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Motivational Factors and Strategies in Language Learning: Perspectives From Military Language Learners

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Abstract—Motivation is a critical factor influencing student learning outcomes in language learning contexts. This study employed a qualitative research design to explore factors affecting military learners' motivation at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) in the United States. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with military students who completed the DLIFLC's Undergraduate Persian Farsi (UPF) program. The research examined the factors influencing language learning motivation and strategies to sustain and enhance motivation from the perspectives of military language learners. Findings revealed that military students perceived their motivation as multifaceted, shaped by a complex interplay of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, academic goals, academic achievement, personal growth, student–teacher relationships, peer relationships, and the learning environment. The study identified motivational strategies such as designing engaging and enjoyable curricula and extracurricular activities that immerse students in the target language, fostering effective communication among learners and stakeholders, creating a positive and supportive learning environment, and ensuring recognition and support from all stakeholders. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the motivational factors influencing military language learners and offer practical strategies to improve learning outcomes in language education settings.

Index Terms—foreign language education, military education, motivational factors, motivational strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

Motivation has been a reappearing theme in the history of language teaching and is crucial for achieving positive language-learning outcomes (Redondo & Martín, 2015). Motivation in the second language acquisition context refers to the language learners' efforts, desires, and positive attitudes that drive them to achieve language-learning goals (Jodai et al., 2013). Some studies indicate that motivation is the most influential factor in language-learning achievement at military institutions (Jodai et al., 2013; Kurum, 2011). There is substantial research on how motivation affects learning outcomes in K-12 and higher education settings. However, U.S. intensive military foreign language programs at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) differ from traditional universities and other military institutions in the length of the foreign language programs, curriculum, and graduation requirements. Also, there is a lack of literature on how motivation affects military student learning outcomes in U.S. military language programs. Therefore, this study investigates the factors that affect military students' language learning motivation and strategies to enhance military learner motivation at DLIFLC.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Although motivation plays a fundamental role in achieving positive language-learning outcomes, there is no standard definition of motivation among researchers, especially regarding language learning. In one definition, motivation is “the tendency of a student to find meaningful and useful academic activities and to try to obtain academic benefits from them” (Brophy, 1998, p. 205). Gardner (1985) defined motivation as “the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity” (p. 10). Cole (2007) defined motivation as the “internal state that instigates, directs, and maintains behavior” (Redondo & Martín, 2015, p. 127). According to Deci and Ryan (1985), intrinsic motivation relies on individual feelings, desires, and internal instincts, whereas external motivation is based on the purpose and incentives of external events and stimuli. For this research, motivation refers to the effort, attitude, and desire of military students to achieve the goal of language learning in the military language-learning setting.

Factors Affecting Motivation

Research points to multiple factors affecting second language acquisition motivation. For example, activities in the teaching and learning process, the final learning results, internal motivation, and extrinsic motivation were identified by Skehan (1989) as the four most significant motivating factors. Second language acquisition motivation was affected by the foreign language-learning environment, including student–teacher relationships and peer relationships (Miller & Crowther, 2020; Sipos et al., 2019). Environment-related demotivation factors also negatively affected learners' interest

and language proficiency (Holbah & Sharma, 2021). On the other hand, a positive language-learning environment with effective instruction and positive peer- and teacher–student relationships enhanced learner motivation and success (Drakulić, 2019; Miller & Crowther, 2020; Sipos et al., 2019). According to Drakulić (2019), student motivation was influenced most by students' subjective interpretations of teachers' foreign language teaching competencies.

In the Turkish Military Academy, Kurum (2011) examined the effect of motivational factors on the success of military learners in foreign languages. In this quantitative study, the researcher developed a motivational factors questionnaire adapted from Wen's (1997) Motivational Scale, which consisted of 40 items divided into three parts to collect data on participants' background information, the relationships among different types of motivation, and their foreign language success (Kurum, 2011). The study recruited 50 male military participants with approximately 7 years of English learning experience and collected their data from their first semester of the 2008–2009 academic year. Using frequency, mean, independent *t* tests, ANOVA, and Pearson correlations, the study found a high correlation between military service members' overall learning motivation and their foreign language success (Kurum, 2011). Additionally, significant differences were observed between low- and high-proficient students in their overall motivation and perception of ability (Kurum, 2011).

Some research used the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005) as the main theoretical framework to identify factors affecting learning motivation (Alqahtani, 2018; Miller & Crowther, 2020). According to Dörnyei (2005), the L2 Motivational Self System Theory uses three dimensions: Ideal L2 self (i.e., internal desire and intrinsic motivation), ought-to L2 (i.e., external motivation for professional success or career advancement), and L2 learning experience to investigate learning environment, teaching styles, teaching strategies, learning anxiety, and curricula. The language-learning environment, including student–teacher and peer relationships, was found to be a second language acquisition motivation factor (Miller & Crowther, 2020; Sipos et al., 2019). In addition, different L2 motivational types affected learning approaches and processes through different motivational paths (Papi & Teimouri, 2014). Furthermore, research conducted in U.S. universities found that social context and social status also contributed to second language learning motivation (Chan, 2018; Palfreyman, 2006). Below are some key factors that researchers have found to affect motivation.

Learning Environment. The learning environment encompasses the physical, social, and psychological conditions in which learning takes place. The learning environment includes the classroom setting, available resources, and the atmosphere supporting or hindering learning. Indicators of a positive learning environment include the availability of adequate resources (books, technology, materials), a classroom layout conducive to learning and interaction, a positive and supportive atmosphere, a safe and inclusive environment for all students, and access to extracurricular activities and support services (Fraser, 2012).

Student–Teacher Relationship. Student–teacher relationships refer to the interactions and bonds between students and their teachers, which can significantly impact students' academic and personal development. Indicators of a positive student–teacher relationship include mutual respect and trust between students and teachers, open and effective communication, teachers' responsiveness to student needs and concerns, positive feedback and encouragement from teachers, and students' willingness to seek help and guidance from teachers (Pianta et al., 2012).

Peer Relationship. Peer relationships refer to student connections and interactions, influencing their social development, learning experiences, and overall well-being. Indicators of positive peer relationships include positive and supportive student interactions, collaboration and cooperation in group activities, a sense of belonging and inclusion within the peer group, peer support in academic and personal challenges, and healthy conflict resolution and communication skills (Wentzel, 2005).

Student Effort. Student effort means the amount of time, energy, and resources a student invests in their learning activities while focusing on short-term actions and behaviors, such as studying for exams, completing assignments, and participating in class. Indicators of student effort include regular attendance, actively participating, completing homework, seeking help when needed, and consistently working hard (Fredricks et al., 2004).

Student Commitment. Student commitment refers to a student's dedication to their educational goals and long-term academic success. Commitment focuses on long-term attitudes and beliefs about the value and importance of education and a willingness to persevere through challenges. Indicators of commitment include setting long-term academic goals, maintaining a positive attitude toward learning, staying motivated despite setbacks, and demonstrating resilience (Tinto, 1975).

Social Connectedness. Social connectedness refers to belonging and being part of a community or group. It involves having solid and positive relationships and interactions with others, which can provide emotional support, enhance well-being, and contribute to overall life satisfaction. Social connectedness is crucial for mental and emotional health, as it helps individuals feel valued, understood, and supported by their social network (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Intrinsic Motivation. Internal or intrinsic motivation refers to the drive to engage in an activity due to personal interest, enjoyment, or the inherent satisfaction derived from the activity (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Indicators of internal motivation include enthusiasm for learning new topics, persistence in challenging tasks, engagement in learning activities without external rewards, curiosity and desire to explore new ideas, and the initiative to seek opportunities for personal growth (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Extrinsic Motivation. Extrinsic motivation is the drive to perform an activity to achieve external rewards or avoid adverse outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It is influenced by external factors such as grades, praise, and avoiding

punishment. Indicators of extrinsic motivation include working hard to earn good grades or rewards; participating in activities to receive praise or recognition; avoiding tasks to prevent criticism or punishment; completing assignments to meet external expectations or deadlines; and seeking approval from teachers, parents, or peers (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Language-Learning Anxiety. Second language-learning anxiety is the sense of tension and apprehension that arises in contexts where a second language is used, including speaking, listening, and learning activities, and it generally hurts the process of second language learning (Alqahtani, 2018). For example, anxious second language learners tend to take more time to learn new vocabulary and have difficulty recalling learned vocabulary compared to other learners in the same class (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). Another aspect of foreign language anxiety is the fear of negative evaluation, which entails a sense of apprehension about being judged by others, a tendency to avoid situations where evaluation might occur, and an expectation of being assessed unfavorably by others (Alqahtani, 2018). Studies found that language-learning anxiety and test anxiety significantly impact learner motivation and learning outcomes (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989).

The literature synthesis indicated that many factors affect student motivation, including student–teacher relationships, peer relationships, and learning environments (Miller & Crowther, 2020; Sipos et al., 2019). Motivation was also the most influential factor in language-learning achievement at military institutions (Jodai et al., 2013; Kurum, 2011). Therefore, there is an opportunity to investigate if those factors exist at DLIFLC, where the author works as an associate professor. The following sections describe the study context at DLIFLC, followed by the purpose of the study and research questions (RQs). Finally, the method is outlined via descriptions of participants, research design, data collection instruments, and data analysis.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Context and Purpose of the Study

The DLIFLC (n.d.-b) employs approximately 1,700 civilian language instructors across the United States and worldwide to teach foreign languages to military language learners from various U.S. military branches. As the Department of Defense's (2022) premier language school, DLIFLC (2021) has a mission to "provide culturally-based foreign language education, training, evaluation, and degrees to safeguard the national security of the United States" (p. 60). As the literature synthesis indicated that motivation might impact students' language learning, the study investigated factors affecting military students' language learning motivation and strategies to enhance military learner motivation at DLIFLC. There is limited research on military language learning motivation, so this study will contribute to understanding this under-studied population and topic.

This research used a qualitative method to collect data about the perspectives of military students at DLIFLC's Undergraduate School of Persian Farsi (UPF) program on factors affecting their language learning motivation. Based on the collected data, this study examined (a) how motivation is associated with student learning outcomes and (b) strategies to enhance learner motivation.

B. Research Questions

The study answered the following questions to understand factors affecting military students' motivation to learn a second language, complete a language program, and achieve learning outcomes:

RQ1: What factors do students identify that influence their motivation for learning?

RQ2: What are the strategies to boost learner motivation?

C. Method

The study employed a qualitative design to explore factors influencing the learning motivation of military service members through semi-structured interviews. Qualitative data were collected from six volunteer participants who had completed the Persian Farsi language program at DLIFLC. Each participant engaged in a one-on-one, semi-structured interview lasting approximately one hour. The interviews addressed the research questions (RQs) and provided a deeper understanding of the factors that impact military learners' motivation to complete a language program. Additionally, the study sought to identify interventions and strategies to sustain and enhance student motivation.

For this study, the researcher used a purposeful sampling method (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017) to select students and recruited a group of student participants ($n = 6$) from the UPF program whose program completion timeline aligned with the researcher's research proposal timeline and who volunteered to participate in the interviews. The RQs guided the data analysis process to code qualitative data.

D. Participants

Student participants were recruited through emails and face-to-face meetings. All participants were adults. The researcher obtained permission to recruit 15 participants through the Human Research Protections Program at DLIFLC. Then, the researcher approached the students in person, provided basic information about the study's purpose, invited them to volunteer, and explained why they were invited. Following the initial conversation with the selected six participants through purposeful sampling, the researcher sent a formal email inviting them to participate in the research. Those who agreed were sent a consent form. After receiving the completed consent form, the researcher arranged the

interview schedules for the participants. All the recruited participants volunteered to be interviewed. Before starting the interviews, the researcher provided hard copies of the consent form for the participants to read again and sign. The researcher did not recruit non-English speakers or individuals who could not consent. Before and during the interviews, the participants were informed that the collected data were confidential. All the interview participants' demographic information was collected during the one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The researcher collected demographic information from each student interviewee, including their military service units, ranks, previous foreign language-learning experiences, Farsi learning experiences at DLIFLC, and foreign language-learning choices before attending DLIFLC.

E. Semi-Structured Interview

In this research, the main instrument used to collect qualitative data was through interviews. Based on the literature review, the researcher designed 13 open-ended interview questions to identify the factors that affected student motivation. The researcher then selected samples to participate in semi-structured interviews. Each interviewee received the same questions, and the data collected through interviews was used to answer the RQs. Each student participated in a one-on-one semi-structured interview at the researcher's office at UPF and answered the same 13 interview questions. These interviews were recorded using Microsoft Teams and Otter.ai with the participants' permission.

This study mainly explored the two constructs within the RQs, including motivation and strategies. For RQ1 (What factors do students identify that influence their motivation for learning?), the construct was motivation. Gardner (1985) defined motivation as "the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (p. 10). To address this question, the researcher used qualitative data collected from student interview responses regarding their strategies to maintain motivation and succeed in the program, focusing on how they describe their motivations for learning Persian Farsi and the factors that affected their motivation. For RQ2 (What are the strategies to boost learner motivation?), the construct was strategies. In this context, strategies refer to approaches deliberately designed and implemented to stay motivated and achieve language learning goals.

F. Data Collection

At the start of each interview, the researcher gave participants time to read the printed consent form, requested permission to record audio through Microsoft Teams and Otter.ai software, and asked participants to sign the consent forms. The researcher collected the signed consent forms and sent scanned copies to the participants after the interviews. The researcher promoted openness during the conversations by establishing rapport, assuring confidentiality, maintaining a neutral stance, refraining from expressing personal opinions or judgments, and encouraging participants to share their thoughts openly without fear of criticism to avoid potential bias and increase participant comfort. Participants were reminded that the interview could be paused or stopped anytime. The researcher also observed participants' nonverbal behavior, took notes of their comfort levels and emotions, and checked with participants to see if they felt comfortable continuing the interviews. Throughout the process, the researcher was solely responsible for collecting, accessing, and storing the data. All the qualitative data collected from the interviews were also de-identified. The six audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed and de-identified after data collection. Each recording was assigned a participant number at the point of transcription. The transcripts were verified for accuracy, and the recordings were destroyed after verification.

G. Data Analysis

The researcher used the RQs and the literature review to guide the data analysis and analyze the collected qualitative data. The following section primarily describes the data analysis process for the interview data. The researcher completed a four-step process to conduct the interview data analysis. This process included (a) preparation and organization of the data for analysis, (b) transcription and data preparation, (c) data coding and codebook development, and (d) thematic analysis (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

Step 1: Preparation and Organization of Data. The researcher first labeled all the data based on the data type and developed a table listing each data source to stay organized. The data were secured in a locked file with password protection. In this step, the researcher also de-identified the six audio recordings of the interviews and assigned participant numbers.

Step 2: Transcription and Data Preparation. All interview audio recordings were transcribed verbatim to create accurate transcripts (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Notes taken during the interviews were integrated with the transcripts. The data were then combined into three Word documents based on the interview groups and questions for coding and analysis.

Step 3: Data Coding and Codebook Development. The qualitative data collected from the six interviews were transcribed and analyzed using elemental coding, specifically descriptive codes. Descriptive codes summarize the main topic of a data segment in a word or phrase, allowing for the summarization of similar words or themes (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Three rounds of coding were conducted for each interview group. Initially, the researcher identified codes based on the interview questions' constructs and selected examples for each code. Then, the researcher combined related codes and categorized them based on their similarities and relationships. The researcher grouped more codes and categories in the third round and moved them to themes. The researcher developed a codebook for the student interviews, indicating the themes, categories, codes, and examples. See Appendix for interview questions.

Step 4: Thematic Analysis. The researcher conducted a thematic analysis based on the codebook regarding the themes, categories, and codes. The analysis explored how the themes addressed the research questions (Creswell, 2013). The five most relevant themes and codes, such as ‘motivation,’ ‘learning environment,’ ‘intervention,’ ‘program completion,’ and ‘language-learning strategies,’ emerged in the codebook.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This empirical study employed a qualitative research approach, collecting and analyzing qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with six military students to explore how factors affect learner motivation at DLIFLC. This section presents the results of the qualitative data analyses and discusses the findings concerning the RQs.

A. Research Question 1: What Factors Do Students Identify That Influence Their Motivation for Learning?

The results below include interviews with six UPF students who completed the Persian Farsi language program. During the interviews, all six student participants responded to the following question: “What strategies or techniques do you use to maintain your motivation and focus to complete and succeed in this program?” Gardner (1985) characterized motivation in language learning as the extent to which an individual consistently and willingly applies themselves to learn a new language, influenced by their desire to learn and the enjoyment they find in the process. Under the theme of motivation, two categories and 12 codes emerged from the interviews. The two categories are behaviors and motivational factors. The codes and examples under each category are presented below.

TABLE 1
MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

Theme	Category	Code
Motivation	Behaviors	Motivated behaviors and demotivating behaviors
	Motivational factors	Intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, goal setting, personal growth, academic achievement, student–teacher relationship, peer relationship, learning environment, course pace and requirements, and burnout.

Two codes under the behavior category emerged from the interviews, which included motivated and demotivating behaviors. Motivated behaviors are proactive actions and attitudes driven by enthusiasm and persistence toward achieving goals. For example, one student shared, “Build your base, build your habits, because you need to pass your test next year by yourself” (Interviewee 2). Demotivating behaviors refer to actions and attitudes that lack engagement, enthusiasm, and persistence toward goals. Two out of six students responded that they lost motivation during the course. For instance, one student mentioned, “I didn’t study vocab; I didn’t preview for the next day. And I went off base [and] played games. And then I failed a unit test, and that was when I completely lost all my motivation” (Interviewee 1).

Ten codes under the motivation factors category emerged from the interviews: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, goal setting, personal growth, academic achievement, student–teacher relationship, peer relationship, learning environment, course pace and requirements, and burnout. Intrinsic motivation is the internal drive and personal satisfaction derived from learning. Two out of six students described their intrinsic motivation for language learning. For example, one student shared, “I wanted to be a linguist when I joined the military. I felt very committed to the class and felt like I had to work hard to prove that I should be here” (Interviewee 4). Extrinsic motivation refers to motivation driven by external rewards or pressures. Five out of six students mentioned that extrinsic motivation affected their language learning during the interviews. As Interviewee 3 stated, “What affected my motivation most was seeing other students succeed”.

For the goal-setting code, the definition was defining clear and achievable objectives to guide actions and behaviors. This context included setting personal, academic, and career goals. All six students responded that goal setting affected their learning motivation. For example, one student mentioned, “I really wanted to pass. I want to achieve 2+/2/2”¹ (Interviewee 5). Personal growth, which referred to self-improvement through learning, was another code that emerged, with four students sharing their experiences. One participant shared,

“The Defense Language Institute experience allows me to understand how to study because I did not really know how to study before. Again, I just got out of high school, and I think I understand how to utilize my emotions to push myself more than I thought I could.”

Academic achievement refers to reaching educational goals through learning and performance. Three out of six students shared their examples. As one student said, “Seeing good grades is nice” (Interviewee 2).

The student–teacher relationship is the interaction and bond between students and teachers, influencing learning and development. Four out of six students mentioned that the student–teacher relationship affected their learning motivation. For example, Student Interviewee 6 shared, “The things that kept me motivated is that I had a good teacher team, and I had a good relationship with them.” Another student explained, “Teachers here are really encouraging, and the faculty here also helped me a lot, which affected my motivation in a positive way.” Peer relationship is defined as interaction and

¹ Based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages scale, a 2+/2+/2 score indicates an achievement of an ‘advanced high’ level in reading comprehension (2+), an ‘advanced high’ level in listening comprehension (2+), and an ‘advanced mid or low’ level in speaking (2).

bond among individuals of similar status or in the same class. Three out of six students showed how peer relationship affected their motivation. As student Interviewee 4 explained,

“One motivation factor was I created bonds with a lot of my classmates, so I wanted to pass the class, pass the DLPT so that I could go to the next step with them because they are my friends, so I kind of want to stay in touch with them.”

Another student shared,

“I did not want to quit because of my classmates, who are my friends, who were going to pass, and they said I got to pass with them, that helped with extra bit of motivation when I was feeling on my low points.”

A learning environment is another code that refers to the physical or virtual setting in which educational interactions and activities occur. All six students commented on how important the learning environment was to their learning motivation. For example, Student Interviewee 3 stated, “The classroom environment was like the number one factor affecting a student’s motivation.” Another student shared, “I think the learning environment in the classroom and schoolhouse is really important to me”.

Two factors reported by students negatively affected their learning motivation, categorized under factors affecting motivation. These two codes included course pace and requirements, as well as burnout. Course pace and requirements refer to the speed and demands of a course that impact learning. Two out of six students provided examples of this code. For example, Student Interviewee 4 shared, “What the course expects from us and the speed of the course are factors that affected my motivation negatively.” Burnout refers to physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion due to prolonged stress. Two out of four students mentioned that burnout negatively affected their language-learning motivation. For example, one student mentioned, “Burnout is like the number one thing that causes a lack of disappearance in motivation”.

Also, students mentioned that their motivation to learn in different semesters changed. Each DLIFLC language program has three semesters, regardless of its length. During the interview with military students, Interviewee 3 described the differences in her motivation between Semesters II and III. She shared, “I think I really started to lose motivation toward the end of Semester II, from the middle to the end of Semester II.” Additionally, she mentioned, “At the very end of Semester III, like the last couple of weeks, I did not really study. I did not do any of that. I did not do [anything extra] to prepare. I was like, it is what it is at this point”.

Moreover, all six students responded to an interview question regarding their motivation to join the military, which could contribute to answering this RQ. Two key factors influencing student motivation emerged: financial needs and family influence. Financial needs refer to the monetary requirements for an individual’s well-being and activities. Three out of six students mentioned that their main reason for joining the military was financial needs. For example, one student shared, “I did not have much money because I was a college student” (Interviewee 3). Family influence refers to the impact of family members and the environment on an individual’s decisions, behavior, and development. Three students commented that family influence was their primary motivation to join the military. For instance, one student shared, “I feel like I was raised to join the military just the way that I was raised” (Interviewee 2).

In addition, all six students responded to an interview question about whether Persian Farsi was their first choice of language to study at DLIFLC. Language learning choices refer to the option for students to select the foreign languages they would like to study at DLIFLC. Among the six participants, two reported that they were not given a choice in selecting the languages they were interested in learning at DLIFLC. For example, one student said, “I do not have a choice” (Interviewee 1). Two other students shared that Farsi was not among their top three language-learning choices at DLIFLC. For instance, one student stated, “I did not put Farsi as a choice. My top three choices were Chinese, Korean, Russian” (Interviewee 5). Finally, two students indicated that Farsi was one of their top choices at DLIFLC. One shared, “So I picked my top three; my number one is Farsi” (Interviewee 6).

The results have provided insights into each RQ. First, students described their motivation for learning as multifaceted and primarily positively influenced by intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, academic goals, academic achievement, personal growth, student–teacher relationships, peer relationships, and the learning environment. Also, interviews with students revealed substantial influences of positive and negative learning environments on student motivation, commitment, and learning outcomes. In addition, students who used a broader range of strategies across multiple categories and implemented them consistently and effectively achieved higher learning outcomes and program completion. In addition, students’ motivation fluctuated throughout the course, particularly in Semesters II and III. Addressing these RQs offers a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing student success at DLIFLC.

The student interview participants who completed the language programs described their motivation for learning from several perspectives, including motivational behaviors, demotivating behaviors, factors affecting their motivation, and strategies used to maintain their motivation. Students stressed that when motivated, they were willing to go the extra mile, collaborate with their peers to explore the language, and try to reach their academic goals. The students’ descriptions of motivation align with Gardner’s (1985) conception of motivation as determined by an individual’s desire for and satisfaction from the activity. Conversely, students also shared that when they lacked motivation, they experienced stress and tended to do the bare minimum without putting in extra effort due to negative emotions.

Students described their motivation for learning as multifaceted because it was influenced by a complex interplay of various factors and positively influenced by intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, academic goals, academic achievement, personal growth, student–teacher relationships, peer relationships, and the learning environment. The

students' conclusions on motivational factors echoed previous research findings that multiple factors, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and academic achievement, affected motivation (Drakulić, 2019; Skehan, 1989). These findings also corroborated previous research highlighting that the language-learning environment, including student–teacher and peer relationships, was a significant factor in second language acquisition motivation (Miller & Crowther, 2020; Sipos et al., 2019).

Consistent with the literature, this study found that student–teacher relationships, peer relationships, and the learning environment played crucial roles in not only helping students maintain their learning motivation but also enhancing their resilience and improving their commitment to complete and graduate from the language course, as highlighted by Brophy (1998). For instance, students emphasized that supportive and encouraging interactions with their teachers and peers contributed to their sustained motivation and academic success. It also contributed to the trust built with teachers and peers, fostering a positive learning environment. Notably, the students identified motivation as a major factor in completing the language program. This finding was consistent with previous findings that motivation was the most influential factor related to language that related to language-learning achievement at military institutions (Jodai et al., 2013; Kurum, 2011).

Meanwhile, the students emphasized that fast-paced and challenging coursework and burnout negatively affected their language-learning motivation. This finding aligned with V. E. Lee and Burkam's (2003) previous finding that student motivation can decrease, and attrition rates can increase as the students struggle to keep up with academic pace and demands. This finding is also consistent with the report by Sipos et al. (2019) that over 350 students experienced high or very high-stress levels due to academic expectations, lack of sleep, and pressure from civilian classroom instructors. Therefore, adjusting the course pace and providing tailored content based on students' learning progress is important to enhancing learner motivation and engagement (Grove et al., 2008).

In addition, students pointed out that their language-learning motivation was significantly affected by their reasons for joining the military and their language-learning choices. Financial needs such as securing a job, getting paid, and facing family influences were primary reasons for most students joining the military. This result also mirrored Elliot's (2018) previous statement that economic factors played a vital role in military service member retention.

Among all six interviewees, only one student joined the military specifically to become a linguist. Four out of six students reported they had no choice in selecting the languages they would like to study or did not choose to learn Farsi, which showed that the DLIFLC language program prosperities were based on the national foreign language needs. These needs were mainly determined by the broader changes in national defense needs and mission priorities (National Foreign Language Center, 1999). Some students reported taking Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB) and were assigned to learn Farsi based on DLAB scores, but some did not even take DLAB. Fortunately, all six students eventually found the motivation to learn Farsi during the course. The finding also suggests that DLIFLC may consider resuming the DLAB test as a language placement test. Leaders may give every military student a chance to choose their preferred languages based on the national defense strategic language needs, which may help enhance students' overall language-learning motivation and academic goal setting.

B. Research Question 2: What Are the Strategies to Boost Learner Motivation?

The results below include interviews with six UPF students who completed the Persian Farsi language program. During the interviews, all six student participants responded to the following question: "What strategies or techniques have you used to maintain motivation?"

TABLE 2
MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES

Theme	Category	Code
Motivational Strategies	Cultural and immersive extra-curriculum	Curriculum, communication with different stakeholders, learning environment, recognition and support
	Mental health	Well-being

Two codes emerged from the interviews for the strategies to maintain motivation category: cultural and immersive extra-curriculum and mental health. Cultural and immersive activities refer to activities outside the regular curriculum that involve cultural immersion and learning. Three of six students mentioned that cultural and immersive activities were strategies they used to maintain motivation. For instance, one student shared, "Gets us out of the classroom environment, even talking about culture or just immersions, stuff like that really keep [sic] us motivated" (Interviewee 6). Mental health refers to someone's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Two of six students mentioned that mental health was one of their strategies to maintain motivation. For example, one student remarked, "My mental health being really good helped me to keep motivated" (Interviewee 5).

Also, all six student participants responded to the following question: "What are your suggestions to enhance student motivation?"

Four codes emerged from the interviews for the strategies to maintain motivation: curriculum, communication with different stakeholders, learning environment, and recognition and support. Curriculum refers to textbooks, regular classroom instructions, and extra-curriculum. Four out of six students mentioned that engaging in classroom instructions and activities and extra-curriculum to immerse students in the target language and culture are ways to boost student

motivation. For example, one student mentioned, “Bringing something more fun, like picnic days, cookery, something enjoyable while in the target language is essential in my view, like different clubs” (Interviewee 1). Another student shared,

“I know for sure some of my favorite parts of the course were the immersions and times were more immersed in the good parts of the culture, such as Nowruz, clubs, those things like really help you keep a good mindset when going through the course. I would suggest having more cultural experiences to maintain motivation.”

For communication with different stakeholders, all six students mentioned the importance of having effective communication with military units, language instructors, school leadership, and the effective communication among different stakeholders. For example, one student indicated, “To improve military unit communication efficiency, something they need to change is to make communication flow more easily to the students to save time” (Interviewee 1). The same student also mentioned, “Communication between the unit and the Farsi School house is low. Apparently, when they want to call you out for class, the units are supposed to contact the teaching team. That does not happen” (Interviewee 1). Another interviewee commented, “Every school leader, including the chair and the dean, is very good at listening. They will just continue to care about those students and continue to show that compassion and passion for what they are doing because they are the reason why we succeed” (Interviewee 2).

Regarding the learning environment, all six students shared that building a positive learning environment is a great way to enhance learner motivation. For instance, one student shared, “Build a positive class environment, be open to people, even if they’re weird to you or strange, because maybe they will have a feel that you do not have.” (Interviewee 5). For recognition and support, one student shared, “So those things that are how to motivate students giving rewards, telling they are doing a good job. Acknowledging their successes more than complaining about their failures is important. And if there are not as many successes as their own failures, ask how you can help them out to get them there” (Interviewee 2).

Another student mentioned,

“Bring some therapists and counselor here or bringing somebody in who has qualifications to a class and, like, being able to sit down with a student for 20 or 30 minutes and just talk to each student and see how they are doing individually so they feel comfortable sharing. So, if they could talk to a therapist or somebody confidentially without getting to the unit or anything, then I think that would be a big help to motivate students.”

The findings suggest the following major strategies to inform interventions and practices to enhance military language learners’ motivation, improve their learning experiences, and maximize outcomes to align with DLIFLC’s mission (n.d.-b).

(a). *Mental Health and Stress Management*

Students emphasized balancing academic responsibilities with mental health and stress management. They highlighted the need for relaxation and activities to prevent burnout and sustain motivation. However, current practices at military service units and language schools do not prioritize mental health or stress management, which is crucial given the highly intensive nature of DLIFLC’s language courses (n.d.-a; n.d.-b). This finding underscores the necessity for stakeholders at DLIFLC to prioritize mental health initiatives and provide resources such as time management strategies and stress reduction tools to support student well-being (Sipos et al., 2019).

(b). *Extracurricular and Cultural Engagement*

Students identified several strategies they used to maintain motivation, including participating in cultural and immersive extracurricular activities, joining clubs that made learning enjoyable, and spending time with friends to decompress. These suggestions align with previous research indicating that a well-designed curriculum—one that is relevant, engaging, and supportive—enhances student motivation and engagement (Rumberger & Lim, 2008). Furthermore, consistent with findings by Albayrak and Şener (2021), students who engaged in extracurricular activities demonstrated higher motivation levels than those who did not, positively influencing attitudes toward language learning.

(c). *Positive Learning Environment*

In response to RQ2, students reiterated the importance of establishing a positive learning environment to sustain and boost motivation. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that a supportive language-learning environment, coupled with effective instruction and positive peer and teacher-student relationships, enhances learner motivation and success (Drakulić, 2019; Miller & Crowther, 2020; Sipos et al., 2019; Tam, 2009).

(d). *Effective Communication*

Students also highlighted the importance of effective communication among all stakeholders—students, teachers, and military service units. This observation aligns with DLIFLC’s Command Guidance (2021), which emphasizes the need for formal and informal communication to foster collaboration and ensure students receive timely support. Addressing miscommunication or communication gaps is critical, as such issues can hinder students from accessing the full range of available resources and support.

(e). *Stakeholder Support and Recognition*

Students identified stakeholder support as a key motivator, consistent with findings that positive reinforcement from drill sergeants and other authority figures can boost self-confidence, motivation, and commitment, indirectly reducing attrition rates (Gibson et al., 2014). Additionally, the study found that extrinsic motivators, such as recognition and external rewards, enhance motivation. This finding aligns with Ryan and Deci's (2000) research, which demonstrates that external factors like praise and recognition positively influence learner motivation.

V. CONCLUSION

In higher education and military contexts, motivation is a critical factor influencing student learning outcomes (Allen & Bell, 1980; Allen et al., 2008; Boton & Gregory, 2015). This study employed a qualitative research design to explore factors affecting military learner motivation at DLIFLC. The data collection and analysis were guided by research questions (RQs) and the literature review (Creswell, 2013; Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Findings from this study will inform future research and guide potential interventions to improve DLIFLC policies and practices and enhance learner success. These policies and practices emphasize supporting foreign language learning needs, boosting learner motivation, and allocating resources to improve learning outcomes.

The study revealed that military students perceived their motivation for learning as multifaceted, influenced by a complex interplay of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, academic goals, academic achievement, personal growth, student-teacher relationships, peer relationships, and the learning environment. The research findings aligned closely with the themes identified in the literature review and provided strategies to maintain and enhance military language learner motivation. These strategies include:

1. Designing engaging and enjoyable curricula and extracurricular activities that immerse students in the target language environment.
2. Enhancing communication between learners and stakeholders.
3. Creating a positive and supportive learning environment.
4. Ensuring recognition and support from all stakeholders.

The study further emphasized the need for DLIFLC stakeholders to enhance communication and collaboration to provide timely and comprehensive support to students. A positive learning environment incorporating mental health support, stress management resources, and engaging extracurricular opportunities is essential. Additionally, recognizing and rewarding student achievements can sustain motivation and commitment. Together, these strategies create an environment that effectively boosts learner motivation and supports successful outcomes. The findings reinforce the critical role of the learning environment, student-teacher relationships, and peer relationships in student motivation, as supported by prior research (Drakulić, 2019; Miller & Crowther, 2020; Sipos et al., 2019; Tam, 2009). Specifically, positive relationships with faculty and peers and a supportive learning environment significantly enhance student motivation.

Despite these contributions, this research had several limitations. First, some interview questions were not well-aligned with the RQs, and the constructs within the interview design and RQs should have been more clearly delineated. Second, the limited participation of just six military students in this research restricted the generalizability of the findings due to the small sample size. Finally, the study did not compare perspectives from other stakeholders regarding the factors influencing military students' motivation, limiting the comprehensiveness of the findings.

In the broader context of military education, this study underscored the importance of enhancing motivational strategies and learning outcomes for all military learners. Additionally, it addresses a research gap regarding the impact of motivation on the learning outcomes of military students in U.S. military language programs, where existing literature is limited. Future research should focus on identifying additional factors influencing military student motivation and evaluating interventions by interviewing a wider range of participants, including civilian and military language instructors and military students from all language programs at DLIFLC. Surveys and interviews tailored to uncover common motivational factors and intervention strategies should be conducted. The findings can be shared with stakeholders to foster collaboration and develop actionable plans to support learner success. Additionally, suggestions from students on boosting motivation should be collected and shared with stakeholders to encourage collaboration and action. Subsequent studies could assess the effectiveness of these interventions in enhancing motivation and reducing attrition. This research provided a foundation for future exploration and practical applications to enhance military students' motivation and language learning outcomes.

APPENDIX

Student Interview Questions

1. What is your military service and grade?
2. What is your educational background?
3. Is the current foreign language you are studying your first choice?
4. Have you learned any other foreign languages at DLI in the past? If yes, please specify which language.
5. What are your motivation and reasons for joining the military?

6. What strategies or techniques do you use to maintain your motivation and focus to complete and succeed in this program?
7. Which learning strategies do you find most impactful in contributing to your learning outcomes?
8. How is your relationship with your classmates and instructors including teaching team leader, chairperson, Military Language Instructors? Could you please describe your interactions, communication, and level of trust with them?
9. How would you evaluate the impact of the learning environment on your learning motivation, commitment, and academic performance?
10. What is your career goal? How do you think your current studies at DLI help you achieve your career goals?
11. How have the supports and interventions implemented by the school and teaching team influenced student motivation and attrition?
12. What are your suggestions to enhance student motivation and reduce attrition?

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Approach to Listening Skills Formation in Students of Non-Linguistic Schools

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Abstract—The paper presents the description of experimental research aimed at revealing the stages of listening comprehension skills development in students with low foreign language proficiency. The experimental group was formed as the result of a multi-component monitoring test. During the studies, special attention was paid to the facilitation of listening skills and a subsequent response to an oral message. The experiment was divided into three stages. The first one was dedicated to the formation of social language competence (the creation of neuron connections between a phoneme, a grapheme, and the acquisition of intonation of an English sentence). The second stage included listening comprehension training with both supporting texts and their gradual elimination. Such consistent transition made it possible to combine listening comprehension tasks with training active vocabulary and grammar, to accompany listening with visuals to include the cultural component in teaching the foreign language for specific purposes, to form skills to define the general idea of an oral message, etc. The third stage of our experiment proved to be challenging for students with low language proficiency. It was concluded that it would be more effective to proceed with the listening activities of the second stage but with the gradual introduction of oral responses to the listening activities.

Index Terms—foreign language competence, listening comprehension, listening skills, oral message, training technique

I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern system of education, students encounter a wide variety of opportunities for academic mobility. These experiences are beneficial for future specialists as they allow them to be more competitive and capable of intercultural communication in the labor market. However, one of the main challenges when selecting applicants for an international internship is possessing a letter of assessment of foreign language competence or a certificate of proficiency in the language that meets international standards. Unfortunately, on these language competence tests, listening often receives a lower score when compared to the other major language skills of reading, speaking, and writing. This leaves the selection commission to doubt the applicant's ability to perceive specialized material in English by way of lectures.

Experience has proved that even when students have a certain lexical and grammatical base and show the ability to work with a written text, they show unwillingness to respond to oral communication. Thus, in addition to mastering the language for specific purposes, there is a need to develop the skills of listening to a foreign text, understanding it, and further working with it.

Likewise, mastering listening skills also makes it possible to accomplish educational and developmental goals. Listening has a positive effect on the development of memory and auditory memory, which is important for learning a foreign language. Through listening, the vocabulary of the language and its grammatical structure are learned. At the same time, listening helps develop the skills of speaking, reading, and writing. As Nation and Newton (2009) state, the ability to listen is the key to success in learning a foreign language. Wenden (1986) and Rost (2002) point out that listening, used as a teaching tool, stimulates the educational and communicative activities of learners, and ensures the management of the learning process. It should be noted that in the process of teaching listening, feedback takes place, and favorable conditions for mastering a foreign language are created.

The analysis of scientific literature has shown that scientists have repeatedly addressed the issues of introducing listening into the educational process. Wenden (1986) revealed the approaches to teaching English through English. Berezhneva (2022) explored some aspects of the listening training of military students. Brown and Brown (2011) revealed some myths when teaching listening. Zhen (2021) researched students' anxiety issues connected with listening and strategies for overcoming them. Domkin (2023) worked on the development of criteria for selecting texts for listening activities. Goh (1997) studied students' metacognitive awareness during listening. Movva et al. (2022) presented the effect of pre-, while-, and post-listening activities on developing students listening skills and so on.

At the same time, in the opinion of the researchers, current literature does not sufficiently cover approaches to the formation of listening skills in students of non-linguistic specialties with low foreign language proficiency.

Thus, the aim of this study is to present the results of the experiment aimed at developing listening skills in students of a non-linguistic school with low language proficiency.

To meet their goal, the researchers will complete the following tasks:

1. determine the essence of listening in the educational process and the stages of listening training;

2. describe characteristic exercises of every stage of the experiment; and
3. compare the results of the experimental group with the group taught according to the standard program.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on scientific literature, the researchers found that there is no unique definition of listening as an educational activity. Zhen (2021) states that listening refers to the perception and understanding of spoken texts, used primarily for training auditory comprehension, especially in educational contexts. Indeed, listening is the foundation of communication, as the mastery of oral speech begins with it. This process involves the ability to differentiate sounds, integrate them into meaningful units, retain them in memory, make probabilistic predictions, and interpret the sound sequence based on the communication context. Perception occurs at a natural pace characteristic of the specific language.

Lypchanko-Kovachyk and Tupytsia (2022) define listening as an activity that combines the perception and understanding of spoken language and emphasize that it is a perceptual activity closely linked to memory. The process of perception includes the analysis and synthesis of language units (phonemes, morphemes, words, and sentences) at various levels, resulting in the transformation of sound signals into meaningful records—thus enabling comprehension.

Heredia-Arboleda et al. (2024) point out that listening is closely related to other types of speech activity. Both listening and reading involve the perception and semantic processing of information, explaining the shared language mechanisms that support receptive forms of speech activity. Furthermore, they posit that listening and speaking are two interconnected components of oral communication, representing two sides of the same phenomenon.

Brown and Brown (2011) specify that the distinctive features of listening are defined by the nature of verbal communication where: 1.) listening and speaking are language skills that facilitate direct oral communication (although information can also be transmitted through technical means); 2.) in the communication process, listening is a reactive type of speech activity, like reading; 3.) listening is oriented toward receiving or transmitting information (a verbal message); 4.) listening functions as a receptive form of speech activity (unlike speaking and writing); and finally, 5.) the primary form of listening is the internal mechanism of auditory perception, which relies on mental processes such as auditory perception, attention, recognition, comparison of linguistic elements, identification, prediction, grouping, and memory retention.

As previously mentioned, the act of listening is based on an educational situation. Its subject is the content of the text being listened to, and the communicative task expresses the purpose of listening. These are the key components that determine communication. Moreover, listening, like any other speech act, is preceded by awareness and acceptance of the need for it. Listening skills training is based on the systematic use of listening elements in classroom and online work with the sequential complication of tasks (Goh, 1997).

The researchers support the point of view of Hayrapetyan (2016) that teaching students listening skills should begin not even with listening to the messages themselves, but with preliminary work with active vocabulary and grammar, especially when students have quite low language proficiency. This process not only facilitates further perception of the oral text but also motivates students to work more, tunes them into the topic, and activates background knowledge. However, listening poses challenges for the teacher, such as:

1. challenges that are caused by the peculiarities of the act of listening and the student's linguistic competence.
2. challenges that originate in the phonetic features and pronunciation of the speaker.
3. misunderstanding of sociolinguistic and sociocultural components of communication (Berezneva, 2022).

In addition, there is an inability to concentrate on this type of work. Students need to listen to information and concentrate on the task as much as possible so that the oral message has the planned pragmatic impact (Srejon, 2024).

As for the first challenge, Hasan (2020) notes that instead of gradually introducing the listening element and considering the level of foreign language competence, teachers tend to give complex and long constructions for listening with complex instructions for completing the task after it. Challenges associated with phonetic features and pronunciation highlight the individual characteristics of the speaker who reads the text, as well as the ability to perceive the information by the student himself/herself. As Lypchanko-Kovachyk and Tupytsia (2022) point out, if the features of pronunciation and intonation are an objective obstacle that can be overcome through the formation of a graphic image of the word, different from the sound in the listener's mind, then the features of perception are a subjective factor, the solution of which depends on the specific problem with a particular student.

Based on the sociocultural components of communication, the solution to the challenges is suggested by Demkin (2023) and includes a number of preparatory measures, namely, the correctly chosen tempo of the audio message, the volume and duration of sounding, taking into account linguistic features and socio-cultural orientation, the authenticity of selected audio texts, their modernity and relevance to the age and level of English of the audience, and consideration and explanation of intercultural communication features.

Taking into consideration the challenges that may arise when teaching listening, the researchers of the current study tried to develop an approach that could simplify the acquisition of listening skills in students with low levels of English proficiency.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Hypothesis

The researchers assumed that if they divided the listening activities of the students with lower language competency into three stages, the learning outcome would be more effective. To achieve this goal, they introduced such stages as listening to a foreign text without further response, listening and giving a short answer, and listening and giving a long answer.

B. Participants

The study included 39 first-year economics students at H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University (Ukraine) during the 2023-2024 academic year. All the students participated in this study as volunteers. The detailed information on the students is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
INFORMATION ON THE STUDENTS WHO TOOK PART IN THE RESEARCH

Variables	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	19	48.7
Female	20	51.3
Age		
18	2	5.1
19	12	30.8
20+	25	64.1
English as an Optional Part of Ukrainian National Multi-Subject Test		
Passed	26	66.7
Chose Another Subject	13	33.3

It should be noted that English is an optional part of the Ukrainian National Multi-Subject test, and that is why not all the students passed it to enter university. Those students who passed English as an optional part of the test had band scores between 149-162 out of 200 maximum possible, which corresponds to A2-B1 CEFR level. However, this test does not include listening tasks.

C. Instruments

Theoretical methods, such as generalizing and analyzing scientific literature on the issue under consideration, and empirical methods, such as pedagogic observations, questionnaires, conversations, and the analysis of the results of the tests to explore the development of listening skills, were used.

D. Data Collection Procedure

After explaining the purpose, procedures, and significance of the study and obtaining consent from the students who took part in the experiment and interviews, the experiment itself was conducted. Following an admission monitoring control, the students were separated into two groups based on their English proficiency. Then, the intermediate listening test control allowed researchers to monitor the students' progress in the experimental group.

E. Ethical Considerations

This study received ethical approval from the Dean's Office of the School of Social and Behavioral Studies. Students' participation was entirely voluntary, with informed consent obtained after they were thoroughly briefed on the study's objectives and procedures. Their involvement had no impact on their course grades, and they were clearly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point or to skip any question they preferred not to answer.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

At the beginning of the academic school year, entrance monitoring control was conducted consisting of three sections:

1. a vocabulary and grammar multiple-choice test with three gaps and four answer options.
2. listening with multiple-choice tasks and establishing the correctness/incorrectness of statements regarding the text heard.
3. interview on everyday topics.

The test results are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
MONITORING TESTING RESULTS

Types Of Activities	Maximum Score	Result (Average)
Vocabulary and grammar test	50	32
Listening		
• 10 multiple choice questions for 10 short statements or dialogues	10	4
• 10 True/False statements to a text of ~3000 printed characters	10	6
Interview on an everyday topic	30	13

It should be noted that the most successful type of activity was the vocabulary and grammar test, which indicates students were specially prepared for this type of knowledge test, whereas listening and speaking were more difficult for the students; thus, they have lower results. Based on the results of the entrance test, the group of students was divided into two subgroups: students whose knowledge of English corresponded to the A2 CEFR level (23 students) and students whose knowledge of English corresponded to the B1 CEFR level (16 students).

For the B1 group, a pre-intermediate level textbook was selected, and classes were conducted according to the work program developed based on the teacher's book. For the A2 group, a textbook of the same level was used; however, listening tasks were modified.

During the academic year, listening training for the experimental A2 group was divided into three stages:

1. Listening to a foreign text without further response.
2. Listening and giving a short answer.
3. listening and giving a long answer.

A. *Listening to a Foreign Text Without Further Response*

This was the starting point for listening activities. This stage takes only 10% of the total time allocated to studying a foreign language per year. The purpose of this stage is to form sociolinguistic competence, namely, to create a mental connection between a graphic sign and the pronunciation of a word, as well as to master the intonational features of an English text in accordance with the structure of a sentence.

During this stage of learning, students listen to texts read by a teacher or to recordings with authentic speech, follow the text that is in front of their eyes, and repeat it, imitating intonation and pronunciation. The stage does not provide for control testing. The purpose of this listening is:

1. to establish the recognizability of lexical material, namely, the relationship between a graphic sign and its articulation.
2. familiarizing students with the intonational features of a foreign language.
3. familiarizing students with different ways of articulation depending on the timbre, speed of pronunciation, and dialect features.

These kinds of activities correlate with scientific research for the development of listening competence, helping students remember the spelling and pronunciation of new words, and can be considered as the primary form of listening that allows for the gradual introduction of more complex listening elements.

B. *Listening and Giving a Short Answer*

This takes up the largest part (60%) of the learning time allocated to mastering listening. This part is important since a short answer is the most common form of response in everyday communication; in addition, it allows for finding out whether the student understands both the general information provided in an oral message and the detailed information. The activities of the second stage of the experiment were targeted at:

1. combining listening tasks with training of current lexical and grammatical material.
2. combining audio-text with graphic support in the form of photos/pictures/maps, which included a linguistic and regional component in the teaching of a foreign language for specific purposes.
3. developing the ability to determine the general purpose of an oral message.
4. highlighting key information from an oral message.

At the beginning of this stage, listening is still accompanied by a printed text (it allows for accomplishing preliminary work with active grammar and vocabulary) but with some omitted elements. Thus, the researchers suggest our students complete the exercise on filling in the gaps. For example:

1. You are on a student _____ program in England. At the end of the _____ year, your classmates would like to buy a thank-you present for your teacher. Your partner wants to buy a bottle of wine, but you do not think this is a good idea. You decide to persuade your partner to present some _____ literature (exchange, academic, scientific).
2. Many companies, especially in the US, now offer games and sports facilities to attract _____ people to work for them. They want a _____ workforce because the young learn _____ and can accept change

_____. In the past _____ people took all the decisions, but now young workers often have a lot of responsibilities (young, younger, faster, more easily, older).

The examples demonstrate the possibility of combining listening skills training with the lexical process material (Example 1 – vocabulary related to academic discourse) or grammatical (Example 2 – morphological features of the English adjective and the construction of degrees of comparison).

Next, the textual support is not completely removed, but the volume of printed text in relation to the oral message is significantly reduced. One of the proposed activities is to establish the order of the given statements/sentences. In this case, the students learn to scan reading since they have a small amount of time to familiarize themselves with the task before completing the exercise. When preparing this type of task, the teacher must make sure that the selected statements/sentences cannot be put in the correct order without first listening to the text (Movva et al., 2022).

The next step involves removing the reference text and performing exercises, which are widely used types of testing listening skills. Among the proposed tasks, the researchers will define:

1. Listening to a short message or dialogue and determining the correct answer.

Script: Good morning. I'd like to make a complaint. I bought these shoes here a week ago, and the heels came off. I'd like to return them.

What is the speaker's intention?

- a. To buy a pair of shoes
 - b. To walk on a hill
 - c. To take the shoes back to the shop
 - d. To talk to the shop assistant
2. Listening to several messages and establishing correspondences between the speaker and his/her main intention.

Speaker A: I do, but not as often as I'd like to. It's a pity that supermarkets don't have a better range of Fairtrade products in stock. All they have ...

Speaker B: Fairtrade... to be honest, I've never heard of it.

- You have, Rooney. It's those things Oxfam sells, from Africa...

- Oh, this one... No, we don't buy it.

Speaker C: No, I don't; they are too expensive. Anyway, I don't believe in it. If those farmers can't get a good price for their products ...

Match the speakers to the following:

1. The speaker is negative about the products in question. (Speaker C)
2. The speaker is unaware of the products in question. (Speaker B)
3. The speaker regrets the lack of the products in question. (Speaker A)

Further use can be modified by complicating it, for instance, by adding a distractor (an option that will not be used). As the types of tasks become more complicated, the length of the oral message also increases. Starting from this point, the researchers have introduced complex exercises into the training that contained several options for activity; for example, up to five multiple-choice questions, up to ten questions to determine the truth or falsity of information, and matching concepts with a graphic image were some of the questions introduced. Here is an example of the last exercise:

Script: Oh, hi! Are you a new guy here? George? Great! I'm Veronica. I'll show you around here everything. As you enter the office, you'll have a cloakroom on your left, well, you know, to leave your coat or jackets. Don't worry. It's really warm here! After that, you go left, and in there, just in front of you, you'll see our desks. We don't practice hot-desking here, so everyone has their own workplace. Yours is in the middle, just next to Andy. Well, I don't envy her. She is such a chatterbox! Anyway, I sit behind you in a row. Your place is important—you'll tell when the boss comes so that he can see us working... You asked where the boss sits. He has a separate office. It'll be on your right as you go to your desk. Oh, I have to warn you. That place between you and the boss, just next to his place, which is supposed to be a lounge zone... well... we don't talk there; he can hear everything. But we can chat in the copy room; it's just in front of the entrance....

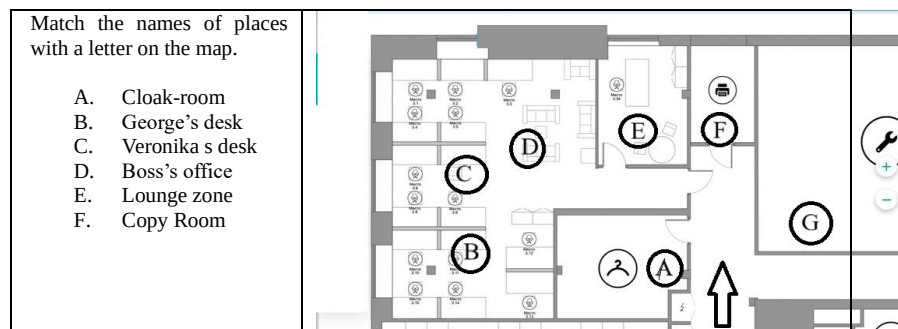


Figure 1. Example of an Exercise on Matching Concepts With a Graphic Image

The example shows an exercise that tests detailed understanding of the text, the ability to concentrate on a long statement, and the ability to correlate a graphic image with an oral text.

The second stage of the experiment involved intermediate control, in which the listening part consisted of three types of activities:

1. listening to five short messages and comparing them with a statement summarizing the speaker's position.
2. listening to the message and filling in seven gaps with 1-2 words.
3. listening to the text and choosing seven correct statements from the ten proposed.

Developing the test, the researchers tried to consider the findings described by Demkin (2023).

The results of the intermediate control on listening are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 3
RESULTS OF THE INTERMEDIATE LISTENING TEST

Types of Activities	Level A2 Students' Maximum Score (23 students)	Level B1 Students' Maximum Score (16 students)
Listening to five short messages and matching them with a statement that summarizes the speaker's opinion (max. 5)	5 91.3 % (21 students) 4 8.7 % (2 students)	5 100% (16 students)
Listening to the message and filling in the seven gaps with 1-2 words (max. 7)	7 4.3 % (1 student) 6 30.4% (7 students) 5 34.8 % (8 students) 4 21.7 % (5 students) 3 8.7 % (2 students)	6 56.25% (9 students) 5 31.25 (5 students) 4 12.5 % (2 students)
Choosing seven correct statements mentioned in the message from ten given. (max. 7)	5 30.4 % (7 students) 4 52.17 % (12 students) 3 17.4% (4 students)	7 6.25 % (1 student) 6 81.25 % (13 students) 5 12.5 % (2 students)

The intermediate monitoring control showed significant progress in the application of listening skills by students of the group with a lower level of foreign language competence, whereas the level of the students who completed listening activities only from their students' books hasn't significantly changed. The most difficult task for students was the task of filling in the gaps, which indicates insufficient mastery of the spelling component of thematic vocabulary and the inability of a small number of students (8.7%) to listen and take notes at the same time. The variation in answers in the third task is explained by inattention, inaccuracy in understanding the statement, and inability to paraphrase foreign language statements while preserving the original meaning.

C. Listening and Giving a Long Answer

This is an integral component of teaching listening skills since it is this type of activity that stimulates independent speech and motivates students to discuss and search for additional material. Starting from simple questions to the content component of the message, the teacher gradually moves on to the analysis of the conceptual component of the oral text. This type of listening is based on the use of large-scale oral messages (7-10-minute tracks). Among the tasks that are relevant for teaching foreign languages for specific purposes, the researchers suggest some extracts from business programs, interviews with famous people, parts of lectures of English-speaking professors, etc. A feature of this stage of listening training is its combination with teaching oral or written speech. In accordance with the task, a

work program is formed, which indicates which type of activity (oral or written) will check the understanding of what was heard. During our experiment, the emphasis was placed on oral speech. The final control of this stage involved listening to the text and forming one's own oral expression. The assessment considered the proximity to the topic of the oral message that was listened to, understanding of active lexical material, the correct structural construction of the student's expression, and the accuracy of the selected grammar constructions. Thus, checking the assimilation of the material and understanding of the audio text also allows avoiding the use of artificial intelligence during control.

Even though the researchers introduced preliminary work with the vocabulary and defined key words for the A2 group, the students still had some problems with completing this task. A comparison with the group that followed the standard program showed that students in the B1 group demonstrated better results in speaking, namely, the fruitful use of connective constructions that form the structure of the expression, greater awareness of the contextual component of the question that was put up for discussion, which is due to the orientation of the selected textbook and its program. Students of the A2 group were unable to master their listening skills to give a complete, detailed answer in the allotted time, which proved that giving such difficult activities was not effective.

Among the advantages of the third stage are the inability to guess the answer; educating children to focus on a long message and draw their own conclusions; mastering the correct structural composition of the text; and the capacity to mix its pieces organically.

However, listening and giving a long answer as an educational activity has the following disadvantages, including a long-term evaluation of the group's skills; when listening to one text at the same time, some students have more time to prepare, whereas with sequential listening, it is necessary to prepare a separate message for each student, which is time-consuming; and if you use one text, there is a possibility of recording the text with its subsequent transfer to other members of the group, which contradicts the principles of academic integrity.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The experiment showed that, with a consistent approach to using various types of listening, progress is observed in the performance of the written type of control. This approach allows forming necessary skills even with a small number of practical hours per week (4 hours – 2 classes). The second stage is the most important in acquiring foreign language listening competence, which involves not only the linguistic aspect but also the country, social and psychological studies, since the use of photo material contributes to interest and the ability to determine the main intention of the speaker. Training during the third stage brings students to a higher level of language competence, but it is successfully provided if the student has internal motivation to build an expression on the proposed topic independently. The control at the third stage is too long and is not prescribed in the planning regulations, which makes it impossible to include it as a separate activity for the final control (test/exam).

Thus, the researchers wouldn't recommend introducing long listening activities that require oral answers from the students with low language competence, as they are still too difficult for the students. Instead, the researchers would advise practicing the format of the listening activities of the second stage but adding an oral response to tracks or videos. This approach would eliminate the usage of artificial intelligence and develop oral skills without stress.

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Teacher and CEO Job Ads: Metaphor and Framing Analysis

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Abstract—According to the Critical Discourse Analysis, language use reflects the power dynamics in various social circumstances. Also, underlying metaphors in the discourse reveal the similarities and differences between the ideas, attitudes, and values of different groups and individuals (Cameron et al., 2009). In this paper, we compare job ads for teachers and CEOs, looking for metaphors and metaphorical frames used to describe perfect candidates. Before that, we provide an analysis of similarities between these two professions and a review of literature discussing the metaphor research on teachers and managers. A couple of interesting conclusions arise. First, there are differences in the self-assumed metaphorical identity of teachers and the metaphors students and works of literature use to describe them. Secondly, in the public discourse, managers' identity is set in the WAR metaphor frame, whereas in the leadership theories, they are described either as charismatic or transformational leaders (Storey, 2004a). Finally, our research shows that job ads for CEOs portray the ideal candidates within the charismatic leader frame, leaving out the WAR frame, whereas teacher ads leave out many metaphors that constitute the identity of successful and passionate teachers. This poses the question of why 'employer branding' (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 501) is not applied to the educational setting and whether this points to the status of these two professions in society.

Index Terms—metaphor, discourse, job ads, teachers, CEOs

I. INTRODUCTION

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it does not only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered a productive network that runs through the whole social body, much more than a negative instance whose function is repression (Foucault, 2010, p. 120).

Ever since the linguistic turn in the mid-20th century, there has been an ongoing debate about whether language affects our thought, is responsible for the reinforcement of social hierarchies, is used as a control tool in power wars, etc. The thesis that language use reflects power dynamics in various social circumstances has been reiterated by many theorists and researchers, mainly those following in the steps of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) founders Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk, and others. The researchers in CDA seek to uncover the ways in which power relations and ideologies are reflected in the discourse (e.g. Beard, 2000; Ramsay, 2008; Thomas et al., 2004). The idea that the change in language may change the circumstances of events has spilt over into our daily lives. A recent example is the #ReframeCovid initiative, claiming that the war-related language used around the pandemic is in some way hurtful to society (even though there are researchers who believe that it is not the war metaphor itself, but the context in which it is used that seems problematic and possibly leads to panic and misinformation of the public, see Štrkalj Despot & Ostroški Anić, 2021).

Metaphor as a way to gain insight into the way people think about reality has been the focus of much research since Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) influential Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Their claim that the metaphor is not simply a linguistic device but rather a mental construct based in our physical, bodily reality that shapes the way we perceive the world around us and make sense of abstract notions has been confirmed in some studies involving the connection between the physical senses and our decisions and behaviour (Jostmann et al., 2009; Williams & Bargh, 2008; for a review, see Gibbs & Perlman, 2006, p. 226). However, Lakoff and Johnson's idea has been challenged in terms of the embodied nature of all metaphors. For example, Casasanto and Gijssels (2015, pp. 327-328) use the term 'mental metaphors' to describe 'implicit associations between two analogue continuums: the "source domain" continuum, which is typically more concrete and can be experienced directly through the senses (e.g., touch for warmth, vision for spatial proximity or height), and the "target domain" continuum, which is typically more abstract and can only be experienced through introspection (e.g., affection, similarity, happiness)'. 'Mental metaphors' ought to be distinguished from 'linguistic metaphors', according to them, and they treat them as hypothetical non-linguistic associations in memory, whereas they see Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) term 'conceptual metaphor' as often used ambiguously, sometimes referring to conventions in language and other times to these non-linguistic associations in memory. Kövecses (2005, p.

266) furthermore claims that ‘what is recognised as shared between two domains need not be something as abstract as generic-level structure. It can be similarities of all kinds – most important, actual, or perceived shared features’, which ‘can create an infinitely large number of novel metaphors’. Moreover, the language itself does not have to be metaphorical to invoke metaphorical frames. The best way to understand this is to analyse poetry works that use concrete language yet invoke many metaphors (Camp, 2009). Analogously, complicated social circumstances produce certain frames within which different professions may be seen differently, not in terms of the knowledge and skills they need to do their jobs, but in terms of the value of their work to society.

Frame Theory (Fillmore, 1982, pp. 135-136) posits a connection between the meaning-bearing elements of language and the background knowledge and experiences that give people reasons to create categories expressed by words. Cognitive frames, or ‘any of the many organized packages of knowledge, beliefs, and patterns of practice that shape and allow humans to make sense of their experiences’ (Fillmore & Baker, 2009, p. 314) are sometimes overlearned – we are so used to them that we are not aware of their existence. There is perhaps no effect of metaphorical framing on reasoning, as stated by Steen et al. (2014); however, metaphorical framing is a cognitive phenomenon revealing the similarities and differences between the ideas, attitudes, and values of different groups and individuals (Cameron et al., 2009).

Analysing metaphors within a discourse or metaphorical frames evoked by the discourse offers a potential avenue for gathering evidence supporting the idea that our perceptions of certain professions are influenced by their societal value. Even though online job ads are expected to be neutral and free from opinionated descriptions of various professions in the media, they may reveal hidden ideologies (which will be discussed in one of the following sections) or, at least, provide a view of ‘ideal’ candidates (unlike other types of discourse, which quite often discuss the ones belonging to opposite sides of the spectrum).

II. WHY COMPARE TEACHERS AND CEOs?

The comparison of teachers' and CEOs' skills and duties as described in online job posts may seem surprising and lead to the question of why compare these two professions and not some others. As professionals in the sector of education for 25 years, the reasons are partly personal but not undeniable as a current social fact. Years of teaching have shown us that teaching is never just teaching, as many who have not been in the profession assume. Being an expert in the field does not necessarily make you a good teacher. In fact, to be a successful teacher, one needs to possess, among others, many managerial skills, and the jobs themselves are similar in many ways, which we will illustrate in the section to follow. A newspaper article by Schildkrout (2015) confirms our idea that a successful teacher is usually adorned with numerous skills that would also make them a successful manager. Of course, such teachers do not get the appreciation and pay they deserve, which is reflected in the latest surge of teacher shortages in the USA and Europe. Anyhow, this is what Schildkrout wrote at the beginning of his expose on the similarities between teachers and CEOs:

When, six years ago, I made the switch from high school teacher to startup CEO, I thought I was in for a rather dramatic change. On the surface, the two vocations could not be more divergent: nonprofit vs. for-profit; public institution vs. free market; chalkboard and textbook vs. Google Analytics and business-expansion playbook; curriculum-building vs. consumer-product design. And yet, I've come to see that teaching is a lot more like being a CEO than our teacher-degrading, CEO-fetishizing society wishes to know. (Schildkrout, 2015)

In the rest of the article, he brings up an inspiring description of a successful leader, concluding with the remark that “we pay a lip service to the importance of education and the nobility of teaching”, but “we don't come close to offering teachers the concrete manifestations of honour that we afford CEOs”. This is the thought that we would revisit later. Now, we would like to give a somewhat different elaboration of the idea that teachers and CEOs share many similarities in terms of duties and skills, which explains our research in the first place.

First, what we see common to both positions is good management as the basis for the implementation of work. Both teachers and CEOs are in charge of creating long-term and short-term plans based on the available resources. For CEOs, resources refer both to human and monetary resources, whereas for teachers, they refer to the curriculum they need to teach as well as the knowledge their students already have and that needs to be built on. The differences between the two are obvious, and it is clear that CEOs are in pursuit of funds that would make their business or company function and grow, whereas teachers' goals are the growth of knowledge, independence, and curiosity of their students. However, the management skills behind the pursuit are the same: analysis of the resources, planning, the ability to restructure and be flexible, ability to see the consequences of certain actions, keeping records of steps taken, and noticing how they reflect on the final goals. If we wish to look for the source domain of these abstract concepts, we understand that the resources are understood as OBJECTS THAT NEED TO BE MADE BIGGER AND/OR SMARTLY DISTRIBUTED TO HELP SOMEONE GROW. The metaphorical frame that makes these jobs similar to each other is that of GROWTH, and teachers and CEOs are represented as a FORCE that is able to change others, to make them grow, or to move others to make something else grow. Good management focuses on GROWTH, and a good manager is a FORCE that is ABLE TO AFFECT GROWTH. Also, it consists of the metaphorical entailment that MONEY or KNOWLEDGE are LIVING BEINGS due to the idea that they can grow.

Secondly, both teachers and CEOs are not completely independent in their work, meaning that they have to work with others to succeed. On the one hand, CEOs work with the company board that guides or supervises their decisions, which is comparable to teachers being overseen and guided by the school principals, advisors, agencies, and other institutions in charge of education. On the other hand, there is the staff or the students, and the person in charge (the CEO or teacher) is responsible for their actions. This might look like a simplified picture, but it shows that we operate with the same set of transversal skills in very similar circumstances: comprehending the potential inherent in a plan or a strategy requires a set of analytical skills; interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are the key to thriving communication with the supervisors and many people/students we are in charge of; we need to be able to motivate others to work and believe that what they do will help them prosper. With students, it is even more complicated because they are not necessarily intrinsically motivated (keeping the job, advancing in their career), and teachers need to be creative in retaining the level of interest of their students. The metaphorical frame within which people in these positions may be compared is the CONDUIT METAPHOR. They serve as a container which delivers ideas, wishes, or plans from a 'higher' place to the 'ground', where these are to be implemented.

Thirdly, there are others involved in the process. For CEOs, those are the partners and stakeholders, for teachers, those are the parents. Again, the set of skills needed to communicate your goals and cooperate is similar: active listening, analysis, good communication skills, and many others. Finally, there is a growing need for so-called 'public relations' in both of these jobs. The presentation of the school's or company's vision, mission, and accomplishments has become an important part of both careers. Again, the CONDUIT metaphor is at work here, but this time the teachers and CEOs may be seen as CONTAINERS of results, successes, or failures that need to be delivered (communicated) to the public.

We dare to believe that a teacher's job is even more demanding for the reasons mentioned above, as well as the fact that teachers are most often left to their own devices, without a secretary to remind them of their daily duties, type for them, do photocopies of the materials they need daily, etc.

III. JOB ADS RESEARCH – DISCRIMINATION ISSUES AND EMPLOYER BRANDING

Online recruitment possibilities have given way to a surge of research on job posts in different fields. Studies of the wording of recruitment ads are oftentimes intertwined with social issues, such as gender inequality (Gaucher et al., 2011) or the marginalisation of some groups of job candidates (Mackenzie, 2020). The wording of ads may influence whether applicants see themselves fit for the job (Wille & Derous, 2018) or whether they feel the need to adjust their personality description to suit the position (Wessel et al., 2015).

Also, applicants may see some jobs as less attractive or less desirable if they feel that the organisation does not share their values (Celani & Singh, 2011). Values seem to be more important than policies that benefit the applicants' demographic group (Casper et al., 2013), and applicant's safety attitudes seem to be the best predictor of attraction to job descriptions that focus on employees' safety (Fruhen et al., 2015). In other words, the company's strategy or culture is of great importance to applicants. Thus, 'employer branding', a concept defined by Backhaus and Tikoo (2004, p. 502) as "the process of building an identifiable and unique employer identity" has become important in developing and recruiting the workforce. It has developed under the assumption that employees or human capital are crucial for the company's performance. There are many examples of small and big companies that are famous for their employer branding - the most famous example being Google, which builds their employer branding around various benefits for workers - quite long (for the American context) paternal leave, comfortable working conditions (swimming pools, relaxation areas, free canteens, etc.), or investing in their employees' self-development. It manages to attract a highly qualified workforce, even for the simplest jobs in the company (Nowakowski, 2020).

IV. REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH ON METAPHORICAL REPRESENTATIONS AND FRAMING OF TEACHERS AND MANAGERS

The research of metaphors used to describe or conceptualise teachers' duties, identities, or performances is usually performed by asking teachers, prospective teachers, or students to compare teachers to something or someone. Oxford et al. (1998) study those metaphors in an attempt to better understand the classroom environment and fine-tune the teaching methods accordingly. They categorise metaphors into four different philosophical perspectives: social order metaphors (teachers mould students to fit the society), cultural transmission metaphors (teachers initiate students into the 'correct' canon of a certain culture), learner-centred growth (teachers help learners develop their naturally inherited biological potential), and social reform metaphors (teachers are in charge of creating miniature democracies in their classrooms that would help students learn about themselves in the society). Chen (2003, p. 28) has studied metaphors for teaching in literature and teachers' journals and has categorised them into five categories according to their orientation: an art-oriented view of teachers (sculptors, painters, entertainers, directors, actors) with the focus on the creative side of teaching, sensitivity to students' needs and flexibility in adapting to those needs; business metaphor (advertisers and sellers of knowledge; teaching is delivering); science metaphor (studying the process of teaching and believing that anyone can reproduce the results by replicating the effective practices); power metaphor (teacher-as-a-leader as opposed to teacher-as-a-collaborator), and personal dynamics metaphor (how teachers see the teaching - as a game, a journey, a roller-coaster, etc.). Similarly, Saban et al. (2007) investigate the concept of teachers through

metaphor analysis by asking 1222 participants to describe teachers metaphorically. They categorise the metaphors into ten conceptual categories. Teachers are seen as moulders or craftspersons, curers/repairers, superior authority figures, change agents, entertainers, archetypes of spirit, nurturers/cultivators, facilitators/scaffolders, or cooperative/democratic leaders. In a study of metaphors that Chinese EFL university teachers use to describe their beliefs about English teachers, Xiong et al. (2015) categorise them into three cognitive models of education: journey, building, and conduit.

An interesting variety of teacher metaphors comes from the analysis of learner narratives by Pavičić Takač and Molnar (2009). Teachers are seen by their students as friends, zoo-keepers, sleep-inducers, tyrants, co-learners, preachers, prophets, family members, challengers, consultants, investors, and many more, which testifies to the variety of teacher roles and differences among teachers. It seems that students do not necessarily see teachers within the ideal-teacher model. The same can be said for teachers who appear in literary works, either as antagonists, protagonists, or side characters. Muchmore (2012) performed an identity analysis of teachers in 44 works of literature (novels, children's books, plays, short stories, autobiographical novels) published between 1598 and 2010 and set in the USA, Canada, England, Germany, Russia, New Zealand, and Trinidad. The identity themes that emerged through her analysis were the following: (a) teacher as nurturer, (b) teacher as subversive, (c) teacher as conformist, (d) teacher as hero, (e) teacher as villain, (f) teacher as victim, (g) teacher as outsider, (h) teacher as immutable force, (i) teacher as eccentric, and (j) teacher as economic survivor. The portrayal of different types of teachers, unlike the above-cited research, displays a more realistic picture of teachers, out of which some fit the ideal-teacher model whereas others occupy the non-ideal or troubled-teacher conceptual space.

Metaphor research about managers' identities is usually focused on business ethics and management studies, using narrative and discourse analysis, looking into the metaphors used by managers, or discussing the metaphorical frames underlying the manager's identity conceptualisation. Thus, Carollo and Guerri (2018) investigate the self-reported identity issues of sustainability managers and analyse the tensions that accompany this role. As their function is to make sure companies balance their economic, social, and environmental performances, they have an ungrateful position of the 'insider' who may work against the company's main goal of increasing their earnings. Their research has shown that sustainability managers use metaphors to describe their role and cope cognitively with this awkward position. The metaphors they use are those of a 'hyena', 'do-gooder', 'talking-cricket', 'activist in a suit', 'undercover consultant', or even 'visionary bringing messianic visions'. Ashcraft (2013) discusses occupational identities through the 'glass slipper' metaphor, seeing 'embodied social identities' as social constructions of an idealised 'body' with typical features that only certain members of real-life bodies possess. Thus, 'occupations come to appear possessed of inherent characteristics that render them a natural fit for some and a stretch, if not an impossibility, for others' (Ashcraft, 2013, p. 16). Taylor et al. (2018) interviewed 69 welfare programme managers in search of their moral identity work and concluded that two metaphors reappear in it - the SOLDIER and the HELPER metaphors. Metaphors were used as a research tool in the research by Koller (2004), who studied magazine and newspaper articles describing businesspersons. The search for metaphorically used expressions has yielded the centrality of the cognitive metaphor of WAR across the discourse set in the aggression and competition frame. It has revealed some gender-specific metaphors, such as the CHEERLEADING metaphor for women and the COWBOY metaphor for men, as well as some other proof that hegemonic masculinity quite often enters the text.

Managers' identities are often discussed within the frame of leadership theories (see Storey, 2004a). The media is full of accounts of charismatic leadership, and the consultancy industry on leadership has grown exponentially since the 1970s (Storey, 2004b, pp. 2-3). According to him, the competences of leaders may be divided into three main meta-capabilities: big-picture sensemaking, ability to deliver change, and inter-organisational representation. Big-picture sensemaking refers to the ability to analyse the circumstances, see the organisation's strengths and weaknesses, and construct a plan (vision, mission, and strategy). The ability to deliver change consists of making others perform according to the plan. The skills that a leader needs here are mostly related to communication (active listening, communicating their ideas), self-awareness, social awareness, and being able to motivate others and empower them to move towards goals. It is important to note that these two meta-capabilities do not differ from the ones that teachers need to possess. The third one is perhaps not applicable to teachers in terms of cooperation between various organisations, but still, skills such as coalition building, understanding others' perspectives, persuasion, and assessing client needs in a holistic rather than a single agency manner (as listed in Storey, 2004a, p. 26) are crucial for the school-parents relationship.

Furthermore, Storey (2004a, p. 28) has distilled a large literature on the ideas of charismatic vs. transformational leaders and concluded that the first one is described in terms of the following six elements: a heroic figure with past success stories, a mystic in touch with higher truths, a value-driven individual, someone who is perceived to 'know the way', someone who has a vision of a more desirable and achievable future, and someone capable of caring and developing followers. On the other hand, a transformational leader is focused on engaging his followers. They are alert to their needs and ready to develop them, they encourage followers to think in creative ways and propose innovative ideas, they energise followers and offer them role models. Both models show us that ideal leadership depends on attributes of personality and behaviour.

V. RESEARCH

To investigate the metaphors and metaphorical frames evoked when describing an ideal candidate for the position of a teacher or a CEO, we perform a discourse analysis of job ads that list their duties, responsibilities and desirable skills. Job ads are chosen for the analysis assuming that they would be a) devoid of any emotional or ideological burden that might accompany other types of texts (e.g., newspaper materials, handbooks, etc.) and b) similar in form, which would provide us with means to compare them.

A. Corpus and Methodology

The corpus used in this research consists of a random selection of job posts retrieved on May 29, 2023, at the Indeed job search engine, an American worldwide employment website that aggregates job listings from thousands of websites. The job search used in the research was a simple one - the terms 'teacher' and 'CEO' were separately typed into the section 'Find jobs', and no specific criteria were selected. The first 20 job posts of both occupations (40 posts altogether) were copied into a Word document, thus creating a small corpus of 29,848 words. The CEO subcorpus contained 20,030 words, and the teacher subcorpus was two times shorter, containing 9,818 words. The subcorpora were analysed manually to search for possible job-related metaphors and metaphorical frames.

B. Hypothesis

We may agree that there are no celebrity teachers, and there are plenty of celebrity CEOs. Successful representatives of the two professions do not have the same public visibility, which must be a socially constructed phenomenon aligning with Foucault's (2010) view of power as something that runs through the whole social body. Therefore, the main thesis of our research is that the metaphors and metaphorical frames evoked in what seems to be the neutral discourse of job ads will reveal the different social statuses of teachers and CEOs.

C. Metaphor and Frame Analysis

In teacher job ads, the metaphorical framework for the teacher's role or their duties is the following: the typical view of learning is that of an OBJECT THAT CAN GROW (e.g., A candidate will have to 'Create projects designed to enhance learning'). Also, it is described as a PATH (UP OR FORWARD) with a final destination at the end. Thus, learning activities must have 'clear objectives' and teachers need to 'monitor students' progress'. Quite often, it is described as a PRODUCT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, as when the perfect candidate is described as someone who is able to 'create classroom environment conducive to learning' or 'promote a positive school environment that enhances student learning'. The same frame is evoked in regard to curriculum: it is an OBJECT TO DEVELOP, DELIVER, or IMPLEMENT within time frames; or an OBJECT THROUGH WHICH STUDENTS ARE MOVED with the help of lessons ('Develop regular lesson plans that move students through the curriculum within time frames'). A successful teacher will create and use a curriculum that 'reinforces the joy of learning', so curriculum is also an OBJECT THAT SUPPORTS or MAKES SOMETHING STRONGER. Teachers also need to be able to 'translate the curriculum standards' into 'meaningful learning experiences' through 'classroom instruction', so the curriculum is an UNKNOWN LANGUAGE that needs translating or, again, AN OBJECT THAT NEEDS TO BE DELIVERED to a different place (students' heads). Curriculum is also a PATH ('Guide the learning process toward the achievement of curriculum goals'; 'teach engaging lessons that follow the ...curriculum') or a NURTURING PERSON ('curriculum that nurtures students' natural curiosity about the world'). Learning is achieved through the use of TOOLS: techniques, textbooks, resources, tests, projects, etc., and the teacher needs to be able to use those tools or is a tool themselves. Students' needs, abilities, skills, or knowledge are UNIQUE HIDDEN OBJECTS that teachers need to find and use as a tool as well. These objects can be filled, expanded, nurtured, or groomed. Teachers are a FORCE that can expand those objects, start a process, change someone's minds, states, and behaviours, and move others in some direction.

Furthermore, according to the ads, a teacher's role is that of a BUILDER or, CREATOR, or DEVELOPER. As stated in the ads, the candidate needs to be able to 'build deep relationships that support student progress and development', 'build a warm and inclusive classroom environment', 'create a learning environment', 'develop and conduct instruction', 'develop schemes of work'. However, at the same time, the TEACHER AS A MEDIUM or the CONDUIT metaphor is evoked, because they are just the users of tools (such as techniques and teaching strategies) or those who 'select instructional resources to meet students' needs' or 'instructional strategies that connect the curriculum to the learner'. If they select the right tool, there will be a transfer of knowledge to students. Also, a teacher needs to be able to 'monitor the progress and use the information to adjust teaching strategies', which signals the presence of a KNOWING-IS-SEEING metaphor. Interestingly, their enthusiasm or personality in doing that is not put in the spotlight, but rather the functions they have: to plan, assign work, adhere to plans, manage time ('best utilize available time for instruction'), select materials, or monitor students' progress. Quite often it is specified that ideal candidates need to 'adhere to plans' or support students or goals ('support small groups or whole class instruction', 'support school goals', 'support school culture'), which puts them in a rather passive role of a SUPPORTING OBJECT. There are only two examples of the more personal characteristics the job provider seeks: the mention of a sense of humour a teacher needs to possess and the fact that one of their duties is 'making learning fun and interesting for all students' (even though it is, again, not mentioned what kind of person would be able to do that). The word 'creative' appears just once in the corpus, not to describe the ideal candidate, but to explain that in a video they need to send as a part of the application, they can 'get creative'. The same is true with words

such as 'interested', 'compassionate', 'empathic', 'observant', and many more that we would use to describe a perfect teacher candidate.

The other constant metaphor in teacher job ads is that of a GUIDE who needs to keep their travellers informed: 'establish and communicate clear objectives for all learning goals', 'guide the learning process toward the achievement of curriculum goals', 'lead students toward the fulfilment of their potential', 'utilise curriculum guides in planning'. Teachers are also described as keepers of rules, which evokes a PRISON frame ('maintain classroom discipline', 'enforce rules and keep inmate students on-task'), or as ONES LOOKING FOR SOMETHING ('seeks to improve', 'seeks and implements feedback from team leaders'). Then, there is an image of a teacher as a PROVIDER for students' needs ('apply theories to meet others' needs') and a DELIVERER ('deliver instructional activities').

In CEO ads, the metaphorical framework for the duties and skills of the ideal candidate for the position assumes a very active role. Even though there are a few examples of describing the perfect candidate as someone who serves, most often this person is someone who possesses and brings their superb characteristics or mindset ('Finely honed and high-level strategic thinking, planning and execution skills', 'A mission service mindset that infuses their leadership style'), partners with others ('Experienced, transparent, and collaborative partner to a non-profit Board of Directors', 'Identifying, cultivating, and securing community partners, stakeholders, funders, and investors to support strategic priorities'), or is an authority figure to others ('Rewards and holds employees accountable for their performance/behaviours'). Despite lengthy and metaphorical explanations of a CEO's duties (e.g., 'Nurture an organizational culture focused on impact and accountability across all departments and programs, with strategic goals being prioritized, accomplished and celebrated'), their job is to make sure that the organisation's profit is sufficient for the organisation's needs. They do it either through advertising and selling their products or raising funds from donors. Some people work for them for this to happen, and usually, there is a board to which the CEO is responsible. Like in the teacher framework, there is the metaphor of a LIVING BEING THAT NEEDS TO GROW, but here it refers to money. Instead of being expected to 'translate the goals' to their employees (like a teacher who translates or delivers the curriculum to students), the CEO is described as the one who creates goals and makes sure that everybody follows the path. Thus, the LEADER frame is evoked ('lead the organisation to the new future', 'prepared to lead the growth', 'national thought-leader'). They have created the path and the goals, and they lead the organisation, the staff, and the programmes towards these goals. This metaphor is often combined with other metaphors in the same sentence, such as the HEALER metaphor or the SUPPORTING OBJECT metaphor ('leads and supports the process of organisational healing'), KNOWING-IS-SEEING metaphor ('Oversees the development of strategic partnerships and collaborations with community-based organizations to support ... clients in efforts to move towards self-sufficiency and wellness'), or FORCE metaphor ('leveraging the resources of the Board to maximum effect to accomplish the organization's goals and objectives', 'orienting new board members').

The ads are abundant with FORCE metaphors: the ideal candidate will be able to grow a team, the business, the community, a culture, relationships, visibility, programs, capital, etc. Other verbs used in similar contexts are expand, enhance, evolve, strengthen, or maintain. Quite often, the language through which this metaphor is expressed is very poetic, and the role given to CEOs is a grandiose one: they are the ones who 'impact lives', 'galvanise others around a unified vision', 'grow programs', 'expand safety culture', 'evolve an iconic brand', 'empower staff', 'catalyze others', etc. The WARRIOR metaphor appears, as well, so an ideal candidate 'wins customers', 'has a track record of being bold, fierce, and courageous', 'commands the confidence and respect of stakeholders', 'confronts the complex realities of the environment', etc. The role given to CEOs through the use of metaphorical frames in job ads is an active and vibrant one. They are seen as AMBASSADORS ('represent the organisation', 'serve as an ambassador for the mission, purpose, and vision'), CULTURE-KEEPERS ('function as a chief culture-keeper'), CHAUFFEURS or SAILORS ('can shift gears comfortably', 'navigating complex structures'), COACHES ('coach team'), or PARENTS ('bringing mission to life'). The CREATOR metaphor is rich with symbolism: 'creates mileposts and symbols to rally support behind the vision', 'creator of a better world', 'crafts a strategy', 'creates a welcoming, equitable, affirming, genuine, hopeful, and nurturing environment', as well as the ARCHITECT or BUILDER metaphor ('works to build upon the financial and operational strength of the organization', 'Assess entire structure – ensuring that staff are well-positioned, operations are efficient, and programs are exciting and mission-aligned'). Besides the roles which suggest CEOs' power to change, create, heal, lead, or teach, they are represented as great HUMANITARIANS ('meet people where they are', 'being compassionate and empathic in messaging and actions', 'experience in increasing philanthropic support'), BELIEVERS ('maintains faith in a different and better future', ROLE-MODELS ('role model', 'holds self to highest standard for organisational values'), TRAVELLERS ('pursuing new opportunities', 'refine the road-map'), AGRICULTURALISTS ('cultivate relationships', 'Cultivates an open, honest and positive culture'), VISIONARIES ('product visionary', 'guides product based on vision', forecasts financial trends'), or even EVANGELISTS ('Serve as the chief salesperson, product visionary, and evangelist for the product'). The superiority frame is evoked by the RISK-TAKER frame ('not afraid to take risks'), or a SUPERVISOR frame ('supervise a highly skilled professional team'). The BRIDGE metaphor ('serve as the bridge between the board and day-to-day operations') and the SERVANT metaphor ('serves the Board') are rare examples of the passive role ascribed to CEOs. Interestingly, a learning frame is evoked too: 'evaluates lessons learned from both success and failure'. Most of the sentences in the CEO ads contain multiple metaphors, combining different images. However, it is clear that the ideal candidate has an active role in the system and is expected to be a gentle leader, a mighty but not

hurtful force, someone that others will trust and follow, who is a generator of great ideas due to their ability to see the future.

D. Discussion

CEO ads reveal that the search for a perfect candidate does not rely solely on their knowledge of the field but on numerous personality traits that create a picture of CEOs as great people of our times, blessed by compassion, intelligence, empathy, and belief. The same as teachers, they are represented in the metaphorical frame of *FORCE*, but the choice of language reveals the power dynamics in which CEOs are superior to teachers in terms of their influence on people. Teachers can expand students' knowledge or enable students to develop, whereas the force of CEOs is a mightier one - they catalyse, grow, or galvanise. In the *JOURNEY* metaphor, teachers are described as *GUIDES* and CEOs as *LEADERS* – guides show the way and leaders create the ways. Other similar frames in the ads are the *BUILDING* frame, the *KNOWING-IS-SEEING* frame, and the *SUPPORTING OBJECT* frame, but the differences are striking. Teachers' duties are quite often described using the *CONDUIT* metaphor, within which teachers are seen as *TOOLS* or a *MEDIUM* through which the curriculum would be transferred to students. There is, however, a lack of other metaphors usually found in the narrative of teachers describing their occupational identity, to use the term by Ashcraft (2013). Teachers are aware of the multitude of roles they perform while teaching: they describe themselves as *ARTISTS*, *CHANGE AGENTS*, *NURTURERS*, *ENTERTAINERS*, *LEADERS*, *SELLERS*, *RESEARCHERS*, *COLLABORATORS*, and much more. The ads, however, do not emphasise these or any other metaphors that would highlight the fact that personality or various skills play a huge role in successful teaching.

On the other hand, metaphors in CEO ads are in line with the 'charismatic leader' frame (Storey, 2004a), in which CEOs are represented as *HEROIC FIGURES*, *TRAVELLERS*, *RISK-TAKERS*, *CREATORS*, and *ONES TO FOLLOW*. Furthermore, their role as leaders is expanded to the whole society, representing them as *CULTURE-KEEPERS*, *AMBASSADORS*, *PHILANTHROPISTS*, *BELIEVERS*, *VISIONARIES*, and *EVANGELISTS*. Although the research on metaphors across the discourse in magazines and newspapers suggests that the central cognitive metaphor in the manager world is the *WAR* metaphor (Koller, 2004), this frame appears in ads rarely and, again, representing the ideal candidates as *HEROIC FIGURES* and not *PREDATORS*. Interestingly, in a few ads, CEOs are described as *STORYTELLERS*, whereas teachers, who in reality tell stories all the time and make sure that students are engaged and entertained, are never asked to have storytelling skills.

The question arises as to why this is so. The teacher ad creators may have left out the personality metaphors, assuming that they are an inherent part of the teachers' identity. However, reality shows that they are not, since there are teachers that are on both ends of the success scale – some are loved by students and parents, appreciated, and seen as the ones who have an impact on students' motivation to learn, creating results, and the others are not (which is exemplified in the *SLEEP-INDUCERS* or *TYRANTS* metaphors found by Pavičić Takač & Molnar, 2009). Another possible explanation for leaving out these metaphors in the ads is that they reflect the reality that Schildkrout (2015) describes, in which teachers are not offered concrete 'manifestations of honour'. Honouring them by admitting that their job is stressful and requires a multitude of skills (or metaphorical identities) would lead to questions about their 'net worth' to society. In the modern world, the classroom power dynamics have shifted from the teacher as an authority figure to the teacher as a researcher and cooperative leader frame (as discussed in Pavičić Takač & Molnar, 2009, pp. 386-388), pointing to the fact that modern teachers need to have multiple skills and metaphorical identities and that the metaphorical frames they use to describe their occupation are closer to reality of their jobs than that of the 'charismatic leader' frame, which managers use to describe their profession. It is important to notice that, even though the metaphorical frames that are evoked in the ads by the description of teacher duties and skills do indeed correlate to what teachers do, many frames that are a reality of every teacher's life are left out. Teachers as *ARTISTS* or *INVENTORS* or *MAGICIANS*, let us name a few, because many times teachers feel as if they have created something out of nothing or something despite the scarcity of resources. Teacher as a *PARENT* or a *NURTURER* as well, which is very much present in the thoughts of both teachers, real parents, and children. Many times, students would call their teachers 'Mum' by accident. They spend a lot of time with them, teachers know their secrets and worries, who they are in love with, and much more. What strikes us the most is that there are no *LEADER* metaphors. On the contrary, the teacher they are looking for in the ad 'must demonstrate loyalty to the school and its leadership'. Even though one of the ads suggests that teachers need to create future leaders, teachers are never described as such. It seems that 'employer branding' (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004) is not a thing in education – schools that posted the ads did not try to go beyond the dry descriptions of duties and skills ('Prepare and write instructional plans', 'Attend all staff meetings', 'Ability to establish and maintain cooperative and effective working relationships with others.', 'Ability to instruct students and manage their behaviour') nor express the need for an autonomous, creative, interesting, intelligent, emotionally intelligent individual that would be a hero of the classroom and staff meetings and 'empower' and 'catalyze' others. Someone who would be a classroom 'thought-leader', a 'healer' of tender souls, a 'warrior' who would confront children's problems, an 'ambassador' for the school's vision of success for all students, a 'culture-keeper', a 'sailor' through stressful situations, or a 'visionary' of children's future. Any successful and accomplished teacher would agree that this is what they do every day. However, these metaphorical frames are evoked by the descriptions of the duties and skills of CEOs, not teachers.

VI. CONCLUSION

The analysis of metaphors in the literature and the random selection of job ads on Indeed, retrieved on May 29, 2023, reveal that there is a discrepancy between the teachers' self-assumed identity and the identity ascribed to them through the analysed ads. Instead of acknowledging that an ideal teacher needs to be adorned with a set of skills and portraying teachers' identity as a patchwork of a multitude of metaphorical roles (as done in the identity research literature), the analysed teacher ads stick to a colourless, almost Kafkaesque representation of ideal candidates. CEO ads, on the other hand, perpetuate the figurative framing abundant with the saviour-like images of corporative leaders. If discourse is indeed an instrument and effect of power, then we need not ask ourselves whether the social reality has had an effect on the differences between these ads or whether the discourse used in the ads influences the reality. The differences are obvious and significant to all who believe that a view of education as a vehicle of change in a society needs to be reiterated, first and foremost among those who create the education-related discourse - education policy-makers, ministries, and finally, school boards looking for ideal teacher-candidates.

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Investigating Inflectional Morpheme Errors in ESL Learners' Writing

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Abstract—Understanding common errors in English language acquisition is crucial for enhancing ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction, particularly in mastering inflectional morphemes that are vital for grammatical accuracy. This study addresses the persistent challenges ESL learners face in mastering inflectional affixes, focusing on errors in nouns, adjectives, and verbs. It investigates the types and frequencies of inflectional morpheme errors among Grade Eleven students at San Jose National High School, aiming to identify the most problematic morphemes and provide insights into patterns of difficulty. A total of 261 student essays, written over three three-hour sessions, were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Errors were identified through Grammarly and categorized using Dulay et al.'s (1982) Surface Structure Taxonomy. Results indicate that verb inflections, particularly past tense and 3rd person singular present agreement morphemes, are the most challenging for learners, with noun and adjective errors being less frequent. Notably, the study highlights the 3rd person singular present agreement as a significant area of difficulty. These findings suggest the need for targeted instruction focused on verb inflections in practical writing contexts. By implementing error-focused teaching strategies, educators can address specific challenges, fostering improved grammatical accuracy and supporting better language acquisition outcomes.

Index Terms—second language, error analysis, inflectional morphemes, ESL learners, verb morphology

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning English as a foreign language is not easy, and only a few succeed in mastering it. According to Dewaele (2016) and Fernández (2017), the learner has had experience with another language. A person who has been using a certain language since early childhood already has experience with that language, and when learning a new one, they face

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challenges related to different sounds, words, and sentence structures, as well as variations in how things, people, and actions are grouped and how time, space, and manner are expressed. These differences may conflict with the structure of their native language (Scharenborg & van Os, 2019).

Among global languages, English has emerged as the most sought-after, playing a critical role in business, education, travel, and international collaboration (Abdelrady & Ibrahim, 2015). Despite its global significance, achieving proficiency in English remains a challenge, particularly for non-native speakers. Grammar, as a foundation of language proficiency, governs sentence structure and ensures effective communication (Kharmilah & Narius, 2019). Writing, often regarded as one of the most complex language skills, frequently reveals learners' gaps in grammatical knowledge. Errors in grammar, particularly those involving inflectional morphemes, pose significant barriers to constructing well-formed sentences (Belkhir & Benyelles, 2017). Inflectional morphemes alter words to convey tense, number, or agreement without changing their core meaning, making them crucial for grammatical accuracy.

Research identifies verb tense, pluralization, and subject-verb agreement as the most challenging aspects of English grammar for ESL learners (Daulay et al., 2016; Alam & Hameed, 2023). Contributing factors include interlanguage interference and insufficient mastery of grammar rules. Among common errors, omission errors—where necessary inflectional markers are left out—are particularly pervasive, reflecting the complexity of mastering these linguistic structures (Yordchim & Gibbs, 2014). Such errors impact students' academic writing and communicative competence, hindering overall language development.

Recognizing these challenges, this study examines inflectional morpheme errors in the written outputs of Grade Eleven Senior High School students at San Jose National High School. Employing error analysis as outlined by Corder (1967), the research investigates the types, frequencies, and patterns of errors. By identifying the most problematic inflectional affixes, this study seeks to enhance understanding of ESL learners' struggles and provide practical recommendations to improve teaching strategies and curriculum design.

The study focuses on Filipino ESL learners' unique challenges, particularly in the context of inflectional morphemes across nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Unlike previous studies, this research emphasizes the local educational context of San Jose National High School, chosen for its significant ESL learner population. By analyzing the writing of eleventh-grade students from vocational tracks, the study explores real-world linguistic difficulties faced by Filipino learners, aiming to inform instructional practices in similar educational settings across the Philippines.

Mistakes offer valuable learning opportunities for both students and educators. Al-Haysoni (2012) underscores the importance of error analysis in identifying and addressing student mistakes. This process allows educators to refine teaching strategies and provide targeted interventions. Building on this foundation, the present study seeks to analyze inflectional morpheme errors to identify the inflectional affixes most frequently misused by ESL learners.

The specific objective of this research is to conduct a detailed error analysis of inflectional morphemes in student writing. By identifying the most challenging inflectional affixes, the study fills a knowledge gap in ESL error analysis within the Filipino educational context. Its novelty lies in its focus on inflectional morphemes across nouns, verbs, and adjectives, providing fresh insights into the grammatical challenges faced by Filipino high school students. Through this exploration, the study offers practical implications for enhancing instructional approaches and curriculum design, ultimately supporting students in achieving greater grammatical proficiency in English.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), pioneered by Michael Halliday in the 1960s, offers a viewpoint on language that emphasizes its functional elements over solely structural ones. SFL is based on a social semiotic perspective of language, seeing language as a "web of linked systems for generating meaning" (Pertiwi, 2011). Unlike traditional grammar, which concentrates on word categories like nouns and verbs within individual clauses, SFL emphasizes the role of language in.

Understanding the nuances of second language acquisition and the challenges encountered by English as a Second Language (ESL) learners have been central themes in linguistic research for decades. Among the diverse facets of language learning, the acquisition and utilization of inflectional morphemes stand out due to their critical role in ensuring grammatical accuracy and fluency in writing.

A. Importance of Inflectional Morphemes in Language Learning

Morphemes represent the smallest meaningful units of language and play essential grammatical roles (Cook, 2016). They are categorized as "free morphemes" and "bound morphemes." Free morphemes can be further divided into lexical and functional types, whereas bound morphemes fall into derivational and inflectional categories. This research specifically targets eight inflectional morphemes in English: plural -s, possessive -'s, third-person singular present tense -s, past tense -ed, present participle -ing, past participle -en, superlative -est, and comparative -er.

Inflection refers to the morphological marking of properties on a lexeme, resulting in various forms for that lexeme (Booij, 2007). Essentially, an inflectional morpheme modifies the form of lexemes to align with different grammatical contexts or meanings without altering their word category. These contexts include number (singular and plural), person (first, second, third), and tense (past and present).

In the field of English morphology, the morpheme is considered the most fundamental unit among the five identified linguistic components (Berry, 1977; Bauer, 1983; Farinde & Ojo, 2000; Mahant et al., 2023). Inflectional morphemes are instrumental in language structure, signaling tense, number, and other grammatical relationships within sentences (Brown, 1973). For ESL learners, proficiency in these morphemes is crucial for constructing grammatically accurate and contextually relevant sentences (Dulay et al., 1982).

B. Challenges in Inflectional Morpheme Acquisition

Numerous studies highlight the difficulties ESL learners face in acquiring and correctly using inflectional morphemes. Error Analysis (EA) studies, including those by Corder (1981), identify these morphemes as frequent sources of errors in ESL writing. Kazazoğlu (2020) and Eng and Lim (2005) emphasize first-language interference as a primary factor contributing to inflectional morpheme errors among ESL learners.

Several factors influence the acquisition order and accuracy of inflectional patterns, including the formal complexity of an inflectional marker (Clark, 2003), its relative salience, and the "bathtub effect," which facilitates peripheral word recognition (Demaree et al., 2004). Distinguishing between errors and mistakes in language acquisition is crucial for effective pedagogical strategies. While learners often self-correct mistakes, errors indicative of systemic competence deficiencies typically require targeted interventions (Corder, 1982; Çetereisi & Bostancı, 2018; Keshavarz, 2015). Research by Manihuruk (2022) and Gardner et al. (2021) further confirms the prevalence of inaccuracies in inflectional morphemes, particularly in present and past tense inflections across diverse native language backgrounds.

C. Error Analysis

Error Analysis (EA), introduced by Corder (1981), is a fundamental approach for identifying, categorizing, and interpreting language errors, including those related to inflectional morphemes. This methodology sheds light on ESL learners' error patterns, helping educators develop targeted instructional strategies (James, 1998). EA examines learners' cognitive processes in recognizing or coding input from the target language, providing insights into second language acquisition (Erdogan, 2005).

Richards and Schmidt (2010) argue that EA systematically identifies, classifies, and interprets unacceptable language forms in learners' production data. Analyzing errors provides valuable feedback to learners, reveals language acquisition strategies, and informs foreign language study methodologies (Davies & Pearse, 2002).

D. Pedagogical Implications and Future Directions

Understanding inflectional morpheme errors in ESL writing has significant pedagogical implications. Insights from such research can inform instructional materials, curricula, and strategies tailored to ESL learners' needs (Ellis, 2008). Future studies could explore the effectiveness of various teaching methodologies in enhancing inflectional morpheme acquisition and usage among ESL learners.

Ellis (1998) highlights the importance of understanding second language acquisition processes for practical applications in language teaching, such as syllabus design, material development, and language testing. Abbasi et al. (2023) underscore the impact of English instruction volume on acquisition order, emphasizing the need for targeted language instruction focusing on specific morphemes. Recognizing potential first-language interferences in L2 learning can help instructors adapt teaching approaches to address specific linguistic challenges.

The acquisition and correct use of inflectional morphemes remain significant challenges for ESL learners. Through systematic analysis using methodologies such as Error Analysis and leveraging technological tools, educators and researchers can gain deeper insights into these errors, leading to targeted interventions that enhance ESL learners' language proficiency. Given the existing literature, there is a noticeable gap in research on inflectional morpheme acquisition among Filipino ESL learners, particularly in Eastern Visayas. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the types of errors ESL Grade Eleven students make when using inflectional morphemes in English.

III. METHODS

A. Participants and Design

The study was conducted with 160 Grade Eleven students from San Jose National High School, selected using a complete enumeration approach. This choice was motivated by the desire to capture a comprehensive dataset from the population of students enrolled in four distinct sections—Bartending (Section Prudence), Cookery (Section Honesty), Bread and Pastry (Section Diligence), and Food and Beverages (Section Hope). By including all students from these sections, the researchers ensured that the data would reflect the entire spectrum of linguistic abilities and common error patterns within the school's eleventh grade.

The decision to include the entire Grade Eleven cohort was based on complete enumeration, a method appropriate for moderate-sized populations where comprehensive data collection is feasible. Given the manageable size of the cohort and the objective of capturing a broad range of error types, the researchers opted for this inclusive approach rather than a sampling strategy. This choice not only maximized the representativeness of the data but also enhanced the study's reliability by providing a robust foundation for statistical analysis.

Data collection was limited to three meetings, each lasting three hours, to align with the students' academic schedules and avoid excessive disruption to their regular curriculum. This time frame was sufficient to collect meaningful data while accommodating the students' existing school commitments. The three-session structure enabled students to engage with the task of writing under conditions that allowed for reflection and revision, which are essential in detecting consistent language errors. This approach enhanced the validity of the data collected.

During the study, researchers provided guidance to participants to support their understanding of the task and minimize anxiety, which could otherwise impact their writing performance. This assistance was limited to clarifying task instructions rather than influencing the content of the students' writing. By offering support, the researchers aimed to create a comfortable environment where students could focus on writing naturally, thus producing authentic samples that reflect their actual language proficiency. This approach aligns with ethical research practices, ensuring participants' well-being without compromising data integrity.

Grammarly software was chosen as the primary tool for error detection, specifically for its effectiveness in identifying grammatical issues, including those related to inflectional morphemes. The use of Grammarly was supported by previous studies (Almusharraf & Alotaibi, 2021, 2022), which affirm its reliability and utility in ESL research contexts. Grammarly's automated feedback provides an efficient, consistent, and impartial method of pinpointing linguistic errors, offering insights that manual analysis alone might miss due to human oversight or bias. However, Grammarly's limitations in interpreting nuanced errors necessitated subsequent qualitative analysis, which was conducted to provide context and depth to the initial findings.

In analyzing these errors, the research also utilized Dulay et al.'s (1982) Surface Structure Taxonomy, providing a systematic framework for classifying and understanding the types of inflectional morpheme errors present in students' essays. This combined quantitative and qualitative approach—using Grammarly for initial detection and the taxonomy for classification—ensured both accuracy and depth in examining students' language use, ultimately offering a comprehensive understanding of their challenges with inflectional morphemes.

B. Instrument

The researcher utilized Writing Prompts as the primary data collection tool. These prompts consisted of essay topics that students were prompted to write about. The topics included: 1) students' experiences during the Pre-assessment in their specific specializations (bartending, cookery, bread and pastry, and food and beverages), detailing activities they engaged in during and after the Pre-assessment; 2) completing the narrative "Once there was a newly born baby..."; and 3) sharing their thoughts and feelings about the trend of spending more time in front of computers and relying heavily on email or instant messaging for communication rather than face-to-face interactions.

C. Data Gathering Procedure

In eliciting data, the researchers prepared writing prompts with the topics: 1) students' experiences during the Pre-assessment in their respective specializations (bartending, cookery, bread and pastry, and food and beverages (things they did during and after the Pre-assessment; "Once there was a newly born baby; and Spending hours in front of computers and communicating more by e-mail or instant messaging than in person.

Since there were three prompts, each of these was given to the participants in every meeting. Each participant had an hour to write the essay. The administration of the prompts took three meetings for a total of 3 hours to complete the data gathering. The prompts were administered individually to the participants. While one of the researchers was introducing the activity and making sure that each student could follow the instructions of written activity, the other researchers had to observe and extend assistance when necessary, making the participants comfortable and highly engaged in the activity throughout the entire process.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal significant trends in the types of errors eleventh-grade students at San Jose National High School made with inflectional morphemes. Each category—nouns, adjectives, and verbs—demonstrates specific areas of difficulty, with variations in the frequency and types of errors providing insights into underlying linguistic challenges and potential instructional needs.

A. Errors in Inflectional Morphemes for Nouns

Table 1 presents errors in inflectional morphemes for nouns, where plural (-s, -es) errors dominated at 72.22% of all noun-related mistakes. This high incidence suggests a pattern of noun-verb disagreement, such as in "Computer have a side effect" and "Some user are." Additionally, errors were common in plural noun forms preceded by determiners, indicating a lack of awareness in using plurality markers correctly (e.g., "Some of teenager" instead of "Some teenagers"). The missteps in possessive (-'s, -s') morphemes, making up 27.78% of errors, indicate some students struggle to express possession accurately (e.g., "father money" instead of "father's money").

TABLE 1
ERRORS IN INFLECTIONAL MORPHEMES FOR NOUNS

Inflectional morphemes	Sample extracted sentence with error	Frequency of errors	Percentage
Plural (-s, -es)	<i>Computer have a side effect.</i>	13	72.22
Possessive (-'s, -s')	<i>She always joined my other cousin's when they are playing.</i>	5	27.78
Total		18	100

Regarding inflectional morphemes for nouns, the majority of errors made by students involved pluralizing morphemes (-s and -es). It was observed that the nouns used as subjects often did not agree with their corresponding verbs (e.g., ingredients are, Computer have, some user are). Additionally, students failed to apply the plural form of nouns preceded by modifiers and determiners that indicate plurality (e.g., Some of teenager, some user, some question, lot of drink, three question, those person).

For possessive inflectional morphemes (-'s, -s'), students frequently omitted the possessive marker to indicate ownership (e.g., father money instead of father's money). Conversely, there were instances where students incorrectly applied possessive morphemes in place of plural morphemes (e.g., She always joined my other cousin's when they are playing). Another notable error involved the misuse of the nominative pronoun she, which was made possessive (she's) instead of using the correct possessive pronoun or pronominal adjective her (e.g., She's laughter can make the people smile too).

These patterns align with findings by Akande (2003), who observed similar trends among ESL learners, highlighting noun-verb agreement and possessive form application as persistent challenges. Such errors may stem from syntactic transfer from the learners' first language (L1), particularly if their L1 lacks explicit markers for noun plurality or possessiveness. This suggests that these linguistic features should be prioritized in targeted instruction.

Furthermore, the observed errors are consistent with previous research (Kazazoglu, 2020; Eng et al., 2020; Gayo & Widodo, 2018), which identified L1 interference as a predominant source of mistakes among ESL learners. The interplay between L1 influence and limited exposure to English grammar underscores the need for instructional strategies that explicitly address these recurring issues in pluralization and possessive constructions.

B. Errors in Inflectional Morphemes for Adjectives

Errors in adjective inflectional morphemes were concentrated entirely in comparative forms, with 100% of the errors involving improper use of the comparative suffix (-er). Students tended to use "more" with the comparative (e.g., "more happier"), indicating confusion between using -er and the comparative marker "more." This redundancy suggests a lack of conceptual clarity in English's morphological rules regarding comparatives, as students seem to overgeneralize the "more + adjective" structure, possibly due to a simpler comparative structure in their first language.

TABLE 2
ERRORS IN INFLECTIONAL MORPHEMES FOR ADJECTIVES

Inflectional morphemes	Sample extracted sentence with error	Frequency of errors	Percentage
Comparative (-er)	<i>They feel very thankful because God gave them a very special gift that make their life more happier.</i>	4	100.00
Superlative (-est)	No errors found.	0	0.00
Total		4	100

For inflectional morphemes for adjectives, students struggled to correctly apply the comparative adjective form for words like happy, weak, and easy (e.g., happier, weaker, easier). Instead, they added the word more before these adjectives (e.g., more happy, more weak), reflecting a lack of understanding about when to use the comparative adjective morpheme -er versus the comparative marker more. Additionally, one student combined both the comparative marker more and the comparative morpheme -er (e.g., more happier), resulting in redundancy. No errors were observed in the use of the superlative morpheme -est.

This study revealed that errors involving inflectional morphemes for adjectives were the least frequent in students' essays compared to other types of inflectional morphemes. These findings align with Akande (2003), which similarly noted that inflectional morphemes for adjectives, particularly the superlative morpheme -est, were rarely utilized in students' written work. The infrequent usage of superlatives appears to correlate with the low incidence of errors involving this form, potentially due to limited exposure or application of superlatives in students' daily language interactions.

The scarcity of errors involving superlative forms highlights an opportunity to contextualize comparatives and superlatives in real-world communication scenarios to enhance student familiarity and usage. These observations also underscore the influence of the learners' first language on their patterns of inflectional morpheme errors in ESL contexts. The challenges noted in using comparative and superlative forms point to the need for targeted, contextualized instruction to reinforce these grammar rules.

Furthermore, numerous studies support the implementation of eclectic, practical teaching methods to reduce student errors in real-life contexts (Alam et al., 2020; Alam et al., 2022; Alam et al., 2023; Mahant et al., 2023). Productive language skills, such as writing, require authentic practice that can be achieved through communicative strategies and

activities. These activities provide students with platforms to engage in meaningful language practice, thereby improving their grasp of grammatical structures (Alam & Hameed, 2023). Encouraging real-life application of comparatives and superlatives through interactive and communicative exercises can help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical usage, ultimately enhancing student proficiency.

C. Errors in Inflectional Morphemes for Verbs

The errors in verb inflectional morphemes, detailed in Table 3, reveal the most substantial difficulties for students, with past tense (-d, -ed) and third-person singular present (-s, -es) errors accounting for the highest frequency. Errors in past tense (58.15%) often involved inconsistent tense usage within sentences, reflecting challenges in maintaining temporal coherence (e.g., "I wash the frying pan then started heating it"). The frequent use of base verbs in third-person singular contexts (e.g., "She sleep very calmly") indicates that students struggle with subject-verb agreement, possibly due to first-language interference, where similar rules may be absent.

TABLE 3
ERRORS IN INFLECTIONAL MORPHEMES FOR VERBS

Inflectional morphemes	Sample extracted sentence with error	Frequency of errors	Percentage
3 rd Singular Present Agreement (-s, -es)	She <i>sleep</i> very calmly	141	39.61
Past Tense (-d, -ed)	Then after that, I <i>wash</i> the frying pan then started heating it	207	58.15
Past Participle (-en)	No errors found.	0	0.00
Present Participle (-ing)	I <i>roaming</i> all around the market	8	2.25
Total		356	100

The majority of errors committed by students involved the use of inflectional morphemes for verbs. Among these, past tense morphemes (-d, -ed) were the most problematic, accounting for 58.15% of the total errors. These errors often reflected inconsistencies in tense within sentences, such as, "Then after that, I wash the frying pan then started heating it." Additionally, misuse of past tense forms in infinitive constructions (e.g., "to asked," "to saved," "to cooked," "to removed") was frequently observed. Errors in the third-person singular present morphemes (-s, -es) were also prevalent (39.61%). Students struggled with subject-verb agreement, often using the base form of verbs with singular subjects, as in "She sleep very calmly..." and "She acts like she know what she doing".

For the present participle morpheme (-ing), which constituted 2.25% of the errors, the omission of auxiliary verbs when forming continuous tenses was common. For example, "So, his father trying hard to be as a mother and a father to Ariel" and "I roaming all around the market." Conversely, no errors were recorded for the past participle morpheme (-en).

These findings align with the research by Usama et al. (2022), who identified persistent difficulties among ESL learners with various inflectional morphemes, including third-person singular present (-s), past tense (-ed), progressive (-ing), past participle (-en), and others. Similar trends were noted in earlier studies (Kazazoglu, 2020; Eng et al., 2020; Gayo & Widodo, 2018), which highlighted first language (L1) interference as a significant factor contributing to these errors.

The observed challenges underscore the critical influence of a learner's native language on their grammatical competence in ESL contexts. For example, difficulties in forming continuous tenses (e.g., "I roaming all around the market") suggest limited exposure to structures that require auxiliary verbs and modification of main verbs. Studies by Alam et al. (2020, 2022, 2023) and Mahant et al. (1977) emphasize the importance of using communicative, real-world strategies to facilitate grammar acquisition. Activities such as role-plays, storytelling, and collaborative writing can provide learners with meaningful opportunities to apply grammatical rules in authentic contexts.

This study aligns with prior research in emphasizing the role of L1 interference and underscores the necessity of diverse instructional methods to address specific grammatical gaps. By focusing on these areas, educators can help students develop greater confidence and accuracy in their use of inflectional morphemes, thereby enhancing their overall language proficiency.

D. Summary of Inflectional Morphemes Frequently Committed by ESL Learners

Table 4 synthesizes the frequency of errors across all inflectional morpheme types, highlighting that verb inflectional morphemes—particularly past tense and third-person singular present—are the most problematic for students, collectively accounting for over 90% of verb errors. This concentration suggests that verb inflectional morphemes should be prioritized in ESL curricula, particularly for L2 learners facing difficulty in differentiating temporal distinctions and agreement rules.

TABLE 4
SUMMARY TABLE OF INFLECTIONAL MORPHEMES FREQUENTLY COMMITTED BY ESL LEARNERS

	Inflectional Morphemes	Frequency	Percentage
Nouns	Plural (-s, -es)	13	3.44
	Possessive (-'s, -s')	5	1.32
Adjectives	Comparative (-er)	4	1.06
	Superlative (-est)	0	0.00
Verbs	3 rd Present Agreement (-s, -es)	141	37.30
	Past Tense (-d, -ed)	207	54.76
	Past Participle (-en)	0	0.00
	Present Participle (-ing)	8	2.12
Total		378	100

As shown in the table, over half (54.76%) of the inflectional morpheme errors committed by the students involved the past tense morphemes –d and –ed, making these the most frequently observed errors among all inflectional morphemes. Notably, the present study offers a new insight: the 3rd person singular present tense morphemes –s and –es emerged as the second most challenging for ESL learners to acquire.

Regarding nouns, the majority of errors were associated with pluralizing morphemes (–s and –es). Common mistakes included incorrect noun-verb agreement, such as "ingredients is" and "Computer have." Additionally, errors often occurred when students failed to use plural forms preceded by modifiers and determiners that signal plurality (e.g., "Some user," "three question," "those person").

For adjectives, errors primarily involved the use of comparative forms. Students frequently replaced the comparative morpheme –er with the marker "more," as in "more happier." Additionally, redundant constructions such as "more happier" were observed. However, no errors were noted for the superlative morpheme –est.

In the case of verbs, the most challenging morphemes were the past tense markers –d and –ed, as evidenced by tense inconsistencies and misuse in sentences like "Then after that, I wash the frying pan then started heating it." Errors in the 3rd person singular present tense morphemes –s and –es were also common, with students failing to establish subject-verb agreement (e.g., "She sleep very calmly"). Additionally, students often omitted auxiliary verbs when using the present participle morpheme –ing (e.g., "I roaming all around the market").

The findings of this study hold significant implications for ESL teaching and curriculum development. Understanding the specific challenges ESL learners face with inflectional morphemes can inform the creation of targeted instructional materials and strategies to enhance language acquisition outcomes. By addressing identified error patterns and focusing on problematic morphemes, educators can design more effective and engaging teaching methods to improve grammatical accuracy and fluency in English writing.

The high frequency of noun- and verb-related errors highlights these areas as priorities for instructional intervention. Adjective-related errors, while less frequent, point to the need for reinforcing comparative and superlative structures. These findings underscore the importance of contextualized practice in ESL instruction, as supported by Alam and Hameed (2023), who emphasize the role of real-world communication scenarios in reinforcing correct usage patterns.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study examined inflectional morpheme errors among ESL learners, uncovering specific challenges that impact their language proficiency and usage. The analysis showed that the most challenging morphemes for students were the past tense markers "-d" and "-ed," which likely reflects the writing prompts used, requiring participants to employ past-tense forms. Additionally, frequent errors with third-person present agreement morphemes "-s" and "-es" were noted, suggesting these forms present a second, significant difficulty for learners. This finding contrasts with prior studies, such as those by Burt and Dulay (1973) and Bailey et al. (1974), which identified these morphemes as typically acquired later in language learning.

The study's findings hold practical implications for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers, particularly in enhancing English language instruction at the senior secondary level, a crucial phase for students' academic and real-world language skills. This study, however, has limitations due to its sample size and demographic scope, as it involved a single urban school in Region 08, Leyte, Philippines. Future research would benefit from broader and more varied participant samples to improve the generalizability of results. Additionally, since this study focuses exclusively on inflectional morphemes, future studies should examine other linguistic aspects to deepen our understanding of ESL learners' language patterns.

Several recommendations arise from these findings to aid language instruction. First, it is essential for language teachers to focus on enhancing students' understanding of subject-verb agreement, plurals, and past participles, as these areas presented frequent errors. A targeted focus on these grammatical features could help address persistent gaps in students' language comprehension. Second, highlighting the structural differences between Filipino and English language systems could mitigate errors caused by interlingual interference, specifically by reducing negative transfer from Filipino grammatical rules. Lastly, to ensure consistency in error analysis, it is recommended that future studies employ a single qualified reviewer to identify and categorize errors, as multiple reviewers can lead to conflicting judgments. This approach can streamline the review process and improve the accuracy of data collection.

In sum, error analysis provides valuable insights into learners' challenges, helping educators design effective instructional materials and strategies. Addressing these identified areas could significantly support ESL learners in their journey toward language proficiency, equipping them with essential skills for both academic success and effective communication.

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Assessing the Learning Potential of Second Language Student Interaction in Collaborative Writing

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Abstract—This study examines peer interaction in collaborative writing in second language (L2) learning and assesses how interaction may allow students to learn about correct language use from each other as they write. A small number of studies have found more pronounced improvement in individual writing after students had completed collaborative writing with their peers over a period of time than after learners had completed writing independently under the same conditions. However, research has not examined how peer interaction could provide L2 students with opportunities to learn from their peers. To address this, the present study looked at learner interaction in collaborative writing to identify discussions that could potentially allow students to learn about how language is used in writing, such as those involving learners asking and answering questions and those in which they give corrective feedback to their peers; also assessing the correctness of the information that peers provide to L2 students. The results revealed that students were frequently involved in discussions that could promote individual learning and that the information that learners provided was almost always correct. These results suggest that collaborative writing may be an activity that can help students to learn about correct language use.

Index Terms—peer interaction, interactive feedback, collaborative writing, L2, student-centred learning

I. INTRODUCTION

In second language (L2) learning, peer interaction in collaborative writing has generally been viewed as a process that allows learners to resolve language issues in their writing, but this interaction could also allow students to learn about correct language use, which in turn may lead to the improvement of their own individual writing. Previous studies of collaborative writing in L2 have primarily been driven by a socio-cultural approach to learning. This approach has focused on how students can pool their linguistic resources to correctly express ideas in their co-authored text (Swain, 2000). Driven by this perspective, studies conducted by Storch and Wigglesworth (2007), Wigglesworth and Storch (2009), Fernández-Dobao (2012), McDonough et al. (2018) and Villarreal and Gil-Sarratea (2019) have examined how writing produced by two or more learners differs from writing produced by individuals.

However, seen from the socio-cognitive / interactionist perspective that is adopted in this study, peer interaction in collaborative writing can also be viewed as an opportunity for students to learn about language use from each other. From this theoretical perspective, learning is seen as an individual, cognitive process that is facilitated by interaction with others (Philp et al., 2014). Therefore, we can look at how peer interaction creates opportunities for L2 students to learn about correct language use, and at how each learner's own individual writing may change as a result. Up until now, only a small number of studies have looked at how individual writing changed after L2 learners had completed collaborative or independent writing. These found that there was more pronounced improvement in individual writing after collaborative writing had been completed (see Bikowski & Vithanage, 2016; Davison, 2024; Hsu & Lo, 2018; Khatib & Meihami, 2015; Shehadeh, 2011). Collectively, the findings of these studies seem to indicate that L2 students can possibly learn from their peers, but these studies did not examine how peer interaction could have allowed them to learn. Therefore, it is necessary to examine how peer interaction in collaborative writing can facilitate individual learning and to determine whether students can learn about correct language use from writing collaboratively with their peers. These questions will be explored in the present study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

While more extensive research is needed, there are indications that peer interaction in collaborative writing could facilitate individual learning and that it may provide L2 students with increased opportunities to learn about correct language use. While writing collaboratively, learners interact continuously and work together; contributing to the planning, generation of ideas, deliberations about the text structure, and are involved in the editing and revision of the co-authored text (Storch, 2013). This may be completed face-to-face, or online. The present investigation focuses on collaborative writing completed in a physical learning environment and on face-to-face interaction. Collaborative writing is a process that involves two (or more) learners who decide upon the ideas that should be included in the co-written text, how language should be used to convey these ideas in writing, and on how they should be organized and arranged in their work. This type of writing is typified by students proposing and counter-proposing ideas to be included in the co-written text and suggesting and/or deliberating about how language should be used to communicate these ideas. Davison (2021) has noted that through the contributions of learners involved in collaborative writing, they are able to come up with the correct way to convey their intended ideas. This process is indicative of the socio-cultural perspective of learning, and of students working together to correctly express their ideas in text. However, in previous studies, there are also a small number of examples of learners asking their peers questions about language use while deliberating about how to express ideas in their writing. This could allow L2 students to learn about language use. One example from a study carried out by Villarreal and Gil-Sarratea (2019, p. 17) is shown below.

EG1: In the one hand
EG2: On the one hand
EG1: On?
EG2: Yeah
EG1: Or in?
EG2: On ... on the one hand ...

Examples from other studies reveal that L2 student questions are not only restricted to queries about language use. There are also examples of learners asking questions about cohesion and the use of cohesive devices while writing collaboratively (see Davison & Hasaneen, 2024) and examples of learners asking their peers questions about spelling; as illustrated in the example from the study completed by Mayo and Zeitler (2017, p. 77) below.

1G2S2: Skiing
2G2S1: Skiing.
3G2S2: With two I?
4G2S3: Yes with two I.

When students discuss the language that should be used to convey ideas in their co-authored text, they also may have the chance to learn about correct language use. From a socio-cognitive/interactionist perspective, learning is seen as an individual process that is facilitated by interaction with others (Philp et al., 2014). A peer may be viewed as an additional source of information and may have knowledge about language use that learners do not have. As a result, asking peers questions during collaborative writing may potentially allow L2 students to increase their own knowledge of language use. To illustrate, in the example above from the study completed by Villarreal and Gil-Sarratea (2019), EG1 learns that “in the one hand” is incorrect and that “on the one hand” should be used instead. Similarly, a small number of examples of language related episodes in previous studies reveal that students provide corrective feedback to their peers on incorrect language use when they make a proposal for the co-authored text. This potentially presents students with an opportunity to reconsider their own language use. This can be seen in the example below from the study completed by Storch and Wigglesworth (2007, p. 162).

Dan: As seen on the graph.
Sam: Has the most average, most average.
Dan: You mean the highest.
Sam: Yes the highest average. The highest average rainfall during the. . .
 throughout the year.

When L2 students make a proposal for the co-authored text and receive corrective feedback from their peers, this pushes them to correct the language used in their proposal and means that the proposed idea can be included or incorporated into the co-written text. However, this feedback can also draw the students' attention to their own errors. When making a proposal, a learner may be unaware that language has been used incorrectly, but corrective feedback draws the L2 student's attention to this and thus, from a socio-cognitive/interactionist perspective, provides this person with a chance to learn about language use. Additionally, interactive feedback is immediate and is provided as writing is being completed (Storch, 2019). The real-time nature of this feedback means that a learner has the opportunity to modify the language used in a new, updated proposal and can receive further feedback which may confirm that this new language attempt was successful (Davison, 2021). Potentially, it also means that the feedback that learners receive while writing is multiplied. Students commonly receive written corrective feedback on their writing from their instructors (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Cui et al., 2022). In addition to this, when students complete collaborative writing, they can also receive interactive corrective feedback from their peers. One advantage of this type of feedback is that it is suited to the learners' level of understanding which Polio (2012) suggests is one of the key characteristics of effective feedback. However,

without further investigation, we cannot be sure that the frequency of exchanges that involve students asking questions or receiving corrective feedback would have a meaningful impact on their learning. Additionally, we also cannot be sure that learners would answer their partners' questions correctly or give correct feedback to their peers. Vuogan and Li (2022) stress that there are questions about the correctness of the information that L2 students can provide to their peers. For example, Adams et al. (2011) and Cheng et al. (2023) suggest that L2 students can mis-correct their peers and Chen and Yu (2019) revealed that learners can answer peer questions incorrectly.

While further investigation is needed, there are indications that collaborative writing creates opportunities to learn about language use that are not presented by independent writing. When L2 students write collaboratively, deliberation is external and explicit as each learner's thoughts about how ideas should be organized or about how language should be used in the co-authored text are brought out into the open to be reviewed, explained, or discussed (Storch, 2019). This leads to notable differences between collaborative and independent writing. One of these differences is that when students write collaboratively, they have the chance to discuss the language that they will use in their co-authored text. Learners engage in discussions referred to as language related episodes or LREs (Swain & Lapkin, 1998). A number of scholars have found that learners engage in LREs relating to the use of grammar, lexis, and mechanics of writing (Fernández-Dobao, 2012; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009). Others such as Davison and Hasaneen (2024) also found that L2 students engaged in LREs concerning organisation and the cohesion of text although they primarily deliberated about language use.

Learners engage in these discussions primarily to ensure that language is used correctly in the ideas that they wish to express, but these discussions may also create opportunities for students to learn about language use. Herder et al. (2020) suggest that collaborative writing allows L2 learners to share knowledge with their fellow students and Davison (2021) noted that students share knowledge about language use while engaged in LREs. Another difference is that L2 students can notice how language is used by their partners as collaborative writing is being completed. For example, when peers make proposals for the co-authored text, students receive additional language input that independent writers do not receive, and this increases the opportunities for them to notice how language is used (Schmidt, 1990). Peer language input also provides L2 students with examples of language use which learners can compare to their own use of language. This means that they can also notice how peer language use differs from their own (Davison, 2021). Additionally, Storch (2005) points out that L2 students can notice how their peers use new words and expressions when they make proposals for the co-written text and then can incorporate these into their own language repertoire. The final major difference between collaborative and independent writing concerns how learners deliberate about language use. In collaborative writing, deliberation is brought out into the open. The proposals that learners make for the co-written text and the language used to express these ideas are constantly reviewed and discussed by those involved (Storch, 2019). In this open forum, each learner's ideas about language use can possibly be questioned or challenged by a peer if language use is incorrect. This process may prompt learners to re-evaluate and possibly to modify their own language use. This is illustrated in the following example from Davison (2021, p. 50).

- S1 *What did you write?*
 S2 They don't move a lot to burn the fats and calories
 S1 Fat without s
 S2 Correct
 S1 They don't move a lot...
 S2 To burn the fat and calories...
 S1 *That's it...*

An important question to ask is: if the student in the previous example was writing independently (S2), what would draw this student's attention to incorrect language use and prompt them to re-evaluate language? Clearly, learners do deliberate about language use while writing independently because they can think about, and thus reconsider, the language that they will use (De Guerrero, 2018). However, this internal process is bound by the individual student's linguistic knowledge and understanding of how language is used (Storch, 2013); limiting the learner's ability to re-evaluate and reconsider language use. Chen and Lee (2022) stress that learners may even disagree about language use when collaborative writing is completed, but this demonstrates that each learner's preconceived ideas about how language should be used in text can be challenged or questioned by a peer; providing each student with the chance to reconsider and possibly learn about correct language use.

However, while these opportunities are not presented to L2 students who complete writing independently, they are still contingent upon the students' knowledge of language. Accordingly, it is important to determine whether learners can answer peer questions about language use correctly and to determine if they can provide accurate feedback to their peers. Also, to date, it is still unclear how frequently students are involved in exchanges that allow them to learn about how language is used. To address these questions, the present study examined collaborative writing dialogue to identify student deliberation that could potentially facilitate individual learning, such as episodes in which learners ask their peers questions about language use, and those in which students give corrective feedback to their peers. It also assessed whether the information that peers provided was correct.

Accordingly, the present study addressed the following research questions:

1. Do peers engage in LREs that involve learners providing corrective feedback and answering peer questions?

2. Do they engage in these types of LREs less frequently than in LREs that involve other types of interaction?
3. Do students share correct information with their peers?

III. METHOD

A. Design

This classroom-based study involved 64 students who completed an academic writing course in a university in the UAE. In this program, pairs of students from four intact class groups completed various writing activities together over a period of eight weeks. The dialogue of students who completed collaborative writing was recorded and then transcribed. This was then analysed to identify learner discussions about language use and about other facets of writing, referred to as language related episodes or LREs. These LREs were subsequently reviewed to determine the ratio of episodes that involved learners providing corrective feedback and answering peer questions, or those that involved other types of interaction. The exchanges that involved students asking questions and providing corrective feedback were subsequently assessed to determine the ratio of discussions in which learners provided correct information to their peers.

B. Participants and Setting

The participants were university students who completed the same academic writing course. They were all between 18-21 years old, Arabic first language speakers and had an intermediate level of English (IELTS 6.0 – 6.5). Approximately 16 learners from each of the four intact class groups gave consent for their data to be used in this study, and there were between 20 to 22 students in each class. No changes were made to the way the academic writing course was normally taught to accommodate this study. Students received the same instruction and carried out the same series of writing activities as their peers who had previously completed this writing course (see Table 1 below). Learners completed two classes per week. Each 1-hour and 20-minute class was composed of a 20-minute instruction phase, a 50-minute writing phase and a final 10-minute review phase. During the writing phase, pairs of learners worked collaboratively to produce a co-authored essay in each class. All writing was completed on paper and learners did not use their computer, mobile phones or the internet to do this. Over a period of eight weeks, pairs of students from four intact class groups completed various writing activities together. (see Table 1). When the writing was completed, this would be submitted to the instructor and learners would each receive a copy of their writing with written feedback in the following class.

TABLE 1
TIMETABLE OF WRITING ACTIVITIES

Writing task	Week	# of classes
Descriptive/expository	2-3	4 classes
Cause and effect	4-6	6 classes
Compare and contrast	6-8	6 classes

C. Recording and Transcription of Collaborative Writing Dialogue

Collaborative writing was completed by pairs of students who were seated together at the same desk. The desks were arranged in a horseshoe formation and the instructor's desk was situated at the front of the class close to where the learners were seated. To record the dialogue of learners who completed collaborative writing, a small audio recorder was placed on the table of each pair of students. Due to the norms of the host country, video recording was not allowed, so audio recording was used. The unintrusive nature of the small audio recorder also meant that learners did not pay attention to the recording device as they discussed their writing. During collaborative writing, the instructor did not intervene in any way but was able to observe student interaction and note when learners had completed the writing tasks. Due to the time and labour involved, 25% of the recordings were randomly selected to be transcribed and then analysed (n=94).

D. Assessment

The examples of collaborative writing dialogue (n=94) were then assessed by two different examiners. Before assessment was carried out, both assessors completed training to ensure that they were assessing the samples in the same way. The same training procedure was used for the three different types of assessment shown in table 2 below. For training, a small sample of scripts were reviewed by both examiners. Using an assessment guide, they would assess each example together. When both assessors were confident that they were interpreting the measures in the same way, an identical set of scripts was given to each examiner to be assessed. Once completed, the assessment of both raters was compared to determine the consistency between the rating of both examiners. This was deemed to be acceptable (Polio & Friedman, 2016). When this was completed, the scripts that had been assessed differently by both raters (for each measure used) were reviewed and discussed by both examiners until they agreed on the final assessment of these (see Johnson et al., 2005). Thus, there was 100% agreement between both raters on the final assessment of the scripts for all measures.

E. Measures

Table 2 illustrates the measures that were used in the present study. The identification of LREs was used solely to identify student discussions about language use and about other facets of writing. The results of this identification were not analysed but were needed to subsequently identify the type of peer interaction that took place in each of the LREs.

This study identified LREs concerning language use (relating to grammar and lexis) and mechanics of writing, which were identified in previous studies completed by Storch and Wigglesworth (2007), Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) and Fernández-Dobao (2012). It also identified discourse related LREs associated with discussions about cohesion/organization of text (see Davison & Hasaneen, 2024).

TABLE 2
ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Order	Activity
1	Identification of LREs in transcribed collaborative writing dialogue
2	Identification of exchanges involving students asking questions, providing feedback or other types of interactions in LREs
3	Identification of the number of exchanges where learners provide correct/incorrect information to their peers when answering questions or providing corrective feedback

When LREs had been identified, the number of episodes that involved students asking and answering questions or providing corrective feedback to their peers was determined. To simplify assessment, interaction that did not involve students asking questions or providing feedback was classified as other types of interaction. The reason for doing this was to facilitate the comparison of the number of LREs that involved students asking questions and providing corrective feedback to the number of those that did not. If the ratio of these was very low, then it could be assumed that these would have a minimal impact on individual learning as students would not be provided with frequent opportunities to learn about language use from working and interacting with their peers. It is also assumed that LREs classified as other types of interaction in the present study would be representative of the type of interaction noted in research previously conducted by Storch and Wigglesworth (2007), Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) and Fernández-Dobao (2012) namely, interaction that involves students pooling their linguistic resources and resolving language issues in their writing together.

Finally, the number and ratio of LREs where learners gave correct information to their peers when answering questions or providing corrective feedback was assessed. If peers answer student questions incorrectly or provide corrective feedback that is incorrect, then this clearly would not facilitate individual learning and possibly could even be detrimental. As a result, the present study not only assessed how frequently students asked questions or gave corrective feedback but also assessed whether the information that they provided was correct.

To present the results of this study, statistics associated with the number and ratio of LREs that involved students asking questions and providing corrective feedback will be presented; along with the number and ratio of these LREs where learners gave correct/incorrect information to their peers. To provide a more complete picture, it will also present examples of LREs involving students asking/answering questions, providing/receiving corrective feedback and examples of LREs involving other types of interaction.

IV. RESULTS

Overall, the results of this investigation revealed that there were a similar number of LREs that involved students answering questions and providing corrective feedback to their peers, and LREs that involved other types of interaction. Analysis of LREs involving learners answering questions and providing corrective feedback also showed that they almost always provided correct information to their peers. As a result, there were very few examples of LREs where students gave incorrect information to their partners. Examples of LREs illustrated instances of students modifying language use in their proposals as a result of the feedback received. Additionally, there were examples of learners sharing knowledge about language use, and of students noticing how language was used by their peers as they made proposals for the co-authored text. The details of these results are shown in the following sections.

A. Learner Interaction in Collaborative Writing Dialogue

As can be seen in Table 3, there was almost an equal mean number of LREs involving students answering questions and providing corrective feedback to their peers ($M=5.00$), and LREs involving other types of interaction ($M=5.02$). Thus, in a notable number of the LREs identified, students were presented with opportunities to learn from their peers.

TABLE 3
TYPE OF PEER INTERACTION IN LREs

Type of Interaction	# examples	Mean # per sample	SD
Answering peer questions	326	3.47	2.68
Providing corrective feedback	144	1.53	1.75
Answering questions + providing corrective feedback	470	5.00	3.70
Other types of interaction	472	5.02	3.33
All LREs	942	10.02	5.81

To test the difference between the mean number of LREs in which learners gave corrective feedback and answered questions and LREs that involved other types of interaction, a paired-sample t-test was completed. The difference between these means was not significant ($M=5.00$, $SD=3.70$) and ($M=5.02$, $SD=3.33$), $t(92) = 1.66$, $p = .48$. This means that there were not significantly fewer LREs in which students provided corrective feedback and answered peer questions than those that involved other types of interaction.

Qualitative analysis of LREs that involved learners asking peers questions revealed that students were presented with different opportunities to learn. While writing, peers answered questions about language and the mechanics of text as illustrated in examples 1, 2 and 3 below. This allowed learners to share knowledge with their peers. A review of the LREs in which students asked questions also revealed that these often stemmed from students noticing peer language use as proposals were made for the co-authored text. This can be seen in Example 4.

Examples of LREs involving students asking questions to their peers

Example 1 – Asking questions about grammar

- S1 Is that people who suffered...
 S2 From obesity ... have... have or has?
 S1 Have ... many health problems

Example 2 – Asking questions about spelling

- S1 Principles...
 S2 Principles... How do we do spell principles?
 S1 P R I N C I P L E S

Example 3 – Asking questions about lexis

- S1 They tend not to move a lot
 S2 They tend to get tired... let me write ... synonym of tired?
 S1 Get tired ...exhausted
 S2 They tend to get exhausted

Example 4 – Noticing followed by questions about lexis I

- S1 What...
 S2 Have a high risk
 S1 I wrote high average
 S2 Big risk ... why did you erase it
 S1 Who... are more ... what's risk?
 S2 Danger

Qualitative analysis of LREs also revealed that peers provided corrective feedback on language use when students made proposals for the co-authored text as can be seen in examples 6 and 7 below. Peer feedback often pushed learners to modify the language used in their original proposal as illustrated in Example 8.

Examples of LREs involving students providing corrective feedback to their peers

Example 6 – Corrective feedback on the use of lexis

- S2 Is a delighting... caramel
 S1 Delightful *not* delighting...

Example 7 – Corrective feedback on the use of grammar

- S2 The high amount of calories they consumes
 S1 Just like snacks calories they consume... just on snacks

Example 8 – Corrective feedback on the use of lexis with language modification

- S2 ... increasing the risk...
 S1 Increasing your heart attach
 S2 Increasing the risk of heart attack
 S1 Okay, the heart attack for it...

For the sake of simplicity, in this study, LREs involving other types of interaction were defined as those that did not feature students asking questions or providing corrective feedback to their peers while deliberating about writing. As expected, these reflected the interaction noted in previous research conducted by Storch and Wigglesworth (2007), Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) and Fernández-Dobao (2012); that is, interaction that involved students pooling their linguistic resources to express their intended ideas in text. As can be seen in Example 10, through the contributions of both learners, students were able to correctly express their ideas.

Examples of LREs involving other types of interaction

Example 10 – Other types of interaction I

- S2 Wait... there wasn't lots of.... There wasn't variety of food...
 S1 Yes... there wasn't a variety of food...
 S2 Food was not available
 S1 Wait... and it was... we say it was limited

- S2 Food was available in limited quantity
 S1 Yes... limited quantity
 S2 That's the word I was looking for!

B. Providing Correct/Incorrect Information to Peers

When students provided corrective feedback and answered questions, the information that they gave to their peers was almost always correct. This is shown in Table 4. Students provided correct information to their peers in 463 of 470 LREs that involved them providing corrective feedback or answering questions; meaning that in 98.51% of these, the information that they gave was correct. This approximates the rate of accuracy that would be expected from first language speakers. In this study, students only answered peer questions incorrectly in 2 of the 326 LREs; meaning that 99.39% of the answers were correct. Learners provided incorrect feedback in 5 of the 144 LREs. Thus, 96.53% of feedback given was correct.

TABLE 4
 PEER INTERACTION IN LRES WHERE STUDENTS PROVIDED CORRECT/INCORRECT INFORMATION

Type of Interaction	# Examples	# Correct	# Incorrect
Answering peer questions	326	324	2
Providing corrective feedback	144	139	5
Providing corrective feedback + answering questions	470	463	7

As noted in Table 4, there were 2 examples of students answering questions incorrectly. Both were in the same sample of collaborative writing dialogue (collaborative dialogue 90) and the incorrect information was given by the same learner. In 5 of the 144 LREs that involved peers providing feedback to other students, they provided information that was incorrect. However, in each of the examples, the incorrect feedback was subsequently highlighted by the recipient. Thus, this feedback did not lead to incorrect language use. In some of these, the learner pointed out why the feedback given was incorrect as shown in Example 11.

Example of incorrect corrective feedback

Example 11 – One student correcting incorrect feedback

- S1 Both of the countries are similar
 S2 We write, both of countries
 S1 Both of the countries are alike

To sum up, learners frequently asked questions and provided corrective feedback to their peers while engaged in LREs in collaborative writing dialogue. The number of these were similar to the number of those that involved other types of interaction. Analysis of these LREs also revealed that students frequently gave correct information to their peers; answering questions correctly and providing feedback that was correct. A review of LREs illustrated examples of students sharing knowledge about language use, and of learners noticing how peers used language in their proposals. This review also illustrated how peer feedback can draw the learners' attention to incorrect language use and lead them to modify their own language.

V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this investigation was to assess the learning potential of peer interaction in collaborative writing by determining how frequently learners gave corrective feedback to their peers or answered their questions about language use or about other aspects of writing. Results revealed that the frequency of these episodes is sufficient to have a meaningful impact on learning. If these exchanges were limited in collaborative writing, then L2 students would not be presented with frequent opportunities to learn about language use. However, in the mean number of 10 LREs per collaborative writing dialogue noted in the present study, approximately 5 of these involved learners asking questions or providing corrective feedback to their peers on errors in language use. This means that students frequently engaged in discussions with their peers that provided them with opportunities to learn. The results also revealed that when answering questions and providing corrective feedback, peers almost always gave correct information to learners; specifically in 98.51% of the LREs that involved this type of interaction. Scholars such as Vuogan and Li (2022), Cheng et al. (2023), Chen and Yu (2019) and Adams et al. (2011) have stressed that there are questions about the correctness of the information that L2 students can provide to their peers. However, in the present study, students only answered 2 of the 326 questions that they were asked incorrectly and only gave incorrect feedback in 5 of the 144 LREs where they provided corrective feedback to their peers. Taken together, these results suggest that peers can be a useful source of information about language use. Peer interaction also provides students with opportunities to learn about correct language use which are not presented to students who write independently.

A review of the LREs that involved learners asking questions and providing corrective feedback highlighted different opportunities for L2 students to learn. These revealed examples of learners asking their partners questions about grammar, lexis and spelling; allowing them to share knowledge with their peers (see Herder et al., 2020). Davison (2021) suggests that when students write collaboratively, they can notice how language is used by their partners and how it differs to their own use. In the present study, there were examples of learners noticing how lexis was used by their peers when making

proposals for the co-authored text and then asking them questions about this. Other examples illustrated how peer feedback on language errors led students to reconsider and modify language use. Storch (2019) points out that interactive feedback is given in real-time as writing is being completed. This means that learners can modify language use in response to this and can receive further peer feedback confirming the success of this new language attempt (Davison, 2021). Collectively, it seems that interactive processes in collaborative writing can draw L2 students' attention to errors in their own language use, providing them with opportunities to learn from their peers. Additionally, peer interaction multiplies and varies the feedback that learners receive while writing. Students receive immediate, real-time feedback from their peers in addition to the written corrective feedback that is commonly provided by their instructors after writing has been completed (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Cui et al., 2022). Manchón (2014) stresses that different types of feedback can fulfil different functions in writing. For example, Nassaji (2015) suggests that oral feedback focuses on the accuracy of language use while written feedback may focus more on the improvement of writing skills. This potentially means that the varied modes of feedback presented by collaborative writing can help to develop different aspects of written discourse. Additionally, Polio (2012) suggests that peer feedback may be effective because it is suited to the learners' level of understanding. However, it is still necessary to determine how students engage with feedback that is provided by their peers. Thus, further investigation is needed.

The results of this study and of previous research suggest that peer interaction in collaborative writing may fulfil two different roles. Firstly, as proponents of the socio-cultural approach to second language learning suggest, it allows students to work together to resolve language issues in their writing (see McDonough et al., 2018; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007; Villarreal & Gil-Sarratea, 2019). Driven by a socio-cognitive/interactionist perspective, the present study also suggests that students may be able to learn from completing collaborative writing with their peers. This possibility is supported by the results of studies completed by Shehadeh (2011), Khatib and Meihami (2015), Bikowski and Vithanage (2016) and Davison (2024) that highlighted more pronounced improvement in individual writing after students had completed collaborative writing than after independent writing had been carried out. From a pedagogical perspective, collaborative writing may be seen as an activity that facilitates learning about language use and may potentially allow L2 students to learn from each other as they write. The frequency of exchanges and correctness of the information that peers provided in this study seems to support this interpretation. However, more extensive research still needs to be carried out, particularly to determine whether lower-level students would also be able to answer peer questions correctly or be able to provide accurate feedback to their partners. Additionally, this study seems to suggest that there may be other possible indirect benefits of peer interaction in collaborative writing. Allowing learners to answer peer questions about language use and to provide corrective feedback to each other can foster a more student-centred approach to L2 writing as Yu et al. (2021) suggest. Moreover, completing collaborative writing may possibly reduce the reticence that learners feel when they need to provide corrective feedback to their peers (Kuyyogsuy, 2019; Fujii et al., 2016). For example, there is no clear recipient or provider of feedback in collaborative writing because both learners provide corrective feedback to each other on different aspects of language use while writing (Davison, 2021). However, it is clear that further investigation is still needed to gauge L2 student acceptance of the interactive feedback that is provided by peers during collaborative writing.

VI. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicated that L2 students frequently asked their peers questions about language use while writing collaboratively, and that peers provided corrective feedback to learners on their errors in language use when they made proposals for the co-authored text; prompting these students to re-evaluate and modify language use. The results also revealed that learners almost always gave correct information to their partners, answering questions correctly and providing correct feedback to their peers. Together these results suggest that peers may provide L2 learners with an additional, beneficial source of information about language use. They also indicate that peer interaction in collaborative writing creates opportunities to learn that are not presented by independent writing. The results of the present study and of previous research seem to suggest that peer interaction in collaborative writing may play two different roles; allowing learners to pool their resources and work together to resolve language issues in their writing, and at the same time allowing students to learn from each other as they write.

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Breaking Silence, Weaving Stories: Dalit Women's Autobiographies Unveiling Experiences, Challenges, and Societal Dynamics

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Abstract—The paper explores the rich tapestry of Dalit women's experiences through the autobiographical works of Baby Kamble and Urmila Pawar, shedding light on their unique struggles, challenges, and the complex dynamics of Indian society. Dalit women's autobiographies serve as powerful tools for reclaiming agency, giving voice to the nuanced dimensions of their identities. This study uses a qualitative approach, analyzing a curated selection of these autobiographies to uncover the lived realities of Dalit women. Through thematic analysis, the paper highlights the challenges they face, such as entrenched caste-based discrimination and gendered inequalities. The autobiographies reveal the intersectionality of Dalit women's identities, illustrating the complex interplay between caste, gender, and socio-economic status. The research also examines the societal forces that shape these narratives, considering the historical roots of caste-based discrimination and the evolution of resistance movements. These autobiographies serve as repositories of collective memory, documenting not only the struggles against systemic oppression but also the enduring quest for dignity and respect. Additionally, the paper explores how these narratives challenge stereotypes, foster solidarity, and contribute to broader social change. The challenges of limited opportunities, economic disparities, and discrimination in various spheres are analyzed within the autobiographical context. This study also emphasizes how the narratives highlight Dalit women's resilience, agency, and empowerment as they navigate adversity and contribute to their communities. By examining these experiences, the paper aims to deepen the understanding of the intersection between identity, resistance, and social justice in Indian society.

Index Terms—Dalit literature, identity, resistance, gender, caste

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

Dalits, historically referred to as "Untouchables," have faced deep-rooted oppression and exclusion in Indian society for centuries, a consequence of the rigid caste system. This hierarchical social order placed Dalits at the bottom, condemning them to perform tasks considered "impure" or "polluting," such as sanitation work, leather processing, and manual labor. Their social status made them victims of severe discrimination, with restrictions on their access to education, public spaces, and basic human rights. Dalits were segregated, forced to live in separate, often unhygienic, colonies, and denied entry to temples, schools, and even water sources used by higher castes.

The legacy of untouchability also meant Dalits faced widespread violence and exploitation, with little legal or social recourse. In the face of this oppression, many Dalit leaders, such as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, emerged as champions for their rights, advocating for social justice and the abolition of untouchability. In 1950, the Indian Constitution legally abolished untouchability, but despite these protections, caste-based discrimination persists in many parts of India. Dalits continue to struggle for equality, dignity, and justice, confronting both overt violence and subtle forms of discrimination that hinder their access to opportunities, education, and political participation.

A. Significance of Dalit Women's Autobiographies

Autobiographies by Dalit women rest on their ability to enhance the voices of underprivileged individuals, question structural injustices, and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the interconnectedness of caste and gender (Beth, 2015; Kamble, 2009). These memoirs function as potent instruments for empowerment, defiance, and societal transformation. The relevance of Dalit women's autobiographies may be understood by examining many crucial characteristics. Autobiographies of Dalit women serve as a venue for amplifying their voices (Ambedkar, 1937), which have traditionally been suppressed and oppressed by the upper caste people. These women use personal stories to convey their own experiences, viewpoints, and difficulties, providing insight into the complex obstacles they encounter at the crossroads of caste and gender. Engaging in self-narration serves as a means of regaining control and demonstrating one's entitlement to be listened to.

Autobiographies serve as a means to confront and debunk existing assumptions and misunderstandings about Dalit women (Singh, 1978). Through the act of sharing their own experiences, these women challenge false beliefs and provide an alternative perspective to the existing biases. The accounts challenge deep-seated social prejudices (Shah, 2000) and enhance a more precise and compassionate understanding of the lives of Dalit women. Dalit women's autobiographies function as historical records, offering valuable perspectives on the societal, economic, and political circumstances they have encountered across many epochs. Personal narratives are essential resource for historians, researchers, and policymakers that want to comprehend the effects of institutional prejudice on people and communities.

The act of writing an autobiography is inherently empowering for Dalit women. It enables individuals to contemplate their own life, recognize their abilities, and proclaim their ability to overcome challenges (Biswal et al., 2023; Kumar, 2010, 2016). Moreover, these memoirs have the potential to motivate and embolden individuals within the Dalit community, creating a feeling of togetherness and shared resilience. Dalit women's autobiographies are crucial in fostering social consciousness and promoting activism by shedding light on societal inequities and pushing for transformative action (Zelliot, 1992). They serve as instruments for activism, bringing awareness to issues like as caste-based discrimination, gender violence, and economic inequalities. The narratives have a role in current social justice movements and have the ability to shape public conversations and policy debates.

These memoirs provide an environment conducive to discourse and comprehension across diverse cultures. Dalit women use the act of sharing personal narratives to encourage others from all backgrounds to understand and relate to their experiences, hence promoting a society that is more accepting and empathetic.

B. Intersectionality of Caste and Gender

The examination of the interaction between caste and gender in autobiographies written by Dalit women provides a crucial perspective that reveals the intricate and multifaceted nature of their identities. The intersection of caste and gender gives rise to a distinct set of difficulties and encounters that profoundly influence the lives of Dalit women. The autobiographies serve as a medium to examine and express the complex interaction between these two aspects, providing valuable understanding of the subtle characteristics of prejudice and subjugation. When analyzing Dalit women's autobiographies, it is important to address the intersections of caste and gender. Here are some crucial aspects to keep in mind:

Dalit women experience a compounded kind of marginalization as a result of their intersectional identities, being both members of the Dalit caste and female. Autobiographies provide insight on how these overlapping identities amplify prejudice, rendering Dalit women susceptible to distinct types of mistreatments, aggression, and marginalization. The tales reveal the cumulative impact of being marginalized in two different ways on their ability to access opportunities and resources. Secondly, educational disparities are often highlighted in autobiographies, specifically focusing on the difficulties faced by Dalit women (Guru, 2003) in obtaining education. The intersectionality of caste and gender is evident in the restricted access to education, discriminatory treatment inside educational institutions, and cultural norms that favor the education of males above that of Dalit girls. These stories emphasize the significance of education as a place where people may resist and gain power.

Thirdly, the autobiographies of Dalit women provide light on the economic discrepancies that result from the combined effects of caste and gender. These accounts often portray challenges related to finding job, disparities in wages, and instances of exploitation inside the workplace. The intersectional perspective aids in understanding the intricacies of economic oppression, where the convergence of caste-based discrimination and gender prejudices strengthens structural disparities.

Fourth, autobiographies explore the complex relationships and interactions within families and society, influenced by the combined effects of caste and gender. The researchers investigate the role of long-established customs and behaviors in perpetuating the oppression of Dalit women (Gupta, 2010; The Wire, 2017) in their households and societies. The accounts provide valuable perspectives on topics such as underage marriage, restricted autonomy in decision-making, and the continuation of patriarchal systems.

Fifth, violence and exploitation are prominent manifestations of the intersectionality between caste and gender, particularly targeting Dalit women. Autobiographies recount instances of domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and discrimination, elucidating the ways in which various types of oppression are shaped by both caste-based biases and gender hierarchies.

In spite of the difficulties presented by the overlapping factors of caste and gender, autobiographies by Dalit women commemorate their ability to bounce back and their defiance against oppression. The accounts often portray examples of fortitude, bravery, and advocacy, highlighting how these women skillfully negotiate and confront repressive systems, not only as Dalits but specifically as Dalit women (Rege, 1998, 2006).

C. Purpose of the Research Paper

The aim of this paper is to discuss that how can autobiographies written by Dalit women reveal the complex web of their personal experiences, providing a detailed examination of their educational paths, familial relationships, and the impact of cultural customs? Moreover, how can these memoirs shed light on the particular difficulties encountered by Dalit women, tackling matters of caste-based prejudice, gender-specific hurdles, and economic inequalities? How can these personal accounts help us comprehend the larger social dynamics, such as power structures, resistance movements,

and the influence of societal expectations on the formation of Dalit women's identities? This study seeks to analyze the many facets of Dalit women's life in order to understand their resilience, obstacles, and the potential for their stories to contribute to a more inclusive and empathic society.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Dalit Literature and Autobiographies*

(a). *Historical Context*

Dalit literature and autobiography are deeply intertwined with the historical backdrop of social and caste-based oppression in India. Examining the historical circumstances and conditions encompasses: Pre-Independence Era: Examine the first literary works that established the basis for Dalit literature, highlighting the emergence of literary expression in the fight against caste-based injustice (Hazari, 1951; Trouillot, 1995). Post-freedom Era: Analyze the development of Dalit writing after India's freedom, investigating changes in subjects, attitudes, and the rise of autobiographical accounts (Hardtmann, 2009; Ram, 2010). The impact of social and political forces, such as the Dalit Panthers, on the development of Dalit literature, particularly in constructing autobiographical narratives, should be taken into account (Wallach, 2006).

(b). *The Progression of Narratives by Dalit Women*

Understanding the growth of Dalit women's narratives is essential for comprehending the formation of their voices throughout history. Early Contributions: Examine the first autobiographical writings of Dalit women and their significant contributions to the broader Dalit literary corpus (Gajrawala, 2012; Nimbalkar, 2006). Examine the evolution of themes in autobiographies of Dalit women, specifically analyzing shifts in depiction, emphasis (Limbale, 2007), and narrative approaches. Examine the extent to which global feminist movements and ideas have shaped the development of Dalit women's stories.

B. *Intersectionality in Autobiographical Works*

(a). *Interactions Between Social Classes and the Roles of Gender Caste and Gender Dynamics*

To comprehend the intersectionality of caste and gender in Dalit women's memoirs, one must delve into their distinct encounters: Explore how autobiographies express the distinct obstacles encountered by Dalit women as a result of the convergence of caste and gender, highlighting occurrences of prejudice, isolation, and aggression. Identity construction: Examine the ways in which Dalit women navigate their sense of self in relation to the stories they tell, taking into account the impact of both caste and gender dynamics on their self-image and the expectations placed upon them by society.

(b). *Challenges in the Realms of Economics and Education*

The autobiographies of Dalit women focus on the significant role of economic and educational problems within their intersectional perspective (Bruek, 2014). Analyze the portrayal of Dalit women's problems and achievements in attaining education in autobiographies, with a focus on institutional obstacles, cultural biases, and the resulting effects on their empowerment (Nagraj, 1993). Examine the personal narratives to gain understanding of economic disparities, including issues like unfair treatment in the workplace, disparities in wages, and the ongoing difficulty in achieving financial security. Analysis of intersectional barriers: Investigate the combined impact of caste and gender intersectionality on economic and educational difficulties, resulting in a more holistic understanding of the systemic obstacles encountered by Dalit women.

III. METHODS

A. *Selection of Autobiographies of Baby Kamble and Urmila Pawar*

(a). *Inclusion Criteria*

The choice of autobiographical writings is determined by several criteria to guarantee a concentrated and thorough analysis:

Authenticity: Verify that the chosen memoirs are authored specifically by Dalit women, ensuring a genuine portrayal of their experiences.

Diverse experiences: Incorporate autobiographies that encompass a wide array of experiences within the Dalit community, taking into account factors such as socio-economic status, geographic region, and individual life paths.

Relevance to intersectionality: Give priority to memoirs that specifically discuss the intersectionality of caste and gender, enabling a detailed examination of these aspects.

(b). *Justification for Selected Works*

The selection of autobiographies by Baby Kamble and Urmila Pawar is predicated upon their noteworthy contributions to Dalit writing and their distinct viewpoints:

Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke* has been chosen for its historical importance as it provides valuable perspectives on the experiences of a Dalit woman in India before and after Independence. Kamble's tale offers a fundamental comprehension of the realities of the Dalit community.

The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs is a book written by Urmila Pawar. Selected for its current significance and the writer's involvement with topics of caste, gender, and socio-political changes. Pawar's work enhances Kamble's, offering a more contemporary viewpoint.

B. Qualitative Analysis

(a). Thematic Analysis

It refers to the process of identifying and categorizing patterns or themes within a set of data. The method of thematic analysis is used to detect and classify reoccurring themes in the memoirs. The research is conducted a systematic coding of the material to detect reoccurring themes, including caste-based discrimination, gendered experiences, educational hurdles, economic discrepancies, and defiance against societal norms.

Contextual Analysis: Take into account the historical and social circumstances in which these themes are portrayed, acknowledging the development of these stories across time and their relationship to wider societal forces.

Emergent Patterns: Facilitate the formation of patterns or sub-themes throughout the coding process, providing a thorough investigation of the diverse experiences of Dalit women.

(b). Comparative Analysis of Autobiographical Works

A comparative examination is undertaken between the autobiographies of Baby Kamble and Urmila Pawar. The research is conducted an analysis of the convergences and divergences by examining the similarities and contrasts in the tales, considering both shared experiences and contrasting views.

Intersectionality Analysis: Focused on occasions when the combination of caste and gender is particularly noticeable, evaluating how these factors influenced the writers' distinct experiences.

When analyzing the autobiographies, it is important to take into account the socio-political environment in which they were written. This means understanding the changing experiences of Dalits and how the writers responded to the growing dynamics of society.

IV. DALIT WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES

A. Educational Challenges

(a). Limited Access to Education

The Prisons We Broke describes the obstacles she encountered while trying to get an education as a Dalit girl in India before it gained independence. The pervasive discriminatory practices in society deprived her and other individuals similar to her of the basic entitlement to education. Kamble eloquently portrays situations in which Dalit children were often prohibited from accessing educational institutions, hence emphasizing the deeply rooted systematic marginalization within the education system. On the other hand, Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* offers a more modern viewpoint. Pawar recounts the challenges she had in pursuing higher education owing to structural prejudices, albeit recognizing some improvements in educational accessibility. The account highlights the ongoing difficulties encountered by Dalit women in obtaining education, underscoring the interaction between caste and gender that restricts their access to academic possibilities. Both the autobiographies highlight the persistent obstacles faced by Dalit women in obtaining education, illustrating a historical progression from Kamble's past encounters to Pawar's present-day hardships. The accounts reveal the inherent and long-standing presence of caste-based inequality inside educational institutions.

(b). Struggles Within Educational Systems

The autobiographies of Kamble and Pawar highlight the caste-based discrimination, social marginalization, and educational inequalities they faced in institutions. Their narratives shed light on the emotional and academic challenges of navigating these systemic barriers. In her tale, Kamble depicts the antagonistic atmosphere prevalent in schools, where Dalit pupils often face discriminatory treatment from both educators and classmates. The challenges stretched beyond obstacles in gaining admission to include disparities in care, prejudiced evaluation, and exclusion from educational prospects. Pawar's experiences go further into the intricacies inherent in educational institutions. She explores the nuances of discrimination, examining cases where Dalit students encountered segregation and bias within educational settings. Pawar contemplates the psychological burden of being subjected to substandard treatment in scholastic environments, highlighting the widespread occurrence of prejudice based on caste. The memoirs together expose the intricate challenges (Omang et al., 2020) present in educational institutions, demonstrating that although obvious obstacles may decrease with time, hidden prejudices and unfair practices continue to exist, impacting the whole educational journey of Dalit women.

B. Economic Disparities

(a). Employment Opportunities

The tale of Baby Kamble in *The Prisons We Broke* reveals the economic hardships that Dalit women encounter while trying to find work. Kamble elucidates the relegation of Dalit folks to menial and low-paying occupations, hence maintaining a cycle of economic imbalance. The restricted employment prospects for Dalit women were closely connected to caste biases. *The Weave of My Life* by Urmila Pawar delves further into this investigation by recounting her own odyssey in the quest for job. Pawar emphasizes the difficulties that Dalit women have in obtaining respectable and high-paying employment, often being limited to vocations that are considered appropriate according to traditional norms. Both the memoirs highlight the persistent economic inequalities faced by Dalit women. The tales illustrate a recurring pattern of restricted job prospects that are based on caste-based biases, so strengthening the structural aspect of economic inequality.

(b). Wage Disparities

The memoirs of Kamble and Pawar explore the issue of wage discrepancies in a thought-provoking manner. Kamble, in her contemplation, recounts the disparity in wages between Dalit women and non-Dalit women, where the former were consistently remunerated at a much lower rate while doing the identical tasks. Dalit women experienced intensified economic exploitation due to discriminatory pay practices. Pawar's work delves further into the nuances of salary inequalities. The author recounts situations in which Dalit women, while possessing the necessary credentials, were presented with inferior remuneration in comparison to their counterparts belonging to higher castes. This unequal treatment in pay acted as a continual indication of the deep-rooted social prejudices embedded inside economic systems. The memoirs provide a thorough perspective on the salary gaps experienced by Dalit women, highlighting how the combination of caste and gender contributes to the continuation of economic inequalities. The accounts highlight the pressing need to tackle discriminatory behaviours in the workforce.

C. Social Dynamics

(a). Marriage and Family Life

The Prisons We Broke depicts the obstacles that Dalit women encounter in the context of marriage and family. The tale reveals the cultural biases that governed marital customs, whereby Dalit women often faced unequal treatment in the process of finding a suitable match. Kamble eloquently portrays situations in which Dalit women were marginalized, leading to negative effects on their chances of being married. Urmila Pawar, further discusses into the examination of current societal relations. Pawar recounts her encounters with the arduous task of defying society expectations around matrimony, liberating herself from conventional conventions. The story she presents illustrates the changing social dynamics for Dalit women, as they progressively challenge and oppose long-standing biases.

(b). Societal Expectations and Restrictions

The memoirs of Kamble and Pawar revolve on the prominent themes of societal expectations and limits. Kamble's tale portrays the historical milieu in which Dalit women were constrained by inflexible cultural standards, limiting their options and creating a cycle of oppression. The personal narrative reveals the social constraints that dominated many aspects of the life of Dalit women. Pawar's work explores the ongoing challenges and limitations that Dalit women still encounter, while recognizing the shifting dynamics of society (Pawar, 2008). She examines the delicate equilibrium between traditional and contemporary elements, uncovering the enduring cultural norms that influence the decisions and possibilities accessible to Dalit women. The memoirs jointly highlight the persistent cultural norms and limitations imposed on Dalit women. The accounts provide light on the changing nature of these interactions, while emphasizing the ongoing need for social change to empower Dalit women.

V. CHALLENGES FACED

A. Discrimination and Prejudice

(a). Caste-Based Discrimination

The memoirs clearly portray the widespread occurrence of caste-based prejudice experienced by Dalit women. Kamble's account in *The Prisons We Broke* mirrors the historical circumstances in which Dalit women were seen as inferiors, enduring prejudice at all phases of their lives. Kamble's experiences reveal the clear examples of caste prejudice embedded in society systems. Pawar discusses further into this examination, uncovering the nuances of caste-based prejudice in the present day. The author recounts instances in which Dalit women experience microaggressions, emphasizing the persistent biases that exist despite advancements in society. Although, both the autobiographies provide valuable insights into caste-based prejudice, offering a thorough comprehension of its historical origins and current expressions. The tales emphasize the pressing need to dismantle deeply entrenched prejudices inside society systems.

(b). Gender-Based Discrimination

Dalit women are subjected to gender-based discrimination due to the intersectionality of caste and gender. Kamble's account highlights the intersectional oppression experienced by Dalit women, who not only encountered caste discrimination but also endured gender-based inequities. The cultural norms that enforced the subordinate position of

Dalit women intensified discrimination among households, educational institutions, and industries. Pawar's memoir further investigates into the examination of modern gender issues. She contemplates the ongoing struggle of Dalit women against discrimination based on gender, highlighting the need of using intersectional ways to tackle the several levels of oppression. These memoirs highlight the interconnectedness of caste and gender-based discrimination, demonstrating how Dalit women manage several types of oppression that cross with each other. The tales promote the adoption of a comprehensive strategy to tackle both caste and gender prejudices.

B. Violence and Exploitation

(a). Domestic Violence

The memoirs prominently highlight domestic abuse, illustrating the susceptibility of Dalit women in their own families. Kamble's account offers historical perspectives on the systemic oppression of Dalit women, who often endured domestic abuse without enough avenues for seeking justice. The personal story reveals the widespread occurrence of violence caused by society standards. Pawar's memoir further delves into the examination of present-day situations. The author recounts specific cases in which Dalit women persistently experience domestic violence, highlighting the interconnectedness of caste and gender in perpetuating these acts of abuse. Pawar's account emphasizes the pressing need of tackling domestic violence as a structural problem. Both the memoirs together underscore the persistent problem of marital violence experienced by Dalit women. The accounts highlight the interconnectedness of caste and gender issues in sustaining violence within household systems.

(b). Exploitation in Public Spaces

The memoirs of Kamble and Pawar often address the issue of exploitation in public areas. Kamble's tale depicts the historical milieu in which Dalit women were susceptible to exploitation in public domains, enduring abuse and prejudice. The personal narrative reveals the systematic nature of the exploitation experienced by Dalit women outside their homes. Pawar's work further delves into the examination of current socioeconomic processes. The author recounts specific incidents in which Dalit women experience exploitation in public areas, highlighting how the combination of caste and gender contributes to the continuation of these acts of mistreatment. Pawar's account emphasizes the pressing need to dismantle deeply rooted systematic prejudices within public domains. The memoirs throw light on the ongoing problem of exploitation that Dalit women experience in public areas. The accounts highlight the interconnectedness of caste and gender issues in maintaining exploitation beyond the boundaries of family systems.

C. Health Disparities

(a). Limited Access to Healthcare

The memoirs highlight the significant obstacle of restricted healthcare availability for Dalit women. Kamble's account illustrates historical occurrences in which Dalit women were systematically refused access to medical services, hence maintaining inequities in health outcomes. The personal story reveals the systematic nature of healthcare disparities experienced by Dalit women. Pawar's memoir further explores into the examination of current settings. The author recounts specific cases in which Dalit women encounter obstacles in obtaining healthcare, highlighting how the combination of caste and gender contributes to the persistence of health inequalities. Pawar's account highlights the pressing need to dismantle deeply rooted systematic prejudices throughout healthcare institutions. These memoirs together underscore the ongoing problem of restricted healthcare availability experienced by Dalit women and highlight the interconnectedness of caste and gender factors in sustaining health inequities and urge for healthcare systems that are inclusive.

(b). Health Impact of Discrimination

The memoirs of Kamble and Pawar vividly explore the profound effects of prejudice on health. Kamble's account examines the correlation between the prejudice experienced by Dalit women and the negative consequences on their physical and emotional well-being. The personal narrative reveals the widespread influence of social prejudices on the well-being of Dalit women. Pawar's memoir further excavates into the examination of current settings. The author recounts specific cases in which Dalit women consistently face health issues due to discrimination, highlighting how the combined factors of caste and gender contribute to the persistence of these health inequalities. Pawar's account emphasizes the pressing need of removing deeply rooted systematic prejudices within social frameworks in order to enhance the overall welfare of Dalit women.

VI. SOCIETAL DYNAMICS PORTRAYED

A. Resistance Movements

(a). Grassroots Initiatives

The Prisons We Broke by Baby Kamble chronicles the rise of grassroots movements among the Dalit community as a reaction to societal injustice. Kamble enthusiastically engaged in grassroots initiatives campaigning for the rights and empowerment of the Dalit community. The novel effectively portrays the essence of defiance at the local level,

highlighting the significant contributions of Dalit women such as Kamble in their endeavors. Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* explores this concept in a modern context. Pawar contemplates the development of grassroots movements, underscoring the ongoing significance of community-driven endeavors. The author's account offers valuable perspectives on the ways in which Dalit women actively participate in community-based activism, confronting structural disparities and promoting self-empowerment at the local level. The autobiographies demonstrate the crucial importance of grassroots activities in questioning and opposing conventional conventions. The accounts highlight the active role of Dalit women in influencing and engaging in movements that aim to achieve social justice and upliftment of the community.

(b). Political Activism

Kamble's autobiographical narrative explores the political involvement that occurred throughout her life. Kamble, who actively participated in the Dalit Panthers movement, recounts her own experiences of involvement in political activity. The personal account demonstrates the vital role that political movements had in empowering Dalit women to express their grievances and advocate for equal rights. Pawar's memoir delves further into the examination of political action, providing a comprehensive account of her involvement in current socio-political movements. Pawar contemplates the importance of Dalit women's active involvement in political arenas, where they challenge discriminatory policies and make valuable contributions to the wider conversation on social justice. The memoirs emphasize the convergence of Dalit women with political activity, illustrating their contribution to creating political discourse, confronting institutional prejudices, and championing the rights of marginalized populations.

B. Impact on Community and Identity

(a). Solidarity and Community Upliftment

The Prisons We Broke by Kamble offers a personal and direct perspective on how solidarity among the Dalit community brings about significant change. The autobiography recounts situations in which collective effort and community support served as means of resilience and upliftment. Kamble's experiences exemplify the power that comes from solidarity in the face of social injustice. *The Weave of My Life* by Urmila Pawar delves further into the concept of solidarity. Pawar contemplates the changing dynamics of community development, highlighting the ongoing significance of collaborative endeavors. The tale depicts situations in which Dalit women actively engage in community-led efforts, promoting togetherness and reciprocal assistance. Both autobiographies emphasize the crucial importance of unity in influencing the strength and determination of Dalit women. The anecdotes illustrate how the community's collective activity serves as a powerful force, confronting structural injustices and cultivating a feeling of empowerment.

(b). Shaping Dalit Identity

Kamble's account in *The Prisons We Broke* contemplates the profound influence of resistance movements on the Dalit identity. The autobiography demonstrates how involvement in local community projects and political advocacy had a role in fostering a shared sense of identity among Dalit women. Kamble's experiences exemplify the development of a strong Dalit identity that is firmly grounded in acts of defiance. Pawar's memoir further delves into the examination of the current environment. She contemplates the changing characteristics of Dalit identity, highlighting the significance of community-led efforts and political involvement in building a sophisticated understanding of oneself. Pawar's tale depicts the ever-changing process of constructing one's identity in the face of social opposition. These autobiographies provide insights into the significant impact of social dynamics, namely resistance movements, on the formation of Dalit women's identity. The accounts highlight the ever-changing and active character of Dalit identity as it connects with community-led initiatives and political engagement.

VII. CONCLUSION

A. Recapitulation of Findings

The analysis of Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* reveals a deep examination of the experiences of Dalit women. The accounts effectively reveal the historical and current difficulties encountered by these women at the point where caste and gender cross, offering a diverse range of perspectives. Baby Kamble's autobiographical work, *The Prisons We Broke*, is a powerful testament to the deep-rooted prejudice experienced by Dalit women in India throughout both the pre-Independence and post-Independence eras. Kamble's perspective immerses readers in a realm where restricted educational opportunities, economic inequalities, and cultural norms sustain a cycle of subjugation. The novel investigates the profound influence of caste-based prejudice on all aspects of a Dalit woman's life.

Pawar provides a modern examination of the difficulties faced by Dalit women, which complements Kamble's historical viewpoint. Pawar's account exemplifies the changing socioeconomic dynamics, highlighting the enduring challenges within educational institutions, economic inequalities, and cultural norms. The book offers valuable perspectives on the evolving interplay between caste and gender, showcasing the unwavering strength of Dalit women in the midst of challenges.

However, the importance of Dalit women's autobiographies is in their capacity to challenge oppressive narratives, empower people and communities, record historical truths, and promote wider social change by cultivating empathy,

comprehension, and social consciousness. The intersectionality of caste and gender in autobiographies written by Dalit women offers a deeper comprehension of their actual life experiences. Through the use of an intersectional perspective, readers get a deeper understanding of the complex network of prejudice and determination that defines the experiences of Dalit women. This analysis contributes to wider conversations around social justice, parity, and the destruction of repressive systems.

B. Implications for Social Change

The conclusions derived from these autobiographical writings transcend the personal histories of Kamble and Pawar, advocating for significant societal transformation. The tales emphasize the need of promptly tackling systemic challenges that are deeply ingrained in education, employment, and society standards. The ramifications for societal transformation encompass:

(a) The accounts highlight the need of implementing educational changes that are inclusive and egalitarian, aiming to eliminate the obstacles encountered by Dalit women. Efforts aimed at guaranteeing equitable opportunities and eradicating bias in educational institutions are crucial for societal advancement.

(b) The memoirs highlight the need of eradicating economic inequalities that stem from caste and gender. Enforcing policies that support equitable employment practices and ensure equal compensation is crucial for creating economic parity and social equity.

(c) The tales advocate for a critical evaluation of deeply entrenched cultural norms that uphold discrimination and limitations. Promoting gender-sensitive and caste-inclusive practices is essential for questioning and shifting social norms.

C. Areas for Future Research

Although these memoirs provide a substantial contribution to the comprehension of the lives of Dalit women, they also create opportunities for more study. Potential areas for further investigation encompass:

(a) Exploring the interconnection of caste with other identities, such as religion, ethnicity, or regional differences, in order to get a more comprehensive understanding of the complex experiences within the Dalit community.

(b) Examining the current state of grassroots movements and political action spearheaded by Dalit women. Examining the influence of activism on societal transformation and its consequences for the empowerment of Dalit women.

(c) Examining the accounts of resilience and resistance in autobiographies to get insight into how Dalit women negotiate and confront repressive systems. Investigating the function of narrative as a means of empowerment.

Ultimately, the autobiographies of Baby Kamble and Urmila Pawar provide deep and perceptive understanding of the encounters, obstacles, and social intricacies encountered by Dalit women. They function as catalysts for societal transformation, stimulating a reassessment of current structures and urging active engagement towards a society that is more inclusive and fairer. The tales not only describe personal experiences but also promote a wider cultural change that guarantees the rights and respect of Dalit women.

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Dialogic Heteroglossia in Doctoral Psychology Dissertations: A Discourse Study

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Abstract—This study aims at investigating the use of dialogic heteroglossia in the introductory chapters of doctoral dissertations in psychology. Applying the heteroglossic engagement system (White, 2003; Martin & White, 2005), the current study analyzes a corpus of four doctoral dissertation introductions (2000 words each) from well-recognized British universities. A mixed-methods research design is adopted for analysis. This research design comprises quantitative frequency analysis to identify patterns in the distribution of heteroglossic resources with qualitative discourse analysis to explore their rhetorical functions. The findings demonstrate that dialogic contraction (51.71%) slightly outweighs dialogic expansion (48.29%), in an indication of a preference for consolidating research positions and simultaneously maintaining a space for engagement with alternative perspectives. Among contraction strategies, proclaim-endorse (13.63%) and disclaim-counter (19.31%) are the most predominant. Expansion resources, particularly attribute-knowledge (27.27%) and entertain (20.67%), echo the emphasis of the discipline on citing prior studies and acknowledging the contestability of knowledge. Remarkably, attribute-distance is entirely absent, indicating a strong commitment to direct source attribution. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how authors of doctoral psychology dissertations construct their research space through heteroglossic engagement. Moreover, they offer insights into the disciplinary writing conventions that sustain academic knowledge authentication.

Index Terms—dialogic heteroglossia, appraisal, engagement, dialogic contraction, dialogic expansion

I. INTRODUCTION

Acts of meaning-making are not entirely faceless but always engaged in that they recognize the interests, the positions, the perspectives and the standards of those who endorse them. Those who communicate meaning must, therefore, regard the impact it has on those who construe the meaning, the respondents who at that moment representatively establish an audience for the communicative process (Hyland, 2005). The transmission of academic knowledge was appropriately described by Lyotard as a language game in which “*the sender is supposed to be able to provide proof of what s/he says, and on the other hand s/he is supposed to be able to refute any opposing or contradictory statements concerning the same referent*”, henceforth creating “*a horizon of consensus to be brought to the debate between partners*” (in Sarup, 1993, pp. 135–136). In this context, the representation of reality is always sieved through acts of selection, prioritizing, and symbolizing. Manifestations of the real world are created through practices that are basically social and comprise constructing texts in ways which will be convincing to the reader. Therefore, academic discourse does more than echo research that reasonably epitomizes an external reality: it serves to convert research outcomes or armchair considerations into academic knowledge. This sort of knowledge, then, is not an elevated demonstration of reality, but an exchange between individuals. However, this should not lead to the idealist vision that repudiates existence itself (Hyland, 2009).

In general, language is not used for communicating with the world at large, but with individuals or groups of individuals. These groups are gathered into communities. One such grouping that is widely used to analyze written communication is discourse community (Borg, 2003). Academic disciplinary communities are depicted as clans, each with its own norms, categorizations, bodies of knowledge, sets of conventions and methods of investigation which constitute a distinct culture. Within each culture, individuals obtain a proficiency in specific discourses. In other words, they acquire an ability to systematize data and observations into meaningfully structured patterns for the reader. Constructing a persuasive reader-environment comprises the deployment of genre and discipline-specific conventionalities. By way of explanation, crafting a text as a member of a specific disciplinary domain encompasses wording work in a fashion that other members can see as doing psychology or doing sociology and so on (Hyland, 2005). In other words, the constraints imposed by the discourse community not only limit the ways in which something can be expressed but also confer legitimacy on the author to be recognized as a knowledgeable and credible contributor. In academic research writing, dialogistic heteroglossic resources play a critical role in engaging with and positioning the

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author in relation to different perspectives within the discourse. This comprises referencing or responding to prior views and anticipating possible reactions from the reader, thereby contributing to the social practice of scholastic communication (Fryer, 2013).

Advanced academic discourse of psychology, as best represented by doctoral dissertations, constitutes a captivating area for scrutinizing dialogic heteroglossia. According to Ash (2001), psychology, as both a discipline and a practice, occupies an eye-catching, socio-historical, academic position in the sense that it bridges the natural and social sciences. Its impact spreads beyond academia. It shapes public understandings of human behaviour and mental processes. Doctoral dissertations in psychology constitute a considerable and developing body of scholarly work that reflects the discipline's expansion and growing specialization. Thus, this study examines how dialogic heteroglossia is encoded in a corpus of doctoral psychology dissertations, with a specific focus on their introductory chapters. Adopting a discourse analytic approach, it investigates a range of linguistic resources employed to construct a heteroglossic background, encompassing prior scholarship and anticipated alternative perspectives. The primary aims are to explore how these resources are combined to position the author's voice within the academic discourse and to identify patterns and variations in their use. By focusing on introductory chapters, the study offers insights into how doctoral candidates in psychology establish their research space, position themselves within the disciplinary landscape, and contribute to the broader academic dialogue through the negotiation of multiple voices and perspectives.

II. CONCEPTUALIZING DIALOGIC HETEROGLOSSIA

All forms of verbal communication, whether written or spoken, are dialogic (Martin & White, 2005). In theorizing the concept of dialogic heteroglossia, Bakhtin (1981, p. 294) gave emphasis to the multi-voicedness of language in the sense that *"language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others"*. Multi-voicedness comes not only from those individuals that authors cite and or cooperate with but also from the overarching genres and discourses within which authors articulate their contributions. Thus, dialogic heteroglossia reveals that the voice of the text is best seen as a fusion of multiple voices, although the way these voices interact is shaped by the individualistic choices of the author (Tardy, 2012).

This dialogistic perspective lays emphasis on analyzing the relationship between a given utterance and prior utterances articulated within the same discourse community. It focuses on how an author aligns with or responds to previous positions on the issue under consideration, especially when those prior utterances have the potentiality of playing a central role in establishing a socially significant consensus or shared frame of beliefs and values. Thus, the emphasis is on the extent to which prior contributors are acknowledged and on the way in which they are negotiated. Analysts are basically concerned with whether authors introduce themselves as aligning with, as opposing to, as ambivalent, or as neutral with reference to these other contributors and their value positions. Simultaneously, the dialogistic perspective directs attention to the anticipatory dimension of the text – to the signs authors provide as to how they anticipate the intended audience to react to the current proposition and the value position it advances. Consequently, analysts pay meticulous attention to whether the value position is conveyed as one that is widely accepted by the audience, as one which is in some way innovative, problematic, or contentious or as one which is likely to provoke skepticism, resistance or rejection (Martin & White, 2005).

Dialogic heteroglossia refers to utterances that invoke, allow for, or in some way challenge other voices or viewpoints in the discourse (Fryer, 2013). It is basically concerned with *"linguistic resources by which speakers/writers adopt a stance towards to the value positions being referenced by the text and with respect to those they address"* (Martin & White, 2005, p. 92). It deals with the heterogeneous array of linguistic resources via which authors negotiate and adjust the debatability of their propositions and proposals (White, 2020). Thus, dialogic heteroglossia is intrinsically concerned with inter-subjective positionings and incorporates semantically based choices in order to adjust the argumentativeness of authors' propositional content and negotiate this content with external voices held by real or putative readers in a continuously communicative event. Martin and White's (2005, p. 92) treatment of heteroglossic engagement is based on a traditional configuration viewing that any oral or written utterance is *"dialogic"* in that *"to speak or write is always to reveal the influence of, refer to, or to take up in some way, what has been said/written before, and simultaneously to anticipate the responses of actual, potential or imagined readers/listeners"*.

Thus, authors employ the resources of heteroglossic engagement to indulge into a dialogue whereby, in varying strength, they are all concerned with acknowledging manifestations or viewpoints that are conceivably different from those of respondents. Within this socially driven perspective, resources of engagement are comprehended to have the potentiality of acknowledging the argumentativeness of a particular stance, and the inclination of the author to negotiatively argue with putative respondents holding a different viewpoint. The system of heteroglossic engagement operates with this dialogistic and heteroglossic perspective rather than the functional truth-based perspective (Lee, 2006).

III. DIALOGIC HETEROGLOSSIA WITHIN THE APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK

The focus now shifts to explicitly dialogistic locutions and the various orientations to heteroglossic diversity they designate. Prior to providing a more meticulous account of individual options, it is important to note that these resources of dialogic heteroglossia can be categorized into two broad groups based on their intersubjective functionality: those that are dialogically expansive and those that are dialogically contractive. The distinction is based on the extent to which an utterance, via specific linguistic choices, dynamically makes allowances for alternative dialogical positions and voices (*dialogic expansion*), or otherwise, seeks challenging, fending off or restricting the space of such (*dialogic contraction*) (White, 2003).

Different types of *dialogic contraction* can be distinguished based on the linguistic resources used to restrict or limit the dialogic space. Distinctions are determined by whether some dialogical alternative is dismissed or replaced (*disclaim*) or whether, “*through some authorial interpolation, emphasis or intervention, dialogic alternatives are confronted, challenged, overwhelmed or otherwise excluded*” (*proclaim*) (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 117–118).

Within *disclaim*, the author references existing or prior alternative positions and explicitly rejects them. Direct rejection is inherently contractive, and presents opposing viewpoints as unsustainable. By way of explanation, the textual voice establishes itself in opposition to or in direct contradiction with an alternative perspective. This process is sustained through two more delicate categories of meaning which are *deny* and *counter* (White, 2003). *Deny* refers to the meaning by which an author acknowledges prior or anticipated alternative positions and explicitly negates them. In other words, rejecting a proposition intrinsically recognizes the existence of alternative perspectives prior to dismissing them. This function is typically realized via negation, such as the use of *not* in English. The critical point is that negation is characteristically dialogistic, because it implies a contrasting affirmative assertion (White, 1998). According to Martin and White (2005), *counter* incorporates meanings by which a proposition is presented as supplanting or replacing an alternative proposition. The alternative proposition is not typically stated in an explicit fashion but is inferred with reference to prior discourse or orthodox expectations. For example, in “*Although there are many frailty measurement tools, there remains divergence in opinion as to what frailty actually entails*”, the underlying expectation that a large number of available tools should lead to consensus on the definition of frailty is acknowledged yet eventually rejected. Here, ‘*although*’ functions as a concessive marker that signals the view that the anticipated correlation between the existence of multiple measurement tools and definitional clarity does not hold. Consequently, the dialogic space for the countered proposition is closed off, as the statement asserts an opposing viewpoint. In English such unstated propositions are typically countered by the use of concessive (sometimes termed adversative) conjunctions such as *but*, *although*, *however* (Frier, 2013).

Proclaim refers to meanings through which propositions are reinforced, boosted, or defended against potential counterarguments. The author presents the proposition as highly credible, widely accepted or self-evident, and positions any contradictory viewpoints as fragile or indefensible. This sort of reinforcement demonstrates that an alternative perspective, which the author is actively refuting or dismissing, exists. As a result, *proclaim* is both dialogic and contractive in the sense that it engages with other voices while simultaneously restricting the scope of disagreement (Martin & White, 2005). White (2003) presented the system of ‘*proclaim*’ as having four delicate subsystems: *concur*, *pronounce*, *endorse* and *justify*.

Concur refers to formulations where the author presents a proposition as if it is already accepted by the audience. There is an assumption of alignment between the author’s stance and the reader’s perspective. The proposition is framed as shared knowledge or as self-evident within the communicative context. In English, this sense of agreement is often formulated through adverbials such as *clearly*, *evidently*, *naturally* and *unsurprisingly*. For example, in “*Naturally, social support plays a crucial role in mental health recovery*”, the author assumes that the importance of social support in mental health is widely acknowledged. This formulation is dialogistic in the sense that it positions the reader as someone who already accepts this view. Such a formulation reinforces the idea that the viewpoint expressed is not open to debate but is a commonly accepted reality (Martin & White, 2005).

Through the resource of *pronounce*, authors have the potential of interpolating themselves straightforwardly into the text as the overtly responsible source of the utterance (White, 1998). It involves formulations that basically incorporate an authorial emphasis or explicit authorial intervention or interpolation. For example: ‘*I contend ...*’, ‘*The facts of the matter are that ...*’, ‘*The truth of the matter is that ...*’, ‘*We can only conclude that ...*’, ‘*You must agree that ...*’, ‘*intensifiers with clausal scope such as really, indeed, etc.*’ (Martin & White, 2005). Authors thereby increase the interpersonal costs of any disapproval/skepticism of their utterances, rendering such straightforward challenges to the authors’ dialogical positions (White, 2003).

According to Martin and White (2005), the category of *endorse* is concerned with the attribution of propositions to external sources while simultaneously considering them as established truths. Unlike other forms of attribution, where an author may simply reference or report an external view, this resource involves presenting the attributed material as universally accepted. In English, this is typically attained through factive reporting verbs such as *prove*, *demonstrate*, and *show*. For example, in “*Factor analytic studies have demonstrated that depression and loneliness are different constructs*”, the author aligns with the attributed source, and minimizes potential counterarguments by positioning the proposition as already confirmed. This marks endorsement a dialogistic strategy in the sense that it comprises both referencing another voice and reinforcing the proposition as an accepted fact.

The *justify* resource introduces the textual voice as defending or arguing for a certain positional value, one that might be controversial or substantially require further support (White, 2003). Thus, justificational meanings are normally sourced by connectives and conjunctions such as *thus*, *because*, *accordingly*, and *for this reason*. For example: “*The government has betrayed the people because it didn’t maintain full employment*”. The textual voice considers that it is a matter of necessity to offer ‘justification’ for the assertive utterance that “*The government has betrayed the people*”. The textual voice introduces an overt explanation or motivation for the propositional content, signified by the conjunctive item *because*, and in doing so ‘contracts’ the dialogical scope for alternative clarifications. From an intersubjective perspective, the *justify* resource has the potentiality of acknowledging or anticipating an audience that might hold an alternative positional value and is in need of persuasion. The *justify* resource is therefore essential in the negotiation of alignment, functioning (at least potentially) to “*win over those who might be dubious or resistant*” to certain claimings (White, 2012, p. 64).

The focus now turns to the heteroglossic sub-system that is considered to be in contrast with the previously cultivated linguistic resources. This sub-system encompasses choices categorized as dialogistically expansive. These formulations explicitly situate propositions in individual and context-dependent subjectivity, and present them as one possibility among an array of possibilities that could be articulated within the given communicative context. Therefore, such formulations have the potential for acknowledging the presence of alternative voices with different value positions. Generally speaking, there are two primary resources through which propositions are anchored in this way in an author’s subjectivity: *entertain* and *attribute* (White, 2003).

According to Martin and White (2005), the *entertain* resource involves wordings that present the position of the authorial voice as just one among multiple possibilities, and therefore allows space for alternative perspectives. When analyzed from a dialogistic perspective—rather than through a truth-functional semantic lens, as is often the case—such wordings are seen as actively constructing a heteroglossic context for the text. This positioning can be rooted in the author’s subjectivity that is typically conveyed through epistemic modals, evidential markers, or similar formulations as in “*Cognitive-behavioral therapy may be/probably is/ is almost certainly the most effective treatment for generalized anxiety disorder*” and “*In my view/I believe, cognitive-behavioral therapy is the most effective treatment for generalized anxiety disorder*”. Relying solely on a truth-function perspective—common in some linguistic analyses—can be misleading if it suggests that such expressions merely indicate uncertainty or a lack of commitment to the truth of the proposition. As an alternative, these formulations fundamentally function to acknowledge the potential contestability of the proposition within the communicative context.

The resource of *attribute* involves formulations that are inherently dialogistic in that they introduce a secondary voice into the text as the source of the attributed proposition. This dialogism works on two levels: first, by explicitly referencing an external source, and second, by presenting the proposition as rooted in that individual and contingent subjectivity of that source. As a result, the proposition is positioned as but one possibility of a range of possibilities which could be advanced (Shibata, 2018). White (2003) identified two distinct sub-types of *attribute*. The first, which they describe as *acknowledge*, involves what can be considered a neutral form of attribution. This is achieved through certain reporting verbs and related expressions such as ‘*she said...*’, ‘*she reported...*’, ‘*she believes that...*’ or ‘*according to...*’. Through these formulations, the author appears to relay the ideas or propositions of the cited source without explicitly adopting a stance towards them. The second sub-type of *attribute* is *distance*. This sub-type is closely associated with the reporting verb ‘*to claim*’ and some relevant wordings, such as ‘*supposedly*’ and ‘*so-called*’ (Shibata, 2018). For example: “*The author is claiming that social media usage negatively impacts cognitive development*”, or “*Social media is supposedly a major factor in cognitive decline*”. Martin and White (2005) suggested that such formulations allow authors to create distance from the attributed material, and indicate a degree of authorial caution towards the claim. However, this does not imply that the proposition is intrinsically problematic or unreliable, but rather that it is still subject to further confirmation and verification. These formulations are dialogistically expansive in the sense that they open space for alternative viewpoints, especially for those who may challenge or dispute the stated claim.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Corpus Selection

The study investigates dialogic heteroglossia in advanced academic research of psychology via analyzing a corpus of four introductory chapters of doctoral dissertations (2000 words per chapter) submitted to British universities. The selection process follows the following criteria:

1. The introductory chapters must be explicitly labelled to guarantee consistency in analysis.
2. The dissertations must be from the 2020s to capture contemporary academic conventions and rhetorical practices.
3. The authors must be native speakers of English to reduce possible confounding factors that are associated with second-language interference.
4. The dissertations are obtained from institutional repositories to confirm data availability.

The selected corpus has the potentiality of providing a representative sample of how doctoral candidates in psychology use heteroglossic resources to present their research rationale within the disciplinary research area.

B. Research Design

Applying the heteroglossic engagement system (White, 2003; Martin & White, 2005), the current study adopts a mixed-methods design that integrates both quantitative and qualitative analyses to investigate heteroglossic resources in the introductory chapters of doctoral psychology dissertations. Thus, the research design of this study involves two phases:

1. Quantitative phase: A frequency analysis of heteroglossic resources is carried out in order to identify patterns in their distribution.
2. Qualitative phase: Qualitative analysis is applied to selected examples to substantially sustain the contextualization of the quantitative results. Moreover, the rhetorical functions of the used heteroglossic resources are scrutinized to realize how they contribute to positioning the author's voice with reference to the backdrop of other discursual voices.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Applying the heteroglossic engagement system to the selected corpus of the introductory chapters of doctoral psychology dissertations, it is evident that dialogic heteroglossia is distributed across multiple categories and sub-categories with different frequencies of occurrence. Across the corpus, the heteroglossic resources manifest at a frequency of approximately 22 per 1000 words, with *dialogic contraction* accounting for 51.71% and *dialogic expansion* for 48.29%, as shown in Table 1. This distribution indicates a relatively balanced yet slightly contraction-oriented rhetorical approach in psychology dissertation introductions. The marginal predominance of *dialogic contraction* over *dialogic expansion* suggests that while dissertation writers prioritize consolidating their research stance, they also maintain a substantial degree of engagement with external perspectives.

TABLE 1
OVERVIEW OF THE HETEROGLOSSIC RESOURCES IN THE CORPUS

Heteroglossia								
Contraction						Expansion		
Proclaim				Disclaim		Entertain	Attribute	
Concur	Pronounce	Endorse	Justify	Counter	Deny		Acknowledge	Distance
7	11	24	8	34	7	37	48	0
3.97	6.25	13.63	4.54	19.31	3.97	21.02	27.27	0

A. Dialogic Contraction

The slight prevalence of *dialogic contraction* (91 occurrences, 51.71%) in the introductions of doctoral psychology dissertations echoes a broader disciplinary tendency to emphasize claims, consolidate research positions, and selectively engage with opposing perspectives. In academic discourse, particularly within the context of dissertation introductions, *contraction* plays a central role in managing epistemic authority and positioning the author's research within established knowledge as well as justifying its contribution to the research area. This tendency puts forward that authors of psychology dissertations aim to create a well-ordered argumentative space in which alternative viewpoints are acknowledged but ultimately constrained to support their own perspectives. The presence of *contraction* resources shows an effort to preserve a persuasive stance, and to ensure that the research is not perceived as excessively tentative or speculative. Via limiting dialogic space, authors introduce their research as indispensable and reasonable within the ongoing scholarly sphere to align with disciplinary expectations that prioritize clarity and authoritative positioning in academic discourse.

(a). Disclaim Resources

Within dialogic contraction, disclaim resources (41 occurrences, 23.29%) play a crucial role in the introductions of doctoral psychology dissertations in the sense that they enable authors to explicitly reject, counter, or challenge alternative perspectives to reinforce the necessity of their research. The relatively high frequency of disclaim suggests that dissertation authors actively engage with competing viewpoints, positioning their research within existing debates and simultaneously establishing its unique contribution.

The prevalence of counter (34 occurrences, 18.99%) within the disclaim resources points out the tendency of authors of doctoral dissertations in the discipline of psychology to engage actively with opposing views rather than simply rejecting them outright. Counter serves as a rhetorical strategy that first acknowledges an alternative perspective before ultimately replacing it with the author's argument. This strategy is substantially evident in statements such as "Although many interventions have been put forward to tackle loneliness, for the most part, they have been deemed ineffective (Akhter-Khan & Au, 2020; McDaid, Bauer, & Park, 2017)". Here, the concessive structure introduced by 'although' recognizes the existence of interventions designed to address loneliness, only to encounter and eventually refute their effectiveness with supportive evidence. This way, authors position their research as contributing to an ongoing scholastic debate. Moreover, they reinforce the necessity of their research via demonstrating that existing perspectives are inadequate or contested. The high frequency of counter suggests that authors of psychology dissertations give greater emphasis to argumentation through engagement with competing viewpoints than to simple assertion. Thus,

ensuring that propositions are framed as responses to broader academic discussions rather than isolated findings reflects a key disciplinary norm in crafting psychology. By way of explanation, establishing a research gap requires not only presenting innovative evidence but also critically engaging with prior scholarship to justify research relevance.

In contrast, deny (7 occurrences, 3.97%) appears significantly less frequently, and indicates that introductions of psychology dissertations do not often involve outright rejection of competing perspectives. Rather than explicitly dismissing alternative perspectives, authors tend to engage with competing viewpoints through counter, which allows them to acknowledge and then contest prior research in a more dialogic way. The infrequent use of deny suggests a disciplinary preference for sophisticated argumentation more than categorical negation. This pattern is evident in statements such as “Additionally, the motivational profiles of mountaineers and low-risk sports participants before, during, and immediately after participation was not associated with sensation seeking”. Here, the phrase ‘was not associated with’ exemplifies deny, explicitly rejecting the notion that sensation seeking plays a defining role in these individuals. However, unlike counter, which frames an alternative perspective before challenging it, deny simply negates the proposition without engaging in a more extensive discussion of alternative interpretations. The lower frequency of deny reinforces the impression that authors of doctoral dissertations in psychology prioritize argumentative strategies that maintain academic engagement with existing literature over outright refutation in order to preserve the scholastic integrity of their discourse while ensuring that their contributions are positioned as part of an ongoing academic dialogue.

(b). Proclaim Resources

The relatively high occurrence of proclaim (50 occurrences, 28.40%) in the introductions of doctoral dissertations in psychology points out a resilient preference for strengthening statements and managing reader interpretation via assertively rhetorical strategies. Proclaim resources serve to enrich the credibility of the author’s argument through positioning central propositions as well-established or self-evident within the disciplinary discourse. This recurrent use indicates that authors of psychology dissertations prioritize a degree of epistemic authority to support the well-groundedness of their perspectives. Via strengthening their research within the broader academic background, authors advantageously close down the dialogic space for potential controversy. Doing so, they align with disciplinary norms that give emphasis to empirical validation and theoretical coherence.

The most frequently employed proclaim sub-category is endorse (24 occurrences, 13.63%), which indicates a strong tendency among authors of doctoral dissertations in psychology to align with authoritative sources as a means of firming up their arguments. Endorsement has the potential for positioning previous research as established knowledge, diminishing possible counterarguments and highlighting credibility. For example, in “Research has shown that public speaking anxiety (PSA) can negatively affect critical thinking skills in group discussions (Blume et al., 2010)”, the verb phrase ‘has shown’ is a factive reporting verb that marks endorsement via presenting the research findings as empirically validated rather than arguable. This choice restrains the dialogic space in the sense that it covertly dismisses alternative elucidations, and frames the proposition as an unquestionable contribution to scholarly discourse.

The relatively low occurrence of pronounce (11 occurrences, 6.25%) in the introductions of psychology dissertations reflects a cautious rhetorical choice by authors to lessen explicitly assertive propositions in favour of empirical confirmation. Rather than relying on direct authorial statements, authors in the psychology domain purposefully foreground external evidence to boost the legitimacy of their arguments. For example, in “Without research and novel solutions, this discrepancy and the prevalence of these age-related health conditions will continue to increase exponentially in the future,” the use of ‘will’ and ‘exponentially’ manifests a resilient authorial commitment to the proposition, and positions it as an unavoidable consequence. Nevertheless, the infrequent use of pronounce implies that researchers in the advanced academic psychology domain exercise caution in proclaiming propositions as self-evident. They tend to adhere to disciplinary writing practices that prioritize evidence-based argumentation over overconfidently subjective assertions. This tendency echoes the broader academic expectation that statements require substantiation through engagement with previous research rather than through authors’ imposing stance alone. Through the limitation of the use of pronounce, introductions of dissertations in the discipline of psychology sustain a sense of balance between persuasion and scholastic objectivity.

The relatively low frequency of justify (8 occurrences, 4.54%) puts forward that authors of psychology dissertations rarely rely on categorical justification to defend their positions. They conversely prefer to frame their arguments through alignment with established literature (endorse) or by opposing alternative viewpoints (counter). This tendency echoes the disciplinary emphasis on empirical grounding in the sense that the legitimacy of research decisions is often assumed, not explicitly argued. An example of justification is demonstrated in “As public speaking is a cognitively demanding task, an exploration of how anxiety influences the mechanisms of working memory and attention is worth including in this thesis”. The author justifies the inclusion of this focus by linking it to cognitive demands. However, such blatant rationalizations are uncommon because introductions of doctoral dissertations in psychology typically embed their justifications within broader disciplinary norms, such as referencing previous research or detecting research gaps. This tendency exposes that the relevance of academic research is often implied through citation patterns and established theoretical frameworks. Accordingly, the low occurrence of justify echoes that justification is more imperceptibly woven into the discourse rather than explicitly shown.

The least frequently occurring proclaim resource in the corpus is *concur* (7 occurrences, 3.97%). It indicates that authors of psychology dissertations rarely frame propositions as shared by the putative reader. Alternatively, they demonstrate a preference for aligning their arguments through endorsement rather than direct expressions of agreement. For example, in “Typically, those with trait PSA and/or FoPS are predisposed to respond to relatively unthreatening public speaking situations and stimuli with disproportionately high levels of state PSA and/or FoPS”, the use of ‘typically’ conveys a generalized assumption within the field, and invites the reader to recognize the proposition as a familiar or expected phenomenon. This indicates that authors are more inclined to support their propositions with authoritative sources, and refrain from assuming shared knowledge with the reader. In other words, they emphasize the broader disciplinary preference for evidence-based validation over unreserved concurrence.

B. Dialogic Expansion

Dialogic expansion, accounting for 48.29% (85 occurrences) of the heteroglossic resources identified in the corpus, demonstrates the extent to which authors of doctoral psychology dissertations engage with external voices, acknowledge alternative perspectives, and situate their research within broader disciplinary debates. Expansion resources allow authors to introduce, entertain, or attribute viewpoints that extend the discursive space of their argument, signaling an awareness of multiple positions rather than solely reinforcing a singular perspective. The relatively high occurrence of expansion suggests that, despite the prevalence of contraction, introductions of doctoral dissertations in psychology maintain a degree of epistemic openness, particularly when positioning research in relation to prior studies.

(a). Entertain Resources

Among the expansion resources, *entertain* (37 occurrences, 20.67%) is a prominent feature in introductions of doctoral psychology dissertations. The use of this resource reflects the disciplinary need for epistemic openness and cautious argumentation. Unlike truth-functional semantics, which focus on absolute propositions, a dialogistic perspective reveals that *entertain* actively constructs a heteroglossic backdrop via anchoring propositions in the subjective positioning of the author. This rhetorical strategy is particularly justified in psychology discourse, where propositions often comprise complex human behaviours, cognitive processes, and theoretical constructs that are intrinsically adaptable and context-dependent. Through the use of *entertain*, authors of doctoral dissertations in psychology acknowledge the probabilistic and interpretative nature of psychological research, recognizing that findings are rarely definitive but alternatively one possibility among multiple perspectives. For example, in “As social creatures, it is possible that social needs exist on a spectrum where the negative feeling or pain of feeling disconnected is loneliness”, the formulation ‘it is possible that’ signals *entertain*, and foregrounds the contingent nature of the proposition rather than asserting it as an established fact. Given the emphasis of psychology on empirical inquiry and theoretical debates, the frequent use of *entertain* aligns with the commitment of the discipline to preserving an open and exploratory stance. This allows for the accommodation of alternative explanations, methodological limitations, and future research directions. This way, propositions remain flexible and subject to scholarly scrutiny. Thus, the relatively high occurrence of *entertain* in the introductions of doctoral psychology dissertations reflects the epistemological stance of the discipline in the sense that authors must carefully navigate the balance between making knowledge claims and acknowledging their contestability within an evolving scientific landscape.

(b). Attribute Resources

Attribute (48 occurrences, 27.27%) is the most frequently employed resource, with *acknowledge* (48 occurrences, 27.27%) emerging as the single most common heteroglossic value in the corpus. The prevalence of *attribute-acknowledge* as the most frequently employed heteroglossic resource in the corpus calls attention to the commitment of authors of doctoral dissertations in psychology to explicit engagement with previous research. This strategic choice ensures that their investigations are firmly situated within an established scholarly framework. Authors use *acknowledge* to introduce external perspectives in a neutral manner, without necessarily endorsing or rejecting them. A case in point is the statement where an author attributes a theoretical distinction to previous scholars as in “According to these authors, three distinct neuropsychological systems of emotion and motivation exist.” In this example, the phrase ‘according to these authors’ exemplifies *acknowledge*, marking the proposition as derived from an external source while maintaining an impartial stance. The absence of *attribute-distance* (0 occurrences, 0%) further reinforces this pattern, and suggests that authors of doctoral dissertations in psychology intentionally avoid distancing when engaging with cited sources. Alternatively, they adopt a transparent citation style to ensure that their arguments remain firmly anchored within the disciplinary discourse.

VI. CONCLUSION

The analysis of heteroglossic resources in the introductory chapters of doctoral psychology dissertations reveals a cautiously attuned interplay between *dialogic contraction* (51.71%) and *dialogic expansion* (48.29%). This nearly equal distribution reflects the distinctive nature of psychology as a discipline that straddles the boundaries between the social and natural sciences. The prominent presence of *dialogic contraction* suggests that authors of doctoral dissertations in the discipline of psychology are enthusiastically concerned with consolidating their arguments, aligning with

established research conventions, and reinforcing the reliability of their propositions. Through the substantial employment of strategies such as rejecting counterarguments, and endorsing authoritative sources, they construct a sense of certainty and acceptability to position their research within a recognized body of academic knowledge. In addition, the significant use of *dialogic expansion* designates a sphere of openness to alternative angles, current scholastic discussions, and the intricacies that are intrinsically specific to psychological investigations. Doctoral candidates in psychology actively engage with multiple perspectives, and recognize diverse theoretical frameworks to contextualize their research rationale within the broader academic discourse. Their strategic use of expansion resources indicates an awareness of evolving and dynamic nature of the discipline. Contrary to disciplines that predominantly depend on experimental certainties or interpretative flexibilities, psychology demands a balanced approach—one that realizes procedural consistency and simultaneously allows for ideational diversity. Thus, the study shows that authors of doctoral dissertations in psychology use heteroglossic resources in a strategic fashion to navigate the unparalleled epistemological status of the discipline. This strategic employment of heteroglossic resources has the potential for echoing the conventions of academic writing in psychology as well as highlighting its broader identity as an academic discipline that incorporates empirical investigation and interpretative depth.

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Potentials and Challenges of Using ChatGPT in Language Learning: EFL Learners' Perceptions*

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Abstract—Using ChatGPT in language education is surrounded by arguments and many questions are raised regarding its advantages and disadvantages for language learners throughout their journey. Despite extensive body of research, EFL learners' viewpoints of ChatGPT have not been sufficiently studied in the Saudi context. This qualitative study investigated Saudi EFL learners' perceptions of the potentials and challenges of using ChatGPT in language learning. The data was collected from 22 Saudi university learners using semi-structured interviews. Results showed that ChatGPT is perceived as a helpful language learning tool, nevertheless, it should be used selectively and wisely to avoid undesirable consequences. Based on the obtained findings, some important pedagogical recommendations were suggested.

Index Terms—Artificial Intelligence, ChatGPT, language learning, EFL learners, perceptions

I. INTRODUCTION

In learning a foreign language (FL), it is critical for learners to practice the target language in an authentic environment to grow proficiently (Chen & Hwang, 2022), however, learners do not always find ideal interactive partners particularly in contexts where the target language is not spoken (Guo et al., 2022). Lack of opportunities is a serious obstacle for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) during their journey (Young & Shishido, 2023). Owing to the absence of realistic practice, EFL learners have limited opportunities for communicating in English and getting feedback to make reflections (Chien et al., 2020). Hence, it is fundamental to find effective ways to increase opportunities of exposure to the target language (Jeon, 2023).

Using technology in education has been unquestionably trusted by its proponents over the last two decades (Selwyn, 2020). Indeed, technology provides users with realistic sociocultural contexts and authentic materials to practice the target language meaningfully (Loncar et al., 2023). Technology-oriented solutions are considered a substitute to real-life situations and used as practical supplements in the classroom (Hwang & Wang, 2016). Through its different manifestations, technology helps FL learners overcome burdens of spatial distance to fill the gap caused by lack of exposure (Chen & Hwang, 2022) and go far beyond the traditional paradigms of education (Bernacki et al., 2020). In addition to the positive effects of technology on linguistic skills, non-linguistic aspects such as motivation and attitudes can also be improved via technology (Chen, 2022; Wei, 2022).

As an alternative to human communication, unceasing development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly offered a realistic portrait of partnership (Pack & Maloney, 2023). By interacting with intelligent chatbots, users can find an instant access to multiple languages (Kohnke et al., 2023) that is not restricted to a particular place or time (Fryer et al., 2020). A chatbot provides human-like conversations (Guo et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2022) and offers synchronic tutoring and support (Kerly et al., 2007). Among the most advanced AI-powered chatbots is ChatGPT (chat generative, pre-trained transformer) which is designed to perform different tasks and engage in normal conversations with users (Kim et al., 2022) providing enormous pedagogical potentials (Kohnke et al., 2023).

ChatGPT functions have received significant attention from educational scholars and practitioners across numerous fields (e.g. Guo et al., 2022; Adeshola & Adepoju, 2023; Kohnke et al., 2023; Liu & Ma, 2023; Pack & Maloney, 2023; Shaikh et al., 2023; Young & Shishido, 2023; Xiao & Zhi, 2023), nevertheless, its effectiveness from the learners' perceptions has not been sufficiently investigated in the literature (Xiao & Zhi, 2023). As an unobservable factor in shaping the significance and effects of language learning, examining learners' perceptions is highly advocated (Peng, 2011; Wesely, 2012; Chen & Yu, 2019). Studying the role of technology from the learners' perceptions contributes to a better understanding of how language can be effectively learned and yields significant pedagogical implications (Salaberry, 2001; Stepp-Greany, 2002). Hence, this study aims at investigating EFL learners' perceptions of the potentials and challenges of ChatGPT in language learning and bridging the research gap. Precisely, the present study addresses the following questions:

- 1- What are the potentials of using ChatGPT in language learning from the perceptions of EFL learners?
- 2- What are the challenges of using ChatGPT in language learning from the perceptions of EFL learners?

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Technological Advancements in Language Learning*

With a rapid growth of technological possibilities, many anticipations have surrounded the future of civilization including education and knowledge as cornerstones of this development (Staric, 2019). Technology-enhanced instruction has brought promising chances to improve a more efficient pedagogical process (Yenkimaleki & van Heuven, 2019; Yan, 2023) and transform education to a more flexible student-focused system (Ginns & Ellis, 2009). For EFL learners who need frequent practice of the target language, technology provides genuine and pervasive language input (Wei, 2022) and enables the learners to communicate with native speakers in an FL context (Reinders & Benson, 2017). As a result of the development of communication technologies, EFL learners can sufficiently receive English oral performance training via digital materials (Chien et al., 2020).

One manifestation of the role of technology in language education is reflected through the use of chatbots. Precisely, a chatbot is a computer application that provides rich linguistic input and written or spoken natural conversations (Guo et al., 2022). Chatbots have become a popular option for interaction with rapidly spreading implementation and popularity (Smutny & Schreiberova, 2020). As opposed to traditional chatbots, or what is known as rule-based chatbots that are derived from pre-defined guidelines, AI-powered chatbots generate responses from an enormous human language dataset (Jiang et al., 2022; Kohnke et al., 2023). Chatbots communicate with users intelligently and learn from previous interactions in a way that contributes to the improvement of chatbot functions (Fryer et al., 2020).

The efficiency of chatbots in education has been demonstrated in previous studies. Huang et al. (2022) found that using chatbots in language learning provided various technological and pedagogical affordances that facilitated task completion and learning through interaction activities. They also suggested that using chatbots encouraged students' social presence by affective and coherent communication. However, challenges of using chatbots were also found including technological limitations, the novelty effect, and cognitive load. According to Smutny and Schreiberova (2020), "Chatbots have had a long history of use as pedagogical agents in educational settings" (p. 2). Jeon (2023) indicated that chatbot-assisted dynamic assessment contributed to EFL learning development in general and higher vocabulary gains in particular and offered diagnoses about vocabulary learning.

B. *The Role of ChatGPT in Education*

Currently, one of the most impressive chatbots is ChatGPT that was designed by the Microsoft-backed company OpenAI and released in November 2022 (Kohnke et al., 2023). Its user-friendly characteristics have attracted over one million subscribers in just a week following its launch (Grassini, 2023). Based on the fact that it is free and easy to use for people with different technical expertise levels, ChatGPT is unique and highly functional (Adeshola & Adepoju, 2023). What distinguishes ChatGPT from automated speech recognitions that provide information upon request is the capability of ChatGPT to engage in back-and-forth conversations with users and mimic human conversation (Kohnke et al., 2023). In addition to generating texts, ChatGPT can also understand and interrupt the meaning of the text in numerous languages, making it useful for a variety of language processing tasks. By its attractive capacities, ChatGPT opens a new avenue and an innovative paradigm in language learning.

According to Grassini (2023), ChatGPT could automatize the grading process of students' works by highlighting both strengths and weaknesses in a broad range of assignments, such as academic essays. Also, reports generated by ChatGPT could be used for giving feedback to the students in formative or summative assessment leading to a more precise estimation of a student's learning challenges. Young and Shishido (2023) investigated the potentials and effectiveness of ChatGPT in generating reference dialogues for an EFL chatbot system and creating high-quality dialogue materials suitable for EFL learners. The results showed that learners easily comprehended ChatGPT's dialogues, understood the vocabulary and learned new words. The study proved that integrating AI powered chatbots in EFL education overcame limitations and provided valuable resources. ChatGPT also works as an assistant tool for language researchers even those with limited experience in using AI tools and helps throughout the different stages of research procedure such as collecting and summarizing data (Pack & Maloney, 2023). Despite its beneficial uses in many aspects of education, ChatGPT is not without its limitations as it might reduce analytical skills and encourage misconduct (Grassini, 2023). Indeed, human efforts should not be replaced by ChatGPT functions, rather that it can be used as a supplementary tool to develop language learning skills effectively (Shaikh et al., 2023).

C. *Learners' Perceptions in Language Learning*

To arrive at a better understanding of how language is learned and taught, it is crucial to examine the covered aspects of the process in addition to the observable ones. Learners' attitudes, perceptions and beliefs are unobservable attributes that reflect learners' opinions and feelings, and investigating these thoughts can help to deeply recognize the nature of language education (Wesely, 2012). According to Richardson (1996), perceptions, attitudes and beliefs are a "subset of a group of constructs that name, define, and describe the structure and content of mental states that are thought to drive a person's actions" (p. 103). Based on the fact that learners' perceptions greatly influence their achievements (Williams & Burden, 1997), it is necessary to provide language learners with ample opportunities to express their perceptions and foster their critical thinking and reflective skills which consequently affects learning outcomes (Chien et al., 2020). Learners' perceptions have been commonly investigated in the literature in terms of how they perceive themselves and the

learning situation (Wesely, 2012). Perceptions of themselves is defined as how learners understand themselves and their learning (Liskin-Gasparro, 1998) while learner' perceptions of the learning situation refer to how they understand and experience aspects of the classroom (Brown, 2009). Although many studies have focused on one type of learners' perceptions, the two types are highly interrelated (Wesely, 2012).

Investigating learners' perceptions of using technology in teaching and learning has received considerable attention. For example, Wang et al. (2021) examined EFL learner' perceptions of blended learning and found that learners had positive perceptions of the blended design which motivated them to learn at their own pace with easily accessible resources and enhanced their engagement with interactive activities. The blended design also expanded the limited classroom time and encouraged the learners to develop learning autonomy in a supportive and participatory environment. Chen (2022) conducted a study to understand learners' perceptions of integrating information technology tools such as Kahoot! and Padlet for assessment and collaboration in EFL classes. The study indicated that using technological tools in teaching could significantly increase the learners' positive perceptions of the lesson as a whole.

Using a questionnaire-based approach, Shaikh et al. (2023) explored EFL learners' perceptions of the usability of ChatGPT for formal learning of English. A group of students with different English proficiency levels, age, gender, field of education, and nationalities were asked to give their feedback after performing series of tasks using ChatGPT. The quantitative analysis of the participants' responses reflected their positive attitudes as indicated by the high satisfaction scores. As an easily accessible tool, ChatGPT was helpful for performing different tasks such as conversation, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. In informal digital learning of English, EFL learners' perceptions and actual use of ChatGPT were examined by Liu and Ma (2023). A total of 405 EFL learners answered the technology acceptance model questionnaire with scales including Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Attitude, Behavioral Intention, and Actual Use. Results showed that Perceived Ease of Use did not predict learners' Attitude, but it could influence Attitude through the full mediator Perceived Usefulness. Learners who had positive attitudes toward the usefulness of ChatGPT showed a higher level of Behavioral Intention, which predicted their Actual Use of ChatGPT in English learning outside the classroom.

The effect of metacognitive awareness (MA) levels on EFL learners' perceptions, practices, and satisfaction with ChatGPT in developing research competency was investigated by Abdelhalim (2024). Results proved that high MA group showed a statistically significant advantage over the low MA group regarding the perception of the effectiveness of ChatGPT as a research tool. Adeshola and Adepoju (2023) investigated the opportunities and challenges of ChatGPT in education. The sentiment analysis of data extracted from Twitter showed that people had positive attitudes towards ChatGPT, and that its use was not going to slow down in the coming years. Based on these findings, the researchers called for considering the positive ways in which ChatGPT can be integrated into the university curriculum without affecting the cognitive reasoning of the students. Using a qualitative study design, Xiao and Zhi (2023) investigated EFL learners' perceptions of the role of ChatGPT in language learning. Analysis of the learners' responses indicated that ChatGPT worked as a valuable partner in completing language tasks and providing the learners with personalized learning experiences and immediate feedback. However, evaluating the quality of outputs generated by ChatGPT and modifying prompts to increase learning benefits were critical for the participants. Despite the extensive body of investigation, EFL learners' perceptions of the potentials and challenges of using ChatGPT in language learning have not been sufficiently examined in the Saudi context. This study aims to fill this gap.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Data Collection and Research Procedure

In this study qualitative study, data was collected using semi-structured interviews to investigate the learners' perceptions of the potentials and challenges of using ChatGPT in language learning. Interview guiding questions were adopted from Xiao and Zhi (2023). Following the theoretical review developed by Kohnke et al. (2023), the interviews revolve around three main issues: (1) knowledge and understanding of ChatGPT; (2) utilization of ChatGPT in language learning; (3) awareness of the drawbacks and challenges of using ChatGPT (Xiao & Zhi, 2023, p. 5). They were face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher for an average of 45-60 minutes. The interviews were very smooth and full of information through which the participants expressed their thoughts freely and enthusiastically in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. Follow up questions were created during the interviews based on the participants' responses to achieve better understanding of their perceptions. The interviewees were told that they can speak English or Arabic, their mother tongue, so that they can talk with no language restrictions. The interview guiding questions were understandable and clear to the participants, so no further explanations were made by the interviewer. After transcribing the data, the researcher needed clarifications of some points, hence, the participants were asked for follow up online interviews via Telegram. To ensure validity of the interview guiding questions, a group of four students were first interviewed and their responses showed the appropriateness of the questions to achieve the purpose of this study.

B. Participants

A group of 32 students were asked about their experience in using ChatGPT in language learning. 12 students stated that they have never used ChatGPT, thus, they were not invited to participate in the study. The total number of participants was 22 EFL Saudi female students majoring in English at a public Saudi university in Riyadh. All participants had a three-

month-experience in learning English as college students and their ages ranged between 18-19. They all have good experience in using ChatGPT with an average of 2-3 times every week to perform different tasks as EFL learners. The participants' consent to be audio recorded during interviews and quoted in data analysis was taken and they were told that their participation was confidential and voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected in this study was analyzed qualitatively using the grounded theory. The interview data was carefully transcribed and coded by the researcher who has a good experience in transcribing interviews. A number of categories were created based on the codes and some relationships between these categories were established to obtain a theory. Dörnyei (2007) states that analyzing data using the grounded theory should adapt certain sequential coding system and produce some theory as an outcome of the analysis. To confirm that coding and categorization were appropriate, they were revised by an academic expert. Minor modifications were suggested and considered by the researcher. The analysis led to the following categories.

A. *Sufficient Knowledge About ChatGPT Basic Usages:*

Despite its recent development, ChatGPT was perceived by all participants as a user-friendly language learning tool that requires basic technological skills. They portrayed themselves as very good users with sufficient experience in using ChatGPT. They were highly satisfied with their knowledge about the features of ChatGPT that enabled them to perform fundamental needed tasks at this early stage of language learning. Nouf clearly stated "I know how to use it and I know what it is" and that what a normal user needs to know. Sara added that they don't need to dive into deep learning of ChatGPT because they use as an assistant device in language learning and not as the core of learning.

Basically, the participants used ChatGPT for summarizing and simplifying purposes. Instead of reading a whole text thoroughly, they used ChatGPT to summarize it and divide it into shorter parts when completing different tasks such as presentations. Four detailed pages can be reduced by the help of ChatGPT to four focused lines that emphasize the main points. Indeed, they believed that the most effective function of ChatGPT is making education easier which is manifested in its ability in changing an unreadable text to a comprehensible and enjoyable one. Sultanah usually asks ChatGPT to explain difficult texts "using very easy words like kids!!" to create a short and easy output especially if she is under time restrictions. Arwa added that, "If the essay is a higher level, it can...like... simplify it for you instead of having to research each word". ChatGPT sometimes explains meanings with new words which can definitely add to their vocabulary knowledge.

All participants agreed that they used ChatGPT for different purposes related to writing tasks. For example, Wahag uses ChatGPT as a guide to understand the general organizations of different types of paragraphs such as comparison and contrast. For Rand, ChatGPT is so helpful in changing the types of essays, from descriptive to argumentative for example, using the same ideas. Through understanding how to write different types of essays, the participants don't only learn new words such as connectors, they also practice different grammatical structures. ChatGPT also helps to find innovative writing ideas and supporting details which opens new domains of thinking as the human brain, due to overloading responsibilities, might sometimes lose the creativity in brainstorming. Yet, lack of writing ideas is not always the main cause of using ChatGPT. Sometimes, the participants have many ideas but face a difficulty in organizing them. Hence, ChatGPT functions as an idea organizer.

Another justification for using ChatGPT as the participants argued was class time limitations. Dana indicated that time is not enough for practicing writing in class, hence, she could use ChatGPT outside the class to deeply understand basic writing stages such as narrowing topics down and forming topic sentences. To avoid repetitions of words and enrich the content of writing, the participants use ChatGPT to find synonyms and derivations of the same word. As stated by Najd, instead of spending long hours to find a particular piece of information such as the meaning of new words, ChatGPT can do it in seconds by just one click that is much easier than dictionaries. Catching missed information is another major use of ChatGPT. In the recent past, according to the participants, it was disastrous if they missed a class or some important parts. It was challenging to understand the missed parts by themselves or find someone who could explain the material appropriately. But now, ChatGPT reduces the burden and offers a "plan B" that is kindly available upon request as stated by Ragad who consults her "lovely" ChatGPT at night before bedtime to bridge the gaps in understanding.

B. *Copying vs Understanding:*

It is worth noting that there is a huge difference between copying and understanding when using ChatGPT. The participants strongly argued that using ChatGPT to find information or summarize texts is not the whole story because if they don't understand the output, it is definitely ineffective. As indicated by Shahad, in making presentations, they have to understand the ChatGPT summary to be able to present the information appropriately and answer questions from teachers and colleagues confidently, otherwise, their performance will clearly indicate that it is not a personal effort.

Similarly, in generating writing ideas with the help of ChatGPT, they never copy and paste texts, instead, they read the text carefully, double check the correctness of information and redesign it in their unique writing style. Juri stated "When I make assignments and projects, I search and take the main ideas and the key words only from ChatGPT and complete it by myself". Menwah added that the main usage of ChatGPT in writing is for finding extra examples that only support but

never substitute her writing. As mature college students, Retag claimed that they are capable of distinguishing what facilitates learning from what hinders it as evident in her response below:

If we copy a text, why do we come to college then? If I let the ChatGPT write the essay for me then what is the point of taking a writing subject. I am not against ChatGPT and other AI tools... I am against using it in the wrong way. I use ChatGPT to exam myself. If I don't understand the material, I will not learn. I will not pass exam. (Retag)

Interestingly, the participants agreed that another major reason behind modifications of ChatGPT outputs was avoiding identical or highly similar answers. Copying ChatGPT materials will provide the same texts which is never tolerated by all teachers. Undoubtedly, it is easy to distinguish a machine-generated text from a text that is polished by elegant human touches as Hanadi claimed. She added that teachers enjoy their students' excellent styles after a number of written assignments, but complete copying from ChatGPT would obstacle this nice relation. However, if the teacher finds a high plagiarism percentage, the nice relation will be the opposite and the situation becomes worse if the teacher presents plagiarism results in front of colleagues. "Why do we put ourselves in this bad situation?", Ragad confirmed.

C. Teachers' Attitudes Towards Using ChatGPT:

As the participants claimed, all teachers have negative attitudes towards using ChatGPT in studying and completing tasks and assignments. Throughout their experience as EFL learners, no teacher has encouraged the use of ChatGPT in learning. The connotation between ChatGPT and plagiarism might be the main reason behind the teachers' attitudes, nevertheless, this is not usually the case as the participants argued. The participants didn't deny that they frequently consult ChatGPT, however, they never rely on it as the main source of information. The main problem is that teachers usually associate excellent performances with cheating to the degree that the first thing most teachers do is checking originality. As an excellent student, Futon was exposed to a very embarrassing situation. One of her teachers gave her zero for an assignment because the teacher didn't believe that it was a human effort. After taking a written exam in class, the teacher recognized her excellent level and modified the assignment grade. Futon added "Why teachers don't trust us now? Is it because of new apps? So, how can we convince them that we did it ourselves?"

The participants were against the idea of refusing the integration of helpful learning tools because some students might cheat. This opinion created a very sensitive relation between learners and teachers where learners always try to prove their credibility. The participants expressed their desire to take a course in a past era when all language learning tasks were "human made" and when teachers truly appreciated and trusted excellent performances. Nevertheless, all participants honestly emphasized that cheating is not uncommon among learners throughout the decades in diverse learning environments. Indeed, according to the participants, many colleagues do cheat under some conditions, though, they will recognize its bad consequences when they find it impossible to complete learning due to lack of knowledge. Those users believe that dependence on AI tools is legal and can never be considered a case of cheating which poses threats to academic integrity that suffers to a considerable extent all over the world because of such innovative methods of cheating and plagiarism as the participants declared.

D. Autonomous Learning Skills:

Most participants believed that ChatGPT helped them learn autonomously and avoid complete reliance on the efforts of others. For example, in group work activities, it is easier to complete the required tasks with the assistance of ChatGPT as opposed to the past when they had to seek help from group members. During examination periods when everyone is busy and stressed, the participants depend entirely on their efforts for understanding and revising using ChatGPT. Another picture of developing independent learning was reflected by Rawan who sometimes loses concentration in class and goes back to ChatGPT for deeper explanations of broadly explained ideas that she needs to focus on.

A noticeable improvement has also been observed in the participants' independent researching skills that was manifested in their enthusiasm to find more details about certain issues. ChatGPT helps them manipulate different research inquires and develop the ability to ask questions. Sultanah loves to ask ChatGPT "Why" questions to find convincing justifications for a variety of questions as she clarified:

I always ask ChatGPT about grammar mistakes because I want to know how to correct them... I can help myself... I don't wait to the next class. ChatGPT is an AI tool, so you find can information that you don't find in Google. It is more interesting and open. (Sultanah)

Searching for different sentence structures is another manifestation of the usefulness of ChatGPT that saves the time spent in watching "YouTube" tutorials. The participants chose the appropriate structures and avoid unrelated ones in a way that develops selectivity and autonomy in learning. Ragad loves to write poems and needs regular consultations and modifications so she frequently takes feedback from ChatGPT and selects what suits her poems. Repeated comments helped her develop autonomously and learn by herself.

On the contrary, two of the participants had the opposite view. They believed that frequent use of ChatGPT obstacles autonomous learning skills. According to Sahar, who represented this view "AI tools take the role of learners in searching and finding information. To be independent, I search by myself from books, resources, dictionaries and not from AI." Indeed, according to Sahar, AI can limit personal outputs and brain functions.

E. Disadvantages and Lazy Brain:

Generally speaking, despite the fact that it has proved to be advantageous in many cases, ChatGPT is not without its disadvantages. For example, Heba argued that ChatGPT does not always understand the intended purpose of the question, hence, it provides answers that are inaccurate, unrelated, or more than needed. Dana added:

I know it doesn't understand every question. Sometimes it makes mistakes so you have to check it if you want to use it. I search for the same thing that ChatGPT gave me in another place such as Google and if it is the same thing then it might be correct. (Dana)

The participants confirmed that they need to change question words until they get the answer from ChatGPT, nevertheless, clarifications of inquiries are not always successful because the answers are sometimes not available. The unavailability of answers in addition to the uncertainty of the reliability and appropriateness of ChatGPT materials put extra burden on the learner's shoulders. ChatGPT is expected to be a reliable helper every time to support and facilitate the human effort, yet, it is not always the case. Furthermore, not all functions are open to all users making it challenging in some cases to perform all needed tasks and that is "so disappointing" as Dana confirmed.

Although some participants discussed different disadvantages of using ChatGPT, all other participants agreed on one main issue that is "the lazy brain". An interesting example to reflect the lazy brain claim was discussed by Retag as follows:

Because we have a calculator in our smartphones, now, it is difficult for me and for many people, ... for most people, to calculate $15+15...$ and it is impossible to calculate $15+25!!$. Sometime it is easy and we know the answers but it is easier for us to use the calculator in the mobile. Because we take it everywhere!! (Retag)

Her claim was supported by other participants as they were strongly convinced that they might under more strict conditions lose self-confidence and double check even if they know the answer. Another undesirable consequence is losing the brain ability to negotiate and filter information. Greater reliance on AI tools might result in complete acceptance of received materials without trying to refine and validate and some people might consequently lose the ability to form appropriate answers.

The participants believed that continuous dependence on ChatGPT will definitely lead to decreasing levels of eagerness and willingness to learn. Learners, even enthusiastic ones, might find it easier to escape from basic requirements of learning simply because an obedient device can take their role. Unquestionably, reducing jobs of the brain will make it lazy as all participants confirmed. Johara stated that online shopping made their bodies lazy and ChatGPT made their brains lazy. All participants insisted that ChatGPT, as a machine, has no emotions and lacks the human natural capability of debate and consideration of different affecting factors. Hence, it mostly provides repeated opinions and relying on such identical views might destroy personal opinions and argumentation skills. Sahar was so worried about the future of cognitive and intellectual abilities particularly in new generations.

V. DISCUSSION

This qualitative study investigated EFL learners' perceptions of the potentials and challenges of using ChatGPT in language learning. Based on the analysis of data, ChatGPT is seen as a user-friendly tool that helps users in performing different language learning tasks with basic technical skills. In this regard, it has been stated that ChatGPT has proved to be easy to use which attracts many people to subscribe despite their expertise level (Adeshola & Adepoju, 2023; Grassini, 2023; Huang et al., 2022; Pack & Maloney, 2023). The participants of this study believe that they have very good levels of expertise that enable them to use ChatGPT appropriately as an assistant tool in learning English. Using ChatGPT as a powerful tool for EFL learning has been demonstrated by a number of previous studies (e.g. Adeshola & Adepoju, 2023; Kohnke et al., 2023; Shaikh et al., 2023; Tlili et al., 2023; Young & Shishido, 2023).

The participants mainly use ChatGPT to summarize long texts and simplify difficult ones for many purposes such as making presentations and completing projects and assignments. ChatGPT does not only save time and effort, it can also help the participants increase vocabulary and practice grammar through exposure to new words and structures. It has been previously indicated that ChatGPT materials are significantly beneficial in expanding vocabulary gains (Young & Shishido, 2023) and grammatical knowledge (Shaikh et al., 2023). Additionally, findings provided by Jeon (2023) suggest that chatbots do not only facilitate vocabulary acquisition but can also offer diagnoses concerning vocabulary learning.

There is a general agreement among all participants in the usefulness of ChatGPT in developing writing skills and performing related tasks such as organizing paragraphs, finding innovative writing ideas and examples. It has been proved by previous research that ChatGPT is effective in facilitating writing (e.g. Liu & Ma, 2023; Shaikh et al., 2023) by helping the students in generating ideas, drafting, editing and evaluating (Yan, 2023), selecting the topic, setting the context as well as receiving tailored feedback (Barrot, 2023). Furthermore, if class time does not allow for enough practice, ChatGPT provides ample opportunity for extra practice after class that is achievable 24 hours. Based on the fact that students receive immediate responses when communicating with ChatGPT, they can easily and continuously learn the language at any time (Huang et al., 2022).

All participants strongly confirm that ChatGPT materials should not be copied, rather, it should be carefully understood to achieve successful learning outcomes. It is definitely important to select suitable materials and modify it using their own styles. They claim that complete copying from ChatGPT yields identical responses which can be easily identified by teachers, yet, never accepted. However, this finding contradicts those suggested by other studies (e.g. Huang et al., 2022; Xiao & Zhi, 2023) who claim that ChatGPT offers personalized learning by providing different inputs to different students

even when given the same topic for discussion. In a similar line, Abdelhalim (2024) finds that EFL learners with high metacognitive awareness perceive ChatGPT as a facilitative tool that enhances personalized learning through which they develop research competency.

It is worth noting that the participants have never been asked by teachers to use ChatGPT, and that excellent performances are often understood as a sign of plagiarism. Despite the fact that the participants frequently use ChatGPT, they state that they never depend on it entirely as other learners might do. Indeed, all participants show their disagreement with the teachers' negative attitudes towards using ChatGPT as they believe that beneficial learning tools should not be rejected because some students misuse them. Cheating is not a new phenomenon, and learners' perceptions about legality of copying information from online resources might be affected by the advent of new applications which in turn warns academic integrity. It has been previously indicated that using ChatGPT might pose threats to academic honesty (e.g. Yan, 2023), and that learners must be aware when using this learning tool (Hockly, 2023; Yeo, 2023). In consistence with these findings, Adeshola and Adepoju (2023) claim that academic cheating has a long history among generations and that using materials generated by AI tools for cheating in assignments is a new challenging method.

Most participants argue that using ChatGPT in language learning contribute to the development of autonomous skills that is mainly demonstrated in the participants' researching skills as well as their tendency to rely on personal efforts. In this respect, Pack and Maloney (2023) state that ChatGPT is a helpful device in different research phases for language education researchers with varying levels of experience in using AI tools. For example, a novice researcher can be guided by ChatGPT that performs the role of a supervisor throughout the process of a research experiment. The participants add that the talent of writing poems can also be improved via seeking feedback from ChatGPT and making necessary modifications autonomously. Grassini (2023) proves that ChatGPT is useful in providing feedback to the students by identifying points of strength and weakness to overcome learning challenges. Abdelhalim (2024) finds that EFL learners with low levels of metacognitive awareness consider ChatGPT a learning assistant that decreases dependence on teachers in a variety of tasks such as editing, answering questions and completing assignments. Nevertheless, such a view is not advocated by two of the participants in the current study who claim that using ChatGPT frequently hinders autonomous skills and creates a barrier that prevents learners from performing their roles properly.

There is a general agreement among all participants that ChatGPT has some disadvantages despite its noticeable advantages. Some functions are not accessible for all users and information taken from ChatGPT might be unreliable, inaccurate or unavailable. As a result, users need be alert when using ChatGPT by adjusting research words and checking the appropriateness of derived materials which is overwhelming in some cases. In addition, all participants strongly claim that overusing ChatGPT will definitely lead to a "lazy brain" which loses its basic activities and abilities. Losing self-confidence and the ability to form or manipulate responses might result from complete dependence on ChatGPT. Levels of enthusiasm to learn could also decrease among learners who might rely on ChatGPT in doing their jobs, and personal opinions and negotiation skills might be restricted due to greater reliance on such tools. The disadvantageous effects of continuous use of ChatGPT in learning have also been identified by other researchers who claim that ChatGPT should be an assistant language learning tool which needs to be used with more caution (e.g. Grassini, 2023; Huang et al., 2022; Shaikh et al., 2023; Tlili et al., 2023). Therefore, it can be theorized that using ChatGPT is perceived by EFL learners as a facilitative tool that should be used selectively to avoid bad consequences.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

EFL learners' perceptions of the potentials and challenges of using ChatGPT in language learning were investigated qualitatively in this study. The main findings show that ChatGPT is perceived as a user-friendly tool that assists in performing a variety of language learning tasks. The participants are satisfied with their experience level through which they can benefit from ChatGPT in learning English. They mainly use ChatGPT to summarize and simplify long and difficult texts which helps them save time and effort and expand their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. ChatGPT is noticeably helpful in improving writing skills and facilitating the completion of writing tasks. Additionally, ChatGPT proves to be effective in providing extra practice after class that is attainable every day and every time.

All participants are strongly against copying ChatGPT materials and insist that users understand the materials to accomplish successful learning goals. Users should carefully select and adjust ChatGPT texts and avoid identical responses that might result from complete copying. The participants state that excellent answers are usually associated with plagiarism by their teachers who never ask them to use ChatGPT nor accept using it in learning. However, the participants disagree with the teachers' negative attitudes towards using ChatGPT and strongly confirm that they never completely rely on ChatGPT although they frequently use it. Indeed, beneficial learning devices should be used wisely and appropriately because cheating is not new, and perceptions of learners about copying from online resources might be changed after the advent of new applications which warns academic honesty.

Autonomous skills, mainly reflected in researching and modifying tasks independently, can be increased by using ChatGPT. Nevertheless, two of the participants disagree and believe that frequent use of ChatGPT stops learners from performing their roles correctly. Although ChatGPT has some advantages, it has also some disadvantages. ChatGPT materials are sometimes unreliable, inaccurate or unavailable and some functions are not accessible which constitutes extra burden on users who need to be attentive when using ChatGPT. Additionally, all participants strongly believe that greater dependence on ChatGPT will create a "lazy brain" and less confident users with low levels of enthusiasm to learn.

User might also lose negotiation skills and personal views. The theory that is obtained from the investigation is that EFL learners perceive ChatGPT as a helpful tool that requires selective use to avoid undesirable results.

This study is limited to investigating EFL learners' perceptions of the potentials and challenges of using ChatGPT in language learning. The participants were Saudi female EFL learners at the university level and the data was collected using semi-structured interviews only. To generalize the findings of the study, similar studies with larger samples in other learning contexts should be conducted.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

On the basis of the research results, it is recommended that EFL learners be given extra guidance and practice on how to use ChatGPT appropriately to achieve higher academic benefits. As shown from the findings, using ChatGPT seems to be unavoidable, hence, it is advocated that teachers help their students avoid plagiarism by reinforcing critical thinking and selective skills. EFL teaching material developers are advised to create tasks that promote skills of using AI tools appropriately and manage levels of reliance on such tools. Workshops and training courses that explain how these tools can be utilized properly and raising awareness campaigns that address how EFL learners satisfy their needs can be helpful. It is suggested for future research to consider the effect of other aspects such as personality factors and English proficiency level. Future studies with larger samples can be conducted and data can be collected using other instruments such as classroom observation and questionnaires to enrich the outputs of this study and expand the research scope.

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A Cross-Cultural Comparison of the Topic Structure of Chinese and Indonesian Literature: A Case Study of *The True Story of Ah Q* and *This Earth of Mankind*

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Abstract—Literary works are closely interwoven with the social fabric of their era, mirroring the lived experiences and social issues the general population faces. This study employs a qualitative research method to analyze the content of two works, *The True Story of Ah Q* and *This Earth of Mankind* regarding topic marking and connection, continuity, transformation, and deepening. It then elucidates the similarities and differences in social reality and cultural mentality by investigating the differences in topic selection and expression. The findings indicate that *The True Story of Ah Q* emphasizes the individual's fate, whereas *This Earth of Mankind* prioritizes ethnic group consciousness. The cross-cultural analysis of this study enhances the comprehension of the interconnections between Chinese and Indonesian literature and offers a novel lens for cross-cultural research.

Index Terms—Chinese and Indonesian literature, linguistic feature, topic structure, cross-cultural comparison

I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization, cross-cultural communication is becoming an increasingly prevalent phenomenon. As a significant conduit for cultural transmission, literature plays a pivotal role in facilitating the dissemination and acceptance of cultural norms across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Despite the geographical distance and cultural dissimilarities between China and Indonesia, their literary works exhibit striking resemblance in their exploration of human nature, social issues, and cultural conflicts. As a canonical work of modern Chinese literature, *The True Story of Ah Q* offers a profound insight into the psychological disposition and social reality of the lower-class characters within society. As a representative of modern Indonesian literature, *This Earth of Mankind* also exemplifies the intricacies and diversities of Indonesian society from a distinctive vantage point. A detailed examination of these two works allows for a more nuanced understanding of the similarities and differences between Chinese and Indonesian approaches to literary topic structures, thus facilitating a more profound comprehension of the two languages and their associated cultures.

This paper selects two works, *The True Story of Ah Q* and *This Earth of Mankind* as research objects, taking Chinese and Indonesian as examples, and employs comparative research methods to analyze the topic structures of the two languages. Topic structure is a significant area of linguistic study, primarily concerned with introducing, retaining, modifying, and impacting topics within discourse. From a cross-cultural perspective, this paper considers differences in language levels and then extends the analysis to encompass cultural and social dimensions. It explores how literary works utilize topic structures to convey social criticism and reflection in diverse cultural contexts.

There is a notable divergence between the linguistic systems of Chinese and Indonesian. Chinese civilization has endured for five millennia, during which time its language has become imbued with profound cultural wisdom. In contrast to Chinese, Indonesia employs a concise topic structure, and its grammar system is primarily based on changes in affixes (Candra & Yusup, 2020). In the mid-19th century, the emergence of Indonesian Chinese foreign literature considerably influenced local literature, becoming a pioneering force in Malay literary innovation (Adelina & Suprayogi, 2020). These works engaged with significant political and social issues, including the exposure of social injustice and the portrayal of instances of power abuse. They also depicted love stories between individuals of different ethnicities and explored internal conflicts within the families of young people.

Furthermore, these works depicted the lives and customs of the lower-class population. There are many Indonesian dialects, which is about 200. Chinese comprise approximately 4% of Indonesia's population, forming a minority group.

Hence, Mandarin holds a place in the Indonesian language environment (Tong et al., 2022). The language of Indonesian Chinese literature is mainly Chinese, which is gradually developed under the promotion of the May Fourth Movement, evolving from a language style with strong overseas Chinese characteristics to a localized modern literary expression (Zein et al., 2020). Despite being hindered by anti-China policies, the language of Indonesian Chinese literature is still constantly improving and perfecting. This language combines the traditional characteristics of Chinese, local features of Indonesia, and modern elements (Kuntjara & Chang, 2020; Latupeirissa et al., 2019).

Literary works from different countries and backgrounds have their unique topic structures. With the development of the times, comparative studies of cross-cultural literature have received increasing attention from the academic community and become a hot research field. Taking Chinese and Indonesian literature as examples, through in-depth analysis of literary works from different cultural backgrounds, the accuracy of translation and cultural acceptance can be understood (Ma, 2019). Comparing literary classics from different countries can reveal cultural changes, language adaptability, and how to preserve the spirit of the original work in translation (Ma, 2022; Nematullayev, 2024). Whether it is the similarities or differences between literature, their impact on society should not be underestimated.

This paper employs a comparative approach to analyze the literary works of Lu Xun and Pramoedya Ananta Toer. It utilizes their topic structures as entry points to elucidate the nuances of change and to critique and evaluate their respective literary works. Furthermore, it derives values and meanings based on their interconnections and influences. This approach expands literary theory's boundaries and promotes cultural understanding and respect (Wei, 2019). In particular, the analysis of topic structure offers a valuable lens through which to elucidate the fundamental ideas and cultural traits inherent to linguistic works, thereby opening up new avenues for cross-cultural literary inquiry. In terms of research methods, this paper employs qualitative analysis, text reading, linguistic analysis, and cultural criticism. The objective is to interpret the topic structural characteristics of *The True Story of Ah Q* and *This Earth of Mankind* from disparate perspectives and analyze the cultural connotations they contain. This paper aims to analyze the differences and similarities in topic markers, connection methods, continuity, change, and deepening between Chinese and Indonesian languages. It will then analyze the impact of these differences on the expressive effect and cultural dissemination of works. These commonalities emerge not only from the shared emotional experiences of humanity but also from the mutual infiltration and integration of cultures in the context of globalization. A comparative analysis of this kind not only serves to enhance our understanding of literary theory but also provides valuable insights that can inform and facilitate cultural exchange and mutual understanding between the two countries.

II. TOPIC STRUCTURE ANALYSIS OF *THE TRUE STORY OF AH Q*

Lu Xun's famous work *The True Story of Ah Q* is set in the rural society of China from the late Qing Dynasty to the early Republic of China. This literary work portrays Ah Q, an ordinary homeless man whose life experiences are characterized by a blend of comedy, absurdity, and tragedy. Lu Xun's vivid description of Ah Q in his writing is a personal performance and a reflection of the broad masses of farmers in that historical period. Lu Xun uses precise and profound descriptions in his works to depict all aspects of rural Chinese society at that time. The various emotions experienced by Ah Q, as well as the intricate mindsets of the other characters, are vividly depicted, provoking contemplation. The book is a direct commentary on the social landscape of the time and a metaphorical insight into the intricacies of human nature and the challenges and limitations of early capitalism in China.

Of particular note is the defining character of Ah Q's "fantasy victory," which sets the work apart regarding recognition and influence in contemporary Chinese literature. This characteristic symbolizes the tendency of individuals to resort to self-deception and escapism in the face of life obstacles. The phenomenon has attracted much attention and is a valuable case study for exploring individual psychological defense mechanisms and social criticism.

Despite the passage of time, the influence of *The True Story of Ah Q* has not waned, but it has left a deep impression on readers. In 1942, the work was adapted into a film that further consolidated its profound social critique and enhanced its relevance through visual representation. The film version of *The True Story of Ah Q* uses the magic of the screen to bring the vivid characters and scenes written by Lu Xun to a broader audience so that they can enjoy the entertainment and feel the clash of ideas across time and space.

A. Topic Markers and Connection Methods

In Lu Xun's novel *The True Story of Ah Q*, the charm of the Chinese language is fully reflected. By skillfully using the unique syntactic structure of Chinese, such as the flexible arrangement of subject, verb, and object, Lu Xun can construct the level and depth of the topic. In addition, the frequent function words in the paper also play a role in enhancing the expression effect and creating atmosphere, such as "but," "and," "however," "therefore," and "but".

Ah Q's name, this repeated cultural symbol, not only constitutes the central thread of the whole paper but also becomes a key literary symbol, guiding the reader to follow the protagonist's fate and experience a series of social changes. It is not only a symbol of Ah Q's awakening of self-consciousness but also clear evidence of his gradual decline in social status and confusion of identity.

Lu Xun uses Ah Q's words and behaviors to reveal the subtle changes in his inner world. His complex relationships with Master Zhao, Little D, and other characters in Wei Zhuang skillfully expand and deepen the theme. These complex relationships reveal the multifaceted nature of humanity and social contradictions and conflicts (Huan, 2023).

B. Topic Continuity

In Lu Xun's *The True Story of Ah Q*, the character Ah Q connects the topic and plot of the entire book. Every appearance of Ah Q, whether it is his naivety, self-consolation, or tragic experiences, leads to sharp criticism of the traditional system (Tania & Stephen, 2023). Through Ah Q's life trajectory, Lu Xun reveals the phenomena of class rigidity and moral imbalance that existed in Chinese society from the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China. Through the skillful use of Chinese narrative techniques, the plot is ingeniously woven, with internal coherence and smooth emotional transfer, allowing the topic to delve deeper into Ah Q's story, like a small stream gathering into a river and sea, and gradually presenting a grander social picture. This narrative technique highlights the close interaction between individuals and society, allowing readers to perceive the rhythm of historical changes in Ah Q's life scenes.

To sum up, *The True Story of Ah Q* has become a classic not only because it profoundly reveals various problems in a specific historical period but also because of the depth and logic of its narration. The work emphasizes the continuity of the topic and profoundly explores the analysis of the core problem, which makes the whole story full of space for thinking. This attention to detail and careful consideration of big questions make *The True Story of Ah Q* more persuasive and influential.

C. Topic Changing and Deepening

The protagonist, Ah Q, is carefully portrayed as a bridge for the evolution of the topic in *The True Story of Ah Q*. The elements of the topic include his life experiences, escape, resistance, and self-consolation. By revealing Ah Q's inner world, Lu Xun illuminates the living conditions of the people at the bottom of the feudal society and their psychological responses under challenging situations. The topic change is not a straightforward switch but a step-by-step transition from the external expression of individual behavior to a profound criticism of social structures. It is a good reflection of Lu Xun's profound insight into the nature of humans and society. Like a multi-prism, Ah Q's complicated psychological state reflects the common difficulties and grievances of that era and social injustice, contradictions, and conflicts.

In the process of artistic creation, the transformation and deepening of topics play a decisive role, demonstrating the author's skills of words and unique insights into multiculturalism (Zheng et al., 2019). In Chinese, implicit associative phrases and innovative sentence structures are often used to change topics, emphasizing seamless logical integration.

III. TOPIC STRUCTURE ANALYSIS OF *THIS EARTH OF MANKIND*

This Earth of Mankind (Bumi Manusia), the masterpiece of Indonesian literary giant Pramoedya Ananta Toer, is the opening work of his famous "Buru Quartet," which first appeared in 1980 (Sulaeman & Koh, 2023). The historical picture of this novel unfolds during the colonial era in Indonesia, revealing through the eyes of the protagonist, Minke, the living conditions and resistance of the Indonesian people under the iron hooves of the Netherlands at that time. The work cleverly interweaves personal fate and grand historical processes, narrating touching growth and love and profoundly analyzing the diverse landscape of Indonesian society and the emergence of national consciousness.

A. Topic Markers and Connection Methods

In the Indonesian language work *This Earth of Mankind*, the construction and advancement of topics mainly rely on clear word order and specific connectors. These words act as a compass, guiding the reader through the sea of text and accurately grasping the main lines and details of the story. Classic words, like "yang" and "dimana," are often used to summarize the main idea and establish the narrative context. "Dimana" not only indicates the event's location but also conveys the protagonist's emotional state and the surrounding environment's atmosphere. The connectives "karena" (cause) and "sehingga" (effect) are also distinctive. Simple word use can exhibit complex logical networks. Reasonable use of these words can not only point out the root cause of taking specific actions but also intuitively show the resulting results to provide more intuitive and verifiable logical evidence for connecting topics. This way of connecting dramatically enhances the credibility and persuadability of the narrative, enabling the reader to grasp the author's concepts more effectively and fully understand the motivations and influences driving each storyline. Because of the inherent characteristics of this language structure, Indonesian literary works put special emphasis on stating facts and establishing causal links when conducting topic tagging.

Compared to other languages, Indonesian emphasizes the structure and coherence of the storytelling process, and the narrative style tends to be linear and direct. This emphasis does not imply a lack of diversity or intricacies of depiction but rather highlights the focus of Indonesian works on narrative progression and discrimination rather than excessive attention to minute details. In essence, *This Earth of Mankind* provides a coherent and systematic framework of topics through its unique grammatical composition, which sets it apart from many other Indonesian literature works of similar nature.

B. Topic Continuity

In Indonesia's rich and diverse cultural background, Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *This Earth of Mankind* constructs a three-dimensional topic network through multiple interwoven plot clues. Each short story is like a cross-section of society, revealing the diversity of Indonesian society (Farhana & Aflahah, 2019). The topics are harmonious and diverse, reflecting both individual life and collective memory, and this narrative is deeply rooted in the essence of Indonesian

language and culture, with subtle interweaving of clues and elaborate plot layout to show the depth of the narrative (Jin et al., 2023). Moreover, such narrative traditions demonstrate a deep insight into social structures and historical changes, allowing readers to explore the complexities of Indonesian society from multiple perspectives.

This Earth of Mankind pursues breadth, which requires a wide range of topics. It pays attention to the topic's continuous themes and emphasizes a keen capture of ever-changing dynamics. In short, it has unique interpretation results of topic continuity.

C. Topic Changing and Deepening

Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *This Earth of Mankind* adopts a multi-dimensional narrative strategy in which the characters weave their way around the topic to create a vivid panorama of Indonesian society. The author expands and deepens the topic during the process, gaining profound insights into human nature and describing human emotions in detail. By constantly changing the narrative perspective, society's diversity and complex structure are fully displayed, allowing readers to not only focus on individual experiences but also understand the overall changes in society. This topic change and depth endow the text with profound connotations and a sense of hierarchy, further revealing social history's intricate and complex evolution.

Indonesians tend to use explicit sentence connections and oral communication between characters to advance stories, and their narrative strategy appears more transparent. The difference with Chinese is a vivid portrayal of cultural context and narrative tradition, which reveals the diversity of syntactic structure.

IV. CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON

Although *The True Story of Ah Q* and *This Earth of Mankind* originated from different eras and geographical environments, they both hold a pivotal position in the field of literature (Ma, 2019). These two works touch upon universal human nature and social issues by depicting individual life trajectories. Its deeply ingrained topics, multidimensional character shaping, and novel narrative techniques lead readers to contemplate the historical context and values of their respective cultural environments. In interdisciplinary analysis, these two works are often used as comparative cases to reveal the uniqueness of the literature of the two countries, as well as the historical, social, and cultural differences reflected behind these differences.

A. Relationship Between Language Structure and Cultural Background

As a cultural phenomenon, language structure contains both people's thinking patterns and cultural values and historical experiences (Xi et al., 2019). Language is a means of communication and an important carrier of cultural inheritance and expression (Lee & Meng, 2022). Lu Xun uses the refinement and logic of the Chinese language in his book *The True Story of Ah Q* to conduct an in-depth analysis of various problems and characters' psychology in the late Qing of China. Ah Q's "allegorical mental victory" is a self-consolation mechanism in individual psychology and a true reflection of the prevalent escapist mentality in society (Lu, 2024). The expression characteristics of the Chinese language reveal the introspection and reality of the Chinese nation when facing difficulties, as well as its keen insight into social phenomena. In Lu Xun's writings, images such as "braid" and "revolution" are like codes, revealing a specific era's spiritual style and collective subconscious. These symbols carry rich historical lessons and the evolution of national identity. The novel *This Earth of Mankind* explores the multifaceted elements of Indonesian culture and the significance of cultural integration through the vast vocabulary and fluent sentences in Indonesian. The author skillfully exploits the adaptability of language to describe the intricate nuances of the character's emotional landscape and the country's historical context. Among them, the interaction and internal reflection that shape the characters, like dynamic flowing water, show the emotional changes in Indonesian society over a long period and critically analyze its colonial history. Indonesian expressions highlight a deep level of cultural convergence and historical understanding. "Braid" is a synonym for feudal society, but also the previous feudal system of restrictions and the symbol of the necessity of transformation; metaphors such as "Bali" and "colony" reflect the historical path and cultural integration of Indonesia, presenting the identity and cultural conflicts of a nation in historical change. These cultural symbols are indispensable elements in both works, strengthening their symbolic significance and deepening readers' understanding of their respective social histories.

Although the two works are in different languages, they have successfully constructed a rich network of topics through their unique language, showcasing the author's profound insights into human nature and society. This cross-linguistic comparison not only enriches the public's understanding of literary works but also provides a deeper understanding of how language shapes thoughts and expressions.

B. Differences and Similarities in Topic Handling Methods

In *The True Story of Ah Q*, Lu Xun portrays the profound and delicate handling of topics in Chinese by portraying Ah Q as a typical character. As a marginalized figure in society, Ah Q's psychology and behavior are meticulously portrayed by Lu Xun, leading to a series of topics about self-esteem, inferiority, resistance, and compromise. Lu Xun changes the topic through Ah Q's experiences and reactions, thus deepening his criticism of social reality. The narrative style of *The True Story of Ah Q* highlights Chinese expression's coherence and emotional depth. Focusing on the psychological evolution of the character, Ah Q delves into the tension between individuals and groups, ideals, and reality.

In contrast, *This Earth of Mankind* introduces multiple intertwined topics and adopts multiple linear narratives to express the diversity and complexity of society, allowing readers to understand and experience the reality of this society from various aspects so that the work can be more inclusive and profound. It stimulates readers' broader thoughts and discussions. Regarding topic handling, *The True Story of Ah Q* emphasizes using language to explain things' linear logic and profound emotional color. *This Earth of Mankind* presents a non-linear logic and complex structure. It is not only the difference between Indonesian and Chinese languages but also a reflection of the narrative traditions and aesthetic orientations of the Indonesian and Chinese ethnic groups.

Taking the topic structures of *The True Story of Ah Q* and *This Earth of Mankind* as references, there are differences in the narrative structure between the two works, allowing readers to have a more thorough understanding of the distinct personalities of Chinese and Indonesian in literary expression. This topic structure comparison not only enhances insight into the literary forms of the two languages but also provides unique insights for cross-cultural dialogue. The depth of the topic can guide readers to experience the unique charm displayed by different languages in constructing plots, portraying characters, and depicting social phenomena, and thus profoundly appreciate the irreplaceable value of literary creation in enhancing understanding and communication between different cultures.

C. Social Criticism and Cultural Reflection in Literary Works

As the pinnacle of artistic expression, literary works also provide a keen insight into social and cultural phenomena (Huang, 2020). Lu Xun's *The True Story of Ah Q* deeply reveals the feudal dregs of traditional Chinese society, the weakness of national character, and the helpless struggle and numbness of individuals in the face of injustice and unfair treatment through the portrayal of Ah Q. As a classic literary work, *This Earth of Mankind* clearly presents the social life of Indonesia during the turbulent period described in the book. The joys and sorrows of the people in the book depict the hardships of this country, as well as their yearning for freedom and justice. Whether in Chinese or Indonesian, these works serve as a mirror reflecting the current social situation, allowing readers to understand the challenges and contradictions while showcasing the authors' deep reflection and critical spirit on these issues.

This social analysis and cultural reflection enhances the depth of literary works and provides valuable references for cross-cultural communication. They broaden people's understanding of the diversity of human experiences and inspire empathy and understanding of social issues in different cultural backgrounds through their unique stories and profound topics. By comparing *The True Story of Ah Q* and *This Earth of Mankind*, it can be seen that despite differences in geography and language, literary works can strongly connect the common emotional bonds of humanity, reveal common human challenges, and respond to these issues in different cultural backgrounds.

Critical analysis plays a crucial role in literary criticism, encouraging humanity to go beyond surface art forms and explore the underlying social and cultural issues contained in the works. Lu Xun's *The True Story of Ah Q* reveals the deep-rooted problems in Chinese feudal society and the weaknesses in national character and exposes the general mentality of helplessness and self-comfort in the face of injustice (Zhao, 2024). *The True Story of Ah Q* reveals the shortcomings of the times through its sharp satire, triggering a profound reflection on social progress. Combining life experiences and historical trends, *This Earth of Mankind* questions the unfairness of rights and the oppression of the state, praises the perseverance and hope of individuals in adversity, inspires readers' longing for justice and fairness through the ups and downs of life, and calls on people to awaken and build a beautiful society where everyone is equal. *This Earth of Mankind* and *The True Story of Ah Q* have broken through pure literature with their unique artistic techniques, becoming important carriers for promoting social transformation and cultural consciousness.

D. Mutual Influence Between Culture and Language

Language is like a mirror, reflecting a country's spiritual outlook and historical accumulation. Moreover, language and culture influence, constrain and promote each other. Through the uniqueness of language, artistic creation conveys narrative and emotions and carries the core of culture and hidden moral perspectives. Cross-cultural interaction and deep understanding are key driving factors for human social progress and cultural prosperity. With the continuous deepening of global trends, the cross-border circulation of artworks has gradually become particularly important and necessary. These measures strengthen the knowledge bridge between various cultures and promote the protection and creation of cultural diversity.

The True Story of Ah Q, with its unique, concise, clear, and logical language, reflects the implicit and pragmatic personality of the Chinese people. Ah Q's iconic phrase, "I will get you!" is a vivid symbol that expresses his sense of frustration and powerlessness, as well as the author's feelings of social injustice and helplessness and acceptance of their own destiny. It is concise and clear but powerful. Moreover, the phrase emphasizes not only the effectiveness and precision of the Chinese language in capturing subtle emotions and dealing with complex social issues but also the attributes of Chinese culture that tend to be subtle, complex, exquisite, and charming.

This Earth of Mankind showcases the breadth and inclusiveness of Indonesian culture and insights into historical changes that draw on the richness and adaptability of the Indonesian language. There is a scene in the book: under the grey sky he stands alone on the banks of the river, remembering the beautiful times that have passed. His heart feels heavy like an invisible burden pressing. This intricate depiction of emotions and establishment of deep symbolic associations in the book underscores the uniqueness of a particular language in capturing subtle emotions.

In contrast, different languages exhibit unique styles when constructing topics, with one language possibly favoring

clear narratives and rigorously structured discourses. At the same time, another adopts a broad vocabulary and rhythmically charged expressions to convey emotions and imagery. This diversity enriches the appearance of literary creation and provides diverse insights for cross-cultural communication. The language difference is not only reflected at the linguistic level but also deeply reflects the differences in communication and expression between the two cultures, each interpreting the rich diversity of human emotions and understanding of the world in a unique way.

E. Social Value and Significance of Literary Works

Literary works, as treasures of the human spiritual world, undoubtedly have an indispensable social value and significance in literary research. They use unique artistic techniques, such as Lu Xun's sharp satire in *The True Story of Ah Q*, to expose the dark side of society, allowing readers to see the remnants of feudalism and the weaknesses of national character in Ah Q's image. Lu Xun's writing is a revelation of the old era and a call to the new world. His works inspire people's reflection on the current social situation and drive the wheels of social progress. *This Earth of Mankind* is a masterpiece by Pramoedya Ananta Toer. It profoundly analyzes the historical context of the Indonesian nation, showcases the struggle and resilience of the people in hardship through meticulous narration, and inspires readers to reflect deeply on freedom and equality. This work is not only a witness to history but also like a prism, reflecting the complexity of human nature and inspiring people to move towards a brighter future.

The role of literary works lies in their ability to transcend the boundaries of time and space and deeply explore the profound essence of humanity. *The True Story of Ah Q* is like a magnifying glass, revealing the shortcomings of society and inspiring individuals to move towards a better tomorrow. The topic structure in the author's writing is like a precise tool, penetrating the core of the soul, touching on the fundamental aspects of human nature, and promoting introspection and personal growth. With its broad historical context and deep empathy for humanity, *This Earth of Mankind* portrays the resilience of the Indonesian people in difficult times. The chosen topic documents Indonesia's history and conveys a powerful message of humanity's continued pursuit of freedom and justice, even in the most difficult circumstances. This enduring spirit has translated into a powerful driver that has been passed down through the generations, shaping the collective identity and actions of the Indonesian people. It depicts the indomitable human spirit and testifies to the strength and unwavering determination of individuals and communities in the face of adversity.

Moreover, the social importance of literary works can be found in their ability to have a broad impact, inspire deep thinking, and trigger large-scale social change. The insightful analysis in *The True Story of Ah Q* and the empathy depicted in *This Earth of Mankind* exemplify how literary creations have evolved to mirror the societies they represent. These literary masterpieces have played a key role in enriching humanity's vast cultural trove while bringing complexity and nuance to humanity's collective heritage. Moreover, they provide a valuable perspective and guidance for society toward a future characterized by enlightenment and progress.

These two works of literature have had a broad and lasting impact on readers in China, Indonesia, and across the globe. The social significance of these works is not only a critique of the existing reality; they delve into the emotional realm of the reader and stimulate their inner sense of wisdom. The thematic component embedded in these works prompts a close examination of various social phenomena. At the same time, the underlying idea catalyzes individuals to aspire to a more fulfilling life and strive to build a just and equitable society. These works resemble radiant beacons that illuminate the way forward for humanity, enrich the collective spiritual nature of society, elevate the academic pursuit of academia, provide individuals with deep insights into the dynamics of life and society, and promote a deeper understanding.

V. CONCLUSION

The paper suggests notable differences in how Chinese and Indonesian speakers maintain coherence in their discourse. Chinese language use is characterized by clear sentence structures and direct expressions, facilitating straightforward information transmission. In contrast, Indonesian language use is marked by rich rhetoric and metaphors, which enhance the artistic and suggestive nature of language. This contrast is particularly evident in the handling of the topic in *The True Story of Ah Q* and *This Earth of Mankind*. *The True Story of Ah Q* revolves around Ah Q, elucidating feudal China's social milieu and individual survival struggles. *This Earth of Mankind* focuses on specific issues and social class dynamics in Indonesian society.

The two narrative works offer unique insights into different cultural perspectives and philosophical depths. Through analysis and interpretation, they illustrate the heterogeneity of culture. *The True Story of Ah Q* employs a bold approach to examine the pathological aspects of society, whereas *This Earth of Mankind* delves into the nuances of emotional dynamics in individual and group interactions, reflecting the diversity of moral evaluations and cognitive patterns across cultures.

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The Flavours of Migration: Mother-Daughter Culinary Experiences in Preethi Nair's *100 Shades of White*

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Abstract—The concept of resilience in diasporic contexts emphasises how individuals and groups deploy cultural traditions and adaptive tactics to confront hurdles and retain their identities in the backdrop of relocation. Masten underscores the power of endurance in adjusting to notable challenges. In a transnational environment, food functions as an important emblem of resilience, where it connects diasporic individuals to their cultural roots and promises a sense of continuity in a landscape of displacement. This paper primarily explores migrant mothers and their daughters' culinary attitudes towards traditional foods in diasporic settings, focusing on the mother-daughter conflict in Preethi Nair's *100 Shades of White*. Our analysis is guided by Masten's notion of resilience and McCartney and Gill's framework of Cultural Freeze, Convergence, and Compromise/Adaptation, offering novel perspectives in investigating Nalini and her daughter Maya's interactions with traditional cuisines across cultural and geographic divides, addressing a lacuna in British South Asian women's literature. The novel compellingly displays the power of embracing forgiveness in culinary practices enabling the protagonists to incorporate English ingredients and habits, thus facilitating their assimilation into unfamiliar life in Britain. This paper endeavours to uncover how migrant mothers' and daughters' food attitudes endure, adapt, and achieve equilibrium that values both their cultural traditions and the unique culinary traditions they find in foreign settings.

Index Terms—diaspora, food, forgiveness, generational conflicts, resilience

I. INTRODUCTION

Food is more than a nourishment; it is a potent expression of connection, memory, and cultural heritage. This is particularly notable in the context of the South Asian diaspora, where the exploration of food holds a distinct and multifaceted magnitude in illustrating its cultural, social, economic, and emotional contributions to shaping the diverse experiences of diaspora communities. Moreover, food serves as an influential and recurring motif in the literature of South Asian diasporic women authors, presenting an interesting lens through which to gain insight into the realm of culture, identity, and belonging (Gandhi, 2024). Furthermore, British South Asian women writers have largely contributed to the debate on food and identity in transnational experiences, providing unique insights into women's lives. *Brick Lane* (2003) and *In the Kitchen* (2009) by Monica Ali, *The Handsworth Times* (2004) by Sharon Duggal, and Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* (2009) are among the pioneering works of this group of authors that highlight the significance of food in cultural identity and migration.

This paper primarily aims to explore the food attitudes and responses of migrant mothers and daughters towards traditional foods in the light of generational conflicts in the diaspora, therefore bridging a critical gap in the literature of British South Asian women. To elucidate this discussion, we focus on *100 Shades of White* (2003) by Preethi Nair, a British writer of Indian origin. Nair's corpus exposes recurring themes that align her with prominent British Asian women authors, including Monica Ali, Kamila Shamsie, Meera Syal, Ravinder Randhawa, and Kamala Markandaya, who have courageously examined the challenges of identity within the diaspora. They address questions of belonging, displacement, memory, nostalgia, and cultural struggle through various literary genres and styles (Hussain, 2017). Nevertheless, Nair's engagement in the British Asian literary canon of such writers presents unique perspectives on migrant women's culinary experiences, particularly in *100 Shades of White*. This novel features the fusion of the Eastern and Western worlds, the role of food in survival and healing, and the conflict between mothers and daughters. The

novel's portrayal of family interactions and food provides a fascinating outlook into cultural adaptation and identity, as represented by the culinary voyages of Nalini and her daughter Maya as they relocate from India to Britain. Nair's novel, written in 2003, continues to be pertinent today as it ventures into the timeless themes of migration, intergenerational conflict, and cultural assimilation all through the ever-present prism of food. The novel's depiction of migrating mothers and daughters traversing culinary traditions offers unique insights the therapeutic role of food in fostering generational connections, healing, and resilience—core elements that continue to resonate in the lives of diasporic communities.

This study further delves into the significance of resilience in culinary traditions, underscoring its impact on diasporic individuals' adaptations to culinary practices. Additionally, it illustrates the role of forgiveness in food habits, enabling the protagonists to make compromises and integrate English ingredients and customs, thereby facilitating their assimilation into the host country—a void that this study seeks to fill. By drawing on Masten's (2018) interpretation of resilience and McCartney and Gill's (2007) framework—comprising Cultural Freeze, Convergence, and Compromise/Adaptation, this paper offers a new perspective on the generational culinary paths to traditional cuisine experienced by migrant mothers and daughters in a transnational context. The mother-daughter relationship in Nair's novel serves as a focal point for this analysis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Food studies is a comprehensive academic discipline that researches the historical, cultural, social, and economic implications of food. It goes beyond consumption to address the complex relationships between food, people, communities, and the wider globe (Guptill et al., 2022). Food studies undertake a critical analysis of behaviours and attitudes towards food, which comprises beliefs, emotions, and relationships with consuming. Eating habits are greatly influenced by cultural heritage, social dynamics such as peer and family influence, and socioeconomic status (Chen & Antonelli, 2020). In this context, researchers study the effect of a variety of influences on these attitudes and their consequences on identity, social structures, and good health (Gandhi, 2024).

Food transcends national borders, fostering cultural expression and resistance while connecting disparate diasporic groups. It helps people keep connections to their heritage by preserving traditional cuisines (Roy, 2021). In the same vein, Mannur (2010) highlights the significance of food in South Asian diasporic communities as a cultural signifier and a means for identity negotiation. She investigates the preservation of legacy through cuisine, while also adapting to new contexts, emphasising the conflicts between belonging, tradition, and assimilation. Moreover, Rasagam and Pillai (2015) illustrate how food in *Born Confused* triggers nostalgia and cultural memories, aiding migrant individuals in reclaiming their identities. Furthermore, food has an essential impact on gender dynamics, offering women the opportunity to regain authority and challenge patriarchal systems (Fauzi & Ahmad, 2022).

Generational conflicts in the writings of South Asian diasporic women, notably British South Asian writers, frequently emphasise the struggle between conventional and contemporary ideals, migration, and identity (Hussain, 2017). A major concern is the mother-daughter relationship, where tensions arise from mothers' commitment to tradition and daughters' aspirations to navigate new cultural contexts (Oreiq et al., 2024). These writers employ a variety of narratives to accentuate the complexities of transnational connections.

Considering the aforementioned, Preethi Nair, a contemporary Indian-British writer residing in London and the focus of our paper, engages with the literary tradition of British Asian women writers through her novels, which encompass recurrent ideas and subjects. This paper primarily examines Nair's second novel, *100 Shades of White* (2003). It is worth noting that Nair's creative journey commenced with the successful self-publishing of her first novel, *Gypsy Masala* (2000), which first faced rejection but eventually led to a book deal. In addition to these two novels, she has written *Beyond Indigo* (2004), *Unravelling* (2024), and a children's book entitled *Anjali's Story: My Magical Lip Balm Adventure* (2021).

Several scholars have examined *100 Shades of White* (2003) through the prism of food. Ray (2017) demonstrates how diasporic women writers utilise cooking to represent dual existence, with traditional foods reminding characters like Nalini and Maya of their homeland. Rana (2019) highlights food's significance in expressing South Asian female characters' self-worth and cultural roots, whereas Karthika (2019) analyses how food, namely Nalini's pickle business, resolves financial challenges. Moreover, Ayan and Yalvaç (2022) explore the role of cooking in the everyday experiences of female characters through a gynocritical lens. According to Devi (2022), Nair's protagonists use cooking as a metaphor for conserving cultural roots and navigating identity challenges in a new environment. Furthermore, Fathima and Gnanamuttu (2023) elaborate on this, illustrating how three generations of women employ cooking to investigate identity and manage the duality of their experiences. Priyadarshini et al. (2024) further highlight how Nair's female characters gain self-discovery and independence through food as they encounter the challenges of migration and integration.

Considering this, this paper deviates from previous studies on British Asian women's literature and analyses of Nair's *100 Shades of White* by investigating how immigrant mothers and daughters adjust their culinary practices. It explores how these women build resilience and employ forgiveness in culinary traditions to navigate and resolve intergenerational conflicts within the diaspora. Accordingly, the paper aims to address this gap in the existing literature

by employing Masten's (2018) idea of resilience and McCartney and Gill's (2007) framework of cultural adaptation, by relying on the experiences of the protagonist characters in Nair's novel.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

A. *Approaches for Culinary Survival*

Traditional societies frequently place a greater emphasis on community and family compared to individual ambitions, which may culminate in challenges when families migrate and carry their cultural values along (Ahmed et al., 2020). Food acts as a significant healing element in intergenerational conflicts and trauma between migrant mothers and daughters, particularly when viewed through the lens of forgiveness in culinary traditions, a notable gap that this study aims to address. Within diasporic theoretical contexts, forgiveness is an intricate process impacted by the historical and emotional realities of migration and displacement. Communities frequently grapple with the legacies of trauma, including colonialism and violence, which impede the process of forgiveness. Brah (1996) emphasises the significance of 'home' and 'belonging' in diasporic identities, proposing that the incapacity to forgive may arise from losing a solid sense of self and place. Moreover, this term in diasporic thought is more than just a release of past wrongs; it can also serve as an arena for political reform. According to Gilroy (1993), forgiveness is conceptualised as a means of healing and reimagining the future, allowing marginalised communities to redefine their identities and histories. Therefore, this concept is both a personal and collective process, determined by the desire for justice, healing, and identity preservation in the aftermath of adversity.

In terms of food, mothers view traditional cuisine as a crucial link to ethnic identity and lineage, frequently leading to a strict dedication to these habits. Nevertheless, daughters raised in contemporary cultures that value individuality may reject traditional ideals, leading to conflict. This paper emphasises forgiveness as crucial in easing this tension. By embracing forgiveness, migrant mothers and daughters can share culinary experiences that harmonise their cultural expectations. Both generations engage in culinary reconciliation by modifying recipes and integrating new ingredients, reflecting their evolving identities. This approach fosters communication and compassion, aiding in healing emotional traumas from displacement and migration, making forgiveness key in reconciling generational differences through cuisine.

In addition to conflict resolution, food is vital in promoting resilience in migrant families as they adapt to their new host countries. In a diasporic context, resilience pertains to the ability of individuals and societies to endure, adjust, and prosper in unfamiliar environments beyond their native land (Pandya, 2024). From the standpoint of family dynamics, Masten (2018), noted for her work on resilience and its influence on helping children and their families manage adversity, contends that resilience is "the capacity of a system to adapt successfully to significant challenges that threaten its function, viability, or development" (p. 1), stressing the ability to prosper despite adversity. In the realm of migration, food helps migrating mothers and daughters adapt to new situations while preserving their cultural heritage. Their culinary adaptation reveals their resilience and feeling of community (Roy, 2021). Additionally, food fosters psychological resilience, assisting both generations to adjust to challenging environments (Denckla et al., 2020). In the context of resilience, McCartney and Gill (2007) use Cultural Freeze, Convergence, and Compromise/Adaptation to study cultural integration in British South Asian groups.

The term 'cultural freeze' refers to the preservation of traditional cultural practices in the face of migration. Migrants frequently uphold their cultural beliefs and practices to maintain their identity in a foreign setting (McCartney & Gill, 2007). From the perspective of migrant mothers and daughters, this paper will utilise this concept to explore how mothers uphold traditional culinary habits without adapting to the new cultural environment, which can lead to conflicts with daughters growing up in a different culture. This notion highlights the discrepancies in cooking practices between mothers and daughters and how these disputes are managed within the framework of cultural continuity and adaptability in Britain.

The concept of 'convergence' proposes that migrants quickly embrace the cultural norms of their host country (McCartney & Gill, 2007). In our paper, we use this approach to explore migrant daughters' culinary attitudes towards traditional food, illustrating their adjustment to and adoption of new cultural customs. Generational tension is demonstrated by their hesitation to entirely accept traditional foods their mothers enjoy as they attempt to incorporate more familiar, local items or foods that fit their new cultural identities. Consequently, this culinary battle symbolises the fight between heritage and conforming to mainstream society, providing a nuanced comprehension of the cultural and generational interactions within migrant families.

The notion of Compromise/Adaptation posits an amalgamated and balanced approach, in which diasporic individuals adapt to the new settings while preserving the cultural practices of their homeland culture (McCartney & Gill, 2007). This study employs this concept to explore how migrating mothers and their daughters navigate the balance between adapting to new environments and preserving traditional culinary practices. This approach highlights the resolution of generational conflict, where both parties reach an understanding. Forgiveness is central to this process, helping mothers and daughters redefine culinary traditions while preserving cultural heritage, filling a key gap in the research. Forgiveness extends beyond emotions to practical issues like food, fostering culinary reconciliation between generations and representing cultural compromise. This paper underscores the role of forgiveness in resolving

intergenerational issues, helping mothers adapt to new elements while maintaining cultural roots. For daughters, it involves accepting traditional meals, recognising their heritage, and adjusting to life in a new country like Britain.

This study principally investigates the food paths of migrant mothers and their daughters to traditional foods in transnational settings, through the lens of generational conflicts as portrayed in Nair's *100 Shades of White*. It posits that food serves as a cornerstone of resilience, assisting individuals in navigating challenges and flourishing in diverse circumstances. It further offers a novel perspective by showing that forgiveness through culinary adaptation embodies resilience and healing, demonstrating that resolving culinary conflicts symbolises a broader reconciliation of identities in cross-border contexts.

To demonstrate migrant mothers' and daughters' culinary and survival experiences, this paper utilises Masten's (2018) interpretation of resilience and McCartney and Gill's (2007) framework—comprising Cultural Freeze, Convergence, and Compromise/Adaptation—to explore how Nalini and her daughter Maya in Nair's novel interact with traditional food. It illustrates how they preserve, adapt, and balance their culinary practices as they navigate their cultural identities in new environments. This dual framework deeply explores resilience in daily routines like food consumption and how cultural adaptations help preserve, transform, and blend culinary traditions in diasporic communities. By adopting this framework, this study illustrates how these concepts address generational conflict and how culinary traditions reflect broader issues of belonging, identity, and cultural survival in migrant households.

B. Methodology

The methodology reflects the conceptual framework adopted for this paper by identifying three distinct approaches to culinary adaptations experienced by migrant mothers and daughters in the novel. Through a textual analysis, Nalini and Maya's culinary clash is analysed first, demonstrating Nalini's 'Cultural Freeze' approach versus Maya's 'Convergence' strategy. The paper then delves into their culinary reconciliation, highlighting their eventual adoption of the 'Compromise/Adaptation' approach. This method underscores Nair's emphasis on generational conflicts regarding traditional foods and their closure through embracing forgiveness in culinary practices, accentuating the vitality of traditional foods in a transnational context. Forgiveness bridges the generational divide between migrant mothers and daughters through food practices, symbolising adaptability and historical reconciliation. By accepting their heritage and migratory experiences, they achieve tranquility in their identities and connections, reflecting the immigrant experience of navigating dual cultures.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A. Mother-Daughter's Culinary Approaches in *100 Shades of White*

Nalini, a mother who is forced to leave her comfortable life in India and face the challenging conditions of Britain, is left to take care of her two young children by herself after her husband leaves them. Nalini's initial fabrication of the death of her husband, to protect her children from the awful truth of his abandonment, creates a crucial metaphor for her ongoing efforts to preserve equilibrium and safeguard their innocence in a time of turmoil. "I cannot easily put into words why I told my children that their father had died. To save them from the lies that inextricably led to the fact that the only person he could have possibly loved was himself," Nalini confesses (Nair, 2003, p. 53). Thus, Nalini's lie hides the unpleasant reality of her husband's betrayal from both her children and herself.

Nalini's narrative offers a perspective on the tensions between generations, illustrated by her declaration, "Children adapt, it is adults who find change hard" (Nair, 2003, p. 80). Her assertion addresses the crucial aspect of personal behaviour and development, notably concerning generational conflicts and traditions. The core message of the quote reveals that younger generations, signified by children in this scenario, are frequently more adaptable and flexible to adopting modifications in cultural rituals, traditions, and behaviours. Their adaptability derives from an ongoing process of learning and integration in which individuals are constantly exposed to new viewpoints and influences from their surroundings, as confirmed by Masten (2018). On the other hand, adults, who are already comfortable with their unique cultural identities and deeply established habits, may have greater difficulty in accepting or adjusting to changes.

Extending this understanding to the culinary struggle between Nalini and Maya, Nalini reflects the adult standpoint by adhering to a 'culture freeze' approach, which aligns with McCartney and Gill's (2007) interpretation of the concept, underlining the persistence of traditional cultural practices despite migration. Contrary to this, Maya epitomises the younger generation's embracing of a 'convergence' approach, confirming a greater openness to exploring and integrating new culinary skills and techniques into her repertoire. This varies by generation, with first-generation individuals demonstrating distinct methods of cultural adaptation compared to concurrent generations. The following discussion will demonstrate the divergent culinary voyages of Nalini and her daughter Maya.

Nalini's character is primarily defined by her strong affinity for typical Indian cuisine and cooking, which not only supports her with nourishment but also as an emotional connection to her cultural and familial traditions. This is exemplified by Maya's assertion that her mother "could cook exceptionally well, since she and my Ammamma were the village cooks" (Nair, 2003, p. 5). She further states, "Groceries and things like spices and other ingredients, which weren't readily available, were delivered to our house every Thursday. Achan had arranged this as Amma liked to cook. It was the only thing she loved to do" (Nair, 2003, p. 23). She also emphasises that cooking is the most successful

resolution to her challenges, as she states: "At times, I didn't want to see because guilt crept into my soul. Guilt that I had nothing to offer them and the only way I could compensate was to cook" (Nair, 2003, p. 93). In another incident, Nalini declares that she "cooked just to forget. I had to continue. There was no choice" (Nair, 2003, p. 91). Consequently, Nalini establishes an entrepreneurial business that sells homemade pickles, perceiving cooking as a form of solace and change in times of hardship. She is inspired by her mother's guidance to flavour her culinary endeavours with enthusiasm and commitment, contending that the love and gratitude that are incorporated into her food are the basis of her customers' pleasure.

Nalini demonstrates the powerful impact of spices, stating, "just the right amount of cumin to stimulate appetite for life, a cinnamon quill to bring spice or action into stagnant phases of life, lemon juice to diffuse an argument, chilli to relieve pain and turmeric to heal the heart" (Nair, 2003, p. 54). Nalini's belief in the healing power of food and its role in fostering resilience is reflected as she overcomes challenges with the help of chillies and peppercorns. Her homemade pickles are a nostalgic reminder of their Indian heritage amidst the coldness of their new home. Hence, Nalini's devotion to traditional South Indian particularly Malayalee cuisine, specifically expressed through her homemade pickle enterprise, reflects the cultural freeze attitude. For Nalini, the act of preparing traditional dishes and selling homemade pickles from her kitchen is not merely a means of generating income or sustenance; it is a conscious endeavour to preserve a cultural identity that has been passed down through generations.

In stark contrast to Nalini's firm dedication to Indian culinary habits, her daughter Maya's narrative trajectory demonstrates the intricacies of generational difference and adjustment to culture. Maya, shaped by being raised in a diverse British society, enthusiastically adopts a variety of culinary practices. She represents the 'Convergence' approach, expressing hostility and refusal towards her mother's conventional cuisine. Nalini's delightful pickles offer both enjoyment and financial security to the household, having an immense effect on all who consume them, except for her adolescent daughter, Maya. Maya loves English burgers, fish fingers, and chips and rejects to taste her mother's food. She expresses this by stating: "I loved my school, my teacher, the food, television, and I didn't want to go back. If I was asked to make a choice, I would choose England every time" (Nair, 2003, p. 26).

Maya's preference for English cuisine over her mother's traditional Indian dishes illustrates her process of cultural adaptation and her wish to smoothly merge into her new home. Maya's narrative commences with poignant recollections of her birth, characterised by an astrologer's gloomy prophecy: "the second child always brings change, but this one has come with Mars in the first house, and she will surely be the cause of much, much upheaval" (Nair, 2003, p. 6). The prediction anticipates the chaos that Maya believes haunts her throughout her life, especially as she encounters the difficulties of migrating from India to Britain.

Nair adeptly depicts the culinary tension between the mother and daughter in *100 Shades of White* through a multitude of incidents. Any time Nalini cooks a meal, there are always leftovers since Maya and Satchin love fish fingers with ketchup and burgers, showing their acceptance of a different lifestyle. This follows McCartney and Gill's (2007) utilisation of the notions of cultural adaptation, marked by 'cultural freeze' and 'convergence', as stated previously in the conceptual framework section. They often persuade their mother to grill food or make English cuisine, highlighting a generational conflict between traditional and cultural integration. Maya and Satchin's refusal to eat leftover lunches underscores their difficulties adapting to the new environment, often disposing of food on their way to school.

In addition, Maya adopts English food protocols and customs, mastering the skill of using cutlery from her teacher, Miss Davies, to assimilate with her school peers who deem eating with hands to be improper. "Miss Davies is warm and cuddly and is nice to me, she sat with me at lunchtime, to make sure that I ate properly. She taught me how to use a knife and fork" (Nair, 2003, p. 22). Maya informs her mother and justifies this by stating, "Amma, all the other children looked at me when I ate with my hands" (22). This cultural adaptation is evident when Maya decides to use a knife and fork at a restaurant, saying, "I cut softly into them with my knife and fork" (Nair, 2003, p. 239), despite her mother's preference for eating with fingers, as represented by her mother's comment "fingers connected you to food in a way no other instrument could" (239). The mother's commitment to eating with the fingers is an embodiment of a 'cultural freeze,' underscoring her significant attachment to traditional practices despite the new surroundings. Nevertheless, Maya's rationale to her mother reflects her adjustment: "Satchin and I would argue with her about hygiene, insisting that we had to use cutlery" (239) and further defend such reaction: "We had learnt this from the other kids who said that Pakis were unclean and ate with their fingers. "No," the mother answered, "it is important to touch the food" (239). Maya's mother's desire to connect her children with home traditions contrasts with Maya's emphasis on using cutlery, emphasising the generational clash between maintaining cultural practices and embracing new norms.

In *100 Shades of White*, Nair skilfully presents the causes of the mother-daughter culinary conflict in a transnational context. Maya's deviation from her mother's cooking style illustrates the constant dispute between the traditions of her native Indian culture and those of her new host country. This tension, as underlined in recent studies, frequently introduces significant obstacles for migrant daughters when their home culture clashes with that of the hostland (Costa, 2022). Torn between these two worlds, Maya refuses to eat her mother's homemade food as part of her efforts to fit in. She expresses this struggle: "I felt we were forced to make a choice and I chose the easiest route, which was to forget the place and the culture that I was from" (Nair, 2003, p. 51). Maya's capacity to adapt and thrive amidst cultural

conflict demonstrates Masten's (2018) theory of resilience; her initial disapproval of her heritage, while seemingly a setback, constitutes an integral aspect of her holistic journey to reconcile and assimilate both cultures.

Furthermore, Maya's encounter with racism at her school in London intensifies her refusal to accept conventional cuisine. Discrimination, bias, and stereotyping increase the challenges for migrating daughters, intensifying feelings of loneliness and hostility (Pourya Asl, 2022). Maya, at six years old, is deeply impacted by racial acts against her native foods.

In class, Mark Fitzgerald denigrates her by calling her "Paki," a derogatory term for South Asians (Nair, 2003, p. 37). He further abuses her during playtime by asking, "Well, why have you got dirty hair and that Paki smell? Bet you eat with your fingers an'all" (37). This remark devalues Maya and links her cultural food habits with inferiority. In this context, Belford and Lahiri-Roy (2020) explore the impact of racism, triggered by gender and migration, on South Asian women's feelings of identity, belonging, and social mobility in Britain. They underscore how these women challenge discrimination by embracing cultural history and perseverance. Maya's resilience in facing such prejudice is illustrated when she physically fights him back. Thereby, she is driven to give up her native cuisine and embrace English cuisine because of this disrespectful comment.

The conflict between Nalini and her daughter Maya over food in Nair's novel represents the broader issues of identity negotiations in migrant families. Nalini's commitment to traditional culinary practices (cultural freeze) helps maintain familial ties and cultural consistency in a foreign context (McCartney & Gill, 2007). Conversely, Maya's preference for diverse foods from her new home reflects the convergence approach. The novel showcases the complex struggle of diasporic individuals using the kitchen to maintain and adapt cultural roots across generations.

B. Culinary Reconciliation Between Mother and Daughter in 100 Shades of White

In the course of the narrative, a resolution evolves demonstrating a harmonious approach in the mother-daughter relationship towards conventional culinary practices. This commences with Nalini, the mother, undergoing a considerable change in her culinary habits. Nalini's transition from cultural freeze to a strategy of compromise and adaptation signifies her realisation of the need to adapt to thrive in a new setting. Initially adhering to traditional practices to manage parenting alone in Britain, she eventually incorporates local elements with her cultural heritage. This shift indicates her move towards adaptability and a better future for her family. Her successful opening of a new brand shop in London, where she sells her recipes to diverse consumers, exemplifies her adaptation. Nair details Nalini's use of specific ingredients, highlighting cooking's role in fostering migrant women's resilience. Thus, her integration of new components into traditional recipes illustrates the 'Compromise/Adaptation' culinary approach, aligning with McCartney and Gill's (2007) interpretation.

Unlike the 'cultural freeze' style she previously embraced, the 'Compromise' strategy entails adjusting to the new setting while upholding the customs and habits of the home country (McCartney & Gill, 2007). Realising that her mango and lime pickles are selling, Nalini decides to present a new range: apple, cinnamon, and chilli. She mixes English cooking apples with a combination of fiery chilies, asafoetida, a hint of toasted fenugreek, and luscious all ground with nicely sautéed onions and mustard seeds. Nalini reflects on this by saying: "In those bottles were a perfect combination of stable West and fiery East. It was an acceptance on my part, an assimilation of cultures, fused with the coarse sweetness of cinnamon" (Nair, 2003, p. 108). Nalini's remarks underscore her adoption for the Compromise cooking approach, emphasising her skill in blending ingredients from her new surroundings with traditional recipes from her native country. Her culinary creations reflect a seamless cultural fusion, with cinnamon symbolising the sweetness of integration. Nalini's expert use of spices and gratitude gives her pickles healing properties, contributing to the success of her company, 'The Abundance of Spice'.

Nalini reconstructs her life with the support of her loved ones and the wisdom of her mother. She affirms her mother's emphasis on the healing power of forgiveness by saying: "My mother used to say that it was forgiveness that worked on the soul and made miracles possible. According to her, forgiveness from a broken heart combusted energy that made insurmountable obstacles just dissolve" (Nair, 2003, p. 101). Nalini's 'Compromise' method implies that acknowledging forgiveness helps her overcome obstacles, reconcile new and old traditions, and achieve a balanced and successful life. This corresponds with Gilroy's (1993) understanding of forgiveness, which he characterises as a restorative process enabling minorities to heal and redefine their identities. In Nair's *100 Shades of White*, the Compromise cooking approach provides new insights into diasporic literature by South Asian women writers, addressing a significant gap. Forgiveness is essential for Nalini's ability to adapt and incorporate English products into her culinary practices, easing her transition into British culture.

Nalini finds solace in her mother's wisdom about forgiveness, which helps her accept her new context and let go of past bitterness. This forgiveness inspires her to blend English components with traditional Indian flavours, symbolising her cultural adaptation and personal growth. Forgiveness enables her to embrace new opportunities, turning her culinary art into a thriving business that reflects a blend of her heritage and new life. In this process, Nalini enriches her cultural identity, showcasing adaptability and resilience in her culinary journey. This is consistent with Masten's (2018) notion of resilience, referring to an individual's ability to successfully adapt and prosper in the face of adversity.

Maya's journey of self-discovery through various countries leads to a pivotal return to India after twenty years, restoring her connection to her roots through traditional food. This enhances her appreciation of her heritage and highlights the role of culinary traditions in emotional wellness. Like her mother, Maya adopts a compromise approach

to her culinary customs, balancing new influences with the core elements of her home traditions. As the following discussion will demonstrate, this technique helps her adapt to new culinary environments while preserving her cultural heritage.

Maya's development in incorporating traditional food into her culinary life reflects her 'Compromise' approach. Initially, she rejects iddlies, seeing them as a conflict with her mother: "It was the battleground between Amma and us, used to establish the balance of power, and Satchin and I stood firm. She was a skilful opponent, packing the iddlies into our lunch boxes which we managed to dispose of them easily" (Nair, 2003, p. 238). However, upon returning to India, she finds comfort in the dish: "The hot peppercorns made me cough and felt soothing, like returning safely home" (Nair, 2003, p. 240). This is further illustrated when Maya, staying at a hotel in India, decides to order "iddlies with sambar" (Nair, 2003, p. 238) and admits that "the last time I tasted iddlies and sambar was probably when I was about four, preferring food that had been processed since" (Nair, 2003, p. 239). Maya's choice of a traditional South Indian dish over an English meal highlights her cultural heritage and openness to blending modern experiences with conventional techniques. She recalls, "It was a typical dish from the South which my grandmother would make for us, smashing down the fermented rice cakes in the liquid sambar" (Nair, 2003, p. 238), underscoring the cultural and familial importance of iddlies and sambar. This shift signifies her reconciliation with her heritage, embracing her grandmother's wisdom that "this was the process of self-cleansing, washing out all the impurities that had become stuck throughout the years" (Nair, 2003, p. 240). Maya's capacity to reconcile her past and present through culinary practices demonstrates resilience, as she evolves beyond her prior rejection of tradition, exemplifying the constructive change that Masten (2018) posits as fundamental to resilience.

A prime example of Maya's 'Compromise' approach to her culinary journey is her reunion with her mother in Britain. After reconnecting with her Indian culture, Maya joins her mother in pickle-making rituals, preserving their heritage. Nalini's first lesson to Maya, "It's forgiveness, Mol. I know there is no more resentment inside of you, but forgiveness also includes oneself" (Nair, 2003, p. 286), deeply resonates with her. This advice highlights that forgiveness is about letting go of animosity and embracing self-acceptance. This realisation exemplifies the complex interactions between mothers and daughters, where culinary practices serve as a path to reconciliation and understanding. Maya reflects on this new culinary experience with her mother: "We chopped our way through so many bags of onions that it made us cry. Sizzling in a cauldron of oil, everything that was bitter and raw turned sweet" (Nair, 2003, p. 286). Cutting onions together, despite the tears, symbolises their effort to turn bitterness into sweetness through cooking. Maya's eagerness to learn this tradition represents her embrace of her heritage and her bond with her mother, representing a compromise between past conflicts and present harmony.

Considering the above discussion, Masten (2018) underscores the importance of the bond between migrant mothers, such as Nalini, and their daughters, such as Maya, in reconciling their cultural upbringing with their new surroundings. They build resilience by harmonising the dual expectancies of their host country and the customs of their homeland. This voyage enhances their culinary skills and fortifies resilience, developing a stable identity essential for their wellness. As illustrated in this section, both Nalini and Maya experience a culinary reconciliation that reflects their broader cultural and emotional healing. Nalini adapts by combining new and old cooking methods; similarly, Maya embraces new practices while maintaining her heritage. Therefore, this compromise strategy fosters adaptability and fortitude.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper delves into the diasporic culinary experiences presented in Nair's *100 Shades of White*, concentrating on the generational disputes over traditional food as faced by its protagonists within a transnational context. Using McCartney and Gill's (2007) paradigm and Masten's (2018) insights into familial resilience, the novel reveals the culinary adjustments migrant mothers and daughters make across cultural settings, fostering deep connections in new environments.

Analysing the culinary adaptations of migrant mothers and daughters in Nair's novel, we contend that Nair employs traditional foods as a means to depict diasporic individuals' passion for, refusal of, and eventual embrace of their native culture. This paper proposes that food becomes a battlefield for generational tensions, with initially Nalini manifesting the cultural freeze approach in upholding traditional culinary practices and Maya the convergence culinary approach influenced by Western culture. The novel poignantly presents this culinary conflict to highlight larger themes of independence, assimilation, and changing identities of South Asian women in the diaspora. However, the narrative gradually bridges the gap between Nalini and her daughter Maya by leveraging food as a reconciliation ground for their culinary disagreements. Both characters embrace a compromise/adaptation approach, integrating conventional and new culinary practices through forgiveness, thereby facilitating their adjustment into the new land. Through Nalini and Maya's growing relationship with food, Nair emphasises the continuing value of legacy and the dynamic nature of cultural identity in promoting personal development.

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Prosodic Features of Lying: A View From Jordanian Colloquial Arabic

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Abstract—Lying is an intentional act of delivering false information to deceive others using language. Examining the linguistic features of this act has been an area of interest for Forensic linguists because of its potential value in investigating various legal contexts such as allegations, testimonies, criminal investigations, and police interrogations. This study aims to explore the relationship between the frequency and duration of Filled pauses (FPs) and lying in Jordanian colloquial Arabic (JAC) and examines their social constraints. To achieve this aim, a corpus of 288 narratives, 144 lying and 144 truthful, was collected through face-to-face interviews with 48 speakers stratified by gender, age, and educational attainment. The truthful accounts served as a baseline to detect any change in the pattern of FP frequency and duration in the lying condition. The results obtained from the analysis revealed that lying accounts contained more frequent and longer FPs than truthful accounts, indicating that the frequency of FPs and their duration are potential cues for deception in JAC. In addition, the data showed that the three social factors influence the frequency and duration of FPs when lying. In terms of gender, female deceptive accounts displayed a higher frequency of and longer pauses than males'. With regard to age, the lying narratives of old speakers had the highest frequency and longest FPs among all age groups. As for education, the deceptive narratives of high-educated speakers contained more frequent and longer pauses than their low-educated counterparts.

Index Terms—Forensic Linguistics, Filled Pauses (FPs), lying, deception detection

I. INTRODUCTION

Forensic Linguistics is considered an applied linguistic science in which linguistic knowledge is utilized in examining some legal issues (Olsson, 2008; Coulthard & Johnson, 2010); thus, it refers to the application of any scientific linguistic principle to any text that could be potential of being forensic like text messages, emails, recorded speech, testimonies, and confessions.

Considering that any legal matter is codified in language, linguists of all the various subfields of linguistics could always have a role in contributing to the field of law. For example, syntacticians, semanticists, and pragmaticians can have their input when legal documents are in question by offering linguistic analysis; phoneticians could help identify speakers and contribute to trademark cases where sounds of names are at issue; dialectologists could determine the country or city of origin of suspects (Tiersma & Solan, 2002). Therefore, forensic linguists play an influential role in the legal system by detecting linguistic cues in the examined court case to reveal certain pieces of evidence.

Owing to the fact that the act of lying violates veracity and goes under the umbrella of deception, its detection has been an area of interest for scientists in many fields. Throughout history, lying detection has been examined through different approaches. A number of scientists studied whether there are any physiological cues associated with lying via polygraphs; some conducted voice analyses, and others examined the non-verbal cues associated with lying (Nicklaus & Stein, 2022; Vrij, 2008). However, since lying is a linguistic activity (Horn, 2017) that cannot be performed without the use of language, some linguists have been interested in searching for the verbal cues of deception by developing verbal veracity assessment tools that could be implemented in investigations in court cases, e.g., false testimonies, confessions, or accusations (Masip et al., 2005; Vrij, 2008; Nicklaus & Stein, 2022). In attempt to contribute to the field of law from a linguistic perspective, this study aimed to investigate whether the occurrence and frequency of filled pauses (FPs) are potential cues for deception in Jordanian Colloquial Arabic.

Pauses are among the acoustic cues that signal breaks in the prosodic units of natural speech. There are two major types of pauses: silent and acoustic-filled ones. Silent pauses are defined as “periods of non-articulation by the speaker” (Rose, 2017, p. 49), whereas acoustic-filled pauses FPs e.g., ‘Um’ in “*behind um the banana that’s not peeled*” are defined as “gaps in speech production filled with non-lexical vocalizations (Gosy, 2023, p. 1)”. These pauses indicate various processes, such as recalling a word, controlling speech production, keeping the floor, and managing communication between interlocutors (Clark & Tree, 2002; Benus et al., 2006). However, pauses of both types cause interruptions to an ongoing speech, which could affect listeners’ judgment of the veracity of an account. They might either boost or lower their confidence in the speaker’s knowledge as they indicate uncertainty and hesitation (Vrij et al., 1996; Arciuli et al., 2010; Chen, 2020).

To explore the relationship between FPs and deception, a corpus of lying and truthful accounts was gathered through face-to-face interviews with 24 male and 24 female speakers of Jordanian Colloquial Arabic. Truthful narratives were

used as a baseline to explore any remarkable deviation in the frequency or duration of pauses that occurred in the lying accounts.

The below section reviews related literature on the use of Filled Pauses with regard to lying.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section reviews the pertinent literature on the relationship between filled pauses (FPs) and deception.

Filled pauses like uh and um tend to be used at specific points in discourse, serving multiple intentional and unintentional communicative messages such as signaling speakers' intention to take the floor in a conversation, facilitating the perception and comprehension of the next proposition (Tree, 2002), and managing interpersonal communication (Bortfeld, 2001). However, this prosodic feature has also been an area of interest for researchers due to its potential association with verbal deception.

Chen et al. (2020) examined four linguistic and acoustic-prosodic features of discourse, namely filled pauses, false starts, response latency, and repetition, in relation to human perception of deception. They collected data through a game where participants were requested to rate a corpus of deceptive and truthful interviews. Subsequently, researchers pointed out the acoustic-prosodic and linguistic characteristics of language that raters adopted to judge the veracity of interviewees. Afterward, they compared them to the features they actually detected in truthful and deceptive discourse to examine the accuracy of people's perception of the veracity of statements in alignment with reality. The findings revealed that successful lies were shorter, with fewer sentences and fewer filled pauses than unsuccessful ones. In addition, it was shown that successful liars responded more quickly than unsuccessful ones.

Levitan et al. (2018) also examined deception detection in a corpus containing dialogues conducted between 340 subjects in the English language. Besides, they explored the perception of deception by highlighting the features of the statements that were identified as truthful or deceiving by interviewers. The analysis revealed significant differences between honest and deceiving responses. First, results showed that participants' deceptive responses were longer and contained more words than truthful ones. Second, it was revealed that the increase in the average response duration and number of words per sentence were significant indicators of lying. Third, their analysis showed that the increase in the use of filled pauses in participants' response segments is a significant indicator of deceit.

Montacié et al. (2016) investigated three prosodic cues namely pauses, speech segmentation, and phone duration with regard to deception detection. They applied computational methods to a deceptive speech database consisting of truthful and lying answers to a number of unknown questions. Findings showed that deceptive answers contained more frequent and longer pauses than truthful ones as a result of the extra cognitive load liars assume when fabricating an event.

Arciuli and Villar (2010) examined the use of two utterances, namely 'um' and 'like' in laboratory-elicited lies. Participants were asked to share two accounts as part of the data collection process. In the first account, they were instructed to honestly express their opinions about specific social issues (e.g., smoking ban, legalizing marijuana, abortion) to the interviewer. In the second one, they were requested to provide an untruthful response and convince the interviewer with an opinion opposite to their genuine belief. Results revealed that filled pauses were less frequent and shorter in deception than in truth-telling. Researchers attributed this finding to two possible reasons. The first reason is that the utterances 'um' and 'like' should not be classified as filled pauses as they can hold a lexical status, similar to injections, that appears in effortless communication. The second possible reason might be that speakers attempt to control the use of any utterance that could signal uncertainty when lying to mask their lies.

Mann et al. (2004) examined the ability of ninety-nine police officers to distinguish between truthful and lying statements said by suspects in videotaped police interviews using a set of verbal cues and non-verbal cues. Findings showed that police officers had a higher success rate in detecting lies when pauses were more frequent in the statements. However, the efficiency of this feature as a cue for deception varied on the officer's level of experience and the severity of the offense.

Tree (2002) examined the perception of deceptive speech by comparing how overhearers perceived second speakers' contributions to a conversation depending on whether the responses were immediate, preceded by a pause, a preceded by an 'um,' or preceded by an 'um' and pause. The findings showed that listeners perceived the use of filled pauses after direct questions (e.g., "Are you here because of affirmative action?" (*pause, um, or both*) "It helped me out a little bit.") (p. 73) as a signal of dishonesty or discomfort with the subject being discussed.

Vrij et al. (2000) conducted a study examining the production of verbal and non-verbal deception behavior. Amongst the examined non-verbal deception behaviors were speech hesitations "e.g., 'ah' or 'mm'" speech errors "word or sentence repetition, change, completion, or slip of the tongue"; latency period "period of time between the question and the answer"; and speech rates "the number of spoken words divided by the length of interview minus latency period" (Vrij et al., 2000, p. 299). To examine these features with regard to lying, researchers conducted video and audio-taped interviews with seventy-three nursing students. Students were requested to either tell the truth or lie about a movie they had just watched. The results showed that liars demonstrated more filled pauses (e.g., *ums* and *uhs*), longer speech latency, and slower speech rates than truth-tellers. The researchers attributed the reason for these findings to the increased cognitive load participants assumed when they were requested to perform a difficult task, which is making up a bold-face story.

III. METHODOLOGY

This section overviews the research questions, participants, instrument, and data collection procedure.

A. Research Questions

This paper attempted to answer the following questions:

- To what extent do acoustic-filled pauses indicate lying in Jordanian Colloquial Arabic?
- To what extent does the duration of acoustic-filled pauses indicate lying in Jordanian Colloquial Arabic?
- To what extent do the social factors (gender, age, and educational attainment) constrain the use of filled pauses and their duration while lying?

B. Participants

The target population comprises all Jordanian speakers of colloquial Arabic aged between 21-30, 31-40, and 41-50. The researcher recruited 24 male and 24 female native speakers of Jordanian Colloquial Arabic who all live in West Amman.

As shown in Table 1, speakers were distributed into three age groups (young, middle-aged, and old). The age range of young speakers was between 21-30 years old, middle-aged speakers were between 31-40, and old speakers were between 41-50. Twelve participants within each age range were chosen. In view of the three age ranges, this would enable the researcher to examine whether 'age,' as an independent variable, affects the choice of linguistic expressions of lying and whether it indicates any linguistic changes in progress. As for participants' level of education, participants were classified into 24 highly educated individuals and another 24 low-educated ones.

TABLE 1
SAMPLING OF THE POPULATION ACCORDING TO GENDER, AGE, AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Education	Male			Female			Total
	21y-30y	31y- 40y	41y-50y	21y-30y	31y-40y	41y-50y	
High	4	4	4	4	4	4	24
Low	4	4	4	4	4	4	24
Total	8	8	8	8	8	8	48

A non-probability sampling method, precisely the convenience sampling technique, was employed to recruit the required number of participants. This technique is a way through which data is collected from a population that is accessible and close at hand to the researcher (Rahi, 2017). This technique was adopted in this research and not any other due to three reasons. First, the nature of the topic under investigation, lying, is widely regarded as a dishonorable behavior that is not tolerated in Jordanian society. Moreover, being identified as a liar is deemed face-threatening, which might prevent people unfamiliar with the researcher from telling a lying account or conducting the mock crime comfortably. Second, as Jordan is considered a conservative society, some males, especially of the old age group, might feel shy or embarrassed to lie in front of a female interviewer. Third, collecting data from three different age groups of males and females who are half highly educated and half low-educated is time-consuming; thus, this technique is time efficient since the population is accessible to the researcher.

C. Instrument & Data Collection Procedure

To investigate whether FPs and their length could be cues for lying detection in JAC, it was crucial to examine specific speech content in a systematic manner (Mann et al., 2004). As the scope of this study is limited to the Jordanian colloquial of Arabic, participants were interviewed by the researcher. Each interview was approximately 25- 30 minutes long. During each interview, three phases were conducted as explained below:

Phase 1: Breaking the Ice:

In this phase, the researcher started by asking the participants a few ice-breaking questions (e.g., how are you, how was your day...etc.) to put the participants at ease while talking to the researcher.

Phase 2: Eliciting Lying Accounts

In this phase, participants were requested to convincingly recount three false narratives about the following three scenarios (car accident, theft, and wedding they attended)

Before participants shared their narratives, the interviewer instructed them only to recount completely made-up narratives and not real past experiences and to be as detailed as possible.

Phase 3: Establishing a baseline

In order to establish a speech baseline to detect any change in the use of FPs and their length in the data obtained from the lying narratives, participants were requested to recall real past experiences in the same scenarios (a car accident they had or witnessed before, a wedding they attended, a trip they took before). They were asked to provide detailed responses to stimulate more speech.

As participants tend to adopt a formal way of speech and may be conscious of their lexical choices while being recorded (Labov, 1972), they were informed that the present study was on episodic memory and not linguistic in nature.

D. Data Analysis Procedure

To investigate whether the frequency and duration of FPs can be cues for veracity or deception in Jordanian Colloquial Arabic (JCA), this section outlines the steps that were adopted to obtain comparable numerical data:

First, to examine whether the frequency of FPs varies when lying than when telling the truth, the following steps were applied to draw comparable numerical data:

- All FPs in all the lying and truthful accounts were counted.
- The overall averages of all FPs used in two modes (lying and truthful) with respect to the social factors were calculated by dividing the total number of FPs of each speaker by the total duration of records.
- The percentage change of the average of FPs between lying and truthful accounts was calculated by applying this equation: $(A-B)/B \times 100$. This equation calculates the percentage of variation in comparison to a reference value (B). In this thesis, A represents the average number of FPs in the lying accounts, while B represents the average number of FPs in the truthful accounts.
- In order to obtain accurate results, the average number of FPs per minute was calculated. This was deemed necessary since the length of the accounts varied between speakers.
- The data obtained from the truthful accounts served as a baseline to detect any change in the pattern of FP distribution that occurred in lying accounts

Second, to examine whether the duration of FPs varies when lying than when telling the truth, the following steps were applied to draw comparable numerical data:

- Duration of all FPs in all accounts was counted using a stopwatch
- The average single pause duration was calculated by dividing the duration of the pauses by the number of pauses;
- Afterward, the percentage of the duration of all pauses was calculated by dividing it by the total duration of the accounts;
- The percentage change in FP duration between lying and truthful accounts was calculated using the equation $((A-B)/B) \times 100$. This equation calculates the percentage of variation in comparison to a reference value (B). In this case, A is the percentage of FP duration in the lying accounts, while B is the percentage of FPs in the truthful accounts.
- The data obtained from the truthful accounts served as a baseline to detect any change in the pattern of FP distribution that occurred in lying accounts.

Due to the fact that this study examines the phonological features of lying by JCA speakers, only the data sets obtained from the analysis of deceptive accounts were explained in detail. On the other hand, those obtained from truthful accounts were only used as a benchmark to examine the patterns of deceptive language against them.

The section below presents the results of the study along with their discussion.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is mainly dedicated to presenting the findings of the study regarding the use of FPs and their duration with regard to lying in JAC. As I show below, the two types of accounts maintain differences between them in terms of prosodic features.

This section comprises two sub-sections that provide an analysis of two phonological features with regard to lying detection in JCA: (7.1) Filled Pauses (FPs) and (7.2) Duration of Filled Pauses (FPs).

A. Filled Pauses (FPs)

Drawing upon the reviewed literature, it is obvious that the production of deceptive utterances requires a higher cognitive load than producing truthful ones, which might consequently cause speech-planning difficulties; therefore, fillers come to compensate for the time the speaker needs to plan and control speech (Gosy, 2023, p. 10).

The following sub-sections present the average frequency of FPs as well as the percentage of their duration in the two lying and truthful modes with respect to social factors (i.e., gender, education, and age).

(a). Speaker's Gender

The influence of gender (males vs. females) on the distribution of FPs across data was examined by calculating the average of FP frequency in the two modes by applying the mathematical equations that were explained above. The results are shown in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2
AVERAGE OF FPs PER MINUTE IN THE TRUTHFUL AND LYING ACCOUNTS ACCORDING TO SPEAKER'S GENDER

Gender	Mode	
	Lying	Truthful
Males	4.23	3.251
Females	3.87	2.79

Table 2 demonstrates that males produced an average of 4.23 filled pauses per minute when lying, while females produced an average of 3.87 filled pauses per minute. This indicates that males used 10% more FPs than females when lying. By comparing the data sets obtained from the lying accounts to the truthful ones, it was observed that males tend to use more filled pauses when lying, averaging (4.23) as compared to when telling the truth (3.251). Similarly, females

tend to use more filled pauses in deceptive communication (3.87) than when being truthful (2.79). Thus, there exists a 30% percent increase with respect to the average number of pauses used by males when lying than when telling the truth. Additionally, there is a 37% percent increase in the average number of pauses used by females when being deceptive compared to when telling the truth. Hence, both males and females used a higher average number of filled pauses in lying accounts than in truthful accounts. Example (1) below illustrates this difference:

1.

(1) Excerpt from a lying account:

knt ʕa: ala:ʃa:ra {pause: eeeeh} wfdʒʔa: hʃjt {pause: eeeh} ʔlsja:r ʔlj wra:j θrkt {pause: eeeeh} wnzlna: (pause: Eeeeh} ɲʃwf ʃw sʕa:r [M:Middle-aged: H]

‘I was stopping at the light {pause: eeeh} suddenly I felt {pause: eeeeh} that a car hit mine from behind {pause: eeeeh} so we got out of the car {eeeh} to see what had happened.’

(2) Excerpt from a truthful account:

wa:hd skra:n ʔdʒa: xbtʃj ba:lsja:r mn wra: {eeeh} wma: sʕa:r ʃʃj ʔʃj bs ʔdʕra:r ba:lsja:r

‘A drunk person hit my car from behind {pause: eeeh} nothing happened to me but the car was damaged.’ [M: Middle-aged- H]

(b). *Speaker's Age*

Table 3 below presents the average number of FPs used by each age group across the three scenarios. Second, the effect of age on the distribution of filled pauses in the corpus has been examined by calculating the average of FPs in the three scenarios of each age group (22-32/ 33-43/ 54-54), as demonstrated in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3
AVERAGE OF FPs IN THE TRUTHFUL AND LYING ACCOUNTS ACCORDING TO SPEAKER'S AGE

Age	Mode	
	Lying	Truthful
21-30	3.77	3.31
31-40	4.25	3.27
41-50	4.14	2.88

It is apparent that individuals in the 33-43 age group exhibit a higher tendency for filled pauses during lying, as indicated by their higher average of 4.25 compared to the other age groups. However, the age group (22-32) showed comparatively less use of filled pauses when lying, averaging at (3.77), the lowest within this age range. For the 44-54 age group, the average number of filled pauses per minute is 4.14, which falls between the other two groups. The average difference between age groups in using FPs in the lying accounts indicates that speakers aged 33-43 use 12.73% more FPs than speakers aged 21-32 and 2.65% more than those aged 44-54. Example (2) represents the high number of FPs a female took while recounting a false event. As for the percentage change in the use of FPs between the lying and truthful accounts, data shows that there is a 13.89% increase in the lying narratives of young speakers, a 29.96% increase in the narratives of middle-aged speakers, and 43.75 in the narratives of old speakers. Therefore, the frequency of FPs increases with age when lying.

After testing the findings against the numerical data obtained from the analysis of truthful accounts, the use of FPs in the deceptive accounts was higher than in the truthful accounts, with a noticeable difference. In addition, it was revealed that the percentage difference in the number of FPs between lying and truthful accounts changes with age. The age group of 44-54 has the highest percentage difference, indicating a more significant change in filled pause usage between lying and truthful scenarios. Speakers aged 44-54 used 43.75%; 32-43 used 30.01%; and 21-32 used 13.90% more pauses in the deceptive accounts than in the truthful accounts. These results indicate potential age-related differences in the filled pause patterns used in deceptive communication, with older people showing a substantial difference in FP patterns between lying and telling the truth. Example (2) demonstrates this difference.

(1)

(A) An excerpt from a lying account

ħa:tʕ mwba:jlj θt ʔlmnʃeh {pause: u:} wrħt ʕla ʔlʔiʕ jʕnj qʕdna: {pause: eeeeh} ʃj ʕʃr dqa:jʃ {pause: eeeeh} ʃlma: rdʒʔt {pause: eeeeh} qʕdt wnsjt mwdʕwʕ ʔlmwba:jl.

[F, Middle-aged, H]

‘I put my phone under a towel {pause: u:} and went to the beach and stayed there {pause: eeeeh} for about 10 minutes {pause: eeeeh} When I got back {pause: eeeeh} I sat down and forgot about my phone.’

(B) An excerpt from a TRU account

knt tʃʃl sʕjʃr {pause: eeeh} kna: dʒa:jjn ʔdʒa:z mn ʔlkwt ʕa:la:rdn wna:zljn ʕla ʔlywr {pause: u:} ʔxtj btqtʕ ʔʃa:rʕ wdʕstħa: sja:r

‘I was a little girl {pause: eeeh} We were coming on vacation from Kuwait to Jordan and were going down the Jordan Valley {pause: u:} My sister was crossing the street, and a car ran over her.’

(2)

(A) An excerpt from a lying account

kna: bʃrs b {pause: eeeeh} lslʃ {pause neeeeh} ka:n ʔlʃrs hʌw {u:::} ka:n ʃrs ʃb sʃa:hʌb ʔlj {pause: mmmm} ka:n ba:lsʃf

[M, Old, H]

‘We were at a wedding in {pause: eeeeh} Salt {pause: neeeeh} the wedding was nice {u:::} it was a wedding for a friend {pause: mmmm} it was in the summer’

(B) An excerpt from a truthful account

rht ʃla ʃrs ʔbn xa:lj ba:lsʃtʃ {pause: eeh} mʒrʃ hʌw ktjr ʃrs ktjr mrtb {pause: eeh} wa:lʃrws wa:lʃrjs ktjr ka:nw mbswtʃjn

[M, Old, H]

‘I went to my cousin's wedding in Salt {pause: eeh}, a very nice farm, a very well-arranged wedding {pause: eeh}, and the bride and groom were very happy.’

(c). Speaker's Education

Table 4 below shows the average FPs used by high-educated and low-educated speakers in both account modes (lying and truthful).

TABLE 4
AVERAGE OF FPs IN THE TRUTHFUL AND LYING ACCOUNTS IN RELATION TO AGE

Education	Mode	
	Lying	Truthful
High	4.48	3.50
Low	3.59	2.73

The results indicate that highly educated speakers tend to use more filled pauses per minute at an average of (4.48) than low-educated speakers, averaging (3.59) during lying scenarios. Hence, high-educated speakers tend to use 24% more FPs than low-educated speakers. As for the difference between lying and truthful accounts, the analysis uncovered that the average number of FPs is higher in the former (4.48, 3.59) than the latter (3.50, 2.73) regardless of education level, with a noticeable difference, especially for the low-educated speakers. Accordingly, a 28.00% increase was observed for highly educated speakers and a 31.42% increase for low-educated speakers in lying accounts compared to truthful ones.

3

(A) An excerpt from a lying account by a highly educated speaker

qbl ʃr snjn {pause: eeeeh} bbnzl ʔna: wa:sʃdqa:ʔjj {pause: eeeeh} bjdʒwnj mn ʃma:n {pause: fa:::} fmnnzl ʃla hma:ma:t ma:ʃjn {pause: u:::} hwa:lj ʔhna: {pause: eeeeh} ʔʃxa:sʃ

[M, Middle-aged, H]

‘Ten years ago {pause: eeeeh} friends of mine they came from Amman {pause: a:::} we went to MaʼIn Hot Springs {pause: u:::} we were around {pause: eeeh} 4 people.’

(B) An excerpt from a truthful account by a highly educated speaker

sa:ʃrna: qbl ʔrbʃ snjn {pause: eeeh} ʃla mdjn ʔstʃnbwl qʃdna: ʔja:m {u::} rhna: ba:lsʃf wka:nt sfr hʌw

[M, Middle-aged, H]

‘We traveled four years ago {pause: eeeh} to the city of Istanbul. We stayed for 8 days {u::} we went in the summer, and it was a nice trip.’

The following section provides an analysis of the duration of FPs with regard to lying in JCA.

B. Duration of Filled Pauses

This section presents an analysis of the percentage of FPs duration in the three scenarios (car accident, wedding, and trip) in the two modes (lying and truthful) in light of the three social factors of gender, age, and education.

The following section presents the frequency of occurrence of FPs with respect to speakers' gender.

(a). Speaker's Gender

Table 5 shows the average duration of pauses in the two modes in relation to speakers' gender.

TABLE 5
PERCENTAGE OF FP DURATION IN THE LYING AND TRUTHFUL ACCOUNTS ACCORDING TO SPEAKER'S GENDER

Gender	Mode	
	Lying	Truthful
Males	13.42	10.92
Females	11.08	9.46

Table 5 showed that males and females had longer pause lengths when recounting deceptive stories than truthful ones. The average pause duration percentage for males was notably higher when lying (13.42) than when telling the truth (10.92), indicating a 22.89% increase in the lying scenarios. Similarly, the pause duration percentage for females was higher when lying (11.08) than when telling the truth (9.46), indicating a 17.12% increase in the lying scenarios. The comparison between the percentage change in the duration of FPs between the lying and truthful accounts demonstrates that the rise in duration in the lying narratives of males was higher than that of females.

The subsequent section exhibits the frequency of occurrence of FPs with respect to speakers' gender.

(b). *Speaker's Age*

Table 6 presents the average duration in the two modes with regard to speakers' age of pauses.

TABLE 6
PERCENTAGE OF FP DURATION IN THE LYING AND TRUTHFUL ACCOUNTS ACCORDING TO SPEAKER'S AGE

Age	Mode	
	Lying	Truthful
22-32	12.2568	10.1963
33-43	12.00615	10.3223
44-54	11.2871	9.1439

Similar to the findings of gender, all age groups tend to have longer pause durations while lying than when recounting truthful narratives. Among speakers aged 22-32, there was a noticeable 20.17% uptick in pause duration when they were being untruthful (12.5) rather than truthful (10.19). Similarly, for those aged 33-43, there was a substantial difference of 16.36%, indicating a heightened pause duration while telling false narratives (12.00) than when telling truthful ones (10.32). Those aged between 43-54 exhibited a more significant increase in pause duration at 23.41% in the lying mode (11.28) compared to the truthful mode (9.14). The comparison of the percentage of change in the duration of FPs between the two account modes revealed that old speakers had the highest percentage of increase in the FP duration, followed by young and middle-aged speakers.

The next section presents the frequency of occurrence of FPs with respect to speakers' gender.

(c). *Speaker's Education*

Thirdly, the analysis considered the education level of speakers to identify patterns in the length of FPs between truthful and deceptive narratives amongst speakers. Table 7 shows the percentages of pause duration in the modes according to the speakers' education level.

TABLE 7
PERCENTAGE OF FP DURATION IN THE LYING AND TRUTHFUL ACCOUNTS ACCORDING TO SPEAKER'S EDUCATION

Education	Mode	
	Lying	Truthful
High	13.9105	11.5032
Low	10.603	8.889

The data indicates noticeable differences in pause durations between the lying and truthful scenarios for speakers of both education attainments. In fact, both had longer pause durations while lying than when telling the truth. The percentage of pause duration by highly educated speakers in the lying mode was 13.91. In the truthful mode, it was 11.50%, indicating a 20.93% increase in pause duration while lying. Low-educated speakers also demonstrated similar results with a 10.60% pause duration in the lying accounts and 8.88% in the truthful accounts, which implies a 10% increase in pause duration while lying than when telling the truth. Furthermore, the data indicates that highly educated speakers take longer pauses while telling the truth than their low-educated counterparts.

C. *An Excerpt From a Lying Account*

kna: qa:ʃdʒn {pause: 2.76 seconds} wknt ha:tʰtʰ mʰfʃdʒtj ʒa:ltʰa:wl {pause: 2.76 seconds} 2.91 seconds} nzlt ʔdʒjb ʔfj
rdʒʃt {pause: 2.53 seconds} lqjt ʔlmʰfʃdʒ mʰmwdʒwd
[H, Middle-Aged, M]

'We were sitting {pause: 2.76 seconds} and I had put my wallet on the table {pause: 2.76 seconds}. I went down to get something and came back {pause: 2.53 seconds} to find that the wallet was not there.'

(B) An excerpt from a truthful account

wsʰlʲna: ʔlbtra: ʔlðʰr {pause 1.50 seconds} wsʰlʲna: ʔlðʰrwtʲdʲna: wsbʰna: wa:rʰna: {pause 1.56 seconds} dʰlʲna:
hna:k

[H, Middle-Aged] After analyzing the collected corpus, several findings were revealed. swam, rested, {pause 1.56 seconds} and stayed there.

As observed from the examples, the speaker used longer pauses when lying than when telling the truth.

After stating the analysis results, below is a discussion of the main findings.

Several findings were revealed upon examining the use of filled pauses and their duration in the collected corpus. First, it was observed that deceptive accounts had a higher frequency of filled pauses (FPs) than truthful accounts, with females using more FPs than males. Second, the analysis indicated that middle-aged speakers used the highest frequency of FPs, followed by old and young speakers, respectively. Third, high-educated speakers used more FPs in their lying narratives than their low-educated counterparts. As for the analysis of the duration of FPs in the collected corpus, it was revealed that the duration of FPs was longer in deceptive accounts than in the truthful ones, with females using longer pauses when lying than males. Second, results showed that old speakers used longer pauses across all age groups while lying. Third,

the data indicated that highly educated speakers took longer pauses while telling the truth than their low-educated counterparts.

The findings mentioned above align with those of Vrij et al. (2000), Tree (2010), Levitan (2018), Montacie (2016), Mann et al. (2004), Zuckerman et al. (1981) revealing that the increased use of pauses correlates more with deceptive than truthful speech. Therefore, this can be ascribed to the assumption proposed by Zuckerman et al. (1981), DePaulo et al. (2003), and Vrij et al. (2008) that lying increases cognitive load and, therefore, leads to more pausing in deceptive speech due to difficulty in speech planning and production. When speakers recount truthful stories, they tend to retrieve self-experienced memories, making it easy for them to provide information deliberately and quickly. On the other hand, when speakers recount false narratives, they may need to construct externally derived memories based on perception to make their stories sound more believable. They may also attempt to monitor their responses to avoid giving away inconsistencies that might get their lies detected, leading to extra cognitive load and an increased number and duration of FPs while recounting a story (Zuckerman et al., 1981). As for telling the truth, speakers tend to retrieve self-experienced (internally derived) events that are already stored in their memories, which is a process that would not take as much time as making up an externally derived event.

Moreover, the analysis revealed a correlation between the speaker's education level and the number and duration of filled pauses (FPs). High-educated speakers had a higher frequency but shorter FPs than low-educated speakers when lying. Speakers with higher education attainment might have advanced cognitive processing skills, which enables them to organize their thoughts more efficiently. Consequently, they might need more pauses to produce more complex and creative ideas, but they tend to keep them short to maintain overall fluency. Additionally, they used frequent pauses to make their stories sound real, mimicking a spontaneous flow of speech.

Furthermore, data showed that middle-aged speakers used more frequent and prolonged pauses while lying across all age groups. Speakers of this age group in Jordanian society may be burdened with numerous career and family responsibilities, which can take a significant amount of cognitive capacity. Thus, when they choose to lie, they must keep track of the truth, falsify details, and maintain a convincing story, all of which require additional mental effort on top of their already heavy cognitive load. Therefore, they take more frequent FPs while lying to make up events that are not self-experienced.

V. CONCLUSION

A mixed method analysis of the frequency and duration of acoustic-filled pauses (FPs) was conducted with regard to lying based on a corpus of 144 lying and 144 truthful narratives gathered from 48 speakers of Jordanian Colloquial Arabic. The study calculated the average frequency and length of filled pauses in both lying and truthful accounts. Data obtained from truthful accounts served as a baseline to detect any change in the FP frequency and length pattern in the lying accounts. The analysis showed that the frequency and duration of filled pauses could be cues for deception detection in Jordanian Colloquial Arabic; deceptive accounts had a higher frequency and longer duration of filled pauses (FPs) than truthful accounts. Furthermore, the study revealed that FPs and their duration are socially constrained by speakers' age, gender, and educational attainment. Regarding gender, it was found that females used more FPs than males. In terms of age, middle-aged speakers used the highest frequency of FPs, followed by old and young speakers, respectively. As for education, it was revealed that highly educated speakers used more FPs in their lying narratives than their low-educated counterparts. Therefore, the findings of this study imply that the examination of Filled Pauses and their duration in a speech could be a potential cue for lying detection in JCA.

The current study has demonstrated a number of compelling findings with regard to filled pauses and lying in Jordanian colloquial Arabic. Based on the results of the present study, the researcher proposes the following recommendations:

1. The corpus of the present study consisted of lying and truthful accounts on general topics. It is recommended to explore genuine courtroom confessions, testimonies and criminal investigations to obtain more practical and relevant outcomes in the field of forensic linguistics.
2. One prosodic feature of speech was investigated in regard to deception. Future researchers are recommended to explore the relationship between lying and other prosodic features such as stress, pitch, and intonation.
3. The current study was limited to a small corpus of lying and truthful accounts from 48 speakers of Jordanian Colloquial Arabic. Thus, it would be premature to generalize these findings due to the topic's sensitivity. Further investigation is recommended to explore the use of FP with regard to deception in a larger corpus.

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On the English Translation of Culture-Loaded Words in Tourist Texts in Light of Skopos Theory: A Case Study of Attractions in Nanjing

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Abstract—Tourist texts, serving as an essential introduction, carry crucial importance in the tourist industry and bridge the gap between Chinese culture and visitors. Therefore, to facilitate foreign visitors to obtain a comprehensive grasp of local culture, the English translation of tourist texts, especially those culture-loaded words inside, should be prioritised. Prior studies on translations of cultural terminologies in tourism offer a range of strategies and methodologies. Yet Chinese cultural connotation is intricate and implicit due to its various formation processes, complicating the search for appropriate English equivalents. Instructed by Skopos Theory, the study collects culture-loaded words regarding three prominent tourist attractions in Nanjing, namely Nanjing Museum, Imperial Examination Museum of China, and Nanjing Presidential Palace. The research examines the implementation of three translation principles of skopos rule, coherence rule, and fidelity rule. Findings reveal that many translations fall short of expectations, primarily due to deviations from these principles. The research evaluates the current translation version, identifies key issues, and provides systematic recommendations for further modification. Working as a reference for translating tourism materials, this study also lays the foundations for further tourist translation research.

Index Terms—Skopos Theory, culture-loaded words, tourist texts

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an intricate amalgamation of culture, language, and communication, wherein the translation of cultural concepts plays a pivotal role in influencing tourists' perceptions and impressions. In the era of globalisation, comprehending the representation and translation of cultural diversity in tourism texts is of paramount significance, especially in historically rich sites like Nanjing.

Nanjing is known for its profound cultural heritage and historic legacy. As one of the four capitals of ancient China, Nanjing draws millions of tourists annually, both domestic and international. Nonetheless, limited studies delve into the dynamics of cultural interaction and communication in tourist texts. Moreover, the translation of tourist texts often presents challenges, as translators and readers operate within distinct cultural systems, complicating the task of rendering culturally specific terms.

Skopos Theory is a crucial branch of translation studies, which refers to the translation strategy that adopts purposeful criteria to achieve the target text (Du, 2012). By digging into its applicability, the research examines the translation strategies used to translate these cultural elements into English and evaluates its effectiveness in conveying cultural meanings. Through conducting a case study of specific attractions in Nanjing, China, namely, Nanjing Museum, Imperial Examination Museum of China, and Nanjing Presidential Palace, the study seeks to explore the culture-loaded words in the English version and analyse their effectiveness in conveying understandable meanings to target audiences.

The paper is structured as follows. The introduction is followed by a comprehensive review of existing literature on the translation of cultural terms in the tourism industry. The framework of Skopos Theory is outlined in the third section, presenting the selection of tourist texts, and culture-loaded words. Subsequently, translation errors found in the texts are listed as examples in the fourth part, presenting the analysis and discussion of translation violations and effectiveness. The last section comprises a summary of principal findings and recommendations for further research. The study is expected to enhance intercultural communication and translation studies by providing insights into the application of Skopos Theory in translating cultural concepts within tourist texts.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

To lay a foundation for the investigation, this part explores previous research associated with the translation of cultural words, especially in the tourism industry.

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A. *The Introduction of Culture-Loaded Words*

Culture-loaded words are words and idioms that signify something specific to a certain culture, directly reflecting some vocabulary that has been gradually accumulated by a group of people with a long history, which differs from the ways of activity of other people (Ding, 2023). According to Bao Huinan and Bao Ang (2004), every language is a product of the cultural development of a country and has a long historical background and rich connotations. The concept of “cultural translation” first appeared in the article “Translation and Culture” by scholar Liu Shan in 1982, and it marked the beginning of cultural translation studies in China. Henceforth the investigation of translation expanded to the aspect of culture and cross-culture (Li & Yi, 2023). Many translators have investigated the definition and translation of culture-loaded words. In a study on the translation of journalistic discourses, researchers state that various cultural words must be translated in specific contexts in a meaningful way when they are suitable and understandable for another language in different cultural backgrounds where the target audience agrees with it (Guessabi, 2021). Ball (2021) emphasizes the communicative function and translator’s subjective in his research and proposes that translation needs to adapt to the reading habits and cultural background of readers. Hu Wenzhong (1999) defines culture-loaded words as words, which are direct and indirect reflections of the national history and culture in the linguistic vocabulary. Li Xiaoying and his colleagues (2023) in their study on the translation of culture-loaded words in Chinese medicine, claim that the accurate translation of these words requires the understanding of the items’ connotations. Minor linguistic changes possibly result in different reader responses (Repke & Dorer, 2021). It’s necessary for translators to compare the Chinese and Foreign cultures in order to seek common and put aside differences, and only then can we select the most faithful and appropriate words that bridge the cognitive gap.

B. *The Tourism Translation of Culture-Loaded Words*

Cultural or heritage tourism is an expanding area for translation research with the dramatic growth in the number of tourists (Liao, 2018; Richards, 2018). Regarding tourism translation, Cappelli and Gloria in 2007 discussed the translation of texts related to travel websites. They think keyword analysis, in fact, cultural keyword analysis, is an important part of the translation process (p. 97). The translation of tourism signs catches researchers’ attention as well. Since 2000, empirical translation studies have become popular across the country. In 2014, Tao used Ecological Translation Theory to evaluate the English translation of Nanjing’s tourism website, indicating that translators need to make necessary reconstruction of the translation ecosystem. In the same year, Ye (2014) wrote a study on the English version of the tourism text materials in Nanjing Museum under the perspective of communication studies. She believes that the principles of tourism translation are accuracy and sufficiency, readability, and acceptability, which form the foundations of the questionnaire for international tourists involving the texts in the Nanjing Museum. Moreover, Liu (2020) investigates the cultural translation in coastal cities. With a broader context and a similar purpose to this study, she analyses the problems existing in the translation of tourism publicity and seeks a higher-quality English version. Jia (2020) analyses it from the perspective of Skopos Theory, revealing the existing translation problems in Chongqing. She provides meaningful and feasible suggestions for the revision. Signs in Guangzhou are also studied and given revisions to the English version. Apart from traditional qualitative analysis, technical development nowadays enables researchers to conduct a more effective quantitative investigation. Li et al. (2022) employ the corpus linguistics method to study the English geo-tourism translation from the perspective of cultural terms. They build a model platform for the relevant study and provide translation pedagogy for further research. All these studies have laid a foundation for the present research which focuses on the translation of culture-loaded words in tourist texts of Nanjing. Increasing attention has been paid to the practical application of translation in China. However, there are still deficiencies in the translation of tourism texts in Nanjing so far. Researchers hardly concentrate on the shortcomings of the existing English version, whilst this study makes up for this gap and puts forward practical advice for translation problems in Nanjing tourism text.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section outlines the main concepts of the Skopos Theory, namely skopos rule, coherence rule, and fidelity rule. It introduces its necessity in the translation of culture-loaded terms in tourist texts and emphasizes its relevance in guiding translation strategies to fulfill specific communicative purposes.

Developed by Hans J. Vermeer in the 1970s, the functionalist Skopos Theory is introduced as a central framework for understanding translation as a purposeful action guided by the communicative needs of the target audience. Katharina Reiss in 1971 first proposed the use of functional relationships as a basis for translation criticism. Since this, the idea of the Skopos Theory was first systematically mentioned in his thesis *A Framework of General Translation Theory* in 1978. He proposed that “any form of translational action, including therefore translation itself, may be conceived as an action, as the name implies. [...] The word skopos, then, is a technical term for the aim or purpose of a translation (Reiss, 1978, p. 83)”. Then Vermeer and Reiss published the book *Towards a General Theory of Translational Action* which presented the main contents of Skopos Theory in detail.

Entering the 21st century, Skopos Theory has been more widely welcomed in China. In 2001 and 2004, the books of Christiane Nord and Katharina Reiss were published in China. Since then, increasing scholars have dug into investigation from this perspective in order to explain the modern Chinese translation situation. For instance, An and

Sun (2023) mainly focus on a specific research point on legal terms in the translation of the *Civil Code*, while Wang and Zhou (2023) take a broader view on the research techniques for improving further translation quality. Skopos Theory has been widely noticed and explored, and many studies have shown that it plays an extremely important role in the translation of functional texts.

Translation based on Skopos Theory needs to follow three rules, namely skopos rule, coherence rule, and fidelity rule.

(a). *Skopos Rule*

Among the three, skopos rule is the first and foremost. It emphasizes the significance of considering the purpose and intended function, guiding translators to produce target texts that are both linguistically appropriate and functionally effective. The term “skopos” is often used to refer to the purpose of a translation, derived from the Greek word. In addition to skopos, Vermeer (1996) uses the related terms “aim”, “purpose”, “intention”, and “function”. He describes the skopos rule as follows: “Each text is created for a specific purpose and shall serve for that purpose (p. 35).” The skopos rule recognizes that translations are purposeful acts of communication. Before translation, the translator needs to make clear the functions and goals to be achieved by the translation act, and accordingly decide the whole subsequent translation research process. The universal one is to fulfill the communicative purpose of the translated text, including providing technical support, conveying information, and so on.

The skopos rule allows for adaptation and creative change on the part of the translator. This means that the translator may need to modify and polish elements of the source text to ensure that the target text effectively serves its purpose in the target culture. While linguistic accuracy is important, functional equivalence takes precedence (Li, 2021). What is more, the skopos rule admits that translation involves interpretation and negotiation of meaning between the source and target cultures. Translators must make decisions about how to convey the intended meaning effectively, even if it means deviating from the literal or surface-level meaning of the source text. It also needs to be recognized that the skopos of a translation, influenced by various factors, can be dynamic and may evolve throughout the process.

(b). *Coherence Rule*

The coherence rule is also called “intra-textual coherence”, which guides translators to create internally coherent and cohesive texts (Nord, 2001). Coherence refers to the logical and meaningful connection between different parts of a text, while cohesion means the linguistic devices used in it. The coherence rule emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the target passage makes sense and reads smoothly in its own context, even if this requires adjusting or reorganizing.

The translation needs to conform to the language structure of the target language and can enable the users to understand linguistically and culturally (Zhang & Wang, 2021). This requires translators to take into full consideration the context. While translating, the ideas, themes, and arguments presented in the target text should be logically connected and should not contain contradictions. Translators must also ensure that the target text follows a logical progression of ideas and events. The coherence rule also requires translators to consider cultural and contextual factors that may affect the coherence of the target text. Translators must ensure that the target text is culturally appropriate and contextually relevant for the target audience, even if it means making cultural adaptations or adjustments to the source text.

(c). *Fidelity Rule*

“One possible kind of inter-textual coherence could be a maximally faithful imitation of the source text (Reiss et al., 2014, p. 113).” The fidelity rule is also known as the loyalty rule, which refers to letting the translated text accurately convey the information of the original one. While the skopos rule emphasizes the importance of achieving the intended purpose or function of the translation, and the coherence rule focuses on linguistic and textual coherence, the fidelity rule addresses the translator’s responsibility to maintain an appropriate level of faithfulness or loyalty to the source text which translators are expected to approach with a sense of respect and to strive to convey its meaning and message accurately in the target language.

While the primary focus of translation is to achieve the skopos or purpose, the fidelity rule requires translators to prioritize the preservation of meaning from the source text to the extent possible. This means accurately conveying the content, tone, style, and nuances of the source text in the target language. In addition to linguistic fidelity, the Fidelity Rule also encompasses cultural and contextual fidelity. Translators must be sensitive to cultural differences and nuances, ensuring that the target text is culturally appropriate and resonates with the target audience while remaining faithful to the source text. The rule also involves ethical considerations related to the representation of the source text and the intentions of the author. Translators must adhere to ethical standards and avoid misrepresenting or distorting the meaning of the source text in the translation process.

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATION PROBLEMS OF CULTURE-LOADED WORDS IN TOURIST TEXTS

Culture-loaded words are precisely the representations of unique language and culture in a country or nation, bearing distinctive features. In terms of English and Chinese languages and translation, cultural terms mainly contain two categories: one is words that have the same meaning without corresponding expression in the Chinese and English cultures; the other is words that seem to correspond in the two cultures, but their meanings are different or even

completely opposite. Since there has been a dispute between direct translation and indirect translation in the translation world, some scholars believe that the Skopos Theory can provide useful guidance for the translation of culture-loaded words (Jiang, 2024; Zhu, 2023; Chen & Cao, 2024).

This part will introduce the selection of tourist attractions and culture-loaded words inside. Data collection methods, analysis, and limitations are discussed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research. Meanwhile, according to the three rules, this part will conclude the reasons for the translation errors and suggest appropriate translation revisions for further improvements.

A. Data Collection

The attractions selected for this study are based on specific criteria, including their cultural significance, popularity among tourists, and availability of tourist materials such as brochures, websites, and signs. Attractions that meet these criteria are chosen to ensure the relevance and richness of the database.

As the capital of Jiangsu Province, Nanjing is a national key tourist city that is extremely popular among citizens. The attraction of Nanjing was chosen due to the city's rich historical and cultural heritage, which makes it an ideal occasion to study the translation of culture-loaded words in tourism texts. The investigation chooses three out of the most popular tourist attractions to conduct the investigation (Nanjing Daily, 2023). Based on these data and the research purpose, the author collected bilingual texts used for the study of culture-loaded words from three famous tourist attractions, Nanjing Museum, Imperial Examination Museum of China, and Nanjing Presidential Palace. Various types of tourism texts are collected, including texts from websites, signs, and interpretative materials. These materials are obtained from official tourism websites, tourist information centers, and physical scenic spots. Then the collected linguistic data are scanned by word and sentence to sort out the culture-loaded words and their translations separately, and the translation errors are marked. As the research attached importance to whether the translation complies with the Skopos Theory, the improper translations are then categorized according to the three rules, and formed into three categories as well, violation of these three rules. Data and table records are created as described below. The study records the classification and integration of various problems and then organizes the use of words so that the revised translation is more local and fluent.

B. Translation Errors

(a). Violation of Skopos Rule

Skopos rule is of most value among the three rules, and it is easy to be violated as well. The aim of translation is a cultural and social practice of processing, reconstructing, and retransmitting knowledge across languages (Yang, 2021). Tourist texts are designed to convey Chinese culture and spirits in an accessible way. That is the aim and goal that translators should keep striving for.

According to this, the research analyses the source texts and summarizes 28 errors in total. In exploring their contributors, the main reason can be summarized as that the translation text fails to meet the requirement of cultural function and cannot point out the cultural connotations. On one hand, it is impossible to translate these culture-loaded words one by one directly according to the original word order as English and Chinese have different grammatical structures. Moreover, the meaning of the source text needs to be accurately elucidated with the maintenance of the original stylistic style and without any distortion or deletion. Translators need to consider whether to keep both the content and the structure of the source text. On the other hand, translators have to avoid translating the text from the word level while ignoring the purpose and meaning of sentences. Context, thus, cannot be overlooked since it always contributes to an adequate understanding of source messages, especially within the hidden humanistic connotation. To fully understand the connotative and denotative meaning of traditional culture, it is necessary to comprehend background information and related implications. Hence, translators must pay attention to the context. Negligence of this principle will cause inadequate translation and even failure in the communication of cultural messages. A few examples are as follows.

Example 1:

ST: 一旦考中进士，即被称为“登龙门”，“鱼”即变为“龙”，从此踏上仕宦之路。

TT: As long as they could be selected as Jinshi, they were called “enter the dragon gate”, as if the “fish” became the “dragon”. Since then, they began their official careers.

Revised version: As long as they could be selected as Jinshi, they were called “enter the ‘loong’ gate” (succeed in the imperial examination), as if the “fish” (ordinary people) became the “Loong” (successful people). Since then, they began their official careers.

The source text wants to point out the importance of the imperial examination in ancient times when a high-ranked student could win a better future. The related phrases such as “登龙门” and “鱼、龙” are special terms in Chinese. In most cases, “龙”, as a product of the agricultural civilization, is mainly responsible for blessing people with good physical conditions, carrying beautiful symbols such as bravery, vitality, and good fortune. The application of “登龙门” and “鱼、龙” is a special denotation within Chinese culture, referring to a story that after jumping through a special door, one fish can evolve into a “龙”. It is a metaphor for career success or higher status. However, the Western background “dragon”, as a product of oceanic civilization, often breathes fire, and causes casualties, which is mostly

seen as a symbol of evil. The translation of “龙” as “dragon” is a mechanical way to apply a negative Western image to local culture. It is easy to create a pejorative understanding (Zheng, 2008). As a result, translators can translate this word into “loong”, which has been recorded as a symbol of Eastern culture in many dictionaries. Apart from that, it can also add some necessary explanations if we want to keep the translation of “dragon”. The target text, after the discussion, can be polished into: As long as they could be selected as Jinshi, they were called “enter the ‘loong’ gate” (succeed in the imperial examination) as if the “fish” (ordinary people) became the “Loong” (successful people). Since then, they began their official careers.

Example 2:

ST: 清两江总督署史料馆

Target Text: Exhibition of Historical Materials on the Liangjiang Viceroy's Official Residence

Revised version: Exhibition of Historical Materials on the Mansion of Jiangsu and Jiangxi Provinces' Viceroy

The original text introduces one of the official positions in the Qing Dynasty. “两江总督”, one of the nine most senior ministers of the Qing Dynasty, was in charge of the military and civil affairs in the past provinces of Jiangsu (including nowadays Shanghai), Anhui, and Jiangxi province. “两江” refers to the provinces of “Jiangnan” (now Jiangsu, Anhui, and Shanghai) and Jiangxi. The original translation only translates it as “Liangjiang” which is likely to confuse foreign visitors, and even result in misunderstanding. For instance, visitors and commentators may mistake it for the Two Rivers Valley, namely the Yangtze River and the Yellow River. As a result, the revised version needs to point out the details and be polished as: Exhibition of Historical Materials on the Mansion of Jiangsu and Jiangxi Provinces' Viceroy.

Example 3:

ST: 民间还出现了蹴鞠的社团。

TT: Soccer was so widely played that clubs were organized among the people.

Revised version: As the prototype of modern football, Cuju, originating in ancient China, was so widely played that clubs were organized among the people.

“蹴鞠” is a kind of ball game widely spreading in ancient China. It was popular among Chinese people as early as the Warring States Period. Later, it was spread from China to Europe by the Arabs and gradually evolved into modern football. Modern football began in the United Kingdom, and its predecessor originated from “蹴鞠”. Besides, the translation of “足球” cannot make foreign visitors understand the historical significance of “蹴鞠”. Thus, we cannot equate “蹴鞠” with football. The related context is necessary. The revised version can be: As the prototype of modern football, Cuju, originating in ancient China, was so widely played that clubs were organized among the people.

Example 4:

ST: 原碑立于苏州寒山寺。此碑系 1939 年 3 月, “维新政府” 按原碑复制后所立。

TT: The original tablet was placed in the Hanshan Temple in Suzhou. The “Reformed Government” made a reproduction and placed it here in March 1939.

Revised version: The original tablet was placed in the Hanshan Temple in Suzhou. The “Reformed Government*” made a reproduction and placed it here in March 1939.

* *Reformed Government (1938-1940) was established in Nanjing by Liang Hongzhi and others as a puppet regime supported by Japan during the war against the Japanese invasion.*

The source text “维新政府” cannot be simply translated into “Reformed Government” as it will be confused with other several modernization movements in modern China, such as the Hundred Days Reform. Based on the time mentioned in the original source, this Reformed Government of the Republic of China was established in Nanjing on 28 March 1938 by Liang Hongzhi and others. It was a puppet regime supported by Japan during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. The source text is aimed at introducing the development of the tablet. Though the “Reformed Government” is not the emphasized point, to better assist tourists in understanding the text, the revised text can add some additional notes below as shown above.

(b). Violation of Coherence Rule

The coherence of translation is mainly embodied in four aspects. Firstly, it is necessary to maintain the grammatical coherence within the sentence. The second is to ensure the logical coherence between sentences. That is to say, the transition should be natural and smooth. Thirdly, we need to pay attention to the continuity of the paragraph. Finally, to keep a clear organization and logic at the level of sentence and paragraph, it should be emphasized.

Under such considerations, two main kinds of violations are identified, namely, grammatical mistakes and nonstandard and inconsistent terminology. Based on this, what can be concluded is that, with 38 in total, there are 16 cases related to the former and 22 cases related to the latter. Further analysis with some examples will be presented as follows.

TABLE 1
TRANSLATION ERRORS THAT VIOLATE THE COHERENCE RULE

	Translation Errors that Violate the Coherence Rule		Total
	Grammatical Mistake	Nonstandard and Inconsistent Terminology	
Number	16	23	39

Example 1:

Source Text: 应天府

Target Text: Yingtianfu

Revised version: Yingtianfu prefecture

“应天府”, also known as Nanjing, was its name during the Ming Dynasty and used to be the capital in the early time. During the Qing Dynasty, it was renamed as “江宁府”. The main focus of the source text is to emphasize both the geographical location, but also the use of the Chinese character “府”. “府” is the name of a Chinese administrative division during the Ming and Qing dynasties. It is the second level of administrative division, whose status is between the province and the prefecture-level city nowadays. If it is directly transliterated as the target text, foreign readers will never understand a strange single-syllable “fu”. “府”, thus, needs to be translated to assist their understanding. So we can revise it into Yingtianfu prefecture. With the help of “prefecture”, English readers will be more likely to have a general imagination of “应天府”.

Example 2:

Source Text: 科举考试

Target Text: civil service examination

Revised version: imperial examinations

In the source context, the non-standardized and different translation of “科举考试” in the tourist attraction will cause cognitive difficulties for tourists. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.), the civil service exam refers to a test to get a job in the civil service (the administrative part of the government). It is more suitable for the modern civil service selection system rather than in the traditional Eastern context. The history of Western and Chinese times is distinctive, and we need to choose culture-loaded words more scrupulously. “Imperial examinations” is a more appropriate and conventional translation.

(c). Violation of Fidelity Rule

Fidelity rule means our translation should be in accordance with the original texts. As Pinkham (2000) has contended, translators are charged with translating meaning, not words. Translators ought to maintain a faithful relationship with the original text as far as possible on the basis of skopos rule and coherence rule so that the translation meets the requirements of the target language without losing the spiritual connotation.

As a result, if the translation of tourist texts is inconsistent with the source one, consequently, it violates the fidelity rule. Specifically, the translation errors that violate the fidelity rule can be divided into two types, namely, omission of key information and mistranslation. The omission of key information refers to the situation where some translations of cultural items are omitted intentionally or unintentionally. Thus, readers might find it hard to understand the uniqueness of the tourist attractions. Apart from this, mistranslation means the English translation of culture-loaded words does not match the Chinese ones, such as information bias and misuse of commendatory or derogatory connotations. From the research, the study concludes the number of errors. There are 19 cases of violations in total, 12 cases of omissions of key information, and 7 cases of mistranslation. The chart below shows the analysis. Several examples are shown below.

TABLE 2
TRANSLATION ERRORS THAT VIOLATE THE FIDELITY RULE

	Translation Errors that Violate the Fidelity Rule		Total
	Omission of Key Information	Mistranslation	
Number	12	7	19

Example 1:

Source Text: 魏晋的九品中正制

Target Text: the Nine Rank System

Revised version: the Nine Rank System in Wei and Jin dynasties

The source text is used to describe an exhibited picture that introduces the policy of selecting talents in China. Separated into Upper, Middle, and Lower classes, each of which was composed of three ranks, the nine rank system made nine in total. Each rank was also further divided into standard and secondary ranks so that the entire system contained 18 ranks. The information it conveys is the policy used in the Wei and Jin dynasties, and what should be emphasized exactly is the period of time. The target text has translated the main body of the phrase “九品中正制” without the time, assuming that the reader knows the historical background and dynasty of the selection system. In fact, foreign readers need more information to get familiar with Chinese history. As a result, the dynasty should not be omitted, and the target text can be expressed as: the Nine Rank System in the Wei and Jin dynasties.

Example 2:

ST: 科举时代，人们对登科的追求与祝愿、对耕读的勉励与劝诫、对孝廉的恪守与宣扬，无不体现在建筑的装饰之中。

TT: In the time of Keju, earning the degree (“Deng Ke”), recommending and investing diligence to learn, strict observance of honesty, and publicity of filiality are some commonly seen patterns in ancient Chinese architecture.

Revised version: In the time of Keju (the imperial examination), earning the degree (“Deng Ke”), encouraging learning with diligence, strictly observing, and promoting honesty and filial piety are commonly seen in the decorations of ancient Chinese architecture.

This source text depicts the decoration of the building which was built during the time of Keju (the imperial examination). The core information of this sentence is the depiction that shows the pursuit and wishes of people in the past. Moreover, the pursuit is reflected in the decoration of the building, rather than itself as a pattern. The original translation ignores the meaning of the sentence, and the translation is misleading and against the fidelity rule. Moreover, “孝” is the value of demonstrating love and respect for one’s parents, elders, and ancestors, especially in the framework of Confucian, Chinese Buddhist, and Daoist moral principles. Based on the official translation in Collins Dictionary (n.d.), the noun’s translation is “filial piety”. This term is academic and widely recognized. The English version can be revised as: In the time of Keju (the imperial examination), earning the degree (“Deng Ke”), encouraging learning with diligence, strictly observing and promoting honesty, and filial piety are commonly seen in the decorations of ancient Chinese architecture.

Example 3:

ST: 妙笔生花

TT: flowery expression

Revised version: elegant writing

“妙笔生花”, as a positive Chinese idiom, refers to that one’s writing technique is so excellent and vivid that readers can even see a real blossom in front of themselves just through the depiction of a flower. It is often used as a metaphor to praise the outstanding writing talent. Thus, the idiom is commendatory. However, the target text, the “flowery expression” does not mean that way. The Cambridge Dictionary explains flowery as “if a speech or writing style is flowery, it uses too many complicated words or phrases in an attempt to sound skillful (Cambridge Press and Assessment, n.d.)”. The word flowery, if used to describe someone’s writing skill, is a derogatory term clearly. As a result, its translation violates the fidelity rule and conveys wrong information and emotional meaning. The mistranslation can be revised as elegant writing.

V. CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the urgent need for improved translation strategies in cultural tourism, particularly in translating culture-loaded terms in Nanjing’s tourist texts. Guided by Skopos Theory, the research collects bilingual texts from Nanjing Museum, Imperial Examination Museum of China, and Nanjing Presidential Palace, analyses the main reasons, and provides reasonable suggestions for possible revision. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, the research provides a systematic framework for addressing translation challenges, and underlines the employment of Skopos Theory in translation contexts, emphasizing the critical status of cultural terminologies in cross-cultural communication.

The findings demonstrate significant issues stemming from violations of Skopos Theory’s core principles. Specifically, accounting for 39 cases, coherence rule is the most frequently violated rule, including 16 grammatical errors and 23 instances of nonstandard terminology. This should be the focus when the tourism text translation is carried out in Nanjing in the future. These errors highlight the importance of ensuring grammatical accuracy and consistency in cultural expressions. Thus, translators should take the coherence rule seriously, avoiding ignoring normal grammatical mistakes and nonstandard and inconsistent cultural phrases. The second most common type of problem is the violation of skopos rule, which indicates translators to put the translation purpose in the first place. Errors occurred due to misalignment with the translation’s intended purpose, strengthening the necessity of adapting content to meet the expectations and comprehension of target audiences. As the least violated principle, fidelity rule accounts for 19 cases, indicating occasional lapses in maintaining the authenticity and integrity of the original cultural content.

Still, the study has some limitations. For one thing, the investigation selects several major well-known scenic spots in Nanjing instead of all the tourist attractions. The collection and division of the translation database in Nanjing may not be complete. For another, the revised versions of the translation are all provided by the author rather than the universally recognized version. The quality of the translation should be given high attention in order to set a good cultural image of a tourist city, domestically and abroad. Future tourist text translation studies from the perspective of Skopos Theory will involve more tourist attractions, collecting more source texts, and creating a larger database. Moreover, other types of theories will be applied in further study, including translation theory or interdisciplinary theory.

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Nominal Models of Youth Work Terms in Vietnamese

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Abstract—This paper presents the results of research on the nominal models of youth work terms in Vietnamese. The data includes 1587 terms collected from online news and document systems related to youth work on the electronic information portal of the central agency of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union. To elucidate the nominal models of youth work terms in Vietnamese, descriptive methods, along with statistical and classifying methods, were employed. Through a survey of 1587 terms to investigate the signs that serve as the basis for the identification of youth work terms in Vietnamese, we divided these terms into 10 semantic categories. The findings reveal that derivative youth work terms in Vietnamese are created based on semantic relationships and the selection of 12 specific nominal attributes. The study also discovered 39 nominal models of youth work terms in Vietnamese. Based on the research results, the paper offers some recommendations for developing and standardizing youth work terms in Vietnamese as well as translating this terminology into English.

Index Terms—terminology, youth work terms in Vietnamese, nominal models, nominal attributes, semantic categories

I. INTRODUCTION

In the process of governing the nation, the Communist Party of Vietnam always supports the role and contribution of the youth, considering them as the pioneering force in developing and protecting the nation. Youth work is essential to the survival of the nation. Correspondingly, the Communist Party of Vietnam has put forward a variety of policies with a view toward educating, training, and organizing the youth into a powerful and loyal force to continue the revolutionary cause of the Party and the nation. Through each period, generations of young people have fulfilled their historical mission, regardless of the challenging circumstances.

Recognizing the significance of youth work, the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training signed an official decision authorizing the university training program in youth work at the Vietnam Youth Academy in 2011. Up to now, the Vietnam Youth Academy has undergone 14 years of training youth work, which has become a science in Vietnam. Along with the strong development of this science is the development of youth work terminology. In scientific research, terminology is vital since it forms the foundation for effective communication and understanding within and across disciplines. The need for precise and standardized terminology is essential as science becomes increasingly interdisciplinary. Good terminology, which minimizes ambiguity, helps practitioners and researchers convey complicated concepts consistently and clearly.

However, there is currently little research on youth work terminology being carried out, either worldwide or in Vietnam. In 2017, the Vietnamese Youth Dictionary, published by Duong et al., explains about 2000 Vietnamese words, including various concepts and categories associated with Marxism, such as Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's ideology, and the views of the Communist Party of Vietnam on the role and position of youth in the process of social development, on the organization and education of youth, especially in terms of ideology, revolutionary ethics, aesthetic ideals, cultural lifestyles, aspirations, dreams, and civic responsibilities of young people. In addition, a forty-page English vocabulary handbook for youth workers was compiled and circulated internally by the Central Committee of Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union. This handbook mainly includes the names of organizations and units under the Central Committee of Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, the names of some central agencies in the Vietnamese political system, and the names of some youth projects.

Thus, interest in researching and building a youth work terminology has been deployed after only six years, exceedingly early considering the science of youth work was born in Vietnam. Up to now, however, the study of this terminology has so far only focused on compiling, explaining, and presenting them in the form of a handbook or dictionary in a rudimentary and straightforward way. To serve the process of deep integration and globalization, it is imperative that youth work terms be thoroughly studied theoretically. This will be the basis for collecting, developing, and standardizing youth work terms in Vietnamese and translating this terminology into English.

This paper focuses primarily on surveying, studying, and evaluating nominal models of youth work terms in Vietnamese; however, some recommendations for creating and standardizing youth work terms in Vietnamese and translating this terminology into English are also made.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Up to now, scholars and researchers have created numerous definitions of a term. Keinys (1980) states that a term is “only such a word that has a defined and limited meaning and an established area of usage” (p. 14). Likewise, Dubuc (1997) believes that terms “designate concepts specific to subject fields” (p. 38). Sharing the same opinion as the above linguists, Shelov and Shufan (2017) call the term a special word or phrase that has a strictly developed definition in different areas of scientific disciplines. Furthermore, Sager (1990) defines terms as lexical items with specific reference in a restricted subject field. A term is a word or phrase that has a special, strictly defined meaning in a particular field of science and technology (Leichik, 1989). Pearson (1998) also claims that “a term is a word or phrase that has been assigned an agreed meaning and has been officially approved and published in a standard” (p. 23).

In addition, the linguist Tatarinov strives to give the maximum number of characteristics of the term as follows:

A term is a special word or verbal complex that correlates with the concept of a certain organized field of knowledge (science, technology), entering into systemic relationships with other words and verbal complexes, and forming with them in each individual case and at a certain time a closed system, characterized by high information content, accuracy, and expressive neutrality. (Leichik, 1989, p. 157)

Dubuc (1997) states that, besides being accurate and adequate, a term should also reflect an essential characteristic of the concept and avoid any ambiguity. Additionally, Gaivenis suggests a term should be “precise, grammatically correct, widely applicable, short, and stylistically neutral” (p. 30).

Besides, Shelov (2005) describes the term as follows:

- a. It is a concept denoted by a lexical item (word or word combination) that makes this item a term.
- b. The “termness” of an item (=quality of being a term) is determined by all items necessary for the identification of its concept within the whole system of definitions (explanation) of these items, belonging to the domain under consideration.
- c. The greater the amount of information required in a definition (explanation) to identify a concept, denoted by a certain item, the higher the degree of “termness” of this item (p. 123).

In this research, the following definition of a term is used as a working definition: terms are fixed words and phrases, representing concepts or objects belonging to a certain scientific or specialized field and identified through three standards, including accuracy, brevity, and systematism.

In linguistic theory, the concept of nomination is understood in many ways. Kolshansky believes that nomination is to attach to a linguistic sign a concept—a symbol that reflects certain characteristics of a denotatum, the properties, qualities, and relationships of the objects and the processes belonging to the physical and mental scope, thanks to which linguistic units form the content elements of linguistic communication (Nguyen, 2010).

The theory of nomination shows that each thing or phenomenon has many distinctive characteristics, but people only choose one typical characteristic to identify it. This means that a characteristic must be highly distinctive to distinguish objects and phenomena and that that characteristic has had a name in language. Characteristics that are easy to see and recognize are often chosen to represent the object. Gak believes that the process of nomination is closely related to the act of classification. He said that in natural language, the nominal process is inevitably associated with classification behavior. If it is necessary to display a certain object X, which has no name, based on the characteristics that have been separated from this object, it is then attributed to the concept A or B, which has its own way of expressing them and receiving corresponding names in the language. However, at the same time, the “assembly” of the words themselves into reality also takes place. This means that one can remove or add something to that initial understanding (Nguyen, 2014).

Thus, the process of naming an object, property, or process consists of two steps: defining the conceptual type of the object to be named and choosing a distinctive characteristic to identify (Nguyen, 2016).

According to Clause 2, Article 4 of Decree 120/2007/ND-CP of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam issued on July 23, 2007, guiding the implementation of a number of articles of the Youth Law, Youth Work is the activities of the Party, State, and society to educate, foster, and create favorable conditions for young people to strive and develop while promoting their pioneering role, creativity, and great potential in the cause of building and defending the nation. The Youth Work major (code: 7760102) trains youth workers to master youth work knowledge and skill systems and be able to conduct research, advise, and propose to the Party committees and authorities at all levels on policies related to the youth. The training goal of the Youth Work major is to educate students with good political qualities and ethics and good physical health, to master youth work knowledge and skills, and to have the capacity for leading, managing, administering, and organizing professional youth activities at all levels and sectors.

From the general theoretical basis of terms, along with the key definition of youth work and youth work major, the study provides a working definition of youth work terms as follows: youth work terms are fixed words or phrases which are used in the field of youth work to represent concepts, attributes, things, phenomena, and objects in the field of youth work. This definition is the basis to determine criteria for identifying and collecting youth work terms from various sources for analysis and research.

III. METHODOLOGY

A combination of methods was employed to research youth work terms in Vietnamese. In detail, the elemental analysis method was used to analyze the structure of youth work terms in Vietnamese according to direct elements to determine the elements that make up the terms as well as identify and divide the terminology into two groups: word-level terms and

phrase-level terms. Furthermore, the descriptive method was used to describe the nominal attributes of youth work terminology. The semantic analysis method was also applied to analyze the meaning of youth work terms in Vietnamese.

Based on the categories of content and meaning of youth work terminology, this system was divided into semantic subcategories and nominal attributes that serve as the basis for identifying the term system and its types of semantic relationships which create this term system. Thanks to this, nominal models of youth work terms in Vietnamese were created. Finally, statistical and classifying methods were used to determine the frequency of occurrence, the percentage of each group of terms (word-level terms and phrase-level terms), and the nominal models of youth work terms. The statistical results were summarized in table form with a view to better visualizing the basic semantic characteristics of youth work terminology in Vietnamese.

The research corpus includes 1587 youth work terms in Vietnamese that were collected from the following three sources: (1) the online administrative document system and news related to youth work on the website of the Central Committee of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, (2) the specialized textbooks used in the youth work training program at Vietnam Youth Academy, and (3) the Vietnam Youth Dictionary (Duong et al., 2017).

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result of surveying the corpus reveals that the youth work terms in Vietnamese, in terms of structure, are composed of words and phrases, including 359 word-level terms such as *tiên phong* (“pioneering”), *tình nguyện* (“volunteering”), and *phong trào* (“movement”) and 1228 phrase-level terms such as *định hướng nghề nghiệp* (“career orientation”), *tháng thanh niên* (“youth month”), and *bán thường vụ* (“standing committee”).

In terms of structural models, all youth work terms that are phrase-level terms include main elements and secondary elements. The main elements are primarily nouns that stand in the first position, having the most general meaning and signifying the type concepts. The secondary elements are used to modify the type concepts and often come after the main elements and concretize the characteristics, properties, and attributes of the concepts or objects represented by the main elements.

Within the scope of this research, nominal models of the 1228 youth work terms in Vietnamese are focused upon for clarification. To examine the signs that serve as the basis for the nomination of youth work terms in Vietnamese through the research corpus, this terminology was divided into the following 10 semantics:

1. Subjects in youth work
2. Activities of subjects in youth work
3. Programs/Movements in youth work
4. Document system in youth work
5. Educational work in youth work
6. Objects of youth work
7. Fields in youth work
8. Professional ethics in youth work
9. Educational methods in youth work
10. Operating principles in youth work

In terms of the expressive content of youth work terms, they can be divided into two types: the first type has basic content, naming concepts of fundamental phenomena, things, objects, activities, and so on in youth work. These terms are called primary terms, which are the first-generation terms, playing a core role, thereby creating second- and third-generation terms known as derivative terms. These derivative terms are highly distinctive, describing the properties, characteristics, attributes, and so on of concepts about things, phenomena, objects, activities, and the like that the primary terms express. In terms of linguistic form, primary terms, including words, are typically short, while derivative terms, including nominal phrases, are typically longer.

Through surveying the research corpus, it is found that the derivative youth work terms in Vietnamese are created on semantic relationships and the selection of the following nominal features: (1) *characteristic*, (2) *function*, (3) *rank*, (4) *object*, (5) *field*, (6) *activity*, (7) *frequency*, (8) *location*, (9) *content*, (10) *method*, (11) *organization*, and (12) *profession*.

Within the framework of this study, the nominal models of the most typical youth work terms will be presented.

“A” is denoted as the distinguishing characteristic chosen as the basis for nomination when naming the youth work terms.

A. The Terms Denoting Subjects in Youth Work

The main subjects in youth work were individuals, agencies, and organizations participating in youth work. These individuals, agencies, and organizations carry out activities of the Party, the State, and society to educate, foster, and create favorable conditions for young people to strive and develop, and at the same time promote their pioneering role, creativity, and great potential in the cause of constructing and defending the nation. Through surveying the corpus, the findings showed that there are five distinctive characteristics chosen to identify the group of terms that denote subjects in youth work. These characteristics were selected to be included in the nominal models of 166 youth work terms in Vietnamese. The particular models are as follows:

(a). Model 1: Subject + Characteristic

Examples: *trí thức trẻ* (“young intellectual”), *đại biểu dự khuyết* (“alternate delegate”), *cán bộ chuyên trách* (“full-time official”).

(b). *Model 2: Subject + Function*

Examples: *ban chấp hành* (“executive committee”), *ủy ban kiểm tra* (“inspection committee”), *ban kiểm phiếu* (“vote-counting committee”).

(c). *Model 3: Subject + Rank*

Examples: *bí thư thứ nhất* (“first secretary”), *bí thư cơ sở* (“grassroots secretary”), *ban chấp hành cấp trên* (“senior executive committee”).

(d). *Model 4: Subject + Object*

Examples: *hội sinh viên* (“student union”), *trung tâm thanh niên* (“youth center”), *ban thanh niên nông thôn* (“rural youth department”).

(e). *Model 5: Subject + Field*

Examples: *tiểu ban nội dung* (“content subcommittee”), *tiểu ban nhân sự* (“personnel subcommittee”), *tiểu ban tuyên truyền* (“propaganda subcommittee”).

TABLE 1
NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING SUBJECTS

NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING SUBJECTS					
Category	Model		Nominal Attributes	Number	Percentage (%)
Subject	Subject + A		Characteristic	43	3.5
			Function	46	3.7
			Rank	27	2.2
			Object	27	2.2
			Field	23	1.9
Total				166	13.5

The group of terms denoting subjects in youth work was distinguished by five attributes, including *characteristic*, *function*, *rank*, *object*, and *field*. Of the total 166 terms denoting subjects, 46 units were distinguished by the attribute *function*, equivalent to 3.7%, and 43 units were distinguished by the attribute *characteristic*, accounting for 3.5%. Other characteristics, including *rank* (27), *object* (27), and *field* (23), accounted for quite similar proportions at 2.2%, 2.2%, and 1.9%, respectively.

B. *The Terms Denoting Activities of Subjects in Youth Work*

Through the corpus survey, six distinctive characteristics were found to identify the group of terms denoting the activities of subjects in youth work and were selected to be included in the nominal models of 202 youth work terms in Vietnamese. Below are the nominal models of terms denoting activities of subjects in youth work.

(a). *Model 6: Activity + Characteristic*

Examples: *hỗ trợ trực tiếp* (“direct support”), *kiểm tra toàn diện* (“comprehensive supervision”), *giáo dục cá biệt* (“individualized education”).

(b). *Model 7: Activity + Activity*

Examples: *tổ chức thực hiện* (“implementation organization”), *hoạt động tuyên dương* (“commendation activity”), *hướng dẫn làm cha mẹ* (“parenting guidance”).

(c). *Model 8: Activity + Object*

Examples: *quy hoạch cán bộ* (cadre planning), *hỗ trợ trẻ em* (“child support”), *tập hợp thanh niên* (“youth gathering”).

(d). *Model 9: Activity + Field*

Examples: *tư vấn pháp lý* (“legal consulting”), *bảo vệ môi trường* (“environmental protection”), *định hướng nghề nghiệp* (“career orientation”).

(e). *Model 10: Activity + Frequency*

Examples: *thi đua thường xuyên* (“regular emulation”), *kiểm tra định kỳ* (“periodic supervision”), *kiểm tra thường xuyên* (“regular supervision”).

(f). *Model 11: Activity + Location*

Examples: *phát triển nông thôn* (“rural development”), *xây dựng đô thị* (“urban construction”), *bảo vệ biển đảo* (“sea and island protection”).

TABLE 2
NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING ACTIVITIES OF SUBJECTS

NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING ACTIVITIES OF SUBJECTS				
Category	Model	Nominal Attributes	Number	Percentage (%)
Activity	Activity + A	Characteristic	41	3.3
		Activity	39	3.2
		Object	59	4.8
		Field	31	2.5
		Frequency	19	1.5
		Location	13	1.1
Total			202	16.4

According to the survey results, 202 terms denoting activities of subjects in youth work are distinguished by six attributes, including *characteristic*, *activity*, *object*, *field*, *frequency*, and *location*. The attribute *object* was the most prominent among them and served as the basis for identifying 59 youth work terms denoting activities, equivalent to 4.8%. The attributes *characteristic* (41) and *activity* (39) contributed a considerable amount at 3.3% and 3.2%, respectively. There were 31 terms identified with the attribute *field* (2.5%) and 19 terms identified with the attribute *frequency* (1.5%). The nominal attribute *location* accounts for the lowest proportion at 13 units, equivalent to 1.1%.

C. The Terms Denoting Programs/Movements in Youth Work

Youth work encompasses a range of programs and movements implemented to promote a proactive role and volunteerism as well as arousing the enormous potential of the young to contribute to the successful implementation of the nation's industrialization, modernization, and international integration. Through surveying the corpus, the findings showed that three nominal attributes were chosen to identify the group of terms denoting programs and movements in youth work and were selected to be included in the nominal models of 168 youth work terms in Vietnamese. These nominal models are provided below.

(a). Model 12: Program/Movement + Object

Examples: *phong trào thanh niên* ("youth movement"), *hành trình sinh viên* ("student journey"), *trại hè thanh niên* ("youth summer camp").

(b). Model 13: Program/Movement + Activity

Examples: *lễ tuyên dương* ("commendation ceremony"), *chương trình rèn luyện* ("training program"), *chương trình xóa đói giảm nghèo* ("poverty reduction program").

(c). Model 14: Program/Movement + Field

Examples: *câu lạc bộ học thuật* ("academic club"), *chương trình an ninh chính trị* ("political security program"), *chương trình kinh tế - xã hội* ("socio-economic program").

TABLE 3
NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING PROGRAMS/MOVEMENTS

NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING PROGRAMS/MOVEMENTS				
Category	Model	Nominal Attributes	Number	Percentage (%)
Program/ Movement	Program/ Movement + A	Object	40	3.3
		Activity	69	5.6
		Field	59	4.8
Total			168	13.7

The results of the corpus survey showed that terms denoting programs and movements were distinguished by three nominal attributes: *object*, *activity*, and *field*. Of these, *activity* was chosen as the basis for identifying 69 terms denoting programs and movements, taking the largest proportion with 5.6%. Two attributes, *field* and *object*, were selected to identify 99 terms, specifically, *field* with 59 terms, equivalent to 4.8%, and *object* with 40 terms, equivalent to 3.3%.

D. The Terms Denoting Documents in Youth Work

According to the findings of the corpus survey, four distinctive characteristics were chosen to identify the group of terms denoting the documents in youth work and were selected to be included in the nominal models of 143 youth work terms in Vietnamese. The details of these models are displayed as follows:

(a). Model 15: Document + Activity

Examples: *quyết định công nhận* ("recognition decision"), *quy chế hoạt động* ("operating regulation"), *chương trình hành động* ("action program").

(b). Model 16: Document + Object

Examples: *luật thanh niên* ("youth law"), *lý lịch cán bộ* ("cadre resume"), *luật trẻ em* ("children's law").

(c). Model 17: Document + Time

Examples: *báo cáo năm* ("annual report"), *báo cáo quý* ("monthly report"), *báo cáo nhiệm kỳ* ("term report").

(d). *Model 18: Document + Organization*

Examples: *điều lệ đoàn* (“youth union charter”), *điều lệ hội liên hiệp thanh niên* (“youth federation statute”), *điều lệ hội sinh viên* (“student union regulation”).

TABLE 4
NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING DOCUMENTS

NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING DOCUMENTS				
Category	Model	Nominal Attributes	Number	Percentage (%)
Document	Document + A	Activity	63	5.1
		Object	29	2.4
		Time	36	2.9
		Organization	15	1.2
Total			143	11.6

The group of terms denoting documents in youth work was distinguished by four attributes: *activity*, *object*, *time*, and *organization*. Remarkably, the attribute *activity* was included in more models identifying terms denoting more documents in youth work than other attributes, with 63 units, constituting 5.1%. The attributes *time* (36) and *object* (29) accounted for 2.9% and 2.4%, respectively. There were 15 terms distinguished by the attribute *organization*, accounting for 1.2%.

E. *The Terms Denoting Educational Work in Youth Work*

Educational work is a particularly important content in the field of youth work. There is the organizing of activities and creating an environment for educating and training young people to contribute to the implementation of local political, economic, cultural-social, national defense, and security tasks. Educational work is carried out in many ways, such as political and ideological education, revolutionary tradition and patriotism education, education of national pride and self-respect, moral education, lifestyle education, and legal propaganda. The corpus survey indicated that five distinctive characteristics were chosen to identify the group of terms that denote educational work in youth work and selected to be included in the nominal models of 136 youth work terms in Vietnamese. These models are clarified as follows:

(a). *Model 19: Educational Work + Activity*

Examples: *giáo dục phát huy tính tích cực* (“positivity promoting education”), *giáo dục xây dựng hành vi đạo đức* (“ethical behavior building education”), *giáo dục giao tiếp* (“communication education”).

(b). *Model 20: Educational Work + Field*

Examples: *giáo dục chính trị* (“political education”), *giáo dục giới* (“sex education”), *giáo dục quốc phòng an ninh* (“national defense education”).

(c). *Model 21: Educational Work + Frequency*

Examples: *bồi dưỡng định kỳ* (“periodic training”), *bồi dưỡng thường xuyên* (“regular training”), *bồi dưỡng liên tục* (“continuous training”).

(d). *Model 22: Educational Work + Method*

Examples: *bồi dưỡng thông qua các hoạt động* (“training through activities”), *bồi dưỡng thông qua giao nhiệm vụ* (“training through assigning tasks”), *giáo dục thông qua hoạt động xã hội* (“education through social activities”).

(e). *Model 23: Educational Work + Characteristic*

Examples: *giáo dục điển hình* (“typical education”), *giáo dục đặc biệt* (“special education”), *giáo dục hòa nhập* (“inclusive education”).

TABLE 5
NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING EDUCATIONAL WORK

NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING EDUCATIONAL WORK				
Category	Model	Nominal Characteristics	Number	Percentage (%)
Educational Work	Educational Work + A	Activity	26	2.1
		Field	33	2.7
		Frequency	11	0.9
		Method	38	3.1
		Characteristic	28	2.3
Total			136	11.1

The research findings indicated that the group of terms denoting educational work in youth work was distinguished by five characteristics: *activity*, *field*, *frequency*, *method*, and *characteristic*. Among them, the terms identified by the attribute *method* contributed to the most prevalent number, with 38 units, equivalent to 3.1%. Following closely, the attribute *field* was included in the 33 terms denoting the educational work, accounting for 2.7%, while two attributes, *activity* (26) and *characteristic* (28), had quite equal proportions, with 2.1% and 2.3%, respectively. The number of terms which denote educational work and were distinguished by the attribute *frequency* accounts for the lowest number, with 11 units, equivalent to 0.9%.

F. The Terms Denoting Objects in Youth Work

According to the results of the corpus survey, there were four distinctive characteristics chosen to identify the groups of terms denoting the objects in youth work. These characteristics were selected to be included in the nominal models of 131 terms. Below are the nominal models in point.

(a). Model 24: Object + Location

Examples: *thanh niên nông thôn* (“rural youth”), *thanh niên đô thị* (“urban youth”), *trẻ em vùng sâu vùng xa* (“children in remote areas”).

(b). Model 25: Object + Characteristic

Examples: *thanh niên yếu thế* (“vulnerable youth”), *trẻ khuyết tật* (“disabled children”), *trẻ bị bỏ rơi* (“abandoned children”).

(c). Model 26: Object + Profession

Examples: *thanh niên công nhân* (“young worker”), *thanh niên trí thức* (“intellectual youth”), *doanh nhân trẻ* (“young entrepreneur”).

(d). Model 27: Object + Activity

Examples: *trẻ em vi phạm pháp luật* (“juvenile lawbreaker”), *trẻ em lang thang* (“homeless children”), *trẻ em hoàn lương* (“reforming children”).

TABLE 6
NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING OBJECTS

NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING OBJECTS				
Category	Model	Nominal Attributes	Number	Percentage (%)
Object	Object + A	Location	28	2.3
		Characteristic	52	4.2
		Profession	12	1
		Activity	39	3.2
Total			131	10.7

The survey results showed that terms denoting objects in youth work were distinguished by four distinctive attributes, including *location*, *characteristic*, *profession*, and *activity*. Among them, the attribute *characteristic* was predominantly utilized in most of the terms with 52 units, equivalent to 4.2%. Ranked second were 39 terms distinguished by the attribute *activity*, accounting for 3.2%, and they are followed by 28 terms distinguished by the attribute *location*, accounting for 2.3%. The number of terms distinguished by the attribute *profession* is low, with 12 units, equivalent to 1%.

G. The Terms Denoting Fields in Youth Work

Through the corpus survey, the findings revealed that there were three distinctive attributes chosen to identify the group of terms denoting fields in youth work. These attributes were selected to be included in the nominal models of 103 youth work terms in Vietnamese. The findings of these models were as follows.

(a). Model 28: Field + Object

Examples: *công tác thanh niên* (“youth work”), *công tác thiếu nhi* (“children work”), *công tác trẻ vị thành niên* (“juvenile work”).

(b). Model 29: Field + Activity

Examples: *công tác kiểm tra* (“inspection work”), *công tác phòng ngừa tội phạm* (“crime prevention work”), *công tác phòng chống bạo lực học đường* (“school violence prevention work”).

(c). Model 30: Field + Field

Examples: *công tác từ thiện* (“charity work”), *công tác tư tưởng* (“ideological work”), *công tác xã hội* (“social work”).

TABLE 7
NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING FIELDS

NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING FIELDS				
Category	Model	Nominal Characteristics	Number	Percentage (%)
Field	Field + A	Object	27	2.2
		Activity	47	3.8
		Field	29	2.4
Total			103	8.4

The survey results indicated that the category of fields in youth work was distinguished by three nominal attributes: *object*, *activity*, and *field*. In a total of 103 youth work terms in Vietnamese, *activity* emerged as the most frequently employed attribute, with 47 terms, accounting for the maximum number of 3.8%. The number of terms denoting fields in

youth work distinguished by the attributes *object* and *field* were approximately equal. Of these, there were 27 terms distinguished by *object* (2.2%) and 29 terms distinguished by *field* (2.4%).

H. The Terms Denoting Professional Ethics in Youth Work

Professional ethics are required in all fields and professions. The findings show that there were three distinctive attributes chosen to identify the group of terms indicating professional ethics in youth work. These attributes were selected to be included in the nominal models of 74 youth work terms. These models are revealed as follows:

(a). *Model 31: Professional Ethic + Field*

Examples: *phẩm chất chính trị* (“political quality”), *bản lĩnh chính trị* (“political spirit”), *ý thức pháp luật* (“legal consciousness”).

(b). *Model 32: Professional Ethic + Activity*

Examples: *tinh thần tiên phong* (“pioneering spirit”), *ý thức chấp hành pháp luật* (“sense of law observance”), *khả năng dự báo tình hình* (“situation predicting ability”).

(c). *Model 33: Professional Ethic + Characteristic*

Examples: *tư duy độc lập* (“independent thinking”), *hoài bão lớn* (“great aspiration”), *bản lĩnh vững vàng* (“strong bravery”).

TABLE 8
NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING PROFESSIONAL ETHICS				
Category	Model	Nominal Attributes	Number	Percentage (%)
Professional Ethic	Professional Ethic + A	Field	23	1.9
		Activity	42	3.4
		Characteristic	9	0.7
Total			74	6

From the table above, the findings showed that the terms belonging to the group of professional ethics in youth work are distinguished by three attributes that include *field*, *activity*, and *characteristic*. These characteristics appeared in 74 youth work terms in Vietnamese. The nominal attribute *activity* with a frequency of 42 accounts for the largest number, equivalent to 3.4%. The nominal attribute *field* was included in the model of 23 terms denoting professional ethics. There were only nine terms in this group that were distinguished by the attribute *characteristic*, accounting for 0.7%.

I. The Terms Denoting Educational Methods in Youth Work

Educational methods are a set of ways to organize activities and educate young people about personality, ethics, ideals, lifestyle, culture, profession, world view, and philosophy of life with a view to training the youth with comprehensive qualities to continue the revolutionary cause of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the nation. Through surveying the corpus, the results showed that there are three distinctive characteristics chosen to identify the group of terms denoting the educational methods in youth work. These characteristics were selected to be included in the nominal models of 62 youth work terms in Vietnamese. These models are as follows:

(a). *Model 34: Educational Method + Activity*

Examples: *phương thức quản lý* (“management method”), *phương thức bồi dưỡng* (“training method”), *phương pháp thuyết phục* (“persuasion method”).

(b). *Model 35: Educational Method + Field*

Examples: *phương pháp kinh tế* (“economic method”), *phương thức hành chính* (“administrative method”), *phương pháp pháp luật* (“legal method”).

(c). *Model 36: Educational Method + Characteristic*

Examples: *phương pháp trực tiếp* (“direct method”), *phương pháp gián tiếp* (“indirect method”), *phương pháp thực tế* (“practical method”).

TABLE 9
NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING EDUCATIONAL METHODS

NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING EDUCATIONAL METHODS				
Category	Model	Nominal Attributes	Number	Percentage (%)
Educational method	Educational method + A	Activity	20	1.6
		Field	17	1.4
		Characteristic	25	2
Total			62	5

The findings showed that the nominal attributes selected as the basis for identifying the youth work terms in Vietnamese include *activity*, *field*, and *characteristic*. In particular, the number of terms distinguished by the nominal attributes *characteristic*, *activity*, and *field* corresponds to 25 (2%), 20 (1.6%), and 17 (1.4%), respectively.

J. The Terms Denoting Operating Principles in Youth Work

Through the survey of the corpus, it is found that there are 3 distinctive characteristics chosen to identify the group of terms denoting the operating principles in youth work. These characteristics are selected to be included in the nominal models of 43 youth work terms in Vietnamese. Details of these models are demonstrated as follows.

(a). Model 37: Operating Principle + Characteristic

Examples: *nguyên tắc công khai* (“principle of openness”), *nguyên tắc bình đẳng* (“principle of equality”), *nguyên tắc tự nguyện* (“principle of voluntariness”).

(b). Model 38: Operating Principle + Activity

Examples: *nguyên tắc biểu quyết* (“principle of voting”), *nguyên tắc hiệp thương* (“principle of consultation”), *nguyên tắc bảo lưu ý kiến* (“principle of opinion reservation”).

(c). Model 39: Operating Principle + Method

Examples: *chế độ tập thể lãnh đạo* (“collective leadership regime”), *chế độ cá nhân phụ trách* (“individual responsibility regime”), *nguyên tắc cấp dưới phục tùng cấp trên* (“principle of subordinates obeying superiors”).

TABLE 10
NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING OPERATING PRINCIPLES

NOMINAL MODELS OF YOUTH WORK TERMS DENOTING OPERATING PRINCIPLES				
Category	Model	Nominal Attributes	Number	Percentage (%)
Operating principle	Operating principle + A	Characteristic	8	0.7
		Activity	21	1.7
		Method	14	1.1
Total			43	3.5

From the table above, the attributes selected as the basis for identifying terms indicating operating principles in youth work included *characteristic*, *activity*, and *method*. Among them, the attribute *activity*, with an occurrence of 21 terms, highlights the highest proportion, equivalent to 1.7%. There were 14 terms identified by the nominal attribute *method*, corresponding to 1.1%, and 8 terms identified by the nominal attribute *characteristic*, corresponding to 0.7%.

TABLE 11
SEMANTIC CATEGORIES AND NOMINAL ATTRIBUTES

Semantic Categories (Number)	Nominal Characteristics (Frequency)											
	Characteristic	Function	Rank	Object	Field	Activity	Frequency	Location	Method	Time	Organization	Profession
Subjects (166)	43	46	27	27	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Activities of Subjects (202)	41	0	0	59	31	39	19	13	0	0	0	0
Programs/ Movements (168)	0	0	0	40	59	69	0	0	0	0	0	0
Documents (143)	0	0	0	29	0	63	0	0	0	36	15	0
Educational Work (136)	28	0	0	0	33	26	11	0	38	0	0	0
Objects (131)	52	0	0	0	0	39	0	28	0	0	0	12
Fields (103)	0	0	0	27	29	47	0	0	0	0	0	0
Professional Ethics (74)	9	0	0	0	23	42	0	0	0	0	0	0
Educational Methods (62)	25	0	0	0	17	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Operating Principles (43)	8	0	0	0	0	21	0	0	14	0	0	0
Total: 1228	206	46	27	182	215	366	30	41	52	36	15	12

From the table above, the findings reinforce the claim that, of the total 1228 youth work terms in Vietnamese that are phrases, the number of terms denoting the category of Activities of Subjects accounts for the largest number with 202 terms, equivalent to 16.4%. Besides, the group of terms belonging to the categories of Programs/Movements and Subjects also accounts for a high number with 168 terms (13.7%) and 166 terms (13.5%), respectively. Furthermore, the terms belonging to the categories of documents, educational work, objects, and fields also account for a considerable number of 143 (11.6%), 136 (11.1%), 131 (10.7%), and 103 (8.4%), respectively. Additionally, in the three groups of professional ethics, educational methods, and operating principles, the number of terms denoting operating principles is the lowest, with 43 terms, equivalent to 3.5%.

What is more, the findings show that youth work terms are created based on semantic relationships and the selection of 12 nominal attributes: *characteristic*, *function*, *rank*, *object*, *field*, *activity*, *frequency*, *location*, *method*, *time*, *organization*, and *profession*. Notably, the group of four nominal attributes encompassing *characteristic*, *object*, *field*, and *activity* account for an exceptionally substantial number and are included in the nominal models of 969 youth work terms in Vietnamese out of a total of 1228 terms. Among them, the number of terms distinguished by the nominal attribute *activity* accounts for the highest number, with 366 units, equivalent to 29.8%. Ranked second is the group of terms distinguished by the nominal attribute *field* with 215 terms, equivalent to 17.5%. The group of terms identified by the nominal attribute *characteristic* also accounts for a considerable number, with 206 units, equivalent to 16.8%. In addition, there are 182 terms identified by the characteristic *object*, equivalent to 14.8%. The characteristics *function*, *rank*, *frequency*, *location*, *method*, and *time* are low in number. The number of terms distinguished by the nominal attributes of *organization* and *profession* is the lowest, with 15 terms and 12 terms, respectively.

V. CONCLUSION

From the results of surveying and analyzing the nominal attributes of youth work terminology in Vietnamese, some salient conclusions can be drawn as follows:

The youth work terminology in Vietnamese includes word-level terms and phrase-level terms. Of the total 1587 terms, there are 359 word-level terms and 1228 phrase-level terms. These 1228 phrase-level terms belong mainly to 10 semantic categories, with the group of terms denoting Activities, Programs/Movements, and Subjects accounting for a higher number than the other groups of terms.

Through the semantic analysis method and the statistical and classifying methods, the study discovered 39 nominal models of youth work terms in Vietnamese. 1228 terms were identified by 12 nominal attributes. Among these 12 attributes, *characteristic*, *object*, *field*, and *activity* accounted for the majority.

In terms of expressive content, the Vietnamese youth work terminology can be divided into two types. First, there are the primary terms, which are the core terms having basic content, naming concepts of phenomena, things, objects, activities, and so on in the field of youth work. Then there are the secondary terms, which are highly distinctive. They describe the properties, characteristics, attributes, and so on of the concepts about phenomena, things, objects, activities, and the like that primary terms represent. From the primary terms to the secondary terms, it can be developed according to a hierarchical mechanism; that is, from a primary term, a secondary term will be created, and then from a secondary term, a tertiary term will be formed, and on and on. Furthermore, there is typically a one-to-one correspondence in structure with the nomination of youth work terminology in Vietnamese; that is, each attribute that needs to be identified always has a formal element representing it, and the number of elements in a term will correspond to the number of attributes that are identified. For example, the term *hình thức bỏ phiếu kín* ("secret ballot method") consists of three elements, in which *hình thức* ("method") is the primary term; the second element corresponds to the characteristic *bỏ phiếu* ("ballot"); and the third element corresponds to the attribute *kín* ("secret"). Thus, when identifying a concept, it is necessary to determine how many elements to use because each element will correspond to an attribute that needs to be identified. The term will be formed based on the concept the term represents, which necessitates an accurate name for that concept. The accuracy of terms is one of the first standards that terms need to meet. Therefore, terms cannot exist if they do not accurately name concepts in this terminology.

For youth work terms with many attributes, if the general attributes overlap, more specific attributes must be taken. For example, the two terms *công tác giáo dục chính trị* ("political education work") and *công tác giáo dục pháp luật* ("legal education work") have the same primary term *công tác* ("work") and the same attribute *giáo dục* ("education"). Therefore, more specific attributes, like *chính trị* ("political") and *pháp luật* ("legal"), must be used to distinguish these two terms. Similarly, the elements that make up a term need to be gradually placed in a certain order from general to specific. In addition to the main element denoting the concept, each sub-element constituting the term needs to correspond to only one attribute.

The results of this study have theoretical and practical significance, serving as a basis for building and standardizing the Vietnamese youth work terms as well as translating this terminology into English based on the nominal attributes that are found in this study.

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Text Versus Screen: A Linguistic Comparison of Selected English Novels and Their Film Adaptations

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Abstract—This paper aims to analyse the linguistic features of ten English novels and their adaptations into films using Biber's multidimensional analysis framework. The paper compares and contrasts the various linguistic features of novels and movies. Dividing each text into three equal parts, the MAT (Multidimensional Analysis Tagger) was applied. Descriptive statistics and the results of an ANOVA were then analysed using SPSS. The study indicates that movie subtitles are semantically more straightforward as they occupy limited space and time, while novels use more elaborate vocabulary. Movies are more involved, non-narrative, non-argumentative, non-abstract, and less explicit than novels. The present research contributes to the existing knowledge by providing a clearer picture of the connection between the narrative form and the linguistic manifestation and helpful information on how language adapts to the new media.

Index Terms—comparative study, linguistic analysis, media adaptation, multidimensional framework, narrative techniques

I. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary, constantly developing media world, the relationships between the textual and visual representations of the material help to understand language development processes. Often, novels have been considered the primary form of literary art due to the popularity of their stories and main characters. Written stories have become an essential source of art that can be turned into movies. These movies have become vital instruments to turn these written stories into immersive experiences that captivate the audience through sound, vision, and speech. While each media outlet has its fan base, very little is known about how the language changes when a novel is adapted to the screen. This study intends to fill this gap by focusing on ten English novels alongside their film adaptations. It tries to differentiate between 150+ linguistic features used in the two media through the help of Biber's (1991) multidimensional analysis framework. This framework provides insights into how language use changes in different contexts (Ali, 2024a, 2024b; Ali & Abdulhaleem, 2024; Ali & Thompson, 2022).

The chosen works cover a broad spectrum of genres and styles, providing room for analysis. Four hundred tokens were annotated using MAT after each text was split into three parts. The data was therefore analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to produce descriptive statistics and ANOVA. Adapting a book into a movie requires a lot of language changes. The novel must reflect narratives, descriptions, and plots, which cannot be effectively achieved in hundreds of pages. However, because of the time available on a screen, the movies' scripts and subtitles contain these elements concisely. This means that fewer words have to be employed, and content delivery has to be done differently. Dialogues and thoughts need to be voiced, descriptions need to be illustrated, and resolutions need to be regularised often to ensure the audience's understanding and attention. This study is critical because it contributes to the field of linguistics and the practice of media adaptation. The study helps understand conversion processes by focusing on the distinct communicative purposes and conditions of movie subtitles and novels. The results will provide a further understanding of the more global linguistic features that define each medium and how language use is mediated by narrative structure. Therefore, the study aims to improve the understanding of the complex interconnection between the textual and the visual story using a multidimensional approach. In light of these linguistic changes, this research seeks to offer a closer understanding of the shifting relations between novels and their film adaptations. This eventually leads to a better understanding of the talent and creativity required to bring a written script on paper to life on screen.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Examining linguistic elements in written texts and their transformation for the screen has drawn academic attention. Many papers have been devoted to analysing the language features of books and films. Thus, the reader has an opportunity to get acquainted with the artistic and narrative decisions made in each of the mentioned mediums (Mamosiuk, 2023; Nalabandian & Ireland, 2022; Horbacauskiene, 2022; Lutge, 2018). Yet, comparatively few texts compare the language of novels and their film adaptations. Prior research has paid particular attention to the linguistic characteristics of novels. For instance, Sardinha (2004) conducted a quantitative analysis of the lexical and grammatical patterns in novels to identify the stylistic devices that characterise novels. Like this, Joshi (2020) argued about the narrative structures and the language features of the modern novel, giving the readers an understanding of what the contemporary novel looks like. In addition, the analysis of the chosen American novels regarding the identified stylistic devices can also show a range of emotional stylistic units that refer to negative judgments and topics such as drugs, money, and people's behaviour (Martyniuk et al., 2023). By leveraging postcolonial stylistics, such as otherness and drug discourse, a review of books in Indian English literary texts illuminates the possibilities of language in associating and constructing meaning and identity (Adami, 2022). These studies show how effectively it is possible to convey the meanings of such novels and their language features, the description of the characters, and the engaging plot.

Prior studies have also examined subtitles, particularly the translation of the dialogue from the script into the movie (Moura, 2023; Huang & Wu, 2023; McLoughlin et al., 2023; Lu, 2023). Mahamoud et al. (2022) focused on the language changes that enhance dialogue in films and found that situational and linguistic contexts are relevant for understanding the pragmatic content of screen subtitles. Hmidi (2023) also discussed the process of translating audiovisual content and stressed the need to know how language is used for visual purposes. The studies can be applied to analysing the linguistic strategies employed in movie subtitles since subtitles are often brief and straightforward to accommodate the cinematic context.

While novels and movies have been the subjects of much individual research, there is a need for comparative studies that look at the linguistic aspects of both media at the same time using the multidimensional framework. The research gap presents a great chance to examine the nature of language across different media and how the changes impact audience reception. To meet this research need, ten English novels and their respective films are compared in this study from a linguistic perspective. Consequently, this study makes a significant contribution to the field of linguistic studies by applying the comparative approach to examining the constituent elements of novels and their film adaptations. This study will be helpful for future research on linguistic variation and media adaptation because it defines the unique communication strategies and limitations and expands our understanding of language variation with media.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research analysed ten novels in English and their film adaptations from a linguistic perspective. The selection of novels was made by considering several factors. The final choice of movies and novels was based on the fact that the movie transcripts used in the study are precise, and the novel editions are easily available in most formats. Furthermore, only novels that received critical acclaim or were popular were selected; thus, the data set contains important linguistic shifts in today's literature and movies. Such a selection was made very cautiously to guarantee that the corpus would be suitable for comparative linguistic analysis. Table 1 below provides the list of the novels and the related movies.

TABLE 1
NOVELS AND THEIR CORRESPONDING MOVIE ADAPTATIONS

Novels	Movies	Genre
Five Feet Apart	Five Feet Apart (2019)	Romance
The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes	The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes (2023)	Adventure
All the Bright Places	All the Bright Places (2020)	Young Adult
I Heard You Paint Houses	The Irishman (2019)	Crime
Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret	Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret (2023)	Coming-Of-Age
Death on the Nile	Death on the Nile (2022)	Mystery
Doctor Sleep	Doctor Sleep (2019)	Horror
The Goldfinch	The Goldfinch (2019)	Thriller
Where'd You Go, Bernadette	Where'd You Go, Bernadette (2019)	Comedy
The Aftermath	The Aftermath (2019)	War

All texts, including the transcripts from the movies and novels, were divided into three equal parts to facilitate the analysis of the texts. This division generated 30 novel texts and 30 movie texts, establishing a large corpus for analysis. The first analysis step was to use the MAT (Multidimensional Analysis Tagger) to tag the data at 400 token intervals. The tagging process was necessary to record various linguistic characteristics across the text sections, providing a comprehensive and balanced view.

After tagging, statistical analysis was done by transferring the data to SPSS. Descriptive statistics were computed to stress out the specific characteristics of the data and to get the first impression of the linguistic aspect of the subtitles of the book and the movie. To examine the differences between the two media in more detail, the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) tests were conducted. These evaluations enabled the discussion of variation within and between the groups and revealed the differences in the linguistic features described by Biber's (1991) multidimensional analysis. It is

becoming increasingly critical to achieve accurate text partitioning, accurate labelling, and high statistical processing simultaneously. Biber's multidimensional approach ensures that the outcomes of the study are reliable and valuable. The combination of qualitative tagging and quantitative analysis made a significant contribution to the field of linguistic studies by enabling a thorough understanding of the linguistic techniques used in novels and their film adaptations.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A. Dimension 1

Biber (1991) named the first Dimension "Involved vs. Informational." This dimension helps distinguish between interactive, personal language and factual, impersonal language. First-person pronouns, private verbs, and contractions indicate an intimate, conversational tone in the involved discourse. However, in informational discourse, which emphasises the dissemination of factual information, attributional adjectives, prepositions, and nouns are more common.

Our analysis reveals significant linguistic differences in Dimension 1 between the movie subtitles that correspond with the corpus of novels. Table 2 shows that the mean score for movies is significantly higher than for novels (1.92, SD = 6.28). The mean score for movies is 24.53 (SD = 5.01). Based on the results of the ANOVA, there is a statistically significant difference ($F(1, 58) = 237.08, p < .001$) between the two mediums.

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR DIMENSION 1

Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Novel	30	1.92	6.28	1.14	-0.42 to 4.27	-11.10	14.34
Movie	30	24.53	5.01	0.91	22.65 to 26.40	16.78	35.78
Total	60	13.22	12.71	1.64	9.94 to 16.51	-11.10	35.78

These results imply that movie subtitles are significantly higher in producing involved discourse than novels. This pattern suggests that movie subtitles prioritise involving the audience, most likely due to the constraints and requirements of the medium.

For instance, consider the same scene from the novel and the movie subtitles:

"I thought Cato killed you!" I almost shout. "No, I'm fine." Peeta wraps his arms around me, but I don't respond. "Katniss?" I push away, trying to sort out my feelings." NTHG (2)

In contrast, the movie subtitles (THG23) condense the dialogue to convey the same emotional tension, as illustrated in:

"Katniss: I thought Cato killed you! Peeta: No, I'm fine. Don't worry." THG23 (2)

The comparison of the two excerpts shows significant dissimilarities in the lexico-grammatical patterns associated with Biber's Dimension 1. The novel uses important features of informational discourse to provide a descriptive, contextually charged account of Cato: *feelings, arms around me, trying to sort out*. Other adjectives include *fine* and *frustration*, and *they* create the detail and reflective nature of the text. These linguistic elements are used to build a detailed picture of the character's subjectivity, which corresponds to the objective of the novel, which is to tell the reader a complete story. On the other hand, the movie subtitles tend to be concise and urgent and use features characteristic of the involved discourse. The omission of *that* in *I thought Cato killed you!* and the numerous shifts between "I" and "you" make the exchange sound like a conversation. The use of the contraction *I'm fine* signifies the interpersonal roles since the film has temporal and visual requirements.

The differences in scores are due to various factors inherent in each medium. Movies often explore characters' innermost thoughts and emotions through various linguistic devices that create a sense of involvement. On the other hand, novels have to focus on crucial details because they need more time to convey the story effectively.

Novels and movie subtitles differ, reflecting larger linguistic patterns specific to each platform. Given their length and necessity for clarity, novels tend to take an informational approach because of their size and descriptive nature. At the same time, movies can afford a more involved style.

The significant variation in Dimension 1 scores draws attention to the different communication goals and constraints of novels and movie subtitles. Understanding these differences is necessary to analyse how language is used differently in various media and how these differences affect the audience's perception and understanding of the story.

TABLE 3
ANOVA RESULTS FOR DIMENSION 1

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7667.05	1	7667.05	237.08	.00
Within Groups	1875.68	58	32.33		
Total	9542.73	59			

This analysis of Dimension 1 highlights the various linguistic techniques employed in novels and the films that adapt them, underscoring the importance of medium-specific objectives and limitations in shaping language use.

B. Dimension 2

Biber's Dimension 2, "Narrative versus. Non-Narrative Concerns", establishes a distinction between texts that are essentially narrative and contain elements of storytelling and temporal sequencing and texts that are expository or descriptive and focus on information delivery without a temporal framework. Narrative discourse components, such as *verbs of reporting and communication*, *third-person pronouns*, and *past tense verbs*, are essential to the creation and dissemination of stories. Conversely, non-narrative discourse contains exposition-supporting components like *attributive adjectives* and *present tense verbs*.

There were some noticeable differences between the subtitles of novels and movies after we analysed Dimension 2 across our corpus. As indicated by Table 4, the mean score for movies is -2.57 (SD = 0.92), while the mean score for novels is 3.14 (SD = 2.55). This implies that movie subtitles are typically non-narrative, but novels have a more substantial narrative component. According to the ANOVA results, this difference is statistically significant ($F(1, 58) = 132.45, p < .001$).

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR DIMENSION 2

Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Novel	30	3.14	2.55	0.46	2.19 to 4.10	-0.64	7.96
Movie	30	-2.57	0.92	0.16	-2.91 to -2.22	-4.24	-0.70
Total	60	0.28	3.45	0.44	-0.60 to 1.18	-4.24	7.96

For instance, consider the same scene from the novel and the movie subtitles:

"She looked up at the figure in the dim light, the familiar face bringing a flood of emotions she couldn't name. 'Why did you come here?' she whispered, her voice catching. 'I had to,' came the quiet response. 'You needed me.'" NDS (2)

In contrast, the movie subtitles condense the dialogue significantly, as illustrated in:

"Why are you here?" "Because you need me." DS19 (2)

This comparison shows how particular lexical and grammatical patterns are some of the characteristics of narrative and non-narrative discourse. Many *past tense verbs* are used in the novel excerpt, including *looked* and *brought*, *third-person pronouns* like *she* and *her*, and *communication verbs* such as *whispered* and *responded*. These features explain the temporal continuity and emotional development characteristics of the narrative discourse. On the other hand, the movie subtitles demonstrate the features of concise language and close connection with the present moment: there are more *present tense verbs* (*are*, *need*) and *no time markers*.

Novels score higher in narratives, naturally including more storytelling elements like character development, time progression, and detailed descriptions. This aligns with the traditional goal of novels, which is to use complex narrative structures to immerse readers in a fictional universe.

The movie subtitles, on the other hand, scored lower since they adopted a more explanatory stance, highlighting crucial plots and the good delivery of dialogues. With brevity and efficiency, movie subtitles prioritise informational content over intricate plots. This results in a more straightforward, less narratively dense text.

Dimension 2 highlights the linguistic features that distinguish subtitles from novels and movies. Novels use storytelling to engage readers and create detailed plots and characters, while movie subtitles streamline content to ensure that the viewers understand them.

TABLE 5
ANOVA RESULTS FOR DIMENSION 2

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	490.31	1	490.31	132.45	.00
Within Groups	214.70	58	3.70		
Total	705.02	59			

Thus, the analysis of Dimension 2 emphasises the differences in the narrative structures in the novels and the movie subtitles. This differentiation is driven by the goals and limitations specific to each medium: novels are part of informative and entertaining narratives, while movie subtitles are translations that should be comprehensible.

C. Dimension 3

In Biber's Dimension 3, "Explicit vs. Situation-Dependent Discourse", the texts are categorised according to the extent to which they rely on the situational context to be understood. Explicit discourse features elements such as the *relative clause*, *nominalisations*, and *prepositions* while conveying specific, detailed context information. On the other hand, situation-dependent discourse comprises context-embedded factors such as *deictic* and *adverbial factors*. The differences identified in Dimension 3 when comparing novel adaptations and movie subtitles are also observable in our corpus analysis. As is indicated in Table 6, the mean score of movies is lower than that of the novels, which is 0.08 (SD= 2.26). Movies obtain a mean of -2.23 (Standard Deviation = 1.88). The analysis of variance (ANOVA) also proves the hypothesis that there is a difference between the two media with a statistical significance difference of $F(1, 58) = 18.65, p < .001$.

TABLE 6
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR DIMENSION 3

Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Novel	30	0.08	2.26	0.41	-0.75 to 0.93	-2.95	5.71
Movie	30	-2.23	1.88	0.34	-2.94 to -1.53	-6.70	0.56
Total	60	-1.07	2.37	0.30	-1.68 to -0.46	-6.70	5.71

For instance, consider the same scene from the novel and the movie subtitles:

"He pointed to the artwork on the wall, a vivid landscape that spoke of another time and place. 'This used to hang in the study,' he explained, his voice tinged with a quiet pride. 'It was my wife's favorite.' Rachael remained silent, her expression unreadable." NTA (1)

In contrast, the movie subtitles condense this exchange, as illustrated in:

"That? My wife loved it." "It's fine." TA19 (3)

This comparison underscores the distinct linguistic approaches of explicit versus situation-dependent discourse. The novel employs explicit features such as *relative clauses* that speak of another time and place and *prepositions* on the wall and in the study to provide detailed context and evoke the emotional significance of the artwork. These features reflect the novel's reliance on explicit discourse to convey complex ideas and relationships independent of the immediate situational context.

Conversely, the movie subtitles prioritise brevity, relying on deictic expressions like *that* and a minimalistic structure that integrates the dialogue seamlessly with the visual and auditory context. The lack of *relative clauses* or *prepositions* in the subtitles demonstrates their reliance on situation-dependent discourse, as the accompanying imagery supplies much of the contextual information. This aligns with the medium's constraints, where rapid comprehension is critical.

The raw frequencies of explicit discourse features are higher for novels with higher scores, indicating that they use linguistic signals more often to provide additional specifications. Novels require complex plots and characters and enhanced detailed descriptions that need unique settings, characters' backgrounds, and events. These components are stated in novels regardless of the situational context of the reader. On the other hand, the lower the movie subtitle score is, the more the text depends on situation-bound language. Due to the limitations of time and space, movie subtitles depend on situational context, which is given by images and sounds. This is why subtitles can sound more straightforward –they do not have to mark the information with language and context the same way as the spoken word does. The findings in Dimension 3 demonstrate that movie subtitles are more situation-dependent than novel subtitles because they use explicit discourse to build well-defined and autonomous stories.

TABLE 7
ANOVA RESULTS FOR DIMENSION 3

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	81.13	1	81.13	18.65	.00
Within Groups	252.30	58	4.35		
Total	333.43	59			

Thus, the analysis of Dimension 3 demonstrates that both novels and the screen adaptations derived from them are, to varying degrees, reliant on explicit and situation-bound discourse. This means that, unlike novels, movie subtitles give little situational information and depend primarily on context. The inherent limitations and requirements of each medium cause these variations.

D. Dimension 4

Biber's Dimension 4, "Overt Expression of Argumentation/Persuasion," distinguished texts that overtly attempt to persuade or influence. This dimension is characterised by sentence patterns like *prediction models*, *conditional subordination*, and *suasive verbs*, which are commonly used to develop arguments, communicate needs, and persuade readers or listeners. Texts that score highly on this dimension include opinion pieces, argumentative essays, and other discourse forms where the primary goal is to convince the reader.

After analysing Dimension 4 within our dataset, we discovered distinct differences in the subtitles of movies compared to novels. The data in Table 1 reveals that the average score for movies (-2.60, SD = 0.62) is significantly higher than for novels (-1.23, SD = 1.01). According to the ANOVA results, this contrast is found to be statistically significant ($F(1, 58) = 40.10, p < .001$), indicating a notable disparity between the two forms of media.

TABLE 8
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR DIMENSION 4

Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Novel	30	-1.23	1.01	0.18	-1.61 to -0.85	-3.22	1.62
Movie	30	-2.60	0.62	0.11	-2.83 to -2.37	-3.39	-0.69
Total	60	-1.92	1.08	0.13	-2.19 to -1.64	-3.39	1.62

The higher score for movies suggests that they use non-argumentative language elements more often than novels. Internal monologues, arguments, and dialogues that show characters trying to sway or convince one another are typical

examples of more overt forms of argumentation and persuasion found in novels with complex plots and character development. So, it is evident from the mean scores that novels are less non-argumentative than movie subtitles.

On the other hand, movie subtitles get a better score, which shows that they are primarily used to contain the information that is most important for the moving plot without an attempt to convince the viewer of something more complicated. Since subtitles must be brief and precise, they need a more persuasive aspect, and therefore, the language used is plain. Significant differences in Dimension 4 show how text and movie subtitles use non-argumentative discourse. Novels often explore why their characters think the way they do. The arguments they present for and against these reasons are more convincing. On the other hand, by summarising the information to maintain the flow of the visual story, movie subtitles reduce the need for explicit rationale.

TABLE 9
ANOVA RESULTS FOR DIMENSION 4

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	28.29	1	28.29	40.10	.00
Within Groups	40.91	58	0.70		
Total	69.20	59			

Finally, the Dimension 4 analysis reveals different strategies used in novel and movie subtitles to encode argumentation and persuasion. The differences come from the unique needs and conditions of the media; for instance, the novel contains more elaborated and interesting aspects than movie subtitles, which focus primarily on the plot and the dramatic dialogue.

E. Dimension 5

Dimension 5 is labelled as “Abstract vs. Non-Abstract Style” by Biber. It compares texts that use concrete, personal language with abstract, impersonal language. Some syntactic features, like *conjunctions*, *agentless passives*, and *nominalisation*, contribute to the discourse's formal and distant tone. On the other hand, the non-abstract discourse is concrete, more assertive, and individualistic, employing *personal pronouns*, *active verbs*, and *direct references*.

When comparing the corpus of novels with the corresponding movie subtitles, there are discernible differences in the application of abstract and non-abstract styles about Dimension 5. According to Table 10, the mean score for novels is -1.23 (SD = 1.01), whereas the mean score for movies is -2.60 (SD = 0.62). The ANOVA results show the statistical significance differences ($F(1, 58) = 40.10, p < .001$), highlighting an essential difference between the two mediums.

TABLE 10
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR DIMENSION 5

Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Novel	30	-1.23	1.01	0.18	-1.61 to -0.85	-3.22	1.62
Movie	30	-2.60	0.62	0.11	-2.83 to -2.37	-3.39	-0.69
Total	60	-1.92	1.08	0.13	-2.19 to -1.64	-3.39	1.62

Movie subtitles score higher than novels, suggesting they use non-abstract linguistic features more often. Novels frequently employ an abstract style to express complex ideas, create a feeling of detachment, or create a formal narrative structure, especially those with intricate plots and complex themes. Abstract language allows themes and concepts to be explored that go beyond the characters' tangible, first-hand experiences.

Movie subtitles rely on a particular specific non-abstract language. Due to the time and space constraints of subtitles, they must be as direct and intimate as the film's visuals and sound. They use clear language and improve the simple way of sharing messages. The comparison of Dimension 5 scores for novels and movie subtitles demonstrates the differences in the communication strategies. Subtitles for films are more straightforward and much clearer when using a simple and rather personal tone. On the other hand, novels use less non-abstract language to develop complicated stories and deal with significant issues.

TABLE 11
ANOVA RESULTS FOR DIMENSION 5

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	28.29	1	28.29	40.10	.00
Within Groups	40.91	58	0.70		
Total	69.20	59			

The analysis of Dimension 5 highlights how novels and films differ when we consider abstraction and non-abstraction. These differences stem from the intrinsic characteristics of each medium, which are to communicate clearly and ensure the audience gets its message; movies use concrete, intimate language in subtitles. However, novels employ a relatively less non-abstract way to present complex messages.

V. CONCLUSION

By applying Biber's multidimensional analysis of text, linguistic features in the subtitles of the movies and the novels are compared, and the marked contrasts define the specific purpose and conditions of the two media. As *first-person pronouns, conjunctions, and adjectives* are used more frequently in novels than in movies, the reading experience is reported to be less involved and more narrative. However, movie subtitles are supposed to engage the audience, are less likely complex, and are designed to be efficient. To this end, they use situational context more often.

The two differ in narrative style as well. The movie subtitles focus on successfully conveying the story within the temporal and visual space of a motion picture, thus creating non-narrative discourse. While novels tell a story and develop characters effectively, indicating a narrative discourse production. Additionally, the movie subtitles often differ significantly from the novels, highlighting a clear preference for logical and persuasive discourse.

So, this study offers a detailed analysis of how language evolves depending on the media and sheds light on the more complex relationship between language and discourse style. By revealing the distinctive linguistic strategies used in novels and their film adaptations, this study adds to our understanding of how and why storytelling techniques change between novels and their film adaptations. The presented findings expand the understanding of language adaptation and its influence on stories in literature and cinema.

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TPACK Levels of Indonesian Language Teachers: A Survey in Rural Junior High Schools

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Abstract—There is a gap in the implementation of TPACK in Indonesia. Urban schools often outperforming rural ones. This study aims to measure the level of implementation of TPACK elements in Indonesian language learning in rural junior high schools based on teacher perceptions. The case study involved 224 teachers from 5 regencies in Central Java, where internet access is moderate to slow. Data were collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). The results indicate that most Indonesian language teachers in rural areas feel most competent in mastering material and pedagogy. However, when it comes to the application of technology in the classroom, the majority of teachers' performance does not align with their beliefs about their technological proficiency. This disconnect is due to various external challenges, including limited internet access, inadequate facilities, and restrictive school policies, which prevent teachers from utilizing technology in a way that aligns with their beliefs. However, a small portion of the issue can be attributed to internal challenges, such as a lack of confidence or feelings of inadequacy due to age. In terms of school status, there are notable differences in technology application, with private schools in rural areas being more advanced than public schools. The factors that cause limitations in public schools need to be studied further.

Index Terms—TPACK, Indonesian language, rural junior high school, public school, private school

I. INTRODUCTION

The demand to integrate technology into learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the competencies that teachers must master in the post-pandemic era. Teacher competency is defined as a cognitive performance disposition that is functionally responsive to specific situations and demands (Konig et al., 2020, p. 4). Teachers are required to be able to utilize knowledge of materials, pedagogical experience, and new technologies known as the technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge or TPACK framework (Galanti et al., 2020, p. 2). TPACK is a framework that emphasizes the interaction among three elements, including materials, pedagogy, and technology. These elements are important for developing good teaching practices because teachers use technology effectively to teach (Zhang, 2020, p. 39).

Many studies have proven the effectiveness of learning by applying the TPACK framework, but researchers have identified gaps in technology implementation in education, particularly between urban and rural areas. Huang et al. (2020) found that the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the digitalization of education, contributing to increasing the digital divide in China and the UK (Choi et al., 2020). The findings showed that teachers in urban schools excel because they are more adept at synchronous and asynchronous learning, while teachers in rural areas predominantly rely on asynchronous learning (Lin & Gao, 2020; Libasin et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Mwinyi (2024) found that infrastructure and resource limitations in rural areas hindered the adoption of educational technology, making the challenges of implementing TPACK particularly significant.

The inequality in applying the TPACK framework in urban and rural areas can affect the significance of student learning progress. A study by Carvalho and Goodyear (2019), which investigated the use of augmented reality in technology-based learning in various environments, concluded that student achievement improved in both urban and rural areas. Similarly, Li (2025) study on the impact of TPACK on students' mathematics abilities highlighted the positive effects of TPACK integration in rural areas in China, specifically an increase in students' academic achievement in mathematics. Chatterjee et al. (2020) found that the use of technology (mobile applications) developed by girls' schools in rural India can improve the school's education system. Martina et al. (2022) studied the use of TPACK in teaching English in Bengkulu, Indonesia, during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that although urban teacher competence and technology facilities were superior, the application of TPACK was effective in overcoming problems in distance learning in both urban and rural schools. Shambare and Simuja (2024) also found low levels of TPACK competency among teachers in rural and marginalized areas in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, and even found a large gap between

the two groups in the TPACK domain related to technology, including technological knowledge (TK), technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK), and overall TPACK competency.

Other challenges relate to technical and communication issues. Technical weaknesses are influenced by geographical factors, internet connectivity, and internet costs. Communication weaknesses arise from slow adaptation, suboptimal use of learning media, lack of interactive engagement, and an absence of empathetic communication (Hidayat et al., 2020, p. 67). In line with this, Febrianto and Megasari (2020, p. 233) found that geographical factors and internet access significantly impact the varying implementation of online learning in Indonesia. Putri et al. (2020, p. 4809) further identified additional challenges teachers face, including limited teaching method options, insufficient technological skills, a lack of electronic resources in Indonesia, and high internet costs.

Regarding the factors of urban and rural areas, TPACK research has been conducted by Bustamante (2020); Young et al. (2019) in the United States; Chaemchoy (2017) in Thailand; and Li (2025) in China. These studies found that teachers in urban schools demonstrated higher TPACK competence than those in rural schools. In Indonesia, comparative studies on TPACK in urban and rural areas remain limited, one of which is Martina et al.'s (2022) research in Bengkulu. Moreover, most TPACK research in Indonesia focused on a single city, regency, or province, such as studies by Eliyanto et al. (2021) in Kebumen, Agustin et al. (2019) in West Java, and Surahman et al. (2020) in South Garut. However, none of these studies have explored how schools in two different locations implement learning using the TPACK framework.

The general objective of this study is to measure the level of the TPACK framework implementation in Indonesian language learning in rural areas. Specifically, the study aims to examine the perceptions of Indonesian language teachers in rural junior high schools regarding the level of TPACK implementation, encompassing its seven components: TK, PK, CK, TPK, TCK, PCK, and TPACK in learning practices.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) Framework

Technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (TPACK) is formulated as a framework for integrating technology in learning and teaching. TPACK was developed based on the concept of PCK (pedagogical and content knowledge) introduced by Shulman (1987). Mishra and Koehler later broadened PCK by incorporating technology, describing TPACK as the interaction between educational technology and PCK, working together to produce effective technology-based teaching (Koehler et al., 2013; Mishra & Koehler, 2020). The framework is visualized in Figure 1.

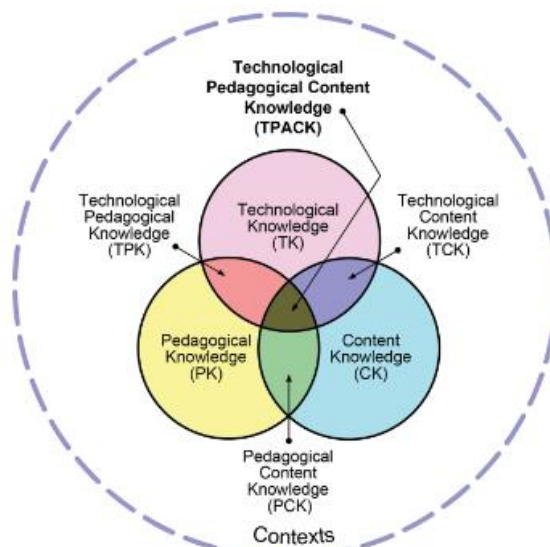


Figure 1. TPACK Framework

Figure 1 shows the seven components in the TPACK framework, namely CK, PK, TK, PCK, TCK, TPK, and TPACK (Schmidt et al., 2009).

B. TPACK-Based Language Learning

Not only in science subjects, technology used significantly impacts the success of language learning (Purnawarman et al., 2015, p. 242). Ghanizadeh et al. (2015, p. 73) explained that technology can support the development of all language skills, including listening, writing, reading, speaking, and viewing. Furthermore, Toding et al. (2024) emphasized that incorporating technology applications to teach language skills is recommended, as it enhances student participation, fosters collaborative activities, and stimulates students in ways that are not easily achieved in conventional classes. Technology-based language learning, including AI applications, facilitates active learning of language skills. Various types of texts and contexts must be acquired gradually, and students can achieve this independently with the support of

technology-based applications (Warnock, 2009).

Tseng et al. (2020, p. 2) highlighted the growing importance of integrating technology into language teaching, particularly in how language teachers present linguistic material using appropriate technology in line with the latest teaching model, namely the TPACK framework. The TPACK framework in language learning is considered a valuable tool for assessing language competence contextually (Inpeng & Nomnian, 2020, p. 370). TPACK supports teachers in implementing practical, non-theoretical learning and guides practice-oriented learning processes (Koehler et al., 2013).

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Design

This research was conducted using a mixed method, combining qualitative and quantitative ones. The study employed a case study approach, which is designed to answer the questions of "what," "how," and "why." The focus of the research was to describe the level of TPACK application in teaching and learning activities by Indonesian language teachers in rural junior high schools.

B. Participants and Sampling Techniques

This research focuses on Central Java Province, Indonesia, because of the significant gap in internet access within the education field. The selected regencies vary in terms of network availability, ranging from fast to low (4G, 3G, and 2.5G capacity). The schools chosen for the study are located outside city centers and are characterized by moderate to low internet access.

Through collaboration with the head of the Indonesian language subject teacher group in five regencies, 376 teachers were initially identified as meeting the criteria for participation. However, of the teachers who received the questionnaire, 224 fully completed and returned it, thus they were qualified as research participants. Therefore, participants were determined using the purposive sampling technique. The distribution of participants is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Regency	Number of Participants	School status		Age
		Public	Private	
Purworejo	43	30	13	26 – 55
Magelang	41	26	15	23 – 52
Karanganyar	38	22	16	29 – 50
Boyolali	48	27	11	25 – 54
Wonogiri	34	25	9	32 – 52

C. Data Collection

To measure the level of TPACK implementation among Indonesian language teachers in rural schools, a questionnaire was distributed via *Google Forms*. The questionnaire included four response scales: ALWAYS, OFTEN, SELDOM, and NEVER. "ALWAYS" represents 100% of teaching activities aligned with the statement item, "OFTEN" represents 50% to less than 100% of appropriate teaching activities, and "SELDOM" represents less than 50% of appropriate teaching activities. The items in the questionnaire were developed based on the in-service teacher performance measurement instrument used in the professional teacher certification exam. The test instrument was developed from the TPACK framework. Some items were modified, while others were developed by the researchers to represent the seven components of TPACK. The questionnaire consists of 25 statement items, detailed as follows: CK = 3 items, PK = 3 items, TK = 4 items, PCK = 3 items, TCK = 5 items, TPK = 3 items and TPACK = 2 items.

In addition to the questionnaire, the level of TPACK implementation was assessed through in-depth interviews. These interviews were conducted face-to-face, with researchers visiting the schools. For teachers in remote schools with difficult road access, interviews were conducted by telephone. The interviews took place after the questionnaire was distributed.

D. Data Validity Test

To measure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha formula and Pearson correlation were used. The analysis using SPSS version 25 revealed that the overall composite validity coefficient was 0.934, indicating that all items were valid and reliable. For the qualitative data, validity testing was performed through triangulation of theory, method, and data sources.

E. Data Analysis

The data in this study include quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were analyzed using basic statistics, including the calculation of frequencies and percentages, then presented in tables. Qualitative data were analyzed using an interactive model, involving the interaction of data collection activities, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Content Knowledge (CK)

The distribution of teacher responses regarding CK, which refers to teachers' knowledge of the content of Indonesian language subject material, is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
LEVEL OF CONTENT KNOWLEDGE OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE MATERIAL

States	Percentage			
	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
Teachers understand all the content of Indonesian language subjects that must be taught.	47.8 107	46.4 104	5.8 13	0 0
Teachers do not experience misconceptions regarding the content of Indonesian language subject material.	51.3 115	37.1 83	8.5 19	3.1 7
Teachers understand easy-difficult, simple-complex, and concrete-abstract material.	38.4 86	48.2 108	13.4 30	0.9 2

For the first item, the majority of teachers responded with 'always' and 'often.' Based on the interviews, the teachers' opinions were shaped by the following factors: (1) all materials were available in government-published textbooks, (2) teachers could answer all student questions related to the material, (3) most of the materials in the latest government textbooks were similar to those in previous editions, and (4) teachers had considerable teaching experience.

Regarding the second item, the majority of teachers gave 'always' and 'often' responses. The teachers mentioned two main reasons for their statements: (1) there were no difficult concepts in the Indonesian language subject material for junior high schools and (2) a summary of the material was provided by the Indonesian language subject teacher working group. A small number of teachers who selected 'seldom' and 'never' explained that misconceptions typically occurred in language or grammar materials, particularly with standard and non-standard words.

Dealing with the third item, the majority of teachers responded with 'always' and 'often' for some reasons: (1) the material details and its sequence were provided in both the teacher's and student's books and (2) for abstract material, pictures and explanations were usually included in the supplementary book. Meanwhile, a small number of teachers selected the 'seldom' response because there was a different understanding of concrete and abstract concepts between teachers and students.

Related to the content knowledge of the subject matter the findings of this study indicate that rural Indonesian language teachers generally feel they have a high level of understanding. Teachers reported a strong grasp of all types of texts taught, with no misconceptions, and they could distinguish between easy and difficult, simple and complex, and concrete and abstract materials. This finding aligns with the report of previous research, that teachers generally felt most competent in the CK or the content of their subject matter (Nguyen, 2024). In fact, another study concluded that CK is crucial for enhancing teachers' PCK skills (Schiering et al., 2023). This finding is supported by the outcome of prior research identifying a significant relationship between teacher knowledge and teaching quality (Haron et al., 2021).

B. Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)

The distribution of data of PK, which refers to teacher knowledge about the teaching process—including methods for managing classes, providing assessments, as well as developing lesson plans and student learning process—can be seen in Table 3.

TABLE 3
LEVEL OF PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

States	Percentage			
	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
Teachers understand learning strategies that are appropriate for the needs, potential, and interests of students, as well as their learning styles.	30.4 68	59.4 133	7.1 16	3.1 7
Teachers understand various concrete media in learning to strengthen concepts in students.	33.8 75	50.1 113	12.5 28	3.6 8
Teachers understand the comprehensive assessment of the three domains (affective, cognitive, and psychomotor) according to learning objectives.	15.2 34	46 103	33.5 75	5.3 12

Regarding the first statement, the majority of teachers responded with 'always' and 'often' because (1) the teacher's book already provided information about learning strategies for each material and (2) teachers had received training on selecting differentiated and multicultural learning strategies. However, teachers who selected 'seldom' and 'never' explained that understanding the concept of differentiated learning was challenging, as it was a new approach introduced with the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in 2023.

For the second item, the majority of teachers also responded with 'always' and 'often'. These responses were based on

the fact that government textbooks, non-government textbooks, and teaching modules developed by teacher working groups already listed the media for each material, allowing teachers to easily implement them. Several teachers answered with 'seldom' and 'never' and stated that there was still confusion between the concepts of real object media and concrete media.

In terms of the third item, the responses of 'always' and 'often' were less dominant compared to the first and second items. Teachers selected 'always' and 'often' because of the following reasons: (1) the assessment tools, including assessment instruments, were explained in the teacher's book for all three domains and (2) the teachers had received training on assessment from teacher leaders. Meanwhile, the responses of 'seldom' and 'never' are linked to the implementation of diagnostic assessments, which still confuses some teachers.

The data show that teachers feel highly competent in their pedagogical knowledge. This aligns with the finding of a prior study that teachers are most confident in their pedagogical knowledge (Hill & Uribe-Florez, 2020). High confidence in pedagogical knowledge is reflected in how teachers integrate technology in a way that enhances their teaching activities. In fact, research has shown that teacher knowledge is a positive predictor of student achievement (Charalambous et al., 2020).

C. Technological Knowledge (TK)

Data on the level of implementation of knowledge related to various technologies, including computer software and hardware, from the most basic to the most advanced technology, is presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4
LEVEL OF TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

States	Percentage			
	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
Teachers understand the use of ICT devices to access learning materials	21.9 49	33.5 75	30.8 69	13.8 31
Teachers understand the use of ICT devices to facilitate learning	18.3 41	29.9 67	33.5 75	18.3 41
Teachers understand the use of ICT devices to carry out assessments	16.6 37	27.7 62	31.3 70	24.5 55
Teachers understand the use of ICT devices for learning administration	34.4 77	31.2 70	28.6 64	5.8 13

For the first item, over 60% of teachers specified that they were familiar with using technology-based devices to access learning materials, by responding 'always' and 'often'. The supporting factors include: (1) the availability of technology devices and reliable internet access both at school and at home, (2) the inclusion of materials in textbooks that could be accessed with a barcode, and (3) participation in ICT training. The reasons provided by teachers who selected 'seldom' and 'never' responses are: (1) very limited availability of technology-based devices at school, (2) very poor internet access at school, (3) lack of internet-enabled devices at home, including smartphones, (4) difficulty in operating internet-based technology, and (5) never having participated in ICT training due to age factors, particularly nearing retirement.

Regarding the second item, the majority of teachers responded with 'always' and 'often' for several reasons: (1) the availability of technology-based devices in each class, (2) good internet access at school, and (3) students being allowed to use smartphones for learning through coordination with guidance and counseling teachers. Teachers who responded with 'seldom' noted the following reasons: (1) technology-based devices for displaying materials were very limited and prioritized for certain subjects, (2) there was a ban on students bringing smartphones to class, and (3) internet access at school was not good. The reasons teachers struggled to understand the use of technology in learning were (1) insufficient knowledge of the concept of ICT-based devices and (2) the absence of ICT-based devices, such as computers and smartphones, at home.

For the third item, most teachers testified using ICT devices less frequently or not at all. Teachers who answered 'always' and 'often' pronounced the following motives: (1) familiarity with conducting assessments using *Google Forms* or *Quizizz* applications, (2) regularly asking students to submit assigned projects, such as speaking recordings, via smartphones, (3) availability of technology-based devices at school, such as LCDs and smart TVs, and (4) active participation in ICT training for learning. The teachers who gave 'seldom' or 'never' responses mentioned these reasons: (1) lack of mastery in operating communication technology devices, including smartphones, (2) not having smartphones, and (3) never having participated in ICT training for learning.

About the fourth item, the majority of teachers responded with 'always,' 'often,' and 'seldom'. These teachers explained that (1) storing learning data using ICT devices was more practical than doing so manually (handwritten), (2) administration using ICT devices was easier to access and more secure, such as on computers, flash drives, or *Google Drive*, and (3) they had ICT-based devices available both at school and home. Teachers who admitted 'never' stated the following reasons: (1) they lacked ICT-based devices and (2) they had visual impairments, making it difficult for them to use computer devices for extended periods.

The phenomena above highlight that teacher readiness is vital for the successful utilization of ICT learning devices, and this readiness can be fostered through proper training. This aligns with the findings of Makakoe et al. (2017), who explored teacher readiness to integrate technology in rural schools in Botswana. Their research revealed that the success

of TPACK implementation in rural environments depends on teachers' preparedness, which is achieved through intensive training. In this context, the research of Shambare and Simuja (2024) shows that teachers in rural South Africa have integrated technology into their pedagogy and content knowledge despite the absence of structured training. Similarly, Wells et al. (2015) examined the perceptions of rural principals on instructional leadership, which can provide valuable perspectives on the successful implementation of TPACK learning. Therefore, to maximize the effectiveness of TPACK implementation, teachers need to participate in training and certification programs, as recommended by Voithofer (2019).

All of those who responded 'always' were private school teachers, while those who responded 'often', 'seldom', and 'never' were both public school teachers and a small number of private school teachers. This indicates that private school teachers have an advantage in utilizing ICT in learning compared to public school teachers. When linked to the range of facilities used by private school teachers, it demonstrates the readiness and flexibility of private schools in providing ICT-based learning devices, as compared to public schools. This aligns with the findings of other research showing that teachers' workplaces significantly influence their perceptions of TK and TCK (Ibrohim et al., 2022).

D. Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)

The data of teacher responses on PCK components are presented in Table 5.

States	Percentage			
	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
Teachers use effective learning strategies based on the characteristics of the material.	37 83	55.4 124	7.6 17	0 0
Teachers apply variations of three-way interactions (teacher-student-material) when teaching complex material.	38.5 86	39.7 89	19.6 44	2.2 5
Teachers relate learning to students' real daily lives for abstract material.	34 76	46.8 105	17.4 39	1.8 4

The majority of teachers responded with 'always' and 'often' for some underlying causes: (1) the availability of learning implementation examples on YouTube, including the necessary media, (2) the presence of a detailed and complete flow of presentation of each material in non-government textbooks, and (3) training in innovative learning models tailored to the characteristics of the material.

Teachers who answered 'never' to the items regarding providing interaction variations for complex material (item 2) and concretizing abstract material (item 3) explained the following causal factors: (1) all the material felt difficult for their students, (2) most students in their school had difficulty reading and writing, and (3) there was limited availability of learning media that supported Indonesian language learning, such as picture media and recording devices.

Further investigation reveals that the students' difficulty in reading and writing can be attributed to the disruption of learning in elementary schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. This disruption resulted in a learning lag, persisting and carrying over into their junior high school years. The challenges contributing to this learning lag during the pandemic include limited technological facilities and insufficient human resources, including teachers (Mailizar et al., 2020; Martina et al., 2022). This is because teachers continue to play a crucial role in the learning process, even during the pandemic (Ginting et al., 2022). The use of limited technology at lower levels of education makes an online learning particularly vulnerable (Portillo et al., 2020). Schools with limited or no experience in online learning and those that have not prepared adequate online resources face significant challenges. This is especially true when teachers lack the knowledge to effectively use online applications (Zaharah et al., 2020).

E. Technological Content Knowledge (TCK)

Data on the TCK level, which refers to knowledge of how technology can create a new perspective on certain material, as applied by teachers, is presented in Table 6.

States	Percentage			
	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
Teachers use appropriate ICT-based tools to improve students' reading skills.	17.9 40	23.2 52	25.4 57	33.5 75
Teachers use appropriate ICT-based tools to improve students' listening skills.	23.7 53	26.8 60	27.7 62	21.8 49
Teachers use appropriate ICT-based tools to improve students' viewing skills.	20.5 46	18.8 42	29 65	22.7 51
Teachers use appropriate ICT-based tools to improve students' speaking skills.	15.1 34	18.8 42	22.8 51	43.3 97
Teachers use appropriate ICT-based tools to improve students' writing skills	13.4 30	19.6 44	25 56	42 94

Regarding the first item, fewer than 50% of teachers reported using ICT in reading instruction ‘always’ or ‘often’. The factors supporting the use of ICT in reading lessons include: (1) the availability of ICT devices to present theories on the characteristics of the texts being studied, (2) the availability of ICT devices to present texts for students to read, and (3) the presence of instructional materials related to the texts on YouTube. Teachers who ‘seldom’ used ICT explained that ICT devices (LCDs) were primarily used to display theories on the characteristics of specific texts downloaded from YouTube, while the texts for students to read were sourced from textbooks or other printed materials. Meanwhile, teachers who ‘never’ used ICT provided the following reasons: (1) the availability of ICT devices (LCDs) in schools was very limited, (2) the texts read by students were considered more suitable in written form rather than as slide shows, and (3) the texts for students to read were already available in their textbooks.

Concerning the second item, the majority of teachers reported using ICT devices for listening, such as (1) radios and/or cell phones for listening to spoken texts, with or without speakers, and (2) YouTube videos as listening material for story/fairy tale texts. Some teachers used ICT devices to present theories about texts rather than listening materials. Teachers who responded ‘never’ highlighted the following reasons: (1) there were no devices necessary for listening activities, such as radios and speakers, and (2) they did not have a smartphone suitable for listening to audio materials.

For the third item, the majority of teachers reported using ICT devices. All of them stated that they used LCDs, while a small number also used both LCDs and smart TVs to present videos, either directly from YouTube or pre-downloaded. Additionally, some teachers instructed students to use smartphones to access materials or videos by scanning the barcodes provided.

Dealing with the fourth item, more than 50% of teachers stated they used ICT devices in speaking. They mentioned some purposes of using the ICT devices: (1) showing a model of people speaking, such as delivering a speech or telling a story through audiovisual media like YouTube or television videos, (2) playing examples of storytelling audio through radio or mobile phones, and (3) asking students to send their writings through a WhatsApp group. Meanwhile, teachers who responded ‘never’ detailed their approach to speaking learning, including (1) the teacher acting as a speaking model, such as demonstrating how to deliver a speech, (2) asking students to act as models, like demonstrating a dialogue, and (3) not providing examples of speaking demonstrations.

For the fifth item, less than 40% of teachers reported using ICT in teaching writing. Their ICT uses include (1) showing videos or images, (2) using LCDs or smart TVs, (3) using smartphones to access video materials by scanning the barcode provided by teachers, and (4) asking students to send their writings via a WhatsApp group.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the main factor hindering the majority of teachers from utilizing ICT devices in teaching reading, listening, viewing, speaking, and writing is the lack of supporting facilities, such as adequate internet access and basic learning devices like LCDs. Meanwhile, some schools prohibit students from using mobile phones or smartphones for learning. This creates a contradiction, as most teachers report being competent in utilizing ICT-based devices, yet this competence is not effectively applied in practice. This situation inevitably hampers the learning process. Therefore, it is recommended that stakeholders provide support in the form of facilities for these schools (Taopan et al., 2020).

Limited ICT facilities also trigger misconceptions in the learning process. These misconceptions appear in various learning activities, (1) in listening learning, materials provided are often in the form of written text or audio-visual displays instead of actual audio materials, (2) in viewing learning, the stimuli are typically written texts rather than engaging audio-visual materials, and (3) in language skills learning (reading, listening, speaking, and writing), the material presented is often theoretical. This conceptual error is likely to occur among teachers who have limited knowledge of integrating various ICT-based devices into learning. In fact, prior research has shown a significant positive relationship between the availability of facilities, teacher knowledge, and teaching quality (Haron et al., 2021).

F. Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK)

Teacher responses on TPK components, which refer to their knowledge of how various technologies can be integrated into teaching and how these technologies can transform the way teachers teach, are presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7
LEVEL OF TECHNOLOGICAL PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

States	Percentage			
	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
Teachers use ICT-based devices throughout the delivery of all Indonesian language learning materials.	11.1 25	30 67	31.3 70	27.6 62
Teachers use ICT-based devices in conducting learning assessments.	9.8 22	27.7 62	24.5 55	38 85
Teachers teach by implementing a variety of ICT-based devices to optimize learning interactions (teacher-student-material)	4.9 11	29 65	29 65	37.1 83

In the first item, less than 50% of teachers reported actively using technology to present learning materials. The supporting factors include (1) the availability of technology-based facilities such as language labs, smart classrooms, and podcasts at school, (2) reliable internet access at school, and (3) the presence of textbook materials accessed using barcode

scanning. Teachers ‘seldom’ or ‘never’ applied ICT because of some reasons: (1) most technology-based devices, such as LCDs and tape recorders, were broken, (2) the internet access at school was poor, (3) students were not permitted to use smartphones in class, and (4) teachers did not understand the way to operate technology-based devices.

For the second item, the majority of teachers were less or not active using technology for assessments. Those who responded ‘always’ and ‘often’ explained that (1) assessments were conducted using *Google Forms* or *Quizizz*, (2) students completed assessments either in class or at home, and (3) project assignments, such as speaking and writing tasks, were submitted via smartphones. Teachers who responded ‘seldom’ stated that technology was mainly used for submitting student writing assignments and other projects, such as speaking recordings, through smartphones. Meanwhile, those who responded ‘never’ lacked mastery in using communication technology devices, including learning assessment applications.

Related to the third item, the majority of teachers ‘seldom’ or ‘never’ used technology-based devices for teaching. They admitted that the challenges in using technology-based devices for teaching were due to: (1) the limited availability of these devices, which were prioritized for subjects like Natural Sciences and Mathematics, (2) a ban on students bringing smartphones to class, (3) poor internet access at school, and (4) a lack of mastery in operating technology-based devices.

Regarding the use of communication technology in learning, all ‘always’ and ‘often’ responses (items 1, 2, and 3) came from teachers at private schools, while the ‘seldom’ and ‘never’ responses were primarily from public school teachers. This suggests that, in terms of both facilities and human resource readiness, private schools are better equipped than public schools. This can be linked to the finding that in Indonesia, private schools are striving to outperform public schools to attract public interest by offering better infrastructure and teachers, enabling them to compete with public schools (Ibrohim et al., 2022). Other research also indicates that, while not all private schools are more advanced, some private schools indeed can compete with public schools (Martono et al., 2020). The phenomenon of private schools being superior as a result of competition with public schools is also evident in various countries (McKinnon et al., 2013). This situation is closely tied to the development of facilities and the TPACK competencies of teachers. It aligns with findings that teachers and students in rural areas are not yet fully prepared to utilize technology in learning (Wuryaningtyas & Setyaningsih, 2020). This fact can be linked to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (2021), indicating that among the 5-24 age group (school age), only around 53.06% of students can utilize the internet. However, internet usage is much higher in urban areas at 77.36%, compared to rural areas. These data specify that the use of computers and the internet has not been fully mastered by teachers and students, particularly in rural areas.

G. Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK)

Data on the implementation of the TPACK framework are presented in Table 8.

States	Percentage			
	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
Teachers use ICT across all stages of the learning process—at the beginning, core, and end—with various learning activities through digital platforms.	0	0	0	100
Teachers combine available learning platforms with self-developed ones.	0	0	0	100

Table 8 shows that no Indonesian language teachers in rural areas have implemented the TPACK framework. Interview results revealed two main contributing factors: (1) the absence of a digital-based Indonesian language learning platform accessible to teachers in rural areas and (2) the limitations of ICT-based devices and inadequate internet access, which hinder the provision of digital learning platforms.

This fact highlights that the implementation of TPACK in rural schools has yet to reach an ideal level. Similar findings have been reported in studies on the application of the TPACK framework conducted by Bustamante (2020), Young et al. (2019) in the United States, Chaemchay (2017) in Thailand, and Li (2025) in China. The results reveal a significant gap in the quality and quantity of TPACK implementation among rural teachers compared to teachers in urban areas. Shambare and Cita's (2024) study shows that there are deficiencies in the TPACK competencies of life sciences teachers in rural areas of South Africa, especially in technology knowledge (TK), technology pedagogy knowledge (TPK), and overall TPACK proficiency. Kormos and Wisdom's (2018) study, which investigated the role of internet access in achieving educational equality in rural areas, noted that internet access is a critical factor in the context of TPACK. It enables teachers and students to access technology and digital resources to support more varied and relevant learning experiences. However, the availability of these facilities in rural areas lags significantly behind that in urban areas. These findings suggest that while the TPACK framework is an educational necessity in both urban and rural areas, a gap in available facilities hinders its implementation. This delays rural teachers from developing their TPACK and limits the potential for effectively integrating technology into the learning process in rural areas.

V. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the application of the TPACK framework is an educational necessity in both urban and rural

areas. However, a significant gap in facilities exists. This situation hampers rural teachers from developing their TPACK and restricts the opportunity to effectively integrate technology into the learning process in these areas.

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Trauma, Healing and Narrative in Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You*

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Abstract—Traumatic experiences are often claimed as unspeakable and beyond the reach of language. Nevertheless, literature has always found a way to express these inexpressible pains and depict the traumatic experiences of its characters. Using Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You*, this study explores trauma narrative within a mixed-race family dealing with the hidden pain of loss in 1970s America. This novel is very detailed in depicting the racial, gender, and intergenerational trauma suffered by the Lee family in the social dynamics of race and gender discrimination. This paper, therefore, focuses on the individual traumas of James Lee, Marilyn, and their daughter Lydia, as well as on their recovery from trauma, by examining how these traumas intersect with social pressures to shape the characters' life trajectories and the dynamics of the family. This paper also examines the trauma narrative strategies that Celeste Ng uses to give voice to traumatic experiences, with an emphasis on how Celeste Ng invites readers to reflect on issues of race, gender, and generational divide in the context of globalization. In this manner, this study contributes to the development of literary trauma studies, provides some therapeutic values for those who have similar experiences, and prompts readers to think about social inequality across the globe and come up with the idea of creating a better and more inclusive future.

Index Terms—*Everything I Never Told You*, trauma, healing, narrative, self-redemption

I. INTRODUCTION

Chinese American literature has, since its inception, been preoccupied with the foundational themes of identity and cultural conflict. As a product of cross-cultural exchange, Chinese American writers have explored how individuals find their place between two cultures by portraying the immigrant experience, family dynamics, and racial prejudice. What makes these issues particularly problematic for Chinese American writers is their dual marginalisation: on the one hand, they are rejected by mainstream society as ethnic minorities; on the other hand, they maintain a subtle connection to the traditional culture of their ancestors. This struggle between cultures has become a defining feature of Chinese American literature. However, despite this distinctive focus, Chinese American literature has faced critiques regarding its narrative content. The focus on issues concerning ethnic minorities in these works often overshadows broader human experiences and more complex social issues. This narrative tendency may lead readers to reduce the creations of Chinese American writers to a simple manifestation of racial identity while ignoring the diversity and universality of their literary contributions (Chiang, 2023).

Against this backdrop, Celeste Ng's debut novel *Everything I Never Told You* provides a groundbreaking narrative paradigm for Chinese American literature. Rather than limiting her work to "telling a story about being a Chinese American," (Cheng, 2003, p. 53) she explores the complex interactions between family, race, gender, and society from a diversity of perspectives, and demonstrates a unique creative philosophy. She emphasises the universality and diversity of the work itself, rather than focusing solely on the ethnic identities of the characters, which makes this novel different from traditional Chinese American literature, as its narrative goes beyond the homogenised perspective of racial identity and focuses more on universal human experiences and social interactions.

This novel was inspired by a story told by Ng's husband, who is a white American man: his classmate from primary school once pushed the classmate's sister into the water. Although the girl was rescued, the incident triggered Ng's deeper thoughts about family relationships and human behaviour (Penguin Books USA, 2014). Based on this story, Ng wrote this novel centering around a mixed-race family living in 1970s America, where the father, James, has long suffered from racial discrimination because of his Chinese ethnicity; the mother, Marilyn, is a white American whose professional

aspirations are interrupted by family responsibilities, and these unfulfilled aspirations are ultimately projected onto their daughter, Lydia. Unfortunately, the parents' weighty expectations exacerbate the tensions within the family, driving Lydia to despair and ultimately leading to her tragic death by drawing in the lake. The narrative not only shows how family and social oppression intertwine to affect individual psychology, but also reveals multilayered social issues through the lens of intergenerational transmission of trauma.

Trauma often buries itself deep within the psyche whence it becomes barely visible yet highly influential, since it affects not only individuals, but also the life trajectories and emotional connections of family members (Raihanah & Idrus, 2022). In literature, trauma narratives have the importance of exposing such injuries, recounting a character's inner turmoil while capturing the social causes of that person's suffering. While they make it possible for the readers to get an insight into aspects of the character's psychological trauma, they also help in creating a view of the parameters of the correlation between personal suffering and social problems (Morrissey, 2021). In this regard, Celeste Ng's novel, celebrated as the Best Book of 2014 by Amazon and National Public Radio in the United States, stands as a valuable case study in the dimension of literary trauma studies. This novel intricately weaves together personal grief and social issues into traumatic narrative of a mixed-race family, as it captures important undercurrents of discrimination based on color, sexism, and complex familial relationships. Trauma, as a kind of personal suffering, does not only affect the characters' behaviors and decisions but also concerns the very plot of the novel. Therefore, the consideration of trauma would reveal the characters' suffering and their personal and interpersonal experiences of identity, family relationships, and social expectations.

Based on the above illustration, this paper thus attempts to delve deep into the investigation of trauma narrative in Ng's novel *Everything I Never Told You* by critically interpreting and analysing the portrayal of trauma, the process of trauma recovery, and the use of narrative strategies in this novel. Specifically, the research objectives of this paper include: (1) to reveal the manifestations of racial, gender, and intergenerational traumas in the novel to explore how these traumas are manifested in the characters' psychology and behaviour through the tensions between the individual and the society, as well as how the family and the society interact with each other to exacerbate the intergenerational transmission of trauma; and (2) to analyse the process of trauma recovery and study the mechanism of memory, reflection and self-repair of the characters after the traumatic experience; (3) to explore the strategies of narrating trauma in the novel for the purpose to demonstrate how these strategies can enhance the depth of the narration and the social critique of the text.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior literary reviews and research have approached and discussed the multiple themes that are present in this novel, such as the bicultural conflicts, spatial representation, ethical considerations, and the subject of family secrets. Current studies address how bicultural conflict influences the formation of identity and social exclusion and the effects on the character, as Yin and Liu (2016) have identified. However, these analyses do not delve into how this othering inflicts psychological trauma and causes lasting damage to individual self-perception. The characters in Ng's novel, especially Lydia and her mother Marilyn, not only face identity crises brought on by biculturalism but also endure accumulated intergenerational trauma. Additionally, Shen and Xie (2017) categorize and analyze the spatial narrative, highlighting how physical, social, spiritual, and textual spaces enhance the novel's readability and artistic quality, while their analysis primarily focuses on the superficial aspects of space. Space is not only a manifestation of social and cultural oppression but also reveals the inner trauma of the characters, especially how psychic spaces are invaded by historical and cultural wounds. The spaces inhabited by Ng's characters do not just restrict their actions and choices; they also become sites of inescapable trauma.

On the ethical aspect, focusing on marriage, parent-child, and sibling ethics, Shen and Yang (2018) stress the role of a healthy family environment for child development. Yet they fail to realize that apart from the actual passing of the hurt and suffering, the intergenerational transfer of trauma within the family is very effective and prominent in affecting people. Lydia's identity crisis and her ultimate tragedy stem not only from concerns of familial ethical issues but are very much related to unresolved and painful personal histories of her parents most especially Marilyn's unfulfilled ambitions, which are subtly passed down to her daughter. Ibarrola-Armendariz (2021), as well as Zhou and Omar (2022), highlights the importance of family secrets and the psychic realm of women in understanding the role of social complexity and latent family conflict for characters; however, they do not address how trauma is produced and sustained in this context. Family secrets are not just structural elements that drive the plot but the way they are portrayed in this novel as a trauma. Lydia's death thus can be regarded as an event that brings into the open the trauma that has been latent within the family for a long time. This aspect of trauma affects not only the psychological condition of characters but also the dissolution of family dynamics.

In conclusion, after reviewing all these recent studies, this study finds that there is a lack of perspectives in the existing research that explores this novel as a comprehensive exploration of trauma narratives. The current study aspires to explore how racial discrimination and gender bias exacerbate individual and collective trauma through familial and social mechanisms, and how individuals gradually achieve recovery and self-redemption through traumatic experiences. At the same time, the study will also analyse how the novel's multi-layered narrative strategies are effective in presenting the complexity of trauma and provide readers with new perspectives to understand the profound connection between trauma and social dynamics.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This study attempts to construct an integrative theoretical framework from a variety of existing theories of literary trauma to explore how trauma narratives reveal the complex relationship between the individual and society. The concept of trauma has been an important tool for literary studies to understand human psychology and social dynamics. Trauma narratives show diverse forms and characteristics in different cultural backgrounds and historical contexts. Drawing theoretical insights from Caruth's (1996) concept of trauma, this paper aims to view trauma not only as a psychological injury, but also as a dynamic process that is continually recycled and transmitted through memories, narratives, and social interactions. According to these theoretical perspectives, trauma both reflects individual suffering and reveals the role of social structures and environmental factors in the formation and perpetuation of trauma. Caruth (1996) defines trauma as a profound disruption in an individual's experience of time, memory, and identity that stems from an overwhelming event that the mind cannot fully process. She provides a perspective on theorising trauma in a way that highlights two critical aspects of trauma: "a crisis of death," which refers to the overwhelming impact of a life-threatening event; and "a crisis of life," which relates to the ongoing struggle to integrate and make sense of the traumatic experience (Caruth, 1996, p. 7). These two aspects relate to two dimensions of a traumatic experience: the event itself and the after-effect of the event, which could be described as "a double wound" (Caruth, 1996, p. 3). This concept reveals that trauma is not just present in the violent or original events of an individual's past, but rather in its latency, which refers to the ways in which trauma's incompletely assimilated or understood qualities, and the state of being insufficiently aware at the occurrence of the event, can resurface later to haunt the survivor. Therefore, trauma is not only a direct impact on the individual, but also includes its continuing consequences, which continue to affect the individual's life at the level of memory, emotion, and identity, and may extend further to the intergenerational level. The continuing effects of dual trauma provide an important theoretical basis for understanding intergenerational trauma. Emotions and memories that trauma survivors have not fully processed may be unconsciously passed on to future generations through family relationships, behavioural patterns, and socio-cultural interactions, allowing the pain and struggles of trauma to continue across generations (Schwab, 2010). Successive generations not only inherit the unresolved effects of trauma from previous generations, but also need to deal with the psychological and social dilemmas that arise from it.

Trauma is a complex and continuous experience, therefore, the process of recovery from trauma is not only about the reconstruction of the individual psyche, but also involves a connection to society and history. Caruth (1996) argues that the key to trauma recovery lies in creating a narrative space in which traumatic memories can be expressed and integrated. By "listening to the voice of the wound": acknowledging the "otherness" of trauma, individuals can witness their own experiences while connecting with others who share similar traumas (Caruth, 1996, p. 8). Caruth's theory of trauma repair focuses primarily on the narrative and relational dimensions of trauma, exploring its psychological roots and historical impact, but does not explicitly propose specific steps in the repair process for survivors. Hence, this paper applies Herman's conceptions of recovery from trauma as a complementary theoretical framework. Herman divides trauma repair into three phases: "the establishing of safety," "remembrance and mourning," and "reconnection with ordinary life" (Herman, 1992, p. 155). The first stage emphasises repairing the disruption of trust in reality and safety caused by the traumatic event; the second stage transforms the traumatic experience into memory and gradually dissolves the pain in acceptance; and the third stage focuses on reconnecting with everyday life, particularly through relationships with family, community, or broader social structures (Herman, 1992). This framework highlights the importance of emotional expression and social support, recognising that trauma is not only an individual psychological problem, but is also deeply rooted in social relationships and interactions.

In the study of trauma narratives, in addition to examining the mechanisms of trauma formation and recovery, it is equally crucial to explore the stylistic features of trauma narratives. As illustrated by Whitehead (2001) in her work *Trauma Fiction*, trauma is an unspeakable experience, which is often expressed in narratives through stylistic elements such as nonlinear structures, temporal disruptions, narrative repetition, and silence to reflect the fragmented and intrusive nature of traumatic memory. These features are not only artistic representations of psychological trauma, but also reveal the deeper connections between trauma and socio-historical dimensions. Studying the stylistic features of trauma narratives helps better understand the artistic value of trauma literature and its unique role in expressing trauma, reflecting on society, and promoting healing, thus providing a necessary complement to the overall study of trauma narratives.

In the process of studying the trauma-forming mechanisms in this selected novel, apart from the core trauma theoretical framework, other related concepts and theories have been introduced to broaden the analytical perspective and further enrich the understanding of trauma. For example, Bhabha's (2012) concept of *The Third Space* provides a field for trauma narratives where cultures and identities intersect, revealing how trauma manifests unique tensions in multicultural contexts. Specifically, the cultural identity crisis caused by racial trauma, as illustrated by Comas-Díaz et al. (2019). Moreover, De Beauvoir's (2014) theory of gender analysis in *The Second Sex*, and Iantaffi's (2020) conception of gender trauma provide insights into understanding the formation and manifestation of trauma in the gender dimension by deconstructing gender roles and power relations. The introduction of these theories not only complements trauma studies on different levels, but also facilitates more comprehensive analyses of trauma narratives across multiple dimensions of culture, gender, and identity, deepening the understanding of trauma formation mechanisms.

Overall, this paper integrates Caruth's literary trauma theory, Herman's three-stage recovery model, and Whitehead's conception of trauma narrative strategies to construct a multidimensional framework for systematically analysing the

mechanisms of trauma formation, the process of recovery, and the distinctive stylistic features of trauma narratives. In addition to this comprehensive framework, this study also incorporates Bhabha's concept of "The Third Space", Comas-Díaz et al.'s racial trauma, Beauvoir's gender analysis and Iantaffi's gender trauma to explore the multifaceted dimensions of trauma narratives across culture, race, gender, and identity, and to reveal the multilayered significance and social and artistic value of trauma narratives.

IV. THE ROOTS OF TRAUMA IN *EVERYTHING I NEVER TOLD YOU*

A. *James' Trauma Caused by Racial Discrimination*

Racial trauma is a form of race-based stress that refers to the persistent individual and collective harm experienced by People of Color and Indigenous individuals due to repeated exposure to or perceptions of racial discrimination (Comas-Díaz et al., 2019). The main source of James' trauma can be tied to the fact that he has never been able to integrate into American society as a result of racial discrimination and exclusion. Cultural differences have been a major factor that has made him work hard to change his identity. James' conflict with his identity can thus be analyzed through Homi Bhabha's (2012) concept of the third space. In this space, people tend to redefine their identity through cultural hybridity. Born in American with a Chinese root, James feels out of place with the culture and society in which he grows up. Despite setting "himself a curriculum of studying American culture," (Ng, 2014, p. 44) to change how he acts and speaks in the school, he does not undergo any improvement in his situation and is unable to make contact with any of his fellow students. Although he tries to mimic the behavior of other children, his black eyes, black hair, and yellow skin together with other children's stares make him feel different and unwanted. He cannot fully understand the causes of the racism he has experienced, James eventually reduces it to the color of his skin and his lack of clear ethnic identity, for which James develops an inferiority complex (Kim, 2020). He struggles between two cultures, seemingly trapped in an ambiguous space where he belongs to neither and fails to genuinely integrate either side as well, eventually falls into the identity crisis.

Despite earning his doctorate from Harvard University and being considered as a member of the model minority, James still cannot completely avoid the racist attitudes he has been exposed to. Although he has a lot of expectations that he would continue to work at Harvard as a faculty member, his Chinese origin is still a hindrance at his workplace. Harvard prefers to employ his white counterpart instead of him. Sitting in this liminal space between the American culture that he was born into and the distant Chinese culture of his ancestry, James constantly faces challenges from the American mainstream culture, which repeatedly reminds him of his outsider status (Lyu, 2021).

The trauma James has experienced does not simply vanish; instead, it lingers, reappearing in subtle yet significant ways throughout his life. This ongoing impact of trauma, referred to as the latency effect by Caruth (1996), indicates that trauma is not just tied to a single violent event from the past. Instead, its presence is often unrecognized initially, only to reemerge and haunt the individual later. James never speaks about the humiliations he has endured, but this silence does not mean that he has processed or understood these traumatic events. The truth is that he temporarily suppresses these traumatic memories, however, whenever he encounters similar situations, the old wounds will resurface. When his son, Nath, faces ridicule from his peers, James is immediately transported back to his own childhood experiences thirty years ago. While changing clothes in a PE class at Lloyd's primary school, some of his classmates played a cruel joke on him by tying his pants in knots and hiding under a dusty pipe. The mocking words, "Chink can't find China!" (Ng, 2014, p. 90) echoes painfully in his mind by reminding his own traumatic memory. These episodes show that the racial traumas of James' childhood are never truly buried; instead, they resurface from time to time, reinforcing his sense of displacement between two conflicting worlds.

As a man of Chinese descent, James' trauma is rooted in his race. In white American society, he is an ethnic minority who experiences racism in childhood and, leading him to distance himself from his Chinese heritage (Lu, 2022). This sends him into a cycle of rejection, ultimately convincing him that he will never be accepted by white society and that will always be marginalized and oppressed for being a yellow man. Racial rejection and subjugation become a persistent source of pain for him. Even as an adult, the pain does not go away, leaving him feeling rootless and without a sense of belonging. This same unresolved trauma is then passed down to his children, which continues the cycle of racial alienation and suffering.

B. *Marilyn's Trauma Caused by Gender Oppression*

Gender trauma is a systemic trauma rooted in patriarchy, colonial culture and rigid binary gender norms, which manifests as the oppression and erasure of gender identities and persistently affects individuals and groups through social, cultural and historical structures (Iantaffi, 2020). Marilyn's gender trauma is profoundly influenced by the social expectations and constraints imposed upon her as a woman. This trauma is best understood through the lens of De Beauvoir's (2014) analysis of *The Second Sex*, where she posits that in a patriarchal society, women are relegated to the position of the Other, secondary to men as the second sex. Historically, women have been marginalized not only by men but also by other women who internalize and perpetuate this marginalization. This social conditioning made the role of a full-time housewife seem acceptable and even desirable—an ideology embraced by both Marilyn's mother and her husband, James.

Marilyn is an American white woman raised in a single-parent family in which her mother is a home economics teacher. Due to the fact that her father is absent, her mother tries her best to bring her daughter up, and she spends all her life in the kitchen, except for attending her daughter's wedding which is the only time she travels outside Virginia. For her mother, a perfect woman is firstly a virtuous wife and a good mother – that is why her life's goal should be to take care of a husband and children, as well as the house. This is why Marilyn hates her mom's plan for her because she wants more than to be stuck in a small kitchen all her life like her mom. Marilyn is quite certain that women are capable of living fully without men or anybody else and therefore women should be able to walk out of the home and into the world and live meaningful lives (Ma, 2018). Hence, she starts fighting with social norms in her style. She does not care about home economics which are courses that women are expected to excel in while she excels in science and engineering courses which are deemed to be for boys only. To avoid being the Other, she almost wants to run away from home to achieve her ambition of being a doctor. Ironically, this is where the bright picture of the future is shattered by the birth of a baby. She tries to go back to school after some time but, she is again pregnant and has to leave her studies.

Marilyn feels powerless in this situation, and it is this powerlessness that allows her traumatic experiences to disrupt the sense of security that allows people to live normal lives. It only aggravates her frustration and further enhances her feeling of being powerless in a way that is parallel to the life of her mother (Zhou & Omar, 2022). Caruth (1996) also stresses the fact that trauma cannot be put into words, that is, the aspects of pain and suffering of the traumatized subject are often internalized and difficult to be articulated. This is evident with Marilyn, as she has this overwhelming need to rebel against the norms set for women by society and especially by her mother. She dreams of becoming a doctor, a goal that symbolizes her need for independence and self-fulfillment. However, the social pressures and the unexpected responsibilities of motherhood force her to abandon these aspirations, relegating her to the very domestic role she sought to avoid. This unfulfilled desire becomes a source of pain, one that she cannot openly express but instead projects onto her daughter, Lydia, whom she hopes will achieve what she cannot.

C. *Lydia's Intergenerational Trauma Caused by Parental Expectation*

Trauma is not only an individual experience but one that can be passed down from one generation to the next, particularly when the original trauma remains unresolved (Caruth, 1996). In Lydia's case, the trauma she experiences is a direct result of the unaddressed issues her parents carry with them. James, her Chinese American father, suffers from the psychological impacts of rejection from the American society. His strong feelings of isolation and inability to become integrated are transmitted to Lydia, whom he hopes to be successful in the social integration he has not been able to achieve. For this purpose, he always encourages Lydia to socialize and to be friends with her classmates. Likewise, Marilyn's gender trauma, derived from her respective desires being suppressed by social gender roles, is also transferred to Lydia. Marilyn forces Lydia to succeed where she has failed. She does not wish to see her daughter enduring the same disappointments that she has gone through. Marilyn wishes that Lydia could do well in her studies and become a doctor—a dream she herself fails to realize.

This dilemma puts Lydia in a very difficult position where she has to deal with the pressure from her parents on the one hand and her own confusion on the other hand. Lydia's trauma is not hers only but a passed-on burden that is exacerbated by her parents' problems. Caruth (1996) has argued that whereas trauma remains unarticulated and unresolved it has a propensity to redefine itself and reemerge in the next generation. Lydia fails to fulfill these high expectations and this leads her to develop feelings of worthlessness and loneliness which are well-known signs of transgenerational trauma.

Lydia's tragic fate is the direct result of intergenerational trauma. The expectations that she has shouldered are not only about her own life choices, but rather the pressure that stems from her parents' unfulfilled dreams and social loss. This dynamic illustrates the destructive nature of unclaimed trauma, meanwhile it also highlights its capacity to transcend individual experiences and influence the next generation in a profound and often tragic way.

V. THE HEALING JOURNEY OF SELF-REDEMPTION IN *EVERYTHING I NEVER TOLD YOU*

A. *James' Self-Redemption*

Trauma is not merely the memory of a past event but rather the repetition of an unresolved experience that the mind cannot fully assimilate (Caruth, 1996). Lydia's death is the catastrophic event that reactivates James' deep-seated trauma, not only because it takes his daughter from him but also because it obliterates his hope that she might succeed where he has failed—integrating into the very society that has rejected him. Lydia's passing thus forced James to relive the alienation and rejection that has defined his own life, bringing to the surface the unresolved pain he has long tried to suppress.

Instead of confronting his trauma, James decides to run away from it, literally and figuratively. He distances himself from his wife, Marilyn, and their surviving children, seeking solace in an affair with his Asian teaching assistant, Louisa. This relationship although gave James some relief could not solve the fundamental cause of his pain. Therefore, this is not enough to bring about a cure, rather what is needed is to go back to the event through the process of reconstruction of the story, as proposed by Caruth (1996). James' affair with Louisa, however, though momentarily comforting, only strengthens the walls he has put up around his pain so as not to be overwhelmed by it.

As his relationship with Marilyn deteriorates, James reaches a tipping point where the weight of his unspoken trauma becomes too great to bear. It is during this period of crisis that he finally breaks his long-held silence, confessing to

Marilyn the emotions and fears he has kept hidden for years. Caruth (1996) emphasizes the importance of speaking the unspeakable—the act of narrating one's trauma as a means of reclaiming agency and beginning the process of healing. In pouring out his long-repressed feelings, James takes a crucial step toward integrating his traumatic memories into a coherent narrative, one that allows him to begin to understand and process the pain that has shaped his life.

The process of healing for James is not a linear progression. It is not a simple case of moving from one stage to another, but rather, a process of remembering, telling, and feeling for James. As Pearce (2022) notes, trauma is not about forgetting but how to live with the events that have taken place, that is, how to turn the traumatic memory into a story that can be told and thus made sense of. James' journey toward self-redemption illustrates that through facing his past, dealing with isolation, and seeking reconciliation with his family, he is able to start the process of overcoming the traumas that have been left unresolved for many years. Indeed, the process of recovering is possible only if one learns to face pain rather than to escape it: to speak out and forge new connections that can offer the understanding and support necessary for recovery.

B. Marilyn's Self-Redemption

Marilyn's process of recovering from trauma can be examined through Herman's (1992) conception of trauma recovery which consists of establishing safety, remembrance and mourning, and reconnection with ordinary life. In the beginning, Marilyn has a lot of difficulties in accepting the fact that Lydia is already dead and has committed suicide. Such denial is a common phenomenon seen in trauma victims where the individual's mind will try to avoid dealing with the realities in order to protect them from further harm. For Marilyn, she becomes obsessed with the notion that someone has to be responsible for Lydia's death, and this becomes her way of avoiding herself from the deeper emotional reality of her daughter's struggles.

As Marilyn progresses through the stage of remembrance and mourning, she begins to face the hidden dimensions of Lydia's life. The discovery of items like the hidden cookbook, cigarettes, and condoms reveals that Lydia had silently carried the weight of her mother's expectations. This pivotal moment forces Marilyn to confront how her own desires and frustrations, passed down unknowingly, have created a pressure Lydia could no longer bear. The realization that Lydia is not the obedient daughter she appears to be—and that she is struggling under the burden of these expectations—reflects what Schwab (2010) describes as the transgenerational transmission of trauma, where emotional burdens are inherited without explicit communication.

In the last recovery state, Marilyn goes toward the process of reintegrating into society. She starts to come to terms with Lydia's death, which means that she accepts her own responsibility for developing the conditions that lead to her daughter's despair. Baysal (2020) explained that for people to recover from trauma they should not suppress or erase the memory of the event but instead make it a part of their narrative. Marilyn's reconnection with her youngest daughter, Hannah, and her decision to let go of her resentment towards James, show how she is gradually breaking free from denial and guilt, thus turning her loss into a way of redemption for the family. This process of self-redemption is important because it enables Marilyn to find a way to heal as well as to stop the cycle of trauma that has been going on for generations.

Marilyn's self-redemption then is not a mere individual process, but it is grounded on the idea of interpersonal trauma recovery. According to Herman (1992), genuine healing entails both the processes of self-analysis and the reconstitution of the relationships that have been disrupted. Thus, when Marilyn faces her past and makes amends with the family, she starts to break the emotional cycle which leads to the death of Lydia. This process of healing is significant as it shows that it is imperative to recognize the latent traumas that one may have, as well as those within the family to lay the foundation for a better future.

C. Lydia's Self-Redemption

The roots of Lydia's psychological trauma can be traced back to an event in her childhood: The main reason that has a strong impact on her life is her mother's sudden leaving. Though Marilyn comes back, at some point, the emotional damage that Lydia suffers is long-term and includes her fear of losing her parents. Caruth (1996) notes that the essence of trauma lies in its unassimilated nature, an experience that cannot be fully understood or told, and hence remains perpetually re-enacted in the memory of the victim. For Lydia, her mother's unexplained departure represents the origin of this unresolved past. Her subsequent actions—her compliance with her parents' wishes—are attempts to deny and escape this trauma. However, this kind of avoidance is rather counterproductive because the trauma remains unprocessed and as such, it will persist in influencing the life of the victim in more and more negative ways. Living with their parents' love becomes a tremendous pressure on her, Lydia has no force to oppose it directly; she opts for surrender and escapes. She takes on her parents' unrealized dreams as her goal and tries to win her parents' acceptance and affection by trying to achieve what they have not achieved. Nevertheless, this escape does not help her to overcome the trauma but rather aggravates her state of confusion and gradually destroys her identity, and she becomes imprisoned in a life of escape, isolation, and bewilderment. In the end, the enormous mental stress and the unsolved issue of family tragedy cause Lydia's accidental death in Middlewood Lake.

In the work of Crockett (2020), the importance of narrative in the process of trauma recovery is underlined. Where the victim is able to articulate their traumatic experiences to express the trauma, the result is a disruption of the trauma's repetition. Moreover, Teenagers need to express their traumatic experiences in a supportive environment, thus achieving

emotional recovery and improving their psychological well-being (Kamarazaman et al., 2023). In the course of the story, Lydia has a passion of wanting to speak out about what she feels, and what is happening in her mind. Whenever she has a conversation with her parents, she feels suffocated and wants to discuss things with her brother Nath as this would make her feel better. For the character of Lydia, Nath is the only one who knows her and the only one she can tell everything about. However, Nath's listening and encouragement do not completely cure Lydia from her trauma. As a result, Lydia turns to Jack, a rebellious figure, in search of solace. However, Jack's response lacks the empathy and understanding that Lydia so desperately needs. Narrative healing requires not only the recounting of trauma but also a compassionate and capable listener who can offer necessary support (Salam & Mahfouz, 2020). Deprived of the support and understanding of her classmates and friends, Lydia remains haunted by her traumatic experiences and the guilt of deceiving her parents, ultimately pushing her toward self-destruction.

Lydia's death can be also considered as a form of the ultimate act of self-redemption and, at the same time, the final revolt against the roles that are assigned to her by her family. For this reason, in death, she frees herself from the pressure that her parents put on her and the suffering she has had in her past. Even though this act marks the end of Lydia's life, it is also the event that makes the rest of the family face their own emotional shortcomings and thereby find a kind of collective redemption. Lydia's silent sacrifice through her death has become the final, unspoken but powerful confession and offering to her family, which helps them reunite with warmth and harmony.

VI. TRAUMA NARRATIVE STYLE IN *EVERYTHING I NEVER TOLD YOU*

In the current literary trauma studies, the emphasis is no longer solely placed on the recognition of the traumatic event and its recreation but on the processes of memory and narrative construction (Whitehead, 2004). This shift emphasizes how and why certain memories are articulated within a narrative, revealing the deeper mechanisms at play in trauma representation. Using unique trauma narrative style, Ng is able to transform the characters' experiences in *Everything I Never Told You* into a portrayal of the deepest emotions and mental health states. The plot of the story is rather intricate and includes parallel, alternating, and reverse chronology which gives the reader a better perspective on the time. Thus, the novel not only reflects the stygian aspect of trauma but also allows the author to present the trauma from multiple perspectives, guiding the readers from ignorance to understanding.

The novel is divided into twelve chapters, in which Ng shifts the time forward and backward in an attempt to reveal the events that lead to Lydia's death. The chronological chapters (Chapters 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, and 12) are set directly after the event of Lydia's disappearance and deal with the psychological impact that the event has on the family. These chapters explore the effect that Lydia's death has on each one of the family members. On the other hand, the retrospective chapters (Chapters 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 11) employ the technique of fragmentation to convey the family's story before Lydia's death and how the family gets to where it is at the time of Lydia's death. Nonetheless, those retrospective narrative chapters are quite structured chronologically to recount the story from Lydia's parents' childhoods to the night of her death. This pattern of switching between the chronological account and the flashbacks creates a dual storyline that presents the causes and consequences of trauma, thus helping the reader to trace the relation between the past and the present to reveal the effects of the previous trauma on the present events.

Besides the complex structure of the text, the narrator with the omniscient point of view skillfully employs prolepsis to connect the events of the storyline and deepens the novel's thematic exploration of inevitability and unresolved grief. By shifting fluidly between past, present, and future, the narrative emphasizes the inescapable nature of Lydia's fate and the lingering impact of her death on the family. The use of present-tense narration, coupled with the certainty of past events, creates a sense of fatalism that permeates the entire story. The opening line, "Lydia is dead. But they don't know this yet," (Ng, 2014, p. 1) establishes this tone immediately, intertwining the family's present actions with the foreknowledge of tragedy. This narrative technique positions the characters' lives as locked in a cycle of predestination, where the outcome is inevitable, yet the emotional weight of the past continues to haunt them.

The narrator's recurring hints about Lydia's death serve not only as foreshadowing but as a reminder that the characters' present and future are inextricably linked to their unresolved traumas. For instance, lines like, "Lydia was fifteen and a half... In five months she would be dead," (p. 161) reinforce the tragic inevitability, drawing attention to the emotional weight that hangs over the family. The manipulation of tense, particularly in statements like, "Years from now, they will still be arranging the pieces they know, puzzling over her features, redrawing her outlines in their mind," (p. 291) conveys the characters' enduring struggle to process their grief. This temporal fluidity, where the future remains uncertain yet burdened by the past, highlights the novel's central theme: the long-lasting, unresolved nature of trauma. The family's grief is not something that can be neatly concluded or overcome; it is an ongoing process, extending into an indefinite future, marked by a perpetual attempt to understand Lydia's death and their roles within it. This sense of unending grief underscores the novel's broader reflection on trauma as something that cannot easily be resolved, shaping both the characters' lives and the narrative structure itself.

Prolepsis uses the long time span of recalled time to condense the narrative into concise narrative sequences, disrupt the linear time, and produce the emotional impact (Brescó de Luna, 2022). It can be observed that the narrator persistently endeavors to contemplate the reasons for Lydia's mishap, while simultaneously making inferences, associations, and predictions in a repetitive cognitive process. By blurring the boundaries between past, present, and future, the narrator not only deepens the reader's engagement with Lydia's tragedy but also creates a cyclical process of reflection. This switch

between tenses allows the reader to view the events from different time angles, hence enhancing the reader's analysis of the events in the narrative.

Thus, skillfully managing the technique of the narrative time, Ng composes a multi-layered temporal maze, which allows the reader to consider Lydia's death, as well as individual miseries that are typical for each character. Such a structure of the narrative creates a rather sophisticated pattern that contrasts the origin of trauma with the consequences of the latter. It not only enhances the narrator's insight into the family's collective trauma but also encourages readers to connect past events with present realities, thereby deepening their understanding of how trauma begins and evolves over time. Thus, the novel's trauma narrative, interwoven with the chronology, flash-forwards, and flashbacks, produces a plot that addresses various levels of consciousness of the narrator, the reader, and the characters, which reproduces the narrativity of the trauma experience (Miller, 2023).

VII. CONCLUSION

This study, taking Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You* as the textual basis, delves into an in-depth exploration of race, gender and intergenerational trauma, systemically analysing the novel's portrayal of trauma, the recovery process and narrative strategies through the lens of literary trauma theory. Firstly, by investigating the experiences of the three protagonists, this paper reveals how racial discrimination, gender oppression, and unresolved trauma exacerbate the intergenerational transmission of trauma through interacting within the tensions of family and society, which offers deeper insights into the mechanisms of trauma. Secondly, this study explores the complex process of recovery from trauma, especially James's path to self-redemption through storytelling, Marilyn's through establishing safety, reflection, and reconciliation with their families, while also pointing out Lydia's descent into self-destruction due to a lack of support. This highlights the critical role of social support systems in trauma repair. Finally, this paper analyses the multi-layered narrative strategies that Celeste Ng adopts in the novel, such as non-linear narrative structures, temporal disruptions, and prolepsis to demonstrate the fragmented nature of traumatic memories and reveal how the text strengthens its critical reflection on the issues of social inequality through the employment of the narrative form. Overall, this study not only makes a contribution to the space of studying trauma narratives in this novel, but also offers a new perspective for understanding the role of trauma narrative in revealing social and historical trauma, while calling for the construction of a more inclusive and equitable future.

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Communication Apprehension Among Female EFL Majors: Quantitative Assessment and Qualitative Exploration of the Influencing Factors

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Abstract—This research sought to assess the status-quo of communication apprehension (henceforth CA) and investigate the influencing factors. To realise this objective, the research adopted the mixed method (the explanatory sequential design). The quantitative method was used to identify the status- quo of CA, and the qualitative method to uncover the factors influencing CA. PRCA (McCroskey, 2005) was adopted to assess the participants' level of CA, and the focus-group interview was used to explore the influencing factors. The subjects of the research in the quantitative phase were 111 female EFL majors from all academic levels registered in the Department of English, College of Science & Humanities, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University; the subjects of the qualitative phase were 15 female EFL majors who agreed willingly to take part in the quantitative phase. The research findings revealed that the research participants display a high level of CA (very apprehensive); the focus group interview highlights various sub-factors under many categories such as personal, social, educational, psychological, and linguistic factors. The research recommended employing CA-reducing strategies such as creating a friendly environment, providing constructive feedback, and integrating technology tools in the teaching-learning process.

Index Terms—communication apprehension, female EFL majors, mixed method

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication plays a pivotal role in human interaction, and it is the cornerstone of social, professional, and personal development. Through communication, individuals can share ideas, voice opinions, express emotions, engage in discussions, and build relationships. In academia, students ought to be competent in communication to be able to cooperate and interact with their peers, acquire knowledge, and develop their academic and professional expertise. Mastering communication skills facilitates language learning, cultural understanding, and personal development.

Communication is not only a linguistic skill, but it is a multifaceted competency that is influenced by a plethora of factors. Communication anxiety might hinder learners' ability to use language effectively (McCroskey, 1977). CA has also a negative impact on the EFL learners' motivation, performance, and overall language proficiency linked to many other factors such as gender, self-efficacy, and social expectations (Abdulaal et al., 2023; Abdou, 2023; Al-Najjar & Merhi, 2022; Horwitz et al., 1986; Musa, 2019). MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) highlighted that higher levels of CA might lead to avoidance of communication situations, reduction in participation in class activities as well as lowering academic achievement. Therefore, identifying the multifaceted aspects and factors associated with CA might help in identifying the essence of CA and the possible remedies for facing such a phenomenon.

Bragg (2017) underscored that CA, a feeling that most people experience to a specific level, is the fear of presentation in public accompanied by feelings of reluctance and nervousness. McCroskey (1984) underscored that CA has oral and written forms. Gardner et al. (2005) depicted CA as the feeling of anxiety experienced by an individual before or during communication triggered by various factors. More significantly, Mahdi (2015) identified a significant relationship between EFL learners' level of CA and their communicative competence. Horwitz et al. (1986) delineated CA as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 28). Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) highlighted anxiety as "fear or apprehension occurring when a learner is expected to perform in the second or foreign language" (p. 59). Spielberger (1983) cited that psychologists categorise apprehension into three categories, namely trait apprehension, state apprehension, and situation-specific apprehension. CA is a trait-like in most situations, a situation-like in public speeches or job interviews and a state in some people that hinders acquiring knowledge, skills and interpersonal relationships (Olam et al., 2024).

Constructivism represents a theoretical assumption for second language learning and acquisition. It highlights the significance of the learner's characteristics and interaction in the learning process; however, CA means a fear of real or anticipated communicative situations impacted by the learners' autonomy and self-esteem (Benson, 2011). In other words, learners with higher levels of self-esteem, and autonomy are more likely to communicate effectively than those with

higher degrees of anxiety and with lower degrees of self-confidence. Learners can construct their knowledge effectively and meaningfully (Naylor & Keogh, 1999; Schunk, 2012).

Horwitz (1986) proposed a framework highlighting CA, including mainly three components: CA, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The framework confirmed that CA stems from self-perception. Tanveer's (2007) framework focused on three factors responsible for second language anxiety: learners' self-perceptions, teachers' beliefs, and classroom management. The framework focused on the components of the teaching-learning process that impact apprehension such as the instructor, peers, and classroom environment.

Krashen's (1982) second language acquisition theory of the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis confirms that language acquisition increases in low-anxiety situation contexts. CA has myriad negative impacts on students, specifically in the context of EFL learning (Frymier, 2005; Machell et al., 2016). Highly apprehensive students would not seek help from their instructors when needed (Amara, 2018; Shad et al., 2020); they tend to withdraw from situations which require communication whether inside or outside the class and prefer to be occupied with tasks and activities that require fewer communication activities (Minj et al., 2024). CA has a significant impact on the students' self-esteem, self-concept, and social relations, which leads to stress, and anxiety that negatively affects their psychological well-being (Agrawal & Krishna, 2021; Mahmud, 2014). Amiri and Puteh (2022) identified six strategies for overcoming CA, namely: self-confidence, acquiring background knowledge of the subject matter; employing efficient presentation strategies, preparing and rehearsing the presentation; passivity, reacting expressively but non verbally in response to the CA; positive cognitive restructuring, changing reflection about self and accepting comments from the examiners; visualisation techniques, i.e. imagining the questions asked and scenario of the presentation; and cultural awareness, recognising cultural differences and the different aspects of audience.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Rickards-Schlichting et al. (2004) conducted a study to investigate the effect of an intervention based on self-modelling on reducing speaking anxiety. The subjects of the study were high school students: five males and six females. Many instruments were adopted for fulfilling the purpose of the study, namely the BASA scale (Mulac & Sherman, 1974); the PRPSA scale (McCroskey, 1970); and the self-reported state anxiety of Spielberger (1983). Results revealed that the participants experienced a decrease in their anxiety which appeared in the follow-up tests.

Jones and Procopio (2017) aimed to develop communication skills through mentoring and assess the level of CA among at-risk students. The study participants were 47 middle school students: 20 males and 27 females. The PRCA of McCroskey (1982) was adopted to fulfil the study purpose. The results revealed that the mentoring intervention was effective in lowering the level of CA among the participants.

Herbein et al. (2017) sought to enhance public speaking skills and reduce speech anxiety among primary-stage pupils. The study participants were 65 primary school students: 38 males and 27 females. The study made use of some tools for fulfilling its purpose namely, a performance questionnaire (Cartwright-Hatton et al., 2005); appropriateness of public speaking observation sheet; performance anxiety questionnaire (Cox & Kenardy, 1993; German et al., 2005); and DESSA test (LeBuffe & Naglieri, 2009). The results highlighted that public speaking skills were positively impacted by the training aimed at improving the participants' nonverbal and organisational skills.

Casteleyn (2018) investigated the influence of theatre training on the students' public speaking stress, and public speaking competence. The study employed the 'Personal Report of Confidence as a Speaker' (Hook et al., 2008) for collecting the study data. The study participants were 35 high school students. The results underscored that the participants may benefit from the intervention.

Asan and Sezgin (2020) examined the impact of education games on improving speaking skills and reducing speaking anxiety. The study participants were 28 primary school students: 12 males and 16 females. For collecting the study data, the personal information form, the impromptu speaking achievement rubric, and the speaking anxiety scale (Yildirim, 2015) were administered to the participants. Results revealed that the educational games were effective in developing the participants' speaking skills but were not successful in reducing speaking apprehension.

Alkhalidi et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study to investigate CA among Jordanian students inside and outside the educational environment. The study participants were from various programs and English was the language of instruction. The interview was used as a means for collecting the study data. The results underscored that the participants employed the following five strategies for overcoming CA: interpersonal interaction, building self-confidence, practice and preparation, external motivation, and faking it as a coping mechanism.

Ordoubadi et al. (2023) questioned the relationship among CA, privacy preferences, willingness to communicate, and foreign language achievement considering the differences related to gender between males and females. The study administered three questionnaires as instruments for collecting the study data. Participants of the study were 250 English learners. The results revealed that CA has a negative correlation with foreign language achievement; willingness to communicate has a significant positive correlation with foreign language achievement.

Shan et al. (2020) enumerated the factors contributing to foreign language CA such as improper tasks, lack of language input, overuse of the native language, and many linguistic, emotional, and socio-cultural problems. Further, several studies investigated the factors influencing apprehension in many different contexts and identified a plethora of categories such as the learners' personality factors, namely introversion and extroversion, shyness, lack of linguistic knowledge, and peer

pressure (Asif et al., 2019; Irfan et al., 2020; Samad et al., 2021; Soomro et al., 2020). Some other factors are related to the teaching-learning environment such as lack of motivation, discouragement from instructors, and the learner's personality type (Samad, 2014). A study by Kayaoğlu and Sağlamel (2013) concluded that the main causes of CA are linguistic factors, namely semantic, syntactic, and phonetic problems.

Bearing this in mind, foreign language communication has been explored in a plethora of contexts addressing its causes, manifestations, and remedies based on a prominent foundational theoretical base (Horwitz et al., 1986; McCroskey, 1977; Musa, 2023) which highlighted some related factors such as self-perceptions, linguistic background and the educational environment. Much subsequent research, based on the previous framework, has developed copious inventions for combating such negatively impacting states. Although most studies focus on the general population or mixed gender, the current study focuses on the female EFL majors considering all the societal aspects that might interfere with the CA phenomenon. Some studies have targeted some context-specific remedies such as theatre exercises and public speaking drills (Casteleyn, 2018; Shan et al., 2020). Furthermore, the dependence on the quantitative approaches only might provide a superficial understanding of the phenomenon investigated and might not identify the multivarious factors of CA in the educational context (Shan et al., 2020). Although most studies have depended on quantitative instruments, qualitative instruments, such as self-reports, interviews, and observations, remain scarce; this research utilises both the quantitative and qualitative ones for verifying both the status-quo of CA and the impacting factors.

Considering that female EFL majors might face some challenges such as community expectations, the norms of the culture, the perceptions of competence, which might have a negative influence on their communication, the present research sought to investigate the status-quo of CA among the research participants as well as identify the factors influencing CA among the EFL majors in the Department of English, Sattam University. The findings of the research might pave the way for future research to devise strategies for enhancing communication skills among female EFL majors; the results, furthermore, might give insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers to construct a supportive learning environment to empower EFL female learners to excel academically and professionally.

Impacting communication negatively, CA is considered one of the critical challenges and a main barrier to language development. Communication skills are deemed to be a cornerstone of EFL education, specifically for female students who are seeking a career necessitating using a foreign language professionally. With this in mind, a closer examination of the factors influencing CA reveals a knowledge gap in understanding the interplay among these factors within specific demographic categories. Moreover, much of the literature targeting CA addresses the general population, not gender directly.

Moreover, as an EFL instructor, the researcher has noticed that a significant number of students are reluctant to participate in oral activities, classroom presentations, class discussions, or communication activities. They are afraid of making grammatical mistakes, committing pronunciation errors, or receiving negative evaluations from their peers or their instructors. Female EFL majors' background knowledge and proficiency levels in language are shaped by a myriad of social, personal, linguistic, and gender-specific factors. Bearing this in mind, the present research sought to answer the following questions:

- [1] What is the status-quo of CA among the female EFL majors in the Department of English Language and Literature, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, KSA?
- [2] What are the factors impacting the female EFL majors' CA in the Department of English Language and Literature, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, KSA?

III. METHOD

A. Research Design

The mixed method was adopted for assessing the status-quo of CA and the influencing factors among the female EFL majors. The quantitative method was adopted to identify the measurable trends to direct the qualitative inquiry to uncover personal experiences. The descriptive survey method, due to its aptness, was employed to collect robust quantitative data from a large audience to form the foundation for the subsequent qualitative phase. Procedurally, the research adopted the *explanatory sequential design* which begins with the quantitative phase, namely collecting the quantitative data followed by collecting the qualitative data. Subsequently, a holistic overview of the target phenomenon under investigation would be developed.

B. Participants

The population of the current research comprises the female EFL majors in the Department of English, Saudi Arabia. They study linguistics, literature, and communication skills courses. Selection of the research participants followed two phases: quantitatively, the research participants totalling 111 included all the academic levels, namely freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors who completed the CA test. Qualitatively, the research participants were purposively selected (availability sampling technique), totalling 15 to complete the qualitative phase of the research.

C. Instruments

PRCA Scale developed by McCroskey was adopted for quantitatively assessing the research participants' CA. It is a standardised instrument developed for assessing CA across various contexts, and it consists of 24 items under the

following main factors: group discussions, meetings, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking (McCroskey, 2005). The PRCA, moreover, uses a 5-point Likert scale as follows: not at all apprehensive, slightly apprehensive, moderately apprehensive, very apprehensive, highly apprehensive.

On the other hand, for fulfilling the purpose of the current research, a focus-group interview was used as a qualitative instrument for attaining a deeper insight into the personal experiences for fulfilling the research purpose. The employment of the focus-group interview was to identify the inner thoughts and emotions perceived by the participants to delimit the factors not elicited by the PRCA scale.

D. Data Collection and Analysis

The research participants completed the PRCA scale, which was delivered through a Google Form. The total score of the scale ranged from 24 to 120, demonstrating that the higher scores mean higher levels of CA and vice versa. Statistically, the scores below 51 mean low CA; the scores ranging from 51 to 80 mean average CA; and the scores above 80 mean high CA. The PRCA scale proved to be an effective tool for assessing the participants' level of apprehension in various contexts and different cultural settings; it was validated, and its reliability was checked using Cronbach's Alpha (> 0.90).

The interview was conducted under the supervision of the researcher, and the participants have given their agreement regarding recording the interview. Procedurally, the participants were given some prompts to guide the interview, considering their freedom to express their ideas. Participants were encouraged to participate in the focus group interview actively as they were informed that their responses would not be used except for research purposes.

Thematic analysis was utilised for analysing the participants' responses substantiating the quantitative findings and offering deeper insights into the factors influencing CA (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). To ensure credibility, the participants were encouraged to provide frank and detailed responses. The dependability of the attained results was ensured via following systematic documentation of the results as well as bringing an external audit for checking all the procedures pursued by the researcher, such as data collection and analysis. Transferability was ensured by providing a comprehensive description of the participants and the context of data collection to determine the relevance and applicability of the attained results. To ensure confirmability, the research used a journal to document any assumption or bias in the data collection or the analysis process to ensure that the findings reached are based on solid data and rigorous analysis rather than the researcher's perspective. Furthermore, to enhance trustworthiness, participants' responses were cited verbatim in the results discussion to ensure authenticity and contextual depth.

E. Ethical Considerations

Considering the significance of ensuring ethical integrity, informed consent was obtained before participating in the research. Participants received detailed information about the purpose, method, and potential benefits and risks of partaking in the research; they were informed that their participation was merely voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw when it would be pertinent for them. Furthermore, confidentiality of the collected data was rigorously considered throughout the collection and analysis phases.

IV. RESULTS

A. The Status-Quo of CA

For identifying the status-quo of CA, the first research question "What is the status-quo of CA among the female EFL majors in the Department of English Language and Literature, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, KSA", was addressed. The participants' responses were categorised using the Likert scale analysis formula as follows: not at all apprehensive (from 1 to 1.80); slightly apprehensive (from 1.81 to 2.60), moderately apprehensive (from 2.61 to 3.40), very apprehensive (from 3.41 to 4.20), and highly apprehensive (greater than 4.20). The participants' responses to the PRCA scale were collected and statistically analysed. The following table depicts the statistical analysis.

TABLE 1
THE STATUS-QUO OF CA AMONG THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS (PRCA SCALE)

Items	Not at All Apprehensive	Slightly Apprehensive	Moderately Apprehensive	Very Apprehensive	Highly Apprehensive	Mean	SD	Direction
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total			
	%	%	%	%	%			
Item 1	-	6	54	29	22	3.60	.866	Very Apprehensive
	-	%5.4	%48.6	%26.1	%19.8			
Item 2	-	58	19	10	24	3.00	1.221	Moderately Apprehensive
	-	%52.3	%17.1	%9.0	%21.6			
Item 3	-	23	40	12	36	3.55	1.150	Very Apprehensive
	-	%20.7	%36.0	%10.8	%32.4			
Item 4	-	20	23	9	59	3.96	1.213	Very Apprehensive
	-	%18.0	%20.7	%8.1	%53.2			
Item 5	-	15	11	19	66	4.23	1.093	Highly Apprehensive
	-	%13.5	%9.9	%17.1	%59.5			
Item 6	-	46	35	22	8	2.93	.951	Moderately Apprehensive
	-	%41.4	%31.5	%19.8	%7.2			
Item 7	-	12	21	45	33	3.89	.957	Very Apprehensive
	-	%10.8	%18.9	%40.5	%29.7			
Item 8	-	13	29	19	50	3.95	1.090	Very Apprehensive
	-	%11.7	%26.1	%17.1	%45.0			
Item 9	-	11	14	38	48	4.11	.976	Very Apprehensive
	-	%9.9	%12.6	%34.2	%43.2			
Item 10	-	11	9	27	64	4.30	.987	Highly Apprehensive
	-	%9.9	%8.1	%24.3	%57.7			
Item 11	-	24	45	20	22	3.36	1.034	Very Apprehensive
	-	%21.6	%40.5	%18.0	%19.8			
Item 12	-	36	41	10	24	3.20	1.119	Moderately Apprehensive
	-	%32.4	%36.9	%9.0	%21.6			
Item 13	-	18	41	5	47	3.73	1.175	Very Apprehensive
	-	%16.2	%36.9	%4.5	%42.3			
Item 14	-	53	29	14	15	2.92	1.071	Moderately Apprehensive
	-	%47.7	%26.1	%12.6	%13.5			
Item 15	-	15	25	31	40	3.86	1.057	Very Apprehensive
	-	%13.5	%22.5	%27.9	%36.0			
Item 16	-	15	17	21	58	4.10	1.103	Very Apprehensive
	-	%13.5	%15.3	%18.9	%52.3			
Item 17	-	28	35	21	27	3.42	1.116	Very Apprehensive
	-	%25.2	%31.5	%18.9	%24.3			
Item 18	-	9	4	22	76	4.49	.903	Highly Apprehensive
	-	%8.1	%3.6	%19.8	%68.5			
Item 19	-	46	29	9	27	3.15	1.208	Moderately Apprehensive
	-	%41.4	%26.1	%8.1	%24.3			
Item 20	-	11	25	21	54	4.06	1.056	Very Apprehensive
	-	%9.9	%22.5	%18.9	%48.6			
Item 21	-	29	45	11	26	3.31	1.102	Moderately Apprehensive
	-	%26.1	%40.5	%9.9	%23.4			
Item 22	-	25	37	22	27	3.46	1.094	Very Apprehensive
	-	%22.5	%33.3	%19.8	%24.3			
Item 23	-	7	17	47	40	4.08	.875	Very Apprehensive
	-	%6.3	%15.3	%42.3	%36.0			
Item 24	-	8	8	32	63	4.35	.901	Highly Apprehensive
	-	%7.2	%7.2	%28.8	%56.8			
Weighted mean = 89.01 = 3.70								

The above table shows that the weighted mean was 3.70, underscoring that female EFL majors are “very apprehensive”, underscoring that a considerable portion of them is suffering from higher levels of CA. Digging deep, items 5, 10, 18, and 24 show higher degrees of apprehension as the scores were 4.23, 4.30, 4.49, and 4.35 respectively. While items 2, 6, 12, 14, 19, and 21 were moderately apprehensive as their scores were 3.00, 2.93, 3.20, 2.92, 3.15, and 3.31 respectively. The participants’ responses to 14 items of the scale were “very apprehensive” where their responses ranged from 3.36 to 4.11; notably, the participants’ responses do not include “Not at All Apprehensive”. The following Figure 1 depicts the frequencies of apprehension among the research participants.

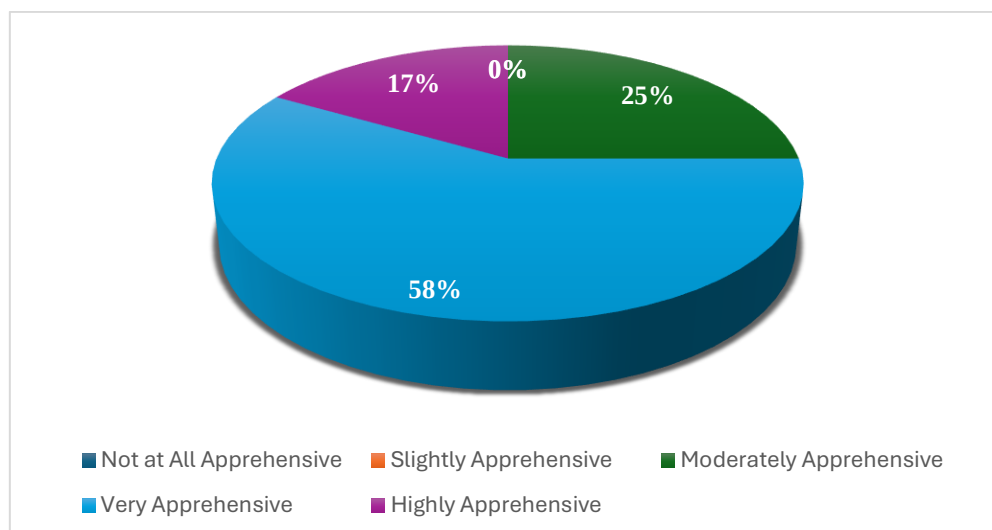


Figure 1. The Status-Quo of CA Among the Research Participants

B. Factors Influencing Communication Apprehension

To identify the factors triggering CA, the second research question “What are the factors impacting the female EFL majors’ CA in the Department of English Language and Literature, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, KSA?”, was tackled. The focus group interview was conducted online by the researcher with the research participants and lasted for 150 minutes. The script of the interview was reviewed and matched with the recorded track for generating the themes underscoring the factors influencing CA. The main themes attained from the interview are depicted in the following Figure 2.

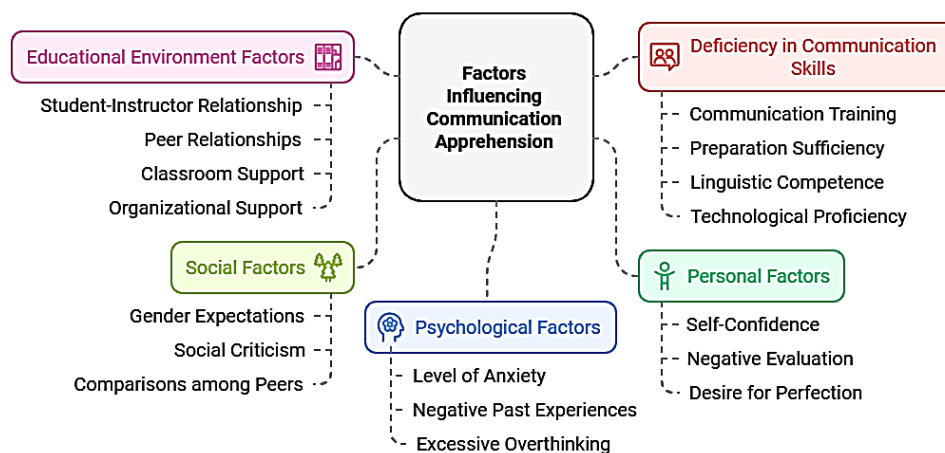


Figure 2. Factors Influencing Communication Apprehension

1) Personal Factors

A) Self-confidence

Female EFL majors underscored that they avoid communicating in English as they fear making mistakes that will ruin their self-image due to others’ bullying. They are less willing to participate in activities that require communication because of others’ expectations, and they are always hesitant to ask questions. One of the participants articulated, “*I usually feel that I don’t have good ideas*”.

B) Negative evaluation

The participants expressed self-negative judgment due to avoidance of communication activities. The competitiveness of the classroom pushes the students to amplify these fears, specifically when the classroom focuses on mistakes. Frequent abstention from participation in class activities leads to underperformance and self-doubt. A respondent articulated, “*My friends will say that I’m weak*”.

C) Desire for perfection

The interviewees highlighted that they have a strong desire to speak fluently among others, and they usually compare themselves to native speakers. This desire to achieve perfectionism puts pressure on them to cope with classroom activities. Thus, some students prefer to stay silent in class and not risk their imperfections. An interviewee conveyed, “*I know that I should learn more, and if I’m not good enough, I won’t speak at all*”.

2) Social Factors

A) Gender expectations

The participants reported that they, as females, feel anxious in communication settings. The traditional society requirements do not encourage assertive communication from women; the students perceive that they should be quieter and less assertive. A subject in the interview remarked, *"The girl should be quieter and more reasonable when speaking"*.

B) Social criticism

The respondents confirmed that they fear social criticism if they participate improperly. They are aware that they might communicate inadequately in the classroom. A respondent asserted, *"If I speak too much, people will say that I'm talkative, stupid, or speaking wrong"*.

C) Comparisons among peers

The participants pinpointed that they always compare themselves to their peers, specifically those who excel in language skills and believe that making a mistake is not acceptable in most settings. They feel that staying silent is better than being below the expected level. A participant reported, *"I don't know why I can't speak fluently like my friends"*.

3) Education Environment Factors

A) Student-instructor relationship

Female EFL majors perceive that there are barriers between them and their instructors, and they feel that there ought to be some restrictions when they communicate with them. Sometimes, they find it difficult to ask a question or voice an opinion, which reduces their participation and willingness to communicate. A respondent disclosed, *"I'm afraid that my professor will say that I'm weak"*.

B) Peer relationships

The research subjects highlighted that their relationship with their peers has an integral role in identifying the quality of communication. Working with a collaborative group or diverse group has an impact on the way students interact with each other. When students feel less comfortable in the group, they might withdraw from interaction in and act passively. An interviewee contributed, *"Sometimes, I can speak more with my friends when we work in my cooperative groups to do something"*.

C) Classroom support

The interviewees confirmed that support and encouragement play a significant role in encouraging them to participate effectively. When students feel safe while communicating, they will be more engaged and less apprehensive. A respondent disclosed, *"I feel that my friends collect my mistakes when I speak"*.

D) Organization support

The research subjects underscored that supportiveness from the educational institution is also crucial. Whenever they feel rigidity in any context, they abstain from participation. Feeling supported might help in overcoming the personal barriers and empower them to participate willingly and effectively. An informant affirmed, *"I can't speak during the events we make at the college. I can't"*.

4) The Psychological Factors

A) Level of anxiety

The participants showed that they feel stressed when involved in communication contexts such as oral exams or presentations. Higher levels of stress negatively impact the students' communication willingness and apprehension. An interviewee said, *"I feel that my heart races when I present something"*.

B) The negative past experiences

The research subjects stated that they have old negative experiences of communicating in public or with others, which resulted in apprehension and reluctance to communicate. Past experiences such as bullying, negative feedback, and sarcasm from peers might stimulate students to avoid communication activities. A contributor asserted, *"They laughed at me when I said the word -improvements- in a wrong way"*.

C) Excessive overthinking

Surprisingly, the participants highlighted that engagement with overthinking and over-analysis of past, current, and future negative thoughts has a negative impact on their future participation, specifically when focusing on situations related to communication and interaction. One of the research participants reflected, *"I overthink my words when I speak"*.

5) Deficiency of Communication Skills

A) Communication training

The interviewees elicited that they lack adequate communication training in the previous stages, which hindered possessing advanced communication skills. Public speaking and communication skills were not paid the due attention and training. Thus, they feel challenged when it comes to communication activities. A respondent disclosed, *"I hope that they provide for me more training on speaking"*.

B) Preparation sufficiency

The female EFL majors revealed that they do not feel adequately prepared for most communication tasks. The limited time and insufficient preparation, alongside the lack of resources and activities, might negatively influence communicative competence, so they feel apprehensive and less willing to communicate. A participant reported, *"I did not study speaking in the past, and I can't speak about a different topic"*.

C) Linguistic competence

The participants shed light on a plethora of linguistic factors which are perceived to be impacting their communication skills; thus, they feel apprehensive due to the weaknesses of their linguistic competence. An informant affirmed, *"I hope that I memorise many vocabularies to say everything that I want to say"*.

D) Technological proficiency

The interviewees underscored that the new advancement in technology and the services provided by artificial intelligence might contribute to the development of their communicative skills. However, they underscored that they are not competent enough to best employ artificial intelligence in the teaching-learning process effectively. A respondent exclaimed, *"Why don't they teach me how to learn the AI to use it in speaking!"*

V. DISCUSSION

The present research sought to investigate the level of CA and the influencing factors among female EFL majors using mixed-method research. The results obtained underscored that the subjects of the research suffer from high levels of CA due to a plethora of factors: personal factors, social factors, educational environment factors, psychological factors, and a deficiency of communication skills factor. The findings underscored that CA is a multidimensional factor (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986). The results obtained are in line with the body of literature about CA. McCroskey (1984) and Horwitz et al. (1986) highlighted that CA is mainly affected by the students' lack of linguistic competence; when the students think about their mistakes, they avoid the communication tasks.

The results also echo those of Kayaoğlu and Sağlamel (2013) who verified that mistakes related to phonetics and syntax are among the most influential factors of CA. Social factors are also a main influencer of CA as the cultural context and the community expectations contribute to CA, specifically among female students as illustrated by a plethora of studies (Asif et al., 2019; Irfan et al., 2020; Shan et al., 2020). Moreover, the findings of the research highlight the role of self-perception in CA. The perceptions of the students, whether positive or negative, are the main factors affecting their CA (Abdulrazzaq & Abdellatif, 2023; Ahmad, 2021). The students' perceptions of their peers, instructors, and the educational institution are important contributors to CA; such findings are in line with Tanveer's (2007) framework of apprehension. The perceptions were found to be a strong motive or cause of human behaviour, e.g. CA (Gardner et al., 2005). Linguistic competence is considered a fundamental factor that is linked directly to the learner's perceptions, specifically the level of CA which ought to be considered by educators. Moreover, the adoption of new technologies and AI tools provides a secure environment for learners to practice language (Shalan & Ahmad, 2024).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that CA is a prevalent feature among the participants, which results from a plethora of factors, namely personal, social, educational environment, psychological, and deficiency of communication skills, which uncover a dire need for developing systematic interventions for providing safe spaces so that the learners can enhance their communication skills. The results of the research call for developing a supportive and friendly environment; the teacher is the main element for developing such an environment through constructive feedback, tolerance of mistakes, and a friendly atmosphere. The affective filter will be lowered when anxiety is reduced as illustrated by Krashen (1982); consequently, it will impact language acquisition. The findings also necessitate providing extra practice on the different communication aspects such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, which are necessary language components to raise self-esteem and self-confidence as demonstrated by Amiri and Puteh (2022). More critically, it is apparent that the multifariousness of CA entails the development of a holistic approach to combat its negative consequences considering all other factors.

The research offers a myriad of avenues for future researchers to address many gaps in literature. Firstly, gender differences should be thoroughly investigated to draw a comparison between genders to identify the potential differences. Intervention strategies ought to be employed by future researchers to reduce apprehension and increase willingness to communicate. Another area of interest, the interference of the personality traits and self-perceptions, should be studied in future research to identify the relationship between them and CA. Finally, a future researcher can investigate the impact of employing technology in the form of online activities and AI tools to mitigate CA.

APPENDIX

THE PERSONAL REPORT OF CA SCALE (PRCA) (McCroskey, 2005)

No.	Statement	Response				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I dislike participating in group discussions.					
2	Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussions.					
3	I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.					
4	I like to get involved in group discussions.					
5	Engaging in a group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.					
6	I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.					
7	Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.					
8	Usually, I am comfortable when I have to participate in a meeting.					
9	I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at a meeting.					
10	I am afraid to express myself at meetings.					
11	Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.					
12	I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.					
13	While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.					
14	I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.					
15	Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations.					
16	Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.					
17	While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.					
18	I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.					
19	I have no fear of giving a speech.					
20	Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.					
21	I feel relaxed while giving a speech.					
22	My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.					
23	I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.					
24	While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.					

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A Corpus Study of Cyberbullying Metaphors Used on Social Media: Employing Conceptual Metaphor Theory

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Abstract—This study delves into the theoretical analysis of metaphors employed by male and female users on Facebook to cyberbully five Arab female celebrities. Employing Conceptual Metaphor theory, the investigation focuses on two primary facets: women's appearance and behaviors. The study compiles and scrutinizes two corpora—715 metaphors provided by male commenters and 140 metaphors provided by female commenters. The metaphors are collected from comments written on the official Facebook pages of these celebrities in January 2021. The source domains concerning appearance are categorized into: ANIMALS, CARS, REPULSIVE OBJECTS, FOOD, MALES, PRODUCTS, and FRIGHTENING OBJECTS. Conversely, there are two source domains that depict clothes: HOUSEHOLD ITEMS and PLACES. Behaviors-related source domains are grouped into: ANIMALS, LOOSE/PUBLICLY EXPOSED OBJECTS, LOW, and SICK. Upon comparing frequencies, it is observed that the source domains MALES and ANIMALS are more frequently utilized by males in metaphors depicting appearance, whereas the source domain REPULSIVE OBJECTS is more prevalent in females' comments. The study also reveals that, in alignment with the objectification theory, males tend to view females as objects of sex. Males focus on describing the uncovered parts of celebrities' bodies and they conceptualize the open clothes, that show females' sexual attraction, as open places.

Index Terms—cyberbullying, females, CMT, celebrity, gender

I. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid evolution of social media from a communicative tool to a powerful tool for business, it is unsurprising that influencers, such as celebrities, increasingly use social media to interact with their audience by sharing videos and photos of their life events. Although the audience may be addicted to celebrities and referred to as celebrity worshippers (McCutcheon et al., 2002), celebrities may also be subjected to cyberbullying because the audience hate them (Ouvrein et al., 2018; Hermes & Stoete, 2019) and provide negative derogatory descriptions of them (Claessens & Van den Bulck, 2014; Qamar et al., 2020). Cyberbullying is defined as “The use of communication technology (e.g., mobile, internet etc.) to deliberately harm others through hostile behavior such as sending text messages and posting nasty comments on the internet” (Khawar & Malik, 2016, p. 24). Pyzalski (2012) identified celebrities' cyber aggression as one of the six categories of cyber aggression (peer, vulnerable, groups, random, school staff and celebrity). He explained that in this category, adolescents post indirect tough aggressive comments on famous people such as celebrities and sport players. Johansson (2006, 2008) argues that the audience express their hatred and hostility toward celebrities because they feel that they live in a distanced world that is full of fantasy and is incomparable to their lives. Cyberbullying is primarily reported on social media platforms because users can conceal their true identities and create fake accounts (Vogels, 2021).

Online cyberbullying against influential female celebrities in different fields is covered in news articles. In his article in *Mail Online*, Bracchi (2013) reports cases of two women (an MP and a feminist campaigner) who were victims of online abuse and insults such as *bi*ch* and *dumb*. The article metaphorically refers to the abusing comments as *bait*s and the abused celebrities as *fish*. McNally (2015) sheds light on cases of cyberspace violence against visible women in the public sphere in different professions (a journalist, a video game developer, a columnist, a TV personality, and a feminist writer), focusing on the impact of this violence on women and how they deal with it. A recent article in *People magazine* Yagoda (2022) stressed that female celebrities are constantly cyberbullied for their physical appearance and race. Metaphorical expressions like *giraffe*, *big bird*, *brownie*, *curry*, and *hot dog nose* are used to describe celebrities' physical appearances.

As stated by Gadavanijb and Saengpranga (2021) cyberbullying differs from one culture to another, so it is important to study different types of cyberbullying language across cultures. Since cyberbullying against Arab celebrities is an emergent area of study, this paper is meant to contribute to filling this gap by providing a corpus-based analysis of the

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metaphorical expressions employed by Facebook users to cyberbully famous Arab female celebrities. Additionally, it is noted that previous studies on the depiction of people are mostly done through monitored tasks that have limits in time, number of participants, and the data collected (De Klerk, 1992; James, 1998; Talebinejad & Dastjerdi, 2005; Sommer & Sommer, 2011; Al-Harashseh & Al-Rousan, 2020; among others). However, data in this study is naturalistic and it reflects a wide range of linguistic expressions used by a wide range of Arab Facebook users which make it a rich source for metaphors that reflect different cultural backgrounds.

In view of this, the current study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the conceptual metaphors employed by Facebook users to cyberbully Arab female celebrities?
2. Are there any differences in the use of conceptual metaphors between female and male users? If yes, what are they?
3. Are there any dialect specific expressions? If yes, what are they?
4. What are the pragmatic and communicative functions that these metaphors convey in light of Conceptual Metaphor Theory?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cyberbullying metaphors serve as a productive resource for conceptualizing women negatively. A large body of research has been conducted to investigate animal metaphors that provide negative depictions of women. Palmatier (1995) states some animal metaphors which give negative representations of women: an overweight woman is depicted as a cow, an elephant, a beached whale, chubby (chub is a fish), or a pig. A woman who does not follow the social values is referred to as a bi*ch. A woman who seeks sexual pleasure is conceptualized as a cat in the heat while an unattractive old woman is referred to an old bat. Furthermore, a woman who interferes in others' concerns is an old hen and a bad-tempered woman is a vixen or a wildcat.

Similarly, Allan and Burridge (2006) mention some taboos used to refer to women: a cruel woman is a cat, an unpleasant dirty woman is a bi*ch, an overweight woman is a cow or sow, and an unworthy woman is a mouse. Rodríguez (2009) compares between animal metaphors depicting women in Spanish and English and concludes that the depictions of females as dogs and cats convey similar meanings in both languages: dogs refer to ugly women while cats refer to prostitutes. Haslam et al. (2011) confirm that the degree of offensiveness of animal metaphors depends on the context and that animal metaphors are seen more insulting when addressing females by strangers (i.e. out-group members). The study also demonstrates that the use of metaphorical expressions in which the person is explicitly perceived as an animal is more offensive than using indirect descriptions such as similes. Sacher (2012, p. 19) reports types of animal metaphors used in different languages as insults to mothers. Some examples are: "Ibn il-labwa! 'Son of a lioness!' (Arabic), Ta mère est une vache. 'Your mother is a cow' (French), Saubua! 'Son of a pig!' (German), and Ullu ke pathe! 'You are born of an owl!' (Hindi)". Focusing on animal metaphors describing women in Romanian and Serbian languages, Kilyeni and Silaški (2015) conclude that the expressions snake, hen, turkey, goat, cow, sow and goose are employed to provide negative depictions of women in Serbian while bitch, whale, sow, cow, turkey, snake, and jenny are used by Romanians to describe women negatively.

Apart from animal metaphors, researchers examine other negative images of women in different cultures. De Klerk (1992, p. 282) mentions negative descriptions of women such as "sword, tanks, green, bus, bags, and witches". Kövecses (2006) demonstrates that American women are often portrayed in American slang as commodities (e.g. "piece of dry goods", p. 153), food (e.g. "black meat", p. 156), objects, products, servants, and witches. In the western Balkans, women are often compared to cheap cars, and their body parts are described as being in poor condition, like those of a car that has been in an accident. According to this language, women's bodies are cars owned by men and are referred to as low-cost cars. Additionally, women's breasts are referred to as airbags, and their fronts are compared to car fronts (Bračić & Stamatović, 2017). Yu (2021) identifies common source domains used to depict leftover females in Chinese culture: FIGHTER, HUNTER, TRAVELER, FOOD (e.g. "spoiled food", p. 259), and COMMODITIES (e.g. "an expired product being left on the shelf", p. 258).

Metaphorical expressions cyberbullying female celebrities, however, received little scholarly attention. Williamson (2010) states that Britney Spears, a famous American celebrity, is described as broken and a trash after shaving her hair while Kerry Katona, a famous British celebrity, is depicted as "chav" a newly emerging British abuse term that refers to an uncivilized person belonging to the working class (p. 119). Adopting the objectification theory, Qamar et al. (2020) finds out that Pakistani female celebrities on Facebook are conceptualized as instruments and objects owned by others.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since the introduction of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), an extensive body of research that studies metaphor as a conceptual cognitive tool has been conducted. A metaphor is defined as "the cognitive mechanism whereby one experiential domain is partially 'mapped', i.e., projected, onto a different experiential domain, so that the second domain is partially understood in terms of the first one" (Barcelona, 2003, p. 3). For instance, the metaphorical expression *time is money* is reflected in different linguistic expressions in English. English speakers use expressions like "*You're wasting my time*" and "*This gadget will save you hours*" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 7). In

CMT, the target (abstract) domain is better understood in terms of another (concrete) source domain through systematic structured mappings. The perception of metaphors differs from one culture to another because they reflect the values, knowledge and mental images in a speech community (Kövecses, 2005, 2010). The conceptualization of time in English and Hungarian illustrates this point. “The idea that English expresses with the words *spending your time* is expressed in Hungarian as *filling your time*” (Kövecses, 2010, p. 198).

Besides CMT, the study adopts sexual objectification theory as a framework to shed light on how men view women as sexual objects. A woman is sexually objectified “when her sexual parts or sexual functions are separated out from the rest of her personality and reduced to the status of mere instruments” (Bartky, 1990, p. 26). As the definition suggests, objectified women are judged depending on their physical attractions that fulfil men’s sexual desires rather than their personalities (Heflick et al., 2011). Evidence for objectification of female celebrities is reported in a study by Heflick and Goldenberg (2009) who found out that participants focus on body parts of female celebrities (Sarah Palin and Angelina Jolie) and paid less attention to their personal traits, such as competence and agency.

IV. CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

In this section, we will describe the procedures of compiling the two corpora used in this study. The data were collected from Facebook comments on images of famous female celebrities in the Arab world. To determine which Arab female celebrities should be included in the study, we consulted “The Celebrity List: Arab Music Stars 2021” published by *Forbes Middle East* magazine. In this magazine, celebrities are arranged according to the alphabetical order of the first name or stage name in English. The first five female celebrities whose followers are more than 10 million were selected (to examine the number of followers, the official Facebook pages of these celebrities were visited in July 2023). Names of celebrities, as they appear in the list, and number of followers were as follows: Ahlam (10 million followers), Angham (3.8 million followers) (not included), Assala Nasri (20 million followers), Carole Samaha (11 million followers), Elissa (24 million followers), and Haifa Wehbe (13 million followers).

Textual comments on the photos uploaded in January 2021 on the Facebook official pages of the five selected celebrities were extracted in excel sheets using ExportComments application and then data was categorized manually depending on the source domains (details about this procedure are below). Only Arabic cyberbullying texts were included (texts in other languages, tagged people, and Emojis are excluded). Names of commenters and names of female celebrities were hidden for privacy purposes (unless celebrities’ names are directly stated in the comments). As the comments are shared with the public, no consent was needed to collect the data. Metaphors that are profane were excluded from the study. The discussion section includes source domains for which the percentages provided by male and/or female commenters are above 2%. Two specialized corpora were built for this study. The first corpus consists of 715 metaphorical comments written by male Facebookers, whereas the second consists of 140 metaphorical comments written by female Facebookers. The difference in size is due to the fact that the comments are written on public posts and females are more concerned about their privacy on social media (Hoy & Milne, 2013; Deniz, 2020). Examining the Facebook profiles of commenters reveals that there were a large number of fake profiles. Facebook defines a fake profile as “a profile where someone is pretending to be something or someone that doesn't exist”. To distinguish between fake and real profiles, the researchers depended on public written interactions to guarantee that the owner is identified and addressed by others. Thus, comments written by Facebookers whose accounts were fake or locked (locked accounts are accounts in which the owners do not share posts or photos with the public) were excluded.

Interactions on Facebook profiles were also fruitful in identifying the gender of profiles’ owners since the Arabic grammatical system is highly marked for gender. Therefore, accounts in which interactions did not help identify the gender were not included in the corpus. The profile pictures did not yield accurate results in identifying the gender of the commenters as many commenters use photos of others or non-human photos. Similarly, names of profile owners do not always tell if the owner is male or female since some Facebookers use gender ambiguous names like *ʔalʔawra:q ʔalmubaʕθara* ‘scattered papers’ and others use gender-neutral names such as Islam and Nour. Facebook pages that belong to business accounts are not included because the commenter’s identity is unknown.

To determine if there are any dialect-specific expressions, the researchers thoroughly examined each metaphorical expression in the corpora. Several sources of information were used to identify the dialect, including the “About” section of the profile, where the profile owner states his origin, dialects used, and any posts, pictures, videos, comments, etc. in which the profile owner clearly states from where he is, such as ‘proud of my country...Iraq is the best’. To provide accurate transliteration of comments, the researchers checked the commenters’ origins and found out that they are from Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. Comments written by one of Levantine dialects (Palestinian Jordanian, Lebanese, or Syrian) are transliterated in the urban Jordanian Arabic (UJA) spoken by the researchers. Noting that all the expressions used in the examples by speakers of one of Levantine dialects are used in (UJA) and bearing in mind that transliteration is not one of the main concerns of this study and slight differences between dialects in pronunciation do not affect the results or the analysis of data. Examples written in Egyptian Arabic (EA) were transliterated by the one of the researchers who is a native speaker of (EA) as well. For examples written in Iraqi Arabic, three native speakers of Iraqi were consulted. Since Egyptian and Iraqi dialects differ from Levantine dialects in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation, Egyptian and Iraqi comments, unlike other comments, were identified during data analysis.

The five-step procedure developed by Steen (2007) was implemented in this study. This procedure involves a bottom-up approach to extract conceptual metaphors from linguistic evidence. In metaphorical expressions, context dependent meanings are different from the literal meanings found in dictionaries. Below is an illustrative example:

(1) *xarba:na wus'a:jra řazu:z*

Lit. You are damaged and you become old
'You are an ugly old woman'.

To decide if the contextual meanings of the lexical units are different from the literal meanings, the researchers depended on their intuitions as native speakers of Arabic and the judgments of ten Arabic native speakers (5 males and 5 females). In this example, the contextual and the literal meanings of the lexical items are the same except for the expression *xarba:na* 'spoiled' which conveys a metaphorical meaning. The meaning of a product/commodity is inferred from the expression *xarba:na* 'spoiled' which is used to describe products as in *issaya:ra xarba:na* 'the car broke down'.

V. RESULTS

A total number of (855) metaphorical expressions (715 by male commenters and 140 by female commenters) were identified and classified into two broad categories: source domains depicting cyberbullied physical appearances and source domains depicting cyberbullied behaviors. The source domains for which the percentages provided by male and/or female commenters are above 2% are discussed in this section. Table 1 shows the frequencies and percentages of the source domains used by male and female Facebookers for the metaphors involving cyberbullying of appearance.

TABLE 1
THE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF SOURCE DOMAINS DEPICTING CYBERBULLIED APPEARANCES OF ARAB FEMALE CELEBRITIES

Source domains depicting physical appearances					
	Source domains	Male commenters		Female commenters	
		frequency	Percentage	frequency	percentage
1	ANIMALS	82	11.4	10	7.1
2	CARS	28	3.9	1	0.7
3	FOOD	66	9.1	20	14.4
4	FRIGHTENING OBJECTS	42	5.8	12	8.6
5	MALES	93	13	3	2.2
6	PRODUCTS	48	6.7	7	5
7	REPULSIVE OBJECTS	57	7.9	25	18
Source domains depicting clothes					
	Source domains	Male commenters		Female commenters	
		frequency	Percentage	frequency	Percentage
8	HOUSEHOLD ITEMS	33	4.6	6	4.3
9	PLACES	37	5.1	0	0

According to Table 1, the most frequent source domain used by males is MALES 93 (13%) whereas the most frequent source domain used by females is REPULSIVE OBJECTS 25 (18%). Additionally, the source domains ANIMALS and CARS are more frequent in comments provided by males. On the other hand, the source domains FOOD and FRIGHTENING OBJECTS are more frequent in females' comments. As for describing the outfit, the source domain PLACES is exclusively used by male Facebook users. Focusing on portraying the revealing clothes and the uncovered parts of women's bodies supports the objectification theory as it indicates that men view women as objects of sexual desire. Moreover, a look into the source domains (1-7) in table 1 reveals that five source domains focus on conceptualizing women as sex object (CARS, FOOD, PRODUCTS, FRIGHTENING OBJECTS, and REPULSIVE OBJECTS). Such images of women show that, although Arab female celebrities are powerful influencers, Facebook users objectify and humiliate them as they evaluate them depending on their sexual attraction.

Table 2 presents the source domains provided by male and female commenters involving cyberbullying of behaviors.

TABLE 2
THE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF SOURCE DOMAINS DEPICTING CYBERBULLIED BEHAVIORS OF ARAB FEMALE CELEBRITIES

Metaphors depicting misbehaviors					
Source domains for which the percentages are above 2% for comments provided by males and females (arranged alphabetically)					
	Source domains	Male commenters		Female commenters	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	ANIMALS	37	5.1	10	7.1
2	LOOSE/PUBLICLY EXPOSED OBJECTS	38	5.3	9	6.5
3	LOW	27	3.8	4	2.9
4	SICK/ IDIOTS	35	4.9	9	6.5

As shown in Table 2, the number of the source domains depicting cyberbullied behaviors is less than the number of source domains depicting cyberbullied appearances (Table 1). This result provides another support for the objectification theory as it demonstrates that Facebook users paid more attention to the description of celebrities based on their physical appearances while they paid less attention to their personal traits. According to Table 2, the most frequent source domain

provided by males is LOOSE/PUBLICLY EXPOSED OBJECTS 38 (5.3%) while the most frequent source domain used by females is ANIMALS 10 (7.1%).

VI. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis that highlights the pragmatic and communicative functions of the metaphorical expressions is presented in this section. The metaphors are categorized into two broad categories: Metaphors that are used in cyberbullying of appearance (physical appearance and outfit) and metaphors that are used in cyberbullying of behaviors.

There are seven types of metaphors that cyberbully celebrities' physical appearance. The first type is animals metaphors. This conceptualization consists of three mappings (subtypes). The first mapping is 'overweight women are big animals'. Overweight women are often portrayed as big animals such as cows/buffalos, as in (2). Here the commenter depends on similarities in size to create the metaphorical expressions. The second mapping is 'ugly women are animals' as in (3) in which the celebrity is referred to as a monkey. The third mapping is 'body parts of women like legs, lips, and faces are body parts of animals. In (4), the lips are referred to as lips of a camel.

(2) *mafaʔalla tʔu:l baʔara ho:landijja*

lit. God willing you say a Dutch cow

'God! You are a cow'.

(A male commenter)

(3) *ʔaħla fi l-warda ʕaʔizrik ja ʔirda*

Lit. The most beautiful thing is the flower on your leg, you monkey.

'The most beautiful thing is the flower on your leg, you dog'.

(A male commenter)

(4) *fafa:ti:r l-zamal*

lit. lips of a camel

'Ugly lips'

(A male commenter)

The second type of metaphors is cars metaphors. There are two identified conceptual mappings related to the source domain CARS. The first one is 'women are cars' as in (5) in which the celebrity is referred to as a car owned by men. In this example, the objectification of women is apparent as the celebrity is described as a car (i.e. an object) that men trade in. Additionally, this example cyberbullies the plastic surgical repairs that celebrities undergo and compare them to cars' repairs. The portrayal of female celebrities as taxis in (6) is due to similarities in colors as both the taxi and the celebrity's dress are yellow¹. The second conceptual mapping is 'body parts of women are body parts of cars'. In (7), a woman's mouth is referred to as a car's sunroof (Here there is similarity in size. The celebrity's mouth is as big as a car's sunroof).

(5) Speaker A: *issʕr wil-faħs⁶ law samaħt?*

lit. The price and the condition report, please?

'The price and the condition report, please?'

Speaker B: *iffas⁶i wil-mato:r mad⁶ru:b l-bu:z mad⁶ru:b wumʕaddal ʕind docto:r ħma:r*

jaʕni talatmijja wutalati:n

The chassis and the motor are damaged. The front part of the car is damaged and fixed by a donkey doctor. It means 330.

Her body is ugly and the surgical repair of her ugly mouth is performed by a stupid doctor. The price is 330.'

(A male commenter)

(6) *salama:t ʔe:ʕfi le:f ʔaddik ʔas⁶far lo:nik walla ʔaddamti tiftiyli taksi ʔuzra?*

lit. Get well soon. What's wrong with you? Why your body is yellow? Is this your color or you applied to work as a taxi?

'Your yellow dress is ugly. It is like the taxi's color'.

(A male commenter)

(7) *tumha ʔad fathit saʔf issajja:ra*

lit. Her mouth is as big as the car's sunroof.

'Her mouth is very big'.

(A male commenter)

The third type of metaphors is repulsive objects metaphors. Here there are two subtypes. First, 'women are repulsive objects'. According to (8), female celebrities who have been subjected to cyberbullying are viewed as repulsive objects. The second subtype is 'body parts of women are repulsive objects'. Both male and female commenters use the expression *yaʕ* (yuck) to convey their negative sentiments as in (9) in which the celebrity's lips are seen as repulsive.

¹ The photo is available at the following link:

https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=268051481346203&set=pb.100044240598934.-2207520000&locale=ar_AR

- (8) *muʔrifa walla*
lit. You are repulsive, I swear.
'You are really repulsive'.

(A male commenter)

- (9) *le:fiftik he:k jaʃ*
lit. Why your lips are like this, yuck!
'Why your lips are like this, yuck!'

(A female commenter)

The fourth type of metaphors is food metaphors which reduces women to sexual objects and conceptualize LUST as HUNGER and THE OBJECT OF LUST (i.e. WOMEN) as FOOD. Most, though not all, of the food items are unappealing. Two mappings are found. The First mapping is 'women are food' as in (10) in which the celebrity is referred to as an old piece of bread. It is worth noting that Arabic salad varieties hold negative connotations in Arabic culture². Male Facebook users refer to cyberbullied female celebrities as different types of salads to belittle them and indicate that they are not as attractive as other famous sexy celebrities, as in (11). The second mapping is 'a woman's body is meat'. In (12) the celebrity's old body is referred to as expired meat. In the source domain FOOD, the role of color in the production of metaphor is apparent³. A cyberbullied yellow dress is conceptualized as yolk as in (13) whereas a cyberbullied green dress is seen as Jew's mallow as in (14).

- (10) *xubza ja:bsa*
lit. A hard piece of bread
'She is old and not tasty'.

(A male commenter)

- (11) *la tsawwi nafsik ʒo:rʒi:na ja tabbu:la*
lit. Do not make yourself Georgina, Taboulah
'Do not behave like Georgina Rodríguez. You are beneath notice'.

(A male commenter)

- (12) *lahm zama:n intahat muddit sʕala:hi:tu waʔin ka:n bilbarra:d*
lit. Expired meat from a long time, even if it is in the fridge.
'Your body is old and ugly even if you take care of yourself'.

(A male commenter)

- (13) *sʕafa:r l-be:dʕ*
Lit. yolk
'Your yellow dress is ugly'.

(A female commenter)

- (14) *karo:l bil-mlu:xijja*
lit. Carol cooked with Jew's mallow
'Your green dress is ugly'.

(A male commenter)

Male metaphors is the fifth type of metaphors. In certain cultural contexts, female Arab celebrities are sometimes portrayed as men. Here, the commenters focus is on the lack of feminine qualities that make celebrities attractive. Four mappings are related to the source domain MEN. The first mapping is 'women have masculine physical characteristics'. In (15), the celebrity's shoe size is portrayed as equivalent to that of a man. The second mapping is 'women are dressed in masculine clothing'. In (16), the commenter directly states that the celebrity wears sport set for men. The third mapping is 'women are addressed using male names'. Some names that appeared in the corpus are Jafar, Azouz, Abo Jasim (used in Iraq), and even Michael Jackson. In (17), the commenter calls the celebrity, Jafar. The last mapping is 'women work in male-dominated industries'. These industries include electricians, dealers, wrestlers, and football players, especially players with dark skin. In (18), the celebrity is conceptualized as an electrician.

- (15) *nimrit ʔizirha itne:n wuxamsi:n*
Lit. The size of her leg is 52.
'The size of her shoes is very big like men's shoes. It is 52'.

(A male commenter)

- (16) *badlit me:ssi*
lit. Messi's suit
'A masculine suit'

(A male commenter)

²The phrase *haja:ti min ye:rik salatʕa* "my life without you is worthless" is commonly used as a compliment on social media as clear in the links below:
<https://twitter.com/kindabhi/status/1071133330555457539>
<https://twitter.com/xQueenEllx/status/736557007046627329?lang=ar-x-fm>
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=377385446534436>

³Conceptualizations of a cyberbullied yellow dress include: *kurkum* 'turmeric', *xardal* 'mustard', *mo:z mʕaffin* 'rotten banana' (unappealing food), *ʃo:rbat ʕadas* 'lentil soup', *mzajta* 'oily', *ʔahla:m bil-ka:ri* (lit. Ahlam cooked with curry), *lajmu:n* 'lemon', *l-kastar* 'custard', etc.

- (17) *imsahi l-mikja:ʒ jal-bu:ma wufu:fi btirzaʕi zaʕfar*

Lit. Remove the makeup you owl and see you will be Jafar again.

'Remove the makeup, you toad and see how you will look masculine again'.

(A male commenter)

- (18) *ʔabu ʕabdo: l-kahrabʕi*

lit. Abo Abdo, the electrician

'a mannish woman'.

(A male commenter)

The sixth type of metaphors is products/commodities metaphors. Two mappings are related to the source domain PRODUCTS. The first one is 'women are products/commodities'. In (19), the celebrity's body is conceptualized as an expired product to indicate that her beauty and sexual attraction decline with age. Examples in this section provide further evidence for women sexual objectification. The portrayal of female celebrities as sexual objects can be also attributed to the growing prevalence of cosmetic surgeries that promote the idea of normalized bodies. As argued by Heyes & Jones (2009) cosmetic surgeries are tools of medicine that contribute to the representation of women as commodities. This is clear in (20), in which the commenter indirectly states that the celebrity needs to undergo plastic surgeries. The second mapping is 'body parts of women are products/commodities'. In (21), Facebook users condemn the exposure of celebrities' bodies by referring to their body parts that are visible through their clothing as 'for sale'.

- (19) *s'a:ʔra iksbajar*

lit. You became expired

'You are old and unsexy'.

(A male commenter)

- (20) *xarba:na maʕ curo:na biddik taʕdi:l*

lit. You are ruined with Corona. You need a repair.

'You lost your beauty after Corona. You need to undergo plastic surgeries.

(A male commenter)

- (21) *ʔxa:d lil-be:ʕ*

Lit. Thighs for sale

'She sells her body for sex'.

(A male commenter)

The last type of metaphors is frightening objects metaphors. Arab female celebrities subjected to cyberbullying are depicted as evil spirits (e.g. ghoul), a nightmare (this is used particularly to cyberbully Ahlam as her name in Arabic means 'dreams'). In (22), the celebrity is conceptualized as *l-buʕbuʕ* (the bogeyman: an imaginary spirit used to frighten children).

- (22) *lamman l-ʔat'a:l jiʔalbu:ni baʕki:lhum biddi ʔaʕi:bilkum l-buʕbuʕ jaʕni ʔinti*

lit. When kids trouble me I tell them I will bring to you the bogeyman which means you.

'When the kids make troubles, I tell them I will bring to you the bogeyman, you!!'

(A female commenter)

As for the description of celebrities' outfits, there are two main types of metaphors. First, household items metaphors. Besides describing their outfit as an outfit of men that lacks feminine styles, Facebookers describe celebrities' clothes as household items such as curtains, towels, and tablecloths. Such descriptions indicate that the clothes are unattractive and are of low quality because their prices are as low as the prices of household items. In (23), the commenter sarcastically depicts the dress the celebrity wears as nice curtains. The second type is places metaphors. This metaphor is used only by male commenters. As stated earlier, it demonstrates that men see women as sexual objects as they focus on depicting their clothes that show the uncovered parts of their bodies. There are two (mappings) subtypes of this metaphorical expression. The first mapping is 'open clothes are open places'. Male commenters refer to the open clothes as open shops, windows, doors, and balconies. In (24), the dress is described as an open shop where body parts (conceptualized as goods) are sold. The second one is 'To make revealing clothes modest is to close open places'. Male Facebook users condemn female celebrities for appearing in public wearing revealing clothes and hence they ask them to wear modest fashion styles that suit the conservative societies in the Arab World. Turning revealing clothes into modest outfits is conceptualized as closing an open place such as a window or a door. In (25), the commenter refers to making a revealing dress modest as closing the window of the *manwar*⁵.

- (23) *hilwa hal-bara:di ha:j*

lit. These curtains are nice.

'Wow! nice curtains'.

(A male commenter)

- (24) *ha:da ba:b rizi? hara:m jitsakkar*

Lit. It is a living door. It is prohibited to close.

'She wears a hot open dress and sells her body for sex'.

(A male commenter)

(25) *nifsi tiʔfili fibba:k l-manwar*

Lit. I hope you close the window of the manwar.

"I hope that your dress will be modest and less revealing".

(An Egyptian male commenter)

Moving to the metaphors that cyberbully the behaviors of Arab female celebrities, analysis of data revealed that there are four main types. The first type is animals metaphors. There are four mappings (subtypes) of this metaphor. The first mapping is 'women who behave in stupid socially unacceptable manners are animals'. Facebookers use the source domain ANIMAL, with its general sense, and the source domains DOG, DONKEY and COW to focus on stupid socially unacceptable behaviors of female celebrities, especially appearing in public in sexy revealing outfit. In (26), the celebrity is described as a dog and the commenter tells her to cover the exposed parts of her body. The second mapping is 'a poisonous woman is a snake'. In (27), the celebrity is depicted as *ʔafʕa* 'snake'. By wearing clothes that show her skin, the celebrity poisons the ideas of the young generation who likes to imitate and follow celebrities' life styles. The celebrity's appearance is described as *laʕi:n* 'cursed' since it is against the social norms of the Arabic and Islamic culture. The third mapping is 'a savage woman is a savage animal'. In (28), the celebrity is viewed as an animal that behaves in a savage way. The fourth mapping is 'a seductive woman is a lioness'. This depiction is exclusively used by Egyptians. They use the animal metaphor *labwa* 'lioness' to refer to sexy females who run after men and try to seduce them. The article titled *ʔassabab ʔal-xafi wara:ʔ iʕtiba;r labwa laʕð'an x:arizan fi muʕtamaʕa:tina* 'The reason behind considering lioness an offensive word in our societies' in the Egyptian newspaper, Al-Arab Al-Youm clarifies this conceptualization. It states that this behavior of women is similar to how lionesses behave after the defeat of the old king of lions. The lioness allows the new kings to sleep with her as a sign of obedience. In (29), the celebrity is depicted as a seductive woman who runs after men.

(26) *ityat'i ja kalba*

lit. Cover your body, dog.

'Cover your body, dog'.

(A male commenter)

(27) *ma haða iffakl il-laʕi:n ʔafʕa*

lit. What is this evil appearance? A snake

'What an evil appearance!'

(A female commenter)

(28) *bto:kli baniʔa:dmi:n*

lit. Do you eat human beings?

'Do you eat human beings?'

(A male commenter)

(29) *danti bint labwa baʔa wuʕajza titrawwaʔi*

Lit. You are a lioness girl and you want to be in a good mood.

'You are a vamp who run after men'.

(An Egyptian male commenter)

The second type of metaphors describes women who are open to seducing men and engaging in multiple sexual encounters. These women are objectified as loose/publicly exposed objects. Two mappings are found here. The first mapping describes the celebrities as loose/publicly exposed objects as in (30). This portrayal, which gives a sense of not being held or attached together, has led to the creation of other metaphorical phrases such as the use of "*limmi nafsik*" "behave in a moral way" by Egyptians, as in (31). Speakers of Levantine dialects depict loose women as publicly exposed objects. In (32), the commenter condemns the celebrity's revealing clothes that expose her seductive body. The second mapping is celebrities' uncovered body parts are loose/publicly exposed objects. In (33) the commenter asks the celebrity to cover her thighs. In (34) the commenter asks the female celebrity to cover her breasts.

(30) *bitiʕmili e: ja sa:jba*

lit. What are you doing a loose woman.

'What are you doing? You are a loose woman.'

(An Egyptian male commenter)

(31) *la kida o:var s'ara:ha ja wilijja itlammi*

lit. No, this is over really woman collect yourself.

No, this is over. Behave in a moral way, you loose woman.

(An Egyptian male commenter)

(32) *ru:hi ind'abbi juʔs'uf ʕumrik...*

Go and hide yourself. It bombs your life.

'Behave in a moral way and cover your body. Damin!'

(A male commenter)

(33) *limmi ʕa:dik...*

lit. Gather your thighs...

'Cover your thighs...'

(An Egyptian male commenter)

- (34) *dʿubbi sʿadrik*
lit. Hide your breasts
'Cover your breasts'.

(A male commenter)

The third type of metaphors is women are low metaphors. This metaphorical expression has two mappings. First, low women have low social status'. Celebrities, in certain cases, are referred to with names that are typically associated with lower social classes or savage women, such as the name "Rabha" in (35). Additionally in (36), the commenter sarcastically uses the name of a western celebrity who is perceived as poor to refer to an Arab female celebrity, emphasizing the idea that the celebrity is attempting to imitate the western celebrity's style but falling short. The results also show that female celebrities are often portrayed as unsophisticated by likening them to shepherds, which is considered a low-status occupation in Arab culture, as in (37). The second mapping is 'low women are down'. In (38), the commenter condemns the celebrity because of her low morals:

- (35) *bityanni wutisʿrfi:ha fi ʿamalijja:t tazmi:l ja rabha*
lit. You sing and spend it on plastic surgeries.
'You spend the money you gain from singing on plastic surgeries.'

(A male commenter)

- (36) *zinifir lu:bi:z l-yala:ba*
lit. Jennifer Lopez of the poor.
'Her attempt to imitate Jennifer Lopez failed'.

(A male commenter)

- (37) *ra:jha ʿarraʿi*
lit. She is going to sheep herding.
'She lacks good taste'.

(A male commenter)

- (38) *.nizlit min ʿe:ni xalasʿ*
lit. She fell from my eyes.
'I look down on her'.

(A male commenter)

The last type is 'women are sick/ idiots metaphors. Some commenters perceive the targeted celebrities as being mentally ill or unintelligent as in (39), where the celebrity is depicted as disabled. Example (40) makes reference to an Egyptian idiomatic expression known as "issara:ja" (also referred to as "issara:ja iisʿsʿafra") which means 'psychiatric hospital'.

- (39) *xaʿs naʿs l-ʿa:ha ha:j laʿinha daʿiman tintiqid issu:rijji:n*
lit. Mentioning the text of this handicapped because she always criticizes the Syrians.
'Especially this stupid because she always criticizes Syrians.'

(A male commenter)

- (40) *tʿalaʿti min gama:ʿit issara:ja*
lit. You appear to be from the group of yellow brigade.
'It appears that you are crazy'.

(An Egyptian male commenter)

VII. CONCLUSION

The aim of this research paper was to examine the metaphors used by male and female individuals who engage in cyberbullying against Arab female celebrities. Two main categories of cyberbullying metaphors were identified: those depicting celebrities' appearances and those depicting their misbehaviors. The research found out that the source domains MALES, and ANIMALS are more frequently used by male commenters and the source domain REPULSIVE OBJECT is more frequent in comments provided by females. Additionally, it was evident that male commenters make reference to the uncovered parts of women's bodies and depict their open clothes as open places. This indicates that they portray female celebrities as sexual objects that fulfil their sexual desires. The study also highlighted the role that colors play in the creation of new and creative metaphors. Furthermore, the study concluded that for women to appear in public in revealing clothes is not acceptable in the Arab World since it is against the social costumes and values.

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Research on the Translation of Chinese Complex Sentences With Large Language Model ChatGPT-4o —Taking English Translation of Chinese Flowing Sentences as an Example

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Abstract—Large language models (LLMs) have demonstrated outstanding performance in the field of machine translation. Many scholars have explored LLM-based translation from various perspectives, primarily focusing on the translation of routine, simple, and everyday texts. However, when it comes to the examination of specific sentence structures, especially complex sentences, the research is still somewhat insufficient. Therefore, this study attempts to investigate the translation of Chinese complex sentences by ChatGPT-4o, focusing on the translation of Chinese flowing sentences, a special sentence pattern in Chinese. The study examines how ChatGPT-4o handles the subject identification and translation of zero-subject sentence segments within Chinese flowing sentences, as well as the translation of the frozen sentence segments in Chinese flowing sentences. The research results indicate that: for the ten categories of subject identification in zero-subject sentence segments, ChatGPT-4o can generally identify them all, but occasionally makes ambiguous identification; ChatGPT-4o employs two translation strategies—one is to add subjects (mostly in the form of pronouns) to translate the zero-subject sentence segments into independent clauses, the other is to translate the zero-subject sentence segments into attributive structures; the accuracy of ChatGPT-4o's translation of frozen sentence segments is inconsistent; ChatGPT-4o may adopt the literal meaning or metaphorical meaning of the frozen sentence segment, determining the form of the frozen sentence segment based on the overall structure of the flowing sentence.

Index Terms—LLMs, ChatGPT-4o, Chinese flowing sentences, translation

I. INTRODUCTION

Large language models (LLMs) are the deep learning models trained on massive amounts of text, which can accomplish various tasks, including the generation of relevant text, translation, answering questions, making conversations, doing the sentiment analysis, etc. LLMs have the powerful capabilities of understanding and generating language texts (Pavlick, 2022). The emergence of large-scale pre-trained language models such as ChatGPT has further promoted the development of machine translation. Translation, as a classic task in Natural Language Processing (NLP), has been a key focus in LLM research (Ma et al., 2023; Minaee et al., 2024; Santos & Khalil, 2024; Moorkens et al., 2025).

The translation mechanism of LLMs is different from that of human translation. The former relies on the application of algorithms and vast amounts of language data, while the latter relies on human translators' language and cultural knowledge as well as their creative abilities. For conventional, simple, and everyday texts, LLMs have demonstrated their powerful translation capabilities, but for unconventional and complex texts, the accuracy of translations produced by LLMs remains to be verified. Therefore, this study will examine the translation practice of LLMs on Chinese long and complex sentences, especially those containing multiple subordinate clauses, nested structures, and complex modifiers. The focus will be on whether LLMs can accurately analyze the logical structures and semantic relationships within sentences. This study examines the translation of Chinese flowing sentences with ChatGPT-4o.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent researches have demonstrated the impressive translation capabilities of LLMs, especially the ChatGPT series developed by OpenAI. Scholars have been considering how to better utilize LLMs to improve translation processes.

Scholars affirmed the role of LLMs in post-editing. Raunak et al. (2023) confirmed the excellent ability of GPT-4 in translation and post-editing tasks for language pairs such as English and Chinese. Jiao et al. (2023) introduced an iterative feedback mechanism, leveraging ChatGPT's self-correction and optimization capabilities, significantly improving translation fluency and accuracy. Scholars investigated the impact of the prompts on translation practice. Nagi et al. (2024) proposed a new prompt methodology, which effectively improved the translation performance of ChatGPT in different language pairs and fields by designing more refined and targeted prompts. Lu et al. (2023) used "error-analysis prompts" to enable LLMs to generate quality assessment results that are close to those made by humans. To improve translation

quality, scholars have also proposed collaborative human-machine translation models. Chen et al. (2023) proposed an iterative translation optimization method. Through multiple rounds of interaction between human translators and LLMs, the quality of translations has been continuously improved and optimized. Kocmi and Federmann (2023) were the first to propose the idea of using LLMs for machine translation quality assessment, and confirmed that they could generate results highly consistent with human judgments. Scholars have examined the translation quality of LLMs, and Hendy et al. (2023) pointed out that GPT has approached or surpassed traditional neural machine translation models in terms of translation quality.

In summary, scholars have examined LLM-based translation from multiple perspectives. However, it must be pointed out that the present research on the effectiveness of LLM-based translation mostly focuses on an overall performance, with limited studies on specific sentence structures. Therefore, this study attempts to examine the translation of Chinese long and complex sentences by LLMs, focusing on the translation of Chinese flowing sentences.

As to the earlier studies on the translation of Chinese flowing sentences, many scholars explored the similarities and differences between Chinese flowing sentences and English compound sentences, thereby proposing translation strategies (Nida, 1983; Hu, 1999; Fang, 2003; Renkema, 2004; Quirk & Crystal, 2010; Sun, 2013; Xu, 2014; Zhao & Wang, 2023). In terms of the translation of Chinese flowing sentences by LLMs, there has been little research on it. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the translation of Chinese flowing sentences by LLMs and find out whether LLMs are the useful tools in translating Chinese flowing sentences. In this research, Chinese flowing sentences are to be discussed with a particular emphasis on analyzing the subject identification of zero-subject sentence segments, the translation of zero-subject sentence segments, and the translation of frozen sentence segments. The zero-subject sentence segments and frozen sentence segments are critical elements in the translation of Chinese flowing sentences, as their translation requires a deep understanding of the structures and semantics of Chinese flowing sentences.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Questions

This study explores the following key questions:

1. Can ChatGPT-4o correctly identify the subjects of the zero-subject sentence segments in Chinese flowing sentences?
2. What translation strategies does ChatGPT-4o employ for the zero-subject sentence segments in Chinese flowing sentences?
3. Can ChatGPT-4o accurately translate the frozen sentence segments in Chinese flowing sentences?
4. What translation strategies does ChatGPT-4o employ for frozen sentence segments in Chinese flowing sentences?

B. Text Selection

Because ChatGPT-4o relies on the use of algorithms and massive language data, our research will eliminate the texts which have been translated and the translation of which can be accessed on the internet, to eliminate interference. The texts selected in this study, which have not been translated before, come from the Peking University CCL corpus. The selected texts are categorized into two types, zero-subject sentence segments and frozen sentence segments.

(a). Zero-Subject Sentence Segments

Chinese flowing sentence is a complex linguistic phenomenon. It is composed of multiple sentence segments. There are few or no explicit connectives between the sentence segments, and the sentence segments are related by means of implicit connections. The forms of sentence segments can be sentences, phrases, and the subject of each sentence segment can be implicit or explicit. In Chinese flowing sentences, zero-subject sentence segments often appear. The subject of such a sentence segment can be defaulted, and the identification of the subject is complicated. The zero-subject sentence segment cannot be simply defined as a sentence segment containing only the predicate component, but should be defined according to its relations with other sentence segments. Thus, the zero-subject sentence segment is defined as a sentence segment that contains only a predicate component and fails to form a complete and explicit subject-predicate relationship with the subject of the previous sentence segment. The routes of subject identifications of the zero-subject sentence segments can be divided into the following categories:

1. The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment identified as the subject in another sentence segment
2. The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment identified as the object in another sentence segment
3. The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment identified as the predicative in another sentence segment
4. The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment identified as the possessive modifier of the subject in another sentence segment
5. The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment identified as the possessive modifier of the object in another sentence segment
6. The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment identified as the subject connoted by the text
7. The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment identified as the subject in another sentence
8. The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment identified as the object in another sentence
9. The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment identified as the possessive modifier of the subject in another sentence

10. The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment identified as the possessive modifier of the object in another sentence

Based on the ten types of subject identification, the zero-subject sentence segments are divided into ten categories.

(b). *Frozen Sentence Segments*

The frozen sentence segments are composed of idiomatic expressions. Idiomatic expressions consist of proverbs, set phrases, allegorical sayings, aphorisms, maxims, slogans, and catchphrases. Idiomatic expressions are the living fossils of language. They witness changes in language and preserve cultural heritage. Idiomatic expressions appear in Chinese flowing sentences and become frozen sentence segments. They only need to be consistent with other sentence segments in semantics, not in form.

C. *Research Process*

The frozen sentence segments and the ten subcategories of zero-subject sentence segments are to be translated with ChatGPT-4o. The “prompt” is very important when using ChatGPT-4o to do the translation since different “prompts” will produce different results. Therefore, in order to avoid inconsistent translations during the test, we need to standardize the prompt to ensure the validity and reliability of the test results. The “prompt” of this study is standardized as: “please translate these words into English”.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By analyzing the translated texts of zero-subject sentence segments and frozen sentence segments in Chinese flowing sentences by ChatGPT-4o, four general findings have been acquired. In the following sections, they will be presented in detail.

A. *Accuracy of Subject Identification in the Translation of the Zero-Subject Sentence Segments by ChatGPT-4o*

Regarding Chinese flowing sentences, the identification of the subject in a zero-subject sentence segment is highly complex. In this research, ten types of subject identification have been categorized. ChatGPT-4o performed differently in terms of subject identification. In the following part, we will discuss them sequentially. Before proceeding with the discussion, one point needs to be clarified, that is, in the following example sentences, the zero-subject sentence segment and its translation are marked with an underline, while the subject identified as the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment and its translation are marked with a curved line. In this subsection, all example sentences follow this type of annotation, and it will not be reiterated thereafter.

(a). *The Subject of the Zero-Subject Sentence Segment Identified as the Subject in Another Sentence Segment*

For this type of subject identification, the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment is identified as the subject in another sentence segment. When translating this type of zero-subject sentence segment, ChatGPT-4o can identify the subject accurately, as shown in example (1). In this example, the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment “第二天居然驾鹤西归” refers to the subject “陶氏” (“Tao Shi”) in the preceding sentence segment “陶氏，本来病势就加重，听见这个信，自然是催命符” (“Tao Shi, whose illness had already worsened, naturally saw the news as a death sentence upon hearing it”), and ChatGPT-4o made an accurate subject identification by adding the subject “she” in the translated zero-subject sentence segment “she unexpectedly passed away”.

(1) 陶氏，本来病势就加重，听见这个信，自然是催命符，晚晌就发了一阵昏，仲纯跟翁氏也都到了，第二天居然驾鹤西归。

(蔡友梅 《新鲜滋味》)

Tao Shi, whose illness had already worsened, naturally saw the news as a death sentence upon hearing it. By the evening, she had a fainting spell. Zhongchun and Weng Shi both came as well, and the next day, she unexpectedly passed away.

(Cai Youmei, *A Fresh Taste*)

(b). *The Subject of the Zero-Subject Sentence Segment Identified as the Object in Another Sentence Segment*

The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment can also refer to the object in another sentence segment. When translating this type of zero-subject sentence segment, ChatGPT-4o made an ambiguous identification, as illustrated by the following two examples. In example (2), the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment “落在柏油路上，和初夏的热气混合成为使人晕眩的奇味” refers to the object “一股淡灰色的轻烟” (“a wisp of light gray smoke”) in the preceding sentence segment “放出一股淡灰色的轻烟” (“releasing a wisp of light gray smoke”). However, in the translated text, the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment is supplemented with “It”. The identification of the subject is ambiguous since “It” could refer to either “a wisp of light gray smoke” or “the car”. In example (3), the zero-subject sentence segment “听见嚷，就要脱衣裳下河里救去” refers to the object “小伙子” (“a young helper”) in the sentence segment “他船上有一个小伙计名叫王福子” (“On his boat, there was a young helper named Wang Fuzi”). However, in the translated text, the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment is supplemented with “he”. The identification of subject is ambiguous, as “he” could refer to “a young helper” or “he” from “On his boat”. ChatGPT-4o failed to erase this

ambiguity.

- (2) 汽车喘着气飞驶过去，哧，哧，放出一股淡灰色的轻烟，落在柏油路上，和初夏的热气混合成为使人晕眩的奇味。

(茅盾 《蚀》)

The car sped past, panting as it went, pop, pop, releasing a wisp of light gray smoke. It settled on the asphalt road, mixing with the early summer heat to create a dizzying, peculiar scent.

(Mao Dun, Erosion)

- (3) 他船上有一个小伙计名叫王福子，听见嚷，就要脱衣裳下河里救去。

(金国璞 《华言问答》)

On his boat, there was a young helper named Wang Fuzi. Hearing the commotion, he immediately prepared to take off his clothes and jump into the river to save someone.

(Jin Guopu, Questions and Answers in Chinese)

(c). *The Subject of the Zero-Subject Sentence Segment Identified as the Predicative in Another Sentence Segment*

The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment can also refer to the predicative in another sentence segment. For this type of subject identification, ChatGPT-4o can correctly identify it, as seen in example (4). In this example, the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment “走起路来两手或是微向前伸，或是倒背在身后，总是带着一副匆忙而又庄重的神情” is identified as the predicative “一个约摸六十岁的孤单老人” (“a solitary old man of about sixty years”) in the preceding sentence segment “这是一个约摸六十岁的孤单老人” (“This was a solitary old man of about sixty years”), ChatGPT-4o made an accurate identification by adding the subject “he” in the translated text of the zero-subject sentence segment “When he walked, his hands were either slightly extended forward or clasped behind his back, always carrying an expression of both urgency and solemnity”.

- (4) 这是一个约摸六十岁的孤单老人，个子不高不矮，背略有些驼，走起路来两手或是微向前伸，或是倒背在身后，总是带着一副匆忙而又庄重的神情。

(张贤亮 《邢老汉和狗的故事》)

This was a solitary old man of about sixty years, neither particularly tall nor short, with a slightly hunched back. When he walked, his hands were either slightly extended forward or clasped behind his back, always carrying an expression of both urgency and solemnity.

(The Story of Old Xing and the Dog by Zhang Xianliang)

(d). *The Subject of the Zero-Subject Sentence Segment Identified as the Possessive Modifier of the Subject in Another Sentence Segment*

For this type of subject identification, the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment is identified as the possessive modifier of the subject in another sentence segment. When translating this type of zero-subject sentence segment, ChatGPT-4o can identify the subject accurately, as shown in example (5). In this example, the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment “便领着僧众给人家去唸真经，不要报酬” refers to the possessive modifier of the subject “他的” (“his”) in the sentence segment “他的庙里不应佛事” (“In his temple, he did not perform Buddhist rituals on his own initiative”), and ChatGPT-4o made the correct identification by adding the subject “he” in the translated sentence segment “he would lead the monks to recite the sutras for others without asking for any compensation”.

- (5) 他的庙里不应佛事，赶到有人来请，便领着僧众给人家去唸真经，不要报酬。

(老舍 《宗月大师》)

In his temple, he did not perform Buddhist rituals on his own initiative. However, when someone came to request them, he would lead the monks to recite the sutras for others without asking for any compensation.

(Master Zong Yue by Lao She)

(e). *The Subject of the Zero-Subject Sentence Segment Identified as the Possessive Modifier of the Object in Another Sentence Segment*

The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment can also refer to the possessive modifier of the object in another sentence segment. For this type of subject identification, ChatGPT-4o can identify it correctly, as demonstrated in example (6). In this example, the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment “载过多少有势力的军人、阔佬，或名驰沅冰流域的妓女” is identified as the possessive modifier of the object “这只油船的” (“the oil boat”) in the sentence segment “遇有身分的客人搭船，喝了一酒后，便向客人一五一十叙述这只油船的历史” (“When distinguished guests boarded the boat, after having a drink, he would recount in detail the history of the oil boat”), and this kind of subject identification is dealt with by the ChatGPT-4o via adding the subject “it” in the translated text “how it had carried influential soldiers, wealthy magnates, or famous courtesans from the Yuan and Bing river regions”.

- (6) 遇有身分的客人搭船，喝了一酒后，便向客人一五一十叙述这只油船的历史，载过多少有势力的军人、阔佬，或名驰沅冰流域的妓女。

(沈从文 《常德的船》)

When distinguished guests boarded the boat, after having a drink, he would recount in detail the history of the oil boat—how it had carried influential soldiers, wealthy magnates, or famous courtesans from the Yuan and Bing river regions.

(The Boats of Changde by Shen Congwen)

(f). *The Subject of the Zero-Subject Sentence Segment Identified as the Subject Connoted by the Text*

In this type of zero-subject sentence segment, the subject is not to be found in the text, but is connoted by the text. Therefore, when translating it, the translator should clarify the subject according to the text. Our research shows that ChatGPT-4o is capable of clarifying the subject, as shown in example (7). In this example, the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment “必擂鼓敲锣，在船头烧纸烧香，煮白肉祭神，燃放千子头鞭炮” is not explicitly mentioned in the text but refers to “people in general” based on the context. Therefore, it is reasonable to add the subject “they” in the translated segment sentence “they would always beat drums and strike gongs, burn paper and incense at the bow, cook white pork as an offering to the gods, and set off strings of firecrackers”.

- (7) 拔锚开头时，必擂鼓敲锣，在船头烧纸烧香，煮白肉祭神，燃放千子头鞭炮，表示人神和乐，共同帮忙，一路福星。

(沈从文 《常德的船》)

When setting sail, they would always beat drums and strike gongs, burn paper and incense at the bow, cook white pork as an offering to the gods, and set off strings of firecrackers. This was meant to symbolize harmony between humans and deities, ensuring their assistance and blessings for a fortunate journey.

(The Boats of Changde by Shen Congwen)

(g). *The Subject of the Zero-Subject Sentence Segment Identified as the Subject in Another Sentence*

It is normal that the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment can be identified within the whole sentence, but still it can be identified beyond the sentence. It can refer to the subject in another sentence. As to this kind of subject identification, ChatGPT-4o can still successfully identify the subject, as seen in the example (8). In this example, the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment “留神一看，见路西有一座大门” refers to the subject “十几个人” (“A dozen or so people”) in the preceding sentence “十几个人，不管三七二十一，就大迈步，走进村里边来” (“A dozen or so people, without a second thought, took big strides and walked into the village”), and ChatGPT-4o made the accurate identification by adding subject “they” in the translated text “Looking closely, they saw a large gate to the west of the road”.

- (8) 十几个人，不管三七二十一，就大迈步，走进村里边来。留神一看，见路西有一座大门，门内高搭席棚，里面灯光明亮，老远听得刀杓齐响，遂紧走了几步，到了门前，见门口两旁，贴着一双红纸金喜字。

(亚铃 《何喜珠》)

A dozen or so people, without a second thought, took big strides and walked into the village. Looking closely, they saw a large gate to the west of the road. Inside the gate, a tall canopy made of matting was set up, brightly lit from within. From afar, the sound of synchronized clanging of ladles and spatulas could be heard. They quickened their pace and approached the gate. At the entrance, on either side of the doorway, were pasted a pair of red papers with golden “double happiness” characters.

(From Yaling's He Xizhu)

(h). *The Subject of the Zero-Subject Sentence Segment Identified as the Object in Another Sentence*

The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment can also refer to the object in another sentence. For this kind of subject identification, ChatGPT-4o can still successfully identify the subject, as shown in the example (9). In this example, the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment “说话之间，已然到了庙里，来在跨院儿” refers to the object “二十几名捕快” (“over twenty constables”) in the preceding sentence, therefore, the subject “they” is added in the translated text “In no time, they arrived at the temple and entered the side courtyard” by ChatGPT-4o.

- (9) 不大的工夫儿，传出谕来，派了二十几名捕快，同着傅老头儿及村正副等，够奔顾家村而来。说话之间，已然到了庙里，来在跨院儿，看守的工人们，这才把门开开，随把张铁汉同甄醉仙提到院里，揭去头上的花布手巾，洗去脸上的锅烟子，两人全都露出本来的面目。

(自了生 《张铁汉》)

Before long, an imperial decree was issued, dispatching over twenty constables along with Old Man Fu and the village chief and deputies to rush to Gujia Village. In no time, they arrived at the temple and entered the side courtyard. The guards there finally opened the gate and brought Zhang Tiehan and Zhen Zuixian into the courtyard. They removed the colorful cloth headscarves from their heads and washed the soot from their faces, revealing their true appearances.

(Zhang Tiehan by Ziliaosheng)

(i). *The Subject of the Zero-Subject Sentence Segment Identified as the Possessive Modifier of the Subject in Another Sentence*

The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment may also refer to the possessive modifier of the subject in another sentence. In such cases, ChatGPT-4o can still successfully identify the subject, as shown in the example (10). In this example, the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment “穿生牛皮靴子，走路时踏得很重” refers to the possessive modifier of the subject “船主的” (“The boat owner’s”) in the preceding sentence. Consequently, the subject “he” is appropriately added in the translated text “He wore rawhide boots, walking with heavy steps”.

- (10) 船主的装束在船上时看不出什么特别处，上岸时穿长袍（下脚过膝罩三四寸），罩青羽绂马褂，戴呢帽或小缎帽，佩小牛皮抱肚，用粗大银链系定，内中塞满了银元。穿生牛皮靴子，走路时踏得很重，个子高高的，瘦瘦的。

（沈从文 《常德的船》）

The boat owner's attire didn't appear particularly remarkable while on the boat. However, upon coming ashore, he would wear a long robe (its hem reaching three or four inches below the knees), covered with a blue satin horse coat, and a felt hat or a small silk cap. He carried a small calfskin belly pouch secured with a thick silver chain, stuffed full of silver dollars. He wore rawhide boots, walking with heavy steps. He was tall and thin.

(Shen Congwen, The Boats of Changde)

(j). *The Subject of the Zero-Subject Sentence Segment Identified as the Possessive Modifier of the Object in Another Sentence*

The subject of the zero-subject sentence segment may also refer to the possessive modifier of the object in another sentence. For this kind of subject identification, ChatGPT-4o can still successfully identify the subject, as shown in the example (11). In this example, the subject of the zero-subject sentence segment “死前几天里呻吟辗转，浑身筋脉抽搐，似乎痛苦不堪” refers to the possessive modifier of the subject “临终人的” (“of someone nearing the end of their life”) in the preceding sentence. Therefore, the subject “they” is added in the translated text “In the days before death, they groan and toss about, their entire body convulsing with strained muscles and veins, seemingly overwhelmed by unbearable pain”.

- (11) 你瞧过临终人的情况没有？死前几天里呻吟辗转，浑身筋脉抽搐，似乎痛苦不堪。

（苏雪林 《当我老了的时候》）

Have you ever seen the condition of someone nearing the end of their life? In the days before death, they groan and toss about, their entire body convulsing with strained muscles and veins, seemingly overwhelmed by unbearable pain.

(When I Am Old by Su Xuelin)

Based on the above discussion, we can conclude that ChatGPT-4o can generally identify the nine categories of zero-subject sentence segments. However, when the subject of a zero-subject sentence segment corresponds to the object in another sentence segment, its recognition is sometimes ambiguous. Therefore, it is evident that ChatGPT-4o is not reliable in terms of the translation of the zero-subject sentence segment, making human post-editing unavoidable.

B. *ChatGPT-4o's Translation Strategies for Zero-Subject Sentence Segments*

There are mainly two translation strategies for the zero-subject sentence segments in Chinese flowing sentences. One is to add subjects (always in the form of “pronoun”) and translate the zero-subject sentence segments into independent clauses, as in example (12). The other is to directly translate the zero-subject sentence segments into attributive structures, as seen in examples (13) and (14).

- (12) 宁生自王三走后，追思往事，不由一缕情丝，忽然绵绵絮絮，萦绕在心头之上，愈显愈大，愈解愈缠，把平日厌世主义的心肠，吹到爪哇国去了，心说人之一生，最难却者，就是一个情字。

（亚铃 《劫后再生缘》）

Since Wang San left, Ning Sheng had been reminiscing about the past. Unconsciously, a thread of emotion began to linger softly and persistently in his heart, growing larger and more entangled the more he tried to unravel it. It swept away his usual nihilistic outlook, as if it had been blown all the way to Java. He thought to himself that in a person's life, the hardest thing to escape is the word “love”.

(Ya Ling, Rebirth After the Catastrophe)

- (13) 他在京里忽然交了三个新朋友，都是外乡人，盘桓了些日子，彼此都很投缘对劲。

（金国璞 《华言问答》）

In the capital, he suddenly made three new friends, all from other regions. They spent some time together and found themselves to be very compatible and like-minded.

(Jin Guopu, Questions and Answers in Chinese)

- (14) 见往来的尽是些下等男子，一个个擎着伞，携着衣，穿着高木屐，凄凄惶惶的跑，绝无一个女子。

（向恺然 《留东外史》）

He saw that all the passersby were low-class men, each holding an umbrella, carrying clothes, and wearing tall wooden clogs, running about in a pitiful and frantic manner. There wasn't a single woman among them.

(Xiang Kairan, The Tale of Studying Abroad in the East)

C. The Accuracy of the Translation of Frozen Sentence Segments by ChatGPT-4o

By examining ChatGPT-4o's translation of frozen sentence segments, we found that the accuracy of ChatGPT-4o is inconsistent. A deep discussion is to be carried out in the following part. Before proceeding with the discussion, one point needs to be clarified, that is, in the following example sentences, the frozen sentence segment and its translation are marked with an underline. In this subsection, all example sentences follow this type of annotation, and it will not be reiterated thereafter.

As to the frozen sentence segment, its meaning and form are fixed, and usually it has the literal meaning and metaphorical meaning. To elaborate its meaning, one has to get to know its origin and acquire the related knowledge and culture behind it, and also has to consider the context where it is used. Therefore, the translation of the frozen sentence segment is a big challenge for ChatGPT-4o. And by summarizing and probing into the translations of the frozen sentence segments, we find that the accuracy of the translation by ChatGPT-4o is inconsistent. In the following examples (15) and (16), its translations of frozen sentence segments are not correct.

In example (15), the frozen sentence segment “上梁不正下梁歪” originates from a construction-related idiom. From an architectural perspective, beams are crucial load-bearing components. If the upper beam (the main load-bearing beam) is not properly and stably placed, the lower beams (secondary load-bearing beams) will also be affected, resulting in instability in the entire structure. This physical phenomenon has a practical basis in architecture, highlighting the interdependence between different parts of a building. “上梁不正下梁歪” is more commonly used as a metaphor for social phenomena and interpersonal relationships. Here, “上梁” typically refers to superiors, leaders, or elders, while “下梁” refers to subordinates, followers, or juniors. The meaning of this idiom is that if superiors or elders behave improperly or immorally, their subordinates or juniors are likely to be negatively influenced and follow suit. In example (15), ChatGPT-4o translated the literal meaning of the idiom but inaccurately rendered “上梁不正下梁歪” as “If the upper beam is not straight, the lower beam will be crooked.” A more proper translation should be, “If the upper beam is not placed well, the lower ones will go askant.” Similarly, in example (16), the frozen sentence segment “天要下雨娘要嫁” means that, just as rain is inevitable, a widow's determination to remarry cannot be stopped. It is often used to refer to situations where someone is resolute in their decision and difficult to dissuade. ChatGPT-4o translated it as “just as rain will fall and daughters will marry”, failing to convey the meaning of “娘” (widow) in the context.

(15) 王振才听了, 觉得儿子话有道理, 上梁不正下梁歪。

《人民日报》

Wang Zhencai listened and felt that his son's words made sense: “If the upper beam is not straight, the lower beam will be crooked.”

(From People's Daily)

(16) 不用担心你接触不到人脉和资源, 你把更多的时间用到自己的事业中, 人脉和资源会主动靠近你; 不用担心没有你的参与这个世界就会怎么样, 天要下雨娘要嫁人, 谁也主宰不了谁。

(微信公众号)

Don't worry about not having access to connections and resources; if you dedicate more time to your own work, connections and resources will naturally come to you. Don't worry about how the world will manage without your involvement; just as rain will fall and daughters will marry, no one can dictate anyone else's destiny.

(From a WeChat public account).

In summary, the accuracy of ChatGPT-4o's translation of frozen sentence segment is inconsistent. Therefore, when utilizing ChatGPT-4o for translating frozen sentence segments, manual verification should be employed as a supplement.

D. ChatGPT-4o's Translation Strategies for Frozen Sentence Segments

ChatGPT-4o translates frozen sentence segments either by adopting the literal meaning or by interpreting the metaphorical meaning. For example, in example (17), the frozen sentence segment “八仙过海, 各显神通” is translated by elaborating on its literal meaning, while frozen sentence segment “一举两得” is translated by elaborating on its metaphorical meaning. Additionally, when the structure of a frozen sentence segment cannot align with other parts of the sentence, ChatGPT-4o often handles it as independent sentence. For instance, in example (18), the frozen sentence segment “一言既出, 驷马难追” is translated as a sentence. It shows that ChatGPT-4o determines the form of a frozen sentence segment by considering the overall structure of the flowing sentence.

(17) 联合起来, 你出力, 我出设备, 你出原料, 我搞加工, 八仙过海, 各显神通, 将是一松百活, 一举多得。《人民日报》

Unite together: you contribute labor, I provide equipment; you supply raw materials, I handle processing. Like the saying “The Eight Immortals crossing the sea, each showing their own prowess,” this approach will invigorate everything at once and achieve multiple benefits with a single effort.

(From People's Daily)

(18) 到了玉成在高等工科毕业的前一年, 侯七奶奶发现, 自己的儿子到了成家的年龄了, 发挥自己的所长, 侯七奶奶在适龄的女青年中一找, 给自己的亲生儿子找到了一位美貌的才女, 她没和玉成商量, 一言既出, 驷马难追, 侯七奶奶就给她的亲生儿子把亲事说定了。

《作家文摘》

When Yu Cheng was in his final year of advanced engineering studies, Grandma Hou Qi realized that her son had reached the age for marriage. Using her skills, Grandma Hou Qi searched among young women of suitable age and found a beautiful and talented young woman for her son. Without consulting Yu Cheng, she made the decision on her own. Once her words were spoken, there was no taking them back. Grandma Hou Qi arranged the marriage for her biological son.

(From Writer's Digest).

V. CONCLUSION

This study examines how ChatGPT-4o handles the translation of Chinese flowing sentences, with a focus on zero-subject sentence segments and frozen sentence segments.

The findings reveal that ChatGPT-4o employs two translation strategies for zero-subject sentence segments: one involves adding a subject (mostly in the form of pronoun), translating the zero-subject sentence segment into an independent clause; the other directly translates the zero-subject sentence segment into the attributive structure. Based on the types of subject identification, there are ten types of zero-subject sentence segments, and ChatGPT-4o can generally identify nine of them, except for the type in which the subject is identified as the object in another sentence segment. In this case, the other sentence segment may have both subject and object, which may lead to the ambiguity in identification. Furthermore, if ChatGPT-4o simply adds a subject in the form of pronoun, which is the common practice of ChatGPT-4o, such ambiguity is just reinforced. Therefore, ChatGPT-4o is not reliable in translating zero-subject sentence segments, and human post-editing is necessary.

As for frozen sentence segments, ChatGPT-4o may translate the literal meaning or adopt a metaphorical interpretation, and ChatGPT-4o determines the form of a frozen sentence segment by considering the overall structure of the flowing sentence. The accuracy of ChatGPT-4o's translation of frozen sentence segments is still inconsistent.

Based on these findings, we conclude that while LLMs like ChatGPT-4o demonstrate impressive translation capabilities, they are not always reliable. Therefore, when dealing with complex sentences like Chinese flowing sentences, manual proofreading remains necessary.

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Emphasis Spread in Zilfawi Arabic: An Optimality Theoretic Analysis

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Abstract—The current study seeks to provide a phonological analysis of *emphasis spread* on adjacent segments in Zilfawi Arabic (ZA), one of the spoken dialects in Najd province in central Saudi Arabia, within the optimality theory (OT) framework. There is a shortage of studies that addressed this phonological phenomenon in Arabic dialects from the perspective of the OT. This study leads to deepening the knowledge of the phonological system of this dialect. Moreover, it contributes to documenting this phonological phenomenon related to Saudi Arabia's linguistic diversity. The study implemented the OT to account for the interaction and effect of the emphatic sounds on their adjacent segments. The analysis revealed that the primary emphasis spread has a syllable domain in which the emphatic sound lies and occurs bidirectionally where, consequently, the dominant constraints are MAX-RTR and EMPHATIC-σ, even when there is a morpheme.

Index Terms—assimilation, emphasis spread, methodology, optimality theory, Zilfawi Arabic

I. INTRODUCTION

Many languages in the world have special categories of sounds that are distinguished by their phonological systems. The varieties of Arabic and Hebrew languages have a specific category of sounds called *emphatics*. It is a group of consonant sounds produced by the movement of the tongue root to the pharynx wall (Davenport & Hannahs, 2013). These consonants are labialized with the diacritic [ʕ], presenting the sound as pharyngealized (Ladefoged & Johnstone, 2015). In Arabic, they are /tʕ, ʔ, sʕ, dʕ/. This category of sounds is called *Al Itbaq* (Hussein, 2012).

Emphatic consonants are distinguished by their effect on adjacent sounds. This process is called emphasis spread or pharyngeal spread. Emphatics emphasize neighboring consonants and vowels by sharing some of their phonological features. Their plain counterparts are /t, ʔ, s, d/ (Carr & Montreuil, 2013). Emphasis spread is a common phonological phenomenon in Arabic dialects and differs from one dialect to another (Davis, 1995). To the best of the researchers' knowledge, very little attention has been given to emphasis spread in Saudi dialects. Therefore, the current phonological study aims to add to the Arabic literature in the field by analyzing the emphasis spread in Zilfawi Arabic (ZA) from the perspective of the Optimality Theory (OT), which has not been analyzed before. In doing so, this study addresses the following questions:

1. What is the primary domain of emphasis spread in ZA?
2. What constraints are required to analyze the primary emphasis spread in ZA within the OT framework?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Emphasis Spread

Multiple scholars have proved that emphatic consonants affect neighboring sounds in various varieties of Arabic. For example, Watson (1999) proved that in Sanaani Arabic, a dialect spoken in Yemen, emphatic consonants affect the neighboring sounds and assimilate them with the retracted tongue root (RTR) feature. Emphasis spreads to the sounds in the words to share the RTR feature. In addition, the emphasis spread in Sanaani Arabic occurs bidirectionally and is blocked by [+high] vowels on the right.

Davis (1995) applied a grounded phonology framework to analyze southern and northern Palestinian Arabic. The results proved the influence of emphatics on adjacent sounds. The grounded phonology accounted for the effect of the emphasis on both directions of the segments. The emphasis spread on the right is blocked by [+ front] sounds, but no segment blocks it on the left.

Jaradat (2020) studied the influence of the spread of emphasis in Fallaahi Jordanian Arabic. The study demonstrated the effect of emphatics on adjacent sounds in both directions by employing the feature geometry approach. Adjacent sounds assimilate the [+back] feature with neighboring vowels and consonants. However, the spread is blocked to the

right when there is a [+high] [-back] sound. This phenomenon occurs across syllables and word boundaries with suffixes when they are adjacent to emphatics, but prefixes remain unaffected.

In addition, Kulikov et al. (2020) acoustically analyzed the emphasis spread on coronal stops when they occur in a word-initial position in Qatari Arabic. Their analysis focused on the emphasis spread of the left and right effects on a word's sounds, coronal stops, and vowels. The results revealed that the emphatics do not affect the voice onset time of initial plain coronal stop /t/ features. However, the emphasis spread affects the short and long vowels, thus causing them to have a longer duration than plain coronal stops. Moreover, emphasis spread influences the plain /t/ in the leftward spread of emphasis.

Alharbi and Alammam (2022) used the underspecification theory to analyze the emphasis spread on adjacent vowels in Qassimi Arabic, a variety spoken in Najd province. The emphatics in Qassimi Arabic are /tʰ, ɖʰ, sʰ, rʰ/. The results of their analysis revealed that the emphatics' [dorso-pharyngeal] feature spreads to the adjacent vowels; however, this feature cannot spread to adjacent front vowels /i, æ, ɛ:/ because they have [+back] as a secondary feature. In addition, the front vowels /i:/ and /e:/ are not influenced by emphatics.

Further, Alammam (2017) conducted an acoustic study on the emphasis spread in ZA. He analyzed emphatics and their plain counterparts in initial and final positions followed or preceded by vowels. He analyzed them in non-sense disyllabic words, CVC.CVC. The study proved that emphasis spreads to all vowels in the words, regardless of the type of vowel; however, the main effect of the spread is on the vowel closer to the emphatic sound in the word. Moreover, emphatics that occur in the initial position have a more substantial effect on vowels than those in the final position. Unlike other studies, Alammam's (2017) study indicates that emphasis can spread in both directions without being blocked by any other segment.

Regardless of the analysis method, all previous studies confirm that emphasis spread occurs bidirectionally. The spread's domain is the word's phonology, not the syllable, and is blocked by certain sounds, such as front vowels; the exception is Kulikov et al. (2020), who studied the effect within only one syllable. Moreover, Alammam (2017) proved that other sounds in ZA do not block the spread of emphasis.

B. Emphasis Spread and Optimality Theory

The optimality theory (OT) is one of the fundamental theories in the field of phonology. Alan Prince and Paul Smolensky introduced it in 1990 (McCarthy, 2008). This theory refers to an analysis based on constraints ranked according to the analyzed language. It aims to extract the correct pronounced surface form (i.e., output) from the underlying representations (i.e., input). In addition, it uses constraints to generalize the data for various phonological phenomena—such as assimilation, where the emphasis spread falls under its scope (Davenport & Hannahs, 2013).

Some scholars in the field of phonology conducted studies using the OT as a framework for their analyses on emphasis spread. Van De Vijver (1996) used southern and northern Palestinian Arabic data from Davis (1995) to analyze the emphasis spread within the OT framework. The researcher claimed that if there is a blocking of emphasis spread in all Arabic varieties, it will be in the rightward direction of the emphatic sound, not the leftward. He used different constraints for southern and northern Palestinian Arabic. For southern Palestinian Arabic, he applied the following constraints: EMPHATIC-σ, RHi^ONSj[EM] >> [HI, FR, EM]. In contrast, the northern Palestinian Arabic presented a more restricted behavior of emphasis spread. Consequently, he used variant constraints to account for it—EM-NUC, EM-[LAR] >> *ONS[EM]. In general, emphasis spread in both dialects is related to the relationship between syllables and rhyme.

Similarly, McCarthy (1997) conducted a study to prove the applicability of the OT to specify the constraints needed to analyze the data from Davis (1995) in southern and northern Palestinian Arabic. The constraints were IDENT-RTR, RTR-LEFT >> RTR-HI >> RTR-TO-A >> RTR-RIGHT >> RTR/LOWER-VT >> IDENT-ATR. The analysis proved that the bidirectional emphasis spread is blocked with [+front] [+high] vowels and the consonants /ʃ, dʒ, and j/.

In contrast, Al-Raba'a and Davis (2020) studied emphasis spread in a rural Jordanian Arabic subvariety. The domain of emphasis in that dialect is the syllable, not the phonology of words. The researchers revealed that emphasis spreads within a syllable in both directions and is unblocked by any sound. They used the following constraints: MAX-RTR, EMPHATIC-σ >> DEP-LINK-RTR >> RTR-LEFT, RTR-RIGHT.

A study conducted by Abudalbh et al. (2022) applied the constraints of McCarthy (1997) to their research on rural Jordanian Arabic. The former's analysis demonstrated that emphasis in this variety spreads to the leftward and rightward segments and is blocked by [+front] [+high] sounds, as also revealed in Davis (1995), McCarthy (1997), and Alharbi and Alammam (2022). In addition, emphasis spreads to one morpheme boundary only; consequently, the scholars added two other constraints related to words that include affixes to show the effect of emphasis spread; the added constraints were [RTR-++] and [RTR-+].

In general, the studies that applied OT proved that emphasis spread in Arabic dialects has a syllable domain and, thus, there are no blocking sounds (Al-Raba'a & Davis, 2020). The other domain is the phonology of words, and it is presented in variant Arabic dialects (Van De Vijver, 1996; McCarthy, 1997; Abudalbh et al., 2022). However, there is a shortage of studies in the literature that use the OT to analyze the emphasis spread in Saudi varieties. Consequently, the current study aims to employ the OT framework to analyze the data and apply the required constraints on ZA.

C. Linguistic Aspects of Najdi Arabic

Najdi Arabic (NA) is one of the leading spoken dialects in Saudi Arabia, and it encompasses several varieties. It is spoken in the central area of Saudi Arabia. Multiple phonological phenomena occur in this dialect, such as metathesis and epenthesis (Alqahtani, 2014). Consequently, various linguists used the OT as a framework to analyze the phonological system of this dialect. According to the Arabic literature on the phonology of certain Arabic varieties, syllable structure strongly affects variant phonological phenomena (Alabeeky, 2022; AlAmro, 2015; Al-Momani et al., 2023; Alqahtani, 2020). Ruthan (2024) analyzed the syllable structure of consonant clusters in word-initial position in NA. The researcher analyzed the NA-spoken data from the Riyadh region to identify whether onsets in the dialect are simple or complex. Utilizing OT, the researcher argued that the onsets in NA are simple. His study proved that syllables in the sequences of consonants in word-initial position are #C.CV# not #CCV#.

Besides, Alhoody and Aljutaily (2022) analyzed the weight of superheavy syllables in Qassimi Arabic (i.e., one of the notable varieties of NA). Their study agreed with Ruthan's (2024) on NA that Qassimi Arabic prefers simple onsets. The researchers used Praat Software to measure stressed syllables' pitch, duration, and loudness. They also analyzed data from accounts of the OT and concluded that superheavy syllables are bi-moraic and weigh the same as heavy syllables in this dialect.

Another study by Alrasheedi (2023) analyzed syllables in NA. The researcher argued that prefixes lead to re-syllabification depending on the number of syllables in the core word, thereby leading to a change in the stress place. The analyzed prefixes were the definite article /ʔal-/ , prepositional prefixes (such as *fi-* and *ba-*), verbal prefixation, and adverbial prefixation /ʔib-/ . The findings revealed that the syllables are rearranged when prefixes are added to words—consequently, the stress placement changes. However, re-syllabification is blocked when the first syllable of the core word is heavy. The literature on the syllable structure of NA provides an analysis of the syllabification and structure of syllables in NA, which enables an analysis of the data of other Arabic varieties to examine the effect of affixes on the emphasis spread and whether it is related to syllables or the phonology of words.

Zilfawi Arabic (ZA) is another variety of NA. It is spoken by people in Az Zulfi city. It has a distinguished phonetic and phonological system from modern standard Arabic and classical Arabic (Alammar, 2017). Besides, it has a few distinguishing features from other NA varieties. It has 27 consonants and 12 vowels in its phonetic inventory, as depicted in Table 1 (Alammar, 2023).

TABLE 1
THE PHONEMIC INVENTORY OF ZILFAWI ARABIC CONSONANTS (ALAMMAR, 2023, p. 5)

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Dental	Alveolar	Alveopalatal	Palatal	velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Stop	b			t d				k g			ʔ
Emphatic stop				tʔ							
Fricative		f	θ ð		s z	ʃ			χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h
Emphatic fricative			ðʔ		sʔ						
Affricate						dʒ					
Nasal	m				n						
Liquid				l	r						
Glide	w						j				

Concerning vowels, Alammar (2023) states that ZA has three short vowels: /i/, /a/, and /u/. In addition, there are other vowels based on one of the researchers' knowledge as a native Zilfawi speaker. The additional vowels are /e/, /ə/, /o/, and /ʌ/, as in the following examples:

(1) Short vowels

- [ʕam] "uncle"
- [bint] "a girl"
- [kum] "sleeve"
- [ləh] "no"
- [tʕʌb] "he jumped"

- f) [reħ] “go”
g) [tsof] “stop”

Moreover, ZA has five long vowels /i:/, /a:/, /u:/, /e:/, and /o:/ (Alammar, 2023), as in the following examples:

(2) Long vowels

- a. [tʰi:b] “perfume”
b. [ra:s] “head”
c. [ru:h] “soul”
d. [tʰe:r] “bird”
e. [lo:n] “color”

Alammar (2017) states that stress falls on three syllables in ZA. They are antepenultimate, penultimate, or final syllables. When two or more heavy syllables are in a word, stress will be on the rightmost heavy one. The penultimate might be stressed if it is the only heavy syllable. The final position attracts stress only if it is CVVC or CVCC. However, the stress falls on the penultimate syllable if all these syllables are light.

III. ANALYSIS OF EMPHASIS SPREAD IN ZILFAWI ARABIC

The emphatics in ZA are /tʰ, ðʰ, sʰ/. This variety of NA has a syllable domain for the primary emphasis spread. Consequently, the RTR feature spreads to all the syllable segments. There is no blocking segment, and thus, it is not related to the phonology of words. The following data in Table 2 explain this phenomenon.

TABLE 2
DATA ON EMPHASIS SPREAD FROM ZA

a. /isʰr.ar/	‘bundle’	j. /fa.rðʰ/	‘obligation’
b. /sʰa.ləh/	‘living room’	k. /sʰa.mit/	‘silent’
c. /ðʰarb/	‘hitting’	l. /sʰal/	‘he got angry’
d. /natʰ/	‘jump’	m. /im.sʰu.fir/	‘yellowed’
e. /fur.sʰah/	‘chance’	n. /ðʰab/	‘lizard’
f. /ðʰa.har/	‘back’	o. /ðʰa.biʰ/	‘police officer’
g. /tʰaw.ləh/	‘table’	p. /iðʰ.læl/	‘shades’
h. /iy.lesʰ/	‘hurry up’	q. /tʰa.min/	‘lowered’
i. /im.fatʰ.ətʰ/	‘exited’	r. /ðʰo.ma/	‘thirst’

The bold syllables are the emphasized ones.

The data presented in Table 2 reveal that the primary emphasis spreads clearly to all the segments in the syllable. For example, in /sʰa.ləh/ ‘living room’, the emphasis of /sʰ/ spreads to the vowel of the first syllable, which is similar to the other words in the data. The emphasis spreads to both directions—for example, the word /ðʰa.biʰ/ ‘police officer’ emphasis spreads to the entire segments because it contains two emphatics in two syllables in the word. The emphatic sound affects the adjacent sounds to acquire the RTR feature.

Depending on the data analysis, the ZA need faithfulness and markedness constraints to account for the spread of emphasis.

Constraints:

(a) MAX-RTR: “Assign a constraint violation to any RTR feature in the input that is not realized in the output” (Al-Raba’a & Davis, 2020, p. 24)

(b) DEP-LINK-RTR: “Assign a constraint violation to any link to an RTR feature in the output that is not realized in the input” (Al-Raba’a & Davis, 2020, p. 24)

(c) EMPHATIC-σ: “A syllable must be emphatic if one of the rhyme segments is emphatic” (Van De Vijver, 1996, p. 248).

(d) RTR-LEFT: “Any instance of RTR is aligned initially in Word” (McCarthy, 1997, p. 235).

(e) RTR-RIGHT: “Any instance of RTR is aligned finally in Word” (McCarthy, 1997, p. 235).

Constraint (a) is a faithfulness constraint that prohibits the deletion of the emphatic feature in the input to be non-emphatic in the output. Similarly, constraint (b) is a faithfulness constraint that prohibits any spread of the RTR feature to other segments in words. In contrast, constraint (c) is a markedness constraint that requires any RTR feature in a syllable to be spread to all segments. Constraint (d) is a markedness constraint that requires the RTR feature to be spread leftward till the beginning of the word. Lastly, constraint (e) is a markedness constraint that requires the RTR feature to spread till the end of the word in the output. ZA needs all the previous constraints to account for the primary emphasis spread.

The constraints are analyzed to specify the appropriate ranking based on the data from ZA that presented the optimal outputs. First, the relationship of the MAX-RTR and EMPHATIC-σ constraints with the DEP-LINK-RTR constraint are analyzed in Tableaux (1) and (2) for the ranking.

(1) /isʰr.ar/ “bundle” (see Table 2a)

Input: /isʰr.ar/	MAX-RTR	DEP-LINK-RTR
⚡ a. /isʰr.ar/		**
b. /isʰr.ar/	*!	

The first candidate eliminates the second candidate in (1b) since it suffers a fatal violation due to the higher ranking of the constraint MAX-RTR in ZA. On the other hand, candidate (1a) wins since it respects the ranking of MAX-RTR to be higher than the DEP-LINK-RTR. Consequently, the ranking of these constraints is

MAX-RTR >> DEP-LINK-RTR

If these two constraints are reordered, it will yield a wrong output from the input. Therefore, the optimal output should preserve the RTR feature. Similarly, the EMPHATIC- σ constraint outranked the DEP-LINK-RTR, as shown in Tableau (2).

(2) /is^r.ar/ “bundle” (see Table 2a)

Input: /is ^r .ar/	EMPHATIC- σ	DEP-LINK-RTR
a. /is ^r .ar/	*!	*
EF b. /is ^r .ar/		**
c. /is ^r .ar/	*!	

Tableau (2) shows that the emphasis should spread to all the segments in the syllable. Consequently, candidates (2a) and (2c) get a fatal violation. For the first candidate (2a), the emphatic feature spreads to only one segment in the syllable, which is not allowed in ZA. Similarly, the third candidate (2c) is eliminated due to the same violation, and the RTR feature is only limited to the emphatic sound. The optimal candidate (2b) is favored because it respects the order of these two constraints. Consequently, the ranking of the constraints is

MAX-RTR, EMPHATIC- σ >> DEP-LINK-RTR

The constraints MAX-RTR and EMPHATIC- σ ranked higher than the DEP-LINK-RTR. This ranking is demonstrated in Tableau (3).

(3) /is^r.ar/ “bundle” (see Table 2a)

Input: /is ^r .ar/	MAX-RTR	EMPHATIC- σ
EF a. /is ^r .ar/		
b. /is ^r .ar/	*!	

Both are ranked the highest in the hierarchy because if we reverse the order, the same result will be yielded, and the optimal output would be (3a). There is no other constraint in ZA that dominates the two.

(4) /im.s^u.fir/ “yellowed” (see Table 2m)

Input: /im.s ^u .fir/	EMPHATIC- σ	RTR-LEFT
EF a. /im.s ^u .fir/		**
b. /im.s ^u .fir/	*!	**

The analysis in Tableau (4) presents that the constraint RTR-LEFT is ranked lower than the EMPHATIC- σ since the optimal candidate is (4a), where the emphasis spreads rightward of the emphatic segment. In contrast, candidate (4b) gets a fatal violation since it violates the EMPHATIC- σ constraint. Moreover, it gets two violation marks because the emphasis did not spread to the left side of the word.

(5) /im.s^u.fir/ “yellowed” (see Table 2m)

Input: /im.s ^u .fir/	EMPHATIC- σ	RTR-RIGHT
EF a. /im.s ^u .fir/		***
b. /im.s ^u .fir/	*!	****

Candidate (5a) is the optimal output since it follows the requirements of the constraint EMPHATIC- σ . However, it violates the RTR-RIGHT constraint three times. Candidate (5b) gets a fatal violation because it violates the EMPHATIC- σ , which presents the ranking of these two constraints in the hierarchy in ZA.

EMPHATIC- σ >> RTR-LEFT, RTR-RIGHT

(6) /im.s^u.fir/ “yellowed” (see Table 2m)

Input: /im.s ^u .fir/	DEP-LINK-RTR	RTR-LEFT
EF a. /im.s ^u .fir/	*	**
b. /im.s ^u .fir/	***!	

Tableau (6) presents that candidate (6a) is the optimal output since it respects the DEP-LINK-RTR constraint. In contrast, the second candidate (6b) gets a fatal violation for the DEP-LINK-RTR constraint since it violates it three times. However, it respects the RTR-LEFT, which will yield a wrong output. Consequently, DEP-LINK-RTR is ranked higher than RTR-LEFT.

(7) /im.s^u.fir/ “yellowed” (see Table 2m)

Input: /im.s ^u .fir/	DEP-LINK-RTR	RTR-RIGHT
^{EF} a. /im.s ^u .fir/	*	***
b. /im.s ^u .fir/	****!	

Tableau (7) shows that the optimal candidate (7a) respects the DEP-LINK-RTR constraint. In contrast, the second candidate (7b) gets a fatal violation because it violates the DEP-LINK-RTR constraint four times but respects the RTR-RIGHT constraint. This analysis proves that the constraint DEP-LINK-RTR is higher than RTR-LEFT and RTR-RIGHT. The ranking of all the constraints in the emphasis spread in ZA emphasis is presented below:

MAX-RTR, EMPHATIC- σ >> DEP-LINK-RTR >> RTR-LEFT, RTR-RIGHT

(8) /is^r.ar/ “bundle” (see Table 2a)

Input: /is ^r .ar/	MAX-RTR	EMPHATIC- σ	DEP-LINK-RTR	RTR-LEFT	RTR-RIGHT
a. /is ^r .ar/		*!	***	*	
^{EF} b. /is ^r .ar/			**		**
c. /is ^r .ar/	*!				
d. /is ^r .ar/		*!		*	***
e. /is ^r .ar/		*!	*		***

In Tableau (8), candidate (8c) gets a fatal violation of the MAX-RTR constraint. Similarly, candidates (8a), (8d), and (8e) are ruled out due to their fatal violation of the high-ranked EMPHATIC- σ constraint. In contrast, the winning candidate (8b) respects all the high-ranked constraints and violates only the low ones—the DEP-LINK-RTR and RTR-RIGHT constraints—twice for each.

(9) /ð^a.bit^f/ “police officer” (see Table 2o)

Input: /ð ^a .bit ^f /	MAX-RTR	EMPHATIC- σ	DEP-LINK-RTR	RTR-LEFT	RTR-RIGHT
a. /ð ^a .bit ^f /	*!		**	**	
b. /ð ^a .bit ^f /		**!		***	***
c. /ð ^a .bit ^f /	**!				
^{EF} d. /ð ^a .bit ^f /			***		
e. /ð ^a .bit ^f /	*!		*		***

The ranking also accounts for the word /ð^a.bit^f/ ‘police officer’ in Tableau (9). Candidates (9a), (9c), and (9e) are immediately excluded because of their fatal violation of the high-ranked constraint MAX-RTR. Moreover, candidate (9b) is ruled out due to its fatal violation of the EMPHATIC- σ constraint. Finally, the optimal output is (9d), which satisfies the high-ranked constraints and only violates the low-ranked DEP-LINK-RTR constraint three times.

(10) /t^a.min/ “lowered” (see Table 2q)

Input: /t ^a .min/	MAX-RTR	EMPHATIC- σ	DEP-LINK-RTR	RTR-LEFT	RTR-RIGHT
a. /t ^a .min/		*!			****
b. /t ^a .min/			****!		
^{EF} c. /t ^a .min/			*		***
d. /t ^a .min/	*!				
e. /t ^a .min/	*!	*	****	*	

Candidates (10d) and (10e) are excluded since they violate the MAX-RTR constraint. Moreover, candidate (10a) is ruled out due to its fatal violation of one of the high-ranked constraints, EMPHATIC- σ . Candidate (10b) is excluded because it violates the DEP-LINK-RTR constraint four times, while the winning candidate (10c) only violates it once.

Morphemes

In ZA, morphemes are not clearly affected by the emphasis spread because they occur in different syllables linked to the root word, as evident in the following examples in Table 3.

TABLE 3
EMPHASIS SPREAD DATA WITH MORPHEMES IN ZA

s. /ri.s ^a .as/	/ri.s ^a .s ^a .ə.-ha/	‘her pencil’
t. /m ^ə lt ^f /	/im.l ^ə t ^f .-ha/	‘smear it’
u. /t ^a .la.b/	/ja.-ət ^f .leb/	‘he orders’
v. /ra.g ^ə s ^f /	/ir.g ^ə s ^f .- əw/	‘they danced’
w. /ha.feð ^f /	/ha.feð ^f .-ha/	‘he memorized it’
x. /g ^ə s ^f /	/g ^ə s ^f .s ^a .hin/	‘he cut them’
y. /m ^ə ʃ.ət ^f /	/jə.-im.fet ^f /	‘he pulls it’

Based on the above analysis of morphemes in ZA, there is a need for a markedness constraint that can account for the emphasis spread when there is a morpheme in words, either prefixes or suffixes.

RTR-+: “no morphemic boundary in an RTR domain” (Abudalbh et al., 2022, p. 22).

Tableau (11) analyzes the accurate ranking of constraints when a word has a morpheme.

(11) /ha.feðˤ.-ha/ “he memorized it” (see Table 3w)

Input: /ha.feðˤ.-ha/	DEP-LINK-RTR	RTR-+
a. /ha.feðˤ.-ha/	*****!	*
EF b. /ha.feðˤ.-ha/	**	

Tableau (11) presents evidence that the constraint RTR- + is ranked lower than the DEP-LINK-RTR constraint since candidate (11a) violates the DEP-LINK-RTR constraint four times. ZA treats morphemes as the other syllables that do not have an emphatic sound; thus, the primary emphatic feature does not spread to it with the same degree. The ranking of all the constraints, when there is a morpheme in ZA, is presented below:

MAX-RTR, EMPHATIC-σ >> DEP-LINK-RTR >> RTR- +, RTR-LEFT, RTR-RIGHT

(12) /ha.feðˤ.-ha/ “he memorized it” (see Table 3w)

Input: /ha.feðˤ.-ha/	MAX-RTR	EMPHATIC-σ	DEP-LINK- RTR	RTR-+	RTR - LEFT	RTR-RIGHT
a. /ha.feðˤ.-ha/			*****!	*		
EF b. /ha.feðˤ.-ha/			**		**	**
c. /ha.feðˤ.-ha/	*!					
d. /ha.feðˤ.-ha/			****!	*	**	
e. /ha.feðˤ.-ha/		*!			****	**

Tableau (12) analyzes a word with the suffix [-ha] in ZA. First, candidate (12c) is ruled out due to its violation of the constraint MAX-RTR. In addition, candidate (12e) is excluded since it violates the EMPHATIC-σ constraint. Further, candidates (12a) and (12d) are eliminated due to their violation of the DEP-LINK-RTR constraint, six times for (12a) and four times for (12d). Finally, the optimal output is candidate (12b) since it satisfies all the high-ranked constraints. It violates the DEP-LINK-RTR constraint twice, less than candidates (12a) and (12d).

(13) /ja-.əṭˤ.leb/ “he orders” (see Table 3u)

Input: /ja-.əṭˤ.leb/	MAX-RTR	EMPHATIC-σ	DEP-LINK- RTR	RTR-+	RTR - LEFT	RTR-RIGHT
a. /ja-.əṭˤ.leb/			*****!		**	
b. /ja-.əṭˤ.leb/			***!	*		***
EF c. /ja-.əṭˤ.leb/			*		**	***
d. /ja-.əṭˤ.leb/	*!					
e. /ja-.əṭˤ.leb/			*****!	*		

Tableau (13) analyzes a word with the prefix [ja-]. First, Candidate (13d) is excluded because it violates the MAX-RTR constraint. Candidates (13a), (13b), and (13e) are excluded due to their fatal violation of the DEP-LINK- RTR constraint, four times for (13a), three times for (13b) and six times for (13e). Lastly, the winning candidate (13c) only violates the low-ranked DEP-LINK-RTR once.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study analyzed emphasis spread in ZA. The results revealed that the primary emphasis spread has a syllable domain. Therefore, all segments in the syllable share the RTR feature. This phonological phenomenon was analyzed using the OT framework. Consequently, the analysis proved that the MAX-RTR and EMPHATIC-σ constraints dominate the other lower constraints. For morphemes, it was demonstrated that ZA deals with morphemes as it does with other syllables, where the primary emphasis spreads to the syllable that includes the emphatic sound. The results of the current study on the main emphasis spread in ZA agree with those of the acoustic study conducted by Alammar (2017). However, this study focuses only on the primary emphatics. Further study is needed to analyze secondary emphatic sounds in the phonology of ZA.

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An Analysis of Illocutionary Acts in the Disney+ Short Film *Once Upon a Snowman*

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Abstract—People not only produce sentences but also perform actions when using language. In the study of language, an action performed by saying something is known as a speech act. Speech acts are divided into three categories: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. In this research, the main purpose is to find out each type and function within the category of illocutionary acts in a Disney+ short movie entitled *Once Upon a Snowman*. According to Searle's theory on speech acts, an illocutionary act is classified into five types: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. It was found that the short movie entitled *Once Upon a Snowman* consists of four types (representatives, directives, expressives, and commissives) out of the five types in the category of illocutionary acts. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method to accumulate all the data. The result shows that there are fifty-four utterances that consist of illocutionary acts in *Once Upon a Snowman*, with 24 utterances classified as representatives, 15 utterances as directives, 13 utterances as expressives, and 2 utterances as commissives.

Index Terms—illocutionary act, short movie, speech act

I. INTRODUCTION

In society, language plays a significant role since it is used as a way to communicate with others. Language exists to express ideas, information, feelings, and thoughts. In other words, language is a means of communication used by the speaker to deliver messages to the hearer. However, when using language to communicate, misunderstandings tend to happen between the hearer and the speaker. Therefore, in order to evade misunderstandings and ensure the continuity of successful communication, linguistics has a branch of study that discusses the intended meanings expressed by the speaker through their context. This study is known as pragmatics.

According to Yule (1996), pragmatics involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context affects what is said. Therefore, it requires a consideration of how speakers manage what they want to say in conformity with whom they're talking to, where, when, and under what circumstances. Regarding this definition, Joan Cutting (2008) defines pragmatics as an approach that scrutinizes the relationship between language and its contextual background characteristics. In other words, pragmatics is a study of meaning based on its context.

The context here is simply defined by Yule as the physical environment in which words are spoken. On the other hand, Mey (1993) depicts context as more than just a reference and an understanding of what it means. Context gives a deeper meaning to an utterance. The utterance "what a beautiful morning," when uttered by a new bride on honeymoon in Bali, will have a different meaning from when it is said by someone who just got fired from their job, which can be considered sarcastic. Therefore, knowing the context of an utterance can be considered the most important key in pragmatics.

Pragmatics is indeed a study that examines the meaning of what you actually say (your utterances) and not the meaning of the sentence. In addition to that, pragmatics is also a field of study that explores the function of speech: what the utterance is performed for. The branch of pragmatics that studies how an utterance performs certain actions is known as speech acts. Initially, speech acts were introduced by John Langshaw Austin in 1962 and developed by John Rogers Searle in 1969. According to Austin (1962), speech acts are an act performed in saying something. Hence, in speech acts, people do not merely use language to say something but to perform some kind of action via their utterances.

Austin stated that a speaker can perform three acts via their utterances simultaneously, which are locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is basically an act of saying something, which means the way to interpret an utterance is still based on a traditional sense. This traditional sense is a way to interpret an utterance through its literal meaning by analyzing the grammatical rules of a language. Therefore, Levinson (1983) identified the locutionary act as an utterance of a sentence with determinate sense and reference. Yule (1996) also stated that a locutionary act is the basic act of utterance, meaning that the speaker's intended meaning lies in the actual words that the speaker uses.

On the contrary, an illocutionary act is an act performed in saying something. In other words, there is an intended meaning behind the utterance that requires the hearer to do something, whereas a perlocutionary act is known as an act of affecting someone. Therefore, when someone is using a perlocutionary act, the utterance will generate a certain effect or influence on the hearer.

Out of the three major classifications of speech acts by Austin mentioned above, the focus of this research is on the illocutionary act. Illocutionary acts are classified into five types, namely representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Searle (1979) argues that the main aim of a representative act is to utter what the speaker believes.

Directives aim to express what the speaker wants from the hearer; usually, the utterance is used to get someone else to do something. A commissive act is one that the speaker uses to commit to doing some future action. An expressive act states what the speaker feels about certain things. Lastly, utterances that give immediate effect to someone else's life are called declaratives.

From all the statements mentioned above, it is concluded that people can understand another person's intentions by their utterances through speech acts. Utterances that contain speech acts can be found in various sources; one of them is obtaining the data from movies. Research on illocutionary acts in movies was done by Fita Nur Rahayu, M. Bahri Arifin, and Setya Ariani on "Illocutionary Acts in the Main Characters' Utterances in Mirror Mirror Movie" (2018) from the English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Mulawarman University. Their result from analyzing the illocutionary acts that appeared in the utterances of the main characters of the Mirror Mirror movie was a collection of 55 utterances, which they categorized into representatives with 5 utterances, directives with 37 utterances, commissive with 1 utterance, and expressive with 12 utterances. However, they did not identify any utterances containing illocutionary acts classified as declaratives. The result of this study shows that directives are the dominant type among the other types of illocutionary acts. This is because, in most cases, the main characters expressed their utterance in a direct way, such as ordering, requesting, asking, or commanding.

Another research on illocutionary acts was conducted by Dilla Ramayati and Leni Marlina on "The Analysis of Types of Illocutionary Acts in 'Tangled' Movie" (2018) from the English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Padang State University. They found four types of illocutionary acts in the movie Tangled. These types are representative, commissive, directive, and expressive. They collected 197 utterances categorized as follows: 86 directives, 49 representatives, 48 expressives, and 14 commissives. Compared to the first review above, they have a similarity in not having any declarative utterances in their research. Additionally, the most dominant type of illocutionary act found in this research was directives.

The last research is an analysis by Zulfa Tutuarima, Nuraeningsih, and Rusiana on "An Analysis of Speech Acts Used in 'London Has Fallen' Movie" (2018) from Muria Kudus University. The result of this study shows that they collected 76 utterances in the London Has Fallen movie, which they categorized into 3 types of speech acts: 37 utterances as illocutionary acts, 25 utterances as perlocutionary acts, and 14 utterances as locutionary acts. The illocutionary acts appear as the acts primarily used in this movie, with the result showing 32 utterances classified as directives, 26 utterances classified as assertives, 23 utterances classified as expressives, 12 utterances classified as commissives, and 6 utterances classified as declaratives. This confirms that most utterances in the movie are used to give an order to someone to do something, which is why the dominant type is directives.

From all the research conducted before, movies are most likely to be objects analyzed by linguists because they consist of characters having conversations with other characters, which means any kind of linguistic scope can occur anytime, including speech acts and illocutionary acts. In movies, it is necessary to pin down what the characters actually mean by their utterances to clarify the messages being delivered. Therefore, this research was conducted to identify, describe, and analyze illocutionary acts and their function that are found in the Disney+ short movie entitled *Once Upon a Snowman*.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The general belief of the speech act theory is that there is an action in saying something, which is why Yule (1996) claimed that speech acts are actions carried out through speech. Austin (1962) added that in uttering an utterance, speakers can perform three actions simultaneously, namely locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. Locutionary acts are known as acts that interpret an utterance in a traditional way, which refers to interpreting an utterance by using the grammatical elements of an existing language. Levinson (1983) stated that locutionary acts are equivalent to saying an utterance with certain meanings and references, which defines its true meaning.

This statement, however, is different from illocutionary acts because they occur when the speaker implies certain meanings in their utterances. For instance, when the speaker utters an utterance, it's not merely them saying something but also performing a function. In this regard, they have a certain purpose with their utterances, such as asking, offering, ordering, or encouraging. Meanwhile, perlocutionary acts are acts where an utterance gives certain effects to the hearer. Likewise, Yule argues that the utterance uttered by the speaker has a certain function and purpose to have an effect on the hearer, such as convincing, persuading, obstructing, or even misleading.

Amongst the three classifications of speech acts by Austin, the author's main concern in this research is the illocutionary act, which was developed by Searle. Searle's classification of illocutionary acts is used because it's known as a modification of Austin's general theory of speech acts, and it is more specific and detailed than Austin's classification. Searle categorized illocutionary acts into five, namely Representatives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives, and Declaratives.

Representative's main purpose is for the speakers to state what they believe in, which can be determined by asking whether the utterance is true or false. The examples of representatives include stating, reporting, concluding, boasting, and complaining, among others. Whilst directives have the intention of getting the hearer to do something, such as ordering, requesting, inviting, asking, advising, prohibiting, encouraging, and more. The main point of commissives is basically to commit the speaker to some future action, such as promising, threatening, refusing, offering, and so forth.

Expressive acts are meant to express the psychological state of the speaker, such as expressing their joy, pain, sorrow, thanking, apologizing, and so on. Meanwhile, declarations are acts to state an immediate effect that can change someone else's world by their utterance, which can only be done by someone with a special institutional role.

Pragmatics is associated with studies that discuss the meanings in an utterance within a certain context. Morris (1938) argues that the study of pragmatics has aspects of meaning that depend on the context. Therefore, meaning is examined through certain contexts and systematically analyzes the composition of its own content and logical forms. In line with Morris's statement, Leech (1983), in his book entitled *Principles of Pragmatics*, also stated that pragmatics is one of the scopes of linguistics that talks about how an utterance has meaning in a particular situation.

Yule (1996) defines pragmatics in four ways. First, pragmatics is concerned with the study of the meaning spoken by the speaker and interpreted by the hearer. Pragmatics in this sense is referred to as the study of the meaning spoken by speakers. Second, pragmatics is a study that interprets meaning based on a certain context. When interpreting meanings, it is necessary to consider how speakers prepare what they want to say along with the other elements, such as who they are talking to, where, when, and under what circumstances. In this sense, pragmatics is referred to as the study of contextual meaning.

Third, pragmatics also investigates how the speech partner can make inferences about what is said by the speaker, so they can understand the meaning of the speaker's words. Therefore, pragmatics is the study of how there are more implied meanings than explicit ones. Fourth, pragmatics is the study of language in which what is expressed by someone will depend on the closeness between each participant. This closeness can be classified as physical, social, conceptual proximity, etc.

So far, the benefit of learning pragmatics is that it helps people understand what other people actually mean, their assumptions, their goals, and what actions they take in speaking. Pragmatic studies can also be found in several sources. First, there is the theory of J.L. Austin and John Searle about speech acts.

Speech acts were first proposed by John Langshaw Austin in 1962 in his book entitled *How to Do Things with Words*. Then the study of speech act theory was developed by John Rogers Searle in 1969. They developed a theory of speech acts based on the belief that language is used by humans to perform actions. When humans interact using language, humans do not only state propositional statements about objects, entities, states, and so on. Therefore, Nunan (1993) argues that when humans interact using language, they also fulfill other functions, such as asking, denying, introducing, and apologizing.

Basically, the theory of speech acts has the belief that an action is taken when someone says something. Therefore, Yule argues that speech acts are actions that are carried out by someone through their words. It can be said that when uttering their utterances, speakers do not arbitrarily use language to say something, but also to do something. Austin (1962) also adds that in telling an utterance, speakers can perform three actions simultaneously, namely locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts.

Out of the three types, this research focuses on the types of illocutionary acts based on Searle's theory. According to Searle (1979), illocutionary acts are categorized into five types: they are representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives.

A. Representative

This type of illocutionary act is defined as any utterance uttered by the speaker as something that they believe in. Searle (1979) argues that the purpose of a representative is to state something that the speaker believes is factual. Therefore, utterances that consist of representatives are usually found by questioning whether the utterance is factual or not from the speaker's point of view. Examples of representative acts are usually to state something, to conclude, to boast, to complain, to report, etc. For example:

(a) *Stating Something*

Abby: Eric borrowed his step dad's car.

The utterance above is expressed by the speaker in accordance with her understanding and what she believes in. The utterance is considered a representative illocutionary act because the aim of the utterance is to state information that she knows to be true.

(b) *Concluding*

Eric: Sorry. The less time spent at a crime scene, the better.

Joel: What do you know about it?

Eric: My stepdad's a cop and I enjoy the internet, and the first thing about crime is you don't wanna get caught.

The utterance above is expressed by the speaker in accordance with her understanding and what she believes in. The utterance is considered a representative illocutionary act because the aim of the utterance is to state information that she knows to be true.

(c) *Boasting***Sheila: We did it! We got an offer!**

The utterance above is a statement made by Sheila to her husband Joel, who works as a real estate agent and recently got an offer from their client. The utterance is considered a representative illocutionary act because it aims to boast about their recent achievement, namely getting an offer from a client.

(d) *Complaining***Joel: Would've been nice to have the lid.**

The statement was said by Joel Hammond, who was pushing a large box containing blood and corpses without a lid. This utterance is a representative illocutionary act because Joel expressed the complaint he was experiencing. Joel expressed dissatisfaction regarding the situation he was in. In this case, it was a container that did not have a lid.

(e) *Reporting***Abby: I saw the broken toaster in the yard, and there was blood on the lawn, and no one was home.**

This utterance is a representative illocutionary act because it reports what she saw. The purpose of a representative act in reporting is to convey something that the speaker has heard, seen, or investigated.

B. Directive

Utterances used by the speaker to get the hearer to do something are classified as illocutionary acts under directives. It is when someone has a certain intention of instructing or ordering the hearer to take any action desired by them. This type of illocutionary act usually happens in the form of asking, requesting, inviting, advising, prohibiting, etc. For example:

(f) *Asking***Sheila: Did you send them an email?**

Utterances used by the speaker to get the hearer to do something are classified as illocutionary acts under directives. It is when someone has a certain intention of instructing or ordering the hearer to take any action desired by them. This type of illocutionary act usually happens in the form of asking, requesting, inviting, advising, prohibiting, etc.

(g) *Requesting***Sheila: I just wanna go home, get out of these clothes and take a bath.**

The sentence above was uttered by Sheila to her husband Joel, which can be said to be a requestive directive sentence. This sentence was uttered when Sheila was in the hospital waiting room. She uttered the sentence above with the aim of requesting her husband to take her home instead of waiting in the hospital waiting room.

(h) *Inviting***Lisa: Hey, some of us girls are going out tonight.****Drinking, dancing, etcetera. You wanna come?**

The sentence above is an invitation that was expressed by Lisa to Sheila, where the sentence has the aim of inviting Sheila to do what Lisa wants, which is to go out with Lisa and her friends.

(i) *Advising***Eric: Always keep her fed.**

I'm pretty sure we don't want to find out what happens when she's hungry.

The utterance above is advice, where an utterance uttered by the speaker is believed to be a good thing to do and is for the benefit of the listener themselves.

(j) *Prohibiting***Sheila: Let's buy a Range Rover.****Abby: Fuck yeah.****Joel: No. We are going home and coming up with a plan.**

The utterance stated by Joel is a prohibiting directive sentence because it has the intention to get the hearer to take the actions that have been prohibited by the speaker.

(k) *Commanding***Carl: None of this "try" bullshit. Do it!**

The utterance above was uttered by Carl, who is the boss of a company where Sheila works. The utterance is considered a directive illocutionary act in commanding, because the boss directly ordered Sheila to sell the Peterson family home as soon as possible.

C. Commissive

If someone made a promise to do certain actions in the future, that person has performed commissive speech acts. Searle (1979) proposed that the aim of a commissive is to commit the speaker to perform some future action. Therefore, a person is using a commissive when they want or will to do something in the future. According to Tarigan (2009), examples of commissive speech acts are promising, vowing, wishing, threatening, refusing, offering, volunteering, etc. For example:

(a). I'll show you your office. (Promising)

(b). You know, 15 years ago, I would have punched you, once. I might have dropped you. (Threatening)

(c). If you want me to go away, I will. (Offering)

- (d). Well, we can't start killing people. (Refusing)

D. Expressive

Someone can be considered to be engaging in an expressive act when the person has expressed the feelings they are experiencing. Therefore, Searle (1979) agrees that the aim of an expressive is to express the psychological state of the speaker. For instance, statements of joy, pain, thanking, apologizing, congratulating, welcoming, etc. For example:

- (a). Hi Gary. Welcome aboard. (Welcoming)
- (b). Thanks for the flowers, Gar. (Thanking)
- (c). You look so pretty today. (Complimenting)
- (d). Sorry buddy, I don't know how that happened. (Apologizing)
- (e). I love this room. (Statement of joy)

E. Declarative

Utterances will be classified as declaratives if the utterance can give an immediate effect to a person's life. However, Yule (1996) argues that the speaker should have a special institutional role that has the privilege to do a declarative act. For instance, the boss of a company who has the right to fire one of the employees, a jury in a court that has the privilege to convict someone of guilt, or the queen of England who has the power to declare war.

III. METHODOLOGY

The method used for this research is a qualitative descriptive method. The researcher decided to use this method is because the aim of this research is to describe each type of illocutionary act and to elucidate the functions of each type of illocutionary act itself. Consequently, all the data and the results in this study are mostly in the form of words and are presented descriptively rather than with numbers or statistics.

In order to collect the data for this research, the writer had to use a few techniques. First, the researcher had to watch *Once Upon a Snowman* on Disney+. Then, the researcher had to find the full script of the movie on Google. For analyzing the data, the researcher had to go through four steps. The researcher had to write down the entire script from https://transcripts.fandom.com/wiki/Once_Upon_a_Snowman. Then the researcher had to identify the categories of illocutionary acts that were found in *Once Upon a Snowman*. After that, the researcher had to analyze the data into more specific categories of illocutionary acts based on Searle's theory. Moreover, the researcher had to explain the functions of the types of illocutionary acts that were found in the short movie. Lastly, the researcher had to interpret the utterances results which were categorized into illocutionary acts.

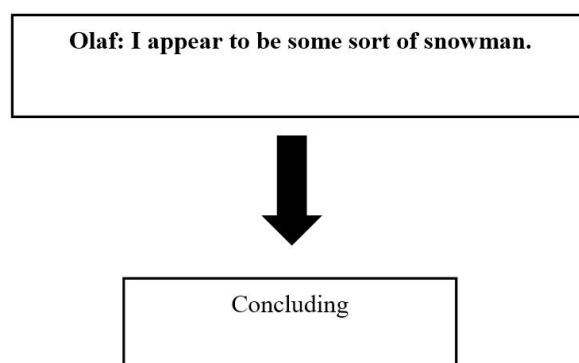
The data obtained in this research was taken from Disney+, which is the newest streaming subscription video service besides Netflix. *Once Upon a Snowman* came out on October 23, 2020. The short movie is the unrevealed story of Olaf, the snowman from *Frozen*, who came to life and embarked on a journey to find his destiny. The data was downloaded from Disney+. Then, the researcher found the full script on https://transcripts.fandom.com/wiki/Once_Upon_a_Snowman. The data for this research was chosen because the utterances contain many illocutionary acts, mainly representatives.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fifty-four utterances occurred that contain illocutionary acts in *Once Upon a Snowman*. All the data was focused on illocutionary act classification by Searle. This was followed by 24 utterances classified as representatives, 15 utterances as directives, 13 utterances as expressives, and 2 utterances categorized as commissives.

A. Representative

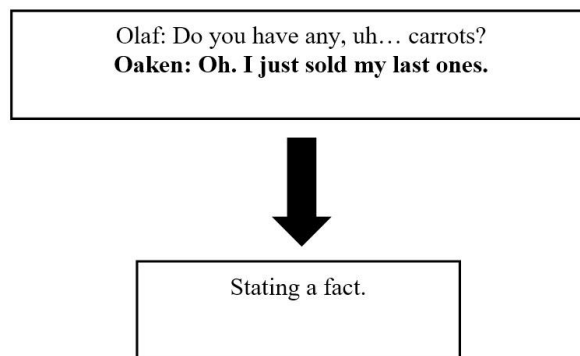
Data 1



Context: The short movie entitled *Once Upon a Snowman* is Olaf's journey as he comes to life to find his identity. At one point, Olaf realizes that he has come to life and is observing what he is by looking around his whole body. He looks

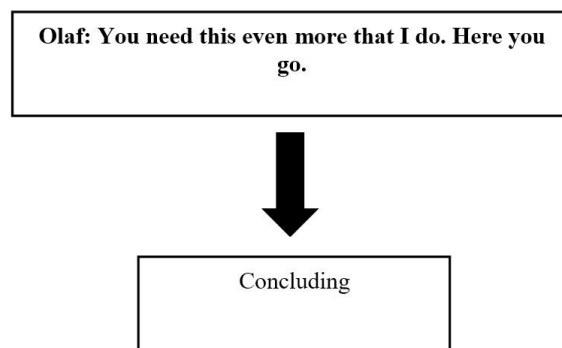
at his hands that are made of sticks or twigs, and his body and legs that are made out of snow. The utterance above is considered representative because it concludes what the speaker believes in. In this case, Olaf concludes what he sees and what he believes a snowman should look like.

Data 2



Context: In the middle of the snowy forest, there is a little shop called Wandering Oaken's. A person named Oaken owns the place. Olaf decides to go there to find a nose. Since Olaf is a snowman, he looks for carrots for his nose. However, Oaken has just sold his last carrots to Anna. So, Oaken tells Olaf that he has just sold his last ones, which is the truth. In other words, the utterance above is expressed by the speaker to inform something that he knows is true. Therefore, the utterance above is considered representative in stating a fact.

Data 3



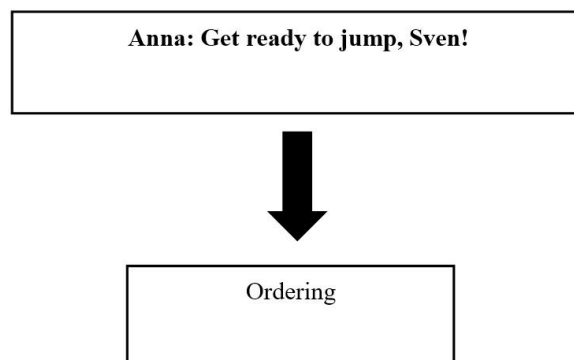
Context: A wolf comes up to Olaf with a puppy face, showing an expression that the wolf wants the sausage stuck on Olaf's face. Olaf looks at him with pity because he understands what it wants by the look on its face. He then looks away to think and finally decides to give the wolf his sausage nose because he concludes that the wolf needs it more than he does. The utterance above is considered representative because it concludes what the speaker believes in. In this case, Olaf concludes what he sees, and what he believes in, which is that the wolf needs the sausage more than he does.

B. Directive

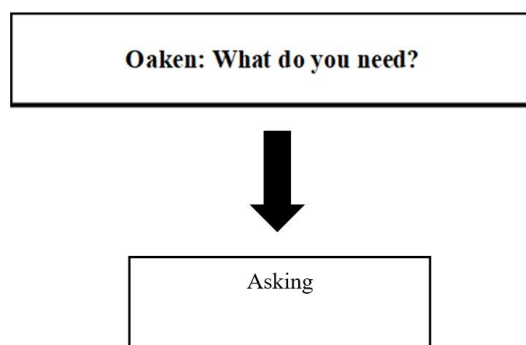
Data 1



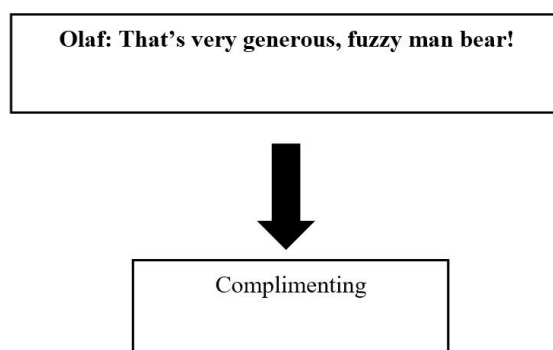
Context: After Olaf decided to swap a carrot with a meat sausage for his nose, he was chased by a pack of wolves. He was running and sliding down the snowy forest to save his nose from the hungry wolves. The utterance above is considered a directive command because Olaf wants the wolves to stay away from him, which is something he wants them to do.

Data 2

Context: Anna, Kristoff, and Sven the reindeer were in the middle of their journey to find Anna's sister Elsa. In the middle of the forest, they were found and chased by wolves. They tried to run away from the pack of wolves, but they were at the edge of a cliff. Therefore, Anna was telling the reindeer to jump so he would not get eaten by the wolves. This utterance is considered a directive order because Anna was ordering Sven the reindeer to jump before it's too late.

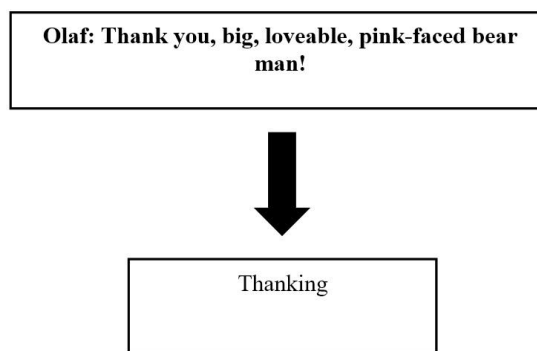
Data 3

Context: Oaken was asking Olaf what brought him to his shop and what he needed. The utterance above can be considered a directive illocutionary act in asking because it has the intention to get the hearer to answer and provide the information that the speaker has asked for.

C. Expressive**Data 1**

Context: Olaf happened to come to Oaken's little shop looking for something until he realized he did not have a nose. Oaken then offered him a nose, and Olaf replied by saying, "Yes, but I don't have any money," but Oaken said that it's okay. Therefore, Olaf was expressing his gratitude by complimenting Oaken for being so generous and willing to give him a nose for free. The utterance above is considered an expressive compliment because that was how he expressed what he felt about how nice Oaken was to him.

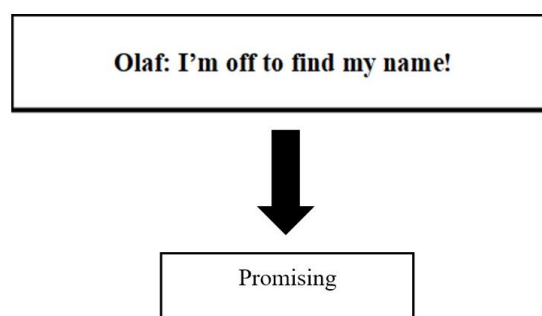
Data 2



Context: The utterance above was uttered by Olaf after Oaken gave him a free sausage in exchange for a carrot for his nose, which makes Olaf a snowman with a sausage nose. This utterance is categorized as an expressive thank-you because Olaf was expressing how happy he felt by thanking Oaken for the free sausage.

D. Commissive

Data 1



Context: The utterance above was spoken by Olaf after he thanked Oaken for giving him a new sausage nose for free. "I'm off to find my name!" is considered commissive in promising because he commits himself to some future action, which is to find his name or some sort of identity.

V. CONCLUSION

An illocutionary act is known as a part of speech that involves an act performed through speaking. Searle divided the illocutionary act into five categories: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Each of them has a different function and is performed differently in utterances. A representative is a type of illocutionary act that tells what speakers believe to be factual or not. Representatives were frequently used in *Once Upon a Snowman*, with 24 utterances in total. A directive is used by the speakers to make an attempt to get the hearer to do some particular actions for them, of which the writer found 15 utterances in directive illocutionary acts. This is followed by expressive acts, with 13 utterances that occurred in the short movie, which are defined as the way the speakers express their psychological state. Then commissive acts, with 2 utterances, occurred in *Once Upon a Snowman*, which are known as actions where the speaker intends to do something in the future, such as promising, threatening, vowing, etc. The research on illocutionary acts in this study is intended to share better information about the types and functions of illocutionary acts.

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Unveiling the Middle Ground: Intermediate-Level Linguistic Differences and Their Influence on L2 Writing Proficiency

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Abstract—This study examines whether and how adult L2 learners' awareness of intermediate-level language difference (ILLD) affects their writing competence. Quantitative data were collected from 75 English-major university students using an explanatory sequential design, through questionnaires and IELTS Writing Task 2 tests. Correlation and error analyses revealed that understanding distinctions like the use of cohesive devices and substitution of words was linked to higher writing quality. Focus group interviews show that participants recognized the importance of these differences but often struggled to apply them in writing. Error analysis identified common issues, such as the lack of conjunctions and repetitive expressions. 3 of the 8 linguistic differences, including hypotactic versus hypotactic, impersonal versus personal and substitutive versus repetitive, had moderate correlations with writing competence, leading to frequent errors despite learners' theoretical knowledge. Less prominent differences, like indirect versus direct expression, showed weaker correlations and fewer errors. The study contributes both quantitative and qualitative evidence to a field previously dominated by surface-level analyses of CLI. Findings emphasize the need for guided practice in teaching ILLD. Targeted pedagogical interventions can enhance second language writing instruction, improving learners' accuracy, fluency, and overall communicative competence.

Index Terms—intermediate-level linguistic differences, cross-linguistic influence, second language writing, bilingualism, contrastive linguistics

I. INTRODUCTION

Acquiring a second language (L2) involves much more than merely mastering vocabulary and grammar; it requires a nuanced understanding of subtle linguistic features that shape effective communication. Traditionally, language structures are analyzed at two levels: surface features, such as lexical and syntactic elements, and deep-level influences, including socio-cultural and pragmatic factors. However, an intermediate level exists between these extremes that encompasses preferred syntactic, lexical, and discourse arrangements deeply embedded in cultural and cognitive frameworks (Liu, 1991; Ellis, 1992). These intermediate-level linguistic differences (ILLD) can lead to persistent, yet often unnoticed, errors in L2 writing, thereby undermining coherence and fluency (Keyan & Chuangen, 2022; Li & Zhang, 2022).

Although cross-linguistic influence (CLI) is widely recognized in bilingual language development (Unsworth, 2023), most studies have predominantly focused on surface-level characteristics (e.g., word choice and sentence structure) or on deep-level factors (e.g., cultural and pragmatic differences). Consequently, the role of intermediate-level differences in L2 writing remains underexplored. While qualitative research has provided insights into learners' use of cohesive devices and structural patterns (Fei, 2023; Hu et al., 2021; Liang, 2021; Yang, 2023), there is limited quantitative evidence linking learners' awareness of these intermediate features to their actual writing performance.

The contrast between Chinese and English at intermediate level offers a particularly relevant case for examining these issues. For example, English, as a hypotactic language, favors explicit logical connectors and complex syntactic structures, whereas Chinese, being paratactic, relies more on contextual cues for meaning. Moreover, Chinese writing

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often emphasizes repetition over substitution, direct rather than indirect expression, and personal over impersonal constructions, which can lead to stylistic and structural mismatches in L2 English writing. Previous research has shown that raising cross-linguistic awareness can enhance L2 reading and writing (McManus, 2019) and that targeted instructional approaches can improve L2 proficiency (Irsara, 2022; Lucas & Yiakoumetti, 2019). Nonetheless, little is known about how mastery of these intermediate linguistic features translates into improved writing performance.

To address this gap, the present study investigates how Chinese learners' awareness of intermediate-level linguistic differences affects their writing competence. Specifically, the study aims to (1) identify which intermediate-level differences most strongly correlate with writing quality; (2) examine how these differences manifest as errors in learners' compositions; and (3) explore learners' perceptions and challenges in applying these linguistic distinctions in writing. By systematically analyzing both theoretical knowledge and practical writing performance, this study seeks to highlight potential instructional targets for enhancing L2 writing pedagogy.

This research broadens CLI studies by incorporating the intermediate level, addressing a key gap in understanding how mid-tier linguistic contrasts shape L2 writing proficiency. It also provides empirical evidence that explicit instruction in these features is essential for bridging the gap between linguistic awareness and effective writing.

II. INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL LANGUAGE DIFFERENCE

A. Theoretical Framework, Conceptual Definition, and Example Analysis

Unlike surface features (such as vocabulary and grammar) or deep-level elements (such as thought patterns and cultural values), intermediate-level linguistic differences focus on the patterned ways of expression and structural preferences that lie between the two extremes (Liu, 1991). As shown in Table 1, the intermediate level serves as an “expression system” that converts abstract thought into concrete linguistic forms through specific rules and patterns. As Lian (2010) points out in his comparative study of Chinese and English, intermediate-level differences are manifested in the fixed patterns, structural preferences, and cohesive devices that language users employ when expressing their ideas.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTION OF COMPARISON LEVELS

Level	Description
Surface level	the formal structure layer, which includes basic and syntactic means of expression.
Intermediate level	system of expression, the patterned means of expression when thought is transformed into language.
Deep level	thought patterns, the foundational structure layer, which is the philosophical mechanism of language.

Source: M. Liu (1991)

Building upon these levels, Figure 1 provides an example illustrating how cultural values influence expression at the intermediate stage. Chinese classical philosophy, grounded in Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, often prioritizes intuitive and contextual understanding of content (Lian, 2010). This orientation manifests in paratactic connections—where sentences rely on context rather than explicit conjunctions—resulting in greater ambiguity and more reliance on inference by the reader. In contrast, languages that favor hypotactic connections explicitly mark logical or causal relationships through structured linking words. Such contrasts highlight why learners from paratactic traditions may experience challenges when adopting the more syntactically explicit patterns often found in English.

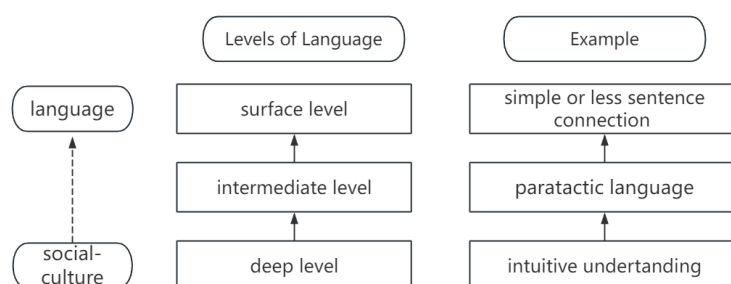


Figure 1. Example of Language Levels

In this study, the term “intermediate-level linguistic differences” refers to those characteristics that are not entirely grammatical in nature nor solely attributable to deep cultural factors but are instead found in sentence organization, the use of connectors, voice selection, and strategies for substitution versus repetition. For example, English tends to employ explicit logical connectors and complex subordinate clauses, whereas Chinese relies more on contextual cues and coordinate structures (Lian, 2010; Liu, 1991).

According to Lian (2010), a number of key differences between Chinese and English at the intermediate level can be summarized as Table 2:

TABLE 2
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND CHINESE AT INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

English	Chinese
Hypotactic	Paratactic
Complex	Simplex
Impersonal	Personal
Passive voice	Active voice
Static	Dynamic
Abstract	Concrete
Indirect	Direct
Substitutive	Repetitive

Table 2 depicts how both languages show systematic differences in speech styles. This study takes these differences as a framework, and checks how learners' awareness of these differences is related to their writing competence.

B. Cross-Cultural Comparisons and Impact on L2 Writing

From cross-linguistic studies, it appears that the reflection of these intrinsic differences is not only about the structural aspects but also the cognition styles, aesthetic values, and cultural beliefs that were formed through the differences (Lian, 2010). While the English language usually leans towards logical power and orderliness in all relevant features, the Chinese language is more inclined towards the in-depth comprehension and the abstract meaning. These cultural and cognitive disparities among Chinese participants operate at the intermediate level as fixed expressions which are interconnected to their writing strategies.

During the process of writing in L2, learners frequently and automatically imitate the structure of their native language. For example, studies by Fei (2023) report that the Chinese students are likely to skip the logical connectives when writing English because they are influenced by the fact that their native speech mostly relies on comprehension-bearing objects. Consequently, past research also declared that an indecorous or wrong employment of connecting words is a typical problem given for these students (Hu et al., 2021). Similar problems are observed not only on learners at early stage but also on more advanced learners. Another often observed problem at intermediate level is the underuse of passive voice, which affects the objectivity as well as the formal writing tone that may lower the quality of the paper (Peng, 2023).

Problems at intermediate level not only disintegrate the articles but also relegate them to less academic or formal writing level. In comparison to other means, boosting the knowledge on differences between the L1 and L2 is very necessary to be implemented when improving the writing quality in L2.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Current Research on Cross-Linguistic Influence and Cross-Linguistic Awareness

Cross-linguistic influence (CLI) refers to the phenomenon in which learners, in the process of acquiring an L2, experience positive or negative transfer due to the differences between their native language and the target language (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). A large body of research indicates that CLI is particularly evident in the early stages of language acquisition and gradually diminishes as learners become more proficient (Wood, 2017; Van Dijk et al., 2022). Meanwhile, cross-linguistic awareness—namely, learners' understanding of the differences between their native language and the target language—is considered an important factor in reducing negative transfer and promoting L2 acquisition (McManus, 2021; Lucas & Yiakoumetti, 2019).

Existing studies tend to focus on comparisons of surface features such as vocabulary choice, grammatical structures, and phonological systems (Liu, 1991), or on deep-level cultural and cognitive differences, exploring how social pragmatics and thought patterns in different cultural contexts affect language use (e.g., House & Kádár, 2022). However, there is still a dearth of both theoretical discussion and empirical analysis regarding the intermediate-level linguistic differences—that is, the preferred or fixed patterns of expression—which Lian (2010) argues play a crucial role in maintaining textual coherence, logical flow, and the accurate transmission of information.

Empirical studies have found that Chinese learners often experience a decline in writing quality when composing in English because they tend to neglect the necessary logical connectors, favor simple coordinate sentences over complex structures, and underuse the passive voice (Fei, 2023; Hu et al., 2021; Dai, 2024). These studies indicate that while CLI is a widespread phenomenon overall, its specific manifestations at the intermediate level and the subsequent impact on writing strategies have not been systematically or quantitatively validated. In addition, some studies employing contrastive analysis (CA) have revealed systematic differences in expression patterns between the native and target languages, suggesting that enhancing learners' cross-linguistic awareness may help predict and correct writing errors (Saini, 2016; Wardhaugh, 1970).

B. Research Gaps on Intermediate-Level Linguistic Differences and Pedagogical Implications

Although significant progress has been made in investigating cross-linguistic influence, systematic studies focusing specifically on intermediate-level linguistic differences remain noticeably insufficient. First, most existing literature

tends to analyze surface features or deep structures, while insufficient attention is paid to the expression patterns, sentence structure preferences, and cohesive devices that lie between the two. Second, the empirical studies on the impact of intermediate-level linguistic differences on writing are rather fragmented; they primarily rely on qualitative analyses and case studies, lacking large-scale quantitative validation (Fei, 2023; Peng, 2023). In terms of teaching practice, although some studies suggest that cultivating cross-linguistic awareness can help reduce negative transfer, there is still no mature system for translating the theory of intermediate-level linguistic differences into concrete pedagogical strategies.

IV. METHOD

An explanatory sequential design was adopted so that quantitative data could first be collected and analyzed, followed by qualitative data that provides further insight into the quantitative findings. Figure 2 illustrates the overall research process.

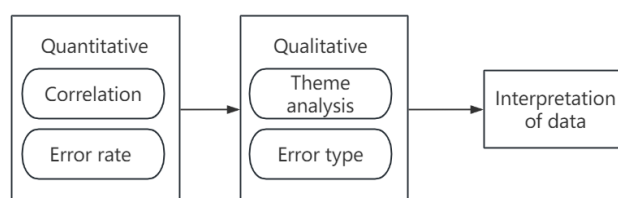


Figure 2. Explanatory Design of the Study

Seventy-five undergraduate students in their fourth semester majoring in English at a Chinese university participated in this study. All participants were native Chinese speakers who had passed the College English Test Band 4 (CET-4) with scores ranging from 435 to 592. Importantly, none had taken any IELTS examinations or received IELTS writing training. Consequently, they were entirely unfamiliar with the IELTS test format and had never encountered the specific writing prompt used in this study.

Data were collected using three main instruments. First, a questionnaire of 16 questions was developed based on Lian's eight linguistic differences to measure the students' awareness of these differences. This instrument was reviewed by experts and pilot-tested to ensure its reliability and validity. An IELTS writing Task 2 exam item (from authentic test) was used as a testing instrument. Two instructors, who have arrived at the same results independently, marked the writing applying the regular IELTS criteria, and conducted categorization of errors according to the eight differences; as a result, these scores were used in the quantitative phase.

Finally, focus group interviews were conducted in the last phase of the research with a sample of participants selected based on their questionnaire and writing results and their primary analysis has been presented in this chapter. Those interviews target at those barriers that learners encounter in their attempts to make sense of previously learned, intermediate-level differences influence on their writing and to provide personal insights into their writing practices. All of the interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed thematically in order to extract the most information out of the data.

Regarding the data processing, Spearman's rank-order correlation is used to see the relation closer to the writing performances of the second language learners and their awareness of intermediate-level linguistic differences. As another step towards the goal, regression analysis was conducted in this study to find out whether the learners' awareness of intermediate-level language differences would help them with their English writing test results. The qualitative data obtained from the four focus group discussions were coded and thematically analyzed, and these findings were integrated with the quantitative data collected to then produce an overall understanding of the impact of linguistic differences on L2 writing at the intermediate level.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and all data were anonymized to protect participant confidentiality. Participants were informed that their involvement was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. It is also acknowledged that this study has several limitations, including the relatively small and homogeneous sample and the potential constraints of the measurement instruments used.

V. RESULTS

A. Correlation

A preliminary analysis examined participants' writing scores across five components: Task Achievement (TA), Cohesion and Coherence (CC), Lexical Resources (LR), Grammatical Accuracy (GA), and an overall Writing Competence (WC) derived from the average of the first four. As shown in Table 3, the mean scores ranged from 5.447 to 5.667, indicating relatively consistent performance across the components, with GA displaying the highest variability (SD = 0.828) and WC the lowest (SD = 0.661). Normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) revealed that

TA, CC, LR, and GA significantly deviated from normality ($p < 0.05$), whereas WC approached normality ($p = 0.037$). Consequently, Spearman's rank-order correlation was deemed appropriate for the subsequent analyses.

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE WRITING TEST RESULTS

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. d
TA	75	4.0	7.5	5.667	.759
CC	75	4.0	7.0	5.527	.682
LR	75	4.0	7.0	5.447	.774
GA	75	4.0	7.0	5.493	.828
WC	75	4.375	7.0	5.533	.661

In addition, a separate questionnaire was administered to assess participants' awareness of eight key linguistic features based on Lian's framework, with two items dedicated to each feature (F1–F8). Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for each factor. The mean scores for these factors ranged from 7.09 to 8.76, suggesting that although learners generally recognized these differences, the depth of their understanding varied. The questionnaire demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.839$).

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF EACH FACTOR

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
F1 (hypotactic vs. paratactic)	75	5	10	7.69	1.294
F2 (complex vs. simplex)	75	6	10	8.48	1.178
F3 (impersonal vs. personal)	75	4	10	7.69	1.740
F4 (passive vs. active)	75	5	10	8.31	1.115
F5 (static vs. dynamic)	75	3	10	7.09	1.780
F6 (abstract vs. concrete)	75	6	10	8.76	.998
F7 (indirect vs. direct)	75	3	10	8.41	1.253
F8 (substitutive vs. repetitive)	75	5	10	8.25	1.015

Two hypotheses guided the correlation analysis: (H1) a significant positive relationship exists between the overall questionnaire score (QUE) and writing performance, and (H0) no significant positive relationship exists between the two. As indicated in Table 5, the total questionnaire score significantly correlated with WC ($r = 0.343$, $p = 0.001$), CC ($r = 0.309$, $p = 0.004$), LR ($r = 0.425$, $p < 0.001$), and GA ($r = 0.302$, $p = 0.004$), while the correlation with TA ($r = 0.164$, $p = 0.08$) was not statistically significant.

TABLE 5
CORRELATION BETWEEN QUESTIONNAIRE AND WRITING TEST RESULTS

		WC	TA	CC	LR	GA
QUE	R	.331**	0.154	.306**	.356**	.285**
	Sig.	0.002	0.094	0.004	0.001	0.007
	N	75	75	75	75	75

To further explore the predictive power of the questionnaire scores on writing performance, a linear regression analysis was conducted. The results, as shown in Table 6, indicated a significant positive relationship, with the questionnaire score exhibiting a coefficient of 0.019 (95% CI: 0.001 to 0.038, $t = -2.025$, $p = 0.047$). Although the model's R^2 value was 0.053—indicating that the questionnaire scores explained only 5.3% of the variance in writing performance—this relationship is statistically significant, suggesting that learners' cross-linguistic awareness does have a measurable impact on their writing competence. The collinearity diagnostics (VIF = 1, Tolerance = 1) and the Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.333 further confirmed the absence of multicollinearity and autocorrelation, supporting the validity of the model.

TABLE 6
LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS

	Coefficient	95% CI	VIF	Collinearity Diagnostics Tolerance
Constant	3.972** -5.15	2.461 ~ 5.484	-	-
Questionnaire Score	0.019* -2.025	0.001 ~ 0.038	1	1
Sample size	75			
R ²	0.053			
Adjusted R ²	0.04			
F	F(1,73)=4.101,p=0.047			
Notes: Dependent Variable = WR				
D-W Value = 1.333				
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ Values in parentheses are t-values				

Further factor-by-factor analysis (see Table 7) revealed that factors F1, F3, F4, and F8 consistently demonstrated small-to-moderate positive correlations with most writing measures, suggesting that these intermediate-level differences substantially influence learners' performance. In contrast, factors F2 and F6 showed selective correlations—primarily with lexical resources and grammatical accuracy—while F5 and F7 did not exhibit significant relationships with the writing scores.

TABLE 7
CORRELATION BETWEEN WRITING TEST AND EACH FACTOR

		WC	TA	CC	LR	GA
F1	R	.310**	0.13	.230*	.379**	.303**
	Sig.	0.003	0.133	0.024	0	0.004
	N	75	75	75	75	75
F2	R	0.173	0.035	0.141	.264*	.213*
	Sig.	0.069	0.382	0.114	0.011	0.033
	N	75	75	75	75	75
F3	R	.372**	0.127	.305**	.454**	.366**
	Sig.	0.001	0.14	0.004	0	0.001
	N	75	75	75	75	75
F4	R	.242*	0.083	.252*	.251*	.248*
	Sig.	0.018	0.24	0.014	0.015	0.016
	N	75	75	75	75	75
F5	R	0.028	0.027	-0.018	0.106	0.006
	Sig.	0.405	0.41	0.437	0.183	0.481
	N	75	75	75	75	75
F6	R	0.128	0.064	0.036	.206*	0.103
	Sig.	0.137	0.293	0.38	0.038	0.189
	N	75	75	75	75	75
F7	R	0.108	0.012	0.032	0.174	0.139
	Sig.	0.179	0.46	0.391	0.068	0.116
	N	75	75	75	75	75
F8	R	.302**	.199*	.287**	.334**	.240*
	Sig.	0.004	0.044	0.006	0.002	0.019
	N	75	75	75	75	75

Overall, these findings highlight that certain intermediate-level distinctions—particularly those concerning hypotactic versus paratactic structures (F1), impersonal versus personal usage (F3), passive versus active constructions (F4), and substitutive versus repetitive strategies (F8)—are significantly and positively correlated with writing performance. This suggests that these factors play a particularly salient role in enhancing learners' overall writing competence. In contrast, factors such as complex versus simplex (F2) and abstract versus concrete (F6) showed more selective correlations, primarily with lexical resources and grammatical accuracy, while static versus dynamic (F5) and indirect versus direct (F7) did not display significant relationships with the writing measures. These results indicate that, at this stage of language development, F1, F3, F4, and F8 are especially influential for improving writing performance, whereas the remaining factors may have a more limited or context-dependent effect.

B. Frequency of Errors

A T-unit-level error analysis was conducted on the compositions of all 75 participants, focusing on the eight identified linguistic factors. As shown in Table 8, the error frequencies and corresponding error rates for each factor were calculated. Specifically, Factor 2 (complex vs. simplex) and Factor 1 (hypotactic vs. paratactic) exhibited the highest error rates at 43.35% and 37.91%, respectively, followed by Factor 3 (impersonal vs. personal) with an error rate of 17.43%. In contrast, Factor 8 (substitutive vs. repetitive) displayed a moderate error rate of 15.86%, while the error rates for Factors 4 (passive vs. active), 5 (static vs. dynamic), 6 (abstract vs. concrete), and 7 (indirect vs. direct) were all below 3%.

TABLE 8
FREQUENCY OF ERRORS

Error Type	Frequency	T-unit	Error Rate (%)
F1	459	1211	37.91%
F2	525	1211	43.35%
F3	211	1211	17.43%
F4	31	1211	2.56%
F5	24	1211	1.98%
F6	23	1211	1.90%
F7	17	1211	1.40%
F8	192	1211	15.86%

These findings indicate a pronounced need for targeted instructional interventions for the factors associated with the highest error rates—namely, F2 and F1—as these issues appear to exert the most substantial impact on learners' overall

writing competence. Conversely, the relatively low error rates for F4, F5, F6, and F7 suggest that the difficulties associated with these factors are comparatively minor for this group. Overall, the error distribution underscores the importance of prioritizing those linguistic features that are most problematic in order to effectively enhance writing performance.

C. Types of Errors

The current part investigates the learners' errors that are based on the differences between Chinese and English proposed by Lian (2010). The study indicates that the differences in structure and cognitive thinking styles lead to typical mistakes often made by EFL students in their writings. To put it in general, they are divided into two types of error: the first one has to do with a sentence structure and cohesion, these are the style and revolts of an author's rendering.

a) *Errors Related to Sentence Structure and Cohesion:*

One of the most important differences between English and Chinese writing is the hypotactic (the inside sentence consists of the more important or higher rank) compared with the paratactic structure (sentence that consists of the equal words). Unlike English that normally builds its logical connections between clauses with linking words, Chinese implies such expressions. Thus, they are left out of the mandatory conjunctions by the learners or replaced by too many simple connectors. For instance, the author could have used the transitions "despite" and "in contrast" for linking the ideas of the distraction caused by digital devices and the focused environment exclusively offered by printed media, which would avoid the breaking of the ideas flow. Additionally, at times, students may overuse "and" to connect those ideas that need to be described by either a causal (e.g., correlation between increased use of electronic devices and decreased critical thinking) or an explainable relationship. Substituting out such connectors for "which causes" or "resulting in" types will help clarify implication from one idea to another, thus enhancing readability and coherence.

This second set of problems involves components of constructing complex versus simple sentences. Academic writing in English normally prefers complex sentences by referring to subordinate clauses to clearly set out the relations between ideas, while Chinese is often used to write in style consisting of a series of short sentences that coordinate with each other to suggest the implied relationship between ideas. This seriously strikes three prominent problems. In the first place, the wording of some texts lack the necessary linking words and thereby, disjointed pieces of work are produced. Biological teachers might require students to summarize data and other material to create coherent paragraphs that contain simple subject-verb agreement sentences. Thirdly, the repetition of ideas and descriptions that play similar roles (i.e., referring to "printed books" repeatedly in the essay) not only create choppy sentences but more so disrupts the full flow of the essay. To fix these quibbles, teachers encourage students to utilize different conjunctions and give them a strategy to merge further points to form a unit complex sentence, which comes with clarity and flow.

b) *Errors Related to Stylistic and Rhetorical Expression:*

Another set of errors stems from differences in subject selection, voice, and descriptive style. In Chinese, even in contexts that require objective expression, it is common to use personal subjects; however, formal English writing typically favors non-personal or abstract subjects to maintain objectivity. This difference results in learners overusing pronouns such as "we" in English compositions, making the statements appear overly subjective and informal. For example, "We access information quickly on the internet" can be more formally expressed as "Information is readily accessible on the internet." Additionally, sudden shifts in the subject within a sentence (for instance, switching abruptly from "this method" to "we") can disrupt cohesion, and using vague subjects (such as "we," "people," or "you") may obscure the identity of the agent, thereby reducing clarity. Using more precise or impersonal subjects, or appropriately adopting the passive voice, can effectively improve clarity and formality.

Another recurring issue is voice selection. In Chinese writing, the active voice is often used—even when the subject is ambiguous—whereas formal English writing typically requires the passive voice to emphasize the action or its outcome rather than the doer. For example, in the sentence "If we reduce our consumption of printed books, then we are actually reducing our burden on the environment," converting to the passive voice (e.g., "If consumption of printed books is reduced, the burden on the environment is lessened") can better highlight the action itself and align with English academic conventions.

Additional errors emerge from differences in dynamic versus static expression and abstract versus concrete language usage. Chinese learners tend to prefer dynamic, action-oriented verbs and adjectives; although such expressions are vivid, they may not suit the formal tone required in academic writing. For instance, the sentence "If we watch computers and electronic devices for a long time, it can cause a decline in our eyesight" foregrounds the verb "watch," giving the sentence an immediate yet informal feel. In contrast, a more static or nominalized expression, such as "Prolonged use of computers and electronic devices can lead to a decline in eyesight," better aligns with the requirements of formal writing. Thus, in English writing of scientists and researchers, especially in academia, detailed and concrete descriptions are usually avoided in favor of generalized and abstract expressions. Terms like "writing on paper" or "searching for books" may become a description that is way too detailed, on the other hand, including the generalizations (for instance, "pay attention to the traditional methods") could be clear enough to grasp the main idea.

In this case, mistakes are detected as indirect or direct meaning. Some learners can be too honest in their manner when they talk about casual social crimes—for example, they would say "poor families", "poverty jumbled up in those areas" or "forever poor"—which comes from the Chinese philosophy of being direct and straight to the point and can

offend the hearers in a more polite surround in formal contexts English. More euphemistic or indirect expressions, for example, "families of limited financial resources" could be used as an expression instead of extended "low-income families" and "under-resourced communities" would be ones to refer to the people who need help.

At last, the prominent one is a copious application of redundancy in language. Often, they recast the same noun (an instance is "books" or "printed books") all the way through the lines or they tend to rely on one single sentence pattern (like "for + group" construction) when giving examples for various demographic groups, for example, "for children, for elders, for us...". Such recurrences do not only make the text dull and monotonic but also compromise syntax variety and rhetorical power. By applying synonyms, pronouns, the ellipsis, and various sentence structures, such persistence can be successfully minimized, which probably can improve not only readability but also the effectiveness of persuasion.

D. Interview

Group interviews were held to understand the participants' perception on specific contrastive issues between English-Chinese and their manifestations in writing, as well as the factors that caused the errors. To carry out this research, as analysis data is processed, factors were grouped into four groups based on respective correlation of writing performance with related error rates. Table 9 describes the results for the criteria through which we defined working categories.

TABLE 9
CATEGORIZATION OF FACTORS

Categories	Factors	Correlation	Error rate
C1	F1/ F3/ F8	high	high
C2	F5/ F6/ F7	low	low
C3	F2	low	high
C4	F4	high	low

For Category 1 (C1), Dictionary in the first category, headed by items F1, F3, and F8, has given many students only a general understanding of these concepts. Thus, they didn't use the same technical vocabulary and saw it as a communication gap of "English having more connecting words". Even though they knew the importance of cohesive devices, they never could keep the rules no matter how hard they tried. One such case was that each time many students consumed "we" the result became too formal, but they faced so many issues in avoiding it and using impersonal constructions. The overall finding of the students was that having a deeper insight into these discrepancies may lead to better writing; at the same time, they mentioned that more ways and methods of bridging the gap between theory and management should be employed, and the use of examples, practice in the form of guided instruction, and feedback should be prioritized.

The last type of category (C2) includes (F5, F6, F7: the members of these families were novices). By the assumption, the difference between static versus dynamic language (F5) was the least uncovered matter, abstract versus concrete expression (F6) more, and last but not least indirect versus direct phrasing (F7), the subjective level of most learners being described as quite low. The try-out focused on aspects that were not treated in our lectures on the constructor classes; the students seem to come with a belief that they don't need to work on those aspects yet, because they are for the advanced level. Since students put more effort into the immediate questions, i.e., grammar or vocabulary, they tend generally to overlook the subtler distinctions unless they perceive their results or overall value in their proficiency.

The question rises now whether the topic is complex or simple. That is, the Category 3 (C3) will involve solely the complex and the simple ones. As students became aware that the academic writing in English often employs greater level of complexity of the sentence structure than the development of Chinese, they were not certain which of these differences are the sure-vise type of the sentence structure in Chinese as well as in English. Among those who did admit that they had problems deriving subordinate clauses, conjunctions usage, and punctuation usage; that is the main reason why they used simple sentences totally, as they hemmed forever around where the sentence is complex. Perhaps, the insecurity that comes from being afraid of miswriting actually is what governs the reliance on simpler sentences. All of the participants, including teachers, agreed that only an instruction in the use of the complex structures that are mentioned above will not be sufficient to attain self-sufficiency, but that constant practice and concrete support should be just as matched in the classrooms.

Finally, Category 4 (C4) pertains to F4 (passive vs. active). Student opinions regarding F4 varied: some participants clearly understood that English academic writing frequently employs the passive voice to maintain objectivity, while Chinese writing tends to highlight the agent through active constructions. Others were less clear about the preferred usage in each language; however, they generally made fewer errors when attempting to use the passive voice in English. Overall, learners perceived the use of the passive voice as more "straightforward" compared to other grammatical features, despite acknowledging occasional lapses in its correct application. As a result, instructors might consider focusing on advanced nuances—such as determining when and why to use the passive voice—rather than emphasizing the basic formation rules.

E. Findings

After analyzing both quantitative data (questionnaires and writing tests) and qualitative data (interviews and error analysis), a comprehensive summary of the findings for each linguistic factor (F1–F8) was developed. Table 10 summarizes key metrics for each factor: the average questionnaire score (Que), the correlation coefficient (Cor) with writing performance, the error rate observed in the T-unit analysis, the level of understanding as indicated in the interviews, the frequency with which learners attempted to apply the linguistic differences, and the perceived influence of each factor on writing quality.

TABLE 10
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

	Que	Cor	Error rate	interview understanding	Awareness to apply	Influence on writing
F1	7.69	.310**	37.91%	recognized	seldom	moderate
F2	8.48	0.173	43.35%	good	sometimes	moderate
F3	7.69	.372**	17.43%	recognized	seldom	significant
F4	8.31	.242*	2.56%	mixed	seldom	minimal
F5	7.09	0.028	1.98%	minimal	seldom	low
F6	8.76	0.128	1.90%	limited	seldom	low
F7	8.41	0.108	1.40%	limited, wrong	seldom	low
F8	8.25	.302**	15.86%	recognized	sometimes	moderate

The findings can be discussed under three thematic areas:

a) Types of Differences Most Strongly Correlated with Writing Quality

Quantitative analyses indicate that certain features show stronger positive correlation with writing quality especially those features that are related to morphological complexity, cohesive devices, and the effective management of sentence structures. In our data, factors F1, F3, and F8 not only yielded higher correlation coefficients, but also demonstrated relatively high error rates. This suggests that, for intermediate-level learners, a solid grasp of explicit morphological rules and the effective use of cohesive structures is pivotal in enhancing clarity, coherence, and overall textual sophistication.

b) Manifestations of These Correlations in Learner Errors

Error analysis reveals that the factors most strongly correlated with writing quality also lead to more problems in writing. For instance, the underuse or misuse of cohesive devices results in abrupt transitions and a reliance on simple conjunctions such as “and,” which disrupts the logical flow of ideas. These frequent errors indicate that the very features that, when properly executed, elevate writing quality are the ones learners most commonly struggle to apply consistently, likely due to a lack of procedural fluency and sufficient practice in real writing contexts.

c) Students’ Perceptions and Challenges

Qualitative interviews further show a consistent tension between learners’ theoretical awareness of these linguistic differences and their practical application in writing. Participants generally recognized that incorporating appropriate cohesive devices or employing accurate morphological markers would improve the clarity and academic tone of their texts. However, many expressed reluctance to move beyond “safe” or familiar sentence constructions for fear of making mistakes. Several students noted the absence of targeted practice and constructive, example-based feedback on these intermediate-level features, which hampers their ability to internalize and automatically apply more advanced writing strategies. Consequently, even when learners can articulate the importance of correct verb forms or varied conjunctions, they often struggle to integrate these strategies consistently into their writing. These insights underscore the need for deliberate instructional interventions—such as systematic scaffolding, iterative feedback, and guided revision activities—that can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical writing proficiency.

In summary, the integrated findings reveal that among the various intermediate-level linguistic differences, F1, F3, and F8 appear to have the most substantial influence on writing quality, both in terms of their strong correlations and high error rates. At the same time, while other factors (such as F2, F4, F5, F6, and F7) also play a role, their impact is either more limited or context-dependent. These observations highlight the importance of prioritizing instructional interventions that focus on the most problematic areas, thereby enhancing learners’ ability to produce coherent, precise, and academically sound written texts.

VI. DISCUSSION

This study explored how Chinese adult English learners’ awareness of intermediate-level linguistic differences between English and Chinese affects their L2 writing competence. Employing an explanatory sequential design, we integrated quantitative data from questionnaires and writing tests with qualitative insights from interviews and error analyses to develop a comprehensive picture of the interplay between cross-linguistic awareness and writing performance.

Our results indicate that approximately 60% of the intermediate-level linguistic factors examined are significantly correlated with learners’ writing performance. Factor 1 (hypotactic vs. paratactic structures), Factor 3 (impersonal vs. personal expression), and Factor 8 (substitutive vs. repetitive usage) not only show strong positive correlations with

overall writing scores but also emerge as frequent error hotspots in learners' compositions. These findings align with earlier studies (e.g., Fei, 2023; Hu et al., 2021; Liang, 2021) that have demonstrated the impact of cross-linguistic influence (CLI) on second language competence. In contrast, Factors 5 (static vs. dynamic), 6 (abstract vs. concrete), and 7 (indirect vs. direct) exhibited both low correlations and low error rates, suggesting that these subtler differences are less salient in learners' writing practices. Additionally, while Factor 2 (complex vs. simple structures) shows a high error rate, its overall correlation with writing performance is low, indicating that although learners acknowledge the importance of complex sentence constructions, they struggle to apply them effectively.

Our findings partially support Wood's (2017) meta-analysis, which reported that 81% of studies found a significant influence of L1 on L2 development, while 19% considered it negligible. Similar to the work of Van Dijk, Dijkstra et al. (2022), who observed small to moderate CLI effects in early bilingual children, our study demonstrates that adult learners also experience CLI effects of a small to moderate magnitude at the intermediate level. However, unlike Wood's (2017) suggestion of a declining L1 influence with increased proficiency, our results indicate that adult learners continue to experience consistent CLI effects, particularly in the intermediate linguistic domain. Moreover, while previous research (e.g., Leonet et al., 2020; Lucas & Yiakoumetti, 2019) has shown that heightened cross-linguistic awareness can enhance L2 reading and writing, our study reveals that such awareness alone is insufficient for significantly improving writing competence. The persistence of high error rates in factors that are strongly correlated with writing performance underscores the gap between learners' theoretical knowledge and its practical application.

These findings have clear pedagogical implications. Rather than solely raising learners' awareness of linguistic differences, effective teaching interventions must also focus on bridging the gap between theory and practice. Instruction should include explicit teaching of intermediate-level differences, for example, directly instructing students on the use of precise conjunctions to manage complex sentence structures (addressing F1) and on the adoption of impersonal subjects to achieve the desired academic tone (addressing F3). In addition, targeted practice is essential; structured exercises that allow learners to practice constructing complex sentences (F2) and using cohesive devices appropriately (F1 and F8) are necessary to build procedural fluency. Constructive, personalized feedback is also crucial in helping learners identify and correct errors associated with the high-correlation factors. Finally, guided revision activities that focus on the integration of intermediate-level linguistic features into students' writing can provide the iterative practice needed to internalize these advanced strategies. Such comprehensive interventions are likely to lead to improvements in clarity, cohesion, and overall academic writing competence.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence that awareness of intermediate-level linguistic differences (ILLD) between English and Chinese plays a significant role in shaping the writing competence of Chinese adult EFL learners. Although our quantitative analyses revealed that certain linguistic contrasts—particularly hypotactic versus paratactic structures (F1), impersonal versus personal expression (F3), and substitutive versus repetitive usage (F8)—positively correlate with improved writing performance, the high frequency of errors associated with these factors demonstrates that theoretical awareness alone is insufficient for mastery. The persistent gap between understanding and practical application underscores the need for pedagogical approaches that extend beyond mere awareness-raising.

By integrating both quantitative correlations and qualitative error analyses, this study highlights the critical importance of explicitly addressing intermediate-level differences in L2 writing instruction. Our findings suggest that educators should incorporate direct instruction on these nuanced contrasts into the curriculum, accompanied by targeted practice exercises and personalized, constructive feedback. Such comprehensive instructional interventions can help learners internalize and apply the necessary linguistic features more consistently, thereby mitigating negative transfer from the L1 and fostering more coherent, precise, and academically appropriate writing.

Although these insights are drawn from a specific cohort of Chinese adult learners, they hold broader implications for L2 writing pedagogy across diverse learner populations and language pairs. Future research should expand its scope by including learners of varied proficiency levels and from different linguistic backgrounds, and by exploring additional language skills such as speaking and listening. Moreover, longitudinal studies are recommended to track the evolution of learners' understanding of intermediate-level differences over time and to examine whether sustained instructional interventions yield similar improvements across various communicative domains.

In conclusion, this study underscores the centrality of intermediate-level linguistic differences in L2 writing development. By designing and implementing instruction that specifically addresses these subtle yet impactful contrasts, educators can more effectively support learners' progression toward accurate, cohesive, and contextually appropriate written output. Ultimately, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and its practical application is essential for enhancing overall second language writing competence.

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Effects of Multimedia Inputs on Improving the Grammatical Accuracy of Students' Speaking Skills: An Experimental Study

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Abstract—The study examines the influence of multimedia inputs on the speaking skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, mainly targeting the minimization of prevalent errors made by Arabic-speaking individuals within the cohort of first-year university learners. A total of 104 undergraduate students participated in the study and were divided equally into two groups: an experimental group (N=52) and a control group (N=52). The experimental group was exposed to multimedia input techniques, and the control group was instructed via traditional methods. Additionally, data was gathered twice through pre-and post-tests. The data was analyzed through the RM-ANOVA test using SPSS. The analysis revealed that Arabic-speaking EFL learners committed common errors related to inflectional morphemes in both groups. The results indicated a considerable enhancement in using inflectional morphemes while speaking proficiency of the experimental group following the treatment was compared to the control group. These findings highlight the effectiveness of multimedia inputs in aiding EFL learners, particularly beginners who struggle with English proficiency.

Index Terms—multimedia inputs, speaking skills, grammatical accuracy, inflectional morphemes

I. INTRODUCTION

Improving grammatical accuracy in English speaking skills is essential for language learning, especially for deriving meaningful sentences. Larsen-Freeman (2003) suggests that a thorough knowledge of English grammar is crucial for developing speaking abilities. It forms the structural basis needed to construct clear and coherent sentences. Thornbury (2006) further asserts the importance of grammar in learning speaking skills, emphasizing that it encompasses the knowledge of rules and their practical application in spoken language. Additionally, grammatical accuracy is significant in various contexts, particularly where clear and precise speaking is required, such as in professional and academic settings (Derwing & Munro, 2005). Therefore, mastering English grammar is indispensable as a linguistic achievement and a key component in effectively using speaking skills in a globally interconnected environment.

This study investigates how multimedia inputs can help decrease linguistic errors among university-level EFL learners. The research focuses on inflectional morphemes (the third person singular present “-s,” past tense “-ed,” progressive “-ing,” past participle “-en,” plural “-s,” possessive “-s,” comparative “-er,” and superlative “-est”) to improve English grammar mastery among EFL learners by identifying common errors and enhancing communication accuracy. These morphemes are commonly misused by spoken EFL learners (Honrado & Biray, 2022; Yang & Jianguo, 2021). The primary objective is to evaluate multimedia input’s role in developing English-speaking proficiency of first-year university students, with a focus on diminishing error occurrences.

Furthermore, the study explores the influence of multimedia inputs on the student's capability to articulate English with fewer errors. The current study is motivated by the findings from various studies (Hwang et al., 2014; Mahdi, 2022; Muslem & Abbas, 2017; Nguyen & Pham, 2022) and underscores the significant impact of multimedia tools and technology in enhancing English speaking skills. Nguyen and Pham (2022) showed that various multimedia resources, including PowerPoint presentations, YouTube videos, speech recognition applications, and movies, greatly enhance spoken language skills in EFL students. Based on a study involving 46 Arabic-speaking undergraduates, Mahdi (2022) found that interactive multimedia environments notably improve speaking and presentation skills, focusing on a phonological aspect of non-native English speakers. Moreover, Muslem and Abbas (2017) revealed that immersive multimedia learning, increased by peer support, leads to considerable improvements in English speaking skills among first-year university EFL students, where high achievers showed enhanced speaking performance while low achievers made significant progress in speaking proficiency.

Furthermore, Hwang et al. (2014) illustrated that a web-based multimedia storytelling system markedly enhanced English-speaking skills, outperforming conventional learning methods. The system fostered active engagement and was well received by students for enhancing language skills and creative storytelling. Similarly, Cabrera-Solano (2020), exploring higher education contexts, demonstrated that digital portfolios significantly improve fluency in undergraduate EFL students. This study utilized tools like smartphones and Google Drive, indicating the effectiveness of portfolios in fostering oral skill practice and learner motivation.

The current study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of multimedia inputs in achieving oral proficiency in terms of grammatical accuracy of students learning English programs at the university level in Saudi Arabia. In particular, the research concentrates on examining the degree to which multimedia resources can assist in reducing errors associated with inflectional morphemes in the spoken English of these learners. By concentrating on this particular linguistic feature, the investigation aims to address the existing void in research and contribute to a more refined comprehension of how multimedia instruments can be employed to enhance not only overall language competence but also the intricate facets of linguistic structure (such as inflectional morphemes within EFL environments).

The aforementioned studies have assessed the efficacy of multimedia devices in enhancing English speaking skills in different contexts. However, there is a need for more comprehensive studies to evaluate the efficacy of multimedia inputs foregrounding English speaking skills to minimize errors related to inflectional morphemes. This gap leads to the hypothesis that EFL learners, when using multimedia inputs, may demonstrate a more significant enhancement in the productive skills of language, particularly in the accurate use of inflectional morphemes. This study aims to investigate two key aspects. First, it examines whether there is a notable difference in the frequency of inflectional morpheme errors between two groups of EFL learners in their spoken language. Second, it explores how multimedia inputs influence the occurrence of these errors by comparing the learners' performance in pre- and post-tests.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Multimedia Inputs*

Multimedia inputs profoundly influence pedagogical implications by integrating dynamic, diverse, and interactive elements that cater to various learning styles (Arifin et al., 2024). This approach aligns with Mayer's (2009) multimedia learning principles, suggesting combining visual and auditory materials enhances understanding and retention. Interactive Multimedia Elements (IME) tools incorporate audio-visual aids, interactive activities, and immediate feedback, providing a rich context for language exposure and practical application of language skills, which is crucial for developing proficiency (Ahmad & Alam, 2024). For instance, incorporating videos, podcasts, and interactive games offers a realistic context for practicing listening and speaking skills, fostering a more natural language acquisition process (Mago et al., 2023).

The adaptability of multimedia inputs to individual learning needs and proficiency levels allows learners to progress at their own pace, resonating with Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which emphasizes comprehensible input's importance in language learning (Krashen, 1982). Adaptive learning platforms, like Duolingo, for example, utilize algorithms to customize learning experiences, significantly enhancing language learning retention (Vesselinov & Grego, 2012). Moreover, multimedia's immediate feedback mechanisms aid in error correction and learning reinforcement, enhancing language accuracy and fluency (Nunan, 1999). Furthermore, the collaborative nature of multimedia inputs, through online forums and virtual classrooms, promotes interactive learning and cultural exchange, a vital element in language mastery (Lamy & Hampel, 2007; Kramsch, 1993). For educators, multimedia inputs provide tools to create more engaging lessons, utilizing multimedia resources to present language concepts in more accessible and appealing ways (Chapelle, 2001; Usama et al., 2024a). These resources enable a more individualized and learner-focused methodology, catering to diverse learning styles and inclinations, thus enhancing motivation and participation in language learning. Moreover, incorporating IME in language instruction promotes a transition from conventional instructor-centered techniques to a more learner-oriented paradigm, fostering active engagement and autonomous study, which are crucial for successful language learning (Usama et al., 2024b; Beg et al., 2025).

B. *Advantages of Multimedia Inputs in EFL Classrooms*

Multimedia inputs, which encompass a blend of textual, auditory, still imagery, animation, video, and interactive techniques, have emerged as a significant approach within the EFL learning context, providing a variety of advantages. The incorporation of multimedia in EFL pedagogy significantly boosts student involvement and enthusiasm, which are critical components in the acquisition of language, as evidenced by Mayer's (2009) findings that highlight the role of multimedia in fostering stimulating educational environments. This is pertinent to Prensky's (2001) concept of digital natives, which exhibits a greater affinity for digital learning modalities. Multimedia facilitates a multisensory learning experience, which, according to the theory of dual coding by Paivio (1990), enhances memory and understanding by processing information through both verbal and visual means. This multimodal approach is crucial for language learners as it caters to different learning styles, a concept supported by Fleming's (2001) VARK model, which identifies visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic learning preferences.

Furthermore, multimedia provides authentic language exposure essential for developing fluency and comprehension skills in a foreign language. Using real-life videos, podcasts, and interactive games introduces learners to varied linguistic contexts and cultural nuances, highlighting the importance of cultural understanding in language education (Kramsch, 1993). This exposure not only aids in developing listening and speaking skills but also enhances learners' cultural awareness, a critical component of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). Additionally, multimedia tools allow for individualized learning paths. Adaptive learning systems cater to individual learner needs, aligning with Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, emphasizing the necessity of tailored scaffolding that aligns with the learner's current abilities.

C. Effects of Multimedia Inputs in the EFL Learning Environment

The findings from various studies foreground significant contributions made by multimedia incorporations in classroom language-learning skills, particularly in listening, across diverse linguistic contexts. Sukjairungwattana (2023) focused on improving Chinese listening abilities among Thai university students through a novel workload-based learning model augmented with multimedia, employing a mixed-methods approach involving both students and experts. The study demonstrated significant enhancements in listening skills, emphasizing the importance of multimedia in conjunction with workload-based learning management. Similarly, İnceçay and Koçoğlu (2016) investigated how various multimedia input methods affect listening abilities in classroom teaching and learning. Their research combined quantitative and qualitative approaches and found that the audiovisual with subtitles mode adversely affects listening comprehension.

In contrast, the audio-combining mode with PowerPoint presentations proved to be the most effective, and students predominantly favored the audio-only mode. Al-Athwary and Lasloun (2021) conducted a quasi-experimental study on Saudi female EFL learners, comparing the efficacy of listening comprehension using aural versus audio-visual materials. The results indicated a significant improvement in the group exposed to audio-visual materials, highlighting the importance of these authentic realia in listening and comprehension skills. Lastly, Rahmawati and Sianturi (2021) examined the use of audio podcast-based learning media to enhance listening comprehension and pronunciation skills among English Literature students. Their study found that podcasts effectively improved students' pronunciation and listening skills, with a notable reduction in pronunciation errors and a positive student response to the learning medium. Together, these studies provide comprehensive insights into the beneficial impact of multimedia and various input modalities on language proficiency, especially in listening and speaking skills, in different educational and linguistic settings.

Furthermore, the studies by Alobaid (2020), Sun and Asmawi (2023), and Ai and Lu (2013) collectively provide perceptions of multimedia and innovative teaching models for enhancing English language writing skills. Alobaid's (2020) study investigated the impact of using the BBC Six-Minute English YouTube channel on the writing fluency of English language learners aged between 12 and 15. Incorporating IELTS-based writing tasks and various analyses over five months, the study demonstrated significant improvements in error-free T-units and idea organization in writing. However, it noted no substantial change in lexical density. This underscores the potential of platforms like YouTube in certain aspects of language learning.

Sun and Asmawi's (2023) study examined the Presentation-Assimilation-Discussion (PAD) Class Model with Chinese undergraduates and found notable improvements in their Business English writing abilities, specifically in content, language use, grammar, and structural organization. The mixed-methods approach highlighted the model's acceptance and effectiveness in improving writing performance. Ai and Lu's (2013) corpus-based study compared syntactic complexity between non-native and native speakers' university student writings, revealing marked differences in syntactic complexity across various dimensions. This finding indicates the necessity for targeted pedagogical approaches to improve syntactic development in non-native speakers. Together, these studies illustrate the efficacy of multimedia tools and innovative teaching methodologies in advancing different aspects of English language writing proficiency.

Refat et al. (2020), Cadio and Tan (2020), and Mahmoudi (2020) collectively examined the efficacy of technology-enhanced approaches in improving English grammar acquisition, with Refat et al. (2020) employing a sequential mixed-method design involving 115 undergraduates to assess the role of a mobile-assisted grammar-learning application on learner motivation. Utilizing the Instructional Material Motivation Survey (IMMS), paper-based tests, and interviews, the study found notable increases in student motivation across attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction, alongside significant improvements in tense learning performance. Cadio and Tan's (2020) research examined multimedia's efficacy among Grade 9 students. The pretest-posttest study with forty participants showed marked improvement in English grammar proficiency. The multimedia model was found to ease grammar learning, enhance interest in multimedia technology, promote independent learning, and foster collaborative opportunities.

Mahmoudi's (2020) study assessed the impact of grammatical accuracy among upper-intermediate EFL learners using online classes. Involving 20 students from the Pishtazan English Institute in Iran, the study demonstrated significant improvements in grammatical accuracy and learning motivation across the groups, that is, online and traditional methods. These studies collectively underscore the potential of technology-assisted learning tools and innovative teaching models in improving English grammar proficiency and learner motivation in various educational settings.

In their respective studies, Akkara et al. (2020) and Rahmawati and Sianturi (2021) explored technology-assisted methods in classroom pedagogy, mainly focusing on pronunciation skills. Akkara et al. (2020) implemented a mixed-methods approach with 25 first-year engineering students, using the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) model in Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Their study, including pre- and post-tests and interviews, demonstrated significant improvements in pronunciation, highlighting the efficacy of smartphones and the BYOD model. Rahmawati and Sianturi's (2021) study on pronunciation improvement through audio podcasts also employed a mixed-methods design. Their research showed notable advancements in pronunciation skills, evidenced by decreased errors, attributed to the structured practice facilitated by the podcasts.

Li and Tong (2018) examined the efficacy of digital tools in vocabulary teaching and learning across various educational contexts. They employed a quasi-experimental design with fourth and fifth graders, comparing E-flashcards and paper flashcards in Chinese vocabulary learning. Their findings showed that E-flashcards improved performance in

immediate and delayed tests and fostered more positive learning attitudes. Immanuel and Sahul's (2023) study explored integrating the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML) with code-switching, revealing significant improvements in English vocabulary among undergraduates, thereby underscoring the effectiveness of combining CTML and code-switching in language acquisition. The systematic review provides data from various studies on computer-based vocabulary learning in English language education (Regina & Devi, 2022). It has been identified that digital methodologies, particularly multimedia and gamified learning, significantly improve vocabulary retention and acquisition. The study by Hasram et al. (2021) is in line with highlighting vocabulary development among young students. Their quantitative analysis indicated notable improvements in vocabulary scores post-intervention, along with moderate satisfaction and engagement levels. Together, these studies affirm the substantial benefits of multimedia and computer-assisted tools in facilitating vocabulary learning and retention in different learning environments.

Nguyen and Pham (2022) underscore the significant role of multimedia tools and technology in advancing English speaking skills among EFL learners in various educational contexts, particularly highlighting the beneficial effects of tools like PowerPoint, YouTube, and speech recognition software. Their research underscored the pivotal role of technology in boosting students' confidence and proficiency in speaking English, thereby advocating for a paradigm shift towards more technology-integrated language learning approaches within educational contexts.

Similarly, Mahdi (2022) investigated multimedia inputs on non-native English speakers' speaking skills. Employing a mixed-method approach using pre-tests, visually recorded presentations, questionnaires, and semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews, Mahdi's (2022) study included 46 undergraduate students studying English. The results clearly demonstrated that students engaged in the multimedia environment significantly outperformed their counterparts in verbal presentation performance. The study highlights the efficacy of multimedia resources to nurture speaking skills among non-native English speakers.

Muslem and Abbas (2017) also assessed the efficiency of learning through immersive multimedia learning with peer support in improving English speaking skills. Using a quasi-experimental design that included post-tests, the research included 80 participants studying in an English language course. The salient findings revealed that the group exposed to peer support and immersive multimedia learning exhibited substantial improvements in all oral production measures for speaking, surpassing those without such support. It was observed from the findings that students with low and high achievements demonstrated enhanced speaking performance using multimedia. This research showed that the immense potential of immersive multimedia techniques increased with peer support in enhancing oral English production skills, offering promising prospects for enhancing language proficiency, especially among students facing academic challenges.

Hwang et al. (2016) meticulously scrutinized the effectiveness of a web-based multimedia storytelling system in ameliorating English speaking skills within the context of elementary school students. Employing a quasi-experimental design, their research illuminated the remarkable progress achieved by students who engaged with the multimedia system, showcasing significant improvements in speaking skills compared to their peers who adhered to conventional learning methods. Notably, the multimedia system engendered active engagement among students, with individual storytelling activities emerging as a potent catalyst for enhancing their speaking abilities. Additionally, students responded enthusiastically and positively towards the system, deeming it an invaluable tool for increasing EFL learners' language skills and enabling them to make constructive stories. This study served as a testament to the advantages of seamlessly integrating technology into language learning, especially through personalized and interactive activities that foster active participation and sustained engagement.

Finally, Cabrera-Solano (2020) concentrated on higher education, aiming to enhance EFL speaking skills through the innovative medium of online portfolios. The methodological framework was framed in a mixed-method approach, encompassing 42 undergraduate English-major students at the A2 level. The research included speaking rubrics, observation sheets, and pre- and post-questionnaires. The crux of the intervention involved students' crafting digital portfolios utilizing readily accessible tools such as smartphones and Google Drive, with the content comprising videos and audio addressing an array of topics. The noticeable outcomes demonstrated that digital portfolios effectively harnessed the potential to elevate students' fluency, marking an observable progression in their oral communication competencies (Alam, 2025). Furthermore, the incorporation of digital portfolios and the seamless integration of free storage services galvanized students' motivation to actively indulge in the practice of target language oral skills. The study highlighted the innovative possibilities inherent in technology-mediated language learning approaches, particularly within higher education settings where English language proficiency was enhanced (Alam et al., 2024). Collectively, incorporating these comprehensive research endeavors clearly underscores the transformative influence of multimedia tools and technology in English-speaking skill development. These studies collectively advocate for the strategic embrace of technology-driven language learning methodologies to nurture greater speaking competencies, promising enhanced language skills and heightened motivation and engagement among learners across diverse educational contexts.

D. Research Gap

Despite extensive research examining the effects of multimedia tools and technologies on various aspects of English language learning, a significant gap is still found. Based on the above-mentioned literature, none of the studies have focused explicitly on enhancing English speaking skills in terms of reducing or eliminating common errors of inflectional morphemes committed by EFL learners in their speaking. While these studies have significantly contributed to understanding how multimedia tools can improve general speaking proficiency, there needs to be more research targeting

the specific area of inflectional morpheme accuracy in spoken English. This gap suggests an opportunity to explore how multimedia and technology-assisted learning can address this aspect of language proficiency, thereby providing an effective approach to language pedagogy.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study was explored based on the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant variation in the occurrence of inflectional morpheme errors across two groups of EFL learners in their spoken?
2. How do multimedia inputs affect the rate of inflectional morpheme errors in the spoken language of EFL learners from the pretest to the posttest?

A. Participants

A sample of a total of 104 students currently studying at a Saudi Arabian university has been chosen using convenience sampling techniques in this study. The rationale for choosing this sampling technique is the accessibility, flexibility, and availability of the participants from the selected place since the target audience belongs to a homogenous group in this study. Therefore, the researcher adopted both convenience and random sampling. The participants are undergraduate students ranging in age from 19 to 23. The two groups were designated as an Experimental Group (N=52) and a Control Group (N=52). The selected groups were given four instruction sessions once a week for four weeks. The EFL instructors gave the participants general explanations of multimedia inputs to make sure everything was clear.

B. Experimental Group

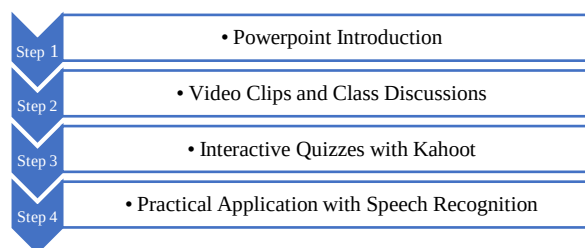


Figure 1. Activities for Experimental Group

Over four weeks, for three days each week, the instructor held one-and-a-half-hour sessions on teaching English inflectional morphemes. The instructor executed a comprehensive instructional plan designed by researchers of the study (see Figure 1) aimed at enhancing students' mastery of English inflectional morphemes. This targeted exploration focused on the eight fundamental morphemes: “-s,” “-ed,” “-ing,” “-en,” “-er,” “-est,” “-’s,” and “-es,” each pivotal to the grammatical structuring and nuance of the English language. The instructional journey began with the deployment of an interactive PowerPoint presentation in each session. These presentations were not merely expository tools but were carefully crafted to provide visual and contextual clarity, making abstract grammatical concepts tangible and accessible to the learners. The presentations served as a foundational platform and set the stage for the learning process's more profound, more interactive phases.

In the second step of the instructional framework, the sessions were enriched with a series of relevant video clips. These clips were carefully selected and sourced from a variety of contexts, such as YouTube and online courses, which showcase the application of the specific morpheme under study in real-world conversational scenarios. This method effectively creates equivalence between theory and praxis of multimedia usage in classroom pedagogy, offering students a glimpse into these inflectional morphemes' real-life relevance and application. The video segments were followed by class discussions, which were instrumental in reinforcing the learning. These discussions provided a platform for students to engage in analytical thinking, articulate their understanding, and seek clarifications, thereby fostering a deeper internalization of the morphemes.

To further reinforce the learning objectives, the third step of each session involved an interactive and competitive quiz using the digital platform Kahoot. Tailored to the specific morpheme covered in the session, these quizzes transformed the learning experience into a dynamic and engaging process. The gamified nature of these quizzes fostered a sense of excitement among the students and served as an effective tool for consolidating their knowledge. By actively participating in these quizzes, students could apply their understanding in a fun and stimulating environment, enhancing retention and comprehension.

The final step in each session was dedicated to practical application facilitated through speech recognition software. Students were encouraged to actively construct and articulate sentences incorporating the morpheme of focus for the day. This hands-on practice was crucial in bridging the gap between the passive reception of knowledge and active application. The use of speech recognition technology in this phase was particularly impactful as it provided students with immediate feedback on their spoken output, focusing specifically on the accuracy of their morpheme usage and pronunciation. This aided in reinforcing the correct usage of morphemes and heightened students' awareness of their spoken English skills.

C. Control Group

The instructor applied a traditional non-multimedia approach to teach English inflectional morphemes to a control group of English language learners. The lesson began with a lecture-style introduction using a whiteboard, where the instructor listed and explained the eight key inflectional morphemes (“-s,” “-ed,” “-ing,” “-en,” “-er,” “-est,” “-’s,” and “-es,”), providing clear examples for each. This was followed by group reading activities where students were divided into small groups and given texts from English literature, focusing on the usage of the various morphemes that they read and discussed. The instructor then distributed worksheets with exercises for identifying and using the correct morphemes, including fill-in-the-blank and sentence correction exercises. To reinforce the quick application of morphemes, flashcard drills were conducted where students practiced adding the correct morphemes to base words. The lesson also incorporated a listening and repetition exercise using a traditional audio system to play recorded dialogues for students to mimic the correct usage of morphemes. The session concluded with a class discussion to address questions and summarize key points. This comprehensive non-multimedia methodology was employed for teaching English inflectional morphemes, emphasizing direct teacher-student interaction and peer learning.

D. Data Collection and Analysis

In this investigation, the initial tool employed to standardize participant levels was the Interpreting Scores for Oxford Placement Test (OQPT). The proficiencies of the participants were categorized into pre-intermediate and intermediate levels and based on band scores ranging from 33 to 36 out of 60, classifying these as pre-intermediate. Inter-rater reliability was utilized to ascertain the dependability of the initial test, yielding a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.981. Similarly, the dependability of the concluding test was established using the same statistical method with a coefficient of 0.894. Four English teachers validated both preliminary and concluding tests.

A picture was given to the students to elaborate upon in 5 minutes for the pretest. Similarly, another picture was given to the students to elaborate upon in 5 minutes for the posttest. For both the pretest and the posttest, different pictures were utilized. During the data collection phase, as participants described the image, their verbal responses were recorded using an iPhone by the researcher, who informed them about the recording process. Subsequently, these audio recordings were transcribed. Following the transcription, the Error Analysis (EA) methodology, as outlined by Corder (1981), was applied to categorize and identify the errors within the study. Errors were labelled according to Dulay et al. (1982). Surface Structure Taxonomy, addition, omission, and misinformation were utilized. Then, errors were described and classified according to inflectional morphemes.

The researcher employed SPSS version 22 to analyze the data. The approach included conducting a repeated measures ANOVA to compare results from pretests and posttests for both the control and experimental groups.

IV. RESULTS

ANOVA revealed significant effects across three different variables. For the inflectional morphemes variable, the result of the study revealed the significant effect $F(1, 51) = 176.540$, $p < .001$, with a partial $\eta^2 p = .786$, indicating substantial differences in the levels of inflectional morphemes (Figure 2). The mean score of errors EFL learners committed in inflectional morphemes ranked from the most to the least common. The past tense (“-ed”) morpheme with the highest mean error value that was close to 6 suggests that learners struggle most frequently with this aspect. It is followed by the progressive (“-ing”) morpheme, with a mean score of error value approaching 4, indicating a slightly lesser degree of difficulty. The past participle (“-en”) and the plural (“-s”) morphemes occupy the mid-range, with a mean score of error values between 2 and 4. Just above the 2 mark is the possessive morpheme (“-’s”), signaling fewer errors than its predecessors. At the lower end, the comparative (“-er”) and superlative (“-est”) morphemes exhibit the least mean score error values, marginally over 1, which suggests that learners are less challenged by these morphological forms.

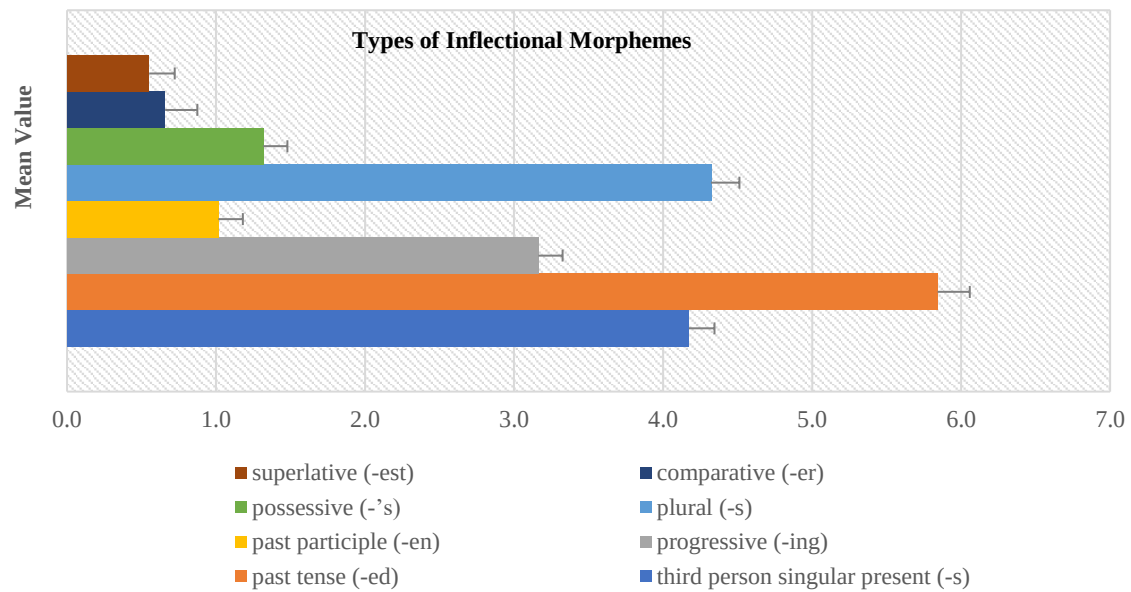


Figure 2. Types of Inflectional Morphemes

Similarly, a main effect was observed that was significant for the group variable, $F(1, 51) = 225.458$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 p = .824$, entailing notable variations across the groups (experimental, control) (Figure 3). It showed that EFL learners had committed more errors in comparison to the experimental group. The results disclose that multimedia inputs minimize inflectional morphemes errors in spoken English rather than other traditional approach.

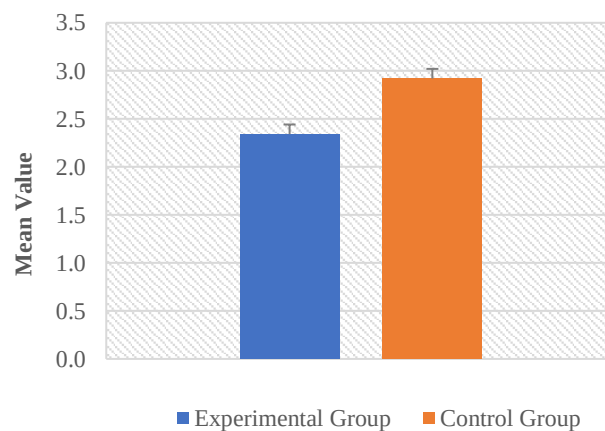


Figure 3. Mean Values for Both the Experimental and Control Groups

Lastly, the assessment variable also demonstrated a significant main effect, $F(1, 51) = 130.689$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 p = .731$, signifying considerable differences in the assessment conditions (pretest, posttest) (Figure 4, below). It demonstrated that the EFL learners had reduced the errors in their speaking for posttest. These results indicate that each variable's inflectional morphemes, groups, and assessments significantly influence the dependent variable.

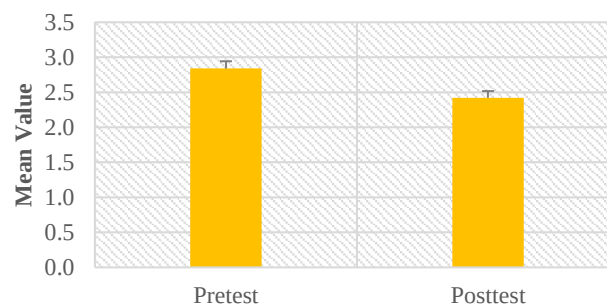


Figure 4. Mean Values for Both the Pretest and Posttest

Significant interactions were observed across multiple variable combinations in the analysis of interaction effects. The interaction between inflectional morphemes and groups (experimental and control) was significant, $F(1, 51) = 19.698$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2p = .291$, indicating that the impact of groups varies across different inflectional morphemes levels (Figure 5). Additionally, the results indicates that multimedia inputs impact in reducing errors of spoken English in comparison to traditional method of pedagogy. Similarly, inflectional morphemes and assessments (pre-test and post-test) had significant interaction, $F(1, 51) = 11.807$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2p = .197$, suggesting that the effect of assessments changes across various inflectional morphemes (Figure 6). Furthermore, the result shows that multimedia inputs influence on minimizing errors of spoken English across these inflectional morphemes.

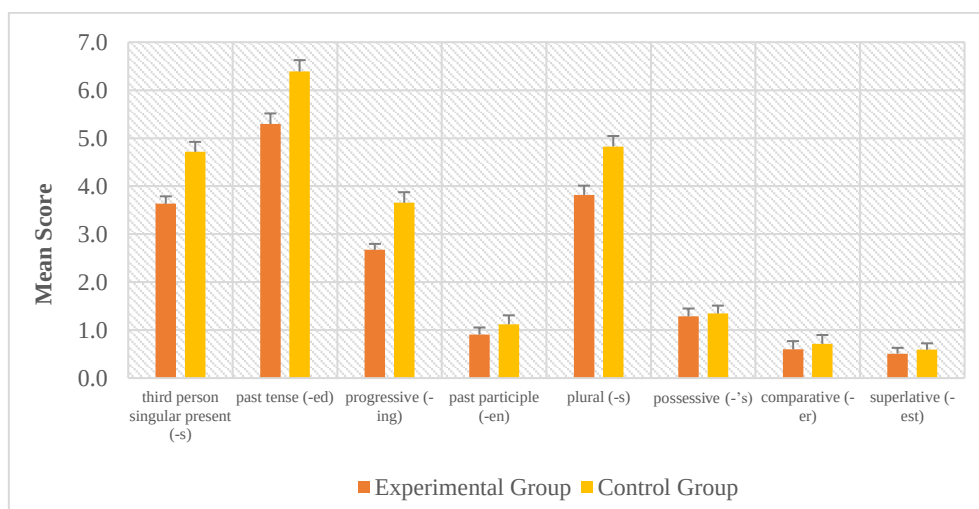


Figure 5. Mean Variations Across Inflectional Morphemes Between Experimental and Control Group

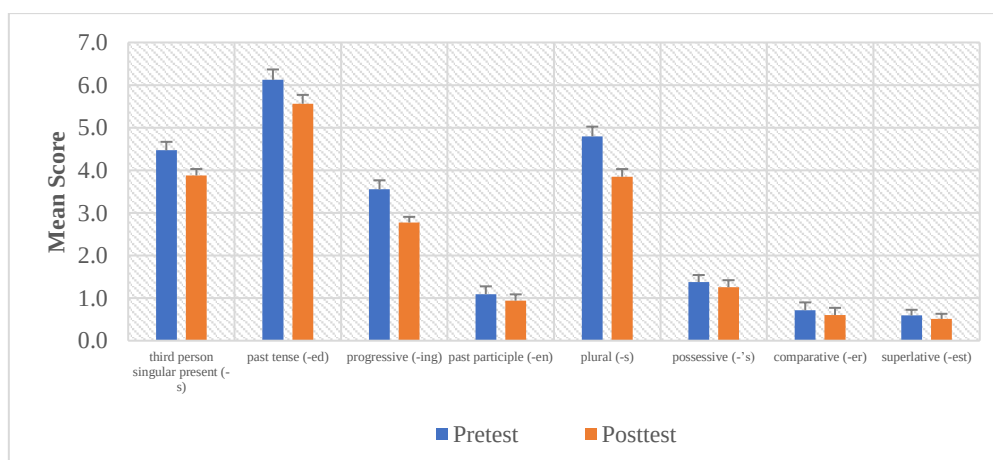


Figure 6. Mean Variations Across Inflectional Morphemes Between Pretest and Posttest

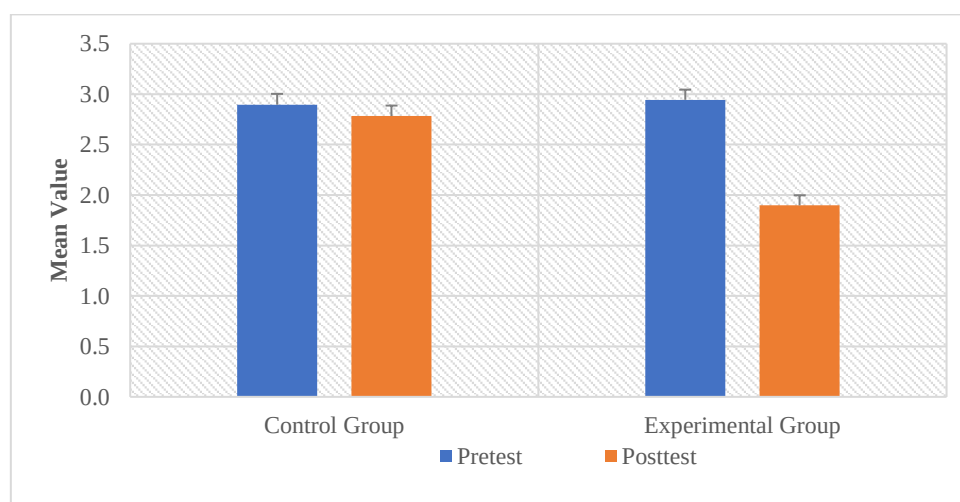


Figure 7. Mean Variations Across Tests Between Control and Experimental Group

In addition, the interaction between groups and assessments was also notable, $F(1, 51) = 232.579$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2p = .829$, implying that the influence of groups differs across assessment conditions (Figure 7). Moreover, a significant three-way interaction among inflectional morphemes, groups, and assessments was observed, $F(1, 51) = 19.556$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2p = .289$, demonstrating that the interaction effects of inflectional morphemes and groups vary with the levels of assessments. These findings suggest complex interdependencies among the variables: inflectional morphemes, groups, and assessments.

V. DISCUSSION

The study consolidates two crucial findings: first, it highlights a significant difference in the occurrence of inflectional morpheme errors between EFL learners taught through multimedia-based and traditional methods, with the former group showing markedly fewer errors. Second, it demonstrates that multimedia inputs significantly reduce the rate of these errors over time, from pretest to post-test. This dual insight underscores the effectiveness of multimedia tools in enhancing grammatical accuracy and language proficiency in EFL contexts. The results advocate for multimedia integration in language instruction, emphasizing its role as an immediate aid in learning complex grammatical structures and to achieve sustained improvement in linguistic competency over time. The findings suggest a transformative potential of multimedia inputs in EFL pedagogy, particularly in mastering intricate aspects like inflectional morphemes.

The noticeable difference in inflectional morpheme errors between the experimental group receiving multimedia instruction and the control group subjected to traditional teaching methods substantiates the pedagogical advantages of multimedia learning identified in the literature. Research has shown the effectiveness of multimedia inputs in language instruction, emphasizing their ability to engage various sensory modalities, thus facilitating a richer and more effective learning experience (Martinez, 2022). The reduced error rate in the experimental group aligns with the findings by Mutlu-Bayraktar et al. (2019), who observed enhanced cognitive engagement and retention of linguistic concepts through multimedia stimuli.

Moreover, the specific benefits of multimedia in teaching inflectional morphemes are supported by Lin et al. (2021), who noted the effectiveness of such instructional tools in learning complex grammatical structures. The findings from the present study add to this discourse and suggest that the multimedia approach offers a pedagogical advantage in EFL contexts, potentially due to its ability to provide context-rich, interactive learning scenarios that traditional methods may not (Wu et al., 2014). The study's findings on the multimedia-instructed group's progress are particularly significant, given the substantial evidence supporting multimedia learning's transformative effects in EFL education.

The study's results, showing multimedia inputs significantly reduce inflectional morpheme errors in EFL learners' spoken language from pretest to posttest, align with the expanding research available on multimedia's effectiveness in language acquisition. The observed enhancement in the experimental group's command over inflectional morphemes post-multimedia intervention is consistent with the assertions made by Martinez (2022), who highlight multimedia's significant role as a language learning facilitator. Multimedia inputs provide a rich, multimodal educational experience that traditional teaching methods often lack. Engaging through various sensory pathways fosters deeper linguistic comprehension and retention (Liu, 2024). The specific improvement in handling inflectional morphemes can be attributed to the comprehensive and interactive nature of multimedia tools, which creates more engaging and contextually relevant learning environments. The application of visual aids, interactive elements like quizzes, and incorporation of contextualized visuals in multimedia pedagogy, as pointed out by Cairncross and Mannion (2001) and Vu et al. (2021), significantly aids in the practical usage and its application of grammatical concepts. This approach is efficient for teaching inflectional morphemes, which are critical for grammatical precision and require a nuanced understanding that multimedia tools are acceptable for providing the complete usage in EFL learning and teaching context.

These findings were effectively analyzed through the lens of established educational theories, particularly Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory. Vygotsky's ZPD theory posits that optimal learning transpires when educational activities are precisely aligned within the learner's ZPD, defined as the gap between a learner's independent proficiency and their potential with guidance (Vygotsky, 1978). In utilizing multimedia inputs in teaching inflectional morphemes, these tools likely act as a scaffolding mechanism situated ideally within the learners' ZPD. Multimedia, by integrating visual and auditory elements, offers a richer and more contextualized learning experience compared to traditional methods, which may lack these layered cues, thus facilitating better understanding and retention of grammatical rules (Mayer, 2002). Additionally, multimedia resources effectively serve as the 'more knowledgeable other,' a concept central to Vygotsky's theory, providing essential guidance that helps learners navigate through their ZPD. This scaffolding process aids students in internalizing the rules associated with inflectional morphemes, enabling them to utilize these grammatical elements more accurately and confidently over time (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976; Ajmal et al., 2025).

The pronounced reduction in error rates from the pretest to the posttest illustrates multimedia's effectiveness in reducing linguistic inaccuracies. It supports Vygotsky's importance of the critical role of structured instructional support in cognitive development (Ormrod, 2014). Furthermore, incorporating multimedia tools in language instruction aligns with Vygotsky's advocacy for interactive and mediated learning environments, which enhance cognitive development by providing learners with opportunities to develop a more profound understanding through active engagement and exploration (Kozulin, 2003). Thus, the study's findings highlight the efficacy of multimedia in enhancing linguistic

accuracy among EFL learners, substantiating the theoretical framework provided by Vygotsky's ZPD, which underscores the importance of mediated learning and scaffolding in educational settings (Scribner & Cole, 1978).

VI. CONCLUSION

The conclusion reiterates the profound impact of multimedia-based instruction on EFL pedagogy and its incorporation of enhanced learning outcomes. It firmly establishes that the use of multimedia tools results in a substantial reduction in inflectional morpheme errors among EFL learners, which has far-reaching implications for language pedagogy. By providing a dynamic, engaging, and interactive learning environment, multimedia inputs facilitate a deeper understanding and retention of complex grammatical structures. The study's findings carry important implications for educational practice, curriculum design, and teacher professional development. By integrating multimedia, instructors can maximize learning outcomes in EFL classrooms and use various multimedia tools to create more effective and engaging EFL lessons that can help students improve their grammatical accuracy. Curriculum designers can incorporate multimedia-based modules to enhance language programs aligning with modern teaching methodologies. Furthermore, teacher training programs can empower instructors to integrate multimedia tools in classroom teaching. Still, it is crucial to recognize the study's constraints (such as sample size and duration), which may impact the general implications of the results. Considering these limitations, future research should focus on exploring the long-term effects of multimedia instruction, examining its applicability across diverse learner demographics, and conducting comparative studies on different types of multimedia tools. The platform may further contribute to the evolution of EFL pedagogy, ensuring that language learners receive the most effective and innovative instructional experiences.

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Designing Need-Based Learning Material Properly? A Practical Guide for Teachers

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Abstract—Teachers who work on improving learners' performance often find it extremely difficult to develop learning materials tailored to their learners' needs. Creating new learning materials without a deep understanding can lead to weak outcomes and may widen the gap in the learners' language skills. Designing and creating effective learning materials should follow a series of steps. While books on designing new learning materials describe these steps in detail, they lack practical and statistical application. This paper serves as a clear guideline for teachers, offering a practical application of these steps based on the learners' needs, especially in syntax. The paper outlines these steps, starting with the analysis phase and ending with the approval stage, including the application of the material to a randomly selected group of learners.

Index Terms—performance, self-learning material, quality education, syntax, kit

I. INTRODUCTION

The teachers in charge find that selecting the best learning material for a specific student's level is an extremely difficult task (Abu Anzeh et al., 2022). Publishers offer a vast collection of different learning series for different learner levels but there is still a need for designing professionally developed learning materials to suit the learning needs (Al-Nofaie, 2021). The question is whether this learning material is suitable for learners' levels or whether changes should be made to address gaps in their learning.

Many researchers have studied the field of learners' difficulties in learning English as a second or foreign language (Al-Nasser, 2015). Their studies indicate that several factors contribute to these difficulties, such as the teachers' proficiency, the learners' background, the strategies used in the classroom, and the learning materials. Designing and implementing effective instructional materials is crucial for teaching and student learning. Research indicates that the strongest predictor of student achievement is teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Rivkin et al., 2005; Yaseen et al., 2024), which includes the instructional practices and materials used.

Arab learners make various linguistic errors when using English in different situations. These mistakes occur because they do not fully understand the structure of English (El Sayed, 2020). Teachers also contribute to the issue by not providing adequate guidance to the students. These issues often stem from differences in the curricula used. Most curricula focus on teaching the four skills in general but neglect the importance of integrating language skills (Hinkel, 2006). Moreover, various teaching methods are also used, but students are not given the opportunity to engage in self-help activities (Al-Shara'h et al., 2021). Thus, creating self-learning materials to improve their performance and manage their learning process is essential. Such materials can support students in internalizing their understanding of the importance of learning English, quality education, and contribute to their independent learning outside the classroom.

The main aim of this research is to provide a practical example of these steps involved in proposing and developing any self-learning material. The given example focuses on proposing a single chapter consisting of three lessons in grammar. This topic was selected based on the results of the first step in proposing and developing learning materials, known as the need analysis step. This practical example serves as guidance for teachers, researchers, and curricula developers and designers who aim to enhance their learners' performance based on validated statistics taken from real exams.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching and learning materials used in teaching are considered learning resources which contain the substance of certain achieved abilities. These learning materials include the necessary knowledge, skills, and ability to apply (Trainto, 2012). According to Aydin and Aytakin (2024), teaching materials are all forms of materials used to assist instructors and teachers in carrying out teaching and learning activities. These teaching materials are designed and arranged systematically to enable the students to learn actively. Some learning materials are designed with evaluative tests at the beginning and end of each chapter to measure the learning performance and learning outcomes.

Learning materials used in all academic institutions are books that are used to deliver knowledge and deepen the learners' understanding of specific topics. Therefore, they contain different tasks and exercises that can require active learning based on educational standards outcomes. They also focus on the development of effective, psychomotor and

cognitive aspects to make these learning materials more meaningful. Therefore, psychomotor is connected to the learning outcomes achieved by students through students' learning activities and practicum.

Designing learning materials should be addressed by implementing different processes to insure its suitability to the learners' needs. Borg and Gall's design is considered as one of the workable designs which depends on designing learning materials based on the learners' needs. This design is called Research and Development Design which contains different stages starting with the needs analysis stage until the final product. The need of analysis is the initial stage that diagnoses the learners' difficulties in achieving the learning outcomes.

Andriani et al. (2021) stated that developing learning materials starts at needs assessment phase which is commonly performed in early stage to diagnose subject's characteristics. Needs assessment refers to three phases: information collection, analysis, and framework development. Therefore, need assessment defines educational needs and decides which areas' priorities. These steps are followed by validation phase where the learning materials prove their quality after applying different adjustments in a long revision phase. These phases result in a suitable learning material that can be considered suitable for the learning outcomes, which is beneficial to education.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Question

The research aims to answer the following question:

What steps can be applied to propose a self-learning kit?

B. Participants

The participants of this study are divided into two groups. The first group is involved in the learners' data analysis in the research methodology. The researcher chose one hundred students' exam papers from a selected university in Jordan to investigate the learners' errors and understand their needs, which will form the basis of the proposed learning material. Those learners enrolled in a communication skills course. Their levels were similar due to the requirements for enrolling in such a course, which required a GPA higher than 2.0. This step is supported by the students' teachers from the same semester to provide a deeper understanding of the learners' needs. The second group is involved in the validity step where the researcher chose another communication skills class from the same university to apply the proposed learning material to find out the difficulty and discrimination indices, which are a main step in proposing learning materials.

C. Instrument

The initial instrument is university exam papers, which were used in the needs analysis step. Other instruments vary based on the phases followed in the methodology.

D. Data Collection and Study Procedures

As stated by Gall et al. (2003), different steps can be followed to ensure the suitability of the proposed learning material starting with the needs analysis step and ending with the application of the readability level. The diagram below clarifies these steps:

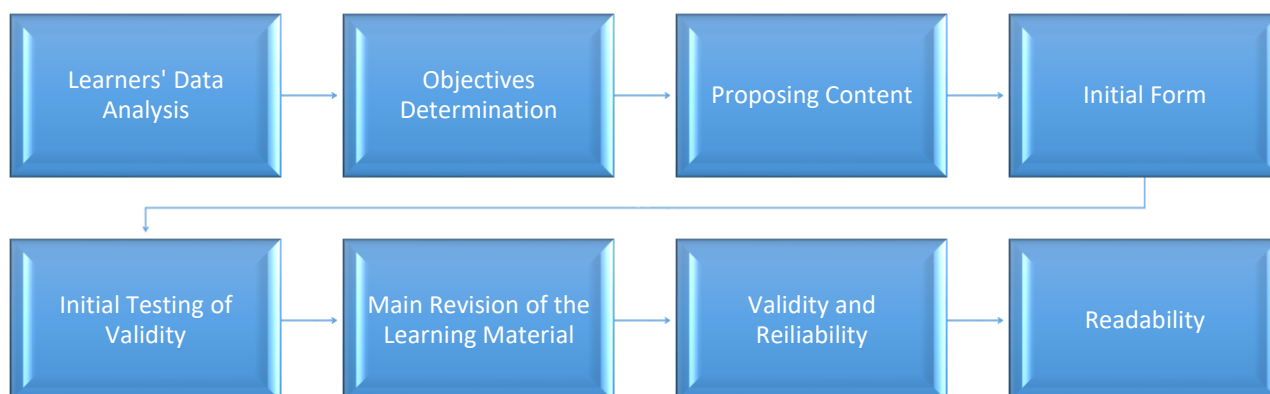


Figure 1. Gall, Gall and Brog (2007): Phases of Research & Development Conceptual Framework

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Step 1: Learners' Data Analysis

The need for needs analysis or assessment is the foundation of designing any effective learning material because it is based on the learners' needs (Jalabneh, 2001). This step is essential for identifying and determining the learners' gaps and investigating their needs to address obstacles in learning (Irfadila & Noprika, 2022). This step serves as the initial step in formulating the learning objectives based on the gathered data for the analysis step. Additionally, it provides teachers with a clear path regarding what learners should be able to do after the learning practice (Al-Janaydeh & Dheif, 2022; Alsaifi, 2024).

The sources of the needs analysis data vary and can include information from teachers and from the students' records of previous exams. This data should be analyzed to determine students' needs based on their errors. These errors form the basis for setting the objectives of the new learning material, which are addressed in the second step, as shown in the table below marked with (*), referring to the most frequently committed errors and those recommended by the teachers. Moreover, interviews with teachers add further value to the collected data from the students' results and help prioritize the most common errors made by learners.

The researcher analyzed one hundred exam papers from students over one semester to identify the types of errors committed by those students, numbered from one to eight as shown in Table 1 below. The researcher presented these error types to the four teachers who taught the selected students in the same semester. The teachers were asked to rank the importance of these error types based on their teaching experience and perspectives.

TABLE 1
SYNTACTIC ERRORS COMMITTED BY THE STUDENTS AND BY TEACHERS

Areas of Syntactic Errors	Number of Students' Errors	Level/Rank	Teachers' Perceptions	Level/Rank	Average Rank
Using verbs to be and to have	145	1	24	1	1*
Using SVO pattern	90	4	41	4	4
Using The Articles	95	3	39	3	3*
Using Prepositions	85	5	43	5	5
Using Past and Present Tenses	25	7	46	6	7
Using Conjunctions	35	6	69	8	7
Subject-Verb Agreement	100	2	31	2	2*
Using Modals	15	8	62	7	8
1= Most Errors / 8= Least Errors / * Selected Content of the Self-learning Kit					

As shown in the table, the students committed eight types of errors, labeled as: Using verbs 'Be' and 'Have', Using Subject-Verb-Object Pattern, Using the Articles, Using Prepositions, Using Past and Present Tenses, Using Conjunctions, Subject-Verb Agreement, and Using Modals). These types were ranked based on the number of errors committed statistically. Then, each teacher ranked the same types from one to eight based on their importance from their own perspective. Finally, both rankings were computed to show the average ranking of the collected data. The top three rankings were selected to determine the components of the proposed self-learning kit.

Step 2: Objectives Determination

The second stage in designing the learning materials is determining the objectives that should be covered in the proposed learning material (Jamil, 2020). These objectives should be designed based on Bloom's Taxonomy to achieve the desired course outcomes. As stated by Al Qaralleh et al. (2024) and Al-Shallakh (2024), outcomes are good indicators to the achievement of the desired goals. Adithan (2015) stated that Bloom's Taxonomy is a model used to categorize objectives of learning by levels of complexity and specificity. It was formed to outline and clarify how learners acquire new knowledge and skills.

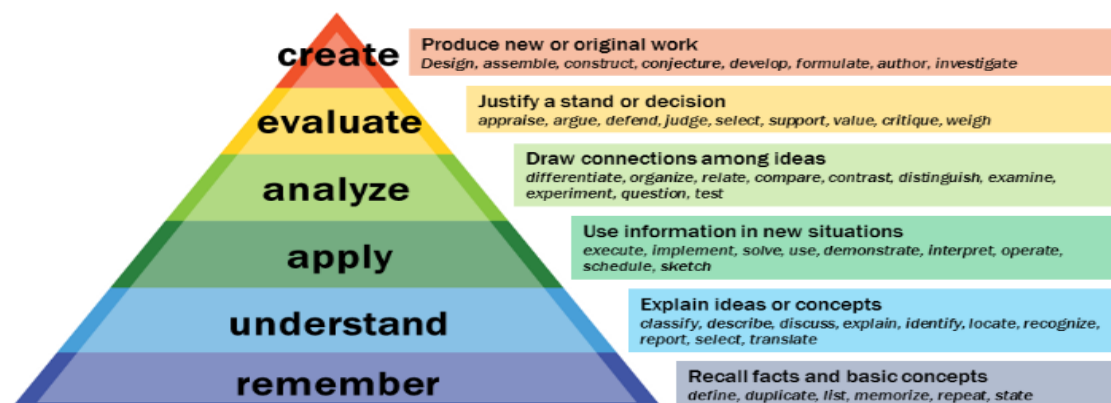


Figure 2. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001): Blooms' Taxonomy

In designing the proposed self-learning kit, these objectives should be stated at the beginning of each unit/chapter and each lesson. Additionally, a two-way chart called the 'Table of Specifications' should be created to ensure the balanced distribution of the objectives and activities across the lessons, effectively meeting the intended goals.

As stated earlier, this paper presents a sample of each step in designing a self-learning material, which includes a pre-test and a post-test for each unit, in addition to the content of the included learning material. These activities, along with both test items (pre-test and post-test) items, should be balanced with the objectives. To determine weight the activities, the equation (sum of activities divided by the sum of all items in the activities by 100%) is applied. This step also helps in determining the weight of activities within the learning material and the item weights in both tests for each lesson, as clarified in Table 2:

TABLE 2
CONTENT DISTRIBUTION BASED ON THE OBJECTIVES

Chapter	Chapter One: Syntax		
Lessons	1	2	3
Areas	Verb To Be	SVO Agreement	The Articles
Objectives	3	3	3
Pre-test	15	15	15
Input	6	6	6
Activities	6	6	6
Post-test	15	15	15

The previous table shows the distribution of objectives in balance with and relation to the content of the chapter in the proposed learning material. It is observed that the number of objectives is balanced with all other items: the number of pre-test questions, input topics, activities, and post-test questions. Implementing this step ensures that the content of each section is proportionate to its objectives. For example, three objectives correspond to fifteen pre-test questions, six input topics, six activities, and fifteen post-test questions. In other words, each objective is addressed by five pre-test questions, two inputs, two activities, and five post-test questions.

Step 3: Proposing the Content

This step is the most comprehensive, as it involves formulating the proposed learning material content in alignment with the objectives and other components of the material. The proposed learning material should be designed according to established guidelines that show the necessary components and elements (Madariaga et al., 2021). These guidelines determine how the content is presented, including the number of pages per chapter, the uniformity of activities, the presentation method of them, the language of the instructions, the page size, the font size of each part, the expected duration to complete the selected content, and the time allocated for reviewing the content of the learning material.

Step 4: Initial Form

This step is also important and supplements the previous step in forming and evaluating the new learning material. This stage involves obtaining feedback from experts in the field of learning material design (Nathenson & Henderson, 2017). The experts assess the content of the learning material and its suitability in meeting the proposed objectives. The experts also evaluate the characteristics of the proposed learning materials. For instance, a self-learning material should be self-directed, self-explanatory, self-contained, self-motivated, self-evaluative and ultimately self-learning.

Step 5: Initial Testing of Validity

After checking the characteristics of the proposed learning material and receiving approval from the experts, it is time to conduct the initial validity test to determine whether the proposed learning material is designed for its intended purpose. This validation process consists of two sub-steps, which are carried out by the experts:

- A- Face validity
- B- Content validity

Face validity involves experts reviewing the format and structure of the learning materials to ensure that they meet the intended objectives. They also assess whether the materials accurately measure what they are intended to measure. The second process, known as content validity, involves examining the number and structure of activities, exams, questions, and input exercises within the materials. It assesses how well the materials cover the full range of the concept being measured, including a review of the tables of specifications for the activities, pre-tests, and post-tests (Logan et al., 2021).

The validation process is crucial when designing learning materials, as it allows researchers to gauge reactions to the new resource and determine whether it meets the identified needs. The mean average helps determine the acceptance of the elements of the proposed learning material. A copy of the proposed material along with an evaluation questionnaire, is sent to several experts. The evaluation of different components is collected, and the results are used to assess whether the characteristics are considered fair or poor, with average and above being deemed acceptable. The table below provides a sample of the evaluation criteria for the face-validity process.

TABLE 3
FACE VALIDITY

Section One – Format of Chapter One (pages 2-72)					
	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
1.Content in a logical order	1	2	3	4	5
2.Organization of content and layout	1	2	3	4	5
3.Readability of the text	1	2	3	4	5
4.Appropriate grammar and vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
5.Use clear pictures and colors	1	2	3	4	5
Section Two – Content of Chapter One (pages 2-72)					
6. Activities in the kit are enough.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Scope and content are appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
8. Relevance of the content	1	2	3	4	5
9. Clear instructions before activities	1	2	3	4	5
10. Overall content quality	1	2	3	4	5

To evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed self-learning material, it is essential to conduct a thorough validity test. This step is considered the deeper way of measuring the components of the designed self-learning material by applying the table of specifications that describes the topics that should be covered in the activities, as well as both pre- and post-tests in a step later. The Table of Specification classifies the domains measured and ensures a fair representation of questions appearing in the tests. It also helps teachers conduct tests and see how these questions focus on the key areas and their weight to the lessons' objectives based on their importance.

To modify a Table of Specification (ToS) effectively, it is crucial to understand that improving validity depends on the specific evaluation context. The term validity refers to the level to which teachers' evaluations of students are reliable and trustworthy based on the gathered evidence (Kukwi & Galle, 2023). Table 5 below outlines the content of the Specification Table for the activities in the proposed Self-learning Kit.

To determine the weight of the activities, the following formula was implemented: (sum of items in the activities ÷ total number items in all activities of the lesson by 100%). In this lesson, there are 48 items in activities. To calculate the weight of each activity, the researcher divided the number of the items of the activity by the total number of the activities in the entire lesson, and then multiplied the results by 100 to obtain the percentage weight, as clarified at the top of the equation column. The percentages demonstrate a consistent ratio, indicating that the activities are well-organized and aligned with the lesson objectives.

The same process was applied to all lessons in the chapter. The percentage column serves as the judgment criterion, reflecting the relative importance of each activity within the content of its corresponding lesson and objectives.

TABLE 4
ACTIVITIES OF THE SELF-LEARNING KIT

Chapter	Lessons	NO. of Objectives (ILOs)	Activities (AC)	Number of Items in the Activity	Equation (sum items over sum of items in ACs×100)	Percentage
Chapter One: Syntax	1	3	1	10	$10/48 \times 100$	20.8%
			2	7	$7/48 \times 100$	14.6%
			3	7	$7/48 \times 100$	14.8%
			4	10	$10/48 \times 100$	20.8%
			5	7	$7/48 \times 100$	14.5%
			6	7	$7/48 \times 100$	14.8%
	Total			48		100%
	2	3	1	7	$7/21 \times 100$	33.3%
			2	7	$7/21 \times 100$	33.3%
			3	7	$7/48 \times 100$	33.3%
	Total			21		~100%
	3	3	1	10	$10/27 \times 100$	37%
			2	10	$10/27 \times 100$	37%
			3	7	$7/27 \times 100$	26%
	Total			27		100%

The Table of Specifications below was designed to measure whether the questions in the pre-tests and post-tests align with the lesson's objectives. It was used to identify the achievement areas being measured and to guarantee that the assessments were constructed in accordance with the objectives and maintaining a balanced focus on each part. Its purpose was to ensure a strong correlation between what was taught and what was assessed. The researcher developed this table to evaluate the validity of the Self-learning kit. This step involves assessing the weight of both test questions in relation to their objectives. This is also called the Table of Specifications for the pre-test and post-tests.

TABLE 5
TOS OF THE ACTIVITIES

Chapter	Lessons	Objectives	Pretest Questions	Total	Percentage	Posttest Questions	Total	Percentage
one	one	Objective 1	1-3-5-7-8	5	33.33%	3-5-9-10-15	5	33.33%
		Objective 2	2-4-6-11-15	5	33.33%	1-2-4-18-19	5	33.33%
		Objective 3	9-10-12-13-14	5	33.33%	6-7-8-11-13	5	33.33%
	two	Objective 1	3-4-7-9-12	5	33.33%	1-4-8-9-11	5	33.33%
		Objective 2	8-10-11-13-15	5	33.33%	3-5-7-12-13	5	33.33%
		Objective 3	12-5-6-14	5	33.33%	2-6-10-15-17	5	33.33%
	three	Objective 1	2-6-10-12-15	5	33.33%	5-7-9-12-16	5	33.33%
		Objective 2	7-9-11-13-14	5	33.33%	2-3-4-8-11	5	33.33%
		Objective 3	1-3-4-5-8	5	33.33%	1-6-10-13-14	5	33.33%

Step 6: Main Revision of the Learning Material

Based on the experts' feedback regarding format, content, and construct validity, the proposed self-learning material underwent significant revisions. This step is the initial major revision that incorporates the suggested changes (Abdalla, 2013).

Step 7: Validity & Reliability

Construct validity ensures that the measurement method accurately reflects the construct the researcher intends to measure (AlSmadi & AlNasraween, 2022). This is achieved by verifying that the measurements are based on relevant existing knowledge, can help determine this. By examining the Discrimination Indices and Difficulty Index of both internal and external groups, we can assess how well the construct is operationalized in real-world settings. It is important to mention that this guidance is applied only the internal group due to the size of the paper's word limitations. For the external group indices, the same calculations can be used on another group not related to the students in the internal group.

TABLE 6
RELIABILITY TEST

Type of Test	Group	/Indexes
Reliability Test	Internal Group	Discrimination Index
		Difficulty Index
	External Group	Discrimination Index
		Difficulty Index

The index tables are designed to align course objectives, lesson topics, time allocations, and chapter topics, ensuring coherence between what is taught, assessed, and the appropriate level of difficulty for students. These tables serve as a valuable link between the learning objectives, teaching process, and assessment/testing process. In other words, they measure how effectively each test item differentiates between knowledgeable and less knowledgeable students.

This process of evaluating the discrimination indices is applied to the self-learning kit activities and the pre- and post-tests for each lesson, ensuring alignment between the assessment questions and the intended learning objectives. The discrimination index was calculated for both pre-test and post-test items:

1. Learners took the pre-test, then went through the lesson, and finally took the post-test.
2. Researcher collected results and organized them from highest to lowest scores.
3. To calculate the discrimination index, the researcher selected the top 25% of scores (upper group, UG) and the bottom 25% of scores (lower group, LG).
4. The discrimination index formula used was: $(UG - LG) / n$, where:
 - UG = NO. of students in the upper 25% group who answered the item correctly
 - LG = NO. of students in the lower 25% group who answered the item correctly
 - n = total number of students in the upper and lower groups
5. The resulting discrimination index values were then classified according to the guidelines provided by Ebel and Frisbie (1986). Then the results are distributed based of the scale below:

TABLE 7
INDEX OF DISCRIMINATION

Index of Discrimination Scale	Interpretation
0.40 and above	Very Good Item
0.30-0.39	Reasonably Good Item (subject for Improvement)
0.20-0.29	Marginal (for Improvement)
0.00-0.19	Poor Item (to be Rejected or Revised)

The following is an example taken from a proposed self-learning kit applied to a small group of twenty students who sat for the test and received the results based on their performance:

TABLE 8
PRACTICAL PRE-TEST EVALUATION

Number of Questions	Pre-test Evaluation / Chapter One			Index of Discrimination Total (U-L) ÷ 10	Interpretation Scale
	Upper (U) 25%	Lower (L) 25%	Total (U-L)		
1	5	4	1	0.1	Poor
2	5	3	2	0.2	Marginal
3	5	1	4	0.4	Very Good
4	4	0	4	0.4	Very Good
5	3	1	2	0.2	Marginal
6	5	2	3	0.3	Reasonably Good
7	3	3	1	0.1	Poor
8	5	1	4	0.4	Very Good
9	5	2	3	0.3	Reasonably Good
10	4	0	4	0.4	Very Good
11	3	0	3	0.3	Reasonably Good
12	5	2	3	0.3	Reasonably Good
13	5	1	4	0.4	Very Good
14	4	2	2	0.2	Marginal
15	3	1	2	0.2	Marginal
Pre-test Evaluation / Chapter One					
1	4	2	2	0.2	Marginal
2	3	3	0	0.0	Poor
3	4	3	1	0.1	Poor
4	5	2	3	0.3	Reasonably Good
5	4	1	2	0.2	Marginal
6	3	1	1	0.1	Poor
7	4	3	1	0.1	Poor
8	4	2	2	0.2	Marginal
9	5	4	1	0.1	Poor
10	3	1	2	0.2	Marginal
11	4	4	0	0.0	Poor
12	3	1	2	0.2	Marginal
13	5	1	4	0.4	Very Good
14	4	2	2	0.2	Marginal
15	5	1	4	0.4	Very Good

Based on the interpretation scale, questions that show poor performance will be revised and restructured to meet the related objective and address the issue of not aligning with intended learning objectives.

To determine the level of difficulty test items, the difficulty index measurement is applied. It evaluates high and low scores. The item difficulty index is calculated for the pre-test and post-test items:

1. The test results were organized from highest to lowest scores.
2. To calculate the difficulty index, the researcher selected the top 25% of scores (upper group, UG) and the bottom 25% of scores (lower group, LG).
3. The difficulty index formula used was: $(UG + LG) / n$, where:
 - UG = NO. of students in the upper 25% group who answered the item correctly
 - LG = NO. of students in the lower 25% group who answered the item correctly
 - n = total number of students in the upper and lower groups
4. The resulting difficulty index values were then classified according to the guidelines provided by Ebel and Frisbie (1986).

This analysis of item difficulty helped the researcher evaluate how challenging each test item was for the students, which is another important aspect of validating the assessment. Combining the discrimination index and difficulty index analyses provides comprehensive validation of the test items.

TABLE 9
INDEX OF DIFFICULTY

Index of Difficulty Scale	Interpretation
0.81 and above	Very Easy
0.61-0.80	Easy
0.41-0.60	Average
0.21-0.40	Difficulty
0.20 and below	Very Difficulty

The following is an example taken from a proposed self-learning kit applied to a small group of twenty students:

TABLE 10
PRACTICAL PRE-TEST EVALUATION

Number of Questions	Pre-test Evaluation / Chapter One			Index of Difficulty Total (U+L)÷10×100	Interpretation Scale
	Upper (U) 25%	Lower (L) 25%	Total (U+L)		
1	5	4	9	90	Very Easy
2	5	3	8	80	Easy
3	5	1	6	60	Average
4	4	0	4	40	Difficult
5	3	1	4	40	Difficult
6	5	2	7	70	Easy
7	3	3	6	60	Average
8	5	1	6	60	Average
9	5	2	7	70	Easy
10	4	0	4	40	Difficult
11	3	0	3	30	Difficult
12	5	2	7	70	Easy
13	5	1	6	60	Average
14	4	2	6	60	Average
15	3	1	4	40	Difficult
Pre-test Evaluation / Chapter One					
1	4	2	6	60	Average
2	3	3	6	60	Average
3	4	3	7	70	Easy
4	5	2	7	70	Easy
5	4	1	5	50	Average
6	3	1	4	40	Difficult
7	4	3	7	70	Easy
8	4	2	6	60	Average
9	5	4	9	90	Very Easy
10	3	1	4	40	Difficult
11	4	4	8	80	Easy
12	3	1	4	40	Difficult
13	5	1	6	60	Average
14	4	2	6	60	Average
15	5	1	6	60	Average

Based on the interpretation scale, questions that are deemed very difficult will be revised and restructured to improve clarity and alignment with intended learning outcomes. This process will be applied in steps to both the initial group of participants and the larger group after necessary modifications have been made to ensure that all items fall within the average difficulty range.

After completing the evaluations of the Self-learning Kit in the previous steps, it was time to test its reliability. Reliability is defined as the instrument's consistency in producing the same result in repeated measurements. In the referenced study, the researcher mentioned that reliability testing was applied to the exam created by the teacher for their students. To compute the test reliability, the researcher implemented the Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR-20) formula.

The KR-20 formula is a commonly used method for estimating the internal consistency reliability of assessments, particularly for tests with dichotomous (right/wrong) scoring. It provides a reliability coefficient that indicates how consistently the test measures the intended construct. By applying this reliability testing using the KR-20 formula, the researcher could determine how consistently the Self-learning Kit assessments measured student learning, which is an important quality indicator for the instructional materials.

The process of testing the reliability of the proposed Kit's assessments started by first finding the discrimination index and difficulty index for the test items, as described in the previous steps. Reliability was then predicted by finding the correlation between both tests' scores, with the researchers applying the Spearman-Brown methodology to estimate the reliability based on the internal structure of the tests.

Testing the reliability of the Self-learning Kit's assessments using the KR-20 formula:

$$KR-20 = \left(\frac{k}{k-1} \right) * \left(1 - \frac{\sum p_j q_j}{\sigma^2} \right)$$

Specifically, the researchers utilized the Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR-20) formula, which is a commonly recommended approach for assessing the internal consistency of reliability of assessments. By following this systematic process, the researchers determined the reliability of the assessments used in the Self-learning Kit, providing a measure of how consistently the tests evaluated student learning. This reliability analysis complemented the earlier validity assessments conducted on the instructional materials.

The coefficient ranges between 0 and 1.0 is the value of measuring reliability, where "0" means no reliability while "1" means perfect reliability. Moreover, if the reliability of a test is above 0.7, it indicates good reliability; if the test is below 0.5, it means the test is not reliable.

TABLE 11
RELIABILITY SCALE

Reliability	Interpretation
0.00 to 0.20	Negligible correlation
0.21 to 0.40	The low or slight correlation
0.41 to 0.70	A marked or moderate relationship
0.71 to 0.90	High correlation
0.91 to 0.99	Very High correlation
=1.00	Perfect correlation

Below is an example from the proposed self-learning kit, applied to a small group out of twenty students:

TABLE 12
PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF RELIABILITY

Chapter	Test	Item Number	Difficulty Index (Pi)	Quality Improvement (Qi)	Pi × Qi
Chapter one: Syntax	Pre-test	1	0.9	0.1	0.09
		2	0.8	0.2	0.16
		3	0.6	0.4	0.24
		4	0.4	0.6	0.24
		5	0.4	0.6	0.24
		6	0.7	0.3	0.21
		7	0.7	0.3	0.21
		8	0.6	0.4	0.24
		9	0.7	0.3	0.21
		10	0.4	0.6	0.24
		11	0.3	0.6	0.18
		12	0.7	0.3	0.21
		13	0.6	0.4	0.24
		14	0.6	0.4	0.24
		15	0.4	0.6	0.24
	Post-test	1	0.6	0.4	0.24
		2	0.6	0.4	0.24
		3	0.7	0.3	0.21
		4	0.7	0.3	0.21
		5	0.4	0.6	0.24
		6	0.3	0.7	0.21
		7	0.7	0.3	0.21
		8	0.6	0.4	0.24
		9	0.9	0.1	0.09
		10	0.4	0.6	0.24
		11	0.8	0.2	0.16
		12	0.4	0.6	0.24
		13	0.6	0.4	0.24
		14	0.6	0.4	0.24
		15	0.6	0.4	0.24

The last step was testing the reliability, which depended on the previous steps' data to determine the internal consistency of both internal and external groups to measure how well the tests address different constructs and provide reliable scores. Data from the discrimination indexes and difficulty levels of both groups of learners were used to calculate the Piqi (Portion of correct items times incorrect items). The results of Perceptual Image Quality Index (PIQI) were used to calculate the standard deviation of the internal consistency. As a final point, the results from the previous tables were used to determine the correlation of each group's internal consistency using Richardson's formula (KR-20).

Starting with the first chapter of the internal group of 20 students, the results show the tests' inter-consistency. The table above shows the correlation results of the tests using the KR-20 formula. The correlation results of the pretest and the post-test of the first lesson are 0.82 and 0.78, which denote a high level reliability. The results for the second lesson are 0.71 and 0.77 for the pre-test and the post-tests, which also denotes a high level of reliability. The results for the last lesson are similar to those of the second lesson, with values of 0.72 and 0.74, which can also be interpreted as a high level of reliability. Hence, the results of all tests in Chapter One of the internal group are reliable, showing a high level of consistency and reliability.

TABLE 13
INTER-CONSISTENCY OF THE INTERNAL GROUP OF THE FIRST CHAPTER

Chapter	Lesson	Test	Mean	SD	KR-20	Interpretation of Correlation
One	One	Pre-test	7.20	14.91	0.82	High Relationship
		Posttest	12.25	6.89	0.78	High Relationship
	Two	Pre-test	7.00	9.30	0.71	High Relationship
		Posttest	9.90	9.20	0.77	High Relationship
	Three	Pre-test	5.15	7.72	0.72	High Relationship
		Posttest	4.34	4.34	0.74	High Relationship

The final part of the methodology is to discover the significant correlation after applying the proposed material to the students in real-world condition. The researcher relied on ANOVA to analyze the students' performance in all sections of the learning material by comparing and contrasting the means of the students' evaluation and calculating the F-value to determine the significance for the entire regression.

TABLE 14
CORRELATION OF LESSON ONE FROM CHAPTER ONE

Chapter One / Lesson One					
Source	SS	DF	MS	F Value	Decision
Between Treatment	376+498=872	100-1=99	872÷1=872	872÷8.93=97.6	
Within Treatment	876	99-1=98	876÷98=8.93		
Total	1748	99			Significant and accepted

- Correlation is significant at 0.05 level of (3.94)
- Correlation is significant at 0.01 level of (6904)

The data in the table show a significant at the 0.05 level and a correlation of 3.94 and a correlation of 6.90 at the 0.01 level. Students who used the first lesson of the Self-learning Kit to learn about verbs 'to be' and 'to have' found it helpful in improving their knowledge and performance in this syntactic aspect of the language. In other words, if students are required to address their syntactic issues, they might use the proposed learning material.

TABLE 15
CORRELATION OF THE SECOND LESSON OF CHAPTER ONE

Chapter One / Lesson Two					
Source	SS	DF	MS	F Value	Decision
Between Treatment	548+544=1092	100-1=99	1092÷1=1092	1092÷8.57=127.4	
Within Treatment	840	99-1=98	840÷98=8.57		
Total	1896	99			Significant and accepted

- Correlation is significant at 0.05 level of (3.94)
- Correlation is significant at 0.01 level of (6904)

The second lesson also showed a significance correlation of 3.94 at the 0.05 and 6.90 at the 0.01 of, which referred to the students who used the second lesson of chapter one of the Self-learning Kit to enhance their syntactic performance in using subject-verb agreement. They found it to be a suitable and valuable tool that met their needs.

TABLE 16
CORRELATION OF THE THIRD LESSON OF CHAPTER ONE

Chapter One / Lesson Three					
Source	SS	DF	MS	F Value	Decision
Between Treatment	550+656=1206	100-1=99	1206÷1=1206	1206÷7.44=162.0	
Within Treatment	730	99-1=98	730÷98=7.44		
Total	1936	99			Significant and accepted

- Correlation is significant at 0.05 level of (3.94)
- Correlation is significant at 0.01 level of (6904)

The last lesson of chapter one also showed a significant correlation of 3.94 at the 0.05 level and 6.90 at the 0.01 level. This referred to the students who used this lesson of the Self-learning Kit to enhance their syntactic performance in using the articles and found it to be a suitable and useful learning material that met their need.

Step 8: Readability

The last step in this process is testing the readability of the tests. The readability tool is a quick and easy way to assess the readability of a written work. It is used to ensure the test is within the average level of the learners. Flesch-Kincaid uses a scale from 1 to 100 to assess the test's readability level. The researcher followed the Flesch Reading Ease Formula (1948), which is expressed as follows:

$$= 206.835 - 846(\text{syllables over words}) - 1.015 (\text{words over sentences})$$

TABLE 17
READABILITY SCALE

Score	Interpretation
100-91	Very easy to read
90-81	Easy to read
80-71	Fairly easy to read
70-61	Standard plain English
60-51	Fairly difficult to read
50-31	Difficult to read
30-0	Very difficult to read

The Table below shows the measurements of readability of both tests of the Self-learning Kit. All tests scored averages ranging between very easy to read and standard level of readability. Two tests were the easiest (readability score = 92), and one test, with a score of 64, was at the highest level of readability within the standard level. The four tests were ranked in the easy level range with readability scores of 83, 85, 89 and 89. Finally, seven tests were considered easy to read, with scores ranging from 74 to 79. On the other hand, none of the tests scored at a difficult readability level, which are considered suitable for the learners' levels to be read within their range.

TABLE 18
TESTS OF READABILITY

Chapter	Lesson	Type of Evaluation	Formula	Readability Level
Chapter One	Lesson One	Pre-test	$RE = 206.835 - (1.015 \times \frac{87}{15}) - (84.6 \times \frac{125}{87}) = 79$	Fairly Easy
		Post-test	$RE = 206.835 - (1.015 \times \frac{154}{20}) - (84.6 \times \frac{227}{154}) = 74$	Fairly Easy
	Lesson Two	Pre-test	$RE = 206.835 - (1.015 \times \frac{134}{15}) - (84.6 \times \frac{172}{134}) = 89$	Easy
		Post-test	$RE = 206.835 - (1.015 \times \frac{165}{20}) - (84.6 \times \frac{212}{164}) = 89$	Easy
	Lesson Three	Pre-test	$RE = 206.835 - (1.015 \times \frac{117}{15}) - (84.6 \times \frac{173}{117}) = 74$	Fairly Easy
		Post-test	$RE = 206.835 - (1.015 \times \frac{151}{20}) - (84.6 \times \frac{208}{151}) = 83$	Easy

V. CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates a systematic approach to designing and implementing effective learning materials tailored to learners' specific needs in syntax. By following the outlined steps, teachers can enhance the quality of their instructional materials and bridge the learning gap. The practical application and statistical analysis presented in this paper offer a valuable source for educators seeking to improve learner performance and foster a more engaging and effective learning environment.

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The Conceptual Metaphor FATE OF LOVE IS A TALISMAN in the Minds of Thai People as an Ethnic Minority in Vietnam

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Abstract—The Thai people are one of Vietnam's ethnic minorities, possessing distinct cultural characteristics that shape their lived experiences. This paper explores the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A TALISMAN by examining 50 love charm songs that have been passed down through Thai folk culture and ancient texts. The study analyzes a corpus of 121 verbal expressions, categorizing them into three key mappings from the source domain TALISMAN to the target domain FATE OF LOVE. Specifically, the act of creating a TALISMAN symbolizes the formation of emotions, the materials used in its crafting represent the forces that bring two lovers together, and its effects correspond to the stimulation and deepening of love. Furthermore, this study offers insights into the daily life, labor, and spiritual world of the Thai people, revealing their intuitive thinking, which is deeply rooted in familiar, everyday experiences. Their expressions of love and marriage reflect a sincere and unembellished perspective, demonstrating a uniquely innocent and heartfelt way of understanding romantic relationships.

Index Terms—cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, love, talisman, cultural perception

I. INTRODUCTION

Vietnam is home to 54 ethnic groups, each characterized by distinct cognitive patterns shaped by their living conditions and cultural heritage. The Thai ethnic group primarily resides in the Northern Midlands and Mountainous regions of Vietnam. As an ethnic minority, they possess unique spiritual beliefs, maintaining a deep faith in gods and supernatural forces, which is reflected in their cultural traditions. Among their rich cultural heritage, a collection of mantras and talismans has been preserved through Thai folk culture and ancient texts.

This study focuses on love talismans, known as *koawmx dēt hâu mặc* in Vietnamese, by analyzing approximately 50 talisman songs. Through this investigation, researchers explore how the Thai people conceptualize the fate of love using the metaphor FATE OF LOVE IS A TALISMAN. Examining this conceptualization provides valuable insights into the cognitive characteristics and worldview of this ethnic minority in Vietnam.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Concept Formation

(a). Systematic Nature of Ideas

Concepts serve as the foundation of cognitive linguistics, functioning as fundamental units of consciousness that encompass three core elements: emotion, intelligence, and will. Building upon this framework, concepts can also be understood as associations and impressions that reflect the lived experiences of language users. Since ideas emerge from human interactions with the world, they are inherently experiential.

As Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 4) explain:

The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details. Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we navigate the world, and how we relate to others. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are correct in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor.

From this perspective, ideas emerge as the result of cognitive processes through which individuals make sense of the world. Moreover, concepts do not exist in isolation but function within interconnected systems. For example:

(b). *Conceptual Structuring in Human Cognition*

DEATH ← LIFE ← HUMAN

The concept of DEATH is categorized under the broader concept of LIFE, which, in turn, belongs to the overarching category of HUMAN. Since human life is finite, the notions of life and death are inherently natural.

Another example of the systematic nature of concepts is:

DESTROY ← ACTION ← EVIL ← HUMAN

Here, DESTROY falls under the category of ACTION, which is classified under EVIL, and ultimately, EVIL is linked to the broader category of HUMAN. This distinction highlights that while DEATH and DESTROY represent different conceptual domains, both belong to the broader HUMAN conceptual system. DEATH is situated within the cognitive framework of life perception, whereas DESTROY is associated with the perception of evil human actions.

This demonstrates that in the process of conceptualization, human cognition systematically selects and organizes ideas. A conceptual system is only activated and interconnected when an appropriate cognitive signal is triggered. Researchers refer to this phenomenon as the structural nature of concepts. As Pham (2023, p. 87) explains:

The structural nature of the concept is an important issue in understanding conceptual metaphors. Currently, scientists classify concepts into two main categories: one examines concepts in relation to language and culture, while the other explores concepts through the relationship between language and cognition.

(c). *The Experiential Basis of Concept Formation*

The foundation of concept formation lies in self-experience. Throughout human life, the biological body continuously receives signals from the surrounding environment, and through repeated exposure, these experiences gradually become ingrained in cognition. As Gibbs (2005, p. 12) explains:

Embodiment is more than physiological and/or brain activity; it is constituted by recurring patterns of kinesthetic, proprioceptive action that provide much of people's felt, subjective experience.

In other words, human experiences form the basis of cognition. For instance, the perception of cold originates from the sense of touch, and the concept of cold is formed after repeated exposure to low temperatures. Cold and hot are opposing states, yet both belong to the broader category of temperature. This illustrates that concepts serve as cognitive structures that organize human understanding, linking experiences into a structured system—a process known as conceptualization.

When discussing concepts and the process of conceptualization, most cognitive linguists argue that this process is fundamentally expressed through metaphorical mapping—a transfer of meaning from a source domain to a target domain. A concept is constructed through multiple mappings, and these mappings are inherently partial: only certain aspects of the source domain are emphasized to facilitate understanding of the target domain, while other aspects remain less salient. Moreover, a single source domain can map onto multiple target domains, meaning that most source domains are not restricted to just one conceptual relationship but extend across several.

Consider the following example of a verbal expression:

Your road you go, my road I go.

The term “road” represents a path of journey, while “go” signifies movement along that path. The phrase “Your road you go, my road I go” metaphorically conveys the concept of separation in love, indicating that two individuals no longer share a romantic connection. This way of conceptualizing separation is shaped by the experience of walking different paths in life.

This verbal expression belongs to the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY, where the attributes of paths and movement are mapped onto the experience of romantic relationships. However, other journey-related attributes—such as a starting point and destination—may not always be emphasized in this metaphorical framework.

Similarly, consider the following verbal expression:

He reached the end of the road. Death took him away.

Here, “reaching the end of the road” is a metaphorical representation of death, mapped from the journey’s endpoint attribute. This expression falls within the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY.

These examples demonstrate that the concept of JOURNEY extends to multiple target domains—LOVE and LIFE—with each metaphorical expression highlighting distinct mapped properties.

B. *The Experiential Basis of the Concept of Fate of Love Embodiment and Conceptual Metaphors*

The concept of embodiment is crucial in understanding how human physical experiences shape abstract thought and language. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) argue that our interactions with the physical world not only form conceptual structures but also shape our capacity for abstract reasoning. Embodiment is often expressed through metaphors, which enable individuals to regulate motor and sensory neural activities in support of cognitive development. However, the relationship between bodily experience and embodiment metaphors is complex and varies depending on contextual factors (Goschler, 2005).

One challenge in studying embodiment is that the bodily experiences underlying self-awareness are difficult to capture through scientific language. Translating reflexive sensations into verbal expression requires nuanced interpretation (Stelter, 2000). Moreover, human bodily experience is dynamic and ever-changing, influenced by sociocultural factors and altered by conditions such as illness or disability. In these cases, the body itself becomes an object of metaphorical mappings, illustrating the flexibility of embodiment within metaphor theory (El, 2014).

The connection between physical experience and language is not merely linear but multifaceted, profoundly shaping human cognition and communication. To fully understand how language and thought emerge from lived experience, it is essential to consider the various dimensions of embodiment.

From an experiential perspective, all forms of human intelligence arise from bodily experience. Personal experiences accumulate into an expansive, ever-growing knowledge base about the world. Lakoff and Johnson (1999, p. 4) emphasize this universality:

It is universal, however, in that it is a capacity shared universally by all human beings. What allows it to be shared are the commonalities that exist in the way our minds are embodied. Reason is not completely conscious but mostly unconscious. Reason is not purely literal but largely metaphorical and imaginative. Reason is not dispassionate but emotionally engaged.

Thus, bodily experience is fundamentally tied to the mind-body relationship, playing a pivotal role in human perception of the world. Benjamin Bergen (2019) further distinguishes this relationship as follows:

- The first perspective suggests that the cognitive mechanisms underlying behaviors such as reasoning and language use develop from an individual's experiences, which may be perceptual, motor, or affective. These experiences shape the characteristics of cognitive system components over the course of development (Bergen, 2019, p. 14).
- A second possibility is that the connections between concepts and an individual's perceptual, motor, and affective experiences persist throughout development, remaining crucial for grounding and making sense of concept usage (Bergen, 2019, p. 14).

(a). *Embodiment in the Spiritual and Cultural Practices of the Vietnamese Thai Community*

The Vietnamese Thai community primarily resides in the mountainous regions of Lai Châu, Điện Biên, Lào Cai, Yên Bái, Sơn La, Hòa Bình, Thanh Hóa, and Nghệ An. Their houses are built facing rivers or streams, with their backs against the mountains. The Thai people developed early, mastering water conservation and cultivating crops such as rice, maize, cassava, cotton, and yarn. Each family raises livestock, poultry, and silkworms for weaving. As a result, their experiences with nature reflect the distinct regional identity of the Thai community (Dang, 2024, p. 866).

In their spiritual beliefs, the elders of the Thai ethnic group perceive everything on earth as having a soul (*Khoăn*). According to Thai culture, natural elements such as stones (*Da*), stone caves, watersheds, and streams are believed to be inhabited by spirits. Consequently, they often summon these spirits (*Phị khoăn*). However, unlike many other ethnic groups in Vietnam, the Thai people recognize only spirits, not gods, in their spiritual world.

As a community with diverse spiritual practices, the Vietnamese Thai engage in various worship and sacrificial rituals. This is evident in ceremonies such as:

- The New Rice Festival (*Xên Lầu No*)
- The First Water Source Ceremony (*Tế Họa Tá*)
- The Field Ritual (*Nguột Na*)
- The Grave Worship Ritual (*Lời Má, Tế Má*)

In Thai Muong villages, there is often someone skilled in magic (*bít nặng bằng phẫn*). Only individuals who are intelligent and discreet are allowed to learn this craft. The practice follows a strict principle:

- Magic may only be used to punish those who commit unforgivable, hateful, or illicit acts.
- A magician is permitted to use their powers only once or twice in their lifetime; exceeding this limit is believed to result in madness or death.

Beyond magic, the Thai people also use talismans (*bằng phẫn*), including:

- Protective charms to ward off illness (*bít nặng*)
- Love talismans (*khoắm mấn*)

Due to the scope of this study, researchers focus solely on love talismans (*khoắm mấn*).

(b). *Love Talismans in Thai Folk Culture*

In remote areas, where traditional beliefs remain strong, some still regard love talismans as real. According to folk culture, these talismans influence emotions and psychology, primarily to bring men and women together in love. In regions such as Mộc Châu, Phù Yên, and Bắc Yên, various love talismans and techniques are practiced, including:

1. Bitter fruit charm (*mấn mác khoénh, Mác khạm póm*)
2. Excavation of the back (*tóp xịa lạng*)
3. Salt talisman (*mấn cựa*)
4. Turtle blowing pipes (*pấu lốt*)
5. How to recite the spell (*hóc khoam mấn*)

The Thai people have a distinctive perspective on love and marriage. They cherish a life close to nature and value hard work. Deeply spiritual, they believe in supernatural forces and trust that their desires for love can be fulfilled through the magic of talismans.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Methodology

The present study employed two primary research methods: descriptive analysis and quantitative research.

a) Descriptive Method

The descriptive method was utilized to examine the conceptual relationship between the source domain (TALISMAN) and the target domain (FATE OF LOVE). This method involved:

- Constructing mapping diagrams to illustrate how TALISMAN concepts are projected onto FATE OF LOVE.
- Analyzing metaphorical verbal expressions and cultural symbols embedded in Thai love spells.

b) Quantitative Research

The quantitative approach was employed to compile statistical data on the frequency of metaphorical references and verbal expressions. Through statistical analysis, the study:

- Identified key attributes transferred from the source to the target domain.
- Provided insights into the cultural characteristics and cognitive patterns of the Thai people.

B. Document Survey Process

The study followed a systematic document survey process consisting of four steps:

1. Reading and Selection – All 50 love talisman songs were reviewed, and verses reflecting the concept of FATE OF LOVE were identified.
2. Metaphor Identification – Metaphors expressing the mapping of TALISMAN onto LOVE were extracted.
3. Quantitative Analysis – Key attributes of the mapped source domain were statistically analyzed to quantify recurring themes.
4. Descriptive Analysis – The descriptive method was applied to:
 - Outline key conceptual attributes.
 - Construct projection diagrams.
 - Analyze metaphors within the conceptual framework of *LOVE IS A TALISMAN*.

C. Data Sources

The study is based on 50 love charms collected from *Mantras, Talismans in Folklore*, and the ancient Thai book *Koām Mān Muōn Tāy*, compiled by Hoàng and Ca (2016).

IV. RESULTS

A. Mapping the Conceptual Metaphor FATE OF LOVE IS A TALISMAN

(a). Target Domain: FATE OF LOVE

The conceptual metaphor FATE OF LOVE IS A TALISMAN consists of the target domain (FATE OF LOVE) and the source domain (TALISMAN). The Thai people's understanding of love and fate is deeply rooted in their environment and cultural beliefs. From a cognitive perspective, the systematic nature of this concept can be expressed as follows:

FATE OF LOVE ← AFFECTION ← HUMAN

The concept of FATE OF LOVE belongs to the broader category of AFFECTION, which, in turn, falls under the overarching category of HUMAN. Since love and marriage are intrinsic to human life, they are perceived as predestined forces. The Thai people hold spiritually profound yet simple beliefs regarding love. They believe that offerings and spells can secure a lover's devotion, ensuring that the desired person remains faithful. This belief system has influenced Thai cultural practices, including love spells and worship rituals, which have been preserved across generations, even after their migration to Vietnam.

(b). Source Domain: TALISMAN

The source domain (TALISMAN) occupies a significant place in Thai culture. The Thai people maintain a strong belief in supernatural forces, and talismans are deeply intertwined with their spiritual and everyday life. The concept of TALISMAN encompasses the following key attributes:

1. Bestowing delight through its power – A talisman is believed to bring happiness by fulfilling desires.
2. Bringing great joy or satisfaction – Talismans are seen as tools of emotional fulfillment.
3. Exercising control or influence, as if by magic – Talismans are perceived as having the power to manipulate emotions and relationships.

Due to these attributes, a talisman is not merely a physical object but also a metaphorical representation of mystical influence, capable of affecting human emotions and actions.

(c). *Mapping From the Source Domain (TALISMAN) to the Target Domain (FATE OF LOVE)*

The conceptual mapping of TALISMAN onto FATE OF LOVE highlights the way the Thai people cognitively structure their understanding of romantic relationships. This mapping will be analyzed in further detail in the following sections.

TABLE 1
MAPPING SCHEME OF THE CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR FATE OF LOVE IS A TALISMAN

Target domain FATE OF LOVE	Mapping	Source domain TALISMAN
Create love	←	The act of casting a talisman
Catalyst to love each other	←	Material for creating talisman
Love status	←	The effectiveness of talisman

Source: Author generalizes from documents

These three mapping rays illustrate the Thai people's cognitive perception of love. They maintain a deep-rooted belief in the mystical power of talismans, which are deeply integrated into their daily lives. For them, magic is not solely derived from the ritualistic act of creating talismans but also from the materials used in their construction. These materials, in turn, are perceived as manifestations of magic itself.

This perspective highlights how the Thai people's understanding of love is closely intertwined with their everyday experiences. Anything that is familiar and intimately connected to their lives can be transformed into a talisman, believed to possess the power to influence love and relationships.

B. *Metaphor Analysis of the Concept Fate of Love Is Talismans*

(a). *The Act of Creating Talismans Maps the Creation of Fate of Love*

These three mapping rays illustrate the Thai people's cognitive perception of love. They maintain a deep-rooted belief in the mystical power of talismans, which are deeply integrated into their daily lives. For them, magic is not solely derived from the ritualistic act of creating talismans but also from the materials used in their construction. These materials, in turn, are perceived as manifestations of magic itself.

This perspective highlights how the Thai people's understanding of love is closely intertwined with their everyday experiences. Anything that is familiar and intimately connected to their lives can be transformed into a talisman, believed to possess the power to influence love and relationships.

TABLE 2
METAPHORICAL EXAMPLE OF THE ACTION OF CREATING A TALISMAN

Ordinal	Metaphorical Vehicle		Number of Appearances/50 Love Charm Songs	Percentage/121
	Thai Transcription	English		
1	<i>Kin</i>	<i>eat</i>	26	21.5
2	<i>Pák</i>	<i>speak</i>	25	20.1
3	<i>Tóp</i>	<i>clap</i>	13	10.7
4	<i>Kín</i>	<i>drink</i>	11	9.1
5	<i>Hín/ xím</i>	<i>throw</i>	5	4.1
6	<i>Páu</i>	<i>blow</i>	5	4.1
7	<i>Vì hùà</i>	<i>comb</i>	5	4.1
8	<i>Pók mák</i>	<i>peel</i>	5	4.1
9	<i>Khót cẩu (upside down) Khót phỏm (down)</i>	<i>bun</i>	5	4.1
10	<i>Hóm phẫ</i>	<i>cover with</i>	4	4.1
11	<i>Pủ xĩa</i>	<i>to unwind</i>	4	4.1
12	<i>Kàng dẫn</i>	<i>hang a net</i>	3	2.7
13	<i>Nung xĩa</i>	<i>wear</i>	3	2.7
14	<i>Xuối nả</i>	<i>washing face</i>	3	2.7
15	<i>Bíp</i>	<i>press</i>	2	2.7
16	<i>Kẹo hát pũ</i>	<i>stick</i>	2	1.6
17	<i>Pắc bók</i>	<i>fasten</i>	2	1.6
18	<i>Tak</i>	<i>measure</i>	2	1.6
19	<i>Chốc xẳng</i>	<i>scratch</i>	2	1.6
Total			121	

Source: Statistics from documents

The examples in the table above represent everyday actions that are deeply rooted in lived experiences. Activities such as putting up a mosquito net, covering with a blanket, scratching the back, washing the face, tying the hair, holding the head, and getting dressed are integral components of daily routines. These actions are so familiar that, within the Thai belief system, talismans are thought to harness their power to ensure a lover or spouse remains faithful forever.

Among these actions, the most frequently referenced in talismanic spells include eating (26 occurrences), speaking (25 occurrences), clapping (13 occurrences), drinking (11 occurrences), throwing (5 occurrences), tying hair (4 occurrences), peeling fruit (4 occurrences), and covering with a blanket (4 occurrences). The most commonly appearing verbs—eat, wear, sleep, talk, pat, and drink—reflect fundamental aspects of Thai communal and cultural life.

Additionally, the expressions “spread the mattress” and “cover the blanket” frequently appear in talismanic texts, reinforcing love and loyalty between couples.

The following analysis will focus on the most frequently occurring actions in talisman creation, offering deeper insight into the distinctive cognitive patterns of the Thai people.

Eat¹

Sacred! Sharp knife with black handle.
I brought it home and peeled the fruit for her to eat
 Elephants eat a big, peeled fruit - owner
The person who eats the fruit I peel - my lover
 Sacred! Sacred - Spiritual! Sacred

Ôm! Mịt nọi mịt dằm dằm
Kẳm àu mả pók mák
 Chạng đầy kìn mák kf pók chạng hờn
Kỏn đầy kìn kỏn mặc
 Ôm !... Xốp kù dằm! Koãm kù khót... Ôm...

This example illustrates a blended metaphor, where two metaphorical mappings occur simultaneously. In this verbal expression, the actions of peeling and eating are metaphorically linked to the creation of a talisman. The underlying meaning is that if one eats the fruit that has been peeled by another, they will become enchanted and fall deeply in love with that person.

The mystical nature of this talismanic ritual is reinforced through lexical choices such as *sacred* and *miraculous*. Here, metaphorical extension is evident in the act of eating the fruit, which symbolically translates into loving the person who prepared it. This belief reflects a deeply ingrained yet somewhat naive faith among the Thai people in Vietnam.

Speak²

My mouth is holy - My words are effective
 Elephant love gathers - never separates
I cast a spell on the person I love so tightly
 Charm the trees in the forest to grow thorns
A spell on a girl sticks to me like plastic

Ôm khóp!...ôm dằm
 Koãm xét chạng kù len xỏn xỏn
Xết xấu kỏn bấu hỏn xida đầy
 Mẩn xấu mạy nằng pả tài khuyễn
Mẩn xấu xỏo phủ đi hẩu chặp pàn tằng

This case exemplifies a blended metaphor, where a single verbal expression incorporates multiple metaphorical mappings.

First, the spoken words, combined with the sacred atmosphere evoked by the term *sacred*, emphasize the mystical power of prayer. Second, the concept of seduction through the talisman, represented as an action rather than an object, conveys the supernatural influence exerted on individuals.

This metaphor can be structured as follows:

- Casting a talisman on a lover ensures their unwavering attachment.
- Placing a talisman on a tree causes forest trees to grow thorns.
- Using a talisman on a girl makes her cling to you like resin.

Understanding this conceptual metaphor requires insight into Thai cultural cognition. Residing in Vietnam's Northern Midlands and Mountainous regions, the Thai people naturally associate supernatural forces with their environment. For instance, they believe a talisman's power can cause trees to develop more thorns, making them stronger. This imagery metaphorically represents the idea that lovers remain inseparable, devoted, and resistant to separation.

Furthermore, the intensity of love induced by the talisman is mapped onto the adhesive quality of tree resin, a natural binding agent in the forest. This association reinforces the idea of unwavering attachment and deep passion in love.

Pat³

Sacred, *patting*...love love
 My hand pats the elephant's back - the elephant stops
Patting someone's back - lover

Ôm! *Tốp tốp*...ôm! Mặc mặc...
 Mữ kù tốp xỉlảng chạng hẩu hờn
Tốp xỉlảng kỏn hẩu mặc

The efficacy of the talisman in this context derives from the belief that patting exerts a supernatural influence. When applied to an elephant, it is thought to render the animal motionless; when used on a person's back, it is believed to evoke feelings of love and attachment.

¹ Talisman for peeling fruit to feed - Koãm pók mák

² Elephant love words 2 - koãm xét chạng 2

³ Elephant love words 1 - koãm xét chạng 1

This belief system encapsulates two layers of metaphor:

1. Physical force as a supernatural agency – The act of patting is perceived as a conduit of mystical power.
2. Physical force as a medium of emotional influence – Tactile contact is conceptualized as a catalyst for love and affection.

This verbal expression epitomizes the intuitive cognitive framework of the Thai minority in Vietnam.

(b). *The Materials Used to Create Talismans as Catalysts for Love*

For the Thai people, talismans are concrete artifacts deeply embedded in their daily lives and natural surroundings. These objects, drawn from familiar materials, carry profound cultural and spiritual significance. Based on an extensive survey, the most commonly used materials in the creation of Thai amulets are compiled in the following table:

TABLE 3
MATERIALS USED TO CREATE TALISMAN OF THE THAI PEOPLE IN VIETNAM

Metaphorical Vehicle			Number of Appearances/50 Love Charm Songs	Percentage
Ordinal	Thai Transcription	English		
1	<i>Chạng</i>	elephant	23	19.0
2	<i>Mák</i>	fruit	18	14.8
3	<i>Bầu</i>	leaf	13	
4	<i>Phã</i>	blanket	10	10.7
5	<i>Xửa</i>	shirt	9	7.4
6	<i>Káy</i>	chicken	9	7.4
7	<i>Nộc</i>	bird	8	6.6
8	<i>Bók</i>	flower	5	4.1
9	<i>Kéo</i>	pearl	3	2.7
10	<i>Dã lợk</i>	Fairy medicine	3	2.7
11	<i>Cò khâu</i>	rice	2	1.6
12	<i>Pũ</i>	mountain	2	1.6
13	<i>Pá</i>	forest	3	2.7
14	<i>Cán phúc</i>	ocrea	3	1.6
15	<i>Bần</i>	bulb	2	2.7
16	<i>Buồn</i>	moon	2	1.6
17	<i>Hòm búa khèo</i>	green onion	2	1.6
18	<i>Kí</i>	loom	2	1.6
19	<i>Xáy</i>	egg	2	1.6
Total			121	

Source: Author's statistics from documents

The materials used to create talismans originate from the natural world and are deeply intertwined with the daily lives of the Thai people. These include plant-based elements such as leaves, sheaths, bulbs, and green onions, as well as animal-related components like elephants, chickens, birds, and eggs. Additionally, talismans incorporate elements from the surrounding environment, such as mountains, forests, and the moon, along with household objects like looms, blankets, and shirts.

Among the metaphors within the category of fishing-related talismans, the most frequently occurring symbols include elephant (23), fruit (18), leaves (13), blanket (13), shirt (9), chicken (9), and bird (8).

The Thai people select these materials based on two fundamental principles. First, humans tend to conceptualize abstract ideas through familiar, tangible objects readily available in their surroundings. Second, as an ethnic minority, the Thai people rely on an intuitive cognitive framework, wherein the power of talismans emerges from ordinary materials imbued with sacred significance.

Elephant⁴

Sacred! People say love elephants

I say love people

I cast a spell on the elephant - the elephant retreats

Charm on someone - lover

Ôm! Tan xa xét chạng, kù va xét kôn

Kù măn xáu chạng hầu hôn

Măn xáu kôn hầu kôn mặc

Mừng chấp kù pàn tăng

In Thai cultural perception, the elephant embodies the strength of the green forest, symbolizing a force that is extremely difficult to subdue. This challenge is metaphorically associated with the difficulty of winning someone's affection. Just as taming an elephant demands considerable effort, gaining a person's love is perceived as equally arduous—thus necessitating the use of talismanic magic. It is believed that casting a talisman on an elephant can make it retreat, while casting one on a person can transform indifference into love. This conceptualization of talismanic power, rooted in the strength and resistance of elephants, reflects the intuitive and distinctive cognitive framework of the Vietnamese Thai people.

⁴ Love people - *xét kôn*

Fruit⁵

Sacred! *Fruit of the seven sacred trees*
 The fruit is smooth, and the stem is pink
 Whoever eats the fruit of the seven trees loves me
 Whoever eats the smooth, pink-stemmed fruit loves me

Ôm! *Mák chết tồn vẫn vi*
 Mák kôn đôm, kôn mồn vẫn vi
 Phàu kìn mák chết tồn vẫn vi, hàu mặc
 Phàu kìn mák kôn đôm, kôn mồn vẫn vi, hàu pãnh

The seven-tree fruit holds profound spiritual significance for the Thai people. Although the tree itself does not physically exist, it has become a powerful talisman through worship and belief. Regarded as sacred, its fruit is thought to enchant anyone who consumes it, compelling them to fall in love with its owner. This belief reflects an intuitive cognitive framework, where the mystical atmosphere, reinforced by the connotations of the word "sacred," enhances the talisman's supernatural allure.

Blanket⁶

Sacred! *Pink flower blanket*
 Wide cotton blanket lined with white
 Lying with my husband, I brought it out and covered it
 He felt warm and hugged me tightly

Ôm nả phã bók đành òn
 Lóp phã khào bàn mók
 Nãng chí chặt phã đi hóm nầu
 Chắc phã châu hóm phừa

In the verbal expression above, *nả phã*, *lóp phã* (blanket) becomes an object imbued with talismanic power. This talisman ensures that a woman's husband remains deeply devoted to her, symbolizing unwavering love and fidelity. When he covers her with a blanket, he is believed to embrace her tightly and never let go. Here, the act of covering with a blanket metaphorically signifies the deep and steadfast bond between husband and wife, reflecting the Thai woman's aspiration for a harmonious and enduring relationship.

The cultural foundation of this expression is deeply rooted in Thai traditions. Notably, one of the materials traditionally used to make fishing nets is a cotton blanket. As previously mentioned, bedding serves as a cultural artifact, embodying the traditional lifestyle of Thai people in Vietnam. From the ages of 13 to 14, Thai girls are traditionally taught embroidery and sewing, and an essential component of their dowry includes blankets and mattresses crafted from rice flower cotton. The quantity and quality of these items symbolize the girl's skill, resourcefulness, and family wealth.

In the context of talismanic practices, the imagery of "quilting" intertwined with "blanket-making" not only highlights the materials used in love talismans but also encodes a deeper "symbolic language"—a manifestation of cultural memory and lived experience. In contrast to other ethnic communities, such as the Kinh, Thai women ascribe a unique emotional and cultural significance to bedding, which plays a central role in their traditions and expressions of love.

Shirt⁷

Sacred! Get up, get dressed, go get dressed
 I wore it for a walk through the countryside
 For everyone to love
 Demons stay away
 Youth sees the desire for love

Ôm! *Lục dỡ mày, pày dỡ xừa*
 Uống ừa tan đủ đi
 Phì hên phì dân
 Xngạn hể len pại
 Kôc tênh lài hên châu mặc

The shirt worn becomes an object imbued with talismanic power. Rooted in the belief in the talisman's magical efficacy, merely wearing the shirt is thought to attract admiration from those who see it, while young individuals who notice it will feel an urge to develop affection for the wearer. This perception reflects an intuitive and deeply ingrained cognitive pattern among the Thai people.

The metaphorical mapping lies in the mystical properties of the love spell associated with the shirt—seeing the shirt symbolizes love, while malevolent forces are repelled. In Vietnamese spiritual beliefs, a shirt worn by the Buddha is often regarded as a symbol of good fortune. For instance, a garment once worn by the Buddha, when bestowed upon someone, is believed to bring blessings. Similarly, the notion of a love talisman embedded in a shirt embodies the cultural experience of the Thai community in particular and Vietnamese society in general.

Moreover, within the traditional costume culture of all Vietnamese ethnic groups, the shirt serves as both a functional garment and a culturally significant artifact. As an essential item that covers the body and integrates seamlessly into daily life, the shirt has acquired a symbolic value beyond its practical use. Drawing from their lived experiences with clothing, both the Thai and other Vietnamese communities have ascribed to the shirt an extended meaning—one that encompasses not only physical protection but also the power of attraction and love.

(c). *The Effectiveness of the Talisman as a Reflection of the State of Love*

⁵ Charm on fruit to feed - *Koâm kìn mák*

⁶ The words of covering the blanket - *Koâm* is proud

⁷ Words to wear clothes - *Koâm nung xừa*

In Thai belief, the efficacy of a talisman is manifested in an individual's state of love. Their distinctive cognitive framework is evident in both their verbal expressions and their perception of the power of love spells. The following table presents key verbal expressions that illustrate these effects.

TABLE 4
EFFECTIVE METAPHORS OF WITCHCRAFT

Ordinal	Metaphorical Vehicle		Number of Appearances/50 Love Charm Songs	Percentage/121
	Thai Transcription	English		
1	<i>Niêu cơ tăng</i>	Sticky like plastic	13	10.7
2	<i>Chàng nôi hặc nôm</i>	Little elephants love to suckle	12	9.9
3	<i>Ài bóc hân</i>	Scent of turmeric flowers	8	6.6
4	<i>Lục mặc nôm me</i>	children love breast milk	8	6.6
5	<i>Bừa mặc bóc</i>	Butterflies love flowers	7	5.7
6	<i>Ốn nôi mặc tấu nôm</i>	Babies love breasts	7	5.7
7	<i>Ốc chấp ốc</i>	Chest to chest	6	4.9
8	<i>Èm hặc lục ón</i>	Mom loves her child	6	4.9
9	<i>Phông lạt hìm nậm</i>	Waves roll against the shore	6	6.6
10	<i>Cáy mặc hộc</i>	Chickens love the brooder	6	4.9
11	<i>Pók ngồn lạo xong</i>	Double screw silver ring	5	4.1
12	<i>Đốt mây xuồi</i>	Bobbin thread	5	4.1
13	<i>Khà cái khà</i>	Thigh rests thigh	5	4.1
14	<i>Me cây phặc</i>	The hen incubates eggs	5	4.1
15	<i>Kẹo khâu é cừm</i>	Chewing rice likes to swallow	5	4.1
16	<i>Cáp lằng ôm mạy</i>	The areca sheath hugs the tree	5	4.1
17	<i>Cần phúc păn cò</i>	The sheath hugs the tuber stem	5	4.1
18	<i>Huống khâu còm mùa nào</i>	Rice fields are heavy in the cold season	4	3.3
19	<i>Hong nậm lầy tiêu</i>	Fast current	4	3.3
20	<i>Lườn mặc bốn nôm</i>	Pythons love their place to lie down	3	2.7
21	<i>Pà chất lỏng pưng</i>	Fish chattering away	3	2.7
Total			121	

Source: Author's statistics from documents

Statistical analysis reveals that metaphors illustrating the effectiveness of love talismans primarily fall into fundamental categories, predominantly derived from natural elements such as trees, leaves, and animals. Specifically, these metaphors include imagery such as areca sheaths embracing tree trunks, sheaths wrapping around tubers, rice ears heavy with grain, fast-flowing streams, hens incubating eggs, pythons clinging to their resting place, chickens nestled in their coops, silver rings twisted in half, and waves rolling against the shore.

Beyond natural imagery, these metaphors also extend to human relationships, such as a mother's love for her child, a child's attachment to breastfeeding, and hair tied into buns—expressions deeply rooted in daily life. These representations highlight familiar connections that naturally coexist, reinforcing a worldview in which love and attachment are mirrored in everyday experiences.

A defining feature of Thai cognitive patterns is the extensive use of comparison. Researchers have identified 121 verbal expressions conforming to this structure, underscoring a distinctive characteristic in both the language and cognitive style of the Thai ethnic group. The following examples illustrate this pattern:

Curtains⁸

Sacred! I will open the four corners of the curtain
Let it spread its fish tail
I will pull two corners of the blanket
Let it taper to a turtle's tail
I used a mosquito net to sleep with him
He hugs me like an areca pod hugs a tree
Like the sheath hugging a tuber

Ôm! Năng chí chắc xí chè dẫn
Hầu mần pênh hàng pà
Năng chí chắc xí chè phã
Hầu mần kôm hàng tấu
Kàng dẫn xú nầu phũa hặc kù nôm
Hầu mần kết kô kù bấu páy
Hầu mần mặc kù xường tón xành

The talismanic action in this context involves drawing a curtain, which, being infused with a talisman, compels the husband to fall deeply in love. The talisman's effect ensures that he embraces his wife as tightly as an areca sheath clings to a tree or a betel nut sheath wraps around a tuber.

The Thai people often perceive the world through visual imagery derived from everyday life, particularly objects that naturally coexist, such as areca sheaths and tubers. This cognitive approach reflects a thinking pattern rooted in direct visual observation. By mapping familiar objects onto human emotions, they establish cognitive connections that reinforce their belief in the power of talismans.

The corresponding metaphorical expressions include:

⁸ The words of the curtain - *Koām kang dẫn*

1. He hugged me.
2. The areca sheath hugs the tree.
3. The sheath hugs the tuber stem.

These inevitable associations between natural elements and the passionate emotional state of a couple highlight a fascinating cognitive mechanism. The perceived effects of love spells metaphorically mirror the interconnectedness of the natural world within the Thai people's living environment.

Elephants 2⁹

A spell on a girl sticks to me like plastic
 Please love me with all your heart and soul
She loves me like a little elephant loves to suckle
She treasures me like the hair on her head is treasured in a bun
She likes me like chewing rice likes to swallow
Sleeping at night, restless and longing
Missing me is like a narrow, fast-flowing stream
Like a lonely fish wandering around

Mẩn xáo phù đi hủi chấp pàn tăng
 Hủi mẩn khâu chà khâu kỗ bấu lá
Mặc kù xướng chạng nọi mặc nôm
Xướng phỏm dú hủi mặc kàu
Khâu dú xóp mặc kìn
Nôm kĩn é thòng kù khăm khăm
Xướng nặm đàng lầy hát lầy tiêu
Xướng chát tổ điều lỏng pững

In this verbal expression, the characteristics of the source domain **TALISMAN** are conveyed through various comparative images:

1. Sticky like plastic.
2. Love with all your heart.
3. Love like a young elephant nursing.
4. As precious as hair tied in a bun.
5. Like chewing rice and swallowing it.
6. Remember like a narrow stream with a fast current.
7. Like a lonely fish drifting aimlessly.

The cultural imprint of Northern Thai traditions is vividly reflected in their language. One of the most distinctive customs is Sanghau, a practice unique to the Black Thai people. A bun worn on the top of a bride's head serves as a central symbol of beauty, marriage, and commitment. For a Tang Crane (a Black Thai woman), thick, black, and glossy hair represents the ideal standard of beauty. To achieve this, hair fillers are often used. From childhood, Thai women consciously collect their fallen hair in preparation for their future bun.

One of the most meaningful gifts a mother-in-law bestows upon her daughter-in-law at marriage is a bundle of hair—gathered from her own shedding since becoming a daughter-in-law herself. This bundle, carefully tied and groomed, symbolizes the continuity of tradition and the bond between generations. When the time comes for the bride to “put up a bun,” the groom's family sends two young, married women to accompany her, carrying a ceremonial offering known as “curing” (asking for a bun), which includes a padded bundle of hair.

Once married, a woman's hair must remain in a bun, never to be let down—except in the event of her husband's passing, at which point she unties it and wears it behind her as a sign of widowhood. This custom embodies the essence of traditional Thai culture and its moral values, emphasizing loyalty and the protection of marital happiness. As a result, the expression “as precious as the hair in your bun” serves as a powerful affirmation of love and fidelity between husband and wife.

Other metaphorical expressions reinforce this sentiment. Comparisons such as “little elephants that love to suckle” and “chewing rice that loves to swallow” depict inevitable, instinctive occurrences in nature, symbolizing an unbreakable attachment between couples. Similarly, imagery such as “narrow water, fast-flowing water, and a single fish wandering in schools” conveys the intensity of love. In narrow streams, water rushes forward with great speed and force, just as a solitary fish relentlessly seeks a mate. Drawing from these natural laws, the Thai people project these vivid images onto human emotions, expressing the passionate and enduring nature of love.

Moreover, words signifying emotional states—such as remember, cherish, love, and treasure—appear frequently, reinforcing the connection between talismans and the deep emotions of love. These linguistic patterns create a powerful resonance, strengthening the conceptual mapping between traditional talismans and romantic devotion.

Fragrant Love¹⁰

Sacred! The scent of rice flowers along the fields
The scent of sunflowers along the village
The scent of rice flowers along the roadside
She loves me like a fragrance
 The scent sticks to the skin and the flesh does not leave
 The fragrance penetrates into the heart and liver without leaving

Ôm! Nguyệt phắc kát liệt nã
Nguột phắc xà liệt bản
Nguột hĩm thắm pì kai
Xào lải mặc kù kơ nguyệt chấp
Nguột chấp nựa kàu kủa bấu vãng
Bấu vãng xướng káy đàng phắc

⁹ Words of Love for Elephants 2 - Koām xết chạng 2

¹⁰ Love is Like Loving a Fragrance - Koām xết nguột

Don't give up, like a hen incubating eggs
She loves me like a child loves her breast

Mững mặc kù xưỡng ẽ nọi mặc nỏm
Kĩnh kỏm mững tử tang kù xủ

This verbal expression contains multiple metaphorical references, particularly through the use of flowers—such as rice flowers and sunflowers—as materials for creating charms. The effects of the talisman can be understood as follows:

1. She loves me.
2. She will never leave me.
3. She cannot leave me.

The materials used in talismans are drawn from the familiar natural world of plants and trees, which are deeply intertwined with the daily lives of the Thai people. One such example is the flower of the *Dac Xa* tree (phắc xà)—a wild tree commonly found in mountainous forests. Another is the rice flower (hĩnh thẳm), a woody plant that thrives in highland regions. When the rice flowers wither and turn white, Thai people often collect them from the forest to use as bedding. These familiar and abundant plants are imbued with symbolic meaning, transforming them into powerful talismans.

The primary effect of this talisman is to ensure unwavering love and fidelity. This deep desire for an unbreakable bond is poetically emphasized through hyperbolic expressions: “Perfume sticks to the skin. Perfume penetrates the heart and liver.”

(nguyệt chấp nựa kủa báu vãng / báu vãng xưỡng káy dàng phắc)

Additionally, the wish for lasting love is metaphorically compared to the effect of fishing nets—capturing and holding affection. The metaphors “a hen incubates eggs” and “a child loves the udder” (*xưỡng ẽ nọi mặc nỏm, tử tang kù xủ*) reinforce the idea of an inseparable, sacred connection. These images evoke natural instincts—maternal care and nourishment—symbolizing enduring and unconditional love.

V. CONCLUSION

The conceptual metaphor **FATE OF LOVE IS A TALISMAN** reflects how the Northern Thai people of Vietnam perceive and express romantic relationships. In Thai belief, love talismans are crafted from familiar, everyday objects and are thought to foster affection between men and women, ensuring lasting emotional bonds across generations.

A particularly intriguing aspect of this metaphor is its reflection of the cultural identity of Vietnam’s Northern Thai community. Living in vast, mountainous landscapes, the Thai people develop a simple and intuitive worldview. Their deep connection to nature and their social customs are clearly manifested in their use of talismans. The language associated with love talismans embodies this perspective, drawing directly from their lived experiences and natural surroundings.

At its core, the concept of a predestined relationship is a universal idea, forming the foundation of love, marriage, and family continuity. However, among the Thai people, love is perceived through a distinctive lens—one shaped by childlike innocence and direct observation of the world around them. The metaphor **LOVE IS A TALISMAN** underscores their profound relationship with nature, encapsulating both natural laws and the emotional essence of human connection.

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Effects of Captioned Film Clips on Incidental Learning of Lexical Collocations and Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategy Use Among Saudi EFL Learners

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Abstract—Exposure to collocations in real-life film dialogues could enhance language acquisition and engagement among learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). This study investigates the effectiveness of captioned film clips in Saudi female EFL students' incidental learning of three categories of lexical collocations. It also examines cognitive and metacognitive strategy use by successful learners of lexical collocations. Furthermore, it explores students' perceptions of using films as a learning tool for English vocabulary. The sample comprised 88 Saudi female EFL university students. The participants were divided into a control group ($n = 43$) and an experimental group ($n = 45$). A mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data was collected through a pretest and posttest on three categories of lexical collocations and a questionnaire about cognitive and metacognitive learning strategy use. The qualitative data was collected from semi-structured interviews with five participants. The results showed that the intervention significantly improved the students' incidental learning of lexical collocations. Moreover, it revealed that successful learners of lexical collocations employed various cognitive and metacognitive strategies, with a notable emphasis on metacognitive strategies. Additionally, qualitative analysis revealed that students perceived films as practical tools for improving vocabulary, as they provide authentic language exposure and motivation for learning. The study suggests incorporating captioned film clips into EFL collocation instruction to enhance EFL learners' collocational competence. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of strategic awareness in achieving collocation mastery and raising EFL students' understanding of effective learning strategies to improve collocation learning outcomes, particularly for less successful learners.

Index Terms—collocations, EFL teaching, film-based instruction, language-learning strategies, incidental vocabulary learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary learning is crucial for language acquisition, whether for a second or a foreign language (Morra & Camba, 2009). In learning English, sufficient vocabulary knowledge is fundamental for effective communication (Widdowson, 1989). Researchers have recently focused on teaching multi-word units, especially collocations (Choi, 2017), which account for as much as 70% of everyday language use (Hill, 2000). Collocations are combinations of words that frequently and naturally occur side by side (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2005). They are categorized into two types: grammatical and lexical. Grammatical collocations combine a controlling word (verb, noun, adjective) with a grammatical word (e.g., preposition), such as "make up" or "concern about". Lexical collocations, in contrast, consist of content words like nouns, verbs, and adjectives, such as "make a mistake" and "traffic accident" (Benson et al., 1997). These combinations are crucial for grasping a language and producing coherent and fluent speech (Benson et al., 1997). Thus, a lack of familiarity with these patterns can lead to communication barriers and misunderstandings (Wray & Perkins, 2000), and the fluency of non-native speakers often relies on their grasp of formulaic language (Aghbar, 1990).

Collocation proficiency is essential for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) to achieve native-like fluency (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993). Mastering multi-word sequences enhances communicative competence and allows fluent, idiomatic language use (Henriksen, 2013). The acquisition of collocational competence in second-language (L2) and EFL learners is influenced by various factors, including language-learning strategies (LLSs; Tabak & Takač, 2023). A LLS, which aids in understanding, retaining, and recalling information (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990), enhances proficiency, boosts confidence, and improves retention (Oxford, 1990). The varying degrees of success among learners has led to interest in exploring the behavior of good language learners, which revealed effective strategies that can be applied by less successful learners for improved outcomes (Chamot, 2008). Studies on the use of LLSs in vocabulary acquisition have indicated that good language learners, who are also considered successful language learners, use diverse cognitive and metacognitive strategies, while less successful ones tend to rely on basic cognitive approaches (Alasmari, 2019; Alsharif, 2022; Gerami & Baighlou, 2011).

Equally important for effective LLS use is the perceptions of EFL students regarding integrating educational audio-visual resources, especially films, into language-teaching practices. According to Lynne (2001; as cited in Amalia, 2017), students' interest is a significant determinant of the effectiveness of English-language instruction. Previous research has shown that watching films improves vocabulary acquisition and significantly boosts students' engagement and motivation in the learning process. Notable studies conducted by Kabooaha (2016), Albiladi et al. (2018), Sari and Aminatun (2021), and Maulida and Warni (2024) further support the idea that incorporating films into language learning can lead to enhanced vocabulary-learning outcomes.

In Saudi Arabia, university students majoring in English are expected to be proficient and sound natural in their language use. However, many struggle with producing accurate collocations. For example, they might say “create pain” instead of “inflict pain”, “powerful tea” instead of “strong tea”, or “beauty disappears” instead of “beauty fades”. These errors indicate a deficiency in collocational competence (El-Dakhs, 2015). The difficulty with collocations arises from limited resources and insufficient exposure to the English language (Alsakran, 2011; Al-Nasser, 2015). For instance, native speakers naturally absorb language chunks from their environment (Altuwairesh, 2016), while EFL learners find this challenging due to their restricted exposure to authentic English (Nesselhauf, 2003). Another contributing factor is individual learning methods; students often employ ineffective strategies for learning collocations, which hinders their development of English lexical collocations (Noor & Adubaib, 2011).

Audio-visual resources can significantly enhance EFL learning, especially since authentic language exposure is vital (Alsakran, 2011; Al-Nasser, 2015). Captioned film clips, in particular, provide a rich combination of L2 text, images, and sounds, offering clear input that reinforces verbal messages and links individual words, leading to an engaging learning experience (Gorjian, 2014; Vanderplank, 1990; Choi, 2017). These resources can also aid incidental learning in which learners focus on understanding communication rather than intentionally learning new terms (Ellis & He, 1999). This approach can help address the time constraints that EFL instructors often face when providing explicit instruction on all L2 collocations. Previous studies have indicated that captioned films are effective for incidental collocation learning (Güler & Buyukkarci, 2020; Teng, 2022). However, there is limited research on their effects on Saudi female EFL learners at the university level or on how successful and less successful learners use cognitive and metacognitive strategies for collocation acquisition. Understanding the role of these strategies is essential for improving vocabulary acquisition and for helping educators enhance their teaching methods by guiding less successful learners in employing effective learning strategies.

This research aims to fill a significant gap in the literature by conducting an experimental study into the impact of captioned film clips on Saudi female EFL learners' incidental learning of lexical collocations and students' perceptions of films as a learning tool for English vocabulary. It also examines reported experiences of successful and less successful learners using cognitive and metacognitive strategies in lexical collocation learning. The study has valuable pedagogical implications for EFL instructors and practitioners, particularly concerning collocation instruction, LLSs, and film-based language teaching. The findings could enhance collocation instruction methodologies and empower EFL learners to adopt more effective learning strategies in their collocation learning. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- (1) Does watching captioned film clips significantly increase incidental vocabulary learning of lexical collocations for Saudi female EFL learners?
- (2) Is there a significant difference between how successful and less successful Saudi female EFL learners use cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies to learn lexical collocations?
- (3) How do Saudi female EFL learners perceive films as a learning tool for English vocabulary?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Lexical Collocations

According to Benson et al. (1997), lexical collocations involve content words, including nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs, such as “pay attention” (which includes a verb and a noun). They differ from grammatical collocations in that they do not contain function words (e.g., prepositions or infinitives). Benson et al. (1997) further identify six subtypes of lexical collocations: verb + noun or adverb, noun + verb or noun, adverb + adjective, and adjective + noun. This research focuses specifically on three subtypes of lexical collocations: noun + verb, verb + noun, and adjective + noun, as illustrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1
SUBTYPES AND EXAMPLES OF LEXICAL COLLOCATIONS RECOGNIZED IN THE STUDY (JAFF, 2013)

Description or structure	Examples
Noun + Verb noun + verb that describes the activity performed by someone designated by this noun (Jaff, 2013)	<i>bombs explode, bees sting</i>
Verb + Noun verb (indicating an action or creation) + noun/pronoun/prepositional phrase	<i>come to an agreement, launch a missile</i>
Adjective + Noun adjective + noun, or noun used in an attributive way + noun (Jaff, 2013)	<i>strong tea, a crushing defeat, house arrest, land reform</i>

Channel (1981) argues that vocabulary instruction should include collocations. The author asserts that collocations provide important contexts and opportunities for connecting words, which can benefit vocabulary acquisition. However, the literature indicates that errors in lexical collocations can lead to more severe communication difficulties than grammatical errors do (Bahardoust & Moeini, 2012). Additionally, L2 learners tend to make more mistakes with collocations than with grammar (Mahmoud, 2005). Moreover, research has shown that learners make more errors in lexical collocations than in grammatical collocations (Anwar & Khan, 2012; Mahmoud, 2005). Anwar and Khan (2012) found that EFL students produced significantly more errors in lexical collocations than in grammatical ones (52.68% vs. 11.61%, respectively). Similarly, Mahmoud (2005) reports that, in the English of Arab university students, 53.33% of lexical combinations were incorrect, while only 10.71% of grammatical combinations were erroneous.

B. Language-Learning Strategies

The concept of LLSs is diverse and widely debated in L2 and EFL research. Rose (2012) notes that Oxford's (1990) classification is the most commonly used and divides LLSs into direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies involve manipulating language through memory, cognitive, and compensation techniques, while indirect strategies facilitate learning via metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Memory strategies involve creating mental associations, using imagery and sound, performing actions, and thoroughly reviewing information. Cognitive strategies, which are crucial for language acquisition, include techniques such as summarizing and deductive reasoning. According to Oxford (1990), these strategies consist of four main components: practicing communication, sending and receiving messages, analyzing and reasoning, and organizing both input and output. Compensation strategies help learners make intelligent guesses and overcome challenges in writing and speaking. Metacognitive strategies, on the other hand, operate either independently or alongside cognitive processes, enabling learners to manage their learning effectively. These strategies include evaluating, organizing, planning, and setting learning goals. Both memory and cognitive strategies are essential for successful language learning (Oxford, 1990). Affective strategies aim to reduce anxiety, enhance motivation, and regulate emotions, while social strategies encourage more interaction with the target language. Both L2 and EFL learners use these strategies to learn new words and phrases (Nation, 2001; Catalán, 2003). Oxford also categorizes vocabulary-learning strategies into direct methods such as dictionaries and lists and indirect methods emphasizing planning, regulating, and evaluating vocabulary learning. Moreover, Gu and Johnson (1996) identified two essential dimensions of vocabulary acquisition strategies: metacognitive regulation and cognitive strategies.

(a). Language-Learning Strategy Use and Successful Language Learning

Oxford and Crookall (1989) found that successful language learners effectively combine cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Rees-Miller (1993) argues that such learners employ cognitive strategies such as seeking clarification, verifying information, and making inferences, along with metacognitive strategies that involve organizing their learning and prioritizing approaches (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Oxford, 1990). Research has indicated that successful learners use a greater variety of LLSs that are more appropriate for specific tasks than less successful learners (Ramirez, 1986; Stern, 1983). A study by Gerami and Baighlou (2011) revealed that successful Iranian EFL students frequently used metacognitive strategies, while unsuccessful students tended to rely on basic cognitive techniques.

(b). Cognitive and Metacognitive Learning Strategy Use and Successful Vocabulary Learning

Even when it is assumed that frequently employing a combination of strategies in language learning has a more significant impact on language learning than using a single strategy, Graham (1997, pp. 42–43) argues that the differences between cognitive and metacognitive strategies in vocabulary acquisition are significant in that they assist in identifying the strategies that are most critical in determining the success of learning. Graham (1997) emphasizes that these strategies differ significantly in their roles: Cognitive strategies focus on execution (e.g., practice and review), while metacognitive strategies support understanding and regulation of learning. Moreover, Anderson (2003) claims that metacognitive strategies are particularly vital, as learners who manage their learning effectively tend to progress quickly. For instance, Alasmari (2019) conducted a case study to examine how a successful language learner in Saudi Arabia acquires vocabulary. The study found that the successful learner uses two main strategies: metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies. The findings suggest that these vocabulary-acquisition techniques could benefit low-level students in improving their vocabulary learning. Moreover, Alsharif (2022) investigated the vocabulary-learning techniques used by Saudi female EFL learners and their impact on vocabulary acquisition. Data from an online survey revealed that metacognitive learning techniques were the most commonly used. The study suggested that enhancing metacognitive strategies could improve vocabulary knowledge. Although previous findings regarding the strategies employed by successful and less successful learners in vocabulary acquisition have been informative, little research has investigated the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies by successful and less successful learners in collocation acquisition (Oxford, 1990; Graham, 1997).

C. Films in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Vocabulary Instruction

Research on collocation instruction indicates that EFL learners can acquire vocabulary through explicit teaching or incidental learning, which occurs through repeated exposure (Mackin, 1978). Incidental learning, in which learners focus on understanding communication rather than intentionally learning new terms, is significant for vocabulary acquisition

(Ellis & He, 1999). Recent technological advancements have led to exploration of incidental vocabulary acquisition using tools such as 3D simulations and interactive games (Huang & Yang, 2012). Few studies, however, have examined incidental collocation learning through films (Güler & Buyukkarci, 2020; Teng, 2022). Güler and Buyukkarci (2020) investigated the effects of different input modes, such as captioned vs. non-captioned, on incidental collocation learning. They divided students into two groups: One group watched films with captions, and the other watched without. After six weeks, both groups were tested on their content comprehension. While the experimental group scored higher, the difference was not significant. Interviews showed that students in the experimental group held positive attitudes toward captioned films.

Additionally, Teng (2022) explored the effects of captioning modes (full captioning, keyword captioning, and no captioning) and other instructional methods, such as advanced organizers, on students' incidental learning of collocations. Advanced organizers were a teaching method in the study that was used to help learners integrate prior knowledge and organize their thoughts and ideas to improve comprehension of input. The results showed that full captioning improved performance in incidental learning of collocations compared to keyword captioning or the absence of captioning. Moreover, the use of the advanced organizer technique also improved outcomes. Despite previous studies suggesting the benefits of captioned films for incidental learning of vocabulary, including collocations, research is needed into their effects on EFL students' incidental learning of lexical collocations and the individual factors influencing the acquisition of collocational competence such as the use of LLSs.

D. EFL Students' Perceptions of Using Films to Learn Vocabulary

The literature indicates that students' perceptions of incorporating films into EFL language teaching are generally positive. For instance, Albiladi et al. (2018) found that they perceived films as authentic resources for enhancing their proficiency in all language skills, specifically vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, Sari and Aminatun (2021) found that students had favorable views on using English films to improve vocabulary development. Moreover, Maulida and Warni (2024) reported that exposure to diverse language inputs improved vocabulary, accent, and pronunciation. In addition, Kabootha (2016) conducted a study in Saudi Arabia that revealed that both students and teachers held positive attitudes toward using films in their classes to enhance language skills. The study suggested that carefully selected film materials can improve the language-learning process and increase students' motivation to learn the target language.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. The quantitative data was collected through a test assessing three types of lexical collocations and a questionnaire regarding participants' cognitive and metacognitive strategy use. Moreover, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data of the participants' perceptions of using films as a tool for learning English vocabulary.

B. Participants

The study employed a convenience sampling method to select participants. The researcher was assigned to instruct four distinct classes of university students in the first semester of the academic year 2024–2025. These classes were therefore chosen as the study's sample group. The sample comprised 88 Saudi female EFL university students in the English language and Literature Department at a Saudi university. They were divided into a control group ($n = 43$) and an experimental group ($n = 45$). The ages of the participants varied, ranging from 18 to 24 years, representing a typical age group for university students in this context.

C. Instruments

(a). Test

The objective of the test was to assess the students' mastery of three categories of lexical collocations: Noun + Verb (N.V), Verb + Noun (V.N), and Adjective + Noun (Adj.N). The test was used as both a pretest and a posttest and was adopted from the Cengage website. This website provides customized course materials tailored to higher education institutions and specific needs. The test items effectively target the three categories being investigated. In the first part, participants were required to match nouns with verbs to create appropriate N.V. collocations (20 items). The second part prompted them to match verbs with nouns to form suitable V.N. collocations (20 items). Lastly, participants were provided with a list of adjectives and asked to construct complete sentences that pair each adjective with a noun to create an appropriate Adj.N. collocation (10 items). Participants were instructed to use each word only once in each section of the test.

(b). Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

The study adopted the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0, developed by Oxford in 1990. The SILL questionnaire helps assess how people use LLSs and how these strategies relate to factors such as age, gender, proficiency, learning style, and culture. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* was used. The SILL has 50 items across six categories: (a) Memory Strategies (9 items), (b) Cognitive Strategies (14 items), (c)

Compensation Strategies (6 items), (d) Metacognitive Strategies (9 items), (e) Affective Strategies (6 items), and (f) Social Strategies (6 items). The study focused on the 23 items related to metacognitive and cognitive strategies to identify what learning strategies successful and less successful language learners employ to learn lexical collocations.

(c). *Semi-Structured Interviews*

The study employed semi-structured interviews to gather data about the students' experiences of using films as a learning tool for English vocabulary. Five participants were randomly selected from the experimental group and interviewed for approximately 25 minutes each. They were encouraged to provide in-depth responses. With the participants' consent, the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed.

(d). *Instrument Validity and Reliability*

The collocation test used in this study was peer-reviewed and validated by three professors of applied linguistics from the English Language and Literature Department at a university in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the internal consistency reliability of both instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a satisfactory value ($\alpha > 0.70$). The reliability tests for the lexical collocation instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.899 for the pretest and 0.907 for the posttest, based on 50 items. Additionally, the reliability tests for the LLS questionnaire indicated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.889 for the pretest and 0.867 for the posttest, based on 23 items. These values suggest that the items within each test are well-correlated and consistently measure the same underlying construct, indicating a high level of reliability (see Table 2).

TABLE 2
RELIABILITY STATISTICS FOR THE STUDY INSTRUMENTS

Instrument		Items	Cronbach's alpha
Collocation test	Pretest	50	.899
	Posttest	50	.907
Language learning strategies questionnaire	Pretest	23	.889
	Posttest	23	.867

The interview questions were crafted based on insights gained from previous studies conducted by Sari and Aminatun (2021), Albiladi et al. (2018), and Maulida and Warni (2024) to explore EFL students' perceptions of using films for vocabulary acquisition. Three applied linguistics professors from the English Language and Literature Department of a Saudi university reviewed and evaluated them to ensure the questions effectively addressed the third research question. Their feedback and comments enabled the researcher to implement the necessary revisions.

D. *Procedure and Intervention*

The study was conducted during the first semester of the academic year 2024–2025. The eighty-eight participants took the pretest focusing on three collocation categories. The participants were divided into control and experimental groups. The experimental group was instructed to watch four captioned clips from popular films, including *Top Gun*, *First Reformed*, *Johnny English*, and *Emma*, among others. These clips were sourced from various YouTube channels that share excerpts from English-language films. Each clip was approximately one to two minutes long and featured collocations, including ones relevant to the study. The students were advised to watch the clips multiple times over four weeks to ensure rich exposure to the targeted collocations. The control group did not receive any intervention. After the intervention, participants' gains in collocation knowledge were assessed through the posttest. Additionally, the experimental group completed the SILL questionnaire about their cognitive and metacognitive strategies in learning lexical collocations based on their respective learning experiences. One week later, five participants from the experimental group were randomly selected and invited to participate in semi-structured interviews.

E. *Data Analysis*

The quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. The study employed various statistical tests for data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the means and standard deviations of learners' performance on the lexical collocation test, as well as their perceptions of cognitive and metacognitive strategy use. To compare the scores of the experimental and control groups prior to the intervention, an independent sample *t*-test was conducted. Additionally, independent sample *t*-tests were conducted to examine performance differences between successful and less successful learners on the lexical collocation test, specifically focusing on their use of cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies. To assess the impact of the intervention on the experimental group's performance in regard to lexical collocations, a paired sample *t*-test was performed to compare scores before and after the intervention.

The qualitative data was collected from interviews and then transcribed, categorized, and analyzed using thematic analysis to explore students' perceptions of using films to learn English vocabulary. Five semi-structured interview transcripts were examined for emerging themes. Each answer related to perceptions was labeled and identified, allowing for automatic organization of the data into categories. Finally, the data within each category was interpreted.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Impact of Captioned Film Clips on Lexical Collocation Learning

The descriptive statistics on the impact of clips of captioned films on lexical collocation learning reveal that before the intervention the experimental and control groups exhibited similar performances across all measured variables (see Table 3). In the N.V category, the experimental group had a mean score of 13.39 ($SD = 5.11$), while the control group had a comparable mean of 14.25 ($SD = 4.99$). For the V.N category, the experimental group's score was 7.97 ($SD = 3.22$), closely aligned with the control group's score of 8.11 ($SD = 3.23$). In the Adj.N category, the experimental group had a mean score of 6.33 ($SD = 2.85$), compared to 6.39 ($SD = 2.89$) for the control group. The total scores also reflected this similarity, with the experimental group scoring 28.24 ($SD = 9.25$) and the control group scoring 28.76 ($SD = 9.10$). Additionally, the results of the independent t -tests further support these findings, revealing no statistically significant differences between the two groups across all categories (see Table 4), which allows for the implementation of the intervention. The t -test results indicate that there were no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the categories N.V ($t = -0.299, p = .766$), V.N ($t = -0.201, p = .841$), or Adj.N ($t = -0.101, p = .920$) or the total scores ($t = -0.267, p = .790$), as all p -values exceeded .05.

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS FOR THE COLLOCATION TEST BEFORE THE INTERVENTION

Sub-category	Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
N.V	Experimental	45	13.39	5.11
	Control	43	14.25	4.99
V.N	Experimental	45	7.97	3.22
	Control	43	8.11	3.23
Adj.N	Experimental	45	6.33	2.85
	Control	43	6.39	2.89
Total	Experimental	45	28.24	9.25
	Control	43	28.76	9.10

TABLE 4
INDEPENDENT T -TEST OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS FOR THE COLLOCATION TEST BEFORE THE INTERVENTION

Sub-category	Group	<i>n</i>	Levene's test for equality of variances		t -test			
			<i>f</i>	Sig	<i>t</i>	Sig (two-sided)	Mean difference	Std. error difference
N.V	Experimental	45	.101	.751	-.299	.766	-.322	1.078
	Control	43						
V.N	Experimental	45	.000	.999	-.201	.841	-.138	0.688
	Control	43						
Adj.N	Experimental	45	.031	.860	-.101	.920	-.062	0.612
	Control	43						
Total	Experimental	45	.030	.864	-.267	.790	-.523	1.95
	Control	43						

Following the intervention, descriptive statistics and paired sample t -test results for the experimental group indicated significant improvements in the collocation test. As shown in Table 5, the mean score for the N.V sub-category increased from 13.93 ($SD = 5.11$) in the pretest to 18.22 ($SD = 2.09$) in the posttest, reflecting a substantial improvement. Similarly, in the V.N sub-category, the mean score rose from 7.97 ($SD = 3.22$) to 14.02 ($SD = 4.85$), demonstrating notable progress. The Adj.N sub-category also exhibited improvement, with mean scores increasing from 6.33 ($SD = 2.85$) to 8.75 ($SD = 2.19$). Overall, the total score for the experimental group improved significantly from a mean of 28.24 ($SD = 9.25$) in the pretest to 41.00 ($SD = 7.37$).

TABLE 5
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS ON THE LEXICAL COLLOCATION TEST

Sub-category	Condition	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
N.V	Pretest	45	13.93	5.11
	Posttest	45	18.22	2.09
V.N	Pretest	45	7.97	3.22
	Posttest	45	14.02	4.85
Adj.N	Pretest	45	6.33	2.85
	Posttest	45	8.75	2.19
Total	Pretest	45	28.24	9.25
	Posttest	45	41.00	7.37

Additionally, the paired sample t -test results further validate these findings, revealing significant differences across all sub-categories with p -values indicating strong statistical differences ($p < .001$) (see Table 6). The results for the sub-categories are as follows: N.V ($t = -6.162, p < .001$), V.N ($t = -6.154, p < .001$), Adj.N ($t = -5.657, p < .001$), and total ($t = -6.902, p < .001$). These findings indicate strong statistical significance and suggest that the intervention effectively enhanced participants' performance in the collocation test across all assessed categories. In line with previous studies,

such as those by Güler and Buyukkarci (2020) and Teng (2022), this research demonstrates that watching captioned films has a positive effect on students' collocation acquisition.

TABLE 6
PAIRED SAMPLE *T*-TEST OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON THE LEXICAL COLLOCATION TEST BEFORE AND AFTER THE INTERVENTION

Sub-category	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Std error Mean	95% confidence interval of the difference		Significance			
				Lower	Upper	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	One-sided	Two-sided
Pre–posttest N.V	–4.28	4.66	.696	–5.691	–2.886	–6.162	44	<.001	<.001
Pre–posttest V.N	–6.04	6.58	.982	–8.023	–4.065	–6.154	44	<.001	<.001
Pre–posttest Adj.N	–2.42	2.87	.428	–3.285	–1.559	–5.657	44	<.001	<.001
Pre–posttest total	–12.75	12.39	1.84	–16.480	–9.031	–6.902	44	<.001	<.001

B. Use of Language-Learning Strategies in Collocation Learning

The study investigated the disparities between successful and less successful learners in the use of LLSs. These differences were examined using descriptive statistics and an independent samples *t*-test. The descriptive statistics reveal significant differences in strategy use between the two groups (see Table 7). For cognitive strategies, successful learners had a mean score of 3.95 (*SD* = 0.499), compared to 3.88 (*SD* = 0.561) for less successful learners. This higher mean score for successful learners suggests that they engage in cognitive strategies that promote a deep understanding and mastery of collocations. As they encounter new collocations, they effectively integrate them into their language use. Additionally, these learners use various language-manipulation techniques to enhance their retention of collocations, making their learning more impactful. For example, they practice new collocations by repeatedly saying or writing them. They also use different resources for learning collocations, such as dictionaries and films. Furthermore, they take notes of collocations and underline them when they come across them during reading.

Concerning metacognitive strategies, successful learners achieve higher performance than less successful learners, with a mean score of 3.99 (*SD* = 0.641) compared to 3.35 (*SD* = 0.749). This significant difference indicates that successful learners use metacognitive strategies during the process of acquiring collocations. They identify gaps in their collocation knowledge by focusing on strategizing and assessing their learning. For example, they seek ways to enhance their understanding of collocations, for instance by watching films, and pay close attention to how native speakers use them. Additionally, they set clear goals and develop a plan for their collocation learning. Overall strategy use further emphasizes these findings, with successful learners achieving a mean score of 3.97 (*SD* = 0.519) compared to 3.61 (*SD* = 0.529) for less successful learners. These findings lead to the conclusion that successful learners have a greater awareness of their learning processes, allowing them to self-regulate, plan, and evaluate their learning.

TABLE 7
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF LANGUAGE-LEARNING STRATEGY USE FOR SUCCESSFUL AND LESS SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS

Language-learning strategies	Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Std. error mean
Cognitive	Successful	24	3.95	0.499	0.101
	Less successful	21	3.88	0.561	0.122
Metacognitive	Successful	24	3.99	0.641	0.130
	Less successful	21	3.35	0.749	0.163
Total	Successful	24	3.97	0.519	0.106
	Less successful	21	3.61	0.529	0.115

Furthermore, the results of the independent samples *t*-test indicate significant statistical differences between successful and less successful learners (see Table 8). For cognitive strategies, the test reveals a *p*-value of .627, which exceeds the threshold for statistical significance, indicating no statistically significant difference between the two groups. The mean difference of 0.077 and the confidence interval ranging from –2.416 to 0.396 support this finding. In contrast, a significant difference was found in metacognitive strategies, with a *p*-value of .004. The mean difference of 0.636 and a confidence interval from 0.218 to 1.054 indicate that successful learners are significantly more likely to employ metacognitive strategies than less successful learners. Furthermore, the total strategy use shows a significant difference with a *p*-value of .028, suggesting that successful learners effectively use a wide range of strategies.

This analysis highlights significant differences in the use of LLSs between successful and less successful learners, particularly regarding metacognitive strategies. Successful learners not only engage more effectively with cognitive strategies, but also demonstrate advanced metacognitive awareness. These findings strongly reinforce previous research such as Alasmari's (2019) study that reported that successful learners employ a diverse range of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in their vocabulary acquisition. Moreover, this study supports the findings of Alsharif (2022), who suggests that metacognitive strategy use enhances vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, the findings validate Graham's (1997) and Anderson's (2003) critical observations that metacognitive strategies are essential for enhancing learning outcomes. In the current study, the successful learners reported employing more metacognitive strategies and demonstrated awareness of their learning process by effectively planning, regulating, and evaluating their understanding of lexical collocations, which resulted in significantly positive learning outcomes.

TABLE 8
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST OF LANGUAGE-LEARNING STRATEGY USE FOR SUCCESSFUL AND LESS SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS

Sub-category	F	Sig	95% confidence interval of the difference		Mean difference	Std. error difference	Significance			
			Lower	Upper			t	df	One-sided	Two-sided
Cognitive	.172	.680	-2.416	.396	.077	.158	0.489	43	.314	.627
Metacognitive	.452	.505	.218	1.054	.636	.207	3.070	43	.002	.004
Total	.052	.821	.041	.672	.356	.156	2.278	43	.014	.028

C. EFL Students' Perceptions of Using Films to Learn English Vocabulary

The findings presented in this section are supported by the data collected from excerpts of the student interviews. Table 9 outlines the frequencies and rankings of EFL students' perceptions regarding the use of films to learn English vocabulary. From the analysis, three main themes emerged: (1) audio-visual resources such as films as effective tools for improving vocabulary knowledge, (2) films as a source of authentic everyday language, and (3) films as a motivating tool for vocabulary learning.

The data indicates that the students view audio-visual resources such as films as valuable tools for enhancing vocabulary. This opinion was reported by five students, accounting for 35.71% of the responses. One student (P3) stated, "Films help you understand common phrases." Another student (P2) said, "My vocabulary has improved very much; at first, I used simple words, but now I use stronger and formal words." One student (P5) shared her experience of how films helped with her incidental vocabulary learning over the years:

I have been watching films and shows over the past six years. At first, I didn't know that it would be useful, but when I chose my major and started studying, I realized that I knew a lot of vocabulary without studying. It shocked me that my brain was preserving the whole time by itself without me realizing that.

This result aligns well with previous studies' findings, such as those of Albiladi et al. (2018) and Maulida and Warni (2024), which revealed that EFL students regarded films as an effective tool for language learning, especially for vocabulary acquisition.

Furthermore, students generally held positive attitudes toward using clips of captioned films for vocabulary learning, viewing them as a motivating tool for mastering English. This was reported by four students, representing 28.57% of the perceptions. One student (P4) noted that "clips of films were clear and understandable for me. I didn't have any difficulties." Another student (P3) remarked, "I feel bored with traditional learning methods, so that is why I prefer to learn English through films." This finding aligns with previous studies, such as those by Kabooa (2016), Albiladi et al. (2018), Sari and Aminatun (2021), and Maulida and Warni (2024), which all reported that EFL students had positive attitudes toward using films for vocabulary learning. Lastly, the EFL students in this study viewed films as a valuable resource for authentic and everyday language, as reported by five students, representing 35.71% of the perceptions. One student (P5) said, "The films really helped me understand how native speakers speak. Now I watch films without subtitles and I can understand them." This finding supports Vanderplank's (1990) idea that films provide visual cues, such as facial expressions and body language, which can assist language learners in understanding the meaning of words in context. Another student (P1) noted that films can help learners keep pace with the constant and rapid changes in the English language: "They help us keep up with the language, because language always changes." This finding supports previous research by Albiladi et al. (2018), which indicated that EFL students view films as an authentic resource for language learning.

TABLE 9
STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING FILMS TO LEARN ENGLISH VOCABULARY

Perception	n	%	Rank
Audio-visual resources such as films as effective tools for improving vocabulary knowledge	5	35.71%	1
Films as a source of authentic language and everyday language	5	35.71%	1
Films as a motivating tool for vocabulary learning	4	28.57%	2
Total	14	100	

D. Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for EFL classrooms. When used effectively, captioned film clips can be a valuable resource for collocation instruction, as watching them and hearing collocated words in meaningful contexts in film dialogues can incidentally improve the collocational knowledge of the EFL learner. It is therefore recommended that instructors incorporate them into their teaching of collocations to help students acquire collocations through exposure to authentic language input. These clips are concise and practical for use in EFL classrooms, as their brief nature allows students to grasp the content without confusion. This also enables instructors to use the remaining class time for practicing what the students have learned. However, the success of this approach depends on the instructor's ability to integrate the clips into their teaching effectively and on ensuring that the clips are pedagogically appropriate.

Moreover, developing an adequate collocational competence is a dynamic process that involves various factors and a range of skills. Students' approaches to learning often differ based on individual preferences and needs. The study suggests integrating captioned film clips into collocation instruction, with an emphasis on raising EFL students' awareness of the significance of using LLSs in learning English collocations. In the EFL classroom, instructors can demonstrate effective strategies, specifically metacognitive strategies, reinforce them, and provide opportunities to practice these strategies and encourage less successful learners to assess their progress consistently. This insight will empower educators to effectively guide their students through the complexities of collocation learning, ultimately leading to more successful outcomes for all. Furthermore, the study indicates that students view films as a valuable tool for acquiring collocations and improving vocabulary learning. They are seen as both enjoyable and educational. These findings could encourage educational institutions and stakeholders to improve media and film-based resources, promote the creation of film clips for EFL classrooms, and increase teachers' awareness of the significance of captioned film clips in developing language skills.

V. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effect of captioned film clips on the incidental learning of lexical collocations among Saudi female EFL university students. It found that these clips, featuring authentic dialogues, enhance collocation acquisition and boost student engagement and enjoyment in EFL settings. Moreover, students viewed films as valuable for vocabulary enhancement, providing real-world exposure to language use. They reported that the engaging nature of films increases their motivation to learn, making the process more enjoyable. Furthermore, cognitive and metacognitive LLSs were identified as important for successful collocation learning, with a particular emphasis on metacognitive strategies. Successful learners not only memorized and practiced collocations, but also monitored their understanding and adjusted their learning processes to optimize acquisition.

Several avenues for further research emerged from the study's findings and implications. While this research focused exclusively on female university learners, other studies could include male students and investigate gender differences in the effect of the intervention on their collocation learning. Moreover, the study focused on three categories of lexical collocations, indicating a need for further research to examine additional categories. The researcher also suggests comparing the effects of different modes of inputs, such as captioned vs. non-captioned film clips, on collocation acquisition and exploring LLS use. Additionally, the study focused on only two types of LLS essential for vocabulary acquisition: cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Future research could include other types of LLS, such as vocabulary-learning strategies. Moreover, the study focused exclusively on the perspectives of EFL learners regarding the use of films for acquiring English vocabulary. Future research could incorporate EFL instructors' perspectives on using these clips as instructional tools and identify the difficulties in implementing them in EFL classrooms.

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Cultural Identity and the *To Lotang* Belief System in *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng*: A Literary Anthropology Perspective

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Abstract—This research explores the belief system of the *To Lotang* people as depicted in the novel *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng* by S. Gegge Mappangewa. Using a literary anthropological approach informed by Clifford Geertz's theory, the study adopts a descriptive qualitative research method. Data is gathered through literature review to analyze the portrayal of *To Lotang*'s belief system. The findings reveal that this belief system is a syncretic tradition, blending elements of animism, dynamism, and Hindu influence. Through characters who uphold ancestral values and customs, the novel illustrates how these beliefs shape the identity and worldview of the *To Lotang* people, emphasizing the enduring legacy of cultural traditions passed down through generations. The study highlights the role of spirituality in the daily lives of the *To Lotang*, showing how their belief system is intricately woven into their cultural practices and social interactions. It also demonstrates how the characters' adherence to these traditions influences their decisions, relationships, and understanding of the world. Ultimately, the research underscores the significance of literature as a medium for preserving and conveying indigenous belief systems, offering insights into the deeper cultural values of the *To Lotang* community.

Index Terms—*To Lotang* Belief, novel, literary anthropology

I. INTRODUCTION

The novel *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng* by S. Gegge Mappangewa has gained widespread recognition as a best-selling work and was awarded first place in the 2011 *Republika* Novel Writing Competition. This literary masterpiece not only captivates readers with its compelling narrative but also delves deeply into the values, belief systems, myths, and traditions of the Bugis-Makassar people. Central to the novel is the portrayal of the *To Lotang* belief system, which is uniquely presented alongside the influences of Islam and Hinduism. This fusion of religious and cultural elements creates a rich tapestry of reciprocal and dynamic interactions between different belief systems.

The *To Lotang* belief system, as presented in *Sajak Rindu*, is more than just a religious practice—it represents the cultural identity of the people of *Amparita, Sidenreng Rappang*. As Hall (1997) posits, cultural identity is an ongoing process of becoming and being, shaped by both the past and the future, transcending time and space. In this sense, the *To Lotang* belief system, intertwined with rituals, traditions, and community behaviors, plays a vital role in forming and maintaining the identity of the *To Lotang* people. These cultural expressions are vividly captured through the characters, plot, setting, and themes of the novel, offering a rich representation of the dynamic relationship between local traditions and larger religious influences.

Indonesia, a nation known for its cultural and religious diversity, offers a fascinating context for studying the intersections of traditional beliefs and official religions (Mazya et al., 2024; Abbas et al., 2024; Ilham & Rahman, 2024). In particular, the *To Lotang* community in South Sulawesi presents a unique example of how traditional belief systems can endure and adapt, even amidst the pressure of dominant religions such as Islam and Hinduism. Though officially classified as part of Hinduism by the Indonesian government, the *To Lotang* religion maintains distinctive practices and beliefs that set it apart from mainstream Hinduism. This community's ability to preserve its traditional identity amidst

religious and cultural change provides valuable insights into the complexities of cultural survival. *Sajak Rindu* serves as an important literary work that not only explores the life and beliefs of the *To Lotang* people but also sheds light on the intricate interactions between their indigenous beliefs and Islam, offering a profound understanding of how these influences shape both individual and collective identity.

In addition to its exploration of religious and cultural dynamics, *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng* also highlights the ways in which literature functions as a powerful tool for preserving and transmitting cultural heritage. Through the characters' experiences, the novel provides readers with an intimate view of the *To Lotang* people's worldview and the importance they place on ancestral traditions. By intertwining these beliefs with the narrative, the author not only portrays the *To Lotang*'s rich cultural identity but also fosters a deeper appreciation for the resilience of traditional belief systems in the face of modernization and religious pluralism. The aim of this research is to analyze the *To Lotang* belief system as depicted in the novel, uncovering how these beliefs shape the cultural identity and worldview of the community. This study is important as it offers a deeper understanding of the role literature plays in preserving indigenous belief systems, while also examining the intersection of traditional beliefs with mainstream religions like Islam and Hinduism. Through this, the research emphasizes the significance of cultural representation in literature and contributes to broader discussions on cultural survival and adaptation in contemporary societies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies are relevant to this article, providing a foundation for understanding the depiction of cultural identity and belief systems in *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng*. Yantu (2020) conducted research titled "Local Wisdom of the Bugis Community in the Novel *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng* by S. Gegge Mappangewa," which highlights the values of honesty, commitment, politeness, conflict resolution, hard work, and mutual cooperation in Bugis culture as depicted through characters like Halimah. The study shows how these values manifest in the characters' actions, particularly in Halimah's difficult decision to remain true to her faith despite the pressures of love, reflecting the moral compass of the Bugis people. Mahfiroh et al. (2020), in their study "Social Conflict in the Novel *Lontara Rindu*," examined the various forms of social conflict portrayed in the novel, categorizing them into conflicts of gender, religion, groups, interests, and individuals. Their research highlights how these conflicts are resolved and their societal impact, offering insight into the social dynamics of the community depicted in the novel.

Another significant contribution comes from Ardiansyah et al. (2021), whose research on "Bugis Ethics in the Novel *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng* and Its Contribution to Character Education in Schools" demonstrates how the three key Bugis ethics—*sipakatau* (respect), *sipakainge* (remind each other), and *sipakalebbi* (humility)—serve as valuable tools for character education, especially in the context of schools. These ethical values, embodied by the characters, are presented as vital components of the community's cultural fabric. Additionally, the anthropological aspects of literature are explored in studies like those by Febrianto and Anggraini (2019); Rohmana (2012), who apply literary anthropology to examine the cultural elements in works such as *Rahvayana Aku Lala Padamu and Perempuan Named Arjuna*. These studies reveal how literature serves as a medium to represent and explore cultural traditions, values, and systems within various communities, such as the Balinese and Sundanese cultures.

The theory of Literary Anthropology, as outlined by Ratna (2011), is fundamental to this research. It provides an interdisciplinary framework for analyzing the relationship between literary works and the cultural contexts in which they emerge. Literary anthropology suggests that literary works cannot be understood in isolation; instead, they must be examined in relation to the social, cultural, and historical circumstances that shape them (Blissett, 2024; Abbas et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2023). This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of how cultural identity, belief systems, and societal norms are represented and transmitted through literature. Furthermore, as literary works often evoke and construct cultural meanings, they play a crucial role in reflecting and challenging cultural realities (Gottlieb, 2024; Suma et al., 2023; Junaid et al., 2023). By applying literary anthropology to *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng*, this study aims to uncover the intricate ways in which the *To Lotang* belief system is woven into the cultural identity of the community and how it interacts with other belief systems in the novel.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a descriptive qualitative research method to analyze the belief system of the *To Lotang* people as depicted in *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng* by S. Gegge Mappangewa. The primary aim is to explore how the *To Lotang* belief system is represented in the novel and how it interacts with elements of Islam and Hinduism, contributing to the cultural identity of the community. The study uses a literary anthropological approach, drawing on Clifford Geertz's theory to examine the relationship between cultural phenomena and the narrative structure of the novel.

The data collection method involves literature study, focusing on the novel as the primary text. The text will be analyzed for its portrayal of the *To Lotang* belief system, identifying key symbols, rituals, and traditions that shape the characters' worldview and cultural identity. Additionally, the analysis will consider the social context and interactions between the characters, particularly those influenced by religious beliefs and cultural practices. Through this, the research aims to uncover how the *To Lotang* belief system is represented and how it intersects with broader social, cultural, and religious dynamics.

In the analysis, both intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the novel will be considered. Intrinsically, the research will focus on the characters, plot, setting, and themes to understand how the *To Lotang* belief system is embedded in the narrative. Extrinsically, the research will contextualize the novel within the broader cultural, historical, and religious environment of the *To Lotang* people, exploring how their beliefs interact with and adapt to other belief systems, such as Islam and Hinduism. By applying literary anthropology, this method allows for a deeper understanding of how literature reflects and constructs cultural identities and belief systems.

IV. RESULTS

A. History of *To Lotang* Beliefs

The novel *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng* describes the belief of *To Lotang* embraced by the main character, Ilham. Ilham's character comes from Amparita, Sidenreng Rappang Regency, likes Halimah as a Muslim who comes from Pakka Salo. During Ilham KKN at Pakka Salo, Ilham fell in love with Halimah. Halimah did not know that Ilham had a different belief from him. This is the conflict that builds the story.

This novel tells the story of the *To Lotang* belief which originated from the traditional belief system embraced by the *Towani To Lotang* community. This belief is a unique blend of various elements, including animism, Hinduism, and local traditions, passed down from generation to generation. Although officially classified by the Indonesian government as part of Hinduism with a distinctive name, Hinduism *To Lotang*, orally, they still refer to them as *To Lotang*. This belief has very distinctive characteristics and practices and is different from Hinduism. The *To Lotang* Trust is one of the beliefs of the Bugis Wajo community, especially Wani Village. This belief existed before Islam entered the Wajo kingdom. This can be seen in the following quote:

Data 1

He didn't realize that the Ilham he chose, even though his father didn't like him because he never got him to pray at the mosque during KKN in his village, was a follower of the Tolotang Hindu religion. The religion that was initially only recognized as a school of belief brought by Ipabbere entered Amparita, but after this country only recognized five religions, its adherents preferred to name themselves Hinduism for many reasons in common. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 163)

The data above reveals that the *To Lotang* belief system was first introduced to Amparita by *I Pabbere* centuries ago, marking the beginning of a distinct cultural and spiritual tradition in the region. Although the *To Lotang* people are identified as Hindu, their practices diverge significantly from mainstream Hinduism. For instance, they do not observe Nyepi Day, which is a central celebration in Balinese Hinduism. Instead, the *To Lotang* community follows their own unique set of traditions, including holidays established by the Uwas through the process of *tudang sipulung* (a traditional consultation). One of the most significant holidays for the *To Lotang* people is held in January at *Perrinyameng*, where they gather to celebrate and reinforce their cultural identity. This distinctive practice underscores the ways in which the *To Lotang* belief system has adapted and evolved over time, maintaining its roots while integrating some aspects of external religious influences.

Data 2

Today, at the end of January, according to the results of *tudang sipulung*. It is designated as the Tolotang holiday which will be held in Perrinyameng. The first place *I Pabbere*, the bearer of the Tolotang teachings entered Sidrap, received asylum hundreds of years ago. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 241)

Historically, the origins of the *To Lotang* community can be traced back to the 16th and 17th centuries in the Wajo region. At that time, King Wajo ordered all its inhabitants to convert to Islam, and those who refused would be expelled from the area. The *Tolotang* community that refused this order eventually spread to areas such as Amparita, Bacukiki, and Otting. Although they are scattered, they still maintain their ancestral beliefs and practices. Bandung (2016) stated that Raja Wajo who was titled Arung Matoa Wajo XI named La Sangkuru obliged all his people to embrace Islam (p. 178). Those who reject are those who still believe in the teachings of *To Lotang*. King La Sangkuru emphasized that those who did not follow the teachings of Islam immediately left Wajo. Adherents of the *To Lotang* teachings from Wani village, which numbered about 50 families, finally left Wajo. The leader of the *To Lotang* teachings at that time was *I Pabbere*. He asked for asylum to Arung Amparita, La Paduppai. Arung Amparita also declared to the King of Addatuang Sidenreng, La Patiroi. Their request was finally accepted by setting the terms of the agreement. The conditions of the agreement include that *To Lotang* adherents must be held in an Islamic ceremony if someone gets married and dies.

Based on the data above, it shows that *To Lotang* originally came from Wajo Regency. After King Wajo converted to Islam, he asked all his citizens to embrace Islam. Those who refuse to embrace Islam are welcome to leave Wajo. Some of the residents chose to leave their hometowns to maintain their faith. Therefore, their leaders do *tudang sipulung* (deliberating) to make decisions. The decision was taken that the *I Galigo* group was given a place in Bacukiki, Pare-Pare, the *I Mango* group to the Otting area and the *Pabbere* group was accepted by La Patiroi, the King of Sidenreng, and placed in Amparita. *I Pabbere* is very strong in maintaining and spreading the belief in *To Lotang* (Bandung, 2009, p. 180).

The uniqueness of this *To Lotang* belief, even though it is in the name of Hinduism, is that their dress culture in ritual events does not resemble the clothes used by Hindus in performing ritual ceremonies. Their clothes are more like Muslims. This is possible because of the agreement between King Addatuang Sidenreng and the leader of *To Lotang*, *I Pabbere*

above. When the ritual event is carried out in *Perrinyameng*, the men use black songkok made of velvet like the songkok used by Muslim men. They also use sarongs, like the appearance of Muslims who will pray. While women wear batik sarongs with kebaya tops.

They carry out various rituals related to the cycle of life, nature, and ancestors. This ritual involves offerings to the spirits of ancestors and the gods they believe in. Respect for ancestors is a central element in the *To Lotang* belief. They believe that ancestral spirits can influence daily life, so various ceremonies are performed in their honor. This belief also includes elements of animism, where they believe that everything in this realm has a spirit or soul. Therefore, they have great respect for nature and the surrounding environment.

B. *To Lotang* Trust System

Adherents of the *To Lotang* belief believe in God Almighty called Dewata Seuwae. Etymologically, *de'* means not to be concerned with the body. So, Dewata means disembodied, intangible, invisible. In addition, Dewata can also mean God or God, Seuwae means singular, one or one. They believe that the Seuwae God has power beyond human strength because He is able to create seven layers of heaven upwards and seven layers of earth downwards. The *To Lotang* people believe that the Seuwae Gods are able to see all human movements. Therefore, humans perform rituals and offerings to Him both through ceremonies, rituals, and offerings. Adherents of this belief cannot worship the God Seuwae directly, but through a religious intermediary called Uwa. Uwa is the one who can be directly related to the Seuwae God (Bandung, 2009, p. 181).

According to Clifford Geertz (1992), God is a symbol rich in meaning and is used by humans to understand and interpret the world around them. This explanation is similar to the concept of the One God in monotheistic religions. The *To Lotang* community also believes in the system of revelation. This is clearly illustrated in the story of La Pannaungi, a figure who is believed to be the bearer of the treatise of the forerunner of *To Lotang's* beliefs. Bandung (2009) stated that once La Pannaungi performed a belief ritual embraced by the teachings of Sawerigading, suddenly there was a voice out of nowhere which read: "Hi La Pannaungi, stop doing it, accept what I will say later". La Pannaungi replied, "Who are you?" the answer was "I am the God of Seuwae as the Lord who rules over all things and will give you confidence". La Pannaungi acknowledged and believed that the voice was the word of God, namely the Seuwae God. In addition to believing in revelation, this community also believes in an afterlife called lino paimeng (the afterlife). According to their belief, lino paimeng is a lipu bunga (beautiful place) as a place for people who obey the rules of the Gods and the Uwatta and Uwa (p. 177).

The leader of *To Lotang's* belief is called Uwa. Uwa is a religious leader who has a role model in society. He has a very large position and influence amid his society because he has excellence, both in science and integrity. In the novel, Ilham's father is Uwa. Therefore, Halimah could not be accepted by Ilham's father as a son-in-law unless Halimah entered *To Lotang*.

Data 3

In front of there, where the *Uwa* lead the ritual, there is the tomb of I Pabbere and several tombs of their ancestors who used to carry the teachings of *To Lotang* from Wajo district. This area is not allowed to be entered by anyone, except for certain people, and cannot even take pictures there. Very, very sacred! (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 245)

The *Uwa* holds a crucial position as a spiritual intermediary between the human world and the *Seuwae* Gods, embodying a role of great reverence and responsibility within the *To Lotang* community. As the trusted leader in all ritual activities, the *Uwa* is responsible for ensuring that the community's spiritual practices are carried out with precision and respect to tradition. Their leadership in these rituals is not only vital for maintaining the cultural continuity of the *To Lotang* belief system but also for preserving the connection between the people and their ancestral gods. Through the *Uwa's* guidance, these sacred rituals continue to be a cornerstone of the *To Lotang* community, reinforcing both spiritual and social cohesion.

Data 4

Their feast day is the day of the grave pilgrimage to the grave of I Pabbere which is held in January every year. Even then, the certainty of the day is uncertain, we have to wait for the results of the *tudang sipulung* of the *tolotang* leaders whom they call Uwa. (Mappangewa, p. 163)

In the novel *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng*, Ilham's father, who serves as an *Uwa*, plays a pivotal role in the tension surrounding the relationship between Ilham and Halimah. As the *Uwa*, he holds significant authority over spiritual matters and traditions, which becomes a barrier to their union. Ilham's father is unable to accept Halimah into the family unless she embraces the *To Lotang* belief system, highlighting the deeply rooted influence of cultural and religious identity on personal relationships. This conflict underscores the central theme of the novel, illustrating the complexities of navigating love within the context of tradition, belief, and cultural expectations.

Data 5

Now the problem is no longer because you are considered inappropriate for Ilham who has just graduated, but... I am from *Tolotang's* family, Halimah! And my father can only accept you if you want to hug *Tolotang*. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 165)

This is the conflict that becomes the climax in this novel. Halimah did not want to abandon her faith. She is willing to lose everything as long as it is not her belief. This can be seen in the following quote:

Data 6

She does not know where to go because it is impossible to go home, but he will not be able to leave Islam just because of love... She can betray his father in love affairs, but in religious affairs, she does not need to think twice to say NO. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 166)

The Book of Lontara is a book that is believed by the To Lotang community to be a holy book. They consider that the teachings received by La Panaungi come from the Seuwae God. They call this book Appongenna Tolotangnge. This book contains stories and ancestral messages about life contained in scattered Lontara writings, not in the form of formal books. However, the book has been burned. From then on, they no longer had a book. The concept of theology, which includes revelation and religious ritual procedures, is all oral. The To Lotang community as an entity that recognizes the existence of God, has religious reason. In principle, the concept of religiosity in the belief in To Lotang is a belief in God. The supreme god in the Tolotang perspective is Dewata Seuwae, as well as several companion gods such as Dewa Langie; a god who resides in the sky, this god is tasked with bringing rain, fertility/prosperity as well as disasters. The god Mallinoe, the god who occupies certain places on the earth such as in trees, roads, land and so on, and the god Uwae, which is the god who lives in water.

C. To Lotang Ritual

To Lotang's beliefs are the same as other beliefs in general. They have several rituals that are carried out through ceremonies. This ceremony serves as a medium for meeting with his God who is referred to as the Seuwae God. The To Lotang ritual is generally divided into 2, namely rituals related to offerings to the Seuwae God and rituals related to human life such as birth rituals, marriage rituals, and death rituals. This ritual is carried out by the To Lotang community through the intermediary of Uwa. Some of the To Lotang rituals in the novel *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Rindu dari Sidenreng* by S. Gegge Mappangewa.

(a). Perrinyameng

Perrinyameng is actually the burial place of I Pabbere (the first person to bring the teachings of To Lotang to Amparita in Sidenreng Rappang Regency). This place is the center of the ritual of celebrating the To Lotang holiday which is held in January. Etymologically, perri means suffering/difficulty and nyameng means happiness/pleasure. So, the To Lotang people symbolize the implementation of the holiday as a symbol of celebrating happiness after going through/going through various difficulties in living this life. This celebration was held in Perrinyameng. This can be seen in the following data:

Data 7

Today at the end of January, according to the results of the tudang sipulung, is designated as the Tolotang holiday which will be held in Perrinyameng. The first place I Pabbere, the bearer of the Tolotang teachings in Sidrap, received asylum hundreds of years ago. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 241)

Implementation of Eid al-Fitr To Lotang decided through Tudang Sipulung. Tudang Sipulung consists of two words, namely Tudang 'Sit' and sipulung 'gathered'. Ritual Tudang Sipulung carried out before Hari Raya To Lotang. This ritual is carried out to determine the holiday. Implementation center Tudang Sipulung carried out at the grave of I Pabbere. The data below shows that Tudang Sipulung is carried out to determine the day of the ritual Perrinyameng and other rituals such as the ritual of the first day going down to the rice fields. They will open their book called lontara. Bandung (2009) mentioned that there are two sources of religious law In Lotang: written law and unwritten law (p. 184). The source of the written Law is Lontara. This book is distinguished from Lontara Kutika and Lontara said. Lontara Kutika is Lontara, which contains good times or times, and bad times, such as days, months, and years, are good and bad. Lontara is a Lontara that can be used as a guideline in knowing the good or bad schedule, especially related to agriculture. The following data shows that the ritual mappalili also carried out by the community To Lotang.

Data 8

This gathering event is called tudang sipulung. At this tudang sipulung event, lontara will be opened. From this lontara, it will then be determined when it will be made the day of mappalili as the first day to go down to the rice fields. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 93)

The implementation of this perrinyameng ritual is carried out every year. The basis for the implementation of this ritual was that when I Pabbere's death was approaching, he advised that when I pass away, bury me in Perrinyameng and make a mass pilgrimage to my grave every year. The grave of I Pabbere cemetery is located approximately 3 km from the center of Amparita. This cemetery is under a large shady tree and is always locked, except on the day of the ceremony (Bandung, 2009, p. 228). Their feast day is the day of visiting the grave of I Pabbere. This can be seen in the following quote:

Data 9

If Hindus have the Nyepi holiday, Tolotang Hindus do not know it. Their feast day is a day of pilgrimage to the grave of I Pabbere which is held in January every year. Even that certainty is uncertain, we have to wait for the results of the tudang sipulung of the Tolotang leaders whom they call Uwa. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 163)

Implementation of rituals Perrinyameng This was done massively and lively.

Figure 1. Rituals *Perrinyameng*

Source: <https://nopagunawan.com/towani-tolotang-salah-satu-agama-asli-nusantara-dari-sulawesi-selatan/>

The devotees To Lotang who migrated will return on this Eid. They believe that it is a sacred day, a day of gathering, a day of blessing, so they will try to attend the ritual event.

Data 10

Thousands of Tolotang believers spilled out next to the Amparita market. Men wear black songkok made of velvet and use an industrially woven sarong. Meanwhile, the woman also uses a sarong but a batik motif, with a kebaya shirt top. Young and old, big and small, all in the same clothes and no one wears footwear... (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 241)

The implementation of this holiday was not only attended by To Lotang adherents, but those who held office such as the Regent, Sub-district Head, Chairman of the DPRD, Police, Army and other community leaders were also invited (Bandung, 2009, p. 228). In the novel poem *Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng*, data on the implementation of the To Lotang holiday is also found.

Data 11

A year, people outside Tolotang who usually attend the event held at Perrinyameng, are people who receive special invitations such as the Regent and a number of district officials. Journalists are also not free to take pictures, especially at the funeral of I Pabbere. Although in fact, the holiday has been similar to a tourist parade because of the many interesting attractions that they hold after the main menu of their ritual is completed. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 223)



Figure 2. I Pabbere Cemetery on Foot Barefoot

Source: <https://nopagunawan.com/towani-tolotang-salah-satu-agama-asli-nusantara-dari-sulawesi-selatan/>

The Uwa used horses accompanied by the To Lotang people who walked beside them. This can be seen in the following data:

Data 12

The cavalry began to move slowly. His companions, who wore red sarongs, walked beside the horses of the gods. Other Tolotang adherents also moved. Visitors from outside Tolotang also walked to witness firsthand the ritual that only exists on the land of Amparita. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 245)

The clothes used by To Lotang devotees at the ceremony are sarongs, regular shirts, and black skullcaps for men. Women use sarongs with batik motifs and kebaya tops. Bandung (2009) stated that women use two sarongs (p. 229). One sarong is directly used, and the other is used as a scarf or head covering. Some women also wear Bodo clothes and silk sarongs. In addition to clothes, this ritual also has special ways of carrying out the ritual. Bandung (2009) stated that the

implementation of the ceremony was carried out in such a way that all participants of the ceremony faced the direction of the I Pabbere cemetery by sitting cross-legged around the I Pabbere cemetery (p. 231). Then several religious leaders entered the cemetery of I Pabbere. These are the ones who pray to the God of Seuwae. First Uwa poured water on the tombstone of I Pabbere, then he was given a cotton sack and then given minnyak smell. Other followers of the To Lotang religion are only outside the cemetery but with the same attitude. In addition to water, cotton, and oil smell, this ritual also carries pesse pelling (candles made from candlenuts) lit during the ceremony. In addition, they also bring betel leaves and areca nuts.

(b). *Pammasetau*

Pammasetau is basically the burial place of To Lotang's ancestors as well as a place to worship and hand over their slaughtered animals. Some opinions say that this pammasetau ritual is carried out when a person has a wish/vow. They will come to the tomb of I Pabbere to deliver their vows. This ritual is carried out by watering the minnyak bau grave of I Pabbere carried out by Uwa. In the novel, the implementation of this ritual is described as follows:

Data 13

One of the unique rituals when visiting Pammasetau, visitors usually tie a rope on the fence of the tombstone while praying and promise to release the bond again when their prayers are answered. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 148)

People pray in front of I Pabbere's tombstone and tie a rope to a tree as a sign that he has come to make a vow. For example, when they have a celebration to be able to build a house, then they make a vow and promise that after the vow is fulfilled, they will come back to express gratitude and gratitude because their vow has been received by cutting a goat, cow, or buffalo as well as removing the ropes/cloth that have been tied in the past. In addition, he also brought offerings and miniature houses that he built. Offerings that are mandatory at a vow release event like this are betel leaves, jasmine rice, grease smell and incense.

Data 14

One of the three tombstones is fenced with blocks made of black wood. The three shiny black stones look like they have just been painted and varnished. That's because there is a special treatment on the stone when it is burned. If people in general when going to the tomb usually water the tombstone with water, the treatment of the tombstone is different from the others. The stone can be watered with a smell. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 147)

(c). *Massempe*

Massempe is a pencak silat game that is carried out to fight against leg strength. This ritual is carried out at the To Lotang holiday. This activity was carried out after the sacred ritual of perrinyameng was carried out. In the past, this massempe was carried out by adults and children. Now massempe is only done by children. This massempe is carried out to carry out ancestral habits, foster courage, fostering physical health to find a resilient To Lotang generation in the future. This massempe has referees and special rules.

Data 15

The field that was occupied by people sitting and performing rituals, is now empty. Soon it will become a massempe massempe area (kicking each other. As a rule, it is permissible to kick the calf and shin. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 247)

The novel *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng* tells the story of the characters Vito and Vino as twin brothers who are separated due to the difference in their parents' beliefs. Ilham, his father, was a To Lotang and Halimah, his mother, was a Muslim. Vino followed his father to become To Lotang and Vito followed his mother to Islam. When Vito missed meeting his father, he came on the To Lotang ceremony and participated in the massempe in the hope of meeting his father but never met.



Figure 3. The Massempe Ritual

Source: <https://nopagunawan.com/towani-tolotang-salah-satu-agama-asli-nusantara-dari-sulawesi-selatan/>

Several times, Vito became the winner in the massempe ritual. Uwa (Ilham's father) thought Vito was Vito who was his grandson.

Data 16

Vito didn't realize, besides Jihang, there was a horseman who was watching his movements. The man is one of the Uwa who is respected in the Tolotang community. And Uwa is his grandfather. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 241)

To Lotang's marriage with Muslims often occurs. The adherents of To Lotang who converted to Islam called themselves To Lotang Benteng. Although some original To Lotang adherents do not recognize the existence of the term To Lotang Benteng. Those who married to Islam and moved from To Lotang were no longer recognized as To Lotang. This happened to Uncle Ilham. Halimah asked for asylum when she left her home to live with Ilham, and Ilham's parents did not accept Halimah.

Data 17

Some To Lotang Benteng people have admitted to Islam and are Islamic in terms of ID cards, but in their daily behavior they still carry out some To Lotang rituals without feeling that they have worshipped Allah who they have acknowledged without allies in their shahada. (Mappangewa, 2016, p. 168)

In daily lives, they continue to perform traditional To Lotang rituals. These individuals do not seem to recognize that these rituals, which may involve practices not in line with Islam, conflict with the core Islamic belief in worshipping Allah alone. The paragraph suggests a disconnect between their formal religious identification and their ongoing engagement with traditional practices.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta Dari Sidenreng* by S. Gegge Mappangewa not only explores the personal journey of the characters but also intricately weaves the history and belief system of the To Lotang people from Amparita, Sidenreng Rappang. Through the depiction of rituals such as perrinyameng, pammasetau, and masssempe, the novel highlights the cultural significance of the To Lotang's belief in the Seuwae God. These traditional practices play a crucial role in shaping the narrative and conflict, particularly through the character Ilham, whose internal struggle reflects the tension between cultural beliefs and the broader themes of change and identity. Thus, the novel serves as both a cultural and personal exploration, showcasing the complexity of the To Lotang belief system and its impact on the characters' lives.

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Tools and Methods for Assessing Narrative Competence in Preschool Children: A Systematic Review

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Abstract—This review intends to synthesize the assessment approaches in preschool children for narrative competence while focusing on some major characteristics like elicitation procedures, stimuli, types of tasks, and levels of analysis. With reference to 37 studies published between 2019 and 2024 in the WOS database, this review points to a diverse array of tools and methods of assessing narrative competence. Standardized and non-standardized tools have their own advantages and disadvantages, with the former providing cross-cultural consistency and the latter better capturing natural language samples; however, in the digital age, both also face common limitations. Different types of narrative tasks have different cognitive demands and apply to different assessment goals. In addition to conventional picture books, narrative stimulus materials include wordless books. However, there is a growing interest in digital stimulus materials, which offer interactivity and dynamic engagement and may fit better into modern educational environments. Future research can address these limitations by expanding the scope of included studies and considering the reliability and validity of assessment tools, while integrating digital technology and artificial intelligence to promote the dynamic, comprehensive, and real-time development of narrative competence assessment methods.

Index Terms—narrative competence, preschool children, assessment tools, content analysis, web of science database

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, many studies have focused on the development of narrative competence in preschool children and its assessment techniques (Ralli et al., 2021). However, despite the inherent importance of narrative competence, systematic reviews of its assessment methods are scarce—especially among preschool children, largely because their writing skills are not yet fully developed and they predominantly rely on oral narration (Pinto et al., 2019). Moreover, the diversity of research topics, methodologies, and disciplinary perspectives, combined with concerns over the replicability of narrative competence assessments, further underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive analysis to address existing gaps and promote progress in this field.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Narrative competence is one of the core early literacy skills (Pinto et al., 2019) in child psychology, linguistics and education. It has thus been defined as the ability to tell a story in a consistent manner (Bowles et al., 2020), critical in early childhood language development. It forms the basis of improved vocabulary growth, acquisition of sentence structures, and advanced skills such as reading and writing (Grolig et al., 2020). Most importantly, it is a potent predictor of how well one succeeds academically and is a powerful promoter of social development (Pinto et al., 2019; Ralli et al., 2021).

Given the importance of narrative competence for child development, related studies have increased significantly in recent years. This is because assessments of narrative competence not only evaluate children's storytelling abilities but also provide a basis for educational interventions, thereby attracting considerable attention. For example, Van Kraayenoord and Paris (1996) employed wordless picture books as stimulus materials to elicit narrative expressions in

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children and evaluate their developmental levels. Subsequently, assessment tools such as Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives and Edmonton Narrative Norms Instrument have been gradually developed and applied in practice. Moreover, some scholars have adopted more ecologically valid sampling methods to obtain language samples for measuring children's narrative competence.

Considering the wide variety of tools available for assessing children's narrative competence—and the substantial differences in children's language abilities, ages, and cultural backgrounds—there is an urgent need for a systematic review that summarizes the characteristics, applicable contexts, and the strengths and limitations of these assessment tools, thereby providing a more comprehensive theoretical basis for future research and educational practice. Although Sánchez-Gómez et al. (2024) have conducted a systematic review on the assessment of children's narrative competence, her focus was on children with atypical development. In contrast, systematic reviews on typically developing children, especially among preschoolers, are relatively scarce. Therefore, the necessity of this study lies in its exclusive focus on typically developing children, with an in-depth analysis of the characteristics, scope of application, and limitations of various assessment tools, aiming to fill this research gap and provide targeted guidance for further theoretical exploration and educational practice.

This study intends to conduct a systematic analysis of the literature on narrative competence in preschool children using scientific databases. Specifically, it addresses the following research questions:

- (i). What are the key features of studies on narrative competence in preschool children?
- (ii). What are the widely used instruments and approaches for evaluating narrative competence in preschool children, and what are their main characteristics.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Systematic Procedure

Using the WOS database, a systematic review was carried out, and synonyms were added to broaden the scope of the search. Expanded terms were not applied in the search. The search targeted terms associated with preschool children, narrative ability, and evaluation methods. A detailed account of the search results and the composition of the initial dataset can be found in Table 1.

TABLE 1
RETRIEVAL RESULTS AND REMOVAL OF DUPLICATE RECORDS

Terms	Rec.	Tot.	Dup. Rem oved	Sel.for Scr.
preschool children AND narrative skills AND (assessment OR evaluation OR measurement)	54	443	179	264
preschool children AND narrative competence AND (assessment OR evaluation OR measurement)	12			
early childhood AND narrative skills AND (assessment OR evaluation OR measurement)	34			
early childhood AND narrative competence AND (assessment OR evaluation OR measurement)	7			
preschool children AND narrative development AND (assessment OR evaluation OR measurement)	77			
early childhood AND narrative development AND (assessment OR evaluation OR measurement)	113			
children AND storytelling abilities AND (assessment OR evaluation OR measurement)	18			
early childhood AND storytelling abilities AND (assessment OR evaluation OR measurement)	4			
preschool children AND narrative skills AND analysis	60			
preschool children AND narrative competence AND analysis	8			
early childhood AND narrative competence AND analysis	19			
narrative language AND measurement AND preschool children	7			
kindergarten children AND narrative skills AND (assessment OR evaluation OR measurement)	26			
kindergarten children AND narrative competence AND (assessment OR evaluation OR measurement)	4			

B. Study Selection and Inclusion

The study initially collected 443 studies, and then entered the screening phase. Only those studies that met all the criteria were included in the final sample. The screening process was divided into three stages, progressively refining the sample, and the detailed steps can be found in Figure 1.

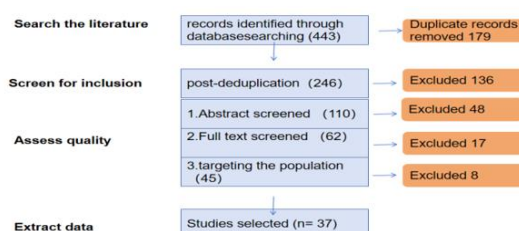


Figure 1. Flowchart

The screening process was divided into three stages. The first stage screened studies based on abstracts, requiring that studies (i) assessed preschoolers' narrative competence, (ii) did not include case reports, (iii) were published from 2019 to 2024, and (iv) were written in English. The language requirement applied only to the manuscripts and did not include the language background of the participants.

The second screening phase at the full-text level retained studies that provided measurement data and evaluated oral narratives.

The third screening criterion was that the study was of preschool children, even if other age groups were included, as long as the study focused on normally developing children. Studies were excluded if they involved children with developmental disabilities or special needs, such as speech and language disorders, Down syndrome, or individualized education plans.

Ultimately, a total of 37 studies were chosen for data extraction.

C. Data Extraction and Coding

This study employs content analysis, coded across two main dimensions: study characteristics and assessment characteristics.

The coding framework for research characteristics includes not only the country, language, children's age, and gender ratio, but also the research designs. Research designs were classified according to Creswell (2012) research typology, which includes quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research. Quantitative research is further divided into Survey Design (cross-sectional, longitudinal) and Experimental Methods (true experiments, quasi-experiments). Qualitative research is subdivided into Phenomenology, Narrative Research, Case Study, Ethnography, and Grounded Theory (Creswell, 2012).

While the categorization of assessment characteristics was adapted from the methodological framework employed by Sánchez-Gómez et al. (2024), Table 2 provides a detailed breakdown of these assessment characteristics.

Two raters were responsible for the coding process. Each rater independently assigned codes to the selected studies. One rater coded all the selected studies, while the second rater coded 24.3% of the total (N=9). Cohen's Kappa was used to estimate the inter-rater reliability of the coding process, showing the degree of agreement between the two raters for each category (Yang et al., 2022). Perfect consensus (Cohen's Kappa = 1) was achieved for the following categories: age range, sample size, percentage of girls, country, participants' language, and standardization. Acceptable consensus (Cohen's Kappa = 0.85–0.91) was achieved for the following categories: nature of analysis, task type, research design, stimuli, and elicitation procedure. Any discrepancies were discussed and resolved by the raters.

TABLE 2
ANALYSIS CATEGORIES BASED ON ASSESSMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Criteria	Categories and Examples
Standardized test	Yes (i.e., language samples that use a certain type of stimulus and scoring scheme. It has norms of interpretation); No (i.e., language samples that use diverse types of stimuli with different scoring schemes. It has no norms of interpretation).
Stimuli	wordless picture book (e.g., frog goes to dinner); illustrated story book with words (e.g., Peter and the Cat); wordless plates or pictures (e.g., images, pictures, draws); cartoon scene; verbal prompts (oral) (e.g., instruction, prompts, questions).
Level of analysis	Macrostructure; Microstructure.
Task type	story generation; story retelling.
Nature	fictional; personal

Source: Adapted from Sánchez-Gómez et al. (2024)

IV. RESULTS

This section is organized into two parts. Firstly, the characteristics of the selected studies are described to answer research question i. Secondly, the assessment tools identified in these studies are analyzed, focusing on their features and the most commonly used instruments to answer research question ii.

A. Overview of the Chosen Studies

TABLE 3
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDIES

Study	Design Type	Age range (Y; M–Y; M)	N	Girl%	country	Language
Bailey et al. (2020)	Quasi-Experimental	3-5	59	54%	United States	English
Baldwin et al. (2022)	Cross-sectional study	3;0-5;1 (M=4;2)	78	53%	United States	African American English
Bohnacker et al. (2022)	Quasi-Experimental	4;0-8;1 (M=6;1)	100	53%	Sweden	Turkish-Swedish bilingual
Byrnes-Cloet and Hill (2022)	Phenomenology	Preschool group M=4;3 School group M=5;5	39	49%	United States	Spanish -English bilingual
Clark-Whitney and Melzi (2023)	Cross-sectional study	4-5 (M =4;11)	102	46%	United States	Spanish–English bilingual
Dealy et al. (2019)	Longitudinal Study	4-6	210	51%	United States	English
Fiani et al. (2022)	Longitudinal Study	4;4-9;11	69	51%	Lebanon	Lebanese Arabic-French bilingual
Gómez and González (2019)	Longitudinal Study	M= 5;7	63	46%	United States	Spanish–English bilingual
Grolig et al. (2020)	Experimental Research	M=5;5	210	43%	Germany	German
Guedes et al. (2023)	Cross-sectional study	3-6(M= 4;11)	231	50%	Portugal	Portuguese
Işıkoğlu and Güzen (2024)	Mixed Methods Research	4;8-5;8(M=5;1)	18	61%	Türkiye	Turkish
Jiménez et al. (2024)	Cross-sectional study	4;8-6;7(M=5;10)	343	53%	Spain	Spanish
Khan, Hong et al. (2021)	Cross-sectional study	M=5;2	108	53%	United States	English
Khan, Logan et al. (2021)	Cross-sectional study	3 -5;6 (M = 4;3)	307	56%	United States	English
Kiernan et al. (2024)	Cross-sectional study	5;11-6;5(M=5;7)	27	44%	Australian	English
Lai (2020)	Cross-sectional study	5;0-6;1	56	48%	China	Chinese
Lake and Evangelou (2019)	Experimental Research	3;1-4;8	94	62%	UK	English
Lindgren (2019)	Longitudinal Study	4;4-7;4	17	59%	Sweden	Swedish
Lindgren and Bohnacker (2022)	Experimental Research	4;0-6;11 (M=5;7)	46	67%	Sweden	German-Swedish bilingual
Lindgren (2022)	Longitudinal Study	T1: 4;0–4;8 (M = 4;4) T2: 5;5–6;2 (M= 5;10)	17	59%	Sweden	Swedish
MacLeod and Pesco (2023)	Longitudinal Study	5;2-6;2 (M=5;8)	60	48%	Canada	French
Mahfoudhi et al. (2023)	Cross-sectional study	4;0-7;11(M=6;10)	96	58%	Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti Arabic
Melzi et al. (2023)	Quasi-Experimental	M=3;10	56	64%	United States	Spanish or Spanish–English bilingual
Mendoza et al. (2021)	Cross-sectional study	2;1-5;11 (M=5;6)	227	53%	Spain	Spanish
Orizaba et al. (2020)	Longitudinal Study	M=4;5	40	unmentioned	United States	Spanish
Pinto et al. (2019)	Experimental Research	M=5;1	428	51%	Italy	Italian
Pronina et al. (2023)	Experimental Research	3;3-4;2(M=3;9)	37	50%	Spain	Catalan-Spanish bilingual
Rojas et al. (2019)	Longitudinal Study	5-8	1243	49%	United States	Spanish–English bilingual
Spencer et al. (2023)	Experimental Research	3;2-5;4(M=4;10)	22	46%	United States	Spanish–English bilingual
Sun et al. (2024)	Longitudinal Study	4-5	186	54%	Singapore	English-Mandarin bilingual
Tompkins et al. (2020)	Longitudinal Study	3-5(M=4;5)	52	50%	United States	English
Veneziano et al. (2020)	Experimental Research	5;6-8;8	114	50%	France	French
Wofford et al. (2022)	Longitudinal Study	5;2-7;10 (M=6;4)	133	unmentioned	United States	Spanish–English bilingual
Yang et al. (2022)	Longitudinal Study	3;10- 6;4 (M=4;11)	20	75%	Australia	Mandarin-English bilingual
Yang et al. (2023)	Longitudinal Study	5;0-9;2(M=6;8)	55	53%	China	Kam-Mandarin ethnic minority bilingual
Zanchi and Zampini (2021)	Cross-sectional study	3-8 (M = 4; 6)	240	50%	Italy	Italian
Zhang et al. (2019)	Cross-sectional study	2;11-6;11	80	50%	China	Chinese

Following the presentation of the table, the study characteristics are summarized as follows. The research types included quantitative studies (N=35), qualitative studies (N=1), and mixed-methods studies (N=1). Among the quantitative studies, survey research and experimental methods were prominent. Survey research (N=25), comprising 12 cross-sectional and 13 longitudinal studies, provided snapshots or insights into long-term trends and effects, respectively. Experimental methods (N=10) included seven experimental studies with controlled variable manipulation and three quasi-experimental studies exploring causal relationships without full randomization. Sample sizes ranged from 17 to 1,243 participants.

In terms of linguistics and geography, participants represented 11 languages across 15 countries or regions. It is particularly noteworthy that the languages of English, Arabic, and Chinese also encompassed their dialects, such as African American English, Lebanese Arabic, Kuwaiti Arabic, and Kam language. English was the most common (N=18), primarily from the United States, Australia, the UK, and Singapore. Spanish (N=11) and Chinese (N=5) followed. Bilingual narratives (N=14), particularly Spanish-English bilinguals (N=7), were also analyzed.

When it comes to participant gender, most studies include mixed-gender samples, except for three studies that do not specify the participants' gender. In terms of age, while the screening criteria require the inclusion of preschool-aged children, participants in some studies span a broader age range, covering children from 2 years and 1 month to 9 years and 2 months.

Overall, these study characteristics demonstrate the diversity and cross-cultural context of research in the field. The differences in language, culture, gender, and age involved add to our understanding of preschoolers' narrative competence, but also expose differences between studies. The above analysis provides a comprehensive overview of research on narrative competence in preschool children. Building on this foundation, the focus will shift to the core tools and methods used in the research, which will be analyzed in the following section.

B. Evaluation Instruments Identified and Features

(a). Characteristics

The assessment tools were identified, coded, and analyzed based on their characteristics, as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ASSESSMENTS

Study	Stand	Elicitation Procedure	Stimuli	Task Type	Nature	Level of Analysis
Bailey et al. (2020)	No	Topic: recent scary things	Verbal prompts	Generation	Personal	Macrostructure
Baldwin et al. (2022)	Yes	NSS ¹ (Frog, Where Are You)	Wordless picture books	Retelling	Fictional	Macrostructure Microstructure
Bohnacker et al. (2022)	Yes	MAIN ²	Wordless pictures	Generation	Fictional	Macrostructure Microstructure
Bymes-Cloet and Hill (2022)	No	1. <i>Frog, where are you?</i> 2. <i>Frog goes to dinner</i> 3. a recorded story	Wordless picture books	Retelling	Fictional	Macrostructure Microstructure
Clark-Whitney and Melzi (2023)	No	Topic: 1. falling 2. taking medicine that tastes bad.	Conversational Map	Generation	Personal	Macrostructure Microstructure
Dealy et al. (2019)	No	Story stems	Verbal prompts	Generation	Fictional	Macrostructural
Fiani et al. (2022)	Yes	MAIN	Wordless pictures	Generation	Fictional	Macrostructure ¹
Gámez and González (2019)	No	Cartoons: 1.a small mouse and his friends 2.a duck and an elephant	non-verbal animated cartoons	Retelling	Fictional	Macrostructure Microstructure
Grolig et al. (2020)	Yes	NCT ** ³ (Frog, Where Are You?)	Wordless picture books	Generation	Fictional	Macrostructure Microstructure
Guedes et al. (2023)	No	Children and adults having fun in a swimming pool	Pictures	Generation	Fictional	Macrostructure Microstructure
İşıkoğlu and Güzen (2024)	No	Story authoring apps	Brainstorming, storyboarding, and Creating multimedia content	Generation	Fictional	Macrostructure
Jiménez et al. (2024)	No	unmentioned	Pictures	Generation	Personal	Macrostructure Microstructure
Khan, Hong et al. (2021)	Yes	TNL ⁴ (the Shipwreck Story)	Verbal prompt and pictures	Retelling	Fictional	Macrostructure
Khan, Logan et al. (2021)	Yes	NAP ⁵ -2	Wordless picture books	Retelling	Fictional	Macrostructure

¹ Narrative Scoring Scheme

² Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives

³ Narrative Comprehension Task

⁴ Test of Narrative Language

⁵ Narrative Assessment Protocol

						Microstructure
Kiernan et al. (2024)	No	1. William's Baby Brother 2. The Football Story or Ana Gets Lost	Pictures	Retelling	Fictional	Microstructure
Lai (2020)	No	Interview (the experience of visiting a doctor)	Verbal prompt	Retelling	Personal	Macrostructure
Lake and Evangelou (2019)	Yes	BST ⁶ and TNR ⁷	Illustrated storybook, visual prompts and pictures	Generation	Fictional	Macrostructure
Lindgren (2019)	Yes	MAIN	Wordless pictures	Generation	Fictional	Microstructure
Lindgren and Bohnacker (2022)	Yes	MAIN	Wordless pictures	Generation	Fictional	Macrostructure
Lindgren (2022)	Yes	MAIN	Wordless pictures	Generation	Fictional	Microstructure
MacLeod and Pesco (2023)	Yes	ENNI ⁸	Wordless pictures	Generation	Fictional	Macrostructure
Mahfoudhi et al. (2023)	Yes	ENNI	Wordless pictures	Generation	Fictional	Microstructure
Melzi et al. (2023)	No	1. <i>Frog, Where Are You?</i> 2. share personal narratives 3. a play narrative	Wordless picture book, the conversational map the MacArthur Story Stem Battery	Generation	Personal and Fictional	Macrostructure:
Mendoza et al. (2021)	No	An Afternoon in the Park	Verbal prompts	Retelling	Fictional	Microstructure
Orizaba et al. (2020)	Yes	NAP-S NSS (<i>Frog, Where Are You?</i>)	Wordless picture book	Generation	Fictional	Macrostructural
Pinto et al. (2019)	No	Activities, recycling material, games, storytelling, discussion	Pictures and activities	Generation	Fictional	Microstructural
Pronina et al. (2023)	Yes	BST	Pictures	Retelling	Fictional	Macrostructure
Rojas et al. (2019)	No	<i>Frog, Where Are You?</i> or <i>Frog Goes to Dinner</i> or <i>Frog on His Own</i> or <i>One Frog Too Many</i>	Wordless picture book	Generation	Fictional	Microstructure
Spencer et al. (2023)	Yes	NLM ⁹ Listening	Illustrations	Retelling	Fictional	Macrostructure
Sun et al. (2024)	Yes	MAIN	Wordless pictures	Generation	Fictional	Microstructure
Tompkins et al. (2020)	No	1. The Great Monster Hunt 2. Mr. Duck Means Business	Wordless picture books	Generation	Fictional	Macrostructure
Veneziano et al. (2020)	No	1. the Stone story 2. the Bicycle story.	Wordless pictures and a game (control group)	Generation	Fictional	Microstructure
Wofford et al. (2022)	No	Generation: <i>One Frog Too Many</i> Retelling: <i>Frog, Where Are You?</i>	Wordless picture books	Generation and Retelling	Fictional	Microstructure
Yang et al. (2022)	No	Ana gets lost and pictures	Wordless pictures	Retelling	Fictional	Macrostructure
Yang et al. (2023)	Yes	MAIN	Wordless pictures	Retelling and Generation	Fictional	Microstructure
Zanchi and Zampini (2021)	Yes	NCT * ¹⁰ and BST	Illustrated storybook	Generation	Fictional	Macrostructure
Zhang et al. (2019)	No	Topic	Verbal prompt	Generation	Personal	Macrostructure
						Microstructure:

The first feature analyzed pertains to the use of standardized assessment tools. Some language samples were obtained using diverse stimuli and non-uniform scoring criteria, while others were gathered through standardized tests employing fixed stimuli and explicit interpretive guidelines. Among the reported studies, 19 employed non-standardized assessment tools, whereas 17 utilized standardized tools. Notably, studies conducted by Lake and Evangelou (2019), Orizaba et al. (2020), Zanchi and Zampini (2021), incorporated two types of standardized tools. Casenhiser et al. (2013) argued that non-standardized methods, such as oral narrative and language sample analysis, are more appropriate for evaluating Indigenous children's language skills, as they allow for the collection of more representative samples in

⁶ Bus Story Test

⁷ Test of Narrative Retell

⁸ Edmonton Narrative Norms Instrument

⁹ Narrative Language Measures

¹⁰ The Narrative competence Task

natural communication contexts, avoiding the limitations of decontextualized standardized tests.

The second feature examined concerns the types of stimuli used to elicit children's narratives. In most studies, researchers employed audiovisual stimuli, such as pictures, picture books, cartoons, and audio recordings. Specifically, 29 studies used pictures or picture books, with 18 explicitly indicating the use of picture books. Additionally, six studies employed verbal prompts; for instance, one study required participants to recount a personal experience related to a specific topic. Depending on the research objectives, multiple types of stimuli (N=6) were sometimes employed, including activities, games, and discussions, alongside traditional audiovisual and verbal stimuli.

The third feature analyzed concerns the type of narrative task utilized in the assessments: story generation or story retelling (Sánchez-Gómez et al., 2024). These two types of tasks differ in their approaches. In retelling tasks, children are first asked to listen to a story and then either use visual aids (e.g., picture books or images) or rely on memory to retell the story in their own words. In contrast, generation tasks provide children with only a prompt or stimulus (e.g., an illustration or cartoon) and require them to create a story based on their interpretation of the stimulus. For instance, in the Multilingual MAIN, examiners guide children to examine a series of pictures and then invite them to narrate a story in their own words. Across the studies analyzed, story generation tasks were more prevalent (N=26) than story retelling tasks (N=13), with two studies incorporating both types of tasks.

This study analyzed two main types of tasks to assess narrative skills: story generation and story retelling. Story retelling requires children to listen to a story and then retell the content using pictures or from memory. Conversely, the generation of a story is a type of materials stimulation that encourages children to create some story from their fanciful understanding. For instance, in MAIN, the child looks at a number of pictures and independently comes up with the story in each picture. In fact, generation tasks (N=26) were more numerous than retelling tasks (N=13) in the analyzed studies, two of which combined components of both tasks into a single approach.

Researchers believe that feedback given to children while storytelling (e.g., That's good. Very nice, etc.) as well as directive language (e.g., I'm going to show you a picture, please take 30 seconds to look at it and tell a story) (Jiménez et al., 2024) cannot be considered as components of stimulation.

The form of story used in the assessment is the fourth key aspect of the analysis of children's narratives. Sánchez-Gómez et al. (2024) classified two types of stories: personal and fictional. However, children's fictional stories often involve, to varying degrees, personal characters or events, which justifies the particular attention evolving only on those stories based clearly on their lived experiences. Children could be requested, for example, to share their experience of going to the doctor (Jiménez et al., 2024) or to narrate a personal event linked to a specific theme (Zhang et al., 2019). Out of the studies reviewed, only six complied with that requirement. That underscores what Clark-Whitney and Melzi (2023) believed reasoned assessments of children's narratives often emphasize fictive stories more so than personal stories. But personal stories give vital information on children's language usage, which gives knowledge on their grammatical structures and vocabulary richness (Ralli et al., 2021).

There are two main levels of analysis for competence in terms of narrative: macrostructure and microstructure (Zanchi & Zampini, 2021). Macrostructure means the structure of the story, how it is held together, overall coherence, and itself includes evaluative comments one makes (Zanchi & Zampini, 2021). On the other hand, microstructure comprises details in aspects of language, that is, sentence complexity and vocabulary richness (Lindgren, 2022). Twenty-one studies examined both macrostructure and microstructure. Eleven only examined macrostructure, while five only examined microstructure.

Table 4 further details the particular criteria for each analytical stage. Overall, the studies effectively utilized standardized tools and tailored narrative analysis to their research objectives. Macrostructure analysis was relatively consistent, focusing on dimensions such as story grammar, plot complexity, and coherence (e.g., Gámez & González, 2019; Lake & Evangelou, 2019; Melzi et al., 2023). In contrast, microstructure analysis showed greater variability. Common measures included language productivity (e.g., number of words or C-units, total word count), syntactic complexity and vocabulary diversity (e.g., Bohnacker et al., 2022; Dealy et al., 2019; Grolig et al., 2020). Some studies also examined lexical structures (e.g., Khan et al., 2021), use of modifiers, nouns, verbs, and sophisticated words (e.g., Orizaba et al., 2020), as well as errors in word choice and syntax (e.g., Jiménez et al., 2024).

It is particularly noteworthy that the *Frog, Where Are You?* series of wordless picture books was used in 6 studies, making it one of the most popular picture books. This trend of use is unrelated to the use of standardized assessment tools. In these studies, the nature of the stories was primarily fictional, with five studies employing fictional stories. Except for one study conducted in Germany, the remaining studies were all carried out in the United States, with the languages involved mainly being bilingual English and Spanish (N=3), pure English (N=2), and pure Spanish (N=2). In terms of narrative analysis, three studies examined both macrostructure and microstructure, two studies focused solely on microstructure, and one study focused only on macrostructure.

(b). Most Common Tools

Seventeen studies in this research utilized standardized assessment tools, encompassing 10 different instruments. The figure below provides details on their specific usage. Notably, NAP has undergone iterative updates, resulting in versions such as NAP-2 and the Spanish adaptation, NAP-S. While these versions include some modifications, they retain the original NAP's core framework and methodology. Therefore, this study consolidates NAP-2 and NAP-S into a

single category of standardized tools. A similar approach is taken for the BST, with various versions treated as adaptations of the same standardized tool.

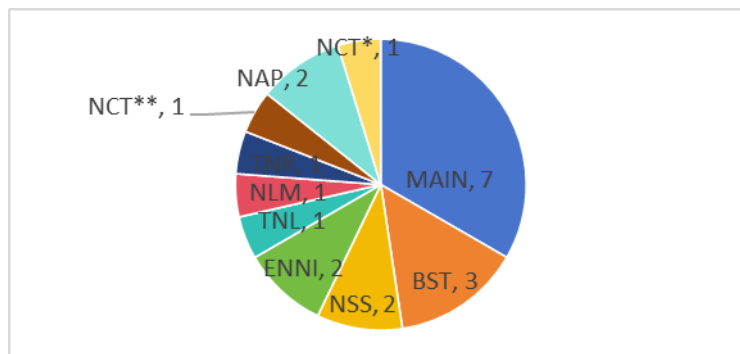


Figure 2. Breakdown of Standardized Assessment Tools Across 17 Studies

In this report, a total of seven studies employed the MAIN as a standardized research tool, five of which focused on assessing the narrative competence of bilingual children, exploring narrative performance across different linguistic backgrounds as well as the differences between narratives in the first and second languages. These applications align with the original purpose of MAIN's development and design. In all seven studies, children completed the story generation task using the wordless picture sequences provided by MAIN (with one study additionally including a story retelling task). Regarding narrative analysis, four studies examined both macrostructure and microstructure, while three studies focused solely on macrostructure. No studies were found that exclusively focused on microstructure.

The second most commonly used tool is the BST (N=3). Since the BST comes with accompanying picture stimuli, all studies utilizing this tool employed these images. However, the nature of story generation and the levels of analysis varied across the studies. Zanchi and Zampini (2021) analyzed both the macrostructure and microstructure of stories created by Italian-speaking children based on the pictures. Pronina et al. (2023) asked Catalan-Spanish bilingual children to retell the story and analyzed their macrostructure scores. Lake and Evangelou (2019) involved English-speaking children in creating stories, examining both the macrostructure and microstructure of their narratives. Additionally, two of the studies used other standardized assessment tools alongside the BST.

The third tool, the NSS, is specifically designed to assess children's narrative organizational skills by evaluating seven dimensions of narrative macrostructure: introduction, character development, mental and emotional states, referencing and listener awareness, conflict resolution, events and reactions, and overall coherence and conclusion (Baldwin et al., 2022). In this report, two studies utilized the NSS in alignment with its intended purpose, focusing exclusively on narrative macrostructure analysis.

The fourth commonly used tool is the ENNI. The ENNI also includes wordless picture stimuli, and the two studies in this report employing the ENNI used it for story generation tasks. However, their narrative analyses differed: one study focused on macrostructure, while the other emphasized microstructure.

V. DISCUSSION

Further, the diversity of research approaches and cultural settings denotes the significance of an evaluation of instruments and methods of carrying out assessments-whose key features, characteristics, and practical relevance need to be especially attended to. With the findings thus arrived at, the next part studies the characteristics of narrative assessments, thereby presenting elicitation techniques, stimuli, and levels of analysis. The next section will dwell on these aspects in greater depth.

A. Standardized vs Non-Standardized Tools

As outlined earlier, the narrative abilities of preschool children were evaluated based on language sample recordings, utilizing both standardized and non-standardized assessment tools. Each tool has advantages and certain limitations.

Non-standardized tools are used slightly more often, as they are capable of collecting natural speech samples, highlighting children's language development (Casenhiser et al., 2013). However, there are objective drawbacks to non-standardized instruments. These include the susceptibility of raters to subjective factors, the lack of stability in the scoring criteria, and the low general applicability of the studies, which makes them difficult to replicate.

Conversely, standardized tools offer substantial comparative validity to research due to their scoring and cross-cultural consistency. For instance, the MAIN and BST, two frequently cited standardized narrative assessment tools, employ pictured stories to facilitate narrative assessments. The MAIN's primary feature lies in its employment of wordless pictures to mitigate cultural and linguistic biases, thereby enabling comprehensive macrostructure and microstructure analysis for both generation and retelling tasks. The MAIN has been shown to effectively assess a range of linguistic and cognitive abilities, including vocabulary, grammar, reading skills, and false belief understanding. Concurrently, the BST enhances children's storytelling abilities by facilitating comprehensive investigations of narrative

structure and intricacy. The BST demonstrates significant reliability across cultures and serves as a valuable complement to other narrative assessment tools. The selection of a standardized or non-standardized tool is determined by the specific objectives of the research study, contingent upon the nature of the subjects being assessed.

However, standardized assessment tools have certain limitations. For example, due to the fixed nature of the testing environment, children's verbal performance may not correspond exactly to the real situation. There may also be limitations in measuring children's immediate creative narratives.

There are also limitations common to both standardized and non-standardized assessment tools.

Firstly, most current narrative proficiency assessments (except NAP) rely on post hoc analysis, where researchers need to collect children's language data before transcribing and coding, resulting in lagging feedback. This not only affects the capture of children's immediate language changes in different contexts, but also makes it difficult for educators to adjust strategies in real time during teaching or therapy.

Second, whichever method is used to measure narrative competence, children's spoken language samples have to be recorded, after which the data are transcribed, coded, and analyzed, which is time- and labor-intensive. After that, researchers usually need to use professional language analysis software, such as CLAN, to analyze the data, and the analysis methods of different language analysis software may lead to different analysis results.

Thirdly because narrative ability is strongly influenced by children's cognitive and emotional states. Children's attention, emotions, and fatigue levels can affect narrative performance and lead to data fluctuations.

Therefore, future research can combine the strengths of standardized and non-standardized tools to explore new ways of assessment, reduce their respective limitations, and provide educators and therapists with a more universal, accurate, and real-time method of assessing narrative ability.

B. Comparison of Narrative Task Types: Retelling vs Generation

Story generation tasks are more commonly used in research than retelling tasks. Nonetheless, these two types of tasks differ in their structure and demands on cognition, and development pacing of language.

While retelling gives children the structural framework with adult narration and pictures, thus encouraging a more advanced vocabulary and long stories, it is an essential skill when children between three and five are learning narrative skills (Grolig et al., 2020; Wofford et al., 2022).

On the contrary, story generation tasks allow the children to create a narrative on their own, taking it any hint. Tasks such as that involve more of working memory and put high cognitive demands on executive function (EF), which is quite difficult for younger children (e.g., Clark-Whitney & Melzi, 2023; Fiani et al., 2022; Grolig et al., 2020). It also bears more expression of the child's ability for independent presentation. They are also a major way for children to interpret the world around them. On the other hand, retelling tasks are easier, relying chiefly on long-term memory (e.g., Lai, 2020; Wofford et al., 2022).

Thus, one ought to make a sound judgment when designing task types based on the research goals and the children's characteristics. Retelling tasks serve to monitor the use of language models and memory skills, whereas generation tasks are more suited to investigate independent expression and cognitive capacity.

C. The Use of Narrative Stimuli

In most assessments, audiovisual stimuli such as pictures, picture books, cartoons, and audio recordings are used. Wordless picture books and images were the most used amongst these others (N=18). This reduces the cognitive load for the children and allows them to focus on their storytelling rather than interpreting written texts (e.g., Grolig et al., 2020). It brings children into storytelling in a more natural manner and helps them improve their storytelling skills. It also gives teachers the freedom to devise tasks to meet the special language needs of each child (e.g., Melzi et al., 2023). Wordless picture books promote better interaction with children, thus allowing them to form stories together easily through a simple dialogue (e.g., Melzi et al., 2023). In addition, they provide the natural setting for storytelling, so fantasy and imagination can run simultaneously without depending on verbal prompts (e.g., Orizaba et al., 2020). Because wordless picture books are not reliant upon specific vocabulary or language, lay the groundwork for little to no testing bias, allowing children across varied language background to show their language competencies fairly (e.g., Grolig et al., 2020). Finally, when children retold stories from wordless picture books, they revealed their language qualifications for vocabulary, structures, and discourse, thus making them overtly revealing to the assessors (e.g., Orizaba et al., 2020).

In summary, paper-based images and wordless picture books remain valuable tools for stimulating children's language production, ensuring fairness, and promoting cross-cultural applicability while fostering creative thinking. However, as children are increasingly immersed in digital environments, the demand for more diverse narrative stimuli has become more pressing. In response, researchers have begun exploring how digital tools can complement traditional stimuli to better align with contemporary learning experiences.

The integration of digital technology in narrative competence assessments helps address some of the limitations of traditional stimuli. Unlike static images or text, digital tools provide greater interactivity and engagement, allowing children to construct narratives in dynamic, multi-sensory environments (Isikoglu & Güzen, 2024; Zanchi & Zampini, 2021). Moreover, multimedia elements can enhance children's comprehension and retention of storylines and character relationships. Although only a small fraction of the 37 studies included in this review focus on digital technology,

existing research has already highlighted its potential advantages.

VI. CONCLUSION

A. Findings

This review synthesizes evidence from 37 studies examining the assessment of narrative competence in preschool children. The findings indicate a diversity of assessment methods: some studies employ standardized tools, providing a reliable benchmark for cross-cultural comparisons, while others use non-standardized approaches to capture more natural and enriched language samples. However, all methods have certain limitations, such as the inability to conduct real-time assessments. Additionally, narrative tasks predominantly focus on story generation rather than retelling, reflecting the cognitive differences between the two—retelling tasks may elicit richer vocabulary and syntactic structures, whereas story generation tasks place greater demands on children's independent expressive abilities.

Moreover, the widespread use of audiovisual stimuli, particularly wordless picture books, effectively reduces children's cognitive load and facilitates more authentic narrative production. The dual analysis of macrostructure and microstructure in narrative competence further underscores the complexity of assessing language development in preschool children.

B. Study Limitations

This study reviewed how narrative competence is assessed in typically developing preschool children. However, the review methodology has its limitations. The selection and analysis of studies were influenced by factors like the database they may use, search terms, language, and time constraints. This may have caused some relevant studies to be missed and affected the final results. Furthermore, in some studies involving children with atypical development, the control group may have consisted of typically developing children, which could affect the findings.

Additionally, due to space constraints, the analysis of reliability and validity was not included, which constitutes a limitation of this study. Future research could address these limitations by expanding the scope of included studies and considering the reliability and validity of the tools used in the assessment of narrative competence.

C. Recommendations for Future Research

With advances in digital technology, it is expected that AI technology will be integrated into narrative measurement tools to enable real-time measurement and rapid feedback on children's language structure, lexical diversity, and grammatical diversity. This will make the assessment of children's narrative competence more comprehensive and in line with the global trend of cultural diversity. In addition, innovations in narrative measurement tools will lead to further expansion of narrative stimulus materials for children's narratives, such as interactive pairs of media tools to create more realistic storytelling scenarios, or even augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies to allow children to create stories in immersive virtual environments and to track changes in their narrative abilities in real time. These innovations offer powerful support for narrative ability assessment. In the future, it is expected that more dynamic, comprehensive and real-time assessment methods can be realized, thus promoting further development of the field.

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An Irrelevant Syllabus? Medical Students' Insights Into the English Syllabus at Hail University

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Abstract—English is widely used in global business, science, and technology, making it an essential skill for undergraduates in Saudi Arabian universities. Additionally, English is a requirement for students to communicate effectively in various fields, such as computing and medicine, in Saudi universities. Learners' evaluation of their syllabus plays a crucial role at most higher education institutions. This study, a collaborative effort between students, teachers, and researchers, provides insightful information about how learners perceive and evaluate the English syllabus used in their medical courses. Data on evaluating the English syllabus were obtained from questionnaires completed by 44 first-year medical students at the University of Hail (UOH). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five teachers to acquire more specific and detailed information. Therefore, the present study uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate the English syllabus for first-year medical undergraduates, which could help to tackle areas of weakness and ensure that the syllabus remains relevant to students' needs. The results of the current study show that the English syllabus does not meet the needs of medical students at UOH. It is concluded that the English syllabus, specifically the English syllabus within the medical department at UOH, requires significant revision. It is hoped that this research will guide educators and decision-makers in addressing areas of weakness and ensuring that the syllabus remains aligned with students' evolving needs.

Index Terms—English syllabus evaluation, University of Hail, medical students, English language syllabus level and content, EFL students

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Importance of Learning English in Saudi Arabia

English is widely considered an international language which is used by people from various linguistic backgrounds to communicate effectively. Much information, including scientific research, news, and educational resources, is available in English, making it essential for knowledge acquisition. English is often the primary language in most academic fields, including international medical communication. Medical professionals usually pursue further education and training delivered in English. As English language skills play a crucial role in the global healthcare industry, there is a pressing need to enhance medical English teaching (Guan & Scott, 2024). Over the previous couple of decades, there has been significant development in English-medium teaching programmes at Saudi universities and colleges (Alqarni et al., 2024; Alnasser, 2022; Al-Hoorie et al., 2021; Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020; Almoailly & Alnasser, 2019; Elyas, 2008, 2011; Elyas & Picard, 2010, 2013, 2018; Elyas & Badawood, 2016; Elyas & Al-Ghamdi, 2018; Phan & Barnawi, 2015; Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Barnawi, 2017, 2021a, 2021b). Several factors have contributed to this rapid expansion of English-medium instruction in Saudi Arabia. These include the drive for globalisation (Phan & Barnawi, 2015), economic development (Elyas & Picard, 2013; Elyas & Al-Ghamdi, 2018), the need for instructional reforms (Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020), and the ambition to improve universities' rankings (Kirkpatrick, 2014; Tsou et al., 2017), all within the context of a more interconnected global environment (De Costa et al., 2020). These factors have led to the widespread adoption of English-based instruction, especially at top-tier universities in Saudi Arabia (De Costa et al., 2021). They are part of a broader movement toward creating globalised universities (Collini, 2012). Medical students at UOH study English in their preparation year, and they go on to study English language for beginners in year one at medical college. In year one, medical students study all the medical subjects in English, and Engl-100 is a required English course. The researcher noticed some unofficial complaints about the English syllabus from year-one medical students, and it was also observed that 100% of both male and female medical students got an A+ grade in the Engl-100 syllabus. Therefore, this study evaluated the English syllabus according to students' perspectives and suggestions for improving the syllabus.

B. Evaluation

Over the past two decades, educational institutions have faced increasing pressure from various sources to assess and enhance their programmes. As a result, the current assessment, evaluation, and improvement process are far more complex and very different from how they were fifty years ago—or even two decades ago—with competing standards, priorities, findings, and claims, making it challenging for practitioners and consumers to navigate (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).

As a result, evaluators must guide the evaluation process and plan evaluations carefully, considering how every step, from start to finish, will influence its eventual use (Patton, 2008).

C. Syllabus Evaluation

Assessing a syllabus is essential to ensure that it fulfils the learning objectives. Assessing how engaging and compelling the current syllabus can lead to adjustments that improve student motivation and participation. In short, ongoing evaluation of the English syllabus helps to maintain its quality, relevance, and effectiveness, ultimately enhancing the educational experience for students. For instance, medical learners must become acquainted with the demands of their future profession through real-life experiences to advance professionally (Salehi et al., 2015). It is essential to pay close attention to students' opinions to maintain a comprehensive overview of all aspects of the English language syllabus. Recognising learners' perceptions is crucial to teachers' and university leaders/managers' roles in creating an effective educational environment (Al-Mutairi & Elsawy, 2021).

Previous studies in this field have revealed the importance of syllabus evaluation, such as research conducted by Usman and Anwar (2021), which focused on evaluating the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) syllabus for first-semester nursing students. The study was grounded in a needs analysis framework. The evaluation of the ESP syllabus for nursing students showed that it needs to be revised to align with the findings of the needs analysis. Meanwhile, research by Le and Tran (2021) explored the perceptions of 100 English as a foreign language (EFL) students regarding an English language training curriculum designed for English majors at a university in Vietnam. The findings indicated that the students believed the curriculum's five components—objectives, content, materials, teaching methods, and assessment—were not optimised. Additionally, the participants recommended making specific adjustments to these components to enhance the curriculum's effectiveness and better align it with students' requirements.

The actual language needs of medical students are often overlooked by those who create educational materials, who may not fully understand the specific language demands of individual faculties (Sojoodizadeh et al., 2020). English departments at these universities should work to create supportive programmes for learners in the medical field to enhance their interaction skills. Additionally, the results indicate that analysing learners' language expectations must go beyond just reading; the goal is to develop a range of skills to make them better prepared for effective interaction in English.

The study addresses the following research question:

Is the English syllabus suitable for year one medical students at UOH?

Previous studies have shown a noticeable gap between learners' needs and the syllabuses they study, leading to student dissatisfaction. In this context, our study is designed to evaluate the English syllabus for year one medical students, focusing on students' perceptions, to ensure its relevance. We employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' evaluation of their English syllabus. The insights gained will be instrumental in enhancing the syllabus to better meet learners' needs and improve their progress. The current study concludes by discussing the practical implications for educators and learners, providing actionable recommendations and paving the way for future studies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses the definition of evaluation and various types of syllabus evaluations before examining previous studies about syllabus evaluation.

Evaluation involves assessing the quality, significance, and value of something or the outcome or result of evaluations (Scriven, 1991). Rossi et al. (2004) defined programme evaluation as “the use of social research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programs in ways adapted to their political and organizational environments and designed to inform social action to improve social conditions” (p. 28).

The following comprise the three main types of evaluation: diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment (see, e.g., Chufama, 2021; Liu, 2012). Diagnostic evaluation helps learners to assess their understanding or abilities within a specific area, ensuring that any misconceptions are addressed before further education occurs (Boud, 1995). Formative evaluation focuses on tracking the implementation of programmes and analysing the processes involved (Altschuld & Austin, 2006). In contrast, summative evaluation is concerned with the findings or consequences of the programme, providing insights for final determinations about how the course should be taught, for instance. It focuses on evaluating the extent to which a learner has met predefined formal objectives (Bloom et al., 1971).

The following are examples of diagnostic evaluation: preliminary tests (on knowledge and skills), self-evaluations (assessing abilities), forum posts (on topic-specific questions), and interviews (short, individual 10-minute discussions with each learner) (Chufama, 2021). Some of the main types of formative assessment include: observing learners' in-class tasks; homework assignments that are used as preparation for exams and class discussions; reflective journals assessed regularly throughout the term; question and answer discussions, both structured and spontaneous; and student feedback gathered through periodic responses to targeted questions about the instruction and their self-assessment of achievement and development. Examples of summative evaluation are: exams; final exams (a definitive summative evaluation); projects submitted in stages as formative evaluations; teachers' self-assessments; and learners' course evaluations.

Earlier research has examined medical students' English language needs from various perspectives and across different

global environments. Student course evaluations are a prevalent and essential aspect of the higher education environment. Some previous ESP evaluation studies have revealed mismatches between students' expectations of their English textbooks and the textbooks used to teach the course. For instance, Le et al. (2021) examined how learners evaluate the ESP syllabus used at a medical college in Vietnam. This study is significant for educators and syllabus designers as it provides insights into the effectiveness of the ESP syllabus in a specific context. After a year of use, the users, including medical students and their instructors, provided feedback informally. The findings of this research showed that learners were generally satisfied with the ESP coursebook, particularly regarding its coverage of the four areas of proficiency (reading, writing, speaking, listening), the inclusion of vocabulary and grammar, relevant content, a clear social and cultural context, and its suitability for mixed-level learners. However, participants generally agreed that the coursebook did not adequately address interactive abilities, that the grammar examples could be more engaging, that the visuals lacked variety and quantity, and that the cover was plain and unappealing.

The recent growth of online teaching, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, represents a significant shift away from traditional instructor-focused approaches towards more student-focused classrooms. As ESP is a learner-centered approach, web-based instruction effectively supports the concepts associated with ESP, such as promoting self-directed learning, independent choices, flexibility in terms of time and location, and how the role of teachers is evolving from teaching to guiding (Meddour, 2015). Therefore, it is of value to investigate the effectiveness of online learning in an ESP environment. Course evaluation by students has become an essential feedback resource for instructors to assess programme presentations and evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching. A study by Meddour (2015) assessed the efficacy of an online-focused ESP course delivered to 42 master's learners in Computer Science at Biskra University. It also evaluated how well the teacher met the programme goals regarding addressing the students' requirements. A summative assessment list was used as the study tool with which to achieve this. The results indicated that students approved of their engagement in various web-based activities and the feedback provided by the instructor. Nevertheless, learners expressed discontent with the impersonal nature of online-based teaching and felt that it did not adequately equip them for educational and career-related difficulties.

In contrast, research by Salehi et al. (2015) and Hadi and Zahra (2024) aimed to assess the ESP textbooks used in university medical courses. Both studies showed that instructors and learners held positive views about the content of their ESP textbooks. However, these studies also identified potential areas for improvement, such as the need for more authentic texts. Students who participated in those studies added that using more authentic texts in their course would be preferable, as the textbook alone would not equip them for their future careers. Additionally, the findings indicated that there was a notable difference in the perspectives of teachers and students towards the ESP textbooks (Salehi et al., 2015). Furthermore, recent research by Guan and Scott (2024) found that the course materials, learning setting, and teacher efficiency were key elements that shaped students' perceptions of the quality of medical English courses. Learners highlighted the necessity for more effective and relevant content, noting that the existing materials and course books did not adequately prepare them for the interaction challenges that they would face in their medical careers.

There is a lack of research on this topic within the Saudi setting. One of the few relevant studies in the Saudi context was conducted by Alrashed and Abdel Latif (2025), which explored the English language challenges faced by Saudi university medical learners, the strategies they employed to address these challenges, their assessment of the English instruction at their institutions, and their views on their requirements for English language skills. The learners' greatest language needs were found to be enhancing their medical vocabulary and speaking skills, while they were least concerned about listening. Although they generally appreciated the efforts of medical faculty and language instructors to improve their English, they expressed less satisfaction with the English courses offered at their universities. They felt that more emphasis should be placed on developing learners' expressive language abilities and ensuring that they can interact fluently using the medical vocabulary to improve their medical English education. Alhamami and Almelhi (2021) conducted a study using two questionnaires to examine English as the teaching medium in healthcare programmes. They identified several challenges involved in using English to teach medical learners in Saudi Arabia, namely that learners' weak English abilities negatively impacted their academic performance, with listening and speaking fluency being their primary deficiencies. Similarly, Qadeer and Chow (2023) conducted a study using a student questionnaire and teacher interviews to assess English language obstacles among foundation-year healthcare learners at a Saudi university. Their findings showed that learners struggled more with writing and reading than listening and speaking skills, with writing being their most challenging language skill.

Several studies have focused on the English language requirements of Arab university medical learners. Sabbour et al. (2010) distributed a questionnaire designed to gather opinions from medical learners and teachers in Egypt about the use of English as a medium for teaching. As a result of the many challenges they faced in relation to English, most learners in this study preferred to use Arabic for their medical courses and relied on translation during their studies. Mohamed et al.'s (2024) survey showed that medical students in the United Arab Emirates greatly valued ESP courses, as their primary language goal was to improve their medical vocabulary and communication skills. Farea and Singh (2024) employed a mixed methods approach to determine the language needs of medical learners in Yemen. Their study uncovered differences in how learners and teachers prioritised language abilities. While learners considered listening and reading the most crucial skills, their instructors considered writing and listening more important. Using a survey conducted at a Bahrain university, Tayem et al. (2020) investigated the English language challenges that might affect medical learners'

performance. Most learners believed that their degree of English competence did not impact their academic results. The research also highlighted concerns among Bahraini learners about their performance in terms of using medical vocabulary and oral English skills.

Another set of pertinent studies was carried out in non-Arab Middle Eastern contexts. For example, Sadeghi et al. (2013) explored the relationship between Iranian medical learners' English proficiency and their performance in healthcare courses. The findings showed a significant link between the learners' English skills and academic success. Additionally, two other recent studies have been published regarding the language requirements of medical learners in Iran. The study by Atai and Abbasi (2023) found a disparity between how students and medical faculty members rated the significance of learners' language requirements. While the learners required improvement in all areas of language, the English courses offered only addressed their reading skill requirements. Meanwhile, Khalili and Tahririan (2023) discovered challenges in teaching medical English across five Iranian medical institutions due to inappropriate materials, students' low levels of engagement, and the diverse proficiency levels in English classes. Their research also showed that listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills were not consistently practiced in the English courses on which learners were enrolled.

Kayaoglu and Dağ Akbaş (2016) examined the academic English requirements of medical learners in Turkey by using a survey that addressed the learners' reasons for learning English and the skills they needed. Their results indicated that speaking was the most crucial skill for learners to develop, followed by listening, reading, and writing. Lodhi et al. (2018) surveyed the English language requirements of medical learners in Pakistan and practicing doctors. They discovered a significant disparity between the English skills needed in the workplace and the English teaching offered to medical learners. The participants in their research emphasised the need for various forms of English education to be incorporated into medical curricula. Meanwhile, Gayessa and Mohammed (2024) investigated the English language requirements of health sciences learners at a university in Ethiopia using qualitative observation and interview methods. Their findings revealed that, in comparison to reading and grammar, learners faced more significant challenges with writing, medical vocabulary, speaking, and listening.

Wahyuni (2021) conducted a study set in Indonesia that used a survey to examine the English language needs of medical students in both academic and professional contexts. Most participants identified enhancing their English listening and speaking skills as their primary professional language requirements. Regarding academic needs, the learners prioritised interactive skills and methods for academic reading. In a mixed strategy piece of research that employed a survey and learner and instructor interviews, Reynolds et al. (2023) explored the challenges faced by Taiwanese learners in learning English healthcare terminology. The findings revealed that learners struggled with unfamiliar medical terms due to a lack of contextual writing practice, limited instructor feedback on terminology usage, and limited exchange of information among instructors about instructional approaches.

Addressing essential factors such as the motivational environment is more effective than simplifying the course. Another study by Reverter et al. (2020) gathered data from learners' assessments over a three-year period, from 2015 to 2018. The study suggests that while student evaluations are often seen as a measure of teaching effectiveness, they are more strongly influenced by the learning environment and motivational factors than course difficulty or teaching style. The authors argue for a more nuanced understanding of student feedback and highlight the importance of fostering a supportive, engaging, and motivating educational environment. This underscores the educators' role in creating such an environment.

A further study by Jones et al. (2022) explored the relationship between the motivational environment and learners' assessment of instruction. The results showed a strong connection between students' evaluations of instruction and the motivational climate. Additionally, learners evaluated programmes less favourably when they perceived them as more straightforward, even after accounting for the motivational environment and the demographic composition of the class. These findings suggest that enhancing the motivational climate, including factors such as encouraging autonomous learning, relevance, expectations of success, situational engagement, and support, rather than merely simplifying courses, could offer a more practical approach to enhancing learners' assessments of education.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The current study stands out in its approach. It utilises quantitative and qualitative methods to delve into students' evaluations of the current English coursebook. This comprehensive method enables a more thorough understanding of the students' perspectives.

Evaluating a programme using qualitative methods is a potential substitute for quantitative assessments, yet there has been less research into their effectiveness than quantitative methods. Therefore, Steyn et al.'s (2018) research addressed this gap by exploring and evaluating a new approach to collecting qualitative responses from learners at a higher education institution in South Africa. The programme assessment approach offers insights into the aspects of instruction that matter to learners as they reflect on their educational journey. The research findings also highlight the significance that learners attach to assessments. However, it could be argued that the focus on assessments may have diminished the importance of other elements of learners' educational journey. Furthermore, the results of the learners' evaluation are valuable because they can be used to guide significant enhancements in the course material and teaching techniques. More constructive

feedback was generated by encouraging learners to suggest ways to enhance the programme rather than merely asking for an evaluation. These comments, particularly the learners' suggestions, promise significant improvements in the syllabus. These comments were thought to be more beneficial than the evaluative feedback typically collected through questionnaire-based evaluation. Therefore, we asked for students' assessment and suggestions regarding their ESP syllabus in the current study.

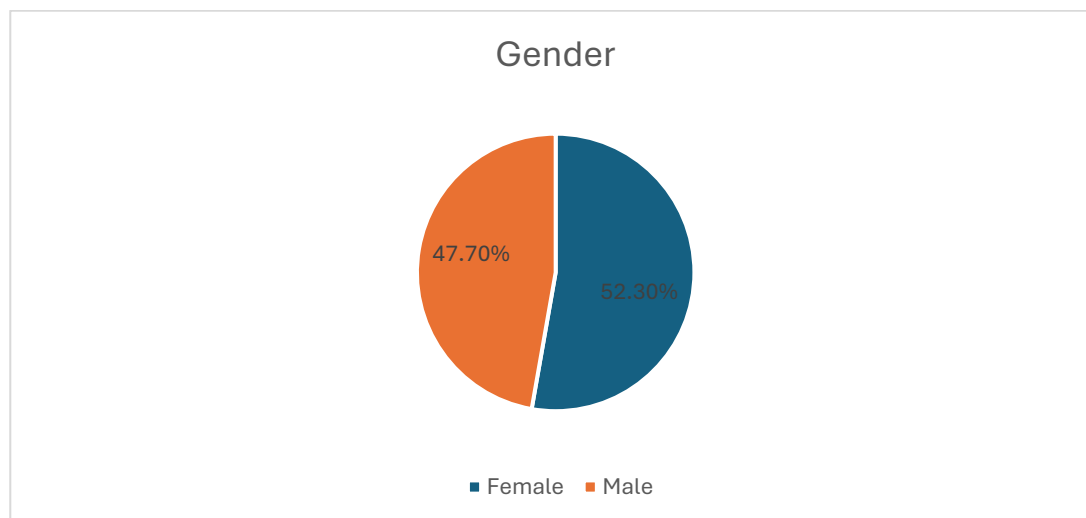


Figure 1. Gender of the Participants

The study involving 44 students, 52.3% female and 47.7% male first-year medical students (see Figure 1) and five instructors, was conducted with thoroughness and attention to detail. The questionnaires and interviews were conducted in the participants' native language (Arabic) to ensure their understanding and increase the research's validity. The surveys provided critical views from the students regarding the content of their English syllabus, and the semi-structured interviews with the teachers helped to give a more detailed understanding of the students' responses to the questionnaire. Previous studies (e.g., Steyn et al., 2018) have indicated that qualitative programme assessments offer a more comprehensive, learner-focused view of the learner journey than quantitative assessments. However, qualitative methods offer a more thorough, contextually nuanced understanding of the learner journey, providing insights widely seen as valuable for enhancing instruction and the overall educational quality. Ethical approval was obtained from all participants before data collection to ensure compliance with the ethical requirements for conducting the study.

B. Data Analysis

SPSS, a widely used piece of statistical software, was chosen to analyse the quantitative data and produce graphs due to its ability to handle large datasets and perform complex statistical analyses. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The information obtained from the interviews was examined using thematic analysis, a technique for recognising, exploring, and presenting patterns in the data. Thematic analysis is valued for its flexibility and ease of use, making it well-suited to the qualitative focus of this study, as it emphasises the content of participants' responses—the 'what', rather than how it is expressed (Willig & Rogers, 2017). As Braun and Clarke (2006) note, "Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data" (p. 5).

IV. RESULTS

The following section presents this study's survey and interview findings, which are discussed later in the discussion section concerning previous literature.

A. Questionnaire Data

The surveys were distributed to 52.3% female and 47.7% male first-year medical students at the UOH.

Is the English language syllabus content suitable for improving my English? If so, why?

Only two students out of 44 thought that the English content of Engl-100 was suitable for their needs, while most considered the content inappropriate for improving their English proficiency. When asked why, several students mentioned that it was mainly because the English syllabus that they are currently studying in year one is much easier than the English syllabus that they followed in the foundation year; it is essentially a repetition of what they had previously studied at school. Other students stated that their English textbooks were equivalent to those used at primary school level, and not university level. Additionally, one student stressed the importance of learning English to help them understand the medical subjects taught in English. Nevertheless, their English syllabus (Engl-100) was perceived as too simple. "It is a waste of our time to study this level of English language," student S3 reported, referring to Engl-100 classes they had

taken in year one.

Furthermore, the students expressed a strong desire for more advanced English content. Several participants noted that the English content they had previously studied in the foundation year was significantly more advanced than that which they were learning in year one. "If we have already passed much more advanced English subjects in the foundation year, why are we repeating studying English with much easier content?" S12 questioned. S1 added, "I hoped that medical terminology would be included, and the number of unrelated terms found in some sections of the textbook reduced". The students' plea for more advanced English to help them learn medical subjects more effectively was clear and urgent.

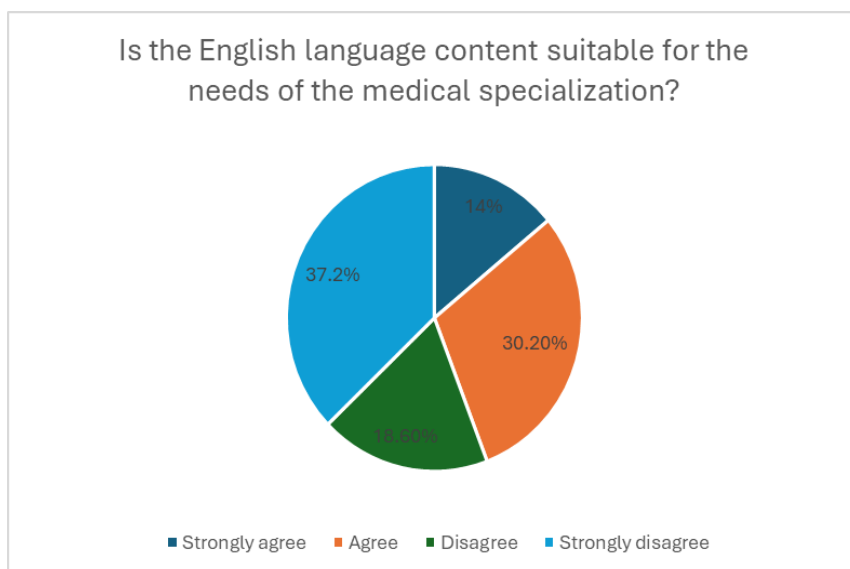


Figure 2. Is the English Language Content Suitable for the Needs of the Medical Specialisation?

Figure 2 indicates that, from the student's perspective, 55.8% found the English language syllabus unsuitable for their medical specialisation needs, while 44.2% thought it was suitable. This perspective, consistent with the results of the previous question, highlights the students' struggle with a syllabus that is below their current level of English and contains content unrelated to their medical specialisation.

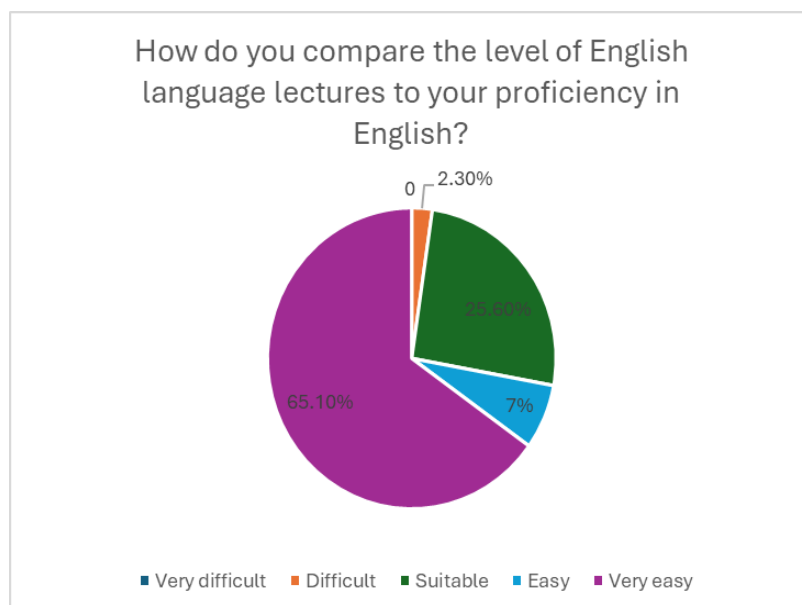


Figure 3. How Would You Compare the Level of English Language Lectures to Your Proficiency in English?

The above Figure reveals that 65.1% of year one medical students considered the level of the English language lectures elementary compared to their proficiency in English, while 7% considered it easy. Meanwhile, 25.6% considered it suitable for their level, and only 2.3% thought it was tricky. This result corresponds to their grades in Engl-100, as it was found that 100% of the medical students got A+.

What are your suggestions for improving the English language syllabus overall?

Students' answers to this question mainly centred on improving their English syllabus to match their level of English

proficiency, making the content related to their medical specialisation, and focusing on improving their speaking skills. Some participants responded to this question with suggestions for improving their English syllabus. However, four participants suggested removing the English course from the syllabus or not making it mandatory for first-year medical students, as they study their medical curricula in English, which means their English level will have already improved. Most of the students' comments in response to these questions indicated that the English course they studied in year one is too simple and below their proficiency level, and the content is unrelated to their field. For instance, S11 suggested: "Please remove the English course in year one. It is just a repetition of what we have already taken in the preparatory year". Thus, S2 concluded: "Why waste my time on an English course that is below the level of the English syllabus at the preparatory level?". Furthermore, S5 stressed the importance of improving the syllabus level to match their needs: "We need more advanced English to help us with our medical subjects taught in English." Meanwhile, S9 added:

"As for the English course in the first year of medical school, there were no medical terms in the syllabus, and most of the grammar had already been covered extensively in the preparatory year. The vocabulary was elementary, so there was no real difference—it felt like we were studying it again. This does not help with language development when the learning level remains basic and repetitive".

Other participants offered suggestions about how the English language syllabus could be improved, such as by making it more suitable for their current level of English proficiency. Furthermore, it was proposed that the person responsible for choosing their English syllabus should consider the students' specialisation when deciding on an appropriate English syllabus so that the content could be tailored accordingly: "Reduce the amount of vocabulary unrelated to medicine and its terminology, and increasing the amount of medical vocabulary," S6 suggested. The English language syllabus content should be appropriate for the goals of the medical college. It was also suggested that the focus of the English exam should be on speaking and other language skills to improve students' speaking skills and on practising speaking using the English language, as they did in the foundation year. S7 suggested that "a regular session or part of the curriculum should be held throughout the year within the English course, where we have to speak in English on a specific (medical) topic, which would help us learn to speak English and build self-confidence".

B. Interview Data

Five teachers who teach year one medical students at the UOH participated in the current research by providing their views and suggestions regarding the English syllabus content for first-year medical students, which yielded more in-depth information. Two participants undertaking administrative roles as well as their teaching roles at the UOH revealed that they had received emails from students expressing dissatisfaction with the English classes: "I receive emails from students asking to drop the Engl-100 syllabus as it is too easy and there is no point attending the classes... it is a waste of time". The teacher interview data revealed that some medical students asked some of their teacher/administrators to drop the Engl-100 syllabus because they felt it was too easy and, therefore, there was no point in attending the classes. However, they were not allowed to do so because attending Engl-100 classes is a university requirement. All the teachers suggested a more advanced English syllabus for year one medical students, explicitly focusing on medical content matching students' perspectives.

V. DISCUSSION

This section discusses the current research results encompassing students' views and suggestions about their English syllabus in light of previous literature. Firstly, according to the results of the current study, most students believe that the level and content of the current English syllabus are not beneficial, not relevant, too easy, and, therefore, a waste of time. They also felt that the content did not apply to their medical specialisation. Consequently, it does not meet their needs, which corresponds with their teachers' views, as they also believe that the level of the English textbook used in the course is below the students' English proficiency level and the content is not relevant.

The results shown in Chart 3 are similar to those obtained for the first question, whereby the majority agreed that the English language syllabus content is unsuitable for their goals of improving students' English, and it is far below their current level of English proficiency. Similarly, according to Chart 3, most of the participants considered the level of the English language lectures to be elementary compared to their proficiency in English. Similarly, the results of the second question aligned with both of the aforementioned results, as more than half of the students disagreed when asked if the English language syllabus's content was suitable for their medical specialisation needs, which is supported by previous studies such as Alrashied and Abdel Latif (2025). However, this result contradicts findings from previous research, such as Salehi et al. (2015) and Hadi and Zahra (2024), who reported that teachers and students held positive opinions about the content of their ESP syllabus. However, the current study concurred with previous studies such as those by Le et al. (2021) and Meddour (2015), Usman and Anwar (2021), and Le and Tran (2021), in which students expressed negative opinions about their course and stated that it did not meet their needs. Therefore, the English syllabus must be improved to better align with students' needs.

The interview results corresponded with students' perspectives when the participants were asked if the content of the English syllabus was suitable for their level of English proficiency, a statement with which the majority disagreed, as well as when asked how they find the level of the English language lectures compared to their proficiency in English, in response to which most of them chose 'very easy' (see Chart 3). This aligned with the fact that all of the medical students

got a grade of A+ in Engl-100, and was also in accordance with the teachers' interview data. For example, teacher 1 stated that he believes the current English syllabus is below the proficiency level of the medical students. It appears that the teachers' views about the English syllabus support the students' opinions regarding the deficiencies of the English syllabus that they studied in year one, due to it not being appropriate for their proficiency level. According to the data from the present study, it appears that the medical students were not satisfied with the English classes that they studied in year one, which contradicted the findings of Salehi et al. (2015) and Hadi and Zahra (2024), as they found that both teachers and students had positive opinions regarding the content of their ESP textbooks. However, it aligned with previous studies in that the English course for medical students did not meet their needs in certain respects, such as its irrelevant content (e.g., Khalili & Tahririan, 2023; Reynolds et al., 2023; Lodhi et al., 2018; Guan & Scott, 2024; Le et al., 2021) and, therefore, when students were asked about their suggestions for improving the English syllabus, they emphasised the need for more impactful and applicable material to equip them for the communication obstacles that they would encounter when practicing in their medical professions (Guan & Scott, 2024).

Furthermore, the students who participated in the current study were convinced that they needed more advanced English with relevant medical content to help them improve in the other medical subjects they were studying that were taught in English. This result aligns with Sadeghi et al.'s (2013) findings, highlighting a strong connection between the students' English abilities and educational achievements.

Secondly, the findings of this research also revealed the main reasons why students believe that the English textbook is not suitable for them, with the majority confirming that their English syllabus is too easy compared to their level of English proficiency. It is possible that improving the motivational environment by focusing on variables such as ensuring relevance and providing assistance may be a more effective strategy for enhancing learners' perceptions of education rather than merely simplifying the course (Jones et al., 2022; Reverter et al., 2020).

Furthermore, participants in the current study suggested several crucial factors to consider when choosing their English syllabus. For example, to improve the English syllabus for medical students, it should be tailored to their proficiency level and relevant to their field of study. When selecting the syllabus, the students' specialisation should be considered to ensure that the content aligns with their medical focus. Additionally, English speaking skills should be considered alongside other language abilities, and practical communication should be encouraged, as suggested by the participating students. The notion that medical students need to improve their speaking skills is supported by previous research such as Alrashed and Abdel Latif (2025), Ani (2024), Tayem et al. (2020), Wahyuni (2021), Kayaoğlu and Dağ Akbaş (2016), Le et al. (2021), and Alhamami and Almelhi (2021), which found that students prioritised the importance of focusing on improving their oral skills. However, it contradicted Qadeer and Chow (2023), who reported that students need more help with writing and reading than speaking skills. Additionally, the syllabus should align with the goals of the medical programme and include regular sessions in which students speak about medical topics, thus helping them to enhance their language skills and build confidence. Sojoodizadeh et al. (2020) highlight that the unique language needs of medical students are often overlooked by those whose job is to develop educational materials, who may not fully grasp the specific language demands of medical disciplines. Therefore, it was suggested that English departments should design targeted programmes to improve medical learners' interaction skills. Additionally, the study emphasises that addressing language expectations must go beyond reading and aim to develop a broad set of skills to better prepare students for effective communication in English.

VI. CONCLUSION

The current study achieved its aim by exploring medical students' opinions and recommendations regarding their English curriculum at UOH in the context of previous research. It highlighted a significant issue: Most students find the current English syllabus irrelevant, too easy, and not aligned with their medical specialisation, a sentiment echoed by their teachers and their Engl-100 grades. This dissatisfaction contrasts with previous studies in which students and teachers reported positive opinions of their English syllabuses. However, similarly to previous research (e.g., Le et al., 2021; Khalili & Tahririan, 2023; Reynolds et al., 2023; Lodhi et al., 2018; Guan & Scott, 2024; Le et al., 2021), students expressed concerns that the course did not meet their needs. Consequently, students stressed the importance of having more relevant and adequate resources available to prepare them for the communication challenges they would encounter in their medical careers (Guan & Scott, 2024). This highlights the urgent need for a re-evaluation and potential overhaul of the current English syllabus.

The findings highlighted students' dissatisfaction with the English syllabus because they found it too easy for their English proficiency. It has been argued that educational materials often overlook medical students' specific language needs and suggested that English departments should create specialised programmes to enhance interaction skills and overall communication (Sojoodizadeh et al., 2020). However, this presents an opportunity for improvement. Enhancing the motivational environment by focusing on relevance and support could increase students' engagement and motivation. This approach could be more effective than merely simplifying the course (Jones et al., 2022; Reverter et al., 2020). It offers a promising route towards a more effective and engaging English syllabus.

Furthermore, as well as emphasising that the English syllabus should be tailored to students' proficiency levels and medical specialisations, the students stressed the importance of focusing more on speaking skills for practical communication. They proposed holding regular sessions where students discuss medical topics in English to build their

confidence. This finding that medical students need to enhance their speaking skills aligns with previous studies such as those by Alrashed and Abdel Latif (2025), Ani (2024), Tayem et al. (2020), Wahyuni (2021), Kayaoğlu and Dağ Akbaş (2016), Le et al. (2021), and Alhamami and Almelhi (2021), all of which highlighted that students prioritise improving their oral skills. As a result, it was recommended that English departments create specialised programmes to enhance the interaction skills of medical students and tailor them to their needs to better equip students for their medical careers and enable them to communicate successfully in English (Sojoodizadeh et al., 2020).

Continuous evaluation is essential to keep the syllabus relevant to the students. The current research aimed to evaluate the English language textbook in order to improve it to meet students' needs and maintain the quality of the courses taught to students. It is hoped that this will give educators and other people interested in this field insights into students' requirements to provide a more effective and engaging learning environment to help them in their chosen professional path. Therefore, the current study recommended improving the syllabus to meet students' needs by, for instance, raising the course level and revising the content to meet students' needs and help to improve their English proficiency. The potential impact of these recommendations is significant, as they could lead to a substantial improvement in students' English proficiency. The results of this study could also be used to evaluate and improve syllabuses in other departments at UOH and other EFL contexts.

While the study has achieved its objectives, it is essential to note that it also has inherent limitations. The evaluation was based solely on the subjective views of 5 teachers and 44 first-year students from the medical department at the UOH, which may not fully capture all the strengths and weaknesses of the English language curriculum and could affect the findings' broader applicability. Therefore, additional studies with a larger sample of participants are required to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the English language needs of Saudi medical students. Furthermore, more research in other global medical education settings would also be valuable. Future research could integrate various research methods to gain further insights into students' perceptions and suggestions regarding targeted syllabuses to help them achieve their potential. All these research endeavours could help to enhance the development of suitable medical English syllabuses, considering various elements such as students' level of English proficiency and syllabus content to better meet students' needs.

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Beyond Words: A Linguistic and Cultural Analysis of Tribe's Image in Jordanian Proverbs

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Abstract—Proverbs, as a form of cultural expression, encapsulate long-standing human experiences. Proverbs associated with the tribe reflect a distinct form of social organization in Arab societies, including Jordan. This study examines the image of the tribe in the popular proverbs in Jordanian culture. The corpus of the study consists of 42 Jordanian proverbial expressions related to the tribe. The data were obtained from 36 students studying at Al-Balqa Applied University and Yarmouk University, Jordan. This study adopts Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions theory. The proverbs were organized using content analysis methods into five key cultural themes or dimensions, linking their linguistic meanings to their cultural connotations. These themes include collective identity, blood ties, a sense of strength, pride in lineage, and leadership. The study has concluded that investigating the tribe through popular proverbs is an important means of understanding the nature of Jordanian culture. The findings have also indicated that the tribe persists in the collective consciousness and people's everyday lives. Some recommendations for future studies have been suggested.

Index Terms—proverbs, tribe, Jordan, culture, linguistics, sociology

I. INTRODUCTION

Popular proverbs associated with the tribe reflect a distinct form of social organization in Arab societies, including Jordan, and are firmly grounded in historical Bedouin and rural life. Therefore, these proverbs cannot be judged through the lens of contemporary urban society, as they are embedded in a specific social and historical context that shaped Jordanian values and ways of life (Shabi, 2022). As a cultural reservoir, Proverbs express society's self-awareness, illustrating both progress and backwardness (Al Rousan & Shatnawi, 2023). They are a fundamental component of intellectual life, easily understood, accepted, and circulated due to their rhythmic and memorable structure.

Proverbs, as a form of cultural expression, encapsulate long-standing human experiences. Linguistically, they are concise yet rich in meaning, reflecting societal customs, traditions, and values. Their ability to convey ancestral experiences makes them deeply resonant with people's emotions, reinforcing their significance in daily life (Eid, 2023, p. 63). Moreover, they serve as one of the most direct means of communication, capturing the complexities of social life across different class dimensions (Al-Kuwari, 2005, p. 97).

Beyond their linguistic function, proverbs construct social discourse by embedding meanings within their imagery and words. Their interpretation arises from the interplay between language and cultural implications (Zubair, 2017). In Jordan, proverbs are prominent in shaping social beliefs, reflecting positive and negative connotations. While they reinforce values such as pride, strength, loyalty, and unity, they can also foster divisions by distinguishing individuals based on tribal affiliations. Critics argue that tribal proverbs sometimes promote exclusivity and discrimination, emphasizing differences even on a geographical level (Barakat, 2009). Research examining either the linguistic or the cultural aspects cannot avoid its influence on people's past, present, and future.

The tribe is primarily a social structure that extends from the family and is characterized by a specific kinship hierarchy that aligns with a unique residential system. The tribe remains a vital social structure in Jordan, exerting a lasting influence on political and social life. In the Jordanian collective consciousness, the tribe symbolizes identity, loyalty, and a spiritual entity (Bsharat & Al-Aqaili, 2016). It is regarded as a social organization ensuring its members'

security and stability. It represents a set of values and norms that shape a well-established society based on solidarity, cooperation, and mutual support (Al-Zyoud & Al-Shtaywi, 2000). Despite efforts to integrate the tribe into modern state institutions, it persists in the people's collective consciousness (Al-Afif & Saleh, 2006).

Hofstede's (1980) Theory offers a helpful framework for analyzing Jordanian tribal identity and values represented in Jordanian popular proverbs. This theory will help us identify fundamental tribal values and dimensions that shape Jordanian values, social relations, and behaviours. Moreover, Hofstede's theory systematically comprehends how linguistic expressions in proverbs emphasize tribal values in Jordanian society.

Despite its significance, the portrayal of the tribe in Jordanian proverbs remains underexplored. This study examines the image of the Jordanian tribe in Jordanian cultural proverbs. It aims to examine how Jordanian cultural proverbs construct the image of the tribe in relation to values such as loyalty, power, respect, and unity. By analyzing linguistic expressions that prioritize collective identity over individualism, this study will highlight how proverbs embed tribal values into social behaviour, decision-making, and social relations.

A. Proverbs

Proverbs are one of the vital cultural components of all societies and nations. They are defined as grammatical structures with a traditional nature highlighting customs, tradition, and folklore (Norrick, 1985). They reflect their past and present. Proverbs encapsulate people's experiences simply yet meaningfully, shaping their interpersonal relationships (Al Rousan & Shatnawi, 2023). Proverbs serve an educational role by conveying the wisdom of ancestors. They also function as an informal means of social regulation by providing a framework for individual and collective behaviours (Eid, 2023). At the same time, they remain cultural indicators that help understand the self and others (Al-Domrani, 2017). Proverbs play a key role in social regulation because of their religious, cultural, and social components, passed down from generation to generation. (Al-Shihri, 2016, p. 184) Proverbs are concise, colloquial expressions that reflect individual and society's experiences, carrying civilizational and spiritual dimensions with philosophical meanings (Al-Kuwari, 2005, p. 93). Through their cultural significance, proverbs are transmitted across generations as part of a cultural heritage. They are brief, eloquent, elegantly phrased, and easy to remember. They serve as a timeless witness to a nation's traditions, morals, and experiences. Proverbs are a universal phenomenon that provides insight into a people's collective mind and ambitions (Fang, 2023). Even though proverbs are a kind of artistic expression, they serve as social documents that represent all social classes and reflect the spirit of a community. They are among the simplest forms of mass communication; they use written and spoken forms of language but mainly rely on oral transmission and rhythmic delivery (Al-Kuwari, 2005, p. 93). Proverbs embody ideas, traditions, and experiences. They are culturally significant literary texts, capturing imagery and collective intellectual experiences (Eid, 2023).

B. Tribe in Jordan

Émile Durkheim (1909) views the tribe as a society of several social groups while maintaining its unity and homogeneity. Despite being composed of smaller family units, the tribe remains unified and does not divide into individual political communities within its whole structure (Ghoneim, 2009). The tribe represents a spatial entity whose members believe in a common ancestor—a legendary figure sometimes—who is believed to be the tribe's founder. In Jordan, the tribe has deep roots in history. It also expresses longstanding traditions and values that have existed since the beginning of history. Furthermore, the tribe holds a significant impact. It plays a vital role in all aspects of Jordanian society, whether political, social, or economic, contributing to its development and progress over time (Al-Zyoud & Al-Shtaywi, 2000). The tribe has significantly contributed to Jordan's society and state, playing a significant role in development and social stability. It is regarded as a safeguard for society, with tribal law as a quasi-legal system that upholds customs and traditions. The Jordanian government has historically dealt with the tribe as one of the country's most vital social components, emphasizing that Jordan's political system has had a strong tribal foundation since the state's formation (Al-Rousan, 2019). Over time, the tribe's political and social role has evolved (Ghoneimat, 2014). The tribe's security and reconciliation role cannot be denied as it helps Jordanian authorities to resolve conflicts through "tribal mediation" (*jahah*), a traditional tribal delegation whose aim is to ease tensions and to facilitate the government's role in reconciliation efforts (Rawashdeh, 2016). Generally, Jordanians believe that tribal roles should be upheld, especially in conflicts, such as disputes and homicide (Jibreel, 2016).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research has discussed the importance of the tribe in Jordan. For example, Al-Hourani's (2012) study examines the role of the tribe as a social framework for Jordanian tribal members, emphasizing its deep connection to their interests, which in turn strengthens their loyalty and unity. The study demonstrates that tribal affiliation is a source of power and social cohesion, fostering solidarity through blood relations. Regardless of social or professional standing, the results show that strong tribal allegiance persists across all economic levels. Al-Hourani (2012) notes that while everyone argues that older people show higher tribal loyalty than urban dwellers, educated people show more loyalty than less educated people. Bakhit's (2011) research discusses Jordanian attitudes toward the tribe's role in security-related issues, confirming that Jordanians trust the tribe as a stabilizing force. The study identifies economic factors as the primary threat to security, followed by media and technology, which are perceived as having a negative impact. Additionally,

the research focuses on the tribe's crucial role in crime prevention and social order conservation. On the other hand, Bsharat and Al-Aqaili's (2016) study points out that the Jordanian political system heavily relied on tribal structures to establish the modern state, which established power and emphasized authority all over Jordan. Tribalism has played an active role in the political process, contributing to political stability during various critical periods in Jordan's history. The study stresses that the tribe has been essential in nation-building, development, security, political stability, and national success and achievement. The study by Al-Zayoud and Al-Shtaywi (2000) revealed that the tribe has a fundamental role in parliamentary elections, with tribes engaging in strong competition to reinforce tribal influence in Jordan. As a traditional social structure, the tribe has successfully adapted to modern social frameworks, either by strongly supporting political figures or, in some electoral districts, by acting as an alternative to conventional political structures. In certain cases, tribes have established electoral alliances based on tribal associations and affiliations.

The role of proverbs in promoting the tribal structure has been investigated by some Arab scholars, such as Abdelbaki and Abdulrahman (2014), Ben Youb (2015), Al-Tamimi (2016), and Shabi (2022). Contrary to expectations that tribalism would diminish in contemporary Arab societies, the reality has been quite the opposite. Ben Youb (2015) argues that the tribal system has demonstrated remarkable resilience, adapting to new social and political conditions. In Algeria, for example, the tribe has maintained its influence despite post-independence political rhetoric that dismissed it as a relic of backwardness and an obstacle to state-building. One key factor in the endurance of tribal structures is the role of popular proverbs in reinforcing tribal consciousness. Shabi (2022) argues that proverbs are crucial in maintaining social structure, fostering stability, and reflecting shared societal norms. They serve as linguistic expressions and cultural markers of identity. Similarly, Al-Tamimi (2016) asserts that proverbs capture a society's collective consciousness, articulating its values, concerns, and conflicts. The study highlights the adaptability of proverbs, as they are continually reshaped to fit new social contexts. The influence of proverbs extends across different social classes, as Abdelbaki and Abdulrahman (2014) argue from a social psychology perspective. Their study suggests that despite differences in education, profession, or social standing, people are influenced by popular culture and tend to conform to its authority. Al-Ali (2004) and Al-Domrani (2017) study proverbs' social and educational functions in Syria and Egypt. Al-Ali's (2004) study on the educational aspects of proverbs in Deir ez-Zor classifies them into several themes, including social, emotional, religious, ethical, intellectual, economic, and political dimensions. His field research emphasizes the role of proverbs in shaping people's lives, highlighting their cultural and educational value, historical depth, and role in social upbringing. Al-Domrani's (2017) study on marital relationships in Upper Egypt further confirms the powerful influence of proverbs in structuring social relationships. Despite age, profession, and education variations, proverbs continue to shape family dynamics and reinforce social norms across diverse backgrounds.

III. METHODS

A. *Participants and Data*

This study adopted a qualitative analytical approach. The data analyzed in this study were collected from 36 students in the Department of Social Sciences at Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan, and the Department of Translation at Yarmouk University, Jordan. They were enrolled in two courses the authors usually teach. They were all native Jordanians who came from different cities in Jordan. The students were all in their fourth year of study. The instructors asked them to jot down tribe-related proverbs they were familiar with in Jordanian Culture. They were also asked to provide the meaning and the social context in which the proverbs are used. The data collection process occurred in the second semester of 2023-2024. The students provided 48 proverbs. Six proverbs were excluded because they were not proverbs, or they do not belong to the tribe; thus, only 42 proverbs were used in the analysis.

B. *Data Analysis*

This study adopted a qualitative analytical approach. The data analyzed in this study were collected from 36 students in the Department of Social Sciences at Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan, and the Department of Translation at Yarmouk University, Jordan. They were enrolled in two courses the authors usually teach. They were all native Jordanians who came from different cities in Jordan. The students were all in their fourth year of study. The instructors asked them to jot down tribe-related proverbs they were familiar with in Jordanian Culture. They were also asked to provide the meaning and the social context in which the proverbs are used. The data collection process occurred in the second semester of 2023-2024. The students provided 48 proverbs. Six proverbs were excluded because they were not proverbs or they did not belong to the tribe; thus, only 42 proverbs were used in the analysis.

IV. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings and discusses the data analysis. The selected examples were translated literally and transliterated into English.

A. *Collective Identity*

Throughout history, the family has been an economic and social organization for its members, closely tied to their social and geographical identity. Similarly, the tribe has functioned as a political unit, protecting individuals and families. The tribe also represents a historical continuity, with individual names passed down through generations, as people are often identified by their tribe names. This creates a strong emotional bond between individuals and their tribes, and as a result, this affiliation influences individual behaviour and shapes the nature of their social relationships. Some proverbs in Jordanian society reflect an individual's collective sentiment and sense of belonging to the tribe and highlight the importance of family in their life. The following three examples represent this theme.

Example 1:

ان انجنو ربيعك عقلك ما بنفعك

?in injannu rab 'ak, 'aqlak ma binfa 'ak

"If your group goes mad, your reason won't help you."

This saying expresses the idea that an individual follows the group's decisions, even if those decisions are wrong. This implies that personal freedom is limited in the face of collective decision-making, illustrating the dominance of group thought over individual reasoning. Although some required actions may contradict personal beliefs, the individual must comply.

Example 2:

الموت مع الجماعة رحمة

Al-mūt ma'a al-jamā'a raḥma

"Dying with the group is a mercy."

The above proverb indicates that pain and suffering feel lighter when shared with the group. It expresses the moral importance of the community in an individual's life and its influence in alleviating their struggles and challenges. Additionally, taking on dangerous tasks becomes easier when done collectively. This proverb also highlights courage, particularly in facing challenges and adversaries, emphasizing the strength found in unity, togetherness, and solidarity.

Example 3:

نحترق ولا نفترق

niḥtariq walā niftariq

"Better burn together than to part."

This proverb highlights the crucial role of social unity and oneness within a tribe. It emphasizes that, regardless of individuals' difficulties, struggles, and hardships, maintaining the tribe's cohesion is far more valuable than risking its fragmentation and discord. The proverb also indicates that conflicts or injustices might arise among tribe members, but such challenges should never lead to separation. The unity of the tribe is deemed more important and more bearable than the consequences of division.

B. Blood Ties

The tribe's sense of unity and belonging, rooted in blood ties and the individual's extended family, is a vital concern for all tribe members and their leadership. From a social perspective, this can be seen as tribal loyalty through which individuals identify themselves within a collective cultural and cognitive framework. The structure of Jordanian society, deeply ingrained in tribal and familial affiliations, reinforces this sense of identity and behaviour. Most individuals in society who define themselves through their tribal connections embrace this sentiment.

Jordanian proverbs show the importance of blood ties within a group, creating a sense of belonging that can even feel sacred. Individuals feel a moral obligation to their tribe, strengthened by their blood connection. This bond helps ensure the tribe's continuity and its role in society. In addition, the tribe attempts to identify and fix any problems that could harm its relationships, focusing on reinforcing the members' sense of unity. For example,

Example 4:

انا وأخوي على ابن عمي وانا وابن عمي على الغريب

Ana wa akhūy 'alā ibn 'ammī, wa ana wa ibn 'ammī 'alā al-gharīb

"My brother and I stand against my cousin, but my cousin and I stand against the stranger."

This proverb highlights the strong, inseparable bond between a person and their tribe. It shows that this connection is essential, and if it is broken, the individual feels deep pain, emphasizing how important it is to one's identity. The proverb expresses that without this tribal bond, the group cannot survive, and without the group, the individual loses value. The strongest form of unity is defending those closest to you, starting with family, then extended family, and finally more distant relatives. Defense and rivalry depend on the closeness of the blood relationship.

Example 5:

الدم ما بصير مي

id-dam mā biṣīr mī

"Blood does not turn into water."

This proverb highlights the strong, inseparable bond between a person and their tribe. It shows that this connection is essential, and if it is broken, the individual feels deep pain, emphasizing how important it is to one's identity. The proverb expresses that without this tribal bond, the group cannot survive, and without the group, the individual loses value. The strongest form of unity is defending those closest to you, starting with family, then extended family, and finally more distant relatives. Defense and rivalry depend on the closeness of the blood relationship.

C. Sense of Strength

Individuals who belong to the same tribe view their connection as an undeniable and unbreakable bond. This deep association gives them a strong sense of security and power, originating in their natural connection to the group. It strengthens their belief in a collective system ensuring justice, equality, and protection of rights. The more a person feels this strong connection, the stronger their sense of responsibility toward fellow tribe members, driven by loyalty and the sense of strength and protection the tribe provides. Thus, the tribe creates a shared sense of equality among its members, fostering a belief in unity and collective support. Consider example (7-9).

Example 7:

الكثرة غلبت الشجاعة

Al-kathrah ghalabat ash-shajā'ah

"Numbers outweigh the bravery."

The proverb emphasizes the importance of the tribe in protecting its members and providing its members with a sense of security. It suggests that an individual is vulnerable and easily defeated on their own. The proverb highlights that no matter how strong or brave a person is, they always need the support of their family and tribe to be strong. It shows the significance of family and tribal bonds, a value that becomes clear only in crucial moments—whether in battle or times of hardship. A brother, whether close or distant, never abandons another.

Example 8:

عد ارجالك ورد المي

'idd irjālak wirid al-mai

"Count your men, then fetch the water."

The proverb in example 8 conveys that the larger the tribe, the stronger it becomes; this strength is reflected in the unity and power of its members. Just as a large tribe first takes its livestock to water sources due to its large number of members and influence, the same principle applies to many life affairs. This idea is evident in Jordan during parliamentary and municipal elections, where the tribe's influence often plays a significant role in securing a seat for its candidate.

Example 9:

الواحد بين اهله حصين

il-wāḥad bain ahluh ḥaṣīn

"A person is safe with his family."

This proverb also refers to the importance of the tribe in protecting its members, as it serves as a source of security and strength. Many Jordanians prefer to live in areas where members of their tribe reside, as they provide mutual support and protection. Furthermore, the proverb stresses the importance of the group in an individual's life, providing them with social and economic protection and safeguarding them from external threats. The tribe in Jordan can provide such support. That is, within their close-knit group, an individual feels the protection of the tribe, ensuring they are not alone in facing internal and external challenges but rather have others to support them in overcoming such challenges.

D. Pride in Lineage

Lineage, which refers to an individual's ancestry or family line, is significant in many cultures because it affects inheritance, social status, and family traditions. One way a person is proud of his lineage is through marriage. Marriage is regarded as one of human history's most important social and cultural foundations. In the Arab and Jordanian context, marriage holds particular social significance that is deeply rooted in Jordanian society's structure, history, and culture. It is not merely an individual decision but a future endeavour that involves the family and tribe, impacting the lives of children as well. As such, marriage is closely tied to the tribe, as it represents the individual's lineage, which plays a key role in determining their social status. The importance of lineage is reflected in many popular proverbs. Consider examples (10-12) below.

Example 10:

النسب عند الغانمين كنوز

in-nasab 'ind al-ghānimīn knūz

"lineage is a treasure to the victors."

Proverb 10 emphasizes the tribe's strength, reflected in its women. The daughters of the tribes are known for their prestige, good morals, and generosity. Therefore, the true value lies in choosing a woman from a respected lineage with a strong origin. While money is important in the lives of tribe members, what truly matters is selecting a wife from a good tribe, someone with strong principles and high morals and values. A young man about to marry should choose a wife who will honour and protect him, and only a daughter of the tribe can provide that. Otherwise, the husband may face hardship and misery in his life.

Example 11:

النسب عز يا مكيلة يا بهدله

in-nasab 'izz ya makialah ya bahdhalah

"Lineage is a crown, bringing either glory or shame."

This proverb deeply reflects the value of choosing a wife, not only for who she is but also for her family, as she will pass on her character and heritage to her children. This proverb expresses that the core value in marriage lies in both the wife's and husband's families, making the union socially sacred. It grants significant status to both individuals and their families in the future. Additionally, the proverb highlights the importance of the wife's lineage, as it brings pride and honour to her husband and future children. Those with a weak lineage are encouraged to seek a partner from a strong family or tribe, as this will provide them with strength and status. It speaks to the tribe's role in protecting the individual, whether they are a direct member, an ally, or a relative. The "back" represents the tribe's strength, and those without a strong tribe often seek to marry into one to gain this protection.

Example 12:

طريقك لو طال و بنت عمك لو بارت

Tariqak law tālat wa bint ‘ammak law bārat

“Your path, no matter how long, and your cousin, no matter how distant.”

Example 12 presents marriage between relatives in Jordanian society as a symbol of their honour and protection. It considers a man as obligated to marry his cousin even if she is not beautiful. Despite the health problems of marrying between relatives, Jordanians still prefer internal marriage for psychological, social, and symbolic reasons. This proverb prioritizes marriage within the family over marrying outsiders. It encourages Jordanians to marry their female cousins, expressing the significance of preserving lineage and safeguarding the family and tribe.

E. Leadership

Historically, the tribe's leadership has been crucial to its progress, continuity, and reputation. The leader's role in the lives of all his tribe members is to guide and protect them while ensuring the tribe's social and cultural continuity cannot be ignored or disrespected. A great and wise leader is essential in maintaining the tribe's positive reputation among other tribes, as the leader's status reflects the tribe's overall standing. Therefore, this leader must be respected by all tribe members, as they represent the tribe in gatherings and embody its presence, serving as a key symbol of its social strength. Al-Qurashi (2011, p. 220) points out that social control and the protection of individuals are maintained through the authority of the tribe's leader or sheikh. For example,

Example 13:

شيخ بلا عزوه قلة مراجيله

Shīkh bilā ‘azwah qillāh marājīlūh

“A leader without a tribe is powerless.”

This saying represents the power of a leader or sheikh in the tribe, a power that does not come from the individual alone. It is shaped by the support of the tribe's members, from whom the leader obtains his value, position, and power. This proverb means that a leader without strong support or loyal followers lacks power and true authority. The proverb expresses a significant aspect of tribal structure in Jordanian society. A tribe needs a leader and wise individuals who offer insight and advice, but it also requires strong and loyal people who guarantee the tribe's survival and power. The balance of wisdom and action is vital; wisdom leads with planning, while strength executes. This balance is a key political and social dynamic relied upon in many serious situations within the tribe, especially during disputes. This aligns with the study conducted by Areiqat and Tarawneh (2019), which emphasizes the vital role of tribal councils.

Example 14:

اللي ما له كبير يشتري كبير

illi māluh kabeer yashtari kabeer

“He who has no elder buys an elder.”

Proverb 14 also emphasizes the significance of having wise leadership in the lives of tribe members. It highlights the vitality of guidance, wisdom, and experience. A tribe cannot prosper or continue without the presence of a wise, strong, and experienced leader, who is usually an elder. In this context, the elder is not necessarily the oldest member, but rather someone with influence, power, and social wisdom. These proverbs indicate that the management of a tribe's affairs is never done randomly. There must be a leader who directs, plans and makes decisions, especially in crucial situations that require a thoughtful, balanced viewpoint to address complex issues. The proverbs imply that the leader or sheikh of the tribe does not act or make decisions aimlessly; every choice is made with purpose and is intended to serve the best interests of the tribe and its members.

Example 15:

الذئب ما يركض عبث

il-dhīb mā yarkuḍ ‘abath

“The wolf does not run in vain.”

The image in this proverb strong and wise leadership. This proverb means that when the leader of the wolves begins to run, the pack follows him because it trusts his judgment. The proverb emphasizes the necessity of listening and obeying the leader or the tribe's sheikh, symbolized by the wolf, in what he does and says; his actions are known to be guided by wisdom and for a specific objective that often benefits the tribe's members. In other words, he does not act or speak for no reason but rather for a meaningful cause.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings show that the tribe has developed into a new form of collective awareness. It has become one of the fundamental components of the cognitive structure of Jordanian society, forming a social and political bond with distinct boundaries that define identity and differentiate it from others while continuously governed by the rules of mutual interest. The tribe holds a significant position within the traditional structures of Jordanian society and continues intertwining the realities of the past with the dynamics of the present. It notably influences the future, influencing individuals, groups, and cultures. This aligns with Bakhit's (2011) study, which highlights that belonging to a tribe enhances the sense of security, serving as a protective factor that safeguards property and reduces crime rates.

Tribe-related proverbs indicate that Jordanians take great pride in their strong family ties, as the family serves as a source of values that support individuals in every aspect of life. Through the heritage passed down from generation to generation, individuals gain a powerful moral foundation, including material, emotional, and psychological dimensions. This foundation fosters a sense of security and protection. Furthermore, the tribe plays a vital role in shaping an individual's identity and guiding their relationships with others. Matouq (2017) maintains that the attachment to the tribe is so powerful that it can acquire a sacred significance, and sometimes it is considered a fundamental aspect of one's religious belief. This bond is deeply embedded in the individual's mind, leading them to fully embrace the ideals of loyalty and devotion to the tribe. Thus, it becomes a natural and automatic sense of belonging to the group. Tribal affiliation holds a high societal value, fostering social cohesion, strengthening ties to geography and community, and promoting integration among individuals and groups.

Furthermore, the proverbs in this study highlight the importance of staying connected and united with family and tribe members. They encourage keeping close ties with the tribe, even during disputes and discourage hostility within the group. A person always remains loyal to their tribe and cannot abandon it. The tribe is compared to paradise, a place of safety, comfort, and love. It provides protection and support, even if an individual experiences injustice from within. Despite its imperfections, the tribe remains the best and most important place for its members. Dortier (2011) noted that tribe members strongly believe they share a common ancestor, even without proof. This belief is like a myth, not something that can be proven.

Throughout history, people have sought a unifying framework that makes them feel connected. They are not merely members of a social group but bound by blood. This bond instils a sense of responsibility toward the group, creating a shared understanding of equality in rights and duties. This deep connection, born from shared blood, cannot be disregarded or overlooked by individuals or institutions.

Historically, especially in Jordan, the tribe provided security and protection to its members even before the establishment of the modern Jordanian state. It was also responsible for basic needs such as food, and land and livestock were collectively owned. It handled matters of security and justice as well. Although this role changed significantly with the rise of the state and its institutions, the tribe's influence continued to shape the individual's sense of belonging and community. Hence, it instilled a strong feeling of solidarity and equality with fellow tribe members. As Al-Hourani (2012) points out, the tribe acts as a form of social capital, providing emotional support to its members. This support helps them feel strong, secure and reassured. It also boosts their unity and solidarity when collective strength is needed.

Lineage has also been emphasized in the proverbs used by Jordanians. Lineage is a source of social and cultural pride, closely tied to one's social status and the enhancement of their social standing. It is also linked to a person's reputation and honour, based on the belief that blood from a particular lineage carries unique qualities. As a result, many people pay close attention to the family name of the person they wish to marry, as it is associated with boosting social status and serves as a point of pride for both families.

Tribes' leaders have also received their share of praise and significance from the proverbs. Tribal leaders often hold significant social influence within and outside the tribe, making them authoritative figures who can make decisions that serve the tribe's social and political interests. These leaders are typically seen as wise and astute, representing a symbolic status that reflects the tribe as a whole. Being elderly, they command respect for both their age and social standing. Their wisdom and knowledge make them key advisors on the tribe and its decisions.

VI. CONCLUSION

The tribe portrays one of the most fundamental pillars of Jordanian society. The clan has shaped peoples' thinking, built on the foundation of "we" as members of one clan and "they" as outsiders and different. Therefore, a clan member does not consider their support and loyalty to the clan's interests a form of hostility. Rather, they see it as a defense of a right he believes in, making it a justified behaviour. The tribe is a symbol and a question of existence for most Arabs, as the clan's survival ensures its people's survival and existence. By doing so, people also protect themselves and their children, whom the clan will continue to protect as long as it exists.

Members of the same clan often feel they are the best, strongest, and most deserving to survive. To achieve this, individuals usually seek to express their personal and individual identity through their clan. They take pride in being associated with its name and love to be addressed by it. Thus, they praise the clan and its members, prioritizing them over all others. The clan members' identity is simultaneously an expression of their collective identity. For them, defending the clan represents a defense of their history of existence and that of their ancestors, whose presence is deeply embedded in their collective consciousness.

Accordingly, members of the Jordanian society refer to the clan in their daily lives through popular proverbs, which are seen as the product of real experiences. These proverbs serve as deep linguistic expressions of the lived experiences of Jordanians and provide a logical representation of these experiences. When it comes to the clan, this takes on a deeply psychological dimension, as the formation of Jordanian society is rooted in the individual's sense of belonging to the clan. This belonging reinforces a deep understanding of actual existence, particularly during the erosion of the traditional structure of Jordanian society due to Palestinian refuge and the country's domination of the clan, diminishing its role in their lives.

This study argues that several factors have contributed to the tribe's continuity as an indispensable social structure in Jordanian society. The most significant of these factors is the interest of the tribe individuals, as it ensures the continuation of their historical privileges and social standing. At a profound collective level, members of tribes perceive the tribe as an essential part of their identity, bridging the past and present. As a result, they feel compelled to preserve it, even symbolically, through their colloquial language and the proverbs they use in various social situations. Finally, this study has revealed that the tribe functions as an extended kinship system, beginning with the family unit and expanding into a broader network through blood relations, marital alliances, and lineage-based affiliations. It also serves as a protective source of strength, reinforcing social cohesion and providing a cultural and social identity rooted in the symbolic connection to a common ancestor.

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Kavita Kané's *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* Through the Lens of Victor E Frankl's Logotherapy

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Abstract—The quest to unravel the purpose of existence has been captivating human minds for centuries now. Philosophical, scientific, religious, and metaphysical conjectures have all been abundant in the historical discourse on the purpose of life. As for the solution to these questions, various people and cultures have different ideas. The neurologist and psychiatrist Victor Frankl developed a theory that deals with existentialism titled, "Logotherapy", which focuses on the meaning of human existence and man's search for such a meaning. Kavita Kané is an Indian author known for her novels that survey and conceptualize the lives of female characters from Indian mythology. The novel *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* demonstrates how an author can take the most tarnished mythical woman character and transform her into a celebrated woman in the hearts of the readers. This research article attempts to study the character of Satyavati, the grandmother of Pandu and Dhritarashtra in the epic *The Mahabharata*, through the lens of Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*.

Index Terms—mythology, logotherapy, existential vacuum, forgiveness, realisation

I. INTRODUCTION

Kavita Kané is an Indian author known for her novels that survey and conceptualise the lives of female characters from Indian mythology. Indian mythology is rich with high-powered and assorted female characters who play outstanding roles in shaping the narratives. M. H. Abrams states:

Myth is one story in mythology- a system of hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group, and which served to explain (in terms of the intentions and actions of deities and other supernatural beings) why the world is as it is and things happen as they do, to provide a rationale for social customs and observances and to establish the sanctions for the rules by which people conduct their lives. (170)

Kané retells the tale of Satyavati in the novel *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* and demonstrates how an author can take the most tarnished mythical woman character and transform her into a celebrated woman in the hearts of the readers. She has obtained acceptance for her distinctive frame of reference in retelling these stories, giving a voice to the often overlooked or misunderstood women in ancient epics. Tanvi Shah says, "Reading about strong female heroines gives us insights into the world of our old Indian epics. It has intrigued me deeply how women like Satyavati from our Indian mythology have endured pain and suffering and turned it into something wonderful" (Shah et al., 2019). Kané's writing style is known for amalgamating historical and mythological components while supplying a fresh approach to familiar characters. The title, *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty*, hints at the lineage and legacy of Satyavati, who is often mentioned as the "Fisherwoman" (Kané, 2022, p. 31). In Kané's novel the character Satyavati is introduced as Kali, as she is dark in colour. Her biological father, King Vasu of Chedi, abandons her as she is a female child, and he accepts her twin brother as the heir to his throne. Dasharaj, the chieftain of the fisherman community and Satyavati's uncle, adopts Satyavati and brings her up in an ambitious manner. This abandonment of her father becomes a scar that runs deep and from which she finds it hard to heal. She sees it as a disapproval of her identity, and that affects her overall development. In the process of healing, she slides away from the consequences of her actions and determinations. Marius et al. observes that, "parental rejection is a highly traumatic experience" (3), and the resulting feeling of abandonment can have profound emotional and psychological effects on people.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The question "What is the meaning of life?" leads one to seek the importance of life and existence in general. "Why are we here?" "What is life all about?" and "What is the purpose of existence?" are just a few of the many similar queries. Numerous responses to these queries have been put forth from a wide range of ideological and cultural perspectives. The neurologist and psychiatrist Victor Frankl's theory "Logotherapy," is a therapeutic approach that focuses on the meaning of human existence as well as on man's search for such a meaning. According to logotherapy, striving to "find a meaning

in one's life is the primary motivational force in man" (Frankl, 2022). This research paper attempts to study the novel *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* by Kavita Kané through the lens of Frankl's theory of Logotherapy in his famous work *Man's Search for Meaning*.

The novel *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* is analysed through various perspectives. Kapila Joshi's article *Dreams, Desires and Destiny in The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* explores how human's quest for power and throne creates an effect on oneself as well as others through the character Satyavati in the novel *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty*. Suchitra Rani Mahato makes a feminist study of the novel in her article *Gender Discrimination and Quest of Female Identity in Kavita Kané's The Fisher Queen's Dynasty*. Dr. Veerendra Kumar Mishra expresses the valour, strength and determination of Satyavati through his article *The Reconstruction of the Mythical Image of Satyavati in Kavita Kané's The Fisher Queen's Dynasty*. Basundhara Chakraborty, in her article, *Deconstructing the Patriarchal Construction of Epic: A Feminist Re-reading of Mahabharata in Kavita Kané's Karna's Wife and The Fisher Queen's Dynasty*, intervenes the meta narrative with the help of feminist nuances and refinement, attempts to ask and diagnose the popular conviction propagated and disseminated by the male constructions of the epic. Siddhi Shahi and Dr. Mandvi Singh, in their article, *Breaking Chains, Reclaiming Identities: Unveiling Women's Struggles and Empowerment in Kavita Kané's Novels*, have discussed the personification, illiteracy, ostracism, and confined preferences experienced by a female individual. The article also discusses how Kané's novels investigate the psyche of such characters. Parinitha B. and A. Lourdusamy, in their article, *The Evolution of the Female from Suppression to Supremacy in the Select Novels of Postmodern Retellings of the Epic: A Review of Literature*, have discovered the quest for power, politics, gender roles, etc. through the character Satyavati. The article presents a comparative study between western and Indian feminism.

III. METHODOLOGY

The researchers have applied Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy to explore the novel *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* by an Indian author Kavita Kané. This paper focuses on the character of Satyavati and her role in shaping the meaning of her life. It also illustrates how Logotherapy and the quest for meaning resonate with Satyavati's experiences. Kané depicts her as a resilient individual who discovers the significance of her life despite the crises and suffering imposed by fate. The narrative reflects Frankl's three pathways to find meaning in life. Logotherapy is a type of existential analysis and psychotherapy created by Viktor E. Frankl. It is often referred to as the "Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy", (Pfeifer, 2021) following Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis and Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology. This approach uses various therapeutic techniques to assist individuals in discovering the meaning of their lives, especially during times of suffering or crisis. Frankl's own experiences in the Auschwitz concentration camp had a significant impact on the development of logotherapy. He observes that those who are able to find meaning in their suffering have a greater chance of survival and resilience despite the extreme hardships they face.

IV. DISCUSSION

This section of the paper provides a concise overview of Satyavati, highlighting the differences between the original mythology of *The Mahabharata* and the retelling by author Kavita Kané. Mythologies consist of a collection of stories, legends, and beliefs that are unique to a specific culture. They serve as a means to pass down heritage and cultural significance from one generation to the next. Indian mythologies represent a vast system intertwined with beliefs, culture, philosophy, and everyday life. These narratives often explore the human experience from birth to death, with central themes including Dharma, Moksha, and Karma. Satyavati is a pivotal character in the epic *The Mahabharata*, playing a significant role in instigating the Kurukshetra War. Her ambition and political acumen elevated her to the position of Queen of Hastinapur, despite her humble beginnings as a fisher girl. The novel *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* explores Satyavati's life, shedding light on her inner struggles, emotions, and motivations. In Kané's portrayal, Satyavati is not merely a cunning figure; rather, she is deeply affected by her emotions. Her ambition is intertwined with a tragic personal history. Kané's retelling provides a feminist and psychological perspective on the character, highlighting her inner conflicts, desires, and sacrifices. While both interpretations of Satyavati follow a similar path in their actions, Kané's version offers a more profound exploration of Satyavati's emotional and moral complexities, granting her a voice and agency that resonates with modern readers.

The term "logotherapy" is derived from the Greek word logos, which denotes meaning. According to logotherapy, one can discover the meaning of life in three different ways: "(1) by creating a work or doing a deed; (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and (3) by the attitude we take towards unavoidable suffering" (Frankl, 2022). Satyavati tries to find the meaning of her life in all three ways.

The first way Frankl explains is by occupying oneself with work or doing a deed in the face of adversity. This will help the individual keep up with life without succumbing to the hardships. Kali's first phase of life is filled with trauma and insults. It is common for someone who is wronged to be filled with thoughts of indignation, resentment, anger, and vengeance, but Satyavati bears everything and moves forward towards her ambition. Leary explains in his article that feelings of loss, rejection, and confusion may arise, which impact one's self-esteem and sense of security. He further accentuates that when a person is, "incapable of managing his or her interpersonal interactions and relationships, they would likely experience wholesale rejection" (Leary, 2015, p. 441). These feelings develop a sense of fear and low self-

esteem in her. She says, "Never in my life have I been so deeply insulted...I, well-educated, refined, the daughter of a fisherman- chieftain, suspected of theft by the king's men" (Kan , 2022, p. 9). As her biological father, King Vasu of Chedi, rejects her just because she is a girl, Satyavati is determined to make use of her femininity to achieve her goals. She breaks through societal barriers and stereotypes and does whatever feels right for her. Jasvant V. Rathode observes, "Satyavati declares not only to use her body as a site to manifest her power relations in the future but to gain upward mobility in the social structure of her time" (Rathode, 2022). She neglects all the obstacles she faces because of being a fisherman's daughter and continuously focuses only on her upliftment.

The second way that Frankl explains is by experiencing or encountering someone or something. Firstly, the romance she encounters with Rishi Parashar changes her life forever. She is ready "to deal with him" (Kan , 2022, p. 13) but only for a profit. She is clearly able to witness the arousal in his eyes and feels "no fear, no apprehension, no uncertain anxiety instead feeling a strange sense of power over him" (Kan , 2022, p. 15). She justifies her act that, "I am going to make love to a powerful seer, not some young fisher boy or some callow villager... She stiffened pleasurably against him, aroused not by desire but by ambition" (Kan , 2022, p. 19). Thus, she has "lost her innocence to gain Freedom" (Kan , 2022, p. 20). She gives birth to a son, names the son Krishna Dwaipayana, and gives it to Rishi Parashar. She and Parashar part ways like strangers with no emotions or feelings. She believes:

I -no Fate or God-shall be responsible for my own happiness, my own future. I promise myself, I will not be the victim anymore; nor will my child...It is better to use my ambitions wisely. I would rather make use of a powerful man and get some benefits, as I have done with Rishi Parashar. If it is looks and lust which can seduce a man, weaken him, then I shall employ them as my means; I shall use my charms to get what I want. I cannot afford to have morals like the rich and the royal. (Kan , 2022, p. 32)

With her newly gained confidence, she helps those in need, and by doing so, she becomes a respectable person in her clan. Frankl elucidates that, "the only way to grasp other human beings as they truly are at their innermost core is to love them" (Frankl, 2022). However, the definition of love for Satyavati differs because her experiences from childhood change her outlook on love. She says, "I learnt to love like a man-to love without feelings. And I shall never forget this lesson" (Kan , 2022, p. 42). Secondly, an opportunity to become the queen, as she always longs for, strikes her when she comes to know that the King of Hastinapur, Shantanu, wants her. She dreams of securing the position of queen beside the king and not as a mistress. She vows, "I shall make him so... But not as his mistress in his Harem, as he would have preferred; instead as his wife. His Queen. The Queen of Hastinapur, she smirked, relishing each word" (Kan , 2022, p. 65). Sumona Banerjee justifies the act of Satyavati as she asks, "How are virtue and chastity terms invented by patriarchy to suit its purpose? It makes us ask why it is only a grave misdemeanour when men think about upholding their code of ethics, but it is a crime, nay, a sin if women seek independence of thought and action" (Banerjee, n.d.).

No one in the world is free from hard times. Getting past them is the real challenge, which differs from person to person. To overcome misfortunes, bounce back, and resume moving forward takes a certain kind of mental and emotional fortitude. Like a butterfly, she starts as a worm and transforms from Kali to Matsyagandha after she encounters Rishi Parashar. She always looks for opportunities to lift herself up from the pit and refuses to dwell in despair. All she cares for is the destination, not the journey. From her humble beginning as a fisherwoman to becoming the queen, Satyavati faces numerous challenges and moral dilemmas to secure her life. Satyavati turns the encounters with Rishi Parashar and Shantanu fruitful without worrying that they demand a heavy price from her. She makes it an opportunity to rediscover and rebuild herself. Victor Frankl states, "What matters is to bear witness to the uniquely human potential at its best, which is to transform a personal tragedy into a triumph, to turn one's predicament into a human achievement when we are no longer able to change a situation," (Frankl, 2022, p. 101). After becoming the Queen, Satyavati is not accepted by the people of Hastinapur. She knows that, "This is a new experience: she was a leader, popular with the people in her village. *But not always. I had to earn it*, she reminded herself. She would have to work at it here in Hastinapur too" (Kan , 2022, p. 112).

From ancient women to modern women, they are always on the quest to find meaning in their existence, their purpose in life, the courage to resist life's temptations and challenges, and ultimately the power to become who they really want to be. Satyavati uses all the possible ways to turn her suffering into achievement and accomplishment. Suchitra Rani, in her article, discusses Satyavati as, "strong and independent woman who is able to fight for her own rights and take her own independent decisions. Her life is a story of transformations from Kali to Satyavati, Matsyagandha to Yojanagandha, a fisher girl to a queen. She made choices of her own and succeeded in attaining those choices. Satyavati had the ability to be practical, ask logical questions, and participate in debates and discussions" (Rani).

The third way Frankl explains this is through the attitude one takes towards unavoidable suffering. He illuminates that an individual should choose to see a meaning to their suffering. Satyavati feels a sudden prick on the wedding night as she realises that she did not love Shantanu. She finds it hard to fall in love with the king. However, she knows that, "She was his queen. It was her duty. Her status as a queen would be uncertain till she produced an heir. And for that she has to surrender to her King everyday..." (Kan , 2022, p. 120). She understands that, "she had overlooked all this in her greed to have him have the crown. She was supposed to fall in love with this man... She was incapable of falling in love. One has to stumble to fall in love or otherwise, she thought grimly, and I am not one who will ever stumble or fall. But to own the king, she had to give her all, she reminded herself" (Kan , 2022, p. 121).

Why and what we are suffering is more important than how we are suffering. Everyone in the world suffers according to their own deeds. Taking up the suffering for the cause of good makes one stand firm in one's decision. The riots of the public against her continue even on the day of her son's christening. The hostility towards her continues to burn within and outside the palace walls. She tries to win them over several times. Everyone inside the palace knows that, "she was trying to win their hearts, but it was a losing battle" (Kané, 2022, p. 141). Feeling socially unaccepted can be challenging. She breaks down her barriers by facing the public, engaging with them, and making them understand that she is also one of them. Her continuous efforts in asking them to give her a chance to serve them finally make the public understand her real concern for their community. Satyavati's sole existence, after the death of King Shantanu, depends on the crown and her power. Her biggest fear always is that the throne will slip away from her hands. She swears to herself that, "She would not allow any man, marriage, or motherhood to erode her power. She had to decide her priorities as she sat on the throne. And she was far too intelligent to compromise herself" (Kané, 2022, p. 188). She actively participates in court affairs after the death of her husband and channelled her determination into pursuing her ambitions with resilience. She possesses all the necessary qualities, such as empathy, resilience, adaptability, and strength, through which she navigates the new life she creates for herself. The novelist mentions, "She was the Kuru queen, mother of the heirs, and champion of the people. It had been a trying task, with the public and nobles both casting aspersions and accusations on her intentions and integrity, but she had eventually won them all over" (Kané, 2022, p. 190).

Life often tests some people more than their capacity; Satyavati is one such character in the novel. According to the words of Victor Frankl, "In accepting this challenge to suffer bravely, life has a meaning up to the last moment, and it retains this meaning literally to the end. In other words, life's meaning is an unconditional one, for it even includes the potential of unavoidable suffering" (Frankl, 2022). Satyavati loses her two sons and feels shattered and devastated.

As Victor Frankl says, "A man's concern, even his despair, over the worthwhileness of life is an existential distress" (Frankl, 2022). Even though Satyavati feels frustrated, she vows fiercely, "I will not surrender; I will not be defeated. I have to find a way" (Kané, 2022, p. 270). She tries to hold on to her power for herself and the generations to come. She is reminded of Krishna Dwapayan (Vyasa) for performing Niyog with her daughters-in-law. Niyog as explained in the Hindu Scripture is a process for producing a son and an heir in the family where, "the brother-in-law or a cousin or a person of the same clan can have intercourse with an issue less widow till she conceives... The son born thus is the legitimate son of the deceased husband" (Banarsidass, p. 293). It is not, "just caution or discretion that prompted her to take this decision" (Kané, 2022, p. 288); she adamantly wants, "it would be her blood that would inherit the throne" (Kané, 2022, p. 288). Therefore, to achieve her aim, Satyavati meets all odds and endures all the sufferings that life throws at her to reach her end goal. Even though she suffers extremely, she does not give up and keeps on going with optimism.

Her attitude and belief that life has its own purpose and she has the power to change herself make her a strong woman who faces struggle without surrendering or succumbing to it. Through all the hardships she faces, she not only succeeds in becoming a queen but also ensures that it is her bloodline that rules the kingdom. She finds her life's purpose and strives throughout her life to achieve it, irrespective of the obstacles she faces. Life will always find a way to fight with humans and make them face unprecedented crises, no matter how strong one may stand. Thereby, reading the novel *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty* makes us believe that even in the darkest of circumstances, changes may take place to drag us out of the miseries that may seem endless. Archa Sasi comments, "In *The Fisher Queen's Dynasty*, Kané describes the pathetic circumstances faced by women to achieve their passion for power. The victory of Satyavati in the novel provides an optimistic and logical message to the people around the world that their lives are in their hands, and if they have the intention and guts to protest the impediments enclosing their path, then they can extricate themselves" (Sasi).

Arlin Cuncic in her article states, "Frankl believes that humans are motivated by something called as a will to meaning, which is the desire to find meaning in life. He argues that life can have a meaning even in the most miserable of circumstances and that the motivation for living comes from finding that meaning" (Cuncic, 2024). Satyavati just wants to become a queen but never bothers about the direction she takes, as she is determined to follow what her heart desires. Desire, when it is self-centred, makes people rebel, which fractures an ideal relationship with the other people around them and makes them feel alienated from their own family. She thinks:

She had thought she was unvanquishable. She had power, wealth, and progeny, but in her heir-yearning, prestige-hungry life, she had witnessed her husband, her two sons, and one grandson die. She thought she had succeeded in using authority to achieve and accomplish, but where had it taken her? At this crossroads, where would her family be annihilated in a bloodbath? Was her leaving for the forest an escape from an end that was so lost that she could not bear to face it? (Kané, 2022, p. 319)

Satyavati at last retires to the forest and lives there until she realises, "It was time to leave this earthly kingdom, too. She thinks, "Ganga, would she ever forgive her for what she had done to her son? (Kané, 2022, p. 324) and begs, "Absolve me, Oh Ganga, forgive me for what I did. Wash away my sins; give me my salvation (Kané, 2022, p. 325), and she finally closes, "her eyes in tired surrender. Ganga had accepted her in her arms" (Kané, 2022, p. 325).

V. CONCLUSION

With sudden swiftness, one may feel life has come to a dead end, a kind of void choking the heart, the mind wrestling with unanswered questions, and nothing good remains in life. Seizing control of one's life is not so easy, though seizing the moment sounds pretty easy. Sometimes even determined efforts cannot bring personal fulfillment. There is no

assurance or promise that one's efforts will surely bring success into one's life. Satyavati's grasping attempts to seize power lead her not into self-actualization but into disillusionment and cynicism. The character of Satyavati is shown in brutally honest terms. The limitations do not stop her from achieving her determined and elusive goals. Despite her flaws, there is much one can learn from the encounters, unnerving occurrences, and episodes of her life. One can find sterling qualities alongside her human failings. To find instruction and inspiration, hope to face our trials, and strength to walk through the unlikable path, one must feel how the characters in the novel lived amidst uncertainty and despair. To comprehend Satyavati's ways of finding meaning in life one should have the ability to sense her emotions and mirror what she feels.

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Exploring the Negative Implications of Over-Reliance on Social Media Content Among Foreign Language Undergraduates

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Abstract—Social media has become an essential tool in foreign language (FL) learning, offering interactive, flexible, and engaging features that support grammar and vocabulary acquisition. However, while prior studies have explored its advantages and disadvantages, limited research has examined its specific negative implications, particularly on academic performance and cognitive processing. This study investigates why FL undergraduates excessively rely on social media for language learning and explores the negative effects of overuse through the lens of Cognitive Load Theory (CLT). A quantitative approach was adopted, using a 10-item Likert-scale questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to 70 purposively sampled undergraduate students to assess their perceptions. Findings indicate a divided perspective on its role. While students appreciate its benefits in enhancing engagement and accessibility, 70% expressed concerns about unverified information, and 41% reported frequent distractions. Additionally, 56% agreed that social media could hinder learning effectiveness, while 59% highlighted the lack of structured assessment as a challenge. Extraneous cognitive load results from distractions, unverified content, and multitasking, hindering language processing and deep learning. This study underscores the need for moderation and structured evaluation in integrating social media into FL education. Future research should explore how structured learning resources and strategies can enhance and regulate FL undergraduates' social media use, reinforcing pedagogically sound content to support language acquisition effectively.

Index Terms—technology, social media contents, foreign language education, grammar and vocabulary skills

I. INTRODUCTION

Oral communication, in particular, serves as the primary channel for connecting and interacting with society. Despite its importance, language teaching has always experienced challenges over the years with learning foreign languages for effective communication. While most teaching methods involve more writing and fewer speaking drills, foreign language students perform better when in writing exercises than in spoken interactions (Namaziandost et al., 2019). Namaziandost et al. (2019) note that the motivation to use social media among foreign language students is due to its interactive features, such as video and audio options, which makes language learning more engaging and enjoyable. Research suggests that students who primarily use social media for language learning may be outperformed by those who engage with more traditional methods. This was attributed to reasons which include but are not limited to distractions such as chatting with friends, playing irrelevant games, listening to music, or dealing with short ad pop-ups (Daggol et al., 2018). While social media has the potential to enhance learning, excessive reliance on its content raises concerns (Daggol et al., 2018; Siddiqui et al., 2016). Siddiqui et al. (2016) highlight that excessive use of social media and digital tools in language education can hinder students' engagement in proper face-to-face communication. Further studies (e.g., Mingle et al., 2015) report other concerns, including negative academic behaviors such as late assignment submissions, reduced study time due to distractions, and poor spelling habits influenced by social media trends. Similarly, Odabaş et al. (2018) report that prolonged use of electronic devices not only leads to physical strain but also contributes to inefficient time management.

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As social media has become increasingly integrated into various aspects of life, it serves as a hassle-free facilitator for language education. However, understanding its peculiarity and its people-oriented features is necessary to fully grasp its role in language learning and the negative implications of excessive use. While acknowledging the facilitative role of social media in language education, this study focuses on identifying the negative implications that arise when students become excessively dependent on social media content. By surveying foreign language (FL) undergraduates, it seeks to understand how excessive use of social media impacts their academic performance, particularly in grammar and vocabulary acquisition. The study also explores the underlying reasons for this reliance and examines the broader disadvantages that FL undergraduates may face due to excessive engagement with social media while learning a foreign language.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature provided below presents the role of social media in language learning and the potential drawbacks of excessive use.

A. *Social Media in Language Education*

The adoption of social media into language education denotes the level of development of language acquisition over the years. Its use in language learning has gained ground over the years, as both instructors and students recognize its effectiveness in facilitating language acquisition and addressing educational needs (Alfaki, 2018). According to Perez (2023), this development can be traced back to the early of the 21st century when the internet played a crucial role in introducing digital platforms such as online forums and discussion boards particularly structured to aid language learning. These platforms provided foreign language learners with opportunities to engage with fellow learners, receive proper guidance, and foster their proficiency in the target language.

Hu and Du (2022) explore the role of social media in language education and underscores the impact of the Web 2.0 era, which brought a transition into multimedia platforms in the late 2000s. These multimedia platforms facilitate communication, allowing users to express their ideas more effectively. Zhang et al. (2022) note the emergence of interactive language-learning applications such as Memrise and Duolingo in the 2010s. These applications gained popularity due to their gamified learning approaches to language acquisition, which increased accessibility and engagement by making language learning an enjoyable experience. Wong et al. (2017) emphasize that these applications promote the concept of 'mobile learning,' enabling students to practice language skills anytime and anywhere. Similarly, Alnujaidi (2017) highlights the importance of flexible and convenient access to language-learning resources, free from time and location constraints, underscoring the role of social media in advancing foreign language learning. Additionally, the combination of audio-visual elements and interactive exercises enhances conventional educational methods, making language acquisition more effective and engaging for FL learners.

Taskiran et al. (2018) highlight that social media fosters student's active participation in lessons and practice drills, while Achraf (2017) reports significant improvements in speaking skills among students who incorporate social media into their learning, compared to students who relied solely on traditional methods. Yunus et al. (2012) report other benefits including increased knowledge, willingness to study, and greater confidence in writing.

B. *Gap in Literature*

Considering these studies, FL undergraduates increasingly rely on social media for grammar and vocabulary development due to its interactive, flexible, and engaging features, which have been shown to enhance various aspects of language learning (Taskiran et al., 2018; Achraf, 2017; Yunus et al., 2012). While previous studies explored both the advantages and disadvantages of social media in language education (Alnujaidi, 2017; Alfaki, 2018), limited research has examined the specific negative implications of excessive reliance on social media content for language learning. Little attention has been given to how FL undergraduates' excessive use of social media impacts their academic performance, particularly in grammar and vocabulary acquisition. By addressing this gap, this study also investigates the underlying reasons for this reliance and examines the broader disadvantages that FL undergraduates may face due to excessive engagement with social media while learning a foreign language. Through the lens of cognitive load theory (CLT), this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the balance between the benefits and drawbacks of social media in FL language learning.

C. *Theoretical Framework*

In the process of determining the effects of social networking sites on the academic level of foreign language students, there are a few very useful theories. The cognitive load theory (CLT) is one of the most crucial theories. CLT is based on the fact that people are limited in the cognitive resources they need for assimilating information. This use of social media can overwhelm the resources, which causes a decrease in academic performance.

On the one hand, social media platforms very often function as a non-stop flow of information and entertainment, making a student forget about his or her language lessons. This is part of the multitasking that can increase cognitive load and therefore slow down the students' focus on language learning tasks. Additionally, cognitive overload due to information overload is one more way social media can contribute to this. Students tend to spend more time with their

social media feeds than usual instead of consuming information in larger amounts in a short period. This results in a decrease in their cognitive ability and they become exhausted mentally and are unable to concentrate on the language learning and class tasks.

Cognitive load theory (CLT) was developed as the result of research by educational psychologist John Sweller in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Sweller brought the CLT, which is a model to understand how the human mind processes information and how cognitive resources can be limited in learning environments, to the forefront. The theory posits that people have a limited “attention span” and that once this is reached, learning becomes less effective. The early research of Sweller was centred on the design of instructional materials and ways of minimising cognitive load to achieve maximum learning outcomes.

The tenets of Cognitive Load Theory revolve around the concept of three types of cognitive load: essential, superfluous, and relevant. Extrinsic cognitive load refers to the difficulties associated with the learning material or tasks themselves. For second language learners, memorising vocabulary, memorising grammar rules, and mastering pronunciation can cause a high intrinsic cognitive load. Extraneous cognitive load includes any additional cognitive overload induced by the educational environment that is not directly related to learning. When it comes to social media and its influence on academic performance, extraneous cognitive load can be a result of distractions, for instance, notifications, ads, and unnecessary content that can vie for students' attention and cognitive resources. Finally, content-related cognitive load describes the cognitive work involved with schema formulation and meaningful learning. When cognitive resources are used to manage the extraneous cognitive load, there are fewer capacities left for deeper processing and encoding materials for language learning.

Through the lens of cognitive load theory, the impact of social media on the academic achievement of FL learners is explained as high social media usage can lead to an increase in extraneous cognitive load and, eventually, poor learning. Keeping up with news feeds, notifications, and messages on social media can change students' attention and even make it harder for them to think deeply about language learning materials.

III. RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND METHODOLOGY

A. Research Questions

The following research questions, which were developed from the study objectives and the review of previous studies, are put forward to guide this paper:

- (A) Why do Foreign Language (FL) undergraduates excessively rely on social media contents to improve their grammar and vocabulary skills?
- (B) What are the demerits faced by FL undergraduates as a result of excessive reliance on social media contents to improve their grammar and vocabulary skills?

B. Research Design

The quantitative survey methodology was implemented during the process of this study. In order to achieve this effectively, an online survey was adopted as the primary instrument for data collection. The aim of the surveys was to gather information about students' perspectives on the reasons for excessive reliance on social media contents by foreign language undergraduates with reference to the negative implications faced by these FL undergraduates. The findings from this study will provide educational suggestions for FL instructors.

C. Instruments

The online survey was sent as a closed-end questionnaire to the 70 (Seventy) research participants. This online form was sent through emails as Google forms consisting of 10 (Ten) questions which aimed at assessing the perspectives of students about the negative implications of excessive reliance on social media contents to improve their grammar and vocabulary skills. The questionnaire was further subdivided into two sections; one was about the demographic data of the research participants, the second contained a Likert-type (summative scale) with 10 questions.

D. Participants

The study's participants were selected using a purposive sampling approach. Certain criteria were used to recruit the participants, including being within the age range of 16 to 35, being active users of social media, and providing their informed consent by completing a consent form. After selection, a total of 70 (seventy) undergraduate students participated in this study. As shown in Figure 1, the participants specialized in various fields, including Computer Science (60%), Information Technology (20%), Environmental Technology (16%), and Industrial Chemistry (4%).

Among the participants, 30 were males (42.85% of the sample), while 40 were females (57.15% of the sample).

The Demographic data of the participants is presented in Table 1.

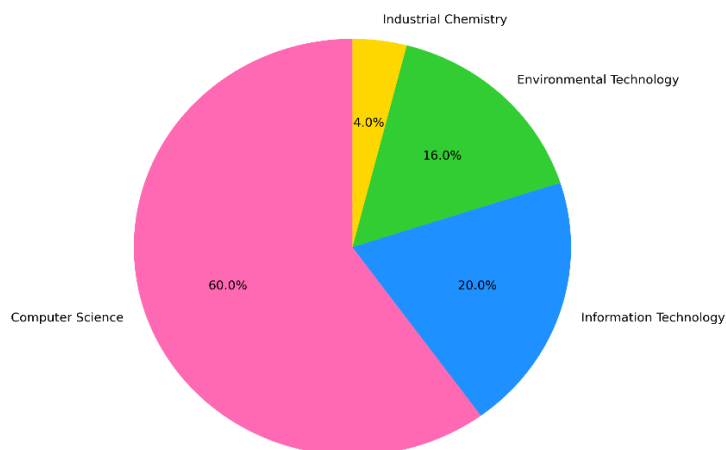


Figure 1. Distribution of Respondents by Specialization

TABLE 1
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Category	Number of Participants	Percentage
Gender		
- Male Students	30	43%
- Female Students	40	57%
Total Participants	70	100%
Average Age Range	18 – 35 Years	-

E. Data Collection

Having been sent out through Google forms, a 100% response rate was recorded as the participants showed a good level of engagement and willingness to participate due to the anonymity of online surveys. In line with that, personalized emails were sent out to the participants to encourage their participation and submission through the right media provided.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section contains the presentation of the data provided by the participants which will be presented based on the two developed research questions.

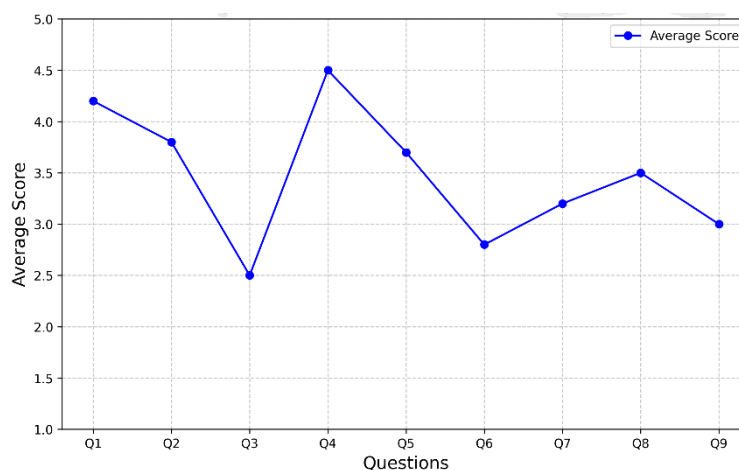


Figure 2. Trend of Responses to Social Media Use in Language Learning

(A) Why do Foreign Language Undergraduates excessively rely on social media contents to improve their grammar and vocabulary skills?

Five questions are contained under this research question; a pie chart is used to discuss the first part while the rest are presented in a table.

1. How frequently do you use social media content to improve your grammar and vocabulary skills?

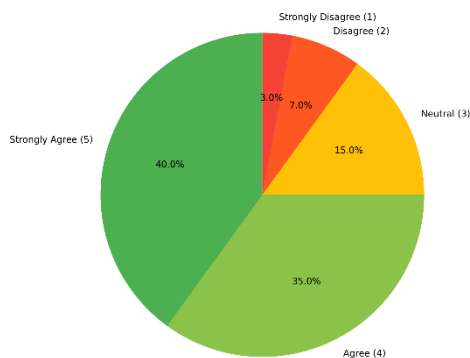


Figure 3. Agreement on Social Media Helping Assimilation (Q1)

The data from the survey item above is presented below:

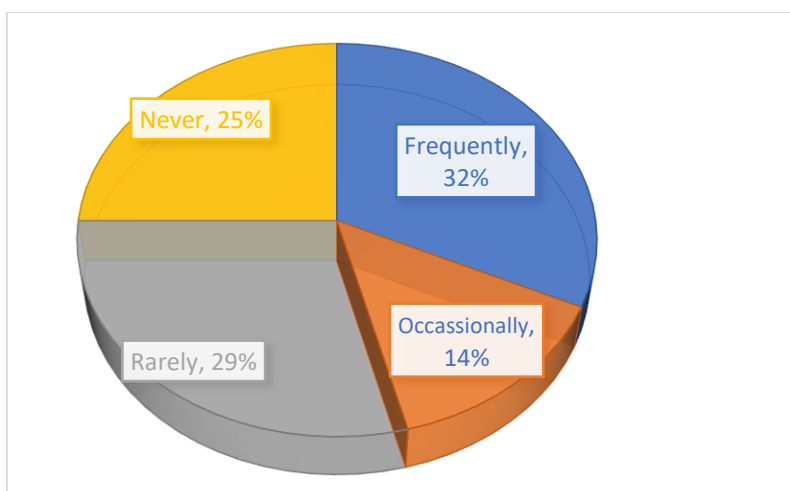


Figure 4. Usage of Social Media Contents in Language Learning

The pie chart above represents the responses of the participants on the frequency of their usage of social media content in the improvement of their grammar and vocabulary skills. From the information gathered after the survey, 32.86% of the participants admitted that they frequently utilize social media content for the improvement of their grammar and vocabulary skills. This indicates that a significant proportion of the participants actively make use of social media content to improve their grammar and vocabulary skills. Furthermore, 14.27% responded that they occasionally use these contents. This indicates that the 'frequent' group utilizes these materials more than the least engaged participants. Meanwhile, 29.65% of participants frankly stated that they had never used the contents of social media for language acquisition. This shows that in effect, a large pool of users does not commonly make use of social media content to advance their grammar and vocabulary skills. Eventually, 25.75% of the participants mentioned that they have never exploited social media content for the development of grammar and vocabulary skills. Participants with the largest group of 32.64% reported frequent use which indicates that they are actively and often make use of social media content to improve their grammar and vocabulary skills. The implication of these findings suggested that the utilization of social media content to improve their grammar and vocabulary skills may be influenced by different factors such as ease of use, goals, language proficiency level, individual preferences, perceptions and access to technology.

TABLE 2
USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENTS FOR LANGUAGE AND VOCABULARY SKILLS IMPROVEMENT

Item	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std. Dev
Do you agree that social media contents help FL Undergraduates to assimilate better?	29.35	21.08	20.86	21.03	7.68	3.18	1.86
Do you think that social media content is more easily accessible than the traditional sources?	41.64	39.72	13.07	5.57	-	4.96	0.73
Based on experience, do social media contents stand as your primary source for improvement of your language skills?	41.53	14.25	21.85	12.06	10.31	3.64	1.36
Do you struggle to concentrate while using social media content during your language education?	43.22	27.19	9.08	7.32	13.19	4.37	1.25

Strongly agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, strongly disagree=1

The above table shows the responses from the participants through the online survey concerning the reasons Foreign Language Undergraduates excessively use social media content to improve their language skills. As shown in the data presented above, the research participants in ways more than one acknowledged the impacts of social media content in foreign language education with regards to assimilation of knowledge. The majority of the participants constituted over 29% (strongly agree), while over 21% (agree) affirmed this. On the other hand, a total of 30% of the participants disagreed while over 20% were neutral. In line with the participants' perspectives on the comparison between social media content and traditional sources in terms of availability, a total of over 80% (both strongly agree and agree) of the responses attested that social media content is more easily accessible compared to the traditional sources of language education. Over 13% of the responses came back as neutral leaving the remaining 7% as respondents who disagree. Additionally, more than 44% of the participants rejected social media content as their primary source for improvement in language education, the remaining 56% was shared between the participants who agreed (35%) and more than 21% who remained neutral. When asked if they struggle with concentration when learning using social media content, 60% confirmed the challenges of concentration they face. Although the majority attested that they faced challenges, 31% refuted this claim leaving the remaining more than 9% of the responses neutral to this claim.

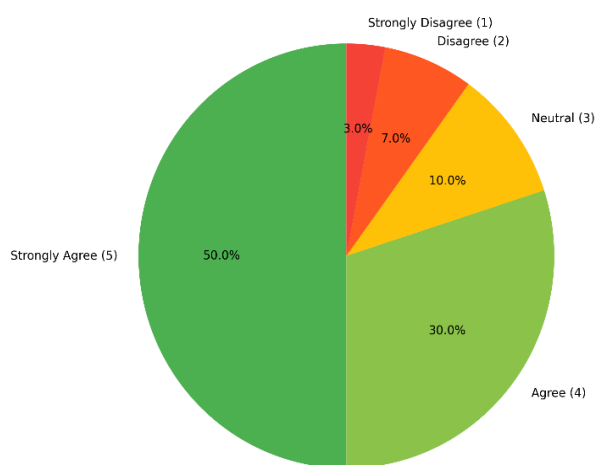


Figure 5. Accessibility of Social Media vs Traditional Sources (Q4)

(B) What are the demerits faced by Foreign Language Undergraduates as a result of excessive reliance on social media contents to improve their grammar and vocabulary skills?

The table below contains the survey questions which are under the above research question.

TABLE 3
THE DEMERITS OF EXCESSIVE RELIANCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENTS TO IMPROVE GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY SKILLS

Item	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std. Dev
Do you think social media contents might contain information from unverified sources about language in excess?	53.25	17.47	20.09	8.02	1.17	4.28	1.32
Based on experience, do you get distracted easily when using social media content to improve language skills?	41.37	21.19	17.42	13.09	6.93	3.89	1.47
Does reliance on social media contents in excess impede the effectiveness of the learning process during language education?	29.85	27.75	34.65	5.19	2.56	3.27	2.08
Do you think social media education presents the optimal learning environment even without any means of assessment?	17.54	10.94	14.06	14.85	42.61	2.17	2.98
Does excessive social media content reliance affect your performance in other learning methods due to differences in methods?	30.53	10.75	8.35	29.55	20.82	2.89	2.16

*Strongly agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, strongly disagree=1

This table displays the responses collated from the data gathered from the research participants on the demerits of excessive reliance on social media content to improve grammar and vocabulary skills. The majority of the respondents (70%) affirmed that social media content might contain information from unverified sources about language. While a handful of respondents refuted the claim (10%), more than 20% remained neutral. As per their experience with distractions during their learning process, more than 21% refuted the claim, over 17% remained neutral while the majority of the respondents (41%) noted that they get distracted when they make use of social media content to improve their grammar and vocabulary skills.

Additionally, the majority of the respondents (56%) affirmed the third claim in this survey question which asked if social media content impeded the effectiveness of their learning process, meanwhile, 34% reported neutral while a small group of over 13% disagreed. Furthermore, a significant amount of the respondents (59%) refuted the claim that without assessment of progress made, social media content presented foreign Language Undergraduates with an optimal learning environment. In other words, without any standard method to test if any progress is made, they are of the view that it might all be an effort with latent results. Over 14% remained neutral while more than 27% attested to the claim in the fourth item.

In the fifth item, 40% of the responses received suggested the existence of a decline in performance in other learning methods due to excessive reliance on social media content. More than 8% of the respondents were neutral to this claim while more than 50% refuted the claim.

V. DISCUSSION

A. Social Media as a Double-Edged Tool

The survey results indicate that while social media content offers significant advantages for FL acquisition, excessive reliance on it can lead to negative implications. Findings suggest that FL undergraduates perceive social media as a more effective tool compared to traditional methods. This can be attributed to the various interactive features, such as visual and audio-based learning. Unlike traditional methods that emphasize writing practices, social media platforms provide dynamic content that facilitate better assimilation. The results confirm that video and audio materials contribute to more efficient understanding, as they present language in a more immersive and contextualized manner than written text alone (Taskiran et al., 2018; Achraf, 2017; Yunus et al., 2012).

As shown in data 2 presented above, the research participants acknowledged the impacts of social media content in FL education about the assimilation of knowledge. 29% (strongly agree), while over 21% (agree) affirmed this. On the other hand, a total of 30% of the respondents disagreed while over 20% were neutral. In line with the respondents' perspectives on the comparison between social media content and traditional sources in terms of availability, a total of over 80% (both strongly agree and agree) of the responses attested that social media content is more easily accessible compared to the traditional sources of language education. Over 13% of the responses came back as neutral leaving the remaining 7% as respondents who disagree.

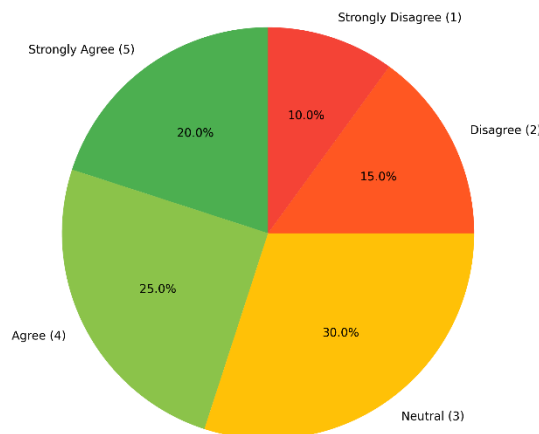


Figure 6. Distraction While Using Social Media (Q6)

Another key reason FL undergraduates rely on social media content is its ease of access (Castells, 2000). Features including a user-friendly, people-oriented interface, allow them to engage with content effortlessly. Survey findings indicate that a significant portion of respondents to the first set of questions pointed out that social media contents are taken as the primary source of improvement for grammar and vocabulary skills.

B. Negative Implication

While a large percentage of respondents (80%) agreed that social media is more accessible than traditional learning sources, confirming its role as a convenient learning tool (Alfaki, 2018; Wong et al., 2017), accessibility alone does not guarantee effective learning. Many students also acknowledged notable drawbacks, highlighting the negative implications of the excessive use of social media in FL education. Students reported issues related to distractions, unreliable content, and lack of structured assessment. A key issue identified is the high level of distractions associated with social media platforms. The distractions associated with social media content affects their levels of concentration during the learning process. When asked if they struggle with concentration when learning using social media content, 60% confirmed the challenges of concentration they face. Although the majority attested that they faced challenges, 31% refuted this claim

leaving the remaining more than 9% of the responses neutral to this claim. Junco (2012), Rouis et al. (2011), and Walsh et al. (2013) all highlight a common finding: excessive social media use negatively impacts academic performance. Distractions, poor time management, and reduced study time contribute to lower productivity and decreased learning outcomes. Survey results reinforce these findings. As per their experience with distractions during their learning process, more than 21% refuted the claim, over 17% remained neutral while the majority of the respondents (41%) noted that they get distracted when they make use of social media content to improve their grammar and vocabulary skills. Meanwhile, 34% reported neutral while a small group of over 13% disagreed.

Concurrently, the second set of research questions emphasizes the negative implications of excessive reliance on social media for language learning. While respondents acknowledged that social media platforms provide dynamic content that facilitate better assimilation, a significant number reported concerns about the high possibility of exposure to unverified sources about language education. More than 44% of the respondents rejected social media content as their primary source for improvement in language education, the remaining 56% was shared between the respondents who agreed (35%) and more than 21% who remained neutral. This implies that excessive reliance on these sources can result in the intake of false or misleading content, more likely affecting students' learning outcomes.

The availability of social media content still raises some challenges that can hinder the learning process and academic performance. While 70% of respondents acknowledged the presence of unverified sources and information about language in social media content, 41% admitted they often get distracted while using it for language learning. Additionally, 56% affirmed the third claim in this survey question, which asked if social media content impeded the effectiveness of their learning process, 40% believed excessive reliance on social media led to a decline in performance. Additionally, more than 8% of the respondents were neutral to this claim while more than 50% refuted the claim. A notable 59% of respondents refuted the claim that without assessment of progress made, social media content presented FL undergraduates with an optimal learning environment, emphasizing the need for structured evaluation. In other words, without any standard method to test if any progress is made, they are of the view that it might all be an effort with latent results. Meanwhile, 27% agreed with this claim, and 14% remained neutral.

The findings of this study align with Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) by illustrating how excessive reliance on social media for language learning can increase extraneous cognitive load, leading to distractions and reduced academic performance. This theoretical perspective provides a strong foundation for understanding how managing social media distractions and unverified information requires cognitive resources, leaving less capacity for deep processing and schema formation, which are essential for meaningful language learning. Through the lens of CLT, meaningful schema formation and deep processing are hindered when cognitive resources are dominantly used for managing extraneous load (e.g., distractions from social media) and lack of structured assessment. Moreover, without structured assessment, students may struggle to develop and reinforce language skills effectively, leading to weaker learning outcomes.

C. Mixed Perceptions on Social Media's Overall Impact on FL Learning

While distraction and reduced concentration suggest that social media content may decrease attention and hinder effective learning, 70% of respondents acknowledged concerns about unverified information, recognizing its potential to expose them to false or misleading linguistic rules that could affect their grammar and vocabulary development. Additionally, the 59% who disagreed with the notion that social media offers an optimal learning environment without assessment reflect the importance of structured evaluation in language learning. Perceptions of social media's overall impact on FL learning remain mixed. While 56% agreed that social media could impede the effectiveness of their learning process, 40% believed excessive reliance negatively impacted their performance in other learning methods, whereas over 50% refuted this claim. This divided perspective suggests that while some students recognize social media's potential drawbacks, others do not perceive it as significantly disruptive to their overall learning experience.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings reveal a divided perspective on the role of social media in FL language learning. While many respondents acknowledge its usefulness, concerns about distractions, misinformation, and the lack of proper assessment highlight the risks of excessive reliance. By examining the challenges and drawbacks that arise when FL students become overly reliant on social media content for language learning, this study also suggests that the impact of social media varies based on individual usage habits, emphasizing the need for a balanced and moderated approach to social media. Integrating structured evaluation methods can help ensure that social media complements, rather than hinders, FL learning. Additionally, understanding FL undergraduates' perceptions and experiences with social media provides insights into its peculiarity and its people-oriented features, which is necessary to fully grasp its role in language learning and the negative implications of excessive use. Hundberger (2009) emphasized the importance of face-to-face teaching methods in fostering social interaction and allowing instructors to monitor FL students' psychological and physical well-being. Future research should explore how structured learning resources can enhance and regulate FL undergraduates' social media use, ensuring that it provides verified, engaging, and pedagogically sound content to support language acquisition effectively.

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Social Criticism in *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens: From the Perspective of Genetic Structuralism

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Abstract—Social criticism is the analysis and evaluation of societal structures, norms, and practices to identify and challenge injustices, inequalities, and oppressive systems. Therefore, this study aims to determine social issues transformed into social criticism in the novel *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens. The process was based on the collection of data from the novel through the application of a qualitative descriptive method in order to analyze the themes, characters, and text. Social issues were also analyzed from two aspects, which included social condition in the novel and the subsequent impact, through the theory of genetic structuralism proposed by Lucien Goldman. The results showed that the condition and social issues were vividly presented through the theme, character, and text of the novel. This was observed from the illustration of extreme wealth and poverty as well as the cycle of violence that ensued from unchecked inequality which made the novel a powerful reflection on the need for empathy, social reform, and justice. Moreover, Dickens used the novel to invite readers to consider the long-lasting effects of social structures and how societal change could lead to destruction and redemption through the vivid portrayal of the tumultuous political landscape.

Index Terms—social, criticism, issues

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a concept that covers a wide range of written creations distinguished by literary style or expression and designed to offer aesthetic enjoyment instead of fulfilling a practical function. It consists of a diverse array of genres, including poetry, drama, fiction, and non-fiction, which are characterized by the objectives of the authors and the artistic quality of the presentation. According to Arafah et al. (2021), literary works often act as mirrors that reflect the reality of a given age. The works are a reflection of real life as well as a manifestation of the vision and experience associated with the authors during certain periods, specifically in the past (Afiah et al., 2022; Yudith et al., 2024). Moreover, literature is a broad category of written works that are considered significant due to the literary form or expression that aims to provide aesthetic pleasure rather than serve a utilitarian purpose (Arafah et al., 2025). It is an act that relies on the usage of

figurative language as media to present ideas aesthetically (Baa et al., 2023; Arafah et al., 2024; Hasyim & Arafah, 2023a). Each author has a unique style often used to attract readers' interest to the literary works produced (Asriyanti et al., 2022).

The information presented by Wellek and Warren (1956) described literature as a social institution that used language as the medium to present the ideas of the author and reflect social behavior phenomena. Authors often explore the phenomenon to be written about in order to understand the surrounding elements. This shows that literature provides useful information using the most appropriate styles such as short stories, poems, novels, plays, and songs (Arafah, 2018). For example, humans are presently modifying different habitation forms due to excessive needs (Jaelani et al., 2024). Literary works have presented information on the close relationship between humans and nature through different stories related to the environmental situation (Siwi et al., 2022; JUSDALYANA et al., 2024; Manugeran et al., 2023). This is possible because authors are mostly inspired by the surrounding environment, thereby showing the importance of the atmosphere in creating a literary masterpiece. The trend shows that authors often show their experiences, life situations, and the condition of the environment during the process of writing novels.

Wellek and Warren (1956, p. 95) showed that the phrase "Literature is an expression of society" was typically used to start discussions on the relationship between literature and society. This was based on the belief that literature could show the happenings in society and the typical features of the characters (Arafah et al., 2024). The trend leads to the belief that literary works serve a societal purpose in the context of social reality (Arafah et al., 2023). The inference is that authors talk about their feelings, imagination, experience, and thoughts. Therefore, literature can be generally explained as a written piece of art produced by a certain author (Arafah & Kaharuddin, 2019). Literary works are also defined as the personal opinion of authors about a concept that is subsequently passed to the public (Mutmainnah et al., 2022).

Literature is believed to be a form of human expression but not all concepts expressed in words, organized, and written down are classified under this category. For example, writings that are primarily informative, technical, scholarly, and journalistic are often excluded from the rank of literature by most, though not all, critics. However, certain forms of writing in literature are universally regarded as an art. Another important point is that literary works are perceived as a form of reflection of human life but not all reveal facts or truths. The readers are required to understand that these works are the product of the imagination of the authors and their reality is not consistently true (Sunyoto et al., 2022). Another study also explained literature as the mirror or reflection of society (Marliana et al., 2018).

Literary works and human lives are difficult to be separated. This is because literary works discuss life through the inspiration of the authors and are divided into three parts, including poetry, prose, and drama. The three aspects are considered products and parts of society. Moreover, the assumption that literature mirrors the current social situation 'correctly' at a specific period is false. The common and popular trend that the concept expresses life is even more ambiguous. This is because authors inevitably express their experience and total conception of life which do not reflect the complete and exhaustive account of the specific period (Wellek & Warren, 1956, p. 20).

Some literary works discuss social issues related to topics such as gender inequality, socioeconomic class, and intercultural conflict (Yudith et al., 2024; Arafah, 2011). English authors have frequently discussed the impact of these social issues on the lives of people and society through intricate plots and compelling characters. This is based on the consideration that literary works can change the mindset of people about social conditions (Lestari et al., 2025). Moreover, Wellek and Warren (1956) explained literature as a social institution used by authors to reflect their thoughts on social behavior through the application of language as the medium. The trend led to the identification of language as a tool to present cultural meaning and values (Yudith et al., 2023). It works as a communication medium to deliver the message and ensure the information required is passed across from the authors to the readers (Asri et al., 2023; Yulianti et al., 2022). Social issues are certainly expressed explicitly and implicitly in the works to inform or entertain readers and provide education on values or good behaviors (Arafah & Hasyim, 2019). The purpose is to ensure readers gain value through the story in addition to self-awareness to be more positive human beings (Arifuddin et al., 2024; Arafah et al., 2020; Fadillah et al., 2022; Iksora et al., 2022).

Cultural values and literary works are inseparable because authors use literary works to present the values contained in society as well as the actions and behaviors of each member (Arafah et al., 2023; Takwa et al., 2022). Traditions and local languages can also be captured because both are parts of local wealth with significant valuable contents (Takwa et al., 2024; Mofu et al., 2024; Arafah et al., 2020). However, the change to the digital age tends to modernize traditional values (Arafah & Hasyim, 2023b; Suhadi et al., 2022; Takwa et al., 2022). This is critical because the change of values can influence the character of the younger generation, specifically Generation Z which spends more time on social media rather than communicating with the surrounding environment (Mokoginta & Arafah, 2022; Arafah et al., 2023; Arafah & Hasyim, 2023a; Hasyim & Arafah, 2023b). The trend has increased the call for attention to the situation with some people observed to be valuing local traditions more due to the pressure (Arifin et al., 2022). Therefore, optimism is expected to be used in solving the problems associated with the fear of losing valuable heritage (Arafah et al., 2024). This is possible because the culture presented in literary works as a form of art can be passed down for generations to avoid abandonment (Takwa et al., 2024; Kaharuddin et al., 2017).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Genetic structuralism is a basic component derived from both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of literary works. The concept is explained as the arrangement of words to form a suitable pattern of sentence. This is necessary because the

mastery of sentence structure is considered to be more than the acquisition of vocabulary. Moreover, genetic structuralism is based on the theory of behaviorism and the application of the method to teach language requires understanding the pattern and structure. This is considered important because every language differs structurally.

Human behavior has a coherent structure which is a response to social support and the natural environment (Goldmann, 1981, p. 15). This is observed from the fact that human sciences have two essential categories, including structure and function. The aspect of function enables a person to improve on balance and is considered not inherently conscious to eliminate the fundamental bias of the conventional human sciences (Goldman & Boelhower, 1980).

Lucien Goldmann developed genetic structuralism as a method for analyzing literary works. The theory was divided into two large frameworks and the first was the relationship between the meanings of an element in the same literary work while the second focused on when the correlation became mutually binding. This shows that authors can influence a worldview that is not a fact but a depiction of their imagination (Endraswara, 2003, p. 56). The trend explains genetic structuralism as a branch of literary sociology that connects the structure of literary works, the social context of society, and the worldview of authors (Yasa, 2012). The method shows that there is a dialectical relationship between literary works and social structure.

Genetic structuralism was established on several fundamental ideas to understand the basic information that could be used to develop other important concepts. The emergence as part of the 20th-century critical methods cannot be separated from the development of different literary theories at the very beginning of the century. For example, the sociology of literature which focused on the relationship between literary works, and other external factors including the authors, society, and historical background as well as structuralism emphasized the autonomy and differences between these factors. However, the development of genetic structuralism served as a link between the factors. It was initiated through the idea of human fact which was synonymous with human conduct. According to Faruk (2014, p. 156), human facts were all actions and behaviors, verbal and physical, that humans engaged in and sciences attempted to comprehend. Furthermore, genetic structuralism requires philosophy to understand literary work because the worldview is considered as the concept to provide an alternative structure to society (Azi, 2017).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative method to analyze social criticism in *A Tale of Two Cities* as observed in the precise data described specifically based on the information retrieved from the novel. According to Mack et al. (2005, p. 1), qualitative studies could be effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations.

The supporting data used were the information, evidence, or details that reinforced, substantiated, or validated the claim, argument, or conclusion. The data were considered important in various contexts, such as research and analysis (Arnawa & Arafah, 2023; Arafah et al., 2020). The focus covered any relevant information and additional sources such as books, theses, journal articles, and online materials that supported a statement or argument to provide a solid foundation for conclusions or analysis.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A Tale of Two Cities describes social problems identified and criticized by Charles Dickens. These are further discussed and presented as follows.

A. *The Portrayal of Social Conditions in the Novel*

The social life of the time was portrayed in a highly critical and complex way, reflecting the stark contrasts between the privileged aristocracy and the suffering lower classes during the French Revolution. Social conditions are a central theme of the novel and Dickens uses the characters, events, and settings to show the inequalities, injustices, and turbulence of the period. The novel shows extreme and rampant inequality, systemic injustice, and class division which lead to both personal and societal unrest. Moreover, the stark contrasts between the lives of the privileged and the oppressed, as well as the violent consequences of revolutionary ideals, serve as a powerful critique of social systems at the time.

(a). *Social Class*

A Tale of Two Cities presents social class as a prominent theme that reflects the stark divisions between the aristocracy and the lower classes, particularly in the context of the period before and during Revolutionary France. This was observed in several passages such as the very first paragraph where Dickens contrasted the extremes of social conditions, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only" (Dickens, 2012, p. 1). This opening quote sets the stage for a society deeply divided by social class, where extreme wealth and poverty coexist.

(b). *The Injustice in the Legal System*

Charles Dickens presents the injustice in the legal system through the novel, specifically in the context of the French Revolution. The character, Dr. Manette, and the oppressive legal system in both France and England were used to critique the manipulation and abuse of laws which often led to unfair treatment and suffering. An example of the most poignant depictions of the injustice occurred during the trial of Charles Darnay which was more about public spectacle than justice even though the character was innocent of the charges. The trial was characterized by political maneuvering with the legal process subverted to serve the needs of the revolutionaries. This was observed from the extract "The courtroom was full, and the judges sat there, with their wigs and their frowns, listening to all that was said as if they were hearing it for the first time. They were like pieces of iron that had been cast into their seats for no other purpose than to judge those that were brought before them" (Dickens, 2012, p. 340). The statement showed that the judicial system was mechanical and indifferent, leading to failure to ensure impartiality or the delivery of justice based on the merits of the case.

B. *The Portrayal of the Impacts of Social Issues in the Novel*

Social impacts were portrayed as a multifaceted exploration of inequality, revolution, sacrifice, and personal transformation. Dickens critiqued the rigidity of class systems, the dangers of unchecked vengeance, and the possibility of redemption through personal action. The novel serves as both a cautionary tale about the consequences of social injustice and a hopeful reflection on how individuals can rise above circumstances to make a meaningful difference. Moreover, the intersection between social issues, personal choice, and historical events ensures *A Tale of Two Cities* powerfully reflects the broader social impact of revolutionary change.

(a). *The Abuse of Power and Corruption*

Several passages show the themes related to abuse of power and corruption in the novel. This is because the concepts are central to the narrative as observed in both the French aristocracy and the revolutionary forces showing how power can corrupt and lead to brutal outcomes. An example of the most striking occurrence was the character of Madame Defarge who embodied the vengeance and ruthlessness associated with giving power to the wrong people. This was observed from specific passages such as "The time will come, when the poor, the downtrodden, the oppressed, the despondent, will rise in their might, and make a last stand for their rights. They will break the chains that bind them, and trample the oppressors beneath their feet" (Dickens, 2012, p. 307). The statement reflects the growing resentment of the lower classes against the abuse of power by the aristocrats, leading to the eventual revolt. However, the relentless drive of Madame Defarge for revenge shows the possibility of the abused becoming equally corrupt when in power. This was observed from the fact that the character did not show mercy to even those who could be innocent of the crimes projected to have been committed.

Another quote that speaks to the corrupting influence of power is identified in the actions of the Marquis St. Evrémonde character. The cruelty of the character toward the lower classes was part of the clearest depictions of aristocratic corruption. "I have been accustomed to this", said the Marquis, as he looked at the murdered child and I will not stop for such a trifle" (Dickens, 2012, p. 105). This statement shows the complete indifference of the Marquis to human life, reflecting how the aristocracy, in its unchecked power, becomes desensitized to suffering and cruelty. The abuse of power leads the character to act with a brutal sense of entitlement without any compassion or remorse.

(b). *The Revolution and Social Retribution*

The themes of revolution and social retribution are central to the narrative of the novel and its examination of the socio-political upheaval during the French Revolution. This was observed in the experiences of the main characters, their struggles, and the larger societal forces at play.

As the revolution erupted, the lower class wanted revenge on the aristocracy. A key character in the novel, Madame Defarge, embodied the darker side of the revolution as observed in the relentless pursuit of vengeance against the aristocracy which symbolized the danger of revenge without a sense of proportionality or forgiveness. The vendetta against the Evrémonde family and the determination of Madame Defarge to ensure their destruction showed that the thirst for retribution could lead to a cycle of violence and dehumanization. The character served as the symbol of revolutionary zeal as well as the desire for justice and retribution. This was confirmed by the statement "I am the wife of a poor man, and I have been married to him for five-and-twenty years. In that time, my father has made me his slave. I have suffered, and I have learned that revenge is sweeter than forgiveness" (Dickens, 2012, p. 46).

The quest of Madame Defarge for vengeance showed the anger that simmered for years under oppressive aristocratic rule, where the poor were neglected, abused, and left to suffer. The role of the character showed how social issues and injustices led to a thirst for retribution and the process through which the revolution became a force of social upheaval.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *A Tale of Two Cities* portrayed some social criticisms identified through class disparity, injustice, and the corrupting effects of power served as a backdrop to the story and significantly shaped the actions and destinies of the characters. The process of analyzing the personal tales of Dr. Manette, Charles Darnay, Sydney Carton, and Madame Defarge allowed Dickens to examine the effects of social turmoil as well as the intricate relationships between personal

choices and societal influences. The novel showed the need to implement social change with empathy despite its importance because uncontrolled rage and revenge could sustain the problems the process was designed to address.

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Discursive Strategies in the French Broadcast Media About the Ukraine Crisis

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Abstract—The present paper aims to investigate the use of discursive strategies that critically represent how the act of bias, represented by “hate speech,” is framed within the French broadcast media. Two models of analysis were adopted for this study: one that illustrates the discursive strategies adopted by Reisigl and Wodak (2009) and the other that represents the theme of hate speech as an act of bias, the Hate Speech Intensity Scale by Bahador (2020). The results of the analysis show that perspectivization discourse is the essential type of discourse when comparing it to other discursive strategies such as referential and argumentation. To reinforce the claims, negative actions are associated with raising awareness, discussing, and addressing criticisms and imminent issues.

Index Terms—act of bias, discursive strategies, French broadcast

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant political concerns in Europe, and indeed, the world, is the current crisis between Russia and Ukraine. However, what promotes the political aims of local officials is their attentiveness to radio and television broadcasts and digital media. This is quite clear where the Russia-Ukraine crisis is concerned, as evidenced by the establishment of European military and US involvement that has been accompanied with this crisis. It is worth noting that digital media has organized and presented the circumstances in such a way as to sway common opinion in shaping both Western and European political and military attitudes. As a result, there is a great need to highlight this very significant issue. Moreover, it is applicable throughout critical discourse analysis to shed light on discursive strategies that illustrate hidden hate speech regarding the data under analysis. To the best knowledge of the researchers, no academic study has yet tackled this topic, making it even more critical to fill in this gap in the literature.

Indeed, the study of critical discourse analysis (CDA) approaches indicates a gathering of attitudes and standpoints that are possible to be probed jointly in the form of analysis of the behavior of language in society. This can be done by engaging in the way the main group's interests are advocated through discourse analysis. Models of the analysis are adopted from Reisigl and Wodak's (2009) discursive strategies, along with the adoption of Bahador's (2020) Hate Speech Intensity Scale.

To realize the aims of this study, eight broadcast channels were chosen, including France 24, RFI, and RTL, all of which are considered the largest and most well-known broadcasts that will benefit the research into the topic under study. The selection of the data considers the utilization of the discursive strategies that best represent the theme of hate speech in French broadcast media. The selection of the data is not a random one, but it is with the intention of addressing the theme of this study. France 24, RFI, and RTL services are reliable sources of news for those newsrooms that do not have their own international correspondents stationed all over the world.

More concisely, the present study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the frequent discursive strategies that have emerged in French broadcast media, representing the theme of hate speech in relation to the crisis involving Ukraine?
2. What are the frequent types of hate speech examined in French broadcast media that are emphasized by these discourse strategies?
3. What are the reasons for advocating the use of those discursive strategies in French broadcast media?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) not only considers the ideational categories but also takes the ideological assumptions into account. According to Widdowson (2007, p. 3), CDA is an analytical research tool that identifies opposition to an ideology as well as the attitudes of the governing system in both written and spoken communications

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that attempt to reinforce their dominance and control. Conversely, CDA also searches for assumptions or ideologies to manage inequality and bias (e.g., bias between elites and non-elites). Moreover, it also tries to operate against these assumptions.

CDA is explained by Luke (2002) as a “distinguished if incomplete history of attempts at a normative political linguistics” (p. 97); he then added that it would make a maintainable anti-tradition in linguistics by taking together these predispositions with CDA. To shape liberal and neoliberal approaches in society, this perspective renounces approaches in the field of social sciences, and then, unquestionably, linguistics. In fact, the study of CDA approaches indicates a gathering of attitudes and standpoints that can be probed jointly in the form of the analysis of the behavior of language in society. This can be done by focusing on engaging in the way the main group’s interests are advocated through discourse analysis.

It is a matter of defiance to grasp the difference between those who are interested in their own ventures and those who are discourse analysts or “non-critical” linguists. This defiance is made by asserting that their analyses surpass the ultimate image regarding the behavior of language in society and turning it into an image of the title role of language in society and an image of the reason it takes that role; thereupon, language executes anything it executes. Additionally, language then executes everything that comes before it through “critical” and “non-critical” perspectives (Fairclough, 1989). Likewise, the study of CDA proclaims interrelations that are undeclared and undertakes that which is not obvious (Fairclough, 1992). This refers to ascertaining the operations of ideology.

Van Dijk (2015) points out that what refers to the discourse analytical research that essentially studies the mean by which social –power abuse and inequality are established, duplicated, and challenged by text and talk within the societal and political realm is critical discourse analysis. Those who are specialists in the analysis of CDA approaches undertake both the appreciation and questioning of social inequality. Thus, it is appropriate to view CDA as an indicator of social advancement and shifts in the politics that discourse analysts employ. Concerning the dialectally or regionally interrelated social process, the study of language is foreshadowed according to Fairclough and Graham (2002, p. 188). To elucidate this with an analysis of genuine examples of social relations that have an incomplete or full form of linguistics that it intends to make noticeable, CDA is engaged along with “the ideological loading of particular ways of using language and the relations of power” that determine them.

The crucial focus of CDA aims to keep track of and manage the language of human beings besides enterprise. Thus, with the fundamental realization that releases critical theories from a limited category of mastery and desire, these theories aid in legitimizing humans.

Critical analysis promotes awareness relating to all techniques and methods employed in creating, preserving and reproducing asymmetrical connections of power as implemented through discourse (Van Dijk, 1997). This indicates that CDA aims to clarify and put forward the different relationships of power, dominance, and inequality that are reflected in written and spoken discourse. This happens in a way that is ambiguous to others. Conversely, CDA provides tools to study and analyze 13 types of written and spoken texts to examine discursive sources of power, dominance, and bias. In general, CDA provides a critical evaluation of how these discursive sources are made, remade, and justified within social practice and interaction.

It is worth stating that many scholars have strived to study, recognize, and present the basic principles of CDA that are still enriching controversial inquiries. Moreover, scholars utilizing methods of CDA state that they seek to increase awareness of this feature of language use in society. The following are some of the principles scholars explicitly maintain:

1. CDA is not only interpretative but also explanatory. The aim is to identify the hidden meanings and ideologies and relate texts with their context. Furthermore, there is a need to shape a systematic methodology in this case. This methodology is interpretive and explanatory in nature to thoroughly explore texts (Fairclough, 1992, p. 18).
2. CDA causes ideological change. This means that ideologies often change through both discourse and the process of making discourse, by which different ideologies are shaped and replaced along with their connection to power and domination (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 18).
3. CDA denotes other social practices like prejudice, resistance, and bias. In other words, discourse itself indicates a social practice. CDA is a “socially committed scientific paradigm” that tries to alternate and involve what is happening in institutional and social contexts (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 20).
4. CDA is quite interested in “the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, pp. 271-80). CDA seeks to adopt a critical approach to social problems to detect any hidden power relations. It tries to discover the results of the social problems of language with the distinct cultural, social, political, legal, and economic contexts. In this regard, “CDA follows a critical approach to social problems in its endeavors to make explicit power relations that are frequently hidden”.
5. Another principle of CDA shows that discourse is arbitrated between text and society. CDA appeals to an idea of mediation (Fairclough, 1993). Furthermore, Fairclough conducted a thorough scrutiny of CDA by taking into consideration the order of discourse concerning the relation between text and society. In general, Van Dijk (1997) proposes a “sociocognitive level” to his study. Scollon (2001) refers to mediation also by investigating “mediated action”.

B. Hate Speech as an Act of Bias

Discourse “is the main interface between the social and cognitive dimensions of racism,” (p. 15) claims Van Dijk

(2012). Since “the reproduction of social representations, such as knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms, and values, is one of the main roles of discourse,” this information is fundamental. Therefore, discourse can play a basic role in giving rise to conflict and in initiating social peace. Moreover, the way the news media portrays social issues impacts how the general public and decision-makers perceive and react to them (Thompson & Ungerleider, 2004).

The basic origin of racist beliefs begins not from individual’s daily interactions but more from the racist speech in societal discourse and ethnically prejudiced media platforms (Deutscher, 2010). More importantly, the public’s primary source of information regarding who to trust and who to undervalue is the media (Dasgupta quoted in Hernandez, 2011, p. 814).

The following examples are displayed by the United Nations (2016) according to what constitutes hate speech: (a). any ideas that are disseminated that include ethnic and/or racial hatred; (b). prompting hatred; (c). threats of violence against individuals based on prompting hatred; and (d) declarations of abuse, scorn, or disrespect. Moreover, hate speech is classified as (a). genocide; (b). an act of violence; (c). an act of discrimination; (d.) an act of prejudice; and (e). an act of bias.

This study adopts Bahador’s (2020) Hate Speech Intensity Scale. Within this scale, there are six items to classify the intensity of hate speech. The first item on the scale is Disagreement and is used to indicate rhetoric that contains words and phrases of disagreement such as “false,” “incorrect,” or “wrong.” Negative Actions is the second item on the scale and indicates rhetoric that contains negative, non-aggressive actions connected to a group. Responses to these actions illustrate non-aggressive actions such as the use of metaphors. The third item on the scale is Negative Character and refers to rhetoric that embraces nonviolence (not involving force features and insults). Dehumanizing, the fourth item on the list, incorporates rhetoric involving subhuman superhuman features such as “rat,” “Nazi,” “demon,” and “monster.” A reaction that means an imposition of physical harm, even if metaphoric, such as “raped,” “mugging,” or “starved,” refers to the fourth item on the scale—Violence. Reactions demand that the other group be physically harmed, such as by being attacked. The last item on the Hate Speech Intensity Scale is Death, which is rhetoric that calls for killing by a group. See the following table for a clearer understanding.

TABLE 1
HATE SPEECH INTENSITY SCALE BY BAHADOR (2020)

No.	Item	Description	Examples
6.	Death	Rhetoric implies collective murder.	damage, sabotage/interference
5.	Violence	Physical injury to the body or metaphorical or aspirational physical harm are also featured in rhetoric. Actions involve bodily damage that is a metaphorical or a real assault.	punched, violated, hungered, cruelly treated.
4.	Demonizing and Dehumanizing	Both superhuman and subhuman attributes can be found in rhetoric. With respect to this item, there are none.	rat, monkey, demon, cancer
3.	Negative Character	Nonviolent traits and insults are involved in this reaction.	foolish, thief, aggressor, insincere/dishonest, crazy
2.	Negative Actions	Negative, nonaggressive actions accompanied by the group are included in this reaction.	frightened, diverted, conducted, preposterous acts, mistreated, abandoned
1.	Disagreement	Disagreeing at the idea and/or belief level indicates this rhetoric. Refuting assertions to change one’s perspective and evaluating and verifying the claims show these reactions.	false, incorrect, challenge, shift in perspective.

C. Discursive Strategies

According to Reisigl and Wodak (2009), discursive strategies include the following types:

The Referential/Nomination strategy refers to the way the speaker specifies social actors for the intention of including or excluding. This is done through many ways, such as through membership categorization devices like race, religion, and occupation; deictics; anthroponyms; tropes such as metaphors, metonymies, and synecdoches; along with verbs and nouns to indicate processes and actions (Sacks, 1989, p. 89; Wodak, 2008a, p. 54; Wodak & Richardson, 2013, p. 78).

The second discursive strategy is Predicational, which denotes the way the social actors are evoked. In this strategy, predicates, adjectives, appositions, adverbials, relative clauses, collocations, metaphors, similes, and other rhetorical tropes such as hyperbole, metonymies, euphemisms, and litotes, along with presuppositions, evocations, allusions, implicatures, infinitive clauses, conjunctive clauses, participial clauses, predicative nouns, pronouns, explicit and/or implicit comparisons, and others are utilized to see how certain characteristics of social actors are usually perceived (Baker & Ellece, 2011, p. 101; Wodak, 2008b, p. 54; Wodak, 2015b, p. 9).

The Perspectivization strategy denotes the speaker’s perspective, participation, and detachment of circumstances in his discourse. This is done by employing direct or indirect speech in forms of narration or quotation. Deictics, discourse markers, particles, repetition, and metaphors are also involved to illustrate this strategy (Wodak, 2009, p. 42; Wodak, 2013, p. 49).

The Argumentation strategy is used to indicate the way arguments are employed to account for the way arguments are experienced and maintain the inclusion and exclusion of social actors. This also maintains the (de)legitimization of specific actions (Wodak, 2013, p. 48).

Finally, the Mitigation strategy is used to raise illocutions and to sharpen certain matters by employing gradable verbs, modal verbs, repetition, hyperboles, and argumentation (Wodak, 2013, p. 49). Furthermore, it is also employed to mitigate

some propositions to keep away from the danger of criticism (Fraser, 1980, p. 342) through the use of verbs, feelings, sayings, or where one makes use of implicit references instead of explicit ones (Wodak & Reisigl, 2001). The following figure illustrates these discursive strategies:

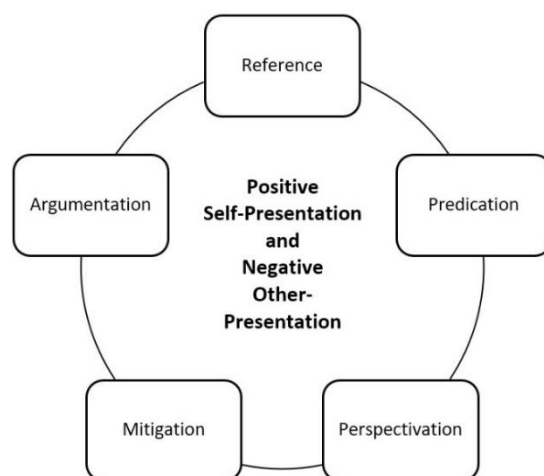


Figure 1. A Selection of Discursive Strategies (Reisigl & Wodak, p. 104)

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

A mixed method of analysis was selected in this paper. By considering what individuals say and do, qualitative research gathers, evaluates, and explains data. The main concern of qualitative research is to comprehend the meanings that individuals adhere to in occurrences such as decisions, actions, beliefs, and rules. The goal of quantitative research is controlled, objective, product-oriented, and obstructive, which measures the variability of a specific circumstance, problem, event, or phenomenon. Leedy (1993) points out that quantitative research also aims to promote and make use of mathematical models and theories regarding certain events. Altogether, the present study is a mixed method of analysis that is presented since it aids in getting a clearer, more detailed picture than a single quantitative or qualitative study. This mixed method combines the benefits of both methods.

B. Data Selection and Collection

The selection of the data considered the utilization of the discursive strategies that best represent the theme of hate speech in French broadcast media. Data analysis comprising eight news articles was selected from French broadcast media. The selection of the data is not a random one, but it is with the intention of addressing the theme of this study. France 24, RFI, and RTL news services are reliable sources of news for those newsrooms that cannot afford to have their own international correspondents disseminated all around the globe.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The following are eight excerpts from broadcasts by French media represented by France 24, RFI, and RTL, analyzed in terms of discursive strategies and hate speech:

A. Excerpt One: France 24

(a). *Russia Extends the Battlefield to Its History Books*

1. The new textbooks are part of a larger gaslighting movement in which Putin has repeatedly tried to persuade his own population—and the world—that Russia is a victim rather than the aggressor in a disastrous war that has now left some 500,000 people either killed or wounded on both the Russian and Ukrainian sides, according to US estimates released in mid-August. US officials caution that casualty figures are estimates, as Moscow is suspected of minimizing losses, while Ukraine does not disclose official figures. (Ciesnik, 2023, para. 2)
2. In a chapter dedicated to the war in Ukraine, the books affirm that Ukraine is “an ultranationalist state” where political opposition is “forbidden.” Over the course of the 28 pages devoted to Russia’s “special military operation,” the authors frame Russian actions as a response to an increasingly aggressive West that sought to use Ukraine as a “battering ram” with which to destroy Russia, echoing rhetoric repeatedly used by Putin. (Ciesnik, 2023, para. 3)

(b). *The Analysis*

The first statement uses the argumentation strategy to present a series of claims and declare a certain viewpoint, rather than to describe events. To build a case, there are certain details the writer provides, such as “500,000 people” either killed or wounded, in addition to mentioning “US estimations.” In this statement, there are claims about Putin’s actions and events in Russia to frame it as a victim. The second statement is a form of perspectivization discourse. It states the authors of the chapter figure Russia’s “special military” actions are a response to an “aggressive West.” The writer presents this action as Russia’s reasoning for its military activities. The mention of “gaslighting” implies that there is a negative behavior on the part of Russia. This is a rhetoric that involves a negative action. The mention of “battering ram” in the second statement is used as a negative action to support a non-inclusive language.

B. Excerpt Two: France 24

(a). *Russian Dissidents in France: The Price of Exile, Far From Putin's Russia*

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of its neighbor, upending the lives of millions of Ukrainians. But the conflict also changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Russians opposed to the war. Some left for Armenia, Georgia, or Turkey, while others requested asylum in France. It was the start of a long road, far from the country they were born in, but which had left them no choice but to leave. We met Alexei, Ernest, Nastia, and Dmitri—four Russian dissidents who have sought refuge in France. They told us about their decision to flee Vladimir Putin's Russia and start a new life in exile in a foreign land (Vesnitch, 2024, para. 1).

(b). *The Analysis*

The writer states a form of dissatisfaction or negative view toward the leadership of Russia. There is an act of bias in the form of a negative character. This denotes a level of cruelty and a disregard of democratic principles. The statement presents the personal perspective of the Russian refugees who fled to other foreign countries to start a new life in exile. This perspectivization strategy conveys the subjective experiences and decision-making of people affected by the invasion.

C. Excerpt Three: France 24

(a). *Russian Speakers Reject the “Language of the Enemy” by Learning Ukrainian*

One of the stated goals of Russia’s “special military operation” in Ukraine was defending Russian-speaking populations who were allegedly being persecuted by Ukrainian nationalists. Ironically, since the start of the war, Russian speakers in Ukraine have been signing up for classes to improve their Ukrainian-language skills (Gormezano, 2022, para. 1).

(b). *The Analysis*

The use of “ironically” is to indicate a coincidental situation and to signify the writer’s own critical take concerning the event being narrated. This is a form of disagreement at the belief level. This statement is an example of referential discourse strategy. The use of language is to focus on a factor of the external world. The writer frames particular events represented by (Russia’s military operation) and the (response of Russian speakers in Ukraine).

D. Excerpt Four: France 24

(a). *Russia's War on Ukraine: “Vladimir Putin is Desperate”*

France 24 is joined by Dr. Sergej Sumlenny, a Ukraine expert and former Director of the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Kyiv. He highlights three major developments in the war: Russia's offensive spanning between Kharkiv and the neighboring Donbas region, the “humanitarian catastrophe” in Mariupol in what's being labeled a “genocide,” and Russia's attempt to “destabilize” Transnistria. As Russia's invasion of Ukraine rapidly evolves into a war of attrition, Dr. Sergej Sumlenny asserts that “Ukraine is fighting for every single nation in Europe, and we must not make any illusions.” He describes the Russian assault as an onslaught of “terror on a scale unseen since World War II” (France 24, 2022, para. 1).

(b). *The Analysis*

Mentioning terms such as “onslaught” indicates a feeling of fear and aggression. Proposing that the actions of the Russian assault are portrayed in a purely negative action depicts the intensity of the event. The discourse is a perspectivization in this statement. Dr. Sergej Sumlenny presents his point of view concerning the war and its impact on Ukraine along with its consequences on Europe. Dr. Sergei frames the situation based on his viewpoint, even though he asserts his certainty regarding the essence of this conflict.

E. Excerpt Five: France 24

(a). *“Ghost Recruits”: Is Putin Raising a Potemkin Army to Boost Troop Numbers?*

1. Putin wants to turbocharge his offensive in Ukraine by pouring in reinforcements, to the tune of 137,000 extra soldiers—bringing the total to 1.15 million active fighters. This would be the biggest increase in Russian military personnel in years, the last such boost being in 2017, when Moscow announced that the army’s ranks had swelled with 13,698 new soldiers. (Seibt, 2022, para. 1)

2. “So we may be heading for a further Potemkinization of the military, with Moscow issuing decrees and the MOD drawing up new orgs that increasingly don't match the actual numbers in service,” Galeotti went on. “We'll see if/how this gets operationalized, but at first glance, this sounds like a Kremlin grappling with impotence and a lack of proper ideas about how to change the situation in Ukraine,” he concluded. (Seibt, 2022, para. 5)

(b). *The Analysis*

In this headline, “Ghost Recruits” symbolizes fakeness and a lack of honesty. The context is a negative link to the action of increasing a Potemkin force. The event depicts the reality that there is a misleading act to escalate the number of troops on the condition that Putin was raising a Potemkin army as expected. In the first statement, the phrase “turbocharge his offensive” contains some negative connotation in this context. It suggests dramatically escalating an offensive action (negative action). The second statement is a remark about an act of creating an illusion of support for deception by referring to Potemkin, a Russian leader who allegedly set up a fake resolution to impress others. This is a negative character.

The headline suggests a perspectivization discourse. The use of recruiter ghosting frames a specific point of view and reflects the way the writer explains and judges the event under analysis concerning the increasing of the army. The first statement is also a reflection of perspectivization discourse. It depicts a certain view about an event referring to military personnel in Russia. There is also an emphasis on the growing and the historical setting of army ranks. The Perspectivization discursive strategy is depicted in the second statement as an evaluative perspective concerning the subject matter, which is identified by the use of “Potemkinization of the military.” There is also a fundamentally concerned tone conveyed by the language of this statement.

F. *Excerpt Six: France 24*

(a). *“Danger to the Regime”? Russia Faces Anti-Mobilization Protests Among Ethnic Minorities*

1. “This two-speed “partial mobilization” — with outlying regions bearing the brunt—is one of the reasons why “there are more and more people who say the country will never be like it was before the invasion of Ukraine,” Schenk said.” (Seibt, 2022, para1)
2. In Crimea—a Ukrainian peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014 — Moscow has pressed members of the Tatar minority into the army first. “80 percent of summonses for mobilization in Crimea were issued to Crimean Tatars,” Russian journalist and activist Osman Pashaev pointed out via Facebook. (Seibt, 2022, para. 3)

(b). *The Analysis*

In the first statement, the mention of “bearing the brunt” indicates a negative impact. This impact carries an irritating circumstance. Because of this “partial two-speed mobilization,” the statement frames Ukraine and its people as facing severe consequences because of the war. These hard consequences suggest a negative action. Criticality in the second statement is represented by “Moscow has pressed members of the Tatar minority into the army first.” The mention of “pressed” suggests “forced.” There is a reference to undue pressure to link the army in which the people from the Tatar minority may be facing. The choice of the word “pressed” is an impactful verb that indicates a negative action.

An argumentation discourse is suggested in the first statement. This argument is about the relationship between a particular event, partial mobilization, and generating public perception relating to the future of the country. Based upon distinguished conditions, that assertion proposes a logical attitude.

Furthermore, there is a referential discursive strategy in the second statement. The writer suggests references to events or entities. The statement provides a direct reference to Moscow pushing members of the Tatar minority to mobilize into Crimea. In all, making direct reference to specific actions and their effect on the Crimean Tatars is the basic recognition of this statement.

G. *Excerpt Seven: RTL*

(a). *Putin Win in Ukraine “No Victory” for Trump: EU's Top Diplomat*

“On the battlefield, Ukraine's troops are struggling to stave off Russia's advances as they approach three years of full-scale combat” (AFP, 2024, para. 4).

(b). *The Analysis*

In this statement, the mention of “combat” indicates a conflict or a fight between nations. The identification of violence and destruction is accompanied by the negativity of this word. Mentioning such a time in this context of being “three years” into the war and its intense combat indicates a circumstance that has this negative effect. This is a form of a negative action.

In this statement, a referential discourse is stated. It indicates specific items such as Ukraine’s troops, Russia, and the battlefield. The writer sets these items to frame the event described.

H. *Excerpt Eight: RFI*

(a). *France Says Russia's Attack Signals "New Era" for Europe With Tough Days to Come*

"The Russians entered Ukraine looking for a blitzkrieg, a fast advance that would allow Russia to control Ukraine," Le Drian told France 2 TV on Thursday morning. (RFI, 2022, para. 4)

(b). *The Analysis*

The implementation of the Nazi regime concerning Blitzkrieg strategies is connected to aggression. This is a negative action committed towards civilians.

In this statement, a referential discourse is stated. The writer gives information and refers to certain entities and concepts in this text. The statement illustrates certain information concerning the aims and the actions of the Russians, which mirrors this referential discourse.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results of the analysis show that there were 12 instances of discursive strategies employed in the French media broadcasts representing acts of bias (hate speech). The highest-ranking type of discursive strategy was Perspectivization which accounted for six instances, representing 50% of the total. Referential discourse accounted for four instances, representing 33.333% of the total. The lowest-ranking type of discursive strategies was Argumentation which accounted for two instances, representing 16.667% of the total (see Table 2 below).

TABLE 2
DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES IN THE FRENCH BROADCAST

Types of Discursive Strategy	Frequency	Percentage %
Perspectivization	6	50
Referential	4	33.333
Argumentation	2	16.667
Total	12	100

Regarding the theme of hate speech in the data under study, findings indicated a notable difference between the type associated with Negative Actions and those linked to Disagreement and Negative Character within the theme of hate speech. There were 12 instances of hate speech. Negative Actions were the highest-ranking type, which contained nine instances, representing 75% of the total. The lowest-ranking type is Disagreement, which accounted for one instance, representing 8.333% of the total. Negative Character accounted for two instances, comprising 16.666% of the whole (see the following table).

TABLE 3
HATE SPEECH IN THE FRENCH BROADCAST MEDIA

Types of Discursive Strategy	Frequency	Percentage %
Negative Actions	9	75
Negative Character	2	16.666
Disagreement	1	8.333
Total	12	100

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The writers strengthened their claims by using the Perspectivization strategy rather than using any other type of discourse. This is because this strategy presents information from a specific perspective to show how the readers perceive certain situations or circumstances. By presenting specific viewpoints or perspectives in the media, writers inspire readers about certain political and/or societal events. Altogether, this helps to navigate through this thematically distinguished collection.

With reference to the act of bias represented by hate speech, the wide use of Negative Actions is because they are rhetorical and include negative non-violent actions accompanied by the group or an individual, thus strengthening their claims. To reinforce the claims, Negative Actions are associated with raising awareness as well as discussing and addressing criticisms and imminent issues.

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Motivational Benefits of Translanguaging for EFL Learners

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Abstract—Translanguaging is emerging as an alternative medium of instruction to the traditional monolingual approach adopted in many countries teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Researchers have evaluated its applicability in monolingual and multilingual environments, concentrating on learners' perceptions of its use in classrooms but giving relatively little attention to its motivational benefits at Saudi universities. Addressing that gap, this study investigated the motivational benefits of translanguaging among EFL learners at Taibah University, Saudi Arabia, with self-determination theory as the theoretical framework. Online questionnaires in Arabic were collected from 159 EFL students, and written interviews in English were collected from 10 of the same students. Their responses indicated they understood what translanguaging was, expressed a positive attitude toward its use in the classroom, and appeared to show motivational benefits from it in terms of proficiency level, clarifying complex concepts, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps, and addressing difficulties with learning English.

Index Terms—English as a foreign language, motivation, translanguaging, Saudi, self-determination theory

I. INTRODUCTION

Students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Saudi Arabia face numerous obstacles, including the influence of their mother tongue, insufficient exposure to English in day-to-day life, inadequate teaching methods (Fareh, 2010), and poor assessment techniques, leading to insufficient language skills (Al-Khasawneh, 2010). Another issue is the medium of instruction. Some applied linguists (e.g., Hall & Cook, 2012; Krashen, 1982) have advocated target-language-only instruction in EFL classrooms because it offers more exposure to the target language, while others (e.g., Collier & Thomas, 2017) have recommended alternating between the native and target languages (a practice called translanguaging) because students tend to be more attentive and less confused when they are allowed to use their full language repertoire in class. Alsaawi (2019) and Al-Ahdal (2020) found EFL students held a positive attitude toward translanguaging in which Arabic was used for practical reasons, such as making them more involved in the class and increasing their motivation to learn. As Mazak (2017) noted, “translanguaging is a language ideology that takes bilingualism as the norm,” where “bilinguals do not separate their ‘languages’ into discrete systems, but rather possess one integrated repertoire of languaging practices from which they draw as they navigate their everyday bilingual worlds” (p. 5). This phenomenon goes beyond code-switching, encompassing “any practices that draw on an individual’s linguistic and semiotic repertoires,” such as “reading in one language and discussing the reading in another” (p. 5).

Translanguaging benefits EFL students by letting them draw on their diverse language resources to develop a deeper understanding of the target language, engage more fully with content, and bring their linguistic and cultural identities into their learning (Baker, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2015; García, 2009; García et al., 2017; Paulsrud et al., 2021; Tian & Shepard-Carey, 2020). Furthermore, “it creates a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance” (Li, 2011, p. 1223). It also helps build cross-linguistic awareness, reading comprehension, conceptual knowledge, and sense of belonging (Daniel et al., 2019; García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017; Leonet et al., 2019; Rajendram, 2021; Sayer, 2013). For these reasons, and because translanguaging presents greater learner involvement and allows for transferring Arabic skills into English, it has been embraced in Saudi higher education, and there is a high level of awareness about it among students and instructors (Al-Ahdal, 2020; Alasmari et al., 2022; Alharbi & Alqefari, 2021; Alhazmi, 2024; Almayez, 2022; Alqahtani, 2022; Alsaawi, 2019; Alzabidi & Alahdal, 2022; Bin Ghali, 2023).

Another core challenge in Saudi EFL classes is a lack of motivation to learn the target language (Al Hosni, 2014; Alrahaili, 2014). Motivation is a critical factor in language learning (Crisfield & White, 2012; Dörnyei, 1998; Honggang, 2008) and has been characterized as a learner’s “willingness or desire to be engaged in or commit effort to completing a task” (Zhou, 2012, p. 1318), but who makes the learner willing to learn? Dörnyei (2001) suggested it is primarily the teacher, while Alshenqeeti (2018) noted that some motivation must come from the learner and the learning environment. In the context of second language (L2) learning, Kissau (2006) regarded motivation “as the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so” (p. 76). Ortega (2009) defined motivation as “the desire to initiate L2 learning and the effort employed to sustain it,” with the common understanding “that some learners are highly motivated and others have little or no motivation” (p. 168).

A growing body of research has examined the motivations of Saudi EFL learners. For example, Al-Otaibi (2004) found they experienced a high level of instrumental motivation, followed by integrative motivation, and a lower level of effort and desire to use the language. In a study on intrinsic motivation by Moskovsky and Alrabai (2009), students showed significant reserves of motivation—which might be used to reach higher learning outcomes given more favorable circumstances—and a positive attitude toward learning English. Alshahrani (2016) investigated whether motivational self-system could explain the L2 motivational behaviors of a group of EFL university students in southern Saudi Arabia. That study confirmed the validity and relevance of the L2 self-system model's basic components of ideal L2, ought-to L2, and English learning experience. However, there is a need for further research on the relationship between translanguaging and motivation among Saudi EFL students.

Although studies have confirmed translanguaging as an effective instructional approach in monolingual and multilingual environments (e.g., Alrayes et al., 2022; Alsaawi, 2019; Alzabidi & Al-Ahdal, 2022; Bin Ghali, 2023), the focus of such work has been more on learner attitudes and acceptability and less on the strategies used by instructors to motivate learners. The present study sought to address this gap by answering the following research questions:

1. How do Saudi EFL learners perceive the use of translanguaging in their classrooms?
2. Are Saudi EFL learners motivated by translanguaging to achieve their desired proficiency levels?
3. What motivational benefits do Saudi EFL learners derive from translanguaging in their classrooms?

This research thus contributes to the debate on the role of translanguaging in improving academic success (Beres, 2015), increasing student autonomy (White et al., 2013), and showing the value of linguistic diversity (MacSwan & Rolstad, 2010). This is in line with the observations by Dörnyei (1990) and Oxford (1996) that when learners can measure the practical outcomes of the learning process, they are much more motivated to engage in that process.

II. METHODS

A. Research Design and Theoretical Framework

This study adopted a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design (see Creswell & Clark, 2017). The first phase involved a quantitative questionnaire administered to EFL students at Taibah University, Saudi Arabia, and the second involved a written qualitative interview administered to selected EFL students at the same university.

The theoretical framework was self-determination theory (SDT) (see Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000), due to its versatility, which has resulted in researchers from different domains employing it to test people's motivation in different contexts (Deci & Ryan, 2008), including language learning (Noels et al., 2003). In SDT, motivation resides along a continuum, with intrinsic motivation at one end, extrinsic motivation in the middle, and amotivation at the other end, as shown in Figure 1, taken from Ryan and Deci (2000).

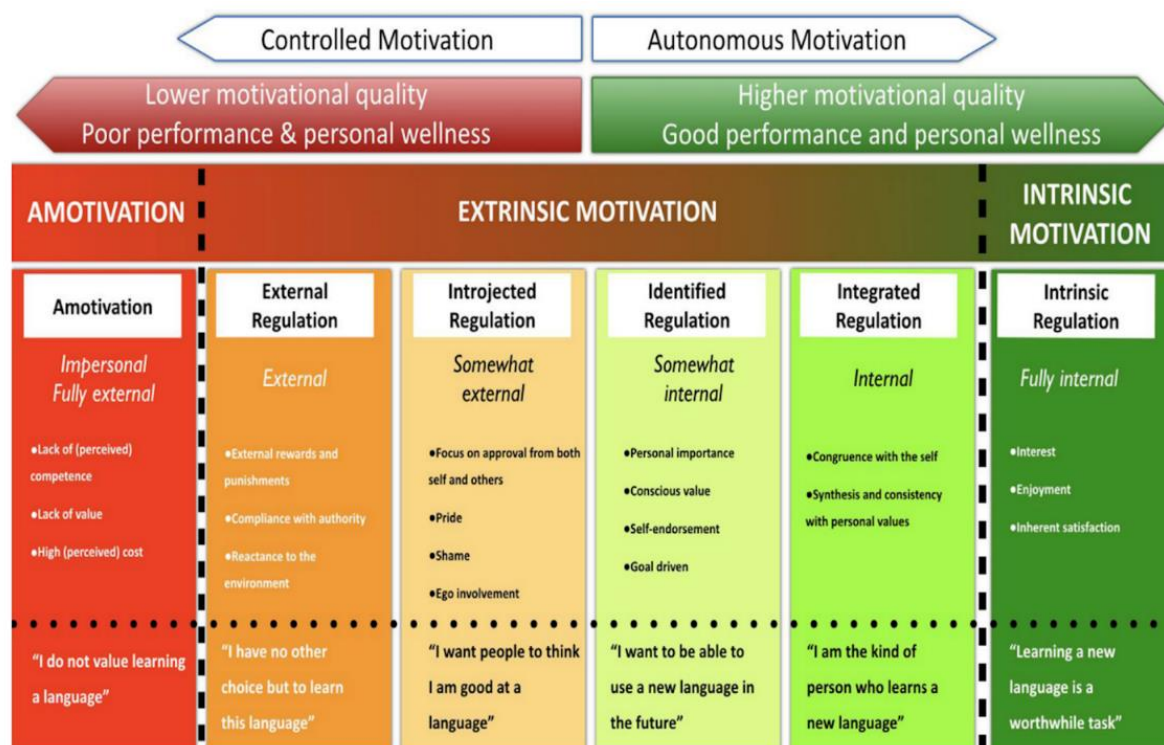


Figure 1. SDT Continuum

Intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation to engage in something because the action itself is enjoyable and satisfying, while extrinsic motivation is a drive to do something for an independent outcome. Amotivation refers to a lack of motivation. The present study investigated the motivational benefits of using translanguaging along this continuum. The SDT constructs shown in Table 1, adapted from Agawa and Takeuchi (2016), were used to answer the research questions.

TABLE 1
SDT CONSTRUCTS

Construct	Definition	Level of motivation
Need for autonomy	When translanguaging in EFL instruction encourages learners to want to engage in learning inside and outside of class.	High
Need for competence	When translanguaging encourages EFL learners to want to understand the content of English classes and become good at English.	High
Need for relatedness	When translanguaging encourages EFL learners to build and maintain a good relationship with their teacher and classmates.	High
Intrinsic motivation	When translanguaging encourages EFL learners to learn English because of a genuine interest in engaging in the subject for the pleasure and satisfaction of doing so.	High
Identified regulation	When translanguaging encourages EFL learners to learn English because they acknowledge and understand its value and importance.	High
Introjected regulation	When translanguaging encourages EFL learners to learn English due to a feeling of guilt or pride or to avoid anxiety or shame.	Low
External regulation	When translanguaging encourages EFL learners to learn English due to external pressure when they do not value its importance.	Low
Amotivation	When translanguaging encourages EFL learners to feel learning English has no value or refuse to pay attention during lessons.	None

B. Sample

Table 2 presents the demographics of the questionnaire sample.

TABLE 2
QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Variable	Sub-variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	79	61
	Female	62	39
Age	18–22	142	89.3
	22–25	12	7.5
	25–30	3	1.9
	Over 30	2	1.3
	Arabic	155	97.5
Native Language	English	4	2.5
	Advanced	12	7.5
English Proficiency Level	Intermediate	97	61
	Beginner	48	30.2
	Other	2	1.3
	First	127	79.9
University Year	Second	3	2
	Third	13	8.2
	Fourth	10	6.3
	Other	6	3.8
	English	132	83
Course of Study	Arabic	22	13.8
	Other (e.g., both, business)	5	3.2

Using purposive sampling, the researcher sent a questionnaire link to 100 male and 100 female EFL university students. This sampling technique was used to select participants who would possess the qualities needed to provide an in-depth understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2007). Out of the 200 target participants, 159 responded to the questionnaire, including 79 (79%) of target men and 62 (62%) of target women. All returned questionnaires were completed, resulting in a completion rate of 79.5%. Written interviews were sent to 10 of the participants (five male, five female) who completed the questionnaire. All 10 written interviews were returned. As shown in Table 2, most participants were between the ages of 18 and 22, spoke Arabic as their native language, and were English majors. Their English proficiency was mostly intermediate (61%) or beginner (30.2%).

C. Data Collection and Analysis

Participants agreed to an informed consent form before the study commenced, and all reasonable efforts were made to ensure their privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. Two instruments were used to collect the data. The first was a 30-item questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, strongly disagree, disagree) that was uploaded to Google Forms and distributed through email. The questionnaire clearly explained the study's purpose and instructions for filling it out. It was divided into three sections: seven items on perceptions of translanguaging, eight on attitudes

toward translanguaging in the EFL classroom, and 15 on motivational benefits of translanguaging. The questionnaire was based on Deci and Ryan (2002), Dörnyei (2010), Bolkvadze (2023), and the Saudi Ministry of Education's (2002) policy on learning English. It was translated from English into Arabic by a competent academic and checked by the researcher to ensure accuracy, validity, clarity, and readability and to avoid redundancy. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the questionnaire data via SPSS (Version 26). The second instrument was a written qualitative interview consisting of three questions on translanguaging perceptions, attitudes, and benefits. The responses were coded and grouped according to their similarities and then categorized to tally with the questionnaire themes. To illustrate the use of translanguaging, participants were asked to answer the questionnaire in Arabic and the written interview in English.

III. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

A. Awareness and Perception of Translanguaging

The majority of participants were aware of the meaning of the term translanguaging and its practical use in their classrooms, as shown in Table 3. This agreed with the literature (e.g., Al-Ahdal, 2020; Alasmari et al., 2022; Alharbi & Alqefari, 2021; Almayez, 2022; Alqahtani, 2022; Alsaawi, 2019; Alzabidi & Al-Ahdal, 2022; Bin Ghali, 2023).

TABLE 3
AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF TRANSLANGUAGING

Translanguaging instruction involves my instructor's use of Arabic in teaching me English.			
S/N	Option	Frequency	Percent
1	Strongly Agree	76	47.8
2	Agree	42	26.4
3	Neutral	24	15.1
4	Disagree	13	8.2
5	Strongly Disagree	4	2.5
Answering this questionnaire in Arabic on my English lessons means I am translanguaging.			
S/N	Option	Frequency	Percent
1	Strongly Agree	76	47.8
2	Agree	47	29.6
3	Neutral	30	18.9
4	Disagree	6	3.8
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
When my instructor uses Arabic sometimes or allows me to speak Arabic in our English class, he/she is actually translanguaging.			
S/N	Option	Frequency	Percent
1	Strongly Agree	85	53.5
2	Agree	53	33.3
3	Neutral	15	9.4
4	Disagree	6	3.8
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0

They also gave their perceptions of translanguaging as a medium of instruction in EFL classes. The majority reported Arabic as very important to teaching English, as illustrated in Table 4. Machaal (2012a, 2012b) similarly found that Arabic was perceived as useful, and sometimes necessary, in EFL classes to mediate a learning activity and as an educational scaffold.

TABLE 4
PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF USING ARABIC IN EFL CLASSES

It is important to use Arabic in teaching English in the classroom.			
S/N	Option	Frequency	Percent
1	Strongly Agree	81	50.9
2	Agree	37	23.3
3	Neutral	25	15.7
4	Disagree	11	6.9
5	Strongly Disagree	5	3.1

Participants attributed their rising English proficiency to the use of Arabic in their classrooms (see Table 5). This was in line with Cenoz and Etxague's (2013) assertion that low language proficiency students might need first language support to cope with the challenges of an English medium of instruction.

TABLE 5
PROFICIENCY LEVEL AND TRANSLANGUAGING

My high level of English proficiency and competence in English is a result of my instructor's use of Arabic in my English lessons.			
S/N	Option	Frequency	Percent
1	Strongly Agree	77	48.4
2	Agree	31	19.5
3	Neutral	27	17
4	Disagree	15	9.4
5	Strongly Disagree	9	5.7

B. Attitudes Toward Translanguaging in EFL Classes

Participating students reportedly appreciated the way their instructor allowed them to have class discussions in Arabic and write EFL activities in English (see Table 6, Item 1). This was in line with using translanguaging as a pedagogical practice that switches the input and output language to “increase understanding” and “augment the pupil’s ability in both languages” (Williams, 2002, p. 37).

TABLE 6
ATTITUDES ABOUT TRANSLANGUAGING

Items		Responses (%)				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	My instructor always allows us to discuss activities in Arabic and write the answers in English.	38.4	25.2	25.7	8.8	1.9
2	My instructor is a native speaker of English but understands Arabic.	36.5	18.2	20.2	13.2	11.9
3	My instructor is a native speaker of Arabic but speaks English fluently.	66.7	20.8	11.9	0.6	0
4	My instructor uses Arabic only when explaining difficult English concepts or for instructions.	47.8	28.3	17.6	5	1.3
5	My instructor uses Arabic only when making comparisons between languages.	42.1	23.3	27.6	5.7	1.3
6	I am just learning English to pass my exams.	27	10.1	13.2	25.2	24.5
7	Using Arabic to teach English is wasting a lot of lecture time.	31.4	9.4	22	22	15.2
8	I am always lost when my instructor speaks English so fast during lessons.	40.3	17	23.3	12.6	6.9

Participants indicated that instructors could use translanguaging regardless of whether they were native English speakers as long as they used translanguaging effectively (see Table 6, Items 2 and 3). This supported Yeşilçınar and Çakır’s (2020) teacher assessment and evaluation model that requires EFL instructors to have knowledge-related competencies (knowledge of the subject matter), skill-related competencies (ability to understand English and Arabic conversations), and attitude-related competencies (e.g., a warm attitude toward students and consideration of their needs).

According to the findings for Items 4 and 5 (see Table 6), participants asserted that their EFL instructors used Arabic only when explaining difficult English concepts, giving instructions, or making comparisons between languages. This was in line with Bolkvadze’s (2023) recommendations for when to use translanguaging.

Regarding participants’ overall attitude toward learning English, nearly half (49.7%) claimed they were not learning English only to pass exams, while 37.1% agreed they were. Hussain (2024) similarly found generally positive attitudes about learning English. Furthermore, participants in the present study tended to report negative attitudes toward the way instructors conducted EFL lessons. About 57.3% agreed that they were lost in class when the instructor used English quickly, likewise agreeing with Hussain (2024).

C. Motivational Benefits of Translanguaging

The SDT continuum was used to determine whether students were motivated to achieve their desired proficiency level through translanguaging and the types and levels of motivation they derived from translanguaging (see Table 7).

TABLE 7
ITEMS 1–3 ON MOTIVATIONAL BENEFITS OF TRANSLANGUAGING

Item		Responses (%)					Motivation	
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Type	Level
1	I feel relaxed and enjoy my English lessons when my instructor uses Arabic.	43.4	29.6	20.1	5	1.9	Intrinsic motivation (intrinsic regulation)	High
2	My instructor’s use of translanguaging supports me and encourages me to learn English.	61	26.4	10.1	1.3	1.3	Extrinsic motivation (integrated regulation)	High
3	My instructor lectures entirely in English but allows us to collaborate and construct meanings in Arabic.	49.7	29.6	17	3.8	0	Extrinsic motivation (integrated regulation)	High

In their responses to Item 1, the majority of EFL students reported enjoying their lesson when their instructor used translanguaging. In SDT terms (see Agawa & Takeuchi, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017), the students experienced intrinsic regulation because translanguaging motivated them to learn English out of a genuine interest in engaging in the subject for the pleasure and satisfaction it gave them. This would be measured as “high motivation” in the SDT motivation continuum. High motivation was also recorded in responses to Item 2, with students reportedly feeling supported and encouraged by their instructor’s use of translanguaging. By implication, this created the desire to build and maintain a good relationship with the teacher and other classmates. This type of motivation is referred to as integrated extrinsic motivation. The responses to Item 3 could be interpreted in the same vein, with the use of translanguaging encouraging students to collaborate and construct meanings in Arabic. Bin Ghali (2023) similarly reported benefits of collaborative activities using translanguaging, including students feeling empowered to make choices in their language in the pursuit of learning, which was associated with feeling encouraged to participate more and be more creative.

According to the responses to Item 4 (see Table 8), the use of translanguaging in an EFL classroom reportedly helped students appreciate the languages involved, i.e., Arabic and English, indicating that they regarded them as personally important, consciously valuing and self-endorsing them. This type of motivation is defined in the SDT as identified regulation and is marked as high on the motivation continuum. This was in line with Schuman’s (1978) observation that when people possess favorable attitudes toward the target language community, they will have a stronger desire to learn the language. Tai and Wong (2022) argued that translanguaging encouraged students to view diverse languages as resources and appreciate linguistic and cultural diversity. Based on the responses to Item 5, translanguaging motivated participants to improve their English to communicate with English speakers. In terms of the SDT, they were motivated because they had a goal to achieve. When learners become interested in the people and culture speaking another language, they are expected to have a higher motivational quality that will result in better performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In response to Item 6, students placed a utilitarian value on language learning, such as to improve one’s career potential or gain social recognition or economic advantages.

TABLE 8
ITEMS 4–6 ON MOTIVATIONAL BENEFITS OF TRANSLANGUAGING

Item		Responses (%)					Motivation	
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Type	Level
4	My instructor’s use of translanguaging helps me appreciate Arabic and English.	56	24.5	17	1.9	0.6	Extrinsic motivation (identified regulation)	High
5	My instructor’s use of translanguaging helps me acquire basic language skills to communicate with English speakers.	56	28.3	13.8	1.3	0.6	Extrinsic motivation (integrative regulation)	High
6	My instructor’s use of translanguaging helps me acquire the linguistic competence necessary in various life situations.	56	27	13.8	2.5	0.6	Extrinsic motivation (identified regulation)	High

According to the responses to Item 7 (see Table 9), participants viewed translanguaging as instrumental to motivating them to acquire the linguistic competence required in different professions. This type of motivation was the same as the one they experienced in response to Item 6 in Table 8. In response to Item 6 (Table 8), EFL students reported being motivated to adapt to different life and environmental conditions, while in response to Item 7 (Table 9), they were motivated to learn English and prepare for professional opportunities. According to the responses to Item 8, translanguaging motivated participants to be aware of the importance of English as a means of international communication. This could be interpreted as extrinsic motivation (identified regulation) because translanguaging caused students to personally view learning English as important, resulting in high motivation. It could also be considered extrinsic motivation (external regulation) because students were compelled to learn English for external rewards or punishment, compliance with authority, or as a reaction to the environment (for a similar view, see Ryan & Deci, 2000, pp. 70–73). This would imply students achieved low motivation. However, it should be noted that students may derive more than one type of motivation based on their reasons for learning English (Brown, 2000), and “one type can drive or develop another type, such as the pressure to get a good job, which may, in time, drive a more intrinsic motivation when one becomes pleased and confident as their abilities and competencies develop” (Alshenqeeti, 2018, p. 3). The strong responses to Item 9 indicated that participants perceived translanguaging in EFL classes as motivating them to have a positive attitude toward English, agreeing with Baker (1992) that a positive attitude toward a language is an essential factor in language learning.

TABLE 9
ITEMS 7–9 ON MOTIVATIONAL BENEFITS OF TRANSLANGUAGING

Item		Responses (%)					Motivation	
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Type	Level
7	My instructor's use of translanguaging helps me acquire the linguistic competence required in different professions.	56	27	14.5	1.9	0.6	Extrinsic motivation (identified regulation)	High
8	My instructor's use of translanguaging helps me develop an awareness of the importance of English as a means of international communication.	57.2	27	13.8	1.3	0.6	Extrinsic motivation (identified regulation),	High
							Extrinsic motivation (external regulation)	Low
9	My instructor's use of translanguaging helps me develop a positive attitude toward learning English.	59.1	25.2	13.2	1.9	0.6	Extrinsic motivation (identified regulation)	High

In their responses to Items 10–12 (see Table 10), participants reported that translanguaging motivated them to be aware of the cultural, economic, and social issues of their society, enabling them to contribute to solutions. Ismael (2024) suggested that translanguaging could create an environment where every student's home language and culture are embraced and celebrated. It could also promote an inclusive atmosphere and raise awareness among students about the various languages spoken in their communities. García et al. (2017) similarly claimed that translanguaging allowed for an expansion beyond monocultural and monolingual understandings in the classroom and promoted student connection with home languages and cultures. The responses to Item 10 indicated that participants were either motivated intrinsically, in the sense that they were studying English with personal interest and inherent satisfaction, or extrinsically, because they were learning English out of pride, seeking approval or recognition from society.

TABLE 10
ITEMS 10–12 ON MOTIVATIONAL BENEFITS OF TRANSLANGUAGING

Item		Responses (%)					Motivation	
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Type	Level
10	My instructor's use of translanguaging helps me be aware of the cultural, economic, and social issues of my society in order to contribute to solutions.	52.8	21.4	22.6	1.9	1.3	Intrinsic motivation (intrinsic regulation)	High
11	My instructor's use of translanguaging helps me develop the linguistic competence that enables me to present my country's culture.	59.1	25.8	13.2	1.3	0.6	Extrinsic motivation (identified regulation)	High
12	My instructor's use of translanguaging helps me understand the concepts of international cooperation and understand and respect the cultural differences between countries.	57.9	22	17	2.5	0.6	Extrinsic motivation (identified regulation)	High

Responses to Item 13 (see Table 11) suggested that students benefited from translanguaging because it created a desire to participate in transferring the scientific and technological advances of other nations to their country. In this sense, translanguaging helped them appreciate the value of English. This type of motivation would be graded "high" on the motivation continuum (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In responses to Item 14, participants reported experiencing extrinsic motivation because they were willing to integrate their proficiency into native speaker proficiency. Translanguaging in their classroom created a desire to open up and embrace English-speaker culture, in line with the observation by Brown (1989) that when someone is learning a foreign language, it will always entail learning a foreign culture to some degree (as cited in Dörnyei, 2001).

TABLE 11
ITEMS 13–15 ON MOTIVATIONAL BENEFITS OF TRANSLANGUAGING

Item		Responses (%)					Motivation	
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Type	Level
13	My instructor's use of translanguaging helps me acquire the linguistic foundations that enable me to participate in transferring the scientific and technological advances of other nations to my country.	54.7	23.9	19.5	1.3	0.6	Extrinsic motivation (integrated regulation)	High
14	My instructor's use of translanguaging helps in thinking like an Arab and speaking like a native English speaker.	58.5	25.8	13.2	1.9	0.6	Extrinsic motivation (integrated regulation)	High
15	Learning English through translanguaging helps me communicate easily with other communities who do not speak English as their native language.	57.9	24.5	16.4	0.6	0.6	Extrinsic motivation (introjected regulation)	Low

Responses to Item 15 showed that an instructor's use of translanguaging in EFL classes reportedly motivated participants to be able to communicate in English to non-native speakers of the language. This agreed with Ou and Gu's (2020) observation that translanguaging helped students develop communicative repertoires for interpersonal interaction with peers of diverse language backgrounds, which is what they can expect in the contact settings they are likely to experience after graduation (e.g., global teams in multinational companies, international social networks, and translocal communities).

IV. QUALITATIVE RESULTS

A. How Instructors Use Translanguaging to Teach English

Students' responses to Item 1 (see Table 12) in the interview indicated that their instructors strategically employed translanguaging, incorporating Arabic alongside English to enhance comprehension, cultural relevance, and student engagement. They explained that this approach supported their EFL learning by clarifying complex concepts, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps, and addressing confusion. These observations complemented responses to the questionnaire (see Table 6, Items 4 and 5).

TABLE 12
USE OF TRANSLANGUAGING TO TEACH ENGLISH

Participant	Briefly describe the way your instructor uses translanguaging in teaching English in your class.
Male 1	My instructor uses Arabic to explain abstract concepts like idioms or phrases that are hard to translate directly. They also use it to give instructions or examples when students seem confused.
Male 2	My instructor explains challenging English terms by giving Arabic synonyms and compares sentence structures between both languages.
Male 3	They use Arabic to explain homework instructions or assignments and check our understanding of difficult reading passages.
Male 4	My instructor switches to Arabic to explain technical terms in writing and grammar exercises.
Male 5	They use Arabic to clarify differences between English and Arabic pronunciation and to correct common mistakes we make.
Female 1	They use Arabic for cultural comparisons, like explaining the meaning of proverbs in both languages.
Female 2	My teacher uses Arabic to summarize long English texts when we struggle to understand them.
Female 3	They sometimes use Arabic to provide feedback on our writing assignments and explain how to improve.
Female 4	My instructor often uses Arabic to explain difficult grammar rules that are unclear to students in the class. They also compare Arabic and English grammar, which makes the rules easier to understand and apply.
Female 5	My instructor uses Arabic to clarify the meanings of new or difficult vocabulary. They also give examples related to our culture, which helps us remember the new words and place them directly in our minds.

B. Student Opinions About How Instructors Use Translanguaging to Teach English

EFL students generally viewed the use of Arabic by their instructor as a supportive and beneficial tool for learning English, especially in the early stages of language acquisition (see Table 13). They described it as a method that bridged comprehension gaps, reduced anxiety, and fostered a more approachable and relatable learning environment. Students highlighted the strategic and limited use of Arabic as effective in clarifying difficult concepts, addressing common challenges specific to Arabic speakers, and promoting confidence. Some also acknowledged the importance of balancing this approach to encourage greater immersion in English.

TABLE 13
OPINIONS ABOUT INSTRUCTORS' USE OF ARABIC TO TEACH ENGLISH

Participant	Briefly give your opinion on the use of Arabic by your instructor to teach English in your class.
Male 1	I find it helpful because it bridges the gap between what I know and what I'm learning, but I think using less Arabic would push us to practice English more.
Male 2	Using Arabic makes the lessons feel more approachable and helpful.
Male 3	I think it's a good strategy for beginners but might not be as necessary as we advance in learning.
Male 4	I like how Arabic is used only when absolutely needed. It ensures I stay focused on learning English.
Male 5	I think it's helpful because it highlights where we as Arabic speakers often struggle with English.
Female 1	I appreciate it because it makes learning English more relatable and less foreign.
Female 2	I find it beneficial, but I think we should try harder to understand English without translations.
Female 3	I think it's very useful because it reduces misunderstandings and helps us focus on improving our skills.
Female 4	I think using Arabic is helpful for me and my classmates, especially when learning new and challenging topics.
Female 5	I think using Arabic is important because it makes the lessons less intimidating and helps me feel more confident about asking questions.

C. Goals for Learning English

Table 14 presents students' stated goals for learning English. Many aimed to achieve fluency and confidence in English for various purposes, such as international travel, academic success, and career advancement. While translanguaging (the strategic use of Arabic alongside English) was valued for facilitating foundational understanding, students also highlighted the need for greater immersion in English to achieve their long-term objectives.

TABLE 14
GOALS FOR LEARNING ENGLISH

Participant	Briefly explain your objectives for learning English as a foreign language (EFL) and whether the use of translanguaging by your EFL instructor is helping you (or not helping you) to achieve such objectives.
Male 1	My goal is to improve my speaking and listening skills to communicate confidently in professional settings. Translanguaging helps me grasp the basics.
Male 2	My main objective is to achieve fluency and comprehension for international travel and studies. The use of Arabic assists me to understand the lesson.
Male 3	I want to read English papers and research and write research papers in the future. Translanguaging is beneficial for understanding grammar rules and giving some instructions and information regarding the research paper formats and rules.
Male 4	My goal is to develop fluency to secure a job in a multinational company. Translanguaging helps me feel confident.
Male 5	I aim to improve my English for better career opportunities. Translanguaging helps me avoid confusion and understand faster.
Female 1	My goal is to pass international English exams like IELTS or TOEFL. Translanguaging is helpful, but I need more practice without Arabic to achieve this.
Female 2	I want to improve my English for academic success. Translanguaging supports my understanding of complex ideas, but more exposure to English would be better.
Female 3	My goal is to communicate confidently in English for both personal and professional use. Translanguaging is helping me gain a solid foundation.
Female 4	My main goal is to improve my ability to speak and write English fluently for academic purposes. Translanguaging is helping me achieve my goal because I can understand the lessons better and participate in class confidently.
Female 5	My goal is to develop my ability to speak and write English for academic and professional purposes. Translanguaging helps me fully understand the lessons and reduces confusion. However, I sometimes feel that relying too much on Arabic slows down my progress in thinking directly in English.

V. DISCUSSION

A. Research Question 1

Participating EFL students appeared aware of the meaning and application of translanguaging as a form of instruction different from a monolingual approach (see Figure 2). They also reported that this approach supported their EFL learning by clarifying complex concepts, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps, and addressing confusion, in line with the literature (e.g., Cenoz & Gorter, 2021; Lewis et al., 2012). This result differed from Alqahtani (2022), in which 51.3% of EFL learners were largely unaware of what translanguaging was.

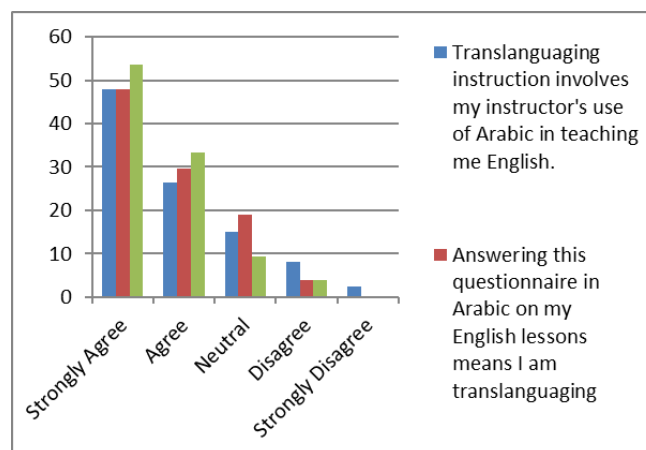


Figure 2. Awareness of Translinguaging

B. Research Question 2

Participants reported feeling motivated by translanguaging to achieve their desired level of English proficiency. Two-thirds (67.9%) attributed their high level of proficiency to the use of Arabic in class (see Figure 3). This supported the observation by Cenoz and Etxague (2013) that students with low language proficiency might need first language support to cope with the challenges of English.

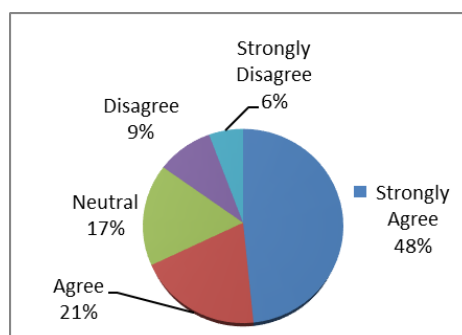


Figure 3. English Proficiency Is Result of Instructor's Use of Arabic in English Lessons

The overall responses indicated that translanguaging motivated participants to enjoy EFL lessons, persevere, collaborate with instructors and classmates, appreciate bilingualism, be competent in various life situations and professions, and see the importance of English in international communication. These motivational benefits were in line with the objectives of EFL education in Saudi Arabia (Elyas & Badawood, 2017).

C. Research Question 3

The dominant type of motivation experienced by EFL learners from translanguaging was extrinsic, as they reported feeling motivated to learn English to be competent in various life situations and professions; see the importance of English in international communication; participate in class; and contribute to the scientific, cultural, and economic development of their country. Furthermore, most participants showed a high level of motivation from translanguaging.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the motivational benefits of translanguaging in EFL classes in the monolingual Arabic environment of Saudi Arabia through the lens of self-determination theory. Based on an online questionnaire and written interview, students showed an understanding of what translanguaging is and a positive perception of its use in the classroom by native and non-native speakers alike. Most students were extrinsically motivated, as their goals for learning English were influenced by external factors. Future research could look for any significant differences in the motivational benefits of translanguaging in terms of age or gender. Similar research could also employ alternative theories of motivation.

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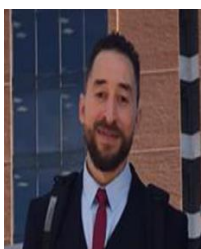
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Vietnamese-English Translation Errors and Pedagogical Implications in the Digital Age: A Case of English Major Students at a University in Vietnam

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Abstract—The current study aims to analyze common translation errors made by students majoring in English at Thu Dau Mot University (TDMU) when translating Vietnamese texts into English. In the current study, a mixed-methods approach was employed, which incorporated document analysis of 200 translation assignments and semi-structured interviews with five lecturers. It discovered that grammatical errors, such as the misuse of passive voice and incorrect use of the determiners, were the most frequent, followed by lexical errors, including inappropriate word selection and spelling mistakes. The study highlighted the impact of linguistic distinctions between Vietnamese and English, as well as cultural variations, on students' translation performance. Moreover, students have limited exposure to authentic English content and practical translation exercises. The study recommends specific interventions such as supplemental grammar instruction, exposure to culturally significant texts, and ongoing practice through translation drills to train students to produce accurate and contextually appropriate translations. The research strives to rectify these issues to enhance translation pedagogy and better prepare students for the demands of professional translation in the digital age.

Index Terms—translation errors, grammatical errors, lexical errors, English-majoring students, digital age

I. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, English has become a globally widespread language, particularly in educational and professional contexts, due to the rapid expansion of globalization. As indicated by Nguyen et al. (2022), English is not only a communication tool but also a lingua franca playing a crucial role in promoting international cooperation, accelerating cultural exchange and driving economic growth worldwide. Kesmez (2021) further reinforces this point by stating that English proficiency is increasingly recognized as an indispensable skill in accomplishing social and economic mobility, and bridging the gap between local and global markets. As English is broadly employed in every aspect of life and is one of the primary languages in several nations, becoming fluent in English is a prerequisite for anyone wishing to engage with human civilization. Therefore, learning and mastering this language is the foremost target of non-native English speakers who learn it as a second language from many nations, including Vietnam.

Within this context, translation plays a crucial role in facilitating effective communication across languages and is regarded as a fundamental skill for all foreign language learners. As Vietnam is becoming more integrated internationally, the need for professional translators or interpreters to bridge the gap in tongue and cultural differences has risen. Translation is defined as not only the process that converts words of a written text from one language to another, but it is also about expressing precisely the meanings, context, and cultural aspects of a language. As a result, inaccurate translation can lead to misunderstanding in communication, culture, and financial losses (Pym, 2013).

Regardless of the importance of English proficiency and translation skills, many Vietnamese students, especially English-majoring students, still face particular challenges in mastering the language and developing translation skills.

More specifically, in the study conducted by Do (2018), Vietnamese students mostly struggle with word-by-word translation; in other words, despite being exposed to various translation approaches carefully, students fail to transmit the intended meaning of the text. These errors occur primarily due to their grammar and vocabulary knowledge gaps. In addition, according to Nguyen and Nguyen (2023), the lack of practical translation tasks in academic context, which concentrate primarily on rote and examination-oriented learning has made these issues more serious. Therefore, this leads to the graduation of students with poor translation skills to meet professional demands. Also, resolving these difficulties requires a broader understanding of the causes to translation errors and the application of appropriate teaching and learning methods to enhance translation skills.

The objective of the current study is to contribute efforts to the essential reference source of researching about translation education improvement in Vietnam by examining the common Vietnamese-English translation errors performed by students majoring in English language at Thu Dau Mot University. In addition, the study will focus on identifying types of errors, explore their underlying causes and suggest practical methods to enhance students' translation competence. aims at providing students with the necessary skills to function in the increasingly globalized professional setting. To achieve these goals, the following research questions were developed:

- (i) *What common errors do English-majored students at Thu Dau Mot University commit in translating Vietnamese texts to English ones?*
- (ii) *What are the underlying causes for these errors?*

Addressing these issues, the current study aims to offer concrete recommendations for enhancing students' translation skills, thus benefiting both English learners and educators.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Overview of Translation

The translation is defined as a fundamental tool that allows the transfer of meaning between languages and, thus, between cultures. it is the process involving converting of a text from a source language (SL) to another corresponding text in a target language (TL), while retaining the same meaning, style, and cultural understanding of the work. In addition, Khatibi (2024) points out that translation is not only a linguistic act but also an understanding of cultural, situational, and pragmatic elements spreading the message (Khatibi, 2024).

Furthermore, as highlighted in several studies, the process of translation is indicated as complex and diverse, with strategies of translation including literal translation, adaptation and cultural transposition, which are used to achieve equivalence between texts (Panou, 2013). In general, these diverse requirements highlight the need for specialized knowledge base and skill set specific to the intent and audience of the translation.

Besides all of these considerations, translation has also been characterized as a creative and interpretative act requiring negotiation regarding the source and target languages. The quest for both semantic and stylistic equivalence, as indicated by Bell (1991), was a process trial to acquire the level of correspondence where the target text resembles its source text in both sense and style. Likewise, Robinson (1997) considers translation as a cognitive process that demands creative problem-solving as distinct horizons of meaning and context arise as moving into new languages, cultures and social environments.

Essentially, translation is a complex process of transferring the meaning of a source text to the equivalent text in the target language. This requires a deep understanding of various source language elements such as syntax, semantics, and pragmatics along with ingenuity to make the translated text convey the same intention and message as the original. This process needs to achieve both semantic and stylistic equivalence whilst maintaining the actual intention of the writer. Hence, translation is intellectual but also an art.

B. Translation Machine as a Tool in the Digital Age

In the digital age, Machine translation (MT) has introduced a new dimension to the discussions on translation quality. Next-generation neural machine translation systems, such as Google Translate, Microsoft Translator, and DeepL, have made significant progress but still face challenges in preserving context and cultural elements. To ensure translation quality, the post-editing stage of MT outputs has become critical, particularly for improving the precision of translations, as seen in scientific articles (Akbari & Tengku, 2020).

MT is a valuable tool for translation tasks and has found utility in various scenarios, such as academic and professional translations. However, it remains prone to errors, particularly in maintaining cultural nuances and handling idiomatic expressions. Addressing these issues requires both an understanding of MT systems and the ability to post-edit outputs effectively (Carré et al., 2022).

Bowker and Ciro (2019) emphasize the importance of machine translation literacy, which includes understanding how MT works and recognizing its limitations. For translation students, this involves learning to critically evaluate and refine MT outputs to produce contextually appropriate and accurate translations. Contemporary MT relies on machine learning, particularly deep learning, which necessitates awareness of its potential and constraints.

In educational contexts, teaching students to integrate MT effectively involves fostering skills in post-editing and cultural adaptation, enabling them to combine technological tools with linguistic and cultural knowledge to achieve high-quality translations.

C. Translation Quality

Translation quality has been a primary area of concern in translation studies since it is a prerequisite for effective communication across languages and cultures. Translation quality is the degree of equivalence between a translated text and its source text, involving semantic accuracy, stylistic fidelity, and cultural appropriateness. The expertise and qualification of translators are crucial for translating, but the quality of the source text also play an essential role (Orozco & Hurtado, 2004).

Language accuracy, cultural adaptation, and functional equivalency are critical factors that influence translation quality. More specifically, linguistic accuracy ensures the correct exercise of grammar, lexicon, and syntax. Cultural adaptation, on the other hand, relates to the contextual nuances of the target population. Meanwhile, functional equivalency, according to Castilho et al. (2018) involves reconciling the translation's purpose with the original's communicative intent. This component is particularly important for technical and academic translations (Castilho et al., 2018). Additionally, translation errors can be rated in terms of severity, applying frameworks that allow the assigning of a "weight" to each error type, ensuring a systematic approach to quality assessment.

Finally, Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) methodologies allow for rigorous assessments of the translations. These comprise quantitative approaches that count the incidence and severity of errors and qualitative approaches that highlight functional and stylistic components. From the perspective of reliability and validity for real-world TQA, Fabrychna (2022) states that in a learning and skilled profession, many TQA models are considered high significance for effective combination.

Translation quality is conveniently defined by different linguistic, cultural and functional perspectives. The process of producing a high-quality translation requires a deep comprehension of the original text, the use of appropriate translation strategies, and the use of strong assessment frameworks to ensure the target text serves its intended purpose.

D. Translation Assessment Criteria

Translation assessment is an important tool in bridging the gap between translation theory and implementation (Newmark, 1995). There have been different models and criteria proposed by researchers for assessing the quality of a translation in which its multifaceted identity is highlighted.

Essential criteria for evaluating a good translation have been indicated by various scholars. Larson (1984) identified three main criteria: accuracy, which judges the precision of the conveyed original meaning of the source language; clarity, which determines the readability and understandability of the text; and naturalness, which emphasizes the flow and native-likeness of the target language.

Massoud (1998) consolidated these criteria, indicating that an effective translation should be able to distinguish between metaphorical and literary meanings as well as reconstruct the cultural and historical settings of the source language. Furthermore, based on content and form criteria, El Zeini (1994) argues in favor of a pragmatic and stylistic model for translation evaluation. The strategy is designed to increase precision, retain the source text's meaning, and enhance the target language's acceptability.

In general, the criteria for translation assessment are numerous yet interdependent. An equally important aim of high-quality translation is a blend of linguistic fidelity, cultural sensitivity and rhetorical fluency. Translators can improve the quality of their translation by using these criteria.

E. Translation Errors

Translation errors broadly refer to the errors due to mismatching between the source and the target texts that either produce inaccuracy or failure in the community's linguistic or cultural standards. On the other hand, Hatim and Mason (1997) describe errors as either departing from the meaning of the source text or infracting of the linguistic system of the target language. Koller (1979) further states that translation errors also include deviations that do not fulfill preset quality criteria.

Different kinds of translation errors usually arise from various difficulties in the translation process. Semantic errors occur when the translator does not assign the correct overall meaning to the source text because of language or cultural misunderstandings. These errors are prevalent when translating idiomatic expressions, metaphors, or other culturally specific references that lack direct counterpart in the receiving language (Nida, 1964). In Vietnamese-to-English examples, semantic errors arise from the tonal nature of Vietnamese and its flexible syntax, which vary notably from the firm structure of English. Stylistic errors, by contrast, arise when the source text's tone, register, or stylistic features are not adequately reproduced, which is particularly important in the case of creative work where preserving the author's purpose is crucial.

The causes of these errors are manifold and interconnected. Furthermore, differences in language patterns, such as differences in syntax, vocabulary, or word collocations, make the process of translation more difficult. Furthermore, Baker (1992) indicated in his book, "In fact, differences in lexical and syntactic structure can cause significant problems for the translator who cannot find a comparable expression in the target language." In other words, disparities in lexical and syntactic structure can be underlying causes leading to translation errors of translators when they struggle with choosing appropriate comparable expression in the target language. Cultural differences are also essential, as references in idiomatic expressions and historical figures often have no parallels in other languages.

Furthermore, pragmatic issues can arise due to varied communication styles in different cultures and result in translation mismatches in tone, intention, or emphasis (Nord, 1992). Finally, text-specific complexity in the source text, like ambiguities, specialized terminology, and domain-specific references, heighten the possibility of errors. Such topics are particularly pertinent to the Vietnamese-to-English translation, as specialist terminology frequently needs to be so far to fit inside English idiom. Such errors emphasize the fact that translation from different texts, especially with languages as distant as Vietnamese and English, are from one another linguistically and culturally, and requires more than just dictionary knowledge and grammatical pattern application.

F. Previous Studies

Several recent studies on translation and translation errors have shed light on the barriers to good translations and strategies to improve translations in a formal setting. Relevant linguistic and cultural aspects are highlighted in these studies that impact translation.

Translation errors have been deeply studied in Vietnam. A study by Dang et al. (2023) examined frequent translation mistakes made by first-year English majors at the Foreign Trade University. Researchers utilized assignments as data to understand common problems with grammar, lexicon, and spelling. These errors were attributed to linguistic differences between English and Vietnamese, lack of cultural knowledge, and applying the wrong translation strategy. By highlighting potential areas of concern, this study is an important step toward ensuring that the English language education we provide is effective and culturally sensitive (Dang et al., 2023).

Nguyen et al. (2022) analyzed translation errors from 100 menus (Vietnamese to English). The study discovered four main categories of errors, including syntax errors, semantic errors, pragmatic errors, and translation-specific errors. These findings are valuable for translation training and contribute to cultural tourism in Vietnam (Nguyen et al., 2022).

These studies underscore the complexities of translation processes, the prevalence of errors, and the necessity of including linguistic and cultural factors in translation training. They emphasize the need for customized teaching strategies and practical exercises on matters of accuracy and fluency in the translation field.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The current study investigated 200 translation assignments done by 4th year English-majored students at TDMU in the academic year of 2024-2025, focusing on specific categories of translation errors relevant to the context of Vietnamese-English translation. All the errors were identified and categorized in cooperation with the experienced translation lecturers from the faculty. In the scope of the study, the errors were divided into two types: (i) lexical errors and (ii) grammatical errors. Lexical errors are those which are related to incorrect spelling, misuse of word order, incorrect word choice, incorrect idiomatic expressions, or misinterpretation of cultural terms. Grammatical errors are those which are related to incorrect use of passive voice, incorrect use of relative clauses, misuse of tense, incorrect word collocations, or improper use of determiners. To strengthen the data collected, five lecturers responsible for translation courses at TDMU were also invited to participate in interviews to enrich and further the data collected from document analysis.

B. Sampling Methods

In the current study, a total of 200 translation papers from fourth-year English-majored students were analyzed. These papers were submitted as assignments requiring translations from Vietnamese to English and vice versa, as part of the Translation courses at TDMU.

The participants are fourth-year students majoring in English language at TDMU, with English proficiency levels ranging from intermediate to upper-intermediate. They were selected because they were enrolled in English-Vietnamese Translation courses at the university during the study period.

Additionally, five experienced translation lecturers from TDMU were purposefully chosen to participate in the interview. These lecturers have at least six years of experience teaching English translation courses at universities. Due to their experience, the lecturers are almost aware of their students' translation abilities. The interview data were paraphrased and summarized to thoroughly understand the lecturers' perspectives. In conclusion, by analyzing these insights, the significant objective is to enrich the study's overall findings. Each participant was given the following three open-ended questions:

- (i) What common errors do English-majored students at TDMU commit in translating Vietnamese texts to English ones*
- (ii) What are the causes of these errors?*
- (iii) What strategies and resources do you suggest for students to help them minimize or avoid these errors in translation?*

The above questions were used to gain an in-depth understanding of lecturers' perceptions of students' Vietnamese-to-English translation mistakes. This helped to determine the reasons behind the observed phenomenon and to obtain suggestions to enhance student achievements. The interviews also discussed ways to improve translation teaching at the university level.

C. Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity were vital in ensuring the study's findings were consistent and error-free. Interview-based participation was encouraged to improve the current study's validity and reduce the likelihood of biases. Pilot testing of the interview protocols was conducted to improve the questions and minimize data-collection errors. Additionally, interviews were audio-recorded to secure the reliability of data and prevent data loss. Calculations and descriptive statistical analysis were performed using Microsoft Excel (version 2009). Finally, the data were comprehensively cleaned to exclude inconsistency and converted into text format to correctly interpret the interview responses.

Lastly, data coding and systematic explanation further guaranteed the results' reliability and validity. Triangulation of data from document analysis and interviewing helped strengthen the study's conclusions drawn from the study and provide confidence in addressing the research objectives.

IV. RESULTS

A. Results From Document Analysis

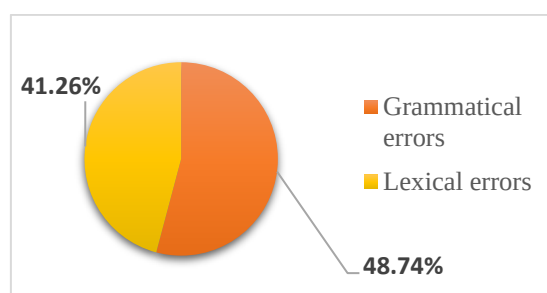


Figure 1. The Frequencies of Translation Errors Performed by the Students

Figure 1 displays the frequencies of translation errors related to grammar and lexicon identified in the analysis of 200 translation assignments performed by students majoring in English. The data reveals that grammatical errors are a higher percentage, 48.74%, and lexical errors are roughly 41.26%.

As can be seen, grammatical errors are the most prevalent among the two types of errors. These errors primarily involve incorrect verb usage, including tenses, passive voice, and relative clauses. The high percentage of grammatical errors implies that students face significant challenges in acquiring the rigid structures of rules in English which are often more static compared to Vietnamese syntax, which is relatively more flexible. This difference illustrates the necessity of focused instruction on grammatical structures to help learners bridge the gaps between the two languages.

While less frequent, lexical errors still remain a significant challenge. These errors are usually associated with inappropriate word choice and order, the improper application of expressions used in idioms, and a misunderstanding of cultural terms between languages. The data indicates that students usually commit these errors due to their imprecise vocabulary choices and the modification of their translations to fit the context of the target language.

In general, the high rate of grammatical errors shows the students' problems in aligning English grammar to Vietnamese sentences. On the other hand, 41.26% of lexical errors exposes gaps in students' vocabulary knowledge and cultural fluency.

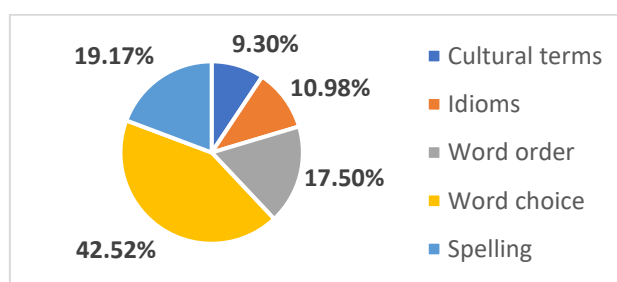


Figure 2. The Frequencies of Lexical Errors Performed by the Students

As illustrated in Figure 2, lexical errors were identified through the statistical analysis of 200 assignments and categorized into five primary types: cultural terms, idioms, word order, word choice, and spelling.

Among these, word choice errors were the most frequent, constituting 42.52% of the total lexical errors. Such errors typically stemmed from confusion between similar grammatical forms or the misuse of vocabulary. For instance, students frequently mistranslated the Vietnamese verb "*quyết định*" into the noun "*decision*" instead of the verb "*decide*." This demonstrates a lack of understanding of morphological rules, which require accurate selection of the appropriate part of speech.

Another example of word choice challenges in translation is the Vietnamese word "*bầu*." Depending on the context, "*bầu*" can mean "vote," "ballot," or "gourd." For example, with the Vietnamese sentence "*Họ cùng bầu trưởng làng*".

Based on the Vietnamese meaning of the word “bầu”, it can be translated into the above English words. However, depending on the context where “bầu” appears, if a translator picks “gourd” or “ballot” for the original sentence, the whole translated sentence would not make sense, and means “The gourd (a plant) village chief” or “They ballot the headman of village”. Therefore, the right choice of word here is “vote,” which provides the correct translation of: “They voted for the village chief.” This example demonstrates the importance of context in finding the proper equivalent to prevent mistranslation.

Spelling errors, accounting for 19.17% of the total errors, occur when students incorrectly spell the words used in English and may be caused by unfamiliarity with English orthographic norms or phonology. For instance, typo errors could be spelling *accommodation* as *acomondation*, *prevalence* as *prevalance*, etc. or in the wrong use for “orginal” instead of “original” in translation. For example, students tend to write their names in Vietnamese directly in English based on their sounds, which leads to phonemes in Vietnamese combining to produce spelling errors in English. For example, the Vietnamese word “phát triển” (to develop) could be inadvertently written as “phat trien”, missing accents, which are essential in conveying the definition of the word in Vietnamese.

Misplacement of words/word groups in context is considered a word order error, making up 17.5% of the lexical errors. Such a method results in translations that either misrepresent the meaning or sound unnatural in the target language. This problem often occurs in Vietnamese-to-English translation due to differences in grammatical features among the two languages.

For example, Vietnamese and English both have subject-verb-object (SVO) ordering in their sentences, but the order of adjectives is placed differently regarding the nouns they modify. In Vietnamese, adjectives come after the noun they describe, while they are before the noun in English. An error in the way a student translates the Vietnamese phrase “trò chơi thú vị” (literally “game interesting”) into “game interesting,” instead of “interesting game,” leads to a syntactical error that sounds very unnatural. Also, there are often problems with time expressions. In Vietnamese, temporal markers are used at the start of the sentence, while in English, they are usually mentioned at the end. For instance, the Vietnamese sentence “Ngày mai tôi đi thăm ông bà”, which could be literally translated to “Tomorrow I go to visit grandparents”, yet, the correct translations were not necessarily the most natural English sentences. The correct translation should be: “I will visit my grandparents tomorrow”.

Also, errors related to idiomatic expressions account for 10.98 % of the total. Translating idiomatic expressions is problematic in and of itself since they usually have no equivalent in the target language. For instance, the English proverb “break a leg” meaning “wish you good luck” would sound meaningless if translated literally into Vietnamese “gãy chân”. A proper translation, however, requiring a deeper understanding of the meaning, and finding an equivalent that fit the cultural context, like “chúc may mắn” in Vietnamese. This type of error highlights the challenges in expressing non-literal language across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Finally, the last category of errors is relating cultural terms and cultural differences, comprising 9.3% of the total errors. These are errors in which students fail to translate cultural references or translations of concepts that do not transfer swiftly between English and Vietnamese. A familiar paradox is translating “Thanksgiving” directly without context can baffle Vietnamese readers who are not aware of this holiday. In the same vein, rendering “Tết Trung Thu” as “Mid-Autumn Festival”, or “Tết” as “Chinese New Year” may miss a more profound significance without adequate cultural context.

Generally, as illustrated in Figure 2, while word choice and spelling errors posed the greatest challenges for students, the other aspects, including word selection, idiomatic expressions, and cultural understanding are also significant in Vietnamese-English translation.

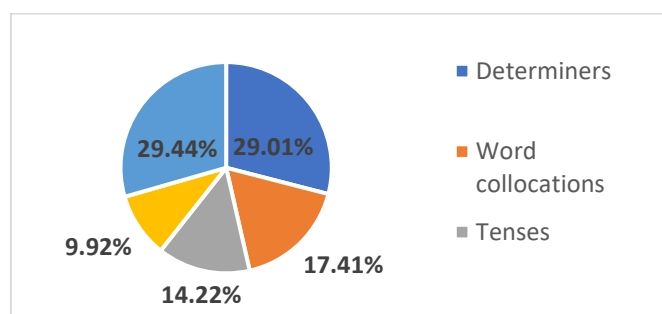


Figure 3. The Frequencies of Grammatical Errors Performed by Students

In the current study, five types of grammatical errors were observed: passive voice, determiners, word collocations, tenses and relative clauses, which have been further classified, as shown in Figure 3.

The most common errors, which account for 29.44% of all grammatical errors, are in passive voice usage. This high frequency is due to the primary distinction between the English and Vietnamese passive voice characteristics in construction. In English, the passive voice uses an auxiliary verb like “is” or “was” with a past participle. In contrast, Vietnamese passive voice constructions are derived primarily from either direct form without the use of auxiliary verbs, relying on markers such as “bị” or “được” to express passivity, causing uncertainty for students translating directly between the two languages.

Moreover, as Vietnamese lacks a system of definite and indefinite articles, determiners account for 29.01% of grammatical errors, representing one of the most persistent challenges for learners. For instance, students sometimes rendered "*I saw a cat in the garden*" as "*I saw cat in garden*", omitting "*a*" or "*the*". Furthermore, there is very little in common with the English language, which has an article system where nouns require at least an article to describe specificity or generality. For example, if the Vietnamese sentence "*Anh ấy để cuốn sách trên bàn*" is directly translated to English, it can be "*He puts book on table*," and omit the word "*a*" or "*the*" that standing before "*book*" and "*table*." in the sentence. These components, like determiners, are important in English because the language relies on them to identify specific and unsure nouns. Therefore, this leads Vietnamese speakers to drop needed articles or misuse them, both leading to translation errors. For example, it should be written as below, "*He puts a book on the table*," since otherwise it is grammatically untrue and its meaning cannot be understood in English.

In addition, word collocation errors are responsible for 17.41% of the total grammatical errors seen. The equivalent in English is collocations, fixed pairings of words that often go together, like "*take a break*" or "*have a conversation*." Conversely, Vietnamese is free to combine the words flexibly, resulting in wrong collocations when translated into English. For example, a Vietnamese learner would make the mistake of translating "*ăn bữa ăn*" to "*eat a meal*" when the proper collocational pairing in English would be "*have a meal*".

The same applies when translating common verb-noun words in Vietnamese, such as "*uống thuốc*", which might produce errors when directly translating it to "*drink medicine*" in English. In contrast, the correct word would be "*take medicine*." These English collocations do not have their counterparts in other languages. These word phrases are only learned through memory with context.

Furthermore, many errors are due to tenses, which account for 14.22% of the total, presenting a significant challenge for Vietnamese learners. Unlike many other languages, such as English, which engages an extensive tense system that requires a separate verb form to show action in the past, present, or future, Vietnamese relies largely on context and time markers where the verb does not change but is preceded by "*đã*" for past and "*sẽ*" for future. More specifically, the English sentence "*She went to the zoo last week*," calls for the past-tense verb "*went*." On the other hand, the past-tense English phrase "*She went to school yesterday*" and its Vietnamese counterpart "*Cô ấy đã đến trường vào hôm qua*" have the auxiliary marker "*đã*" to reflect the past tense — otherwise the verb "*đến*" would stay the same.

This structural difference frequently causes mistakes in translation, like using the base form of the verb, where English needs a conjugated form. For instance, students might write "*She go to the zoo last week*" instead of "*She went to the zoo last week*." Likewise, future tense errors happen when students neglect the conjugation, producing something such as: "*He will come tomorrow*," as "*He come tomorrow*".

Following common errors are that learners misuse relative clauses, consisting 9.92% of the total grammatical errors, which seems to be a significant challenge for Vietnamese learners. Relative clauses are introduced in English by using specific relative pronouns such as "*who*," "*which*," or "*that*," and serving to provide additional information about a noun (as in "*The house that Jack built is on the hill*"). However, relative clauses often exclude relative pronouns in Vietnamese, in other words, if structural flexibility is going to be speculated, relative clauses are a better candidate than attribute clauses. Therefore, this variation can make learners struggle with constructing relative clauses in English.

For instance, even simple sentences in Vietnamese like "*Cô gái xinh đẹp đang hát là em gái tôi*" which should be translated into: "*The beautiful girl who is singing is my sister*," could end up being translated too literally: "*The girl beautiful is singing is my sister*." As a result, the lack of a relative pronoun, in this case, "*who*," and an incorrect word order make it an unnatural and grammatically incorrect translation.

In conclusion, errors related to relative clauses, passive voice, and determiners underscore the crucial structural differences between English and Vietnamese. These findings highlight the importance of focused instruction on English syntax and grammar that diverge from Vietnamese linguistic patterns. In addition, instructors can assist students in memorizing correct forms through tailored exercises directed towards the proper use of grammar markers such as relative pronouns and word group techniques, and ultimately in producing more concise and literate translations.

B. Findings From Semi-Structured Interviews With Lecturers

To fully comprehend the issues targeted students face in Vietnamese-to-English translation, five lecturers who had taught courses relating to Translation at TDMU were interviewed. More specifically, they answered an updated set of open-ended questions that were intended to elicit more details:

- (i) What common errors do English-major students at Thu Dau Mot University commit in translating Vietnamese texts to English ones?
- (ii) What are the causes of these errors?
- (iii) What strategies and resources do you suggest for students to help them minimize or avoid these errors in translation?

The lecturers began their response to the first question by identifying common errors in students' translations. More specifically, grammatical errors are first highlighted by the lecturers. As inferred from the teachers' response, these errors primarily relate to incorrect verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, passive voice, and relative clauses. The other common translation errors emphasized by the interview participants are lexical errors, including wrong word usage, use of wrong word collocations, and spelling errors. In addition, idiomatic expressions and cultural terms were highlighted as areas of

significant challenge, as students struggled to accurately translate both non-literal language and references specific to particular cultures.

For example, students frequently mistranslate idiomatic expressions when they render them literally. An example is the English idiom *"raining cats and dogs,"* which some students translate into Vietnamese as *"mưa mèo và chó"* instead of the contextually applicable *"mưa rất to."* Another example is the idiom *"Don't judge the book by its cover,"* this idiom is usually translated literally to *"Đừng đánh giá cuốn sách bởi cái bìa của nó"* instead of *"Đừng đánh giá con người qua vẻ bề ngoài"*.

The second question reveals various causes for these errors, classified into subjective, objective, and other explanations. Regarding the subjective causes, the five-lecturer emphasized students' limited comprehension of grammatical structures and vocabulary as the first issue. For example, students often misused articles, verb forms, and prepositions as they relied heavily on literal, word-for-word translations. Also, these errors were magnified with dictionaries without grasping the contextual nuances. In addition, students' ability to accurately convey meaning was hampered by a lack of exposure to the target language's cultural differences.

In terms of objective causes, lecturers pointed out that Vietnamese and English are primarily different in terms of linguistic and cultural systems, it was built-in barriers. For example, Vietnamese does not have tense conjugation, but English has many verb forms whose meaning depends on the time. For example, the word *"Tết"*, which is Vietnamese New Year holiday, is often translated literally to *"Lunar New Year"* instead of remaining the original text. However, this type of translation cannot fully capture the cultural significance of the source language.

Some lecturers have also expressed concerns about students' uncontrolled use of MT, which often results in inaccurate and contextually inappropriate translations. According to instructors' feedback, many students rely excessively on automatic translation tools without reviewing or revising the output, leading to errors in syntax, semantics, and cultural appropriateness. Common mistakes include translating word-for-word without considering the overall sentence structure, using vocabulary that is inconsistent with academic style, and misinterpreting idiomatic or technical expressions. Furthermore, due to a lack of proficiency in post-editing principles, students frequently fail to identify errors in machine-generated translations and do not make necessary adjustments to ensure fluency and accuracy. This overreliance on MT poses a significant challenge to the development of professional translation skills, highlighting the need for instructor guidance to help students use translation technology more effectively.

The third interview question yielded a few suggestions. More specifically, the collected data emphasized that students should spend more time reading various types of source documents such as English-language books, newspapers, or articles to improve their understanding of how the English is used in different cultural contexts. Training on this data would enable students to generate more fluent, natural translations. In addition, students' daily translation practice activities help reinforce their acquisition of regularly practiced grammar knowledge and vocabulary. This would allow them to learn additional vocabulary and understand the distinctions between English and Vietnamese sentence forms.

V. DISCUSSION

Regarding grammatical errors, misuse of the passive voice is the most frequently committed error by students. This aligns with differences between the structures of Vietnamese and English as English passive sentences require past participles and auxiliary verb. In contrast, Vietnamese frequently employ particles like *"bị"* or *"được"* without modifying the verb. Another common type of grammatical errors that students frequently committed is misuse of determiners, emphasizing the absence of determiner system in Vietnamese. Therefore, this leads to students' confusion in Vietnamese-to-English translation. In addition, several other grammatical errors relating tenses, word collocations and relative clauses are highlighted.

Lexical errors were another prominent issue, with word choice errors being the most common frequent error, followed by errors relating spelling, word order, idiomatic misinterpretations, and cultural terms inaccuracies. The frequency of word choice and spelling errors in translation texts emphasizes that students have insufficient vocabulary and orthographic knowledge to translate correctly. On the other hand, the lower frequency of errors in terms of word order, idiom, and cultural terms suggests that students have a better understanding of these components in comparison to the above. For example, translating an English phrase like *"raining cats and dogs"* to Vietnamese as a word-for-word *"mưa mèo và chó"* as opposed to the proper equivalent *"mưa rất to."* shows the difficulty students have with idiomatic translation.

The conclusions indicate that such errors arise due to various causes, such as inadequate exposure to more accurate language resources and poor cultural competence. More specifically, based on the findings, it can be seen that the rigid grammar and precise vocabulary requirements in English generate significant challenges for Vietnamese learners, who have accustomed to a more flexible language framework. Language translation is concerned with the exchange of meaning from one language to another demands a high proficiency within each language and a deep understanding of the cultural contexts. Translation is complicated by the cultural connotations of words, especially in idiom and culture-bound terms. An example is the direct translation of the Vietnamese term *"chung bánh chưng"* to English is *"cook square rice cake."* This translation cannot fully transmit the cultural importance of this term in the source language, as it carries a symbolic meaning relating to the Vietnamese New Year celebration. Hence, cultural sensitivity in translation is emphasized, as translation without involving cultural settings can reduce the abundance of the original term.

One of the key factors contributing to students' translation errors is the overreliance on translation aids without proper evaluation and adjustment. Although tools such as Google Translate and DeepL can facilitate rapid translation, they have significant limitations, particularly in preserving context, syntactic structure, and cultural nuances. Findings from the study indicate that many students tend to copy machine-generated translations without engaging in post-editing, resulting in serious errors such as word-for-word translation without regard for overall grammatical accuracy, the use of vocabulary inconsistent with academic style, and misinterpretation of idiomatic expressions. These findings underscore the need for targeted instruction from lecturers to help students develop essential skills in evaluating and refining machine translations rather than depending entirely on technology without critical oversight.

Based on the research findings, several recommendations for enhancing translation skills are expected benefit both educators and students. In terms of approaches for translation teaching, educators can focus on both grammatical and lexical awareness by designing exercises on passive voice, determiners, and tense usage to help students become more aware of these aspects when they translate. Also, consistent exposure and reading of various English-language content would increase the knowledge of vocabulary words and spelling. Simultaneously, exposure to English literature, films, and media allows cultural immersion, which enhances students' understanding of idiomatic expressions and cultural contexts.

Regarding students, figuring out appropriate learning methods is a need for students to improve their translation ability. In addition, they should focus on developing a firm knowledge of grammar and vocabulary through daily practice. Also, forming reading habits, especially reading materials written in both languages, should be considered, as this habit can help broaden students' knowledge of syntax, idiomatic expressions, and cultural nuances.

Last but not least, in this digital age, together with the explosion of information technology nowadays, the presence of technology in every aspect of life is considered an obvious fact, including academic and professional settings. Furthermore, various technological tools are embedded in education to help educators and students improve their learning and teaching. Akbari Motlaq and Tengku Mahadi (2020) further explain that it is an automated process involving converting text from one language to another using computer software and algorithms.

The rise of translation machines has undeniably transformed the landscape of the translation industry, introducing both opportunities and challenges for translation teaching. These machines, driven by sophisticated artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, have significantly enhanced productivity by providing quick and accessible translations. However, they have also sparked debates about the future role of human translators. While translation machines can handle basic and repetitive tasks, they still struggle with context, cultural nuances, idiomatic expressions, and the subtleties of meaning that human translators navigate with ease. Therefore, machine translations are becoming more popular among translators.

According to He et al. (2021), several modern machine translation systems, including Google Translate, Yandex, or Microsoft Translator, are widely used worldwide, especially by students, due to their ability to translate a large amount of text from one language to another in a few minutes or even seconds. In other words, these tools are widely used because of their convenience, speed, and ability to translate to multiple languages at the same time. Despite its benefits, MT also has a variety of drawbacks that users should be consider. More specifically, as indicated by Akbari Motlaq and Tengku Mahadi (2020), MT mostly struggles with integrating context, idiomatic expressions, or cultural nuances in their translations, which leads to the production of poor translations from this system. Hence, to improve MT's quality output, post-editing action from human translators is essential.

Based on the findings of translation errors and criteria for translation assessment, several recommendations are proposed to help students use machine translation (MT) systems more effectively. Instructors can utilize MT outputs to teach students how to recognize errors and assess the appropriateness of translations in context. This involves not only linguistic accuracy but also a deep understanding of the cultural and contextual factors that may influence meaning. Students should also learn how to provide constructive feedback on MT outputs, which is a valuable skill in both the academic and professional worlds. More specifically, students must be aware of the limitations of MT, and avoid over-relying on these tools, as they may produce errors relating to grammar, context, or cultural meanings. In addition, students should always review and revise all the translations produced by these tools, mainly focusing on correcting grammatical and lexical errors. Finally, paying attention to the context, idiomatic expressions or cultural nuances of both source and target languages is a need for using the MT system. This can help to produce high-quality translations. In addition, the ethical implications of relying on translation machines, such as concerns about data privacy and the potential for reinforcing biases in AI algorithms, highlight the importance of equipping students with a strong ethical foundation in their translation practice. Educators must encourage students to be aware of the limitations and biases inherent in machine translation and to adopt a more responsible approach to using these tools.

VI. CONCLUSION

Findings from the current study highlight the complexity of translation between Vietnamese and English, as elements of language, culture, and education contribute to both grammatical and lexical errors. While mechanical issues, which are grammatical errors dominate, especially passive voice and determiners, lexical issues like word choice or spelling are also a significant barrier. In addition, regarding educators, targeted instruction, cultural immersion, and consistent practice are highlighted for addressing these issues. Also, in terms of students, to produce accurate, fluent, and culturally appropriate translations, they should combine theoretical knowledge with practical translation exercises and cultural

education. Furthermore, in the digital age, the combination of machine translation efficiency and human knowledge can meet the diverse needs of global communication. In general, by providing better resources and a more laid-out process for the students, teachers can assist students in achieving these goals and ensure performance in translating tasks.

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