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Teaching Quality and Students' EFL Achievements in Ethiopia: Analysis From the Perspective of the Basic Dimensions of Teaching Quality

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Abstract—Teaching quality is important for students' English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Achievements. The three basic dimensions of teaching quality (student support, classroom management, and cognitive activation) showed effectiveness in some subjects in developed countries, but there is very little investigation on its effectiveness in developing ones. Using hierarchical linear modeling and re-centered influence function regression, this study investigates the extent to which the three basic dimensions of teaching quality affect students' EFL achievements and how much the effect varies across achievement distributions in the context of Ethiopia. Findings reveal that classroom management does not affect students' EFL achievements and this is consistent across achievement distributions. However, cognitive activation positively affects students' EFL learning achievements and the effect is consistent across the distribution of achievements. Similarly, student support affects students' EFL achievements positively, but its effect is higher for high-achieving students. Implications of the findings were discussed.

Index Terms—EFL achievement, teaching quality, HLM, RIF, teaching quality dimensions

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching quality is important in foreign language learning because children usually do not have other learning opportunities outside the classroom (Muijs et al., 2014). Klieme et al. (2001) developed the three basic dimensions of teaching quality and its effectiveness was investigated mostly in mathematics and in developed countries. Praetorius et al. (2018) argue that it may be applied “across school subjects, grade levels, and potentially even countries and cultures” (p 408). However, contextual factors might influence teaching quality itself and interact in the process of how it affects learning achievements in education in general and in English as a foreign language (EFL) in particular (Tikly, 2011). Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the effectiveness of the framework in developing countries. Moreover, studies tested the framework in EFL and German language, but they do not account for heterogeneity across achievement levels, an approach which is critical for a better understanding of the effect of quality teaching (Hochweber & Vieluf, 2018; Praetorius et al., 2016). Some instructional strategies might be important for high-performing students and not for low-performing ones (or vice versa) due to hidden mechanisms behind the effect of these strategies or due to hidden classroom circumstances (Konstantopoulos et al., 2019). As such, the question as to whether the effect of teaching quality is consistent across EFL achievement levels remains unanswered. Therefore, it is important to examine how teaching quality affects students' EFL achievements while also accounting for heterogeneity in achievements.

This study examines the effectiveness of the dimensions of teaching quality for students' EFL learning achievements. Specifically, the following research questions are asked: (1) to what extent does teaching quality affect students' EFL achievements? (2) to what extent does teaching quality affect students' EFL achievement across EFL achievement distributions? To answer these questions, we use Ethiopia, driven by three reasons: first, Ethiopia was chosen due to availability of reliable countrywide EFL data. Second, we want the study to be on a developing country, different than the developed ones where the theoretical model of interest was already tested (especially Germany), in order to capture the potential country difference in the effect of teaching quality on EFL achievements. And third, Ethiopia is one of the few developing countries that officially teach EFL at the primary school level, giving us an opportunity to investigate the dimensions of teaching quality in an EFL context at primary education. We draw from the rich Young Lives data on Ethiopia, a survey that captures many variables needed to operationalize the three basic dimensions of teaching quality

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analyzed in the study.

This study is important for its theoretical and policy implications not only in EFL teaching but also in other subjects. Its findings can be linked to better teaching practices in EFL teaching in Ethiopia and similar developing countries, improving education quality in those countries. This is very crucial in most developing countries, regarding the learning crisis they currently face. Moreover, EFL achievements are related to labor market premia in non-English speaking countries (Chakraborty & Bakshi, 2016). Helping to improve students' EFL achievements will likely give them more socioeconomic opportunities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers matter for learning in general education or EFL because they facilitate the learning process through quality instruction (Hochweber & Vieluf, 2018; Kunter et al., 2013). Teaching quality is sometimes referred to as effective teaching, instructional quality, or good teaching practices. There is no universal agreement on what teaching quality is, but the concept implies instructional strategies that match learners' needs and teaching behaviors and processes which promote better learning achievements (Pozas et al., 2020). For example, quality instruction may be learner-centered and it includes creating a relevant environment for learners to learn efficiently, adapting the teaching style to the learning style of students, and caring for their other learning needs (Valiandes, 2015). Consequently, teaching quality in this study is approached as teacher instructional activities or behaviors that are related to better learning achievements.

Many studies agree that teaching quality is related to EFL achievements. Wilden et al. (2020) found a relationship between teaching quality and students' L2 proficiency (EFL) in Germany. The study approached teaching quality from many of its components, but the one which was found to be related to students' achievements is supportive climate. Similarly, Kunter et al. (2013) examined what determines teaching quality and its subsequent potential effects on students' achievements. They found that teaching quality is determined by factors such as pedagogical content knowledge, self-regulatory skills, and enthusiasm for teaching. They also found that teaching quality is a strong predictor of learning achievements. Furthermore, Elgun-gunduz et al. (2012) showed that teaching quality is related to students' EFL achievements. They approached the concept from the perspective of isolated and integrated form-focused instructions. They found that integrated instruction was related to students' EFL achievements. Iraj and Gholami (2018) also found that these two instructional approaches are related to EFL achievements, though they agree that integrated form-focused teaching has a higher effect than isolated form-focused teaching.

Despite this evidence, some studies found a weak relationship between teaching quality and learning. Blömeke et al. (2016) found that teacher credentials are related to teaching quality and students' achievements, but teaching quality is not related to students' achievements. Some other studies argue that teaching quality affects some groups of students and not all students. Mehrdad et al. (2012) found that teaching quality is related to EFL achievements of intermediate proficiency students and not low or high proficiency ones. This finding is echoed by another EFL study which shows that learning outcomes also dependent on student ability levels (Wilden & Porsch, 2019).

The three basic dimensions of teaching quality developed by Klieme et al. (2001) conceptualizes student support, effective classroom management, and cognitive activation as the fundamental dimensions of quality teaching. Student support refers to caring for the learning needs of students by providing them with support whenever necessary; it may also be associated with student-teacher interactions and relationships. A supportive classroom triggers students' well-being and learning motivation, contributing by that to improve their learning achievements (González et al., 2016; Adler et al., 2018). Classroom management is about disciplinary issues and interventions that help create desired behaviors or prevent undesired ones, so as to avoid disruptive situations that reduce the teaching and learning time (Kuger, 2016). However, time management is also included in the classroom management dimension, as better time management helps increase the teaching and learning time. Cognitive activation refers to teaching in a way that students can understand. In cognitive activation, teachers rely on what students already know and build on that by employing challenging tasks or engaging students in high-level thinking.

Praetorius et al. (2018) reviewed the literature on the three basic dimensions of teaching quality and suggest that the model has the potential to improve learning achievements across subjects and countries, but research is needed to identify the conditions under which it can be effective. Various studies have tested the model but are focused on subjects such as science and mathematics and are mainly on developed countries (e.g., Praetorius et al. 2016; Wilden et al., 2020). As such, the question arises whether the model is effective for EFL teaching and in a developing country.

III. METHODS AND DATA

A. Data

This study used the Young Lives (YL) 2016-2017 school survey dataset. YL follows children from four low- and middle-income countries (Ethiopia, Peru, Vietnam, and India) to better understand child poverty in these countries and also explore how policies affect children's well-being. It was initially designed to cover information on children, their families, and their communities. However, in 2010, a school survey component was included in order to collect information on children's background and their educational experiences. The survey captures information on child background, learning achievements, and their schools or related factors.

YL used a sentinel site surveillance system as a sampling technique. In Ethiopia, this consisted of a three-stage sampling technique following the administrative division of the country. Specifically, the program selected regions, then woredas (districts), and finally kebeles (the lowest administrative tier). In selecting regions, YL ensured national coverage, for the data to be representative of the concerned population. From this perspective, five out of the nine regions of the country were initially selected, but the regions of Somali and Afar (called “Emerging regions”) were later included in the sample, making it representative of the concerned national population. Within each region, three to five woredas were selected while keeping balanced representations of poor and non-poor households, rural and urban areas, and the cultural diversity of the country. Within each woreda, at least one kebele was sampled. As a whole, YL data include students from schools in thirty sentinel sites.

B. Variables

YL provides information on students from grades 7 and 8 (primary school) and their respective school-related factors. Students’ EFL test score is the dependent variable in this study. This dependent variable measures the functional English skills of students, i.e. their skills in terms of understanding English in relevant contexts or situations which reflect real life. As such, it focuses on English for communication, rather than correct technical and grammatical aspects of the language.

The concept of teaching quality is not easily captured. This paper adopts the three basic dimensions of teaching quality and operationalizes it following literature (e.g., Atlay et al., 2019; Lotz, 2014). It computed constructs capturing each dimension of the model. To do so, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to reduce information dispersed over a number of variables (related to each dimension) into single index variables (Jolliffe, 1990). PCA is often used in educational research to capture concepts which are challenging to measure using a single variable (Sanfo, 2020). Items on each dimension of the model are Likert-type (four categories) and are used to construct indexes representing each dimension (table A-1 in the appendix). The index for each component was constructed independently and validity of the correlation between the initial items was checked by ensuring a Cronbach alpha of at least 0.7 for each set of items (Dhrymes, 1970). Following Kaizer (1960), we retained extracted components with at least an eigen-value of one as the “meaningful” ones to be used in the analysis. However, as recommended by Hatcher (1994), we applied a varimax (orthogonal) rotation to the retained components in order to have loadings which are similar to the correlation between these components and the initial variables used for the PCA. In summary, PCA helped construct indicators which better capture the complexity of the dimensions of teaching quality. Tables 1 and 2 present the descriptive statistics and the definition of variables, respectively.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF VARIABLES USED IN THE ANALYSIS

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Dependent variable					
English score	12,182	19.071	6.927	1	40
Student and family level variables					
Gender	12,182	0.485	0.500	0	1
Age	12,182	14.364	1.549	11	16
Household size	12,182	6.599	3.087	1	28
Mother education (No educ.)	12,182	0.273	0.446	0	1
Mother education (Primary)	12,182	0.335	0.472	0	1
Mother education (Second.)	12,182	0.205	0.404	0	1
Mother education (Tertiary)	12,182	0.060	0.238	0	1
Father education (No educ.)	12,182	0.154	0.361	0	1
Father education (prim.)	12,182	0.253	0.435	0	1
Father education (Sec.)	12,182	0.287	0.453	0	1
Father education (Tertiary)	12,182	0.123	0.329	0	1
Home books (no books)	12,182	0.114	0.318	0	1
Home books (1-5)	12,182	0.332	0.471	0	1
Home books (6-10)	12,182	0.289	0.453	0	1
Home books (11-20)	12,182	0.125	0.331	0	1
Home books (21-50)	12,182	0.061	0.240	0	1
Home books (51+)	12,182	0.079	0.270	0	1
Reading habit	12,182	0.556	0.497	0	1
Labor (family business)	12,182	0.297	0.457	0	1
Labor (outside paid)	12,182	0.545	0.498	0	1
School level variables					
Student support	12,182	0.000	1.583	-4.858	2.665
Classroom Management	12,182	0.000	1.360	-3.808	2.170
Cognitive activation	12,182	0.000	1.385	-4.154	2.153
Public school	12,182	0.891	0.311	0	1
English class periods	12,182	5.116	0.501	3	6
Teaching has training	12,182	0.428	0.495	0	1
Teacher experience	12,182	14.983	9.467	1	36
Teacher experience square	12,182	314.101	358.661	1	1296
Student book ratio	12,182	0.701	0.458	0	1
Pedagogical resources	12,182	0.000	1.242	-0.572	9.281
Site level variables					
Urban	12,182	0.744	0.436	0	1

TABLE 2
DEFINITION OF VARIABLES USED IN THE ANALYSIS

Variable	Definition
Dependent variable	
English score	Student's English test score
Student and family level variables	
Gender	Student's gender (male = 1)
Age	Student's age in years
Household size	Number of household members
Mother education (No educ.)	Student's mother has no education = 1
Mother education (Primary)	Student's mother has primary education = 1
Mother education (Second.)	Student's mother has secondary education = 1
Mother education (Tertiary)	Student's mother has tertiary education = 1
Father education (No educ.)	Student's father has no education = 1
Father education (prim.)	Student's father has primary education = 1
Father education (Sec.)	Student's father has secondary education = 1
Father education (Tertiary)	Student's father has tertiary education = 1
Home books (no books)	Student has no books at home = 1
Home books (1-5)	Student has one to five books at home = 1
Home books (6-10)	Student has 6 to 10 books at home = 1
Home books (11-20)	Student has 11 to 20 books at home = 1
Home books (21-50)	Student has 21 to 50 books at home = 1
Home books (51+)	Student has more than 51 books at home = 1
Reading habit	Student sometimes reads the books outside school = 1
Labor (family business)	Student does not do family related business labor = 1
Labor (outside paid)	Student does not do paid labor outside the household = 1
School level variables	
Student support	Student support index variable
Classroom Management	Classroom management index variable
Cognitive activation	Cognitive activation index variable
Public school	Student goes to government school = 1
English class periods	Number of English class periods
Teaching has training	Teacher teaching diploma = 1
Teacher experience	Teacher experience in years
Teacher experience square	Teacher experience square
Student book ratio	One textbook per student = 1
Pedagogical resources	Classroom pedagogical resources index variable
Site level variables	
Urban	School belongs to an urban site

C. Empirical Analysis

This study used Stata 16.1 for all estimations. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was employed to answer the first research question. HLM is often used in analyses using data with a clustering nature structure (Hox 2010). We first fitted an empty model (model 1), which decomposes the dependent variable into different variance components of the clusters (here student, school, and site). The variances are used to estimate the intraclass correlation, i.e., the degree of similarity in the outcome variable within the second (or higher) level of the hierarchy. In order to determine the number of clusters to use, we fitted single-level, two-level, and three-level models by maximum likelihood (ML) and we compared them using likelihood ratio test (Leckie, 2013).

Second, we added predictors at the student, school, and site levels. The dimensions of teaching quality were included along with school-level factors used, and the estimation for each dimension was done separately to avoid collinearity (Praetorius et al., 2018). After including all predictors in each regression and it was found that the factor of interest was not statistically significant, interaction terms with other variables were explored. This showed a statistically significant interaction term between classroom management and school type (government school). Furthermore, the effect of student-book ratio was found to vary across schools, leading to the inclusion of a random slope related to this variable at the school level. The inclusion of all factors, the interaction term, and the random slope provided the final model, model 5, specified in (1).

$$y_{ijk} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{1ijk} + \beta_2 x_{2ijk} + \beta_3 x_{3ijk} + \beta_4 x_{4ijk} + \beta_5 x_{5ijk} + \beta_6 x_{6ijk} + \beta_7 x_{7ijk} + \beta_8 x_{8ijk} + \beta_9 x_{9ijk} + \beta_{10} w_{1jk} + \beta_{11} w_{2jk} + \beta_{12} w_{3jk} + \beta_{13} w_{4jk} + \beta_{14} w_{5jk} + \beta_{15} w_{6jk} + \beta_{16} w_{7jk} + \beta_{17} w_{8jk} + \beta_{18} w_{9jk} + \beta_{19} z_{1k} + \beta_{20} w_{1*} w_{2jk} + v_k + u_{0jk} + u_{1jk} w_{7jk} + e_{ijk} \quad (1)$$

$$(v_k) \sim N(0, \sigma_v^2)$$

$$u_{jk} \sim N \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_{u0}^2 & 0 \\ 0 & \sigma_{u1}^2 \end{pmatrix} \right\}$$

$$e_{ijk} \sim N(0, \sigma_e^2)$$

Where:

y_{ijk} is the EFL achievement score of student i in school j in site k .

β_0 is the mean across all sites;

v_k is the effect of site k ;

u_{jk} is the effect of school j ; and

e_{ijk} is the student level residual term.

$x_{1ijk} \sim x_{9ijk}$ are students' background factors

$w_{1jk} \sim w_{9jk}$ are school factors (including teaching quality)

z_{1k} is the site factor

$\beta_{20} w_{1*} w_{2jk}$ is the interaction between classroom management and public school

$u_{1jk} w_{7jk}$ is the random slope of student book ratio at the school level

It is important to mention that just adding predictors does not necessarily improve model fit. We tested "new" models using deviance statistics ($-2 \times \log$ likelihood). Furthermore, variables were not standardized, because studies show that this practice is subject of debate, as it may lead to estimating a different model than the one intended (Hofmann & Gavin, 1998; Paccagnella, 2006).

Despite its widespread use, HLM cannot estimate the effect of predictors across distributions of the outcome variable, what our second research question investigates. Consequently, it is critical to use another approach that allows such investigations. To do so, this study employs unconditional quantile regression (UQR) based on re-centered influence function (RIF) developed by Firpo et al. (2007). RIF is specified as:

$$\text{RIF}(Y; q_\tau; F_Y) = q_\tau + \frac{\tau - 1(Y \leq q_\tau)}{f_Y(q_\tau)} \quad (2)$$

Where q_τ is the value of the dependent variable y at quantile τ . $f_Y(q_\tau)$ is the density function of y at q_τ . $1(Y \leq q_\tau)$ is the indicator function and identifies whether the value of the dependent variable Y for the individual is below q_τ .

The UQR was estimated using cluster-adjusted standard errors (Woessmann, 2003), and it can be specified as conditional RIF regression models at the quantile q_τ as follows¹:

$$E[\text{RIF}(Y_i; q_\tau; F_Y) | X_i] = X_i \beta_\tau + \varepsilon_i \quad (3)$$

Where X is a vector of the factors included in the regression, β represents their respective coefficients, and ε is the error term.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Teaching Quality and Students' EFL Learning Achievements

In this study, the first research question investigates the extent to which teaching quality affects students' EFL achievements. The study estimated each dimension of teaching quality separately and controlled for a certain number of factors that it added stepwise. We present only the results from level 2. The full results are available upon request.

Model 3 in table 3 indicates that classroom management does not have a direct effect on students' EFL achievements. Potential indirect effects were then investigated through interaction terms. The interaction with public school showed statistical significance, as can be seen in models 4 and 5 in table 3. This means that the effect of classroom management on EFL achievements depends on whether the school is a government or a non-government one. We plotted the interaction in order to interpret it (figure 1). As can be seen, along all levels of classroom management, the slope for non-government schools is higher relative to the one of government schools. This means that as classroom management improves, EFL achievements of students from non-government schools are expected to be higher relative to students from government schools.

¹ See Borgen (2016) for a technical presentation of RIF regression

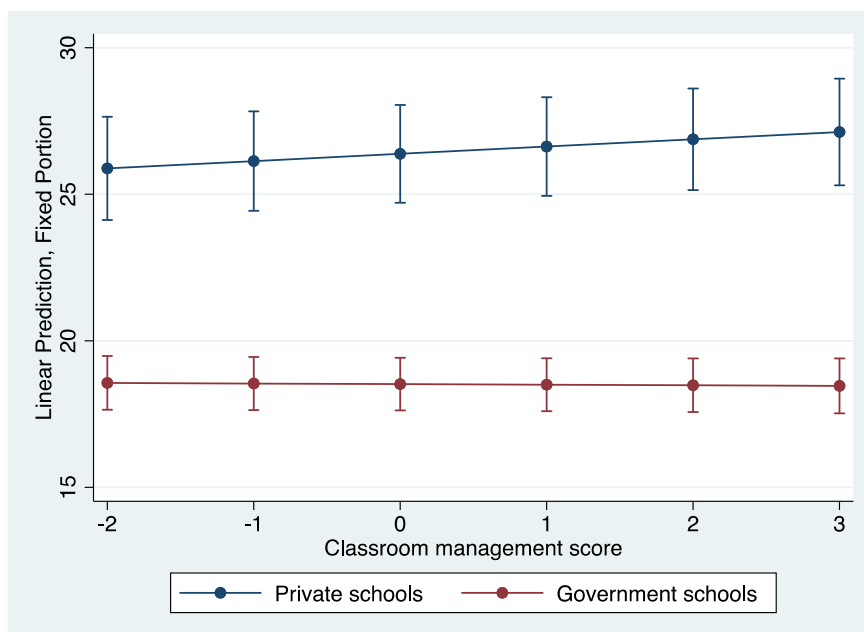


Figure 1: EFL achievements by classroom management and school type

TABLE 3
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND STUDENTS' EFL ACHIEVEMENTS

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
English class periods			-0.174 (0.256)	-0.174 (0.254)	0.186 (0.296)
Teacher has training			-0.117 (0.228)	-0.075 (0.227)	-0.156 (0.229)
Teacher experience			0.332*** (0.044)	0.317*** (0.043)	0.336*** (0.044)
Teacher experience square			-0.009*** (0.001)	-0.009*** (0.001)	-0.009*** (0.001)
Student book ratio			0.872*** (0.211)	0.876*** (0.210)	0.823*** (0.407)
Classroom management			0.009 (0.042)	0.240* (0.133)	0.248* (0.132)
Public school			-8.535*** (0.893)	-8.116*** (0.852)	-7.855*** (0.854)
Public school X Classroom management				-0.257* (0.140)	-0.269* (0.140)
Pedagogical resources			0.029 (0.065)	0.027 (0.065)	0.063 (0.066)
Urban				3.432*** (0.794)	3.443*** (0.776)
Observations	11,616	9,710	8,985	8,985	8,985
Number of groups	30	30	30	30	30

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The results on the effect of the cognitive activation dimension of teaching quality on students' EFL achievements are presented in table 4. They indicate a strong relationship between cognitive activation and students' EFL achievements. Specifically, the relationship between cognitive activation and students' EFL achievements is positive and statistically significant at the 1% level. The variable cognitive activation is added from model 3 which already presents a statistical significance at 1% level. In model 4, controlling for rural and urban sites does not change the statistical significance of the relationship between the two variables. Similarly, in the final model (model 5), a random slope is accounted for, but the relationship between cognitive activation and EFL achievements does not change. It can be said then that cognitive activation is positively related to students' EFL achievements.

TABLE 4
COGNITIVE ACTIVATION AND EFL ACHIEVEMENTS

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Public school			-8.663*** (0.905)	-8.269*** (0.859)	-8.105*** (0.860)
English class periods			-0.087 (0.258)	-0.082 (0.256)	0.215 (0.297)
Teacher has training			-0.267 (0.229)	-0.222 (0.228)	-0.293 (0.230)
Teacher experience			0.327*** (0.044)	0.311*** (0.044)	0.333*** (0.044)
Teacher experience square			-0.009*** (0.001)	-0.008*** (0.001)	-0.009*** (0.001)
Student book ratio			0.913*** (0.213)	0.917*** (0.211)	0.848** (0.406)
Cognitive activation			0.255*** (0.042)	0.255*** (0.042)	0.254*** (0.042)
Pedagogical resources			0.029 (0.066)	0.027 (0.066)	0.065 (0.067)
Urban				3.389*** (0.788)	3.394*** (0.773)
Observations	11,616	9,710	8,809	8,809	8,809
Number of groups	30	30	30	30	30

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

As for the results on the relationship between student support and EFL achievements, they are presented in table 5. Model 3 indicates that student support is statistically related to students' EFL achievements for all students, and the relationship is statistically significant at 1% level. Model 4, which controls for differences between rural urban areas, also indicates that classroom support is statistically related to students' EFL achievements at 1% level. Model 5, the final model, confirms the statistical relationship found in the previous ones. Specifically, student support is related to students' EFL achievements, statistically significant at 1% level. In summary, the results on the student support perspective show a strong relationship between the latter and students' EFL achievements.

TABLE 5
STUDENT SUPPORT AND EFL ACHIEVEMENTS

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Public school			-8.518*** (0.902)	-8.140*** (0.859)	-7.893*** (0.865)
English class periods			-0.177 (0.257)	-0.171 (0.255)	0.199 (0.297)
Teacher has training			-0.129 (0.228)	-0.088 (0.227)	-0.151 (0.229)
Teacher experience			0.320*** (0.044)	0.304*** (0.044)	0.321*** (0.044)
Teacher experience square			-0.009*** (0.001)	-0.008*** (0.001)	-0.009*** (0.001)
Student book ratio			0.895*** (0.212)	0.899*** (0.210)	0.810** (0.399)
Student support			0.104*** (0.037)	0.104*** (0.037)	0.103*** (0.037)
Pedagogical resources			0.045 (0.065)	0.044 (0.065)	0.075 (0.066)
Urban				3.450*** (0.802)	3.452*** (0.784)
Constant	17.227*** (0.796)	16.241*** (0.935)	22.592*** (1.722)	20.848*** (1.710)	19.098*** (1.896)
Observations	11,616	9,710	9,005	9,005	9,005
Number of groups	30	30	30	30	30

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

B. Teaching Quality and Students' EFL Achievements across Distributions of Achievements

The second research question of this study explores the extent to which the effect of the three basic dimensions of teaching quality on EFL achievements might vary across EFL achievement distributions. The analysis was done separately for each dimension and results presented accordingly. Moreover, the analysis used many quantiles, trying to uncover relationships that may change across as many of them as possible. Results are presented from percentiles 10 to 95.

Table 6 indicates that classroom management is not statistically related to students' EFL achievements at the mean. The lack of statistical relationship may change depending on disaggregation into percentiles (i.e., low, medium, and high-performing students). The disaggregation still shows a non-statistically significant relationship between classroom management and students' EFL achievements. Consequently, regardless of EFL achievement levels, it can be said that classroom management does not affect students' EFL achievements.

Examining the relationship between cognitive activation and students' EFL achievements, results indicate that the relationship between the two at the mean is positive and statistically significant at the 1% level (table 7). Disaggregating the analysis into percentiles might make the statistical significance disappear if there are students at some percentiles who are not affected by cognitive activation. However, the disaggregation shows that the relationship between cognitive activation and students' EFL achievements remains positive and statistically significant across the whole distribution. In terms of the strength of the statistical significance, it is at least 5% level along the distribution, though no consistent pattern can be observed when comparing the tails or the middle of the distribution. As a whole, cognitive activation affects students' EFL achievements consistently across distributions of learning achievements.

In terms of the relationship between student support and EFL achievements (table 8), surprisingly, no statistical significance was found at the mean analysis, while there was a statistical significance in the first research question (using HLM). As the analysis is disaggregated across distributions, the results remain statistically insignificant for students on the lower tail and the middle of the distribution. Moving to the upper tail of the distribution, statistical significance was found at the extreme end. Specifically, student support affects EFL achievements at percentile 95 of the distribution, statistically significant at the 10% level. These results from a comparative perspective across the distribution indicate that student support is related to students' EFL achievements, but only for those at the 95th percentile (high achievers).

TABLE 6
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND STUDENTS' EFL ACHIEVEMENTS ACROSS DISTRIBUTIONS

VARIABLES	(1) Mean	(2) Perc. 10	(3) Perc. 20	(4) Perc. 30	(5) Perc. 40	(6) Perc. 50	(7) Perc. 60	(8) Perc. 70	(9) Perc. 80	(10) Perc. 90	(11) Perc. 95
Public school	-8.368*** (1.063)	-1.328*** (0.338)	-1.955*** (0.398)	-3.189*** (0.608)	-4.836*** (0.744)	-5.942*** (0.810)	-8.225*** (0.988)	-11.739*** (1.288)	-15.614*** (1.932)	-19.894*** (2.982)	-22.735*** (4.938)
English class periods	1.434* (0.778)	-0.208 (0.259)	-0.055 (0.388)	0.416 (0.576)	1.022 (0.765)	1.141 (0.816)	1.797* (1.001)	2.600* (1.311)	3.505** (1.378)	3.202** (1.362)	2.877* (1.692)
Teaching has training	-0.711 (0.795)	-0.671* (0.369)	-0.944** (0.465)	-1.084 (0.665)	-1.131 (0.830)	-1.198 (0.891)	-1.282 (0.998)	-0.961 (1.214)	-0.391 (1.255)	0.427 (1.258)	1.039 (1.402)
Teacher experience	-0.003 (0.120)	0.012 (0.054)	-0.016 (0.068)	-0.039 (0.101)	-0.016 (0.138)	-0.005 (0.150)	0.014 (0.166)	-0.058 (0.182)	0.105 (0.186)	0.104 (0.201)	-0.047 (0.244)
Teacher exper. squared	-0.000 (0.003)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.003)	0.000 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.004)	0.001 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.006)
Student book ratio	0.641 (0.529)	0.501 (0.396)	0.407 (0.379)	0.206 (0.488)	0.058 (0.575)	0.041 (0.594)	0.034 (0.655)	0.332 (0.798)	0.894 (0.855)	1.539 (1.026)	3.545** (1.388)
Classroom management	0.079 (0.084)	0.005 (0.062)	0.098 (0.067)	0.094 (0.075)	0.094 (0.090)	0.133 (0.103)	0.113 (0.123)	0.132 (0.136)	0.049 (0.141)	0.013 (0.143)	0.010 (0.127)
Pedagogical resources	0.437*** (0.093)	0.168*** (0.051)	0.295*** (0.061)	0.432*** (0.086)	0.478*** (0.102)	0.502*** (0.111)	0.606*** (0.137)	0.544*** (0.155)	0.513*** (0.191)	0.635*** (0.170)	0.316 (0.279)
Urban	2.670*** (0.685)	1.964*** (0.432)	2.318*** (0.547)	3.153*** (0.716)	3.722*** (0.901)	4.025*** (0.874)	3.887*** (0.905)	3.217*** (0.963)	2.510*** (0.956)	1.774* (0.895)	0.772 (0.940)
Constant	14.796*** (4.392)	10.749*** (1.572)	12.152*** (2.321)	11.785*** (3.414)	10.622** (4.395)	11.527** (4.521)	11.147* (5.739)	13.527* (7.263)	16.040** (7.657)	27.759*** (7.748)	38.733*** (9.770)
Observations	8,985	8,985	8,985	8,985	8,985	8,985	8,985	8,985	8,985	8,985	8,985
R-squared	0.349	0.051	0.094	0.146	0.197	0.216	0.230	0.242	0.245	0.247	0.189

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

TABLE 7
COGNITIVE ACTIVATION AND STUDENTS' EFL ACHIEVEMENTS ACROSS DISTRIBUTIONS

VARIABLES	(1) Mean	(2) Perc. 10	(3) Perc. 20	(4) Perc. 30	(5) Perc. 40	(6) Perc. 50	(7) Perc. 60	(8) Perc. 70	(9) Perc. 80	(10) Perc. 90	(11) Perc. 95
Public school	-8.522*** (1.036)	-1.309*** (0.338)	-2.010*** (0.416)	-3.104*** (0.589)	-4.795*** (0.718)	-6.841*** (0.928)	-9.586*** (1.060)	-12.119*** (1.253)	-16.142*** (1.841)	-20.339*** (3.012)	-22.878*** (4.846)
English class periods	1.503** (0.730)	-0.260 (0.243)	-0.040 (0.379)	0.421 (0.523)	1.048 (0.701)	1.487* (0.857)	1.892* (1.109)	2.761** (1.260)	3.719*** (1.302)	3.477*** (1.283)	2.994* (1.658)
Teaching has training	-0.699 (0.786)	-0.800** (0.366)	-0.997** (0.483)	-1.194* (0.651)	-1.166 (0.811)	-1.325 (0.933)	-1.208 (1.100)	-0.867 (1.208)	-0.293 (1.224)	0.532 (1.241)	1.178 (1.380)
Teacher experience	-0.013 (0.118)	0.020 (0.053)	-0.017 (0.069)	-0.049 (0.098)	-0.037 (0.136)	-0.043 (0.158)	-0.034 (0.178)	-0.063 (0.180)	0.104 (0.181)	0.106 (0.198)	-0.051 (0.240)
Teacher exper. squared	-0.000 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.004)	0.000 (0.004)	0.001 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.005)	-0.000 (0.006)
Student book ratio	0.640 (0.519)	0.571 (0.407)	0.464 (0.402)	0.172 (0.481)	0.082 (0.570)	0.071 (0.638)	0.258 (0.667)	0.325 (0.784)	0.737 (0.809)	1.457 (1.023)	3.402** (1.356)
Cognitive activation	0.227*** (0.057)	0.204*** (0.065)	0.147** (0.065)	0.217*** (0.053)	0.218*** (0.067)	0.196** (0.090)	0.281*** (0.099)	0.315*** (0.116)	0.326*** (0.119)	0.263** (0.120)	0.309** (0.140)
Pedagogical resources	0.415*** (0.096)	0.142** (0.056)	0.276*** (0.068)	0.403*** (0.089)	0.447*** (0.107)	0.513*** (0.142)	0.597*** (0.159)	0.513*** (0.155)	0.515*** (0.182)	0.642*** (0.172)	0.309 (0.263)
Urban	2.752*** (0.699)	2.085*** (0.437)	2.334*** (0.582)	3.329*** (0.736)	3.873*** (0.915)	4.167*** (0.954)	3.809*** (0.999)	3.318*** (0.984)	2.508** (0.957)	1.728* (0.875)	0.733 (0.917)
Constant	14.608*** (4.130)	11.204*** (1.575)	11.852*** (2.290)	11.641*** (3.097)	10.214** (4.061)	10.018** (4.731)	12.247* (6.318)	12.932* (7.034)	15.701** (7.331)	27.196*** (7.329)	38.175*** (9.302)
Observations	8,809	8,809	8,809	8,809	8,809	8,809	8,809	8,809	8,809	8,809	8,809
R-squared	0.358	0.056	0.097	0.152	0.203	0.228	0.238	0.250	0.253	0.255	0.193

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

TABLE 8
STUDENT SUPPORT AND STUDENTS' EFL ACHIEVEMENTS ACROSS DISTRIBUTIONS

VARIABLES	(1) Mean	(2) Perc. 10	(3) Perc. 20	(4) Perc. 30	(5) Perc. 40	(6) Perc. 50	(7) Perc. 60	(8) Perc. 70	(9) Perc. 80	(10) Perc. 90	(11) Perc. 95
Public school	-8.389*** (1.060)	-1.323*** (0.333)	-1.976*** (0.404)	-3.172*** (0.590)	-4.763*** (0.736)	-5.860*** (0.809)	-8.412*** (0.981)	-12.016*** (1.303)	-15.806*** (1.937)	-19.735*** (3.017)	-22.505*** (4.980)
English class periods	1.462* (0.768)	-0.214 (0.254)	-0.046 (0.400)	0.364 (0.574)	0.989 (0.764)	1.138 (0.820)	1.960* (1.008)	2.802** (1.314)	3.611** (1.376)	3.214** (1.326)	2.844* (1.669)
Teaching has training	-0.664 (0.792)	-0.682* (0.359)	-0.950** (0.475)	-1.107* (0.646)	-1.113 (0.815)	-1.170 (0.881)	-1.132 (1.004)	-0.852 (1.232)	-0.221 (1.263)	0.442 (1.256)	1.055 (1.390)
Teacher experience	-0.021 (0.119)	0.014 (0.052)	-0.031 (0.067)	-0.049 (0.096)	-0.025 (0.134)	-0.022 (0.146)	-0.004 (0.165)	-0.075 (0.186)	0.073 (0.190)	0.075 (0.206)	-0.095 (0.253)
Teacher exper. squared	0.000 (0.003)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.003)	0.000 (0.004)	-0.000 (0.004)	0.001 (0.005)	-0.003 (0.005)	-0.003 (0.005)	0.001 (0.007)
Student book ratio	0.628 (0.536)	0.553 (0.403)	0.446 (0.394)	0.237 (0.495)	0.027 (0.591)	0.091 (0.604)	0.023 (0.668)	0.258 (0.827)	0.714 (0.862)	1.423 (1.042)	3.477** (1.403)
Student support	0.046 (0.061)	0.033 (0.059)	0.015 (0.063)	0.009 (0.065)	0.013 (0.067)	0.010 (0.071)	0.046 (0.088)	0.066 (0.105)	0.069 (0.106)	0.141 (0.128)	0.283* (0.146)
Pedagogical resources	0.435*** (0.092)	0.146*** (0.051)	0.273*** (0.062)	0.411*** (0.085)	0.471*** (0.101)	0.503*** (0.109)	0.613*** (0.132)	0.570*** (0.155)	0.531*** (0.182)	0.666*** (0.170)	0.310 (0.279)
Urban	2.689*** (0.687)	1.945*** (0.454)	2.256*** (0.565)	3.129*** (0.711)	3.764*** (0.896)	4.045*** (0.866)	3.951*** (0.898)	3.324*** (0.972)	2.589*** (0.954)	1.840** (0.892)	0.802 (0.935)
Constant	14.834*** (4.332)	10.975*** (1.467)	12.026*** (2.323)	12.254*** (3.337)	10.652** (4.379)	11.592** (4.507)	10.403* (5.749)	12.646* (7.268)	15.946** (7.734)	28.265*** (7.581)	39.138*** (9.634)
Observations	9,005	9,005	9,005	9,005	9,005	9,005	9,005	9,005	9,005	9,005	9,005
R-squared	0.351	0.052	0.093	0.147	0.198	0.215	0.230	0.245	0.247	0.246	0.189

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

C. Discussion

The analysis revealed that classroom management does not directly affect EFL achievements, consistent along the distribution. These findings are inconsistent with previous studies which found that classroom management is positively related to students' EFL achievements (Cevallos & Soto, 2020; Talebi, 2015). This might be explained by the complexity of the concept of classroom management. Martin et al. (1998) showed that it includes behavior management, people management, and instructional management. This is supported by Sowell (2013) who divides the concept into behavioral management and instructional management. Our variable for classroom management incorporates these aspects to some extent because the three basic dimensions of teaching quality also accounts for them. Furthermore, our findings suggest that the effect of classroom management may be inconsistent across countries. In other words, it might be a characteristic of effective teaching, but its effect is not consistent across contexts. The effect may depend on other factors at the school or country level, which underlines hidden mechanisms that need to be elucidated. Yet, students' performance heterogeneity does not reveal hidden mechanisms. As such, potential direct benefits of classroom management as supported by Praetorius et al. (2018) may not be expected in developing countries, at least for Ethiopia.

Our findings show that cognitive activation is positively related to students' EFL achievements, and RIF regression confirms that this applies to all students. These findings are consistent with previous studies that show that cognitive activation is related to students' achievements (Iwai, 2011; Wernke et al., 2011). A plausible explanation of these findings is that cognitive activation gives the opportunity to students to engage into higher-level thinking processes which are very important for learning achievements in general. Anderson (2002) showed that these processes involve the skills of learning to learn. When students are given opportunities to reconstruct, elaborate, question, and evaluate their own learning, they are able to communicate concepts and ideas, and thereby develop a conceptual understanding of what they learn (Osborne et al., 2004). Another plausible explanation is that cognitive activation develops students' motivation and positive attitudes towards EFL learning, critical factors for language learning (Wilden & Porsch, 2019). From such a perspective, it might be important to promote the use of cognitive activation in EFL teaching in developing countries like Ethiopia because it has potential benefits. This is critical in such a context because the country is facing a learning crisis and many of its students are not motivated to learn English (Geberew et al., 2018).

The potential benefits of cognitive activation are applicable to a subject like EFL and seem not to change depending on whether the context is a developed country or a developing one. Furthermore, these potential benefits of cognitive activation are also crucial for low-achieving students (usually the most struggling ones) in EFL context and have implications for instruction. EFL teachers of low-achieving students might present challenging problems and believe that these students are not able to cope with the cognitive demand of solving them. Consequently, these teachers may not use cognitive activation approaches with low-achieving students; this makes the activity de-motivating for these students, which means performing lower than they could have. Using cognitively engaging activities is likely to help improve students' EFL achievements regardless of their performance.

The results reveal that student support is related to students' EFL achievements, but mainly for high-achievers. These findings are in line with Talebinejad and Akhgar (2015) who found that student support is very important to improve students' EFL achievements. Nevertheless, the differing effect of student support on EFL achievements suggests that there might be hidden mechanisms or classroom-specific circumstances which exist and that need to be addressed for all

students to profit from the support of teachers. For example, teacher perceptions on students might lead them to develop high expectations for high-achievers and devote most or the best of the quality of support to them. In such circumstances, low-achievers are left behind and will likely not profit from the support of the teacher. Chang and Read (2007) provide evidence showing that student support may not only boost EFL achievements of low-achievers, it also encourages them to keep up with their efforts to achieve higher. As such, student support as a teaching quality dimension has the potential to improve students' EFL achievements even in different contexts or countries, but caution might be needed in relation to student heterogeneity. Factors like teacher ones may need to be accounted for in order to identify the effectiveness of student support for some groups of students.

V. CONCLUSION

Teaching quality is important for students' EFL achievements. Klieme et al. (2001) developed the three basic dimensions of teaching quality (student support, classroom management, and cognitive activation) and research shows they are effective in developed countries. Praetorius et al. (2018) argue that the framework has a potential to improve students' achievements but there is need of research to identify the conditions under which its effectiveness may occur (e.g., country context, student abilities, subject, and school type). This study examined the effect of the three basic dimensions of teaching quality on students' EFL achievements in Ethiopia. It used the rich YL 2016-2017 school survey that it analyzed using three-level HLM and RIF regression. Results revealed that classroom management does not directly affect students' EFL achievements, consistent across achievement distributions. However, cognitive activation affects students' EFL achievements and consistently across distributions. Similarly, student support affects EFL achievements positively, but its effect is higher for high-achieving students. This research shows that two of the three dimensions of teaching quality are effective for students' EFL achievements in the context of Ethiopia and supports Praetorius et al. (2018), i.e., teaching quality can improve students' achievements in other countries and other subjects (EFL).

Teaching quality may be effective in developing countries, but all its dimensions do not have equal potentials. The findings of this study imply that teaching practices in developing countries need to be grounded on theoretical frameworks which are evidence-based if these countries are aiming at higher students' achievements in EFL. From this perspective, student support and cognitive activation are teaching strategies that are promising as a way to help these countries address the learning crisis they are facing. We believe that developing rigorous and meticulous programs related to the evidence from the findings of this study will contribute substantially to improve students' EFL achievements.

Despite its insights, this study has limitations that might need to be noted. First, there is no common operationalization of the three basic dimensions of teaching quality, which leads to inconsistency as to which dimension some of the variables might fit in. This study followed studies like Praetorius et al. (2018) in selecting items, but there are variables not included because they are not available in the dataset. Second, the analysis focused on students at the final stage of primary education, then it might be interesting to test the validity of findings at the early stage of primary education as well. Third, the methods of analysis do not infer causality but rather correlation, then the findings should be interpreted accordingly. Future studies may address these limitations.

APPENDIX

TABLE A-1
ITEMS USED TO COMPUTE EACH OF THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF TEACHING QUALITY

Variables	Items used
Classroom management	
	Every time my teacher explains something, we are asked whether we understand. The lesson doesn't continue until we understand
	From start to finish, there is no time wasted in lessons
	I can talk to my friends while my teacher is talking
	My teacher is always on time to start lessons
	My teacher will notice immediately if I am not concentrating and tell me to focus
Cognitive management	
	If I raise my hand to share, my teacher will always want to know what I think about a topic
	If I find something hard my teacher does not mind if I stop trying
	When I give an answer, my teacher makes me explain why I think that it is correct
	In this lesson I must correct all mistakes that I make
	When my teacher explains something, I can usually understand it straightaway
Student support	
	If I don't understand something, I can ask my teacher to explain again until I do understand
	If I walk into a lesson upset my teacher will come and talk to me
	My teacher will always notice when I don't understand a topic and then come and help me
	If I need help I can always ask my teacher
	My teacher always knows what I am doing
	When I ask a question, my teacher will be nice to me

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Virtual Reality Software as Preparation Tools for Oral Presentations: Perceptions From the Classroom

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Abstract—Although there is a wealth of studies on the role of virtual reality (VR) technology in language acquisition, little research has been done on the utilization of virtual reality mobile applications in English language acquisition, especially in developing oral presentation skills. The main purpose of this case study is to investigate the usefulness of VirtualSpeech, which is a virtual reality mobile application, as a preparation tool for oral presentations via the perceptions of international students and their instructor. The participants are five Academic English Program (AEP) students and their English language instructor at Saint Michael's College. Qualitative analyses were performed on data collected from: (1) learning logs that were shared between the students and the researcher, (2) surveys that were sent to the students and their instructor, (3) one-to-one interviews with the students, and (4) the researcher's fieldnotes of the students' oral presentation performances. The results of the study show that all of the participants recommend using VirtualSpeech as a tool to prepare for oral presentations. Most of the students reported higher confidence levels while speaking English after their use of VirtualSpeech. Thus, this case study can be considered as a contribution to the research on VR mobile applications in English language acquisition.

Index Terms—virtual reality, oral presentation, public speaking anxiety, English language learners, VirtualSpeech

I. INTRODUCTION

As digital platforms become ubiquitous components of educational environments, there is an increasing interest in more advanced digital tools. One such tool is virtual reality (VR), the use of computer programs and purpose-built video-display headsets to simulate an artificial environment (Schroeder, 1996). With large companies investing hundreds of millions of dollars into new generations of VR technology (Molla, 2017), its capabilities have grown rapidly and there are now a number of VR-based educational systems available, which are seeing some use in classrooms. In particular, VR programs have been developed to assist the outcomes of language learning curricula (Li & Wong, 2021), with simulated environments and interactions used to augment standard in-classroom activities.

Moreover, VR may be especially promising for tackling particular kinds of educational challenges. One of these is public speaking anxiety (PSA), a common anxiety disorder that affects approximately 40% of those who suffer from social phobias (Ruscio et al., 2008). There is evidence that exposure to the sources of phobias in virtual environments can provide safe and effective means of combating fear and easing anxiety through a gradual process of familiarization (Owens & Beidel, 2015; Wallach et al., 2009). In the classroom, VR applications that allow students to practice public speaking while remaining in private—addressing only a virtual audience—offer great means of helping people overcome PSA gently (Hinojo-Lucena et al., 2020; Stupar-Rutenfrans et al., 2017). The present study takes up this issue, building on previous work that has examined the use of VR applications in second language acquisition for English language students.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The first section introduces the concepts of virtual reality environments (VREs) and virtual learning environments (VLEs) and reviews research on the use of VREs and VLEs in the field of English language learning. The second section reviews research on the application of VLEs in combating anxiety, specifically public speaking anxiety.

A. Virtual Reality in Language Education

Learning a language is a complex endeavor that requires mastering not only vocabulary and grammar but also skills and habits for producing, receiving, and handling information more generally (Burns & Joyce, 1997). In speaking a new language, the learner has to learn new words and naming patterns that can be different from the learner's first language (Pavlenko, 2011). Thus, second language learners face multiple challenges simultaneously, as they need to adapt to different components of speaking skills, which are vocabulary, grammar, fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension (Harris, 1969; Syakur, 1987). Learners overcome these challenges by using innovative strategies with common examples, including acting out a script, communication games such as information-gap and role-play, discussions such

as formal debates, and prepared talks such as oral presentations (Harmer, 2007). Oral presentations are especially helpful, as they offer a stable scaffold to organize speech—typically a set of slides or notes—and a unidirectional communicative mode that allows students to focus on their linguistic performance without the need to practice language comprehension at the same time (Hyland, 1991; Nation & Newton, 2008).

Presentations delivered in simulated environments may even be more effective, as simulations can provide easily accessible and low-stakes means of practicing real-world behaviors or skills (Banks et al., 2001; Merchant et al., 2014; Page & Smith, 1998). Such simulations are common training tools across many fields—for instance, one common example is Microsoft Flight Simulator, which allows its users to control virtual aircraft with a high degree of real-world validity (Beckman, 2009).

In educational contexts, simulated or “virtual reality environments” (VREs) are a means of giving complex visual, auditory, and interactive feedback in the absence of the real-world circumstances that would typically be required (Brundage & Hancock, 2015; Olle & Westcott, 2018). Most virtual environments also include game-like elements or are themselves videogames, making them engaging, motivating, and appealing to students of all ages (Gee, 2007; Kirriemuir & McFarlane, 2003; Tobias et al., 2014). VREs can very easily be designed so that the skills they encourage are education-relevant, such as problem-solving, learning strategies, or interactional skills (Ang & Krishna, 2008; Chen & Hsu, 2020; Gee, 2003).

Some recent work has explored the use of VREs as tools in language learning. In one study, conducting lessons and activities with English language learners (ELLs) in virtual environments in online games such as *Second Life* (Linden Lab, 2003) was found to improve vocabulary development (Hsiao et al., 2017). Students may also feel more creatively free, better able to communicate easily, and more comfortable following instructions while learning in VREs rather than physical classroom settings (Cheng et al., 2017; Reinders, 2012). These results are significant in light of the global prevalence of English as a second language, as it is the most widely spoken and frequently taught second language in the world. Thus, techniques that facilitate ELL instruction have the potential to increase the efficiency of instruction for a large number of students (Young et al., 2012). Moreover, students tend to prefer VREs to more traditional learning aids, such as textbooks (Lin & Lan, 2015; Symonenko et al., 2020).

The reasons behind the utility of VR tools in language classrooms have also been explored. This is because the design of virtual environments is so flexible and relatively unconstrained by limitations such as physical space; therefore, VR technology allows the instructor to design virtual environments (e.g., virtual classrooms) that promote verbal and physical interactions that are most relevant to the language skills being taught (Cheng et al., 2017; Morrison, 2017). Thanks to this flexibility, VR learning can be integrated with task-based language teaching (TBLT) to create virtual learning environments (VLEs) that foster collaboration, autonomy, and communication skills. Moreover, these VLEs are able to accommodate students with specific learning needs (Lin & Lan, 2015). Ruggiero (2013) points to another benefit: VLEs allow students to exercise their skills and practice content knowledge in “fail-safe situations.” Fail-safe situations are learning contexts in which students feel safe to make mistakes related to language usage, and they avoid any possible embarrassment due to miscommunication. These properties of VLEs highlight their potential to alleviate language learning challenges such as social inhibition and anxiety by providing low-stress contexts for language practice.

B. Anxiety and Virtual Reality in Educational Contexts

The potential that VLEs possess to help alleviate anxiety is a significant advantage. Woodrow (2006) writes that, “anxiety experienced in communication in English can be debilitating and can influence students’ adaptation to the target environment and ultimately the achievement of their educational goals” (p. 309). Many students experience extreme anxiety when delivering oral presentations, which—given the negative effects of anxiety on memory and attention—naturally hinders learning (King, 2002). In general, emotions significantly influence cognitive functions such as perception and memory (Parkinson et al., 1996), thereby affecting learning (Pekrun et al., 2002). Immordino-Yang explains the relationship as follows:

Emotions are not add-ons that are distinct from cognitive skills. Instead emotions, such as interest, anxiety, frustration, excitement, or a sense of awe in beholding beauty, become a dimension of the skill itself. This is one reason that anxiety can be so debilitating to students’ performance. (Immordino-Yang, 2015, p. 21)

Many individuals live with one or more social phobias, of which public speaking anxiety (PSA) is among the most common. PSA can be debilitating, causing fear-based fantasies of failure and embarrassment and distracting learners from the task or activity at hand (Pertaub et al., 2002). It can lead to students performing poorly, refusing to speak in class, or, in extreme cases, dropping out of school (Harris et al., 2002). These issues may be exacerbated for students who are primarily familiar with highly teacher-focused classrooms in many Asian countries (King, 2002).

There are a number of ways to confront anxiety disorders and non-clinical anxiousness. Leading clinical tools include traditional cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which is a clinically proven psychotherapy that successfully helps in changing patients’ behavior and thought pattern (Beck, 2011). Moreover, several meta-analyses about CBT treatment concluded that CBT is efficacious in treating anxiety disorders (Otte, 2011). Another alternative to CBT is direct exposure therapy (EXP), which involves desensitizing patients from fear-inducing stimuli through safe, mild, and controlled exposure (Myers & Davis, 2007). However, Owens and Beidel (2015) argue that—especially in non-clinical settings—a virtual version of EXP might be both more ethical and far easier to practice. Owens and Beidel dub this

method “virtual reality exposure therapy” (VRET), and it has proven effective in reducing anxiety-related symptoms in a wide range of circumstances (Opriş et al., 2012; Powers & Emmelkamp, 2008; Stupar-Rutenfrans et al., 2017; Wallach et al., 2009). Moreover, researchers such as Reeves (2020) conducted a meta-analysis study on the use of VRET in combating public speaking anxiety, which generally found that VRET significantly decreases the symptoms of PSA.

In the specific context of language learning, and even more narrowly the use of oral presentations to practice speaking skills, several VR applications are available. These include *Be Fearless: Fear of Public Speaking* (Samsung, 2016) and *Speech Trainer* (Wolf in Motion, 2016), both of which aim to enhance ELLs’ capabilities in public speaking and to lower their PSA. Additionally, recent studies recommend instructors to adopt VR as a new and innovative approach in speech preparation, as it is efficient in increasing students’ confidence in public speaking and can be effectively incorporated into the classroom (Frisby et al., 2020; Hinojo-Lucena et al., 2020; Lindner et al., 2021).

This under-explored relationship between VR and anxiety presents an opportunity for the widespread use of VR in classrooms to allow students to access the benefits of oral presentations as part of second language acquisition. This is because speech is essential to all forms of social engagement; moreover, adults are frequently judged on their speaking skills, and the acquisition of high levels of speaking skills can assist individuals in achieving personal goals (Bygate, 1987; Thornbury, 2005). This makes public speaking skills an essential educational outcome; combined with the potential for anxiety reduction, the case for the use of VR in ELL environments is clear.

III. METHODS

This case study was conducted to investigate the usefulness of VirtualSpeech as a preparation tool for oral presentations via the perceptions of AEP students and their instructor. The study utilized qualitative methods to answer the following research questions:

1. Having used VirtualSpeech as a preparation tool for oral presentations, how do students describe their emotional state in presentations?
2. What value do students see in VirtualSpeech as a preparation tool for presentations?
3. What value does the instructor see in VirtualSpeech as a preparation tool for presentations?

A. Research Design

This case study was conducted in a 16-week AEP oral skills course at Saint Michael’s College in Vermont. The course aimed to improve learners’ English speaking and listening skills through listening activities, class discussions, and oral presentations. The students had to do two presentations which were among the main assessment methods of the course. The first presentation occurred in the middle of the semester and was called the midterm presentation, while the second one occurred in the last days of the semester and was called the final presentation. The researcher provided the participants with a Google Cardboard headset before they did the midterm presentation. Regarding the employed research methods, the researcher conducted interviews with the students, wrote observations of students while they were delivering presentations, distributed surveys to the students and their instructor, and individually shared a private Google Document with each participating student in order to log the student’s use of VirtualSpeech before the midterm presentation.

B. Participants

There were seven students in the AEP oral skills course, and all of them are native Chinese speakers who initially agreed to participate in the study of this research. However, after the first measure of data collection, which is learning logs, the researcher withdrew the participation of two students due to reasons which are explained below. Consequently, five participating students were included in all of the qualitative measures of the study. In this group of five students, there were four males and one female, and they were between 20 and 22 years old. All of the student participants were Academic English Program (AEP) students, and all of them were enrolled in AEP after achieving satisfactory progress in the Intensive English Program (IEP) at Saint Michael’s College. Generally, AEP students have TOEFL scores that range between 61-78 for the Internet-based Test (iBT) format of the TOEFL test. Regarding the instructor, the instructor’s areas of expertise include academic English, presentation skills, speaking and listening, and computer-assisted language learning (CALL). Furthermore, the instructor’s first language is American English. In order to preserve the confidentiality of the participants, all participating students were assigned an identification code (e.g., P1 was assigned for a participating student).

C. Instruments

The instruments used in the case study were the Google Cardboard VR device, VirtualSpeech VR application, learning logs via Google Docs, surveys via SurveyMonkey, one-to-one interviews, and the researcher’s fieldnotes.

D. Google Cardboard

Most VR programs rely on cumbersome and expensive headsets that can only be run by high-end personal computers, making them inefficient for most classroom environments. However, there are alternatives. One of the most popular modern VR headsets is Google Cardboard that uses smartphones as its screen. When the smartphone is placed inside the

glasses-like cardboard frame while running the Google Cardboard application, its screen is split into two sections that provide each eye a 360-degree field of view. The results are highly immersive VR experiences. Instruments used in the case study were the Google Cardboard VR device, VirtualSpeech VR application, learning logs via Google Docs, surveys via SurveyMonkey, one-to-one interviews, and the researcher's fieldnotes.

E. VirtualSpeech

The study employed a VR program available for Google Cardboard called VirtualSpeech. VirtualSpeech is a VR mobile application that allows users to upload their PowerPoint presentations and then practice their delivery in a virtual reality environment (VRE) that includes a virtual audience. The audience does not interact with the user, nor do they provide feedback, but the application measures the talking time of its users and the extent of their eye contact with the virtual audience.

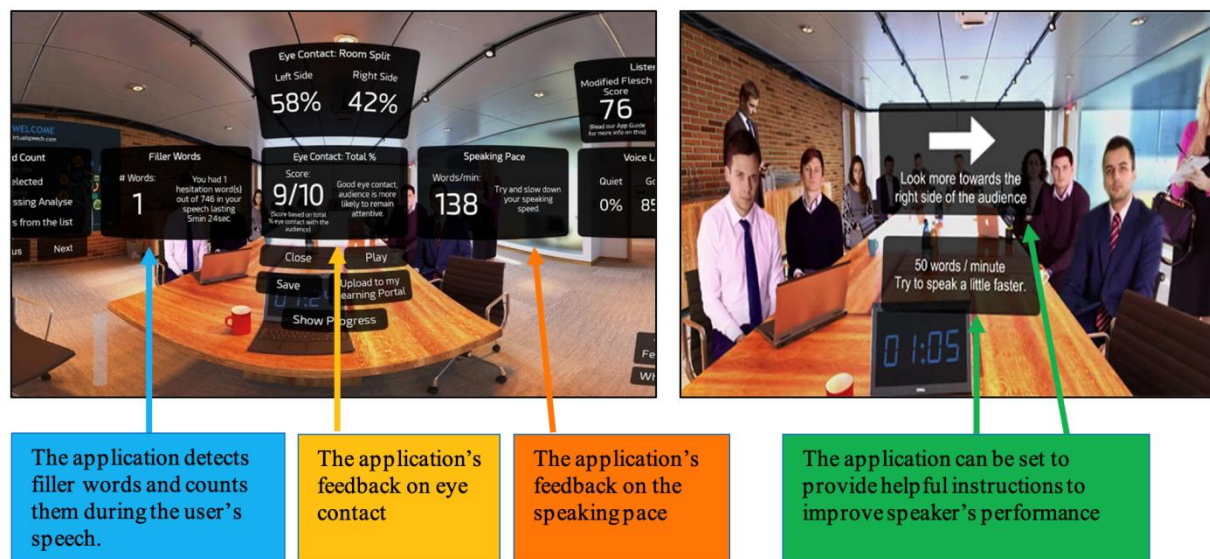


Figure 1: Screenshots from the virtual environment of VirtualSpeech with examples of its feedback

F. Learning Logs

The main aim of data collected from learning logs was to obtain students' perceptions of VirtualSpeech while preparing for oral presentations. The learning logs consisted of four open-ended questions and were privately shared with the student participants before the midterm presentation via Google Docs. The learning logs included prompts that encouraged students to write about their initial user experience of VirtualSpeech honestly. The following table consists of the learning log prompts:

TABLE I
LEARNING PROMPTS

First question	In VirtualSpeech, how many different environments can you select from the menu to practice speaking?
Second question	In all of the different environments of VirtualSpeech, what are the people in the audience doing while you are speaking?
Third question	What was easy or difficult in using VirtualSpeech?
Fourth question	What did you like or dislike about VirtualSpeech?

Additionally, a vital purpose of the learning logs was to distinguish the level of engagement of the student participants. A student's answers to the first two questions showcased if he/she had used VirtualSpeech and if he/she was writing genuine and credible responses for the study. Furthermore, the learning logs were utilized to answer the second research question; this is because the learning logs captured students' first impressions of using VirtualSpeech as a preparation tool for oral presentations.

G. Surveys

The surveys were retrospective, and they focused on eliciting opinions about the effectiveness of VirtualSpeech in oral presentation preparation. Two types of surveys were employed in this case study. The first type is student surveys, and the second type is an instructor survey. The student surveys (see Appendix A) were distributed after the midterm presentation, while the instructor survey (see Appendix B) was distributed at the end of the semester. Both surveys were distributed through SurveyMonkey and included a mixture of close-ended and open-ended questions. The surveys served to answer all of the research questions via opinion responses from all of the participants.

H. Structured Interviews

Each student was interviewed after the last oral presentation. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed at the start of data analysis. The interview questions were scripted (see Appendix C), and certain questions from the learning logs and student surveys were repeated in the interviews. This is because the interview questions seek to find consistency in the students' answers in learning logs, surveys, and interviews. In addition, a significant purpose of the interviews is investigating the possibility that the student's progress in delivering oral presentations might be ascribed to tools other than VirtualSpeech. For instance, the fifth question of the interview, "Do you feel that you are now able to perform better in future presentations? Why?" is designed to elicit responses about all the methods and tools that helped the students without mentioning VirtualSpeech.

I. Fieldnotes

The researcher had attended the midterm and final presentations and wrote observations during the presentations. The researcher mainly focused on noting the emotional state of the presenters. The notes were built on the researcher's perception of how each student felt (e.g., calm, nervous) during his/her presentation. Moreover, these observations were used to contrast the students' answers on the surveys and interviews about their affect during the presentation.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The data gathered from the four qualitative methods were analyzed to assess the effectiveness of VirtualSpeech in promoting positive learning outcomes and alleviating PSA. The analysis focused on the participants' attitudes toward VR technology. The following figure demonstrates a timeline for the data collection and analysis of this research.

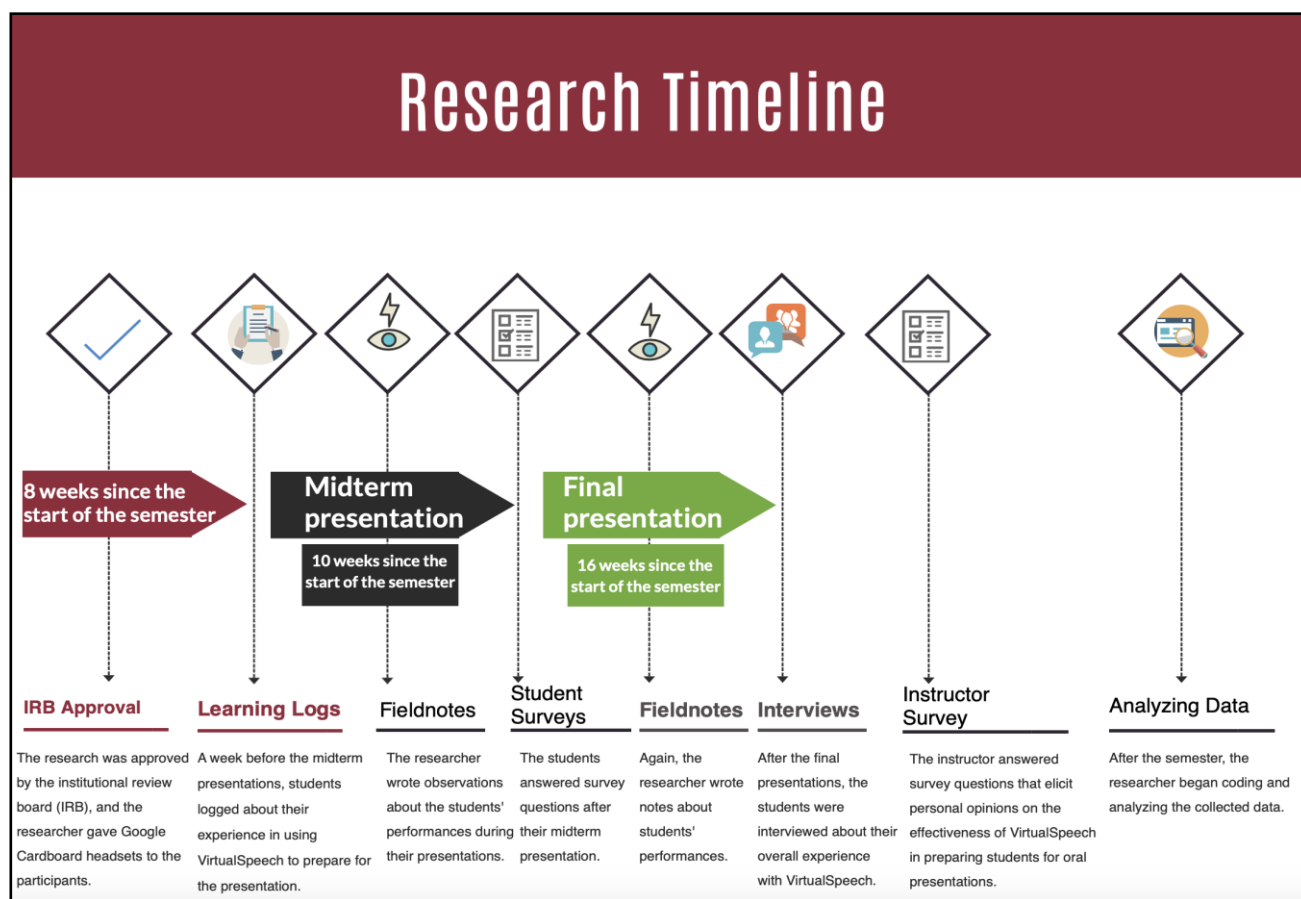


Figure 2: Research methodology timeline

A. Learning Logs

One of the main purposes of the learning logs was filtering genuine responders from non-genuine responders. Two students did not provide suitable answers to all the prompts of the learning log, as they provided incorrect and irrelevant answers. The researcher met the two students to discuss their answers because he had thought they misunderstood the prompts and found them to be vague. However, the researcher discovered that they lost their interest in participating in the study; consequently, there was a mutual understanding and agreement that they would withdraw their participation

from the study. While reading the students' answers in the learning logs, the researcher created a table of two columns for positive and negative comments, and each column contained quotes from multiple participants.

B. Surveys

For student and instructor surveys, the researcher gathered data from open-ended questions in a non-linear pattern, as the researcher followed a *grounded theory* which is an approach described by Dey (2004) as a flexible data-analysis method without limiting guidelines. The grounded theory allows the researcher to have a theory as an outcome after data analysis (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012). Regarding closed-ended questions for student surveys, the researcher analyzed the responses by observing graphs generated from SurveyMonkey, and the researcher combined multiple graphs to create one comprehensive graph via Microsoft Excel. As for open-ended questions for student surveys, the researcher observed the students' written responses and highlighted keywords. Regarding the instructor's survey, the researcher analyzed responses for open- and closed-ended questions by identifying keywords.

C. Structured Interviews

The researcher included questions that were repeated from learning logs and surveys to test for consistency. The researcher grouped the 13 interview questions into two main sections. Questions 1-6 are about students' overall experience with oral presentations before and after enrolling in ENG 106, and questions 7-13 are about students' experience with VirtualSpeech in preparation for oral presentations. After transcribing the interviews, the researcher read the responses of each participant and identified keywords. Based on keywords, the researcher generated categories within the two main sections of the interviews (questions 1-6 and 7-13). Merriam (2009) named this method in data analysis as *category construction* for finding themes and patterns.

D. Fieldnotes

The fieldnotes mainly contained the researcher's personal observations of students' affect during the presentation and frequency of eye contact with the audience. The researcher color-coded specific words that refer to emotions and eye contact. The analyzed data from fieldnotes were utilized to contrast students' answers in the interview and surveys regarding their performance and affect in oral presentations.

V. RESULTS

A. Learning Logs

The learning logs highlighted accessibility issues with VirtualSpeech. Some respondents were unable to perform basic functions that had been covered in the demonstration of the application and the study, while another student mentioned eye strain and dizziness from prolonged use. Overall, opinions toward the application were similarly mixed, with specific pieces of negative feedback, including the relatively small set of features and the lack of interactivity with other users (as well as with the virtual audience).

B. Student Survey

The student survey showed results for the following three aspects: 1- Students' emotions during the midterm presentation. 2- Students' speaking difficulties in delivering presentations. 3- The possible ways that VirtualSpeech helped the students in overcoming their difficulties. Regarding students' emotions during the midterm presentation, their responses were combined to produce the following figure. Fig. 3 indicates that all students, with the exception of one student (P3), were feeling "nervous" at the start of the presentation and felt "relaxed" as they progressed through the presentation.

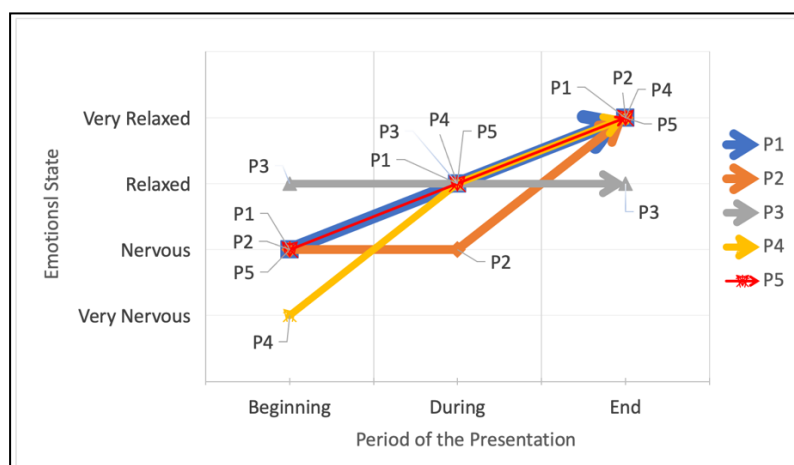


Figure 3: Students' perceptions of their emotional state at different times of their midterm presentations

For the students' self-reported difficulties in delivering presentations, the students' answers were combined to produce the following table that indicates the type of difficulty and the number of students who reported having it.

TABLE II
STUDENTS' SELF-REPORTED DIFFICULTIES IN ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Type of difficulty	Number of students who have it
Lack of confidence	2 out of 5
Lack of fluency	5 out of 5
Lack of vocabulary	1 out of 5
*Other difficulties	2 out of 5
*The other difficulties: P1 said: "Not enough time" P2 said: "Eye contact"	

Regarding the helpfulness of VirtualSpeech in combating the difficulties, all of the students wrote positive comments about VirtualSpeech for the tenth question, "If VirtualSpeech had helped you then write how, and if it did not help you then also write how." However, only P1, P3, and P4 elaborated more on the benefits of VirtualSpeech. P1 and P4 expressed that VirtualSpeech helped them in gaining more confidence while presenting. Moreover, P3 said about VirtualSpeech that, "It makes us pay more attention to people which I like." This comment by P3 can relate to the difficulty of "eye contact."

C. Instructor Survey

The instructor thought that "lack of fluency" and "lack of vocabulary" were the most prominent difficulties that his students faced. Moreover, the instructor stated that the students' confidence in presenting had increased between the midterm and final presentation. However, the instructor said that this improvement could not certainly be attributed to VirtualSpeech, as the students had also received continuous training in delivering presentations. In addition, the instructor stated that VirtualSpeech needs to provide more types of specific feedback and include a feature that would allow instructors to monitor their students' progress in using the application.

D. Structured Interviews

The responses from the interviews showed results in students' opinions on the benefit of VirtualSpeech in reducing speaking anxiety and specific ways to improve the features of the application. All of the students, with the exception of P5, agreed that VirtualSpeech helped them in feeling less nervous during presentations. P2 and P3 elaborated more on this aspect by both saying that VirtualSpeech provides safe-fail virtual environments that simulate speaking in front of real people. However, P5 did not think that VirtualSpeech has a significant effect in reducing speaking anxiety because he thought that extensive practice for an upcoming presentation with or without VirtualSpeech would have the same effect in reducing the feeling of nervousness during a presentation. It is worthy to note that the students stated other components that significantly helped them in feeling less nervous for presentations, such as practicing for the presentation using their laptops, recording their presentation practice via a voice recorder application on their smartphones, and following notes given by the instructor and their peers. All of the students, with the exception of P3, provided suggestions to improve VirtualSpeech. P1 suggested that the program's developers need to create ways to remove the dizzy feeling she experienced when using it. P2 wanted more instructions inside the application that would increase its accessibility and effectiveness. P4 recommended that VirtualSpeech should have motion detection because he wanted the ability to move around during the presentation virtually. P5 thought that VirtualSpeech should not be limited to presentations, as he thought that the application should have more speaking activities such as virtual conversations with other users via the program's online connectivity.

E. Fieldnotes

The researcher's fieldnotes showed a significant degree of correlation between what the researcher had observed during students' presentations and what the students mentioned in their surveys and interviews about their levels of confidence during presentations. The researcher noted that all students, with the exception of P3, were nervous at the beginning of their presentations and became more relaxed towards the end of their presentations. Moreover, the researcher noted that students had improved in different aspects between the midterm and final presentation. For instance, in the final presentation, all of the students enhanced their presentation organization, and they improved their eye contact with the audience as they had gained more confidence in speaking towards the end of the course.

VI. DISCUSSION

The results can be summarized in the following three aspects: (1) All of the participants saw a benefit for VirtualSpeech in reducing public speaking anxiety (PSA). (2) The user experience of the application varied among different students. This is because some students did not report any issues with VirtualSpeech, while other students reported difficulties in using the application. (3) Most of the participants provided suggestions that aim to enhance the user experience of VirtualSpeech and make it more beneficial in training to deliver presentations.

A. *The Effects of VR Practice on Delivering Oral Presentations*

Between the midterm and final presentation, the results showed that students had decreased levels of nervousness; however, these positive results cannot be entirely attributed to VirtualSpeech. This is because students had received helpful feedback from fellow peers and their instructor. Still, the results included students' attribution to VirtualSpeech as one of the methods that improved their speaking confidence. Moreover, the most common feature that the students mentioned is the realistic classroom environment and the virtual audiences that made the students feel as if they were presenting in a real academic setting. Moreover, P2 stated that VirtualSpeech gave him a safe environment that allowed him to practice his presentations without feeling embarrassed in making mistakes. This particular finding supports claims made by researchers such as Ruggiero (2013) that virtual environments are fail-safe environments that encourage students to practice their target language without the fear of embarrassment when making language mistakes. Additionally, based on the difficulties chart (see Table II) and the interview data, it could be stated that all of the students attributed VirtualSpeech to overcoming at least one difficulty from the chart of presentation difficulties. P3, for instance, attributed his progress in pronunciation to the time spent practicing with VirtualSpeech, highlighting the recording function as particularly useful. These results suggest that the VR environment is maybe specifically helpful in making progress on issues of fluency and pronunciation. Moreover, P2 and P3 mentioned VirtualSpeech in relation to the "Eye contact" difficulty, and P3 said in the interview that he liked that VirtualSpeech measures eye contact level, as he thought that this feature is helpful in improving eye contact with real-life audiences.

B. *Variability in Student Experiences of VR*

Not all of the students had the same user experience with VirtualSpeech, as all of them experienced different negative and positive aspects of the program. As mentioned in the results, P5 saw the least benefit in using VirtualSpeech to improve speaking confidence. One of the possible reasons that explain P5's experience can be established from the timeline of the study (see Fig. 2), which shows that students had only two weeks to utilize VirtualSpeech for their midterm presentation. Thus, P5 may not have been able to devote adequate time to VirtualSpeech from the beginning of the study. P4 had a much different experience than P5, as P4 expressed that VirtualSpeech was a useful tool in increasing speaking confidence due to the program's focus on eye contact practice with virtual audiences. It is worthy to note that P4 had the highest levels of nervousness during his midterm presentation (see Fig. 3). This result matches the results of studies that found that virtual environments are most effective for users who possess high levels of anxiety. For example, Stupar-Rutenfrans et al. (2017) reported that Speech Trainer, which is a software application similar to VirtualSpeech, was most effective in reducing speaking anxiety for participants who suffered high levels of anxiety. In addition, the students' user experience differed in terms of encountered issues in using all of the features of VirtualSpeech. P3 expressed his use of the program's presentation recording feature without any issues or confusion; however, P2 and P5 experienced difficulties in fully utilizing the program's features. For instance, P2 did not identify the method of recording his presentation, and P5 was confused about the process of uploading presentations into the program. These difficulties may have been linked to the training provided at the beginning of the study, as retrospective interviews suggested that the training—which introduced the headsets and provided information on YouTube tutorials—did not go into sufficient depth in discussing key procedures, including recording and uploading presentations. Additionally, the study brought to light a negative user experience that might pose a potential challenge for future work in VR, which is nausea and eye discomfort that some participants can feel when using the headsets for extended periods of time. Only one participant, P1, mentioned these problems in this study, but they are common among VRET studies, such as Raghav et al. (2016) study on VR use to combat the anxiety and fear of dentists. One of the best ways to lessen these negative aspects is thorough and rigorous training on mitigation protocols, such as taking a frequent fifteen-minute break for every 30 minutes spent using the headset ("Virtual Reality Health & Safety Usage Guide," n.d.).

C. *Implications for the Classroom*

The results demonstrate that instructors may recommend VR tools such as VirtualSpeech to support their students in practicing specific presentation skills, such as making and maintain eye contact with audiences. Moreover, in regard to public speaking anxiety (PSA), students who are especially anxious or nervous about presenting can and should absolutely be encouraged to use VR to practice. This is because VR allows students to practice delivering oral presentations in realistic and fail-safe environments, which is proven by researchers such as Stupar-Rutenfrans et al. (2017).

D. *Implications for the Developers of VirtualSpeech*

The students stated that the program should provide cues that improve the user's performance; for instance, VirtualSpeech should show indicators that constantly remind the user to keep eye contact with the virtual audiences and not focus on a single direction. This suggestion can directly help improve a user's eye contact level while delivering a presentation, rather than only learning about the statistical data regarding a user's eye contact at the end of his/her talk. Additionally, both the instructor and the students mentioned that VirtualSpeech lacked interaction and lacked a feature that allows the teacher to check on his/her students' performances. Regarding the lack of interaction between the user and the virtual audiences, this is based on the limited technological resources of the Google Cardboard VR headset. A

virtual audience that can comprehend the content of the user's presentation and has the ability to give specific feedback on it might be possible; however, this could be achieved with the advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) that would be programmed for the virtual audiences. Moreover, there is another possible method that allows users to receive interaction from the virtual audiences without AI, which is adding a feature that allows other users to join the presentation and interact with the presenter. This feature would require online connectivity and would also be incredibly beneficial for the instructor to view and evaluate his/her students while using VirtualSpeech.

E. Limitations

Although the research is a case study, the timeline of the case study was limited and did not allow for further data collection, especially with the instructor. In addition, the main limitation of the study was the curriculum of the course (ENG 106 –Academic Oral Communication Skills). This is because the primary objective of the course was to generally develop students' speaking skills via listening activities, discussions, and two presentations. Consequently, the study included a limited number of presentations that were observed and analyzed.

F. Directions of Further Research

A key recommendation is to conduct the study in a course dedicated to presentation skills, as the researchers would have more extensive data to validate the use of VR applications such as VirtualSpeech for participants who struggle in delivering oral presentations. Moreover, another recommendation is to adopt a longer timeline with longer periods allocated to increasing participants' familiarization with all of the available features of the VR software, as participants who are more comfortable with the VR tool and its capabilities will better be able to leverage it to augment their learning. Lastly, it would be incredibly advantageous for researchers to conduct this study with a larger group sample, and they should collaborate with the instructor to design a presentation rubric that evaluates students' progress in overcoming difficulties, such as the ones mentioned in Table II, and this rubric would also assess skills that software applications such as VirtualSpeech claim to develop.

VII. CONCLUSION

The present study explored the use of the VirtualSpeech VR mobile application for practicing public speaking in a college-level ELL course. The experiences of student participants were collected through one-on-one structured interviews, surveys, and learning logs, complemented by fieldnotes. Questions and prompts focused on challenges encountered with the software, positive effects on anxiety or nervousness and vocabulary, fluency, and other aspects of speech performance, and on general attitudes toward the VR platform.

The results were encouraging with respect to the future of VR as a means of helping students cope with PSA and other barriers to language learning. All participants reported that the use of a virtual practice space in addition to at-home and in-class learning and practice had an overall positive effect. Most said that it helped with feelings of nervousness; most said that it helped them in feeling more confident. Some participants' experiences raised the possibility, which is supported by the literature, that those whose PSA is particularly acute may benefit from the "safe" practice space created by VR more than their less-anxious peers. In addition, while the details varied, all of the students agreed that the virtual practice had also helped them overcome at least one significant barrier to delivering their oral presentations successfully. There were a number of minor difficulties in the implementation and use of the platform; however, these would likely be easily remedied by more in-depth training, longer periods for familiarization, and more thorough incorporation of the VRE into classroom activities and homework assignments.

Participants also had a number of detailed and specific suggestions for improvements that might be made to the virtual space in order to better facilitate language learning. Social features were mentioned most often, including sharing of recorded presentations, tools for giving feedback and comments, and general communication options. Some students also felt that a more immersive and interactive virtual environment would be more realistic and more effective, although the suggestions offered might be beyond the capabilities of the Google Cardboard VR setup.

These results point toward a need for meaningful additional research. Future work should experiment with other more fully-featured VR platforms and technologies, and it should be administered in contexts where VR can become a more central part of the curriculum. The potential gains are significant: many students suffer from some form of anxiety related to public speaking or even just speaking up at all in foreign language classes. Given the global reach and significance of English as a second language, a low-cost and accessible software tool that allows students to confront PSA safely and comfortably has the potential to be a game-changer in language education.

APPENDIX A. TEMPLATE OF THE STUDENT SURVEY

*** 1. What is your gender?**☐ Female☐ Male☐ And what is your age?*** 2. How much time did you spend in preparation for the presentation?**☐ Less than 1 hour☐ 1-2 hours☐ 3 hours or more*** 3. How did you feel at the beginning moments of your presentation?**☐ Very Nervous☐ Nervous☐ Relaxed☐ Very Relaxed☐ Other (please specify)*** 4. How did you feel during your presentation?**☐ Very Nervous☐ Nervous☐ Relaxed☐ Very Relaxed☐ Other (please specify)*** 5. How did you feel at the end of your presentation?**☐ Very Nervous☐ Nervous☐ Relaxed☐ Very Relaxed☐ Other (please specify)

* 6. How would you rate the performance of your presentation?

☐ Very Bad

☐ Good

☐ Bad

☐ Very Good

☐ Mediocre

☐ Other (please specify)

* 7. Did you encounter any difficulties while doing the presentation?

☐ Yes

☐ No (Skip the next question)

8. What might have been a difficulty that you have faced during your presentation? (check all boxes that apply)

☐ Lack of confidence (ie. shyness, facing anxiety and fear when speaking)

☐ Lack of fluency (fluency is the ability to speak the language with complete ease and with complete accuracy, which also means speaking the language without making mistakes in pronunciation)

☐ Lack of vocabulary knowledge

☐ Other difficulties (please specify)

* 9. Has VirtualSpeech helped you in preparing for your presentation?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 10. If VirtualSpeech had helped you then write how, and if it did not help you then also write how:

APPENDIX B. TEMPLATE OF THE INSTRUCTOR SURVEY

* 1. From your observations, what are the difficulties that students face in their presentations? (Check all that applies)

- ☐ Lack of confidence (ie. shyness, facing anxiety and fear when speaking)
- ☐ Lack of fluency (fluency is the ability to speak the language with complete ease and with complete accuracy, which also means speaking the language without making mistakes in pronunciation)
- ☐ Lack of vocabulary knowledge
- ☐ Other (please specify)

* 2. How helpful do you think VirtualSpeech is in preparing students for their presentations?

- ☐ Extremely helpful ☐ Not so helpful
- ☐ Very helpful ☐ Not at all helpful
- ☐ Somewhat helpful

* 3. What are the reasons for your answer to the previous question (helpfulness of VR)

* 4. Would you recommend using VirtualSpeech for future students?

* 5. Do you think VirtualSpeech can be improved for students practicing upcoming presentations?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes (please specify your opinion on improvements of this technology)

6. Please, use the space below if you would like to express additional comments or judgments regarding the topic of VR in preparing students for oral presentations.

APPENDIX C. SCRIPTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

- Q1- How did you feel during your last presentations?
 Q2- Do you think you have done better at the final presentation than any of the previous presentations?
 Q3- How did you prepare for presentations before you took ENG 106?
 Q4- Did you like doing presentations before you took this class? Why?
 Q5- Do you feel that you are now able to perform better in future presentations? Why?
 Q6- Would you change anything about your performance in the last presentation?
 Q7- Were you aware of virtual reality headsets before I provided you with a Google Cardboard VR headset?
 Q8- What did you think of VirtualSpeech when you first started using it?
 Q9- What do you think of VirtualSpeech now?
 Q10- Has VirtualSpeech helped you in feeling less nervous in doing presentations? Explain if it did or didn't.
 Q11- Did you use other tools than VirtualSpeech in preparing for your presentations? What are they?
 Q12- Would you recommend other students to use VirtualSpeech in preparation for doing presentations? If yes or no, why?
 Q13- What do you think should be added to VirtualSpeech to improve it for you and for other students?

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ELT Online Teachers' Professional Development During the Covid-19 Pandemic Outbreak: Perceptions, Implications and Adaptations

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Abstract—As lockdown restrictions were implemented in most countries around the world with the subsequent transition to full-mode online teaching and learning, English language teachers (ELTs) in particular, had to adapt and adopt new teaching strategies. These unexpected changes to the medium or mode of teaching necessitated the provision of efficacious and coherent professional development (PD) training in order to smoothly navigate the transition from full-time (or semi full-time) onsite teaching and learning to full-mode online teaching. This research study, based on sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design, is aimed at exploring the availability and provision of ELT PD opportunities at English Language Institutes (ELIs)/English Language Centers (ELCs), at five major universities in Saudi Arabia and the perception of the ELT teachers on its coherence and adequacy. A total of 307 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) male and female teachers participated in a custom designed 20-item questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale, as well as ten EFL teachers (6 female and 4 male) taking part in 40-minute semi-structured interviews, to explore their perception and opinions of online PD opportunities. Analysis of results of the gathered data indicated that the majority of the teachers felt that there were adequate online PD opportunities while the structures of these opportunities sufficiently addressed most of their needs. However, some teachers voiced concerns regarding the correlation between contextual, full-mode online teaching and the online PD sessions provided. Implications and recommendations for stake holders as well as for future research are given at the end of this study.

Index Terms—Covid-19, ELT, online teacher professional development, Saudi Arabia

I. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown and social-distancing measures saw a mandatory shifting of the teaching and learning processes at all levels of education from full time onsite teaching and learning to full time online teaching, compelling teachers to adapt to this new full-mode online environment. This global pandemic has urged educational organizations across the world to introduce online efficacious and coherent teaching and learning approaches (Khatser et al., 2021). As teachers in general and English language teachers, (ELTs) in particular, faced these new challenges, new pedagogical approaches, that are congruent to a full-time online teaching mode, had to be adopted. These challenges were not new. Long before the Covid-19 outbreak, the integration of digital technologies into the teaching and learning process had been proposed in different forms and shapes as an alternative to traditional educational settings (Al-Abdullatif & Gameil, 2021). In order to implement these approaches for learners, teachers required input forming a newly laid solid foundation upon which pedagogical proficiency in the (online) second language (L2) classroom could be achieved via continuous opportunities for development and learning through effective teacher professional development (Chen & McCray, 2012).

The sudden transition from the status-quo of an onsite teaching and learning mode to a full online L2 teaching and learning mode obliged teachers to implement completely new ELT methods and pedagogies, therefore calling for sustainable and coherent teacher professional development (Paesani, 2020). Thus, English L2 teachers, especially EFL teachers, at the onset of the mandatory lockdown measures imposed by governments worldwide, required significant support and guidance through opportunities to attend online continuous professional development (CPD) and teachers' continuing professional development (TCPD) sessions so as to address their needs and develop their online teaching skills (Arifani et al., 2019; Boruah, 2018).

The administrative and pedagogical challenges which EFL teachers face during a transition to full-mode online teaching are considerable and thus, CPD and TCPD which are performance-driven and (underpinned by) a standards-based curriculum are essential in order to facilitate online teaching and learning effectively (Sato & Chen, 2019). Insights into how best to integrate effective online EFL pedagogical tools which can be offered by initiatives involving CPD and TCPD, are best drawn from action research and extensive research studies (Greene & Jones, 2020). However, "their emphasis is usually limited to affordances and constraints of different technological tools with little or no examination of the complexity of teacher knowledge and how macrostructures shape teacher practices in a language classroom" (Greene & Jones, 2020, p. 113). Furthermore, a thorough search of academic literature revealed no relevant

study that has been conducted in the Saudi context which addresses the needs of the EFL teachers for structural and effective online teaching practices via CPD or TCPD. Therefore, this study will attempt to begin addressing such issues and also reflect upon the perceptions of the EFL teachers in the Saudi context on the opportunities of CPD and TCPD afforded to them by their institutions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

As a result of the Covid-19 virus pandemic outbreak and the subsequent lockdown and social distancing restrictions implemented by most governments around the world, the majority of global education systems from elementary to tertiary levels, swiftly entered an unprecedented new era of full-mode online teaching and learning (Firmansyah et al., 2021). The heavy impact of such a transition and the resulting implication for teaching and learning was the need of sound online teaching and learning pedagogies which required a monitoring of online teaching performances informing provision of professional support via online CPD and TCPD (Sato & Chen, 2019; Truong & Murray, 2019). In order for any CPD or TCPD to be fruitful and efficacious, it needs to address the pivotal point of how teachers acquire the best experiences in teaching English (L2) and subsequently transform that knowledge into active pedagogical practices which are conducive to students' actual learning (Beavers, 2009). This was particularly pressing because of the rapid transformation from complete onsite to complete online teaching and learning meant that English L2 teachers in general and EFL teachers in particular, needed to learn as well as adopt new approaches which were in harmony with online environments. Thus, CPD and TCPD are at the core of such a transformation to accommodate the needs of the teachers and help ameliorate any challenging situations which some teachers may have experienced during this move to full-mode online teaching and learning.

The transformative learning theory is perceived by many researchers as the cornerstone of PD for teachers since PD/CPD/TCPD are all part of what is known as adult learning (Beavers, 2009; De Oliveira, 2019). Transformative learning is a special learning process characterized by deep, experiential learning experiences or even through several life events which for most of the teachers, can occur in the classroom (DeAngelis, 2021). Some researchers assert that for transformative learning to occur, teachers must experience a type of disorienting dilemma which will allow the teacher to consciously generate critical exploration of their teaching approaches, values, assumptions and beliefs which are all part of the process the teachers transform those elements on the convictional, psychological or behavioral levels (Christie et al., 2015). Thus, teachers can critically reflect upon their careers' values, teaching approaches, assumptions and beliefs and subsequently become more effective analysts helping them re-evaluate their classroom experiences by reformulating the meaning of such experiences (Behroozi & Osam, 2021). Out of all the disciplines in education, English language (L2) teachers experience the most occurrences of disorienting-related dilemmas during their teaching practice in the classroom (Borg, 2011).

The lockdown restrictions and the implementation of full-mode online delivery can very much be considered a disorienting dilemma for EFL teachers. The situation brought about a critical re-evaluation of teachers' own teaching practices and furthermore, a consolidation of their experience and teaching knowledge via CPD and TCPD so as to handle the new paradigm shift from onsite to online.

There has been a plethora of research studies conducted on PD, CPD and TCPD over the past three decades, the bulk of those studies focused on understanding the structures and principles of CPD and TCPD to facilitate and implement the outcomes of any new curricula or guidelines to be followed by the teachers. However, despite the abundance of research studies on the main pillars of TCPDs and their programs' design principles, there has been a very limited amount of research that focuses on the utilization of specific technologies as well as quality online professional development opportunities for teachers and how best to deliver recommended pedagogies to English L2 learners via online platforms proficiently that extends beyond the knowledge of mere online teaching delivery methods, but rather to a whole spectrum of elements needed in an online teaching environment such as ensuring students' engagement, authenticity of assessment and exam results as well as motivation to master English L2 four skills in a successful manner (Powell & Bodur, 2019). As such, it is pressing that the ELT field address such crucial issues to support EFL teachers in their online teaching via a designated and specified online teacher professional development (OTPD) program (Lay et al., 2020). Online teacher professional development (OTPD) programs are defined as: "OTPD refers to courses, workshops, or learning modules that are delivered in an online format for teacher PD" (Powell & Bodur, 2019, p. 21).

Furthermore, and prior to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, there seems to have been some discrepancies which the teachers perceived as important features missing from certain TCPD programs where there seems to be an educational gap between the actual contents of such pre-designed TCPD programs and the local periphery context which English is taught as a second language (ESL) or as foreign language (EFL). The latter requires the following to be taken into consideration; the overall specific context in which such teaching materials and resources along with their corresponding curriculum, teaching strategies, and techniques are produced (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

For the sake of addressing these gaps in the literature, this study aims to provide answers to the following three research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of the EFL teachers on the ELT online teacher professional development?

2. How did the teachers view OTPD opportunities in helping them adapt to the new realm of full mode online ELT?
3. What are the most perceived beneficial elements which EFL teachers identified in their OTPD sessions?

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Research Design

This study aims to gather the perceptions of the EFL teachers on OTPD programs which they either had already attended or planned to attend and what benefits they felt it offered or could offer them. As such, this study followed an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, where the initial phase of the quantitative data collection and analysis via the questionnaire tool was later consolidated with qualitative data collection and analysis from semi-structured interviews (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2016). Such an approach is advantageous as it will serve to substantiate the results of the initial quantitative data collection and analysis phase ultimately bringing clarity to the quantitative results or improving comprehension of analysis results where some unexpected significant findings (or even insignificant findings) are noted or of results that are considered to be outliers (Clark & Ivankova, 2015).

B. Participants

The selected participants were Saudi and non-Saudi male and female EFL teachers at five major Saudi universities. There was a total of 307 participants in the questionnaire phase and 10 teachers in the semi structured interviews. All participants granted their consent and agreement to take part in the research.

C. Data Collection and Procedure

The study utilized two data collection tools. The quantitative data collection tool was a custom designed 20-item questionnaire on the Likert scale and the qualitative data was gathered via semi-structured interviews. As social distancing and lockdown were announced and implemented in most countries worldwide, the online medium was the best available method of collecting data. The researcher utilized Google Forms in the quantitative phase and the Zoom® platform for the qualitative data phase. The research study spanned one academic semester, from September 2020 until December 2020.

D. Reliability and Validity of the Data Collection Tools

The reliability of the gathered quantitative data was evaluated via calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the psychometric properties of the questionnaire, where the generated internal consistency alpha value of 0.781, which is considered a good value regarding the reliability of the data collection tool instrument. With regards to the test of validity of the questionnaire instrument, two experts in ELT were consulted on the content validity of the instrument and they confirmed its validity as an effective data collection tool for the OTPD. Furthermore, the questionnaire instrument was piloted among 5 EFL teachers who did not report any issues with the instrument (their data was discarded after the pilot study ended). The five semi-structured interview questions were also piloted with two EFL teachers who gave full responses to the questions and did not report any ambiguity, nor did they request any clarification on the five questions. Furthermore, Guba's (1981) four aspects model of ensuring trustworthiness of the qualitative data: (a) truth value, (b) applicability, (c) consistency, and (d) neutrality; was comprehensively applied by the researcher, finding that the gathered qualitative data is compliant with these four aspects.

IV. RESULTS

A. Quantitative Data Analysis

Once all the quantitative data was collected via Google Forms, descriptive statistical analyses as well as frequency distribution of the data, as it relates to the answers to the research questions of this study, was carried out.

1. Demographics

The following breakdown of responses highlights the gathered demographics' data of the participating teachers:

TABLE 1
DEMOGRAPHICS

Q1. Gender		
Male	135	44%
Female	172	56%
Q2. Type of EFL Profession		
Teaching Assistant	14	5%
Instructor	171	56%
Lecturer	40	13%
Assistant Professor	47	15%
Associate Professor	35	11%
Other	0	0%

Q3. Years of EFL Teaching

0 – 5 Years	23	7%
6 – 10 Years	145	47%
11 – 15 Years	88	29%
16 – 20 Years	32	10%
21 – 25 Years	14	5%
26 – 30 Years	3	1%
>30 Years	2	1%

Q4. Teaching Area of KSA

Western Province	267	87%
Central Province	15	5%
Northern Province	7	2%
Eastern Province	8	3%
Southern Province	10	3%

Q5. Teaching Area of KSA

Beginner	117	38%
Elementary	71	23%
Pre-Intermediate	56	18%
Intermediate	43	14%
Advanced	20	7%

Q6. No. of Students in Online Classroom

0-15 students	61	20%
16 – 25 students	94	31%
26 – 35 students	127	41%
36 – 45 students	25	8%

Q7. Online Teaching Experience

Novice/Beginner	56	18%
Above average	179	58%
Expert level	72	23%

As can be seen from the above responses in table 1, there were 44% and 56% male and female participants respectively. The majority were English language instructors at 56% and most had 6-10 years of EFL teaching experience. Also, most of the participants were from the Western province at 87% and most of them stated that they taught beginner level at 38%. The majority of the teachers had 26-35 students in their classes at 41% and most of them stated that they are either above average or at expert level at a combined 81% based on the amount of experience in online teaching in their careers.

2. Part II (Status of TPD/CPD)

The following table highlights the responses of the teachers to the second construct (Status of TPD/CPD).

TABLE 2
STATUS OF TPD/CPD

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. The institute where I work has an established unit for PD/CPD/TCPD.	201 65%	58 19%	28 9%	13 4%	7 2%
9. The institute provided us with plenty of PD opportunities as well as CPD such as peer observation and assessment.	198 64%	62 20%	12 4%	24 8%	11 4%
10. Prior to Covid-19 pandemic, I have mostly attended PD/CPD sessions at our institute.	189 61%	89 29%	6 2%	14 5%	9 3%
11. Prior to Covid-19 pandemic, I attended many PD/CPD on best practices of online teaching.	36 12%	65 21%	52 17%	107 35%	47 15%
13. When full mode online teaching came into effect due to Covid-19 pandemic, I had full confidence on best practices of teaching online.	59 19%	43 14%	53 17%	94 31%	58 19%
14. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, there were many opportunities for OTPD at our institute.	87 28%	90 29%	48 16%	44 14%	38 13%
15. The majority of OTPD offered at our institute were tailored towards our full-mode online teaching.	45 15%	78 25%	49 16%	97 32%	38 12%

As can be seen from the table 2, the majority of the teachers responded with a combined agreement of an established TCPD unit at their place of work (84%). Similarly, the majority also responded with a combined agreement of the provision of ample TCPD opportunities (84%) and also, the majority of the teachers declared that prior to Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, they had attended PD events at their place of work with a combined agreement of 90%. However, nearly half of the participants stated that they did not attend many workshops on oTPD with a combined disagreement of 50%. Similarly, half of the teachers stated that they did not agree with the statement that they were ready and confident to teach online at a combined disagreement to the statement at 50%. Nonetheless, over half of the teachers stated that there were plenty of opportunities of OTPD at a combined agreement to the statement at 57%. There was equal share of opinions on whether the OTPD offered at the teachers' place of work was tailored towards their needs (or not) at a combined agreement of 40% compared to a combined disagreement of 44%. Results on question 12 (whether the teachers had taught online before Covid-19 pandemic outbreak or not), the majority of the teachers (59%) indicated that they had taught online prior to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak compared to 32% who had not and 9% who simply couldn't remember.

3. Part III (Satisfaction with OTPD)

The following table highlights the responses of the teachers to the third construct (Satisfaction with OTPD)

TABLE 3
SATISFACTION WITH OTPD

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16. I am satisfied with the OTPD opportunities offered by my institute.	204 66%	67 22%	18 6%	12 4%	6 2%
17. I had experienced some challenges and concerns about full-mode online teaching and the OTPD sessions and workshops helped overcome those challenges.	71 23%	99 32%	23 7%	90 30%	24 8%
18. The institute where I work offer OTPD with international experts in ELT from around the world.	188 61%	89 29%	7 2%	14 5%	9 3%
19. I prefer attending onsite, face-to-face CPD/TCPD sessions rather than OTPD sessions.	211 69%	44 14%	12 4%	27 9%	13 4%
20. During the Covid-19 pandemic, I had many opportunities to attend OTPD workshops and sessions both, at out institute and at other national and international seminars and conferences.	144 47%	56 18%	24 8%	60 20%	23 7%

As can be seen from the table 3, the majority of the teachers responded with a combined agreement of 88% to the statement that they were satisfied with the OTPD offered at their place of work. Also, the majority agreed that the OTPD helped overcome challenges and concerns the teachers had experienced with the full-mode online teaching at a combined agreement of 55%. Strikingly, the majority of the teachers stated that their institute offered OTPD at an international renowned level at a combined agreement of 90%. However, most of the teachers expressed their preference to attend on-site TCPD rather than OTPD at a combined agreement of preference to onsite TCPD of 83%. The majority of the teachers also responded with a combined agreement of 65% to the statement that they had many OTPD opportunities offered during the Covid-19 pandemic.

B. Qualitative Data Analysis

Following on from the quantitative data analysis stage, the consenting participants (6 female and 4 male teachers) were asked to participate in semi-structured interviews on secured scheduled Zoom® platform sessions. Once all ten interviews were completed, the audio from those interviews were transcribed verbatim and the relevant qualitative data was coded and thematically analyzed for the identifications of common emergent themes amongst the participants.

There were two major themes which the participant teachers collectively voiced their concerns and opinions on. The first major element is more of a consolidation to the findings in the quantitative data where all the teachers expressed their overall satisfaction with the OTPD and TCPD offered at their place of work.

The following is a statement from Participant A (female):

The institute have (sic) always cared for us and offered us plenty of opportunities to attend training workshops and seminars. Sometimes the institute will even bring renowned international trainer or expert (sic) in the field to deliver workshops and training.

Another participant, Participant B (male), stated:

In the past, it was tough finding the (sic) suitable time to attend training and workshops. However, the institute now offers the same workshop and professional development sessions at two different time slots so that some teachers do not lose such an opportunity if they were (sic) teaching. Sometimes we have experienced colleagues from our institute and also, we regularly have international speakers to give us professional development training.

However, the second emerging theme which the teachers expressed their concerns about, is the fact that the OTPD needs to address the specific needs of EFL teachers in the Saudi context via a collective pool of opinions from EFL teachers whose concerns could then inform the preparation of the OTPD sessions and workshops and therefore tailor the input to local needs.

The following is a statement from Participant C (female):

I attended few online professional development sessions at the institute. However, I wish there was (sic) an opportunity for us to select specific areas of concerns which I personally felt I needed more help in (sic) This way, the institute can ask the trainer or workshop presenter to tailor the online training session to our specific needs.

Another participant, Participant D (male), stated:

Sometimes the international speakers or the international professional development experts are not familiar with our Saudi context and thus, we need them to prepare more specifically to the context of our full-time online teaching. Our students may require specific attention in some areas which might be different to other EFL learners around the world.

V. DISCUSSION

As per the gathered data analysis from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, it can be clearly seen that the majority of the teachers understood the importance of OTPD workshops and sessions. They also acknowledged the convenience and comfort of having the opportunity to attend OTPD sessions at their workplace and felt that there were adequate opportunities at their places of work for TCPD and OTPD. Additionally, the majority of the participants acknowledged that such a provision is vital due to the fact that different modes of teaching and delivery require different approaches and pedagogies and this transformation to full mode online teaching and learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, was indeed a new area which was both unexpected but necessary. This is in line with what Lay et al. (2020) and Powell and Bodur (2019) who have markedly expressed in their research studies the importance of the provision of PD sessions and opportunities whenever a new situation calls for it.

Furthermore, the majority of teachers, by acknowledging the importance of CPD in general and OTPD in particular, illustrated their comprehension of the session aims: to facilitate their professional advancement as well as to address any challenges or concerns they might have from their teaching. The latter is in agreement with the conclusions of Arifani et al. (2019) and Boruah (2018). It is worth noting that teachers expressed their preferences to the onsite training and TCPD to the OTPD since they felt that they have more opportunities to engage with the teacher trainer and ultimately, voice their specific concerns and requests for advice and input on teaching issues personal to them during the PD sessions.

The data also indicated that while teachers expressed their satisfaction with most of the OTPDs provided by their institutions, some participants expressed their desire to be given the opportunity to select from a variety of sessions or even, be given the opportunity to send their own desired choice of OTPD sessions which they felt would reflect on their need for the full mode online teaching and learning. This may not mean that established PD units are not taking into consideration the specific needs of the teaching and learning context in which they operate, but rather that just as needs vary between teaching and learning contexts, the same occurs between individual teachers and their classes. In larger institutions, it may be logistically impossible to address all the needs of staff members or faculty in the time permitted, therefore the PD unit has a responsibility to address the needs which are most common and those which would most benefit learners' successful acquisition of a foreign or second language.

There are other concerns regarding PD in larger ELT operations; the large number of teachers often means that a percentage miss a live PD session (online or onsite) and therefore training videos, often edited from the live session are essential to ensure the PD input reaches all those it was intended for and exists for future reference and recruits. In order to make these training videos as effective and engaging as possible, larger institutes might consider employing instructional designers to help shift teacher training content to online formats, for example, content that has embedded questions to engage viewers, highlight main points and allow the institute to analyze the responses (learning analytics). The benefits of what one might call augmented training videos are illustrated by Powell and Bodur (2019) whose results included empirical evidence of six OTPD design and implementation features.

VI. CONCLUSION

While the majority of the participant teachers expressed their satisfaction with the OTPD opportunities provided by their institute, it has to be noted that teacher training cannot be of the "one size fits all" style of training, but rather, designated and specific workshops are needed to address the specific needs of the learners in their specific context. Furthermore, stakeholders and concerned decision makers need to select the best OTPD sessions that reflects positively on the needs of the students as well as the context in which teachers work. The new and sudden transformation from full-mode onsite teaching and learning to a complete full-mode online teaching and learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak and the subsequent lockdown measures, has indications for OTPD sessions which addresses the concerns of the EFL teachers in the Saudi context.

The pressing need to help EFL teachers cope with full mode online teaching cannot be overstated, however, it has to be mentioned that every teacher is different and while the platforms utilized in online teaching are the same for each institute, the experience of different teachers working with them can be quite different and the skills of working with personal computers (PCs), laptops, tablets and smart phones can be different from one teacher to the other. As such, OTPD need to accommodate for such differing skills of the teachers.

Furthermore, due to the imposition of social distancing, the production of online training videos, often edited versions of live online PD sessions, available to all teaching staff as well as written and illustrated instructions on websites can help teachers to remain fully informed of what is required and of the support on offer by their institutes and centers. In situations such as the one experienced around the world in the last 18 months, this would be advisable in smaller institutions but essential in larger scale operations. Such institutions may need a scalable and cost-effective solution to professional development and so although live training sessions are more popular amongst teachers than asynchronous videos with questions, the videos are more scalable and cheaper. Indeed, the quantity of quality PD material available online presently means that institutions may not need to create PD material but rather curate the most appropriate and helpful to their staff in their particular teaching and learning context. Curation offers solutions for vetting existing resources and creating new learning content to provide current, relevant information and meet the needs of different learning preferences (Cherrstrom & Boden, 2019).

VII. RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study can benefit from online collaboration with other researcher colleagues in other EFL contexts. Furthermore, a national query in the form of a more comprehensive questionnaire on OTPD can highlight other areas of concerns which the teachers may have as they deliver their classes on an online full-mode teaching. Further research on how best to curate existing online PD content is required. Also, research on the whole spectrum of elements needed in an online teaching environment mentioned earlier in the Literature Review, building on the findings of Xie et al. (2017) on teachers' online skill sets, for example, teachers' capacity for digital content evaluation may improve if they were guided by highly-qualified trainers through the evaluation process using best practices and procedures along with practical examples.

APPENDIX A. ELT ONLINE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC OUTBREAK: PERCEPTIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

Part I (Demographics):

1. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Type of EFL Profession:
☐ Teacher Assistant ☐ Instructor ☐ Lecturer ☐ Assistant Professor
☐ Associate Professor ☐ Other, please specify, _____.
3. Years in the EFL field:
☐ 0 – 5 Years ☐ 6 – 10 Years ☐ 11 – 15 Years
☐ 16 – 20 Years ☐ 21 – 25 Years ☐ 26 – 30 Years ☐ >30 Years
4. Which area of Saudi Arabia did you teach in:
☐ Western Province ☐ Central Province ☐ Northern Province
☐ Eastern Province ☐ Southern Province
5. Which level(s) are you assigned to teach online this semester?
☐ Beginner ☐ Elementary ☐ Pre-Intermediate ☐ Intermediate
☐ Advanced
6. How many students are you assigned to teach this semester?
☐ 0-15 students ☐ 16 – 25 students
☐ 26 – 35 students ☐ 36 – 45 students
7. How would you describe your expertise at teaching online?
☐ Novice/Beginner ☐ Above average ☐ Expert level

Part II (Status of TPD/CPD):

8. The institute where I work has an established unit for PD/CPD/TCPD
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ No opinion
☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
9. The institute provided us with plenty of PD opportunities as well as CPD such as peer observation and assessment
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ No opinion
☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
10. Prior to Covid-19 pandemic, I have mostly attended PD/CPD sessions at our institute.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ No opinion
☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
11. Prior to Covid-19 pandemic, I attended many PD/CPD on best practices of online teaching.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ No opinion
☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

12. I had taught online before Covid-19 pandemic outbreak.
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Cannot remember
13. When full mode online teaching came into effect due to Covid-19 pandemic, I had full confidence on best practices of teaching online
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ No opinion
☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
14. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, there were many opportunities for OTPD at our institute.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ No opinion
☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
15. The majority of OTPD offered at our institute were tailored towards our full-mode online teaching
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ No opinion
☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Part III (Satisfaction with OTPD):

16. I am satisfied with the OTPD opportunities offered by my institute.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ No opinion
☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
17. I had experienced some challenges concerns about fill-mode online teaching and the oTPD sessions and workshops helped ameliorate those challenges.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ No opinion
☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
18. The institute where I work offer OTPD with international experts in ELT from around the world.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ No opinion
☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
19. I prefer attending onsite, face-to-face CPD/TCPD sessions rather than oTPD sessions.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ No opinion
☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
20. During the Covid-19 pandemic, I had many opportunities to attend oTPD workshops and sessions both, at out institute and at other national and international seminars and conferences.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ No opinion
☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

APPENDIX B. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your experience with online teaching prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. How would you describe your experience of teaching with online full-mode process?
3. How would you describe the TCPD workshops offered before and after the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak?
4. How would you prefer to see OTPD offered as to address your concerns and worries in online full-mode teaching?

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Sociolinguistic Awareness of Spanish Speakers on the Mexican Border with Belize

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Abstract—The border society of Chetumal is studied in order to know how the speakers of this linguistic community conceive their ways of speaking Spanish in different situational contexts (home or work), before different people (employers, friends or subordinates) and with it get to check the degree of linguistic awareness they possess; that is, if the social boundaries present in their speech exist and are recognized as such by all speakers. This study is based on just over 100 questionnaires applied to the same number of Spanish-speakers born in Chetumal in 2019, who were registered according to the traditional sociolinguistic factors of age, sex, and socio-cultural level, the latter calculated basically on the individual's education index. The conclusions reflect the linguistic reality of Spanish speakers on the southern border of Mexico in which Caribbean and English elements are palpable in the lexical sector of the language.

Index Terms—chetumal, border, Belize, Spanish, sociolinguistic awareness

I. INTRODUCTION

The dialect complex of Spanish, already detected through the awareness of notable differences in regional or community languages, is not easy to determine historically. The history of culture - in which the social history of the language must necessarily be embedded - still keeps little-traveled nooks that must be studied in parallel with the language manifestations of those who have formed and structure the various linguistic communities¹ in the present.

In this dialect complex, contemporary dialectology and sociolinguistics cannot only establish boundaries between geolects and sociolects, but also verify this complex and real diatopic and diastratic configuration of a language state. In other words, it must present an analysis of linguistic phenomena not only rural - such as traditional dialectology - of a diatopic character, but also of the diastratic and diaphasic varieties - more unstable than the diatopic and diachronic ones - in which the linguistic variation contains a fortunate description that makes use of extralinguistic correlations and statistical sampling methods.

In this sense, a dialectology and a sociolinguistics must be considered that presents not only the phenomena - lexical, morphological, phonetic and syntactic - on maps, but also pays special attention to social and contextual variation and to the urban varieties in which standardized² and vernacular³ forms necessarily coexist.

The social background of the linguistic phenomenon is undeniable. Thus, today throughout the world, the structure of human communication cannot be studied by the scientific community as an abstract entity, but rather as a social interaction in various contextual situations. The word names and designates, and in doing so it inclines the speaker's attention to the thing it names, to the object, action, or life experience; However, the word also means, and at the precise moment of using it it brings to the memory of the speaker the components of these socially shared meanings (which are usually multiple) that give it a relevant meaning for the society that uses it (Lara, 2016, p. 213).

The well-known reflection of Vicente García de Diego (1946), who says that the language is a vast complexity of geographical dialects and an overlap of social dialects is extremely illuminating if we observe the versatility of any idiolect: that of the government employee, the university professor or the peddler who express their speech in different contexts: formal or informal, in different ways.

However, there should be no shortage of those who say that he expresses himself in the same way before an administrative authority as before his friends in a less formal situation; but this is no basis for defending the uniformity of his speech, but rather evidence of his lack of linguistic awareness. However, not all speakers think this way. It is clear to many - and they are the majority - the difference between "bad speaking" and "good saying", especially due to the lexical or phonetic manifestations of other speakers who are usually described as vulgar "bad spoken" or possessors of a great eloquence respectively.

¹ A linguistic community is understood as the group of individuals who use the same language (or geolect) at a given time, and allow them to communicate with each other

² A standardized form is that used in an accepted language that serves as a model for a relatively large community. In this sense, one of the functions of the standard language is to unite the speakers of different geolects in the same language and thus oppose them to those of other languages

³ Vernacular forms are non-normalized elements (not recognized by other communities) whose function is to serve as a means of expression in informal or family communicative situations, they are forms acquired in childhood, heteronomous social varieties that must be studied, as well as the standardized forms, in light of social groups and contextual situations.

Sociolinguistic consciousness refers to the knowledge that the speaker possesses about the organization of the entire sociolinguistic spectrum in which you have immersed yourself as a member of a certain speech community (García, 2019, p.17).

Now, how aware are these speakers of the variation of the speech of their countrymen and of themselves? If the linguistic variation is evident, what does this situation have to do with the social structures of a speech community?

In communication, the immediacy of dialogue flows because the speaker expresses the learning he has of his language, of the meaning that words have of their socially accepted use and of socially forbidden words, of what situational contexts impose on his speech and his own transit through popular, colloquial and cultured forms of the language even though he is not fully aware of all this. And this itself makes it safe from all questioning and from all wanting to see in it a user who sometimes makes mistakes and falls into the incorrectness because he commits faults to the Hispanic tradition by misnaming a verb, for example and saying *imprimido* by *impreso* or saying *hubieron* muchos invitados instead *hubo* muchos invitados.

We know that speakers are aware of a series of linguistic and sociolinguistic facts, because they know that in their community some linguistic uses are preferred over others according to the interests one has when speaking. This faculty of choice comes from a linguistic awareness, which is decisive when the phenomena of linguistic variation and linguistic change occur (Falcón and Mamani, 2017, p. 98).

II. THE OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is the analysis of Chetumal Spanish⁴ as it is conceived by the same speakers of the linguistic community, in order to be able to check the degree of linguistic awareness they possess; that is, if the social borders present in their speech exist and are recognized as such by all Chetumaleños.

The methodology used for the selection of the informants was based on the following aspects: the selection was random, the speaker had to meet certain requirements such as being a native speaker of the city or having lived in it 75% of his life, have parents from the city or the Yucatecan region, be over 18 years of age and live in a specific area of the city with a long population tradition.

This study is based on just over 100 questionnaires applied to the same number of Spanish-speakers born in Chetumal⁵, who were registered according to the traditional sociolinguistic factors of age⁶, sex⁷, and sociocultural level⁸, the latter calculated basically on the individual's education index⁹.

Three turn out to be the objectives broken down:

1. Analyze the general sociolinguistic awareness of Chetumaleños to establish relationships between ways of speaking and social structure.
2. Analyze the sociolinguistic norm or the habit of everyday speech as established by the respondents.
3. Analyze positive or negative attitudes towards the variants of local Spanish and their current and future influence.

Despite the fact that there is no effective method by which the degree of sociolinguistic awareness in the minds of speakers can be measured, there is no doubt in it that there are differences in the way people speak. And even less so in the researcher, who through a procedure that gives validity to the evaluation made by the speakers of the social aspects of the language, will objectively judge the linguistic variation studied by him.

Faced with this absence, a questionnaire that Hugo Kubarth from the University of Graz, Austria designed and applied to a hundred inhabitants of Buenos Aires in 1983 was adapted¹⁰. Its invoice is based on open questions, on

⁴ The case of Chetumal is unique because it was not properly the seat of Canaries only, but of many Bacalareans, Yucatecans and their children, mostly who, inheritors of the Mayan, Yucatecan and Canary forms, grew up or were born in British Honduras (now Belize) and who, invited to return to their homeland for Admiral Othón P. Blanco, they founded Payo Obispo (today Chetumal) in 1898, as their parents or themselves, as in the cases of the codfish Francisca López and the Valladolid Fernanda Briceño (my great-grandmother), left from Bacalar in 1858 due to the Mayan revolt against the whites (known as the Caste War) and they settled on English soil under the protection of the Royal Crown. (See Pérez, 2016). The nascent border city had, in 1904, a population made up of 248 inhabitants of which 205 were Spanish-speaking and of these 180 were Yucatecans or descendants of them (87.8%). In that small space of Mexican soil, the Yucatecan language took root along with the Canarian heritage without its users realizing it. It is worth mentioning that the Yucatecans and their descendants who decided not to return to Mexico continued to plant their linguistic forms in the south of the Hondo River in towns such as Orange Walk, Corozal, Sarteneja, San Román, San Esteban, Xaibé and others, or they continued to arrive to Chetumal for the next 5 decades. Currently immigration continues on a smaller scale legally and illegally. (For more details see Vallarta, 2001, 74 and annexed 2).

⁵ The questionnaires (100) were applied in 2019, but only those of 60 individuals were useful since several of them did not meet some of the essential requirements for this type of study (being born in the city of Chetumal parents or from the Yucatan peninsula or have a residence of 75% of their life in the city, live in a certain area of the city with a long population tradition); However, the sample is representative of the different sociolinguistic factors that were taken into account.

⁶ Young people: 18 to 30 years old: 30 respondents; mature: 31 to 50 years: 20 respondents; elderly: over 50 years: 10 respondents.

⁷ 32 women and 28 men turned out.

⁸ Lower class: up to primary: 24 informants; middle class: up to high school or short career: 18 informants; upper class: studies after high school: 18 informants.

⁹ Of course, there are other ways of calculating belonging to a certain social sector, such as the income of money in the family, the place of residence and the occupation. The income was not recorded but the occupation and place of residence were not. 17 professionals, 10 students, 11 housewives, 4 merchants and 18 people of various trades were surveyed: blacksmiths, policemen, secretaries, saleswomen, carpenters, watchmen, etc. Furthermore, the distribution of informants in popular, elegant and middle-class areas was more or less homogeneous: 35% in popular areas, 33% in middle-class areas, and 32% in elegant areas of the city.

¹⁰ This is found in "La lengua como juego social. Conciencia sociolingüística del porteño", Thesavrus, XLI, 1986, p. 187-210.

others in which the respondent is provided with options, and in some that - given their imprecision - they served a lot to collect attitudes of the speakers and reflections on the linguistic phenomenon in question.

III. QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire applied is as follows:

1. In Mexico there are differences in pronunciation that could be classified with the following scale: affected (A) or careful (E), normal (N), popular (P) or vulgar (V) pronunciation. Is the same thing happening in Chetumal?
2. Based on the scale above, how do you think a secretary speaks?
3. According to the scale above, how does a doctor speak?
4. According to the scale above, how does a minibuss driver talk?
5. Is there a neighborhood in Chetumal where people speak especially badly?
6. Would you like to live in that neighborhood?
7. According to the previous scale, how is it spoken in the Campestre neighborhood?
8. According to the previous scale, how do you speak in the Solidaridad or Proteritorio colonies?
9. On local television and radio, are there programs in which a particularly popular or vulgar Spanish is spoken?
10. According to the scale above, how do you speak at work?
11. According to the scale above, how do you speak at home?
12. Did your parents teach you how to pronounce or speak?
13. Does this seem important or necessary?
14. Do you recognize a Yucatecan son born in Chetumal by any particularity of his speech?
15. How do you recognize a tourist from the Federal District by their speech?
16. Do you know what maya is?
17. Who speaks that language?
18. What is "bludgeoned" speaking?
19. Who talks like this?

Before detailing each of the questions, it is necessary to clarify that 96.7% of them were answered. In other words, 1102 of the 1140 questions answered show the interest of those surveyed in giving an answer to the problems that arose. Even the poorly educated social class showed a broad disposition for linguistic reflection.

Furthermore, on several occasions the informants not only dedicated themselves to answering the questionnaire, but also issued additional information to what they were asked, thus demonstrating, once again, their interest in the linguistic phenomenon¹¹.

IV. THE ANSWERS

The first question was answered in the affirmative by all the informants. However, apparently it was understood by several of them in a wrong way, since they perceived that they were being questioned about dialect and not social differences. That is to say, these speakers undoubtedly perceived different pronunciations in people from Veracruz, the Federal District or Yucatán and were unaware of the diastatic value of what they were being asked. However, the answer shows that the diatopic variation of the Spanish language is clear to them. For others, the diastatic variation is also evident, as a doctor can "speak naturally and fluently"¹², while a minibuss driver "speaks in an abrupt and vulgar way". Even in several, the reflection on the diaphasic aspect of the tongue is perceived, since the same doctor who "speaks naturally and fluently" can be "disgustingly vulgar and offensive depending on the person with whom he speaks."¹³

Questions 2, 3 and 4 have the purpose of perceiving the social classification in three strata: high, medium and low, and at the same time to evaluate the position of these social layers in front of the others and in front of themselves. To help the informant, the scale indicated in the previous question was repeated.

In order to make the analysis of these three questions simple, we will group the terms "affected and careful" (AE) on the one hand, and "popular and vulgar" (PV) on the other, leaving the normal modality in the middle box (N).

In the case of the secretary (question 2), the majority rated her speech as normal (N), 22% opted for A-E and 23% for P-V¹⁴. The doctor's speech was classified as A-E by 60%, as normal by 35% and only 5% said that it seemed P-V,

¹¹ This work would undoubtedly improve if a more extensive questionnaire were applied that would include in its structure variables such as: (single / married / widowed / divorced, illiterate / literate, native / foreign, bilingual / monolingual, office worker / street worker, in addition Variables that would complement the knowledge of sectors of society if relative questions were added about the speech of women, men, the speech of wives, the speech of husbands, of bosses, the speech of the merchants, the masons, the servants, the teachers, etc., which would rethink new objectives that seek to capture the sociolinguistic consciousness of the speakers and open the way to new investigations into the dialect and idiolectal uses of the language.

¹² The comment belongs to a 53-year-old woman with a university degree.

¹³ Answer from the same person in the previous note.

⁹ The comment is from a 55-year-old woman with graduate studies.

¹⁴ "In his work, he tries to speak, but with friends he speaks vulgar." This is the opinion of a 20-year-old low-level woman.

because “there are also vulgar and offensive ones¹⁵”. Here there is more homogeneity in the results. However, the speech of the minibus driver was considered as P-V by 85% of the respondents¹⁶, an evaluation in which it was not perceived a noticeable hesitation towards the extremes of the proposed scale, as occurs with the speech of the doctor and the secretary.

That is, according to these global results, each of the representatives of each social class corresponds to a specific way of speaking. Now, how to explain the disparity of judgments about the speech of the minibus driver in relation to the other professions?

Apparently the terms “conscientious”, “normal” and “popular” are usually seen as neutral from a social point of view, and only the label “vulgar” or “affected” seem to have a certain connotation. If we split the four terms grouped before into two sets, this disparity can be explained.

In the case of the doctor, 25% rated their speech as A, while that of the minibus driver showed 44% of V. This leads to think that extreme A is less recognized than V, and that only the latter is considered as widely negative as it was rated that way by 26 of the 60 respondents. Only seven people said that the driver's speech was N, and only two that it was E, indicating the presence of strong social factors in the analysis of language problems.

Conversely, it turns out to be the doctor's speech whose percentage of V is barely 2%; only the case of the secretary is undefined as it shows notable variations on both sides of what is “normal” in the proposed scale.

The above justifies, in some way, the social scale that we proposed. It can be seen that not only do the speakers have an awareness of differences in speech but also the power to relate them to the structure of Chetumal society. The clear result of these three questions cannot be neglected despite the questionable choice of the informants being considered. Now, if we look at each social class separately, the results are also interesting. If we see the behavior of the members of each social class in front of their representatives, the results show great agreement. The lower class considers their own speech as P-V in 96%, the middle class as N in 66% and the educated sector sees the doctor's speech as A-E in 60%. The P-V type of social discredit factor is present in the group where it has more weight: the uneducated class. If it was thought, at a given moment, that each group would classify the speech of its representative as mostly “normal” it was only an illusion; This shows the veracity of the documented answers and the degree of linguistic awareness of the respondents –especially in the less educated sector, since it was this in which all its members gave their opinion about their own speech, in the other sectors the opinions were lower.

If, on the other hand, it is a matter of evaluating the speech of an alien social group in addition to that of the representative of the sector itself, things change. The critical attitude and self-criticism towards the strange social group and towards the representative himself shows interesting aspects.

The lower class, for example, mostly defines the doctor's speech with A-E values in 54% (critical attitude), and to that of their representative they give P-V values in 96% (self-critical attitude). On the other hand, the upper class gives the minibus driver 72% in the P-V values (critical attitude) and his representative 60% A-E (self-critical attitude).

The middle class shows percentages that, on the scale, point towards both extremes, the highest being the middle class with 55% overall (critical attitude) and 66% in the opinion of the same speakers in the group (self-critical attitude). That is, the difference between both attitudes is 11%, the same percentage shown by the lower class (96% -85% = 11%). Only the educated sector does not present differences between the general pattern (60%) and the attitude of the speakers of this group towards their representative (60%). This means that the speech of this group is the model of the entire population since there are no marked discrepancies between the various opinions of the respondents.

If the analysis continues, certain differences can be found between the opinions of men and women despite the fact that both groups coincide in some respects: for example, neither considered the secretary's speech as “affected”. However, the men rated the minibus driver as more vulgar, but the ladies gave more AE values to the doctor's speech (49%) than the men (28%), for whom the representative of the tall group spoke “normal” (57%). The least marked difference appears in the secretary's “normal” rating: 60% men, 50% women.

In women there is more variation in self-critical judgments than in men who, while being incisive in their majority percentages, tend to standardize their criteria from N to AE in the case of the doctor, or from N to PV in the case of the driver of minibus. In women, therefore, there seems to be more restraint in self-critical judgments.

Given these evidences, the male self-critical judgment seems more homogeneous, not the female; therefore, the group of women shows a greater sociolinguistic awareness of their speech and that of the other sectors, since their observations are guided by the stigma or social prestige of a certain population of the community. Regarding the critical judgments towards other social groups, both sexes agree in their observations with the inclinations already noted towards one or the other side of the scale. The questions that refer to the ways of speaking badly in certain areas of the city were used to analyze the attitudes of rejection towards the groups “bad spoken”. Thus, 65% of the informants consider that the neighborhoods where people speak badly are Solidaridad, Barrio Bravo, Forjadores, Proteritorio, Payo Obispo and Del Bosque, which are, for the most part, places where people with an economic precariousness live visible.

¹⁵ Opinion of an uneducated 25-year-old woman.

¹⁶ “They are rude, they shout things to each other and they are not interested in people, but they talk like that.” The comment is from a 57-year-old middle-level woman.

In this regard, the lower class considers that in those places, where many of its members live, they speak badly (75%); while the educated class shows a higher affirmative percentage (77%) claiming that these neighborhoods are the cradle of badmouthing, despite the fact that only 94% of its members have answered the question.

However, it is also possible to find deficiencies in the speech of other neighborhoods. This situation was observed by 25% of the lower class, 61% of the middle sector and 17% of the educated group. These neighborhoods are popular with diverse inhabitants but where people with limited economic and cultural resources prevail.

The analysis of these results shows that there is awareness of social barriers in Spanish speakers in Chetumal in all social sectors, especially in the low and high groups. The first, aware of his sociolinguistic position, locates the incorrect forms in other places as well; the second, defending its privileged position, observes that linguistic deficiencies are mostly found in poor neighborhoods.

The middle class is more measured in this regard. She distributes "bad talk" in all parts of the city (61%) and not only in the aforementioned neighborhoods (39%). The reason is undoubtedly their intermediate position that looks both sides of the social scale.

The differences regarding sex are visible. Men distribute their judgments in almost the same percentage in the two options mentioned to them (53% said that there are neighborhoods where Spanish is spoken badly, 40% said no); while women were more blunt (78% and 22% respectively). However, 64% of the men did not want to live in neighborhoods where people speak badly, 1% said they did not care and 30% did not respond; while 84% of the women mentioned that they would not like to reside in one of those colonies. The educated sector was the most reluctant to live among the humble (83%), and 70% of the uneducated group mentioned the same; while the middle class rejected this possibility by 61%.

It is necessary to clarify that by presenting the concept of "speaking badly" without nuances or definition, the respondents could reject the question due to the lack of precision of its meaning, or could use their subjective personal experience. Fortunately, they chose the second option.

The combined analysis of the five questions results in the following observation: the relationship of linguistic exchange between the different social layers indicates that this does not occur in all directions, but rather from the top down¹⁷. Not being the objective of the present work to demonstrate how some elements of speech move from one group to another, it is possible, however, to study to what extent the different social levels are capable of accepting foreign elements. The lower sector, being described mainly by the other two groups as P-V, does not contribute much in this linguistic exchange. The stigmatized form of their speech is never taken as a model, and the awareness of this situation is evident because lower-class people "do not care if someone tells them that they are speaking badly."¹⁸ If the results of questions 4, 5 and 8 are compared, it is confirmed that most of the popular and vulgar forms reside in humble areas, a situation that, as already pointed out, the uneducated sector is very aware. This group sees in the secretary's speech a certain model that can be imitated (42% of N), but not the educated class that observes in this representative of the intermediate sector 33% popular characteristics when for the group under these they are only 16%. That is, what serves as a model for the less educated sector is discarded by the class with more culture.

The doctor's speech is, clearly, the most appropriate linguistic modality to be imitated; and although the lower sector has given certain negative characteristics to term A, those of E are certainly higher. The middle class finds more negative elements in the speech of the minibus driver (44% of V) than in the speech of the representative of the educated sector (16% of A). However, this same intermediate class, in terms of the distribution of the speech of the other two social groups in the city (questions 7 and 8), feels that the people of the Campestre neighborhood - where the rich class lives - speak more well normal (66%), and those of Solidarity or Proterritorio, popular (66%). That is, their observations change when it comes to qualifying a social group than when that evaluation refers to a single individual who was taken as the representative. His generalizations are more thoughtful, as are those of the other two sectors in identical situations. Only the less educated group increases its percentage by 4% of A when evaluating the speech of the inhabitants of the wealthy zone who they consider, due to the same negative connotation of the term, pedantic or excessively arrogant -especially women- despite that, as noted before, the speech of the representative of this sector is the most imitable¹⁹.

The critical behavior of men from the uneducated sector towards the speech of the Campestre neighborhood shows that it is the women -of the same group- who most reject the way these people speak, since the percentage of A in the doctor's speech rises to double when they evaluate this zone of rich people. Men, for their part, see more negative connotations -of A- in the doctor's speech than in that of the neighbors of that colony. Again the observations change when rating an entire social group and not just an individual.

The V value of the uneducated class visibly lowers its percentage when it comes to evaluating the speech of the Solidarity and Proterritorio colonies. The comment would be that the speech of the minibus driver is more stigmatized than that of the neighbors of those popular neighborhoods, although the male upper class mentions that in both -both in

¹⁷It is a linguistic change initiated sporadically and irregularly that allows correcting certain forms by imitating those used by a higher social group.

¹⁸Comment of a 30-year-old man who works in a carpentry.

¹⁹Despite the fact that, in the opinion of several of those surveyed, the young people of the Campestre neighborhood are very rude in their way of speaking, that is, very vulgar; vulgarity that is not exclusive to that colony, but the property of a large part of the young Chetumaleños.

the representative and in the social group- vulgarity prevails²⁰, thus showing this sexual group as the one that most rejects this sociolect.

The role of the mass media –especially radio and television- in the Chetumaleña community plays an important role in the diffusion of linguistic trends. Proof of this has been the displacement of the concept of "brata" for that of "pilón"²¹: a kind of gift –especially sweets- that the landlord gives to the buyer. This displacement is due to the diffusion of the dialectal modality from the capital of the country - a normalized variety - that operates in the regression of the regional or local vernacular and that has come to become a model in the community. In the purely lexical field this situation seems to be more evident, not so in phonetics. The role of television in the dissemination of news and other information is not unknown, and it is also possible that it may function as an important factor in language changes.

However, it was already mentioned that the majority P-V speech of the lower classes does not collaborate in terms of linguistic exchanges from one social class to another; However, how to explain that television can have such an influence on speech if 58% of those surveyed said that there are programs in which popular or vulgar Spanish is used?

The explanation for this paradox resides - and partially discards this supposed influence - in that in some television programs from Mexico City - most of them - stereotyped forms are sometimes shown that function as social signals and are captured by the respondent, cartoonish ways of speaking of a character whose main objective may be to show certain social differences²². In others, the forms of prestige are also presented, but most of them escape the attention of the speaker.

The popular or vulgar character is found by the respondents more in local radio programs than in foreign television, and the statement that the announcers speak badly seems to indicate that the awareness of this situation is clear and that these models, because they are socially discredited, they do not influence anything in everyday communication²³.

The next two questions are aimed at studying the formal and informal styles²⁴ of the respondents. For this, the proposed scale was returned and the informant was asked which type of speech was closest to his in the contexts of work²⁵ –formal- and home –informal. These responses would result in the vision of an individualized self-critical attitude.

In general, both men and women from the three social strata clearly recognize the differences between a formal and an informal situation, showing majority P-V values for the latter, except for women from the upper sector. Compared to the general pattern that indicated mostly A-E for the doctor's speech, N for the secretary and P-V for the minibus driver, the individualized self-critical attitude indicates that the majority of all groups speak or pretend to speak normally in both situations. Given this, linguistic indulgence appears as a real fact that results from putting the speaker in front of his own pronunciation.

Regarding the formal style, it is the men of the uneducated group who consider that their speech has characteristics of E (7%) compared to 0% of E of women in the same sector. And it is they themselves who maintain that same 7% of E in informal speech, although they find 37% of P-V in it, while the ladies only manifest 18% of this last value, and 27% in the formal situation. In sum, to be clearer, in this sector it can be seen that discredited forms increase in male informal speech. According to the above, men seem to be more aware that there are different styles in different situations, and they are more concerned with putting aside uncultivated forms and speaking well in formal contexts. Women from the same social strata tend to ignore linguistic correctness and speak with little variation - at least that is what their responses reflect - at home than in their workplace.

The cultured group shows fewer differences. Regardless of whether the N value prevails in both sexes and situations, men again tend to differentiate more between formal and informal. What is striking about women is that they give the P-value 30% in formal situations and 0% in informal situations when it was expected to be the other way around. This result could be explained by housewives in the low sector, but not in those in the upper sector. This may be due, among other things, to the surprise of the informant who does not expect that type of question that surely causes confusion and responds full of doubts.

Men consider that their speech is more careful in formal situations and is even careful (37%), and they do not give any percentage to the P-V value. However, at the informal level the curve descends from normal to P-V (37%).

The middle sector shows some variation in their responses. Both men and women show normal speech both at home and in the workplace and the same percentage of P-V in both places - although this is higher in women (9%). In opposition to this, men rate their speech as more careful (A-E 7%) at work, something that women do not do (0%). This is the only marked difference. It should be noted that questions 10 and 11 were those with the highest percentage of

20 According to a 50-year-old cultured man, this vulgarity is due "to the environment and to the little education that these people have received".

21 This vernacular form widely used in the sixties and seventies has been gradually displaced by that broadcast on television.

22 I write down some of the television programs that the informants mentioned: all are broadcast from the capital of the country: "Mexican Picardie", "Puro loco". I also cite others that from my own experience I consider clear examples in which a popular and even vulgar Spanish is used: "El chavo", "Zero in conduct", "What happens to us?", "The thing"

23 I think that it will be difficult for them to influence local speech - at least in the academic and colloquial one of some generational and social groups - in ways such as the following taken from a commercial for French fries broadcast on national television: "con esto te podrás llevar un premio bien chido: una buena lana, una batata o una lira, o una súper nave"; es decir, "con esto te podrás llevar un premio muy bueno, bastante dinero, una batería o una guitarra eléctrica, o un gran automóvil".

24 We understand by style the register conditioned by the communicative situation, that is, by the linguistic use.

25 A definition of social context is not easy to carry out, consider, at least to try to do it, the social, cultural and psychological world in which the speaker acts at any given moment.

non-response; a situation that highlights the hesitant attitude of the speaker when questioned about his own way of speaking. This absence was more visible in the informants from the lower classes in formal situations, especially in women. This is understandable because this sector is unaware of the different types of speech that the upper class - the only one to answer the two questions 100% - has or believes they have, and thus their doubts are so many that they prefer not to comment. In the middle sector, the absence was a little less, but also considerable.

When asked about the informal style, the situation visibly changed, and most answered the question.

In summary, social loss of prestige, difficulty in making a self-critical judgment and awareness of a variety of styles are factors that can be observed in Chetumalian speakers. The first has more weight in women in the lower group, the second appears more in the female sex of the lower classes, and the third characterizes men in the lower sector.

Questions 12 and 13 are aimed at certain language learning problems and the importance of speaking well. The lower class considered that it is important to speak correctly (92%) although this has not been indicated by the parents of 25% of those surveyed.

The upper class was more concerned and aware of speaking correctly (100%) and declared that they had been taught this problem by their parents (83%). The intermediate social group was less aware than the educated and low in the importance of speaking the language well (88%) and referred to this disdain for the lack of correction in their linguistic forms by their parents (28%). On the other hand, women turned out to be more aware of the role of teaching the correct forms of the language than men who received very little education in this regard, especially those from the uneducated group.

Question 14 alludes to the Yucatecan origin of several Chetumaleños. The constant migrations of Yucatecans in the city have had consequences in the particularities of the community's discourse. Everyone knows the migrations of many people from various parts of Mexico to Chetumal; Among these, that of people from the neighboring state of Yucatán is the most widespread.

Those who most perceive some particularity of speech in the children of Yucatecans are the women of the lower class whose ages range between 30 and 50 years. Now, in what is perceived this particularity? The observations lie both in the indigenous Mayan lexicon²⁶ used by these speakers, as well as in the pronunciation of Spanish that characterizes Yucatecan speech: articulation of b, d, g as stops in intervocalic position: [ebap'áa], presence of glottic cuts: [tu'erm'áo], glottalized articulation of certain consonants p', t', k', (') and palatalization of n + j: [kin'j'áitos] basically. The nahua lexicon

This means that, despite the respondents belonging to the same dialect variety as the children of Yucatecans, they are able to perceive well the difference in pronunciation between them and those who do not have that origin.

And not only that, they also observe the difference, especially in intonation, between their speech and that of the inhabitants of the Federal District who, according to them, lengthen their words and speak little songs. The conclusions that they all made always referred to phonetic and not lexical aspects. Of course, a single question in this regard is not very significant to frame so many opinions expressed about foreign speech.

Questions 16 and 17 go beyond the borders of the city since they revolve not around the knowledge of the indigenous language of the region: Yucatec Mayan, but about its existence and use in the community. 92% answered that they do know of its existence, this knowledge was higher in men 30 years and older and mostly in the lower sector. The young women and the upper and middle groups showed less knowledge of the presence of that language. Now, who speaks that language? Opinions are diverse. For the more knowledgeable group, the majority of the inhabitants of the Yucatecan peninsula speak Mayan. His opinion is supported by several studies done in Yucatan; and although today the majority are not Mayan speakers in Quintana Roo, at one time they were in Yucatán and in various places near the geographic limits of that entity: Tihosuco, José Marín Morelos, Kantunilkín. Product of this situation of languages in contact (Mayan-Spanish) is the singular pronunciation of the Spanish-speaking Chetumale. Considered as an astratum language, the Mayan language not only qualifies Spanish at the lexical level, but has also provided it with a particular phonetic. Proof of this is that a Yucatecan -from the peninsula or almost all of it- is clearly distinguished when compared to other Mexican speakers where there is also a large indigenous-speaking population. His way of pronouncing has notable peculiarities. Perhaps someone confuses a Veracruz native with a Tabasco, or a Poblano with someone originally from Tlaxcala; but you can never confuse a peninsular Yucatecan with a Chiapas or Tabasco. The last two questions refer to this modality more dialect than social. First of all, what is bludgeoning? The majority (33%) accepted that it is speaking Spanish with a strong accent, cutting words (5%) and with a Mayan accent (6%)²⁷. It was mostly men who made such statements and those over 30 from the lower sector. On the other hand, who speaks that way? Opinions, again, are diverse. A high percentage (17%) said they did not know, another (10%) mentioned that those from northern Mexico and gang members (10%). However, the majority assured that this way of speaking is only held by the Yucatecans, especially that opinion is held by those of the cultured sector and men of all

26 Some of these lexical forms widely not used throughout the city are: muchipollo, muilx, pipi'í xik, uix, uixar, xek, bacal, ch'el, meco, mocho, papa zúul, saramuyo, siricote, tucho, turix, xix, chechón, chechonear, koliz, (See Pérez, 2000). The Nahuatl lexicon is also present in this border speech, however, being used more than the Mayan languages, it does not characterize any social group as the use of the Mayan lexicon can. (See Pérez, 2006).

27 Here they basically refer to the occlusive articulation of b, d, g, intervocalic and the presence of the glottal cut, glottal joint or "saltillo" typical of the Mayan language.

generational groups. This general opinion clearly has stigma or rejection overtones; especially for the cultured group²⁸, as the other social sectors were less blunt in their opinions.

V. CONCLUSIONS

As a member of a linguistic community, any speaker knows which words are socially acceptable and which are not, knows how to discriminate and rank them based on the meaning they have or have had in their multiple life activities, that is, according to use that I gave them. That is, he is aware of this value that words have even though sometimes he is not able to express it.

The degree of linguistic awareness of Chetumaleños is notorious because they are capable of relating differences in speech with social structures. Factors of social discredit motivate negative attitudes in all layers of society, while prestigious variants produce reverse reactions and serve as a model of good talk for the entire population. This leads to the assumption that linguistic exchange occurs mostly from the top down, and that if it is carried out in the opposite direction it is very limited and in markedly informal situations.

It is in the humble neighborhoods of the city where deficient ways of speaking can be found more frequently, there is a wide awareness of this among the entire population, especially in the less educated sector.

The differences between men and women of the same social class are sometimes notorious. In the uneducated layer, they are the ones who most reject the talk of the colonies where rich people live; while men have a more particular and not so panoramic judgment. In other words, the female sector has a certain tendency to generalizations and the male sector is more measured in that sense. In short, the linguistic variations shown by Spanish speakers in Chetumal are notorious, and this notoriety is nothing more than the reflection of a linguistic awareness that is very well situated in all social sectors. Chetumaleños know how to start any conversation with people from different social sectors, and in these talks, everyone's ways of speaking emerge that are sporadically analyzed by the speakers themselves when asked about them. Perhaps only at that moment of answering the applied questionnaire they have been aware of their way of speaking and that of others, but this does not prevent that awareness is always present in all life situations in the community in which they live.

These differences and coincidences can be seen in the following table that summarizes the results obtained after analyzing the data obtained in the surveys.

Opinions	Talk about the doctor	Talk about the secretary	Talk about the driver
All speakers	A E+ N- PV-	A E+ N- PV-	P V+ N- AE-
Speakers about own social group	Low PV+	Medium N+	Alto A E +
Speakers about alien social group	Low E A+ doctor P V+ driver	Medium E A+ doctor P V+ driver N+ secretary	High P V+ driver E A+ doctor
Mens	N+ doctor and secretary PV+ driver		
Women	E A+ doctor N+ secretary		
Places of evil speak (popular neighborhoods of the city)	Low P V+	Medio PV++	Alto P V+
Places of good talk (elegant neighborhoods of the city)	Low N+	Medio N+	Alto A E+
formal style men	Low P V+	Medio N+	Alto N+
Formal style women	Low N+	Medio N+	Alto N+
Social discredit	Low women +		
Lack of self-critical judgment	Low women +		
Lack of awareness of variety of styles	Low mens +		
Awareness of the importance of speaking well	Low-	Medium ++	High +

Sociolinguistic variation and awareness in Spanish speakers on the Mexican border with Belize.

To understand more clearly the stage of Spanish spoken in this border region, it is necessary to base our conclusions on the lexical region, since the use of these spoken forms in the neighborhoods of the entire city can serve to fully show the way in which that Chetumalian speakers conceive the speech of their neighbors who live with them daily and that of their friends who do not live in the same neighborhood as them and who, supposedly, do not belong to the same social class or who, belonging to the same social class, speak like them or like outsiders; These examples serve to find the differences between the vulgar and refined speech of the inhabitants as well as the perception that the same protagonists of the linguistic environment have of them.

Undoubtedly, any speaker is capable of perceiving the way in which people express themselves, and this capacity becomes evident when he is asked directly about the characteristics of the speech of other people with whom he has a relationship and is given to him. They give examples of these speeches when selecting the characters to represent them (the secretary, the driver, the doctor). That is to say, the questionnaire has the purpose of extracting from the same

²⁸ I have had the opportunity to hear not very flattering comments about the pronunciation that the Yucatecans have, not only from those who do not have that origin but also from those who, having it, deny it. That is to say, those born in Chetumal say that they are not Yucatecan -although their parents are and speak "clubbed" -; They are Chetumaleños and they are aware that one should not speak "bludgeoned" like the Yucatecans because they are not.

speech community its opinions about the speech of itself and about that of the social strata that structure it. In this way, samples of diverse speech have been obtained in the different social strata in which certain lexical features that characterize them usually appear. For example, the appearance of the Mayan voices *coliz* 'pelón' and the morphological hybrid *chechón* 'lloriquear' in a daily conversation show an eminently popular speech typical of the poor and middle-class neighborhoods of the city. On the other hand, the use of sidereal or didactics in any conversation are samples of a more refined language typical of educated people who live in wealthy areas of the population. The reference to various nahuatlisms *comal*, *zacate*, *tamal* are not exclusive to any social group such as the Mayanisms, and their use is not a symptom of belonging to a popular or cultured type of speech. The results obtained from the designed questionnaire attest to the degree of sociolinguistic awareness that Chetumal speakers have of their language.

The foregoing assumes that sociolinguistic practices do not accept remote work but that these must be carried out in situ under penalty of their conclusions not being accepted because they do not reflect the reality of the sociolinguistic consciousness that a speech community has about its productions of speech everyday.

Through the application of a questionnaire we have been able to extract vernacular and standardized forms from the speaking community of Chetumal that characterize the entire population. An example of vernacular form would *bulto* be 'purse', 'bag', backpack, 'backpack', 'briefcase'. *Bulto* - vernacular form - has a use in almost the entire population, that is, it is a speech register that can appear in any sociolect, even in the written form. No store of the Liverpool or El Palacio de Hierro chain would dare to promote their merchandise as "Lucy's" does in the heart of the city: "Costume jewelery in gral. and lumps", so reads the ad, simply because lumps is a vernacular, a non-standardized form that only the natives of the region know and understand, and although they are the majority of potential buyers, it would be preferred to use bags or backpacks, forms standardized with a broader spectrum of use.



What symptom does this use of lump leave us? 1. That the owner of the establishment is from Chetumal, 2. That the advertisement is intended for the full understanding of the entire native population (even though it bears a drawing of a backpack), 3. That the written record attests to the colloquial use of the voice. This stylistic use of the bulge leads us to consider that every speaker—or scribe in this case—belongs to both a social and a geographical dialect, determined by historical factors not always known to the linguist. And ignorance of these factors tends to hinder a deep analysis of the state of the language being studied. The example of a package is just a sample of the power that the vernacular has in the written record in Chetumal, of the power it enjoys in use, and of the long life that is predicted if its geolectal and sociolectal distribution is taken into account; A more extensive study would be missing to know the styles of use of this word and to guarantee with it that long predicted life. What can be assured is that its use is greater in people over 50 years of the social sectors with less schooling and with a precarious or barely stable economy. That is, his use is a symptom of the speaker's vernacularity and indicates that he is a speaker born in the city of Chetumal parents from whom he has acquired the voice that is already part of his active lexicon.

The use of standardized forms can characterize the social group with the highest education and the people who live in residential areas, although they can be found at different social levels because they are in common use. Standardized forms such as logistics, autonomous, delicate, etc., do not characterize any social group. Perhaps the use of paraphernalia, buried, unison if it is a symptom of a careful speech of people with studies, forms that never appear in the records of popular speech.

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Psychological Compassion as Portrayed in Dorothea in Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Louisa in Dickens' *Hard Times*

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Abstract—This article has a cogent argument to investigate the similarities and differences between Eliot and Dickens' techniques in revealing the insight natural expressions of compassion by analyzing the heroines' characteristics portrayed in the common theme of their selected novels. This article adopts the Seven-Stage Model of Maslow's (1970) Motivation Theory to analyze Dorothea in Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Louisa in Dickens' *Hard Times*. According to Maslow, individuals should satisfy the models' conceptual expressions completely to reach an ultimate level, which is self-actualization needs. In this regard, Maslow maintained that those who have reached the pyramid's peak are capable of love. The findings of this study indicate that Eliot shines by enhancing many prominent feminine touches, emotional and aesthetic concepts, and passionate experiences in her heroines' personalities much more than Dickens who ignores them. For instance, Dorothea in Eliot's *Middlemarch* satisfies all the conceptual expressions of the model's self-actualization needs perfectly, while Louisa in Dickens' *Hard Times* has many problems, particularly in getting love, esteem, as well as cognitive, aesthetic, and self-actualization needs. So, Eliot's excellence suggests a powerful contribution by refuting and criticizing the Victorian masculine stereotypical mottos that women could not express more than half of life and they could not feel a passion.

Index Terms—compassion, *Hard Times*, *Middlemarch*, psychology, Victorian era

I. INTRODUCTION

First of all, in the Victorian age, the great age of English novels, Victorian literature became very important and powerful because it relied on a realistic model of representation. Almost most writers played an honorable role in picturing what had taken place during that period, especially how much women struggled to take their justice and legality. It is worthy to recognize that during the Victorian period, women did not have many rights to live as ideal ones because men did not believe that women could express more than half of life and could not feel passion, ambition, anger, or honour (Showalter, 1977). Besides, many women were treated as inferior to men. According to Gallagher (1985), "whatever their social rank, in the eyes of the law women were second-class citizens" (p.57). Therefore, women were susceptible to dangers such as sexual and physical threats. Also, most women were portrayed as fallen women, old maids, or victims of social circumstances. This situation led them into slavery even at an early age (Rashed & Shahwan, 2018).

In essence, one of the problems in the Victorian age was women's inferiority in many aspects. In this regard, women were hardly seen in literary works (Soumia, 2015). Despite women's detrimental situations, some feminine writers

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appeared to publish their literary works under pseudo names. One of these writers was Marry Evans. She sent one of her literary works to Charles Dickens to check it before it was published but under the name of George Eliot (Ramsdell, 2018). Afterward, Dickens wrote Eliot a letter clarifying his philosophical admiration because of some womanly touches in Evans' literary text. Therefore, Dickens was never in doubt that George Eliot, the pseudo name, was a woman.

I have been so strongly affected by ... the book you have had the kindness to send me ... I hope you will excuse my writing to you to express my admiration of their extraordinary merit ... If I had been left to my own devices, to address the said writer as a woman. I have observed what seem to me to be such womanly touches, in those moving fictions, that the assurance on the title-page is insufficient to satisfy me ... If they originated with no woman, I believe that no man ever before had the art of making himself, mentally, so like a woman since the world began (Hartley, 2012, p.331).

Within fifty years, many significant declarations appeared. Maslow (1970) asserted that it is astonishing how little the empirical sciences have to offer on the subject of love. Additionally, Lernout (2006) suggested that researchers in the field of comparative literature are rare today. In this regard, Sinclair (2016) also concluded that compassion has received little attention over the past quarter-century. In all of this, this paper comes out to enrich the field of comparative literature, particularly, Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Dickens' *Hard Times* have hardly been studied in terms of psychological compassion based on the Seven-Stage Model of Maslow's Motivation Theory.

The foregoing explanations encouraged us to investigate the similarities and differences between feminine and masculine novelists' techniques in revealing the insight natural expressions of compassion. Specifically, this paper explores psychological compassion as expressed by Dorothea in Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Louisa in Dickens' *Hard Times* based on the Seven-Stage Model of Maslow's (1970) Motivation Theory. Additionally, this paper shows how the findings of this investigation reinforce or refute the Victorian masculine stereotypical mottos that women could not express more than half of life and could not feel a passion. By employing the Seven-Stage Model, this paper will serve as a powerful guideline for students, academicians, and researchers in analyzing protagonists' feelings, emotions, behaviours, and motivations in the literary texts to conduct similar studies that can be used for academic purposes.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Some recent literary studies related to the theme of this study have been conducted, focusing on previous research on Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Dickens' *Hard Times*.

A. Eliot's *Middlemarch*

A few studies analysed certain related concepts in Eliot's *Middlemarch*. For instance, a study conducted by Anderson (2018) focused on analyzing the concepts of individuality and marriage by clarifying the romantic relationship between Dorothea and Casaubon in *Middlemarch*. The author concluded that Dorothea escapes from the romantic world and cannot associate with it. Also, Nijibayashi (2015) explored romanticism and the influence of John Ruskin on George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. The study concluded that Dorothea's only failure is her marriage to Casaubon. Similarly, Weber (2012) studied discussed the continuity of married companionship in *Middlemarch*. According to Weber, Eliot's insistence on the ordinariness of wedded women's tears suggested the contemporary ethical challenges that would examine relationships that very consistently produce suffering.

B. Dickens' *Hard Times*

Some previous studies explored related concepts in Dickens' *Hard Times*. For instance, Wiggins (2017) revealed marriage and unionization that bring security at home and work and that mirror each other in their futility in *Hard Times*. The author inferred how the father exploits the innocence of his daughter and marries her to a wealthy old man for financial benefits without considering her feelings and emotions. Additionally, Bansal (2016) revealed that *Hard Times* devoid of warmth and love because it was a persistent tussle between fact and fancy. The author concluded that a woman is losing her selfhood, property, and immersing her identity in that of her brother and her husband. Also, Awawdeh (2010) explained that Dickens criticized the social and moral abuses in the Victorian age through unsuccessful marriages of some main characters. The study suggested that human relations and economic relations have been contaminated.

III. MASLOW'S SEVEN-STAGE MODELS

The Seven-Stage Models was developed by Abraham Maslow (1901-1970). Maslow was an American psychologist who was best known for his Hierarchical Triangle of Needs that was published in 1940. He proposed that satisfaction of needs was influenced by an individual's behaviour and motivation to feel satisfied with the achievement of the needs. Besides, Maslow suggested that human behaviour was determined by the tendency of individuals to achieve goals. In 1970, he proposed that all individuals had needs that were organized in a hierarchical triangle. This hierarchical triangle works from the lower level called Physiological Needs to the higher level called the Self-Actualization Needs. He argued that individuals should have to satisfy the basic and primary level completely to move higher to the next upper levels in the hierarchy. This paper employs the expanded model which is called Seven-Stage Model. This model has

two extra levels: Cognitive Needs and Aesthetic Needs. The first extra level, Cognitive Needs, shows that human beings need to understand what is going on around them, whereas Aesthetic Needs suggests that human beings need beautiful imagery that is aesthetically pleasing to continue up towards Self-Actualization.

Furthermore, Maslow's Hierarchical Needs consist of seven needs, namely; physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, self-esteem needs, cognitive needs, aesthetic needs, and self-actualization needs. Based on the conceptual expressions of the Seven-Stage Models, this paper analyses psychological compassion in Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Dickens' *Hard Times*. To construct love, individuals have to fulfil all the conceptual expressions of the Models (Maslow (1970)). They have to fulfil, satisfy and gratify all the conceptual expressions completely to reach the ultimate level, which is Self-Actualization needs. This paper includes an analysis of text and context that relates to compassion. Specifically, Maslow's Seven-Stage Model was used to analyze heroines' personalities in the selected novels.

IV. PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPASSION IN MIDDLEMARCH AND HARD TIMES

The Seven-Stage Model of Maslow's Motivation Theory is employed to provide a comprehensive reading and obtain an understanding of the personalities of Dorothea and Louisa in Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Dickens' *Hard Times* respectively. Expansively, Maslow (1970) stated that individuals have needs and these needs are prioritized in a certain hierarchy. An individual must satisfy the primary needs to achieve higher needs in the hierarchy. This paper analyses psychological compassion in the selected novels based on Maslow's Hierarchical Needs as follows.

A. Psychological Needs

Maslow (1970) explained that this level includes basic life needs that aim to keep the individual alive, such as drink, food, water, shelter, clothing, and sleep. In *Middlemarch*, Eliot writes that Dorothea "was taking her usual place in the pretty sitting-room" (Eliot, 1872, p.6) and that she "walked about the house with delightful emotion" (Ibid. p.57). These expressions show that Dorothea lives a rich life. So, Dorothea has a complete family and a proper house to sleep and rest. She has enough food and drink. According to all the above clues, Dorothea fulfils, satisfies, and gratifies her physiological needs completely. In a similar vein, Louisa in Dickens' *Hard Times* lives in a rich house with her family because her father, Thomas Gradgrind, is a wealthy professor. Dickens writes "[Louisa] Her own private sitting-room was a story higher, at the window" (Dickens, 1854, p.127). Because of the wealthy life, Louisa does not face problems in fulfilling her physiological needs. The above contexts indicate that both Dorothea in Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Louisa in Dickens' *Hard Times* fulfil and gratify all the conceptual expressions of the first lower-level of Maslow's Hierarchical Needs, which is called Physiological Needs. Now, Dorothea and Louisa can progress higher to the next level, which is called Safety Needs.

B. Safety Needs

Maslow (1970) proposed that an individual has to feel secure and comfortable. He added many extra conceptual expressions that are associated with safety needs, such as family, social and economic stability, physical safety, protection, security, health and wellness, as well as freedom from threats. In Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Dorothea's family, health security, and social stability manifest when she admires Ladislav's good humour, and Ladislav was admired by her personality. Eliot states "she had now a life filled ... with a beneficent activity which she had not the doubtful pains of discovering and marking out for herself" (Eliot, 1872, p. 671). From this expression, Dorothea feels comfortable with her life. Of course, she has no problem with this need because she fulfils it completely. In the same way, Louisa in Dickens' *Hard Times* feels safe in physical safety and economic security, which may be categorized as safety needs. Louisa's father protects her by keeping her up within his philosophy. He blames his children for observing some activities at the circus because he believes that all the circus' activities are a kind of imagination. Louisa says "we were peeping at the circus ... and father caught us" (Dickens, 1854, p.19). At the end of the novel, Louisa considers her father as the final and the only place to return if she has critical situations; she says "father ... I know I have been your favorite child. I know you have intended to make me happy (Ibid, p.253). From the above explanations, Dorothea and Louisa have no problem in terms of safety needs.

C. Love and Belonging Needs

The need for love and belonging was a necessity that encourages individuals to have friends, love, and affection towards family and others. This need represents a natural desire to be fulfilled by us as humans. Each individual must have a feeling of wanting to love and be loved, adore and be adored (Maslow, 1970). In Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Dorothea has two romantic relationships: one with Casaubon and the other with Ladislav. Eliot showed that Dorothea plans to build a romantic relationship, "I should wish to have a husband who was above me in judgment and in all knowledge" (Eliot, 1872, p.30). Likewise, Ladislav clarified his honest admiration, "her large eyes were fixed dreamily on a streak of sunlight" (Ibid, p.152). In other words, Eliot enhanced her work with many romantic glimpses that are raised distinctly in every Dorothea's meeting with her lovers. Of course, Dorothea fulfils and satisfies completely her needs of love and belongingness. On the other hand, in Dickens' *Hard Times*, because of her father's system of teaching, "teach these boys and girls nothing but facts" (Dickens, 1854, p.1), Louisa never learns how to love and what is love in her real-life? Additionally, it is hard to find any signs that expound any romantic glimpses between Louisa and both of her

lovers, Bounderby and Harthouse. It is important to notice, too, that her brother confirms that his sister “never had a lover” (Ibid, p.167). Meanwhile, Bounderby remarks, “your daughter don’t properly know her husband’s merits” (Ibid, p.239). According to the above statements, Louisa does not fulfil and satisfy the level of love and belonging needs completely.

D. Esteem Needs

Maslow (1970) asserted that individuals should have recognition, admiration, and esteem from surrounding people to move to the self-esteem level which involves confidence, achievement, independence, competence, etc. In Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, Eliot concurs with Maslow when Dorothea received appreciation from many surrounding people. For instance, Mr. James clarifies his admiration, recognition, and glory of Dorothea’s beauty, “(Casaubon) is not half fond enough of Dorothea; and he ought to be, for I am sure no one else would have had him-do you think they would? I always thought it a horrible sacrifice of your sister, said Sir James” (Eliot, 1872, p.228). Continually, for confidence, achievement, independence, and competence, she shows her self-esteem when, “she had given up position and fortune to marry Will Ladislaw” (Ibid, p.671). According to these expressions, Dorothea fulfils and satisfies the esteem needs fully. On the contrary, Louisa in Dickens’ *Hard Times*, losses her brother, husband, lover, and her romantic world. For instance, her husband does not care about her feelings and emotions because he considers her as a piece of his property. This lack of care means that Louisa’s husband never appreciates her emotionally and romantically. Also, Louisa does not have the ethically justified ability to exchange her respect or feelings towards her husband. At the end of the novel, Louisa’s husband clarified, “your daughter doesn’t properly know her husband’s merits” (Dickens, 1854, p.194). Back to her father’s educational ideology, “Facts alone are wanted in life” (Ibid, p.1). Louisa also losses appreciation from the surrounding people like her brother who shows his harsh relationship with her because of his self-love and selfishness. He discovers the weaknesses of his sister’s married life to another lustful man without a care for his family’s duties. According to the above excerpts, Louisa does not fulfil and satisfy the level of esteem needs completely.

E. Cognitive Needs

Maslow (1970) articulated that humans have a strong need to understand what goes on around them. Therefore, he added another extra level with many associated expressions such as the desire for intelligent knowledge, understanding, self-awareness, and curiosity. In Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, Dorothea affirms to improve her personality within society to show her full understanding of the right decisions in critical situations, particularly after her first husband dies. She explores the reasonable causes that lead to developing her character, “I should learn to see the truth by the same light as great men have seen it by” (Eliot, 1872, p.20). Her self-awareness urges her to understand all people around her by discovering their hidden passions and reaching a deeper level of intelligent knowledge, “all her eagerness to know the truths of life” (Ibid, p.5). However, Dorothea gratifies this level precisely. On the other hand, Louisa in Dickens’ *Hard Times* adheres only with her father’s cruel educational ideology which depends on fact rather than imagination, love, and emotion, “Facts alone are wanted in life” (Dickens, 1854, p.1). In this respect, Louisa cannot understand people’s feelings and emotions romantically. At the end of the novel, she escapes from all surrounding people and returns to her father’s house to ask him about love, imagination, and emotions, “where are the sentiments of my heart? What have you done, oh, Father, what have you done with the garden that should have bloomed once?” (Ibid, p.246). She feels that she can never explore, understand, or become aware of the right situation. Again, Louisa does not fulfil the level of cognitive needs perfectly.

F. Aesthetic Needs

Maslow (1970) mentioned that humans need beautiful imagery that is aesthetically pleasing, such as beauty, pride, creativity, and art. This level stimulates the five bodily senses to evoke a pleasurable emotional response that promotes positive affirmation of oneself and identity. In *Middlemarch*, Eliot enriches her novel with many aesthetic glimpses that are developed between lovers. For instance, Ladislaw expresses his admiration for Dorothea’s beauty, “her large eyes were fixed dreamily on a streak of sunlight which fell across the floor” (Eliot, 1872, p.158). Similarly, because Dorothea realizes that her beauty is described by other people’s senses, she makes her beautiful fashion, “the solicitudes of feminine fashion appear an occupation ... with a keen interest in gimp and artificial protrusions of drapery ... she was enamoured of intensity and greatness” (Ibid, p.4). However, Dorothea fulfils and satisfies the conceptual expressions of the aesthetic needs completely. On contrary, Louisa in Dickens’ *Hard Times* does not know how to declare her inner emotions because her upbringing depends on facts that are far from certain aspects such as love and imagination. According to Bansal (2016), *Hard Time* “is a gripping narrative ... devoid of warmth and love; a persistent tussle between fact and fancy; life and mechanization” (p.1). Generally, it is hard to find any aesthetic needs in Louisa’s life, and therefore she cannot satisfy the conceptual expressions of the aesthetic needs perfectly.

G. Self-Actualization Needs

Maslow (1970) suggested that an individual ought to reach the full potential of growth and achievement in his/her actual life. In Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, Dorothea’s previous satisfied needs provide her with a chance to arrive at the seventh level, which is self-actualization that has been commonly interpreted as the full understanding of the individuals’ potential, power, and efforts. For all the events experienced by Dorothea, the last need that must be realized

is self-actualization. Her first unemotional marriage that passes through her life makes her become a better human being completely. She wants to prove that she could recover from the unemotional marriage. With all her abilities and efforts, she wants to make up her second romantic relationship for her next comfortable life by truly becoming an ideal woman.

Moreover, Eliot narrates that the power of love, tenderness, and affection are exploded between Dorothea and Ladislav honestly. She declares profoundly that “her soul thirsted to see him. How could it be otherwise?” (Eliot, 1860, p.432). In this light, she decides to lose her first husband’s fortune. Also, she is never anxious about her future with Ladislav and never looking for faults, weaknesses, or reveal physical and psychological shortcomings in his character. At the end of the novel, Eliot tacitly illustrates, “Dorothea has a little boy” (Ibid, p.672), which means that sexuality is satisfied without being stated obviously. After she has engaged with Ladislav, Eliot remarks on her inner emotions which are full of admiration and appreciation towards Ladislav, “her soul thirsted to see him” (Ibid, p.432). Furthermore, she considers her second marriage as a victory that removes all her worst past stories. These excerpts show that Dorothea satisfies all the conceptual expressions effectively.

In Dickens’ *Hard Times*, on the other hand, it is worthy to recognize that it is hard to find any improvement in Louisa’s personality because she rarely attempts to express her feelings and emotions. At the beginning of her romantic life, Louisa cannot understand and recognize the real meaning of marriage, “what are the Facts of this case? ... What do you recommend, father? asked Louisa” (Dickens, 1854, p.112). This queries mean that she is prevented from developing her compassion, imagination, and kindness because of her father’s useless educational ideology of teaching, “facts alone are wanted in life ... Stick to Facts” (Ibid, p.1). Her brother clarifies that Louisa “never had a lover” (Ibid, p.167). After she has married, her relationship with her husband is one of the most tragic examples in her life because she was married to a worthless character. So, both Louisa and Bounderby do not have any romantic glimpses. In other words, Louisa “never cared for old Bounderby” (Ibid, p.152) emotionally or romantically. Unfortunately, Louisa does not have the full strength to have the equitable way of education to acknowledge the surrounding world which is made up of both fact and love.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper explored psychological compassion in Eliot’s *Middlemarch* and Dickens’ *Hard Times* with a particular focus on Dorothea and Louisa. The analysis was based on the Seven-Stage Model of Maslow’s Motivation Theory (1970). According to the analysis, Dorothea’s character was described as strong, resilient, responsible, and able to accept reality and love for herself and her family. She did not give up easily on any problems and events that happened. In the most difficult conditions, she tried to fulfil her basic needs as a human being. However, Dorothea fulfils, satisfies, and gratifies all the conceptual expressions of Maslow’s Seven-Stage Model. This outcome means that Eliot concurs with Maslow’s vision that individuals who satisfy all the conceptual expressions of the Seven-Stage Model are capable of love.

On the other hand, although Louisa in Dickens’ *Hard Times* only fulfils the first two levels of hierarchical needs, she could not fulfil various other needs properly, particularly the conceptual expressions of the last five levels in the Seven-Stage Model. So, Louisa does not fulfil, satisfy, and gratify all the conceptual expressions of Maslow’s Seven-Stage Model. This outcome means that Dickens does not concur with Maslow’s vision that individuals who satisfy all the conceptual expressions of the Seven-Stage Model are capable of love. Therefore, because heroines in Eliot’s *Middlemarch* fulfil, satisfy, and gratify all the conceptual expressions of the model distinctly, they harmonize correctly with Maslow’s vision (1970) that those who have reached self-actualization are capable of love. Also, this conclusion clarifies that psychological compassion in Eliot’s *Middlemarch* contributes to the refutation and criticism of the Victorian masculine stereotypical mottos that women could not express more than half of life and they could not also feel a passion.

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EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Writing Assessment at High Schools in Central Vietnam

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Abstract—This study aimed to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of classroom writing assessment at high schools in Central Vietnam. The constructs of teachers' perceptions under survey included the purposes and procedures employed in classroom writing assessment. Data was collected from an online questionnaire delivered to 60 EFL teachers from different high schools in Central Vietnam, followed by individual in-depth interviews with 10 participants selected from the surveyed teachers. Empirical data generally disclosed the teachers' positive perceptions of the investigated aspects and highlighted both compromise and conflict in teachers' perceptions. The study revealed that formative assessment purposes were associated with the essence of those in summative assessment. Specifically, while formative assessment purposes such as modifying and improving teaching and learning were perceived as important, the teachers also confirmed the necessity of summative assessment purposes of scoring students' writings and ranking students as part of teachers' responsibilities. The study also indicated the teachers' preference for different procedures including setting and informing criteria to students, using diverse assessment methods, and giving diagnostic feedback on student writing. Nonetheless, while the teachers did not highly value writing tests and aimed for the use of various assessment methods, they seemed to have minimal knowledge of alternative assessment, which might adversely affect their intention of diversifying their writing assessment practice. The findings imply the dominance of testing culture and also shed light on the essential role of teacher professional development, particularly in assessment, for effective implementation of classroom writing assessment.

Index Terms—EFL classroom writing assessment, teacher perceptions, writing assessment purposes, writing assessment procedures, alternative assessment

I. INTRODUCTION

A huge reform in language curriculum design and teaching and assessment practice has been made since the National Foreign Languages Project was launched by Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). In terms of English testing and assessment, it is compulsory that the assessment of four language skills namely reading, listening, speaking and writing be conducted at school of all levels (MOET, 2014) in order for students to achieve Level 3 (equivalent to B1-CEFR) when completing their high school education (Hoang et al., 2014). In accordance with its aim of innovation, the assessment of four language skills should be taken into consideration. Nevertheless, Vietnam high school teachers keep using summative tests mainly to generate marks for ranking students and reporting to parents and to prepare for standardized examinations, which reflects the reality of teaching to the tests (Le, 2015); therefore, assessing language skills is often ignored and how to assess writing effectively receives little attention. Besides, some teachers hold the belief that assessing writing means giving learners a topic to write about and then marking their papers (Le, 2015). Yet writing assessment is not that simple. Khongput (2010) asserts writing as "an art" which requires "the mixture of criteria, judgment and experience" as an assessment method (p. 7). It is even more demanding when writing assessment aims to enhance the teaching and learning of writing. Numerous studies have been conducted to examine teachers' perceptions of writing assessment in several EFL contexts worldwide (e.g., Crusan et al., 2016; Ketabi, 2015; Kobra & Hossein, 2018; Guadu & Boersma, 2018; Lee & Coniam, 2013) whilst this research area has been minimal in Vietnam high schools where testing culture is still dominant (Le, 2015) even though policy-makers have introduced a culture of assessment to improve teaching and learning (Hoang, 2014; MOET, 2014). The current study was therefore an attempt to investigate teachers' perceptions of EFL writing assessment at high schools in Central Vietnam, specifically focusing on the purposes and procedures of classroom writing assessment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Concept of Assessment

The meaning of the term *assessment* is not generally straightforward and is sometimes misunderstood. Testing and assessing may be mistakenly considered synonymous terms while in fact they are not (Brown, 2004). According to Cizek (1997), assessment is the process of gathering and synthesizing information relevant to the purposes of

discovering and documenting students' strengths and weaknesses, planning and enhancing instruction, or evaluating progress and making decisions about students. Meanwhile, Brown (2004) sees tests as an instrument that requires the performance of test takers on particular language skills or areas and offers them some kind of result. It can be inferred from these definitions that tests are a subset of assessment and only one of different ways that teachers can use to assess students. At the classroom level, assessment is more associated with the teaching-learning process (Cizek, 1997); in other words, it is employed to promote teaching and learning. As Witte (2012) points out "assessment is most effective and useful when it matches with the instructional content that is taught in the classroom, thereby providing *instruction-learning-assessment alignment*" (p. 12).

B. Categories of Language Assessment

Language assessment can be categorized in terms of purposes, intention, interpretation, and in comparisons between traditional assessment and alternative assessment.

Assessment can be used for formative and summative purposes. Formative assessment aims to provide learners and instructors with information on learners' present performance to improve it in the future (Andrade & Cizek, 2010). Brown (2004) emphasizes that the key to such information is delivering immediate and appropriate feedback on performance, with an eye toward the future continuation of learning, which contributes to the ongoing development of learners' language. Summative assessment differs from formative assessment in a fundamental way; it aims to measure or summarize student's achievement at the end of a course or unit of instruction (Brown, 2004).

Concerning intention, assessment can occur spontaneously or be planned. When it occurs incidentally, it is informal assessment. Teacher's informal assessment is embedded in classroom tasks to elicit student performance such as marginal comments on papers or essay drafts, or suggestions for a strategy without contributing directly to final grades (Brown, 2004). On the other hand, formal assessment is systematic and intended, with the intention to give an appraisal of student achievement, and is generally accompanied by a numerical score.

The interpretation of assessment results may be norm-referenced or criterion-referenced. Norm-referenced assessment ranks learners in comparison with each other (Brindley, 2001), thereby allowing educators to make comparative decisions. Criterion referencing, on the contrary, describes learner performance in relation to an explicitly stated standard, or the level that he/she must reach (Brindley, 2001). Criterion-referenced assessment evaluates students' mastery of course objectives, usually involves students in a class, and connects to a curriculum; hence teachers are required to deliver useful feedback to students to address the gaps in their knowledge (Brown, 2004).

Over the last decades, limitations have been reported to exist in traditional testing, such as concentrating principally on some basic skills, the mismatch between test content and instruction, the overemphasis on discrete skills, and so forth (Herman et al., 1992). The recognition of these shortcomings has given rise to the concept of alternative assessment. Alternative assessment is defined as the ongoing process involving students and teachers in making judgments about the students' progress in nonconventional strategies (Hancock, 1994). Its purpose is to gather data about how students are processing and completing authentic tasks in the target language (Coombe et al., 2012). The characteristics of alternative assessment are summarized as follows: (1) documenting students' growth over time; (2) emphasizing students' strengths; (3) considering the learning styles, language proficiency, cultural and educational backgrounds, and grade levels of students; and (4) authenticity because it reflects tasks typical of real-life settings (Coombe et al., 2012). Alternative assessment, therefore, takes a completely different approach from traditional assessment. Popular forms of alternative assessment include self-/peer-assessment, portfolios, and journals.

C. EFL Writing Assessment

English writing in many ways is perceived as the most difficult language skill in comparison with the others. Writing requires a higher level of productive language control (Hyland, 2003) and functions to reinforce patterns of oral language use, grammar and vocabulary (Weigle, 2002). Hamp-Lyons (2003) also claims, "writing is a very complex activity involving thinking, planning, organizing, and linking as well as several levels of language manipulation" (p. 163). Such complex nature of writing poses many challenges faced by not only EFL learners but also teachers as writing assessors.

In teaching and assessing writing, the product and process approaches see writing in different perspectives. The product approach focuses on the learner's final product with error-free performance (Nunan, 1999). This means the written product must be a grammatically correct and coherent text, with appropriate use of vocabulary, grammar, and language devices. The product approach places the emphasis on accurate language form in the final text while the process approach concerns more on the process of how students develop and formulate ideas into effective writing works. The process approach sees writing as a non-linear sequence in which learners go recursively through such stages as planning, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing, and it puts special emphasis on audience and interaction with peers and teachers (Hyland, 2003). In the product approach, students are often passive recipients of information, whereas in the process approach, they become an active part of learning process, develop knowledge under the guidance of teachers and peers, and learn from their mistakes to achieve a longlasting improvement. However different these explanations are, it is worth noting that a good product depends on good process and the emphasis shifts from the final product to the process of creating the final product.

In assessing students' writing, to avoid bias and subjectivity from raters and to yield consistent scores, there needs to be a systematic process and a written rubric that outlines the criteria for grading. Crusan (2010) highlights that the criteria for writing assessment should be stated clearly in the language that students understand. The best known scoring framework developed by Jacob et al. (1981) presents a set of criteria for assessing compositions including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. However, the number and weight of criteria to evaluate written products depends on the construct of the writing task or the aspects that teachers want to assess their students (Phan, 2008). Therefore, it is important to identify the construct and establish a proper set of criteria before conducting assessment. More importantly, in classroom assessment, in order to obtain positive washback, clear scoring criteria should be informed to both teachers and learners (Phan, 2008).

Unquestionably, timed impromptu writing tests which mainly focus on written products are not sufficient to enhance student writing process. In class, students engage in social interaction with the teacher and peers, and get assistance from them. Therefore, Lee (2017) claims that feedback delivered during different stages of writing process "lies at the heart of classroom writing assessment" (p. 14). In the same manner, the importance of feedback is stressed by Hattie and Timperley (2007) that "feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement, but this impact can be either positive or negative" (p. 81). Hattie and Timperley (2007) suggest that effective feedback can be divided into three stages, *feed up* (Where am I going?), *feedback* (How am I going?), and *feed forward* (Where to next?). In the *feed up* stage, the teacher shares learning goals and success criteria with students and provides instructional scaffolding. In the *feedback* stage, descriptive and diagnostic feedback linked to criteria given beforehand is delivered to students. This second stage informs students of what progress they are making toward the goal. The last stage, *feed forward*, provides information about what students need to do next in order to move forward in their learning. In other words, feedback may affect learners on both sides, thus how to deliver feedback effectively is a key question to answer.

Feedback on student writing can come from both teachers and students. Hyland (2003) points out that teachers' response to their students' writing is in various forms, such common ones as commentary, rubrics, minimal marking, and electronic feedback. Bloxham and Boyd (2007) strongly assert that written feedback needs "to provide specific and sufficient comments and suggestions on strengths, areas for development, and strategies for improvement" (p. 104). Lee (2017) also suggests using feedback to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses. In other words, teachers should use feedback to inform students of their major strengths and areas for improvement with reference to the learning goals and success criteria. Additionally, peer feedback is used synonymously with peer response or peer assessment, which has potential in developing student writing ability through creating meaningful interaction among peers (Lee, 2017). Andrade and Cizek (2010) state that students prefer feedback provided by peers rather than teachers, because peer feedback can be more immediate, timely and individualized. Lee (2017) stresses that if students engage in peer feedback meaningfully, not only do they help their peers to improve their writing but they also enhance their ability to review, critique, and improve their own writing. On the negative side, according to Hyland (2003), learners are rhetorically inexperienced, so they may focus more on sentence level than ideas and organization, which makes their feedback somewhat unhelpful. However, Penafiora (2002) argues that students may not be as skilled as their teachers at responding to each other's works, but "they are excellent in providing the one thing that writers need most - an audience" (p. 351).

Along with teacher feedback and peer feedback, feedback from students themselves is important in life-long learning; self-assessment of one's own writing is, therefore, considered "a step toward learner autonomy" (Penafiora, 2002, p. 351). Research shows that students are capable of analyzing and responding to their own writing, thus by letting students react to their own writing, they will become independent learners (Iraj et al., 2016). Alternative assessments such as portfolios and journals can be involved to assess both the process and the product of students' writing (Coombe et al., 2012; Hancock, 1994).

D. Review of Studies on EFL Writing Assessment

The issues around writing assessment have inspired numerous researchers worldwide. A number of previous studies have examined certain aspects concerning teachers' perceptions and practice of EFL writing assessment. A large-scale survey throughout 41 EFL/ESL countries conducted by Crusan et al. (2016) revealed that the teachers had little training in alternative assessment and felt confused in the use of rubrics in writing classes. In Lee and Coniam's (2013) study, while the teachers were committed to and enthusiastic about assessment for learning (AfL) in teaching writing, they had to adhere to conventional practices. The study indicated that the test-oriented system that valued summative scores could pose severe obstacles to the implementation of AfL in writing at secondary schools in Hong Kong. A more recent research by Guadu and Boersma (2018) showed that the instructors' positive beliefs about formative assessment and their actual practices were incongruent in Ethiopian context. Likewise, alternative assessments have become the issues of interest among researchers (e.g. Birjandi & Hadidi Tamjid, 2012; Eridafithri, 2015; Iraj et al., 2016; Ketabi, 2015; Kobra & Hosseini, 2018; Vangah et al., 2016). These studies implied that alternative assessments had a significant effect on student writing ability; however, there remain difficulties in implementing them. Some studies conducted in Vietnam have dealt with rater consistency in essay evaluation (e.g., Nguyen, 2016) and self-assessment in writing classes (e.g., Nguyen, 2015).

Although writing assessment has increasingly gained attention, the existing research literature has three major limitations. First, it can be noted that most of the aforementioned studies have been conducted in tertiary education

contexts where teachers tend to have higher qualifications; consequently, their perceptions might greatly differ from those in high school education settings. Undoubtedly, responses to the same questions in different contexts might vary; what underpins previous findings and what underlies the remaining issues are still unexplored. Second, while numerous assessment-related activities have been discussed, there exist considerable debates over teachers' views in different settings. Ultimately, it is problematic that few studies provide empirical evidence of how EFL teachers understand purposes and procedures employed in classroom writing assessment in the context of Vietnam where there has been a huge reform in curriculum design, textbook, teaching and assessment (Hoang, 2015). In response to the need for further research of this area, the current study sets out to investigate Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceptions of writing assessment at some high schools in Central Vietnam, a disadvantaged area where research on EFL teaching, learning and assessment has so far been minimal.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. *Context of the Study*

In accordance with the MOET's (2014) reform whereby the assessment of four language skills, namely reading, listening, speaking, and writing should be conducted at all levels of education, guidelines on how to implement this at high schools were also issued. In other words, the English mid-term tests and end-of-course tests at high schools must include four language skills, one of which is writing. More importantly, the new English textbooks for high school students in Vietnam have been claimed to respond to the MOET's reform in language curriculum design, teaching and assessment practice and to equip learners with four language skills in order to help them develop communicative competence (Hoang et al., 2014).

It can be said that the MOET's policy, the implementation guidelines and the new version of English textbooks have supported EFL teachers in Vietnam to integrate all language skills in teaching, testing and assessment. Nonetheless, time for teaching writing skill is very minimal in practice, let alone that for testing and assessing it. Accordingly, teachers have the tendency to integrate listening, reading, writing and language areas in a mid-term test or an end-of-semester test lasting for 45 minutes each with the writing section accounting for 20% of the total mark.

B. *Participants*

The current study involved 60 EFL teachers (11 males and 49 females) as participants, who were based at 16 high schools applying the new version of English textbooks in Central Vietnam. The samples' teaching experience ranged from three to over twenty years, with 8 teachers having a Master's degree and 52 obtaining a Bachelor's degree in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language).

C. *Data Collection*

In order to investigate teachers' perceptions of EFL writing assessment, the study employed questionnaire and interview as data collection instruments. The use of questionnaire is advantageous as it can accommodate a large amount of data which reflects attitudes, beliefs, practices, and trends of the population, and reduces sampling error (Creswell, 2012). Besides, Dörnyei (2007) asserts that a well-conducted interview is a powerful tool to elicit rich data on people's perspectives and attitudes that underpin their behaviours. The study started with the collection and analysis of data from the questionnaire to gain an initial understanding of the research problems and was then followed by in-depth interviews to obtain further information, thereby being able to provide full understanding and deep insights into the investigated issues.

The full questionnaire consisted of 16 statements in which 6 items concern teacher perceptions of writing assessment purposes and 10 items inquire teacher perceptions of writing assessment procedures. The questionnaire items were based on the literature and designed in the closed-ended form as it is best for obtaining data that can be easily categorized (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). Moreover, scales were used because they are viewed to allow fairly accurate assessments of opinions in terms of gradations (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). The teachers were asked to indicate their opinions on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = undecided, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree). The questionnaire was written in Vietnamese to ensure clarity of meaning for the participants and distributed online by means of Google form.

After the initial analysis of the questionnaire responses, the interview protocol was designed. Since the interview aimed to clarify the variations in teachers' responses to the questionnaire, most of the interview questions were relevant to the questionnaire items receiving lower mean and/or high standard deviation. Specifically, the interview questions concern the teachers' perceptions of marking and ranking purposes and the procedures of informing criteria, giving marks, making comments, providing feedback, using alternative assessment and using writing tests. The interview questions were designed in the semi-structured form because of its flexibility which allows individual open-ended responses to fairly specific questions (Borg, 2015). The individual interviews were conducted in Vietnamese with 10 teachers. Each individual interview lasted from 20 to 25 minutes and was recorded with the consent of the interviewees. The interview participants' names remained confidential through the use of pseudonyms (Teachers I1-I10) on reporting findings.

D. Data Analysis

Data analysis was presented in accordance with the work aspects under survey, thereby combining the elements of quantitative and qualitative data. Descriptive analysis was employed to transform a set of numbers into indices to describe the questionnaire data. Statistical numbers, including percentages, means and standard deviations were computed. The results were then presented in figures and tables to make the interpretations comprehensible. Following initial analysis of the quantitative data, the interview data was transcribed and analyzed using content analysis (Dörnyei, 2007) that identifies messages to elaborate the questionnaire data in relation to writing assessment purposes and writing assessment procedures.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Teachers' Perceptions of Writing Assessment Purposes

This section presents and discusses empirical data about teacher perceptions of writing assessment purposes. The results of questionnaire data are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1
TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF WRITING ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
(SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, M = Mean, Std Dev = Standard Deviation)

Statements	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %	M	Std. Dev.
1. Assessing students' writing is conducted as part of teaching and learning English.	50.0	43.3	3.3	3.3	0.0	4.40	0.72
2. Assessment is conducted to mark students' writing.	11.7	51.7	25.0	8.3	3.3	3.60	0.92
3. Assessment is conducted to evaluate students' mastery of course objectives.	43.3	41.7	10.0	3.3	1.7	4.22	0.88
4. Assessment is conducted to rank students.	11.7	51.7	25.0	8.3	3.3	3.60	0.92
5. Assessment is conducted to modify on-going teaching.	51.7	35.0	10.0	3.3	0.0	4.35	0.80
6. Assessment is conducted to improve learning process.	41.7	41.7	15.0	1.7	0.0	4.23	0.77

As Table 1 indicates, most of the items were rated positively and the proportions of respondents rating *strongly disagree* and *disagree* were conspicuously low, which reveals that the surveyed teachers attached importance to the purposes of writing assessment mentioned. Item 1 as a general statement introducing how teachers perceived writing assessment as part of teaching and learning English received the highest mean value ($M=4.40$) with 93.3% of the participants who either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Similarly, a noticeable trend would be claimed from items 5 ($M=4.35$) and 6 ($M=4.23$) that the vast majority of participants (86.7% and 83.4% respectively) believed that assessing writing played a pivotal role in teaching and learning, that is to modify on-going teaching and improve learning process. This claim is also evidenced in item 3 ($M=4.22$) wherein most of the informants (85.0%) assumed that writing assessment is conducted to evaluate students' mastery of the course objectives. These findings reflect the teachers' positive attitudes towards the formative purposes of writing assessment, which coincides exactly with what Guadu and Boersma (2018) and Lee and Coniam (2013) already emphasized in their previous research.

Another feature worthy of commenting is teachers' perspectives on whether assessing writing is conducted to mark students' writing or to rank students. As illustrated in Table 1, the number of teachers responding to items 2 and 4 was exactly the same at each of the 5 points on Likert scale. Hence, there is a noticeable variation among teachers' responses to both items 2 and 4 ($M=3.60$, Std. Dev.=0.92). Figure 1 illustrates clearly the proportions of the teachers' responses to both items 2 and 4 with reference to the levels of agreement.

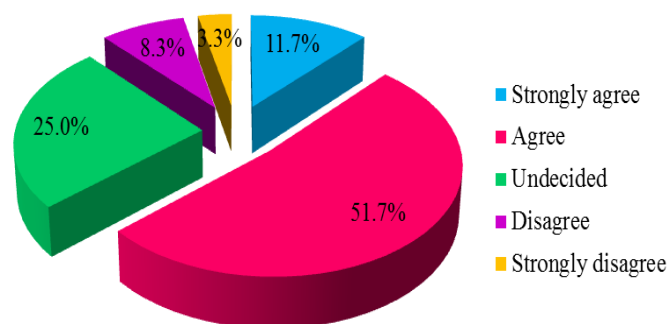


Figure 1. Teachers' perception of whether assessment is conducted to mark students' writing
Teachers' perception of whether assessment is conducted to rank students

It is obvious from Fig. 1 that more than half of the participants (63.4%) thought that assessment is conducted to mark students' writing as well as rank students while a quarter of them (25%) were uncertain about their answer and the rest

(11.6%) disagreed with the statements. In other words, more participants considered the purposes of marking and ranking important, whereas a remarkably lower number of the teachers (36.6%) kept mixed feelings or opposed to the ideas. Notably, items 2 and 4 received the lowest mean score compared to the others; it would thus be reasonable to claim that the teachers viewed the purposes of marking and ranking not as important as those indicated in items 1, 3, 5, and 6. This finding was subsequently clarified by the interview results. When being interviewed, the teachers highlighted the compulsion of marking writings in order to rank students, yet emphasized that assessing writing also served many other purposes such as to see student learning ability and to modify their teaching methods. They made the following assertions:

I think scores are not the most important; however, it is necessary because giving marks to students' works is compulsory. Also, marks are necessary in classifying or ranking students. Therefore, that assessing writing serves the purposes of marking and ranking is not an exception. (Teacher I1)

It depends. Marking is necessary when teachers need to provide scores for students' work. They can also be ranked according to their scores. In addition, thanks to the assessment of students' writing performance, teachers can see students' levels, and sort out some ways to fill their knowledge gaps as well as modify lesson plans. (Teacher I4)

We rarely have time to conduct writing assessment in reality. Normally, writing assessment is included in the progress tests, mid-term tests or end-of-semester tests. As a result, scores are always required. (Teacher I6)

The findings from questionnaire and interviews not only indicate the teachers' emphasis on the relationship between marking and ranking but also disclose the teachers' understanding of writing assessment purposes, which are to enhance teaching and learning writing in addition to evaluating students' knowledge, in other words, giving priority to formative assessment purposes. The findings are consistent with those found in a number of earlier studies whereby EFL teachers had positive attitudes towards the important roles of formative assessment in the teaching and learning of writing skill (e.g., Guadu & Boersma, 2018; Lee & Coniam, 2013). These results also support the idea that assessment should be employed to promote teaching and learning; particularly, in classroom-based assessment, formative assessment is prominent because it contributes to the ongoing development of learners' language (Brown, 2004; Witte, 2012). Furthermore, writing by nature is considered a demanding language skill, thus integrating assessment into instruction to enhance teaching and learning writing should be highly appreciated. Since writing skill is required to be included in English tests at high schools (MOET, 2014) and time for classroom writing assessment is limited, the findings highlighted how teachers made compromise in their own perceptions, that is, they appreciated the formative purposes of writing assessment while still confirming the summative purposes such as marking and ranking students as part of the teachers' responsibilities.

B. Teachers' Perceptions of Writing Assessment Procedures

This section analyzes and discusses how high school EFL teachers perceived the procedures that should be followed in classroom writing assessment. In general, the data analysis shows relative consistencies in teachers' responses. Fig. 2 below shows the teachers' agreement and disagreement levels across the facets including defining construct, setting criteria, informing criteria, informing progress, giving comments, giving diagnostic feedback, aligning feedback with criteria, using different methods, using alternatives, and using writing tests.

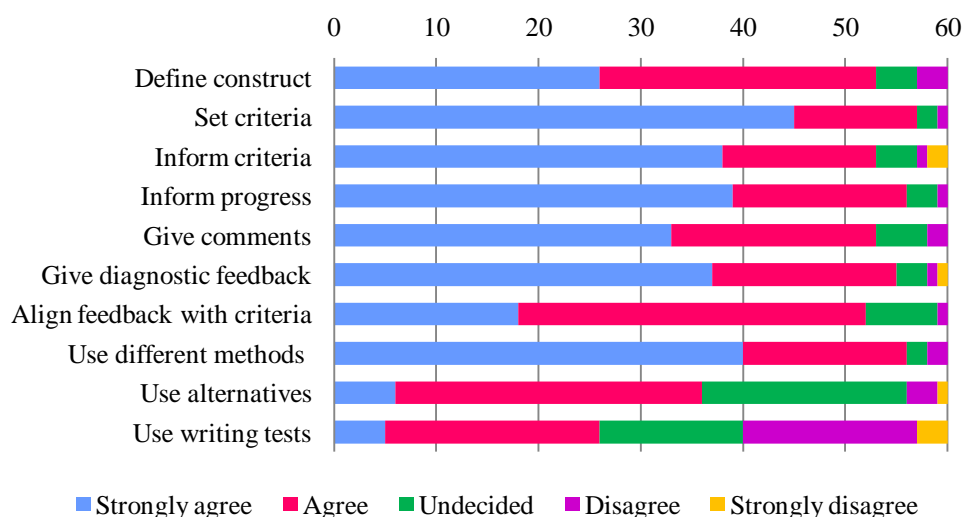


Figure 2. Teacher perceptions of writing assessment procedures

As displayed in Fig. 2, the participants reach high agreement on the listed aspects while the levels of disagreement are noticeably low. This generally discloses the teachers' positive attitudes towards the listed procedures. It can be

observed from Fig. 2 that agreement rating is the highest at *setting criteria* and lowest at *using writing tests*. Table 2 details percentages, means, and standard deviations of the responses to every single item.

TABLE 2
TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF WRITING ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES
(SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, M = Mean, Std Dev = Standard Deviation)

Statements	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %	M	Std Dev
7. Teachers should define the construct when assessing writing.	43.3	45	6.7	5.0	0.0	4.27	0.80
8. Teachers should set criteria to evaluate students' writing.	75.0	20.0	3.3	1.7	0.0	4.68	0.62
9. Teachers should inform students of the assessment criteria beforehand.	63.3	25.0	6.7	1.7	3.3	4.43	0.95
10. Teachers should inform students of the progress they make in writing process.	65.0	28.3	5.0	1.7	0.0	4.57	0.67
11. Teacher should give comments rather than marks on students' writing.	55.0	33.3	8.3	3.3	0.0	4.40	0.79
12. Teachers should give diagnostic feedback for students to realize their strengths and weaknesses.	61.7	30.0	5.0	1.7	1.7	4.48	0.81
13. Teachers should align feedback with the assessment criteria already set.	30.0	56.7	11.7	1.7	0.0	4.15	0.68
14. Teachers should use different methods for assessing writing.	66.7	26.7	3.3	3.3	0.0	4.57	0.72
15 Teachers should use alternatives for assessing writing.	10.0	50.0	33.3	5.0	1.7	3.62	0.80
16. Teachers should use writing tests to obtain a good estimate of students' writing ability.	8.3	35.0	23.3	28.3	5.0	3.13	1.08

As depicted in Table 2, the most dominant trend is that almost all surveyed teachers proclaimed the importance of setting criteria in writing assessment. As illustrated in item 8 (M=4.68), up to 75.0% of the participants showed their strong agreement, gaining the highest figure across this column and 20% of them agreed with setting criteria for evaluating students' writing. In addition, a large proportion (88.3%) of the respondents contended that teachers should inform students of the criteria before conducting an assessment (item 9, M=4.43). Although there are still proportions of disagreement (1.7%) and strong disagreement (3.3%), these numbers are not considerable. That agreement rates far outweigh disagreement ones indicates that most participants held positive perceptions about informing students of the assessment criteria. This finding was evidently supported by interview results. All interviewees stated that teachers should set and discuss criteria with students beforehand because this helped teachers make fair evaluations and focused students' attention on what to write and how to meet the expected requirements. As a result, from the teachers' perspectives, mastering assessment criteria is of great importance to both teachers and learners. This confirms the assertions of many researchers (e.g. Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Khongput, 2010; Lee, 2017; Phan, 2008) that in classroom assessment, clear criteria should be provided for both teachers and learners in order to obtain positive washback; once students are aware of success criteria and learning goals, they will be able to assess their own progress and understand what they can do to improve their future writing.

Concerning defining language construct prior to conducting writing assessment, item 7 (M=4.27) shows 88.3% of the participants expressing their agreement, wherein there is no response to strong disagreement. In other words, a large number of the respondents acknowledged the necessity of defining what construct to assess writing. As discussed in the literature, defining construct is significant because it equips teachers with what aspects of writing to be assessed, from which they can set criteria to evaluate students' writing (Phan, 2008).

Informing progress and giving feedback were also well perceived by the participants. As analyzed in item 10 (M=4.57), the overwhelming majority (93.3%) of them reached agreement on informing students of their progress in the writing process. The claim is also strongly supported by item 11 (M=4.40) in which teacher participants expressed their interest in giving comments rather than marks on students' works, at 88.3% agreement. In responding to the question which asks teachers to identify whether giving marks or giving comments is better, one interviewee asserted as follows:

Psychologically, it is students' interest and habit to see how many marks they get whenever receiving their writing papers. However, giving feedback is far better to help improving student writing proficiency because detailed comments help them realize strong and weak points and make improvements next time. (Teacher 17)

Moreover, the principles of giving effective feedback must be well noted when items 12 (M=4.48) and 13 (M=4.15) gain up to 91.7% and 86.7% of participants' agreement, respectively. These figures imply that the teachers strongly agreed that they should give diagnostic feedback to help students realize their strengths and weaknesses, and align feedback with the criteria established beforehand. These results are consistent with the relevant literature; that is, feedback should be concretely and constructively delivered by integrating with the planned criteria to inform students of their major strengths and areas for improvement (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Lee, 2017).

Given that giving feedback and informing progress are formative by nature, this ample evidence elaborates on the earlier finding of the current study; that is, the teachers highly appreciated the formative purposes of writing assessment.

In addition, the teachers' perceptions were well reflected in item 14 (M=4.57), in which the vast majority (93.4%) of them agreed that they should use diverse methods to assess writing. This anticipation is also reflected in item 16 (M=3.13, SD=1.08) where many participants did not believe that writing tests can provide a good estimate of writing ability as shown by the lowest agreement rate at only 43.3%. Interviewees expressed that they should assess student

ability by various ways because writing tests had many shortcomings such as limited topics, mark focus, and being conducted under time pressure. Concerning if tests should be used to assess students' writing ability, one teacher articulated her opinion:

Writing tests may bring about unreliable results because of both subjective and objective factors such as inappropriate topics, health problems, and limited time, so writing tests are not the best to evaluate student writing ability. (Teacher I3)

Much in the same vein, another teacher added:

Tests focus on marks, so students cannot always see their strengths and weaknesses and teachers may not motivate weak students in learning writing as well. (Teacher I2)

The participants were, therefore, not completely supportive of using tests in assessing writing. Likewise, traditional tests are frequently criticized for their time-related constraints and therefore cannot assess the depth of a student's knowledge (Brown, 2004). As Brown (2004) states, all methods could be beneficial, but using one method instead of a variety of methods could not help in building student proficiency. In other words, different methods for assessing should be employed.

Unexpectedly, the reflection above seems not consistent with the responses to item 15 ($M=3.62$) which has a remarkably lower mean score than item 14 ($M=4.57$) at 0.95. One third of informants (33.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed that alternatives should be used in assessing writing. This could probably be the tendency of being neutral or avoiding expressing opinions when participants were not confident about their answers, which implies their insufficient understanding of alternative assessment. Interview data reveal while the teachers believed that tests are not the only way to assess students' writing ability, some teachers seemed unfamiliar with specific terminologies associated with alternative assessment as few interviewees mentioned other ways in writing instruction (e.g. portfolios, journals, self-assessment). In addition, some teacher interviewees felt uncertain about the benefits of alternative assessment because they strongly believed that portfolios, journals, and self-assessment were suitable for only good students.

It is argued that alternatives compensate for shortcomings of timed tests because they add more tools to measure students' abilities and contribute to students' development of language skills (Brown, 2004; Weigle, 2002). In the same line, Brown and Hudson (1998) vehemently claim that alternative assessment requires students to use real-world tasks, assess their true abilities, focus on process, employ problem-solving skills, and provide information about their strong and weak points. Many studies have also proved significant effects of portfolios, self-/peer assessment, and journals on improving student writing (Birjandi & Hadidi Tamjid, 2012; Iraj et al., 2016; Kobra & Hossein, 2018; Vangah et al., 2016). The teachers' reflection in the current study, however, is inconsistent with what has been found in previous research. A relatively substantial proportion of the teachers (40%) were either doubtful or against the use of alternative assessment, some teachers even questioned its usefulness for students of lower levels. This finding highlights an interesting conflict within the teachers' perceptions, that is, while they did not highly value the role of writing tests and thus emphasizing the necessity of employing different methods for assessing writing, they were not really confident in making use of alternative assessment in order to diversify their writing assessment practice.

V. CONCLUSION

The study highlighted the teachers' positive perceptions of EFL writing assessment. Overall, the vast majority of the teachers had positive perceptions of the purposes of EFL writing assessment, agreeing that writing assessment is conducted to promote the teaching and learning of writing. Importantly, the findings implied that the purposes of formative assessment were preferred, which is similar to EFL teachers' views in different contexts of previous research; nonetheless, in the current study, the formative purposes were associated with the essence of those in summative assessment and the teachers saw grading as one of their teaching responsibilities. The procedures employed in classroom writing assessment were also well acknowledged. Particularly, the teachers expressed their high agreement on setting and informing criteria to students, using diverse assessment methods, and giving diagnostic feedback on student writing. However, while the teachers did not highly appreciate writing tests and aimed for the use of different assessment methods, they seemed to have limited awareness and inadequate knowledge of alternative assessment, which indicates a conflict in teachers' perceptions and might adversely affect their assessment practice. This finding is likely to contradict the results of previous research whereby alternative assessment is highly appreciated.

In general, by employing multiple methods of data collection, the study achieved its goals of exploring teachers' perceptions of EFL writing assessment at high schools in Central Vietnam. The findings both confirm and contradict earlier research. The findings also imply that testing culture was still dominant at high schools in Central Vietnam. Tests were still perceived to be mainly employed in assessing writing; therefore, the purposes of scoring and ranking students were confirmed along with other purposes of promoting teaching and learning. Testing culture was also dominant in that although tests were neither well perceived to obtain a good estimate of learners' writing ability nor acknowledged to be the only means to assess learners' writing, a considerable number of teachers were reluctant in recognizing the value of alternative assessment. These findings have made significant contributions to the field of language teaching and assessment and highlighted implications for effective teaching and assessing writing in Vietnamese educational context.

In order for writing assessment to work effectively, it is imperative to take account of teachers' professional development in assessment in order to build teachers' capacity of improving their assessment practice. Furthermore, relevant reference materials, clear guidelines and instructions should be offered so that teachers should have an unambiguous sense of how to conduct writing assessment-related activities effectively in class. Only when the teachers are equipped with theoretical and practical knowledge of assessment methods do they implement writing assessment successfully in congruence with Vietnamese educational reform.

Admittedly, despite the contributions to the field of EFL writing assessment, some limitations are unavoidable. First, the scale of the study is limited to EFL teachers at only some high schools in Central Vietnam. The second limitation also stems from the participants themselves. The study focused on teachers' perceptions while students' perceptions have not been examined yet. In order to overcome the above shortcomings, possible directions for future research on the nascent issues emerging from EFL writing assessment are suggested. First, a fruitful line for future research might investigate the perceptions and practice of other stakeholders as well as the difficulties they encounter when writing assessment is conducted. Furthermore, a larger-scale study should be considered by future researchers so that a deeper understanding of Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceptions and practice of writing assessment would be gained. In the light of these suggestions, decisions on the reform of language teaching and assessment might be made more valid in the current educational context of Vietnam.

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Tradition Versus Modernity in Laila al-Juhani's *The Waste Paradise*: An Intertextual Approach

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Abstract—The aim of this paper is to investigate the issue of intertextuality in the novel *Alfirdaws Alyabab* (*The Waste Paradise*) by the female Saudi novelist and short story writer Laila al-Juhani. Intertextuality is a rhetoric and literary technique defined as a textual reference deliberate or subtle to some other texts with a view of drawing more significance to the core text; and hence it is employed by an author to communicate and discuss ideas in a critical style. The narrative structure of *Alfirdaws Alyabab* (*The Waste Paradise*) showcases references of religious, literary, historical, and folkloric intertextuality. In analyzing these references, the study follows the intertextual approach. In her novel *The Waste Paradise*, Laila al-Juhani portrays the suffering of Saudi women who are less tormented by social marginalization than by an inner conflict between openness to Western culture and conformity to cultural heritage. Intertextuality relates to words, texts, or discourses among each other. Moreover, the intertextual relations are subject to reader's response to the text. The relation of one text with other texts or contexts never reduces the prestige of writing. Therefore, this study, does not diminish the status of the writer or the text; rather, it is in itself a kind of literary creativity. Finally, this paper aims to introduce Saudi writers in general and the female writers in particular to the world literature.

Index Terms—Waste Paradise, Laila al-Juhani, intertextuality, transtextuality, pastiche

I. INTRODUCTION

The Arabic novel emerged late compared to Arabic poetry, which is considered as old as the Arabic language. In Saudi Arabia, the novel has flourished recently and many Saudi female novelists appeared in the literary scene in the 20th and 21st centuries with great works of art: Laila al-Juhani's *Alfirdaws Alyabab* [*The Waste Paradise*] is a good example. Laila al-Juhani was awarded several literary prizes. She won the Sharjah Award for Arab Creativity in 1997 for her novel *Alfirdaws Alyabab* [*The Waste Paradise*] – the novel which this paper deals with. She has also written three more novels entitled: *Always Love Will Remain* (1995), *Days of Ignorance* (2007), and *40 Fi Ma'na an Akbor* (2009).

In her novel, *Alfirdaws Alyabab* [*The Waste Paradise*], also translated under the title "The Desolate Paradise" by Mandy McClure (Ashour et al., 2008, p. 273) and the title "Barren Paradise" by Jayyusi (Jayyusi et al., 2006, p. 295). Laila al-Juhani dealt with love and betrayal in a conservative society. The novel's plot revolves around three main characters: Saba, the girl represents love and also the victim; Amer represents betrayal and cruelty; and Khalida represents the witness of the story events.

Like other Saudi female writers, al-Juhani highlights ideological and societal bias against women. She criticizes the social norms that make women suffer from marginalization and gender bias. In her novel, *The Waste Paradise*, al-Juhani refers to the injustice of the men to women, whereas in her novel *Days of Ignorance*, she refers to the injustice of the society to women. Intertextuality, allusions, and quotations in al-Juhani's novel *The Waste Paradise* support the author's message of criticizing the cultural heritage and social prejudice against women. Barthes (1977, as cited in Allen, 2011) argues that a text is "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (p. 13). In other words, Barthes reduces the writing act to "quotation" in so far as writing is "quoting" other texts. In so doing, Barthes anticipates Kristeva's theory of intertextuality.

Genette (1997, as cited in Allen, 2011) differentiates between pastiche and parody, as being the two types of relationships, a derived text can have with the text of reference, known as hypotext. Pastiche refers to imitation, among other hypertextual practices, whereas parody refers to transformation. Pastiche and parody are the two most prominent hypertextual genres in imitative writing.

Intertextuality refers to the fact that a text is made up of other texts. It is achieved through such ways and means as citation, transformation, allusion, imitation, repetition, and so on. Kristeva (1980, as cited in Allen, 2011) calls any text an "intertext"; in other words, any text is the intersection of a multitude of other texts, and it exists only through its relation with other texts. A text is produced within a cultural sign system, which conditions its meaning. Intertextuality is often restricted to intentional allusion or references to previous texts through means of quotation or citation. However, the meaning its expounders – Kristeva, Barthes and other French post-structuralist theorists of the 1960s and 1970s – gave it is far broader than that.

Kristeva, Barthes, and the other post-structuralists look upon a text as a linguistic phenomenon deeply rooted in the numerous discursive contexts of its immediate culture and its author. In other words, the essence of a text does not lie in the intention of its author. Barthes (1968) expanded on this central idea in his famous essay *The Death of the Author* which addresses authorship issues and textual ownership. Barthes symbolically "kills" the author seen as the source of textual meaning – the Author God –, and celebrates the activation or construction of meaning as an enterprise involving the discursive contexts within which the language of the text, the author, and the reader exist. The construction of meaning then takes into consideration a vast network of discursive contexts, all in interconnection. Barthes makes it clear that a text is made of multiple writings drawn from many cultures, and between which there are relations of dialogue, parody, and contestation. As Barthes clearly asserts, the reader's birth must be at the cost of the author's death.

The technique of intertextuality can be traced in al-Juhani's novel *The Waste Paradise* sparks from the very beginning, the title. This paradoxical title "The Waste Paradise" echoes T. S. Eliot's title "The Waste Land" and John Milton's title "Paradise Lost". As Adam and Eve lost Paradise, Saba lost her own paradise - paradise of love - Her paradise turned to dust, it turned to be barren like Eliot's *The Waste Land*.

The novel is divided into six chapters, the title of the first chapter is built upon a paradox "The air dies of suffocation", the second chapter is "Details of pain", the third chapter is "An eighth continent subsides", the fourth is "Fall of the flower", the fifth is "The sensitive people will not be left to cry on the balconies", and the last chapter has the title "The reduction of the soul". In the first four chapters, Saba herself tells the story of her life and then dies. In the last two parts, Khalida discovers her fiancé's betrayal and tells the rest of Saba's life story.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers and critics show a particular interest in the representation of the social status of women in Saudi literature. Indeed, a lot of studies tackle the issue of the condition of Saudi women in contemporary Saudi Arabian literature. Badry (2018) comes up with an overview of a sample of novels by contemporary Saudi female writers that address taboo subjects and challenge prevailing gender discourses fostered by the religious- political establishment. These novels also seek to push for reform and correct the stereotypes images of the Arab woman in Western countries. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that the majority of the research papers and doctoral dissertations about this issue mainly adopt a sociological approach. As a case in point, Alhazza (2014) studies the marginalization of the Saudi woman in Saudi literary production within the period 1990-2011. Intertextual studies about Saudi Arabian literature do exist.

Hammad (1997) conducted a study entitled "Intertextuality in the Arabic novel, a critical analysis" in the Arabic language. Deheuyels & Michalak-Pikulska (2006) edited a book entitled "Intertextuality in Modern Arabic Literature since 1967". Adaouri (2012) wrote a book in Arabic language, entitled "Poetic Intertextuality in the Arabic Novel". Seddar (2016) conducted a study on intertextuality in Arabic literary Heritage: A Reading in the Light of the Theory of Transtextuality.

El Sayed (2014) conducted a study on the intertextuality between Imam Abdul Qahir Al Jurjani and Julia Kristeva. He traced the intertextuality in Arabic literature and found that the idea of intertextuality in the Arabic literary heritage could be a literary practice with a plagiarizing touch. Jayyusi in (al-Hazimi et al., 2006) translated anthology of modern Saudi literature. London and selected the title "Barren Paradise" as a translation of al-Juhani's novel *Alfirdaws Alyabab*. Phillips (2004) translated Laila al-Juhani: "Jeddah is Sinking" – an excerpt from *The Waste Paradise* in *Banipal*, Vol. 20. al- Mana in (Ashour 2008) conducted a study about Arab women writers in Arabian Peninsula and Gulf, translated by Mandy McClure who selected "The Desolate Paradise" as a translation to al-Juhani's novel *Alfirdaws Alyabab*. Hamed bin Aqeel (2006) conducted a hermeneutic-critical study of Laila al-Juhani's novel *The Waste Paradise*. He divided his study into five sections: the first is the Desolate Individual, the second is the Desolate society, the third is the Waste City, the fourth is the Universe, and the fifth is the Waste Civilization. He presented a general introduction to the study of the novel. He referred to the relationship between John Milton's *Paradise* and Laila al-Juhani's *Paradise* in general. If paradise is existent, it is waste, and when non-existent, it is lost. Khalid Aldakheel (2014) published a paper in the 7th International Conference on Literature, 9-12 July 2014, entitled "The Power of Men over Women in Layla al-Juhani's novel *al-Firdaws al-Yabab* (*The Waste Paradise*)".

Beside all these studies about intertextuality, there is no research dealing with the subject of intertextuality in Laila al-Juhani's *The Waste Paradise*, the novel under study in this paper. And yet, researchers resort to other approaches to explore the issue of the place of Saudi women in fiction. For instance, Najlaa Aldeeb uses a gynocritic-intersectional approach to study the condition of the Saudi woman in Raja Alem's novel *The Dove's Necklace*. This approach is based on gynocriticism, a term coined by Showalter (1981) to undermine the feminist approach to literary texts, and on *intersectionality*, a concept that expresses the way factors such as gender, race, religion and social class cause social discrimination.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This study is rooted in the framework of the intertextual approach and makes use of the western critical writings which considers the term intertextuality as one of the critical canons in literary criticism.

IV. CONCEPT OF INTERTEXTUALITY IN ARABIC LITERATURE

The concept of intertextuality in its modern critical sense was not present in old Arabic criticism. However, it has some hints in the Arabic heritage. El Sayed (2014) mentioned that the first seed of intertextuality in Arabic literature can be traced back in the poetry of Imru Al Qais, Antara, Kaab bin Zuhair, and Tarfa bin Al-Abd. He added that the idea of intertextuality in the Arabic literary heritage could be a literary practice with a plagiarizing touch, but in modern Arabic criticism, the term has been translated into Arabic in various ways with various meanings.

V. INTERTEXTUALITY IN AL-JUHANI'S *THE WASTE PARADISE*A. *The Religious Intertextuality*

The religious intertextuality is present from the first chapter of the novel, 'The air dies of suffocation'. The writer uses religious phrases to link the events of the novel with similar events of stories told in the Holy Qur'an. Saba, the main character, has transgressed the social and religious taboo; therefore, a feeling of guilt made her recall religious phrases. In the first chapter, Saba discovers her lover's betrayal and wishes for the end of the world: "And Michael¹ blows the horn, and the details of my slaughtered love are laid open and are resurrected naked" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 5). Such phrases echo verses of the Holy Qur'an: "The Trumpet will be sounded and – and behold! – they will rush out to their Lord from their graves" (The Qur'an 36: 51), "When the records of deeds are spread open" (The Qur'an 81: 10).

When Saba sees her traitorous lover, Amer, with her friend, Khalida, she wishes to warn her, but she cannot: "For God's sake, do not open the doors of torment with your hands. But I fall seventy autumns in the fire" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 6). The phrase "I fall seventy autumns in the fire" is mentioned in the hadith of the prophet Mohamed: "Indeed a man may utter a statement that he does not see any harm in, but for which he will fall seventy autumns in the Fire." (At-Tirmidhi, 2007, p. 351)

Saba does not want her friend Khalida to go through the same experience, but she herself thinks she deserves to fall seventy autumns in the fire because of her guilt and her incapacity to warn Khalida.

She prays: "Where are you God? Where are you? Why do you leave me to this world that would sullenly frown at me?" (al-Juhani, 1999, P. 25). It is taken from the prophet's Mohammed supplication: "You are the Lord of the weak, and You are my Lord. To whom You leave me? To a foe who would sullenly frown at me" (Al-Mubarakpuri, 2007, p. 126)

It clearly appears from the analysis of *The Waste Paradise* that the fundamental text of Islam, known as The Qur'an, is a hypotext to al-Juhani's novel in the sense that it serves as the source of the discourse of some characters and shapes their idiolect. al-Juhani uses it in the novel both explicitly and allusively: "I will not be there, and you, my baby, will not there. Moreover, this ramshackle world may not be there. . . It perhaps will be a thing long forgotten. Maybe a flood sweeps it; a flood without Noah floods the world and wash it from humans and sins" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 55-56). In these lines, Saba, the main character of the story, remembers Mary in the Qur'an and cries like her: "and, when the pains of childbirth drove her to [cling to] the trunk of a palm tree, she exclaimed, 'I wish I had been dead and forgotten long before all this!'" (The Qur'an 19: 23). Saba wishes the world were "a thing long forgotten" and swept. She could not face society as Mary did. Mary did not commit any sin; she did not miscarry her baby like Saba either. Moreover, her miraculous son, the prophet Jesus was her lawyer. Saba has a baby from an adulterous relationship with Amer, her beloved, who betrays her later and says to her: "Love is a dunghill". Saba strongly believes that the world is a place of sins, and she wishes a flood like the one Noah and his people underwent washed it. She makes an allusion to the story of Noah in the Qur'an, but she does not quote the text. Saba's words, "The sea is burned in Jeddah. It is filled like my heart" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 59) reminds a verse in the Qur'an "And by the sea kept filled (or it will be fire kindled on the day of resurrection" (The Noble Qur'an 52: 6).

When Khalida discovers the reality, she bewails her friend, Saba, who was the victim of betrayal and love. Khalida prays to her, "Let God's forgiveness be a cloud that the angels now drive to clouds pour down the rain and hail, roses, little birds, and olives and palm trees, and dense orchards, and fruit and fodder." (al-Juhani, 1999, P. 77). Khalida's prayer is taken from verses in the Holy Qur'an "Then let man look at his food. We pour forth water in abundance. And We split the earth in clefts. And we cause therein the grain to grow. And grapes and clover plants. And olives and date-palms. And gardens dense with many trees. And fruits and herbage" (The Noble Qur'an 80: 24-31).

Khalida remembers going out with Saba to the sea, but now she addresses the sea to split up to Saba. "Moses called, and the sea was split, each part was like a huge mountain." (al-Juhani, 1999, P. 79). She may want Saba to escape as Moses did. "And We revealed to Moses: 'Strike the sea with your staff.' It parted– each side like a mighty mountain" (The Qur'an, 2004, 26: 63).

The presence of religious expressions in the novel indicates that through the character of Saba, the woman lives in conflict with herself because she lives in a conservative society and wants to be free from the restrictions of cultural heritage, but she is tied to it. Saba implicates the oppression of women when she says to her friend, Khalida: "Isn't that

¹The writer said that Michael blows the trumpet, but it is familiar among the common people that, it is the Angel, Israfil who will blow the trumpet. However, this name, Israfil, is not mentioned in the Qur'an or in the Authentic Hadiths.

an agony to be a woman?" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 8). The novel used words and phrases from the Qur'an not merely to give strength to the text, but also to evoke the scenes and images similar to the situation that Saba experiences.

B. *Historical Intertextuality*

The Waste Paradise builds up dialogic relationships with history. Literary discourse draws on historical discourse, as illustrated by the historical references and allusions in the characters' ideas and thoughts: "Paradise Lost is behind me, and the sea is in front of me" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 29). These words recall the famous words of the Muslim commander Tariq bin Ziyad who invaded Spain in 711 and said: "The Sea is behind you, and the enemy is in front of you". The writer evokes the history in her mind and the fall of cities. She compares Saba's tragedy with the fall of Andalusia and Jerusalem. "Leave her, she is cursed, resembles herself to Andalusia and Jerusalem" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 33).

"And you, Saba, another Granada fell yesterday" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 75). In this line, there is historical and literary intertextuality. [Historically, it refers to the fall of Granada; and literary, it refers to Darwish poem "The Fall of Granada"] The reference to the fall of Granada anchors the narrative not only in history but also in literature as it evokes Darwish's poem "The Fall of Granada".

The writer also recalls the history of English literature: "Paradise Lost? From where this name came? From which book I picked it? From which story I read? The short history of English literature by Ifor Evans" She specifies where she got this name: from "Miltons' epic Paradise Lost which was published in 1667 and became a symbol for every dream that collapses" (al-Juhani, 1999, Pp 34 -35). From Paradise Lost book IV, al-Juhani quotes:

A Me miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep
.....
O, then, at last relent: Is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
.....
So farewell, hope; and with hope farewell, fear;
Farewell, remorse! all good to me is lost.
(al-Juhani, 1999, p. 35)

In the novel, Saba is implicitly compared to Eve and Amer to Satan: "Paradise Lost, Adam, Eve and Satan. Always Adam and Eve, even the universe began with Adam, Eve a Satan and paradise lost" (al-Juhani, 1999, P. 36)

This comparison is further reinforced by the parallel the narrator makes between the story of Saba and Amer and that of Adam, Eve, and Satan: "Finally, Satan won, Adam and Eve have lost the paradise. Now I hear him laughing near the window. He laughs and laughs whereas I am spread out upon the sofa." (al-Juhani, 1999, pp. 38-39).

C. *Literary Intertextuality*

Saba describes her embryo: "Irises without Eyelids without eyelashes" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 14). Similarly, Al-Sayyab depicts Baghdad tyrant during his time as a gruesome creature when he says in his poem Vision in 1956: "Eye without eyelids" (Al-Sayyab, 2000, p. 87). Nevertheless, Saba, the main character, does not depict her embryo as a gruesome creature, but she was crying her incomplete fetus she was going to miscarry. Or she may depict the torn fetus when that woman aborts it.

Saba comments on the painful end of her love for Amer and alludes to her life as a Paradise Lost. "Everything finished and vanished in the abysmal depths even the paradise lost" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 27). The writer alludes to Milton, Darwish, and Unsi al-Hajj. "Did Unsi al-Hajj say: what have you made with the gold, what have you done with the rose". (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 42). Here, She alludes to the title of a book by Unsi al-Hajj.

An analysis of The Waste Paradise enables us to identify a co-presence of Ernest Hemingway in his story The Snows of Kilimanjaro in al-Juhani's novel, notably through the comparison of love to dunghill: "Didn't I say to you, Saba, love is dung, and I am its cock that crows?" (al-Juhani, 1999, pp. 43- 44). Indeed, Harry makes the same comparison in Hemingway's novel: "Love is a dunghill," said Harry. "And I'm the cock that gets on it to crow." (Hemingway, 1936, p. 16) Moreover, in the Rob Roy Movie 1995, by the screenwriter Alan Sharp, Archibald Cunningham said the exact phrase to Betty, the woman that she loved; and became pregnant of his child: "Love is a dunghill, Betty, and I am but a cock who climbs upon it to crow". In fact, the idea of al-Juhani's novel is based on this scene of the movie.

In The Waste Paradise, Saba's friend Khalida hates August and describes it as a cruel month and a tyrant because Saba died this month, August: "August is cruel, stingy and despotic" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 71). Khalida's abhorrence for the month of August much recalls T. S. Eliot's aversion for the month of April in his poem The Waste Land: "April is the cruellest month"

The title of al-Juhani's novel "The Waste Paradise" is a parody of the title of Eliot's poem "The Waste Land". The phrase "Waste paradise" is an oxymoron as a paradise is opposed to a waste or barren land. The paradise fictionalized in al-Juhani's novel is not a "paradise lost" like Milton's; it is not a "waste land" like Eliot's either. This paradox title expresses the significant shift in Saba's life after she becomes pregnant and gets rejected by her boyfriend, who denies being the father of the child she is carrying. Therefore, her paradise – the place where she used to meet her boyfriend –

becomes a waste paradise, and her life and future in general turn into a barren existence. The invocation Saba makes expresses her suffering: "My God, take me back to my innocence, nightingale" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 11). Saba borrows her words from Darwish's verse: "My God, bring me back to my homeland, Nightingale".

Sometimes, al-Juhani explicitly mentions the name of the writer whom she quotes: "Darwish returned and then left". Her phrase "Granada is for singing, so sing" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 75) is taken from Darwish poem "The Fall of Granada". Khalida remembers fond memories with Saba; she addresses Saba after her death: "There is a line you quote it from Mahmoud Darwish, and you leave it without flowers, decorations or branches:

And there is no longer a present left
To let me pass, tomorrow, close to yesterday² (al-Juhani, 1999, 80)

D. Folkloric Intertextuality

Folkloric intertextuality is also present in *The Waste Paradise*. The writer includes a stanza of folk songs for children from the Hijazi folklore son, Doha ya doha:

Doha ya doha
And they built the Kabah
My grandpa traveled to Mecca
He got me some cake
The cake is in the closet
And the closet needs a key
And the key is with the carpenter
And the carpenter wants money
And the money is with the bride
And the bride wants to have a baby boy (al-Juhani, 1999, pp. 54-55)

She was dreaming of singing such a song to her baby, but she addressed herself "I will never be a bride and will never have a baby" (al-Juhani, 1999, pp. 54-55)

In the novel, there is also intertextuality to the character of Cinderella and to Ninja Turtles. "Their children, who know about the Ninja Turtles, and like Pocahontas (a Native American woman) no innocence on their faces... their rooms are full of her pictures they dream of Cinderella and Mermaid who loved the young prince and sacrificed her voice to be close to him" (al-Juhani, 1999, p. 75)

VI. CONCLUSION

A text is not an original product of one author according to the Kristeva, the novel certainly includes many textual overlaps. Laila al-Juhani's *The Waste Paradise* clearly evidences this fact, as the study of her novel shows that the notion of intertextuality is at the core of its poetics. Intertextuality is primarily the way al-Juhani uses to exposes the conditions of Saudi women, the conflict these women experience, notably openness to Western culture and conformity to their own culture, tradition and religion, all of which are constraints to their self-fulfillment and their empowerment. Laila al-Juhani's novel *The Waste Paradise* resorts to various types of hypotexts that serve as source of discourse. Religion, literature, history, folklore, myth are as many types of hypotexts that contribute to the representation of Saudi women through intertextuality. The list is not exhaustive as Laila al-Juhani's even resorts to intercultural intertextuality in her novel, notably when she referred to 'Adam and Eve', 'Thamudic inscriptions', 'Moses and Pharaoh', 'Tariq bin Ziyad', 'Pocahontas' (a Native American woman during the American colonial period), the 'Inquisition', 'Christopher Columbus', the 'Fall of Granada', and 'Jerusalem'. As shown in this study, intertextuality does not diminish the status of the writer or the text; rather, it is in itself a source of creativity.

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²These lines were taken from Mahmoud Darwish poem "I am one of the kings of the end" translated by Shahid Ali Agha (Agha, 2009, p. 304).

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Language Acquisition and Cultural Identity Among Modern Chinese Minority College Students^{*}

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Abstract—This research attempts to have an empirical analysis on the relationship between the acquisition of language and the cultural identity among modern Chinese minority college students, and try to show an empirical view of how the acquisition of language matters with the cultural identity from one side as well as the mutual influences reflected from the relationship between language acquisition and cultural identity from the other side. The research employs mainly three analytical methods including method of theoretical analysis, method of comparative analysis and method of questionnaire to acquire a full understanding of the relationship between the acquisition of language and the cultural identity among modern Chinese minority college students. The current study data shows that compared with the local language, modern Chinese minority college students use Mandarin more in most of the time and occasions. At the same time, while acknowledging the importance of their local language, modern Chinese minority students also strongly advocate the promotion of Mandarin and English. Conclusion: Language acquisition and cultural identity are closely related. This is mainly reflected in the fact that language acquisition deeply reflects the elements of cultural identity, while cultural identity deeply reciprocally affects the way of language acquisition. The cultural identity of modern Chinese minority college students has determined the series of characteristics and methods they exhibit in the process of their language acquisition. The close relationship between language acquisition and cultural identity has provided great support and enlightenment both theoretically and practically for the majority of language educators.

Index Terms—language acquisition, cultural identity, Modern Chinese Minority College Students

I. INTRODUCTION

Stepping into the 21st century, we are faced with a heated interactive relationship between language and culture, which is also an area that urgently needs in-depth research. One of the challenging breakthroughs in contemporary language teaching research is also to put culture into the language environment, especially from a cultural standpoint to understand language acquisition in the future, which is actually one of the key areas of future linguistic research.

Regarding the relationship between language acquisition and culture, the world of academia has put forward a variety of views, one of which is the “Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis”, which believes that language structure is the origin and decisive factor of cultural structure (Larsen-Freeman, 2018), the opposite is from the Marxist viewpoint, which maintains that the social and cultural structure is the decisive factor of language (Kramsch, 2000).

At the same time, positivism believes that there is only “partnership” and correlation but no causality between language structure and social cultural structure. There are also viewpoints that support such a theory that language is the carrier of culture, and that the basic relationship between language acquisition and cultural identity are consistent, and so on.

The development of cultural identity has historical continuity, and this continuity is achieved through language acquisition activities. In China, since there is a large population, the issue of the relationship between the acquisition of language and the cultural identity among modern Chinese minority college students has become an important issue that we cannot avoid (Lv, 2010).

In this research, by introducing the points of language acquisition and cultural identity, the researchers try to analyze the deep relationship between language acquisition and cultural identity among modern Chinese minority college students from the perspective of their language attitudes, language recognition as well as their language understanding.

In other words, discussing the issue of the study from the perspective of language attitudes, recognition and understanding will help modern Chinese minority college students as well as all paper readers understand more easily

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and directly the deep-seated relationship between language acquisition and cultural identity.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research mainly reviews literatures about language acquisition and cultural identity. Besides, some basic information related to the modern Chinese minority college students will also be introduced and explained so as to help all readers fully understand the relationship between language acquisition and cultural identity among modern Chinese minority college students.

A. *Connotation of Language Acquisition*

Before knowing what exactly language acquisition is, we have to know what language is from the beginning. General linguistics believes that language is a system composed of vocabulary and grammar (Haugen, 1972). This is the most basic connotation of language. However, if you look at it from the perspectives of sociolinguistics, historical linguistics, cultural linguistics, etc., various interpretations will be drawn. It thus can be seen that it is not easy to define a language that everyone recognizes (Cho, 2000).

Language emerges and develops along with the development of human society. The connotation of language has different views due to different eras and different schools. Generally speaking, the connotation of language can be defined as the most important symbol system used by humans in communication and thinking. Language is unique to human beings. Humans can use a variety of tools for communication and thinking, but language is the most important tool that humans cannot leave.

When people speak, it is a compound phenomenon. Language is not equal to speaking. It is only one aspect of the compound phenomenon of speaking, that is, a set of symbols used in speaking, which is composed of voice, vocabulary, semantics, grammar and other subsystems, are called language (Faretta-Stutenberg & Morgan-Short, 2018). The connotation of language includes a relatively complete abstract symbol system that exists in the brains of all members of the community, which is universal, immaterial and abstract.

And then, what is language acquisition?

The so-called language acquisition is also the symmetry of language learning. It generally means that people naturally, subconsciously, and gradually master a language in a speech environment (Benson, 2017). In the general grammar idea of generative linguistics, the rules of each language are interpreted as follows: the same set of universal grammar principles and specific values of parameters are adjusted to their specific states.

We all know about first language acquisition. The acquisition of the first language is the process by which children gradually learn a certain state of the universal grammar. This process involves not only the activation of the natural language ability, but also the mastery of the specific state of grammar and parameter values (Faretta-Stutenberg & Morgan-Short, 2018). Therefore, cognitive linguistics may tend to think that the acquisition of the first language also involves the semantic learning of language knowledge.

We also have second language acquisition. As for the acquisition of the second language, this is actually on the premise that the specific state of the universal grammar presented in the first language has been mastered, and then the specific state presented in the second language is learned (Au, 1983). Although these two states can be converted to each other through conversion rules, however, in many cases, learners may not realize that these conversion rules are actually learned by their intuition.

Second Language Acquisition, also known as SLA, usually refers to the learning of any other language after a person has acquired his mother tongue. People generally study second language acquisition from the perspectives of society, psychology, and linguistics. As an independent discipline, the study of second language acquisition was probably formed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. SLA describes the learners' second language characteristics and their development and changes, as well as the common characteristics and individual differences that learners have when learning a second foreign language. At the same time, it also analyzes the internal and external factors that affect second language acquisition.

Compared with other social sciences, second language acquisition research is a new field. Therefore, the second language acquisition mostly borrows the methods of mother tongue research, pedagogy research or other related subject-based research. In a nutshell, research in this field is to systematically explore the nature and processes of second language acquisition. Its main goal is to describe how learners acquire a second language and explain why learners can acquire a second language. Since entering the 21st century, the research scope of second language acquisition is much wider than that in the 1970s and 1980s. This is mainly because its research scope involves linguistics, psychology, psycholinguistics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics and many other aspects (Benson, 2017).

From another perspective, as an important branch of applied linguistics, second language acquisition mainly studies the processes and results of people learning a second language. Its purpose is to objectively describe the language learning ability of the learners and communicative ability of the language learners, and to make in-depth explanations based on a certain scientific information database.

The early theory of second language acquisition was a vassal of the teaching method and existed to serve to improve the quality of teaching (Davin & Heineke, 2017). In 1967, Larry Selinker put forward the inter-language theory for the first time in the book *Language Transfer*. Since then, the theory of second language acquisition has its own research

field and has become an independent subject. The current research on second language acquisition involves three major areas, namely the study of inter-language, the study of learners' internal factors as well as the study of learners' external factors.

Ellis (1994), professor of second language, teaching English at the School of Education, Temple University, Philadelphia, wrote the masterpiece *Research on Second Language Acquisition*, which became a classic textbook in the field. The book is divided into seven parts, mainly including three aspects. According to Ellis (1994), in the first aspect, the book summarizes the main theories about the nature of learner language, including learner errors, development patterns, language variables and pragmatic features. In the second aspect, the book mainly describes the role of social factors and language input, including language transfer, epistemological interpretation and language universality. In the third aspect, the book shifts the focus of discussion from learning to learners, discussing individual differences in second language acquisition and learning strategies.

In a nutshell, the masterpiece makes a critical analysis of the current research on second language acquisition based on relevant data analysis, theoretical construction and practical application (Benson, 2017). Because of this, many modern language researchers and language learners regard that book as the most basic theoretical book as well as bibliography for studying second language acquisition. Broadly speaking, to a certain extent, this has also promoted the theoretical development and practical breakthrough of second language acquisition within the field of linguistics in the 21st century.

Through the above introduction of the connotation of language as well as language acquisition, we cannot have an overall but can have a general understanding of language acquisition. Besides, in reality, it is also necessary to discuss some of the important attributes of the language acquisition, which include the semiotic, systematic, generative and national aspects.

B. Nature of Cultural Identity

In the past century, scholars have roughly defined the nature of cultural identity from three different perspectives. First of all, from the perspective of anthropology, it is emphasized that the nature of cultural identity is related to the nature of human beings. As the basic form of human beings different from animals, culture is essentially an artificial object relative to nature, and the nature of cultural identity is creation (Baggett, 2016). Secondly, from the perspective of social functions, it is emphasized that cultural identity is productivity, information and knowledge, and a cultural mentality and symbol system. Finally, from the perspective of communication studies, it is emphasized that communication is the nature of cultural identity. Without communication, cultural identity will take place nowhere.

Anthropologist Edward Tylor once proposed an understanding of the nature of cultural identity in his book *Primitive Culture*, which is very influential worldwide and is one of the most extensive and precise definitions. His famous definition is that the so-called culture and cultural identity is a combination that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, and any other abilities and habits acquired by individuals as members of society. In his definition of the nature of cultural identity, he has emphasized knowledge, customs, abilities, habits, etc., rather than concrete objects.

In addition, there is another definition of nature of cultural identity, which refers to all the life styles created in history, including the explicit and the implicit, the reasonable and the unreasonable. Such life styles exist as a potential guide for human's behaviours in a certain period.

In accordance with different research fields, the perspectives of the definition of cultural identity are also different. When different cultures collide, issues of identity or belonging often arise. Therefore, at present, in the actual application processes, cultural identity is mostly used in cross-cultural communication researches such as studying the cultural identity of overseas Chinese, or the cultural identity of foreign language learners, etc (Chen, 1985). These studies are often accompanied by studies of ethnic identity.

Cultural identity refers to the confirmation and submission of a certain cultural group or a certain cultural behaviour pattern. It is very comprehensive to define cultural identity as the confirmation of the common culture between people or between individuals and groups (Baggett, 2016). Using the same cultural symbols, following a common cultural concept, and adhering to a common mode of thinking and behavioural norms are the basis for cultural identity. In the book *Cross-cultural Communication*, Dr. Liu Shuang also points out that cultural identity is the sense of identity of members of a cultural group with their own cultural belonging, and its characteristics are manifested by the words and actions of members of a cultural group.

Researchers in this article also believe that cultural identity refers to the process by which individuals perceive the worldview, values, and attitudes of a cultural group under the influence of different social environments and different cultures, and then generate emotions. It is embodied through language, values, and behaviour, and it is a process of confirming a member's belonging (Couto, 2014). This is also the individual's awareness and internal definition of the same characteristics of a certain culture, accompanied by other identities, including national identity, ethnic identity, and so on.

It is worth mentioning that Professor Wang Guangwu, an internationally renowned expert on overseas Chinese issues, puts forward the concept of Chinese identity in *The Study on Chinese Identity in Southeast Asia*, which mainly includes four types of identity: national identity, cultural identity, ethnic identity and class identity. Cultural identity mainly includes two aspects. The first aspect is the Chinese cultural norms that the Chinese believe are bounded on them. The second aspect is the modern cultural norms that the Chinese consider useful and necessary to accept, including all social

customs that reflect the complexities of diverse societies (Hao, 2002).

In the study of Chinese cultural identity in Southeast Asia, Dr. Yang Yiyin analyzes the concept of cultural identity as the individual's sense of belonging and inner commitment to the culture and cultural group to which he belongs. She believes that cultural identity is a kind of social identity, and according to the theory of social identity and self-categorization, she believes that the construction of cultural identity is a dynamic psychological process. She points out that when people choose their own identities, they are mostly based on their language and cultural values as well as cultural customs, which have strong flexibility and are closely related to the social environment of the individual existence.

The social identity obtained by searching for differences between us and others is the way and process for individuals to gain a sense of belonging to a cultural group. This is because once cultural identity is established, it is independent and dynamic, internalized as a part of personality, and can have long-term stability. In the dimension of cultural identity, according to the theory of social identity, people classify cultural identity into three stages, including the cognitive stage, which includes a basic understanding of the other's culture; emotional stage, which includes committing the other's culture and having a good impression of the cultural group; behavioural stage, which includes participating or imitating and learning from each other's culture.

Professor Tomlinson has stated in *Cultural Imperialism* that all cultural identities are representations of belonging and an imaginary sense of belonging. His definition focuses on the emotional aspect of cultural identity, and the definition of cultural identity relies on the behaviour of individuals or group members (Hecht, 2005). These might include showing their group belonging, their understanding of the conditions required to become members of the group, and the acceptance of the group members, as well as the ability to participate in social practice in a different way.

To sum up, cultural identity is a process of confirming cultural belonging. It is a choice made after comparison between different cultures. It divides cultural identity into three dimensions, including cognition, emotion, and behaviour. In essence, cultural identity is a kind of social identity, which affects individuals' social identity and self-identity, and guides people to love and to be faithful with their own culture, thereby preserving and developing their cultural values in a deeper psychological structure.

There is no fixed statement about the nature of cultural identity. The discussion on the nature of cultural identity at home and abroad has continued for a long time. There are general discussions and academic discussions, but in the end there is no conclusion. Understanding of culture as well as cultural identity is meaningful (Stephen, 2014). When it comes to engaging in cross-cultural communication research, cultural comparison is a crucial issue. If there is a different understanding of the nature of cultural identity, the comparison cannot be accurate, and even the things being compared may be different.

Besides, the definition of terminology is the prerequisite for studying any discipline. The accuracy of the definition of terminology for the positioning of the nature of cultural identity is related to the scientificity and precision of the discipline itself (Hecht, 2005). This is to say that we ought to have a substantive discussion of ideas without defining the concept and nature of culture as well as cultural identity.

In addition, discussing the nature of culture as well as cultural identity can help us further understand the nature and characteristics of culture. Scholars in various disciplines want to give accurate explanations of the nature of cultural identity. However, their explanations have the characteristics of the discipline and have their own different focuses, so much so that they all reveal the nature of cultural identity to varying degrees; nevertheless, they have already had a deep understanding of the nature of culture as well as cultural identity, which is actually necessarily needed.

C. *Cultural Identity of Modern Chinese Minority College Students*

Continued above with 2.2, the cultural identity of Chinese minority college students is seen as their overall self-perception, including the sharing of information and elements such as world outlook, values, attitudes and beliefs. Therefore, this also calls on all Chinese minority college students to realize that cultural identity involves unique behaviours of a race, ethnicity, region, economy, or other social group that distinguish themselves from others.

Of course, in today's China, the consciousness of cultural identity of Chinese minority college students is getting more and more attention. Chinese minority college students' awareness of cultural identity includes various types of identities related to different social and cultural groups (Lv, 2010). At the same time, it also includes ethnic identity, national identity, and group identity, etc.

In the group of Chinese college students, Chinese minority college students are a special group. When they first enter the university campus, they face cultural shocks and influences from different places. This is because the culture they face is a mainstream culture within China, and the culture of ethnic minority college students is their own originally unique culture (Luo, 1989). This kind of culture in their own body has their own national cultural characteristics and cultural connotations, and because of this, it makes them appear to be different from the mainstream group to a certain extent.

In that case, most Chinese minority college students adopt a cultural adaptation strategy called "Cultural Integration" (Xiao, 1990). On the one hand, they will accept the social views from the influence of mainstream culture to better adapt to the university's living environment, humanistic environment and so on. On the other hand, they also maintain the parental culture of their own ethnic minorities and retain their cultural identity. In this way, they will better adapt to the life of college and get along with more and more college peers.

Of course, sometimes, Chinese minority college students encounter moments when the mainstream culture and their own national culture conflict, but they can quickly find out the problem, actively analyze the cultural problem, and solve it sensibly (Zhu, 2003). Chinese minority college students with excellent cultural identity and values can handle the problems that arise between different cultures keenly. This kind of cultural identity also helps them better understand the relationship between their own culture and the mainstream culture, so as to face the various cultures in the university with a better inner state (Luo, 1989).

Since cultural identity refers to a process in which individuals recognize and approve of their own cultures within individuals and groups, in the process of language learning, Chinese minority college students continue to deepen their cultural identity and give a certain degree of recognition and tolerance to other foreign cultures as well as their cultural identities.

III. METHODOLOGY

Methodology of this research mainly talks about methods of the research paper. Since this is about an empirical analysis of language acquisition and cultural identity among Chinese minority college students, the researchers will focus on the analysis of the language acquisition and cultural identity and the interpretation of how the acquisition of language connects with culture understanding as well as cultural identity.

A. Research Problem

This research paper intends to have a detailed understanding of language acquisition and cultural identity among modern Chinese minority college students, as is mentioned at the beginning of the paper. Based on what has been introduced and analyzed in literature review, this research makes efforts to answer such a question that how significant language acquisition and cultural identity are among modern Chinese minority college students as well as what the actual relationship between language acquisition and cultural identity is among modern Chinese minority college students.

Therefore, the research problem of the research paper is as follows: what is the actual relationship between language acquisition and cultural identity among modern Chinese minority college students?

B. Research Participants

This research has selected two groups of modern Chinese minority college students with one group of them are female and another group of them are male from a medical university in China as the research participants. The total number of the research participants is eighty. Among the selected Chinese minority college students, they come from the same medical university, but they have different educational backgrounds. Their current majors are different, and the language learning environments they are exposed to are also different from each other before they enter the university. Selecting college students based on such criteria is more conducive to the research in terms of the reliability and validity of this research topic.

C. Research Site

The researchers have chosen a medical university from Guangxi Province, China as the research site. In the process of conducting the research, in order to collect relevant data more directly and objectively, the research was carried out at the same research site from the beginning to the end. This is also aimed at providing a more convenient and objective environment for data research as well as data analysis in the later stage of the research.

D. Research Methods

Qualitative and quantitative methods are employed to carry out this research. To specify, three analytical methods including the method of literature synthesis, the method of comparative analysis, and the method of questionnaire are introduced as follows.

1. Method of Theoretical Analysis

The theoretical analysis method is the most basic method used in this research. The researchers have read extensively domestic and foreign books and papers on language acquisition and culture understanding, especially those that are latest published or known. This will make the study as theoretical and original as possible.

The method of theoretical analysis is opposite to the empirical analysis method. It is a scientific analytical method to understand the nature and laws of things through rational thinking on the basis of perceptual knowledge. Theoretical analysis method is a form of theoretical thinking and an advanced form of scientific analysis. It decomposes things into various components, characteristics, attributes, relations, etc. The results of the theoretical analysis method are thus defined and established in essence through comprehensive analysis, so as to grasp the regularity of things in the world.

When conducting the method of theoretical analysis, the researchers realize that some things must be done. On the one hand, under the guidance of a certain theory, the analysis of social phenomena and processes requires social science theories, as well as the philosophical theories of dialectical materialism. On the other hand, in addition to formal logic methods such as induction and deduction, analysis and synthesis, the theoretical analysis method should also use dialectical logic methods such as contradiction analysis, etc. Besides, the researchers also know that within this study

the theoretical analysis and the practical testing should be combined in order to be verified in time.

An organic combination of theoretical analysis and empirical analysis is not only conducive to the realization of dialectical analysis, but also more realistic for the study. In view of this, the researchers thus read and analyze through a qualitative means in order to analyze the related theories of language acquisition and cultural identity more realistically and rationally, and extract the view that the acquisition of language and the understanding of culture are closely integrated, and then draw the possible conclusions. By theoretically analyzing a large number of relevant documents and data, this study strives to demonstrate that the analytical processes and final conclusions about the relationship between the acquisition of language and the understanding of culture in terms of cultural identity are comprehensive and objective enough.

2. Method of Comparative Analysis

A comparative analysis method is also adopted for the research. On the one hand, this method can comprehensively sort out some necessary thoughts of the language acquisition and cultural identity and unify these scattered thoughts into a systematic and complete theory. The related theories of language acquisition are combined with the related theories of culture understanding, so as to have a deeper understanding of the transition from language acquisition to cultural identity.

The use of comparative analysis methods is more conducive for the researchers to accurately analyze the relationship between the acquisition of language and the understanding of culture, and to locate the roles of the language acquisition and the cultural identity from the perspective of culture understanding. Specially, with the help of a comparative viewpoint, the acquisition of language will also incorporate elements of culture, thus promoting the development and understanding of culture, and at the same time allowing language acquisition and cultural identity to better display a new face of the entire world.

3. Method of Questionnaire

This research also adopts the method of questionnaire to facilitate the outcome of the study. The method of questionnaire is a research method widely used in many social surveys nowadays. The so-called questionnaire refers to the materials used for a variety of collections of data as well as statistics. Questionnaires in a research will generally express questions in the form of questioning. The method of questionnaire is a method for the researcher to use controlled measurement to measure the problems related under a certain research or study, so as to collect reliable data and information. The two main advantages of the method of questionnaire are standardization and low cost. The method of questionnaire uses a well-designed questionnaire tool to conduct surveys; therefore the design of the questionnaire requires standardization and measurability.

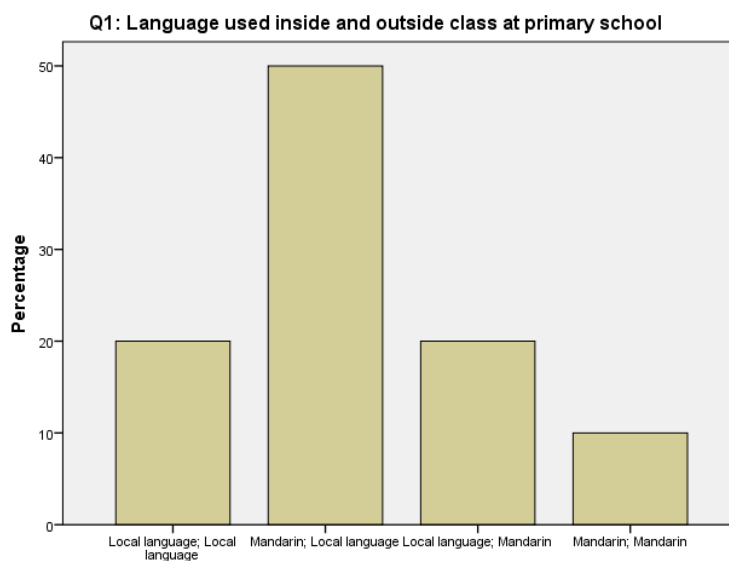
In the questionnaire of this research, the quantitative research is mainly to understand the relationship between language acquisition, language awareness, language attitude and cultural identity among Chinese minority college students. At the same time, it is also meant to understand whether these factors mentioned above affect the changes in cultural identity of Chinese minority college students in the process of language acquisition. This research uses EXCEL 2010 and the statistical software of SPSS 23.0 as well as other related tools to further analyze and explain the results of the questionnaire.

Overall, the three analytical methods mentioned above will lay a solid theoretical and methodological foundation for the research and writing of this research paper. It will also provide a necessary and important premise for the writing of the findings which will be shown in the following chapter.

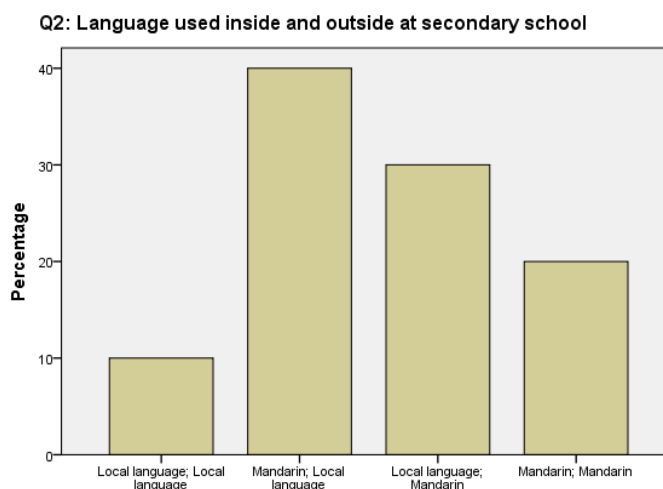
IV. FINDINGS

In the findings, the researchers will mainly show a detailed description of the data collected from the questionnaires. The results of the research will also be shown via EXCEL 2010 as well as some other forms of tables or charts. At the same time, a brief interpretation of the relationship between language acquisition and cultural identity among Chinese minority college students will also be introduced within the chapter.

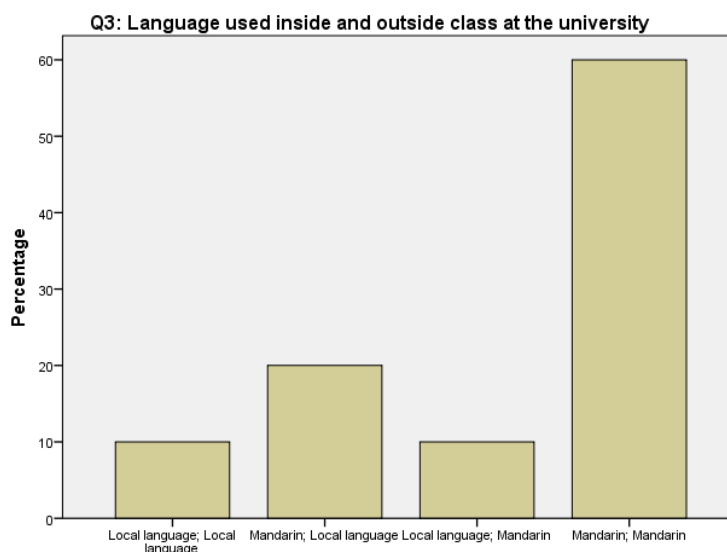
A. Reality of Language Usage



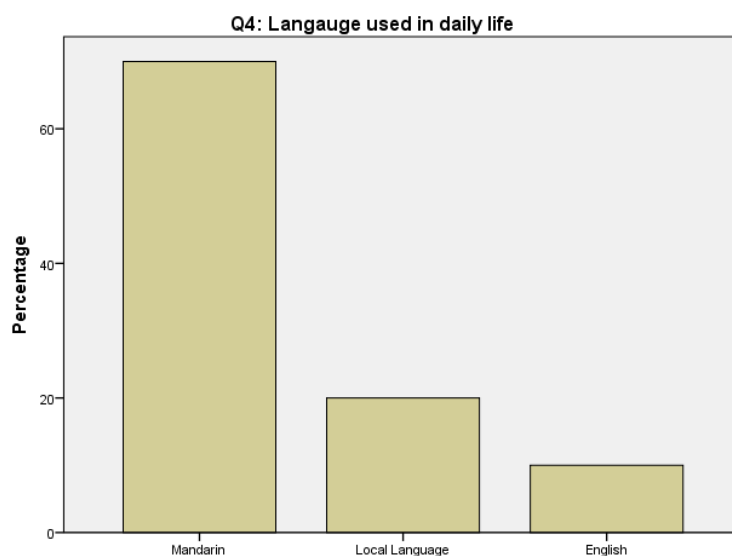
According to the data of Q1, we can clearly see that the percentage of language uses varies from one to another. The highest percentage of language used inside and outside class at primary school goes to Mandarin/local language, which is 50%. The lowest percentage of language used inside and outside class at primary school goes to Mandarin/Mandarin, which is 10% only. Besides, the percentage of local language used inside and outside class at primary school is the same as that of Local language/Mandarin, which is 20%. The data from the above chart illustrates that Mandarin is mostly spoken inside class at primary school while most of the time they speak local language outside class.



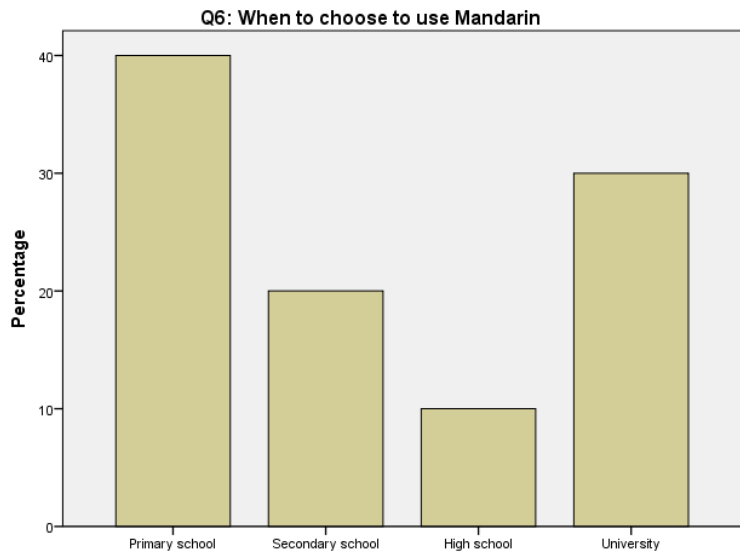
Based on the data of Q2, we can clearly see that the highest percentage of language used inside and outside class at secondary school goes to Mandarin/local language, which is 40%. The lowest percentage of language used inside and outside class at secondary school goes to Local language/Local language, which is 10% only. Besides, the percentage of the case of Local language/Mandarin used inside and outside class at secondary school is 10% percent higher than that of Mandarin/Mandarin, which is 20%. The data from the above chart illustrates that Mandarin is mostly spoken inside class at secondary school while most of the time they speak local language outside class.



As for the data of Q3, it is shown that the highest percentage of language used inside and outside class at university goes to Mandarin/Mandarin, which is 60%, ranking the highest. The lowest percentage of language used inside and outside class at university goes to Local language/Local language and Local language/Mandarin, which is 10% only. Besides, the percentage of local language used inside and outside class at university stays between the above cases goes to Mandarin/Local language, which is 20%. The data from the above chart illustrates that Mandarin is mostly spoken inside and outside class at university.

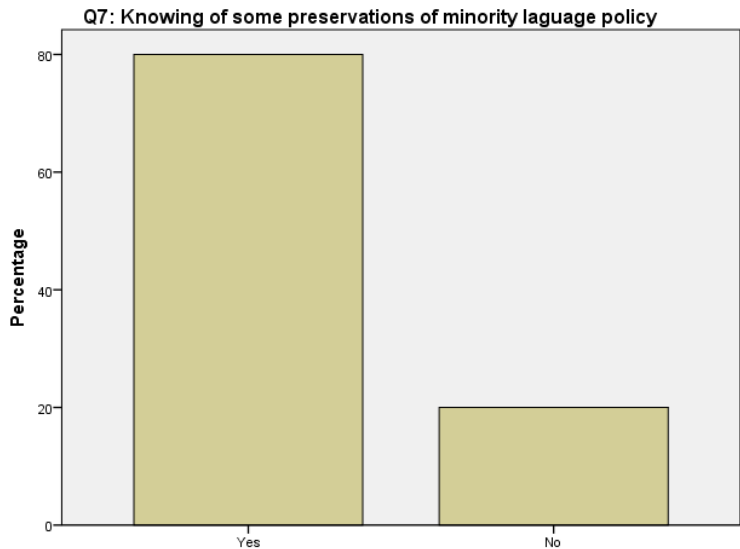


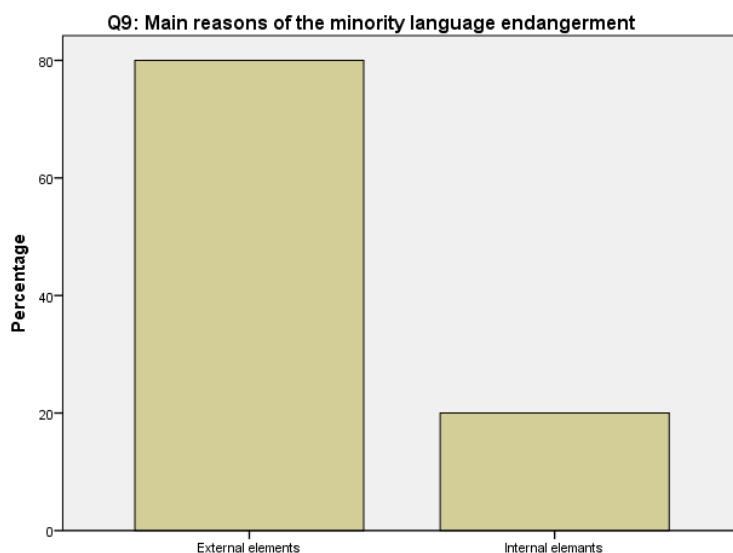
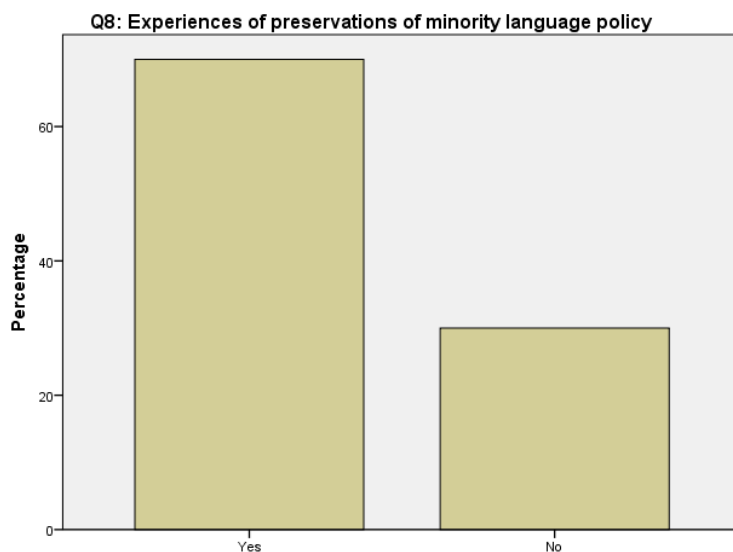
Based on the data of Q4, it is clearly indicated that Mandarin is most frequently used in the participants' daily lives, which is about 70%. Meanwhile, local language is also used in their daily lives, but is only 20%. Besides, English is spoken the least in the participants' daily lives; the percentage is only 10%. The data from Q4 tells us that Mandarin is still the most common language spoken in the daily lives of the participants even though they sometimes use their local language in their daily communication.



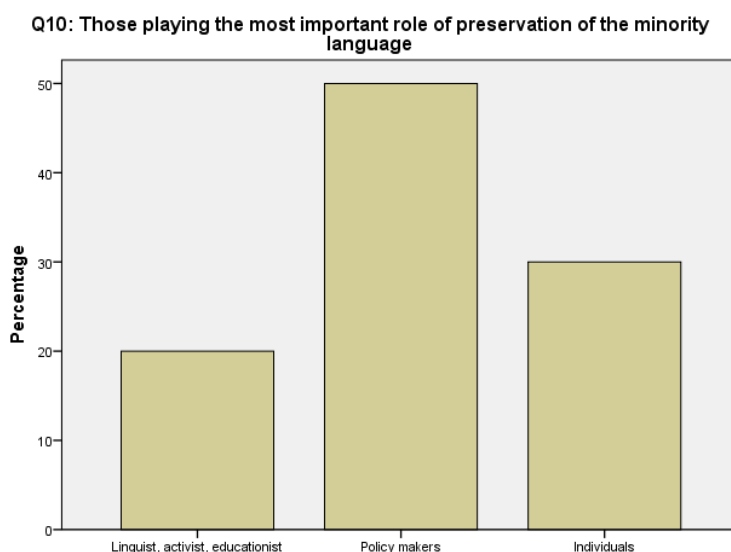
Q6 is telling us the data about the participants’ choice of using Mandarin at what time. According to the data of Q6, the percentage of the participants choosing to use Mandarin at primary school is about 40%. And as far as when they are at university, it is less frequently than when they were at primary school, the percentage of which is 30%. The percentages of the participants choosing to use Mandarin at secondary school and at high school are both lower, which are 20% and 10% respectively. This is to tell us that when the participants were at primary school they might have already chosen to use Mandarin in their daily language communication and for their language learning.

B. Factors Affecting Language Usage and Endangerment



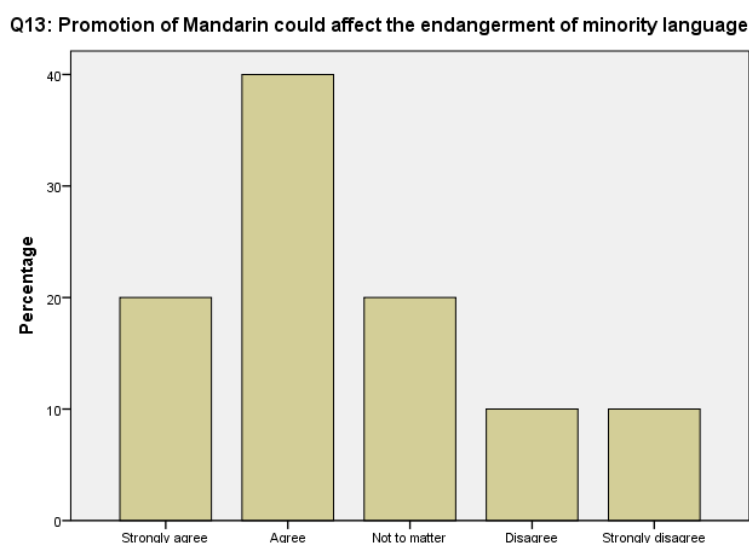


From question 7 to question 9, the main issue is about the knowing of some preservations of minority language policy, the experiences of preservations of minority language policy and the main reasons of minority language endangerment. According to the data of the three questions, it is clearly indicated that when it comes to the knowledge of some preservations of minority language policy, 80% of the participants know the knowledge. And 70% of the participants have the experiences of preservations of minority language policy. At the same time, about 80% of the participants think that external elements are the main reasons of minority language endangerment while those 20% of the participants think that the main reasons are from internal elements.

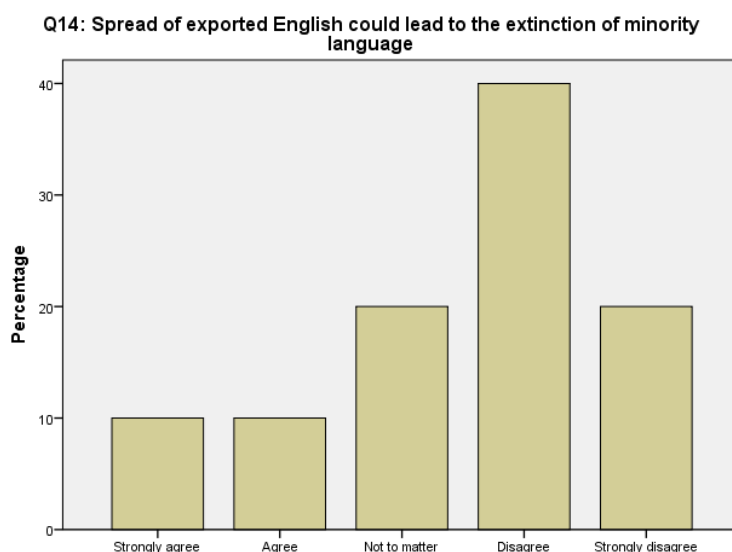


As for those who are playing the most important role of preservation of the minority language, 50% of the participants think that policy makers play the most important role of the preservation of the minority language. 30% of the participants think that individuals also play a part. For the role of linguists, activists, educationists, only 20% of the participants have that idea. Thus it is indicated that policy makers are playing the most important role to preserve the minority language.

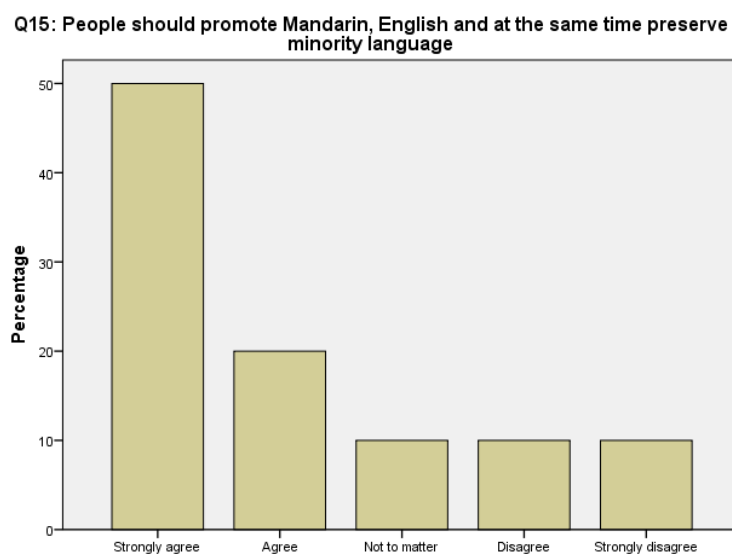
C. Relationship among Mandarin, English & Mother Tongues



Question 13 is about whether promotion of Mandarin could affect the endangerment of minority language. According to the data, 40% of the participants think that the promotion of Mandarin could affect the endangerment of the minority language. 20% of the participants strongly agree with such a fact while 10% of the participants disagree. The same percentage goes to those who strongly disagree with such a fact.



Question 14 is about whether the spread of exported English could lead to the extinction of minority language. It is indicated that 40% of the participants disagree with such a fact while 20% of the participants think that they strongly disagreed to admit such a fact. At the same time, only 10% of the participants strongly agree with such a statement.



Question 15 mainly shows about whether people should promote Mandarin, English and at the same time preserve minority languages. According to the data of question 15, 50% of the participants strongly agree to promote Mandarin, English and at the same time preserve minority language. Altogether there are 70% of the participants agreeing to promote Mandarin, English and at the same time preserve minority language. Based on question 15, we can clearly see that people tend to support the promotion of Mandarin and English while at the same time they also support to preserve their minority language.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research concludes what has been discussed above the four parts and gives a conclusive interpretation of the relationship between language acquisition and cultural identity among Chinese minority college students. Meanwhile, an enlightening significance is also introduced, aiming to call for an application of the transition from language acquisition and cultural identity among Chinese minority college students.

A. From Language Acquisition to Cultural Identity

Accordingly, in China nowadays, Mandarin serving as a common language is generally seen as providing an

important means by integrating discrete groups of people in China into a common linguistic and cultural system. This process of language acquisition actually involves the so-called legitimation and institutionalization of Mandarin promoted by the government (Zhu, 2003).

Legitimation here refers to the formal recognition accorded to Mandarin by the government. While, institutionalization refers to the process by mass communication, educational practices, which the language comes to be promoted or taken for granted in a wide range of social, cultural and linguistic domains or contexts, both formally and informally (Xiao, 1990).

From language acquisition to cultural identity, the factor of language attitude plays an important role in understanding and expression. The traditional cultural thoughts, national cultural meanings, and cultural identities in the pragmatic system have been affecting the language acquisition all the time. For instance, the basic characteristics of the two languages of Chinese and English embody a different kind of psychological stereotype, value, aesthetics and morality of the respective nations (Chen, 1985). A correct understanding of cultural identity depends on the comprehensive consideration of factors and contexts in language acquisition and language communication.

From language acquisition to cultural identity, language acquisition is an important aspect of language learning. There are two aspects of language learning, one is the understanding of language acquisition, and the other is the understanding of cultural identity. The two complement each other, but they cannot replace each other. The understanding of language acquisition is not an end, but a means to accurately grasp the information conveyed by the identity of the corresponding culture.

In fact, the understanding of language acquisition is not the only means in information conveyed because cultural identity also plays a very important role in it (Hao, 2002). Thus it helps Chinese minority college students learn to know such a fact that, understanding is acting as a communicative activity, which is the process of communicating cultural concepts, cultural thoughts as well as cultural identities between two or more different parties.

B. An Enlightening Significance

The human society has been progressing since it took place, the development of science and technology and the increasingly close cultural exchanges, the exchanges between different countries, different ethnic groups and different cultural circles are increasing. In modern society, bilingualism and multilingualism are gradually becoming an important part of education (Xiao, 1990).

In China, Mandarin has been of great prestige and importance while other languages or dialects spoken by Chinese have achieved far less attention or been considered in a low prestige (Hao, 2002). After considering all perspectives carefully, it should be concluded that almost all citizens in China may decide to use Mandarin in almost every situation.

Therefore, the transition from language acquisition to cultural identity will also help Chinese minority college students better understand the nature of language structures as well as the language needs of social and cultural activities. Thus it further helps develop effective language instruction and the cultivation of local talents who can carry out language instruction.

Besides, just as Kramsch (2000) maintains, since language is the carrier of culture dissemination and inheritance, a transition from language acquisition to cultural identity is even helpful for Chinese minority college students to understand language acquisition and cultural identity between countries and regions. More importantly, it is also beneficial for further mutual language education and language communication all over the world.

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Problems in Subtitling Cultural-Bound Expressions in “Theeb” Movie: A Case Study*

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Abstract—Subtitling is a challenging task making subtitlers use precise strategies to improve the quality of the subtitles. This paper aims at identifying the subtitling strategies employed in subtitling the culture-bound terms in the Jordanian movie entitled “Theeb” and assessing the translation of such culture-bound terms. The dialect used in this movie is the Bedouin Jordanian Arabic. So, the translator faced two dilemmas: (1) Understanding the Bedouin Jordanian-Arabic dialect and understanding the dimensions and features of this distinguished culture. (2) Translating this work, which is loaded with cultural expressions, into English. Furthermore, the study deals with the issue of overcoming the difficulties faced by translation of Arabic-language audiovisual dialogues into English. To achieve the purpose of this study, the data was collected from the movie “Theeb” and then analyzed. The results show that not all the subtitling strategies were used. Those left unused were dislocation, condensation, decimation, and resignation strategies. Hence, this article critically evaluates this subtitling, exposing pitfalls and offering more efficient renderings in a practical context.

Index Terms—Translation Studies, Subtitling, Cultural Expressions, Arabic/English, “Theeb” Movie

I. INTRODUCTION

One of many ways to translate films and television programs is subtitling. Subtitling can be defined as a textual form of a dialogue displayed in films and TV programs. Subtitling is essential for films due to its contribution to their overall effect and reception. Subtitles are usually displayed at the bottom of the TV screen. Through subtitling, the audience enjoys the film by reading and understanding the translated text at the bottom of a screen clearly. We can say that subtitling is more realistic since it displays the original sound. As the main method of translating films, subtitling involves the least interference with the original. In other words, therefore, it is a way of experiencing the flavor of the foreign language. Subtitling is a way of translating a foreign film without tampering with the original soundtrack and dialogues, as in the case of dubbing.

Translating subtitle texts, dialogues or conversations in a film is a difficult task for translators. Hatim and Mason (in Venuti, 2000) point out that there are four types of difficulties related to subtitling. The first difficulty is the shift in mode from speech to writing. The second one is the factor that governs the medium or channel in which meaning is to be conveyed. The third one is the reduction of the source text, as a consequence, and last but not least is the requirement of Subtitling Strategies in “Theeb” Movie.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Audiovisual Translation (AVT)

In this era of globalization, the exchange of information and cultures is unavoidable, and translation across languages and cultures is a big demand. Audiovisual Translation (AVT) in the form of translating, subtitling, and dubbing in TV programs, is a new category in the field of translation. In addition to AVT, other writers consider this translation category as audiovisual language transfer, which is a concept used to identify the process through an audiovisual program containing materials in a source language translated accurately and precisely to be understood by the audience in the target language, who are foreigners to the source language (Ghaemi & Benyamin, 2011).

Typically, translation deals with one single channel which is the written one, but in Audiovisual Translation (AVT) a translator must deal with four channels as proposed by Gottlieb (1998, p. 245):

1. Verbal auditory channel
2. Non-verbal auditory channel
3. Verbal visual channel
4. Non-verbal visual channel

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Meaning conveyed by the translation in the target language mainly depends on the four channels stated above, as they provide the context for the translation.

B. Subtitling

As mentioned earlier, subtitling is a translation between two languages and between modes of communication from the spoken words to the written ones. Moreover, subtitling has many difficulties in time and space constraints that may reduce how much can be said. Subtitling usually excludes words or full sentences, and the exact translation is often ignored for a more accurate translation.

In a similar vein, Vöge (1977) states that subtitling is a written translation of the film dialogue which is projected at the bottom of the screen (p. 120). Furthermore, Luyken et al. (1991) point out that subtitles are written translations of original dialogue which can be seen as lines of text, usually positioned at the foot of the screen (p. 31). Subtitles appear and disappear to coincide in time with the corresponding portion of the original dialogue and are almost always added to the screen image later as a post-production activity (Luyken et al., 1991, p. 31). Furthermore, Ivarsson & Carroll (1998) use the concept “subtitles” for texts which represent what is being said (whether they are visible, 'open' subtitles or 'closed' teletext which can be added to the picture when the viewer so wishes) (p. 4).

As mentioned above, making an excellent and relevant subtitle is a difficult task, and the translator must fully comprehend the guidelines related to subtitling. As translation strategies, subtitling strategies are the technical devices in the world of translation. However, subtitling is used for transferring the meaning of dialogues in one language into a text in another language. (Fawcett in Bogucki, 2004). In this study, the researchers rely on subtitling strategies from Gottlieb (1992): expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, dislocation, condensation, decimation, deletion, and resignation (p. 166).

Subtitling and Culture

It is common to say that native speakers of a language share not only this language but also a culture for which the language serves as a medium. One of the tasks of a subtitler, hence, is translating cultural-bound expressions. Cultural references or cultural-bound expressions are usually linked to culture-specific contexts such as sociolinguistic ones, geography, and history. According to Foreman (1992) (as cited in Narváez, 2015), cultural references include culture-bound terms and signs, gestures, and symbols. Furthermore, Mayoral and Muñoz (1997, as cited in Narváez, 2015) point that these terms can be regarded as culturally marked segments. For Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), cultural references broadly include history, geography, society, and culture. From his perspective, Ramière (2004) proposes three kinds of cultural references, viz. sociocultural, historical and extralinguistic references. Vandeweghe (2005) uses the concept of cultural references in order to include geographical, ethnographic and socio-political references. In the same vein, Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) use the concept “culture-bound terms” to refer to cultural references.

Translating culture-bound terms is very challenging. Nevertheless, the challenge is higher when it is related to subtitling. In contrast to other forms of written translation, subtitling does not allow at hand solutions to translate the difficult terms. In the other forms of translation, footnotes, glosses, and many other translation strategies can be used to convey the meaning of some culture-bound terms. However, in subtitling, all these solutions are absent (Zojer, 2011). One more problem in subtitling is lack of theory. Another problem in translating cultural references is conveying the ST meaning, as it is sometimes problematic to find out the meaning of the ST subtitles. Sometimes, one more problem is the ambiguity and lack of coherence of verbal texts such as speeches, which need to be translated faithfully or communicatively (Zojer, 2011). Other problems of translating cultural references include the emotive words, which need to be translated carefully. Therefore, this paper identifies strategies for translating subtitles, locates some problems in implementation, and offers alternatives using a pragmatic model.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims at:

1. Identifying the translation strategies used in subtitling “Theeb” movie from Arabic into English.
2. Identifying the problems that the translator of this movie encountered while translating culture-bound expressions from Arabic into English.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study stems from being an original attempt to tackle the problems and the strategies in subtitling a Jordanian movie from Arabic into English. “Theeb” is the first Bedouin movie and the first Jordanian film to receive an Oscar nomination. The film premiered in 2014 and was directed by Naji Abo Nowar. The title of the movie means “Wolf” in colloquial Arabic and carries ambivalent symbolism beyond our concern in this article. The researchers believe that the director introduced a masterpiece and displayed a magnificent image of the Bedouin society. Moreover, the study is significant as it contributes to directing the translations of the future Arab movies, especially those related to culture and tradition.

V. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Based on the research background of the study, the problems proposed in this research are:

- 1) What are the subtitling strategies applied in the movie "Theeb"?
2. What are the problems a translator might face in subtitling such movies?

VI. METHODOLOGY

A. Data Collection

The data of the research was collected from the official English subtitle of "Theeb" movie translated by Lamya Al-Khraisha who is a native speaker of Arabic language. The researchers selected 13 examples to achieve the objectives of the study.

B. Data Analysis

The study shall be conducted on the transcript of the screenplay and the subtitling which was done by Lamia Al-Khraisha. The transcript and subtitles could not be appended to this manuscript due to length and word count considerations, but we here reproduce relevant parts for this discussion. The researchers selected the examples that are loaded with cultural expressions and analyzed them based on the strategies proposed by Gottlieb (1992). The subtitling strategies are "expansion, paraphrase, transfer, transcription, imitation, dislocation, condensation, decimation, deletion, resignation" (p.166).

VII. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

In this section, the researchers identify and describe the subtitling strategies and the problems the translator faced in subtitling "Theeb" movie.

Example One:

Sharif Hussein bin Ali sent Marji and Edward to ask the Sheikh of a Bedouin tribe in Wadi Rum to guide them to a Roman well on Pilgrim's Trail. In a traditional sitting in the Sheikh's tent, Marji asked the Sheikh:

-SL: لي طلب عندك يا شيخ

-TL: I have a request, Sheikh?

The Sheikh:

-SL: ابشر، حياك الله

-TL: Of course.

Marji:

-SL: أرسلنا الشريف تدلنا على البير الروماني

-TL: The Sharif said you could guide us to the Roman Well

-The Sheikh:

-SL: هذا اللي على درب الحجاج؟

-TL: On the Pilgrim's Trail?

-SL: بس هالدرب ما هي ممشية يا رجل من يوم صارت السكة

-TL: That trail's been abandoned since the railroad came

Marji:

-SL: لي ربع غاد

-TL: I have people there.

The Sheikh:

-SL: والنعم بربيعك والله

-TL: With all respect.

-SL: بس ما ظل بهالدرب حجاج كلها قومان

-TL: There are more raiders than pilgrims on that trail.

In order to make an effect on the Sheikh, Marji said:

-SL: جينا على سمعة الشيخ الله يرحمه

-TL: Your father's reputation led us here.

Marji intended to remind the young Sheikh with his father, the former Sheikh of the tribe, who had a good reputation among people. So, the Sheikh said:

-SL: وصلتوا، حياكوا الله

-TL: You've arrived.

In the above example, the term (وصلتوا) is usually used in Jordan to refer to one's willingness to satisfy the listener's wish or demand. The translator, a Jordanian, translated this well-known cultural expression into "you've arrived." He/she should have been aware of such a common expression. This translation is literal and does not make any sense in the target text. However, the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context. The true translation has a deeper meaning and conveys more that someone on a trip and just arriving. The subtitler/translator should have translated (وصلتوا) into "you are welcome, will do it with pleasure."

Again, in the above example, we have the cultural expression (حياكوا الله) which means God bless you. The subtitler/translator omitted this expression. He/she did not translate it into English. The subtitler/translator should have translated this term into "Allah bless you" in order to reflect the sense and the image of this common expression which indicates warmly welcoming guests and visitors.

To further illustrate such problematic translations, let us consider the following example:

Example Two:

Marji asked The Sheikh Hmoud:

-SL: يا أخي عرب الشيخ أبو حمود وين؟

-TL: Where's Sheikh Abu Hmoud's Tribe?

The Sheikh replied:

-SL: وصلت.

-TL: You've arrived.

After dinner the guests start talking to the sheikh, explaining more about their intentions. The guest asks about the tribe of Abu Hmoud (Theeb and the Sheikh's father). The Sheikh answered with (وصلت) which is a literal translation or direct translation. The Sheikh's intention is to tell the man that you have what you're asking about, or you are now among Abu Hmoud's tribe. The dialogue is translated by transfer strategy. This strategy is used to transfer meaning of source language into target language without adding or deleting the utterance, and this strategy does not change the meaning of both source language and target language. The subtitler/translator used the Transfer strategy which refers to the strategy of translating the source text completely and correctly.

In this great scene, the director showed a magnificent habit that could be unknown even to Arab people. In the Bedouin society, neither the host nor the guest asks each other about their name except after the host made food to the guest. In this case, the translation is correct.

Example Three:

Trying to justify his dirty actions to Theeb, the stranger or the raider, began to talk about him-self. He said:

-SL: أنا عاشرت ناس من الشرق والغرب

-TL: I've met all kinds of people.

-SL: منهم الحكيم والتاجر

-TL: Anyone from wise men to merchants.

The word (الحكيم) in this context, means "the doctor who is trained to treat people who are ill" not "the wise man" who makes good decisions and gives good advices" (Longman, 2006). Unfortunately, the translator failed to understand the original text despite being a native speaker of Arabic language and a member of the source culture.

Example Four:

Usually after drinking coffee in someone's tent, the Bedouin man, the guest, says the word (عشت). It is an idiom used by Bedouin people to express thankfulness and gratitude and wish the listener health. In his turn, the host replies (تعيش). The literal meaning of the word (عشت) is "wishing someone long life". The translator did not understand the idiomatic meaning of the word in the source text; therefore, he/ she translated it literally as follows:

Al Sheikh Hmoud said to his brother Hussein:

-SL: قهوة يا حسين.

-TL: Coffee, Hussein.

Hussein replied:

-SL: إيه والله.

-TL: Coming.

Marji said:

-SL: الله بمسيكوا بالخير جميع. كيف حالكموا، شلونكموا؟

-TL: Good evening to you all.

Hussein gave Marji and Edward the coffee. Marji drank it and said:

-SL: عشت.

-TL: A long life.

Hussein replied:

-SL: تعيش.

-TL: And to you.

In example four, we have the cultural expression (عشت). The subtitler/ translator translated this term literally into "a long life." The translator should have translated (عشت) into "thank you." Such errors in subtitling can ruin the subtitles for most viewers. Moreover, this error may hamper comprehension and disrupt the coherence of the text. One more point, the subtitler/translator did not translate the expression (شلونكموا) which means "how are you?" Indeed, omission is one of the strategies used in subtitling culture-bound expressions. The subtitler/translator opted to delete this expression and did not compensate it. We believe that omission can be made followed by compensation to compensate the space left on the screen. Otherwise, the viewers will lose track of the scene and lose enjoyment.

To better prove our argument and add more substance to it, let us also consider the following example:

Example Five:

As we have mentioned above, the raider tried to justify his dirty actions to Theeb. In the same context, the raider said:

-SL: ولفيت ديار كثيرة.

-TL: I've travelled all over.

-SL: رحلت للقدس والشام.

TL: I've seen Jerusalem and El-Sham.

In the above example, we have the proper name (الشام) Damascus. The subtitle/translator translated it by using transliteration strategy. This proper name has a translation in English language which is "Damascus." The translator should have translated (الشام) into "Damascus." In Arab culture, (الشام) means "Damascus" even though it could be expanded to include all the Levant countries (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan). But in this context, as we can see, (الشام) refers to "Damascus" because it is joined with Jerusalem which is considered a part of the Levant cities. Indeed, Arab people who live in Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine call "Damascus" (الشام). In fact, the use of the name of another city (Jerusalem) in the same immediate context hints that El-Sham here refers to the city of Damascus.

Example Six:

Theeb and Hussein got up the mountain. The raiders surrounded them and began to use the war of nerves tactic, trying to strike fear into their hearts:

-SL: ناموا، تريحوا يا رجال.

-TL: Get some sleep, brothers.

-SL: لا تناموا يا ذبايح!

-TL: Don't sleep little doggies!

-SL: يا ولد والله تقول الربع انخدوا!

-TL: Hey, I think they've really fallen asleep!

-SL: خمدة.

-TL: They're dreaming.

In the above example, the translator translated (انخدوا) into "they've really fallen asleep" which is acceptable, but translating (خمدة) into "they're dreaming" is not acceptable. In Arabic language, (خمدة) means wishing somebody death. The translator did not notice the way the raider said this word. In this case, the translator should have translated (خمدة) into a wish that they die or undergo eternal sleep. The subtitle/translator used the generalization strategy. He/she translated (خمدة) into a more polite euphemistic word phrase "they are dreaming."

Example Seven:

ST:

مرجي: لي طلب عندك يا شيخ

الشيخ: ابشر حياك الله

TT:

Marji: I have a request Sheikh?

Sheikh: Of course

"Marji" wants a favor from the Sheikh, and the Sheikh answers with "ابشر حياك الله". The subtitle/translator translated (ابشر حياك الله) into "of course". The term (ابشر) refers to obligation. Bedouins usually link their answers with Islamic expressions, where they praise Allah in each utterance. In the above example, they connect their answer (ابشر) with (حياك الله). The subtitle/translator does not convey the same sense and image into the target language. He/she translated it into "of course." In order to convey the same image, the translator should have translated it into "Allah bless you, will do it with pleasure." In other words, he/she should have followed the dislocation strategy to maintain the effect and the sense of the image of the source text.

Example Eight:

ST:

الشيخ: رح نتواجه إن شاء الله

مرجي: يا الله بخاطرك يا شيخ

TT:

Al sheikh: Soon, God willing

Marji: With your permission sheikh

In the above example, we have the colloquial expression (بخاطرك يا شيخ) translated literally into "with your permission." The subtitle/translator is not familiar with the Bedouin culture. The term is not translated accurately by the subtitle; thus, a meaningless and senseless translation has been made. The subtitle/translator should have translated the above term functionally into "Please excuse me (I need to go)", or even simply "Goodbye."

Example Nine:

ST:

قاطع الطريق: الكف ما يناطح مخرز

TT:

The raider: you can't stop a spear with your hand

The raider and "Theeb" see all the dead revolutionaries after the battle with the Ottomans. The raider comments with a proverb, which is a metaphor, to highlight how unfair the battle was for the revolutionaries. The literal meaning is

"you can't fight a dagger with your bare hand." The subtitler/translator chose cultural equivalence for this proverb to create a familiar and intense effect. This equivalence can also be described as dynamic since it created the same effect in the target language and evoked a similar image in the receptor's mind. The translator employed the condensation strategy. He/she manages to retain both meaning and most of the stylistic features of the original.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study aimed at identifying the subtitling strategies adopted in subtitling the Bedouin movie "Theeb" which was released in 2014. For this purpose, the data was collected from the movie and analyzed using Gottlieb (1992) subtitling strategies. The results of the study have shown that some of the strategies proposed by Gottlieb were used (condensation, decimation, transfer, imitation, and deletion), but the other strategies were totally ignored. Furthermore, the translation of the movie did not reflect an adequate absorption of the Bedouin dialect and Arab-Islamic culture. Moreover, the study has shown that there were some serious errors or problems that can ruin the subtitles for viewers and make the subtitles sound unnatural. These errors occurred due to not translating the culture-bound expressions functionally, which affected conveying meaning. Hence, we tried to suggest more accurate or more apt renderings that work better for the designated context. Finally, further studies on subtitling such movies (i.e. Bedouin ones) are still needed. In other words, the researchers believe that there are not enough studies on audiovisual translation, particularly translating dialect. Hence, we hope that this study may lead to more research in this regard. And since translation is a bridge among cultures and languages, sensitivity to culture-bound expressions serves this noble mission of translation.

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Critical Discourse Analysis and Rhetorical Tropes in Donald Trump's First Speech to the UN

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Abstract—Language and politics go hand in hand and learning and comprehending political genre is to learn a language created for codifying, extending and transmitting political discourse in any text/talk. Drawing upon the theoretical framework of Fairclough's CDA and Rhetoric, the current study aims at investigating Donald Trump's First Speech, from the point of frequency and functions of some rhetorical strategies (*Parallelism, Anaphora and the Power of Three, Antithesis and Expletive*, etc.), *Nominalization, Passivization, We-groups and Modality* as well as *Lexical and Textual Analysis*, presented to the UN delivered on Sep. 19, 2017. Specifically, the study seeks to determine: (1) how President Trump succeeded in conveying his notions and assumptions to his intended audience, and in convincing and negotiating, (2) how he attempted to explicitly and implicitly pass his attitudes on his targets, and (3) how those orientations, intended notions and assumptions were seamlessly presented to his addressees in discursual and lexico-grammatical levels; (4) and finally in this underlying trend how he achieved his own ends. The results of the study hope to enhance reading comprehension and writing in academic registers for EFL/ESL students.

Index Terms—CDA, rhetoric, passivization, modality, lexical & textual analysis, unification strategy, power of three, antithesis

I. OVERVIEW

Language plays a vital role in the transfer of orators' forethought and pre-determined notions to the crowd. Language is not independently powerful; it obtains power through the powerful use of pundits and politicians etc. to provoke, prevail, and persuade the audience toward the intended goals and meanings. Kazemian and Hashemi (2014) contend that "power is signified, for example, by rhetorical and grammatical forms within a text or a text's genre". This underlines a growing need for scrutinizing the language use of those prominent people critically and rhetorically.

Schiffrin, et al. (2003) postulate that discourse has broadly been construed as anything above the sentence; for others, the study of discourse is the study of language use, though. Discourse refers to modes of speaking and writing whereby interactants engaged in the acts of communication adopt particular attitudes towards areas of socio-cultural activity (Schiffrin, et al. 2003). Discourse Analysis (DA) is a rapidly growing and evolving field. Considering its diverse definitions, it is no surprise that the terms discourse and DA have various meanings to teachers-researchers in various fields. DA is generally characterized by scholars as the study of usage of languages in text/talk and its contextual meaning, whereas CDA is the analytical discourse as a research to investigate the social practice of domination, power abuse by text and talk in a socio-political context. CDA views discourse as a form of social practice (Van Dijk, 2001). There are various definitions for CDA by salient scholars; those definitions might seem different on the surface but all unanimously concur on the fact that CDA is an analytical approach for language in use.

To Fairclough (2006), CDA is an increasing interdisciplinary analytical movement which sifts through the association between discourse and power, and it specifically inspects the way in which "authority, dominance and social inequality are constructed, sustained, reproduced and resisted in the discourse of written texts and spoken words"

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(Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014; Kazemian et al., 2021). CDA targets to unload the down-to-earth social and cultural notions which are deeply lodged in 'all forms of language' that we exert (Kazemian et al., 2021).

Fairclough's (1989, 2003) approach to CDA is unique, *the focus of this study*, in that he deals with the central focus on the linguistic investigation of textual materials and has established linguistic devices probing textual forms and structures. Fairclough's procedure is of great value in essence as it narrows the divergence between the structural components of language and the extrinsic communal world it struggles to exhibit through which a deeper comprehension of discourse can be attained. To substantiate the linguistic relationship to such subjectivity, Fairclough adopts the procedure triggered by Halliday (1994) as Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to dissect discourse at the lexico-grammatical level. The interaction between discourse and social engagements can be perceived through a grammatical inspection of structural components (Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014). To Fairclough (1989), there is a significant correlation between society and discourse to complement each other well. To him, discourse molds the way people think and the linguistic properties as vehicles bear creed, assumptions, and perceptions of the social world.

Whereas CDA's primary focus is on language in its socio-cultural context, the ideological presumptions formulated through interaction, texts, and linguistic investigation of textual materials, rhetorical analysis restricts its prime focus to political interplay and probes "to find patterns of goals, interests and joint assumptions underlying persuasive actions" (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 125).

Technically, Rhetoric is the art of discourse, wherein a rhetorician struggles to brief, exhort or stimulate specific audiences in specific situations. In rhetoric, rhetorical apparatus (resources of language, or stylistic device) is a method that rhetoricians deploy to express a message or meaning to the listener or reader with the aim of **convincing** and **inciting** him/her towards considering a subject/s from a distinctive aspect and outlook, exploiting sentences engineered to persuade or provoke an emotional display of a given mindset or action. The term rhetoric in this sense, *the focus of this study*, proposes an analytical toolkit to inquire into and ruminate on how to impart itself appropriately and adequately in association with the subject matter of text/talk, and the crowd, and to draw upon practices to distinguish the connections between contexts and texts (Jost & Olmsted, 2004, p. 25).

A. Statement of the Problem and the Purpose of the Study

Every text/talk text incorporates some lexico-grammatical components that constitute its existence as a meaningful context. This meaningful context contains some *covert, implicit presumptions* and *implications*. To van Dijk (2012) "discourses are like icebergs. Only a minor part of their meaning is 'visible' as explicit propositions expressed in their sentences. The major parts of their meaning remain implicit, namely as implied propositions" (p. 596). Thusly, we must be attentive while we read, sift through or inquire into political discourse to explore evidence of *persuasive, purposive* and *eclectic* deployment of "words and expressions, or even of contextual, lexico-grammatical, rhetorical tropes and so on" (Kazemian, et al., 2021). Knowing rhetorical devices and CDA strategies along with their respective implications and the way to unpack those implied expressions, and strategies can be very effective for EFL and ESL learner's proficiency in academic registers at various levels; it can develop reading comprehension in EFL and ESL students in academic registers as well.

Regarding the absence of studies in Donald Trump's First Speech to the UN, the aim of this study is to investigate Donald Trump's First Speech to the UN, about 4500 words, from the point of frequency and functions of some *rhetorical* and *critical strategies* as well as *Lexical* and *Textual Analysis* to reveal their implicit and explicit meanings, and structures as well as to grasp and disclose the effective and dominant principles and tropes utilized in his speech. Fairclough's CDA framework is used to unravel the speaker's adroit and skillful employment of these devices in the speech which are bound up with his overall political orientations. The study seeks to determine how President Trump succeeded in conveying his notions and assumptions to his intended audience; additionally, the study scrutinized the corpus to unpack how he attempted to explicitly and implicitly pass his attitudes on his targets.

B. Significance and Justification of the Study

According to Van Dijk (2013), critical discourse studies do not privilege a specific analytical model or believe in the necessity of such a unified method. Researchers working within this school are free to locate or design an appropriate method for their study depending on its aims, research questions, and the type of data. For this study, we accordingly draw on some CDA strategies and rhetorical devices for the first phase of the research to show how Mr. Trump made use of given devices and resources in order to smoothly present and convey his intended ideologies and assumptions to a convincing representation of the deal to the American people as well as to the rest of the world.

Considering the fact that most students in academic registers have reading comprehension problems in various discourses (Johnson, 1981; Atai & Nazari, 2011; Afshar & Movassagh, 2016), this study hopes to smooth the path for those students interested in comprehending political or other academic discourses. Most academic students are seemingly oblivious to the fact that nearly all political texts/talks contain hidden assumptions and ideologies which are deliberately engineered for public consumption. By knowing rhetorical and CDA strategies, academic students can be equipped to deal with and take into account those hidden ideologies and intentions which are beneath the surface of any political texts/talks. They will remain vigilant at all times to hold their attention to invisible and implicit parts of any political text/talk.

The selection of the speech is grounded in its deft political rhetoric and oratory; the benchmarks for choosing these devices and tropes are as follows: Principally, *agentlessness* (passive voices) leaves an agent fuzzy and is chiefly deployed to depict ambiguity and equivocation - as true for nominalization. Then, an insight into the essence and the functions of rhetorical devices in political discourse can assist instructors and scholars, to give overarching and fathomable presentations of these strategies; knowing these tropes and devices can aid readers and students to pinpoint their considerable significance for perusing and comprehending political speeches as well. The main pedagogical goals of this study are, firstly, *raising the consciousness* of EFL and ESL students, and instructors in academic registers with regard to the role of lexico-grammatical and rhetorical expressions as well as implied assumptions in reading and comprehending political discourse. Then, it can help students to identify those implicit messages and implications in a clause and in different political text/talk in particular, so that, equipped with such political awareness, their reading comprehension could be assisted. Eventually, it is to develop students' awareness of the characteristics of political written/spoken discourses.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

A. CDA & Its Pertinent Literature

As mentioned above, the primary linguistic approach in language studies is the analysis of discourse. Critical Discourse Studies (thereafter, CDS) as a school of discourse analysis provides researchers with a critical attitude towards the relationship between discourse and society and a set of guidelines about how this mutuality of discourse (text) and society (context) should be taken into account. CDS, on the one hand, aims at showing how discourse constructs social structures through representing the world in a particular way, and on the other, it demonstrates that this particular representation is itself under the influence of social structures like power relations and ideologies (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough (1989) specified that CDA is a critical tool for analysis; it is argued that:

Discourse is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them. In other words, is socially *constitutive* as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it contributes to transforming it (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258).

There seems to be a growing body of studies on CDA as follows. Kazemian and Hashemi (2014) proposed an integrated procedure by investigating political discourse through the lenses of two frameworks viz *CDA & Rhetoric* plus *Nominalization* in SFL. In another research, Kazemian & Hashemi (2017) have probed ideological assumptions lodged in three speeches by Mr. Obama; the analysis is based on Fairclough's perspectives of ideology and significance of inspecting the grammatical prospects of discourse, Hallidayan Grammatical Metaphor (GM) in SFL and some rhetorical strategies (Kazemian, et al., 2021). In some other veins, Ali and Kazemian (2015) analyzed a speech by Liaquat Ali Khan in light of Van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework to emphasize the key aspects of discourse construction and perception. In another study, Ali, et al. (2015) explored a reading text '*Pakistan Zindabad*' to recognize and address issues and display the gap and obliviousness on the part of instructors and learners regarding the CDA of the text in the context of reading classroom. In surveying the current annals of literature, some other remarkable inquiries was found which scrutinize a wide variety of political text/talk in light of CDA to point out numerous strategies applied by eloquent rhetoricians and politicians, and to demonstrate how they make political discourse *convincing*, *consequential*, *entrancing*, and *obscure*, and how they convey their intended objectives to the crowd as well (Hussein, 2016; Amoli, 2016; Skarp, 2016; Carreon, & Svetanant, 2017; Gill & Kausar, 2017; Albtoush & Sahuri, 2017a, b; Kazemian et al., 2021 etc.). Prior studies contributed to focus on some other discourses and genres. This study is unique in the sense that it struggles to narrow the gap among formers surveys by looking into Donald Trump's First Speech to the UN through the lenses of CDA strategies, Rhetorical tropes and Nominalization to reveal its implicit and explicit meanings and structures as well as to grasp and disclose the effective and dominant principles and tropes utilized in his speech.

B. Rhetoric and Its Relevant Literature

To Corbett (1990), Rhetoric is "an art that aims to improve the capability of speakers that attempt to inform, persuade or motivate audiences in specific situations" (p. 1). It is the skill to use language more impressive and persuasive. Moreover, Leech (1983) clearly delineates rhetoric as "the effective use of language in its most general sense, how it is applied in everyday conversation and public speaking" (p. 15). So, the purpose of rhetoric is not plainly to accomplish *persuasiveness*, but rather "to uncover the means of approaching as near such success as the circumstances of each particular case" (Kazemian et al., 2021).

In all political systems whether monocratic or democratic, leaders need people to accept and believe in the *virtuousness* of their leadership. Even totalitarian regimes cannot rely only on coercion and need to employ some forms of 'soft power' to legitimize themselves (Althusser, 1971; Gramsci, 1971). Performing in language is one of the most effective means by which leaders try to legitimize their leadership and mobilize their followers (Charteris-Black, 2005). *Legitimization* and *mobilization* as important political goals are also the concern of two language-oriented fields: CDA and Classical Rhetoric (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013; Goddard & Krebs, 2015; Wodak, Angouri, & Vaara, 2014).

While CDA is concerned with the notion of discourse representation and how it can help achieve legitimation to serve or resist power relations, rhetoric deals with how that representation is made persuasive in order to make people believe in an idea or person and to mobilize them to take specific actions. Rhetorical analysis therefore is “an effort to understand the whole of a message and the way the message has been constructed for the purpose of persuasion” (Bazerman & Prior, 2003, p. 282). This means that rhetoric can enrich CDA by providing information about the mechanisms of a persuasive representation. CDA’s main concern is answering broader questions regarding what representation of reality a specific discourse offers; and whose interests it serves (Bazerman & Prior, 2003). Rhetoric can help identify how this representation of reality is constructed to be appealing to its audience. By bringing these two frameworks together, the researchers aim to show how Mr. Trump presents a version of reality that is in line with his interests and ideologies and, at the same time, persuasive to his audience.

Rhetoric and Rhetorical devices have been used widely in linguistic studies whether in DA, CDA, or in political and law discourses, literature or language learning and teaching. The focus is various from one study to another in terms of what of the various CDA and rhetorical devices to be analyzed. Reviewing the annals of literature, recent years have witnessed increased attention being given to Rhetoric and political text/talk as follows. A survey of investigations from the perspective of CDA, SFL and rhetoric by Kazemian and Hashemi (2014) and Kazemian et al. (2021) was made to perform and explore Barack Obama’s 2012 five speeches and Mr. Khamenei’s 2 letters to the youth in the Occident. The studies contributed to find out the frequency and functions of Burke’s *Identification theory*, *GM*, *Rhetorical tropes*, *Passivization*, *Modality* etc. Zhou and Kazemian (2015) made a study based on Burkean rhetorical theory and Identification to dissect John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural Address. An analysis of rhetorical devices in Hillary Clinton concession speech to reveal their respective functions was applied by Taping, Juniardi & Utomo (2017). Revising recent annals of literature in rhetoric, there are other studies that adopted Rhetoric and its devices in various discourses and text/talk (Bull & Wells, 2002; Flowerdew, 2002; Bizzell, 2003; Murphy, 2003; Sinha & Jackson, 2006; Lillian, 2008; Rex, 2011; Li & Chen, 2015; Bull, 2016;).

III. METHODOLOGY

It is assumed that “familiarity with context can assist readers in comprehending coherent relations across text/talk” (Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014). To date few studies have embarked on analyzing Donald Trump’s first speech to the UN based on CDA and rhetorical devices. The current study followed a qualitative approach to analysis. The method of analysis was top-down, applying some rhetorical devices (*Parallelism & Anaphora*, *the Power of Three & Amplification*, *Antithesis & Expletive*, and *Rhetorical questions*), and some CDA strategies (*Passivization & Nominalization*, *We-groups* and *Modality*) presented by Fairclough (1989) as well as Lexical and Textual Analysis.

A. Corpus

Due to the paramount importance of selecting authentic and a native speech in political genres, an effort was made to choose the US president’s speech to the UN on the basis of its recent delivery, skillful political rhetoric and oratory. For the purposes of this study and due to its international political salience, the speech, approximately **4500** words, is selected to pinpoint and analyze the frequency and functions of those devices and strategies. The speech was delivered on Sep. 19, 2017; the full transcript of the speech is available in the following link (<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-un-speech-read-in-full-transcript-north-korea-general-assembly-a7956041.html>).

B. Procedure

The analysis began by perusing the given speech several times by the researchers and a colleague, specialized in CDA and Rhetoric. Primarily, it was scrutinized by the researchers in order to identify tokens of frequent and possible rhetorical devices and CDA strategies used by Mr. Trump. In the first phase of the analysis, the researchers perused the speech to spot probable devices and strategies; then, each instance of chosen devices and strategies was counted, classified and tabulated based on their frequency in the speech; each of which is explicated in the next chapter. After about a two-month intermission, ‘coding reliability’ was attested by a second probe by the researchers, and any divergence in differentiating between rhetorical tropes and CDA strategies was recorded and fully settled. ‘Cohen’s Kappa coefficient’ (κ) was employed to beckon the amount of intra-coder reliability (a statistic which measures inter-rater agreement for qualitative (categorical) items, and the attained index was 0.91. Kappa values ranging from -1 to $+1$; a value of 1 depicts total accord, and a value between 0.80 and 1 denotes very nice accord. Furthermore, a fraction of the corpus was chosen and perused by the colleague to check the accuracy of recognition of rhetorical devices and CDA strategies and to aid boosting the credibility of the inspections and the findings. Cohen’s Kappa coefficient signified an index of 0.80. In the second phase of the analysis, the researchers extracted the functions of those chosen devices and strategies used in each category by analyzing the lexico-grammatical contexts in which they occurred. Eventually, the corpus was critically analyzed and concentrated on more detailed points in terms of Lexical and Textual Analysis. The design of the present study is descriptive-analytic which focused on the frequency of occurrences of CDA strategies and Rhetorical tropes along with their respective functions in the speech.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A. CDA Strategies

The exemplified and dominant featured CDA strategies in this study are *passivization* and *nominalization*, *unification strategy* (we-groups), and *Modality*, etc. each of which will be discussed in the following.

1. Modality (Modal Verbs)

Eggins's (2004) and Renkema's (2009) maintain that modal verbs enable language users, rhetoricians, and orators to convey and meekly impose their notions and ideologies to the audience. *Modal verbs* are utilized along with other verbs to articulate beliefs and perceptions such as *probability*, *permission*, *prohibition*, *obligation*, or *intention* with *high*, *median*, and *low* values as in Table 4.1. More schematically, modality with a highly functional mood paradigm is asserted in all languages through "either grammatical mood or modal systems (or both), and it is the degree of certainty about an incident, action or a state of affairs" (Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014). To Mortelmans (2010), the English modal verbs are essentially involved with the degree of prospect, or the degree of individual obligation or engagement of the speaker toward the truth of a proposition. The English modal verbs, then, are regarded as making up the grammatical classification that is precisely related to the semantic classification of force dynamics, as such, the modal verbs are the '*grammaticalized encodings*' of multitudinous forms in which entities communicate concerning forces and barriers. Fairclough (1989) argued that Modals are engaged with orators' authority as well; he views modality from two *perspectives*, on the basis of what aspect the authority is aligned with. Basically, *relational modality* (the focus of this study) is engaged upon the status of the authority of one person pertaining to others. Second, *expressive modality* is construed "as a matter of a speaker or writer's authority regarding the truth or possibility of a depiction of a reality" (Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014). Relational modality is determined by modal auxiliary verbs such as *might*, *must*, *would*, *can*, *ought to* etc., as follows embraced from Halliday (1994) and Halliday & Matthiessen, (2004):

TABLE 4.1
MODALITY VALUES

	Low politeness	Median politeness	High politeness
Positive (P)	Can, may, could, might	Will, would, should, shall	Must, ought to, need, has/had to
Negative (N)	needn't, need to, have to	Won't, wouldn't, shouldn't	Mustn't, oughtn't to, can't, couldn't, mayn't, mightn't, hasn't/hadn't to

Modal auxiliaries are implied instruments of modality of probability and necessity with *high*, *median* and *low* values. As table 4.1 manifests, high standards of modals include *had to*, *need*, *must*, and *ought to* plus their negative forms; median standard of modals accommodates *will*, *should*, and *would* etc.; and *could*, *might*, *may*, and *can* and the like are of low standard. Fairclough (2003) contends that with respect to grammatical options, a fundamental aspect of the inquiry draws in investigating modality which symbolizes viewpoints into commitments to truth, obligation and necessity. Consider the following excerpts from the speech:

- 1) If we desire ..., then we **must** fulfill our sovereign duties to We **must** protect our nations, We **must** reject threats to sovereignty We **must** uphold
- 2) We **cannot** let a murderous regime continue these destabilizing activities while building dangerous missiles, and we **cannot** abide by an agreement

The modal (*must*) is employed four times in example 1 and the modal (*cannot*) is applied twice in the example 2 which are enunciating deep conviction based on inference or deduction from proof; they exhibit *commitment* and *obligation*, in other words, authority's points of view obligate the addressees to do so. Thusly, obligation can be perceived as an unavoidable assignment or necessity achieved by *must*, and *has (got) to*; "the modal verb '*must*' can have the force of a direct command" (Kazemian & Hashemi, 2041). This force emanates from the fact that in definite cultural contexts, the orator has power and control over the crowd, and the orator takes the accountability for the action being carried out. The use of '*must*', as signifying a real-world force imposed by the orator, impels the audience unquestioning obedience and to do the action or lead onto doing it stated in text/talk.

By using high negative modality (example 2) (*cannot: denoting obligation*), the speaker makes an effort to probably tempt and convince the crowd to pass a resolution calling for a ban to that Regime, otherwise, they will be accused of being incompetent and inept to do so. In the example (1), by dint of *must*, the speaker instills his attitudes and conceptualizations explicitly and then implicitly into the audience, as if "he is dictating and imposing what he wants the audience to do where it seems that they cannot help defying but agree with him" (Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014).

TABLE 4.2
MODALITY ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECH

Text	Total No.	Low value			Median value			High value			Total percent
		Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Total	
1	4500	12	1	13	29	3	32	17	6	23	68
		0.2 %	0.02 %	0.28 %	0.64 %	0.06 %	0.71 %	0.37 %	0.13 %	0.51 %	1.51 %

The above table (4.2) showcases the frequency and percentage of modal auxiliaries used by Mr. Trump in his speech. In accordance with the statistics, it is made manifest that modals are employed to relate and refer widely to the orator's perspectives and concepts toward the truth of a proposition/s conveyed by a sentence with an average of 2.22 % throughout the speech. A significant proportion of the exploitation of the modal verbs is adequate and appropriate to the speaking since the speech is delivered through a powerful and political speech. By analogy with other verbs, modals are more readily and easier to spot and then conceded or even acquiesced, the reason for acquiescence and acceptance is that the audience has no time to deliberate at the time of listening to the speech. The most constantly featured modals in the speech are *will*, *must* and *can* indicating the orator's judgments of probabilities, necessity and permission respectively.

2. Passivization and Nominalization

Quite a few investigations have provided conclusive findings that political obligations and commitments and the power hierarchy as well in social associations are essential features that determine linguistic strategies such as *nominalization* and *passivization* (Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014, 2017). Linguistically, foregrounding the act of an agent/s, and downgrading and cloaking the agent/s are largely achieved through the deployment of the passive voices and nominalizations. *Passivization* offers rhetoricians and orators an option to obscure or even eliminate the agent/s altogether in text/talk, known as an *Agentlessness* structure (Simpson, 1993). In passive clauses, the actors indeed are converted into *circumstances*, and those circumstances can be removed without making the sentence ungrammatical, e.g.: *Nathan was shot to death in the city*; grammatically, this clause is an absolutely adequate clause, even though it is *Agentless* (Renkema, 2009). Undoubtedly, the passive voice foregrounds the theme and backgrounds the agent. Consider some other examples from the speech as follows:

- 1) We **are guided** by outcomes, not ideologies.
- 2) No society could be safe if banned chemical weapons **are allowed** to spread.
- 3) The United States has ..., but if it **is forced** to defend itself or

The exertion of all above passivized clauses in his address is probably due to the fact that the effect of the action is much more significant than the actor. In the above excerpts, the agent/s is downgraded in the first example; the action is foregrounded, though; whilst, in the second example, the participant(s) is totally left out to blot out the agent of such foul and obnoxious misdeeds. There is an abundance of nominalized words and 32 passivized phrases in the speech in which the actors are unintendedly 'backgrounded' or cleared away to cloak in actors and/or misdeed. Hence, it can be asserted that such toolkit encrypts ideological bias in favor. In the meanwhile, actors and entities accountable for maltreatment are relegated and hidden from the stage of misdeed or action by orators, and from the crowd or readers as follows (Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014, 2017):

- 4) For too long the American people **were told** that mammoth,
- 5) ... that new generations of children **are raised** free from *violence, hatred, and fear*.
- 6) Their democratic institutions **are being destroyed**.
- 7) I **was elected** not to take power, but to give
- 8) If this **is not twisted** enough, now North Korea's reckless

Fairclough (2003) demystifies that "the exclusion and inclusion of social actors can be syntactically distorted" (p. 149). He comments "there are many motivations for exclusion, such as redundancy or irrelevance, but exclusion may be politically or socially significant" (p. 149). In parallel with the *agentlessness* of propositions, orators and spin doctors can draw on nominalized phrases to contract and condense information and to obliterate agents out of the scene and make clauses objectified and more equivocal (Cook, 2003) (... *free from violence, hatred, and fear* from example 5).

3. Unification Strategy (We-Groups)

If one pores over a text or listens to a political speech critically and methodically, he/she can fathom how every clause or sentence is delicately engineered for grass roots consumption and how it holds and embodies hidden meanings, underlying assumptions, and strategies awaiting to be revealed and to be spotted by thoughtful audience and observant readers. *Unification strategy* is one of those prominent techniques utilized by politicians and rhetoricians in political text/talk; the planned deployment of *we-groups* (*we*, *our* and *us*) serves to create an affiliated relations between orators and the audience. Fairclough (1989) claims that pronouns in English have complementary values of assorted types, that is, the selection between *we* and *you* is engaged with combination of 'power and solidarity'. In general, there seems to be two sorts of *we-groups*, i.e., in *inclusive we* the audience and orators are incorporated and integrated, simply put, they are strategically unified; nevertheless, in *exclusive we* the audience is cunningly segregated and dissociated, and it does not incorporate the addressee(s) (Fairclough, 1989). It has been argued that strategic deployment of *we-groups* in political discourses not only functions to establish a '*personalized/demarginalized and inclusive*' linkage between orators and the audience, but also considering its equivocacy, it serve to '*exclude, marginalized/depersonalize*' agents of political action making it enigmatic to realize the precise referents of *we* in propositions as follows (Fairclough, 2001; Kazemian, 2015):

- 1) To overcome the perils of ..., **we** must begin with the wisdom of the past. **Our** success depends on a **We** do not expect diverse countries to, but **we** do ...

2) If **we** desire to lift up **our** citizens, if **we** aspire to the approval of history, then **we** must fulfill **our** sovereign duties to the people **we** faithfully represent. **We** must protect **our** nations, their interests and their futures. **We** must **We** must uphold respect

In the above examples (1 & 2), all we-groups can be categorized under *inclusive we* in which the speaker makes an effort to include himself with audience and to establish a unified relationship with them. In this regard, he has strategically coalesced and combined himself in the same group to reduce his gap between them, and then to transmit and share his political creeds and notions to them.

TABLE 4.3
FREQUENCY OF WE-GROUPS IN MR. TRUMP'S SPEECH

Text	Total No.	We	Total	Percent	Our	Total	Percent	Us	Total	percent	Total percent
1	4500	√	90	2 %	√	65	1.4 %	√	15	0.3 %	3.7 %

Knowing the starring roles of *we-groups* in demonstrating his solidarity with the audience, as table 4.3 displays, Mr. Trump would rather *we-groups* in his speech more than other pronouns. In the following example (3), he marks and builds political boundaries between his administration/himself or his country, as an authority, and the audience by exclusive we-groups:

3) In Syria and Iraq, **we** have made In fact, **our** country has achieved **We** seek the de-escalation of

4) ... when **we** looked around and understood that **we** were a nation. **We** realized who **we** were, what **we** valued, and what **we** would give **our** lives to defend.

5) **We** want harmony **We** are guided ... **We** have a policy of That realism forces **us** to confront ..., it is a question **we** cannot escape or avoid. **We** will slide down, or do **we** have enough strength and

As it is obvious in most above instances (example 5 in particular), there is a vagueness/enigma in the strategy, because at times it is not immediately obvious that by *we*, who he touches on: is it inclusive or exclusive? It is not immediately apparent by '*we*' if he incorporates the audience or just leaves them out and embraces his Cabinet and the US. In the above example (4), the usage of we-groups definitely refers to his government and Americans; but in example (3), for instance, he probably unifies himself with the crowd. The unification strategy, i.e., *we*, *our* and *us* are deployed 170 times in the speech (90, 65 & 15 times respectively about 3.7 %) and they are some of the most frequently featured words of the speech.

B. Rhetorical Tropes

Obviously, research in rhetoric deals with the various forms and powers of political *persuasions* and this *exhortation* is noticeably a type of demonstration. A Rhetorical probe in a speech full of rhetorical phrases inquiries into its eloquence, persuasiveness, effectiveness, and contrasting strategies etc. in the realm of political contexts.

1. Parallelism and Anaphora

To Gandio (2008), persuasion consists primarily of 3 steps: it can modify, reinforce and constitute *someone's* notion. Language establishes our understanding, our attitudes, and our orientation to the world; to put it simply, language encompasses discernment and viewpoints. Utilized for persuasive impact and partly for aesthetic splendor and effect, rhetorical devices viz *parallelism* & *anaphora* include instances of Lexico-Syntactic Patterns of language; they also append melody, coherence, and cohesion to any text/talk (Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014, 2017). Technically, parallelism is "re-occurrence syntactical and lexical similarities and is employed across or inside sentences or even inside clauses and phrases" to show that the ideas in the parts or sentences are equal in importance (Cuddon, 2012, p. 512). And *Anaphora* is "a rhetorical device involving the repetition of a word or group of words in successive phrases", clauses or sentences, usually along with parallelism (Cuddon, 2012, p. 35). Like passivization, nominalization and other devices, parallel structures and anaphora are intentionally disseminated through the text by the speaker. Consider some excerpts from the speech:

1) ... **to lift** millions from poverty, **to help** our citizens realize their dreams, and **to ensure** that new generations of children are raised free from **violence, hatred, and fear**.

2) *The success of the United Nations depends upon* the independent strength of its members. ... *Our success depends on* a coalition of strong and independent nations that **embrace their sovereignty, to promote security, prosperity, and peace**, for themselves and for the world.

3) *Strong sovereign nations let* diverse countries with **different values, different cultures, and different dreams** not just coexist, *Strong sovereign nations let* their people And *strong sovereign nations allow* individuals to

4) **If we desire to** lift up our citizens, **if we aspire to** the approval of history, then *we must fulfill* our sovereign duties to the people we faithfully represent. *We must protect* our nations, their interests and their futures. *We must reject* threats to sovereignty from the Ukraine to the South China Sea. *We must uphold* **respect for law, respect for borders, and respect for culture**, and the peaceful engagement these allow.

All the above examples contain both *parallelism* and *anaphora* structures which have been boldfaced or underlined for readers' attention. The tactical use of these parallel structures is obviously for effect and they can create a rhythm

and establish a pattern, giving readers a contextual framework for understanding the ideas. Done well, parallel structures can convey influence, harmony and power to text/talk.

2. Three-Part Listing and Amplification

Thomas & Wareing (2004) argued that "audiences and speakers seem to find linguistically grouped features, and especially those in *threes*, aesthetically pleasing" (p. 49). Oratorically, *the power of three* is one of a substantial number of outstanding rhetorical figures, recognized by rhetoricians, which falls within the purview of the heading of parallelism. Not only does an artful arrangement of these grouped figures (*threes*) add illumination, coalescence, and beauty to the clauses, but also are they deeply embedded in the brain of the audience. They also construct a so-called '*clap-trap rhythm*' that the audience appreciate them as both impressive and accordingly oratorical and political as follows: (Atkinson, 1984; Woods, 2006).

- 1) The Marshall ...are **strong, independent, and free**.
- 2) ... to promote **security, prosperity, and peace**,
- 3) ... with **different values, different cultures, and different dreams** not just ...
- 4) In America, **the people govern, the people rule, and the people are sovereign**.

As embodied in the above examples, *repetition* and *three-part statements* emphasize particular points and make the speech more memorable and catchy for the audience. Mr. Trump's speech is teeming with a wide and impressive array of three-part parallel figures which can be symbolized as '*slogan-like expressions*' that are verbalized deliberately to attract and focus the crowd's attention to his political dogma and creed. All these three-part structures in the speech amount to 31 clauses denoting that they cannot be expressed impromptu and must be pre-planned and stage-managed. In addition, the three-part listening is accompanied by *amplification* device in some clauses as the following examples in boldface. Amplification, as a part of rhetoric and common in orator, is frequently utilized by reiterating a word or a phrase while adding more details to it to obtain a particular impact; it is a rhetorical device in which "language is used to extend or magnify or emphasize" (Cuddon, 2012, p. 30):

- 5) ... we and all others have **a goal — that goal is** to help them *regain their freedom, recover their country, and restore their democracy*.
- 6) ... substantive for *strong, sovereign, and independent nations*, **nations that** are rooted in the, **nations that** seek allies to befriend, ...of all, **nations that** are home to men and ... for *their countries, their fellow citizens, and for all that is best* in the human spirit.
- 7) Those these beautiful **pillars, they are pillars of peace, sovereignty, security, and prosperity**.

3. Antithesis and Expletive

To Abrams & Harpham (2009), *Antithesis* is defined as a "contrast or opposition in the meanings of contiguous phrases or clauses that manifest parallelism" (p. 14). Fundamentally, *Antithesis* is prevalent in rhetoric and oratory and was particularly favored by rhetoricians and orators. To Cuddon (2012), it is "contrasting ideas sharpened by the use of opposite or noticeably different meanings" often juxtaposed in parallel structures (p. 45). By dint of antithesis and in the speech, the speaker can put all his premises in two contrasting directions as in:

- 1) Rogue regimes represented in this body *not only support terror but threaten* other ...
- 2) To put it simply, we meet at a time of both *immense promise and great peril*. It is entirely up to us whether **we lift the world** to new heights or **let it fall into** a valley of despair.
- 3) We *do not expect* diverse countries to share the same cultures, traditions, or even systems of government, *but we do expect* all nations to uphold
- 4) I was elected **not to take power, but to give power** to the American people where it belongs.
- 5) We want **harmony and friendship, not conflict and strife**.
- 6) If the **righteous** many do not confront the **wicked** few, then **evil** will triumph.

Generally, the above antithesis phrases are apposed in the speech to present and highlight conflicting statements and to draw the crowd's attention to distinguish *facts from fictions*. By this marked contrast, the addressees might be more *pensive, receptive* and *impressionable* to his propositions, and as a consequence, much more likely to identify and assent to him. They are often juxtaposed in parallel structure as well.

These *antithesis* and *reversal structures* in the speech are intentionally or subconsciously, and strategically paired and apposed to exhibit inconsistent premises and to aid the crowd to differentiate facts from fictions, falsehood from truth and so on (Kazemian & Hashemi, 2017). Some of the above examples, extracted from the speech, contain antithesis, parallel structure, and an *expletive*. As a figure of emphasis, the *expletive* device is a single word or a short phrase occasionally interrupting smooth flow of a speech, and is used to place emphasis on the words instantaneously close to the expletive. Typical examples of the expletives in the speech include: *but, in fact, to put it simply, indeed, actually, especially, recently, completely, clearly, in any event, totally, certainly, remarkably* etc.

4. Rhetorical Questions

The last rhetorical strategy analyzed in the corpus is the utilization of *Rhetorical Questions* which can assist the speaker to bolster his rhetorical influence and affective force of his oratory. By use of these preplanned rhetorical

questions in the speech, the speaker is in a supreme bid to steer the audience to the focal issue and to his demands that he wishes to convey to them in the following paragraphs. Consider the following excerpts from the speech:

- 1) Or do we have enough strength and pride to confront those dangers today, so that our citizens can enjoy peace and prosperity tomorrow?
- 2) Will they continue down the path of poverty, bloodshed, and terror?
- 3) Or will the Iranian people return to the nation's proud roots as a center of civilization, culture, and wealth where their people can be happy and prosperous once again?

C. Lexical and Textual Analysis

The textual function tackles with language mechanisms which help to give any text/talk coherence and cohesion and "make a living passage different from a random list of sentences" (Wang, 2010). It should be noted that the term lexical analysis mainly refers to delve deeply and critically into the speech and to examine it in detail in terms of its coherency, examples and functions of the most frequent and distinct terms, of purposeful deployment of emotively, religiously, and politically-oriented terminology entrenched in, between or behind lines, of the speakers' tone and mood, and of using quotations etc.

To Foss, Foss, and Trapp (2001), a rhetor "can't possibly make a statement without its falling into some sort of pattern, any consideration of the subject or content of rhetoric also must include a consideration of its form" (p. 194). Conventional form in rhetoric is the expected process utilized to craft rhetoric. To Kazemian et al. (2021), "rhetorical form and content are of equal importance to rhetorical acts. Form is the preliminary thing that the readers encounter a discourse". It is argued that if form cannot tempt and attract the readers' interest, nice as its content may be, it mitigates the chance of attracting its readers' focus and evoking their interest, not to mention acquiring identification and obtaining the communicative goals (Zhou & Kazemian, 2015).

Overall, the speech is well-organized and it shows high rationality and coherence in terms of arguments and content. It does not contain multiple ambiguous, cloaked and implicit remarks so that it may be easy for the audience to grasp and take the speaker's pre-designed assumptions and conceptions in, and therefore, easy for them to identify and align themselves with the speaker. It may be easy for the speaker as well to embolden the audience to support and embrace his policies. Consider the generic structure of the speech as follows:

- 1) Addressees: Members in the 72nd Session of United Nations General Assembly.
- 2) Salutation,
- 3) The expression of gratitude and honor,
- 4) A short review of his administration's achievement after the election,
- 5) An analysis of the contemporary situation in the world,
- 6) Voicing his concerns about terrorist atrocities, international criminal networks etc. in the world,
- 7) A short summary of the US' and UN's international duties and accomplishments,
- 8) Reprimanding some rogue regimes in the UN and deprecating their vile deeds nationwide and worldwide such as North Korea, Iran, etc.
- 9) Hopes for the beautiful and prosperous future of the world and the US,
- 10) Resort to God for help and blessing.

As the prologue, he commences his speech by defending the status quo after the election and he gives his administration's accomplishments and major changes in the stock market, unemployment, and investment in military forces and defense etc. In his explosive speech, Mr. Trump declared that If Pyongyang does not halt the advancement and proliferation of its nuclear weapons program, the US might have no alternative but to thoroughly annihilate North Korea; in seldom tone and language seen or heard at what is, the head of world diplomacy, Mr. Trump disregarded the proprieties and addressed North Korean leader Kim Jong-un as a rocket man: "Rocket man is on a suicide mission for himself and his regime". He announced that North Korea has maximized testing of ballistic missiles and nuclear payloads, "threatens the entire world with unthinkable loss of life". "If the righteous many don't confront the wicked few, then evil will triumph", he pontificated on. He also discussed that Iran nuclear deal, among the top issues, "was one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States has ever entered into".

While poring over the political address, the researchers detected that the speech is replete with some-recurrently-utilized words or clauses for particular addressees and for specific purposes. Critically, logical and compelling reasons for profuse and plentiful exploitation of selective words in the speech may reflect and be indicative of the speaker's major preoccupations and his growing apprehension about international conflicts, worsening global crises and unrests, and his political ambitions and creed etc. about them as well. For instance, he overtly threatens North Korea and states his attitudes toward that regime by dint of various terms and expression such as '*It is time for North Korea to realize that the denuclearization is its only acceptable future*' etc. otherwise it will be totally destroyed by the UN.

He, then, rebuked Iran's government for violence, bloodshed, and chaos; he accused Iranian officials as well of bolstering Bashar al-Assad's dictatorship, of inflaming tensions in Yemen's and its civil war, and of spoiling peace throughout the entire Middle East; his words also insinuate that Iranian government must meet its international responsibilities under UN, otherwise Iran's isolation will be deepened and more sanctions will be enforced. Consider the following frequently featured words in the speech:

TABLE 4.4
MOST FREQUENTLY USED WORDS IN THE SPEECH

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
<i>Nation</i>	55	Freedom	13	Power	9
<i>People</i>	47	Peace	13	Fight	8
<i>US</i>	23	Politics	12	Korea	8
<i>World</i>	23	Future	12	History	8
<i>Prosperous</i>	20	Support	12	Rights	8
<i>Sovereign</i>	19	American	11	Life	7
<i>Strength</i>	19	Iran	11	Allies	7
<i>Regime</i>	19	Secure	11	Conflict	7
<i>Human</i>	17	Today	10	Independent	7
<i>UN</i>	15	Respect	10	Values	7
<i>Terrorist</i>	14	Threat	9	Hope	6
<i>Citizen</i>	14	Safe	9	War	6
Positive & Neutral: 438— 9.7 %			Negative: 63 ---- 1.4 %		
			Total No.: 501 Percentage: 11.13 %		

Regarding international issues in 2017 viz Iran's and North Korea's nuclear programs, he referred to Iran's name 11 times and North Korea's 8 times, definitely based on his major concerns about them. At first, he is implicitly and then explicitly threatening and alerting North Korea and Iran's government as well to call a halt to their nuclear weapons programme; he accused Iran of shoring up terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and Bashar al-Assad's dictatorship, fuelling Yemen's civil war, and undermining peace throughout the entire Middle East.

He then addressed North Korea's government as a rogue and depraved regime which is accountable for "the starvation deaths of millions of North Koreans, and for the imprisonment, torture, killing, and oppression of countless more". He calls for the denuclearization of North Korea as acceptable future otherwise "we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea". Based on the featured words in table 4.4, he has utilized more positive words (about 9 %) than negatives ones (1 %) in his speech. His tone of speech is very aggressive and belligerent toward Iran and North Korea but soft, lenient and gentle to the others; overall, he employs a more conciliatory tone throughout the speech.

As presented in Table 4.4, *his tone* is mostly less belligerent for countrywide and global crises and controversial subjects throughout the speech; he prefers to array more positively-loaded terms than negatively-charged ones (applying major God terms 438 times more frequently than Devil terms), formulating his bright strategies to prioritize and put premium on people's 'wellbeing, peace, security, prosperity' etc. Furthermore, as a political speech, his language is perfectly legitimate, for instance, he ceremonially draws upon titles rather than names throughout his address, and focuses on civility and order. All in all, his confident and optimistic mood permeates throughout the speech and his phrases are generally riveting, benevolent, and stimulating where he endeavors to develop rapports among the audience all over his speech; in such and so, he struggles to build up joint intimacy and rapprochement with the addressees and to go through their heads and hearts by means of various tropes (*by we-groups for example*), which have big values and are the very epitome of political and media discourses.

Another eye-catching and notable device is the use of *quotations* from the US Constitution and some heroic figures in the speech (4 quotes) such as two quotes from President Truman about UN's independence, and a quote from John Adams. Accordingly, Atkins & Finlayson (2016) state that "quotations are not only a source of authority, but a way of claiming authorization"; by referring to President Truman or using the U.S Constitution at the beginning of his speech, he is principally apt to attain his political trustworthiness and authorization to his assertions or to achieve equality to his speech. The quotations can also be deemed to be flashbacks to furnish nostalgic reminiscence and emotive feelings for the audience and to confirm his propositions by tailoring those quotes to his current statement (Kazemian & Hashemi, 2017). Last but not least, as Wang (2010) contends: "direct or indirect **prayers** in the speeches, from Bible, Jesus etc. can all assist the speaker to win the sympathy and supporting of the audience and make the speech full of charisma". Thus, by referring to GOD five times in the speech and blessing all people worldwide, Mr. Trump's religious creed and convictions are readily perceptible.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Political contexts to date have become the major avenue of research and of data for exploration in the realm of linguistics. The prime motive and compelling rationale behind it is that rhetoricians, orators, and spin doctors attempt to opt for politically correct phrases and politically-loaded notions and terms as they have identified that the preponderance of the people are listening to political texts/talks. Thusly, it can be articulated that investigating political texts/talks would furnish a mirror image of their concepts, presumptions and intentions. Considering political speeches, Sch äffner (1996) proposes that political texts/talks mirror political activities and they fulfill a variety of functions linked with these activities. Van Dijk (1997) elucidates that any text/talk made or composed by a politician is a cognizance of his motives and purposes, and has its own function.

The aim of current study was to probe Donald Trump's First Speech to the UN, about 4500 words, from the point of frequency and functions of some rhetorical and critical strategies and Lexical and Textual Analysis as well to reveal its *implicit* and *explicit* meanings and structures as well as to grasp and disclose the effective and dominant principles and tropes utilized in his speech. Some rhetorical tropes and Fairclough's CDA framework are employed to disclose the speaker's dexterous and skilled deployment of these devices in the speech which are closely connected with his overall political intentions.

The current study sought to find out how the language in Mr. Trump's speech has been manipulated to create, convey and enforce powerful political assumptions and ideologies to his audience. This was achieved through various tropes, strategies and devices both in Rhetoric and CDA. Rhetoric and rhetorical tropes analyzed in this study, dealing with both the content and form of the speech, offer an analytical lens to researchers to analyze and concentrate on how politicians and rhetorician struggle to convey themselves accurately and effectually in connection with the subject of writing or speech to the audience. In the meantime, with the primary aim of unmasking relationships among language, society, power, and ideology, CDA and its pertinent strategies in the current study supply a toolkit which enables researchers to unravel structures of power and also disclose ideological dogma and power relations in multiple texts/talks.

Findings of the Research

In the light of an in-depth analysis of the speech based on some rhetorical tropes and CDA strategies, the researchers have summed up the following findings:

- 1) The speech abounds with deliberate deployment of both rhetorical devices and CDA strategies;
- 2) The speech used vigilant lexical choices very shrewdly and deliberately which called the audience attention to burst into rapturous applause at the right time;
- 3) Therefore, a tendency to utilize more devices and tropes by the speaker can be a valid reason for his diplomatic maneuvers to make his political language influential, eloquent, manipulated, pre-planned, and equivocal as well.
- 4) It also found that the language of Mr. Trump carried specific cynical and negative attitudes toward some governments such as Iran and North Korea but upbeat and positive views toward other countries.
- 5) Hence, these cynical and ideologically biased attitudes toward some countries are intentionally engineered to establish and build negative image worldwide and nationwide for those countries.

Ultimately, all these inquired strategies divulge that political texts/talks are not improvised at all, and all lexico-grammatical constructions are politically-loaded and intentionally-charged by spin doctors for political and compelling reasons to smoothly convey predetermined ideas and messages to specific targets in order to win and draw the audience's massive support, and to gain power and authority, and to keep them under control as well.

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Phonological Analysis of Errors in the Consonant Cluster System Encountered by Saudi EFL Learners

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Abstract—This study investigates the pronunciation difficulty of selected English consonant clusters (CCs) encountered by Saudi EFL learners. The sample consisted of 134 female Saudi EFL students in their freshman year in the English Department at Najran University. Two instruments were used: a pronunciation test that assessed participants' CC pronunciations in the onset and coda positions and a questionnaire that explored participants' attitudes towards their CC pronunciations. This study provides detailed data on the participants' pronunciation difficulties using Optimality Theory (OT). The results showed that the participants encountered CC pronunciation difficulties in both the onset and coda positions. However, most errors occurred in the coda position, especially for the four-consonant pattern (-CCCC). Participants used different strategies to simplify their CC pronunciations: epenthesis, deletion, substitution, or some combination thereof. Questionnaire data indicated that the participants attributed their pronunciation difficulties to inadequate knowledge of the pronunciation rules, insufficient language instruction, and native-language influence. The participants proffered some remedies to their difficulties, which included doing more pronunciation drills and offering a new course focused primarily on correct pronunciation. OT analysis revealed that onset clusters were mainly influenced by L1 ranking constraints whereas coda clusters were more influenced by universal Markedness constraints. OT indicated that the tendency to satisfy Markedness constraints over the Faithfulness constraints led the participants to use the above-mentioned simplification strategies.

Index Terms—Saudi EFL learners, consonant cluster, epenthesis, Optimality Theory, markedness and faithfulness constraints

I. INTRODUCTION

Proper English pronunciation is a fundamental component of effective communication, and thus it is perceived to be a cornerstone of intelligibility among speakers. However, second language (L2) learners of English are more likely to encounter obstacles, when it comes to communicating freely with English native speakers. In fact, this difficulty is somewhat anticipated, especially when the two languages being compared come from different backgrounds (Lado, 1957). English and Arabic, for instance, belong to dissimilar language families; the former is an Indo-European language while the latter is a Semitic language. Accordingly, they have different linguistic systems including phonology. Due to the dissimilarities between these two languages, L2 learners are more likely to develop and construct what might be called an 'interlanguage'. Linguistics factors would include the L1 influence on L2 (transfer) and the markedness (complexity) of the learned form, whereas non-linguistics factors, such as an L2 learner's attitude towards the target language, their age, the amount of exposure to the learned language they have had, the amount and quality of language instruction they have received, their lack of training, and so on, are also considered to be influential aspects (Barrios, 2018; Brown, 2000; Tarone, 1980). The current study is an endeavor to examine whether Saudi EFL learners face hurdles in pronouncing consonant clusters (CCs) with the aim of providing a thorough analysis of the interlanguage pronunciation of CCs. Moreover, it aims to identify the most common strategies and techniques used by Saudi EFL learners to simplify clusters under the framework of optimality theory (OT). Not only that, but also, it pays special attention to students' perception towards the pronunciation of CCs.

A. English and Arabic Syllable Structure

In the onset position, the English cluster system permits two consonant clusters (CC-) (e.g. /sp-/ as in 'spoon') and consonant clusters (CCC-) (e.g. /spl-/ as in 'spleen'). However, in the coda position, the coda cluster is asserted to be more complex than the onset one because it permits up to four consonants—that is, it may consist of -CC, -CCC, or -CCCC patterns as /-sk/ in 'ask', /-kts/ in 'acts', and /-ksts/ in 'texts', respectively (Yavaş, 2011). According to Roach (2000), clusters in the coda position are more varied and complicated than in the onset position because they may

contain inflectional morphemes (e.g. /-s/) that are attached to nouns to form plurals, as in ‘texts’ /teksts/, or third person singular forms as in ‘he takes’ /hi: teiks/. Moreover, /-ed/ is added to form the past tense of regular verbs and manifests itself as /-d/ when preceded by voiced sounds excluding /d/ or as /t/ when preceded by voiceless sounds excluding /t/, as in ‘removed’ /rɪˈmuːvd/ and ‘wished’ /wɪʃt/, respectively. On contrary, Arabic forbids onset clusters (i.e. no initial clusters are found in Arabic at all). Arabic doesn’t permit CCs to exist in various positions as they do in English (Al-Malki, 2014). Arabic permits clusters only in the coda position, as indicated by this simple structure: CV(CC). Some permissible -CC combinations are /-zb/, /-lb/, and /-bt/, as in /hizb/ ‘party’, /qalb/ ‘heart’, and /sabt/ ‘Saturday’, respectively (Na’ama, 2011).

B. Optimality Theory (OT)

OT is primarily a constraint-based approach built upon interacting constraints, and it claims that phonology reflects universally conflicting or competing constraints rather than rules. Though these constraints are assumed to be found throughout linguistics, they differ in term of ranking (ordering)—that is to say, ranking constraints can vary markedly from one language to another. As a result, learning another language might pose difficulty due to the violable constraints ranking. OT states that the surface pattern (optimal output) originates from conflicting constraints in a speaker’s competence.

The Generator (GEN), Evaluator (EVL) and Constraints (CONs) are recognized as the vital components of OT. Accordingly, the relationship between input and output is utterly dependent upon these three constituents. GEN produces a large number of candidates, and EVL then evaluates and filters the candidates (CANDs) (i.e. outputs) iteratively until the optimal output is selected (also known as the “winner” or “harmonic candidate”) (see Figure 1). Notwithstanding, this process is accomplished using two contrasted constraint families, namely, Faithfulness and Markedness.

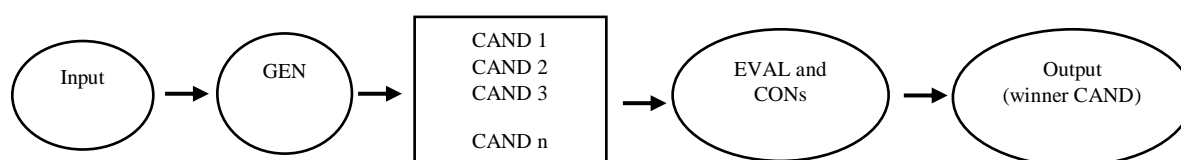


Figure 1. OT Paradigm

C. Constraint Types

The Faithfulness and Markedness constraint families are the core constraint families of OT. Kager (1999) described them as "two forces which are engaged in a fundamental conflict in every grammar" (p.4). The Markedness constraint family relies on evaluating the surface representation (output). More specifically, it governs the final shape of the output in the sense that it prevents the occurrence of certain configurations (i.e. marked or complex forms). There is an enormous number of Markedness sub-constraints, such as ONSET, NOCODA, and *COMPLEX (Kager, 1999). These particular sub-constraints are defined as follows:

ONSET: Onset within a syllable is compulsory.

NOCODA/*CODA: A syllable may not end in a coda (consonant).

*COMPLEX: No syllable is allowed to have CCs.

Unlike Markedness constraints, Faithfulness constraints evaluate the relationship between underlying representation (input) and surface forms (output). In short, they seek identical representation between input and output forms. McCarthy and Prince (1995) postulated three fundamental constraints to express Faithfulness, namely, MAX IO, DEP IO, and IDENT. These particular constraints require that each segment in the output appear exactly as it does in the input. Nevertheless, each one of them has a different segment prohibition.

MAX IO implies that deletion or reduction of a segment is prohibited.

DEP IO implies that insertion of a segment is prohibited.

IDENT implies that a feature change is prohibited, including voicing, place, and manner of articulation.

II. PURPOSE OF STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is significant in that it seeks to provide a deep insight into the interlanguage phonology pronunciation of English CCs in the onset and coda positions. It is considered a novelty in the sense that it goes a step further than previous studies by not only relying on percentages and means to explain such errors, but also by providing an OT analysis to gain a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. Moreover, it presents a unified treatment of the topic under study and offers some pedagogical suggestions that may assist Saudi EFL learners and English instructors at the College of Languages and other Saudi universities in understanding and correcting their students’ phonological errors. In other words, this study is an attempt to provide potential solutions that may improve Saudi EFL learners’ levels in pronunciation. This research is needed not only because it concentrates on linguistics factors (i.e., L1 influence and markedness), but also because it takes students’ attitudes into account by explaining such phonological errors. Based on

the findings of the current study, improper production of CCs is expected to be somewhat minimized because this study intends to widen teachers' horizons in the most common areas of difficulty in this regard. In addition, the outcomes of the present study might also help textbook designers incorporate CC problems encountered by Arab EFL learners – and Saudi EFL learners in particular – into materials to provide solutions.

This study seeks to answer the following questions: 1) Do Saudi female EFL learners encounter any difficulties in pronouncing consonant clusters in English? If so, which position (e.g. onset or coda) is the most challenging to pronounce?, 2) What kind of strategies and techniques do Saudi female EFL learners employ in pronouncing English consonant clusters?, and 3) What are students' attitudes toward the pronunciation of consonant clusters?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Complex English syllables that are comprised of CCs in the onset and coda positions have been explored in a great deal of literature. Different researchers from different backgrounds (e.g. China, Korean, Spain, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia) went to great lengths to identify factors that might induce the occurrence of the interlanguage phonology, the non-native version pronounced by L2 learners, particularly in the pronunciation of CCs. Hence, they started analyzing L2 learners' errors in articulating clusters as well as investigating the modification strategies used by L2 speakers. Most studies put the whole emphasis on the role of transfer as a way to account for all phonological errors made by L2 learners. For instance, Fatemi, Sobhani, and Abolhassani (2012) undertook a study to address the hindrances in pronouncing English CCs by Persian EFL learners. The Persian language has a few simple structures, such as CV and VCC. Consequently, when the participants pronounced CCs that did not exist in their native language, they tended to insert a vowel as a repair tool to facilitate their pronunciation. For instance, 'proved' /pru:vd/ was pronounced incorrectly by some of the participants as /porovd/, /peruvd/, and /pirovd/.

The same concern was also revealed by Jabeen, Mahmood, and Asghar (2012), but in reference to Punjabi, the spoken language in Pakistan. As ascertained by these writers, Punjabi speakers of English adopted phonological processes such as vowel insertion to meet the clash between the constraints of native language and target language. It appeared that vowel addition could take place either at the beginning of clusters (e.g. /sp-/ was mispronounced as /əsp-/ as in 'spin'), or between clusters (e.g. /str-/ was mispronounced as /sətr-/ as in 'straw'). These findings were also reported in other studies (e.g. Bouchhioua, 2019; Hago and Khan, 2015; Keshavarz, 2017). On the other hand, other studies stressed the role of markedness. Chen (2011), for instance, investigated the pronunciation of the CC- and CCC- patterns by nine Taiwanese students. He asserted that the Chinese phonological system did not allow for the CC pattern at all; thus, the participants were expected to face difficulty in uttering both types (i.e. CC- and CCC-). Surprisingly, participants made many more errors in pronouncing marked clusters like CCC- compared to less-marked ones like CC-, although these two structures were not found in their native language. Elsaghayer (2014) also examined the erroneous pronunciation of CCs spoken by 20 Libyan students at the Misurata University Language Center. He deduced that clusters posed obstacles for participants, especially the most complex patterns, which were the -CCC coda clusters. Clusters were split by inserting /ə/ or /ɪ/, for instance. Additionally, /-dz/ and /-mps/ were incorrectly pronounced as /-dɪz/ and /-mbəz/, respectively. Rungruang (2017) pointed out that shorter clusters were less marked than longer ones. As a result, clusters with longer lengths, such as -CCCC, were more likely to pose a difficulty (i.e. the hardest one to be acquired) compared to shorter ones, like -CC, that were presumed to be easily acquired by L2 learners.

Na'ama (2011) and Nogoud (2020) also highlighted the impact of various extra-linguistic factors that induced pronunciation errors, such as unsuitable teaching aids, incompetent or unqualified teachers, and participants' lack of awareness of their own errors. Indeed, methods, materials, and activities designed for teaching English pronunciation might also constitute a serious impediment when it comes to improving pronunciations.

There is a great consensus among scholars on the most common simplification strategies adopted by L2 learners in articulating CCs; these are vowel epenthesis, substitution, and deletion (Chan 2007; Jayaraman 2010). Hansen (2001) revealed that numerous numbers of Korean EFL learners tended to use epenthetic technique after the final consonant as in "held"/held/, they tend to add the short vowel /ə/ to create a new syllable; thus it is pronounced as /hɛldə/. Similar findings were also reported by other studies (e.g. Kharma and Hajaj, 1989). In the same line, Al-Sammer (2014) and Jayaraman (2010) claimed that when a syllable ended with inflectional morphemes, such as a plural, participants tended to omit the last cluster to simplify their articulation. In addition, they asserted that the deletion tendency was also applied to certain final cluster combinations (e.g. -mp, -pt, -kt, -nt, -bt).

On the contrary, Al-Aqlobi (2013) noticed that Saudi EFL learners faced problems in uttering CCs and epenthesis was the dominant strategy. For instance, the onset clusters in the word 'sport' /spɔ:t/ was mispronounced as /ispɔ:t/, inserting the short vowel /i/. Moreover, Alenazi (2016) argued that Saudi EFL learners tend to substitution strategy when a certain phoneme within cluster is not allowed in Arabic. For example, the cluster /pr-/ was mispronounced as /br-/ as in 'pride' because the stop voiceless sound /p/ is not found in Arabic.

Some other studies use OT analysis to explain CC mispronunciations. Hideki (2004) examined the simplification strategies used by Japanese EFL learners in articulating complex onset and coda clusters within the framework of OT. He succinctly expounded the impact of universal markedness on the interlanguage pronunciation of CCs. He noted that unmarked patterns emerged in Japanese EFL learners' pronunciations of CCs due to conflicting constraints. As asserted

by the author, participants resorted to inserting a vowel to break or alter complex clusters to satisfy the two dominant CONs—*COMPLEX and MAX-IO—at the cost of violating the lower ranked DEP-IO.

Turkustani (2011) also used OT to explain the interlanguage pronunciations of coda CCs pronounced by 30 Arabic speakers enrolled at the English Language Institute (ELI) in Malaysia. The findings showed that Arabic EFL learners resorted to ranking the Markedness constraint higher than the Faithfulness constraints in order to avoid complex coda clusters. The ranking was shown as follows: *COMPLEX CODA, *CCC >> MAX-IO, DEP-IO, IDENT-IO.

As opposed to the previous studies that were restricted to analyzing a particular combination of the onset or coda positions, this study provides a more comprehensive investigation of both types of cluster structures (i.e. onset and coda). Moreover, it examines participants' own self-assessments of their pronunciations of English CCs. To this end, it adopts two instruments to gather accurate data: a pronunciation test and a questionnaire. As far as Saudi EFL/ESL literature is concerned, exploring the pronunciation of CCs from the standpoint of OT is quite rare. Hence, we think that using OT analysis might be deemed an appropriate approach in elucidating errors committed by Saudi EFL learners in pronouncing CCs in both positions. Although prior investigations have employed diverse theories (e.g. sonority scale distance, CA, MDH) to analyze errors, OT is widely accepted as one of the most effective frameworks to investigate problems within syllable structures (McCarthy, 2008).

IV. METHOD

A. Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative descriptive design that employed statistics and percentages for data interpretation. Besides the statistical analysis, the researchers strived to yield deeper insight into this phenomenon, and so for this reason, OT analysis of CCs was also demonstrated. This constraint-based analysis assisted in accounting for observed error patterns as accurately as possible. In other words, this analysis examined and exposed the simplification techniques used by Saudi EFL participants in pronouncing CCs in the onset and coda positions. Furthermore, it explored whether or not errors pronounced by Saudi EFL learners were triggered solely by transferring the ranking constraints from L1 to L2.

B. Participants

The subjects of the study were 134 female Saudi EFL students specializing in the English Department at the College of Languages and Translation, Najran University, KSA. Only 30 of these 134 participants were willing to participate in the pronunciation test due to a self-ascribed lack of confidence. However, all 134 participants volunteered to participate in the questionnaire portion of the study. The participants were in their freshmen year and were considered to be at the beginner level of English based on an English placement test given by the English Department.

C. Instruments

The key instruments used to gather data were a pronunciation test and a questionnaire that included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The pronunciation test was constructed to assess participants' oral performance in the pronunciation of CCs. The list consisted of 40 target clusters, half of which covered clusters in the onset position and half of which covered clusters in the coda position. The tested words were adopted from previous studies (e.g. Jayaraman, 2010; Turkustani, 2011). The participants were instructed to read aloud 40 target CCs in the word list as clearly as possible and at a normal reading speed.

On the other hand, questionnaire examined the participants' own perceptions toward their pronunciations of CCs. It was divided into two main sections. The first section collected the participant's demographic information (e.g. age, number of years spent learning English, etc.), and the second section collected data about the participant's attitudes towards pronouncing CCs. This second section was further divided into four subsections as follows: part A: The participants' overall opinion concerning their CC pronunciations, part B: The participant's feelings towards common causes that might lead to mispronouncing CCs, part C: The participant's perspective regarding some suggested solutions, and part D (Open-ended questions): The participant's opinion about their own pronunciations of English CCs.

Parts A, B, and C were measured on a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, and strongly agree) and consisted of a list of 15 items preceded by clear instructions and definitions of the terms used.

Part D was comprised of two open-ended questions intended to give participants a chance and space to ponder and list any factors that might also exacerbate their mispronunciations of CCs and to offer suggestions for techniques that might also improve their pronunciations in a classroom setting.

D. Procedure

Since this study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, meeting with the participants in person, face-to-face, was problematic. Consequently, online data collection was performed remotely from the safety and comfort of the participants' own homes. They were invited to meet the researcher on Zoom, an online conferencing platform, which supports virtual meetings over the Internet. The researcher then set up and scheduled meeting dates amenable to the individual participants. Meeting links were then sent to each participant, after which the researcher met and conversed with each participant in one-on-one sessions. Once a participant was present at a meeting, the researcher began the

session with some a brief icebreaking, welcome speech designed to put the participant at ease and alleviate any anxiety or speech hesitation that they might be experiencing due to undergoing an unfamiliar process with a stranger.

Then a list of 40 words was displayed on the screen, and each participant was given some time to peruse the word list. Once the participant was ready to begin, she was reminded that only her voice would be recorded. Participants were instructed to read the words in the word loudly and clearly and to pause for two seconds between words to facilitate data extraction later. Each session took only a few minutes of each participant's time. The researcher met with five participants each day until all participants had been interviewed. The whole interview and data-collection process took about one week. Concerning the second instrument, the questionnaire, the researcher posted an online questionnaire for the participants to access individually via links sent to them via email. They were requested to click on the emailed link to access the questionnaire, to read each statement carefully, and to respond by clicking on the appropriate Likert scale item for each statement. Then they were requested to answer two open-ended questions to solicit any amplifying information and suggestions they might want to offer on the topic of this study. The completed responses were then stored and kept for later data analysis.

V. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The collected data were analyzed, using Microsoft Office Excel 2010 and SPSS statistical software version 21. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed to answer the research questions.

A. Do Saudi Female EFL Learners Encounter Any Difficulties in Pronouncing Consonant Clusters in English? If So, Which Position – Onset or Coda – Is the Most Challenging to Say?

To discover the most challenging consonant cluster positions to pronounce, an ANOVA Analysis and Descriptive Statistics were performed.

TABLE 1
ANOVA ANALYSIS OF USE OF CONSONANT CLUSTERS IN ONSET AND CODA POSITIONS

Position	Cluster Type	Correct		Incorrect	
		N	Mean	N	Mean
Onset	CC-	398	26.50	52	3.46
	CCC-	92	18.40	58	11.60
	Combined	490	22.45	110	7.53
Coda	-CC	131	16.37	109	13.62
	-CCC	69	9.85	141	20.14
	-CCCC	34	6.80	116	23.20
	Combined	234	11.00	366	18.98
All	All	724		476	

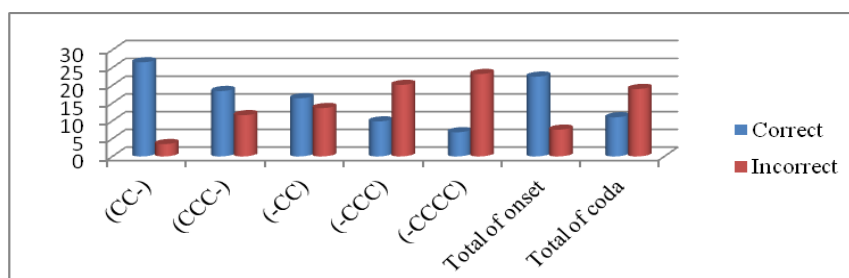


Figure 2. Results of Consonant Cluster Pronunciations in Onset and Coda Positions

As illustrated in Table 1 and Figure 2 the means value of using the CCs correctly was high at the onset position ($M=22.45$); the mean for CC- was 26.50 while the CCC- was 18.40. However, the mean was low at the incorrect responses ($M=7.53$); then the means for CC- and CCC- were 3.46 and 11.60, respectively. For coda CCs, the correct responses had a low combined mean ($M=11.00$); the means for -CC, and -CCC, and -CCCC were 16.37, 9.85, and 6.80, respectively. The incorrect responses had a high combined mean ($M=18.98$); the means for -CC, -CCC, and -CCCC were 13.62, 20.14, and 23.20, respectively. The conclusion was that participants faced more difficulty pronouncing coda CCs than onset CCs.

B. What Kind of Strategies and Techniques Do Saudi Female EFL Learners Employ to Pronounce English Consonant Clusters?

To answer this question, the percentages of the modification techniques were calculated for each CC type in both onset and coda positions. The results are summarized and graphically depicted in Table 2 and Table 3 and in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

TABLE 2
SIMPLIFICATION STRATEGIES OF THE PRONUNCIATION OF ONSET CONSONANT CLUSTER

Onset Cluster Type	% Errors	Simplification Strategies (%)			
		Epenthesis	Deletion	Substitution	Various
CC-	11.0	5.0	2.0	4.0	0
CCC-	38.5	22.6	10.6	1.3	4

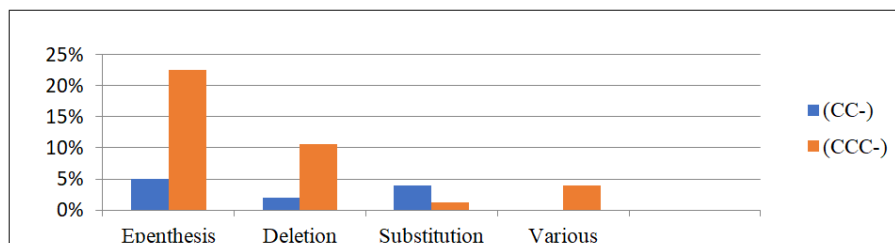


Figure 3. Simplification Strategies of the Pronunciation of Onset Consonant Cluster

As depicted in Table 2 and Figure 3, the participants applied different strategies and techniques to pronounce onset CCs. Those adopted patterns were categorized into four categories: epenthesis, deletion, substitution, and a combination of these strategies, collectively categorized as “various”. Overall, the epenthesis strategy was the most dominant simplification strategy preferred by the participants comparing to other strategies (e.g. deletion and substitution). In Figure 3, the CC- cluster pronunciations consisted of 5% epenthesis errors, 2% deletion errors, and 4% substitution errors, giving a total of 11%. However, there was no evidence of using more than one strategy for the CC- cluster pronunciations, so the “Various” percentage is zero.

For CCC- cluster errors, the errors consisted of 22.60% epenthesis errors, 10.60% deletion errors, 1.30% substitution errors, and 4.00% various errors, giving a total of 38.50%. The various errors were situations where some participants applied two different strategies to pronounce the CCC- cluster, such as insertion and deletion.

TABLE 3
SIMPLIFICATION STRATEGIES OF THE PRONUNCIATION OF CODA CONSONANT CLUSTERS

Coda Cluster Type	% Errors	Simplification Strategies (%)			
		Epenthesis	Deletion	Substitution	Various
-CC	45	32.5	4.6	6.6	1.25
-CCC	67	33.8	6.0	10.0	17.00
-CCCC	77	33.0	35.0	0	9.00

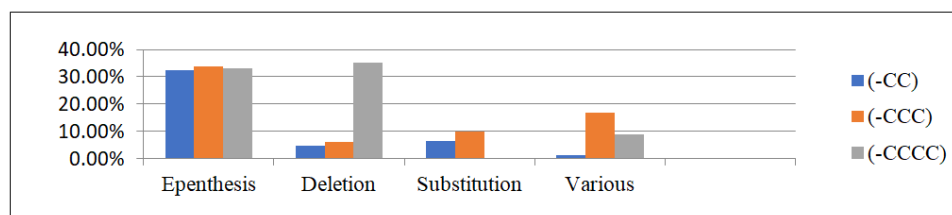


Figure 4. Simplification Strategies of the Pronunciation of Coda Consonant Clusters

As illustrated in Table 3 and Figure 4, the participants applied the same strategies to pronounce coda clusters as well. The epenthesis error rates were the highest compared to other strategies (e.g. deletion and substitution). For the -CC structure, the 45 % errors consisted of 32.5 % epenthesis errors, 4.6% deletion errors, and 6.6% substitution errors, and 1.25% various errors, which manifested as combining two different strategies. For the -CCC structure, the 67% errors consisted of 33.8% epenthesis errors, 6.00% deletion errors, 10.00% substitution errors, and 17.00% various errors. For the -CCCC structure, the 77% errors consisted of 33.0% epenthesis errors, 35.00% deletion errors, 0% substitution errors, and 9.00% various errors. There was no evidence of using a substitution strategy for this structure. The “various” errors were cases where participants use two different strategies, such as substitution and insertion.

C. What Are Students' Attitudes towards the Pronunciation of Consonant Clusters?

This question is divided into four parts:

1. Students' Overall Opinions in the Pronunciation of Consonant Clusters (CCs)

To identify the students' general attitudes towards pronouncing English consonants clusters, descriptive statistics were used to elicit the means and standard deviation of their responses on the questionnaire items.

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF STUDENTS ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH CCS

No.	Item	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	I believe the proper pronunciation of CCs is a one of the key aspects of the effective communication.	4.14	.79	-.71	.133
2	I find it difficult to pronounce CCs correctly.	3.21	1.05	-.05	-.951
3	I feel that pronouncing a set of consonants in a sequence is more difficult than pronouncing a single consonant.	3.59	.92	-.29	-.233
4	I feel that pronouncing the four members of cluster in English is the most complex and hardest task such as 'texts'.	3.52	1.07	-.31	-.654
Total means		3.60	.58	-.21	.279

Table 4 reveals that the overall mean of all the items is 3.60, indicating that the students' collective opinions towards learning English CCs pronunciation was high.

2. Student Attitudes towards Some Factors Contributing to the Mispronunciation of CCs

Descriptive statistics were utilized to explore students' perception toward some factors that may impede their pronunciation in terms of consonant clusters.

TABLE 5
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD CERTAIN FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CC MISPRONUNCIATIONS

No.	Item	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
5	I believe that the major source of difficulty in English CCs is due to the difference that exists between English and Arabic.	3.36	1.06	-.631	-.016
6	The bi-cluster (-cc) in the final-word (e.g. 'tent') causes no trouble for me to pronounce it because it exists in Arabic (e.g. bint 'a girl').	3.791	.90	-.385	-.279
7	I think the lack of knowledge of some of pronunciation rules may contribute to the difficulty of CCs production (e.g. [x] is pronounced as two consonants: /ks/ as in the word 'box' or /gz/ as in 'exam').	3.72	1.11	-.78	-.06
8	I receive little language instruction in terms of CCs pronunciation.	3.66	1.26	-.31	-.48
9	I think that the problem in uttering CCs correctly is due to the lack of pronunciation training.	3.84	.88	-.304	-.23
10	I am not sure how to pronounce the CCs, containing the inflectional suffixes, like -ed in the past tense (i.e., whether to pronounce /d/ or /t/ as in 'watched', 'cleaned', 'asked').	4.13	.94	-.98	-.44
Total means		4.20	.597	-.319	-.535

As shown in Table 5, the total means of students' responses towards certain factors that contributing to the difficulties in pronouncing English CCs was 4.20, indicating that their perceptions were high. The highest response of the participants was for Item 10, showing that the participants agreed that the most vital factor was the lack of knowledge of how to pronounce the CCs, containing the inflectional suffixes like -ed/ in the past tense (i.e., whether to pronounce /d/ or /t/ as in 'watched', 'cleaned', 'asked'. Their perception values (M=4.13, SD= .94) indicated exceedingly high perception. However, the lowest response for the participants was Item 5 (M= 3.36, SD=1.06), indicating that their views toward language transfer as a major factor was moderate.

3. Perception toward Some Suggested Solutions

To understand students' perceptions about toward some suggested solutions, descriptive statistics were used to elicit the means and standard deviation of their responses on the questionnaire items.

TABLE 6
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD SOME SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

No.	Item	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
11	I consider pronunciation drill to be very beneficial technique in teaching CCs.	4.22	.922	-1.045	.465
12	I think improving pronunciation of CCs requires constant listening to English native speakers.	3.76	1.105	-1.017	.049
13	I believe that sufficient practice of pronouncing CCs would help master them.	4.04	1.044	-1.189	.864
14	I think teachers should draw my attention to the correct pronunciation of clusters, especially those patterns that are not found in Arabic, like three and four clusters.	3.40	1.007	-1.111	.54
15	I feel that teachers should raise my awareness of various pronunciation of CCs, especially those that contain the inflectional markers such the plural form /-es, s/ (when to pronounce it /s/ or /z/, as in 'cleans', 'mates'.	4.06	1.046	-.961	.067
Total Means		3.90	.80	-.851	-.252

As shown in Table 6 and the total means came out to be 3.90, indicating that the students' overall attitudes towards some suggested solution to improve CC pronunciation was high. Item 11 gained the highest score ($M=4.22$, $SD=.922$), indicating that the pronunciation drill was a greatly beneficial technique in teaching CCs. However, Item 15 garnered lower scores ($M=4.06$, $SD=1.046$), indicating that focusing on the correct pronunciation of clusters, especially not found in Arabic, like three- and four-consonant clusters, was moderate.

4. Open-Ended Questions.

Students may feel limited in expressing their feelings when responding to a structured questionnaire, so the researcher also utilized two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire to give the participants an opportunity to freely report their opinions about contributing factors that they felt might also impede their proper pronunciation of CCs. In addition, it gave them the liberty to provide some suggested solutions to improve their pronunciations.

Q1. From your point of view, what are the factors that could also contribute to the mispronunciation of consonant clusters, other than those mentioned?

In general, students stressed some other factors which they believed might also adversely affect their pronunciations of CCs. Among these factors were lack of self-study and practice, and distracting environments, not to mention the complexity of the CCs structures itself. Moreover, insufficient and delayed feedback in class could also lead to less than optimum pronunciations of CCs. Lastly, students argued that being taught by non-native English speakers could also result in improper pronunciation of CCs.

Q2. Do you have any further suggestions for improving the pronunciation of consonant clusters?

The majority of the participants suggested adding extra classes to improve their listening and pronunciation skills. Additionally, students hoped to take specialized subjects such as phonetics and phonology starting from the first level. Another proposed solution was to use dictionaries to help improve pronunciations, for example, the Oxford and Cambridge dictionaries. They further believed that teachers should integrate pronunciation practice with other English lessons. The participants also emphasized the importance of getting constant feedback for their pronunciations. Finally, they wished to be taught by native English speakers.

D. OT Analysis of the Interlanguage Pronunciation of Consonant Clusters in Onset and Coda Positions

The following analysis shows the interlanguage pronunciations of each type of CC (CC-, CCC-, -CC, -CCC, -CCCC). The data obtained suggested a set of ranked constraints that reflect an obvious violation of the Faithfulness constraints, namely DEP-IO, MAX-IO and IDENT-IO. The violation of these constraints occurred in order to satisfy the Markedness constraints, resulting in simplifying CCs. To illustrate this, CCs were modified in terms of vowel epenthesis, which indicated a serious violation of the DEP-IO constraint. The CCs could also be repaired by a deletion strategy, which implied a serious violation of the MAX-IO constraint. Last but not least, CCs could be modified by a segmental substitution, which resulted in a violation of the IDENT-IO constraint. In a nutshell, all three cases indicated that the Markedness constraint *COMPLEX ranked above the DEP-IO, MAX-IO and IDENT-IO, that is, Faithfulness constraints. The Arabic and English languages have differing constraint hierarchies, as follows:

Arabic: ONSET CONDITION >> *COMPLEX ONSET >> MAX-IO >> DEP-IO >> IDENT

English: MAX-IO, DEP-IO >> ONSET CONDITION, COMPLEX ONSET >> IDENT

1. Onset Position

TABLE 7
1 CC# CLUSTER PRONOUNCED BY SAUDI EFL LEARNERS

Candidate	ONSET Condition	Complex ONSET	MAX-IO	DEP-IO	IDENT
a. $C_1C_2V\#$		*!			
b. $C_X\ldots V\#$			*		*
c. $\ldots C_2\langle V\#$			*	*	
d. $\Rightarrow C_1\langle C_2V\#$				*	
e. $C_1C_XV\#$		*!			*

The symbols used were adopted from Jabbari and Arghvan (2010) where # represents a syllable boundary, < indicates an inserted vowel, ... represents a deleted consonant, and C_X indicates a substituted consonant. As shown in Table 7, candidate d, $C_1\langle C_2V$, was the optimal candidate for Saudi EFL learners as it only violated one constraint, DEP-IO. Based on the analyzed data, epenthesis was more frequent among other strategies in the onset position. It came out to about 5% out of 11% errors.

However, it is worth mentioning that a few students tended to substitute one sound with another without changing the structure of CCs (4%). Thus, the constraint hierarchy of the substitution strategy was ONSET >> MAX-IO >> IDENT-IO.

TABLE 8
CCC# PRONOUNCED BY SAUDI EFL LEARNERS

Candidate	ONSET Condition	Complex ONSET	MAX-IO	DEP-IO	IDENT
a. $C_1C_2C_3V\#$		**!			
b. $C_1C_2...V\#$		*!	*		
c. $...C_2C_3V\#$		*!	*		
d. $\varnothing \langle C_1C_2.C_3V\#$				*	
e. $\varnothing C_1 \langle C_2.C_3\#$				*	
f. $C_1C_2C_3V\#$		**!			*

As illustrated in Table 8, $\langle C_1C_2.C_3V$ and $C_1 \langle C_2.C_3V$ were optimal candidates due to their violating on the lower-ranked constraints. Candidates a, b, c, and f were ruled out because they violated the highest-ranked constraint COMPLEXONSET. Hence, it can be said that epenthesis in the CCC- structure was the most preferable strategy. Based on the data analysis, it came out to about 22.6% out of 38.6 % errors.

2. Coda Position

In addition to the MAX-IO, DEP-IO and IDENT, other constraints should be introduced to account for coda clusters for each type of coda clusters, namely COMPLEXCODA (two clusters are not allowed) and CODA (more than two clusters are not tolerated). Moreover, other constraints, such as *CCC (three clusters is prohibited), *CCCC (four clusters is not acceptable), should also be utilized to account for -CCC and -CCCC clusters as much as possible. Arabic and English have the following hierarchical constraints:

Arabic: CODA CONDITION >> MAX-IO, DEP-IO>>COMPLEX CODA>IDENT

English: MAX-IO>>DEP-IO>>CODA CONDITION>>COMPLEX CODA>>IDENT

Here, CODA CONDITION constraints in Arabic imply no more than two consonants are acceptable whereas in English no more than four consonants are acceptable.

TABLE 9
#CC CLUSTER PRONOUNCED BY SAUDI EFL LEARNERS

Candidate	Complex CODA	MAX-IO	DEP-IO	IDENT
a. $\#VC_1C_2$	*!			
b. $\#V...C_2$		*!		
c. $\varnothing \#VC_1 \langle C_2$			*	
d. $\#VC_1C_X$	*!			*
e. $\#VC_XC_2$	*!			*

As depicted in Table 9, candidates, d, and e were not optimal candidates because they violated the highly ranked Markedness constraint *COMPLEXCODA. Likewise, candidate b was ruled out because it was in violation of the Faithfulness constraint MAX-IO. As a result, candidate c won out as the optimal output since it satisfied the Markedness constraint *COMPLEXCODA while violating only the lower-ranked Faithfulness constraint DEP-IO. Based on the data analysis, it came out to be 32.5% out of 45 % errors.

TABLE 10
#CCC CLUSTER PRONOUNCED BY SAUDI EFL LEARNERS

Candidate	*CCC	MAX-IO	Complex CODA	DEP-IO	IDENT
a. $\#VC_1C_2C_3$	*!				
b. $\#V...C_2C_3$		*!	*		
c. $\#V...C_2 \langle C_3$		*!		*	
d. $\varnothing \#VC_1.C_2 \langle C_3$				*	
e. $\#VC_XC_2C_3$	*!				*

As illustrated in Table 10, candidates a, b, and e were excluded from being optimal candidates because they were in conflict with the highest-rank constraint *CCC. Similarly, candidate c was also ruled out because it violated Faithfulness constraint MAX-IO by deleting a consonant segment. Thus, candidate d was chosen as the winner output because it had the least severe violations. It can be inferred that it satisfies the *COMPLEXCODA constraint at the cost of violating the lower-ranked constraint DEP-IO. Based on the data analysis, it came to about 33.8% out of 67% errors.

TABLE 11
#CCCC CLUSTER PRONOUNCED BY SAUDI EFL LEARNERS

Candidate	*CCCC	MAX-IO	DEP-IO	IDENT
a. $\#VC_1C_2C_3C_4$	*!			
b. $\varnothing \#VC_1C_2C_3...$		*		
c. $\#VC_1...C_XC_4$		*		*
d. $\#VC_XC_2C_3C_4$	*!			*
e. $\#VC_1C_2 \langle C_3 \langle C_4$			**	
f. $\varnothing \#VC_1C_2 \langle C_3C_4$			*	

As shown in Table 11, candidate b and f were selected as optimal candidates. Most students preferred the deletion strategy (35%) when pronouncing complex clusters -CCCC. The vowel insertion strategy occurred 33% of the time, not quite as common as the deletion strategy. Obviously, candidates a, c, and e were disqualified from being winner outputs due to having multiple violations.

VI. DISCUSSION

The present study is conducted to investigate the pronunciation of English onset and coda clusters by Saudi EFL learners. Quantitative descriptive and OT analyses were performed. This section discusses, compares and contrasts the result of the study with relevant literature in the same area. Based on data analysis Saudi female EFL learners had trouble pronouncing English CCs in the onset (CC-, CCC-) and coda (-CC, -CCC, -CCCC) positions. This conclusion agrees with other Arab studies (Elsaghayer, 2014; Na'ama, 2011). However, the difficulty hierarchy varies, that is to say, Saudi EFL learners encountered more problems in pronouncing CCs in the coda position more than in the onset position. Not only that, but another interesting result was also uncovered; the difficulties were not equal, even within the same position. The CC-structure was the least difficult type (M=3.46, SD= 3.9) (e.g. /pr-/ mispronounced as /br-/ in 'private') compared to the CCC- structure, (M=11.6, SD=3.04) (e.g. /skw-/ was reduced to /sk-/ in 'square') in the onset position. The same also held true for coda clusters. It appeared that the most difficult pattern was the -CCCC structure (M= 23.2, SD=2.04) (e.g. /ksθs/ was mispronounced as /ksθ/ and /ksis/ in 'sixths'). The difficulty hierarchy can be summarized as follows: CC- < CCC- < -CC < -CCC < -CCCC

Students used different strategies to pronounce CCs. For example, epenthesis strategy which was the most preferable simplification strategy in pronouncing CC-, CCC-, -CC and -CCC. For instance, the clusters /gl-/ as in 'glamorous', /str-/ as in 'street', /bd-/ as in 'robbed', /sks/ as in 'masks' were mispronounced as /gəl-/ , /sitr-/ , /bid-/ and /kist/, respectively. Nevertheless, this result is in contrast with Al-Sammer (2014), and Jayaraman (2010), all of whom argued that the commonly used repair strategy to produce the -CCC structure was segmental deletion rather than an epenthesis strategy. However, deletion was the most dominant strategy in pronouncing -CCCC, for example, the cluster /-mpts/ in 'attempts' was mispronounced as /-mpits/. Other strategies such substitution (e.g. /pr/ was mispronounced as /br/ in 'private') and some combination thereof, like insertion and deletion (e.g. /spl-/ mispronounced as /isp-/ as in 'split') were also used but they were less common.

Factors that could account for student errors in CCs pronunciation can be classified into two types: linguistics factor such L1 influence and Markedness, and the second type is non-linguistics such as an L2 learner's attitude towards the target language, their age, the amount of exposure to the learned language they have had, the amount and quality of language instruction they have received, their lack of training. Since students experience problems in pronouncing the more marked structure -CCCC than the less marked structure -CC, this evidence is in support with Markendess factor. This outcome is also in line with other studies (e.g. Chen, 2011; Hansen, 2001; Turkestani, 2011). Nevertheless, those studies only concentrated on particular structures in onset or coda positions.

Another factor that could also account for student errors is the L1 influence; student faced more difficulties in those structures that are not found in Arabic, so they tended to resort to Arabic syllabification structure. This is also supported by previous studies (e.g. Fatemi et al., 2012; Hago and Khan, 2015; Keshavarz, 2017). Indeed, the questionnaire indicated to some other contributing factors such as lack of knowledge of the correct way to pronounce CCs containing inflectional suffixes such as /-ed/, /-s, and /-es/. Moreover, lack of self-study and practice and being in a distracting environment and also lack of language instruction. This seems to resonate with Na'ama (2011), as he pointed out that lack of knowledge was deemed an influential factor behind the difficulties in the pronunciation of CCs. However, it is still in contrast with some researchers (e.g. Keshavarz, 2017; Jabeen et al., 2012) who attributed students' errors only to the dissimilarities between L1 and L2.

Regarding OT analysis, it provided an explanation of simplifying CCs. Overall, the interlanguage pronunciation of CCs emerged as a result of an interaction demonstrated between the Markedness and Faithfulness universal constraints. There was an obvious tendency towards unmarked patterns, implying that the Markedness constraints (e.g. COMPLEX) were ranked higher than the Faithfulness constraints (e.g. MAX and DEP). Due to this conflict, repair strategies such as epenthesis, deletion and substitution were used.

In the case of onset, OT revealed that the mispronunciation of the CC- and CCC- structures were mostly affected by L1 ranking transfer. As mentioned earlier, the Arabic rank hierarchy is as follows: ONSET CONDITION >> *COMPLEX ONSET >> MAX-IO >> DEP-IO >> IDENT.

Based on the data analysis, participants resolved the conflict between L1 and L2 by directly transferring their native language ranking constraints. For example, the CC- structure was broken up by adding an intrusive vowel, pronounced as CVC-. The explanation behind this phenomenon is that participants tended to follow the same pattern as their native language, that is, by satisfying the COMPLEX constraint at the expense of violating the MAX-IO and DEP-IO constraints. Consequently, epenthesis and deletion strategies were used to pronounce such clusters. In short, the ranking hierarchy of the interlanguage onset pronunciation is as follows: Markedness CON (COMPLEXONSET) >> Faithfulness CON (MAX-IO, DEP-IO)

This result is also in congruence with previous studies (e.g. Hideki, 2004; Turkestan, 2011), but these studies were limited to examining only coda clusters.

With respect to the coda clusters, there was to some extent an overlap between the effect of L1 influence and universal markedness factors. Regarding L1 influence, some patterns like -CCC and -CCCC, are not found in Arabic, so participants might transfer their native language structure. As previously stated, Arabic has the following ranking: CONDITIONCODA>> MAX-IO, DEP-IO>>COMPLEXCODA>> IDENT

VII. CONCLUSION

Investigating the pronunciation problems of CCs by Saudi EFL learners has been heretofore underexplored by preliminary literature in terms of examining errors within an OT framework, considering both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors, and exploring student's perceptions in this regard. Therefore, the significance of this study evolved from those shortcomings. The current study focused on the pronunciation difficulties of CCs in the onset and coda positions encountered by Saudi female EFL learners in the English department at Najran University. It provided empirical evidence that Saudi female EFL learners face pronunciation difficulties in CC pronunciations in both the onset and coda positions. It should be noted that most of errors occurred in the coda positions containing inflectional suffixes. The results also revealed that almost all Saudi female EFL learners continue to modify CCs in their normal English speech. The analysis of the present study demonstrated that the dominant and preferred mispronunciation strategies used was epenthesis, even though deletion was commonly used in -CCCC pronunciations.

In the case of onset clusters, OT uncovered that modifications and adjustments were due to the impact of L1 influence ranking. Concerning coda cluster modifications, OT argues that simpler structures are less marked than more complex structures; consequently, was less marked than CCC-, and -CC was in turn less marked than -CCC, gradually leading to the most marked structure -CCCC. Therefore, it can be inferred that -CCCC was the most challenging structure as a result of the universal markedness effect. Saudi female EFL learners' perceptions toward the importance of pronouncing CCs properly were positive. Besides the impact of transfer and markedness, some other extra-linguistic factors also lie behind the pronunciation problems faced by Saudi female EFL learners, such as lack of adequate pronunciation instruction, pronunciation knowledge, and exposure to an English-language-immersion environment. Consequently, students look forward to minimizing the impact of those factors and to enhancing their pronunciations. In a nutshell, this study emphasizes that L1 interference is not the sole source behind pronunciation problems, as some prior literature affirmed. Thus, universal markedness, along with other extra-linguistic factors, should be taken into account, given the essential roles they play in pronunciation learning and teaching.

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Research on TPR in English Vocabulary Teaching in Primary Schools: A Case Study of a Primary School in Hangzhou*

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Abstract—As the basis of English learning, English vocabulary plays an important role in both teaching and learning. Therefore, the TPR approach proposed by James Escher is highly respected. By means of questionnaires and an interview, this paper studies the application of Total Physical Response in primary school English vocabulary teaching. It has been found that both students and teachers approve of the application of TPR in primary school English vocabulary teaching and then suggestions for children's English education have been proposed.

Index Terms—primary school, English vocabulary teaching, total physical response

I. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary has long been seen as one of the key factors in language learning. It is a solid foundation in all English learning, especially in primary school English vocabulary teaching. However, for teachers, vocabulary teaching is equivalent to one of the difficulties in primary school English vocabulary teaching. So how do teachers carry out primary school English vocabulary teaching smoothly?

Most of them adopt the following teaching methods, such as intuitive teaching methods, natural spelling methods, game teaching methods, situational teaching methods, story teaching methods, etc. At the same time, TPR is a teaching method which can mobilize the enthusiasm and the initiative of learners. That is to say, learners can acquire the perception and knowledge of language through various body movements and activities, and then imitate it further so that learners can use it better. If TPR is used in primary school English vocabulary teaching, the English classroom atmosphere will be activated. TPR method can breathe new life to words. For primary school students, they like to express themselves through body movements. Therefore, the application of TPR method in English vocabulary teaching has positive educational value. When primary school English teachers teach English vocabulary, they should be good at combining textbooks to find suitable English vocabulary learning methods for students, and then can stimulate students' initiative. In this way, students can not only learn English vocabulary in a relaxed and pleasant environment, but also accumulate a large number of vocabularies while having fun, laying a concrete foundation for English learning, and ultimately cultivating students' English literacy. Ummah (2017) also thinks that it is an arduous task for teachers to teach English among teenagers, which is challenging. Teachers have to spend more time preparing to create teaching success. Only by adopting positive and effective teaching methods can teachers stimulate students' interest in learning English to the greatest extent and help students focus in the whole process of classroom learning.

Consequently, the present study mainly focuses on the following three questions:

First of all, is TPR effective in English vocabulary teaching in primary schools? Secondly, how well do students accept TPR in English vocabulary teaching?

Last but not least, how well do teachers accept the application of TPR in vocabulary teaching?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

TPR is the abbreviation of the Total Physical Response teaching method, which was put forward in the 1960s by James Asher, a celebrated American psychology professor. TPR is a comprehensive teaching method, which combines

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language learning with body movements. Learners can use their body movements to help them memorize the target language better. The key teaching activity of TPR is not only to issue commands, but also to respond to commands. That is to say, on the basis of students' understanding of the command and making correct and corresponding responses to the command, students can also imitate the teacher, and then issue the command to other students, and other students will also respond to the student's command. In short, teachers guide students with words and students respond with actions in TPR class.

A. Previous Studies on TPR in China

Generally speaking, the research of TPR in English teaching started relatively early in foreign countries. However, with the implementation of China's basic education reform and quality education, TPR method has also aroused wide concern by many other scholars in China. At the end of the 20th century, China introduced the TPR method, and then a great number of domestic scholars also tried to apply it to English teaching. Scholars at first maintained a conservative attitude. For instance, Xie (1997) thinks that TPR teaching method is only applicable to children's language learning. To some extent, it is easier for children to learn foreign languages than adults because they have better memory than adults, and the psychological burden of children is lighter than that of adults. To conclude, the ability and effect of children to master a second language is better than that of adults.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, TPR method has gradually been widely welcomed, especially in primary and secondary school English Teaching in China. More and more scholars believe that this new method of learning a foreign language can be popularized in China. Hu (2000) discussed the differences between the traditional English teaching method and TPR teaching method in China, as well as the advantages of TPR method. He believes that TPR teaching method is a teaching process, which follows the internalization of operations. When teachers use TPR in teaching, they don't have to pay too much attention to correcting students' grammatical errors, which can stimulate students' enthusiasm in language learning. Wang (2004) believes that TPR method can make students learn English with pleasure in the real experience. TPR mode can not only fully mobilize students' senses, but also fully arouse students' interest in learning, and even make English learning full of vitality, so as to hold on to students' English interest in learning. Similarly, Wang (2005) holds that TPR teaching method can create a relaxed and pleasant learning environment, so as to reduce the psychological burden of students. So that they can learn English in a state of zero learning pressure. Another special feature of TPR teaching method is that teachers can use body language, which cuts down the communication distance between teachers and students. It could also increase the affection between teachers and students.

Wu (2013) reported an empirical study on the application of TPR in English teaching for children that was based on a kindergarten and took nearly three months. The results show that TPR English teaching is not only more attractive to children in the teaching process, but also enhances students' listening comprehension ability. What's more, it can also help students keep a relatively high retention rate of what they have learned.

B. Previous Studies on TPR Aboard

TPR has a long history of English teaching abroad, and its research started earlier. Since 1969, James Asher, the founder of TPR teaching method research, has designed and implemented a series of experiments. In one study, Asher (1969) compared the comprehension and memorization of Japanese among college students who had not studied Japanese and found that the experimental group with TPR teaching performed significantly better than the control group. Later, Asher conducted the same experiment on Russian students, and the results were actually the same. Therefore, Asher believes that TPR teaching method emphasizes the combination of body movement and language learning. TPR focuses on interactive behavior in the process of second language learning. The outstanding feature of TPR is that it allows students to learn in a relaxed and pleasant environment, which makes students develop greater interest in language learning, and it is easier to accept the target language.

In addition to Asher, there are many other scholars who have done much research on language acquisition, which shows that TPR is beneficial to language acquisition. Wolfe and Jones (1982) conducted a 13-week experiment in a Spanish class at middle school level 1 and found that the TPR method creates an easier learning environment for learners.

Ellis (1994) proposed that TPR is necessary for language beginners. He believes that it is the most perfect for beginners and that it is a good form of classroom activities for students to respond to teachers' instructions with body movements.

Through experiments, it has been proved that when adults are put into the language environment of body movements, they can achieve the same learning effect as children. In the experiment, Asher (2009) took students who had not studied Japanese as subjects. In the test, the experimental group made action response to instructions, while the control group only watched the performance, but did not make action response. Experiments show that the experimental group excelled than the control group in both long sentence learning and short sentence learning. Later, he found in the experiment that adolescence is a critical period for learning foreign language pronunciation. If students are sent to live in the target language country before puberty, they are likely to learn fluent pronunciation. If they are after puberty, it will be more difficult.

C. Deficiency of Previous Studies on TPR

Based with the research of domestic and foreign scholars, it could be said that TPR teaching method has many advantages in English teaching, while in other aspects, especially in the aspects of English learning, there is little research. Foreign research on TPR teaching method relies on the empirical validity of this method, but rarely involves the research on TPR teaching method in primary school foreign language teaching. However, although Chinese scholars hold different opinions on the research of TPR teaching method, they only focus on English learning as a whole.

For example, the research on vocabulary and sentence pattern, and the experimental research on specific parts of English teaching has rarely been conducted.

D. Present Situation of Studies on English Vocabulary Teaching in Primary Schools

Primary school stage can be said to be the prime time for children to learn, and English vocabulary is a basic part of primary school English. So mastering and using a certain amount of vocabulary is one of the significant tasks for primary school students. Therefore, vocabulary teaching plays an important role in primary school English teaching, which has been the focus of extensive research.

Yin (2013) believes that English vocabulary is like the cornerstone of a building, and it is also a key to opening the door to English. If the pupils master the words well, it will help them to understand authentic English correctly. Learning vocabulary can also help pupils to build up their confidence in learning English. Hu (2018) analyzed the situation of English Vocabulary Teaching in primary schools, and came up with some useful methods to develop English vocabulary learning ability so as help students in primary schools.

Since the new curriculum reform, English Teaching in primary schools in China has gradually shifted from exam-oriented education to quality education. Nevertheless, there are still many problems to be solved in primary school English vocabulary teaching. First of all, from the current point of view, the teaching methods of primary school English vocabulary learning are relatively limited in number. Either the teacher leads the reading, and then students follow; or the teacher finds a student to lead the reading and other students follow suit like a machine. In short, they read it repeatedly. Secondly, there is a lack of connection between words, and the teaching process lacks the consolidation of words. Hence, this kind of learning makes students unable to develop deep memorization of the English vocabulary they have learned. Thirdly, the introduction of vocabulary learning methods and strategies is critically needed. In the past, the teaching mode mainly relied on teachers to impart knowledge to students, which ignored the importance of learning methods. In this way, it is impossible to cultivate students' self-taught ability. Finally, vocabulary teaching in primary schools generally ignores regular review. If learners don't review English vocabulary after learning, they are likely to forget all the words learned.

III. METHODOLOGY

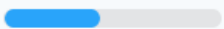
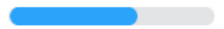
This part illustrates the methodology, involving subjects and research methods.

A. Subjects

A primary school in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province was chosen. This primary school has good teaching equipment and qualified teachers who know some teaching methods including TPR. Therefore, a questionnaire survey and interviews with teachers could be conducted. There are 20 teachers in the questionnaire survey. They are teaching more than one grade, that is to say, teachers may teach students across grades. These teachers mainly teach students in Grades 3-6. For purpose of finding out how well students accept the application of TPR in primary school English vocabulary teaching, Grade-Three students were chosen by the researcher. They were from Class Two and Class Three respectively.

There were 40 students in each of the two classes. A total of 80 students participated in the survey, including 33 boys and 47 girls in total. The results are shown in Table 3-1. Most of them just began to learn English. This means that they are just beginners of English learning. Therefore, they always encounter some problems in learning a second language besides their mother tongue.

TABLE 3-1
GENDER OF SUBJECTS

Gender	Amount	Percentage
Boys	33	 41.25%
Girls	47	 58.75%

B. Research Methods

The questionnaire survey and the interview are used to complete the data collection process. Before the questionnaire survey, it has been learned that TPR has been used in English vocabulary teaching in this primary school. The questionnaire survey was used twice by the author, one for teachers and the other for students. The questions from the two questionnaires are put forward from the perspective of teachers and students respectively. These problems are of great significance to the research of this paper.

1. Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire survey is used to collect students' views on vocabulary learning. As the subjects are the third-grade students, the researcher asked the teacher to explain each question to the students in detail, so that they can understand the meaning of each question in the questionnaire and increase the reliability of the questionnaire. This prevents unreliable results. The teacher explained that the questionnaire has nothing to do with the final score of the students and the students could completed the questionnaire according to their actual situation.

In the first questionnaire, there were 17 questions. 80 copies were distributed, and 80 were withdrawn. The form of the questionnaire was multiple choices. The questionnaire includes the following dimensions: Students' interest in English vocabulary learning (questions 1-2), students' cognition of vocabulary learning (questions 3-6), students' participation in class (questions 7-10), the atmosphere of vocabulary learning (questions 11-12), the effectiveness of vocabulary learning (questions 13-15), and the attention of vocabulary learning (questions 16-17). Therefore, the questionnaire is based on the situation of the subjects. The questionnaire attempts to find out the effectiveness of using TPR in vocabulary teaching, so as to get the forward-looking ideal which is conducive to the formulation of education policy.

The second questionnaire, with a total of 10 questions, is for teachers. The contents of the questionnaire include the following dimensions: the basic situation of teachers' vocabulary teaching (1-2), teachers' application of TPR (3-7), teachers' views on TPR (8-10), and Item No. 11 are about whether teachers have participated in training. The subjects of this survey are English teachers in this primary school. The 20 copies of the questionnaire have been distributed and withdrawn, and all of them are valid.

2. Interview

In order to further understand the teachers' views on the use of TPR in teaching, three teachers were interviewed. Before the interview, the researcher explained the purpose and intention of the interview to the respondents, and the teachers were encouraged to express their true views on TPR method, and then the researcher recorded what they said immediately. The question about teachers' acceptance of TPR involves three aspects: 1. Do you think it is necessary to use TPR in English vocabulary teaching? 2. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of TPR compared with other teaching methods? 3. If you were to reform TPR, what valuable suggestions would you like to put forward?

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The analysis is based on the data of questionnaires collected from 80 students and 20 English teachers from a primary school mentioned above, by means of the WeChat small program "Survey Star" and the use of Microsoft Excel data analysis.

A. Analysis of the Effectiveness of TPR in Vocabulary Teaching

Aiming at answering this question of the effectiveness of TPR in vocabulary teaching, the researcher conducted a questionnaire survey on the third-grade students of a primary school in Hangzhou, and made a detailed statistical analysis. The purpose is to verify the effectiveness of TPR in vocabulary teaching.

TABLE 4-1
SUBJECTS' INTEREST IN ENGLISH VOCABULARY LEARNING

	Amount	Percentage
Interested in	69	86.26%
Not sure	8	10%
Not interested in	3	3.75%

In the first question of the questionnaire, the students were asked to answer whether they were interested in English vocabulary learning. Among the 80 students, 86.26% said they were interested in English vocabulary learning, as shown in Table 4-1.

TABLE 4-2
INFORMATION ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING VOCABULARY

Question number	A (Being effective)	B (Not sure)	C (Being ineffective)
13	75	5	0
14	64	13	3
15	64	15	1

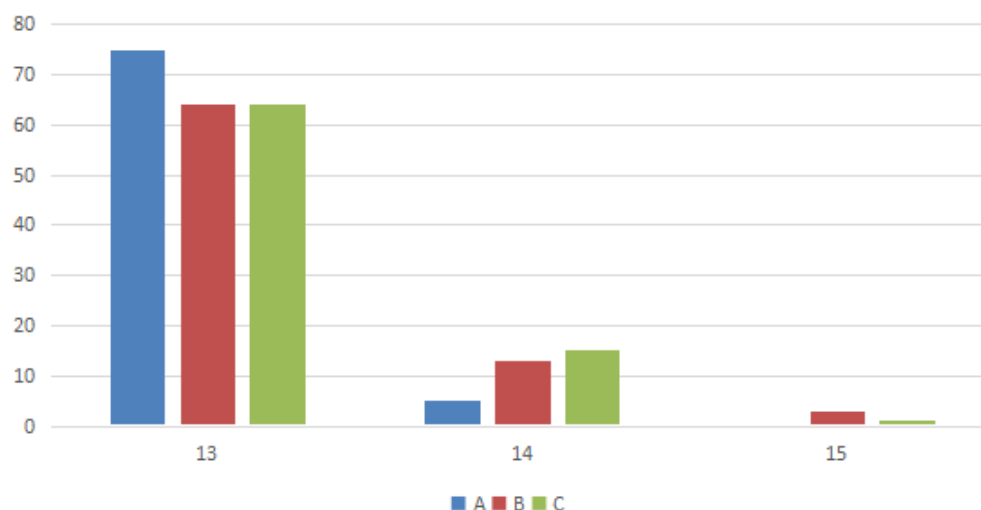


Figure 4-1 Information on the effectiveness of vocabulary learning

According to Question 13, 93.75% of the students think that the teacher's praise can make the learning more positive. If the teacher praises the students properly when the teacher teaches students the words, this method can improve the students' learning efficiency and make the learning of words more efficient. Only 6.25% of the students hold the opposite opinion.

The result of Question 14 shows that 80% of the students believe that following the teacher's action to learn words can help improve their English learning, and 16.25% of the students are not clear. 3.75% of the students answered "No". It can be seen from the statistical results of Question 15 that 80% of the students think that when the teacher uses games, actions, pictures and other auxiliary teaching devices, their vocabulary learning efficiency is very high, that is, they can remember new words faster, and the students' learning will become easier. TPR teaching method is a lively and vivid teaching method closely related to action. It is necessary to use it in class for a long time to improve students' English learning. From the data of the results of questions 13, 14 and 15, it could be found that the application of TPR in vocabulary teaching is effective. Therefore, it is necessary to use this new vocabulary teaching method to improve students' interest and motivation in English learning.

TABLE 4-3
STUDENTS' ATTENTION IN LEARNING WORDS IN ENGLISH CLASS

	Amount	Percentage
Able to concentrate and listen to the class carefully	50	62.5%
Sometimes attentive, sometimes absent-minded	28	35%
Daze or absent-minded	2	2.5%

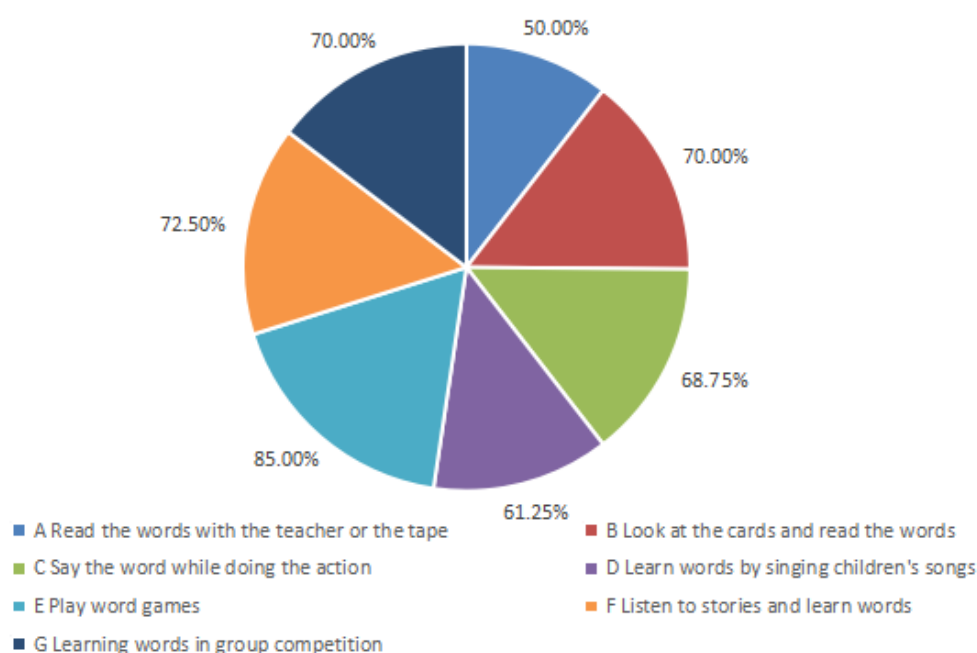


Figure 4-2 Ways to attract students' attention in learning English words

From Table 4-3, it can be seen that most students can concentrate their attention in the classroom when using TPR, so TPR can catch the students' attention. The conclusion drawn from Figure 4-2 is that students prefer these ways of learning vocabulary, and word games account for 85% of the total. Relatively speaking, the proportion of students who choose to follow the teacher or record the words is not high, only 50%. Therefore, it could be concluded that TPR teaching method is in line with children's psychology and thus effective in primary school English vocabulary learning.

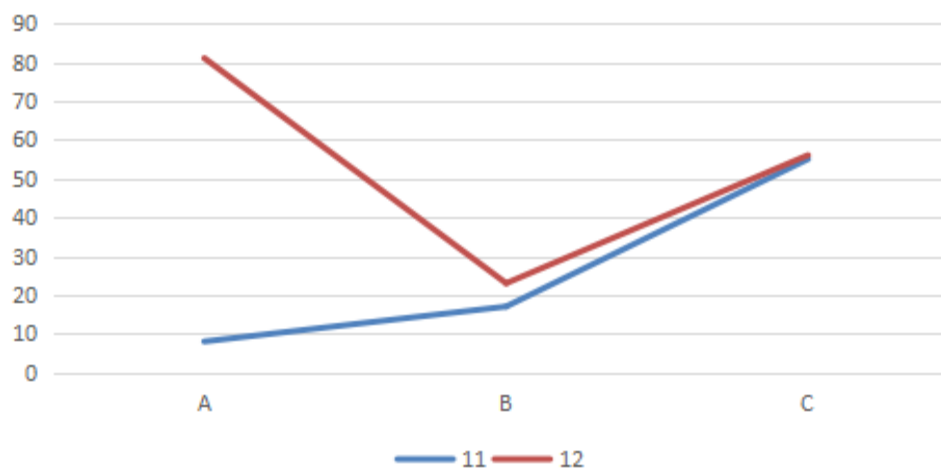


Figure 4-3 Learning atmosphere

Additionally, from the analysis of the results of the questionnaire 11 and 12 based on Figure 4-3, we can draw the following conclusion: students like a relaxed and pleasant learning atmosphere. When the teacher applies TPR to primary school English vocabulary teaching, students feel that the classroom atmosphere is not tense, which is conducive to better vocabulary learning. In TPR English class, there is a non-pressure environment, so students will be more confident in vocabulary learning.

Through the above analysis, it can be concluded that TPR is effective when it is applied to English vocabulary teaching.

B. Analysis of Students' Acceptance of TPR Teaching

Question 3 is mainly used to investigate how the teacher teaches English words in class. The results show that 75% of the students choose to play games, and 51.25% of the students choose password action. These two ways are in line with the second language acquisition theory and memory trace theory, so they are conducive to students' English vocabulary learning.

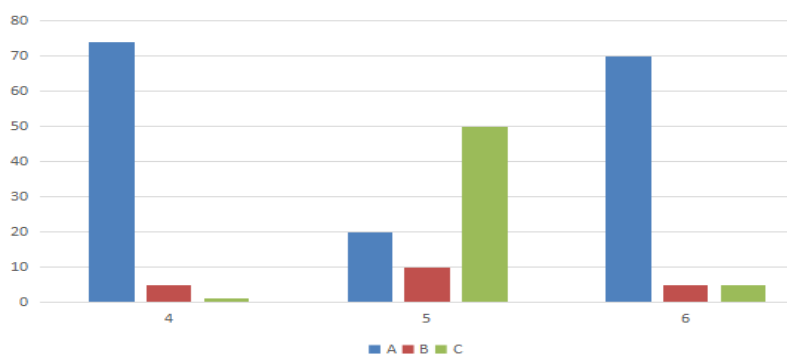


Figure 4-4 Students' acceptance of TPR

According to the data of Question 4, none of the 80 students dislike TPR teaching method and 75 students like TPR teaching method. From the perspective of students, they accept TPR teaching method, and TPR is also a teaching method in line with students' psychological needs. Question 5 discusses the traditional way of learning words. As shown in the data in Figure 4-4, 62.50% of the students don't like the way the teacher teaches the words before. It's just a way in which students are forced to follow the teacher to read vocabulary over and over again. This kind of mechanical memory will make students feel tired and lose interest in learning. For Question 6, which is about whether students can easily remember the words through the teacher's physical activities and games, 87.50% said yes, which fully shows that students favor the TPR teaching method. TPR is a teaching method closely related to language and action, which can win the heart of students.

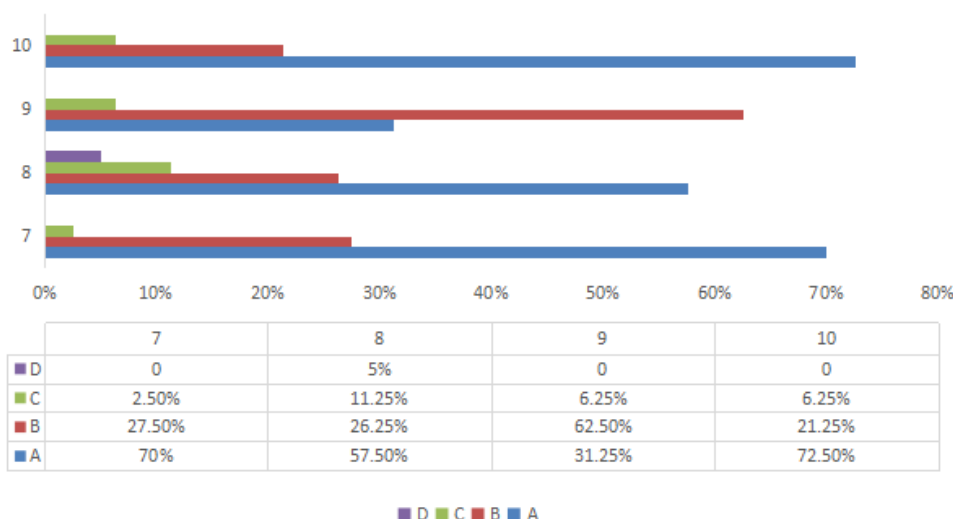


Figure 4-5 Students' participation in class

From Questions 7 to 10 of Questionnaire 1, we can see that teachers often invite students to answer questions when using TPR in vocabulary teaching, and students are very willing to take the initiative to answer the teacher's questions, which can also make students pay more attention, and students can even actively participate in the classroom. At the same time, it also confirms the relevant theory of TPR, that is, by listening first, then speaking, and then doing actions. In this way, students deepen their understanding of the language and improve their vocabulary learning. According to Question 9, only 6.25% of the students dare not answer the teacher's questions because they are afraid of being criticized for wrong answers. Most of them are shy and dare not raise their hands. However, from Question 10, it has been found that 72.50% of the students would actively participate in the classroom when the teacher used games, group games, action to teach words. From the choice of these questions, we can see that students prefer the TPR teaching method for students could become the masters of the classroom under TPR. Moreover, students' comprehension ability can be improved through action learning. In addition, their enthusiasm in learning English could also be enhanced.

C. Analysis of Teachers' Acceptance of TPR in English Vocabulary Teaching

Questionnaire 2 was distributed to all English teachers in this primary school in Hangzhou with the purpose of exploring the teachers' acceptance of the application of TPR in primary school English vocabulary teaching. The results are as follows:

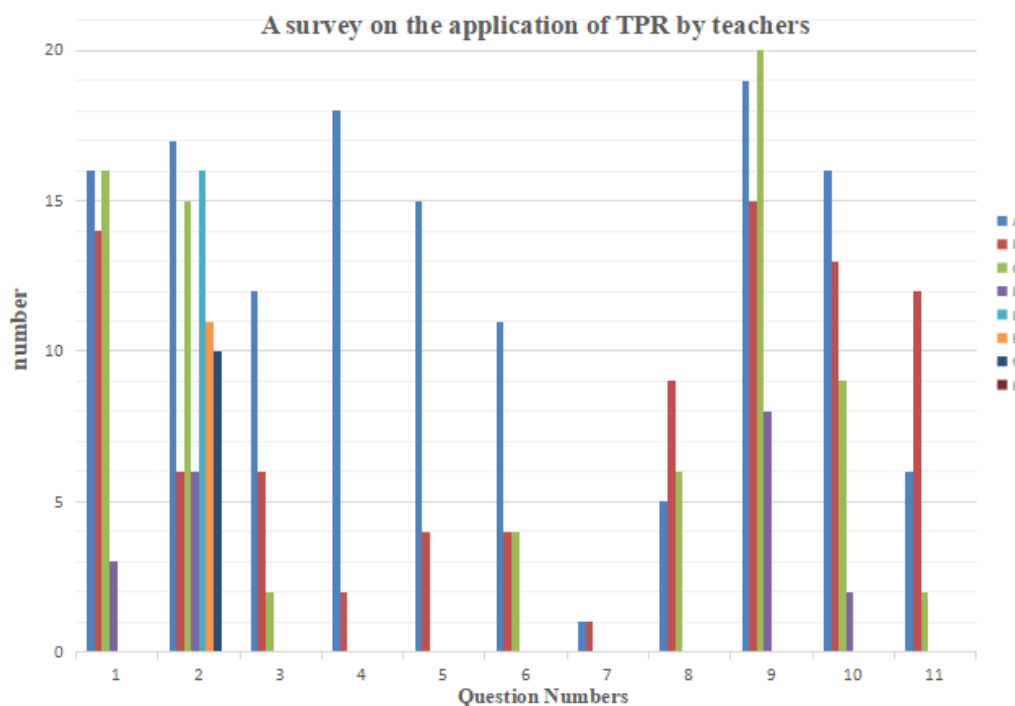


Figure 4-6 A survey on the application of TPR by teachers

From the survey results, it could be found that most of the teachers will use games, pictures, role-playing teaching strategies to teach vocabulary. The data of Question 3 shows that 60% of teachers often use TPR teaching methods. It seems that TPR is a teaching method approved of by teachers as well. For Question 4, 95% of the teachers said that when teaching new verbs, they would first demonstrate the verbs to the students through their own body language. From this, we can infer that teachers are willing to teach students words in this way. Only two teachers do not use TPR. The reason why they choose not to do so is reflected in Question 7. One teacher thinks the class time is limited and can't organize everyone to participate in it. The other teacher thinks that students prefer to sit and watch the teacher's performance or watch the slide show. And for Question 5, teachers who use TPR method agree with this way of teaching words. They believe the effect of the TPR method is very beneficial, which is conducive to students' learning. As to question 6, teachers all answer that students like this kind of teaching method. When answering Question 8, teachers tend to hold the TPR teaching method is a waste of time to some extent. For Question 10, teachers gave their own opinions on the difficulties of TPR. 80% of the teachers hold that with the large number of students, the whole class is not easy to control, and 65% of the teachers think that it is the limitation of the teaching environment. Many activities cannot be carried out easily. The advantages of TPR are as shown in Question 9. All teachers choose TPR to capture students' attention, and 95% of the teachers also choose TPR to activate the classroom atmosphere. For Question 11, 60% of the teachers did not participate in any TPR training, but they have learned about it through other channels. It is proved that TPR teaching method is accepted by teachers from the choice of these four questions, which is effective.

As one of the research tools, interview is used to answer the third question. It is a supplement to the questionnaire and aims to get more information about teachers' views on the application of vocabulary in primary school English teaching. All the teachers surveyed agree that it is necessary to use TPR in English vocabulary teaching in primary schools, and they support that TPR is beneficial to English vocabulary learning and students will have more confidence in learning English in the future. Through the TPR teaching method, the relationship between teachers and students could be more harmonious. From the answers of the three teachers interviewed to the three questions, it could also be concluded that teachers support TPR in the English vocabulary teaching class.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Through the questionnaire survey, it has been found that the primary school students are interested in English vocabulary learning. They like to participate in group games and are willing to accept this way. In the questionnaire survey and the interview with the teachers, it has been found that the implementation of the TPR teaching method not only mobilize the students' senses, exercising their body, but also make their thinking more sensitive. Teachers use games, actions and other forms to provide students with a pressure-free learning environment, so students can learn English in a happy way. Therefore, we can conclude that TPR is a more effective method of vocabulary teaching than traditional vocabulary teaching methods. Through questionnaires and interviews, it could be concluded that the TPR teaching method not only facilitates teachers' teaching work, but also promotes the harmonious relationship between

teachers and student. The TPR teaching method is also consistent with the concept of cultivating students' comprehensive quality proposed in the current English education reform in China, which provides a theoretical basis and direction for the reform of English education and teaching in China.

In the process of investigation, several problems have been spotted. Although TPR teaching method plays an important role in primary school English vocabulary teaching, it cannot be ignored that children with different personalities will have different results in vocabulary learning efficiency. In other words, introverted children are less willing to participate in the course. In addition, the body movement of vocabulary teaching in each class should not be too much, too many words will contribute to students' memory confusion, and even cause classroom fatigue, because it consumes too much physical strength of students.

Consequently, suggestions have been put forward: When using TPR teaching, teachers should encourage shy students and give them more opportunities to perform in class; teachers should employ teaching methods that are close to students' life and in line with their age; finally, schools should give primary school English teachers more opportunities of professional training.

To conclude, it has been found that TPR are welcomed by students and teachers alike. More studies are expected to be conducted on the application of Total Physical Response in primary school English vocabulary teaching so as to improve the efficacy of English teaching in primary schools.

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Research on Flipped Classroom Teaching Mode From the Perspective of Multimodality*

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Abstract—Flipped classroom is not only the flipping of knowledge imparting and knowledge internalization, but also the all-round reform of education concept, teaching content, teaching methods, teaching means and teaching evaluation. Multimodality provides a theoretical perspective and analytical framework for the teaching design of flipped classroom. Multimodality theory fits many characteristics of flipped classroom, which is conducive to giving full play to the advantages of flipped classroom. With the help of multimodal theory and multimodal teaching ideas, this study constructs a flipped classroom teaching mode under the multimodal perspective, which takes the dynamic teaching structure as the core and the open multimodal learning environment as the all-round support, and gives some operational suggestions.

Index Terms—flipped classroom, multimode, multimodal teaching, teaching model

I. INTRODUCTION

The teaching process includes knowledge imparting and knowledge internalization. Although the two processes can not be strictly divided, generally speaking, the process of knowledge imparting and knowledge perception come first, and the process of knowledge internalization and knowledge understanding come second. Therefore, for the convenience of expression, we can divide the teaching process into two stages: knowledge imparting and knowledge internalization. In the traditional classroom, knowledge is mainly taught by teachers in the classroom, while knowledge internalization is mainly realized by students' homework or practice. Flipped classroom flips the process of knowledge imparting and knowledge internalization in traditional classroom, puts knowledge imparting after class, completed by students independently, puts knowledge internalization in class, discussed and completed through students' cooperation. Flipped classroom liberates the students and practices the "student-centered" education concept. Teachers change from the imparter of knowledge to the instructor and promoter of students' learning. It is a new teaching method which leads the new direction of classroom teaching reform.

Robert Talbert (2015) of Franklin College is one of the earliest scholars who paid attention to and practiced flipped classroom teaching. He put forward the teaching structure model of "before class + in class". On the basis of Robert model, Zhang Jinlei (2012) of Nanjing University refined the learning links and processes before and during class, which enhanced the operability of the structural model. In addition, Jackie Gerstin (2015), an American scholar, constructs a four-stage model of flipped classroom based on students' learning activities. From the perspective of teaching design, Zhong Xiaoliu (2013) of Tsinghua University put forward the Taiji ring model of flipped classroom. The above teaching models have played a positive role in promoting the current implementation of flipped classroom, leading the deepening and development of flipped classroom to a certain extent.

Although we pay attention to both students' learning and teachers' teaching, expand our vision from "before class + in class" to "after class + in class", focus on learning links and specific processes, and take "operability" and "practicability" as the criteria, we fail to break through the barriers of traditional teaching mode, It failed to further highlight the role and value of technology, so that we did not get the desired effect of change in the reality of flipped classroom teaching.

In the research, the author finds that multimodal theory is compatible with many characteristics of flipped classroom. What's more, multimodal theory helps to highlight the application of information technology in classroom teaching. Along this exploration path, the author tries to construct the flipped classroom teaching mode from the perspective of multimodality in order to reveal the true meaning of flipped classroom and achieve the desired effect of flipped classroom.

II. MULTIMODALITY AND MULTIMODAL TEACHING

A. Multimodality

The term multimodality can be literally divided into two parts: multi and modality, which means the complexity of multiple modes. Many Modal thoughts can be traced back to the classical rhetoric of the fourth century BC, and it

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comes from how to make voice, gesture and expression more conducive to the actual speech. However, it was not until the 1990s that multimodal theory was formed and developed with the development of information technology and the emergence of more expressions.

The concept of modality is very complex. Charles Forceville (2009), University of Amsterdam, defines the modality as a social symbol system explained by the specific perceptual process, such as image, text, gesture, sound, taste, contact, etc. Some other scholars regard the modality as the interaction between human senses and external environment, that is, the interaction modality, such as visual modality, auditory modality, taste modality, etc (G. Kress, 2009). In the field of human-computer interaction and artificial intelligence, some people regard the modality as the communication mode or information channel for human to perceive information. Multimodal human computer interaction is a system that responds to input in multiple modes or communication channels, such as voice, posture, writing and other modality. Corresponding to human sensory system, the input equipment of human-computer interaction includes camera, tactile sensor, microphone, olfactory equipment and taste equipment, and also includes some mixed input equipment, such as keyboard, mouse, writing board, motion input and biosensor. They correspond to two or more senses of human body.

At present, in the multimodal emotional interaction research, it's the focus to study large-scale body movement, posture, gaze and so on based on the visual research. Specifically speaking, face recognition, facial expression, posture recognition, human motion analysis and eye tracking are hot research topics. The modality can be realized by one or several media. Only one modality system is called single modality, and the system with two or more modalities is multimodality. With the rapid development of information technology, with the help of multimedia and high-tech, more modalities emerge. Multimodality has become normal in human life and communication.

There are many similarities between multimodality and multimedia. People often regard the paper, tape, CD-ROM and so on as the physical media, while the encoding method of loading content or information on physical media is called logical media, such as text, audio stream, video stream, etc. We can use logical media to define multimedia. For example, the single logical media with words printed on paper is called single media. It is called dual media, such as silent movie, which carries two coding means of image and text. Multimedia, which carries three or more kinds of coding systems at the same time, is called multimedia, such as teaching video, which integrates text, sound and image. Multimodality focuses on the perceptual channel of human senses to the external things or the symbol system of information representation. When the channel of people getting information is single or the information is a single symbol system, it is a single-modal system. Two or more sensing channels are called bimodal or multimodal. For example, the silent movie can be regarded as dual-modality, and the teaching video which integrates text, sound and image is multimodality.

These aspects are consistent with the classification of multimedia. But there are some differences between them, such as paper media, single media with pure text, text image multimedia with illustrations, photos, tables, etc. The first mock exam is that all the paper media, whether single media or multimedia, use visual sense to get information, which is a single modality. For another example, the current micro lesson video, from the perspective of logic coding means, includes three coding systems of text, sound and image, which are three media. From the perspective of multimodality, if the text and video image of the video act on vision and hearing respectively, and audio-visual perception participates in it at the same time, it is bimodal. If the video is only shot by a camera, no matter how many cameras are involved, people can only get a symbol system of information representation, then the video is single modality. If there are multiple input channels such as microphone, camera, computer keyboard, etc., such as video recorded by screen recording software, it is multimodal.

B. Multimodal Theory

Due to its loose and multi-domain research, multimodal theory has not formed a perfect theoretical system with clear purpose. Multimodal research focuses on social semiotics, systemic functional grammar and discourse analysis. The multimodal theory referred to in this paper is the research viewpoint and results in these fields. The core of multimodal theory is multimodal discourse analysis theory, which was first proposed by Chris and van Leeuwen Out (2001). The main points of multimodal discourse analysis theory include: other symbol systems outside language are also the source of meaning, and can also express meaning. Different modalities have the same symbol principle, which can express the same meaning. Being a social symbol, language has the conceptual function, interpersonal function and textual function, which can be extended to other symbolic systems. Context factors are closely related to the meaning construction of multimodal discourse.

The multimodal learning model constructed by Gu Yueguo (2007) of China Foreign Language Education Research Center is representative in multimodal research. He uses three basic roles to build learning behavior model framework: information acquisition, meaning construction, practical ability, each role includes several sub roles. The role of information acquisition mainly refers to the interaction of human body with the external environment, and its sub roles include: vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste, perception of spatial distance and body imitation. Meaning construction role simulates human brain's processing of external information. Its sub roles include visual information processing, auditory information processing, tactile information processing, olfactory information processing, taste information processing, distance information processing, action information processing and personal knowledge storage. Practical ability is the external behavior performance of learning effect, and its sub roles include traditional listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation skills, as well as body language in face-to-face communication and interaction, namely listening

ability, speaking ability, reading ability, writing ability, translation ability, body ability, body skill and personal knowledge updating.

On the basis of intensive research, Gu Yueguo proposed five hypotheses about multimodal learning: (1) the same mode learning process is easier than the mode conversion learning process; (2) Appropriate mode switching can enhance learners' internalization of what they have learned and improve the persistence of content memory; (3) Multimodal learning can enhance memory more than unimodal learning; (4) Learning words and images together is better than learning words alone; (5) As to the two ways of learning: face to face with teachers and classmates, and a person alone with computer science, the former is more conducive to enhancing memory than the latter.

C. Multimodal Teaching

The development of information technology promotes the improvement of school teaching conditions, the multimodality of meaning representation and information exchange urges us to change the traditional teaching methods and implement multimodal teaching, so as to promote the optimization of classroom teaching. Under the guidance of multimodal theory, multimodal teaching is to coordinate the multimodal system of language, image, sound, action and other meaning construction to become the most effective way of meaning expression and communication, and guide students to construct meaning with the help of multimodal means.

In multimodal teaching, teachers are not only the imparter of knowledge and the player of PPT, but also the selector, cooperater and demonstrator of multimodality. Teachers use multimodal system to design classroom teaching, build multimodal curriculum resources with the help of network learning platform, fully mobilize students' sensory potential, and provide multimodal interactive learning environment for learners to promote learners' multimodal understanding of learning content and multimodal meaning construction.

At the beginning of the 21st century, Stein (2000) introduced multimodal thinking into teaching and put forward multimodal teaching method, emphasizing that curriculum, teaching and evaluation should focus on the modal characteristics of learning environment, and all communication activities in the classroom are multimodal. Multimodal teaching is more used in English teaching. Royce uses images and speech to complement each other in multimodal texts to achieve cross symbol coherence, and uses visual modal stimulation and the presentation relationship between different modes to strengthen English reading, writing, listening, speaking and vocabulary training. Based on practice, he puts forward "multimodal teaching methodology" (Royce, 2002).

Zhang Delu of Ocean University of China studies the effective mode under the condition of modern technology. He points out that mode selection can be carried out from three aspects: (1) It provides teaching situation and convenient conditions for teaching. (2) It provides auxiliary conditions for teaching. (3) It provides multi-channel expression of discourse meaning for multimodal discourse communication (Zhang Delu, 2009).

Shi Junhua of Yantai University discusses and practices the cultivation of multimodal reading ability and multimodal communication ability from the perspective of college English teaching. He believes that today's English reading and writing teaching should be expanded to focus on "multiple discourses" and develop in the direction of multiple reading. Reading and writing ability should not be limited to the understanding and use of language symbols, but should be combined with other symbol systems (Shi Junhua, 2012). With the help of multimedia and other technical tools to construct meaning, one of the significance of English "reading and writing" teaching is to cultivate students' communicative competence. Communication can be carried out through auditory, visual and tactile modes at the same time. Voice, action, gesture, image, color and other communication channels and symbolic modes participate in the process of communication and meaning construction, which is conducive to the cultivation of multimodal communicative competence. O'Halloran of Curtin University in Australia is committed to the research of multimodal discourse analysis theory. He has developed multimodal image and multimodal video software, and actively applied multimodal teaching to middle school mathematics teaching, focusing on the multimodal interaction in mathematics classroom (O'Halloran, 1999).

III. THE FEASIBILITY OF APPLYING MULTIMODAL TEACHING TO FLIPPED CLASSROOM

Compared with the traditional classroom, flipped classroom is a new teaching method, which reverses the two processes of knowledge teaching and knowledge internalization. More importantly, it reverses the status of "teaching" and "learning", and puts "students' learning" in the core position. Multimodal teaching provides a variety of channels for students to obtain, perceive and transfer information. With the help of multimedia and network technology, it can provide more possibilities for students to learn.

A. Flipped Classroom Needs Effective Teaching Mode to Guide

Flipped classroom is not only the flipping of teaching links, but also the "flipping" of teaching design and teaching implementation under the guidance of new teaching concepts. The premise of this design is that students already have the ability of autonomous learning, and the learning support provided for students is enough to maintain their learning. At present, it's still doubtful whether students have the ability of autonomous learning. Teachers and parents are more worried about whether students will get lost on the Internet and whether they can complete the task of autonomous

learning with quality and quantity. At any time, we can not replace or force students to learn, and flipped classroom learning is no exception.

However, if we can fully consider students' differences and personalize learning needs in teaching design, mobilize students' participation in various senses with the support of information technology, and implement multi-channel and multi-modal learning, we can always make learners find the most suitable one for their own learning, so as to attract and maintain learners' interest in learning.

Under the traditional teaching conditions, it is almost impossible to achieve. With today's information technology platform, the era of menu learning has come, and the realization of this need is no longer unattainable. In contrast, the current flipped classroom teaching is far from enough in learning support. The quality of many teaching videos is not flattering, and most of them are based on PPT display, with single sensory stimulation and lack of novelty and creativity; Learning materials are limited, and most of them are text and PPT; the communication platform is in vain, and the communication channel is single. The reason for the current situation is that the flipped classroom teaching mode only focuses on teaching content and teaching strategies, and ignores knowledge representation, knowledge presentation and knowledge acquisition methods, which are exactly what students need for autonomous learning.

Constructivism holds that the acquisition and internalization of knowledge is the process of meaning construction by learners through interpersonal cooperation in a certain situation. Internalization of knowledge in class is the core of flipped classroom. The purpose is to leave enough space and time for classroom teaching, so that learners can form a deep understanding of knowledge through exploration and communication. We have reached a general consensus on this point, the existing flipped classroom teaching models mostly pay attention to the importance of creating situations and cooperative activities. However, the current model lacks a deep understanding of the teaching environment, fails to fully reveal the interaction between the individual and the environment, media and artifacts, and is limited to the understanding of the meso dimension of students' activities, which leads to the simple design and implementation of teaching activities.

Therefore, we should not only pay attention to the design of learning resources and media tools, but also pay attention to the design of learning activities and interaction. Technology is not only a medium for spreading knowledge, but also an integral part of distributed cognitive system. It is a tool to support learners' cognitive and learning activities. It can be seen that not all activities can promote students' cognition, we need to realize the essence of activities, promote the deep interaction between learners and external things, build a variety of connection channels between learners and external things, explore the potential of various media resources, and fully display the potential of other people's, time, space, media, then it is possible to support and enrich learners' cognitive activities.

B. Multimodal Teaching Provides a Wide Space for the Implementation of Flipped Classroom

Multimodal teaching can provide students with multi-modal curriculum resources including video, text, pictures, audio and so on through multimodal means. It can not only meet the needs of learners with different learning orientations, but also enhance the internalization of knowledge through appropriate modal transformation. It can also build multi-modal compound resources for students to learn, Practice has proved that multimodal learning can enhance learners' memory more than single-mode learning. Multimodal teaching can provide students with multimodal network communication platform and multimodal learning tools, mobilize various resources and systems, and build a multimodal learning ring for students' learning.

This not only benefits the cultivation of students' multimodal communication ability, but also cultivates students' practical ability and innovative spirit through different forms of multimodal interaction. Previous studies have shown that face-to-face discussion and communication between people can obtain information from multiple modal channels, which is better than learning from computers alone. It can be seen that multimodal teaching, with the help of the complementary advantages of various modes, participates in the overall construction of meaning, promotes the internalization and understanding of students' knowledge, highlights the characteristics and advantages of flipped classroom, and is conducive to the optimization of teaching.

IV. CONSTRUCTION OF MULTIMODAL TEACHING MODE

On the basis of multimodal theory, we can combine with the reference and sublation of previous research results of flipped classroom teaching mode, then construct a new teaching mode, namely multimodal teaching mode, which aims to highlight the characteristics of flipped classroom and give full play to the function of flipped classroom.

A. Design of Multimodal Teaching Mode

The design of this mode mainly includes two dimensions: teaching structure and multimodal means.

1. The design of teaching structure is based on the characteristics of flipped classroom and the previous research experience. The teaching structure is still divided into two teaching implementation links: in class and after class. According to the different characteristics of students' learning in class and after class, multimodal curriculum, tools and environment are applied to support the teaching structure.

(1) After class. Through autonomous learning, students can realize the perception and initial internalization of new knowledge. At this stage, multimodal teaching mainly supports learners' autonomous learning through multimodal curriculum resources and multimodal communication platform.

(2) In class. Students' autonomous learning after class can only complete a simple cognition of new knowledge. For more complex multimodal problems, that is, problems involving a wide range and poor structure, students' independent learning alone can not be completed. It needs to be completed through consultation and discussion with teachers and students in class. Group discussion and communication in class is the real essence of flipped classroom. The reason why flipping is implemented is to put the most important content and learning difficulties in the classroom and let everyone study together to complete them, and cultivate students' practical ability, innovative consciousness and innovative spirit in the process of completing the learning task. In class, multimodal teaching is more useful. By providing multimodal curriculum resources, multimodal interaction, multimodal communication platform and multimodal evaluation, multimodal learning environment are built for students to promote the optimization of classroom teaching.

2. Multimodal means design. The design of multimodal means is the focus of multimodal teaching mode design. Taking into account the theory of symbolic system and the theory of interaction mode, we design multimodal means from these two dimensions, that is, the multimodality of symbolic system and the multimodality of communicative mode. The multimodality of symbol system shows the multimodality of meaning expression, such as multimodal curriculum resources. The multimodality of communication mode reflects the diversity of information exchange, such as multimodal interaction mode, multimodal interaction strategy, multimodal learning environment and multimodal evaluation. We need to give full play to the advantages of each mode and tap the potential of each mode to make it complement each other, besides, it's also important to avoid the limitations of single mode.

(1) Multimodal curriculum resources. Whether it is after class or in class, multimodal curriculum resources are the main source of information for students. Different symbolic systems have different ways of expression and advantages, such as text, image (chart), video (animation, micro lesson) and audio (sound), which can meet the learning needs of learners with different aptitudes. Multimodal stimulation is conducive to learners' attention and memory of learning content, so we should design and construct various modal curriculum resources as much as possible. Moreover, with the development of information technology, advanced technology provides the possibility for the integration of multiple modes. As far as possible, audio, text, image and video can be integrated, so that the combination of multiple modes can achieve multi sensory stimulation for learners, and better teaching effect can be achieved. For example, teaching video is one of the main resources for students to learn after class. When making a video, we try to input all the information of voice, PPT and some pictures of the activity when explaining. It's better to input the blackboard with the writing board. At the same time, the writing board input highlights the key points and difficulties of teaching, and it is easy to focus the attention of learners. All these are conducive for students to obtaining as much information as possible from more channels.

(2) Multimodal interaction. Multimodal interaction includes modes and strategies of multimodal interaction. The former mainly includes teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, group interaction, human-computer interaction, etc. The latter mainly includes role transformation, role play, virtual reality, classroom report, group negotiation and so on. Through a variety of multimodal interaction methods and multimodal interaction strategies, we can mobilize students' multiple senses to participate in cooperation, help students obtain more knowledge understanding from the distributed cognitive environment, promote knowledge internalization, and effectively improve students' practical ability and social communication ability.

(3) Multimodal learning environment. Multimodal learning environment mainly includes technological, cultural and natural dimensions. Technological environment, such as online learning platform (MOOC, Netease open class, Wiki, blogs, Weebly, Sakai, etc.), network communication software (QQ, wechat, Skype, email, Gmail, etc.), search engine (Baidu, Google, CNKI, etc.); cultural environment, such as harmonious and equal interpersonal relationship, active exploration spirit, responsible master attitude, etc; natural environment, such as learning places that meet the needs, natural learning conditions that meet the requirements, etc. The creation of multimodal learning environment can not only help students improve their ability of multiple interaction and the ability of various organs to work together, so that learners can learn happily and easily, but also enable teachers and students to cooperate with each other, promote each other, form a learning community, and stimulate greater potential.

(4) Multimodal evaluation. Multimodal evaluation is to evaluate students' learning results or performance by using multimodal methods. Multimodality can be a process or product. Therefore, we can divide multimodal evaluation into formative evaluation and summative evaluation. Formative assessment mainly focuses on classroom teaching report, role play, learning performance, participation, learning attitude and other process contents in evaluation; summative evaluation is mainly a one-time evaluation of learning results (products), such as paper test, final works, papers, completed projects and so on. The so-called multimodal method is mainly reflected in the multimodal evaluation methods (such as individual evaluation, group evaluation, teacher evaluation, multiple evaluation, etc.), the multimodal evaluation methods (paper evaluation, work exhibition, classroom report, learning performance, report performance, etc.) and the multimodal evaluation dimensions (such as thought, feeling, behavior, cognition, communication, imagination, results, etc.). Multimodal evaluation is consistent with multivariate evaluation, but different from multivariate evaluation, multimodal evaluation not only emphasizes the diversity of evaluation, but also emphasizes

different information feedback channels. Multimodal evaluation means multi method, multi-channel and all-round evaluation.

B. The Construction Process of Multimodal Teaching Mode

The design of this mode mainly includes two dimensions: teaching structure and multimodal means.

Based on the above teaching structure design ideas, we divide multimodal teaching into two main links or processes: after class and in class. In class and after class, multimodal problems connect with each other. After class, students mainly study independently, including understanding learning tasks, watching videos, searching materials, communicating and discussing, complete the exercises and pre-class evaluation and other activities. The learning goal is to recognize new knowledge, master factual knowledge, and form the ability of autonomous learning. Through pre-class evaluation, students can get timely feedback, understand their learning effect, and establish multimodal problems encountered in learning, so as to provide problem sources for collective negotiation in class. Class is for multimodal problems, we discuss and negotiate collectively, mainly including problem exchange, independent exploration, group cooperation, achievement display, self-evaluation and group evaluation, summary and reflection and other activities. This process mainly focuses on the complex and ill structured multimodal problems that students encounter in autonomous learning. Under the guidance of teachers, with the help of multimodal resources, multimodal interactive platform, multimodal learning methods, students can solve the problems and form their ability.

In addition to the core flipped classroom teaching structure, this model highlights the construction and role of multimodal learning environment supporting flipped classroom teaching. We believe that in order to better promote learning, we need a variety of multimodal learning environment support, whether it's after class or in class. The creation of multimodal learning environment is the core of multimodal teaching, and also the key to the success of teaching. In the model, open multimodal learning is the environment designed as an encircling structure, encircling the whole teaching structure, which means that the multimodal learning environment should provide 360 degree all-round support for multimodal teaching.

According to the theory of distributed cognition, cognition is distributed within individuals, time, space, environment and society. The cognition of subject is the interaction between cognitive subject and cognitive environment as well as all things related to cognitive activities. It emphasizes that cognitive subject understands cognitive phenomena through interactive activities. A 360 degree multimodal learning environment is conducive to learners' cognition and internalization of knowledge. In flipped classroom, the most beneficial change to students' learning is not after class learning, but the multiple interaction in class. The multimodal interactive activities are the core of classroom activity design. How to design multimodal and interactive activities largely determines the quality of students' knowledge internalization. We should make full use of multimodal teaching resources to promote students to complete the cognition and internalization of new knowledge with the help of multimodal learning platform and interaction mode.

V. SUGGESTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTIMODAL TEACHING MODE

When using this teaching mode, we put forward the following suggestions for teachers.

A. Designing the Whole Process of Flipped Classroom with Multimodal Thinking

The design of this mode mainly includes two dimensions: teaching structure and multimodal means.

Multimodal thinking fits well with the characteristics of flipped classroom. In the teaching design of flipped classroom, multimodal thinking should be fully used to reflect the characteristics of multimodal teaching mode, so as to promote the improvement of flipped classroom teaching quality. First of all, the whole flipped classroom teaching process should be designed with multimodal thinking. Both the design of autonomous learning after class and the design of communication activities in class should embody multimodal thinking. Secondly, the multimodal idea should be implemented in the specific links of teaching implementation. In the design of teaching resources, teaching methods, teaching strategies and teaching evaluation, the multimodal idea and multimodal method should be fully used to tap the potential of resources and environment, meet the needs of students with different sexual orientation as far as possible, and promote the development of each student.

B. Multimodal Interaction in Class Is the Key to Instructional Design

What flipped classroom focuses on is the two basic teaching processes of students' knowledge imparting and knowledge internalization, rather than simple form flipping. Some teachers spend a lot of energy on the design and preparation of students' learning materials, especially on the design and production of exquisite micro class, ignoring the design and implementation of classroom interaction and communication, which is undoubtedly picking up the sesame and losing the watermelon. The original intention of flipped classroom is to transfer the relatively easy process of knowledge to after class learning, so as to release valuable classroom time to promote students' knowledge internalization. Classroom knowledge internalization is the focus of flipped classroom, teachers need to evaluate the students' learning situation after class on the basis of class communication activities for fine design, so that students can complete knowledge internalization in high-quality interaction. In the design of activities in class, we should not only use the information resources such as multimedia and network, but also make good use of the opportunities of face-to-

face communication and collective face-to-face negotiation, explore, develop and use various information channels, give full play to the advantages of various modes, and boost learners' understanding and internalization of knowledge.

C. Creating an Appropriate Multimodal Learning Environment

Appropriate learning environment is the premise to ensure the smooth progress of learning. A suitable learning environment should at least have the following functions: help arouse students' past experience and understanding, provide rich means of interaction and collaboration, provide rich learning context support, seamlessly integrate rich curriculum resources, and provide instant feedback methods and means. With the help of multimodal resources such as text, image and video, teachers can arouse students' past experience and understanding of new knowledge. Through multi-modal interaction, such as teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, human-computer interaction, as well as role transformation, role play, virtual reality and other strategies, rich means of interaction and cooperation are provided for students. Teachers can provide timely feedback and guidance for students through multiple and multi-channel evaluation mechanism (Ye Xindong, 2014).

However, when creating a multimodal learning environment, the more the better, the more multimodal is relative. Whether it is the multimodal design of symbol system or interactive mode, teachers should provide abundant resources and means as far as possible according to the teaching content, students' characteristics and teaching conditions. Besides, as teachers, we should take the principle of appropriateness, and should not blindly go into the misunderstanding of aiming too high. Secondly, because flipped classroom is a teaching form based on digital media technology, it is easy for people to focus on media technology and ignore the human environment. Compared with media technology, the design and construction of humanistic environment should be the first. We should not fall into the mire of "technology teaching". We should pay attention to the construction of humanistic environment, build equal and harmonious interpersonal relationship, form a positive learning community, and make flipped classroom teaching to achieve twice the result with half the effort.

D. The Multimodal Evaluation Runs through the Whole Flipped Classroom

Multimodal evaluation has the functions of diagnosis, stimulation and regulation of teaching. In the whole process of teaching mode design and implementation, we should give full play to the function of multimodal evaluation and make it run through the whole process. According to the principle of "evaluation design prior to teaching design", teachers should first learn from teaching students to achieve the level of learning, design a series of multimodal interactive activities to ensure that each student has excellent performance, so as to collect the development information of students in thought, feeling, behavior, cognition, communication, imagination, results and other aspects, which can help better manage and regulate the flipped classroom. In the pre-class exercise and pre-class evaluation, teachers should have a clear understanding of the knowledge, skills and degree that students should master in the stage of autonomous learning, and design the corresponding measurement methods and indicators.

Through the feedback of students' pre-class practice and pre-class evaluation, teachers can understand the specific situation of students' learning and diagnose the problems in learning, so as to provide content basis for students' communication and discussion in class. In class, teachers should adjust the teaching plan in time according to the feedback of students before class, correct the designed multimodal interactive activities, and carry out the activities in class. Through various modal methods to collect classroom information timely and comprehensively, teachers can provide appropriate help and support for students, guide students to discuss the direction in time, meet the learning needs of students with different aptitudes, adjust the atmosphere, control the rhythm, and ensure the smooth operation of flipped classroom. In addition, multimodal evaluation is not a dissociative event outside of teaching.

Multimodal evaluation itself is a valuable learning resource, which has the significance of teaching value. By making students experience various multimodal evaluation methods, such as self-evaluation, group evaluation, teachers can not only make their learning more effective and self-conscious, then students can naturally learn the methods and skills of evaluation, and form the ability of evaluation. In order to facilitate the comprehensive collection of evaluation information, and to avoid learners' negative emotions about evaluation, especially in the practice and evaluation of pre-class learning, teachers should try their best to change the use of text style, chart style, voice style, video style and other modal or multimodal feedback methods, so that students will not take the evaluation as a chore and get bored with the test. In the evaluation, we should adhere to the multimodality of evaluation methods, evaluation dimensions, and give full play to the evaluation function.

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The Literary Pleasure of Dalia Al-Nahshli's Poem 'Al-Khali Fell Asleep'

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Abstract—This study aims to show the artistic and literary value of Al-Nahshli poem. The pleasure of the text comes from the presence of its textual standards, highlighting its thematic unity, which is so clear from the general meaning of the texts, without relying on the linguistic links that represent the standard of consistency, which is the first of the seven text criteria for De Beaugrande & Dressler (1981). The poem is a sad contemplation, a complaint about the passing of time, and a tingling twinge of old age that includes judgments and sermons inspired by human experiences on the extent of his historical consciousness; the idea of death dominates the poem from beginning to end, this fate that human thought in all its stages as a state of dilemma; the poet was one of those who felt this fate.

Index Terms—structure, consistency, coherence, death

I. INTRODUCTION

What has come to us from the Pre-Islamic Period poetry can be summed up in four artistic structures: the fragments, the one-subject poem, and the complete poem (Al-Jaber, 1990, p.9). What matters to us in this study is the structure of the poem with one subject, because the current poem by Al-Aswad Bin Yafar Al-Nahshly falls within this structure relied upon the history of Arabic poetry, as this structure is considered the sign in the poetry that preceded the Omraa al-Qays. Perhaps, it was with Ibn Khadam (ibid) in what was mentioned about him in the poems of the other poets. As for the compositions, they are well-known, and perhaps they are the primaries of Arabic poetry, which is a collection of verses that people say in their daily needs. Ibn Salam pointed out: "The Arabs did not have any poetry before Omraa al-Qays and Al-Muhalhal except the verses that the man says in his need" (Al-Jamhi, 1974, p. 32).

The poets continued to take the structure of a single-topic poem as a model for most of their purposes and needs, so this structure remained present even after crystallizing the completed poem and laying it the basis for the criterion of poetic virility, and it continued to stand next to the completed poem. The construction of the poem is a fundamental pillar of the poetic work with its artistry and accuracy, and this reflects for us the poet's vision and the way he deals with his issue that haunts him, in case his immediate emotion over the event does not allow him to prepare for that preface decided in the completed poems, which is what Ibn Rashiq referred to by saying: "Among the poets are those who attack what they want to fight, and they shake hands with them" (Al-Kairawani, 1972, p.232). The poets who were known by the one-subject poem were not less than the poets of the completed poem. Rather, it delayed them from the stallions that many poems did not reach them like this poem, and this is what made Ibn Salam put Al-Aswad ibn Yafar in the fifth class of the Pre-Islamic Era poetry and saying: "Al-Aswad is a poet, then a stallion ... and he has a wonderful long one that follows the finest poetry, if his intercession was similar to it, we would have presented it to his rank" (Al-Jamhi, 1974, p. 32).

Before starting to analyze the text and discuss its pleasures, it is necessary to consider the textual criteria of De Beaugrande & Dressler (1981) who defined the text as: "a communicative event whose text is fulfilled if it meets seven criteria, namely: consistency, harmony, intentionality, acceptability, informativeness, attitude, and intertextuality (Beheiry, 1977, p.146). It is these standards that achieve the text of the texts, and these criteria are divided into criteria related to the text (consistency and harmony) and criteria related to the author and the recipient (intentionality, informativeness, and acceptability), and criteria related to the external context (position and intertextuality), and we will focus in our analysis on consistency, harmony, intentionality and informativeness. Coherence is a concept known in many terms in terms of casting, linking, coherence and interpretation, Muhammad Moftah says: Cohesion is a group of converging concepts, including typesetting, consistency, harmony and symmetry. (Moftah, 1994, p.157).

Consistency is a term showing coherence between the elements of the text that allows the text to be received and understood, through many linguistic elements that achieve the text of the text, in addition to its distinction in an inclusive connotation that achieves its overall textual unity. That is what makes it "a structured linguistic unit whose elements are joined by certain relationships and bonds" (Al-Subaihi, 2008, p.80).

Consistency is concerned with the means by which the characteristic of continuity is achieved in the appearance of the text, that is, they are facts from which the former leads to the next, and they are organized together according to the syntactic structures, and this is achieved by providing a set of methods of casting that make the text preserve its existence and continuity, and among these means: repetition, cohesive devices, referring and deleting, in addition to harmony, which is a semantic characteristic of speech that depends on understanding each sentence forming the text in

relation to what is understood from other sentences. As for harmony, it is knitting, semantic coherence and coordination, and this is what the recipient decides in judging the consistency of the text, including the "moral and logical relations between the sentences, as there are no apparent links between them" (Moftah, 1987, p.151).

As for the intentionality criterion, it needs parts contributing to the production and use of the text, namely the sender as a producer of the text and the recipient as a recipient of the text, each of which has its own role that it seeks to achieve (Al-Feki, 2000, p.110).

Informativeness is what the text conveys in order to direct the listeners' attention towards a particular message; there is no doubt that the application of these seven criteria in determining what a text means only modifies the contrast between the two concepts of the sentence and the text. The distinction between them is no longer limited to quantity or grammatical structure, but rather in the presence of these seven criteria; it requires the fulfillment of a set of conditions necessary for the quality of the text.

II. ABOUT THE POET

He is Al-Aswad Bin Yafar Abdul Aswad Bin Jandal Bin Nahshal Bin Darem Bin Malik Bin Hanzalah Bin Malik Bin Zaid Bin Manat Bin Tamim. He is from the tribe of Nahshal bin Darem, Zabab, the Tamim tribes (Al-Andulusi, 1983, p.5) used to inhabit Yamamah where he was born and grew up and brought up, and the Yamamah was famous for its fertility, fresh water and the abundance of its villages. (Hamawi, 1977, p.115). He was an eloquent poet, advanced among the poets of the pre-Islamic era, not much (Al-Asfahani, 1950, p. 27). Muhammad bin Salam al-Jamhi says: "Al-Aswad was a poet, so good ... and he has a wonderful long poem, followed by the finest poetry "fell asleep," and did not feel my sleep (p. 224).

III. THE PRESENT STUDY

This poem was composed by Al-Aswad Bin Yafar Al-Nahshly on the weight of the whole sea with equal and successive activations that suit the poetry of lament and sadness, for the poet is in a state of despair and anxiety, so he chose a long weight with many syllables, in which he pours from his bowels what his sadness and agony will give away, He needs this dynamic, successive resonance; To suppress the stillness and despair that controls him. The current poem is in conflict with three segments or sections: that is, it is a text that is not mono-topic but rather multi-topic. These sections are:

The first Part: represents the poet's present; Weakness, his old age, and his anticipation of death as he begins to talk about suffering and death, and the image of insomnia presented by the poetic text has reached an advanced and exacerbated level to link it with self-reflection and contemplation of existential issues related to the fate of life and death.

The second stanza: The poet looks back at past historical events. To cite it as evidence for what he emphasized in the first axis, which is the certainty that death is the fate of every living.

The third part: He opens a window with him, trying to escape from his terrible suffering by introspecting a past that he enjoys remembering, and is proud of his strength and youth in it, reassures himself with it, grieving and fearful of the expected fate, comforting and amusing her that his life has not gone in vain; We have enriched it with forms of pleasure, which is soothing to remember:

وَالْهَمُّ مُحْتَظَرٌ لَدَيَّ وَسَادِي	نَامَ الْخَلِيُّ وَمَا أَحْسُ رُقَادِي
هَمُّ أَرَاهُ قَدْ أَصَابَ فُؤَادِي	مِنْ غَيْرِ مَا سَقَمٍ وَلَكِنْ شَفَنِي
ضُرِبْتُ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ بِالْأَسَدَادِ	وَمِنَ الْحَوَادِثِ لَا أَبَالِكُ أَتْنِي
بَيْنَ الْعِرَاقِ وَبَيْنَ أَرْضِ مُرَادٍ	لَا أَهْتَدِي فِيهَا لِمَوْضِعِ تَلْعَةٍ

(Al Qaisi, 1970, p. 25)

In the first verse at the beginning of the poem, the poet was keen to cite two opposing positions, represented by two people: the first: the Khali, and the other: the poet, so the first position deals with the sleep of the poet and the other: the poet, in the first position, deals with the sleep of the **Al-Khali**, and sleep was introduced to the **Al-Khali** because sleep is his deep obsession, he dreams of sleep, and this reveals a state of anxiety and sadness that struck the same poet thinking, agitated by pains and obsessions. The singular pronoun in the verb (I feel) is based on the fact that the poet is alone in his suffering, as he suffers insomnia alone and does not share his worries with any of his companions. At a time when sleep escapes his eyes, he is softened This is what the verb (Khali fell asleep) at the beginning of the poem, which is the basis of the text, and this increases the poet's worries because he feels the disconnection between the ego and the other, and this is what perpetuates the poet's state of sadness and makes him paint a sad picture of what happened to

him in his old age, he was keen to present the verb he slept to draw an emotional state based on anxiety and worry that the poet suffered and prevented him from sleeping.

Sleep is the basis of the poem; Because it expresses the emotional state of the poet, which he wants to portray the state of heartbreak and pain that the poet suffers, so the lack of sleep expresses the extent of the anxiety experienced by the poet, so sleep is absent and worry is present and in this equation we see a state of disharmony between the soul and the body. The body is thirsty for sleep, and the soul is troubled by worries, and the ghost of sleep is expelled from it. Here, the relationship between place and worry appears clear. The poet, in the first axis of this poem, talks about his weakness, old age, and his blindness, describing a tragic present in which he does not feel the effect of a slump, and he did not give sleep a chance from the worries that he took as a pillow for him while **Al-Khali** in a deep sleep.

The poet state of sleepless is not because of an illness that betrayed his body, but from these worries that remained in his heart. To relax the soul from the long agony. And among the poets who were overwhelmed by worries, the poets of the pendants in their standing on the ruins, which are considered a band of sadness, grief, bitterness and anxiety although each of them has grief linked to the nature of his life, so Qais, for example, is overwhelmed by worries and does not know the taste of sleep while he is in need, he says (Ibrahim, 1984, p.18):

وليلٍ كموج البحر أرخى سدوله
عليّ بأنواع الهموم ليبتلي

But his worries are different from the concerns of Al-Nahshly, has his own concerns, a special psychological and physical one, which will not leave him until his soul is taken away, and he is handed over to the cold and dark world of Lahoud, where there is no life in it except for worms, while the Nashli lions complain of concern about two doors, one of them: Fate lurking for him, who does not Miss the blink of an eye. This amount came close to him, and between his body and his robe and between his head and a pillow, he lurks him whenever he tries to apply his eyelids to two tearful eyes destiny watches him in his movements and dwellings, counting his breath and his seconds, as if he is watching him alone. And referring to him without the people, and he forgets from his intense fear that this fate lurks about every neighborhood, without there being a deliverance from him for a newborn, and he does not accept a ransom or exchange as a substitute for himself. Secondly: Blindness that afflicted him from the succession of times and the different nights, which blocked his way of life until he was no longer guided to the largest and most knowledgeable city in the land of the Arabs, and he had a theater, a field and a resort in the past in his life. He still keeps memories of his movements between Arab neighborhoods, and he had a lot of movement and travel, which borders generosity, and praises and reprimands. And in the second house, worries are inconsistent with him, and he sees that illness is not a cause of his suffering, but rather that concern is the one that inhabited his hear. Here the controversy of absence and presence appears. Lack of sleep and the presence of worry, then he explains some of the reasons for his worry that kept sleep from his eyes, which are accidents (.....)

ومن الحوادث لا أبالك إنني
ضربت عليّ الارض بالأسداد

Accidents are what brought him worry and awakened the tragedy that haunts him, especially the blindness that shackles the poet's consciousness, because the universe is closed in front of him.

ولقد علمتُ سوى الذي نبأتني
أنّ السبيلَ سبيلُ ذي الأعواد
إنّ المنية والحتوف كلاهما
يوفي المخارم يرقيان سواد
لن يرضيا منّي وفاء رهينة
من دون نفسي طارفي وتلاذي
(Al Qaisi, 1970, p. 25)

The issue of fate worries and increases his worries. If the time comes, it will not calm him and will not accept a ransom from him, no matter what concessions he makes, and the deficiency has appeared on his body. The inevitable conclusion reached by the poet is that death is the end of his journey in life. The poet, in the second passage, recalls historical events from the stories of people who suffered and whose lives were turned from bliss to wear and tear, as a confidentiality and reassurance for him that the time did not go to him alone and consolation for what he suffered and spent his sleep in worries that bear the specter of annihilation and destruction. With this conclusion, and the historical history from the news of the Muharraq family and Iyad after, transferred to them, and their homes were destroyed after welfarelessness

ماذا أوّمل بعد آل مُحَرَّق
أهل الخورنق والسدير وبارق
أرضاً تخيّر هالدار أبيهم
جرب الرياح على مكان ديارهم
ولقد عُنوا فيها بأنعم عيشة
في ظل مُلكٍ ثابت الأوتاد
أين الذين بنوا فطال بناؤهم
وتمتعوا بالأهل والأولاد
نزلوا بأنقرة يسيلُ عليهم
ماء الفراتِ يجي من أطواد
تركوا منازلهم وبعد إِياد
والقصر ذي الشرفات من سِنَاد
كعبُ بن مامة وإبن أمّ دُوَاد
فكأنما كانوا على ميعاد
مَاءُ الْفَرَاتِ يَجِي مِنْ أَطْوَادِ

فإذا النعيم وكل ما يلهى به يوماً يصير إلى بلى ونفاد
(Al-Dhbi, 1963, p. 218).

In the previous verses, the poet used to console himself and entertained her, employing the interrogation, to show the depth of the tragedy that he lives, for life and its pleasures are destined for demise and annihilation, and all that it contains from the children of those who are the symbol of strength and victory, and structure is the symbol of civilization and the luxury of life as a whole. The poet has come to a final conviction of the inevitable end of death and annihilation.

The reference of these stories, with their various incidents and the depth of their indications, will comfort the poet and ease his suffering, to prove that death is a natural thing that all people encounter at all levels. His self-satisfaction and acceptance, then the evocation of these incidents and their retrieval through the poet's awareness and merging them with his experience prepared his creative ability to continue expressing what his emotion, emotional energy and psychological needs are. Each incident before his eyes indicates death and annihilation until he submits himself to it and shows surrender:

إمّا تريني قد بليت و غاضني
و عصيت أصحاب الصبابة والصبأ
ما نيل من بصري ومن أجلاي
وأطعت غاذاً ولان قيادي
(Al-Dhbi, 1963, p. 218)

In the above two lines, the duality of the past and the present is embodied, as his admitting his own brokenness in these two homes embodies the duality of the past and the present. He admits his own brokenness and weakness in the face of existence. The verses paint an emotional picture that indicates the poet's asceticism in pleasures and his detachment from the whims of youth and the patience and obedience that accompanied it to the companions of youth and the afflicted. Weakness, therefore, we find it resorting to compensation for what was the condition of the youth in the days of drinking wine and its weakness in the face of existence. The verses paint a sentimental image that indicates the poet's asceticism in pleasures and his deviation from the whims of young people and the patience and obedience that accompanied them to the companions of youth and the excused ones. The soul is haunted by brokenness and weakness, so we find it resorting to compensation for what It was the state of the youth of drinking wine and his interest in elegance, good looks, recklessness of youth and generosity, which is a period different from what it is today. Events in these verses are divided into two opposite times, the past and the present, and in this duality there is a balance between two states of the poet that of youth, and the state of old age Because of its grayness and weakness, his head was lightened, and the bone weakened from him, and this picture we can infer from through actions (please, angry, obey because I'm a leader). All these actions taken together painted a picture of the deterioration that the poet reached from grayness, weakness in vision, bending, and wrinkles in the face. Health has become an elusive demand: "Health does not become a subject of special attention except when a physical imbalance occurs that affects the natural course of the self-object's relationship with life and other things. Manifestations of change" (Nassar, 2008, p. 328).

The poet gathers his ability to escape from this fate by retrieving an ancestral past from his life, capturing cherished memories that he stole from time, inside a white dream in which he lives some hours of youth, and the youth is abundant with miracles; he is a symbol of strength, vitality and activity:

فلقد أروخ على التجار مرجلاً
ولقد لهو وث للشباب لداذة
مذلاً بمالي ليتاً أجيادي
بسلافة مزجت بماء غواي
(Ibn Manthor, 1999).
(Al-Dhbi, 1963, p. 218).

Money is in the hands of man, strength, and happiness. The money spent is created in the youth stage, for black people in his youth display the markets, taking advantage of the quick money he has in hand to spend for him, and increase his strength in this position which he is experiencing is the completion of his youth and his desire for life, and the symbol of strength and youth for the pre-Islamic Arab man there are three pleasures: taking alcohol, engaging in courage, and petting women.

The wine is associated with an aura of sanctification in the process of poetic creativity, as it produced rhetorical images, such as the analogy that the poet gave in the verses to women, , and like dolls, and the analogy of their hearts to sacrifices. The poet repeated the word al-Bayadh as a description of women. Because the white color of a beloved woman carries with it several connotations, including the symbol of health, safety, concealment, purity, and fertility. The moon symbolizes masculinity, while the sun symbolizes the face of the woman whom the poet loves, but he changed the image of the sun to the image of the moon in its white, so we find these values intertwine in the following imagery:

من خمر ذي نطف اغن منطوق
يسعى بها ذو ثومتين مشمر
واقى بها لدرهم الإنسان
قنات أنامله من الفرصاد
والبيض تمشي كالبدور وكالدمى
والبيض يرمين القلوب كأنها
أدجي بين صريمة وجماد
ونواعم يمشين بالأزفاد

يَنْطِقْنَ مَعْرُوفاً وَهُنَّ نَوَاعِمُ
يَنْطِقْنَ مَحْفُوضَ الْحَدِيثِ تَهَامُساً
بِيَضِ الْوُجُوهِ رَقِيقَةُ الْأَكْبَادِ
فَبَلَّغْنَ مَا حَاوَلْنَ غَيْرَ تَنَادِي
(Al-Dhbi, 1963, p.218-219)

The poet describes a vivid and lively picture of a drinking bar, and the owner of the bar seemed eager to earn money. As for the bartenders, they are among the mourning boys who put silver badges on their chests while they rolled up their robes, not to light the matter and fight the brave on the battlefields, but to show the decorations of their nails. Then it is separated by describing the white women who serve drinking from young Arabs who come to this pub, and the paths from Al-Saqr in its burning paths or from the pioneer travelers from the markets in the Neighboring villages .

As for their descriptions, they are soft white ways, their conversation is whispered and they walk dancing, attracting attention with their white skin, and this trait for women is loved by the Arabs. This white color has been repeated three times in three verses out of four that he held on the description of the waitresses, the white color symbolizes happiness, peace, life, and freedom. But suffers from a black present. There is no whiteness in it, nor salvation from the night crouching on his chest, which closed the paths and paths of life, so the white color was windows from which in this painting looked to the first delicious life and the youth of a hundred times with his coming, breathing through it the breeze of vitality and wellness and enjoying the clicks of this color in his imagination in moments of flow Poetic, so he prolonged this painting to stay longer with her, until it became the longest painting of the poem, and in it he tells us that these women are trappers of men's hearts, so he did not disclose at that time his experience with the women of this tavern, but rather this desire was stored in him in his subconscious mind, risking his poetic experience in the time of deprivation Who lives in his present state , And poetry is like daydreams seeking to fulfill repressed desires that cannot be fulfilled on the ground, and it appears through this beautiful painting describing women that women were the mirror of the pre-Islamic poet, through which he sees the effects of time on himself. In that painting, the poet tried to express what was in himself, and colored these verses with simile in an attempt to convey the meaning to the recipient, mastered the metaphor and chose words that affect the listener's soul, and convey his feelings to others as he tried to show his poetry in a beautiful way. To make the recipient interact with his meanings, swim in his imaginations and memories, and live the tragedy, as if he is its owner, and this poem is like the blood of a deer that comes out of his blood due to his great stress and fatigue, as Al-Mutanabi says (Al-Jaafi, 1983, p. 151):

فَإِنْ تَفَقَّ الْأَنَامَ وَأَنْتَ مِنْهُمْ
فَإِنَّ الْمِسْكَ بَعْضُ دَمِ الْغَزَالِ

The poet concludes his artistic painting by pouring tears on the memories of youth and welcomes death with a wonderful welcome. As he spoke about what is being cured in his chest, and from this feeling full of vitality flowing his feelings, trying to perpetuate his activity and recover his strength from a horse with long legs prepared for a fast running, he enters it with a patron who is in dispute with it to defend it Spears, no one dared to enter until fertilized.

وَلَقَدْ غَدَوْتُ لِعَازِبٍ مُتَنَادِرٍ
جَادَتْ سَوَارِيهِ ، وَأَزَرَ نَبَاتُهُ
أُخْوَى الْمَذَانِبِ مُؤْنِقُ الرُّوَادِ
فَبَضَّ أَرْجَ فَقَصَّ يَمَةَ الطَّرَادِ
قَدِ الْأَوَابِدِ وَالرَّهَانَ جَوَادِ
بَشْرِيحٍ بَيْنَ الشَّدِّ وَالْإِيرَادِ
يَشْوِي لَنَا الْوَحْدَ الْمُدَّ بِحَضْرِهِ
(Al-Dhbi, 1963, p. 218-220).

his painting shows the spatial dimension in the poet's experience, so his attachment to the place is intense despite his frequent travel in the Arab countries. The idea of survival and eternity, these places are here to stay. And if it becomes impoverished from its people, and its life is long, it does not age, it does not grow old, and the nights and the times pass by, it is and the age is twin, and the age falls on people from their perches, and it does not convince or get bored, and does not regret the pretenders of it.

Perhaps remembering and attaching to it gives the soul rest and hope to return to it and to practice the means to live in it again.

This idea of clinging to the place corresponds to the image of a fast horse bound for game and always wins in every round they find a bull or a wild donkey, flaunting its beauty and proud of its strength, and has been physically complete, this beast, whatever its activity and ability to compete Inevitably.

And the poet comes with the last image; It is the tragic end for every living creature, as the poet reached a high degree of certainty about his inevitable fate and declared surrender, informing that he had pursued the pretenders of this world who had previously spoken of their glories and the supplies of their power that provide its owner with a kind of security and hope with a wider space in this life, but all These necessities of survival did not spare them anything from the power of the days, the brutality of the time and the treachery, as there was no time left from them, and they became a relic after an eye.

Al-Nahshly concluded his poem with this firm conviction that he reached after reviewing time, despite his attempt to take refuge in his past with condolences and clinging to the causes of life, revolting against a reality sometimes. But he realized that escaping from reality cannot transform the dream into reality, so he declared his surrender. To this end, he

is carried to it by a strong bridge that knows neither monology nor fatigue. This end is the natural end of the living poem.

Dalia Al-Nahshli alternates between an anti-dualism represented in death and life, stillness and movement, and blackness and whiteness, each side of these antagonists represents a stage of life. The poem was born after a long labor of pain and suffering, like the birth of a person in a normal state, where the poet started screaming from the first verse like a child who just came out of his mother's womb, frightened, anxious about the world and what its days hide from him from the twists and pain of the auras and her pain. The poet is anxious about his end from the beginning, mourning himself with his cry, which mixes with the voice of the tidings of his birth, and the regrets of the hours of separation are more painful than the joy of the hour of birth, and every natural beginning carries in its depths the seeds of its end.

The poem began to grow in three stages or grow within three axes, all of which converge to form a complete model for human life in its development. The transition from one painting to another came as an unsurprising one. Its main axes, intertwined with a growing soul, went from tension, shouting and complaints at the beginning and began to grow as a person grows in the various stages of development, even if he grew up, the poem moved to its second axis. The axis that represents strength, perfection and fullness, is matched by the youth stage with its marvels and fun through drinking wine, petting women and riding risks by riding strong horses, and entering dangerous places. Then this stage of the stages of life ends and the stage of regression begins in everything until it reaches stillness and surrender, which is symbolized by the third axis in the poem, as the poem is an artistic picture of human life in nature.

In the poem, an objective, psychological, organic unity is formed, with a spirit running through its parts, which is the soul of the poet, which has spread in his body from the hour of his birth. He was pulling its ties from the first verse to the last verse in the poem. Little by little, it was developed by the psychological implications that linked the axes together. So every painting took the necks of the painting that preceded or followed it, so we cannot arrange the verses of the poem in another order other than their original arrangement in the poem to fit their parts and cohesion, otherwise the poem betrays an impediment that excuses its merits and wears out its features.

"The text is not a random structure, but rather a work intended to be coherent and coherent in order to achieve a specific goal. In other words, it is a planned action aimed at achieving a specific goal" (Faraj, 2007, p. 50). This goal is the pleasure and enjoyment of the text that is formed by textual coherence through the elements upon which the poet relied. Such as repetition, lexical cohesion and linkage, which made the poem consistent in the arrangement of its verses and the aesthetics of its images and similes, which made it achieve its goal that is treated in the same poet and thus achieved many standards clearly manifested in the poem such as consistency and harmony, the textual cohesion had a great role in the completeness and coherence of the poem. And the consistency of its verses with each other, which returned in the affirmative to the strength of the text, and the pleasure of the recipient, and this is what constituted the intention in the text. When the recipient contemplates the poet's condition, he develops a certainty of the inevitability of the end, and the sincerity of feelings gives him pleasure in forming the inevitability of old age and death. The connection was also achieved through the letters that expressed his feelings that gathered in himself, such as despair and frustration, for the poem included many linking tools in his talk about those who perished and were respected by death, so he worries about their fate that awaits him and this fateful anxiety made him choose the narrator carefully as he came with the letter signal. It is one of the letters of the telescope. To suit his psychological state, and what added to the pleasure of the recipient of the poem is its completeness, consistency, and rotation around one topic, which formed an understanding and pleasure for the recipient.

The poem is "documented in bonding, solid unity and no gap in it" (Al-Jamhi, 1998, p.147) and for this it is followed by the finest poetry, a wonderful long as the poem is distinguished from the rest of Al-Nahshli's poetry. The total in his poem is about the humanity of its subject, and the sincerity of its affection and the tightness of its construction and the convergence of its steps and the continuation of the soul in it, so the gap between it and the rest of his poetry is wide, as no other poem evoked what this poem has received of wide fame and turn on the tongues, and praise in literary forums in its time and ages. Writing pre-Islamic poetry, preserving its repertoire with poetry's people and criticizing it, for most of his poetry in the Divan is composed of phrases in praise and satire, so one of the poets and his orphan is counted to distinguish it from the rest of his poetry and the high status and problems of the great and timeless poems.

IV. CONCLUSION

In this poem, the poet's suffering was clearly demonstrated through the images he uses, and the repetitions he mentioned, especially the repetition of the narrator who had chosen carefully to harmonize with his psychological state and the external rhythm of the narrator in the poem. The poem was beautifully crafted and compositions, and honestly expressed his sad feelings, because his words with a calm bell were in harmony with the psychological atmosphere that he wanted to spread in the poem and those suggestive images that he wanted to draw and imagine in order to present them to the recipient; To taste it and enjoy hearing it, and this is the intentionality of the standards of the text.

We find the poet dressed up in choosing the internal musical bell that attracts the recipient and draws his attention and makes him imagine mental images that fit the psychological atmosphere that he wanted to spread in the poem. So his thoughts came sincere, fraught with emotions and sad feelings, as he colored his poem in multiple linguistic colors, trying to influence the recipient with what fills himself from anxiety and tension. Then he poured his tears on the memories of youth, welcomed death, spoke about his worries and insomnia, and came up with historical examples that

relieve himself and amuse him about death and its inevitability, recollection of memories, adventures, the recklessness of youth and the flame of youth. The poem was one of the best ancient poems.

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On the Formation of the New Construction “ta bu xiang ma” of Polysemy Isomorphism and Its Usage in Discourse

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Abstract—The paper takes “ta bu xiang ma₂” as the research object, and analyzes its formation, function, and application in discourse. The study results indicate that “ta bu xiang ma₂” is a new and fillable construction that expresses the meaning of the domain of knowing and uttering. The structure has the functions of subjectivity, exclamation, anticipation and illocutionary. The formation mechanism is metaphor, and the motivation is the widespread use of network language and people’s psychology of seeking novelty and differences. “Ta bu xiang ma₂” has strong spoken language style and is used in interactive and evaluative contexts. It can be used as both trigger and response sentences, and it has similarities and differences with its related formats.

Index Terms—polysemy isomorphism, rhetorical question construction, “ta bu xiang ma”, spatial fusion

I. INTRODUCTION

In daily communication, rhetorical question is used frequently and it can be used as both trigger and response words. Rhetorical question has the function of interrogation, subjectivity and interactive subjectivity, anticipation, exclamation and illocutionary. Li Yufeng (2010), Zhu Jun (2013), etc. have conducted researches on rhetorical questions from the perspective of interactive communication. However, few people have studied the rhetorical expression “ta bu xiang ma (他不香吗)”. Since 2019, with the spread of an old man’s words “Is it not fragrant to buy pork ribs with the money from picking up bottles?” online, “ta bu xiang ma” has been widely used, and its uses are not limited to Internet terms, but gradually penetrate into people’s daily communication. But when it is used in different contexts, the meaning of this expression is different, and the structure is also different. E.g:

- (1) 百合花他不香吗? (自拟)¹
Baihehua ta buxiang ma?
Lilies he not fragrant?
Don’t lilies smell fragrant? (Self drafted)
- (2) 韭菜炒鸡蛋它不香吗? ? ? ? ? (新浪微博 2020-06-20)
Jiucai chao jidan ta buxiang ma?
Scrambled Eggs with Leek it not delicious?
Aren’t Scrambled Eggs with Leek delicious? (Sina Weibo 2020-06-20)
- (3) 我的衣服已经够多了, 这些钱买吃的不够香吗? (新浪微博 2020-06-06)
Wode yifu yijing gou duo le, zhexie qian mai chide buxiang ma?
My clothes already enough, this money buy something eat not fragrant?
I already have enough clothes. Isn’t it good for buying something to eat with this money?
(Sina Weibo 2020-06-06)

In the above cases, “ta bu xiang ma” is a polysemy isomorphic form. In sentence (1) and sentence (2), “ta” and the subject “lily” and “Scrambled Eggs with Leek” form a homotopic relationship; “xiang” describes the smell and the flavour. “Ta bu xiang ma₁” is a negative form of rhetorical question. When questioning, it expresses affirmative meaning. In example (3), “ta bu xiang ma₂” is a buzzword on the Internet, and is used to make suggestions. The meaning of “ta bu xiang ma” in example (3) is “Is it good to buy food with money?” It can be seen that “ta bu xiang ma” has evolved from a rhetorical sentence to a standardized and solidified expression. So what are the formation mechanism and motivation? What discourse functions does this construction have? These are the questions to be discussed in this paper.

This paper takes “ta bu xiang ma₂” as the research object. Based on the analysis of its construction and discourse function, the paper discusses the evolution mechanism and motivation and the using context, and finally compares it with similar formats.

¹ The corpus in this paper comes from Sina Weibo, Baidu search, and natural spoken dialogues. The online search period is from January 1, 2019 to September 20, 2020. A few examples come from introspection. The source of all corpora is indicated, and punctuation and spaces strictly follow the original text.

II. CONSTRUCTION AND DISCOURSE FUNCTION

The meaning expressed by the negative rhetorical question “ta bu xiang ma₁” can be directly deduced from its external expression: the basic grammatical meaning of the rhetorical question is “negation” (Lv Shuxiang, 1982), and the negative negation means affirmation, “xiang (香)” means “smells good, tastes good” (Dictionary editing room, Institute of Linguistics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2016, P. 1429). “Ta bu xiang ma₁” expresses affirmative meaning, refers to the fragrance one feels through smell and gustation directly. While the meaning of “ta bu xiang ma₂” cannot be understood literally, which has a rhetorical tone and means that when someone is obsessed with something that is not cost-effective, the other uses another options to persuade him to give up. According to Goldberg’s construction grammar theory, as long as the overall meaning or function expressed by a certain language form cannot be fully deduced from its components, the expression can be regarded as a construction. “Ta bu xiang ma₂” has been constructed into a new and fillable construction with a rhetorical question as the construction and “ta” and “xiang” as the components. With the development and evolution of the construction, the meaning and discourse functions of “ta bu xiang ma₂” have also changed. According to Shen Jiaxuan (2003), language expression has three domains: acting, knowing and uttering domain. “Acting” refers to the behavior and action which is the description and expression of actual behavior; “knowing” refers to knowledge and cognition which is the speaker’s inference and evaluation of reality; “uttering” refers to speech and utterance which is related to the speaker’s communicative intentions. “Ta bu xiang ma₁” expresses the meaning of the acting domain, which is a description of the results of “smell” and “taste”. The judgment of “fragrance” is mainly based on objective facts, and at the same time, subjectivity also plays some role. While “ta bu xiang ma₂” expresses the meaning of knowing and uttering domain, and it is the speaker’s subjective judgment on “whether something is worth doing” which has the function of acting with words. “Ta bu xiang ma₂” is a way of speech act, with the subjectivity of the speaker. The evolution of the domain of acting from “ta bu xiang ma₁” to the domain of knowing and uttering of “ta bu xiang ma₂” is consistent with the three-domain meaning proposed by Shen Jiaxuan (2003)—acting domain is basic, knowing and uttering domain are derived from acting domain.

In addition to subjectivity, “ta bu xiang ma₂” also has the discourse functions of illocutionary, anticipation and exclamation. First of all, rhetorical questions express negative meaning. They are a kind of imperative sentences. While stating opinions and expressing attitudes, they also have the function of acting with words. “Ta bu xiang ma₂” is “words of action”² and has the function of illocutionary. Second, the difference between affirmation and negation is that affirmation can have no presupposition, but negation always presupposes the corresponding positive content, and then negates or refutes it (Shen Jiaxuan, 1999). When the speaker uses “ta bu xiang ma₂”, he first denies the listener’s original opinions, and then puts forward his own suggestions and expects the listener to accept and adopt them. Therefore, “ta bu xiang ma₂” has the function of anticipation. When expressing in rhetorical questions, the speaker usually expresses the existing emotions and attitudes in the form of question, and the purpose is to enhance the expressive effect. Liu Yuehua (2001) believes that rhetorical questions use the rhetorical tone to affirm or deny a certain obvious truth or fact, in order to strengthen the tone of speech and express the emotion and attitude. Therefore, “ta bu xiang ma₂” also has the discourse function of expressing exclamation.

III. FORMATION MECHANISM AND MOTIVATION

A. Formation Mechanism

The main formation mechanism of “ta bu xiang ma₂” is metaphor. Fauconnier (1997) proposed that metaphor is a cognitive process that relies on the cross-domain mapping between metaphorical objects and ontology, activates different conceptual information, and forms cross-domain connections under certain conditions, thereby generating new information (Wang Yin, 2007). We use Fauconnier and Turner’s Theory of Conceptual Blending to explain the formation mechanism and formation process of “ta bu xiang ma₂”. Theory of Conceptual Blending believes that Conceptual Fusion includes one Generic Space, one Blended Space and two Input Spaces. The cognitive subject maps the two Input Spaces to the Fusion Space. Fusion Space integrates the received information to form new information. The Input Space 1 is equivalent to the source field, the Input Space 2 is equivalent to the target field, the Fusion Space is equivalent to the similar attributes and information in the source and target field, and the Fusion Space is equivalent to the final formed Image schema.

“Ta bu xiang ma₂” is a metaphorical cognitive process of new information formed by the component “xiang” from the concrete domain of taste and smell to the abstract domain, through reasoning and conceptual blending. “Xiang” in Input Space 1 means “smells good, tastes good”, which can be directly perceived through sense; the fragrance is pleasant and enjoyable, from which can extract the conceptual attributes of “popular and valued” to form a generic space, and then this generic space attribute is projected to the Input Space 2—things with the attributes of “popular and valued” are worth doing and cost-effective. The related concepts in Input Space 1 and Input Space 2 jointly undergo chemical reactions in the Synthesis Space and they are integrated into new information. This process completes the projection of “xiang” from the Input Space 1 (the source domain) to the Input Space 2 (the target domain), from sensory perception to psychological perception, and from the concrete domain to the abstract domain. Along with the conceptual

2 Austin (1955) proposes “Speech Act Theory”, which divides the sentence into statement sentences and performance sentences.

integration, the semantics of “xiang” has been generalized and virtualized, and then the constructional development and evolution of “Ta bu xiang ma_2 ” realized. The process of conceptual integration of “Ta bu xiang ma_2 ” is shown in Figure 1.

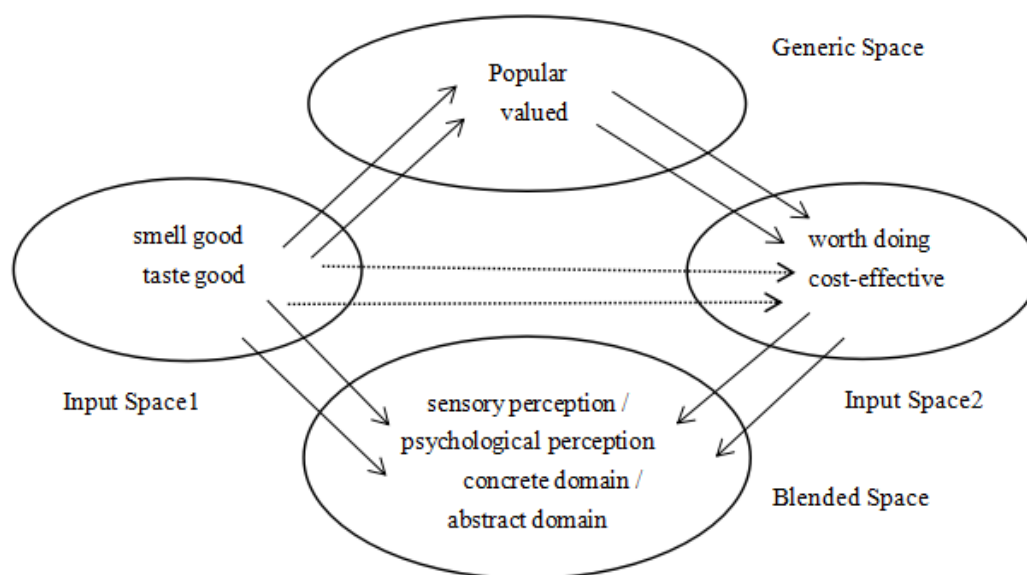


Figure. 1. Conceptual integration of “Ta bu xiang ma_2 ”

B. Motivation

“Ta bu xiang ma_2 ” is an internet buzzword. Its popularity and structural formation are mainly due to the popularity of Internet. Internet has accelerated the spread of language and the scope of its application. Since its inception, “ta bu xiang ma_2 ” has been favored by a large number of netizens and its use has been spread quickly. Its use has gradually penetrated into people’s daily life. High-frequency use is one of the important factors for the construction and grammaticalization of language expression. High-frequency repeated use will wear out and blur the semantic meaning, and at the same time produce new syntax and text functions (Yao Shuangyun & Yao Xiaopeng, 2012). When “ta bu xiang ma_2 ” appears in example (4), the speech recipient generally does not associate “set up a stall” with fragrance that the senses can perceive, but will directly deduce the pragmatic meaning of “ta bu xiang ma ” according to the context—isn’t it cost-effective, isn’t it good? Over time, when the speech recipient frequently sees or hears the expression “ta bu xiang ma ”, he no longer needs pragmatic reasoning to think of the meaning of “cost-effective, worthwhile, and good”. As the frequency of use increases, the meaning has gradually become routine and standardized, and “ta bu xiang ma_2 ” has also achieved a structural evolution.

(4) 别去摆地摊致富了 游戏陪练它不香么? (太平洋电脑网 2020-06-11)

Bie qu baiditan zhifu le youxi peilian ta buxiang ma?

Not go set up a stall game sparring it not fragrant?

Don’t go to the street stall to get rich, isn’t it good to play games? (Pacific Computer Network 2020-06-11)

In addition, the psychology of seeking novelty and difference is also one of the motivations of the constructional evolution of “ta bu xiang ma_2 ”. People usually have curiosity and yearn for all the new and beautiful things, especially young people like to accept new things. “Ta bu xiang ma_2 ” uses the well-known negative rhetorical question as the structure and “xiang” as the component, conveying the defamiliarization ideological function, and realizing the organic combination of defamiliarization and familiarization. Compared with the traditional expressions, this expression can play a more unconventional effect, and are more popular among young people, especially those who pursue fashion.

IV. CONTEXT AND ITS RESPONSE

Through collecting, sorting and analyzing the corpus, it is found that “ta bu xiang ma_2 ” has a strong spoken language style, and is generally used in interactive and evaluative contexts, often in natural spoken conversations, Weibo, and headlines. The basic unit of dialogue is turn-taking. According to the Conversation Analysis Theory, two adjacent turn-takings form an Adjacency Pair, in which the first turn is the triggering words and the latter turn is the response words. In specific usage, the triggering words and the response words are not completely separated, and sometimes they overlap. “Ta bu xiang ma_2 ” is a trigger-response words, which can be used as both trigger and response in the discourse. First of all, “ta bu xiang ma_2 ” as a rhetorical questioning construction, it needs to respond to the rhetorical object, its triggering is non-initiating, and at the same time it will also trigger further feedback and responses from the listener. E.g:

(5) 他说：隔壁情侣今天早上九点就起来做早饭还做了几道菜 真是精致 好幸福的感觉

我说：周末的早上九点钟躺床睡觉不香吗 还起来做饭

他看了我一眼说：活该你单身（新浪微博 2020-06-20）

Ta shuo: gebi qinglv jintian zaoshang jiudian jiu qilai zuo zaofan hai zuo le jidaocai zhen shi jingzhi hao xingfu de ganjue

Wo shuo: zhoumo de zaoshang jiudianzhong tang chuang shuijiao buxiang ma hai qilai zuofan

Ta kan le wo yiyan shuo: huogai ni danshen

He say: next door couple today 9am already get up make breakfast make several dishes really exquisite really happy feel

I say: weekend 9am lie in the bed sleep not fragrant still get up make breakfast

He look at me say: deserve you single

He said: The couple next door got up at 9 o'clock this morning to make breakfast and cooked a few dishes. It was exquisite and so happy.

I said: Isn't it good to sleep in bed at 9 o'clock in the morning on the weekend? Get up and cook?

He glanced at me and said: You deserve to be single (Sina Weibo 2020-06-20)

"Bu xiang ma₂" in example (5) is a response to the last sentence and it also triggers the next turn. As the response, the trigger sentences of "ta bu xiang ma₂" are relatively simple—the one in the conversation proposes alternatives for the other to ask. But when used as a trigger, the corresponding response has various forms.

Although Li Yuming (1990) and other researchers believe that the rhetorical question need not to answer, this is not the case in actual use. Shao Jingmin (1996) put forward that the rhetorical question is "not the kind that you do not ask others to answer, but that your answer is consistent with your own opinion". There are two types of answers, which are self-questioning answers and self-responses. The self-questioning answers include five types: "consistent answer" "reasonable answer" "inferential answer" "defensive answer" and "rebuttal answer", and self-responses answers include three types: "emphasis answer" "reasonable answer" and "effective answer".

Self-answering type of "ta bu xiang ma₂" is relatively infrequently used, and it is mainly used for the author's self-narrative expression and as article titles in Weibo. While the self-questioning is a category that truly reflects the interactive communication between the trigger language and the response language, this kind of question-answer model is also the main application of "ta bu xiang ma₂" in discourse. E.g:

(6) 姜子牙他不香吗？不香不香。（爱奇艺 2020-03-08）

Jiangziya ta buxiang ma? Buxiang buxiang.

Jiang Ziya he not fragrant? Not fragrant not fragrant.

Is Jiang Ziya not good? No, it is not. (Iqiyi 2020-03-08)

(7) “我自己动手不香吗？”

“那我帮你善后。”（新浪微博 2020-08-08）

“Wo ziji dongshou buxiang ma?”

“Na wo bang ni shanhou.”

“I myself do not fragrant?”

“Then I help you later.”

“Isn't it good to do it myself?”

“Then I will help you aftermath.” (Sina Weibo 2020-08-08)

Example (6) is an emphatic answer, using “xiang” to give a positive response to the triggering sentence. Example (7) is an inferential answer. From “then I will help you aftermath”, we can deduce the speaker's attitude of supporting the other one.

V. COMPARED WITH RELATED FORMATS

“Ta bu xiang ma₂” is a new and refillable construction composed of “ta” and “xiang”. “Ta” is a demonstrative pronoun and its application is to make this construction more colloquial. “Ta” can also be replaced with the demonstrative pronoun “na (那)”, but cannot use “zhe (这)”. The reason is that although “zhe” and “na” are both demonstrative pronouns, which have substitutional and demonstrative functions, in modern Chinese their usages and frequencies are asymmetry. “Zhe” is generally used for proximal denotation, while “na” is used for the far finger (Yang Yuling, 2006). People always take themselves as the center when perceiving the external world. In comparison, things far away from the perceiving subject have low distinctiveness, which is difficult to be accurately recognized and grasped, and are often regarded as unknown things. Therefore, people usually use the pronoun “na” to relate to interrogative sentences (Zhang Zhenya, 2007). Shen Jiaxuan (1999) also pointed out that the combination of the unmarked item “zhe” and the marked item “na” with positive and negative is an unmarked combination. Therefore, “na” is closely related to the negative rhetorical question “X bu xiang ma” and can constitute an unmarked combination, forming a variant form of “ta bu xiang ma₂”. The marked combination formed with “zhe” is not commonly used. In addition, in actual use, sometimes the demonstrative pronoun “ta” can also be omitted to form a variant of “bu xiang ma₂”, but the frequency of use is relatively low, mainly because the virtual demonstrative word “ta” also has syllables

and Rhythm function. “Bu xiang ma₂” is a three-syllable supersegmental structure in rhetorical form, and when adding “ta” to “bu xiang ma”, we can get a four-syllable form. The four-syllable form in Chinese is relatively stable and more commonly used than the three-syllable form.

The component “xiang” can also be replaced with words which have commendatory and emotional colors such as “hao (好)” and “xing (行)”, but generally no derogatory words can be used. It can be explained by the “Pollyanna Hypothesis” proposed by Boucher & Osgood (1969), that is, people always yearn for good things and try to avoid bad ones. The discourse function of “ta bu xiang ma₂” enables the speaker to perform the suggested speech act while uttering this sentence. The speaker generally makes reasonable and good suggestions that he thinks.

In summary, “ta bu xiang ma₂” can be coded into the form of “P bu X ma”, and there are variants of “na bu xiang ma (那不香吗)” “na bu hao ma (那不好吗)” “na bu xing ma (那不行吗)” “bu xiang ma (不香吗)” “bu hao ma (不好吗)” “bu xing ma (不行吗)”, etc.. Each variant has the syntactic, semantic and discourse functions of “ta bu xiang ma₂”, but due to the different semantic accumulation of its constituent components, there are also some differences. E.g:

(8) 为什么都推荐电商第三方仓储, 自建仓储他不香吗? (松松供应链 2020-05-13)

Weishenme dou tuijian dianshang disanfang cangchu, zijian cangchu ta buxiang ma?

Why all recommend e-commerce third-party warehouses? Self-built warehouses it not fragrant?

Why do people all recommend e-commerce third-party warehouses? Self-built warehouses are not popular?

(Songsong Supply Chain 2020-05-13)

In the above example, “ta bu xiang ma” can be replaced with its variants and the meaning expressed is basically unchanged. However, they have subtle differences. “Ta bu xiang ma” makes suggestions in a funny way, “ta bu hao ma” emphasizes the good effect, and “Ta bu xing ma” emphasizes feasibility.

VI. CONCLUSION

With the rise of interactive linguistics and the deepening of research, language phenomena in actual use have gradually attracted the attention of linguists. Chafe (1994) pointed out that the actual discourse that occurs naturally is the research focus of linguists. More and more Chinese researchers are studying and discussing natural spoken Chinese from the perspective of interactive linguistics. Oral communication is random, dynamic and interactive, and the language style that best reflects the interaction is the dialogue style (Fang Mei, 2007). This paper studies the formation of the new polysemous isomorphic construction “ta bu xiang ma₂” as well as its function and application in discourse, from the perspective of interactive communication. The research found that “ta bu xiang ma₂” is a catchword on the Internet. It has been constructed into a new and fillable construction with the rhetorical question as the structure and “ta” and “xiang” as components. Its main formation mechanism is metaphor. The development of the Internet and the widespread use of online languages, as well as people’s psychology of pursuing novelty and differences are the driving factors of its construction. “Ta bu xiang ma₂” has the semantic features of subjectivity and interactive subjectivity, exclamation, anticipation and dominance. It can be used as both triggering words and response words by young people in interactive and evaluative contexts. “Ta bu xiang ma₂” has similarities and differences with its related formats. In actual use, sometimes they can be used interchangeably.

The new construction “ta bu xiang ma” is novel, but it has not yet developed into a lingua franca. Therefore, as far as teaching Chinese as a foreign language is concerned, this construction only requires students to understand, and its application is not encouraged. However, as the popularity rate increases, when it becomes a standard term, it will be included in the basic terminology that international students should master, and it is required to be able to use it while understanding it.

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Conversational Implicature Instruction as a Pedagogical Strategy for English Majors in a Chinese Context: A Pragmatic-Analysis of Its Effectiveness

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Abstract—In English teaching, teachers have always attached great importance to exploring scientific listening teaching methods to improve students' listening comprehension ability. In order to improve the listening teaching mode, scholars in both China and in other countries have done a series of studies. However, there is little research on the effectiveness of conversational implicature in improving listening comprehension ability of English majors. Therefore, through empirical research, this paper explores the effectiveness of applying the Conversational Implicature Theory in pragmatics to instruct English majors to improve their listening comprehension ability, and tries to find an efficient teaching strategy of conversational implicature. The two classes are used as the experimental class and the control class respectively in this experiment. The experimental class adopts Conversational Implicature Teaching Strategy, while the control class still adopts the traditional teaching mode. The results show that the ability of conversational implicature inference of the experimental class is obviously better than that of the control class, which can effectively improve the listening comprehension level of the students. The results of the study provide some enlightenment for the implementation of conversational implicature teaching strategies in similar environments, and some suggestions for listening teaching of English majors are put forward based on the results of the study.

Index Terms—conversational implicature instruction, pragmatic-analysis, effectiveness, listening teaching, listening comprehension ability

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Grice's Conversational Implicature, in order to achieve specific communicative goals, both parties in discourse communication should abide by the Cooperative Principle (He, 2000). The cooperation principle is specifically embodied in four criteria: the maxim of Quantity, the maxim of Quality, the maxim of Relation and the maxim of mode Manner (Grice, 1975). However, in actual discourse communication, both sides of the communication do not strictly abide by these maxims, and sometimes the speaker deliberately or openly violates these maxims. At this time, the meaning of the discourse is not just the literal meaning. The listener should infer the purpose and implied meaning of the speaker's violation of the cooperative principle according to the context at that time. This implied meaning is called "Conversational Implicature" by Grice. Grice's theory of Conversational Implicature has become an important theory in pragmatics. Many researchers at home and abroad question this principle, either reinterpret it, or make amendments or supplements (Grice, 1984; Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1987; Xu, 1993; He, 1997). However, many scholars have applied Conversational Implicature Theory to language teaching to explore its effectiveness in improving learners' English ability (Bouton, 1990; Bouton, 1994; Harris & Chen, 1994).

In the traditional listening teaching of ESP, teachers and students pay more attention to the surface structure of language, and listening comprehension still stays at the level of words and phrases. However, the research on listening teaching focuses more on the topics of listening skills and strategy training, and does not pay enough attention to the context issue, ignoring the cultivation of students' pragmatic awareness and ability. Therefore, researchers begin to apply Conversational Implicature Theory to English listening teaching. Buckhoff's research shows that the ostensive teaching of Conversational Implicature Theory can effectively improve the TOEFL listening scores of non-native English speakers (Buckhoff, 2011). Chinese scholars have also carried out researches on the relationship between Conversational Implicature Theory and English Listening Teaching (Liu, 2006). But, most of them still remain in the theoretical discussion level, and few people use objective experiments to test the effectiveness of a new teaching strategy, namely Conversational Implicature Teaching Strategy, in improving the listening comprehension ability of English majors. Therefore, through empirical research, this paper explores the effectiveness of applying Conversational Implicature Theory in pragmatics to instruct English majors to improve their listening comprehension ability, and attempts to demonstrate that Conversational Implicature Teaching Strategy is operable and effective.

II. RESEARCH DESIGN

A. *Research Purpose and Hypothesis*

This paper will study the application of Conversational Implicature Theory in listening teaching for English majors. The purpose of the research is to study the practicability of Conversational Implicature Theory in listening teaching for English majors. Guided by the Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature Theory, the teaching research is devoted to improving English listening teaching strategies, designing Conversational Implicature Teaching Strategies, cultivating students' ability to infer conversational implicature, so as to improve students' listening comprehension.

The research is designed and completed on the basis of a hypothesis. Hypothesis: using Grice's Conversational Implicature Theory to design Conversational Implicature Teaching Strategies to instruct English Major students' listening teaching has a positive impact and can improve students' English listening comprehension level, which is feasible and effective.

B. *Research Objects*

This experiment was conducted in the listening course of English majors in the School of Language and Culture of Shanghai University of Political Science and Law. The subjects of the experiment are sophomores majoring in English, a total of 102 students in 4 classes. The two classes are used as the experimental class and the control class respectively. The experimental class adopts Conversational Implicature Teaching Strategy, while the control class still adopts the traditional teaching mode. Among them, the teaching of English listening in experimental classes should introduce some pragmatic knowledge, such as Conversational Implicature Theory, to expand students' cultural background knowledge and improve their ability of thinking analysis and pragmatic reasoning. However, the teaching of English listening in the control class is still carried out in accordance with the traditional teaching mode, mainly explaining semantics knowledge such as vocabulary and grammar. The experiment adopts the test form, which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative. The experiment lasted for 15 Teaching weeks in a semester, with two English listening classes per class every week.

C. *Research Tools*

The research adopts the experimental form, which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative. The main tool of the experiment is the two test papers done before and after the semester. The purpose of the pre-test is to test the students' English listening comprehension level before the experiment, and the purpose of the post-test is to verify the effectiveness of Conversational Implicature Theory in the listening teaching of English majors. The results of tests taken before and after the semester are analyzed. Each test paper contains 20 short dialogues, each with a test question, each question is 5 points, the full score is 100 points.

D. *Research Steps*

The experiment started in September 2020 and ended in January 2021. There was one listening class every week, 90 minutes per class, for a total of 15 teaching weeks. The subjects of the experiment are all sophomores majoring in English from the school of language and culture, Shanghai University of political science and law.

This experiment was conducted in the listening course of English Majors in the school of language and culture, Shanghai University of political science and law. The subjects of the experiment were 102 students from 4 classes, majoring in English in School of Language and Culture of Shanghai University of Political Science and Law. The two classes are used as the experimental class and the control class respectively.

The teaching material used in the experiment is *A Listening Course 2* (Third Edition) (Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press), in which the Listening materials are mostly drawn from life, vivid and close to reality. During the experiment, the experimental class and the control class used the same teaching materials and different teaching methods to verify the experimental hypothesis. In the control class, the traditional teaching mode is adopted, and the content of pragmatics such as conversational meaning theory is not involved. In the classroom, each class first spends 20 minutes to learn about semantics such as vocabulary, phonetics, grammar, etc. according to the traditional model, and then 40 minutes to do listening exercises and check the answers. In the last 30 minutes, explain the exercises, and mainly supplement the vocabularies, phrases, and grammars and other semantic knowledge in the exercises.

In the experimental class, pragmatic knowledge such as Conversational Implicature Theory is introduced to guide listening teaching, and cultural background knowledge, pronunciation and intonation, context and other related knowledge are appropriately introduced to consolidate and improve students' listening level through training.

The experiment can be divided into two stages: the first stage is the theoretical explanation stage (the first six weeks). In this stage, the teacher gradually explains the cooperative principle and Conversational Implicature Theory to the students, supplemented by exercises to consolidate. The second stage is the practice intensive stage (the last 9 weeks). In this stage, students have basically mastered conversational implicature and its related theoretical knowledge, so the classroom teaching in this stage is mainly to consolidate and strengthen the knowledge learned through a large number exercises and explanations, so as to achieve the ultimate goal of improving students' listening level.

Next, we will describe the whole process of listening strategy training in detail according to the two stages of the experiment.

1. *Theoretical Explanation Stage*

The first stage is the theoretical explanation stage, which lasts for 6 weeks. In this stage, teachers spend 20 minutes to explain the theory in each class, and give a lot of examples to facilitate students' understanding. Then do the listening exercises for 40 minutes and check the answers. In the last 30 minutes, explain the exercises and focus on the types of questions related to conversational implicature. As mentioned in this paper, the main content of the theoretical explanation is cooperative principles and maxims, as well as the related theory of violating the maxims.

Dialogue is the main type of listening materials in ESP listening textbooks. Moreover, most of the content in the textbooks for English majors is drawn from daily life, vivid and close to reality. The theory of conversational implicature is just about the understanding of conversational implicature. Therefore, we try to use Conversational Implicature Theory to guide English listening teaching and explain listening materials in order to improve students' listening comprehension level.

Example 1:

M: How did you like the movie yesterday?

W: I should have gone swimming with you instead.

Q: What does the woman mean?

In this dialogue, M asked W what did she think of yesterday's movie, and W replied that she should really go swimming with W. Obviously W violated the maxim of relevance and said something irrelevant to the topic. However, assuming that W is willing to cooperate, we can infer that W's implication is: Yesterday's movie was really bad.

So, let's take a look at the options for this question:

A: She didn't like the movie.

B: She went swimming instead.

C: She enjoyed the movie very much.

According to the above analysis, the answer is obviously A.

Example 2:

Man: Well, what do you think of the movie?

Woman: I don't know why I let you talk me into going. I just don't like violence. Next time you'd better choose a comedy.

Question: What can we infer from the conversation?

A) The woman hated the man talking throughout the movie.

B) The woman saw a comedy instead of a horror movie.

C) The woman prefers light movies before sleep.

D) The woman regrets going to the movie .

In this dialogue, when the man asked the woman what she thought of the movie, the woman did not make a direct comment, but said, "I don't know why you will be convinced to go to the movie. I don't like violence. Next time you'd better choose a comedy." This obviously violates the "brevity" and "avoidance of obscurity" in the way maxims. But it was the lady's endless chatter that aptly expressed her deep regret at this time and regretted going to the movie, so the answer was D.

2. Practice Strengthening Stage

The second stage is the practice intensive stage, which lasts for 9 weeks. In the first stage, students initially learn and understand the relevant theories of conversational implicature, but this understanding is often preliminary, superficial and isolated, and has not yet been transformed into a part of students' knowledge system. Therefore, students must truly comprehend and internalize what they have learned in practice through a great deal of practice.

At this stage, students in each class first use 50 minutes to do exercises, and then the teacher uses 40 minutes to explain the exercises in a targeted manner, and appropriately supplement cultural background knowledge, pronunciation and intonation, vocabulary, grammar and other related knowledge. At the same time, it is suggested that students expand their vocabulary and develop their sense of language by reading English original works, reading English newspapers, magazines, novels, watching original movies, listening to English programs on radio and television, etc. At the same time, they can also understand the differences between Chinese and Western cultures and reserve more cultural background knowledge.

Example 3

W: Shall we talk about Mr. Johnson?

M: Well, he is a senior citizen at first.

Q: What does she mean?

The key to understanding this dialogue is to grasp the word "senior citizen". At aboard, people are unwilling to admit that they are getting old or have grown old. Therefore, for the sake of politeness, people rarely ask about their age when talking, and when describing others, the word "old" should be avoided as much as possible. Therefore, in this dialogue, W asked M if he could introduce Mr. Johnson to her. M only used "senior citizen" instead of "old people". If students understand the differences between Eastern and Western cultures, it is not difficult to make correct judgments.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Comparison and Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test Results

A. Comparison and Analysis of the Pre-Test Results of the Experimental Class and the Control Class

Before the beginning of this semester, a test (pre-test) was conducted on the students in the experimental class and the control class. The purpose of the pre-test experiment is to master the students' listening comprehension level and listening comprehension ability before the experiment. The test consists of 20 short dialogues, each with one question, 5 points for each, 100 points in total.

The following are the pre-test scores of the experimental class and the control class:

TABLE 1
PRE-TEST SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL CLASS

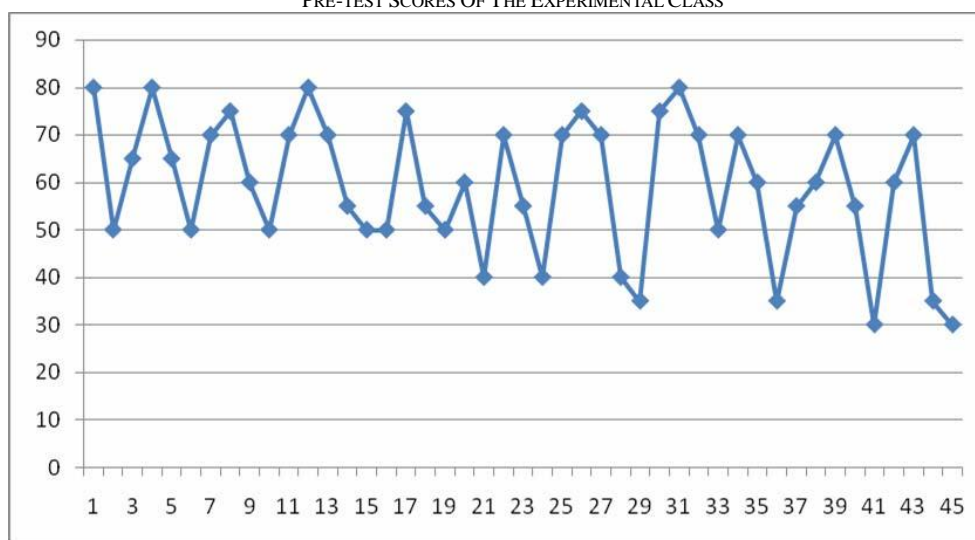
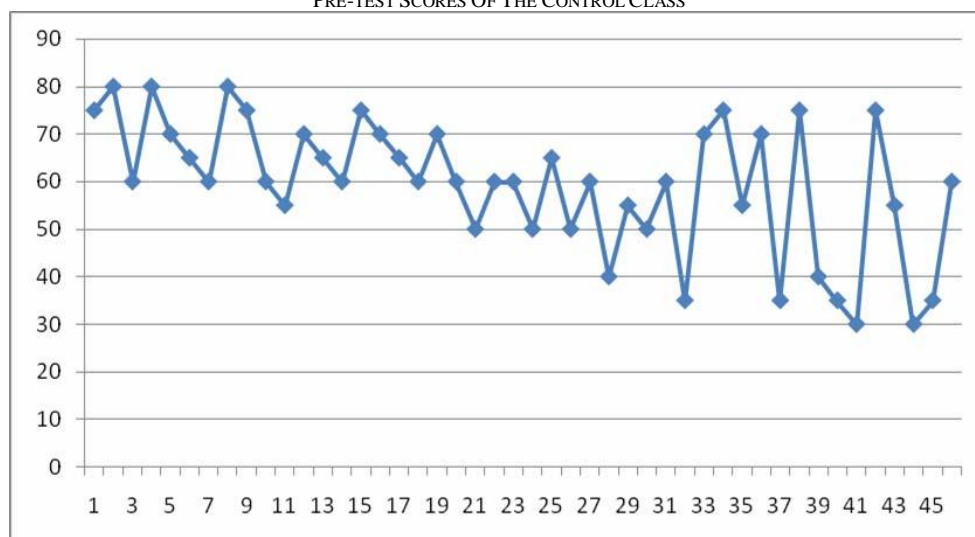


TABLE 2
PRE-TEST SCORES OF THE CONTROL CLASS



According to the pre-test scores of the experimental class and the control class, this paper uses SPSS 17.0 system to compare and analyze the scores of the experimental class and the control class, and Table 3 and Table 4 are obtained:

TABLE 3
DATA STATISTICS OF PRE-TEST RESULTS OF EXPERIMENTAL CLASS AND CONTROL CLASS

Group statistics					
	class	N	mean value	standard deviation	Standard error of mean
Scores	1	43	58.1068	13.45130	2.14000
	2	44	58.0478	13.00820	2.06541

Table 3 is the comparison of statistical data of pre-test results between the experimental class and the control class. Before the experiment, the average score of the experimental class was 58.10, while that of the control class was 58.04. The difference between the two classes was very small. It can be inferred that the English listening level of the

experimental class and the control class is roughly the same before the experiment. In other words, the students in the two classes are basically at the same listening level. In addition, the overall listening level of students in the two classes is not high.

TABLE 4
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE TEST OF PRE-TEST RESULTS OF EXPERIMENTAL CLASS AND CONTROL CLASS
Independent sample test

	Levene test of variance equation		T test of mean value equation						
								95% confidence interval of difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (bilateral)	Mean difference	standard error value	lower limit	upper limit
Scores	.502	.450	-7.728E-2	87	.915	-2.33715E-1	2.90550E0	-6.10870E0	5.60542E0
			-7.726E-2	8.763E1	.915	-2.33715E-1	2.90656E0	-6.17123E0	5.60780E0

Table 4 is the independent sample test of the pre-test results of the experimental class and the control class. Among them, $P(\text{Pearson})=0.907>0.05$, indicating that there is no significant difference between the experimental class and the control class through the comparison of their performance. In other words, before the paper experiment, the students in the experimental class and the control class were roughly at the same listening level. This is also the premise and basis of the experiment.

B. Comparison and Analysis of Post-Test Results between the Experimental Class and the Control Class

At the end of this semester, the experimental class and the control class are tested again (post test). The purpose of the post-test is to detect whether the English listening level of the experimental class and the control class is different before this semester, and to detect whether the improvement of English Listening Teaching Mode under the guidance of Conversational Implicature Theory can improve the students' English listening level. The test consists of 20 short conversations with a topic under each conversation, and each question is marked 5 points for a total of 100 points.

The post-test scores of the experimental class and the control class are as follows:

TABLE 5
POST-TEST SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL CLASS

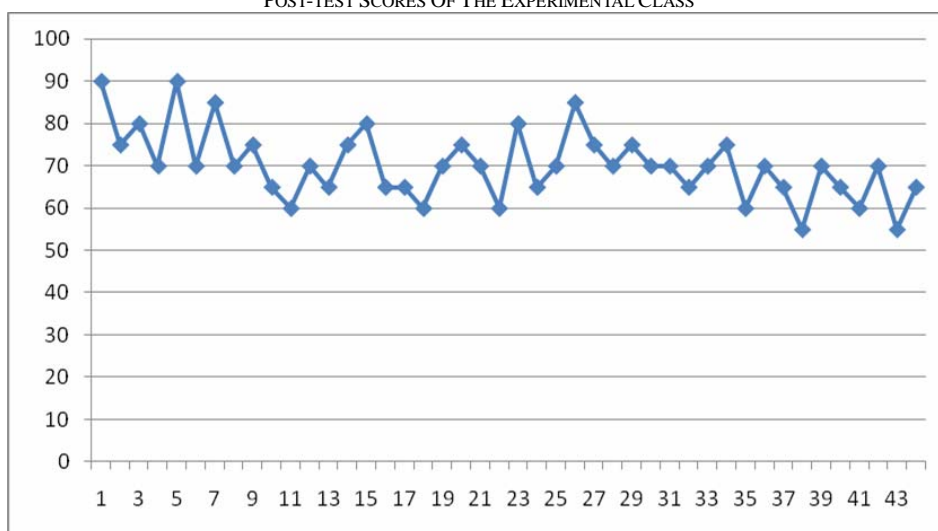
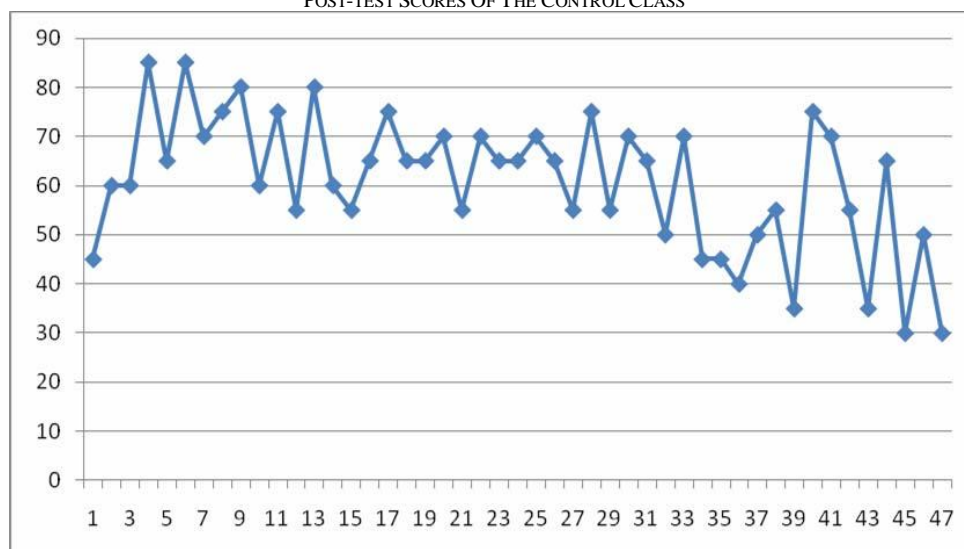


TABLE 6
POST-TEST SCORES OF THE CONTROL CLASS



According to the post-test scores of the experimental class and the control class, SPSS 17.00 system is used to compare and analyze the scores of the experimental class and the control class, and Table 7 and Table 8 are obtained:

TABLE 7
DATA STATISTICS OF POST-TEST RESULTS OF EXPERIMENTAL CLASS AND CONTROL CLASS
Group statistics

	class	N	mean value	standard deviation	Standard error of mean
Scores	1	45	68.5667	8.94427	1.33333
	2	46	60.1957	13.67011	2.01555

Table 7 is a comparison of statistical data of post-test results between the experimental class and the control class. After the experiment, the average score of the experimental class in the pre-test was 68.57, and that of the control class in the post-test was 60.20. The average score of the two classes was very different. The average score of the experimental class was significantly higher than that of the control class ($68.57 > 60.20$).

In addition, if Table 3 is compared with table 7, that is, the pre-test and post test scores of the experimental class and the control class, we can find that: (1) the average score of the pre-test in the experimental class is 58.10, the average score of the post test is 68.57, and the post test scores are significantly improved than the pre-test. (2) The pre-test score of the control class was 58.04, and the post-test score was 60.20. The post-test score was slightly higher than the pre-test score, but the increase was not obvious. (3) In the pre-test, the scores of the experimental class and the control class were roughly the same, and the students of the two classes were at the same level in listening. In the post-test, the performance of the experimental class was significantly higher than that of the control class. The two classes were no longer at the same level, and the experimental class was significantly better than the control class.

TABLE 8
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE TEST ON POST-TEST RESULTS OF EXPERIMENTAL CLASS AND CONTROL CLASS
Independent sample test

	Levene test of variance equation		T test of mean value equation						
								95% confidence interval of difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (bilateral)	Mean difference	standard error value	lower limit	upper limit
Scores	8.681E0	.004		89	.001	8.47101E0	2.42743E0	3.64776E0	1.32943E1
		3.505E0		7.77	.001	8.47101E0	2.41665E0	3.65960E0	1.32824E1
				7E1					

Table 8 is an independent sample testing of the post-test results of the experimental class and the control class. Among them, $P=0.001 < 0.05$, indicating that there is a significant difference between the experimental class and the control class through the comparison of their scores. In other words, after our experiment, the students in the experimental class and the control class have obvious differences in their scores, and the scores of the experimental class are significantly better than that of the control class.

In addition, if Table 4 is compared with Table 8, that is, the independent sample test results of the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental class and the control class are compared, we can find that: (1) In the pre-test independent sample test of the experimental class and the control class, $P=0.907>0.05$, indicating that before the paper experiment, students in the experimental class and the control class were at roughly the same listening level. (2) In the independent sample test of the post-test results of the experimental class and the control class, $P=0.001<0.05$, indicating that after the experiment, there is a significant difference in the English listening performance of students from the experimental class and the control class, and the performance of students from the experimental class is significantly higher than that of the control class.

Therefore, the experiment shows that the students in the experimental class are better than those in the control class in inferring conversational implicature in listening comprehension, which can effectively improve the listening comprehension level of students. The results show that Conversational Implicature Teaching Strategy is effective and feasible for English majors to improve their listening comprehension ability. Moreover, it is of practical significance to explore and apply Conversational Implicature Theory in pragmatics to guide the listening teaching of English majors. However, it should be noted that the differences in listening comprehension ability in this study only existed among English majors in the School of Political Science and Law. The results of this study provide some enlightenment for the implementation of Conversational Implicature Teaching Strategy in similar environments. In Section IV of this paper, some suggestions for listening teaching of English majors are proposed based on the results of this study.

IV. TEACHING ENLIGHTENMENT

The research shows that the application of Conversational Implicature Theory to ESP listening teaching is helpful to improve students' conversational implicature comprehension ability in listening, and then improve their listening level. Therefore, the combination of students' English listening ability training and pragmatic ability training, through targeted training, is helpful to cultivate students' ability to use relevant pragmatic strategies to analyze and infer the material they hear, and ultimately improve students' English listening comprehension ability. Based on the results of the experimental teaching, this paper puts forward some suggestions on the teaching of ESP listening.

A. Pay Attention to the Teaching of Pragmatic Knowledge

He Ziran (1997) once said that English learning is the process of cultivating students' pragmatic competence. The teaching of English listening for English majors should be no exception. In listening teaching, we should also pay attention to cultivating students' pragmatic ability.

Listening comprehension is far more than just understanding the literal meaning of words and sentences, it includes understanding the conveyance meaning of the speaker (Brown & Yule, 1983). In the process of listening comprehension, although it is possible for students to hear every word clearly, they cannot accurately understand the conveyance meaning of the whole sentence. Pragmatic knowledge can help students to carry out effective pragmatic reasoning, so that students can understand the implied meaning of the discourse through the surface language form. The research shows that the development of pragmatic competence does not develop naturally with the development of linguistic competence. In listening teaching of English majors, it is necessary to carry out targeted teaching of pragmatic competence (Hong, 1991). The listening textbook does not provide any relevant pragmatic knowledge, so it is necessary for teachers to convey some relevant pragmatic knowledge to students in normal teaching.

In this way, students can make effective pragmatic inferences based on the pragmatic knowledge they have learned during the listening process, understand the implied meaning of the utterance, and improve their listening comprehension ability.

This study, based on Conversational Implicature Theory, shows that Conversational Implicature Teaching Strategy is effective in English listening teaching for English majors and can improve students' listening comprehension ability. In listening teaching, in addition to Conversational Implicature Theory involved in this study, teachers can also make students understand cultural background knowledge and enhance students' awareness of cultural context. Teachers should guide students to understand the cultural background of foreign countries and the cultural differences between China and the abroad as much as possible so as to guide students to better grasp the implied meaning expressed in the discourse.

For example, 4

M: Have you seen Tom these days?

W: Of course, for many times. He always drops by just at lunch. And I would be happier if he could call ahead.

Q: Why does the woman mean?

This dialogue involves the differences between Eastern and Western cultures in daily etiquette and behavior habits. In daily life, Chinese people often visit home to express friendship and enthusiasm, but it is not polite to visit others when they are eating; in the West, it is necessary to make an appointment with others before visiting, otherwise it will disrupt other people's plans and arrangements and cause the interviewees to be unhappy. Therefore, according to the context of the dialogue and the corresponding cultural background knowledge, the reason why the speaker in the dialogue is dissatisfied with Lucy should be that he did not call to make an appointment before the visit.

So, let's look at the choices in this question:

A: She is very happy because Tom frequently drops these days.

B: She frequently calls Tom.

C: She is not very happy because Tom doesn't phone ahead before visiting.

Based on the above analysis, the answer is obviously C. However, many students chose the wrong option A. These students obviously do not know enough about the cultural background of the East and the West. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for teachers to properly introduce relevant knowledge of cultural background in the class.

In order to improve students' pragmatic inference ability and cultivate students' pragmatic competence, teachers should also integrate the application of relevant pragmatic strategies in their listening teaching. When analyzing and explaining listening training materials, teachers should not simply tell students the answers or explain the surface structure of listening materials, but should explain and analyze the deep or implied meaning of utterances, so as to naturally arouse students' pragmatic awareness and cultivate their pragmatic competence in the process of listening teaching.

B. Carefully Select and Design Listening Materials

In this experiment, some long and short dialogues with conversational implicature are used as teaching cases to analyze and explain the conversational implicature, so as to help students improve their listening comprehension ability of conversational implicature. The results show that it is effective. Therefore, in ordinary listening teaching, teachers should try their best to select authentic listening materials and present different language communication environments, which can not only stimulate students' interest, but also enable students to understand the characteristics of language use in different contexts and cultivate students' pragmatic awareness and competence.

The listening materials can be diversified, which can be daily conversations, speeches, interviews, news broadcasts and even songs, as well as audio or video (such as movie clips, etc.). These materials can be selected from English radio or television programs, so that they are more authentic in terms of content, context, or language itself. Real, natural and diversified listening materials can give students a better exposure to a rich variety of languages and their use in different life scenarios.

It should be particularly pointed out that English listening textbooks or teachers' books should provide specific teaching and learning materials for listening course teaching. However, the existing listening textbooks rarely involve the content design of the interpretation and annotation of pragmatic knowledge. Therefore, in order to make reasonable and effective use of English listening teaching materials, teaching materials play a role in course teaching. We suggest that the following suggestions should be considered when designing textbooks: (1) Provide as many listening materials as possible that reflect real communication, and introduce some pragmatic knowledge contained in them; (2) annotate the pragmatic knowledge embodied in the dialogues and short passages in the textbook; (3) Present the pragmatic knowledge points in teachers' books or annotate the pragmatic knowledge that appears in the textbook, and so on. In this way, teachers can explain the pragmatic knowledge in the listening materials with the help of textbooks or teachers' books, so as to better cultivate students' pragmatic awareness.

This study shows that the application of Conversational Implicature Theory to ESP listening teaching can improve students' conversational implicature comprehension ability, and thus promote their listening comprehension ability. This study only applies Conversational Implicature Theory to ESP listening teaching, and more pragmatic theories can be incorporated in the future research. In a word, the cultivation of listening ability is a long-term accumulation process. How to effectively cultivate students' listening ability needs further study.

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The Effectiveness of Collaborative Teaching and Learning and Engaging Students as Partners on English Language Teaching in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract—This paper looks at the effectiveness of Collaborative Teaching and Learning (CTL) strategies in increasing students' satisfaction in their learning outcomes, experiences, and achievements. The main strategy addressed in this paper is engaging Students as Partners in the CTL. Student engagement correlates with positive learning experiences and outcomes for students. 'Students as Partners' principles and approaches are relevant to many aspects of enhancement and innovation in curriculum and pedagogy, particularly in Higher Education. While this may not be a novel or new idea in the West, many countries in Asia and the Middle East have yet to incorporate collaborative approaches in the classrooms. As such, this review hopes to shed light on the possibilities and advantages of engaging learners in aspects that in a traditional classroom, the role that only educators and teachers take on. This paper also explores the potential issues, challenges, and further work required in the application of CTL in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom in Saudi Arabia.

Index Terms—teaching, learning, English language, students, Saudi Arabia

I. INTRODUCTION

Engaging learners and teachers concurrently in English Language Teaching is arguably one of the most important issues facing higher education in the 21st century (Healey et al., 2014). It is important to reflect and distill the current context, underlying factors, and principles for future work on Collaborative Teaching and Learning (CTL). This term, broadly defined by Smith and MacGregor (1992) as the cooperative use of various approaches in education by teachers and students, has long been associated with a low-threat and comfortable learning environment for students (Pattanpichet, 2011). Such an environment would, *prima facie*, result in a learner that is more relaxed and less anxious and should improve English Language Acquisition. Another concept introduced in the paper is the act of engaging students as partners in the teaching and learning arena. Therefore, this means that students are not just seen as the receiver of information, but they have a stake in producing, developing, and modifying the curriculum, teaching and learning approaches, and more. The aims of this paper are: to identify the motivations and rationales for CTL, propose a conceptual model for exploring the use of CTL in Saudi Arabia, outline how the development of this model may guide and sustain the practice in ELT in Saudi Arabia and identify possible challenges and tensions inherent to CTL, and offer suggestions to teachers and institutions for addressing these.

Although research on CTL has been well documented, there has not been in-depth research in relation to the use of CTL for English Language Acquisition in Saudi Arabia. This paper aims to address this gap. Notwithstanding the positive outcomes such as reduced student anxieties and increased engagement noted in various research papers (Pattanpichet, 2011; Chen et al., 2021; Sousa et al., 2019) with regards to CTL, Jeong et. al. (2019) notes that class-wide CTL may not result in the desired outcome of knowledge acquisition under certain circumstances. It is highlighted that CTL may also cause a heightened level of stress and correspondingly result in an adverse learning experience or outcome. These would be covered in the later section under 'potential challenges and tensions'.

Despite the large expenditure, priority, and effort accorded by the Saudi Arabian government to ELA in Saudi Arabia over the years, there leaves much room for improvement related to the general standard of English in Saudi Arabia (Al-Johani, 2009; Fareh, 2010; Khan, 2011; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). In this regard, an overview of the difficulties of ELA in Saudi Arabia will be briefly discussed in this paper. However, the purpose of this paper is to consider the potential application and issues of the CTL methods in the acquisition of English in Saudi Arabia.

English Language Acquisition and Teaching in Saudi Arabia: A Brief History

English language acquisition and teaching in Saudi Arabia has progressed quite significantly from when it was first introduced in the 1930s where factors such as Saudi Arabian culture, community, first language (Arabic), and religion led to a resistance in the acquisition of English (Alrabai, 2018). In light of the government's position to steer the Saudi Arabian economy towards a more all-rounded economy comparable to developed countries (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017) the corresponding transition educational policies resulted in a four and a half times increase in the number of universities from 8 in 2001 to 36 in 2015 (Alshahrani, 2016). This would mean that the number of people who would have received English Language Education at the tertiary level could have increased in a similar proportion if the

English language was taught by the English Department of these Universities.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned progress and increased acceptance of English in Saudi Arabia, the key challenges that Saudi Arabian learners of English face include: 1) first language interference – technical differences between Arabic and English (Rababah, 2005); 2) cultural influences – misconstrued notion that the learning of English may result in a dilution of Saudi culture (Al-Nasser, 2015); 3) unfavorable English teaching and learning practices – e.g. using Arabic to teach English (Alhawsawi, 2013); 4) a lack of experiential exposure to English – limited opportunity to practice English (Khan, 2011); and 5) foreign language anxiety – situational anxiety as a result of foreign language acquisition (Woodrow, 2006).

This paper seeks to investigate how CTL may help to overcome or partially mitigate some of the above challenges that Saudi Arabian learners of English face.

II. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING: AN OVERVIEW

A. *What Is Collaborative Teaching and Learning (CTL)?*

Frameworks and definitions of CTL have been developed and discussed in various papers over time. Häkkinen et al. (2017) broadly construct CL as the use of social skills and the commitment to coordinated work with co-learners, and further breaks it down to 1) collaborating to learn; 2) learning to collaborate, and 3) learning to teach whilst applying collaborative learning approaches. On the other hand, Vygotsky (1978), in one of the initial iterations of CL, defined it as a construct of social constructivism, where he emphasized “the collaborative nature of learning by the construction of knowledge through social negotiation”. A more modern definition of CTL involves students working as teams to discuss and problematize real-life situations. To illustrate this, the instructor or tutor and the learner start by engaging in understanding and mastering the processes linked to the intended learning outcomes in order to succeed in authentic contexts as well as from the education perspective (van Schalkwyk, 2015). It emphasizes student-centered learning and relational practices to their fullest extent. Some important concepts related to student-centered teaching and learning include encouraging student-faculty contact, cooperation among students, and active learning. This can be facilitated through giving timely feedback, focused time-based tasks, and effective two-way communication of expectations of learning goals.

Engagement through partnership is also crucial to understanding the collaborative aspects of ELT. This paper will use the term partnership congruent with collaboration and they may be used interchangeably. Viewing students as partners is one effective way to structure the body of education. This concept interweaves assessment and feedback, flexible pedagogies, internationalization and retention, and success (Healey et al., 2014). The investment in students with the power to co-create forms the root of this partnership. Traditionally, students learn passively by waiting for input from the instructor, learn through textbooks or worksheets and the tutors are responsible for the learning taking place in the classroom. It is also examination-driven and rote learning, which emphasizes what the educator hopes to achieve. However, van Schalkwyk (2015) argues that active learning is more sustainable and has more positive long-term results because active learners prepare themselves for independent learning, interact with authentic problems, and constructively engage with materials, methods, technology, and equipment. Student-centered learning also means that the learners take responsibility for their learning, critically think about the problem, actively learn with their peers, and constantly reflect on the learning process.

Despite the flexibility CTL seems to be, there is structure to regulate the interaction within student groups and encourage cognitive, social, and emotional development necessary for deep learning. Through co-creation and construction of knowledge and planned activities for individuals, they acquire and apply content knowledge and develop crucial skills through collaborating with others (Johnson, 2009).

B. *The Conceptual Model for Exploring the Use of CTL in Saudi Arabia*

The conceptual model, as constructed by Healey, Flint & Harrington (2014), focuses on four interrelated methods of engaging students in partnership, namely:

- learning, teaching and assessment;
- subject-based research and inquiry;
- scholarship of teaching and learning;
- curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy.

Each of these four areas will be discussed in turn in the next few sections. The conceptual frameworks which have been developed for each area will also be identified, and case studies of initiatives that have applied the ideas will be presented. To this must be added at the center of the model the partnership learning communities, which emphasizes the processes by which the four different kinds of partnership operate. These are discussed in detail in the following chapter. The wider topic of student engagement aims to emphasize the point that engagement through collaboration is a form of student engagement, but not all forms of student engagement are forms of collaboration (Healey et al., 2014).

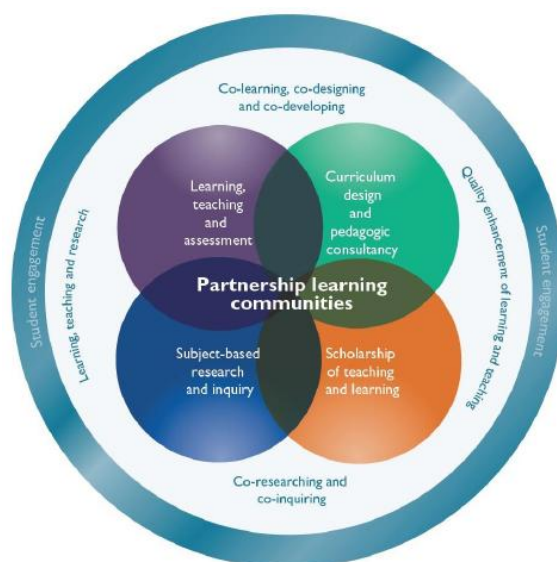


Fig 1. Collaboration between partners in teaching and learning in higher education

1. Learning, Teaching, and Assessment

The most common way to understand CTL and meaningful student learning is to engage them as partners. As previously mentioned, active learning is the key to this (Graham et al., 2007). Reflecting on the experience of learning helps the idea of active learning and student engagement, Kolb (1984, p.38) theorizes that “Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience”, and this process may be akin to experiencing, reflecting, generalizing, and testing. The importance of active learning was revealed in Trowler’s (2010) international review into student engagement. She found that such engagement is enhanced by: (a) student active involvement in their learning (both asynchronously and synchronously); (b) collaborative tasks (e.g., peer-to-peer learning, peer review, assessment); (c) student participation in the creation, delivery, and assessment of their learning (Healey et al., 2014).

Involving students as collaborative partners in assessment is increasingly adopted in many countries. Self-assessment and e-assessment are two examples of how institutions can increase student autonomy and self-regulated learning (Ellis & Folley, 2011). The flexibility and freedom gained by learners who can negotiate their choice of assessments is a fine example of positive collaborative teaching and learning. This also forms an important part of recognizing ‘assessment for learning’ (Cambridge Community, n.d.), which is an approach to teaching and learning that generates feedback. This is then used to improve students’ performance. This way learners become more involved in the process of learning and from this gain confidence in what they hope to achieve and are expected to learn.

2. Subject-Based Research and Inquiry

The second way of engaging students as partners collaboratively is in research and inquiry into their subject or area of interest, though in some way, the students are seen as research assistants. It is believed that the time has come to move on from the paradigm shift from teaching to learning, to one based on discovery and inquiry.

There are two main models for engaging students in partnership in this way (Healey & Jenkins, 2009). The first model aims to give selected students an authentic research experience. This could be beyond the curriculum, for example, students who are given a bursary to work for six weeks during the summer vacation with a member of academic staff or in a laboratory (Laursen et al., 2010). The second model integrates the research experiences into the curriculum (Healey & Jenkins, 2009). As with active learning, not all ways of engaging students in research and inquiry involve partnership, but there are many examples where students negotiate as partners and have extensive autonomy in many of the details of the research and inquiry projects that they undertake (Healey et al., 2014).

3. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

The scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) comprises theorizing how students learn within a discipline and communicating and disseminating the findings (Healey, 2000). Most SoTL projects are undertaken by staff members and engaging students in undertaking SoTL projects is rather infrequent; students are usually seen as the subject of research undertaken by staff. Yet, Felten (2013) suggests that one of the five principles of good practice in SoTL is that the projects are conducted in partnership with students. The idea is not novel, but most of the initiatives focused on engaging students as partners are in teaching and learning (Healey et al., 2014).

4. Curriculum Design and Pedagogic Consultancy

Students are regularly involved in course evaluations and departmental staff-student committees, but it is uncommon for institutions to go beyond the students’ voice and collaborate in designing the curriculum and giving pedagogic

advice and consultancy. These ways of engaging students as partners complement those discussed in the last section in which students undertake SoTL projects and the student representative systems which are well developed in many institutions of higher education (Healey et al., 2014).

A post-graduate course in educational technology at the University of Regina in Canada involves students in creating and mapping their curriculum through combining their own blogs with knowledge sign-posted by tutors and engaging in discussions with professionals within the tutors' networks. In this way, the tutors enable an entry point for the students into a professional learning community. More importantly, the students' emerging knowledge not only impacts the development of the curriculum, but also the growth of the learning community and knowledge within the discipline (Healey et al., 2014; Cormier, 2008).

III. POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND TENSIONS

The approach of working with a partnership approach can heighten the awareness of conflicting tensions and priorities between the differing perspectives and motivations of those involved, specifically the students, the tutors, and the coordinators of courses, at the individual as well as institutional levels. It elevates challenges to present assumptions and norms about working in Higher Education, but at the same time provides opportunities for thinking and reacting differently. This is done by embracing the challenges as problems to grapple with and learn from. Taylor and Robinson (2009) explore this challenge concerning student voice between the normative ideal of student engagement and the realities of practice. Such realities refer to the constraints and limitations of the current context. With a partnership approach, it is in the tensions raised, and in being prepared to acknowledge, tackle, and innovate, where the potential for new and further learning resides.

Where confronting new initiatives and methodologies are concerned, it could spark anxieties and increase stress levels among staff members and students. This could stem from the unfamiliarity of the grounds, failure to adopt and adapt in consideration to the culture, beliefs, and values of the institutions involved, forcing the model onto the tutors without fully understanding the rationale of the change. Often, staff and students, have different motivations and reasons for engaging in partnership, and this results in varied experiences of navigating established structures, practices, and norms (Bovill et al., 2016). These could lead to differing perceptions of one another's tasks and roles in the partnership process. This can possibly give rise to tensions around power differentials, reward and recognition of participation, identity, and accountability for each partnership. As the desire for change naturally varies among individuals, the resistance to change can be heightened when partners experienced conflicting views. The next paragraph will highlight some concerns both staff and students may have.

The concerns of staff may center on carving out time for collaborative work with students on top of their existing heavy workloads, as well as how students can meaningfully contribute to the development of teaching and learning materials when they may lack the subject or pedagogical knowledge, and whether it is wise for students to have a voice in elements like assessment. On the other hand, students may also be concerned about changing their role and whether stepping out of their comfort zone would truly benefit them, and they often require specific assurance on how the changes would affect their grades and performance (Bovill et al., 2016). However, when staff and students recognize that their current habits and performance can be improved and may not be ideal at the moment, the resistance to change can be reduced or eliminated. Both parties must be convinced that the changes to be implemented must work to their benefit, in ways calculated that meet their needs (Healey et al., 2014). For example, it is important to avoid asking students to contribute beyond their means and in order to mitigate that, they can undergo specific training before they are asked to brainstorm and suggest ideas. They should gain confidence gradually before shifting to a more collaborative partnership in due course. This requires the understanding of staff members and consistent communication, which includes active listening and regular feedback sessions during the learning process.

As CTL could regularly involve group activities, weaker students who may be struggling to speak up may potentially face an increased level of difficulty in participation. Free riders or bystanders may also potentially precipitate from such arrangements, which may result in a dichotomy in the learning levels for the class (Saito et al., 2020). Potential techniques like allocation of roles by staff (de Beer & Petersen, 2017; Law, 2014) and rewarding participation (Sears & Pai, 2012; Unrau et al., 2015) may help to mitigate the potential issues. However, as such techniques encourage learners to be task-focused and are goal-centric, staff should continually be on the lookout and encourage learners who potentially have questions to voice out and speak up along the way.

IV. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SAUDI ARABIA

As authentic CTL accords learners of English greater engagement in the classroom (Chen et al., 2021), it may imply a proportionally greater exposure in speaking and the practice of English during group exercises as compared to typical classroom teaching and correspondingly affect the academic achievement of learners. Gubbad (2010) found in research conducted in Saudi Arabia that as compared to a control group being taught via traditional methods, the group being taught via CTL showed a significant positive difference in the achievement evaluation test. Another survey conducted by (Awatef, 2006), demonstrated that learners who were taught via the CTL method showed a statistically significant distinction between post and pre-test results, and students who were taught via the CTL method achieved a higher level

of linguistic performance in English. As such, CTL may potentially be a solution to the lower-than-expected performance of English language learners in Saudi Arabia. Notwithstanding the above, more extensive research should also be conducted to understand the potential gain in performance against the overhaul required in the Saudi Arabian educational system as achieving authentic CTL requires more than just a change in teaching method.

A transition to CTL would potentially require more than just a change of way of teaching or an introduction of a new way of teaching into Saudi Arabian teaching. For CTL to be truly effective, staff would need to embrace a paradigm shift in their role as an educator: from that of a deliverer of curriculum and content to be a facilitator who listens and adapts the lesson according to the needs of the learners (Bjork, 2005; Sato, 2012). In this regard, it may require an overhaul of the entire Saudi Arabian educational system that would potentially require years to implement. Further research and survey among Saudi Arabian staff should also be conducted to understand the true extent of staff's view of their role as an educator in the 21st century. This would allow for more targeted training to effectively eradicate any potential misconceptions should CTL be implemented.

Another viable aspect to consider is to increase the collaborative learning strategies in the current e-learning environments. Due to COVID-19, all institutions worldwide have to shift to online teaching and learning regardless of the readiness of the learners, staff members, or the institutions. Alkhalaf et. al. (2013) report that an increased student interaction in the e-environment, which could be fostered using CTL is likely to be both popular with students in Saudi Arabia and beneficial to their learning outcomes. More recent research in the country reveals positive outcomes using collaborative teaching and learning strategies in writing classes in Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes (Alkhalaf, 2020). A collaborative writing strategy was used and a number of advantages in terms of the quality of the produced texts and improvements in students' writing skills were highlighted. This strategy can be adopted in both online and offline environments. The model this paper suggested can also be considered when applying this teaching strategy. For instance, an intentional partnership between staff and students can be planned and implemented in the developing of materials and deciding on the assessment criteria and mode. With this partnership, there would be an increased motivation to learn and be involved in the class.

In the EFL situation in Saudi Arabia, the learning of vocabulary is mostly relegated to heavy memorization. Therefore, formal assessments and achievement tests have proven to be unfruitful to learners' progress and proficiency in the language. One recent study found that using an e-tool of collaborative learning indicated improved vocabulary retention and critical knowledge application (Al-Ahdal et al., 2021). This was a pilot study done on intermediate EFL learners at Majmaah University and Qassim University, using a mobile-assisted language learning tool.

Hakim (2015), a research done in EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia, noted an increase in learner satisfaction whilst participating in collaborative learning which also increased their motivation to work harder and make more effort to use the target language in their interactions with each other. In this regard, it would appear that in a Saudi Arabian context, the effects of CTL in an EFL classroom may be a potential game-changer if implemented correctly. Notwithstanding the current CTL research done in Saudi Arabia, further research can be conducted to understand whether an overall framework (e.g., the repeated use of a CTL method at every level) for CTL which spans across the various levels in the EFL classrooms would be helpful to allow for a more effective and efficient application of CTL.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Understanding the culture, history, and educational beliefs of an institution before recommending a change is as important as implementing a change effectively. The above suggestions and recommendations based on previous research have been tested in various countries and institutions. However, not all strategies would produce similar results as there are many variables, including the age group, level of proficiency and competence, and learning styles. This paper aims to shed light on a particular model of CTL, specifically in partnering students, which is relevant to many aspects of enhancement and innovation in curriculum and pedagogy, particularly in Higher Education, and the possible application of such methods in Saudi Arabia.

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On the Construction of College English Listening and Speaking Ecological Classroom From the Perspective of Eco-Linguistics

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Abstract—Ecological approaches to language learning and teaching have captured the interest of language educators as both native and non-native speakers find themselves operating in increasingly multilingual and multicultural environments. Based on ecolinguistics, this paper describes what an ecological perspective on college English listening and speaking class would look like. It first explains some major concepts related to ecolinguistics, and analyses problems on current ecological imbalances in college English and speaking classrooms and proposes strategies for building a harmonious ecological classroom through language education in institutional contexts.

Index Terms—ecolinguistics, ecosystem, teachers' niche, students' niche

I. INTRODUCTION

Ecolinguistics, also known as ecology of language, is an emerging discipline that combines ecology and linguistics. Its ideas provide a new research paradigm for foreign language teaching. The concept of "language ecology" (Haugen Einar, 1972), first proposed by Einar Haugen, a scholar at Stanford University in the United States, derived from natural ecological system, holds that language, like biology, also has its own ecological environment and emphasizes the interaction between language and social ecological environment. Since 1980s, linguists began to pay attention to the development of ecolinguistics and apply it to language teaching which gradually lead to the combination of ecolinguistics and language teaching. According to those linguistics, educational ecology refers to the research methods of ecology and pedagogy to study the ecological problems in education. In educational ecology, classroom is regarded as a system with ecological attributes and characteristics, all elements within it are interrelated. Teachers, students and teaching environment are the three most important ecological elements in classroom ecosystem. The relationship between them is interdependent and interactive, forming a diversified interaction. The ill development of any ecological element may cause a chain reaction and lead to the imbalance of classroom ecology, which inevitably affect the efficiency of language teaching.

Based on ecolinguistics, English classroom is a complete ecosystem with various ecological elements affecting and restricting one another. The main ecological elements include teachers, students, classroom environment etc. In which, classroom environment includes micro and macro environment. Macro environment involves social environment, campus environment and curriculum setting. Micro classroom environment includes classroom equipment, teaching concept, teacher-student relationship and classroom discipline. Successful integration of these elements and information technology is the key to a healthy and sustainable teaching ecology. Only when the ecological elements develop harmoniously in college English listening and speaking teaching ecosystem, and have a relatively stable, balanced and virtuous cycle of English listening and speaking teaching ecological environment, a dynamic and balanced ecosystem with interaction, symbiosis, competition and bionics can be built in class. Current college English listening and speaking teaching, however, is witnessing many challenges caused by imbalances in the class ecosystem.

II. ECOLOGICAL IMBALANCE IN COLLEGE ENGLISH LISTENING AND SPEAKING CLASS

A. Over Developed Teachers' Ecological Niche

The essence of classroom teaching is to promote a process of sustainable development in which teachers and students cooperate and explore knowledge together. In current English listening and speaking classroom, the development of the niche of both teachers and students, two important elements in college English listening and speaking class, is out of balance.

Teachers' niche generally refers to their role in class in the process of knowledge transfer, exchange and transformation with students. At present, teachers have too much power in classroom: teachers dominate almost all the activities in class, and are almost the only "producer" of English knowledge and information. The classroom teaching mode still presents the characteristics of "one speech", and teachers are still the authority of the classroom and knowledge due to their excessive control of the classroom. The modern teaching concept of "student-centered" has not been well practiced. Meanwhile, students are not well acknowledged their ecological roles in classroom, they are still

passive knowledge receivers and "consumers". And in listening and speaking class, teachers' teaching method is still like this: play listening materials -- ask students questions -- answer the materials -- proofread listening materials, in which, teachers are the publishers of knowledge, while students are passive receivers of knowledge. There is no process of knowledge transforming and absorbing, and there is a lack of positive interaction between teachers and students. Cheng Xiaotang (2016) believes that teachers and students are the main sources of knowledge, Teachers should deeply understand the significance of classroom interaction and cultivate the awareness of classroom interaction; they should design some activities that teachers and students could interact with each other on the combination of teaching purpose and content. At present, due to the lack of awareness of interaction and the lack of well designed curriculum, English teachers in high schools often fail to achieve a satisfactory effect in developing students' listening and speaking competence though they spend a lot of time and efforts. And actions should be taken to improve current situation.

As an ecological element in the system, English teachers fail to cooperate with other elements to build a perfect ecosystem. Because their self-development lags behind, their information literacy couldn't cope with the need of high-tech based teaching method, they fail to bring effective application of computer and internet to English listening and speaking classroom. Some English teachers are still used to the traditional teaching mode. More efforts should be made to the complementary advantages of the new teaching mode highly integrated with modern information technology. Rich teaching resources, such as all kinds of learning and teaching apps and online resources can not be integrated into the classroom, which will virtually affect teachers' arrangement of classroom content and design of class organization. These problems directly lead to teachers' excessive participation in the classroom, and the imbalance of teacher-student ecological niche directly affects the function of teacher-student ecological elements and the harmonious development of English classroom ecosystem.

B. Lack of Students' Ecological Niche

Classroom is a natural and open ecological system composed of various elements and environment in a certain space. In this system, all elements depend on and interact with each other in the survival process, forming a healthy and orderly state (Chen Jianlin, 2010). Therefore, the role and function of any ecological element in the classroom will inevitably affect others. As the most important ecological elements in the construction of ecological classroom of College English listening and speaking, students' ecological niche face some problems in forming a well developed ecosystem.

As the core of classroom ecosystem, most students haven't yet realized they are the main body of classroom activities, they just act as passive participants, they don't have sustainable learning concept. Many students lack intrinsic learning motivation, such as weak desire for knowledge, lack of interest in understanding the world and curiosity to explore the mysteries of the world, lack of learning initiative and creativity. Under such circumstance, sustainable individual development will not appear, autonomous learning will not happen.

Influenced by traditional "Teacher centered" teaching mode, most students see themselves as subordinates in the process of language learning. The hegemonic position of teachers in the classroom makes it difficult for students to reflect their status as the main body of language learning. Students, as major element of classroom ecology, are not effectively integrated into classroom activities. As a result, there are many cases of students with high academic scores and low language ability or low efficiency of language learning, and students' language ability is not well developed.

The lack of "group effect" among students is another problem. One of the most important factors in College English listening and speaking class is the atmosphere of group learning. The interaction and communication mode of students within and among groups will cause a series of reactions in language learning, which of course are beneficial to their language development. In College English listening and speaking class, with continuous language learning, the differences of students' listening and speaking ability between individuals and groups are becoming more and more obvious, showing obvious polarization phenomenon, which causes great physiological and psychological pressure on students who are in the "slow", "middle and low" or even "low" level in learning. These students are easy to self denial and burnout, or even give up language learning completely. In the long run, if teachers just neglect the problem, it is not conducive to the development of students' individual niche, nor as to the healthy and harmonious development of classroom ecological environment.

In addition, most students don't know how to use metacognitive strategies to guide their language learning. Metacognitive strategies can be adopted to monitor learners' cognitive activities. They are closely in connection with contemplating the learning process, designing learning plans, supervising learning tasks, and commenting one's performance in the learning process (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). It's a shame that so many of the students have little knowledge about it. Without the knowledge, they couldn't realize autonomy and independence of learning, self-management and self-supervision can not be well achieved, and tasks assigned by teachers before and after class can not be successfully completed, which has a certain impact on the effect of language teaching and learning. Meanwhile, a considerable proportion of teachers and students' perception of the two factors of "student participation" and "classroom co construction" is generally not high, which means that students' participation in the classroom is not enough, and they lack the consciousness of "classroom subjectivity". In short, the poor cooperation with each other is another factor leading to the deviation of teachers' and students' niche.

C. The Imbalance of Ecological Environment in College English Listening and Speaking Classroom

Ecological overload is a common phenomenon in College English classroom, and it is also an important reason for the time-consuming and inefficient College English teaching. If the ecological classroom is compared to a pond, students are like fish growing up in it. The number of fish that a pond can hold is limited. If there are too many fish, they will not be able to get enough resources. At present, most colleges and universities expand enrollment scale every year, resulting in a sharp increase in the number of students. The class population density basically exceeds the endurance and tolerance of system resources, which violates the principle of moderation. Great individual differences exist among students and their English abilities are uneven in such big classes, meanwhile foreign language teachers are relatively insufficient. In such overload class, it is difficult for teachers to take into account the individual needs of each student. The process of large class teaching will lead to certain obstacles in the development of teaching activities, and the reduction of students' enthusiasm to participate in classroom activities, which will inevitably affect teaching effect and students' learning effect. English is a language, in the learning process, we need to provide students with proper language environment, so that students' English learning ability can be improved in all aspects. But in such big class, it is difficult to provide students a good language learning environment.

With the rapid development of educational network technology, the combination of traditional teaching mode with online learning and mobile learning is a new trend in the development of College English teaching, which makes great changes in the ecological environment of English listening and speaking class, such as, the increase of ecological factors, and the multi-dimensional adjustment of ecological subjects. Nowadays, in the process of teaching, teachers are required to use not only blackboard and multimedia equipment, but also network technology to carry out teaching activities, including network audio and video, network teaching clips, MOOCS or teaching apps. However, students often lose their concentration and attention in the teaching activities due to their lack of self-control in such high-tech class. In classroom online learning, they will be involuntarily attracted to other interfaces of mobile devices such as computers or mobile phones. Especially in teaching task links based on mobile app, it is difficult for teachers to control what students do with their high-tech learning equipment and students are easily distracted from what they are required to do. Effective strategy should be adopted to avoid such things happen.

III. CLASSROOM ECOLOGICAL OPTIMIZATION STRATEGY

A. *The Upgrading of Teachers' Niche*

In nature, only when a pond is injected with living water and exchanged with the outside world, can all factors in the pond maintain vigorous vitality. It's the same when it comes to language teaching. The closed or semi closed teaching ecological environment will lead to the decline of individual ecological threshold, narrow ecological range and decrease of ecological value. In College English classroom ecosystem, the role of teachers determines whether the ecosystem can operate well or not. As the main element of classroom ecology, English teachers act as knowledge transfers and producers in the ecosystem, and also the output of information. To optimize teachers' ecological niche, College English teachers should begin with advanced beliefs. Chen Jianlin (2006) pointed out that foreign language teachers should first keep pace with the times and build correct teaching beliefs with the development of information technology. In addition to knowledge structure and professional ethnics, teachers should possess reflective and critical teaching attitudes. They should know they are the assistant and helper instead of dominant in students' process of language learning. Therefore, teacher's role can be redefined as pre-class curriculum planner, the leader and evaluator of class as well as after-class collaborator. In a word, English teachers should do a good job in changing their roles, from the master of the classroom to the constructors, guides, coordinators and supervisors of ecological classroom.

Professional knowledge is the basic guarantee for teachers to perform the functions of production and transformation of knowledge; Modern educational technology can help teachers achieve higher efficiency and better effect when they export knowledge. Thus, teachers' information literacy is also required in an all round ecological classroom. With the knowledge they can know how to use "living books" and possess the ability of creating a virtual environment. Virtual environment is a good way to connect and monitor students' inside and outside classroom activities. They can train students' autonomous learning, and become provider, and leader of self-learning resources. And, they should also participate in students' self-learning as an equal.

Besides self-learning and training, a training system should also be a support for English teachers' development. Under a systematic training, teachers can accept a continuous educational training, and upgrade their teaching concept, promote teaching methods diversification and improve the interaction ability of information techniques and courses. In a word, a teacher who keeps a clear view of the basic ecological principles can ignite students' sparks of interest that in turn can set in motion perceptual, social and cognitive processes that instigate learning

B. *Optimization of Students' Niche*

An ecological approach sees the learner as a whole person, not a grammar production unit. This involves having meaningful things to do and say, being taken seriously, being given responsibility, and being encouraged to tackle challenging projects, to think critically, and to take control of one's own learning. The teacher provides assistance, but only just enough and just in time, taking the learner's developing skills and interests as the true driving force of the curriculum (van Lier, L 2004).

To optimize students' ecological niche, teachers first should enhance students' subject consciousness as ecological

population, strengthen students' subject status in learning, and pay attention to students' ecological subject from the perspective of development. A completely passive learner will not learn. Students should know they are the center of College English listening and speaking class, not passive knowledge receivers, they should turn themselves from passive into active participants, make active use of good personalized and autonomous learning environment, actively explore and enjoy the learning process. Students must really become the masters of their own learning. Only with teachers as the guide and students as the main body or center can students' niche be correctly positioned. In a word, it is an essential step to establish the dominant status of students and make them form a strong self-awareness and desire to optimize the individual niche in College English listening and speaking class.

Change "isolated passive learning" to "cooperative active learning" is another way to optimize students' niche. It is easy for students to believe that language learning must be accompanied by teachers in traditional college English classroom. Traditional teaching mode makes students be in the subordinate niche of "being instilled" in the classroom ecology, and lack of the motivation and ability of independent learning. The cooperative interaction between students can inject new vitality into the classroom ecosystem, which can promote students to learn from each other, reflect on their learning process, strategies and achievements, and then carry out higher quality autonomous learning. Cooperative learning is the promotion and sublimation of students' individual independent learning.

It is important to note that online interaction of college students will be affected by many factors, such as learning attitude, learning strategy, time management ability, communication ability, network environment, etc., so it is necessary for teachers to organize and intervene students' online interactive learning properly. Because the number of students in College English classroom is relatively large, it is difficult to give every student sufficient language training opportunities in a limited period of time. English teachers should properly deal with the relationship between cooperation and competition between students, form an incentive effect of benign competition, help students increase their confidence and enthusiasm for language learning, improve the methods and strategies of language learning, cultivate critical thinking and communication skills, and finally realize the improvement of English ability and the overall development of individuals.

C. Co-Development between Teachers and Students

The coordination between teachers and students is vital for classroom ecology. First of all, the niche of teachers and students complement each other. English teachers' role is to help students acquire knowledge and develop language ability, while students' main task is to improve their language ability with the help of teachers. In traditional teaching mode, teachers and students exchange information and emotions through face-to-face interaction. Teachers guide students and students give teachers feedback on teaching and learning. In ecological teaching mode, teachers first carefully study the teaching materials, and then rely on their teaching knowledge, integrated with their information literacy, to design learning activities in class and online for students. Students complete the task through communication, brainstorming and cooperation in and after class. In the process, teachers give appropriate guidance, and teachers and students evaluate and summarize together after completing the task. In the whole process of language teaching, teachers are not act only as teachers, but also as guides and cooperators of the students. This kind of teaching mode is helpful to the mutual development of teaching and learning, to achieve a state of coordination and balance between teachers and students, and to realize the co evolution of teachers and students.

D. Optimization of Classroom Ecological Environment

1. Micro Environment Optimization

The optimization of College English classroom ecology must follow the law of tolerance and the most appropriate principle. The law of tolerance in ecology holds that the tolerance range of organisms to an ecological element is limited, and "too much" or "too little" will have adverse effects. Only when the degree of ecological elements to biological or system is in the most appropriate state, the best development can be achieved for individuals, populations or systems. Therefore, first of all, the relevant management departments of university should provide support and help for the smooth implementation of classroom teaching, and take reasonable measures to solve the problems such as large class teaching brought by the expansion of college students. It is true large class will save teaching resources to some extent, but from the perspective of students' professional development, especially the development of language ability, large class teaching has its disadvantages compare to small lass. The excessive number of class affects the effectiveness of teaching activities and will influence proper development of classroom ecology. Universities can adopt small classes for language teaching, or carry out graded teaching method according to the students' English proficiency and needs, aiming at promoting their language ability. This way also meets the needs of tolerance and adaptability of different educational students' subjects. In this way, universities can focus on not only students' physical and mental growth and development, but also better training on their comprehensive English ability.

Secondly, the ecological factors such as autonomous learning, project-based learning and computer-aided teaching should be reasonably allocated in the classroom ecology, so as to achieve the most appropriate principle. Because only reasonable allocation can make these ecological elements play a positive role and promote the coordination of all elements in classroom ecology. Improper allocation may make them become limiting factors, which will reduce the teaching effect.

2. Macro Environment Optimization

The use of hybrid teaching effectively connects classroom and extra-curricular teaching. The optimization of educational ecology classroom is not only in the university classroom itself, but also outside the classroom, making rational use of internet teaching resources, enhancing teachers' ability to apply information technology teaching and realizing the interaction between teachers and students to change traditional classroom into "Zhi Huiyun classroom" to optimize the macro classroom environment.

With the process of network informatization, the relationship between teachers and students and resources is also undergoing profound changes. For teachers, they are no longer the users of static teaching resources, but the creators of dynamic teaching resources. Outside classroom, according to the actual situation and needs of students, teachers can make online teaching resources or design English learning network platform that students are interested in through class QQ group, Dingding class, public mailbox and class micro-blog home page. They can also design mobile teaching links with the help of mobile learning network resources or application software to guide students to carry out mobile learning according to the teaching schedule, help and guide students to choose mobile learning resources, strengthen the supervision of mobile learning, and give full play to the leading role of teachers. Teachers and students can ask questions, answer questions and discuss with each other anytime and anywhere, so as to realize the flexible, timely, effective and online interactive ubiquitous learning between teachers and students and realize the effective extension of classroom teaching, so as to make the classroom and extracurricular learning ecological balance and harmony.

IV. CONCLUSION

An ecological approach aims to study the learning process, the actions and activities of teachers and learners, the multilayered nature of interaction and language use, in all their complexity and as a network of interdependence among all the elements in the setting. The sustainable development of ecological classroom requires mutual benefit and symbiosis among all ecological elements to achieve ecological balance. Based on the theory of educational ecology, the author finds that the ecological imbalance in College English listening and speaking classroom is mainly caused by the imbalance of ecological subjects, which leads to the flower pot effect and ecological overload in classroom ecology. In view of these problems, this paper proposes corresponding optimization strategies, in order to eliminate the imbalance and reconstruct a balanced classroom ecology. Only by the collaborative interaction between ecological subjects and various ecological communities in listening and speaking classroom ecosystem can we build a harmonious and balanced and dynamic teaching ecological environment, and achieve the goal of promoting the improvement of students' individual language ability and the overall development.

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Construction of Short-Term Memory Training Model in Consecutive Interpretation*

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Abstract—With the deepening of the reform and opening up policy, China is moving towards the world dramatically, and the importance of interpretation is becoming increasingly prominent. Based on the theory of memory in interpretation and the theory of discourse type in interpretation, this paper aims to demonstrate the fit between discourse type and memory, and analyze the effectiveness of the training model through empirical research. In the experiment, students of Translation Class 2018 (reference class) and students of Translation Class 2019 (experimental class) were selected as the research objects, and a six week teaching experiment was carried out. Through the analysis of students' data, questionnaires and interviews, it can be found that the application of the theory of discourse type in interpretation to the training of short-term memory in interpreting can improve the logic and integrity of information transmission, so this teaching model is effective and feasible. The purpose of this study is to construct a training model of short-term memory in consecutive interpretation teaching with the help of the theory of discourse type, so that students can experience the joy of progress in the process of practice, monitoring and reflection, which will greatly mobilize students' subjective initiative in learning, stimulate students' innovative consciousness and cultivate students' innovative ability.

Index Terms—short-term memory, training model, discourse type, consecutive interpretation

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the *Teaching Requirements for Undergraduate Translation Major*, and the *Teaching Guide for Undergraduate Translation Major*, the interpretation course is listed as a compulsory course, emphasizing the "skill" in the interpretation course, that is, to enable students to master the basic theory of interpretation and the skills of consecutive interpretation of special topics by teaching the basic theory and background knowledge of interpretation and training basic skills of interpretation. In order to help students interpret Chinese and English accurately and fluently, they should learn the methods of memory, gist retelling and interpreting, notes taking, public speaking skills and so on. Memory training plays an important role in interpreting teaching. There are many factors which may exert great pressure on interpreters, like the "immediacy" of interpretation, and the criteria "accuracy, smoothness and quickness" in interpretation quality assessment (Li, 1999). Therefore, to deepen the research of short-term memory training in consecutive interpretation can help interpreting learners improve the efficiency of memory in interpreting and the overall quality of interpretation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Main Works

At present, most of the interpreting textbooks focus on skills training, containing chapters or units of memory in interpreting. For example, in the Second Edition of *Basics of Interpreting Skills*, a series of undergraduate textbooks for translation majors edited by Deng Yi and Liu Ying (2016), Unit 2 introduces memory information and auxiliary memory. The fourth and fifth units of the National Excellent Textbook *A Coursebook of Interpreting Between English and Chinese* edited by Ren Wen (2011) explain the memory mechanism and training methods. *Basics of Interpreting Skills* edited by Su Wei and Deng Yi (2009) lists memory information as a unit between getting the message through listening and information expressing. *A Foundation Coursebook of Interpreting*, a textbook for master's degree in translation, edited by Zhong Weihe and Wang Binhua (2009), also tells the basic principles of memory in interpreting in Unit 6. Lei Tianfang and Chen Jing (2006) set up the units of "difficulties in memory" and "improving memory efficiency" in the first few lessons of *Challenging Interpreting: A Coursebook of Interpreting Skills*.

B. Main Papers

Deng Lin (2019) in *The Study of Memory Mechanism in Consecutive Interpretation*, summarizes the main factors that affect the memory effect of translators from the analysis of memory process and mode, and concludes that the interpreter should grasp the overall structure and meaning of the segment. Wu Cai (2017) in *On the Strategies to Improve Short-term Memory in Consecutive Interpretation*, proposes five strategies to improve short-term memory from

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its characteristics in the process of consecutive interpretation: extracting key information, memory chunks, image memory, taking notes and retelling.

C. Main Views

Short-term memory is the core in information processing and plays a leading role in memory in interpreting. It is compared to the "central processing unit" of a computer. Some people also call it a temporary "processing field" or "working space" for brain thinking activities. The information processing ability of short-term memory has been the focus of academic fields. In Miller's (1956) experiment, the subjects were asked to retell a random number table of 3 to 12 digits. It was found that after the information was presented at one time, the maximum number that the subjects could recall was generally 7 ± 2 digits. However, the information breadth of 7 ± 2 can be expanded. According to Miller's chunk principle, chunk can combine several small units into large units for information processing. "Chunking" actually refers to the method of information processing. Baddeley (2000) also found the phenomenon of "capacity expansion". He proposed the concept of episodic buffer, which means that information from different sources can be integrated together. The "integration" here is also a "chunk". Bao Xiaoying (2005) further believes that this expansion can be reflected in the expansion of memory units, because 7 ± 2 can be 7 ± 2 syllables, 7 ± 2 words, 7 ± 2 phrases, or 7 ± 2 short sentences.

In the neuropsychological process model of interpretation constructed by Liu Shaolong and Zhong Weihe (2008), long-term memory is characterized by multiple information network systems (including sensory network system, language network system, knowledge network system, etc.), which provides the necessary retrieval (or access) channels and information resources for speech information processing; Working memory (short-term memory) is the "processing field" of speech information in the "memory system", which undertakes the selection, processing and access of information. Li Fangqin (2004) proposed the outline memory strategy and reasoning memory strategy, which grasped the information level of the original text, combined with logical analysis and reasoning, and increased the capacity of short-term memory. Zhong Weihe (2003) classified the types of memory in interpretation as follows: a. speech coding memory, which is memorized by voice; b. visual coding memory stores information in the form of image rather than sound; c. semantic decoding memory is mainly applied to abstract information. Bao Gang (1998) pointed out that "In the practice of interpretation, the instantaneous memory is related to the listening and understanding of the source language. The long-term memory is related to the interpreter's preparation before interpretation, while the short-term memory is related to the interpreter's storage of information such as the content and key words of the source language".

D. Discourse Types in Interpretation

Jones (2000) divided discourse into the following types and gave suggestions to interpreters: a. Argumentation: pay special attention to the logic between the original views, and to the structure in understanding and interpreting output, so as to facilitate the audience's understanding; b. Narration: it is suggested that special attention should be paid to time, date and tense of verbs; c. Description: the interpreter is advised to concentrate on the most important information; d. Strongly debating type: not only guarantee faithfulness, but also convey the gist of original intention and the intensity of emotion; e. The type with more structure than content: it is more important to grasp the essence of the original than the details. Jones's classification is of great help to interpreters. His suggestions can take into account the "key points" understood by the interpreter and the "acceptability" of the interpreter's output from a practical point of view.

According to the previous studies on memory training in interpretation, it is not difficult to find that most of the researches on memory training in interpretation are theoretical, but there is no empirical research on interpretation training. In consecutive interpretation, the research on the construction of short-term memory training model based on the theory of discourse type in interpretation has certain theoretical innovation significance, reflects the advantages of multidisciplinary combination, helps to enhance the sustainability of interpretation research, enriches the theoretical support and method guidance in the whole process of interpretation teaching, and promotes the deepening of interpretation research and interpretation teaching. It forms a closed loop of interpretation theory, teaching and practice.

III. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF SELF-EVALUATION OF SHORT-TERM MEMORY LEARNING IN TRANSLATION MAJOR OF ZUNYI MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

Knowing the current situation of self-evaluation of short-term memory learning is conducive to the development of the experiment. For this reason, "Questionnaire on Memory in Interpretation" is designed for students majoring in translation in Zunyi Medical University in recent five years on Wenjuanxing Website (<https://www.wjx.cn>). 80 valid questionnaires were collected. Combined with the questionnaire survey, two prominent problems can be found, as shown in Table 1:

TABLE 1
QUESTIONNAIRE ON MEMORY IN INTERPRETATION (TWO PROMINENT PROBLEMS)

Questions	Choices	Percentage
What do you know about memory in interpretation?	Definition	37. %
	Status and role	31.25%
	Related works	11.25%
	Long term memory and short-term memory	86.25%
	Working memory	26.25%
According to your listening practice, which of the following situations do you prefer to memorize?	Memorize just a few words, but the relationship is messy and fuzzy, and the utilization rate is low	65%
	Memorize just a few words, but the relationship is clear and the utilization rate is high	17.5%
	Memorize a lot of words, but the relationship is messy and fuzzy, and the utilization rate is low	13.75%
	Memorize a lot of words, but the relationship is clear and the utilization rate is high	3.75%

As is shown in Table 1, in terms of the first question, most students only know about long-term memory and short-term memory (86.25%), but little know about working memory in interpretation (26.25%). Therefore, in the selection of teaching contents, introducing the background information of interpretation memory (definition, status, role, etc.) and the relevant theories of interpretation memory should be the first priority. As for the second question, in listening and memorizing information, 65% of the students can only record a few words, but the logic is messy, and the utilization rate is low. Therefore, interpreting discourse theory should be introduced into class. The combination of discourse theory in interpreting and memory model can help students classify the discourse and integrate the information they hear, and then memorize and output them according to appropriate memory methods.

IV. CONSTRUCTION OF SHORT-TERM MEMORY TRAINING MODEL FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DISCOURSE THEORY IN INTERPRETING

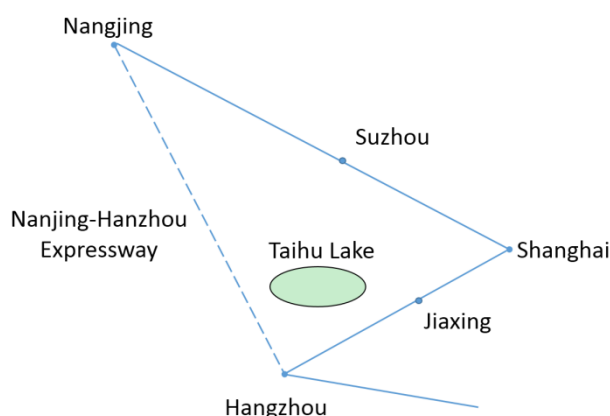
Based on the discourse theory in interpreting as well as the various discourse types, it's better to choose some specific materials for interpreting practice.

A. *The Practice of Image Memory in Narrative and Descriptive Discourse*

1. *Mind Drawing for Static Image or Information*

E.g.1 In the past, from Nanjing to Hangzhou, you should take the train to the East, bypass Suzhou and Shanghai, and then go south to Hangzhou via Jiaxing. In 2013, after the completion and opening of the Nanjing-Hangzhou Expressway, you do not have to take such a zigzag road to the East from Nanjing, but directly to the south, through Taihu Lake to Hangzhou, which is more than 200 kilometers shorter than before.

The most effective way to memorize this passage is to process the original text into a map and string the cities listed in the original text with railway lines. In this way, the locations of the cities can be clearly seen at a glance, and the efficiency of memory will be greatly improved. The graphic example is as follows:



2. *Film Projection for Dynamic Image or Information*

E.g.2 Water breathing exercise: stand in the water, hands forward, palm down, head and upper body with movement of up and down. Exhale in the water, and inhale out of the water. Practice over and over again; then breathe with the stroke of hands. When the hands are floating on the water, the head will enter the water and exhale. When the hands are pulling down 45 degrees, the head will naturally come out of the water and inhale.

When memorizing the above information, you may imagine yourself breathing in the water, and follow the steps of

the original text step by step, just like the pictures in a movie.

3. *Mind Drawing Plus Fingers Counting for Exposition with Procedures*

E.g.3 Kung Pao Chicken: remove the bone from the washed chicken drumsticks, cut into diced meat, add egg whites, cooking wine, salt, sugar, starch and oil into the diced chicken, mix well, and let stand for 15 to 20 minutes to marinate the diced chicken; Pour the soup, cooking wine, soy sauce and sugar into the bowl, stir evenly to make the sauce and set aside, stir fry the diced chicken and set aside; Pour the oil into the hot pan, add the dried pepper and scallion, stir fry until fragrant, add the bean paste and mashed garlic, stir fry until fragrant, and then pour the sauce in, add water and starch; Then pour in the diced chicken and stir fry until the sauce completely covers the diced chicken; Add vinegar, peanuts and sesame oil and stir fry evenly. Then remove from the pan.

Students can remember what they need to do and the food materials involved in each step with the method of image memory, and record how many steps are needed to make Kung Pao Chicken with the method of finger breaking.

B. *The Practice of Logical Memory in Argumentative Discourse*

1. *Gist Extracting and Summarizing*

E.g. 4 In the United States, the last Thursday in April of each year is called "Take Your Children to Work Day". On this day, parents can take their children to the work place and let them learn about their work. The attraction of this kind of activity is that "Take Your Children to Work Day" belongs to the public welfare activities, and the company can get the government's tax preference at the end of the year, so the company's cost is low. More importantly, this kind of activity not only promotes the communication between children and their parents, provides reference for young people to choose their future career, but also helps the company's departments and employees at all levels to understand each other, so as to enhance the cohesion of the enterprise.

When students practice the logical memory of this passage, they can extract the gist according to the logical relationship of "event-what-why", that is, first memorize the event "Take Your Children to Work Day", then what is "Take Your Children to Work Day", and finally memorize why to implement "Take Your Children to Work Day".

2. *Information Layered*

E.g. 5 Doctors also warned that people should pay attention to correct the wrong habits of drinking tea and walking after meals. If you drink tea immediately after meals, tea will dilute gastric juice, affect the normal digestion of food in the stomach. Tannic acid contained in tea can also promote the coagulation of substances in the stomach and affect the absorption of protein, thus increasing the burden on the stomach. In this regard, the doctor suggested that people should not drink tea within one hour after a meal, and should drink tea when the food in the stomach is almost digested after a meal, which will not have a great impact on the digestive function and material coagulation. In addition, it's also unscientific to say, "If you walk a hundred steps after a meal, you will live to ninety-nine." People's stomach is in a state of filling after meals, even very slight movement will make the stomach vibrate, thus increasing the gastrointestinal burden and affecting the digestive function. In this regard, the doctor suggested that it is more appropriate to take a 30-minute rest after meals and wait for the food in the stomach to be properly digested before moving again, so as not to have too much impact on the digestive system. "

This passage introduces two kinds of wrong habits after meals. When students memorize them, they can divide the information into two levels "bad habit1 - what (tea after meals) - why (reasons) - how to correct" and "bad habit 2 - walking after meals - why (reasons) – how to correct".

3. *Details Repetition*

The teaching procedures: play the recording first and then ask questions. On the basis of students' mastering the main idea, the important details of the original text are asked, so that students can have a certain grasp of the text from the whole and part.

C. *Proper Nouns and Numbers*

For proper nouns and numbers, intensive training in this area is adopted, which are shadow reading, first two numbers and unit memory, slide presentation method.

V. EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

A. *Research Subjects*

The subjects of this study are students of Translation Class 2018 (control group) and students of Translation Class 2019 (experimental group) in School of Foreign Languages of Zunyi Medical University. The students of these two grades are trained in interpreting for the first time, that is, with no basis.

B. *Principles*

In consecutive interpretation, the construction of short-term memory training model must be carried out within the objectives of interpreting teaching (that is, skills-teaching centered), and the corresponding methods and principles

should be formulated under this goal.

C. Research Tools

Spss software was used to analyze the data of students' retelling task.

D. Experiment Implementation

1. Task Design

In the experimental class (Translation Class 2019), the task-based teaching method of Willis (1996) was used to complete three tasks of memory in interpretation.

1) Pre-task: the teacher introduces the background materials related to the memory task by asking questions to warm up the students;

2) Task cycle: a. Task. Teacher plays a recording of a memory task or presents a memory task material in the class; b. Planning. Students concentrate on listening to the recording or oral presentation, and actively memorize information with their brain; c. Report. Students report the information that they memorize with their brain to the whole class in the form of source language or target language retelling;

3) Post-task: a. Analysis. Some students make self-analysis of difficulties in the process of memorizing, and other students comment on the completion of students' memory tasks, and then teacher comments on the completion of students' memory tasks, so as to emphasize the methods and key points of memory in interpretation; b. Practice. Teacher can provide more practice materials for the objectives of memory training of this course, so as to make the students fully understand the method.

4) Follow-up activities (network teaching auxiliary platform): a. Some students are required to find the similar short-term memory training materials used by teachers in class, search and organize a section of memory materials, and upload them to the network platform; b. Other students use the memory training resource database on the network platform to form a learning group of two. They take turns to play the roles of discourse publisher and memory trainee to carry out autonomous training.

2. Teaching Arrangement

The experiment lasts for 6 weeks, two periods a week. See the table below for details.

TABLE 2
TEACHING PLAN

Teaching Week	Teaching Content	Teaching Objectives	Teaching Materials
1	Theory of memory in interpretation and the theory of discourse type in interpretation	Master the two theories	Theory of memory in interpretation (textbook and supplementary materials) and discourse type in interpretation (theory and several examples)
2-3	Mind drawing Film projection Mind drawing plus hand index	Master the method of image memory in narrative and descriptive discourse	<i>Challenging Interpreting: A Coursebook of Interpreting Skills</i> , Yang Liuyan; <i>Basics of Interpreting Skills</i> , Deng Yi; online resources
4-5	Gist extracting and summarizing Information layered Details repetition	Master the method of logical memory in argumentative discourse	<i>Challenging Interpreting: A Coursebook of Interpreting Skills</i> , Yang Liuyan; <i>Basics of Interpreting Skills</i> , Deng Yi; online resources
6	Proper nouns and numbers	Master the methods of phonetic memory and picture memory	Discourse with more proper nouns and numbers

3. Testing

The retelling parts in the oral test of the 2010 (pre-test) and 2013 (post-test) TEM-4 (Test for English Majors-4) were selected in the experiment. Due to the consistency in difficulty of the oral part in the national standardized test, it won't cause obstacles to students' basic listening comprehension, so as to eliminate the early interference factor. In the test, students were asked to listen to the original text twice and then retell it. We used the recording function of the simultaneous interpretation room to record the whole process of the corpus. 9 students in the experimental group participated in the test. Due to the equipment problems, the effective recording collection rate was 88.9%; 9 students in the control group participated in the test, and the effective recording rate was 88.9%.

After collecting the audio materials, we adopted the scoring standard of the retelling part in the TEM-4 oral test to score the completeness of students' retelling. After that, all the scores were input into SPSS for analysis. The statistical methods involved were single sample t-test and paired sample t-test.

4. Questionnaire Survey

After the end of the test, we immediately conducted a questionnaire survey on the 9 students in the experimental group, distributing 9 questionnaires, and collecting 9, with an effective collecting rate of 100%. The questionnaire is

divided into two parts: the first part is the basic information of the respondents; the second part is the main part, with 18 problems divided into three categories. The first is to ask the difficulty of the test, a total of 13 questions, for yes or no multiple-choice questions: the purpose of setting this kind of questions is to investigate whether the respondents have problems in understanding the test materials, and whether it affects the memory of the test materials. The second is about the effect of memory learning in interpretation. There are two single choice questions, each with the same four options, asking the respondents about the amount of recalling information before and after learning: this group of questions is set up to investigate the learning effect and assist the score data of the experimental group before and after the test. The third is about the effectiveness of training elements (including teachers, methods and materials), with a total of 6 questions.

E. Experimental Results

1. Test Results

According to the comprehensive research methods of the control group and the experimental group, such as pre-test and post test results (effective recording data), questionnaire survey and so on, the experimental results are as follows:

TABLE 3
COMPARISON OF PRE-TEST RESULTS BETWEEN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND CONTROL GROUP (SINGLE SAMPLE T-TEST)

Experimental group				Control group				T value	P value
Maxim um	minim um	average	standard deviation	Maxim um	minim um	average	standard deviation		
79	73	76.25	2.121	78	72	74.5	2.33	1.172	0.128

According to the results before the teaching reform (Table 3), the average score of the experimental group was slightly higher than that of the control group, but in view of $T = 1.172$, $P = 0.128$ ($P > 0.05$), there was no significant difference between the two groups.

After six weeks of memory training, the average score of the experimental group was 7.25 points, higher than that of the control group, showing a significant level of 0.01: $T = 4.408$, $P = 0.003$ ($P < 0.05$) (Table 4), that is, there was a significant difference in the retelling ability between the experimental group and the control group after the teaching reform, and the retelling ability of the experimental group was significantly improved.

TABLE 4
COMPARISON OF POST-TEST RESULTS BETWEEN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND CONTROL GROUP (SINGLE SAMPLE T-TEST)

Experimental group				Control group				T value	P value
Maxim um	minim um	average	standard deviation	Maxim um	minim um	average	standard deviation		
90	78	83	3.742	80	72	75.75	2.712	4.408	0.003

TABLE 5
COMPARISON OF PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST RESULTS OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST)

Pre-test				Post-test				T value	P value
Maxim um	minim um	average	standard deviation	Maxim um	minim um	average	standard deviation		
79	73	76.25	2.121	90	78	83	3.742	-5.974	0.001

Compared with the results of pre-test and post-test in the experimental group (Table 5), there is a significant difference in the data: $T = -5.974$, $P = 0.001$ ($P < 0.05$), and the average score of post-test is 6.75 higher than that of pre-test, which shows that the short-term memory training carried out in the experimental group is effective.

2. Questionnaire Results

The effect of short-term memory training is also verified in the questionnaire survey results. The questionnaire investigates the changes of information that students can recall when they only listen to the original text twice without taking notes. The statistical results are shown in Table 6. It can be seen from table 6 that the information recall of the experimental group is more complete and has been greatly improved. Before the experiment, no students could remember it all at once without taking notes

Most of the students (44.44%) could only remember one clause / phrase. After the experiment, 55.56% of the students can remember 2-3 sentences at a time without notes, and 22.22% of the students can remember a small paragraph (5-7 sentences), so it is greatly improved than it was before the experiment.

TABLE 6
COMPARISON OF INFORMATION RECALL BEFORE AND AFTER THE EXPERIMENT IN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Information recall	Before the experiment	After the experiment
A clause / phrase	44.44%	11.11%
in a word	22.22%	11.11%
2-3Sentence	33.33%	55.56%
A paragraph (5-7 sentences)	0	22.22%

In addition, the role of teacher, short-term memory training methods and the effectiveness of training materials were also investigated in the questionnaire.

TABLE 7
EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER'S ROLE

The role of teachers	Recognition
Short term memory training theory	88.89%
Training methods of short-term memory	100%
The selection of targeted exercise materials	88.89%
Regularly evaluate short term memory practice (including homework review)	88.89%

According to the survey results in Table 7, students agree with the teacher's role in teaching method, material selection and student evaluation. In particular, it is worth noting that the students' recognition of the effectiveness of the teacher's memory training method reached 100% (Table 7). The survey also showed that the students' recognition of the effectiveness of memory training materials was 88.89%. Students also need teachers to constantly supervise and evaluate in the learning process (88.89%). The class hours of interpretation are very limited, so the teacher must make use of the students' after-class time in the form of homework and spot check in class. In the experimental stage, we made full use of the network platform of the course (Chaoxing Platform), assign homework to students every week, and ask them to upload it within the given time and the teacher checked it in the next class. In class, even if only a small number of students' homework is checked, it can also play a role of comprehensive supervision.

TABLE 8
EFFECTIVENESS OF SHORT-TERM MEMORY TRAINING METHODS

Training methods	Recognition
Summarize the main idea of the original text	88.89%
Analyze of the original text layer	66.67%
Answer the important details of the original text	66.67%
Retell the original text	88.89%

In terms of the memory training methods, 88.89% of the students think that "summarizing the main idea of the original text" is effective, and 66.67% of the students think that "analyzing the level of the original text" is effective (Table 8). To complete the analysis of the original text layer, students need to pay more cognitive efforts. They must grasp the logic of the original text, not just by understanding the main idea. Generally speaking, students have to go from "what to say" to "how to say" to complete the layers division, which is like drawing a mind map in their mind. 66.67% of the students thought that "answering the important details of the original text" is effective. It is true that memorizing information does not only refer to grasp some details, but also connect it to form a completed meaning. If students can only grasp individual details and can't use logic to connect them, they will eventually be overwhelmed. In addition, 88.89% of the students think that "retelling the original text" is effective, which indicates that the students recognize the "retelling exercise".

TABLE 9
EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING MATERIALS

Training materials	Recognition
Choose image memory and narrative discourse memory	66.67%
Choose the texts with a variety of logical relations (cause and effect, comparison, examples, etc.) to illustrate and discuss discourse memory	88.89%
Choose materials containing numbers and proper nouns to enhance the memory of important details	66.67%
Choose materials with no obvious structure to deepen logical memory	66.67%

With regard to training materials, the students fully affirm "Choose a variety of logical relations (cause and effect, comparison, examples, etc.) to illustrate and discuss discourse memory", and 88.89% of the students think it is effective (Table 9). The other three items are 66.67%. The reason why we choose materials with less obvious logical structure is that the real interpretation text often has no clear logical relationship, or even logical confusion. This requires interpreters to use logical thinking to "edit and memorize" the source language in order to produce a clear interpretation. However, the students' low recognition of the effectiveness of these materials may be related to their interpretation level: the students we investigated are still in the primary stage of interpretation learning, and they may not have enough ability to accept the challenge of more difficult materials. In the experiment, students are sometimes asked to speak freely, and then other students are asked to memorize or interpret. When the speech is clear, the students can better complete the task of memory and interpretation. However, when the logic of the speech is confused, the students' performance of the task is poor. This shows that in the primary stage of interpreting learning, students' logical memory ability and information processing ability are still limited.

VI. RESULTS ANALYSIS

Through the analysis of the experimental results, we can find that: 1) the post-test scores of the experimental group

are significantly higher than the pre-test scores; 2) The amount of information of the experimental group was dramatically improved in the experiment. This shows that the experiment of the short-term memory training is effective. The questionnaire survey on the effectiveness of training elements shows that: 1) Students agree with the teacher's role in teaching methods, material selection and student evaluation; 2) In terms of training methods, students think that the most effective methods are "summarizing the main idea of the original text" and "retelling the original text"; 3) As for training materials, the material with the highest degree of students' recognition is the "texts with a variety of logical relations", which shows that the experiment of constructing short-term memory training based on the theory of discourse type in interpretation is effective.

VII. SUMMARY

Although the test scores of the experimental group is the most improved, which indicates that the experiment is effective, the questionnaire survey shows that different methods have great differences in effectiveness. Specifically, we should design exercises that can help students carry out high-level information processing and gist extraction activities, improve the understanding of discourse information, and then strengthen the efficiency of information storage and recall. Firstly, the target of interpretation is "meaning" rather than "language". In the experiment, the method of "answering important details" failed to make the students break away from the language form, and did not achieve ideal experimental results. Secondly, Jones (2000) reminds the interpreter not to pay attention to individual words, but to analyze the whole meaning of the text, which requires to identify the definition of the words and the establishment of the meaning connection between the concepts. It can be seen that the logical exercises such as "summarizing the main idea of the original text" and "retelling the original text" exercise the students' ability to grasp the macro meaning of the text and the logical relationship within the text, and achieve good experimental results. Therefore, in the primary stage, we should reduce the difficulty of listening, choose the appropriate discourse type, allocate more energy to memory, and try to have a definite aim in the process of practice, so as to improve students' abilities in this area.

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Classroom Discourse and Teachers' Experience: A Cognitive View

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Abstract—In this article, we intend to investigate the role of experience in EFL teachers' discourse using a cognitive taxonomy. In this line, we are going to examine whether there any significant differences between novice and inexperienced groups of teacher in their discourse with regard to a cognitive taxonomy. The selected sample comprises twenty-seven English teachers engaged in EFL classes. Totally, six categories of cognitive processes were introduced. The categories are from the most concrete to the most abstract: (1) knowledge; (2) comprehension; (3) application; (4) analysis; (5) synthesis; and (6) evaluation. According to the results, it was revealed that experienced teachers used more action verbs in all the categories of this taxonomy (428 action verbs out of 805), whereas novice teachers (teachers which has less than 4 years of experience) used 377 action verbs. It can be concluded that experienced teachers teach in more fruitful and meaningful way. Novice teachers can learn and construct meaning from their experiences when they are actively engaged in authentic activity that will help them to learn to think and act in a community of practice.

Index Terms—cognitive taxonomy, cognition, discourse analysis, EFL, teachers' talk

I. INTRODUCTION

Discourse has been generally described as the utilization of language within social environment (Zarei & Afshari, 2012). Discourse is more than classroom talk; it is a complicated communication between teacher, students, and these students' unique aspects revealed in verbal interactions (Smart & Marshal, 2012). The study of teacher discourse is a flourishing and blooming field of inquiry in second language acquisition. The influence of teacher discourse is known to researchers and EFL teachers since it has an important effect on learners' success or failure. Millrood (2004), has investigated the effect of NLP strategies in teachers' discourse on focusing learners toward better understanding and interpreting of the language. He said that it is possible to improve teacher-learner relationship through a suitable verbal interaction with the EFL learners. In the recent decades creating a suitable condition for a productive classroom interaction was the main goal of many teaching researches. Researchers are studying ways of changing teacher discourse from traditional recitation patterns in which the teacher dominates classroom exchanges to more balanced and student-centered communication in which students take a more active role in classroom discourse (Webb et al., 2004).

In the space of educator talk, Cots (1995) accepts that Bringing talk investigation into the language study hall can't be diminished solely to the selection of a progression of new classes and scientific strategies. It requires the educator, in any case, and the understudies, consequently, to take a gander at their instructing and learning task in an altogether different manner: the principle focal point of study isn't language however correspondence (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Albeit this may seem like an exceptionally clear comment after such countless long periods of having invited to the homerooms the open and notional-utilitarian methodologies, he assumed there still has not been a genuine difference in way to deal with language instructing and learning. The justification this is that, for certain special cases, the etymological instruction of the vast majority of the current language instructors is still particularly impacted by a primary methodology, which focuses on the investigation of language as a self-governing arrangement of rules as opposed to as a method for correspondence. It might in any case require a few years before we begin to see the impacts in the study hall of this new alter of viewpoint which is logically occurring in the phonetic sciences. This change is now reflected in the consolidation of experts in talk investigation and pragmatics in philology divisions and the incorporation of college courses under these titles in the educational programs of future language educators (Cots, 1995). Hymes (as referred to in Cots, 1995), expressed that the main reason includes the acknowledgment that a student's ability to convey in an unknown dialect includes knowing not just (i) regardless of whether and how much a design is officially conceivable (i.e., linguistic), yet in addition whether and how much it is (ii) mentally achievable (i.e., that can be prepared without an incredible exertion), (iii) proper and (iv) really said.

Teachers usually use different discourse strategies to shape the class in the order which they need based on the objectives of the class and the curriculum. When teachers facilitate effective discourse during instruction, they support the development of student understanding and provide a forum for the development of conceptual understanding of scientific constructs (Chin, 2006; Chin, 2007; Mortimer & Scott, 2003). Teachers can pose questions, engage, and challenge each student's thinking; listening carefully to students' ideas; asking students to clarify and justify their ideas orally and in writing; and monitoring students' participation in discussions and deciding when and how to encourage each student to participate (Webb, Nemer, Kersting, Ing, 2004).

A. *Statement of the Problem*

Teachers' discourse is the most important input in every classroom situation (Ince ay, 2010; Kumaravadivelu, 1999). The view that learning is as the "collection of a series of facts which can be elicited" is much criticized for a long time. Teachers just try to ask some concrete questions and the given response is short and brief, and these questions just show the memorization ability of students. Hattie (2003) claimed a previous pattern of discourse which used by at least some teachers. Initiation, Response, and Evaluation (IRE) have been the "default pattern" or the "unmarked" one which seems to be natural at least to some teachers. In these questions teachers are waiting for a word or a small phrase which can be the correct response. These questions may hinder interaction between teacher and students and also it can have negative effect on students' meaningful learning and prevent growth of critical learners. The fact is that this kind of IRE discourse is suitable just for students with beginning levels of proficiency. Traditional teaching methods are usually characterized by lots of closed questions asked by teachers and little or no interaction between students and teachers. Teachers were asked some questions and evaluate students' knowledge and memorizations skills. In the study by Tsui (1985) she concluded that teacher questions in English classes were predominantly a teacher-centered interaction, or the IRE pattern. The pattern suggested by Van den Oord and Rossem (2002), and during these phases student knowledge was displayed and evaluated.

Up to now, little has been done to scientifically investigate teachers' talk via a cognitive point of view. There were different researches which relied on student proficiency level (Bibi Khan, Inamullah, 2011; Wang & Farmer, 2008), and also the discourse teachers use in different skills, but I try to add the variable of teacher experience and analyze the discourse teachers in different proficiency levels of classes. Using Bloom's taxonomy this can be one of the first researches which take into account teacher experience variable and how experienced teachers and novice teachers may be different in discourse they use in the class.

B. *Significance of the Study*

Meaningful teaching and learning have been long under the attention of scholars and philosophers. Socrates believed that knowledge and awareness were an intrinsic part of each learner. This quote shows that during the teaching history it is of much prominence to help learners to grow mentally and reach into the hidden levels of knowing and awareness. After 1950th and after the development of Bloom's taxonomy, Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues believed that the natural thinking process begins with the lower levels of the Taxonomy, and proceeds to the higher levels. As a matter of fact the only solution for helping learners to learn meaningfully and rationally is stimulating students' abilities of judgment and evaluative capability by employing useful vocabulary for discussing their learning. During the class-time teachers are able to use action verbs which belong to higher-level categories of Bloom's taxonomy and must ensure that students are able to function at higher cognitive levels. The subsequent researches revealed that the discourse of teachers are mostly relied on the lower-level categories (Bibi Khan, Inamullah, 2011; Horner, Zavodskaya, and Rushing, 2005), and sometimes they believe up to 90 percent of teaching occurs at the knowledge category which is the lowest of Bloom's six levels (Renaud & Murray, 2007).

The selection of action verbs by teachers is a vital step in the preparation of a useful set of objectives. This study tries to investigate the way teachers try to represent problem-solving abilities as well as higher order processes in the class. Teachers also can design learning activities for use in the classroom and outside of class. In relation to material developers they can consider both higher-level and lower-level processes in their materials and objectives. Finally, the researchers also can use the results of this study for investigating teachers' interaction based on cognitive views.

C. *Research Question*

- Are there any significant differences between novice and inexperienced groups of teacher in their discourse with regard to Bloom's taxonomy?

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A. *Cognitive Psychology and Bloom's Taxonomy*

The first who classified different levels of understanding was Benjamin Bloom (1913-1999); discussions during the 1948 Convention of the American Psychological Association led Bloom to spearhead a group of educators who eventually undertook the ambitious task of classifying educational goals and objectives. Their aim was to develop a method of classification for thinking behaviors that were believed to be important in the processes of learning. Eventually, this framework became taxonomy of three domains:

- The cognitive - knowledge based domain, consisting of six levels
- The affective - attitudinal based domain, consisting of five levels, and
- The psychomotor - skills based domain, consisting of six levels.

In 1956, eight years after the group first began, work on the cognitive domain was completed and a handbook commonly referred to as "Bloom's Taxonomy" was published (Dunegan, n.d.). This study focuses its attention on the cognitive domain. The cognitive domain of Bloom's original taxonomy has six levels organized in a hierarchy. The base of the pyramid is the foundation of all cognition, knowledge. Each ascending level of the pyramid depends on the one below it. Knowledge and comprehension are often referred to as lower-order thinking skills. The skills above them

are termed higher-order or critical thinking skills. One of the benefits of Bloom's Taxonomy is that it helps teachers identify where they are and where they expect students to be on the pyramid for a particular class or subject. Once a teacher knows this, he can develop learning strategies that are most appropriate, effective, and efficient for the class.

Knowledge level is the lowest-level category which is at the bottom of the hierarchy. Knowledge defines as remembering or retrieving previously learned material. Learning objectives at this level often include defining some key terms, or repeating something heard or seen and as recall of previously learned material. Comprehension symbolizes the largest category of cognitive skills and abilities. The key skill at this level is processing new information. At the application level, a learner is needed to be able to solve a new problem by applying information without having to be prompted. Questions and subjects at this level might require learners to interpret information, demonstrate mastery of a concept, or apply a skill learned. In the Analysis levels students may be asked to distinguish relationships among parts and show decomposition of learned material into its component parts so that its structure may be better understood. Objectives at this level of the hierarchy often include verbs such as differentiate, compare and contrast, criticize, or experiment. At Synthesis level which is the second top highest level teachers ask learners putting parts together, in alternative manners, to form a new whole and produce newly constructed and exceptional products. At this level, objectives might have learners create a table, plan an idea or design a table. The highest level in this pyramid is Evaluation. Evaluation means judging the value of material for a given purpose. Learning objectives and teachers discourse at this level require learners to measure, value, estimate, choose, criticize, justify or revise something, perhaps information, a product—or solve a problem.

Bloom was one of the pioneers of supporting critical thinking. This taxonomy has significance because it was designed for the purpose of designing, assessing, and evaluating student learning. The taxonomy is useful in another way: It allows the teacher to gauge the level of questions asked on the exams. For example, if a question on the test asks students to identify a structure defined in a sentence or shown on a graphic, the teacher knows the query fits in level one, *Knowledge*. If, on the other hand, students are asked to interpret a graph or predict what would happen if a certain event was to continue, the instructor would realize the question would require more thinking of students and reside in level two, *Comprehension*. Similarly, a question requiring students to clarify or illustrate a statement would be even more difficult to answer and push the level of difficulty to level three, *Application*. Questions in the three highest levels are the most difficult to answer. Level four, *Analysis*, urges students to break down what is asked and examine the meaning of the various sections, while *Syntheses* (level five) encourages students to combine question elements to solidify understanding. *Evaluation*, the sixth and most difficult level, requires that students assess the understandings and make recommendations for its utilization (Lord & Baviskar, 2007; Mortiboys, 2005).

Bloom's Taxonomy has had a profound effect on education and educators, as it provides a mental model for thinking about the relative difficulty of different objectives that students are expected to master and provides guidance for how teachers should approach and assess various objectives. Generally speaking, Bloom's Taxonomy gives teachers a useful vocabulary for discussing their learning objectives.

B. Bloom's Taxonomy and Teachers Discourse

Questions and use of verbs by teachers are essential components of effective teaching. One of the main purposes of Benjamin Bloom when he started his work was developing a framework for teachers to know how to use the higher order skills. Bloom estimated that the percentage of lower-order assessment questions had been reduced to about 70 percent. By correlating assessment questions to Bloom's cognitive levels, he believed that test developers can ensure that their questions promote both retention of knowledge and critical thinking. One of the basic functions of academics is to use questions to stimulate thinking and reasoning in students and the ability to judge and evaluate the matter (Riding & Rayner, 1998), while as we can see the teachers in the elementary levels cover the class using action verbs belonging to lower-level processes in Bloom's Taxonomy which mostly assess the retention and memorization abilities of students. The supposition exists that questions identifying with three higher levels of taxonomy should begin to rule the higher scholarly levels in schooling, with a comparing decrease in questions requiring maintenance abilities. It implies that initially levels educators would do well to utilization of action words for evaluating the maintenance and reviewing data. In any case, in the event that we dismiss the higher level cycles it is difficult to make understudies as a basic student and they can't reason viably and to tackle issues inventively. As per Bloom et al. (1956), as educators we will in general pose inquiries in the "information" classification 80% to 90% of the time. While these inquiries are not terrible in themselves, utilizing them all the time isn't acceptable practice. These lower-request questions don't consider the conversation of critical thinking methodologies and mental exercises important to react to more unpredictable inquiries. It is desirable over attempt to use higher request level of inquiries. Utilizing these inquiries assist understudies with having the chance to clarify, legitimize, and excuse inside the social setting of the study hall (Chin, 2007). These inquiries require considerably more "intellectual competence" and more broad and elaborate answers.

Wang and Farmer (2008) were anxious to track down the grown-up showing techniques in China, and they attempted to dissect instructors' showing strategies utilizing a creator planned review instrument called Lower-Order Thinking Skills and Higher-Order Thinking Skills (LOTSHOTS). It is utilized to decide if information, appreciation and application drove grown-up showing strategies or examination, blend and assessment drove grown-up showing techniques in China. They based Bloom's taxonomy of instructive destinations and requested that 359 instructors complete the poll. The discoveries showed that Chinese instructors of grown-ups were not acclimated with showing

higher request thinking abilities related with the three higher levels of Bloom's unique taxonomy as portrayed by investigation, blend and assessment. Specialists presumed that Chinese instructors of grown-ups collectively showed lower request thinking abilities. Chinese educators of grown-ups were accustomed to showing lower thinking abilities related with the initial three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, specifically, information, appreciation and application. The investigation proposes some potential reasons and ramifications of such practices, and recommends that showing higher request figuring abilities to Chinese grown-up understudies may broaden their frame of reference in connecting all the more transparently in learning.

In a connected report Horner, Zavodska, and Rushing (2005) did an investigation on the consistency of learning destinations with the course level in way of thinking classes. Utilizing Blooms Taxonomy as the standards, learning goals were exposed to content examination. The outcomes showed that lower-level intellectual ability, was the most underscored of the psychological abilities and higher-level cycles which have the most extreme significance in way of thinking was least underlined. Because of the investigation, the school led staff instructional meetings accentuating the significance of creating higher level psychological abilities in understudies by offering suitable intellectual difficulties in the learning targets and in the course content and appraisal related with those goals.

Bibi Khan et al. (2011) did an examination dependent on examination of nature of inquiries in auxiliary level dependent on Bloom's taxonomy. Twenty instructors of various subjects educating at optional level were haphazardly chosen as test of the examination. Instructors were noticed utilizing an observational aide and sound account were directed. The result of the examination showed that the greater part of the inquiries were low-level intellectual inquiries. Among 267 questions 67 percent were information based, 23% were perception based, 7% were application based, 2% were investigation based and 1 percent was union based. Anyway the proportion of assessment based inquiries was zero. Albeit this was a useful examination it didn't investigate instructors' sexual orientation, and furthermore the level of students' capability and simply consider middle of the road level.

Another investigation utilizing Bloom's taxonomy is by Webb et al. (2004). They respected the examination of perusing expertise during homeroom time. Taking a few ideas in regards to Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) which has its premise on growing a worry for the adequacy of correspondence and the irrefutable impact that people can practice on one another through verbal collaboration and finding powerful highlights of language utilized between conversationalists their examination was essentially directed to dissect the nature of talk between two people. They examine instructor talk as indicated by Bloom's psychological model, particularly the activity action words, while showing perusing in EFL setting. The specialists examined the records of sound recorded perceptions to find the nature of instructor talk while introducing understanding exercises and its connection to students' different levels of capability. The outcomes in this investigation uncovered that instructors, particularly in halfway and upper-middle levels, use activity action words that are generally identified with information and perception. At cutting edge level, while showing perusing, instructors have set up a harmony between utilizing information action words and all the more significant level reasoning cycles like assessment. In the end specialists accept educators ought to be worried to build students' knowledge. At the point when students simply get information, they go to buyers; notwithstanding, when their understanding expands, they become makers of information and from this knowledge they would have the option to tackle their own just as the others' issues. This investigation has a few deficiencies, for example, it didn't show a reasonable differentiation between various levels of understudies, it additionally didn't show the distinction between instructors' sexes and how it very well may be diverse in these two.

III. METHOD

A. Participants

1. Sampling

Based on Moon (2008), a sample is a group of subjects, or a single subject, from which data are obtained; it is the grouping of subjects chosen from a larger group or population to which the findings are assumed to apply. The process of sampling is very important, and if it is done correctly it can help the researcher to have more valid and relevant information for doing the study.

The sample size depends on the amount of heterogeneity of the population being studied that: the greater the heterogeneity of the population being studied, the larger the sample needed; the more homogeneous the population being studied, the smaller the sample needed. However they do not commit themselves to specific numbers. Since we gathered the data from EFL teachers of Persian, the population of this study is homogeneous.

In this study the aim was based on selecting different teachers with different years of experience and in different proficiency levels. Stratified random sampling used for selecting the teachers. That is, teachers from different strata are selected, which are experienced and novice teachers. There should be equal amount of experienced and novice teachers in the participants. Also, learners' proficiency level was also another criterion for selecting the teachers.

2. Description of the Sample

The selected sample comprises twenty-seven English teachers engaged in EFL classes. These classes were classified to nine elementary, nine intermediate and nine advanced classes based on learners' proficiency level. The other

classification of these teachers is related to teachers' years of experience. These teachers were grouped as thirteen experienced and thirteen novice teachers (one of the teachers was omitted to make the two groups similar in size). Therefore teachers were divided according the years of experience and learners' proficiency level. The criterion for dividing teachers to novice and experienced ones was based on Gatbonton (1999). That is to say that teachers who had taught less than 4 years, are placed in novice category and those who had more than four years of teaching were categorized in experienced group. Teachers were all teaching in three main private institutes in Mashhad-Iran. Teachers were aged from 22-48

B. Materials

1. Coding System

Totally, six categories of cognitive processes were introduced by Bloom et al. (1956). The categories are from the most concrete to the most abstract: (1) knowledge; (2) comprehension; (3) application; (4) analysis; (5) synthesis; and (6) evaluation. Table 1 shows Bloom's taxonomy with the definition of each level, the roles students should perform and examples for action verbs. Table 1 is used as the coding system for the data.

TABLE 1
BLOOM'S COGNITIVE TAXONOMY OF THINKING PROCESSES

Level of Taxonomy	Definition	Action Verbs examples
Knowledge , (The most concrete)	Recall of specific information	Tell, Define, name, list, describe
Comprehension	Understanding of communicated information	Change, Describe, explain, rewrite, translate
Application	Use of rules and theories in new situations	Apply, Demonstrate, respond, employ, practice
Analysis	Breaking down information into parts	Investigate, Categorize, distinguish, select
Synthesis	Putting together of ideas into a new plan	Create, Invent, combine, arrange, reorganize
Evaluation (The most abstract)	Judging the value of materials or ideas	Decide, Assess, judge, evaluate, summary

This category is a model for analyzing teachers' discourse. That is, every teacher's action verb in different classes were identified and then placed in each specific level of taxonomy. The action verbs which are used by the teachers are from the action verbs which are mentioned in Table 1. For example, one teacher may use the sentence 'compare these two pictures'. The action verb of this sentence is to *compare*. Therefore, in teachers' discourse there are a variety of action verbs and it is possible to find out and analyze these action verbs.

2. Transcriptions of the Data

Teachers' discourse was observed and audio-recorded by the researcher as an observer of the classes. McMillan and Schumacher (1993, p. 256) stated that as a participant observer the researcher should first make judgment before entering the observation field (that is, high inference observation, and then, in the field: record the specific behaviors and context that led to the inference implied in judgment). The verbatim transcript of the recorded lesson of these audio-recorded sentences was the main material of this study. The transcriptions allowed us to identify the action verbs teachers used in the course of teaching. The total number of action verbs was 824. As it is related to experienced teachers, 428 action verbs were identified and 377 verbs were related to novice teachers. Table 2 summarizes the variables and the amount of action verbs related to each.

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF ACTION VERBS BASED ON LEARNERS' PROFICIENCY LEVEL, AND TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE

Learners' Proficiency Level	Teachers' Classification based on the Frequency of Action Verbs		
	Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced
	244	273	307
Teachers' Experience	Novice		Experienced
	428		377

C. Design of the Study

This study will be embedded in both qualitative and quantitative approach. The qualitative part is related to collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data by observing what people do and say. The coding of the data is related to qualitative part of this study. The data gathering tool was observation of the classes. Based on Peregroy and Boyle, (2005), the advantage of this method over other methods is that the researcher does not have to rely on the willingness and ability of the participants to report information accurately but on human behavior always bound to the context in which it occurs and that social reality cannot be reduced to variables as quantitative researchers would have it. The quantitative section of the study is related to analyzing the significance of the categories in different variables by Chi-square.

There are several methods in hand for researcher to collect empirical materials, ranging from interview to direct observation, to the analysis of artifacts, documents, and cultural records, to the use of visual materials or personal experience. Faced with large amounts of qualitative materials, the investigator seeks ways of managing and interpreting these documents, and here data management methods and computer-assisted models of analysis may be of use (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 14).

D. Procedure

This research was aimed at investigating teachers' discourse based on Bloom's taxonomy. This study was conducted during summer 2013 and took almost three months. Observation of the classes by the researcher as a participant-observer and audio-recording teachers' voice were the main ways to gather data. Observation of the phenomenon under investigation has little restrictive effect on the way data is gathered. In class observation, the researcher would benefit from dynamic and immediate involvement of the teacher with the students as these teachers use a variety of different materials in their discourse and the performance of teachers may be evaluated by direct observation and audio-recording of classes. In the first phase of the study, 27 classes were observed and the verbs teachers had used were identified and analyzed. The Bloom's cognitive taxonomy was used for coding and categorizing of these verbs. In the second phase of this research, the verbs teachers used were categorized based on experience and learners' proficiency level and the verbs were placed in one of the related six categories of Bloom's cognitive taxonomy. For the purpose of comparing between different levels and in different groups, the frequency of each of these groups and the percentage of the verbs in different six categories were calculated.

E. Data Analysis

To analyze the data obtained from observing classes, frequency count and Chi-square formula were used. Each action verb is counted and accumulated. Then, to find out the significance of differences, Chi-square formula is utilized. The Chi-square test applies only to examine the significance of differences between two (or more) nominal-level variables (those expressed in frequency counts). The test is based upon the concept of independence the idea is that one variable is not affected by, or related to another.

IV. RESULTS

This part deals with the distribution of action verbs and analyzing the differences which exist between different groups of teachers. In the first part, teachers' use of action verbs was analyzed based on the proficiency level of classes. The teachers discourse was analyzed and the action verbs teachers used in different levels were placed in different categories of Bloom's taxonomy and each level was investigated one by one. In the next part of this section these teachers were placed in two groups: experienced and novice teachers and the analysis of teachers discourse in these two groups were taken into consideration. Evaluating action verbs with focusing on the teachers' experience as well as how experienced and novice teachers can be different regarding the use of action verbs.

A. Teachers' Experience

After presenting the results of proficiency level and its role on teacher discourse we will examine how the teachers' experience can be related to the quality of teacher discourse. The criterion proposed by Gatbonton (1999) was set as the basis for classifying teachers. He made a distinction between novice and expert teachers in his study. He categorized experienced teachers as the teachers who have more than four years of teaching experience (Gatbonton, 1999). Consequently in this research teachers are divided into two groups of experienced (more than four years of teaching experience) and novice teachers (less than four years of teaching experience).

For the sake of similarity of the two groups and to be able to show that the differences in the use of action verbs are related to the situation of the classes and not to the number of subjects, one of the experienced teachers was omitted and the 26 teachers were categorized in the two groups of experienced and novice teachers (13 experienced and 13 inexperienced). As two groups are placed for the study of the role of experience in teacher discourse one of teachers was omitted to bring equality in number between two groups of experienced and novice teachers.

1. Experienced Teachers

Thirteen out of twenty-six classes were taught by experienced teachers, teachers with more than four years of experience. Most of these teachers have been teaching English in EFL Persian context for about five months to eighteen years. The total proportion of action verbs were used by these experienced teachers was 429 out of 805 action verbs. The novice teachers used the majority numbers of action verbs at the elementary levels, including mostly lower-level thinking processes. It is clear that the experienced teachers used the majority of action verbs compared with novice teachers.

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS' ACTION VERBS IN EXPERIENCED AND NOVICE TEACHERS

Teacher experience Category	Used by Experienced	Used by Novice
	Frequency	Frequency
Knowledge	121	139
Comprehension	103	102
Application	54	72
Analysis	49	24
Synthesis	57	33
Evaluation	44	7
Total	428	377

It is true that experience is an important factor gained over time, which enhances the knowledge, skills, and productivity of teachers. As it can be concluded from Table 3., the action verbs used by these two groups are different. The experienced teachers used 428 sentences containing action verbs whereas 377 action verbs were used by the novice teachers. By examining Table 3, it can be concluded that novice teachers tend to use more low-level action verbs such as 'tell, describe, repeat' vis-à-vis other related verbs in lower-level categories. The quantity of action verbs is decreased in the novice group, i.e. higher in the pyramid concerned with the higher-level thinking categories. The percentage of lower-level action verbs used by novice teachers is about 53%, i.e., a number much higher than the percentage used by novice teachers higher-level thinking categories (30%). So the results suggest that experienced teachers tend to be much more skillful in using higher-level thinking processes and implementing critical thinking skills in the classes. They used about 70% of higher-level action verbs and about 53% of total action verbs (428 out of 805).

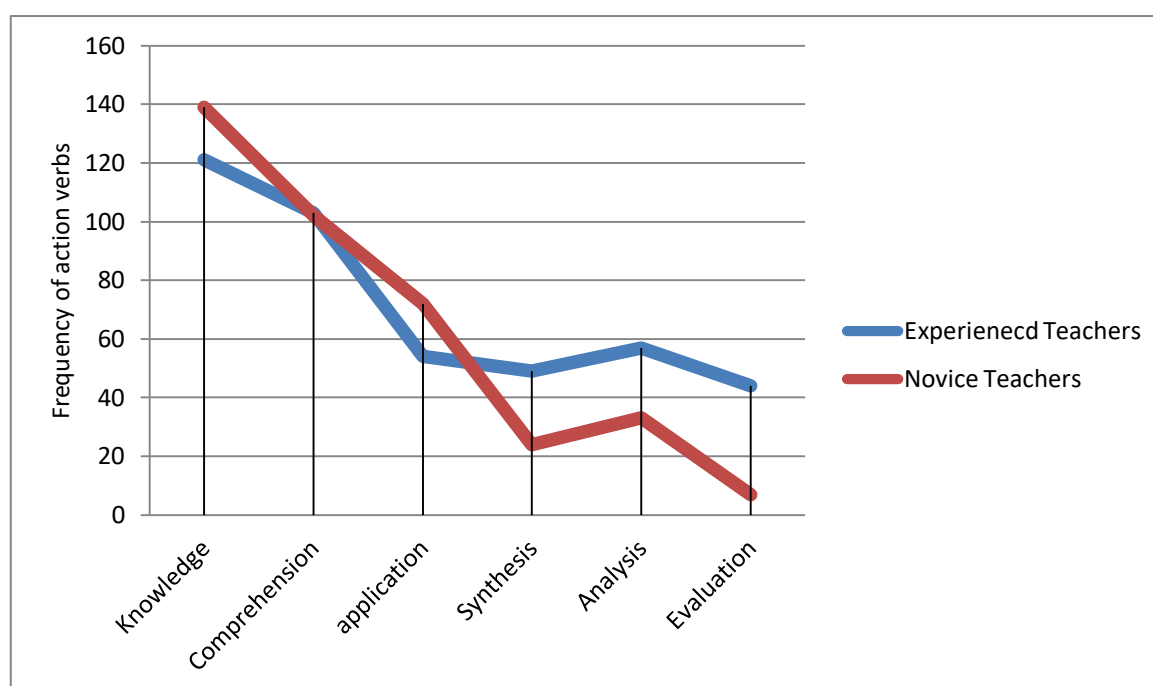


Figure 1. Frequency of action verbs used by the Experienced and inexperienced teachers

As Fig. 1 illustrates, the blue line which relates to the experienced teachers stands in higher positions in three highest-level categories of Bloom's cognitive taxonomy. This figure shows that experienced teachers' discourse contains higher-level thinking processes compared with novice teachers. However, novice teachers used a great number of lower-level action-verbs (313 lower level action verbs compared with 278 low-level action verbs used by experienced teachers). The point that should be taken into account is that one considers the three higher level thinking categories in Figure 1 it is apparent that the use of action verbs by the experienced group in these three categories is varied. Concerning the category *analysis*, the action verbs by the experienced teachers' group were 49 out of 24 action verbs used by the novice teachers. The variation in numbers is followed in the next two categories, that is the *synthesis* 57 versus 33, and the most difference in these two groups belong to *evaluation*, which in the experienced group is 44 compared with 7 action verbs, suggesting that experienced teachers tend to be more careful about higher-level thinking verbs, critical thinking and problem-solving methods. It is clear that there is no balance between usage of different action verbs categories in both experienced and novice teachers (the total amount of higher-level action verbs are still low), between different categories of taxonomy, but the percentage of higher-level action verbs in experienced group is about 35% which is much higher than the percentage of higher-level action verbs in novice teachers (17%).

2. Novice Teachers

As it is a belief that novice teachers are well-trained in the latest research and teaching techniques, giving students the best chance to meet today's rigorous educational standards, and bring a fresh energy to the classroom. But the results show that experienced teachers tend to be more aware of the complexity and have more enriched conceptual repertoires regarding teaching than novice teachers. They are mostly concerned with using action verbs in the class, monitoring students during the class-time, and encouraging students to think critically (the results show that in higher-level categories experienced teachers' use of action verbs is much higher than the novice teachers).

TABLE 4
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EXPERIENCED AND INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS' ACTION VERB

category	Experienced	Novice	Expected	df	χ^2	Sig.
Knowledge	121	139	130	1	1.246	.264
Comprehension	103	102	102.5	1	.944	.005
Application	54	72	63.0	1	2.571	.109
Analysis	49	24	36.5	1	8.562	.003
Synthesis	57	33	45.0	1	6.400	.011
Evaluation	44	7	25.5	1	26.843	.000

As it is shown in Table 4, there is a significant difference between different categories of the table concerning experienced and novice teachers except for *knowledge* and *application* which are not significant (.264, .109). That is to say, novice and experienced teachers are not significantly different in the distribution of knowledge and application verbs. The difference is not attributable to teachers' experience but other factors such as the topic of the lesson, students' qualities, etc.

B. Summary

The data showed that the use of higher level thinking processes is mostly viewed in advanced levels. That is to say, teachers in advanced classes asked students to use their higher-order thinking process more than what is seen in elementary and intermediate levels. The use of lower-level thinking processes which is knowledge and comprehension are mostly seen in elementary and intermediate classes although in intermediate levels more higher-order processes are utilized and observed. Moreover, experienced teachers used more verbs related to evaluation and synthesis which is a manifestation of more productivity and interaction of mental complexities. One justification is that in elementary levels, learners are not good input generators and teachers resort to lower processes to allow learners to avoid cognitive load. That is, there may be a relation between language and mind which is advocated by Vygotsky and his followers (Hausfather & Samuel, 1996).

V. CONCLUSION

Another area which has been taken into account in this study is the role of experience in teachers' use of action verbs. By comparing novice and experienced teachers' instructional activities in the classroom, one can have a better understanding of the development of teaching expertise and how this expertise may be effective on teachers discourse. There is a lot of controversy over this issue and a lot of research is done on this topic. Since teachers usually gain extensive experience of successful and unsuccessful performances throughout their years of teaching, this assumption has generated that experience promotes teacher's effectiveness and help students attain higher levels of achievements. There are other views like Gorrell and Dharmadasa (1994) beliefs, which is in the same line with the results of this study indicating that although experienced teachers were more concerned about classroom management and organization of instruction and their impacts on students, novice teachers preferred implementing new methods of instruction.

The question of this study was related to differences between novice and experienced teachers. With regard to this question we took into account the differences between novice and inexperienced teachers with regard to cognitive taxonomy. It was revealed that experienced teachers used more action verbs in all the categories of cognitive taxonomy (428 action verbs out of 805), whereas novice teachers (teachers which has less than 4 years of experience) used 377 action verbs. The findings of this study revealed that novice teachers used more action verbs related to knowledge and application, and there is an equal quantity between these groups in comprehension category. Experienced teachers reflect and evaluate teaching and learning in a more effective way, talk much more than novice teachers, communicate creatively, and have instruction plans. These experienced teachers used action verbs in a more balanced way than novice teachers. They ask higher quantity of "higher-order" questions, the kinds of questions which promote learning, because these types of questions require students to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information instead of simply recalling facts. It is better to use the following strategies at advanced levels: which is quoted in Hattie, (2003):

- Identifying essential representations of their subject
- Guiding learning through classroom interactions
- Monitoring learning and providing feedback
- Attending to affective attributes

- Influencing student outcomes (p. 5)

When we put our emphasis on the quantity of action verbs in higher-level categories of Bloom et al.'s (1956) taxonomy the results are completely different in two groups. As Table 4 demonstrates, experienced teachers use 150 action verbs in three higher-level thinking skills, versus 64 action verbs used by novice teachers. Expert teachers (especially in intermediate and advanced group) tend to monitor their ongoing solution attempts, checking for accuracy, and updating or elaborating problem representations as new constraints emerge. Flexibility is one of the main characteristics of expert teachers which existed in classes with experienced teachers. They are trying to invoke problem-solving, critical thinking and the skill of analyzing and evaluation besides knowledge and comprehension of students.

There are different studies which are in the same line with this study, considering the effects of teacher experience on student learning and relationship between teachers' effectiveness and their years of experience. As it is deduced from Table 4 novice teachers used simple, low-level questions. It is crystal clear that experienced teachers are in higher sophisticated teaching level, use much more action verbs in their discourse, and are more reflective and active in the class. Morine (1973), as well, stated that it is a kind of stereotyped action of the teacher when not engaged in thinking. By the use of routines, experienced teachers are better in attending other simultaneous events occurring in the classroom. Berliner (1986) believed that expert teachers used routines to record attendance, to handle chorus responding, to start lesson segments, and so on. Another matter which is important and can be seen more in experienced teachers in this study is problem representation which is one aspect of cognition. Problem representation means the mental construction, preservation and interpretation of information of real world object and events. These representations, dependent on their complexity and sophistication, may constrain the mental processes associated with abilities such as perceiving, inferring, assuming, and recognizing situations and phenomena. With regard to the results, it can be concluded that experienced teachers teach in more fruitful and meaningful way. Novice teachers can learn and construct meaning from their experiences when they are actively engaged in authentic activity that will help them to learn to think and act in a community of practice.

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Home-Space and Politics of Gender in *Housekeeping*

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Abstract—Focusing on female characters of Foster family, Marilynne Robinson's debut novel *Housekeeping* presents a tension between stability and mobility within the home-space, and in terms of a fixed, bounded gender identity ascribed by domesticity and social convention with a fluid, non-essential one. Drawing on critical theories of Judith Butler, Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, Tim Cresswell, etc., this paper attempts to analyze how the protagonist Sylvie successfully subverts normative politics of gender by redefining the spatial order of home-space and conducting spatial practices.

Index Terms—Marilynne Robinson, *Housekeeping*, home, space, gender

I. INTRODUCTION

Housekeeping, contemporary American novelist Marilynne Robinson's first novel, is highly acclaimed as a classic female bildungsroman. The story is set in the mountain community of Fingerbone, Idaho and revolves around two orphaned sisters, Ruthie and Lucille Stone. As the first narrator of the novel, Ruthie gives a brief introduction of her family at the outset of the novel. "My name is Ruth. I grew up with my younger sister, Lucille, under the care of my grandmother, Mrs. Sylvia Foster, and when she died, of her sisters in law, Misses Lily and Nona Foster, and when they fled, of her daughter, Mrs. Sylvie Fisher" (Robinson, 1981, p.1). This matrilinear genealogy indicates at the very beginning that *Housekeeping* describes an almost exclusively female community. Apart from the first two chapters, main body of the novel centers on daily life of Sylvie Fisher and her two nieces, Ruthie and Lucille. Before returning to Fingerbone to take care her nieces, Sylvie led a life of transient for decades, and her unconventional way of housekeeping and queer temperament eventually caused Lucille to move in with her home economics teacher, Miss Royce. While for Ruthie, an emotional bond was gradually developed between her and Sylvie. However, people in the town grew increasingly worried about Ruthie's welfare and ultimately, they called for a custody. Fearing separation, Sylvie and Ruthie decided to burn down their home and embarked on a wandering journey. In Ruthie's words, "Now we truly cast out to wander, and there was an end to housekeeping" (Robinson, 1981, p.209).

In *Housekeeping*, the competing force between home and escape, stability and mobility can be clearly precepted through different choices made by the women of Foster family. As scholar William M. Burke aptly points out, "the novel traces a family in which two strong tendencies compete: one is the tendency towards transience and the shifting margin of experiences, the other toward housekeeping within the confines of conventional marriage, family and social rootedness" (Burke, 1991, p.717). In the novel, Sylvie and Ruthie exemplified the former tendency, while Grandmother Sylvia Foster and Lucille the latter one. Embodying the spirit of conventional housekeeping, Grandmother Sylvia and Lucille carved out a rooted and circumscribed life within space of home and social boundaries. On the contrary, Sylvie and Ruthie preferred mobility to stability. They radically burned down their home in the end and chose to lead a life of transience for the rest of their lives. The transient and deviant Sylvie deliberately blurred and broke down the clear boundary between inside and outside, public and private sphere of home by her unconventional way of housekeeping, and in this sense challenged the established domestic order and normative gender norms that were highly proposed by Grandmother Sylvia.

The novel thus presents a tension between stability and mobility within the space of home, and in terms of fixed, bounded gender identity ascribed by domesticity and social convention with a fluid, non-essential one. On one hand, traditional notion of home is widely associated with femaleness and indicates a claim to gender identity. On the other hand, the deliberately chosen homelessness of Sylvie and Ruthie suggests that this gender identity is not inherently spatialized or determined by the ideology of home. Therefore, by demonstrating how the protagonist Sylvie challenges an essentialized gender identity by transgressing boundaries both literally and metaphorically, this paper argues that the deterritorialization of home space and rebellious spatial practices are symbolic of destabilization of gender identity ideologically naturalized in the traditional notion of home.

II. GENDERED SPACE OF HOME

The concepts of space and gender are inseparable and intersected, influencing each other in profound and multifarious ways. For one thing, space is differentiated by gender historically. It has long been known that the dualism between public sphere and private arena constructs a gendered difference between male and female. When women have

been confined to the private and domestic space, men inhabit and rule the public and masculine sphere. Accordingly, masculinity is often featured with movement, mobility and progress, while stasis, passivity and stability have been regarded as feminine characteristics. For another, space, in turn, contributes to the production and reproduction gender as well as gender relations, from the perspectives of practice, movement, and meaning. Men and women consciously use their spatial practice to subvert the social constraints imposed on them.

Such dialectics between space and gender discussed above is also exemplified in the figure of home. For example, Cynthia Enloe proposes that “historically in many societies being feminine has been defined as sticking close to home---masculinity, by contrast, has been the passport for travel...A principal difference between women and men in countless societies has been the license to travel away from a place thought of as ‘home’” (Enloe, 1989, p.21). In this sense, the tradition of the mutual identification between men and travel, women and home has been well-established. In *Housekeeping*, the gender distinction between male and female is best illustrated by different access to home by Grandfather Edmund Foster and other elder female characters.

First of all, the novel begins with Ruth's narration of his grandfather Edmund Foster's life experience and his westward journey. As a youth, Edmund grew up in the Middle West and the house he lived was “a mere mound, no more a human stronghold than a grave” (Robinson, 1981, p.1). Against such overwhelming emptiness and flatness, young Edmund began to dream of travel away from home and thus one spring he walked to the railroad and took a train west. Then he ended up in Fingerbone, Idaho. Like the heroic characters in western literature who lighted out for territories, Grandfather Edmund was an epitome of western American pioneers who longed for breathtaking adventures and unlimited mobility among boundless space. Though he built the family home with his own hands, Edmund was seldom satisfied with the confinement and isolation of home, he roamed around the unknown land, exploring and cataloguing wild animals and flowers with great curiosity. For a long time, males are highly mobile in public sphere while the domain of ideal women is domestic space where they are considered as the static object. Compared with Grandfather's predilection towards outside world and mobility, female characters were much confined to the isolated, private sphere of home. In the novel, female characters like Grandmother Sylvia, as well as Lily and Nona were portrayed in such a caricaturized and flat way. While staying in Fingerbone and taking care of Ruthie and Lucille, Lily and Nona led an enclosed life that they eschewed any social activities and contact with other people. They even showed great uneasiness and anxiety when Ruth and Lucille came home from outside late. Both Lily and Nona conformed to the convention that women should stay inside the protective walls of home, and such conformation in turn reinforced their gender identity imposed by social conventions.

Judith Butler analyzes the way in which constructed gender categories are naturalized through repeated performance. As Butler points out, “gender is not a noun, but neither it is a set of free-floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by regulatory practices of gender coherence” (Butler, 1990, p.34). In Butler's context, gender identity is actually constituted and constructed through ritualized repetition. Through the ritualized and repetitive housework practices, women in fact perform their gender identity that situate within hegemonic conventions, norms or discourses. In *Housekeeping*, Grandma Sylvia Foster was unconsciously engaged with the normative gender convention and discourse. After Edmund died, she led a more isolated and intensely domestic life. Tethered and immobilized by the work within domestic space, women became fixtures in the home. For raising her three daughters and two granddaughters, Sylvia strictly adhered to traditional approach of housekeeping in a fixed and rigid way, “performing the rituals of ordinary as an act of faith” (Robinson, 1981, p.16). When Sylvia's three daughters were still at home, they had to observe the rules stipulated by their mother. “Her girls were quiet, she must have thought, because the customs and habits of their lives have almost relieved them of the need for speech” (Robinson, 1981, p.15). Though quiet and peaceful, their domestic life was monotonous and repetitive at the same time. The most conspicuous example of ritualized performance was demonstrated in the way Grandmother Sylvia taking care of her granddaughters. For instance, as Ruthie described, “she whited shoes and braided hair and fried chicken and turned back bedclothes, and then suddenly feared and remembered that the children had somehow disappeared, everyone. How had it happened? How might she have known? And she whited shoes and braided hair and turned back bedclothes” (Robinson, 1981, p.25). By performing an exemplary role of wife and mother, Grandmother Sylvia also wanted her daughters and granddaughters to conform to domestic and social conventions. Such repetitive and ritualized housework practices performed by Grandmother Sylvia Foster in fact reinforced the gender identity ascribed to her by patriarchal values and social conventions.

However, this process of employing the space of home to connote a securely bounded gender identity was gradually deconstructed by Grandmother Sylvia's three daughters, especially by Sylvie. Instead of succeeding to the traditional gender identity that their mother and aunts had previously played, the three daughters Molly, Helen and Sylvie variously attempted to escape from the oppressive confinement of their private and isolated home. Within six months Molly had arranged to go to China working for a missionary society, Helen eloped with Reginald Stone, Ruth and Lucille's father to Seattle, while Sylvie left home for sixteen years and led a life of transience for decades. As Leed proposes, “departure may serve the need for detachment, purification, liberty, individuality, escape and self-definition” (Leed, 1991, p.22). Departure and escape exert a force of rebellion and change on the fixity of gender norms within the confinement of home and make distinction to cultivate the conscious individuality. The protagonist Sylvie's radical and rebellious ways of challenging the ingrained notion of gender in order to pursue freedom and individuality will be

discussed in the next two sections.

III. SPATIAL ORDER AND DETERRITORIALIZATION OF HOME-SPACE

In *Place/ Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*, Tim Cresswell clearly points out the important role of place and space in the construction and maintenance of ideology concerning order, propriety, and normality, he also puts much emphasis on the potentiality of transgression and resistance in challenging and disrupting those ideological, established conventions and norms. In other words, space and place play important roles in both exerting power and fighting for resistance. In *Housekeeping*, Sylvie's unorthodox housekeeping, serving as way of transgression called by Cresswell, altered and recomposed the highly specialized and regulated space of home established by Grandmother Sylvia, thus gradually dissolved and disrupted the normative politics of gender grounded on it. Under Sylvie's management, the limited and enclosed home space with clear demarcation of boundaries was transformed into an indeterminate and liminal one where gender identity cannot be easily defined.

According to Dara Downey, liminal space is "far from the closed space of delimited territory, but is itself an in-between space of potentiality" (Downey et al, 1992, p.13). In other words, unlike the closed space or place defined by limits and boundaries, liminal space is open, unfolding or becoming. In the novel, the home space under Grandmother Sylvia's care was a typical non-liminal one, which was enclosed and demarcated with clear boundaries and therefore presented as a symbol of hegemonic force. Comparatively, the unorthodox ways of housekeeping by Sylvie dissolved the boundaries between inside and outside, public and private and thus transformed the limited home-space into an open, fluid, liminal space, which generated new meanings and functions.

Henri Lefebvre in *Production of Space* highlights the duality of buildings such as houses. "Either it is stable and immovable with stark, cold and rigid outlines (as a 'particle'). It is the epitome of immovability, possessing clear and unambiguous boundaries...Alternatively the house can be thought of as a 'wave', as 'permeated from every direction by streams of energy which run in and out of it by every imaginable route'" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.92-3). By emphasizing the "wave" and "route", Lefebvre considers the space of house as stable and immovable as well as mobile and fluid, whose meanings are indeterminate and alterable. In the novel, the fingerbone town has been harassed by violent flood yearly. One spring, "water poured over the thresholds and covered the floor to the depth of four inches...If we open or close a door, a wave swept through the house, and chairs tottered, and bottles and pots clinked and clunked in the bottoms of the kitchen cabinets" (Robinson, 1981, p.61-62). After the house was flooded, Sylvie made no effort at repair. Instead of preventing the flood pouring into the house, Sylvie, however, deliberately ushered the water into the house, thus dissolving the physical barriers between inside and outside. The waters permeated the seemingly invulnerable home upon the hills with its overwhelming and destructive power of mobility. Under Sylvie's management, the illusion of permanence and stability embodied by the traditional notion of home was disrupted and finally collapsed. This particular way empowered Sylvie to subvert the conventional notion of home-space by appropriating and engendering a more open and fluid space for herself.

The passages which depict the liminal and fluid attributes of house or home can be noticed in several chapters. For instance, after the flood, "the house flowed around us" (Robinson, 1981, p.64). In addition, Ruthie described the watery houses and barns in the Fingerbone town as "spilled and foundered arks" (Robinson, 1981, p.61). The home was therefore transformed from a grounded and stable site into a porous and liminal one. The images of "floated house" "moored ship" "foundered arks" made linkage to Mitchell Foucault's key concept of heterotopia. The term "heterotopia" was firstly put forward by Foucault in his 1976 lecture essay "Of Other Space". According to Foucault, the space where people lived was not homogeneous and empty, it was heterogeneous. Foucault cited the example of the boat or ship as a floating piece of space connecting all other places and regarded it as "heterotopia par excellence" (Foucault, 1986, p.22). In this sense, alternative ways of ordering conducted by Sylvie in *Housekeeping* transformed the static and limited space of home into a fluid and floating heterotopia which was featured with radical openness and freedom.

Besides, the image of window in the novel is another symbol of liminality of home. The role of window achieves the effect of reversing the inside and outside and further facilitates the conversation between indoors and outdoors. Under Grandmother Sylvia's care, the window was used only in daylight and clearly demarcated the line between inside and outside, day and night. Conversely, when Sylvie ruled the home, the window was also used at night. They usually ate evening meal in the darkness with the kitchen lights off because Sylvie disliked "the disequilibrium of counterposing a roomful of light against a roomful of darkness" (Robinson, 1981, p.99). In this position, they occupied a middle and liminal ground, they were neither deceived by the images of seeing themselves in the window nor were they in the darkness looked into the lighted room. They escaped from the framed structure of window by creating a fusion of light and darkness.

Unorthodox habits of housekeeping by Sylvie also contribute to the deterritorialization of home space. Traditionally, housekeeping emphasizes keeping the house tidy and clean by demarcating a clear boundary between inside and outside, in this sense, this concept actually highlights order and normality. In the novel, Grandmother Sylvia exerted every effort to keep the house they lived clean, tidy and orderly. However, Sylvie's unorthodox ways of housekeeping stood in stark contrast with that of Grandmother Sylvia, thus posing a serious threat to the order and normality established within the house. Sylvie's unorthodox way of housekeeping was characterized by deliberately inviting the outdoor things in doors.

As Ruthie narrated, Sylvie herself in a house was “more or less like a mermaid in a ship’s cabin, she preferred it sunk in the very element it was meant to exclude. We had crickets in the pantry, squirrels in the eaves, sparrows in the attic” (Robinson, 1981, p.99). Such displacement suggests that Sylvie attempted to disrupt the established conventions and norms through deliberate act of making house haphazard and disordered.

Apart from her deliberate neglect of housekeeping, Sylvie remained to keep her habit as a drifter even though she was confined to the domestic space. For example, “Sylvie kept her clothes and even her hair brush and toothpowder in a cardboard box under the bed. She slept on top of the covers, with a quilt over her, which during the daytime she pushed under the bed also” (Robinson, 1981, p.103). Actually, Sylvie’s habits of transients are considered as inappropriate and transgressive actions which Cresswell termed as practices “out of place”. The occurrence of “out of place” phenomena lead people to question behaviors and define what is and is not appropriate for a particular setting. More often than not, within a domestic space, women are supposed to behave like “the Angel in the House”, they should commit to a series of chores such as sweeping the floor, washing the clothes, cooking meals, making up the beds, etc. Instead of observing the traditional routine of housekeeping, Sylvie disrupted the regularity and normality within domestic space established by her mother by her transient and rebellious habits.

The novel thus sets up an opposition between the home-space which is defined by clear boundaries of inside and outside, private and public, featured with enclosure and homogeneity and an open, fluid one. By fluidifying the home space, mobility of water blurs the boundaries between inside and outside, domestic and natural, empowering Sylvie to break free from home’s confinement and defying the hegemonic gender norms ascribed to her. Unorthodox ways of housekeeping therefore redefine the spatial order and negotiate the meaning of space. Home-space becomes a liminal one where gender identity is in flux. In addition to redefining the spatial order, Sylvie also employs spatial practices to further deconstruct the ingrained gender identity.

IV. SPATIAL PRACTICE AND DESTABLIZATION OF GENDER IDENTITY

Apart from the unorthodox ways of housekeeping which contributes to the deterritorialization of home-space, another tactic employed by Sylvie to destabilize the ingrained gender norms is to take participate in spatial practice by making best use of her mobility. In Tim Cresswell’s words, “central to the practices of transgression and resistance, mobility is the key both physically and metaphorically” (Cresswell, 2006, p.46). In terms of mobility, the movement and behavior of the body play a decisive role in challenging the boundary and striation of space and therefore empowering the protagonist with freedom and agency.

First of all, Sylvie’s body exhibited a strong tendency towards mobility and outside world at the very beginning of the novel. As Ruth described, “we thought we sometimes heard her leave the house, and once when we got out of the bed, we found her playing solitaire in the kitchen, and once we found her sitting on the back porch steps, and once we found her standing in the orchard” (Robinson, 1981, p.83). The body shifting from kitchen to porch then to orchard clearly indicated an outward progression. Cherishing a desire for the outside world was never enough for Sylvie. Instead of confining herself to the private, isolated domestic space, she usually wandered around the town in order to transgress boundary physically and metaphorically that imposed on by isolated space and social convention. The French cultural critic Michel De Certeau foregrounds “the forms of mobility including walking as potentially subversive spatial practices to contest against an overarching ideological construction of spatial meaning” (De Certeau, 1984, xx). Sylvie’s mobility took her outside of the bounds of home and town. More often than not, Ruth and Lucille found Sylvie walking or wandering around train station, park, or the shore of Fingerbone Lake. For instance, Ruthie and Lucille once saw her walking directly into the railway station, standing by the stove, with her arms folded, studying the chalked list of arrivals and departures. For another time, they found Sylvie lying on a bench in a little park, her ankles and arms crossed and a newspaper tented over her face. In addition, Sylvie usually strolled at the shore and conversed freely with anonymous homeless men under the bridge. The spaces of railway station, park and shore, out of liminality, bridges stasis and interiority with movement and exteriority. The diffusiveness of these spaces enables transitional contact between parties, with regards to genders, social stations and ages. The boundary between them becomes porous, so that women can easily make transgression to the terrace where they are prohibited to go. Rather than the enclosed space of home where women are forced to conform the hegemonic gender norm, these liminal and open space accommodates marginality, provides more opportunity to women and enhances the self-awareness of them. Sylvie’s mobility blurred boundaries between outside and inside, public and private sphere, thus challenged the binary opposition of male and female. She tried every means to prove her ability rather than vulnerability, which was an excuse to keep women with the wall of home. She made full use of her mobility to escape from the confinement of home, therefore to shed off the normative gender norms imposed on her. For Sylvie, mobility empowered her to fight against the norms of discipline and pursues female freedom and agency.

Apart from thematic mobility, textual mobility is another way for Sylvie to disrupt social gender norms and relocate herself in a fluid space. The textual mobility here refers to the oral stories Sylvie told to Ruthie and Lucille. As Ruth noted, “every story that she told had to do with a train or a bus station” (Robinson, 1981, p.68). Whether it be the old woman named Edith who came to her rest crossing the mountains in a boxcar, or the women Sylvie met on the bus who talked about everything under the sun, they all exhibited drastic difference from the images of fixed and homebound housewives. In the previous times, undoubtedly, there are discrepancies between male and female modes of mobility.

Gendered nature of travel suggests that women have never had the same access to road as men. Heroic and adventurous travels are usually allowed for man while women are impeded from such travels. However, in *Housekeeping*, instead of staying within the limited circle of home and performing the daily rituals as a good housewife, these homeless women in Sylvie's stories escaped the confinement and fixed notion of gender imposed on them and pursued mobility and freedom in the same way like their male counterparts. By dictating these adventurous stories, Sylvie herself also gained power and courage to fight against social norms and engaged in her wandering journey.

The final scene of "burning down the house" in the novel marks the most radical spatial practice conducted by Sylvie. Some scholars stress the symbolic significance of burning down the house. Joan Kirby, for example, explains the rejection of the house as a "rejection of patriarchal housebuilding and housekeeping as conceived in American literature" and "a rejection of a specific social vision of the female, the housed women, the housed wife" (Kirby, 1986, p.106). In essence, burning down of the house is considered as an act of release and transfiguration. Like the soul of house escaped, Sylvie and Ruthie eventually escaped the enclosure and confinement of home and successfully deconstructed the ingrained gender norms embodied by it.

V. CONCLUSION

By examining the interplay between space and politics of gender in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*, this paper has elaborated on the crucial role of space in exploring the changing conception of gender. In the novel, Grandmother Sylvia tries to secure the space of home and to reinforce an established gender identity ascribed by domesticity and social convention. However, through the deterritorialization of home space and conduction of spatial practices, Sylvie Foster gradually dissolves the binary oppositions between outside and inside, public and private, male and female, and therefore subverts ingrained and normative gender norms embedded in such ideology. Through her particular perceptiveness of the regulating force of home space and its impact on politics of gender, Robinson attempts to redefine the traditional notion of home and problematize the fixed, essentialized notion of gender.

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The Application of Total Physical Response Method (TPR) in Preschool Children's English Teaching

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Abstract—This article through a four months' TPR teaching experiment among six preschool children, namely, Pre-interview, Pre-test, TPR Teaching Experiment (such as "Display and Imitation", "Instructions and Action", "Situational Communication"), Post-test, and Post-interview, attempts to investigate the application and effectiveness of the TPR method in preschool children's English teaching. The experimental results show that this approach can not only help children understand the new language quickly and gain long-term memory, but also allow children to learn English happily in a "zero stress" environment. However, abstract words and sentences are difficult to express in the TPR methods. At the same time, this "teaching through lively activities" method is easily leads to classroom discipline chaos. The TPR method also requires teachers to have high professional quality and comprehensive skills, including language expression ability, sports ability, performance skills, etc. Therefore, promoting this approach in preschool English teaching also faces technical and teaching staff difficulties. This study validates some conclusions of earlier studies which can provide experience and lessons to preschool English teachers in applying TPR as well as theoretical and practical contributions to future research.

Index Terms—Total Physical Response Method (TPR), preschool children, English teaching

I. INTRODUCTION

Research that meets the needs of the times is one of the criteria to test the effectiveness of research results. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the social development trend and the requirements of the times before determining the research topic. The purpose of this part is to explain the background, purpose, and significance of this study.

A. Background of the Study

With the development of society, more and more bilingual kindergartens have sprung up. Parents generally believe that they should not let their children lose at the starting line. Therefore, they think that children should learn English as soon as possible. Many teachers take a variety of teaching methods in preschool children's English teaching, such as Situational Language Teaching method, Communicative Language Teaching method, Immersion Teaching method, Total Physical Response method, and so on. However, the English teaching of preschool children is different from primary and senior middle school and it should pay special attention to the psychological and physiological development characteristics of preschool children. Nonetheless, some teachers tend to neglect the cognitive development level of children in the implementation of English teaching, which not only hinders the improvement of children's English but also causes them to lose interest in learning English. As is known to all, interest is the best teacher for children, so it is necessary to provide suitable methods for children to improve their interest in learning English.

The Total Physical Response (TPR) method was proposed by James J. Asher, a famous American psychology professor in the 1960s (Asher, 1969). He carried out a large number of experiments on children's language teaching and combined the research results of children's development, brain side theory, and second language acquisition theory. On this basis of these theories, Asher proposed a systemic reaction method before launching the Total Physical Response method. He took a large number of empirical studies of learning a second language, the result proved that the TPR method was feasible for both adults and children in obtaining the second language (Asher, 1972). According to Asher's thoughts, once a foundation in listening comprehension has been established, the development of speech would be naturally occurring without any efforts (cited in Harrasi, 2014, p. 36). TPR followed the learner's natural process of language learning, which made learning easier and more effective by not forcing students to speak in a target language they are not yet familiar with (Asher, 1981; cited in Harrasi, 2014, p. 36). Krashen and Terrell have promoted TPR as a way of inputting language knowledge to beginners through involving in realistic, meaningful language activities (cited in Zhong, 2002, p.102).

As the superiority of TPR has been proved, more and more Chinese researchers are paying attention to this field. Yu Zhenyou has written an article titled "Asher Second Language Acquisition View and TPR Teaching Methods", which explored the characteristics and advantages of TPR teaching. In the acquisition of a second language, he summarized

that the second language acquisition strategy was an active action response in essence (Yu, 1999). Liu Ning and Sha Jingxiang discussed the application of the TPR method in children's English acquisition in China. They believed that the TPR method conformed to the physical and psychological characteristics of children (Liu Ning, Sha Jingxiang, 2004). Wang li proposed that the TPR method was a foreign language teaching method suitable for children (Wang, 2008). Xie Rong tried to investigate the effectiveness of TPR for young learners through the case study of two teachers, and his observations showed that TPR technology is a good method based on games, role-playing, and body movements. The study also found that traditional teaching methods face challenges to TPR in practice (Xie, 2021).

However, Chinese researchers now focus on the application of the TPR method teaching method in primary school English teaching in China and Chinese teaching in foreign countries (including the United States, New Zealand, Italy, South Korea, etc.). There is little research on the field of English teaching for preschool children. So, it is very necessary to study the application of the TPR method in preschool children's teaching field from the present situation of English teaching in preschool children and the superiority of the TPR method.

B. Purpose and Significance of the Study

"Interest is the best teacher, and playing is the nature of every kid". This sentence indicates that if we want to make the kids learn English well, we must get them interested in English first, and then let them learn English in a relaxing atmosphere. From the view of psychology, the attention that children paid is called "involuntary attention" and the involuntary attention is not controlled by the ideology. That is to say, children only pay attention to things, which they are interested in. So it becomes very important for us to treat interest as the top priority. The Total Physical Response (TPR) method is based on children's psychological and psychological characteristics (Asher, 1981). It can capture children's attention and enhance their learning experience. Hence, it can be seen from the characteristics of TPR that this method is in line with the characteristics of preschool children.

However, just like McKay states that the teaching of young learners is different from adults (McKay, 2012). When it is used in English teaching for preschool children, will the features of the TPR method appear? Can teachers help a child understand a new language quickly by speaking and acting? Can children gain long-term memory when body movement and language are combined? Can the TPR method allow children to learn English under "zero pressure"? Is TPR the most popular method of Teaching English to preschool children? What difficulties do teachers face when using TPR? How to solve these difficulties? The above questions are not only the author's doubts but also her research purposes. The author hopes this rigorous experiment will answer these questions.

The significance of this study includes both theoretical and practical aspects. In terms of theory, it can enrich the theoretical depth of the TPR method. At the same time, it can provide a more scientific and effective theoretical basis for preschool children's English teaching. In terms of practice, this study can test the applicability of the TPR method for the English teaching of preschool children and find effective methods for English teaching of preschool children. The realization of these research significance still depends on the rigorous experimental operation. Therefore, the author attaches great importance to the effectiveness and availability of this research.

II. GENERAL INTRODUCTION ON TPR METHOD

To gain a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the Total Physical Response method, the author has combed and summarized the research of relevant the TPR method. This part mainly introduces the definition of the TPR method, theoretical basis. In essence, this part of the work is called "literature review" in China. Researchers in academia think this part of the work is important and necessary.

A. Origin and Insights of TPR Method

The Total Physical Response (TPR) method also was named a "Complete Repercussion", which was proposed by James J. Asher in the 1960s who was famous for American psychology. In the study of children's natural language development, he combined the results of the study of children's first language acquisition by Thompson and Gesell in the 1930s and hypothesized that there was a physiological mechanism in the human brain to acquire any natural language in the world. He proposed adults learn languages like children through body movement. To test this propose professor Asher designed and launched 40 experiments in 1969. He came to a few conclusions after observing and analyzing the TPR method in another language teaching. He pointed out "no matter how long the language was, or how long it was after training (one to two weeks), the TPR method could produce a quick understanding (Asher, 1969, p.259)".

In addition, Asher tried to pinpoint the reason for the rapid understanding and high memory rate of the TPR method. He ruled out four factors that might affect the effect of systemic reaction: location, confluence, clues, sequence. Through data analysis, he concluded that the body movements of learners were the most important factor (Asher, 1964). After a series of persistent experiments, Asher also found that adults could learn a second language as a child. This is contrary to popular belief that children are always better than adults in second language acquisition. Asher believed that children had a talent for language acquisition after a great deal of observation and adult language acquisition. In contrast, adults learned a second language in a non-game environment and their body movements and language were separate when they were learning a second language. Later Asher proved that adults could even surpass the children when they

had the opportunity to learn the language through listening and moving (Asher, 1974).

Then, what is the relationship between teachers and students when TPR is applied to teaching activities? Asher pointed out that teaching activities were like a stage performance where students were actors and teachers were directors. It emphasized that teachers played an important guiding role in the overall teaching activities. More importantly, it also encouraged children to experience and participate in activities (Kunihira & Asher, 2009). It's worth mentioning that H. E Palmer pointed out 60 years ago that "instruction drill" was best suited to complete beginners. He went so far as to claim: "In the early stages of English teaching, the success of the teaching method cannot be achieved without providing students with plenty of opportunities to participate in activities" (cited in Zhong, 2002, p.102).

B. Theoretical Foundation of TPR Method

A great deal of scientific research suggested that the left and right hemispheres of the human brain were responsible for different tasks. American physiologist Roger Wolcott Sperry conducted the Lacerate brain, this was verified that the left brain could express itself by speaking. Based on these theories, Asher proposed a bold hypopaper that children interpreted and understood language through the right brain. People received and understood language by observing the differences between adult behavior and verbal behavior (Vicory & Asher, 1966). Therefore, learning a second language was a process of using the right brain to establish a link between a second language and physical activity. In fact, many experiments have shown that the speech and behavior of the parents were the favorable stimuli when the infant learns language, and even if the left side of the baby's brain was unable to speak the first time, this effect continues until the left side of the baby's brain became capable of speaking. Therefore, Asher believed that the best way was to use the right brain to understand the unfamiliar second language. One side of the brain works while the other was stimulated. This greatly improved the efficiency of learning. the learning process became slow when the language information was only entered into the brain from the left hemisphere. So, the TPR method advocates that the learners should first learn a lot of information before they begin to speak and that the coordination of gestures and body movements is very important (Asher, 2009).

In addition, the theoretical basis of the TPR method includes psychology. There are two main aspects to it in psychology. On the one hand, the body reaction method absorbs the theory of "memory trace" in psychology (Bing Ni et al., 2017). The theory holds that the more profound the process of memory, the easier it is to associate and recall. Due to children's language is an imperative sentence many children generally dependent on physical reactions. Children are easy to remember when these movements are linked to language. On the other hand, the TPR method also absorbs the viewpoint of humanistic psychology. This theory claims that emotional factors play an important role in language learning. It is suggested that the teaching method with game activities can reduce students' psychological burden and improve learning efficiency (Charlotte, 1971).

Finally, the TPR method is based on linguistic theory. When Asher created the TPR method he did not directly discuss the language theory basis of the TPR method, but from the perspective of the form and practice of the classroom organization of the TPR method, which was related to the concept of language. This method embodied the verb as the core content of the language, especially the verb in the imperative sentence and the language learning. When learning a language, learners needed action participation and a relaxed and happy atmosphere, which was the key factor for them to have a good learning experience (Carless, 2003). Nowadays, most researchers and practitioners who agreed with the TPR method argued that the atmosphere of most foreign language classes was too intense and hoped to create a foreign language teaching method to reduce the pressure of learners and awareness of self-defense in the classroom.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Preschool children mainly refer to children between the ages of 3 and 6 Children in this stage have obvious and unique characteristics including psychology, cognition, and language. Researchers suggest that teachers should follow their characteristics in the development of preschool children's English teaching.

A. Psychological Characteristics of Preschool Children

Generally speaking, the psychological characteristics of preschool children mainly have three aspects. Firstly, preschoolers tend to imitate others because they have poor independence, and they tend to imitate others. They are very observant and tend to mimic the movements and words of those around them (Rukavishnikova, 2016). Therefore, we should pay attention to our own words and deeds and set a good example for children. Secondly, their unintentional attention is dominant. Unintentional attention is also called "involuntary attention". It does neither require a predetermined purpose nor subjective efforts. Children have a higher level of unintentional attention in the preschool stage. Anything that is in line with their interests or experience will attract their unintentional attention. Children of all ages have different physiological and psychological development, their unintentional attention also shows different characteristics. In the classroom, the three-year-old child can hold their attention from 3 to 5 minutes, four years old may last for 5 to 10 minutes, the 5-year-old for about 10 to 15 minutes, five and six is likely to remain at the age of 20 to 25 minutes (Savage et al., 2006). Finally, intentional attention begins to develop. Intentional attention refers to a proactive form of attention that requires willpower control, which is subject to the automatic regulation and control of human consciousness. Intentional attention depends on some factors. For example, clear objectives and tasks of

activities (Hilary & Vanessa, 2018).

Therefore, in the English teaching of preschool children, to ensure that children actively participate in activities, teachers should fully grasp the psychological characteristics and physiological development of children. They should make full use of children's unintentional attention, and at the same time, teachers should try to cultivate children's intentional attention.

B. Cognitive Development of Preschool Children

Jean Piaget divided the cognitive development process of children into four stages, which were: Sensor Motor Stage (Birth to 2 Years), Pre-operational Stage (2 to 7 Years), Concrete-Operational Stage (7 to 11 Years), Formal-Operational Stage (11-12 Years and Beyond). Each stage was not the sum of some isolated behavior patterns but the unity of the whole. Each stage has its main behavioral pattern, which marked the behavioral characteristics of this stage. The previous stage of behavior was always integrated into the next stage, each of which was derived from the previous stage of the structure, the former was the preparation of the latter, and was replaced by the latter. The stage of child cognition has some degree of overlap. The age at all levels of cognitive development could be delayed in advance because of individual intelligence, motivation, exercise, and education impact, as well as differences in the social environment. But the order of the stage was the same, and couldn't be reversed (Piaget, 2013). Preschool children are in the Pre-operational Stage. In this stage, children begin to emerge from concrete actions due to the appearance of symbolic functions. They are different from children at the sensory-motor stage. In this stage, they begin to internalize behavior and could think before moving an object. However, they have not yet formed the psychological structure, they could only operate at the level of representation. Jean Piaget believed that children at this stage could use language and form mental representations and could use symbols to reproduce the external world in their minds. But the children of this period couldn't leave things to use language and symbols. In terms of cognition, children were very different from adults in learning foreign languages. That is, the lower a child's level of cognitive development, the more they need to pay special attention to the meaning of language. Because they don't have the flexibility to think abstractly, they can only see the immediate concrete (Corsaro, 1981).

The above cognitive development features of children provide important references for teachers in English teaching. In English teaching, teachers should not provide children with abstract concepts and original things but should provide more concrete, intuitive teaching tools. At the same time, teachers should be more careful about children's activities to help them translate their language learning needs into physical responses. Finally, children should take an active part in English learning activities. In conclusion, the learning process of children should be one in which they can actively participate. The purpose of education is not only to let children acquire knowledge but also to help them improve their interest in learning.

C. Linguistic Features of Preschool Children

The linguistic features of children mainly include speech function. On one hand, in terms of pronunciation, Children's pronunciation ability depends on the maturity of their vocal organs and the ability of the brain to regulate their vocal organs. Children's pronunciation skills are improved very quickly, especially between the ages of 3 and 4. Under the correct education, 4-year-old children can master the entire pronunciation of the nation. They stay in the critical period and sensitive period for children when they are 3-6 years old to learn a language (Visser-Bochane et al., 2020). It is pointed out that if people start to learn a second language in the teenage stage, they will have difficulty learning pure pronunciation. On the other hand, preschool children already have the initiative in using verbal communication skills and the ability to regulate speech in terms of speech function. With the growth of children's age, children's language expression ability will be improved continuously. Meanwhile, Online fairy tale activities and picture fairy tale activities can improve children's language comprehension and expression ability (Hyun et al., 2006). Children aged five to six can speak more, but their level of expression is still at a lower level. In general, the characteristics of language development of preschool children are as follows:

- a. From the language of dialogue to monologue language.
- b. It gradually develops from situational language to coherent language.
- c. They can use nonverbal information such as facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice to facilitate communication.
- d. Being more and more sensitive to the social situation factors of effective communication, I can use a variety of conversational skills to euphemistically express my requirements.
- e. Be able to adjust your speech according to the characteristics of the listener.

In preschool children's English teaching, they need to take into consideration of the linguistic features of preschool children when they are in English teaching. Cameron, L suggested that priority should be given to the listening and speaking practice in English teaching (Cameron, 2001). In other words, the English teaching of preschool children is should be aimed at simple daily communication and give priority to listening and speaking in English learning.

IV. TPR METHOD APPLICATION ON PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S ENGLISH TEACHING

The purpose of this part is to introduce the research design and the process of a teaching experiment, including the

following five parts: Research Aims and Questions, Research method, Participants, Curricular Contents, Research Plan. In addition, the research plan was divided into five steps: Pre-interview, Pre-test, TPR Teaching Experiment, Post-test, and Post-interview. To ensure the reliability and validity of the research, the author designed a systematic and scientific research link.

A. Research Aims and Questions

To inquire into the feasibility of the TPR method in the teaching practice of children's English teaching and learning, the author did some empirical researches and collected some data through interviews, Pre-test, teaching experiment, and Post-test. By doing these measures, the author hopes to solve the following research questions.

RQ 1: To investigate the application of the Total Physical Response method in English teaching for preschool children.

RQ 2: To what degree does the Total Physical Response method affect children?

RQ 3: How does the Total Physical Response method help children keep a better memory of the knowledge they have learned?

RQ 4: How does the Total Physical Response method improve children's interests in learning English?

RQ 5: What are the shortcomings of the Total Physical Response method in teaching practice and what should teachers pay attention to in using this method?

B. Research Method

After a long process of teaching, the author used the quantitative research method and empirical research method to carry out this research. The author investigated the application of the TPR method in preschool teaching through interviews and used the method of quantitative research to judge the feasibility of the TPR method. At the same time, the author designed and implemented English teaching according to the principle of the TPR method. The effectiveness of the TPR method was analyzed by observing and comparing children's performance. This teaching experiment lasted for four months from September 2019 to December 2019. The author first selected six preschoolers. The author explained the study to their parents. Fortunately, they all agreed that their children participated in the study. Six children were then divided into experimental groups. The experimental group was taught by the TPR method. From September 2019 to December 2019, they received the TPR English teaching training twice a week (one and a half hours each time), mainly on Saturday and Sunday, because they went to school from Monday to Friday. The author designed and conducted the first interview and test in early September 2019, just as the children were about to start school, and the second in late December 2019, just before they were on vacation.

C. Participants

This study followed the general process of purposeful sampling. Patton believed that purpose sampling was effective when researchers sought participants who provided valuable in-depth information for the study (Patton, 1990). To understand the application and effectiveness of the TPR method in preschool children's English teaching, a four months teaching experiment was carried out among 6 preschool children in a classroom (including two boys and four girls) at an English training institution in Luoyang, Henan Province.

For all the local English training institutions, the author conducted a field survey on the number, location, operation, personnel, students, courses, teaching, and other aspects of these institutions. In the end, the author chose to work with this organization because it met all the requirements. After that, the author communicated with the head of the institution to ensure that they have a comprehensive understanding of the study. Finally, after obtaining their consent, the author sent them a written consent and signed it for confirmation.

In the case of the study participants, it was mainly six children in a class at a partner institution. After investigation, the author found that all six children were in the preliminary stage of English learning. To ensure the smooth development of the study, the author introduced the purpose, time, and confidential information of the interviews to the teachers and parents of these children in advance, and conducted interviews and tests after getting their oral consent. In the end, the children's teaching experiment was all approved by parents and teachers.

D. Curricular Contents

To ensure that children can grow up healthily and happily, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China stipulated that the kindergarten curriculum cannot be based on the curriculum of primary school. Teaching the content of primary school in advance was forbidden by this department (Ministry of Education, PRC., 2012). Therefore, the author carefully selected the appropriate course content for this teaching experiment according to the regulations of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China.

According to the characteristics of preschool children, the author wants to help children learning some common nouns, adjectives, verbs, and simple communicative language in this teaching arrangement. For example, some basic nouns (characters, animals, plants), adjectives (height, length, and color, etc.), verbs, and simple imperative sentences. These teaching contents come from children's lives, so they are helpful to attract children's interest and help them improve their understanding. Most researchers think that the TPR method is completely different from those teaching methods which take grammar or structure as the core element of language. The TPR method emphasizes that learning

content should be selected according to vocabulary usage and learners' needs. Therefore, the TPR method fits the characteristics and needs of preschool children.

E. Research Plan

The study was conducted in five steps, including Pre-interview, Pre-test, TPR Teaching Experiment, Post-test, and Post-interview. The research plan was shown in the following chart. In terms of interviews, the form of semi-structured interviews was adopted, that was, the author formed a relatively complete interview outline before the interview began, but this outline could be adjusted according to the actual situation. Then asked questions according to the previous interview outline. For TPR teaching experiments, in essence, this research belongs to the Design of Experiments Single Group Pre-test and Post-test. In such an experimental study, a group of subjects was tested before the test, then the subjects were treated by the experiment, and finally, the subjects were tested after the test. The results were determined by comparing the results of the two tests before and after. Generally, this method was simple and easy to operate, but because there were only one group of subjects, some unrelated factors in the study couldn't be better controlled, such as emergencies, personal experiences, and physical and mental changes.

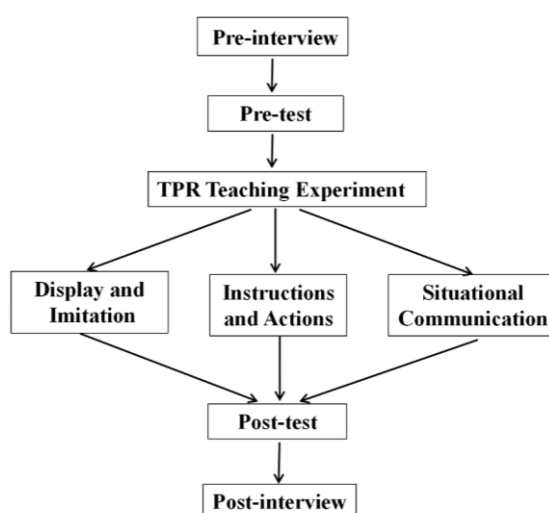


Chart 1 Flowchart of Research Proposal

1. Pre-Interviews

To understand the applicability of the TPR method in preschool children's English teaching, as well as the learning interests and learning styles of preschool children, the author designed in-depth interviews. The interview outline was designed before the interview. In addition to the basic information of the interviewees (six preschool children), the interview included five parts: "interest in English learning", "participation in English activities", "expectation of English learning style", "cognition of the TPR method" and "expectation of the TPR method". The questionnaire included the following questions:

- a. Do you like English? Can you explain your reasons?
- b. Do you often participate in English learning activities? How do you usually take part in English learning activities?
- c. How do you want to learn English?
- d. Do you know the TPR method?
- e. Do you want the teacher to use the TPR method?

2. Pre-Test

To get an idea of the subjects' actual English proficiency, each of the six children took aptitude tests in turn before the study began. To prevent the subjects from being influenced by other factors, especially other children, only one child was tested at a time. To ensure the objectivity and scientificity of the test, each test was performed by the same tester (mainly the researcher himself). To ensure the reliability and validity of the experiment, these test contents were designed according to the requirements of the TPR method. The score of the test was 100, and the questions were divided into Connection (50 points), Speaking (25 points), and Listening (25 points). The listening part of the exam is to listen to some words and point out the picture that is consistent with the meaning of the word. Five points for a correct answer and a total of ten questions should be answered. Speaking part of the exam is to see the picture or model and speak the English meaning about them. Five points for a correct answer and a total of five questions should be answered. Listening includes 5 instructions "Stand up!" "Sit down!" "Point to me!" "Pick up the paper!" "Put down the paper!" The examination results are shown in Table 1.

3. TPR Teaching Experiment

a. Display and Imitation

Children's learning begins with imitation. The TPR method emphasizes that teachers should play an exemplary role. At the same time, preschool children are mainly specific imagery thinking. Only when they feel and participate at the same time can they understand things. The word itself has generality, so children need to learn something related by looking, listening, touching, tasting, and so on. For example, let the children learn "what is water?" Teachers must put a bottle of water before them. Therefore, "Display and Imitation" is an important part of English teaching.

So, who will show it? Show what? Who is the show? How do the show? In this link, the author displayed the English vocabulary that needed to be studied by children through pictures, objects, or movements, such as nouns (common characters, animals, plants, and so on) adjectives (color: red, yellow, green, blue, blue, purple, black, white) verbs (stand up, sit down, picking up, putting down), and so on. This vocabulary mainly involved family members. When learning this English vocabulary of family members, the author showed the pictures of "father, mother, sister, brother, brother, grandfather and grandmother" and told six preschool children the English names. After they learned and remembered these words, the researcher organized a game—"Tell Me, Me Guess", which was very popular with children. In the game, the children modeled the family characters, and the other children made judgments about the characters they modeled. After the game, students used the same method to learn words about animals and plants. When learning adjectives, the author collected colorful balloons. Especially the colors that children like. Before the activity began, the author introduced the children to the colors of the balloons in English and then asked the children to read the words after her. Once the children had memorized the colors, the author assigned one child to hand out balloons on command, while the others were instructed to pick up balloons of different colors. For English verbs, to make it easier for the children to learn English verbs, the author showed the English verbs while instructing the children to imitate the actions together. In learning to "stand up, sit up, pick up, put down," the author introduced the verbs in English while demonstrating the movements with their bodies. The children in the classroom mimicked the author's words and actions together. In the practice of "greeting", students learned how to express greetings in English by imitating the author's language and actions. This approach is also known as "Display and Imitation."

"Display and Imitation" is not only the quintessence of the TPR method but also a model of English teaching for children. This approach is consistent with the physical and psychological characteristics of children. It provided a relaxed learning atmosphere for children and stimulates their interest in learning a second language. In this way, students learned how to express greetings and needs in English by imitating their teacher's words and actions. As a result, the children not only enriched their life experience but also improved their English ability.

b. Instructions and Actions

Preschool children love to move. They have difficulty maintaining consistent attention. Given this, according to the teaching principles of the TPR method, children should learn English by listening and moving. By instructing and moving, they can improve their focus and learn to express themselves freely. Teachers can use a series of verbs and imperative sentences to guide children to do actions. Under the guidance of teachers, children can exercise actively and learn effectively. Asher (1977) states that TPR could build learners' confidence, when learners respond to the instructions through body movement because students feel secure and happy, do not worry about making mistakes (Celestino, 1993). In short, "Instruction and Action" is one of the most basic principles of the TPR method, which is consistent with the nature and characteristics of the child.

Such activities needed large spaces, so the author carefully designed the spaces. Before the event, the author began with daily greetings such as "stand up" and "sit down". Because preschool children have a strong competitive spirit. They like to express themselves, and they want to be appreciated and recognized by others. So the author designed a variety of forms of competitive learning activities, such as word answering, guessing mouth shape, selecting "little teacher" and so on. In these games, the children participated in activities together, and after the activities, the author presented the winners with nice little gifts. The winning child then served as a coach for the second and more rounds. This method not only improved students' interpersonal skills but also promoted their interest in learning English. For English words that represent the color, the author first looked for a nearby color, such as a yellow table. The author pointed to the yellow table and said, "Look here, it's yellow, yellow, yellow." The children learned the other colors in the same way. After many classes, the children were familiar with common plants and animals, colors plus plants, shapes plus animals, and so on. So the author developed the difficulty and complexity of the commands. For example, "colors plus plants plus action", "names plus action plus shapes plus all kinds of toys", and so on. The author handed out carnations and said, "Please pick up the red carnation and put it down", or "Please pick up and put down the dinosaur". In this way, the children remembered English words. This method has helped children expand their vocabulary.

"Instructions and Actions" is one of the characteristics of the TPR method, and it is also an important method to help preschool children to improve. On the one hand, children are at a sensitive stage of language development, because of their limited vocabulary, such activities improved their vocabulary and English listening and speaking level. On the other hand, preschool children's body organs have not yet developed, so early childhood is a period of very rapid growth and development of children. "Instructions and Actions" liberated a child's body. Children's physical

participation is conducive to the development of their physical functions. Children developed memory, reflexes, and motor skills through “Instructions and Actions”. Therefore, “Instructions and Actions” fits the characteristics of preschool children and is a very meaningful teaching method.

c. Situational Communication

Situational Communication refers to teachers and children talk to each other by imitating the same roles which they play in virtual situations. The children have a rich imagination and a talent for acting. They have an excellent ability to imitate and a strong desire to perform. Therefore, this activity is very popular with children and is also widely used in other activities in kindergartens.

When carrying out situational communication activities, the author first introduced the activity situation to the children through oral English, facial expressions, body movements, or other teaching tools. This scenario was mainly derived from the children’s real life. Such as “making an introduction”, “doing housework”, “organizing birthday party” and so on. For example, in the study of introductions, the author instructed one child in the class to play the role of a new classmate. When the “new classmate” introduced himself, the other five students in the class took turns introducing themselves. Or, to learn how to celebrate birthdays, the author simulated a group birthday party, children listened to the song “Happy Birthday to You” and learned the birthday greeting “Happy birthday to you!”, “Here’s a gift for you”, “Oh! How nice. Thank you!”, “Let’s have some birthday cake/ milk” and some grateful answers, such as “thank you”, etc. In addition, the author used PowerPoint to show the children a bear family doing housework. After that, the author used the hygiene tools in the classroom and demonstrated various household chores to ask the students to express the author’s actions in English. The author then created situations that encouraged the students to perform on stage. These dialogues were convenient for students to learn, and these situations were close to students’ life. All in all, this method was of great help to children.

“Situational Communication” is also a performance game. This kind of play developed young children’s imagination. The plot was fictional and the props were fake. To enhance the performance and the fun, they had to treat all of this as if it were real. This kind of fake activity was carried out by the participant’s imagination. In addition, situational communication required children to imitate the roles, actions, and dialogues of the characters in the works. When they stood in the position of the role to perform the role, they needed to consider the feelings of the role. Therefore, this process improved children’s interpersonal skills and language expression skills.

4. Post-Test

During the TPR teaching activities, some interesting phenomena were discovered by this experiment. These children listened attentively to the researcher’s instructions and tried their best to translate the researcher’s instructions into their body language. Especially after setting up the reward mechanism, students were both active and excited. Even some of them who were not normally active were more likely to participate. The students’ eyes, ears, mouth, mouth, hands, and other parts of the body were active in the activity. This activity was vivid and interesting, which stimulated the interest of beginners to learn English and cultivated their good language learning. In a word, the activation process of “the Total Physical Response method” fully reflected the main role of students.

The subjects took the final text after the experiment with the TPR method. The score of the test was 100, and the questions were divided into Connection (50 points), Speaking (25 points), and Listening (25 points). In this test, a child listened to words and pointed out the pictures that were consistent with the meaning of the word. Five points for a correct answer and a total of ten questions were answered. The speaking part of the exam was to see the picture or model of the child and told the English meaning of it. Five points for a correct answer and a total of five questions were answered. Listening included 5 instructions “Stand up! Sit down!”, “Point to me! Point to you”, “Pick up the paper! Put down the paper!”, “Please walk to the chair! Stop!”, “Please walk to the table! Stop! Sit down”. They got 5 when the respondents were right. The examination results are shown in Table 2.

5. Post-Interview

The data in the experimental study accurately and objectively reflected the research results. Based on analyzing the research results, I further inferred the influence of the experiment on the research object (including positive and negative). However, the subjects’ personal feelings and internal changes (such as interest, emotion) couldn’t be obtained by testing. Therefore, interviews needed to understand the above. Only in this way could I obtain more comprehensive research results on this TPR teaching experiment. After the whole teaching experiment, I interviewed the six children from the experimental group to know their opinions about the TPR classes. The children were very young but they have a certain feeling about the classes and the teaching style. The questionnaire included the following questions:

- a. Do you like learning English now?
- b. Do you often participate in English learning activities?
- c. How do you want to learn English?
- d. Do you like the TPR method?
- e. Do you want the teacher to continue to use the TPR method?

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this part, the data collected through interviews and tests, as well as observation were analyzed in detail. By examining whether the results answered the previous research question, the author examined whether the teaching experiment had achieved the purpose of the research. On the one hand, the interviewing author has understood the children's evaluation of the TPR method, the application of this method, and the challenges it faces. On the other hand, the test results have been listed in a table, which was a more intuitive representation of the results. It reduced the subjectivity of the experiment. The effectiveness of the TPR method was detected by comparing the results of pre-test and post-test subjects.

A. The Result of Data Analysis of the Tests

There were two tests in the whole research, one was conducted before the experiment, the other was conducted after the experiment. To understand children's current interests and levels of English learning, the author designed a pre-test. The children were required to be tested one by one in the same classroom. And the author gave the scores according to their performance of each part, then calculated the total scores. The scores and the specific analysis of the pretest are as follows. The examination results are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
EXAMINATION RESULTS OF PRE-TEST

Test Content Scores Name	Connection (50)	Speaking (25)	Listening (25)	Aggregate (100)
Zhang Shiyu	20	10	10	40
Zhang Zixuan	15	10	10	35
Liu Mengran	20	15	15	50
Xia Zexi	20	15	10	45
Wei Yi	15	10	10	35
Wang Shuo	10	10	10	30

The results in table 1 showed that the total scores of six children are less than 50. Most of them didn't understand English instructions. Some children made the right action by imitating their peers and most of them didn't know the English names of the common things in life.

To test the effectiveness of the teaching experiment, the author tested the English ability of six children after four months of teaching the experiment. By testing the results, the author learned about the children's English proficiency after the TPR method. This test was just like the pretest and the children were required to be tested one by one in the same classroom. The specific scores and analysis of the post-test are as follows. The examination results are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
EXAMINATION RESULTS OF POST-TEST

Test Content Scores Name	Connection (50)	Speaking (25)	Listening (25)	Aggregate (100)
Zhang Shiyu	50	25	25	100
Zhang Zixuan	45	20	20	95
Liu Mengran	40	20	25	85
Xia Zexi	50	25	25	100
Wei Yi	40	20	20	90
Wang Shuo	45	25	25	90

The results showed that most of them were above 90 points and only one of them was below 90 points. Compared with the first test, this test showed that children's English proficiency made great progress in many aspects. It was easy to find out how much progress children have made after receiving teaching experiments.

As can be seen from the above data, the whole teaching result was very satisfactory. The advantages of the TPR method were mainly reflected in the following aspects: Firstly, this method helped children quickly understood new

languages by speaking and moving. Secondly, children gained long-term memory when their body movements and language were combined. Finally, children learned English under “zero pressure” and stimulated their interest to study. However, the TPR method had the following problems in preschool children’s English teaching. There was a limit to the vocabulary and language by using pictures, physical objects, body movements, etc. The TPR method was only applicable to preschool children in the primary stage. However, this method was difficult to apply to other areas. In addition, a large of number activities and games learners were excessively excited. So the author suggests that classroom management should be established and good classroom discipline should be maintained.

B. The Result of Data Analysis of the Interviews

To find out how the children felt and changed before and after the teaching experiment, the author interviewed six preschoolers. By comparing the results of the two interviews, it was found that there were significant changes in the attitude and evaluation of these children in English learning and the TPR method. Here are the details:

The first one was to investigate whether they were interested in English before they came to this class, six children were not interested in English. But all the children have shown that they have great interest in learning English after the teaching experiment. The second question was whether they used to take part in English learning activities often. Before the beginning of the teaching experiment, by visiting six children, it was found that only two thought they participated in English learning activities. The other four children were unwilling to participate in such activities. However, after the end of the teaching experiment, all of them participated in English learning activities. The third question was about their expectations in learning English, all children hoped that they could learn English through singing, acting, games, and so on, just like the TPR method. The four-question was about their thoughts as to the TPR method, all children thought the TPR method was very interesting, they learned English through playing instead of just following the teacher. The last question was whether the children want the teacher to keep using the TPR method, five children hoped their teacher to keep using the TPR method and two children had no idea about this question and did not give clear answers.

Above all, it could be found from the children’s answers that children were satisfied with the TPR method, and they expected English teachers to continue to use this method in future teaching. In addition, their English ability has been improved in such teaching activities. As a result, the author suggests that the TPR method should be applied by more English teachers in teaching activities. However, as the saying goes, “No one is perfect”. The TPR method have also some shortcomings, teachers should pay attention to these shortcomings to improve the teaching effect.

VI. CONCLUSION

This research not only provided the background, the purpose, and significance of the study, but also introduced the Total Physical Response Method in detail including its background, definition, theoretical framework, and so on. Meanwhile, the paper presented characteristics of preschool children and common teaching methods in preschool children’s English teaching. The most important thing was that the advantages and disadvantages have been found in the research process.

In summary, the Total Physical Response Method, as effective teaching, is worthy of promotion and application for preschool English teaching in the future. Firstly, the TPR method is a rich and interesting teaching form, which can not only attract the attention of children but also can improve their enthusiasm for learning a foreign language. According to Jean Piaget’s theory of cognitive development of children, teachers should provide children with various sensory stimulation when they carry out activities of English teaching. The TPR method advocates that learners should link language and behavior together when they learn the language. When teachers teach verbs like walking, running, jump, etc., they can make children understand the meaning of these words by speaking and acting. Therefore, the TPR method is very suitable for children’s characteristics. Secondly, the TPR method paid little attention to children’s mistakes in their learning process. It can create a relaxed and happy atmosphere in the classroom, which makes it easy for children to eliminate tension. So, it is helpful to help students eliminate fear and nervousness and enable students to learn in a zero-stress environment. Finally, the TPR method provides a learning environment that is closely related to real-life so that they can learn a foreign language in a variety of activities and apply what they learned. As we all know, preschool children are at the age of 3 to 6 stages in the critical period of language development, so their parents and teacher should grasp the critical period and make full use of the advantage of TPR to promote the improvement of English ability.

However, every coin has two sides, and the TPR method is no exception. The abstract words and sentences are hard to express in the TPR method. To improve learning efficiency and learners’ satisfaction, the user needs to be organically combined with other teaching methods. The TPR method requires the teacher to have high professional quality and comprehensive ability, including language expression ability, body coordination ability, artistic talent, and so on. Therefore, when teachers use the TPR method in practice, they must strengthen the training of professional skills and improve their knowledge and accomplishment. To sum up, different methods have their unique characteristics. According to the different needs of children, preschool teachers should choose a more suitable method for children, especially the Total Physical Response method.

Although many scholars have researched the TPR method in English teaching, the paper pays more attention to preschool children’s English teaching. In addition, the advantages and disadvantages of the TPR method in practice are further discovered by the research, and a reasonable establishment is proposed. Although there are many limitations in

this research, the author hopes it can make some contribution to further study.

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The Impact of Negotiation as a Social Practice on EFL Writing Peer Assessment Sessions

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Abstract—This qualitative study aims to investigate the negotiation technique that EFL students employ in EFL writing peer assessment sessions. As a data collection instrument, a close-observation has been used for ($n=20$) participants randomly selected from an intermediate school in Saudi Arabia. The purpose of using observation is to shed light on the students' negotiation of peer assessment practices in writing class and how they work collaboratively in order to discuss their writing prompts more effectively. The findings of the study showed that students' negotiations skills impacted improvements of the writing skill positively. Moreover, negotiations and discussions have actively engaged students into effective collaborative learning and considerably increased their participation and language practice in their peer assessment sessions.

Index Terms—negotiation, EFL writing assessment, peer assessment, Saudi EFL context, ZPD

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing assessment has always been considered a very complex issue in ESL/EFL classes (Crusan, 2002; Huang, 2009). There are always debates about some issues regarding writing assessment, such as scoring writing performance, reliability, and validity of writing assessment tools. In addition to those issues, raters are often concerned about the scales of exemplary texts, how those scales are constructed, and what linguistics aspects should be included in them (Hamp-Lyons, 1990; Knoch, 2011; Alshakhi, 2019). In the Saudi context, writing assessment has hardly ever been a subject of agreement amongst practitioners, instructors, or even students for many years (Obeid, 2017; Alshakhi, 2018). Its complexity represents a challenge for many writing teachers. The learning outcomes are often affected by assessment tools that teachers use in class which are, in general, based on their belief and theoretical background (Hyland, 2019). Moreover, there are many challenges that play a very significant role in imposing some assessment methods in the class. Those challenges such as large classes, demotivated students, teachers' pre-service training, and lack of teachers' professional development have been a concern of many Saudi scholars (Elyas & Al Grigri, 2014). For example, the massive number of students in the class puts a heavy burden on teachers which often impels them to resort to traditional assessment methods, such as testing or holistic grading to assess students' writing performance (Bahanshal, 2013).

Alternative assessment has emerged as a suggested tool to overcome those challenges in many educational contexts. It has been argued that it enables teachers to vary their assessment tools according to their contexts and gives them the ability to overcome many assessment challenges. Tannenbaum (1996) stated that "many educators have come to recognize that alternative assessments are an important means of gaining a dynamic picture of students' academic and linguistic development" (p.2).

One of the key aspects of alternative assessment tools that might be used to assess students' writing performance is peer assessment. The practice of peer assessment as an alternative writing assessment tool has grown in the field of L1 and ESL/EFL writing teaching since the 1990s and became one of the most effective assessment tools in ESL/EFL contexts (Min, 2006, 2016; Hyland, 2019). Many scholars advocate the use of peer assessment in ESL/EFL writing classes for its potential advantages for learners. They claim that peer assessment can foster students' writing skills and can prove to be an effective tool in raising students' self-confidence, awareness of assessment, and critical thinking. Additionally, it can save teachers' time and reduce assessment load when appropriately used in large classes. On the other hand, the opponents claim that ESL/EFL students are not often capable of conducting effective and fair peer assessment due to their low proficiency level, the tendency for friendship bias, and the complexity of peer-assessment techniques. They also claim that when students conduct peer assessment, they often negotiate the low order concerns of writing rather than the high order concerns and deep writing concepts, such as arguments, perspectives, and critical thinking (Saito & Fujita, 2004; Bijami et al., 2013). As a result, learning outcomes are compromised.

Although many studies have examined the effectiveness of peer assessment techniques, little attention has been given to this notion in the Saudi EFL context, except for two studies which were conducted on university-level students. Therefore, this study targets a public school's students to shed light on the negotiation of peer assessment practice and its effect on students' attitudes towards writing in the Saudi context. As a sub-goal, this study seeks to investigate how

the ZPD contributes to stimulating negotiation and interaction among EFL students in the Saudi context.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It's important to note that the theoretical framework of this study has been chosen to discuss how negotiation in writing peer assessment sessions might impact the learning process in the writing skill. In the following section, I will discuss the theatrical framework.

The Zone of Proximal Development

Based on the social constructivist theory, Vygotsky developed the notion of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Vygotsky assumes that there is a zone between what a learner can do and what s/he cannot do. He asserts that a learning process should fill that zone with challenging activities to gradually move students from their actual developmental level to the potential developmental level through scaffolding, interaction, communicative activities, and collaboration with more capable peers that help them enhance their skills gradually (Wertsch, 1984; cited in Doherty, 2002; Khaliliaqdam, 2014; Hyland, 2019).

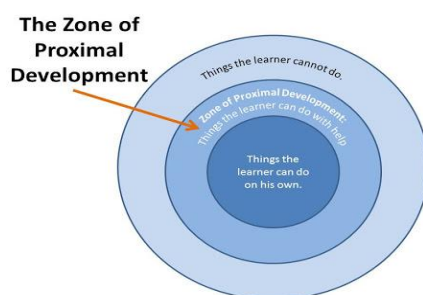


Figure 1: The Zone of Proximal Development

Since writing is a social practice, negotiation and interaction are considered the core of the ESL/EFL learning process in writing skill that contributes to the learners' writing development. Hence, many studies suggest implementing the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory to stimulate negotiation, interaction and reinforce the use of the language among ESL/EFL students, especially in a writing class. ZPD-based learning can be implemented in ESL/EFL contexts through various methods and strategies, such as active learning, cooperative learning, problem solving, and peer assessment which all boost negotiation and interaction between learners in a classroom environment.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching and assessing writing in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) is quite different from contexts where English is considered as the second language (ESL). Hence, there have been many attempts in the EFL and the Saudi context to understand writing assessment practices in general and peer assessment practices in particular. In the following sections, several studies are reviewed and discussed in detail.

A. Impact of Peer Assessment on Writing

Until recently, traditional tools of assessment are the most used tools in different parts of the world and testing is the dominant tool, especially in countries where English is taught as a foreign language, such as in the Arab world (Grami, 2010). However, moving towards new ESL/EFL teaching methods and strategies required new tools for assessment which led to the emergence of alternative tools including, but not limited to, portfolios, authentic assessments, group projects, and peer assessment. Alternative assessment helps gather data about students' progress and learning process (Coombe et al., 2012).

Many scholars have globally conducted many studies to investigate the effectiveness of alternative assessment, particularly peer assessment in ESL/EFL writing classes. Yusof et al. (2012) conducted action research in Bandung, Indonesia, to investigate the use of peer assessment at the planning stage of the writing process. Questionnaires, observations, writing samples, and interviews have been used as data collection tools for the study. The findings revealed that students with guidance from teachers were able to provide constructive feedback to their peers. That definitely essentializes the importance of effective negotiations in peer assessment sessions.

In the same line, Uymaz (2019) conducted another study in the Turkish context during the 2017-2018 academic year. His quantitative study aimed to find the effects of peer feedback on EFL students' written performances in essay writing. As for the participants of the study, a group of students (n=8) took part in the study. Data was gathered from students' work samples. During an eight-week period, students were required to submit two drafts after receiving peer feedback on four separate essay tasks. Moreover, a pre-test and post-test were administered to students. Using Conrad and Goldstein's (1999) taxonomy, data collected from the correct revisions in the second drafts were calculated. Also, data

coming from the pre-tests and the post-tests were statistically analyzed with SPSS by conducting a paired samples t-test. The findings showed that peer feedback helped students write 69% of the feedback points which have been provided by their peers correctly. In addition, the written test results showed a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test.

On the other hand, another study carried out by Huisman et al. (2018) aimed to compare the writing performance of undergraduate students who had provided or received anonymous written peer feedback in the context of academic writing. The findings revealed that there is no significant difference between giving and receiving feedback, and that both have resulted in similar improvements in writing performance. Moreover, results revealed that there is no direct relationship between peer feedback perceptions and writing performance improvement.

In the Saudi context, Alqurashi (2009) conducted a study on Saudi college students to investigate their perceptions towards using non-traditional strategies of feedback in writing class. Students were required to comment on each other's writing as peer assessment. To collect the data, 24 students responded to a four-point survey. The findings showed that most students reported that learning writing as a process had improved their writing skills. Moreover, results revealed that most students had a positive attitude towards both giving and receiving feedback from their peers which contributed to enhancing their compositions.

Another interesting study in the Saudi context conducted by Grami (2010) aimed to investigate the effectiveness of introducing peer assessment to a group of university-level students. Many data collection tools were used during the three-month-long project. Study findings showed that peer feedback had a great impact on the students. They were highly impressed by the potential of peer sessions on their English writing routines which has resulted in their eagerness to have more similar sessions in the future. Furthermore, results revealed that peer assessment has actively engaged students into effective cooperative learning and enhanced their participation in the class. According to the study's results, Grami claims that if there is more training for students to use peer feedback, the benefits might be very significant. It should be noted that Grami's study was conducted on the university-level students, which means that the effectiveness of peer assessment has not been investigated in primary and intermediate contexts.

Although there are interesting studies that have been done globally and in the Saudi context, peer assessment has to be studied in other neglected contexts, such as in public schools, especially in the primary and intermediate stages to investigate the effectiveness of using peer assessment as an assessment tool.

B. Pros & Cons of Peer Assessment

Despite the increasing spread of alternative assessment in EFL/ESL classrooms, its effectiveness has not been determined as literature suggests divergent opinions on this issue. Peer assessment is one of those tools which might have many cons besides its pros. According to the literature, there are many advantages of using peer assessment as it actively involves students into the learning process. It also encourages students and motivates them to participate in classroom activities and negotiate relevant activities which create a conducive learning environment (Hyland, 2000). Similarly, peer assessment minimizes time spent on assessing students' work and reduces teachers' workloads (Yarrow & Topping, 2001). In addition, peer assessment raises students' awareness of the assessment criteria, builds their self-confidence, and promotes learner autonomy. One of the major benefits is that peer assessment helps develop critical thinking and social interaction among learners (Yang et al., 2006), and allows them to practice and develop the targeted language (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). On the other hand, one of the most significant issues that might affect the validity and the reliability of conducting peer assessment inside the writing class is the Friendship-bias. It has been argued that a relationship between students might affect the process of peer assessment and result in a tendency of friendship-bias (Saito & Fujita, 2004; Lee et al., 2013). Moreover, Storch (2005) states that peer assessment might turn the focus of students to the product rather than the writing process. He also claims that many students' feedback often focuses on sentence-level mistakes and their notes might not be helpful for their peers.

Although there are rudimentary issues with the use of peer assessment as an assessment tool, the evidence suggests that the pros outweigh the cons which justify the use of peer assessment for effective and useful writing assessment.

C. Elements of Successful Peer Assessment

Min (2005, 2006) asserts the importance of peer assessment training before conducting it (i.e., students should be prepared for peer assessment by exposing them to its meaning, goal, and the expected benefit). Most often, peer assessment takes the form of formative assessment; thus, it may not be graded at the beginning, which can motivate students and develop their positive attitude towards peer assessment.

Successful peer assessment must have a rational concept. The conceptual rationales for peer assessment are to engage learners in the assessment process, to give them a role in their own learning, and to shift the responsibility for their learning to them, so they become autonomous learners (Liu & Carless, 2006). During peer assessment, students might need support from their teachers, hence, teachers' observation or monitoring is very significant for successful peer assessment as they might help students introduce some critical notes about peers' works, train them how to respond to those critical notes with justifications and prepare a good atmosphere for students' negotiation. Therefore, teachers' following up and supporting students during peer assessment is very important for a successful peer assessment process (Finn & Garner, 2011). Moreover, simple checklists or rubrics are very important for the peer assessment process, especially for low performing students who find conducting peer assessment a challenging task.

Successful peer assessment totally depends on the effectiveness of feedback and the quality of negotiation and interaction among students. Black and William (1998) identify four elements for effective feedback which are: 1) designing accredited and measurable checklists or rubrics; 2) a means for identifying learners' performances in relation to those checklists or rubrics; 3) a means for comparing learners' performance to those checklists or rubrics; and 4) a mechanism in which the data can be applied to modify the gap.

D. Appropriateness of Peer Assessment for Low Performing Students

Low performing students might form the majority of ESL/EFL students in many contexts, particularly in the Arab world. Having low performing students in ESL/EFL classes affects the teaching process and the learning process as well. Since assessment is a part of the teaching process, it is also affected by the performance level of the students in the class. Thus, teachers often struggle to design appropriate activities and assessment tasks for those students. Implementing peer assessment for low performing students might be, to some extent, complicated for many reasons. Firstly, low performing students might reject the idea of conducting peer assessment. Secondly, the benefits of peer assessment might not be understood by the students. Finally, low performing students could find difficulty reading their peers' works critically. However, good observation and support from teachers might help overcoming these challenges, such as providing them with checklists or simple rubrics might be very effective at the beginning.

E. Negotiation in Writing Peer Assessment Sessions

Many scholars assert that learning is a social activity that is strongly influenced by involvement, engagement, and participation. It has also been argued that a language is a functional tool that can be acquired through interaction and negotiation in the classroom which play a very significant role in mediating learning (Krashen, 1982; Kramsch, 1986; Walsh, 2011, 2013, 2014; Urmeneta & Walsh, 2017). Likewise, Walsh (2011) claims that Classroom Interaction Competence (CIC) is the core of the learning process. He defines CIC as "Teachers' and learners' ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning" (p.158). Consequently, negotiation and interaction are considered key to a successful learning process in writing classes, which can occur between teacher-student or student-student in a classroom environment. It can also take place during the writing peer assessment sessions to facilitate learning for students which lead to students' writing achievement.

As many of the contemporary practices in ESL/EFL classrooms advocate student-centered teaching, peer assessment derives its strength from the social learning theory of Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978). Peer assessment sessions mainly depend on the interaction and negotiation between learners which might include, exchanging ideas, critical thinking, and cognitive processes. Hence, peer assessment is one of those assessment tools that can help stimulate negotiation and interaction between students in the classroom. It can also help learners cooperate, negotiate with each other, and engage into social activities, such as dialogues and communicative activities to learn the language. During peer assessment sessions, students speak, listen, and negotiate which is a very realistic context for learning L2. Peer assessment is an authentic tool for learning due to its social characteristics.

Research Question

This study aims to answer the following overarching question:

1. How do language learners negotiate the practice of peer assessment in a writing class in the Saudi EFL context?

IV. METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the methodology of this study: research design, context, participants, data collection instruments, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

A. Research Design

Bearing in mind that the research question of this study is: How do language learners negotiate the practice of peer assessment in a writing class in the Saudi EFL context? This study adopted a qualitative research design in order to examine my context and address its problems while considering factors that might affect it.

B. Context and Participants

The context of the study was an intermediate school located in Jeddah, in the western region of Saudi Arabia. The school is a public school under the management of the Saudi Ministry of Education. Like all public schools in the Saudi context, this school teaches English as a foreign language. Due to the limitations of the study which have been explained in detail in the limitations section, the participants of the study were ($n=20$) 9th-grade students. All participants were male students between the ages of 15 to 16 years old. Since all participants were in the 9th grade, the language proficiency level of the participants was supposed to be an intermediate level which is expected to be at the high A2 level according to the CEFR.

C. Data Collection Instrument

Observation is a data collection instrument used to collect data about participants' behavior in a specific context. Creswell (2014) defined observation as "when the researcher takes field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site" (p. 239). The purpose of the observation is to study in-depth the many phenomena that

constitute or affect the context of a unit (a student, a class, a school or a community) and develop generalizations about the larger population to which it belongs (Cohen et al., 2017).

In this study, the observation took place over four sessions, preceded by three training sessions to prepare the participants for the peer assessment practice and the proper use of the assessment checklist. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all sessions were conducted online using the Microsoft Teams platform. Prior to the start of the study, the participants were given a clear rationale for peer assessment. Moreover, the participants were explained the importance of peer assessment and the expected benefits that might be gained through it. Despite the observation being online, I was able to take many valuable notes that facilitated the interpretation of the data.

D. Ethical Considerations

In this study, many ethical protocols have been followed in order to preserve the confidentiality of the study. An approval was taken from the Ministry of Education to conduct this study in a public school. Due to all the participants being underage, voluntary informed consent has been obtained from their parents. For the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, all of them have been given anonymous names. Moreover, the participants have been informed that all data gathered from the observation will be preserved for the purpose of the study and will not be disclosed to anyone.

V. FINDINGS

Observing the peer assessment process during the sessions enabled me to take notes about the students' negotiation and practice of peer assessment. During the first session, students asked each other several questions to clarify their writing works before assessing them. Although peer assessment instructions were clear for most of the participants, the researcher intervened many times to help low performing students and scaffold the peer assessment process. Due to scaffolding, the students gradually became more independent, but still needed some interventions from the researcher, especially to assist the lower-level students.

Participants were incredibly active and very helpful towards each other even though it was a new experience for them. To raise students' self-confidence, I encouraged them by using the word "teacher" to call each student, which had a great impact on them as they showed responsibility for assessing and grading each other's work. The peer assessment sessions were very helpful for the learning process and the students since they enhanced self-confidence, awareness, and responsibility as autonomous language learners. Moreover, the students were interested in assessing each other and passionately continued peer assessment sessions that positively changed the classroom atmosphere by engaging them in negotiations, such as asking, clarifying, assessing, and grading. Due to the element of scaffolding, discussions and negotiations with more knowledgeable students contributed to improved performance of lower-level proficiency students who somehow became more independent learners.

Since peer assessment has a social nature, we can't overlook the behavioral aspects of it. Although it was a new experience for them, all students maintained good behavior during the sessions. The turn-taking was systematic and smooth between them, and no misbehaviors or interruptions were noticed. Moreover, students were very polite and showed some respect to each other except for one aggressive case where one student rejected the criticism notes that were provided by his peer. Ultimately, it had a positive impact on the process by increasing the length of the negotiation and discussion between the two students.

In fact, there was a clear difference between the teacher's assessment and peer assessment in terms of classroom atmosphere, time spent on the tasks, teacher's workload, students' performance, and practice of the language. Peer assessment decreased the teachers' workload and helped them deal with the assessment process in a short time. Furthermore, peer assessment enhanced the students' attitude towards the writing class. They enjoyed the peer assessment sessions which made the writing class more appealing to them. Additionally, the conducive learning environment encouraged students to practice the language more freely, which is not the case in many writing classrooms in the Saudi EFL context. Finally, peer assessment has obviously enhanced classroom participation and actively engaged students into an effective cooperative learning.

In the final peer assessment session, the students were more actively involved in negotiation and discussion than the previous sessions. There was no intervention from the researcher except for facilitating the lower-level proficiency students who also showed very good self-confidence like higher-level proficiency students. Furthermore, their awareness and responsibility for assessment have remarkably increased. Additionally, students became more independent and confident as they could take many assessment notes even without referring back to the assessment checklist.

However, students' feedback focused on the lower-order concerns (LOCs) (sentence-level). No feedback regarding higher-order concerns (HOCs), such as organization, argument, and development were noticed. In terms of the amount of feedback produced by the students, it was very short and limited to the assessment checklist, but useful for peer assessment. It was observed that the amount and length of the feedback were significantly affected by the learners' varied proficiency levels. It was also noticed that some students, in particular the high performing students, outperformed their peers in the amount and length of the given feedback.

VI. DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to identify how students negotiate the practice of peer assessment in writing class. In order to answer this question, close observation was conducted during the peer assessment sessions to get a deeper understanding of the students' negotiation of peer assessment. Surprisingly, the close observation facilitated the process and helped students to actively participate in the peer assessment sessions. This finding supports the stance of Finn and Garner (2011) who advocate the idea of the observation during the peer assessment sessions for its potential advantages. The results are also in line with those previously published studies as the participants of this study were actively engaged in the writing class which was also reported by Hyland (2000), Grami (2010), and Yu et al. (2020). These results indicate that implementing ZPD can reduce the students' anxiety and lead to their effective participation in a writing class. Its implementation through discussion and negotiation can also push students to become more extroverted and more open to the learning process. Furthermore, many participants, in particular the low performing students, became more engaged in the learning process which is one of the key purposes of implementing the ZPD in the writing class.

Another important finding was that peer assessment had raised students' self-confidence, awareness, and responsibility towards assessment, which enhanced social interaction and negotiation among the students. Moreover, the participants were very much interested in assessing each other and passionate to have more peer assessment sessions. One assumption from the results is that when assessment tasks shift from teachers to the ESL/EFL student-writers, they will feel more confident and show some responsibility towards their learning. Moreover, they will be more aware of assessment criteria which encourage them to assess each other and implement those criteria to find their shortcomings. Additionally, implementing ZPD through peer assessment sessions helped turning students from being mere dependent learners to be more independent ones, which was evident in the third and fourth sessions in which the participants were able to provide effective and constructive feedback to their peers. Also, implementing ZPD had amazingly encouraged the hesitant students to be more confident which positively affected their participation in classroom activities. Moreover, ZPD created a good atmosphere for collaborative learning, which was evident in the students' participation and their enthusiasm for the peer assessment sessions. These findings support many previous studies, including Min (2005), Yang et al. (2006), Ertmer et al. (2007), Grami (2010), Moussaoui (2012), Yusof et al. (2012), Uymaz (2019).

Another finding of this study is that peer assessment has obviously decreased the teacher's workload and the time spent on assessment. Shifting responsibility of assessment to students made the main responsibilities of the teacher monitor, supervise, and facilitate the learning process for students which is one of the key aspects of student-centered classes and ZPD. This finding is in accordance with studies such as Yarrow & Topping (2001).

One unanticipated finding from the observation showed that although the participants were young, they maintained good behavior during the peer assessment sessions. The sessions were very systematic, smooth, peaceful, and undisturbed in terms of turn taking, providing, or receiving feedback, and showing mutual respect to others. No interruption, rudeness, or misbehavior among the participants was noticed during the peer assessment sessions. Moreover, the students were provided effective and useful feedback and no friendship-bias was noticed during these sessions. One assumption from these findings is that shifting the responsibility of the assessment tasks to the students made them feel more responsible for their own learning, which was positively reflected in their attitude and behavior in the class. Such a finding was also reported by Liu and Carless (2006). However, this result is contrary to some previous studies, such as Saito and Fujita (2004), and Lee et al. (2013) who claim that students can have the tendency of a friendship-bias during a peer review due to the relationship between them. Students who are less responsible might also have a tendency of friendship bias, which might affect the assessment process.

One interesting finding is that students during the negotiation were focused on the lower-order concerns (LOCs), such as structure, capitalization, space between words, handwriting, grammar, spelling, and punctuations (sentence-level only), which is in line with the study by Storch (2005). The reason behind that in my opinion, is the lower level of language proficiency of the students which made them stick to the assessment checklist, i.e., their limited linguistic competence does not help them to look beyond the sentence level and think more critically.

In terms of practicing the targeted language, observation showed that the amount of practice had significantly risen. This result makes it possible to assume with confidence that the implementation of ZPD theory through peer assessment gave the students more opportunities to negotiate and discuss which expanded their practicing of the new language and positively affected their language acquisition. This result may also be explained by the fact that learning is socially constructed through social activities, such as interaction, negotiation, and collaboration. This result is in line with studies by Min (2005) and Lundstrom and Baker (2009).

Observation also showed that the dynamic nature of the peer assessment sessions which depends on giving and receiving feedback at the same time expanded the participants' time of speaking which forced them to speak for a longer period to discuss, negotiate and justify their points of view. It is possible to assume that implementing ZPD through dynamic peer assessment sessions had contributed to the learners' participation, negotiation, engagement, and openness, and enabled them to be more confident and more autonomous students.

Observation also showed a need for more peer assessment training as it is a new experience for students, and they need more practice to obtain the necessary skills for assessing their peers' works. This result may suggest that the students are neither aware of the assessment criteria nor its literacy which are essential for the assessment process. Moreover, students in the Saudi EFL context are accustomed to the teacher's feedback and do not consider it a role of

the inexperienced students. Therefore, peer assessment training sessions have to take place before shifting the responsibility of assessment to the students. As this finding was expected, it supports several previous studies by Stanley (1992), Zhu (1995), Hansen and Liu (2005), and Min (2005, 2006) who also emphasized the significant role of training learners before conducting peer assessment sessions in classrooms.

VII. CONCLUSION

This research project provided a deeper insight and shed new light on the implementation of peer assessment and ZPD in writing classes. The key findings of the study suggest that peer assessment is a very effective tool and has a great impact on EFL Students' attitudes towards writing classes in the Saudi context. It incredibly contributes to triggering the spirit of competition and teamwork among students in a writing class through a collaborative learning approach. Peer assessment also raises students' motivation, confidence, responsibility, and awareness of the writing assessment criteria which lead to significant improvements in their writing skills.

Negotiation and interaction as a social practice in writing peer assessment sessions have the potential to stimulate the social nature of the learning between low performing individuals and the more knowledgeable ones, which contributes to revealing their writing shortcomings and enables them to correct those shortcomings and show better writing performances.

Considering the pedagogical implications for this project, this study might be a valuable source for many stakeholders. Furthermore, it provides some directions for future studies to add more valuable findings which might help create a broader view and a deeper understanding of alternative and peer assessment.

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Theory and Practice in Language Studies (TPLS) is a peer-reviewed international journal dedicated to promoting scholarly exchange among teachers and researchers in the field of language studies. The journal is published monthly.

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