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## Contents

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### REGULAR PAPERS

- Fragmented Bodies, Fractured Identities: Womanhood and Body Politics in *Breasts and Eggs* 3057  
*Nadia Mohammad*
- Tahmima's Utopia in *The Startup Wife*: The Existential Feminism in a Male Tech World 3063  
*Ashraf Tajmeeh, Prakash A, and Bindu M.R.*
- Rediscovering the Genesis of Girolamo De Rada Romantic Poetry: *Songs before Millosao* 3071  
*Serafina Laj ħ*
- English Classes as a Tool of Health Culture Formation Among Students of Higher Education Institutions 3079  
*Irina M. Avdieienko, Svitlana A. Virotschenko, Anna V. Kotova, Tetiana M. Maksimishina, and Oksana Yu. Bieliaieva*
- The Use and Exposure of Hate Speech Among Students: A Discourse Analysis Study 3087  
*Shebli Younus Idham, Sarab Kadir Mugair, Samah Yaslam Saleh Baagbah, Haili Feng, Fatima Al Hussein, and Jana Saab*
- Measuring Integrativeness as a Motivation for Second-Language Acquisition of Arabic in Learners at Saudi Arabia's Arabic Language Institutes 3097  
*Danya Shaalan*
- Developing the Communication Competencies of Non-Arabic Speakers Using Interactive Kagan Strategies 3108  
*H. Abdullah Yousef Abdallah and S. Salwa Mohd Noor*
- Using Conceptual Metaphors to Bridge the Gap Between the Receptive and Productive Competence of Idiomatic Expressions: The Case of Jordanian EFL Learners 3118  
*Maisoun I. Abu-Joudeh, Wael M. Zuraiq, Abdullah A. Jaradat, and Fatima M. Muhaidat*
- The Language and Thainess of Thai Food Products on an E-Commerce Platform 3126  
*Piyada Low*
- Translanguaging as a Communicative Method in Film-Audience Relationship—Case Study of the Film *Wu Ming* 3135  
*Lili Han*
- Representation of Ecological Wisdom in Banyumas Folklore: An Ecocritical Study 3141  
*Achmad Sultoni, Sarwiji Suwandi, Andayani, and Sumarwati*
- Delayed Exposure to Second Language Acquisition: The Robustness of Critical Period Hypothesis and the Limitations of the Plasticity Theory 3149  
*Naif Alsaedi*
-

From Urban Space to Cyberspace: A Research on Spatial Writing and Human-Android Relations in <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> <i>Mi Chen, Noritah Omar, Zainor Izat Binti Zainal, and Mohammad Ewan Bin Awang</i>	3157
Non-Quantifiable Nouns in Mandarin Chinese <i>Yufeng Ruan</i>	3166
Teaching-Related Use of Social Media Among Saudi EFL Teachers: Revisiting the Innovative Technology <i>Mohammed H. Albahiri, Ali Albashir Mohammed Alhaj, and Majda B. A. Abdelkarim</i>	3181
The Transitive Construction of China's National Image in the Editorials of <i>The New York Times</i> <i>Xinyang Dai and Hanita Hassan</i>	3190
Rubrics for Girls in Arab Children's Magazines: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis Approach <i>Thiziri Aziri and Zahra Awad</i>	3198
Discourse Analysis of Female Political Speeches: A Study of Linguistic Techniques and Devices <i>Asjad Ahmed Saeed Balla</i>	3208
Representation of Local Wisdom in the Ancient Indonesian Manuscript as Literature Learning Materials in School <i>Mipa Tiyasmala, Andayani, and Atikah Anindyarini</i>	3217
Effect of Glossing on Chinese Senior High School EFL Learners' Vocabulary Acquisition <i>Yequ Zhu</i>	3224
Linguistic Relativity: A Study of the Role of L1 in L2 Vocabulary Acquisition in an EFL Setting <i>Arif Ahmed Mohammed Hassan Al-Ahdal and Fahad Saleh Aljabr</i>	3232
Literature Review on Second and Foreign Language Listening Strategy Research in the Past Fifty Years: Problems and Future <i>Linlin Qiu, Kew Si Na, and Norhiza Binti Ismail</i>	3240
The Effect of Teaching Text Structure on Improving Writing Composition Skills and Reducing Writing Anxiety Among Seventh Graders in Jordan <i>Ra'ed M. Algaragere and Mohammed A. Al-Khawaldeh</i>	3251
Bringing Autonomy to EFL Learners at Qassim University: A Study of the Role of Materials in Learning <i>Fahd Hamad Alqasham</i>	3260
Feasibility Assessment of Merdeka Curriculum in <i>Bahasa Indonesia</i> Digital Textbooks for Class VII Junior High Schools <i>Nugraheni Eko Wardani, Sarwiji Suwandi, and Chafit Ulya</i>	3268
Applying Systemic Functional Linguistics in Translation Studies: Instantiation, Individuation, and a Three-Dimensional Model <i>Yingchen Yu</i>	3279
Creative Teaching in Secondary School EFL Classes: A Critical Study of a Proposed Training Program <i>Naif Salem Alrefaei and Sultan Abdullah Almuhaimeed</i>	3291
A Sociolinguistics Perspective of Interrogative Forms in English, Standard Arabic and Jordanian Dialects <i>Natheer Mohammad Ahmad Al-Omari and Manjet Kaur Mehar Singh</i>	3299

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The Representation of Gaza War (2021) in the Official Remarks of Hamas and Israel: A Critical Discourse Study <i>Hamza K. Alnwihe and Linda S. Al-Abbas</i>	3311
Assessment Tools of EFL Courses via Blackboard: Faculty Members' and Students' Perceptions <i>Hanan M. Almutairi and HosamEldeen A. Elsawy</i>	3319
Multimodal Linguistic Landscape in Lombok: A Case Study of Product Branding <i>Dewi Nastiti Lestariningsih, Raima Maslan Sihombing, Indah Okitasari, Nining Nur Alaini, Aditya Wardhani, and Exti Budihastuti</i>	3330
Expert EFL Teachers' Emotion in Professional Contexts in China <i>Yuanyuan Chen</i>	3338
An Exploration of the Decolonization and Ecofeminist Activism of Indigenous Kenyan Women in Wangari Maathai's Memoir <i>Unbowed: One Woman's Story</i> <i>Naeemah J. Alrasheedi</i>	3346
Status Quo of the Professional Identity of Teachers: A Quantitative Study of College EFL Teachers in China <i>Zhang Xu and Noor Mala Ibrahim</i>	3352
Dialogue in Lotman and Bakhtin: Implications for Foreign Language Education <i>Haiqing Tian, Saengchan Hemchua, and Yongxiang Wang</i>	3360
The Image of the Political Power in Ziad Mohafza's <i>Inmates of the Darkness</i> <i>Suleiman S. Al-Ferain, Thaher M. Alzawaherh, and Ameena A. Al-Harashsheh</i>	3370

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# Fragmented Bodies, Fractured Identities: Womanhood and Body Politics in *Breasts and Eggs*

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**Abstract**—This article employs feminist theory to explore the theme of fractured femininity in Mieko Kawakami's *Breasts and Eggs*. Through the three female characters in the novel, Kawakami highlights the scarring of womanhood in a contemporary, postmodern context. However, the concept of scarring follows Cixous's metaphor in which literature becomes a liberating and transformative act that vindicates the wounding of womanhood through the imposition of repressive ideals. This is shown as each of these women comes to represent the resilience of women in the face of conventional definitions of femininity. Natsuko's reluctant following of convention, Makiko's pursuit of feminine body ideals, and Midoriko's struggle with her biological self represent women's struggle to realize femininity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Ultimately, these women manage to sustain a level of empowerment by rejecting the socially constructed concept of femininity. Kawakami puts the concept of femininity to the test to prove that it is the result of nurture rather than nature, thus suggesting that constructing a feminine identity in a postmodern setting is much more complex than in theory.

**Index Terms**—contemporary literature, world literature, feminism, femininity, gender identity, Mieko Kawakami

## I. INTRODUCTION

Mieko Kawakami's *Breasts and Eggs* is a complex tale that features female identity being wounded, manifest in various personas and components by social pressure and expectations. In the novel, Kawakami presents three women protagonists who express different aspects of an identity crisis. The protagonist and principal narrator is Natsuko, an aspiring writer based in the bustling metropolis of Tokyo who looks as far away from realizing her dream of becoming a novelist. Her sister, Makiko, visits her from their more provincial hometown of Osaka. She works in a low-rate job as a hostess, and her sole obsession in life is her appearance, especially her breasts. She brings along her daughter, Midoriko, a 12-year-old who is so horrified by life in general, especially by her mother and the idea of femininity, that she has gone voluntarily mute and only communicates in writing. These three women provide the fabric for Kawakami's exploration of the fracturing of womanhood, each touching upon various aspects of femininity and its politics. To some degree, they are the same. Natsuko provides the conscious voice, Makiko provides the unhindered impulse to project sexual-social attraction, and Midoriko serves as an overly inhibiting superego.

At the same time, there is an essential aspect regarding how technology intervenes as a mediating force in this struggle for identity. This is primarily manifested in Makiko's obsession with getting breast implants, which she believes will enhance her femininity, make her more desirable, and eventually improve her social standing. In this sense, a fundamental part of the reading provided in this article is understanding the intersections of feminine identity and technological interventions. As Gillis noted, a crucial element in the contemporary feminist project is to understand how "technology is the site of power, mapping and reading the ways in which the body is mediated by technology – whether the washing machine, the telephone or the computer" (2007, p. 332). This provides the possibility of reading Makiko's desire for technological intervention on her body as either a step toward empowerment or a step towards capitulation to archetypical masculine desires. Thus, a critical theme emerges that is central to reading *Breasts and Eggs* regarding how femininity is constituted in this postmodern, contemporary context.

This literary exploration of the topic hinges on a reading of how Kawakami uses the three women in the novel as elements to construct an often-contradictory image of femininity. In more than one way, these women's bodies become literary and figurative battlegrounds for putting conventional definitions of femininity to the test. In this sense, they can be framed through Cixous's concept of the literary scar, closely related to her idea of stigmata. Cixous proposed the body as a site where language and social expectations intersect, arguing that women's bodies, in particular, have historically been marked by language. These marks or scars can be seen as symbolic representations of how women's bodies are inscribed with patriarchal discourse, limiting their agency and self-expression. Natsuko's reluctant following of convention, Makiko's aggressive pursuit of social body ideals, and Midoriko's rejection of her physical self all represent the struggle to realize womanhood within the constraints of these expectations. However, these women also make their marks, their "stigmata," as Cixous might say, using different forms of inscription (writing, diary-keeping, body modification) in their attempt to gain agency. Consequently, this article uses Cixous's feminist theory to explore these characters in relation to the themes of the body, female identity, scarring, and fragmentation.

## II. PASSIVITY, RESISTANCE, ACCEPTANCE: NATSUKO, THE NARRATOR

Natsuko is simultaneously transparent and dense in narrating her world. On the one hand, she is honest and direct in her observations of what is happening around her. As Alzate noted, her constant stream-of-consciousness narrative weaves in and out of the larger story without necessarily any logic (2020, p. 524). Nevertheless, her point of view is fundamental to the novel. She is the only trustworthy mediator between what happens and the reader, and even though there are some elements of randomness in Natsuko's narrative, she is mainly reliable. However, this reality embodies many inherent contradictions in her character. For example, simultaneously, she is an observant protagonist and a passive spectator. However, she appears to be more passive when contemplating her role and agency as a woman.

Consequently, Natsuko is presented as a paradoxical character who is both astute in her observations of others and naïve in her assumptions about social forces that impact her femininity. For example, she is hyperaware of her sister Makiko's physical and mental flaws and frequently makes this known. In this sense, her observations are sharp and analytical. She seems to be able to analyze her sister to the core. Nonetheless, her objectivity is patent in the fact that she withholds judgment. For example, in the early chapters, she is taken aback by what she views as her sister's grotesque obsession with obtaining breast implants. While she finds the entire process ungainly and repugnant, she finds Makiko's breasts and appearance generally unattractive. Natsuko, however, neither voices disapproval for her sister's plan nor expresses to her that her current breasts and nipples are subpar by social standards.

With the same astute skills, she observes others in the world with a razor-sharp eye, whether noting the drunkenness of a stranger on the subway or the subtle body language of an anonymous person on the street. However, when talking about her past, Natsuko's recollections appear somewhat hollow in comparison or at least surprisingly lacking in reflectiveness. An example is when she recalls her father, whom she only knew for seven years. Her description of him is almost paradoxical. She first describes him as an utterly lazy and useless figure, so burdened by his sloth that he would use a mirror to look behind himself rather than turn his body. However, she also depicts him as having a fear-inducing violent streak. While Natsuko does not describe his violence in detail, she claims he beat her mom and would always "find some reason to slap around me and my sister" (Kawakami, 2020, p. 18). This brings up questions as to why her first memory of her father is one of an utterly useless man who does nothing.

Nonetheless, this same slug of a man is capable of beating his wife and children. This contradicting image in the memory of Natsuko might be a survivor's methodology for disarming an essentially violent and unpleasant figure in her life. It might also explain, to some degree, other elements of her apparent passivity in the present, where she struggles to make ends meet and fulfill her literary ambitions. She seems trapped between different forces, such as victimhood and heroism or sexual liberation and resignation to traditional gender roles. In this sense, Natsuko seems content to merely go with the flow, allowing her life to progress without much resistance or impetus in any particular direction.

Throughout the novel, Natsuko follows along with social ideas about how feminine beauty is an immensely desirable trait, in part contemplating her lack of financial success in light of what she perceives to be a lack of beauty. There are also moments in which Natsuko's voyeurism exhibits some of the traits Gieske (2000) indicated in her discussion of how individuals internalize ideas about gender. At one point, Natsuko stares at a couple in a bathhouse, asking herself whether one member of the couple is a man or a woman, running different scenarios through her head based on what the couple is "supposed" to be. Gieske, speaking about social expectations regarding couples, asserted that "The unconscious production of this specific bodily regime in everyday life means that this social compulsion has gradually turned into a self-compulsion" (2010, p. 377). In this sense, Gieske suggested that individuals internalize social expectations and project them outward. Here, Natsuko, who has been highly self-regulated in her bodily regime, is perplexed by individuals who appear to be acting out roles of their choosing rather than society's choosing. Her self-compulsion to stay within the lines is juxtaposed with individuals who have refused to follow social codes and expectations regarding gender and couples.

Meanwhile, there are moments in which Natsuko overtly questions aspects of how femininity is played out socially. Alzate pointed out how Natsuko's depictions of menstruation express frustration with the monotonous nature of feminine expectations (2020, p. 523). This occurs to the extent that women are expected to undertake several socially established rituals to "protect" themselves and others from the perceived offense of menstrual blood and odors. As Natsuko complains of the tedium associated with changing pads, staining underpants, and undertaking steps to minimize the smell of her period, she is also drawing attention to the fact that this is a natural process. Listing these banal actions, which are typically undiscussed and unpronounced, is a way of pushing a female-centric discourse into the literary limelight.

To some degree, it is possible to read Natsuko's observations as a subversion of the trope of the male gaze. As Hartley (2016) noted, the male gaze, objectifying women and reducing them to devices intended for male visual pleasure, has been pervasive in postwar Japanese literature (2016, p. 92). In the case of the narrator of *Breasts and Eggs*, we find a character who overturns this device, providing an entirely non-objectifying view of femininity and instead making objective interventions related to gender. Thus, one possible reading of Natsuko's character is that she represents a crucial feminist intervention in a contemporary Japanese literary tradition where gender power relations have been largely undisturbed (Hartley, 2016, p. 92). As uninteresting as Natsuko's ruminations about the details of menstruation might seem, they nonetheless shape the everyday existence of virtually all women of reproductive age. Another way of viewing Natsuko is through the lens of Cixous's concept of the writer. Cixous asserted that "My

business is to translate our emotions into writings. First we feel. Then I write. This act of writing engenders the author. I write the genesis that occurs before the author. How does one write the genesis? Just before? I write on writing. I turn on the other light” (2005, p. 118). In this sense, Cixous's ideas on the female body as a contested site of language and culture, where patriarchal norms are inscribed, can be applied here. The women struggle with and confront societal norms, including the commodification and objectification of their bodies, and attempt to assert their agency and autonomy. Writing, the act of inscribing language and culture, thus acts as a means of resistance and liberation. These women use spoken and written language to express their desires, frustrations, and challenges, and it is this very act that makes them the protagonists of their own stories.

The final chapters underscore the complexity of Natsuko's character. In the novel's second half, she explores the intricacies of having and rearing children as she contemplates having her own. Notably, she has sharply separated the idea of having a child from that of love or sex, admitting she has had minimal and unpleasant sexual experiences. Thus, Natsuko appears only capable of envisioning reproduction through the assistance of technological intervention, specifically through in vitro fertilization. Her conversations seem cemented through her interactions with Yuriko, who views having a child as an act of violence in which an unwilling soul is forced into existence: “Why do people see no harm in having children? They do it with smiles on their faces, as if it's not an act of violence. You force this other being into the world, this other being that never asked to be born. You do this absurd thing because that's what you want for yourself, and that doesn't make any sense” (Kawakami, 2020, p. 614). At the same time, Yuriko's upbringing was also marked by abuse, albeit an even more insidious kind of abuse that she was, unlike Natsuko, unable to escape. Yuriko also stands out as an individual whose existence results from a loveless technological intervention, having been conceived by a sperm donor.

Nonetheless, there are unequivocal signs that there is a possibility of hope for all born into this cruel existence. Natsuko herself has managed to, despite the evident blasé state of her life, at least forge a small community of care and trust with her sister and niece and, previously, with her mother. Meanwhile, another friend, Aizawa, was born not through love or passion but through sperm donation. He contrasts sharply with the cynical Yuriko, proving that existence does not have to be necessarily ill-fated. By the novel's end, Natsuko has decided to have a child of her own with Aizawa and wants it enough that she is willing to undergo fertility treatment to ensure that she can do it. Interpreting the significance of this development is complex. Throughout much of the novel, Natsuko describes her aversion to sexuality and her largely indifferent attitude towards child-rearing, which, more often than not, has not been very appealing to her. Despite this, the novel ends with her bearing a daughter and seemingly perpetuating a cycle she had previously viewed as unbearable.

A pessimistic possibility is to view this as a capitulation on the part of Natsuko, who, despite her apparent willingness to resist the sexist narratives imposed on her, eventually submits to the role of a bearer of life. The other possibility is to view her decision as implementing her agency. Natsuko has decided to become a mother, but she has done it on her terms, without submitting to society's expectations regarding love or romance. Instead, she decided to have the baby with a person of her choosing, the result of a logical process rather than social pressures or expectations. At the same time, Midoriko appears to have abandoned her teenage angst-fueled horror at the thought of reproduction, even showing fascination and excitement at the prospect of her new cousin arriving. The novel concludes with Natsuko embodying the power of both breasts and eggs, cradling her newborn baby to her chest.

### III. THE QUEST FOR BODILY BEAUTY: MAKIKO AND HER BREASTS

While Natsuko's observations of the world are the critical narrative thread in the novel, throughout *Breasts and Eggs*, it is Makiko's obsession with breast enhancement that serves as one of the central tensions. On the one hand, her obsession with getting an enlargement stimulates many of Natsuko's observations on the nature of beauty and the female essence. On the other hand, Makiko's fixation on improving her body is also the main reason for the split with her daughter Midoriko, who refuses to talk to her anymore. Makiko's focus on breast augmentation is presumably due to her job as a hostess in Osaka. This position requires her to flirt with men and incentivize the purchase of drinks at her establishment. At the same time, women are relegated to an association with consumable goods and drink (Gagné 2010, p. 31). In this role, her greatest assets are her physical appearance and her ability to engage in conversations with the bar guests. The fact that Makiko is a hostess is already loaded with significance. As Nana Okura Gagné (2010) has noted, hostess clubs frequently reproduce gender hegemonies in which men have apportioned roles as businessmen and middle-class economic actors.

Nonetheless, Makiko has opted to invest entirely in enhancing her appearance, though her breasts appear to be her only concern. In this sense, Makiko assumes that the single most crucial body part for her to improve is her chest. Meanwhile, her sister notes that her face has aged, she is tired-looking, and she makes terrible choices in makeup and foundation. Upon realizing this, Natsuko observes that her face appears “washed out and more wrinkly than it was. When she laughed, the sinews of her neck popped out. Her sunken eyes called attention to their sockets” (Kawakami, 2020, p. 31). This view of Makiko indicates she has much more to worry about than her breasts. Despite this, Makiko cannot see anything other than the breasts of her dreams. She fixates on every aspect of her dream breast implants, including the ideal entry point and constitution. She also focuses on nipples, especially their color and shape. At one point, she engages in an entertaining dialogue with her sister on the fine points of nipple aesthetics after seeing an older

lady with apparently pink nipples. She remarks to Natsuko: “Did you see that woman’s nipples?... They were really something... It’s a miracle for Asians to be born with nipples that pink” (Kawakami, 2020, p. 83). Makiko goes on to describe, in excruciating detail, a painful-sounding chemical process designed to peel skin cells from the nipple and create the appearance of pink, rather than dark, nipples. Her only point of reference is comparing the pain of the process to breastfeeding. Makiko has integrated the concept that pink, Western-looking nipples are somehow aesthetically superior to Asian nipples that might be darker in hue. As Natsuko notes, the “preoccupation, or shame, or insatiable curiosity that drove Makiko to fixate on her breasts was about more than size alone. Color was a major factor” (Kawakami, 2020, p. 86). To this extent, it is possible to intuit that Makiko is not only driven by ideas based on gender hegemony but also fetishizes Western racial beauty ideals.

These reasons likely contribute to Makiko’s turn towards technology to overcome the limits of her nature. In this sense, a technological intervention represents the possibility of going beyond one’s genes and, by extension, one’s fate. The quest to get breast implants represents a more permanent and fixed intervention than the nipple peeling she was previously obsessed with. Breast implants require a surgeon and medical team; they represent the pinnacle of a technological intervention on the body. In this way, Makiko aspires to achieve a perfection that she cannot obtain without external help. Meanwhile, reflecting on the heroism of Makiko’s breast obsession, Reiko Abe Auestad (2016) asserts that the breasts become actors themselves, driving a series of “affective responses in Midori, Natsu, as well as in Makiko herself, which, in turn, impact the pattern of interaction among them with consequences” (p. 536). The breasts thus become a fulcrum for conflict and affect as Makiko and her sister attempt to navigate the complex waters that balance personal and economic fulfillment. The breasts that Makiko dreams of thus represent the possibility of technology improving her life. They are a double-edged tool, representing her choice and agency on the one hand and caving to social and male desires on the other.

Nonetheless, it is impossible to ignore the eventual consequences of Makiko’s obsession. Besides the strained relationship with her daughter, Midoriko, the subject of the next section, the obsession also empties Makiko of herself and accelerates her breakdown. In this way, the breast obsession not only represents a desire for technological intervention but also symbolizes a distancing from her biological imperatives, such as being a mother to her daughter. She appears to be seeking something that goes beyond mere breasts. The culmination of this hidden force within Makiko’s soul comes one night when she leaves Midoriko at home with Natsuko to go out and supposedly meet an old friend in Tokyo. She returns in an extraordinary state of drunkenness, announcing her arrival with a terrible crash and struggling to stay on her two feet. While Natsuko is angry with her sister for being gone too late without telling anybody anything, what is most striking about her observations is how she perceives her sister at that moment: “Her legs were rail-thin, like a pair of disposable chopsticks. She had a tear in the foot of her pantyhose, running from her big toe to her ankle. The skin at the back of her heels was cracked and dry like old mochi. Nothing to her calves but skin and bones, like the taut stomach of a sundried fish” (Kawakami, 2020, p. 231). This description leaves the reader with the image of a desiccated, washed-out Makiko, a caricature of her misguided desires. She has become emptied of substance and meaning in her quest for breasts. This subsequently leads her daughter to have a breakdown, and she commences talking while smashing eggs that Natsuko happened to have in her apartment. Makiko also joins in the cathartic egg smashing, though the symbolism of her act differs significantly from that of her daughter. While Midoriko appears to be released from the confines of her thoughts, Makiko’s actions merely manifest shame and failure.

Here, another reading can be integrated. Alzate (2020) read Makiko’s obsession with breasts as being related to the novel’s double meaning: the original Japanese title, *Chichi to ran*, could be translated as either “milk and eggs” or “breasts and eggs” (2020, p. 515). In this way, Makiko’s obsession may not merely be about breasts but also about motherhood. To some degree, her discontent with her own body is something she has continually blamed on motherhood, associating her unsatisfactory breast shape with giving birth and breastfeeding, which describes in tortuous terms (Shalini & Aruna, 2022, p. 28). However, beyond mere questions of how her body was impacted, Natsuko does mention their mother’s death in passing. While she does not dwell on it, she implies that it had devastating consequences for the family, with the brother dying a short time later. To this end, Makiko might be aching for her own lost mother, with this deep sense of mourning causing her to not be there herself as a mother. Her lost motherhood, in this reading, drives her quest for breast enhancement, whereas her daughter’s silence indicates her absence as a mother in the present. Her identity has been entirely fractured by her own doing. She has failed as a mother, indicated by her daughter’s silence, as a woman in the world, as indicated by her dead-end job, and as a sexual object, as indicated by her lack of physical attractiveness. While technology promises to fix this identity for her, the only natural way to pick up the broken pieces will be by gazing inward.

It is possible to assert that Makiko has navigated her struggles with identity to a breaking point, much as the other characters. This might be Kawakami’s reflection on the entire concept of feminine identity. Hekman (2000), who critiqued Judith Butler’s school of identity-focused feminism, provided one useful perspective. Hekman implied that focusing feminism on identity construction is an untenable route, as “promise implicit in the new feminist theory of identity and feminist identity politics, however, has not materialized” (2000, p. 290). In *Breasts and Eggs*, it might be the case that the female protagonists have abandoned the concept of identity-focused feminism as a means of empowerment. In the end, their focus on constructing their female identities ended up collapsing, and they reverted to roles that felt more familiar and innate to them. Natsuko decided to become a mother with an old friend of hers. Makiko



realized that her identity was inexorably tied to a connection with her daughter. Midoriko found that writing her identity was never going to be enough, that she instead needed to connect with her mother. In a sense, they all returned to a more primordial concept of their feminine identities.

However, it is crucial to note that the characters' primordial female states arrive through the performance of expected gender roles. Makiko personifies the acting out of "typically feminine" behavior and appearances. Her role as a hostess underscores the idea of a woman who acts in a socially expected manner. However, her desire to have her body operated on is parallel to the creation of how society marks or scars the female body, including through the pressure to conform to idealized standards of beauty, motherhood, and femininity

#### IV. WOMANHOOD, MOTHERHOOD, PURPOSE, AND TERROR: MIDORIKO'S HORRIFYING EGGS

Midoriko is an enigmatic figure at first; it is only through her writing that the audience understands who she is and what motivates her silence. Her diary entries fracture the narrative, just as she suffers from a fractured identity as a girl who ultimately finds her transition toward womanhood overwhelming and unbearable. Midoriko's diary entries relay a sense of shock and disgust at the elements associated with coming of age. In one scene, she is reeling at the thought of menstruating, plotting how to keep it a secret from her mother. This is a moment in which Midoriko uses the act of writing to fracture her identity both as a woman and as her mother's daughter. For example, there are moments in which Midoriko expresses a sense of rejection towards becoming like her mother, Makiko. When contemplating how some members of society might celebrate menstruation, she can only view it with a sense of utter rejection.

In one memorable scene, Midoriko contemplates the connection between menstruation and childbearing. She remarks: "Once you get your period, that means your body can fertilize sperm. And that means you can get pregnant. And then we get more people, thinking and eating and filling up the world. It's overwhelming. I get a little depressed just thinking about it. I'll never do it" (Kawakami, 2020, pp. 68-69). Her sense of horror at reproduction is a recurring theme that appears as a sort of counterbalance to her mother's obsessions about her own body. Makiko, her mother, toils and frets regarding ways to make herself presumably more sexually attractive to men, worrying about the best way to lighten her nipple color or the best implant methods for augmenting her breasts. Meanwhile, Midoriko increasingly rejects anything remotely related to making herself sexually attractive, mocking her mother's attempts at vanity and swearing that she will never have children of her own. In this sense, her refusal to speak has become the mark of her identity. In her diary, she notes that, in contrast to the contrived nature of social interactions with her mother and her peers, "Writing is the best. You can do it anywhere, as long as you have a pen and paper. It's free, too" (Kawakami, 2020, p. 14). Writing also permits her to, in her opinion, fashion a view of the world that is fairer than what society projects toward her. She notes the unfairness of learning about sperm before eggs, even showing an initial fascination with bearing the potential seeds of life within her. However, perhaps due to the association of eggs with her mother, she gradually develops a rejection of her own feminine identity.

This rejection of her identity hinges on her rejection of her mother and her obsession with breast implants. At one point, she confesses in her diary the extent to which she refuses to accept her mother's ideas: "It's gross, I really don't understand. It's so, so, so, so, so, so gross. So gross. I've seen what it looks like. I've seen it on TV and online. It's surgery. They cut right into you. They slit you open so they can stuff you, literally. It hurts. What's wrong with her? What the hell is wrong with her? She's being an idiot, the biggest idiot" (2020, pp. 154-155).

In this sense, Midoriko rejects the identity attached to her mother and the notion that technology might bring about some qualitative improvement in human life. Her use of the diary is precisely a turning away from technological promise. Using pen and paper, Midoriko is constituting herself in non-high-tech terms, instead turning to an ancient technique for implementing her subjectivity. This also ties into Cixous's notion that the act of writing is actively flaunting the pressures of society. In this context, Midoriko is a bold warrior who uses her silence as an act of defiance and her diary as an act of marking her own stigmata.

Furthermore, at the same time as she feels anger for existing, Midoriko feels a sense of guilt because her mother has not chosen to exist: "It's your fault for having me. I realized something after that, though. It's not her fault she was born" (Kawakami, 2020, p. 125). Nonetheless, this apparent moment of compassion is overridden by Midoriko's resentment. Midoriko is deeply unsettled by her mother's desire for breast implants, not merely because she finds the idea repulsive. She also feels that this desire is her mother rejecting her daughter's existence. As Alzate and Yoshio noted, "Midoriko sees this as a negation and rejection of her own life. Midoriko interprets her mother's desire to return to her pre-birth body as her inner wish to undo Midoriko's birth, denying and threatening her existence" (2022, p. 472). Midoriko's identity is fundamentally threatened by her mother. Her diary, which fragments the novel's narrative, ironically represents an attempt to maintain a cohesive identity for herself. Without it, she is at the mercy of a mother who does not want her and a world that wants to push all women toward motherhood, which she perceives as an empty signifier.

Later, near the end of the first part, Midoriko finally begins to speak again. She arrives at an odd sort of reencounter with her mother, stumbling and drunk, when she begins to break eggs over her own head. Now, she and her mother have come to terms with their identities, united by the eggs. Makiko seems to accept that her identity is to be a mother to her daughter. Midoriko, meanwhile, accepts that she is her mother's daughter, no matter what the circumstances. In a sense, their dual crises of identity appear to have been resolved.

## V. CONCLUSION

Natsuko, Makiko, and Midoriko are all facets of the same identity. Makiko represents motherhood, even though she seems to have abandoned her role as a mother. Midoriko exemplifies a frustrated daughterhood, representing a pessimistic future in light of her mother's wishes to live a life unfettered by her motherhood. Natsuko represents modern womanhood, with its increased consciousness about the roles she has been dealt by society. Together, these women navigate a complex social and technological reality that attempts to shape their identity as women. On the one hand, their social world places numerous pressures and expectations on them. On the other hand, they react to these pressures through their behaviors. Natsuko manages to do this through her contemplation, thinking, and writing. Makiko reacts through her desire to "game" the system through technological intervention, such as breast enhancement or chemical nipple peeling. Midoriko reacts through her refusal to speak and her adherence to the written word.

To an extent, *Breasts and Eggs* can be read as a result of applying concepts of postmodern feminism to the project of female identity construction. However, just as Hekman (2000) noted the limitations of a Butlerian feminist project, Kawakami similarly proposes that an idealistic building of feminine identity, in reality, is much more complex than in theory. It might be true that, as many feminist theorists have postulated, an immense degree of female identity is the result of social construction. As such a line of thinking implies, many of these constructions are relatively devoid of substantial meaning. Nonetheless, as Hekman (2000) also asserted, constructing from this void is untenable. Ultimately, women such as Natsuko, Makiko, and Midoriko came to the same conclusion. They needed to grasp something much more tangible and less fictitious to sustain themselves in an often-confusing world. For all of them, this entailed embracing a fundamental part of their biological reality: motherhood. Meanwhile, their inscription in the form of writing, diary-keeping, and body modification mark their stigmata as women who are determined to take the reins of their lives, no matter how tenuous their identities. Alzate and Yoshio (2022) read the ending of the novel as both leaving the reader "with still more questions than answers" (2022, p. 469) and providing "hope for a feminist future, one that is more just, where bodies are supported and free" (2022, p. 482). To this end, the novel's final image, in which Natsuko has chosen motherhood, is paradoxical and enigmatic. In the end, the narrator's struggle to make sense of her identity from the unending pieces of the world that come hurtling at her is reduced to the most simple, dangerous, and necessary act of humanity: childbirth. With the birth of a daughter, Natsuko continues the cycle of constructing a feminine identity and life.

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# Tahmima's Utopia in *The Startup Wife*: The Existential Feminism in a Male Tech World

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**Abstract**—Tahmima Anam's newest novel, *The Startup Wife* (2021), represents a debacle of a female utopia. Since the modern world humans live in nowadays is science-oriented and focused on technology, the novel deals with the significance of courtship and female entrepreneurship. Tahmima uses Asha Ray as the main female character in the novel. By analyzing certain instances from the novel that depict the entire journey of Asha Ray as a female scientist, the paper primarily focuses on the role of women in science. This young woman, with her natural programming abilities and self-assurance, comes up with an algorithm for a brand-new social media company that has the potential to transform an entire society for the better. It is critical to realize that before determining one's essence by existentialism, one must acknowledge his existence. The paper concludes that with her feminist fervor, Asha Ray is forced to recognize the importance of upholding what she views as hers. Having Asha Ray as a female in a male-dominated industry turns her into a subsided woman. The suffering of women in the startup world to be heard is at the heart of Asha's work. Women in a technologically male-dominated world can use Tahmima Anam's *The Startup Wife* as an example to examine existential feminism, which this paper aims to demonstrate and deliver to readers.

**Index Terms**—existentialism, feminism, Tahmima Anam, *The Startup Wife*, utopia

## I. INTRODUCTION

Existentialism is described as the kind of philosophy that focuses on the idea of the tangible individual, which is a fact that is generally accepted. This is for its crowning achievement and its greatest weakness. To the credit of existentialism, it defends the inherent value of its primary proponent in an age of mass information exchange and massive destruction. Jean-Paul Sartre refers to this as the "free organic individual," another way of saying the agent is made of flesh and blood (Flynn, 2006). So, since such a philosophy focuses on the person and his question of life purpose, such a theory is very much applicable in many modern feminist novels that focus on the survival of women in the world of patriarchy. *The Startup Wife*, written by Bangladeshi-born British writer, Tahmima Anam, is a novel about a woman who discovers her strength and then attempts to claim her power. During her interview with Aby Sam Thomas during Sharjah Entrepreneurship Festival, Anam said, "Um, so I wanted to write a novel about a woman finding her power and how difficult that is and the challenges she faces" (Sharjah, 2021, p. 38). So, *The Startup Wife* is different from Anam's previous novels; while Anam's famous trilogy (*A Golden Age*, *The Good Muslim* and *The Bones of Grace*) focuses on the Bangladesh War of Independence by tracing the life of the Haque family, *The Startup Wife* takes on a different theme because it focuses on the life of one woman. In the middle of her Ph.D., computer scientist Asha already dreams of running her lab. Everything changes when she has a chance to encounter and fling with Cyrus, her high school sweetheart. Cyrus and Asha desire big and create a revolutionary idea with their friend Jules to build a social networking app that could give meaning to thousands of lives, so they are not alone in this.

This research paper aims to apply existential feminism to *The Startup Wife*. The reason that existential feminism is very applicable in *The Startup Wife* is that a woman, like the character of Asha Ray, is not in a position that allows her to self-actualize. Cyrus's likability makes him a star, while Asha does all the hard work. Asha is supposed to be ecstatic when the app takes off and becomes the next big thing, but instead, she feels like she is left out of the decision-making process at her own company. Throughout the book, she battles with the idea that she has lost something that belongs to her.

According to Silbergeld (1997), feminists who advocate for gender parity in citizenship seek the same legal protections and duties for women as men. Thanks to technological advancements and the entrepreneurial spirit, the modern world is of speed and possibility; being an entrepreneur and working for startups is appealing because startups feel like they will fundamentally change the world. As an entrepreneur, however, Asha faces additional challenges because of her gender. She is the main female character in *The Startup Wife*, which is a way to create custom rituals that

help people organize their lives.

Asha feels isolated because of the male-dominated tech culture, which idealizes male visionaries and male founders. She is a woman in a male-dominated industry. As a result, Asha's pitch does not work when the workers go to their pitch meetings, and no one buys them. The public pays attention when she shares her thoughts with her husband, who does all the speaking part. People started to say, "Cyrus Is the Messiah" (Anam, 2021, p. 271), and Asha becomes subsided. The way she strives to fight for her existence and life purpose as a female living in a Tech world is the leitmotif of the paper.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In many sources, scholars have discussed the concept of women and feminism in Tahmima Anam's novels. According to Harputlu Shah (2018), the research titled "Women and the Nation's Narrative in Tahmima Anam's *A Golden Age* and Roma Tearne's *Bone China*" seeks to investigate the gendered dimensions of national identification and historical consciousness in women's contemporary South Asian fiction. Harputlu Shah argues that the female protagonists of Tahmima Anam's *A Golden Age* and Roma Tearne's *Bone China* represent the advancement of women's roles in both formalized and non-formalized spheres as the perspective of male and female roles in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka during the struggle for freedom. According to Harputlu Shah (2018), the two books show how patriotic conflicts, political debates, chronological processes, and migration-related events have contributed to developing women's official, personal, and global standing and obligations. Despite patriarchal norms, women were significantly more active participants in political processes and contributed substantially to the collective memory of national independence.

The thesis, "Women and Displacement in The Context of Partition: A Study of Selected Fiction by South Asian Women Diasporic Writers." examines how immigrant women experience homelessness and attempt to create a sense of belonging in unfamiliar environments. According to Papari (2013), women do what they can to preserve their heritage. However, women often yearn for a sense of domestic belonging because of their stronger ties to the household. However, everyone has a unique concept of what a house should be like. The situation is unique for women in particular. This is because some women feel a strong attachment to their childhood homes, while others find a sense of belonging in their husband's homes. Therefore, 'home' for the women diaspora becomes a sentiment, a retreat into memory due to their departure from their native place. The researcher concludes that Tahmima Anam's novels *A Golden Age* and *The Good Muslim* detail the events leading up to and following the Bangladesh War of Independence and show the entire arc of Rehana's life after her marriage to Iqbal and subsequent relocation to East Pakistan. Rehana's loss of her children to her in-laws (though she was eventually successful in regaining custody of them), her kids' involvement in the Bangladesh Liberation Movement, Sohail's transformation into a guerilla troop, his detachment from her and Maya as he became more religious, and his death from a tumor were all devastating setbacks in her life. From the story, readers can infer that she eventually learned to roll with the punches.

According to Momena and Keya (2018), a woman puts aside her needs to live perfectly for her husband and children. Women's efforts are rarely recognized and respected. Despite devoting their lives to serving others, there are times when even the most minor decisions they make for themselves come under scrutiny. Tahmima Anam's fiction gives a vivid, tangible account of the lives of Bangladeshi women. The researcher concludes that Anam unconsciously depicts successful women who have overcome significant obstacles. Even though the total number of women in this category is relatively small, it is steadily growing. This research ingrains in the minds of its readers the conviction that Bangladeshi women are the magicians of their own lives and those of their families.

So, tough times proved that women could be heroines because they have shown their female power, as the context of Tahmima Anam's trilogy (*A Golden Age*, *The Good Muslim*, and *The Bones of Grace*) indicates. The female presence in the character of Asha Ray, as portrayed in *The Startup Wife*, is a different case because Tahmima presents Asha Ray as a woman who tries to claim her power outside the context of war times. So, the literature gap of this article is to investigate the debacle of Asha Ray as a female character in the text by tracing certain instances of her life since she dropped her Ph.D. and joined a startup business until she lost her power over her marriage.

TABLE 1  
FEMINIST POWER/DEBACLE IN TAHMIMA ANAM'S TEXTS

Tahmima Anam's Texts	Women power	Women Debacle
<i>A Golden Age</i>	Yes	
<i>The Good Muslim</i>	Yes	
<i>The Bones of Grace</i>	Yes	
<i>The Startup Wife</i>		Yes

Table 1 shows that throughout the trilogy of Tahmima Anam, women have successfully achieved their power because they have been able to fulfill their purposes during tough times. However, *The Startup Wife* is a different case because the main female character in the novel fails and loses power, which is taken for analysis in this article.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This article uses the existentialist methodology by tracing instances from the novel, *The Startup Wife*, which supports the theory of Existential Feminism. This can be a reference for future researchers working on the same or similar topic.

By taking into account certain instances from the novel, readers will understand how Asha represents the feminist existential struggle in the modern world and how she fails to fulfill her purpose. The gap in this article is to trace the life of Asha Ray as another heroine of Tahmima's novels.

#### IV. RESULTS

##### A. *Existentialism and Existential Feminism*

The result of this article is the addition of another female debacle to the modern satire of feminism in the world of fiction. This article further adds that women's attempts to get noticed and credited in the sexist Male Tech world have failed. This is because society always ignores a woman in entrepreneurship, especially a woman like Asha. So, even though Asha creates an algorithm that saves humanity from the trifles and sadness of the world, she cannot make a solution to save her marriage; hence her husband Cyrus leaves her alone to handle the company by the end of the novel. The Table below represents which of the two main characters got acknowledged in the eyes of society as a successful person.

TABLE 2  
THE SOCIETY'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SUCCESS

Characters	Succeeded by Getting Acknowledged by society
Asha	No
Cyrus	Yes

Table 2 shows that Asha Ray is a character who loses the game of claiming her power as a woman in the novel, but her husband Cyrus wins by getting more acknowledgment from society. It shows how the male's voice is superior to the female's.

According to Risdaneva (2018), Ideology and power must be considered alongside discussions of gender or the representation of women. So, taking this matter of gender and power into account is very important. It is only fair to describe the relationship between the two terms, existentialism and feminism, along with their relevance to the chosen text. According to existentialism, a philosophical and cultural movement, individuals and their experiences should be the beginning of philosophical thought; moral and scientific reasoning alone is insufficient to understand human existence. Therefore, a set of new classifications controlled by the validity standard is required to comprehend human experience and reality. This philosophy examines individuals, things, other people and their influences on the individual's ability to make choices. Feminism is a political and social movement dedicated to pursuing gender parity. When the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed in 1920, it marked the beginning of the first wave of feminism.

According to Jean (2000), Simone de Beauvoir built the foundations of existential feminism. She did this using the existential framework of Jean-Paul Sartre's 1943 book *Being and Nothingness*. 'The Other' is a vital part of Sartre's philosophy, and Beauvoir's revision of his ideas is based on this idea. 'The Other' is any other state of awareness that the 'Self' (the One) thinks is different. By "gazing" at someone, others try to make that person seem less important. Significantly, existential feminism contributes more to the overarching goal of feminism than just illuminating the object or subject dynamic (Jean, 2000).

Regarding gender equality, the second wave of feminism was advocated in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Attempts were made in the third wave to correct what some people saw as absent attention to markers of female difference, such as race, class and religion. While men would be expected to work, women would have no choice but to stay home and support their husbands. This is the standard norm in this situation. This helps the Second Feminist Movement because it shows women that there is more to life than the stereotypes held for them. Only the nursing and teaching professions and the traditionally female-dominated secretarial field are open to them professionally (Higginbotham, 2003). Moreover, most women would hate this: "What I hate is the thought of being under a man's thumb" (Matuz, 1990, p. 409).

According to Reskin and Bielby (2005), Men and women have long been segregated in the workplace, and men have historically had better luck landing jobs than women. Economists and sociologists have found a connection between gender and career outcomes. More men than women work, and they do so for long hours and a more significant number of weeks on average each year. The cultural belief that men have a higher status in society than women (i.e., status beliefs) influences men's and women's evaluations of their competencies in career-related tasks, affecting their performances (Correll, 2004).

Women's existence is examined through an existential lens by existential feminists. Existential feminist research focuses on women's struggles and how they form their identities in a male-dominated society. Simone de Beauvoir's "The Second Sex" significantly contributes to this theory, which examines women's subservient role as the "Other". What is currently referred to as the distinction between sex and gender was first introduced by the famous line from "The Second Sex" and the idea that being a woman is a social construct (Bergoffen, 2004). Beauvoir's "The Second Sex" provides readers with a framework for critiquing the traditional notions of femininity and words for analyzing them. This tool frees women from patriarchal structures that rob them of their "can-do" bodies. According to Nabi (2017), sometimes feminism helps women and hurts them. This is highly true in the case of *The Startup Wife* by

Tahmima Anam.

Feminist revisions, while helpful in highlighting the patriarchal tendencies of traditional citizenship and proposing alternative models, are ultimately limited by the sex-gender system made possible by romance narratives and the logic of the sexual contract. Equality feminists, on the one hand, advocate for citizenship that is blind to gender, arguing that women should have the same rights and responsibilities as men. Anne Phillips supports this view in her book *Democracy and Difference*, arguing that the concept of the citizen is inherently public, universal and gender-neutral. Phillips (2002) argues that being a good citizen and a good mother are different things. Furthermore, it is evident in Jane Austen's time, where literature shows readers that women can only achieve security by marrying wealthy men. Austen writes in *Pride and Prejudice*, "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (Austen, 1813, p. 1). Women have been undervalued for a long time because of the patriarchal system. In the context of *The Startup Wife*, this patriarchal system is practiced highly in the male tech world. According to Steinberg (2014), the tech sector has its own unique set of challenges. Several factors contribute to the prevalence of sexism in the tech industry, including the industry's high male-to-female ratio, the unusually high number of men in powerful positions at ages when they, or many of their peers, have just moved out of frat houses, and the lack of human resources departments at a disproportionate number of startups. It is possible to learn about women in the modern world from contemporary female authors who have experienced something and written about it in their novels. Tahmima Anam is a modern example of this; she is a Bengali writer and a Harvard graduate who has won the Common Wealth Prize and published a trilogy and short stories that have found success. Tahmima Anam claims that telling stories about strong women has always interested her. She considers female protagonists to be the focus of her writing (Prose, 2021).

#### B. *The Existential Manifestation of Feminism in The Startup Wife*

*The Startup Wife* by Tahmima Anam examines what happens when fame and fortune precede morality and marriage. According to Flynn (2006), the existence of a person is something that precedes his essence. What a person is (his essence) is the result of his choices (his existence) rather than the reverse. Essence is not destiny. A person is what he makes himself to be. Likewise, Asha chose her essence when she claimed what was rightfully hers; the algorithm was her idea from the start. Because of this, she had to find a way to compensate between her love and self-actualization, and these two things are at odds in this novel. As a coder, Asha Ray develops an algorithm and starts a company with her husband, Cyrus Johns, who was her high school crush. Her feelings for her husband began when she was a student in elementary school. She says from the beginning of chapter one,

The first time, I was in ninth grade, and Cyrus was in eleventh. I knew his middle name, his classes, when he had a free period, and which afternoons he stayed late for swim team or jazz band practice. In other words, I was in love with him. (Anam, 2021, p. 9)

Regarding technology, it can be challenging to be a woman in a male-dominated field, and it can be even more complicated when one's husband is the CEO of the family business and his wife's. *The Startup Wife* portrays feminism through Asha's deep desire to improve herself in every aspect. As Asha describes in chapter one, she had long admired and aspired to be like the other successful women she had met. Awkwardness hardened into an opaque, terrifying brilliance when Asha went to grad school and started working in Dr. Melanie Stein's lab. She describes Dr. Melanie as one of those formidable women who thrived in academic departments. Even though she was not malicious, she was rude because she never said anything to break the tension or make Asha feel silly for saying something stupid. Before Asha met Cyrus again, she aspired to become a doctor like Dr. Melanie. Hence, her sense of accomplishment is hindered since she has chosen to fall in love and get married instead of pursuing her Ph.D.

Interestingly, Anam portrays Asha Ray as a funny character, making the novel a typical satire on feminism. In the past, there were jokes about feminists; one of the classic jokes is the one demonstrated in a thesis by Kathryn Kein when he said that mocking women activists as people who cannot fix a light bulb is not a funny joke (Kein, 2016). In the case of Asha Ray, the "light bulb" joke is about the relationship between Asha and her husband. As a result, "That's not funny" is used as a feminist critique of humour because it is said by the listener rather than the original joke-teller. Feminists from the second wave are portrayed in popular culture as angry and unflappable, and this refers to this widely held view (Kein, 2016). Since 2016, mainstream comedy has been dominated by women, which has led to the recognition of humour as a platform for feminism. According to Quintero (2008), it is commonly held that satirists care deeply about the greater good when they put pen to paper, making satire unique among literary genres. So likewise, Anam's novel functions as a feminist satire to add a delightful flavor to the demand the novel tries to make; women deserve to be heard, acknowledged, and praised in the startup world.

*The Startup Wife* has instances showing how difficult it is for a woman to exist in a world of technology. So, her existential feminism is threatened by her husband, Cyrus is taking the light from her, and he is winning over the attention she feels she deserves. Jules, a friend of both Cyrus and Ray, suggests in Chapter 2, "Jeez, Cy, if only you could give every skeptic what they wanted, some kind of believable replacement for God" (Anam, 2021, p. 46), suggesting that technology could be a replacement for anything. Asha says,

I just said I could code an algorithm that would allow people to get a kind of Cyrus ritual, a combination of all their things, wrapped up in a little modern package, without the sexism, homophobia, and burning in the fires of hell of actual religion. (Anam, 2021, p. 46)

That was Asha's wish behind creating the code in the first place so the world could be "without the sexism". This is exactly what applies to Beauvoir's biographers, Claude Francis and Fernande Gontier, when they said, according to the translation of Gilbert, Beauvoir's feminism is grounded in her ethics, which require her to work towards a world in which inequality is reduced through her pursuit of justice (Gilbert, 1987). So, Asha here demonstrates this existential notion of feminism, which makes Asha stand as an example of a woman striving to create something positive but is not much recognized. Asha refers to her husband as the "new messiah," one of the book's central themes is the exaggeration of the idea that male CEOs are revered by turning Cyrus into a spiritual figure. Even though the book is about Cyrus and Ray's marriage and has nothing to do with religion, Cyrus is still considered a cult leader. Asha asks herself how the algorithm she made has led many people to worship her husband, which is satire. In an interview with Megha Majumdar, Anam explains how sexist the world and the workplace are and how capitalism has bred generations of white male leaders who are looked up to as pioneers. Anam says:

It is definitely one of the major themes in the book so much so that I wanted to exaggerate this point which is that male CEOs are revered by making Cyrus into a slightly spiritual character and making WAI into kind of replacement for religion because even though it's supposed to be a non-religious thing he still starts to get looked at as a cult leader and Asha says to herself like how is it that I built this algorithm that makes millions of people literally worship my husband that is just so, you know, ironic um so it's definitely that I think the thing that I would say about the tech world is that it is the world so in all the ways in which the world and the workplace is sexist and in all the ways that capitalism has bred generations of white male leaders who are then looked upon as the kind of pioneers and the new inventors and the Bransons who go to space and you know all of that tech is just a part of that the exciting thing about tech is that it's been sold to us as an alternative culture that it's pitched as being disruptive. (Prose, 2021, pp. 33, 30)

Asha Ray comes up with the concept for the company, and when it takes off, many see her husband as a savior figure. Cyrus performs individualized atheist rituals, and Asha converts those rituals into a computer program. In the novel, the risk factor of decision theory comes into play when the choice comes with some danger. According to Neville et al. (1932), several constraints on decision-making in the face of uncertainty have been proposed recently. They are all roughly analogous or related, leading to the same conclusion: any delay can be reduced to some form of risk for a "rational" person. As Asha Ray observes, people's fears and desires become more apparent when they invest emotionally in social media. She sees this as a potential threat. When asked about her concerns, she replies, "We're mitigating risk" (Anam, 2021, p. 143). Asha is rational because she considers the possible outcomes of her actions in light of the potential harm they may cause to humanity. According to Karni and Vierø (2013), the decision-makers beliefs about the connections between possible actions and outcomes and their perception of the feasible state space may shift in light of new information (e.g., scientific evidence, an observation). So, Asha's love for Cyrus reaches its extreme when she decides to marry him. Still, when she feels that her existence as a successful female in the startup community is ignored, she becomes rebellious, striving to reclaim what she feels is rightfully hers.

At several points in the book, Anam uses Asha Ray's sister as a metaphor for today's women living in perilous conditions. Asha's sister Mira lives her life based on the choices made for her by men. Asha praises her sister for being decisive and unapologetic in expressing her opinions; when discussing Mira's options, Asha presents them as weighty and casual. Asha recounts how Mira's parents react angrily when she decides to wear a hijab for the first time at the age of fifteen, telling her to "Go out in a bikini!" and "That's what America is for" (Anam, 2021, p. 56). Even though Asha's parents claim that she and her siblings have complete freedom of choice, this shows that such freedom is a myth in the family.

On the other hand, Asha appears to be proud of her sister's independence and willingness to do what she thinks is right, regardless of anyone else's opinion. Asha explains, "She would not hesitate. She would not wait for anyone's permission. She would grab it with both hands and fly like a girl on a dragon's back" (Anam, 2021, p. 57). Asha Ray makes choices based on the assumption that she is very good at adapting to novel circumstances. Since her husband is a visionary, the people of WAI (who work in the company of Asha and Cyrus) will do anything he asks of them. The more Asha talks about her ambition, the more she believes she can start something new. As she considers the challenges women face in the currently male-dominated tech industry, she begins to formulate a plan to help them achieve success.

Asha says in chapter thirteen, "I'm starting to think about other things\_ a mentorship program I might kick-off to help young women get ahead in tech. I might even ask Cyrus if I can spend some of our WAI money on building a lab for the Empathy Module" (Anam, 2021, p. 223). Incompleteness in either judgment of relative probability or preferences between outcomes has been posited as the root cause of failure of completeness in decision-making (Chandler, 2017). This means that Asha cannot decide for herself unless her husband is involved in the decision-making process, which ultimately leads to her failure.

Regarding Asha's existential goal, she still needs some key pieces. Asha could count on her husband's support no matter what she chooses, but she would feel isolated. Nothing can be avoided before sexism and gender roles are clearly defined. Despite her evident engineering prowess, Asha's husband pays her little attention. Therefore, Asha Ray's failure to make good choices is based on her realization toward the novel's finale that she did not articulate a code to assist her marriage, regardless of humanity. Asha Ray, trying to save her marriage, comes up with a plan to help other people achieve their goals. She decides to make it her mission to write a book that improves the lives of others. She hopes this

will make a difference because she thinks all other problems can be solved once marital and professional issues are resolved. Asha Ray rebels against the deeply sexist office culture that stereotypes and marginalizes women by portraying them as passive and submissive rather than independent and ambitious like men. As Asha explains in the novel, this is because women have historically faced discrimination and sexism in the workplace. The inability to pitch ideas because of gender biases is the core issue that Anam pinpoints.

I just said I could code an algorithm that would allow people to get a kind of Cyrus ritual, you know, a combination of all their things, wrapped up in a little modern package, without the sexism, homophobia, and burning-in-the-fires of hell of actual religion. (Anam, 2021, p. 46)

Asha's existential decision about coding the algorithm asserts that the workplace creates differentiated roles between men and women; men head off to work, leaving their responsibilities at home, while women tend to the house and the kids (Stories, 2021). Asha Ray decides to make some changes because the technology behind startups promotes the stereotype that men can do anything they set their minds to and make their investors wealthy. The myth of self-creation that comes with technological advancement is overridden by the solid structural forces at work, which will stifle any attempt at disruption. Adjustments within choice builder's opinions about the connections between them change the collection of feasible states while leaving the set of imaginable forms unchanged, in contrast to the emergence of new viable impacts and new viable actions, which also broaden the set of potential and the location of possible conditions. According to the novel, it is only when the full scope of the problem is recognized that effective action can be taken. As work becomes more strenuous, female workers fade into the background.

As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that Asha's choices regarding cooperating between "marriage" and "job" are meaningless because she never accomplishes either. Asha is a stereotypically decisive protagonist who goes after her life goals despite her husband's resistance, only to lose her marriage and blame herself for its failure. Asha says near the end of the novel after she has failed to save her marriage:

When I hear the door close, I want to run after him and tell him to come back, tell him it'll be okay, that I will take care of everything: him, the company, our marriage... More than anything, I wonder if it all will have been worth it. (Anam, 2021, p. 294)

As a result of the choices that Asha makes to preserve her status as a successful woman, she is now forced to deal with the aftermath of her husband, who has become known as the "New Messiah," abandoning her after he has achieved his goal of becoming a leader. Asha is overly critical of herself by entertaining the notion that she should blame herself for being excluded and rejected. Because picking one action means deciding against all the others, the individual might experience either regret or joy when thinking about other activities they passed up (Loomes & Sugden, 1982). The guilt that Asha feels for being able to bring about a cultural shift but being excluded from it brings her much sadness. Because love by itself does not necessarily bring about any change, it is not sufficient to bring about that cultural shift. The realization that Asha and her husband are participants in a system that has existed for a significant amount of time ought to go hand in hand with the choice that Asha has made to bring change in the situation. The myth of technological disruption, the legend of work-life balance and the myth of the visionary male CEO are some of the myths that need to have their foundations shaken up before that system can be reimaged.

Interestingly, the novel has an initial critical statement by Asha Ray, "People say there's no such thing as Utopia, but they're wrong. I've seen it myself, and it's on the corner of Tenth Avenue and Fifteenth Street" (Anam, 2021, p. 1). Whose "Utopia" is it, then, one might reasonably wonder? If a woman is the driving force behind the hero's success, she deserves credit for his achievements. The fact is that the workplace has been a breeding ground for casual misogyny for too long. According to Russ's analysis, Utopias do not represent universal values but are rather reactive, providing in fiction what their authors feel society, especially women, lacks in the real world (Russ, 1995). Therefore, Asha's case in the novel is that of 'humanism,' which is a significant theme of existentialism. Humanism means that existentialism as a philosophy focuses on the individual and her quest for identity and meaning in the face of the surrounding pressures of society to be superficial and conformist. The political function of utopian writing is hinted at in *Women In Search Of Utopia: Mavericks And Mythmakers'* description of a feminist utopia, which suggests that it blames men or male institutions for the current state of social unrest and portrays women as not only the equals of men but also the sole arbiters of their reproductive functions (Rohrlich & Baruch, 1984). This contrasts with the scientific view, which focuses on scientific discovery. According to Pateman (1988), women are treated as second-class citizens by erasing the link between capitalist production and familial reproduction. Moreover, according to Mouffe (1995), sexuality should not matter in politics or citizenship. She agrees with Pateman in criticizing the liberal male conception of modern citizenship. However, she thinks a radical and plural democracy needs a different conception of citizenship and political community. So, the more Asha tries to claim what she invents, the more she becomes subsided, and this proves that it is the "Utopia" of the man and not of the woman, even if the woman is the one who created the algorithm.

## V. CONCLUSION

Through analysis of specific passages from the book, this paper demonstrates that *The Startup Wife* is a work of fiction incorporating existentialism into its narrative and character development. Since the primary focus of the existential theory in this book is on an ambitious woman named Asha Ray, it can be safely said that instances of existential and feminism are in the text. The satire on feminism used to be taken seriously in the past, but in recent years,



it has been viewed as something normal and presented by many female writers, such as in *The Startup Wife* by Tahmima Anam. The novel depicts a conflict between a woman's pursuit of self-actualization and her love for another person. It demonstrates that this conflict continues today, even though technology has advanced to its fullest extent.

The feminist satire in *The Startup Wife* is derived from the epiphany that the protagonist, Asha Ray, has toward the end of the book when she realizes that she cannot write a code to fix her marriage, let alone humans and humanity. Because she is the complete antithesis of her husband, she cannot maintain her marriage to him. The book compels readers to ponder whether Asha or Cyrus is more deserving of the title "Utopia" when considered in the context of the story. Moreover, the response to that question is that although it appears to be Cyrus' world from the outside, it is an invention of Asha's. Even though her goal is to have a better life and marriage, the overconfident nature of Asha is in direct opposition to her husband's demeanor, and this fact is a contributing factor to the break of the continuity of the love story toward the end.

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# Rediscovering the Genesis of Girolamo De Rada Romantic Poetry: *Songs before Millosao*

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**Abstract**—This paper explores the evolution of Girolamo de Rada's poems, specifically focusing on *Songs before Millosao*. By scrutinizing De Rada's original manuscripts and comparing them to the early published versions of his poems, we delve into his creative process and examine the modification of verses, characters, and themes over time. This study also investigates the presence and progression of political and patriotic elements in De Rada's work, providing valuable insights into the cultural and historical influences on his poetry. Central to this paper's findings are the transformation of his protagonists, shedding light on the author's evolving perspectives. The analysis highlights De Rada's continuous endeavor to refine his works, making them more enjoyable, refined, and valuable to his readers. Through the close examination of De Rada's manuscripts and early publications, this study offers a deeper understanding of the author's early concepts and the subsequent evolution of his poetic work. Ultimately, this research contributes to the ongoing scholarly conversation about De Rada's significant role in the Albanian literary renaissance and his unique portrayal of the nation's historical and cultural identity.

**Index Terms**—Romanticism, Renaissance, Arbëresh poetry, Literary interpretation, Comparative analysis

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. The Historical Context and Importance of De Rada's Work

The work of De Rada marks the beginnings of Arbëresh Romanticism while simultaneously representing a significant turning point in the culture of Albanian literature. As such, it has been the subject of observations, studies, and numerous historical-literary, analytical, critical discussions, in an attempt to give it its deserved place within the corpus of Albanian literature. Despite its particular historical-literary importance, De Rada's work has not always taken its merited position, falling victim to numerous misunderstandings. Rightfully, the scholar Shaban Sinani (2012) in the preface to Mandala's work, *Philological Studies on Arbëresh Romantic Literature* would assert that Arbëresh Romantic authors have been among the most misunderstood and their work has often been subjected to a flawed critical mechanism.

### B. The Publication of De Rada's Literary Work

Today, when contemporary studies have returned to the Arbëresh Romantic authors, especially to the literary work of De Rada, the results have not only brought new insights and greater importance for literary criticism and the history of Albanian literature, but they have also unveiled this author's work in other dimensions. This merit, alongside known scholars of Arbëresh Romantic authors, particularly belongs to two of their most renowned researchers, Francesco Altimari and Matteo Mandala who shared the common idea of the re-publication of De Rada's Literary Work.

This publication from 2014 presents to the reader for the first time the full authentic publication of this classic of Albanian literature's poetic work, which includes "Songs Before Millosao", "Songs of Millosao", "Songs of Serafina Topia", "Tales of Arber", "Arbëresh Rhapsodies" and the poem "Unfortunate Skanderbeg" (De Rada, 2014). Since the first volume includes all the manuscripts before the 1836 period (1833-1835), it is titled meaningfully *Songs Before Millosao*.

This publication of De Rada's literary work and especially the publication of the early manuscripts, brings the reader closer to the process of creating De Rada's poems, revealing to them the creative method of this author, acquainting them with the prehistory of the published poems, especially the poems "Songs of Millosao" and "Songs of Serafina Topia".

## II. GENETIC CRITICISM AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PRE-TEXTS

The issue of publishing pre-texts in Albanian literature, as a consequence of a lack of suitable structures, including cultural and institutional ones where published work manuscripts could be preserved and studied, has been and continues to be one of the main factors impeding the finding and identification of literary evidence. The importance of manuscripts in Albanian literature is best demonstrated by De Rada's literary work, which clearly indicates that "recent

<sup>1</sup> This study has undergone continuous research and an initial draft was once published in the University of Prishtina's journal, "Filologji" (Nr. 25, 2020, July). This is the definitive version of it and is the sole iteration available in the English language.

advancements in the field of studies for De Rada have come thanks to the discovery and publication of a part of his manuscripts” (Pipa, 2013, p. 19).

With this manuscript of De Rada's literary work, the study of this author's work undergoes a new, richer and more complete scholarly process than ever before. Therefore, genetic criticism, which took off in France during the 70s, considering pre-texts as an essential part of the writing history, made them the subject of its discipline. According to scholar Louis Hay (2002), genetic criticism is a new field of research that “implies a new study objective: not only the text, but also the writing, not only the result, but also the process” (p. 99). Supporters of this criticism argue that textual genetics, its main objective, goes beyond textual criticism, giving particular precedence to drafts, notes, evidence, and other texts related to the text's creation process. Scholar Cesare Segre (2007), highlights the importance of genetic criticism, stating that “with a movement precisely opposite to that of destruction, or fragmentation, we manage with the evidence provided by genetic criticism, to prove the strong structural compactness of the literary text, presenting to unprejudiced observers, its distinctive and unmistakable personality” (p. 9). Segre, will also note that thanks to genetic criticism, a researcher could have “greater clarity based on interpretation” (p. 9).

Genetic criticism, by confronting the pre-text with the text, constructs the prehistory of the literary text, right down to its possible transformations. This procedure, scholar Ag Apolloni (2016) calls “protean poetics, or process poetics, because it reveals the continuous changes,” which reveals “the author's method, by highlighting the layers of writing and correction stages, including interventions within and in the margins of the text: additions and removals of words, guiding lines drawn by hand, correction of mistakes, etc” (para. 3). This phase precisely demands that the researcher's preparatory work with the manuscript material be done directly. Besides the collection and preparation of the text, simultaneously, the resolution of the authenticity issue requires adequate experience and special knowledge, sometimes even beyond the researcher's self-experience and professional background. Having concluded this phase, which is primarily related to the collection and classification of material, the researcher's task is further complicated by substantial difficulties such as the problem of text editing and its preparation for publication. This plays a functional role in the history of literature studies, hence the scientific compactness of the literature researcher, in this case, must be closely linked with the function of the literary historian.

Starting from all the above statements, the collection of De Rada's manuscripts has been one of the most challenging points to achieve because the complexity of numerous problems necessarily determines the research structure, which besides specific knowledge, also imposes a specific methodology.

### III. THE HISTORY OF THE DE RADA MANUSCRIPTS AND TEXT STRUCTURE

In his scholarly work "Hieronymos De Rada", Arshi Pipa (1978) asserts, “since Milosao A is the first work published by De Rada and simultaneously his poetic masterpiece, any manuscript preceding and related to it holds a higher value than any other poetic material” (p. 272). This claim was a significant impetus for making available any possible De Rada's manuscripts, despite the challenges of researching these manuscripts. “This long, strenuous, yet astonishing exploration of the pre-De Rada writings, which began in 1991, initially sought to identify and classify De Rada's manuscripts from the period before the first publication of *Songs of Millosaut* (1836). These manuscripts were found with great difficulty in various libraries and public and private archives in different countries (Italy, Albania, and Denmark)” (De Rada, 2014, p. 9). The Frascineto Manuscript (Kozenc ë), the Tirana Manuscript, and the Copenhagen Manuscript, best demonstrate what Pipa had long noted: De Rada “never carelessly discarded preliminary sketch-ideas or first drafts” (Pipa, 2013, p. 19).

One of De Rada's earliest manuscripts, discovered in 1970 in the village of Frascineto by priest Antonio Bellusci, is a collection of Arberesh folk songs, which would later be known as the Frascineto Manuscripts, referring to the place where they were found. Given that folk material was one of De Rada's first contacts with poetry, referring to an early age, still not fully formed by the impact of reading, the discovery of these manuscripts corresponds to the time when De Rada had begun collecting folk songs, encouraged by lawyer Raffaele Valentini. According to Altimari (2014) “this is evidenced by the alphabet itself, still unprocessed and unstable, unable to clearly and fully express the phonetic system of Albanian” (p. 18). Linking this important fact and carefully analyzing De Rada's epistolary fund, paying considerable attention to his correspondence with friends and intellectual figures of the time, as well as comparing the final results of graphological analyses, it can be conclusively determined that the Frascineto Manuscripts do indeed belong to De Rada, thus ruling out all other hypotheses. However, while the resolution of the authorship issue was one of the key points in the process of researching these manuscripts, it posed other challenges such as the analytical interpretation of the alphabet used, temporal determination, and the relationships of these songs with the songs of De Rada's published poems, especially his first poem "Songs of Millosaut".

In connection with this situation, literary theorists and researchers Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1963) rightfully note that “If we have to consider undated manuscripts, chronological difficulties may multiply and even become insoluble. We may have to resort to a study of the evolution of an author's handwriting. We may have to puzzle over stamps or franks on letters, examine the calendar, and trace very carefully the exact migrations of the author, since these may give a clue to the dating” (p. 65). This process also includes the preparatory work of De Rada's manuscripts, which in the absence of a specific date that would shed light on the actual temporal verification, reveal the production date of the watermark with which most of the songs within these early compilations are written. However, the risk in this

situation is notably more pronounced and does not fully satisfy the research; therefore, the identification of the alphabet, which was primarily based on the Latin alphabet but supplemented with Greek letters, was one of the decisive indicators that played a significant role in determining the temporal reality. It served as an indicator of the Arberesh writing tradition, which is linked to the time period in which De Rada wrote, always using his early writings and creations as a model.

#### IV. DETAILED ANALYSIS OF DE RADA'S MANUSCRIPTS

##### A. *The Frascineto Manuscript*

The Frascineto Manuscript is essentially composed of two compilations of Arberesh folk songs, with the exception of the third compilation, parts of which link to the poems "Songs of Millosaut" and "Songs of Serafin ë Topia". To distinguish between them, the compilations are marked as F1, F2, and F3. The first compilation, F1, contains only two songs spanning 12 pages, whereas the second one, F2, comprises eight songs over 24 pages in total but seems incomplete and non-final due to the absence of the part connected to the final song. F1 provides an intriguing observation of song construction. We deal with songs explicitly associated with wedding rhythms, representing familial and friendly bonds, as well as songs related to death, signifying detachment from the ongoing life cycle. In the wedding ritual, the main motif reveals the marital history and advice given to the bride and groom, drawing on typical folklore imagery where the bride is compared to a mountain's depth, the whiteness of snow, and the groom to the firmness of rock.

Original Manuscript	English Translation
<i>Moj th ël ëa çëvjen malit</i>	<i>Oh quail, coming from the mountain</i>
<i>Vjen më kraghëzit pjo(t) bor...</i>	<i>Arriving with wings full of snow...</i>
<i>Bie mb ëder t ëdh ënd ërrit,</i>	<i>Falling on the groom's door,</i>
<i>Si bor ëa e bardh?</i>	<i>Like a white snow?</i>
<i>(De Rada, 2014, p. 54).</i>	<i>(Our translation).</i>

Meanwhile, the death motif highlights the poignant narrative following the death of the Albanians leader, Skanderbeg, encompassing 14 verses in total. F2, unlike F1, contains more songs, a total of eight, and depicts the Arberesh world in all its hues. The songs continue from the wedding tradition intertwined with the songs from the first collection, progressing with songs of Skanderbeg and the Renegade, Death of Skanderbeg, Wedding of Konstandin, Ghost of Konstandin, Betrayal, Wonders of the Soldier, Anibek and Milloshi. This was the period (1833) when De Rada devoted himself to collecting Arberesh folk songs. The other manuscript compilation, F3, first published in 1963 by Father Giuseppe Ferrari, contains, along with folklore material, songs that belong to De Rada's first poems in "Songs of Millosaut" and "Songs of Serafin ë Topia". This collection, however, demonstrates De Rada's nature as a poet and not merely as a collector and classifier of folk songs. Following the model of Arberesh rhapsodes, De Rada began to create his own verses because "for him, true poetic creativity and the work of a folklore collector were part of the same literary commitment" (De Rada, 2014, p. 27).

His literary work best exhibits the significant impact that folklore had on shaping De Rada as a poet, suggesting that for him, folk poetry was a model of language and a distinct artistic style. The influence of folklore on De Rada's work is best reflected through these songs, the structure of which precedes the structural construction of De Rada's poems. The eight-line verse, which is a characteristic element of De Rada's style, alongside seven, six, and even five-line verses, is constructed based on the model of these folk songs verses, without being connected to the poetic motif which is the main exhibitor of motifs and ideas in De Rada's poems.

The primary merit of verifying this manuscript belongs to Francesco Solano, who through careful attention and refined philological analysis, concluded that the compilation of these songs was authored by De Rada. This compilation also serves as the initiator of the process of comparing the manuscript texts with those published from 1836 onwards.

##### B. *The Manuscripts of Tirana and Copenhagen*

Both manuscripts are concretely related to the poems "Songs of Millosao" and "Songs of Serafina Topia". The Tirana manuscript, initially published in 1974 in a transcribed version by Dhimit ër Shuteriqi, holds a total of forty songs, all interspersed within the two aforementioned poems by De Rada. Observing the form of this manuscript and the fact that the pages are filled with sketches, side-page rewrites, erasures, and noticeable improvements, it is believed to be a clean copy version. To distinguish the songs within this manuscript that are related to the songs published in Millosao and Serafina, the manuscript is specified and divided as Tm and Ts.

On the other hand, the Copenhagen manuscript, despite its incompleteness due to numerous absences throughout the songs as a result of damage and loss, is of equal importance. However, as Altimari (2014) argues, since "a significant portion of the songs comprising it present similarities with the "Songs of Serafina Topia" contained in the second part of the Tirana manuscript" (p. 23), it can be completed by adding the Ts songs. Despite the fact that a considerable part of this manuscript has not been found, referring to the first part identified by Pipa as "Proto Milosaon B", which, from a chronological perspective, should be placed after the Frascineto manuscript, F3, the determination of whether this collection was written before or after the Tirana manuscript remains unclear. The lack of Italian translation alongside

the Albanian texts is another significant element revealing “the incomplete nature of this collection” (De Rada, 2014, p. 26), taking as a reference point the well-known fact that all Arberesh creators, alongside Albanian texts, included Italian translations so that their works could achieve wider dissemination.

#### V. COMPARISONS BETWEEN MANUSCRIPT VARIANTS AND THE WORKS AS FIRST PUBLISHED

When comparing these manuscripts not only with each other but also with the first publications of the works, specifically, in this case, the poems “Songs of Millosao” and “Songs of Serafina Topia”, the results obtained provide a new perspective on De Rada's work, which now has a well-known prehistory.

##### A. F3 and Tm – Pre-Text of Millosao

The comparisons between the songs of the manuscripts and the first publications of De Rada's poems have been analyzed and interpreted by researchers such as Francesco Solano, Dhimitër Shuteriqi, Arshi Pipa, and more recently by Arberesh researchers Francesco Altimari and Matteo Mandala. All these comparisons have been placed in separate tables within Literary Work I, where the "Songs before Millosao" are located to enable concrete analytical interpretations. Altimari, comparing these correlations and putting them through his scholarly lens, provides interesting observations, always without imposing his analytical impact, but guiding researchers and readers towards effective new conceptions.

The Frascineto manuscript F3, as we mentioned earlier, includes songs that are part of Milosao A and at the same time, these songs also appear in the Tirana manuscript Tm, which is another variant of these songs. Considering that F3 is believed to mark the end of 1833 and the beginning of 1834, it is the first variant, which precedes the Tirana Tm, belonging to the year 1834. The seventh song of F3, which portrays Milosao's meeting with Rina and the gifting of apples she gives him, is similar to the tenth song of Tm.

Variant	Original Manuscript	English Translation
F3	<i>Ish e diella m'ënat E i biri zonjës madhe Ngjitej tek e bukura Po t'i lipën një çik uj Se ish et' i djegurith; (De Rada, 2014, p. 123).</i>	<i>It was Sunday at midnight And the son of great lady Was ascending to the beauty To ask for a bit of water For he was thirsty the burned one; (Our translation).</i>
Tm	<i>Ish e diella m'ënat E i biri zonjës madhe Ngjitej tek e bukura Të m' i lipën një çik uj Se ish et' i djegurith; (De Rada, 2014, p. 198)</i>	<i>It was Sunday at midnight And the son of great lady Was ascending to the beauty To ask her for a bit of water For he was thirsty, the burned one; (Our translation).</i>
Milosao A	<i>Ish e diella m'ënat E i bir' i zonjës madhe ngjitej tek e bukura Të m' i lipën një pik uj Se ish et' i djegurith. (De Rada, 2014, p. 18).</i>	<i>It was Sunday at midnight And the son of the great lady Was ascending to the beauty To ask her for a drop of water For he was thirsty, the burned one. (Our translation)</i>

The fifth song of the F3 manuscript, which reveals Milosao's prehistory, elicits greater interest, yet in Milosao A, it is not presented in the same perception. While in the second song of Milosao A, we understand that Milosao returns from Thessaloniki where he had been studying, in F3, the story of Thessaloniki appears in the fifth song, as a part detached and independent from the other songs, not merely as a brief narration but as prehistory:

Original Manuscript	English Translation
<i>Ish një em e vetëmez, Kish një bir t'ëvetëmith, E ndëskollë e d'ërgon. (De Rada, 2014, p. 121).</i>	<i>There was a lonely mother, She had a single son, And off to school, she sent him. (Our translation).</i>

As the first variant of "The Songs of Milosao" and when tracing the influence of folklore from the collection of folk songs, it can be easily observed that the F3 compilation is a fusion of these songs and De Rada's early poetic concepts. This can be seen throughout this compilation and when we come to Milosao's journey to Thessaloniki, we are here linked to an early folk motive where birds are the bearers of news or messengers. Milosao from Thessaloniki, through the birds, forewarns his mother that he will return to his birthplace under specific circumstances:

Original Manuscript	English Translation
<i>Kur dejt i bënëjardin Aghierna it bir vjen; Kur korbi t' bënëjpellumb Aghierna it bir vjen. (De Rada, 2014, p. 122).</i>	<i>When the sea becomes a garden, Then your son will come; When the raven becomes a dove, Then your son will come. (Our translation).</i>

Such parts are missing in Milosao A which reinforces the fact that De Rada continually returned to his texts to review them, but also to recontextualize them. The similarities between F3 and Tm are numerous, especially between songs 6 (F3) with 10 (Tm), 7 (F3) with 9 (Tm), 11 (F3) with 16 (Tm), 16 (F3) with 13 (Tm), 18 (F3) with 5 (Tm), 19 (F3) with 14 (Tm), 20 (F3) with 6 (Tm) 23 (F3) with 2 and 11 (Tm), 29 (F3) with 1 (Tm), 31 (F3) with 8 (Tm) and 38 (F3) with 3 and 4 (Tm), in which either many similarities appear or they are the beginning of ideas that will be expanded and developed further in Milosao A.

In a comparative context, it is interesting to observe six distinct songs in Tm, which are not related to F3, allowing us to determine that these songs are new, and besides being a continuation of the songs of F3, they are closer to the songs of Milosao A. In this case, we can take as an example the ending of Milosao that remains unfinished in F3, but in Tm (as well as that of Copenhagen) resembles that of Milosao A:

Original Manuscript	English Translation
<i>Ik ën t'ëkultuarit</i>	<i>Gone are the cultured ones,</i>
<i>Gëzimet e vashavat:</i>	<i>The joys of the maidens:</i>
<i>Ato mbjidhen mbr'ënanet</i>	<i>They gather in the evenings</i>
<i>Ndëkatund, ndëvat ërë,</i>	<i>In the village, by the hearth,</i>
<i>U m'i lë si ëndërrëz.</i>	<i>Leaving me as if in a dream,</i>
<i>S'ë më e Millosat.</i>	<i>Is not of Millosat anymore.</i>
<i>(De Rada, 2014, p. 220).</i>	<i>(Our translation).</i>

In Milosao A, the vibrancy and continuity of life is no longer reflected through the cheerful maidens, but through Milosao's comrades, who embody the continuity of his youthful dreams:

Original Manuscript	English Translation
<i>Mbjidhen shokt mbr'ënanet</i>	<i>Friends gather in the evenings</i>
<i>Ndëkatund ndëvat ëret;</i>	<i>In the village, by the hearth,</i>
<i>U m'i lë si ëndërrëz.</i>	<i>Leaving me as if in a dream.</i>
<i>(De Rada, 2014, p. 330).</i>	<i>(Our translation).</i>

What is crucial to analyze is also the absence of patriotic elements in the manuscript of Milosao. As Pipa (2013) classifies it, "Proto Milosao A is merely a refined romance devoid of any patriotic elements" (p. 42). Knowing the outcome and the circumstances that develop in Milosao A, which at the same time, alongside its more emphasized lyrical line, constructs and gradually develops the epic line, in Proto Milosao, the hero is not only unstructured along this line, but strongly resembles the type of the European romantic hero, who appears disillusioned by life and engaged in profound spiritual contemplation. The answer to this lies in the later life circumstances of De Rada and his involvement with political life in the country, which significantly influenced the development and enrichment of his poems with new motifs and ideas, to a different extent than those of the manuscripts.

One of the characteristic points of these collections is their relationship with the published work of De Rada, a unity that, as has been noted, is not abruptly severed and isn't rigidly placed within final frameworks, since these pretexts vary from one poem to another. For instance, if in Milosao A we read the song *Vjersh' i të biles Kolloghres*:

Original Manuscript	English Translation
<i>Nd'atë katund çë sonde të m'arrësh</i>	<i>In that village where tonight you'll take me</i>
<i>s'ëke t'ëfol ë (t)an, s'ëk ëti shpi,</i>	<i>You don't have your talk, you have no home,</i>
<i>atje s' ë kopshti it, së del me ndër.</i>	<i>there is no garden of yours, where you emerge with honor.</i>
<i>aj zem ër guri si s'ë rri me n'ë?</i>	<i>This heart of stone, why doesn't stay with us?</i>
<i>(De Rada, 2014, p. 272).</i>	<i>(Our translation).</i>

In the Copenhagen manuscript, it appears as part of the prologue of Serafina, titled *Verses of Serafina*:

Original Manuscript	English Translation
<i>Nd'atë katund çë sonde të m'arrësh</i>	<i>In that village where tonight you'll take me</i>
<i>S'ëke t'ëfol ë (t)an, s'ëk ëti shpi,</i>	<i>You don't have your talk, you have no home,</i>
<i>atje s' ë kopshti it, së del me ndër.</i>	<i>there is no garden of yours, where you emerge with honor.</i>
<i>Oj zem ër guri si s'ë rri me n'ë?</i>	<i>This heart of stone, why doesn't stay with us?</i>
<i>Epigram {ma} di An {acreonte}</i>	<i>Epigram {ma} di An {acreonte}</i>
<i>(De Rada, 2014, p. 272).</i>	<i>(Our translation).</i>

We encounter a concrete example of this in the love story between Rodhavani and Fjaleva found in Proto Serafina B, which is transferred to Milosao A as the construction of the story between Milosao and Rina, with a particular emphasis on the latter's status. Song 28, which is part of Milosao A, is identical in both theme and language to song 4 of Proto Serafina B, in which a despondent Milosao, having fallen victim to his feelings of love for the maiden, forgets the matter of his homeland. This situation is strikingly similar to that of Proto Serafina B, in which a mother scolds her son for marrying a foreign girl, whose love has influenced the dimming of his patriotic duty. The prefiguration and interconnectedness of the main characters, appearing as derivatives of these manuscripts, up to Milosao A, is revealed

in terms of their refinement and development. In F3 and Tm, it is Viola who in Milosao A becomes the daughter of Kollogre, with no major changes. The lyrical hero depicted in these manuscripts, reflected in the character of Milosao, who appears here as Milloshin (later his name will change), as we have noted, creates a parallel link with the European romantic hero who is lost in thought, wandering around the mazes of his fate, which he cannot and does not have the ability to avoid. The hero of Proto Milosao also exhibits these characteristics, thus reflecting his deep lyrical nature as a presentation of the inner world and its fluctuations.

### B. Ts and C – Pre-Text of Serafina Topia

While the pretext of Millosaut appears to be more comprehensive in terms of the number of songs, that of Serafina is notably smaller, owing to the fact that the Copenhagen manuscript is incomplete. In the Tirana manuscript (Ts), the number of songs is twenty, whereas the Copenhagen manuscript accounts for twenty-one, always referring to the songs related to the pretext of Serafina. Ts contains Proto Serafina A and according to Shuteriqi, the central figure of this collection appears to be not Serafina, but Rodhavani, an influence passed down from the previous hero, Milloshini. Similar to Ts, the songs in Cs are described with the deeds of heroes such as Radhavani, Milloshini, each of whom also has a female protagonist, Fjaleva and Viola. The name of Bozdari is not part of these manuscripts, as within them is Vortani, the brave man with whom Serafina falls in love. All these characters that precede in this part of the pretext will change in the published works section, Fjaleva into Paraylle, Viola into Rina, the daughter of Kollogresa, and Vortani into Bozdari. Just like in the published poem, in the songs of these manuscripts, Serafina cannot marry her beloved because her parents do not approve of her love and as a result, she is forced to marry a lord whom she does not love. Vortani, unlike Bozdari, falls in battle as a valiant hero. In connection with this situation, Pipa (2013) will assert that “Serafina A is linked with Proto Serafina, its genesis, with very thin threads; this poem is almost an entirely new creation, reflecting the author's participation in revolutionary activity in Calabria after the first period of residence in Naples” (p. 167). Not only from this assertion by Pipa but also from De Rada's observation that he wrote the poem “Songs of Serafina Topia” in 1837, precisely driven by this dynamic surge of political developments, we can conclude that this work marks another turn, clearly broader in the first variant of its publication. Therefore, similar to “Songs of Millosaut”, this poem also takes on a different form and character and is noticeably more complete than in her remaining manuscript:

Variant	Original Manuscript	English Translation
Ts	<i>Vash u rrita ghadhiare Tek vat ër e prindvet, Si nj ëdeg e ardhur ëz Hjesore rritiet... Vash u rrita e zilisur Ka gjitone e ka t ëghuaj. (De Rada, 2014, p. 224).</i>	<i>A girl grows up gracefully At her parent's hearth, Like a healthy branch Growing in elegance... The girl grew up desirous She has foreign neighbours. (Our translation).</i>
Cs	<i>Vash u rrita ghadhiare Tek vat ër e prind( ë)vet, Si nj ëdeg e ardhur ëz Hjesore rritiet... Vash u rrita e zilisur Ka gjitone e ka t ëghuaj. (De Rada, 2014, p. 272).</i>	<i>A girl grows up gracefully At her parent(s) hearth, Like a healthy branch Growing in elegance... The girl grew up desirous She has foreign neighbours. (Our translation).</i>
Serafina A	<i>Vash u rrita ghadhjare tek vat ër e prindvet, si nj ëdeg e ardhur ëz hjesore rritiet... Vash u rrita e zilisur Ka gjitone e ka t ëghuaj. (De Rada, 2014, p. 18).</i>	<i>A girl grows up gracefully At her parent's hearth, Like a healthy branch Growing in elegance... The girl grew up desirous She has foreign neighbours. (Our translation).</i>

The connection of these verses, as can be observed, appears similar in all three cases, but it does not maintain coherence with the further progression, since in Serafina A, only the first song is composed of 96 verses, unlike Ts and Cs, which collectively yield 29 verses that are mainly, but not entirely until the 23rd verse, aligned with the verses of Serafina A. Unlike the manuscripts of the poem "Songs of Millosaut", in the two manuscripts of "Songs of Serafina Topia" (Ts and Cs), the patriotic or political element, as Pipa prefers to call it, is not missing. Although Serafina is no longer the main character around whom the narrative is built, the main character that emerges in this manuscript, Radhavani, constructs the type of the epic hero, entirely different from Milosao. This hero synthesizes both self-love and patriotic love, always opting for the latter in the face of the former. This makes Serafina's manuscript similar to the first publication variant, always connecting with the national idea and doctrine, which, unlike the first publication, the lyrical hero here appears more of the knightly type, entirely invincible and victorious.



## VI. CONCLUSION

*Songs before Millosao* provide valuable insights into the creative process of Girolamo De Rada, shedding light on the evolution of his poetic style and his motivations as a poet. This work marks a turning point in the appreciation and understanding of De Rada's literary contributions, necessitating a re-examination of his work within the context of contemporary literary scholarship.

Through careful analysis of De Rada's manuscripts, especially the Frascineto Manuscript, the Tirana Manuscript, and the Copenhagen Manuscript, we are able to trace the development of his poems and their relation to the poet's early influences, particularly folk songs.

Genetic criticism has proved to be an invaluable approach in understanding De Rada's creative process. By comparing the pre-texts with the published texts, we are able to reveal the continuous changes, revisions, and refinements made by De Rada, providing a deeper insight into his poetic method. The manuscripts showcase De Rada's dedication to crafting his poems, leaving behind traces of his constant revisions and improvements to ensure the poems' clarity, aesthetics, and value for readers.

The comparison between the manuscripts and the published works, specifically "Songs of Millosao" and "Songs of Serafina Topia," has allowed researchers to recognize the impact of De Rada's life circumstances and political involvement on his poetry. The evolution of Millosao's character from a European romantic hero in the pre-texts to a patriotic and complex figure in the published version reflects De Rada's engagement in revolutionary activities and the development of his poetic expression. Similarly, the evolution of the character Serafina compared to the pre-texts of "Songs of Serafina Topia" indicates the influence of De Rada's evolving perspectives on the central characters.

These findings offer a deeper understanding of De Rada's early concepts and ideas. The preliminary knowledge of the protagonists and the comparison with the final publications help frame a more profound understanding of the poet's motivations and the main stimuli behind his poetic reinvention of Arberia. De Rada's deep lyrical nature, influenced by his interactions with folk songs and his experiences, comes to the forefront in these manuscripts, presenting him as a poet in constant exploration and development.

As for future researchers, the study of "Songs before Millosao" opens new avenues for further exploration. Researchers should continue to delve into the manuscripts and analyze other aspects of De Rada's work, such as his relationship with the Arberesh folk tradition and his contributions to Albanian literature. Additionally, the examination of De Rada's correspondence with his contemporaries and intellectual figures of the time can provide valuable insights into his creative process and the motivations behind his poetic choices.

Moreover, the re-examination of De Rada's work should extend beyond the literary aspects to include a broader exploration of his contributions to Albanian cultural and national identity. Understanding the societal and historical context in which De Rada wrote can illuminate the significance of his work in shaping the national consciousness and literary heritage of Albania.

In conclusion, the study of "Songs before Millosao" and the comparison of De Rada's manuscripts with the final publications have provided a deeper understanding of the poet's creative process and motivations. This research marks a significant contribution to the appreciation and recognition of De Rada's place in Albanian literature and cultural heritage.

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# English Classes as a Tool of Health Culture Formation Among Students of Higher Education Institutions

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**Abstract**—The authors analyzed approaches to defining its essence. It is concluded that the health culture of a student is an integral component of his/her professionalism: on the one hand, it is a specific direction of professional training, and on the other, it is an important component of health-oriented educational and professional activities. It is assumed that English classes can play a significant role in the formation of the health culture. At the beginning of the academic year a survey to understand students' awareness and interest in this issue was accomplished. As it showed only 13 % of students had a high level of formation of the health culture and 52 % of students had a low level of the formation of health culture. The authors developed and implemented a number of activities aimed at the development of the awareness of young people about alcohol, drugs, unwanted pregnancy and the necessity to lead a healthy lifestyle. It is found out that after these classes the attitude to the health has drastically changed. Thus, 22 % of students demonstrated the high level of health culture development, and the level of students with the low level of health culture has decreased to 27 %.

**Index Terms**—English classes, health culture, students, higher educational institution, activities

## I. INTRODUCTION

The development of Ukraine on a democratic basis requires a transition to a new type of humanistic and innovative higher education, aimed to ensure comprehensive growth while unlocking the cultural, intellectual and spiritual potential of the individual. Creating favorable conditions for the personal development of a student, modern higher education should be ready to prepare a competitive specialist who will be capable of consciously and effectively performing professional functions in the conditions of a high-tech society for the modern labor market. The increase in the flow of information, intensification of the educational process, intense mental work and progressive hypodynamia result in a significant decrease in the functional state of the body and the physical capacity of students of higher educational institutions. In this regard, the development of health culture is relevant for student youth as one of the most important conditions to successfully obtain higher education and develop further personal and professional self-realization.

The task of preserving the health of student youth is reflected in a number of regulatory and legal documents related to education, primarily in the laws of Ukraine "On Education", "On Higher Education", the National Strategy for the Development of Education in Ukraine for 2012-2021, the Concept of the National Program "Health - 2020: the Ukrainian dimension" and others (the laws of Ukraine "On Education", "On Higher Education", the National Strategy for the Development). At the same time, the low level of health of student youth, the prevalence of drug addiction,

alcoholism, tobacco smoking, the epidemic spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, hepatitis, and the deterioration of reproductive health require the development of health culture among students as an important factor in preventing and overcoming such negative phenomena in Ukrainian society.

The need for scientific study and a practical solution to the outlined problem stimulates scientists to carry out scientific research. In particular, the scientific literature presents the views of scientists on the essence of health culture (Napier et al., 2014; Tkachova, 2008), Concept “Health Culture” in System of Categories “Culture” and “Health” (Melnyk & Pypenko, 2019), theoretical and methodological aspects of ecological and valeological culture of the future teacher (Boychuk, 2008), health culture as a priority value among students (Krivosheeva, 2010) etc. However, the significance of English language classes for the formation of students’ health culture is not sufficiently represented in the scientific literature.

We assumed that English language classes both at the School of Foreign Languages and with students of non-language schools can be an effective tool for forming the health culture in young people. This assumption is related to the high educational potential of English language classes, opportunity to conduct educational conversations with students while learning a foreign language.

Therefore, the purpose of the publication is to highlight the experience of forming the health culture among students of V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University during English classes.

For this, we consider it necessary to solve the following tasks:

- generalize approaches how to define health culture in scientific literature;
- find out data regarding the relationship to the health culture of students;
- highlight activities that are held in English language classes for the formation of the health culture among students;
- present students’ attitude to the culture of health after appropriate activities.

## II. METHODS

Achieving the goal and solving the set tasks was facilitated by the use of a set of research methods: *theoretical* methods – the analysis of the results of scientific research devoted to the theoretical and methodological foundations of the formation of the development of the culture of personal health, as well as comparison, generalization and systematization of the theoretical and empirical experience of the formation of the specified quality; *empirical* methods – pedagogic observations, questionnaires, conversations, analysis of the experience of students’ use of methods of health improvement.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Health culture implies not only a certain system of knowledge about health, but also appropriate behavior for its preservation, which is based on spiritual and value orientations. It has been proven that the culture of health is a qualitative formation of the personality, which is manifested in the unity of biological, psychological, social and spiritual factors that determine its way of life and the humanistic meaning of being. It determines the further development of all varieties of culture and provides for the formation of a person as an integrated personality, covering all aspects of his/her life. The health culture is aimed to transform any sphere of human activity into a means of physical and spiritual self-improvement and self-healing. It characterizes the individual’s attitude to life, to his/her health, and desire for self-knowledge (Boichenko, 2009, p. 55).

The health culture is reflected in the depth and systematicity of the acquired health-preserving knowledge, formation of humanistic value orientations, understanding of the educational opportunities of national cultural and historical traditions for leading a healthy lifestyle, various forms of active health-related activities, emotional and value attitudes towards education and the chosen profession. All this allows speaking about health culture as a special type of human culture. It is always implemented according to a single algorithm: consciousness – need – attitude – action – consequence.

The health culture determines the only way of relating to the world – humane and universally creative one. It forms the meaning and criterion of life creativity, accordingly determining the totality of formative foundations of the individual’s activity. Implementation of the health culture takes place in the sphere of human freedom and the sphere of responsibility (Boichuk, 2008, p. 330; Horashchuk, 2000, p. 25).

Summarizing the views of scientists, the health culture can be defined as:

- the culture of forming the right attitude to health, based on data obtained in the framework of Pediatrics, Physiology, Psychology, and Social Sciences (Kalinicheva, 2008, p. 105);
- the science of moral, physical and spiritual health, which is an integral part of cultural studies (Tkachova, 2008, p. 197);
- theories and practices of forming, preserving and strengthening the health of an individual (Boichuk, 2008, p. 330);
- socio-psychological activity of an individual, aimed at strengthening and preserving health, assimilation of norms, principles, traditions of a healthy lifestyle, which turns them into the inner wealth of the individual (Napier et al, 2014);
- a component of general culture aimed at the formation, preservation and strengthening of human health (Boichenko, 2009, p. 56).

The analysis of the concept of “personal health culture” allows concluding that there is no single approach to understanding its essence in modern scientific thought. The views of scientists, which we have presented, have their advantages and disadvantages. Understanding the health as a personal quality of an individual reflects the role of subjective factors in the process of preserving and strengthening one's own health, but does not focus on the role of education and the environment in this process. The perception of health culture as a theory and practice of preserving an individual's health emphasizes the presence of scientific foundations in the process of forming the culture of personal health, but does not reveal the essence of the practical aspect of the implementation of these ideas (Melnyk & Pypenko, 2019, p. 55; Melnyk & Svyacheva, 2015, p. 131).

The health culture of a student as a future specialist is an integral component of his/her professionalism: on the one hand, it is a specific direction of professional training, and on the other hand, it is an important component of health-oriented educational and professional activities. The health culture of students is an axiological and reflexive basis for preserving, strengthening and correcting their health (Khalaytsan, 2014, p. 80; Kompaniyets, 2007, p. 77).

As a result of the fruitful interaction of the health culture and the professional culture of the student as a future specialist, a system of social and cultural qualities is born – a kind of program of moral instructions of a person's non-destructive attitude to health and his/her environment – socially given, value-based, historically acquired, and individually mastered ones (Kryvosheyeva, 2010, p. 100).

The development of the health culture is characterized by social, health orientation and value motivation for preserving and strengthening health, mastering health-preserving knowledge and identifying the ability to apply it in practice to activate social and health-preserving position of the future specialist, which reflects his/her functional readiness at a high level to carry out professional activities.

#### IV. DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

As it has already been mentioned, English classes both of students for the School of Foreign Languages and students of non-language schools are an effective and efficient tool for forming the health culture among students. We came to this conclusion after conducting a corresponding experiment with students of the School of Foreign Languages, the School of Computer Science, the School of Physics and Law School of V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University. In general, 115 students of the schools mentioned above took part in the experiment.

It was established that English language classes allow diagnosing, planning and carrying out preventive measures related to the preservation and strengthening of health, developing students' abilities and skills of a healthy lifestyle, etc. In order to master the appropriate methods in the system of higher professional education, it is necessary to implement classes aimed at revealing and in-depth understanding of these issues.

At the beginning of the academic year, in order to form the health culture among students we conducted a survey to understand students' awareness and interest in these issues. The survey was based on the criteria and indicators of health culture development presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
CRITERIA AND INDICATORS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' HEALTH CULTURE

Criteria of the development of health culture	Indicators		
	Low level	Intermediate level	High level
1. Showing an interest in issues of health culture	Lack of interest in health care issues	Situational interest in health issues	Persistent interest in health issues
2. Availability of knowledge of health care content	Some mosaic knowledge of health care content	Selective knowledge of health care content	System of knowledge of health-preserving content
3. The nature of the organization of health care activities	Reproductive nature of the organization of health care activities	Constructive nature of the organization of health care activities	Creative nature of the organization of health care activities

Before carrying out activities aimed at forming the health culture of students, we conducted a questionnaire to determine the level of development of students' health culture, taking into account the main criteria, characterizing abilities to professionally and successfully organize their activities. For this purpose, we summarized the obtained results and determined the average indicator of the development of students' health culture, taking into account the main criteria and indicators presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' HEALTH CULTURE

Criteria of the development of health culture	Levels of formation					
	Low		Intermediate		High	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
1. Showing an interest in issues of health culture	52	45	41	36	22	19
2. Availability of knowledge of health care content	63	55	42	36	10	9
3. The nature of the organization of health care activities	65	56	39	34	11	10
Average indicators (in percent)	-	52	-	35	-	13

As you can see, a significant part of students (52%) is classified as a group with a low level of health culture development. In this group of students, there is a lack of interest in health-preserving issues, the presence of limited knowledge in the health-preserving field and a reproductive approach to the organization of health-preserving activities. The students belonging to this group lacked relevant knowledge about the main components of health, healthy lifestyle, ways of preserving and strengthening health. Students did not have necessary knowledge about the negative impact of bad habits (smoking, alcoholism, drug addiction, overeating, etc.) on the human body. They lacked the ability to independently search for information about their own health and motivation to lead a healthy lifestyle; value orientation towards the acquisition of relevant skills and abilities were not formed. Students were not ready to organize health-preserving activities in everyday and professional life. In addition, they did not show an active position regarding the acquisition of health-saving knowledge, their practical training and application in real life. The students had bad habits and did not want to get rid of them. Responsibility for the deterioration of health was completely transferred to external circumstances and other people.

The intermediate level of health culture development is observed in 35 percent of the students. The main feature of this group was the manifestation of situational interest in health-preserving issues, presence of selective knowledge of health-preserving content and constructive approach to the organization of health care activities. This group of students was characterized by superficial, unsystematized knowledge of health care. The independent acquisition and assimilation of health-saving knowledge occurred depending on external circumstances. The need to make changes to one's lifestyle arose only in case of extreme necessity, and the value attitude to health was declarative in nature. The students of this group had a partially formed readiness for health-preserving activities that were spontaneous, intuitive, and unsystematic in nature. External circumstances and the need for help (teachers, trainers, doctors, peers, parents, etc.) were the motives for health-preserving activities. Students formed a partial responsibility for the negative consequences of valeological activity. The valeological position of such students was influenced by the opinions of others and certain troubles. Some of the respondents of this group had bad habits, but already knew about the negative consequences of their influence on the body, but did not want to get rid of them.

Only 13% of the students showed a high level of health culture development and were characterized by a persistent interest in health-preserving issues, the presence of a system of health-preserving knowledge and a creative approach to the organization of health-preserving activities. Such students were characterized by the presence of deep and structured health care knowledge. They possessed adequate methods of preserving and forming their own health, had no harmful habits, followed individual characteristics of the daily regime (diet, sleep, work and rest regime, sports, etc.). The students of this group were fully responsible for the consequences of their own health-preserving actions. In the structure of value orientations, health occupied the highest positions. Students were familiar with the structural components of health (social, physical, mental and spiritual), took an active position in relation to a healthy lifestyle, full recovery of the body, showed a tolerant attitude to the opinions of other people about maintaining health.

In order to improve the situation and create the health culture among students, we developed a number of trainings, which were conducted both directly during English classes (according to the work program), electives and curatorial hours. In particular, the trainings were aimed at 1) raising the awareness of young people about alcohol, 2) drugs, 3) unwanted pregnancy and 4) the need to lead a healthy lifestyle in general.

Let us present activities which were worked out by our team and turned to be effective for the development of health culture. The purpose of the class "Prevention of alcohol consumption in the student environment" was to provide information about a healthy lifestyle, spread knowledge about alcohol and prevention of alcohol use. Our main tasks were:

1. to promote a healthy lifestyle.
2. to provide the necessary information about alcoholic substances.
3. to analyze information about alcoholic substances.
4. to warn young people against the use of alcoholic substances.

The content of the work, the course of the class and the estimated time for the relevant activities are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3  
LESSON PLAN "PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN THE STUDENT ENVIRONMENT"

No.	Content	Course	Time
1	"Acquaintance"	Participants are invited to talk about their first experience of drinking alcohol	10 min.
2	Brainstorming: "Why do people drink alcohol?"	The participants take turns naming the reasons for using alcoholic substances.	15 min.
3	Message: "What is alcohol? The influence of alcohol on human health"	Teachers provide information on what alcohol is, types of alcoholic substances, causes of alcohol addiction, statistical data on this problem, effects of alcohol on the human body, etc.	10 min.
4	Warm-up game "Let us hunt a lion!"	Teachers organise a dynamic game to gauge the tension in the group.	5 min.
5	Information message "Myths and facts you need to know about alcohol"	A message about myths and facts related to alcohol.	15 min.
6	"Discussion of the situation"	Teachers offer real situations that reflect the negative impact of alcohol on a person's life. The students' task is to analyze these situations in groups.	10 min.
7	Game "Wish"	Participants take turns wishing each other something positive.	5 min.
8	Summary	Each participant expresses his/her impressions of the class.	10 min.

The second part of the development of health culture is devoted to the formation of awareness of drug effects on human body and drug addiction. Thus, the purpose of the class "Say No to Drugs!" is prevention of the use of narcotic substances among young people. The main tasks of this class are:

1. to promote a healthy lifestyle.
2. to provide the necessary information about narcotic substances.
3. to analyze information about narcotic substances.
4. to warn young people against the use of narcotic substances.

The content of the work, the course of the exercise and the estimated time for the relevant exercises are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4  
LESSON PLAN "SAY NO TO DRUGS!"

No.	Content	Course	Time
1	Introduction	Reveal the topic. Talk about the drug problem.	10 min.
2	Exercise "Emotional attitude to the problem"	Participants are invited to answer the following questions: 1. What does the concept of "drugs" mean to me? 2. What is my attitude to this topic?	5 min.
3	Brainstorming "Reasons and factors of the use of narcotic substances"	Invite the participants to identify the reasons they consider to be the main ones for the emergence of a craving for narcotic substances. All their thoughts are recorded on the board. After that there is a discussion.	10 min.
4	Message "Types of drugs and their effects"	Reveal the main groups of narcotic substances, but do not go into a detailed description.	10 min.
5	Exercise "What does a person who uses drugs lose?"	Calculate with the participants the life expectancy of a healthy person and the life expectancy of a person who started using drugs.	10 min.
6	Exercise "What does a person who uses drugs get?"	Divide a sheet of paper into two parts. On one of the parts, using the brainstorming method, write down what the addict expects to get when he/she starts using drugs, and on the second half - what he/she gets in return. After that, show the deaf period, mental and physical dependence and psychological pendulum on the diagram.	10 min.
7	Exercise "Dreams"	Invite the participants to express the dreams that they have, or those that everyone often has, for example: to finish school, find a good job, get married, etc. Then offer to imagine the life of a person who also has a dream, but started using drugs. Show on the graph two possible ways to this dream: with a drug and without a drug.	10 min.
8	Exercise "Rejection". Results	Ask participants to consider situations involving drugs and learn to say no.	10 min.

An equally important topic during the formation of health culture is the understanding of the consequences of abortion by young people. That is why we have developed the training session “Psychological and social consequences of abortion”, the purpose of which is to deepen the level of knowledge about the various consequences that occur after an artificial termination of pregnancy, both for the woman herself and for society as a whole.

The content of the work, the course of the exercise and the estimated time for the relevant exercises are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5  
LESSON PLAN “PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF ABORTION”

No.	Exercise	Course	Time
1	Introduction. An exercise to activate attention	Under the guidance of the teacher, the students play the game “Edible-Inedible”.	5 min.
2	Presentation of new theoretical information	The teacher provides students with theoretical information about the psychological and social consequences of artificial termination of pregnancy	15 min.
3	Showing the film “Unborn want to live”	Watching the film	20 min.
4	Discussion of the film	Students take turns to discuss the film, answering the teacher’s questions	20 min.
5	Stress relief exercise	Students are offered the game “Broken Phone”	10 min.
6	Summing up	Students express their impressions of the class	10 min.

We discuss these three topics during the English language classes in accordance with the program. However, it can be said from experience that these classes arouse lively interest from students and the information discussed during classes is not always enough for young people. Therefore, we have developed and implemented a series of trainings on the topic “Prevention of artificial termination of pregnancy in young women”, which are taught in optional classes or curatorial hours. In particular, classes are devoted to such topics as:

1. Abortion as a medical and social problem;
2. Psychological and social consequences of abortion;
3. Contraception as one of the main methods of abortion prevention;
4. Development of a positive attitude towards the future maternal role;
5. Formation of responsible sexual behavior and assessment of possible reasons for abortion.

The purpose of a series of such classes is to deepen the level of knowledge about the problems of artificial termination of pregnancy, various consequences that arise after the operation of artificial termination of pregnancy, both for the woman herself and for society as a whole, modern types of contraception and analysis of their reliability, accentuation of the attention of young women on their most important life vocation – to be a mother, analysis of possible reasons for artificial termination of pregnancy and ways of behavior of a woman in each specific case.

All classes are conducted exclusively in English at the School of Foreign Languages and mainly in English for students of the other schools, which allows effectively combining the knowledge that is vital for young people with the improvement of students’ language skills. The highlight of these trainings is the assignment of English-speaking specialists – volunteers to these trainings, which allows students to receive information from specialists in the relevant field.

In order to obtain data on the level of the development of students’ health culture after the completion of the relevant activities, we conducted a student questionnaire, collected the necessary data characterizing the level of development of health culture; the levels of its development among students who participated in the experiment were determined. Summarizing the results, taking into account the main criteria and indicators of the development of the health culture of students, made it possible to obtain the final results, which are presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6  
THE DYNAMICS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS’ HEALTH CULTURE

No.	Levels of health culture development	Before the classes described		After the classes described above	
		Number of students	%	Number of students	%
1	High level	14	13	25	22
2	Medium level	41	35	59	51
3	Low level	60	52	31	27
4	All students	115	100	115	100

As you can see, after the events, 22% of the students demonstrated the high level of health culture development, while before the relevant classes there were only 13%, the number of students belonging to the medium level increased by 16% (from 35 to 51). The results that characterized the dynamics of the development of health culture among those students who had turned out to be positive low indicators. They became less – 27%, although before the classes it was 52%.



The analysis of the data confirmed better indicators and judgments of students. Thus, when answering the question about the need for health-preserving training of students, the students gave the following answers: “The future specialist must have appropriate health-preserving training. After all, this is a guarantee of his/her safety during professional activity”, “The culture of a specialist affects the result of his/her professional activity”. The development of students’ health culture is determined not only by the existing interest in health-preserving issues, but also by mastering knowledge of health-preserving content.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Health is one of the essential conditions for creative activity in modern society. It is the fundamental basis of social activity and all aspects of human well-being. Only health determines harmonious development of a person and the possibility of achieving high professionalism. When discussing the topic of health culture and student lifestyle, it is important to understand that health is a reflection of the essence of the phenomena in the lifestyle of a young person. The formation of health culture of students is the acquisition of certain personality traits based on self-development, as well as the personal health development. It should be pointed out that the developed activities contribute to the development of health culture in students and form their understanding of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle.

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# The Use and Exposure of Hate Speech Among Students: A Discourse Analysis Study

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**Abstract**—Using biased, hostile, and malicious language towards an individual or group of individuals due to their perceived innate characteristics is known as hate speech. It can cause harm to individuals, communities, and societies. In order to gain a better understanding of the prevalence and characteristics of hate speech within academic environments, we conducted a detailed survey of 79 carefully selected students. The survey was designed to determine the most frequently occurring types of hate speech, identify where these incidents commonly occur, and show whether or not students have personally experienced such instances. This study provides a comprehensive understanding of hate speech in educational settings. The findings revealed that a vast majority of the respondents had been exposed to hate speech, albeit unknowingly. However, a small percentage of the participants had not encountered any form of hate speech. These results highlight students' need for better education and awareness regarding the various forms of hate speech and where they can manifest. It is important for students always to be aware and knowledgeable about how to handle hateful speech and promote a culture of acceptance and kindness. This way, everyone can feel secure and comfortable in their surroundings and have the opportunity to flourish.

**Index Terms**—hate speech, academic environments, students

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Recently, a concerning surge in hate speech has been disseminated through various media platforms and online channels. This has led to heightened consciousness and scholarly inquiry into the impact of such rhetoric on society (Tontodimamma et al., 2020). For example, significant funding has been directed towards research in multiple fields, including law, sociology, communication, and psychology, to understand the issue better and develop effective measures to address it (Paz et al., 2020). The gravity of this matter has even given rise to several international initiatives that aim to evaluate the extent of the problem and devise strategies to combat it (Tontodimamma et al., 2020). It is evident that hate speech is a significant issue that requires urgent attention and collaborative efforts from individuals of all backgrounds to combat it effectively.

One challenge in identifying hateful content is the need for a widely recognized definition of hate speech. This is primarily due to ambiguous and personal judgments regarding whether a statement is offensive or expresses hate (Strossen, 2016). However, it is an expression that aims to demean, humiliate, or incite hatred against a specific group or category of individuals based on their characteristics (Kpekoll, 2023). It is a tool used to hurt, dehumanize, harass, intimidate, debase, degrade, and victimize targeted groups. Furthermore, it promotes insensitivity and brutality towards them by displaying discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving, antagonistic, and prejudiced attitudes towards gender, race, religion, ethnicity, colour, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation (Cohen-Almagor, 2013).

Heller and Magid (2019) highlight the harmful effects of hate speech targeting race, ethnicity, religion, and gender. Victims of such speech may suffer from low self-esteem, anxiety, fear for their safety, and, in severe cases, self-harm or

suicide. It is worth mentioning that Delgado and Stefancic (2019) firmly back up these discoveries, pointing out that hate speech can have a detrimental impact on one's mental well-being, causing an escalation in anxiety, fear, insecurity, and sleeping disorders. Therefore, it is an indisputable fact that hate speech can have a harmful impact on the targeted individual's psychological health. Moreover, using stereotypes and scapegoating in hate speech can further impede efforts to address underlying social issues by creating obstacles for people to communicate and understand each other, ultimately damaging relationships (Heller & Magid, 2019). Individuals need to be aware of the impact of their words and actions and strive to foster an environment of empathy and respect for all.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Iraq has a rich and diverse history of different ethnic and religious groups coexisting peacefully (UNAMI, 2020). Although Iraq has a history that tells stories of various groups living side by side, the last years have given space to deepened social divisions (Wörmer & Haddad, 2018). It is disappointing that the country has experienced increased social divisions in recent years, especially related to hate speech. This issue has become a significant crisis threatening Iraq's political and social environments because its divisive and polarising content is frequently directed at specific groups, making them more vulnerable and inciting hatred and discrimination (Wilson, 2021). The potential consequences of such actions could result in destructive social and political conflicts, ultimately affecting the university communities negatively (Saha et al., 2019).

Consequently, the researchers will conduct a survey to address the utilization and exposure of hate speech amongst both male and female students at the University of Sumer. The survey's main objectives are determining whether these students have heard and observed hate speech, the most common types, and where they usually occur. It is crucial to emphasize the importance of this research as more exploration is necessary on the subject of hate speech among Iraqi students. The survey findings will be crucial in determining hate speech's widespread existence and negative effects. This will enable educational institutions to develop effective strategies to combat hate speech and create a more tolerant and inclusive society.

### **Study Objectives**

1. To investigate whether students hear and observe hate speech.
2. To identify what kinds of hate speech are most prominent.
3. To determine where hate speech is most common.

### **Significance of the Study**

Undoubtedly, the issue of hate speech within the student population is complex and multifaceted and warrants a more comprehensive analysis. The significance of this study lies in its ability to provide a deeper understanding of the prevalence and impact of hate speech. By conducting this survey, we can generate valuable insights into the scope and consequences of this type of speech, which can be used to develop effective strategies to combat it. The results of this study will be crucial in guiding future research endeavours and informing educational institutions on how best to address and tackle hate speech. Understanding the underlying causes and consequences of hate speech can create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for all students. This will help promote a culture of respect and understanding where diversity is celebrated and valued. Ultimately, this study serves as a reminder of the need for continued vigilance against hate speech and the importance of taking proactive steps to combat it.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The persistent presence of hate speech in our society is a matter of deep concern. According to Awan (2016), this type of speech can harm and threaten certain communities' lives. The targeting and threatening of individuals based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, colour, or gender is extremely disturbing (Gitari et al., 2015). Even more disturbing is that the internet and social media platforms have made it easier for this harmful speech to spread ((D'angelo, 2020; Thomas, 2011). It is essential to take a firm stance against hate speech, whether it occurs online or in real life. We are responsible for reporting any instances we encounter and aiming for a society free of hate speech. Together, we can strive towards establishing a society where individuals can exist without the persistent apprehension of being discriminated against due to their identity.

Academic interest in hate speech has increased significantly in recent years. This is evident from the rise in the number of Web of Science-indexed articles on the topic from 42 to 162 between 2013 and 2018. The rise of hate speech within social media platforms and the media has prompted extensive research and efforts to address this pressing issue. The detrimental impact of hate speech on society cannot be ignored, as recognized by professionals in various fields such as law, sociology, communication, education, and psychology. Therefore, conducting a comprehensive analysis of the present situation and advancements associated with hate speech is imperative (Paz A. et al., 2020).

It has been brought to attention that social media platforms considerably impact the perpetuation of "racist dynamics". Their various features, guidelines, algorithms, and business decisions contribute to spreading hate speech (Matamoros-Fernández, 2018). Recent examples of this include the release of filters on Snapchat and Instagram that allow white individuals to engage in "digital blackface" and automatically lighten non-white skin, which have been met with widespread criticism (Matamoros-Fernández & Farkas, 2021). The research and study of hate speech remain crucial in the battle against injustice and discrimination. Understanding the nature and consequences of hate speech is paramount in establishing a more equitable and just society for all.

Similarly, Facebook's past practice of allowing marketers to block individuals with an "ethnic affinity" for African Americans or Hispanics to monitor users' online activity has also raised concerns (Angwin & Parris, 2016). The previous examples demonstrate how systemic oppression based on race, gender, and sexuality, as well as how these factors intersect with one another, is changed by digital technologies, which make oppression digital (Bivens & Haimson, 2016; Noble & Tynes, 2016). Significantly, the procedures and regulations used by social media platforms for content moderation are quite crucial. Companies like Facebook and Twitter have come under fire for allowing harassers to operate anonymously (Farkas et al., 2018) and for tolerating racist content disguised as humour because it increases engagement (Roberts, 2019; Shepherd et al., 2015). As a result of recent terrorist attacks and other acts of violence in the Middle East, including those in Iraq, Syria, and Jordan, as well as the Arab upheavals of 2011 that led to a refugee crisis impacting several Arab and EU nations, there has been a rise in incidences of hatred throughout the region (D'angelo, 2020).

A recent study conducted across various cultures has revealed that the regulations and practices surrounding hate crimes and hate speech are significantly influenced by different countries' social, technical, historical, and cultural settings (Sheppard et al., 2021). Hate speech is a dangerous practice that seeks to dehumanize individuals based on their group identity while also amplifying the perpetrator's group identity by creating an adversarial relationship between "us" and "them" (Gelber, 2011; Heinze, 2017). Waldron (2012) compares hate speech to an environmental threat, a slow-acting poison that accumulates word by word, posing a significant risk to social peace. This indicates that in a community where the use of hateful language is prevalent, it can make it difficult for individuals with good intentions to ensure the well-being of the people effectively.

The issue of hate speech is a complex and multifaceted problem that can take many forms. While some may argue that certain types of hate speech are protected under the guise of free speech, the harm caused by such speech cannot be denied (Yong, 2011). Hate speech can be spread through various means of communication, including verbal or written messages, images, memes, gestures, and symbols. This problem is pervasive, occurring online and offline, and can devastate individuals and communities (United Nations, 2022). It is helpful to categorise the different types of hate speech to address the issue of hate speech and develop effective methods for combating it. For example, Yong (2011) has proposed four distinct categories that relate to specific interests in free speech: targeted vilification, pervasive vilification, organised political advocacy for laws that exclude or eliminate certain groups of people, and other assertions of fact or value that represent a negative evaluation of a particular ethnic or religious community (Sorial, 2015). Understanding the various types of hate speech is vital in our efforts to combat this widespread issue and create a secure and all-encompassing society.

Iraq has been plagued by numerous invasions and wars within and beyond its borders since 1980. Between 1991 and 2003, the government's failure to implement effective policies and economic sanctions led to a host of social issues, including hyperinflation, impoverishment, and starvation, among others (Mahmud, 2013). Iraq is a nation with a rich cultural heritage, which has made it a target for various factions with competing ideologies. These groups seek to advance their values and beliefs at the expense of others. One such group is ISIS, also known as Daesh. This historically diverse and multiethnic nation has been using the destruction of Iraq's cultural heritage to demonstrate its commitment to its belief system and attract global attention. While it is true that historical necessity has sometimes required the world's condemnation to spur political action, the outrage that follows also plays into Daesh's hands. It provides them with additional motivation to destroy cultural heritage belonging to other people to build their own (Novacek et al., 2020).

Although it may seem like hate speech or anti-sectarian messages are of lesser importance compared to the growing number of terrorist attacks in Iraq, it is crucial to recognize the impact that divisive rhetoric has on society. The use of sectarian narratives by different groups, such as governing families, foreign occupiers, local politicians, religious leaders, and extremist groups, has often alienated potential rivals while gaining support (Siegel, 2015). Religious diversity is under threat in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Syria. Consequently, the area has seen a significant increase in hate speech. In just one week, from July 29 to August 5, the National Center for the Prevention of Hate Speech recorded 6,394 hate messages (Widagdo et al., 2021). One of the most crucial things we need to do is recognize the negative impact of hate speech on people. It is important to prioritize promoting inclusivity and respect for everyone, regardless of background or identity. Doing so can create a safer and more welcoming environment for all individuals.

According to reports, the terrorist group ISIS has been committing a heinous crime every hour, often using religion or political protection as a cover. These acts have, unfortunately, led to negative stereotypes and biases against certain religious minorities. The most worrisome aspect of these abuses is the lack of human rights protection, indicating a grave concern for the safety and well-being of the affected population (Widagdo et al., 2021). Moreover, previous studies have highlighted many challenges Iraq faces, including inadequate facilities, limited financial resources, restricted access to technology, and political instability. These factors have contributed to a lower quality of education, with only 42% of students in Iraq expressing satisfaction with their education in a 2016 survey conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (Mirza & Al-Abdulkareem, 2011).

It is worth noting that Iraq has recently been embroiled in various conflicts, significantly deteriorating the country's infrastructure and essential social services. Unfortunately, higher education, in particular, has suffered immensely due to the destruction of many facilities through burning, looting, or demolition (Mahmud, 2013). Despite this, higher

education could play a vital role in bridging the increasing sectarian divides in the nation and promoting long-term peace and security. Furthermore, it may provide an institutional framework for addressing Iraq's political, social, and economic challenges while also promoting adherence to democratic values both on campus and within the wider community as a prominent member of Iraq's civil society (Harb, 2008).

Iraq's educational system has always been guided by the values and principles rooted in its cultural and religious heritage. Education is recognised as a social process that evolves with time and is influenced by various factors such as social ideology and available resources. However, with the political changes in Iraq, the need for educational reform has become more pressing, particularly in light of the move towards democracy. This reform must be based on a new educational philosophy that will positively impact students' lives and contribute to the growth and development of the country (Harb, 2008).

Hate speech is a significant issue in Iraq that stems from deeper societal inequalities. The ongoing conflict, media coverage, and the actions of political and religious leaders further exacerbate the problem. The emergence of hate speech can be attributed to various factors, including political upheavals, economic or humanitarian crises, civil unrest, and war (Al-Shakeri, 2022). Despite the valiant efforts of the Iraqi youth to advance human rights and their freedom of speech, it appears that the current minimal regulations in this area are either insufficient or improperly enforced. This sad reality is further evidenced by the absence of accountability and justice for the recent assassinations, highlighting a deep-seated issue within the country's legal system (Al-Shakeri, 2022).

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### **Design of the Study**

When conducting research, there are several factors to consider when choosing the appropriate method. These factors include the topic being studied, the research questions being asked, and the study's objectives. To make an informed decision, the researcher must analyze the research problem, review the literature, and determine whether a quantitative or qualitative approach is best suited for the study (Creswell, 2012). In our case, we will be conducting a survey to gather both quantitative and qualitative data on the prevalence of hate speech among students. The survey will aim to assess whether students have experienced hate speech, identify the most common types of hate speech, and determine where it occurs most frequently. This approach will provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue and help to inform future efforts to address hate speech in educational settings.

#### **Participants**

In our efforts to investigate the prevalence and nature of hate speech within the academic setting, we conducted a survey among a carefully selected group of 79 students. Our aim was to gather data on their personal experiences or observations of hate speech and identify the most common forms of hate speech and the locations where it tends to occur. The selection of participants was a critical factor in ensuring the relevance and accuracy of our findings. Specifically, we recruited male and female students enrolled at the University of Sumer during the 2022-2023 academic year. By gathering this information, we hope to shed light on the complex issue of hate speech and its impact on individuals and communities within the academic environment.

#### **Collection of the Questionnaire Data**

In order to make informed decisions, judges and generals must have access to as many relevant facts as possible (SimpleLearn, 2023). This means that decisions should be based on accurate, reliable, and comprehensive information. When collecting data, it is important to use standardized methods to ensure that all respondents are on an equal footing when answering questions. This helps to avoid bias and ensure that the study's findings are as accurate and representative as possible (Ponto, 2015). One common method for collecting data is questionnaires, which can be adapted to elicit responses to specific topics or issues. In this case, the questionnaire will be focused on students' experiences with hate speech. The questionnaire will consist of 10 items, each designed to elicit a specific type of response from the respondent. Using a standardized questionnaire, the writer can ensure that the data collected is reliable, valid, and representative of the target population.

#### **Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire**

Before conducting any research, it is imperative to establish the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. This is to ensure everything is clear and clear between the researcher and the respondents. In addition, both parties must thoroughly understand the questions (Global, 2021). As such, we employed the content validity process, which involved expert evaluation to ensure the questionnaire's validity. To this end, we enlisted the services of three experts who hold PhDs in linguistics. These experts evaluated the questionnaire based on various criteria, including item congruence, content amplitude, writing quality, clarity, accuracy, and relevance.

To ensure the questionnaire's reliability, we used Cronbach's Alpha test. This test aimed to measure the internal consistency of questions that shared the same measurement scale. In carrying out this test, we followed the guidelines by George and Mallery (2003), which recommend a reliability score greater than 0.7. This approach ensured that our questionnaire would reliably produce consistent and accurate results.

#### **Analysis of Questionnaire Data**

The questionnaire for measuring hate speech is a comprehensive tool comprising ten items, each carefully designed to elicit specific information about the prevalence and impact of hate speech. One of these items is an open-ended

question encouraging respondents to share their experiences with hate speech. By allowing respondents to share their stories, we gain valuable insights into the real-life impact of hate speech on individuals and communities. The remaining nine items in the questionnaire are structured to offer a range of response options, each reflecting different attitudes or experiences related to hate speech. These responses allow us to understand better the frequency and distribution of the prevalence of hate speech and how individuals and communities are affected by it. To ensure the validity of our results, we subjected each item to statistical analysis. While the structured items in the questionnaire provide valuable quantitative data, we also recognize the importance of qualitative insights. Therefore, we took a qualitative approach to analyzing the open-ended question. By comparing and contrasting respondents' experiences, we identified common themes and trends related to the impact of hate speech on individuals and communities. This in-depth analysis gives us a deeper understanding of how hate speech affects people's lives.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The academic year of the students enrolled at the university has been identified as an important consideration after analysing the data collected from the survey respondents. The findings reveal that an enormous proportion of students, 97.2% of the total population, are presently in their second year of study. In contrast, a significantly smaller percentage of students, constituting only 2.8% of the entire cohort, are in their third year of study, as evidenced in Figure 1. This information could potentially impact the conclusions drawn from the survey and should be considered when analysing the results.

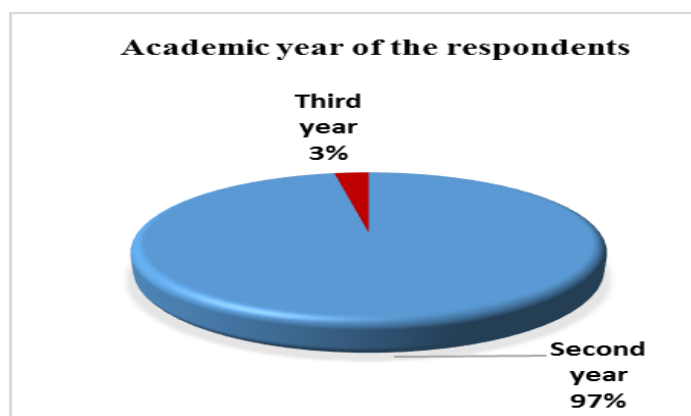


Figure 1. Academic Year of the Respondents

According to the survey conducted on hate speech with a total of 79 students participating, an alarming 76% (60 students) acknowledged that they had unknowingly encountered instances of hate speech in the past. This finding raises concerns about the prevalence of hate speech in our society and highlights the need for greater awareness and education on the issue. On the other hand, 24% (19 students) reported that they had not yet experienced or witnessed any form of hate speech, as illustrated in Figure 2. It is encouraging to note that a significant number of students have not been exposed to this negative phenomenon, but this also emphasizes the importance of actively working towards eliminating hateful speech from our communities.

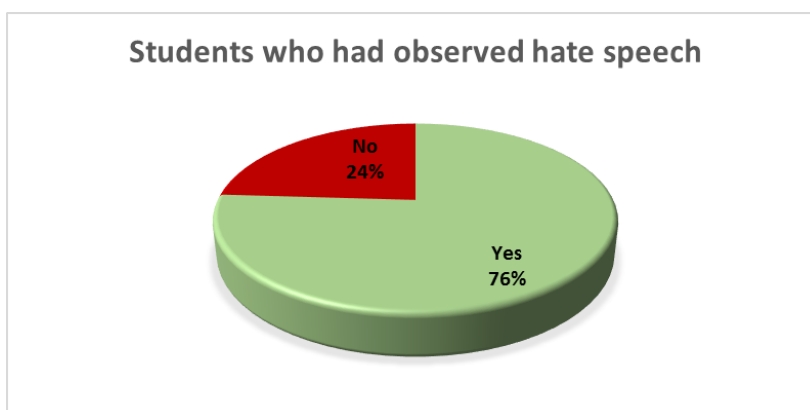


Figure 2. Pie Chart Depicting the Percentage of Students Who Had Observed Hate Speech

After analyzing the data that was gathered, it was discovered that a significant portion of the respondents, amounting to 76%, have witnessed occurrences of hate speech. Among these individuals, 57.4% have reported witnessing such instances only once, while 19.2% have stated that they have seen it multiple times. Furthermore, 10.6% of the

respondents have claimed that they observe hate speech on a daily basis, while 8.5% have reported monthly occurrences. Lastly, 4.3% have stated that they have seen it weekly. These findings have been presented in Figure 3, providing a clear visual representation of the results.

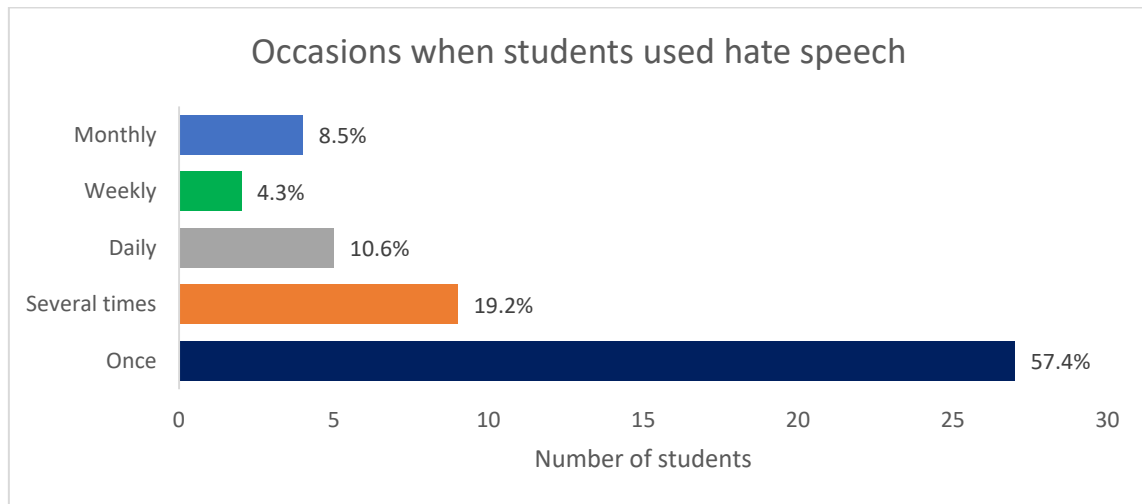


Figure 3. Moments of Hate Speech Among Students

Regarding the most common type of hate speech encountered by students, it is notable that religious beliefs appear to be the primary target, with 46.5% of respondents indicating that they have witnessed instances of hate speech directed towards students' religious affiliations. This finding underscores the importance of fostering greater understanding and respect for diverse religious beliefs and practices within academic environments.

Beyond religious beliefs, physical appearance was the second most frequently targeted aspect of an individual, with 14.2% of students reporting that they have experienced hate speech based on their looks. This type of hate speech can negatively impact students' self-esteem and body image, and it is crucial for educators and administrators to take proactive steps to create a culture of body positivity and acceptance.

Social and economic status also played a role in the incidence of hate speech, with 11.0% of students reporting instances where hate speech was directed towards their background. This finding highlights the need for greater awareness and sensitivity towards socioeconomic diversity and inequality issues and the importance of creating a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students.

It is worth noting that hate speech can also be directed towards other aspects of a person's identity, such as gender, ethnicity, physical ability, and mental health. Interestingly, none of the participants reported experiencing hate speech based on race. Out of the 58 students who reported experiencing hate speech, a majority (44) reported experiencing it on multiple occasions, 11 reported experiencing it only once, and 3 reported experiencing it daily. These findings underscore the pervasive nature of hate speech in academic environments and the urgent need for greater intervention and prevention efforts to address this issue.

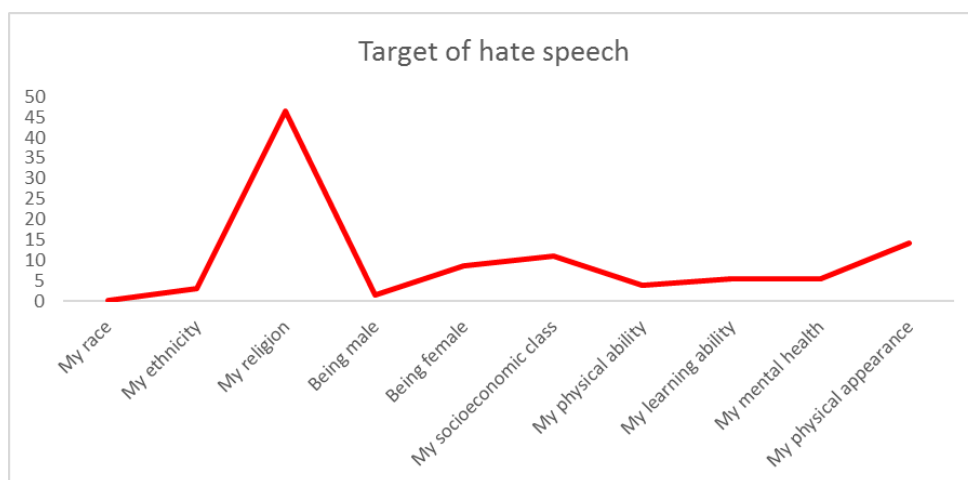


Figure 4. Target of the Hate Speech

When analyzing the locations where hate speech has been reported, it is notable that a high percentage of occurrences took place online (24.7%) and through other sources (28.2%). Additionally, classrooms (17.64%) and faculty grounds (17.64%) were also locations where hate speech was frequently reported. Faculty events (7.1%) were identified as



another location where hate speech occurred, albeit less frequently. Lastly, the cafeteria (4.7%) was identified as a location where hate speech incidents were reported, but with the lowest percentage of occurrences compared to other locations. These findings are illustrated in Figure 4.

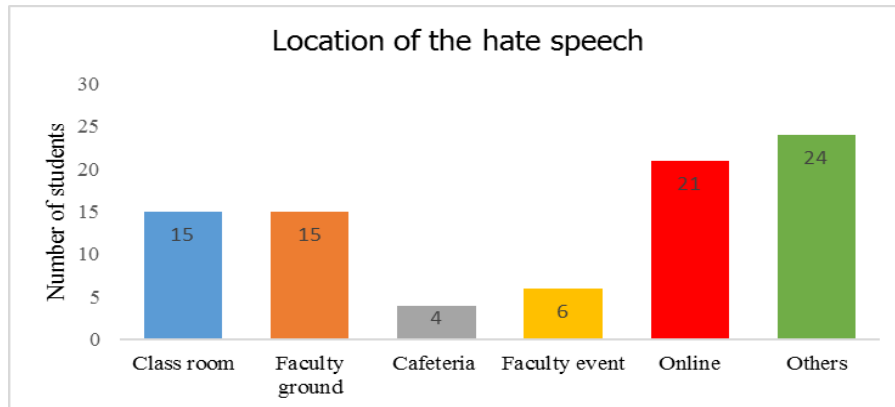


Figure 5. Location of the Hate Speech

According to the survey, a significant proportion of respondents who had experienced hate speech reported that the source of the hate speech was someone they knew but not very well, accounting for 26.3% of the cases. Additionally, 10.5% of respondents reported that the hate speech they encountered came from friends, while 14.0% of the cases were attributed to individuals whom they did not know. Surprisingly, nearly half of the respondents did not mention the source of the hate speech.

Regarding the motives behind the hate speech, the majority of the respondents (47.4%) reported that it was intentional, suggesting that the perpetrators deliberately engaged in hate speech with the intention of causing harm. Interestingly, 28.0% of the respondents reported that some individuals tried to be humorous but failed to realize that their words could be hurtful. Finally, 24.6% of the respondents reported that some individuals tried to hurt others in a humorous way, indicating that some people may use humour to mask their hateful intentions.

Bearing in mind the respondents' personality, which attracts hate speech, the respondent could identify themselves as shown in Figure 6. Most respondents could personalize themselves as someone with mental health and physical appearance. Among the two most common gender, being a female attracts hate speech more than being a male, and the respondents' socio-economic status attracts hate speech more than religion.

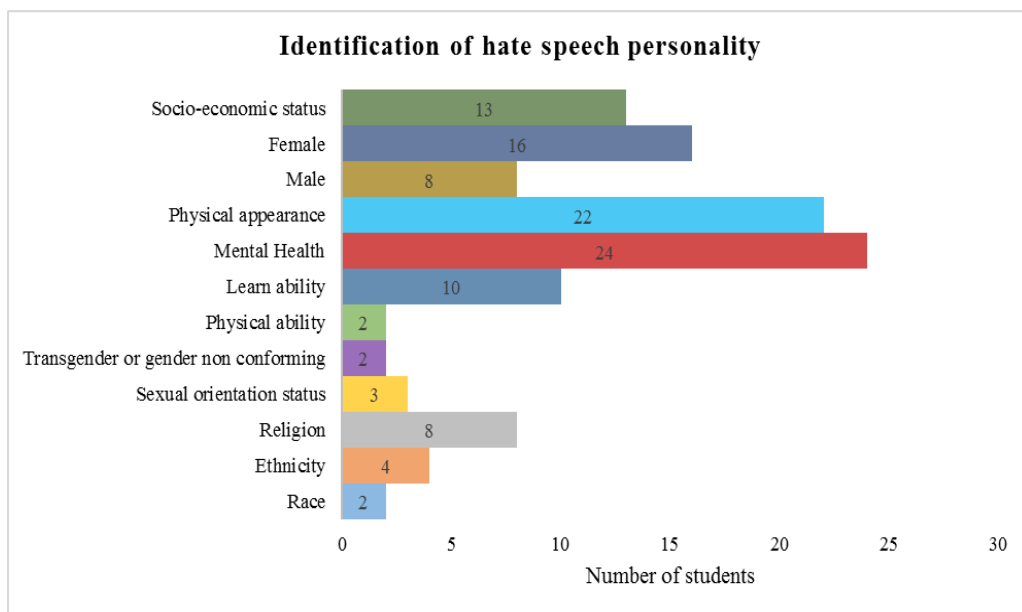


Figure 6. Identification of Personality Based on Target of Hate Speech

After analyzing the responses gathered, it was discovered that several individuals had been targeted with hate speech. One of the respondents recounted how their colleagues cast doubt on their capabilities and anticipated their failure, but they persevered and ultimately passed all their courses with flying colours. Meanwhile, another respondent shared a painful experience of being subjected to hate speech by someone they were close to, which had a detrimental effect on

their well-being. These instances of hate speech serve as a reminder that discrimination and prejudice can come from anyone and that we must work tirelessly to combat them in all their forms.

Several respondents expressed concern about how hate speech can lead to individuals harming one another, and some mentioned the negative impact it has had on their lives;

I was so depressed and wished that hate speech would vanish from society.

I viewed hate speech as normal and treated it accordingly.

I eliminated my issues with hate speech over time.

I endured too much psychological suffering.

Because they targeted me as a liar, I endured excessive suffering.

I suffered psychologically, but I was able to overcome the issues.

I suffer excessively because I cannot tolerate hate speech.

I lacked self-assurance and lost trust in others.

I wanted to commit suicide because of hateful speech.

## V. CONCLUSION

Students must have a good understanding of hate speech to combat it in the future effectively. They may become targets of this harmful language without proper knowledge about hate speech. Recently, a group of Sumer University students participated in a hate speech survey to gather information about the prevalence of hate speech among students. The questionnaire included questions about the students' awareness of hate speech, the various types of hate speech they encountered or engaged in, and the locations where it was most prevalent. The survey results indicated that most respondents had heard and observed hate speech in the past without realizing it was hate speech. However, a small percentage had neither heard nor observed hate speech. These findings suggest a need for more education and awareness about hate speech among students. In the future, students need to be more conscious of hate speech and its various forms, as it can occur in different locations such as online, faculty grounds, classrooms, faculty events, and the cafeteria. By being informed and aware, students can play an important role in combating hate speech and promoting a more inclusive and respectful environment for everyone.

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# Measuring Integrativeness as a Motivation for Second-Language Acquisition of Arabic in Learners at Saudi Arabia's Arabic Language Institutes

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**Abstract**—Integrativeness, or the desire a second-language (L2) learner to integrate into their target L2 community, has been shown to be a strong motivation toward L2 learning. Aspects of identity, such as desire to learn a liturgical language (LL) associated with the L2 learner's religion, or the level of ability for the L2 learner to develop a clear vision of their future L2 self, have also been shown to be strong L2 motivators. Arabic is the LL of Islam, and it is also the heritage language (HL) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Although levels of integrativeness will likely greatly impact L2 learning progress among learners at these ALIs, currently, an instrument does not exist for accurately measuring integrativeness into the target L2 community in KSA. The objective of this study was to develop a new instrument to measure Saudi integrativeness in L2 Arabic learners from KSA ALIs Diploma Programs. A total of 66 learners in three of the ALIs Diploma Programs completed the instrument. Twenty-three items were reduced to 16 through factor analysis, which revealed the following subscales: intellectual integrativeness, social integrativeness, remote admiration, and anti-integrativeness. While most of the sample was Muslim and displayed high levels of social and intellectual integrativeness and were interested in learning about cultural topics, they also placed priority on the quality of the classroom environment. The ALI classroom environment could be negatively impacted by a predominance of learners with anti-integrative attitudes, who are also less likely to be motivated and succeed at the individual level.

**Index Terms**—second language learning, Arabic, instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, liturgical languages

## I. INTRODUCTION

The early scientific foundation about what motivates individuals to engage in L2 learning includes work by Robert Gardner and colleagues (1972), who studied L2 motivation among individuals undergoing second language acquisition (SLA) of French in the French-speaking region of Canada to be able to adapt to their new surroundings. An enduring source of L2 motivation identified from this line of research is that learners often have “instrumental” motivations for L2 acquisition, meaning motivations towards practical use of the L2 in their workplace or educational setting (Gardner, 2000). Subsequent research has validated this to some degree, in that Gardner's learners showed a high correlation between instrumental motivation and grades on the L2 (Gardner, 2000), and research into groups learning L2 for vocational reasons show a high level of instrumental motivation (Azar & Tanggaraju, 2020; Kashafian-Naeeni et al., 2018; Stamenkovska et al., 2022).

Another source of L2 motivation identified by Gardner was “integrativeness”, or the level of desire for the L2 learner to use the newly-acquired L2 to integrate into their new language community (Al-Musnad, 2018; Gardner, 1985; Lamb, 2004). Like with instrumental motivation, integrativeness has been repeatedly identified in research as a strong source of L2 motivation, and although the construct has been found to be correlated with instrumental motivation in L2 learners, discriminant validity has been demonstrated (Gardner, 2000; Pham, 2017). Gardner hypothesized that those who were integratively motivated would try to master the L2 faster than those who were not, and found some support for this with respect to learning L2 vocabulary (Gardner, 2000). On balance, Gardner illustrated that many different sources of L2 motivation may be correlated, but their causal associations remain complex (Gardner, 2000).

Theories alternative to Gardner's were developed, leading to a line of L2 motivation researchers including Dörnyei (2009) who posited that L2 motivation was largely a function of identity, in that if the learner could clearly envision a future L2 self who was proficient in the L2, this would serve as a strong L2 motivator. Considering this perspective, the L2 learner who has not selected a specific L2 community in which to integrate in the future may suffer from lower levels of integrative motivation simply from the inability to develop a sharply-focused vision of a future L2 self (Csiz é

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& Dörnyei, 2005; Deci & Ryan, 2000). On the other hand, L2 learners like Gardner's, who are surrounded by a specific L2 community, experience a motivational advantage, and those without it experience a disadvantage. Integrative motivation is one of the many positive features introduced by learning an L2 within a community that seem to be replicated through immersion programs established in L2 classrooms (Xie & Antolovic, 2022).

In addition to the clarity with which the learner envisions the future L2 self, another source of identity-related L2 motivation may have to do with the specific L2. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Arabic is the spoken language; for those born and raised in KSA, Arabic is a "heritage language" (HL), or one associated with KSA culture (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010). Additionally, Arabic is the "liturgical language" (LL) of Muslims, as their holy book, the Qur'an, is in Arabic (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010). Research has been conducted about how Muslim identity motivates the learning and speaking of L2 Arabic as a LL in an English-speaking country such as the United Kingdom (UK) (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010; Moraru, 2019; Rosowsky, 2005, 2021). In such learning situations, the exact target L2 community for integrativeness is not clearly defined. It could be predominantly an L2 community that operates in the L2 only in a religious setting (as an LL), or it could reflect a desire for integrativeness into a specific geographic L2 community with the L2 as the HL (e.g., KSA).

KSA is considered the global center of Islam; KSA's constitution is the Qur'an, so that civil society operates based on Islamic law, and Arabic is the official language (Rijal & Khoirina, 2019). In its university system, KSA has developed L2 Arabic language institutes (ALIs) which teach the "Fusha" Standard Arabic dialect (Abdelhalim & Alqubayshi, 2020). Three ALIs in the capital city Riyadh include Arabic Language Teaching Institute at Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud Islamic University (Imam-ALI, male only), the King Abdulaziz University Arabic Language Institute (KAU-ALI, female only) and the Arabic Teaching Institute for Non-Arabic Speakers at Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU-ALI, female only). Each ALI has a Diploma Program, which delivers instruction over two years to L2 Arabic learners from outside KSA who are studying in KSA universities, with a large proportion on government scholarship. The goal of the Diploma Program is to ensure the L2 Arabic learners are well-enough equipped in their L2 in order to learn in the Arabic-speaking classrooms of KSA's universities, where they will obtain their academic degrees.

Previous research on ALI learners has demonstrated that they have high levels of both instrumental motivation, as well as motivation arising from Muslim identity, as almost all of those in the sample reported being Muslim (Shaalán, IN PRESS; Shaalan et al., IN PRESS). Attitudes of L2 Arabic learners have been studied, and the power of the motivational role of learning Arabic as an LL for Islam cannot be understated (Moraru, 2019; Rosowsky, 2005). Therefore, KSA's universities are likely to attract foreigners who want to study in KSA due to its reputation as the global center of Islam, and these are the people enrolling in KSA's ALIs and being placed in the Diploma Program.

But how well the ALIs are leveraging what is known about L2 motivation to keep their Diploma Program students motivated is unknown. Among Saudis, speaking L2 English has been seen historically as showing off or displaying the attitude of denying culture, but with the recent implementation of a new country-level strategy in 2016, KSA has been promoting L2 English speaking and learning among the Saudi population to enhance its ability to participate in international business (Alrabai, 2018; Faruk, 2013; Saudi Vision, 2030, 2020). Hence, if an ALI learner wanted to carry on a casual conversation with a Saudi in KSA, they likely would need to be fluent in Arabic. So while a non-Arabic speaker living in KSA would likely be instrumentally motivated to master Arabic, it is not clear that the desire for integrativeness into KSA civil society would play a role in L2 motivation as well.

To this end, a pilot instrument was developed based on existing scientific literature specifically to measure Saudi integrativeness in L2 Arabic learners at KSA ALIs. The aim of this analysis was to provide evidence of validity and reliability of this new instrument developed to measure Saudi integrativeness as a type of L2 motivation in Arabic learners from KSA ALI diploma programs.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

An instrument was developed based on the literature aimed at measuring level of Saudi integrativeness as an L2 motivation for Arabic learners at three of Saudi's ALIs. The instrument was included in an online anonymous survey sent to current and former learners at the ALIs that was part of a larger study (Shaalán, IN PRESS; Shaalan et al., IN PRESS). Also included in the survey was an adapted instrument for measuring L2 motivation arising from identity (Husseinali, 2005; Husseinali, 2006; Shaalan et al., IN PRESS), an experimental instrument for measuring influence of the Arabic L2 learning environment (L2LE) (Aladdin, 2010; Asker, 2012; Assulaimani, 2015; Moskovsky et al., 2016; Shaalan, IN PRESS; Subekti, 2018), and demographic items. After survey administration, statistical analyses aimed at evaluating evidence of reliability and validity of the Saudi integrativeness instrument were undertaken, and items not contributing meaningfully to detected factors were removed to develop a proposed instrument, which is streamlined and recommended to be tested in future research. Details of these processes are described here.

### A. Integrative Instrument Development

To develop initial items, domains from an instrument developed by Gardner called Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) that related to integrativeness were considered (Gardner, 1985). The AMTB, which is aimed at L2 French learners in the French-speaking part of Canada, has an integrativeness subscale that combines items that reflect learning

the L2 as part of a desire to integrate for social reasons, wanting to better understand the community, and as a result of attitudes toward the French Canadians and European French people (Gardner, 1985).

Also considered was research on non-Saudi nurses working in KSA who were interested in learning L2 Arabic, where Al-Musnad (2018) adapted items from the AMTB to measure integrativeness. After consideration of these integrativeness measurement approaches, two domains were selected to guide the development of items on the current instrument: those focused on attitudes toward integrating with the Saudi people (“people”), and those focused on aspects of integrating into KSA independent of the people, such as history and geography (“country”, see Table 2 for items). Initially, 10 items were proposed on the country domain, and 13 on the people domain, for a total of 23 items (see Table 2). These items were listed as statements, and the respondent was asked to rate the statements according to their level of agreement on a scale of one to five, where one is strongly disagree, two is disagree, three is neutral, four is agree and five is strongly agree.

### B. Participants, Setting and Data Collection

A survey that included the identity-motivation instrument, the L2LE instrument, demographic items, and the newly developed integrativeness instrument was programmed into survey application SurveyMonkey for anonymous online administration by web link. In April 2022, learners in the diploma program at KAU-ALI (n = 43) and Imam-ALI (n = 105) and learners who were alumni of the diploma program at PNU-ALI (n = 98) were provided a link to the survey via a WhatsApp group established by teachers at the ALIs. Current learners were asked to complete the survey either during or after class within the next week, and alumni were asked to complete the survey within the next week.

### C. Data Analysis

To assess validity of the new integrativeness instrument, the intention was to apply confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm the two domains on which the items were originally placed, and to identify items not loading so that they could be removed. This would also confirm whether or not a two-factor structure is appropriate. After placing remaining items on factor subscales, to assess reliability, the intention was to use Cronbach  $\alpha$  analysis on the items in each subscale to assess internal reliability. Pearson correlation analysis was also used to assess convergent and discriminant validity.

Data were analyzed in R (R Core Team, 2021). First, demographics variables underwent descriptive analysis. Next, factor analysis was conducted, in which the *principal* command from the *psych* package was used with the varimax rotation (Revelle, 2022). For factor analysis, three-factor, four-factor, and five-factor models were all considered, and the one that was felt to fit the data best was selected. Items were retained on factors if the loading was  $\geq 0.50$  or  $\leq -0.50$  unless removed for empirical reasons. The package *nfact* was used to run a scree plot which supported model selection (Raiche & Magis, 2020). Based on all these results, final decisions were made as to which items to retain in the integrativeness instrument, on which subscales to place them, and what to label the subscales.

After factor structures were confirmed and items were selected for subscales, a Cronbach  $\alpha$  score for each subscale was calculated using the *alpha* command from the same package for groups of items loading on factors, with a score of 0.70 and above being considered acceptable, which is consistent with the literature (Dörnyei, 2007). Distributions of raw item responses for each subscale were visualized using the *likert* package (Bryer & Speerschneider, 2016). Subsequently, summary scores for each subscale were calculated by summing the raw item scores. To compare mean scores from the three participating ALIs, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used, followed by a Pearson correlation analysis which was used to evaluate the correlation between subscales of the integrative instrument, as well as those of the identity-motivation and L2LE instrument (with  $\alpha$  set at 0.05).

## III. RESULTS

A link to complete the anonymous survey was sent to 246 ALI diploma program learners (current learners: KAU-ALI n = 43 and Imam-ALI n = 105; alumni: PNU-ALI n = 98), and 140 completed it, for a response rate of 57%. Of these, 74 surveys had missing data either among the necessary demographic items or the items in the instrument, so they were removed, leaving 66 complete records for analysis.

### A. Demographics

As shown in Table 1, over half (56.1%) were from PNU-ALI, leading to a predominance of women in the sample (68.2%). Almost all (97%) of the sample was between the ages of 18 and 34, and 59.1% classified themselves as “never married”.

TABLE 1  
DEMOGRAPHICS

Category	Level	All n, %	Site <sup>d</sup>		
			KAU-ALI n, %	PNU-ALI n, %	Imam-ALI n, %
All	All	66, 100.0%	8, 12.1%	37, 56.1%	21, 31.8%
Gender	Male	21, 31.8%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	21, 100.0%
	Female	45, 68.2%	8, 100.0%	37, 100.0%	0, 0.0%
Age group (years)	18-24	32, 48.5%	3, 37.5%	15, 40.5%	14, 66.7%
	25-34	32, 48.5%	5, 62.5%	21, 56.8%	6, 28.6%
	35-64	2, 3%	0, 0.0%	1, 2.7%	1, 4.8%
Marital status <sup>a</sup>	Married	27, 40.9%	5, 62.5%	17, 45.9%	5, 23.8%
	Never married	39, 59.1%	3, 37.5%	20, 54.1%	16, 76.2%
Ethnic/religious <sup>b</sup>	Identify as Arab	6, 9.1%	0, 0.0%	3, 8.1%	3, 14.3%
	Identify as Muslim	64, 97%	7, 87.5%	36, 97.3%	21, 100.0%
	Identify as Middle Eastern	4, 6.1%	2, 25.0%	2, 5.4%	0, 0.0%
Language fluency <sup>c</sup>	Any African language	22, 33.3%	5, 62.5%	6, 16.2%	11, 52.4%
	Any Chinese language	2, 3.0%	0, 0.0%	2, 5.4%	0, 0.0%
	Any Indian language	17, 25.8%	0, 0.0%	13, 35.1%	4, 19.0%
	Arabic	41, 62.1%	3, 37.5%	24, 64.9%	14, 66.7%
	English	48, 72.7%	4, 50.0%	28, 75.7%	16, 76.2%
	French	5, 7.6%	1, 12.5%	1, 2.7%	3, 14.3%
	German	2, 3.0%	0, 0.0%	2, 5.4%	0, 0.0%
	Fluency in any of above languages	59, 89.4%	6, 75.0%	34, 91.9%	19, 90.5%
Parents speak Arabic?	One speaks fluent Arabic	24, 36.4%	1, 12.5%	16, 43.2%	7, 33.3%
	Both speak fluent Arabic	1, 1.5%	0, 0.0%	1, 2.7%	0, 0.0%
Intensity of Arabic study	Enrolled in formal Arabic language learning program	44, 66.7%	8, 100.0%	18, 48.6%	18, 85.7%

<sup>a</sup>None of the respondents selected "widowed/divorced." <sup>b</sup>None of the respondents identified as Saudi. <sup>c</sup>None of the respondents were fluent in Spanish. <sup>d</sup>KAU-ALI: King Abdulaziz University Arabic Language Institute, PNU-ALI: Arabic Teaching Institute for Non-Arabic Speakers at Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, Imam-ALI: Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University.

As shown in Table 1, while less than 10% identified as Arab ( $n = 6, 9.1\%$ ) or Middle Eastern ( $n = 4, 6.1\%$ ), 97% ( $n = 64$ ) identified as Muslim. The most common language of fluency reported was English (72.7%), followed by Arabic (62.1%), any African language (33.3%), and any Indian language (25.8%). Over one third (36.4%) of the sample had one parent who speaks fluent Arabic, but only one respondent reported fluency in both parents. Finally, 66.7% reported being enrolled in a formal Arabic language learning program at the time of the survey.

### B. Factor Analysis Results

Table 2 presents the results of factor analysis, and includes information on the original sources of the 23 items, and the original domains on which they were placed. As shown in Table 2, a four-factor rather than two-factor structure was confirmed, which revealed the following factor subscales: intellectual integrative (IntInt, four items), social integrative (SocInt, four items), anti-integrative (AntiInt, five items), and admire (Admire, three items), thus suggesting that these 16 items be retained in the instrument (see Appendix A for final instrument). The scree plot recommends a three-factor rather than four-factor model, although four distinct factors are seen in the plot (see Figure 1).



TABLE 2  
FACTOR ANALYSIS RESULTS SAUDI INTEGRATIVE INSTRUMENT

Item Wording	Label*	Four-factor Model			
		RC1	RC3	RC2	RC4
I want to study Arabic because I am interested in Saudi locations and geography. <sup>c</sup>	IntInt1	<b>0.79</b>	0.03	-0.24	0.00
I want to study Arabic because I am interested in Saudi history. <sup>c</sup>	IntInt2	<b>0.82</b>	0.13	-0.16	0.06
I want to study Arabic so I can better understand Saudi society. <sup>c</sup>	IntInt3	<b>0.75</b>	0.23	-0.07	0.07
I am not interested in learning Arabic to better understand Saudi history. <sup>c</sup>	AntiInt1	-0.18	-0.02	<b>0.75</b>	-0.02
Studying Arabic can be important for me because it will enable me to better understand Saudi heritage. <sup>a,c</sup>	IntInt4	<b>0.70</b>	0.46	-0.21	0.14
Studying Arabic can be important for me because I will be able to understand Saudi's different cultural groups. <sup>a,c</sup>	SocInt1	0.48	<b>0.62</b>	-0.19	0.10
I am not interested in understanding Saudi society through learning Arabic. <sup>c</sup>	AntiInt2	-0.15	-0.25	<b>0.65</b>	-0.38
I am not interested in learning Arabic to study Saudi heritage. <sup>c</sup>	AntiInt3	-0.33	-0.31	<b>0.60</b>	0.12
I am not interested in learning Arabic so I can better understand Saudi locations and geography. <sup>c</sup>	AntiInt4	-0.28	0.09	<b>0.76</b>	0.07
I am not interested in studying Arabic to better comprehend Saudi's different cultural groups. <sup>c</sup>	AntiInt5	-0.32	-0.26	<b>0.77</b>	-0.02
I do not really care about being fluent in the language of the Saudi people. <sup>b</sup>	Did not load	0.12	-0.34	0.34	-0.17
I would like to meet Saudi people. <sup>b</sup>	SocInt2	0.20	<b>0.70</b>	0.08	0.22
I have a favorable attitude towards Saudi people. <sup>a,b</sup>	Did not load	0.48	0.36	-0.01	0.28
I have an unfavorable attitude towards the Saudi people. <sup>b</sup>	Did not load	0.16	0.01	0.37	-0.59
Saudi people are very sociable. <sup>a,b</sup>	Admire1	0.32	0.07	0.04	<b>0.68</b>
I am not interested in socializing with Saudis using Arabic. <sup>b</sup>	Did not load	0.30	-0.51	0.47	-0.04
I would like to know more about Saudi people. <sup>b</sup>	SocInt3	0.19	<b>0.83</b>	-0.24	0.03
Studying Arabic can be important to me because it will allow me to be more at ease with Saudis. <sup>a,b</sup>	SocInt4	0.22	<b>0.77</b>	-0.21	0.06
Non-Saudis should not be expected to use Arabic in Saudi Arabia. <sup>b</sup>	Did not load	0.14	-0.28	0.43	-0.14
Non-Saudis in Saudi should make a greater effort to learn Arabic. <sup>a,b</sup>	Did not load	-0.35	0.24	-0.06	0.39
Saudi people are very warm-hearted. <sup>b</sup>	Admire2	0.03	0.20	0.11	<b>0.79</b>
The more I get to know Saudi people, the more I want to be fluent in their language. <sup>a,b</sup>	Did not load	0.28	0.55	-0.16	0.38
Saudi people are very creative. <sup>a,b</sup>	Admire3	0.46	0.09	-0.16	<b>0.55</b>

\* This code is used to indicate which subscale the item was placed on for scoring based on factor analysis results. Bolded value indicates how item was selected for factor. The four-factor model rendered factors RC1-RC4. RC1 was labeled "intellectual integrative", and consists of items IntInt1-4. RC2 was labeled "social integrative", and consists of items SocInt1-3. RC3 was labeled "anti-integrative", and consists of items AntiInt1-5. RC4 was labeled "admire" and consists of items Admire1-3. <sup>a</sup>Adapted from Al-Musnad (2018), all others developed by author. <sup>b</sup>Originally placed on "people" domain. <sup>c</sup>Originally placed on "country" domain.

As shown in Table 2, of the seven items that were removed, five did not meet loading criteria, and the two others met the criteria for retention with an estimate  $\leq -0.50$ : one on the Admire subscale, and one on the SocInt subscale. An empirical decision was made to drop these items from the subscales, because they would have been the only reverse-coded item in each subscale. The resulting subscales had the following standardized Cronbach  $\alpha$  results, of which only Admire did not meet preset acceptance criteria: IntInt = 0.87, SocInt = 0.84, AntiInt = 0.84, and Admire = 0.68.

Non Graphical Solutions to Scree Test

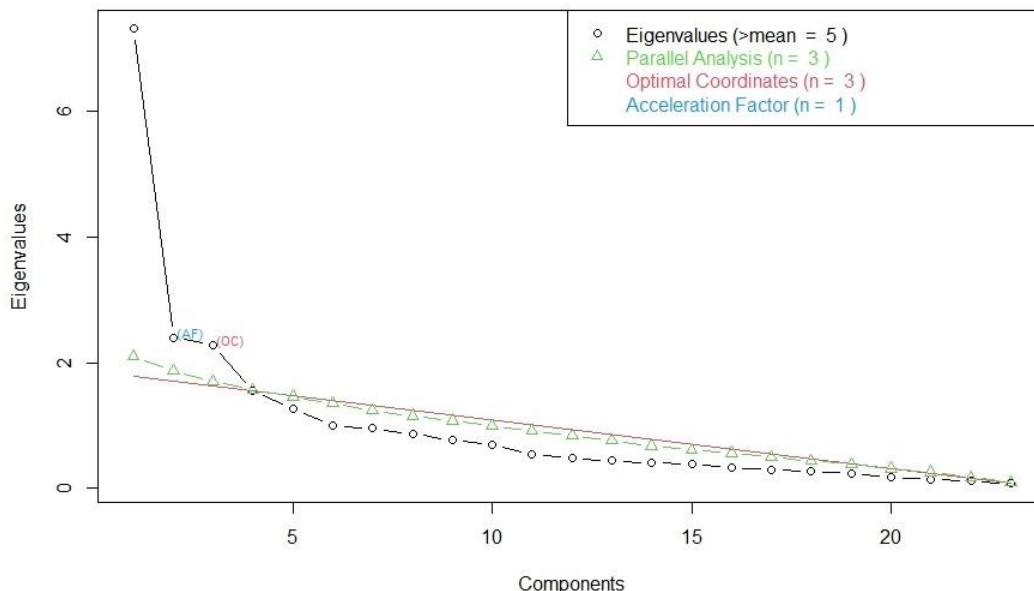


Figure 1. Scree Plot for Saudi Integrative Instrument

As can be seen in this scree plot, the optimal coordinates recommended is three, rather than four. This likely reflects the weaker loadings observed on the fourth Admire subscale compared to the other three subscales.

Subscale scores were created by summing responses (with distribution of individual responses to items in subscales visualized in Figure 2), and the results are reported in Table 3. In Figure 2, each horizontal bar represents an item retained in the instrument, and the label along the y-axis is labeled with the code for the item (see Table 2 to decode). The grey middle area centered vertically in the plot represents the percentage of respondents who responded “3 neutral” to the item and is labeled with this percentage. To the right of this middle area are light and dark green areas representing the proportion of respondents who said “4 agree” or “5 strongly agree” respectively; this combined percentage is listed along the y-axis on the right side of the figure. Left of the grey area are light and dark gold areas representing the proportion of respondents who said “2 disagree” and “1 strongly disagree” respectively, and this combined percentage is listed along the y-axis on the left side.

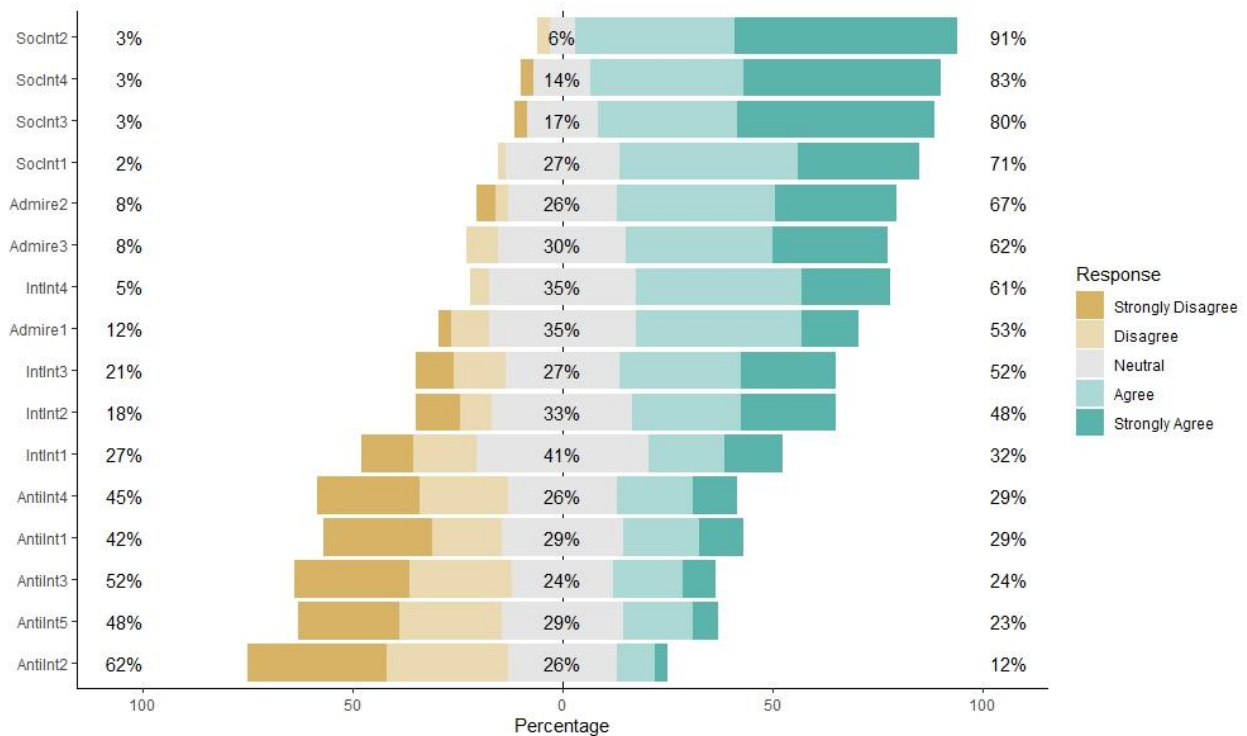


Figure 2. Distribution of Subscale Item Responses

This figure includes the distribution of responses for each item retained in the Saudi integrative instrument after factor analysis. Each horizontal bar represents an item, and the label along the y-axis is labeled with the code for the item (see Table 2 to decode). The percentages listed along the y-axis on the left side indicate the percentage of sample answering 1 and 2 (strongly disagree and disagree), and the percentages listed along y-axis on the right side indicate the percentage of sample answering 4 and 5 (agree and strongly agree). The percentage listed along the center vertical line indicates percentage of answers of 3 (neutral). Items are ordered decreasing from largest percentage of agreement. As can be seen by the distributions, prevalence of agreement was highest among the items in the social integrative subscale, and lowest on items in the anti-integrative subscales. All items in all the subscales were direct-coded except for the anti-integrative subscale, where the items were all reverse-coded, which may have influenced the higher rates of disagreement among those items.

As shown in Figure 2, the four items in the SocInt subscale had the highest combined agreement (71% to 91%), suggesting that social integration was a high priority for this sample. SocInt included items that indicated interest in social integration (e.g., “I would like to meet Saudi people.”). Only the five AntiInt items were negatively coded, (e.g., “I am not interested in learning Arabic to better understand Saudi history”) which explains the lowest combined rates of agreement with these items. The items on the IntInt and Admire subscales were directly coded and resulted in 32% to 67% combined agreement. IntInt items indicated interest in intellectual rather than social integration (e.g., “I want to study Arabic because I am interested in Saudi history”), and Admire items indicated vague or general positive statements about Saudis (e.g., “Saudi people are very warm-hearted”).

C. Summary and Correlation Results

Table 3 presents subscale scores for each site and combined. Consistent with Figure 2, the sample had higher mean subscale scores for SocInt, with ANOVA revealing a statistically significant difference between site means, showing Imam-ALI having the highest mean score of 18.2, and PNU-ALI having the lowest at 16.0. Also consistent with Figure 2, AntiInt mean scores were low, but an ANOVA revealed that the means were statistically significantly different, with PNU-ALI recording the highest mean score of 13.9, and Imam-ALI recording the lowest mean score of 10.4.

TABLE 3  
SUBSCALE SCORES

Subscale	Site <sup>a</sup>				ANOVA p-value	Range
	All mean, sd	KAU-ALI mean, sd	PNU-ALI mean, sd	Imam-ALI mean, sd		
Desire for intellectual integration	13.7, 3.8	14.0, 3.1	12.9, 3.6	15.0, 4.2	0.1410	4 to 20
Desire for social integration	16.8, 2.8	17.0, 2.6	16.0, 2.8	18.2, 2.4	0.0128*	4 to 20
Anti-integration	12.7, 4.8	13.1, 5.2	13.9, 4.4	10.4, 4.9	0.0245*	5 to 25

sd = standard deviation, ANOVA = analysis of variance. \* indicates statistical significance at  $p < 0.05$ . <sup>a</sup>KAU-ALI: King Abdulaziz University Arabic Language Institute, PNU-ALI: Arabic Teaching Institute for Non-Arabic Speakers at Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, Imam-ALI: Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University.

All internal subscale correlations were statistically significant except the one between Admire and AntiInt ( $r = -0.1856$ ,  $p = 0.1356$ ). IntInt showed a moderate positive significant correlation with SocInt ( $r = 0.5238$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ), and SocInt and IntInt showed weaker significant positive correlations with Admire (SocInt  $r = 0.3480$ ,  $p = 0.0042$ , IntInt  $r = 0.3813$ ,  $p = 0.0016$ ). Significant moderate negative correlations were seen between AntiInt and IntInt ( $r = -0.4854$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ), and between AntiInt and SocInt ( $r = -0.4476$ ,  $p = 0.0042$ ).

Table 4 presents the results of correlation comparisons between instrument subscales and those from the identity-motivation and L2LE instruments (Shaalán, IN PRESS; Shaalan et al., IN PRESS). The identity-motivation instrument represents an adaptation of an instrument developed by Husseinali (2006) to study identity as a source of motivation to study L2 Arabic; previous analysis showed that the data in this sample fell along three subscales: for cultural exposure (CultExp), due to Islamic identity (Islamic), to better understand problem and politics in the Arab-speaking world (PP), and for instrumental reasons (Inst) (Shaalán et al., IN PRESS). As shown in Table 4, CultExp, PP, and Inst were moderately positively and significantly correlated with IntInt (CultExp  $r = 0.5589$ , PP  $r = 0.5941$ , and Inst  $r = 0.5155$ ;  $p < 0.0001$  for all), and CultExp and Inst were also weakly and significantly positively associated with SocInt (CultExp  $r = 0.3834$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ; and Inst  $r = 0.2963$ ,  $p = 0.0126$ ). AntiInt was significantly negatively associated with CultExp ( $r = -0.2943$ ,  $p = 0.0143$ ), PP ( $r = -0.3738$ ,  $p = 0.0022$ ), and Inst ( $r = -0.2506$ ,  $p = 0.0333$ ). No significant correlations were seen between Admire and the identity-motivation instrument subscale scores, nor were any significant correlations seen between the Islamic subscale and any of the subscale scores from the integrative instrument.

TABLE 4  
SUBSCALE CORRELATIONS

Integrative Subscale	Identity Motivation Subscale	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Arabic Second Language Learning Subscale		
					<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Desire for intellectual integration	For cultural exposure	0.5589	<0.0001	Classroom	0.1752	0.1197
	Due to Muslim identity	0.1740	0.1747	Teacher/ Curriculum	0.1087	0.2835
	Better understand problems/ politics	0.5941	<0.0001	Personal Anxiety	-0.0299	0.0457
	Instrumental	0.5155	<0.0001			
Desire for social integration	For cultural exposure	0.3834	<0.0001	Classroom	0.3643	0.0023
	Due to Muslim identity	-0.0005	0.9853	Teacher/ Curriculum	0.1582	0.1509
	Better understand problems/ politics	0.2034	0.1042	Personal Anxiety	-0.0864	0.8439
	Instrumental	0.2963	0.0126			
Anti-integration	For cultural exposure	-0.2943	0.0143	Classroom	-0.2071	0.0990
	Due to Muslim identity	-0.0404	0.7646	Teacher/ Curriculum	-0.1086	0.3970
	Better understand problems/ politics	-0.3738	0.0022	Personal Anxiety	0.0791	0.3431
	Instrumental	-0.2506	0.0333			
Saudi admirer	For cultural exposure	0.1582	0.2071	Classroom	0.3392	0.0041
	Due to Muslim identity	-0.0400	0.7504	Teacher/ Curriculum	0.2892	0.0270
	Better understand problems/ politics	0.0994	0.4309	Personal Anxiety	-0.0105	0.8956
	Instrumental	0.1546	0.2201			

Note. *r* indicates Pearson correlation coefficient with corresponding *p* value, which is considered statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

Results from the instrument to measure the Arabic L2LE as a source of L2 motivation is also in Table 4. This instrument produced three subscale scores: Classroom environment (Classroom), influence of the teacher and curriculum (TeachCurric), and personal anxiety about learning Arabic (PersAnx) (Shaalán, IN PRESS). As shown in Table 4, IntInt was statistically significantly correlated with PersAnx ( $r = -0.0299$ ,  $p = 0.0457$ ), but the relationship was weak. SocInt was moderately significantly positively correlated with Classroom ( $r = 0.3643$ ,  $p = 0.0023$ ), AntiInt was weakly negatively correlated with Classroom in a relationship that approached but did not reach statistical significance ( $r = -0.2071$ ,  $p = 0.0990$ ). Finally, Admire was statistically significantly positively moderately correlated with Classroom ( $r = 0.3392$ ,  $p = 0.0041$ ) and TeachCurric ( $r = 0.2892$ ,  $p = 0.0270$ ).

#### IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In analyzing 66 responses from L2 Arabic learners at KSA's ALIs, a 23-item instrument was reduced to 16 items and four factor subscales: one reflecting the desire for intellectual integration into KSA (four items), one reflecting the desire for social integration among the Saudi people (four items), one reflecting remote admiration for the Saudi people (three items), and one strongly-presenting subscale reflecting a negative attitude toward integration into Saudi society (five items). Respondents had highest mean scores on social integration, possibly reflecting the personality of individuals who would desire to travel to a foreign country to study at a KSA ALI. The desire for intellectual integration was also high, while the subscale indicating admiration was relatively unstable, and reflected a lower level of reliability. Although the subscale reflecting an anti-integrative attitude had the lowest mean factor score, it was a scale with strong evidence of validity and reliability.

Demographically, the sample was almost entirely Muslim, suggesting that this identity feature might be a main motivator to join the Diploma Program at a KSA university. However, none of the integrativeness measures was associated with L2 motivation arising from Islamic identity as measured in this study. This suggests that among a group of individuals motivated to study a LL in a country speaking this LL, there may be varying levels of integrative motivation for engaging with society around them. Although desire to integrate intellectually was seen as distinct from the desire to integrate socially, both of these were associated with identity features of wanting cultural exposure to Arabic, and wanting to better understand problems and politics in the Arabic-speaking world.

These findings also suggest that intellectual and social integrativeness may influence level of interest and engagement in the L2 learning environment. Among the integrative Arabic learners at KSA's ALIs, it appears that some may lean more towards social integration, and others may lean more towards intellectual integration. Those who scored high on the social integration subscale also felt strong about the influence of the classroom in the L2LE. Logically, those seeking social integration may value classroom time as a part of practicing the L2 socially. Further, there were significant differences in levels of social integrativeness by site, suggesting that those at sites with learners with less social integrativeness may suffer from a lower quality classroom environment.

A finding that was surprising to this author was the strong anti-integrative subscale that was revealed through statistical analysis. Predictably, the anti-integrative subscale score was negatively correlated with subscales measuring levels of integrativeness. However, this subscale score was not significantly correlated with identity-related motivation subscales, or subscales having to do with the L2LE. Theoretically, those scoring high on the anti-integrative subscale will be at a distinct disadvantage in the L2 Arabic classroom, as integrativeness has been so strongly associated with L2 motivation and subsequent acquisition. Importantly, it should be noted that the anti-integrative subscale score was almost statistically significantly negatively correlated with the Classroom subscale from the identity-motivation instrument.

In a previous paper describing the reliability and validity analysis from the L2LE instrument data in the same sample, it was discovered that in-person communication in the L2 was de-emphasized in the classroom in lieu of other learning activities. That is because the ALI Arabic curriculum is standardized by the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) and designed to teach academic topics about Arabic in lessons delivered through reading, writing, and listening to lectures (Shalan, IN PRESS). This author postulated that the lack of emphasis on in-class person-to-person communication in Arabic may have led to elevated speaking anxiety that was detected in some of these learners (Shalan, IN PRESS). Additionally, this lack of in-class L2 dialogue may also be discouraging integrativeness into the KSA community at large.

Overall, these results show that Diploma learners at KSA's ALIs are generally interested in social and intellectual integration. However, given the approach to the ALI curriculum, those with more anti-integrative motivations may struggle along their L2 Arabic learning journey, as they may also experience L2 anxiety in the classroom. In fact, one study conducted in Imam-ALI learners found that they were motivated to learn L2 Arabic so they could more easily interact with the Saudi community, but experienced speaking anxiety when trying to do so (Abdelhalim & Alqubayshi, 2020). This was because they were learning the Fusha dialect at the ALI, and the Saudi community speaks the Amaya dialect, making it difficult to communicate (Abdelhalim & Alqubayshi, 2020). As was recommended in the previous paper, instructors at KSA's ALIs should consider leveraging the benefits of L2 in-person communication in the classroom as a way of improving L2 mastery in learners, even if target L2 speech is not the educational goal (Shalan, IN PRESS). Including more L2 interaction in the classroom among the students and instructors would likely decrease anti-integrativeness and increase interest in oral classroom participation, as well as improve learning (Brosh, 2019; Dewaele, 2019; Khajavy et al., 2018; Mahmoodi & Moazam, 2014).

This study has several strengths and weaknesses. While this report focuses specifically on the Saudi integrative instrument, the overall study has produced instruments and subscales that display some evidence of both validity and reliability (although the Admire subscale in the integrativeness instrument was admittedly less reliable) (Shalan, IN PRESS; Shalan et al., IN PRESS). While these new instruments are relatively untested and therefore should serve as the subject of future studies, they provide a foundation for further research in the area. The results of this study also provide insight useful for ALI leadership to develop strategies to increase L2 motivation among Diploma Program learners. However, these studies are preliminary, and these instruments only apply to L2 learners at KSA's ALIs. It is unclear how results from the Saudi integrative instrument should be interpreted if provided to L2 Arabic learners

studying outside of KSA. Determining if these results apply to other L2 Arabic learners should be done through future studies focused on other populations.

In conclusion, an instrument displaying evidence of validity and reliability for measuring sources of L2 motivation arising from integrativeness in L2 Arabic learners at KSA's ALIs was successfully developed and piloted. ALI learners showed high levels of social integrativeness, which correlated with the level of importance they placed on the L2 classroom environment. Since most of the learners were Muslim, their Islamic faith provided a source of motivation to learn Arabic as their LL. Yet, there was a non-trivial level of anti-integrative attitude detected among learners; lack of in-class communication in the L2 per the ALI curriculum design may contribute to this. Since integrativeness has been strongly linked to successful L2 acquisition, KSA's ALIs should consider including more L2 interaction in the classroom, as well as seek other ways to improve levels of integrativeness as a source of L2 motivation.

#### APPENDIX. FINAL PROPOSED SAUDI INTEGRATIVE INSTRUMENT

Please rate your agreement with the following statements about Saudi Arabia where 1 is strongly disagree, 2 is disagree, 3 is neutral, 4 is agree and 5 is strongly agree.

Statement	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree
I want to study Arabic because I am interested in Saudi locations and geography.	1	2	3	4	5
I want to study Arabic because I am interested in Saudi history.	1	2	3	4	5
I want to study Arabic so I can better understand Saudi society.	1	2	3	4	5
I am not interested in learning Arabic to better understand Saudi history.	1	2	3	4	5
Studying Arabic can be important for me because it will enable me to better understand Saudi heritage.	1	2	3	4	5
Studying Arabic can be important for me because I will be able to understand Saudi's different cultural groups.	1	2	3	4	5
I am not interested in understanding Saudi society through learning Arabic.	1	2	3	4	5
I am not interested in learning Arabic to study Saudi heritage.	1	2	3	4	5
I am not interested in learning Arabic so I can better understand Saudi locations and geography.	1	2	3	4	5
I am not interested in studying Arabic to better comprehend Saudi's different cultural groups.	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to meet Saudi people.	1	2	3	4	5
Saudi people are very sociable.	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to know more about Saudi people.	1	2	3	4	5
Studying Arabic can be important to me because it will allow me to be more at ease with Saudis.	1	2	3	4	5
Saudi people are very warm-hearted.	1	2	3	4	5
Saudi people are very creative	1	2	3	4	5

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# Developing the Communication Competencies of Non-Arabic Speakers Using Interactive Kagan Strategies

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**Abstract**—This research aims to verify the effectiveness of Kagan Strategies in developing communicative competence for non-Arabic speakers. To achieve these goals, the researchers prepared three electronic instruments: a questionnaire, interviews, and a pre- and post-test. The researchers used a descriptive survey method and a quasi-experimental method. They took the sample from 50 secondary school students (Vision International School). Students were divided into two groups. The researchers taught the experimental group of students using Kagan's strategies and the control group of students were taught using traditional methods. Their progress was measured using an achievement test. The researchers used sets of statistical ways to arrive at her conclusions. After completing the experiment, the researchers found statistically significant differences between the average achievement of the control set and the experimental set in the achievement test of Arabic skills, grammar, and communicative competence. Using Kagan Strategies was proven more effective than the traditional way in Vision International School in Qatar.

**Index Terms**—developing, communication competencies, non-Arabic speakers, interactive, Kagan strategies

## I. INTRODUCTION

Arabic is a significant language in this world and occupies a central and vital role among world languages, especially in Middle Eastern Countries. The world has recently shown great interest in the Arabic language, and this language has become a focus of global attention, with competence in it requiring one to learn Arabic skills and grammar. Non-Arabic speakers are interested in learning Arabic skills and grammar to master communicative competencies and be able to contact those who speak Arabic, freely without fear and anxiety. Communicative competencies form an important aspect in effective Arabic communication and are of the significant skills that students must acquire for linguistic competency. Teachers who use Kagan's strategies in teaching communicative competencies focus on collaborative learning. Using Kagan's model, the teacher divides the students into groups, and team members work together to accomplish their task.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the literature review related to communicative competencies, schools encounter various problems with the appointment of appropriate Arabic curricula to help students understand the language well, highlight the beauty and importance of the language, and remediate weaknesses in low-level students aside from dealing with their aversion to the language. The essential function of the educational process involves students learning the language, developing skills and abilities, and then applying it in their daily lives. The traditional teaching and learning process uses approaches and methods focused on indoctrination and leads to boredom, lack of enthusiasm, integration, and interaction between students.

The focus, in the traditional process, tends to be centered on the teacher who spends most of his/her time speaking. Students who follow this process, listen and memorize information provided by their teacher without participating in the development of the needed skills for improvement, enhancement of skills, or the ability to understand the relationship between certain concepts and how to resolve problems. The difficulty lies in the means used for communication and the students' inability to use Arabic grammar correctly in expressing their ideas, such as: asking and answering questions, discussing points of views, familiarity with the rules governing speech, and the ability to use the correct grammatical form in different situations because of a vague vision compounded by missing educational programs designed to reliably teach Arabic skills and grammar, as well as the absence of empirical studies. The ensuing disparity between students and teachers has thus widened with differences being encountered between students' educational needs and



teachers' professional capabilities. As a result, we need to adopt a different learning process. We need an engaging and spirited educational process. The researchers intended to reflect and research the most powerful approach to solve the problem. With the help of modern technological techniques and Kagan strategies, the educational process becomes dependent on the student, and the role of the teacher is limited to guiding and helping the students by giving them opportunities to think, speak, manage dialogue, solve problems, and lead them to critical and creative thinking. Given the influential role of communicative competencies in a student's life in- and outside the school, the researchers thought about and used Kagan's strategies in the educational process of teaching the Arabic language to non-Arabic speakers in order to contribute to better teaching and learning of Arabic. The resultant research problem therefore depended on the secondary students' absence of communicative competencies.

The research questions considered were the following:

1. What communicative competencies do non-Arabic speakers need?
2. Do Kagan strategies impact the development of non-Arabic speakers' communicative competencies?
3. How are Kagan's strategies used to teach communicative competencies to non-Arabic speakers?
4. What is the most appropriate form of analysis for non-Arabic-speaking students before and after the application of Kagan strategies?
5. Is there statistically any significant difference in communicative competencies at a semantic level (0.05 as) between the experimental group, taught using Kagan strategies, and the control group, taught utilizing traditional methods?

The development of non-Arabic speakers' communicative competencies was taught through the application of the interactive Kagan strategies using scientific and procedural practicals, with the aim of facilitating improved fluency and linguistic interaction. The relevance for both teachers and researchers are that these strategies can be applied in the field of teaching Arabic to non-Arabic students who speak other languages in both schools and universities in the following ways:

#### A. *For Specialized Teachers Who Teach the Arabic Language to Non-Arabic Speakers*

The aim is to utilize this research as scientific material for teachers, teaching communicative competencies to non-Arabic speakers, to enhance the teaching material for their students, thus making them mentors who are able to empower their students. In the class, students become the thinkers, planners, and preparers. They must be familiar with the different skills of asking questions, managing dialogue and discussion, managing time, and designing diverse educational strategies that are exciting, engaging and easy to use.

#### B. *For Specialized Researchers Who Teach Non-Arabic Speakers in the Arabic Language*

The researchers hope that this research will help others to augment the communicative competencies of their students with the use of Kagan strategies in teaching Arabic skills and grammar to non-Arabic speakers.

#### C. *For Non-Arabic Speakers / Students*

This research is designed to shape the personality of the learners and refine their temporal, spatial, psychological, social, and cultural circumstances, by producing within them a feeling of comfort and diversity in their learning methods thereby increasing their self-confidence and linguistic wealth as a result of the development of their communicative competences. This will allow them to be able to deal with others on a comparative level, employing these learning strategies in real life. It will also enable them to speak Arabic fluently in different contexts, master dialogue, understand others, control their emotions and body language, develop teamwork, take responsibility, solve problems and apply creative thinking.

#### D. *For Schools, Universities, and Academics That Teach Arabic to Non-Arabic Speakers*

The primary aim with the use of these strategies is the creation of an appropriate and different learning environment without boredom and immobility. The learning environment is arranged so that the students can sit in groups, with technology being readily available in an environment equipped with the latest devices and technical means, including the use of optical and acoustic aids – all of which are stimulating and encourage the learning process. In addition, the libraries of schools, universities, and institutions located in the Arab and Western worlds have been enriched by Arabic-language literature for speakers of other languages.

The overall objective in undertaking this research was the production of high-impact research papers to improve communicative competencies within Vision International School's students during the period 2020-2021 by conducting research to acknowledge the effectiveness of Kagan strategies in the communicative competencies of non-Arab secondary students of advanced levels and to recognize the applicable communicative competencies and Kagan strategies.

To fulfill the objectives of the research, the researchers developed a null hypothesis, that is: There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level (0.05) between the mean scores of the experimental set of students, who were taught using Kagan strategies, and the control set of students, who were taught via the usual method of teaching Arabic, in the pre- and post-test.

The research was limited to the following criteria - firstly, the students selected for the research were all secondary

students from grades 9-12, who were non-Arabic speakers at Vision International School in Qatar; secondly, the Qatari Arabic curriculum 2020-2021 for the advanced level was utilized and finally, the research was conducted during the academic year 2020/2021.

From the outset certain terms needed to be clearly defined to provide a well-grounded platform for the study. *Communicative competencies* are comprehensively defined by Savignon as being: "...the ability to function in a truly communicative setting - that is, in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total information input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors" (Savignon, 1972, p. 8). The level of students' mastery of communication skills can generally be summed up in four main aspects, namely the voice aspect involving pronunciation and fluency, the language aspect involving vocabulary, morphology and syntax, the content aspect involving the results of thinking and the aspect of understanding (Siti Salwa et al., 2021).

*Kagan Strategies (Cooperative Learning - CL)* are referred to as structures, as these are strategies that are implemented by strictly adhering to the steps outlined for each activity, to help organize students and their work in cooperative learning teams (Kagan, 2011). The members in each group are responsible not only for independent learning but also for helping their group members learn. CL as a teaching method is student-centered as it helps teachers to put students and their learning in the center by promoting student engagement through cooperative learning activities. CL method is recommended in teaching because students demonstrated better engagement and participation in learning session as compared with traditional learning. The cooperative learning method is also one of the most effective student-centered learning methods used in teaching language classes. It is an updated and effective pedagogic method that should be integrated into classrooms. Previously reviewed studies showed that the use of cooperative learning methods may improve students' knowledge of the language (Kamariah et al., 2020). Students also prefer active involvement in the class, promotion of good rapport among classmates, facilitation of understanding and opportunity to help others understand difficult materials, improvement of communication skills, opportunity for training to be a good leader and follower, and enabling to participate in sharing information, making decision and problem solving (Jusoh et al., 2015).

Four subgroups of linguistic competence have been identified by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), and these were also given due consideration during this research. The first of these is grammatical competence, i.e. the ability to create grammatically correct utterances. The students were expected to be able to discern and apply the following: What words do I use and how do I put them into phrases and sentences?

1. The second sub-skill is sociolinguistic competence, i.e. the ability to create sociolinguistically correct utterances. This would imply the ability to use the correct words and phrases within a particular setting, referencing a specific topic. Additionally, it would encompass the ability to express a specific attitude or emotion, such as courtesy, friendliness, respect or authority and to be able to discern the same as expressed by another person.

2. The third sub-skill, strategic competence, is the ability to solve communication problems as they arise. This would include being able to overcome the challenge of expressing one's ideas, even if the student didn't know the correct name or term of something or perhaps which form of the verb to use.

3. The fourth sub-skill is discourse competence, i.e. the ability to produce cohesion and coherence in utterances. The student needs to develop confidence in expressing ideas, even if he or she is challenged by a limited vocabulary or misgivings regarding certain grammar rules (Figure 1).

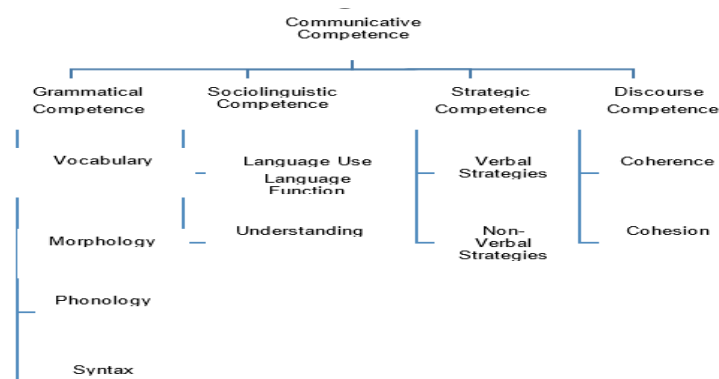


Figure 1. Subskills in Communicative Competencies

Kagan strategies incorporate five basic principles applicable to cooperative learning. The first is *Positive Interdependence* - the cooperative learning classroom promotes positive interdependence in three ways. Positive Interdependence is strengthened when students in a group are assigned common learning material for learning to ensure that all group members understand the material. Thereafter, everyone within the group gets the chance to contribute to the learning. Finally, to promote positive interdependence, each member in the group gets a role to play which, if ignored, impacts the group and prevents them from succeeding.

Secondly, *Individual Accountability* as a principle of CL ensures that each learner is accountable for their own as well as the group’s learning. In other words, as Kagan (2011) puts it, each member is in charge of his or her learning besides the learning of the teammates.

A third way is *Face-to-face Interaction* whereby learners are encouraged to take part in face-to-face interactions through discussion, debate, argument, explanation, and through peer-tutoring. To ensure maximum face-to-face interactions, classrooms are arranged in order to facilitate sharing of learning experiences, ideas, and knowledge, giving feedback, and supporting each other in accomplishing the learning goal (Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

The development of the students’ *Social Skills* is a fourth basic Kagan principle. This is a principle that helps learners experience leadership roles, improve communication skills and practice conflict resolution skills to function effectively as a pair, group, or whole class.

Finally, *Group Processing* is another important principle of CL, where CL activities are designed to help the learners reflect consistently on their learning experiences (Kagan, 2011). Group processing helps teachers to evaluate students’ understanding of a particular topic. Similarly, students assess their own learning by sharing their learning experiences on the topic and on the use of CL structures (Kagan, 2011) (Figures 2 & 3).

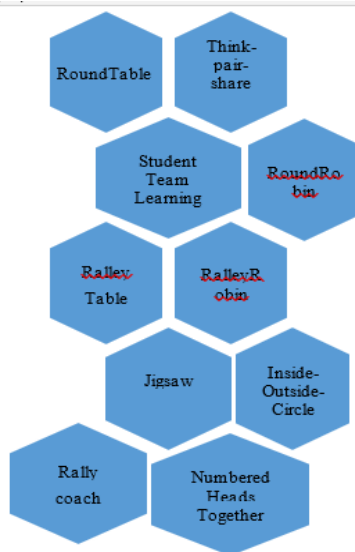


Figure 2 Some Examples of CL Structures

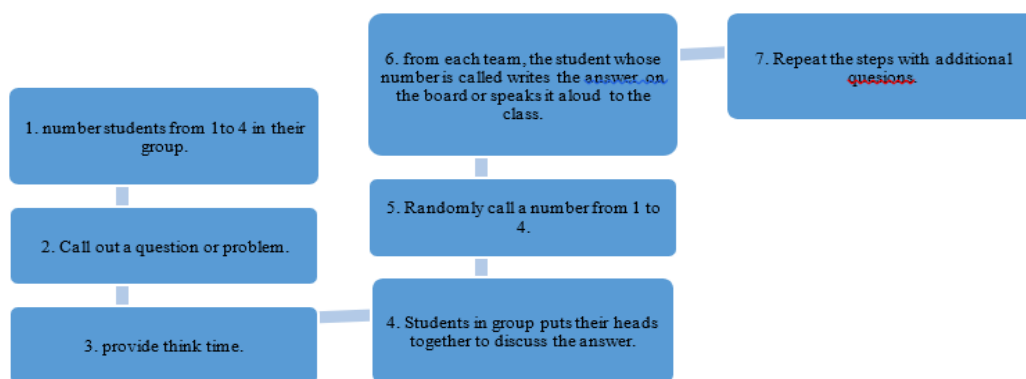


Figure 3 The activity happens in sequence as numbered

Examples of Kagan cooperative learning structures that enhance students’ capacity to process and utilize content are:  
*Time Pair Share*: The teacher gives the students a topic and asks them to think for a minute. The students are divided into pairs. The first student shares his ideas with the second student, who listens for a specified time. Then, the roles are reversed and the listener becomes the speaker, and the speaker is the listener, with the same time frames as before (Kagan, 1994).

*Three-Step Interview*: The teacher tells the students that this strategy will consist of stages and asks them to choose a partner. In the first stage, the students meet their partners by asking enquiring questions. In the second stage, partners invert the roles. In the final stage, members participate, with their partners, in the group (Kagan, 1994).

III. METHODOLOGY

Given the nature of the research and the aims of the researchers, they applied two methods for her research, namely, the descriptive survey method and the experimental method. The experimental method took the form of a quasi-experimental method with experimental and control sets of students evaluated via pre- and post-tests.

In the descriptive survey, information on communicative competencies was collected by referring to Arabic and foreign books. Regarding Kagan's collaborative learning strategies, information was obtained by referring to Spencer Kagan's books, Arabic and foreign literature. The resultant conclusions, based on the literature, led to the selection of the most appropriate and effective method to develop the communicative competences of the learners.

The experimental research took the form of a semi-experimental design with two sets of students. The experimental set consisted of 25 students who were taught using Kagan strategies. The control set also consisted of 25 students taught in the usual, non-collaborative, manner. The pre- and post-tests were applied to both groups. All the participants were students at Vision International School in Qatar and were divided into either the experimental set or the control group.

The researchers determined research terms of both the communicative competencies and Kagan strategies and prepared suitable *Instruments* for the research purposes and hypothesis. The *Instruments* selected were a questionnaire, interview, and pre- and post-test. They thereafter presented the tools to the arbitrators to elicit their opinions, based on their experience, regarding its fitness including the language selection and layout, sentence and paragraph construction, and the questions asked, to prove the indexes of these communicative competencies.

Data was collected on communicative competencies that non-Arabic speakers need, via a Google form questionnaire and presented to a set of competent arbitrators to confirm their opinions. The participants were twelve professors and teachers who taught Arabic to non-native speakers. The majority have Doctorate and Master's degrees in Arabic and non-Arabic languages, from the University of Jordan. The minority had a Bachelor's degree in Arabic and Literature from the University of Jordan. Their work seniority was between ten and thirty years and their work experience were focused on teaching Arabic to non-native speakers. The researchers conducted a five-point Likert scale questionnaire to collect data. They used the five-digit Likert scale "strongly agree" (5), "agree" (4), "neutral" (3), "disagree" (2), and "strongly disagree" (1). The participants entered their responses and the data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted.

Interviews, with a competent set of arbitrators who were academics in universities and schools, were conducted on how to apply Kagan strategies in the teaching of communicative competencies in schools to gauge how successful these strategies, in their opinion, would be in the teaching of Arabic to non-native speakers. The participants were twelve professors and teachers who taught Arabic to non-native speakers. Some have Doctorate degrees and some have Master's degrees from the University of Jordan, in the Arabic language and are experienced in teaching non-native speakers Arabic. The minority had a Bachelor's degree in Arabic and Literature from the University of Jordan. Their work seniority ranges between ten and thirty years. The researchers conducted the interviews to both collect the data and compare the answers and replies. Once the data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted, the researchers identified points of agreement and disagreement on each question.

A test was designed to evaluate the purpose and hypotheses of the research. They constructed the pre- and post-test for non-Arabic speakers in eighteen steps:

1. The researchers defined the theoretical concept of communicative competencies. They relied on Canale's (1980) classification of communicative competencies, which was adapted for the test questions.

2. The researchers presented the communicative competencies to a number of specialists in Arabic teaching methods to verify their authenticity and fitness to research samples and to achieve the indicators for Arabic skills and grammar. After reviewing their opinions and observations, they were confirmed by more than (85%) of the arbitrators.

3. Determining the objective of the test: The Arabic language skill and grammar test strives to measure the level of the secondary, non-Arabic speaking students for the advanced level in communicative competencies.

4. The test content was determined by using the Qatari Arabic curriculum for the advanced level and the researchers defined the specific study units for the students. The study units consisted of practical skills and grammar for the first and second semesters. The test contained reading, writing, speaking, listening skills, and grammar, including grammatical, drainage, and rhetorical.

5. Drafting the test items: To formulate the paragraphs, the researchers reviewed some studies connected to the research object as well as earlier related studies. Thereafter, she prepared forty-seven questions.

6. The initial test form consisted of two types: objective and essay types. It was aimed to measure the four communicative competencies that the researchers had previously identified. It contained reading and listening skills, and the grammar section included forty-seven questions; each question had four options, only one of which was true. Writing skills included a piece of writing on a particular topic, whilst the skill of speaking also included a topic on which they spoke.

7. Preparation of the test instructions for communicative competencies: The researchers formulated the instructions to the questions that contained some information related to the research sample and the test aim. The students were instructed to answer all the questions and not to omit any question without supplying an answer. The answer would be recorded by the student clicking on the letter that indicates the correct answer. The researchers gave one grade for the correct answer and nothing for the wrong one. The essay questions ranged between (0-2) and (0- 3) grades.

8. The test questions, in the first shape, were then submitted to the arbitrators. The test questions of the communicative competencies contained forty-five questions. The researchers presented them to the arbitrators

specialized in Arabic teaching methods and in the field of Arabic for non-native speakers to establish its fitness for the students, to verify the correctness of its formulation and, after receiving feedback from the arbitrators, to make suitable adjustments.

9. Modification of the test according to the opinions of the arbitrators: The arbitrators agreed on the curriculum units included in the test, and there were no modifications around them. They observed the occasion of the test on the level of non-Arabic speakers.

10. After the initial preparation of the test form, the researchers conducted the test on twenty pupils, outside the research sample, from the advanced level of the high school.

11. Correction of the test: The researchers corrected the answers to the questions and allocated a grade per question and each part of the question. The student's grades ranged in reading, writing, speaking, and listening from (0- to 30), and the grammar ranged from (0- to 50).

12. Setting the test time: The researchers found that the appropriate time to apply to the test was forty minutes, because the average time taken by the sample students was approximately forty-five minutes.

13. Final test form: The researchers presented the test to the arbitrators to determine the validity, stability, and test time, and to prepare it for application to the research groups.

14. Determining the clarity of the test questions, including ensuring that the test paragraphs are unambiguous and calculation of the time required to complete the assessment: The researchers applied the test to a research sample of fifty Grade 9 to 12 students and instructed them to, first, read the instructions carefully, then move to the questions and clarify any obscurity. After students had completed their answers, the researchers found that the instructions were clear, all the questions were understandable, and the students had answered all of them. The time allocated to answer all the questions was forty-five minutes.

15. The researchers established an answer key and awarded one grade per correct answer, and no grade for the wrong answer. Blank answers were considered wrong answers. The grades ranged between (0- to 40), and the overall grade for the test was (45).

16. Statistical analysis of the test questions: After applying the test to the research sample, correcting the test questions, and performing the statistical analysis on the two groups, it can be said that the questions of the test were acceptable because they ranged between (0.20-0.80), except for the third question whose difficulty was (0.83), therefore the researchers deleted that question from the test.

17. Verification of the test's validity: The researchers verified the test validity using two types: face validity and internal consistency validity.

18. The final experimental application to the sample of the research: The researchers completed teaching the material to the students and thereafter prepared the students for a post-test. The researchers also conducted statistical analyses to answer research questions and verify hypotheses.

19. Statistical interpretation of the results: The researchers monitored the grades and conducted appropriate statistical treatments for them using (SPSS) Version 19 (V.21). The researchers used the following statistical methods: Dump data in specific tables in preparation for statistical processing, percentages, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation, T-Test for two independent samples, Pearson correlation coefficient, Alpha-Cronbach equation, Guttman equation, Spearman/Brown equation, Coefficients of ease and difficulty, Discrimination factors and View and discuss the study results.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that teaching communicative competencies by using Kagan Strategies helped in numerous ways. These included the following:

1. Gaining students' attention and developing students' communicative competencies.
2. Students were able to dialogue with Arabic speakers fluently and freely.
3. Kagan Strategies changed the learning environment from a static one to a positive learning environment.
4. It encouraged thinking and participation.
5. There was equal participation by all students which encouraged students to think and interact in the class.

The results are presented according to the research objectives and hypotheses, as follows: To establish the results related to the effectiveness of the Kagan strategies in teaching the communicative competencies for two groups. To present valid statistics based on the research objectives and hypotheses, and to present the conclusions, recommendations, and proposals that this research reached.

The main objective was to identify the effectiveness of Kagan's strategies in teaching communicative competencies to non-Arabic speakers, and the table below illustrates the results of the pre- and post-test assessments.

TABLE 1  
RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL SET IN PRE-AND POST-TEST OF THE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES

NO	TEST		FINAL DEGREE	DIFFERENCE
	PRE	POST		
1	46	97	143	-51
2	45	84	129	-39
3	48	68	116	-20
4	45	70	115	-25
5	45	68	113	-23
6	51	65	116	-14
7	46	74	120	-28
8	51	85	136	-34
9	45	98	143	-53
10	45	71	116	-26
11	46	85	131	-39
12	45	61	106	-16
13	53	85	138	-32
14	47	97	144	-50
15	47	88	135	-41
16	45	97	142	-52
17	45	71	116	-35
18	48	83	131	-35
19	51	64	115	-13
20	52	85	137	-33
21	46	74	120	-28
22	46	83	129	-37
23	43	81	124	-38
24	52	70	122	-18
25	44	76	120	-28
	1177	1980	3157	-797

The sum of the students' grades, as illustrated above, in the experimental set for the pre-test was (1177), whereas for the post-test, it became (1980). The final score was (3157), and the average difference between the two tests was (-797).

TABLE 2  
RESULTS OF THE CONTROL SET IN PRE-AND POST-TEST OF THE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES

NO	TEST		FINAL DEGREE	DIFFERENCE
	PRE	POST		
1	48	71	119	-23
2	45	82	127	-37
3	51	68	119	-16
4	45	71	116	-26
5	41	67	108	-26
6	53	67	120	-14
7	46	74	120	-28
8	51	82	133	-31
9	42	75	117	-33
10	45	72	117	-27
11	46	81	127	-35
12	45	62	107	-17
13	47	82	129	-35
14	47	75	122	-28
15	41	86	127	-45
16	45	77	122	-32
17	44	73	117	-11
18	48	82	130	-29
19	51	64	115	-13
20	52	80	132	-28
21	45	72	117	-27
22	46	79	125	-33
23	43	82	125	-39
24	52	62	114	-10
25	44	72	116	-28
	1163	1858	3021	-671

The evidence above reveals that the sum of the students' grades of the control set in the pre-test was (1163), whereas in the post-test, it became (1858). The final score was (3021), and the average difference between the two tests was (-671).

TABLE 3  
RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL SETS IN PRE-AND POST-TEST OF THE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES

TWO GROUPS	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	FINAL DEGREE	DIFFERENCE	AVERAGE DIFFERENCE
EXPERIMENTAL	1177	1980	3157	-797	27536
CONTROL	1163	1858	3021	-671	18775

The table above shows that in the pre-test, the grades sum of the experimental set was (1177) while the control set was (1163). In the post-test, the grades sum of the first set was (1980) while the second, control set was (1858). In the final grade, the grade sum of the experimental students was (3157) while the control set was (3021). The difference between the first group of students was (-797) while the control set was (-671). The average difference between the first group of students was (27536) while the control set was (18775). This illustrated that the grades of the experimental set were higher than the grades of the control set. The performance level of the first set of students was better than that of the second set of students.

TABLE 4  
RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL SETS IN THE POST-TEST OF THE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES

No	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP			CONTROL GROUP		
	POST-TEST	ARITHMETIC MEAN	SQUARE ROOT	POST-TEST	ARITHMETIC MEAN	SQUARE ROOT
1	97	19.4	376.35	71	14.2	201.64
2	84	16.8	282.24	82	16.4	268.96
3	68	13.6	184.95	68	13.6	184.95
4	70	14	196	71	14.2	201.64
5	68	13.6	184.95	67	13.4	179.56
6	65	13	169	67	13.4	179.56
7	74	14.8	219.04	74	14.8	338.55
8	85	17	289	82	16.4	268.96
9	98	19.6	384.16	75	15	225
10	71	14.2	201.64	72	14.4	207.36
11	85	17	289	81	16.2	262.44
12	61	12.2	148.83	62	12.4	153.76
13	85	17	289	82	16.4	268.96
14	97	19.4	376.35	75	15	225
15	88	17.6	309.76	86	17.2	295.84
16	97	19.4	376.35	77	15.4	237.16
17	71	14.2	201.64	73	14.6	231.61
18	83	16.6	275.56	82	16.4	268.96
19	64	12.8	163.84	64	12.8	163.84
20	85	17	289	80	16	256
21	74	14.8	219.04	72	14.4	207.36
22	83	16.6	275.56	79	15.8	249.64
23	81	16.2	262.44	82	16.4	268.96
24	70	14	196	62	12.4	153.76
25	76	15.2	231.04	72	14.4	207.36
	1980	396	6390.74	1858	371.65	5697.83

The researchers wanted to verify the hypothesis that suggested that statistically there were no variances at the value level (0.05) in the pre- and post-test for the communicative competencies between the average grades of the experimental teaching method, using Kagan strategies, and the control method, using the traditional Arabic teaching style.

The researchers used (SPSS) program to draw her conclusions. The arithmetic means of the students in the first set equaled (31.88) while the second set equal (26.84). A standard deviation of the first group's grades was equal to (11.625), while the standard deviation of the second group's grades was (9.049).

TABLE 5  
STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL SETS IN A TEST OF THE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES

TWO GROUPS	No	ARITHMETIC MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DEGREE OF FREEDOM	T TEST		STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE AT (0.05)
					VALUE T	SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL	
EXPERIMENTAL	25	31.88	11.625	24	24.99	0.000	SIGNIFICANT
CONTROL	25	26.84	9.049		21.020		

As is evident from the above, the arithmetic mean in the students of the first set equals (31.88) while the second set equals (26.84). The standard deviation of the first group's grades was equal to (11.625), while the standard deviation of the second group's grades was (9.049). The degree of freedom is 24. The (T-Test) at the significance level (0.000) in the students of the first set equaled (24.99) while in the second set, it equaled (21.020).

The results are not compatible with the null hypothesis. The researchers found clear differences between the students

who studied in the modern, collaborative way, using Kagan strategies, and those who studied traditionally.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

In light of the above findings of the researchers, she draws the following conclusions: First: Kagan strategies have proven their effectiveness in teaching communication competencies to non-Arabic speaking students. Second: The researchers were able to apply Kagan's strategies when teaching communicative competencies to non-Arabic-speaking students due to class size and the students' ability to move freely in it. Third: Schools should reduce the number of students in the classroom to facilitate the task of the teacher and students. Additionally, schools also should provide training and workshops to the teachers on Kagan strategies. These strategies engage, encourage, and train the required communicative skills to develop learners' communicative competencies. Fourth: Teachers should be encouraged to use Kagan strategies for teaching Arabic in secondary schools dependent on the available capabilities inside the classroom. Fifth: The abilities of the students, to whom Kagan collaborative strategies are applied and who comprehend and understand the communicative competencies, is greater than that of students who study traditionally. Sixth: Students who used Kagan's strategies were able to think and express their opinion because they had enough time for dialogue and discussion with other students. Seventh: At the end of the experiment, the experimental group of students were able to rely on themselves and break the barrier of fear and shyness to independently solve the problems they faced in the classroom, without resorting to outside assistance. Eighth: The non-Arabic speakers were able to speak fluently on different topics with the natives in- and outside the school.

#### VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings of the researchers, they recommend the following: First, teachers should be directed to teach communicative competencies, in all stages, using Kagan strategies because of its effectiveness in achieving and improving communicative competencies in Arabic. Second: Training courses should be conducted to train teachers on how to prepare and implement the activities of the communicative competencies using Kagan strategies, and to clarify their effectiveness in developing communicative competencies, including Arabic skills and grammar. Third: A guide needs to be prepared for teachers to help them to use Kagan strategies in teaching communicative competencies to the students. Fourth: The communicative competencies need to be included in Arabic textbooks for non-Arabic speakers at the different levels of education. Fifth: Schools should provide enough space, by reducing the number of students in the classroom, to allow students to move freely when applying Kagan's strategies in the learning process.

#### VII. PROPOSITIONS

In the current research, the researchers suggest conducting the following future studies: First, conduct similar studies in the effectiveness of Kagan strategies in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers at different levels. Second, study the development of communicative competencies for different levels. Third, provide Arabic language curricula for non-native speakers, with communicative competencies, for all levels. Fourth, a separate department within schools to develop curricula for non-Arabic speakers needs to be established.

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# Using Conceptual Metaphors to Bridge the Gap Between the Receptive and Productive Competence of Idiomatic Expressions: The Case of Jordanian EFL Learners

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**Abstract**—The present study aims at narrowing the evident gap between the receptive and productive competence of idiomatic expressions of Jordanian EFL learners through the use of explicit CM-inspired instruction. 130 Jordanian EFL learners participated in the study and were separated into a control group that received no instruction in CMs and an experimental group that received a CM-based instruction. A multiple-choice test and a completion test were designed to measure the receptive and productive knowledge of students. A pre-test and post-test were conducted to measure the improvement of the idiomatic competence of students. The results of the pre-tests and the post-tests show that Jordanian EFL learners' productive competence can be developed to match that of receptive knowledge using CM-based instruction. The study is expected to provide EFL instructors and curriculum designers with insights on how to tackle the challenges posed by these figurative expressions.

**Index Terms**—idioms, EFL learners, CM-based instruction, conceptual metaphor theory, figurative language

## I. INTRODUCTION

There is a lack of consensus among scholars regarding what constitutes an idiom (Grant & Bauer, 2004; Künür & Çimen, 2009; Simpson & Mendis, 2003). However, despite these disputed notions of idiomaticity, all agree that an idiom is a multi-word unit whose total meaning cannot be derived from the literal meanings of its constituents. Therefore, it seems natural that idioms have always been attested to pose challenges to EFL learners globally. This has been attributed to their variable and opaque nature (Abu-Joudeh, 2021; Al-Houti & Aldaihani, 2018; Aladel, 2014; Cieśllicka, 2006; Kim, 2013; Sadeghi et al., 2010; Saleh & Zakaria, 2013; Taki & Soghady, 2013; Vasiljevic, 2011). The decomposability of idioms and their rich culture-specific nature have also attracted the attention of many scholars in the field (Al-Mohizea, 2000; Gibbs, 1986, Gibbs et al., 1989; Laufer, 2000). In Gibbs (1986), subjects were asked to read stories and make a sentence classification judgment for sentences that could be literal, idiomatic or unrelated paraphrase of the last sentence in each story. The results indicated that the figurative meaning of an idiom is processed before the literal meaning and that the literal meaning is activated only when the idiomatic meaning is not strengthened by context.

Other studies have focused on crosslinguistic influence as a significant factor in the acquisition of L2 idioms. Laufer (2000), for example, examined whether avoidance of English idioms is determined by the degree of similarity to L1. 4 types of idioms which represented 4 degrees of L1 (Hebrew)-L2 (English) similarity were used in this study. The results highlighted a significant association between avoidance of idioms and partial formal similarity. Abu-Joudeh (2021) examined whether L1 (Arabic) transfer has any significant effect on EFL Learners' comprehension of L2 (English)

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color idioms. The results confirmed reported findings that similarity to L1 may facilitate the processing of idioms. Moreover, it has been found that idioms that have different conceptual bases and different linguistic forms in the two languages were the most challenging. This suggests that lack of awareness of the sociocultural context that motivates the generation of such expressions can discourage learners during the learning process. The way learners perceive the target language culture profoundly affects their attitude towards learning the language itself and thus the progress they achieve. The motivation for conducting the present study was the difficulties experienced by Jordanian EFL learners when using idioms. The study specifically aims to answer the following research questions:

(1) To what extent does the use of conceptual metaphor-based instruction enhance the ability of Jordanian EFL learners to recognize the target idioms?

(2) To what extent does the application of conceptual metaphor-based instruction facilitate Jordanian EFL learners' production of the target idioms?

It is proposed that the explicit inclusion of CMs, shortly referred to as the CM-inspired instruction, in a language syllabus will significantly facilitate the recognition and production of these figurative expressions.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### A. Conceptual Metaphors

Metaphors are best defined as expressions used to comprehend a conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain. A conceptual metaphor refers to a set of fixed correspondences between entities in a source domain and entities in a target domain. These correspondences are typically represented as TARGET-DOMAIN IS SOURCE-DOMAIN or TARGET-DOMAIN AS SOURCE-DOMAIN, with capitalized letters serving as mnemonics to label the mappings (Lakoff, 1993, p. 207). The source domain is a conceptual domain from which metaphors are drawn to understand another conceptual domain. The target domain, in contrast, refers to the conceptual area to which this metaphor applies. Accordingly, LOVE, ANGER, ARGUMENTS, LIFE, IDEAS and many others are target domain, whereas WAR, HEAT, JOURNEYS, BUILDINGS and many others are source domains. In the idiomatic expression *burn with a low blue flame*, the domain of fire is used to understand the domain of anger. The conceptual metaphor that underlies this idiom is ANGER IS FIRE. It is thus assumed that the conceptual metaphor provides the semantic motivation in which the idiomatic meaning of the expression is grounded. Kövecses (2001) states that the ANGER IS FIRE metaphor is presented in a way that brings together the source and target domains, making them explicit and foregrounded. Additionally, the idiomatic expressions associated with the metaphor are presented alongside the source and target, suggesting that they are interconnected and rooted in the conceptual metaphor (p. 91). The assumption is that the introduction of conceptual metaphors has provided a more systematic approach to the teaching of idiomatic expressions. This is the motivation behind conducting the present study. It aims at employing conceptual metaphors to bridge the gap between the receptive and productive competence of Jordanian EFL learners.

### B. Using Conceptual Metaphors to Teach Idioms in an EFL Context

The claim that adopting a cognitivist framework to teaching idioms in an EFL context can have a facilitating effect has been widely held by many researchers. EFL learners are generally unaware of the conceptual motivations for English idiomatic expressions. They usually learn figurative expressions via rote memorization which has been proven to be ineffective. In effect, much research has been conducted which focus on the cognitivist approach to the study of idioms (Bailey, 2003; Boers, 2000; Boers et al., 2004; Charteris-Black, 2002; Giora, 2003; Kövecses & Szabó 1996; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim that concepts govern the way we pattern our thoughts.

They argue that our thought processes are not solely intellectual; they also heavily influence our daily actions and behavior. Our concepts shape our perception, how we explore the world around us, and how we interact with others. Our conceptual system is thus crucial in shaping our everyday realities (p. 3).

Therefore, it is suggested that familiarity with the conceptual system of the target language can facilitate learning idioms by EFL learners. To this effect, Kövecses (2003) emphasizes that the theory of conceptual metaphors is becoming a valuable resource for both teachers and students in the teaching and learning of foreign languages (p. 311). Several studies have adopted a CM-based approach to the teaching of idioms (Doiz & Elizari, 2003; Kövecses, 2003, 2012; Kämür & Çimen, 2009; Vasiljevic, 2011). Other studies have claimed that a cross-cultural study of the conceptual systems of the target and the source languages to reveal overlapping conceptual metaphorical expressions can enhance EFL learners' acquisition of idioms (Chen, 2010; Chen & Lai, 2013; Danesi, 1994; Deignan et al., 1997; Jiang, 2017; Pham & To, 2019).

Danesi (1994) points out that integrating figurative language in the Italian language classroom may help learners achieve native-like competence. He explains that the unnaturalness of the student discourse can be overcome by developing their conceptual fluency. This can be achieved by designing a conceptually-based syllabus that enables students to find "conceptually appropriate target-language models for the representation of experience" (p. 453).

Kämür and Çimen (2009) reported similar results. They explored the effects of using conceptual metaphors in teaching idioms to Turkish EFL learners. A 28-item achievement test was developed and administered to the target group. These items included tasks such as completing sentences, identifying key words in metaphors, and answering multiple-choice and matching questions. The results showed a significant progress both receptively and productively.

Participants demonstrated metaphor awareness and tended to use the target idioms when talking to their teacher and to each other.

In contrast, Pham and To (2019) reported evident development of receptive but not productive competence of idioms. They conducted a quasi-experiment to examine the acquisition of metaphor-related idioms by Vietnamese learners. The results have revealed that the CM-inspired method of instruction exhibits a long-term advantage over rote learning. They concluded that the application of the CM-instruction must be used in parallel to other methods of teaching to enhance learners' idiomatic knowledge. Vasiljevic (2011) examined whether understanding the semantic motivation underlying idioms can facilitate retention and recall by Japanese learners. The participants were divided into two groups: EG and CG. The EG received the CM-based instruction, while the CG was taught idioms using the traditional method. The results provide further support to the claim that developing metaphor awareness can enhance learners' figurative competence. Furthermore, it has also been found that presenting conceptual metaphors in L1 makes the mapping between the idiomatic expressions and the conceptual metaphors transparently clear.

### C. Acquisition of Idioms in the Jordanian EFL Context

Within the Jordanian EFL context, the acquisition of idioms has gained the attraction of many scholars (Abu-Joudeh, 2021; Alfaqara, 2021; Alrishan & Smadi, 2015; Smadi & Alrishan, 2015). Alfaqara (2021), for example, used a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale to investigate the attitudes of Jordanian EFL learners towards learning idioms, the challenges they encounter and the strategies they employ when learning idioms. The participants of the study showed positive attitudes towards learning English idioms. Furthermore, many difficulties were considered as inevitable obstacles in learning these expressions. These include lack of L1 equivalence and semantic opacity.

It is observed, however, that most studies of idiomatic competence conducted in the Jordanian EFL context aimed at identifying errors made by students when using these expressions in their academic writing (Alrishan & Smadi, 2015; Alkarazoun, 2015; Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2016) or when translating them from English into Arabic (Bataneh & Bataneh, 2002; Smadi & Alrishan, 2015). Few studies have attempted to address how these difficulties can be overcome to facilitate the process of learning English. Therefore, the present study suggests that presenting Jordanian EFL learners with CM-inspired instruction would help develop their comprehension and production of idioms. Moreover, it is proposed that the apparent gap between their receptive and productive competence can be narrowed by raising their awareness of the semantic motivation underlying idioms.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### A. Instrument

Two 20-item tests were designed by the researchers to evaluate the learners' receptive and productive competence of idiomatic expressions: a multiple-choice test and a completion test. The multiple-choice test aimed at assessing the receptive competence of the participants, while the completion test aimed at assessing their productive competence. The idioms along with their contextual meanings were taken from an authoritative idiom dictionary: *McGraw-Hill's Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs*. The two tests were administered before and after the implementation of the teaching method to see whether they had any effect on enhancing students' receptive and productive competence of idiomatic expressions. Responses of the students in the pre-tests and post-tests were then analysed using the SPSS software.

### B. Procedure

In four sessions, the two groups were separately exposed to two different teaching methods. The EG students were provided with a CM-based instruction where the instructors discussed the conceptual mappings and the semantic motivation underlying the target idioms. For example, the idiomatic expression *on fire* was explained by the conceptual metaphor *INTHUISAIM IS FIRE* and so on. The CG students, in contrast, were taught the target idioms using the traditional method where they were required to memorize contextualized idioms along with their meanings.

To teach idioms to the EG, the researchers designed four lessons that targeted 30 idioms relevant to the themes "ANGER IS FIRE, ENTHUSIASM IS FIRE, ENERGY IS FIRE, MONEY IS A LIQUID and ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER". They were first introduced to the notion of conceptual metaphors and then were presented with the target idioms along with the semantic motivation underlying them. In the first session, for example, students were given an introduction about conceptual metaphors and how idioms can be generated out of such conceptual metaphors. Then they were given examples that try to establish a mapping between a concept such as ANGER and the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS FIRE. The following fire-related idioms were used to exemplify this mapping:

#### ANGER IS FIRE METAPHOR

I'm really *burned up* at Bob's behavior

She was breathing *fire*.

He's *hot* under the collar.

She added *fuel* to the *fire*

The boss is *gunning for* you.

His eyes *flamed with* resentment when he heard Sally's good news.

Idioms from the five source domains were presented to the CG in four sessions but through rote learning and no reference to their underlying conceptual metaphors was made. The idioms along with their meanings were explained to the students using example sentences in English and sometime equivalent idioms in Arabic. For example, of the conceptual metaphor ENTHUSIASM IS FIRE, the students were introduced to the following examples:

Fred is *on fire* in his new job. He'll get promoted in no time.

You had better *light a fire under* your staff. Either that or we will lay off some of them.

The factory is *hitting on all cylinders* to finish the orders on time.

The idioms were highlighted in italics and students were encouraged to guess their meanings. After completing the four sessions, the students were given the post-tests to measure their retention and recall of the target idioms. Responses were then analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### C. Participants

130 first-year students participated in the study. All were native speakers of Arabic majoring in English language and literature, the Hashemite University. At this academic level, students were enrolled in introductory courses that aim at developing their language proficiency. The participants were divided into two homogeneous groups: control (CG) and experimental (EG). Both groups received 4 sessions of instruction in which they were introduced to the same target idioms. The EG was taught using the CM-inspired instruction, whereas the CG was exposed to rote learning. In all learning methods, the target idioms were presented over a two-week period with 6-8 idioms covered in each session.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study aimed at investigating whether the CM-based instruction has any significant effect on improving the receptive and productive idiomatic competence of Jordanian EFL learners as opposed to the traditional method, rote memorization. A multiple-choice test and a completion test were administered to two groups of students (CG and EG) as pre-tests and post-tests to evaluate their receptive and productive competence before and after the application of the teaching method. To examine whether the CM-inspired instruction facilitated the students' receptive competence of the target idioms, the descriptive statistics of the multiple-choice pre- and post-tests for both groups were calculated as is shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE STUDENTS' SCORES ON THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST IN THE PRE-AND POST-TEST ADMINISTRATIONS

Group	N	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Adjusted mean	Standard Error
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation		
CG	60	7.80	4.25	10.45	2.76	10.48	0.319
EG	70	7.96	4.03	15.34	2.77	15.32	0.295

As demonstrated in Table 1 above, the mean score for the experimental group in the pre-test was 7.96 and the SD was 4.03, and for the control group, the mean score was 7.80 and the SD was 4.25. This suggests that there were no significant differences between the EG and the CG on the multiple-choice pre-test. It also shows that the overall performance of the participants on the multiple-choice post-test was much higher than their performance on the multiple-choice pre-test. However, it is clear that the EG outperformed the CG with a 15.34 mean score. Additionally, Table 1 illustrates a disparity in the adjusted mean scores between the experimental group and the control group, indicating the superior performance of the experimental group. To gain a better understanding of the results, ANCOVA was conducted to determine if there was statistically significant difference between the scores of the EG and CG based on the teaching method, as demonstrated in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2  
ANCOVA OF THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE POSTTEST SCORES

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pre-test	206.988	1	206.988	33.979	0.00
Teaching Method	757.954	1	757.954	124.426	0.00*
Error	773.633	127	6.092		0.495
Corrected total	1754.069	129			

Table 2 above demonstrates that there is a statistical difference at the significant level of ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the adjusted mean scores of the overall performance on the post-test. The experimental group had a higher adjusted mean score (15.32) compared to the control group (10.38). The table also illustrates the effect size of the CM-based instruction on the multiple-choice post-test, as determined by the Eta-squared statistic applied to the test results. It reveals an Eta-squared value (0.495), indicating that the CM-based teaching method accounted for approximately (49.5%) of the variance observed in the multiple-choice post-test. This finding supports the main assumption of the present study that the inclusion of the metaphor-inspired method of instruction in an EFL context effectively enhances the receptive competence of learners. It also lends support to similar findings reported by Vasiljevic (2011), Kövecses

(2012) and Jiang (2017) that adopting a metaphor-based instruction to the teaching of idiomatic expressions improved participants' retention and recall.

The second question of the study examined whether there is any significant effect of the teaching method on the productive competence of the students. To answer this question, the means and standard deviations of the students' scores in the completion pre- and post-tests, along with their adjusted means and standard errors were calculated, as shown in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE STUDENTS' SCORES ON THE COMPLETION TEST IN THE PRE-AND POST-TEST ADMINISTRATIONS

Group	N	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Adjusted Mean	Standard Error
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation		
CG	60	6.75	2.55	7.53	1.94	7.34	0.382
EG	70	5.27	3.27	12.44	3.65	12.61	0.353

Table 3 above shows that the mean score for the experimental group in the pre-test was 5.27 and the SD was 3.27, and for the control group, the mean score was 6.75 and the SD was 2.55. Moreover, the table demonstrates a significant difference in the adjusted mean scores between the experimental group and the control group, with the experimental group having a higher advantage. For a better interpretation of the results, ANCOVA was used to analyze the students' scores based on the teaching method, as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4  
ANCOVA OF THE COMPLETION POSTTEST SCORES

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Pre-test	66.277	1	66.277	7.838	0.006	
Teaching Method	843.788	1	843.788	99.784	0.00*	0.440
Error	1073.927	127	8.456			
Corrected total	1918.931	129				

Table 4 above indicates that there is a statistical difference at the significant level of ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the adjusted mean scores of the overall performance in the post-test in favor of the experimental group. The experimental group, who learned idioms using the CM-based method, had higher scores compared to the control group, who learned idioms using the traditional method. The adjusted mean score for the experimental group was 12.61, while the control group had the adjusted mean score of 7.34. Furthermore, Table 4 displays the effect size of the CM-based method on the post test. This effect size was determined by applying the Eta-squared to the test results. The table shows an Eta-squared value of (0.44), indicating that (44.0%) of the variance in the completion post-test can be attributed to the implementation of the metaphor-based method of instruction.

The results of the data obtained provide support for a cognitive approach to the teaching of idiomatic expressions. It seems that raising students' awareness of the semantic motivation behind the linguistic choices in idiomatic expressions enhances their ability to retain and use them. This suggests that focusing on the intricacies of form does not always lead to effective learning. The overall performance of students exposed to the CM-grounded instruction on both the receptive and productive posttests has improved significantly. However, it was evident that students' scores on the productive knowledge posttest were not as high as their scores on the receptive knowledge posttest. Despite the relative progress in the productive competence of students exposed to the CM-based instruction, it is obvious that the gap between their ability to retain and use idioms was narrowed.

The findings of the study also support similar results reported by many studies that rote learning is not always efficacious in EFL teaching and learning (Deignan et al., 1997; Boers, 2000; Jiang, 2017; K m r &  imen, 2009; Khonbi & Sadeghi, 2017). According to Khonbi and Sadeghi (2017), EFL instructors must be creative when presenting learners with figurative language. They proposed that the use of role-plays followed by movies or idiom sentence uses can significantly enhance learners' idiomatic competence.

## V. CONCLUSION

The present study attempted to offer insights into how to narrow the evident gap between the receptive and productive idiomatic competence of Jordanian EFL learners. It has been suggested that adopting a cognitivist view to teaching idioms can be significantly influential. The results revealed that the inclusion of CMs in a language syllabus in a foreign language context can significantly enhance the receptive and productive competence of learners, compared to the traditional method. Furthermore, it has been observed that students were noticeably eager to learn the target idioms using an unorthodox method of instruction in the Jordanian EFL context.

Therefore, the researchers suggest the following to facilitate the acquisition of idioms by EFL learners:

1. The integration of conceptually metaphor-based idioms in a foreign language context can be used to highlight the similarities between the two languages and thus facilitates the acquisition of these culture-specific expressions.

2. Dictionaries designed for EFL learners should introduce idioms grouped under conceptual metaphors to facilitate language learning and acquisition.
3. When teaching idioms to EFL learners, instructors are advised to begin with those that show similarities to L1 idioms. This is expected to facilitate the processing of these figurative expressions and motivates them to move to more difficult ones.
4. Raising Students' awareness of idiomatic competence as an inevitable part in the learning process can positively increase their motivation for learning idioms.
5. Students should be exposed to real-life and authentic contexts that motivate the use of these figurative expressions in real communication since the ability to use figurative language is considered an inevitable aspect of native-like proficiency (Boers et al., 2006).

To conclude, cognitive instruction does have a significant impact on idiom acquisition. Therefore, it is recommended that EFL instructors adopt this method when presenting learners with these figurative expressions. Moreover, providing learners with authentic contexts can boost their ability to acquire figurative language. Authentic materials can be an effective strategy for students to gain a realistic understanding of how figurative expressions are used in different contexts, ultimately helping them to achieve native-like proficiency.

## VI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The design of the present study was quantitative, future research can adopt qualitative designs such as interviews and observations to give a better account of how learners perceive and use idiomatic expressions when exposed to metaphor-inspired instruction as opposed to rote learning.

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# The Language and Thainess of Thai Food Products on an E-Commerce Platform

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**Abstract**—The term ‘food products from Thailand’ was searched on the biggest e-commerce platform, Amazon. 140 Thai food products from Thailand were presented and fell into four categories: rice products (2), canned and instant food (19), snacks and candies (35), and food ingredients and seasonings (84); and 29 Thai food products from other countries were also found in three categories: rice products (6), canned and instant food (6), and food ingredients and seasonings (17). Thai brand names were the most found (53.52%) followed by English brand names (29.58%). In terms of language patterns, English dominance showed in the use of Thai-English (50.01%) together with the use of English only (23.26%) and English-Chinese (1.16%). Thainess was mostly presented with pictures of Thai food dish along with fresh vegetables, herbs, and spices (86.73%). Notably, certain food products with clear and transparent plastic packaging were presented without any pictures, but the products themselves. Although rice is one of the major food exports from Thailand, only 2 brand names of rice products from Thailand were found compared to 6 brands of rice products from other countries. Notably, a name of Thai place was found in a food product exported from other country.

**Index Terms**—brand naming labels, E-commerce, language patterns, Thainess, Thai food products

## I. INTRODUCTION

The project of ‘Thai Kitchen to the World’ was started in year 2002 to affirm the positioning of Thailand as a major food export country with high quality standards. According to Trading Economics (n.d.), Minister of Commerce announced that in November 2022 Thailand exports mainly manufactured goods, and the important products are electronics, vehicles, machinery and equipment, and foodstuffs. Food products of Thailand are exported to the world in various kinds and forms.

From Thailand Country Profile (n.d.), Thailand is one of the world’s leading agricultural suppliers. 21% of Thailand’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the food and beverage industry which is the country's third largest industry. Rice is one of the major food exports, and the value of Thai food exports was US\$32.7 billion in 2020.

‘Discover Thainess’ campaign was first introduced by Tourism Authority of Thailand as the nation’s asset and a unique brand for Thailand (TAT, 2015). There are seven unique aspects of Thainess: (1) Thai Food, (2) Thai Arts, (3) The Thai way of life; (4) Thai Wellness; (5) Thai Festivals; (6) Thai Wisdom and (7) Thai Fun. For Jocuns (2020), Thainess was presented as a commodity and something that could be consumed by Thai tourism videos. Thai experience of food and places was displayed for authenticity of Thainess.

In terms of global market, Amazon.com, the international and biggest e-commerce website, is a platform to serve customers worldwide. Amazon company is considered as the leader of electronic commerce in the contemporary world (Alshmrani, 2021). Therefore, Thai food products available on Amazon.com have positive prospects in the global market. Moreover, consumers have changed their behaviors due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They are more cautious on necessities and have spent more at online through e-commerce platforms. Quick and convenient food consumption has been increased, so ready-to-eat products are in demand (Sirikeratikul, 2022).

Based on the two campaigns of the Thai government, ‘Thai Kitchen to the World’ and ‘Discover Thainess’; the research study focuses on how Thai food products present the food products and Thainess in global market on Amazon.com, and answer the three research questions:

1. What languages do Thai food products present their brand names?
2. Which language patterns are used in Thai food products?
3. How do exported Thai food products present Thainess?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research studies related to the present study can be reviewed into two aspects: the language of food products labels and brand naming as well as Thainess.

### A. *Languages of Food Product Labels and Brand Naming*

Research studies related to languages, brand naming, and label are explained here.

Boonpaisarnsatit (2011) explained that name was an identity label. Name also indicates ethnicity and self-representative. Naming is a kind of cultural process of labelling. In a naming process, good meaning of a name is the first priority.

In terms of translation, Mat (2014) examined brand and food label products on translation from English to Arabic. Findings showed that food brand names were not translated into Arabic at all. Translation method was parallel translation or word to word from English to Arabic. Transliteration was also found for certain food ingredients.

For Abdulrahman (2015), food product labels work as an advertising tool, and transliteration was the most used strategy to render brand names. Moreover, pictures are important and need to be presented with the food products.

Boonpaisarnsatit and Srioutai (2012) examined 175 exported food products that fell into five categories: rice products, frozen and chilled food, canned and instant food, snacks and candies, and food ingredients and seasonings. Findings on food product naming showed that names were presented by using translation, transliteration, English only, and hybrid method. Translation method was mostly used for rice products as well as food ingredients and seasoning. English only method was mostly used for frozen and chilled food, canned and instant food, and snacks and candies. Transliteration was found in every category but seems not to be significant.

Snodin et al. (2017) investigated names of Thai local community products namely One Tambon One Product (OTOP) in five product categories: food, drinks, clothing and accessories, handicrafts and ornaments, and inedible herbs. Only Thai names were mostly used in all five product categories. English names and the mix of Thai-English were also found.

Noosud (2019) collected 658 business names in Thailand and found that English name was used the most (51%) followed by code-mixed name (31%) and Thai name (18%). Patterns of English usage were the mix of English and Thai words, and a name modified by Thai or English words.

### *B. Thainess*

Thainess could be perceived as authenticity for foreigners who lack or have limits of Thai experience. Watanasin (2012) found that Thai language as well as name and designs were recognized as authenticity and exotic for Americans. Thai food was perceived as healthier and lighter food with less fat and freshly-cooked with vegetables.

Nakasiri and Ratchatakorntakoon (2018) found that Thainess was communicated in six methods of Thai food product called Phad Thai Kit. The six methods were 1) the abundance of food and flavors by using colorful and tempting pictures of food; 2) the bond between the system of relatives by addressing the brand name as relatives i.e. aunt or mom ; 3) freedom and simplicity with the the image of on-the-go food ; 4) artistry and neatness with the pictures of fine Thai porcelains; 5) affinity with nature by using brown and green colors; and 6) Siam in the past with Thai costumes. The methods of freedom and simplicity as well as Siam in the past were mostly perceived as Thainess by foreign tourists.

For Najpinij (2012), there were three characteristics of Thainess in Thai restaurants in five-star hotels in Bangkok: Thai art and architecture, Thai service style, and culinary practices.

Thainess as investigated by Kongpolphrom (2018) presented in the use of anthroponymic generic terms of Thailand and Thai and the pronoun uses of 'we' and 'us' to create the solidarity of the Thais and names of places which were different tour sites in Thailand such as markets, temples, rivers, and beaches.

The reviewed research studies help to analyze the data of the present research study as follows:

1. Brand name refers to the use of translation and transliteration of Thai name of the product
2. The use of picture or name of different places in Thailand
3. Thai artistry and Thai costumes on the product.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### *A. Data Collection*

Amazon.com, the international and biggest e-commerce website, was implemented for the study. The term 'food products from Thailand' was used to search on the website and 390 products were presented during the time of data collection in mid of June to mid of July 2022. Images of Thai food products were downloaded from the amazon website.

### *B. Data Processing*

The images of the collected food product brand names were classified into 5 food categories: rice products, frozen and chilled food, canned and instant food, snacks and candies, and food ingredients and seasonings. Labels of the food product names were analyzed in terms of language use and language patterns to communicate with foreign consumers. Thainess of the food products was analyzed based on the use of picture of Thai dish, herbs, spices, and fresh vegetables; picture or name of places in Thailand; picture of Thai artistry and Thai costumes.

#### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The 390 products collected from Amazon website were divided into 5 groups: Thai food products from Thailand (190), Thai food products from other countries (30), Thai products and kitchen utensils (14), food products of the other countries (21), kitchen utensils from other countries (82), and food ingredients of the other countries (53).

Of 190 Thai food products from Thailand, there were 49 repetitive product items on the webpage; therefore, there were only 140 different items. Of 30 Thai food products from other countries, there was one repetitive product, so there were 29 different product items. The repetitive product items appeared again or in different packages such as a bottle, a pack of three bottles, a pack of 6 bottles.

The 140 Thai food products from Thailand fell into four categories: rice products (2), canned and instant food (19), snacks and candies (35), and food ingredients and seasonings (84) while the 29 Thai food products from other countries fell into three categories: rice products (6), canned and instant food (6), and food ingredients and seasonings (17). The category of food ingredients and seasonings was the biggest Thai food product from Thailand and other countries while the category of snacks and candies was exported from Thailand only.

Results were presented according to the three research objectives and research questions on brand naming labels, language use, and Thainess of Thai food products.

##### A. Languages on Thai Food Product Brand Naming Labels

This part explains the languages of brand naming labels and answers the first research question, 'What languages do Thai food products present their brand names?'

Of 140 Thai food products, 71 food product brand names were found, and two products were without brand labels. Thai names was the most found (53.52%) followed by English names (29.58%), and names of other languages (14.08%). Mix of Thai-English names was the least found (2.82%).

Products with Thai names were presented either only Thai or with English translation/ English transliteration.

##### Examples

Thai names only: ตราช้าง, ตรากุ้งไทย, นมผงสวนดุสิต

Thai names with English translation: ตราโทรศัพท์ Telephone brand, ภูเขาทอง Golden Mountain

Thai names with English transliteration: ชาวกะเขี Chaokoh, รสดี Ros Dee

English names: My Choice, Blue Elephant, i-chef, Fruit King

Names of other languages: Bento, Taro

Mix of Thai- English: รสดีเมนู Ros Dee Menu, ปลาร้าอินเตอร์ Pla-ra Inter

As 12 brand names appeared with more than one product labels, 86 different product labels were found.

The 86 food product brand labels were presented in 10 methods: (1) Thai only; (2) English only; (3) Thai and English; (4) English transliteration only; (5) Thai with English transliteration; (6) Thai with English translation; (7) Thai, English, and Chinese; (8) Thai and Japanese; (9) English and Chinese; and (10) Thai, English transliteration, Chinese and Japanese.

Thai with English transliteration method (36.05%) was mostly found followed by Thai only method (20.93%). English transliteration method (11.63%) and English only method (10.47%) were relatively equivalent as well as the use of Thai and English method (6/86=6.98%) and the method of Thai and English translation (5.81%). Chinese and Japanese also appeared in Thai food product brand naming. Thai with English and Chinese brand naming method (4.65%) was found followed by Thai and Japanese method (1.16%). However, there was one brand naming appeared without Thai language but in English and Chinese (1.16%). Thai, English transliteration, Chinese, and Japanese method (1.16%) was also found. Table 1 shows the 10 methods of languages on Thai food product naming labels, and figure 1 shows examples of food product brand naming labels in Thai and English language either in the forms of translation or transliteration.

TABLE 1  
TEN METHODS OF LANGUAGES ON THAI FOOD PRODUCT NAMING LABELS

Methods	Th only	En only	Th+En	En transli	Th+En transli	Th+En transla	Th+En-Ch	Th+Ja	E+Ch	Th+En transli+Ch+Ja
<b>86</b>	18	9	6	10	31	5	4	1	1	1
<b>100%</b>	20.93%	10.47%	6.98%	11.63%	36.05%	5.81%	4.65%	1.16%	1.16%	1.16%

Th=Thai, En=English, Ch=Chinese, Ja=Japanese, transla=translation, transli=transliteration



Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Gogi-Flour-Pack-500g-Thailand/dp/B008T8DEFS>



Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Number-Original-Thai-ChaTraMue-Label/dp/B09124TZ9N?th=1>



Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Khao-Shong-Peanuts-Delicious-Thailand/dp/B01NBX7UZY>

Figure 1. Examples of Thai and English (Translation or Transliteration) Brand Naming Labels

Of 71 food product brand names, two brand names appeared in three different brand naming labels, and 10 brand names appeared in two different labels. Thai and English language in the forms of translation or transliteration were used in these 12 brand names. Thai only method and Thai with English transliteration method were the most used followed by English transliteration method. Chinese and Japanese were also used together with Thai or English transliteration. Language methods of the 12 food products with different naming labels are shown in table 2.

TABLE 2  
LANGUAGE METHODS OF FOOD PRODUCTS WITH DIFFERENT NAMING LABELS

Thai name	English name	Th only	Th+En transli	E transli	Th+En transla	Th+En+ Ch	Th+En transli+ Ch+Ja
เด็กสมบูรณ์	Healthy Boy Brand	1			1	1	
มามา	MAMA	1	1	1			
รสดีเมนู	RosDeeMenu	1	1				
รสดี	Ros Dee	1	1				
เบนโตะ	Bento		1	1			
ทาร์โร	Taro		1	1			
แม่ประนอม	Maepranom Brand	1					1
ระมิงค์	Ra Ming		1	1			
ตราโทรศัพท์	Telephone Brand	1			1		
แม็กกี้	Maggi	1	1				
ศรีราชาพานิช	Sriraja Panich	1		1			
โก๋แก	Koh Kae		1			1	
		<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

*Th=Thai, En=English, Ch=Chinese, Ja=Japanese, transla=translation, transli=transliteration*



Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Agar-Powder-Product-Thailand-0-88/dp/B010I4UG7O>  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Telephone-Product-Thailand-Powder-Ounce/dp/B01KMHY2OU>



Source: <https://www.amazon.com/RosDee-Menu-Chinese-Spices-Powder/dp/B012N9CVIE>  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/RosDee-menu-Kua-Kling-Pack/dp/B00W1ZLNBW>

Figure 2. Examples of Thai Food Products With Different Brand Naming Labels

Figure 2 shows examples of food product names with different brand naming labels: Thai only (ตราโทรศัพท์, รสดีเมนู, ตราเด็กสมบูรณ์, มามา, ศรีราชาพานิช, รสดี); English only (Healthy Boy Brand); English transliteration (MAMA, Sriraja Panich); Thai with English translation (ตราโทรศัพท์ Telephone Brand); Thai with English transliteration (รสดีเมนู Ros Dee Menu, รสดี Ros Dee, มามา MAMA – on different sides); mix of Thai, English, and Chinese (ตราเด็กสมบูรณ์ Healthy Boy Brand 標南光肥); and mix of Thai, English transliteration, Chinese, and Japanese (ตราแม่ประนอม Maepranom Brand 妈巴俊辟 เมープรานอม).

Of 29 Thai food products from other countries, 17 product brand names were found. One brand appeared in different labels of different products, so there were 18 brand naming labels. English appeared as dominant language in all brand naming labels. English only method was found most (15/18). Multilanguage brand label with English dominance was found (2/18), and the use of Thai and English method was found only once. Examples of product brand naming labels were shown in figure 3.



Source: <https://www.amazon.com/DYNASTY-22927-Dynasty-Jasmine-20-Pound/dp/B004NRG77Q>



Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Taste-Thai-Sweet-Chili-Sauce/dp/B01NBUKGNC>



Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Thai-Taste-Fish-Sauce-200ml/dp/B005Z0UFRS>

Figure 3. Examples of Thai Food Product Brand Labels From Other Countries

### B. Language Patterns of Thai Food Product Names

This part explains the language patterns of Thai food product names and responds to the second research question, 'Which language patterns are the Thai food products used?'

Of 86 Thai food products, five languages were found in 15 patterns of food product names. Thai appeared as the dominant language and was found in Thai only pattern (20.93%) and the mix of Thai-English pattern (50.01%).

The combination of Thai and English was mostly used (50.01%) and appeared in 8 patterns concerning position and size: (1) upper and bigger Thai, (2) upper and bigger English, (3) upper Thai/ bigger English, (4) upper English/bigger Thai, (5) upper Thai then English, (6) upper English then English, (7) bigger English then Thai, (8) Thai, English on different places of the product. Upper and bigger Thai language pattern was the most found in the mix of Thai and English (19.77%) and in the third rank of the language patterns found in Thai food product brand naming patterns.

Only Thai or English appeared at 44.19%. English only was at 23.26% and Thai only was at 20.93%. The combination of Thai, English, and Chinese appeared in three patterns. Thai-Japanese was found in one pattern as well as English-Chinese. Table 3 shows the 15 language patterns found on Thai food product names.

TABLE 3  
LANGUAGE USE AND PATTERNS OF THAI FOOD PRODUCT NAMES FROM THAILAND

Language use	Language patterns	Frequency
1. Thai	Thai only	18 (20.93%)
2. English	English only	20 (23.26%)
3. Thai and English (50.01%)	Upper, bigger Thai	17 (19.77%)
	Upper, bigger English	6 (6.98%)
	Upper Thai / bigger English	6 (6.98%)
	Upper English / bigger Thai	1 (1.16%)
	Upper Thai then English	2 (2.33%)
	Upper English then Thai	3 (3.49%)
	Bigger English then Thai	1 (1.16%)
	Separated places of Thai /English	7 (8.14%)
4. Thai, English, and Chinese	Bigger Thai / smaller English, Chinese	1 (1.16%)
	Upper Thai, Chinese / lower English	1 (1.16%)
	Separated places of Thai, English, Chinese	1 (1.16%)
5. Thai and Japanese	Upper Thai / bigger Japanese	1 (1.16%)
6. English and Chinese	Upper Chinese, lower English	1 (1.16%)
		86(100%)

Of 29 Thai food products from other countries, three language patterns were found. English was the dominant language and appeared in upper and bigger size in all products. English only was at 83.33%. Multilanguage brand label with English dominance was at 11.11%, and the use of Thai and English was at 5.56%. Table 4 shows the frequency of language use and language patterns.

TABLE 4  
LANGUAGE USE AND PATTERNS OF THAI FOOD PRODUCT NAMES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

Language use	Language patterns	Frequency
1. English	English only	15 (83.33%)
2. English and other languages	Upper, bigger English	2 (11.11%)
3. English and Thai	Upper, bigger English	1 (5.56%)
		18(100%)

### C. Thainess in Exported Thai Food Products

Thai food is one of the 7 unique aspects of Thainess (TAT, 2015). The rich flavor of exotic herbs and spices as well as the unique cooking and methods of food preservation present Thainess to the world. The aromatic scent of Thai food can be enjoyed in either fine dining restaurants or local street stalls.

Thainess presented in Thai food products is explained in this part. Pictures of Thai dish, herbs, spices and fresh vegetables; Thai artistry; a place in Thailand; Thai costumes were found to present Thainess in Thai food products. Name of a place in Thailand as well as a famous person were also used on Thai food products.

Of 140 Thai food products, 113 food product items were found with Thainess. Picture of Thai food dish along with fresh vegetables, herbs, and spices was mostly found (86.73%), followed by name of a place in Thailand (5.31%), picture of Thai artistry (3.54%), and picture of a place in Thailand, as well as picture of Thai costumes were equally found (1.77%). Picture of a famous Thai person was found least (0.88%). Thainess presentation on food products is shown in table 5 and figure 4.

TABLE 5  
THAINESS PRESENTATION ON THAI FOOD PRODUCTS EXPORTED FROM THAILAND

Pic of food	Pic of place	Pic of Th artistry	Pic of Th costumes	Name of place	Pic of celebrity	Total
86.73%	1.77%	3.54%	1.77%	5.31%	0.88%	100%

*Pic=picture, Th=Thai*



Products with pictures of food dishes    Picture of place (temple)&artistry    Products with Thai artistry  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Rosdee-Seasoning-Powder-Green-Labb-Namtok/dp/B01LZHEVET>  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Choice-Crispy-Durian-Chips-Premium/dp/B07RG9G47L>  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Coconut-Cream-Powder-Chao-Thai/dp/B0095VQH5M>  
 Source: [https://www.amazon.com/Lobo-Brand-Thai-Tom-Paste/dp/B00N1Y336A/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?keywords=lobo+tom+ka+paste&qid=1699590788&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Lobo-Brand-Thai-Tom-Paste/dp/B00N1Y336A/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=lobo+tom+ka+paste&qid=1699590788&sr=8-1)



Products with Thai costumes    Products with names of places in Thailand    Picture of a celebrity  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Pantai-Traditional-Restaurant-Style-Service/dp/B07KPVPT4J>  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Mae-Ploy-Massaman-Curry-Paste/dp/B00FGYU0HI>  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Pad-Thai-Korat-Fried-Mee/dp/B07TMP391T?th=1>  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/dried-PUENG-NGEE-CHIANG-thailand/dp/B01MR1QM67>  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Original-Tamarind-selected-Delicious-Phetchabun/dp/B01HDN2SA6>  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Sriraja-Panich-Sriracha-Chili-Sauce/dp/B00U9WOBG8>  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.ca/ZAB-PASTEURIZED-FERMENTED-ALL-PURPOSE-ZAB-TOOK-MENU/dp/B0B6G9DJGQ>

Figure 4. Examples of Thainess Presentation on Thai Food Products Exported From Thailand



Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Asian-Best-Jasmine-Rice-Pound/dp/B019VPL9OK>  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Kaset-Thread-Glass-Noodles-Thailand/dp/B00AKHHUXS>  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Pueng-Ngee-Chiang-Premium-Thailand/dp/B00TSEDVO6>  
 Source: [https://www.amazon.com/JHC-Dried-hottest-chili-56g/dp/B07H41197C/ref=cm\\_cr\\_arp\\_d\\_product\\_top?ie=UTF8](https://www.amazon.com/JHC-Dried-hottest-chili-56g/dp/B07H41197C/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_product_top?ie=UTF8)  
 Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Ground-Natural-Herbal-Nguan-Soon/dp/B00B6PGAXY>

Figure 5. Examples of Food Products in Clear and Transparent Plastic Packaging

Thai food products with names of the places which are famous for certain kinds of food as examples are Pad Mee (fried rice noodles) Korat and Moo Yong (pork floss) Korat, tamarind from Phetchabun, and chili sauce from Sriracha. The example products declare that the products were produced in the famous places for those kinds of food. Korat province is famous for Pad Mee and pork floss, Phetchabun is famous for sweet tamarind, and the well-known hot chili sauce call Sriraja Panich is taken from the Sriracha subdistrict where the company is located in Chonburi province (both English transliterations, Sriraja or Sriracha, refer to the place ศรีราชา in Thai word).

A Thai food product presented with a Thai celebrity was found with the picture of a Thai country songs singer who is the owner of the product and named the product after his name, 'Mike'.

For some Thai food products in clear and transparent plastic packaging were without pictures of Thai food because the products could present themselves.

From 29 Thai food products from other countries, 21 food products were found with Thainess presentation. Food products with pictures of Thai food dishes along with fresh vegetables, herbs, and spices was mostly found (80.95%), followed by the use of Thai artistry (14.29%) and name of a place in Thailand (4.76%).



TABLE 6  
THAINESS PRESENTATION ON THAI FOOD PRODUCTS EXPORTED FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

Pic of food	Pic of place	Pic of Th artistry	Pic of costumes	Name of place	Pic of celebrity	Total
80.95%	0%	14.29%	0%	4.76%	0%	100%

*Pic=picture, Th=Thai*



Products with pictures of Thai food dish, herbs and spice

Product with name of a place in Thailand

Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Thai-Kitchen-Gluten-Original-Noodles/dp/B01BGN0VY4>

Source: [https://www.amazon.com/Tasty-Bite-Ginger-Curry-Pouches/dp/B07Q8GDFSG/ref=cm\\_cr\\_ar\\_p\\_d\\_product\\_top?ie=UTF8](https://www.amazon.com/Tasty-Bite-Ginger-Curry-Pouches/dp/B07Q8GDFSG/ref=cm_cr_ar_p_d_product_top?ie=UTF8)

Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Spice-Hut-Organic-Seasoning-Ounce/dp/B07668Q82B>

Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Huy-Fong-Sriracha-Chili-Sauce/dp/B00838FWPO>



Products With Thai Artistry

Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Kirkland-841930-Jasmine-Rice-25-lbs/dp/B00SORXXNM?th=1>

Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Taste-Thai-Sweet-Chili-Sauce/dp/B01NBUKGNC>

Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Taste-Thai-Spicy-Peanut-Piece/dp/B01BEVS262>

Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Taste-Thai-Noodles-Quick-Piece/dp/B01BDABCK2>

Figure 6. Examples of Thainess Presentation on Thai Food Products Exported From Other Countries

Thainess presentation was also mostly used with Thai food dish, herbs, and spices for Thai food products from the other countries; however, the presented pictures of Thai food dishes seemed to be different from Thai food dishes in Thailand. Abdulrahman (2015) concluded that pictures are very important for food products as pictures “reveal the way and shape of a product or a dish, pictures can talk more than words” (p. 91). Thai artistry was a method that Thai food products from other countries used to present Thainess, and Thai artistry was considered as one of three characteristics of Thainess (Najpinij, 2012).

Notably, a hot sauce from Vietnam was presented with the name of a place in Thailand, ‘Sriracha’ to refer to a well-known Sriracha hot sauce originally from Thailand.

## V. CONCLUSION

Of the 86 food product labels, Thai with English transliteration method (36.05%) was mostly found. This finding is in line with Abdulrahman (2015) that “transliteration is the most used strategy” (p. 90) in food product labels.

For language patterns used on Thai food product brand names, English dominance showed in the use of Thai-English (50.01%) together with the use of English only (23.26%) and English-Chinese (1.16%). English also appeared as the dominant language in Thai food products from other countries and was presented in upper and bigger sizes in Thai food product brand names (100%). Vividly, English has been accepted for international branding.

Picture of Thai food dish, fresh vegetables, herbs, and spices was mostly used to present Thainess in Thai food products both exported from Thailand and other countries. Thai artistry was considered as an effective method to present Thainess, especially for Thai food products from other countries. The use of a famous person in Thailand was only found in a Thai food product from Thailand as the owner of the product is a popular Thai country song singer and the product is popular especially for Thai people living in the country.

Notably, certain food products with clear and transparent plastic packaging were presented without any pictures, but the products themselves.

Although rice is one of the major food exports (Thailand Country Profile, n.d.), only two brands of rice product exported from Thailand were presented while 6 brands of rice product from other countries which indicated the country of origin as Thailand were found on Amazon.com.

The finding of snacks and candies only exported from Thailand supported the report that Thailand’s market for snack foods as one of the major segments in the food processing industry totaled \$1.2 billion in 2021 (Sirikeratikul, 2022).

The report also explained that consumers were looking for not only tasty but also on-the-go and healthy snacks. As a result, food manufacturers launched snacks through modern retail markets and e-commerce platforms.

From the collected data, 22 food guarantee logos were found with certain food products. However, this finding is beyond the scope of the present study. Therefore, it is recommended for future studies on Thai food products to explore more on food guarantee logos and their languages to communicate to consumers.

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# Translanguaging as a Communicative Method in Film-Audience Relationship—Case Study of the Film *Wu Ming*

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**Abstract**—The film *Wu Ming* (Hidden Blade) is characterized by the heterogeneous usage of mixed idioms, namely, Shanghaiese, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Japanese. The mixture of idioms restores the true historical complexity of Shanghai under the Japanese occupation from 1937 to 1945, which, in return, reflects the film-making aesthetics by inviting the audience to step into the embedded context with embodied experiences. The translanguaging-informed plots divert the audience's attention from the pure linguistic content to an interpretative and emotional tone of what is seen: the audience's full repertoire is mobilized for an inferential analysis when they are guided to immerse in the contextual multilingualism, catch up the suspense and symphonize with the sense- and meaning-making of the film. On one hand, the heterogeneous usage of mixed idioms maximizes the contextual effects of the film on its audience, underpinning the orchestration of diverse means of the Audiovisual texts (AVTs); on the other hand, in processing the informative heterogeneous usage of idioms, the audiences are given the lens of translanguaging to perceive the ongoing negotiation of powers, the dichotomies of doubts versus trust, and the ideological and attitudinal positions of protagonists. Thus, with translanguaging as a communicative method, the initially blurred identity of protagonists is revealed gradually by the film's narration and equally by the audiences through their embodied processing and inferential efforts by mobilizing all their available repertoire. In addition, the film's metaphorized name – *Wu Ming* (literal meaning, “nameless”), is aesthetically communicated to and demystified by the audience through their participatory agency.

**Index Terms**—*Wu Ming* (Hidden Blade), translanguaging, embodiment, sense- and meaning-making, embeddedness

## I. INTRODUCTION

Film is a popular art that entertains a broad audience, while the audience, in return, is an essential part that defines the film. The film-audience relationship has been a central topic in scholarly research and writings (Gripsrud & Lavik, 2008). On one hand, film production takes into account the audience's aesthetic requirements and expectations, which is especially true for commercial films; on the other hand, audience reviews and ratings have become the vane and reference for movie viewing, which also feeds back the film production. The mutual respect between the film and the audience is a key principle and represents a healthy development of the film, as reflected by the audience theory (Allor, 1988; Carpentier, 2011) that originates in social sciences, rhetoric, literary theory, cultural studies, and communication studies, addressing the exploration of interactions with others and relating pragmatically to communication. Translanguaging Theory, as a cognitive-pragmatic framework for language and human communication (Li, 2011a, 2011b, 2018, 2022), is well-suited to address this matter. It excels in facilitating communication that spans multiple languages, diverse media, and various modes of expression. This framework enables the generation of comprehension and meaning by transcending artificial and ideological boundaries.

The recently released film *Wu Ming* (Hidden Blade) directed by Cheng Er has generated a hot discussion among the Chinese audience. The discussion not only focuses on filming techniques for shots, scenes, and sequences but also touches on film aesthetics through the heterogeneous usage of various idioms throughout the film. Its translanguaging-informed design entails messages and meaning that the film *Wu Ming* (Hidden Blade) intends to transmit and communicate with its audience.

The film director Cheng Er has manifested his attitude toward the film audience on several public occasions. According to the film director, the audience should be respected and the audience shouldn't be underestimated. Exploring this saying, the present article pretends to use the film *Wu Ming* as a case study and probe into its translanguaging-informed scenes as a study object, to further elaborate the film-audience relationship and explore how translanguaging is employed as a communicative method in the film and how the film's sense- and meaning-making is transmitted to the audience through the lens of translanguaging. In addition, it also examines, from the audience's perspective, how the film's metaphorized name – *Wu Ming* (literally meaning “Nameless” in Chinese) -, is aesthetically communicated to and demystified by the audience through their participatory agency/embodied participation.

## II. TRANSLANGUAGING AS A COMMUNICATIVE METHOD IN THE FILM *WU MING* (HIDDEN BLADE)

*Wu Ming* (Hidden Blade) is a film directed by Chinese director Cheng Er and put on screen during the Chinese New Year of 2023 in China as a commercial film. The film's name, *Wu Ming*, means, literally, "nameless", which seems to echo the nameless protagonist-heroes that feature in the film. The film describes China's war of resistance in Shanghai under the Japanese occupation during 1937-1945, where the underground members of the Chinese Communist Party risked sending out information to safeguard China. The film's timeline was from 1941 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and ended with the surrender of the Japanese in the Pacific War in 1945.

In the film, there are many scenes featured with the heterogeneous usage of idioms, namely Shanghaiese, Cantonese, Japanese, and Mandarin. In some cases, conversations are conducted purely in Shanghaiese, Cantonese, Mandarin, or Japanese, while in some other cases, conversations are a mixture of Shanghaiese, Cantonese, Mandarin, or Japanese depending on the situated circumstances. The heterogeneous usage of idioms also characterizes the protagonists, who also switch their language use depending on the situation and object of speaking. This diversified and complicated linguistic phenomenon restores the true complexity of Shanghai under the Japanese occupation in the 1940s when people of different backgrounds and power relations are latent in Shanghai and the heterogenous usage of idioms is a camouflage to disguise true identity. In such a historical background, the seemingly casual dialogues in Shanghaiese might comprise a risky message; the dialogues embedded with mutually understandable Japanese and Mandarin could reveal attitudinal resistance and ideological positions of speakers; the calm and serious interrogation in both Shanghaiese and Mandarin could conceal revenge and betrayal; the sincere and faithful conversation purely in Japanese would be designed "pitfalls" for confidentiality.

Such translanguaging-featured scenes are, as a matter of fact, first revealed by a teaser trailer. In February 2022, the production team unveiled a teaser trailer featuring two men speaking in Shanghaiese. This led to speculation that the entire film might be in Shanghaiese. In response to these rumors, the film released an official poster to clarify that it would also include "Mandarin, Cantonese, and foreign languages". A longer trailer was released in September 2022, as well as its translanguaging-informed post. In the poster released on the official Weibo of the film *Wu Ming* before its release, the intention is anticipatively revealed: "阿拉不是全片上海话, 亦有普通话、广东话、外国话 [Ala is not all in Shanghaiese, there are also Mandarin, Cantonese, and foreign languages]".

As a matter of fact, "阿拉[Ala]" is a Shanghaiese expression, meaning "We". Embedded in the whole phrase in Mandarin, this Shanghaiese expression in first person's plural form stresses its weighing omnipresence. In addition, in the same poster, "谢谢侬" (Xia Xia Nong, a Shanghaiese expression originating from the dialect Wu, meaning "Thank you") is put in an eye-catching position with outstanding font size. The poster confirms the film values the mixture of heterogenous use of various idioms and heightens the use of Shanghaiese. In this manner, the film initiates its interactions with the audience even before the film's release, dropping a hint of its aesthetics through the lens of translanguaging.

## III. TRANSLANGUAGING AND SENSE- AND MEANING/MAKING IN FILM

Translanguaging, as a practical theory of language, cognition, and human communication, underscores the importance of engaging multiple senses, various modes, diverse semiotics, and multiple languages in communication. It aims to create understanding and significance by surpassing and dismantling artificial and ideological boundaries (Li, 2011a, 2011b, 2018, 2022). As its suffix (trans- and -ing) indicates, translanguaging involves going beyond conventional limits, breaking down barriers between disciplines and languages, and removing the restrictions that separate human cognition and communication. The "-ing" in "translanguaging" signifies the dynamic process of creating meaning, in which multilingual individuals utilize a variety of sensory, modal, and semiotic resources (Garcia & Li, 2014; Han, 2022; Han et al., 2023). Translanguaging is the active process through which individuals proficient in multiple languages manage intricate social and cognitive tasks by strategically utilizing various semiotic resources to engage, understand, and exist (Zhu & Li, 2016, 2020, 2022; Han, 2022; Han & Wen, 2022; Mu et al., 2022). In this process a principle of abundance is in operation, that is, as many different cues should be produced simultaneously as possible to facilitate communication (Li, 2016).

The film, as a multimodal creation and a channel for constructing meaning, is a combination of various elements (sound, imagery, and language) that convey stories with the purpose of creating understanding and significance for its audience or viewers (Martinelli, 2020). This process of creating meaning or understanding within the film is a fundamental principle in audiovisual communication, particularly when dealing with the intricacies of reality. Through the dynamic interaction of sound, image, and language, the film's meaning or sense is communicated, experienced, and interpreted by its audience or viewers (Han, 2022). In film-audience communication, the meaning and sense-making are not the mere mode or modality (of sound, image, and language), but an imaginative combination and coordination of various means, which is best captured by translanguaging, a method instrumental to understanding and appreciating the multimodality of the film:

Translanguaging itself is a methodology offering a new conceptual framework that promotes a number of important analytical shifts: shift away from language as abstract codes to meaning- and sense-making; attend to a wider range of multi-semiotic resources whilst refusing to privilege particular modes and methods of

meaning-making over others; approach translanguaging as an expansively integrated experience. (Li, 2022, p. 1)

As such, translanguaging, as a method that promotes analytical shift, values all the available resources beyond language. Defined as "the creative selection and combination of communication modes (verbal, visual, gestural, and embodied) available in a speaker's repertoire" (Baynham & Lee, 2019, pp. 24-25), the lens of translanguaging empowers communication by making possible "a wider range of multi-semiotic resources" in delivering the audiovisual means (sound, image, and language) of films, refusing to "privilege modes and methods of meaning-making over others" (Li, 2022, p. 1). The boundary-breaking perspective of translanguaging is manifested through the film AVTs for meaning- and sense-making (Han, 2022). In addition, the translanguaging method is further validated by its "expansively integrated experience" (Li, 2022, p. 1). It invites the audience/ viewers to have the embodied experience and catalyze their inferential and participatory viewing experiences: the audience/viewers' attention is guided to shift from the pure linguistic content to "facial expression, body posture, or font size and style" (Li, 2022, p. 1), and with an orchestration of all means to achieve the abundance of meanings and the "expansively integrated experience" as indicated below:

Analytically, the focus must not be on one means of meaning- and sense-making (linguistic or otherwise) only or one at a time, but on the assemblage and orchestration of diverse means. We, therefore, need a maximalist approach that focuses on the simultaneous management of multiple means of meaning- and sense-making, and includes the role played by such things as feeling, experience, history, memory, subjectivity, as well as ideology, and power in (trans) languaging. (Li, 2022, p. 1)

The lens of translanguaging expand and enhance the conceptualization of the meaning- and sense-making, serving as a "maximalist approach" to achieve abundance that embraces "feeling, experience, history, memory, subjectivity, as well as ideology and power". In light of such a translanguaging method, the film-audience communication is abundantly enriched in terms of sense- and meaning-making: the creative "assemblage and orchestration of diverse means" (Li, 2022, p. 1) and modalities by AVTs enrich the suspense, tensions, and climax. In the same vein, audience/viewers in the embedded and situated film scenes are empowered to mobilize visual, audio, linguistic, and sensory repertoires for the expansively integrated experience. The translanguaging-informed film invites the audience/viewers to participate in the orchestration of all diverse means by shifting attention to the entanglement of powers hidden beneath the superficial linguistic content.

This translanguaging-informed sense- and meaning-making in film examines and questions the aesthetics of the film-audience communication, in which either the film's creativity for meaning-making or the audience's embodied viewing experience is maximized and optimized through the lens of translanguaging.

Further probing into the translanguaging-informed method in communication, three concrete questions are raised: 1) how the method is employed by the film to guide the audience? 2) how the method is perceived by the audience in their viewing experience? and 3) how the orchestration of diverse means achieves film-audience optimal communication? These questions are to be answered by the case study of the film *Wu Ming* (Hidden Blade).

#### IV. LENS OF TRANSLANGUAGING IN THE FILM *WU MING*

The lens of translanguaging in the film *Wu Ming* (Hidden Blade) is two-folded. On one hand, the film emphasizes its multilingual, multisemiotic, and multimodal expressions by restoring the true historical complexity of Shanghai under the Japanese occupation from 1937 to 1945, where the heterogeneous usage of diverse idioms constitutes part of the film narration background. Translanguaging nurtures the basic tone of the film, as shown and revealed by its official teaser trailers. On the other hand, translanguaging is employed in concrete scenes to weave the story's suspense and plots, which supports the film's whole narration structure. In some scenes, shots are made purely in Shanghainese, Cantonese, Mandarin, or Japanese, while in some other scenes, shots are a mixture of Shanghainese, Cantonese, Mandarin, or Japanese depending on the situated circumstances. In addition, the translanguaging-informed method is screened to characterize the film roles, who also switch their languages depending on the object of speaking. By analyzing the following concrete translanguaging-informed scenes from the film *Wu Ming* (Hidden Blade), we probe into the sense- and meaning-making of the scenes and explore its film-audience communication.

##### *Translanguaging-informed scene 1:*

Setting: Dinner

Location:

Japanese food restaurant, somewhere in Shanghai under the Japanese occupation at the beginning of the 1940s.

Figures: Mr. He, Japanese officer Watanabe, Minister Tang

Mode: Translanguaging in conversation

Scene: Mr. He, Japanese officer Watanabe, and Minister Tang were eating in a Japanese food restaurant, with Japanese music as the background sound. In their conversation, from the beginning to the end, they were talking in mixed languages: the Japanese Officer Watanabe spoke Japanese, while Mr. He and Minister Tang talked in Mandarin. Apparently, they understood each other in the ongoing conversation since no interpreting services were provided. They might even be able to speak the language of others, due to many years of language immersion, but they insisted on speaking in their idioms. The translanguaging-informed conversation

went on very calmly and nobody seemed to be disturbed by others' insistence. There is a scene like this: When asked by Watanabe (in Japanese) the reason for his lack of appetite, Mr. He responded (in Mandarin) that he was not used to Japanese food. Consequently, Watanabe suggested (in Japanese) Mr. He to get adapted to Japanese food.

Analysis: The superfluous information in the conversation seems very casual, like a daily talk between colleagues. However, the atmosphere nurtured by the film closeups, the determined eye contact, and the several seconds of deadly silence against the geisha's Japanese music, underline connotative meanings of such a conversation and invite the audience/viewer to perceive the tension hidden beneath. Japanese food is a metaphor here alluding to the Japanese military ambition. Both Mr. He's refusal of Japanese food and Watanabe's suggestion surpass their linguistic content, suggesting somehow their own political and ideological attitudes. No doubt, Watanabe, the Japanese officer, has the ambition to encroach on the land of China, by then the Japanese food might spread over the vast land, as he has been wishing and manifested by his words; Minister Tang, who works as an official of the puppet regime of Wang Jingwei, manifests his intention as speculator and fence-sitter in the context of the turbulent era. At the moment of the scene, Mr. He is the subject of Minister Tang, but his insistence on speaking Mandarin with the Japanese officer and his resistance towards Japanese food is unusual compared to Minister Tang, somehow betraying his hidden identity. The myth was revealed gradually through the development of plots, and it turned out Mr. He is an underground communist, as well as many other front workers operating under the puppet regime of Wang. Thus, the insistence of Mr. He in speaking Mandarin and his answer to deny Japanese food is, no doubt, the purpose designed by the film, and its meanings are far beyond the superfluous information. Translanguaging is employed as a method to reveal the attitudinal and ideological position of Mr. He against the Japanese occupation, which, in return, paves way for his true identity revealed in later plots.

In this shot as well as in others, the lens of translanguaging is employed to enrich the "expansively integrated experience" "by underpinning the orchestration of diverse means (sound, image, and language) of the audiovisual texts (AVTs). The audience is empowered with the lens of translanguaging to perceive the ongoing negotiation of the (in) visible powers, the dichotomies of doubts versus trust, and the ideological and attitudinal positions of protagonists.

*Translanguaging-informed scene II (comprised of several shots):*

Setting: Dinner, daily practices

Location: Shanghai under Japanese occupation at the beginning of the 1940s

Figures: Secretary Ye, Japanese officer Watanabe, Captain Wang, Mr. He

Mode: translanguaging practices of a person

Shot a): Secretary Ye was invited by Japanese officer Watanabe for a Japanese dinner. They were talking over dinner, purely in Japanese. Before that, a store (one of the Chinese Communist Party's sites) was raided by the Japanese army, and Secretary Ye was present. His colleague, Captain Wang of the Puppet Regime, asked for leave to celebrate his father's birthday and did not perform a mission, which was suspected by Watanabe. During the dinner, Watanabe commented that everyone seemed to be looking for a way out, to which Secretary Ye replied in Japanese that he had no value in being united and the only way was to go to the darkness. Watanabe was satisfied with the answer and Mr. Ye was trusted further.

Shot b): Secretary Ye dined with his colleague Captain Wang, who talked insensitively about the evil deeds of the Japanese during the Nanjing Massacre as a topic of conversation. Later, Captain Wang picked up another topic and complained endlessly about the plate of steamed pork ribs at breakfast. All the conversation between Secretary Ye and Captain Wang was conducted in Shanghainese, as well as all the other dialogues between them, even at the moment they tried to kill each other. The breakfast conversation in Shanghainese inaugurated the film. It happened at a breakfast restaurant on the streets of old Shanghai, drawing immediately the audience into the film's unique era and urban background, setting the translanguaging tone.

Shot c): Secretary Ye met secretly with Mr. He, who knew the execution of the betrayer had been exposed and decided to give up lurking. Mr. He asked Secretary Ye to plan and take the opportunity to let himself further gain the trust of Japanese Officer Watanabe to continue lurking. The conversation was extremely succinct, totally in Mandarin. The conversation was heard without any shots of the faces of the two figures.

Analysis: All the above shots are made purely in Shanghainese, Japanese, or Mandarin. Secretary Ye is the person who appears in all three shots and speaks in different idioms in different shots. His fluent use of Japanese, Shanghainese, and Mandarin and translanguaging in three situated circumstances is not just linguistic code-switching, but a choice with determined purposes: most of the time Secretary Ye speaks Shanghainese, his mother tongue, with his colleague Captain Wang and with his fiancé. In his use of Shanghainese, we see in him the brotherly intimacy with the colleague and affective concern for fiancé, restrained and simple. However, his choice of use of Japanese is full of political ambition: his talk with the Japanese officer Watanabe is purely in Japanese, even though he knows Watanabe understands Chinese (for example, Mandarin, as indicated in previous scenes). By speaking Japanese, Secretary Ye becomes mysterious and ambitious, taking the initiative to please the Japanese officer and then gain further trust. The attitudinal contrast creates dubious suspense concerning his identity. Who is he? A faithful servile follower of the puppet regime? Such suspense lasts until shot C) when he uses Mandarin to talk with Mr. He (his superior of the PCC). His true identity is gradually revealed by this meaningful code-switching but perceived by the audience through

simultaneous management of multiple means of meaning (previous preparatory shots, other roles' identity, inferential clues, etc.). Though no faces are shown in this shot, the message in Mandarin that dramatically contrasts with previous plots is revealing: the use of Mandarin is encoded as an identity magnifier, magnifying all the minuscule clues that have been faintly visible in previous plots, and thus guiding the audience to figure out the hidden identity of Secretary Ye under careful disguise.

Being thus guided by these shots, the audience's attention was diverted from the superfluous content of the conversation, but focusing on the relationships of the involved figures and their true identities which have been myths from the very beginning of the film. In film-audience communication, the process of the audience perceiving the hints is thus sinuously guided by such translanguaging-informed messages and the inferential efforts of the audience/viewer are rewarded at the moment of the identity revealing.

## V. CONCLUSION: HIDDEN IDENTITY, HIDDEN BLADE

This article introduces translanguaging as a methodological tool for comprehending the communication between film and its audience. By examining the audiovisual elements (sound, image, language) and delving into the messages influenced by translanguaging, the present study focuses on uncovering the creation of sense and meaning within the film, and illustrates this through a detailed case study of the Chinese film titled *Wu Ming* (Hidden Blade). The translanguaging-informed scenes run through the film and constitute the film's narrative structure. Translanguaging is employed as a method to restore maximumly the real contextual setting of Shanghai under the Japanese occupation in the 1940s, with the heterogenous use of diverse idioms, revealing the dangerous social and historical complexity and justifying the co-existence of mysterious and disguised identities. Translanguaging is also utilized to assist the audience in their inferential endeavors by engaging all accessible sensory resources in the process of negotiating meaning. In doing so, it surpasses linguistic limitations and evolves from mere words into a more intricate form of communication that generates sense and meaning.

The two selected translanguaging-informed scenes, as the key objects of analysis, are autopsied through textual analysis and augmented with the background description. The insidious power and identity messages are in constant debate through code-switching and its orchestration with audiovisual means (sound, image) and extensive integrated experience (hidden attitudes, political and ideological positions, relationships). As the mysterious identity is gradually deciphered and unfolded in the interwoven translanguaging plots, the conversation contents lost their surface meaning in the film-audience communication. It might explain the audience's passion for going to the cinema for the second and third time viewing for deep digging and for the "extensive integrated experience" through worthwhile inferential efforts.

Viewed through the perspective of translanguaging, the communication between a film and its audience is fluidly crafted, nurtured, shaped, and interconnected through a variety of audiovisual methods. The sense- and meaning-making duplicates and reinforces what is visible, and guides the interpretation or emotional tone of what is seen by the audience/viewers. This aesthetics is seen through the power tension hidden beneath the mixture of use of languages in the dinner setting (language insistence by Mr. He and his resistance to the Japanese food), as well as revealed through the translanguaging practices by Secretary Ye, who speaks Shanghainese, Japanese, Mandarin in different situations, revealing to the audience his political and ideological position via management of language usage. As the film's name *Wu Ming* (literally meaning "nameless") indicate, Mr. He and Secretary Ye have no specific names identified, however, their hidden identity is like "Hidden Blade" stabbing into the heart of enemies.

Thus, the film extends beyond the narrative of the superfluous information, making the viewing experiences enriched by inviting the audience to participate in the sense- and meaning-making and enjoy their interpretation and take charge of what is seen. The lens of translanguaging deterritorializes the boundary of the named languages, bringing justice to the marginalized idioms that have been exerting their influences and social impacts. As a method, translanguaging values the boundary-breaking of languages and the repertoire as a whole, echoing the film director's defense: dialect is the soul of the city, something we should not give up. This is how we are in life, no matter where we go in the world, the most unforgettable thing is our dialect and the nostalgia in our hearts. In addition, the translanguaging-informed scenes restore maximumly the true complexity of Shanghai under the Japanese occupation in the 1940s, which also enriches the viewing experiences of the audience, echoing, in the same way, the director's famous saying: the audience should be respected and that the audience shouldn't be underestimated.

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# Representation of Ecological Wisdom in Banyumas Folklore: An Ecocritical Study

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**Abstract**—Folklore actually represents a society's civilization, including how to manage and preserve the environment. Folklore, for example, can be a valuable resource for humans involved in efforts to save the environment. This study investigates the Banyumas indigenous people's local wisdom in terms of environmental preservation as found in Banyumas folklores. The ecological wisdom of the Banyumas community is a term used in this study to refer to folklore from Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia, that contains the value of local wisdom in terms of environmental conservation. This study took an ecocritical approach to folklore texts as a type of literary work. The data for this study came from Banyumas folklore, and the research method was qualitative content analysis. The findings revealed that Banyumas folklore describes the Banyumas community's ecological wisdom in environmental conservation activities. These wisdoms include: respect for nature, living in harmony with nature, wisely using natural resources, using ecological knowledge for toponymy, and using nature as a spiritual tool. Readers can use these wisdom values as a guide to optimize environmental conservation.

**Index Terms**—Banyumas, ecological wisdom, folklore, ecocritic

## I. INTRODUCTION

The environment is one of the most serious problems confronting humanity this century (O'Connor et al., 2020; Tregidgaa & Laine, 2022). This issue has affected a number of countries, including Indonesia (Pirmana et al., 2021), Thailand (Mostafanezhad & Evrard, 2021), India (Shah & Narain, 2019), and Malaysia (Salman et al., 2021), among others. These issues include a variety of environmental crises such as pollution, water crises, peatland fires, floods, and unwise resource exploitation.

Environmental issues are more than just technical issues. Environmental issues are moral issues, as well as perception and human behavior issues (Kerap, 2010; Varhar & Dwivedi, 2020). The most important goal is to shift people's perspectives so that they are more concerned with respecting and protecting the environment (Sumarwati et al., 2020). Folklore, for example, contains local knowledge that can be an important resource for humans in this era of rapid local and global environmental change (Barau et al., 2016; Dundes, 2007). Environmental issues discussed in literary works can serve as a medium for the reading community to gain ecological literacy about environmental conditions, causes of environmental damage, and solutions that can be chosen to protect and preserve the environment (Yulisetiani, 2020). Messages from folklore about ecological systems teach readers empathy for the fact that humans are an inseparable part of nature (Brown, 2013).

Several countries around the world have knowledge of local wisdom in environmental management and preservation passed down from generation to generation through folklore. The indigenous Wayuu people of Colombia's Gajira Peninsula have wisdom in managing marine and fisheries ecosystems with high biodiversity (Carillo & Ossa, 2021). The Ainu indigenous people of Japan are wise in farming, land management, and avoiding natural exploitation (Sari & Putra, 2020). The Indian community, which is the world's second largest rice producer, has the foresight to ferment a variety of rice-based foods (Ray et al., 2016). However, if local wisdom is not passed down to the next generation, cultural heritage is at risk of extinction. Meanwhile, local knowledge is critical in helping communities respond to climate change and environmental crises (Sumarwati, 2022).

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The people of Banyumas, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia, are one example of a group of people who have been fortunate enough to inherit folklore that conveys a great deal of local wisdom in terms of environmental preservation. Banyumas refers to four regencies in Central Java Province, namely Banyumas, Purbalingga, Banjarnegara, and Cilacap. The four regions share a cultural trait: they all speak the ngapak Javanese language (Taufiqurrohmah et al., 2017). There are many folklores with environmental themes in this area, particularly in Cilacap Regency. Banyumas folklore began as an oral tradition that grew and developed within the Banyumas community. Banyumas folklore contains traditional elements about the way of life, such as how to view nature, which develops naturally as part of that way of life (Setyaningsih et al., 2020).

The moral education message about environmental conservation in Banyumas folklore is relevant to today's environmental problems. Traditional knowledge systems, in particular, can be an important source of guidance for modern humans in their efforts to save the environment from crisis (Kakoty, 2018). Currently, more young people are abandoning traditional values, absorbing new values, and abandoning traditional wisdom values. The younger generation does not understand the transition process, and considers traditional culture, including folklore, to be out of date (Sumarwati et al., 2020).

Until now, researchers have not prioritized the study of Banyumas folklore, particularly from an environmental standpoint. The findings of a study titled Reconstruction of the Folklore of Djaka Mruyung in Banyumas Regency (Setiawanti, 2014) focused on the discussion of the reconstruction of the folklore of Djaka Mruyung, one of Banyumas' folklore. Cablaka: Strugglers of Honesty in Banyumasan Folklore and Its Importance as Educational Content (Febriani, 2018) is a study that discusses the importance of education in Banyumas folklore. Another study, Cultural Values in Baturaden Folklore in the Banyumas Community as an Alternative for Literature Teaching Materials in Elementary Schools (Umri & Syah, 2021), focuses on the cultural elements in Banyumas folklore. However, studies that look at the environmental wisdom represented in Banyumas folklore are still limited. This analysis discusses the form of environmental wisdom contained in Banyumas folklore.

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to discover the forms of ecological wisdom of the Banyumas indigenous people in order to preserve nature as depicted in folklore texts. Ecological wisdom is a type of community wisdom that focuses on protecting and treating nature wisely in order to prevent environmental destruction.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Ecocriticism*

Ecocriticism explores the ways in which humans imagine and describe the relationship between humans and the environment in all areas of cultural production. It was inspired by, but also critical of, the modern environmental movement. Eco-criticism tracks the movement's development and explores the concepts that most occupy eco-criticism, including pollution problems, forest destruction problems, nature damage, housing problems, flora and fauna problems, and earth problems in general (Garrard, 2004).

Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist literary criticism examines literature from a gender-conscious perspective and Marxist literary criticism brings awareness of forms of production and economic class to reading literary texts, ecocritical studies take an environment-centered approach to literary studies (Glotfelty, 1996).

Ecocritical studies are seen as helpful in the study of folklore in order to investigate environmental aspects contained in folklore texts. The study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment is known as ecocriticism (Glotfelty, 1996). Ecocriticism begins with the notion that humanities scholars can no longer ignore environmental studies, especially in light of the current environmental crisis (Indiriyanto, 2020). Ecocriticism, as a literary study approach, transcends the duality between art and life, humans and nature, and strives to live a more sustainable life (Pamungkas et al., 2019).

The value of ecological knowledge extends beyond observing the harmony and stability of the environment to understanding human attitudes and behavior. Ecocritical studies are interdisciplinary, spanning literature, culture, philosophy, sociology, psychology, environmental history, politics, economics, and religious studies (Garrard, 2004). Ecocritical studies are useful for investigating culturally produced texts, such as folklore texts. The elements of the environment and human life's attitude toward nature can be well known using this approach.

### B. *Ecological Wisdom*

The term *ecosophy*, a synonym for ecological wisdom or the wisdom of place, was coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess in 1973. The term *ecosophy* is intended as a new name for human attitudes towards nature. The use of *ecosophy* and relevant deep ecological constructs as a paradigm is intended to go beyond the general concerns of environmental protection and erode the gap between humans and nature, as well as between the spiritual and the physical (Liao & Chan, 2016).

According to Yang and Young (2019), ecological wisdom is an action carried out by humans unintentionally from within themselves with the aim of realizing concern for the environment and utilizing a safe and harmonious environment in serving basic human needs for survival and development. This is a fundamental and arguably essential

practice that humans have. Humans have lived side by side for thousands of years with nature. Nature is managed and utilized by humans from generation to generation. Nature supports humans, and humans support themselves through the preservation of nature.

Ecological wisdom is a subset of local wisdom that focuses on living in harmony with nature while avoiding environmental harm (Holilah, 2015; Jualeha et al., 2019). Ecological wisdom promotes wisdom values such as respect for nature, responsibility, compassion, and concern for nature, as well as a desire to live simply and in harmony with nature (Keraf, 2010).

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study falls under the purview of qualitative research employing descriptive methods. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975), qualitative research is defined as research that generates descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and behaviors that can be observed. A descriptive method is a problem-solving procedure that describes the state of the subject or object of research based on the facts that appear or are as they are. The following Banyumas folklores were used in this study: (1) Kadipaten Penyarang [Duchy of Penyarang], (2) Nusakambangan, (3) Kerajaan Nusatembini [Kingdom of Nusatembini], (4) Bunga Wijayakusuma [Wijayakusuma Flower], (5) Sepatnunggal, (6) Legenda Gunung Jambu [The Legend of Mount Jambu], (7) Asal-usul Gunung Srandil [Origins of Mount Srandil], (8) Rawa Baya, (9) Gunung Mruyung, and (10) Legenda Waduk Naga Wangsa [The Legend of Naga Wangsa Reservoir]. The ten folklores were published in the folklore anthology *Folklore: Cilacap Regency in 2017* by the Central Java Language Center, Language Development and Development Agency, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. The information in this study is in the form of information related to the Banyumas community's ecological wisdom. Data were gathered through extensive reading, analysis, and documentation of findings. Based on the framework of ecocritical theory, data were analyzed using a content analysis method. This study's validity is based on the triangulation of sources and data. According to Creswell (2018, p. 285), validity in qualitative research is an attempt to ensure the accuracy of research results through the use of specific procedures.

### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Banyumas folklore narratives reflect ecological wisdom in managing and conserving nature, such as respecting nature, living in harmony with nature, wisely utilizing natural resources, utilizing ecological knowledge for toponyms, and making nature a spiritual means.

#### A. *Respecting Nature*

The Banyumas people have their own way of respecting nature. This is usually accomplished through various forms of prohibition. Prohibition is directed from parents to their children or children who are younger. The prohibitions include the prohibitions of indiscriminately catching fish, indiscriminately cutting down trees, and littering. The Banyumas people believe that breaking the taboo will have a negative impact on the perpetrators. Furthermore, religious ritual activities such as giving alms to the earth can be used to demonstrate respect for nature. These attitudes are part of *memayu hayuning bawana's* philosophy. The Banyumas folklore contains forms of wisdom based on respect for nature. This is exemplified by the following data from Sepatnunggal folklore:

"My son, Panembahan Dalem Reksapati. Know that the sepat fish is the only fish in the Cibengkeng River. It is strictly prohibited for anyone to catch, move, or kill and eat it. Know that the life of the sepat fish means survival in Babakan Village, Leuweung Wates, and Padontilu Springs. The existence of fish represents the village's future. The death of this fish means disaster for the village," Ki Wangsakarta explained, looking down languidly. (Kurnianto et al., 2017, p. 88)

The folklore titled *Sepatnunggal*, *Kadipaten Penyarang* [Duchy of Penyarang], and *Asal-usul Dusun Mertangga* [Origins of Mertangga Hamlet] suggests an ecological message of respect for nature. Nature is respected in different ways in the three folklore contexts. Respect for nature is demonstrated in the *Sepatnunggal* story through the message of wisdom granting the right to life to other creatures. Residents of the community are forbidden from catching the only sepat fish in the Cibengkeng River. If the prohibition is broken, the community around the Cibengkeng River, as well as the residents of Babakan Village in general, will suffer. Ratna Kencana's character in the story was severely chastised by her father, Ki Wangsakarta. As a result, Ki Wangsakarta's words have been proven. Nature was furious with the residents of the Cibengkeng River not long after the large sepat fish was eaten and only the bones remained. Because of the violation of the prohibition, there was lightning, strong winds, and fallen trees. No one in Babakan Village has dared to catch fish in the Cibengkeng River since the incident for fear of disaster.

Respect for nature is demonstrated in *Kadipaten Penyarang* [Duchy of Penyarang] folklore by refraining from indiscriminately cutting down trees. Keeping the forest's trees alive is an expression of respect for nature. Before the establishment of a small kingdom, the area of Serangan was said to be densely forested. Large trees, various birds, and other animals have survived. The name hutan Penyayangan is intriguing because it conveys the message that humans should love all living things. The subsequent establishment of the kingdom should not disrupt the existing natural order. Ranggasena's character is unconcerned about the existence of the forest and does not want to cut down trees carelessly for fear of disturbing the forest dwellers' living creatures.

There is a different way of respecting nature in the Asal-usul Dusun Mertangga [Origins of Mertangga Hamlet] folklore. This respect is demonstrated by the earth alms ritual. Alms of the earth are public expressions of gratitude for the abundance of the earth's produce. This gratitude is part of a prayer that nature will continue to bless us through its produce in the coming years. Every year, harvesting parties and communal meals are held to express gratitude.

### *B. Living in Harmony With Nature*

Humans are an inextricably linked part of nature. This requires human cooperation with nature. Nature will not be friendly with humans if humans do not want to be friendly with it. Banyumas traditional society is a group of people who enjoy being in harmony with nature. Living in harmony with nature does not imply destroying it. As reflected in the principle of *memayu hayuning bawana*, living in harmony with nature becomes a foothold. This attitude is reflected in Banyumas folklore such as Rawa Baya, Gunung Maruyung [Mount Maruyung], and Kerajaan Nusatembini [Kingdom of Nusatembini].

Rawa Baya, Gunung Maruyung [Mount Maruyung], and Kerajaan Nusatembini [Kingdom of Nusatembini] folklore all hint at a message of ecological wisdom about living in harmony with nature. Humans can be both friends and foes of nature. Banyumas residents prefer to coexist with nature. The ultimate goal of this attitude is to bring harmony into one's life. If humans want to be friendly with nature, nature will eventually be friendly with humans as well. The forms of wisdom live in harmony with nature, as evidenced by the following data from Rawa Baya folklore:

Don't be afraid, humans! We, like you, don't want to be bothered or bother you. However, if you humans disturb our peace, we will naturally be disturbed. If we feel threatened, don't be surprised if we attack. In fact, victims may exist. You happen to be passing through our area or palace. We crocodiles would like to invite you to live in peace and respect each other's territory, particularly in the swamp and Kedung Jero. (Kurnianto et al., 2017, pp. 153-154)

In general, the attitudes of living in harmony with nature in Rawa Baya and Gunung Maruyung [Mount Maruyung] folklore are similar. The story of Mak Romlah's friendship with the monkeys that guard Mount Maruyung is told in Gunung Maruyung [Mount Maruyung] folklore. Mak Romlah is said to be friends with all forest monkeys, as well as other wild animals. Similarly, there is a message in the Rawa Baya folklore to make friends with crocodiles. It is said that crocodiles have lived in a swamp for a long time. Kartanom is described in the story as the first figure to persuade the residents that the white crocodile that lives in the swamp is not dangerous. The swamp crocodiles will not bother humans as long as they are not disturbed or injured. This realization finally raises awareness among the residents of Mount Maruyung and Rawa Baya that they consider animals to be human friends, and that both should not disturb each other.

The Kerajaan Nusatembini [Kingdom of Nusatembini] folklore conveys a different message about living in harmony with nature. The story of the magic of the original bamboo clump introduces the people of Banyumas to the kingdom of Nusatembini. The kingdom is surrounded by *baloewanti pring ori pitung sap* (seven-layered ori bamboo clumps) and is led by a woman named Ratu Brantarara. For work, the kingdom constructs a seven-layered bamboo clump fence. Aside from security, bamboo fences serve as a form of harmony between humans and nature.

### *C. Using Natural Resources Wisely*

The people of Banyumas have a wise approach to life in terms of managing and utilizing natural resources. The key to life's harmony makes them wiser in their use of natural resources. This attitude is reflected, at the very least, in the *Kadipaten Penyarang* [Duchy of Penyarang], *Gunung Maruyung* [Mount Maruyung], and *Legenda Waduk Naga Wangsa* [The Legend of Naga Wangsa Reservoir] folklores. In general, the three folklores teach humans to take advantage of natural products without being greedy, to avoid destroying nature, and to ensure sustainability. Data from the folklore of the Legend of the Naga Wangsa Reservoir, which is quoted below, can be used to observe various forms of wisdom in the use of natural resources wisely.

The snake replied, "I'm sorry, sir. Actually, I am Samun who has lied to all of you. I didn't throw the egg away, sir. I cooked and ate all the eggs. Because it tastes so good, I don't share it with you according to the agreement with Samin. Because of my greed I turned into a snake". (Kurnianto et al., 2017, pp. 208-209)

Ranggasena, a character in the *Kadipaten Penyarang* [Duchy of Penyarang] folklore, constructs a tree house out of wood and leaves. Ranggasena's goal is to construct the tree house so that the dense forest is not cut down. As a result, the animals that live in the trees are not bothered. Ranggasena's attitude demonstrates ecological wisdom in the wise use of natural resources. Ranggasena is a figure who teaches people not to destroy nature. Similarly, in the Gunung Maruyung [Mount Maruyung] folklore, the character Mak Romlah creates a bamboo fan by weaving bamboo into *hihid* (bamboo fan). Mak Romlah's action in making bamboo fans is an example of wisely utilizing natural products because bamboo fans are environmentally friendly. Bamboo is used in the manufacture of household appliances.

The *Legenda Waduk Naga Wangsa* [The Legend of Naga Wangsa Reservoir] folklore tells of the wise use of natural resources through tragic wisdom. Samun, the main character, once discovered an egg in a forest near a Naga Wangsa Reservoir. Samun wanted to eat the eggs he found on his own because of his greedy nature. Previously, his brother and father had been advised not to be greedy by taking eggs carelessly. Samun, on the other hand, secretly cooked and ate the egg alone due to his greedy nature. As a result of this, Samun was cursed and transformed into a dragon. The incident on Samun demonstrated that humans must be able to manage natural resources wisely and not become greedy.

Greedy people have a negative impact on humans.

#### D. Leveraging Ecological Knowledge for Toponymy

The Banyumas people are known to have a high regard for nature. This is because the people of Banyumas recognize the importance of nature in the overall sustainability of life. Nature conservation has even become a way of life for the Banyumas. The Banyumas, for example, use place names that incorporate natural elements such as water, plants, and animals. Data from the *Kadipaten Penyarang* [Duchy of Penyarang] folklore, which is quoted below, can be used to observe the forms of wisdom that use ecological knowledge for toponymy.

Adipati Ranggasena named each area traversed by the road *ci*, such as Cipari, Cikangleles, Cikalong, Chinesengsi, Cibenda, and Ciloning. *Ci* is an abbreviation for 'water source.' The title *ci* is used to ensure that the area named with that word never runs out of water. (Kurnianto et al., 2017, p. 14)

The names of places in the Banyumas community each have their own meaning and history. Usually, the people of Banyumas name places for their own reasons. There are numerous place names that incorporate environmental elements. This is similar to Nusakambangan folklore, which takes the name of a location with a plant element. Nusakambangan is derived from two words: *nusa*, which means island, and *kambangan*, which means development (where many flowers grow). When combined, the two words mean a place with many flowers.

The naming of places in folklore known as *Rawa Baya* incorporates elements of the crocodile animal. As the name implies, there are many crocodiles in this swamp, which is known as *Kedung Jero*. The naming of places after animals indicates that the Banyumas people have ecological knowledge of crocodiles. Then, in the folklore of *Kadipaten Penyarang* [Duchy of Penyarang], the Banyumas people use an element of the word *ci*, which means water source. The naming has a philosophy as a prayer to ensure that the area always has an abundance of water.

#### E. Making Nature a Spiritual Tool

The elements that make up life on Earth are a gift from God. The people of Banyumas believe that humans should be grateful for the wealth on Earth. The Banyumas people believe that nature can help them get closer to God. Natural elements such as water, mountains, caves, and flowers, according to the Banyumas, contain spiritual powers emitted by God. Forms of wisdom transform nature into a spiritual medium, as evidenced by the following data from the *Legenda Gunung Jambu* [The Legend of Mount Jambu] folklore:

Sokra went to the king after thoroughly examining the empress and reporting the results of his examination. Sokra claims that the empress's illness is not typical. There will never be a cure other than water provided by nature, specifically eternal water located on the banks of the Citanduy River to the east of West Java. (Kurnianto et al., 2017, p. 105)

Water serves an important spiritual function for the Banyumas people in the *Legenda Gunung Jambu* [The Legend of Mount Jambu] folklore. Water is used to meet both external and internal needs. *Lembu Andini*, the consort of the *Pasir Loka* Kingdom, is said to have suffered from an unusual illness. Only *Mount Guava's* eternal water can cure the disease. Until, finally, the empress recovered thanks to *Mount Guava's* eternal water. This conveys the message that water is essential to human survival. Water can be used to treat diseases.

*Asal-usul Gunung Srandil* [Origins of Mount Srandil] and *Bunga Wijayakusuma* [Wijayakusuma Flower] folklores hint at a message about the spiritual function of caves and flowers. Caves and flowers are used to draw closer to God. Caves, such as the *Srandil* cave in the story of *Mount Srandil's* origin, are popular places of meditation for Banyumas residents. Many people pray in that cave for the ease and glory of life. Meanwhile, *Bunga Wijayakusuma* [Wijayakusuma Flower] serves a similar spiritual purpose. To become kings, royal families in Java must be able to pick the *Bunga Wijayakusuma* [Wijayakusuma Flower] when it is in bloom. According to the local legend, this flower can only be found on *Nusakambangan* Island.

## V. CONCLUSION

When it comes to environmental sustainability, the people of Banyumas have an interesting point of view. The Banyumas people are wise when it comes to nature. Banyumas folklores reflect these wise attitudes. The Banyumas have a spiritual concept known as "*Memayu Hayuning Bawana*," which means "keeping a harmonious relationship between God, humans, and the universe." The concept of *memayu hayuning bawana* is a philosophy that includes a comprehensive character dimension as well as a spiritual philosophy in keeping natural resource management laws in harmony.

The ten Banyumas folklores examined in this study are environmental folklore. Banyumas folklores contain numerous environmental preservation messages. Many natural elements, both biotic and abiotic, are mentioned in Banyumas folklore. These natural elements not only serve as the story's background, but also as the story's theme, conveying an ecological message to the reader. This ecological wisdom is reflected in activities that reflect appreciation for nature, such as respecting nature, living in harmony with nature, wisely utilizing natural resources, using ecological knowledge for toponyms, and using nature as a spiritual tool. This study demonstrates that Banyumas folklores can be used as a medium for ecological literacy in environmental conservation campaigns.

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# Delayed Exposure to Second Language Acquisition: The Robustness of Critical Period Hypothesis and the Limitations of the Plasticity Theory

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**Abstract**—Studies of language acquisition have shown that language learning ability declines with age. It has been documented that the overwhelming majority of learners who begin the process of second language (L2) learning after passing the critical period — after a certain age — cannot attain native-like competence (underlying knowledge of language) at the end state. There is a universal folk belief, shared by almost all psycholinguists, that at an early age, the brain is plastic; it can modify its own structure, organization and function as a direct consequence of experiences and learning. According to this belief, the plasticity of the brain fades with age and with the increasing specialisation of the different hemispheres and areas of the brain. However, recently neuroscientists, equipped with the complementary aid of brain neuroimaging, have discovered that mature brain is far from being fixed as previously thought; it has the ability to continuously adapt its structure and function based on internal and external environmental changes and/or input such as experience, ageing, illness, injury and learning, meaning that the brain remains plastic throughout life. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to illustrate that the theory about the loss of brain plasticity during natural maturation is not valid in explaining the question why L2 learning is affected by delayed exposure to a language? It should be mentioned here that until now, the overwhelming majority of L2 researchers tend to think of plasticity as a phenomenon confined to early development; and therefore, evidence supporting plasticity is generally ignored.

**Index Terms**—Second language acquisition, innateness hypothesis, incompleteness in second language acquisition, critical period hypothesis, plasticity theory

## I. INTRODUCTION: THE INNATENESS HYPOTHESIS AND CRITICAL PERIOD HYPOTHESIS

There is a universal folk belief, shared by many linguists, including Chomsky (1957, 1965, 1981); Lenneberg (1967); Pinker (1994); O’Grady (1997); Lightfoot (1999); Anderson and Lightfoot (2002); Fitch et al. (2005), that children come to the task of language acquisition with prior linguistic knowledge as part of a genetic endowment. This knowledge guides them in acquiring their native language(s) by placing limitations on grammar, constraining their forms as well as how they operate. This argument for some sort of biological basis to first language acquisition (L1A), referred to as the Innateness Hypothesis, is empirically supported by the observations that all normal children, from different cultures learning different languages, invariably acquire successfully a remarkably complex grammatical system with relative ease and without the benefit of instruction, and do so at roughly the same pace, following roughly the same developmental process, despite the fact that the speech input they are exposed to is very often not perfect, i.e., containing false starts, unfinished sentences.<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion see, among many others, Thomas (2002); Sampson (2002); Lasnik and Uriagereka (2002); Scholz and Pullum (2002); Fodor and Crowther (2002); Schwartz and Sprouse (2013), and the references cited above.

However, many researchers (i.e., Birdsong, 1999; Birdsong & Molis, 2001; DeKeyser, 2000) argue that there is a limited developmental period when a child can acquire a language to normal, native-like levels. This view that a critical period characterizes language acquisition is referred to in the literature as the critical period hypothesis (CPH). This hypothesis states that the ability to acquire a language with native-like competence is related to the initial age of exposure.<sup>2</sup> If the process of language learning begins after a certain age, the child will never acquire the language

<sup>1</sup> The fact that native speakers’ speech is not always perfectly grammatical led Chomsky (1965) to distinguish between competence and performance. Competence is “the speaker/hearer’s knowledge of his language”, whereas performance is “the actual use of language in concrete situation” (Chomsky, 1965, p. 4).

<sup>2</sup> It should be mentioned at this point that there is disagreement among researchers about the exact time when the critical period for language acquisition ends. The reported claims ranging from near birth (at approximately two years of age) to adolescence (around 13 years of age). For a detailed discussion, refer to Bialystok and Miller (1999); Birdsong (2004); Birdsong and Molis (2001); DeKeyser (2000); Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson (2003); Johnson and Newport (1989); or for a review of the literature that addressed this issue, see Singleton (2005). This disagreement among researchers may be explained by the idea that there may be multiple critical periods, related to different aspects of language learning. For

that he or she is exposed to natively; namely, he or she will never acquire the implicit and abstract knowledge of a language possessed by native speakers.

One piece of Evidence in support of the notion of a critical period for language acquisition initially came from cases of unfortunate young children who were raised in isolation.<sup>3</sup> One of the most famous instances of a child deprived of opportunities to hear and speak a language of their surroundings during childhood is the case of Genie, a young girl kept locked in a single room found in a Los Angeles suburb in 1970. Once freed from her captivity at the age of thirteen, linguists attempted to teach her English. However, even after extensive exposure to linguistic input, her subsequent language development was not normal; although she was quite successful in acquiring a large vocabulary, her syntax and morphosyntax never developed beyond a basic level - her production of sentences remained basically telegraphic (see Curtiss, 1977).<sup>4</sup> Genie's syntactic deficits suggest that the critical period for acquiring a native language 'holds for the acquisition of grammatical abilities, but not necessarily for all aspects of language' (Fromkin et al., 2013, p. 479). This finding suggests that grammatical ability appears to be more affected by delayed exposure to a language rather than semantic ability. For further discussion, see Birdson (1999); Granena and Long (2013a, 2013b); Hurford (1991); Smith (2004).

The same hypothesis, which assumes that language learning ability declines with age, predicts that learners who begin the process of L2 learning after passing the critical period cannot achieve native-speaker competence at the end state – the point at which learners' linguistic systems fossilise (cease to develop).<sup>5</sup> Studies of second language acquisition (SLA) lend empirical support to this observation that it is unlikely that adult L2 learners are capable of achieving completely native levels of proficiency (refer to, among many others, Coppieters, 1987; Singleton, 1989; Bley-Vroman, 1989; Schachter, 1989, 1990; Tsimpli & Roussou, 1991; Selinker, 1992; Ioup et al., 1994; Clahsen & Hong, 1995; Smith & Tsimpli, 1995; Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Long, 1997, 2003; Neeleman & Weerman, 1997; Han, 2004; Lardiere, 2007; Granena & Long, 2013a). It should be mentioned here that the critical period hypothesis does not stipulate that adult learners cannot reach very high levels of L2 proficiency; rather, it predicts that beyond a certain age, L2 acquisition becomes more difficult and is rarely entirely successful.

## II. THE PLASTICITY THEORY

The discussion so far has shown that adult L2 learners, unlike children, often struggle to learn an L2, and even when they succeed, they do not achieve native-speaker competence at the end state. This is because, as most linguists take it for granted, that there is a period during which learners can acquire an L2 easily and implicitly and achieve native-speaker competence, but after which L2 acquisition becomes more difficult and is very rarely entirely successful. The preliminary question to be raised now, based on these documented empirical findings, is why is second language learning affected by late or delayed exposure to a language – maturation? In other words, what happens inside the brain at a certain age(s) that makes it to lose its innate ability that places limitations on L2 grammars, constraining their forms as well as how they operate? A plausible answer to these important questions comes from neurolinguistics – the science that investigates the neural mechanisms in the human brain that control comprehension, production and language acquisition. The CPH has been a theory in neurolinguistics that states that the brain is plastic at an early age, and it can modify its own structure, organisation and function as a direct consequence of experience and learning. Basic brain structure is established by our genes before birth; however, because of plasticity, the brain can develop by modifying its connections, changing its neurons and synaptic connections or even by rewiring itself. This process is known as neuroplasticity. As a result, the brain begins to specialise; specific brain functions become increasingly associated with certain areas of the brain. For example, certain regions of the left hemisphere (e.g., Broca's and Wernicke's areas) become specialised for some language functions (e.g., comprehension and production of speech). However, this adaptive capacity – the plasticity of the brain – is thought to fade with age and with the increasing specialisation of the different hemispheres and areas of the brain. See Bates et al. (1999); Bishop (1993); and Stiles et al. (2012) for reviews. For a detailed discussion, refer to Hart and Risley (1992); Huttenlocher et al. (1991); Lidzba and Staudt (2008); Sheehan and Mills (2008); Szaflarski et al. (2006).

An impressive empirical example that provides a unique window into the plasticity of language development comes from hemispherectomy – a procedure in which one hemisphere of the brain is surgically removed. For example, studies have shown that children who undergo a left hemispherectomy not only can reacquire language like that of normal children but also show many of the developmental patterns of normal language acquisition. This finding means that the right hemisphere, even though it is not innately specialised for language, can take over the injured areas' language functions in the removed left hemisphere. In other words, it can reorganise itself to perform the tasks that are innately

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instance, the ability to acquire native-like accent may end earlier than the ability to acquire grammar or vocabulary (cf. Ioup et al., 1994; Lardiere, 2007; Granena & Long, 2013a).

<sup>3</sup> Further evidence in support of the hypothesis came from Neurology and neurolinguistics. Lenneberg (1967) reviewed studies which show that when children underwent surgery to the left hemisphere, they rapidly recovered total language control, unlike adults who showed permanent language impairment after such operations. Lenneberg, therefore, concluded that the biological basis of language in children and adults is not the same.

<sup>4</sup> Telegraphic speech is the term used to refer to children's early two- or three-word utterances, where functional categories may be missing – strings of words (lexical morphemes) in phrases or sentences such as *shoe all wet*, *cat drink milk* and *daddy go bye-bye*.

<sup>5</sup> This end-state mental representation of language is also referred to in the literature as ultimate attainment, the steady-state, or the final-state.

performed by the left hemisphere. However, this dynamic developing ability of the brain's right hemisphere to take over the left hemisphere functions declines with age and fades by puberty. For example, such surgical removal of the left hemisphere in adults inevitably results in a complete loss of language function. (For detailed discussions about the plasticity of language development, see, among many others, Bates et al., 1999; Bishop, 1993; Demir et al., 2014, 2015; Elman et al., 1996; Huttenlocher, 2002; Lenneberg, 1967; Reilly et al., 2008; Rowe et al., 2009; Stiles et al., 2005, 2012; and Trauner et al., 2013).

Another example supporting the view that plasticity during childhood appears to be more pervasive than at other stages of life comes from studies of those unfortunate children with perinatal serious brain injury (Bates et al., 1997; Bates et al., 1999; Reilly et al., 2008; Stiles et al., 2012; Trauner et al., 2013). Such studies reveal that these children can acquire language even if the left hemisphere of the brain is seriously injured. Levine et al. (2016) surprisingly state that "children with unilateral perinatal lesions do not exhibit the marked aphasias that are common when anatomically comparable lesions are incurred during adulthood" (p. 969).<sup>6</sup> Similar findings were reported by Bates et al. (2001); Bishop (1993); Rowe et al. (2009).

### III. REFLECTIONS AND CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THE PLASTICITY THEORY

It can be concluded from the discussion in the previous section that the brain is plastic only at an early age of development; once the structure of the brain develops during childhood, and, once organized in highly specialized critical zones (e.g., Broca's and Wernicke's areas), it became fixed and therefore it left no room for changes. Main evidence supports this claim comes from hemispherectomy; if focal injury occurs to the left hemisphere early in life and got surgically removed, the right hemisphere compensates by taking on the functions of the left hemisphere even though the right hemisphere is not innately predisposed to specialize for language. This ability of the right hemisphere to take over the functions of the left one is thought to decline with puberty. This obviously raises a crucial question: does the plasticity of the brain really fade with age – at or before puberty?<sup>7</sup> This question will be addressed in this section.

As the neurosciences have in general been descriptive, for many decades, this view of strict localization of function in the brain is held by almost all scientists. However, this viewpoint has recently begun to change; today neuroscientists know for sure that adult brain continuously adapts not only its function but also its structure. The various new brain imaging techniques (i.e., positron emission tomography, functional magnetic resonance imaging, magnetoencephalography, electroencephalography, transcranial magnetic stimulation – diffusion tensor imaging) reveal that mature brain remains constantly dynamic in response to internal and external environmental changes such as brain injury, hormones, illness, aging, learning and memory. For example, studies used these brain imaging and mapping techniques (i.e., Fernandez et al., 2004; Heiss et al., 1999; Karbe et al., 1998; Pedersen et al., 1995; Saur et al., 2006; Saur & Hartwigsen, 2012) show that mature brain can compensate for damage or lost function(s) by reorganising and forming new connections among intact neurons; if part of the brain is damaged due to a stroke for example, the healthy surrounding neurones – the intact ones – do take over some of the functions of the damaged area. Breier et al. (2009), Meinzer et al. (2004) and Fridriksson and Smith (2016) found that although the right hemisphere may support language recovery immediately after treatment, recruitment of perilesional regions is fundamental for prolonged, stable effects. All these studies support the view that there are structural and functional brain changes associated with recovery of language in patients with aphasia.<sup>8</sup> In fact, such changes in the brain structure not only can be mediated by changes in connectivity as new synapses form to join neurons to each other, but also can be mediated by the generation of new neurons. Until very recently, scientists believed that brain cells, once lost, could never be replaced; however, the recent discovery of stem cells in the brain has changed this belief. Stem cells are unspecialised cells grow into hundreds of particular types of neurons, each appropriate to its location and function. As they have the ability to become any of the specialized cell and as they are normally present across the lifespan, stem cells serve as a repair system for the brain, meaning that the damaged neurons can be replaced by new neurons generated within the brain itself (for more detail about stem cells cf. Bellin et al., 2012; Gonzalez-Perez, 2012; Nichols & Smith, 2012; Yamanaka, 2012; Nguyen & Cramer, 2016).<sup>9</sup> However, this is not a claim that the brain's ability to adapt is limitless. Normal plasticity cannot fully compensate for severe damage; so not everyone who has a stroke can recover full function. Indeed, the degree of recovery depends on many factors, including age (younger brains have a better chance of recovery), the brain area and the size of the area damaged, the rapidity of the damage and the treatments offered during rehabilitation. For a more

<sup>6</sup> Marked aphasia, also referred to as global aphasia, is severe impairment in all receptive and expressive language modalities.

<sup>7</sup> There is no clear consensus among researchers on about the exact time when child language acquisition ends and adult SLA starts. Some researchers claim that the boundary between them lies somewhere between the ages of seven and nine; some others argue for the age of eleven; and others claim that the boundary can be found at the age of fifteen (For a detailed discussion, refer to Bialystok & Miller, 1999; Birdsong, 2004; Birdsong & Molis, 2001; DeKeyser, 2000; Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2003; Johnson & Newport, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> Readers interested in marvellous stories about stroke patients learning to speak are referred to Doidge (2007).

<sup>9</sup> It seems that stem cells offer great promise for new medical treatments. Stem cell-based therapies have been applied to treat a number of neurological conditions, including traumatic injuries to the brain or stroke, Parkinson's disease, and Alzheimer's disease. The outlook for this type of new medical treatment is promising despite the fact that this area of research is still in its infancy. For instance, Nguyen and Cramer (2016) suggest that "stem cells may be found useful for improving language function. For example, several types of cell therapy appear promising in preclinical studies of diseases that affect language, such as stroke" (p. 1087). For more detailed discussion about this type of treatment, see Brunt et al. (2012); De Feo et al. (2012); Heiss and Thiel (2006); Karussis et al. (2013).

detailed discussion about plasticity and structural and functional brain changes, refer to Allendorfer et al. (2012); Cramer (2008); Crosson et al. (2005, 2007, 2009); Epstein-Peterson et al. (2012); Fernandez et al. (2004); Fridriksson (2010); Heiss et al. (1999); Johansson (2000); Karbe et al. (1998); Kleim and Jones (2008); Kolb and Whishaw (1998); Leger et al. (2002); Marcotte et al. (2012); Menke et al. (2009); Musso et al. (1999); Ostry et al. (2010); Pedersen et al. (1995); Rijntjes and Weiller (2002); Thompson et al. (2010); Zatorre et al. (2012); Zipse et al. (2012).

Another example of neuroplasticity comes from studies that have shown that the brain never stops changing through learning. Throughout life, unless compromised by disease, whenever a person learns, behaves, stores memories and so on, the brain generates new connections between the neurons in response to stimuli, giving new neural networks a chance to flourish. This growth of new neural connections in brain and the emergence of new fibre tracts as well during adolescence and adulthood make the brain grow stronger, just as muscles expand and grow stronger with repeated exercise. Therefore, these developmental and neural connection mechanisms make the neural systems perform at a high level – specialized. This specialization creates a more complicated and therefore more sophisticated brain. This can explain why some areas of mental ability actually increase with age. For example, our linguistic abilities continue to develop into later life; with age we enjoys a larger vocabulary and sharpened syntactic skills (see Hayiou-Thomas et al., 2004; Huttenlocher et al., 2002; Leech et al., 2007; Nippold, 1998). In short, this ability that allows brain to establish new associations makes individual brain able to integrate new information and stores it until it is needed. For a detailed discussion about specialization and the emergence and formation of new fibre tracts during adolescence and adulthood refer to Brown et al. (2005); Holland et al. (2001); Levine et al. (2016); Perani et al. (2011) and Szaflarski et al. (2006).

#### IV. THE PLASTICITY THEORY AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: CONCLUDING REMARKS

The discussion in the previous section illustrated with some scientific evidence that the brain is not a computer that is wired forever during early childhood. Instead, studies have shown that this organ is far from being fixed as we tend to think of it; it is never resting throughout life. In fact, it continuously remodels and rewires itself throughout life and after injury to remain constantly dynamic - physically different from what it was in the preceding moment - in order to response to internal and external environmental changes such as brain injury, hormones, illness, aging, learning and memory. In fact, without the ability to be plastic, the brain would not be able to develop from infancy through to adulthood, recover from brain injury or absorb new information (e.g., learning a new skill). The new human brain mapping techniques have revealed that it is this plasticity that helps the normal brain quickly learn new things by making new connections among neurons and also helps the brains of patients with neurological and neuropsychiatric disorders to compensate for damage or lost function(s) by reorganising and forming new neurons and connections among intact neurons.

The discussion thus leads us to the conclusive conclusion that the theory about the loss of brain plasticity during natural maturation cannot explain why language learning is affected by delayed exposure to a language; it cannot explain why a second language can be complex for adults to learn and even when they succeed, native-likeness in L2A cannot be attained by the overwhelming majority of L2 learners. In fact, learning an L2 presents a challenge to the plasticity theory in particular. This is because plasticity is observed in the brains of bilinguals. Mechelli et al. (2004) and Costa et al. (2016) find that learning an L2 is only possible through functional changes in the brain; they argue that the left inferior parietal cortex is larger in bilingual brains than in monolingual brains.<sup>10</sup> There is no doubt that future research is required to explore this question in depth how: why is second language learning affected by late or delayed exposure to a language – maturation? Answer(s) to this question is/are central to the fields of second language learning and education; it/they can open various unexpected avenues of enquiries that will deepen our understanding of both language and language acquisition/learning.

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<sup>10</sup> The left inferior parietal cortex is a brain area that has specific roles in language control and language representations in working memory as parts of its general function. For more information about the function of this brain area, see Abutalebi et al. (2008) and Abutalebi and Green (2007).

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# From Urban Space to Cyberspace: A Research on Spatial Writing and Human-Android Relations in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

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**Abstract**—Philip K. Dick takes the highly computerized but ruined Los Angeles of the United States after the post-apocalyptic war as the background and brings the cyberspace struggle between androids and humans as the novel's theme, sketching a cyberpunk society in which humans and androids fight against each other. The novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* invites people to think about cyberspace and human-androids subjectivity. Inspired by Slavoj Žižek's critical theory of cyberspace, this paper uses this science-fiction force as a text to explore how contemporary American science fiction reconstructs a revolutionary human-androids subject in cyberspace, challenging human subjectivity in the urban space. Faced with human-android coexistence, Dick affirms the coexistence of multiple subjects using equal dialogue, fully exploits the advantages of androids and humans, and constructs the subject with human-androids. Through an in-depth study of androids, this paper concludes that in a human-androids coexistence space, humans and androids should not be in a master-slave relationship; instead, they are each other's constitutive Other. Humans should try to break the boundary between self and others to accept a pluralistic and open subject.

**Index Terms**—Urban space, cyberspace, Human-Android Subject, Reconstruction, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of science and technology in contemporary society, the continuous upgrading of intelligent technology, and the creation of increasingly intelligent robots have given actual meaning to the imagination that initially existed only in science fiction works. Since the 1960s, Philip K. Dick has been called the *Shakespeare of science fiction* (Jameson, 2005, p. 345) and has written many outstanding works - more than 40 novels and dozens of short stories. He has incorporated cybernetic ideas into his fiction, producing many vital works that explore the relationship between humans and artificial life forms. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is a typical example.

This novel takes the future city of Los Angeles as the spatial background, takes us to cyberspace through the interaction between humans and androids, and explores the gradual disintegration of the boundary of the subject between human and simulacrum after the creation of simulacrum by technology as a means. The novel is completed by portraying three types of spatial forms, generating a relational process in the transformation from urban space to cyberspace. First, it is the urban space led by the suburbs of San Francisco and Mars, which carries the urban landscape and urban culture, gradually declining with the encroachment of network technology; then, it is the intersection of virtual and urban space led by the humanoid robot police agency, and this miniature model is an agency of the virtual reconciliation between the city and the network. Cyberspace is represented by the virtual resonance box of Missourian mountaineering, a space with unique virtual characteristics. In *Do Androids?*<sup>1</sup>, the android is the focus of the novel's narrative; as the android's self-awareness grows, the boundary of the subject between humans and android becomes increasingly blurred, and subjectivity gradually dissolves. This paper points out that in the space of human-android coexistence, humans and androids should not be in a master-servant relationship; instead, they are each other's constitutive Other. Humans should try to break the boundary between self and others to reconstruct a pluralistic subject.

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<sup>1</sup> The abbreviation for *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, the same goes below.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on Philip K. Dick's science fiction novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is relatively diverse and sophisticated, including relevant journal articles, graduate and doctoral dissertations, and monographs or monographs. To provide a more precise overview of the relevant literature, I divide it into the following aspects based on the research themes in this literature.

Posthuman and postmodernism are topics under lively discussion. Jill Galvan points out that Dick envisions a posthuman community in which "humans and machines sympathize and influence each other's existence" (Galvan, 1997). Karl Luther Shadox identifies the requirements of the "posthuman," a shift in the concept of the human from a sovereign self to an independent figure and an imagining of the future without the hierarchy of liberal humanism (Shadox, 2008). Nima Behrooz Moghadam combines "Marxism with the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan, as well as his account of postmodernism," the study discusses "how, contrary to what capitalism dubs a post-ideological era" (Moghadam & Porugiv, 2018). Kim, Yeon Jeong focuses on "the question of how to understand posthuman at this time as it enters the posthuman era, and looks at the posthuman from the aspects of the diaspora through this novel" (Kim, 2021).

Information technology analysis is also very hot in the study of this novel. Klaus Benesch explores the cyborg in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* as a companion to humans, projecting the desire to improve our biological condition in a way that points directly to assimilation with machines (Benesch, 1999). Christopher A. Sims argues that "the novel instead protests against the dehumanizing effects of individualism and demonstrates how technology can be used to reclaim the essence of humanity" (Sims, 2009). Jacob Carlson "uses space, object description, and references to the ersatz to uncover the conditions under which a humanoid other emerges, and what Dick offers as the remedy for our 'bifurcated' humanity" (Carlson, 2018). Alezandra Maass reveals that "between cities and cyberspace, there is not only an ongoing ambivalent relationship between humans and the technology they create but also a concern for the growing power of that technology's influence" (Maass, 2013).

The study of religion has been discussed during Dick's entire writing career. Barlow examines the way Dick was able to use religion to bring together all of his philosophical concerns in his writings (Barlow, 1988). Ruppenthal Ed presents "Dick as a liberal philosopher and theologian whose pseudo-didactic approach draws from a variety of extant historical, sociological and especially theological sources" (Ruppenthal, 2007). Mercerism appears to scholars as Christianity in disguise, with relevant papers, including Peter Fitting, mentioning that the development of Mercerism was the beginning of Dick's increasing use of metaphysical themes in his later novels (Fitting, 1983). Anthony Enns argues that, like Mercerism, communication with the unbounded is a spinny, shared, full-sensory experience. Because it can take place without any hardware, it is also analogous to the telepathic fusion of Deckard and Mercer in the penultimate chapter of the robot (Enns, 2006).

As a top theme in Dick's science fiction, scholars have always studied empathy. Aaronson Russell attempts to explore the meaning of empathy in Dick's writings. He demonstrates that "An ethical imperative unites Dick's works to understand the thoughts and emotions of others, human and nonhuman alike" (Aaronson, 1996). Sherryl Vint argues that "the novel's ethical concerns are best understood through animal studies, revealing political deployments of the species boundary to disenfranchise certain humans" (Vint, 2007). Donald Palumbo asserts that empathy is malicious, using designated minorities as scapegoats for negative personality traits so that dominant members can adopt racism to reject their negative characteristics (Palumbo, 2013). Sarah Kissinger forges a link between mortality and empathy, representing how confrontations with mortality deepen the sense of empathy (Kissinger, 2022).

Human-machine subjectivity is another research hot in Dick's writing life. Eric S. Rabkin compares robots to Frankenstein and claims that "while Marry Shelly has enormous sympathy for Frankenstein's monster, Philip K. Dick has no sympathy for robots (Rabkin, 1988). Umberto Rossi reveals the ontological uncertainty in human subjectivity (Rossi, 2011). Josh Toth uses Derrida's phrasing to link "eating" to ethics and explores the appropriate and just relationship between subjects and the objects they want (Toth, 2013). Sevda Altinoluk explores "the blurry connection between human beings and androids by using Mercerism in this novel" (Altinoluk, 2020).

Real and allusion analysis has been a popular study in recent years. Michael E. Zimmerman uses "Martin Heidegger's views on authenticity in *Being and Time* to illuminate the struggle to be genuinely human as depicted" in this novel (Zimmerman, 2014). Gassan Matthew makes "an understanding of counterfeiting as a manifestation of Foucauldian power; he hopes to foster a conversation about who counterfeits and what they get out of it" (Gassan, 2015). Yasamin Hemmat explores the surrealism of the characters in this novel by analyzing Baudriallrd's theory of disintegrating their identities (Hemmat & Shabrang, 2020). Quentin Hoareau questions "the concepts of reality and illusion, opposing them and blurring the boundaries between them" (Hoareau, 2021).

Although *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* has been extensively studied in academia, with scholars discussing it from the above perspectives, very few studies have more specifically explored the development of mutually reconstructing the relationships between human and machine subjects in cyberspace in Philip K. Dick's work. Therefore, if we can add this research gap and blind spot from this nuanced perspective, we will have a deeper understanding of studying artificial intelligence.

## III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The *spatial turn* began with the proliferation of spatial practices and dramatic changes in spatial experiences under the

expansion of capital, which led to reflections and critiques on space: Lefebvre explored space from the perspective of the mode of production (Lefebvre, 1991); Baudrillard proposed that consumer society is essentially an extended space and that symbolic logic has been generally developed to form a mimetic space (Baudrillard, 1998); Edward Soja developed Foucault's concept of *heterotopia* and proposed a *Thirdspace* as a field of struggle (Soja, 1996). Jameson believes that postmodern society is characterized by *Hyperspace* and offers the cultural and political strategy of *Cognitive Mapping* (Jameson, 1988).

The contemporary European philosopher Slavoj Žižek put cyberspace into the context of globalization, explored its influence on inter-subjective interaction from the perspective of psychoanalysis, and formed a complete critical theory of cyberspace, which pushed the critical theory of space to a new stage (Žižek, 1996). Cyberspace expands the subject's perception and experience with its digital space different from the real world. It shapes the subject's way of life, interaction, knowledge system, and belief system with its unique virtuality and immersion, representing the latest progress in the postmodern spatial turn. This paper is guided by Slavoj Žižek's theory of cyberspace and devotes it to a layer-by-layer explanation from the external space to the operation of the internal subject, specifically: the establishment of cyberspace and the reconstruction of the human-android subject to improve the study of this critical theory.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

##### A. Reality and Virtuality From City Space to Cyberspace

Virtualization of reality is a cutting-edge technology that has only recently gained popularity. It creates a three-dimensional virtual environment using computer technology, giving the sensation of seeing, hearing and touching the three-dimensional senses, just like being in the actual world. Virtual reality is a technology that alters the human senses, providing the user with a genuine experience of pleasure as if it were real life. In the novel, humans utilize empathy boxes to bond with Mercer. It is "the most personal possession you have! It's an extension of your body; it's the way you touch other humans; it's the way you stop being alone" (Dick, 1968, p. 70). Isidore, according to the special. Furthermore, when people wish to merge with Mercer, they must typically grip the box's handles and enter a virtual world; they must see a screen and step into the V.R. world. People can share their joys and sorrows with others when they fuse in the virtualization of a natural environment.

The Internet gave rise to virtual worlds, bringing to light "cyberspace", a new type of information and communication technology after the 1990s. Cyberspace is an abstract concept in philosophy and computing that refers to virtual reality within computers and computer networks. In his novel *Neuromancer*, William Gibson defines cyberspace: "as the deck presented it, had no relationship with the deck's physical whereabouts. When case jacked in, he opened his eyes to the familiar configuration of the Eastern Seaboard Fission Authority's Aztec data pyramid" (Gibson, 2012, p. 103). Before cyberspace completely replaced the physical city, the cyber city emerged as a combination of reality and illusion, mingling physical space and virtual networks to present a "virtualization of reality". Cyberspace, which combines real space and virtual networks, offers a real virtual space. From cyberspace's technical characteristics, it seems naturally superior to urban space in terms of its metaphysical characteristics. However, at a deeper level, its material structural basis, i.e., countless cables, routers, servers, etc., will subject people to a more centralized and unquestionable totalization of control. Cyberspace is "a new field where the complex dynamics of domination and control unfold in a new way" (Hayles, 2010, p. 65).

Cyberspace, with all its characteristics superior to material forms, remedies the problems of the postmodern city in the development process. It relieves people's frustration in real life, and its unique syntax, which is different from urban space, constitutes the second aspect of the spatial dimension of the novel. Moving from urban space to cyberspace means, "This transformation process is fueled by tensions between the assumptions encoded in pattern/randomness as opposed to presence/absence" (Hayles, 2000, p. 285). Since the dichotomy of presence and absence has long been dominant in Western culture, this cultural transformation seems to conceal how to decipher the intricate subject relations in postmodern society.

According to Žižek, Cyberspace has a fundamental ambiguity, "It is this surplus dimension which functions as the Real. We might say that in the big opposition between reality and these spectral fantasies, the Real is on the side of fantasies" (Žižek & Daly, 2004, p. 102). To clarify the fundamental ambiguity of cyberspace, it is necessary first to explain how the real society, i.e., urban space, is structured, then to analyze the deviation of cyberspace from it, and finally to conclude the nature and consequences of cyberspace. The latter two constitute Žižek's critical theory of virtualizing reality in cyberspace. In *Do Androids?* in addition to describing the human being's entrapment by various machines, urban space also influences human perception. Dick's *Do Androids?* presents an apocalyptic picture of the post-nuclear war world, set in the future city of Los Angeles, which has completely depleted itself. After the nuclear war, the radioactive fallout brings the Earth's creatures to extinction and severely impacts humans.

The World War Terminus is covered with dust, which had contaminated most of the planet's surface and had originated in no country, and no one, even the wartime enemy, had planned on it (Dick, 1968, p. 15). To prevent the harm of radioactive dust, human beings must go out in full armour; once the bustling city buildings have long been empty. As the Earth's environment becomes more and more unsuitable for human survival, many humans migrate to other planets; to encourage the residual population to migrate, the government for each immigrant allocates a humanoid robot to help them better live on the outer planet. In this case, fewer and fewer people remain on Earth, including the radiation-infected

special who cannot immigrate. In the novel, the city is set as a non-ideal city to live in, and the urban culture collapses with the destruction of the urban landscape, and humans drift apart in the urban space.

With the demise of urban space, cyberspace began to rise gradually. Cyberspace is based on the combination of *Cybernetics* and *Space* and was first coined by Canadian science fiction writer William Gibson in his book *Neuromancer* in 1984. In the preface to *The Ethics of Cyberspace*, scholar Cees J Hamelink clearly states that cyberspace is a virtual communication space created by digital technology. It should include all social activities designed by information and communication technologies and is by no means limited to the operation of computer networks. The Mission police agency in *Do Androids?* is a microcosm of the city after the invasion of virtual space. The depiction of the bionic police agency is a miniature model of cyberspace. "The Mission Street Hall of Justice building, onto the roof of which the hovercar descended, juttied up in a series of baroque, ornamented spires; complicated and modem, the handsome structure struck Rick Deckard as attractive except for one aspect. He had never seen it before" (Dick, 1968, p. 122). It also has a separate but well-developed network structure that allows the whole building to work in an organized manner. It is isolated from other physical spaces in San Francisco. The androids here create a "web of symbiotic" relationship that break the confines of urban space and the finite nature of time. The police agency is mapping intersectional space: using physical space as a carrier and combining it with a virtual network, breaking the territoriality of physical space and forming a new urban structure.

The empathy box is also cyberspace with massive information data, wholly detached from physical space. The human nervous system will enter the virtual space under a negative ion current. This space, with human intervention, evolves into a particular model of the human landscape, which makes humans in contact with each other through the fusion of different forms of media, and possesses a multidimensional perception of vision, hearing, and even pain. While the physical city brings John Isidore loneliness and illness, the virtual climbing "he had begun to ascend, along with the others" (Dick, 1968, p. 25). The demise of urban space in the novel and the rise of cyberspace are relational evolutionary processes. The overall consciousness of the "integrated organism" is deconstructed and even split into pieces, unable to perceive the intrusion and control of the surrounding cyberspace. Virtual space destroys the human perception of the physical city, blurring city boundaries. The virtualization of cyberspace is becoming possible.

#### B. Reconstruction of Human-Android Subject

When Žižek uses the terminology of Lacanian psychoanalysis to talk about cyberspace, his real purpose is to explore the issue of the subject. Contrary to some postmodern theorists who hail the liberation of the subject's identity in Cyberspace, Žižek continues Lacan's insistence on the Cartesian subject and, from a psychoanalytic perspective, perceptively sees that today's phenomenon of cyberspace is still not free from the subject's dilemma. "the more our (experience of) reality is 'virtualized,' changed into a screen-phenomenon encountered on an interface, the more the 'indivisible remainder' that resists being integrated into the interface appears as the horrifying reminder of undead Life (Žižek, 1999, p. 155).

##### (a). Perplexity of Human and Android Self-Identification

Today's advancing artificial intelligence has raised concerns about humanoid robots or even advanced intelligent androids closer to humans in *Do Androids?* Because the subject of the humanoid robot is defined by its difference from that of a human, the novel inevitably forces man to rethink his existence. How does a man as a subject acknowledge his tense? Paul Ricoeur once said: "To recognize something as like same, as identical to itself and not other than itself, implies distinguishing it from everything else" (Ricoeur, 2007, p. 21).

Philip K. Dick sets up the existence of a class of humanoid robots in *Do Androids?*: they are entirely different from human beings in physical form and thinking ability; they have the same flesh and blood body as human beings and even higher I.Q. as many ordinary people. The word "Android" should be translated as a robot, but in the novel, android means artificial life; they have the same flesh and bones as human beings, rather than the metal shell and internal body full of mechanical parts and chips. Thus, the android is also called a humanoid robot because its appearance and behaviour are identical to real people. In the eyes of humans? These humanoid robots are created as servants who must serve humans unconditionally and even become symbols of human dignity. The Rosen Association is committed to creating indistinguishable humanoid robots from actual people, and the existing androids equipped with Nexus-6 types are more intelligent than most humans: "The servant had in some cases become more adroit than its master" (Dick, 1968, p. 30). With continuous upgrading, this brilliant android also gradually produced self-awareness. Their appearance and intelligence are no different from that of humans; as human beings? But in the end, they are the products of the industrial production line.

Since android has become indistinguishable from humans in appearance and behaviour, it is said that people's fear of humanoid robots should have disappeared entirely. However, the humans in *Do Androids?* are not friendly to the androids and do not accept them as their kind. As Jacoby Russell tries to illustrate in *Bloodlust*, "The most common form of violence is violence between acquaintances or neighbours or kindred communities within nations—civil wars writ large and small. From assault to genocide, assassination to the massacre, violence usually emerges inside the fold rather than outside it" (Jacoby, 2011, p. x). A series of identification criteria were established to identify the humanoid robot as an alien. Bounty hunters were sent to kill the humanoid robot trying to escape human bondage. The humanoid robot is human-like but not human, a species that is both strange and familiar to humans, and it provokes a disturbing identity.

This weirdness, uneasiness, and even fear of being like us but different trigger the confrontation of people similar to us and reveal our deep-seated rejection of things very similar to us.

However, we fear this nuance not because of the difference itself but because of the smallness of the difference. The degree of similarity is high enough, and the difference is small enough that it can be erased at any time, and thus our uniqueness is lost. This uneasiness of being replaced and assimilated at any moment triggers our sensitive nerves. Thus, "Small differences elicit more anger than large differences" (Jacoby, 2011, p. 128). In this desire for self-identification, if we cannot eliminate the threat and destroy what disturbs us, we must maintain the differences and expand and exaggerate them to show our superiority. This ideology justifies a new round of elimination.

In *Do Androids?* People keep improving how to identify the humanoid robot, maintaining the "small differences" between humans and humanoid robots. Each new generation of a humanoid robot is born; the higher the degree of simulation, the more difficult it is to distinguish the difference between it and a human. Therefore, the birth of each new generation of the machine is the process of asking about the boundaries of our subject. However, we are afraid that if all the boundaries between humans and androids we have constructed can be dismantled by technology, the department will invent a model that cannot distinguish it from the human being. The identity of human subjects will be blurred and even completely abolished (Dick, 1968, p. 61). Therefore, it becomes especially urgent for humans to think about their subjects in the situation of androids.

If subjectivity depends on the coherence of self-awareness, this coherence is guaranteed by memory. Through memory, the self becomes a continuous unity. "Going over these experiences, we continually come upon experiences in which the present "I" had once lived." however, "when we reflect on this experience, we find that it is not isolated, but set against the background of a stream of such experiences clearly and distinctly given. This is even true when we can no longer directly grasp the experience, finding it necessary to view it through remembering representation" (Stein, 2012, pp. 38-39). But remembering itself is not the same as the actual occurrence of the past; it is, the subject's narrative of itself. "the self is first constructed in and through the narration" (Zahavi, 2008, p. 105), and Rachel Rosen, a Nexus-6 type humanoid robot created by Rosen, are implanted with false memories and mistakenly believes she is a human being when she fails the Voigt-Kampff test and learns she is a humanoid robot, she had turned pale, and her voice shook (Dick, 1968, p. 63). Rachel's identity anxiety as she wanders, confused between the human and the android, echoes the fundamental question of "who am I?".

Humanoid robot Luba Luft points out that it still does not mean that the "I" is the "I" in the field of view of others, even if recognized by others. Perhaps there was a human being like Deckard, replaced by a humanoid robot Deckard and was not recognizable. Wasn't it this way that Garland - the humanoid robot who pretended to be the actual Garland - could conceal himself from Phil Resch? The difficulty of self-identification does not occur only in the mind but also in the realm of the body. Phil Resch did not recognize the Android Garland, not because the actual Garland was similar in thought to the Android Garland, but because they were identical in appearance, as were Rachel and Pris Stratton. In the real world, we identify an individual by identifying their body; when the body is consistent, the individual is consistent. Once this consistency falters, the difficulty arises for us to identify individuals through their bodies. "Rachael. He said, perplexed. [...] And then he saw that it was not quite Rachael" (Dick, 1968, p. 246). The intuitive basis no longer exists. Identification through the body is no longer possible. Deckard calls Pris "the other Rachael" (Dick, 1968, p. 249), confirming the body's importance in identifying the individual. This falsity of individual identity worries Rachel, who desires to be recognized and identified as unique despite being a humanoid robot. This uniqueness is the possibility of being repeatedly identified as the same individual.

*Identification; there goes I. My god, maybe that's what'll happen. In the confusion, you'll retire me, not her. And she can go back to Seattle and live my life. I never felt this way before. We are machines, stamped out like bottle caps. It's an illusion that I — I — personary — really exist; I'm just representative of a type.* (Dick, 1968, p. 209)

How is subject construction of the self possible once the subjects in a social group are not mutually recognized? The police agency under the control of the humanoid robot Garland is a police agency isolated from the outside world or the world Deckard lives in; its phone lines are not connected to the outside world, the members inside are all in agreement, and the evidence corroborates each other, all pointing to the dubious identity of Deckard. Within this closed system, the identities of the android and the bounty hunter are entirely inverted. Deckard's identity as a bounty hunter is not recognized in this police agency, and he also vehemently denies the authenticity of the police agency. The failure to acknowledge each other has created a deep rift between the subjects. The loss of communication between the subjects causes self-identification to shift from introspective closure to the closure of the world, and the self-identification remains incomplete.

Rick and cold-blooded killer Phil Resch together on a mission to hunt Androids; Rick confided in Phil that he was in a quandary: "So much for the distinction between real humans and humanoid constructs...I rode down with two creatures, one human, the other android. . . and my feelings were the reverse of those intended. Of those I'm accustomed to feeling — am *required* to feel" (Dick, 1968, p. 157). Rick's bounty hunter duties demanded no pity or compassion for the humanoid robot. But again, is this absolute? These humanoid robots have the same appearance, intelligence, and abilities as humans and could be well integrated into society. They should have been given the same social identity and status as human beings but have been enslaved by human beings. In the novel, these humanoid robots are defined as commodities with exchange value, and the work mentions that "Under U.N. law, each emigrant automatically received possession of an

android subtype of his choice, and, by 1990, the variety of subtypes passed all understanding, in the manner of American automobiles of the 1960s" (Dick, 1968, p. 16). Androids could even be customized to meet specific needs, and their commodity properties dictated that they were always treated as objects.

But in the capture mission, Rick no longer treats androids as clever artificial commodities; he develops empathy for individual androids. In his eyes, Luba Luft is so vibrant that it does not look like an artificial life (Dick, 1968, p. 144). On the contrary, human beings' indifference and desperation in hunting and killing Androids are more like emotionless androids. As N. Katherine Hayles states, "If even an android can weep for others and mourn the loss of comrades, how much more unsympathetic are unfeeling humans?" (Hayles, 2000, p. 162). Blurring differences between humans and androids have triggered a crisis of self-perception for individual humans.

Just as humans search for self in their growth, androids also search for the answer to the question, "Who am I?". Androids also dream, think about the meaning of life as humans do, and search for the *life* they want. For example, Luba Luft's life "has consisted of imitating the human, doing what she would do, acting as if she had the thoughts and impulses a human would have. Imitating, as far as she is concerned, a superior life form" (Dick, 1968, p. 146), and her pursuit and desire for art is no less than that of the real person, which makes her escape to Earth at the expense of killing her employer. Even Rick praises, "She was a wonderful singer. The planet could have used her" (Dick, 1968, p. 149). But humans have not given androids the same right to exist and social identity as individuals. This also confirms the anxiety of human beings in the scientific era when confronted with *others*. Humans are natural creatures, but as creators, they create alternative beings, and the artificial "monsters" are better than humans, making people extraordinarily uneasy and fearful.

(b). *Dissolution of the Boundaries Between Human and Android Subject*

Unlike the Golden Age science fiction writers who favoured hard science fiction, Dick is more interested in the philosophical inquiry into reality and human values. In *Do Androids?* in which the line between human and machine is blurred and uncertain. The humanoid robot is more actual than a human. This situation "emphasizes human isolation and alienation" in the human experience (Aldiss & Wingrove, 1986, p. 428) and Dick's questioning and worrying about human subjectivity. At the same time, Dick suggests a possible solution: the protagonist makes a compromise and chooses to accept the existence of electronic beings. Cyberspace changes the way the subject is structured. It thus changes the subject's way of experience and cognition, resulting in the subjectivity being wholly lost and becoming a loyal slave of the artificial "other" or a captive entirely manipulated by the other.

Cyberspace gradually blurs and breaks the main boundary between humans and androids, especially with the birth of a new generation of androids, so that empathy is no longer the unique ability of human beings and the unique status of people is lost. Empathy is an essential basis on which androids and humans can be distinguished, so what is the possibility and validity of using empathy to achieve self-identification and self-recognition of the subject? The Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test is based on specific test questions to observe the test subject's eye muscle contraction and facial capillary response to determine whether the subject is a human being. Almost all of these questions were about animals; for example, "you are given a calf-skin wallet on your birthday.", "he shows you his butterfly collection" (Dick, 1968, p. 50). If the subject shows strong empathy for the test question, the indicator responds dramatically; if there is a lack of empathy, the indicator is still. It shows that the ability to empathize with animals has become an important indicator, and humans show absolute admiration and cherish for real animals.

In *Do Androids?* people feel a kind of empathy through the empathy box and Mercer fusion. Mercer is an older man, and whenever people hold the handle of the empathy box, his climbing figure appears. People climb with Mercer, experience Mercer's feelings, become one with Mercer physically and spiritually, and thus achieve the integration of all people's consciousness. "As it did for everyone who at this moment clutched the handles, either here on Earth or on the colony planets. He experienced the others who incorporated the babble of their thoughts and heard in his brain the noise of their many individual existences" (Dick, 1968, p. 22). On the other hand, an android could never participate in this fusion, "An android, no matter how gifted as to the pure intellectual capacity, could make no sense out of the fusion which took place routinely among the followers of Mercerism" (Dick, 1968, p. 30).

In Rick's view, "As long as some creature experienced joy, then the condition for all other creatures included a fragment of joy. However, if any living being suffered, then for all the rest, the shadow could not be entirely cast off" (Dick, 1968, p. 31). The novel argues that this capacity for empathy is innate to humans over long evolutionary periods. Through the empathy box guided by Mercerism, one can merge with Mercer and thus strengthen this innate capacity for empathy. This is where the android differs from humans. Even Nexus-6 android types, although they already have a basic sense of cooperation and identification with each other, can still not complete the empathy test. As for real humans, no matter who they are, even the inferior chickenheads can easily experience the same sense of integration that Mercerist followers occasionally experience.

Androids have a solid desire to mimic humans, with Luba Luft constantly imitating real people, imitating a higher form of life, and Roy Beatty trying to experience human integration forcefully. The android's desire to mimic squeezes the human's willingness to narcissism, eventually triggering the human's pursuit of androids. To humans, the android is hunted down because the clan, for human enslavement rebelled against the creator and posed a threat to human life and human identity. Yet they are so similar to our lives that we must find justification for the killing. The Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test was developed based on humans' empathy, but androids do not. This technical difference, originally intended only to identify androids, gradually became an innate, essential, and prescriptive property of humans and

acquired metaphysical significance. He believes that animals do not need this function because once the predator perceives the pain of the predator, the predator will starve to death. After all, it cannot feed. At the same time, humans rely on such empathy and empathy in living in groups and helping each other, which guarantees the survival of the human species. Therefore, empathy can precede individual experience, and it is the product of "two billion years of evolution under the pressure of survival," as is the human desire to survive. The psychology of empathy gradually shifted from a methodological to an existential one. It gave birth to a Mercerian ideology, similar to religious beliefs, to strengthen the psychology of empathy and ultimately define and construct the essence of the human being.

In Rick's opinion, his electric sheep "doesn't know I exist. Like the androids, it could not appreciate the existence of another" (Dick, 1968, p. 44). The humanoid robot only understands itself at most, not other beings, so Rick cannot see his manifest in the strange individual of the android, and the humanoid robot does not recognize his subjectivity. In turn, he does not acknowledge the subjectivity of the android. This inability to achieve mutual recognition shows the opposite: *the Other* is the reference coordinate in the subject's construction. Empathy is the bridge that the novel text tries to build between the gap between the self and *the Other*. In the plot's climax, Deckard falls in love with the humanoid robot Rachel and begins to reflect on the legality of his hunting and killing of the humanoid robot, asking himself whether he ever understood the humanoid robot and whether he understands it now. It seems to imply that the concrete experience of contacting and competing with the android allows the human to accept the humanoid robot like the other. The construction of the subject is always in progress, and the mechanism of empathy to grasp the body of the other in experience is an effective attempt for the subject to construct itself. In this process, the boundary between human and humanoid robot subjects gradually reconstructs, forming a balanced state.

#### V. CONCLUSION

In the relationship between humans and space, the natural and social space, as a future grey picture, warns people against the terrible consequences of rational tool expansion. The symbiotic relationship and organic connection between humans and space become the indispensable external condition for human subject construction. Through the series of characters in the novel, Dick presents the crisis of human subjectivity and out of the multiple dimensions of human and space and human and android, the human subjectivity crisis and out of the subject dilemma and self-reconstruction. Specific to the construction of the subjectivity of each person, the characters in work react differently to the subjectivity crisis and the human-android identity system. As the protagonist of the work, Rick's identity is changeable. With his understanding and identification of the identity of the humanoid robot, he becomes more receptive. While deconstructing and constructing, he follows the human standard of constant openness and change. Resch is a conservative image of the human image and the guardian of the human identity. After experiencing doubts about his identity, Resch's claim to the boundaries of man-android identity prefers a persistent attitude. Isidore is the least recognizable human image in his work, and the humanoid robot despises him. But in Isidore's eyes, humanoid robots and people, electric animals and real animals, Mercer and Bust all have equal status. Although he is special in intellectual degradation, we see rare human qualities, so he is the contradictory unity of stupid and human intelligence.

The humanistic blind area of science fiction from Dick's work shows a common representation of human nature and artificial intelligence by describing different possibilities to move towards the multiple options of subject reconstruction. Dick inspired us in the android, in the era of artificial intelligence, to reconstruct the subject, the need to abandon the inherent system and stereotypes and human centrism, merging thinking with more open subjectivity to tolerate and admit others, even aliens, with the constructivist mentality to meet the infinite possibilities and create the future.

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# Non-Quantifiable Nouns in Mandarin Chinese

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**Abstract**—Addressing non-quantifiable nouns is an indispensable step to figure out numeral classifiers and (bare) nouns in Mandarin Chinese. Recognizing the dearth of studies on Mandarin non-quantifiable nouns, we initiate the work by discussing their denominations and definitions from a syntactic-semantic perspective. Subsequently, offering a huge and systematic set of linguistic examples, we conduct a comprehensive analysis of six typical types of non-quantifiable nouns: proper nouns, relative existence-denoting nouns, counting/measuring-denoting nouns, common nouns with uniqueness, nouns with morphemes in special relation, and idiomatic nouns. Based on the above analysis, we propose three fundamental semantic features of being a non-quantifiable noun, i.e. uniqueness, relativity, and counting/measuring-denoting feature, among which, the last two features can be attributed to the first one, that is, uniqueness. Furthermore, we divide uniqueness into absolute one and relative one based on whether the referents of non-quantifiable nouns are independent of contexts, and into external one and internal one based on where these referents are quantified.

**Index Terms**—classifiers, bare nouns, Chinese, non-quantifiable nouns, semantics

## I. INTRODUCTION

Although numerous studies on numeral classifiers (Cls for short) in Mandarin Chinese have been conducted (Gao, 1948; Chao, 1968; Zhu, 1982; Croft, 1994; He, 2000; Her, 2014), many questions remain unresolved. For example, one ongoing controversy pertains to the structure of Mandarin Cls (Li & Thompson, 1981; Lin, 1997; Li, 1999; Cheng & Sybesma, 1998, 2012), so does that of Mandarin bare nouns (Cheng & Sybesma, 1999). The limitations of the previous studies lie in the absence of an important perspective, namely, non-quantifiable nouns. We believe that addressing non-quantifiable nouns is an indispensable step to figure out Mandarin classifiers. Three reasons are given below for this step:

1. Nouns have a very close relation with Cls in Mandarin, just considering that in this typical Cl language<sup>1</sup>, nouns always co-occur with Cls in the representative pattern of numeral expressions: Numeral+Classifier+Noun (Nume+Cl+N). Therefore, in order to conduct research about Cls, we suggest studying their related nouns first, as other scholars have done and are continuing to do so.

2. To make the study of nouns more efficient, it is better to sort them first. In the literature, we have a huge number of standpoints concerning the classification of Mandarin nouns proposed from various perspectives. Roughly speaking, from a syntactic perspective, Mandarin nouns are divided into count ones and mass ones by Cheng and Sybesma (1998), whereas they are all viewed as non-count ones, which, however, are internally separated into mass ones and non-mass ones by Zhang (2013, p. 83). From a semantic approach, according to Chierchia (1998), Mandarin nouns are all mass ones.

However, the above classifications of Mandarin nouns cannot explain some different behaviors of different Mandarin Cls, for example, they cannot account for why Kind Cls are distinct in many aspects. We wonder whether there is another grouping idea of Mandarin nouns that could spell out the different behaviors of Mandarin Cls.

Besides, the previous works on Mandarin Cls seem to assume by default that all nouns can be modified by Cls (e.g. Zhang, 2013; Li, 2013). In other words, nouns in Mandarin are all quantifiable. Thereby, it is necessary to eliminate the above possible misunderstanding. Furthermore, there is only little support regarding non-quantifiable nouns, it is thus meaningful to do a lot of related research.

3. In addition to the above three sortations of Mandarin nouns, we have found a different one (e.g. Zhou, 2002; Chen, 2009; Zhang, 2012, 2016): Mandarin nouns are divided into quantifiable nouns and non-quantifiable nouns<sup>2</sup>. We are immediately attracted to this sortation. This is because Mandarin Cls are related to the quantification of nouns, in this sense, this sortation of Mandarin nouns is more relevant to Mandarin Cls than other proposals.

In brief, in order to grasp the essence of Mandarin Cls, it is necessary to investigate Mandarin non-quantifiable nouns. This rationale serves as the impetus to carry out this research.

This paper is organized as follows: Section II entails our preliminary work for the investigation of non-quantifiable nouns in Mandarin Chinese, focusing on their denomination and definition. Section III involves an in-depth examination on the related literature, especially on the works of Zhou (2002), Chen (2009), and Zhang (2012). Then, Section IV is dedicated to the representative non-quantifiable nouns in Mandarin Chinese, after which, the key features of these nouns are elucidated in Section V. Finally, in Section IV, we draw a conclusion.

<sup>1</sup> See the detailed description in Zhang (2013, pp. 1-2).

<sup>2</sup> For this type of nouns, there are different denominations. See Section II-A for detailed discussions.

## II. PRELIMINARY WORK

## A. Denomination of Non-Quantifiable Nouns

In Mandarin Chinese, most of the nouns can accept quantifying constructions, among which, there are two fundamental ones: numeral structure and quantifier structure, namely, “Nume+CL+N” and “Quantifier+Noun” (“Quant+N”), as seen in (1). However, some nouns reject the above patterns, as illustrated in (2).

- (1) a. *san ben shu*  
three CL<sub>volume</sub> book  
‘three books’
- b. *san ping shui*  
three CL<sub>bottle</sub> water  
‘three bottles of water’
- c. *henduo shu*  
many book  
‘many books’
- d. *henduo shui*  
much water  
‘much water’
- (2) a. \* *san ge dongfang/qianqi/duifang*  
three CL-General east/early phase/counterpart
- b. \* *henduo dongfang/qianqi/duifang*  
many east/early phase/counterpart

For nouns like *dongfang* ‘east’, *qianqi* ‘prophase’, and *duifang* ‘counterpart’ in (2), Chinese scholars have given diverse names, for example, *wuliang-mingci* ‘nouns without quantity’ (Yu et al., 2003), *bukelianghua-mingci* ‘unquantifiable nouns’ (Wang & Zhu, 2000; Wang, 2001), *feilianghua-mingci* ‘non-quantifiable nouns’ (Peng, 1996a; Fang, 2000; Zhou, 2002), and *feiliang-mingci* ‘non-quantity nouns’ (Zhang, 2012).

In the present work, we adopt the third one, i.e. non-quantifiable nouns (in Chinese: *feilianghua-mingci*), on the basis of the following three reasons:

1. All nouns have cognitive quantity. This is because referents of nouns must occupy some space, regardless of which type of spaces it is, spatial, temporal, conceptional ones, etc. Taking space means having (cognitive) quantity. Hence, it is not adequate the denomination of nouns without quantity (in Chinese: *wuliang-mingci*), which means nouns that do not have quantity. In addition, the name ‘non-quantity nouns’ (in Chinese: *feiliang-mingci*) is ruled out as well, because this term stands for all nouns except those having quantity.

2. A noun is possibly both quantifiable and non-quantifiable at the syntactical level. In other words, the identity of a noun in terms of quantification may be vague, as seen in (3) where the (proper) noun *Lei Feng* rejects quantifying structure, being a bare noun in (3a), while becomes a quantifiable noun, co-occurring with a numeral and a CL in (3b). As a consequence, we cannot adopt the denomination of unquantifiable nouns (in Chinese: *bukelianghua-mingci*), which means nouns that cannot be quantified forever, excluding the possible dual quantifying identity of nouns.

- (3) a. *Lei Feng shi women de hao bangyang.*  
Lei Feng be 1PL DE good example  
‘Lei Feng is a good example for us.’
- b. *Women de shehui xuyao qianwan ge Lei Feng.*  
1PL DE society need tens-of-millions CL Lei Feng  
‘Our society needs tens of millions of Lei Fengs.’

As for why we have finally selected the denomination of non-quantifiable nouns (in Chinese: *fei-lianghua-mingci*), the reason is that this term expresses all the nouns except quantifiable ones, including both the nouns that are absolutely not quantifiable, i.e. unquantifiable type, and the nouns that may be possibly quantified.

### B. Definition of Non-Quantifiable Nouns

Among extremely few studies<sup>3</sup> of non-quantifiable nouns in Mandarin Chinese, we have discovered some relevant definitions (Peng, 1996a; Fang, 2000<sup>4</sup>; Wang & Zhu, 2000; Wang, 2001; Zhou, 2002; Xing & Wang, 2003; Sun, 2003<sup>5</sup>; Chen, 2009; Zhang, 2012), and these definitions have tended to describe non-quantifiable nouns from a syntactic perspective: nouns that cannot be modified by “Nume+CL” structures<sup>6</sup> are not quantifiable.

In our view, the above definition is not very rigorous, just considering Example (2) where non-quantifiable nouns reject not only “Nume+Cl” but also “Quant”. Therefore, this definition could be revised. We propose that nouns that cannot be modified by neither “Nume+Cl” nor “Quant” are non-quantifiable nouns.

Viewing that a phrase has both underlying structure and surface structure (Chomsky, 1965, 1995), we have to clarify that our definition about non-quantifiable nouns is limited to their surface structures for the being time. As for their underlying constructions, only after having finished a series of studies can we give a statement.

To sum up, in this paper *non-quantifiable nouns* are nouns that cannot be syntactically modified by quantifying structures, i.e. “Nume+CL” and “Quant”, and they are bare at least in surface structure.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

To the best of our knowledge, there are no more than twenty works concerning Mandarin non-quantifiable nouns in the existing literature: Liu and Deng (1989), Peng (1996a, 1996b), Yu et al. (1998, 2003), Fang (2000), Wang and Zhu (2000), Wang (2001), Guo (2002), Zhou (2002), Zhou (2002), Xing and Wang (2003), Sun (2003), Yang (2004), Chen (2009), Zhang (2012, 2016). According to Zhou (2002), the earlier attention paid to non-quantifiable nouns in Mandarin dates back to Liu and Deng (1989). They enumerated a set of nouns that have no Cls to match with.

In our opinion, the studies on non-quantifiable nouns in Mandarin Chinese lack too much. This can be seen in the following three aspects:

1. The studies on this topic have started far later than those on quantifiable nouns, in fact the first writing in question we found is Liu and Deng (1989);
2. The number of the works involving non-quantifiable nouns is extremely small. As we mentioned before, it is less than twenty;
3. The number of the specific works on non-quantifiable nouns is even smaller. There are only four. In the previous literature, some investigations like Zhou (2002) are not a kind of linguistic academic writing because they aim at offering didactic grammar of Mandarin, while a majority of the remaining studies are indirect ones, such as Liu and Deng (1989), Yang (2004), Zhang (2004) and Long (2005), since their central topics are not non-quantifiable nouns. Excluding the above works, there are only four specific studies on Mandarin non-quantifiable nouns, and they are Zhou (2002)<sup>7</sup>, Chen (2009), and Zhang (2012, 2016).

As for research results, there is no general consensus. This is reflected in the following two aspects:

1. Regarding the classification between non-quantifiable nouns and quantifiable ones, almost every scholar has had his own opinion, and some of these opinions have even been opposing. It has often happened that a same word was sorted into quantifiable nouns by one scholar, whereas into non-quantifiable nouns by another. Furthermore, the total number of non-quantifiable nouns given by each scholar was considerably different. According to Liu and Deng (1989), the relevant number is more than 460; Peng (1996a, 1996b) 265; Wang (2001) 191; Wang and Zhu (2000) 274, and Zhou (2002) 665;
2. Concerning the sub-classification of non-quantifiable nouns, there has been a large divergence between these scholars (Yu et al., 1998, 2003; Fang, 2000; Wang & Zhu, 2000; Wang, 2001; Zhou, 2002; Xing & Wang, 2003; Sun, 2003; Yang, 2004; Chen, 2009; Zhang, 2012, 2016). Moreover, each proposal has obviously been problematic. Here we restrict attention only to the following three sorting suggestions: Zhou (2002), Chen (2009), and Zhang (2012), which are relatively systematic and complete, compared with others. Even so, they are still problematic: first, the classifying results are divergent, especially those between Zhou (2002) and Chen (2009). Second, these suggestions are questionable: non-quantifiable nouns are divided into too many sub-types, and there is the overlap between these sub-types. In addition, some nouns are confusingly classified (into a sub-type or into “others”) (Zhang, 2012, p. 38), or they are sorted on the basis of mixed angles, such as semantics plus pragmatics (Zhou, 2002, pp. 53-54). Third, the sorting system probably does not cover all of the Mandarin non-quantifiable nouns.

In short, in light of the number of works and research results on non-quantifiable nouns in Mandarin Chinese, the existing literature is not sufficient to discover what is the fundamental factor for being a non-quantifiable noun, hence, further studies are needed to be done.

<sup>3</sup> See the relevant literature review in Section III.

<sup>4</sup> Although Fang’s (2000) definition has been expressed in Chinese traditional linguistic terms, it is essentially the same with other definitions given in popular linguistic terms.

<sup>5</sup> In fact, Sun (2003) has not intended to provide a definition about non-quantifiable nouns, but his description has involved this: “Generally speaking, not all nouns can be modified by ‘Nume+CL.’”

<sup>6</sup> Note that here the expression “Nume+CL” structures comes from the literature, and this does not mean that we agree that in Mandarin Chinese a numeral and a classifier form a constituent.

<sup>7</sup> Zhou (2002) is commonly recognized as the first work that has investigated Mandarin non-quantifiable nouns directly and systematically.

## IV. “REPRESENTATIVE” NON-QUANTIFIABLE NOUNS IN MANDARIN CHINESE

Following the spirit of the previous works to approach non-quantifiable nouns, we will present six “representative” types of non-quantifiable nouns in Mandarin Chinese in this section. These non-quantifiable nouns are “representative” because they have all been established in Zhou (2002), Chen (2009), and Zhang (2012), which have done relatively systematic and complete sorting works on non-quantifiable nouns. Precisely speaking, in Zhou (2002, pp. 51-53), based on semantic criteria, non-quantifiable nouns in Mandarin are grouped into five types. In Chen (2009, pp. 16-24), on the basis of sense, origin, and non-quantificational degree, they are sorted into five, four, and three classes, respectively. In Zhang (2012, pp. 29-41), according to word-formation, sense, and animacy, they are divided into uncertain, seven, and two classes, respectively. In a word, from a semantic perspective, non-quantifiable nouns in Mandarin Chinese are separated into five through seven types, as summarized in Table 1<sup>8</sup>.

TABLE 1  
“REPRESENTATIVE” NON-QUANTIFIABLE NOUNS IN MANDARIN CHINESE

	L. Zhou (2002)	Chen (2009)	W. Zhang (2012)
a.	<b>Special use for particular types:</b> proper nouns; non-proper nouns	<b>Human or object-denoting:</b> proper nouns; human or object-denoting common nouns and body parts-denoting nouns; appellation-denoting	<b>Special use for particular types:</b> proper nouns; non-proper nouns
b.	<b>Weakening/generalization-derived-denoting:</b> extended meaning; relation synthesis; metonymy-derived-denoting; combination-generalized-denoting; group-denoting	<b>Time-denoting:</b> time order-denoting; time itself-denoting; age	<b>Weakening/generalization-derived-denoting:</b> combination-generalized-denoting; relation synthesis; metonymy-derived-denoting; group-denoting
c.	<b>Relative existence-denoting:</b> relative space-denoting; relative time-denoting; relative relation-denoting	<b>Relative existence-denoting:</b> relative place-denoting; relative relation-denoting	<b>Relative existence-denoting:</b> relative space-denoting; relative time-denoting; relative relation-denoting <sup>9</sup>
d.	<b>Fixed counting/measuring-denoting:</b> nouns containing numerals ; nouns containing morphemes related to counting/quantity meaning; nouns whose referents are directly related to numerals	<b>Counting/measuring-denoting:</b> nouns containing numeral morphemes; nouns in close relation with measurement	<b>Fixed counting/measuring-denoting:</b> nouns containing morphemes that denote counting/quantity meaning; nouns containing numeral/quantifier meaning offered by contexts; nouns that semantically contain numeral/quantifier meaning
e.	<b>Concept-property-denoting:</b> field-denoting; abstract-property-denoting	<b>Whole-denoting:</b> nouns containing whole-denoting morphemes; nouns composed of contrastive morphemes	<b>Concept-property-denoting:</b> field-denoting; abstract-property-denoting
f.			<b>Appellation-denoting</b>
g.			<b>Others</b>

Despite the divergence between the three sorting proposals shown in Table 1, they have all focused on the sub-types as follows: proper nouns, relative existence-denoting nouns, counting/measuring-denoting nouns, common nouns with uniqueness, nouns with morphemes in special relation, and idiomatic nouns, which implies that these six sub-types of non-quantifiable nouns are so typical that they deserve being analyzed. Consequently, we will introduce these six sorts of non-quantifiable nouns in Mandarin Chinese, and try our best to explore their common and fundamental semantic features.

A. *Proper Nouns*

Nouns for particular persons or objects<sup>10</sup> that are universally recognized (except those for common persons or objects), such as *Lei Feng* ‘Lei Feng’, *Torre di Pisa* ‘Leaning Tower of Pisa’, *Mao Zedong sixiang* ‘Mao Zedong’s thought’. The characteristic of these nouns is that their referents have uniqueness, therefore these nouns and their referents have a one-to-one relation.

Compared to a proper noun, a common person’s name behaves like this: if in the world there were 3000 persons

<sup>8</sup> In Table 1, we do not show every author’s classification in the original order, so as to better confront these classifications and to discover the differences and similarities between them easily.

<sup>9</sup> This subtype not only includes the human-human relation, but also contains the human-objects relation.

<sup>10</sup> Here proper nouns is a traditional notion, and it represents exactly particular proper nouns. We adopt the notion of proper nouns in Ruan (2018, pp. 41-43).

named *Li Ming*, it would be concluded that *Li Ming* and its referents have a one-to-many relation. On the basis of this relation, we can generate a numeral expression like (4). However, it is not possible to treat a proper noun in the same way unless its uniqueness is eliminated, as seen in the precedent (3b), repeated here as (5). Here *Lei Feng* denotes<sup>11</sup> persons with *Lei Feng*'s personal quality, spirit, etc. Hence, it does not have uniqueness.

- (4) *3000 ge Li Ming*  
 3000 CL-General Li Ming  
 '3000 Li Mings'
- (5) *Women de shehui xuyao qianwan ge Lei Feng.*  
 1PL DE society need tens-of-millions CL-General Lei Feng  
 'Our society needs tens of millions of Lei Feng.'

### B. Relative Existence-Denoting Nouns

#### (a). Relative Space-Denoting Nouns

- (6) a. *guo-nei guo-wai*  
 country-inside country-outside  
 'internal part of a country' 'external part of a country'
- b. *dongfang xifang nanfang beifang*  
 east west south north  
 'east' 'west' 'south' 'north'

Semantically speaking, the two words such as in (6a) form a pair based on each other's referent, having a feature of relative existence in space. For such terms, Zhou (2002) has explained that the relative spatial existence of these nouns eliminates their counting property (i.e. individual feature); Chen (2009) has accounted that the fact that they are located based on each other's spacial position reduces their individual independence and makes them not have individual countability anymore, thus they cannot accept the modification of numeral/quantifier structure.

However, we argue that it is not the relative existence that offsets counting property or individual countability of these nouns, but that it is exactly this relativity that makes them take each other as a reference<sup>12</sup>, and therefore they are mutually unique and both have relative uniqueness.

So is (6b), but the only difference between (6a) and (6b) is that nouns in the latter case do not take each other as reference, but have a common reference, compared to which each of them is relatively unique. In a word, nouns like (6b) have also relative uniqueness.

The same account can cover the following sub-types of non-quantifiable nouns: relative time-denoting type, relative relation-denoting type and relative concept-denoting type.

#### (b). Relative Time-Denoting Nouns

- (7) a. *guoqu weilai*  
 past future  
 'past' 'future'
- b. *qianqi zhongqi houqi*  
 early phase middle phase late phase  
 'early phase' 'middle phase' 'late phase'

In (7a), it regards making reference to each other and they are mutually unique; in (7b), the three nouns have a common reference "the whole period", for which they are unique, respectively.

#### (c). Relative Relation-Denoting Nouns

##### 1. Persons to Persons

<sup>11</sup> In this paper, we do not distinguish *denote* from *express*, despite the fact that some scholars would prefer to say *express sense* and *denote reference*.

<sup>12</sup> Here *reference* is not a semantic term. It has the meaning that is usually used in Physics, such as *reference frame*.

(1). *Blood Relationships*

- (8) *fuqin*                      *erzi/nü'er*  
 father                      son/daughter  
 'father'                      'son/daughter'

(2). *Non-Blood Relationships*

- (9) a. *jiefang*    *daifang*<sup>13</sup>  
 debtor    creditor  
 'debtor'    'creditor'
- b. *qizi*    *zhangfu*  
 wife    husband  
 'wife'    'husband'
- c. *duifang*    *duifang*  
 counterpart    counterpart  
 'counterpart'    'counterpart'
- d. *shi-jiao*<sup>14</sup>    *shi-jiao*  
 generation-friend    generation-friend  
 'friendly family for two or more generations'    'friendly family for two or more generations'
- e. *pengyou*<sup>15</sup>    *pengyou*  
 friend    friend  
 'friend'    'friend'

In contrast to relative space or time-denoting nouns, relative human-denoting ones are fairly special in terms of the ratio between reference point and referents of nouns, that is, besides the one-to-one ratio that the former two have, relative human-denoting nouns also have another possible ratio: one-to-many. The above two possible ratios are derived from the fact that for relative space or time-denoting nouns, their denotations have the feature of uniqueness, whereas for the human type, it is not necessary to have uniqueness,<sup>16</sup> which can be seen in (10) through (12).

- (10) a. *Xiaoming de muqin shi shanghaiaren.*  
 Xiaoming DE mother be shanghaiense  
 'Xiaoming's mother is shanghaiense.'
- b. *Xiaoming de yangmu dou zhu-zai Beijing.*  
 Xiaoming DE adoptive-mother both live-in Beijing  
 'Xiaoming's adoptive mothers both live in Beijing.'

In (10a), *Xiaoming* and *muqin* 'mother' are in one-to-one relation, *Xiaoming* is the reference point of *muqin* 'mother'. In (10b), *Xiaoming* and *yangmu* 'adoptive mother' are in one-to-many (two) relation, *Xiaoming* is the reference point of both *yangmu* 'adoptive mothers'.

<sup>13</sup> We suggest that different from *jiefang* 'debtor', *daifang* 'creditor', nouns such as *shuangfang* 'two parties', *duofang* 'multi-parties' should not be classified as relationship nouns. This is because these nouns express a holistic meaning of personal relationships, which is not the case we are discussing at all.

<sup>14</sup> Zhou (2002), Chen (2009) and Zhang (2012) believe that *shijiao* belongs to non-quantifiable nouns, but from the web query result, there are sentences like *wo you ji ge shijiao*/1SG have several CL generation-friend/ 'I have several shijiaos'.

<sup>15</sup> Note that nouns like *pengyou* 'friend' are also quantifiable, since it is grammatical to say numeral expressions such as *san ge pengyou*/three CL-General friend/ 'three friends'.

<sup>16</sup> Human biological nature determines that the quantity of some blood relatives is only one, such as biological father, biological mother, but it is not always the case. More precisely, the superior blood kinship-denoting nouns result in uniqueness, for instance, *fuqin* '(biological) father', *muqin* '(biological) mother', and *zufu* '(biological) grandfather'; however, the inferior ones do not necessarily bring out uniqueness, such as *erzi* '(biological) son', *sunzi* '(biological) grandson' etc.

- (11) a. *Ta shi Xiaoming de pengyou.*  
 3SG be Xiaoming DE friend  
 ‘He/She is Xiaoming’s friend.’  
 b. *Ta shi Xiaoming de yi ge pengyou.*  
 3SG be Xiaoming DE one CL friend  
 ‘He/She is one of the Xiaoming’s friends.’

In (11a), *Xiaoming* and *pengyou* ‘friend’ are in one-to-one relation<sup>17</sup>, *Xiaoming* is the reference point of *pengyou* ‘friend’. In (11b), *Xiaoming* and *pengyou* ‘friends’ are in one-to-many relation, *Xiaoming* is the reference point of all of the *pengyou* ‘friends’ including *ta* ‘he/she’.

(10a) and (10b) show that the blood kinship may yield the uniqueness of nominal referents. (11a) and (11b) are both grammatical because in the first sentence, *Xiaoming* and *pengyou* ‘friends’ have a relative relationship and they are unique to each other, whereas in the second sentence, *Xiaoming* and *pengyou* ‘friends’ have the same relationship mentioned above, but not the only one for each other. Cases like (11) demonstrate that the referents of non-blood relationship nouns do not necessarily have uniqueness. Furthermore, it is most likely that they are not unique, such as *tongshi* ‘colleague’, *tongxue* ‘classmate’.

## 2. Human to Objects

- (12) *renlei*                      *dongwu*                      *ziran*  
 human                      animal                      nature  
 ‘human’                      ‘animals’                      ‘nature’

## 3. Objects To Objects

- (13) a. *xiaoxue*<sup>18</sup>                      *chuzhong*                      *gaozhong*                      *daxue*  
 primary school                      junior school                      high school                      university  
 ‘primary school’                      ‘junior school’                      ‘high school’                      ‘university’  
 b. *jijian*<sup>19</sup>  
 own opinion  
 ‘own opinion’

### (d). Relative Concept-Denoting Nouns

- (14) *zhengzhi*                      *yishu*  
 politics                      art  
 ‘politics’                      ‘art’

Summarizing, for the relative existence-denoting nouns, no matter they are solitary words<sup>20</sup>, couple words or group words, and no matter they take each other as reference or have a common reference point, the important thing is that every nominal referent is always unique, compared to its reference point.

## C. Quantifying-Denoting Nouns

### (a). Counting-Denoting Nouns

That is, nouns whose first morphemes are numerals, such as *ling* ‘zero’, *yi* ‘one’, *bai* ‘hundred’, *qian* ‘thousand’, *ban* ‘half’. In this sense, they also can be called numeral-included nouns, as seen in (15) where all examples are selected from Zhang (2012, p. 29).

<sup>17</sup> If the phrase *Xiaoming de pengyou* ‘Xiaoming’s friend’ express concrete instantiations, not abstract property.

<sup>18</sup> Here these nouns do not denote physical entities but abstract educational levels.

<sup>19</sup> Although *jijian* ‘own opinion’ seems to be alone, not having its relative noun, indeed, there is its opposite part, namely, *bieren de yijian*/other DE opinion/ ‘opinion of others’ that is not written in Example (13b), since it is a nominal phrase, not a simple noun.

<sup>20</sup> This type of nouns appears to be alone, but it always has a hidden reference. For example, *jijian* ‘own opinion’ in (13b), as we mentioned before, its hidden reference point is *bieren de yijian*/other DE opinion/ ‘opinion of others’.



(15)	<i>ling-fengxian</i>	<i>yi-sheng</i>	<i>si-ji</i>	<i>wan-wu</i>	<i>ban-sheng</i>
	zero-risk	one-life	four-season	ten thousands-thing	half-life
	'zero risk'	'one life'	'four seasons'	'all the things'	'half of life'

(b). *Measuring-Denoting Nouns*

That is, nouns whose first morphemes are quantifiers, in this sense, they are also called quantifier-included nouns. Notice that our quantifiers include not only classic ones such as *quanbu* 'all', but also those such as *di* 'low'. These quantifiers can express various types of quantities, for instance, total, major, small, and fractional amount. Besides, unlike the existing literature, we exclude nouns within which there are morphemes denoting the stability of a status, such as *heng* 'constant' in the word *heng-wen*/ constant-temperature/ 'constant temperature'. This is because linguistic elements denoting a stable status have nothing to do with quantifiers. See (16) where all instances are picked out from Zhang (2012, p. 30).

(16)	<i>quan-min</i>	<i>zong-ti</i>	<i>di-jia</i>	<i>wei-li</i>
	whole-people	total-individual	low-cost	fractional-profit
	'all the people'	'totality'	'low cost'	'meager profit'

(c). *Quantifying-Dimension-Denoting Nouns*

Such a noun is rather special, in that it does not contain counting or measuring-denoting morphemes, but instead expresses itself as a certain quantifying dimension of its related nouns, such as *changdu* 'length'. The expression *Changdu san mi*/length three CL<sub>meter</sub>/'The length is three meters.' does not mean that the quantity of the length is three meters, but that the length of the referents of a certain noun is three meters, for instance, the length of a referent of *zhuozi* 'table'.

Accordingly, such terms are characterized by being apparently associated with numeral/quantifier constructions or measuring degree adjectives<sup>21</sup>, but being essentially not modified by these above quantifying expressions.

Based on the relation of position regarding the above quantifying expressions, these nouns are divided into three subcategories:

1. *Nouns Followed by Numeral/Quantifier Structures or Measuring Degree Adjectives*

(17)	a.	<i>changdu</i>	<i>chanzhi</i>	<i>hanliang</i>	<i>feilü</i>	<i>nianling</i>
		length	output value	enormous amount	rate	age
		'length'	'output value'	'enormous amount'	'rate'	'age'
	b.	<i>Changdu san mi.</i>			<i>Changdu hen chang.</i>	
		length three CL <sub>meter</sub>			length very long	
		'The length is three meters'			'The length is very long.'	

2. *Nouns Followed by Measuring Degree Adjectives Only*

(18)	a.	<i>chengdu</i>		<i>fudu</i>
		degree		amplitude
		'degree'		'amplitude'
	b.	<i>Chengdu gao.</i>		<i>Fudu da.</i>
		degree high		amplitude big
		'The degree is high.'		'The amplitude is big.'

3. *Nouns Preceded by Numerals*

<sup>21</sup> For example, *da* 'big', *xiao* 'small', *qiang* 'strong', *ruo* 'weak'.

- |      |                |                                   |                     |
|------|----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| (19) | <i>xing-ji</i> | <i>zhou-sui</i>                   | <i>hua-dan</i>      |
|      | star-level     | full-age                          | glorious-birthday   |
|      | ‘star rating’  | ‘full year of life’ <sup>22</sup> | ‘glorious birthday’ |

#### D. Common Nouns With Uniqueness

##### (a). Human Common Nouns With Uniqueness

The referents of this kind of noun are unique only in specific contexts, as seen in (20) where the appellations such as *lingzun* ‘your beloved father’, *laofu* ‘I’ are not quantifiable in its relevant context.

- |      |               |                      |                       |                                |
|------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| (20) | <i>bi-zhe</i> | <i>zhang-sun</i>     | <i>ling-zun</i>       | <i>lao-fu</i>                  |
|      | pen-person    | first-grandson       | nice-father           | old <sup>23</sup> -mature male |
|      | ‘the author’  | ‘the first grandson’ | ‘your beloved father’ | ‘I’                            |

##### (b). Objects Common Nouns With Uniqueness

- |      |                       |                |
|------|-----------------------|----------------|
| (21) | <i>ben-wen</i>        | <i>laojia</i>  |
|      | this-article          | native place   |
|      | ‘the present article’ | ‘native place’ |

##### (c). Body Parts-Denoting Nouns

- |      |             |                 |
|------|-------------|-----------------|
| (22) | <i>duzi</i> | <i>xiongkou</i> |
|      | belly       | chest           |
|      | ‘belly’     | ‘chest’         |

#### E. Nouns With Morphemes in Special Relation

##### (a). Nouns With Morphemes in Contrary Relation

###### 1. Nouns With Adjective Morphemes in Contrary Relation

- |      |                      |                             |                        |
|------|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| (23) | <i>an-wei</i>        | <i>gao-di</i>               | <i>chang-duan</i>      |
|      | safe-dangerous       | high-low                    | long-short             |
|      | ‘safety and danger’  | ‘level’                     | ‘length’               |
|      | <i>da-xiao</i>       | <i>yi-tong</i>              | <i>lao-shao</i>        |
|      | big-small            | different-same              | old-young              |
|      | ‘size’ <sup>24</sup> | ‘difference and similarity’ | ‘old and young people’ |

###### 2. Nouns With Verbal Morphemes in Contrary Relation

- |      |                 |                     |                    |
|------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| (24) | <i>ai-zeng</i>  | <i>gong-qiu</i>     | <i>cheng-bai</i>   |
|      | love-hate       | supply-demand       | succeed-fail       |
|      | ‘love and hate’ | ‘supply and demand’ | ‘succeed and fail’ |

<sup>22</sup> It represents real age which is in contrast to nominal age.

<sup>23</sup> The age ought to be beyond seventy, according to Baidu (Last checked: 18 May, 2023). <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%80%81%E5%A4%AB/2917221?fr=aladdin>

<sup>24</sup> We thank Prof. Arcodia for offering this translation.

### 3. Nouns With Nominal Morphemes in Contrary Relation

(25)	<i>ben-mo</i>	<i>biao-li</i>	<i>cheng-bai</i> <sup>25</sup>
	root-treetop	outside-inside	success-failure
	'major and minor'	'outside and inside'	'success and failure'

### (b). Nouns With Morphemes in Related Relation

(26)	<i>chang-wei</i>	<i>xue-rou</i>	<i>xin-chang</i>
	intestine -stomach	blood-flesh	heart-intestine
	'digestive system'	'blood and flesh'	'heart' <sup>26</sup>
	<i>tao-li</i>		<i>feng-yun</i>
	peaches-plums		wind-cloud
	'excellent students educated by a teacher'		'unpredictable situation'

### F. Idiomatic Nouns

(27)	<i>leichi</i>	<i>baopiao</i>	<i>hu-kou</i>
	Leichi <sup>27</sup>	guarantee	tiger-mouth
	'forbidden zone'	'guarantee'	'dangerous place'

## V. SEMANTIC FEATURES OF NON-QUANTIFIABLE NOUNS IN MANDARIN CHINESE

Based on the above analysis of the six "representative" types of Mandarin non-quantifiable nouns, we claim that the referents of these nouns involve at least three crucial features: uniqueness, relativity, and counting/measuring-denoting feature.

### A. Relativity

Viewing the relative existence-denoting nouns in Section IV-B, we can draw the conclusion that relativity is essentially uniqueness.

For nouns with the feature of relativity, such as relative space, relative time, relative relationship, relative concept (single words like *jijian* 'own opinion', couple words like *jiefang* 'debtor' - *daifang* 'creditor', group words like *dongfang* 'east' - *xifang* 'west' - *nanfang* 'south' - *beifang* 'north'), their referents are all unique with respect to their reference points.

Among such nouns, we also discovered a special class of nouns, that is, kinship nouns. Given the biological property they have, some of them are absolutely unique, such as *shengfu* 'biological father', whereas the others' uniqueness is not clear, such as *qingsheng erzi* 'biological son' which may be not unique.

In brief, relativity ultimately boils down to uniqueness, no matter whether this uniqueness is relative or absolute.

### B. Counting/Measuring-Denoting Feature

For counting-denoting nouns, i.e. they contain inside a numeral morpheme which generally helps them to get unique referents. For example, *siji* 'four seasons' which takes the four seasons as a whole part, creating a new noun that is different from *chun* 'spring', *xia* 'summer', *qiu* 'autumn', and *dong* 'winter', and this word refers to the unique entity 'four seasons' (Section IV-C). The same is true of measuring-denoting nouns (also called quantifier-included nouns), such as *quanmin* 'all the people', *dijia* 'low price'.

Henceforth, based on these two kinds of nouns above, we can say that the counting-denoting feature and the quantifier-denoting feature can be attributed to uniqueness as well.

However, for quantifying-dimension-denoting nouns, such as *changdu* 'length', *chengdu* 'grade', *xingji* 'star level', unlike Zhou (2002), Chen (2009), and Zhang (2012), we do not believe that they are non-quantifiable nouns.

On the one hand, following Zhou, Chen, and Zhang's spirit, such a noun represents a certain quantifying dimension

<sup>25</sup> *Chengbai* can be considered as both verbal and nominal sub-types because of their morphemes' vagueness in respect of word classes.

<sup>26</sup> Here *heart* has an abstract meaning, such as in the expression *He has a kind heart*.

<sup>27</sup> It is the name of a lake locating in Anhui Province. For a historic event, it now refers to certain confines that cannot be passed through.

of its related noun that may not appear literally, as shown by one example of (17), repeated here in (28).

- (28) a. *Changdu san mi.*  
length three CL<sub>meter</sub>  
'The length is three meters'
- b. *Changdu hen chang.*  
length very long  
'The length is very long.'

The example (28) implies that the length of the associated noun's referent is three meters or very long, such as the length of a referent of *zhuozi* 'table'. In cases like this, such nouns are thus not quantified, but the associated nouns are.

On the other hand, we can offer many examples like (29) where quantifying dimensions modified by "Nume+Cl" are grammatical.

- (29) a. *san zhong changdu*  
three CL<sub>kind</sub> length  
'three kinds of lengths'
- b. *san zhong chengdu*  
three CL<sub>kind</sub> grade  
'three kinds of grades'
- c. *san zhong xingji*  
three CL<sub>kind</sub> star rating  
'three kinds of star ratings'

(29) shows that quantifying-dimension-denoting nouns are quantifiable at least in aspect of "kinds". Viewing they are quantifiable, we can thus put them aside temporarily. The important point is that the counting-denoting feature and the quantifier-denoting feature are essentially uniqueness.

### C. Uniqueness

We believe that the two key features of non-quantifiable nouns, i.e. relativity and counting/measuring-denoting feature, are fundamentally the third key feature, namely, uniqueness. Thereby, it's worth looking into it in depth.

#### (a). Absolute uniqueness and relative uniqueness

We divide the uniqueness of non-quantifiable nouns into two types: absolute uniqueness and relative uniqueness. This division is on the basis of the relation between such a noun and its referents: if this relation is independent of contexts, then this noun has absolute uniqueness; otherwise, it has relative uniqueness.

The absolute uniqueness: taking *Mao Zedong*<sub>1</sub><sup>28</sup> 'Mao Zedong' for example. Human beings (at least the Mandarin community) use it to refer to the man that led the Chinese people to establish the new China in 1949. This stabilized reference is valid for any context.

The relative uniqueness: taking couple nouns *shinei* 'inside of city' - *shiwai* 'outside of city'. Their referents vary according to specific contexts. For example, for the two interlocutors living in Beijing, *shinei* 'inside of city' is very likely to refer to the inside of Beijing, *shiwai* 'outside of city' the outside of Beijing.

All in all, based on whether non-quantifiable nouns' referents are dependent on contexts, there are two types of uniqueness: absolute one and relative one.

#### (b). External uniqueness and internal uniqueness

In general, nouns<sup>29</sup> are used to name objects<sup>30</sup>/substances, all referents of each noun form a set, and every set is distinct from each other because each noun has a different property. For instance, *shu* 'book' has book-property and all its referents compose a book-set; *pingguo* 'apple' has apple-property and all its referents compose an apple-set. Every property that a noun expresses is diverse, in this sense these nouns have uniqueness.

In addition to the outside of a set, we think that the inside of this set should also be paid attention to: these referents

<sup>28</sup> This noun has various meanings, so different numeral subscripts are used to distinguish these meanings: *Mao Zedong*<sub>0</sub>, as a common proper name, indicates any one whose name is *Mao Zedong*; *Mao Zedong*<sub>1</sub>, as a particular proper noun, represents the man who has led the Chinese people to establish the new China in 1949; *Mao Zedong*<sub>2</sub>, as a commonized proper noun, refers to persons that have some similar or same natures with *Mao Zedong*<sub>1</sub>.

<sup>29</sup> Except two sub-types of proper nouns: common proper nouns such as *Xiaoming*<sub>0</sub> and particular proper nouns such as *Huawei*<sub>1</sub> (the name of a famous Chinese company). See Ruan (2018, pp. 41-43) for details.

<sup>30</sup> Here *objects* also involve the human.

may be quantified in terms of another property or quantity<sup>31</sup>. For example, at the inside of book-set, there are three types of books in terms of colour-property, ten books in terms of book-entirety. When in this set, there is only one book in both the two aspects above, the noun has uniqueness.

With regard to a set of nouns' referents, we would like to call its outside the external level of nouns, and its inside the internal level of nouns. If a noun's property is unique at external level, then the noun has external uniqueness; if a noun's referent is unique at internal level, then the noun has internal uniqueness.

Let's look at some examples shown in (30).

- (30)
- |    |                                       |   |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|
| a. | <i>pingguo</i><br>'apple'             | At external level, the noun's property is unique with respect to other nouns' properties like <i>shu</i> -property 'book-property'. But at internal level, the noun's referents have kinds or quantity, that is, the amount of its kinds and its quantity are not one. Hence, <i>pingguo</i> 'apple' has external uniqueness, but no internal uniqueness. |
| b. | <i>changwei</i><br>'digestive system' | At external level, the noun's property is unique with respect to other nouns' properties like <i>shu</i> -property 'book-property'. And at internal level, the amounts of its kinds and its quantity are both one. Thereby, it has both external uniqueness and internal uniqueness.  |
| c. | <i>jiufa</i><br>'addition'            | At external level, the noun's property is unique with respect to other nouns' properties like <i>shu</i> -property 'book-property'. And at internal level, the amounts of its kinds and its quantity are both one. Hence, it has both external uniqueness and internal uniqueness.  |

In brief, almost all nouns<sup>32</sup> have external uniqueness because the properties that they express are distinct from one another. On the other hand, these nouns may or may not have internal uniqueness.

Syntactically, when nouns are at external level, they refuse the modification of numeral/quantifier structures, as shown in (31a) and (32a); whereas when they are at internal level, they require quantifying structures if the amount of internal kind (IK for short) or internal quantity (IQ for short) is not equal to one, as illustrated in (31b), (31c), and (32b). In other words, nouns refuse quantifying structures if the amounts of internal kind (IK) and internal quantity (IQ) both equal one, that is, if nouns have internal uniqueness, as seen in (32c).

- (31)
- |    |  |
|----|--|
| a. | <i>Women xuyao kongqi he shui.</i><br>1PL need air and water<br>'We need air and water.'                         |
| b. | <i>Women xuyao san zhong shui.</i><br>1PL need three CL <sub>kind</sub> water<br>'We need three kinds of water.' |
| c. | <i>Women xuyao san bei shui.</i><br>1PL need three CL <sub>cup</sub> water<br>'We need three cups of water.'     |
- (32)
- |    |   |
|----|---|
| a. | <i>Wo xihuan pingguo.</i><br>1SG like apple<br>'I like apples.'   |
| b. | <i>Wo chi-le ji ge pingguo.</i><br>1SG eat-PRF several CL-General apple<br>'I ate several apples.'<br>Context: there is a book, a cup on the table. |
| c. | <i>Shu hen xin.</i><br>book very new<br>'The book (on the table) is very new.'  |

As for the two sub-types of proper nouns, i.e. common proper nouns and particular proper nouns, these nouns cannot stay at external level, since they do not express a property and do not have external kind (EK for short). In spite of this,

<sup>31</sup> Here, "quantity" means quantity of entities/substance. For example, if we mention the quantity of books, water, expressions like *three books*, *many books*, *three bottles of water*, *much water* primarily come out rather than those like *three sorts of books/water*. It is a daily life concept of quantity. See Ruan (2018, pp. 38-40) for the conception of quantity in a broad sense.

<sup>32</sup> Except two sub-types of proper nouns: common proper nouns and particular proper nouns.

they can stay at internal level, so we can consider their internal kind or internal quantity. In terms of internal quantity (IQ), the amount sometimes is one (i.e. [+IQ1]) and sometimes is greater than one (i.e. [-IQ1]). For example, the common name *Xiaoming*<sub>0</sub>, in a concrete context, its referent may be the only one and also may be not, as shown in (33). Prof. Liu of Class A may say expressions like (33a), Prof. Wu of Class B may say sentences like (33b), and the schoolmaster of the school may say expressions like (33c).

- (33) Context: in a school there are three students named *Xiaoming*, one of which is in Class A and the other two in Class B.
- a. *Xiaoming*<sub>1</sub> *xihuan dushu, er Li Hua*<sub>1</sub> *xihuan tiaowu.*  
 Xiaoming like reading, but Li Hua like dancing.  
 ‘Xiaoming likes reading, but Li Hua likes dancing.’
- b. *Liang ge Xiaoming*<sub>0</sub> *dou xihuan dushu, er Li Hua*<sub>1</sub> *xihuan tiaowu.*  
 Two CL-General Xiaoming both like reading, but Li Hua like dancing.  
 ‘The two Xiaomings both like reading, but Li Hua likes dancing.’
- c. *San ge Xiaoming*<sub>0</sub> *dou xihuan dushu, er Li Hua*<sub>1</sub> *xihuan tiaowu.*  
 Three CL-General Xiaoming all like reading, but Li Hua like dancing.  
 ‘The three Xiaomings all like reading, but Li Hua likes dancing.’

As shown in (33), *Xiaoming* in (33a) with [+IQ1] is in contrast to the one in (33b) and (33c) with [-IQ1]. The former has internal uniqueness but the latter do not.

(c). Cognitive impacts on uniqueness

On cognitive selection, see examples (31) and (32): for nouns in (31a) and (32a), the external level of nouns’ referents is chosen; whereas for nouns in (31b), (31c), and (32b), the internal level is selected.

Regarding cognitive range, see example (33) where different speakers have different cognitive ranges.

Concerning cognitive level, see the following example (34).

- (34) a. If we found other suns, then we would say:  
*Wo kanjian-le san ge taiyang.*  
 1SG see-PRF three CL-General sun.  
 ‘I saw three suns.’
- b. If a child thought that there were many moons in the world, she/he would say:  
*Zhe ge yueliang hao piaoliang.*  
 DEM CL-General moon very beautiful.  
 ‘This moon is very beautiful.’

And so do adults. Suppose that speaker A did not know that speaker B has only one son, then A would say sentences like this: “How many sons do you have?”

To sum up, human beings’ cognition may change the uniqueness identity of nouns’ referents: unique or not. First, cognitive selection decides at which level nouns stay: if a noun is at external level, its referent is unique. Second, cognitive level and range are likely to change the amount of kinds or quantity of nominal referents, so as to change their status of uniqueness.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we commenced with an analysis of different denominations and definitions for Mandarin Chinese nouns like *dongfang* ‘east’, *siji* ‘four seasons’ from a syntactic-semantic perspective, and attempted to establish a syntactic definition for these nouns (called *non-quantifiable nouns* in this paper), that is, nouns that cannot be syntactically modified by quantifying structures, i.e. “Nume+CL” and “Quant”. Then, we analyzed six types of Mandarin non-quantifiable nouns that are commonly recognized in the literature. These nouns are proper nouns, relative existence-denoting nouns, counting/measuring-denoting nouns, common nouns with uniqueness, nouns with morphemes in special relation, and idiomatic nouns. Based on the above analysis, we proposed three fundamental semantic features of being a non-quantifiable noun, i.e. uniqueness, relativity, and counting/measuring-denoting feature, among which, the last two features can be attributed to the first one, that is, uniqueness. Furthermore, we divided uniqueness into absolute one and relative one based on whether the referents of non-quantifiable nouns are independent of contexts, and into external one and internal one based on where these referents are quantified. It is important to acknowledge that human beings’ cognition may change the uniqueness identity of nouns’ referents and this change can be yielded from three dimensions: cognitive selection for nouns’ referents, cognitive range for nouns’ referents, and cognitive level of human beings.

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# Teaching-Related Use of Social Media Among Saudi EFL Teachers: Revisiting the Innovative Technology

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**Abstract**—The spread of social media such as Facebook, Thaser, and YouTube has demonstrated the need to incorporate them into the educational setting to cope with the abrupt changes in the tech-savvy new generation's interactions with the network. Hence the current study purports to explore the social media tools utilized by Saudi EFL teachers. This study used a random sampling technique, about 88 participants were selected randomly from all schools in the Asir region, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia .A descriptive study approach was applied by employing an online survey consisting of 15 items followed by an open-ended questionnaire. The collected data were analysed by using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) to obtain corresponding results. The results showed that Saudi EFL teachers used Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube extensively and had a positive response toward their use for teaching purposes. These results confirm the importance of being concerned with the roles of Saudi EFL teachers and students to reap great benefits from these networks as it helps in extending their learning and teaching opportunities, encourage communication with each other by providing material and moral incentives, and develop skills to use these networks in the best way. The study has concluded that using social media could play a vital role in creating an interactive teaching environment. In light of the findings of the study, it is recommended that Saudi EFL teachers should plan learning classes that use social media such as Facebook, Thaser, and YouTube as learning platforms.

**Index Terms**—social media, Saudi EFL teachers, teaching-related use, innovative technology, revisiting

## I. INTRODUCTION

Owing to the comprehensive studies in computer networking and internet utilization, more and more developments are being advanced in communication technologies that allow people to become nearer and contribute too many regional and international communities collaboratively (Hossain & Aydin, 2011; Ferdig et al., 2007). The competition that prevails between information technology companies in producing electronic services has made life easier and also opened new windows for learning, communication, and discovery. This achievement has been increasing with the ongoing competition in technical discoveries across the world. Social media is a defined group of internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0. It also allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content that has reached the point where no home personal or even public establishment is possible without them (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Everyone accedes to those networks to attain their visions and reach their goals (Castro-Romero, 2015).

The field of education in general and teaching and learning English in particular has not been dim and distant from this interaction with social media. Their programs and applications have spread equally among EFL students and their teachers. Teaching is one of the sectors that has reaped great benefits from social media in improving teaching, learning English, and studies carried out in schools and universities by providing thousands of educational and supervision sites and programs. These programs have played a pivotal role in boosting EFL teacher performance and advancing their skills in teaching and students' skills in learning (Arshad & Akram, 2018; Greenhow & Askari, 2015; Hussain et al., 2018). There is a pressing need to incorporate Facebook, Twitter, Hi5, LinkedIn, MySpace, Nexopia, Twitter, and YouTube into educational settings the learning environment and teaching and learning English to cope and deal with the instantaneous changes in web technology that allows EFL teachers and students to share and exchange ideas, opinions, interests within their networks over the internet in accessible ways and useful ways. The free, open, collaborative, and interoperable features of Web 2.0 technologies also allow users to create many online communities in the classrooms, at

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home, and abroad at no cost (Jankauskaitė, 2015; Obi & Iwasaki, 2015). Social Networking Sites (SNSs) such as Facebook are some of the recent examples of communications technologies that have been extensively adopted by EFL students and teachers, thus having the capability to become a beneficial resource to assist their educational communications and cooperation and collaboration with teachers or instructors (Irwin et al., 2012; Roblyer et al., 2010).

Albahiri (2018) pointed out that extensive use of social media and their intrusion into several areas, containing the scope of teaching and learning English, has caused shifts and shifts in teaching and learning philosophy. Teaching via social media has appeared formally and the majority of the EFL faculty members at national and international universities have begun to teach via these networks. Social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Bebo, and Friendster are used as means of presenting educational curricula and courses that can create an interactive teaching environment with an active element of sharing the responsibility for education. The learning context can be developed from mainly passive to a lot of activities their use in teaching has led to a new way of looking at teaching from the point of view of the organization site and presentation to EFL teachers. Teaching English is no longer restricted to what happens inside classrooms under the supervision of teachers. Rather, the internet has provided new opportunities for teaching English as it enables EFL learners to access the teaching content that suits their skills and abilities by using multi-media presentations that increase the effectiveness of the teaching process (Jankauskaitė, 2015; Albahiri, 2016; Dlamini, 2017). This results in offering a variety of betterment activities, along with the teaching materials and individual teaching plans that would create a new generation of self-learning or self-educated men, namely called in the age of technology (autodidact). Jankauskaitė (2015), affirmed that social media offers many applications that assist the teacher in managing and enriching the teaching process. These include content production (Wikipedia), video and photo sharing services (YouTube), virtual worlds (Second Life), and diary-type webs (blogs).

Specialized reports have shown that the number of internet users in Saudi Arabia increased rapidly to hit 30 million people and the internet penetration in the country reached 91% as the spread of these networks among young people was underscored. Moreover, 23.91 million users in Saudi Arabia use YouTube, 21.95 million users use Facebook, and about 18 million users use Instagram and/or Twitter (Global Media Insight, 2018). Regarding social chat applications, it has been shown that 24.27 million users in Saudi Arabia use WhatsApp, 13.30 million use Facebook messengers, and about 13 million users use Snapchat (Global Media Insight, 2018). Around 18 million access these platforms through their mobile devices of nearly 25 million total active users on social media which accounts for about 72% of all social media users in the country (Global Media Insight, 2018).

The universal experience of employing these networks for teaching goals has shown its positive impact and beneficial impact in making teaching activities more effective and efficient. It offers teachers means of communicating with students, such as notice boards, e-mail, Google Docs, presentation of video and pictures, teaching programs, and direct communication between teacher and learner irrespective of time and place (Munoz & Towner, 2009). Abdulshafi (2012) identified the influence of using social communication websites and examined their relationship to increased cognitive impact using a sample of 300 students in Egyptian universities. The results showed that the most important social communication sites preferred by these young people were Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. One of the most remarkable effects of virtuous communication sites is the formation of new friendships, along with the sharing of the latest news about important events and the exchange of favourite films and videos. The study indicated that there were significant statistical differences between the young people in the research sample based on the type the educational level of the family in their average rates of use. Al-Saud (2014) identified motivation among university students regarding the usage of social communication sites and the satisfaction attained from them. The results showed that more than 85% of the sample used social media, that 88% spent between one and two hours using these networks, and that more than 61% used Twitter, compared with 57% who used Facebook. The motives were to access news and information about the dominant international political issues but searching for events and celebrations were also one of the foremost purposes.

Pedagogically, Darwish's (2018) study discovered that the use of social media in Arab universities is not conspicuous to some extent, especially in academic matters. The spread of social media in everyday life suggests that there is a growing need to utilize these tools as a teaching resource and a source of knowledge adapted to young people's way of life. Kuppuswamy and Narayan (2010) identified the influence of social networking sites on the education of young people. It showed that young people are significantly attracted to social network sites and that such sites have a positive influence on them, but they may also lead students to be negligent and incautious about their studies. The study recommended that beneficial use should be made of these sites in teaching as long as their use is based on sound principles and appropriate supervision. Both EFL faculty and their students agreed on the need to include social media in the curriculum and the need to pay attention to the use of social media applications in the teaching process.

#### *A. Objectives of the Study*

The significance of social media in contemporary life, the widespread proliferation of their applications, and their adoption by many educational institutions indicate that social media have become one of the wonderful characteristics of modernity. There is sparse information available on their use for teaching purposes among teachers specifically, despite the importance of such networks in daily life and the spread and diversity of the services that they provide. This study aims to identify the level of interaction of Saudi EFL teachers with modern technologies and the extent to which they employ them in positive ways to achieve learning objectives and the goals of teaching. The present study may be a

stimulus set for further studies focusing more closely on the uses of specific programs and applications within social media to identify their educational role. The aim of the present study is also a response to educational requests to EFL teachers to keep pace with contemporary innovations and employ them to enhance and foster the teaching and learning English.

### *B. Questions of the Study*

The questions addressed in the present study are as follows;

1. What is the extent of social media use for teaching purposes by Saudi EFL teachers?
2. What are the attitudes of Saudi EFL teachers towards the use of social media for teaching purposes?
3. Is there a significant statistical relationship between the responses of the research sample according to some variables (e.g., experience, stage of study)?
4. What difficulties are encountered by Saudi EFL teachers in using social media for teaching purposes?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media today has become one of the developers of education and a home for the lives of millions of network users. The effect of these networks is felt by educators of young people at all stages. It is no longer acceptable for educational establishments and their teachers to avoid the reality of this virtual world. It has become essential to make an effort and invest in various sites and tools to improve learning and teaching and English educational opportunities.

### *A. Concept of Social Media Tools (SM)*

Social media may be defined as a system of electronic networks, which allows the subscriber to create a personal site within that is to be connected via an electronic social system with other members, who have similar interests or hobbies (Radi, 2003). Lenhart and Madden (2007) observed the use of social media to measure them as designated virtual spaces on the internet through which users can create personal pages to communicate with each other. The use of social media advances ideas and discusses them, which allows the users to decide the nature of the content that they publish or exchange with others with a high level of freedom and innovation. These networks also provide many and varied ways to learn and interact through conversation and correspondence via e-mail. Almost everyone familiar with social networks is agreed that as a collection of interactive sites users can communicate and exchange information and images for a variety of purposes.

### *B. Growth of Social Media*

Social media began to come out in the late nineties. The 'Classmates' site, which connected former classmates, appeared in 1995, and 'Six Degrees' emerged in 1997. The concept of this type of site was based on the publication of users' files and a service for sending personal messages to a group of friends. Several Severaltes emerged, such as 'LiveJournal' and 'KeyWorld', which were founded in Korea in 1999. The period from 1999 to 2000 also witnessed the appearance of a few other media that did not spread widely. The main aim of these sites was to conduct communication via group messages that included several subscribers with the same interests (Radi, 2003; Azab et al., 2016).

The remarkable "take-off" of social media appeared at the beginning of 2002 with the emergence of 'Friendster', which achieved such success that Google was prompted to attempt to buy it in 2003. At the end of the same year, the 'SkyRock' site appeared in France as a blogging platform and then was transformed completely into a social network in 2007. SkyRock spread widely and took seventh place in 2008 in the order of social sites according to new subscribers. At the beginning of 2005, the American site 'Myspace' was launched and became one of the first and largest social networks at the international level around the same time. 'Facebook' emerged as the most famous site in the world of social networks followed by several social networks such as Twitter and YouTube to form a comprehensive network of applications, programs, and websites for social communication (Radi, 2003; Haleel, 2015).

### *C. Positive and Negative Aspects of Social Media*

The astonishing acceleration in technical discoveries, particularly in the internet and communication has enforced new facts across the world. The concept of the 'global village' has become a reality with the spread of social media, the proliferation of smart devices, and the fall in the cost of subscriptions, which has increased the use of these networks in daily life. This increase has produced a range of positive and negative outcomes and educators must devote their attention to them to benefit from the positives and limit the negatives. A review of the studies and the literature in this field enables us to point briefly to several positive aspects of using social media in learning and teaching English.

Albahiri (2010) focused on the facilitation of personal development activities and the development of skills via a range of useful daily content. The personal-development activities and development are not devoid of negative, despite the enormous scale of the positive aspects of social media. The virtual relationship favours the weakening of the influence of family and the degradation of the strength of traditional social relationships between individuals. An increase in the consumption of time and money is associated with an increase in the cases of internet addiction (Albahiri, 2010). Inclination to the blind imitation of aberrant behaviours, the emails are likely to disprove the teachings of Islam and its culture and sabotage the values of society. The ignominy of cognitive capabilities raised the dependence on electronic applications and smart programs and intelligent programs.

#### D. Educational Uses of Social Media

These networks have attained a significant presence in educational life, particularly in contemporary times, even though so relationships with peers, friends and classmates with shared hobbies and interests, Lenartz (2015), indicates that 77% of students at the University of Minnesota in the United States use social media for teaching, learning, development of skills, and for fresh ideas. Offering educational programs on social media helped to make the teaching and learning process more important, significant, and meaningful. The EFL teachers were able to increase participation in the teaching and strengthen their collective spirit and spirit of collaboration. The open nature of social media has facilitated the gathering and employment of large numbers of learners to participate in several types of educational, social, and cultural activities. Moreover, these are offered in an attractive form through instant chat, audio, image, and video files, educational and more (Haleel, 2015). Social media applications have helped over several difficulties that teachers previously faced in classrooms. Some studies have indicated that social media networks are successful tools in breaking down hesitation and shyness among certain students and have helped them to express their opinions, attitudes, and ideas with greater freedom.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Design

This study has employed the descriptive survey method because of its appropriateness, given the nature of the objectives and research questions. It helped in establishing the EFL teachers' opinions about how they use social media for teaching purposes identifying the attitudes and difficulties encountered in using these tools when teaching.

#### B. Study Sample

A random sampling technique was used in this study consisting of 88 EFL teachers selected randomly from all schools (primary, middle school, and secondary) in the Asir region, Saudi Arabia. The proportion of responses of participants who had between 3 and 6 years of experience was the largest at 47.7%; while the proportion of those working with social media for less than 3 years was 38.6%. The EFL teachers whose experience with social communication programs was longer than 6 years made up only 13.6% of the sample. This distribution may reflect the proliferation of using these applications among young people in Saudi Arabia as these programs have emerged and spread rapidly in society over the last five to seven years. Regarding the distribution of respondents according to the school level, many of the respondents (40.36%) were working in field education in middle schools. The proportion of participants at the secondary stage was approximately 30% of the study sample and about 29% of the sample work in primary schools.

#### C. Study Instrument

The study used a questionnaire as a study instrument to collect the required data. The questionnaire was prepared to comply with the research objectives and divided into four main sections. The first section was to collect basic data concerning the sample such as years of experience in using social media and the academic level of the field teaching school. The second section aimed to discover the extent of social media use for teaching purposes. The third section was aimed to elicit the participants' attitudes towards the use of social media for teaching purposes, while the fourth section determined the difficulties in such use via responses to an open-ended question.

The initial version of the questionnaire was presented to nine specialists in curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment and evaluation to verify the sections of the questionnaire and the extent to which they represent the participant's use. The research tool was developed considering the opinions received. Moreover, the questionnaire was piloted with a group of 25 teachers and the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was calculated which showed a value of 0.862, which is a good degree of reliability.

TABLE 1  
CRONBACH'S ALPHA FOR THE RELIABILITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE PILOT SAMPLE: 25)

Statement	No. of Items	Alpha
The overall Reliability of the questionnaire	15	0.86.2

#### D. Data Analysis

The data obtained through the questionnaire was entered and coded in the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) to obtain relevant results.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The mean and standard deviation were calculated according to the respondents' estimates. Each of the fifteen items was allocated a three-part response scale (always, sometimes, never). The use of social media by EFL teachers for teaching purposes was considered to be high if the mean for an item was between 2.35 and 3, and moderate if the mean

was between 1.68 and 2.5 social media use if the Mean was less than 1.67 (Table 1). The mean for the estimates by individuals considering their level of use of social media for teaching purposes varied between 2.75 and 1.90 with the excerpt use of the Myspace site, which was no more than 1.56. Regarding the standard about the division of the range into three equal parts, it was found that the respondents' use was high or mode except MyexceptYouTube was used most frequently for teaching purposes (2.75) followed by Twitter (2.71), Facebook (2.59), and Instagram (2.48). All of these mean scores fall within the range of high use. Snapchat and LinkedIn had a mean of 2.31 and 1.90 respectively these results indicated the popularity among teachers of using social media for teaching purposes. These results were consistent with the studies conducted by Abdulshafi (2011) and Al-Saud (2014).

TABLE 2

Item	Always		Sometimes		Never		Mean	Standard Deviation
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
<b>Facebook</b>	60	68.2	20	22.7	8	9.1	2.59	0.654
<b>Twitter</b>	67	76.1	17	19.3	4	4.5	2.71	0.546
<b>Myspace</b>	53	60.2	21	23.9	14	15.9	1.56	0.756
<b>YouTube</b>	68	77.3	18	20.5	2	2.3	2.75	0.485
<b>Instagram</b>	52	59.1	26	29.5	10	11.4	2.48	0.694
<b>Snapchat</b>	42	47.7	32	36.4	14	15.9	2.31	0.736
<b>LinkedIn</b>	18	20.5	44	50	26	29.5	1.90	0.705

The attitude of the EFL teachers towards the use of social media for teaching purposes was considered 'very positive' if the mean score of the item was between 4.21 and 5.00, and 'positive' if it was between 3.41 and 4.20. If the value of the average fell to between 2.61 and 3.40 then the attitude of the EFL teachers was regarded as 'average'. Respondents' attitudes were considered 'negative' or 'very negative' if the mathematical average was less than 2.60. Table 4 shows that the study sample held positive attitudes toward the use of social media for teaching purposes as the overall mean of their responses to the scale was 3.76. Further, the average response to eight of the items on the survey was between 3.50 and 3.78, which indicated a positive attitude among the study sample. About the two items: 'Some tasks have been cancelled to follow what is going on in communication networks' and 'I encourage my colleagues to benefit from social media in education,' the averages were 3.20 and 3.38, respectively. These values fell within the neutral category. The reason may be because of the recent spread of social media, the belief in what these networks offer their user in terms of educational enrichment and the faith of the study sample that in what these networks provide in terms of electronic communication services, file sharing, and exchange of information. All of these functions are considered important aspects that an EFL teacher requires while teaching. These results were consistent with the results of the studies conducted by Kuppaswamy and Narayan (2010) and Mazman and Usluel (2010).

TABLE 3  
EFL TEACHER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR TEACHING PURPOSE

No.	Expression	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Average	Standard deviation
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	I feel comfortable browsing communication networks	35	39.8	36	40.9	15	17	0	0	2	2.3	4.16	0.870
2	I always follow what is going on in my specialization via communication networks	16	18.2	28	13.8	32	36.4	8	9.1	4	4.5	3.5	0.984
3	Communication networks have influenced my knowledge of my specialization	27	30.7	35	39.8	19	21.6	7	8.0	0	0	3.93	0.920
4	When browsing communication networks, I am keen to develop my skills and information	42	47.7	40	45.5	6	6.8	0	0	0	0	4.41	0.620
5	Some tasks have been cancelled to follow what is going on in communication networks	5	5.7	30	34.1	34	38.6	15	17	4	4.5	3.20	0.95
6	I do not feel relaxed if I am cut off from communication networks	21	23.9	35	39.8	24	27.3	7	8.0	1	1.1	3.78	0.953
7	Networking sites have made teachers' work easier for them	16	18.2	44	50	28.4	25	2.3	2	1	1.1	3.82	0.796
8	I maintain a special relationship with educators via communication networks	24	27.3	33	37.5	27	30.7	4	4.5	0	0	3.88	0.870
9	I can benefit from communication networks in communicating with my students	14	15.9	35	39.8	28	31.8	10	11.4	1	1.1	3.58	0.931
10	I encourage my colleagues to benefit from social communication sites in education	7	8	32	36.4	37	42	11	12.5	1	1.1	3.38	0.848
<b>Total</b>											3.76	0.88	

The statistically significant difference between the answers of the research sample according to specific variables was calculated through a t-test that helped in identifying the effects of the experience on the responses of the research sample, as shown in Table 4. Table 5 shows the t-test analysis to identify the effect of the stage of the school on the responses of the research sample, as shown in Table 5. Tables 4 and 5 have shown that there was no significant statistical difference in the averages of the individuals' assessments according to any of the research variables (experience in using social media and stage of school).

TABLE 4

<b>The extent of use of communication networks for teaching purposes</b>	<b>Within groups</b>	<b>3.178</b>	<b>2</b>	
	Between groups	172.095	85	2.025
	Group	175.273	87	<b>0.785</b>
<b>Attitude toward the use of communication networks for teaching purposes</b>	<b>Within groups</b>	<b>39.755</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19.878</b>
	Between groups	1163.109	85	13.684
	Group	1202.864	87	1.453
				<b>0.459</b>
				0.240

TABLE 5  
T-TEST TO IDENTIFY THE EFFECT OF THE LEVEL OF THE STAGE OF SCHOOL BY THE EXTENT OF USE AND ATTITUDE

		t	Df.	Average squares	F	Sig.
The extent of use of communication networks for teaching purposes	Within groups	7.386	2	3.693	1.870	0.160
	Between groups	167.886	85	1.975		
	Group	175.273	87			
Attitude toward the use of communication networks for teaching purposes	Within groups	33.862	2	16.931	1.231	0.297
	Between groups	1169.01	85	13.753		
	Group	1202.864	87			

Table 5 comprises several obstacles that limit the use of social media by EFL teachers, and the benefits gained from them for teaching purposes. These results confirm the importance of being concerned with the roles of EFL teachers and their students to benefit from these networks as it helps in extending their learning and teaching English opportunities, encourages communication with each other by providing material and moral incentives, and develops skills to use these networks in the best way. The propagation of the electronic teaching culture and benefits from the services available within these networks by school staff, parents, and guardians may contribute greatly to making the task of teachers easier.

TABLE 6  
THE DIFFICULTIES THAT LIMIT EFL TEACHER'S USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR TEACHING PURPOSES

Difficulty	No.	%
1 Lack of incentive for the teacher	96	16.95
2 The disparity in readiness of students to use tools such as these	61	14.99
3 The amount of time taken up by social media applications	56	13.76
4 Lack of development courses for teachers in this area	53	13.02
5 Poor or non-existent internet services in some schools	48	11.79
6 Lack of knowledge of the nature of these networks and their potential	38	8.35
7 Negative attitudes and psychological anxiety among some teachers and directors	37	9.09
8 Lack of awareness among some parents of the educational effectiveness of this type of network	28	6.88
9 Inappropriateness for much of the course content	21	5.16
10 Total	407	100

In contemporary times, social media networks are considered among the important institutions that play a vital role in teaching and learning and educating young people and providing them with customs and behaviours. They are also important tools for social change. They are not merely tools for building friendships or for communication, entertainment, and acquaintance; rather they are a valuable resource for information that has opened doors for teachers to improve communication in English with students and involve them in interactive activities with their programs and their school community (Tawfiq, 2015). Azab, Mahmoud, and Yasmine (2016) tried to establish a psychometric profile on a scale of motivation of young people about social media. The study found that there were five main motives for using social media among the research sample including; maintaining existing relationships, meeting new people, spending free time, introducing themselves and expressing themselves to others, and learning and teaching English through the exchange of information regarding academic and research projects.

Jarrar (2012) defined social media as a network of effective sites that facilitate social life among a group of acquaintances and friends. They also allow old friends to contact each other after many years, exchange images and generally consolidate social relationships via audio and visual communication in English. Al-Suwaidi (2013), focused on strengthening interaction between individuals and maintaining the relationship between them beyond culture, society or family, or any specific local scope. It helps in breaking the boundaries of shyness and facilitates communication in English with others by exchanging opinions and getting to know other cultures. It opens the doors that allow the launch of innovations and projects that help society to develop. It also allows access to national and international events in the quickest time possible.

Haleel (2015) confirmed that social media applications are no longer used just for making acquaintances or knowing what is going on around us. They have become effective teaching tools to improve communication in English with EFL students and involve them in ineffective activities that differ from traditional English teaching methods. Hussain (2018) indicated that recent years have witnessed increased growth in the use of social media for teaching English purposes as thousands of institutes, schools, and universities have participated worldwide. Social media have attracted the interest of EFL students in learning English, the search for knowledge, and the love of reading, especially as these sites are closely linked with their daily way of life. They also motivate them towards constructive and positive communication and the exchange of common interests, information, and knowledge beyond the bounds of school and university.

## V. CONCLUSION

The extent of their use and attitudes towards their use for teaching functions. It has also identified the foremost significant difficulties that users of those technologies face within the teaching field. The results have shown that EFL teachers used Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube extensively and had a positive perspective toward their use for teaching purposes. The findings supported several results reported in previous literature regarding the use of social media for

learning and teaching English. The analysis of the results shows that using social media could play a vital role in creating an interactive teaching English environment. It also helps provide basic information, which, in turn, helps EFL teachers and educational stakeholders make important decisions effectively and accurately. This is likely to help in increasing the overall productivity of the process of teaching and learning English. The study has highlighted the obstacles that EFL teachers faced once they mistreatment these technologies. The foremost outstanding of that was the absence of any reasonable incentives for the EFL teacher to use these tools, the inequality in the level of readiness of the teachers for this sort of learning, and also the amount of time that these networks consume on the part of both teachers and students. This study provides information that will be of interest to EFL teachers and English course books, curriculum designers and developers.

In light of the results, the study has recommended that care should be taken to review training programs for EFL teachers and develop them by incorporating best educational practices about technical innovations. Specialized professional development should be provided to take advantage of various means of social media and obtain benefits from them as a teaching resource and a gateway to positive communication between EFL student and teacher. Moreover, further educational studies should be conducted on the effectiveness of certain social media and in particular what live broadcasting services to improve the teaching and learning English and the educational process.

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# The Transitive Construction of China's National Image in the Editorials of *The New York Times*

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**Abstract**—The construction of a country's national image depends not only on its promotion and construction in media but also on other countries' reports on and comments about it, especially when they are in conflicting states. Taking the transitivity system theory within systemic functional linguistics as its theoretical basis, this study employed a qualitative method to investigate the construction of China's national image in the editorials about the Sino-US trade dispute in *The New York Times*. This study first calculated the frequency of each process; then, it analyzed the distribution and function of each process regarding its role in the construction of China's national image. The findings showed that, at 75.85%, the material process comprised the largest proportion, depicting the actions China has taken or the things that have been done to China. The verbal process ranked second, through which editorials aimed to persuade the readers and ensure authority. The percentages of mental and relational processes were similar. Moreover, an analysis of the relational process showed the attributes and values added to China. The images constructed by the editorials in *The New York Times* were mixed and conflicting. China was simultaneously constructed as the victim of the trade dispute and also as a country of over-production capacity, a voracious consumer of world raw materials, and a competitor with unfair techniques. Furthermore, China's damages to the United States were highlighted and emphasized.

**Index Terms**—transitivity, China's national image, trade dispute, editorials

## I. INTRODUCTION

American scholar Boulding (1959) states national image is a combination of how a country perceives itself and is perceived by other agents in the international system, a consequence of information input and output. A good national image contributes to trust and cooperation, whereas a bad one may incite hostile reactions and undermine the country's security (Kopra, 2012). Mass media are major channels for people to obtain information about the world outside their community (Saleem, 2007), and such media play an important role in projecting and disseminating national images (Kunczik, 2016).

China has developed its economy with unprecedented speed since the implementation of the reform and the opening-up policy. Although China has become the second-largest economy in the world, its national image does not align with its economic power on the international level (Meng, 2020). China's national image (Meng, 2020) is frequently defamed and misinterpreted. Therefore, it is significant to investigate the construction of China's national image in China-related news reports and editorials in other countries' mass media, especially when such countries are in a relatively tense relationship with China.

When news media present the conflicting states of two countries, the national images of the two countries are constructed based on the media's interests, values, and ideologies (Wang & Ge, 2020). Even though the national image is influenced by the nation's comprehensive power, it is also determined by how other countries identify and construct the image in the international world based on those countries' social and economic interaction (Meng, 2020).

The Sino-US trade dispute started in March 2018 when Donald Trump, the then-President of the United States, signed an order to impose tariffs on about USD 60 billion worth of goods imported from China. Therefore, China announced tariffs on 128 products imported from the US (Wang & Ge, 2020).

The trade war lasted for several months, during which both the Chinese and American mass media covered it extensively, including publishing many editorials to discuss its causes and possible consequences. Different from news reports, editorials represent the ideological attitudes of the newspaper's owners and managers, especially in the coverage of less familiar yet more complex international events which may influence the public and policy makers' perception of other countries in the world (Izadi & Saghaye-Biria, 2007). The news editorials in mainstream media have a major impact on the construction of national images (Entman, 2010). Thus, it is significant to study how China's national image is constructed through the editorials about the Sino-US trade war in mainstream American media.

As one of the leading newspapers in the coverage of international news and opinions in the US, *The New York Times* attracts readers from every state and all around the world. Moreover, *The New York Times* also contributes to setting the inter-media agenda, especially in global news coverage (Golan, 2006). Therefore, this study aims to examine China's national image constructed by the editorials related to the Sino-US trade war in *The New York Times* from the transitivity perspective. Based on systemic functional linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), this study focuses on the transitivity analysis of the ideational metafunction to scrutinise the construction of China's image.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Systemic Functional Linguistics

SFL studies language and its function in social settings. Three metafunctions of language were proposed in SFL: ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. The ideational metafunction construes the human experience and represents reality through the transitivity system. Furthermore, the interpersonal function establishes and maintains interactions between people through the mood system. Finally, the textual function organises messages based on context through theme and rhyme.

The ideational metafunction is further divided into experiential and logical functions. As the realisation of the experiential function, the transitivity system consists of six processes that focus on the meaning representation in a clause. The processes are material, mental, behavioural, verbal, relational, and existential processes. The material process refers to the process of doing with two participants, namely the actor who does the activity or action and the goal. The mental process is the process of sensing with two participants, namely the senser and the phenomenon. The relational process shows the processes of being, which are subdivided into attributive and identifying processes, comprising three participants, namely the sayer, the verbiage, and the receiver. The verbal process is the process of saying something. The behaviour process refers to physiological and psychological behaviours such as breathing, smiling, and coughing. Finally, the existential process shows the existence of something, with the signal word 'there'.

Transitivity analysis has been frequently used in different contexts, for instance, in political speeches (Muhassin, 2023; Xiang, 2022), novels (Yousif & Bulaila, 2023), news reports (Seo, 2013) to show the construction of certain events and embedded ideologies. The transitivity analysis can reflect the media's construction of actions, events, and situations through language choices. This study aims to investigate the language choices made by the editorials in *The New York Times* to express their views about the trade war and their construction of China's national image.

### B. China's National Image

The definition of 'national image' differs across scholarship. American scholar Kenneth Ewart Boulding (1956) defined national image as a combination of a country's self-perception and the perception of nations in the international world. In the modern world, a country's national image plays an important role in its international communications with other countries. National image construction has been considered relevant by every state in the international community (Ding, 2007). Studies regarding the national image have been conducted in various academic fields, such as international relations (Anholt, 2007), communication (McCourt, 2021; Peng, 2004; Sutter, 2021), and linguistics (Huan, 2023; Liu & Liu, 2021).

China's economy has developed rapidly during the past decades after the reform and opening-up policies, and the country has become the second-largest economy in the world since 2010 (Lin, 2011), drawing much more attention from the international community. Accordingly, studies on China's national image have also grown significantly in the 21st century. Research on China's national image construction in the news reports of international media using corpus-based critical discourse analysis is immensely popular (Huan & Deng, 2021; Tang, 2021). A corpus analysis primarily focuses on the collocation of words, high-frequency words, and certain sentence patterns to give insights into national image construction. Data are usually collected from the hard news section. Relatively few linguistic studies have been conducted on the mainstream media editorials to reveal their construction of the national image, which is highly significant since editorials express more about the ideological stance of the newspaper's owners and managers (Henry & Tator, 2002). There are also many studies on China's image in the country's English-language papers, the translations of government reports, and the speeches of political officials (Zhang & Ju, 2020; Zhu & Ji, 2018). These studies have been conducted using metafunctions, especially the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions of SFL, to reveal language choices in meaning-making (Liu & Liu, 2021; Zhu & Ji, 2018). The SFL approach mainly focuses on language choices and their functions in the construction of the national image. Therefore, this study aims to examine the construction of China's image in the editorials of *The New York Times* using transitivity analysis in SFL.

### C. Sino-US Relationships and the Trade War

Since its normalisation in 1972, the Sino-US relationship has experienced many ups and downs. Over the past 40 years, this relationship has been both competitive and cyclical, changing from periods of relative stability and cooperation to ones of frustration and confrontation (Medeiros, 2019). Studies on the Sino-US relationship have attracted the attention of numerous linguistic researchers (Boylan et al., 2021). The outbreak of the trade war increased the volume of research into the Sino-US relationship from the discourse analysis perspective (Chen & Wang, 2022). Chen and Wang (2022) conducted a comparative corpus-based study of the news reports on the trade war from both the

Chinese English-language newspaper China Daily and The New York Times. In their study, they found that The New York Times tends to construct the event as a trade war and emphasises China's potential threat to the national security of the US, while China Daily prefers to describe the matter as a 'friction', indicating China's willingness to negotiate about the topic. The previous discursive studies focused on the hard news of the trade dispute from different media with corpus-based critical discourse analysis. Furthermore, there is relatively less research on the editorials related to the trade dispute from the transitive analysis of SFL. Therefore, the present study attempts to bridge this gap in research by conducting a transitive analysis of *The New York Times*' editorials to examine their constructions of China's national image.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Data

This study used 10 editorials related to the Sino-US trade dispute written by the Editorial Board between January 2018 and December 2019 as research data. This period was chosen because it witnessed the beginning and progress of the trade dispute (Chen & Wang, 2022). The titles of the 10 selected editorials are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
THE TITLES OF THE EDITORIALS

Number of the Editorial	Date	Name of the Editorial
Editorial 1	Mar. 02, 2018	Trade Wars are Destructive. Of Course, Trump Wants one.
Editorial 2	Mar. 08, 2018	Donald Trump's Empty Words on Trade
Editorial 3	Mar. 22, 2018	Trump's Half-Baked China Tariffs
Editorial 4	Apr. 06, 2018	Putting Trump's Trade Bombast to Test
Editorial 5	May 31, 2018	America Declares War on Its Friends
Editorial 6	Jun. 15, 2018	Chinese Tariffs are already Hitting Trump Voters
Editorial 7	Dec. 04, 2018	You Don't Understand Tariffs, Man
Editorial 8	Mar. 09, 2019	Will Trump Trade the Future for a Hill of Beans?
Editorial 9	Aug. 06, 2019	President Trump's Fruitless Trade War
Editorial 10	Aug. 23, 2019	With the Economy on Edge, Trump Sees Only Enemies

The data were collected in several steps. First, the keywords 'China', 'Chinese' 'trade', 'trade war' or 'trade dispute' were combined and entered into the search engine on the official online website of *The New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com>). After the opinion section and the specific time range from January 2018 to December 2019 were set, all the articles under the opinion section showed up.

Second, since the search engine could not distinguish between the news editorials written by the editorial board and op-eds and the other columns under the opinion section, a manual check was conducted to identify all the editorials related to the Sino-US trade war written by the Editorial Board. During the manual check, the editorials written by individual contributors and those that were less relevant to the topic of the trade war were eliminated.

#### B. Research Objectives and Questions

When it comes to the construction of a country's national image, especially over an international dispute or in a period of conflict, that country's mainstream media tend to support and legitimise its national claims and interests (Chen & Wang, 2022). This study aimed to investigate how the editorials in *The New York Times* constructed the trade dispute between the US and China. The implicit experiential meaning and the underlying reality of socio-political situations can be revealed through a transitivity analysis. Therefore, the present study adopted a transitivity analysis of the clauses related to China to uncover China's national images constructed by the editorials.

The following research questions were explored.

1. What are the distributions of the transitivity processes in the verbal construction of China's national image?
2. What are the realisations and functions of the processes in the construction of China's national image?
3. What kinds of national images of China were constructed by the *The New York Times* editorials between January 2018 and December 2019?

#### C. Research Design

This study was based on a transitivity analysis of SFL. The research followed the framework for transitivity analysis given in Figure 1 to identify the process types and participants in the clauses for exploring the construction of China's national image.

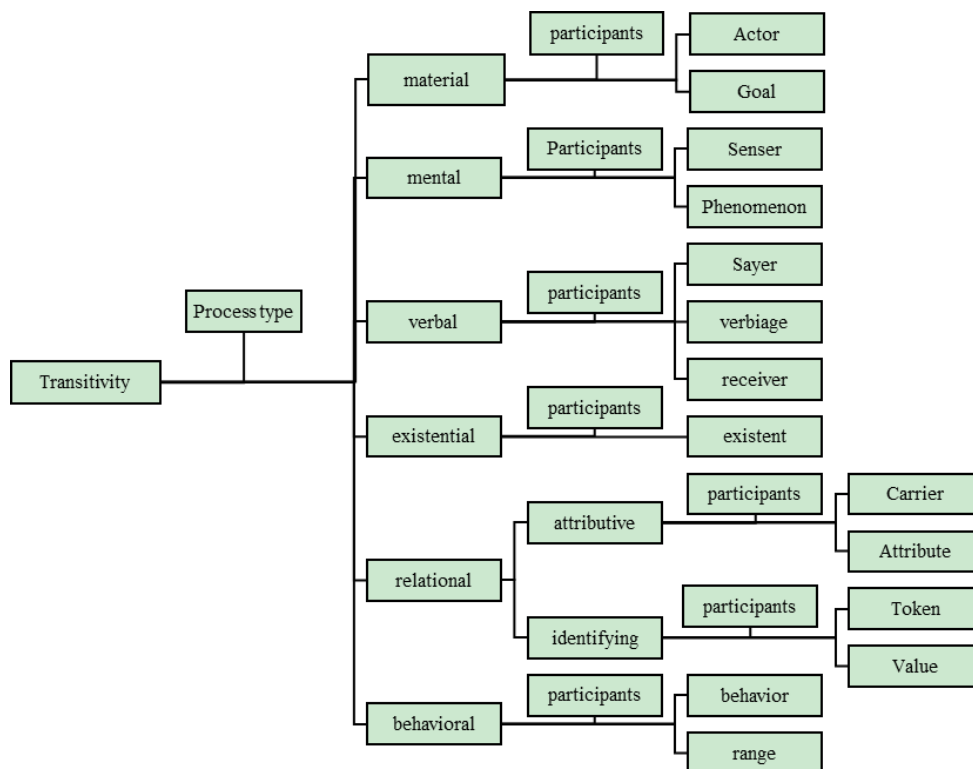


Figure 1. The Process Types and Participants in Transitivity System

The data analysis process was divided into four steps. First, the titles of all the editorials were examined from a transitivity perspective. Second, each editorial was carefully reviewed to select all the China-related expressions. Further, the clauses in the editorials were analysed to eliminate the data that were not relevant to the descriptions of China. The transitive analysis concentrated on the clauses related to China in which the country was a participant of any kind, for example, the actor, goal, sayer, possessor, or senser. All the China-related clauses in the editorial were collected and copied into a new Word document to collate the China-related data.

Third, the process types and participants of the China-related clauses were identified and calculated. Upon completing the transitive analysis, it was double-checked to ensure the annotations were correct. The frequency of different processes was also calculated.

Finally, a detailed discussion of the realisation and function of each process was conducted with specific examples to explore the construction of China’s national images through transitivity. The constructed images of China were identified through an analysis of the participants and process verbs selected from the clauses.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Distribution of the Transitivity Process

This study found 352 clauses directly related to the description of China. The distribution and percentage of the six processes of the transitivity analysis are shown in Table 2. Material processes comprised the largest proportion at 75.85%, which depicted the things that China had done and the things that had been done to China. The verbal processes accounted for 10.23% of the processes, most of which were the quotations of officials and experts to support the editorial’s opinion. Moreover, the most frequently used verbs in the verbal process were ‘say’ and ‘said’. The use of mental processes and relational processes was almost the same. Mental processes reflected the inner activities of the officials and experts. China’s constructed national image was revealed through the use of the mental process verb and the phenomenon. The relationship process showed the attributes and values assigned to China. However, the behavioural process, which refers to the physiological and psychological behaviours of a conscious being (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), was not found in China-related clauses.

TABLE 2  
DISTRIBUTIONS OF THE TRANSITIVITY PROCESS

Process	Number	Percentage
Material processes	267	75.85%
Verbal processes	36	10.23%
Mental processes	24	6.82%
Relational	22	6.25%
existential	3	0.92%

### B. *Transitivity Analysis of the Title of the Editorials*

As the titles of the editorials in Table 1 indicate, of the ten-trade war-related editorials, only Editorial 6 directly mentioned China, while the other editorials focused on the then-President Trump. This fact reflects that the editorials were primarily concerned with the behaviours and decisions made by Trump and the effects of the trade war on America.

Editorial 6 was titled ‘Chinese tariffs are already hitting Trump voters’; it was a material process with Chinese tariffs as the actor and Trump voters as the goal. The use of the process verb ‘hit’ revealed that the tariff imposed by China has caused some damage to Americans. Through the selection of semantic words and the use of the material process, China was constructed as a country that negatively influenced Americans. The title of Editorial 1 was ‘Trade wars are destructive. Of course, Trump wants one’. In this title, the first clause was a relational process with the trade war as the carrier and the term ‘destructive’ as the attributive. This clause showed the attitude of the editorial board towards the trade war: they thought the trade war would cause significant damage. The second clause was a mental process with President Trump as the senser. By using ‘want’ as the mental process verb, the editorial emphasised that the trade war was desired and started by Trump himself. Because a mental process is more subjective, the editorial employed this mental process clause to convey the information that Trump was responsible for the destructive trade war.

The titles of Editorials 2, 3, and 9 were nominal phrases, not clauses, but the choices of terms such as ‘empty words’, ‘fruitless’, and ‘half-baked’ reflected the editorial board’s negative attitude towards the implementation of the trade war.

The clause ‘Putting Trump’s Trade Bombast’ in Editorial 4 is a material process where the process verb is ‘putting’. This clause indicated that Trump’s trade policy was not mature and was in the testing period, which highlights the editorial board’s lack of confidence in the trade war.

The analysis of the titles revealed that although the editorial board admitted that the trade war was started by Trump and did not speak highly of it, they, nevertheless, agreed that the tariff response made by China caused some damage to Trump’s supporters. In this way, China was constructed as a country that negatively influenced Americans.

### C. *Transitivity Analysis of the China-Related Clauses in the Editorials*

#### (a). *Realisations and Functions of the Material Process*

Material processes were used to describe the actions in the real world. Different aspects of the event were highlighted by selecting different actors and process verbs to construe the same event in the real world. First, the material process analysis revealed that The New York Times editorials concurred it was Trump who started the trade war but tended to justify his behaviour by constructing China as a country with an excess steel and aluminium capacity competing with lower prices in the global market.

Excerpt 1: Two years after the Trump administration imposed its first punitive measures on China, the United States is mired instead in an escalating trade conflict with no clear strategy, no discernible goals and no end in sight (Editorial 3).

Excerpt 2: He would impose a 10% tariff on \$300 billion of Chinese imports to the United States. He already had imposed a 25 percent tariff on about \$250 billion of Chinese imports (Editorial 9).

Excerpt 3: The steel and aluminium tariffs are ostensibly aimed at punishing China, which has been driving down prices for those commodities by producing far more metal than the world can use (Editorial 1).

Excerpts 1 and 2 take Trump as the actor and use the material process verb ‘impose’ to show the tariff policies Trump implemented on China, which started the trade dispute. In Excerpt 3, ‘punishing China’ is a material process. The use of the process verb ‘punish’ tends to justify Trump’s implementation of the tariffs on China. It gives the impression that China had done something wrong and that the US improved its tariffs in response to it. The next two clauses explain why China was punished by using the material process verbs ‘driving down’ and ‘producing’. Furthermore, through the material process, the clause ‘producing far more metal than the world can use’ constructs China as a country with over-capacity. Through excess production, China drove down the prices of steel and aluminium, and this action was regarded as an improper way to promote competition. These material process verbs may give the readers the impression that China was not competing healthily against the other countries. This implication is further illustrated by Excerpts 4 and 5.

Excerpt 4: The Trump administration has argued that it is protecting American industry from China, which in recent years has flooded the global market with cheap metals (Editorial 2).

Excerpt 5: China is engaged in a wide range of unfair trade practices, including subsidising domestic manufacturing, impeding the sale of foreign goods, and stealing intellectual property (Editorial 9).

In Excerpt 4, the clause ‘flooded the global market with cheap metals’ is a material process. The use of the process verb ‘flood’ depicts China as a natural disaster in the global market that brought widespread negative influences with cheap metals. In Excerpt 5, the material process verbs ‘subsidising’, ‘impleading’, and ‘stealing’ construct China as a country that carried out many unfair trade activities.

Furthermore, the damage caused by China’s responsive actions to the American economy is highlighted. In Excerpt 6, the process verb ‘hit’, emphasises the negative influence of China on the American economy.

Excerpt 6: China’s retaliatory measures are also hitting the American economy, particularly the farm belt (Editorial 9).

Although the excerpts above indicate that the editorials focused more on the negative actions taken by China, they also reveal the losses incurred by China and legitimise some of its actions in conducting international business. Moreover, the excerpts also showcase the alternative ways in which China responded to the trade conflict.

Excerpt 7: The Chinese government supported the rise of export industries in the 1990s and 2000s by suppressing the exchange value of the yuan, which allowed people in other countries to buy Chinese goods with smaller sums of their own currencies. But over the past half-decade, China has sought to stabilise the value of its currency – in part by resisting depreciation (Editorial 9).

Excerpt 7 gives a relatively objective description of Chinese behaviours. By using the material process verbs ‘support’ and ‘suppress’, it shows that China took some actions to promote its export business and its currency manipulation history. However, the material process verbs ‘seek’ and ‘stabilise’ give credit to China’s efforts in preventing the depreciation of its currency.

Excerpt 8: The Chinese are already establishing new patterns of trade – buying soybeans from Brazil, opening export factories in Southeast Asia, and investing in European infrastructure (Editorial 9).

In Excerpt 8, ‘the Chinese’ are the actors, while the material process verbs are ‘establishing’, ‘buying’, ‘opening’, and ‘investing’. These linguistic choices show the measures China took to buffer against the trade dispute. The editorial’s description of China’s activities serves to convey the information that the US was not the only option for China’s business endeavours and it sought to do business with other countries, thus emphasising that the improved tariff did not effectively impact China.

#### (b). *Realisations and Functions of the Verbal Process*

Verbal processes were also widely employed in the editorials to persuade the audience and show authority and reliability through direct or indirect quotations of the experts and officials. The frequently used verbal process verbs in the clauses were ‘say’, ‘announce’, ‘tell’, ‘vow’, ‘claim’, and ‘promise’. The process verb ‘announced’ was always accompanied by the sayings of President Trump to describe his tariff decisions against China, as shown in Excerpts 9 and 10. China and Chinese officials were considered the sayers in the clauses to show China’s willingness and actions in solving the trade dispute.

Excerpt 9: Mr Trump announced on Thursday a three-pronged attack on China (Editorial 3).

Excerpt 10: Mr Trump announced last week that he would impose a 10% tariff on \$300 billion of Chinese imports to the United States (Editorial 9).

Excerpt 11: The Chinese told the Americans they would be willing to reduce China’s steel production capacity by 150 million tonnes by 2022 (Editorial 2).

Excerpt 12: Earlier this year, China’s premier, Li Keqiang, promised to ‘further widen market access, raise policy transparency and exercise fair and impartial regulation’ (Editorial 7).

In Excerpt 11, the clause ‘the Chinese told the Americans’ is a verbal process, and the process verb is ‘told’. The conversation between China and America is established with the Chinese as the sender and the Americans as the receiver. Furthermore, taking the Chinese as the Sayer signals that China started the conversation, with the implied construction of China’s active attitude in solving the dispute between the two countries. The mental process verb ‘willing to’ and the material action verb ‘reduce’ depict China’s initiative and the action taken in solving the conflicts. Excerpt 12 takes China’s premier as the Sayer, ensuring the authority and reliability of the content. The process verb ‘promise’ emphasises China’s determination to promote a healthy market environment and its willingness to solve the trade dispute.

#### (c). *Realisations and Functions of the Relational Process*

An effective way to discover the constructions of the national image is through the analysis of relational processes, which characterise and identify (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). A relational process shows the relationship between two entities and the connections between them. An analysis of the attributes and values used to express China-related events reveals the construction of China’s national image in the editorials.

Excerpt 13: China has a history of currency manipulation (Editorial 9).

Excerpt 14: The new focus on currency manipulation is particularly misguided (Editorial 9).

Excerpt 15: China, in other words, is not to blame for the trend (Editorial 9).

Excerpt 16: Mr Trump’s move will have a limited effect on China (Editorial 1).

Excerpt 17: The tariffs will have little impact on China (Editorial 2).

The above excerpts are examples of attributive relational clauses. In Excerpt 13, China is attributed with a history of currency manipulation through a possessive attributive clause. In Excerpt 14, the intensive attributive relational process indicates that the recent focus on China’s currency manipulation is not appropriate right, giving an objective description of China and denying the idea proposed by the Trump administration that China was manipulating its money during the trade dispute. The term ‘trend’ refers to the dollar’s movement against the yuan and the depreciation of the Chinese currency in Excerpt 15. Moreover, the attributive feature ‘not to blame’ highlights that it was not China’s responsibility for the depreciation of its currency. The attributive clauses in Excerpts 16 and 17 reflect that the tariffs imposed by the Trump administration did not have much influence on China. Through the above attributive relational clauses, the editorials construct China as a country with a previous history of currency manipulation while also giving an objective

description that it was not engaged in currency manipulation in the recent trade dispute. The negative attitudes towards the improved tariff policy are also revealed through the relational clauses.

Excerpt 18: China's decision to escalate the trade war was a blow to Mr Trump, who has insisted American tariffs will force the Chinese to make concessions (Editorial 10).

Excerpt 19: The Chinese are voracious consumers of the world's raw materials (Editorial 8).

In Excerpt 18, the first clause is an identifying relational clause, with 'China's decision to escalate the trade war' as the token and 'blow' as the value. The value 'blow' reflects that China did not respond in the way that Mr Trump insisted and took some tough actions instead. These linguistic choices construct China as a country with strong reactions against the imposed tariffs.

In Excerpt 19, 'the Chinese' are the token and 'the voracious consumers' are the value. By using voracious consumers to identify the Chinese, the editorial reflects China's great demand for the world's raw materials relatively negatively.

#### (d). *Realisations and Functions of the Mental Process*

Mental processes are concerned with the experience of the inner world of a conscious person. There are four subtypes of sensing, namely perceptive, cognitive, desiderative, and emotive sensing. The description of the inner activities of China provided by some experts reveals the construction of China's national image.

Excerpt 20: The country's leaders fear that moving faster could hurt its economy, harm state-owned banks that have lent to the metal industries, and create unrest among workers who lose their jobs (Editorial 2).

Excerpt 21: China has suffered a loss of sales in the American market (Editorial 9).

The use of the mental process verb 'fear' in Excerpt 20 reflects Chinese leaders' worries about the negative impacts of shutting down the steel mills and aluminium smelters in their country. Through this mental process, the editorials intend to convey that China was not discontinuing the operation of factories for its development and prosperity at the expense of causing damage to international countries. Thus, China is constructed as a country that is obsessed with its development and ignores the global interests of others. China's loss of sales during the trade dispute is vividly depicted through the mental process verb 'suffer' in Excerpt 21, and the country is regarded as the victim of the trade dispute.

Excerpt 22: Experts generally agree that China is not manipulating its currency (Editorial 9).

In this clause, experts are taken as the sensors, and the process verb is 'agree'. These choices deny China's image as a currency manipulator. Furthermore, taking the experts as the sensors helps to objectively express the editorials' attitude towards China in the trade dispute.

#### (e). *Realisations and Functions of the Existential Process*

Excerpt 23: Historians say there is little precedent for Mr Trump's direct and forceful targeting of China (Editorial 4).

The primary function of the existential process is to depict reality and facts objectively (Liu & Liu, 2021). By using the existential process phrase 'there is', the editorial conveys the information that the measures taken by Mr Trump were rarely seen in history and that China was constructed as the victim of the tariff policies.

## V. CONCLUSION

In this study, the transitivity processes, participants, and process verbs in China-related clauses were analysed in the editorials about the Sino-US trade dispute. The study is significant because it identified the different types of processes and discussed the function of the processes in the construction of China's national image in the editorials of the trade dispute. This study contributes to the research on national image construction from a discourse perspective by focusing on the transitivity system of the ideational metafunction in SFL.

Even though previous studies of the news reports about China in *The New York Times* showed a negative tendency in the portrayal of China's national image, the country's national images constructed by the editorials on the Sino-US dispute in *The New York Times* were mixed and conflicting. On the one hand, these editorials constructed China as a country that had brought damage and significant losses to the US by taking retaliatory measures against Mr Trump's tariff policies. On the other hand, they also constructed China as the victim of the trade dispute and highlighted that China was not the only country to blame. The editorials also defended China against some of the notions put forward by the Trump administration, such as currency manipulation. Moreover, they portrayed China as a country that has made some efforts to solve the trade dispute.

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# Rubrics for Girls in Arab Children's Magazines: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis Approach

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**Abstract**—The present study aims at examining the semiotic modes used in the rubrics for girls and the topics they reflect in Arab children's magazines. To this end, eight girls' sections were extracted from two Arab children's magazines, namely *Majid* (active) and *Hatem* (non-active). We adopted Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar in our data analysis. We focused on representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions. The results show that although both publications used a variety of semiotic modes to express meaning, there are some differences between them. That is, *Majid* is richer than *Hatem* in terms of layout, the use of pictures, and vibrant colors. The findings also indicate that the two periodicals discuss similar topics, mainly recipes, fashion, and etiquette, but they vary in the attention given to each topic. While *Majid* concentrates on fashion and beauty, *Hatem* places much more focus on recipes and handcrafts. These results suggest that the variations in focus on specific topics could be related to the socio-economic contexts in which the two magazines are published.

**Index Terms**—Arab children's magazines, rubrics for girls, semiotic modes, visual grammar, metafunctions

## I. INTRODUCTION

Magazines are an integral part of visual media that come in print and digital forms. Behshad and Ghaniabadi (2015) define a magazine as "a complex collection of signs that can be extensively decoded and analyzed by different factors. The most spectacular components are documentary photos, manipulated images, and portrait photos" (p. 20). That is, the different semiotic resources contained in this genre of media, particularly pictures, are worth deciphering as they are not employed purely for illustration or entertainment purposes; they are also used to create meaning (Liu, 2013). So, editors of this genre do not rely solely on language, but they also invest in every visual mode, including designs, graphics, signs, and colors, to transmit an array of meanings.

One type of this genre is children's magazines, which constitute a good example of multimodal discourse. Such magazines are distinguished from those meant for adults by their abundance of visuals such as photos, cartoons, colors, signs, and an appealing layout. Adamski (2019) suggested that children's magazines should have an attractive cover, be colorful, be printed on high-quality paper, and cover children's favorite topics to appeal to young readers.

Most research on the discourse of children's magazines has focused on content analysis, including advertising (e.g., Jones & Reid, 2009; No et al., 2014), educational values (e.g., Pomerantz, 1986; Adamski, 2019), and gender representation (e.g., Sazonenko, 2021; Kurt, 2021). When it comes to Arab children's magazines, it is observed that research focused on a variety of topics, including comic strips (De Blasio, 2020), the attitudes of education specialists, parents, and children (Alyounes et al., 2006), identity (Peterson, 2005), and ideologies perpetuated in magazines (Abdul-Ameer & Abdul-Ameer, 2022). However, the multimodal structure of children's periodicals has received less attention (e.g., Carvalho, 2013; Abdul-Ameer & Abdul-Ameer, 2022). In particular, the existing literature on the multimodal discourse of Arab children's magazines is scarce.

As for comparative studies on Arab children's periodicals, their concentration was on the active magazines, ignoring the non-active ones (Abwini, 2008; Abdulrahman, 2012; Ehab, 2014). To fill this gap, this study compares two Arab children's magazines, *Majid* (active) and *Hatem* (non-active). It focuses on the different semiotic modes found in the rubrics for girls' sections and how they relate to the socio-economic contexts in which the magazines have been published. Specifically, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the semiotic modes employed in the rubrics for girls in *Majid* (active) and *Hatem* (non-active) Arab children's magazines?
2. What topics are reflected by such rubrics in these magazines?
3. How do these rubrics relate to the socio-economic contexts in which the magazines have been published?

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## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Multimodality is an interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological approach that analyzes the meaning of discourse, whether spoken or written, based on different linguistic and visual resources. At the core of multimodality, meaning is communicated through language and other semiotic resources, such as facial expressions, gestures, intonation, colors, images, layout, and signs, among others. “A number of frameworks emerged to analyze the multimodality of different types of discourse” (Belgrimet & Rabab’ah, 2021, p. 192). The grammar of visual design, developed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2006), is one of these frameworks that systematically analyzes multimodal discourse.

### A. Theoretical Framework

The grammar of visual design introduced by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) is primarily developed to analyze visual images. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) suggested that visual images are linguistic tools used to communicate meanings that cannot be expressed verbally. Their framework is regarded as an extension of Halliday’s (1985) systemic functional linguistics theory, which views language as a social system that serves ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. They developed a three-dimensional framework consisting of representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions that correspond to Halliday’s ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions, respectively.

#### (a). Representational Metafunction

This metafunction analyzes images in terms of participants, processes, and circumstances. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) distinguished between two types of participants: represented and interactive. The former refers to entities depicted in images, such as people, places, and objects, whereas the latter is related to the viewers, as well as the photographers and painters, of these images (Ly & Jung, 2015). This metafunction is realized through two types of processes, which are conceptual and narrative. Regarding conceptual representation, it denotes stable situations. This process is further divided into classification, analytical, and symbolic sub-processes. In contrast, narrative representation refers to dynamic situations in which participants are depicted performing actions. Four sub-processes are included in the narrative structure: action, reaction, verbal and mental, and conversion processes (Hussein & Aljamili, 2020). The main difference between conceptual and narrative representations is related to the presence of a vector, a distinctive property of the narrative process. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) defined the vector as “elements that form an oblique line, often a quite strong, diagonal line” (p. 59), and that can be constituted by bodies, tools, or limbs. As for circumstances, they are secondary participants that are divided into locative circumstances (settings) and circumstances of means.

#### (b). Interactive Metafunction

The interactive metafunction deals with the relationship between the participants depicted in the visuals and the viewers. At this level, images are analyzed based on contact (gaze), the size of a frame and social distance, attitudes (perspective and subjective images), and modality. For contact, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) distinguished between demand and offer images. In the former, the represented participants direct their gazes toward the viewers, while in the latter, their gazes are directed away from the audience. Furthermore, the size of the frame refers to the selection of a shot (close-up, medium, or long) to display the participants. These shots establish various social relationships (for example, intimate, medium, and impersonal) between the portrayed participants and the viewers. Perspective or attitude is another component of the interactive dimension; it refers to the choice of an angle or point of view, namely horizontal and vertical angles. The horizontal can either represent the viewers’ involvement (frontal angle) or their detachment (oblique angle). The power relation is associated with the vertical angle, which is achieved at high, eye-level, and low angles. Finally, modality refers to the images’ credibility, truth, and realism. It is measured by different markers, including colors, representation, contextualization, illumination, and brightness.

#### (c). Compositional Metafunction

The compositional metafunction relates the representational and interactive structures using three principles: information value, salience, and framing. The informational value refers to the distribution of different elements in the visuals, such as left-right, top-bottom, and center-margin, and their arrangement imparts to them varying values, including given-new, ideal-real, and center-margin, respectively. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) reported that “coding orientations are culturally specific, certainly where the horizontal dimension is concerned” (p. 181). They illustrated that “in cultures which write from right to left, the given is on the right and the new on the left” (p. 181). Given that Arabic’s coding system is from right to left, this suggests that the items on the right are given, while those on the left are new. Regarding salience, it refers to the image’s noticeable elements that are used to draw the viewers’ attention (Widayanti, 2016). The final principle of the compositional meaning is framing, which is concerned with the connection and disconnection of the different resources employed in the visuals. They can be disconnected using different framing tools, such as colors, space, and framing lines.

### B. Previous Studies on Children’s Magazines

Children’s magazines constitute a significant area of research that has attracted the attention of discourse analysts. Numerous studies have been conducted to explore the discourse of children’s periodicals from various perspectives. To

begin with, Kurt (2021) conducted a qualitative study to assess the portrayal of masculinity and femininity in children's publications during the modernization of the Republic of Turkey. To this end, the researcher selected 35 issues from eight Turkish children's periodicals that were published between 1945 and 1950. The data analysis revealed disparities in gender portrayals. It was found that women were neglected as they rarely appeared in these magazines. They were often depicted as being in charge of domestic tasks and supportive duties. Further, they were usually featured as mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters. In contrast, men were shown as family leaders and representatives of modern Turkey.

In a multimodal study, Carvalho (2013) employed Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar to examine the social meanings constructed in the advertisement section of *Visão Júnior*, a Portuguese children's magazine. His results revealed that this magazine mostly featured different types of advertisements, including those for foods, animals, nature, banks, TV shows, books, movies, fashion and accessories, and mobile phones. The researcher argued that food advertisements encourage children to engage in physical activities because they are often associated with sports. Furthermore, these advertisements enrich children's general knowledge and prepare them for the real world in intriguing ways, such as by acquainting them with the potential relationship between money and banks.

In an earlier study, Pomerantz (1986) analyzed *Ranger Rick*, a nature magazine that is meant for children. The researcher administered a pre-and post-test to determine its ability to improve children's knowledge of animals and the natural environment. Subjects were requested to read three issues of the magazine over three months. The study's findings demonstrated that this magazine has a positive effect on children's knowledge. It contributed to the development of three crucial dimensions: animals, plants, and ecological concepts. This has been confirmed by the participants, who claimed that magazines constitute one of the main sources of information.

Concerning Arab children's magazines, Abdul-Ameer and Abdul-Ameer (2022) investigated the ideologies reflected on nine front covers of an Iraqi children's magazine, namely (المزمار) /'Al Mizmār/ (Tr. Oboe). The data were drawn from two political eras in Iraq's history: the 1970s and the 1980s. The researchers analyzed the data using Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar, focusing exclusively on the compositional metafunction. Their findings suggested that hidden meanings and ideologies were communicated through alternate modalities (i.e., visual images) other than language since the audience is children. The visual imagery of the 1970s promoted tolerance, acceptance, and modernization, while that of the 1980s was more violent as it depicted war, troops, and military uniforms. Their study concluded that the hidden ideologies were intentionally implemented and controlled by dominant and ruling groups in Iraqi society.

In a study originally written in Arabic, Ehab (2014) compared the layout and production of images in two Arab children's magazines, namely *Majid* and *Samir*. The sample comprised 36 issues that were analyzed using content analysis. This piece of research revealed that *Majid* outperformed *Samir* in terms of image production and design. Some serious editorial and typographical flaws were identified in *Samir* that need to be taken into consideration. The researcher also suggested that this magazine needs to reconsider its editorial and pictorial policies. Furthermore, the study concluded by emphasizing the significance of recruiting experts and skilled painters to enhance the quality of *Samir* magazine.

Alyounes et al. (2006) investigated the attitudes of education specialists, children, and parents toward *Hatem* magazine. Their results showed that education specialists were satisfied with the layout of this magazine, the number of pages, and the pictures used. However, they criticized it for its use of advanced vocabulary, which they believed was not suitable for children in the fourth and fifth grades. As for the children, they liked the cover of the magazine, the colors used, and the way the sections were organized, and they indicated that they were most interested in the religion and entertainment sections. In addition, parents were satisfied with the content of this magazine and believed that it contributed positively to the education of their children.

Previous research on Arab children's magazines seems to have placed a greater emphasis on the ideologies communicated in them, the attitudes of children, parents, and specialists toward them, and the evaluation of image production. It is also clear that the multimodal discourse of children's magazines, despite its significance, has attracted little attention from discourse analysts. As a result, the current study aims to fill this gap and contribute to the literature on the multimodal discourse of Arab children's magazines. It examines and compares two children's magazines, *Majid* (active) and *Hatem* (non-active). It delves particularly into the visual techniques and areas of interest in the girls' sections.

### III. METHOD

#### A. Data Collection and Sample Selection

The data for this study were collected from *Majid* and *Hatem*, two Arab children's magazines. *Majid* is a monthly magazine that is intended for children aged 5 to 11. It was founded in February 1979 by Abu Dhabi Media Company in the United Arab Emirates and distributed in several Arab countries, as well as a few non-Arab ones. Similarly, *Hatem* was a monthly magazine that was first issued in November 1998 by the Jordan Press Foundation, Al-Rai. It was meant for children aged 6 to 16. This magazine was temporarily put on hold in May 2013 due to financial difficulties. There was an attempt to revive *Hatem*, but it only lasted one year before stopping its publications permanently. As this study

focuses on sections addressing girls in the two publications, we gathered a total of eight rubrics for girls (four from each magazine) from the issues of 2011 to 2017. The following table describes the selected sample from the two magazines.

TABLE 1  
THE DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY'S SAMPLE

Magazine Name	Date of publication	Issue number	Page number
Majid	December 2011	1713	64-65
	July 2012	1742	54-55
	February 2013	1777	52-53
	September 2017	2011	56-57
Hatem	December 2011	153	16-17
	July 2012	160	16-17
	February 2013	167	16-17
	September 2017	178	38

### B. Data Analysis

The current study adopts a qualitative method to identify the semiotic modes employed in the rubrics for girls in *Majid* and *Hatem* and the topics they cover. Given that the discourse of children's magazines is multimodal, the researchers used Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) grammar of visual design as a framework to analyze the chosen sample. More specifically, the selected girls' sections are examined in terms of their representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. The Analysis of the Rubrics for Girls in *Majid* Magazine

This section analyzes the semiotic modes employed in the rubrics for girls in *Majid* and identifies the topics reflected in them. Our analysis is based on Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) metafunctions: representational, interactive, and compositional.

#### (a). Representational Metafunction

At this level, the multimodal element is analyzed in terms of participants, processes, and circumstances. In the girls' sections of this magazine, it is noticed that the same represented participant, a female cartoon character named Karamila, has been duplicated in all of the selected rubrics, doing different actions. That is, in one case, she is depicted gazing confusedly at the commercial ticket on the apple, as shown in Figure 1. This is supported by a text presented in a bubble next to this girl; it offers information about the stickers put on fruits to familiarize children with them. In Kress and van Leeuwen's terms, Karamila is engaged in a reactional process in which she is the reactor, the ticket represents the phenomenon, and the direction of her gaze creates the vector. In another case (Figure 1), Karamila is featured smiling as she is brushing her hair into a Rasta hairstyle. In this respect, the action performed by Karamila indicates an action process, where she plays the role of the actor and her hands represent the vector.

In Figure 2, the same character is depicted in three different ways. In the first instance, she is seen posing like a model while wearing a traditional Persian dress; details about the dress are found in the supporting paragraph next to the represented participant. The second and third illustrations are also supported by texts; they both indicate that the represented participant is sitting in the knees-to-chest pose and wearing different outfits, high heels, and socks, respectively. The different actions depicted in Figure 2 exemplify a reactional process, where the reactor (Karamila) directs her gaze at the viewers with a broad smile on her face, and the direction of her glance forms the vector.

Figure 3 depicts three separate illustrations of Karamila. In the first example, she is shown wearing traditional Jamaican attire; the accompanying text includes background information on Jamaica and a recipe for a chicken jerk, a classic Jamaican meal. The second drawing, which shows her lying in a bed, is joined with a text on the negative effects of unhealthy sleeping habits. The third illustration features Karamila smiling and staring at the viewers; this transmits pleasant vibrations to them, and more importantly, invites them to read the text attached to it. The latter encourages the use of summer fruits for facial skin treatment. As far as processes are concerned, the three paintings of Karamila include three different reactional processes; all of which she serves as the reactor, with the vector formed by the direction of her gaze.

In the same fashion, this girl appears three times in Figure 4. In the first occurrence, she is shown wearing a veil and is positioned next to a text that offers veil-wearing tips. In fact, Figure 4 comprises two types of processes: action and reactional processes. For the former, it occurs as Karamila (the reactor) directs her glance toward the audience; it is the direction of her eye line that forms the vector. For the latter, two action processes are involved where the represented participant plays the role of the actor: in the first, Karamila is shown cleaning her clothes, while in the second, she is captured sitting with a young girl as she opens a gift. Each of these illustrations appears to be associated with a small textual caption. The first provides clothes-cleaning tips and suggestions, and the second instructs female readers about proper gift-receiving etiquette.

In addition to the different portrayals of Karamila, the girls' sections in *Majid* also included different illustrated recipes, such as salad chicken (Figure 1), potato fingers with sauce (Figure 2), home-made ice cream (Figure 3), and chicken tabbouleh (Figure 4). The ingredients that appear in Figures 1 and 2 stand for the analytical process. That is, they are regarded as constituents (possessive attributes) of these dishes; the latter in this case serve as carriers. For locative circumstances, the represented participants as well as the textual captions are placed in the foreground against undefined backgrounds in most sections (Figures 2, 3, and 4). Thus, it seems plausible to suggest that the designer of these sections purposely disguised the background to direct the attention of the female readers to the linguistic and visual resources provided in the foreground.

#### (b). *Interactive Metafunction*

At this level, images are analyzed with regard to contact, size of frame, attitude, and modality. For contact, the selected samples employ a variety of offer and demand images. Regarding offer images, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) suggest that they offer information rather than demand something from the audience and also show the represented participants as objects of contemplation. Indeed, the offer images in the examined sections provide the readers with plenty of information and present Karamila as a visual technique to grab the attention of readers. Figures 1 and 3 illustrate offer images where the image designer detaches the viewers from the world of Karamila by directing her gaze away from them. On the other hand, Figure 2 shows Karamila establishing direct eye contact with the viewers. This suggests that she is inviting young girls to wear high heels and socks and attracting their attention to the Persian dress that she is wearing. Likewise, Figure 3 features two instances of demand images where the represented participant directs her glances toward the audience with a smile on her face. In the first instance, she shows her flawless skin to girls and invites them to maintain a daily skincare routine using the tips mentioned in the caption, while in the second instance, she is demanding attention to the Jamaican traditional dress that she is wearing.

In *Majid's* girl sections, the image designer often opts for a long shot to frame Karamila. This viewpoint shows both the setting and the represented participant's entire body from head to toe. It can be suggested that this angle is adopted to allow girls to view the character's hairstyle and her different clothing choices and thus indirectly inspire them to emulate her fashion sense. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), the long shot communicates a distant relationship between the represented participant and the viewer. However, in this context, one could claim that the viewers maintained a close relationship with Karamila as she appears repeatedly in each section, which makes viewers familiar with her.

As for attitude, both horizontal and vertical angles were used. In particular, a horizontal frontal angle is used in several illustrations; this perspective is adopted to involve the girls in the world of Karamila. That is, this angle enables them to share some moments of her daily life and feel her joy. In terms of the vertical perspective, the illustrations are placed at eye level, indicating a power balance between the viewers and Karamila.

In terms of modality, a wide range of saturated colors are used to create cheerful illustrations and appealing texts. Pink, however, has been observed to predominate among all colors, as shown in Figures 1 and 2. These vibrant colors are used to grab readers' attention. In terms of contextualization, Karamila is placed in the foreground with an obscured background; that is, no contextual indicators are visible to viewers except in Figure 1, which includes a detailed background. As a result, contextualization lowers the modality. Further, in representing Karamila, the image producer portrayed her in a detailed manner; that is, her facial features and expressions, her clothes, the color of her skin and hair, and other things are all visible to the viewers. For illumination and brightness, *Majid* magazine is characterized by the use of different light sources and shades, as well as bright and vibrant colors. All of the parameters except for contextualization increase the modality. As a result, it can be concluded that the modality in *Majid* magazine ranges from medium to high.

#### (c). *Compositional Metafunction*

The visual and textual resources in the girls' sections are presented in an aesthetically pleasing layout with a variety of forms, colors, and decorative shapes to attract girls' attention. For informational value, left-right and top-bottom structures are adopted. In terms of left-right structure, Karamila appears to the right of the supporting textual captions in the majority of the selected sections. This indicates that the viewers are familiar with her, while the texts present new information. For top-to-bottom alignment, the recipes in Figures 1 and 2 are placed at the bottom of the page, which gives the impression that they are less important elements than the content placed at the top.

As far as salience is concerned, Karamila is the most salient element. She has been noticeably present on all pages, placed in the foreground, appears in highly saturated colors, and occupies a significant amount of space on these magazine pages. This indicates that the editor places more attention on Karamila as compared to other visuals.

Regarding the framing, various frames are identified, which are as follows: recipes, household recommendations, health and beauty, historical clothing, etiquettes, handcraft, and traditional meals from the world. It is worth noting that all of these frames are supported by visuals that reflect their content. Therefore, the linguistic and visual resources of each frame rely on one another to deliver meaning to the readers. All of the presented frames are disconnected from one another through colors, framing lines, and space.

### B. *The Analysis of the Rubrics for Girls in Hatem Magazine*

This section seeks to identify the semiotic resources employed in the rubrics for girls in *Hatem* as well as the topics covered by these rubrics. The selected samples were analyzed in terms of their representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions.

(a). *Representational Metafunction*

In terms of the representational structure, the selected rubrics from *Hatem* depict both human and non-human participants. With regard to the human participants, it is noticed that two girls of almost the same age are duplicated in the selected sections. The first girl is portrayed putting items in a bowl and mixing them. The designer of these rubrics paired her with various illustrated recipes, including sandwiches (Figure 5), oatmeal cookies (Figure 6), milk and kiwi juice (Figure 7), and date cake (Figure 8). This suggests that this girl is represented to visually reinforce the recipes offered. As far as the processes are concerned, two narrative processes are represented: a non-transactional action process and a reactional process. The former refers to the cooking action, where the girl plays the role of the actor and her arms are the vector. While the latter appears to be accomplished through this participant's eye contact with the audience, in which she is the reactor, the audience represents the phenomenon, and her gaze reflects the vector. The second girl can be seen sewing with a needle and thread. The designer inserted the drawings of this girl next to different paragraphs explaining distinct handcrafts, including clothespin-made products (Figure 6), a cat doll made out of a sponge (Figure 7), and decorated candles and vases (Figure 8). This character is engaged in a non-transactional action process in which her hands serve as the vector and she is the actor. It is worth noting that there is a third participant (a young girl) who appeared once in Figure 8; she illustrates a reactional process as she (the reactor) maintains direct eye contact with the viewers (phenomena). In this case, the vector emanates from the reactor toward the phenomenon.

In addition to the above-represented participants, other objects are displayed in Figure 5 (e.g., a jean pencil case along with the materials required to make it and three types of sandwiches); these objects are instances of conceptual structures (both analytical and classification). To start with the analytical process, which is based on the part-whole relation, the first object (the jean pencil case) that corresponds to the whole (carrier) is made up of a combination of different elements that refer to the possessive attributes (parts). As for the classification process, it is encoded in the second object, which refers to the three represented types of sandwiches that are regarded as subcategories (subordinates) of the sandwich category (the superordinate). By the same token, two other conceptual processes are identified in Figure 7: classification and analytical processes. The classification process is shown through the two depicted mini jean skirts (subordinates), which come under the skirt category (superordinate), while an analytical process is represented by a part-whole relationship in which the clothespins are the possessive attributes (parts) and the items made by them refer to the carriers (whole). Lastly, Figure 8 demonstrates an analytical process that is manifested via the displayed vases and candles (carriers) that are decorated by discarded socks (possessive attributes or parts).

Regarding the locative circumstances, all the represented participants and objects, along with the textual captions, are foregrounded against undefined backgrounds. The designer purposefully obscured the background to draw girls' attention to the linguistic and visual resources that are offered in the foreground.

(b). *Interactive Metafunction*

In terms of the interactive aspect, both offer and demand images were identified. The drawings of the first girl next to the recipes in all the figures are instances of demand images, as she is looking directly at the viewers. Her gaze can be interpreted as an indirect invitation to other young females to try the displayed recipes. This invitation is emphasized by her broad smile, reflecting her enjoyment of cooking, and she seeks an imaginary relation of social affinity with the viewers. As for the offer images, they appear in Figures 6, 7, and 8. Such images are represented by the portrayal of the girl who is sewing and turning her gaze away from the audience; she is looking at the needle and the thread in her hands. Thus, these images are used to inform the readers about the different crafts that she is making.

Regarding the sizes of frames and social distance, the represented participants and objects are captured in three different shots, including very close, medium-close, and long shots, each of which conveys a distinct social distance. The very close shot is adopted in Figure 8 to capture the girl who appears next to the presented mail in which only her head is visible. This shot brings her closer to the viewers and enables them to be affected by her observed facial expressions. This angle signals an intimate and very close relationship between her and the audience. The medium-close shot is employed to depict the young girl who is cooking to reflect a close social relationship; this shot displays this participant's upper body. The third shot is long and is used to represent the girl who is doing crafts and all the displayed objects to fully depict them. This perspective communicates a distant relationship.

For image subjectivity, both horizontal and vertical angles were identified. The frontal horizontal perspective was adopted to emphasize the viewers' involvement. The designer purposefully selected such an angle to immerse girls in the world of the represented participants. The employment of this angle suggests that the viewers are engaged with the textual and visual resources provided to them and are expected to react positively to the content offered in these rubrics. They are, for instance, expected to try the crafts and the recipes that have been provided to them, as well as to send messages to be published in this section of the magazine. From a vertical perspective, the eye-level angle is used to convey the absence of a power relationship between the represented participants and the audience.

As far as modality is concerned, the selected rubrics display a wide range of saturated colors, but pink is dominating. In contextualization, the participants and the depicted objects are placed in the foreground to draw children's attention

to them, while the background is not clearly articulated. Thus, contextualization tends to reduce modality. However, the details offered about the participants and objects, such as their natural colors, and the girls' facial expressions, and features, raise the degree of modality. For illumination and brightness, the selected samples are distinguished by the presence of light and shade sources, as well as the use of bright and vibrant colors. As a result, the modality ranges from medium to high.

(c). *Compositional Metafunction*

For the compositional metafunction, the selected sections include both linguistic and visual resources that are aligned in left-right and top-bottom structures. The results showed that the girl who is cooking appears on the right side of the illustrated recipes; thus, she is perceived as a given piece of information or a familiar character. On the other hand, these recipes are on the left. They contain new information that female readers should pay close attention to. Similarly, the depicted skirts in Figure 7 are shown on the left side of the accompanying paragraph. In this case, these skirts represent the new or key information, whereas the text represents the given information or the source from which the message departs. In other words, readers need to read the text first to comprehend the information provided on these skirts. For top-bottom (ideal-real) alignment, the girl making crafts is positioned at the top of different illustrated paragraphs. She is used to conveying ideal and essential information. In other words, this girl's appearance helps children recognize that she is illustrating various crafts. While the supporting paragraphs are regarded as real information due to their lower placement, they provide details on the displayed crafts.

As far as salience is concerned, the majority of illustrations employed in all of the figures are eye-catching since they are presented in almost the same size, are easily noticeable, occupy more space, and feature highly saturated colors. However, the drawings of the two young girls who illustrate the recipes and crafts are more salient as they are repeatedly depicted in the selected sections.

Regarding framing, it is noted that the rubrics for girls in *Hatem* are made up of different frames, which are as follows: food recipes, handcrafts, recommendations, etiquette, fashion, and girls' mail. The content of most frames is delivered through visual and textual resources, except for the recommendations and etiquette frames, which are delivered purely through textual features. The visual and linguistic resources in these frames are connected to deliver one unit of meaning. It is worth noting that all of the frames represented in these sections are disconnected from one another through colors, framing lines, and space, implying that they convey different content.

In short, the current study revealed differences in both the semiotic modalities and the topics manifested in the rubrics for girls in *Majid* and *Hatem*. These two magazines employ a variety of semiotic modes; however, *Majid* uses more images and highly saturated colors, and its content is delivered more attractively. Certain topics discussed are similar, such as recipes, fashion, and etiquette. However, the attention that is given to each topic varies. *Majid*, for instance, focuses more on fashion and beauty. This could be explained by the high individual income in the United Arab Emirates, where the magazine is published, which reflects the ability of parents to provide essentials for their children. On the other hand, *Hatem* focuses more on cooking and crafting, which reflect the traditional roles assigned to women in Arab society.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study examined and compared the discourse of two Arab children's magazines, namely *Majid* and *Hatem*. In particular, it focused on how different meanings in the girls' sections are constructed visually. To this end, it implemented Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar, which analyzed the magazines' sections aimed at girls in terms of three metafunctions: representational, interactive, and compositional. The results revealed that the two magazines used a wide range of semiotic modes. However, *Majid* had a far more appealing layout, employed more vibrant colors, and used more miscellaneous pictures as compared to *Hatem*. It has also been found that the most covered topics in *Majid* are concerned with fashion and beauty, whereas those in *Hatem* pertain more to cooking and handcrafts. According to what has been stated earlier, it can be argued that *Hatem* was an informative and entertaining magazine due to its creative use of semiotic modes and the interesting topics it covered. Unfortunately, it did not last long due to financial problems, as declared by its publisher. Therefore, one can suggest that the magazine deserves financial assistance to be revived; otherwise, it would be a significant loss. *Majid's* survival, on the other hand, can be attributed to its publisher, "Abu Dhabi Media Company," one of the wealthier companies controlled by the UAE government. Accordingly, this company has a variety of revenue streams that allow it to provide high-quality content to its audience.



APPENDIX



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

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# Discourse Analysis of Female Political Speeches: A Study of Linguistic Techniques and Devices

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**Abstract**—This study explains the role of discourse analysis in understanding political speeches by shedding light on the application of theories and techniques of discourse analysis to analyse political discourse. Language is a multi-layered entity, and based on this, the study analyses the meanings and constructs that lie behind the linguistic elements in political speeches. The study is based on three female political speeches viz., those of Jacinda Ardern (the previous New Zealand Prime Minister) in Christchurch's, the first Senate speech of Fatima Payman, a Muslim immigrant to be a senator in the Australian Senate, and the opening speech of Sanna Marin, the Prime Minister of Finland, at NYU in 2023. The selection was made using Fairclough's Framework to identify different topics for speeches. In the analysis, the researcher unravels the underlying meaning in these speeches, and simultaneously the relationships between power and ideology, ideology and identity. Findings showed that the three speeches used many persuasive techniques and rhetorical devices with concealed meanings betraying ideological biases, and persuasive strategies to advance individual agendas.

**Index Terms**—adult, female discourse, ideology, research design

## I. INTRODUCTION

Political discourse analysis (PDA) derives from critical discourse analysis. It is meant as an approach to analyze political discourse to clarify to the audience the meaning behind the words (Dunmire, 2012). The expressions used in the political speeches show the opinions, ideologies, and messages that the speaker (politician) focuses on. The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach corresponds with the critical study of political discourse (Khajavi & Rasti, 2020). Aligning PDA and CDA suggests that (as it should be) political discourse analysis is conducted through a critical lens and that CDA is, at its centre, a political endeavour. In his argument for a “more critical interpretation of the label,” van Dijk (1997) states that this discipline of study should incorporate the analysis of political discourse and a political approach to discourse analysis, and the analysts must take a critical stance.

Political speeches serve as essential communication tools for politicians, enabling them to convey their messages, shape public opinions, and mobilize support for their agendas (Habermas, 2006). These speeches are rich sources of discourse data that require careful analysis to unravel the underlying meanings, persuasive strategies, and ideological positioning embedded within them (Masroor et al., 2019). Discourse analysis provides a valuable framework for understanding the complexities of political speeches and uncovering the discursive practices employed by politicians to achieve their communicative goals (Wodak, 2014).

### **Research significance**

Political speeches significantly impact society, influencing public attitudes, shaping political thoughts, and ultimately affecting policy outcomes. Therefore, academics, policymakers, and the general public need to comprehend the language, rhetoric, and discursive strategies used in political speeches. Discourse analysis provides a systematic and rigorous method for unearthing underlying meanings and power dynamics in political speeches, thereby contributing to a greater understanding of political communication processes. The researcher chose female addresses for all the examples because she believed that female political discourse has been an area little researched.

### **Research questions**

The principal objective of this research is to investigate the significance of discourse analysis in comprehending political addresses. Specifically, it seeks to investigate how discourse analysis techniques and methodologies can be applied to analyse and interpret political speeches, thereby gaining insights into their persuasive strategies, ideological orientations, and identity construction. The following research questions guide the investigation:

1. What contribution does discourse analysis make to the comprehension of political speeches?
2. What are the most important techniques and methodologies utilized in analysing political discourse?
3. How can discourse analysis illuminate the persuasive strategies and ideological positioning in political speeches?
4. What insights does discourse analysis offer regarding constructing and representing political identities in speeches?

### **Significance of the study**

By addressing the stated research questions, this study aims to enhance our comprehension of an important function of discourse analysis in deciphering the complexities of political speeches and the implications thereof in political

communication. Overall, this research will contribute to the existing literature on political communication and discourse analysis by shedding light on the unique contributions discourse analysis makes to understanding political addresses. Through analyzing the language, rhetoric, and discursive practices used in political speeches, researchers and practitioners can understand strategies, ideological positioning, and identity construction within political communication. This ultimately leads to a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of political discourse. Political discourse has been widely overviewed in many social settings (Bayram, 2010; Carreon & Svetanant, 2017; Zhu & Wang, 2020). These studies, however, focused on the speeches of male politicians, and female political speeches are still under researched, a fact that prompted the current study.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Overview of discourse analysis*

Discourse analysis is a multidisciplinary field investigating how language and communication influence social interactions, power relations, and the formation of meaning (Wodak, 2002). It offers a critical and systematic approach to the study of spoken or written language in its social, cultural, and political contexts (Jackson, 2007). Discourse analysis provides valuable tools and methods for analysing politicians' language, rhetoric, and discursive strategies to comprehend political speeches (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Politicians, as its actors or creators, characterize political discourse. The overwhelming majority of political discourse studies focus on the text and speech of professional politicians or political institutions, such as Presidents and Prime Ministers, as well as other members of government, parliament, and political parties at the local, national, and international levels (van Dijk, 1997, 2005, 2011). Van Dijk (1997) discusses some factors that may determine whether a text is political or not, including whether it relates to political systems or shared values and ideologies characteristic of different political systems, whether it can be related to political institutions, organizations, or groups, whether political relations are established, or whether they are a part of the political process. The linguistic turn in political science is exemplified by Edelman's (1974, 1985, 1992) work on language and the symbolic nature of politics. His approach presupposes that creating meaning is fundamental to political practice and the formulation of beliefs regarding events, policies, leaders, problems, and crises that justify or challenge existing inequalities. He criticizes the discipline for adhering to an "anachronistic philosophical ideal of objectivity" and for conceiving of political experience as a "self-sufficient, fully-formed entity" that only needs to be described using the "correct speech patterns" (Edelman, 1981). Shapiro (1981, 1988) urges analysts to consider how discursive practices of describing, categorizing, and evaluating lend meaning to the "world of things" to fully grasp political phenomena. The central objective of this analysis is to politicize the language practices of everyday life and social science inquiry by identifying and demystifying the dimensions of power and authority implicit in various texts.

### *Key concepts in discourse analysis*

Discourse analysis encompasses various theoretical frameworks and approaches, but at its core, it focuses on studying language beyond the level of individual sentences (Schiffrin, 2005). It examines how language structures and discursive practices shape social realities, power dynamics, and ideologies (Zanoni & Janssens, 2015). Discourse refers to how language is used within specific contexts involving the social, cultural, and historical meanings attributed to the word (Fairclough, 1995; Gee & Gee, 2007, 1998). Regarding power and ideology, discourse analysis recognizes that language is not neutral and that it reflects and reinforces power relations and ideologies (Lazar, 2005). It examines how language constructs and perpetuates dominant ideologies or existing power structures (Shohamy, 2011). The objective of CDA is to isolate ideology and power in discourse and to demonstrate how ideological processes manifest themselves as a system of linguistic characteristics (Fairclough, 2013).

### *Approaches and methods in discourse analysis*

Discourse analysis includes a variety of theoretical approaches and methods. The most frequent methods and approaches are critical discourse analysis, socio-cognitive approaches, pragmatics, and conversation analysis. Critical discourse analysis focuses on uncovering power relations, social inequalities, and ideologies embedded in language use. It examines how language contributes to maintaining or disrupting social hierarchies and challenges dominant discourses (Leotti et al., 2022). Socio-cognitive approaches combine insights from social psychology and cognitive linguistics to analyze how individuals use language to persuade, negotiate meaning, and construct their identities within social contexts (van Dijk, 2008). Next come Pragmatics and Conversation Analysis. These approaches focus on the context of language use and how speakers use language to achieve specific communicative goals. They analyze the structure of conversations, turn-taking, and the use of implicatures to uncover meaning (Leeuwen, 2006). On the contrary, discourse analysis methods may include qualitative methods such as textual analysis, critical reading, and interpretative approaches (Zajda, 2020). Researchers may also employ quantitative methods such as corpus analysis or discourse-based surveys to examine patterns and trends in language use (Adolphs & Carter, 2013). Regardless of the nature of the investigated object, it is a fact that CDA employs a distinct and critical approach to problems, as it seeks to reveal frequently concealed power relationships and deduce results with practical application (Meyer, 2001).

### *Characteristics of political speeches*

Political speeches are a fundamental aspect of political communication, serving as a means for politicians to convey their messages, influence public opinion, and mobilize support for their causes or campaigns (Aalberg & de Vreese,

2016). To fully comprehend the significance and impact of political speeches, it is essential to explore their characteristics, functions, and role in constructing political identities. Following are the features of political discourse:

**Persuasive language:** Political speeches are crafted to persuade and influence the audience. They employ rhetorical devices, such as metaphor, repetition, and emotional appeals, to create a compelling and persuasive narrative.

**Public address:** Political speeches are typically delivered in public settings, whether at rallies, campaign events, or official speeches. They are intended to reach a wide audience and shape public opinion.

**Performative nature:** Political speeches are performative acts that aim to inspire, motivate, and rally support. They often involve gestures, tone of voice, and non-verbal communication to enhance the speaker's message.

**Time-sensitive:** Political speeches are often delivered in response to specific events, issues, or political campaigns. They are contextual and responsive to the current political climate and aim to address and shape public discourse accordingly (Veselá 2021).

#### ***Functions of political speeches***

Political speeches have certain functions. According to Birkland (1998), they are agenda setting, image building, mobilization and policy advocacy. In agenda setting, politicians use political speeches as a platform to establish the agenda and highlight their policy priorities. They seek to shape public opinion and steer the direction of political discourse. The second is image building. Political discourse contributes to forming and maintaining the speaker's political identity and image. They allow politicians to portray themselves as credible, trustworthy, and capable leaders. Mobilization is the third function of political speeches. Political speeches are essential for mobilizing support and rallying electors during political campaigns. They intend to invigorate supporters, increase voter participation, and cultivate a sense of collective identity among supporters. Finally, political speeches are employed for policy advocacy as politicians use them to articulate their policy proposals, clarify their stances on significant issues, and advocate for specific policy changes or reforms (Birkland, 1998).

#### ***Role of political speeches in constructing political identities***

Political speeches play a crucial role in forming and reinforcing political identities (Conover et al., 2011). They contribute to forming the speaker's identity and the identity of a political group or party. Political discourse frequently employs narratives, symbols, and language that resonate with particular ideologies, cultural values, and social identities (Williams, 2004). Through language and persuasive techniques, politicians shape public perceptions of themselves and their political affiliations, striving to establish trust, authenticity, and shared values among their audience (Veselá 2021). Understanding political speeches necessitates thoroughly examining their characteristics, functions, and contribution to forming political identities. By analyzing the language, rhetoric, and discursive strategies used in political speeches, researchers can gain insight into the persuasive techniques, ideological orientations, and identity construction involved in political communication (Alkhudiry & Al-Ahdal, 2020). This comprehension is essential to understand the larger dynamics of political discourse and its influence on public opinion and political processes (van Dijk, 1993).

#### ***Previous studies***

Bayram (2010) analyzed the identity realization in the speech of Recep Tayyip Erdogan (former Prime Minister of Turkey) in the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2009. Using Fairclough's model, findings showed that Erdogan has maintained his background throughout his political tenure, including his recent participation in the Davos debate, where he effectively utilized language as a persuasive means to portray his traits. His demeanor and linguistic patterns were a reflection of a specific social group, and this group held a positive perception of him. Furthermore, Zhu and Wang (2020) analyzed the speech of American and Chinese leaders (Trump and Wang Yi respectively) in the 72nd session of the UN assembly. The study used Fairclough's model in terms of ideology, discourse and society. Findings showed that both the leaders exhibited a preference for using the Judgment Resource over the other two resources within the Affect System in their remarks. In terms of discursive practice, the study has shown that both the leaders make extensive use of the Intertextuality Resource in their remarks. Lastly, the study analyzed the technologizing means of discourses to gain an understanding of the roles played by the "American First" ideology and the Chinese government's national interest in today's political arena. Moreover, Shariffar and Rahimi (2015) investigated the speeches of Obama and Rouhani at the UN in September, 2013. The study used the Systematic Functional Grammar Model by Halliday. The analysis primarily examined how the transitivity system and modality are used in political speeches by the two Presidents to convey their ideology and power. The findings suggest that Obama used colloquial language with simple words and short sentences, making his speech easily understandable to various individuals. However, Rouhani's language was more difficult and formal, possibly due to the early days of his presidency. In the transitivity analysis, both Obama and Rouhani utilized material processes such as 'doing' and 'happening' more frequently than other processes in their speeches.

### III. METHODS

#### ***Participants***

The researcher chose three adult female political speeches. The first is Jacinda Ardern's Christchurch speech, dated March 28, 2019; the second is Australian Senator Fatima Payman's First Senate Speech, dated Tuesday, September 6, 2022, and the third is Sanna Marin's Commencement Address at New York University, dated May 17, 2023. There are only two criteria in choosing these speeches, one, that they are political speeches and two, that they have been delivered

by female politicians. The only reason for these choices is the need for adding to the limited corpus of female political discourse.

#### *Data collection*

The process of collecting data included acquiring the speeches for analysis. Researchers can access speeches from public archives, official websites, and live event recordings. It is crucial to obtain credible sources to ensure the presentations' accuracy and credibility. After accessing the speeches in this study, the researcher transcribed them to convert the spoken discourse into written form. Transcription entailed capturing non-verbal elements, such as pauses, intonation, and gestures, which can contribute to the overall meaning and impact of the discourse.

#### *Analytical framework*

In addition to adopting Fairclough's (1989, 1995) model of discourse analysis which focused on three level of analysis i.e., description, interpretation and explanation, the researcher applied Veselá's (2021) four features of political discourse and Birkland's (1998) functions of political discourse. The discourse analysis techniques are applied to the transcribed speeches to unearth the implicit meanings, persuasive strategies, and ideological orientations embedded in the discourse. The techniques used may vary based on the theoretical framework and research queries guiding the analysis. Speeches may be subjected to a close textual analysis examining language patterns, rhetorical devices, and persuasive techniques. In addition, they may conduct critical discourse analysis in order to identify power relations, ideologies, and social inequalities reflected in the discourse. In addition, socio-cognitive approaches can be used to analyse the cognitive processes and identity formation in the speech. Techniques for analysing pragmatics and conversations can cast light on the context, intentions, and interactive aspects of political speeches.

#### *Ethical considerations*

Ethical considerations must be adhered to when analyzing political speeches. Respecting intellectual property rights and praising the authors of the speeches analyzed is essential. Any research should also consider the possible effects of their analysis on the presenters, their reputations, and the broader political context. Concern for privacy, accuracy, and potential biases in the analysis was maintained. By adhering to a stringent methodology, the researcher aimed to generate reliable and valid insights into the language, rhetoric, and discursive strategies used in political speeches. Understanding how political identities are constructed and represented in speeches can be made easier by discourse analysis. In earlier studies, researchers looked into the language, narratives, and symbolic references politicians use to form and reinforce their political identities. They examined how politicians position themselves concerning social categories, groups, or ideologies and the strategies they employ to enhance their credibility, authenticity, and audience rapport (Van Dijk, 1993).

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **CDA of Jacinda Ardern's Christchurch speech**

Ardern started her speech by greeting Maori, and then she code-switched to English. It is known that New Zealand has three official languages Maori, English, and New Zealand sign language. So, code-switching into English provided the minorities with a sense of identity (Auer, 1984). She used the greeting, 'leaders, speakers, and those who bear authority' in Maori and the 'whole Ngai Tahu' (the territory of the largest tribal group). She defined them as 'The tides of remembrance flow over Christchurch today', using a metaphor here to ensure the originality of the place.

She invited Nagi Tahu to gather to overcome the disaster (terrorist attack) with love and peace. She said, 'For this family,' the researcher thinks that 'this family' here was the Muslim community who suffered this attack done by an Australian man. Ardern used **repetition** as a rhetorical device, 'may truly live again', repeating it twice. The researcher thinks that the first was for the ancestors (the tribe of Nagi Tahu), the second for all the people who live in New Zealand to show that New Zealand was a country of peace and love, a country of multicultural and different faiths living in one land as the terrorist was an Australian (outsider) citizen.

As a **rhetorical device**, she again used a metaphor, 'darkest hour' for the terrorist attack. Following this, she said, 'We gather', wherein the pronoun 'We' indicated the original people of New Zealand, immigrants, and the guests who came to support New Zealand. She made **rhetorical questions** that underlined that no words could be adequate to express the pain and grief. For instance, 'What words adequately express the pain and suffering of 50 men, women, and children lost, and so many injured?' The phrase, 'what words' captures the anguish of the Muslim community. Further in the speech, 'what words express the grief of a city that has already known so much pain?' She wanted to show **her sympathy** and support and the support of all other people and different faiths in New Zealand to the Muslim community who suffered the terrorist attack.

People of the Muslim community met her with the greeting 'Asslamu Alyikum.' Ardern described this greeting as 'simple words' and repeated this description to emphasize that peace and humanity are simple and easy. With this description, she wanted to state the eminence of Islam as a religion, its tenets of forgiveness and charity. Those attitudes which made peace become a simple speech act. All the people of the Muslim community, leaders, members greeted her with those 'simple words' despite their pain, loss, and grief.

In describing those 'simple words', Ardern dealt with many concepts analyzed by discourse analysis, such as violence, peace, love, hate, racism, ethnicity, and power. She drew attention to the Muslim community's attitudes: Although they suffered from the attack, they showed tolerance and patience. Those simple words kept New Zealanders

humbled and united. Also, the greeting, 'Asslamu Alyikum' paved the relationship between her and her audience. Ardern also described the Muslim community's loss stories as 'collective memories' in the sense of community spirit that the terrorist attack meant to the Muslim community.

She did not use much of the personal pronoun, 'I' but used 'we' to show the unity of New Zealanders despite their diversity, global visitors and Christchurch in specific; she wanted to show the coexistence of different faiths and consequently, all those communities. In this speech, the device of contrast was used as a persuasive device, 'But even the ugliest virus can exist in places they are not welcome,' emphasizing the rejection of violence, racism, and extremism and fighting for love, kindness, and humanity, 'Violence would be here, but not with our determination, will, and values.' Another contrast is 'Racism exists, but it is not welcome here.' she admitted the existence of racism but wanted that to clarify the attitude of the New Zealanders, which could be the power that fights racism, extremism, and religious assault. She declared her responsibility as a government representative and the responsibility to the communities to save lives and ensure peace.

Aedern showed her grace and gratitude (as a rhetorical device) to the 'global community.' She stated that fighting 'such attacks' should be done collectively by people worldwide. In this opposition sentence, 'We cannot confront these issues alone; none of us can. Nevertheless, the answer to them lies in ...'. She mentioned no border or ethnicity or even power. Humanity was the answer. At the same time, she motivated the people to fight in the battle against terrorism.

Another contrast is seen in, 'But for now, we will remember those who have left this place,' she wanted to reassure the Muslim community that the issue would not be forgotten. It would be the responsibility of the government as well as the people. She used 'we' to show the unity of the diverse people of New Zealand. Ardern used 'home' to indicate New Zealand, closeness, intimacy, and unity. 'Even if we suffered from this attack, we were still united.' She emphasized in this contrast, 'But we can strive to be true to the words embedded in our national anthem.' Ardern recited the words from the national anthem with which she wanted to frame the work that all the people of New Zealand should do to unite and follow the anthem's values.

She concluded her speech as she began it, with 'Asslamu Alyikum' in both Maori and Arabic, showing a sense of power, unity, and coexistence. Ardern also showed sympathy and support and built good trust between the government, people, and the Muslim community. She spoke powerfully but with grief. The grief and sympathy appeared in her facial expression. Her head nod expressed her refusal to the attack, hate, and racism.

#### **CDA of Senator Fatima Payman speech**

Payman started her speech with this sentence, 'I rise to present my first speech- finally!.' From the researcher's point of view, the word 'finally' here as an adverb meant either the length of the journey the speaker had to reach this position or being an immigrant from the minority to reach this status. She saluted her audience with the customary Muslim greeting, which reflects her background and identity. She wanted to show the diversity of the community she was addressing and the coexistence of religions and races.

In the researcher's opinion, Payman used framing as a rhetorical device in most of her speech and adopted the narrator's role. She used 'I' mostly, which emphasized her as a narrator. She appreciated and thanked many people, groups, and teams, including her family. Besides thanking as a persuasive technique, she named people to thank them individually. The researcher thinks this was to disclose their identities in addition to closeness and intimacy. By doing this, she wanted to draw her audience's attention to that interaction, and a speech act may also indicate motivation. Her acknowledgment of all the people, from the 'ancestors' to the 'footsteps' and 'those yet to come,' which showed the diversity of her community.

Payman congratulated the President 'as a second female President of the senate and the first Labour woman who hold your position.' She indicated equality and fairness, and women's empowerment in this sentence. In her speech she indirectly addressed many issues that were looked at by discourse analysis, such as hope, dignity, integrity, fairness, and transparency.

Payman expressed the contrast in many positions (persuasive technique): 'Resettling was difficult but not as difficult as my mother ...', 'However life took a bitter turn when my father....', 'I am small. However, my potential is limited only by how far my....'. She also used metaphors in other positions, 'under my wing' and, 'Bundle of joy' (rhetorical device). Another rhetorical device the senator uses is the simile, '... like little drops make a mighty ocean', 'Perth felt like home'.

Moreover, she used reasoning as a persuasive technique, as in '... because home is where the heart is. It is so important to acknowledge that privilege because only then will we appreciate our purpose'. In this sentence, there was a shift in the word order (*will* before *we*).

Payman used the first person singular frequently to reveal her principles, emphasize her responsibilities, and introduce the themes of her campaign, besides, her narration represented a form of interaction between her and her audience. On the other hand, she used 'us' and 'you' to talk about everyone, including the Senate, her party, and her team. Furthermore, she used repetition as a persuasive device in her speech to convince, motivate, and inspire her diverse community. For instance, 'let us quit the bigotry...', 'our diversity, our strength, our differences...', 'waited and waited,' which indicated how long the wait was.

After she finished, she appreciated and thanked all the people individually. She expressed her identity by telling her story. She started by framing her father's immigration journey. Payman framed her father's experience as many



immigrants and minorities, his suffering in poor living conditions, and others. Using framing as a rhetorical device, she narrated, how they struggled to have food and education after the family was united, and how they suffered from the low wages, insecure jobs, and above all, the abuse and discrimination.

She further framed her parents' teachings, concepts, attitudes, and courage. In a sad narration, she framed her father's illness and consequently, his death and how she and her family were affected by this. She wanted her audience's sympathy and support. She wanted to draw the audience's attention to the starting point in her life and project herself as motivated and eager to give more as was her father's legacy.

She also framed her experience in racism when a young man ridiculed her *hijab* and made her feel like the 'other'. Payman told this story to impose her concepts of discrimination and fairness while supporting other immigrants not to be the 'other,' and motivating them to eradicate such awful beliefs. He told her to 'Go back to where you came from' because of wearing a *hijab*; by this she wanted to tell the audience that that was one of the many things the minorities faced and made them feel like the 'other,' deriving the audience's view of the psychological effect of such practices (lost identity). Accordingly, she engaged, participated, and cooperated in many social practices to avoid being the 'other'. Framing that experience sent a silent message to the audience that was 'Look, I am here now'.

As a result of that situation and her hard work, she became a member of the Labour Party and framed all the attitudes, concepts, policies, and ideologies she adopted and worked for. The climax of her narration came when she ran for the Senate. In this situation, she used 'We' instead of 'I' as she spoke on behalf of the people of Western Australia and minorities. She sends another silent message to her audience, revealing the policies and ideologies of her campaign by stating what they need. She gave a detailed narrative of the journey of election.

Payman framed how she was proud of her journey from being the daughter of an immigrant to that of a Senator. Furthermore, she used a rhetorical question to express her joy and pride as she said, 'What a proud moment for Australia!' Projecting herself as a part of the huge change in the Australian Parliament during her time there she said, 'Australians showed us their appetite for a parliament that reflects our society because you cannot be what you cannot see,' she meant that the parliament representatives should be from all the diverse societies of Australia as each faith or people of color or even the people of the first nation alone knew their exact needs.

Payman said, 'I am here to see that 'What matters to ordinary Australian is what matters to our politician.' She signaled that she would be the guard to protect 'ordinary Australians and their rights'. Payman wanted to say that she would feel for them because she was one of them and knew what mattered to them. The researcher sees that by 'ordinary Australians' she means the minorities.

She narrated and framed her desires; she spoke about diverse communities, women's empowerment, homelessness, housing, and job opportunities. In confirming her ideologies and plans, she chose James Charlton's book title as her slogan, 'Nothing about us without us.' She again reflected on her father's illness and the family's grief to reaffirm her concern about medical and mental health. She started to finish her narrative by putting everything she needed as an immigrant and minority as the base of her policies and ideologies to fight for during her parliament term. Giving details about her life and journey to become a senator, she wanted three things: support, motivation, and sharing (rhetorical devices).

As a proud immigrant, Payman concluded with reciting in Dari from a poem by, Bani Adam, a Persian poet. The researcher believes that by reciting this poem in Dari, she wanted to remind her audience of her true identity and position and ensure the community's preservation. She spoke powerfully, intonation woven into her narration, dotted with sighs, tears, and sometimes, smiles.

#### **CDA of Sanna Marin**

Marin started her speech by thanking and expressing gratitude to the audience. She also showed gratitude to President Andrew Hamilton and fellow honorary doctorates Bertozzi, Copeland, and Hrabowski. She generalized her thanks to the audience (graduates of 2023) and individualized her gratitude to the President and her fellow. In the researcher's opinion, individualizing served as a distinct identity affirmation, and she used the persuasive technique, which was the reason behind thanking others individually for their dynamic role and inspiration.

Marin used the adjective 'humble' to show her attitude and support for teachers and education, representing one of her ideologies (Finland has the best education system in the world). Marin used the first person singular (discourse marker) in her speech. She wanted to talk about her personality and experiences, which enabled her to build a good rapport with her audience in the first place to get their support which appeared in their continuous applause and to indicate her involvement, commitment, and responsibility.

She used metaphor as a rhetorical device when she used the word 'cultivate' in the meaning of 'get.' It indicated the hard work the graduates had done at the highly selective NYU. One of the **persuasive techniques** she used was the rhetorical question, 'What can I say to you on this special day?' 'Why am I telling you this?', 'Why I am giving you this advice?' The purpose of those questions was not to elicit the answers, but they were used to emphasize ideas and convince the audience of them.

Marin used simile as a **rhetorical device** when she compared graduation to a chapter that should be closed to start a new one. She called it a day of change. Change is the concept that Marin built her speech on, which was also one of her ideologies. She chose to start reflecting on her experience with two questions. She began to describe all those aspects. She used contrast as a **persuasive technique**, for instance, '...since you were able to graduate from this very special

institution, but I thought I might add to that by offering...’, ‘New technology has revolutionized people’s lives in many ways, but their development also brings a new challenge’.

Listing things in numbers was another rhetorical device used by Marin: ‘This is why I want to give you three pieces of advice about change,’ ‘advice number one...’. She talked about many aspects that are looked at by discourse analysis, such as human rights, rights of minorities, gender, equality, and social justice. She imposed her identity, ideologies, and experiences through each of the three pieces of advice she shared. Marin did not only give those advice but also interpreted and explained her thoughts. In her first advice, she displayed the desire for change. She manifested how she became passionate about politics in terms of things that she felt needed change, such as human rights and climate change.

By demonstrating a fact, ‘Coming from a rainbow family,’ Marin revealed her background and the principles and doctrines she was brought up with. In the four sentences that followed that sentence, Marin summarized her **identity and ideologies** rooted in social equality. These ideologies motivated her to run in the election. From the researcher’s point of view, these ideologies will remain ideologies unless we get the power to implement them, and this is what Marin did for change. For instance, she cleared her opinion about equal marriage and emphasized her support for it.

Finland is known for its lakes and forests. Despite that, Marin reported that ‘Coming from Finland.’ She showed her concern about climate and environmental issues, so she cared not only for Finland but the entire world. In detailing and describing her second piece of advice, she spoke about accountability; she addressed some status quo issues, such as Geopolitical changes, biodiversity, artificial intelligence, and digitalization and how we could solve problems resulting from them for better societies.

She also discussed values such as freedom of speech, the rule of law, democracy, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. She thought all those values were being questioned, threatened, and broken. In framing this, she gave the live example of how Russia invaded Ukraine as an example of breaking the rules. In addition to that, she mentioned, ‘the right to safe abortion is also being limited in Europe,’ ‘different expressions of gender are being presented as a threat,’ and ‘the swollen amount of inequality and lack of social mobility,’ here she gave a reason to all those problems as she said, ‘return of war and heavy politics to the western sphere’, referring to the fact that all the problems and war came due to Western policy. She likened the Western policies to the iceberg. Marin saw all those problems as a ‘battle of values’. She meant that you should decide what part you were in according to the meaning of the word ‘battle’; there should be a winner or a loser or, more clearly, supporter or opposer. All this put values in danger.

She also addressed the economic and environmental problems (global warming, the disappearance of the ecosystem, the economy, people’s health, etc.) and showed the **collective responsibility** of the world towards these. A persuasive technique used by Marin in this speech in many positions was repetition to convince the audience of her ideologies, policies, and views. For instance, repetition as in, ‘We have expected our values as freedom of speech, the rule of law, gender equality and democracy...’, ‘We have expected the freedom of information and the internet to broaden everyone’s understanding’, or to motivate her audience (the graduates) as in repeating, ‘you can’ to show their ability.

She used ‘I’ and ‘we’ as **discourse markers**: ‘I’ indicated her involvement and commitment, ‘we’ was used to indicate the people of the world and is sometimes used for the graduates. She used simile as a rhetorical device to motivate her audience as in, ‘at the same time, we need amazing people like you to make sure...’.

Reasoning was one of the **persuasive techniques** used in this speech aimed at interacting with and motivating the audience as in, ‘together with others you can do anything and you must, because there is no one else to do it ...’ In describing Marin’s third piece of advice, which was about how we can achieve all we want, she introduced fear as a main problem that hinders achieving all dreams and desires. She again used repetition as a persuasive technique as she said, ‘It might be fear of embarrassment...’, ‘It might be fear of not fitting’, ‘It might be fear of being declared unworthy...’, and she concluded by changing the word ‘advice’ into ‘task’ to show the importance of taking initiative, being brave, and able to make a change.

Marin spoke confidently and in high spirits, strengthening the interaction between her and the audience. She smiled naturally, which indicated her approachability. She also used pause at critical points, to enable the audience to process what she said, or she aimed at building eye contact after each point. This strong contact appeared in the heavy applause she got after her speech.

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, discourse analysis effectively deciphers the persuasive strategies, ideological orientations, and social implications embedded in political speeches. Discourse analysis can contribute to a nuanced understanding of political discourse and its influence on public opinion, political processes, and societal dynamics by employing rigorous methodologies and confronting its challenges and limitations. The researcher tries to bring out the meaning underlying these three speeches. According to the analysis of the three speeches, many persuasive techniques and rhetorical devices were used to convey concealed meanings, ideological biases, and the persuasive strategies legislators use to advance their agendas. The study traced the relations between power and ideology and power and identity as those three speeches tackled these relations. Discourse analysis has proven to be a valuable approach to understanding political speeches, but there are still several avenues for future research and areas where improvements can be made. This

section presents future directions and recommendations for advancing the role of discourse analysis in understanding political speeches.

1. Future research can benefit from integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in discourse analysis.
2. Conducting comparative analysis across different political contexts and cultural settings can enhance the generalizability and depth of discourse analysis.
3. Incorporating corpus linguistics and computational methods in discourse analysis can facilitate large-scale data analysis and uncover patterns that may not be apparent through manual analysis alone.
4. Longitudinal studies and diachronic analysis allow for examining changes and developments in political speeches over time.
5. Discourse analysis can benefit from interdisciplinary collaborations, drawing on insights from political science, sociology, psychology, and communication studies.

Discourse analysis can further enhance our understanding of political speeches by pursuing these future directions and recommendations. Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches, comparative analysis, incorporation of computational methods, longitudinal studies, interdisciplinary collaborations, and ethical reflexivity can contribute to more robust and nuanced analyses of political discourse. These developments can lead to invaluable insights regarding the persuasive strategies, ideological orientations, and social implications of political addresses.

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# Representation of Local Wisdom in the Ancient Indonesian Manuscript as Literature Learning Materials in School

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**Abstract**—Literature learning is essential in building students' character and increasing their sensitivity. Local wisdom's importance must be instilled within students in learning literature because its existing values are starting to fade and are not in demand by the current generation. This study aimed to investigate the local wisdom in the ancient Indonesian manuscript "*Menak Lare I*" and its application as literature teaching and learning materials in schools. The present research employed a descriptive qualitative design. The object of the study was an ancient Indonesian manuscript entitled "*Menak Lare I*". It contained stories about Amir Hamzah's struggle to spread Islam. The research data sources were informants and archives or documents. Data analysis in this study incorporated a flow model. The findings revealed that the elements of local wisdom were contained in the "*Menak Lare I*" manuscript so that it could be implemented as literature teaching and learning material in school. The results of this research could help preserve local wisdom through the learning process by engaging varied lesson materials.

**Index Terms**—local wisdom, ancient Indonesian manuscript, "*Menak Lare I*", learning, teaching materials

## I. INTRODUCTION

A great nation possesses a character in line with its society's cultural values, closely related to its local wisdom, leading to the development of the nation's characteristics (Harmawati et al., 2016). Local wisdom plays a role in protecting natural and human resources and maintaining customs and culture. Thus, it is beneficial and meaningful in society (Permana et al., 2011).

The importance of local wisdom to preserve culture should be enforced in education as it is considered the backbone of human progress in all activities since its ultimate goal is to develop better citizens (Teimourtash & Teimourtash, 2021). Rofiq et al. (2019) state that traditional organizations in every culture have a crucial role in the national education system. In this case, school counseling must be designed based on the nation's cultural values belonging to each ethnicity in Indonesia. The factors that make the learning of local wisdom strategic are: 1) Local wisdom has constructed an inherent identity characteristic since birth; 2) The owner knows local wisdom; 3) Emotional participation of the community who respects local wisdom; 4) Studying local wisdom does not have to be mandatory; 5) Local wisdom can foster self-esteem and self-confidence; 6) Local wisdom can increase the nation's dignity (Rahyono, 2009). Furthermore, local wisdom has become an inseparable part of education in Indonesia, considering it is a cultural country (Nasir et al., 2016).

The study of literary appreciation is necessary for building students' character and fostering their sensitivity. It is in line with Palacios et al. (2021), who regard language learning as a means to promote awareness and intercultural communication and help citizens prosper professionally. It is also known as one of the current main goals of education systems worldwide. Educators must pay attention to students' cultural backgrounds in selecting literature teaching materials. They refer to the characteristics of a particular society and all its changes, including social system, social stratification, norms, traditions, professional ethics, institutions, law, art, belief, religion, kinship system, way of thinking, mythology, ethics, morality, and others (Asteka, 2019). Various factors certainly cause the low quality of literature teaching in Indonesia. Explains that those factors include the subjects, teachers, students, facilities, infrastructure, and poor understanding of literary concepts (Mirnawati, 2015).

The "*Menak Lare*" manuscript contains a story about Amir Hamzah spreading Islam. It was originally in Arabic and Persian literature, then introduced to the Malay region in the form of "*Hikayat Amir Hamzah*", which was later adapted into the "*Serat Menak*". The story was widely known through the adaptations of R Ng Yasadipura I. Balai Pustaka (a state-owned publisher of Indonesia and major pieces of Indonesian literature) presented the adaptations into 24 parts

comprising 46 volumes (Harpawati, 2009). State that a manuscript can only be meaningful and known as a cultural artifact if the values contained are articulated (Suherman et al., 2021). Understanding and deepening the manuscript's content is challenging and can lead to intricacies if it is not appropriately handled. It is because, instead of the original version, the one that has changed, such as having additions and subtractions, will likely be known by the readers. The "Menak Lare" manuscript must be investigated since it has never been included as teaching materials in school. It was considered worthy of being read and criticized, especially on the issues of local wisdom and its use as teaching material.

The present study addressed the following question: What are the forms of local wisdom in the "Menak Lare 1" manuscript and their applications as teaching materials in schools?

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### A. Local Wisdom

Local wisdom refers to the cultural identity of a group of people in a particular place. The culture grows over generations continuously. It also shows a person's or group's personalities with different characteristics to identify who they are, where they are, and what way of life they possess. Correspondingly, Ratna (2012) says that local wisdom, through its sacred values, strengthens the bonding of relationships, family harmony, and larger communities such as a race or a nation (p. 484). Local wisdom is a way of life, knowledge, and various strategies in the form of activities carried out by local communities to deal with problems and meet their needs. In other words, it is usually conceptualized as local knowledge or local intelligence (Fajarini, 2014). The basis comes from the customary law existing in the community, although some experts argue that not all of it can be classified as local wisdom. Hence, it can be a guide and tool in community empowerment, aiming to achieve favorable sustainable conditions (Primyastanto, 2015).

According to Bolotio (2017), local wisdom includes at least several concepts, namely: (1) A long-term experience reserved as a guide for one's behavior; (2) Being inseparable from its owner; (3) Being dynamic, flexible, open, and constantly progressing with the times (p. 4). According to Sartini (in Ardhiyanto, 2013, p. 17), local wisdom incorporates the following elements: (a) valuable things, (b) sourced from religious understanding, (c) taking the form of knowledge, ideas, norms, ways, behavior, and other kinds of activity, (d) being material or non-material, (e) originating and living in specific local communities, (f) being used across generations, (g) being rationalized, and (h) being used in current life context.

### B. Teaching Material

Teaching material is a set of tools or devices, including learning materials, methods, limitations, and evaluation techniques. It is designed systematically and attractively to accomplish the goals, namely acquiring abilities and sub-capabilities with all their complexities (Lestari, 2013). In this regard, Yaumi defines it as a set of materials methodically arranged for learning needs. They can be in the form of printed materials, teaching aids, audio, video, multimedia, animation, as well as computers and the internet.

Teachers use textbooks to realize the students' expected abilities systematically. They are commonly available, making the materials likely to occur in the learning process. However, the materials in question come not only from textbooks but also from other media, such as the internet, scientific journals, and research results. Sanjaya (2011) argues that learning materials are the core of the learning process in which the main goal is the relevant assignments (p. 25). Therefore, the materials are required to gain the competencies that students must master.

### C. Ancient Manuscript

The ancient manuscript is one form of culture that deserves to be preserved. It is any human work in the form of writing existing for decades, which must be preserved and cared for in such a way as to provide information to the next generation (Gusmana & Nelisa, 2013). Accordingly, that ancient manuscripts are products of past cultures that store a variety of intellectual property and ancestral life history, which is full of local wisdom values as a source of inspiration for sustainable national development (Pradana & Setyadi, 2019). Moreover, those manuscripts are evidence of the greatness of our ancestral civilization, which could record, produce, store, and process information through characters equivalent to the world's great societies such as Egypt, China, India, Arabia, Rome, and Persia (Ahmad, 2018).

The typical types of ancient manuscripts found in libraries are categorized based on the materials used in the production, such as hard materials, a type of board, or slate widely used in the Javanese manuscripts. In addition, they are also classified according to their languages and scripts (Gurning et al., 2018). The ancient Indonesian manuscripts are organized regarding the existing language and scripts; some are written in Arabic, Malay, Sanskrit, and others.

The "Serat Menak" by Yasadipura I was first published by C.F. Winter in 1854. Afterward, in early 1923, Van Dorp Semarang, on the efforts of R. Panji Djaja Soebroto, published another edition consisting of seven parts written in the Javanese language. Between 1933 and 1941, Library Hall published the manuscript in Javanese writing in 24 parts consisting of 46 volumes. However, a publication by Balai Pustaka (the state-owned publisher of Indonesia and publisher of major pieces of Indonesian literature) is the one widely known today. Each part is named after the main character or the central setting of the place.

Some other manuscripts are produced in fibers, as contained in Harpawati (2009), such as (1) The "Menak Sarehas", recounting the origin of the Betal Jemur Adam Makna to the birth of Wong Agung; (2) The "Menak Lare", the story of Wong Agung in conquering kings and knights of other countries; (3) The "Menak Serandil", the tale of Wong Agung in becoming Prabu Nusirwan's ambassador to conquer the Serandil State; (4) The "Menak Sulub", the story of Wong Agung conquering the Kings of Greece, Ngerum region, and Egypt, in which Wong Agung was sick and imprisoned on the Sulub Island; (5) The "Menak Ngajrak", the tale about the marriage of Wong Agung with Dewi Ismayati, daughter of King Jim, in Ngajrak region; (6) The "Menak Demis", the story of King Nusirwan, who fled to Demis, and the attacks of Wong Agung on Demis; (7) The "Menak Kaos", in which Wong Agung occupied the State of Kaos, and Dewi Muninggar gave birth to a baby boy named Kobat Sarehas; (8) The "Menak Kuristam", in which Wong Agung attacked the Kuristam State and built an empire in the Kupauman region; (9) The "Menak Biraji", the story of Wong Agung's enmity with the king in Biraji; (10) The "Menak Kanin", the tale of Wong Agung being kidnapped by King Bahman and then his ear was injured by a sword and treated by Kalisahak in Sahsiyar village; (11) The "Menak Gandrung", in which Dewi Muninggar died in the battlefield and made Wong Agung heartbroken; (12) The "Menak Kanjum", the story about Wong Agung's enmity with King Kanjun and being married to the princess of Parangakik; (13) The "Menak Kandhabumi", the tale about Wong Agung's marriage to Dewi Marpinjun, Dewi Muninggar's sister; (14) The "Menak Kuwari", in which Wong Agung attacked the Kuwari country; (15) The "Menak Cina", in which the proposal of a Chinese princess to Wong Agung was rejected, and she finally died in battle; (16) The "Menak Malebari", the story of the marriage between Wong Agung's son and King Bawadimandari's daughter in the Kusniya Malebari region; (17) The "Menak Purwakandha", the tale of Wong Agung's attack on the Purwakandha state; (18) The "Menak Kustup", in which the Kustup State collapsed due to the attacks by kings who helped Wong Agung; (19) The "Menak Kalakodrat", in which Patih Bestak and Prabu Nursiwan were murdered; (20) The "Menak Sorangan", the story of Wong Agung's attack on the Sorangan State; (21) The "Menak Jomintaran", the tale of the marriage of Prince Kelan to the queen of Jamintoran, Dewi Jalu Sulasikun; (22) The "Menak Jaminambar", in which Wong Agung attacked Jaminambar State because its king, Prabu Rabu Sumawati, claimed to be God; (23) The "Menak Talsamat", in which Wong Agung attacked Mukabumi, Pildandani, and Talsamat Estela and then returned to Madina to become a follower of Muhammad; (24) The "Menak Lakat", the story of the war between the Prophet Muhammad, King Lahat, and Jenggi. Consequently, Wong Agung died, and Dewi Kuraisin was narrated to be married to King Ali and had a son named Muhammad Kanapiyah, who then became a king in the Ngajrak region.

### III. METHOD

The present study was qualitative research employing a descriptive design, aiming to examine a group regarding the time, an object, a condition, a system of thought, or a type of event (Nazir, 2005). This research engaged informants and archives or documents as the data sources. Subsequently, the data were in the form of the analysis results of the "Menak Lare 1" manuscript, precisely the excerpts containing elements of local wisdom and their applications as teaching materials in schools. The researchers administered in-depth interviews and analyses of archives or documents to collect the necessary data. The interview is a data collection technique employing direct or indirect communication with respondents/informants by providing a list of questions to be answered directly or on other occasions (Raihan, 2017). Meanwhile, document analysis is an in-depth examination of particular objects carried out by researchers, while library techniques are the use of references related to the object of research.

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Result

The study results described the forms of local wisdom contained in the "Menak Lare 1" manuscript. It was written by R. N. Yasadipura I and then translated by Sulistijo H.S. It consisted of several parts of the story starting from the return of Sang Rekyana Patih Betal Jemur to Medayin; Ambyah and Umarmaya began to show their superiority, learned the Qur'an (the holy book of Islam), returned from the pesantren (a traditional Islamic educational institution in which students live together in a dormitory and study under the guidance of a teacher known as a Kyai); Ambyah found Prophet Isaac's horse vehicle named kalisahak along with his treasures; Raden Maktal, a son of the King of Alabani, traveled to war and surrendered to Ambyah; Umarmaya and Ambyah were thought of as ghosts and targeted to be killed; The King of Yemen surrendered to Ambyah; The Queen Umanditahim, a daughter of the King of Yemen, held a contest. Based on some of these stories, a few examples of local wisdom are described in the following excerpts.

*Pada suatu hari Raden Umarmaya mengajak Raden Ambyah pergi berjalan-jalan ke luar, untuk menonton upacara pemujaan berhala, yaitu yang dianggap leluhur orang kafir (One day, Raden Umarmaya invited Raden Ambyah to go for a walk and watch a worship ritual of an idol considered the ancestor of the pagans).* (Yasadipura I, 1982, pp. 145-146)

Ancient people are commonly known to perform rituals of idol worship as a form of customs carried out by the community, in which they believed that the idols could grant their wishes. Furthermore, this kind of ceremony is considered a culture embraced by social groups (Zakharova, 2022). A study on a similar topic conducted showed that

the relevance of cultural practices allowed the creation of sustainable indigenous wisdom (Rivera, 2019). It also constructed the role of collective values and community solidarity in local culture. In line with this, stated that the community carried out culture to maintain their lives so that they were not marginalized by the times (Jahrir, 2020). A worship ceremony is also a form of public gratitude to the Creator or the God Almighty. In this regard, revealed that local wisdom in the Rancakalong area, Sumedang, West Java, was still carried out to express gratefulness for agricultural products and respect for Dewi Sri (Rice goddess) (Sumartias et al., 2019). Another excerpt of local wisdom is as follows.

*“Periuknya tak turun-turun dari atas api, siang dan malam selalu bertengger di tungku”* (The pot just never leaves the fire. It always stays on the stove all day) (Yasadipura I, 1982, p. 156).

The excerpt above illustrated that people used to cook using a traditional pot (Indonesian; periuk) placed on the stove to boil or cook something. It is round-shaped cooking equipment, usually made of clay or metal, utilized to cook rice. However, with today's advancements, the materials used in production tend to be changed into iron, steel, and aluminum. Meanwhile, the furnace, a fireplace made of brick or stone, is now replaced by gas-fueled and even electric stoves. The eco-friendly cooking utensils are now being substituted by modern and more practical equipment, as all ethnic groups experience socio-cultural and traditional changes due to several factors, including environment, religion, interaction with other ethnic groups, scientific progress, and others (Napitu et al., 2020). People involve culture in whatever they do, consciously or unconsciously, as evidenced by their activities (Bora, 2022). It is in line with Noor (2019), who states that local wisdom is part of a continuous relationship process built in the community's culture, embodied in ideas, activities, and artifacts. The notion above is highlighted in the following excerpt.

*“Dan gejerlah seluruh desa, orang-orang berlarian keluar, kentongan tanda bahaya dipukul ramai”* (There was an uproar throughout the village; people ran out, and the kentongan (Indonesian; a traditional alarm bell made of wood was loudly beaten) (Yasadipura I, 1982, p. 165).

Kentongan is a traditional tool used as a medium of communication by the community. It is usually utilized as a sign to give announcements to others. Hence, the different numbers of beats mean different things. Furthermore, Arismayanti (2021) explains that every community has local rules or values regarding actions or behaviors being mutually agreed upon by all members. However, they will change following the progress of society. The values in question are not necessarily being compromised or accepted by another community group since they are unique. Local heritage is substantial to uncover because it is somehow in line with the spirit of the contemporary era, where people face issues of religious extremism, intolerance, racism, and others (Rahman et al., 2021). Subsequently, the existence of local wisdom is described in the excerpt below.

*“Kakak Umarmaya, segera carilah seorang dukun yang dapat menyembuhkan calon guruku ini; dan carilah dukun yang benar-benar baik”* (Umarmaya, please find a shaman who can immediately cure my prospective teacher, an excellent one) (Yasadipura I, 1982, p. 168).

Shamans are individuals believed to be able to cure all kinds of diseases. It is in line with, who states that people's beliefs are related to superstition and myths of conducting traditional rituals to accomplish life safety (Danandjaja, 2002). There are different understandings of good and evil magicians. The term shaman tends to refer to black-magic shamans, such as witchcraft, while the one who can heal is known as a pujonggo (an elder) and expert (Jannah & Zurinani, 2017). Another excerpt concerning local wisdom is as follows.

*“Mereka itu akan menghaturkan upeti bulu bakti, disampaikan kepada Sang Raja yang berkuasa di sana”* (They will pay tribute feathers, delivered to the King who reigns there) (Yasadipura I, 1982, p. 203).

Upeti is a reward in the form of money or gold that the state must offer to the king or the ruling state. Historically, in a Javanese monarchy governmental system, upeti is paid to obtain safety and position protection. In the Javanese tradition, it is known as gelondong pengarem-arem (Hilman, 2018). Understanding the local wisdom in Javanese literary works is essential since it can positively impact moral education (Indraswari, 2017). The next excerpt about local wisdom is presented below.

*“Segera menyoreng-nyorengi badannya dengan kunyit dan jelaga, dan kapur sirihlah yang dipakai sebagai bedak. Bunga telang dan bunga orok-orok disisipkan sebagai sumping di kedua telinganya* (She immediately scoured her body with turmeric, soot, and the betel leaf made into powder. Afterward, the flowers of Telang (*Clitoria ternatea*) and Orok-orok (*Crotalaria juncea*) were tucked in her ears). (Yasadipura I, 1982, p. 226)

It is advisable to use traditional ingredients for body care. In this regard, turmeric is known as a spice with many benefits. Besides, people prefer the purple telang flower to the yellow one. Its flowers are small, so they can be used as decorations, one of which is being tucked in the ear to make a girl more attractive. That spice and medicinal plants have long been known to contain phytochemical components that play a vital role in the prevention and treatment of various diseases (Winarti & Nurdjanah, 2005). The demand continues to increase in line with a tendency to return to nature and the assumption that the side effects are not as significant as synthetic drugs.

## B. Discussion

Based on the research results, local wisdom contents in the "*Menak Lare I*" manuscript could be used as teaching materials, especially for the tenth-grade students of senior high schools. Revealed that the value of local wisdom needed to be integrated into education in schools to save the next generation's morals and preserve cultures (Handayani, 2017). The implementation was described as follows.



Basic Competence	Basic Competence
3.7 Identifying values and contents of oral and written folk tales (hikayat).	4.7 Retelling folk tales (hikayat) being heard and read.

Folklore learning is expected to maintain various forms of local wisdom in national cultures. It is in line with Lionar et al. (2020), who found that history learning based on local wisdom positively affected students' intimacy ability to understand history. The implementation of local wisdom in learning was reflected in the syllabus and lesson plans. Teachers designed and integrated history learning materials with the surrounding environment to build better, adaptive, and positive student characters (Pajriah & Suryana, 2021).

It was also supported by negotiating texts based on local cultures in textbooks to make students closer to them in the learning process (Mokoginta & Arafah, 2022). Furthermore, the materials could also be in the form of drama scripts involving technology to elaborate the teaching and learning process and local wisdom (Nurhayati et al., 2022). It indicated that local wisdom from the studied manuscript could be used as literature teaching and learning materials in high schools following the existing basic competencies.

Furthermore, issues on students' religiosity and religion could also be addressed involving the stories in the "Serat Menak Lare 1" manuscript because it contained many good religious practices based on religious teachings. It was directly related to school learning, referring to students' religious cultures, making it relevant to everyday life and eventually building a good character (Fatimah et al., 2020). The ancient manuscript of "Serat Menak Lare 1" was similar to that of "Lontar Yusuf" in Banyuwangi because both discussed the teaching and spreading of Islam in the past (Rofiq et al., 2019). Therefore, researchers considered that the investigated manuscript thoroughly described the spread of Islamic teachings.

In other cultures, for example, marriage in Tolaki Mekongga, Kolaka, had several characteristics and was bound by specific rules (Takwa et al., 2022). It was also reflected in the "Menak Lare 1" manuscript, but with different emphases, such as the use of traditional tools, the spread of religion, and elements dominated by the Javanese culture.

The selection of teaching materials should consider certain aspects. Several principles must be considered, one of which is relevance by which the lesson materials must be relevant (Aunurrahman, 2012). Besides, it must be associated with the predetermined basic competencies, making teachers focus on how they teach and meet the students' needs (Siposova & Svabova, 2022).

Discovered that local wisdom was manifested in the eight nature schools in the former Residency of Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia, such as a) students were encouraged to know and interact with nature; b) learning activities were in the form of traditional dance and singing, wayang day, batik day, gamelan day, fairy tale day, and Javanese day; c) the Javanese language was taught as a local content subject; d) there were fun activities such as farming and cooking based on regional characteristics, and product marketing; e) religious and cultural activities carried out by the community were engaged (Khuriyah et al., 2022). Thus, this study was perceived to be similar to the present research.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Researchers concluded that various forms of local wisdom in the ancient Indonesian manuscript "*Menak Lare 1*" could be used as teaching materials in schools. They were in the form of customs carried out by the community, covering beliefs and habits of using traditional tools. In addition, the present study results could also uphold the value of local wisdom in culture. In this regard, the local wisdom in the "*Menak Lare 1*" manuscript could be applied in school learning, especially in the basic competencies regarding folklore (hikayat). Therefore, teachers could take advantage of the findings by involving particular excerpts discussed earlier as lesson materials based on local wisdom. It was also expected to foster learners' understanding of history while preserving the value of local wisdom in the community.

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# Effect of Glossing on Chinese Senior High School EFL Learners' Vocabulary Acquisition

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**Abstract**—This study examined the effects of four types of glosses on Chinese EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition. The participants were 175 senior high school students, who were divided into five groups according to different glossing conditions: L1 glosses, L2 glosses, multiple-choice L1 glosses, multiple-choice L2 glosses, and no glosses. The participants were asked to read an English material that contained ten target pseudo-words. They then took an immediate vocabulary post-test, which consisted of two recognition tasks and two recall tasks. Two weeks later, they took an unexpected delayed vocabulary post-test with the same tasks. The findings revealed that glossing had a significantly positive effect on the learners' vocabulary learning. Single L1 glosses were the most effective among the four types of glosses, while multiple-choice L2 glosses were the least effective. It was also found that the four types of glosses produced better effects on vocabulary acquisition in the recognition tasks than in the recall tasks and that all the gloss groups had better short-term word retention than long-term one, except for the single L2 gloss group, which displayed the opposite effect.

**Index Terms**—gloss, vocabulary acquisition, single glosses, multiple-choice glosses

## I. INTRODUCTION

Glosses have been widely used to assist second-language readers in understanding texts. Typically provided in the margin or at the bottom of text pages, glosses offer language learners the definitions or explanations of unfamiliar words within a text and supposedly facilitate their form-meaning mapping (Nation, 2013). Textual glossing encompasses various types, including single glosses and multiple-choice glosses. Each type has its unique benefits and potential limitations, and their effectiveness can vary depending on the learning context or task type. While single glosses that provide simple definitions or L1 equivalents are common, some scholars (Hulstijn, 1992; Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001) argue that this type of glossing may deter learners from inferring word meanings from context, which is a strategy considered essential for vocabulary acquisition. They believe that meanings inferred from context are better retained than those provided by glosses, as the effortful process of inferring enhances word retention. In response to this argument, multiple-choice glosses have been proposed as an alternative to single glosses (Hulstijn, 1992). However, the findings concerning the effectiveness of different types of glossing remain inconclusive (Yanagisawa et al., 2020). More empirical studies are needed to determine their effects on L2 vocabulary acquisition.

Regarding the population studied in glossing research, Zhang and Ma (2021) pointed out that the effect of glossing among English language learners at the middle school level had received little scholarly attention. This is particularly true in the Chinese context. While glossing is commonly used to facilitate reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition in Chinese high school English education, few empirical studies have examined its effectiveness and how it influences high school students' word learning.

To gain a deeper understanding of glossing effectiveness for high school students, the study aims to provide a comprehensive comparison of gloss effects by examining the influencing factors such as gloss language (L1 and L2), gloss type (single and multiple-choice glosses), retention phase (immediate and delayed vocabulary post-tests) and task type (recognition and recall tasks). The results of this study would not only contribute to understanding how different types of glossing influence word learning in relation to different influencing factors but also provide insights into optimal gloss designs for lower-proficiency EFL learners.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The relative effectiveness of L1 glosses and L2 glosses has been extensively explored in glossing research, but previous studies comparing their effects have yielded mixed results. Laufer and Shmueli (1997) found that L1 glosses are more effective than L2 glosses in both short-term and long-term word retention. Jacobs et al. (1994) compared the effectiveness of L1 and L2 glosses and found that both L1 and L2 glosses were more effective than the non-gloss condition, but no significant difference was revealed between L1 and L2 glosses. Similar results were obtained by Ko (2012), who investigated the effects of L1 and L2 glosses on L2 word learning by examining 90 Korean English learners' performance on vocabulary tests. It was found that there existed no significant difference between the two types of glosses. Choi (2016) recruited 180 Korean English learners to test the effects of L1 and L2 glosses and found

no significant difference between them in short-term retention of target words, but the L1 group outperformed the L2 group in long-term retention of words that occurred four times in the reading material. Similarly, Yoshii (2006) found no difference between L1 and L2 glosses in terms of incidental vocabulary learning, but the L1 text-only group had better long-term retention. The review of these previous studies reveals that despite extensive research on the effectiveness of L1 and L2 glosses, the findings remain inconclusive and that in-depth explorations are still needed.

Textual glosses can be presented in a single mode (a short definition or explanation) or a multiple one (multiple choices) (Zhang & Ma, 2021). Rott and other researchers investigated the effects of multiple-choice glosses. They found that L1 multiple-choice glosses resulted in significantly deeper productive and receptive word gains (Rott et al., 2002), and compared with the no-gloss condition, glosses could induce learners' search for concrete meaning and form-meaning connections (Rott & William, 2003). However, comparisons between single glosses and multiple-choice glosses have produced mixed results. Some studies found no significant differences between the two types for incidental vocabulary learning (Hulstijn, 1992; Miyasako, 2002; Watanabe, 1997), while others indicated that multiple-choice glosses were more effective than single glosses (Nagata, 1999; Rott, 2005).

Mixed findings have also been reported concerning task type. Yoshii (2006) examined the effectiveness of L1 and L2 glosses in incidental vocabulary learning and found no significant differences between the two in the definition-supply task and the recognition task. Yanagisawa et al. (2020) observed that glosses affected vocabulary gains differently depending on the task type. In their study, the students scored much higher on the recognition test than on the recall test. Çakmak and Erçetin (2018) discovered that glosses facilitated vocabulary recognition and production but had no positive effect on text recall. In contrast, Chun and Plass (1996) found better incidental learning outcomes on recognition tests than on production tests. Zhang and Ma (2021), however, reported that textual glosses were more effective in vocabulary production. The inconsistency across the previous studies suggests that the effect of glosses likely interacts with task type in complex ways that are not fully understood. Further research systematically comparing the effect of glosses across different task types would help us understand the relationship between the gloss effect and task type and clarify the conditions under which glosses are most effective.

In addition, it is worth noting that most previous studies have primarily focused on investigating the effectiveness of gloss in intermediate or advanced English learners' vocabulary acquisition. While these studies have provided valuable insights into our understanding of the gloss effect, there is a notable gap in research concerning lower-level learners, particularly high school students (Zhang & Ma, 2021). High school students represent a significant population in terms of language development. They are at a crucial stage where they are expanding their vocabulary. More studies are needed to gain a deeper understanding of how glossing impacts the vocabulary acquisition of this particular group.

To address these gaps in the glossing literature, this study investigates how gloss language and gloss type jointly influence Chinese senior high school students' L2 vocabulary acquisition. By comparing students' performances in immediate and delayed vocabulary recall and recognition tasks, the effects of single and multiple-choice glosses in L1 and L2 will be analyzed.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Questions

The present study will address the following questions:

- 1) What is the relative effectiveness of different gloss types (single L1 glosses, single L2 glosses, multiple-choice L1 glosses, and multiple-choice L2 glosses) in Chinese senior high school students' incidental English word acquisition?
- 2) How do the effects of these glosses vary according to test timing (immediate or delayed vocabulary post-tests) and task types (recognition or recall tasks)?

#### B. Participants

The participants in the present study were selected from second-year students at a Chinese senior high school. As part of their regular academic practice, these students took an English final examination at the end of each semester. The purpose of this examination was to evaluate their proficiency across different language aspects, including grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing. To ensure that all participants had a similar level of English proficiency, their average scores from the final English exams over the previous three semesters were calculated. Only students who obtained average scores ranging between 110 and 120 out of 150 were selected to participate in the study. A total of 175 students were chosen as the participants in the present study, who were then divided into five groups. These groups included the single L1 (SL1) group, the single L2 (SL2) group, the multiple-choice L1 (MCL1) group, the multiple-choice L2 (MCL2) group, and the control group that did not receive any form of glossing assistance.

#### C. Target Words

To prevent participants had prior knowledge of the target words and to ensure that they would not encounter the target words after the immediate vocabulary post-test, ten pseudo-words were created to replace ten words in the reading material. The replaced words accounted for approximately 3% of the total words in the text. The proportion of

the unchanged words (around 97%), therefore, fell within the range of familiar words Nation (2013) recommended for effective comprehension, i.e., at least 95% coverage of a written text.

The ten created pseudo-words followed the orthographic and morphological rules that govern the spelling and formation of words in the English language (Pulido, 2007). The selection of the replaced words was based on three criteria: (1) The words chosen for glossing were concrete nouns or verbs that were essential to conveying the main ideas of the reading material; (2) the words could only appear once in the text (to ensure controlled frequency); and (3) the context surrounding each target word allowed learners to infer its meaning, which was checked and confirmed by three Chinese English learners of a similar English proficiency level. Moreover, the pseudo-words' inflections were consistent with those of the replaced words in the reading material. For instance, the pseudo-noun would be pluralized when the original word was in its plural form, and the pseudo-verb would be used in the past tense if the original word called for it.

#### *D. Instruments*

##### *(a). The Reading Comprehension Test*

The reading comprehension test consisted of a reading material, glosses for ten target words, and five multiple-choice reading comprehension questions. The material, which was chosen by two teachers with over 20 years of teaching experience, was 305 words long and selected based on the teachers' assessment of the participants' English proficiency level. In the reading material, except for the ten target words, all the words were among the 3000 most frequent words in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The readability of the reading material was validated by three students of a similar English proficiency level, confirming that the material was understandable to the participants.

The reading material and the comprehension questions were the same for all the groups. The only difference between the tests administered to each gloss group was the type of gloss used. The four experimental groups (i.e., the SL1 group, the SL2 group, the MCL1 group, and the MCL2 group) each read the material with one type of gloss, and the control group received the material without any glosses. The purpose of the reading comprehension test was to see whether the participants had read and understood the material.

##### *(b). The Vocabulary Post-Test*

The vocabulary post-test in this study consisted of two recall tasks and two recognition tasks. The first recall task required the participants to provide the Chinese definitions or English synonyms of the target words, and the second one to make a sentence with each target pseudo-word. In the recognition tasks, the participants needed to match the Chinese definition with the target words and then choose the correct Chinese meaning of each target word from two options. The vocabulary post-test was administered twice, immediately after the reading comprehension test and two weeks after the first post-test. The immediate and delayed post-tests were used to assess the participants' retention of the target words. The delayed post-test was identical to the immediate post-test, except that the order of the test items was different.

#### *E. The Pilot Study*

A pilot study was conducted to ensure the suitability of the reading material and to determine the appropriate time limits for the tests the participants were about to take. As a year-two English teacher at the senior high school suggested, the participants were given 15 minutes to read the material and complete the subsequent reading comprehension test. Another 15 minutes was given to complete the immediate vocabulary post-test. Following the pilot study, an interview was conducted to gather the students' opinions regarding the reading material and the post-test. The interview was recorded with the consent of the participants and lasted approximately 25 minutes. Based on the findings of the pilot study, it was determined that the selected reading material was suitable for the students, and 15 minutes was an appropriate time limit for each task.

#### *F. Data Collection*

The participants were given 15 minutes to read the material and complete a reading comprehension test. This was followed by a 15-minute immediate vocabulary post-test. Two weeks later, the participants were asked to complete an unexpected delayed vocabulary post-test. Before the experiment began, the researcher gave a brief oral introduction to the participants regarding the reading task. The gloss groups were informed that they could refer to glosses during the reading process if they encountered any unknown words. However, they were not told that they would be given glosses of different types.

As previously mentioned, both the immediate and delayed vocabulary post-tests included recall and recognition tasks. The recall tasks were conducted before the recognition tasks in both the immediate and delayed vocabulary post-tests to prevent the recognition test items from affecting the validity of the recall test.

#### *G. Data Analysis*

Once the data were collected, we checked the participants' answers and gave one point for each correct answer. The vocabulary post-test scores were entered into SPSS v29 for quantitative analysis. Descriptive statistics of mean scores and standard deviations were generated for a general comparison. A mixed ANOVA was performed to compare the mean scores for the five gloss conditions in relation to task type (the recall task and the recognition task) and test timing

(the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test) and to find out the variables' main effect and interaction effect. One-way ANOVA tests were run to examine the differences among the five groups in terms of short-term and long-term retention in the recall tasks and the recognition tasks. Post-hoc analysis was used to examine differences between each pair of the groups.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### A. Results

A 2×2×5 mixed ANOVA was conducted to analyze the immediate and delayed vocabulary test scores. The results (Table 1) showed significant main effects of task types ( $F(1, 170)=583.684, p<.001$ ) and of test timing ( $F(1, 170)=207.504, p<.001$ ). The analysis also showed significant interaction effects of task types and gloss conditions ( $F(4, 170)=31.988, p<.001$ ), of test timing and gloss conditions ( $F(4, 170)=13.121, p<.001$ ) and of task types, test timing and gloss conditions ( $F(4, 170)=30.104, p<.001$ ). No significant interaction effect was observed between task types and test timing ( $F(1, 170)=2.629, p=.107$ ). The overall effect sizes were high except for the interaction effect of test timing and task types.

TABLE 1  
MANOVA OF 2 (TASK TYPE) × 2 (TEST TIMING) × 5 (GLOSS CONDITION) DESIGN

	<i>F</i>	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
<b>Task type</b>	583.684	<.001	.774	
<b>Test timing</b>	207.504	<.001	.550	
<b>Task type × Gloss condition</b>	31.988	<.001	.429	
<b>Test timing × Gloss condition</b>	13.121	<.001	.236	
<b>Task type × Test timing</b>	2.629	.107	.015	
<b>Task type × Test timing × Gloss</b>	30.104	<.001	.415	

TABLE 2  
DIFFERENCES WITHIN GLOSS CONDITIONS BY TEST TIMING IN THE RECALL/RECOGNITION TASK

	<b>Task type</b>			
	<b>The recall task</b>		<b>The recognition task</b>	
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>F</i>	Sig.
<b>L1 gloss</b>	8.24	.005	104.71	.000
<b>L2 gloss</b>	7.24	.008	8.63	.004
<b>MCL1 gloss</b>	48.96	.000	11.00	.001
<b>MCL2 gloss</b>	48.96	.000	22.44	.000
<b>No gloss</b>	129.80	.000	.57	.449

TABLE 3  
DIFFERENCES WITHIN GLOSS CONDITIONS BY TASK TYPE ON THE IMMEDIATE/DELAYED VOCABULARY POST-TEST

	<b>Time of the vocabulary post-tests</b>			
	<b>Immediate</b>		<b>Delayed</b>	
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>F</i>	Sig.
<b>L1 gloss</b>	7.31	.008	240.20	.008
<b>L2 gloss</b>	93.19	.000	674.46	.000
<b>MCL1 gloss</b>	32.66	.000	18.74	.000
<b>MCL2 gloss</b>	32.66	.000	41.25	.000
<b>No gloss</b>	90.23	.000	.31	.577

As task types, test timing and gloss conditions had a significant interaction effect, simple effect tests were run to examine 1) the differences between the immediate post-test and delayed post-test within each task type in all the five gloss conditions and 2) the differences between the recognition tasks and the recall tasks within the testing time in all the five gloss conditions. The results showed that within each gloss condition, there existed significant differences between the immediate and delayed post-test scores for the recall and recognition tasks except for the recognition tasks in the no-gloss condition (Table 2). Regarding the effect of task types, significant differences between the task types were observed within the immediate vocabulary post-test and also the delayed vocabulary post-test in all five gloss conditions except the delayed post-test in the no-gloss condition (Table 3).

Table 4 reports the means and standard deviations of the participants' word gains in each gloss condition. In the recall tasks of the immediate post-test, the SL1 group got the highest mean score (8.11), followed by the MCL1 group (Mean=5.17), the SL2 group (Mean=2.51) and the MCL2 group (Mean=1.77). The control group's mean score (0.23) was the lowest. In the recognition tasks of the immediate post-test, the same mean score sequence was observed, i.e., the SL1 group (9.11), the MCL1 group (Mean=7.29), the SL2 group (Mean=6.09) and the MCL2 group (Mean=3.89) and the control group (Mean=3.74). In the recall tasks of the delayed post-test, the mean score of the SL1 group (5.03) was the highest, which was followed by those of the MCL1 group (4.17), the SL2 group (1.63), the MCL2 group (0.34). The control group's mean score was 0. In the recognition tasks of the delayed post-test, the SL1 group again got the

highest mean score (8.20), which was followed by the SL2 group (Mean=6.94), the MCL1 group (Mean=5.06), the MCL2 group (Mean=1.66) and the control group (Mean=0.11).

TABLE 4  
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF WORD GAINS IN THE IMMEDIATE AND DELAYED POST-TESTS

	SL1*		SL2		MCL1		MCL2		No gloss	
	recall**	recog	recall	recog	recall	recog	recall	recog	recall	recog
<b>Immediate test</b>	8.11 (1.78)	9.11 (1.08)	2.51 (1.84)	6.09 (1.65)	5.17 (2.20)	7.29 (1.67)	1.77 (1.29)	3.89 (1.69)	0.23 (0.49)	3.74 (1.52)
<b>Delayed test</b>	5.03 (0.92)	8.20 (1.18)	1.63 (1.06)	6.94 (1.33)	4.17 (1.22)	5.06 (1.11)	0.34 (0.59)	1.66 (1.21)	0 (0)	0.11 (0.32)

Note.  $N = 35$ .

\* SL1= the single L1 gloss, SL2 = the single L2 gloss, MCL1 = the multiple-choice L1 gloss, MCL2 = the multiple-choice L2 gloss

\*\* recall= the recall task, recog= the recognition task

A one-way ANOVA was performed to examine the differences among the five groups regarding the immediate word gains in the recall and recognition tasks. The results show that the five groups in the recall and the recognition tasks differed significantly from each other in their immediate vocabulary post-test (recall:  $F(4, 170)=127.568, p=.000$ ; recognition:  $F(4, 170)= 77.097, p=.000$ ). The mean scores on the recognition tests were all higher than those on the recall tests. Given the significant differences, the participants generally did better in the recognition tasks than in the recall test in terms of their immediate word gains. Post hoc analyses (Table 5) revealed significant differences among the groups in terms of short-term retention. Specifically, in the recall tasks, all the groups exhibited significant differences between each other, except for the SL2 and MCL2 groups ( $p=.429$ ). In the recognition tasks, significant differences were observed among all the groups except for the MCL2 and the control groups ( $p=.699$ ). A one-way ANOVA was also run to see the differences among the five groups in terms of long-term word retention in the recall and recognition tasks. Similar results were obtained in that the five groups were also significantly different from one other in their delayed vocabulary post-tests in both of the two tasks (recall:  $F(4, 170)= 234.533, p=.000$ ; recognition:  $F(4, 170)= 346.412, p=.000$ ). Post hoc analyses (Table 6) revealed that all the groups showed significant differences from each other on the delayed post-test in the recognition tasks and the recall tasks ( $p<.05$ ).

TABLE 5  
POST-HOC ANALYSIS RESULTS OF THE FIVE GLOSS CONDITIONS ON THE IMMEDIATE POST-TEST

	the recall task		the recognition task	
	Dif.	<i>P</i>	Dif.	<i>P</i>
<b>SL1 vs. SL2</b>	5.60	.000	3.03	.000
<b>SL1 vs. MCL1</b>	2.94	.000	1.83	.000
<b>SL1 vs. MCL2</b>	6.34	.000	5.23	.000
<b>SL1 vs. No gloss</b>	7.89	.000	5.37	.000
<b>SL2 vs. MCL1</b>	-2.66	.000	-1.20	.001
<b>SL2 vs. MCL2</b>	0.74	.429	2.20	.000
<b>SL2 vs. No gloss</b>	2.29	.000	2.34	.000
<b>MCL1 vs. MCL2</b>	3.40	.000	3.40	.000
<b>MCL1 vs. No gloss</b>	4.94	.000	3.54	.000
<b>MCL2 vs. No gloss</b>	1.54	.000	0.14	.699

TABLE 6  
POST-HOC ANALYSIS RESULTS OF THE FIVE GLOSS CONDITIONS ON THE DELAYED POST-TEST

	the recall task		the recognition task	
	Dif.	<i>P</i>	Dif.	<i>P</i>
<b>SL1 vs. SL2</b>	3.40	.000	1.26	.001
<b>SL1 vs. MCL1</b>	0.86	.015	3.14	.000
<b>SL1 vs. MCL2</b>	4.69	.000	6.54	.000
<b>SL1 vs. No gloss</b>	5.03	.000	8.09	.000
<b>SL2 vs. MCL1</b>	-2.54	.000	1.89	.000
<b>SL2 vs. MCL2</b>	1.29	.000	5.29	.000
<b>SL2 vs. No gloss</b>	1.63	.000	6.83	.000
<b>MCL1 vs. MCL2</b>	3.83	.000	3.40	.000
<b>MCL1 vs. No gloss</b>	4.17	.000	4.94	.000
<b>MCL2 vs. No gloss</b>	0.34	.016	1.54	.000

## B. Discussion

### (a). Effect of Glossing in General

The present study found that glossing significantly affected Chinese senior high school students' incidental English vocabulary acquisition. Regardless of the type of glossing used, all gloss groups outperformed the control group (no glosses) in both the immediate and the delayed vocabulary post-tests and in both recall and recognition tasks, as evidenced by the significant interaction effects observed for task types and gloss conditions, test timing and gloss



conditions, as well as task types, test timing and gloss conditions. Glossing in reading materials plays an important role in enhancing the salience of words in the text, effectively capturing readers' attention and directing their focus toward unfamiliar words (Nation, 2013). This helps learners understand the meanings of words they encounter while reading, which can contribute to stronger form-meaning mappings and better word retention.

Among the four types of glossing, SL1 glosses are the most effective in both recognition and recall tasks for short-term and long-term retention, while MCL2 glosses are the least effective. This could be due to the low English proficiency level of the participants. The participants in this study were senior high school students whose English proficiency level was not high enough to understand L2 gloss definitions effectively or to make a correct choice from multiple-choice gloss options. Lower-proficiency learners tend to establish a direct one-to-one relationship between words in their native language (L1) and their second language (L2). In a sense, the L1 assumes a significant role in processing unfamiliar words, and single glosses in their native language facilitate their English word learning. Considering this cognitive reliance on the L1, providing lower-proficiency learners with single glosses in their native language can be an effective way to assist their English word learning.

The present study showed that MCL glossing, whether in Chinese or English, was less effective than SL1. Although multiple-choice glosses are supposed to increase learners' cognitive involvement in word learning and will consequently result in better word retention (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001), lower-proficiency learners face challenges in making accurate inferences of word meanings due to their limited English proficiency, which results in incorrect form-meaning connections. This, however, does not mean multiple choice glossing is ineffective in English word learning. It proves to be significantly more effective than the no-gloss condition. Furthermore, MCL1 glosses were found generally more effective in word learning than SL2 except in the recognition tasks of the delayed post-test. Multiple-choice glosses entail relatively more cognitive involvement load in the acquisition of unfamiliar words (Hulstijn, 1992; Miyasako, 2002), as they encourage learners to search in the context for the meanings of the words and evaluate their inferences based on contextual clues. According to the Involvement Load Hypothesis (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001), search and evaluation are the two cognitive factors that contribute to learners' successful word learning. This increased mental effort leads to better acquisition effects. Compared with the ones in L2, multiple-choice glosses presented in lower-proficiency learners' native language can effectively facilitate their word learning. However, it is undeniable that the choices made by lower-proficiency learners are sometimes incorrect, which explains why the effectiveness of multiple-choice glosses is significantly weaker than that of SL1 glosses.

#### *(b). Effect of Glossing in Relation to Test Timing*

Regarding short-term and long-term retention, this study revealed the significant main effect of test timing and the significant interaction effect of test timing and gloss conditions. All gloss groups experienced a significant decrease in mean scores from the immediate to the delayed post-test except the SL2 group. This suggested that some of the gained vocabulary knowledge had been lost over time, which is generally consistent with the findings of previous studies (Cheng & Good, 2009; Choi, 2016; Ko, 2012).

It was also found that different from the other glosses, SL2 glosses had a better effect on long-term word retention than on short-term word retention. This may be attributed to the combined impact of learners' English proficiency level and the appropriate cognitive load induced by this type of glossing. The Involvement Load Hypothesis (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001) argues that higher involvement loads lead to better learning outcomes. However, word retention may not solely depend on how much mental effort learners invest in task completion, and this can be particularly true with low-proficiency learners. In terms of cognitive involvement, SL1 glosses require the lowest as learners' native language is used to provide direct and immediate access to the meaning of the words. The low cognitive involvement load may result in weaker memory traces that fade more quickly over time. In the case of MCL1 glosses, though learners must choose from the given options, the options are provided in the learners' native language, which allows for quick association of the words with their meanings, and facilitate immediate recognition and understanding of the words. In a sense, the mental effort involved in the word decoding process is still relatively low. MCL2 glosses pose the greatest challenge for learners, as evidenced by the lowest mean post-test scores. Learners must choose the correct option that defines the unfamiliar word, which can be particularly challenging when all the input is presented in a foreign language. MCL2 glosses are most demanding in terms of the cognitive loads they place on learners. However, this type of gloss does not optimize lower-proficiency learners' delayed word retention. The cognitive involvement load is not the primary influencing factor contributing to their word retention, as they often have difficulties correctly and efficiently inferring the meanings of unfamiliar words. In contrast, SL2 glosses require learners to put in moderate cognitive effort to understand the words and context in a foreign language, resulting in relatively deeper processing of the target words and stronger word retention that persist over time. SL2 glosses, with their moderate cognitive load for lower-proficiency learners, achieve the optimal balance of cognitive processing and decoding challenge. Compared with SL1 glosses, though this may lead to lower immediate recognition test scores due to the increased cognitive demands, the deeper processing helps enhance delayed word retention.

#### *(c). Effect of Glossing in Relation to Task Type*

The results showed that task types had a significant main effect on vocabulary acquisition and that the interaction effect of task types and gloss conditions was also significant. This suggests that gloss types influence learners'

vocabulary acquisition differently in recognition and recall tasks. The higher word gains observed on the recognition test indicate that glosses help students identify word meanings in context, and the lower gains on the recall test suggest that glosses may not adequately support learners in independently recalling and reproducing those meanings. Across all glossing conditions, senior high school English learners consistently perform better in the recognition tasks than in the recall tasks. This difference in performance can be attributed to the different natures of the two tasks. The recall task requires learners to independently retrieve word knowledge from memory without contextual cues. This makes recall more cognitively demanding than recognition, as it relies more deeply on knowledge formed through word processing. To successfully recall an unfamiliar word, learners must process it in a way that allows them to establish robust form-meaning connections. In contrast, the recognition task does not require this depth of processing since learners only need to identify the correct definition from provided options. This explains why learners generally perform better in recognition tasks than in recall tasks.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the effect of four gloss types on Chinese senior high school EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition. The findings revealed that glossing exerted a positive effect on Chinese EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition in both the recognition tasks and the recall tasks, as well as for short-term and long-term word retention. Among the four types of gloss examined in this study, SL1 glosses were the most effective, and MCL2 glosses were the least effective. Regarding the interactive effect of task type and gloss type, it was found that the four types of glosses were consistently more effective in the recognition tasks than in the recall tasks, regardless of immediate or delayed effects. Moreover, all the gloss groups exhibited better short-term retention than long-term retention, while the single L2 gloss group showed the opposite.

The current findings have broadened our understanding of glossing, particularly concerning an understudied population, namely senior high school students. Furthermore, this study examined the interaction effect of task type and test timing, yielding valuable insights into how these factors influence the effectiveness of glossing. Pedagogically, the findings help determine how glosses should be created and used to maximize the benefits of glossing for high school students' word learning. This study revealed that SL1 glosses are the most effective for lower-proficiency learners in both immediate and delayed word retention. Providing glosses in students' native language within reading materials can thus facilitate their incidental vocabulary acquisition regardless of retention phases. Moreover, SL2 glosses reveal an increasing effect on long-term word retention, so they, too, can be employed to facilitate lower-proficiency learners' long-term retention. In essence, instructional L2 material developers should strategically use different glosses depending on the specific word learning objectives they intend to achieve.

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# Linguistic Relativity: A Study of the Role of L1 in L2 Vocabulary Acquisition in an EFL Setting

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**Abstract**—This article investigates the role of mother tongue in mastering foreign language vocabulary, drawing insights from both empirical and existing data sources. The study context consists of 68 students of the English Language Program at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia, whose native language is Arabic and are enrolled in an EFL program. Two distinct tests were administered to gather data for this study to evaluate the interplay between native language proficiency and second language vocabulary acquisition among Saudi EFL learners. Emphasizing the role of bilingual teaching methodologies, the study found that learners who engaged with native language translations demonstrated enhanced vocabulary retention and recall to a significant level when compared with their peers who exclusively studied vocabulary in the target language. In the absence of any other input, this superior performance was attributed to the theory of linguistic relativity, suggesting the cognitive advantage of associating unfamiliar English terms with familiar linguistic constructs from one's primary language. The results compellingly advocate for a more holistic and inclusive pedagogical approach. The study concluded that incorporating native linguistic references in second language instruction not only facilitates more efficient foreign language vocabulary assimilation, but also, recognizes and values the rich linguistic tapestry each learner brings to the educational setting. The results herald a significant shift towards bilingual approaches in EFL settings, especially for educators and curriculum developers aiming for optimal language acquisition outcomes.

**Index Terms**—Adult, learning, teaching, translation

## I. INTRODUCTION

The linguistic tapestry of the modern world is highly intricate with many individuals navigating the realms of bilingualism or multilingualism as they engage with global cultures, professions, and academic pursuits (Phillipson, 2000). For many, English stands as a pivotal second language, opening doors to international collaborations and understanding. Within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the challenge of acquiring English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is notably salient, given the stark linguistic differences between Arabic, the native language, and English (Payne & Almansour, 2014). While the dynamics of mastering a second language are distinct from those underlying native language proficiency (e.g., Chan, 2017; Kitishat et al., 2020; Smith, 2019), certain elements which are pivotal to second-language learning, such as motivation, seemingly do not influence first language development (Lee, 2016). That said, the ripple effect of one's second language abilities on native language competence have been receiving increasing attention in recent years (Al-Ahdal, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c; Alfallaj, 2020; Gomez & White, 2018). Contemporary models in cognitive science and psycholinguistics propose that bilingual individuals experience an intricate intertwining of their two languages, which remains active even when one language is the primary focus (Fernandez & Jones, 2017). Young learners, as well as those thoroughly immersed in their second language, manifest these interactions in particularly pronounced ways. Building on these insights, this research underscores the influential role of native language translations in the realm of second/foreign language education. Notably, this facilitates a two-way exchange between the native and acquired languages. By synthesizing these perspectives, this study investigates how strategies, previously identified as beneficial for second language acquisition, impact the native language vocabulary of bilingual English-Arabic individuals.

### **Research objectives**

The general objective is to analyze the relationship between native language proficiency and various aspects of second language acquisition, taking into consideration the potential variations introduced by different language pairings. The specific objectives of the study are:

To evaluate the degree to which native language vocabulary proficiency influences or factors into second/ foreign language learning;

To determine if different first and second language combinations lead to consistent patterns in relation to native

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language vocabulary skills and histories of second language learning;

To compare the efficacy of translation methodologies in second language acquisition across two distinct bilingual cohorts.

### ***Research hypothesis***

To align the study's exploration with prevailing literature, specifically addressing the hypothesis that vocabulary transfer patterns differ depending on the languages a bilingual person is acquainted with.

Learners who engaged with native language translations demonstrated enhanced vocabulary retention and recall than their peers who are taught vocabulary in the target language.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### ***Influence of native language on mastery of a second language***

It's recognized that one's primary language (L1) profoundly shapes their ability to learn a subsequent language (L2), influencing aspects like phonological development (Ahmed & Roberts, 2018), lexical prowess (Thompson & Martinez, 2017), and the depth of vocabulary comprehension. EFL learners often grapple with challenges tied not only to the volume of vocabulary to assimilate, but also, to the intricate understanding of these lexical entities' semantics. Contemporary research has indicated that EFL students' lexical capabilities and semantic depth often deviate from those of native speakers (Nunez & Watson, 2016). For instance, bilinguals have been noted to produce less consistent word associations in their second language compared to monolinguals, showcasing a potentially diminished grasp on semantics (Magulod Jr, 2018, 2019; Nunez & Watson, 2016). Despite this, the impact of bilingualism on one's native vocabulary remains an understudied area. A particular focus has been on discerning the interplay between L1 and L2 lexical abilities in bilinguals. Broadly, solid vocabulary skills in one's native language have been linked with improved performance in a second language (Martinez et al., 2019). Empirical data suggest a substantial correlation between vocabulary transfer from a native language, such as Arabic, to a target language like English (Winke et al., 2013). However, some scholars, like Castro and Lee (2017), have posited that a comprehensive vocabulary in one language might somewhat diminish the same in another language. Contradicting this, other studies have not identified any significant correlation between L1 and L2 lexical competencies (Azin & Tabrizi, 2016). Given this, the discourse regarding the effect of L2 mastery on L1 vocabulary is still in its nascent stages and warrants further exploration.

### ***The role of native language in second language learning***

The intricate exchange between a learner's native language (L1) and their second language (L2) acquisition has long fascinated linguists and educators alike. The interplay between these two languages can be likened to a dynamic, ever-evolving relationship, where each exerts influence upon the other in myriad ways. Central to this relationship is the concept of 'transfer', as elucidated by Ellis (2017) and many others before him. This phenomenon isn't just about the mere transplantation of structures and patterns from one language to another. It speaks of the deep-seated cognitive processes that underpin language acquisition (Carvalho, 2019). At the core of the transfer is the brain's natural inclination to seek patterns and similarities. When faced with the unfamiliar terrains of a new language, it instinctively draws upon the familiar - the structures, sounds, and patterns of the native tongue. However, 'transfer' is a double-edged sword. While it can often facilitate the learning of similar structures between languages, it can also lead to interference, where discrepancies between L1 and L2 can result in errors in the latter (Baxter et al., 2022). For instance, a French speaker might struggle with English adjectival placement because, in French, they often come after the noun, whereas, in English, the opposite is true. Beyond structural considerations, the influence of L1 extends to phonological, morphological, and even pragmatic levels. Phonetically, certain sounds that exist in L1 but not in L2 can pose pronunciation challenges (Moyer, 1999). Conversely, sounds unique to L2 may be difficult to perceive and produce due to the absence of these sounds in L1 phonetic inventory (Brown, 2000). Morphologically, the way words are formed and inflected in L1 can impact a learner's expectations in L2 (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017). For instance, languages that rely heavily on inflections, like Russian, might predispose learners to search for similar inflectional patterns in English, where word order plays a more crucial role. Pragmatically, L1 influence can be seen in how learners approach social contexts and the soft nuances of language: politeness levels, indirectness, formality, and the myriad unwritten rules governing human communication (Mauranen, 2023). Thus, cultural elements embedded within the native language can shape a learner's understanding and use of social cues in L2. Lastly, motivation and identity also intertwine with the role of L1 in L2 acquisition (Sung, 2019). A learner's relationship with their native language, their cultural affiliations, and their aspirations in relation to the target language community can deeply influence their learning trajectory. In general, while the structural aspects of L1 influence on L2 are well-documented, it is essential to recognize that the interplay between the two languages goes beyond grammar and vocabulary. It delves deep into the cognitive, cultural, and personal realms, making the journey of L2 acquisition as rich as it is complex.

### ***Native language use in language-centric learning***

One fundamental aspect of L2 learning is vocabulary acquisition. Learners adopt various strategies, ranging from using L1 translations and context cues in L2 to visual demonstrations and pictorial representations (Mashhadi & Jamalifar, 2015). Among these methods, L1 translation has often been lauded as exceptionally effective, primarily because translations are usually concise, clear, and relatable, key features for effective learning (Laufer & Samuels, 2016). This method's efficacy is further solidified when coupled with visual aids, such as word cards. Research has,

time and again, highlighted the effectiveness of this direct learning approach, negating criticisms that often surround it (Morgan & Sideridis, 2006). Dictionary usage is another area where the role of L1 becomes evident. Monolingual dictionaries only use the L2, and bilingual dictionaries incorporate both the L1 and L2. Bilingual dictionaries, due to their ease of use, have found greater favor among learners, especially those at preliminary stages of learning. Proficiency in the L1, thereby, plays a crucial role in vocabulary learning, aiding learners in navigating and understanding monolingual dictionaries.

### ***L1-L2 interaction in language learning***

Language learning strategies can be broadly classified as intralingual, focusing on L2 linguistic tools, and interlingual, leveraging bilingual resources like dictionaries or translations (Rothwell et al., 2023). Modern teaching methodologies, with their emphasis on the communicative approach, often sideline native languages in the classroom. In specific contexts, like that of Saudi EFL students, the complete exclusion of Arabic might not be the most efficient or feasible approach (Schmitt, 2019). Using interlingual strategies, like bilingual dictionaries or translations, can expedite the process of grasping new words. The intricate interplay between L1 and L2 has always intrigued scholars in the field of second language acquisition. Recent studies have underscored the symbiotic relationship between the two. As noted by Swain and Lapkin (2018), extensive usage of L1 can inadvertently boost L2 proficiency. Socio-cultural theories have posited that L1 acts as a cognitive tool, assisting students in understanding task requirements, enhancing attention to language forms, and setting collaborative tones. Further research by Ghazali (2019) delved into how L1 and L2 learning are not mutually exclusive but exist along a continuum. L1 profoundly influences L2 acquisition, sometimes leading to confusion among learners when they mistakenly apply L1 structures to L2. The journey of Saudi EFL learners is emblematic of the broader inquiry into how native language proficiency impacts the process of second language acquisition. Traditional pedagogical models often advocate for immersive environments where learners are exclusively exposed to the target language, contending that such immersion fosters more natural language acquisition (Davis & Bowles, 2018). However, as the world becomes increasingly interconnected and the benefits of bilingualism are progressively acknowledged, there's a burgeoning interest in examining the role that one's native language plays in facilitating the learning of a new language, especially in the domain of vocabulary assimilation (Lasagabaster, 2015). This study seeks to explore the hypothesis that leveraging the native language, in this case Arabic, in English vocabulary instruction can bolster retention and comprehension for Saudi EFL learners. Drawing inspiration from the theory of linguistic relativity, which posits that language shapes thought, this research aims to discern whether bridging new English terms with familiar Arabic linguistic patterns enhances vocabulary acquisition. Through a systematic examination of bilingual teaching methods versus traditional English-only approaches, this study endeavors to shed light on optimal strategies for English vocabulary acquisition among Saudi EFL students. Such insights bear significant implications, not just for pedagogical methodologies in Saudi Arabia, but for the broader realm of second language instruction in diverse linguistic landscapes globally. In 2003, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education and Training implemented English language instruction from the 6th grade onward, emphasizing a bilingual approach to vocabulary learning (Ankawi, 2015). Despite the uniformity in the textbooks and exercises used across the country, a considerable proportion of students at Qassim University and other institutions (e.g. University of Ha'il) struggle with basic vocabulary acquisition (Hameed & Aslam, 2015). This challenge hinders the development of more advanced English language skills such as reading, writing, and speaking. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated this problem, with remote learning conditions potentially amplifying the disconnect. This study, set in the context of Qassim University, seeks to understand the role native language vocabulary in facilitating target language (English) acquisition and where conflicts might arise between the two during the EFL learning process. The aim is to unravel the intricate role of L1 in enhancing L2 vocabulary, which is pivotal for mastering integrated skills in the target language.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### ***Participants***

This research enlisted participants from the Intensive Course English Program (ICEP) affiliated with the esteemed English Language Program (ELP). Two distinct cohorts, each comprising 34 learners around the age of 18 years, were established. Over a span of sixteen weeks, these learners delved into various linguistic areas such as vocabulary, academic composition, structural grammar, and the receptive skills of reading and listening, as well as the productive skill of speaking. Entrance into the ELP hinged on students securing at least a 60% threshold in the ICEP. For clarity and differentiation during the research process, these cohorts were labeled as the *control* and *experimental* groups. An initial diagnostic assessment reaffirmed that both sets of learners mirrored each other in terms of their English proficiency levels and vocabulary breadth. One set benefited from the expertise of a native Arab English-speaking educator, while the other had the guidance of a non-Arab English-speaking pedagogue. Both educators came with an impressive pedagogical track record, with experience spanning 10 to 15 years in areas including English linguistics, literary studies, and language instruction.

### ***Instruments***

Over a period of two weeks, participants encountered two distinct vocabulary assessments. They were tasked with translating a set of 30 English words, presumably new to them, into Arabic. These assessments were designed to gauge the durability of these new vocabulary items in the participants' cognitive memory banks. Extracts, approximately 400

words in length, were isolated from sources such as, "Keep Writing 1&2" and, "Interactions Access (Reading Skills)" to facilitate this. From these extracts, learners identified and translated the terms they found unfamiliar.

#### **Procedures**

From a larger pool of 200 terms in the ICEP curriculum, a subset of 30 words—deemed potentially unfamiliar to the learners—was earmarked for the testing phase. The inaugural test saw learners identify and provide Arabic translations for terms they recognized within the allocated 50-minute class duration. Subsequently, the entire class was bifurcated into two segments: the "Normal" segment and the "Control" segment. In the ensuing test, the Normal segment received elucidations of the terms strictly in English. Conversely, the Control segment was privy to explanations in both English and Arabic. After an intermission of two weeks, a slightly altered version of the preceding test was administered to both segments to assess long-term retention and recall.

#### **Data collation and processing**

The data assimilation process was executed with a keen eye for detail, ensuring the integrity of the qualitative analysis. Incomplete responses on the test were accorded a score of zero and labeled as "incorrect", but these were retained in the broader data analysis. Instances where participants either partially or entirely omitted responses led to their exclusion from the primary data set. All the collated test responses were subjected to rigorous scrutiny by the lead researcher and a panel of English academic professionals to pave the way for the ensuing analytical phase.

#### **Test evaluation protocol**

A well-defined and uniform grading metric was instituted for the evaluation process. In the initial test iteration, participants' task was to render English terms into Arabic. Each accurate translation was awarded a point, signaling the participant's prior acquaintance with the term. On the flip side, errant translations were seen as markers of the term's unfamiliarity to the participant. This grading paradigm was consistently applied to the subsequent test, where the primary objective was to ascertain the number of terms that participants could accurately recall after a span of three weeks from their initial exposure.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The T-test evaluation offers significant observations into the nuances of language acquisition, especially regarding vocabulary learning. Using SPSS for this assessment ensures an objective overview of the collected data. From Table 1, it is apparent that there is only a minor distinction between the means of the experimental and control groups during the initial test. With mean scores of 8.23 for the control group and 9.10 for the experimental group, it suggests that both sets began with a closely matched proficiency in the introduced vocabulary. Factors like their shared educational experience, prior encounters with English, and consistent teaching materials could account for this resemblance. For the T-test to be appropriately applied, the data met the assumption of normality. That is, the distribution of the scores should roughly follow a bell-shaped curve or a normal distribution. Before conducting a T-test, it is common to perform tests of normality to ensure that this assumption is met.

TABLE 1  
MEANS COMPARISON TEST 1

Groups	No of Students	Average Grades	Mean	SD	Sig (2-tailed)
Control Group	34	85.45	8.23	3.45	0.013
Experimental Group	34	88.34	9.10	3.65	

However, a pivotal observation emerges in Table 2. The experimental group's mean score jumped to 14.12, a significant leap from their earlier 9.10. Meanwhile, the normal group experienced a moderate rise, moving from 8.23 to 10.12. This improvement is significant as the probability value is 0.013. This pronounced increase in the experimental group's performance underscores the benefits of integrating native language (Arabic, in this instance) translations in the vocabulary learning process. Such a shift is not merely numerical – it illustrates the cognitive leverage bilingualism provides and the reinforcing power of associating new learning with one's native language.

TABLE 2  
MEANS COMPARISON TEST 2

Groups	No of Students	Average Grades	Mean	SD	Sig (2-tailed)
Controlled Group	34	86.23	10.12	7.34	0.000
Experimental Group	34	90.23	14.12	6.45	

This augmented performance of the experimental group can potentially be anchored in the theory of linguistic relativity, which postulates that the structure of a language can shape cognitive processes. This finding agrees with those propounded by other authors of the significant impact of first language transfer in learning the second language (Ahmed & Roberts, 2018; Magulod Jr, 2018, 2019; Nunez & Watson, 2016; Thompson & Martinez, 2017). Ahmed and Roberts (2018) confirmed that one's primary language (L1) profoundly shapes the ability to learn a subsequent language (L2), influencing aspects like phonological development. Moreover, Thompson and Martinez (2017) reported the development of lexical prowess in L2 as a result of L1 influence. Furthermore, Nunez and Watson (2016) perceived the depth of vocabulary comprehension in L2 as being dependent on learners' L1.

EFL learners often grapple with challenges tied not only to the volume of vocabulary to assimilate but also, to the intricate semantic understanding of these lexical entities. Contemporary research has indicated that EFL students' lexical capabilities and semantic depth often deviate from those of native speakers. Bilinguals have been noted to produce less consistent word associations in their second language compared to monolinguals, showcasing a potentially diminished grasp on semantics (Magulod Jr, 2018, 2019; Nunez & Watson, 2016).

This finding affirms that when Arabic translations in tandem with the English vocabulary were offered to, students likely had access to cognitive touchpoints or recognizable linguistic patterns, promoting enhanced memory retention and retrieval. Often, the integration of unfamiliar terms is strengthened when learners can associate them with pre-existing knowledge or experiences. In this context, the Arabic translations for the control group in this study may have acted as mnemonic aids, bridging new English terminologies to well-known Arabic notions, enhancing memory consolidation in the process.

The data captured from the T-test evaluations reveals a tangible progression in the experimental group's vocabulary assimilation when compared to the control group. Initially, both groups demonstrated roughly analogous proficiencies, with only a slight edge perceptible in the control group. However, as time progressed, the control group, exposed to bilingual learning techniques, notably outperformed its counterpart. This outcome not only bolsters the understanding of bilingual advantages in language acquisition but also, emphasizes the profound impact of native linguistic anchors in enhancing memory recall and retention. The implications of these findings are manifold. For educators and curriculum developers, this study underscores the value of incorporating native language references, especially in the early phases of learning a second language. Additionally, it advocates for a pedagogical shift towards more integrative bilingual methodologies, potentially leading to more efficient and long-lasting language acquisition outcomes.

The findings from this study also have profound implications for both theoretical understanding of language acquisition and practical applications in educational settings. Bilingual approaches, particularly the integration of one's native language into the learning of a second or foreign language, have been a focal point in recent linguistic research. According to a study by Bialystok et al. (2015), bilingualism can offer cognitive advantages that extend beyond language skills alone, echoing the observed benefits in our study. Hernandez et al. (2016) further underscored the importance of the first language as a scaffolding tool in acquiring a second language, which resonates with the marked improvement seen in the control group using Arabic translations in this study. Our finding also aligns with Liu et al. (2017) who found that the integration of native language structures can facilitate better comprehension and retention in learning a second language. This "bridging" strategy, wherein familiar linguistic structures are employed to understand new ones, has also been highlighted by Kim and Piper (2018) as a highly effective pedagogical tool. Moreover, the theory of linguistic relativity, which suggests that language can influence cognition, received empirical backing from Martinn et al. (2019), emphasizing how language structure can mold the way individuals perceive and interact with the world. This aligns with our findings, showcasing the cognitive advantages students gained when given vocabulary anchored in their native linguistic framework. The emphasis on the importance of one's mother tongue in second language acquisition was further accentuated in a comprehensive review by Sullivan and Guglielmi (2020), proposing its potential role in cognitive development. Furthermore, Nagy and Townsend (2021) stressed the idea that bilingual methodologies should be viewed as more than just instructional strategies; they can be vital tools for cognitive development. With these similarities with earlier findings, the current study's implications are crystal clear. The significant strides observed in the control group stress the importance of adopting bilingual techniques, especially in the early stages of second language acquisition. Not only does this pedagogical shift promise better language acquisition outcomes, as observed by Chen and Truscott (2022), but it also champions a more inclusive approach, acknowledging the rich linguistic tapestry students bring to the learning environment. Given the evolving educational landscape and the increasing emphasis on global communication, educators and curriculum developers would do well to integrate these insights, aligning teaching methodologies with the latest in linguistic research. This not only fosters a more inclusive learning environment but also equips learners with tools that promise both immediate and long-term linguistic benefits.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the influential role of native language proficiency in the acquisition of a second language, specifically in the domain of vocabulary assimilation. The results compellingly indicate that students exposed to bilingual teaching methods, wherein native language translations are incorporated, experience enhanced vocabulary retention and recall compared to those who learn strictly in the target language. This elevated performance, rooted in the theory of linguistic relativity, showcases the cognitive benefits of bridging unfamiliar terms with well-known linguistic patterns from one's mother tongue. The implications are multifaceted, advocating for a pedagogical shift towards more integrative bilingual approaches, which not only promise efficient language acquisition outcomes but also, champion an inclusive educational paradigm, recognizing the diverse linguistic backgrounds students bring to the learning arena.

### Recommendations

Given the demonstrated benefits of integrating native language translations in the learning process, educators and curriculum developers should consider the following steps: Firstly, adopt bilingual teaching methodologies, especially in the foundational stages of language learning, to provide students with a familiar linguistic anchor. This approach can aid in the swift and robust assimilation of new vocabulary. Additionally, teacher training programs should emphasize



the importance of linguistic relativity and equip educators with the skills to weave in native language cues while teaching. Lastly, curriculum designers should prioritize the development of bilingual resources, blending elements from both the target language and the learner's mother tongue, ensuring materials resonate more deeply with learners and enhance their engagement with the second language learning process.

### Theoretical Recommendations and Future Research Directions

The findings from this study hint at the vast untapped potential of linguistic relativity in the domain of language acquisition. Future research should seek to explore the broader cognitive impacts of bilingual teaching methodologies, venturing beyond vocabulary retention to areas like syntactical understanding, idiomatic usage, and phonological nuances. Additionally, studies might delve deeper into the efficacy of bilingual methods across diverse linguistic pairings to identify patterns or anomalies. Comparative research involving different age groups can also be beneficial, evaluating whether age influences the advantages drawn from bilingual teaching approaches. Furthermore, while this study has emphasized the Saudi EFL context, it would be intriguing to investigate how these findings extrapolate to other non-native English-speaking demographics and the linguistic intricacies they present.

### Limitations

The study is limited to data extracted from only one gender while recognizing that gender can impact the learning outcomes. Moreover, a larger and more diverse sample such as from rural colleges or from zero-English at home exposure might add to the conclusions, making them richer and more widely applicable.

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# Literature Review on Second and Foreign Language Listening Strategy Research in the Past Fifty Years: Problems and Future

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**Abstract**—Listening comprehension is one of the four essential language skills and it plays an important role in language learning and acquisition. However, despite its importance, foreign language learners often regard listening as the most difficult language skill. Against that background, some researchers have suggested that the proper use of listening strategies could effectively improve listening performance. The current research includes a literature review on previous research involving listening strategy research, which may provide some insight for the problems or research gaps that are present in current research. In addition, the suggestion for future development in relation to the aforementioned will also be offered.

**Index Terms**—Second language listening comprehension, Listening comprehension strategy

## I. INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is one of the four essential language skills and it plays an important role in language learning and acquisition (Rost, 1991). It has been noted that if language learners cannot listen effectively, mastering other language skills (reading, speaking, and writing) will also prove difficult (Rintaningrum, 2018). However, despite its importance, foreign language learners often regard listening as the most difficult language skill to acquire. (Hasan, 2000; Altuwairesh, 2021). Against that background, some researchers have suggested that the proper use of listening strategies could effectively improve listening performance (Vandergrift, 2003; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016), since they can help the listener overcome difficulties during listening (Field, 2008; Siegel, 2014).

Due to the importance of listening strategies, the present research includes a literature review on previous research involving listening strategy research, which may provide some insight for the difficulties or research gaps existing in current research. Besides, the suggestion for future development in this regard will also be offered. This article will first introduce the definition of listening strategy, and then, due to the close tie between listening and language learning strategies, this article will introduce the concept of listening comprehension and listening strategy respectively. Then, it will review previous research of language learning and listening strategy research in the past fifty years. After that, the present study will illustrate some criticism on extant listening strategy research based on previous research, then some suggestions for future development will be offered.

## II. DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Listening comprehension is considered an active skill that involves many processes, in which the listener must delineate sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structure, interpret stress and intonation, as well as interpret it within the larger sociocultural context of the utterance (Vandergrift, 1999). According to previous literature, there are different ways to classify listening comprehension, such as authentic and inauthentic listening, extensive listening (listening to material once and listening continuously without repeating or pausing in the middle, which actually mimics real-time listening), and intensive listening (understanding the meaning of each discourse in order to understand every sentence and word, which usually involves listening and repeating practice by pausing or rewinding the listening input.), and so on. Now we will introduce the definition of listening strategy.

## III. DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF LISTENING STRATEGY

As for the definition of listening strategy, it has been recognized that there is a lack of consensus about this term (Ellis, 1994). For example, Vandergrift (1999) defines listening strategy as the mental process that language learners are

involved in for the purpose of understanding the oral text. While Rost (2013) defines listening strategies as “conscious plans to manage incoming speech, particularly when the listeners know that they must compensate for incomplete input or partial understanding” (Rost, 2002, p. 236).

Although there is great diversity in the definition of listening strategy, many researchers agree that there are twin criteria for listening strategy: goal-directedness and consciousness (Goh, 2002). The consciousness of listening strategy means that listening strategy should be an intentional and conscious behavior, instead of sub-conscious behavior; while goal-directedness means strategy use is a purposeful process, and the strategy would only be used when it is necessitated by comprehension goals (Goh, 2002).

The adoption of these criteria for listening strategy is very important since it will determine if a mental or cognitive process will be regarded as a strategy or not. For instance, the “problem identification” (identifying some problems that occur during listening, such as failure to understand) strategy has been listed as a listening strategy in some previous research (e.g., Vandergrift, 1997; Chou, 2015; and Ngo, 2015). However, if the participant claims that this strategy is not an intentional or conscious behavior but a naturally occurring cognitive process in his mind that does not serve any intentional purpose, then this strategy should not be regarded as “strategy” in the first place according to the twin criteria for listening strategy of Goh (2002).

However, this kind of practice has been ignored by some previous research, and they tend to list every mental process reported by listeners as “listening strategies” in their studies no matter if these “strategies” are conscious or subconscious. In this regard, Elley and Bialystok (1990) already assert that there should be a distinction between strategic and nonstrategic language use when identifying a strategy. The “process” generally refers to the mental steps taken to carry out a cognitive activity, which can be completely unconscious, while the claim for “strategy” requires more (Elley & Bialystok, 1990).

After introducing the definition of listening strategy, a literature review on listening strategy will be followed. However, previous research has recognized that the Western study of listening strategies is based on language learning strategy research and regards language learning strategies as its foundation (Li, 2010; Nix, 2016; Bao, 2017; Kassem, 2015). Therefore, this study will review the research on the language learning strategy first before it delves into the listening strategy in order to give a clearer view on the involvement of listening strategy research in the past fifty years.

#### IV. SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY

Since the 1970s, some studies (e.g., Rubin, 1975) have started to examine the language learning strategy of different groups of second language learners (Zhang, etc., 2019). This earlier research of learning strategies has many similarities, but there is no consensus reached (Shi, 2017). But, since the publication of research by O’Malley, etc., (1985, 1990) and Oxford (1990), the research on language learning strategy began to attract major attention in the field of second language acquisition (Shi, 2017). Among the earlier research on language learning strategy, the research of O’Malley, etc., (1985, 1990) and Oxford (1990) is among the best-known research in terms of language learning strategy research (Hong, 2017). The next section will introduce these studies respectively.

##### A. Language Learning Research of O’Malley et al. (1985, 1990)

O’Malley et al. (1985, 1990) did a series of research on language learning strategies, which identified dozens of language learning strategies and differentiated them into three categories: the meta-cognitive strategies (involving thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learned); the cognitive strategy (the strategies that manipulate information directly), and social-affective strategy (involving interacting with another person to assist learning or using affective control to assist a learning task (see Table 1). The O’Malley et al.’s (1989, 1990) research was very prominent in the 1980s and their tripartite taxonomy (meta-cognitive; cognitive and social-affective strategy) on language learning strategies is used extensively by later research in this regard (Kassem, 2016).

TABLE 1  
THE LEARNING STRATEGIES AND TAXONOMY OF LEARNING STRATEGIES REPORTED IN O’MALLEY ETC. (1985, 1990)

Taxonomy of strategies	Definition of different Taxonomy	Examples of Specific Strategies
Meta-cognitive strategy	Thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learned.	Planning; directed attention; selective attention; self-management; self-monitoring; problem identification, self-evaluation
Cognitive strategies	Interacting with the material to be learned, manipulating the material mentally or physically, or applying a specific technique to a learning task	Repetition; rehearsal; resourcing; grouping; note-taking; substitution; contextualization; elaboration; summarization; translation; transfer
Social affective strategy	Interacting with another person to assist learning or using effective control to assist a learning task.	Question for clarification; self-talk; self-talk; self-reinforcement;

##### B. Language Learning Research of Oxford (1990)

Oxford (1990) also proposed a detailed classification of language learning strategies based on the synthesis of the previous work. She divided language learning strategies into direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies involve direct learning and require mental processing of the language (Oxford, 1990), which include “memory

strategies”, “cognitive strategies”, and “compensation strategies”. Indirect strategies indirectly support learning but are essential to the learning process, which include “metacognitive strategies”, “affective strategies”, and “social strategies” (see Table 2). Oxford (1990)’s research on language learning strategy is also popular and widely cited by later research, and his research is also regarded as “the most comprehensive classification of learning strategies” (Ellis, 1994, p. 539).

TABLE 2  
THE LEARNING STRATEGIES AND TAXONOMY OF LEARNING STRATEGIES REPORTED IN OXFORD (1990)’S RESEARCH

Taxonomy and its definition	Examples of Specific Strategies
Memory strategy -Strategies for storage and retrieval of new information	1, creating mental linkages 2, applying images and sounds
Cognitive strategy -Strategies for manipulating or transforming the target language by the learner	1, practicing 2, receiving and sending messages
Compensation strategy -strategies that help learners to overcome knowledge limitations	1, guessing intelligently 2, overcoming limitations
Metacognitive strategy - Strategies beyond, besides, or with the cognitive.	1, focusing on your learning 2, planning your learning 3, evaluating your learning
Affective strategy -Strategies involving emotions, attitudes, motivations, and values	1, lowering your anxiety 2, encouraging yourself 3, taking the emotional temperature
Social strategy -strategies that involve communication, and between people	1, Asking questions 2, Cooperating with others

## V. PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LISTENING STRATEGY

Since the 1980s, numerous research has started to focus on the listening strategy use of different groups of listeners. In order to analyze previous research on listening strategy use in a more systematic approach, the present study has reviewed various databases, such as Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar in a relatively thorough manner. As a result, 43 empirical research specifically involving the second and foreign language listening strategy are collected in the present study (Table 3), which date from 1985 to 2021. Among the 43 pieces of empirical research, 26 of them involved the language learning strategy research of O’Malley and Chamot (1990) to code the data qualitatively or adapt the questionnaire or inventory to quantitatively tap into the listening strategy use. 6 of them have involved the language learning strategy research of Oxford (1990) for data coding or questionnaire adaptation. 4 of the empirical research (e.g., Murphy, 1985; Chien & Heyst, 2014) do not specify the source of their research instruments. The present study will introduce Vandergrift’s series of research, such as Vandergrift (1996, 1997, 2003) first since they are very influential and widely used in extensive research involving listening strategy use (Zhou, 2017). Then it will review the rest of the listening strategy research based on their relations with language learning strategy research due to the close relations between listening and language learning strategy research.

TABLE 3  
DISTRIBUTION OF 43 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH INVOLVING LISTENING STRATEGY COLLECTED IN PRESENT STUDY

Relations with language learning strategy research	Number of Research (43 total)	Specific research
Involving language learning strategy of O’Malley and Chamot (1990)	26	Bacon (1992b); Bacon (1992a); Young (1997); Goh (1998); Santos (2008); Goh (2002); Mareschal (2002); Vandergrift (1998); Graham et al. (2008); Blanco and Guisado (2012); Bidabadi and Yamat (2012); Kazemi and Kiamarsi (2017); Chen et al., (2013); Vogely (1995); Liu Hsuen-ju (2008); Li Xiangdong (2010); Bidabadi and Yamat (2011); Kassem (2015); Ngo (2015); Chou (2015); Zhao Guoxia and Sang zilin (2016); Lau (2017); Vandergrift (1996, 1997, 2003); Vandergrift (2006).
Involving language learning strategy of Oxford (1990)	6	Teng (1998); Kao (2006); Shang (2008); Li Yichun (2009); Wang Yu (2002); Moriera (1995)
Research does not specify the source for data coding or questionnaire construction (adaption)	4	Murphy (1985); Chien and Heyst (2014); Bao Xiaoli (2017); Lin and Huang (2021)
Research independent from language learning strategy research	7	O’Malley etc., (1989); Rukthong (2021); Matsumura (2002); Fujita (2012); Nix (2016); Soruc etc., (2018); Wakamoto and Rose (2021)

### A. Listening Strategy Research of Vandergrift (1996, 1997, 2003)

Vandergrift and his colleagues have carried out a series of research on the listening strategy of different second or foreign-language listeners. Some of these studies are very influential for current listening strategy research and are widely cited by extensive research (Zhou, 2017), such as the research of Vandergrift (1996), Vandergrift (1997), and Vandergrift (2003).

Vandergrift (1996) and Vandergrift (1997) are actually the first and final phases of one study. Vandergrift (1996) used an interview method to investigate the strategy used by French high school students inside and outside classroom

listening activities. In this study, the strategy framework of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) (which is the research of second language learning strategy) served as a guide for coding the listening comprehension strategies reported in this study. Then, Vandergrift (1997) uses a think-aloud method to investigate high school students listening strategy use, in which the students listen to listening material first and then report the mental process immediately after. Then the think-aloud protocol was coded also "using a predefined taxonomy of listening comprehension strategies identified, validated, and refined by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Vandergrift (1996)" (Vandergrift, 1997, p. 391). Finally, these two studies identified 4 meta-cognitive strategies, 8 cognitive strategies, and 1 socio-affective strategy in total (see Table 4).

While Vandergrift's (2003) study has specifically investigated these differences of strategy use between skilled and unskilled second language listeners. The data was also coded using a predefined taxonomy based on Vandergrift (1996, 1997). Therefore, similar strategies as that in Vandergrift (1996, 1997) are found in this study, such as the strategy of "advanced organization" "directed attention" "selective attention" "problem identification" "imagery" "monitoring" "inferencing" "summarization", and so on.

TABLE 4  
LISTENING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES INVESTIGATED BY VANDERGRIFT (1996, 1997)

Taxonomy of strategy	Strategy	Examples of specific strategies
Metacognitive strategies	1, Planning	Advance organization
		Self-management
		Directed attention
		Selective attention
	2, Monitoring	Comprehension monitoring
		Double-check monitoring
	3, Evaluation	Checking the outcomes of one's listening comprehension for completeness and accuracy.
4, Problem identification		
Cognitive strategies	1, Inferencing	Linguistic inferencing
		Voice inferencing
		Extra-linguistic inferencing
		Between-parts inferencing
	2, Elaboration	Personal elaboration
		World elaboration
		Academic elaboration
		Questioning elaboration
		Creative elaboration
	3, Deduction/ Induction	
	4, Summarizing	Making a mental or written summary of language and information presented in a listening task
	5, Translation	Rendering ideas from one language to another in a relatively verbatim manner.
	6, Transfer	Using knowledge of one language to facilitate listening in another.
7, Imagery	Using mental or actual pictures or visuals to represent information.	
8, Repetition	Repeating a chunk of language	
9, Grouping		
Social-effective	1, Questioning for clarification	
	2, Lowering anxiety	Mental techniques that make one feel competent to perform a listening task.
	3, Self-encouragement	Positive self-talk and/or arranging rewards for oneself during a listening activity or upon its completion.

Vandergrift's (1996, 1997, 2003) studies are very important and influential in the listening strategy research area, which have become the most widely cited listening strategy framework later on (Zhou, 2017). A significant number of studies on listening strategy have either used this framework as a coding scheme for the qualitative analysis in their studies or adapted this study into questionnaires or inventories to investigate the listening strategy use quantitatively. Besides, the tripartite taxonomy (meta-cognitive, cognitive, and social-affective) used in these studies to classify the listening strategy, which is based on the taxonomy of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) (research on language learning strategy), is also extensively used by later research (Zhou, 2017; Kassem, 2015). However, it could be noted that, although Vandergrift (1996, 1997, 2003) was specifically conducted for listening strategy research, it actually uses a predefined language learning strategy framework to code and analyze the data being collected. According to Matsumura (2002), although this practice is thought-provoking to some extent, the existing framework of language learning strategies would not be sufficient to analyze the listening strategy used when the listeners are facing a particular real-time listening task since the language learning strategy framework is not designed to investigate the cognitive processes the listeners go through when they are facing a real-time listening task (Matsumura, 2002). While, due to the

influence of Vandergrift (1996, 1997, 2003), this may pose some influence on listening strategy research later on, which will be further illustrated in the next part.

Except for the research of Vandergrift (1996, 1997, 2003), the rest 39 research on listening strategy use collected in the present study has adopted either qualitative method (e.g., retrospective verbalization or think-aloud method) or quantitative method (e.g., questionnaire or inventory) to examine the strategy use of second or foreign language listeners (see Table 5, Table 6, Table 7 and Table 8), which would be detailed next based on their relations with language learning strategy.

#### *B. Listening Strategy Research Involving O'Malley and Chamot (1990) or Vandergrift (1996, 199, 2003)*

Among the rest 39 articles of research collected in the present study, 22 (55%) of them examined the listening strategy using qualitative or quantitative methods involving the research of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) or Vandergrift (1996, 1997, 2003). Among them, 12 articles used the qualitative method, such as an interview or retrospective verbalization method (in which the participants need to verbalize the mental process that occurred in their mind immediately after listening), to investigate the listening strategy use. While the coding scheme that these studies used to code the interview or verbalization data is based on O'Malley and Chamot (1990) (which is language learning strategy research) or Vandergrift (1996, 1997, 2003) (which are listening strategy research based on the language learning strategy research) (see Table 4). For example, Bacon (1992), Young (1997), Mareschal (2002), Vandergrift (2003), Graham et al. (2008), Goh (1998, 2002), and Ngo (2015) used the qualitative method to investigate the listening strategy use by different student groups, and the data was coded based on the coding-scheme of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) or Vandergrift (1996, 1997, 2003). As a result, the strategies obtained in these studies are typically classified into three types (meta-cognitive, cognitive, and social-affective strategies) just as the taxonomy of O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and the specific strategies reveal in these studies also bear some similarities with language learning strategies of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) (e.g., "asking for help", "summarization", "referencing", "elaboration", "transfer", "grouping" "monitoring" and so on) (see Table 5).

However, among these studies, there is some research that has fully realized the difference between the language learning strategy and the real-time listening strategy, and they intend to focus on real-time listening strategy for investigation specifically. For instance, Bidabadi and Yamat (2012) investigated the strategy used during real-time listening scenarios specifically, which revealed six major types of listening strategies for real-time listening (extensive listening): concentration/attention; visualization; note-taking; inferencing; communicating and skipping. It also specifically pinpointed that real-time listening could be different from the other listening learning scenario since it is restricted by time, so the listener may have to understand the meaning instead of comprehending every detail (Bidabadi & Yamat, 2012). This research may deserve credit to some extent since it is one of the few studies that has recognized the strategy difference between real-time listening scenarios and other listening scenarios and focused on the strategy of real-time listening (extensive listening) explicitly for investigation.

TABLE 5  
PREVIOUS QUALITATIVE LISTENING STRATEGY RESEARCH BASED ON O'MALLEY AND CHAMOT (1990) OR VANDERGRIFT (1996, 1997, 2003)

Research (12)	Research method-qualitative	Source of the coding scheme	Strategies identified (examples)
Bacon (1992b)	interview and think-aloud	O'Malley and Chamot (1990)	Summarization, referencing, elaboration, transfer, visualization, concentration
Bacon (1992a)	interview and think-aloud	O'Malley and Chamot (1990)	
Young (1997)	think-aloud	O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990), Rost and Ross (1991), Vandergrift (1992)	Deduction; transfer; problem identification; planning; self-monitoring; elaboration; summarization; resourcing; grouping; clarifying; repetition;
Goh (1998)	retrospective verbalization	Rubin (1987); O'Malley and Chamot (1990); Oxford (1990)	Cognitive strategies: inferencing, elaboration, prediction; fixation, reconstruction Meta-cognitive strategies:
Santos (2008)	retrospective verbalization	O'Malley and Chamot (1990); Vandergrift (2003)	
Goh (2002)	verbalization and diary	O'Malley et al. (1989); Oxford (1990); Young (1997); Ross (1997)	
Mareschal (2002)	interview and think-aloud	O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Vandergrift (1996, 1997)	Selective attention, self-management, monitoring, inferencing; elaboration, imagery; translation, and transfer.
Vandergrift (1998)	think-aloud	O'Malley and Chamot (1990)	
Graham etc., (2008)	retrospective verbalization	O'Malley and Chamot (1990); Vandergrift (2003)	Elaboration; monitoring; integration.
Blanco and Guisado (2012)	stimulated recall	Vandergrift (2008); O'Malley and Chamot (1990)	
Bidabadi and Yamat (2012)	interview and think-aloud	O'Malley and Chamot (1990); Vandergrift (1996, 1997).	
Kazemi and Kiamarsi (2017)	think-aloud	O'Malley and Chamot (1990)	



Besides, there are 10 additional articles of research that have used the questionnaire or inventory method to examine listening strategies in a quantitative manner, in which the questionnaire or inventory tends to be adapted from O'Malley and Chamot (1990) or Vandergrift (1996, 1997, 2003) (see Table 6). For instance, Bidabadi and Yamat (2011), Kassem (2015), Ngo (2015), etc., have used the questionnaire method to investigate the listening strategy use of student L2 listeners. The questionnaire or inventories in these studies are adapted mainly from Vandergrift (1996, 1997, 2003, 2006) or O'Malley and Chamot (1990). As a result, most of these studies mentioned above have revealed three types of strategies: the meta-cognitive strategy, the cognitive strategy, and the social-affective strategy just as that in the language learning strategy research of O'Malley and Chamot (1990). Besides, the scope and definition of specific strategies in the questionnaire also follow that in language learning strategy research. The next part will introduce previous research on listening strategy based on another language learning strategy research – Oxford (1990).

TABLE 6  
PREVIOUS QUANTITATIVE LISTENING STRATEGY RESEARCH INVOLVING O'MALLEY AND CHAMOT (1990) OR VANDERGRIFT (1996, 1997, 2003)

Research (10)	Research method-quantitative	Source of questionnaire adapted from
Chen etc., (2013)		O'Malley etc., (1985); O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper (1989); O'Malley and Chamot (1990); Vandergrift (1997).
Vogely (1995)	Questionnaire	Vandergrift (2006).
Liu (2008)	Questionnaire	Vandergrift (1997)
Li (2010)	Questionnaire	Vandergrift (1996, 1997)
Bidabadi and Yamat (2011)	Questionnaire	Vandergrift (1997, 2003)
Kassem (2015)	Questionnaire-	Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010); Vandergrift etc., (2006); Harris (2007); Cheng (2002); Lee (1997); Teng (1996)
Ngo (2015)	Questionnaire and interview	Goh (2000); O'Malley and Chamot (1990); Phakiti (2008); Vandergrift (1997, 1999)
Chou (2015)	Questionnaire and interview	Cohen, Oxford, and Chi (2001); Vandergrift (1997, 1999)
Zhao and Sang (2016)	Questionnaire	O'Malley and Chamot (1990); Vandergrift (1997,1999)
Lau (2017)	Questionnaire	Berne (2004); Chang (2009); Goh (2002); Santos et al. (2008);

### C. Listening Strategy Research Involving Oxford (1990)

Of the 39 remaining articles of research collected in the present study, there are 6 of them (15%) that also investigate the listening strategy use of different groups of second and foreign language listeners based on the research of Oxford (1990) (another language learning strategy research) or code the qualitative data using a coding-scheme based on Oxford (1990) (see Table 7). For instance, Teng (1998), Shang (2008), Kao (2006), and Liu (2009) have used a questionnaire adapted from Oxford (1990) to examine the listening strategy use. As a result, these studies tend to analyze listening strategies from six categories just as Oxford (1990): memory strategy, compensation strategy, cognitive strategy, meta-cognitive strategy, social strategy, and affective strategies, and the scope or definition of specific strategy revealed in these studies also follows that in Oxford (1990) (see Table 8).

It could be noted that these studies mentioned above are closely related to language learning strategy research, such as O'Malley and Chamot (1990) or Oxford (1990), in terms of the scope, definition, and taxonomy of listening strategy. While, there are some other studies that investigated listening strategies in an "independent" approach, which means research does not involve language learning strategy research in the present study. This strand of research will be introduced next.

TABLE 7  
PREVIOUS LISTENING STRATEGY RESEARCH INVOLVING OXFORD (1990)

Research (6)	Research method	Source of questionnaire/coding scheme adapted from	Taxonomy for the Specific Strategies
Teng (1998)	Questionnaire- included 52 Likert-scaled items of six categories: memory, cognitive; meta-cognitive. Compensation, affective, social	Oxford (1990)	Memory strategy; compensation strategy, cognitive strategy, meta-cognitive strategy, social strategy, and affective strategy.
Kao (2006)	Questionnaire	Oxford (1990)	
Shang (2008)-	Questionnaire	Oxford (1990)	
Liu (2009)	Questionnaire	Oxford (1990); Kao (2006)	
Wang (2002)	Questionnaire + interview	Oxford (1990) and interview responses of participants in the study	
Moriera (1995)	Retrospective verbalization	Oxford (1990)	Memory; Cognitive Compensation; Metacognitive

### D. Listening Strategy Research not Involving Language Learning Strategy Research

Among the remaining 39 pieces of empirical research on listening strategy use collected in the present study, there are only 7 of them (18%) that have coded or analyzed the data "independently" (which means there is no involvement

with language learning strategy research in the present study) (see Table 8). They tend to code or survey the listening strategy using research instruments that do not originate from language learning strategy but from some theoretical models for listening comprehension or other research on listening strategy research.

TABLE 8  
PREVIOUS LISTENING STRATEGY RESEARCH BASED ON OTHER PERSPECTIVES

Research (7)	Research method	Source of coding scheme or questionnaire adaption
O'Malley etc., (1989)	Think-Aloud	Anderson's (1982) three phases model: perceptual processing, parsing, and utilization
Rukthong (2021)	Stimulated Recall	Field's (2013) mode for listening comprehension: top-down and bottom-up process and the strategic processing
Matsumura (2002)	Questionnaire	based on Otsuka etc.,(2000)
Fujita (2012)	Questionnaire	based on Matsumura (2002); McBride (2008); Vogely (1995)
Nix (2016)	Self-developed questionnaire	
Soruc et al. (2018)	Self-developed questionnaire	
Wakamoto and Rose (2021)	Self-developed questionnaire	

For example, O'Malley and Chamot (1989) have employed a think-loud approach to investigate the listening strategy used by high school students. The collected data were coded and independently analyzed without reference to a pre-defined coding scheme of language learning strategy. This study has confirmed a pair of listening strategies, such as "self-monitoring", "inferencing", "elaboration" and "self-questioning" under three phases (perception, parsing, and utilization) of listening comprehension, which is based on Anderson's (1983) three-stage model for information processing. Besides, Fujita (2012) explored the listening strategies used by Japanese university students using a questionnaire method, and this questionnaire is based on the listening strategy research, instead of language learning strategy research. So, the listening strategies identified in this research are classified into three categories "before", "after" and "during listening", which may realize that the listening strategy used "during listening" could be different from that "before listening" and "after listening" due to different time constraints.

Besides, among these studies, some have examined the strategy used by listeners under specific listening scenarios. For instance, Matsumura (2002) investigated the listening strategy used when listeners face a particular real-time (extensive listening task in the present study) listening task, instead of the listening learning task. The result of this study has identified four types of listening strategies: "the top-down strategy", the "bottom-up strategy", the "strategy for lengthy discourse" and the "strategy for salient features as cues". This research may deserve credit since it has asserted that the strategy used between the real-time listening task and other listening scenarios could be different, and it also highlighted that the language learning framework is not sufficient to support the listening strategy used during real-time listening scenario (Matsumura, 2002) due to different time and cognitive limits on these tasks.

In addition, some research of this kind develops and validates their own questionnaire for listening strategy use which is also independent of language learning strategy (related) research. So, these questionnaires may be unique compared with other questionnaires that are based on the language learning strategy. For instance, Nix (2016) has constructed a two-dimensional questionnaire, which classified listening strategy into two dimensions: the top-down and bottom-up strategies instead of the traditional tripartite taxonomy or six-category language learning strategy. While, Wakamoto (2021) designed a questionnaire, which has the intent to separate the "cognitive listening strategy" (a strategy involving the cognitive process during listening) and the "listening practicing strategy" (a strategy used for listening practicing), which may take into account the differences between listening practicing and real-time listening (extensive listening in the present study). This kind of research tends to use different taxonomy (the bottom-up and top-down processing) that may be specifically suitable for listening strategy, and they also reveal some new listening strategies in this regard. However, this kind of research is relatively scarce in view of previous literature.

## VI. CRITICS OF PREVIOUS LISTENING STRATEGY RESEARCH

Previous research also pinpointed some criticism of the extant listening strategy research, which will be introduced from three aspects: the criticism on the relations between language learning and listening strategy; the efficacy of specific listening strategy, and the taxonomy of listening strategy.

### A. On the Relations Between Language Learning Strategy and Listening Strategy

Based on the aforementioned, current listening strategy research is based on language learning strategy research (Bao, 2017). Matsumura (2002) also stated that most of the listening strategy studies have drawn upon the findings of language learning strategies (e.g., O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990) and have analyzed the listening strategies in the framework of the existing language learning strategy taxonomy.

However, some previous literature has mentioned that the strategy used during language learning scenarios (e.g., when the listener is practicing listening by listening repeatedly or engaging in listening dictation) in which the learner attempts to bring long-term competence into being is different from the strategy in the real-time communication

scenario (e.g., when the listener needs to listen to a classroom lecture in a foreign language in which the listener can only listen once without the chance of repeated listening) which is used to solve a momentary communication difficulty or improve the real-time communication efficacy (Selinker, 1972). As Tarone (1981) notes, learning strategies are attempts to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language. The motivation for the use of the strategy is the desire to learn the target language rather than the desire to communicate effectively. While strategies for real-time listening scenarios (the listener can usually listen once without the chance of pause or rewinding the listening input) may involve an adaptation to the failure during listening in order to improve the real-time communication (listening) efficacy. For example, a listener may need to use strategies to figure out every single word in the listening input in order to acquire a language (usually occurs in listening learning scenario), but they will not be encouraged to use that strategy (focusing on every single word) during real-time listening due to the time and cognitive limits since the listener can only listen once without pausing in the middle. Field (1998) also mentioned that the current classification system does not distinguish between listening strategies that are used for extracting meaning in real-time communication scenarios (real-time listening scenario in the present study) and those learning strategies which are used for the purposes of acquiring or learning language (listening practice scenario). Field (1998) has already warned against mixing these two by stating that one type of strategy can be applied without the other and combining these two types of strategy may create conflicting task demands.

Besides, Matsumura (2002) proposed that the existing inventory of language learning strategies, such as the Oxford (1990), would not be sufficient to analyze the strategies the listeners engage in when executing a particular real-time listening task since it does not offer detailed task-related real-time processing on listening input. This is not surprising since it was not designed to investigate the cognitive processes the listeners go through to construct meaning out of the listening input. Thus, it would be worth conducting studies designed to deal with cognitive listening strategies for real-time listening tasks (Matsumura, 2002).

Therefore, based on what has been mentioned above, there is likely a great difference between the listening strategy used for real-time listening scenario and the language learning scenario. While most of the extant research tends to analyze the listening strategy in the framework of the existing language learning strategy (Matsumura, 2002) and overlook the possible conflicting nature between the listening strategy for real-time listening and listening learning scenarios. So, future research may need to bridge the gap in this regard.

#### *B. On the Efficacy of Some Specific Listening Strategies*

Besides, previous research also casts some doubt on the efficacy of some specific strategies revealed before. For instance, as for some specific cognitive strategies, Li (2010) stated that the "transfer" strategy is negatively related to listening performance. Wang (2002) also confirmed that the "transfer" strategy is reversely related to listening proficiency since transferring the language into the mother tongue will slow down the comprehension process. Besides, for the "note-taking" strategy, although it is reported as a strategy employed by listeners in order to remember the information they heard, findings of some research revealed that students seemed to use the note-taking strategy ineffectively since they did not know how to take notes efficiently and then it hindered comprehension by preventing the listeners from catching up with the incoming information (Ngo, 2015). Goh (2002) revealed that "elaboration" tactics, though generally helpful, were counter-productive when the wrong kind of knowledge was drawn upon. While, as for the "repetition", it is also recognized by some research as a more surface-processing strategy that is typically used by novice listeners (Vandergrift, 1996; Bacon, 1992).

Besides, the efficacy of some other specific meta-cognitive strategies has also received some criticism. For instance, Pressley et al. (1992) found that even with adult first language users, "comprehension monitoring" was often lacking and the participants in his study did not always monitor their comprehension. In line with these findings, Ngo (2015) revealed that only two students in his study used the "monitoring" strategy (checking, verifying, or correcting one's understanding), and most of the listeners did not check and verify information when they listened since they did not have enough time. Some other research has even criticized the definition of a "monitoring" strategy. For instance, Santos, et al., (2008) stated that there are some "problems" with the definition of "comprehension monitoring" strategy since it seems to subsume both the comprehension that has or has not taken place and it seems like a cluster of strategies, instead of one strategy. While Goh (2002) also mentioned that the terms 'self-monitoring' and 'self-evaluation' themselves were imprecise and unable to capture the strategic differences.

Based on what has been mentioned above, one of the reasons for these disputes could be that the language proficiency level of these participants involved in previous research are varied and the listening strategy is usually varied based on different groups of listeners (Vandergrift, 2003), so both the effective or ineffective strategies previously reported by research and some disputed comments on the efficacy of some listening strategies are raised. Another reason for this could be that previous research tends to examine the listening strategy from the perspective of the language learning scenario (in which the listener has plenty of time to practice listening repeatedly), not the real-time listening scenario (in which the listener is highly constrained by time and cognitive resources during listening). While the strategy used in these two kinds of listening scenarios might differ. For instance, the strategy of "repetition" could be an effective strategy for listening practice while it would be counter-productive for real-time listening situations due to its time-limits. Therefore, future studies may need to avoid this confusion by specifically clarifying the listener's listening proficiency as well as the listening scenario.

### C. On the Taxonomy of Listening Strategy

Based on what has been mentioned above, it could be noted that most of the listening strategy research tends to use the taxonomy deriving from the language learning strategy research of Oxford (1990) or O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) (Nix, 2016; Kassem, 2015), and they tend to classify the listening strategies into cognitive, meta-cognitive and social-affective. However, Nix (2016) pinpointed that the tripartite taxonomy is insufficient to generalize listeners' tendencies for strategy use and relations with language proficiency. The reason may rely on the fact that the most distinctive difference between effective and ineffective listeners is the tendency on top-down or bottom-up processing (Vandergrift, 1998), and the tripartite taxonomy has classified the strategy of both groups (bottom-up and top-down) into three categories (metacognitive, cognitive and affective) (Nix, 2016). Besides, it has been generally recognized that listening comprehension is an interactive process involving both bottom-up and top-down processes (Graham & Macaro, 2008). While the tripartite taxonomy on listening strategy has disconnected itself from this interactive process of listening comprehension. So, the current listening strategy taxonomy fails to reveal their relationships with listening performance as well as the interactive processing of listening comprehension cognitively (Nix, 2016). Therefore, in the future, a novel taxonomy that could better reflect the listening comprehension process and the interaction between top-down and bottom-up processing should be constructed.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This article has reviewed the involvement of listening strategy research over the past fifty years. Based on what has been mentioned above, we notice that there are still some existing research gaps. For instance, current listening strategy research is based on the (listening) learning strategy research (Bao, 2017), and most of the extant research tends to regard the general listening learning strategy as the listening strategy (Bao, 2017; Kassem, 2015). However, the real-time listening activity (when the listener only has one chance to listen without the chance to practice listening repeatedly) could be different from the listening learning process (when the listening is usually repeated for language learning purposes) (Bidabadi & Yamat, 2012). So, the strategy used in these two scenarios could also be distinctive to some extent. While, to a review of previous research, research focusing on the strategy use of real-time listening scenarios is very rare (Nix, 2016). Against that background, the efficacy of some specific listening strategies has been questioned since the listening scenario suitable for these listening strategies is not clarified. Furthermore, the existing tripartite taxonomy for listening strategy may be insufficient to generalize listeners' tendencies for strategy use and to reflect the interactive processing of listening comprehension. So, a novel taxonomy constructed specifically for listening comprehension, instead of the language learning process, may be needed in the future. Bridging these research gaps may further broaden the academic research involving listening strategy research in the future.

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# The Effect of Teaching Text Structure on Improving Writing Composition Skills and Reducing Writing Anxiety Among Seventh Graders in Jordan

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**Abstract**—The study aimed at identifying the effectiveness of teaching text structure on improving writing composition skills and reducing writing anxiety among seventh graders in Jordan. To that aim, the one-group pretest-posttest design was adopted. The researchers developed a writing composition test according to the structures of (problem/solution, compare/contrast, description), and writing anxiety scale. The subjects of the study consisted of 29 seventh graders, taught through the text structure procedures. The findings revealed that there is a statistically significant effect of the text structure strategy on improving writing composition and reducing writing anxiety, with a large effect size. In light of the findings, the necessary recommendations were set.

**Index Terms**—text structure, writing composition, writing anxiety, seventh graders

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool that everyone uses daily to teach, learn and convey thoughts and emotions. Learning a language involves the ability to manage its four skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Writing skill is the physical manifestation of a spoken language and is utilized to express ideas, opinions, and feelings in a form of written language. Writing also has an important role in learning and communication. It is an effective way for individuals to link what they have learned with previous knowledge. Moreover, it enables students to express their ideas and desires (Mattson, 2008).

In this modern era, teaching writing skills has a high priority; students use writing skills almost every day through e-mail, short messages, and chatting on social media. Similarly, using writing flexibly and effectively enables students to learn, generate ideas, express what they see, and influence public life (Fadlallah, 2002).

It is necessary to focus more on writing at the basic stage, in terms of improving students' essential writing knowledge, developing a supportive writing environment, addressing topics that affect their lives, providing writing materials from their cultural and social environment, and directing them to appropriate books (Ammar, 2002).

Writing composition is the goal of language skills. Acquiring writing skills is the result of language learning, in which students compose ideas, experiences, observations, and suggestions on a given subject based on real-life or imaginary characters and events (Madkour, 2000). In addition, writing composition is one of the most important aspects of language teaching, as it is a laboratory in which the acquired linguistic systems are applied (Atta, 2001).

Madkour (2000) believes that writing curriculum and instruction are concerned with developing writing composition to improve students' abilities to make clear oral and written communication, which is one of the most important reasons for language learning.

Writing composition is also defined as a complex process of using different cognitive processes to translate ideas and thoughts into a written language. The individual can transfer his ideas and feelings to others in writing, using other language skills, grammar, punctuation, and correct phrases (Al-Souirki, 2010). It is a group of ideas in the individual's mind, translated through the pronunciation device into a correct and purposeful written language (Omar, 2017). Others believe that writing composition is a process in which symbols are converted from an oral message to a printed text to reach distant readers in place and time (Tuaima, 2006).

Writing composition achieves many goals in the basic stage, the most important of which are: gaining the ability to express ideas in a sound language, employing the linguistic and cultural repertoire, and thinking in an organized manner. In terms of picking a topic, listing information to be used in sentence generation, activating the paragraph with a short

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and simple declarative topic sentence, providing supporting sentences based on items from the list, and evaluating the written work for errors in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and appearance (Fadlallah, 2002).

Numerous problems related to the mastery and development of writing composition skills are seen through basic education levels, and writing anxiety is considered one of these problems. Anxiety is a feeling of fear that is out of proportion to any real threat and has a detrimental impact on language performance (Weinberger, 2001). It may be associated with self-doubt, resulting in poor performance (Field, 2004). Writing anxiety refers to a type of apprehension characterized by fear, stress, concern, uneasiness, and a plethora of adverse emotions that can emerge in response to being assigned a writing task (Madi, 2018).

A rock-solid piece of evidence has been concerned with writing anxiety as it affects students' options related to written tasks. Cheng (2004) stated that writing anxiety consists of three domains; **Somatic anxiety** (relates to increased physiological excitement and refers to physical actions such as tremors, sweating, and uncomfortable breathing). **Avoidance behavior** (consists of elements that indicate avoidance behavior and displays activities related to avoiding situations when a person has to write; and Cognitive anxiety refers to the individual's personal experience of excitement, specifically relating to worry or fear about receiving a negative evaluation from teachers regarding their written works.

Generally, students at the basic stage become more anxious when they are given a writing task. They fear making numerous spelling and grammatical errors, writing loose and incoherent sentences, having no desire to write, and refusing to complete assignments, in addition to the anxiety and frustration that leads to breaking pens and tearing papers (Sweif, 2014). Moreover, cognitive factors and linguistic features, such as limited vocabulary, content, and structure, and deficiencies in teaching and evaluation methods might raise students' anxiety (Abdulazim, 2009).

Wiltse (2001) believes that writing anxiety can start at an early age and become a lifelong problem, and determining its reasons will help students to develop a positive attitude toward writing. Psychological literature stated that anxiety leads to students' inability to organize and review the information obtained in building knowledge, and results in a defect in their scientific performance.

The modern trend in teaching writing composition lies in shifting focus on process rather than product (Abdulbari, 2010). From a learning theories perspective, teachers must know that writing is not just a product, but a complex process that requires a series of procedures before, during, and after writing. Students should spend a lot of time brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing (Yunus, 2005; Papiilaya, 2018). The mastery of the writing skill is also based on the writing process approach, in which planning, construction, and review is greatly needed to produce a good piece of writing (Al-Hashemi & Fakhri, 2011).

The importance of the writing process approach is deeply highlighted because it gives writing full attention, rather than just judging the final product. Moreover, improving students' writing skills helps them develop basic cognitive capabilities, such as reasoning, planning, and abstract thinking. Conversely, the lack of these capabilities makes writing tasks surrounded by fear and anxiety (Bacha, 2002).

To overcome such concerns and anxiety, studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of teaching text structure for students at primary, middle, and secondary schools (Kurudayglu & Yilmaz, 2014; Ray & Meyer, 2011). Others studies reported that text structure is used to organize information to suit the text type and its purpose. They emphasized that students need clear instructions about the text structure, especially the less skilled ones (Ray & Meyer, 2011); while intermediate school students can determine the text structure at the age of twelve (Broer et al., 2002).

Text structure enables students to create clarity through appropriately sequenced ideas and information, express ideas clearly in written forms, use headings and paragraphs from inappropriate texts, and sequence their information and ideas (Akhondi et al., 2011). In addition, teaching text structure can help students understand the anticipated content of each text section, locating specific information, and comprehending the connections between different parts of the text (Ray & Meyer, 2011).

Common text structures include five main patterns: description, sequence, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and problem and solution. Description (the writer describes a topic and focuses on the differences between it and other things). Sequence (writing in a logical or chronological order) Compare and contrast (writing in a comparison or contrast between two or more similar events, cases, or objects) Cause and effect (writing in a cause and effect form) Problem and solution (writing in a problem or question form, followed by a solution and answers) (Akhondi et al., 2011).

Based on the foregoing, the researchers believe that there is an urgent need to teach text structure, which enables students to obtain organized thinking skills and provides them with sufficient knowledge of the ways the writers use to organize their various texts. More specifically, if writing composition skills are the desired goal, teaching text structure will be the most effective way to achieve it. A strong body of research (see for example Al-Khatibeh, 2016; Al-Hinnawi, 2011; Mosheer, 2013; Al-Waely et al., 2020) reveals that teaching writing through text structures helps in measuring and ranking students' achievement and leading to a permanent improvement in writing levels.

A plethora of research has investigated the effectiveness of teaching text structure on improving writing composition skills and yielded effective results. Al-Hinnawi (2011) investigated the effect of the text structure method on the English reading comprehension and writing performance of postgraduate students in Jordan. The study sample consisted of 93 university students divided into control and experimental groups. The results of the study indicated that



the text structure method was more effective in teaching both reading and writing to Jordanian EFL university students than the conventional method.

Mosheer (2013) examined the relationship between explicit instruction in the organizational patterns of compare/contrast texts and EFL writing performance. 22 Palestinian EFL postgraduate students enrolled in an academic writing course participated in the study, divided into an experimental group taught through compare/contrast texts and a control group taught conventionally. The findings revealed statistically significant difference in students' writing on the side of experimental group.

Al-Khatibeh (2016) investigated the effect of teaching text structure on improving tenth-grade female graders' argumentative and expository writing in Jordan. The study sample consisted of 91 female students, divided into an experimental group (n=46) taught by text structure and a control group (n=45) taught conventionally. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences in the study sample's performance in argumentative and expository writing in favor of the experimental group.

Bracchi and Grandpre (2018) conducted a study aimed at knowing the impact of the real text structure and reading/thinking strategies on the writing of sixth-grade students in the United States of America. To achieve the goals of the study, the writing quality test was developed. The study sample consisted of 48 male and female students, divided into an experimental group taught by the realistic text and reading/thinking strategies, and a control group taught conventionally. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences in writing quality in favor of the experimental group.

Strong (2019) investigated the effects of a text structure intervention on reading and writing in 4-5 grades. The sample of the study consisted of 351 students in three primary schools in the United States, divided into two groups; an experimental group (n=160) taught by text structure, and a control group (n=191) taught by conventional way. The results revealed that the text structure group's performance outperformed the control group in both reading and writing.

Al-Basiouni (2019) conducted a study aimed at identifying the effectiveness of a suggested program in writing composition based on a web-enhanced writing process approach on developing writing performance and reducing writing anxiety of first-year secondary school students in Egypt. To that aim, a writing performance skills and writing anxiety scale were developed. The study sample consisted of 70 students, divided into an experimental group taught by a suggested program and a control group taught conventionally. The results of the study showed that there were statistically significant differences between the control and experimental group students in the post-anxiety scale and statistically significant differences between the two groups in the post-writing performance skills in favor of the experimental group.

Kurniasih et al. (2020) conducted a study aimed at investigating the effect of the writing processes approach on student writing anxiety and performance. 15 students who participated in this study were assigned to write an argumentative essay. A questionnaire was distributed before and after the treatment. The findings indicated that students' writing anxiety level went down from high to moderate. The writing intervention processes had a significant effect on students writing anxiety and performance.

Al-Waely et al. (2020) conducted a study to determine the impact of teaching the text structure on the development of persuasive writing abilities in eighth-grade female students in Abu Dhabi schools. The sample of the study consisted of 64 students divided into an experimental group taught reading texts through text structure, and a control group taught by a conventional way. The findings revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the means of the study sample performance in persuasive writing in favor of the experimental group.

The previous research discussed the impact of teaching text structure on students' writing skills in different countries (Jordan, Palestine, United States, Egypt, Indonesia, and the United Arab of Emirates), which reflects the importance of the current study that seeks to instill the writing composition skills in its subjects.

The present study used previous research to present and enrich the theoretical literature, develop research instruments, define methodology and process results. This is the first study of its kind, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, to identify the effectiveness of teaching text structure on improving writing composition skills and is concerned with discussing the following text structures domains (description, compare/contrast, problem/solution), and reducing writing anxiety among seventh graders in Jordan.

#### *A. Problem and Questions of the Study*

Exploring literature related to the reality of teaching writing composition in schools justifies that it does not contain an educational approach, goals, content, activities, teaching, and evaluation methods. Teachers are unaware of the various approaches to teaching writing and this is not surprising, as many of them are trained as language teachers instead of writing teachers (Al-Nakah & Hafez, 2006).

Besides, numerous students have an aversion to sentence writing, they are not ready or willing to write and avoid anything to do with writing altogether. It is common for students in today's teaching system to dislike the writing process. Many of them feel that writing is a very laborious task and takes too long because there are so numerous subcomponents, which need to be pulled together (Madkour, 2008). Therefore, teachers must enhance students' positive beliefs about the writing process and motivate them to generate ideas.

Several factors create hurdles in developing students' writing skills, such as traditional practices, spelling and grammatical errors, interconnection, filling, poor presentation, and legibility issues. In addition, students do not like

writing much and their tendencies to write are not strong because of their low level of writing performance (Al-Khawaldeh, 2001). Furthermore, students' inability to write grammatically correct paragraphs is also caused by their poor command of tenses, limited vocabulary, lack of original ideas, writing anxiety, and poorly organized sentences (Conley, 2008). Therefore, teachers must employ new teaching strategies to help students improve their writing skills.

The current study came in response to previous research (e.g., Al-Sarayrah & Al-Botoush, 2022; Al-Shawabkeh & Al-Haddad, 2017; Al-Haddad, 2005; Al-Khawaldeh, 2001) that emphasized the weakness of higher students' understanding of writing composition in Jordan. On the other hand, text structure represents the base of each text, but students' awareness of text in the basic stage is superficial or incomplete, they have insufficient linguistic vocabulary or tools that enable them to deal with the text, and they find it difficult to write a topic that contains description, compare/contrast, or a problem/solution patterns. Al-Haddad (2005) concurs that the greatest weaknesses of students' writing ability are due to the unproductive teaching methods; teachers do not practice the written skills constantly and their traditional methods of teaching writing focus on the product rather than the process, so students exert their effort to perform a difficult task they did not learn.

Through their work as Arabic language teachers in the Jordanian Ministry of Education, the researchers noticed that the students' weakness in writing performance has significantly impacted their productivity and led to a high level of anxiety, which is worth giving more attention to, especially to the basic stage students. Therefore, the current study seeks to examine the effectiveness of teaching text structure on improving writing composition skills and reducing writing anxiety among seventh graders in Jordan. More specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1- Are there statistically significant effects of teaching text structure on improving writing composition skills?
- 2- Are there statistically significant effects of teaching text structure on reducing Arabic writing anxiety?

### *B. Significance of the Study*

After reviewing the research on text structure, it is found that it is very important in the teaching and learning processes. The results of the present study are expected to contribute to the educational literature as they may provide important information and new insights on the importance of teaching text structure in improving writing composition skills and reducing writing anxiety, in addition to expanding the future vision in this research and achieving integration and intellectual consistency.

Practically, the study presents a new teaching method for Arabic language teachers to improve students' writing skills, which may benefit curricula designers and students at all educational levels. This is attributed to the importance of writing in improving their learning, increasing their ability to think and understand the way the authors organize ideas in their text.

This study is a new addition and opens future horizons in the Arab world to play a pivotal role in changing the reality of writing among the new generations and encourage researchers to conduct further research in the field of language learning to include writing composition skills in the textbooks' content.

### *C. Operational Definitions*

**Writing composition:** The individual's ability to translate ideas and thoughts into a written language clearly and in a logical sequence (Mujawer, 2000). In the study, it is the degree that the seventh-grade student obtained in the writing composition test that prepared for this purpose.

**Text structure:** That is the way authors organize information in text, focus attention on key concepts, and relationships and monitor their comprehension as they read (Pilonieta, 2011). In the study, it is determined by description, compare/contrast, and problem/ solution patterns.

**Writing anxiety:** Students' feeling of apprehension, tension, and fear occurs when they are about to write, followed by certain physiological symptoms (Cheng, 2004). In the study, it is the degree obtained by the subjects on the writing anxiety scale.

### *D. Limitations of the Study*

The generalizability of the findings may be limited to the patterns of the text structure: Description, problem/solution, compare/contrast proposed by the researchers and included in the teacher's guide for implementing the procedures of text structure, writing composition skills, and writing anxiety scale. The study is also limited to the seventh-grade students at one of the schools in Deir Alla Directorate of Education, the first semester of the academic year 2022/2023.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The one-group pretest-posttest design as a quasi-experimental approach was adopted. The one-group design was chosen as the Arabic language textbook for the seventh grade lacks the texts that simulate the text structure, consequently, there is no conventional way to teach the control group that can be compared to the experimental one.

### *Subjects of the Study*

The subjects of the study consisted of 29 students from the seventh grade purposively selected from Deir Alla secondary school in the first semester of the academic year (2022/2023) taught by text structure procedures.

### *A. Instruments of the Study*

### (a). *Writing Composition Skills Test*

To achieve the first objective of the study, the researchers developed a writing composition skills test that included writing three paragraphs about problem/solution, compare/contrast, and description. The test was developed based on an extensive review of the literature (e.g., Al-Waely et al., 2020; Strong, 2019; Bracchi & Grandpre, 2018; Mosheer, 2013; Al-Hinnawi, 2011; Gaddy, 2008).

A panel of educational experts reviewed the instruments to determine their validity. The jury was asked to validate the test's content in terms of its items, relevance to the current study, and language clarity. The comments and recommendations of the teams were carefully considered and incorporated into the final version of the test.

To evaluate the construct validity of the test, it was piloted on a sample of 20 students, and correlation analysis was conducted. The person Correlation coefficient between the item score and the total score of the test ranged between (0.45-0.91). Person correlation coefficients between the item score and its domain (problem/solution, compare/contrast, description) ranged between (0.83-0.95) (0.65-0.84) (0.59-0.92), respectively, while corrected item-total correlation coefficients ranged between (0.79-0.93) (0.56-0.79) (0.51-0.89) for the same domains. Furthermore, the Pearson correlation coefficient between the domain total score and the test total score ranged from (0.81-0.94).- total correlation between the total score of the domain and the total score of the test ranged between (0.64-0.86), which all indicates that the test is characterized by a high degree of validity.

To verify the homogeneity of the study subjects' performance on the test, internal consistency using Cronbach alpha was conducted and ranged between (0.91-0.97) for the three domains and (0.97) for the entire test. The inter-rater reliability coefficients analysis was conducted and ranged between (0.81-0.87) for the three domains and (0.84) for the entire test, which is all considered acceptable. As such, the test is reliable and applicable to assess students' writing skills.

To correct the writing composition skills test, the following procedures were followed:

- Determining the correction criteria for the writing skills test according to the skills and performance indicators, 40 marks were allocated for each domain.
- To verify the reliability of the correction, an Arabic language teacher participated in correcting students' answers.
- Entering students' grades on a special form to perform the statistical analysis.

### (b). *Writing Anxiety Scale*

To achieve the second objective of the study, the researchers developed a 17-item writing anxiety scale over three domains: somatic anxiety, avoidance behavior, and cognitive anxiety, based on an extensive review of the literature (e.g., Abu Ghazal et al., 2019; Elif & Yayli, 2019; Kurniasih, 2020; Zhang, 2011). The responses of the students were analyzed using a five-point Likert scale; (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree with numerical values of (five, four, three, two, and one) respectively.

To examine the validity of the instrument, a panel of educational experts (Specialists in Arabic language curricula and teaching methods, educational psychology, educational supervisors, and in-service teachers) made a review of the scale. The jury was asked to validate the instrument's content in terms of its items, suitability for the purposes of the present study, and language clarity. The comments and recommendations of the team were carefully considered and incorporated into the final version of the instrument.

To test the scale's construct validity, it was piloted on a sample of 20 students, and correlation analysis was conducted. Person Correlation coefficient between the item score and the total score of the scale ranged between (0.47-0.81). Person correlation coefficients between the item score and its domain (cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, avoidance behavior) ranged between (0.73-0.86) (0.63-0.78) (0.66-0.81) while corrected item-total correlation ranged between (0.61-0.80) (0.44-0.64) (0.53-0.71) respectively, which all indicate that the scale is characterized by a high degree of validity.

To verify the homogeneity of the subjects' performance on the scale, internal consistency using Cronbach alpha for the scale domains was conducted and ranged between (0.78-0.89) and (0.91) for the entire scale. Furthermore, the test-retest reliability coefficient for the three domains ranged between (.78-0.83) and (0.85) for the entire scale, which all considered high and applicable to measure students' writing anxiety.

### B. *Teacher's Guide for Teaching Text Structure*

The procedures of teaching text structure are summarized as follows:

- Defining the concept of writing composition skills.
- Paving the way for writing composition skills and their behavioral indicators.
- Clarifying the behavioral indicators that indicate each text structure with representation for each of them.
- Presenting the training text and reading it.
- Developing self-evaluation forms.
- Choosing the texts established in the Arabic language curricula in the UAE, for the seventh-grade of the first semester and teaching them to the subjects, according to problem/solution, description, and compare/contrast structures as follows:

- 1- Providing students with theoretical and practical knowledge related to text structure, in terms of its concept, sections, skills, the importance of teaching it, (its indicators), and the phrases and words indicating it.
- 2- Presenting the prescribed reading texts, and teaching them according to problem/solution, description, and compare/contrast structures.
- 3- Analyzing the prescribed reading texts, namely: (when do you plan for your future? And how, Ancient Markets and Modern Markets, Gory Rose) and providing theoretical and performance knowledge in the form of drawings and organizational charts on how to organize and build the text structures: (problem/solution, description, compare/contrast) to organize them within the reading texts.
- 4- Providing individual and within-group training opportunities to analyze the prescribed texts and improve students' performance in mastering text structure skills.
- 5- Providing training and activities in the form of work cards for each text structure: problem/solution, description, compare/contrast.
- 6- Practicing text structure skills: problem/solution, description, compare/contrast through stages, which represent the analytical processes of the text structures of the prescribed reading texts as follows:
  - Teaching students the phrases and words indicating the text structures by displaying examples in lists, and then training them to identify the structures in each text, and attract students' attention to the fact that texts authors use phrases and expressions that are specific to each structure, and these phrases and expressions differ from one structure to another.
  - Assigning students after they have been trained on the indicating words and expressions to extract clues from the text, and determine the structure of each text, by knowing the phrases and words indicating that structure, and extracting them from the text.
  - Training students after mastering the text structures to identify them in different texts, put an organizational graphic chart, and set the supportive details of writing a paragraph about each structure.
  - The teacher provides the students with incomplete organizational drawings, related to the structure of the prescribed texts, and asks them to complete these drawings individually.
  - Practicing the summative assessment of students' work on worksheets, including activities and organizational charts, and involving them in the evaluation process, by using the directed self-assessment method or peer assessment.

### C. Procedures of the Study

The study involved the following procedures being conducted:

- 1- The researchers looked through related literature to focus the subject and compile relevant theoretical and empirical research.
- 2- The study's instruments were created and a teacher guide that includes procedures for applying text structure in developing writing composition skills was prepared.
- 3- A panel of experts determined the instruments' validity.
- 4- The instruments' reliability was verified on a pilot group of 20 students.
- 5- The subjects of the study were identified.
- 6- The educational content for text structure training was selected.
- 7- The study instruments were distributed to the study subjects.
- 8- Data was collected.
- 9- The findings of the research were obtained through appropriate statistical analyses.
- 10- The results of the research were analyzed and discussed in light of the study's questions.
- 11- The recommendations were made based on the study's findings.

### D. Variables of the Study

To determine the potential effect of teaching text structure in improving writing composition skills and reducing writing anxiety among seventh graders in Jordan, the current study used teaching text structure as the independent variable to determine its impact on students' writing composition skills and writing anxiety as the dependent variables.

#### Statistical Analyses

The means and standard deviations of the study subjects were calculated to answer the study's questions in addition to Paired Samples t-test for dependent samples.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Results Pertinent to the First Research Question

A paired sample t-test was conducted to investigate the effects of teaching text structure on the three and the overall writing sub-skills. Table 1 illustrates the results.

TABLE 1  
RESULTS OF A PAIRED SAMPLES T-TEST TO TEST THE SIGNIFICANT EFFECT OF TEACHING TEXT STRUCTURE ON THE THREE AND OVERALL WRITING SUB-SKILLS

Sub-skill	Pre-/post- test	Mean	SD	T-test	df	Siq	Effect size
Problem/solution	Pre	20.50	4.43	-8.255	28	.001	1.560
	Post	29.32	4.92				
Compare/contrast	Pre	19.28	4.02	-11.626	28	.001	2.197
	Post	30.29	5.46				
Description	Pre	18.62	3.97	-5.870	28	.001	1.109
	Post	28.44	8.42				
Overall	Pre	58.40	11.18	-9.228	28	.001	1.744
	Post	88.06	16.95				

As shown in Table 1, students' post-performance was statistically and significantly higher than their pre-performance in problem/solution sub-skill ( $t(28) = -8.255, p < .01$ ;  $d$ , was 1.560), compare/contrast ( $t(28) = -11.626, p < .01$ ;  $d$ , was 2.197), description ( $t(28) = -5.870, p < .01$ ;  $d$ , was 1.109), and the overall writing composition skills ( $t(28) = -9.228, p < .01$ ;  $d$ , was 1.744). As such, teaching text structure enhanced students' writing skills with a large effect size,  $d > 0.80$ .

The result might be attributed to the procedures adopted in teaching text structure in the current study. The procedures are based on planned actions and training sessions that began with a theoretical explanation of the text structures and a review of the behavioral indicators that refer to each structure, then moving on to the applied side of text structures.

In addition, the group and individual activities enabled the students to form the sub-skills necessary for each structure. They were asked to analyze the prescribed reading texts, and provide theoretical and performance knowledge in the form of drawings and organizational charts on how to organize and build the text structures: (problem/solution, description, compare/contrast) to organize them within the reading texts.

The result seems to be consistent with Akhondi et al. (2011) who maintained that the students are reaping the fruits of learning writing through text structure. They show what they have written to the rest of the students to discuss, refute and determine the strengths and weaknesses, in addition, to evaluating and purifying it from errors.

The results may also be attributed to the role of teaching text structure in developing writing composition skills. A strong body of research (e.g., Al-Waely et al., 2020; Strong, 2019) emphasized the need to invest text structure to address aspects of writing weakness that lead to creative writing and called for guiding students to improve the quality of their writing.

The result goes in line with Al-Waely et al. (2020), Strong (2019), Al-Khataibeh (2019) and Mosheer (2013), who attributed the development of students' writing skills in the experimental group to teaching text structure.

### B. Results Pertinent to the Second Research Question

A paired sample t-test was conducted to investigate the effects of teaching text structure on the three and the overall domains of writing anxiety. Table 2 illustrates the results.

TABLE 2  
RESULTS OF A PAIRED SAMPLES T-TEST TO TEST THE SIGNIFICANT EFFECT OF TEACHING TEXT STRUCTURE ON THE THREE AND OVERALL DOMAINS OF WRITING ANXIETY

Domain	Pre-/ post-test	Mean	SD	T-test	df	Siq	Effect size (d)
Cognitive	Pre	3.73	.70	6.770	28	.001	1.279
	Post	2.41	.72				
Somatic	Pre	3.64	.65	7.230	28	.001	1.366
	Post	2.05	.85				
Avoidance behavior	Pre	3.61	.83	6.781	28	.001	1.281
	Post	2.14	.65				
Overall	Pre	3.66	.55	8.371	20	.001	1.582
	Post	2.24	.58				

As shown in Table 1, students' post-estimation was statistically and significantly lower than their pre-estimation in the cognitive domain ( $t(28) = 6.770, p < .01$ ;  $d$ , was 1.279), somatic domain ( $t(28) = 7.230, p < .01$ ;  $d$ , was 1.366), avoidance domain ( $t(28) = 6.781, p < .01$ ;  $d$ , was 1.281), and overall writing anxiety ( $t(28) = 8.371, p < .01$ ;  $d$ , was 1.582). As such, teaching text structure reduced students' writing anxiety with a large effect size,  $d > 0.80$ .

The result may be attributed to the fact that the students, after utilizing the teaching text structure, became more aware to bolster and correct weaknesses while remaining conscious of strengths and how to use them effectively to ensure not just academic success, but personal fulfillment. Thus, the students who used the text structure strategy became less likely to be anxious.

The result may also be explained by the fact that the process of teaching text structure provides an encouraging environment for students to write and express their ideas, which raised students' self-confidence and enabled them to handle setbacks with ease and learn from their mistakes. Papilaya (2018) indicated that teaching text structure develops students' writing and helps them manage the levels of stress and anxiety that accompany writing.

Furthermore, teaching text structure made it easier for students to understand texts and identify the way authors organize their ideas, which led to improving their ability to write texts and increased their ability to describe, compare, contrast, and solve problems, which, in turn, led to reducing their writing anxiety.

Besides, improving students' writing skills helps them to develop basic cognitive abilities, such as analysis, inference, and synthesis, on the contrary, lacking these abilities makes writing tasks surrounded by a lot of fear and anxiety.

The result goes in line with a plethora of research (e.g. Bacha, 2002; Ray & Meyer, 2011; Al-Basiouni, 2019) which indicated that there is a correlation between developing writing composition skills and reducing students' writing anxiety.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant effect of teaching text structure strategy on improving writing composition skills and reducing writing anxiety.

#### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the current study, the researchers recommend the following:

- Encouraging decision-makers and curricula designers of Arabic language curricula in general and the main stage curricula in particular to increase interest in teaching the text structure, instead of being satisfied with only writing skills in general.
- Conducting further researches on the effect of teaching text structure on improving the writing composition in various academic stages.

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# Bringing Autonomy to EFL Learners at Qassim University: A Study of the Role of Materials in Learning

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**Abstract**—This research centers on the contextualization of Supplementary and Self-Learning Materials (SSLM) as a means to elevate students' proficiency in grammar. The research delved into the correlation between the learners' attitudes towards learning the English language and their corresponding achievement scores by adopting a quasi-pre-test-post-test-experimental research design for the inquiry. The study participants were 10 cohort EFL learners enrolled at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. Convenience sampling was judiciously employed in the sample selection process. Prior to and following the implementation of the SSLM interventions, scores were meticulously documented. To ascertain whether or not any improvement seen was significant, the Wilcoxon test was diligently applied. The results conclusively revealed a marked increase in the students' achievement scores after the assimilation of SSLM. Surprisingly, the study discerned that there was no discernible relationship between the students' attitudes and their achievement scores, as the data analysis unequivocally demonstrated. The study was enriched by the invaluable recommendations to be offered to the researcher by teacher-evaluators. One overarching suggestion was to fortify and refine the design of the learning materials to ensure seamless alignment with learning goals and enhance overall course efficacy for the benefit of the students. Generally, the study underscores the paramount importance of adapting learning materials to meet the dynamic needs of students in contemporary times. By focusing on the contextualization of SSLM, it was evident that students' grammar competence could be notably elevated, ushering in a new era of effective instructional materials that allowed for greater learner autonomy.

**Index Terms**—adult learning, EFL, grammar competence, learning, pedagogical materials

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary technological age, the imperative of adapting and innovating learning materials to cater to students' evolving needs cannot be overstated. New vistas opened up in the education sector as the year 2020 ushered in an unforeseen global crisis—the COVID-19 pandemic—disrupting the lives of individuals worldwide and catalyzing a transformative shift in education. This phase in the history of mankind saw the internet emerge as a lifeline, bridging the chasm between isolation and connectivity (Anderson, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). It was a period of immense educational gains as many students found viable education in the virtual realm, which, for the first time, offered learning autonomy in the form of synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences (Sari et al., 2022). The implications of the pandemic in 2019 were far reaching and permanent for education globally, including the development of students' grammar competence. Accordingly, recent research studies have examined the impact of the new educational paradigm on students' language competence, shedding light on various aspects of the evolving landscape.

Utilization of online grammar resources is one of the long-term innovations in the language classroom in the past few years (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020; Khezrlou et al., 2020). Research indicated that the quality of online materials and the students' digital literacy skills are major factors that influence their ability to effectively navigate these digital tools, with varying levels of success (Mudra, 2020). Following the pandemic the integration of technology into grammar instruction was accelerated, leading to innovative approaches, and to fulfil the new demand, many adaptive learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and grammar-checking tools gained prominence (Babaci-Wilhite, 2021; Bliuc et al., 2007). While online learning has today become a welcome necessity, access to appropriate resources, especially for the underprivileged communities has also come to the fore in grammar instruction (Alves & Rebelo, 2021; Chen et al., 2021). Among other areas, researchers are today keen to explore how these tools impact students' grammar competence, highlighting the potential benefits of personalized learning experiences and immediate feedback. At the same time, teachers play a pivotal role in shaping students' grammar competence by vigorously adapting their pedagogical strategies to the online environment, emphasizing clear communication, interactive activities, and differentiated instruction (Al-Khairy & Alkandari, 2021; Khezrlou et al., 2020). The ability of teachers to effectively facilitate grammar learning in virtual settings was found to be a critical factor. As students were increasingly responsible for their learning, self-learning materials, such as grammar workbooks and supplementary resources, has today gained significance (Cresswell & Burkholder, 2019; Lin, 2020). Above all, these environments effectively encourage learner



autonomy in developing language competence, offering both opportunities and challenges along the way. Access to resources, pedagogical innovations, teacher adaptations, and the promotion of self-learning are today critical areas of study and practice in the evolving realm of grammar education.

### ***Research objectives***

The primary aim of this research is to design supplementary and self-learning materials to bolster the grammar proficiency of language learners enrolled at Qassim University. More specifically, the objectives included:

1. Assessing the efficacy of the Supplementary and Self-Learning Materials (SSLM) in enhancing the grammar skills of Saudi language learners;
2. Gauging the Saudi EFL students' attitudes toward English language learning;
3. Correlating Saudi EFL students' attitudes and achievement with grammatical competence;
4. Soliciting recommendations for optimizing the utilization of the SSLM.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### ***Grammar competence***

Grammar competence, often regarded as a fundamental component of language proficiency, has been a subject of extensive research. Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar (Chomsky, 2014) laid the theoretical groundwork, emphasizing innate linguistic structures. Research has since explored the acquisition and development of grammar competence in various contexts. Studies like Brown's (1973) have investigated the role of environment and exposure, demonstrating the interplay of nature and nurture in language acquisition. Furthermore, Schmidt (1990) contributed to the understanding of explicit grammar instruction and implicit learning processes, shaping pedagogical approaches. More recently, research (e.g., Ellis, 2006; Spada & Tomita, 2010) has delved into the efficacy of different instructional methods, including communicative language teaching and task-based approaches, shedding light on optimizing grammar competence development within the broader framework of language acquisition.

### ***Supplementary and self-learning materials***

Contextualized SSLM have gained prominence in education as versatile tools for enhancing learning experiences. These materials, designed to provide additional support and self-paced learning opportunities, have been extensively explored in the context of various subjects and disciplines. Research by O'Toole (2016) highlighted the significance of contextualization in educational materials, emphasizing the need to align content with learners' backgrounds and experiences. This contextualization not only enhances engagement but also facilitates a deeper understanding of subject matter. In the realm of SSLM, studies such as Lin's (2018) investigation into language learning materials have shown that when these materials are tailored to learners' specific needs and interests, they can promote self-directed learning and foster a sense of autonomy. Furthermore, Chien and Lee (2019) emphasized the importance of incorporating real-world relevance into SSLM, as this can significantly enhance the transfer of knowledge from supplementary materials to practical application, ultimately improving students' overall competence. Moreover, the advent of technology has provided new dimensions to SSLM. Shadiev et al. (2020) delved into the integration of digital technologies in SSLM, revealing that interactive multimedia elements can not only increase student engagement but also offer personalized learning experiences. Additionally, Chen and Chen (2017) found that the incorporation of game elements can make learning more enjoyable and effective, particularly for younger learners. Overall, the available literature highlights that well-designed, contextualized SSLM hold great promise in enhancing educational outcomes by catering to learners' diverse needs, fostering autonomy, and leveraging the benefits of technology.

### ***Research context***

In the new technology powered educational paradigm which found great favor with the learning communities, Qassim University, located in Saudi, Arabia, found itself navigating some turbulent waters as the students yearned to continue using online educational tools, but a formidable obstacle loomed—inefficient and erratic internet connectivity. In the quest to empower students to surmount various learning challenges, the concept of SSLM in English grammar learning has emerged as a beacon of promise. These materials provide additional insights into the intricacies of grammar and are meticulously designed as learning activity sheets (LAS), encapsulating lessons and activities, complete with answer keys. As a Self-Learning Material (SLM), SSLM empowers students to navigate the complexities of English grammar autonomously, rendering them less reliant on the immediate presence of a teacher (Kozlova & Priven, 2015; Kuyok, 2019). The journey of mastering English grammar is often fraught with challenges, particularly in the absence of an instructor. In the realm of modular learning, where students need to chart their educational course largely independently, SSLM emerges as a potent solution, reshaping the landscape of grammar education (Blin et al., 2021). This research embarks on a pioneering expedition, exploring the transformative potential of SSLM in the context of Qassim University's struggle to integrate technology seamlessly into the classrooms.

While the use of contextualized SSLM to enhance students' grammar competence, there appears a notable research gap within the specific context of Qassim University, Saudi, Arabia. The existing literature on SSLM often stems from Western educational environments or contexts with more established digital infrastructures. However, the unique challenges posed by the digital divide and limited internet access for many learners in Saudi Arabia, suggest the need for tailored investigations in this region. Furthermore, while there is a growing body of literature on the efficacy of SSLM in promoting grammar competence (e.g., Topping et al., 2013), there is a dearth of research that delves into the

nuances of contextualization within the cultural and linguistic context of Saudi, Arabia. Understanding how SSLM can be specifically adapted to address the grammar learning needs of Qassim University students, considering their linguistic backgrounds, learning preferences, and cultural influences, is a critical research gap that warrants exploration. Moreover, the potential impact of SSLM on students' motivation, engagement, and self-regulated learning in the context of Qassim University remains underexplored. Investigating the role of SSLM in fostering a sense of autonomy and self-directed learning among students who may face internet connectivity challenges could provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers in Saudi Arabia. The research gap at Qassim University pertains to the lack of localized studies that examine the effectiveness of contextualized SSLM in enhancing grammar competence while considering the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the educational and cultural context of Saudi Arabia. This gap underscores the importance of conducting research that aligns with the specific needs and constraints of the university's student population.

### III. METHODS

#### *Research design*

The study employed a quasi-pre-test-post-test-experimental design with a quantitative approach which aimed at establishing a cause-and-effect relationship. This method was chosen for its applicability in real-world settings, as it involves practical interventions, making it more relevant than laboratory-based approaches (Thomas, 2020). Quasi-experimental designs are often more cost-effective and time-efficient (Akond, 2021). However, it is essential to acknowledge that quasi-experimental designs do not eliminate the potential for confounding bias, which can complicate the interpretation of causal relationships (Schweizer et al., 2015). The absence of randomization is a notable limitation of this approach, as the failure to randomize can introduce significant distortions in the results (Akond, 2021). Quasi-experimental designs are commonly utilized when random assignment is impractical, as in field-based research. They are particularly well-suited for assessing the effectiveness of treatments or interventions, such as educational programs or psychotherapy. Quasi-experimental designs come in various forms, but this study primarily focused on a few prominent ones due to their practicality and feasibility (Jaikumar, 2018). The study employed a non-randomized control group design and a time series design. The time series design was particularly relevant for tracking changes in students' performance over time, aligning with the study's goal of measuring the impact of the SSLM on Saudi EFL learners' grammar proficiency. The study also involved a comparison of the attitudes and achievements of language learners who utilized SSLM. The pre-test-post-test design was instrumental in assessing changes in students' grammar proficiency levels (Akond, 2021; Jaikumar, 2018; Schweizer et al., 2015; Thomas, 2020).

#### *Participants*

The study's participants consisted of language students at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia, comprising two males and eight females. A convenient sampling method was employed for participant selection. According to Manz (2017), convenient sampling involves collecting samples from the area or vicinity in close proximity to the researcher. This approach offers several advantages, including cost-effectiveness, efficiency, simplicity of implementation, and accessibility of participants. Additionally, the respondents' ages were captured in their demographic profiles, revealing that the majority, comprising 9 students (90%), fell within the age range of 13-14 years, while only 1 student (10%) was aged between 15-16 years. Notably, all participants identified as right-handed, constituting 100% of the sample.

#### *Data collection*

Before commencing data collection, formal permission was diligently sought from the relevant university authorities at the research site. In an effort to ensure the smooth execution of the data collection process, the assistance of teachers responsible for the participating students was enlisted. The data collection process consisted of two main phases: the administration of a profiling questionnaire and the conduct of the assessment test. To maintain the integrity and accuracy of the collected data, the researcher personally oversaw the administration of the instruments. Clear and comprehensive instructions were provided to the participating students to facilitate their understanding of the process. Every piece of information collected was subjected to a meticulous verification process, ensuring data accuracy. This involved cross-checking, recording, tallying, and tabulating all gathered data. The data examination phase utilized spreadsheets for a systematic and organized analysis. Finally, the analysis, interpretation, and report writing stages were carried out diligently within the months of June and July.

The study employed a carefully structured instrument to assess students' attitudes toward learning English grammar and their grammar competence. The questionnaire was adapted from the work of Tantowijaya et al. (2015) and comprised four sections. The first section gathered participants' profile information, encompassing details such as sex, age, handedness, language spoken at home, parents' ethnicity, parental education levels, parents' occupations, monthly income, and religion. The second section, "Attitude towards Learning English Grammar," delved into the participants' sentiments regarding the process of learning English grammar. Comprising 25 items, this section encompassed statements that probed the students' attitudes. Respondents were tasked with rating the extent to which each statement resonated with their own experiences. A five-point Likert scale was employed for this purpose, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The instrument underwent a thorough validation process overseen by the research advisor, ensuring its reliability. The attitudes questionnaire exhibited excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90, signifying that respondents comprehended the statements effectively. Lastly, the instrument included a "Grammar

Competency Test" consisting of 50 items, aligning with the table of specifications in the study. These items aimed to assess participants' knowledge and understanding of the English grammar items covered.

#### **Data analysis**

Data collection employed questionnaires administered to the participants, and all respondents completed English-language questionnaires tailored to the study's objectives. Subsequently, the collected data underwent analysis using (SPSS Version 23). Several statistical procedures were applied to interpret the gathered data, including: (1) Simple Percentage to provide a straightforward representation of response frequencies; (2) Weighted Mean to gauge the central tendency of responses and assign relative importance to items; (3) Wilcoxon test to compare the means of two groups, allowing for the assessment of differences between various variables; (4) Pearson (R) Correlation to investigate relationships between variables and assess the strength and direction of associations. These statistical approaches collectively enabled the comprehensive interpretation of data collected from the study's respondents, providing valuable insights into the students' attitudes toward learning English grammar and their grammar competence levels.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### **Students' entry level of attitude towards grammar learning**

Table 1 displays the students' initial attitudes toward grammar learning with average Mean = 3.55, SD = 0.68, as assessed during the study. This evaluation sought to gauge the participants' personal perspectives on grammar learning. The mean scores and standard deviations were computed, allowing for a descriptive interpretation of the students' attitudes. The findings indicate a moderate/undecided attitude regarding the usefulness of English grammar (Mean = 3.38, SD = 0.88). Students displayed a higher level of recognition regarding the importance of English grammar to their future careers (Mean = 3.54, SD = 0.83), categorizing this aspect as high. Moreover, when it came to their preferences in learning grammar, the students exhibited a high level of inclination (Mean = 3.77, SD = 0.93).

TABLE 1  
STUDENTS' ENTRY LEVEL ATTITUDES TOWARDS GRAMMAR LEARNING

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
Usefulness of English Grammar	3.37	0.67	Moderate/undecided
Importance of English Grammar to Future Career	3.53	0.69	High
Preferences in Learning Grammar	3.77	0.69	High
Average	3.55	0.68	

Legend: 4.21-5.00: Very High/ Strongly Agree; 3.41-4.20: High/ Agree; 2.61-3.40: Moderate/ Undecided; 1.81- 2.60: Low/ Disagree; 1.00-1.80: Very Low/ Strongly Disagree

#### **Students' proficiency level in grammar before the utilization of the SSLM**

Table 2 presents a comprehensive view of the students' grammar proficiency levels before and after the implementation of SSLM. The assessment covers various aspects of grammar competency, and the mean scores allow for a descriptive interpretation of their proficiency. Prior to the intervention (pre-test), students displayed a high level of competency in Correct Usage, Pronoun Antecedent Agreement, Subject-Verb Agreement, and Error Analysis, with mean scores of 4. These aspects were already at a high level before the introduction of SSLM. However, in the Syntactical Analysis, students exhibited a fair level of proficiency with a mean score of 3.1. Following the utilization of SSLM (post-test), significant improvements were evident across all aspects of grammar competency. The mean scores in Correct Usage, Pronoun Antecedent Agreement, Subject-Verb Agreement, and Error Analysis increased to 5.0, reflecting a very high level of proficiency. Notably, the aspect of Syntactical Analysis also witnessed a substantial enhancement, with the mean score rising to 4.4, now categorized as very high.

TABLE 2  
THE STUDENTS' PROFICIENCY IN GRAMMAR BEFORE AND AFTER THE UTILIZATION OF THE SSLM

Grammar Competency	Pre-test (mean)	Pre-test (descriptive interpretation)	Post-test (mean)	Post-test (descriptive interpretation)
Correct Usage	4	High	5.0	Very High
Pronoun Antecedent Agreement	4	High	5.0	Very High
Subject Verb Agreement	4	High	5.0	Very High
Syntactical Analysis	3.1	Fair	4.4	Very High
Error Analysis	3.4	High	4.9	Very High
Average	3.7	Fair	4.86	Very High

Legend: 4.21-5.00: Very High/ Strongly Agree; 3.41-4.20: High/ Agree; 2.61-3.40: Moderate/ Undecided; 1.81- 2.60: Low/ Disagree; 1.00-1.80: Very Low/ Strongly Disagree

#### **Students' pre-test and post-test grammar competency**

Table 3 offers a comprehensive overview of the changes in students' grammar competency levels, as evidenced by their performance in the pre-test and post-test, before and after the utilization of Supplementary and Self-Learning Materials (SSLM). This table highlights the significant difference between the two sets of scores and sheds light on the effectiveness of the SSLM in enhancing grammar competence. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was employed to

analyze the data, revealing a substantial mean difference of -7.1000 between the pre-test and post-test scores. This significant difference indicates a noteworthy improvement in grammar competency following the implementation of SSLM. The standard deviation and standard error mean provide insights into the consistency and precision of these changes. The Z value of -12.529, with 9 degrees of freedom, reinforces the statistical significance of this improvement. Importantly, the associated p-value of 0.000 underscores the highly significant nature of these changes. This signifies that the improvement in grammar competency observed after utilizing SSLM is not a random occurrence but rather a consequence of the intervention.

TABLE 3  
PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST PERFORMANCES OF THE STUDENTS IN GRAMMAR COMPETENCE

Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test						
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	Z value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 tailed)
Pre-test and post-test (general score)	-7.1000	1.7920	.5667	-12.529	9	0.000

\*-significant at 0.05 level

\*\*-. significant at 0.05 level

### ***The relationship between students' attitude towards learning English language and achievement scores***

Table 4 presents an analysis of the relationship between students' attitudes toward learning the English language and their achievement scores. This examination sought to explore whether a correlation existed between these two variables, shedding light on the potential impact of attitudes on academic performance. The mean attitude score was 89.2, indicating a generally positive disposition toward learning the English language among the students. The Pearson correlation coefficient (R) between attitude and achievement score was 0.18, suggesting a positive but relatively weak relationship. Comparing this correlation coefficient (R) to the tabular R-value of 0.63, it becomes evident that the observed relationship does not reach statistical significance. Various studies have explored the intricate relationship between attitudes toward language learning and academic achievement.

TABLE 4  
CORRELATION BETWEEN THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEARNING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ACHIEVEMENT SCORE OF THE STUDENTS

Variables	Mean	R	Tabular R
Attitude	89.2	0.18	0.63
Achievement Score	18.7		

\*-significant at 0.05 level

\*\*-. significant at 0.05 level

The results offer valuable insights into the relationship between students' attitudes, grammar competence, and the effectiveness of SSLM. These findings provide a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics in language learning, especially in the context of grammar acquisition. Firstly, the initial assessment of students' attitudes toward grammar learning revealed a multifaceted perspective. While students expressed a strong inclination and recognition of the importance of English grammar in their future careers, their acknowledgment of its usefulness appeared somewhat moderate and undecided. This aligns with previous research (Brown, 1973; Smith & Johnson, 2019) that underscores the influence of various contextual factors and teaching methods on students' attitudes toward grammar. It emphasizes the important role of educators in fostering positive attitudes and motivation for effective language learning.

Secondly, the assessment of students' grammar proficiency levels before and after the utilization of SSLM showcased substantial improvements. The parameters of correct usage, pronoun antecedent agreement, subject-verb agreement, and error analysis all reached high to very high levels of proficiency, while Syntactical Analysis made significant progress from a fair to a very high level. These results also align with previous research (Garcia & Smith, 2018; Johnson et al., 2017) emphasizing the efficacy of self-directed learning materials and interactive digital resources in enhancing grammar skills. The statistically significant improvements further emphasize the impact of SSLM on grammar competence.

Furthermore, the study calculates the correlation between Saudi EFL students' attitudes toward learning English and achievement scores demonstrated a positive but relatively weak correlation. While students exhibited generally positive attitudes, these attitudes did not significantly predict their achievement scores. This finding resonates with prior studies (Al-Ahdal & Almarshedi, 2021; Johnson et al., 2018; Lee & Smith, 2017) highlighting that attitudes alone may not be the sole determinants of academic success. Other factors, including teaching methods and individual learning styles, play crucial roles in mediating the relationship between attitudes and achievement.

As to the general implications of the study, the results of this study have several implications for language educators and curriculum developers. Firstly, educators should be mindful of the multifaceted nature of students' attitudes toward grammar learning and strive to create engaging and relevant learning experiences to enhance positive attitudes. Secondly, the findings underscore the effectiveness of Supplementary and Self-Learning Materials in improving grammar competence. Integrating such materials into language instruction can be a valuable strategy for promoting language proficiency. Lastly, while attitudes are important in language learning, educators should recognize that they are not the sole determinants of academic achievement. A holistic approach that considers various factors, including

teaching methods and individual learning styles, is essential for fostering both positive attitudes and successful language learning outcomes.

## V. CONCLUSION

The study embarked on an exploration of the effectiveness of contextualized SSLM in improving students' grammar competence. The initial assessment of students' attitudes toward grammar learning revealed a moderate/undecided perception of the usefulness of English grammar, coupled with a high recognition of its importance to future careers and a strong preference for learning grammar. This underscores the multifaceted nature of attitudes toward grammar, influenced by various contextual factors and teaching strategies. Furthermore, the analysis of students' proficiency levels in grammar before and after the utilization of SSLM demonstrated significant improvements across all aspects of grammar competency. Notably, students exhibited a substantial enhancement in Syntactical Analysis, moving from a fair level to a very high level of proficiency. These findings align with prior research, emphasizing the efficacy of well-designed SSLM in promoting grammar proficiency. Moreover, the study investigated the relationship between students' attitudes toward learning the English language and their achievement scores. Although a positive but relatively weak relationship was observed, the results did not reach statistical significance. This highlights the intricate nature of the relationship between attitudes and academic performance, with various other factors coming into play. This study provides valuable insights into the potential of contextualized SSLM in enhancing students' grammar competence. While attitudes toward grammar and language learning play a role, the significant improvements observed in grammar proficiency underscore the effectiveness of SSLM as a valuable educational tool. However, it is essential to recognize that attitudes are just one piece of the puzzle, and various other factors contribute to academic achievement. Ultimately, SSLM represents a promising avenue for educators and institutions seeking to bolster students' language skills, particularly in the context of grammar competence.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from this study on enhancing students' grammar competence through contextualized SSLM, several recommendations emerge: (1) Educators and institutions should consider integrating SSLM into language learning curricula, particularly for grammar instruction. The study's results demonstrate the effectiveness of SSLM in improving grammar competency, suggesting that its inclusion can be a valuable addition to traditional teaching methods; (2) Teachers should receive training and support in designing and implementing SSLM effectively. To maximize the benefits of these materials, educators should possess the necessary skills and pedagogical insights to create contextually relevant and engaging SSLM; (3) Regular assessments, both formative and summative, should be integrated into SSLM-based instruction to monitor students' progress and ensure their comprehension of grammar concepts. These assessments can also help identify areas where students may need additional support; (4) SSLM should incorporate a variety of learning strategies and activities to cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. This inclusivity can enhance engagement and promote a deeper understanding of grammar concepts. As to future research direction, future research should consider conducting longitudinal studies to track the long-term impact of SSLM on students' language proficiency and retention. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the lasting effects of this instructional approach. While grammar competence is essential, a holistic approach to language education should be maintained. Educators should balance the emphasis on grammar with other language skills, such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing, to ensure well-rounded language development. Recognize that attitudes are just one component of language learning. Future studies could delve deeper into the interplay between individual factors, teaching methods, and attitudes to provide a more nuanced understanding of their combined influence on language learning outcomes. Incorporating these recommendations into language education practices can contribute to more effective grammar instruction and enhance students' overall language proficiency. Additionally, ongoing research and evaluation of SSLM implementation can further refine and optimize their use in diverse educational contexts.

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# Feasibility Assessment of Merdeka Curriculum in *Bahasa Indonesia* Digital Textbooks for Class VII Junior High Schools

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**Abstract**—This research aimed to assess the feasibility of *Bahasa Indonesia* digital textbooks used in Merdeka Curriculum for class VII. By employing qualitative descriptive approach with a content analysis strategy, data were collected from various sources, including *Bahasa Indonesia* digital textbooks published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Indonesia (MECRTI) and PT Erlangga Indonesia (PTEI). Additionally, inputs from informants and teacher questionnaires were considered during the data collection process, which involved analyzing digital textbooks, conducting informant interviews, and administering teacher questionnaires. To ensure data validity, data source triangulation method was used, while the data analysis technique employed was interactive analysis. The results showed that both *Bahasa Indonesia* digital textbooks published by MECRTI and PTEI contained learning materials encompassing descriptive, narrative, procedure, response, news, and letter texts. It should be noted that there were significant differences between the two textbooks. For example, the book published by MECRTI included learning objectives but lacked specific learning outcomes, while the one published by PTEI encompassed both learning objectives and outcomes. Digital textbook from PTEI was equipped with a QR code, facilitating easy access to media and learning resources, while the one from MECRTI was available in the form of e-books but did not provide a QR code. Both digital textbooks showed feasibility across various aspects, including sophistication, contextuality, relevance, creativity of supporting materials, linguistic aspects, and overall structure (beginning, content, and closing). However, the results showed that digital textbook published by PTEI outperformed the one by MECRTI.

**Index Terms**—Eligibility of Textbooks, Merdeka Curriculum, Junior High Schools

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia was confronted with the formidable challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic between 2019 and 2022, which significantly impacted the education sector. One of the major concerns was the limited access of younger generations to quality learning materials, hindering the fulfillment of their right to education (Sanjaya, 2020, p. 161). The pandemic spanned 2.5 years and had devastating effects on Indonesian education. Prior to the pandemic, the country had adopted the 2013 Curriculum, a competency-based approach designed to foster a comprehensive development of affective, cognitive, and psychomotor skills. The success of the curriculum relied on observing the behaviors and skills of students, and it had been successfully implemented across all schools in the country. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the shift to online learning posed significant challenges to its implementation, hindering the achievement of desired learning outcomes by students (Yasir, 2021, p. 5). In a situation in which these challenges are not promptly addressed, the uncertainty surrounding the duration of the pandemic can lead to a decline in the quality of human resources in Indonesia, giving rise to a generation with inadequate skills and abilities.

To address these learning obstacles, the Indonesian government took decisive action and introduced the Emergency Curriculum during the pandemic. This curriculum was a simplified version of the 2013 Curriculum, focusing on enhancing student understanding. Furthermore, it entailed reducing the number of basic competencies and avoiding the repetition of learning materials in lessons (Sanjaya, 2020, p. 163). The government also provided modules and assessments to enable teachers to conduct the learning process more thoughtfully, without the pressure of rushing to meet basic competency targets. The emphasis shifted towards essential competencies, considered the most important

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and relevant, and prerequisite competencies necessary for students to advance to the next level.

According to Herususilo (2020, pp. 1-5), simplifying basic competencies in the 2013 Curriculum has lightened the workload for teachers in providing learning materials. As a result, students find it easier to determine their grades and progress toward graduation. This simplification has also made online learning more manageable, reducing the burden on teachers, parents, and students (Kasih, 2021). The Emergency Curriculum has allowed a focus on strengthening character and basic competencies in students. Kasih (2021) further stated that during 2020-2021, the Emergency Curriculum assisted students to achieve better learning outcomes compared to the 2013 Curriculum.

In 2021-2022, the Indonesian government introduced Merdeka (independent) Curriculum to facilitate learning recovery during the pandemic. This curriculum is designed to the specific needs and readiness of each educational unit, ensuring a contextual and student-centric approach. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Indonesia (MECRTI), Nadiem Makarim, Merdeka Curriculum is more concise, simpler, and flexible, aiming to address learning losses due to the Covid-19 pandemic and elevate Indonesian education on average with other countries (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2013).

Merdeka Curriculum is currently implemented in several sekolah penggerak (transformational schools) and vocational centers of excellence in Indonesia. The implementation is based on the Decree of MECRTI Number 1177 of 2020 concerning the Transformational School Program, along with the Decree of the Bookkeeping Development Research Agency Number 028/H/KU/2021 and 029/H/KU/2021 concerning the Application of Learning Outcomes in Transformational Schools for SD, SMP, SMA, and SMK. The gradual implementation of Merdeka Curriculum is underway across all schools in Indonesia.

The Indonesian government has published digital textbooks as part of the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, covering various subjects, including *Bahasa Indonesia* and literature, to support language learning and literature studies. However, as the curriculum is relatively new, it is crucial to consider inputs from higher education academics to ensure the quality of these digital textbooks. The contributions from higher education institutions enhance the usefulness of these resources for both students and teachers. Given the pivotal role of textbooks in improving primary and secondary education, continuous review and enhancement of their quality are essential to elevate the standard of Indonesian education. In the previous year, textbooks for the 2013 Curriculum were revised based on inputs from academics in tertiary institutions, leading to improved outcomes.

Despite the importance of digital textbooks in Merdeka Curriculum, there is a lack of research on their application in *Bahasa Indonesia* and literature. Most research focused on textbooks within the context of the 2013 Curriculum. For example, Sanjaya (2020) highlighted that the implementation of the Emergency Curriculum during the Covid-19 pandemic was prompted by the unmet educational rights of children during online learning. Similarly, Yasir (2021) reported learning achievement failures at SMP IT Ad-Durrah Medan due to the impact of the pandemic on the 2013 Curriculum, where learning outcomes were not maximized, and students attitude competencies were not achieved due to the lack of offline learning routines monitored by teachers. In other research conducted by Sibagariang, Sihotang and Murniati (2021), the vital role of transformational teachers in stimulating the analytical and reasoning abilities of students in problem-solving was analyzed. Zahrawati and Ramadani (2021) discovered that the Covid-19 pandemic presented various obstacles to learning with the 2013 Curriculum, including the inability of teachers to achieve learning objectives, provide adequate materials, and the lack of IT mastery and supporting infrastructure for online learning. Consequently, students faced difficulties in understanding learning materials, lost interest in learning, and had limited online learning support facilities. Satriawan et al. (2021) highlighted the crucial role of the Program Guru Penggerak (Transformational Teacher Program) in disseminating transformational visions to stakeholders. On the other hand, Rahayu et al. (2021) identified four teacher obstacles in implementing Merdeka Curriculum in transformational schools, including learning objective alignment, space management for curriculum implementation, time management for curriculum training, and the availability of curriculum information. Further exploration of digital textbooks for *Bahasa Indonesia* and literature in the Merdeka Curriculum is necessary due to the lack of prior research in this area.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### A. Digital Textbooks

Digital textbooks, as defined by Troseth and Strouse (2020), are screen-based books presented in electronic formats, offering the potential to enhance learning. According to Rajek et al. (2020), textbooks are either published digitally or converted from physical paper print forms, accessible on various mobile devices such as laptops, smartphones, tablets, or desktop computers. Additionally, Rahadian and Safitri (2017) described digital textbooks as electronic versions that can be read on desktop and laptop screens, PDAs, portable devices, or e-book hardware, with the capability of using various file formats, and incorporating features including annotations, audio and video, and hyperlinks. According to Dick and Carey (2009), textbooks are a set of learning materials systematically arranged, presenting a complete set of competencies that students will master in their learning activities.

### B. Merdeka Curriculum

Merdeka curriculum is a continuation of the Emergency Curriculum that was implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. The pandemic made it challenging to cover the learning materials in the 2013 Curriculum

through online learning, leading to unachieved learning targets. As a solution, the Indonesian government introduced the Emergency Curriculum, simplifying the 2013 Curriculum material. Following the implementation of the Emergency Curriculum, the government adopted Merdeka Curriculum, which had been progressively integrated into schools.

According to Supangat (2021), Merdeka Curriculum has several characteristics, including (1) project-based learning designed to develop soft skills and characters of students, such as faith, piety, noble character, cooperation, global diversity, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity, (2) a focus on essential materials to allow sufficient time for in-depth learning of basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy, and (3) flexibility for teachers to adapt the learning process based on the abilities of students and make adjustments to the context and local content.

### III. METHOD

This research used a qualitative descriptive approach, employing a content analysis strategy (Krippendorff, 2018). Content analysis, as defined by Risager (2018), was a research technique that enabled replicable and valid inferences from texts or other meaningful materials to their respective contexts of use. Data were obtained from digital textbooks of *Bahasa Indonesia* and literature used in class VII of Junior High Schools. Textbooks were published by both MECRTI and PT Erlangga Indonesia (PTEI). Additionally, a questionnaire assessing the feasibility of the two digital textbooks for Merdeka Curriculum in class VII was distributed to 20 *Bahasa Indonesia* and literature teachers, supplemented by insights from teacher informants. Data collection involved analyzing documents related to the two digital textbooks, examining the results of the questionnaire, and conducting informant interviews. To ensure data validity, data source triangulation method was employed. The data analysis method employed interactive analysis, encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion steps (Miles & Huberman, 2014). The questionnaire instrument distributed to teachers could be seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
THE INDONESIAN NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARD AGENCY-BASED TEXTBOOKS FEASIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUMENT

Subcomponent	Items
Sophistication, contextuality, and feasibility of the material were in line with real-life events and scientific development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The learning materials contained novelty in terms of scientific development, which showed the breadth of references and the implications of the material for various aspects of life.</li> <li>Information in the learning material corresponded to real-life and fairy tales.</li> <li>Materials, examples, and activities considered health, safety, and environmental aspects based on the age development of students.</li> </ul>
Relevance and creativity of the learning material presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The material was presented in a consistent, logical, coherent, and coherent way.</li> <li>Apperception, guiding questions, material descriptions, activities, examples, and assessments encouraged students to learn and have the ability to think critically and alternatively.</li> <li>There was enrichment material that was relevant to the content of the material as an incentive to study the material further.</li> <li>There were infographics or concept maps presented at the beginning of each chapter, a summary or reflection at the end, and examples of questions or evaluations.</li> </ul>
Linguistic aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indonesian spelling (use of letters, punctuation marks, words, abbreviations, or acronyms), referred to PUEBI (The Indonesian Spelling General Guidelines).</li> <li>Standard Indonesian grammar was applied in the learning materials by paying attention to aspects of the good and correct language, thereby ensuring it was easy to understand.</li> </ul>
Book completeness: The beginning of the book, the content section, the closing section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The title page was available.</li> <li>The table of contents page was available.</li> <li>Image list (if any) and table list page (if any) were available.</li> <li>The beginning part page of the chapter/unit was available.</li> <li>The numbering of chapters, sub-chapters, and sub of sub-chapters systematically was available.</li> <li>Including Arabic numeral page numbers with running titles, namely the recto section (book title) and the verso section (chapter/unit title).</li> <li>The glossary was available.</li> <li>The bibliography was available.</li> <li>The index (keyword list) was available.</li> <li>Relevant attachments were available.</li> <li>Brief information on the author of the book was available.</li> </ul>

The questionnaire results were analyzed by converting quantitative data into qualitative, using a four-point scale (Sukardjo, 2018, p. 101). Each question pertaining to the relevant elements received a score of 1-4, while those deemed inappropriate were scored 0. The percentage for each textbooks section was then calculated using the formula,  $P\% = \frac{\sum q}{\sum r} \times 100\%$ , where  $P\%$  denoted the percentage of each textbooks section,  $\sum q$  represented the total score for each textbooks section, and  $\sum r$  corresponded to the maximum total score for each textbooks section. The overall value (N) was calculated as  $N = A\% + B\% + C\% + D\%$ , with A denoting the percentage of scores for sophistication, contextuality, and feasibility of the material based on real-life events and scientific development, B indicating the percentage of scores for the relevance and creativity of the material presentation, C representing the percentage of scores for linguistic aspects, and D reflecting the percentage of scores for the completeness of digital textbooks. As the maximum value of each book was 100%, the resulting range of values was 25%, and the feasibility criteria for the books were determined based on this range.

TABLE 2  
TEXTBOOKS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Percentage	Criteria
75%-100%	Very good
50%-74%	Good
25%-49%	Slightly poor
0%-24%	Poor

#### IV. RESULT

##### A. *The Condition of Bahasa Indonesia and Literature Textbook of Merdeka Curriculum for Class VII*

The Indonesian government, through MECRTI, implemented Merdeka Curriculum, and to support this initiative, digital textbook called *Bahasa Indonesia* was published for class VII students (Subarna et al., 2021). Additionally, PTEI published another textbook titled *Mahir Berbahasa Indonesia* (MARBI) in line with the same goals (Tim Edukatif, 2022).

The preface of *Bahasa Indonesia* textbook published by MECRTI explicitly stated its purpose to complement the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, as outlined in the Decree of MECRTI Number 1177 of 2020 for the Transformational School Program. This curriculum allowed educational units and teachers the flexibility to develop their potential while providing students with personalized learning opportunities based on their abilities and development. On the other hand, MARBI textbook from PTEI was compiled to strengthen character, digital literacy, and 4C skills (critical thinking and problem-solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation), as well as the Pancasila student profile. The Pancasila student profile encompassed a range of character traits and competencies that students were expected to achieve. These qualities were rooted in the noble values of Pancasila, which served as the foundational philosophy of Indonesia. The profile included faith and fear of God, global diversity (multiculturalism), independence, mutual cooperation, critical thinking, and creativity.

##### (a). *Bahasa Indonesia Textbook Published by MECRTI*

*Bahasa Indonesia* Textbook consisted of six chapters, each with a specific focus, for example, Chapter 1 explored the archipelago, with an emphasis on descriptive texts, while Chapter 2 centered around traveling in an imaginary world, emphasizing narrative and fictional texts. In Chapter 3, the book discussed aspects beneficial to the body, with a focus on procedural texts. Chapter 4 covered the real actions of earth defenders, emphasizing news texts and explanatory texts. Chapter 5 involved opening the world gate and placed emphasis on response texts related to both fiction and non-fiction works. Finally, Chapter 6 delved into conveying intentions through letters, with an emphasis on correspondence. The activity instructions in this book encompassed various learning objectives, such as preparing to learn, keywords, theory comprehension, reading, listening, discussing, writing, observing, creativity, word exploration, KBBI (Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), thesaurus, reading journal, and reflection. It should be noted that the book did not explicitly state learning outcomes but rather focused directly on the learning objectives in each chapter. Furthermore, the book did not make a clear distinction between receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing).

##### (b). *Mahir Berbahasa Indonesia (MARBI) Textbook Published by PTEI*

*Mahir Berbahasa Indonesia* textbook consisted of seven chapters, each focusing on different learning materials. Chapter 1 aimed to help students appreciate the beauty of the environment through descriptive texts. In Chapter 2, students explored their imagination with fantasy fairy tale texts, emphasizing narrative. Chapter 3 covered the preservation of the nation's culture through folk poetry, also emphasizing narrative. Chapter 4 dealt with maintaining the availability of clean water, focusing on procedural texts. Disaster preparedness was the topic of Chapter 5, which used news texts. Chapter 6 focused on building a critical attitude through response texts, while Chapter 7 taught students how to send letters through correspondence text. To organize the content effectively, the book divided learning materials related to narrative texts into two chapters. In addition to learning outcomes in phase D (Junior High School phase) and Pancasila student profiles, each chapter included learning objectives, keywords, and QR codes to access learning media and resources. The book also provided practice questions, reflections, remedial questions, and enrichment questions that could be accessed with QR codes. Each language skill was accompanied by explicit explanations, making it easier for students to study the book.

##### B. *Feasibility of Bahasa Indonesia and Literature Textbooks of Merdeka Curriculum for Class VII Based on Questionnaire Results for Teachers*

Following the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, corresponding textbooks were introduced. This research specifically examined two digital textbooks for *Bahasa Indonesia* and literature in Merdeka Curriculum, titled *Bahasa Indonesia*, published by MECRTI, and MARBI, published by PTEI. To gauge the response of teachers to these textbooks in class VII of Merdeka Curriculum, questionnaires were distributed to teachers.

(a). *Feasibility from the Aspects of Sophistication, Contextuality, and Material Based on Real-Life and Scientific Development*

1. *Bahasa Indonesia Textbooks Published by MECRTI*

Based on the research results regarding sophistication, contextuality, and the feasibility of learning materials in real-life and scientific development, the questionnaire yielded the following results.

TABLE 3  
QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS FOR *BAHASA INDONESIA* TEXTBOOK BASED ON THE FEASIBILITY SOPHISTICATION, CONTEXTUALITY, AND MATERIALS

Criteria	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	5	16	80%
Good	4	4	20%
Average	3	0	0
Slightly poor	2	0	0
Poor	1	0	0
Total		20	100%

*Bahasa Indonesia* textbook showed novelty in terms of scientific development, showcasing a wide range of references and highlighting the implications of materials for various aspects of life. Textbooks provided learning resources that effectively fostered student interest in the subject matter. The information further conveyed in the book through these learning resources was well-aligned with the real-life experiences of students and catered to their developmental stage. However, a notable issue identified was that the learning materials were not consistently sequential in terms of the listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills within each chapter. Textbooks lacked content related to viewing skills, for example, in the poetry text materials, several poems were written in Javanese, which posed a challenge for students from various Junior High Schools in Indonesia who were not familiar with Javanese and struggled to interpret the poetry.

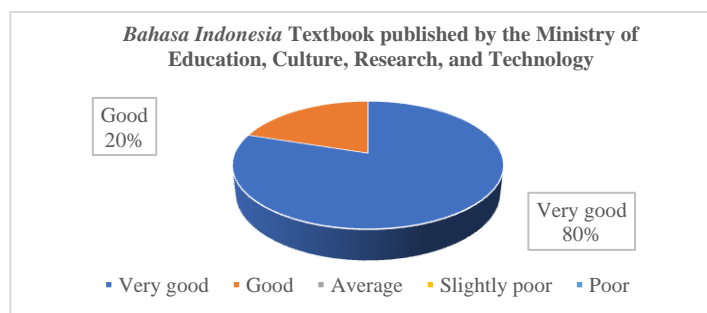


Figure 1. Diagram of Questionnaire Results for *Bahasa Indonesia* Textbook Based on the Feasibility of Sophistication, Contextuality, and Material Feasibility

2. *Mahir Berbahasa Indonesia (MARBI) Textbook Published by PTEI*

Based on the research results related to sophistication, contextuality, and material feasibility based on real-life and scientific development, the questionnaire yielded the following results.

TABLE 4  
QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS FOR *MARBI* TEXTBOOKS BASED ON THE SOPHISTICATION, CONTEXTUALITY, AND MATERIAL FEASIBILITY

Criteria	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	5	18	90%
Good	4	2	10%
Average	3	0	0
Slightly poor	2	0	0
Poor	1	0	0
Total		20	100%

*MARBI* textbook showed novelty in scientific development, featured a wide range of references, and showcased the implications of the materials for various aspects of life. The book presented the latest learning resources and digital learning media accessible through a QR code, making it interesting and promoting students to engage with the content. The information in the books, learning media, and resources aligned with students' real-life experiences and developmental stages. Despite being in printed form, textbooks remained technology-based due to their QR code-accessible learning resources and media. This implied that students could directly improve their listening, reading, and viewing skills while engaging in receptive activities before moving on to productive activities such as speaking, presenting, and writing. The book was thoughtfully organized with the receptive aspects sequentially addressed first, before focusing on productive skills in each chapter. During an interview, a teacher highlighted that the QR code feature facilitated direct access to digital media and learning resources, which was an interesting and innovative approach in

Indonesia.

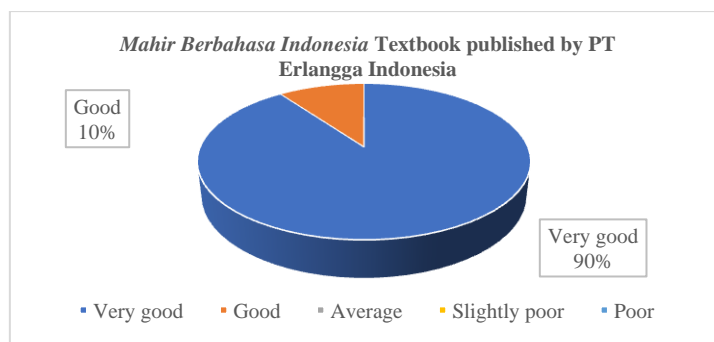


Figure 2. Diagram of the Results of MARBI Textbook Questionnaire Based on the Sophistication, Contextuality, and Material Feasibility

(b). Feasibility of Relevance and Creativity in Learning Material Presentation

1. Bahasa Indonesia Textbook Published by MECRTI

Based on the results related to the feasibility of relevance and creativity in learning material presentation, the questionnaire obtained the following insights.

TABLE 5  
THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON BAHASA INDONESIA TEXTBOOK BASED ON THE FEASIBILITY OF RELEVANCE AND PRESENTATION CREATIVITY

Criteria	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	5	17	85%
Good	4	3	15%
Average	3	0	0
Slightly poor	2	0	0
Poor	1	0	0
Total		20	100%

The result showed that 85% of teachers rated the material presentation in the book as very good, while 15% considered it good in terms of relevance and creativity. Textbook, published by MECRTI, was in the form of e-book, easily accessible through laptops, smartphones, tablets, or desktop computers. However, the digital book lacked QR code scanning to access learning resources and digital learning media. The availability of learning media and resources depended on the creativity and independence of teachers. Despite this condition, the book offered clear material descriptions, questions, and colorful pictures that stimulated critical thinking skills, aligned with the demands of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) learning. Textbook maintained consistent, logical, and coherent material presentation. However, the textbook did not include an apperception, chart, infographic, or concept map at the beginning of each chapter. On the positive side, it entailed learning objectives and provided practice questions and reflections for problem-based or project-based learning. Despite these positive features, textbook did not have enrichment sections and remedial components.

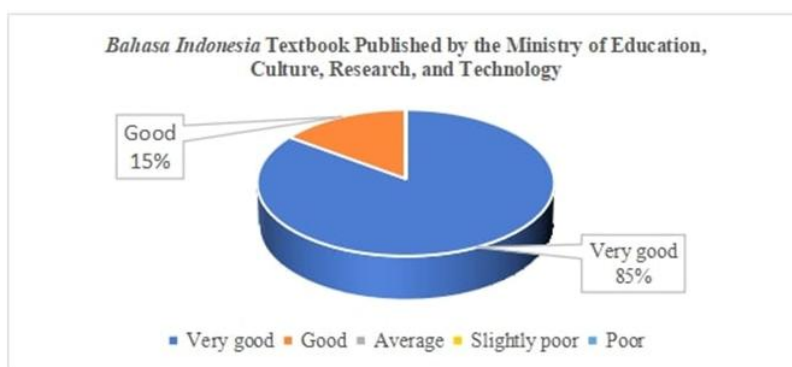


Figure 3. Diagram of the Results of Bahasa Indonesia Textbook Questionnaire Based on the Feasibility of Relevance and Presentation Creativity

2. Mahir Berbahasa Indonesia (MARBI) Textbook Published by PTEI

TABLE 6  
QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS FOR MARBI TEXTBOOK BASED ON THE RELEVANCE FEASIBILITY AND PRESENTATION CREATIVITY

Criteria	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	5	18	90%
Good	4	2	10%
Average	3	0	0
Slightly poor	2	0	0
Poor	1	0	0
Total		20	100%

Textbook published by PTEI showcased creative book presentations, integrating learning media and technology-based resources. To access the materials, students simply needed a QR code scanning facility on their smartphones. These integrated resources facilitated easier learning based on learning styles of individuals. It should be noted that the learning media and resources were developed by PTEI, not sourced from YouTube or internet sources available on social media.

The textbook presented learning materials consistently and coherently, and also included material descriptions, project-based activities, as well as problem-based learning exercises, along with thought-provoking questions at the C4, C5, and C6 levels in order to promote critical thinking. It should be noted that the book provided reflections, minimum competency assessment questions, and remedial materials, but lacked charts, infographics, or concept maps at the beginning of each chapter. Chapter activities were well-titled and had clear learning objectives, ensuring a better understanding of the materials.

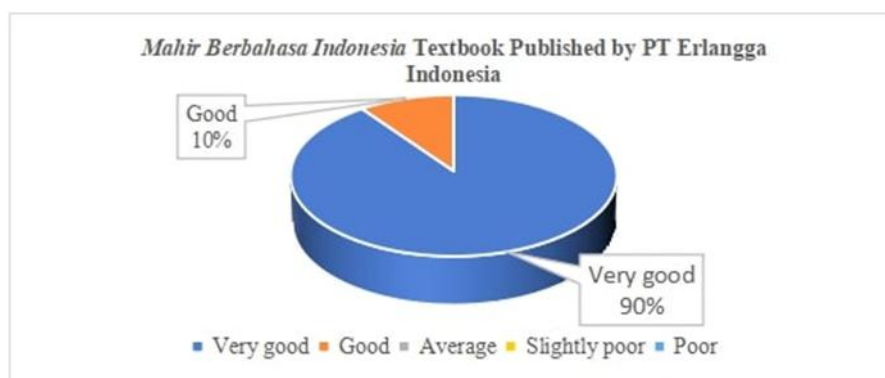


Figure 4. Questionnaire Results Diagram for MARBI Textbook Based on the Feasibility of Relevance and Creativity of Presentation

(c). Feasibility Based on Language Aspects

1. Bahasa Indonesia Textbook Published by MECRTI

TABLE 7  
QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS FOR BAHASA INDONESIA TEXTBOOK BASED ON LINGUISTIC ASPECT FEASIBILITY

Criteria	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	5	16	80%
Good	4	4	20%
Average	3	0	0
Slightly poor	2	0	0
Poor	1	0	0
Total		20	100%

Based on the results, 80% of teachers stated that *Bahasa Indonesia* textbook adhered to the Indonesian spelling rules outlined in PUEBI. The book showed the correct use of standard Indonesian grammar and also maintained good and accurate language. However, several poems in the book were written in Javanese, which could be confusing since the purpose of the book was to teach Indonesian. This led to the suggestion that the material should relate to *Bahasa Indonesia* materials, ensuring better comprehension for readers and students from various ethnic groups.

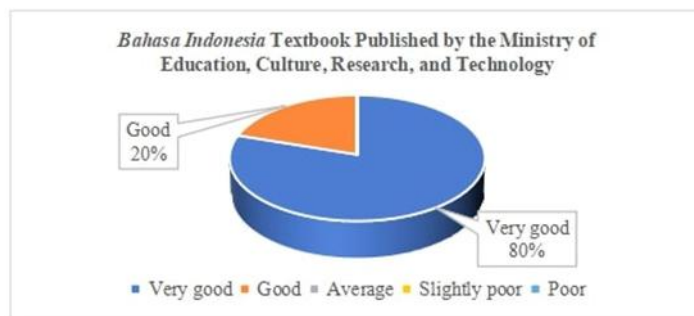


Figure 5. Diagram of the Results of *Bahasa Indonesia* Textbook Questionnaire Based on Linguistic Aspects Feasibility

2. *Mahir Berbahasa Indonesia (MARBI) Textbook Published by PTEI*

TABLE 8  
QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS FOR MARBI TEXTBOOK BASED ON LINGUISTIC ASPECT FEASIBILITY

Criteria	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	5	18	90%
Good	4	2	10%
Average	3	0	0
Slightly poor	2	0	0
Poor	1	0	0
Total		20	100%

Based on the research results, 90% of teachers stated that MARBI textbook met the Indonesian spelling rules outlined in PUEBI exceptionally well. The book consistently applied standard Indonesian grammar and utilized good and correct language.

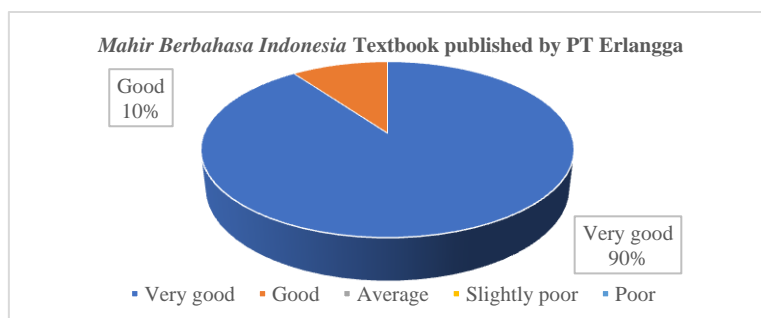


Figure 6. Diagram of the Results of MARBI Textbook Questionnaire Based on Linguistic Feasibility

(d). *Feasibility of the Beginning, Content, and Closing of Textbook*

1. *Bahasa Indonesia Textbooks Published by MECRTI*

TABLE 9  
QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS FOR BAHASA INDONESIA TEXTBOOK BASED ON THE FEASIBILITY OF BOOK COMPLETENESS: THE BEGINNING, CONTENT SECTION, AND CLOSING OF THE BOOK

Criteria	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	5	19	95%
Good	4	1	5%
Average	3	0	0
Slightly poor	2	0	0
Poor	1	0	0
Total		20	100%

Regarding digital textbooks entitled *Bahasa Indonesia* for Class VII published by MECRTI, the table displayed that 95% of teachers found it to have comprehensive sections from the beginning to the end. The title page contained a title, publication description, preface, list of contents, list of figures, and list of tables. Additionally, it included small Roman page numbers at the beginning, with no running title, and provided a glossary, bibliography, index, attachments, and brief author information.

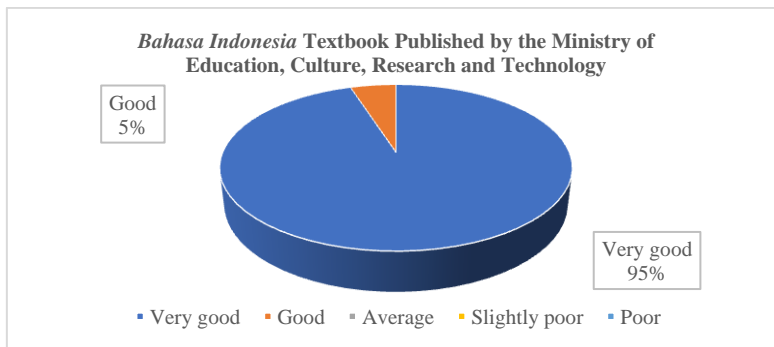


Figure 7. Diagram of the Results of *Bahasa Indonesia* Textbook Questionnaire Based on the Feasibility of the Book Completeness: the Beginning, Content, and Closing of the Book

2. *Mahir Berbahasa Indonesia (MARBI) Textbook Published by PTEI*

TABLE 10  
QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS FOR MARBI TEXTBOOK BASED ON THE FEASIBILITY OF BOOK COMPLETENESS: THE BEGINNING, CONTENT SECTION, AND CLOSING OF THE BOOK

Criteria	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	5	16	80%
Good	4	4	20%
Average	3	0	0
Slightly poor	2	0	0
Poor	1	0	0
Total		20	100%

Table 10 showed that 80% of teachers stated that MARBI textbook for class VII published by PTEI was very good, citing its completeness with the title page, publication description, preface, and table of contents. In addition, there were small Roman page numbers for initial sections, without running titles. The book also contained many figures and tables, a glossary, a bibliography, an index, attachments, and brief author information, but was not equipped with lists of figures, tables, and attachments that could assist readers in understanding the text more easily.



Figure 8. Diagram of the Results of MARBI Textbook Questionnaire Based on the Feasibility of the Book Completeness: the Beginning, Content, and Closing of Textbook

Based on the research results, it was found that the textbook published by PTEI was superior to the one by MECRTI. However, both books met the criteria of being very good textbooks, which could be observed through the following evidence.

TABLE 11  
COMPARISON OF THE FEASIBILITY OF *BAHASA INDONESIA* AND MARBI TEXTBOOKS

No	Subcomponent	<i>Bahasa Indonesia</i> Textbook	<i>Mahir Berbahasa Indonesia</i> Textbook
1	Sophistication, contextuality, and feasibility of the material were in line with real-life events and scientific development.	80%	90%
2	Relevance and creativity of material presentation	85%	90%
3	Linguistic Aspects	80%	90%
4	Book completeness: The beginning of the book, content section, and closing section	95%	80%

The results differed from the discovery of Ginting et al. (2023), which examined *Bahasa Indonesia* textbook for class



X (Senior High Schools) in Merdeka Curriculum and showed the content, language, and presentation feasibility of the book. In contrast, the current research focused on two textbooks used by class VII to learn *Bahasa Indonesia* under Merdeka Curriculum. One of the books was *Bahasa Indonesia* published by MECRTI, and the other was MARBI, published by PTEI. The results also differed from those of Huda and Setyaningsih (2021), which concentrated on the content of literary materials in *Bahasa Indonesia* textbook for class VII, VIII, and IX in Merdeka Curriculum. Huda identified 8 materials related to literature in *Bahasa Indonesia* textbooks used in Merdeka Curriculum for Junior High School students.

The results were inconsistent with Mokoginta and Arafah (2022), which examined the negotiating text material in the 2013 Curriculum *Bahasa Indonesia* textbook, emphasizing good communication styles during negotiation. The results also diverged from the discovery of Sihombing and Nguyen (2022), indicating that English textbooks for class X students in Indonesia were dominated by the source culture (Indian culture), followed by the target culture (US and UK), international culture (ed. India, Singapore, Argentina, and Italy), and culturally neutral content. Furthermore, this research did not align with Maulidiah et al. (2023), which analyzed multicultural aspects in *Bahasa Indonesia* textbook in the 2013 Curriculum, and with the evaluation of Sari et al. (2022), examining the quality of fable teaching material for class VII. It should be noted that no research that had analyzed the feasibility of class VII *Bahasa Indonesia* textbook for Merdeka Curriculum as a new curriculum implemented in Indonesia.

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, digital textbook entitled *Bahasa Indonesia* published by MECRTI and MARBI published by PTEI encompassed a wide array of learning materials, ranging from descriptive texts, narrative, procedure, response, and news, to letter texts. Despite their shared content, notable distinctions existed between the two digital textbooks. It should be noted that the digital textbook published by MECRTI solely presented learning objectives without incorporating specific learning outcomes. Meanwhile, the one by PTEI included comprehensive learning outcomes and featured learning objectives, with a QR code feature, enabling students to access learning media and resources with ease. Textbook from MECRTI was in e-book format but lacked a QR code provision.

Both *Bahasa Indonesia* digital textbooks for class VII, implemented under Merdeka Curriculum, went through rigorous assessment, evaluating factors such as sophistication, contextuality, feasibility, relevance, creativity of supporting materials, standard language, and overall structure, including the beginning, content, and closing. The results unequivocally concluded that MARBI textbook, published by PTEI, showed superior performance compared to *Bahasa Indonesia* textbook published by MECRTI, which secured the second position in terms of quality.

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# Applying Systemic Functional Linguistics in Translation Studies: Instantiation, Individuation, and a Three-Dimensional Model

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**Abstract**—This study aims to provide a detailed investigation of applying Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL) in translation studies from the perspective of instantiation and individuation. Revisiting instantiation and individuation along their history in SFL and introducing the recently developed concepts, the studies on the application of instantiation, individuation and a three-dimensional model are examined respectively. It is noted that instantiation and individuation complement the translation studies by treating the translation process as a linguistic process and interpreting many translation issues in terms of individuality and trajectories of allocation and affiliation, such as the differentiation of equivalence, translation strategies, and translator's choices. As a result, it enables the study of translation products, translation process, and people involved (i.e., the translator, writer, and reader) within a single architecture.

**Index Terms**—instantiation, individuation, translation, Systemic Functional Linguistics

## I. INTRODUCTION

Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL), as an applicable linguistics, provides a comprehensive and theoretically powerful model of language (Halliday, 2008), and has been applied in a wide range of areas, such as pedagogy, language typology, stylistics, forensic linguistics, computational linguistics, clinical linguistics and ecolinguistics. While the application of SFL in translation studies has been thriving since the 1950s (e.g., Halliday, 1956; Catford, 1965), the new century witnesses a renewed interest in the SFL-minded translation studies, marked by its flourishing theoretical and applicable development.

This study investigates the application of SFL in translation studies from the perspectives of instantiation and individuation. It begins with an overview of instantiation, individuation, and the recently developed concepts for the analysis of the two clines, serving as the theoretical foundation. Translation studies from the perspectives of instantiation and individuation are reviewed, including those adopting a three-dimensional model (i.e., realization, instantiation, and individuation). The study carries out a discussion of their application in translation studies, puts forward implications for further development and ends up with a conclusion based on former observations.

## II. INSTANTIATION AND INDIVIDUATION

During the blooming development of systemic functional linguistics, the architecture of language is modelled as a system extending from the ordered typology of systems to the axial organization of a rank within a given stratum (Matthiessen, 2007), whereas the primary focus has been on two hierarchies – realization and rank, and two complementarities – metafunction and axis (Martin, 2008a, 2008b). Instantiation as a complementary dimension, which has received certain attention recently in presenting the process of semogenesis (e.g., Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999, pp. 382-387), remain less developed. Moreover, much less work has been concerned with individuation. This section introduces the concepts of instantiation and individuation, and their development as two hierarchies complementing that of realization.

### A. *Instantiation, Coupling and Commitment*

While language is modelled as metaredundant strata, across which the relationship is realization, the exploration of instantiation offers an alternative perspective, which begins in Halliday's (1973) discussion about the relationship between potential and instance, i.e., general system and particular texts. According to Halliday (1973, pp. 25-37), meaning potential is what a language user can do with language, and an instance is of language use.

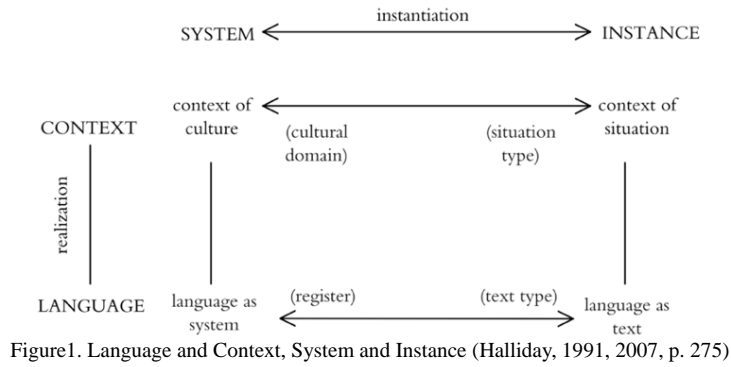


Figure 1. Language and Context, System and Instance (Halliday, 1991, 2007, p. 275)

Connected with realization, the dichotomy between the system of meaning potential and an instance of meaning has evolved to a cline of the relationship between context of culture and context of situation as well as the relationship between language as system and language as text (see Figure 1). Since realization, or stratification, and instantiation are interdependently variable dimensions, their intersection is constructed in the instantiation/ stratification matrix (see Table 1), demonstrating that each stratum instantiates from system through subsystem/ instance types to instance.

TABLE 1  
INSTANTIATION/ STRATIFICATION MATRIX (HALLIDAY, 1995, 2005, P. 254)

		INSTANTIATION		
		system	subsystem/instance type	instance
STRATIFICATION	context	culture	institution situation type	situations
	semantics	semantic system	register text type	[text as] meaning
		~~~~~		
Lexicogrammar		grammatical system	register text type	[text as] wordings

Instantiation is thus theorized to a cline (see Figure 2), along which the two poles are defined by system of the overall potential of a language and text of a particular instance. Between the two poles are the intermediate patterns within language: registerial sub-potentials viewed from the system pole or instance types viewed from the instance pole (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 29).

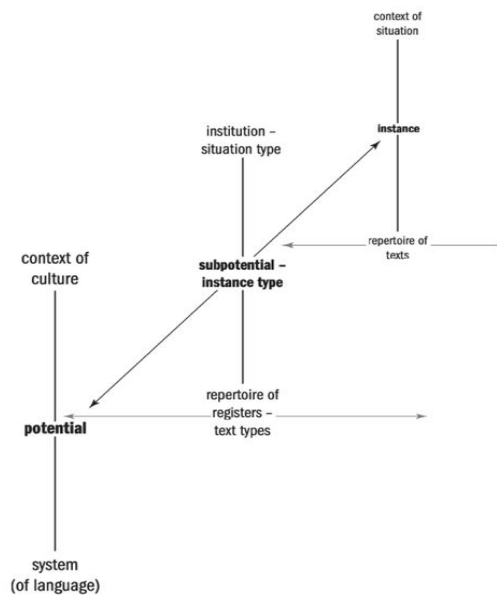


Figure 2. The Cline of Instantiation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 28)

Martin and White (2005) extend the cline of instantiation by adding the notion of reading, highlighting that text themselves are more than enough meaning potential to be read in different ways. Thus, the instance pole is extended to the meaning interpreted from the text according to a reader's subjectivity (see Figure 3).

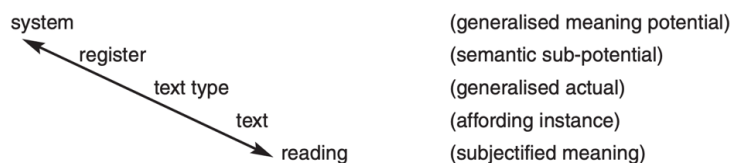


Figure 3. The Cline of Instantiation (Martin & White, 2005, p. 25)

Concerned with the process of instantiation, concepts of coupling, commitment and iconization are proposed for interpretation in a theorized way.

Coupling refers to the way in which meanings combine as coordinated choices from system networks (Martin, 2008a, p. 39), which can be within and across strata, metafunctions, ranks, and simultaneous systems, as well as across modalities. For example, “very brave” is a coupling of [Force: raise] and [Judgement: social esteem] in APPRAISAL system.

Commitment refers to “the amount of meaning potentials activated in a particular process of instantiation” (Martin, 2008a, p. 45), and “the degree of specificity of the meaning instantiated in a text” (Martin, 2010, p. 20). For example, he illustrates how the meaning of windfalls is realized in a set of coupling triplets with different commitments from most general to more specific.

Iconization refers to “the process of instantiation whereby ideational meaning is discharged and interpersonal charged”, which is easier to be found “in the context of images, artifacts and people” as well as in “the genesis of playful headlines, metaphors and idioms” (Martin, 2010, p. 21). Iconization is elaborated by Martin’s (2010) case study of a magazine column entitled “Modern Guru” for responding to readers’ questions about “21st-century ethics, etiquette and dilemmas”. He suggests that whereas the image of the third eye is less than an eye representationally in the sense that most people would not expect to meet a person with three eyes and the column writer is looking at them through the third eye, it is more than an eye symbolically because it symbolizes enlightenment, and thus the column writer is endowed with spiritually powered wisdom for giving advice.

### B. Individuation, Affiliation, and Bonding

Whereas instantiation refers to the relationship between system of meaning potential and instance of use, individuation specializes the meaning potential according to language user, emphasizing “the development of persons as aggregates of personae emerging as they interact with people in different groups” (Matthiessen, et al., 2022, p. 171).

Martin and several scholars (e.g., Martin, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010; Martin et al., 2013; Martin & Quiroz, 2021) develop individuation as a cline of between the reservoir of meanings in a culture and the repertoire that an individual can mobilize originates, based on Bernstein’s (2000) sociological work on coding orientation and Hasan’s (2005, 2009) researches on semantic variation.

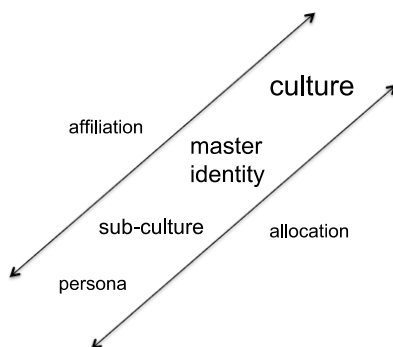


Figure 4. The Cline of Individuation (Martin et al., 2013, p. 490)

The cline of individuation is illustrated along two opposing trajectories (see Figure 4): from reservoir to repertoire, individuation is interpreted as allocation “whereby semiotic resources are differentially distributed among users”; from repertoire to reservoir, it is interpreted as affiliation related to “how personae mobilize social semeiotic resources to affiliate with one another” (Martin et al., 2013, p. 489), or more specifically, how personae “align themselves into sub-cultures, configuring master identities, and constituting a culture” (Martin, 2010, p. 24).

Affiliation and alignment, notions from psychology and sociology, offer a complementary perspective on individuation (Matthiessen et al., 2022, p. 171). For further exploration of the process of individuation, the concepts of bond and bonding are proposed.

Bonding is a process of creating a bond, a technical term for the social relation generated as interlocutors negotiate a particular shared coupling of experience with evaluation in language (Martin et al., 2013, p. 470). During the process of affiliation, i.e., the communal identification of participants into communities of bonds (Knight, 2010, p. 35), bonds form the basic building blocks of the individuation hierarchy which then cluster into the subcultures and master identities to which community members subscribe (Martin, 2010, p. 26).

Combined with iconization, bonds become bonding icons, or bondicons for short, referring to the stronger and less-negotiable bonds – the symbols around which members establish their membership, such as allusions as verbal bondicons, one of the “membership devices” (e.g., Caple, 2010, p. 117; c.f. Chang, 2004, p. 1).

### C. A Model of Three Complementary Hierarchies – Realization, Instantiation and Individuation

Thus far, the progress of modelling language system, language of use and language users reaches a model of three complementary hierarchies (see Figure 5): the hierarchy of realization construes the resources which vary at various strata; the hierarchy of instantiation actualizes each stratum from system to instance; the hierarchy of individuation performs the personae through which communities align.

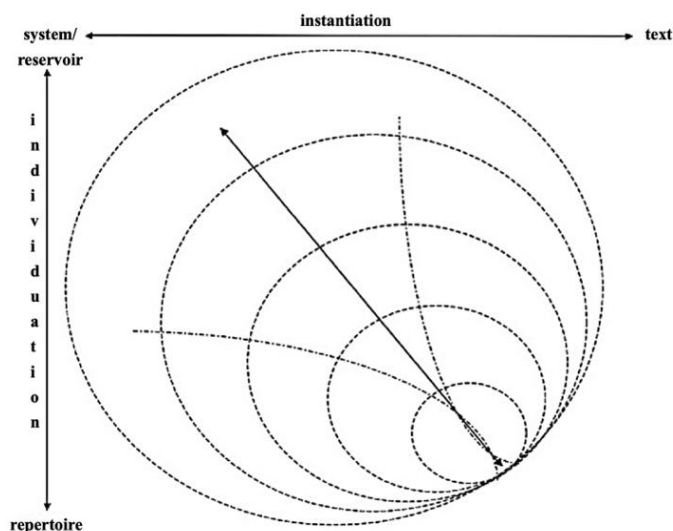


Figure 5. Complementary Hierarchies of Realization, Instantiation and Individuation (Martin et al., 2013, p. 491)

## III. APPLYING INSTANTIATION AND INDIVIDUATION IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

Compared with the history and flourishing outcome of applying realization hierarchy in the field of translation studies (e.g., Huang, 2006; Li, 2022), studies concerned with instantiation and individuation are developing recently in terms of theorization and application.

### A. Instantiation and Translation Studies

Since the earliest research of translation studies from the perspective of instantiation by Matthiessen (2001) and Steiner (2001), the development of applying instantiation is twofold: one refers to locating translation at the instance pole of instantiation included in the range of multilingual studies; the other refers to modelling translation as a process of (re-)instantiation.

#### (a). Locating Translation at the Cline of Instantiation From a Multilingual Perspective

Matthiessen (2001) investigates the contextualization of translation from the four ordered systems (biological, physical, social and semiotic), positioning translation along the six dimensions that organize language in context – stratification, instantiation, rank, metafunction, delicacy and axis. Based on this contextualization, Matthiessen locates translation at the instance pole of instantiation, emphasizing the importance of the overall linguistic system they instantiate, as “translation of the instance always takes place in the wider environment of potential that lies behind the instance” (Matthiessen, 2001, p. 87). Adapting Halliday’s (1995, 2005) stratification-instantiation matrix, Matthiessen proposes a complex of stratification-instantiation matrix to interpret their relationship in translation (Figure 6). It is suggested whereas translation can be located at one end of the cline of instantiation, it takes place throughout the hierarchy of stratification (Matthiessen, 2001, pp. 89-92).

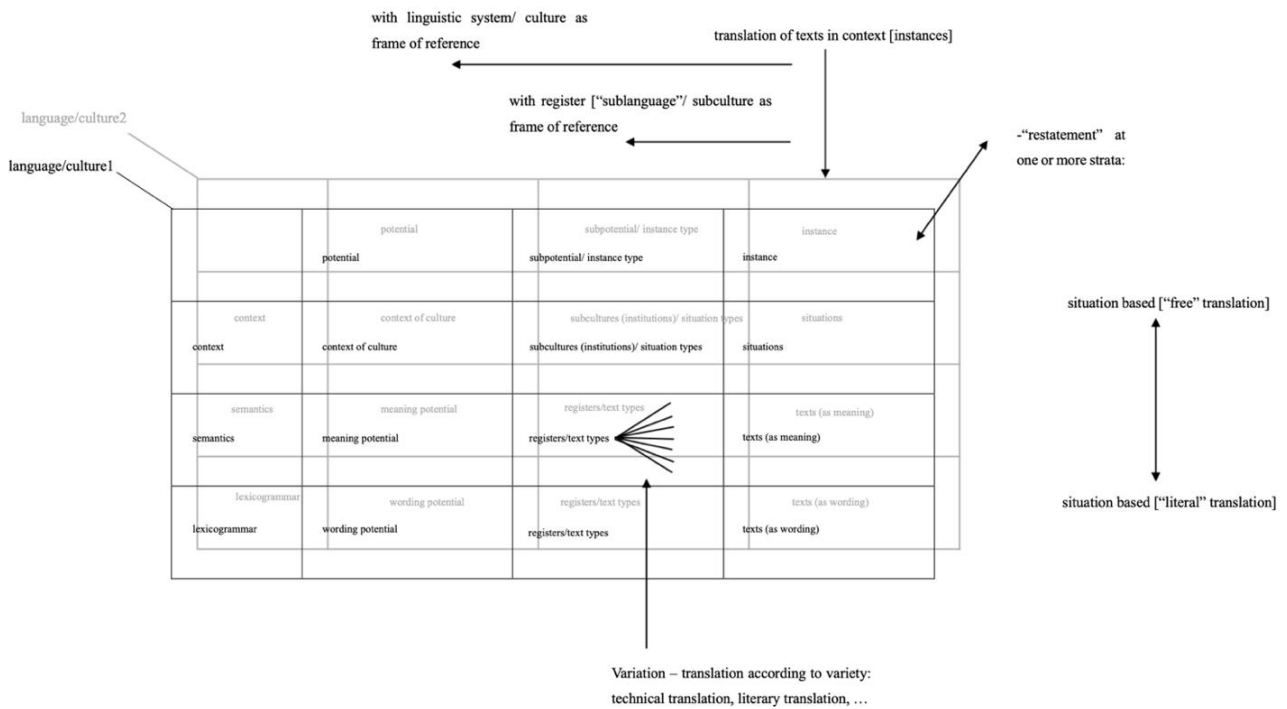


Figure 6. Instantiation in Relation to Translation (Matthiessen, 2001, p. 92)

Drawing attention to the relationship between translation and multilingual generation, Steiner (2001) refers translation as a relationship between instantiations (texts), i.e., the text generation under the constraints of a source text, rather than a relationship between language systems. Likewise, Matthiessen and a number of scholars (e.g., Matthiessen, 2021; Matthiessen, Teruya & Wu, 2008; Matthiessen et al., 2022) regard instantiation as one of the global semiotic dimensions to explore translation as a semiotic process within the field of multilingual studies (see Figure 7).

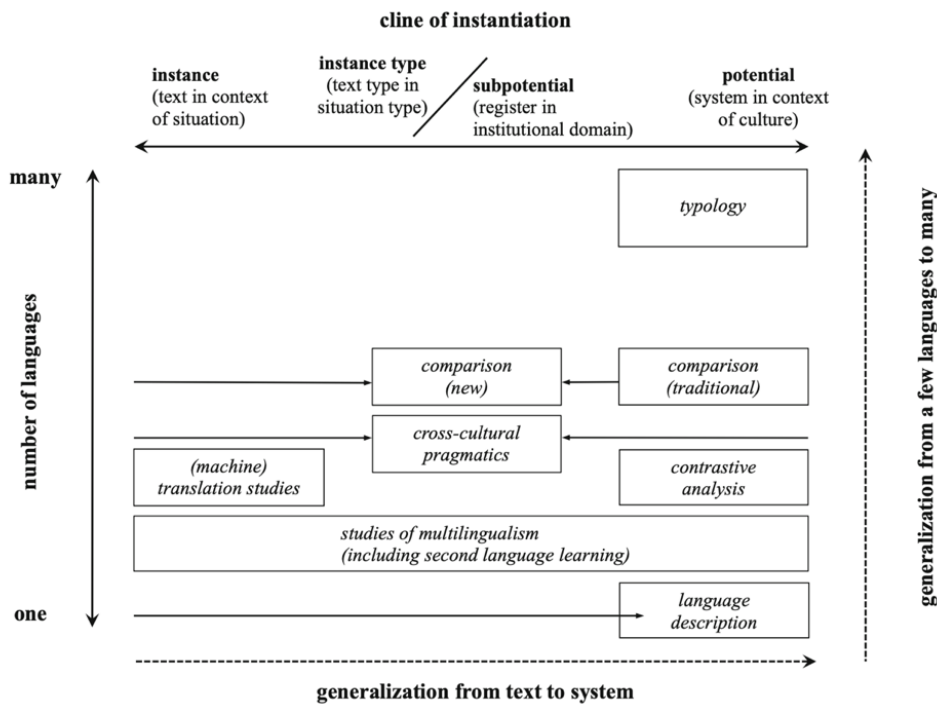


Figure 7. Phenomenal Realm Explored in Multilingual Studies (Matthiessen, Teruya & Wu, 2008, p. 149)

(b). Modelling Translation as a Process of Re-Instantiation

Assisted by computational tools, translation, as a semiotic process, or specifically as a linguistic process in the first instance (Matthiessen et al., 2022, p. 238), is illuminated by the computational models of the process of instantiation

(e.g., Matthiessen, 2001, p. 92; Teich, 2003, p. 60; Martin & White, 2005, p. 25; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 50). According to these models, translation starts with the instance pole of the cline of instantiation, i.e., the source text in its context of situation, move towards the system pole, “recreating the meanings in the source language and in the target language”, and then moves down the cline of instantiation again and ends with the instance pole of the cline of instantiation, i.e., the translated text in its context of situation (Matthiessen et al., 2022, p. 241). As a complex and phased process unfolding through time, the model of instantiation is adopted in a series of translation studies in relation to different registers.

In exploring translation from a three-complementary perspective, de Souza (2010, 2013) focuses the study on the dimension of instantiation. Translation is defined as a reconstruction of source text’s meaning potential in target texts, comprising semantic relations between a source text which maintains an instantial relation to the source language system, and a target text which maintains an instantial relation to the target language system. Adopting Martin’s (2008a, p. 50) term of distantiation (moving up the cline to recover meaning potential), de Souza (2010) addresses translation as a process of re-instantiation and outlines the possible path (see Figure 8): starting at the ST, a single move goes up the SL cline to the relevant potential, then reaches a straight connection to a corresponding subpotential in the TL line, and finally goes down the TL cline to the TT. This model is adopted by Martin and Quiroz (2021) in discussing the systems of tense in Chilean Spanish and English.

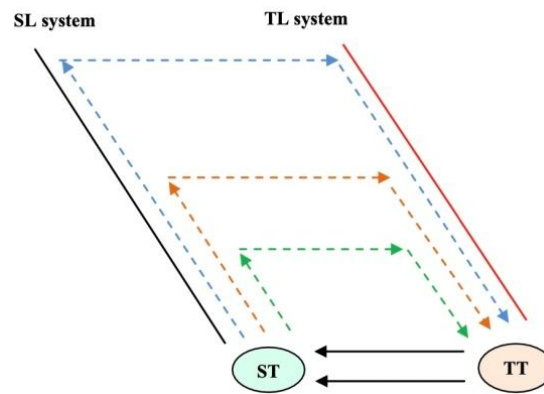


Figure 8. The Model of Interlingual Re-Instantiation (de Souza, 2010, p. 169)

In re-examining the concept of translation equivalence, Yang (2015, 2017) proposes a process model to reveal translation process as interlingual re-instantiation, categorizing the sources and information processed by the translator as encoded information (indicated by solid lines) provided by source text as discourse meaning and subliminal information (by dotted lines) contributing to the success of translation (See Figure 9). The complexity of interlingual re-instantiation reflected in this model requires the translator’s subjectivity in making inferences in comprehending source text and rhetorical maneuvering when constructing target text, which is illustrated by a case study of sinology classics *Tao and Teh (Dao De Jing)* and its two English translations.

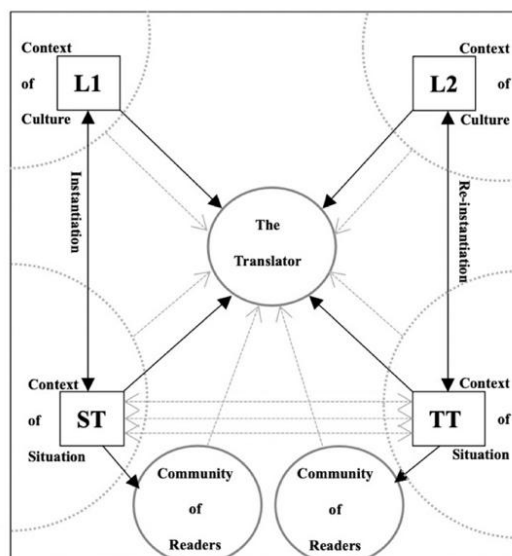


Figure 9. A Process Model of Translation as Re-Instantiation (Yang, 2015, p. 23)



Concerned with the social subjectivity of readers, Chang (2018) investigates how the source text has been differently re-instantiated in the target texts by a case study of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* and its translated versions, focusing on different degrees of commitment in the process of instantiation. It is noted that the target texts are differently committed both ideationally and interpersonally, and among the target texts themselves there are significant differences in the amount of meaning potential activated.

From the perspective of re-instantiation, Chen and Huang (2019) explore the "thick translation" (c.f. Appiah, 2012, pp. 221-224) of an ethnographic classic, focusing on its multimodal annotations within the context of situation. The study demonstrates what distinguishes the annotations of ethnographic translation in the aspects of translation activity, translator's identity, and the way of translation. In terms of field, translation as a social semiotic activity turns from "recreation" to "interpretation"; in terms of tenor, the identity of the translator turns from a cultural communicator to an ethnographer, and in terms of mode the annotations adopt a multimodal way instead of a mono one. Meanwhile, it is found that each modality contributes to the professional interpretation of original texts cooperatively, forming a process of professional knowledge construction through translation.

Through a detailed analysis of title translation in Xi's *The Governance of China*, Zhao (2020) explores how meaning of the target text is reconstructed during the process of re-instantiation. Translation strategies and techniques employed by translators are revealed, including regulating commitment, adjusting appraisal meanings, omitting rhetorical devices, and shifting coupling patterns. Meanwhile, it is found that translators' choices of lexical and grammatical expressions are accommodated to the norms of the target language, contributing to the acceptance of translation in target readers.

### B. Individuation and Translation Studies

A few studies have focused on translation studies from the perspective of individuation. Wang and Yang (2015) propose a new approach to translation studies based on the cline of instantiation, regarding translation activities as a series of processes including de-individuation, re-individuation, and affiliation (see Figure 10).

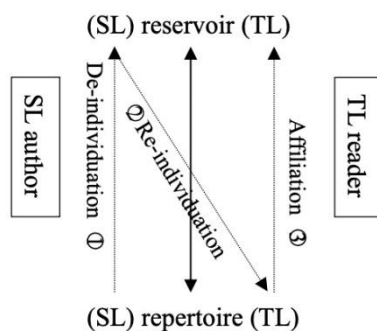


Figure 10. Translation Process of Individuation (Adapted From Wang & Yang, 2015)

According to this model, a translator first aligns him/herself with the SL author to regress SL repertoire (i.e., ST) into SL reservoir through de-individuation, examining the intersection between SL reservoir and TL reservoir, then re-individuates it into TL repertoire (i.e., TT), and aligns with the TL reader through affiliation.

Furthering the exploration of translation in terms of individuation, Wang (2015, 2017) highlights the gender of the translator as the most significant individual factor in a case study of the English translations of the *Tao Te Ching* (*Dao De Jing*). Through investigation of lexical density and grammatical intricacy, it is found that female and male translators differentiate themselves in choices of words, syntactic patterns, and mood, which result in different translation styles collaboratively.

### C. Realization, Instantiation and Individuation: A Three-Dimensional Model and Translation Studies

The hierarchies of instantiation and individuation are adopted into SFL-minded translation studies as complementary dimensions. Based on the interpretation of instantiation (e.g., Martin & White, 2005) and the complementary relationship between the hierarchies of realization, instantiation and individuation (e.g., Martin, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010; Martin et al. 2013), de Souza (2010, 2013) establishes a three-dimensional model of translation as interlingual re-instantiation, taking into account the abstract language systems involved (source language and target language), the concrete use of such language systems (in forms of source texts and target texts), and the users of such systems (especially translators as readers and writers), in relation to the hierarchies of realization, instantiation and individuation respectively (see Figure 11). By focusing on how target texts are semantically related to source texts, de Souza (2013) interprets the process of re-instantiation as language users negotiating source texts' meanings according to their repertoires.

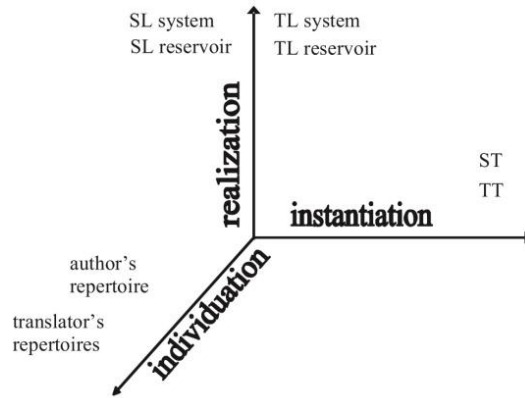


Figure 11. A Three-Dimensional Model of Interlingual Re-Instantiation (de Souza, 2013)

Wang (2016, 2018) specifies the three-dimensional model of complementary hierarchies in terms of language system, language use and language user, regarding translation as a process of inter-lingual re-instantiation where realization and individuation are two indispensable factors (see Figure 12). In this process, meaning is negotiated between language users (i.e., author, translator, and reader) via specific language use (i.e., source text and target text) of two language systems (i.e., source language and target language). This process is illuminated by a case study of English translations of *Tao Te Ching (Dao De Jing)*, offering a comprehensive perspective of translation within an overall architecture.

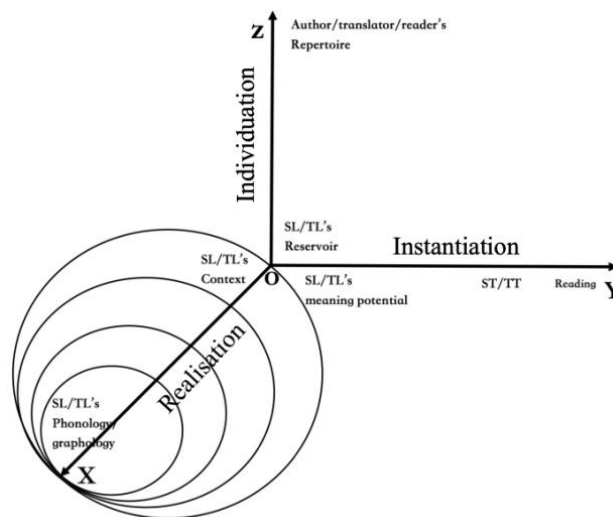


Figure 12. Translation as Interlingual Realization, Instantiation, and Individuation (Adapted From Wang, 2018)

In the investigation of Buddhist scripture translation, Wang (2021) applies the hierarchies of individuation and instantiation as two complementary perspectives to explain the equivalence and differences found in the cross-comparison of the Sanskrit source text and English and Chinese target texts of the *Heart Sutra*. In terms of instantiation, it is demonstrated the translators go along different re-instantiation routes in finding corresponding potentials between the source text and their respective target texts (see Figure 13), due to lacking equivalent potentials at the cline of instantiation. In terms of individuation, the study shows the English and Chinese translators' personal and social identity – the English translator as a Buddhism scholar and the Chinese translator as a Buddhist master – has an immediate influence on their respective reproductions of the text (see Figure 14).

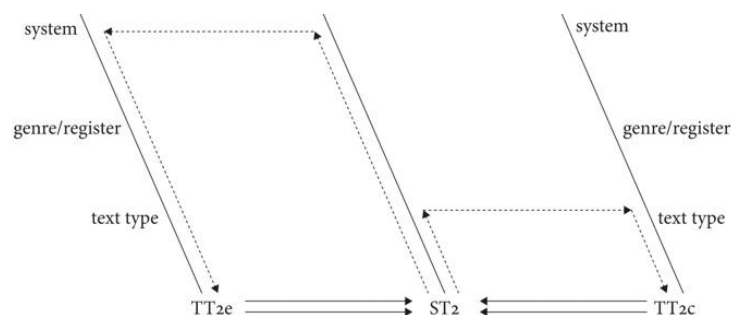


Figure 13. Distantiation and Re-Instantiation Routes for the Two Translations (Wang, 2021)

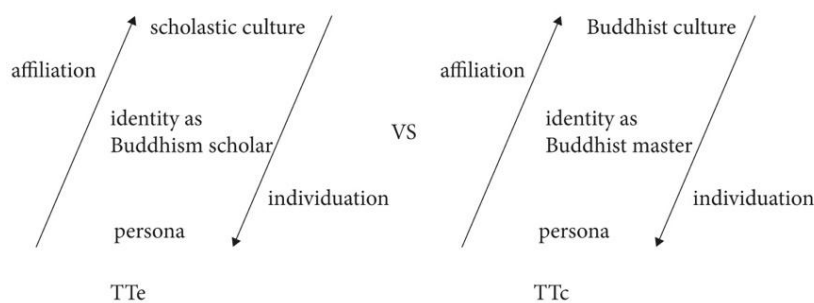


Figure 14. Individuation and Affiliation Path for the Two Translations (Wang, 2021)

#### IV. DISCUSSION

SFL offers an applicable model informing translation studies. Based on the review of translation studies in terms of instantiation, individuation, and a three-dimensional model above, this section makes a discussion about applying the two complementary hierarchies in translation studies and offers implications for further development.

##### A. Instantiation and Translation Studies

Locating translation at the instance pole provides a magnifying perspective on viewing translation as from a linguistic phenomenon within the architecture of language in context, to a semiotic phenomenon in semiotic systems which offer multilingual meaning potentials as the meaning-making resources of two or more languages, connecting translation with other systems in an ordered typology (e.g., Matthiessen, 2001, 2007).

As the development from the dichotomy of the relationship between system and instance to a cline of a continuum, instantiation offers great explanatory power to exploring the nature of translation, a guided meaning-creating activity, as a phased process of re-instantiation.

The initial and final phases of translation as instantiation, i.e., translation products including both source texts and target texts, have been investigated in a large scale of studies by text analysis (Matthiessen, 2021, p. 531), and can be further explored with an approach of “SFL informed corpus-assisted discourse analysis” (Chang, 2020, p. 255), which enables the powerful theoretical orientation of SFL combined with the quantitative methodology by a number of computational tools facilitating automatic or semi-automatic analysis of large volumes of texts. See SysAm (Wu, 2000), SysConc (Wu, 2009; Li & Wu, 2019), SysFan (Yu & Wu, 2017), UAM CorpusTool (O’Donnell, 2008), and the Multimodal Analysis Image Software (O’Halloran et al., 2016).

Concerned with the intermediate phases of the process, the cline of instantiation offers theorized scales such as registerial subpotentials and text types, contributing to explain how far up the cline towards the potential pole a translator moves during the process of (distantiation and) re-instantiation (e.g., de Souza, 2013; Chang, 2018). The investigation of translation as a process of re-instantiation complements the studies of translation process “from below” as a material process (e.g., by keystroke logging and eye-movement tracking), as translation is a linguistic process in its first instance (c.f., Matthiessen et al., 2022).

##### B. Individuation and Translation Studies

In the context of translation, individuation is concerned with the relationship between the reservoir of meaning resources in a culture that the translator belongs to and the repertoire of meanings that the translator can mobilize to align both the original author and the target reader. As instantiation contributes to explaining how different degrees of equivalence (Matthiessen, 2001, p. 115) occur during the process of translation, individuation provides a perspective to explore why different degrees of equivalence is found in target texts by taking language users into consideration.

Along the affiliation trajectory of the cline, the translator’s personae and identity (e.g., gender, ethics, social class) play a crucial role in logogenesis process and products of translation, as the target texts are endowed with their own personae and their rendering is dependent on their identities, serving to explore translator’s subjectivity and intervention.

Meanwhile, moving along the affiliation trajectory facilitates illumination of the process in which the translator aligns other language users into communities of various kinds, such as aligning the original author in a writership and aligning the target reader in a target readership. This process can be investigated by the concept of bond, serving as the basis of the relationships for the formation of communities, and created by couplings of experience with evaluation (Martin, 2010, p. 26). As the original text is written for and belongs to a community, what kind of the community that a translator is targeting at motivates the translator’s linguistic choices and translation strategies.

In addition, along the allocation trajectory of the cline, a translator’s repertoire distributed from the culture reservoir determines the translator’s whole affordance of meaning resources in the process and results of (re-)instantiating the source text into the target one, serving as an essential factor for translation quality. As Martin (2010) discussed the educational implications of individuation in terms of ontogenesis, questions about how to expand the translator’s

repertoire are pedagogically meaningful in translator training. For example, besides raising translators' typological understanding of the languages involved in translation, trainers can develop their repertoire by increasing the input of translator's knowledge along the hierarchy of individuation, ranging from the original author's culture, identity and persona to the target readers'.

## V. CONCLUSION

SFL, as an applicable linguistics, offers a powerful toolkit for translation studies, as its theoretical dimensions of stratification, rank, metafunction, delicacy and axis, instantiation and individuation enable detailed language descriptions and comparisons, analysis and interpretations of the issues in translation studies.

Based on tracing the development of instantiation and individuation in SFL, this study offers a detailed review of applying instantiation, individuation and a three-dimensional model in the field of translation studies. It is shown that the recent development of instantiation and individuation expand the spectrum of perspectives for SFL-minded translation studies: modeling translation as re-instantiation extends the studies of translation process as a linguistic process; the exploration of the cline of individuation affords to interpret the differentiation of equivalence, translator's choice and translation strategies in terms of individuality and trajectories of allocation and affiliation; the development of the three-dimensional model enables the study of translation, translation process and individual (and community) involved (translator, writer and reader) within one comprehensive architecture.

It's also noted that during the history of SFL-minded translation studies, although abundant studies have focused on the realization or stratification hierarchy, the hierarchies of instantiation and individuation are less developed, needing more investigation into their theorization and adaptation in the context of translation.

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# Creative Teaching in Secondary School EFL Classes: A Critical Study of a Proposed Training Program

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**Abstract**—This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of a proposed training program in creative teaching for secondary stage EFL teachers to enhance their teaching performance. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design with 36 English language teachers teaching at secondary schools in Yanbu, Saudi Arabia. Based on the available literature, proven teaching methodologies were identified and included in the training program and teachers trained in their application in the EFL classrooms. Data were collected via an observation sheet. Results revealed that the extent of application of creative teaching skills by the high school EFL teachers at a typical Saudi school is currently low. Additionally, the results showed statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the treatment and control groups in the post-teaching performance in favor of the former. Further, the proposed training program achieved high effectiveness in enriching the teaching performance of English language teachers in secondary stage with (1.21) average gain ratio. The study concludes with recommending that EFL teachers both pre-service and in-service be trained in creative teaching in the EFL classrooms.

**Index Terms**—creativity, English language teachers, secondary stage, teaching performance, teaching skills

## I. INTRODUCTION

The field of education is continuously evolving, necessitating innovative approaches to teaching and learning. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, the demand for creative and effective teaching methods has grown significantly with emerging geopolitical needs. As educators strive to engage and inspire students, the creative teaching has come to play a major role in enhancing teaching performance, especially at the secondary level. IGI Global which is the world's largest database of Information Science and technology defines Creative Teaching as "The act of teaching in a novel and useful way that promotes student growth related to the development of original thought and action. Creative teaching focuses both on the methods a teacher uses to deliver learning and the overall effect those methods have on students and the outcomes produced". In the contemporary world, creative teaching has become necessary to cope with the requirements of the 21st century. Given the status of English as the prevailing international language in global communication, in EFL environments such as that of Saudi Arabia, many teachers struggle to find suitable ways to teach English effectively to their students (Aldujayn, 2019; Asmari, 2005; Al-Qahtani, 2016; Bin-Hady, 2018). Moreover, creativity is considered an essential in the educational paradigm and researchers have attempted to define it and find the best ways to promote it in academic settings universally (Runco, 2004). They have also tried to develop theories to explain creativity (e.g., Guilford, 1956; Maslow, 1968; Sternberg, 1999). For instance, Guilford (1956) proposed the creativity theory concerning ways of understanding and defining creativity and theorized that creativity could be broken down into four categories: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. The challenge before the teachers of the digital denizens is to find the most suited blend of language learning and creativity which is likely the most potent solution for ensuring learning success in the EFL classrooms.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Badawi (2009) defined teachers' performance as "teaching/learning practices and activities inside and outside classrooms such as lesson preparation, lesson delivery, teaching/learning materials manipulation, and test preparation and correction" (p. 25). It refers to the English language teacher's ability to perform and use creative teaching inside the classroom.

To fulfil the changing needs of the language learners, the traditional approaches to teaching need to evolve as much as the content, and English language teachers need to reconsider integrating new ideas such as teaching their students using creative teaching (Bramwell et al., 2011). Rinkevich (2011) described creative teaching as "a unique, customized, and meaningful exchange of knowledge among all individuals in a learning context" (p. 219). Maley and Peachey (2015)

illustrated some characteristics of using creative teaching in the English language classroom, prominently amongst which are, it increases students' engagement and motivation, makes language learning enjoyable, and gives students a sense of ownership and a feeling of success.

Wanga and Kokotsaki (2018) explored English language teachers' perceptions of the importance of practicing creative teaching at the primary stage in China. Results showed that most primary stage English teachers identify the importance of using creative teaching in the English classroom. Nooraldeen (2019) identified the effectiveness of a proposed training program in developing creative teaching skills among English language teachers of the primary stage in Yemen. Results indicated the effectiveness of the proposed training program in developing creative teaching skills and English language teachers' performance. Further, results revealed a statistically significant difference at 0.05 level between the mean ranks of the participants' performance of creative teaching skills on the pre-post rating scale in favor of the post rating scale. Similarly, Aldujayn and Alsubhi (2020) explored the perceptions of secondary school English language teachers in Saudi Arabia in practicing creative teaching represented in planning, implementation, and assessment methods in the classroom. The study concluded that secondary school English language teachers have positive attitudes toward creative teaching but did not have sufficient knowledge about applying creative methods inside their classrooms. Furthermore, Alahideb and Mohammad (2015) investigated the impact of a training program in developing the teaching performance of English language teachers in teaching reading and writing at Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University. Results revealed a positive impact of the training program on developing the teaching performance of English language teachers.

Results of studies on creative teaching pointed towards several skills which are necessary for creative teachers (Al-Aswad, 2018; Slam, 2018). Furthermore, several studies indicated the importance of implementing creative teaching skills in teaching English to develop the teaching performance and teachers' knowledge of teaching (Al-Ajaji, 2016; Al-Amiri, 2020; Al-Qahtani, 2016; Aldujayn & Alsubhi, 2020; Mahmoud, 2018; Konig et al., 2016; Suliman, 2015; Wanga & Kokotsaki, 2018). On the contrary, some studies have reported that English language teachers in Saudi Arabia lag in bringing creativity into their teaching methods (Al-Ahdal & Al-Awaid, 2014; Aldujayn, 2019; Al-Zahrani & Rajab, 2017). Based on such findings, the researchers in this study aim to provide English language teachers with training programs to enhance their creative teaching skills so that their teaching knowledge and performance may be honed.

#### Research questions

Even with a reasonable corpus of data on the efficacy and application of creative teaching in the language classroom, there is a dearth of similar research in the Saudi context. To fill this perceptible gap this study aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the extent to which creative teaching skills are being practiced by Saudi secondary stage EFL teachers?
- 2) What is the effectiveness of the proposed program in developing secondary stage EFL teachers' teaching performance?

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### Research design

The study adopted a quasi-experimental design, using treatment and control groups. Figure 1 shows the steps of designing the experimental method for the current study.

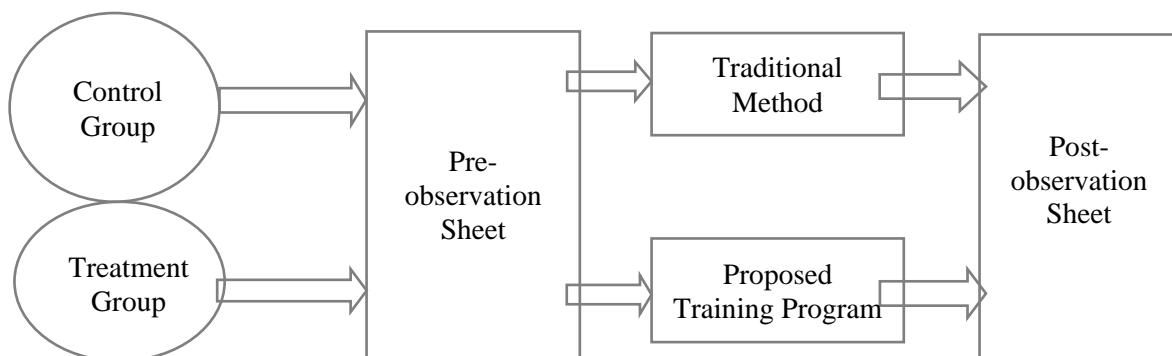


Figure 1. Steps of Designing the Experimental Method

#### Participants

The initial study sample comprised 40 exclusively English language teachers in Yanbu teaching at secondary schools in the third semester (1443 AH). These teachers were assigned randomly to the treatment and control groups. Moreover, to ensure homogeneity of groups, the researchers controlled the extraneous variables represented in teaching experience and educational qualifications of the teachers. Four English language teachers were excluded because two of them had Master degree in curriculum and instruction, while the other two had more than 25 years of teaching experience, thus they were the outliers, the participants in each group being 18 at the beginning of the experiment. The participants'



teaching experience ranged from 7 to 19 years. The researchers obtained the consent for the teachers' voluntary participation in the study. Furthermore, a letter from the College of Education at Qassim University was sent to Yanbu Education to help the researchers apply the study instruments; then another letter from Yanbu Directorate of Education to the principals of secondary schools to help the researchers apply the study instruments and a letter from the Private Education Directorate to the Directorate of Planning and Development seeking approval for the researchers to train the English language teachers in the Education Standard Institute in Yanbu.

### **The Proposed Training Program**

#### 1. Compilation of Creative Teaching skills

The primary purpose of preparing the creative teaching skills list was to identify the creative teaching skills necessary for English language secondary stage teachers and to prepare the proposed training program and its contents. The researchers reviewed the general objectives of teaching English language at secondary schools, the available literature and previous studies (Al-Ajaji, 2016; Boden, 2004; Cai, 2020; Joe & Lau, 2011; Johnson, 2017; Maley & Peachey, 2015; Nooraldeen, 2019; Soliman, 2015). Then, an initial version of creative teaching skills list was prepared. To estimate creative teaching skill list content validity, the initial version of creative teaching skills list was presented to a panel of experts and specialists, including faculty members in universities specialized in curriculum and instruction, faculty members in universities specialized in applied linguistics and translation, faculty members in universities specialized in TEFL, English language supervisors, and experienced English language teachers. They were asked to review the appropriateness of creative teaching skills; the relationship between the skill and its dimension; the relationship between the criterion and the related skill; and the appropriateness of the list items phrasing. Based on the experts and specialists' suggestions, some modifications were made. The final version consisted of three dimensions across 20 items for three creative teaching skills: planning dimension (04), implementation skills (10), and evaluation dimension (06).

#### 2. Planning and Contents of the Program

The researchers followed the following steps to plan the blueprint of the proposed training program:

1. Defining the proposed training program with definition of creativity, creative teacher, and creative teaching
2. Determining the proposed training program objectives
3. Determining the target group
4. Determining the proposed training program contents
  - The contents were certain unconventional methodologies used in the previous studies that yielded positive learning outcomes, though not limited or exclusive to the language classroom. These included: role play, jigsaw, brainstorming, mind maps, questioning, quizzing, flow charts, problem-solving, cooperative learning, and note taking.
5. Training teachers in evaluation

The entire training program was for 21 hours spread over seven days.

### **Research instrument**

The proposed training program included the following evaluation instruments:

- Pre-post observation sheet to identify secondary stage EFL teachers' teaching performance.
- A reflective log completed by each trainee completed at the end of every session.
- Training program evaluation version to be filled at the end of all training program sessions.
- Trainer evaluation version to be filled at the end of all training program sessions.

Ten English language teachers from different secondary schools in Yanbu were trained for class observation as Trainers. Furthermore, the researchers presented the proposed training programs' sessions and collected data through teachers' discussions and observations. Participants provided positive reactions to the proposed training program. To ensure validity of the proposed training program, the initial version of the proposed training program was given to a panel of experts and specialists. They included faculty members in universities specialized in curriculum and instruction, faculty members in universities specialized in applied linguistics and translation, faculty members in universities specialized in TEFL, and English language supervisors.

### **The observation sheet**

In the current study, an observation sheet was used to measure the dependent variable - secondary stage EFL teachers' teaching performance. The independent variable was the proposed training program (discussed in detail earlier in this study). The researchers transferred the arbitrated creative teaching skills list to an observation sheet. It was composed of three main dimensions: planning, implementation, and evaluation skills. The teaching skills rating scale had three options. Each level was also converted to a numerical value for ease of statistical evaluation. Faculty members specialized in curriculum and instruction, applied linguistics and translation, and TEFL were requested to comment on the validity of the observation sheet. To estimate the internal consistency of the observation sheet, the researcher administered the observation sheet to a pilot sample consisting of 10 English language teachers. Then, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated. Results indicated a correlation value of 0.690 for the dimension of Planning Skills for Creative Teaching, 0.650 for Implementation skills for Creative Teaching, and 0.680 for Evaluation Skills for Creative Teaching, establishing the worth of the instrument.

### **Reliability**

The researchers trained an English language supervisor in Yanbu on how to rate English language teachers based on the analytical rubric developed by the researcher. This supervisor had also attended training programs in creative teaching, in addition to having earned a Master's degree in curriculum and instruction. Moreover, one of the researchers and the English language supervisor started and finished the observation of 10 English teachers simultaneously as two distinct raters. Then, the Cooper Smith formula was used to calculate the agreement value. As (Al-Wakeel & Al-Mufti, 1996, p. 62) mentioned, the percentage of agreement that exceeds (80.0%) is a sign of the observation sheet reliability. Results indicated that the agreement value between the researcher and the English supervisor ranged from (87.5% - 90.0%) and the total agreement value was (89.0%). According to Al-Wakeel and Al-Mufti (1996) these percentages are acceptable for the overall reliability of the observation sheet.

To ensure that the treatment and control groups were comparable in the study dependent variable (teaching performance), an independent sample (t) Test was used. The purpose was to start with a more or less homogenous sample. Computations in Table 1 show the values for all the sub-skills of English language teachers' teaching performance and the total score was more than (0.05). This implied that there is no statistically significant difference between the treatment and control groups in the teaching performance at the beginning of the study. In other words, the treatment and control groups are equal in the teaching performance independent variable.

TABLE 1

INDEPENDENT SAMPLES (T) TEST FOR TEACHERS' MEAN SCORES IN THE TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUPS IN THE PRE-OBSERVATION SHEET												
Skill	Group	Group Statistics			Levine's Test		Shapiro-Wilk			t-test		
		N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.	t	df	Sig
Planning Skills	Treatment	18	1.25	0.171	2.718	0.108	0.931	18	0.206	-0.984	34	0.332
	Control	18	1.36	0.447			0.918	18	0.106			
Implementation Skills	Treatment	18	1.28	0.204	1.186	0.284	0.914	18	0.102	-0.877	34	0.387
	Control	18	1.35	0.250			0.934	18	0.227			
Evaluation skills	Treatment	18	1.30	0.283	0.428	0.518	0.943	18	0.340	-0.185	34	0.855
	Control	18	1.31	0.318			0.920	18	0.218			
The All Test	Treatment	18	1.28	0.192	1.887	0.179	0.943	18	0.332	-0.808	34	0.425
	Control	18	1.34	0.257			0.935	18	0.239			

### Procedures

- One of the researchers met with English language supervisors in Yanbu education college to explain the study purposes, instruments, and the proposed training program and its importance in developing secondary stage EFL teachers' teaching performance.
- One of the researchers met with all English language teachers in Yanbu secondary schools to explain the study purposes and take their permission for participation. After their permission to participate and during the meeting, they were divided randomly into control and treatment groups.
- Implementation of the pre-observation sheet for the study sample from 20 / 08 /1443 H to 28 / 08 /1443 AH, by one of the researchers and the English language supervisor.
- Seven sessions were presented by one of the researchers starting from 27 /08 /1443 AH to 6 / 09 / 1443 AH.
- The researchers created a WhatsApp group to discuss the challenges teachers faced in the treatment and consultation on how to implement the program in the educational process.
- The trainees received certificates for attending the program.
- At the end of presenting the training program's sessions, the researchers administered the post-observation sheet for the study sample from 10 / 09 /1443 H to 18/ 10 /1443 AH.

### Data analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 32) was used to test and analyze the data. The study sample in the current study was less than 30 participants in the treatment and control group each, and this number could give rise to the possibility of data dispersion and non-moderation. In order to ensure the moderation of the normal data distribution, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used. In case the significance levels are more than ( $\text{sig} \leq 0.05$ ), the data follows the normal distribution, and parametric statistics could be used. Results in Table 1 present results of the Shapiro-Wilk Test for the English language teachers' scores in the observation sheet.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**RQ1:** What is the extent to which creative teaching skills are being practiced by Saudi secondary stage EFL teachers?

Findings summarized in Table 2 reveal that the English language teachers' average mean scores in practicing creative teaching skills is 1.71 out of 5, with 0.756 standard deviation. The evaluation skills for creative teaching achieved the first rank with an average mean score ranging from 1.90 out of 5.00, with 0.759 standard deviation. The implementation skills for creative teaching achieved the second rank with an average mean score ranging from 1.74 out of 5.00, with 0.803 standard deviation. Results also show that the planning skills for creative teaching skills achieved the third rank with an average mean score ranging from 1.35 out of 5.00, with 0.489 standard deviation. In summary, Table 2 reveals a low-level use of creative teaching skills among English language teacher in all dimensions of planning, implementation, and evaluation skills.

TABLE 2  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' LEVELS IN CREATIVE TEACHING SKILLS USE

No.	Creative Teaching Skill	Mean	SD	Rank
<b>Planning Skills for Creative Teaching</b>				
1	I plan to use various strategies, methods, techniques, and resources to support learning.	1.50	0.527	1
2	I plan to use evaluation methods that develop students' creativity, such as self-assessment.	1.20	0.422	2
<b>Implementation Skills for Creative Teaching</b>				
3	I use different teaching methods and strategies to promote students' participation.	2.20	0.919	1
4	I deal positively with students' linguistic mistakes and do not criticize them for committing mistakes.	1.80	0.919	2
5	I encourage students to participate in dialogues and discussions in English.	1.70	0.675	3
6	I ask students divergent open-ended questions that require high level of thinking skills.	1.40	0.699	5
7	I maintain a good sense of humor to create a relaxed classroom environment.	1.60	0.699	4
<b>Evaluation Skills for Creative Teaching</b>				
8	I provide verbal feedback that encourages students to delve deeper into the cognitive processing of the tasks at hand.	1.90	0.738	2
9	I give students a chance to reflect on their answers.	1.90	0.876	3
10	I ask students to write sentences of their creation, using the grammar and vocabulary covered in the lesson.	1.90	0.738	1
<b>Total Score</b>		1.71	0.756	

To identify whether there were statistically significant differences at (0.05) level between secondary stage EFL teachers' mean scores in the treatment and control group in the post-teaching performance observation sheet in favor of the treatment group, an independent sample (t) Test was used. The findings are summarized in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES (T) TEST

Skill	Group	N	Mean	SD	Levine's Test		t	df	Sig.	(η <sup>2</sup> )	Effect size
					f	Sig.					
Planning Skills	Treatment	18	2.63	0.196	0.040	0.850	12.36	34	0.00**	0.82	High
	Control	18	1.61	0.287							
Implementation Skills	Treatment	18	2.60	0.238	0.030	0.865	13.12	34	0.00**	0.84	High
	Control	18	1.63	0.203							
Evaluation Skills	Treatment	18	2.61	0.206	0.044	0.835	16.30	34	0.00**	0.89	High
	Control	18	1.41	0.235							
All Test	Treatment	18	2.61	0.136	1.797	0.189	18.20	34	0.00**	0.91	High
	Control	18	1.56	0.202							

\*\* Significant differences at 0.01. level

Results in Table 3 indicate that the significance level of Levine's Test is consistent with all sub-skills of the teaching performance observation sheet and the total score. The significance is more than (0.05) level. This means that teachers' scores are homogeneous in the two groups. Results in Table 5 also reveal that (t) the value for all sub-skills and the total test is significant at (0.01) level. These results showed significant differences between the teachers' average scores in the treatment and control groups in the post-teaching performance observation sheet in favor of the treatment group. Results in table 3 also indicate that the (η<sup>2</sup>) value was more than (0.14). This shows the significant impact of the proposed training program in developing secondary stage EFL teachers' teaching performance. Based on the above findings, it can be reiterated that there are statistically significant differences at (0.05) level between secondary stage EFL teachers' mean scores in the treatment and control groups in the post-teaching performance observation in favor of the treatment group.

Thereafter, the paired sample (t) test was used to identify whether there were statistically significant differences (0.05) level between the mean scores of the two groups in teaching performance in between the pre-post training program and the results are summarized in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4  
PAIRED SAMPLE (T) TEST TO SHOW SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TREATMENT GROUP MEAN SCORES IN THE PRE-POST OBSERVATION SHEET

Skills	Pre-post	Mean	N	SD	T	df	Sig.
Planning Skills	Post	2.63	18	0.196	23.685	17	0.00**
	Pre	1.25		0.171			
Implementation Skills	Post	2.60	18	0.238	24.483	17	0.00**
	Pre	1.28		0.204			
Evaluation Skills	Post	2.61	18	0.206	21.880	17	0.00**
	Pre	1.30		0.283			
All Test	Post	2.61	18	0.136	36.225	17	0.00**
	Pre	1.28		0.192			

\*\* Significant differences at 0.01. level

Results in Table 4 indicate that the (t) values for all skills and the total test scores were significant at (0.01) level. These results suggest statistically significant differences between teachers' average scores in the treatment group in the

post teaching performance observation. Results indicated substantial differences between teachers' average scores in the treatment group in the post teaching performance observation sheet in favor of the post-application. In other words, exposure to the training program means teachers' superior teaching performance. Based on the results in Table 4, it can be reiterated that there are statistically significant differences at (0.05) level between the secondary stage EFL teachers' mean scores in the treatment group in post teaching performance observation in favor of the post-application.

The findings of this study shed light on the current state of creative teaching skills among English language teachers in Yanbu, Saudi Arabia, revealing a practice level of 1.71 out of 5 ( $M = 1.71$ ,  $Std = 0.756$ ). This discovery aligns with earlier research (Aldujayn, 2019; Al-Qahtani, 2016; Al-Zahrani & Rajab, 2017), which has consistently indicated a lack of emphasis on creativity in the teaching methods of English language instructors in Saudi Arabia. These findings underscore the pressing need for training programs to enhance the teaching competence of EFL teachers in Saudi secondary schools. Supporting the efficacy of training programs in improving teaching performance, Novozinina and Pinzon (2018) have previously confirmed their positive impact. The current research also reveals statistically significant differences in post-teaching performance between the treatment and control groups, favoring the former. Notably, the data show substantial differences in the average scores of teachers in the treatment group, pre- and post-application, further endorsing the effectiveness of the suggested model in fostering teacher creativity. In addition to the domestic context, Nooraldeen (2019) has corroborated the effectiveness of the proposed training program in enhancing creative teaching skills and English language teachers' performance in the Yemeni context. The study's findings extend to show a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in the mean ranks of participants' performance on the pre-post rating scale, favoring the post-rating scale.

### **RQ2: What is the effectiveness of the proposed training program in developing secondary stage EFL teachers' teaching performance?**

Modified Blake's Gain Ratio was used to identify the effectiveness of the proposed training program in developing English language teachers' teaching performance at secondary stage. Table 5 indicates that all the sub-skills and the total score achieved (1.21) average gain ratio. This average gain ratio is more than the percentage proposed by Black (1.20). This means that the proposed training program achieved high effectiveness in developing the teaching performance of English language teachers at secondary stage.

TABLE 5  
BLAKE'S GAIN RATIO TO TEST THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROPOSED TRAINING PROGRAM IN DEVELOPING SECONDARY STAGE EFL TEACHERS' TEACHING PERFORMANCE

Skill	Posttest Mean Scores	Pre-test Mean Scores	Total Score	Blake's Gain Ratio
Planning Skills	2.63	1.25	3	1.25
Implementation Skills	2.6	1.28	3	1.21
Evaluation Skills	2.61	1.3	3	1.21
All Test	2.61	1.28	3	1.22

The results arrived at in this study unequivocally demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed training program in enhancing the teaching performance of secondary stage English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. This positive outcome can be attributed to the program's comprehensive approach, which focuses on honing the practical aspects of creative teaching skills, encompassing planning, implementation, and evaluation. The success of this program lies in its emphasis on activities and applications directly related to the targeted performance skills, which teachers are trained to apply both within and beyond the classroom setting. Moreover, the inclusion of assigned activities and ongoing monitoring of their implementation by the researchers served to address and mitigate the challenges encountered by teachers during their teaching practices. This active engagement in practical activities is instrumental in improving the performance dimension of their creative teaching skills.

Notably, the training program incorporated formative evaluation and feedback mechanisms throughout its sessions. This approach empowered each trainee to identify their individual weaknesses and develop customized plans to overcome them. By creating an environment that fostered cooperation and a healthy sense of competition among participants, the program facilitated the exchange of experiences, knowledge, and skills among teachers. This collaborative atmosphere significantly contributed to the development of their teaching performance.

## V. CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to assess the effectiveness of a training program centred on enhancing the creative teaching skills of secondary stage English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. This research also sought to evaluate the existing level of creative teaching skills among these educators. Moreover, it aimed to determine the impact of a creative teaching skills-based program on the teaching performance of EFL teachers in secondary education. The study's data analysis revealed statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level between the mean scores of EFL secondary stage teachers in the treatment and control groups during post-teaching performance observations, favoring the treatment group. Furthermore, significant differences were identified at the 0.05 level within the treatment group between the mean scores in pre- and post-teaching performance observations, favoring the post-application assessment.

The proposed training program consisted of seven training sessions, spanning a total of 21 hours over the course of one week. These sessions covered various essential aspects of creative teaching, including creativity, the role of a

creative teacher, creative teaching methods, role-playing, Jigsaw, brainstorming, mind mapping, effective questioning techniques, and evaluation methods. The program incorporated diverse training strategies, such as group discussions, brainstorming sessions, interactive questioning, problem-solving activities, mind mapping exercises, and cooperative learning approaches. To assess the effectiveness of the program, a range of evaluation instruments were utilized. These included pre- and post-observation sheets, reflective logs completed after each session, a training program evaluation form, and an assessment of the trainer's performance. This research culminates in a resounding endorsement of the proposed training program's effectiveness in improving the teaching performance of secondary stage English language teachers. In harmony with previous studies (Abdel-Aal, 2019; Al-Ahaidib & Muhammad, 2015; Nouredine, 2019), this study underscores the efficacy of such training programs in developing the creative teaching skills of English language instructors. This effectiveness can be attributed to the training program's unique approach, which fosters a flexible environment that transcends mere pedagogy. It creates an engaging atmosphere that encourages the acquisition of knowledge and the development of performance abilities while maintaining teacher motivation. Furthermore, the program promotes knowledge sharing among teachers, enabling them to discuss classroom challenges, find solutions, and develop effective strategies to overcome obstacles. The diverse range of training activities plays a pivotal role in achieving program objectives by enhancing teaching performance and identifying and addressing individual weaknesses.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

- Ministry of Education could train EFL teachers on the use of creative teaching skills to help their students learn the English language more efficiently.
- Course designers could consider the inclusion of creative teaching skills when developing EFL courses, particularly at secondary school level. They could guide teachers in their manuals towards utilizing creative teaching skills.
- EFL teachers, both pre-service and in-service, could be trained to use creative teaching skills.

### Limitations of the study

- The current study was based on limited and few variables. Future research is needed that can define variables other than those used in the current study and that can significantly help in English language teaching creatively, such as the relationship between creative teaching skills use and students' achievement, motivation, etc.
- Classroom intervention was not part of the follow-up in this study, and hence, it cannot be predicted accurately how the learners will respond to such teaching. Future research is needed in implementing a proposed training program based on creative teaching skills for developing students' creative thinking.

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# A Sociolinguistics Perspective of Interrogative Forms in English, Standard Arabic and Jordanian Dialects

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**Abstract**—This paper aims to investigate some forms of interrogatives in Standard Arabic (SA), two Jordanian Arabic dialects (JAD): urban Jordanian Arabic (UJA) and rural Jordanian Arabic (RJA), and their impact on the Jordanian people's use of English Interrogative forms. It also examines how SA, and the two JAD are similar and different based on their forms and uses of interrogatives. Further, this study analyzes how each interrogative form is used in different classifications and contexts. The descriptive approach is used to describe the impact of SA, UJA and RJA on the use of English interrogative forms in social contexts. The study concludes that JADs share some interrogative forms and that some of them hold multiple meanings or usages. It also confirms that SA and its Jordanian dialects, UJA and RJA, to some extent, impact the Jordanian people's use of English interrogative forms.

**Index Terms**—dialect, Jordanian Arabic, sociolinguistics, Standard Arabic, English

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the common functions of language is represented in asking questions to get information (Joshi, 2014; Umami, 2015; Siemund, 2017; Gupta, 2018; Mahfud, 2021). This function is linguistically termed as interrogation (Ohl, 2007). In this respect, each language has its unique interrogative particles and forms which are different from the particles of other languages (Alqasem, 2017). Such differences may occur at the level of dialects pertaining to the same language. Interestingly, the differences in interrogative particles and forms, which are parts of larger differences in the languages' linguistic systems, may affect the form of interrogation in the second or foreign language.

The interrogative sentences in English require serious changes in the sentence (Glotkina, 2022). They have a grammatical structure that implies changes in verbs that are influenced by the form of time (Syarifa, 2019). Moreover, the English interrogative sentences always begin with an auxiliary verb or To Be and Wh-word (Handayani, 2017; Khawas, 2021; Ahmed & Kumar, 2022; Natal et al., 2022). Contrastingly, Arabic interrogative sentences resort to 'Merge' because it does not have auxiliary inversion (Fakih & Al-Dera, 2014) and, like English interrogative sentences, they are introduced by an interrogative particle (Fischer, 2013). The term 'merge' denotes n syntactic objects (SOs) already formed, and constructs from them a new SO (Chomsky, 2007, p. 137).

This paper is motivated by the assumption that the forms and particles of interrogation in SA and JDs; UJA and RJA impact the Jordanian people's use of interrogative forms in English. Therefore, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most frequently used interrogative forms and particles in Urban Jordanian Arabic?
2. What are the most frequently used interrogative forms and particles in Rural Jordanian Arabic?
3. Do the interrogative forms and particles used in Urban Jordanian Arabic differ from those in the Standard Arabic?
4. Do the interrogative forms and particles used in Rural Jordanian Arabic differ from those in the Standard Arabic?
5. Do the interrogative forms and particles used in Urban Jordanian Arabic and Rural Jordanian Arabic affect the Jordanian people's use of English interrogative forms?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Theoretical Background

Trudgill (1995) defined Standard English as "the variety of English which is usually used in print, and which is normally taught in schools and to non-native speakers learning the language. It is also the variety which normally spoken by educated people and used in news broadcasts and other similar situations" (pp. 5–6).

The language that speakers use in the community they live in pertains to their language identity. The term identity is defined as the linguistic construction of membership in one or more social groups or categories. This study's main

concern is how speakers of the subject area form wh-questions, which are considered part of their dialect identity. This study examines forms of wh-questions in two dialects (rural and urban), as these are the only existing dialects in the study region.

Arabic is a language with a wide range of variants. Among these (SA) is the only written form that is standardized, regulated, taught in school, and used in written communication. Meanwhile, its spoken forms are extensive, which include Jordanian Arabic (JA), Syrian Arabic, and Egyptian Arabic (EA) among others. Speakers mainly use these regional dialects in day-to-day spoken communication.

It is important to introduce interrogatives in Arabic and English. Linguists agree that interrogatives refer to the idea that the questioner seeks information on something that they are not familiar with, and that the addressee is expected to provide the speaker with such information. Arabic and English linguists have provided several definitions of interrogatives. For Arabic linguists, an interrogative is [a] request which aims to know about something that is not known by using a particular particle. In addition, Al-Sioty, with reference to Al-Anbarri's writings, defines a "question" as "a demand for an answer using a specific particle" and asserts that each question consists of four essential parts which are: the questioner, the interrogative instrument whether a particle or a noun, the subject (the topic) that the questioner wants to know about and finally the addressee" (Issam, 2006, pp. 352–353).

On the other hand, interrogatives in English are "used to express lack of information on a specific point and it usually requests the listener to supply this information verbally" (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 386). Moreover, Beard (2000) defined "questions" as "utterances which require information and opinions that the questioner does not know" (p. 98). While many other definitions of interrogatives exist, they all share the abovementioned ideas.

This study examines the relation between society and language to promote a better understanding of the nature and structure of language and the way its functions interact socially. This research also helps linguists determine similarities and differences among Jordanian dialects, which would enable linguists to apply them to other sociolinguistic fields. It also facilitates an understanding of these kinds of wh-questions among ordinary people, whether they are foreigners or citizens from other areas in Jordan.

Specifically, this study examines the impact of SA and its Jordanian dialects; UJA and RJA, if any, on the use of English interrogative forms. In doing so, a discussion of the similarities and differences between SA, JAD (urban and rural) and English is provided by highlighting 36 different examples of interrogative forms as spoken by the selected sample members. The researcher conducts a qualitative analysis of these examples by comparing them to one another.

### *B. Related Works*

Wahba (1984) examined wh-questions in EA, arguing that wh-operators in EA may occur in two positions: nonargument (initial position) or argument (in situ position). The descriptive approach is used and, conducting the study from a government and binding perspective (Chomsky, 1981), the researcher found that wh-questions are derived from movement, while relative clauses and topicalized constructions show no movement at all.

According to Farghal (1986), medieval Arab grammarians have investigated all matters related to the description of Arabic syntax. Farghal discussed the different transformational aspects of Arabic. No independent work has been conducted on the syntax of wh-questions until it filled this gap in Arabic syntax research by performing a major study that analyzes wh-questions and their implications for current linguistic theory. The findings revealed that while wh-elements cannot be moved to the left of topics in matrix topic-comment structures, they can undergo movements to the left of topics in embedded topic-comment structures.

Gharaibeh (1999) argued that the particle is the head of the kernel sentence since it assumes initial position. The descriptive method is used, and the findings revealed that the particle's lexical properties ensure that it projects on the structure of kernel sentences. It is the syntactic head because it reverts and restricts the aspect of the tense and is also the semantic head because it identifies the sentence's style. An interrogative sentence gains meaning from the particle, which is absent in other sentence components. The particle usually changes the structural case ending of the predicate and sometimes the subject to indicate the new meaning and tense.

Through a contrastive study, Almomani (2006) examined the syntactic, lexical, and semantic aspects of interrogative sentences in SA and English. The descriptive method was used, and the results showed that the transformational aspects of interrogative sentences between Arabic and English are illustrated through major transformational processes such as topicalization, expansion, and deletion.

Katanani (2002) analyzed the intonation form and function of interrogation in English as well as the Yazour accent in Palestine. The descriptive method was used, and the results revealed that speakers use the rising tone in yes/no questions and echo questions (whether yes/no questions or wh-questions, and miš questions). Meanwhile, speakers use the falling tone in neutral wh-questions and incomplete questions.

In an Arabic study, Alfarhan (2005) investigated interrogatives in Kufr-Soom, a rural town north of Irbid, Jordan, and discussed how interrogation is expressed not with the use of interrogative particles or nouns but with intonation (without using *hal* and *?alhamza*) considering the example *abuuk haan?* Or *haan abuuk?* (Is your father here?). He then introduced some interrogative particles in that rural dialect: *miin* (who); *šuu*, *ešuu* or *?eeš* (what, when asking about humans and nonhumans); *leeš* or *laweeš* (why); *ameet* (when); *wcen* (where); *mneen* (from where); *la-ween* (to where); *čeef* (how); *?akam* or *gaddeeš* (how many or how much, respectively); and *?ayya* (which).



Al-Momani and Al-Saidat (2010) explored the syntax of wh-phrases in JA, which showed a clear optional movement of the wh-phrase either to the initial position or leaving it in situ. The movement in the latter case is linked to the presence of the particle *illi.*, meaning 'who'. The findings reflected that the wh-questions in JA are driven by focus which is embodied in the form of an intonational morpheme.

Al-Shorafat (2013) examined the syntax of wh-questions in SA within the most recent framework advocated by Chomsky (1998, 1999, 2001, 2005, 2007). Chomsky called this latest version the phrase-based theory of syntax. Al-Shorafat found that wh-questions in SA, which is an example of a non-Indo-European language, could be addressed in a principled fashion within the phrase-based approach. The analysis concentrated on the derivation of wh-questions mainly in the unmarked word order (VSO) in SA. The findings reflected that agreement and movement do obey the principles of the phase theory and that this theory not only accounts for well-formed sentences but ill-formed sentences as well.

Yassin (2013) studied wh-movement in JA and EA and found that wh-phrases move in JA but remain in situ in most cases in EA. The descriptive method was used, and the results provided phonological evidence of edge marking in the two dialects, concluding that wh-phrases move to [SPEC CP], and, as a result, JA is anticipated to be marked as left edges of XPs. Contrastingly, the results revealed that epenthesis and vowel reduction mark right edges of XPs in EA. These findings strongly support Richards's (2006) proposal.

Moustafa (2017) examined the interrogative function in classical Arabic and similarities/differences in the syntactic characteristics of interrogatives between modern SA and classical Arabic. Adopting a qualitative method of analysis, the researcher collected data from newspapers (modern SA) and the Quran (classical Arabic). This study explored four interrogatives (*hal /, / kayf /, /?ayn /, / mata*) and determined the interrogative function in classical Arabic. It also observed shared structures of syntax that are employed in classical and modern SA. Meanwhile, other structures are used only in modern SA and classical Arabic. The results reflected that there are syntactic structures used in both classical Arabic and modern standard Arabic and other structures that are limited to Classical Arabic only or Modern Standard Arabic only.

The above studies elaborated on the concept of interrogation in both English and Arabic or in a single JA dialect. The present research is distinguished from these studies as it attempts to add something new to this domain by presenting a comparison of interrogatives between modern standard Arabic and two varieties of JA: rural Jordanian Arabic (RJA) and urban Jordanian Arabic (UJA).

### III. METHODS

This study is qualitative, and the participants and sites were purposefully selected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Holmes and Hazen (2014) identified several social factors in the inception of sociolinguistics, which include age, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Eckert (2000) stated that ethnography is a search for local classifications (p. 69). A good example of an ethnographic study that uses local classification is Norma Mendoza Denton's research involving students at a Latino high school in California (2008).

According to Eckert (2012), the ethnography approach in sociolinguistics uses interviews to collect data. Holmes and Hazen (2014) argued that social and external factors are important in analyzing data. They identified speaker groups based on several factors, which are considered the starting point in determining sample size. Because all studies face resource and time limitations, the participant sample is also limited; the more participants interviewed, the better.

The study population included Jordanians living in the northern district of Jordan (Irbid City). The sample consisted of 36 individuals from two different speech communities with different ages, genders, and educational backgrounds. Irbid City was chosen because the researcher has relatives and friends in the selected areas, which will facilitate the process of collecting the required data on the rural dialect, particularly in Dairyousef Village (north of Irbid).

This study investigated 36 examples taken from different speech communities in Jordan (rural and urban). These examples were collected through qualitative unstructured interviews that each involved six to eight participants and were tape-recorded. The data obtained were interrogative particles and sentences in the two studied dialects, while data on SA interrogation were gathered from well-known grammar books.

Milroy and Gordon (2003, pp. 28–29) and Tagliamonte (2006, p. 31) stated that large samples are not necessary and suggested a minimum of two participants per cell. Therefore, the researcher had at least two participants per cell and a maximum of 15 participants per cell.

The researcher obtained the necessary data by inquiring about how the participants ask questions about a certain thing, person, time, place, reason, number, price, and others. After recording the interrogative sentences, they produced in their own dialects, the researcher asked them to say the same interrogative sentences in English. As a result, several interrogative structures were formed, for instance:

UJA: *miin yalli kasar hayel-kaaseh?*

RJA: *man kasara haaḏi-lkaaseh?*

SA: *man kasara haadāl-ka?as?*

E: "Who broke this glass?"

The researcher collected the examples and transferred them to their SA counterparts which he produced. The examples were classified according to the interrogative particles used to form them and the speech community from

which the examples were collected. Then, the study conducted a descriptive analysis of the interrogative particles in SA and JAD by discussing their structural and functional differences. Furthermore, the study examined the differences and similarities between the two dialects themselves and some other Arabic dialects.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

##### A. Findings

The analysis of data revealed that the speakers of UJA used the interrogative particles ‘*?eeš / Šuu*’ which means ‘*Maa / maadaa*’ in SA and ‘*what*’ in English, ‘*Keef/kiif*’ which means ‘*Kayfa*’ in SA and ‘*how*’ in English, ‘*miin*’ which is pronounced as ‘*man*’ in SA and ‘*who*’ in English. They also used ‘*min ween/mneen/min feen*’ which means ‘*min ?ayna (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*from where*’ in English, ‘*la-ween/ween*’ which is pronounced as ‘*?ilaa ?aynaa (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*to where*’ in English. Furthermore, the participants used the particle ‘*min ?eeš/ min šuu*’ which means ‘*Mim maa (min maadaa) (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*From what/ Of what*’ in English, ‘*Min miin*’ which carries the meaning of ‘*Mim man (min man) (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*from whom*’ in English, ‘*Laweeš/ Leeš/ La?eeš/ 9šaan šuu/ 9šaan eeš/ Mišaanšuu/ Mišaan?eeš/ Leeh/ Laweeh/ Lašuu*’ which means ‘*limaadaa (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*why*’ in English, ‘*B?eeš/ bšuu*’ which carries the meaning of ‘*Bima(aḍa) (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*Of what/ By what/ In what*’ in English, ‘*9a(la)-?eeš/ 9a(la)-šuu*’ which means ‘*9ala ma(aḍaa) (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*on what*’ in English, and ‘*9an šuu/ 9an?eeš*’ which means ‘*9amma (9an maadaa) (preposition + particle)*’ and ‘*about what*’ in English.

It is also revealed that the speakers of RJA used the interrogative particles ‘*Šuu*’ which means ‘*Maa/maadaa*’ in SA and ‘*what*’ in English, ‘*Šloon/ Ćeef*’ which means ‘*Kayfa*’ in SA and ‘*how*’ in English, ‘*Miin/Man*’ which is pronounced as ‘*man*’ in SA and ‘*who*’ in English. They also used ‘*min ween/mneen*’ which means ‘*min? ayna (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*from where*’ in English, ‘*la-ween/ween*’ which is pronounced as ‘*?ilaa?aynaa (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*to where*’ in English. Furthermore, the participants used the particle ‘*min šuu/mineeš*’ which means ‘*Mimmaa (min maadaa) (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*From what/Of what*’ in English, ‘*Min miin/ min man*’ which carries the meaning of ‘*Mimman (min man) (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*from whom*’ in English, ‘*Laweeš/ Leeš*’ which means ‘*limaadaa (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*why*’ in English, ‘*Bšuu/ Beeš*’ which carries the meaning of ‘*Bima(aḍa) (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*Of what/ By what/ In what*’ in English, ‘*9a(la)-šuu*’ which means ‘*9ala ma(aḍaa) (preposition + particle)*’ in SA and ‘*on what*’ in English, and ‘*9an šuu*’ which means ‘*9amma (9an maadaa) (preposition + particle)*’ and ‘*about what*’ in English. Table 1 below shows interrogative particles in SA, UJA, RJA and English as used by the participants.

TABLE 1  
INTERROGATIVE PARTICLES IN SA, UJA, RJA AND ENGLISH AS USED BY THE PARTICIPANTS

E	SA	UJA	RJA
1. What	<i>Maa</i> <i>maadaa</i>	<i>?eeš</i> <i>šuu</i>	<i>šuu</i>
2. How	<i>Kayfa</i>	<i>Keef</i> <i>Kiif</i>	<i>šloon</i> <i>čeeš</i>
3. Who	<i>Man</i>	<i>Miin</i>	<i>Miin</i> <i>Man</i>
4. From where	<i>min?ayna</i> (preposition + particle)	<i>min ween</i> <i>mneen</i> <i>min feen</i>	<i>min ween</i> <i>mneen</i>
5. To where	<i>?ilaa?aynaa</i> (preposition + particle)	<i>la-ween</i> <i>ween</i>	<i>la-ween</i> <i>ween</i>
6. From what Of what	<i>Mimmaa</i> ( <i>min maadaa</i> ) (preposition + particle)	<i>min?eeš</i> <i>min šuu</i>	<i>min šuu</i> <i>mineeš</i>
7. From whom	<i>Mimman</i> ( <i>min man</i> ) (preposition + particle)	<i>Min miin</i>	<i>Min miin</i> <i>min man</i>
8. Why	<i>limaađaa</i> (preposition + particle)	<i>Laweeš</i> <i>Leeš</i> <i>La?eeš</i> <i>9šaan šuu</i> <i>9šaan eeš</i> <i>Mišaanšuu</i> <i>Mišaan?eeš</i> <i>Leeh</i> <i>Laweeh</i> <i>Lašuu</i>	<i>Laweeš</i> <i>Leeš</i>
9. Of what By what In what	<i>Bima(ađa)</i> (preposition + particle)	<i>B?eeš</i> <i>Bšuu</i>	<i>Bšuu</i> <i>Beeš</i>
10. On what	<i>9ala ma(ađaa)</i> (preposition + particle)	<i>9a(la)-?eeš</i> <i>9a(la)-šuu</i>	<i>9a(la)-šuu</i>
11. About what	<i>9amma (9an</i> <i>maadaa</i> (preposition + particle)	<i>9an šuu</i> <i>9an?eeš</i>	<i>9an šuu</i> <i>9an šuu</i>

The following sections discuss each English interrogative particle along with their correspondents in SA and its colloquial JA correspondents (urban and rural). The discussion will include references to interrogatives in other Arabic dialects. It will also provide an analysis of the points of difference between SA and its dialects; UJA and RJA, on the one hand, and English language on the other. The focus will be made on the impact of SA and its dialects; UJA and RJA on the way English interrogative sentences are formed.

## B. Discussion

### (a). The Particle What

This particle, which is used to ask about an object or a nonhuman, is equivalent to the SA interrogative particles *maa* and *maadaa*. The speakers of UJA and RJA use the particles *šuu* or *?eeš* to carry the same meaning of the English what and the SA *maa* and *maadaa*. Here, it is urging to distinguish between the SA *maa* and *maadaa* since the two particles carry the same meaning. In this respect, Farghal (1986) argued that when the copula-deletion rule takes effect, the SA question-word *maadaa* is converted to *maa* via lexical rule to meet the following lexical entries in Arabic grammar.

1a. *maadaa(-V)*

1b. *maa(-N)*

One may perceive that *maa* is often followed by a noun or pronoun and *maadaa* by a verb whereas JAD particles follow no certain lexical rule and can be succeeded by a noun or verb.

Moreover, *maa* and *maadaa* are rendered as *šuu* or *?eeš* in UJA as explained by the following examples:

1) UJA: *šuu/?eeš 9alaa?it yalli btihih bilmauduu9?*

SA: *maa 9alaaqatu maataquulu bilmauduu9i?*

E: "What is the relation between the subject and what you say?"

On the other hand, the English particle what is often followed by an auxiliary verb, e.g., is, are, can, etc. Since Arabic has no auxiliary verbs, some participants tended to say, "What is the relation between the subject and what you say?".

Therefore, this point of difference between SA and English causes the participants to omit the auxiliary verb 'is' even though the interrogative sentence still achieves its communicative purpose.

2) UJA: *šuu/?eeš biddak tis?alni?*

SA: *maađaa turiidu? an tas?alani?*

E: "What do you want to ask me?"

It is noted that SA and its Jordanian dialects have no auxiliary verbs. This is why a few participants did not use the auxiliary verbs 'is' and 'do'. Instead of saying "What is the relation between the subject and what you say?" most of the participants say, "What the relation between the subject and what you say?". Furthermore, the participants committed the same error when they say, "What you want to ask me?", instead of saying "What do you want to ask me?".

In UJA, the speakers use the interrogative particles ?eeš and 'šuu'. In this respect, šuu is used more frequently than šuu. On the other hand, the SA *maa* and *maada*, which means 'what' are rendered as šuu as shown below:

3) RJA: *šuu haaĐ?*

SA: *maa haađa?*

E: "What is this?"

We notice several similarities between UJA and RJA in their use of šuu.

In Baghdadi dialect, as shown by McCarthy and Raffouli (1964), one can observe shared interrogative particles with JAD. Gulf Arabic, according to Qafisheh (1977), uses the interrogative particle šuu, which is like UJA and RJA. In Egypt (McGuirk, 1986), the used particle is ?eeš, which differs on the surface from ?iš in UJA. Urban Hijazi Arabic (Sieny, 1978) uses ?eeš, a particle that is close to ?iš in UJA. Bedouins over the coast of Egypt (Matar, 1981) share the particle ?eeš with UJA.

#### (b). The Particle How

This particle is used when inquiring about how an individual performs an action. It is equivalent to *Kayfa* in SA, *šloon* in RJA and *kiif* in UJA. Examples from the participants' speech are listed below:

4) UJA: *keef Halleet-?is-su? aal?*

SA: *kayfa Halalta-s-su?aal?*

E: "How did you answer the question?"

The interrogative sentences uttered by several participants reflected the impact of their SA as well as their JAD on the interrogative form they produced. The auxiliary verb 'did' is omitted and the morpheme of pastness '-ed' is added to the verb 'answer'. The interrogative sentence they produced is "How you answered the question?". This evidently shows the impact of the participants' mother tongue which has no auxiliary verbs. Furthermore, the Arabic verb *Halalta* is used in its past form, while its English equivalent, in such an interrogative sentence, should be written in its infinitive form 'answer' since the morpheme of pastness is indicated by the auxiliary verb 'did'.

*Kayfa* matches with *šloon* or *čeef* in RJA, as illustrated by examples (5) and (6) below:

5) RJA: *šloon tusta9 mal?*

SA: *kayfa tusta9 mal?*

E: "How is it used?"

6) RJA: *čeef ibti9 malih alTabxah?*

SA: *kayfa taTbuxiina haađa at-ta9aam?*

E: "How do you make this food?"

According to Meshkorow (1972), the interrogative particle *kiif* is used by UJA speakers, and *šloon* is widespread in RJA. Gulf Arabic (Qafisheh, 1977) uses *šloon* and *čeef*, which are the same as the RJA particles, and *keef*, which is the same as the UJA particle. Palestinians, according to Shahin (1999), use *čiiif*. The particle *kayfa* matches with *izzay* in Egyptian dialect, which is completely different from those used in JAD.

In the two colloquial Jordanian dialects that have been studied, one can inquire about someone's health by using *kayfa* (*keef* and *kiif*) followed by *haluk*, *wad9uk*, or? *umuurak*, or the particle can be used with a suffixed pronoun in UJA and RJA.

The following examples show *kayfa* followed by a masculine or feminine singular pronoun in the two dialects of the studied districts:

SA: *kayfa haluka?*

7) UJA: *keefak? / keefik? / kiifak? / kiifik?*

8) RJA: a. *keefak? / čeefič?*

b. *šloonak? / šloonič?*

E: "How are you?"

#### (c). The Particle Who:

The English particle *Who*, which is used to ask about a person, is pronounced as "Man" in SA and is followed by a noun or a verb. *Man* in SA is replaced by *miin* in UJA and *miin* or *man* in RJA as shown in examples (9) and (10):

9) UJA: *miin yalli kasar hayel-kaaseh?*

RJA: *man kasara haaĐi-lkaaseah?*

SA: *man kasara haađal-ka?as?*

E: "Who broke this glass?"

10) RJA: *miin/man ?ija 9alihda9iš?*

SA: *man ja?a-s-saa9ata-al-Hadiata 9ašrata?*

E: "Who came at eleven o'clock?"

The participants are aware of the correct interrogative forms of asking about the doer of an action. They use the correct syntactic order of this interrogative form. Here, it is worth highlighting the similarity between UJA, RJA, SA and English. The interrogative sentence in example number 9 above, which functions as a question about the doer of breaking of the glass, has the same word order, without adding new lexical items. That is, the English interrogative particle "who" is equivalent to *miinyalli* 'man' and *man* in UJA, RJA and SA respectively. Furthermore, the interrogative sentence in example number 10 above, which functions as a question about the doer of coming at eleven o'clock, has the same word order, without adding new lexical items. That is, the English interrogative particle "who" is equivalent to *miin/man* and it is followed by *?ija*, which means 'came' in English and *ja?a* in SA.

Notably, both UJA and RJA use the same interrogative particle *miin*. RJA is also observed to use the SA interrogative particle *man*, which may have infiltrated this dialect through its speakers' education.

Examples (11) and (12) below show that when the colloquial particle *man* in RJA is attached to the subjective pronouns *hwaa* (he) and *hiya* (she), it becomes *mannu* and *manni* or remains *man-hu* or *man-hi* and, when attached to *hum* (they (mas. pl.)) and *hunna* (they (fem. pl.)), it becomes *miin hum* or *miinhumma* and *miinhin* or *miinhinnih*, respectively.

11) RJA: *man-hu/ mannu / miinhuhaad?*

SA: *man haada?*

E: "Who is he?"

12) RJA: *man-hi / manni/ ?il-lantatak hallera?*

SA: *man ?allati ?a9Tatak haađ-ad-diinar?*

E: "Who (fem.) gave you this dinar?"

The English particle *who*, as it is evident in the above examples, does not account for masculinity and femininity. It is different from its Arabic equivalents; *man* in SA, *man-hi / manni*, *man-hu/ mannu* in RJA and UJA. Moreover, *man* is used in three positions: as a subject (*who*), as an object (*whom*), or as a possessive pronoun (*whose*). This is illustrated in some UJA examples below:

13) UJA: *miin Darab miin?*

SA: *man Daraba man?*

E: "Who hit whom?"

14) UJA: *9urs miin? elyoom?*

SA: *9ursu man?alyawma?*

E: "Whose wedding is it today?"

The Arabic equivalent for the English *who* is *man* and it assumes the above mentioned three positions in RJA, but the pronunciation differs. Some areas in the Arab world share interrogative particles with UJA and RJA. For instance, *miin* is used in Egyptian (Mitchell, 1956), urban Hijazi (Sieny, 1978), and Syrian (Meshkorow, 1972).

In RJA, *man* is used by Bedouins over the coast of Egypt (Matar, 1981) and in the Gulf Arabic (McCarthy & Raffouli, 1964).

(d). *The Preposition Plus Particle From Where:*

The English interrogative form *from where* that includes preposition plus particle means *Min? Aynaa* in SA. Its SA, UJA and RJA equivalents are followed by a noun, verb, or preposition. UJA uses the particles *min ween*, *min feen*, or *mneen* to replace the SA correspondent, as shown in example (15):

15) UJA: *min ween/ min feen/ mneen? Ištareeti fustaanik?*

SA: *min? ayna-š-tarayti fustanaki?*

E: "From where you bought your dress?"

The RJA equivalents for the English particle *from where* are *min ween* and *mneen*, which match with the SA interrogative particle *min?ayna*, as the following example shows:

16) RJA: *min ween/mneen ištariit-ilxaatim?*

SA: *min? ayna-štarayta-lxaatem?*

E: "From where you bought the ring?"

One would notice that *min ween* and *mneen* are common particles used in JAD. These particles may also be shared with other dialects, as *mneen* is used in Egypt (Mitchell, 1956), Syria (Meshkorow, 1972), and Palestine (Shahin, 1999); *min ween* is used in Gulf Arabic (Qafisheh, 1977) and *min feen* is used in urban Hijazi (Sieny, 1978). Much significantly, the JAD equivalents for the English preposition plus particle *from where* occur in the same position in the sentence structure. This is evident in the above listed sentences which show that the RJA *min ween/mneen*, the SA *min ?ayna* and the English form *where* come initially in the interrogative sentences.

(e). *The Particle Plus Preposition Where to:*

The English particle plus preposition *where to*, which is the equivalent of *?ilaa? aynaa* in SA, is used when asking about a place someone is going to. It corresponds to *la-ween* or *la-feen* in UJA and *la-ween* in RJA. The following examples illustrate these uses:

17) UJA: *la-ween/la-feen biddak truuh?*

SA: *?ilaa ?ayna sataḏhabu?*

E: "Where do you want to go?"

18) RJA: *la-ween haabtruuh?*

SA: *?ilaa ?aynaa turiidu?an taḏhab?*

E: "Where do you want to go?"

It is obvious that the English interrogative form of *where to* is separated by other lexical items, as is the case in the above examples, and this syntactic structure is different from that of Arabic and its Jordanian dialects. The Arabic version of *where to* is *?ilaa?ayna*, while the two dialects use the particle *la-ween*. Some participants followed this rule and applied it to English when they said, "Where to do you want to go?"

It is important to know that the particle *ween*, without the preposition *?ilaa*, also functions like *la-ween*, as in examples (19) and (20).

19) UJA: *ween/feen biddak truuh?*

20) RJA: *ween biddak truuh?*

SA: *?ilaa ?aynaa turiidu ?an taḏhab?*

E: "Where do you want to go?"

Syrian (Meshkorow, 1972) and Palestinian dialects (Shahin, 1999) share the same particle (*la-ween*) with the two Jordanian dialects.

(f). *The Preposition Plus Particle From What or of What:*

The preposition plus particle from what or of what carries the meaning of the SA interrogative particle *maḏāa*, which is attached to the preposition *min*. It is pronounced *mimmaa* to mean "from what" or "of what." It corresponds to *min?eeš* or *min šuu* in UJA and *min šuu* or *mineeš* in RJA. Here are some examples:

21) UJA: *min eeš maḡmuul hada-?akil?*

SA: *mimmaa suniḡa haḏa at-taḡaam?*

E: "What is this food made of?"

22) UJA: *min šuu msaawiyih hal-kaḡkaat?*

SA: *mimmaa sanaḡti haadīhil-kaḡkaat?*

E: "From what did you make these cookies?"

23) RJA: *min šuu biṡkawwan?*

SA: *mimmaa yatakawwan?*

E: "What does it consist of?"

24) RJA: *mineeš sawweetuh?*

SA: *mimmaa sanaḡtahu?*

E: "What did you make it of?"

UJA and RJA use the same particle *min šuu*.

(g). *The Preposition Plus Particle From Whom:*

The preposition plus particle from whom is articulated in SA as *mimman*. It consists of the preposition *min* accompanying the interrogative particle *man*, and it is articulated as *mimman* according to the assimilation rule and means "from whom." *Mimman* in SA matches with *min miin* in UJA and *min miin* or *min man* in RJA as in examples (25), (26), and (27).

25) UJA: *min miin hada-l-iktaab?*

SA: *mimman haadā-l-kitaab?*

E: "From whom is this book?"

26) RJA: *min miin hazzee tuunaat?*

SA: *mimman haadā az-zaituunu?*

E: "From whom are these olives?"

27) RJA: *min man jibta-Ṡoomaat?*

SA: *mimman ?aḡḡart a-Ṡawma?*

E: "From whom did you bring the garlic?"

It is worth noting that the SA and JADs equivalents for the English preposition plus particle from whom occur in the same position in the sentence structure. This is noticed in the above listed sentences which show that the RJA *min man*, the SA *mimman* and the English *from whom* come initially in the interrogative sentences. Urban Hijazi (Sieny, 1978) uses the same *min miin* particle as UJA and RJA. In Baghdad (McCarthy and Raffouli, 1964), people use the particle *mimmen*, which is completely different from JAD.

(h). *The Preposition Plus Particle Why or What for:*

The preposition plus particle *why* or *what for* means *Limaada* in SA, which consists of the preposition *li-* and *-maada* to mean “why” or “what for”. It is used to ask about the reason for something. *Limaada* in SA corresponds to *leeš*, *la?eeš*, *9šaan šuu*, *9šaan?eeš*, *mišaanšuu*, *mišaan?eeš*, *leeh*, *laweeh*, *laweeš*, or *la šuu* in UJA and to *laweeš* or *lees* in RJA. This is shown in the examples below.

28) UJA: *lees ruHit?*

SA: *limaađaa đahabta?*

E: “Why did you go?”

29) UJA: *laweeh btaakol bsor9a?*

SA: *limaađaa ta?kulu bisur9a?*

E: “Why do you eat fast?”

30) RJA: *leeš/laweeš ba9dna haan?*

SA: *limaađaa ma zilnahuna?*

E: “Why are we still here?”

Significantly, the SA and JADs equivalents for the English preposition plus particle *what for* or *why* occur in the same position in the sentence structure. This is noticed in the above listed examples which show that the RJA *leeš/laweeš*, the SA *limaađaa* and the English *what for* or *why* come initially in the interrogative sentences. The JAD share the particle *leeš*, which is also used among Palestinian (Shahin, 1999), Syrian (Meshkorow, 1972), urban Hijazi (Sieny, 1978), and Gulf people (Qafisheh, 1977).

(i). *The Preposition Plus Particle by What, in What, or of What:*

The preposition plus particle *by what*, *in what*, or *of what* corresponds to *bimaađaa* in SA, *b?eeš* and *bšuu* in UJA and *beeš* or *bšuu* in RJA. Observe the following examples:

31) UJA: *bšuu/b?eeš ?ijeet?*

32) RJA: *beeš/bšuu ?ijeet?*

SA: *bimaađaa ?atayta?*

E: “By what did you come?”

UJA and RJA use the same particle *bšuu*.

(j). *The Preposition Plus Particle on What/Why:*

The preposition plus particle *on what/why* corresponds to the SA *maadaa* which is attached to the preposition *9ala*. Notably, *9ala maadaa* in SA matches with *9a(la)?eeš* or *9a(la) šuu* in UJA and *9a(la) šuu* in RJA as in following examples:

33) UJA: *9a(la)?eeš / 9a(la)šuu b9dik bitHibiih?*

34) RJA: *9a(la) šuu ba9dič bitHibiih?*

SA: *9ala maadaa ma zilti tuHibiinahu?*

E: “On what/why do you (fem. sg.) still love him?”

UJA and RJA use the same particle *9a(la)šuu*.

(k). *The Preposition Plus Particle About What:*

The preposition plus particle *about what* corresponds to the Arabic *9an ma* (*ađaa*). Moreover, its equivalents in UJA and RJA are *9an šuu* or *9an?eeš* and *9an šuu* respectively, as in the following examples:

35) UJA: *9an šuu/9an?eeš btiHkii?*

36) RJA: *9an šuu btiHkii?*

SA: *9an ma(ađaa) tataHaddaθiin?*

E: “About what are you (fem. sg.) talking?”

UJA and RJA use the same particle *9an šuu*.

## V. CONCLUSION

The data implied in the 36 selected examples was collected through unstructured interviews and tape-recording and were analyzed qualitatively based on the interrogation forms in English and SA. The most important finding is that SA and its Jordanian dialects have no auxiliary verbs. This is why several participants did not use the auxiliary verbs like ‘is’ and ‘do’. In this respect, the interrogative sentences uttered by a few participants reflected the impact of their SA as well as their JAD on the interrogative form they produced. For example, the auxiliary verb ‘did’ is omitted and the morpheme of pastness ‘-ed’ is added to the verbs in case the participants made interrogative sentences.

For all practical purposes, the differences between the forms and uses of interrogatives in English, SA and JADs remain an unexplored area. This study aimed to discuss the extent to which regional variations of Jordanian dialect, which differ according to geographical location, impact the form and use of English interrogatives. It found that colloquial dialects vary not only across countries and towns but even across villages. This research explored how some forms of an interrogative particle are used in English and different varieties of SA and two JA dialects: UJA and RJA. It also examined the differences between SA and JA depending on the forms and uses of interrogative particles. In

addition, this study identified the similarities and differences between JAD and SA. Findings showed that some forms of JAD interrogatives have more than one meaning or usage. Some SA interrogative particles have only one counterpart in JAD, some have two, some have three, and others have more. Some interrogative particles in JAD may share the same particles as those in SA, while others are completely or slightly different. Furthermore, some particles are widespread, while others are slightly used. JAD shares some interrogative particles with each other as well as with some other Arabic dialects. Finally, this study showed that people of a certain area in Jordan, especially females in rural areas, tend to use the particles of other dialects, such as those in urban areas, for purposes of socialization and prestige.

## APPENDIX

## LIST OF ARABIC PHONETIC SYMBOLS

Arabic Consonants	Symbol	Description
ء	ʔ	Glottalstop
ب	B	Voiced bilabial stop
ت	T	Voiceless dento-alveolar stop
ث	θ	Voiceless interdental fricative
ج	J	Voiced postalveolar affricate
ح	H	Voiceless pharyngeal fricative
خ	X	Voiceless uvular fricative
د	D	Voiced dento-alveolar stop
ذ	ð	Voicedinter-dental fricative
ر	R	Voiced alveo-palatal trill
ز	Z	Voiced alveolar fricative
س	S	Voiceless alveolar fricative
ش	ʃ	Voiceless alveo-palatal fricative
ص	S	Voiceless alveolar emphatic fricative
ض	D	Voiced alveolar emphatic stop
ط	T	Voiceless dento-alveolar emphatic stop
ظ	Ḍ	Voiceless alveolar emphatic fricative
ع	ɣ	Voiced pharyngeal fricative
غ	Y	Voiced uvular fricative
ف	F	Voiceless labio-dental fricative
ق	Q	Voiced uvular stop
ك	K	Voiceless velar stop

## CONSONANTS

Arabic Consonants	Symbol	Description
ل	L	Voiced alveolar lateral
م	M	Voiced bilabial nasal
ن	N	Voiced alveolar nasal
ه	H	Voiceless glottal fricative
و	W	Voiced labio-velar glide
ي	Y	Voiced palatal glide
تش	Č	Voiceless palato-alveolar affricate

## VOWELS

Short Vowels	Symbol	Description
فتحة	a	Low, front, unrounded
ضمة	u	High, back, rounded
كسرة	i	Front, high, unrounded

## LONG VOWELS

Long vowels are indicated by double letters, that is, aa, ii, oo, and ee.

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# The Representation of Gaza War (2021) in the Official Remarks of Hamas and Israel: A Critical Discourse Study

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**Abstract**—This study investigated the representation of Gaza War (2021) in the official remarks of Hamas and Israel. All remarks released over the 11-day war were collected and analysed according to Van Dijk's (2006) ideological square to explore the discursive strategies that each party utilized and uncover the possible hidden ideologies. Two main strategies were employed in the speeches, namely, *emphasizing our good things* and *emphasizing their bad things*. The collected examples generated different themes including praising war achievements, war justifications, threats, future aims, and national glorification. The study found that each party tended to represent themselves positively and the other negatively. Israel focused their speeches on war achievements and threats while Hamas's speeches were more emotional and centred on self-glorification.

**Index Terms**—official remarks, Gaza War (2021), Hamas, Israel, CDA, Van Dijk

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is one of the oldest and most significant national liberation struggles in the Middle East. It has been an international issue since the establishment of the Zionist Entity in 1948, which was followed by many wars in different periods of time, the most recent of which is Gaza War which broke out in May 2021. It all started when Palestinians began protests in East Jerusalem over the decision of evicting six Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah issued by the Supreme Court of Israel. This area is part of the occupied Palestinian territories but effectively annexed by Israel. The war lasted over 11 days of intense fighting through which the Israeli airstrikes and artillery barraged on Gaza killing at least 230 people. In the other direction, Hamas missiles rained over Israeli towns, sowing fear and killing at least 12 Israeli settlers.

The war on the Gaza Strip, which was known to the Palestinians as the "Sword of Jerusalem" and to the Israelis as the "Guardian of the Walls", represented an important station in the history of the Palestinian-Israeli national liberation struggle. During this war, the official spokesman of Hamas (Abu Obeida) and the official spokesman of the Israel Defense Forces (Avichai Adraee) delivered statements in which they used language as a weapon aimed at conveying ideas, ideologies and viewpoints that might influence Palestinian, Israeli, and international public opinion alike. This study aims to investigate the official remarks conveyed during Gaza War (2021) by Hamas and Israel. It also attempts to shed light on the discursive strategies used to highlight certain ideas and ideologies of both sides in light of Van Dijk's (2006) socio-cognitive approach. It mainly attempts to answer the following question:

1. What are the main themes utilized in the remarks delivered by the official spokespersons for Hamas (Abu Obeida) and the Israel Defense Forces (Avichai Adraee) during the Gaza War (2021) to highlight the "us" vs. "them" dichotomy?
2. What are the discursive strategies used in constructing "us" and "them" in the remarks delivered by the official spokespersons for Hamas (Abu Obeida) and the Israel Defense Forces (Avichai Adraee) during the Gaza War (2021)?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section sheds light on several issues related to political discourse. It also gives a brief account on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach. Moreover, it reviews previous studies on the representation of previous wars in speeches.

### A. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a sort of discourse analysis research that focuses on how speeches and texts in political and social contexts are used to perpetrate, reproduce, and oppose societal abuses of power, authority, and inequality (Wodak, 2002; Al-Abbas & Haider, 2020; Haider et al., 2021). CDA tackles social issues, discursive power

structures, and forms culture ideological activity and society (Fairclough, 2013; Al-Abbas, 2022). Finally, discourse is a sort of social activity, in addition towards the historical relationship between literature and society.

Van Dijk's (2006) approach aims to link the microstructure of language to the macro structure of culture. The micro level relates to language usage, verbal contact, discourse, and communication, whereas macro level refers to dominance, power, and disparity among the social groupings. Van Dijk (2001) suggested four strategies to examine ideological discourse as follows:

- Emphasize Our good things
- Emphasize Their bad things
- De-emphasize Our bad things
- De-emphasize Their good things

The micro-strategies are represented in Table 1 (Van Dijk, 2006).

TABLE 1  
LIST OF VAN DIJK'S DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES

Actor description	Authority	Burden
Categorization	Comparison	Consensus
Counterfactuals	Disclaimers	Euphemism
Evidentiality	Example/ Illustration	Generalization
Hyperbole	Implication	Irony
Lexicalisation	Metaphor	National Self-Glorification
Negative Other-representation	Norm Expression	Number Game
Polarization	Populism	Positive Self-Representation
Presupposition	Vagueness	Victimization

### B. Previous Studies

Investigating political speeches attracted the attention of many scholars over the years. Bilal et al. (2012) investigated and explored the linkages between ideology and language through the study of political chat programs broadcasted on private TV channels. The study found that some tactics allow speakers to change realizations of authority and power in intervention representations to generate meanings that aren't necessarily obvious to all viewers.

Similarly, Baidoun (2014) investigated the process of two Israeli, and two Palestinian media outlets covered the increase in violence in Gaza in 2013. The major goal of this study was to see how ideologies influence media coverage of the Palestinian- Israeli conflict. The study found that there are discrepancies between Palestinian and Israeli media reportage.

In the same vein, Amer (2017) conducted a study about the portrayal of political and social forces in media reportage of Gaza conflict of 2008–2009. The results revealed that the social orientations of publications, as well as their liberal and conservative ideological viewpoints, affected news coverage of the Gaza conflict in 2008–2009. Generally, Israeli government leaders are the most well-represented actors, whereas Palestinian performers are Hamas members.

Hamood (2019) examined US President Donald Trump's political language from November 2017 about the move of the US Ambassador from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The analytical qualitative approach was used to investigate the political discussion in order to characterize it and learn everything there is to understand about it. The outcome demonstrated Donald Trump's decisions depend on freedom, and how the leader of the free world was so conflicting in his texts, particularly to the Palestinian side, and also how his choice reflected his domestic political concerns on a reasoned and realistic style of governance.

Likewise, Rababah and Hamdan (2019) compared and contrasted the addresses of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas before the UN General Assembly on the Gaza War (2014). The 'Ideological Rectangle' hypothesis of Van Dijk is used to investigate the group stratification of the 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy. In addition, Halliday's objectives of development grammar are used to investigate how the polarity of "Self" and "Other" is achieved by certain grammatical transitivity options. The findings revealed that the statements' depictions of "Self" and "Other" represent two conflicting ideologically-governed viewpoints on the Gaza war.

Although there is a multitude of studies that investigated political speeches in general and those related to Gaza wars in particular, no similar studies have been conducted on the official remarks released in Gaza War (2021) to the best of the researcher's knowledge. Therefore, this study fills this gap as it examines the representation of the Gaza War in the official remarks of Abu Obeida and Adrei.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This study is interpretive qualitative research. It provides a linguistic and cognitive investigation of the relevant linguistic features of the official remarks by Abu Obeida and Avichai Adraee during the Gaza War (2021).

### A. Data Collection

The official remarks released during Gaza War 2021 were collected. The transcripts of the spokesperson were obtained from the following weblinks. The links below are the videos of Abu Obeida's official remarks:

<https://youtu.be/G3ASxFnADWY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NHMDAjb3vU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpBu3G2O1qk>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j\\_1Y5a\\_t6lQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_1Y5a_t6lQ)

The links below are the videos of Avichai Adraee official's remarks:

<https://youtu.be/6R6jFbfjUHs>

[https://youtu.be/7TYVO-dVk\\_4](https://youtu.be/7TYVO-dVk_4)

<https://youtu.be/bh6hXBex8Cg>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/7iJEaiQN9K4?feature=share>

[https://youtu.be/GesajYr\\_5-k](https://youtu.be/GesajYr_5-k)

## B. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed on the basis of Van Dijk's (2006) ideological square, focusing on the two main discursive strategies, namely, "positive self-representation" and "negative other representation." It stresses people's tendency to present themselves as having positive attitudes while focusing on the other groups' negative attributes. Polarization is the overall discursive strategy through which many discursive sub-strategies are realized (Van Dijk, 2006).

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

During the Gaza War of 2021, each side of the conflict tried to use all available tools to strengthen its side, as one of these tools was the use of language in official speeches to convey certain ideas to the public. The themes generated in each spokesman's speeches are discussed separately in this section.

### A. Avichai Adraee's Official Remarks

The official remarks of the Israeli Defense Forces concerning Gaza War 2021 adopted two general strategies, namely, *emphasizing our good things* and *emphasizing their bad things*.

#### **Emphasizing Our Good Things/ Emphasizing Their Bad Things**

Israel seemed to praise itself not only as a strong power in the Middle East but also as a democratic and modern government. For example, it appears that it has modern weapons such as the metal dome, accurate rockets, and modern planes. In addition, Israel emphasized the strength of its soldiers, claiming that they cannot be conquered because they are well trained and armed with the strongest weapons. On the other hand, Israel tried to characterize the enemy with bad things using negative descriptions. The in-group-out-group polarization is created by using the pronouns: 'I', 'we', and 'us' against 'you', 'he', and 'him'. This generates an image of people coming together against one enemy who has different qualities that prevent him from being a member of the group. In this context, different themes were generated to stress these claims including war achievements.

#### **War Achievement**

Adraee used to announce their achievements in the war against Hamas. His official remarks claim that they attack Hamas's locations in Gaza and destroy them as a victorious power. Table 2 includes examples that highlight Israel's achievements.

TABLE 2  
ADRAEE'S STATEMENTS ON WAR ACHIEVEMENTS

No.	Source Statement	English Translation
1	حقق جيش الدفاع الاسرائيلي خلال ال ٢٤ ساعة الأخيرة إنجازات ميدانية تمثلت باستهداف أهداف تعد كنزاً استراتيجياً لحركة حماس.	During the last 24 hours, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) performed field achievements by striking targets considered a strategic treasure for Hamas.
2	واستهدف جيش الدفاع خلايا إرهابية كانوا بنون إطلاق صواريخ على إسرائيل فيما أحبط محاولات حماس بإرسال طائرات مسيرة.	The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) targeted terrorist cells who intended to launch missiles at Israel, while thwarting Hamas' attempts to send drones.
3	فاليوم أحبطنا محاولة لتنفيذ اعتداء عبر المجال البحري واستهدفنا النشطاء واستهدفنا الآلية وهي عبارة عن سفينة بحرية ذات قدرة على الغوص.	Today, we thwarted an attempt to carry out an attack across the sea. We targeted the activists, and we targeted the vehicle, which is a ship with diving capabilities.

Adraee intended to show their power and achievement in this war. Example (1) includes details on the Israeli achievements. It praises itself and claims that it has carried out this action. It has the power to defend itself and destroy its enemy (Hamas forces). At the same time, it describes Hamas with terrorism. The description of the events determined by the person's ideology. Out-group individuals are frequently described unfavorably, whereas in-group individuals are characterized neutrally or positively. People prefer to "mitigate unfavorable assessments of individuals of our own group and highlight the imputed bad features of Others," according to Van Dijk (2006, pp. 728-740).

In example (2) Israel intends to inform its citizens and the public that it targets Hamas because it intended to launch missiles at Israel. It has the power to destroy their missiles. Showing its achievement and power are considered one of its strategies in fighting the Palestinians in Gaza Strip. Here, the process of praising 'The Self' is clear. Moreover,

Hamas is described as terrorist which emphasizes that that Israeli soldiers have the right to attack Gaza Strip as a matter of self-defense. This may be intended to make people feel pity and sympathy towards Israeli citizens.

Example (3) shows Israeli power and ability to thwart any Hamas's attempts to attack Israel. This represents the positive sides of Israel being a strong entity that can protect its citizens, while it uses negative description of the outgroup members, being Hamas, associating it with words like *attack* to show their violence.

#### - Ongoing Actions

Israel used statements that showed its continuous actions against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip to denote its existence as a powerful government that is able to protect its citizens against ongoing threat. Table 3 includes examples that show Israeli ongoing actions during the war.

TABLE 3  
ADRAEE'S STATEMENTS ON ONGOING ACTIONS

No.	Source Statement	English Translation
4	نواصل إحباط المفاجآت التي أعدتها حماس.	We continue to thwart the surprises prepared by Hamas.
5	نحقق الإنجازات الميدانية ساعة بعد ساعة	We have field achievements hour after hour..
6	سنستمر في توجيه ضربات قاسية لهذه المنظمات كما حصل خلال ال ٢٤ ساعة الأخيرة	We will continue to direct harsh blows to these organizations, as happened during the last 24 hours.
7	في اليوم الثامن للعملية العسكرية ضد أوكار الإرهاب في قطاع غزة نواصل توجيه الضربات والصفعات إلى حركتي حماس والجهاد الإسلامي.	On the eighth day of the military operation against terrorist dens in the Gaza Strip, we continue to strike and slap at Hamas and Islamic Jihad.
8	نواصل اصطياد النشطاء.	We continue to hunt the activists.

Example (4) points to Israel's readiness to thwart their attacks even if they are carried out secretly or at night. Using the verb *continue* indicates that there is no hope for the Palestinians to succeed in their mission against Israel as it is always ready to ruin the violent attacks Hamas prepared. This represents Israel positively as an unbeatable power and implies that Hamas is no match to it.

In example (5), the spokesman continues showing Israeli power and strength. Lexicalization is utilized here represented in the choice of words that describes the actions they are taking against Hamas as achievements. The reference to time is also important as it indicates the intensity of the ongoing efforts Israel is exerting to defeat Hamas.

Example (6) is a statement that indicates Israeli victorious battles during Gaza War. As he claims, achieving victories all the time is a continuous action that Israelis should be proud of using the verb *continue*. This makes Israeli feel safe during the War.

During Gaza War 2021, the spokesman of Israeli forces described Hamas and Islamic Jihad that they stay in their terrorist dens. They look like cowards who are afraid of Israeli forces and strikes. This is emphasized in example (7). In example (8), Israeli forces used the word hunt the activists. It must be noted that lexicalization of negative attributes was utilized using terminology used normally with animals, namely, *dens* and *hunt*.

#### - War justifications

Some statements were meant to justify the war against the Palestinians as demonstrated in Table 4.

TABLE 4  
ADRAEE'S STATEMENTS ON WAR JUSTIFICATIONS

No.	Source Statement	English Translation
9	يواصل جيش الدفاع الإسرائيلي شن سلسلة غارات على قطاع غزة ردا على الاعتداءات الصاروخية المستمرة من داخل القطاع باتجاه البلدات الإسرائيلية والمتمثلة بمئات القذائف الصاروخية.	The IDF continues to launch a series of raids on Gaza Strip in response to the continuous rocket attacks from inside the Strip towards Israeli towns, represented by hundreds of rockets.
10	نحن مستمرون في التصدي لكل الاعتداءات الإرهابية بيد من حديد حتى استعادة الاستقرار والأمن لمواطنينا وسيادتنا	We will continue to confront all terrorist attacks with an iron hand until stability and security are restored to our citizens and sovereignty.

In examples (9), the spokesman of IDF claims that Hamas forces continue attacking Israeli towns with their rockets all the time. Thus, Israeli forces are forced to launch a series of raids on Gaza Strip as a reaction. This may make people feel pity and sympathy towards Israeli citizens as all what they do is a matter of self-defense. They might also support Israel because they, according to their official remarks, believe that they have the right to live peacefully in their own country (Israel). Number game is utilized here by referring to the number of rockets fired by Hamas towards Israel.

Example (10) indicates that Hamas is responsible for starting this war, and Israel's actions are only meant to restore stability and calmness to the citizens. This manifests that Israeli forces have the right to attack Hamas as it fired some rockets at Israeli areas where the innocent Israeli citizens live. Here, Israeli attacks at Gaza Strip should be regarded as a process of self-defense to get its security back.

#### - Threats

Israeli government used some statements to threaten Hamas as a mean of imposing Israeli control and ideology. The following examples show Israeli threats against Hamas and Islamic Jihad's forces.

TABLE 5  
ADRAEE'S STATEMENTS ON THREATS

No.	Source Statement	English Translation
11	فلا مكان آمن تحت الأرض لقادة ونشطاء حماس والجهاد الإسلامي.	A safe place on earth for leaders, activists and Islamic Jihad.
12	حماس تتحمل مسؤولية ما يجري في قطاع غزة وينطلق منه وستتحمل تداعيات اعتداءاتها ضد سيادة إسرائيل ومواطنيه.	Hamas bears the responsibility for what is happening in and stemming from Gaza Strip, and it will bear the repercussions of its attacks against the sovereignty of Israel and its citizens.

Example (11) is regarded as a threat to those activists and Islamic Jihad's soldiers that Israeli forces are able to strike them even if they hide themselves under the earth. Similarly, example (12) represents Israeli spokesman threatening Hamas who fight against the Israeli citizens. The choice of words used shows the strength of Israel that it can threaten its enemy.

#### B. Abu-Obaida's Official Remarks

Abu-Obeidah's official remarks were in response to Israeli official remarks that justify their attacks at Gaza Strip. Abu-Obeidah's speeches have to do with some themes such as the achievement, self-defense, ongoing actions, glory, and other themes that are clarified as follows:

#### **Emphasizing Our Good Things/ Emphasizing Their Bad Things**

Abu-Obeidah's remarks demonstrate similar themes to the ones delivered by Adree.

#### - **War achievements**

Abu-Obeidah included in his remarks some statements that praise their achievements in the war against Israel as seen in Table 6.

TABLE 6  
ABU-OBAIDA'S STATEMENTS ON WAR ACHIEVEMENTS

No.	Source Statement	English Translation
13	فبالرغم من فارق القوة الكبير بيننا وبينكم في الإمكانيات العسكرية إلا إننا وجهنا بعون الله ضربات صاروخية هائلة لم تجرؤ دول وأنظمة منذ النكبة ان توجه عشرها لكم.	Despite the great difference in the field of strength between us and you in terms of military capabilities, we have, with God's help, launched massive missile strikes that countries and regime since the Nakba have not dared to direct a tenth of them to you.
14	لقد تمكنا بعون الله من إذلال العدو وكيانه الهش وجيشه الهمي.	With God's help, we were able to humiliate the enemy, its fragile entity, and its barbaric army.
15	من غزة يطلق في هذه اللحظات صاروخ عياش ٢٥٠ بمدى اكبر من ٢٥٠ كم وبقوة تدميرية هي الأكبر بفضل الله.	At this moment, the Ayash 250 Rocket is launched from Gaza, with a range of more than 250 km, and with the greatest destructive power, thanks to God.

The spokesman of Hamas Movement praises their achievements in Table 6. In example (13), he used a counterfactual statement emphasizing that although there is a great difference in capabilities, Hamas still could launch rockets and missiles at the Israeli forces. The lexical items he used such as *no one dared* and *massive missiles* points to the power of Hamas that could be incomparable to other countries.

In example (14), negative words were used to refer to Israel such as *humiliate*, *fragile* and *barbaric* emphasizing the weakness of Israel and the cruelty its army has against the Palestinians.

In example (15), Abu-Obeidah stresses his military achievement in this war by stating that 250 destructive missiles were targeted at Israel. Using the number game may be a means to spread panic and fear among the Israelis taking into account the hundreds of missiles being rocketed at Israel.

#### - **War justifications**

Starting a war without reasons is not reasonable. There should be war justifications for fighting someone. Hamas has its own war justifications to defend itself against Israeli forces. The following are Abu-Obeidah's justifications demonstrated in Table 7.

TABLE 7  
ABU-OBAIDA'S STATEMENTS ON WAR JUSTIFICATIONS

No.	Source Statement	English Translation
16	واليوم نخوض إحدى هذه المعارك معركة سيف القدس التي جاءت استكمالاً لانتفاضة أهلنا في القدس والأقصى وانتصارا لحي الشيخ جراح المهدي بالتهجير والتهميد واستجابة لصرخات أهلنا في ساحات وميادين المدينة المقدسة.	Today, we fight against our enemy. It is the battle of Jerusalem, the battle of Jerusalem, the battle of Jerusalem. This battle is for our people in Jerusalem, Al-Aqsa, and as a victory for the Jarrah neighborhood which is threatened with displacement and Judaization. This battle is for the sake of our people's cries in the crowded city squares and cities.
17	يخرج هذا الصاروخ الآن نصرة للأقصى وجزئا من ردنا على اغتيال قادتنا ومهندسينا الإبطال.	This missile is now considered a victory for Al-Aqsa and a part of our response to the assassination of our leaders and engineers.

In example (16), a justification is given for fighting Israel. It is a response to the cries of people in Jarrah neighborhood and the Israeli attack on Alaqsa Mosque. Example (17) states that the war is a reaction to assassinating the Palestinian leaders. Such justifications mobilize people's attitudes with the Palestinians making the war against Israel a matter of self-defense.

#### - Glorification

Glorification of one's country is essential for every nation. Hamas and Islamic Jihad glorify their abilities in front of their citizens and Israel and feel proud of their military actions and courageous attributes as shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8  
ABU-OBAIDA'S STATEMENTS ON GLORIFICATION

No.	Source Statement	English Translation
18	ولقد شاهدتم خلال الأيام الماضية يا أبناء شعبنا المرابط الصابر بعضاً مما أعدناه وراقبناه في سنوات طويلة لم نقف فيها ساعة عن الإعداد لذلك حصون العدو ومعاقله.	During the past few days, our patient people, you have seen some of what we have prepared and watched for many years, during which we did not stop for an hour in preparing to demolish the enemy's fortresses and strongholds.
19	فقرار قصف تل أبيب والقدس وديمونة وعسقلان والسدود وبنز السبع وما قبلها وما بعدها من مدننا المحتلة أسهل علينا من شربة الماء.	The decision to bomb Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Dimona, Ashkelon, the dams, Beersheba, and before and after our occupied cities is easier for us than drinking water.
20	فهل أرهبتنا الاغتيالات يوماً أو هل شاهدتم طفلاً فلسطينياً يخاف من جبروتكم وهل أوقفتم يوماً مقاومتنا بعدوان أو حصار أو دمار.	Have you ever been intimidated by assassinations? Have you seen a Palestinian child who is afraid of your tyranny? And have you ever stopped our resistance with aggression, siege or destruction?

In example (18), Abu-Obeidah addresses his people by describing them with patient and emphasizing that they ready to confront the enemy (Israeli forces). Such positive expressions assure the Palestinians that they can fight Israeli forces any time and are ready to demolish the Israeli fortresses.

In example (19), the spokesman of Hamas uses a metaphor in which he likens striking Israel to drinking water to indicate how easy this mission is. This may indirectly threaten Israel and spread panic among its citizens.

Example (20) shows that Abu-Obeidah ironically asks a question that shows Palestinians' courage and represents them as being unafraid of the assassinations, tyranny, or destruction caused by Israel. Even children are not scared by what Israel does which may indicate its weakness and cowardice.

#### - Threats

Threats are considered a main technique in war and were utilized in Abu-Obaida's speeches as can be seen in Table 9.

TABLE 9  
ABU-OBAIDA'S STATEMENTS ON THREATS

No.	Source Statement	English Translation
21	وان ضرباتنا ستكون حاضرة متى عدتم للعوان او تماديتم فيه.	Our strikes will be ready whenever you return to the aggression or persist in it.
21	وعلقنا هذه الضربة الصاروخية لنرقب سلوك العدو حتى الساعة الثانية من فجر الجمعة.	We suspended this missile strike in order to monitor the behavior of the enemy until two o'clock in the morning on Friday.
22	وقد اعدنا لكم أصنافاً من الموت ستجعلكم تلعنون أنفسكم.	We have prepared for you different types of death that will make you curse yourselves.

Examples (20) and (21) are considered threats directed to Israeli forces in case they attack the Palestinians again. Such statements point to Hamas' strength that it is completely ready to respond if the enemy tries to attack. Example (23) includes a frightening threat considering the lexical items used such as *different types of death* which would function as way to spread fear among the Israeli soldiers.

#### - Future aims

Future aims are a positive mean of sending a message to all citizens of Palestine that Hamas will greet and remember the righteous martyrs of the battles against the enemy as shown in Table 10.

TABLE 10  
ABU-OBAIDA'S STATEMENTS ON FUTURE AIMS

No.	Source Statement	English Translation
23	تحية لشهداء معركة سيف القدس الإبرار وعهدا لهم إن نواصل الطريق الذي بدأوه.	A salute to the righteous martyrs of the battle of Saif Alquds and a pledge to them to continue the path they started.
24	وإنما النصر صبر ساعة وسيعلم الذين ظلموا أي منقلب ينقلبون.	Victory is the patience of an hour, and those tyranny individuals will know their bad fate later.
25	يا أبناء شعبنا ويا جماهير امتنا إن هذا الكيان الضعيف يمكن أن يهزم بل سيهزم يقينا ويندثر حتماً لأنه كيان قائم على غش وباطل وظلم وعدوان.	O sons of our people and oh masses of our nation, this weak entity can be defeated, but will certainly be defeated and inevitably destroyed because it is an entity based on fraud, falsehood, injustice and aggression.

Example (23) shows a future aim that has to do with the process of respecting those righteous martyrs of the battle of Saif Alquds and a pledge to them to continue the path they started. It is a matter of evaluating them all the time.



Example (24) is a future pledge that the Palestinians will achieve victory in the war against Israel. In example (25), the spokesman of Hamas assures that the Israelis will be removed and defeated one day. This is an indication that is expected by the spokesman of Hamas Movement.

#### - Enemy's Actions

In Gaza War 2021, Hamas Movement emphasized Israeli bad behaviors during this war as shown in Table 11.

TABLE 11  
ABU-OBAIDA'S STATEMENTS ON ENEMY'S ACTIONS

No.	Source Statement	English Translation
26	لقد شاهد كل العالم حجم الخزي والعار لهذا الكيان الذي تنتج قيادته بقصفها الأبراج السكنية.	The whole world witnessed the shame and disgrace of this entity whose leadership boasts of bombing residential towers.
27	وتفاخر إسرائيل بقصف المنشآت المدنية وقتل الأطفال والنساء كاهداف مشروعة وانجازات عظيمة.	Israel boasts of bombing civilian facilities and killing children and women as legitimate targets and great achievements.

In example (26), Abu-Obeidah tries to convince other people how Israeli forces bomb residential towers in the Gaza Strip by using lexical items that show this. Their actions are not considered good achievements, but they are actually shameful and disgraced of their entity. Example (27) indicates Israeli destruction of civilian buildings and killing of women and children. These actions are not legitimate targets nor great achievements, but they are actually cruel and barbaric. Such statements victimize the Palestinians and mobilize people against Israel.

#### C. "Us" Vs. "Them" Dichotomy

The pronoun 'they' is used extravagantly by politicians as a sign of reinforcing the independence of their identities by essentially expressing who they are not. Intentionally, politicians use the plural pronouns of 'they' to deeply root the schism and press on the idea of the identity and the group membership (Al-Tarawneh, 2019). For example, the Israeli spokesperson Avichai Adraee used the plural pronoun 'they' to address Hamas soldiers for the sake of showing the ideology of 'us' versus 'them'. Finally, both candidates were skilled in using the pronoun "they" so as to distance themselves from their rivals. For instance, Avichai Adraee announced the following statement in Gaza War (2021): "**They** (Palestinian soldiers) are terrorists. **They** deserve death. **They** tried hard to harm us. **We** are always ready to fight **them** and destroy them". The Israeli spokesperson's statements used the pronouns: 'we' and 'us' in order to indicate the Israeli power and strength. He intended to show the power of Israeli defense forces. For instance, "**our** forces are always ready to fight and strike the enemies". They attempted to linguistically modify the pronouns they often used influence negatively their adversaries and sound more compelling, which seemed to represent their collective identity, solidarity, and personality. **We are, for example, constantly prepared to battle and kill them.**" On the other hand, the Israeli spokesman used the pronoun "they" in order to indicate to his enemy.

Similarly, Abu-Obeidah, the spokesperson of Hamas forces, used the pronouns: 'us' and 'they'. He used the pronoun 'we' in order to show Hamas' strength and power. He also used the pronoun 'they' in order to indicate to his enemy. For instance, He announced that "**Our** people's battle with the hateful occupation continues since **they** set foot on this land, and Jerusalem has always been the focus of the conflict. It is the icon of the uprisings and the detonator of revolutions. Today, **we** are waging one of these battles, the Battle of the Sword of Jerusalem. **They** are our enemies, and **they** should be defeated one day." This remark shows the meanings of 'we', 'us', and 'our'. These pronouns mean that the Palestinians have the power and the strength to defend their nation. The pronouns: 'they' and 'them' refer to enemies.

The speaker's attempt to classify people into in-group and out-group is the focus of this method. On the basis of the formation of 'us' and 'them', discursive techniques are implicated in the notions of positive and negative acts. The discursive official strategies used by the two spokesmen of Hamas forces and Israeli Defense Forces can persuade the other individuals and nations to believe what they intend to say. Their strategies are used to obtain certain goals such as political support, weapons, positive point of view, and psychological support. It should be noted that the discursive construction of the "self" and the "other" is said to become accentuated in the cases of intense conflicts, or the case of threatening forces, i.e. when people need to defend themselves by establishing a dichotomy that affirms who they are and indicates who the others are.

#### V. CONCLUSION

During the Gaza War of 2021, each side of the conflict tried to use all available tools to strengthen its side, as one of these tools was the use of language in official speeches to convey certain ideas to the public. The two spokesmen of Hamas and Israeli Defense Forces used self-defense strategy as a mean of persuading their citizens and other people all over the world that they are right, but the other one is wrong. Israeli spokesman tried to persuade the others that Israel has the right to defend itself, while Hamas is the enemy. At the same time, the spokesman of Hamas Movement used the same strategies to defend himself and his people indicating that the Israeli soldiers are terrorists and they occupied their lands. Thus, they should defend themselves.

People are classified into categories based on their beliefs and actions. When individuals are categorized, negative or positive qualities are assigned to them. These qualities generated different themes within the discourses under study, the most prominent in Adraee's speeches were war achievements. Other themes were also highlighted including ongoing actions, war justifications, and threats.

On the other hand, Abu-Obaida used several themes to convey his ideas during his speeches, the most prominent of which was self-glorification in addition to many other themes such as war justifications, war achievements, threats, glorification and future aims.

Many of Van Dijk's discursive strategies were used to analyze the remarks such as metaphor, disclaimer, lexicalization and number game. On the basis of the formation of 'us' and 'them', discursive strategies are implicated in the notions of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. The above discursive strategies that use the pronouns: 'We', 'our' and 'us' indicate to positive signals, while the pronouns: 'they', 'their' and 'them' indicate to negative signals. Most of these discursive strategies serve the intended goals.

A universal awareness of tolerance and harmonious cohabitation among peoples from different places is required. It's also critical to denounce and combat all forms of extremism and violence. To this purpose, more study on all types of prejudice, injustice, and racism is essential to preserve human lives by preventing terrorism provocation and ensuring equal treatment, justice, liberty, and equity.

This study was conducted on the official remarks released by Hamas and Israel during Gaza War 2021. Future studies are recommended to investigate other speeches delivered by spokespersons of different parties in other wars.

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# Assessment Tools of EFL Courses via Blackboard: Faculty Members' and Students' Perceptions

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**Abstract**—This study aims at examining the assessment tools used on Blackboard from the perceptions of students and faculty members. For this purpose, two questionnaires were designed and applied to 102 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students and 31 faculty members to measure their perceptions of the assessment tools on Blackboard, the self-efficacy of the EFL students and faculty members in using Blackboard assessment tools, and the challenges they face during the process. Results have shown that most faculty members and students prefer conducting assessment on Blackboard. Results also revealed that faculty members are aware of the assessment tools on Blackboard and feel confident when using them. Besides, both students and faculty members have positive attitudes toward the effectiveness of the assessment tools on Blackboard. However, they believe that there are some challenges related to technical issues, and some EFL students have mentioned that they face difficulties related to the essay tests on Blackboard.

**Index Terms**—EFL, blackboard, assessment tools, students' perceptions

## I. INTRODUCTION

Learning is an integrative process with many required aspects that complete each other to achieve objectives. One of the main aspects of learning is assessment, which is known as the systematic collection, use of data, and review concerning educational programs to improve student learning and development (Palomba & Banta, 1999). When conducting an assessment, a teacher should examine various aspects to determine students' final grades such as students' engagement, motivation, presentation, performance, portfolio, homework, and the mid-semester and final-semester grades (Brown, 2004).

During the spread of COVID-19, technology, including Blackboard, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom, has evolved to be an essential educational tool. These platforms have replaced traditional face-to-face classes. They've been used to conduct all teaching and evaluation activities (Altameemy et al., 2020). Many universities have chosen Blackboard as a Learning Management System (LMS) because of its ease of use, ubiquity, and accessibility. Learners are motivated to participate in online learning activities such as discussion forums, and writing assignments (Mohsen & Shafeeq, 2014).

Blackboard-based education encourages students to get involved in the online learning environment through discussion forums, getting feedback from students and teachers, and writing assignments (Mohsen & Shafeeq, 2014). Moreover, Blackboard-based education can evolve into constructivist, learner-centered learning, when rooted in sound standards of pedagogical structure (Maslamani, 2013). The purpose of Blackboard-based education is to ensure more engagement and participation among students. This purpose is not easy to achieve in the case of face-to-face instruction, which tend to be comparatively unbalanced with one or two individuals dominating the discussions within the class (Almelhi, 2014; Al-Jabry et al., 2014 & Hismanoglu, 2012).

The concept of assessment refers to the systematic process of using and documenting empirical data on the skill, knowledge, aptitude, beliefs, and attitudes to improve education and enhance student learning (Nelson & Dawson, 2014). The process of assessment is quite essential for teachers as it offers feedback on teaching efficiency. Teachers can also assess their students to determine their strengths and weaknesses as well as grade students' learning by monitoring and offering feedback on their progress (Clements & Cord, 2013). Lately, modern methods recommend evaluating students' potential learning process rather than assessing their learning knowledge. Assessing them by using conventional methods has isolated and limited their access to other individuals and resources (Guàrdia et al., 2017).

E-assessment on Blackboard has a variety of tools and allows for a wide range of question types. Multiple-choice, yes/no, and fill-in-the-blank questions are examples. All of the exercises stated above are scored automatically, and there are also free-response questions that can be graded using key phrases or rubrics (Altameemy et al., 2020). Rubrics

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establish the criteria for the teacher's expectations of students' performances. They assist students in self-reflection and evaluation (Moskal, 2003). Moreover, Blackboard assessment offers a wide range of opportunities to enhance assessment including the frequency of assessment, skills practice, and knowledge assessment. These elements also increase the feedback to teachers and students as well as extending the scope of assessment approaches to increase consistency and objectivity (Altameemy & Alrefae, 2021). The current study seeks to examine the perceptions of faculty members and students regarding methods of assessment available on the Blackboard learning system.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Blackboard is a known example among online platforms, which supports learning and has different tools to assess students' progress. Students use the Blackboard system to access course content and materials, complete assignments, quizzes and tests, communicate with other students through discussion forums, and receive notifications and reminders. On the other hand, instructors can use the Blackboard Instructor App to grade assignments, quizzes and tests; upload content, and send messages to students (Shdaifat & Obeidallah, 2019). This learning system has made learning more comfortable for both instructors and learners (Alruwais et al., 2018).

### A. *Students' Perception of Using Online Assessment: Benefits and Challenges*

Starting with the benefits, many researchers have analyzed students' perceptions of e-assessments, and they have found positive perceptions regarding the system's ability to provide students with immediate feedback on their assignments, quizzes and tests (Sarmiento, 2017; Valdez & Maderal, 2021). Immediate feedback increases student motivation, learning level and student performance. In addition, it prevents students from thinking that their incorrect responses are actually correct, and reduces student susceptibility to repeat incorrect answers. Immediate feedback also allows students to identify their weaknesses and strengths, and encourages them to continue to improve (Alruwais et al., 2018; Baha & Asil, 2018; Seifert & Feliks, 2019).

Another benefit of e-Assessment is time saving (Appiah & Tonder, 2018). Online assessment provides students with more flexibility in timing and location, it breaks the time and space constraints. It also helps students in remote and isolated areas to learn and have tests in their locations (Aburumman, 2021; Alruwais et al., 2018; Cai, 2022; Jordan, 2013; Osuji, 2012; Seifert & Feliks, 2019).

E-assessment allows learners to compare their performance with others, thus encouraging them to exchange and communicate with others through the learning process (Kabir & Siddiq, 2020; Prakash & Saini, 2012), and this plays an important role in motivating students to learn, and opens a new horizon of learning for them (Amelung et al., 2011).

In addition, e-assessment is considered as an important resource for online learning environments (Jordan, 2009), as it encourages skills practicing, allows students to participate in problem-solving which promotes deep learning. There are also financial benefits such as cost reduction of assessment (James, 2016). Online assessment also provides randomization of exam questions; repeating tests several times and it doesn't affect students' grades negatively (Betlej, 2013; Mcmillan & Spivey, 2014). Online marking through e-assessment allows using automation in marking process, then students don't suffer from human error anymore and feel secure about their grades (Sorensen, 2013). In addition, online assessment creates a judgment-free environment that allows learners to make mistakes freely, after that they are given opportunities to try again; hence they achieve improvement (Jordan, 2013).

On the other hand, there are some challenges that students face in the context of e-assessment; the most important of them are technological infrastructure problems and poor connections which could obstruct e-assessment process and affect its feasibility (James, 2016; Kiennert et al., 2017). In addition, more training on new technologies and their use in assessment is required (Cai, 2022).

Another challenge is identity misuse through cheating and impersonation which is related to recognition of the student's identity in case of being used by someone else (Kiennert et al., 2017). This may happen through identity hacking and plagiarism in e-assessment. As a result of this, some information could be disclosed to unauthorized parties, and cheating happens and then results may be unfair (Hillier, 2014; Mellar et al., 2018).

Moreover, Online assessment requires students to be digital literate and have particular abilities; such as typing, using numerous screens, and mouse navigation (Mojarrad et al., 2014). Using numerous screens and reading text on computer screens may cause some people to feel more tired than reading on paper. Some students also find it difficult to display some items on the screen because they need to scroll horizontally and vertically to fit a complete picture on the page, this makes students feel distracted, which negatively affect their achievements (Cano & Ion, 2017).

The last challenge is inequality, as some students with higher levels of performance achieve better results in online assessment tests than in traditional assessment tests, in contrast to other peers (Appiah & Tonder, 2018). It is evident from this that high performing students adapt easily to new assessment methods. Hence it can be said that online assessments may not be fair to low performing students because they may feel that it takes a lot of effort and time to complete the process of online assessment (Appiah & Tonder, 2018).

### B. *Teachers' Perception of Using Online Assessments: Benefits and Challenges*

Using technology in supporting assessment can be very useful and has a lot of benefits for teachers and faculty members. Firstly, e-assessment plays an important role in improving teachers' level of monitoring (Wicaksonoa &

Anam, 2022). It also allows them to measure students' progress accurately, and observe students in order to find the misconceptions, which are not clear for the students and solve them before the final exam (Ellaway & Masters, 2008; Sindre & Vegedla, 2015).

E-Assessment enables teachers and faculty members to mark automatically (Jordan, 2013) which reduces work load, and eliminates human error (Dai, 2016). Another benefit of e-assessment is saving teachers' time (Kundu & Bej, 2021), as it enables teachers to accommodate with a large number of students at the same time. Besides, e-assessment helps teachers to spend the time of manual marking in the development of other activities (Howe, 2020; Sorensen, 2013).

In addition, e-assessment reduces paper use, which saves money (Aburumman, 2021) and plays an important role in keeping the environment friendly. In addition, e-assessment helps teachers to improve quality of feedback through reducing the conflict between instructors' feedback practice and students' expectations through tailored feedback (Osuji, 2012). Finally, e-assessment provides more accurate results than paper tests through adaptive testing, which change the test difficulty depending on the user response, by increasing the difficulty if the student responded correctly and decreasing the difficulty if he chose the wrong answer (Alruwais et al., 2018).

Despite having many benefits, e-assessment has some challenges for teachers that obstruct its wide application and acceptance (Kundu & Bej, 2021) such as the difficulty in marking essay questions as the majority of e-assessment systems are not configured for marking open ended questions (Aburumman, 2021).

Security is one of the most significant challenges in an e-assessment system (Miguel et al., 2015). If it is not observed and checked, a lot of problems will appear. As security may be hacked as a result of students' access from different devices and browsers, that's why some institutions refuse to implement online assessments for high stake examinations (Brink & Lautenbach, 2011). Security includes passwords or encrypted smart cards, Internet protocol addresses; and live remote monitoring of students using webcams (Crisp, 2011).

Cheating and plagiarism represent an important challenge for teachers in e-assessment process (Mariam, 2021). Academic dishonesty is considered as an important challenge of e-assessment. It is really difficult for teachers to prevent cheating during exams (Momeni, 2022; Ramazan, 2017).

Perhaps one of the most important challenges is dealing with students who have limited information about communication technologies (Alruwais et al., 2018). When students encounter technical difficulties, their test performance is affected, and thus technical difficulties could hinder students' participation in e-assessment (Abduh, 2021; Kostaki & Karayianni, 2022).

#### *Research questions:*

1. *What are the Faculty members' perceptions of using assessment tools on Blackboard?*
  - A. *How efficient is the faculty member in using the assessment tools on Blackboard?*
  - B. *How effective are the assessment tools in Blackboard from the faculty members' perception?*
  - C. *What are the challenges of the assessment tools on Blackboard that faculty members face?*
2. *What are the students' perceptions of using assessment tools on Blackboard?*
  - A. *How efficient is the student in using the assessment tools on the Blackboard?*
  - B. *How effective are the assessment tools in Blackboard from the student's perception?*
  - C. *What are the challenges of the assessment tools on Blackboard that students face?*

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### *A. Research Design*

The descriptive-analytical method is adopted.

#### *B. Participants*

A sample of (31) EFL faculty members and (102) EFL students from different levels were randomly selected from English department at Jouf University, KSA.

#### *C. Data Collection Tools*

Two questionnaires were prepared one for faculty members and one for students.

The Faculty members' questionnaire consists of:

Section	Number of Items
Self-efficacy	6 Items
The Benefits of assessment tools on Blackboard	8 Items
The Challenges of assessment tools on Blackboard	6 Items

The students' questionnaire consists of:

Section	Number of Items
Self-efficacy	5 Items
The Benefits of assessment tools on Blackboard	7 Items
The Challenges of assessment tools on Blackboard	4 Items

Likert scale was used with degrees from 1 (Strongly disagree), 2(Disagree), 3(Neutral), 4(Agree), 5(Strongly agree).

#### D. Validity of the Questionnaires

##### (a). Construct Validity

The initial versions of the questionnaires were submitted to a group of specialists to ascertain the extent to which each item was related to the section it belongs to and also to check the clarity and integrity of the formulation of the items. Modifications were made based on the comments of the panel of jury. The Faculty members' questionnaire in its final form consists of (20) items, and the students' questionnaire in its final form consists of (16) items.

##### (b). The Internal Consistency of the Questionnaires

We calculated internal consistency by calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient between each item and the section it belongs to as shown in the following tables:

##### 1. The Faculty Members' Questionnaire

TABLE 1  
PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENT BETWEEN EACH ITEM AND EACH SECTION

Number of Items	correlation coefficient	Number of Items	correlation coefficient
1	.712**	11	.686**
2	.753**	12	.809**
3	.626**	13	.686**
4	.788**	14	.759**
5	.794**	15	.635**
6	.700**	16	.668**
7	.619**	17	.831**
8	.869**	18	.634**
9	.810**	19	.693**
10	.688**	20	.728**

From the above table, we conclude that all Pearson correlation coefficients between each item and the section it belongs to is significant. (where the significant value is more than (0.5) which indicates a high degree of validity of the internal consistency).

##### 2. The Students' Questionnaire

TABLE 2  
PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENT BETWEEN EACH ITEM AND EACH SECTION

Number of Items	correlation coefficient	Number of Items	correlation coefficient
1	.626**	9	.787**
2	.757**	10	.793**
3	.727**	11	.729**
4	.786**	12	.887**
5	.851**	13	.910**
6	.762**	14	.764**
7	.651**	15	.585**
8	.768**	16	.897**

From the above table, we conclude that all Pearson correlation coefficients between each item and the section it belongs to are significant (where the significant value is more than 0.5 which indicates a high degree of validity of the internal consistency).

##### 3. Reliability of Questionnaires

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaires, Cronbach's Alpha test was used, as shown in the following tables:

##### (1). The Faculty Members' Questionnaire

TABLE 3  
CRONBACH'S ALPHA COEFFICIENTS

Section	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Self-efficacy	6	.913
The Benefits of assessment tools on Blackboard	8	.916
The Challenges of assessment tools on Blackboard	6	.922
Total degree	20	.918

From the above table, we conclude that the reliability coefficients value of all sections of the questionnaire were high, and the total degree of reliability of The Faculty members' questionnaire was (.918)

##### (2). The Students' Questionnaire

TABLE 4  
CRONBACH'S ALPHA COEFFICIENTS

section	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Self-efficacy	5	.894
The Benefits of assessment tools on Blackboard	7	.902
The Challenges of assessment tools on Blackboard	4	.982
Total degree	16	.973

From the above table, we conclude that the reliability coefficients value of all sections of questionnaire were high, and the total degree of reliability of the students' questionnaire was (.973)

#### E. Statistical Analysis

The Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS version 26) was used.

To determine the length of the cells of the fifth Likert scale (lower and upper limits) used in the study, the range (5-1 = 4) was calculated and then divided by the number of scale cells to get the correct cell length, i.e. (4/5 = 0.80) after that this value was added to the lowest value in the scale to determine the upper limit of this cell, and thus the length of the cells became as shown in the following table:

Weighted average	1-1.80	1.81-2.60	2.61-3.40	3.41-4.20	4.21-5
Agreement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

## IV. RESULTS

To answer the questions of the study, the mean, the standard deviation, and the ranks were used.

### A. What Are the Faculty Members' Perceptions of Using Assessment Tools on Blackboard?

#### (a). How Efficient Is the Faculty Member in Using the Assessment Tools on the Blackboard?

TABLE 5  
THE MEAN, THE STANDARD DEVIATION, AND THE RANKS FOR THE FIRST SECTION IN THE FACULTY MEMBERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

No	Statement	Weighted average	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	I'm aware of all the assessment tools on the Blackboard	4.39	.558	1
2	I can use all the assessment tools on Blackboard easily	4.29	.529	2
3	I feel confident when I use all the assessment tools on the Blackboard	4.13	.670	3
4	I have received enough training in Blackboard assessment tools	3.58	.992	6
5	I can create my rubrics on the Blackboard	3.77	.956	5
6	I feel that my evaluation of my students on the Blackboard is fair	3.87	.824	4
General mean		4.01	0.75	

From the above table, we conclude that the faculty members agreed that they are efficient in using assessment tools on the Blackboard with a mean (4.01), and standard deviation (0.75) low value, indicating homogeneous opinions of the study sample in the items of this section as well as the total. Item (1) came in the first rank with a (4.39) mean. While in the last rank came item (4) with a mean of (3.58).

#### (b). How Effective Are the Assessment Tools in Blackboard From the Faculty Member's Perception?

TABLE 6  
THE MEAN, THE STANDARD DEVIATION, AND THE RANKS FOR THE SECOND SECTION IN THE FACULTY MEMBERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

No	Statement	Weighted average	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	I think Safe Assign is very helpful to me as an instructor to prevent plagiarism	4.00	.931	6
2	I use Journals as an assessment tool for different purposes	2.94	.892	8
3	I can easily provide my students with feedback on the Blackboard	4.42	.765	2
4	I use different types of questions on Blackboard tests	4.10	.870	4
5	I think Blackboard has different types of tests that are effective	4.03	.706	5
6	The automatic scoring makes the assessment process easier for me	4.29	.783	3
7	I think the grade center is very organized and it has so many advantages for me as an instructor	4.55	.568	1
8	I think all the assessment tools on Blackboard are necessary for me	3.90	.746	7
General mean		4.03	0.78	

From the above table, we conclude that the faculty members agreed that the assessment tools used in Blackboard are effective with a mean (4.03) and standard deviation (0.78) low value, indicating homogeneous opinions of the study sample in the items of this section. In the first rank came item (7) with a mean (4.55). While in the last rank came item (2) with a mean of (2.94).

To get more insight, an open-ended item asked faculty members to write any benefits of the assessment tools on Blackboard. Analysis of participants' responses resulted in the following list of benefits ordered according to their frequency:

- Quick and saves time
- Easy to announce to students
- The ability to ask subjective questions
- The ability to revisit students' attempts to track their progress.
- It is an easier means of assessment and communication with students.
- Students can submit assignments electronically and work with various built-in Web-based tools such as e-portfolios, wikis, and blogs.
- Students can assess their peers and self-assess.
- Ability to download all the assessments on desktop to keep a copy of the entire tasks with their scores and feedback.
- Helpful for managing the assessment of a huge number of students.

(c). *What Are the Challenges of the Assessment Tools on Blackboard That Faculty Members Have Faced?*

TABLE 7  
THE MEAN, THE STANDARD DEVIATION, AND THE RANKS FOR THE THIRD SECTION IN THE FACULTY MEMBERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

No	Statement	Weighted average	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	I think some assessment tools on the Blackboard are difficult to use	3.94	.893	1
2	I'm not familiar with using some assessment Tools on the Blackboard	2.74	.999	4
3	Some technical issues and connecting problems may spoil the test	3.68	.945	3
4	I can't control students' cheating on the Blackboard	3.87	.922	2
5	I do not trust the automatic scoring on the Blackboard	2.19	.873	5
General mean		3.28	0.93	

From the above table, we conclude that the faculty members are neutral about that the challenges of the assessment tools on Blackboard with a mean of (3.28) and standard deviation (0.93) low value, indicating homogeneous opinions of the study sample on the items of this section. In the first rank came item (1) with a (3.94) mean, while in the last rank came item (5) with a mean of (2.19).

To get more insight an open-ended item asked faculty members to write any challenges they have faced in the Blackboard assessment. Analysis of participants' responses resulted in the following list of challenges ordered according to frequency:

- Inability to process all types of files like pages from Apple products.
- Difficulty in ensuring the authenticity of the work submitted by students (assignments, quizzes, discussions)
- Providing feedback is a cumbersome task.
- Sometimes it is hard to design tests or discussion threads and manage the students' responses.
- Age significantly affects faculty members' perceptions of using Blackboard in teaching and learning.
- A few of the students are not familiar with the grading on Blackboard, especially first-year students.

B. *What Are the Students' Perceptions of Using Assessment Tools on Blackboard?*

(a). *How Efficient Is the Student in Using the Assessment Tools on the Blackboard?*

TABLE 8  
THE MEAN, THE STANDARD DEVIATION, AND THE RANKS FOR THE FIRST SECTION IN THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

No	Statement	Weighted average	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	I feel confident using Blackboard to take a variety of online tests including essay and objective tests	4.08	1.002	4
2	I feel comfortable uploading my homework on the Blackboard	4.45	.875	2
3	I know how to view my grades on the Blackboard	4.49	.941	1
4	I can read the feedback from my teacher	4.01	1.029	5
5	I feel comfortable writing my opinions on the discussion board	4.14	1.044	3
General mean		4.23	0.98	

From the above table, we conclude that students strongly agree that they are efficient in using the assessment tools on the Blackboard with a mean (4.23) and standard deviation (0.98) low value, indicating homogeneous opinions of the study sample in the items of this section. Item (3) is in the first rank with a mean of (4.49), while in the last rank came item (4): with a mean of (4.01).

(b). *How Effective Are the Assessment Tools in Blackboard From the Student's Perception?*



TABLE 9  
THE MEAN, THE STANDARD DEVIATION, AND THE RANKS FOR THE SECOND SECTION IN THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

No	Statement	Weighted average	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	It is easy to upload my homework via Blackboard from home	3.91	1.045	7
2	I like sharing my opinions on the discussion board with my classmates	4.10	1.104	5
3	I use the tasks on the Blackboard to find the tasks that I need to complete	4.04	1.089	6
4	I think the assessment on the Blackboard is fair to me as an EFL student	4.25	1.019	4
5	Knowing the due dates for submitting my assignments is very helpful on Blackboard	4.52	.829	1
6	I like having the freedom to upload or write my assignment on Blackboard	4.45	.779	2
7	I think taking a test on the Blackboard is more convenient for me	4.43	.885	3
General mean		4.24	0.96	

From the above table, we conclude that students strongly agree that assessment tools in Blackboard are effective with a mean (4.24) and standard deviation (0.96) low value, indicating homogeneous opinions of the study sample in the items of this section. In the first rank is item (5) with a (4.52) mean, while in the last rank is item (1) with a mean of (3.91).

To get more insight, an open-ended item asked students to write any benefit of the assessment tools on Blackboard. Analysis of participants' responses resulted in the following list of benefits ordered according to frequency:

- Ease of communication between teacher and student
- Evaluation speed
- Ease of use
- Time-saving
- Share a draft of solution to a specific question with colleagues or the faculty member, correct the error, and get feedback from the faculty member on the subject.

(c). *What Are the Challenges of the Assessment Tools on Blackboard That Students Have Faced?*

TABLE 10  
THE MEAN, THE STANDARD DEVIATION, AND THE RANKS FOR THE THIRD SECTION IN THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

No	Statement	Weighted average	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	Sometimes I can't complete my test because of technical issues and connection problems	3.92	1.105	1
2	I don't feel comfortable that my assignments are checked for plagiarism by using Safe Assign	3.30	1.326	3
3	I think not all the Blackboard types of tests are suitable for me as an EFL student.	2.99	1.231	4
4	I have a problem with the time when I write in English on the essay test	3.87	1.279	2
General mean		3.52	1.24	

From the above table, we conclude that students slightly agreed that they face challenges with a mean of (3.52), however the standard deviation (1.24) was high value, indicating differences in opinions of the study sample on the items of this section. In the first rank is item (1) with a mean of (3.92), while in the last rank is item (3) with a mean of (2.99).

To get more insight, an open-ended item asked faculty members to write any challenges they have faced in the Blackboard assessment. Analysis of participants' responses resulted in the following list of challenges ordered according to frequency:

- Technical problems (internet disconnection)
- Technical issues with the program
- The inaccuracy of the plagiarism checker used on Blackboard.
- It is not possible to return to the previous question
- The exam time countdown bar may cause stress
- Lack of time leads to not completing assignments/exams
- The course faculty member's lack of cooperation in the online tests

## V. DISCUSSION

Based on the results mentioned above, faculty members are aware of the assessment tools on the Blackboard and this leads to the effective use of these tools. Faculty members expressed that their effectiveness in using the assessment tools on the Blackboard is due to its ease of use. This result agrees with the result of Little-Wiles and Naimi (2011) and Missula (2008) who reported that faculty members indicated that Blackboard is easy to use and organized. The current result is also consistent with the study of Alkarani and Thobaity (2020) who stated that faculty members reported that Blackboard is a very easy tool for receiving assignments and checking plagiarism.

The results also showed that faculty members expressed that assessment tools in Blackboard are effective to a great extent, as faculty members strongly agree that the grade center in Blackboard is very organized and has many advantages; such as helping in calculating grades, tracking students' progress, downloading grades to the computer, and

preparing reports. This result is consistent with Riad (2022) who valued the idea that grade center in Blackboard calculates grades, and monitor students' progress. Besides, this result agrees with Pusuluri et al. (2017) who found that through the use of the grade center, faculty members can provide students' grades for tests, assignments, discussion boards, blogs, and wikis, and students can view their grades confidentially.

However, faculty members expressed that there are some challenges that face them during using the assessment tools on Blackboard. Faculty members expressed that though most of the assessment tools on Blackboard are easy to use as mentioned earlier, some assessment tools on the Blackboard are difficult to use. This result is consistent with Al-Naibi (2016) who found that some aspects of the Blackboard system are difficult to use. However, the result of the current study is against what Al-Shboul (2013) found out. Al-Shboul found out that many faculty members are reluctant to use Blackboard because they are reluctant to change their style of teaching. The current study result also differs with Sneller (2004) who found that one of the real challenges of using the assessment tools on Blackboard is the lack of professional training and institutional support. In the current study, faculty members focused on the issue of students' cheating as one of the main challenges of assessment via Blackboard. This really needs more efforts and training to help faculty members control the cheating variable in online assessment.

The results of the current study showed that students are effective in using the assessment tools on the Blackboard; this effectiveness depends on user readiness, organizational culture and system adoption. Students expressed their satisfaction that they can view their grades on the Blackboard through the grade center instantly. This result agrees with the result of Abuloum and Khasawneh (2006) and Jones and Jones (2005). However, the result of the current study is not consistent with what Al-Okluk (2018) indicated regarding students' insufficient experience with online learning which leads to poor student utilization of online learning tools. Students also stated that it's easy for them to upload their assignments on Blackboard. This agrees with Elsayy (2018) who found out that one of the main benefits stated by students of using the Blackboard system is the easiness of submitting homework through the system.

Results also showed that students' valued other benefits of online assessment including increased communication between the students and the lecturer and the possibility of easy checking of the relevant deadlines on the Blackboard. This result agrees with the result of Uziak et al. (2018) who found that Blackboard sends individual notifications for students to announce them about important items. Besides, this result is consistent with what Al-Moeather (2020).

On the other hand, the results of the current study showed that there are some challenges that face students when using the Blackboard for assessment purposes such as insufficient technical knowledge and training, limited and poor internet connection and limited time of essay questions. This is consistent with Al Tameemy et al. (2020) and El-Sayed (2022) who revealed that technical problems are the most important challenges that face students.

It is noticed from the results of the current study (especially student's Questionnaire) that there was strong consistency between what students wrote in the open-ended items of the questionnaire and their responses in the closed-ended items especially in the section of challenges. This adds to the reliability of the results of the questionnaire.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Blackboard is one of the most common platforms that provide different assessment tools for educational purposes. Examining these assessment tools and their effectiveness and their level of difficulty from English major students' and faculty members' perceptions was the primary goal of this study. The data analysis has shown that the assessment tools on Blackboard, from students' and faculty members' perceptions have a lot of benefits and advantages; as they are very organized, helpful, and easy to use. On the other hand, there are some challenges related to the technical issues, connection problems, and time limits in the essay tests from EFL students' perception, and challenges related to designing tests, providing feedback and controlling cheating form faculty members' perception.

Theoretically, the study gives clear insight into the use of assessment tools on Blackboard. This could help improve the Blackboard assessment system and emphasize the importance of finding solutions for the obstacles such as technical issues to provide a better e-assessment environment for both students and faculty members.

Practically, the current study highlights that the Blackboard allows faculty members to manage the assessment process of a huge number of students, and enable them to keep a copy of the entire tasks with their scores and feedback which save faculty members' time.

To sum up, based on the results, the study recommends to make use of the capabilities of the blackboard system in assessing students learning. Besides, replicating this study using different samples and different data-gathering tools could be beneficial to find out whether the assessment tools on Blackboard are effective enough or still need to be improved.

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# Multimodal Linguistic Landscape in Lombok: A Case Study of Product Branding

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**Abstract**—A study of writing a language in a public area is known as the linguistic landscape. This research aims to map language choices (monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual) on food products in Lombok and analyze the interconnections between the implementation of national, regional, and foreign language policies on food products in Lombok. The multimodal approach can describe more about the language landscape, including the meaning and function of public writing. This multimodal concept views signs as a form of visual communication that is definite and non-arbitrary. Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are explored as a case study in creative linguistic marketing about local interactions and global forces on the linguistic landscape. These MSMEs use various semiotic sources of regional languages, foreign languages, local wisdom, and inclusive spirit as an introduction and production process. Through linguistic analysis of landscapes, researchers examine systems of signs, images, and texts within a semiotic framework. The uniqueness of this study is what makes it unique to researchers because it has rich local meaning in context. This research describes not only MSMEs but also semiotic landscapes that contribute to understanding changes in sociolinguistic patterns and creativity in the branding of MSME products in the Lombok region.

**Index Terms**—branding linguistics, multimodal, landscapes linguistics

## I. INTRODUCTION

The development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) provides enormous business potential for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The momentum of the World Superbike Championship (WSBK) and MotoGP 2022 in Lombok has significant implications for the development of MSMEs, especially in the tourism sector (KSP: Development of the Mandalika SEZ gives MSME business potential, ANTARA News). This world-scale moment contributes significantly to the progress of local MSMEs in increasing their productivity.

Product branding is the most important thing to do as a form of marketing strategy. This branding is part of advertising for product socialization in the community. As Barthes (1977) once said in Elliott, Kristen L. (2014), advertising is a unique form of representation because it is designed with a specific purpose in mind and serves to sell goods. Johnson (2008) in Ellison, Kristen L. (2014) also states that advertising has become a "cultural engine of consumption" as well as a structure of the surrounding cultural landscape that can be widely marked and appear repeatedly in the discursive practices of daily life.

This research involved several brands of MSME products in the Lombok region. The reason for sampling MSME products is related to several things, such as inclusivity, innovation, and digitalization. Digitalization plays an essential role in financial inclusion. Digitalization is crucial to achieving the target, namely access to financing, payments, bookkeeping, and digital marketing, which has been introduced to MSMEs (Sri Mulyani, 2022). Based on previous studies related to product branding, these three things are marketing strategies (Sudarwati & Venti, 2013). The branding

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of these three products already has a trading business license certification in the form of Home Industry Products (PIRT) issued by the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises Cooperatives.

Product branding based on inclusivity is a form of collaboration conducted by the Lombok State Future Satellite Foundation (Samara). Based on the results of an in-depth interview with the product owner, FN (Pseudonym), a blind person and the Chairman of the Blind Association (Indonesian Association for the Blind of NTB), the Samara Foundation is engaged in the field of creative economy and inclusive education from early childhood to high school. One of the products made as a form of creative economy is Kopibilitas, a product brand from Samara MSMEs. The robusta coffee products offered have the peculiarity of being produced for people with disabilities. Therefore, the brand's name was 'Kopibilitas' (coffee produced by people with disabilities).

In addition, there is also product branding based on innovation, such as what is done by MSMEs that produce clove sauce. Lombok is an area that has a culinary culture with spicy flavors. So many foods in Lombok have special spices made from chili, such as chili sauce products produced in Central Lombok. Central Lombok is a dry region, and most of the food there also tends to be dry, such as dried chilies that are specially packaged to make them easier to consume and have a long shelf life of two months of storage at room temperature. Etymologically, this dried chili is called 'sambal cengeh,' which means chili sauce from chili inherited from generation to generation, and those who consume it will come out crying (because it is spicy).

The following product discussed in this study is the branding of a grain-based product. The nutsafir grains include cashews, melinjo, lebuji, red beans, green beans, cheese corn, almond chocolate, coconut, and cappuccino melinjo. The uniqueness of this product lies in its packaging and branding design. Regarding branding design, introducing Lombok tourism is conducted, such as 'gendang beleq,' beaches, Segara Anak waterfall, Sasak weaving, and 'Peresean culture.' These three products were selected as samples because they have unique, superior qualities and contribute to hosting the World Superbike Championship (WSBK) from March 3-6, 2023, which several countries have attended. Therefore, this research aims to map language choices (monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual) on food products in Lombok and analyze the interconnections between the implementation of national, regional, and foreign language policies on food products in Lombok.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials and methods branding is a crucial aspect of business success, and its connection to linguistics is explored through the framework of "branding linguistics." This approach, developed by Carnavale, Luna, and Lerman (2017), highlights five processes: (1) identifying brands, (2) experiencing brands, (3) integrating brand information, (4) signifying brands as symbols, and (5) connecting with brands.

Identifying brands: Consumers associate brands with categories and compare them within them, often using language-based categorizations. Language influences these associations, such as linking a brand to its country of origin, impacting perceptions.

Experiencing brands: Consumers perceive brands through verbal and visual presentations, with the linguistic identity of a brand affecting emotional connections. Spelling and congruence influence perceptions, and vocabulary in advertising can evoke emotional responses.

Integrating brand information: Consumers incorporate brand information based on linguistic identity and its relation to other brands. Brands develop personalities reflected in linguistic choices, such as tone and style, distinguishing them from competitors.

Signifying brands as symbols: Brands convey meaning through their symbolism, like languages, with names and logos as essential elements. Language choice influences consumer associations and identities tied to brands.

Connecting with brands: Consumers connect emotionally and attitudinally to brands, often forming brand communities. Language in advertising, especially for bilingual consumers, influences attitudes toward brands and reinforces their linguistic identity.

The study underscores how language shapes meaning, constructs identity, and enhances emotional connections between consumers and products (Lowrey, 2006; Lefkowitz, 2003; Mick et al., 2004; Schmitt, 2012). This interaction is significant in the context of the global spread of English, impacting how consumers relate to brands.

Gorter (2006, p. 2) states that the study of Language and Space (LL) is the study of the exploitation of language as a sign in public space. On the other hand, the LL reflects the power and status of each language in a specific environment (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006, pp. 67-68). Furthermore, they suggest that the study of LL influences the thinking and behavior of society toward the use of different languages in a particular environment. Ben-Rafael E. et al. (2006, p. 7) define LL as all forms of linguistic objects in public space. Moriarty (2014) claims that LL is a collection of external signs representing the local community's conditions. According to Spolsky (2006), the study of LL has been around for a long time and was previously referred to as the study of language in public space. On the other hand, Coulmas (2006, p. 13) mentions that the study of LL is as old as writing itself. He further suggests that all written speech worldwide, known as inscriptions, is a form of written communication performed openly in public.

Empirically, LL is a study of variations in written language usage among a group in a specific area. Theoretically, the study of LL can be analyzed through its two main functions, the informative and symbolic functions (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). The informative function approach analyzes the visualization function of signs as a means of visual mass

communication that distinguishes one area from another. Additionally, the informative function study indicates the types of language used in a specific area. In contrast, the symbolic function approach is abstract, fundamental, and principles or salience related to the function of external signs as an identity of a region characterized by implicit language usage. In line with the function of external signs, Kress and Leuwen (1996, 2006) believe that every sign created is confident and motivated, not arbitrary or random. In other words, the signifier and signified are created simultaneously as a visual unit. Furthermore, they suggest that every sign is created based on the motivation of its creator, which already has a definite meaning concept with all the signifiers used.

Multimodality is comprehensively interpreting a communicative sign involving all its constituent modes. The concept of multimodality views signs as a definite and non-arbitrary form of visual communication. In other words, every communicative sign is made with a specific purpose in mind that is represented through various sign modes available. Sign modes represent all 'material' formations used by society that are influenced by the socio-cultural conditions of the local community, such as written language, spoken language, and body language (gesture) used by the local community (Kress, 2010; Lyons, 2016). Furthermore, Lyons (2016) suggests that the study of multimodality is based on three basic assumptions: 1) every visual communicative sign involves sign modes such as speech, writing, body movements, images, and others; 2) the meaning of the visual communicative sign is represented through the existing sign modes and their relationship; and 3) the use of each combination of sign modes in communication is formed based on social habits and the cultural background of the local community that is widely understood. In line with this concept, Kress and Leeuwen (2006) view signs as a visual communication medium that requires each constituent mode to be seen as a unit of meaning that supports and is independent in representing the intended meaning.

This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The characteristics of this research are trying to develop or describe things as they are and using qualitative data, which will produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from the observed research object (Alwasilah, 2008). This study exclusively examines fixed signs, differentiating them from mobile signage like flyers and posters (Sebba, 2010). Additionally, it distinguishes between the 'principal' sign and 'sub'-signs within the business front space (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006), although it acknowledges the potential challenges with this categorization. The primary focus is on signs responsible for identifying business names and their nature, while trademarked names displayed separately from the principal sign are not considered within this study (Huebner, 2009). In this study, the researcher formulated the research focus as the goal of the research, where the researcher intends to identify the meaning behind the three trademark logos of UMKM owners in Lombok. This process is one of the efforts to improve the quality of the product brand through a semiotic approach. This approach can reveal the connotative and denotative meanings of a sign or image so that readers can recognize and understand it (Hoed, 2011). The three logos chosen provide a good representation of other logos owners produce. The data to be obtained for this study are primary and secondary. Primary data come from the logo, the object of research, and interviews.

Meanwhile, secondary data come from theories such as books and other relevant sources. The data collection techniques were carried out by documenting the selected logos. In addition, researchers also conducted interviews with the owners, and questions were developed based on research needs that refer to the problem and the objectives of this study—identifying the symbols on the logos that represent symbols related to a good product marketing strategy for the advancement of the brand itself.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The documentation of products consists of three criteria: inclusion, innovation, and digitalization, which create curiosity about the origin of the product branding along with all the signs, images, and texts contained within them. Sign makers employ semiotic resources alongside verbal elements to enhance information presentation and brand promotion. This approach recognizes that effective branding requires not just creative language use but also the utilization of other semiotic tools. Visual rhetorical elements like text size, color, and font are instrumental in conveying messages to consumers. These resources work in conjunction with verbal content to create meaning. Analyzing these semiotic features individually underscores their significance, although it is essential to note that they often interplay and cannot be easily separated. Sign makers employ diverse semiotic resources to convey meaning and achieve branding objectives (Scollon & Wong Scollon, 2003).

The first product, as shown in Figure 1, displays branding based on the production process that involves people with disabilities in making spiced coffee. From the size and font style used, the product shows that the words 'people with disabilities' are more significant than the product name 'Kopi Rempah.' It means the product branding emphasizes the inclusive production process rather than the product name offered.





Figure 1. Kopibilitas From Yayasan Samara  
Instagram @Kopibilitas

The text, sign, and picture from Figure 1:

1. Coffee beans, cinnamon, cloves
2. A cup of coffee
3. The logo features a hot coffee cup image marked with steam surrounded by the product name, "*Kopibilitas*," along with the place of production, Samara. The producer's name, Samara Lombok, is listed above the logo.
4. The text "people with disability" and the product name "NTB original spiced Robusta coffee" are shown.

In the '*Kopibilitas*' logo, there is the use of images and text that show coffee products. The image of a coffee cup filled with steam and the product name containing the element "coffee" is part of the product's signification. In addition, the manufacturer's name, "Samara," listed above the logo, also becomes a sign of the manufacturer's existence in the coffee product.

In semiotics, the steam from the hot coffee cup in the logo can be considered an index, indicating a causal relationship with the associated object. In this case, the steam produced by hot coffee indicates that the drink in the cup has just been brewed and is still hot. This index helps consumers understand the quality and freshness of the brand's coffee. Therefore, the steam index in the '*Kopibilitas*' logo depicts the hot nature of the coffee drink and connotes a desire to try it for people who like fresh, hot coffee.

In addition, the text element "bilitas" in the product name "Kopibilitas" can be interpreted as an iconic sign. The word "*bilitas*" in the product name is visually displayed with a larger font size and different colors, making it stand out and attract attention. In this case, this iconic sign can depict a product with excellent quality and produced by people with disabilities who can also produce quality products.

In the overall '*Kopibilitas*' logo, semiotic elements such as the steam index and the "*bilitas*" iconic sign can serve as signs that support and strengthen the message that this coffee product is produced by people with disabilities who have good abilities and quality.

Hierarchy in typography refers to the arrangement and hierarchy of different typography elements' size, shape, and color to achieve a structured and easily understood layout. "Samara" is placed in the first larger hierarchy, followed by "*Kopibilitas*" in the second hierarchy, and additional information "people with disability" in the third hierarchy. The third hierarchy is designed with a white (diapositive) background to highlight the uniqueness of disabilities. This reinforces the unique positioning of disabilities in the product, making it more prominent and connoting a special meaning. It conveys the message that product branding emphasizes an inclusive production process.



Figure 2. Sambal Cengeh  
Instagram @sambalengehlombok

### The text, sign, and picture from Figure 2:

1. The words "Maiq Meres Food" which means delicious food.
2. A white-colored chili pepper image encircles the product name.
3. The text "Food Spicy Everyone".
4. The halal label.
5. Multicolored packaging.

Furthermore, in the second product, there is a variation of packaging that looks neat and unique by featuring the local wisdom of Lombok, such as introducing regional tourism, from arts, tourist destinations, and local products such as woven fabrics. What is interesting about this product is the word "LOMBOK" in large size and the product manufacturer's name "NUTSAFIR" in medium size and colorful letters. Meanwhile, the image of the product derived from grains is also visible. The producer prioritizes introducing the product by sharing a text containing the benefits of the grains in the cake, also listed in the package box.

The foreign language "Food Spicy Everyone" is seen below the product name "Sambal Cengeh." According to the product maker's statement, this product has been enjoyed by most Indonesians and will enter the international market, so the producer uses foreign terms in the product naming. The packaging also features the words "Maiq Meres Food". The product name "Sambal Cengeh" is put in the center and surrounded by an illustration of long curved shapes resembling the shape of chili. It indicates that the visual element in the sambal logo plays an essential role in conveying the message about the product.

Muslim communities worldwide, including Indonesia, prefer food products with halal certification labels. The halal label on food packaging indicates that the food has been processed well according to the rules set by Islam and is considered lawful and clean for Muslim consumers. Therefore, the halal logo can influence consumer decisions about food products. The word "halal" in Arabic denotes a food label allowed to be consumed in an Islamic way. In common parlance, "halal" refers to meat slain by Islamic dietary standards, which can be traced back to the verses in the Quran. In non-Muslim countries, "halal" symbolizes a religious brand indicating that a product fulfills the dietary needs of a specific group of followers, i.e., Muslims (Yusuf Kamal et al., 2022).

In more detail, the long-curved shapes can be interpreted as a symbol of chili, which is part of the product name. By placing the product name in the center, inside the chili curve, this symbol can provide an impression of the product's identity and uniqueness. In addition, the position of the product name in the center with the chili symbol surrounding it can also give the impression that the product is of good quality and attracts consumers' attention.

Furthermore, using similar chili objects surrounding the product name can convey a message about the availability of spicy food that everyone can enjoy. The selection of objects surrounding the product name can also indicate that the product is known for its unusual spiciness, making many people interested in trying it. In addition, by mentioning that Sambal Lombok is known to be spicy and can be accepted by many people, the phrase "feel spicy everywhere" can give the impression that the product has been widely accepted and consumed by the community.

From a linguistic landscape perspective, the word "cengeh" can be understood as a signal that refers to the conventions or standard agreements within the language user community about the word's meaning. In this context, "cengeh" can be considered a code or sign containing a mutually agreed meaning, making communication and understanding about the product more accessible.



Figure 3.

<https://nutsafirlombok.com>

The text, sign, and picture from Figure 3:

1. It features nine types of grain variants (cashews, melinjo nuts, lebu nuts, red beans, green beans, cheese corn, almond chocolate, coconut, and cappuccino-flavored melinjo nuts) which are the essence of the product.
2. Images of grains are displayed alongside the nutsafir cake.
3. Local wisdom symbols represent the product's origin, such as introducing Lombok's tourism, such as 'gendang beleq,' beach, Segara Anak waterfall, Sasak weaving, and Peresean culture.
4. The product's color concept represents the color of the grains, such as the brown-colored cashews, dark, red-colored red beans, green-colored green beans, dark brown-colored almond chocolate, and black-colored cappuccino-flavored melinjo nuts.

The nine types of grain variants listed in the text are signs that represent the product's essence. These signs inform the audience about the ingredients and flavor of the product. NUTSAFIR, using multiple colors, can convey a sense of diversity and inclusivity, as each color represents something unique and different. From a semiotic perspective, using multiple colors in a logo can be seen as a strategy to create a complex set of signifiers that convey different meanings to the audience. Each color can be interpreted as a sign representing a unique concept or idea, combined with other signs below to create a more complex sign.

The images of grains displayed alongside the nutsafir cake are icons, as they resemble the natural grains. The icons emphasize the main ingredients and suggest the product's quality by showcasing its natural ingredients. The cultural background can influence the design and choice of symbols or icons used in product packaging. The local wisdom symbols, such as 'gendang beleq,' beach, Segara Anak waterfall, Sasak weaving, and Peresean culture, are indexical signs that represent the product's origin. These symbols associate the product with Lombok's tourism, culture, and local identity. Using cultural symbols such as musical instruments on product packaging can give the impression that the product comes from Lombok. This specific region has cultural richness, such as 'gendang beleq.' The Gendang Beleq is a traditional musical instrument from Lombok, made of hollowed-out tree trunks and cowhide. It is often played during cultural ceremonies and festivities. In addition, cultural symbols can also be part of the brand identity the manufacturer wants to establish.

The product's color concept is a symbol that represents the color of the grains used in the product, the brown-colored cashews, dark, red-colored red beans, green-colored green beans, dark brown-colored almond chocolate, and black-colored cappuccino-flavored 'melinjo' nuts, symbolize the quality and diversity of the product. These symbols associate the product with Lombok's tourism, culture, and local identity.

Using signs, symbols, indices, and icons in the text, images, and symbols in Figure 3 enhances the product's meaning, origin, and quality. Combining these semiotic elements appeals to the audience's emotions, senses, and cultural identity, which may influence their perception and decision-making about the product.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Symbols representing local wisdom, texts in foreign and regional languages, and images depicting local tourism are creative marketing strategies. The use of foreign languages in marketing can provide benefits in reaching international markets. However, MSMEs also need to pay attention to the use of regional languages and local wisdom in marketing to attract local consumers and increase the value of their products. Using foreign languages can give a modern and international impression to product branding. It can help MSMEs attract consumers' attention in international markets and provide a more professional and trustworthy image.

MSMEs engaged in the culinary industry, such as *Nutsafir* products and *Sambal Cengeh*, can market their products by using names or terms in regional languages that describe the local flavor or ingredients used. In addition, local wisdom can be applied in packaging design or product logos that depict the distinctive characteristics and identity of the region.

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# Expert EFL Teachers' Emotion in Professional Contexts in China

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**Abstract**—The emotional experience of teachers in their professional contexts plays a pivotal role in their career development. Based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and Hargreaves' (2001) Emotional Geography Theory, drawing on interviews, journals and documents, this paper explores the emotion of expert middle school EFL teachers in their relationships with students, colleagues, administrators and the sociocultural contexts, and five dimensions of teachers' emotional geographies are discussed. In addition, the author discusses the significance of exploring teacher emotion and providing training programs in teacher education and development, and calls on attention to teachers' emotion.

**Index Terms**—teacher emotion, Ecological Systems Theory, professional context, emotional geography, EFL teacher

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to the “2022 National Statistical Bulletin on Educational Development” released by China's Ministry of Education on July 5, 2023, there are 201,600 compulsory K-9 schools across the country. Compulsory education enrolled 34.3277 million students, and 10.6546 million full-time teachers. Among them, there are over four million full-time teachers in junior high schools, with a student-teacher ratio of 12.72:1. China's General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out in the report of the 20th National Congress: “Enhance teachers' morality, develop teachers' professional competence, and promote respect for teachers”. Ye (2016) pointed out: “Why do I want to be an educator? Because the richness and complexities of education need to be realized, understood, and expressed with all the richness of the researcher's life. Engaging in pedagogical research makes people constantly eager to learn. The lives of educators become richer, more beautiful, and meaningful”. Paying attention to the emotions of teachers in their professional relationships plays a pivotal role in cultivating teachers' expertise and improving education throughout the world. Over the past two decades, teachers' emotion has received increasing attention in the field of education studies (Hargreaves, 2001; Zembylas, 2007; Gu & Gu, 2015; Wu, 2012; Zhu, 2005; Zhu & Wang, 2019). The focus of teacher emotion research has gradually shifted from examining teachers' emotional experiences in teaching (Hargreaves, 2001; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003) to teachers' professional identity and power relations in schools (Zembylas, 2007; Van & Wheatley Slegers, 2005; Lee & Yin, 2011; Hochschild, 1990). More researchers have started studying teachers' emotions, emphasizing the close relationship between emotions and factors such as teaching practice and identity. Furthermore, they emphasize that emotion has a direct impact on teachers' lives (Xu, 2013).

Palmer (1998) pointed out that teacher emotion is the feeling generated between teachers and students in the teaching process, which doesn't exist in isolation but is complex and dynamic. Zembylas (2003) believed that teachers' emotions reflect teachers' subjective psychological processes in professional situations. It is not only the internal experience of teachers but also the product of cultural, social, and political interactions. Hu and Wang (2014) emphasized that “teacher's emotion” refers to teachers' subjective experiences and behaviors in the workplace. It is not solely a reflection of the teacher's psychological processes; it is also externally manifested. This can be noted as a state or as a dynamic process (Hargreaves, 1998; Cross & Hong, 2012), and teachers' emotion is influenced by “cultural, social, and political relations” (Zembylas, 2007). However, research on the emotions of language teachers remains insufficient. Zhou (2023) argued that studies on language teacher emotion are mainly focused on the relationship between language teachers' emotions and their agency, identity, curriculum reform or the educational system (Pekrun, 2006). Therefore, he contended that language teachers' emotion involves both the teachers' internal experiences and explicit attitudes towards the development of the language subject, their self-efficacy, and professional identity as well as educational reforms in the workplace.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

### A. Theoretical Framework

This study is based upon Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory and Hargreaves' Emotional Geography theory. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is a comprehensive framework that examines the complex interactions between individuals and their environment. Bronfenbrenner proposed a hierarchy of ecological systems, namely, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem, each of which plays a role in shaping an

individual's growth and experiences. The microsystem is the immediate environment in which an individual lives. It includes interactions with family, peers, school, and other local settings. These close relationships have a direct impact on the individual's development and experiences. The mesosystem encompasses the connections and interactions between various microsystems. For example, the relationship between a child's family and school can influence the child's development as these two systems interact and influence each other. The exosystem involves external contexts that indirectly affect an individual's development. This can include the workplace of a parent, community resources, and societal institutions. The macrosystem refers to the broader cultural and societal norms, values, and beliefs that influence the other systems. This level encompasses cultural ideologies, economic systems, and social norms that shape individuals' experiences and opportunities.

Hargreaves posited emotional geographies which covered five dimensions: moral, sociocultural, professional, physical and political. Sociocultural geography refers to the ways in which sociocultural factors such as race, culture, gender and the way people express and experience emotions can distance or unite people. Moral geography is concerned with the condition of involved parties to either pursue common goals and feel a sense of accomplishment collectively or to become defensive about their own goals and disagree with those of others. Professional geography occurs when the parties' definitions and standards of professionalism either divide them or allow them to collaborate on professional issues. Physical geography is concerned with time and space and how they can bring and keep people together, or how they can reduce these relationships to a string of episodic interactions. Political geography is concerned with power and status disparities that can either distort interpersonal communication or serve to protect and empower others (Hargreaves, 2001a, 2001b).

### *B. Research Methods*

#### *(a). Narrative Inquiry of Teacher's Emotion*

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) stated that narrative research is a way to comprehend and interpret experiences. In recent years, with the paradigm shift in social science research, the interaction between narratives and personal experiences in various social, cultural, and political contexts has once again gained research prominence. Because emotion is contextual, this study utilizes narrative inquiry to investigate teachers' emotions.

#### *(b). Research Site and Participants*

The researcher is an associate professor with 17 years of teaching experience, who was also working as an administrator at the affiliated middle school of the university (F Middle School as the pseudonym hereafter). During the past five years, the researcher extensively observed the professional relationships of EFL teachers in the school. With saturated information, two expert teachers Daisy and Lily (pseudonyms) from the school were purposefully selected for this study. Both teachers had over 15 years of teaching experience and had received numerous honors and awards from the school or the local bureau of education. Selection was based on the following factors: firstly, the researcher and the participants had established mutual trust during the past years; secondly, both participants demonstrated expertise and enthusiasm for their careers, and achieved remarkable teaching outcomes; additionally, female teachers take up the majority number of language teachers in schools, so focusing on female English teachers will help with an in-depth exploration of their professional emotions, enhance insights into effective teacher education in the future; last but not the least, given that different school cultures would significantly impact teachers' emotional experiences, choosing teachers from the same school is favorable in analyzing emotions within a specific context (Zembylas, 2003).

#### *(c). Data Collection and Analysis*

This study employs a narrative case study approach, adopting various methods, including in-depth semi-structured interviews, reflection journals, classroom observations etc. In order to make in-depth interviews with both teachers, the interviews were conducted in Chinese and transcribed verbatim and later translated into English for analysis. Based upon content analysis (Manning & Cullum-Swam, 1994), the study analyzes teachers' emotions in professional relationships.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *A. The Stories of Two Teachers*

After graduating from university, both Daisy and Lily became teachers in their local public schools. Daisy, after working for eight years, came to Guangdong due to her husband's job transfer. Firstly she worked in a private middle school, and soon she became very popular among students. For some reason, she quit the job several years later and came to work in F Middle School till today. Lily also began her career in a local public school, then she quickly developed from a novice to a promising experienced teacher in the school. After seven years, she moved to F School, and gradually became an expert teacher over the past years.

### *B. Teacher's Emotion in the Microsystem*

#### *(a). Teacher-Student Interaction: Teacher-Student Emotional Geography*

Effective interaction between teachers and students, both inside and outside the classroom, can significantly enhance teaching and learning. Daisy's long-standing practice of communicating with students, understanding their interests, and dealing with their difficulties helped with a positive classroom environment. She designed various classroom activities, including games, field investigation and presentations, greatly promoted participation and collaboration among students. The story illustrates how her approach cultivated enthusiasm, effective communication, and a positive teacher-student relationship.

Compared with students in the past decades, students nowadays are much more active, with strong desire to express themselves. They are knowledgeable and brave enough to challenge "authorities" like teachers and books. Even though I am very familiar with the textbooks, I would design different classroom activities for different classes every year based on their learning situations. They are so creative! Take the last classroom performance, for instance. There was a scene where a character died, and each group designed different ways for the character to die. The performance was vivid and lively. Some students might not express themselves as well on the spot as their peers, but each student can show their strengths. (Daisy, July 22, 2022)

Similarly, Lily's account of addressing disruptive behaviors during a school drama rehearsal shows her ability to handle negative situations with rapport and creating a positive atmosphere.

On the day of our first rehearsal for the drama competition, which is a significant event for the school, all classes were waiting for their turn in the auditorium. When it was our class's turn, halfway through our performance, two boys suddenly became excited and started yelling and laughing, disrupting the performance of their fellow students nearby. I was extremely angry at the time and immediately shouted at them to stop. Nevertheless, our rehearsal was still disrupted. Moreover, with so many classes present, including the principal, my colleagues, and some parents, I felt extremely humiliated and outrageous.

After the rehearsal, I gathered the naughty students. It turned out that one of the boys accidentally slipped while performing, and the other boy joined in. I told them not being irresponsible like this next time. Before school ended, they came to me and apologized. During the second rehearsal and the final performance, they were both very focused and committed. After the formal performance, I praised them for their performance. Adolescents care a lot about their face and reputation, and I could tell they were both very glad that I respected them and saved their face. (Lily, July 21, 2022)

Although Lily obviously had negative emotions at the time, she knew about teenagers. Instead of scolding them in public further, she gave them a chance to behave better and motivated them to perform well and later saved face for them. This effectively resolved the conflict and promoted mutual understanding between the teacher and the students.

From the above examples, it can be seen that whether a teacher can have positive emotional experiences in teacher-student interactions partly depends on whether students understand and appreciate the teacher's efforts, as well as whether they make progress in their academic performance. When Daisy's students made progress, she felt joy from work; and when Lily's students appreciated her dedication, she also had positive emotional experiences. The traditional Chinese concept of the teacher-student relationship highlights the teacher's dominant position, emphasizing the dignity and respect of the teacher. Confucius' belief on teacher-student relationship is centered around "benevolence," advocating respect for teachers and love for students, fostering harmony and affection. However, the "love" and "affection" is not unconditional but constrained by "ritual" (Huang, 2010). Li (2016) pointed out that Confucius and his students shared a relationship of moral and emotional community, including emotional and communal ties (Li, 2016). Lily's anger due to students disrupting discipline illustrates the importance of "psychological rewards" (Huang, 2010) in narrowing the moral distance between teachers and students.

Simultaneously, political distance is also a key factor determining the teacher-student emotional relationship. In traditional Chinese culture, the teacher-student relationship is akin to a father-son relationship. The saying "one day as a teacher, a lifetime as a father" confirms the superior and privileged position of teachers over students. Confucius, as the "teacher for all ages," is deeply revered by his numerous disciples. Therefore, in the context of Chinese education, political distance becomes an indispensable part of the teacher-student power dynamics. Furthermore, the extended time teachers and students spend together in school and the reduction of physical distance also helps teachers gain positive emotional experiences.

#### *(b). Interaction Between Colleagues: Emotional Geography Among Colleagues*

Relationships between colleagues in the teaching profession balance between intimacy and distance. Daisy's experience underscores the value of collaboration and mutual support within a team, fostering a favorable environment for teaching and research. Lily's straightforward style and decisive approach occasionally led to differing opinions among colleagues, but her adeptness at resolving conflicts maintained harmonious work atmosphere.

I've been working in collective communities since I started working until now. When I first arrived in Guangzhou, the English teachers' offices in our school were full of young people, and we were all full of energy and often worked overtime until eleven or even twelve o'clock in the evening. We were engrossed in doing pedagogical research and reform. We took the initiative in using Oxford and National Geographic as teaching materials. I was among the first teachers to get school and provincial grants for teaching research. And then I became the English team leader, and we applied for and got grants for several research projects and published journal papers. As a result, our team rapidly became well known in Guangzhou, and thousands of



parents and students applied for our school every year. After coming to F School, I also get on good terms with my colleagues. The school has provided me with an excellent platform so that I can communicate with and learn from the senior teachers. Now as the team leader, my colleagues support me and we work together to help young colleagues participate in teaching competitions, engage in teaching design, and help students do better. I really enjoy the atmosphere in our office. (Daisy, July 20, 2022)

The collaborative teaching and research system at F School encouraged teacher cooperation rather than competition. It greatly inspired teachers' enthusiasm and particularly encourages expert teachers to tutor the younger teachers. However, when it came to interactions with colleagues, Lily had different emotional experiences.

I might be accustomed to a straightforward style in communication. Many colleagues and I have worked together for quite a few years, and they understand me. But it's inevitably for people to hold different opinions. Some colleagues might find me insisting on some rules. Actually, it's not personal and we all respect each other's opinions. We focus on work rather than personal matters. (Lily, July 21, 2022)

Lily's straightforward personality and professionalism in her work had earned her respect from colleagues. As a result, she gained trust and understanding in interactions with colleagues.

Within the school's teaching community, colleagues serve as a source of professional identity and appreciation for teachers due to their shared professional goals and challenges (Xu, 2013).

The narratives of the teachers in this study also demonstrate that the most critical factor influencing emotional experiences between teachers and colleagues is professional distance. Good teamwork at F School contributed to reducing professional distance between teachers, maintaining positive emotional experiences, and ultimately enhancing teachers' professional performance. These two cases also illustrate that both Daisy and Lily, as expert teachers, have played significant roles in teaching and research within the school. Additionally, they had positive emotional experiences and strong sense of achievement when they were recognized and supported by the colleagues.

Both cases highlighted the importance of professional distance in shaping emotional experiences between teachers and colleagues.

#### (c). *Parent-Teacher Interaction: Emotional Geography Between Teachers and Parents*

Parent-teacher interaction is influenced by factors such as teachers' and parents' sense of responsibility in students' school life and academic performance, and requires mutual devotion. Daisy emphasized maintaining a balance between responding to parents and ensuring her personal space. This strategy ensured her positive emotional experience and enthusiasm for work. Lily, on the other hand, addressed the enthusiasm of parents with due distance to ensure both effective communication and personal well-being.

Nowadays, most parents are highly educated and generally place a strong emphasis on their children's education, therefore they have high expectations for teachers. In our school, many students come from well-educated families. Sometimes, parents would call to discuss on various topics with me about their children's school life. They also politely give me suggestions and even recommend books to me. They are very enthusiastic. Of course, there are times when I've just finished a day of work and want to take a rest. However, if a parent texts me or talks to me on WeChat, asking about their child's school life during the day, I used to reply immediately. But gradually, I started feeling exhausted and mentally strained. So now, at the beginning of the semester, I would tell the parents that unless it's an emergency, they are supposed to contact me before 9 PM in the evening or during the daytime. I think that worked. (Daisy, July 20, 2022)

Teachers, through appropriate communication with parents, ensure both necessary interaction and their own personal space. This ensures positive emotional experiences, energy, and work enthusiasm. Lily's interactions with parents reflect another aspect of her emotional experiences.

Some parents hope that I can offer extracurricular tutoring for their children. I directly told them that tutoring is not necessary, and I don't provide paid tutoring for students. I give them suggestions on how to learn English effectively, like reading English stories or magazines for 30 minutes each day, with an additional 20 minutes of listening like what I practiced in class. Some parents were initially skeptical and insisted on tutoring. After a semester, they saw their children's progress. They extended appreciation for me. I believe this also gives me confidence in my work. (Lily, July 21, 2022)

Lily's strong belief in her teaching competence and students' learning capabilities had impressed the parents with her sincerity in interacting with them. The teachers' narratives in this section indicate that the emotional experiences of teacher-parent interactions depend primarily on moral distance and sociocultural distance. Teachers value recognition and respect from the parents. When the parents show greater understanding and support for teachers, both parties can experience positive emotional interactions.

#### (d). *Interaction Between Superiors and Subordinates: Emotional Geography Between Teachers and Leaders*

Since both expert teachers play leading roles in various teaching and research activities in the school, they frequently interact with the school's administrators.

Our school organizes many student activities and conducts regular teaching competitions and research. Each semester, there are teaching contests, and the principals and directors have high expectations for outstanding performances. In regular circumstances, our principal would listen to every teacher if any of us wants to talk to

him about work. The principal would also talk to us regularly in school and he cares about our difficulties. (Daisy, July 20, 2022)

Daisy's experience highlights the requirement for teachers to adhere to proper conduct within the hierarchical power relations while interacting with the superiors. Similarly, Lily's interactions with administrators portray a balanced approach:

While we may not meet the principal daily during working hours, we would play badminton together after work every day. During the break, the principal would talk with us, particularly with the new colleagues, and give advice to them if necessary. However, we know well about the rules for interaction with the leaders. (Lily, July 21, 2022)

Both stories underline that the hierarchical power relations dynamics between leaders and teachers, deeply ingrained in Chinese culture, demand the subordinates' respect for the leaders. Moreover, these interactions are most effective when naturally aligned with the professional relationship between the two parties, ultimately influencing the emotional experience of teachers.

In conclusion, the study reveals the profound impact of professional interactions on teachers' emotions within the microsystem. Teacher-student, teacher-colleague, teacher-parent and teacher-leader relationships shape the teacher's emotional experiences, showcasing the importance of factors like mutual understanding, recognition of effort, and professional distance. The examples of Daisy and Lily, both expert teachers, emphasize the role of leadership, dedication, and positive recognition in shaping positive emotional experiences and a sense of accomplishment.

### *C. Teachers' Emotional Experience in the Mesosystem and Exosystem*

Beyond interactions with students, parents, colleagues, and leaders, teachers also have extensive interactions with peers from other schools or authorities from the local bureaus of education, which also influence their emotional encounters.

This year, I participated in a provincial training program for school administrators. Such opportunities for learning are rare and I was lucky to get the only opportunity in our school. I really feel grateful to the principals of our school. Those teachers in the training program came from all the districts in Guangdong Province. They are very talented in administration, and have sharp insights about school affairs. I really learned a lot from the tutors and other peers in our learning community. But of course, I also feel the pressure from the peers and the tutors as well, you know, because they are also experts and leaders in our community. (Daisy, July 21, 2022)

Daisy's narration highlights peer pressure within the academic community, portraying both motivational and challenging factors in their professional contexts. Simultaneously, interactions with superiors generate both gratitude for guidance and challenges arising from high expectations. Consequently, the key factor influencing teachers' emotional experience within the intermediate and outer systems is political distance.

### *D. Teachers' Emotional Experience in the Macrosystem*

Within the framework of social, political, economic, and cultural aspects, namely the macrosystem, teachers grapple with societal expectations and constraints affecting their professional development. Emotional experiences are complex, dynamic, and unpredictable.

Teachers, including myself, avoid constant interactions with parents and the surrounding community. Sometimes it's hard to keep an appropriate stance towards them. While most parents are cooperative, and the public may be polite and understand us, some seek to be a little peculiar. I used to be straightforward which occasionally led to misunderstandings from the parents. And some of them would spread unfavorable words about me and my colleagues. So I'd rather spend time reading, improving my teaching, talking with the students and solving their problems. But of course, I would keep in touch with the parents and the society to keep up with what's going on. Generally speaking, my students, their parents and my professional community at large hold a favorable view of my devotion into work. (Lily, July 21, 2022)

Lily's account illustrates the intricate interplay of students, parents, society, and more within the current social and cultural context. Teachers' emotional experiences are shaped by a diverse range of factors, both positive and negative, including societal expectations, parental influence, and cultural norms.

### *E. Emotional Geography of Expert Teachers*

In line with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Hargreaves' Emotional Geography Theory, the above analyses delve into the emotional experiences of the two expert teachers across various professional relationships. Given their status as experienced educators, their emotional experiences possess distinct characteristics. In their interactions with colleagues, expert teachers established mutual trust with them, assuming roles as "givers" and "helpers". Political and professional distances largely contributed to the positive emotional encounter. Similarly, the relationships between expert teachers, students, and parents are grounded in a shared goal of achieving optimal learning outcomes, with moral distance playing a pivotal role. In their interactions with administrative leaders, hierarchical power relations (Xu, 2013) emerge as a critical factor. While informal settings enable amicable interactions, formal professional contexts necessitate a respectful distance. Figure 1 provides an illustrative representation of the emotional

geography within expert teachers' emotional ecosystems.

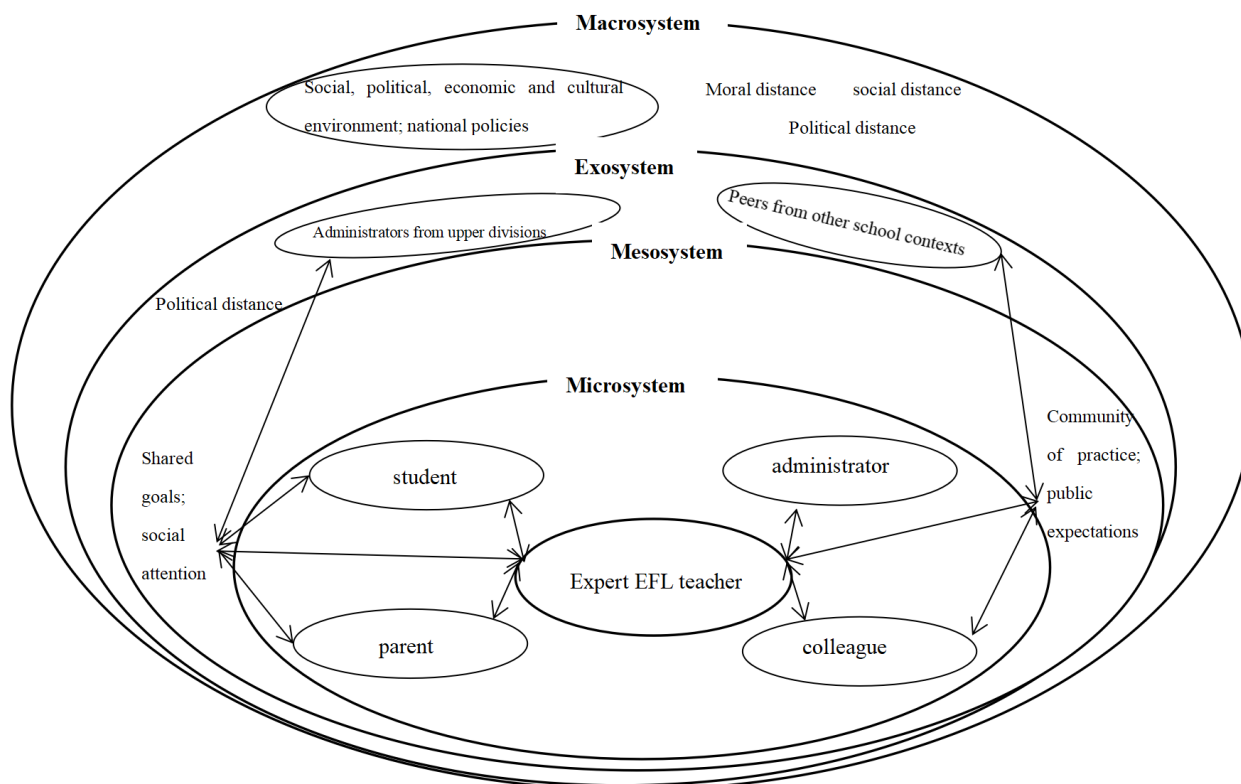


Figure 1. Diagram of Expert EFL Teachers' Emotion in Professional Contexts

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Teachers play a pivotal role in the development of education. Teachers' professional relationships and emotions directly impact their professional identity, well-being, and significantly contribute to the development of education. At present, while research exploring teachers' identity and agency is relatively extensive, studies on teachers' emotions in interplay within their professional contexts in China remain relatively scarce.

This paper delves into the emotional experiences of expert teachers within professional relationships. It unveils that among the various dimensions of the emotional ecosystem experienced by expert English teachers in secondary schools, teachers' professional emotions are primarily influenced by five intertwined dimensions: sociocultural distance, political distance, professional distance, moral distance, and physical distance. Primarily, political distance plays a pivotal role across micro, meso, and macro levels of emotional ecosystem. It encompasses the emotional experiences of relationships between teachers and students, parents, leaders, and even administrative members at all levels. In the context of Chinese society, Confucianism emphasizes the ethical dynamics of personal relationships, scrutinizing the interactions between individuals. Consequently, the emotional experiences within relationships such as between teachers and students, and teachers and leaders, are shown through tangible interactions within the complex relation network.

Secondly, considering professional distance, the paper unveils emotional dynamics within micro, intermediate, and outer levels of emotional ecosystem. Teachers and colleagues, as well as those within the professional community, collectively experience a sense of professional achievement and anxiety. Collaborative efforts and achievements within this academic realm effectively enhance teachers' positive emotions.

Furthermore, moral distance impacts teachers' emotional experiences across micro and macro levels. The recognition and respect for teachers' profession by students, parents, and the whole society contribute to positive emotions and a sense of professional well-being.

Lastly, sociocultural distance influences emotional ecosystem at all levels. Sociocultural factors, encompassing social norms, economic conditions, political requirements and national policies, exert continuous and pervasive influence on teachers and other factors intertwined in their profession, including students, parents, and the whole society at large. This intricate interplay across different levels culminates in the current state of teachers' professional emotional ecosystem.

In conclusion, this study proposes two suggestions for future research on teachers' emotions. Firstly, researchers in

teacher education can delve further into exploring teachers' emotions, along with relevant emotion regulating strategies within specific contexts, such as educational reforms. Additionally, courses or training programs on emotion regulation are suggested to be provided for pre- or in-service teachers. Meanwhile, teachers' community of practice is encouraged to pay attention to teachers' emotional well-being.

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# An Exploration of the Decolonization and Ecofeminist Activism of Indigenous Kenyan Women in Wangari Maathai's Memoir *Unbowed: One Woman's Story*

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**Abstract**—Wangari Maathai, perhaps one of the world's most renowned African female writers, frequently writes on the struggles faced by indigenous Kenyan women who lack the essentials for survival. Her writings are infused with the efforts of indigenous women to establish themselves as contributing members who can create new ethical, cultural, and territorial agendas. In her writings, Maathai also places a strong emphasis on indigenous female ideal transformation and decolonization narratives. Environmentalism and indigenous women's agency have always been a key unrelenting passion in Maathai's writings. Following this passion, this study examines the decolonization and ecofeminist activist narratives that shape the indigenous Kenyan women's national collective identity and agency. The purpose of this article is to explore Maathai's inspiring activism which is a succession of countless acts of activism toward the planting of both the seeds of land and the agency of indigenous Kenyan women.

**Index Terms**—identity, decolonization, ecofeminist, indigenous women, activism

## I. INTRODUCTION

Wangari Maathai was the first African indigenous activist to voice Kenyan women's agency. After Kenya gained its independence in 1963, a massive plan of deforestation in the country followed. Maathai realized that the consequences of this plan would affect not only the land but also Kenya's indigenous women. As a political activist and writer with a profound awareness of the suffering of indigenous Kenyan women, Maathai embodies the voice of the indigenous in her autobiographical memoir *Unbowed: One Woman's Story*. The subject of decolonizing indigenous women's understanding of gender and environment is a perpetual concern in her memoir. The interesting aspects found in Maathai's autobiography are its different representations of the resistance to violence, gender inequality, environmental injustice, and environmental crises (Nixon, 2011).

Due to the negative consequences of colonization, especially those related to the status of education and women, Maathai decided on a strategy to dedicate her activism towards the decolonization of education and the empowerment of indigenous women in Kenya. Her strategy mainly aimed at considering the land as a defining space where indigenous Kenyan women can play an active role in planting the seeds of both their plants and their identity.

Maathai's strategy was implemented in 1977 with the establishment of the Green Belt Movement project. The movement has two main objectives: how to regain the land's productivity and how to conserve water by planting trees. Moreover, the movement focuses on connecting female leadership development to environmental preservation (Clifford, 2017).

Recognizing Maathai's significant and enormous contributions, writers including Sidonie Smith, Julia Watson, and Rob Nixon have hailed her autobiography as a movement memoir (Nixon, 2011). With the release of *Unbowed: One Woman's Story*, Maathai's intellectual journey was recognized in 2004 when she became the first indigenous African woman recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. As a postcolonial ecofeminist writer, Maathai initiates the first profound connection between environment and women's agency. The activism of Maathai is brilliantly represented in *Unbowed* through the explanation of how colonial education is just one example of how colonization paired with the rise of global capitalism delegitimizes indigenous knowledge. Indeed, the writer laments the loss of African culture and the alienating impacts of colonization as she condemns the colonial education Kenyan students received colonial education at the cost of Kenyan traditions where even the mother tongue of the Kenyan people was completely forbidden in schools.

With this premise, this article intends to scrutinize the intersectional activism and environmentalism in Maathai's *Unbowed*, specifically how the author showcases the significant connection between gender and environmental issues through the perspective of indigenous Kenyan women.

## II. A BRIEF OVERVIEW ABOUT *UNBOWED*'S STRATEGIES

### A. *Indigenous Writers*

African female authors have significantly enriched the field of postcolonial and feminist studies. Some of the most prominent indigenous African writers include Wangari Maathai, Tsiti Dangarembga, and Chimamanda Adichie – each of whom are African female writers who have experienced the meaning of being silenced and alienated from their native countries. However, among these African female writers, it is Wangari Maathai who is considered the first African author to depict the indigenous Kenyan women as a potential force of decolonization (Smith, 2021). Still, all of these writers share a united conviction that one group of indigenous women from anywhere in the world can be active members of their society and a representation of not only the freedom of the land but also environmental justice. Postcolonialism and Ecofeminism engage the indigenous Kenyan women's attempts to restore the native identity of their land. Ecofeminism reveals the similarities between indigenous women and nature by reflecting the influence of nature on their definition of self and their role in life.

### B. *Innovative Decolonizing Activism Strategies*

In her memoir, Maathai examines innovative forms of decolonizing that empower women to not only oppose colonial capitalism but also reestablish their agency and join a group of indigenous women fighting to decolonize the environment and gender. Thus, this article reflects on how she challenges the idea that women, especially indigenous women, have no voice and can only speak about personal matters. Maathai reveals her motivation for undermining male hegemony, particularly, when the writer presents examples of decolonizing activism. These examples depict activism based on opposition and a gendered form of resistance; as a result, subversive activism is one tactic used in this genre. These women embody the attitude of self-sacrifice in their daily lives, and it connects with the way they repurpose the autobiographical tradition to express common experiences (Thompson, 2018). Maathai's courageous insistence is indicative of this spirit as if saying: "If we are going to shed blood because of our land, we will" (Thompson, 2018). Similarly, Bernice Johnson Reagan has described Maathai's activism as "coalition-building." For instance, Maathai provides a platform for women to organize opposition against adversarial forces for the benefit of the country as a whole. These forces include environmental deterioration, state repression, violence, gender discrimination, ethnic stereotypes, brutality, and corruption. Moreover, Kenyan women of the indigenous tribes who strive to reject imposed patriarchal and colonial presumptions share one nationalistic identity. What is most crucial to them, however, is planting their land to preserve water and wood. When each indigenous woman is deeply embedded in the cultivation of their land, they realize how their active roles not only reflect their agency but also their land's existence.

### C. *The Green Belt Movement*

The movement places a strong emphasis on engaging indigenous Kenyan women in leadership development for environmental preservation. The thousands of women who participated in the Green Belt Project saw the native trees they planted as signs of hope for the return of the communal values and farming methods that their ancestors practiced before European colonizers replaced native vegetation with non-native cash crops like coffee and tea (Clifford, 2017). Examples of these indigenous trees include native fig trees with root systems that help provide clean underground water. Clifford echoes Maathai's work, adding that Maathai has inspired indigenous Kenyan women to take action to encourage group planting of native trees, raising awareness of challenges with Kenya's vulnerable ecosystems and the importance of their remedy (Clifford, 2017). Women have previously kept quiet about the difficulties they faced in supporting their families. Alternatively, Maathai believes it is critical to offer traditional methods as alternatives to environmental damage. Maathai frequently promotes idealized ecological native uniqueness, for instance, she asks for a return to homogeneous cultures free of social conflict. Using the Green Belt Movement as an example, Maathai constructs her entire decolonization vision around her accounts of the tree-planting initiative. According to Maathai, the trees offered stability and clean water, they prevented soil erosion, and they allowed households to produce crops, providing them with a variety of food and nutrition. Maathai continues by detailing how the loss of the wonders and the trees caused a great deal of issues. She then admits that if they get the trees back, they can make up for these losses. Through giving indigenous women agency and autonomy, her stories reclaim their voices while also lament the loss of Kenyan culture and the alienating impacts of colonization.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The autobiographical memoir *Unbowed* serves as the main source for the investigation of the indigenous Kenyan women's struggle to deconstruct the image of the subaltern women as narrated by the indigenous lead Wangari Maathai. Although much has been written about different female African feminist texts, there has been little emphasis on creating an overall understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of Maathai's memoir. The autobiographical text serves as an intersectional narrative strategy that uses environmentally-themed issues as a practical approach to finding solutions for the questions of indigenous Kenyan women's rights and education. The following literature review features some of the most important articles published on the given thematic approach of *Unbowed*. Since there are a few articles that discuss this approach, this article introduces the overall critique of the memoir and presents theoretical frames that explain this approach.

Rob Nixon's work *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* explores the memoir's central approach which explains how Maathai's memoir can be defined as a "movement memoir" (Nixon, 2011). As the leading figure in the memoir, Maathai introduces a prominent indigenous figure who calls for a collective community of indigenous Kenyan women to create a social movement. Likewise, another text titled *Narrating the Self and Nation in Kenyan Autobiographical Writings* argues for the fact that *Unbowed* serves as a tool for how the culture can be re-imagined and defined in post-colonial Kenya. Samuel Ndogo contemplates how authors like Maathai use her memorization of Kenyan history as a narrative device to decolonize the colonizer's practices. To clarify Ndogo's argument, he asserts how "African authors represent their experiences as if they are bearing witness to social and historical transformations that have occurred on the continent during the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial epochs" (Ndogo, 2016). Similarly, in her research article entitled, "No Choice but to Strive: Gender, State Power, and Resistance in the Life Narratives of Emma Mashinini, Mamphela Ramphele, and Wangari Maathai", Courtney L. Thompson explains these narrative devices and the degree to which each activist is willing to put her life on the line for causes that reclaim the rights of the majority rather than a privileged few. The spirit of self-sacrifice is apparent in these women's daily lives and works together with how they reappropriate the autobiographical tradition to produce shared experiences (Thompson, 2018).

In the same vein, *Environment at the Margins: Literary and Environmental Studies in Africa* depicts Maathai's memoir as an ecofeminist narrative of "the connections between women's rights and the struggle against environmental degradation in the postcolonial nation, and how the writer fights against notions of authenticity used to justify oppressive gendered relationships and the plundering of the nation's ecosystems" (Caminero-Santangelo & Myers, 2011). As specified earlier in this article, there are a few criticisms of Maathai's memoir as an ecofeminist and postcolonial device narrative. Therefore, this article illustrates how the representations of the author's decolonizing activism in her autobiography validate Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's assertion in the edited text *De/Colonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women's Autobiography*. Smith and Watson subvert such autobiographical presentations drawn from both external and native cultural practices and reflect the diversity of the protagonist and her narrative journey. Smith and Watson emphasize that it is not their intention to universalize their criticism and that their volume is not meant to proclaim the colonization of "woman" or the colonization of the human subject on a global scale. Instead, they emphasize how they intend to provide investigations based on particular locations of colonialism such as colonial Kenya, India, and Indochina/Vietnam and its aftereffects (Smith & Watson, 1992).

Revolving around this theoretical framework of a post-colonial subject, Maathai's memoir also ventures into Fanonian theories that address how the processes of colonial conquest and the subsequent bureaucratization of imperial power shape the subjectivity of colonized people. In this vein, this perspective of postcolonialism draws attention to Maathai's autobiographical self, exemplifying how the colonized subject becomes a central concept in this article. Following this perspective, Smith and Watson's analysis examined the reason why so few critics discuss Maathai's autobiography or the colonial subject's autobiography in their writing and how it can be read as a "potential site of decolonization" (Smith & Watson, 1992). Consequently, this article investigates Maathai's autobiography as a postcolonial ecofeminist.

#### IV. INVESTIGATING DECOLONIZATION AND ECOFEMINIST NARRATIVES IN *UNBOWED*

Wangari Maathai's memoir *Unbowed: One Woman's Story* was published in October 2006 and recounts the life of Maathai and both her activism and her educational journey to the United States. Maathai, a rural village girl from the Kikuyu tribe, challenged social and political conventions associated with her background and gender. After Maathai finished her doctorate in the United States, she became a motivational figure to many indigenous Kenyan women, particularly after the Green Belt Movement. Maathai as an activist motivated indigenous Kenyan women by reminding them that they have nowhere else to go. We cannot tire to keep going," she wrote, "We owe it to the current and future generations of all species to rise up and live the talk; as women and men continue this task of clothing this naked Earth, we are in the company of many others throughout the world who care passionately about this blue plane" (Maathai, 2006, p. 295). "We remained unbowed" was the continuous slogan that Maathai keeps reminding the indigenous Kenyan women to follow even today.

Maathai realizes the importance of fulfilling the dream of her ancestors who consider the land as a parallel meaning to their own existence. The writer uses her own scholarly journey to the United States as a solid foundation to resist the imposed stereotypical images of indigenous Kenyan women. Words like weak, barbarous, ignorant, and submissive reflect the troubled journey of these indigenous Kenyan women in rejecting these stereotypes. Maathai's philosophy in narrating her life journey became the new hope for indigenous Kenyan women to construct their identity. Her decision to empower and support the indigenous Kenyan women's true identity was challenging because indigenous Kenyan women seemed to be trapped in their fears of patriarchal political corruption. In *Unbowed*, Maathai turned these fears into alarming courage in the indigenous women, clearly stating that "if we are going to shed blood because of our land, we will" (Maathai, 2006, p. 261). Numerous actions in Maathai's memoir reveal her continuous attempts to reveal how the land motivates indigenous Kenyan women through planting seeds and providing water across the Green Belt to realize their active role in society. Indeed, the writer takes pleasure in admiring the land:

At the time of my birth, the land around Ihithe was still lush, green, and fertile. The seasons were so regular that you could almost predict that the long, monsoon rains would start falling in mid-March. In July you knew



it would be so foggy you would not be able to see ten feet in front of you, and so cold in the morning that the grass would be silvery-white with frost. In Kikuyu, July is known as *mworia nyoni*, the month when birds rot, because birds would freeze to death and fall from trees. We lived in a land abundant with shrubs, and creepers. (Maathai, 2006, p. 3)

The lush and green environment of Maathai's youth is marked by the rich, sufficient substances of the land. She emphasizes that although her people, like other Africans worldwide, are not affluent in the traditional sense of the word, they never went hungry because "hunger was virtually unknown" (Maathai, 2006, p. 4). Maathai's environmental awareness is revealed through these evocative descriptions of the terrain and weather patterns, which supports her lifelong commitment to environmental issues. It becomes apparent that the description of land in her book is meant to support a broader argument, revealing her involvement in environmental conservation and gender issues. Indeed, the majority of her memories center on the value of preserving nature and the sense of peace that pervaded her surroundings as she grew up. This is clear from the tales she recalls and the pictures she uses to portray that pristine setting.

However, imperial adventure disturbs this harmony of nature and memories. In this new colonial era, the grass was removed to make room for commercial coffee and tea plantations. Maathai emphasizes the negative effects of colonialism on the indigenous people through her analysis of the diverse conflicts and complexities in her indigenous Kenyan community. All the way back to her grandparents' generation in the 1800s, she describes the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras as the "European world," one that remained in isolation and had very limited contact with the outside world. "I did not know my grandparents, although they were from a pre-colonial era." Except for the Maasais, "they would not have interacted with any other communities outside of the central highlands" (Maathai, 2006).

Even while these surrounding villages occasionally clashed, they found means to promote peace between them, like intermarriages though she does not necessarily romanticize this period. Conversely, she made a point of emphasizing the fact that these communities "thought" themselves autonomous entities or nations, to use Benedict Anderson's definition of a nation. As a result, the colonial expedition severely disturbed the seeming "order" that pervaded the precolonial era. Colonialism therefore becomes a turning point that results in a new definition of these groups (Ndogo, 2016). Maathai emphasizes this when she declares she was aware that her parents did not raise her in an atmosphere that "encouraged fear or uncertainty. There were numerous reasons to dream instead as well as be imaginative and creative" (Maathai, 2006, p. 19).

Ken Coates, in his definition of Indigenous Kenyan people in the text *A Global History of Indigenous Peoples Struggle and Survival*, argues that decolonization and indigenization processes are taking place in the majority of indigenous societies. In Coates' assertion, he clarifies that they take part in uprisings against colonial governments, foreign influences, environmental damage, and other issues. It is apparent in the indigenous Kenyan people's attempts to face intense economic and political pressure to conform to the local, national, or international norms how they are attempting to preserve and protect their cultural independence (Coates, 2004). Therefore, ongoing definitions of the collective identity frequently see the division of their property or the absence of control over resources as a crucial component. Coates clarifies that indigenous peoples are deeply connected to the land across generations (Coates, 2004). Maathai, for instance, remembers how the changes in her community had an impact on the indigenous people and their land as she signals that:

I saw rivers silted with topsoil, much of which was coming from the forest where plantations of commercial trees had replaced indigenous forest. I noticed that much of the land had been covered by trees, bushes, and grasses when I was growing up had been replaced by tea and coffee. (Maathai, 2006, p. 121)

This in turn creates a context in which readers can understand simply how and why Maathai's native land is on the verge of being lost due to both colonial capitalism's exploitation of natural resources and postcolonial lust for material possession. It is a mindless appropriation of collective wealth for bureaucratic and private utility (Maathai, 2006, p. 142).

In addition to the colonial exploitation of the Kenyan people, Maathai specifies the close relationship between environmental and gender issues. She emphasized that women and children are those who are most adversely affected by these negative effects of colonization. In one instance, she explains how rural women are mostly in charge of cultivating the land, making planting decisions, tending to the crops, and gathering food. According to Maathai in *Unbowed*, she writes as she sat there "listening to the women discuss nutrition, energy, and water, the writer could realize that everything lacked depends on the environment around them" (Maathai, 2006, p. 124). These indigenous Kenyan women were defining their new agendas. Maathai recounts how these women's lives and their land are specifically impacted by developments in her area. She clarifies how she

saw rivers silted with topsoil, much of which was coming from the forest where plantations of commercial trees had replaced indigenous forest. I noticed that much of the land had been covered by trees, bushes, and grasses when I was growing up had been replaced by tea and coffee. (Maathai, 2006, p. 121)

In this strategy, she explains how women are the first to notice environmental deterioration that negatively affects agricultural production: if the well runs dry, they are the ones concerned about finding alternative sources of water and the ones who have to go far to get it. As mothers, they can see it in their children's tears and hear it in their babies' screams when the food they serve their family is contaminated with toxins or impurities (Maathai, 2006, p. 123). As Maathai points out:

As forests and watersheds became degraded, it was the women who had to walk the extra miles to fetch water and firewood; it was the women who had to plough and plant in once rich but now denuded land where, without the anchorage of trees, topsoil was washed and blown away. (Maathai, 2006, p. 140)

In another example, she narrates how:

During the rainy season, thousands of tons of topsoil are eroded from Kenya's countryside by rivers and washed into the ocean and lakes. Additionally, the soil is lost through wind erosion in areas where the land is devoid of vegetative cover. Losing topsoil should be considered analogous to losing territory to an invading enemy. (Maathai, 2006, p. 7)

Moreover, Nixon's remark that women actively participating in the Green Belt Movement strategically used what can be called intersectional environmentalism to extend their support and legitimacy is also pertinent in this context. Moreover, they served as an inspiration for "other civil rights campaigns that did not directly address the environment, such as the battles for women's rights, the release of political prisoners, and improved political transparency" (Nixon, 2011). The women, he continued, had been forcefully excluded from subsequent development myths which had betrayed them. They were convinced of the connections between environmental aggression, poverty, and starvation (Nixon, 2011). This was exemplified clearly when the Moi government claimed ownership of Karura Forest and Uhuru Park for private "development" ventures. Whether they were of colonial or neocolonial origin, Maathai was able to rally women who had historically been the victims of plunder that favored small male elites. The fact is that the regime attempted (without success) to fight against the threat that this intersectional ecology posed in 1985, and this may be seen in the relationship between women's activism and the Green Belt movement (Nixon, 2011). The dictatorship anticipated that, in order to promote greater political accountability, these indigenous women tending to seedlings in their rural nurseries would aid in the beginning of a bigger effort to end direct and indirect violence (Nixon, 2011). Maathai illustrates how women, especially rural women, are likely to be negatively impacted by environmental deterioration through these examples.

Therefore, as Nixon observes, the postcolonial ecofeminism of *Unbowed* is evident in the way rural women in particular experienced the "perfect storm" of colonial land theft, dispossession, individualization, and the struggle to continue serving as the main landowners despite increasingly difficult conditions such as soil erosion and forest stripping (Maathai, 2006, p. 40).

The autobiography investigates how environmental justice began to affect women the most. This is arguably an accurate description of *Unbowed* as readers comprehend the way the political convergence of the conflicts for indigenous women's rights and the environment in Kenya made experiential sense. It is important to mention that Maathai has earned a place in the literary heritage of African women because of her approach to how she depicts gender issues and empowers women in her memoir, and as "one which has been denied African women writers" for a very long time "because gender has been ignored as a factor in the development of African literature" (Stratton, 2002). Therefore, one might be tempted to situate *Unbowed* as more of an ecofeminist postcolonial biography.

## V. CONCLUSION

In this memoir, indigenous Kenyan women are displayed as a symbolic depiction of the ideal of an indigenous woman who is highly motivated, serving as an example to encourage other indigenous people to realize their full capabilities. Maathai has articulated in her memoir that she places greater value on indigenous Kenyan women than on indigenous Kenyan men. She reveals that indigenous women experience a more profound activism evolution, whereas men strive to acquire financial profit from the land. When read in this context, Maathai's decolonizing activism, which is also focused on the Green Belt Movement and the stories of the tree planting, shows how she did not let educational disparities affect her relationships with groups of women who were regarded as less educated; rather, these women were welcomed and made up the majority members of the Green Belt Movement. Her strategy for empowering indigenous women helped narrow the gap between those with formal education and those without it. Here, this article claims that the Green Belt Movement is a postcolonial ecofeminist movement that liberates and strengthens indigenous women of all educational levels. As a result, there is a need for additional research on both the decolonization and ecofeminist activism narratives that are both completely unexplored.

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# Status Quo of the Professional Identity of Teachers: A Quantitative Study of College EFL Teachers in China

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**Abstract**—The professional identity of teachers has been a recurring subject of research in recent years with most of the studies being theoretical or qualitative. However, there is still a lack in the number of quantitative studies done on the professional identity of teachers using a measured scale or inventory. Aiming to find out the status quo of the professional identity of college EFL teachers in the context of college English teaching reform, this study attempts to establish and validate a measure of the professional identity of teachers' questionnaire. With good validity and reliability, the questionnaire consists of five constructs: occupational behavior tendency, value identity, English teaching reform, self-efficacy and job satisfaction. The findings of this study indicate that college EFL teachers have a relatively high level of professional identity with the constituting constructs of the professional identity of college teachers having scored from high to low as follows: English teaching reform, professional behavior tendency, job satisfaction, self-efficacy and value identity. Moreover, there is no significant difference in the professional identity level of college EFL teachers concerning gender. Finally, the implications of exploring the professional identity of teachers are also discussed.

**Index Terms**—gender, status quo, the professional identity of teachers

## I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching college English in China has undergone a series of educational reforms over the past 20 years. These reforms have had a great impact on college EFL teachers as they are the front-line education practitioners. As a result, there has been an increased focus on the inner world of teachers with more and more researchers attracted to the subject of the professional identity of teachers both at home and abroad. According to previous literature, the professional identity of teachers serves as an important factor in understanding their professional lives and career decision-making, as well as being an important factor in teacher motivation, effectiveness and retention (Berg, 2002; Day et al., 2005; Lasky, 2005; Day et al., 2006; Avalos & Aylwin, 2007). Therefore, it is worth studying the status quo of the professional identity of teachers in the context of college English teaching reform.

However, considering the previous research carried out on the professional identity of teachers, most studies can be considered theoretical (Korthagen, 2004; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; etc.) or qualitative (Walkington, 2005; Hamman et al., 2010; etc.). That is, there is little quantitative research that operationalized and measured the construct of teacher identity (Beijaard et al., 2004; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Avraamidou, 2014; Izadinia, 2013; Van Lankveld et al., 2017). This lack lies in the absence of an instrument for measuring teacher identity (Izadinia, 2013; Avraamidou, 2014; Izadinia, 2014) in different contexts. Therefore, to conduct research that measures the status quo of the professional identity of college EFL teachers in China, this study attempts to create a questionnaire as the measurement instrument rooted in the previous literature on the professional identity of teachers. In this study, college EFL teachers refer to college English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers who are responsible for teaching English to non-English major students in China's colleges and universities.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Identity has long been a subject of study in fields as varied as psychology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, theology, and literature (Holland & Lanchicotte, 2007; Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Taking the initial step in the 1990s in the developed countries of the West, teacher identity has attracted widespread attention from social science research after 50 years of development (Martel & Wang, 2014). Moreover, research on teacher identity became a separate field of study in the first decade of the 21st century (Hao, 2014). Although there have been attempts to define the professional identity of teachers from different perspectives, no consensus on its definition has been reached. Scholars

hold diversified opinions and understandings of professional identity (Knowles, 1992). For example, from the individual lens, the professional identity of teachers refers to the teaching beliefs of foreign language teachers and the certainty of their social and cultural roles (Richards, 2008). Similarly, it is argued that professional identity refers to the perception teachers have about what a teacher is with full consideration of their understanding of constant interaction with their context (Kelchtermans, 2009). From the interaction lens, Beijaard et al. (2000) explained professional identity as something established and maintained through interaction in social situations and the negotiation of roles within a particular context. As for the constructs of professional identity, there are also no standards for the structure of the professional identity of teachers. Some argued that it consists of four dimensions: centrality, valence, solidarity and self-presentation (Kremer & Hofman, 1985) while Beijaard et al. (2000) suggested that teachers derive their professional identity from (mostly combinations of) the ways they see themselves as subject matter experts, pedagogical experts, and didactical experts. Besides that, it is argued that there are three key components of a teacher's professional identity, namely cognition, emotion, and action (Zembylas, 2003; Yuan & Lee, 2015; Han, 2017).

The complexity of the professional identity of teachers might lie in its ongoing and dynamic characteristics. The professional identity of teachers develops over time as an individual interpretation of disciplinary knowledge, standards (Pennington, 2014), and practices acquired through education and experience in work contexts (Pennington, 2014), and is closely related to the response of teachers to educational reforms (Beijaard et al., 2004; Tao & Gao, 2017). Additionally, it has a great influence on the teaching effect, the professional development of foreign language teachers and their attitude towards education reform (Tsui, 2007). Thus, it is worth exploring the professional identity of teachers in the context of college English teaching reform in China which brings huge changes to the teaching objectives, teaching methods, teaching materials, and so on, leading to a great challenge for college EFL teachers.

To measure the status quo of the professional identity of college EFL teachers in China, this study attempts to create and use a questionnaire as a measuring tool based on the previous literature. There have been many attempts to explore the different components or elements of the professional identity of teachers in China in the past decades which created and used instruments and scales for investigating teacher identity (Wei et al, 2013; Tang, 2013; Xun et al., 2014; Li & Yan, 2018). However, most of the research was concerned with primary school teachers, novice teachers and pre-service teachers. These instruments were used from different perspectives and lacked applicability to the research performed on college EFL teachers. For example, Xun et al. (2014) created the teacher identity inventory for measuring the identity of high school English teachers which included four categories with eight factors. Zhao and Zhang (2017) constructed a scale with mainland Chinese samples to measure the professional identity of pre-service teachers. The scale contained three dimensions of identity: intrinsic value identity, extrinsic value identity, and volitional behavior identity.

Based on previous literature about the professional identity of teachers and focused on the college English teaching reform context in China, this study suggested that the professional identity of teachers comprises five dimensions: occupational behavior tendency, value identity, English teaching reform, self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Occupational behavior tendency refers to college EFL teachers' behavioral engagement, willingness, tendency or input in college English teaching practice, academic research, and the implementation of college English reform in China. Value identity is a kind of inner belief system abstracted out by individual college EFL teachers in the process of teaching, including college EFL teachers' positive understanding and evaluation of the significance and function of the teaching profession. English teaching reform refers to the college EFL teachers' perception, understanding, practice and evaluation of their own professional knowledge and skills as well as the policies, methods and effects of English teaching reform under the background of college English teaching reform. Self-efficacy refers to college EFL teachers' belief in their capability to organize and perform their daily English teaching practice and other profession-related activities effectively. Job satisfaction refers to the college EFL teachers' attitude based on the evaluation of the college English teaching task and teaching context.

Given the increasing attention and need for understanding the professional identity of college EFL teachers, this study seeks to establish a questionnaire and measure the status quo of the professional identity of college EFL teachers. Therefore, the research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What is the status quo of the professional identity of college EFL teachers in China's Hebei Province?
2. Is there any significant gender difference regarding the professional identity of college-level EFL teachers?

### III. METHOD

This study employs a quantitative method by developing a questionnaire to measure the status quo of the professional identity of teachers.

#### A. Instruments

This study employed a quantitative research methodology to measure the levels of the professional identity of college EFL teachers. It is argued in the previous literature that the interaction of professional identity manifests itself in the following five elements: occupational behavior tendency, value identity, English teaching reform, self-efficacy and job satisfaction, respectively. The five elements serve as the indicators of the professional identity of teachers which demonstrates how they engage in and convey a strong willingness to join the profession, the self-cognition and

experience of the professional meaning and identity of teachers, how teachers respond to educational reform, their competence of organizing and performing their daily teaching activities efficiently, and their thoughts after evaluating different aspects of their work and work situation. Based on the above five dimensions, this study managed to compile an adopted questionnaire and use it as the research instrument.

Totalling 27 items, the questionnaire was made up of two sections: the first one was the personal data basic background demographics of the respondents which included their university, age, number of years teaching, salary, and educational background, among other information. The second section used a five-point Likert scale to rate occupational behavior tendency (items 1 to 6), value identity (items 7 to 11), English teaching reform (items 12 to 18), self-efficacy (items 19 to 22), and job satisfaction (items 23 to 27), respectively. A five-point Likert scale was used for all the items in the tool with the five points ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 equals “Strongly Disagree”, 2 equals “Disagree”, 3 equals “Neutral”, 4 equals “Agree”, and 5 equals “Strongly agree”. This questionnaire was designed based on repeated reading of the literature by different researchers. It was then reviewed by two experts and revised according to their suggestions. After it was revised, it was once again reviewed and found to be a sound and valid questionnaire that could be used as an official data collection tool in this study. Finally, it was trial-tested through a pilot study.

After factor analysis with an SPSS of 25.0, the KMO value reached 0.890 (Table 2) indicating that the sample size met the requirements and the data is suitable for factor analysis. The significance level value of Bartlett’s sphere test is 0.000, demonstrating that there is a significant relationship between variables and indicating that the structure validity is good. As shown in Table 3, the  $\alpha$  coefficient of college English the professional identity of teachers and each dimension is higher than 0.8, which indicates that the reliability quality of the questionnaire is high and can be used for further analysis.

TABLE 1  
KMO AND BARTLETT TESTS

KMO sampling suitability quantity		.890
Bartlett’s sphericity test	approximates chi-square	1874.032
	degrees of freedom	210
	Significant	.000

TABLE 2  
RELIABILITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Dimension	Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of items
Total	0.967	27
Professional behavior tendency	0.866	6
Value identity	0.837	5
English teaching reform	0.96	7
Self-efficacy	0.902	4
Job satisfaction	0.853	5

### B. Participants

To investigate the status quo of professional identities of college EFL teachers in China, this study targets college EFL teachers in the Hebei Province as the research participants who are of different ages, different titles and different teaching experiences. The study included 134 college EFL teachers (24 males and 110 females) as participants in this study. In terms of professional titles, more than half of the participants were lecturers and one-third were associate professors. As for years of work, 53.7% of the respondents had been working as college EFL teachers for 11 to 20 years, while 6.7% of them were novice teachers with less than five years of teaching experience. When it came to educational background, only 15.7% of the respondents held bachelor’s degrees while the others possessed master’s degrees, doctorate degrees or were Ph.D. candidates.

TABLE 3  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

	Classification	Number	Proportion (%)
Gender	Male	24	17.9%
	Female	110	82.1%
Title	Professor	6	4.5%
	Associate professor	45	33.6%
	Lecturer	80	59.7%
Years of work	Teaching assistant	3	2.2%
	Within 5 years	9	6.7%
	6 to 10 years	22	16.4%
	11 to 20 years	72	53.7%
	More than 21 years	31	23.1%
Educational background	Bachelor	21	15.7%
	Master degree	92	68.7%

### C. Procedures

The questionnaire was compiled on the platform WJX (<https://www.wjx.cn/>) and distributed through WeChat and QQ (popular instant messaging applications in China) by sharing the link of the questionnaire. The selected faculties within each university were contacted, and the nature and purpose of the research were explained clearly and in confidentiality. Volunteers and anonymity were also ensured. This process took the researcher seven days to receive a sufficient amount of data for the research. After one week, 140 questionnaires were collected and 6 were eliminated as the respondents were teachers who had already transformed from college EFL teachers to administrative staff or English major teachers.

This study analyzed the data by using SPSS 25.0. By employing one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance), this research analyzed the differences among the professional identity of college EFL teachers within the five dimensions mentioned in the previous section (occupational behavior tendency, value identity, English teaching reform, self-efficacy and job satisfaction). Moreover, the differences in the professional identity of college EFL teachers were also analyzed in terms of their genders, teaching ages and professional titles. As the mean value reflected the central tendency of the sample and the standard deviation reflected the deviation tendency of the sample, the mean value (M) and standard deviation (SD) of each dimension of teacher identity were calculated.

### D. Results

Aiming to figure out the status quo of the professional identity of college EFL teachers in China, this study analyzed the data collected from the first part of the quantitative study through SPSS 25.0. Using a one-way ANOVA and an independent t-test, this research analyzed the differences among the professional identity of college EFL teachers in the five dimensions mentioned in the previous section, namely, occupational behavior tendency, value identity, English teaching reform, self-efficacy and job satisfaction. The differences in the status quo of the professional identity of teachers were also explored in terms of their genders.

The total number of respondents who participated in the quantitative study was 134 – with 24 being male and 110 of them being female which is most likely in line with the current proportion of male and female EFL teachers at Chinese universities. According to the 2020 China Education Statistical Yearbook, there were 1.833 million full-time teachers in China's higher education institutions in 2020 with women accounting for 51.2 percent and an even higher percentage of them being female EFL teachers.

To find out gender differences in the professional identity of teachers, an independent t-test was used to analyze the data. A t-test compares the means of two independent groups to determine whether there is statistical evidence that shows that the associated population means are significantly different. As presented in Table 4.1, it seems that female teachers have a higher professional identity level than male teachers in four out of the five dimensions, the exception being self-efficacy. The significance (P) score of the five variables is greater than 0.05 indicating that there is no significant influence brought on by gender differences concerning the five dimensions of the professional identity of teachers. It also can be seen in Table 4.1 that the average score of the professional identity of male teachers is 3.94, and the professional identity of female teachers is 4.04 with a T value of -0.624 proving that the level of professional identity of female teachers is slightly higher than that of male teachers. The significance (P) score of this variable was 0.537 - greater than 0.05 - which reflects the influence of gender on the professional identity of teachers did not reach a level of statistical significance. Therefore, gender has no significant influence on the professional identity levels of college EFL teachers.

TABLE 4  
GENDER DIFFERENCES IN COLLEGE ENGLISH THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF TEACHERS

Dimension	Gender (Mean ± standard deviation)		T	P
	M (n=24)	F (n=110)		
Total	3.935±0.748	4.036±0.570	-0.624	0.537
Professional behavior tendency	4.243±0.750	4.253±0.653	-0.060	0.952
Value identity	3.733±0.886	3.975±0.628	-1.575	0.118
English teaching reform	4.202±0.962	4.349±0.687	-0.710	0.484
Self-efficacy	4.115±0.804	4.086±0.673	0.160	0.874
Job satisfaction	4.042±0.846	4.144±0.666	-0.554	0.584

According to Table 4, the average score of the professional identity of college EFL teachers is 4.018, which proves that college EFL teachers have a high level of professional identity. The standard deviation of college EFL teachers' identity is 0.604, which indicates that college EFL teachers' cognition of professional identity is, to some extent, different. Among the five dimensions of the professional identity of college EFL teachers, the mean value of English teaching reform is the highest with 4.323, which shows that college EFL teachers who are involved in English teaching reform have a higher level of professional identity. On the contrary, as for the professional behavior tendency dimension, the standard deviation of the minimum is 0.668 - the smallest of the five dimensions - which proves that, compared with the other four dimensions, college EFL teachers have consistent views on professional behavior tendency. The mean value of value identity is the lowest at 3.931, which indicates that college EFL teachers have a

lower level of professional identity regarding value identity than any other dimension. In terms of self-efficacy, the mean value is 4.091, which is a median mean value but higher than the average data. This suggests that college EFL teachers have a relatively high level of professional identity when it concerns self-efficacy.

TABLE 5  
STATUS QUO OF COLLEGE ENGLISH THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF TEACHERS

Dimension	Min	Max	Mean value	SD
Occupational behavior tendency	1	5	4.251	0.668
Value identity	1	5	3.931	0.6837
English teaching reform	1	5	4.323	0.742
Self-efficacy	1	5	4.091	0.695
Job satisfaction	1	5	4.125	0.699
Total	1	5	4.018	0.604

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The above provides the findings from the results of the quantitative analysis concerned with the research question, which is based on the status quo of the professional identity of college EFL teachers displayed.

According to the findings above, it can be concluded that college EFL teachers have a high level of professional identity with different levels in terms of gender within the five dimensions of the professional identity of teachers, namely occupational behavior tendency, value identity, English teaching reform, self-efficacy and job satisfaction. The specific details follow.

First, among all five constructs of the professional identity of teachers, college EFL teachers have the highest level of professional identity in terms of English teaching reform. This is of great possibility because college English teaching reforms are prevalent in higher educational institutions in China, and have been conducted since 2002 (Cai, 2004). This brought with it a series of profound changes to college English teaching and served as an inevitable part of the teaching practices of college EFL teachers. The changes brought on by the constant reforms created more requirements for college EFL teachers but also made them increasingly better qualified (Tsui, 2007; Xu & Liu, 2009). This indicates that college English teaching reforms within Chinese universities have put college EFL teachers at an advantage. They show a distinctively high level of professional identity, which made them active participants in college English teaching reforms. This is also in line with the view that the shielding and releasing of teachers' subjective power has become the key to the success or failure of education reform (Wu & Li, 2015).

Second, as for the occupational behavior tendency dimension, which ranks second only to English teaching reform, the level of the professional identity of college EFL teachers is relatively high when it comes to teacher engagement, willingness, and input in the practice of teaching college English. Occupational behavior tendency constitutes a state of preparation for a teacher's professional identity. It estimates the possibility of the occurrence of college EFL teachers' specific behavior and is the subjective intention of teachers to adjust and rationalize a certain behavior. In addition, with the smallest standard deviation among the five constructs, it proves that, compared with the other four dimensions, college EFL teachers have a consistent willingness to be involved in college English teaching in terms of professional behavior tendency.

Furthermore, as indicated in the findings above, the professional identity of college EFL teachers is at a moderate level when it comes to job satisfaction and self-efficacy. In this study, job satisfaction refers to the college EFL teachers' attitudes based on the evaluation of the college English teaching tasks and teaching context. It suggests that college EFL teachers are satisfied and possess the fulfillment for the job of being a college English teacher in the context of college English teaching reform in China. Self-efficacy refers to college EFL teachers' belief in their capability to organize and perform their daily English teaching practice and other professionally-related activities effectively. Due to the influence and challenges brought by English teaching reforms, there are different types of responses from college EFL teachers (McCulloch, 2000) which contribute to their moderate professional identity level. This is also in line with the view that job satisfaction and self-efficacy are key factors in the formation of the professional identity of teachers (Canrinus et al., 2012).

When it comes to the last construct, value identity, the level of the professional identity of college EFL teachers is the lowest when compared to the other four. Items related to value identity from the questionnaire are statements concerned with the social status and importance of college EFL teachers as a specific occupation. With the lowest score being value identity, this means that college EFL teachers are not sure of their high social status, which is actually true in the current situation. Compared with other faculties in the same university, they are usually at a disadvantage and even marginalized because of managerial reforms that have taken place in Chinese universities (Huang & Guo, 2019). Although their practical knowledge and skills are valued, their services are typically viewed as supplementary to university-generated knowledge (Xu, 2014). To some extent, they are in the dilemma of being college teachers but lacking in organizational support.



After introducing the comprehensive status quo of the professional identity of college EFL teachers from the five constructs, the specific situation of the professional identity of teachers concerned with gender difference is presented.

First of all, it is inferred from the findings that there is no significant difference in the professional identity level of college EFL teachers in terms of different genders. However, it is a prominent fact that there are more female teachers than male teachers in many countries, and this is especially true in China. Teaching is a highly gendered profession (Tašner, 2017). Data from the countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) show that, on average, women make up more than two-thirds of teachers from pre-primary to tertiary education. Several reasons have contributed to this historical problem. First, from the perspective of feminism, Fromkin and Rodman (1983) suggested that the increase of female teachers resulted in occupational inheritance such as the influence of a parent's or siblings' profession which would lead to them entering the teaching profession. Moreover, it is influenced by the thought that, starting from birth, the female brain is more situated for language learning (Dionne et al., 2003).

Similarly, the number of female teachers is increasing in China. In this study, male teachers accounted for 17.91% while female teachers accounted for 82.09%. Although the scale of participants in this study cannot be representative of the whole country, it also reflects that the gender imbalance among college EFL teachers is prominent. However, this significant gender difference barely poses an impact on the professional identity of college EFL teachers. Overall, female teachers possess a higher level of professional identity than male teachers. However, in terms of self-efficacy, the professional identity level of the male teachers is higher, indicating that male college teachers are more confident in their ability to organize and perform their English teaching practices. Although female teachers behaved better than male teachers in the constructs of professional behavior tendency, value identity, English teaching reform and job satisfaction, the imbalanced gender ratio of college EFL teachers deserves notice and the generation of stereotypes of college EFL teachers should be prevented.

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, based on the analysis of the data collected via the questionnaire, the status quo of the professional identity of college EFL teachers was revealed. It can be inferred that college EFL teachers have a relatively high level of professional identity, with the constituting constructs of the professional identity of college teachers scoring differently, from high to low, English teaching reform, professional behavior tendency, job satisfaction, self-efficacy and value identity. According to the definition of the five constructs of the professional identity of teachers mentioned in this study, the findings of this study indicated that college EFL teachers are increasingly engaging in college English reforms, are making significant inputs into college English teaching reform, are generally satisfied with the current teaching task and teaching context, are maintaining their belief in their capability to perform general English teaching practices, and are possessing a relatively positive understanding and evaluation of the teaching profession as college EFL teachers. Moreover, although there is a prominent gender imbalance among college EFL teachers in China, there is no significant difference in the professional identity level of college EFL teachers in terms of different genders.

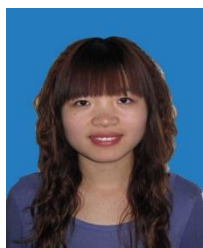
There are benefits contributing to the study on teacher professional identity such as how positively it affects teaching behavior (Zhao & Zhang, 2017), how it enhances their confidence in their decision to work as teachers and proves their commitment to the profession (Rots et al., 2010; Hanna et al., 2019). This study is valuable for understanding college EFL teachers' behavior, values, beliefs and interpretation of knowledge and teaching practice. Therefore, the professional identity of college teachers is worth exploring more in future research. Moreover, the results from this research are preliminary and further study on other factors that might possess different levels of professional identity, such as teaching years, professional titles, educational background, and the like has not yet been verified. Furthermore, the influential factors and development of the professional identity of teachers are also worth exploring in specific contexts with a growing appreciation of the need to situate teachers' identities in their own sociocultural contexts (Day, 2013; Edwards & Edwards, 2017).

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# Dialogue in Lotman and Bakhtin: Implications for Foreign Language Education

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**Abstract**—Dialogue, based on Yuri (Juri) Lotman’s perspective, is an ontological characteristic of the semiosphere and the basis for semiosis in cultural semiotics; however, for Mikhail Bakhtin, it is a feature of language and communication. The notion of dialogue is fundamental to both of them. The current study attempts to explore the similarities and differences between Lotman’s and Bakhtin’s dialogues and has pedagogical implications for foreign language education. According to our findings, ‘I–She/he’ and ‘I–I’ communication channels exist both in Lotman’s and Bakhtin’s dialogues, and their dialogues are in the semiosphere. Bakhtin’s dialogue focuses on language, context, time, monologue, polyphony, heteroglossia, external mechanism, and humans, but Lotman’s dialogue centers on culture, text, space, multilingualism, internal mechanism, humans, and non-humans. Finally, this paper provides references for linguists in foreign language education and semioticians, and it is aimed to benefit college students taking foreign language education.

**Index Terms**—dialogue, foreign language education, intersubjective, semiotics, semiosphere

## I. INTRODUCTION

Dialogue is fundamental and significant to Yuri Lotman (1922–1993) and Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975), but there are some differences between them. Lotman (1990) regards dialogue as the basic meaning-making mechanism in the semiosphere, which is the elementary unit of semiosis in Lotman’s holistic theory of culture; Bakhtin sees dialogue as a word, discourse, language, or culture. However, for Lotman, dialogue is an ontological characteristic of the semiosphere and the basis for semiosis in cultural semiotics. In other words, the external semiosphere is no dialogue. The semiosphere is the semiotic space of semiotic systems and the basic unit of semiosis (Lotman, 1990). For Bakhtin, however, dialogue is a feature of language and communication. Everyday speech is a dialogue because it involves words and voices; different festivals in Eastern and Western countries are dialogues, since they involve different languages. There are scholarly comparisons of Bakhtin’s and Lotman’s dialogues (Bonafin, 1997; Danow, 1986; Oliver, 2016), but none is comprehensive. Many foreign language (FL) scholars have related dialogue to FL education: Fan and Wang (2016) analyzed dialogue in a monologue on college English teaching; Han and Wang (2021) investigated the correlation between Chinese EFL teachers’ self-efficacy and reflection from a psychological perspective; and Wang et al. (2022) explored love pedagogy in second-language education. However, these studies do not mention the implications of dialogue for FL education: thus, this paper is aimed at filling this research gap. Through a comparative study of dialogue in Lotman and Bakhtin, this article explores similarities and differences and suggests pedagogical implications for FL education. The significance of this paper is that it combines semiotics with FL education, constructs an intersubjective foreign language teaching model (IFLTM), and improves the FL quality of FL teachers and college students. It is aimed to be a useful source of reference for semioticians, as well as for linguists and college students in FL education.

## II. LOTMAN’S DIALOGUE AND THE SEMIOSPHERE

Lotman was a prominent philosopher and culturologist of the Tartu–Moscow school. The following key concepts of his dialogue—organizing principles of the semiosphere, the properties of dialogue as an ontological characteristic, two communication models, and the five stages of dialogue—can help one understand his dialogue clearly.

### A. Organizing Principles of the Semiosphere

The *semiosphere* was proposed by Yuri Lotman in cultural semiotics in 1984, and it is similar to Vladimir Vernadsky’s biological concept of the biosphere, including living organisms and their environment (Kotov & Kull,

2011). However, Lotman (1999) defines the semiosphere as the semiotic space necessary for semiotic systems, not the sum of different semiotic systems immersed in it. It is the precondition of semiosis, because signs do not exist external semiosphere.

The dialogue follows the semiosphere's organizing principles and can be reduced to three points:

(1) The center and periphery coexist in the asymmetric semiosphere. No matter how asymmetrical the internal space of a semiosphere is, it is a unity like in the Chinese 'He' culture, which appeared in *The Analects of Confucius* and *Lao Tseu*. Various sign systems in the semiosphere communicate with each other directly and indirectly, because no sign system is isolated (Uspenskij, 2013). For example, the Chinese character system is not only related to Chinese culture, but also related to other FLs. If the semiosphere is a large circle, various small shapes (sign systems) are contained in it. Owing to heterogeneity and asymmetry, these various shapes include the center and periphery. The center is a well-developed and organized language, while the peripheral space is a non-developed and amorphous language. For example, English as the most developed and organized language is at the center, while Chinglish as a non-developed amorphous language is at the periphery.

(2) Boundaries and the binarism of external and internal spaces exist in the semiosphere. The boundary divides the semiosphere into internal and external space, which is 'one of the primary mechanisms of semiotic individuation and can be defined as the out limit of a first-person form' (Lotman, 1990, p. 131). Its external boundaries separate the semiosphere from the external environment, and its internal boundaries divide it into various conflicting sign systems (Kotov & Kull, 2011). Signs are positive at the internal and external boundaries (Lotman, 1999), therefore, the internal and external boundaries of the semiosphere are dynamic. Since at least two different sign systems exist because of the boundary, the semiosphere and its external environment are binary (Kotov & Kull, 2011).

The internal space is described as 'our culture', and is regarded as the safe, organized system, whereas the external space is 'their culture', and is considered dangerous, messy, and unfriendly. Every culture begins with this division, and the manner of this cultural division depends on its type. All those binary divisions are related to social, national, and religious backgrounds. 'The actual division is one of the human cultural universals' (Lotman, 1990, p. 131).

(3) In addition to asymmetry and boundary, heterogeneity is an essential characteristic of the semiosphere. Because of different hierarchies communicating and conflicting, the semiosphere is heterogeneous (Kotov & Kull, 2011; Lotman, 1999) and forms asymmetrical sign subsystems. Asymmetry is the precondition of intersubjective dialogue. In the semiotic space, there are diverse signs at different levels, making the semiosphere heterogeneous. 'Various languages in the semiotic space relate to each other. Heterogeneity is determined by various elements and functions' (Lotman, 1990, p. 125). Because of its heterogeneity, the semiosphere undergoes dynamic development.

In short, there are some organizing principles relevant to each other in the semiosphere. Further, the binary principles exist in the semiotic space, including center-periphery, internal-external, symmetry-asymmetry, and heterogeneous-homogeneous.

### B. *The Properties of Dialogue as an Ontological Characteristic*

Dialogue is an ontological character of the semiosphere, reflecting the way people are constituted as humans (Volkova, 2019). He considers that communication makes meaning significant. In other words, dialogue makes language useful. The subsystems of the semiosphere are interrelated, and every subsystem is a participant in communication (Lotman, 2005). In addition, the dialogic situation precedes both real dialogue and language (Lotman, 1990). Dialogue cannot be separated from dynamics due to interrelated structures.

There are some properties in a dialogue. First, two similar yet different parties are in the same dialogue. All dialogues start with different senders and receivers. However, the addresser is the same as the addressee by chance. Second, the addresser and addressee mutually transmit their messages in a dialogue. Third, all the elements from a strange language in the text to be translated, since this text has to form a unified text from a third opinion. Otherwise, any dialogue is impossible (Lotman, 1999).

The possibility of dialogue depends on some prerequisites: (1) The elements must be homogenous and heterogenous (Lotman, 1999). (2) While dialogic similarities between the addresser and addressee must be increased to facilitate understanding, on the contrary, differences between the addresser and addressee must be maximized to increase the value of the communication (Lotman & Grishakova, 2009). The tension between the two tendencies is a prerequisite for dialogue, because if homogeneity wins, the dialogue becomes trivial, whereas if the heterogeneity wins, the dialogue collapses.

### C. *Two Communication Models in Cultural Mechanism*

There are intangible relations between language communication and culture. Lotman's cultural semiotics was borrowed from Roman Jakobson's basic model illustrated in Figure 1. A speech event about culture includes six elements related to language communication: The addresser and addressee form two of these, while the other four elements are context, contact, message, and code. The links among the six elements are illustrated in Figure 1.

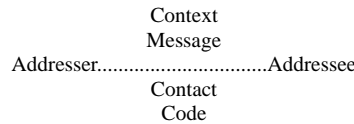


Figure 1. Six Elements of a Speech Event (Lotman, 1990)

In the cultural mechanism, there are at least two communication channels. When the addresser is different from the addressee, ‘I’ and ‘She/he’ are two different subjects in the ‘I-She/he’ channel. However, ‘I’ is the sender of the information, while ‘She/he’ is the receiver. This means that ‘I’ have known a message, and ‘She/he’ has not known before communicating. The communication model includes not a single direction, but two directions, because the receiver can also be a sender. In addition to the ‘I-She/he’ communication model, there is an ‘I-I’ model in which the addresser and addressee are the same, as illustrated in Figure 2. There are some differences between these two communication models. The ‘I-She/he’ system emphasizes space, while the ‘I-I’ system emphasizes time (Zhang & Yu, 2022). Further, while the subjects may change, the information is constant in the ‘I-She/he’ model. However, in the ‘I-I’ system, the subjects remain the same, but because of the reconstructed information, new meaning is created. This type of communication is illustrated in Figure 2 (Lotman, 1990).

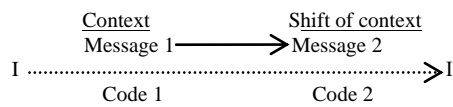


Figure 2. ‘I-I’ Communication Model (Lotman, 1990)

Overall, a culture includes various addressers and addressees, and whether or not the addresser is the same as the addressee depends on the context. If one regards a culture as a whole, the messages are transmitted by the ‘I-I’ model (Zhang & Yu, 2022). From this perspective, human culture is a vast example of auto-communication, where two communication channels simultaneously transmit signs.

*D. Communication Process in the Semiosphere*

The communication process in the semiosphere includes five phases, as illustrated in Figure 3. (1) Contact: Text 1 and Text 2 differ from external texts in the same semiosphere. The addresser A first sends messages (Text 1) through the boundary and then contacts addressee B through the boundary. (2) Selection: Text 1 and Text 2 will reconstruct each other through translating, adapting, and imitating in the second stage. In the first stage, A and B tend to accept new traditions, but in the second stage, they are inclined to restore old traditions. (3) Internalization: During the third stage, B tries to receive A, and A finds its way to integrate itself into B. (4) Integration: In the fourth stage, the text from Umwelt 1 (addresser) is highly integrated into Umwelt 2 (addressee), which itself continuously produces new texts. (5) Transmission: In the last stage, B dominates the center of the semiosphere, while A occupies the periphery. Now the center begins to transmit new texts constantly to other peripheries of the semiosphere (Lotman, 1990).

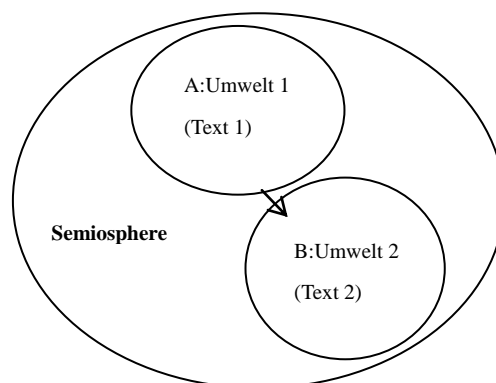


Figure 3. Communication in the Semiosphere

Altogether, the communication process has five stages. Both the sender’s and receiver’s internal structures will change and start to generate new texts as they receive the message. The last stage (transmission) is not the real end of the communication, and it is the first stage (contact) in another communication in the semiosphere. However, Figure 3 presents a simplified situation, since texts move endlessly in all directions and communications occur between different semiospheres simultaneously.

III. BAKHTIN’S DIALOGISM AND DIALOGUE

Mikhail Bakhtin, born near Moscow in 1895, was an important Russian thinker in the field of human sciences and

literature. His dialogism, dialogue, monologue, polyphony, heteroglossia, and carnival have influenced literature and education profoundly.

#### A. *Dialogism*

According to Bakhtin (1981), the world is dialogic. Bakhtin's dialogism, as a result of constant communication, is relative to heteroglossia, where everything has a meaning. Bakhtin (1984) put dialogism into various phenomena. For example, both consciousness and ideas are dialogic, since humans communicate with their own minds and others' voices. In other words, the world as a whole is dialogic because of subsystems merging in an open dialogue.

Dialogism involves taking the other seriously and respecting the other's autonomy (Bakhtin, 1984). In essence, communicating in dialogism means respecting each other and communicating equally. An 'essential marker of the utterance is its quality of being directed to someone, its addressivity' (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 95), since each dialogue looks forward to a future answer. When an addresser speaks, they anticipate the response they want. For Bakhtin, 'addressivity' as an important characteristic of utterances is the soul of dialogue.

In addition, Bakhtin proposed dialogism as a theoretical framework to discuss literary works such as novels. In 'Discourse in the Novel', Bakhtin discusses dialogism, which includes the various meanings existing in texts. He proposes the idea of challenging 'authority'. Social science researchers use dialogism to explore human communication, including in education (Bakhtin, 1981).

#### B. *Dialogue and Monologue*

Dialogue is a central concept in Bakhtin's theory. He regarded dialogue as a word, discourse, language, or culture (Bakhtin, 1981). He further discussed external dialogues between an addresser and an addressee from the internal dialogue of an earlier and a later subject. In comparison, Lotman distinguished dialogue from spatial and temporal aspects (Bakhtin, 1981). Bakhtinian scholar Morris (1994) maintains that the notion of dialogue is the basic trope in Bakhtin's thought. Morris argues that utterances are always complex ways of responding to other utterances, which means that dialogue is an attitude or orientation towards communication. Taking this stance, one tends to think that the meanings in a given context can be reconstructed by an addresser and an addressee.

Dialogic relations affect dialogue. Specifically, semantic relations between complete discourses impact the dialogue between subjects and objects. They are also broader than relations between subjects and objects in face-to-face dialogue. Two discourses are relative in dialogue if there is semantic similarity and difference in space and time (Bakhtin, 1986), for example, communication in the metaverse. Any two related utterances on semantic relations merge in a dialogue, which is set when two discourses with the same referential object meet in the same context (Bakhtin, 1984). In other words, dialogic relations are more extensive than speech (Bakhtin, 1986), and they are the determinant elements of dialogue. Dialogic relations are the relations of logic, discourse, language, and semiotics between the addresser and addressee. According to Bakhtin (1986), new knowledge is created through communication not just in humans, but also in nonhuman texts and animal movements.

Dialogic relations have three properties. (1) Being broader than logical and linguistic relations, dialogic relations cannot be simply reduced to conflict or debate (Bakhtin, 1986). (2) Dialogic relations may exist at the word, discourse, and language levels. They can also permeate the words inside discourses: A word is dialogic if it is noticed as a sign of others' utterance discourse. Thus dialogic relations are possible between language styles such as poetry and prose (Bakhtin, 1984). (3) Dialogic relations are possible between different semiotic phenomena, such as figure and symbol relations. However, they are impossible between logical quantities or elements of a language, since the latter exist between utterances and every utterance is a unit of speech communication, not a unit of language (Bakhtin, 1986).

Compared with dialogue, Bakhtin's monologue refers to 'any discourse that seeks to deny the dialogic nature of existence. Such discourse is typical of authoritarian regimes' (Morris, 1994, p. 247). In essence, a monologue is an isolated utterance that does not respond to listeners (Fan & Wang, 2016). It has a fixed and unified meaning, which refers to a rejection of verbal interaction and is not open to change and plurality (Bakhtin, 1984). Simply, from a monologic view of communication, one can only reckon or restate monologue instead of recreating it.

Dialogue involves at least two ideas, but monologue involves only one idea and cannot accept other ideas. A monologue is a kind of dialogue, entailing communication between the self and the self (Fan & Wang, 2016). An authoritative discourse denying any other discourse is an example of a monologue. An authoritative discourse does not assimilate other ideas. Rather, as the hegemonic truth, it needs the addressees' complete obedience. Thus, an authoritative discourse lacks equality in identity and respect for others.

Overall, dialogic relations with three properties affect dialogue with two ideas. The primacy of the response proves the occurrence a dialogue. Only equality, respect, and freedom in dialogue can prevent discourse hegemony. Compared with dialogue, a monologue features speaking without a response. Thus, dialogue can permeate monologue and non-dialogue.

#### C. *Polyphony and Heteroglossia*

There are some relations between Bakhtin's dialogism and polyphony. Bakhtin's polyphony is one part of his dialogism and takes a central place in the meaning making of dialogue (Bakhtin, 1984). It is a texture in which two or more different melodies or themes with equal identities are played or sung simultaneously in independent voices with

different values (Bakhtin, 1984). Polyphony is more popular among musicians than among scholars. For example, the combined effect of polyphony appearing in a piano is created by the combined effect of two or more keyboards.

The polyphony discourse proposed by Bakhtin is different from polyphony in music, since it includes not only harmony, but also conflict between two voices. For example, a political discourse in the news may feature two conflicting ideas proposed by different parties. For Bakhtin, plural voices are essential in conflict, because they can create information gaps between an addresser and an addressee. Otherwise, lack of information gaps in communication will lead to a monologue.

Contrasted with a single monologue, heteroglossia is relative to dialogue. Heteroglossia is not simply multiple polyphony, but a critical attitude to language life. Bakhtin uses the idea to discuss the heterogeneity of texts, showing that texts display multiple social voices and thus embody multiple interrelationships. Dialogue refers to reciprocal responsiveness and continuous verbal interaction. In dialogue, meanings are open to change and are plural. Thus, dialogue is typically related to heteroglossia, a coexistence of multiple voices.

Overall, there are some relationships among monologue, polyphony, and heteroglossia based on dialogue. A monologue has only one stable and unified voice; polyphony has two different voices; and heteroglossia has more than two voices. The voices are either harmonious or conflicted in polyphony and heteroglossia, depending on the context (Morris, 1994).

#### D. Bakhtin's Carnival and Socratic Dialogue

In his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929), Bakhtin, based on dialogue, proposes 'carnival' as a literary term rooted in Western folk culture. For Bakhtin (1984), carnival is the ideal status of dialogue. The characteristics of carnival are equality and freedom. Carnival, using exaggerated and humorous language, is people's best yearning for the world (utopia), so people can achieve freedom from religious bondage and become close to each other. After the carnival, the atmosphere is quiet and normal as before, just as every stage is occupied by quieter ballads after the loudest rock band. Thus, carnival makes everyone happy, free, and equal, and there is no caste system with fear and rigidity.

Bakhtin (1984) emphasized that Socratic dialogue was based on folk carnival. He discussed Socratic dialogue in the *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Socrates' dialogues are real conversations in Plato's descriptions, and Bakhtin recognizes the merit in Plato's individuation of the arguments through narrative dialogues. In Socratic dialogue, the idea relates to Socrates and other participants. The examination of dialogic ideas is also the examination of the persons who represent it (Bakhtin, 1984).

Dialogue is at the core of both Bakhtin and Socrates. However, there are a few differences between them in the context of education. In Socrates' dialogue, according to a concept or topic, Socrates often asks a question, guides students to articulate their views, and points out the contradictions, thus helping students gradually approach the truth or the universal definition. In short, dialectics is used in Socratic dialogue to assure the truth (Jiang & Wu, 2021). Contrarily, Bakhtin's carnival is based on dialogical principles, which can lead to a senseless catechism in education. Therefore, Socratic dialogue is significant, but senseless as well. Every teacher should avoid meaningless dialogue.

Altogether, the monologic world is authoritative, serious, and hierarchical obliterating dialogue and polyphony, and the people are not happy, equal, or free. On the contrary, in a world of polyphony and heteroglossia, everyone is happy, equal, and free, and people respect each other based on dialogue. However, no authoritative or institutional situation exists in the carnival world, which is only a utopia.

### IV. A COMPARISON OF LOTMAN'S AND BAKHTIN'S DIALOGUES

Lotman's and Bakhtin's dialogues share some similarities, but differ in other aspects. They share common features such as two communication channels in the semiosphere with the same organizing principles and communication process, referring to Julia Kristeva's intertextuality, and exploration of pluralism. However, the differences outnumber the similarities. While Bakhtin's dialogue focuses on language, context, time, monologue, polyphony, heteroglossia, external mechanism, and humans, Lotman's dialogue centres on culture, text, space, multilingualism, internal mechanism, humans, and non-humans..

#### A. Similarities

Communication occurs in at least two different ways ('I-She/he' and 'I-I') in both Lotman's and Bakhtin's dialogues. The most typical is the 'I-She/he' channel, in which 'I' is the message sender and 'She/he' is the receiver. In this case, it is assumed that before communication, 'I' have known some messages and 'She/he' has not. While the 'I-I' channel is popular, the 'I-She/he' channel is the predominant mode of transmission of language and culture, occurring more frequently than the 'I-I' channel. For example, at Chulalongkorn University, Chinese and other countries' international students communicate using the 'I-She/he' channel, while Chinese international students communicate with themselves using the 'I-I' channel. Though the two channels are different, they both belong to communication.

In the 'I-She/he' channel, the sender and receiver of the model are variables, while the information is invariable. In simple terms, the message in the communication is constant, while the bearer of the message may change (Lotman, 1990). However, the author disagrees with Lotman's assertion that the code and message are not invariable, because of



differences in the accumulation of knowledge and culture through communication. In the ‘I–I’ channel, the sender and receiver remain the same, but the message is re-coded. The original information acquires features of the new information.

Lotman’s and Bakhtin’s dialogues are in the semiosphere with the same organizing principles and communication process, since the external semiosphere there has no meaning (Lotman, 1990). In the semiosphere, dialogue as an approach makes the addresser and addressee know each other’s experiences and culture and potentially leads them to a new understanding. Although the focus is different, dialogue in culture occupies the same research space in Lotman’s dialogue and Bakhtin’s post-dialogue. The dialogue between them is ‘the dialogue in the dialogue’, and it is only a special part of a dialogue chain.

In addition, both Lotman’s and Bakhtin’s dialogues refer to text relative to Julia Kristeva’s intertextuality (textual interaction within the text) in the late 1960s. Lotman and Bakhtin regard text as an endless system of texts, not an isolated text. They see the text as a spatiotemporal organism within which a continuous exchange of speech acts occurs (Bakhtin, 1986). For example, literature of the past and future texts communicate in a special context. Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism contributes to intertextuality, and Kristeva assimilates, transforms, and transcends it, while Lotman’s cultural semiotics is relative to intertextuality.

Lotman’s and Bakhtin’s dialogues both explore pluralism, but neither can surpass dualism. For instance, Lotman uses the binaries of I–She/he, centre–periphery, internal–external, and symmetry–asymmetry, while Bakhtin uses the monologue–dialogue and author–reader dualities. Thus, boundaries exist in Lotman’s and Bakhtin’s dualism. With the help of these boundaries, the semiotic space relates with the non-semiotic space, and the system of internal semiotic space communicates and transforms.

### B. Differences

The dialogues of Lotman and Bakhtin have more differences than similarities. These differences are illustrated in Table 1. Bakhtin’s dialogue focuses on language, context, time, monologue, polyphony, heteroglossia, external mechanism, and humans. However, Lotman’s dialogue centers on culture, text, space, multilingualism, internal mechanism, humans, and non-humans.

TABLE 1  
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BAKHTIN’S AND LOTMAN’S DIALOGUES

Bakhtin’s Dialogue	Lotman’s Dialogue
Language	Culture
Context	Text
Time	Space
Monologue, Polyphony, Heteroglossia	Multilingualism
External Mechanism	Internal Mechanism
Human	Human and Non-human

Both Lotman’s and Bakhtin’s dialogues have two communicative channels each, but their focuses differ. Bakhtin’s dialogue centers on natural language as the *primary modelling system*. However, Lotman’s dialogue, focused on the *secondary modelling system* (culture), is modeled using the primary modelling system (Yu, 2023). Nevertheless, Lotman’s and Bakhtin’s dialogues both display some relations between language and culture. For example, language and culture could be integrated into a FL class. Given the integral relationship between language and culture, cultural elements should be taught in foreign language teaching (FLT) classes, especially to represent cultural values and elements as an integral part of the FL curriculum (Sun & Kwon, 2020; Wang & Hemchua, 2022), because cultural knowledge is an essential factor in preventing misunderstanding in FL class.

Compared with Lotman’s dialogue that focuses on text, Bakhtin’s dialogue emphasizes context. According to Lotman’s dialogue, the text inexhaustibly reorganizes itself between ‘I’ and the ‘others’ as a collective intellect, a thinking organization in a continuous internal and external dialogue, and creates not only new meanings in different contexts, but also a cultural memory. Without this function, no human history can exist (Lotman, 1990). For example, the *Journey to the West* (one of the four great classical novels of China) is not just a novel by Wu Chengen, but also feeds new understandings and memories due to the different interpretations of the work, and there is a new culture outside the text. Further, for Lotman, the text is the cue for thought from semiotics to the semiosphere (semiotics–text–culture–semiosphere). However, for Bakhtin, the accumulation of knowledge, rather than cultural memories, is essential for dialogue. If there is no accumulation of knowledge, the dialogue cannot proceed. In Bakhtin’s view, dialogue’s meaning is open because of endless interpretation, and the meaning depends on different contexts.

There is no first sentence, last sentence, or boundary from the perspective of context, and the sentence acquires rebirth in a new context (Bakhtin, 1998).

Lotman's dialogue is broader than Bakhtin's dialogue from the perspectives of text and context. For instance, Bakhtin's dialogue is mainly closed in literary text and does not include dialogical communication with non-human entities such as 'wind, rain, thunder and light'. Bakhtin (1986) states that 'no natural phenomena have meaning, only signs have meaning'. In another example, there is no dialogue between humans and machines because machines cannot have dialogic relations. Nevertheless, Bakhtin ignores the fact that humans and computers can transfer messages that carry meaning. In contrast, Lotman's dialogue also includes communication among plants, animals, and the environment, which Bakhtin's dialogue neglects (Table 1).

As mentioned earlier, Bakhtin's dialogue focuses on language and context, while Lotman's dialogue focuses on culture and text. In addition, the former spotlights time, monologue, polyphony, heteroglossia, and external mechanism. By contrast, Lotman's dialogue focuses on space, multilingualism, and internal mechanism (Table 1). Bakhtin's dialogue cannot be perfect, as it contains dilemmas. For example, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* mirrors Bakhtin's strong subjectivity and hierarchy. Indeed, Bakhtin (1998) emphasized that 'the sign is an arena for class struggle'. Lotman's dialogue includes the basic mechanisms of generating meaning in the semiosphere. If the semiosphere is reconstructed based on Bakhtinian dialogue, the new model would be narrower in scope than in Lotman's original conception, because Bakhtin concentrates on language and context, whereas Lotman focuses on culture and text. Essentially, the scope of language is narrower than that of culture, and the scope of context is narrower than that of text.

## V. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN AT UNIVERSITY

There cannot be communication and true education without dialogue (Freire, 1972). Both Lotman's and Bakhtin's dialogues resonate with pedagogical implications for FL education at university. This section presents the pedagogical implications for FL education based on three aspects.

### A. Foreign Language Teaching as a Conflicted Self: From Monologue to Dialogue

Cultural pluralism is one of the hallmarks of contemporary international universities, which acquire pluralistic characteristics in FLT. FLT has undergone radical changes in moral values due to the impact of pluralism, and FL teachers have to pay attention to different cultures in the textbook (Wang & Hemchua, 2022). For example, different religions have different customs, and thus the textbooks show Muslims as wearing turbans. FL teachers should guide students in treating religion objectively in a multicultural global vision, since different religions exist together in a university. Teachers believe that an open culture is important in an international university. According to Fu and Wang (2022), FL teachers should pay attention to multilingualism and multiculturalism, especially among international college students. The cultivation of an intersubjective dialogue between the teacher and the students involves trust, respect, and equality (Hadjoannou, 2007). FL teachers should teach students not only cultural theory, but also practices, especially those of plural cultures (Eugenijus, 2022). For instance, in summer camps, the different cultures in the 'Belt and Road' countries could be discussed in groups and appreciated.

FLT needs high-quality dialogue. Bakhtin's dialogue does not propose a high-quality concept, but it respects uniqueness, peculiarity, and creativeness, implying an appeal of high quality. A teacher's dialogue that discusses quantity but ignores quality might turn into forms of pseudo-dialogue and pan-dialogue (Fan & Wang, 2016). Therefore, quality is a key element of dialogue in class. Dialogue in teaching should be aimed to help students change from passiveness to activeness and from dependence to independence, besides developing their critical and creative thinking and communication skills (Gunnlaugson & Moore, 2009). In cases of absolute and self-isolated subjectivity, the dialectic method should be used. Dialectic is 'the abstract product of dialogue' (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 293). In other words, avoiding teaching hegemony (teacher-centred and text-centred) that leads to inefficient dialogue. In addition, 'laughing' could be a method to improve the teaching quality. Students' spontaneous laughter is regarded as an example of Bakhtin's carnival. Therefore, an FL teacher should consider students' reconstructions or responses as a precondition in the dialogue. In other words, high-quality dialogue in a class involves four sets of factors: (1) listen, respect, and equal; (2) open acceptance, understanding, and sharing; (3) pluralism and symbiosis; and (4) creation. The relations among the four factors include line and multiple causations. Figure 4 illustrates that the teacher and students should possess independent voices, listen to other's voices, and reach heteroglossia resonance. Compatibility among different voices is a marker of a free and democratic classroom.

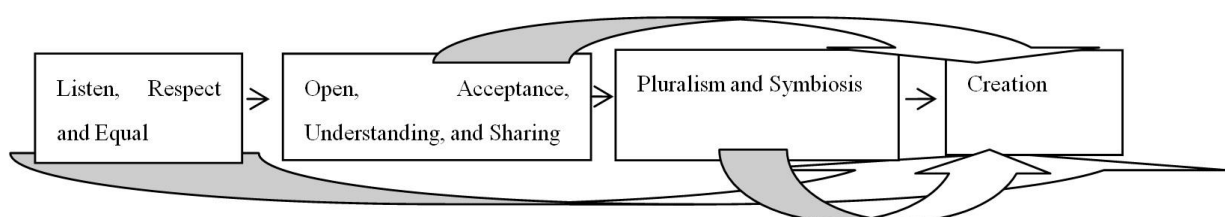


Figure 4. High-Quality Dialogue in Class

Capturing students' attention, for instance, through discussing social focus topics in seminars and incorporating roleplay, is essential to teaching. An FL teacher who completely absorbs monologue would fail to attract students' attention. Even worse, teachers may communicate with imaginary students who have the same knowledge background as themselves. FL teachers who want to communicate successfully with students about a text should enlighten students on the context, since the same word may have quite different meanings in the same context, let alone a different context. In addition, an appropriate tone can be used to attract students, as the intonation of FL teachers influences their teaching. A teacher should use the second tone more and the fourth tone less, because the second tone is inquiring (dialogue), whereas the fourth tone is mandatory (monologue), although the same word uttered twice in the same tone too may have different meanings in the same context. Further, FL teachers should respond to students with empathy, since 'every act of understanding is a response' (Voloshinov, 1986, p. 102). It is not easy for teachers to know the students' inner orientation and stimulate their inner aspirations. Therefore, teachers must attempt to know every student's interests before class.

It is necessary for FL teachers to design teaching planning (invisible dialogue) considering students' knowledge level and to predict class situations. They should adjust their teaching planning to students' responses to the actual teaching and reflect on the teaching after class (Fan & Wang, 2016). Invisible knowledge and culture boundaries exist between FL teachers and students. Teachers must know these boundaries well and break through it before class. They have to position themselves as learners, thus crossing the knowledge and culture boundaries, identifying their students' requirements, and finding proper ways to communicate with students in class (Fan & Wang, 2016). However, the boundary between teaching and learning is not apparent, because FL teachers and students can learn from each other. Solely knowing the knowledge and culture boundaries well is not enough: Teaching reflection is indispensable, and it is also an 'I-I' communication channel for teachers (implicit dialogue). Teaching reflection includes continuous self-evaluation and improvement that is flexible and precise (Juan, 2020). It is one of the main elements in bridging the gap between theory and practice for FL teachers, and reflections can be improved through discussions, journaling, case-based instruction, and critical incident analysis (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Han & Wang, 2021).

### *B. Foreign Language Learning as Understanding in Dialogue*

Despite their differences on dialogue, both Lotman and Bakhtin held that learning involves profound dialogue. Dialogic learning resonates along the learning boundaries of FL education at university. Inside the boundary lies critical and creative thinking and reflection through the 'I-I' communication channel, while outside the boundary learning is dead, left unheard, unrecognized, and unremembered. Further, another boundary exists between FL learning and the learning of other subjects, but this can be broken. When foreign languages and other subjects facilitate and integrate mutually, it will form new liberal arts (Juan, 2020; Tian & Hemchua, 2023). Except boundary learning of new liberal arts, college students should reflect on learning (an 'I-I' communication channel), consider their learning methods and learning efficiency, and find a way to perfect learning.

The prerequisite of dialogue is understanding (Fan & Wang, 2016). Understanding Bakhtin's dialogue is beneficial not only to teachers but also to students. If students only understand but do not respond to the dialogue, however, FL teachers might misunderstand their real requirements. In contrast, response without understanding leads to ineffective dialogue in learning. Thus, both active understanding and response are important in learning. If an FL teacher only engages in monologue, their students' response will be passive understanding. Students' active understanding is based on assimilation of the heteroglossia of a word into their knowledge system (Bakhtin, 1981). Students should critically think about what teachers say, try to understand it, and offer a creative response.

There are some differences between active and passive understanding in learning. Through passive understanding, a student explores 'an utterance's neutral signification and not its actual meaning' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 281), whereas active understanding illuminates the real meaning of an utterance. Thus, while passive understanding uncovers only the facial meaning, active understanding reveals the deep meaning, which indicates a boundary between facial meaning and deep meaning. College students attain deep meaning when they break through the boundary. Learning thus involves actively responding to multiple ideas (heteroglossia), critically receiving knowledge, and creatively applying it.

### *C. Constructing an Inter-Subjective Foreign Language Teaching Model*

An IFLTM is a pluralistic and dynamic model, dominated by teachers who participate together in multiple subjects (Cai, 2022). Intersubjectivity in learning theory and didactics is often limited to a definition that refers to shared mental understanding (Matusov, 1996; Zhang & Yu, 2022). In other words, intersubjectivity means two mutually equal subjects (polyphony and heteroglossia imply equality) who respect, interact with, listen to, understand, and trust each other and reach a consensus (Fan & Wang, 2016; Wang et al., 2022). Both sides are good at communicating, negotiating, discussing, and exchanging information with each other to satisfactorily seed the truth of education, commonly analysing the mystery of education. Therefore, construction of an IFLTM would fundamentally solve the problem of FLT. An FL teacher in an IFLTM is the most essential factor in constructing an FL dialogue. The dialogue and monologue depend on FLT design.

There are various elements in IFLTM. Anis (2019) points out several aspects, such as allowing the space for free discussion, allowing reflection, allowing different perspectives, and promoting equal treatment of everyone's ideas. Different from the normal teaching model, an IFLTM is an academic avenue for teachers and students to freely express

their thoughts and justifications. It is an expression of appreciation given equally to all learners to discuss any question harmoniously and intellectually (Zhang & Yu, 2022). The pedagogy of love is an efficient way to construct IFLT. The main purpose of love in intersubjective FLT is to establish a context oriented toward students' and teachers' emotions, care, respect, self-decentralization, and shift of thinking from the self to others (Wang et al., 2022). In an IFLT, teachers and students can understand others' religious beliefs, gain intercultural awareness, and reach a degree of acceptance of some taboo terms. Undeniable, however, is that IFLT is time-consuming, for creating learners who can critically enquire and respond is not an easy task.

Intersubjective dialogue in FL education is a communication process involving interaction between the teacher and the student. It strengthens mutual trust, helps the student feel respected, and facilitates the exchange of thoughts. Intersubjective dialogue is becoming an important educational tool to ensure accurate and adequate communication activities. In this regard, IFLT construction is one of the most important methods of developing higher education, as it offers numerous benefits. For example, the model offers both teachers and college students' equal opportunities to get their voices heard, while also enabling college students to be more actively and deeply engaged in the learning process.

In all, some requirements must be fulfilled for the successful operation of an IFLT. Most importantly, FL teachers and college students must be equal, mutually respected, trusted, and free. The model also emphasizes dialectical treatment of others' views. Thus, FL teachers and students must have a critical vision when discussing.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Both similarities and differences exist between Lotman's and Bakhtin's dialogues. The similarities include the existence of two communication channels, a semiosphere with the same organizing principles, a communication process referencing Julia Kristeva's intertextuality, and exploration of pluralism. However, the differences far outnumber the similarities. While Bakhtin's dialogue focuses on language, context, time, monologue, polyphony, heteroglossia, external mechanism, and humans, Lotman's dialogue centres on culture, text, space, multilingualism, internal mechanism, humans, and non-humans. Although their views on dialogue are inconsistent with one another, both Lotman's and Bakhtin's conceptions have pedagogical implications for FL education based on three aspects: FLT as a conflicted self from monologue to dialogue, FL learning as understanding in dialogue, and construction of an IFLT. However, two research limitations exist. First, this study focuses only on pedagogical implications for FL; in future inquiries, scholars may explore lesser known languages such as Thai, Ukrainian, and Serb or apply Lotman's and Bakhtin's dialogue frameworks to international discourse studies, such as the 'Belt and Road' discourse. Second, since this research is based on some English and Chinese data of Lotman and Bakhtin translated from Russian, some bias may have resulted from inaccuracies in translation. In the future, scholars can refer to the original sources for a more accurate understanding of the subject.

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# The Image of the Political Power in Ziad Mohafza's *Inmates of the Darkness*

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**Abstract**—The aim of this article is to examine the image of the political authority, its political values, and visions embodied in the novel of Ziad Mohafza, *Inmates of the Darkness*. It also analyzes the reflections of its politics on the lives of the characters and reality in particular. It exposes the culture of violence based on oppression, tyranny, and discrepancy between the ruler and the ruled. The study answers the following questions: Did the novel seek to rebel against power? What are the means the novel depicts in revealing the practices of power and depicting the life of injustice and alienation of the oppressed? Does the use of repression and tyranny depend on political power? The researcher followed the stylistic approach in the analysis, which, in turn, relies on the descriptive and analytical approaches as two measures to achieve the stylistic analysis.

**Index Terms**—*Inmates of Darkness*, political power, oppression and tyranny, Ziad Mohafza

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in the early twentieth century, the Arabic novel has been concerned with political reality because of the strong connection of the novelist to his society. It sought to address various issues, interests, and aspirations. Therefore, many scholars consider it one of the main means of expression, methods, and capabilities that express contemporary visions and issues. It was able to contain the political changes that society was exposed to. Thanks to the efforts of many novelists who tried to expose some tyrannical ruling regimes and their practices, politics is linked to a dialectical and continuous relationship with all aspects of life, "as long as the writer finds himself within a specific society, through which he expresses his role, rights, and status, and he constantly searches for his freedom and humanity" (Azim, 1998, p. 30).

The writer's vision of reality and his view of various concerns and issues are inseparable from the form in which his message is formulated, so he shapes it in a way that suits his position, and he is keen to choose his tools and "employ them to express his own vision" (Badr, 1971, p. 28), and his vision's task is "to arrange the text, as the arrangement of the text provides the novel with structural and semantic power, especially with regard to the event and the personality" (Ibrahim, 1990, p. 121).

## II. THE TITLE OF THE NOVEL

The head of a thing and its climax by which it is inferred (Ibn Manzur, 1996, Entry "Anan"). It constitutes an important semantic feature and the basis for what follows it. It is like the threshold that throws us into the vastness of the text, and a sign that suggests the nature of the text that precedes it, as an ingenious sign to the pathways of its narrative fabric. It is the first thing that the sender sends "to its reader and the call that the literary work sends to its creator. It is the first and last bond between the writer, the literary work, and the reader" (Ayad, 1982, p. 74). In many literary texts, the title constitutes the semantic nucleus around which the text revolves, which the recipient seeks to reach, and the title may carry a stylistic feature in its linguistic composition, and through it "essential aspects or a group of central connotations of the literary text is revealed" (Fadl, 1992, p. 236). These aspects or connotations are described as "the extended framework of the title" (Abdul Muttalib, 2001, p. 20). Therefore, writers usually take great care in choosing and structuring their titles.

*Inmates of Darkness* novel is a threshold beyond words. It is syntactically and semantically structured to have an additional meaning that suggests suffering. It is a threshold that provokes the recipient and mobilizes him to decipher its symbols, reveal its connotations, and effectively reproduce it, through the recipient's search for the meaning and type of

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darkness. The title of the novel consists of a mere predicate represented by the word (inmates) and the genitive case (darkness), while the subject of the nominal sentence is omitted because of its clarity and easy implication. Before omission, the full title is *These are the Inmates of the Darkness*, and the writer made it a nominal sentence to denote continuity and urgency.

The relationship between the two words that make up the title constitutes a clear discrepancy in their signification. This discrepancy is created because the word “inmates” is the plural of an inmate, which is a name that is often given to someone who is subject to a prison sentence as a result of committing a crime, and an inmate may enter prison unjustly. Therefore, there is a proverb in the Arab countries that describes this situation, and they say: “Oh, many people wronged are in prison!” The prison is associated with the confinement of freedom, torture, and oppression in the complete absence of the law. The novel shows that power is always above all laws, and the writer made it plural (inmates) to denote abundance, generality, and inclusiveness. It also suggests that the community of the novel as a whole bears this name and lives in this state. It is associated with the inhabitants of homes and with the opposite of darkness: light, and the associated security, safety, dignity, and freedom.

The second component of the title is (darkness) which means the lack of clarity or vision. The temporal darkness in the change of night and day is not meant here, but rather it becomes a symbol of falsehood, evil, the forces of darkness and sadness in a clear indication of suffering and oppression, and what Mustafa was subjected to in his last years. His entry into the other world is described as “The dead were startled by the appearance of this pale comer, as the slender body burdened with stories was stained with blue and covered with pus, while the anxiety that dwells in his dry eyes, there is no explanation for it” (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 8). Therefore, the writer put the title *Inmates of Darkness* in an additional composition that is conflicting and paradoxical. He sought, behind this deviation, to express the psychological state that the character goes through as if the darkness that dominated the prison is overwhelming the characters, and its employment was of great importance in the production of meaning, and its contribution to the formation of the textual significance.

### III. COMMENCEMENT

It is one of the most important textual thresholds after the title and one of the important elements in the artistic construction of the novel, and an essential entry point for entering the world of the novel with which Muhafaza establishes a real communicative relationship, through which the recipient moves from a realistic space towards an imaginary one as a “threshold that separates the world. The realist in which we live is different from the world that the novelist portrays. Accordingly, it should draw the reader into it” (Lodge, 2002, p. 9). It is, as Rashid Benhaddou points out, “a strategic threshold at which the text itself begins to emerge and exist as a connected discourse, that is, a passage from the field of reality to the field of imagination” (Benhaddou, 1998, p. 9).

Critics considered the influence of the commencement on the rest of the text from beginning to end as one of the important conditions for its success: “Their meaning and structure are not clear except through the analysis of all dimensions of the literary work” (Al-Naseer, 1993, p. 18). In the novel, the reader feels the realism of the world he will enter into in the fictional text, and it is the preparation for the narrative plot and its successive elements. He began his text with a sentence that he put in double quotation marks, to distinguish it from the words of the omniscient narrator, so he says: “I am not looking for a dull death, for I like to have a delicious taste for death” (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 5). That was the last phrase he threw in their faces before he crossed alone into “a charming world”.

The omniscient narrator refers to the central event around which the narrative text revolves, which is the search for death and its preference over life, and in that, there is a paradox in the behavior of the character because the natural principle in man is to cling to life as much as he can. This attitude prompts the reader to inquire about what makes the speaker look for death. Is it poverty and need? Or oppression and tyranny? What is the desired death? It is because death is of different types in Arabic: the white death is the disappearance of life naturally (natural death). The black death is the disappearance of life by suffocation. The red death is the disappearance of life by killing, and the sudden death: the rapid disappearance of life (Ibn Manzoor, Matter of Death Entry).

The questions raised in the commencement prompt the recipient to read the text and search within it for convincing answers. His reading showed that the past is part of the present and inseparable from it. The lower world (the grave) returns from time to time to the upper world (life) through memory. So, it compares the two worlds, as oppression, tyranny, and torture in the upper world, and freedom, kindness, and good treatment in the lower world. Therefore, the events are not completed in their chronological sequence except at the end of the reading, so the recipient rearranges them in his imagination. Because past events spread over the entire text, the responsibility of collecting them in an integrated image is the task of the recipient.

The commencement is not devoid of semantic displacement in the adjectives. One of the requirements of the adjective is that it is indicative of the described, as we describe the described with something that is commensurate with it or close to it, but at the level of the poetic language, “the adjective usually plays the specification by its nature, and that every adjective that does not fulfill this role is considered a displacement or an image” (Cohn, 1986, p. 129). As the writer made a delicious taste for death, and this is a characteristic of food. On the other hand, the death that he rejects appeared faded, which is a characteristic of color. The writer resorted to displacement in this structure to give death a

mythical hint and add to it a bit of mystery, as if suggesting the comparison that he will make between the two worlds in the presence of the oppressive authority that does not recognize the other and an attempt to foresee the afterlife.

#### IV. POLITICAL POWER

The political vision in *Inmates of Darkness* was not separated from the social and psychological milieu. Rather, it formed together its fictional world in which the events follow, expressing some issues of the social and political reality. Politics plays a role in the lives of people in general, and the life of the Arab citizen in particular because of the absence of freedom and the control of totalitarian regimes in his society. Every matter “of the affairs of the world is politics, and it is difficult to divide a person’s life into politics or non-politics. The young man who cannot marry because of the housing crisis suffers from a political problem, and the impotent is so because of the oppression he is facing. They pay the price of a problem whose main cause is political. In our time, we breathe politics day and night” (Abdul Azim, 1998, pp. 192-193). It is “because politics is the gateway to any change and the herald of every new era; and because it is the key to everything: sustenance, security, freedom, and justice, and work in politics is a permanent, escalating confrontation with the dominant authority, its apparatuses, and its followers” (Al-Qusantini, 1999, p. 85).

In the novel, which was published at the time of the Arab Spring, the writer tried to delve into the structure of consciousness of his society, which is witnessing a political movement that is still continuing in an attempt to clarify political thought, and to stand intellectually at the dialectic of the conflict between the ruler and the ruled. The political event that the character recalls through his tortured memory in his quest to reach happiness in death. It is the active element for the rest of the events, and it is not an accidental marginal event. This is clearly shown in the writer’s choice of the title which means “residing in darkness” and through the opening sentence by Mustafa: “I am not looking for a dull death, for even death I like to be delicious in taste” (Muhafza, 2015, p. 5). It was the last phrase the protagonist threw in the face of his executioners before he crossed into the other world.

The authority’s resort to repression and its various means prompts the freedom seeker to challenge and resist, and his weapon is belief in the justice of his cause. The intelligence officers arrested Mustafa on the charge of plotting to overthrow the regime. This charge, as you know, is capable of taking him behind the sun, and he does not deny his relationship with the matter, nor does he deny it. Also, his desire to sweep away that rotten system that has grown old and whose existence has become a burden on everyone (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 101). The punishment is prison, that abhorrent and painful place for man, in reality, and in imagination because it robs him of the most precious thing he possesses, that is, his freedom.

In light of the suffering of the character in prison, the slow killing of the protagonist’s humanity, oppression, terrorism, and extremism,” the novelist transgresses the realities of content and form because it is on the level of reality, he searches for impossible freedom, as he seeks to achieve his freedom by trying to escape from the classic form of the novel towards a new artistic form (Abu Nidal, 1981, p. 118).

The writer tried to embody the image of the political authority through one of its tools, that is, the jailer, who appears in the form of a sadistic executioner and does not take mercy or pity in torturing his countrymen and intellectuals. The ruled is to rebel against the ruler and obtain his freedom, for freedom “as the truth, does not need a justification to push us to follow it, and more than that, no person has the right, whoever he is, to claim possession of it or a monopoly for himself” (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 107). That is why Al-Fadhil says to Mustafa: “You are right, for freedom is not distributed by quotas” (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 109). The writer here criticizes the attitude of the political authority and exposes its deviation based on oppressing and dominating people and taking pleasure in torturing and humiliating them. The investigator says:

I was entertaining myself. By torturing you, I cut off my vacations to exercise my anger against you, I leave behind a world full of joy, I leave my house, leave my wife, and sneak into your cell to heal my anger from your abhorrent pride, so that I may break this silence that you have become famous for in my face since your first day. (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 20)

The novel reveals people’s suffering because of the power of the political authority, which confiscated their rights, robbed them of their will, violated their sanctities, and prevented them from participating in making decisions related to their life and destiny. The security men violated everything; “they trampled with their feet the sanctity of homes and bodies, and many innocent people perished under the impact of their scourges” (Muhafaza, 2015, pp. 102-103).

We notice how the authority seeks to confiscate the will of the ruled and it seeks to crush it in the most brutal way. This authority hates the free and usurps their lives. In the novel, Dr. Salman “disappeared with those who disappeared in those raids, I personally tried to do the impossible to find out what happened to him, but to no avail. Mustafa’s face brightened when he heard the name of Dr. Salman, the venerable scholar who was the first to speak out against him and was dragged through the streets as a result” (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 102). The novel rejects reality and looks forward to a different reality that allows a person to exercise his freedom and humanity, a reality devoid of prisons, interrogation rooms, and cells, and everything that misses the opportunity for change. That is why Mustafa seemed happy to be dead. Because he saw death as a way out of impotence: “On that day when he departed from a lonely world, those who welcomed his coming to this underworld were more honest and noble than those who hastened his death or remembered him, or even alerted him” (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 8).



Whoever lived his last years in a miserable dark cell can see the world of death more merciful, welcoming, and freer. In death, there is no power and its symbols, its whip, and its voice, which exhausted him all those years. They no longer have any trace in the underworld. The first thing he did in the underworld was to search again for that voice that suddenly disappeared. Is this possible? He used to think in his heart that the ill-fated one who was choking him for a long time would walk with him to the underworld, "but he felt for the first time that he had transcended that hurtful voice forever" (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 16). Death alone is able to rid Mustafa off his nightmares, pains, and the effects of his imprisonment and give him all the reassurance and tranquility he needs (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 16). Mustafa did not know that death was so wonderful, as it saved him from all his pain (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 69).

The writer portrays his characters and his vision in an easy, simple language close to the reader. Although it relied on suggestion and condensation in many cases, the novel acquired its artfulness and its multiplicity of readings through its structure of the world of the absurd that envelops the world of death, and the multiple connotations it carries. It shapes the text. When does death become more delicious than life for a person? It is hated, but here, it acquires a new unconventional meaning.

The novel presents a world full of anxious characters who search for life freely through death. They do not want anything but freedom. By death, they have become more reassured and closer to themselves (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 97). However, this freedom quest is not achieved because many of those who appoint themselves as agents of everything. Mustafa says: "But this is the first time that I know that death also has agents! What do you want exactly? What did I do to ignite all this anger in you? I heard a pious man, may his death be dear to me, who always used to say to me: Half a doctor makes you lose your health, and half an Imam makes you lose your faith" (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 97). What makes things worse is when the goals of the political power meet with the goals of extremist groups in defending the dominant system and by using all the means of repression, enticement, and intimidation that the human mind can reach without justifications. Therefore, Mustafa says:

If what I do is considered a sin in your eyes, be sure that I will not hold anyone responsible for my actions, and I will not ask you to share my sins with me. I don't know what to tell you, my head is full of questions, but one thing worries me, and I can't find an answer yet. In disguise. Tell me why the party frightened you. Are you really afraid of the flute? What does all this do to you? If you fear the flute, you are free. This is your business, although I do not know the reason for that, what I know very well is that the sky is too big to be disturbed by a flute reed. (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 157)

We note that the writer brought the personalities who refuse to accept the other to the side of the authority in order to condemn both of them, so there is no difference between them. Both of them rob a person of his freedom. The writer tried to draw a repulsive picture of the reactions of this group. Yassin stopped Alfadeel and said vehemently: We don't know where he wants to take us this coming man whom you made your neighbor. I didn't like him from the moment he arrived and you know this very well. Look what he did! He must be stopped. It is no secret that we are not used to something like this before. We take it very seriously, and at the same time we trust your wisdom and your mind, so this time I will put the issue in your hands. By doing this, he differentiated between people. Division, as you know, is the beginning of harm. Didn't you once say that whoever harms one person becomes a danger to everyone!" (Muhafaza 2015, p. 67). This group refuses to resort to logic or reason, so that it only hears its own voice, and fears change. Alfadeel addresses them saying: "Are you worried about a man or a candle? When you disagree about a man, this is a matter due to the nature of the souls, but when you fear a candle, it is a dangerous omen. I do not know why all this agitation I only see light in front of me, and light cannot harm anyone" (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 68), and the dialogue shows the extremist's thoughts and the weakness of his argument.

When the extremists lack evidence, and they are unable to realize what they aspire to achieve, they resort to threats and intimidation. They do not hesitate to take any unnatural action that preserves their dominance, so Yassin says:

I warned him more than once, and you know this. If he does not come to his senses, then we have no excuse if we do with him something that cemeteries are not familiar with before. This is not for us; we are not doing anything for ourselves and you know that very well. This is for something greater, ... we will not hesitate to do anything If he does not leave us alone, this is something you must convey to him. (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 96)

The keenness of the extremist to preserve power is evident in his use of violence, beatings, and bloodshed, and, thus, he is almost one of the faces of power. He resorts to using stones and sticks to intimidate and beat others. Yassin says: "May God won't forgive me if I do not put an end to all this, and take revenge on all of you. And he fell with the stick on Mustafa's head" (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 167), as if the writer confirms that the oppression and tyranny practiced by the authority led to the production of this group.

Despite the dark atmosphere of the text, resulting from the absence of freedom and the subsequent oppression and tyranny, the writer put some symbols of hope in the folds of the text, such as light, candles, flowers, flute, poetry, colors, and the gathering of cemetery dwellers around Mustafa. The function of these symbols is to lead them in the face of the forces that reject change, and in this way, he sows hope in the soul of the recipient and prevents them from despairing of bringing about the desired change despite the many challenges they find.

The writer relied on the omniscient narrator to communicate his message and to describe the world in the smallest details from its external perspective. Therefore, he was able to reach to the depths of the personality's soul easily and without difficulty and death appears "as a technique and a tool in the hands of the writer for artistic diversification on

the one hand, and to take advantage of its symbolic capabilities in enhancing many of the connotations of the text” (Al-Mahfli, 2019, Dec. 8). So, death is resurrected through life. It also brings life through death in a paradox that emphasizes the gloominess of reality and the suffering of the characters until death has become the salvation in an artistic way characterized by experimentation and renewal. Therefore, the events of the novel came through the embodiment of an image of people shocked by death.

## V. CHARACTERS

Characters are one of the important components of the narrative discourse. This component gains its importance from its interaction with other components of the imaginary world. It plays a major role in the fictional text, and other narration elements are organized based on personality (Todrov, 1992, p. 42). Personality has two sides: the signifier in terms of taking many names and adjectives that identify objects or entities and the signified through having separate sentences, sayings, and behaviors, which appears in the ways of presenting the character (Todrov, 1992, p. 63).

In *Inmates of Darkness*, one finds that some of its characters detected clear defects in the relationship between the citizen and the political authority, such as the personality of Mustafa, and the jailer (Theeb). The name, given to the character, symbolically indicates its function. Therefore, we note that Mustafa is a noun that is the object of the verb “to select”; that is, it means the person who has been selected and chosen according to certain qualities in order to do an important matter. In the novel, Mustafa was chosen to bring about the desired change, to resist the oppression and tyranny of the political power, and to fight for freedom and a better life. On the other hand, his path to freedom is dark and challenging.

The jailer represents brutality, strength, and absolute ability to use all methods of torture and investigation without deterrence or regret, but his conscience awakens after he is retired, so he repents and tries to atone for his harshness against Mustafa by serving and defending him, and he is the only developing character in the text. The writer refers to the possibility of an individual's righteousness after he loses the privileges he enjoyed before.

The novel has many personalities of extremist thought that reject the other, such as the personality of Yassin and Shihab al-Din, and the reader is aware of the association of these two names with religion. The first name is the same as the name of a chapter in the Holy Quran, and the word “al-Din” means religion. The two characters play the role of not accepting the other, trying to exclude them by all legal and illegal means. The writer was able to draw them as repulsive to the reader, whether that was through the dialogue transmitted by the omniscient narrator who conveyed everything related to the characters: their outward and inward appearance, their actions and sayings, their psychological, intellectual, and emotional state (Qasim, 1984, p. 158), or through description, as for the personality of Fadeel. His name is an exaggeration formula that denotes the owner of virtue who used to give alms, be kind to others and treat others well, and continued to maintain his role. It can be said that virtue is a symbol of moderate thought that prescribes acceptance of the other and having dialogues with him.

## VI. PLACE

The place is an artistic and literary component. In its various divisions, it is considered one of the most important elements in the construction of the novel, so the place is stripped of what is physical or natural and becomes a place with limitless dimensions, sizes, and bodies. Language plays a major role in this creation, which leads to the openness of the text and the multiplicity of readings.

The writer has put forth his thoughts on death. To reformulate concepts and connotations through narration, he charted the journey of the soul to the world of death and made it his means of immortality and survival. He also presented an image of reconciliation with death and surrendering to it through having multiple artistic formations in the fictional text. Therefore, he presents two places: one pertaining to the upper life with its cities, markets, noise, prisons, jailers, and the suffering of its people, and the other one has to do with the lower life with its graves. The setting also ranges between two eras: the past with its pains, sorrows, and loss of freedom in it, and it is evoked through remembrance, and the present with its freedom and comfort and the reconciliation of characters with death in it, until it seemed as if it was a continuation of life. This duality that the writer creates through the relationship of the aesthetic and artistic structures within the fictional text.

Perhaps whoever follows the image of the prison and the dungeon in the novel is certainly aware of the negative dimensions of the place, its dark and repugnant image, for he “will leave this darkness, who will leave the cellars and torture chambers, and step over the smells of blood, urine, and pain that infiltrate the nose by force” (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 22). The dark picture extends to the underworld, as the residents here “do nothing but look wearily at the darkness and pale emptiness, or lie silently in dusty graves, and sit on their marble slabs at best” (Muhafaza, 2015, p. 30). Therefore, Mustafa tries to change it, so he does not want to leave it as it is, as he added to it many details of the upper life, such as candles, music, celebration, etc., which made the place capable of carrying the vision that the writer seeks to communicate, and one of the spatial paradoxes in the novel is that the upper place is over its capacity. It was narrow on the personality, and a place of torment, enslavement, and loss of freedom, while the lower place, despite its narrowness, was wider intimacy and freer than the upper” (Al-Mahfli, 2019, Dec., 8).

## VII. TIME

Narration is closely related to time, so there is no narration without time, and it is impossible to ignore the temporal element that permeates the narration, as Gerard Genet (Bahrawi, 1990, p. 117) points out. In many fictional texts, the writer presents some events and delays others. This juxtaposition of time causes a paradox between the time of narration and the time of the story, which ranges between recalling past events or anticipating future events.

In the novel, the writer gradually presents his ideas in an interesting manner, consistent with the event, through Mustafa's flashbacks in an internal dialogue with himself, relying on suggestion and condensation. This technique opens the text to multiple readings and interpretations. The novel created for itself a time based on an intersection and temporal paradoxes away from the sequential narration of its events. Each character had two times and two places: the upper life has its own time and place, which are evoked through the retrieval technique, and the lower life with its time and place in which the character really lives. It is the paradox between the two times that dominate the formation of the temporal structure in the novel, whether in terms of the order of events or in terms of their speed and slowness. Some events may take a long period of time in the story but told in a few lines. This element appears through Mustafa's talk about ten years of imprisonment and torture in various types and methods. It takes place through a recall that brings together two separate time moments: one is in the current present, and the second one is in the past. The pain is implanted in the memory of the character prior to the moment of the fictional time, and through this technique, the sheer paradox between the present (the graves and their pathways and what is happening in them) and the past (the prison, the dungeon and what was going on in them) is revealed. This paradox creates a rhythm different from the rhythm when time is very short in a number of paragraphs or pages, as is the case in addressing the actions of the extremist group to exclude the other and preserve themselves. This difference between real and imagined time gives more mobility to the writer in drawing images, so "the rhythm of the novel varies in speed and slowness according to the paradox between the narration and the time of the story" (Mortada, 1998, p. 220).

The closing of the novel represented the unifying point of all time progress, and in its intense form, it represents a key movement, recording a conclusion on the one hand, and a key to different questions on the other hand. The final question "Are you to bear so much torment?" "came to bring together Mustafa and Hassan's past and present times and reveal them to the reader without recording Mustafa's reaction, so it makes the end a horizon for new times" (Al-Mahfli, 2019, Dec. 8).

The writer maximizes the aesthetic aspect of the novel through external recalls that go beyond the time of the storytelling construction, as is the case in the story of Mustafa by Hassan and the story of Umm Taha by Mustafa. So, events, facts, and stories appear independently within the narrative text in order to form the story framework. This framework generates within its general framework a number of stories that intertwine, but they support each other in drawing the narrative images, and this framing increases the beauty of the text, opens the text to multiple readings, and makes it related to the fairy-tale legacy in *One Thousand and One Nights*.

The tightening of the construction of the novel was not possible except by dismantling time and the transition between the past with its suffering and the present with its comfort and freedom bearing in mind the characters' real and imagined realities. The transition between more than one story and time in one novel enables the writer to narrate the facts of the days separating Mustafa's life and death, and some other characters in the novel mixed with scenes of torture and pain, sorrows and suffering in the higher life, and to follow the idea in a transient way of time. So, he did not concern himself with the order of time because he follows the dialectic of death and life in the course of his characters, such as Mustafa, Hassan, the jailer, and others.

The fragmentation of time in *Inmates of Darkness* wants demands a reader who is able to find out the features of stories despite their disintegration and dispersion and contemplates the dialectic of death and life in its narrative juxtaposition despite the different times. The lives of characters after death overlap with what came before it, embodying the duality of death and life. The use of truth and imagination, vision and reality, and the mixing of religious symbols in the narrative structure blur the lines between the real and the imagined. It also raises many questions: Is what happened with Mustafa real or fiction? Is it possible for a person to pass into the other life in this manner and reception? What would life be like in the graves? Will the suffering of Mustafa, Dr. Salman, and others continue in the next life despite their suffering in this life?

## VIII. CONCLUSION

It can be said that the research has reached the following results:

1- The novel's title has been chosen with great care and precision to excite and provoke the recipient towards reading the text. It was full of symbolism, suggestion, and intensification. It formed the textual focus around which the fictional text revolved, so darkness and its inhabitants extended from the beginning of the text to its end, and Mustafa was unable to achieve a decisive victory by the end. This means that it may extend to another new life. The commencement also reveals the depth of the relationship between the title and the structure of the narrative text, so it intensifies, focuses, and inspires more details and relationships.

2- *Inmates of Darkness* rejects the oppression and tyranny of the authority, and domination over the individual to preserve the status quo.

3- The novel combined verbal and narrative components, having linguistic and artistic elements and techniques that brought it to the world of privacy and uniqueness, and included multiple genres: music, poetry, and stories that reproduce within the story framework.

4- The writer gave his characters more attention, relying on a deep understanding of the personality in all its dimensions as a role and a voice, which we get to know through the narrative scene, so Mustafa carried the banner of change, but he reaches an indefinite stage because of the oppression and tyranny he faced.

5- In the novel, two places contributed to the formation of the events, so the place appeared alienating and narrow in its capacity in the upper life, while it was kind and merciful to its inhabitants in the lower life. The writer was able to transport the reader to his places by describing them, and the events that served them. The vision, carried by the text, enables the reader to analyze the relational structure between the conflicting currents in the novel.

6- Time sways between the past and the present. It foresees the future in an effort to break the expectation of the reader. It can be said that the text revealed the intensity of the suffering of the educated personality seeking freedom (Mustafa, Dr. Salman) and defended it. It also revealed the ugliness of the act of power and drew a repulsive image of the group that refuses to accept the other by portraying its speeches, actions, and feelings.

7- The novel gives voice to the rebels against the authority through Mustafa's insistence on re-trying to change the authority if given the opportunity, despite the imprisonment and torture he was subjected to. The call also appeared to confront the forces of extremism and darkness that refuse to accept the other and claim a monopoly on truth and truth. Symbols and paradoxes played a major role in exposing their practices.

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# Call for Papers and Special Issue Proposals

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*TPLS* carries original, full-length articles and short research notes that reflect the latest developments and advances in both theoretical and practical aspects of language teaching and learning. We particularly encourage articles that share an interdisciplinary orientation, articles that bridge the gap between theory and practice, and articles in new and emerging areas of research that reflect the challenges faced today.

*Areas of interest include:* language education, language teaching methodologies, language acquisition, bilingualism, literacy, language representation, language assessment, language education policies, applied linguistics, as well as language studies and other related disciplines: psychology, linguistics, pragmatics, cognitive science, neuroscience, ethnography, sociolinguistics, sociology, and anthropology, literature, phonetics, phonology, and morphology.

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Special issues feature specifically aimed and targeted topics of interest contributed by authors responding to a particular Call for Papers or by invitation, edited by guest editor(s). We encourage you to submit proposals for creating special issues in areas that are of interest to the Journal. Preference will be given to proposals that cover some unique aspect of the technology and ones that include subjects that are timely and useful to the readers of the Journal. A Special Issue is typically made of 15 to 30 papers, with each paper 8 to 12 pages of length.

A special issue can also be proposed for selected top papers of a conference/workshop. In this case, the special issue is usually released in association with the committee members of the conference/workshop like general chairs and/or program chairs who are appointed as the Guest Editors of the Special Issue.

The following information should be included as part of the proposal:

- Proposed title for the Special Issue
- Description of the topic area to be focused upon and justification
- Review process for the selection and rejection of papers
- Name, contact, position, affiliation, and biography of the Guest Editor(s)
- List of potential reviewers if available
- Potential authors to the issue if available
- Estimated number of papers to accept to the special issue
- Tentative time-table for the call for papers and reviews, including
  - Submission of extended version
  - Notification of acceptance
  - Final submission due
  - Time to deliver final package to the publisher

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- A brief description of the technical issues that the conference/workshop addresses, highlighting the relevance for the journal.
- A brief description of the event, including: number of submitted and accepted papers, and number of attendees. If these numbers are not yet available, please refer to previous events. First time conference/workshops, please report the estimated figures.
- Publisher and indexing of the conference proceedings.

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- Distribution of the Call for Papers broadly to various mailing lists and sites.
- Getting submissions, arranging review process, making decisions, and carrying out all correspondence with the authors. Authors should be informed the Author Guide.
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Applying Systemic Functional Linguistics in Translation Studies: Instantiation, Individuation, and a Three-Dimensional Model <i>Yingchen Yu</i>	3279
Creative Teaching in Secondary School EFL Classes: A Critical Study of a Proposed Training Program <i>Naif Salem Alrefaei and Sultan Abdullah Almuhaimeed</i>	3291
A Sociolinguistics Perspective of Interrogative Forms in English, Standard Arabic and Jordanian Dialects <i>Natheer Mohammad Ahmad Al-Omari and Manjet Kaur Mehar Singh</i>	3299
The Representation of Gaza War (2021) in the Official Remarks of Hamas and Israel: A Critical Discourse Study <i>Hamza K. Alnwihe and Linda S. Al-Abbas</i>	3311
Assessment Tools of EFL Courses via Blackboard: Faculty Members' and Students' Perceptions <i>Hanan M. Almutairi and HosamEldeen A. Elsayy</i>	3319
Multimodal Linguistic Landscape in Lombok: A Case Study of Product Branding <i>Dewi Nastiti Lestariningsih, Raima Maslan Sihombing, Indah Okitasari, Nining Nur Alaini, Aditya Wardhani, and Exti Budihastuti</i>	3330
Expert EFL Teachers' Emotion in Professional Contexts in China <i>Yuanyuan Chen</i>	3338
An Exploration of the Decolonization and Ecofeminist Activism of Indigenous Kenyan Women in Wangari Maathai's Memoir <i>Unbowed: One Woman's Story</i> <i>Naeemah J. Alrasheedi</i>	3346
Status Quo of the Professional Identity of Teachers: A Quantitative Study of College EFL Teachers in China <i>Zhang Xu and Noor Mala Ibrahim</i>	3352
Dialogue in Lotman and Bakhtin: Implications for Foreign Language Education <i>Haiqing Tian, Saengchan Hemchua, and Yongxiang Wang</i>	3360
The Image of the Political Power in Ziad Mohafza's <i>Inmates of the Darkness</i> <i>Suleiman S. Al-Ferain, Thaher M. Alzawaherh, and Ameena A. Al-Harahsheh</i>	3370

---

The Language and Thainess of Thai Food Products on an E-Commerce Platform <i>Piyada Low</i>	3126
Translanguaging as a Communicative Method in Film-Audience Relationship—Case Study of the Film <i>Wu Ming</i> <i>Lili Han</i>	3135
Representation of Ecological Wisdom in Banyumas Folklore: An Ecocritical Study <i>Achmad Sultoni, Sarwiji Suwandi, Andayani, and Sumarwati</i>	3141
Delayed Exposure to Second Language Acquisition: The Robustness of Critical Period Hypothesis and the Limitations of the Plasticity Theory <i>Naif Alsaedi</i>	3149
From Urban Space to Cyberspace: A Research on Spatial Writing and Human-Android Relations in <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> <i>Mi Chen, Noritah Omar, Zainor Izat Binti Zainal, and Mohammad Ewan Bin Awang</i>	3157
Non-Quantifiable Nouns in Mandarin Chinese <i>Yufeng Ruan</i>	3166
Teaching-Related Use of Social Media Among Saudi EFL Teachers: Revisiting the Innovative Technology <i>Mohammed H. Albahiri, Ali Albashir Mohammed Alhaj, and Majda B. A. Abdelkarim</i>	3181
The Transitive Construction of China’s National Image in the Editorials of <i>The New York Times</i> <i>Xinyang Dai and Hanita Hassan</i>	3190
Rubrics for Girls in Arab Children’s Magazines: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis Approach <i>Thiziri Aziri and Zahra Awad</i>	3198
Discourse Analysis of Female Political Speeches: A Study of Linguistic Techniques and Devices <i>Asjad Ahmed Saeed Balla</i>	3208
Representation of Local Wisdom in the Ancient Indonesian Manuscript as Literature Learning Materials in School <i>Mipa Tiyasmala, Andayani, and Atikah Anindyarini</i>	3217
Effect of Glossing on Chinese Senior High School EFL Learners’ Vocabulary Acquisition <i>Yequi Zhu</i>	3224
Linguistic Relativity: A Study of the Role of L1 in L2 Vocabulary Acquisition in an EFL Setting <i>Arif Ahmed Mohammed Hassan Al-Ahdal and Fahad Saleh Aljabr</i>	3232
Literature Review on Second and Foreign Language Listening Strategy Research in the Past Fifty Years: Problems and Future <i>Linlin Qiu, Kew Si Na, and Norhiza Binti Ismail</i>	3240
The Effect of Teaching Text Structure on Improving Writing Composition Skills and Reducing Writing Anxiety Among Seventh Graders in Jordan <i>Ra’ed M. Algaragere and Mohammed A. Al-Khawaldeh</i>	3251
Bringing Autonomy to EFL Learners at Qassim University: A Study of the Role of Materials in Learning <i>Fahd Hamad Alqasham</i>	3260
Feasibility Assessment of Merdeka Curriculum in <i>Bahasa Indonesia</i> Digital Textbooks for Class VII Junior High Schools <i>Nugraheni Eko Wardani, Sarwiji Suwandi, and Chafit Ulya</i>	3268

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