ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

The Asian EFL Journal

October 2020

Volume 27, Issue 4.4

Senior Editor:

Paul Robertson

Published by the English Language Education Publishing

Asian EFL Journal
A Division of TESOL Asia Group
Part of SITE Ltd Australia

http://www.asian-efl-journal.com

editor@asian-efl-journal.com

Publisher: English Language Education (ELE) Publishing

ISSN 1738-1460

ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
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Teacher Online Talk: Scale Development and Validation in English Language Teaching Context

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Abstract

The development of online teaching drives ELT researcher to design valid and reliable scales to assess the effectiveness of online teaching. There were two important aims of the study – to develop and to validate the practice of teacher's online talk and to introduce a comprehensive account of online talk constructs primarily used to ELT context. An analysis was based on some relevant literature review and the theme of teacher talk under the online context was applied as basic consideration of developing the design on teacher online talk. As results, a valid and reliable result of teacher online talk instrument was developed. Pilotting the instrument was done involving 239 ELT teachers and for final validation the scale was rated by ELT practitioner. The validation process of the online talk scale was also applied using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. The results revealed that four constructed category and the 22-developed items were meaningful to teacher, practitioners, candidate of teachers as well as effectiveness indication of teacher online talk.

Keywords: *ELT teacher, online talk, perceptions, scale development, EFL student*

Introduction

The topic of teacher talk that was popular among scholars in 1990 to 2017 received less attention in the current era of information and technology. This is due in part to the shift in traditional learning models into internet-based learning models such as e-learning and blended/hybrid learning (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020). If at first EFL teachers were considered as 'source of knowledge' as well as 'an idol' because of their ability to manage classroom communication and talk in the teaching and learning process or 'charisma' but with the shifting model of internet-based learning, these factors began to fade due to the face-to-face process began to decrease with the emergence of a blended-based learning model (Susanto, Soengkono & Assalma, 2019). Further, in the teaching and learning model that implements full e-learning mode has made it impossible for face-to-face learning to occur, so that face-to-face teacher talks must experience a shift to become teacher online talk and text.

Teacher talk and teacher online talk are two terms that literally have some similarities and differences. In the context of traditional face-to-face ELT teaching, teacher talk is basically defined as an effort of ELT teachers' teaching abilities to manage and control the use of target language, and language awareness (Budiharso & Arbain, 2019). It also covers the language that is used to talk to students (Khany & Malmir, 2017; Kumaravadivelu, 2006). But in the context of e-learning, the definition of teacher talk also adapts to the context of online learning become teacher online talk. Then, it can be similarly defined as ELT teachers' efforts to manage and control language use, language awareness, and language used to talk to learners through electronic media such as teleconferencing, video material, and other similar media. Meanwhile, teacher-text is a non-verbal electronic message applied by the ELT teachers to interact with their learners through electronic media in the form of written messages (Solikhah & Budiharso, 2019).

Research on teacher talks has been documented remarkable issues on learners' language skills, classroom interaction, motivation, native and non-native comparisons, and learning output (Bristol, 2014; Ernst-Slavit & Mason, 2011; Muñoz, 2017; Pogue & Ah Yun, 2006; Walsh, 2002). The focus of these studies was investigating the activities of EFL teachers during their classroom talks and look at whether the quantity and quality of the teacher talks have impacted the aforementioned variables or not. Most of the studies illustrated the positive impact of teacher talks in the traditional face-to-face classroom setting. Pedagogical merits of teacher talks, concepts, teaching practices also echoed from the previous studies. Given the significance of classroom teacher talks, EFL teachers need to enhance their understanding and to reflect the reflective practices of their talks during classroom teaching practices (Solikhah,

2020). Accordingly, the availability of teacher talks instrument deems necessary to assess, report, and follow up the quality of EFL teacher talk.

When we discuss teacher talk assessment tools, we will find many different types of assessment tools because scholars design and develop their instruments using different perspective and dimensions (Kim and Elder, 2005; Khany & Malmir, 2017; Walsh, 2003). However, with the shifting of the learning model from classroom-based teaching to online-based teaching, automatically several dimensions of the assessment instrument tolls will also change, so it is necessary to develop teacher online talk and text instruments which are relevant to current online teaching context (Tarman, 2012).

Accordingly, to extend and to fullfil for lack of an assessment instrument of the English language teaching (ELT) teacher online talk and text in terms of its main functions that has already existed, the present study was intended to develop and validate an ELT teacher online talk and text functional scale. Regarding to the description above, two research questions were proposed as follows:

1. What theory is used underlying of the teacher online talk?
2. To what extend the developed an assessment scale can be used to assess the effectiveness of ELT teacher online talk?

Literature Review

The concepts of teacher talks were proposed in the Self Evaluation of Teacher Talk scale (SETT) by Walsh (2003) and English Language Teacher Talk Functional Scale (TTFS) by Khany and Malmir (2017). These two grids, SETT and TTFS were mainly developed based on the social constructivist framework of learning initiated by Vygotsky (1980) and sociocultural theory of language learning by Lantolf (2000).Walsh (2003) defined SETT in terms of four modes: 1) managerial mode, 2) materials mode, 3) skills and system mode, and 4) classroom context mode. All these four modes are specifically measured by two main features. They are pedagogical and interactional features. Using some theoretical frameworks proposed by Kumaravadivelu (1999) and Ellis (1999), he criticizes the existence of teacher talking time which is currently still used by some researchers. In his critics, he mentions that teacher talking time becomes meaningless when it is viewed from the quality of teacher talks (Kumaravadivelu, 1999). His idea comes up as the teacher has a vital role in maintaining classroom communicative competence.

In a classroom instructional setting, the SETT proposed by Walsh (2003) provides a broader horizon towards measuring the quality of classroom teacher talks and classroom

interaction as well. Some pedagogical features from the four modes like organizing physical learning environment, eliciting oral responses, corrective feedback, and promoting oral fluency become vital features in the classroom instructional context. However, with the changes in teaching mode from classroom based-teacher talk into online based-teaching mode eliminates those essential features. Teacher verbal language model, fluency, pronunciation, intonation, physical arrangement, oral feedback, and some other essential features of classroom communicative competence need to be adjusted in online teaching mode. In online teaching mode, teacher talk will no longer exist and it will be replaced by the existence of teacher online talk in the form of a teacher–talks such as video, audio, or even teacher e-text.

Another study of teacher talk proposed by Khany and Malmir (2017), initiate an English Language Teacher Talk Functional Scale (TTFS) that is designed specifically for assessing teacher talk in the English language teaching context. Different from their predecessors, they propose three essential components of EFL teacher talk, namely: 1) representational EFL teacher talk 2) interactional function of EFL teacher talk, and 3) rapport-building of EFL teacher talk. Different from Walsh's (2003), Khany and Malmir (2017) view the quality of EFL teacher talk from linguistics and comprehensible input for their first component. They also include the roles of scaffolding, engagement and interaction within the second component of EFL teacher talk. In the third component of EFL teacher talk, they involve positive classroom atmosphere, motivating tone speech as part of vital elements of it.

By looking at the development of online instructional context, some of the elements proposed by Khany and Malmir (2017) need to be evaluated following the shift of teaching modes. From the first EFL teacher talk component, for example, some indicators like exposing EFL learners to accurate and natural pronunciation, and organizing physical environment are considered less relevant in an online instructional context since the online teaching was dominated by written exposures. Meanwhile, in the second component of EFL teacher talk such as creating classroom chances to use target language to conduct interaction is also hard to apply in the online teaching model. Furthermore, the last component such as establishing and maintaining friendly classroom rapport is another point that needs to be adjusted within the online learning mode (Tarman & Dev, 2018).

The above previous studies describe an instrument used to assess the ELT teacher talk delivery quality that is traditional classroom teaching, rendering several aspects which are found in the aforementioned instrument as the main reason of conducting the present study. However, in assessing teacher online talk it needs more different characteristics that are significantly different including the use of technical computer skills, online learning

management, and interaction qualities that, indeed, were absent from the above two studies. The current paper reviews some dimensions or factors to be involved in determining the concept of teacher online talk. The factors identified in this paper are based on the ideas taken from SETT framework proposed by Walsh (2003), Khany and Malmir (2017) and Lewis & Abdul-Hamid (2006). The factors gained from the aforementioned theories above are, then, used as a tentative concept of a scale for assessing ELT teacher online talk developed as the aim this research. The following table illustrated the tentative theoretical conceptualization of ELT teacher online talk developed in this study.

Table 1. Tentative conceptual framework of ELT teacher online talk

Component and sub-component of EFL teacher online talk
• **Fostering online interaction**
To promote dynamic online interaction between teacher and learners
To promote dynamic online interaction among learners
To provide learners online chance to learn with and from their peers collaboratively
To promote a higher level of understanding through online scaffolding
To provide online input talk modification and elaboration
To provide learners with good English model in the target language
To stimulate online friendly interaction and communication patterns
To establish online interaction between learners and online course material
To increase the frequency of online interaction with peers
• **Providing online feedback**
To provide learners' relevant individual feedback
To provide online prompt feedback on learners online contributions and tasks
To provide online substantive feedback on learners online contributions and task
To provide interesting and stimulating online feedback
• **Facilitating online learning**
To reiterate the course objectives through online learning
To establish helpful guidance in online discussion
To encourage learners to develop new concepts or ideas through online activities
To help learners actively participate in productive dialogue
To enable all learners to have opportunity to involves themselves in online dialogue with an expert

To facilitate learners online learning collaboration

- **Maintaining online enthusiasm**

  To create well-organized and interactive online classesthat are joyful and manageable

  To build learners' confidence in the online discussion forum

  To appreciate learners' online learning progress

  To establish and maintain a friendly online learning atmosphere

  To control learners' frustration in online learning activities and task

  To build learners' learning enjoyment

Methods

Contexts and Participants

The present study involved English lecturers and ELT practitioners to dig out their views about teacher online talk and text comprehensively. Those views, later, were used as a conceptual means to validate the instrument. That is why, four English lecturers and two ELT practitioners from three different universities who were teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate programs were purposively selected to be interviewed and observed. The representativeness of the four ELT teachers (participants) was considered in terms of gender (2 male and 2 female), online teaching experience (3-5 years), age (35-50 years old), English proficiency level, and (4 PhD) degree (Khany & Malmir, 2017). This was conducted to get insights on the essential issues related to the development of teacher online talks and text in ELT online teaching contexts.

Besides English lecturers and practitioners, EFL learners who took online courses under the English education/literature department from three universities in Indonesia were involved as participants. There were two ways of distributing the total of 250 questionnaires distributed by either paper or email at the end of the online learning courses. A sample of 239 (95.6%) responses was obtained from undergraduate EFL students who attended either blended learning or e-learning course. Each of the EFL students was asked to describe him/herself in reference to a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Regarding the gender, the responded were classified into more female respondents (169, 70.7%) than male respondents (70,29.3%).Regarding the course taken, 86 (35.98%) participants were from the reading course, 92 (38.49%) participants were from introduction to quantitative and qualitative research in ELT, and 61 (25.52%) participants were from intro to literature.

The three online courses surveyed in this study were part of blended learning courses with both synchronous (direct online communication and discussion) and asynchronous (online quizzes, assignments, teachers and students responses, and comments which were not directly responded) formats. Three courses were all compulsory subjects so that students had to enrol in the four online meetings and twelve traditional classroom meetings (by considering there are sixteen meetings in one semester). Before taking the online course, students would already have been informed both the online and traditional course formats through blended lesson plan made by the EFL teachers. Thus, they would be able to prepare and adjust their schedule concerning the online course format. The online course format was implemented via the Moodle learning management system.

Data Collection Procedures

Online learning observations of4 ELT teachers from English education/literature department from seven different universities who implemented blended/hybrid and on-line learning were conducted by participating the courses. To gain more comprehensible data about the teachers' insights dealing with the features of ELT teacher online talk and text those 4 ELT teachers were also interviewed. The significant factors were generated following four syntaxes introduced by Khany and Malmir (2017). The four syntaxes which were drawn during the study involved richness, appropriateness, effectiveness and the quality of teacher online talk and text. Other participants to be interviewed were 2 university professors or teacher educators in which they were experts in education. Interviewing these two experts were intended to dig out their opinions on, in general, teacher online talk and text and particularly ELT teacher online talk and text. In addition, the newly developed teacher online talk and text functional scale used in this study was an observational scale using a Likert scale assessing the main features of ELT teacher online talk and text to which both the teacher online talk and text are effective in terms of their empirically accepted specific features adapted from Khany and Malmir (2017).

Finally, to draw EFL learner perceptions on the developed teacher online talk and text functional scale and for the final validation of the scale, 239 EFL students (161 female and 78 male) who attended online courses as part of the blended learning courses were asked to fill the questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

The first step of this developmental study was developing a framework of theory about teacher online talk representing the context-specific features of teacher online talk in English

language context. This theoretical framework was useful to generate of 22 potential items for the online talk scale. Table 2 depicts the series of online talk items within the component of the theoretical underpinning of the study. The reliability measure using the Cronbach's alpha indicated that the reliability of the 22 items questionnaire was .76, which arrives at a satisfactory coefficient level. Also, an exploratory and a confirmatory factor analysis test were applied to test the construct validity of the newly developed online talk scale in terms of its fundamental construction and classification (Brown, 2015; Khany and Malmir, (2017).

Table 2 Number of items in each component of teacher online talk scale

The dimension of teacher online talk	Items
Fostering online interaction	9
Providing online feedback	5
Facilitating online learning	6
Maintaining online enthusiasm	5
Total	22

The results of the exploratory factor analysis revealed the existence of four factors unlike the tentative conceptual framework of online teacher talks which were presented in Table 1 with the four factors comprising 59%. A number of confirmatory factor analysis was also applied using constant factors ranging from two to eight to find the most acceptable results. Based on the confirmatory factor analysis using Varimax patterns, it was found that the best model of loading factor matrix was the four-factor model constituted64% of the total variance (Table 3). Further, the KMO and Bartlett's test of Spericity for the four factors was 0.76 ($p<.05$) which described that the original components were significantly correlated although there were some amendments of the items proposed on the aforementioned conceptual framework. Consequently, the changes led to a few alterations in the original conceptual framework as depicted in Table 4.

Table 3. Matrix of teacher online talk scale

Item no	**Item dimension**	**Factors**
1	Teacher and learner online interaction	.49
2	Learners' online interaction	.56

3	Online collaborative opportunity	.47			
4	Higher-order thinking	.52			
5	Online input elaboration	.48			
6	Teacher's online English model	.56			
7	Online interaction stimulation	.62			
8	Online course content interaction	.52			
9	Individual online feedback		.61		
10	Fast response feedback		.79		
11	Feedback focus		.82		
12	Feedback form		.72		
13	Course objective			.62	
14	Online discussion			.79	
15	Concept development			.77	
16	Productive online dialogue			.73	
17	Online participation opportunity			.67	
18	Joyful online learning				.68
19	Learner's confidence				.77
20	Online progress				.74
21	Interactive online learning				.62
22	Frustration control				.62

Based on the obtained results from the factor analysis and in order to achieve adequate reliability of the scale, three items were discarded from the 25-item instrument. Under the three different components of online interaction, facilitating online learning, and maintaining online enthusiasm, items of 'to increase the frequency of online interaction with peers', 'to facilitate learners online learning collaboration', and to build learners' learning enjoyment' were deleted from the instrument. The deletions of the three above items would improve the Cronbach's alpha coefficient into .84 (appendix A). These changes did not alter the construct validity of the teacher online talk scale (TOTS).

Table 4. Instrument of teacher online talk

Finalized teacher online talk Instrument
Fostering online interaction (factor 1): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Providing online feedback (factor 2): 9, 10, 11, 12
Facilitating online learning (factor 3): 13, 14, 15, 16, 17
Maintaining online enthusiasm (factor 4): 18, 19, 20, 22

These items were the finalized scale for assessing teacher online talks, the deliberative features of teacher online talk cover four categories such as fostering interaction, online feedback, facilitating learner and online enthusiasm.

Table 5 illustrates the mean and standard deviation (SD) derived from the participants' ratings in each of the components and the whole of the teacher online talks scale developed from the study. The participants' ratings were then calculated using five Likert's scale ranged from 1 *very little* and 5 *very much*.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of teacher online talks scale

The dimension of teacher online talk	Items	Mean	SD
Fostering online interaction	9	92.24	11.27
Providing online feedback	5	60.35	10.70
Facilitating online learning	6	17.97	5.19
Maintaining online enthusiasm	5	59.48	9.72
Total	22	186,62	17,58

As mentioned previously, the teacher online talk items generation process was partly initiated by Walsh (2003) and Khany and Malmir (2017). The developed items, however, were generated based on several vital components of teacher online talks which cover the use of teacher online talks to foster interaction, feedback, facilitate learning and maintain online enthusiasm. Based on the observed factors, it can be critically argued that the main objectives of teacher online talks are to foster learners' online learning interaction quality, enthusiasm, online learning activities, and online feedback in which it was quite different from the previous study conducted by Khany and Malmir (2017) which emphasizes four important components of teacher talk within the traditional classroom context, such as managerial, material, skills and system through the use of language classroom. Since its inexistence, the language classroom was replaced by the emergence of online learning. Some important features such as the role of

the teacher as manager and rapport building in terms of personality traits or 'teacher's aura' (in the traditional classroom context) would automatically be replaced by online teaching activities such as teacher online text and talk which focus mainly on learners' learning improvement. Teacher's sense of humor, friendliness was also difficult to find within the online learning context. These findings were also echoed from Arifani, Khaja, Suryanti and Wardhono (2019). From the online learning survey they conducted to the blended learning context, they found out that students could not find teachers' sense of humor in online learning. These results strengthen the development of teacher online talks to claim the elimination of building rapport from Khany and Malmir (2017).

Next, what is missing in Walh's (2003) and by Khany and Malmir (2017) SETT and STTFS is the teacher-learner rapport which has the highest contribution to learners' motivation but through this study, it was replaced by the quality of online interaction using online texting and talks. If motivation is established using rapport building between teacher and learner, in the online talks this category is established through online learning activities and interesting online feedback.

The category which remains between the newly developed and the previous one proposed by Khany and Malmir (2017) refers to the interaction category. The proposed eight sub-categories of interactional dimension were used for measuring the effectiveness of teacher talk under the traditional ELT instruction. Their concept discussed how ELT teachers made use of their classroom language as meaningful input and exposures for the learners through language simplification, verbal language modeling, oral stress and fluency. However, within the online talks some elements of the interaction were amended, such as oral fluency could only be used through video and online conferencing so that some of the sub-categories were modified and altered into written language modeling*, the accuracy of the written message*. Some of the similar sub-categories like language simplification used by the ELT teachers in online talk and text is still maintained for the purpose of learners' comprehension. Regarding the use of simplification, Siegel (2019) and Allen (2009) points out that this strategy is considered as an effective way to make learners easy to understand the message from the teachers. Therefore, these results put this simplification as one of the sub-categories of online interaction.

Similar findings echoed from the present study is that the feedback category remain exists within the teacher online talk discussion. One of the reasons is the vital role of feedback asserted by several ELT expert is to reflect towards learners' comprehension toward executed the learning activities. Therefore, it is vital to put feedback into teacher online talk scale. If the

feedback in the previous scale proposed by Khany and Malmir (2017) refers to classroom feedback, in this study feedback is narrowed into the online feedback which consists of several essential sub-categories such as quality of feedback, promptness, content, and format. Further, a new insight of feedback was put into this study namely interesting and stimulating online feedback which was absent from the previous scale. This aims to assess the effectiveness of ELT teacher online talk in implementing effective feedback in the online learning activities and to keep up learners' spirit and motivation when the feedback is appropriate to their needs. Regarding this point, Lee (2008) argued that feedback from ELT teachers could influence students' learning motivation and response. Further, he claims that positive feedbacks would cause a positive impact on the learners. Consequently, this addition benefited ELT teachers to assess their ability in promoting online feedback for their learners.

Conclusion

The shifting of ELT instruction from traditional teaching into online instruction brings consequences towards the alteration of teaching effectiveness in the traditional model and the effectiveness of teaching in an online context. The present study aimed at developing and validating a teacher online talk scale. The rating of teacher, practitioners, learners, and scores received by ELT teachers indicated that the developed items and the conceptualization of the category and construct were meaningful to teachers, practitioners, and candidate of ELT teachers to assess their effectiveness of online talk activities. It was generated four main underlying dimensions of teacher online talk, namely fostering online interaction, providing online feedback, facilitating online learning, and maintaining online enthusiasm.

Pedagogical Implication

Meaningful and practical pedagogical implications were also echoed from this study. First, this teacher online talk scale can be used as an instrument to develop teachers' reflective practices to portray ELT teachers teaching strengths and weaknesses. Second, this scale can also be used as an instrument for the teacher for the sake of teacher recruitments and remedial teaching mirrored from teacher online talk.

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Appendix A

Teacher Online Talk Scale

Dear colleague

The aim of this observational instrument is to assess the effectiveness of teacher online talk in of English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts. This scale is applied as an instrument for providing feedback to ELT teachers and ELT teachers' candidate on their online teaching practices.

Name : _____

Age : _____

Gender : _____

Length on online teaching : _____

Degree : _____

Students' level : _____

Students' age : _____

Please read each item carefully and indicate the extent to which each item is true about the online talk of the ELT teachers you are observing. Strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), moderate(3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5)

N	**Questions**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Fostering online interaction						
1	The teacher promotes dynamic online interaction between teacher and learners					
2	The teacher promotes dynamic online interaction among learners					
3	The teacher provides learners online opportunity to learn from and with their peers collaboratively					
4	The teacher promotes higher level of understanding through online scaffolding					
5	The teacher provides online input talk modification and elaboration					
6	The teacher provides learners with good English model in the target language					

7	The teacher stimulates online friendly interaction and communication patterns					
8	The teacher establishes online interaction between learners and online course material					
Providing online feedback						
9	The teacher provides learners' relevant individual feedback					
10	The teacher provides online prompt feedback on learners online contributions and tasks					
11	The teacher provides online substantive feedback on learners online contributions and task					
12	The teacher provides interesting and stimulating online feedback					
Facilitating online learning						
13	The teacher reiterates the course objectives through online learning					
14	The teacher establishes helpful guidance in online discussion					
15	The teacher encourages learners to develop new concepts or ideas through online activities					
16	The teacher helps learners actively participate in productive dialogue					
17	The teacher enables all learners the opportunity to participate online dialogue with an expert					
Maintaining online enthusiasm						
18	The teacher creates well-organized and interactive classes are joyful and manageable					
19	The teacher builds learners' confidence in the online discussion forum					
20	The teacher appreciates learners' online learning progress					
21	The teacher establishes and maintain a friendly online learning atmosphere					

22	The teacher controls learners' frustration in online learning activities and tasks					

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Usability Heuristic Evaluation of the 2012 Ed., ORELT Module 2: Speaking for Better Communication

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Abstract

This is a Critical Research that involved a usability heuristic evaluation (UHE) of an ESL module intended for Secondary School ESL teachers. The subject matter of the critique is a selected section of the 2012 Ed. ORELT Module 2 on "Speaking for Better Communication". The conduct of this study presupposed the development of a specialized UHE tool to pave for a content analysis of the module focused on the standards and principles of usability. The theoretical framework of the instrument was based on the guidelines provided by the University of the Philippines Open University. Moreover, this paper aimed to prove and specify the potential limitations of the subject module along the different criteria of usability.

On account of the research findings, the module was found to have a "satisfactory" level of usability, thereby passing the minimum threshold of usability. As such, the module is deemed suitable in itself for deployment and use for its intended users, i.e. ESL teachers. However, on top of this finding, the critical argument previously advanced by the study was substantiated as it was able to demonstrate the different shortcomings of the learning module along usability standards and principles. These shortcomings register under several usability criteria such as: "content structure, integration of multi-modal learning principles, accessibility of design, assessment-centered, and resources".

The study recommends a corresponding modification of several sections of the module to improve its usability level. On this account, the study offers a matrix of recommendations to carry out the specific points of modification. The study also recommends the viability to adopt the modified version of the module as a supplemental material for the 120-Hour TESOL Certification Course offered by TESOL Asia.

Keywords: *usability heuristic evaluation, TESOL, speaking, multi-modal learning, usability standards, instructional materials development and assessment*

Introduction

English language is an international language, and among many nations it serves as a lingua franca. It is spoken, learned and understood even in countries where it is not a native's language. English plays a major role in many social sectors including education, business, technology, tourism etc.

English as much as any language is a tool for speaking as we communicate with others in order to express our ideas, and to know others' ideas as well. Communication is dispensed through varied means wherein speaking takes primacy as a means of communication. Without

speech we cannot communicate with one another in many contexts and settings. The importance of speaking skills, hence is enormous for the learners of any language. In-order to become a well-rounded communicator one needs to be proficient in each of the four language skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing, but the ability to speak skillfully, provides the speaker with several distinct advantages. The capacity to express one's thoughts, opinions and feelings, in the form of words put together in a meaningful way, provides the speaker with these advantages. The joy of sharing one's ideas with others is immense. When we speak to others, we come to have a better understanding of our own selves. Undoubtedly, the clarity in speech reflects clear thinking. An effective speaker can gain the attention of the audience and hold it till the completion of his message. Speaking skills are important for career success, but certainly not limited to one's professional aspirations. Speaking skills can also enhance one's personal life (Qureshi, n.d.).

In the context of ESL / EFL learning, the common problem faced by teachers for a long time are students who are structurally competent but who cannot communicate adequately (Qureshi, n.d.). To overcome this problem, the processes involved in fluent conversational interaction need to be dealt with. Being "appropriate" is something different from being "structurally correct" and this finds its place within a mode of thinking, predominant in linguistics today (Qureshi, n.d.). It is, in fact, this new 'mode of thinking' which has given new directions to foreign language teaching. It has led to new emphases, not only in syllabus design but also in the teaching communicative use of the language. Language learning today is regarded less of an 'acquisition of structure' and more of a learning of items of use (Qureshi, n.d.).

The methodologies for language teaching therefore are to be based on the linguistic insights about the nature of the language and also on the psychological insights about the processes involved in its use, for the development of communicative competence in the learners. There are three processes involved in the use of a language. First is scanning the pragmatic information. Second is evaluation whereby the utterance can be compared to the speaker's aim and the identification of any discrepancy, and third is the formulation of the next utterance (Qureshi, n.d.). The formulation of utterances and the processes of scanning and evaluation must be made quickly within real time. 'The ability to do this is what we mean generally by fluency in a language.

On the other hand, Kayi (2006) defines speaking as the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts. This therefore makes speaking a crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Despite its

importance, for many years, teaching speaking has been undervalued and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues. However, today's world requires that the goal of teaching speaking should improve students' communicative skills, because, only in that way, students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance (Kayi, 2006).

The ESL curriculum for the teaching of speaking includes several components such as imparting to the learners how to produce the English speech sounds and sound patterns; how to use word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of the second language; how to select appropriate words and sentences according to the proper social setting, audience, situation and subject matter; how to organize their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence; how to use language as a means of expressing values and judgments; and how to use the language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which is called as fluency. (Nunan, 2003).

Many linguistics and ESL teachers agree on that students learn to speak in the second language by "interacting". Communicative language teaching and collaborative learning serve best for this aim. Communicative language teaching is based on real-life situations that require communication. By using this method in ESL classes, students have the opportunity of communicating with each other in the target language. In brief, ESL teachers should create a classroom environment where students have real-life communication, authentic activities, and meaningful tasks that promote oral language. This can occur when students collaborate in groups to achieve a goal or to complete a task (Kayi, 2006).

On the above context, TESOL Asia, an international TESOL provider based in Clark Special Economic Zone, Pampanga Philippines, offers a TESOL certification course. One of the components of its course plan is an 8-hour crash course on “Integrating Macro Skills’, wherein “teaching of speaking” is a further component. Attached is a copy of the 120-Hour TESOL Certification Course Plan that shows the schedule and placement of the course on macro skills adjacent other courses (Appendix A). Due to the rise of many TESOL providers, as well as the changings modes in communication that uses the English language, TESOL Asia engages in a constant review and revisit of its curriculum to ensure its relevance and competitiveness sourced from feedback coming from TESOL trainers who work in different countries. The teaching of speaking skills, for instance, assumes more than just determining universally recognized pedagogical approaches but on how these approaches are dispensed

through the instrumentality of efficient instructional materials or learning modules, and how these materials suit to the varied cultures of EFL / ESL students from different countries.

Methodology

This critical research aimed to evaluate the learning module on "Speaking for Better Communication" (2012 Ed.) of the Open Resources for English Language Teaching (ORELT) using "Usability Heuristic" as the framework of evaluation to substantiate the kernel of the critique. At the outset of the research, a critical argument was advanced to prove that there are shortcomings of the learning module when it comes to several criteria on usability. In carrying the task of critical analysis, the subject module was subjected to a Usability Heuristic Evaluation (UHE) Tool which was developed for the purpose and is also offered as a scholarly contribution of this study to serve as a tool for usability assessment of ESL instructional materials.

The UHE tool developed in this study draws from the framework recommended by UP Open University (2010). The original framework provides a total of 18 guidelines, although only 8 are adopted in this study as basis for developing the UHE tool, i.e. (a) Delivery and Form of Content, (b) Content Structure, (c) Visual Design, (d) Integration of Multimodal learning principles, (e) Accessibility of design, (f) Authenticity, (g) Assessment-centered, and (h) Resources. These form the general classification of the UHE tool's evaluative criteria. The other guidelines were filtered out as they signify to more complex multi-media features of instructional materials that are no longer applicable to the features of the specific IM which is the subject of critique. Moreover, the UHE tool was developed using a 5-point Likert scale, capable of generating a score to gauge the usability rate of an instructional material. The UHE tool has a total of twenty-three (23) qualifying statements that are clustered under 8 evaluative criteria. The IM is rated in terms of these criteria. The evaluative criteria are constructed in the form of "statements of standards" such that the rating should reflect the strength of the applicability of each standard based on the design of the IM.

Data analysis is focused on resolving the argument of the critique, which is to prove the shortcomings of the subject IM based on its rate of usability, along its different standard requirements or dimensions. The overall weighted mean of the ratings in the UHE tool corresponds to the "usability rate" of the subject IM. To prove the shortcomings of the IM, it's rate of usability must be "satisfactory" and below. The individual ratings obtained under each criterion were also presented and discussed to illustrate the strengths and weak points of the subject IM when it comes to the different usability standards.

Results of Data Analyses

The following are the findings of the study, clustered under each research objective, and in the order of the statement of research problem.

Overall Usability Rate of the Module

The subject module registers a "Satisfactory" usability heuristic level (UHL), based on the actual rating obtained for the module's overall UHE, i.e. 4.02 (Fig. 1). This rating surpasses the threshold range of "Manageable UHL", thereby giving credit to the adequateness of the module for deployment and use for the benefit of its target users, i.e. ESL teachers.

The module's strongest points in terms of usability are along the aspects of "delivery and form of content (E), and visual design (E). On the other hand, the module has it weakest points along "accessibility of design (F), and assessment-centered (M).

No.	Evaluative Criteria	Rating Scale					AWM
		1	2	3	4	5	
Delivery and Form of Content							
1	Development of the IM was the result of a collaboration among several experts that involve multiple expertise that are relevant in IM preparation and evaluation.					X	5.00 E
Content Structure							
2	The IM provides a theoretical framework to justify the order of the topics	X					4.2 S
3	The IM orders the topics logically and in accordance with acceptable principles					X	
4	The IM provides research avenues for the user to explore readings or other references that are not directly provided in the IM					X	
5	For sections in the IM directing the user to research or navigate for external references, the directions are stated clearly enabling the user to understand what needs to be done.					X	

6	The research requirements of the IM are feasible for accomplished as there are accessible and sufficient resources that the user can refer to.					X	
Visual Design							
7	The IM uses font style, color and size that are readily readable and lends an overall aesthetic appeal					X	5.0 E
8	Visual elements in the IM are grouped in a logical fashion					X	
Integration of Multimodal learning principles							
9	The IM does not contain elements that are obviously superfluous, i.e. lacking strong connection to the objectives and design of the program					X	4.25 S
10	The elements put into place are appropriate, thereby matching the contents and the objectives specified for every section or unit of the IM					X	
11	Elements that encourage learning remediation or enrichment are in place, which the user can readily notice and easily engage in				X		
12	IM taps the use of multimodal learning venues that uses sounds, videos, graphics, motion graphics (animation) that appeal to different types of learners or encourage different types of learning			X			
Accessibility of design							
13	The IM uses or prescribes types of media that are perceivable to a wide range of users, or that they appeal to common literacies expected of users		X				2.0 F
14	The design of the IM takes into account the needs of users with sensory impairments		X				
Authenticity							
15	The IM uses verbal elements that are familiar to the user (relative to the schema commonly expected for the target user's level)					X	4.67 E

16	The IM uses visual elements that are familiar to the user (relative to the schema commonly expected for the target user's level)					X	
17	The IM uses elements that make the topics and lessons appealing to the authentic interests and cultural environment of the user				X		
Assessment-centered							
18	The IM provides opportunities for self-assessment that advance learner achievement			X			3.0 M
19	The IM has mechanisms that provide sufficient feedback to the learner to provide remedial directions even in the absence of a teacher or a direct consultation with the teacher			X			
20	Activities involve higher order assessments (e.g. analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) rather than lower order assessments (e.g. recall and recognition).	N / A					
Resources							
21	IM prescribes activities that enable the user to explore resources / real data archives available in his / her environment / setting				X		4.0 S
22	IM taps the user's resourcefulness to access real data archives that are relevant to the topics learned			X			
23	IM engages the user to engage in activities that replicates those that apply in the real world					X	
Overall Weighted Mean							**4.02 S**

Legend: E – Excellent; S – Satisfactory, M – Manageable, F – Fair

Fig. 1. Usability Heuristic Evaluation (UHE) of Unit One of the ORELT Module on Speaking for Better Communication

Assessment of the Module along the Different Aspects of Usability

Delivery and Form of Content. The module rated "excellent" along this UHE criterion (Fig. 1). This means the development, preparation and evaluation of the module considered a collaborative effort among experts.

Content Structure. The module rated "satisfactory" along this UHE criterion (Fig. 1). Among the specific limitations of the module as observed, it does not provide a theoretical framework concerning the order of its topics.

Visual Design. The module rated "excellent" along this UHE criterion (Fig. 1). The visual elements are arranged in a logical fashion. Visual cues in the module outline are very clear, which enable the user to distinguish the different parts.

Integration of Multimodal learning principles. The module rated "satisfactory" along this UHE criterion (Fig. 1). Among the specific limitations of the module as observed, it does encourage the user to seek "alternative strategies". Moreover, the module does not provide specific alternative options that can be taken, nor does it provide reference materials or further readings where the users can learn alternative options.

Accessibility of design. The module rated "fair" along this UHE criterion (Fig. 1). Among the specific limitations of the module as observed, the module's recommended learning activities do not involve access to various sorts of media as much as the activities only require learners to introspect and recall from their experiences. Moreover, the module reserves no contingent measures meant for students with sensory impairments, although it does fairly address the needs of students who are "shy" or "self-conscious".

Authenticity. The module rated "excellent" along this UHE criterion (Fig. 1). The verbal and visual elements used in the module are well suited to the intellectual level and schema of the target users, i.e. ESL teachers. However, the module's activities barely sensitize to certain ESL teaching contexts such as:

- Teachers handling classes with a huge student population
- Teachers handling heterogenous classes (in terms of sex, socio-economic status, intellectual level / linguistic ability / learning ability)

Assessment-centered. The module rated "manageable" along this UHE criterion (Fig. 1). Among the specific limitations of the module as observed, it does not have a tool to assess the users' performance on account of the learning activities that they are engaged.

Resources. The module rated "satisfactory" along this UHE criterion (Fig. 1). Among the specific limitations of the module as observed, it directs the users to access data sources that are limited only to internet links, and that the links are limited to reading materials. Beyond these, users are not challenged to explore alternative types of data and data sources.

Recommendations

On the merits of the assessment conducted in this paper and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are offered:

Unit 1 of the learning module on "Speaking for Better Communication" (2012 Ed.) of the Open Resources for English Language Teaching (ORELT) passes the threshold of usability, thereby it is in itself suitable for deployment and use for its target users, i.e. ESL teachers.

The subject module was found to have limitations along several usability criteria, thereby advancing its proposed modification for improvement.

In order to maximize the adoption of the subject module's deployment in TESOL Asia's 120-Hour TESOL Certification Course, this paper recommends the module's adequate modification in accordance with the pointers provided in the matrix (Fig. 2).

Points of Critique: Shortcomings of the Module along the Different Usability Criteria	**Recommended Actions**	**Expected Outcome**
The module does not provide a theoretical framework concerning the order of its topics.	Under the module's section on "Module Overview", insert a new section on "Framework of Module Contents" that provides a brief explanation on the succession of the topics, or its theoretical bases. A new sequence of the topics is hereby recommended:	Improved usability in terms of content structure.

	Unit 1: Social Communication: Performing Language Functions Unit 2: Speaking Accurately Unit 3: Speaking About Myself Unit 4: Practice in Public Speaking Unit 5: Speaking Across the Curriculum	
The module does encourage the user to seek "alternative strategies". The module does not provide specific alternative options that can be taken, nor does it provide reference materials or further readings where the users can learn alternative options.	Under the module's section on "Activities", the list of activities therein should offer a variety of strategies, utilizing different approaches and different types of data or data sources for the learners to explore In addition to making variations in the recommended learning activities, the module should provide further links or references of alternative sets of learning activities that are available online or using other data sources	Improved usability in terms of integration of multimodal learning principles
The module's recommended learning activities do not involve access to various sorts of media as much as the activities only require learners to introspect and recall from their experiences.	Modify the inventory of learning activities or modify the activities' implementing strategies in such a way that they integrate the use of varied sorts of media.	Improved usability in terms of accessibility of design

The module reserves no contingent measures meant for students with sensory impairments, although it does fairly address the needs of students who are "shy" or "self-conscious".	The module must offer an alternative list of activities congenial for learners with sensory impairments	
The module's activities barely sensitize to certain ESL teaching contexts such as: (a) Teachers handling classes with a huge student population; and (b) Teachers handling heterogenous classes (in terms of sex, socio-economic status, intellectual level / linguistic ability / learning ability)	Inclusion of different activities that suits different class settings such as: a. Densely populated ESL classes b. Gender-sensitive activities c. Activities sensitized to students with various socio-economic conditions / intellectual levels / linguistic abilities / learning abilities	Improved usability in terms of authenticity
The module does not have a tool to assess the users' performance on account of the learning activities that they are engaged.	Complete change of the "assessment" section of the module by substituting it with an appropriate assessment tool. The assessment must be aimed to assess the teachers' skills in implementing the different ESL learning activities to their students. This also entails the creation of separate rubrics of assessment for each learning activity.	Improved usability in terms of "assessment-centeredness"

The module directs the users to access data sources that are limited only to internet links, and that the links are limited to reading materials. Beyond these, users are not challenged to explore alternative types of data and data sources.	The reference section of the module should contain instructions that enable the learners to be exposed to various modes of data access beyond mere internet access. The references must featured varied types of data, not only reading materials but it may also include audio materials, graphic or video materials.	Improved usability in terms of resources

Fig. 2. Matrix of Recommendations on the Modification of Unit 1 of ORELT Module 2: Speaking for Better Communication to Improve it's Usability

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APPENDIX A

120-Hour TESOL Certification Course Plan
(Face-to-Face Component)

DAY 1

SLA and Teaching Methodologies	-	4 hours
Teaching English Online	-	2 hours
Error Correction / Error Analysis	-	2 hours

DAY 2

Integrating Macro Skills	-	8 hours
*Listening and Speaking		
*Reading and Writing		

DAY 3

Teaching Grammar	-	4 hours
Teaching Pronunciation	-	4 hours

DAY 4

Teaching English to Young Learners	-	4 hours
Teaching ESP / Business English	-	4 hours

APPENDIX B

Usability Heuristic Evaluation (UHE) Tool***

*** This tool was developed using the framework recommended by the UP Open University (2010)

No.	Evaluative Criteria	Rating Scale					AWM
		1	2	3	4	5	
Delivery and Form of Content							
1	Development of the IM was the result of a collaboration among several experts that involve multiple expertise that are relevant in IM preparation and evaluation.						
Content Structure							
2	The IM provides a theoretical framework to justify the order of the topics						
3	The IM orders the topics logically and in accordance with acceptable principles						
4	The IM provides research avenues for the user to explore readings or other references that are not directly provided in the IM						
5	For sections in the IM directing the user to research or navigate for external references, the directions are stated clearly enabling the user to understand what needs to be done.						
6	The research requirements of the IM are feasible for accomplished as there are accessible and sufficient resources that the user can refer to.						
Visual Design							
7	The IM uses font style, color and size that are readily readable and lends an overall aesthetic appeal						
8	Visual elements in the IM are grouped in a logical fashion						
Integration of Multimodal learning principles							
9	The IM does not contain elements that are obviously superfluous, i.e. lacking strong connection to the objectives and design of the program						
10	The elements put into place are appropriate, thereby matching the contents and the objectives specified for every section or unit of the IM						
11	Elements that encourage learning remediation or enrichment are in place, which the user can readily notice and easily engage in						
12	IM taps the use of multimodal learning venues that uses sounds, videos, graphics, motion graphics (animation) that appeal to different types of learners or encourage different types of learning						

Accessibility of design							
13	The IM uses or prescribes types of media that are perceivable to a wide range of users, or that they appeal to common literacies expected of users						
14	The design of the IM takes into account the needs of users with sensory impairments						
Authenticity							
15	The IM uses verbal elements that are familiar to the user (relative to the schema commonly expected for the target user's level)						
16	The IM uses visual elements that are familiar to the user (relative to the schema commonly expected for the target user's level)						
17	The IM uses elements that make the topics and lessons appealing to the authentic interests and cultural environment of the user						
Assessment-centered							
18	The IM provides opportunities for self-assessment that advance learner achievement						
19	The IM has mechanisms that provide sufficient feedback to the learner to provide remedial directions even in the absence of a teacher or a direct consultation with the teacher						
20	Activities involve higher order assessments (e.g. analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) rather than lower order assessments (e.g. recall and recognition).						
Resources							
21	IM prescribes activities that enable the user to explore resources / real data archives available in his / her environment / setting						
22	IM taps the user's resourcefulness to access real data archives that are relevant to the topics learned						
23	IM engages the user to engage in activities that replicates those that apply in the real world						
	Overall Weighted Mean						

What sections of the IM manifest shortcomings in the application of standards of usability along:

1. **Delivery and Form of Content**

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. **Content Structure**

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. **Visual Design**

4. **Integration of Multimodal learning principles**

5. **Accessibility of design**

6. **Authenticity**

7. **Assessment-centered**

8. **Resources**

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Using Local Contents in English Materials: A Manifestation of Maintaining Local Wisdom in English Language Teaching

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Abstract

The cultural depiction in English Language Teaching (ELT) materials has flourished as one of the required fields of study. To analyze the texts and visuals in Chapter 1 of the locally ELT textbook, *Bahasa Inggris: When English Rings a Bell* for Grade 7 (2017), published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (MONEC), the study employed Cultural Linguistics for the analysis. The recent research focuses on the conceptualization of the Indonesian non-verbal behavior as the local cultural contents, i.e., shaking and kissing the elderly hands. Three hundred forty-six people participated in the study, with a mean age of 37 years. From the analysis of the participants' responses, the cultural conceptualizations of handshaking and kissing the elderly hands were for maintaining cultural obligation, showing respect, expressing love, asking blessings, showing politeness, expressing devotion, having good relationships, and inquiring apology. Based on the participants' experiences of doing the tradition, parents and the elderly were put as valued persons that could give substantial control for the young generation. The results corresponded with cultural conceptualizations represented in the textbook. Here, the English materials provided in the book could be

the manifestation of preserving the Indonesian local wisdom in ELT. This practice can be the model for the ELT around the globe when the local wisdom is a paramount value to be maintained in the respective society.

Keywords: *local contents, Cultural Linguistics, cultural conceptualizations, handshaking and kissing elderly hands, textbook analysis, local wisdom*

Introduction

Culture has fascinated attentiveness from many scholars since it has an interconnected relationship with language and a vital position in English as an International Language (EIL) language teaching (Kumaradivelu 2012; McKay 2012; Sharifian 2014; Baker 2015). At present, with the increase in locally established English textbooks worldwide accepted the representation of local cultures as well as the target culture, the concerned studies have also livened up (Tajeddin and Teimournezhad 2015; Gómez Rodríguez 2015; Aglasi and Casta 2017; McConachy 2018; Xiang and Yenika-Agbaw 2019). The samples of research correspondingly combine the local culture in teaching English provided in the textbooks across countries: Iran, Colombia, Philippines, Japan, and China. Here, the researchers use various methods such as frequency analysis, categorical analysis (surface and deep culture), text analysis, critical incident analysis, and content analysis referring to the culture that exists in the textbooks' documents (i.e., visuals and texts).

In Indonesia's English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum, the 2013 curriculum, English has been officially taught at secondary school level up to university. Meanwhile, in primary schools, English is established as an elective school subject (Solikhah, 2020). The existing curriculum has prepared Indonesians for being religious, productive, innovative, and passionate, as well as who can contribute to societal, nation's, and world's civilizations people (Widodo 2016; Rindu & Ariyanti, 2017; Solikhah & Budiharso, 2019). The policymakers expect the graduates to participate in the domestic and worldwide level with English skills and values prescribed in the curriculum. Additionally, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (MONEC) mandated in its regulation No. 79 the Year 2014 for integrating the local content in the teaching and learning activities. The aims of the directive are equipping the students to recognize and appreciate their environmental, social, cultural, and spiritual; and to maintain and develop their local wisdom for enhancing the national development. To support the curriculum objectives, the MONEC has established locally English as a Foreign Language

(EFL) textbooks nationally utilized at secondary schools. Meanwhile, for the university level, the ELT materials depend on commercial textbooks worldwide.

The present study reveals the depiction of local content in the locally developed EFL textbooks in Indonesia. It is crucial to analyze since the previous studies mostly emphasize how to make the learners more mindful and enhance their knowledge of multicultural diversity. It has not touched the importance of local content for the manifestation of sustaining the local wisdom, both implicitly and explicitly in ELT (Budiharso & Arbain, 2019). The study's contribution is to cultivate Indonesian learners with English abilities, as stated in Indonesia's ELT curriculum, by providing better insight into local content in English materials to preserve the Indonesian local wisdom. Besides, it also offers some information to the ELT textbook writers to develop the materials relate to learners' culture (source culture) to serve the future EIL learners better (Matsuda 2009). The study works on the local content materials as parts of the learners' culture provided by the locally published English textbook for Grade 7 students from the Cultural Linguistics perspective (Sharifian 2017). Specifically, the study focuses on the Indonesian conceptualizations of the culture of non-verbal behavior depicted in the textbook to express Indonesian culture, i.e., shake and kiss elders' hands as the behavior of parental culture maintenance.

Research Questions

For guiding the study, these research questions were formed:

1) What are the Indonesian cultural conceptualizations of Shaking and kissing the elder's hand?
2) How are the cultural conceptualizations of Shaking and kissing elder's hand replicated in an Indonesian locally published ELT textbook?

Literature Review

The Importance of Cultural Understanding in Foreign Language Teaching

Richards (2014) states that in textbooks writing, the writer must focus on the situations and appropriate texts representing how language is used and decide whose culture and values will be illustrated in the book. Besides, Byram (2008) explains that to learn a foreign language (i.e., English) effectively, there is a movement from focusing on language skills to the function of a language as the means of communication. To acquire a language as a system, one should also practice it to communicate to develop their communication skills. Here, Byram also emphasizes the concept of intercultural competence to be a language teaching goal. Further, Gray (2010) claims that the learners have opportunities to reflect their own culture as well that

which is represented in the foreign language. In this concept, learners can use the foreign language as their own right as speakers, not purely as perfect as native speakers.

Bates and Plog (1980) as cited by Kesckes (2015)define culture as anetwork of shared beliefs, traditions, values, practices, attitudes, and artifacts that community members use to deal with their environment. Besides, the primary aspect of culture that it is differentially distributed and that not all members of a given social and/or cultural group embrace, practice or express similarly their fairly popular culture in every moment and every situation of life, nor do all members of the same social and/or cultural group exhibit the same sense of identity.

The inclusion of culture in English teaching materials is essential. Kramsch (1993) suggests that in foreign language teaching, the learners' home culture should be incorporated in the teaching materials and the target culture so that they can comprehend it. The goal of the theory is the foreign language learners have the chance to make meaning rather than having teachers deliver immediate information about the foreign culture. In line with this, Straub (1999) as cited by Sariyildiz (2017) states that teachers should give them opportunities to elevate the students' awareness of their culture, to stipulate them with metalanguage of culture, and to cultivate a degree of intellectual objectivity essential in cross-cultural analysis. In other words, teaching culture aims at fostering the understanding of foreign culture from the students' insider lens to make them able to decipher foreign culture behaviors correctly.

However, the integration of cultural concepts in EFL teaching has not always been well accepted. Some scholars have debated whether there will be conscious and unconscious linguistic imperialism when the native-speakers' cultural norms are dominated in language materials (Phillipson 1992; Phillipson and Davies 1997, as cited by Byram 2008). Besides, Atkinson (1999) explains that many teachers see culture as a geographically, and quite often nationally, distinct entity, as relatively unchanging and homogenous, and as all-encompassing systems of rules or norms that substantially determine personal behavior. Consequently, some language instructors believe that teaching language is more important than enhancing the students' knowledge about the culture (Solikhah & Wirawati, 2020).

To broaden the horizons and minimize the challenges of implementing culture in the EFL classroom, Kramsch and Hua (2016) explain how culture works. First, at the theoretical level, culture is used as a tool for thinking. Second, at the critical level, culture becomes the perspectives of interpretive, reflexive, historically grounded, and politically sensitive that supposed or built by society. At last, at the practical level, culture is prompt the EFL instructors to consider that students may have different senses of particular words they use in English or different views of something. Therefore, the students should be taught the sociolinguistic

variation to help them interpret the meaning of the variations based on the situation and context. Further, cultural awareness facilitates the students to have effective communicative competence (Aly 2014).

According to Byram (1997), the knowledge of culture as a communicative competence facet is called intercultural communicative competence (ICC). There are four knowledge categories of ICC: (1) to understand oneself and others' culture, (2) to understand how to interpret and connect oneself and others' culture, (3) to understand how to engage oneself with others culture, and (4) to understand how to interact with others' culture. Henceforward, the learners acquire knowledge as the bridge between their own culture and the target culture.

ELT Textbooks in Indonesia

The Indonesian government has seen English as the most important international language and is widely accepted as a communication tool worldwide. Therefore, the Indonesian curriculum put English as part of the education curriculum since the power of English has proven a status for the Indonesian society. English has become a compulsory subject for Indonesian learners that is officially taught from Junior High School to the university level. Additionally, government policy relates to ELT has established English as an optional school subject from 1994 to 2012 (Widodo 2016).

Since Independence Day of Indonesia in 1945, the curriculum's implementation has switched for six considerable periods. The periods are Curriculum of 1975, Curriculum of 1986, Curriculum of 1994, Curriculum of 2004 or Competency-based Curriculum, School-based Curriculum (SBC), and Curriculum of 2013 (Prihantoro, 2015; Solikhah & Budiharso, 2019). The latest curriculum, the Curriculum of 2013, the government emphasized the integration of the characteristics of students' cultural identity in the context of education, including in EFL learning. As stated previously, the government has attempted to aid the ELT materials for EFL learners with locally developed textbooks that portray the students' culture and the target culture to make them easier to learn English more communicatively.

Not only presenting the local content but the textbooks undoubtedly also represent the other nations' cultures. Since English has been established as a foreign language, it is crucial to equip EFL students with an understanding of cultural and intercultural communication. In line with this, Herman (2007)recommends that teachers teach students to be more responsive to the ethnic stereotypes in a more complex and modern way. It implies that it is relevant to integrate various cultures or ethnic groups in the EFL curriculum. Moreover, Yamada (2010) states that to reach a positive attitude concerning communication through foreign languages,

the EFL students and teachers are encouraged to be sensitive to the existence of others' cultures and identities when they communicate. Therefore, EFL teaching and learning may support students in enhancing their views of other English speakers' cultural background differences (Tarman, 2012).

Theoretically, textbooks can give benefits to teachers and learners. Despite the technology enhancements and the internet role, course books are the foremost teaching resource for English teachers globally Tomlinson (2013). It means that English teaching worldwide needs myriad kinds of coursebooks to support English teachers. In line with this, Cunningsworth (1995) clearly explains that there are many roles of a coursebook in ELT that support teachers. The first is as a source for stimulating and providing the ideas teaching the language activities in the classroom. The second is for a syllabus that leads to learning goals that have been constructed. Finally, the other role is as sustenance for less experienced teachers to reach their confidence.

Moreover, a textbook also benefits for students, such as a resource for presenting materials in the class for both spoken and written, a reference for learning grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, language skills, and the other knowledge, a source for practicing and performing communicative interaction with others, and a means for self-directed learning or self-access work (Budiharso & Arbain, 2019). Additionally, according to Richards (1993), the curriculum's primary basis is represented in the textbooks. His idea also happens in Indonesia since the government has mandated to use the ELT textbooks established by the Indonesian MONEC. It is not only becoming the artifact of the curriculum, but the course books also preserved as the syllabus of teaching contains the objectives and methods(Appel 2011). Further, the textbooks serve a myriad of learning resources that represent a whole course's comprehensive subjects.

In the Indonesian context, the textbooks guide the teachers to manage the teaching materials and apply them both in the classroom and outside the classroom activities (Setyono and Widodo 2019). These textbooks should meet the basic norms of Indonesian and embody the Indonesian ideology values, i.e., *Pancasila* (the five pillars). Forshee (2006)defines *Pancasila* as the Indonesian statehood principle that was devised by the first president of Indonesia, Soekarno. The principles are "belief in one God, nationalism, humanitarianism, democracy, and social justice" to encourage a philosophy of harmony among Indonesian people. Relating to this, in the ELT newest curriculum, the series of EFL textbooks for the secondary school levels provided by the Indonesian government are designed to boost the learners' positive values as depicted in the ideology of *Pancasila*.

Cultural Linguistics

Sharifian (2017) defines cultural linguistics as a theoretical framework and an analytical framework for investigating the cultural conceptualizations that underlie the use of human languages. Here, cultural linguistics, as the theoretical framework, is the idea of cultural cognition, which provides a unified knowledge of cognition and cultural knowledge as they connect to language. Language becomes a critical system to communicate a particular culture to the next generation of a speech community. Additionally, language has two main functions in the cultural conceptualizations. The first is as linguistic interactions, a means for speakers to build and re-build meanings of their understandings. Meanwhile, the other function is as a tool for expanding the cultural cognitions itself, since it is accompanying with languages and language varieties to draw and reflect the cultural conceptualizations. Further, Sharifian also divides the conceptualizations of the culture of people's lives into seven aspects: language, literature, cultural art, emotion, non-verbal gesture, ritual, and cultural events.

As the analytical framework, cultural linguistics offers the instruments to analyze the relationship between language and cultural conceptualizations. It includes cultural schema, cultural category, and cultural metaphor for studying the language features that describe the cultural conceptualizations. Concerning applied linguistics, cultural linguistics has been employed in some areas that are assembled both in visuals and texts. Here, the including areas are world Englishes, cross-cultural communication, intercultural pragmatics, Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL), and political discourse analysis.

The Cultural Conceptualizations in the Indonesian EFL Textbook

Cultural conceptualizations refer to the compilation of the cultural schema, cultural category, and cultural metaphor (Sharifian 2015). Cultural schemas relate to principles, patterns, procedures, behavior expectations, and morals about numerous experiences' aspects and components. Besides, cultural categories are the things that culturally formed conceptual categories reflected in the human languages' lexicon, such as age categories, food categories, event categories, and emotion categories. The last tool is cultural metaphors that rely on the theoretical foundation that built-in cultural tradition, for example, a belief system of spiritual.

One of the strategies promoted by Aly (2014) for teaching intercultural competence in the EFL classroom is exploring the language learning materials and evaluating the texts and images of culture in the locally established textbook for both home and foreign cultures. The study limits on the non-verbal behavior presented in the Indonesian EFL students' textbook *Bahasa Inggris: When English Rings a Bell* for Grade 7. The visual representation of the

Indonesian culture is to shake and kiss teachers' and parents' hands that express the behavior of parental culture maintenance.

Theoretically, according to Downie et al. (2007), parents' roles are crucial for acculturating their children for becoming partied in their heritage culture. Internalization is then defined as a natural process of altering the previous outside regulations or values into something that a person can individually approve (Sari et al. 2018). Here, a regulation may endure beneath the control of external influence (rewards) or internal strain (offense). The cultural internalization then has a positive impact on the individuals' well-being.

Subiyanto (2018) explains that relating to shake hands as one of the Indonesian cultures, especially in Javanese (one of the Indonesia tribes), is to greet guests, friends, and other people in meeting to complement the verbal greetings. It represents sociability or to show that the person likes being friends with others. Another reason for the handshake is for partings; it signifies that a person has excellent feelings towards each other. For children, they shake hands to their parents to ask blessings since parents considered have more determinants in their lives. They believe that parents' blessings are valuable for their lives and happiness. Therefore, having good relationships with their parents is significant to them. Besides, shaking hands also function as asking an apology when they are doing something wrong. In Indonesia, it is more acceptable to say sorry, accompanied by shaking hands. Here, Subiyanto (2018) also describes how to shake hands to parents; they put their nose close to the parent's right hand and kiss it.

In more specifically, Marjadi (2015) describes that in Indonesian customs, elders are valued by the success of *Salim*, a revering handshake by placing the palm to the forehead. For instance, when shaking hands with older people, such as parents, grandparents, and teachers, it is expected that the younger people or students will contact the back of the elder's palm with the tip of their nose or forehead; this reflects particular respect from young to old.

Meanwhile, Roza (2012)states that handshaking in Indonesia symbolizes friendliness, warmth, formality, and trust the social interactions. Additionally, the tradition of kissing hand represents respecting parents, teachers, and community or religious leaders. Here, Roza acknowledges that it is doubtful where the tradition originated; however, the Indonesian people do this culture in their daily life.

Methods

Participants were from Indonesia who volunteered in response to fill the questionnaire to identify the Indonesian cultural conceptualizations of shaking and kissing elder's hands through Google Forms spread in WhatsApp Group. The questionnaire consists of eight

questions to explore the participants' conceptualizations of handshaking and kissing the elder's hands. These questions were following the questionnaire's framework as handshaking and hand-kissing as (1) childhood rules or customary, (2) respect to elderly people, (3) present rules (4) act of respect when leaving and meeting, (5) blessings, and (6) devotion. Here, the survey was in the form of Likert scale questions involving the contributors' level of agreement or disagreement on eight statements by selecting strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

In addition, in this survey, the participants were also expected to explain the experiences of why they shake and kiss the elder's hand. Then, the participants' responses were thematically analyzed and classified into the purposes of doing handshaking. A total of 104 men and 242 women participated, with a mean age of 37 years (range= 18 - 56 years, *SD* = 11.4 years). They were from many native groups in Java, Kalimantan (Borneo), Sumatra, Bali, and Sulawesi (Celebes), who had experienced the culture.

Further, following the classifications, a text and visual analysis were performed to explore how the cultural conceptualizations are depicted in the locally ELT textbook published by the Indonesian MONEC. The study emphases were shaking and kissing the elder's hands replicated in *Bahasa Inggris: When English Rings a Bell* for Grade 7. The coursebook was selected since it is used nationally in Indonesia, and it is a curricular artifact of the current ELT curriculum in Indonesia. The textbook also represents the Indonesian culture that reflects attitudes and values supporting the ideology of Indonesian people.

Results and Discussion

The study aims to explore the Indonesian cultural conceptualizations of shaking and kissing elders' hands as the non-verbal behavior replicated in middle school English textbooks. The units of the analysis were verbal texts and images. The followings are the findings of the study that divided into two main themes.

The Indonesian cultural conceptualizations of handshaking and kissing elders' hand

To understand the cultural conceptualizations of handshaking and kissing elders' hands as one of the Indonesian cultures, the study required the participants to complete the questionnaire. Here, the questionnaire functioned to identify the cultural schema of the Indonesian people who had experienced the culture. The results of the questionnaire represented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The cultural conceptualizations of handshaking and kissing elders' hands

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1. My parents have accustomed me to shake and kiss the hands of people who are older than me since I was childhood.	244	70.52	95	27.46	6	1.73	1	0.29
2. The habit of handshaking and kissing hands is not only for older people, but I am also accustomed to shake and kiss the hands of family relatives	186	53.76	141	40.75	16	4.62	3	0.87

	whose family tree is considered older.							
3.	I still make a habit of shaking and kissing the hands of older people.	185	53.47	142	41.04	18	5.20	1	0.29
4.	I always shake and kiss the hands of my parents to say goodbye.	258	74.57	84	24.28	4	1.16	0	0.00
5.	I always shake and kiss my parents' hands when I go home.	167	48.27	142	41.04	36	10.40	1	0.29
6.	I always shake and kiss my parents' hands when I ask them for a	245	70.81	93	26.88	6	1.73	2	0.58

	blessing to do something important in my life.							
7.	I shake and kiss my parents' hands to reflect my devotion to them.	248	71.68	93	26.88	5	1.45	0	0.00
8.	I shake and kiss the hand of an older person to express my respect.	197	56.94	136	39.31	12	3.47	1	0.29

Based on the table, handshaking and kissing the elderly hands were accustomed to their parents.It means that parents' role in acculturating their children to become part of their heritage culture is crucial (Downie et al. 2007). There were 70.52% of participants stated strongly agree, and 27.46% chose to agree with the statement. It proves that the behavior had been formed since they were a child and had become their habits in their lives. Theoretically, the definition of culture is a system of shared beliefs, norms, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that the member of society use to cope with their world and with one another (Bates and Plog 1980 cited by Kecskes 2015).

The ritual is not only for parents since *Salim*, i.e., a dignified handshake by putting the palm of the elder's hand on the younger forehead for showing respect (Marjadi 2005), has internalized (Sari et al. 2018) as the Indonesian identity and has a positive impact on the individuals' well-being. The table confirms that more than 90% of participants agreed that they also did the traditions to their family relatives whose family tree was considered older.

Further, the parents' influence on maintaining the tradition of shaking hand and kissing the elderly hands were firmly rooted in the participants' habit. The participants' responses confirm the theories stated by Downie et al. (2007) and Sari et al. (2018). It can be seen from the table that more than 90% of them still did the conduct in their daily lives.

Additionally, it was important for the participants to shake and kiss their parents' hands for leave-takings. The table indicates that more than 90% of the participants agreed with the statement. The results are in line with Subiyanto's (2018) and Tarman's (2012) theory explaining that when leaving home, children do *Salim* to their parents to ask for prayers as parents become more determined in their lives. However, 89.31% of the participants responded that they agreed to shake and kiss their parents' hands whenever they went home. Here, for the Indonesian belief, the blessings of parents are essential for their lives and their happiness so that it is essential to have a good relationship with them.

Surprisingly, more than 95% of the participants chose to agree on the response for statements 6 and 7. They believed that it was crucial for asking blessings from their parents through the tradition of handshaking and kissing their parents' hands since it reflected their devotion to their parents. These responses also strengthen the theory stated by Subiyanto (2018). Based on Indonesian beliefs, the children's success depends on their parents' good wishes. In other words, no matter what age, children will achieve a good life since they are blessed by their parents. Therefore, devotion to parents is a must for the Indonesian, and one way to express it is by shaking and kissing their hands or *Salim*.

Finally, for the last statement, the result also signifies that more than 95% of the participants showed their agreement of respecting the elderly by shaking and kissing their hands. The finding is in line with Roza (2012), Marjadi (2015), and Subiyanto (2018), who state that the shaking and kissing hand tradition reflects respect for older people, such as parents,teachers, and community or religious leaders.

The survey shows that the cultural tradition of shaking and kissing the elderly hands is vital in Indonesia. Here, the tradition of shaking and kissing the elderly hands has semantic and pragmatic meanings for the Indonesian people. In line with this, Sharifian (2015) explains that cultural schema has a relationship with the principles, patterns, procedures, behavior expectations, and morals relating to several aspects and components practice. The tradition has put parents and the elderly as respected persons that could have a strong influence on the young generation. Therefore, the practice would give a positive moral value for the next age group.

About the cultural category, the survey also required the participants to give their responses to the reasons for shaking and kissing the elderly hands as a non-verbal behavior. The following table is a summary of the analysis.

Table 2. The analysis of the cultural conceptualizations of handshaking and kissing elders' hands purposes

Expression							
To ask blessings	To inquire apology	To express love	To maintain culture obligation	To have good relationships	To express devotion	To show respect	To show politeness
39	6	61	89	11	21	88	28
Total	343						

In their previous research, Subiyanto (2018) and Roza (2012) explain that shaking hands is one of the Indonesian cultures that express friendliness, warmth, and formality, and trust the social interactions to complement the verbal greetings. In the present study, according to the participants, there are eight categories of expressions: to maintain cultural obligation, to show respect, to express love, to ask blessings, to show politeness, to express devotion, to have good relationships, and to inquiry apology.

However, three people from the study's total participants did not give their responses for explaining their familiarity with shaking and kissing the elder's hand. It can be seen from the table that most of the participants (89 people) stated that shake hands were for preserving the tradition since they believed that handshaking was one of the characteristics of Indonesian people. It had ethical, moral values for the next generation. Then, 88 participants described that handshaking was for showing their respect to their parents, teachers, and community leaders. One of the participants stated that shaking and kissing the elderly hands was modeled by his parents for showing respect.

As many as 61 participants explained, shaking and kissing the elderly's hands was to express love. In this category, most participants stated that handshaking could create a relationship bond between children and parents, or students and teachers. Meanwhile, 39 participants declared that shaking hands was to ask blessings from parents, teachers, or religious leaders. They believed that God would make things easier through parents, teachers,

or religious leader's hands since God's blessings came from their sincere prayer. Additionally, as many as 28 participants gave their opinions that shaking and kissing the elderly hands was for expressing politeness.

According to the participants' experiences (21 people) on the tradition of handshaking with the elderly, it showed their devotion. Here, the participants explained that kissing hands symbolized the dedication of younger people to the elderly. Moreover, 11 participants mentioned the reason why they did handshaking was to have good relationships with the elderly, and 6 participants confirmed that shaking hands also functioned as a medium for asking apology. For the elderly, it is more acceptable when a younger asks apology accompanied by kissing their hands. Further, these categories have become the theoretical foundation that builds one of Indonesia's cultural traditions, i.e., shaking and kissing elderly hands.

Cultural conceptualization of handshaking and kissing the elder's hand in the Indonesian ELT textbook

The cultural conceptualizations of handshaking and kissing the elders' hands in the Indonesian ELT textbook, *Bahasa Inggris: When English Rings a Bell* for Grade 7, appear in Chapter 1 discussing the greeting and taking leave, saying thank you, and saying sorry. The followings are the images that indicate one of the local wisdom of Indonesian culture, i.e., handshaking and kissing the elderly hands or *Salim*. They reflect positive attitudes and values for supporting nationalism as one of the Indonesian principles (*Pancasila*) since the 2013 Curriculum integrates between the students' cultural identity characteristics in education for this case in the EFL setting.

Figure 1. The portrayal of greeting in *Bahasa Inggris: When English Rings a Bell* for Grade 7 (2017, p. 5)

Figure 1 depicts an interaction between a female student and her male teacher. In the picture, the student, named Siti, greets and shakes her teacher's hand, Mr. Ahmad. Additionally, the visual shows that Siti respects Mr. Ahmad as the teacher. The behavior also represents politeness that could be a model for the EFL middle school learners to maintain the value of respecting teachers.

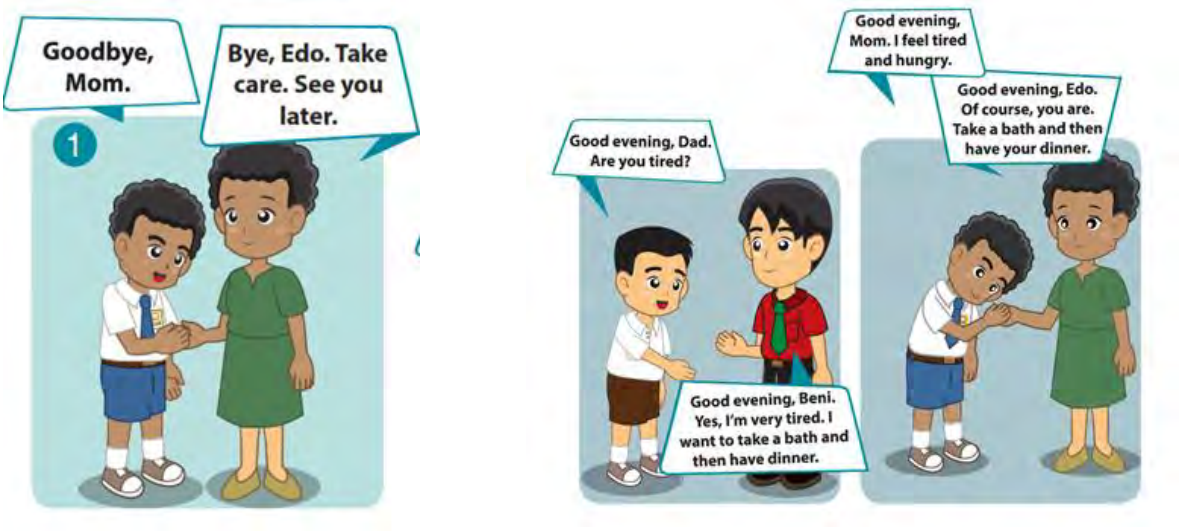

Figure 2. The portrayal of leaving and returning home in *Bahasa Inggris: When English Rings a Bell* for Grade 7 (2017, pp. 7-11)

Figure 2 portrays the activities of students, Edo and Beni, with their parents. The first picture illustrates how Edo says goodbye to her mother. In Indonesian tradition, when children leave and return home, they should do the ritual of handshaking and kissing their parents' hands. Culture represents the children's devotion to their parents. Besides, by shaking their parents' hands, they ask blessings from their parents before they go anywhere.

When they return home, they also shake and kiss their parents' hands. Above all, the ritual also shows the love between children and parents. With the activity, they bond their relationships. According to Subiyanto (2018), to perform the habit, children put their nose close to the parent's right hand and kiss it. Here, the images that represent the Indonesian culture's local wisdom are expected to be imitated by the EFL middle school learners in their daily lives (Tarman&Kuran, 2015).

Figure 3. The portrayal of asking apology in *Bahasa Inggris: When English Rings a Bell* for Grade 7 (2017, p. 15)

Figure 3 shows the interaction between a student, Edo, and his teacher, Mrs. Vina. From the conversation, Edo was late, and he was asking sorry to the teacher. Admittedly, the picture exposes that someone must be asking apology to others when he makes a mistake. In the image, it can also be seen that Edo reached out his right hand to Mrs. Vina. According to the Indonesian culture, when a younger asks apology, he usually shakes and kisses the elderly hand for complementing his verbal language. This is in line with Subiyanto's (2018) theory explaining that to say sorry, followed by shaking and kissing the elderly hand, is more appropriate. As the artifact of the culture, the textbook undoubtedly teaches the EFL learners to do the same things as the visual images represented in it.

The local content exemplified in Figures 1, 2, and 3 of the Indonesian ELT textbook *Bahasa Inggris: When English Rings a Bell for Grade 7* are the students' local wisdom, it can boost their cultural awareness. Further, their awareness of culture will help them have efficiently communicative competence (Aly 2014). Additionally, the integration of the learners' culture in the materials of teaching and the target culture is essential for them to learn a foreign language effectively (Kramsch 1993). The figures represented in the textbook also support Byram's (2008) theory that for teaching a foreign language, teachers should focus not only on language skills but also emphasize on linguistic function as a means of communication.

Conclusion

The cultural conceptualizations of shaking and kissing the elderly hands as one of the local pearls of wisdom in Indonesia have various meanings. The non-verbal behavior

performed by the younger people to the older ones has precious principles to conform to Indonesian citizenship nationalism. There are eight categories of cultural conceptualizations of handshaking: for preserving culture obligation, for expressing respect, for showing love, for asking blessings, for expressing politeness, for showing devotion, for having good relationships, and for asking apology. In this case, all Indonesian people do not equally share these unique representations of non-verbal behavior since cultural conceptualizations are variously dispersed and may change across time and space.

Therefore, the values of handshaking and kissing the elderly hand as one of the Indonesian local wisdom depicted in the Indonesian EFL textbook can elevate students' awareness of their cultural practices and promote their dignity in their own culture and cultural identity. Here, the visuals of shaking and kissing hands were portrayed in the interactions between children, parents, students, and teachers. Additionally, as the Indonesian ELT curriculum represents, the locally EFL textbook published by the Indonesian MONEC can be a means for maintaining the Indonesian local wisdom in English teaching and learning for middle school students. The present study has significant implications for research and pedagogy in ELT and World Englishes using Cultural Linguistics.

The inclusion of learners' home culture is essential in foreign language teaching, so learners will be more natural to comprehend the new language they study. Teaching them using their own culture enables the learners to make meaning of the foreign language more effectively rather than having educators explain information directly about the foreign culture. Besides, the study's outcomes also prove that integrating cultural elements into foreign language teaching typifies authentic input to the learners.

Pedagogical Implication

Learning a language includes understanding the culture behind the expression, attitude and norms the language is being learned. Language learners in the recent context are intercultural learners as learners will make contact to the world culture. Teaching culture should have been considerably planned through textbooks, interaction in the classroom and in the pragmatic contexts for various uses. As a textbook provides the core teaching materials where culture should be emphasized, this study implies that local wisdom has been deemed as the rich sources of culture to teach. In Indonesian context, the inclusion of local-based wisdom into the coursebook becomes the center of attention now and in the future.

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The EFL Professional's Written Forum

Exploring Language Input and Provoking Language Output to Raise English Attainment of the University Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate why Indonesian students learn English and the problems they encounter in the learning process, specifying on language input-and-output methodological approach when teaching English. This study used a case study design and qualitative approach to analyze data. The focus of this study involved learning process that see how various sentence patterns are constructed, how input is taught to students, and how

students' language output is provoked, specifically the way in which students are encouraged to produce written English text and achieve a mastery of English. This study assigned 40 juniors in the Faculty of Economics of Universitas Tulungagung, Indonesia as the participants. Data were collected through the documents, observation, interview and test. Data about how the language input and output were implemented while teaching were collected through the observation, participatory observation, and from documentation. To ascertain the students' abilities for producing English sentences, the researchers administered a test. The obtained data were analyzed qualitatively. Results show that students' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar are prominent to the efforts to attain English proficiency and improve written English. Problems on sentence patterns, especially compound sentence, complex sentence and compound complex sentence appear because of the lack of grammar knowledge. Problems on developing oral English are encountered in terms of psychological barriers where students are afraid of expressing oral English, thus provoking teaching models are required as the input.

Keywords: *language input, language output, raise, provoke, achievement.*

Introduction

This study begins with some justification for why the research topic is regarded as important. Specifically, the data collected by interviewing students at the Faculty of Economics at the Universitas Tulungagung (henceforth, Unita), East Java, Indonesia may disclose facts about why many of them are less proficient in their speaking, writing, and comprehension of English (Solikhah, 2020a; Budiharso & Arbain, 2019). Indeed, this low level of English proficiency may due to a poor knowledge of linguistic and nonlinguistic factors. Firstly, the majority of these students stopped learning English as soon they graduated from high school. Instead of continuing to higher education, they went into work. This likely meant their grasp of English diminished, with it being syntactically and semantically limited. It is therefore not easy for them to memorize and practice the meaning of words or the rules for arranging them in order to express their feelings and thoughts in English text (Tarman & Kuran, 2015). The students know that English differs from both their native language and the national *bahasa* Indonesia. Indeed, the meaning and use of English words are often confusing, because they rely on the context in which they are being used. One word therefore often has more than one meaning. What is more, a word in science may not be easily digested because of its abstractness. In addition, class time is limited to just 100 minutes a week, so students lack sufficient opportunities to practice English. Finally, English, as a foreign language, is not used

for communication in daily activities in Indonesia, and these students learn English just to fulfill the university curriculum. The above linguistic challenges and alack of opportunities to practice English often demotivates the students, such that their resulting English ability is not good (Solikhah, 2020b).

This study describes the methods a teacher uses to elevate the students' ability to produce English sentences. This is facilitated by providing students with more language input during teaching and directing learning activities that drive them to produce language output in terms of communicating in English (e.g., asking questions, stating ideas, rejecting proposals, conveying something, describing things, etc.).

This section also describes several aspects related to the topic of the article, namely the theoretical and empirical rationale for following the language input and output methodological teaching approach in an English course for students at the Faculty of Economics of Unita. The first aspect concerns the underlying theories for teaching and learning a language, and these refer to the behaviorism and cognitivist paradigms, which are integrated approaches for teaching English. The second aspect concerns briefly elaborating the status of English and why the students at the Faculty of Economics of Unita are obliged to take it as a subject. The third aspect concerns describing the problems faced by students. Finally, the fourth aspect covers explaining the implementation of the language input and output methodological approach.

The methodological approach to teaching a language is more or less influenced by beliefs about how language is acquired, based on an existing view about the language. At Unita, English-teaching practices follow the input and output methodological approach as its theoretical framework, which is based on the behaviorism and cognitivist paradigms. Skinner (1992) opines that learning a human language is a matter of conditioning. Skinner's opinion infers that a language leaner learns a language unconsciously on hearing people speaking or trying to read a foreign text. This theory in turn suggests that a stimulus–response reinforcement, such as through the audio-lingual method, can contribute to the learning of a language. Learning can therefore be conducted either through imitation or drilling. This differs from Skinner's view, where structural linguists have theorized language as a system of grammatical rules that are important to acquire(Skinner, 1950, 1963, 2012).

These two tenets were later adapted by cognitivists and generative linguists. The cognitivists propose that people have a learning capacity or a language-acquisition device. They say that studying a language is not aided by environment and habit. The generative linguists, meanwhile, opine that there must be a meaning behind an utterance (i.e., a deep

structure). This view reinforces language teaching's emphasis on meaning, so the communicative approach can be practiced to promote learners' communicative abilities.

When examining the theories about how people actually acquire a language, as previously elaborated, it can be concluded that an effective methodological teaching approach cannot emphasize solely on one "ism." Performing drills, mastering the rules of a language, and practicing communication are all teaching–learning strategies, and they can be applied simultaneously. Indeed, students will become proficient in English if they get into the habit of using English as a means of communication(Cummins, 1992). In the context of classroom language teaching and learning, the use of blended teaching strategies is expected to lead to better student achievement, because the weaknesses of one strategy can be mitigated by the strengths of another strategy (Solikhah & Wirawati, 2020). Take the example of asking the students to repeat or imitate the utterances of a teacher: Performing substitution drills like this does not educate students about using the language in real-life communication, because the students are only being trained "parrot-fashion." Used in isolation, this form of teaching leaves students unable to use the language for other purposes.

The interviews with students at the Faculty of Economics at Unita reveal a lack of grammatical knowledge and vocabulary, poor pronunciation, and limited opportunities use English, often causing the students to be less communicative. They are unable to use the language to communicate each other. To tackle this problem, the teacher applies more than one approach when teaching English. First, the teacher introduces students to linguistic aspects such as phones, morphemes, and grammar. Next, the teacher provokes students' language output. The students are given some tasks and trained to use their acquired vocabularies and grammatical knowledge to construct various utterances.

In the book entitled *The Practice of Language Teaching*, Harmer (1983) divides classroom activities into two stages. First, the students receive language input, and then they produce language output. The language input is defined as the stage in which the language knowledge is conveyed to students through conscious learning in classroom activities. At this point, students receive language input through the teacher's instruction, their own talk, and the materials delivered in terms of morphemes, words, phrases, and sentences, as well as their meaning, function, and grammar in the domain of the four language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing). This language input serves as a basis for building student competence for using the language(Harmer, 1983; Budiharso & Tarman, 2020).

The components of language input need to be learned because each language's system is often unique. For example, the Indonesian language's system differs from that of the English

language, and they are phonetically, morphologically, syntactically, and semantically distinct. With sufficient language input, students can recall the stored knowledge when expressing their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. For example, they can use this when participating in question-and-answer sessions, making presentations, writing, and so on. Further detail about the role of input in learning a language was put forward by Krashen in his "Input Hypothesis"(Krashen, 2013; Krashen, 1985).

Language output is defined as the act of students using their acquired language knowledge as a vehicle to practice conversing in real life contexts(Harmer, 1983;Swain, 2005). A student's ability to use a language is characterized by his or her success in communication, such as conveying ideas to other people in an oral or written form. Students' abilities manifest in their speaking (oral presentations) and writing (reports, essays, and articles).

The objectives of this study are as follows: (1) to describe why these students learn English at university level, (2) to identify the problems encountered by these students when learning English, (3) to explain how the language input and output methodological approach is applied when teaching English, (4) to describe how language input is delivered to students, (5) to describe how the language output is provoked in students, and (6) to describe the students' ability to produce various sentences.

Methods

This study applied a case study design where a qualitative approach was assigned to analyze the data. The aims of this study were to see how students learn English at university level, identify the problems they encounter when learning English, explain how the language input and output methodological approach is applied when teaching English, describe how language input is delivered to students, explain how the language output is provoked in students, and to describe these students' ability to produce various sentences. This study assigned 40 juniors at the Faculty of Economics of Unita as the research participants. Juniors were considered relevant for the participants because they were at the beginning process of learning English so that input theory of English acquisition could be genuinely identified.

The researchers used documentation, interviews, observations, and tests to collect data. In line with this, an observation checklist and a handy cam video recorder were used as tools. The observations aimed to capture the delivery of language input (i.e., English vocabulary and grammar). The interviews were done after the observation and document analysis to gather evidence about the students' problems when learning English. Related documentation, such as the syllabus, lesson plans, teaching materials, and student worksheets, as well as English scores

before the language input and output teaching approach was applied, was also collected as supporting data (Tarman, 2012). Prior to the analysis, trustworthiness of data was conducted through methods triangulation and theory triangulation. Furthermore, the triangulated data were analyzed qualitatively in terms of themes implementing Miles and Huberman's (1994) model that consisted of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion and verification drawing.

Results and Discussion

Why the students learn English

Teaching English at Unita is based on the 2012 institutional college curriculum, which stresses a competence-based curriculum *(Sk Mendiknas* no 45/4/U/2002 and *Peraturan Presiden No 8th 2012 tentang KKNI*). This outlines the contents of the curriculum with regard to the contents standard and its implementation to achieve a graduate-standard competence. According to this, universities have the opportunity to develop their own English syllabi in line with specified contents and competences. Students' basic English competence must therefore reflect an ability to use English receptively and productively.

The students' problems when learning English

Most students at the Faculty of Economics at Unita are not fresh from high school. Many of them are former employees of formal and informal institutions, and this is reflected in their level of English proficiency, because they may have stopped studying English many years ago. They are therefore not proficient at remembering the meaning of English words and grammar. Their difficulties are further compounded because the English words used in science lessons differ from those used in daily conversation, and scientific English is often decontextualized. The events or topics being described to students are unfamiliar, and there is little or no opportunity to establish a shared meaning (Rosenthal, 1996). Indeed, the information presented is abstract and unrelated to the students' everyday activities and life experiences.

Poor oral and written English is characteristic of the majority of students at the Faculty of Economics, and this results not just from the long break from learning English and the abstractness of scientific language—the students are also linguistically hindered by an insufficient knowledge of words and how to arrange them correctly. They are unable to practice correct English grammar and appropriate word choice when they write, speak, read, and listen.

When they construct a sentence, for example, they are often confused about how to arrange the words, because Indonesian grammar does not work with English.

Further problems occur in students' spelling, pronunciation, and understanding of meaning. The meaning must be understood within the context it is used, and English is not commonly used in daily activities. The students learn English merely for academic purposes, such as writing essays or understanding texts as part of the university curriculum, and it is something they are obliged to take. These linguistic issues diminish students' motivation to learn English. To tackle this problem, the input and output methodological approach for teaching a language is practiced to evoke students' interest in learning English. The teacher provides the students with language input according to their needs and guides them in producing language output through communication activities.

The implementation of the language input and output methodological approach

Basically, there were three major stages in which the teacher already conducted English teaching: 1) introducing English, 2) practice activities, and 3) communicative activities. In the first stage, the teacher's job is to firstly present the English being used and its meaning and secondly the English form. To trigger students' interest in learning English, the teacher uses internet-based materials with up-to-date useful issues that relate to the study program and management interest. During the second presentation, the students are guided in understanding English grammar by explicitly analyzing the English form used. For example, the students are introduced to the English in a speech, sentence pattern, word, phrase, or sentence, which they read and listen to. At the introduction stage, five components are considered, including lead in, elicitation, explanation, reproduction, and creativity.

How language input is delivered to the students

English phones, morphemes, words, elements of speech, phrases, and sentence patterns are taught to the students through three general stages, namely introducing English, practice activities, and communicative activities. The teaching materials are taken from newspaper articles, narrative texts, recount texts, announcements, and informative tables and visual texts, as well as the teacher's and students' conversation.

The procedures for introducing English phones, morphemes, words, elements of speech, phrases, and sentence patterns are embodied in the following activities.

Pre-teaching

There are two steps for preparing teaching. These are (1) preparing certain texts (newspaper articles, announcements, narratives, recounts, and so on), and (2) copying the worksheet and distributing copies to the students.

While teaching

While teaching, some steps are followed by the teacher. These include (1) reading the text to give students a guide for how to pronounce the English word; (2) asking the students to follow a reading once they are familiar with the pronunciation; (3) correcting any mistakes; (4) asking the students to read a text as a home assignment; (5) extracting a word and defining elements of speech, morphemes, and phrases in the assigned text and then explaining to the students how to derive meaning; (6) asking the students to extract a word and define the meaning, morpheme, and phrase of the assigned text, followed by explaining the meaning; (7) correcting any mistakes again; (8) extracting the sentence pattern from the text and showing how a word functions and how a sentence is formed with a grammatical explanation; and (9) asking the students to extract a sentence in the same assigned text and analyze its form.

Post-teaching

In the post-teaching period, the teacher asks students to read and identify words, phrases, and sentence patterns, as well as analyze the form, for a text as a home assignment. The materials below are used by the teacher to show how students can use English in certain contexts. The teacher's job is to explain what a text means and how the English language is used, as well as its grammatical form and how it is said or written. The teacher asks the students to repeat the text, training them to improve their pronunciation by reading out loud a word highlighted in a different color.

Sample 1

Pre-teaching

Strategic Partnership Program

ITA's Strategic Partners support our mission of strengthening the competitiveness of U.S. industry, promoting trade and investment, and ensuring fair trade through the rigorous enforcement of trade laws and agreements. Partnership activities help to grow the U.S. exporter base, educate the public on the benefits of international trade, and increase awareness of

government resources that help exporters and investors.Together, we can improve the global business environment and help U.S. organizations compete at home and abroad.

While-teaching activities

1. *Introducing the linguistic components of English*

   The teacher extracts a word, pronounces it, and identifies its role in speech (i.e., noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, interjection).

   A noun is a word that refers to a "thing," such as a person, animal, place, phenomenon, substance, quality, idea, and so on.

   Examples: Partners, mission.

   A verb is a word that describes an action, state, or event.

   Examples: Support, strengthening.

   An adjective is a "describing word," and its main syntactic role is to qualify a noun or noun phrase, thus providing more information about the object being signified.

   Examples: Strategic, global.

   An adverb is a word that modifies the meaning of a verb, adjective, or other adverb. It typically answers questions such as "how?," "in what way?," "when?," "where?," and "to what extent?"

   Example: at home and abroad.

   A phrase is an expression, and it may be a group of words or even just one word. In linguistic analysis, it forms a constituent unit in the construction of a sentence. In the grammatical hierarchy, a phrase is under the class of clauses.

   Examples: Strategic Partners, fair trade.

2. *Introducing English sentence patterns*

   A sentence is traditionally (although inadequately) defined as a word or group of words that expresses a complete idea and may include **a subject, a verb**, **an object, and an adverb.**

   The teacher extracts a simple sentence and complex sentence as examples.

   a. Simple sentence

   - **"ITA's Strategic Partners support our mission"**

S P O

- **“Partnership activities help to grow the U.S.”**

S P O

b. Complex sentence

“ITA's Strategic Partners support our mission of strengthening the competitiveness of U.S. industry, promoting trade and investment, and ensuring fair trade through the rigorous enforcement of trade laws and agreements.

How is the students’ language output provoked?

a. The procedure for encouraging students to produce written English goes as follows:

Pre-teaching

During pre-teaching, the teacher (1) prepares a certain text, such as a newspaper article, announcement, narrative, recount, or such like, and then (2) distributes worksheets to the students.

While teaching

While teaching, the teacher (1) provides an example by extracting a word or phrase from a certain text to build a sentence. He or she then (2) asks students to extract a word or phrase of a certain text to build a sentence using his or her own English. Next, (3) if mistakes arise, the teacher explains the error. Finally, (4) the teacher asks the student to study an additional text as a home assignment.

Post-teaching

During post-teaching, the teacher asks the students to write an English sentence using the words available in any text as a home assignment.

b. The procedure for how the teacher invokes the students’ spoken English goes as follows:

Pre-teaching

During the pre-teaching period, the teacher (1) prepares a written text of any genre and (2) distributes worksheets to the students.

While teaching

While teaching, the teacher (1) provides an example, such as by constructing a question using words like what, who, why, where, when, how, and so on. The answer to the proposed

question must be available in the delivered text. Next, the teacher (2) asks students to follow suit and construct a similar question. Again, the answer to the proposed question must be available in the delivered text. (3)If mistakes arise, the teacher explains the error. Finally, (4) the teacher asks students to write about the text using their own English.

Post-teaching

Following teaching, the teachers ask students to construct a question using the "wh-" words (e.g., what, who, why, where, when, how, and so on). The answer to the proposed question must be available in the specific text.

Below is a teaching sample for students' spoken English using a specific written text.

Sample 2

Indonesian economic review

Although this year's tax revenue so far has reached only 94.87 percent of the estimate in the 2018 state budget, or Rp 1.35 quadrillion (US$93.09 billion), Taxation Director General Robert Pakpahan said this year's revenue would grow more than in previous years.Finance Ministry data show that as of November, tax revenue realization reached Rp 1.14 quadrillion, 16.77 percent more than last year and the highest growth recorded since 2012.Danny Darussalam Tax Center (DDTC) tax research partner Bawono Kristiaji said in a statement that this year's tax revenue double-digit growth was all thanks to the recovering economic situation in some sectors, particularly mining, coupled with a softer approach toward taxpayers and ongoing tax reform efforts made without drastic regulatory changes. Despite the high growth, the lower tax collection in November means another Rp 110 trillion needs to be collected in the last month of the year, which could be hard to achieve given the relaxations introduced recently by the government Taxation Directorate General tax revenue and compliance director Yon Arsal said the government decided in June to decrease small and medium enterprises' income tax from 1 percent to 0.5 percent in order to boost their growth and help their cash flow.

(https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/12/26/not-all-bad-in-2018-indonesian-economic-review.html)

The procedure for provoking the students' spoken English

While teaching

1. Provide some examples; make a question using a "wh-" word (e.g., what, who, why, where, when, how, etc.). The answer to the proposed question must be available in the delivered text.

   Question :When did Indonesia's annual inflation rate likely increase again?

   Answer : Indonesia's annual inflation rate likely increased again in May.

   Question : Why did Indonesia's annual inflation rate likely increase in May and reach a 14-month high?

   Answer : The price pressures intensified in the days leading to the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

2. Ask the students to follow suit and construct a question using "wh-" words (e.g., what, who, why, where, when, how, and so on). The answer to the proposed question must be available in the delivered text.
3. If a mistake arises, explain the error.
4. Ask the student to rewrite or retell the meaning of the text using his or her English.

Post-teaching

After teaching, the teacher (1) asks the student to construct a question with a "wh-" word (e.g., what, who, why, where, when, how, and so on). The answer to the proposed question must be available in the specific text. The teacher then (2) asks the student to rewrite what the text conveys using his or her own English.

The students' achievement in English

The effort to improve students' English skills involves giving language input and soliciting the students' language output. This approach can impact the English abilities of students. Before being taught with this approach, the students' score for English sentences was 66.2 on average. After being exposed to language input and output teaching, the score was 75.5 on average, so students improved their skills considerably.

Discussion

In an era when the people of many different countries mingle, being competent in using English for communicative purposes—such as in the areas of economic, social, political, and

cultural activities—is a priority. Equipping students with a communicative ability in English, through lessons and English teaching content at universities, has been nationally designed to prepare the students with a receptive and productive English ability. Unfortunately, it is commonly the case that the students included in this research are not proficient at using English for social and academic purposes.

The obstacles to improving students' mastery of English derive from not having sufficient skills in English vocabulary and grammar. Consequently, it is challenging for students to arrange English words in a syntactically correct way when they need to write or speak. An effort was made to remedy this situation by delivering language input to the students' and provoking their language output. This research's findings demonstrate that the students are able to produce several types of sentence patterns (affirmative or declaratives, negative and interrogative) in a grammatically correct manner. The students' improvement is indicated by an increase in their average score (see Table1) after being exposed to language input and output, with this average score increasing from 66.2 to 75.4.

This finding agrees with those of some previous research. For example, Bahrani (2014) found that language input contributes to the success of second language learning. His article notes the benefits of provoking language output to increase English achievement, particularly for the acquisition of English grammar skills (Bahrani, 2014).

A related study was conducted by Ahmadi (2016). His research, which is entitled "The Role of Input-based and Output-based Language Teaching in Learning English Phrasal Verbs by Upper-intermediate Iranian EFL Learners," investigates the impact of input-based and output-based pedagogy. His research finds evidence of a significant difference between input-based and output-based instruction when teaching phrasal verbs. He reports that output-based language teaching outperformed input-based language teaching and resulted in better learning of English phrasal verbs (Ahmadi, 2016). The word "output" was used to indicate the outcome or product (i.e., what the learner has learned).This term is described in "the output hypothesis" (Swain, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1995, 1998).

Unsworth (2016) reviewed some recent studies about the role of input quantity and quality in bilingual language development. He defines the characteristics of bilingual language development as being variable in terms of individual children's language-learning outcomes and experiences. Some factors contribute to experiential variation in bilingual contexts, such as the complexity of maternal speech. Bilingual language development is understood in a broad sense, and the acquisition is simultaneous and successive (or sequential) for bilingual speakers. He concludes three points: First, different input sources in the bilingual child's language

environment playa significant role in the child's own language output. Second, specific linguistic domains, most usually vocabulary and morphosyntax, vary between individuals. Finally, these findings have implications for language-acquisition theories and parenting and education (Unsworth, 2016; Sugiharto, 2016; Hoff & Core, 2013).

The theory of language acquisition implies, quite simply, that language acquisition occurs when the comprehension of real messages occurs, when the acquirer is not "on the defensive." However, this does not happen overnight—it develops slowly, and speaking skills emerge significantly later than listening skills. Therefore, the best teaching methods are those that supply "comprehensible input" in low-anxiety situations and contain messages that students are interested in hearing. It involves allowing students to produce when they are "ready," recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not forcing and correcting production (Wilson, 2014).

Chao (2013) investigated Krashen's input hypothesis to analyze an English listening course in Chinese colleges. He explains the influence of the Krashen input hypothesis on college students of English in China. He comes to the conclusion that the hypothesis helps arouse students' interest in learning English and improving their listening abilities (Chao, 2013).

From a pedagogical perspective, there is some evidence for a relationship between input, interaction, and second language acquisition. Studies of second language acquisition are generally concerned with the knowledge that second language learners do and do not acquire and how that knowledge comes about. Some experts therefore tie these issues together through three perspectives: an input or interaction framework, information-processing, and language input learnability (Garcia & Gass, 2000; Huttenlocher, 1998; Long, 1985). The acquisition of a second language is also heavily influenced by parental language input. Differences in the parental language input patterns used in the home correlated with differences in children's language use (De Houwer, 2007).Long (1985) proposes a systematic approach to link the features of "environmental" language and learners' L2 development. He suggests three steps: (1) linguistic/conversational adjustments to promote comprehension of input, (2) comprehensible input to promote acquisition, and (3) linguistic/conversational adjustments to promote acquisition (Garcia & Gass, 2000; Long, 1985).

This present study reveals that providing students with language input and encouraging them to use the language can increase their mastery of vocabulary and grammar. The students' ample understanding of these basic English components are in turn very helpful to students in competently creating English utterances. The researcher, however, acknowledges that there are

a number of limitations to this research. Firstly, the research covers only a limited number of students at a specific research site, and it does not follow an experimental research design. Secondly, due to the research period, the observations only include a limited number of lesson hours. Thirdly, this research does not investigate possible individual variables that may influence students' abilities, nor are the results generalizable. Other effects for providing language input and provoking language output are also not covered, and future studies could investigate the role of offering language input and stimulating students to become more productive at generating English utterances.

Conclusion

When studying this teaching experience, we can see how students are not only conditioned to learn English but also inspired to be creative in using English to communicate effectively. In contrast, the teaching of English may fail to drive students' English communicative abilities if they are simply conditioned to repeat and follow what the teacher says. To make the students more able to conduct English communication, one aspect is important: In the context of EFL, particularly at the University of Tulungagung, having sufficient vocabulary and a mastery of grammar is meaningless if they are not encouraged to produce spoken and written English.

On the other hand, it is hard for students to speak, write, listen, and read English if they do not have a good knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar. They also make some mistakes in English writing, speaking, listening, and reading. To meet the students' needs, the integrated approach is followed to maintain students' capabilities for learning English. To make the learning a joyful experience, the teacher can use attractive communicative teaching materials by maximizing the use of IT. In addition, all the presented linguistic components (e.g., phone, morpheme, word, phrase, meaning, and English rules) match with the students' English proficiency level.

Since the students' English proficiency level is low, we recommend building a sentence with a very simple arrangement. The sentence patterns cover the use of declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives, and exclamations. The teacher explains how the sentence types are used and how to create them. The declaratives are used to explain and describe concepts, to give tasks and information, to make clarifications, and to direct students to perform activities. In some cases, the declaratives are used with a rising intonation for a question. Austin (1962) call sit an implicit performative utterance.

Linguistically, the form is declarative or affirmative, but the illocutionary (what the teacher really intends) is to request information or to question. The interrogatives—beginning with what, which, how, who, to be (is and are), and modals (can, will, may)—are introduced. Some English simple and complex sentences are taken as models. The simple sentences are used when they express a single idea in a sentence. Meanwhile, the complex sentences are used when the idea cannot be stated in a simple sentence. Finally, we conclude that with the acquired language input in terms of linguistic components (e.g., phone, morpheme, word, phrase, meaning, and English rules) the students are capable of creatingwritten or spoken English.

Pedagogical Implication

Input hypothesis has contributed a great influence in teaching English and has been considered as the cornerstone of SLA. Input hypothesis has been implemented in teaching listening, speaking, reading and writing successfully because teachers can control the input in line with teaching goals. This study draws how input has been varied in four English skills and students attain proficiency with expected results. This study implies that input hypothesis can vary the grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation for the oral and written purposes. As for teaching English for non-English major, input hypothesis is effective to promote and English language teachers are suggested to lay the input as the main consideration for the syllabus design, teaching process and improve students' oral and written performance.

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ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

A syntactic difference between the finite and non-finite English clauses with reference to the Arabic ones: A contrastive study

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Abstract

A finite clause has a primary verb as its main verb that shows tense and maybe found in a relative clause or a noun clause embedded within a main clause, while a non-finite clause a participle clause usually has a –ed or –en verb form that does not show tense secondary verb. participle clauses mostly occur as a noun complements. This study is of four sections, section one deals with main definitions, functions and types concerning such clauses in the English language. Section two is about the mentioned clauses with their types in the Arabic language. Section three is concerned with the contrastive analysis between the clauses (finite and non-finite) in both languages (English and Arabic), whereas, section four is fully devoted to conclusions.

Finite and Non- Finite Clauses

The essential difference between the finite & non-finite clauses is connected to the variation of the basic and dependent clauses. Finite sentences may be main or subordinate ones; non-finite sentences are always subordinate. (Huddleston and K. Pullum, 2005:36).

Mathews (2007:388) states that Subordinate clause is a clause which is a syntactic element within a larger one, while main clause is A clause which can be used on its own is called an independent clause, for example, while it is raining, please get inside. (C. Richards and Schnaidt, 2002: 150).

Traditional grammarians classify verbs as a finite and a non-finite verb and then divide clauses in terms of containing or not a finite verb (Huddleston and K. Pullum, 2005:36):

1. The sentence is finite, when the verb has a primary form.
2. The sentence is non- finite, when the verb has a gerund –participle or past participle form.
3. When the verb has a plain form, the clause is either finite or non –finite, particularly:
   a- Imperative and subjective clauses are finite.
   b- Infinitival clauses are non-finite.

Definitions of Finite and Non –Finite Clauses:

Finite is a term used in the grammatical classification of the types of verbs and clauses. A finite verb phrase has a form that can occur on its own in an independent sentence or "main clause". It allows formal contrast in the tense and mood. Non –finite forms of the verb; on the other hand, occurs on their own only in the dependent clauses, and lack the tense and mood contrast of all forms except the infinitives and participle ((-ing and –en forms)) are finite, like is walking, have walked and walks. Clauses which always contain a finite verb are finite clause, "these in English always contain subject, except in the case of commands" otherwise, they are non –finite sentences. e.g, 1: walking down the street, to back the ball(Crystal, 2003:780). Finite clauses are a clause one of whose elements are a finite verb. The subordinate clause in accept that it has broken, as opposed to the construction with an infinitive in expect it to break (Matheus, 2007:139).

Non-finite verb form which refers to an infinitive, participle or any other form has a nominal or an adjectival role. If a clause has such a form as its central element, it is in turn a non –finite clause (Mathews, 2007:260).

Richards and Schmidt (2002:202) define finite and non –finite as a form of a verb that is highlighted to show that it is connected to a subject of person and has no tense. The infinitive and participles are non –finite forms of verbs in English as shown in table (1)

Subject	Finite verb form	Non –finite verb form
they he I	Want Wants Wanted	To leave

Features of Finite Clauses:

1. Finite verb phrases can function as the verb phrase of independent sentence.
2. Finite verb phrases have tense contrast, i.e, the difference between present and past tense.
   E,g 2: I am a journalist now.
   e.g, 3: She worked as a travel agent last summer. (Ouirk et.al, 1985:149)

   a. Present tense:
      One needs to recognize three main kinds of present:
      i. Timeless, explained with the present simple form.

e.g, 4: ((always)) writes with a private pen.

As well as it expressed habitual action as here, the timeless present is used for comprehensive clauses such as:

e.g, 5: The water boils at 100c.

e.g, 6: Spiders have different types.

ii. limited, comes with the present progressive.

e.g, 7: He is writing ((on this occasion)) with a special pen, since he has mislaid his ordinary one.

iii. iii- instantaneous: explained with either the simple ((especially in a series))or the progressive form.

e.g, 8: As you see, she is dropping the ball into the water. (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1989: 41-42)

b. Past tense

Past is an action that happened in past and may be seen:

i. Occurring at particular point of time, e.g, He wrote his letter of 16 June 1972 with special pen.

ii. Over period; the period that may be seen as

1. continued up to the present:

   e.g, 9: I have written with a special pen from 1969 to 1972.

2. relating only to the past that may be viewed as

   i. Having been completed

      e.g, 10: He wrote with a private pen from 1969 to 1977.

   ii. not having been completed.

      e.g, 11: I was writing poetry with a special pen. (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1989:42)

c. Present perfect

The present perfect means, have/has+ past participle. When the present perfect is used, there is always a connection with now. The action that happens in the past has an effect till now.

e.g, 12: She told me her name but I have forgotten it (I can't remember it now)).

present perfect can be used with just, already and yet.

Just= a short time ago.

Hello. Have you just arrived?

one can also use already to say that something occurred sooner than expected.

e.g, 13: what time is Kathy leaving, she has already gone.

Yet= until now. Has it stopped raining yet? (Murphy, 1994:14).

3. There is a person agreement and number agreement between the subject of a sentence and the finite verb clause. Concord is especially clear with the present tense of:

e.g, 14 I am / you are } here he, she, it is / they are } here

but with almost all full verbs concord is confined to a contrast between 3rd person singular and other person or plural number.

e.g, 15: she/he/Jim reads / I /we/you/they read } the paper every morning

With modal verbs there is no distinct agreement at all. e.g, 16: I / we/she/ he/ they can play the game (Quirk et. al, 1985:149).

Concord (agreement) is a syntactic relation between words and phrases which are concordant in a given construction, in terms of inflections carried by at least one of them. E.g, 17: those and carrots are compatible, in the construction of those carrots, by cause both are inflected as plural (Mathews, 2007:73).

4. Finite verb phrases contain their first verb form which is either an operator or a simple present or past forms. Do –support is used for example, in forming a negative and an interrogative construction (Quirk et. al, 1985:149).
5. Finite verb phrase has mood, which shows the factual, non –factual or counter factual status of the prediction (Quirk et. al, 1985:149).

Mood: A term that is used in the theoretical and description study of clause types and especially of the verb they have, (Crystal, 2003: 36).

Functions Of Finite Clause

1. finite clause as complementation may have:
   a- Indicative verb: e.g, 18: I am certain that she is there now.
   b- Putative should :e.g, 19: I was angry that he should ignore me.
   c- Subjunctive verb :e.g, 20: I was adamant that he appointed.

An indicative verb is used if the adjective is factual, i.e, concord with the truth –value of complementation. An indicative verb or putative should be used if the adjective is emotive,

i.g, concerned with the attitude. A subjunctive verb or should (sometimes putative, but often obligational is used if the adjective is volitional i.e, expressing indirectly some command), (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1989:355).

2. Finite Clause As Direct Object.

Finite clauses as direct object may have an indicative verb, putative should or a subjunctive verb, depending on the class of the superordinate verb.

a- Factual superordinate verb with indicative subordinate verb.

e.g, 20: They agree that she is pretty (Ibid:360).

b- Emotive verb, with indicative verb or putative should.

e.g, 21:

I regret that
- She should worry about it.
- She worries about it.

c- volitional verb, with subjunctive verb or should ((not clearly differentiated between its putative and obligation uses)).

e.g., 22: I proposed that he
- admit all applicants.
- Should admit all applicants

(Quirk and Greenbaum, 11989:360)

Types Of Finite Clause:

There are five types of finite clauses:

1. Simple finite clause: I like ice cream.

Simple finite clauses are most common clauses. A plain sentence contains of a single simple finite clause:

e.g, 29: I am going to Sydney.

2. Simple finite clause with connector. Finite clause often functions as adjunct in a clause specifying some circumstances of the clause. They usually have a connector at front, signaling the relation to the main clause:

Reason: I left because she cooked badly.

Temporal: I left while he was in the bath.

Condition: if you eat it, I will pay for it. (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1989:317)

3. Wh –Nominal Clause:

Wh-nominal clauses generally function as subject, object complement usually reported speech or thought without explicit detail wh- nominal clauses can represent content (what is said or thought or polarity. e.g, 30:

What you have is not good enough. As subject

It is amazing how if infuriates her. As complement

She remembers what a good moments she had at my party. As object

I forget who you said I told Mary to see. As reported speech . (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1989:316 -317)

4. Relative Clause:

A relative clauses appear as a post modifier to

NP ((in the qualifier slot))

e.g, 31: The man who I saw him

e.g, 32: The man that saw me. (ibid)

5. That clause ((fact clause)) e.g, 33: I said that you should go.

e.g, 34: The fact that Mary likes this car.

A that clause is a finite fronted by that and which represents a fact clause being presented to the addressee. Most typically they appear as subject or object in a verbal or mental process.

e.g, 35: He told him that he was not moving.

I know that Smith was right. (ibid)

Types of Non –Finite Clause:

Sentences whether by gerund –participle or a past participle are always non–finite clauses with a plain from verb are non–finite verb when they are related to the infinitive construction. Infinitival sentences come in two types: with and without the particular marker to. It shows us four important types of non–finite clauses (Huddlston and K. Pullum , 2005:204).

1. Infinitive without to:

Without subject : e.g, 36: What he did was hitting him on the head.

With subject : e.g, 37: Rather than Jack does it, I prefer to give the post to Marry.

2. Infinitive with to:

Without subject : e.g. , 38: the best thing is to tell everybody. With subject : e.g. , 39 : the best thing for you is to tell everybody (ibid).

Infinitive: the best shape of a verb e.g. , 40 : go , come.

In English grammar the infinitive commonly comes with the infinitive marker to, e.g. , 41 : He wants to leave but can't without to as auxiliary verbs "e.g. , 42: do come ! you may go". The infinitive without to is known as the bare infinitive or simple form. The infinitive with to is sometimes called the "to-infinitive". The infinitive is a non-finite form of the verb (C. Richards and Schimidt, 2002:256).

3. ed Particilpe:

Without subject: e.g. , 43: Full of confusion, he left the home.

With subject: e.g. , 44: they left the room and went home when the task finished, (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1989:311).

4. ing Gerund:

Without subject: e.g. , 45: Leaving the home, she tripped over the mat.

With subject: e.g. , 46: His aunt having left the home, I announced my deep love for Celia (ibid).

Participle: is a non-finite verb form which occurs as an adjective and is utilized in passive sentence and to form perfect and progressive aspect. There are two participles in English, the present participle and the past participle (C. Richards and Schinidt, 2002:386).

Functions of Non-Finite Clause

Non-finite clauses shows up in a very wide range of use, but these are main distinctions between the four types:

1. To infinitival: To infinitival functions as a complement or modifier/ adjunct in a considerable number of constructions.
    a. Subject: e.g. , 47 : To get back now would be a fault.
    b. Extra posed subject: e.g. , 48: It would be a fault to get back now.
    c. Extra posed object: e.g. , 49: we consider it sensible to get legal advice.
    d. Internal comp of verb: e.g. , 50: My parents intend to buy me a truck.
    e. Comp of preposition:e.g.,51:He goes to the gym so as to keep elegant.
    f. Adjunct clause: e.g. , 52: He goes to the gym to keep elegant.
    g. Comp of noun: e.g. , 53: It supplies 'an opportunity
    h. Comp of adjunctive: e.g. , 54: She was anxious to make a good impression.
    i. Indirect comp: e.g. , 55: She's still too small to be left alone. (Hddleston and K. Pullum, 2005: 211-212)
2. Bare Infinitival "infinitives without to"

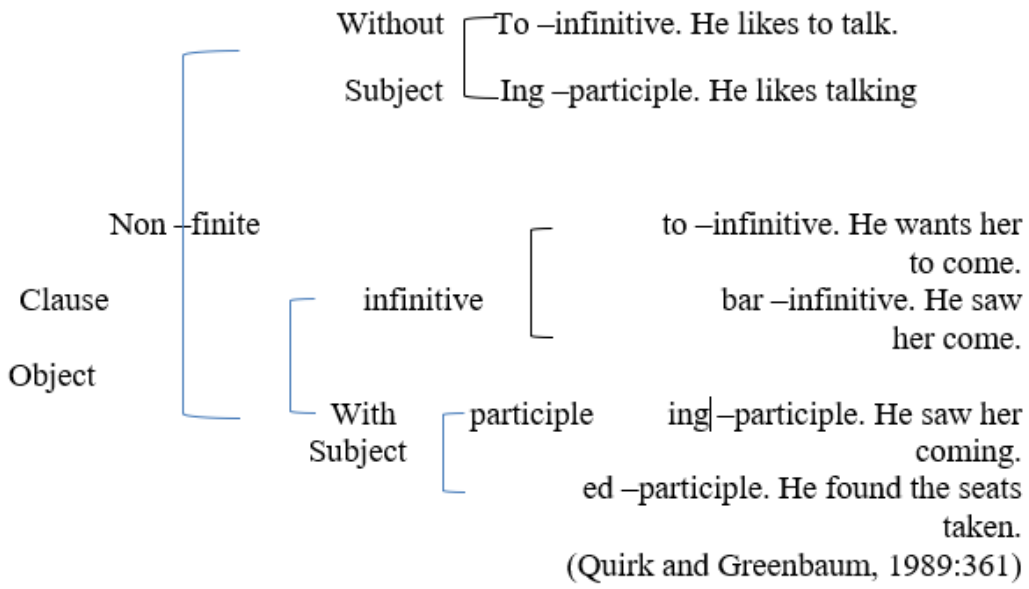
Bare infinitival happens only in a very limited set of function. They hardly happens except as internal complements of definite verbs with no subject permitted.

a. e.g., 56: She should get lawful advice. complement of modal auxiliary
b. e.g. , 57: I want him to help clean up the garden. complement of help
c. e.g. , 58: The devil made me do it. complement of make, let, see, etc.
d. e.g. , 59: What I did was asking an easy question. complement of specifying be (Huddleston and K. Pullum, 2005:213)

3. Gerund-Participle: The scope of use in which gerund-participle clause are found is widely comparable to that of to infinitival.
   a. Subject, e.g. , 60: Fetching your brother in on the deal was a perfect idea.
   b. Object, e.g. , 61: I find speaking to mathew rather stressful.
   c. Extra posed object, e.g. , 62: She regards it a waste of time going meeting.
   d. Extra posed subject, e.g. , 63: It's been a pleasure speaking to you both.
   e. Internal comp of verb
   f. Comp of preposition, e.g. , 64: I persist on checking everything myself.
   g. Adjunctive in clause , e.g. , 65: having read the paper, I can't see why you care.
   h. Modifier in NP, e.g. , 66: Who was the surgeon performing the operation"(Huddleston and K. Pullum, 2005:213-214).
4. Non –Finite Clauses as Direct Object.

Among non –finite clauses as a direct object, we distinguish between those with a subject and those without subject and within each type between infinitive and participle clauses. As shown in figure (2).

Figure (2)



(Quirk and Greenbaum, 1989:361)

Finite vs non –finite clauses:

Radford (1988) cited in Abas (2006: 75-77) sets a number of trials for differentiating finite from non –finite sentences.

((Tensed or finite)) e.g, 67: I said that Mary signed my year book.

((Tense less or non –finite)) 68:I want Mary to sign my year book.

The clause in the first sentence is tensed, whereas the one in the second sentence is tense less. There is one way to tell if a clause is finite or not by looking for agreement and tense morphology on the verb. These include the s –endings associated with third person nouns (he eats) and the past tense suffixes like –ed (ibid).

Finite and Non-Finite Clauses In Arabic

Finite Clause in Arabic

Arabic verb phrase consists of either a single verb or a sequence of two finite verb The great majority of verbs occur as a single verb.

eg. 71 jaa al-waladu جاء الولد The boy came.

However there are number of finite verbs that take place as the first in two verb sequences. These can be divided into three types verbs of beginning .

afaalu al Šuruü أفعال الشروع verbs of propinquity

afaalu al mugarabat أفعال المقاربة Verb of Beginning and liking verbs (khalil, 1999 232).

1. Verb of beginning as suruu

These verbs, which only happen in the perfect tense, are followed by an imperfect indicative verb. Both verbs have the same subject. Example of these verbs are axata اخذ

Tafiqa ظفق sara'a شرع jaala جعل qaama قام

eg. 72: axata yákulu ba'da än wasalna اخذ يأكل بعد ان وصلنا He started to eat / eating after we had arrived. (khalil, 1999: 232)

2. Verbs of Propinquity al- muqaaraba

These verbs, which may take place in the perfect or imperfect indicative are also followed by an imperfect indicative verb but may also be followed by a plus subjunctive.

e.g. 73 are kaada / yakaadu كاد/يكاد

Kaada al-waladu yaqaü كاد الولد يقع The boy was about to full down .(ibid:33) .

3. Linking Verbs:

These verbs, which usually occur in the perfect indicative , are followed by an imperfect indicative verb kaana كان was and its Sister may function as linking verbs. These verbs are asbaha أصبح baata بات saara صار etc.

e.g., 66:Kaanat talab-u kulla yawmin كانت تلعب كل يوم She played / used to play / would play every day. (Ibid(.

Tense in Arabic :

1. The Present Tense :

The verb form that is called the imperfect المضارع mainly refer to the present time when the point of reference is the moment of speaking .

a. As in English language, the present tense may point to the universal present particularly a repeated action, a custom, a fact or an ability in the present. eg. I go to the market once a week. اذهب الى السوق مرة كل اسبوع (Aziz, 1989: 43).
b. Apart from the English present tense, the Arabic present tense may often point to the present moment. e.g. 75 She is writing along poem. انها تكتب قصيدة طويلة!
c. Two other minor uses of the present tense in Arabic should be noted Future and past time, when the present tense is used for future time an appropriate . e.g, 76: (My brother leave for Basra tomorrow » (ibid: 44)

2. The Past Tense:

It essentially refers to actions, states and situations, (the perfect form of absolute tense). This tense has the following uses before the present

a. All types of acts completed before the present moment : long acts, short acts, repeated acts , which indicate definite past time.(ibid: 45) eg. 77:((1 saw him twice last year رأيته مرتين العام الماضي))

b. Past actions in the indefinite past. These may be connected to present by means of their effect or result . Such actions are usually expressed in English by the perfect aspect and the present tense which is occasionally used with the perfect form, but its use is restricted to affirmative statements. (ibid). e.g, 78: (The plane has arrived) وصلت الطائرة

3. Future Tense:

The view taken here is that Arabic, like English has no future tense but means of expressing future time. The main ways of expressing the future in Arabic are the bare imperfect form, and the imperfect used with certain particle (ibid:70).

a. The Bare Imperfect The Arabic grammarians described the imperfect as the form which refers to the present الحال or the future الاستقبال eg. 79:((1'l travel to Baghdad tomorrow)سافر الى بغداد غدا(ibid 71).

b. The Imperfect + Particle

The particles used with the imperfect to indicate future time have other functions beside indicating time.

These particles are: س , سوف

which indicate certainly and, are confined to affirmative sentences.

Which is used for negative.

e.g. 80 He will not come لن يأتي

Which is used for polarity questions yes-no »

e g,81: Will he come? هل يأتي

which is described as an adverbial particle of condition referring to the future (ibid)

e.g. 82 :If you do that you will be sorry اذا فعلت ذلك فستندم

The Subjunctive infinitive: المصدر المؤول

It is a infinitive formed by adding one of the infinitive particles and we interpreted it by « infinitive » parsing according to its place in sentences. the infinitive particles are أن, ان, كي, لو, لن .

It is a infinitive accusative and futural particle because it made what come after it interpreting as infinitive .

So the interpretation of Almighty saying (يريد الله ليخفف عنكم) and that means ((يريد الله التخفيف عنكم)) Allah wants to lighten for you that means your difficulties » (النساء 28) .

The place of subject both of a nominal and of a verbal sentence may sometimes be supplied by an entire sentence compounded of a verb and of the particles ان and ما called حروف مصدرية the particles that supply the place of infinitive or a verb, as ان تصوموا خير لكم, t is good for you

should fast or to fast it pleased that you went out or you're going out pleased me. (wright, 1862: 177).

When the predicate is a preposition with its genitive and the subject of sentence compounded of ان and a finite verb the predicate must put first, as افتعنه كلyou may do it, and not افتعنه كلbid(.

The Pure infinitive: المصدر الصريح

The pure infinitive is an utterance that indicates an action without time and include the letters of its verbs as comprehend = to comprehend, فهم or it replaced what it is removed by another as وصف/صف describe, description.

Or it is the mere action, used sometimes like the verb, so it has a subject and object as in the saying of Almighty God :

(او اطعام في يوم ذي مسغبة يتيما ذا مقربة)

(or feeding on a day of sever hanger an orphan of near relationship) Al-Balad ((15 14: سورة البلد) (Ameen, 2010 :453).

The absolute object as a infinitive :

It is the infinitive in accusative case to emphasize its agent or to limit its kind or its number. so the first as the saying of Almighty God:

(وكلم الله موسى تكليما) And Allah spoke to Moses with direct speech .

The second as جلست قعدت , I sat down taking my place.

therefore, the accusative of infinitive in the first team is كلمHe spoke, it is from the utterance of the infinitive, and the second i sat down, it is from the meaning, not from it's utterance and the third is to limit its number as a ضربه ضربتينHe hit him twice.

المفعول له او المفعو ه

It is the object in the form of the infinitive which expresses the reason for doing an action e.g ضربexpresses the reason for doing an action

« The teacher beats the pupils to teach manners » ضرب المعلم الطلبة تأديبا

Here , the infinitive tells us the reason for beating. This infinitive mostly denotes a mental action like fear, love, desire. respect , etc.

The infinitive in المفعول له is mostly with التنوين it may also be fatha فتحةwhen mention as mudaf مضاف e.g the Almighty Allah says و لا تقتلوا اولادكم خشية املاق «And not kill your: children for fear poverty » (Ahmed, 2008: 197).

Contrastive analysis

Contrastive Analysis Between Finite and Non-Finite in English and Arabic .

Arabic allows two finite verbs to occur in sequence, whereas English allows only non-finite verb to occur after finite ones.

e.g., 83: ااوصل ان بعد يأكل خذ He started to eat / eating after he had arrived.

English finite clauses have a number of features such as: mood and concord. As well as the Arabic finite clauses have tense and concord.

e.g., 84 : يلعب كل يوم he plays every day

The English non-finite clauses have no tense, mood or concord as well as the Arabic non-finite clauses.(Aziz, 1989:233).

e.g., 58: اضرب المعلم التلاميذ أدبا The teacher beats the pupils to teach him manners.

The English non-finite clauses are infinitive with or without to, past and gerund participle

e.g., 86: «subjunctive ان تصوموا خير لكم: مصدر مؤول من أن + فعل

It is good for you should fast or to fast

Non-finite clause, to + infinitive or infinitive without to.

The English infinitive has two equivalents in Arabic an أن + infinitive subjunctive or verbal noun.

gerund and past participle : (the pure infinitive, المصدر الصريح)

e.g. 87:He is writing along poem or He has written along poem.(ibid(.

Comparison Of Tense in English and Arabic:

1. The Arabic language present tense often points to an action happening at the moment of speaking (now in the English language this use of the present tense is restricted to a confined number of verb; especially verb of sensation. e.g., 89:تعد ليلى الشاي Layla is preparing tea.
2. The English and the Arabic languages have the feature of referring to future time while using the present tense. e.g., 90: يغادر أخي إلى القاهرة غدا My brother leaves for Cairo tomorrow.
3. The English language past tense points to certain past which excludes the present moment. The Arabic language past tense may point to certain past.

   e.g., 91:رأيت هذا الرجل في العام الماضي I saw this man last year
4. The Arabic language past tense in contrast with the English language past tense may refer to an indefinite time usually linked to the present in one way or another. e.g., 92: رأيت هذا الرجل مرتين وجهه مألوف لدي I have seen this man twice, his face is familiar to me. (ibid:51(.

5. In absolute tense the present tense, in both English and Arabic languages, refers to universal present time which comprises the present moment; this may explains facts, habits, customs, repeated action but not necessarily action taking place at the present moment. e.g. 93 : I often go there to Visit them (habit)
6. Possibly, the most essential differences between the English and Arabic tenses are the absolute and relative tenses which are explained by means of distinct forms , the non-finite form.(ibid).

The Arabic tenses use the same forms in the absolute and relative structures. The following examples of transformation from direct to indirect speech illustrate this point.

e.g. 94 He said : Ali likes jazz music ((Direct speech))

e.g., 95:He said that Ali liked jazz music ((indirect speech))

In the indirect speech « likes » becomes « liked » because the action is now in the past and the tense is absolute, it utilizes different forms. In Arabic this change is not needful because the same form may be used in absolute tenses ((direct speech)) and relative tenses as in the ((indirect speech)).

قال: يحب علي موسيقى الجاز

قال: ان يحب علي موسيقى الجاز

In both the direct and indirect speeches the imperfect يحب used first absolutely then relatively. (ibid : 52) .

Conclusions

The study has come up with the following conclusions:

1. There are important distinctions between the finite and non-finite clauses according to their types, function , forms and position.
2. Finite clauses is a clause that one whose elements is a finite verb. Non-finite clause which is to infinitive, ing gerund and ed-participle and it is a clause. that one of whose elements is non-finite verb.
3. Finite and non-finite verbs are similar in the form but they are different according to the structure of the sentences and the existence of the verb. The finite forms are model + infinitive or present simple, perfect tense and present continuous etc.. and non-finite forms are to + infinitive ing- gerund and past participle.
4. There are also similarities between finite and non-finite clause in English and Arabic such as in the tense like future tense and in the structure like to + infinitive in English and +أن = المصدر المؤول in Arabic.

5. There are also differences between finite and non-finite in English and Arabic such as Arabic allows two finite verb to occur in sequences whereas English allows one finite verb to occur after finites ones. The English tense differs from Arabic tense in its indicative points.

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الصرف الفني / يمني من اي عن دالغاي / دار الوفي للتراث القاهرة 2010

3 د نجم الدين كافي / يمامس الجلال الصلصلة والايعاع.

ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

Detecting Language Disorders and Anxiety among Young Learners: Remediation Options in the Current Educational Paradigm

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Abstract

Language disorders can be one of the reasons for EFL learners' mediocre performance and poor language proficiency in English, both in the formal educational system and later in life, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. With early detection, however, language disorders can be managed. The key phrase here is 'early detection'. This paper ventures to contribute to the existing knowledge on language disorders among young Saudi EFL learners. It employed a descriptive correlational research design. It seeks to recognize factors that may contribute to English-speaking student development of the respondents by addressing their language anxiety and disorders. Results indicated that EFL Saudi students generally had a feeling of anxiety and disorder in learning the English language. Their communication anxiety is positively correlated to their fear of negative function, test anxiety, and anxiety in English learning. The findings suggest that the higher the communication anxiety of the respondents, the higher they also manifest their fear on negative feedback, test anxiety in language, and their whole anxiety behaviour in the English language classroom. Hence, it can be practically implied from the findings the need for a relaxing and stress-free English language classroom among Saudi universities. Pedagogical implications of the study are presented for EFL language learning.

Keywords: *Language Disorders, Test anxiety, Language anxiety, Language Learning*

Introduction

Language is a way of socialization, and this connects human beings as one race with similar needs and expectations in a common thread. It is also accurate that the leaders of this species are instinctively looking for the company of their fellow human beings: this is their nature. The desire to form groups and an organization, both formal and informal, comes from

this. Language is thus likely to lead to social practices, families, beliefs, taboos traditions, rituals and rites and many other features of a society (van Zyl & Meiselman, 2016).

Today it is difficult to dismiss and disregard the value of English because English is the universal language spoken everywhere. English has played a significant role in many areas, including science, architecture, industry and schooling. In most nations, English skills, English language preparation for personal career or health, national growth and Globalization are granted top priority in today's day (Rose & McKinley, 2018; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017; Yassin, & Razak, 2017). Language is now commonly used across the globe. No one should say that in Asian countries, it is a common second or international language. The knowledge of English thus serves as gatekeepers for individual professions or healthcare, and for national growth. It includes the important function of English language teaching in Asia, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). English language curriculum is, in fact, holistically based on students 'needs. The five interconnected sub-strands (reading, writing, listening, speaking, seeing) which serve as building blocks for understanding and creating sense and for effective communication are part of this (Yassin, Razak, & Maasum, 2019). Oral language is the base of learning in such macro abilities. It is important for learning literacy, and its performance is vital to the well-being of students.

English skills and English language instruction are now at the centre of adult employment and healthcare, as well as domestic growth and Globalization (Le & Miller, 2020; Li, Zhao, & Han, 2020). Language is still widely spread worldwide. Nobody would say that in Asian countries it is a second or international language prevalent. Thus, English language skills are gatekeepers for person professions or healthcare and national development. It includes the fundamental role of English language education in Asia and the KSA. In addition, the English language curriculum reflects holistically on students' needs. The five intricately interlinked and interconnected sub-strands (reading, writing, listening, communicating and viewing) are part of the project and act as the foundation for understanding and generating context and successful communication. Among these macro-competences, oral language is the base for literacy. It is important for literacy, and its effective use is vital to the well-being of children.

Theoretical Framework

This work is focused on two theories, namely, communication anxiety theory and oral language acquisition theory.

McCroskey's Principle of Contact Apprehension

McCroskey's Principle of Contact Apprehension (1977) describes oral aversion to expression as the degree of discomfort or panic linked to the conversation. The absence or inability to engage and potential omission from touch are often underlined by poor communication skills. Contact avoidance can be described as a general reluctance to engage or prevent contact situations or circumstances centred on fear and anxiety. Contact avoidance, In reality, this theory says that in oral communication, there are different degrees of fear of a person. An individual may have a high, medium or low degree of understanding of oral communication. An individual with a strong understanding of verbal communication sometimes avoids interaction in order to avoid fear or anxiety. The role of oral communication concern in influencing educational outcomes has proved to be an important consideration for the academic success of high school students. It is also important to emphasize oral communication in the classroom, as it is essential to the success of the learning environment

Oral Language Acquisition

The acquisition of oral language is a normal learner phase. It happens almost naturally. The speakability increases with age, but it does not mean that such development contributes to success immediately. Speaking more clearly requires a particular emphasis and continuous practice (Abend et al., 2017). Speaking fluency tends to grow when second-language feedback (L2) is revealed (Friedmann & Rusou, 2015). The input applies to learner's language knowledge (Gervain, 2015). Although it is well understood that data is significant for languages, interaction and performance (the language that a learner produces) are not satisfactory if it is not practised, since the processing of comprehension is separate from the processing of development, and the ability to understand the meaning expressed by words is different than the ability to use a linguistic method. When feedback is being exchanged, and learners generate output in conversation, they selectively take parts of understandable information and attempt to articulate themselves in the correct linguistic manner. This method helps students to internalize what they have studied and observed (Fitzpatrick et al., 2019).

Language Learning

There are four requirements for language learning and the training, the opportunity for the use of language, inspiration and guidance is required. Students need the chance to express what they think and feel and to play with language in a positive atmosphere without feeling intimidated. Second-language work stresses that little change happens unless

individuals make a concerted attempt to understand. Development is due to involuntary, unconscious processes that are triggered as learners engage in second-language communication. The subconscious dimension involves a new set of practices where learners concentrate on the transmission of meaning rather than on the language itself (Oga-Baldwin et al., 2017). Stracke (2016) has argued that the students should be concerned with the substance of what they say rather than the form in a communicative function. You can use a wide range of languages. According to Ellis (2003), students are engaged in two kinds of communicative activities: centred contact activities and distracted communicative tasks. These two activities seek to engage learners in practical language usage rather than language showing. By communication, learners can combine different systems into an innovative framework for communicating meaning (Littlewood,1984). They aim to improve their language skills through the way of communication.

Language Disorder

The US National Library of Medicine defines a language disorder as which applies to difficulties of an individual with any one of the following: communication of context and message to others (expressive language disorder) Comprehension of the message from others (receptive language disorder). Learners with other developmental difficulties, ADHD, personality illness, hearing loss and intellectual delays may be impaired by language disorders. The disruption to the central nervous system called aphasia can also lead to language impairment. Language problems are rarely caused by a lack of comprehension. Language disorders vary from delayed language disorders. In late expression, the infant learns expression and speech in the same way as most infants, but later. For language disabilities, vocabulary and voice do not usually develop. The learner will have some skills in language, but not others. Or how these skills grow will be different from usual.

Language Anxiety

Anxiety is generally defined as a psychological framework, which is identified as a condition of anxiety, a vague fear that is only implicitly related to an entity (Friman & Dymon, 2020; Kelsen 2019). Anxiety has been shown to interact with many learning forms, but it is labelled 'second-language anxiety' when correlated with studying a second or foreign language. This linguistic phenomenon was described by McIntyre and Nassif (2019) as being a subjective sensation of stress, anxiety, nervousness and concern correlated with automatic nervous system

arousal. Teimouri, Goetze and Plonsky (2019) also note that linguistic distress is the source of confusion and a detrimental emotional response while studying a second language.

Review of Related Literature

In language learning at modern times, the pendulum swang from traditional language teaching to communicative language teaching (Chen, 2003; Elder, et al., 2017; Iizuka, 2019; Magulod, 2018). Hence, language disorder and anxiety are critical affective factors in language learning (Jiang & Dewaele, 2019; Razak, Yassin, & Maasum, 2020).

Al-Ahdal et al. (2014) conducted a comparative study of proficiency in speaking and writing among EFL Learners in Saudi Arabia found out that they have higher writing skill compared to oral language skill. In like manner, Al-Ahdal et al. (2015) colncldued that Arab EFL learners procnunciaiton skill is not yet at the optumun lelve which needs to be henached by proper language training and isntuciton.

Consequently, Ahmad and Nazim (2014) studied English as a Foreign language among Saudi EFL learners to identify the root cause of the mistake. The writers came up with more reasons as to why it is necessary to learn English as FL / L2 in Saudi Arabia. The following are: first, Globalization as a collective term for free markets and the integration of domestic economies into a single global market; secondly, economic ties between nations exist across the globe, through which a range of approaches and technology are not only utilized but instead gradually directed at simplifying and servicing countries 'industries. Thirdly, The social situation/conditions are evolving rapidly and require a pleasant and very demanding greeting for learning English as it will benefit both countries and safeguard each of the participating States 'sovereignties. They further recommended that concerning KSA's assist schemes for English language promotion, Ahmad and Nazim especially commented that state revenue was liberally allocated by the Saudi government to support and inspire students and English-speaking Saudi Arabic teachers, to learn the English language properly; They also understand that growth and change will only impact the masses through schooling in general and English in particular.

Context and Significance

Language disorders are prevalent among young EFL learners in Saudi Arabia. One of the biggest reasons for this problem could be the fact that English and Arabic are two totally different languages. As Abdulwahab (2015) pointed out, English /t/, for example, is aspirated and alveolar in word-initial position followed by a vowel-like tea /ti:/ while the Arabic /t/ is

non-aspirated and dental in the similar word position like in /ti:n/. In his research, Maniruzzaman (2006) investigated phonology-related English pronunciation problems faced by Bengali speaking EFL learners and their effect on students' speaking and listening. Elmahdi & Khan (2015) studied difficulties in English pronunciation faced by secondary school learners in Saudi Arabia when pronouncing the consonants of the English language, citing causes, and effects, such as the fact that many learners tend to unintentionally insert a vowel sound in a syllable of an English word to break up consonant clusters. There is, however, no clear evidence in the findings of the aforementioned studies to merit any generalizations.

Prevalence of language disorders among young EFL learners in Saudi Arabia and an intent to address, investigate and try to offer solutions to this problem, motivated this research. The primary stated aim of the proposed study is to detect language disorders among young Saudi EFL learners. To accomplish this, the study will adopt an exploratory and qualitative approach to identify language disorders. The target population will be early school EFL learners in Saudi Arabia, and the sample size will be 100 students. It is hypothesized that the study will highlight language disorders undetected so far as teachers are not trained or mandated to identify them in their students. Based on the findings, the proposed research will suggest recommendations and remediation options to policymakers in the educational system of Saudi Arabia. Such work is also valuable for students, provided that the findings of this study would give them knowledge of the effects of their scholarly experience of oral communication. This will help them to improve their ability in oral communication. This work is often valuable for instructors in order to learn how student biases should be discussed and clarified in oral language.

Objectives of the Study

The study focused on accomplishing the following purposes: (1) To identify the language disorders prevalent among young EFL learners in Saudi Arabia; (2) To suggest remediation options feasible in the current educational paradigm; (3) To highlight the role of, and offer workable solutions to, the policymakers in bringing about positive change.

Relevance to International Context

Language literacy and English language learning are already a key priority for people, education, and regional development and Globalization in most countries. English is still commonly spoken in the world. None would claim that it is a second or foreign language common in Asian countries. Skills in English then provide gatekeepers for employment,

healthcare and domestic production. This implies the vital role of English language education of Asia, including the Philippines. The study suggests that EFL learners encounter language disorders which can be overcome by introducing remediation steps to their educational paradigm. Several language disorders, accompanied by students' and teachers' views on these disorders, will be examined. Finally, the study will offer recommendations to the policymakers in the educational system of Saudi Arabia to make changes to overcome this problem.

Materials and Method

Research Design

This paper canters its investigation on the language disorders and anxiety of Saudi EFL learners. This study employed a descriptive research design. It seeks to recognize factors that may contribute to English-speaking student development of the respondents by addressing their language anxiety and disorders.

Research Participants

Anchored on the ethical research consideration, personal information and details given by the participants were confidentially treated. Prior to the selection and identification and selection of participants, a written request was sent and approved by the authorities. Data privacy agreement form was also filled out by the respondents. The proper selection of participants was made through the assistance of the school heads. As such, a total of 100 Saudi EFL learners with inform consent participated in the study.

Research Instruments

The primary questionnaire was the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) tests. The work was carried out by Horwitz et al. (1986) using the International Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Horwitz and his collaborators have led with this systematic method considerably in identifying the continuum of foreign language anxiety. The 33-point questionnaire is determined by Suad EFL learners causes of distress. In English schools, the symptoms are known as touch anxiety, apprehension of an adverse decision, insecurity and discomfort in tests. There are several listed categories: concern regarding encounters, fear of adverse evaluation, apprehension regarding tests and the insecurity of the English classroom. Horwitz et al. (1999) suggest multiple students are feeling extreme foreign language anxiety. This concept has been discussed and used in numerous research projects on language distress (Jin & Dewaele, 2018; Kahraman & Yalvac, 2015; Tuspekova, Mustaffa, &

Ismail, 2020; Zhang, Dai, & Ardasheva, 2020). The respondent answered the statement in the questionnaire with one as strongly agree, and five strongly disagree. The questionnaire responses were categorized, counted and tabulated until all the data was done.

Procedure

The researchers were allowed to carry out the analysis in their English courses by university officials, where the respondents were enrolled. The analysts wrote a statement of advice. They also submitted a copy of the research paper and the FLCAS questionnaire to send the chairs a description of the importance to their organization of this study. After approval of the request, the teachers called for a consultation with the chairs to be given the details of the professors and courses. The researchers arranged with the students the purpose of this current analysis. The research presented the teachers with the ease of conducting the questionnaire for foreign participants. The researchers suggested that teachers authorize surveys during their lessons to prevent early interruptions in their classrooms. The professor in the classroom instructed its international students to explain their additional research on the specified day. In the last row of the chairs, you had to complete the questionnaire. This took 30- minutes to finish the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

Descriptive mathematical modelling was used in the evaluation of the tests. The average participant pain variables were defined with a weighted mean. Standard deviation (SD) is used for the assessment of response differences and Pearson correlations to determine how to distress symptoms are related to the expression approaches employed by these students to deal with such anxieties. Pearson r was utilized to determine the relationship between the variables.

Results and Discussion

The results of the descriptive analyses indicated that EFL Saudi students generally had a feeling of anxiety and disorder in learning the English language. Table 1 shows that they have a moderate level on test anxiety as evidenced with the mean of 3.18 (*SD* = 0.34), followed by fear of negative feedback with the mean of 3.16 (*SD* =0.78). They also manifested a moderate level of anxiety in the classroom with the computed mean of 3.03 (*SD* = 0.47), and finally, an average level of communication anxiety shown with the mean of 2.90 (*SD* =0.43).

Table 1. Language Disorder and anxiety prevalent among young EFL learners in Saudi Arabia

Domains of Anxiety and Disorder	***Mean (N=100)***	***SD***	***Description***
Communication Anxiety	2.90	0.43	Moderate Anxiety
Fear of Negative Evaluation	3.16	0.78	Moderate Anxiety
Test Anxiety	3.18	0.34	Moderate Anxiety
Anxiety in the English Classroom	3.03	0.47	Moderate Anxiety

Legend: *Strongly disagree (4.20-5.00); Disagree (3.40-4.19); Undecided (2.60-3.39); Agree (1.80-2.59); Strongly Agree (1.00-1.79)*

A glance of table 2 showing the relationship of the language anxiety and disorder actors of the Saudi EFL students, showed that their communication anxiety is positively correlated to their fear of negative function (0.56*), test anxiety (0.48*), and anxiety in the English learning (0.20*). The findings suggest that the higher the communication anxiety of the respondents, the higher they also manifest their fear on negative feedback, test anxiety in language, and their whole anxiety behaviour in the English language classroom. Hence, it can be practically implied from the findings the need for a relaxing and stress-free English language classroom among Saudi universities.

Table 2. Relationship between the Language Anxieity and Disorder Factors

Domains of Anxiety and Disorder	***CA***	***FNE***	***TA***	***AEC***
Communication Anxiety	1			
Fear of Negative Evaluation	.56*	1		
Test Anxiety	.48*	.25	1	
Anxiety in the English Classroom	.20*	.60	.00	1

$*p < 0.05$

The findings show that the students of EFL Suadi who have taken part in this study have a moderate level of English language anxiety. Language anxiety and disorders have negative effects to language learning among EFL and ESL learners across the world (Alamer & Lee, 2019; Albesher et al., 2019; Hwang et al., 2017; Magulod, 2018; Malik, Qin, & Ahmed, 2020; Presbitero, 2019; Weng, 2020). This form of anxiety is characterized as an anxious or

emotional state mixed physiologically and behaviourally and experienced under prescribed or other treatment conditions.

Furthermore, in the pre-school or primary school years, certain children encounter such distress when parents tend to need or demand the outcomes of their children so strongly (Akkakoson, 2016; Dewaele, 2017; González-Riaño et al., 2019; Pot, Keijzer & De Bot, 2018). In these years, certain other variables may raise fear of negative evaluation, such as upbringing, peer perceptions or self-reported standards, instructor attitudes and the classroom atmosphere (Elaldi, 2016; Grregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Mechor-Couto, 2017). However, study fear affects members of all significant social, cultural groups from different racial communities, both sex and the middle and working classes (Kasbi & Shirban, 2017).

Similarly, Sturman and Zappala-Piemme (2017) indicated that students were afraid to take exams because test conditions might overwhelm them with the adverse effects of a bad result. That will lead to certain psychological stresses, including fear of losing trust or caring less. The research's results show that foreign participants in this study were often worried about their instructors and peers ' unfavourable appraisal. It may be due to the activities or duties they will undertake in the classroom. Shao, Pekrun and Nicholson (2019) compiled a list of classroom-related behaviours which students consider to be an anxiety-producing activity; (1) random task in front of the classroom; (2) classroom-related talk; (3) an oral presentation and skills learned in a classroom. Furthermore, Roick and Ringeisen (2017) noted that anxiety-producing characteristics are: the criteria for oral development, the sensation that you are on the field, the speed of learning and the assessment dimension (Kralova et al., 2017).

While a number of students think it is important to repair errors (Butler, 2019; Lee & Bong, 2019; O'Leary et al., 2019), often the road to correct errors is called fear. Students have often been found to be more interested when (i.e. when, when, or how many, etc.) their failures are resolved instead of questioning whether to fix errors in the classroom. Ohata (2005) also points out that the fear of losing "face" in front of others has also been seen as a common concern among linguistic learners in addition to anticipating harsh judgement by others. Such students have shown anxiety in assessment situations as others around them monitor their comprehension and achievement in English. The possibility of "face loss" may be true, particularly for foreign students who believe that they provide a thorough assessment of what they mean, the use of grammar and other modes of communication.

Several studies also found out that the ability that triggers more distress is speaking (Afshar & Rahimi, 2016; Atas, 2015; Çağatay, 2015; Kelsen, 2019; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Shao, Pekrun, & Nicholson, 2019; Xiangming, Liu, & Zhang, 2020; Yang et al., 2020;

Zhang, Dai, & Ardasheva, 2020). This apprehension is partially attributed to a lack of faith in the learner's general language abilities, but only by this aspect can all information be similarly impacted. The public essence of the ability, the embarrassment, is what defines expression, and it reveals the language imperfections of the learner to others (García-Pastor & Miller, 2019; Jibeen et al., 2019; Koka et al., 2019). In intercultural or inter- contact fear may also be caused. When people communicate and experience cultural similarities with individuals from other countries, they prefer to perceive them as outsiders. Such circumstances may contribute to intercultural confusion of communication; it can be characterized as the "craziness or anxiety of actual or expected contact with individuals from different communities, particularly culturally, ethnically and racially" (Bohman et al., 2010; Broeckelman-Post, 2019; Samavarchi & Hosseini, 2019; Tip et al., 2019).

In addition, the findings of previous studies often indicate that a strong correlation exists between foreign-language anxiety and fear of unfavourable assessment, a concern which has not been taken into consideration in language learning research (Huang, 2018). According to Rahimi and Yadollahi (2011), the teacher as a fluent speaker and students was fearful of unfavourable assessment. Oroujilo and Vahedi (2011) claimed that apprehension of a linguistic mistake is the explanation of why students are not engaging in classroom events. Rahim and Goli (2016) study also showed that students are afraid of making mistakes in the classroom. Standing before the peers is another source of fear in learning a foreign language. Another research aimed at analyzing the anxiety rates of students and assessing the association between various forms of anxiety showed a strong connection between discomfort at exams and the risk of unfavourable evaluations (Bekleyen, 2009; Gogol et al., 2017; Kelsen, 2019).

Conclusion

This paper centres its investigation on the language disorders and anxiety of Saudi EFL learners. This study employed a descriptive research design. It seeks to recognize factors that may contribute to English-speaking student development of the respondents by addressing their language anxiety and disorders. Results indicated that EFL Saudi students generally had a feeling of anxiety and disorder in learning the English language. Their communication anxiety is positively correlated to their fear of negative function, test anxiety, and anxiety in English learning. The findings suggest that the higher the communication anxiety of the respondents, the higher they also manifest their fear on negative feedback, test anxiety in language, and their whole anxiety behaviour in the English language classroom. Hence, it can

be practically implied from the findings the need for a relaxing and stress-free English language classroom among Saudi universities.

Pedagogical Implications

Findings of the study offered several implications to the educational management and practice in the foreign language of KSA. Firstly, language teachers should understand that EFL students have anxiety in their language classrooms. In addition to the culture shock they might experience in a foreign language, they often suffer from a "language shock" that may allow them to learn the target language with a lot of discomfort and difficulties. Secondly, language instructors must be willing to grasp the essence of the language anxieties of their students. It may differ from one learner to another, such that teachers are conscious of the language anxieties of their students. Thus such, they should plan lessons and organize exercises and instructional resources that better answer approaches that certain categories of learners can use successfully in order to cope with their language anxieties. Finally, when EFL students do not feel comfortable on language testing individually, language teachers may opt for alternate assessment or testing systems that will alleviate students 'discomfort when learning in college. Group learning assessment should be used and general observations on the linguistic success of their learners may be produced instead of individual language assessment that ultimately induces anxiety.

Learners are often subject to learning difficulties, which language educators need to address. These difficulties result from anxieties that learners are made to undergo, particularly in English language classes. Language anxieties are a complex of emotional and intellectual challenges that add burden to the language learner, turning the whole process of learning a second or foreign language into an uphill task. Thus, language teachers need to pay attention to such anxieties, for they hamper proper learning. As practical remediations options in the current educational paradigm of KSA, the conduct of professional development for language arts teachers based on merits and benefits associated with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to reduce anxiety and disorders should be initiated. The gender gap in language learning can be appropriately addressed by providing the students with the more extensive opportunity of using strategies that will help improve the language proficiency of male EFL learners. The use of strategies that will suit the personality, styles, and inclinations of male and female students in language teaching may be considered. Teachers are encouraged to come up with innovative other task learning designs for the students. Having accomplished this study's stated goals, this study has several limitations that may be dependent on future studies. First, the study

is only limited to a small sampling size of Saudi EFL learners, which can be a limiting factor on the test of differences.

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Impact of motivation and group cohesion in EFL Classrooms at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, KSA

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Abstract

This article endeavours to analyze the impact of motivation and reward regarding second language learning. There are numerous internal and external factors that go hand in hand to cultivate motivation among learners. The research design was differential which can better be understood as a comparison of four groups of participants. This research utilized a quantitative approach i.e survey as a method for collecting data. Qualitative analysis was used to elaborate on the results of quantitative information. The research sample consisted of four groups of participants from different semesters of B. A. in English language and Literature at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, KSA. Motivation has influenced the students to bring new learning

strategies and has made students much conscious about learning English. Teachers' motivation also plays a vital role in the way students learn the English language. Teachers are considered as a role model for students and usually, students follow what teachers do more than what they say or teach. So, teachers should motivate their students by involving them in healthy, useful, and interactive activities so that the student has an overall strongly positive attitude towards learning a second language.

Keywords: *low learners, motivation, reward, pedagogical skills, teacher as a guide*

Introduction

In today's information technology era, motivation plays a major role in second language learning (Alderman, 2013). According to Gardner (1985), research has underlined motivation as a significant variable in second language procurement. Conduct and considering students of the second language are related to motivation and people who are roused act in an objective arranged and deliberate way. Dornyei & Ushioda (2011) state that most of the professional need to be a "good enough motivator" using "a few well-chosen strategies that suit both the teacher and the learners" (p. 134).

Motivation in second language learning is considered as the basic force for the long stretch methodology of learning and remaining all variables in a solitary way. Csizer & Dornyei (2005) ensure motivation as a key variable, without which not a great deal can happen. Motivation in second language learning was coined by Lambert and Gardner in 1959. His model has been the topic of conversation. He presents his observed ATMB (Attitude/Motivation Testing Batter). It worked as an instrument in evaluating the effects of mindset and motivation in second language learning.

English as an overall language expanded the impact on the EFL setting. Experts exhibited that the action of the solidified orientation of was low against what Gardener has proposed. Notwithstanding, paying little attention to these remarkable conflicting examinations, it is an affirmation that the better approaches to manage to analyze the issue and offered bits of information to the unavoidable specialists and the work he contributed was essential. As Dornyei (1998) says "having been typical to the Gardnerian approach for such a long time, we may not generally think about the proportion of movement this was".

The word motivation has many multiple definitions. Motivation, according to Gardner (1985), is the synthesis of commitment and motivation to accomplish the objective of language learning, including positive attitudes towards language learning. Pardee (1990) suggests that motivation causes the individual to behave or to establish a disposition towards such behaviour. Crooks and Schmidt (1991) described motivation as an opportunity for learners to learn a second language. Oxford and Shearin (1994) described motivation as an ultimate purpose, coupled with the power to achieve this goal. Motivation, according to Ellliot and Covington (2001), offered an interpretation of the actions, desires, and needs of individuals. Motivation may also be defined as the direction of one's acts, or what causes a person to want the activity to be repeated, and vice versa. Motivation has been described by Broussard and Garrison (2004) as the characteristic that drives us to do something or not. Narayanan (2006) claimed that motivation is the explanation for the acts or behaviour.(Guay, Vallerand, & Blanchard, 2010) add to this that motivation is the primary cause of actions.

Motivation may be described primarily in two ways: integrative and instrumental (Brown, 2000; Kappalumakkel, 2020; Medriano & Bautista, 2020; Gardner, 1985). Gardner (2012) and others emphasized the difference between integrative and instrumental motivation to be used for second language acquisition. Gardner and Lambert (1959) defined integrative motivation as "language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment; that is, the learner likes to learn a language to enter successfully into the target language society" (as cited in Pourhosein Gilakjani, Leong, & Saburi, 2012). They added that the instrumental motivation involves knowing the L2 for practical and social purposes. It includes achieving objectives, functional learning outcomes, such as clearing tests and financial incentives.

Dornyei (1998) said that both instrumental and integrative motivation requires a motivational framework. Instrumental motivation is a kind of engendered encouragement for the prospect of monetizable reward. According to her, "extrinsic motivation is the desire to do something because of the promise of or hope for a tangible result" (p. 8). In the majority of learning situations, each motivation requires a careful balance. Specific integrative or instrumental factors can not be related to language learning performance. The role of integrative and instrumental encouragement is stated to rely on circumstances or contexts, whether the situation is for learning a foreign language or a second language.

Dornyei (1998) also defined intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation can be

defined as activities or tasks, which have an inborn desire to do. Extrinsic motivation applies to acts that are done to accomplish something as a lieu of reward or economical benefits. According to Brown (2000), these two forms of motivation are related to each other. Extrinsic motivation can be integrative motivation if someone else needs the SL/FL learner to learn the SL/FL for integrative reasons; extrinsic motivation can prove instrumental if external benefits need the SL/FL learners to study the SL/FL language. Similarly, if the SL / FL learner needs to connect with the SL / FL environment, intrinsic motivation can be integrative motivation; if the SL / FL learner tries to accomplish goals using SL / FL, intrinsic motivation can also be instrumental motivation. Significant variations between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can also be seen by learners with the same integrative motivation. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for L2 language learning is important to integrative and instrumental motivation

Literature Review

This part incorporates the examination of the writing identified with the subject of the researcher's proposal 'effect of motivation in L2 learning'. In this section, the researcher has attempted to give all conceivable data about the point that the perusers effectively comprehend the subject. The idea of motivation has risen around 1930 and it has been for some time discussed and concentrated trying to recognize what drives individuals to embrace a specific activity. Following quite a while of studies and inquires about, brought together the hypothesis of motivation can't be said that. Be that as it may, a few attributes of motivation are commonly acknowledged. A progression of research untaken in the most recent decade has uncovered some intriguing viewpoints with respect to the impacts of various sorts of motivation on execution (Guay et. al., 2006).

Motivation and its Types

The two types of motivation, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation are significant for the understudies in the learning process (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The subject rotates around inborn motivation. However, to comprehend the contrasts between these two kinds, the researcher additionally examines irrelevant motivation present among all the motivations.

The Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) presents distinctions between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation together with their types. Intrinsic motivation is typically a

desire to immerse oneself in an initiative since it allows one to feel pleasure or satisfaction. It is an inherent need for self-determination and competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Under the roof of full flenched freedom to do things, people with an innate drive can find fascinating circumstances in which they can grow from the obstacles, the action will bring. Intrinsic motivation is defined as three mental necessities: firstly, knowledge as a motivation to carry out such tasks in order to pursue new thoughts, principles and establish new understandings; accomplishment as getting gratification doing work with great mastery; and Stimulation, because of beauty, artistry, or fun and excitement in the assigned work. Intrinsic motivation has been referred to in all literature as having a major role in learning SL/FL (Pae, 2008; Csizer & Dornyei, 2005; Rahman, 2005; Noels et. al., 2001; Brown, 2000; Dornyei, 1998; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Ramage, 1990) as it is closely correlated with continuity of L2 and long-term success (Liu, 2007; Noels et al., 2001; Brown, 2000; Oxford & Sharon, 1994; Ramage, 1990). Therefore, researchers have opposed curriculum programs and strategies that hinder promoting intrinsic motivation (Brophy, 1998).

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation "pertains to a wide variety of behaviours that are engaged in as a means to an end and not for their own sake" (Deci, 1975). Ryan and Deci (2000) classified different types of extrinsic motivation. The levels of extrinsic motivation in education include external regulation, introjection, identification, and integrated regulation. External introjection refers to the action done on pressure. As the individual responds to pressure, not acting out of personal preference, this is not a self-determined action. The third type, the established control, characterizes the extrinsic incentive that is most self-determined. In this situation, the individual executes activities important to him or her that he or she has selected for their meaning and significance.

"Extrinsic motivation is an important part of the dichotomy of motivation" (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However extrinsic motivation sometimes spoils intrinsic motivation. In this regards, Hidi & Harackiewicz (2000) dismiss the opinion that external expectations often negate the intrinsic motivation. They contend that perhaps the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can depend on the duration of involvement and the complexity of the task.

Role of Motivation for Language Learning

Roused students are each instructor's fantasy. They are happy to buckle down, add their own objectives for them, concentrate on the jobs that need to be done, drive forward through difficulties,

don't require nonstop consolation, and may even animate others in the classroom, advancing synergistic learning. Be that as it may, we as a whole realize that motivation drives our students' learning differs broadly, back and forth movements through the span of the year (or in any event, during a solitary classroom action), and comes from different sources, interior to the student, outer, or both. As educators, we can, for the most part, observe who is inspired and who isn't, and frequently we may consider how or regardless of whether we can bridle the motivation of a few and spread it out to other people. Taking advantage of motivation is vital for language educators since we realize that motivation is one of the key elements driving language learning achievement. In this paper, the researcher talks about the meaning and the significance of motivation, survey the particular methodologies for producing motivation, clarify the differentiation among integrative and instrumental motivation, expand the qualification among inborn and outward motivation, notice the variables affecting motivation and de-rousing elements distinguished by, lastly express the reception of persuasive educating practice.

Factors and Approaches to Motivation for Language Learning

Motivation is significant because it is affected by various factors such as attitudes, aptitude, language anxiety, intelligence, self-confidence, etc in language acquisition and learning (Dornyei, 2001a; Gardner, 2001; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). In the present time, there is a growing demand for research on SL/FL motivation. There is a variety of a related number of studies have found on motivational research. As a consequence, we now have a diverse combination of these methods to L2 motivation.

Dornyei (2001) believes that the growing interest in the L2 motivation represents a more general trend in applied linguistics with increasing numbers of researchers incorporating psycholinguistic and linguistic systems to enhance their comprehension of complex second language learning mechanisms. He also suggests that the difficulty of the philosophy of motivation rests in its efforts to establish the interpersonal behaviors of people that can not be clarified by any one method.

For successful motivation, perceived competence is much needed. Consequently, people tend to be searching for perfect difficult tasks for their growth (Harter, 1978; White, 1959). Rajendran (2010) suggests that efforts to develop critical reasoning skills should be made on a consistent basis using various tools and efficient methods. Krulik & Rudnick (1995) and Herman

(2006) state that the critical thinking method can be a suitable method for problem-based learning. This method offers students the chance to discover, examine, and solve problems (Arends 2007; Gallagher, 1997). Mahmood (2020) suggests using Reflective Learning Method, which helps much to learn a language by reasoning. The other researcher, Benson (2005) suggests the implementation of autonomy in the EFL classroom. He gives importance to three elements: learning management, cognitive processing, and the content of learning. Madrid (2002) has also examined students and teachers to evaluate the influence of such techniques in the motivational classroom. He has considered the following best motivational strategies: the use of audiovisual tools and emerging technology, collaborative effort, customer satisfaction, lounge and incentive, and the recognition of student achievement. The author also states that teachers should encourage and incorporate positive methods that boost the involvement, commitment, and happiness of their students.

Research Methodology

Research Approach and Design

The research design was differential. In differential research, the variable that defines the group is a preexisting variable, which is not under to researcher's control. Such preexisting variable includes: clinical diagnosis, age, gender, socio-economic class, etc. This research utilized a quantitative approach i.e survey as a method for collecting data. Qualitative analysis was used to elaborate on the results of quantitative information. The research sample consisted of four groups of participants from different semesters of B. A. English Language and Literature at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, KSA.

Research Sample

The research sample consisted of four groups of participants from different semesters of B. A. English Language and Literature at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, KSA. A significant reason for selecting students from different semesters was that most of the students have been learning English since early education. Among these four groups, group one comprises 23 students of semester 3rd, group two comprises 26 students of the semester, group three comprises 23 students from semester 4th, and group four consisted of 23 students from the 6th semester. Why did the researcher focus on the middle four semesters of B. A. English? The answer to this question is that students of these semesters have at least spent a year in the department and

they have an antagonistic view of learning English. The students of the English department were chosen because they have a direct need of learning English.

Instrument and Procedure

The research data was collected via a questionnaire. The questionnaire used for the collection of data for research was an adopted questionnaire by Gardner (1985) which consists of 26 items in three segments. The first questionnaire contains 9 items that represent attitude and perception towards learning English language. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 9 items which sought students' attitude and perception towards English language. The third part of the questionnaire consists of 8 items to check students' orientation towards an integrative and instrumental motivation. The questionnaire has a five-point scale starting from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Results and Analysis

This part of analysis takes into account the first group of questionnaire, which relates students' attitude towards learning English. It carried nine items and participants were asked to indicate their responses on a scale of five points. The results of all the students showing their attitude towards learning English has been shown in the table below.

Table 1: How do you feel about learning English?

Statements	**SA %**	**A %**	**N %**	**D %**	**SD %**
I think it is useful for me to learn English.	77.61	20.15	0.75	1.49	-
I dislike learning English.	2.99	0.75	7.46	26.81	61.94
I would like to learn English to the highest extent.	67.91	26.87	3.73	0.75	0.75
I'd spend my time not in English but on other subjects.	6.27	23.13	36.57	26.87	6.72
I love learning English.	47.76	42.54	5.97	2.99	0.75
Learning English is waste of time.	2.99	2.99	4.48	26.87	62.69

I plan to continue learning English.	44.03	39.55	8.21	4.48	3.73
Learning English is of little use to me.	5.22	3.73	5.97	23.13	61.94
When I'll leave university, I'll stop studying English entirely.	8.21	25.36	12.69	23.13	30.6

Note: SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree N = Neutral D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

Table one suggests that students have overall a strongly positive approach towards learning English. This shows their close proximity and affinity towards learning English. They have described learning English as a useful, likeable, and loveable experience. There is a strong agreement on the statement that is supportive of learning English. These include 'it is useful for me to learn English', 'I would like to learn English to the highest extent.' and 'I love learning English'. On the other hand, statements that trigger unfavourable responses regarding learning English received strong renunciation from the students. These include 'I dislike learning English', and learning English is a waste of time'.

In terms of their future plans which relate to continuing or abandoning studying English at all (83.58%) of the students believe that they would continue studying English after leaving university. Whereas, one item in questionnaire number one, students seem to be uncertain about their time spending other subjects rather than English. In overall terms, the positive response on positive items leads us to confirm that the students have a positive attitude towards learning English, whereas, the negative responses to negative statements also confirm that the students have a positive attitude towards learning English.

The second part of the questionnaire elicited students' attitude and perception towards the English language. It carried nine items and asked the students to indicate their responses on the five points liker type scale. Table no 2 shows the results of all the students showing their responses in percentage towards the English language.

Table 1 How do you feel towards the English language?

Statements	**SA%**	**A%**	**N%**	**D%**	**SD%**
I find English fascinating and interesting.	39.55	50.75	7.46	1.49	0.75
I don't like speaking English.	1.49	1.49	3.73	37.1	55.97

I don't like English TV channels because it shows programs in English.	4.48	11.19	22.39	32.84	29.10
I find English language easy.	14.93	42.54	23.13	14.93	4.48
I prefer English language over Arabic.	8.21	19.14	31.34	26.12	14.93
I find English language boring.	2.99	9.7	18.66	42..54	26.12
I find speaking English prestigious.	17.16	39.55	29.85	11.19	2.24
I feel more educated when I speak in English.	28.36	35.82	15.67	12.69	7.46
I want to send my children to private English school to learn English fluently.	32.09	35.82	20.90	05.22	5.97

Table 2 shows that the students have overall strongly positive attitude towards English language. This also shows that the students have liked learning English language and English language itself as well. They have described learning English language interesting as well as prestigious. 90.3% of students have reported that learning English is interesting. 57.5 % of students were of the view that learning English is easy for them. 64.18% of students reported that when they speak English they feel themselves educated. There are unfavorable responses towards English language as well.

Regarding other items, students have also shown positive inclinations and concerns. 67.91% of students were hopeful for putting their children into private English language institutes in order to make them fluent in it. Regarding preferences of English over other local languages, 31.34% of students were not sure and 41.05% of students disagreed with the statement.

The third part of the questionnaire elicited the students' purpose of studying English. It carried eight items and asked the students to indicate their responses on the five points liker type scale. Table no 3 shows the results of all the students showing their responses in percentage towards the students' purpose of studying English.

Table 2: Why do we study English?

Statements	**SA%**	**A%**	**N%**	**D%**	**SD%**
English proficiency is crucial to me since it helps me to feel comfortable with people	53.73	40.	3.73	0.75	1.49

who use English.					
English proficiency is crucial to me since because I am going to use it in the future in discussion.	29.85	38.81	8.96	16.42	5.97
English proficiency is crucial to me since it helps me to meet and speak to various people.	35.82	48.51	11.19	2.24	2.24
English proficiency is crucial to me since it helps in gaining knowledge.	38.06	38.06	15.67	4.48	3.73
English proficiency is crucial to me since I may better understand and enjoy English literature and art.	32.09	38.81	17.16	5.97	5.97
English proficiency is crucial to me since it may be helpful in getting a good job.	17.19	48.51	20.9	7.46	5.22
English proficiency is crucial to me since it may help in understanding other cultures.	29.85	46.27	14.18	5.97	3.73
English proficiency is crucial to me since others would value me more if I use fluently.	19.4	29.85	20.15	11.94	18.66

Table 3 describes the integrative orientation towards English, the students' responses are also positive. Students also seem motivated towards learning English integratively. 94.0% of students feel motivated to learn English as it allows them to be at ease with people using English. 84.33% of students consider that they have met varied people as being just around the corner. They think English will help them meeting varied people around the globe and have a conversation with them.68.7 % of students consider English important as it will allow them to participate freely in the discussion if they have good command in English, which again is the reflection of integrative motivation.

In terms of the instrumental orientation of motivation towards English, the responses of students show that 76.12 % of students consider that English will help them be a more knowledgeable person. As in today's world, the one who is good at English is considered knowledgeable and educated. In a response to the statement about the importance of English in

association with a future career, the response of 65.7 of students has been reported positive. And they consider the importance of English for a good job in the future. Almost 49.25% of students think that knowledge of English will ensure more respect in society and they will be preferred.

Some overlapping was also seen in the integrative and instrumental motivation part of the questionnaire's responses. A reasonable number of students were not fully sure about the orientation towards integrative and instrumental motivation. This shows that results are conversant with the research conducted by Dornyei who also suggested that the orientation that falls in an overlapping zone could either be classified as integrative or instrumental and thus should be regarded as two motivational sub-systems.

Conclusion

The results of the research should be used with caution because the sample of the research was limited to only those students who have started studying English as their major at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, KSA. These students are attending English classes as a Bachelor of Arts in English language and Literature. The results could be different as we shift our population to other departments or other programs. The input from the students has revealed that the motivation they have, has a great impact on their learning. Motivation has influenced the students to bring new learning strategies and has made students much conscious about learning English. Besides that, teachers' motivation also plays a vital role in the way students learn English language. Teachers are considered a role model for students and usually, students follow what teachers do more than what they say or teach. So, teachers should motivate their students by involving them in healthy, useful, and interactive activities.

A new avenue of research could be to investigate the learning of L2 at the same level and time. Like, along with English the attitude of students towards Arabic. The interrelationship between two taught languages can also give better insights into the learning process, which may pave for an improved learning situation. L2 learning is a complex process in which motivation plays a vital role. Effective teaching demands that teachers should understand the needs of the students and how they can attain the proficiency they want. In the view of the researcher, motivational strategies could work more effectively if nurtured properly and frequently within and outside the classrooms.

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ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

Learning Style Preferences and Attitudes to MOOCs: Common Grounds for Saudi EFL Learners' Success

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Abstract

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) was first introduced in 2014 as a way to fill the holes in skills in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). However, in recent years there have been catching up for reasons as varied as gender segregation in regular education, poor access to urban education and limited public universities, the latest one being the new societal order forced by the Covid pandemic. In short, their very flexibility and cost-effectiveness have led MOOCs to transform the face of higher education in the country.Learning, yet, is also a factor of learners' learning styles, and this has created obstacles in the greater reach of MOOCs in KSA. Learning

style preferences are highly emphasised upon in regular classroom environments but are rarely considered essential in MOOCs. The distance led this research to analyze the interaction between MOOC learning and the interests of Saudi EFL learners. The CITE Learning Styles Instrument (1976) and the MOOCs Perceived Usefulness Questionnaire (Liu, Li and Carlsson, 2010) were administered to 80 male Saudi regular EFL learners at Qassim University, KSA, who had completed any one short duration (minimum thirty hours) MOOCs in language learning in the previous summer break. Results indicated that different learning styles affect learner success on MOOC courses, and that careful planning and execution of course curriculum and courseware can determine learner motivation.

Keywords: *English, Saudi EFL, Learning style preferences, MOOC Learning Adoption, TAM*

Introduction

In the past two years, e-learning opportunities have changed dramatically and Massive Open Online (MOOC) courses have become iconic examples for this emerging technology movement, but fewer than 10 percent of students have a MOOC. Yet what attracts a large number to enrol in the first place is the massive innovation in distance learning, and success guided by principles of free education (Adham, 2017; Alshahrani & Ally, 2016; Kastrati, Kurti, & Imran, 2020; Mahdy, Samad, & Mahdi 2020; Zhao, Wang & Sun, 2020). The use and integration of technology in/into learning have been the demand of modern education system with the rapid increase in tablets, laptops and desktops, redefining the traditional way of learning into an educational experience with no limits and bounds for the students. For a variety of reasons, the current paradigm in education is defined by cost-effectiveness, availability, and mass appeal as guaranteed by MOOC Learning within the framework of university education. MOOC Learning features are blended, ubiquitous, private, interactive, and collaborative; and provides useful information for students to learn in their own pace and time so as to experience the thrill of learning authentically (Christensen & Knezek, 2017; Crompton, Burke, & Gregory, 2017). Studies have shown that MOOC is an important, main or supplemental learning resource that improves education as it gives all ample learning opportunities. Throughout the context of improved learning, MOOCs have a ton of promise (Al-Ahdal, 2020; Al-Hunaiyan & Al-Hajri, 2018). Such

reasons illustrate why multiple higher education institutions now incorporate MOOC Education in the world.

Given their success and advantages by MOOCs, the possible benefits can not be ideally accomplished if students are not inspired or reluctant and immune to their usage in education (Sun, Xie & Anderman, 2018; Wu, 2018). Therefore, in this research, there is a need to explore further how the interests of students ' learning styles appear in embracing MOOC analysis and how these communicate with English language. Earlier work has shown that the behavioral desire, disposition, and desires have shaped an critical engine of learning (Agogo & Hess, 2018; Christensen & Knezek, 2017; Liardét, 2018; Malik & Rao, 2019; McKenna & al., 2018; Tams, Thatcher&Crover, 2018). We also have varying rates of technology acceptance with various students possessing different inclinations and specific types (Lemay et al . , 2018; Panigrahi, Srivastava, & Sharma, 2018; Park et al . , 2019; Roszkowska & Wachowicz, 2019). This ultimately contributed to a more in-depth study to determine the connection between learning style and acceptance of MOOC Education.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

This research is focused on the TAM which describes how consumers embrace and implement a technology based on its usability, ease of usage, quality of implementation, and behavioral conditions (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw 1989). The research discussed the usage of MOOC Learning from Saudi EFL, led by the dimensions of TAM. The results are supposed to further enhance the execution of MOOC learning and hence the success and output of the students. It will also provide educators with the requisite lessons for how to implement the usage of MOOC in the classroom for optimal student engagement properly. The understanding of Learners regarding the value and convenience of technology determines their degree of computer and technology awareness and the emphasis on improving lifetime skills and global competences. KSA higher education institutions are dedicated to creating skilled and qualified human capital and MOOCs are an effective way of doing this at low cost and with the minimum of infrastructures. This is important for colleges to provide an overview of MOOC training's correct usage to facilitate the advancement of students (Akour, 2010; Bozorgian, 2018; Donaldson, 2010; Medriano & Bautista, 2020).

MOOC Learning

To the optimal usage of MOOCs, an overview of the variables influencing the use of MOOCs as a learning tool is necessary. Some recent studies have suggested that MOOCs have evolved in various fields of linguistics, research, medicine and social science through countries and nationalities (Bernacki, Greene, & Crompton, 2019; Lin et al., 2019). Zhang et al (2017) observed in a further analysis that MOOC learning self-efficacy has a beneficial influence on perceived learner control and ease of usage. Studies based over the course of the decade on the participation of students (from Barba et al, 2020), on outcomes and learning intent (Aparicio, et al , 2019; Dai, et al, 2020; Salzmann, Piguet, & Gillet, 2019) and the happiness of students (Dai et al, 2020). Systematic analyses revealed that MOOC work primarily involves inspiring candidates, hiring, completing and teaching architecture (Cinquin, Guitton, & Sauzéon, 2019; Paton, Fluck, & Scanlan, 2018; Tsai, et al , 2018; Zhu, Sari, & Lee, 2018). Nevertheless, it is unclear whether students accept or reject MOOCs. It is critical in order to increase the standard of education. While MOOC Education leads to student academic success, the MOOC Learning and learning types study divide is still not closely addressed. This research is therefore motivated to add to the existing awareness of how those two variables apply to the Saudi EFLlearning background through MOOCs.

Learning Styles

The present study looks at how students' learning style preferences associate with the adoption of MOOC Learning. Learning style has been claimed as a significant determinant in how students learn and acquire the English language which fundamentally influences their learning outcomes (Hwang, Hsu, & Hsieh, 2019; Marzulina, Pitaloka, & Yolanda, 2019; Murray & Christison, 2019; Reid, 1987a, 1995b; Toyama & Yamazaki, 2019; Wang, Mendori, & Hoel, 2019; Yousef, 2019). According to Sun & Teng (2017), awareness of the learning styles of students allows language teachers to effectively initiate learning activities that meet the needs of individual learners. Classifying and discerning students' differences helps them to develop their capacity to an optimum level. The notable types of learning styles this present study adapted are those of Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Style Preferences, which are classified into visual, group,

individual, auditory tactile, and kinesthetic. These learning styles are the most common and accessible, as well as extensive research types of learning styles in language teaching.

Additionally, appropriate identification of learners' learning style will guide language teachers on how to tackle language lessons by way of planning and designing teaching modalities that are learner-centered. Therefore, limited awareness of learners' characteristics, particularly their learning styles, will not facilitate better learning opportunities, motivation, or outcomes. At present, studies on learning techniques in second language learning and acquisition are still inconclusive, requiring further investigations across personal and cultural backgrounds (Al-ahdal & Al-Ma'mari, 2015; Huang, Hoi, & Teo, 2018). On the one hand, limited studies have been conducted on how learners differ in learning styles when they are being presented with information (Kumar & Pande, 2018; Alkhudiry & Al-Ahdal, 2020). On the other hand, empirical studies relating to learning styles and MOOC Learning are still limited (Lu & Yang, 2018). This research therefore bridges this void by looking at how user expectations for the learning style contribute to the degree of acceptance of MOOC instruction.

Problem Statement and Context

The present trend of economic changes, coupled with technological advancement and development, has brought Saudi society to venture into the knowledge-based commercial approach (Al-Ahdal & Al-Awaid, 2018). The creation, innovation, and development of products and services require new means of business management for investment opportunities, and these will not be achieved without the active channels of communication in the global landscape. In this regard, KSA valorizes the English language, recognizing it as the bridge to the future (Pan & Patel, 2018; Xie, 2019).

For emphasis, MOOC Learning in the Saudi EFL context had been previously studied. Huang (2017) reported that teachers are still hesitant to adopt MOOC Learning in classroom instruction in college. Guo & Benzon (2017) reported that MOOC Learning provided better communication and collaboration opportunities among Saudi EFL students. Mei, Brown & Teo (2018) confirmed that learning a foreign language in KSA by using e-learning is highly conducive to facilitating conditions of resources and technology. Previous studies in KSA have asserted the usefulness of MOOC Learning to language instruction (Hao, Dennen, & Mei, 2017; Luo & Liu,

2019; Ma, Chan, & Chen, 2016; Xu & Peng, 2017; Zhang, 2019; Zhou, 2016; Zuo, 2017). In the context of studies relating to the language learning preferences of Saudi EFL students, Huang, Hoi & Teo (2018) reported that Saudi EFL learners have a significant choice for visual learning, auditory learning, and tactile learning modalities. Sit (2013) said Saudi EFL students favor quiet, inactive and red instruction. As is clear, the studies described above revealed differences in terms of Saudi EFL students ' preferences in learning styles. This research aims to include an overview of MOOC Learning and to obtain an awareness of the variations in Saudi EFL students ' personal learning characteristics. Therefore, an awareness of how students respond to the use of MOOC learning and the role of their styles in achieving the maximum learning results must be created.

Research Questions

This paper attempted to answer the research queries:

(1) How do Saudi EFL learners perceive the adoptions of MOOC Learning in their course?

(2) What are the learning style preferences of the students?

(3) Are the modalities offered by MOOC based learning suitable to the students'learning style preferences?

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The research followed a concise, correlational method, which explored the relationship between MOOC learning and student preferences in a course. Examination of the benefits of utilizing concise, inter-sectional, correlational architecture found that the association between variable is one of the most important approaches for evaluating relevant trends of interaction through the usage of systematic correlation research (Creswell & Poth 2016; Creswell 1998a; 2002b; Lune & Berg 2016). Many previous work (Cheng, 2015; Chung, Chen, & Kuo, 2015; Datu et al . , 2018; Hamidi & Jahanshaheefard, 2019; Milošević et al . , 2015; Sabah, 2016) explained the usage of a concise, linked technique on MOOC learning and learning styles and highlighted important correlations between studied variables.

Research Participants, Sampling Procedure, and Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted with 80 regular EFL learners at Qassim University, KSA, who had completed any one short duration (minimum thirty hours) MOOC in language learning in the previous summer break. The group comprised only males, and the median age fell at 21.5 years. The class members were chosen on the basis of the following requirements for inclusion: (1) must be a daily student and (2) MOOC programming was introduced and implemented over the preceding summer break.

The study used stratified random samples in order to ensure fair distribution of groups for a total of 184 students participating in the English language course. Online raosoft program was used to measure the sample size of 80, with a 5 % margin of error, 95% trust and 50% answer. The algorithm specifies power values for a given sample size and the alpha thresholds to avoid errors of type I and type II (Omair, 2014; Wang et al, 2013; Wilson, 2016). Ethical requirements around data protection and informed consent have been properly addressed. In fact ,the researcher received a short instruction on the objectives of the analysis before administration of the instruments. Thirdly, the privacy of the participants and the organisation was maintained by careful coding of the answers of the participants.

Research Instruments and Procedure

The research used the Instrument for CITE Training Patterns (1976). This is also widely employed as a robust battery for study into learning habits at Murdoch Teachers Center in Wichita, Kansas. The instrument tests the following learning methods: visual, graphical, auditory, statistical, auditorium, audio-visual, socio-individual, socio, social-group, expressive-oral, expressivity-script, etc. The instrument measures the following thinking types. As can be shown, the instrument assesses the desire of students for a variety of knowledge set, working circumstances and expressiveness. There are 45 items in this collection, and ratings fell into three categories: big, tiny and marginal. Five items each are dedicated to one skill, for instance, items 5, 13, 21, 29, 37 require participant feedback on preference for the visual language. This is a detailed questionnaire, and since the EFL classes are held every alternate day in the university, the study was conducted in phases. Moreover, data was collected from participants over a period of two weeks to ensure that they had sufficient time to answer the instruments. These were interpreted

orally by the researcher in order to rule out any chance of misinterpretation of the statements by the participants. The following section discusses the evaluation of the responses according to the inventory.

Secondly, the MOOCs Perceived Usefulness questionnaire (Liu, Li and Carlsson, 2010) was used to assess participants' experience of the usefulness of the MOOCs they undertook in the previous summer break. However, the questionnaire was adapted to suit the special environment of the KSA with questions being stacked to accommodate not only participants' technology readiness, but also the suitability of the MOOCs to different learning styles. The responses were sought on a standard Likert Scale gradient with 1 representing 'Strongly disagree' and 5 representing 'Strongly agree'.

Data Analysis and Results

The CITE inventory is a widely used instrument for obtaining learner data on learning style preferences. The inventory is more detailed than others available for the purpose, and this feature prompted its use in here as an evaluation of learning style preferences in the context of MOOCs in Saudi Arabia's EFL environment, and the researcher felt that a detailed survey instrument would provide a better insight. Once the feedback is obtained, for each participant, the 'most like me' or 'least like me' response for each item is taken and stacked under the learning style. Once each of the five items under a style have been quantified, the style total is calculated (by adding up all the 'most like me' and 'least like me' responses, multiplied by two and a score obtained. It may be recalled that, the battery classifies the styles as major, minor and negligible. Following is the break up of total scores for each of these categories:

34- 40: Major learning style

20- 32: Minor learning style

10- 18: Negligible learning style

Table 1 below presents the raw survey sheet used in the study

Table 1: LEARNING STYLES INSTRUMENT WORKSHEET

Sr. No.	Questionnaire Item	Most Like Me		Least Like Me	
1.	I recall what I knew more when I did things with my research.	4	3	2	1
2.	handwritten learning tasks are good for me.	4	3	2	1
3.	when I listen to somebody reading books I learn better.	4	3	2	1
4.	I learn well independently.	4	3	2	1
5.	learning tasks written on board make me learn better.	4	3	2	1
6.	written assignment is hard for me, todo.	4	3	2	1
7.	I memorize numbers in my head.	4	3	2	1
8.	when I need help, I ask others to help me.	4	3	2	1
9.	I do better in written math tasks.	4	3	2	1
10.	i don't care about writing tasks.	4	3	2	1
11.	I prfer listening than reading.	4	3	2	1
12.	I remember better when I do it alone.	4	3	2	1
13.	I prefer reading than listening to lessons.	4	3	2	1
14.	I feel good when I write.	4	3	2	1
15.	I can do good in math.	4	3	2	1
16.	I prfer collaborative larning.	4	3	2	1
17.	Writing tasks in math is right for me.	4	3	2	1
18.	It helps me to remember it better by writing a word spelling several times.	4	3	2	1
19.	I should recall what I learned than what I wrote.	4	3	2	1
20.	It is enjoyable to practice at first with friends, but it is challenging to study with them.	4	3	2	1
21.	I prefer more durable recorded orders than whispered directions.	4	3	2	1
22.	I prefer homework in vocal performance.	4	3	2	1
23.	If I hear a telephone number, without writing it I can remember it.	4	3	2	1

24.	When I collaborate with others, I get more job completed.	4	3	2	1
25.	hearing numbers makes sense for me.	4	3	2	1
26.	I prefer doing crafts with my hand.	4	3	2	1
27	I prefer writing then listening to learning tasks.	4	3	2	1
28.	I learn better when I am alone in a room.	4	3	2	1
29.	I prefer reading it alone than the teacher instructs me to do it.	4	3	2	1
30.	I prefer talking than writing.	4	3	2	1
31.	I tell it to myself if I have a published mathematical problem to explain it better.	4	3	2	1
32.	I learn better in a small group.	4	3	2	1
33.	Seeing prices written makes me understandd it betterthan telling it to me.	4	3	2	1
34.	I love creating something with my bare hands.	4	3	2	1
35.	I prfer written tests by filling out answers.	4	3	2	1
36.	I learn better when I discuss it with others.	4	3	2	1
37.	I prefer written spelling than oral spelling.	4	3	2	1
38.	It makes it impossible for me to express what I want in writing through spelling and grammar rules.	4	3	2	1
39.	It's better if I inform myself how many things I sort through.	4	3	2	1
40.	I love learning with others.	4	3	2	1
41.	I don't get it until I see it written down, if the teachers say a figure.	4	3	2	1
42.	I would grasp what I found because I do something about it.	4	3	2	1
43.	I say stupid stuff occasionally, but writing allows me time to correct myself.	4	3	2	1
44.	I'm going better in learning because it's stuff I learn in college.	4	3	2	1
45.	If I work with another guy, I can't function so well as when I work alone.	4	3	2	1

Aggregating the total responses of the participants, the most preferred learning style is visual language with 69 (86.25%) of the 80 participants showing an inclination for this. These learners learn from seeing information, and they may also write down notes or keywords when reading. This enhances their understanding and memorization of the data. The auditory learners closely follow these at 80% of the participants reporting hearing as the faculty that best helps them learn new information. Nonetheless, 71% of the participants reported their preference to see numerical data to be able to process it while a comparatively low 38.75% of the participants reported an inclination towards the auditory numerical input. This means that the former need visual input to carry out numerical functions, but this function is considerably reduced when only auditory input is available. Considering the expressiveness, a low 21.25% needed to speak out what they had learnt while 63.75% felt a need to express in writing rather than answer orally. 68.5% of the participants reported better learning outcomes when they studied alone but only 41.25% preferred to be in a group when learning. Finally, the lowest learning output is reported by the auditory visual kinesthetic learners, that is those who needed a range of stimuli such as visual, audio and bodily movement to ensure best learning. These results are presented in Figure 1 below.

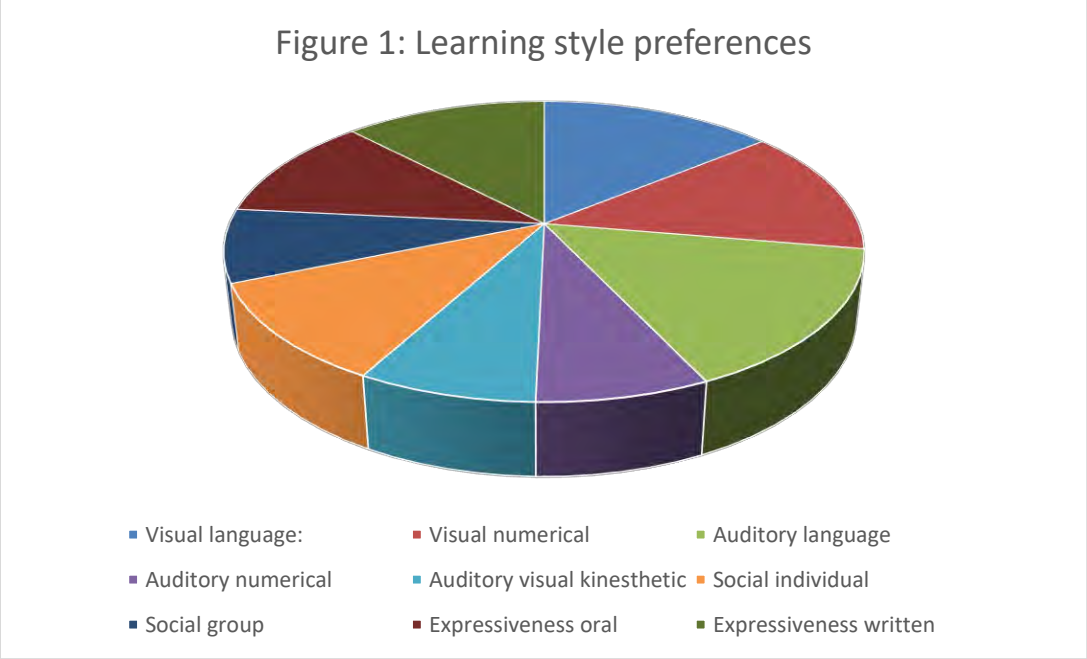

Table 2 below presents the results of the questionnaire.

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	The MOOC I undertook was appropriate for the internet technology available.	8	6	3	18	45
2	The material was presented in a reader friendly format and layout.	1	9	3	32	35
3	The videos in the course were distracting.	54	21	1	4	0
4	It was helpful that we could watch specific sections again.	8	11	3	21	37
5	I didn't face any technological issues in studying online.	6	10	1	20	43
6	The MOOC content was suited to my needs.	14	17	4	21	24
7	I found the visual lesson supported by the audio to be most useful.	8	4	5	27	36
8	I wish there were more activities that were required of me in the course.	24	29	5	9	13
9	The written assignments and tasks in the MOOC I undertook were sufficient to revise and test my learning.	12	7	2	31	28
10	I found it difficult to study all alone while I did my MOOC.	16	21	3	19	21
11	I felt the need for a teacher to hear what I had learnt during the lessons.	24	30	4	13	13
12	I learn best when I actually undertake an activity which I could rarely do in my MOOC.	28	22	4	11	11

Discussion

On the basis of the quantitative analysis, the present research has made it clear that TAM explains participants' intention to use MOOCs, and overall perceived usefulness can be a major factor in deciding student engagement with MOOCs. Responses to items 1, 2 and 5 indicate that the technology available in KSA is suitable to MOOCs, and that the learners are in a state of

readiness to adopt this mode. The specifics of the courses may also be definitive, as the view on the suitability of the MOOC material for the particular requirements of the sample participants tends to be split. Therefore, it appears that greater learner feedback is needed to help improve the content. Talking of the learning styles, only 22 and then 26 of the participants (items 8, 12 respectively) reported a need for more 'to do' activities in the course, it is surmised that these are the kinesthetic learners; yet, their specific learning styles are not well accommodated in the MOOCs. The visual-auditory type of learenrs are most satisfied with their learning experience as 63 of them reported a positive experience with their course. This finding is also supported by response to item 3, which indicates that videos in the MOOCs are found to be useful by the participants. Learner response is somewhat divided on the question of individual versus group study (item 10) as an almost equal number reported preference for either option. Numerical preferences were left out in the questionnaire as the participants belonged to English language course and the MOOCs that they undertook also pertained to language enhancement without any numerical content. These may be tested in subsequent studies with a different participant set. At the same time the expressiveness oral learning style which had alow share in the participants (21.25%)was not accommodated in the MOOCs as a comparable number (27.5%) reported an unfulfilled need during the MOOC.

Conclusions

This research examined the relation between MOOC learning and the expectations of Saudi EFL students. The findings indicate that the students have demonstrated a strong acceptability to MOOC instruction. This research illustrates the positive partnership between the implementation of MOOC Learning in the sense of Saudi EFL, where functionality of MOOC Learning blended, standardized, private, immersive will directly support students ' learning styles to enhance their learning output. It highlights the need to properly consider the TAM, which means that people's understanding of technology acceptance is correlated with their profile and specific attributes for education 4.0.

Recommendations

The findings of the present study yield several practical teaching implications. The following recommendations are found highly pertinent: (1) Orientation for instructors to match student learning styles to MOOC Learning modality needs to be initiated; (2) Improvement and enhancement of the developed program and application should be done on a regular basis; (3) Introduction of training for language teachers to use MOOC Learning in the classroom should be part of the faculty development program of the College; (4) Before the use of MOOC Learning, language teachers should be encouraged to do pre-assessment of the preferred learning styles of the students which can be the basis for initiating learning activities and tasks; (5) Strengthening the provision of e-learning environment in the University to enable students to achieve maximum benefits of MOOC Learning; and (6) Assessment of the level of technology adoption and readiness of language teachers in MOOC Learning should also be made to address their practical and strategic needs.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The present study identified its limits which could be used for further testing and validation. The results of this analysis would predominantly be focused on the self-assessment survey of respondents in a university college in KSA, which is a major restriction of the research. For further education, there is a need to increase the number of participating universities, as well as, the number of samples for more conclusive findings. Secondly, gender and age need to be the additional variables covered in future studies; there is a need to include other equality, individual, and school-related variables. Finally, the use of a hybrid research method, and a quasi-experimental research design are also desirable for future investigations.

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ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

The Acquisition of Emphatic Verb Forms by Iraqi EFL University Students

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Abstract

This paper is about emphatic verb forms as one of the most important subjects in the English language, it focuses on the difficulties that English foreign language students encounter in producing emphatic. Therefore, the study has undertaken to diagnose the students' performance in recognizing and producing emphatic verb forms and discover the causes behind the students' errors and their sources. In order to achieve these objectives, the study has hypothesized that the students of Iraqi universities have difficulties in producing emphatic verb forms. A test has been designed and applied with a taster of (50) students at the 4th class, Department of English, Education College, Babylon University through the educational year (2018-2019). The consequences got through collecting and investigating the students' performance affirm which they encounter difficulties on the production level but they show efficiency on the recognition one. This is obvious from the number of their correct answers comparing them in relation to false answers on the production level and recognition level.

Keywords: *emphatic verb forms, recognition, production, error analyzing errors.*

Introduction

Emphasis plays a very significant role in communication. The inappropriate utilization of emphasis hinders delivering the message. The sender of the massage (speaker or writer) must employ the correct emphasis that s/he wants to reveal in a way the avoid errors and ambiguity, (Khanfar, 2016). Utilization of emphatic is to accomplish certain functions such as avoiding the ambiguity, stressing on such notions, etc. the emphasis employed the two languages- English and Arabic is almost different, this diversity creates difficulties to Arabic students to use the emphasis correctly. Negative transfer of language items, such as pragmatic or empahtic features occurs when learners use speech act norms of of one language that are incongruous in the another language setting (Yassin & Razk, 2018; Alrefaee & Al-Ghamdi 2019; Khanfar, 2016). Modes are developed by each language that not only for sharing material, yet for conveying thought and idea much convincingly for allowing no distrust or suspicion (Jerz, 1988; Medriano & De Vera,2020; Al-Ahdal, 2020a; 2020b).

This paper concerns with the emphatic verb forms in English, the discussion will focus upon the variety of options for verb assertion that include: sentence – inversion, repetition, and using imperatives with (do) as a forceful item. A very few studies dealt with this topic, emphatic verb forms in both language, furthermore most of these studies are old, it means this topic is neglected by scholars (Alkhudiry, Al-Ahdal, & Alkhudiry, 2020 ; Saeed, Al-Ahdal, & Al Qunayeer, 2020; Al-Ahdal, 2020c). It is hoped that the work conducted in this study will shed light upon the emphatic verb forms, as well as on the performance of Iraqi EFL learners in this topic. In addition, it is hoped that the results of this study can prove to be beneficial in understanding the learners' difficulties and in designing effective remedial programs in this respect.

This study aims at:

1-Identifying the Iraqi EFL university students' recognition with the production of emphatic verb forms.

2-Finding out the reasons behind the students' errors and their sources in order to suggest helpful remedial work.

It is Hypothesized that:

1-Many of Iraqi EFL university students have difficulties in using emphatic verbs.

2- Those students face more difficulties in producing these forms than in recognizing level.

Limitations

1- This study limits itself to the analysis of the performance of Iraqi students who are learning at universities in the use of emphatic verb forms. EFL

2- The sample of the study is restricted to college students at 4th stage in the English Department at the College of Education, the University of Babylon through the educational era (2018-2019) since they are the most advanced students at universities.

Theoretical Background

Definition of Emphatic

The term emphasis utilized in most structures that functions as drawing consideration to specific elements in a sentence or utterance. It aims at placing some elements under "focus" or to contrast them in relation to others. The emphasis in spoken English is often achieved merely by stressing the emphasized element, but English and others also display some structural aids to express emphatic like particles , distinctive word order and clefted constructions . (Trask , 1993: 89) .

Emphatic Tenses

There are two emphatic tenses: the tense of present emphatic focuses on events that occurred in the current time. Whereas the tense of past emphatic focuses on events that occurred in the previous time. Do and does are used with the tense of present emphatic. For instances,

I do read slowly.

She does like ice-cream. -

On the other hand, here are some examples where the emphasis is not intended:

- The manager does not come. (Forming a negative sentence)
- Do they have a credit card? (Forming a question)

Did is used with the past emphatic forms followed by infinitive form, for example:

-I did clean the house.

-He did pass the exam.

Sometimes, the emphasis is unintended, e.g,

-He didn't buy that car.

-Didn't you retire from the work last year?

When using emphatic forms for emphasis, structures of sentence can be negative or positive answers to an inquiry (explicit or implicit).

-Did you open that box?

Here, the response that serves as the emphasis is either "I did open that box "or "no, I didn't open that box". That is the setting of the sentence which is used the emphasis. It explains the speaker's meaning whether having an act or refusing it. (Carillo, 2001)

Types of emphatic

Repetition (Lexical Recurrence) :

Repeating is a characteristic of informal manner where by some items are recurrent (whether as a whole form or through substituting a pronoun) for the purposes of emphasizing, focusing , or thematic arrangement. The form of repetition is just the repetition (with weighty emphasizing) of an item or phrases for emphasizing :

-She cried and cried for hours.

-They kept playing, playing, playing all day.

The use of coordination existed with verbs. Further, it may come with adverbs like *again* or *as.* Also, it may come with the prepositional adverbs like *over, on, up, down, around*,…etc.

-I have said it again and again (repeatedly)

-She kept repeating the story over and over.

-They spoke on and on and on (continuously)

The pedestrian kinds of coordination create much emphasis consequence and are particular features of common storyline manner (Quirk et al, 1985).

Fronting and sentence inversion :

Another tool for emphasizing in English which is misinterpreted is the upturned sentence, in that the verb follows the subject, does presenting agreement difficulties with probable misperception when using repeatedly, for instance:

"Away from light steals home my heavy son / and private in his chamber ……"

The verb *away* starts the sentence, with the subject *son* for detached from it, the normal –order sentence would go as follows: "my heavy son steals home away from light …." The reason behind this fronting is for verb emphasis.

Here are other examples of fronting :

- *Do it I will*
- *Sleeping in her bed deeply was my sister Nada.*

The fronting of an element in a sentence is often associated with inversion. Two types of inversion can be distinguished :

A / subject-verb inversion :

This type occurred in the past and comes with simple present and past tense verbs, and with certain verbs of stance or with verbs of motion (come, go, fall, ……etc.)

- *Down came the rain.*
- *Here comes a taxi.*
- *There flies the last plane.*

The inversion of Subject-verb has not taken a position in addition to a personal pronoun like subject; *there she goes* rather than* *there is she*. Yet with the contrast of the subject :

- "There was she, on the playground, while I had to work".
- "Here am I, ill in bed, and you don't seem to *care".*

B/subject – operator inversion :

It is usual in official settings.

- *"*Were she here, she would support the motion".

"- Had the management acted sooner, the strike wouldn't have happened *."*

The use of the imperative as an emphatic form

Imperative can be used in straight commands, suggesting or other determinations. One of them is using command via *do* as an emphasis . do is used beforehand command while having the desire of emphasis (Alexander, 1988: 185).

- *Do wait a moment!*
- *Do tell me the truth!*
- *Do help me with question !*

The use of adverbs when "focusing"

Advs. like *even*, *just*, *merely*, *only*, *actually*, *really*, *indeed*, *simply*, …etc. may come first to the word they succeed in focusing care on it.

- He <u>simply</u> joined the meeting.
- I <u>only</u> asked him to lend me some money.
- He <u>actually</u> passed the exam .

Believing that human intend making their listeners receive what they say like true, the expansion of commenting or declaration highlights the certainty of communicating

Emphasizing those were located following to a portion of communicating , its consequence is often for emphasizing that part. (Quirk et al, 1985: 583).

Methodology

The study surveyed the available literature to describe the emphatic especially emphatic verb forms. This topic was ignored by scholars, while it is very important in the comunuivacation. The researcher dministrated an analytic assessment to a representative number of students from Iraq to find out the students' abilities in using emphatic. The researcher analysed the obtained data by using statistical means to get at a corpus of data that can verify the validity of the hypotheses proposed in this study. Useful conclusions are drawn from the results and certain relevant recommendations are offered.

The Test:

The main instrument usilized in this study was the test**,** so the researcher adminstred this test in a very profound way.

Test Objectives and Format

The present test is of the *diagnostic* or *progress* type in that it checks on the subjects' acquisition of emphatic verb forms in English. More specifically, it is designed to answer the question: "How well have the fourth-year EFL students learnt the emphatic verb forms?" .To ensure its objectivity, the test format has been totally designed to elicit responses in two techniques (See the Appendix). No more than one answer can be correct for each test item. It is worth mentioning here that the two test techniques mentioned in the Appendix are the most suitable for a diagnostic test (Harrison, 1983: v, 12; Ingram, 1968: 93).

Test Reliability and Validity

The characteristics of a good test have seen to be reliability and validity; i.e. feasibility and discrimination (Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 187). Reliability is a quality of *test scores*, and it refers to the extent to which such scores measure the subjects' proficiency in an error-free manner (Bachman, 1990: 24; Ellis, 2003: 310). To ensure this quality in the present test, two procedures have been taken in advance. The first is to design an objective test wherein each item allows only one correct answer (Pit Corder, 1973: 370). The other procedure is second-rating of the test papers by an experienced colleague teacher. The scores of the second-rater have been totally the same as those of the first-rater. This procedure of second-rating has been adopted by Bachman *et al*. (1995: 243), and is endorsed by Ellis (2003: 311).

A valid test is one in which the testee's score gives a true reflection of that testee's ability on the trait measured (Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 187). In other words, it is the degree to which a test measures what it is designed to measure (Ellis, 2003: 352). The most important type of validity is *content validity*; i.e. what goes into the test (Harrison: 1983: 11). This type of validity has been realized by testing only those items which are associated with the recognition and production of emphatic verb forms, neither more nor less (See the Appendix).

Subjects

Fifty undergraduate students have been randomly chosen from the Fourth year students of The English Dept., at the College of Education, University of Babylon. The sample above is quite representative as it comprises 50% of all the legible subjects. All the subjects share the same mother-tongue, English learning years at school, and age.

Test Administration

The test was administered to all the subjects in one sitting during the last teaching month for the second semester of the academic year 2018/2019. The selection of such a time has been based on the assumption that the subjects should by then have acquired maximal skills at the English Dept., immediately before graduation. Subjects were briefed beforehand as to the type of task they are volunteering to perform, and all their questions and queries were attended to during the testing session. The time allocated for the test was forty-five minutes, within which all the subjects submitted their responses to the researcher.

Results and Discussions

This subsection is devoted to discuss the results of the test which reflect the extent to which the students can acquire the emphatic verb forms. These results are necessary to verify or refute the hypotheses of the current study.

Students' performance at the recognition level

The results obtained on each item are illustrated in the following table:

Table (1) *Students' Responses at the Recognition level in Question (1)*

No of Items	*No. of Correct Answers*	*%*	*No. of Incorrect Answers*	*%*	*No. of Avoided items*	*%*
1	45	90	5	10		
2	42	84	8	16		
3	42	84	8	16		
4	30	60	19	38	1	2
5	22	44	27	54	1	2
6	33	66	11	22	6	12
7	39	78	10	20	1	2
8	38	76	11	22	1	2

9	31	62	18	36	1	2
10	31	62	17	34	2	4
Total	353	70.6	134	26.8	13	2.6

The table above shows that the total number of the correct answers is (353, 70. 6%), whereas the total number of the incorrect answers (***including the avoided items***) is (147, 29.4%).

Students' performance at the production level

Question two measures the performance of the students at the production level. The students are requested to respond to each item. The students' answers on each item are shown in Table (2) below:

Table (2):*Students' Responses at the production level in Question (2)*

of.No Items	***No. of Correct Answers***	***%***	***No. of Incorrect Answers***	***%***	***No. of Avoided items***	***%***
1	33	66	15	30	2	4
2	33	66	15	30	2	4
3	15	30	32	64	3	6
4	10	20	37	74	3	6
5	24	48	19	38	7	14
6	13	26	31	62	6	12
7	20	40	24	48	6	12
8	12	24	36	72	2	4
9	31	62	16	32	3	6
10	9	18	26	52	15	30
Total	200	40	251	50.2	49	9.8

The table above indicates that the total number of the correct answers is (200, 40. 0%), whereas the total number of the incorrect answers (***including the avoided items***) is (300, 60.0%).

The results of the test as a whole are demonstrated in Table (3) below which contains both recognition and production levels.

Table (3):*Students' Total Performance at the Recognition and Production Levels*

Level	No. of Correct Answers	**%**	No. of Incorrect Answers	**%**
Recognition	353	70.6	147	29.4
Production	200	40	300	60
Total	553	55.3	447	44.7

The student' general performance at both the recognition and production levels which appear in Table (3) above reveals that the highest rate of the students' correct answers has stood at (553, 55,3 %) which is a high performance rate than that of their incorrect ones which has stood at (447, 44.7%) . This suggests that the students did well in this aspect. Therefore, the first hypothesis which says that "many of Iraqi EFL university students have difficulties in using emphatic verb forms" is refuted.

At the production level, the students' non-mastery to produce emphatic verb forms reflects their incompetence in this area because the total number of their incorrect answers has stood at (300, 60%) which is higher than that of their correct ones which have stood at (200, 40%). Such performance indicators indicate that the students encounter more problems at the production level. Thus, this result gives an assertion to the second hypothesis which states that "those students face more difficulties in producing these forms than in recognizing level".

Error Analysis

Error explanation is a difficult task as it requires hypothesizing about the causes of error occurrence. In this area, the analyst can only suggest plausible answers as being explanations of the facts since there may be more than one plausible answer or source (Bell, 1981:175).

According to the sources of errors, they can be categorized into four types:

1-Interlingual interference whereby the students try to use rules from the negative language before they become familiar with the rules of the second language (Brown, 1987:177)

2. Intralingual transfer whereby the students make use of their knowledge of the system of the target language in the process of

learning the material of that target language or ignore the rule restriction (ibid: 183)

3-Context of learning refers to the bad effects of certain elements of the learning situation, such as, the classroom, the teacher and the textbook which may lead the students to form false concepts about the material (Keshavarz, 1999: 112)

4. Communication strategies that are selected by the students to fill the gap of their knowledge such as guessing. Approximation and avoidance are other strategies that may lead the students to make errors (Ellis, 2003:340).

Conclusions

From the results of the test, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The rate of the students' incorrect answers in the whole test, (447, 44,7%), is lower than their correct ones, (553, 55.3%) because the students show efficiency at the part of the test that relates to the recognition level. This refutes the first hypothesis of the present study.

2. At the production level, the students' incorrect responses in Question (2) (300, 60%) reveal that the students are unable to use emphatic verb forms correctly. This validates the second hypothesis of the study.

3. The following factors are behind the rate of the subjects' incorrect responses at both levels:

a. Interlingual transfer refers to the subjects' use the rules of the native language in the production of the target language.

b. The intralingual transfer is exemplified through overgeneralization, ignorance of rules restrictions and false concepts.

c. Context of learning refers to the classroom, with its teacher and its material.

d. Communicative strategies such as guessing, avoidance and approximation indicate the use of language in order to communicate where the learners are not familiar with linguistic forms.

4. The use of the emphatic verb forms serves many important syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic functions in both speech and writing. Among these are:

a. to clarify and arrange elements within the sentence,

b. to avoid ambiguity,

c. to avoid misunderstanding,

d. to highlight certain written elements or ideas due to the absence of intonation in writing,

e. to provide a necessary emphasis on conversation.

5. In addition to the functions above, emphatic verb forms sometimes serve as a stylistic device to remedy the deficiencies of the English writing system.

6. In certain contexts, the use of the emphasis is a must.

Recommendations

1. EFL learners need to be aware of the various useful syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic functions of the emphatic verb forms.

2. Syllabus designers need to take into their consideration in their selection of grammar materials for Iraqi EFL learners the importance of the emphatic verb forms.

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Appendix (1)

(The Test)

Note: Answer all the questions; and write down your answers on the same test sheet, please .

Q1- Label Emphatic for the emphatic sentences and non emphatic for the non emphatic sentences from the list of the sentences below :

1- What a picture !

2- They do act slowly .

3- There was she ,on the playground , while I had to work .

4- Didn't you finish the work last day ?

5- I didn't write that letter .

6- Away from light steals home my son .

7- Down came the rain .

8- I will do it .

9- He actually sat next to her .

10- How a beautiful girl she is !

Q2- Make an English sentences for each of the following types of emphatic forms , try to use your own words .

1- present emphatic action .

2- Emphatic repetition of a verb .

3- Emphatic repetition with prepositional adverb .

4- Emphatic subject – verb inversion .

5- Emphatic subject – operator inversion .

6- Emphatic imperative form .

7- Emphatic imperative suggestion .

8- Negative past emphatic tense .

9- Positive past emphatic tense .

10- Emphatic with adverb .

Appendix (2)

(The Test's possible answers)

Q1-

1- non emphatic

2- emphatic

3- emphatic

4- non emphatic

5- emphatic

6- emphatic

7- emphatic

8- non emphatic

9- emphatic

10- non emphatic

Q2-

1-She does like ice-cream .

2-She screamed and screamed for hours .

3-She kept repeating the story over and over.

4-Here comes a taxi .

5-Were she here, she would support the motion.

6-Do stop talking.

7-Do make a party,

8-I didn't write that letter.

9-He did promise to go.

10-He really go there.

ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

Online Language Assessment during the COVID-19 Pandemic: University Faculty Members' Perceptions and Practices

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A set of structured practitioner notes

What is already known about this topic

- Assessment is a fundamental element in language teaching because it reflects teaching practices.
- Formative and summative assessment are major types in assessing language courses.

What this paper adds

The online assessment is significant not only in emergency teaching times, but in all times, and this is facilitated by recent technological tools. The biggest concern for language instructors using online assessment is cheating, which is difficult to avoid.

- University genders consider subjective and objective examination differently.

Implications for practice and policy.

- Assessment literacy is very significant in assessing students' language proficiency.
- Applying different question types, sending prompt feedback, and helping learners to differentiate between assessment and grading is achievable using assessment platforms.
- COVID-19 could be the turning point in assessment practices in Saudi Arabia in which faculty can implement full online teaching and assessment at all times as this helps to accommodate large classes, saves government resources, and makes teaching and assessment suitable for the young generation known as digital natives.

Abstract

Many countries have now introduced social distancing in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic. This has subsequently resulted in both national and local colleges being temporarily closed throughout the globe. Several countries have therefore adopted technology-based instruction to firstly, allow students to study at home and secondly, prevent a complete disruption of research. This has resulted in the online assessment being the only method currently available to language instructors to continue the academic year and complete their students' courses. This paper examines the perceptions of university faculty members towards the application of such an online assessment using the 'Blackboard' platform. The volunteers consisted of 171 faculty members of English departments at universities throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The main findings indicate that participants of both genders expressed positive feelings towards the use of online assessments, but differed in their views of the four online assessment-related dimensions, i.e. (1) validity; (2) practicality; (3) reliability; and (4) security. Furthermore, female faculty members tended to place additional focus on the objective, as opposed to the subjective questions available in Blackboard for automatic scoring and immediate feedback.

Introduction

The current COVID-19 pandemic is now expected to increase the global mortality rate (UNESCO 2020), with the virus appearing to have the most significant impact on men. Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a novel strain of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Between 2002 and 2012, several SARS-CoV-2-like viruses emerged, as did Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). SARS-CoV-2 is akin to a broader range of similar viruses than previously reported, and therefore there are numerous problems with COVID-19 treatment and management. In the early stages of the infection, people with COVID-19 suffer weakened immune systems resulting in symptoms, according to medical diagnosis and studies. To date, dry cough, fever, fatigue, shortness of breath, headache, and overall body weakness has been reported (Zhong et al., 2020). SARS-CoV-2 is a new genetic strain that makes it challenging to treat COVID-19 and develop a suitable vaccine.

In response to the threat of COVID-19, the Saudi government has established a stringent countrywide lockdown to flatten the curve and contain the spread. Fowler, Hill, Levin, and Obradovich (2020) report that lockdowns work effectively to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Lockdown involves the closure of companies and classroom, and the cessation of jobs (except essential services). Nevertheless, Viner et al. (2020) have confirmed no valid model or observational study is demonstrating a strong association between school closure and limited COVID-19 distribution. However, all educational institutions in KSA have been temporarily shut down. This raises the question of how students can navigate the lock-up period and meet the requirements set out in the current learning framework. Alternative teaching methods, such as online learning, can be beneficial as a means to guarantee students access to training during the national lockdown period.

COVID-19 appears to affect men predominantly. Thus, individuals cannot act as they did before the pandemic without compromising their wellbeing and risking their lives. Millions of children worldwide are currently excluded from school due to this health threat (Pridmore, 2007). Brooks (2014) notes that good health and social skills are among the key factors improving the success of classroom learners. The sustainability of good education mainly depends on student health and the provision of a healthy learning environment. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

are expected to increase the mortality rate as people become afflicted with the virus (UNESCO 2020). The national closure of schools, aimed at inhibiting the spread of COVID-19, threatens the potential of many children to succeed, especially in developing countries where schools are not equipped with modern learning resources due to economic constraints. At the time of writing, schools are closed in 191 countries worldwide, with over 1.6 billion students and over 63 million teachers (Education International, 2020).

Literature Review

There has been exponential growth in online language teaching and learning since the advent of the Internet (Al-Ahdal, 2020a, 2020b; Saeed, Al-Ahdal, & Al Qunayeer, 2020). Several universities globally offer courses based on full-time online modes. These courses are designed to fulfil the needs of students who are unable to attend conventional classes. The majority also emphasizes affordability and convenience, as they support greater flexibility than face-to-face teaching. Crucially, the current generation of students, termed 'digital natives' are accustomed to utilizing different technological tools and are fully acclimated to modern technology.

Consequently, teaching online suits the characteristics of language learners in the 21st century. Prensky (2001) confirmed that "our students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach" (p.1). Teaching online is just an aspect of the education process. Language instructors also need to evaluate their students' abilities via systematic approaches in the form of language assessments. Assessment is highly significant for both teachers and students. Not only does assessment enable teachers to guide their students through the learning process, but it also helps them implement teaching methods effectively; hence, the importance of assessment literacy has become a focal point because effective assessment methods enhance learning. Some assessment scholars have hypothesized and investigated a strong relationship between assessment and education (Broadfoot & Black, 2004; Reyes, De Vera, & Medriano 2018; Meijer, et al, 2020). Cowan (1998) confirms that judgment is the engine that drives understanding. Nevertheless, language testing is never an objective process.

Assessment illiteracy is one factor that language instructors cite when describing testing as vague and complicated (Alfallaj & Al-Ahdal, 2017; Al-Ahdal, 2020c; 2020d). To have a solid

understanding of assessment, language instructors need to implement appropriate testing practices and develop diverse assessment techniques to assess higher order concepts (Hoyt, 2005) effectively. Stiggins (2007) states that sound assessment involves determining clear objectives and appropriate achievement targets and relies on adequate assessment methods, sampling students' achievements appropriately, and controlling for all relevant sources of bias and distortion. More significantly, all language tests are expected to include three significant features: (a) validity, which means the test measures what it is supposed to measure; (b) reliability, which means the test consistently produces the same scores at different times for the same group of students; and (c) practicality, which indicates the ease of constructing, administering, scoring, and interpreting a test. The above three critical dimensions apply to all assessment types and test formats, whether paper-based or online.

Researchers in the CALL field have confirmed that the above dimensions are easily applied to online language assessment. For example, Chapelle and Douglas (2006) believe that Web-based language testing (WBLT) fulfils test measurement quality criteria, including validity and reliability. Not only does WBLT improve the validity and reliability of language tests, but Venkateswari (2020) also claims that e-assessment accelerates the learning process by permitting language instructors to judge students and provide feedback promptly. Moreover, WBLT provides "rich contextualized input, various response formats, and automated scoring" (Shin, as cited in Coombe, Davidson, O'Sullivan and Stoynoff, 2012, p.277) which all contributes to the authenticity and reliability of online tests.

Online assessment can be defined as "the end-to-end electronic assessment, Information Communication Technology (ICT) is used for the whole assessment process from the presentation of questions to the saving of the learner's responses" (JISC, 2007, p.6). Although language assessment can be conducted using different types of assessment, the current paper examines the perceptions of both types: summative and formative assessment. Previous studies prove the simplicity of using these two assessment types for online assessment. For example, Al-Hattami (2020) states that the rapid shift towards online teaching requires language instructors to implement the available learning management system (LMS) not only to teach, but also to assess students using formative and summative instruments. Venkateswari (2020) opines that it is easy to apply summative evaluation in language online assessments.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many universities have shifted towards unprecedented adoption of online teaching and assessment. This is a paradigm shift that the hundreds of thousands of faculty members around the world had never anticipated. Blending teaching and assessment via learning management systems (LMS) was available as an option for language instructors before the pandemic, but COVID-19 has witnessed a sudden interest in web-based teaching and learning, using a number of LMSs. In Saudi Arabia, Blackboard is the only platform available for university faculty members to utilize for online teaching and assessment, being the official (LMS) platform implemented at all Saudi universities due to the Blackboard national license project. Hence, the current study will evaluate the perceptions and practices of faculty members utilizing Blackboard to assess students' language skills.

The study primarily explores university faculty members' perceptions of the four main dimensions of online assessment: (1) validity; (2) reliability; (3) practicality; and (4) security. In particular, it: (1) ascertains whether the perceptions of faculty members regarding these dimensions are influenced by demographic characteristics; (2) assesses the practice of integrating online assessment in language teaching and learning, in order to establish the types of question teachers of both genders prefer to utilize for online assessment; and (3) proposes interventions to improve online learning modalities.

The study answers the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of university faculty regarding online language assessment?
2. To what extent do university faculty members consider the validity, reliability, practicality, and security of online assessment?
3. Which types of question do faculty prefer to use for online language assessment?

Methods

This exploratory study adopted a quantitative research design, involving faculty members majoring in English at different Saudi universities across the country. All the participants completed an online questionnaire to match the context and research enquiries set out in the study.

Participants

The current study employed 171 volunteer participants, consisting of both Saudi and non-Saudi faculty members. All the participants taught in English departments at universities in KSA. Approximately 60% of the participants were male and 40% female. They came from a variety of academic ranks, with the majority being assistant professors (48%) and associate professors (37%). Table 1 (below) shows their average length of experience in years of using Blackboard for language assessment.

Table 1. The Average Years of Blackboard-based Assessment Experience

Years of Bb-based Assessment Experience	Participants
Less than a year	96
1-5	56
6-10	11
Over 10	8

Blackboard

According to Ibrahim, Mohamed, Alshafeeri and Alqdah (2019), Blackboard is one of the most popular marketable LMSs adopted by higher education institutions throughout the world. As noted above, under the Kingdom's national Blackboard license project, all Saudi universities now use Blackboard as their official teaching and learning platform. Researchers exploring Blackboard have listed several advantages the platform offers to university faculties, including: (1) managing course content; (2) building interactive courses; (3) communicating with students by means of emails and announcements; and (4) the ability to manage assignments, tests and scores (Al Meajel & Sharadgah, 2018). Although Blackboard offers several tools beneficial for teaching and learning, the current research focuses on its methods of assessment.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is one of the best-known methods for collecting data in social sciences, with Dornyei (2003) identifying questionnaires as the most frequently employed data collection devices in statistical research. In addition, Brown (2001) describes questionnaires as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers". The

questionnaire employed in this study was adapted and modified from Dermo (2009). There was no need to re-measure the validity or reliability of the adopted data collection instrument, as it was considered sufficient to make a reference to the method (Creswell, 2014). The research administered an online questionnaire survey consisting of a total of thirty-one statements (see Appendix A), of these: statements 1-8 related to the overall perception of online assessment; statements 9-28 were equally divided (i.e. five for each) between the four main dimensions of validity, practicality, reliability, and security; and statements (29-30-31) related to preferences when it came to question types.

Results

This section presents the key findings from the research questions. In order to ensure the presentation of the findings would be both simple and understandable, a number of items in the survey were grouped together and subsequently linked to the designated research question. The online survey used a 5-Likert-point scale, although both strongly agree, and agree and disagree and strongly disagree were combined, in order to ensure clarity and a straightforward presentation of the main results.

Overall perceptions regarding online assessment

The first research question explored the overall perception of university faculty regarding online assessment and was answered through the analysis of the subsets of items in the first section (i.e. 1-8) of the questionnaire. See Table 2 for the descriptive statistics (attitudinal scale plus means and standard deviations) for the questionnaire items. In addition, Table 2 reveals the overall views of faculty members concerning online assessment, revealing that they were well-acquainted with its tools, particularly as they had prepared themselves with theoretical knowledge gained by attending assessment workshops (M=3.49, SD =1.28). There was, however, little preparation for the practical aspects, as faculty members clearly surmised that, prior to the pandemic, Blackboard was rarely utilized for either formative or summative assessments. This was highlighted by the strongest disagreements among faculty members being for the first three statements; (1) *I have used Blackboard for quizzes before the COVID-19 pandemic* (M=2.77, SD =1.52); (2) *I have used Blackboard for midterm examinations before the COVID-19 pandemic* (M=199, SD =1.13); and

(3) *I have used Blackboard for final examinations before the COVID-19 pandemic* (M=177, SD =1.01).

In addition, the faculty members demonstrated an eagerness to assess students through Blackboard, in response to the pandemic preventing all opportunities to undertake classroom assessment. This was demonstrated by the strongest agreement being towards the statement: *I am excited about using Blackboard to assess my students this term* (M=3.80, SD =1.11). On the other hand, no clear preference could be discerned once online assessment was compared to paper-based assessment, as confirmed by the level of agreement with the statement: *I feel more comfortable with paper-based assessment than online assessment* (M=3.32, SD =1.19). A recognition of the overall perception of faculty members proved insufficient to obtain a clear picture of the feasibility of online assessment. It was therefore considered vital to delve into faculty members' perceptions of the four online-related assessment dimensions, i.e. validity, practicality, reliability and security.

Table 2. Overall Perceptions of Online Assessment

Statements	*Disagreement*	*Neutral*	*Agreement*	*M*	*SD*
I have used Blackboard for quizzes before the COVID-19 pandemic.	95	8	68	2.77	1.52
I have used Blackboard for midterm examinations before the COVID-19 pandemic.	138	10	23	1.99	1.13
I have used Blackboard for final examinations before the COVID-19 pandemic.	149	9	13	1.77	1.01
I have attended training workshops on Blackboard assessment.	42	19	110	3.49	1.28
I am well trained to administer assessment on Blackboard.	30	50	91	3.46	1.08
It is the first time I have assessed my students using Blackboard.	61	6	104	3.32	1.44

I am excited about using Blackboard to assess my students this term.	22	27	122	3.80	1.11
I feel more comfortable with paper-based assessment than online assessment.	42	48	81	3.32	1.19

Perceptions of the validity, practicality, reliability, and security of online assessments

The second research question explored the views of faculty members regarding the four main dimensions related to online assessment: (1) validity; (2) practicality; (3) reliability; and (4) security. Each dimension was divided into five indicators and delivered as questionnaire items (see Appendix A). The indicators consisted of statements acting to individually gather data on one aspect of the dimension, using an adapted and modified Likert scale. When combined, these indicators were expected to constitute a reliable measure of the dimension as a whole. It was clear that a number of these indicators would overlap, while some could also be seen to relate to more than one dimension. This multiple-item measure thus acknowledged the complexity of the issues involved and enabled more granular and varied distinctions for the responses (Dillman, 2007).

Table 3 (below) presents five statements relating to the faculty members' views of the validity of online assessment. The members identified the significance of online examinations for higher education, with the strongest agreement being in response to the statement: *Online examinations have an important role to play in higher education* (M=3.75, SD = 0.91). However, the participants also indicated that the validity of online examinations related directly to the course subject and the type of question, with their strongest disagreement being to the statement: *My subject area is too complex to be dealt with by online multiple-choice questions* (M=2.69, SD = 1.22). In addition, they viewed the types of questions as also impacting on the validity of examinations, as demonstrated by the response to the statement: *Because you can guess the answer, online multiple-choice questions don't really reflect your level of knowledge* (M=3.01, SD = 1.13). This demonstrates that MCQ, which is highly utilized for online assessments, cannot be viewed as an indicator of knowledge acquired during the undertaking of a course.

Table 3. Perceptions of the Validity of Online Assessment

Statements	*Disagreement*	*Neutral*	*Agreement*	*M*	*SD*
Online assessment is appropriate for the subject I teach.	43	43	85	3.33	1.06
My subject area is too complex to be dealt with by online multiple-choice questions.	88	31	52	2.69	1.22
Online examinations test both knowledge of a subject and IT skills.	29	44	98	3.48	0.94
Online examinations have an important role to play in higher education.	17	34	120	3.75	0.91
Because you can guess the answer, online multiple-choice questions don't really reflect your level of knowledge.	65	35	71	3.01	1.13
Total	242	187	426	3.25	0.40

The second dimension examined the practicality of online assessment (see Table 4). Five statements were used to measure the perception of faculty members in relation to issues of practicality, including: (1) questions types; (2) technical problems; (3) the invigilation of examinations; (4) administering examinations off campus; and (5) comparing online and paper-based examinations. The strongest agreement was found in response to the first statement: *The variety of question types makes Blackboard examinations practical* (M=3.80, SD = 0.79). This signalled the practicality of online assessment (i.e. Blackboard) due to the simplicity and feasibility of asking different question types. However, issues related to the practicalities of invigilating online examinations were found to be more problematic, as shown in the response to the statement: *Invigilating Blackboard examinations is impractical* (M=3.77, SD = 0.99). This difficulty also related to firstly, the location in which the students were able to take their examination and the accessibility of online testing. This was identified in the final two statements: (1) *Doing online examinations off campus is a practical way to assess students* (M=3.02, SD = 1.08), and (2) *Online examinations are more accessible than paper-based examinations* (M=3.09, SD = 1.11).

Table 4. Perceptions of the Practicality of Online Assessment

Statements	*Disagreement*	*Neutral*	*Agreement*	*M*	*SD*
The variety of question types makes Blackboard examinations practical.	12	33	126	3.80	0.79
Technical problems make online examinations impractical.	33	39	99	3.50	0.99
Invigilating Blackboard examinations is impractical.	20	40	111	3.77	0.99
Doing online examinations off campus is a practical way to assess students.	57	47	67	3.02	1.08
Online examinations are more accessible than paper-based examinations.	59	44	68	3.09	1.11
Total	181	203	471	3.44	0.43

The third dimension concerned the issue of reliability. Table 5 (below) presents five indicators of the reliability of assessments: (1) automatic grading; (2) technology; (3) students; (4) fairness; and (5) question randomization. The strongest agreement among faculty members related to the accuracy of automatic grading found in online assessments. The response to the statement *Automatic grading for objective online assessment is more accurate because computers don't suffer from human error* (M=3.68, SD = 1.01) confirmed that, in comparison to the fallibility of human beings, online grading for objective types of question was considered both prompt and lacking in errors. Nevertheless, issues arising from faculty members generally distrusting the form of technology employed by online assessment was highlighted in the response to the statement: *The technology used in online assessments is unreliable* (M=2.57, SD = 0.89). It should also be noted that paper-based examinations were, in all aspects, considered to outweigh online examinations, as shown in the statement: *Paper-based examinations are fairer than online examinations* (M=3.46, SD = 1.19).

Table 5. Perceptions of the Reliability of Online Assessment

Statements	*Disagreement*	*Neutral*	*Agreement*	*M*	*SD*
Automatic grading for objective online assessment is more accurate because computers don't suffer from human error.	27	26	118	3.68	1.01
The technology used in online assessments is unreliable.	93	52	26	2.57	0.89
Online assessments favour some students more than others.	75	43	53	2.80	1.09
Paper-based examinations are fairer than online examinations.	41	36	94	3.46	1.19
Randomised questions from an item bank means that sometimes you get easier questions.	64	55	52	2.92	0.99
Total	300	212	343	3.09	0.54

The final dimension concerned faculty members' views of the security of online assessments. Table 6 (below) shows their greatest concern related to the issue of the greater potential for cheating during online assessments in comparison to paper-based examinations. This is demonstrated by the strongest agreement among participants being with the statement: *It is easier to cheat on online examinations than with paper-based examinations* (M=4.32, SD = 0.82). This highlighted the issue that, because students are quite likely to cheat online, faculty members doubted to the security of online tests, as demonstrated by the strongest disagreement being with the statement: *Online assessment is just as secure as paper-based assessment* (M=2.67, SD = 1.08). Such security issues were found to be applicable to all online assessments, including Blackboard-based online tests. The final statement (i.e. *I am confident that Blackboard examinations are secure* (M=3.26, SD = 0.96)) revealed that a large number of academics expressed neutral views of the effectiveness of security for Blackboard examinations.

Table 6. Perceptions Concerning the Security of Online Assessment

Statements	*Disagreement*	*Neutral*	*Agreement*	*M*	*SD*
Online assessment is just as secure as paper-based assessment.	86	43	42	2.67	1.08
I am confident that my grades for online assessments are secure.	31	48	92	3.39	1.01
It is easier to cheat on online examinations than with paper-based examinations.	7	9	155	4.32	0.82
The online examination system is vulnerable to hackers.	30	56	85	3.38	0.97
I am confident that Blackboard examinations are secure.	33	63	75	3.26	0.96
Total	187	219	449	3.40	0.43

Faculty members' preferences for the types of question used for online assessment

The third research question explored the type of questions preferred by faculty members for Blackboard assessments. Blackboard currently offers seventeen types of questions suitable for online use. However, not all types are appropriate for majors in social sciences and humanities, i.e. English. The current researcher focussed on those most frequently employed for English-related courses, i.e. MCQ; True/False; Fill in the Blank; Short Answer; Essay; and Matching. Table 7 shows that the strongest agreement was found with the first statement (i.e. *I prefer objective question types because they are graded automatically (e.g. True/False, MCQ)* (M=3.78, SD = 1.11)). This is a clear indication that faculty members explicitly preferred objective to subjective types of question, in particular due to the simplicity and automaticity of grading. Furthermore, in order to cross-validate the results of their preference when it came to objective and subjective questions, faculty members were asked to rank the above six types so as to recognize the high and

low scores of each one. It is notable that the first three highest scoring questions included examples of objective types as MCQ, True/False, and Fill in the Blank (see Figure 1).

Table 7. Preferences Concerning Objective and Subjective Questions

Statements	*Disagreement*	*Neutral*	*Agreement*	*M*	*SD*
I prefer objective question types because they are graded automatically (e.g. True/False, MCQ).	27	22	122	3.78	1.11
I prefer subjective question types because they are graded manually (e.g. short answer, essay) by teachers.	59	59	53	2.92	1.03

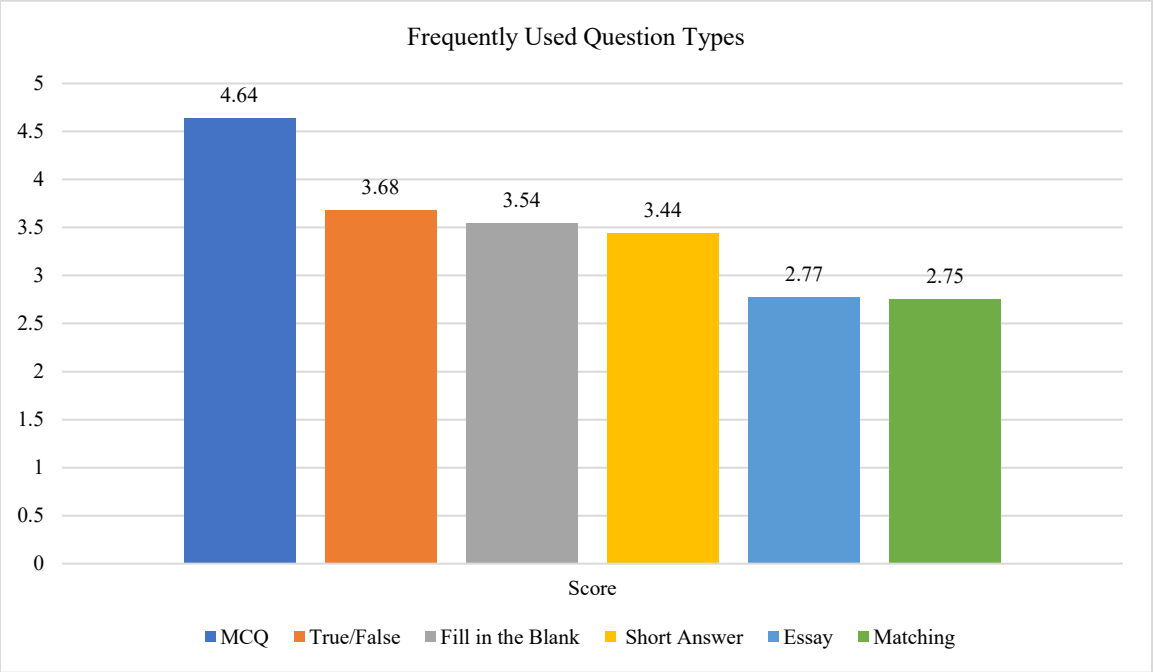

Figure 1: Total Score of Question Types

Discussion and Conclusion

This study found that faculty members at Saudi universities generally expressed a positive attitude towards the use of online assessment (i.e. Blackboard). This result is in line with Dermo's (2009) study indicating that university students experienced slightly stronger positive feelings towards E-assessment. This can be seen as resulting from universities offering regular free workshops discussing ways of implementing Blackboard for both lessons and examinations. Chapelle and Voss (2016) state that: "professional development and teacher education are key areas of interest for those wanting to develop best pedagogical practices on how to integrate useful assessments in a CALL environment" (p. 125). The participants of the current study confirmed their willingness to attend training workshops, as well as their readiness to utilize Blackboard for the purposes of assessment. Nevertheless, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there had been little use of Blackboard for both formative and summative assessments. This was primarily due to Blackboard being optional as a method of assessment in Saudi universities, in particular due to a preference for stringent paper-based examinations. The efficient transfer to using Blackboard for student assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed the ability of faculty members to employ online assessment during an emergency, despite many remaining more comfortable administering paper-based examinations. This study has identified that a primarily cause of faculty members' scepticism towards online assessment related to the lack of interaction and connection between teachers and students (Batang, Dayag–Vecaldo & Medriano, 2018; Fernandez, Santos, & Javier, 2018; Hussain et al., 2018; Sit & Brudzinski, 2017; Tigelaar & Beijaard, 2017). This study has also identified the importance of recognizing faculty members' perception of the validity, practicality, reliability and security of online examinations, due to the differences between the modality of online and paper-based assessment. A comparison of the average mean of the four dimensions has enabled this research to establish that the highest average standard tends to take place about the practicality of online assessment (M=3.44, SD = 0.43), mainly due to the feasibility of constructing, administering, scoring, and interpreting examinations for online platforms. Hamilton and Shoen (2005) ascertain several advantages of using online assessment, i.e. ease of use, replicability, scoring, and data management. It is therefore significant that, in the current research, the security of online review demonstrated the second-highest average mean (M= 3.40, SD = 0.43), despite concerns expressed by faculty members relating to the potential for cheating

in Blackboard-based examinations, as a result of difficulties with invigilating online tests. Roever (2001) states that: "the greatest limitation of WBTs is their lack of security concerning cheating and item confidentiality" (p. 89). Furthermore, Khan and Khan's (2019) study, exploring students' views of online assessment at a UAE university, highlights the issue of cheating when using online platforms.

Validity generally indicates that a test measures the subject being tested in an appropriate manner. This study found that participants' perceptions of the validity of online assessment had a low mean score (M=3.25, SD = 0.40), in particular due to the fact of online examinations being hampered by a number of factors, i.e. the type of course and questions asked, and the knowledge tested. This finding contradicts the view of WBLT proposed by Chapelle and Douglas (2006) that it facilitates effective measurement, including of validity and reliability.

The lowest mean in the current study related to the issue of reliability (M=3.09, SD = 0.54). This indicated that the participants were skeptical that online examinations could prove equally useful as paper-based tests, apart from those capable of being graded automatically. This finding accords with that of Williamson, Bejar, and Sax (2004), who state that inter- and intra-rater reliability were of little concern when it came to online assessment using an automated scoring technique. In addition, it is supported by several studies confirming the accuracy of automatic grading in online assessments, including Alruwais, Wills, and Wald (2018) and Long, Shin, Geeslin, and Willis (2018). The current findings of gender agree with those of Dermo (2009), indicating a lack of any correlation between the gender of faculty members and their approach to the online assessment.

When it came to the issue of the types of questions preferred for use during online assessment, this study found that faculty members tended to prefer that these should be objective rather than subjective. One reason put forward for this preference concerned the ability to give prompt feedback to students, as reported in previous studies (e.g. Al-Hattami, 2020; Alruwais, Wills &Wald, 2018; García Laborda, 2007). It is notable that gender was found to play a major role in the views of the participants concerning this issue. By cross tabulating the data and applying the gender independent variable, this study found that, unlike their male counterparts, female faculty members preferred objective examinations (i.e. MCQ, True/False, Fill in the Blank, and Matching) to subjective online examinations (i.e. Short Answer and Essay) (see Table 8, below).

Table 8. Gender and Preference Towards Objective and Subjective Questions Frequencies

Gender	*Short Answer*	*Essay*	*MCQ*	*T/F*	*Fill in the Blank*	*Matching*
Male	10.8%	27.5%	41.2%	15.7%	2.9%	2%
Female	4.3%	18.8%	47.8%	18.8%	7.2%	2.9%

In conclusion, this current study has established that many educationalists have considered the effectiveness of online assessment since the advent of the Internet and that it has now become a critical and fundamental aspect of teaching (Kearns, 2012). Although this study focused on Blackboard-based assessment, due to it being the official teaching and assessment platform in Saudi universities, assessment practices could potentially prove similarly useful for all available LMSs. The current study revealed that the participants demonstrated slightly more positive than negative views of the online assessment. Besides, it established that university faculty members of both genders expressed different perspectives towards the four online assessment-related dimensions of validity, practicality, reliability, and security. Faculty members, and in particular females, were found to prefer the employment of objective rather than subjective questions for automatic scoring and immediate feedback.

Recommendations, Implications, and Limitation

As COVID19 delays the teaching and studying for a longer time, it lets prepare everyone ahead by taking into account innovative and flexible online solutions for arranging exams and assessment. Significantly, the current study explored the perceptions of faculty members following the emergency measures put in place for the teaching and assessment of students during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is, therefore, possible that future studies examining the attitudes of faculty members after a long period of online education and assessment could substantiate or refute the findings of the current study. A replication of this study using different LMS could also have the potential to assist language instructors in other countries, as the mechanism for language assessment practices are relatively similar regardless of the LMS platform employed. Learning assessment is a critical subject that contributes to contemplation about how to do it, particularly

when while in the school, in this period of incarceration, the working standards no longer exist. Now that online schooling is gaining momentum to ensure instructional consistency at the multiple stages of training in this immersive learning form, appraisal mechanisms are predictive and indispensable.

As to the limitations of the study, it only used small group of respondents which could hardly generalize the findings in the Saudi context in terms of online language learning assessment. Moreover, limited number of variables can be a major drawback in the study which is an important basis for conducting future studies. It is also presented that the study only used a simple survey research design. Future studies should be carried out utilizing experimental research methods to be backed up by qualitative analysis. A follow up study can be conducted to validate the findings of the study.

Statements on open data, ethics, and conflict of interest

The data samples and detailed coding procedures can be accessed by contact-
ing the author.

The data samples and detailed coding procedures can be accessed by contact-
ing the author.

Open data

All empirical data is available upon request to the corresponding author. The proposals will be assessed individually as to their validity and purpose, and solely anonymized E-copies will be provided.

Ethics

This study observed the highest ethical standards of research, namely by ensuring the integrity of the data collection and analysis, by protecting the research participants' data, and by following the appropriate protocols for anonymity and confidentiality.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest in this study

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Appendix (A)

(1) Demographic Info

1. Gender (M/F)
2. Academic rank (Professor / Associate professor / Assistant professor / Lecturer / Teaching assistant / Other)
3. Nationality (Saudi/Non-Saudi)
4. Age (20-30 / 31-40 / 41-50 / 51-60 / 60+)
5. Blackboard-based Language Assessment Experience (Less than a year / 1-5 / 6-10 / over 10)

(2) Questionnaire

Statement	Dimension
1. I have used Blackboard for quizzes before COVID-19 pandemic.	Overall Perceptions
2. I have used Blackboard for midterm examinations before COVID-19 pandemic.	
3. I have used Blackboard for final examinations before COVID-19 pandemic.	
4. I have attended training workshops on Blackboard assessment.	
5. I am well trained to administer assessment on Blackboard.	
6. It is the first time I have assessed my students using Blackboard.	
7. I am excited about using Blackboard to assess my students this term.	
8. I feel more comfortable with paper-based assessment than online assessment.	

9. Online assessment is appropriate for the subject I teach.	Validity
10. My subject area is too complex to be dealt with by online multiple-choice questions.	

11. Online examinations test both knowledge a subject and IT skills.	
12. Online examinations have an important role to play in higher education.	
13. Because you can guess the answer, online multiple-choice questions don't really reflect your level of knowledge.	

14. Automatic grading for objective online assessment is more accurate because computers don't suffer from human error.	Reliability
15. The technology used in online assessments is unreliable.	
16. Online assessments favor some students more than others.	
17. Paper-based examinations are fairer than online examinations.	
18. Randomized questions from a bank means that sometimes you get easier questions.	

19. The variety of question types makes Blackboard examinations practical.	Practicality
20. Technical problems make online examinations impractical.	
21. Invigilating Blackboard examinations is impractical.	
22. Doing online examinations off campus is a practical way to assess students.	
23. Online examinations are more accessible than paper-based examinations.	

24. Online assessment is just as secure as paper-based assessment.	Security
25. I am confident that my grades for online assessments are secure.	
26. It is easier to cheat on online examinations than with paper-based examinations.	
27. The online examinations system is vulnerable to hackers.	
28. I am confident that Blackboard examinations are secure.	

29. I prefer objective question types because they are graded automatically (e.g. True/False, MCQ)	Questions Preference

30. I prefer subjective question types because they are graded manually (e.g. short answer, essay) by teachers.	
31. Rank the following question types based on your preference (Essay – Fill in the Blank – Multiple Choice – Short Answer – True/False – Matching)	

Asian EFL Journal Research Articles. Vol. 27 Issue No. 4.4 October 2020

A Lexical Approach to the Syntax of Negation in Arabic

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Abstract

There are five lexical items that might encode sentential negation in Standard Arabic: *ma* (neutral Neg)*, laa, lan, lam* (modal Neg) & *lays* (copular Neg). The present paper offers a novel lexical approach to the syntax of these negative elements. The analysis proposed leads to a novel classification of the negative items: *pure negatives* which include *maa* and *laa* and *negative auxiliaries* subsuming *lam, lan* and *lays*. A pure negative is analyzed as a negative lexical item merged under a Neg^0. Negative auxiliaries, on the other hand, are argued to be the realizations of functional C/T-elements that are merged under T. These auxiliaries carry a negative feature –

hence the negative interpretation they contribute to the clause. In addition, these auxiliaries carry a [Tense] feature which establishes the C/T-v dependency, manifested in selecting for certain verbal forms.

Keywords: *Arabic; sentential negation; pure negatives; negative auxiliaries; C-v dependency*

Introduction

This paper looks at the syntax of negative items and how they interact with other functional elements along the clausal skeleton. The paper proceeds as follows. Section (1) introduces Negation paradigm in Arabic. In particular, the section shows the two types of negatives, inflected and non-inflected, and their interaction of the different negative elements with the different verbal forms. Section (2) reviews the literature on the syntax of negation in Arabic.

Sections (3) & (4) present a novel analysis to the syntax of negation in Arabic. It will be argued that non-tensed negative markers, namely *maa* and *laa* are pure negative markers, merged in a Neg projection. Inflected negatives, by contrast, will be argued to be C/T-elements, perhaps auxiliaries, with a Neg feature, merged in T.

Section (5) tends to the interaction of negatives with other temporal and modal elements. In this connection, I will claim that there is no need for an independent (in)compatibility theory (Fassi Fehri 1993). Rather, an approach along the lines proposed in the present paper can account for the (in)compatibility facts. Section (6) concludes the paper.

Negation in Arabic: Distributional Facts

There are five lexical items that may encode sentential negation in Arabic: *lam, lan, lays, laa* and *maa.* These negatives have been traditionally categorized into three types, both syntactically and morphologically. For instance, Fassi Fehri (1993: 163) adopts a syntactic approach and classifies negatives according to whether "(a) they entertain a specific governing relation with (inflected) verbal projection; (b) with nominal or adjectival predicates; or (c) they do not". Fassi Fehri calls these 'modal Negs', including *laa, lam* and *lan*, 'Copular Neg', *lays* and 'neutral Neg', *maa,* respectively. Benmamoun (2000: 94) and (Soltan 2007: 178), however,

entertain a morphological approach to classifying negatives. These linguists classify negatives into 'tense-inflecting' (i.e., *laa, lam* and *lan*), 'φ-inflecting' (i.e., *lays*) and non-inflecting' (*maa*). Interestingly, the two approaches, syntactic and morphological, turn out to have identical sets of negative markers. Thus, *laa, lam* and *lan* (known as *laa* and its variants in the literature) fall under the first category, namely modal/ tense-inflecting; *lays* under the second type, copular/φ-inflecting; and *maa* belongs in the third category, namely neutral/non-inflecting. For the sake of simplicity, I will follow this categorization in introducing the facts about negation in Arabic in this section. However, I will, later in this paper, propose a different classification that goes along with the analysis proposed.

1.1 Tensed Negatives: *laa, lam, lan*

laa is said to be the default negative marker. It occurs in so-called present tense/imperfective constructions. Consider the following sentences (from Benmamoun 2000: 94-95).

(1) a. al-Tullaab yadrusuu-n
the-students 3.study.mp-ind
"the-students study/are studying."
b. al-Tullaab laa yadrusuu-n
the-students neg 3.study.mp-ind
"The students do not/ are not study/ing."

In (1), the verb appears in the imperfective form.[1] (1a) can either have a progressive or a habitual interpretation . *laa* cannot occur in tensed clauses.

(2) a. *laa ataa ali
neg came.3m Ali
"Ali did not come."

[1] The verb in Arabic appears in two forms: past/ anterior vs. non-past/ non-anterior in terms of tense; perfective vs. non-perfective in terms of aspect (see Fassi Fehri 1993 for ample discussion of the debate as to how to classify verbal morphology in Arabic). As far as I can tell, this debate does not hinge on the analysis proposed in any way.

b. *laa sa-ya'ati Ali
neg fut-3m.come Ali
"Ali will not come."

It is worth noting that the verb appears in the (default) indicative[2] verbal form. In tensed contexts, the so-called 'variants' of *laa* appear: *lam* appears in past tense constructions; while *lan* surfaces if T is specified as future. Look at the following sentences.

(3) lam uqaabil-Ø-ha ams
neg.pst 1s.met-juss-her yesterday
"I did not see her yesterday."
(4) lan uqaabil-a-ha Gadan fi al-masaa
neg.fut 1s.meet-subj-her tomorrow in the-evening
"I will meet her tomorrow in the evening."

The compatibility of (3) and (4) with temporal adverbs, *yesterday* and *tomorrow* respectively, shows that *lam* encodes past and *lan* encodes future. That the tense cannot be marked on the verb is illustrated below.

(5) a. *lam qaabaltu-ha ams
neg.pst met.1s-her yesterday
"I did not meet her yesterday."
b. * lan.fut sa-uqaabil-a -ha Gadan fi al-masaa
neg will-1s.meet-subj-her tomorrow in the-evening
"I will not meet her tomorrow in the evening."

[2] Alahdal (2014) puts forth a syntactic approach to the different verbal forms. Specifically, he suggests that the different verbal forms, namely indicative, subjunctive and jussive are realizations of a syntactic Agree relation between v and C/T.

We observe here that the tense, past and future respectively, is denoted by the verb in (5a) and by the prefix 'sa-' in (5b). That these sentences are ungrammatical, as opposed to the good sentences in (3) and (4), indicates that *lam* and *lan* cannot cooccur with tensed verbs. The data above, however, raise one question that, I believe, has not been taken seriously, namely: why do these inflecting negatives *not* co-occur with the same verbal form? Looked at in this manner, the distinction between these negatives may boil down to a selectional issue. This intriguing point will be our point of departure towards a novel account.

1.2 φ-inflecting Negative: *lays*

lays[3] is a sentential negative that occurs mainly in two contexts: (i) in small clauses and (ii) in present tense contexts.

(6) Ahmed lays-a Tabiib-an
Ahmed neg-3sm doctor-acc
"Ali is not a doctor."
(7) lays-at nada tadrus-u
neg-3sf Nada 3sf.study-ind
"Nada does not study/is not studying."

It is worth noting that *lays* behaves like verbs (and auxiliaries) in that it inflects for φ-features. Thus, *lays* shows two forms in (6) and (7), *laysa* (3sm) and *laysat* (3sf). Consider the agreement inflection on *lays* in the following.

(8) a. ali w-maha lays-aa hunaa
Ali and-Maha neg-3d here
"Ali and Maha are not here."
b. al-awlaad lays-uu hunaa
the-boys neg-3pm here

[3] Soltan (2007: note 2) observes that *lays* is associated with more emphasis, compared to *laa*.

"The boys are not here."

c. al-banatu las-na huna

the-girls neg-3pf here

"The girls are not here."

Another property of *lays* is that it assigns accusative Case to the predicate noun, exemplified in (6) above and reproduced below as (9), or predicate adjective as in (10).

(9) Ahmed lays-a Tabiib-an

Ahmed neg-3sm doctor-acc

"Ali is not a doctor."

(10) Mohammed lays-a qawiy-an

Mohammed neg-3sm strong-acc

"Mohammed is not clever."

Though *lays* inflects for agreement, it does not inflect for tense. This is evident from the fact that when used in verbal clauses, it exclusively appears in the imperfective. This property sets *lays* apart from *laa* and its variants. Another property distinguishing *lays* is that it does not require adjacency with the verb (cf. (7) above).

1.3 Non-inflecting Negative: *maa*

maa is known as a neutral negative, for it does not inflect for either tense or φ. It occurs in a variety of contexts. The following sentences are reproduced from Aoun et al. (2010: 111, (40)).

(11) a. maa saafar-at hind-un

neg traveled.past-3fs Hind-nom

"Hind did not travel."

b. maa yu-saafir-u amrun illa fii al-Sayfi

neg 3sm-travel-ind Amr-nom except in the-summer

"Amr travels only during the summer."

c. maa Muhammad-un kaatib-un

neg Mohammad-nom writer-nom

"Mohammad is not a writer."

Thus, unlike *lam* and *lam, maa* can occur with tensed verbs as in (11a), the imperfective as in (11b). Like *lays*, *maa* may also occur in small clauses (11c). Notice that with *maa,,* like *laa*, the verb appears in the indicative form.

To recap, any account of the negative paradigm in Arabic has to capture the following properties.

(12) Properties of negative markers in Arabic

a. There are two types of negation markers in Arabic: inflecting and non-inflecting. Inflecting negatives can either inflect for tense, *lam* and *lan*, or φ, *lays*. Non-inflecting, or neutral negatives are *laa* and *maa*.

b. Tense appears on the negative marker, not on the verb.

c. Tensed negatives lay restriction on the verbal form that follows them; *lan* selects for a subjunctive verbal form, while *lam* selects for a jusssive verbal form. With other negatives, the verb appears in the (default) indicative form.

d. Negatives, except *lays,* have to be adjacent to the verb.

e. *lays* assigns accusative case to the nominal or adjectival predicate.

f. Neg interacts with other functional heads, especially T. Hence, representation of Neg, i.e., where Neg is merged in the syntactic tree, matters.

0. Previous Analyses

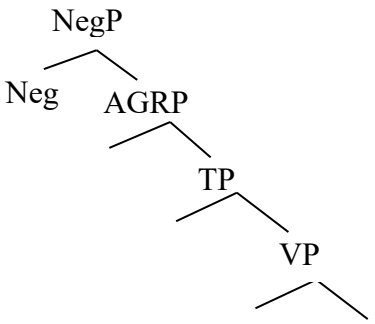
2.1 Fassi Fehri (1993)

Fassi Fehri assumes that Neg heads a NegP, merged above IP.[4] Thus, in modal Neg constructions, say *lam*, Neg is merged above TP. The verb then moves to T and then to AGR. From this position,

[4] Notice that NegP is standardly assumed to be base-generated between vP and TP. Benmamoun extends this view to the syntax of negation in Arabic. Ouhalla (2011), however, claims that the position of NegP should be open to parametric variation. See below for more discussion.

the verb satisfies the TCase (Mood) requirement of Neg,[5] and so surfaces as jussive in the case at hand. Further, the adjacency requirement between Neg and the verb also obtains.

(13) Representation of Neg in Fassi Fehri (1993)



With respect to copular Neg, Fassi Fehri suggests that *lays* be treated as copula verbs and modals in Arabic, which select for IP. Consequently, *lays,* as a governor of IP, assigns accusative case to the IP, which, in turn, percolates down to the predicate.

Though interesting, Fassi Fehri's analysis turns out to be untenable for the following reasons. First and foremost, the analysis is couched in the GB framework, which has long been abandoned, for obvious reasons. Second, the account suffers from some inconsistency. To illustrate, let us look, once more, at his analysis of copular Neg. Fassi Fehri assumes that as a Neg head, *lays* has to be merged above IP. However, after discharging its accusative case to its IP-complement, Neg, i.e., *lays*, "raises to merge with T and AGR to be properly inflected" (p166). The inconsistency arises when we read that Fassi Fehri rejects as the syntactic Neg-T merger approach. Further, the picture is not clear as to where Neg 'raises' in this context.

2.2 Benmamoun (2000)

Benmamoun (2000) proposes an account for Negation in Arabic along the lines proposed in Chomsky's (1995) minimalist theory of feature checking.

(14) Benmamoun's (2000) claims

(i) In past and future tenses in Arabic, T has a strong [+V] feature which has to be checked overtly by V-movement to T; in present tense, in contrast, T's [+V] is weak.

[5] Fassi Fehri analyzes mood markers as T(emporal)Case assigned, in the case at hand, by the negative marker *lam* to the verbal projection. Alahdal (2013) proposes that these markers are formal features manifesting a sort of an Agree relation between v and other functional heads, T and C.

(ii) In Arabic, NegP is merged between TP and VP.[6]

(iii) Neg has a categorial feature [+D].

This is how Benmamoun derives the different negatives. Consider first *laa*. Based on claim (14ii), T in present tense contexts is specified as [-V], and therefore, by Procrastinate, it has to be checked at LF. Benmamoun, however, claims that V, which is lexically specified for phi-features, moves to Neg (and stops there) to check Neg's [+D] feature. This derives the adjacency/merger requirement between *laa* and the verb.

lam and *lan* occur in past and future tenses respectively. Since T here has [+V] (14i), the verb has to move to T to check it. But V cannot take up this movement in one fell swoop, as the Neg head intervenes between T and V. Benmamoun, following Aoun (1981) assumes that the verb is not inflected for tense in the lexicon in Standard Arabic (while this may be the case in modern dialects of Arabic. So, V first moves[7] to Neg, and then the whole head complex [Neg+ V] moves to T. Crucially, it is Neg that is the head of the new head complex. In other words, it is Neg that moves to T, along with V. Since, it is Neg that moves, tense is spelled out on Neg.

For Benmamoun, the negative *lays* is a variant of *laa*. The difference between the two boils down to a phonological realization of agreement features (i.e., D feature) on Neg. If D on Neg is checked by the subject, and Neg does not merge with any other element, Neg is spelled out as *lays*.

maa, the last negative element in the list, is different from *laa* and its variants *lam, lan* and *lays*, in that while *laa* is a Neg head, *maa* is merged in Spec,NegP. Benmamoun bases this idea on the fact that *maa* can merge with the subject (see (11c) above). In verbal sentences, where *maa* obviously merges with the verb, Benmamoun claims that the verb moves to Spec,NegP, merges with *maa*

[6] This is mainly based on data from modern dialects of Arabic where negation is expressed by two markers: circumfixal *ma-sh* and non-afixal *mash*. The former occurs only in past tense constructions, where the verb presumably moves to T; the second appears in present tense context, where there is no movement. Accordingly, Benmamoun reasons that Neg has to be lower than T, for the verb merges with the negative only when it moves to T.

[7] The discussion in Benmamoun (2000) is not clear as to the trigger for V-to-Neg movement. In the case of *laa*, V-movement is triggered by Neg's [+D] feature]; in tensed negative constructions, V-moves to Neg in order to move to T later, perhaps a case of avoiding minimality, which encounters a look-ahead problem.

and then moves to T to check T's [+V], assuming that *maa* occurs solely in past tense constructions.[8]

Benmamoun's analysis cannot be maintained for mainly two reasons. First, Benmamoun's analysis is formulated in the early checking framework of the minimalist program (Chomsky 1995). Details aside,[9] in the phases framework, categorial features and feature checking, two primitives in checking theory, have been dispensed with. Instead, linguists are heading towards a-categorial roots, with lexical words formed in narrow syntax (Marantz 1997; Chomsky 2001; Siddiqi 2009; Chomsky 2015; among others), and, in different guises, feature valuation (Chomsky 2000 et seq.; Frampton and Gutmann 2000; Pesetsky and Torrego 2007).

Further, the analysis raises some conceptual and empirical problems. A conceptual problem for Benmamoun's analysis is that it is not clear whether head movement, namely, V-to-Neg, (V+)Neg-to-T, takes place in narrow syntax or in the PF component.

Benmamoun concludes that the difference among the negatives *laa, lam, lan* and *lays* boils down to how agreement features on Neg are spelled out. An immediate prediction that this idea makes is that their (narrow) syntactic behavior may be identical. This does not seem to be accurate. That *lam* or *lan* selects for a particular verbal form makes their syntax distinct; that *lays* enters an Agree relation with the subject, and assigns accusative Case to the nominal or adjectival predicates make its syntax different. Hence, reducing all these differences to PF seems to be a simplification.

Finally, empirically, Benmamoun's account encounters problems. Soltan (2007: 184), for instance, remarks that "there is a range of data from these Arabic dialects that show this [Benmamoun's] analysis cannot account for all the facts."

2.3 Soltan (2007)

Soltan (2007) proposes a hybrid, syntactic-morphophonological, analysis. The core idea here is that Agree takes place in syntax, while head movement in the morphophonology.

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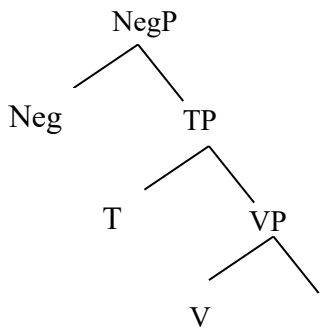
[8] This observation is not accurate. See below, for instance, for a discussion of and examples for the fact that *maa* can occur in non-past sentences. See (11a) in the text for an example from Aoun et al. (2010).

[9] For space limitations, we cannot go into a comparison of the two systems. Suffice it to say that the phases framework has proved more successful and, crucially, more minimalist. In this connection, see, for instance, Richards (2012).

Based on data from Standard Arabic, and modern dialects of Arabic, Soltan (2007) argues, following Fassi Fehri (1993), that NegP has to be merged above TP rather than below it.

(15) Representation of NegP as in Soltan (2007); Fassi Fehri (1993)



Soltan makes a three-way distinction among negatives: tense-inflecting, *laa, lam & lan*, φ-inflecting, *lays* and 'inactive' *maa.* Thus in respect of tensed negatives, Neg is merged (above TP) with an uninterpretable tense feature [uT].

(16) $[\text{Neg}_{[uT]}\ \ [\text{TP}\ \ \text{T}_{[past,\ \varphi, uTC]}\ \ [\text{VP subject V}]]]$

Now, Neg probes and gets its [uT] feature valued by [past] on T. In return, Neg values the [uTC][10] on T. the question why tense appears on Neg is accounted for by what Soltan calls Condition R (p.191), stated below.

(17) Condition R

If X^0 Agrees with Y^0 in F, Y being the head of X's sister, then pronounce F in X and interpret F in Y.

[10] This [uTC] is Fassi Fehri's (1993) temporal case 'TCase', the mood marker on the verb.

Thus, in our case, tense is pronounced on Neg (X in the definition) and interpreted in T (Y above). This is what happens in (narrow) syntax, according to Soltan. V-movement to T, and finally to Neg, takes place in the morphophonology, perhaps driven by some affixal nature of features on some head. This is how Neg-V adjacency is accounted for. The same operation Agree derives φ-inflecting *lays*.

Soltan follows Wright (1898) and Ouhalla (1993) in assuming that *lays* is a composite form containing *laa +ays*, an extinct copula. The representation of a clause negated by *lays* is given below.

(18) [NegP $Neg_{[u\varphi]/[uT]}$ [TP $T_{ays[present]/[uTC]}$ [VP subject V]]]

As the representation in (23) shows, Neg is merged with uninterpretable T and φ-features, T (*aysa)* has interpretable T feature and uninterprtable [uTC]. Agree proceeds as follows. Neg sends two probes, due to the extra features that it has gained, namely φ. Neg first probes the subject DP, and gets its φ-features valued, hence agreement surfacing on *lays*. Then, Neg sends another probe to T. This time, T's [uTC] is valued and, in turn, Neg's [uT] is also valued. By condition R, tense has to be pronounced in Neg, but interpreted in T. As is the case with tensed clauses, *ays* moves to Neg in the morphophonology, driven by the affixal nature of Neg, forming the composite form *lays*.

Finally, inactive negative *maa* is merged unspecified for any formal features. Having no features, *maa* does not enter any Agree relation; neither does it involve any adjacency requirement.

Soltan (2007: 192) admits that his condition R seems an ad hoc stipulation. But he claims that it is supported empirically. Conceptually, the condition is a stipulative conditional statement. This is evident from the fact that it is neither a (narrow) syntactic condition, nor an interface condition. For instance, it is not clear how Agree, a narrow syntactic operation of licensing some formal feature, would be a condition on SEM or PHON?[11] Moreover, T-to-C movement is a typical instance of the configuration described by Soltan's, which surprisingly, cannot be explained by

[11] SEM and PHON are the two interface systems that H_{CL} interacts with.

the condition. The analysis also raises problems to optionality of feature matrices of Neg and their interaction with T. Finally, it will be shown below that lays is not *laa +ays*.

2.4 Ouhalla (2011)

Ouhalla (2011) classifies negatives in Arabic into two categories: clause-peripheral and clause-internal. *maa* belongs in the former category, and *laa, lam, lan* and *lays* are clause-internal. Accordingly, Ouhalla postulates two Neg projections: one above TP, where peripheral negative *maa* is merged, and one between TP and VP to host clause internal negatives. Further, Ouhalla claims that *maa* co-occurs with perfective/past verbs, whereas others with the imperfective.

Ouhalla's account cannot be maintained for the following two reasons. First, Ouhalla bases his idea on the assumption, held also by Benmamoun (2000) as we saw above, that *maa* occurs solely in past tense constructions. We have seen that this is not true (see note (5)); and especially the examples in (11) above). Second, we cannot posit a representation for each construction depending on their surface structure. That NegP can be merged either above TP or below it may be a parameter. Fine! But we cannot stipulate two different Neg projections for one language depending on the surface structure of its negatives. Otherwise, these parameters will turn out to be construction-specific rules.

1. **An Alternative to the syntax of negation in Arabic**

To propose an alternative account that captures the properties of the different negatives in Arabic (summarized under (12) above), and also tries to avoid the problems raised against earlier approaches, I would take as a point of departure the observation that inflected negatives, namely *lam* and *lan* and *lays* are different from uninflected negatives, *laa* and *maa*, in that the former are Neg plus, whereas the latter are pure negative markers. I would assume, as opposed to the available consensus in the literature, that this plus is an extra property of the lexical items themselves, rather than a feature acquired in the syntax. The approach argued for in this section proceeds as follows. First, a novel classification of negatives is presented in section (3.1). More precisely, it is suggested that negatives be classified into (i) pure negatives, *maa, laa* and (ii) auxiliary negatives, *lam, lan* and *lays*. In (3.2) I refute the idea, held, as far as I know, by all linguists of Arabic, that negatives, inflected in particular, are composite forms of Neg+T. In particular, it is shown that *lam* is not

laa+an; lan not *laa+an;* and *lays* not *laa+ays.* Section (3.3) derives the different negatives and their properties. For instance, I will explain here facts like why tense apparently appears on Neg, the traditional puzzle, co-occurrence of negatives with certain verbal forms, etc.

1.1.Pure Negatives vs. auxiliary Negatives

It should be obvious by now that negative markers do not behave syntactically alike. On the one hand, there are lexical items that just contribute the negative interpretation, as it were, to a clause. These include *laa* and *maa*. Look at the following sentences.

(19) a. laa a'arif-u al-ijabat-a
neg 1s.know-ind the-answer-acc
"I don't know the answer".
b. maa araft-u al-ijabat-a
neg knew-1s the-answer-acc
"I didn't know the answer."

In (19a) *laa* negates a non-past clause. In (19b) *maa* negates a past-tense sentence. This seems to be very common in Arabic. That is, it seems that *laa* is used in non-tensed sentences, while *maa* in past-tense constructions. However, *laa* may cooccur with a past-tense verb, particularly to encode a 'wish' interpretation.

(20) laa adim-ta abaa-k
neg lost.2sm father-your
"May you not lose your father/ may your father live long."

In (20), the verb used after *laa* is in the past tense form. In fact neither having the imperfective/non-past form nor substituting *maa* for *laa* is an option, as the ungrammaticality below shows.

(21) a. * laa ta-'adam abaa-ka
neg 2.lose father-your

b.*maa adimta abaa-ka

neg lost.2sm father-your

"May you not lose your father/ May your father live long."

The fact that *laa* (19a) and (20)) and *maa* ((11) above) can cooccur with different verbal forms, and the fact that *laa* is used in constituent negation indicate that these two negatives are no more than negative markers, i.e., they do not interact with the inflectional system. Thus I suppose that these two negatives be grouped together under the label *pure negatives*.

laa and *maa* contrast sharply with the other negatives, namely *lam, lan* and *lays*, as far as interaction with the inflectional system is concerned. The interaction between these negatives and the inflectional system manifests itself in two forms: (i) negatives get inflected for tense or agreement, which are inflectional primitives, and (ii) they impose a selectional restriction on the verb form that may follow them. Pure negatives do not involve any of these properties.[12]

Based on these facts, we can reason that inflecting negatives are C/T elements that interact with v. They are actually lexical auxiliaries that happen to have a Neg feature. Let us call them '*negative auxiliaries'*. Accordingly, *lam, lan* and *lays* are not merged in Neg, as variants of *laa* and then moved to T, as has always been assumed. Instead, these are merged in T, just like other auxiliaries, (and perhaps raised to Neg)[13].

This approach then differs from earlier approaches in that it captures the distinction between negative items in lexical rather than syntactic or morphophonological terms. The following is then the proposed classification of negatives.

(22) Classification of negatives in Arabic

Negative auxiliaries	Pure Negatives
o *lam, lan, lays*	*maa, laa*
o specified for formal features (T,φ, case)	convey only negation

[12] Deriving the differences between *laa* and *maa* may have to do with 'strength' of negation which may suggest that one of them moves higher. However, this remains mysterious at the moment.

[13] The analysis here is built on B&R's (2010) approach to the auxiliary system in English.

o specified for [Tense][14] not specified for [Tense]

1.2.Negative auxiliaries are not composite forms

Here I would like to refute the long-held assumption that negative auxiliaries are a composite Neg+T. Instead, I argue, along the lines proposed in B&R (2010), that negative auxiliaries are independent lexical items.[15]

3.2.1 lan is not *laa+ an*

We have seen that an implicature of all the accounts for the negative facts of Arabic is that tensed negatives are actually *laa* plus T. *laa*, the claim goes, is the default uninflected negative morpheme. Now, *laa* is merged under a Neg head,[16] moves to T and is then spelled out as either *lam* (if tense is past), or *lan* (if tense is future). This is obviously not true. Consider the following sentence again.

(23) a. uriid-u an aðhab-a
1s.want-ind to 1s.go-subj
"I want to go."
b .lan aðhab-a
neg.fut 1s.go-subj
"I don't want to go."

[14] Alahdal (2014) defines [Tense] as a formal feature that establishes the selectional relationships between C/T and v. [Tense] is morphologically realized as indicative, subjunctive and jussive (traditionally known as modalities). i follow Alahdal here.

[15] Note that the analysis proposed in the text is a critique for those approaches that posit a NegP between TP and VP (e.g. Benmamoun 2002; Aoun et al. 2010; Ouhalla 2011), where head movement of Neg to T apparently seems reasonable to derive the respective negatives. With regard to approaches that assume a NegP above TP (e.g. Fassi Fehri 1993; Soltan 2007), negative auxiliaries are simply non-derivable (see especially B&R 2010: 271-275).

16 Or in Spec,NegP as is the case of maa in Benmamoun 2000.

Based on data like these, it might be tempting to argue[17] that *lan* in (35b) is actually a composite of *laa+an*. Two observations may in fact support this conclusion. First, *an*[18] in Arabic selects for a subjunctive verbal form. Hence, the presence of the subjunctive verbal form after *lan* in the example may point in this direction. Second, semantically, the second sentence may look like the negative counterpart of the embedded clause in the first one. Also, it may be claimed that an optional phonological operation of, say, vowel deletion, in a sequence of vowels may give rise to *lan* out of the string '*laa an'*. Though apparently appealing, this view cannot be maintained for the following reasons.

First, a subjunctive clause introduced by *an* cannot occur in a root clause, i.e., it has to be a complement clause to some predicate[19] (cf. (36)). Second, *laa* can actually co-occur with *an* without any reduction ((37)).

(24) * an aðhab-a

to 1s.go-subj

(25) uriid-u-ka an takuun-a ma'ii, laa an takuun

1s.want-ind-you to 2.be-subj with.me neg to 2.be-subj

Didd-i

against-me

"I want you to stand with me, not to be against me."

Phonologically, '*laa an'* turns out to have a proper syllabification in the sense that it is not a sequence of vowels, but rather CVCVC, with *an* initiated by a glottal stop.

3.3.1. ***lam*** **is not** ***laa+am***

The picture is clearer with *lam*. There is no *am* morpheme in the language that can derive this negative marker. The only *am* that the language has is a conjunctive preposition.

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[17] I think this has been a salient assumption underlying earlier approaches.

[18] Opposed to earlier analyses that consider *an* a complementizer merged in C, Saeed (2011) treats *an* as a functional element merged in T, just like the infinitival *to* in English. Alahdal (2014) argues that there are different lexical items of *an,* a C-element merged in C and selects for an indicative verb; and another T-element *an* which selects for a subjunctive.

[19] Subjunctive in Arabic is exclusively intensional. There is no polarity subjunctive in Arabic. (Cf. Quer (2009).

(26) hal turiid-u haaða **am** thaak?
Q 2s.want-ind this or that
"Do you want this or that?"

3.3.2. lays is not *laa+ays*

Similarly, as indicated above, *lays*[20] has been thought of as a composite of *laa* plus *ays*, an extinct copula. This view of *lays* is first expressed in Wright (1967). Wright claims that *ays*, or its roots for that matter, exists in Hebrew and Aramaic. However, this may not necessarily be the case in Arabic. *ays* never shows up in classical Arabic, as far as I can tell. Not only this, but no word of any form that may be thought of as a derivative of *ays* exists.

Moreover, the fact that we can have *laa+yakuun* (i.e., 'to be'), without any reduction, casts doubt on this view of *lays*.

(27) laa yakuun-u al-rajulu musliman Hatta yuHib-a al-aaxiriin
neg 3.be-ind the-man muslim till 3sm.love-subj the-others
'A man cannot be a (true) muslim unless they love others.'

4. Derivation of negatives and their properties

Having these assumptions about negatives in Arabic in place, let us now see how we can derive the different negatives, and explain their respective properties. In particular, we will try to derive the following facts,[21] partly reproduced from (12) above. Interestingly, it will turn out that by adopting a lexical approach to account for negation facts in Arabic along the lines proposed here, almost all these facts fall out immediately without further stipulations.

(28) Negation facts in Arabic

a. Tense appears on the negative marker, not on the verb.

[20] In traditional grammar *lays* is assumed to be a verb, as it inflects for phi-features.

[21] Notice that these facts relate to what I have dubbed 'negative auxiliaries'. For pure negatives are simply negative elements merged under Neg of a NegP, following Fassi Fehri (1993) and Soltan (2007), above TP.

b. Tensed Neg lays restriction on the verbal form that follows it; *lan* selects for a subjunctive verbal form, while *lam* selects for a jusssive verbal form. With other negatives the verb appears in the (default) indicative form.

c. Of the negative auxiliaries *lays* inflects for φ, while others inflect for tense.

d. Neg, except *lays,* has to be adjacent to the verb.

e. *lays* assigns accusative case to the nominal or adjectival predicate.

Let us start with (40a), i.e., how tense appears on Neg, not on the verb. Given our assumptions about negative auxiliaries laid out above, the answer here turns out to be straightforward: Negative auxiliaries are merged in T, where tense, in its deictic temporal sense, is standardly assumed to be interpreted. Notice, further, that negative auxiliaries are also lexically specified for tense: *lam* is lexically specified for 'past'; *lan* for 'future' and *lays* 'present/non-past'. Accordingly, *lam* is merged under a past T; *lan* under a 'future' T, and *lays* a present/non-past T.

The distinction among negative auxiliaries can be accounted for in terms of the feature [Tense]. This takes us to fact (40b), discussed below.

Here, we turn to the question of the different verbal forms that cooccur with our negative auxiliaries. We have seen that pure negatives do not lay restriction on the verb form: they co-occur with the indicative verbal form, both past and non-past. Negative auxiliaries, on the other hand, select for certain verbal forms. Specifically, *lam* selects for a jussive verbal form; *lan* for subjunctive; and *lays* for indicative. To recap, look, once more, at the following.

(29) a. lam yaktub-**Ø**
pst.neg 3sm.write-juss
"He did't write/hasn't written"

b. lan yaktub-**a**
fut.neg 3sm.write-sibj
"He will not write"

c. lays yaktub-**u**
pres.neg 3sm.write-ind
"He does not write"

To account for this correlation, I propose that if my argument that these elements are auxiliaries[22] is on track, then by virtue of being C/T-elements, they carry an unvalued [Tense] feature.[23] Now if v carries the juss value of the feature [Tense], it will, as a consequence of Agree, value [Tense] on T, a negative auxiliary, as juss. The juss-valued negative auxiliary is spelled out as *lam*. Similarly, *lan* is spelled out as the negative auxiliary if its [Tense] feature is valued as [subj]. The indicative form can be derived in two ways. On one scenario, and similar to what happens with *lam* and *lan*, the negative auxiliary in T gets ind as a value for its [Tense] feature, and is spelled out as *lays*. Alternatively, ind may be the default value of [Tense], which obtains when Agree between T and v does not hold in terms of tense.

A note about pure negatives seems to be in order here. Those negatives are 'inactive', not because they lack phi-features or T features as Soltan (2007) claims, but because they are not C/T elements, i.e., they are pure negative markers.[24] Being non T-elements, they lack all unvalued formal features, except those related to negation of course (which would be interpretable).

The Agree scenario in the previous paragraph follows the standard view of Agree: feature valuation in terms of copying the value of a feature on a goal onto its counterpart on the probe, called feature assignment (Pesetsky and Torrego 2007). An alternative view proposed by Frampton and Gutmann (2000) and Pesetsky and Torrego (2007) looks at Agree as a case of feature sharing.

Under the feature sharing system, the Match aspect of Agree will matter most. Suppose that a negative auxiliary, say *lam*, carries the value [juss], then the derivation will converge only if the verb (technically v) carries [juss] also, i.e., if the verb appears in the jussive verbal form. This is how this analysis would explain the ungrammaticality of the following sentences.

(30) a. ahmed lam yaktub-Ø al-wajiba
Ahmed aux.neg 3sm.write-ind the-assignment
"Ahmed did not wite the assignment."

b. * ahmed lam yaktub-a al-waajiba

[22] See Biberauer and Roberts (2010) for a similar account of auxiliary+n't constructions in English.

[23] Of course, the value of the tense feature in its 'narrow' temporal sense is also crucial, as discussed above.

[24] Where Neg is merged, an issue for earlier analyses, does not, however, hinge on the present analysis: either above VP (Benmamoun 2000) or above TP (Fassi Fehri 1993; Soltan 2007). In implementation, I follow the latter camp.

Ahmed aux.neg 3sm.write-subj the-assignment

"Ahmed did not write the assignment."

b. * ahmed lam yaktub-u al-wajiba

Ahmed aux.neg 3sm.write-ind the-assignment

"Ahmed did not write the assignment."

Among the sentences in (42) only (42a) is grammatical. The explanation for the ungrammaticality of (42b and c) is straightforward under the line of argument I propose. More precisely, Agree succeeds in (42a); whereas there is a [Tense] feature mismatch between T and v in (42b and c), represented below.

(31) a. $T_{[Tense:juss]}$ $v_{[Tense:juss]}$ Agree Successful

b. $T_{[Tense:juss]}$ $v_{[Tense:subj]}$ Agree Mismatch

c. $T_{[Tense:juss]}$ $v_{[Tense:ind]}$ Agree Mismatch

Interestingly, the Agree-based approach naturally extends to account for so-called multiple tensed forms, i.e., constructions where tense appears on Neg and the verb.

(32) *lam kataba al-wajiba

aux.neg wrote.3sm the-assignment

"He did not write the assignment."

This example raises an interesting issue. Let us recall how linguists of Arabic explain the ungrammaticality of such constructions. Those linguists claim that in these constructions, the verb does not move to T, because Neg has already moved to T. Details aside, a head-movement analysis is problematic, and seems to be more phonological than syntactic (e.g. Benmamoun 2000). Consider why. Neg, it is claimed, moves to T to support T. Now this 'support' is clearly more morphophonological than syntactic. Feature valuation/checking, a purely syntactic operation, takes place at a distance (Chomsky's Agree). However, an appeal to Agree to account for the ungrammaticality above faces a problem.

If the explanation of a sentence like this boils down to a case of Agree between T and v in terms of tense, in its deictic temporal sense, (44) should be fine, for T is past, realized as the negative auxiliary *lam* and the verb appears in the same past tense form, contrary to fact. By our logic, however, the ungrammaticality boils down to a mismatch of the feature [Tense]. T is [juss] while v is [ind].

That the clause is negative in type can be captured by either a Probe-Goal relation between Neg and T, or by head-raising the negative auxiliary to Neg^0.

Let us consider (40c), namely, how φ-features (in addition to tense, I assume) surface on *lays*, whereas tense surfaces on *lam* and *lan*. We have seen that tense surfaces on these items by the virtue of being auxiliaries, merged in T. With respect to *lays*, I take that fact that *lays* carries agreement suffixes as supporting evidence that these *are* auxiliaries.

Now, with regard to what surfaces where, I would like to approach the issue differently. More precisely, I take the case of *lays*, where tense and agreement surface as the 'norm', 'the default case', i.e., the expected outcome of Agree between T and v, and T and the subject DP. The question we have to explain then is: why do *lam* and *lan* not surface[25] with agreement affixes. We should note at this point that *lam* and *lan*, as opposed to *lays*, consistently trigger merger with the verb (at least in the PF). This, one may conjecture, is due to the affixal nature of these items. Apart from what triggers this adjacency, which is most probably a phonological issue, by the time agreement is realized, we are already in the morphological component. Now, at this particular point, and since T, i.e., *lam, lan,* has already merged with the verb, agreement is realized on the verb.

The issue of adjacency, (40d), I think, has to be accounted for morphophonologically. In particular, it seems that *lam* and *lan* have an affixal feature which *lays* does not. This is supported by the fact that while the first two *always* require some sort of (PF-)merger with the verb, *lays* can stand on its own. Interestingly, this may also shed light on why *lays* can carry agreement markers, whereas in the case of the negative auxiliaries *lam* and *lan*, agreement markers are realized on the verb. If this proves on track, then a phonological interface-based account of agreement (realization) along the lines proposed in D'Alessandro and Roberts (2008), Alahdal (2013), seems to be preferable.[26]

5. Towards a theory of (in)compatibility

[25] An implicature here is that Agree, in terms of φ-features, takes place between *lam* and *lan* on the one hand and the subject DP on the other in the syntax.

[26] The gist of the analysis is that full agreement surfaces when the probe and goal are spelled out in the same domain, namely the same phonological phrase. This is the case in the SVO word order in Arabic. If, on the other hand, the probe and goal are spelled out indifferent phonological domains, poor/default agreement arises.

Fassi Fehri (1993: 170-174) discusses the interaction among modals, Neg morphemes and other temporal markers. He concludes the discussion suggesting that "a theory of compatibility between Mood, Modality and Neg is needed" (p. 172). In this final section of the paper, I will go through the cases that Fassi Fehri considers, and show that with an approach to the negation paradigm in Arabic along the lines argued for here, an analysis for (most of) these cases[27] is readily available without a need for any independent 'theory'.

It is in order to note at the outset that Fassi Fehri's conjecture that in order to account for the interaction of negatives with other inflectional elements, "a checking mechanism is needed" (p. 173) is on the right track. It should be obvious by now that the approach we have developed so far is a checking one, couched in Chomsky's (2000 et seq.) recent Agree framework.

First, under a subsection entitled 'Anteriority', Fassi Fehri (p. 170) wonders why only *maa* among all negative morphemes can co-occur with the anterior/past/perfective form of the verb. The following sentences are reproduced from Fassi Fehri (his 78-80).

(33) a. maa HaSala haaða
neg happened this
"This did not happen."

b.* laa HaSala haaða
neg happened this
intended: "This did not happen."

c. lays HaSala haaða
neg happened this
"This did not happen."

To account for the paradigm above, Fassi Fehri insightfully suggests that 'non-anterioriy' should be encoded as a selectional feature on these Negs. In other words, all negatives except *maa* should be specified for the feature [non-anterior]. In fact, our approach is similar in spirit to this view. More precisely, we have tried to encode the verbal forms that are selected by particular negatives, what we have termed negative auxiliaries in particular, as formal features, namely [Tense], on those respective negatives.

[27] Part of the discussion will be repetitive at times, since some of the facts have already been explained above.

However, the suggestion made by Fassi Fehri, though appealing, cannot be maintained. 'Non-anteriority' is so vague a term that it cannot function as a formal feature. This term sounds more semantic than syntactic. Notwithstanding, it is still not clear whether it is temporal or aspectual, for, as Fassi Fehri himself notes, the 'anterior' form of the verb in Arabic is both temporal (i.e., it encodes tense) and aspectual (i.e., it encodes aspect). Similarly, 'non-anterior', when used, will definitely refer to various temporal and aspectual concepts. Now, Alahdal (2013) argues that the verbal forms found in Arabic, namely indicative, subjunctive and jussive (selected for by certain C/T-elements) are clearly formal/syntactic in nature; they are by no means semantically-driven. Therefore, we can, rightly, conclude that Fassi Fehri's approach (in terms of modality) cannot work.

Moreover, as noted elsewhere, Fassi Fehri's observation is not accurate. *laa* can co-occur with the so-called anterior form of the verb, though with a different interpretation. Thus, (45b), repeated below, is grammatical under a wish reading, noted by Fassi Fehri also.

(34) laa HaSala haaða
neg happened this
'May not this happen.'

This, I assume, is derived by raising *laa* from Neg to a higher Modal^0, along the lines in Bayer (2012) and Chomsky's general constraint that an optional operation should have some effect on the outcome, i.e., it should be driven by some extra interface property. In the case at hand, *laa* acquires a further modal interpretation. What matters however in (46), for the present discussion, is the fact that, putting aside interpretation, *laa does* co-occur with the past/perfective verbal form. In the same vein, *maa* can co-occur with the 'non-anterior' verbal form, though with a different interpretation. Consider the flowing paradigm from Fassi Fehri (1993: 173).

(35) a. laa uSalli 'habitual present'
neg 1s.pray.ind

b. maa uSalli 'actual present'
neg 1s.pray.ind
'I do not pray'

In (47), both *laa* and *maa* co-occur with the non-past/non-anterior form of the verb. Hence, formally, the two negatives can co-occur with indicative verbal form. The distinction between the pair above reduces to an aspectual one (Fassi Fehri 1993: 173-174). As Fassi Fehri points out, *laa* negates the habit of praying, while *maa* negates performing the prayer at the time of utterance.

The second case of (in)compatibility, which Fassi Fehri considers, relates to the occurrence of negatives in small clauses, so-called verbless or nominal sentences.

(36) a. maa anta mariiDun
neg you sick
"You are not sick"

b. *laa anta mariiDun
neg you sick
"You are not sick."

Here, Fassi Fehri also suggests that *laa* be treated as a 'Mood assigner'. In our terms, *laa* carries a [Tense] feature (in Alahdal's 2013 sense), obviously contrary to what we have argued for. An analysis along this line would well explain the ungrammaticality above. Since a small clause does not have an overt verb, [Tense] on *laa* will not be satisfied, hence a derivation crash arises. However, the fact that *laa* is the constituent negation in Arabic will remain mysterious under this view.

(37) laa rajulan fi al-daar
neg man in the-house
"There is no man in the house."

The third case that Fassi Fehri raises concerns the interaction of negation with illocutionary information. Consider the following sentences from Fassi Fehri (p. 171).

(38) in lam tadxul-**Ø**
if neg 2sm.enter-**juss**
' If you don't enter,'

(39) *in maa daxal-ta
if neg entered-2sm
"If you entered,"

(40) *in lan tadxul-**a**

if neg 2sm.enter-**subj**

"If you don't enter,"

(41) *in laa tadxul-**u**

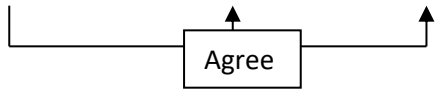
if neg 2sm.enter-**ind**

"If you don't enter"

The sentences above show that only *lam*, among the negative markers, can cooccur with the conditional *in* 'if'. Fassi Fehri does not offer any suggestion as to why this is the case, noting that an account for these facts would go beyond the scope of his book.

I guess that the explanation along the line defended in this paper seems obvious now. See how an explanation for the grammaticality vs. ungrammaticality of the sentences above falls out naturally. In (50), we have two C/T-elements that carry [Tense], namely *in* and *lam*. [Tense] on both happens to be satisfied by [juss] on v. That is how we interpret the selectional relation between *in* and *lam* on the one hand and the jussive verbal form on the other.

(42) C *in* [Tense] T *lam* [Tense] v [Tense: juss]



As (54) demonstrates, (Multiple) Agree (with v) values [Tense] on C (i.e., *in*) and T (i.e., *lam*). Agree could alternatively proceed in two steps. First, T probes v to get its [Tense] feature valued as juss. Then, in a later operation, C' [Tense] probes T and gets valued by T as juss. The derivation thus converges without any problem.

The ungrammaticality in all other sentences boils down to a failure of valuation of [Tense] on *in*. The valuation failure in (51) may be explained in two ways. First, it might be tempting to attribute it to an intervention effect. More precisely, valuation of [Tense] on *in* by v is blocked by the negative head *maa*. However, I cannot entertain this analysis, since I assume that pure negatives do not carry [Tense] as they are not C-elements. Further, there is empirical evidence to this effect: Neg does not block C-v Agree in terms of [Tense], assuming Rizzi's (2004) 'feature-based relativized minimality'. (55) below shows that *in* can Agree with a jussive verbal form across a (pure) negative.

(43) in-laa tadrus-Ø, tarsub-Ø

if-neg 2sm.study-juss, 2sm.fail-juss

"If you don't study, you will fail."

Therefore, I will argue that the ungrammaticality in (51) amounts to a case of Agree mismatch between the C-element *in* and v in terms of Agree. In particular, in the example at hand, it is because v carries [ind] as a value for [Tense] rather than [juss] that the derivation crashes; and, crucially, not due to the presence of the (pure) negative.

The same scenario of Agree-mismatch in terms of [Tense] extends to account for the ungrammaticality in (52) and (53). Specifically, v's [Tense] is specified as [subj] and [ind] in (52) and (53) respectively, while C, (realized as *in*) requires juss.

6. Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to offer a novel approach to the syntax of negation in Arabic. The present approach, contra existing literature on the topic, classifies negatives in Arabic into two categories: *pure negatives,* subsuming *laa* and *maa*, and *negative auxiliaries***,** *lam, lan* and *lays*. It is argued that negative auxiliaries carry a formal feature [Tense], checked in an Agree relation between C/T and v. The breakthrough of the present approach to negatives in Arabic, I believe, manifests itself in two aspects. The first aspect relates to the classification of negatives. We have seen that linguists have always assumed three types of negatives: neutral/non-inflecting *maa*, copular/φ-inflecting *lays* and modal/tense-inflecting *laa* (and its variants). The present classification, however, groups *laa* and *maa* together, and splits off *laa* from so-called its variants, namely *lam* and *lan*.

The second novel aspect of the present approach lies in its being more lexical than syntactic. More precisely, *lam* and *lan* are no longer variants of *laa* (and we have seen why). Instead, *lam* and *lan* are argued to be auxiliaries, independent lexical items, that happen to have a Neg feature. In fact, it has been shown that viewing these negatives as auxiliaries makes their syntax, which is different to that of the syntax of pure negatives, fall out naturally. For instance, since these are auxiliaries, they are merged in T, rather than under a NegP (as has always been assumed). Further, since they are C-related (assuming feature inheritance), they are specified for the feature [Tense], the feature that establishes the syntactic dependency between C and v. That negative auxiliaries carry [Tense] is evident from the fact that each negative auxiliary selects for a certain verbal form.

An approach along the lines proposed in the text can also derive the properties of negatives in Arabic (see (12) above) in a principled manner, without much stipulation. It can also account for negatives (in)compatibility cases, i.e., interaction of negatives with other temporal and modal morphemes, raised by Fassi Fehri (1993), without a need for any independent theory. Notice that most of the cases here are explained by an appeal to the valuation of the feature [Tense].

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ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

The EFL Students' Academic Buoyancy in Reading and Listening Skills

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Abstract

This research aims at identifying the Iraqi EFL students' academic buoyancy in reading and listening skills and then finding out the difference between the two skills; Furthermore, finding out the five predictors differences of each of the two scales. Two academic buoyancy scales used to collect data. After achieving the scales' psychometric characteristics, they are submitted to the study sample. The sample of (100) female students selected according to the stratified random method from the second class at the Department of English\ College of Education for Women\ University of Baghdad. The results show that the students have academic reading buoyancy and have not academic listening buoyancy; the difference between the two abilities shows that: there is a significant difference between the two in favor of reading academic buoyancy. The differences among the five predictors of each scale show the following: in reading, the students are high buoyant in academic achievement and low in control, while in listening, they are high buoyant in teacher-students relationship and low in anxiety. Accordingly, it could be concluded that the students need new strategies in reading and listening to enable them to be more buoyant in reading and listening.

Keywords: *EFL students, academic buoyancy, reading skill, listening skill*

Introduction

The problem and its significance

The rapid development of technology increases the amount of information on the webs and social media that requires a good reading ability in the English language (Savić, 2016: 2). Additionally, the reading skill distinguished in its ability to improve overall language proficiency (Qrqez & Ab Rashid, 2017:423). However, there is a lack of reading ability, which leads to poor academic performance among students (Al-Jarrah & Ismail, 2018:32).

Reading is a vital skill that consists of psychological, physical, and social elements. Accordingly, Reading involves the interaction of cognitive, meta-cognitive, linguistic, and sociolinguistic aspects (Medjahdi, 2015:6).

Romly, Supie, & Nasharudin (2018: 492) declare that learners face difficulties in achieving academic success if they cannot understand the written material. Moreover, the learners' academic performance will be affected, and their ability to access information in the English language is hindered (Ibid,493).

Reading is not the only receptive skill that is problematic listening is the second problematic receptive skill for the language learner.

Despite the importance of listening in understanding the subject matter and its crucial role in developing the other language skills, hence, the students face several problems and difficulties in listening (Trisno, Emzir, and Mayuni, 2018:224).

Since listening used in daily life, it could be developed faster than other language skills and influences the development of other skills easier (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016:123).

The first step in solving the reading and listening skills difficulties is by diagnosing them to face the setbacks and challenges. It is very crucial to solve the reading problems since reading is the skill that integrates the lives of knowledge and new information (Chandran & Shah, 2019: 3374).

Hamouda (2013:115) insists on the importance of understanding the students' listening difficulties to solve them by instructing effective listening strategies; While Yıldırım & Yıldırım (2016: 2095) declare that listening is a neglected skill in second and foreign language classrooms. The previous statements show an agreement with Darti &Asmawati (2017:212) in that the diagnosing and solving the students' listening difficulties are very important for their success since these make them study hard to improve their listening.

Many different studies diagnose these problems from different perspectives. The new in this study is the way of diagnosing by using the academic buoyancy, the new concept of (Martin & Marsh, 2007) which deals with every day academic setbacks and adversity such as poor scores, competing deadlines, examination pressure, and hard school work (Piosang, 2016: 2). Furthermore, Yun, Hiver, and Al-Hoorie (2018) and Malmberg, Hall, & Martin (2013) agree that the academic buoyancy in language learning need for further investigation and more studies.

The academic buoyancy corresponds with the new aim of education, which is the shifting from receiving knowledge into enhancing the students' autonomy and reflection. In the last decades, the students start to activate the autonomies learning competencies to get lifelong learning and challenging unexpected difficulties (Rameli and Kosnin, 2014, p. 5).

Students with high levels of academic buoyancy have an excellent ability to face the everyday challenges of school life, and this path the way to improve achievement (Miller, Connolly& Maguire, 2013: 8).

For Rameli and Kosnin (2014, 2), "students' capacity to face the challenges is a significant element in determining their academic progress." They say that assisting the students to deal with their daily academic difficulties and take the risk of failing in the exam or being late in submitting the assignment before the deadline. This statement can summarize the importance of academic buoyancy in activating the self-confidence and strengthening the students' ability to overcome the difficulties in their daily academic life.

Chandran & Shah (2019: 3373) state that reading skill is a cornerstone for succeeding in life and reinforces the everyday literacy engagement. Hence, EFL students face everyday problems inside and outside the class in reading skills. The same thing with listening skill Hamouda's (2013:114) statement implied a connection between the academic buoyancy and listening skill by saying that listening is the most widely daily life used skill for language learning. However, the study concerned with investigating the reading and academic listening buoyancy, i.e., the setbacks and difficulties inside the classroom.

Yun et al. (2018, p.806) state that language learning faces ups and downs and all the other daily academic setbacks. Therefore, the need for students to struggle and persist for success requires them highly motivated to face the daily common challenges and pressures of language learning.

Datu and Yang (2019) demonstrate the direct relationship between academic buoyancy and academic achievement, motivation, and engagement as the academic buoyancy positively predicts the students' enjoyment in academic activities.

To sum, despite thousands of studies for decades in the field of teaching English as a foreign language, the English language still a problematic subject for Iraqi students, which requires more diagnostic studies for the problems. However, the emergence of new trends in the field of

educational psychology paves the way for investigating these problems from new perspectives that would provide another valid path for solutions. Therefore, the academic buoyancy predictors (5Cs) used as parameters for identifying and classifying the problems and difficulties in learning listening and reading skills.

The study aims at:

1. identifying the EFL students' reading academic buoyancy,
2. identifying the EFL students' academic listening buoyancy,
3. finding out the differences between the academic reading buoyancy and academic listening buoyancy,
4. finding out the differences among the five predictors of reading academic buoyancy scale, and,
5. finding out the differences among the five predictors of listening academic buoyancy scale.

The study limits to the academic buoyancy in listening and reading skills. The EFL second grade students\ English Department\ College of Education for women\ The University of Baghdad, the academic year 2018-2019. In the last few decades particularly after advances in information and communications technology, there has been a growing interest in English. The importance of English cannot be denied as a global means of communication which have brought people of different cultures and countries closer to one another (Alzeebaree & Yavuz, 2017, as cited in Alzeebaree & Hasan, 2020).

Definition of basic terms

Medjahdi (2015, p.5) defines reading "as an interactive process between the reader and the writer in which the former has to understand the message of the passage and then to decode it."

Goss (1982) defines listening as "a process of understanding what is heard and organizing it into lexical elements to which meaning can be allocated" (Gilakjani & Sabouri22016, p.124).

Martin, Colmar, Davey, & Marsh (2010) define the academic buoyancy as "students' ability to successfully deal with setbacks and challenges that are typical of academic life."

Literature Review

The reading and listening and their sub-skills

Reading is a complex language skill since it requires interaction among the other sub-skills such as skimming, scanning, and anticipating meaning from the context. Furthermore, language learners need to know about the reading models and when to use them (Medjahdi, 2015, p.5). Reading sub-skills or strategies as they named by Chandran & Shah (2019, p.3375) are "recognizing words, using world knowledge, reading for meaning, guessing about the meaning, monitoring comprehension, identifying or inferring main ideas, distinguishing main ideas and paraphrasing. Skimming and scanning classified as reading strategies. According to the bottom-up process, reading is a process of transforming a series of codes from written text into spoken text. It based on activating the scheme of the smallest units of language. Thus the comprehension starts with words' morpheme, phoneme, and semantic; Then continue to the sentences, paragraph, and text.

On the other hand, the top-down process based on the prior knowledge the reader has in the communicative situation. In the top-down process, understanding starts with the paragraph, then the sentences and words that make up the message. Top-down activates a high level of the reading process. Thus the prior knowledge and reader expectations are essential in reading comprehension (Medriano & Bautista, 2020; Shehu, 2015, p.15).

Listening is presented by Thomlison (1984) as "the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. The top-down process involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, the speaker's grammar and vocabulary, and comprehension of meaning. A good listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously." (Hamouda, 2013, p.117).

Darti & Asmawati (2017, p.212) present the classifications of listening difficulties into three types: listener factors, listening content, and physical environment. Some listeners' difficulties presented as the lack of vocabulary, inability to understand the structure, inability to comprehend natural spoken, and anxiety.

Trisno et al. (2018, p. 225) give the following sub-skills of listening as problematic skills:

1. Listening for the gist
2. Listening for specific information

3. Listening for important details
4. Listening for topic
5. Listening for main ideas
6. Listening to infer the meaning

Willis (1981, p.134) calls the listening sub-skills as enabling skills. He presents them as predicting what is going to be said, guessing unknown words, relating the previous knowledge with new knowledge for understanding, identifying relevant topics, and recognizing the organization of the details.

The Academic Buoyancy

The context of education displays two concepts the academic resilience and academic buoyancy (Anderson, 2019: 16). The first one is the acute and chronic life problems that affect the students' academic performance, while the second is the typical setbacks and challenges in students' school daily lives. Academic buoyancy derived from long resilience studies; therefore, the distinct features between the two mentioned in any academic buoyancy study (Piosang, 2016: 2).

Resilience and academic buoyancy both are the individuals' ability to overcome setbacks that hinder their motivation and performance. However, they differ according to their kind, degree, category of the populations, and the academic outcomes (Verrier, Johnson & Reidy 2018: 659).

Martin, Brackett & Hall (2013: 129) distinct between the two in that:

Academic buoyancy has been distinguished from resilience in that buoyancy is relevant to ongoing challenges that are typical of the ordinary course of academic life, whereas academic resilience refers to more substantial adversity in academic life. Thus, for example, academic buoyancy is relevant to a poor grade, whereas academic resilience is relevant to chronic failure. Similarly, academic buoyancy is relevant to stress that is typical of performance scenarios such as tests, whereas academic resilience is relevant to clinical levels of anxiety that disrupt academic (and other) functioning. By implication, academic buoyancy tends to apply to all students, whereas academic resilience tends to apply to a relative minority of students (who are nonetheless vital to assist).

Martin (2013: 3) labels the resilience as *major* adversity while the academic buoyancy as minor adversity, and distinguishes between them as follows

Resilience (major adversity) is relevant to	*Academic buoyancy (minor adversity) is relevant to*
1. Chronic underachievement.	Isolated poor grades and patches of poor performance.
2. Self-system debilitation in the face of chronic failure.	Threats to self-confidence as a result of negative feedback;
3. Truancy and disaffection from school.	Dips in motivation and engagement
4. Alienation from school or opposition to teachers	minor negative interactions with teachers

This distinction indicates that buoyancy involved by more students than resilience because the academic adversities here are typical to daily academic life (Piosang, 2016, p. 2).

Pintrich & DeGroot (1990, p.33) classify the components of motivation into expectancy components, value components, and affective components. These components considered predictive of the motivation outcomes. Expectancy components are related to self-efficacy, which connected to the planning as self-regulatory behaviors, and value components related to the high intrinsic motivation that connected to the persistence, while affective components related directly to anxiety. Accordingly, the following five factors subsumed: self-efficacy, control (negative- uncertain control), planning, persistence, and anxiety (negative- low anxiety) (Martin et al., 2010, p.7).

Piosang (2016: 2) displays anxiety as a dominant factor in clarifying the students' academic buoyancy that does not appear previously in resilience studies.

The five factors 5Cs are used for measuring the academic buoyancy in that confidence by high self-efficacy, coordination by high planning, and a commitment by high persistence, composure by low anxiety, and control by low, uncertain control (Martin et al., 2010, p.8).

Related previous studies

Yun et al. (2018)

This study works directly with academic buoyancy and second language instruction. The study sample is (787) college second language learners from South Korea. The academic buoyancy questionnaire of six hypothesized predictors is the study instrument. The results showed that buoyancy significantly predicted second language achievement. This result indicates the buoyancy importance in capturing the dimension of motivation in second language learning, which represents an essential factor in enhancing language learning.

Malmberg et al. (2013)

This study explores the academic buoyancy to extend the understanding of it and its factors. The study aims at investigating the academic buoyancy in English, mathematics, science, and physical education, according to the perceptions of competence, effort, and difficulty in England. The sample selected from three secondary schools in England that represented 260 students aged (11-16) years. The study instrument is a questionnaire of a seven-point Likert scale. The questions put into two sets, the first is subject-general for investigating a nonacademic subject (physical education), and the second is subject-specific for investigating three academic subjects (mathematics, science, and English). Two questionnaires presented to the students, one for subject-general and the second for subject-specific to avoid the boredom from responding to the items of repetitive nature. The results show that the students have limited ability to deal with the daily academic setbacks because of the difficulty of the school subjects.

Discussion of previous studies

The first study is the nearest to the present one since both samples are college students studying English as a second or foreign language. The results of Yun et al. (2018) support the importance of this study since the results show a clear relationship between academic buoyancy and achievement in the English language. Malmberg et al. (2013) is the second study that deals with academic buoyancy in English as a second or foreign language, though the English language here not the target in itself; It is mentioned indirectly as a subject-specific. Similar to Yun et al. (2018), the results show that the students are not buoyant in subject-specific, which is one of them the English language. However, the sample of Malmberg et al. (2013) is secondary school students;

this indicates that academic buoyancy is a new problem for students and not limited to the college students or the English language. This result is also supported by Collie et al. (2015) that proved the positive relationship between the secondary school students' academic buoyancy and their achievement in a standardized test.

Methodology

Participants

A sample is selected randomly as the second grad student of the English Department College of Education for Women\ the University of Baghdad (100) female students aged 21-22 years.

Instruments

The academic buoyancy scale for accounting students (ABS-AS) (Piosang, 2016) is adopted and modified to measure the EFL students' academic buoyancy in reading and listening skills. Each scale consists of 50 items distributed according to the five predictors (ten items for each): Self-efficacy, control, academic engagement, low anxiety, and the teacher-student relationship. The response format determined according to the (3-point Likert scale). The alternatives are (agree, neither agree nor disagree, and disagree). The response scale is (3, 2, and 1), respectively, for the items of the three predictors: self-efficacy, academic engagement, and the teacher-student relationship. Whereas (1, 2, and 3) for the items of the two predictors: control (uncertain control –negative), and low anxiety (anxiety- negative). The items are analyzed to find out the validity and reliability of the two scales.

The two scales are presented to experts to achieve face validity. The experts have given available recommendations to put the scales in their final version. The construct validity ensured through two ways: First, the internal consistency of the items by finding out the correlation factor of each field with the total score of the scale. Second, the discrimination power of each item. The person correlation coefficient for each of the five predictors with the total score of each scale shows that the two scales are valid, see tables (1 and 2).

Table (1). The correlation of each predictor with the total score of the reading scale

Items	Predictors	Person correlation
1. I believe I can do my reading work well if I exert extra effort.	Self-efficacy	0.613
2. I believe I can submit very well in the reading exam if I review it ahead of time.		
3. I believe I can participate well in reading aloud if I will read the lesson in advance.		
4. I believe I can respond to questions about a reading passage when the deadline gets nearer.		
5. I believe I can very well answer the main idea questions.		
6. I believe I can handle well the pressure brought by recognizing the organization of ideas.		
7. I believe I can develop a deep interest in the activities of finding out the stated or unstated details.		
8. I am confident that I could determine the meaning efficiently from word parts when I asked suddenly.		
9. It is easy for me to determine where specific information found and how to accomplish my goals.		
10. I know I can determine where specific information found when confronted with a problem.		
11. I am unsure about my answers of implied detail questions.	Control	0.826
12. I am sometimes unsure when using context to determine the meanings of difficult words in reading activities alone.		
13. I am usually unsure about determining where specific information found when I read a passage.		

14. I am often uncertain as to how to accomplish my reading comprehension assignments in determining the tone or purpose of the passage.		
15. I am usually uncertain whether I will pass the reading examinations.		
16. I doubt if my answers about finding the pronoun referents in a passage are accurate.		
17. I am not sure if my reviewing of reading skills would help me pass my examinations.		
18. I am uncertain if my answers in the reading exam are correct.		
19. I am unsure of how I can do well in reading comprehension.		
20. I am unsure of how I can avoid doing poorly in reading comprehension.		
21. I keep going over reading the passage when I cannot understand it until I do.	Academic Engagement	0.840
22. I ask the teacher about the topic of the passage when I fail to understand it.		
23. I get involved in collaborative work to answer reading passage questions in class.		
24. I volunteer to lead a group in reading activities.		
25. I intend to complete the reading course on time.		
26. I intend to complete the reading course with honors.		
27. Learning reading in college is essential to me.		
28. I value the fact that I have the chance to attend the reading course.		
29. I enjoy being a reading course student.		
30. I enjoy learning to read at college.		
31. I feel worried when reading examinations are coming.	Low anxiety	0.821

32. I feel worried when I get low marks in reading.		
33. I feel worried when there are many reading assignments.		
34. I feel worried when I find the reading activity difficult.		
35. I feel worried when I have not prepared enough for my reading exams.		
36. I feel nervous whenever reading exams are coming.		
37. I am nervous when I am taking the reading exams.		
38. I feel nervous whenever I asked to read aloud in the class.		
39. I feel nervous whenever I asked to present my reading assignment in front of the class.		
40. I feel nervous whenever I assigned to lead a group for a reading task.		
41. In reading class, I get along well with my teacher.	Teacher-student relationship	0.719
42. In reading class, my teacher treats me with respect.		
43. I have high respect for my reading teacher.		
44. My reading teacher values his/her relationship with us.		
45. My reading teacher interacts with us, even outside the classroom.		
46. My reading teacher is a good friend outside the classroom.		
47. My reading teacher is concerned with the personal circumstances of his/her students.		
48. I can talk to my reading teacher about my academic problems.		
49. My reading teacher respects my personal beliefs.		
50. My reading teacher values my opinions on issues discussed in and out of the class.		

Table (2). The correlation of each predictor with the total score of the listening scale

Items	Predictors	Person correlation
1. I believe I can do my listening work well if I exert extra effort.	Self-efficacy	0.832
2. I believe I can do very well in the listening exam if I will review ahead of time.		
3. I believe I can participate well in listening activity if I listen to the lesson in advance.		
4. I believe I can respond to the listening questions when the deadline gets nearer.		
5. I believe I can very well anticipate the topic before listening.		
6. I believe I can handle well the pressure brought by trying to avoid similar sounds.		
7. I believe I can develop a deeper interest in the activities of listening for direct and indirect details.		
8. I am confident that I could determine the topic efficiently if I asked suddenly.		
9. It is easy for me to determine the topic and accomplish my goals.		
10. I know I can understand the casual conversation when confronted with a problem.		
11. I am unsure about my answers in listening for idioms.	Control	0.846
12. I am sometimes unsure when concluding who, what, and where listening activities alone.		
13. I am usually unsure about my answer when listening for negative expressions.		
14. I am often uncertain as to how to accomplish my listening assignments about choosing answers with synonyms.		

15. I am usually uncertain whether I will pass the listening examinations.		
16. I doubt if my answers about listening for orders are accurate.		
17. I am not sure if my reviewing of listening skills would help me pass the listening examinations.		
18. I am uncertain if my answers in listening exams are correct.		
19. I am unsure how I can do well in listening comprehension.		
20. I am unsure how I can avoid doing poorly in listening.		
21. I keep going over listening when I cannot catch the meaning until I do.	Academic Engagement	0.921
22. I ask the teacher about the topic of what I listen to when I fail to understand it.		
23. I get involved in collaborative work of listening activities in class.		
24. I volunteer to lead a group in listening activities.		
25. I intend to complete the listening course on time.		
26. I intend to complete the listening course with honors.		
27. Learning a listening skill in college is essential to me.		
28. I value the fact that I have the chance to attend a listening course.		
29. I enjoy being a listening course student.		
30. I enjoy listening skill course in college.		
31. I feel worried when the examinations of listening are coming.	Low anxiety	0.895
32. I feel worried when I get low marks in listening skill exams.		

33. I worry a lot when there are a lot of listening assignments.		
34. I feel worried when I find the listening activity difficult.		
35. I feel worried when I have not prepared enough for my listening exams.		
36. I feel nervous whenever listening skill exams are coming.		
37. I am nervous when I am taking the listening exams.		
38. I feel nervous whenever I asked to respond to listening questions in class.		
39. I feel nervous whenever I asked to present my listening assignment in front of the class.		
40. I feel nervous whenever I assigned to lead a group for a listening task.		
41. In the listening class, I get along well with my teacher.	Teacher-student relationship Predictors	0.860
42. In the listening class, my teacher treats me with respect.		
43. I have high respect for my listening teacher.		
44. My listening teacher values his/her relationship with us.		
45. My listening teacher interacts with us, even outside the classroom.		
46. My listening teacher is a good friend outside the classroom.		
47. My listening teacher is concerned with the personal circumstances of his/her students.		
48. I can talk to my listening teacher about my academic problems.		
49. My listening teacher respects my personal beliefs.		
50. My listening teacher values my opinions on issues discussed in and out of the class.		

Furthermore, the items discrimination show that all the items are significant at (0.05) and degree of freedom (52), except the items number (3, 11, and 46) in the reading academic buoyancy scale, since the computed T-value (1.10, 1.72 and 0.81) respectively are lower than the tabulated T-value (1.98). Therefore, these items are excluded from the final version of the scale. Thus, the total items in the final version of the reading academic buoyancy scale are 47 (9 for self-efficacy, 9 for control, and 9 for students-teacher relationship); see table (3) whereas all the items of listening academic buoyancy scale are discriminated against, as shown in table (4).

Table (3). Discrimination power of reading academic buoyancy scale

Item	Mean higher (27)	Mean lower (27)	Std. Deviation higher (27)	Std. Deviation lower (27)	T-value	item	Mean higher (27)	Mean lower (27)	Std. Deviation higher (27)	Std. Deviation lower (27)	T-value
1.	2.85	2.11	0.36	0.32	7.96	26.	2.78	2.26	0.42	0.45	4.38
2.	2.67	2.26	0.48	0.45	3.23	27.	2.78	2.26	0.42	0.66	3.45
3.	2.67	2.52	0.48	0.51	1.10	28.	2.78	2.15	0.42	0.60	4.45
4.	2.56	2.00	0.51	0.00	5.7	29.	2.89	2.33	0.32	0.48	5
5.	2.89	2.3	0.32	0.78	3.67	30.	2.52	2.26	0.51	0.45	1.99
6.	2.56	2.07	0.51	0.27	4.37	31.	2.19	1.63	0.74	0.49	3.26
7.	2.74	2.15	0.45	0.61	4.11	32.	2.22	1.63	0.42	0.49	4.74
8.	2.41	2.04	0.51	0.44	2.9	33.	2.48	1.15	0.51	0.36	11.09

9.	2.59	2.22	0.51	0.64	2.37	34.	2.22	1.33	0.42	0.48	7.21
10.	2.85	2.11	0.36	0.32	7.96	35.	2.19	1.41	0.74	0.50	4.54
11.	2.07	1.81	0.68	0.4	1.72	36.	2.37	1.56	0.49	0.51	5.99
12.	2.33	1.59	0.48	0.50	5.55	37.	2.59	1.3	0.50	0.47	9.84
13.	2.63	1.59	0.49	0.50	7.68	38.	2.67	1.26	0.48	0.45	11.15
14.	2.41	1.74	0.50	0.45	5.16	39.	2.63	1.37	0.49	0.49	9.40
15.	2.74	1.81	0.45	0.4	8.06	40.	2.63	1.56	0.49	0.51	7.90
16.	2.59	1.81	0.50	0.4	6.33	41.	2.93	2.00	0.27	0.00	18.2
17.	2.26	1.63	0.45	0.49	4.92	42.	2.85	2.22	0.36	0.42	5.87
18.	2.37	1.78	0.49	0.42	4.74	43.	2.52	2.89	0.51	0.32	3.19
19.	2.41	1.26	0.69	0.45	7.23	44.	2.78	2.26	0.42	0.45	4.38
20.	2.74	1.59	0.45	0.50	8.89	45.	2.44	2.18	0.51	0.4	2.09
21.	2.70	2.11	0.47	0.32	5.45	46.	2.44	2.56	0.51	0.51	0.81
22.	2.70	2.11	0.47	0.32	5.45	47.	2.74	2.26	0.45	0.45	3.96
23.	2.74	1.96	0.45	0.44	6.47	48.	2.63	2.19	0.49	0.4	3.66

24.	2.85	2.15	0.36	0.60	5.21	49.	2.89	2.26	0.32	0.45	5.95
25.	2.70	2.37	0.47	0.49	2.56	50.	2.89	2.15	0.32	0.36	7.96

Table (4). Discrimination power of academic listening buoyancy scale

Mean higher (27)	Mean lower (27)	Std. Deviation higher (27)	Std. Deviation lower (27)	T-value	item	Mean higher (27)	Mean lower (27)	Std. Deviation higher (27)	Std. Deviation lower (27)	T-value
2.07	1.81	0.83	0.4	1.47	26.	2.44	1.44	0.51	0.51	7.26
2.33	1.56	0.48	0.51	5.79	27.	2.26	1.3	0.45	0.47	7.76
2.37	1.78	0.56	0.42	4.36	28.	2.41	1.41	0.50	0.50	7.34
2.33	1.85	0.55	0.36	3.78	29.	2.56	1.04	0.50	0.19	14.57
2.37	1.22	0.74	0.42	6.99	30.	2.29	1.59	0.47	0.50	5.35
2.22	1.22	0.51	0.42	7.87	31.	1.93	1.00	0.55	0.00	8.76
2.44	1.63	0.50	0.49	5.99	32.	1.89	1.18	0.42	0.4	6.30
2.33	1.52	0.73	0.51	4.74	33.	1.74	1.00	0.81	0.00	4.73
2.48	1.37	0.58	0.49	7.59	34.	1.70	1.07	0.72	0.27	4.24
2.37	1.37	0.49	0.49	7.47	35.	1.89	1.00	0.80	0.00	5.77
1.89	1.00	0.64	0.00	7.21	36.	1.56	1.00	0.7	0.00	4.14
2.15	1.00	0.77	0.00	7.75	37.	2.00	1.26	0.68	0.45	4.73
1.81	1.07	0.96	0.27	3.85	38.	1.89	1.00	0.80	0.00	5.77
1.93	1.26	0.47	0.45	5.32	39.	1.67	1.00	0.73	0.00	4.72
1.85	1.52	0.60	0.51	2.19	40.	1.74	1.00	0.66	0.00	5.87
1.56	1.00	0.58	0.00	5.00	41.	2.37	2.00	0.49	0.00	3.91
2.07	1.11	0.62	0.32	7.21	42.	2.62	2.00	0.49	0.00	6.65

2.00	1.55	0.55	0.50	3.08	43.	2.67	2.11	0.48	0.32	5.00
2.18	1.22	0.68	0.42	6.24	44.	2.85	1.89	0.36	0.51	8.04
1.96	1.11	0.59	0.32	6.62	45.	2.33	2.00	0.48	0.00	3.61
2.29	2.00	0.47	0.00	3.31	46.	2.81	2.11	0.4	0.32	7.18
2.59	1.59	0.50	0.50	7.34	47.	2.48	2.00	0.51	0.00	4.91
2.59	1.37	0.50	0.49	9.05	48.	2.59	1.81	0.50	0.4	6.33
2.40	1.37	0.50	0.49	7.68	49.	2.62	1.81	0.49	0.4	6.70
2.40	1.37	0.50	0.49	7.68	50.	2.59	2.00	0.50	0.00	6.15

The reliability ensured by using the formula of alpha-Cronbach (Alsaadi &Hatim, 2016:382). The alpha-Cronbach value is (0.966), which shows that the scale listening academic buoyancy is reliable. The value of the test-retest (0.998) considered as an acceptable value for reliability. The academic reading buoyancy scale is also reliable in that the alpha-Cronbach value is (0.933), and the test-retest coefficient correlation is (994).

Procedure

The two questionnaires are submitted to the sample after informing them about the purpose of the study. The students informed that the purpose of the two questionnaires is to assess their ability to face the setbacks and difficulties in studying reading and listening skills—the instructions about the questionnaires written above the items. Furthermore, the instructions are clarified verbally, and the students informed that they could respond to the questionnaires voluntarily. The time of responding to the two questionnaires is one hour.

Results

The responses of the students are analyzed by using the SPSS version (0.17) to investigate the study aims. One sample t-test formula is used to find out: first, the students' reading academic buoyancy, second, their academic listening buoyancy. The result of the reading scale shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the sample mean (106.29) and hypothetical mean (94) in favor of the sample mean since the hypothetical mean (9.41) at $P<0.05$

and DF. =99. This result indicates that the students have academic buoyancy in reading, see table (5).

Table (5). One sample t-test of the academic reading buoyancy

group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Hypothetical mean	Computed T-value	Tabulated T-value	DF.	Sig. 0.05
reading	100	106.29	13.45	94	9.14	1.98	99	Sig.

On the other hand, the result of the listening academic buoyancy scale shows that there is a significant difference between the sample mean (88.55) and hypothetical mean (100) in favor of the test- value, as the t- value is (6.55) at P<0.05 and DF. 99. Which indicates that the students have not academic buoyancy in listening skill, see table (6).

Table (6). One sample t-test of the academic listening buoyancy

group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Hypothetical mean	Computed T-value	Tabulated T-value	DF.	Sig. 0.05
listening	100	88.55	17.49	100	6.55	1.98	99	Sig.

The paired samples t-test is used to find out the differences between the students' academic buoyancy in reading and in listening. The result ensured that there is a significant difference between the two in favor of the students' reading academic buoyancy, since the computed t- value (7.19) is higher than the tabulated value(1.98) at P<0.05 and DF. 99, see table (7).

Table (7). Paired samples t-test to find out the differences between the reading and listening academic buoyancy.

groups	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Computed t-test	Tabulated t-test	DF.	Sig. 0.05
reading	106.29	100	13.45	7.19	1,98	99	significant
listening	88.55	100	17.49				

The differences between the five predictors of each scale are investigated by using ANOVA to achieve the fourth and the fifth aims. The results show that there are significant differences among the five predictors of each scale since the F-computed value of the reading scale is (50.53) and of the listening scale is (80.35). Both of them are higher than the tabulated F- value (2.39) at P< 0.05 and DF. 4, 495, see table (8).

Table (8). ANOVA to find out the differences among the five predictors of reading academic buoyancy scale and those of listening academic buoyancy scale.

Academic buoyancy	Source	df	Mean Square	Computed- F	Tabulated F	Sig. 0.05
Reading	Between groups	4	619.09	50.52	2.39	Significant
	Within groups	495	12.25			
Listening	Between groups	4	1313.97	80.35		Significant
	Within groups	495	16.35			

Scheffe post hoc comparisons among the five predictors of the academic reading buoyancy show that the means of predictors are (18.57, 19.36, 21.13, 22.43, and 24.80) for control, low anxiety, self-efficacy, teacher-student relationship, and academic engagement respectively, see table (9).

Table (9). Scheffe Post Hoc comparisons of the five predictors in the reading academic buoyancy scale

predictors	N	Subset		
		1	2	3
control	100	18.57		
Low anxiety	100	19.36		
Self- efficacy	100		21.13	
Teacher- student relationship	100		22.43	
Academic Engagement	100			24.80

In listening (13.19, 15.56, 18.44, 18.52, and 22.84) for the low anxiety, control, self-efficacy, academic engagement, and the teacher-student relationship respectively, see table (10).

Table (10). Scheffe Post Hoc comparisons of the five predictors in the listening academic buoyancy scale

predictors	N	Subset			
		1	2	3	4
Low anxiety	100	13.19			
control	100		15.56		
Self- efficacy	100			18.44	
Academic Engagement	100			18.52	
Teacher- students relationship	100				22.84

Discussions

The result of the first aim shows that the students can cope with the daily reading setbacks and challenges. This result is an acceptable one since the students are selected from the second year of the English department who spend a good deal of time in reading. They practice the reading skill not only in reading comprehension but also in other subjects such as short stories, fiction, poetry, drama, principles of teaching English language, Adults learning. All these subjects provide them with continuous training in reading skills, especially in short stories and fiction (Shehu, 2015, p.94). On the other hand, the result of the second aim shows the students lucking of the academic buoyancy in listening. This result gives the red light concerning this neglected "vital" skill. The use of technology in teaching may enhance the development of this skill directly by providing students with a native speaker. Moreover, technology has proved its influence on students' positive attitudes towards learning (Saalh & Srayisah, 2017.p.98). (Saalh & Srayisah, n.d.)

Yıldırım & Yıldırım (2016, p.2104) say that "use techniques that are intrinsically motivating, utilize authentic language and contexts, carefully consider the form of listeners'

responses, encourage the development of listening strategies, include both bottom-up and top-down listening techniques."

Despite the students' being buoyant in reading and not buoyant in listening, still, there is a need for investigating the extent of the significant difference between the two. The result of comparing the reading and listening academic buoyancy shows that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of reading, which indicates that the students have real problems in listening. The post hoc comparisons provide deep insight concerning the differences among the five predictors of academic buoyancy that consequently enlighten the way towards diagnosing the problem exactly that needs to be solved. Despite that, the students are buoyant in reading and not buoyant in listening; still, there are significant differences among each of the five predictors of the two scales. The post hoc comparisons of the academic reading buoyancy scale explain the directions of the differences. The control and low anxiety (18.57, 19.36) have the lowest means, these predictors of negative directions indicate that the high uncertain control and high anxiety are the sources of differences. From comparing these results with the five predictors of listening academic buoyancy scale, it is clear that still the control and low anxiety are the sources of differences. However, in the later comparisons, the mean of low anxiety is lower than the control mean. Self- efficacy maintains its place as a neutral one for both comparisons. Since the EFL students in this study will be EFL teachers after graduation, their stability in self-efficacy is a good indicator to be good EFL teachers (Mahdi, 2009. P. 384). The students- teacher relationship get nearly the same mean for both scales (22.43, 22.84) reading and listening respectively. However, the mean of the teacher-student relationship in the reading scale is lower than the mean of academic engagement (24.80). Comparing with the listening academic buoyancy scale, the mean of the teacher-student relationship is higher than the mean of the academic engagement (18.52). The consistency of the teacher students- relationship in mean scores and the self-efficacy in its order among the five predictors in both scales indicate that the anxiety and the uncertain control is the director of the students' academic engagement.

Conclusions

From all the above, it could be concluded that the students have academic buoyancy in reading since they still have weak points that need to overcome—these weaknesses represented

by anxiety and uncertain control. The teachers need to use different strategies and methods for enabling the students to be buoyant in reading. The similar weaknesses are identified in students' listening buoyancy concerning the anxiety and uncertain control. Though these two predictors are more acute in academic listening buoyancy, the students face more challenges and setbacks represented in the results of other predictors such as self- efficacy and academic engagement. The teacher-student relationship is the only acceptable predictor as students buoyant in listening. The five predictors of listening academic buoyancy scale indicate that students are not buoyant in listening. This study share with (Comerforda et al., 2015, p.99) in that both of them provide valid and reliable scales as tools for reflective teaching. The present one presents two academic scales for two receptive English language skills (reading and listening), not only for diagnosing the students as buoyant or not but also for teachers to reflect on their strategies that could be effective for overcome the students' daily setbacks and challenges in learning the English language. Furthermore, these two scales may pave the way for measuring the academic buoyancy of the productive skills (writing and speaking) and even the students' academic buoyancy in studying vocabulary, structure, and literature genres. Finally, this descriptive study is the first step towards more severe steps represented in experimental studies for presenting real solutions to the problem.

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Asian EFL Journal Research Articles. Vol. 27 Issue No. 4.4 October 2020

Designing an Efficient Oral English Test Through a Comparative Analysis of three Spoken English Test Modes in China, a Literature Review

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Abstract

This study provides a literature review about designing an efficient oral English test through a comparative analysis of three spoken English test modes in china, the article will introduce the form and content of the oral part of the three popular English tests (CET-4/6, TOEFL, and IELTS) in China. Due to the oral part of the three English ability tests respectively for the attention in our study, in the form of three types of oral test mode (the man-machine dialogue, the examiner/examinee conversation, and student group discussion), this study draws lessons from the examination forms. Secondly, in this study, three main relevant theories that makeup of the framework of the study will be introduced. Based on the three main theories, this study will focus on several key contents, to review relevant domestic and foreign research literature. Then, it will review the advantages and disadvantages of the three different modes of oral test, as well as the preference to the oral test modes of the candidates.

***Keywords**; Design oral test, comparative analysis, Chinese EFL students, literature review*

Introduction

Three mainstream oral English tests

Among various kinds of oral English tests, the three most influential and most registered tests are CET-4 and CET-6, TOEFL, and IELTS. Among them, CET-4 and CET-6 oral English tests are developed and managed by the Chinese education department. The latter two are the internationally popular English language proficiency tests, respectively organized by ETS, British Council, Cambridge University examination board, and education international development agency of Australia. The following paragraphs will introduce the three kinds of oral English tests in detail and give a brief overview of their development.

College English Test Band 4 and Band 6

More than 5.08 million people took the CET-4 and CET-6 in December 2018 (Sina education, 2018). However, such a large national test did not include a test of spoken English when it was first set up. It was not until May 2000 that the national college English test band 4 and band 6 was gradually introduced into the oral English test and gradually promoted throughout the country (Chen Jiliang, Tao Wei, 2001). According to a notice issued on the official website of CET-4 and CET-6 (2005), only those with a score of 500 (full score 710) or above in the written test of cet-4 or above and 425 (full score 710) or above in the written test of CET-6 are eligible to register for the CET-6 oral test. In terms of oral test mode, the examiners/examinees and examinee-examinee face-to-face dialogue mode or examinee-examinee and examinee-computer dialogue mode are adopted according to the test site conditions. In order to facilitate the reader's understanding, table 2.1 summarizes the two oral test modes, test forms, and test contents of CET-4 and CET-6.

Table 1. Form and content of CET-4 and CET-6

Examiner/examinee/examinee – examinee interview	Examinee-examinee/examinee-computer dialogue
Number: 2 examiners, 3-4 examinees	Number: 2 examinees
Part 1: the examiner asks questions and the examinee answers.	Part 1: the examinee self-introduction; The computer asks questions and the examinee answers.
Part 2: group discussion, separate summary.	Part 2: group discussion.
Part 3: Questions from the examiner and answers from the examinee.	Part 3: separate summary; questions from the computer and answers from examinees.

TOEFL Oral Test

TOEFL Test, known as Test of English as a Foreign Language, is designed and organized by Educational Testing Service (ETS), a global Test of English Language skills for non-native English speakers (ETS official website). Its main purpose is to test whether English learners can achieve academic activities in an English-speaking environment, and it is widely recognized by teaching institutions around the world with English as the main teaching language. More than 90% of the current TOEFL test is IBT (internet-based test), also known as the reformed "new TOEFL". Compared with the old TOEFL, the new TOEFL IBT includes the test of oral English, which extends the focus of the test from listening and reading to listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reforms have made the TOEFL IBT more comprehensive in assessing English skills. The TOEFL speaking test is based on examinee-computer conversation. It is divided into six separate test questions, which are designed to assess candidates' presentation, information synthesis, and debate skills. Table 2.2 summarizes the test type, preparation time, and response time of the TOEFL interview.

Table 2. TOEFL test type, preparation time and response time

Topic	Time to prepare	Response time
1. Give a speech on a specific topic	15 seconds	45 seconds
2. Choose one of the two options provided and state your reasons for the given topic	15 seconds	45 seconds
3. Read an announcement and listen to a recording in 45 seconds and answer questions	30 seconds	60 seconds
4. Read an academic passage and listen to a lecture in 45 seconds before answering questions	30 seconds	60 seconds
5. Listen to a conversation and choose between two solutions to the problem in the conversation and state your reasons	20 seconds	60 seconds
6. Listen to a 1-2-minute lecture and answer questions	20 seconds	60 seconds

In general, the TOEFL speaking test is a "human-computer conversational" test of spoken English, but it also measures reading ability, note-taking ability, and impromptu speech.

IELTS Speaking Test

IELTS, also known as the International English Language Testing System, is a test designed, developed, and organized by the British Council, the University of Cambridge examinations board, and the Australian agency for education and international development. Different from TOEFL, IELTS offers two different tests: academic and general training. Apart from the different scoring systems from TOEFL (TOEFL single full score of 30, IELTS single full score of 9), the biggest difference between IELTS and TOEFL is the speaking test. Different from the human-computer dialogue mode of the TOEFL speaking test, the IELTS speaking test is conducted by means of examiner/examinee one-in-person dialogue. The main questions are divided into three sections. The first part is the question and answer of the examiner/examinee. In the second part, the examiner randomly distributed to the examinee a title card, there is a title card given topic, and the key points students must be covered. Candidates are given 1 minute to prepare and they are required to complete a 2 minutes personal

statement. Afterward, the examiner will ask one or two questions about the candidate's statement. This section lasts 3 to 4 minutes. The third part is for examiners and examinees around the topic of the second part of a more in-depth, broad, and abstract discussion. The duration of this part is 4-5 minutes (IELTS, 2014). The whole process of the examination is recorded for later grading.

Theoretical Framework

The SLA theoretical framework is centered effective methods that allow the second language acquisition and mastery. The study studies different theoretical approaches to second language acquisition among learners in China to determine factors that affect second language acquisition and how different evaluation methods influences the performance of the learners in different types of tests aimed at rating the acquirers' level of competence in L2. Various variables impact the acquisition of second language, and several language acquisition theories have been developed to understand the process of learning foreign language and factors that determine second language mastery. Krashen's theory, sociocultural theory (SCT), and Behaviorist theory are one of them. So as to completely inspect and understand the second language acquisition phenomenon, it is essential to investigate the significance and scope of both second language acquisition (SLA) and the three second language acquisition theories. The literature review will elaborate on the main content of the three theories and their applications in this research on their contribution in second language acquisition and the foundation for different language testing methods.

Second Language Acquisition Theory

Krashen's theory of second language acquisition is mainly composed of five hypotheses. That is, the acquisition-learning Hypothesis, The Monitor Hypothesis, The Input Hypothesis, The Affective Filter Hypothesis, and The Natural Order Hypothesis. They are regarded as a kind of theoretical model with strong practicability and high application value. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis: The starting point and core of Krashen's theory is his understanding of the distinction between "acquisition" and "learning" and their respective roles in the formation of the learner's second language ability. (Jin 1997). The Monitor Hypothesis; Krashen believes that the language acquisition system, namely the subconscious language knowledge, is the real language ability. The Input Hypothesis; This hypothesis attempts to explain how language learners acquire language rules and transition from one language

level to another. This is his famous "I +1" formula. The Affective Filter Hypothesis: This hypothesis tries to explain the influence of psychological or emotional factors on second language acquisition. The process of second language acquisition is also influenced by many emotional factors. They filter language input and thus determine how much input the learner receives, which is exactly what the "affective filtering hypothesis" states. These factors are as follows: 1) Motivation. Whether the learning motivation of students is clear or not directly affects their learning effect. 2) Self-confident. Students, who are extroverted and willing to put themselves in an unfamiliar learning environment, and feel good about themselves, make faster progress in learning. 3) Anxiety. In the second language or foreign language learning, people with less anxiety tend to get more language input. This study will focus on analyzing the affective filtering hypothesis in the second language acquisition theory, and analyze the influence of examinees with different purposes, different personalities, and different anxiety levels on their examination performance. The Natural Order Hypothesis: The Krashen hypothesis assumed that people's knowledge of the structure of language was predictable in a predictable order (Lightbown, Spada 1998). In this study, the author will focus on the impact of the effective filtering hypothesis on candidate performance. This study explores the impact of test-takers' performance on their oral English, as well as other factors that interfere with their performance in the test room, through qualitative research methods such as post-test recall and one-to-one survey. Analyze the potential reasons that affect the effectiveness of the oral test. According to the theory of second language acquisition, anxiety in the examination room will affect the students' performance on the spot. In other words, the anxiety discussed in this study can be further accurately expressed as the similarities and differences of examination anxiety experienced by Chinese college students' English learners in three different modes of oral English examination.

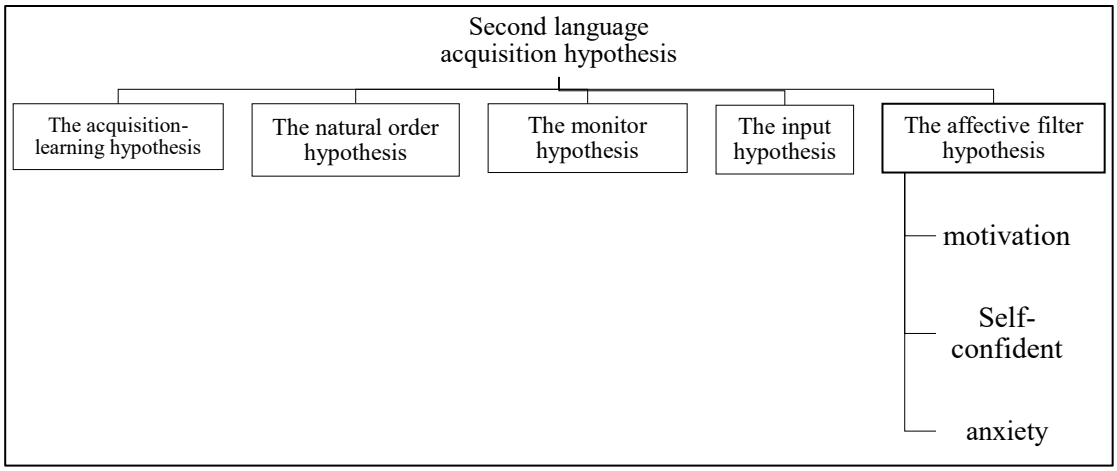

Figure 1 Second Language Acquisition Hypothesis

Socio-Cultural Theory

The Sociocultural theory of second language acquisition is founded on the theoretical concepts from the works of Vygotsky, Wertsch, and Leontev. These theorists of the twentieth century challenged the annalists' theories that disregarded the significance of interaction in the acquisition of language. The SCT theorists are often referred to as constructivists or interactionists. The SCT focuses on interpersonal interactions, cultural-historical interactions, and other social factors as critical contributors to human development (Tudge & Scrimsher, 2003, Razak et al, 2018). The constructivist theory views language acquisition as another form of human development that follows a similar roadmap. Therefore, the constructivists believe that human development processes and cognitive growth are stimulated by the interactions between individuals in their environment. Social interactions in SCT are invaluable to human development and the construction of knowledge among individuals. The development of internal representation is stimulated by mental operations and the ability to internalize actions that occur in social interactions. Such representations include language which is a very critical tool that can only be developed from covert, private, to social speech.

SCT key constructs

Mediated Learning

The idea of the centrality of language as an artifact for mediation is emphasized in the sociocultural

theory of second language acquisition. Mediation, in this view, is defined as the process for deployment of culturally built artifacts, ideologies, and practices that allows humans to control and transform their environment, their social interactions, and mental activities (Lantolf, 2006). L2 also functions as both an artifact of attention and a tool for mediated learning. There are different types of artifacts that mediate the acquisition of a second language including, concrete, symbolic, internal, and external (Razak et al, 2019).

According to SCT, language acquisition is dialogic and learning occurs in active interaction more than being a product of socio-cultural interactions. Scaffolding is considered to be pivotal in the dialogic process whereby the teacher assists the acquirer to perform functions that he or she cannot perform independently. During the same acquisition process, a collaborative dialogue is employed to help in knowledge building and problem-solving. Even though the pedagogic interaction is curricular goal guided, the learning process is conversational (Alakrash & Bustan, 2020). Additionally, private speech is adopted as the acquirer as a means of self-mediating or language practice. These private speeches are never intended for the listener but the speaker uses for mental rehearsals and vicarious responses. Studies show that private talks/speeches have the capacity to support second language acquisition.

Zone of Proximal Development

According to the classical Vygotskian perspective, ZPD is viewed as the variation between the actual level of learners' development and the higher level of potential development. However, the Neo-Vygotskian perspective tends to avoid viewing ZPD as a relatively fixed dimension of a learner's attribute but rather flexible, open-ended but task-specific, and thus emergent. Therefore, ZPD is an activity, not a place.

Internalization

Internalization is referred to as the movement of the acquirer from object regulation to self-regulation. Object regulation in this context refers to all other regulations that involve external assistance other than self-regulation. Self-regulation, in SCT, is achieved through the interactive process with others. Imitation is regarded as a creative and transformative activity that fosters self-regulation.

Learning and Development

SCT relates learning to assisted performance. On the other hand, development results from the internalization of assisted performance through self-regulated mental activities. Therefore, when learning is properly organized, mental development is inevitable.

Activity Theory

Leont'ev (1981) developed the Activity theory that proposes that human behavior and development results from interactions due to the integration of socio-cultural and biological motives. The specific motives are derived from an activity system that includes artifacts and objects of learning which influence a wider activity system in the sociocultural context.

Key issues in SLA

According to Vygotsky, a language is a cultural tool for the mediation of logical thought, intentional memory, voluntary attention, planning, and problem-solving which is continually refined and developed through social action and interaction. Rather than focusing on the formal properties of a language, SCT tends to concentrate on its semantic properties. Consequently, language acquisition is approached as a social-mediated process that takes place due to the interactions between the acquirer and the socio-cultural environment. The learners are expected to actively participate in meaning-making and problem-solving activities during the learning processes. In relation to second language acquisition, SCT takes a different perspective in addressing some of the key issues in second language acquisition processes.

Errors

Normally, errors in SLA are decoded as interlanguage development indicators involving mental processes. However, in SCT, SLA errors are attributed to self-regulation struggles when tasked with demanding tasks (Lantolf, 2000). Therefore, errors in SCT are not translated to knowledge deficiencies but rather the nature of the struggle in the specific activity that they have been tasked with or are engaged with.

Acquisition orders and sequences

In Krashen's theory, second language acquisition is predictable because it follows a formal set of rules and natural order. While the acquisition process explicitly takes place in the acquirer's head., triggered by exposure to comprehensible input, and driven by LAD. Conversely, Vygotsky asserts that language acquisition is active within social interaction while language development is not predictable since it is revolutionary (Scrimsher and Tudge, 2003). Even though SCT acknowledges the inherent formal system of language in terms of priority grammar, it believes more in emergent systems and flexibility shaped by socio-cultural interactions. Therefore, SCT challenges the concept of universal order and acquisition of language since the learners' experiences vary subject to sociocultural factors.

L1 transfer

SCT is more concerned with the ability of the acquirer to mediate thinking by making use of L2 while focusing more on meaning than the form, unlike the mainstream SLA that approach L1 in terms of how it affects the inter-language development.

Implicit and explicit L2 knowledge

Explicit L2 knowledge is regarded as central from an SCT perspective of SLA. In adults, L2 learning involves the systematic internalization of grammatical concepts that eventually become automatized. However, it is still uncertain whether L2 development in young children follows a similar pattern.

Motivation

SCT treats motivation as a learning mediation tool that is socially constructed and reconstructed. Therefore, motivation is depicted both as a powerful support for language acquisition and a product of learning. As a result, in SCT, motivation is not treated as a stable force that is capable of predicting learners' achievements since their goals are constantly forming and reforming under individual sociocultural circumstances.

Behaviorist Learning Theory

Behaviorist learning theory approaches the phenomenon of language acquisition from the

perspective of human behavior study. Behaviorism is an elementarily anti-mentalist. The behaviorists view human abilities and skills as elements that can be acquired through learning. According to behaviorists, human beings can develop a wide range of behaviors. The acquisition of any behavior is dependent on stimulus, a response, and reinforcement. The stimulus elicits the specific behavior which triggers a response that encourages positive or negative reinforcement of the behavior in the future. In the behaviorist approach, reinforcement is a critical learning element that increases the chances of behavior to recur more often thus becoming a habit (Skinner, 1957:Moore, 2017). The application of behaviorist learning theory requires the identification of the second language acquirer as the organism and the language as verbal behavior. The stimulus in this case is the content about foreign language that is being taught to the learner. The reaction of the learner to the stimulus makes up the response while the reinforcement involves extrinsic and intrinsic factors that surround the learning environment including teacher's praises, the individual's learning objectives, and self-satisfaction.

Skinner B. F committed to studying habit formation in humans which was later related to the second language acquisition. Skinner proposed that language learning was identical to any other type of habit formation which could be strengthened through reinforcement. These habits were either observable or automatic that happen spontaneously. Watson also advanced a classical behaviorism theory that proposed the concept of habit formation through increased frequency of the stimulus (Moore, 2017). The sufficiently frequent stimulus is bound to elicit a repetitive response which with continuous practice becomes automatic. However, Skinner provided a separate account of the development of habit in his neo-behaviorism theory that emphasizes the consequences of a specific response while downplaying the significance of stimulus in the entire process. Skinner's argument was based on the idea that it was impossible to identify the specific stimulus that motivated a particular response. Therefore, the learner can readily identify with the associated consequences of a certain behavior without necessarily realizing whether the behavior was informed by imitation or reinforcement.

The behaviorists suggest that the theories of habit formation in humans can be applied to the study of language acquisition. Naturally, children are believed to acquire the L1 through imitation of the utterances that are produced by adults around them. Therefore, the behaviorists suggest that second language acquisition could be explained in a similar way. Imitation and reinforcement continue to be the main stimulus to second language learners. Skinner is a believer in the power of reinforcement in

the process of habit formation because the recurrence of behavior is contingent upon the presence of positive behavior reinforcement. However, Skinner explained that some stimuli received no response from the learners especially those which are attached to a negative experience thus leading to anxiety and fear amongst the learners. Therefore, the impact of reinforcement cannot be overstated since even the slightest boosts the effectiveness of the behavior control.

Basic principles of Behaviorist theory

1. The behaviorists' theory focuses on spoken language since oral speech is the basic medium of any language. The theory follows the order that people learn to speak before the acquire reading and writing skills. Therefore, spoken language ranks highest in the order of language learning priority.
2. Habit formation theory is central in the behaviorist approach towards both primary and secondary language acquisition. Thus, language acquisition, according to behaviorist theory, is a mechanical process with the capacity to form habits. The performance of habits is conditioned and controlled by a set of underlying schemes that foster the learning of structural grammar and the development of positive reinforcements.
3. Behaviorism is based on conditioning guided by the stimulus-response chain. The stimuli responses start from simple conditioning as they gradually grow into very complex as a result, as a learner is exposed to the stimuli and responses for longer.
4. Behaviorism perceives learning as a consequence of reinforcement that results in the establishment of habits. The nature of the reinforcement is very critical to the learning process. Positive reinforcement is what is referred to as a reward while otherwise is a punishment. The formation of a habit, language acquisition, in this case, is established after recurrent responses to stimuli that yield appropriate conditioning. Thus, the reason why the behaviorist learning theory is also referred to as a habit-formation-by-reinforcement theory.
5. Lastly, behaviorists propose that the language acquisition process can be identical to learners due to the socially conditioned nature. Therefore, when learning occurs in a similar setting, language acquisition is expected to be the same for all participants.

According to behaviorists, the effectiveness and the pace of language acquisition are dependent on conditioning. Habituation is key to the acquisition of both first and second languages. Unlike in the SCT where errors are tolerated and viewed as an essential struggle in the second language acquisition process, behaviorists find language errors to be undesirable. Daniels (2001) likened error in SLA to sin

that needed to be avoided at all costs. When the Vygotskian theory does not use error in SLA as an indicator for lack of knowledge but an inherent step in the self-mediation struggles, the behaviorist theory asserts that error is products of non-learning and attempt to predict the way they occur so that they can be avoided. There are limited SLA discussions based on behaviorism but the theory has been considered to be one of the controversial learning theories in contemporary language teaching, assessment, and evaluation techniques. However, the concept of language learning being largely a behavioristic processing is undisputable. The theory has contributed to the development of the Audio-lingual Method, Silent Way, and Total Physical Response teaching methods.

Factors Affecting the Performance of Candidates

The candidate's performance in SLA evaluation is influenced by several factors. These may include psychological, social, environmental, and political factors. Social factors determine the level of acquisition through social interactions. The individuals' attitudes, personalities, and interests determine a lot the efficiency of language acquisition and their performance during evaluations. The main factors considered in this study shall be anxiety and nervousness, interlocutor, and learner's character.

Anxiety and Nervousness

Most of the literature on the effect of anxiety and nervousness in second language acquisition has consistently shown that anxiety interferes with the cognitive processes of language encoding, storage, and retrieval (Macintyre, 1995). Anxiety is the intense feeling of worry and fear about a situation while nervousness is unsettling feelings brought about by the stress response. Both reactions are a couple with a change in hormonal and physiological responses that assist in handling a perceived threat. Nervousness and anxiety are factors that directly affect candidates' performance. The ability to self-mediate during the evaluation is limited when an individual is unsettled. Considering that behaviorist theories have significantly contributed toward the development of most of the learning curricula, there is a very low tolerance to errors during the evaluation because it is directly attributed to the absence of knowledge (Marie, 2006; Alakrash et al., 2020). This kind of pressure often impedes the natural performance of learners during the evaluation of second language acquisition. The fear of making mistakes and embarrassment affects different learners differently depending on their motivators and personalities. While some may be motivated to work harder to master the foreign language, a

significant portion becomes nervous during the evaluation. In most instances, candidates who tend to be nervous during the exam period end up getting lower grades that if often translated to lack of knowledge acquisition (Bustan& Alakrash, 2020).

Interlocutor (examiner or candidate)

An interlocutor is one who is active in a conversion. This term is commonly used when undertaking an oral examination. Oral SLA evaluations are set differently by different examination bodies. The CET allows two examiners while the IELTS involves one on one interaction with the examinee. The interaction between the examiner and the examinee determines greatly the candidate's performance. When the examiner is the interlocutor, his or her conduct will determine how conducive the environment is going to be. In the event that the examinee is intimidated or insecure because the interlocutor may spend most of the time looking at the learner's facial expression, body language, and the physical distance between the speakers, this resulting in negative impacts on the candidate's performance. Interlocutors in IELTS often introduce the evaluation tenderly by allowing the examinee to introduce him or herself while adjusting the intensity of the interaction gradually so as not to make the examinee anxious. The ability of the examiner to create and maintain a conducive environment for an oral evaluation is significant to the performance of the examinees.

Character

Character refers to the moral qualities that are distinctive to an individual. Personality traits such for example friendliness, honesty conscientious, and attitude are important in that they enable one to consistency to be easily predicted. Attitude as a character has a great effect on candidate performance. For instance, attitude toward the subject or teacher could have a positive or negative effect on the performance of students and therefore it is reviewed that candidate academic achievement majorly lies in their attitudes towards the subjects. The behaviorists assert that second language acquisition is not different from any other habituation process (Marie, 2006). Therefore, the character of the acquirer which informs most of the behavior and responses will directly determine the impact of reinforcement. The character of the learner will determine the level of language acquisition even before the evaluation stage. Individuals with a fixed mindset may take considerably longer to master a new language as opposed to the flexible ones. Moreover, during the examinations, individuals' responses to the examiner

and the evaluation process are inseparable from the examinees' character. Some individuals are more insecure and easily scare when things seem to be tough. A few love challenges and would delight in the struggle towards mastery of the newly acquire language while others will become frustrated, embarrassed, and yield to the evaluation process. Either way, character informs an individual's actions and behavior which directly affects their spoken language abilities.

Comparation of the three modes of oral English test

The human-machine dialogue

The use of machines in SLA learning is not a new concept in the modern world of technology. Machine programs have been developed to mimic human instructors to enable efficient learning of the SLA. In his paper, Yao supports that the machine-human dialogue has become handy due to the increasing numbers of examinees against the limited number of competent examiners (Yao, 2020). Different examinees have different experiences with machine interlocutors. Common advantages and disadvantages of human-machine dialogue tests are as follows.

Advantages and Disadvantages

According to Ji, Zhang and Nisbett (2004), a good number of examinees feel more confident or less anxious in front of a computer instead of a human examiner. Low error compared to humans if coding is done properly. The evaluation is always consistent and accurate to the entire pool of examinees (Lu, Zheng and Li, 2018). Yao (2020) mentions that computer programs are enabled to think logically without emotions making a rational decision with fewer mistakes. Despite the efficiencies of computerized tests, computer user proficiency is very crucial when using machine-human dialogues and those who are less proficient in the system can be disadvantaged (Ji, Zhang and Nisbett, 2004). Technical issues are always a possibility when working with machines. Some examiners find it difficult to concentrate or deliver optimally when there is no real human to converse with during an oral test (Yanxia, 2017).

Examiner/Examinee Face to Face Dialogue

Every testing body has a unique way of approaching oral testing for SLA. IELTS choose to use one examiner while CET employs two examiners to an oral test. Each of these variables affects the

examinees differently (Yanxia, 2017). Therefore, there are both advantages and disadvantages to examiner-examinee tests.

Advantages and Disadvantages

There is the existence of effective communication as it includes facial expression (Lu, Zheng and Li, 2018). Instant feedback helps in clearing the doubts and misunderstanding that may occur during the communication process. It is confidential in that all secrets and matters of confidentiality are said to the trusted personnel privately. On the other hand, poor retention by the listener in that the speaker might be too faster for the listener's ability to absorb all the words Unsuitable for people who are a nervous or poor communicator (Yanxia, 2017).

Group Discussion

The ability of second language learners to sustain effective communication can be evaluated through focused group discussions (Yim, Clément, & MacIntyre, 2019). However, there are limited studies into this mode of SLA evaluation since, in most cases, face to face and human-machine dialogues are given more weight during oral evaluation. The common challenges in group dynamics are often used to infer the impact of group test on individual performance of SLA acquirers.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Study by Duff (2017) shows that teamwork assists in enhancing collaboration and has a scope for brainstorming thus result in getting more ideas hence leading to growth in productivity. Teamwork enables easier solvation of complex problems Group discussion enables one to improve on his or her abilities this due to generic skill advancement (Duff, 2017). Teamwork helps in improving communication skills. Loss of time and decrease efficiency due to scheduling of lots of meeting which may not be effective. The conflict between team members may arise thus hindering the teamwork

Candidate's Preference for The Three Modes of Oral Test

The computer-based test has gained popularity among SLA learners globally due to flexibility and convenience (Yao, 2020). Yanxia (2017) believes that the technological developments in AI have fostered to designing of more responsive and interactive CBT in modern times. Studies by Yanxia

explain that there are cases of anxiety among examinees taking both face-to-face oral tests and CBT. However, in China, learners prefer human-machine dialogue mode of testing because they feel safer due to privacy during the evaluation process (Lu, Zheng and Li, 2018). When learners do not worry about face-to-face embarrassment, they become more calm and able to perform optimally. There is limited literature in group discussion mode; but from the available sources, group discussions were to a small extent unfavorable to individuals who were less confident about their language mastery. Despite the inherent technical difficulties that come with CBT, a majority would rather take their chances with human-machine dialogue test than exposing themselves to actual human interactions during evaluation (Ji, Zhang and Nisbett, 2004).

Conclusion

This study firstly introduces the three oral English tests (CET-4, CET-6, TOEFL, and IELTS). It is worth noting that these three forms of oral test exactly represent the three modes of oral test that this study focuses on, namely human-computer conversation, examiner/examinee conversation, and group discussion among examinees. Then, the research results at home and abroad are reviewed and discussed several factors that affect oral test performance. Finally, the existing research results and claims are combined with the above three modes of oral English test concerned by this research to discuss, and the advantages and disadvantages of the three modes of oral English test are stated.

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A Comparative Study of Level One and Level Two Undergraduate Students' Competency in Tenses and Aspects

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Abstract

This study explores and compares whether there are differences on the competency of uses of English tenses and aspects categories among level one and leve two undergraduate students at English Language and Translation Department, College of Arabic Language and Social Studies, Qassim University. English is taught as a foreign language in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) where Arabic language is the mother tongue of students. The descriptive survey method and the SPSS analysis have been used for achieving the major objectives of this study. The data of this study was in the form of achievement test which comprises of 28 sentences representing various

English tenses and aspects. Through an analysis of level of competencies of tense and aspect of verb categories, this study made an attempt to know the comparison of competency among level one and level two of undergraduate students studying English. This paper also discusess the difficulties of tense and aspect systems which level one and level two undergraduate students find challenging while writing and speaking and hence commit errors. Furthermore, the analysis of the data that have been collected from students of level one and level two shows that there are significant differences in the competencies of tense and aspect systems among the students of the two levels as it shows that level one students' competency in the use of tenses and aspects categories is moderate with mean of (24.3), while the level of competencey of level two students is good with mean (35.25). The analysis also shows that there is statistical significant difference between level one and level two undergraduate students in the competency of tenses and aspects categories.

Keywords: *Tenses, Aspects, Competency, Difficulties, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Uses, English Language*

Introduction and Background to the Study

Teaching English as a foreign language has become one of the main concerns among teachers in schools and universities in the Arab world whereby teacher needs to be able to assert that he or she can generate activities that can make the students get the maximum benefit in teaching process and as effective as possible. Teaching Language is a complicated duty which involves skillful teaching and sufficient resources; which in turn, demands considering all affective, cognitive, and other social variables. As such, one of the most essential concerns pertaining to effective classroom teaching and knowledge-gain process is competence of students in performing well in classroom and in exams. (Shahmohammadi, 2015).

Teaching of English language begins from primary level in Saudi Arabia and it continues to higher levels. But, learners' comprehension of the language – reading, writing, speaking and listening – commonly remains very low, as pointed out by Al- Seghayer (2011). Al-Seghayer categorizes Saudi Arabia into the low proficiency (rather than the inner / high proficiency) circle country. According to Al-Seghayer, teaching of English has made a tremendous progress in Saudi

Arabia as regards expansion of teaching facilities, but for the quality of teaching and learning there still remains to be done an uphill task. He presumes that the standard of English teaching in public schools in Saudi Arabia has deteriorated beyond any hope of recovery (p. 95). To contextualize Al-Seghayer's point at this juncture, it would be appropriate to acquaint the reader with a brief history of the teaching of English in Saudi Arabia. English language had little or almost no use in Saudi Arabia prior to the discovery of oil in the country (1938); therefore, the history of teaching of English in Saudi Arabia is closely linked to the events shaping the history of Saudi Arabia after the influx of English speaking people related to the discovery of oil. The then king, Abdul Aziz, had consolidated the tribal set up of the land into a state and English language teaching had been introduced in this state in 1924, though, the major boost in the teaching of the language appeared only after the establishment of English department at King Saud University in 1957 (Al-Abed Al-Haq, & Smadi 1996; Faruk, S.M.G., 2014; Niblock, 2006).

The English language is getting progressively significant as a popular method for correspondence, especially after the ongoing advances in innovation that have brought individuals of various societies and nations more like each other (Alzeebaree and Yavuz, 2017 cited in Alzeebaree and Hasan, 2020). As a result, the need for English and, therefore, its teaching and use go parallel to the growth of the oil industry in the Kingdom, and the government's desire to bring the state's integration into the world system where English was an essential requirement. Thus, in the 1970s sweeping changes took place in Saudi Arabia towards ELT, materializing all the desired developments. For example, in 1970s "tens of thousands of Americans were employed in Saudi Arabia" (Zuhur 2011: 117), and the Ministry of Education designed a special programme for English language teachers in 1973, and "English language teaching became part of training and curriculum at almost all the institutes of higher education" (Al-Abed Al-Haq, & Smadi 1996: 459). There has been a tremendous growth of ELT in Saudi Arabia since then. However, in spite of all these efforts and initiatives, Saudi Arabia falls, as pointed out by Khalid Al-Seghayer (2011) and noted by the present researcher, and many other researchers as well, into the low proficiency (rather than the inner / high proficiency) circle country, to use B. Kachru's terminology denoting the level of English in various countries. As mentioned in abstract, English is taught as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia, but it is mandatory for all university graduates to learn the language and have an academic knowledge of English since English is the library language and the medium of

instruction for all the general and professional university courses. But, students joining universities are found lacking in the required proficiency in English. They are expected to follow the university courses in English, and even the English language training courses provided to them in the Preparatory Year to bridge the gap expect from them some basic level proficiency so that they follow the course instructions. The problem gets complicated because they join the university after the critical age of language learning in a native or near-native environment subconsciously internalizing the latent grammar of the target language.

At the university they have to make conscious efforts to learn all the aspects of the language, as well as be prepared to cope with the initial failures. Therefore, unable to cope with the stress, they either develop diffidence or suffer from psycholinguistic barriers, specially, anxiety, lack of motivation and low self-confidence in using the language (Abu-Ghararah, A. H., 1999; Alrabai, F., 2014; Aljafen, B. S., 2013; Alsaawi, A, 2015; Al-Saraj, T. M., 2014; Al-Zubeiry, H., 2012; Khan, I.A., 2011). Language learning barriers are multiple, individual-specific as well as common barriers affecting a larger learner population, but psychological barriers acquire a prominent place among them and they hinder the learning process of a larger segment of foreign language learners. Among psychological barriers too, lack of motivation, low self-confidence and anxiety affect almost all those whose language learning progress gets affected by language learning barriers. Under the given circumstances, the learners' working knowledge of English remains below standard.

A competency is the capability to apply or use a set of related knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully perform "critical work functions" or tasks in a defined work setting. Competencies often serve as the basis for skill standards that specify the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities required for success in the workplace as well as potential measurement criteria for assessing competency attainment. Competence refers to the skills, knowledge and personal characteristics or personality traits required in performing a task or responsibility. It means abilities, qualifications, willingness and capability to carry out a duty. Competence is the capability of a student to perform his duties and responsibilities in way as expected and taught to perform.

Tense and Aspect

Tenses and aspects play a major role in speaking, learning and writing language. In other words, by knowing tenses and aspects of language, students can speak and write grammatical language which is clear and understood. For doing this, students must know first what are the tenses and aspects of the language and how to use them in the appropriate way, because speaking or writing any language without knowing or taking care of tenses and aspects would be highly randomly and ungrammatical language. Students who are learning a languge must be having the knowledge of tenses and aspects and how they work in language in order to locate the time and the action of the verb as well as to convey the right idea of time and action of the verb.

Tenses and Aspects are the grammatical categories of verbs. The tense and aspectual distinctions in most languages are conveyed in the form of verbal morphology. Languages differ with regard to the specifications of tenses and aspects. In connection to the above, tense and aspect have an important role in the language. It has been believed that for studying any language, there must be clear idea about tenses and aspects of the language otherwise a student or a learner who is not having clear idea and knowledge about the tenses and aspects of the language will not be able to convey the action and the time of the verb which is the most important part in the language. Thus, his or her language will be broken language and not standerd language or up to the mark (Dahl, 1985: 6).

As mentioned by Comrie, tense is the association with location. He defines tense as "the grammaticalisation expression of location in time". In his book *Tense*, he introduces readers to the range of variations found in tense systems across the languages of the world, bringing together a rich collection of illustrative material that student and specialist alike will find invaluable. This systematic account of the data is carefully integrated with a theoretical discussion of tense that is sensitive both to the range of tense oppositions found cross-linguistically and also to the constraints on that variation (1976: 2).

Generally speaking, aspect is associated with the status of an action, state or event with concern to its punctuality or duration. The definition of this notion has been to this point confusing due to the statement that aspect is intricately connected to the notion of tense (Mobaidin, 1988). Comrie (1976:3) defines aspect as "different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation". However, the difference between tense and aspect according to Comrie is all about

the reference of time as he said "although both aspect and tense are concerned with time, they are concerned with time in very different ways". Also he said that "tense is a deictic category, i.e. locates situations in time, usually with reference to the present moment and reference to other situations. Aspect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other time-point, but rather with the internal temporal constituency of the situation".

Aspect can be perfective and imperfective. According to Comrie's definition, the perfective aspect denotes a situation observed as only a single unanalyzable unit that has a beginning and an end. On the other hand, the imperfective aspect, indicates only a portion of the situation without any reference to its beginning or end. In other words, Comrie recommends that the perfective observes the situation from the outside, whereas the imperfective observes the situation from the inside. (1976: 4).

The category of aspect is deliberated, specifically with respect to English, the difference is often made between perfective and imperfective on the one hand, and between progressive and non-progressive on the other . Lyons (1968: 314) clarifies the difference between the members of the first couple by noting that the use of the perfective suggests that the action was accomplished, whereas the use of the imperfective is unbiased as to whether or not the action was accomplished. As much as the difference between progressive versus non-progressive is concerned, most linguists approve that merely the progressive can express an action or that portion of it which is still to be accomplished.

In accordance to the present paper, the factor which are considered important to be investigated to improve students' ability in tense and aspect is their competency in understanding of verb categories which are tenses and aspects of English language. Therefore, in this paper, we will use the terminologies on tense and aspect based on traditional grammars of English that are used for pedagogical purposes. The students of the English Department are taught English tenses and aspects based on traditional grammars of English. Hence, we have decided to utilize these terms in the present paper for the convenience and understanding of the students. We have considered seven categories of English tenses/aspects:

(i) Simple Present Tense
(ii) Simple Past Tense
(iii) Simple Future Tense

(iv) Present Progressive (Continuous) Tense

(v) Past Progressive (Continuous) Tense

(vi) Present Perfect Tense

(vii) Past Perfect Tense

Research problems

The current paper is determined to find out the answers for the following questions:

1- What is the level of tenses and aspects competencies of Level-1 undergraduate students at the English Language and Translation department Qassim University?

2- What is the level of tenses and aspects competencies of Level-II undergraduate students at the English Language and Translation department Qassim University?

3- Is there any statistical difference between Level-1 and Level-II in tenses and aspects competencies?

Research objectives

The current paper aims at achieving the following objectives:

1- To explore the level of tenses and aspects competencies of level one undergraduate students at the English Language and Translation Department, Qassim University.

2- To expore the level of tenses and aspects competencies of level two undergraduate students at the English Language and Translation Department, Qassim University.

3- To find out the difference between level one and level two in tenses and aspects competencies.

Delimitation of the study

The current paper is limited to investigate the tenses and aspects of verb categories of English language competencies of the level one and level two undergraduate students of English Language and Translation Department at the College of Arabic Language and Social Studies at Qassim University

Methodology

The descriptive survey method and the SPSS analysis have been used for achieving the major objectives of the study.

The descriptive survey methodology is a common approach used in the field of social and human sciences. It carefully records and observes a certain phenomenon or problem in certain period(s) of time with the purpose of exploring such problem in terms of content and characteristics to attain certain conclusions and generalizations, which can help to understand the current problem & situation and to improve it (Alyan, 2001, p: 47).

Data

The data of this study comprise 28 sentences in the form of objective questions divided to the catigouries of tenses and aspects that already listed in tense and aspect section. The objective questions include the multiple choice questions. Multiple options are given and the subjects are supposed to select one option from the given options. We have used the multiple choice questions in our study. The questionnaires were in the form of sentences representing various English tenses and aspects. In this study, we had prepared a list of twenty eight sentences encompassing seven categories of English tenses and aspects. These sentences were provided with multiple options (answers). These sentences were distributed to a total of forty students representing the level one and level two undergraduate students of English Language and Translation Department at Qassim University. Tweenty students from each level volunteered to participate in our study.

Research Sample

Research sample consistes of 40 undergraduate students belonging to English Language and Translation Department at Qassim University. The students were 20 from level one and 20 students from level two. The following table describes the research samples.

Level one	20
Level two	20
Total	40

Table (1) Research Sample

Research Tool

The current paper aims to analyze the tenses and aspects competencies among the undergraduate students of the level one and level two of undergraduate students, so the achievement test has been constructed and then used to measure their level of competencies in tenses and aspects. Such test is considered to be appropriate to achieve the objectives of this kind of research.

For constructing tenses and aspects competency test, the researcher followed many steps. First of all, the researcher framed the items by analyzing the specific objectives of the course of grammar which is prescribed to the undergraduates students at the English department, by taking the assistance of some experts in linguistics and statistics. Then, the first draft of the test was applied to some undergraduates students of the same department and faculty for item analysis process and to evaluate reliability and validity of the test. The test has good content validity and construct validity. The reliability of the test was evaluated by calculating Alpha Cronbach Coefficient that is (.73). The Tenses and aspects competency test consisted of 40 items in final formate.

Objective No. 1: *To explore the Level-1 undergraduate students' competency level in tenses and aspects* the inferential statistics 't' test for one sample was used. Where, assumed mean = minimum score of the items + maximum score of the items /2. ([0 + 40] / 2=20).

Table No.2: Descriptive statistics related to the level of tenses and aspects competencies of level one undergraduate students

N	**REAL MEAN**	**TESTVALUE (assumed mean)**	**SD**	**DF**	**T**	**Sig**
20	24.3	20	13.8	19	1.3	0.18

The table no. 2 indicates that the real mean is 24.3 and assumed mean is 20 so we can say that the level of tenses and aspects competencies is modrate among level one students because the

t value (1.3) was not significant. The below given figure (1) clearly depicts the real mean and assumed mean of level one undergraduate students .

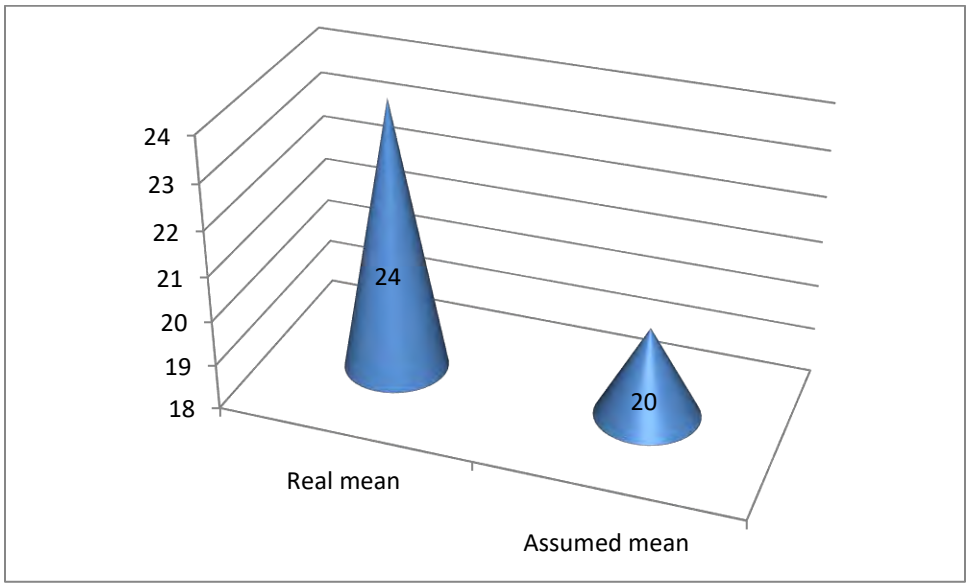

Figure 1: Distribution of real mean and assumed mean of level one undergraduate students

Objective No.2: *To explore the Level-II undergraduate students' competency level in tenses and aspects* the inferential statistics t-test for one-sample was used where, assumed mean = minimum score of the items + maximum score of the items /2 . ([0 + 40] / 2=20).

Table No.3: Descriptive statistics related to the level of tenses and aspects competencies of level two undergraduate students.

N	**REAL MEAN**	**TESTVALUE (Assumed mean)**	**SD**	**DF**	**T**	**Sig**
20	35.25	20	8.5	19	8.01	0.01

It is clear from the table no. 3 that the real mean is 35.25 and assumed mean is 20 so we can say that the level of tenses and aspects competencies is good among level two students because

the t value (8.01) was significant. The below given figure (2) clearly depicts the real mean and assumed mean of level two undergraduate students .

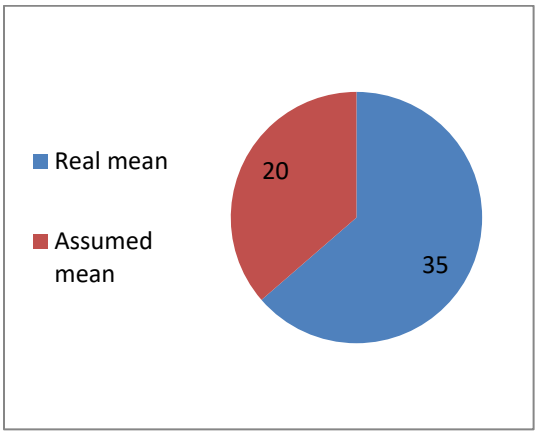

Figure 2: Distribution of real mean and assumed mean of level two undergraduate students

Objective No.3: *To find out the difference between Level-1 and Level-II in tenses and aspects competencies*, the inferential statistics test t-test for two independent samples were used.

Table No.4: Descriptive statistics related to the level of tenses and aspects competencies of level two and level one BA students at Qassim University

SAMPLE	**N**	**MEAN**	**SD**	**DF**	**t**	**Sig**
Level two	20	35.25	8.5	38	3.02	0.01
Level one	20	24.30	13.8			

Table no. 4 reveals that the mean of level two sample is 35.25 and the mean of level one is 24.3, so we can say that there is statistical significant differences between level two and level one in

tenses and aspects competencies, and the level two students have better tenses and aspects competencies than level one.

The below given figure (3) clearly depicts the mean scores of level one and level two undergraduate students.

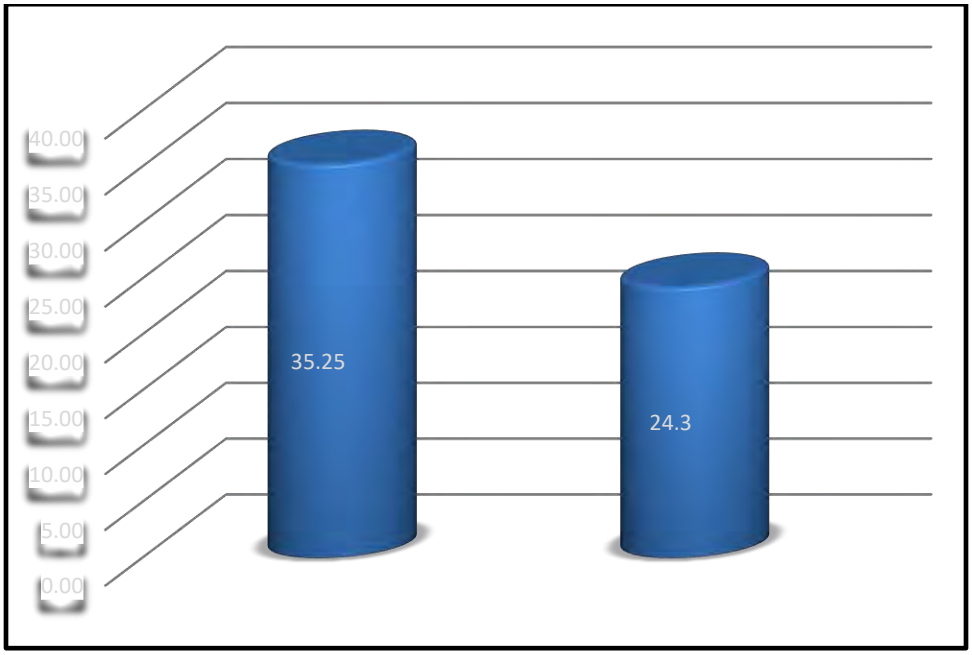

Figure 3: Distribution of mean scores of level one with mean 24.3 of undergraduate students and level two with mean 35.25.

Conclusion

The recent paper is a study of the level of competency among level one and level two undergraduate students at the English Language and Translation department, Qassim University. English is taught as a foreign language in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) where Arabic language is the mother tongue of the students. The descriptive survey method and the SPSS analysis have been used for achieving the major objectives of this study. The data of this study was in the form of achievement test which comprises of 28 sentences representing various English tenses and aspects. Through an analysis of level of competencies of tense and aspect of verb categories, this study made an attempt to know the comparison of competency among level one

and level two of undergraduate students. This paper also brings to discuss the difficulties of tense and aspect systems which level one and level two undergraduate students find challenging while writing and speak and hence commit errors. Furthermore, the analysis of the data that have been collected from the students of level one ands level two shows that there are big differences in the competency among the students of the two levels as it shows that level one students' competency in using tenses and aspects categories is moderate while the level two students' competencey level is good. The analysis also shows that there is significant statistical difference between level one and level two undergraduate students in the competency of tenses and aspects categories.

According to the analysis the students of level one commited errors more as compared to level two. The errors clustered in the use of present simple tense category and in the use of present perfect tense category. This as well brings to our consideration to recall the difference of the both systems of English and Arabic languages as that Arabic and English differ in the expression of temporality. In addition, If we exclude the category of "present simple tense and present perfect tense", then the highest number of correct answers come from the simple future tense and present progressive tense categories. The highest number of incorrect answers come from eleventh out of twenty students in the category of present simple tense and present perfect tense.

The students of level two had got adequate training in English language teaching, because they have been learning English grammar for two years. Thus, we have observed a lot of progress in the performances of level two students. They could provide answers for the English tenses and aspects quite accurately. The range of correct selection rises with mean (35.25) with where, assumed mean = minimum score of the items + maximum score of the items /2 . ([0 + 40] / 2=20) in level two. It is noted that the statistical analysis shows that the errors are not equally distributed within all the English tense and aspect categories. The best performance from level one students is seen in the use of English present progressive tense and past progressive tense. With mean of (24.3) and inferential statistics 't' test for one sample was used. Where, assumed mean = minimum score of the items + maximum score of the items /2. ([0 + 40] / 2=20) students of level one were successful in selecting the proper options provided for English tenses and aspects categories. On the other hand, the lowest success rate is attained in the category of present perfect tense in level two, students could not select the appropriate answer for present perfect tense. The statistical analysis reveals that level one students' competencey in the uses of English present tense and

aspects is moderate and good for the competency in use of English tenses and aspects categories by level two.

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ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

Iraqi English Learners' Identification of Phrasal Verbs

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Abstract

Phrasal verbs are considered to be a fundamental part of the English language at all levels, i.e., speaking, listening, writing, and reading. To understand these expressions is important to a successful interaction. This study examines the understanding and use of phrasal verbs of Iraqi English learners. Its focus is on how far those learners can deduce these phrasal verbs from their elements and the errors committed by them as well as their sources. It is presupposed that understanding two-word patterns may be one of the most intricate features for EFL learners as they are being idiomatically used. Besides, many phrasal verbs are idiomatic, i.e., they possess more than one meaning as well as their literal meanings. To this end, a multiple-choice questionnaire as a data collecting technique is formulated to embrace the most widely used phrasal verbs discussed in the literature part. It consists of (30) different situations. For each one, five options are provided to fill in the spaces the best alternative. The subjects of the study comprise fifty, senior students at the English Department, Faculty of Education, University of Kufa. The findings of the study reveal that these phrasal verbs are ambiguous and difficult to be comprehended by the learners.

Keywords: *Separable, Idiomatic, Phrasal, Particle, Intralingual*

Introduction

Phrasal verbs have always been considered as being the most frequently existing aspects of English. They are extremely used in everyday dialogue. All languages have phrases but sometimes these constructions could not be comprehended literally and may not be used confidently. They are ambiguous or not predictable because their literal meaning has not been expected. Although the listener knows the meaning and the grammar of the phrase completely, the meaning may still be confusing. This type of phrase is said to be an idiomatic expression for the second element of the verb (the adverb or preposition) is necessarily unpredictable **(**Spears, 2005:7)**.** For example, why the word *off* in *take off a shirt*? Why not say *take back a shirt* or *take out a shirt*? Those are three unpredictable, separate combinations, and they each mean something entirely not the same. For instance, you can *take off a shirt (remove it)*, *take back a shirt* to the shop because it doesn't fit, and *take out* to get money from your bank account (withdraw).

This study deals with the performance of actual learner as well as with a theoretical background of phrasal verbs, problematic issues will also be thoroughly discussed. The study also empirically investigates the learners' performance of phrasal verb structures. Those structures cause difficult problems that English learners encounter having their non-idiomatic and idiomatic use.

Terminology of Phrasal Verbs

As regards syntax, a phrasal verb is a combination of a verb followed by one or more other words. It can be sometimes called idiomatic (multi-word verb) as in certain cases it behaves as one verb. "The most frequent types of multi-word verbs consist of a verb followed by one or more particles (words that do not change their form) such as *at*, *away*, *by*, and *for"* (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002: 64). This combination usually has idiomatic meaning. That is, its meaning could not be predicted from the meaning of each word. This multi-word unit functions as a single verb. It would be helpful to use the context to understand them (Biber et al., 2002: 124).

Hewings (2002:268) assert that "a phrasal verb is a form of a compound verb" which is constituted by one of the following combinations: (1) 'verb' followed by an 'adverb'; (2) 'verb' followed by a 'preposition'; or (3) 'verb' followed by both 'adverb' and 'preposition'. Verbs that are widely used with a specific particle, i.e., adverb or preposition are called two-word verbs (e.g. *showed up*) whereas verbs that are widely used with two specific particles, i.e., adverb + preposition are called three-word verbs (e.g. *put up with*). These are sometimes referred to as idiomatic, i.e., multi-word verbs (See also: Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003).

A phrasal verb is a verb idiom that is composed of words, (a) a lexical verb, such as ***look***, ***pass***, ***make,*** and (b) a prepositional adverb (often called a particle), such as *up*, *away*, *out*. Thus ***look*** *up*, ***pass*** *away,* and ***make*** *out* are all examples of phrasal verbs. Particularly in informal English, phrasal verbs are common and numerous. As has been mentioned by Biber et al. (2002), their meaning is idiomatic, i.e., the sense of the expression may not be easily inferred from the senses of its parts. Thus ***look*** *up* (in one of its senses) means 'improve' and ***pass*** *away* means 'die' (Leech, 2006: 84-85).

The terminology of phrasal verbs denotes a main verb and an adverbial particle (*ask over, break off, bring about, carry on*). The verb might be intransitive (require no object), **or** transitive

(require a direct object). With a noun as an object, in general, the particle either follows or precedes the object. But when a pronoun is an object, the particle is put after it. The motivation for this decision has to do with the distribution of information (Locke & Downing, 2006:60).

The expression of phrasal verbs refers to two-word patterns which comprise "a verb followed by a particle" (an adverb or a preposition) or "a verb followed by two particles" (an adverb and a preposition as in, *make up for*, *break out in*). They are recognized by syntax, however; it is possibly to regard them as single items to be comprehended in phrases or sentences. They frequently have a one-word synonymous. For instance, "a person can come across a new phrasal verb or can encounter it. S/he can pick a language or can acquire it. Come across and pick up sound less literal or formal than encounter or acquire" (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2007: 6 & Thim, 2012: 62).

Types of Phrasal Verbs

Wyatt (2006: 4-5) categorizes phrasal verb constructions mainly into five main types. Phrasal verbs followed by adverb particles are often separable. This means the particle can precede or follow the direct object. Adverb particles or prepositions are putting after verbs when constructing phrasal verbs. Phrasal verbs constructed with prepositions are often non-separable. These are:

1. "Intransitive phrasal verbs", i.e., phrasal verbs that require no object.
   Example: *The basketball player* ***passed out*** *after training for five hours.*
2. "Transitive phrasal verbs", i.e., phrasal verbs that do require an object. Two positions for the object are:

(1) It is placed between the verb and the particle(s).

Example: *She'll* ***turn*** *the fan* ***on****.*

(2) It follows the particle.

Example: *She'll* ***turn on*** *the fan.*

Moreover, when the object is a pronoun (s*he*, *me*, *they*, etc.), it is placed between the verb and the particle.

Example: *She'll* ***t****urn it* ***on***. (NOT *She'll* ***turn on*** *it*.)

3. "Transitive phrasal verbs": the object has to be placed between the verb and the particle.

Example: *The last three projects **set** our corporation **apart** from the competition.*

4. "Transitive phrasal verbs": the particle is followed by an object.

Example: *Suzie **takes after** her father*.

*Can you tell me why she **puts up with** the way they treat her?*

5. "Transitive phrasal verbs with two objects": one follows the verb and the other follows the particle.

Example: *The engineers **put** their success **down to** phenomenal execution.*

Phrasal Verbs Passive

Regarding passivization, Eastwood (2002: 304**)** points out that "some transitive phrasal verbs may be used in the passive form because they are transitive" and are capable of inverting to logical subjects and objects. The object could not be placed between the verb and the particle. Example:

Phrasal:

Active: *She **threw** the rest of the food **away**.*

Passive: *The rest of the food was **thrown away.***

Active: *He **turned off** the alarm. **Turn** the alarm **off**.*

Passive: *The alarm has been **switched** off.*

Prepositional:

Active: *A neighbor is **looking after** the children.*

Passive: *The children are being **looked after** by a neighbor.*

Active: *She has **dealt with** the matter**.***

Passive: *The matter has been **dealt with.***

The adverb (*thrown a'way)* is usually stressed but not the preposition ('*looked after).*

Understanding of Verb Particles

Several various kinds of verbs are used with adverbs or prepositions, they often called 'particles':

1. Idiomatic verb + particle combinations: Sometimes, these units are difficult to understand "based upon the meanings of the individual parts but must be taken as a whole. In other words, the meaning is non-compositional and thus unpredictable."

Examples of these are ***fall through*** **(**meaning *not happen'***)** and ***put up with*** **somebody** (meaning *'accept somebody unpleasant or undesirable without complaining'*). There is usually a one-word verb with the same meaning. For instance, instead of ***show up,*** *it is possible to say 'arrive'.* One-word verbs are regarded as more formal than the phrasal verbs as well as they are used in somewhat different contexts.

2. Verbs which are always followed by a particular particle: Examples of these are ***carry on, make up, put out***. These verbs are not to be used without the particle.

3. Verbs followed by a particle in a particular sense: Those verbs may be used on their own, i.e., without a particle, but they have a different sense when used with one. ***Brush sth up*** is an instance of a verb like this. ***Brush sth*** may be used to mean ***'clean',*** polish, or '*make sth smooth'***.** *While* ***'brush sth up'*** means '*study or practice sth to restore the skill or knowledge that you had in the past'.* Other examples are ***nod /nod off, grow/ grow*** **up,** ***carry/ carry on***.

A large number of common verbs may fall into this category. ***Break***, for instance, can come with several various particles, and it has a special meaning with each one that is different from ***break*** on its own. ***Break away*** means *escape*; ***break in*** means '*to enter a building by force'*.

4. Verbs followed by a particle (the particle adds to but does not change the basic sense of the verb): The particle usually adds something to the meaning, such as completeness. For instance, you can say *'He'll* ***finish*** his *report' or He'll* ***finish*** *off* his *report'.* ***Finish off*** makes the action more emphatic. Another instance is ***wake/ wake up*****:** *'She woke* at 7:00' or 'She *woke up at 7:00'***.** ***Woke up*** **is** more common than ***woke*** (***woke*** is used more in formal or written style).

5. Verbs followed by particles (each has its normal meaning): '*Phone back'* means *'telephone sb again'* which is an instance of a verb like this. The sense of ***'phone back'*** derives from the meaning of '***phone'*** and '***back'*** (Parkinson, 2001: vi).

Difference between Prepositional Verbs and Phrasal Verbs

Since the preposition and particle have identical forms, the English learners easily "confuse phrasal verbs with prepositional verbs". It is necessary and important to make a distinction between a preposition and adverbial particles.

A prepositional phrase is composed of a verb and a preposition. Examples are: *depend on, suffer from, apply for, refer to*. While a phrasal verb is combined of a verb followed by a preposition or an adverb or both. Examples are*: went on, join in, fall down, make up, do away with, go back on*.

6.1 The first difference: Meaning of the original verb:

The sense of the phrasal verb is not the same as the sense of its original verb. Examples are:

The firefighters *put out* the blaze. ('put out' means 'to extinguish')

Sarah is *looking for* a job. ('look for' means 'to search')

6.2 The second difference: Separable and non-separable nature

The majority of the phrasal verbs are separable, i.e., its verb and preposition could be separated to be used in different positions. "They can be used as in a joined-form as well as in a separated form":

My brother requested me to *turn on* the AC.

My brother requested me to *turn* the AC *on*.

Her hands were cold, so she *put on* her gloves.

Her hands were cold, so she *put* her gloves *on*.

Moreover, all prepositional verbs cannot be separated, i.e., the verb and preposition are non-separable:

She *stared at* my dress.

My dog is *barking at* my new neighbor.

6.3 The third difference: Requirement and place of an object for the verb

All the prepositional verbs should be accompanied by an object in the sentence. Without this object, the meaning of the sentence is incomplete. The object is positioned right after the preposition of the prepositional phrase. The position of the object is fixed and cannot be changed in the sentence (Prepositional Verb and Phrasal Verb- Difference, para. 6):

Noor has applied for a new job.

My dog is *barking at* my new neighbor.

Besides, some phrasal verbs do not require an object, and some of them do require an object to make the meaning complete:

After a long struggle with breast cancer, my aunt ***passed away*** yesterday. (no object)

Could you tell our dad how the accident *came about*? (no object)

Moreover, some of the phrasal verbs should be accompanied by an object, the position of the object is changeable (flexible) in the sentence:

Ali took off his jacket.

Ali took his jacket off.

"Transitive phrasal verbs require an object in the sentence" while intransitive phrasal verbs do not require an object in the sentence. Since all prepositional phrases do require an object, they are all transitive. (Prepositional Verb and Phrasal Verb- Difference, para. 6).

Research Questions

The present study tries to seek answers to the following questions:

1- Can Iraqi students recognize the correct phrasal verbs when they are missing in sentences and options are given?

2- Do Iraqi learners face more difficulty in identifying the phrasal verbs when the verb in a set of options is the same (i.e., come around, come about, come back, come along) than identifying them when the verb in a set of options is different (i.e., came off, run over, go for, mess around)?

Methods

8.1 Participants

A total of 50 university EFL candidates took part in this study. They represented one group; they are undergraduate learners from the English Department at Faculty of Education, University of Kufa/ Iraq. The subjects were 20 males and 30 females, their age ranges from 22-25 years. They represented a random selection of all learners enrolled in the course. All of them possessed the same characteristics.

8.2. Instrument

It became significant that the best way to measure a phenomenon is by using a quantitative method. This study mainly relied on a multiple-choice questionnaire as its main instrument. Dörnyei (2003:14) defines a questionnaire as "a highly structured data collection instrument, with most items either asking about very specific pieces of information or giving various response options for the respondent to choose from." Therefore, a multiple-choice questionnaire was administered to measure the learners' performance in using phrasal verbs. It is composed of only one part with (30) items each of which based on five answer options from which the learners can select the right option which is best suited to the given situations (See Appendix 1). To indicate the stability and usefulness of a questionnaire, two important features should be examined: reliability and validity. The former criterion is fulfilled if the assessment device "provides a consistent distribution of responses from the same survey universe" (Brace, 2008: 174). It is very different from the latter which is about truthfulness. It is achieved if the data of the research provides precise reflection or measurement of the topic or variable under consideration (Murchison, 2010: 229). However, a good study will be both reliable and valid. The type of validity used in this study is the face and content one. Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009: 59) state that the term "*content validity* refers to the extent to which the items fully represent the concept being measured". On the other part, the concept *face validity* "alludes to the degree to which an instrument appears to be an appropriate measure for obtaining the desired information, particularly from the perspective of a potential respondent" (Colton & Covert, 2007: 66). The face validity of this technique has been appraised by exposing the questionnaire to panel experts of university professors. One of the methods used for estimating the internal consistency of reliability is a Kuder-Richardson Formula.

8.3 Procedure

The questionnaire layout was organized and given out to the learners electronically via MOODLE learning platform at the Faculty of Education, University of Kufa. The subjects already have accounts, so they have access to the system. The questionnaire has been uploaded in an electronic version and before they get started, the instructions are kindly explained to the learners and informed them how to respond to the questionnaire. For the sake of obtaining the results, the

learners were called for answering their questions. It took 30 minutes to answer all the items of the questionnaire. When the time finished, the results were submitted automatically. Then their answers were collected, corrected, and analyzed by the authors.

Discussion of the Research Results

This part deals with the central area of the research as it presents the data that forms the basis of the investigation. It includes a collection of information in numbers which represents the learners' responses to help answer the research questions stated earlier. These outcomes indicate the range to which the learners could react to varying phrasal verbs and their level of understanding of the subject under discussion. They are vital to sustain or disapprove the research questions of the current study.

An objective measure for the evaluation of the learners' performance has been conducted. By the end of the questionnaire, the results were scored to consider to what extent the learners made mistakes. Each result was scored out of (90) marks. Three marks were allocated for each correct answer and a zero mark for the incorrect as well as the ignored answers as the latter ones indicated the leaners' failure in giving the required responses.

Depending on this strategy, it is found that the overall number of the learners achieving pass grade is (16) of the total study population which is (50) learners. They manage to get at the pass mark of (50) out of (100), with a low pass-rate of (39.36%). This result reported strong evidence of a low level of recognizing phrasal verbs as the low success rate is less than (50%). Turning to the mean score of the questionnaire for the learners of the study who pass the exam, it comes to (64%) out of (100). A profound investigation is labeled as a table below:

Table (1)

Percentage of the Learners' Responses

No.of Items	*No. of Correct Responses*	*%*	*No. of Incorrect Responses*	*%*	*No. of Avoided Items*	*%*
1	**38**	**76**	**10**	**20**	**2**	**4**
2	**11**	**22**	**35**	**70**	**4**	**8**
3	**14**	**28**	**33**	**66**	**3**	**6**

4	14	28	30	60	6	12
5	1	2	46	92	3	6
6	6	12	41	82	3	6
7	14	28	33	66	3	6
8	13	26	35	70	2	4
9	25	50	23	64	2	4
10	18	36	28	56	4	8
11	27	54	19	38	4	8
12	33	66	13	26	4	8
13	17	34	29	58	4	8
14	33	66	11	22	6	12
15	25	50	18	36	7	14
16	31	62	13	26	6	12
17	6	12	38	76	6	12
18	14	28	27	54	9	18
19	36	72	7	14	7	14
20	35	70	8	16	7	14
21	15	30	28	56	7	14
22	11	22	32	64	7	14
23	15	30	27	54	8	16
24	14	28	28	56	8	16
25	20	40	22	44	8	16
26	21	42	21	42	8	16
27	20	40	21	42	9	18
28	25	50	17	34	8	16
29	12	24	30	60	8	16
30	26	52	15	30	9	18
Total	**590**	**39.33**	**738**	**49.2**	**172**	**11.46**

Further information evidenced by the questionnaire that is done, it appears that phrasal verbs present a challenge for language learners. The first pointer is that the learners' general performance in the questionnaire brings to light that the highest rate of the correct responses has reached (**590,39.33%**) which is a low-performance rate than that of their incorrect ones (***including the avoided items***) which has reached (**910, 60.66 %**), see **Table** (**1**) above. This can also be seen in items (**5, 6,** & **17**) which have the highest number of learners who respond incorrectly. Most of

the learners incorrectly respond to the item (**5**). This item receives (**49%**) incorrect responses out of (**50%**). The next items that receive a high frequency of errors are items (**6** & **17**). They both receive (**44**%) incorrect responses out of (**50**%). One possible explanation of why the learners' misunderstanding of the phrasal verbs is due to their limited understanding of the topic under discussion. The sense of the particles (i.e., *'off', 'down', 'about',* '*into*') may also cause problems because "sometimes the particles may share the meaning across a large number, but not all". For instance, the particle *'down'* is usually said to mean *'decrease'*, as in *'slow down',* but this meaning could not be applied to the verb 'turn 'as in 'turn down'. This discussion has served to offer an answer to Research Question (1) posed previously. As for the Research Question (2), Table (2) exposes the learners' percentage responses when the verb in a set of options is different.

Table (2)

Percentage of the Learners' Responses to Different Root Phrasal Verbs

No.of Items	*No. of Correct Responses*	*%*	*No. of Incorrect Responses*	*%*	*No. of Avoided Items*	*%*
1	11	22	35	70	4	8
2	14	28	30	60	6	12
3	6	12	41	82	3	6
4	13	26	35	70	2	4
5	18	36	28	56	4	8
6	33	66	13	26	4	8
7	33	66	11	22	6	12
8	31	62	13	26	6	12
9	14	28	27	54	9	18
10	35	70	8	16	7	14
11	11	22	32	64	7	14
12	14	28	28	56	8	16
13	21	42	21	42	8	16
14	25	50	17	34	8	16
15	26	52	15	30	9	18
Total	305	40.66	354	47.2	91	12.13

Table (2) above shows that the data of the correct items is (**305, 40.66**), while the statistics of the incorrect items (***including the avoided ones***) is (**445, 59.33**). The highest rate of the incorrect responses shows that the learners are incompetent in identifying phrasal verbs in a set of different options. Concerning this acquisition part, it is obvious that item (**10**) whose percentage (**70%)** is the easiest one. It tests the recognition use of the phrasal verb ***get back***. This rate reflects that the learners are familiar with this item. Moreover, item (3), the most difficult one whose percentage **(12%),** tests the recognition use of the phrasal verb ***put out***. The result provides evidence confirming that the learners are unable to use such an item. Moving to the learners' responses when the verb in a set of options has the same root (i.e., take in, take up, take on, take off), they can clearly be seen in **Table (3)**:

Table (3)

Percentage of the Learners' Responses to One Root Phrasal Verbs

No.of Items	*No. of Correct Responses*	*%*	*No. of Incorrect Responses*	*%*	*No. of Avoided Items*	*%*
1	38	76	10	20	2	4
2	14	28	33	66	3	6
3	1	2	46	92	3	6
4	14	28	33	66	3	6
5	25	50	23	64	2	4
6	27	54	19	38	4	8
7	17	34	29	58	4	8
8	25	50	18	36	7	14
9	6	12	38	76	6	12
10	36	72	7	14	7	14
11	15	30	28	56	7	14
12	15	30	27	54	8	16
13	20	40	22	44	8	16
14	20	40	21	42	9	18
15	12	24	30	60	8	16
Total	285	38	384	51.2	81	10.8

Table (3) above indicates that the data of the correct responses is (**285, 38**), whereas the statistics of the incorrect ones (***including the avoided items***) is (**465, 62**). The highest percentage of the correct responses is (**76%)** which can be seen in item (**1**) which tests the recognition use of the phrasal verb ***come back***. This result shows that the learners are having good knowledge of this item, whereas the lowest percentage of the correct responses is (**2%)** in item (**3**) which tests the recognition use of the phrasal verb ***take up***. From this rate, it seems that the learners unfamiliar with the structure of this item.

To verify or refute the Second Research Question, the next analysis emphasizes the type of phrasal verbs in which Iraqi EFL learners may face more difficulty. See **Table (4)** below which displays a comparison between the two types under study.

Table (4)

Learners' Total Responses to Both Phrasal Verbs Types of the Whole Questionnaire

Types of Phrasal Verbs	No. of Correct Responses	%	No. of Incorrect Responses	%	*No. of Avoided Items*	%
One Root	285	38	384	51.2	81	10.8
Different Roots	305	40.66	354	47.2	91	12.13
Total	590	39.33	738	49.2	172	11.46

Table (4) tells that the data of the correct responses of the phrasal verbs having one root forms is (**38%).** This is lesser than that of the incorrect ones (***including the avoided items' rate***) which forms (**62%**). Moreover, the total rate of the correct responses of the phrasal verbs of different root forms is (**40. 66%).** That is lesser than that of the incorrect ones (***including the avoided items' rate***) which forms (**59. 33%**). From these figures, we can easily infer that the learners face more difficulty in mastering one root phrasal verbs than those of different root ones and this answers the Research Question (2).

Conclusion

The results point out that the subjects of this study show their level of understanding of phrasal verbs is poor because the majority of them got under (**50%**) in the phrasal verbs questionnaire. This consequence is a sign of low performance. It is also found that the correct responses rate in the whole questionnaire (**590, 39. 33%**) is lower than the incorrect ones (***including the avoided items***) (**910**, **60. 66** %). This outcome refers to lack of awareness in recognizing this language form which provides an answer to the First Research Question. Further, the present study confirms that the learners struggle more to understand one root phrasal verbs than those of different root ones. That is clear from the rate of the correct responses of the phrasal verbs of one root which forms (**38%)** which is lesser than that of the different root ones which forms (**40.66%**). This means that the former ones (i.e., one root phrasal verbs) are more difficult for the subjects than that of the latter ones (i.e., different root phrasal verbs). That is to say, the Second Research Question is answered.

To sum up, the findings provide empirical evidence concerning Iraqi learners' understanding of phrasal verbs. It seems that phrasal verbs are considered to be one of the most difficult grammatical subjects for them because their senses are quite different from the senses of the verb that they are constructed from. Therefore, it is advisable to enhance the learners learning by giving them rich material covering phrasal verbs.

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Appendix 1

Please, read the situations carefully and choose the correct phrasal verb:

1. Tom: "Could you tell me where your father is?"

Steven: "He still works at the office and will only ---------- at 4 pm."

A. come around B. come about C. come back D. come along E. other (specify)

2. Mel: "Did you watch the match last night?"

Roger: "No, I didn't. They ---------- the match because of the bad weather."

A. called off B. gave up C. put out D. took off E. other (specify)

3. Ted: "Can you help me to answer this question?"

Nick: "No problem."

Ted: "I'm sorry to ---------- your time."

A. take in B. take up C. take on D. take off E. other (specify)

4. Sarah: "I ---------- an interesting book."

Catherine: "What book is that?"

Sarah: "A geography book, my most liked subject."

A. came across B. looked up C. looked after D. came up E. other (specify)

5. Amy: "I'm sorry Susan. You need to ---------- your shoes before entering the house. It's part of our culture."

Liz: "Ok. I understand that."

A. put back B. put out C. put down D. put up with E. other (specify)

6. Emma: "The old lady lost her belongings in the fire yesterday."

Sophia: "Yes. It's really sad. The fire engine only arrived twenty minutes later. It was too late for them to ---------- the fire then, though she was safe."

A. break into B. call off C. put out D. cut down E. other (specify)

7. Oliver: "If you think so, most of your classmates will disappear from your life forever when you graduate."

Liam: "Yes, but every now and then you will ---------- one of them on the streets."

A. run in B. run down C. run around D. run into E. other (specify)

8. Mia: "Our school will arrange a health campaign next week".

Emily: "I know, most students will help to ---------- posters all over the school".

A. give up B. throw away C. put up D. put on E. other (specify)

9. Mila: "Layla is such a strong lady."

Ella: "Yes, she is. She ---------- her children alone after their husband's death."

A. brought over B. brought up C. brought forward D. brought back E. other (specify)

10. David: "Could you tell me what the word AIDS ----------?"

John: "To be honest, I'm not very sure. Let's find it out from the website."

A. comes across B. stands for C. takes up D. looks into E. other (specify)

11. Luke: "Do you remember our old friend, Dylan?"

Levi: "Yes, where is he now?"

Luke: "He's in Tokyo and has ---------- his private firm."

A. set aside B. set back C. set up D. set apart E. other (specify)

12. Andrew: "Many people are dying of cancer nowadays."

Gabriel: "Yes. Smoking could be one of the reasons, I think."

Andrew: "I hope my father will ---------- smoking."

A. put down B. point out C. give up D. throw away E. other (specify)

13. Ava: "She doesn't know what this word means".

Zoey: “Why doesn't she ---------- the meaning in the dictionary?"

A. look forward B. look down C. look up D. look at E. other (specify)

14. William: “What did the schoolmaster say this morning?”

James: “He ---------- the importance of fitness to ensure good health.”

A. pointed out B. called off C. gave up D. put on E. other (specify)

15. Ethan: “I’m sorry to disturb you. I didn’t mean to say those words. I was just upset.”

Michael: “Just ----------. I want to forget for a little while.”

A. go on B. go away C. go off D. go down E. other (specify)

16. Zoe: “The weather is very cold out there. Please ------ your jacket when you go out.”

Bella: “Alright mum.”

A. take off B. look up C. get away D. put on E. other (specify)

17. Lucy: “Are you sure this is the destination?”

Anna: “I’m certainly sure. Let’s ---------- now.”

A. get on B. get away C. get rid of D. get off E. other (specify)

18. Daniel: “It’s sad to hear many shameful events that have been reported recently.”

Henry: “I heard that a committee has begun to ---------- the problem.”

A. put up B. cut down C. point out D. look into E. other (specify)

19. The manager: “Why are you late?”

Leo: “I’m so sorry. My car ---------- again.

A. broke into B. broke down C. broke away D. broke up E. other (specify)

20. Ryan: “Are you coming to see the match tomorrow?”

Aaron: “I don’t think so. I’ve got to ---------- to Paris tomorrow.”

A. get back B. run into C. put up D. find out E. other (specify)

21. Caroline: "How's your new position?"

Emilia: "I am too busy. Now, I've got so many new duties to ----------**."**

A. carry weight B. carry away C. carry on D. carry out E. other (specify)

22. Maya: "There's a bloodstain on your shirt."

Elena: "I know. I've washed it many times but it would not ----------."

A. come down B. give up C. come out D. take off E. other (specify)

23. Lucy: "Linda worried about her weight".

Naomi: "What's wrong with it?"

Lucy: "The doctor advised her to ---------- on what she eats."

A. cut down B. cut through C. cut in D. cut across E. other (specify)

24. Alice: "I didn't do my assignment yesterday. The power ---------- for more than two hours."

Ruby: "Really? Just tell your teacher. She'll satisfy."

A. put out B. took off C. went out D. got off E. other (specify)

25. Jackson: "So, tomorrow is Jane's wedding!"

Nolan: "Yes! I ---------- a present for her!"

A. picked out B. pick up C. pick off D. pick on E. other (specify)

26. Adam: "I don't think Liverpool team will win the game. Look at the players, they're too tired!"

Ian: "Well, don't ---------- on them. You never know."

A. look down B. get off C. look back D. call off E. other (specify)

27. Rose: "I was late to school yesterday, so I ---------- a story about the traffic jam."

Mary: “But did your teacher believe it? Be honest next time.”

A. make out B. made of C. made off D. made up E. other (specify)

28. Ashley: “This course is really hard and I think I couldn't go on.”

Valeria: “ ---------- John! Don’t give up. I know you can manage it.”

A. Get off B. Look back C. Come on D. Look down E. other (specify)

29. Iris: What did she tell you, Mina?

Mina: She told me to ---------- this form to her after I fill it out.

A. send for B. send back C. send in D. send up E. other (specify)

30. Kayla: “Where is your brother? I need to talk to him.”

Cecelia: “He’s on the phone.”

Kayla: “George, please ---------- the phone and come here now!”

A. put down B. take off C. get down D. put out E. other (specify)

The questionnaire answers

1- come back 2- called off 3- take up 4- came across 5- put back 6- put out 7- run into 8- put up 9- brought up 10- stands for 11- set up 12- give up 13- look up 14- pointed out 15- go away 16- put on 17- get off 18- look into 19- broke down 20- get back 21- carry out 22- come out 23- cut down 24- went out 25- pick up 26- get off 27- made up 28- Come on 29- send back 30- put down

ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

Undergraduate Students' Attitudes towards Learning English: A Case Study at the College of Arabic Language and Social Studies, Qassim University

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Abstract

Attitude towards language learning is one of the most significant components to acquire language proficiency. The purpose of this study is to have insight into the learners' minds and view their preferences and attitudes towards the English language. The participants comprise 106 Level-one undergraduate students studying English as a compulsory subject at the College of Arabic Language and Social Studies, Qassim University. The researcher has used a structured questionnaire consisting of five sets of items and an adjacent Likert scale as an instrument for the

study. The findings are highly motivating and encouraging, and it is hoped that the academicians will exploit it to the full in further betterment of teaching English Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: *Attitudes, Motivation, EFL, Student, Saudi Arabia*

Introduction

English language proficiency has become one of the crucial parts in an EFL context. Especially after the rapid technological growth in various fields, the rule of the English language has become more influential globally. As a result, people from different cultures and countries get closer, and efficiency in English has become essential (Alzeebaree & Yavuz, 2017, as cited in Alzeebaree & Hasan, 2020). Along with the other major components to acquire language proficiency, the students' attitudes towards the language play a significant role. Last few decades, although tremendous improvements have been noticed among the Arab EFL learners' attitudes towards learning English, many of them are still passive towards it.

A large number of researchers have justifications that there are some variables 'Age, socio-economic status, strategies, methods and techniques, teaching-learning environment, and cultural dimension' (Gömleksiz, 2010), which affects the students' attitudes.

This study is an attempt to evaluate the undergraduate students' attitudes towards learning English.

Objectives

The study aims to identify the following objectives:

Whether the students have positive attitudes towards learning English?

Whether the male students are more interested than the female?

Whether the female students are more interested than the male?

What are the factors that affect the students' attitudes towards learning English?

Attitudes

Research on attitude is a broad tradition rooted in various fields such as psychology, sociology of communication, and socio-linguistic**.** Several researches were conducted to explore the role of attitude in achieving the course objectives. Allport (1935) stated that attitude as the

most unique and essential concept in social psychology. Attitude has donated to the development of second language learning and social psychology.

On the other side, most readers view the word attitude in literature as perhaps linked to students. Coming to reality, what makes life easy or difficult in foreign language learning for students and student's ability good or poor classroom is attitude. If any teacher who reads this study will assume that the attitude in the question is perhaps of the unlikable kind, then there will be no problem introducing and offering solutions to it in situations where students are learning a foreign language. This study is also giving reactions to foreign language teachers to the matter of attitude, where it reveals two attitudes they frequently hold as a group: 1. It is the learner's or student's attitude that is the crucial factor in language learning, and 2. This aspect is unnoticed unless it shows a problem. In previous years, all thought that the future of foreign language teaching was guaranteed. Moreover, enrolment enlarged; all were flourishing. By the sixties, anxiety began to appear on the lines of all foreign language journals. Somewhat had been ignored, an important issue that we are only now beginning to explore is attitudes.

Attitude is linked to psychology, especially social psychology. The word "psychology" has come from the Greek word "psych," which means "mind" or "soul", and logos means "study" or "line of treating." Many psychologists have conducted several studies on human minds—basically, this definition exemplifies what psychology is all about to the end of before the twentieth century. Currently, the most broadly accepted definition of psychology is that it is "the scientific study of behavior and experience" (Malim & Birch, 1998, p.3). Through systematic research, Psychologists have tried to explore questions about human beings like 'how they behave?' and how they see this reality and the world around them.

Coming to the term attitude, many scholars have defined attitude as "a term which is complex" Gardner (1985). Allport (1935) defines the term attitude as "a mental and neutral state of readiness, systematized via practice, exerting a dynamic and directive influence upon human's reaction to all situations and objectives with which it is connected" (p.810).

Gardner (1985) stressed the relationship between attitude, opinion, and belief. According to him, attitude is "an assessment reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the base of the human's belief or opinion about the referent" (p.9).

Components of Attitudes

Attitude has got three components, (i) affective, (ii) cognition, (iii) behavior (Gardner, 1985a; Fazio, 1990; Backer, 1992; Malim & Birch, 1998). The first component is an effective component that comprises emotions toward and assessment of an attitude's purpose. The second component is cognition, which refers to knowledge or belief that humans have about an attitudinal purpose. The last one is a behavioral component that has a relation to actions or intentions related to an attitudinal purpose.

These three components of attitude are broadly recognized by many scholars, as stated by Birch and Malim, but lately, doubt has been created upon the behavioral part. Many scholars say that it is difficult to view how knowing a human's attitude towards something may help us identify their behavior. Backer (1992) has the same opinion that humans do not continuously behave in ways that are constant with their attitudes (p.11).

Ellis (1994, p.199) discusses the main characteristics of attitude as follows:

1. Attitudes are cognitive (i.e., are capable of being thought about) and effective (i.e., have feelings and emotions attached to them).
2. Attitudes are dimensional rather than bipolar-they vary in degree of favorability and favorability.
3. Attitudes predispose a person to act in a certain way, but the relationship of attitudes and actions are not strong.
4. Attitudes are learnt, not inherited, or genetically endowed.
5. Attitudes tend to persist, but experiences can modify them.

The Methodology

A detailed account of the method adopted to conduct the respective study forms the content of this section. In the following sections, the methods for the current study are presented.

The Setting

The study was conducted in the vicinity of Qassim University during the academic session 2018-19, and it took six weeks to complete the process. The data collection process took three weeks, and analysis a little time of one week.

The Participants

The study subjects are 106 Level-one undergraduate students studying English as a compulsory subject at the College of Arabic Language and Social Studies, Qassim University.

The participants comprised of 90 male students and 16 female students. The age group to which all the participants belong is 16-21 years. All these participants are familiar with English and Arabic. The researcher participated in the study as the instructor and guide.

The Instruments

In comparison to the other tools of a survey, questionnaires have some advantages over other data collecting methods (e.g., interviews): a) questionnaires tend to be more reliable b) they encourage greater honesty from respondents, c) they save the researcher's and participants' time and effort(more economical), and d) they can be used in small-scale issues and large scale issues. For this study, a structured questionnaire was used as an instrument.

The questionnaire consisted of five sets of questions. The first two sets of questions aim to inquire about the learners' language preference when they use language in front of different people and different situations. The questions were in the form of statements. All the items were general and based on the learner's personal experience. The language used in the questionnaire was simple and easy to understand for the participants.

The Likert scale

The participants were asked to respond to the questionnaire's items in a typical five-point Likert Scale, one which ranged from 'Always' at one end to 'Never' at the other end. The other two sets of questions were designed around 'Strongly Disagree' on one end to 'Strongly Agree'.

Procedure

The procedure of the whole study can be divided broadly into two processes: Data Collection Process, which involves the method of collecting the data from the participants and Data Analysis Process, which involves the procedure that was adopted in analyzing the data collected from the participants.

Data Collection Process

Before the beginning of the data collection process, a structured questionnaire was prepared, keeping in mind the participant's time and level. During their academic classes at Qassim University, the questionnaire sheets were distributed to them in person. Explicit instructions to complete the questionnaire were conveyed to the participants by the researcher. Any doubt

regarding the questionnaire was also clarified during the time of distribution. All the participants were given enough time to complete the questionnaire. Then, the researcher collected all the fully responded questionnaire sheets from the participants, which took a time of three weeks.

Data Analysis Process

After the data collection was done, the responded sheets were subjected to the data analysis process. Each of the questionnaire sheets collected from the participants was given their own individual number. The participants' responses on each question were put in an M. S. Excel table with questions in the horizontal column and the respondents in the vertical one. Finally, the answers were statistically analyzed using the same software.

Analysis

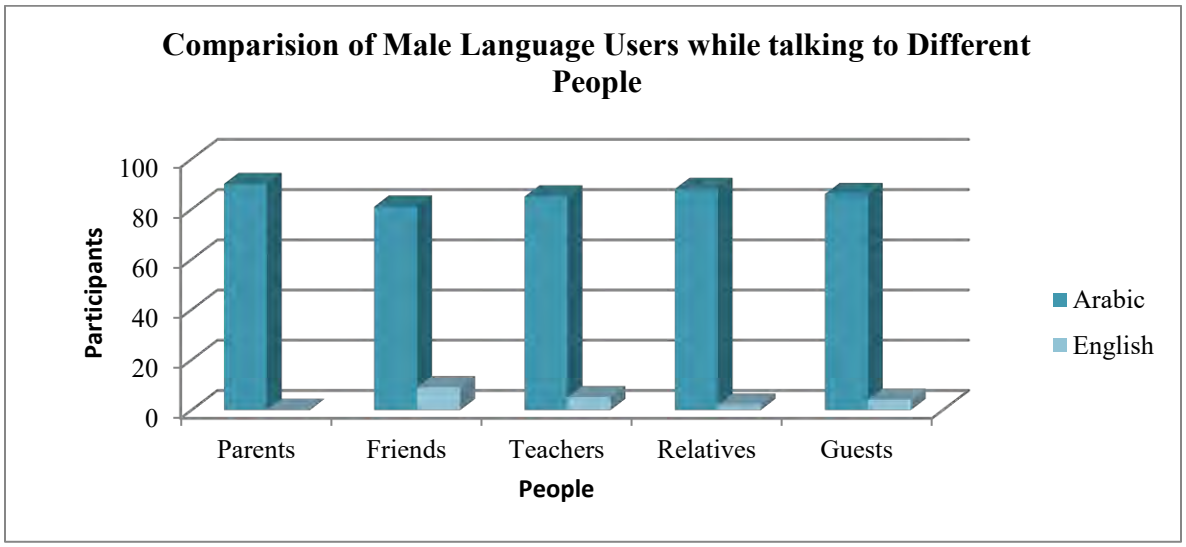
The results of the data collection were analyzed with respect to Mean, Mode, and Percentage. The data obtained from the different sets of questions in the survey questionnaire have been explained through different tables and graphs. Based on the statistical data calculated, participants' views towards the English Language were analyzed and interpreted. The study hopes that these findings will provide benefits to teachers and help develop an understanding and further inculcate English among Saudi students.

The participants were asked their preferences for Language among Arabic and English when they talk to their parents, friends, teachers, relatives, and guests. The responses that were received have been shown in Table.1 below-

	Arabic		**English**	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Parents	90	16	Nil	Nil
Friends	81	6	9	10
Teachers	85	9	5	7
Relatives	88	11	2	5
Guests	86	12	4	4

Table.1

This first set of questions was analyzed separately for male and female students to compare the students' preferences when using Arabic and English while talking to their parents, friends, teachers, relatives, and guests. The concerned comparisons have been explained with the help of a bar graph in Fig.1 and Fig.2.



From Fig.1, we analyze that out of 90 males, all of them prefer to talk to their parents in the Arabic language, and none of them use English. At the same time, 9 students prefer to use English when out with their friends in contrast to 81 males who still prefer Arabic. With the teachers too, 85 male students prefer to use the Arabic language while 5 students like to talk to their teachers in English. With relatives, 88 males out of 90 speak in Arabic while 2 males opt for English for their conversation. Moreover, while talking to their guests, 86 male students choose to use Arabic as a medium of communication in comparison to 4 prefer English over Arabic.

Besides males, all 16 female participants were also surveyed, and their findings have been elaborated on with the help of Fig.2.

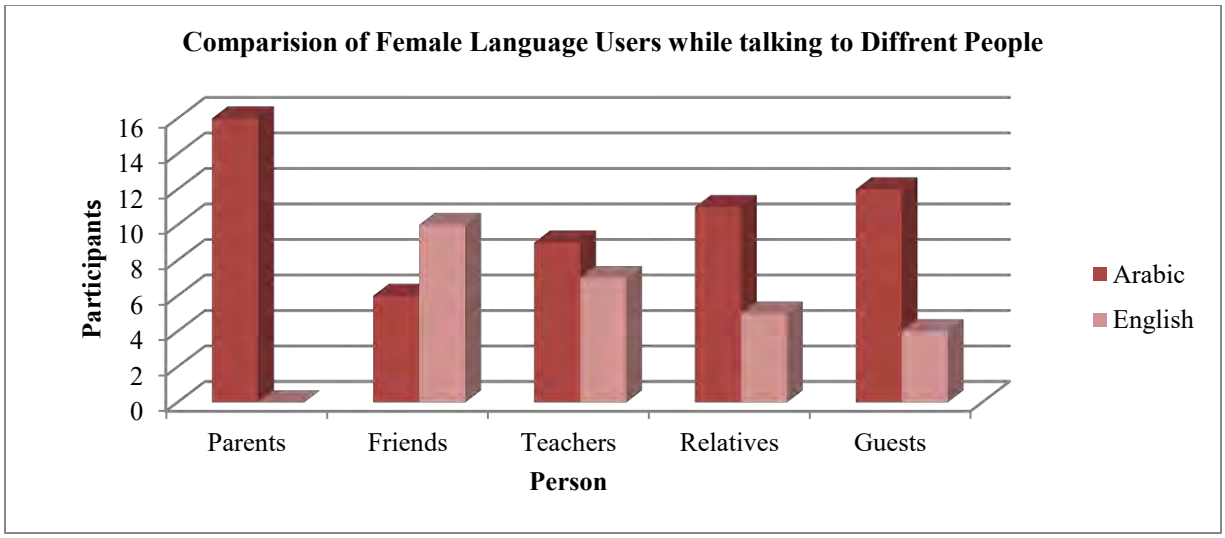


Fig.2 shows the results of the comparison between preferences among choices of language by the female users. The first bar shows preference to the Arabic language while talking to their parents and none opted for English. While 10 out of 16 females are found to be conversing in English when they speak to their friends, only 6 are seen using Arabic. 9 female students favor Arabic over English when talking to teachers as opposed to 7 females who select English to do the same. When talking to relatives, 11 females out of 16 prefer to talk in Arabic, and only 5 settle on English. With guests, it is observed that 12 females use Arabic in comparison to 4 who use English. The study has also compared the percentage of preferences of these choices according to the gender to establish a difference in males' and females' preferences and use of Arabic and English when they talk to their parents, friends, teachers, relatives, and guests. Fig. 3 shows the percentage of males versus females who prefer to use Arabic with respective people-

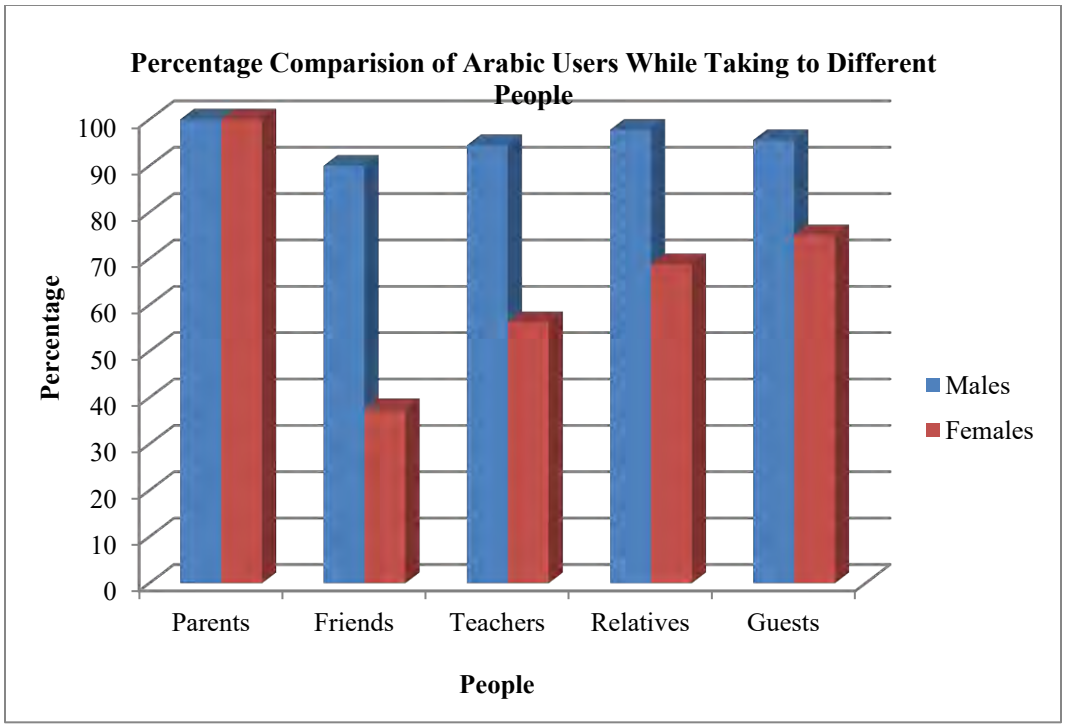


Fig.3

The above chart compares the use of Arabic by male versus female students while talking to their parents. It is evident that while talking to parents, both genders prefer to use Arabic. However, while talking to teachers, relatives, and guests, we observe a difference by 38, 29 and 21 percent respectively between males and females, and males seem to prefer Arabic use more than females under all situations. There is a dramatically big difference of 53 percent between males and females' preference in Arabic when they talk to their friends, concluding that males prefer Arabic more than females in all situations.

Fig.4 shows the percentage comparison of males versus females in preference to the English language.

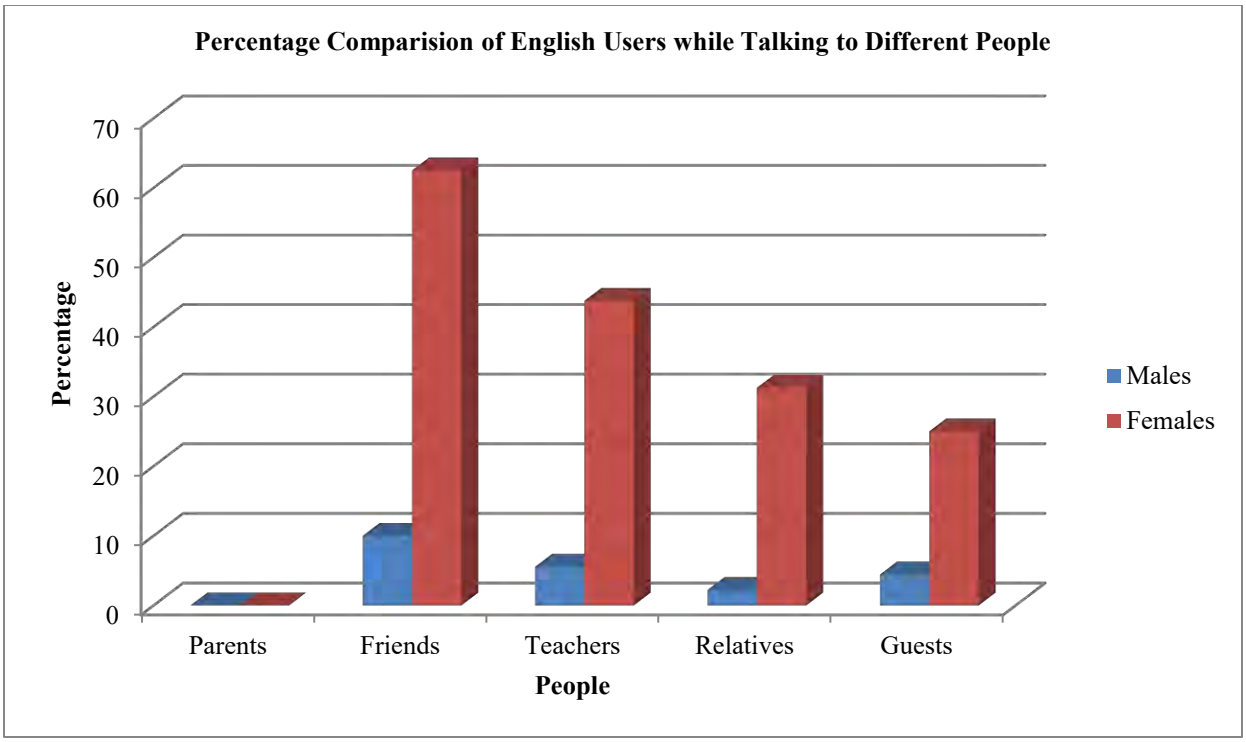


Fig.4

As we analyze Fig.4, we see a dramatic difference in English Language use among males and females. Though both the genders prefer not to use English with their parents, there is a difference in opinion regarding the use of English among friends. Only 10 percent of males use English with friends, while 63 percent of females use English. Similarly, there is a difference of 38, 29, and 21 percent between females and males when they speak to teachers, relatives, and friends, respectively.

As a whole, among these students, Arabic is the dominant language when they talk to their parents, and English is dominant while talking to friends.

The participants were also surveyed about their preference of language among Arabic and English when they are in different situations like markets, offices, restaurants, traveling, and college/University. The responses received have been shown in Table.2 below-

	Market		Office		Travelling		Restaurant		College/University	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Arabic	77	12	82	13	72	11	81	13	79	12
English	13	4	8	3	18	5	9	3	11	4

Table.2

This second set of questions was again analyzed separately for male and female students to compare the students' preferences when they use Arabic and English languages in different situations like markets, offices, restaurants, traveling, and college/University. The concerned comparisons have been explained with the help of a bar graph in Fig.5 and Fig.6

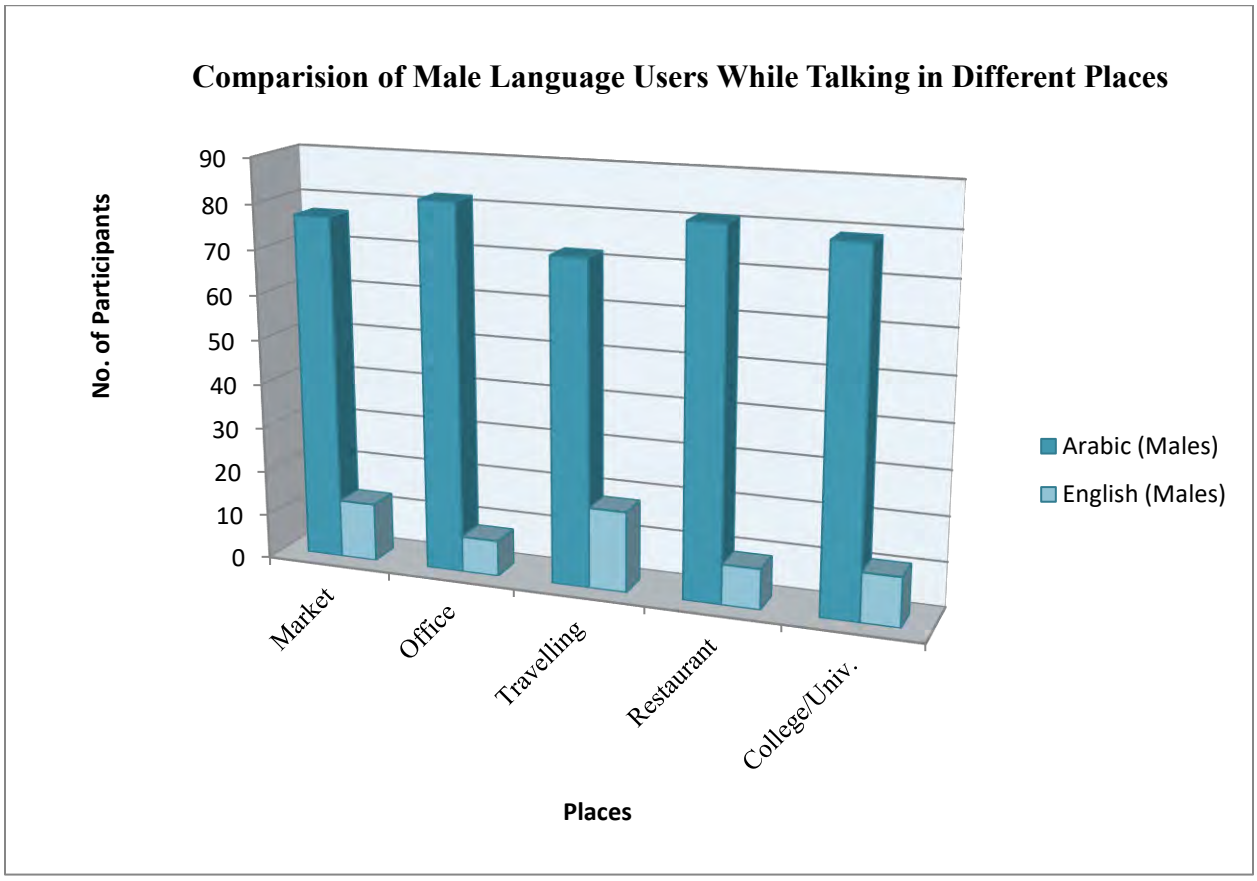


Fig.5

From Fig.5 we study that out of 90 males, most of them prefer to use Arabic in different places like markets, offices, traveling, restaurants, and colleges/Universities. It is noted that 77 males prefer to use Arabic when they go for shopping in comparison to 13 males who make use

of English. Surprisingly, it is also found that in offices, 82 males prefer to use Arabic over the English language used by only 8 participants. During traveling, 72 students choose to use Arabic over English as compared to 18 who use English. When they are out with their friends and families in a restaurant, 81 students use Arabic to communicate, and 9 use English. With the teachers and others too in colleges/Universities, 79 male students prefer to make use of the Arabic language while 11 opt for English to communicate.

16 female participants, when asked the same question, responded differently, findings of which have been elaborated with the help of Fig.6.

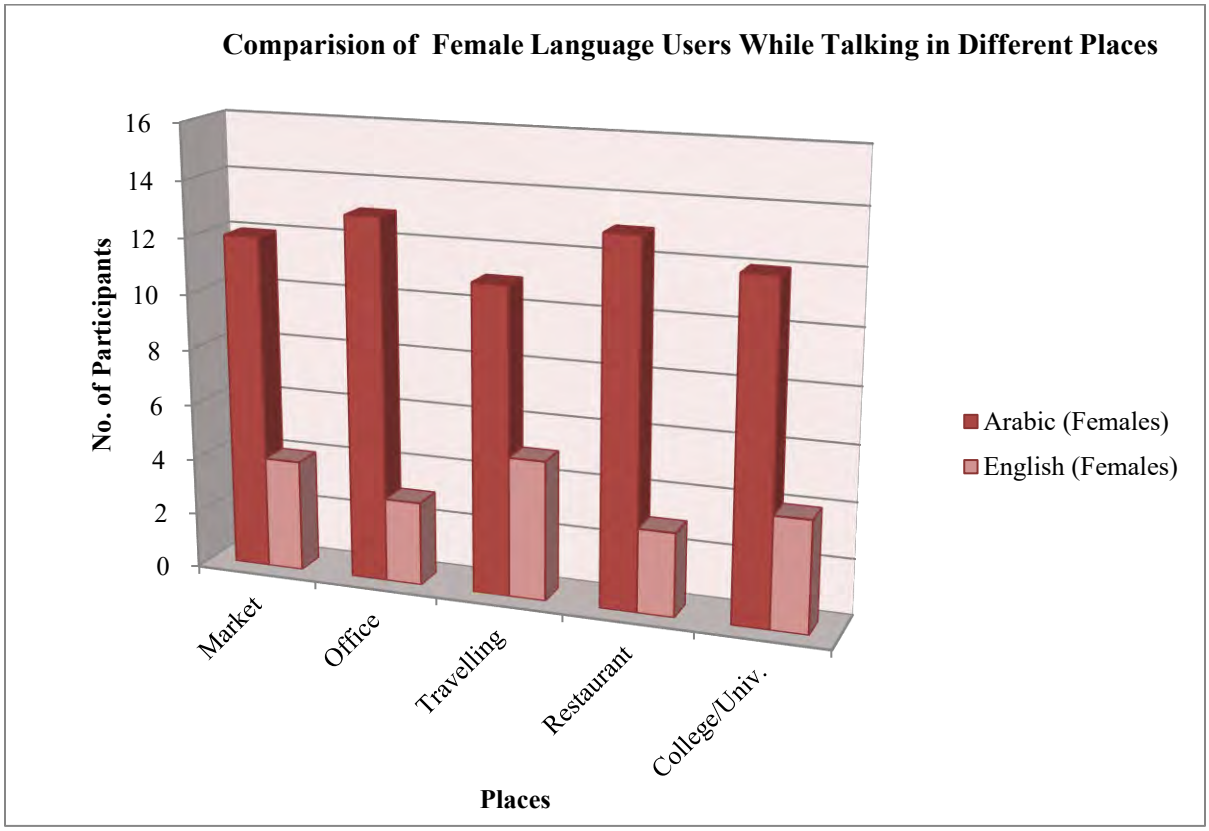


Fig.6

Fig.6 illustrates the outcome of the comparison between Arabic and English language use by female users. Among females too, preference for Arabic over English was observed while using language in different situations. 12 out of 16 females were found to be using Arabic in comparison to 4 who use English in the markets. Similarly, in offices too, 13 females prefer Arabic over English in contrast to 3 females who use English. While traveling, 11 students use Arabic, and 5 opt for English, which is more than any other situation. In a restaurant, 13 females prefer to use

Arabic to place their orders and chat with families compared to 3 who use English for the same. In colleges, it was found that 12 females use Arabic, and 4 prefer to use English in formal settings. There was also a comparison made in the percentage of language use preferences among males versus females in different situations of being at places like markets, offices, traveling, restaurants, and colleges/Universities. Fig. 7 shows the percentage of males versus females who prefer to use Arabic at respective places.

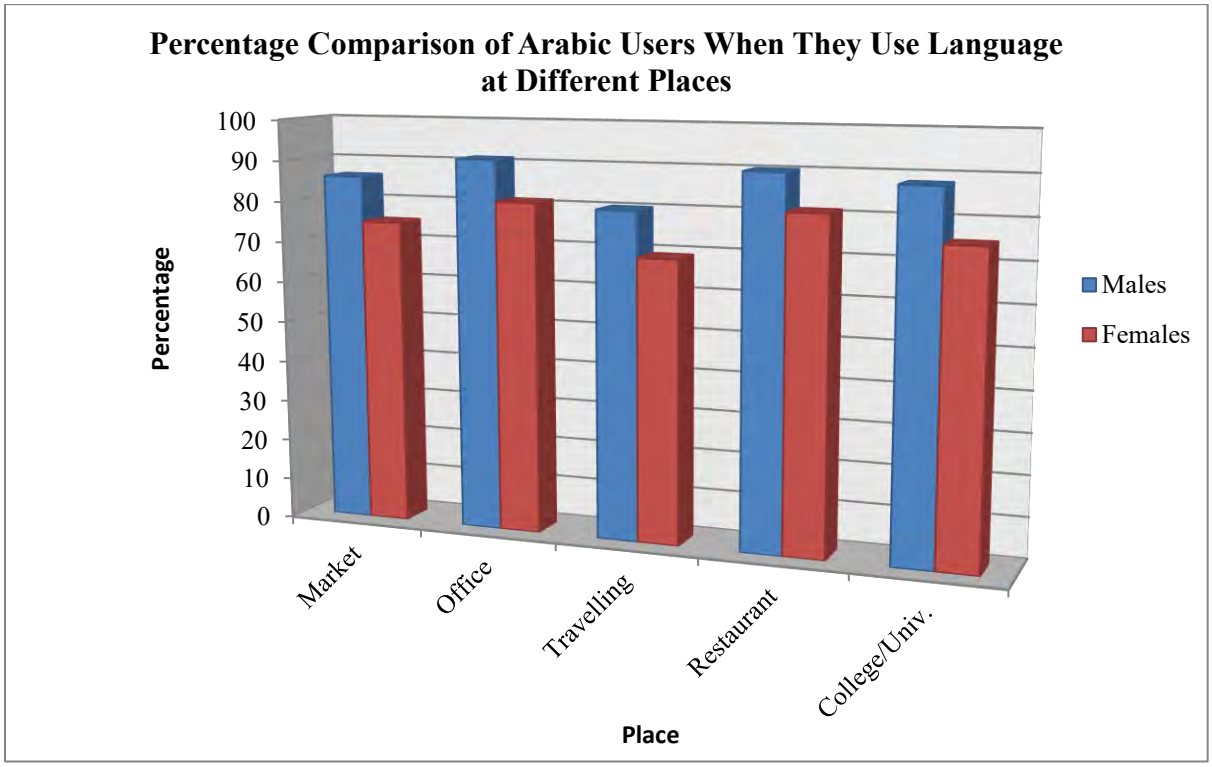


Fig.7

The graph shows a comparison of Arabic use among males versus female students in different places like markets, offices, traveling, restaurants, and colleges/Universities. It is apparent that males make use of more Arabic under all conditions. When in the market, almost 86 percent of males use Arabic, and only 75 percent of females use Arabic. In Offices, however, a large percentage of males, i.e., 91 percent of males use Arabic as opposed to 81 percent of females. 69 percent of female students use Arabic while traveling. When compared to men, we find that 80 percent of them use Arabic. Furthermore, it is noticed that 81 percent of females use Arabic when they go to restaurants as opposed to 90 percent of males who use Arabic in restaurants. In colleges,

it is noticed that 88 percent of males use Arabic in comparison to 75 percent of the female students who use Arabic in colleges and universities.

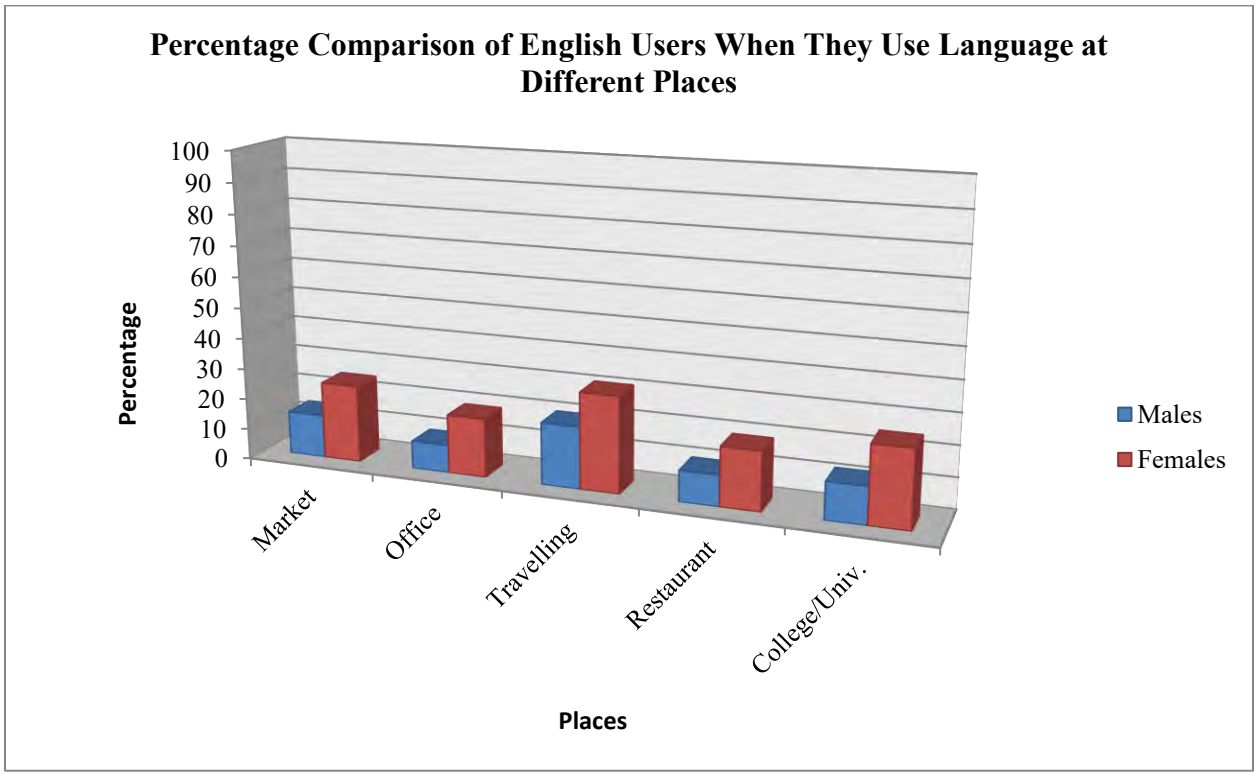


Fig.8

As we analyze Fig.8, we see an impressive variation in English Language use among males and females. Though both genders prefer more English in offices, there is a difference in the number of females compared to males. While almost 19 percent make use of English in offices, only 9 percent of males use it. In markets, 14 percent of males use Arabic, and 25 percent of females prefer the same. While traveling, 31 percent of females realize the importance of English while traveling and only 20 percent of males do so. In restaurants, it is observed that 10 percent of males use English as compared to 19 percent of females. In colleges and universities, only 12 percent of males use English, while 25 percent of females are involved in the same.

Among these learners, Arabic is the dominant language in offices while English is realized to be useful while traveling, suggesting the global nature of the language.

The third set of questions was a seven-item question prepared to analyze participants' attitudes and motivations towards using English as a language. Participants were provided with a

Likert scale, and their responses, along with the mean response, were collected and analyzed to calculate its 'mean' and 'mode.'

Table.3 below shows the responses of male students along with their mean and mode-

	Always (5)	**Frequently (4)**	**Occasionally (3)**	**Seldom (2)**	**Never (1)**	**Mean ($\bar{x}$)**	**Mode**
Reading English Newspaper	2	6	9	29	44	**1.8**	**1**
Reading English Magazines	4	5	14	29	38	**2.0**	**1**
Reading English Books	8	16	32	25	9	**2.9**	**3**
Listening to English Radio programme	3	15	22	38	12	**2.5**	**2**
Listening English Music	24	18	28	14	6	**3.4**	**3**
Watching English programme on TV	18	26	27	15	4	**3.4**	**3**
Watching English Movie	12	28	23	6	21	**3.0**	**4**

Table.3

(Preferred Activities involving the use of English among Males)

From the data collected, it is observed that when it comes to reading English newspapers, most of the male participants never read English newspapers (as their mode is suggesting). There are 29 males who seldom read the English newspapers while 9 read it occasionally and only 6 who read it frequently and there are only 2 male participants who read these newspapers always. Similarly, 38 male participants never involve in reading English magazines in contrast to 4 admit reading them always. 29 male participants seldom read English magazines while 14 who read it occasionally and only 5 who read it frequently. 32 male participants admit that they occasionally participate in reading English books. 25 of them disclose that they seldom read English books, while 9 say they never read English books. Among those who read English books, 8 participants

declare that they always read English books, while 16 read it frequently. The male participants are seen to be seldom involving in listening to English radio programs. While 12 never listen to such programs, 22 listen to it occasionally. 15 male participants listen to English radio programs frequently, and only 3 admit that they always listen to English radio programs.

In contrast to it, 24 males always listen to English music and 28 who listen to it occasionally. There are 18 who listen to it frequently and 14 who seldom listen to English music. However, there are 6 who say they never listen to music. Male participants show a keen interest in watching English programs, though. 26 out of 90 watch these frequently and 27 occasionally. There are 18 who say they always watch English programs in contrast to 15 and 4 who deny watching English programs on TV. Interestingly, while 21 male participants never watch English movies too, there are again 28 who frequently watch them and 23 who watch these occasionally. While 12 say they always watch English movies, 6 say they seldom watch such things.

Apart from males, females also inquired about the activities involving the use of English and their preference. Table.4 talks about their responses

	Always (5)	**Frequently (4)**	**Occasionally (3)**	**Seldom (2)**	**Never (1)**	**Mean (x̄)**	**Mode**
Reading English Newspaper	0	2	5	9	0	**2.7**	**2**
Reading English Magazines	1	3	8	4	0	**3.1**	**3**
Reading English Books	6	4	6	0	0	**4.0**	**3,5**
Listening to English Radio programme	0	2	4	6	4	**2.3**	**2**
Listening English Music	6	3	7	0	0	**3.9**	**3**
Watching English programme on TV	7	5	3	1	0	**4.1**	**1**
Watching English Movie	7	6	3	0	0	**4.3**	**1**

Table.4

(Preferred Activities involving the use of English among Females)

The above data collected observes that when it comes to reading English newspapers, 9 of the female participants occasionally read English newspapers. There are 9 females who seldom read English newspapers while 2 read it frequently. There are no females who read it always and also those who never read it. Similarly, 8 female participants read English magazines occasionally in contrast to 1, who always admits reading them. There were 4 female participants who seldom read English magazines while 3 who read it frequently. 6 female participants admit that they occasionally participate in reading English books and 6 who say that they read it always. 4 of them disclose that they read English books frequently while none who do not read books or read them seldom. No female participant is seen to be involved in listening to English radio programs always. While 2 listen to such programs frequently, 4 listen to it occasionally. There are, however, 6 female participants who seldom listen to English radio programs and 4 who admit that they never listen to English radio programs. In contrast to it, 6 females always listen to English music and 7 who occasionally listen to it. There are 3 females who listen to it frequently, and none who never listens to English music or may listen to it seldom. Female participants show a keen interest in watching English programs, though. 7 out of 16 always watch these programs. There are 5 who say they frequently watch English programs in contrast to 3 who watch these occasionally. There is one who watches it seldom but none who never watches English TV programs. Interestingly, while 7 female participants always watch English movies, there are again 6 who frequently watch them and 3 who watch these occasionally. Again among females, there is none who doesn't watch English movies.

A comparison has been made to observe the majority of the male participants' reactions to a particular activity in contrast to the majority of female participants' opinions. Fig. 9 shows a comparison of the mean of their preference.

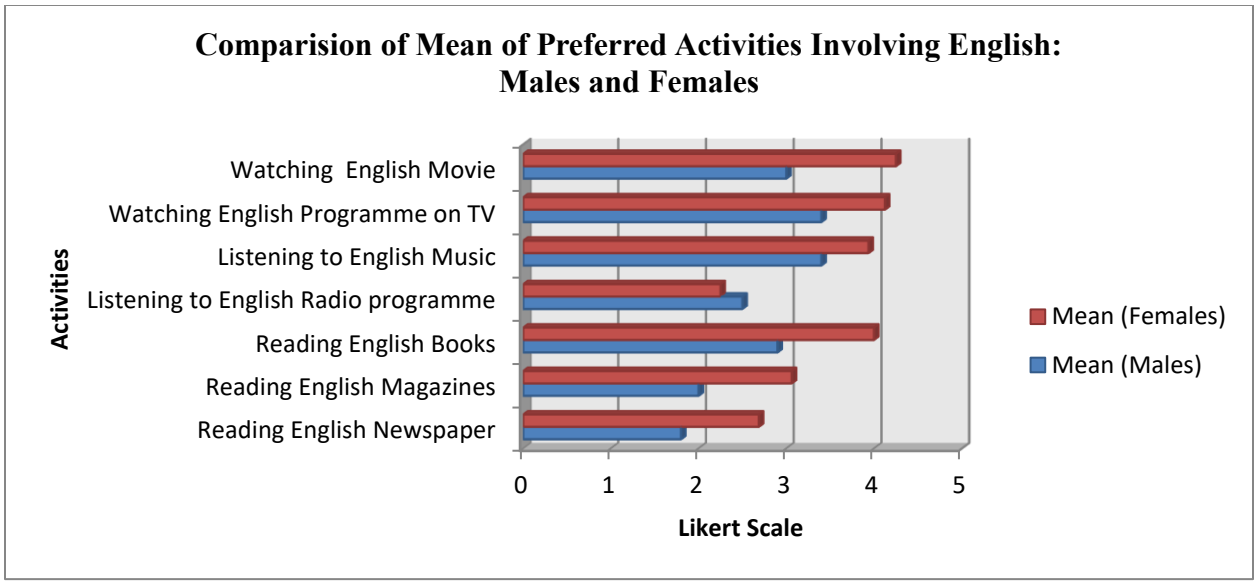


Fig. 9

As we compare males' and females' responses to a particular activity, we find that females are more inclined to do most of the activities mentioned earlier frequently than males. On average, females watch English movies more than frequently, in contrast to which males watch it occasionally. Female participants accept that they are also frequent in watching English programs on TV while males, in general, are a little more than occasional in the same. When it comes to listening to English music, female participants have an ear towards English music as they listen to it a little frequently, which is slightly more than males' preferences. In reading English books, females are way ahead to males, and they read English books frequently while males do the same a little less than occasionally. While female participants admit reading English magazines sometimes enough, males seldom read these magazines, which is similar to reading English newspapers. However, more males are interested in listening to radio programs in English as compared to females who do that seldom.

The fourth set of questions was a nine-item question, prepared to analyze participants' perceptions towards the importance of the English language. Participants were again provided with a Likert scale, and their responses, along with the mean response, were collected and analyzed to calculate its 'mean' and 'mode'.

Table.5 below shows the responses of male students along with their 'mean' and 'mode'-

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	No Idea (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean (x̄)	Mode
To get a good job	22	39	Nil	29	Nil	3.6	4
To develop my personality	35	42	Nil	10	3	4.1	4
To complete my Graduation	41	34	Nil	9	6	4.1	5
To pursue Higher Education	25	27	9	35	3	3.7	2
To read English Newspaper, novels, etc.	16	23	15	31	5	3.2	2
To communicate with non-Saudi speakers	8	31	17	29	5	3.1	4
To know about English culture and society	15	21	26	13	15	3.1	3
To know about current events	8	17	16	37	12	2.7	2
To behave like native speakers	14	26	12	38	Nil	3.2	2

Table.5

(Perception of Importance of English Language among Males)

The responses of male students to this set of questions were analyzed to develop an idea of how these learners perceive the English language and what is the importance of this language in their opinion. The data concluded that 39 males out of 90 agree that English is essential to get a good job. In contrast to it, there were 29 who disagree with the fact, and they don't see English as an important entity to get a good job. However, there are 22 who strongly agree with the fact that English is extremely important to get the job. When asked if English is important to develop a

personality, there are 35 who strongly agree and 42 who agree. There are 10 and 3 who disagree and strongly disagree with the fact. 41 males feel that they need English to complete their graduation, and 34 agree to it. However, at the same time, there are 9 who disagree and 6 who strongly disagree with it. 35 males out of 90 do not see English as an important factor to pursue their higher education, and 3 strongly join them in disagreement. But there are 25 who strongly acknowledge that English is required to pursue higher education, and 27 support them in agreement. There are, however, 9 who have no idea regarding the same. 16 males strongly believe that English is required to read English newspapers and novels. They are supported by 23 in agreement. 31 strongly disagree with this statement, and 5 strongly disagree. There are, at the same time, 15 who have no idea about it. 31 male participants acknowledge that they need English to communicate with non-Saudi speakers and are strongly backed by 8 in agreement. While 29 think they do not need English to be able to do so, 5 strongly supports the denial. Still, there are 17 who form no opinion about it. 15 males strongly believe that they need English to know about culture and society, and 21 agree with them. But there are 13 who disagree and 15 who strongly disagree to the fact. 26 males do not seem to have any opinion about the matter. 17 males want to learn English as they believe it can help keep themselves updated with the current events. There are 8 who strongly agree to it and 16 who have no idea. However, 37 do not keep the same faith, and 12 strongly reject this idea. There are 26 who say they want to learn English to behave like native speakers and 14 who strongly believe in it. However, 38 strongly disagree with this point, and 12 forms no such opinion.

Apart from males, females were also asked about their opinion on the importance of the English language. Table.6 talks about their responses-

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	No Idea (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean (x̄)	Mode
To get a good job	4	7	NIL	5	NIL	3.6	4
To develop my personality	11	5	NIL	NIL	NIL	4.7	5
To complete my Graduation	13	3	NIL	NIL	NIL	4.8	5
To pursue Higher Education	6	4	2	4	NIL	3.8	5

To read English Newspaper, novels, etc.	2	5	5	4	Nil	**3.3**	**4,3**
To communicate with non-Saudi speakers	2	5	1	5	3	**2.9**	**4**
To know about English culture and society	3	2	2	6	3	**2.8**	**2**
To know about current events	1	3	2	5	5	**2.4**	**2,1**
To behave like native speakers	3	6	Nil	5	2	**3.2**	**4**

Table.6

(Perception of Importance of English Language among Females)

Female students' responses were analyzed to develop an idea of how they perceive the English language and its importance in their opinion. The data revealed that 4 females strongly agree that English is essential to get a good job. In contrast to it, there were 5 who disagree with the fact. However, there are 7 who agree that English and they see English as an important entity to get a good job. When asked if English is important to develop a personality, there are 11 who strongly agree, and 5 agree to the fact. There is, however, no one who disagrees with reality. 13 females feel that they need English to complete their graduation, and 3 more agrees to it. Again none disagrees with it. 6 females out of 16 see English as an important factor to pursue their higher education, and 4 joins them in agreement. However, there are 4 who disagree that English is required to pursue higher education and 5 who have no idea. 2 females strongly believe that English is required to read English newspapers and novels. They are supported by 5 in agreement. No one strongly disagrees with this statement, but 4 disagree. At the same time, there are 5 who have no idea about it. 2 female participants acknowledge that they need English to communicate with non-Saudi speakers and are backed by 5 in agreement. While 3 think they do not need English to do so, 5 support the denial. Still, there is 1 who forms no opinion about it. 3 females strongly believe that they need English to explore about the culture and society, and 2 agree with them. But there are 6 who disagree and 3 who strongly disagree with the fact. 2 females do not seem to have any opinion about the matter. 1 female wants to learn English as they believe it can help keep oneself updated with the current events. She is supported by 3 who agree to it and 2 who have no idea. However, there are 5 who do not keep the same faith, and 5 strongly reject this idea. There

are 3 who say they want to learn English so that they can behave like native speakers and 5 who believe in it. However, 2 strongly disagree with this point, and 5 forms a negative opinion too.

A comparison has also been made to observe the majority of the male participants' ideology compared to the majority of female participants' opinions to find who has a stronger view of these statements. Fig. 10 shows a comparison of the mean of their opinions-

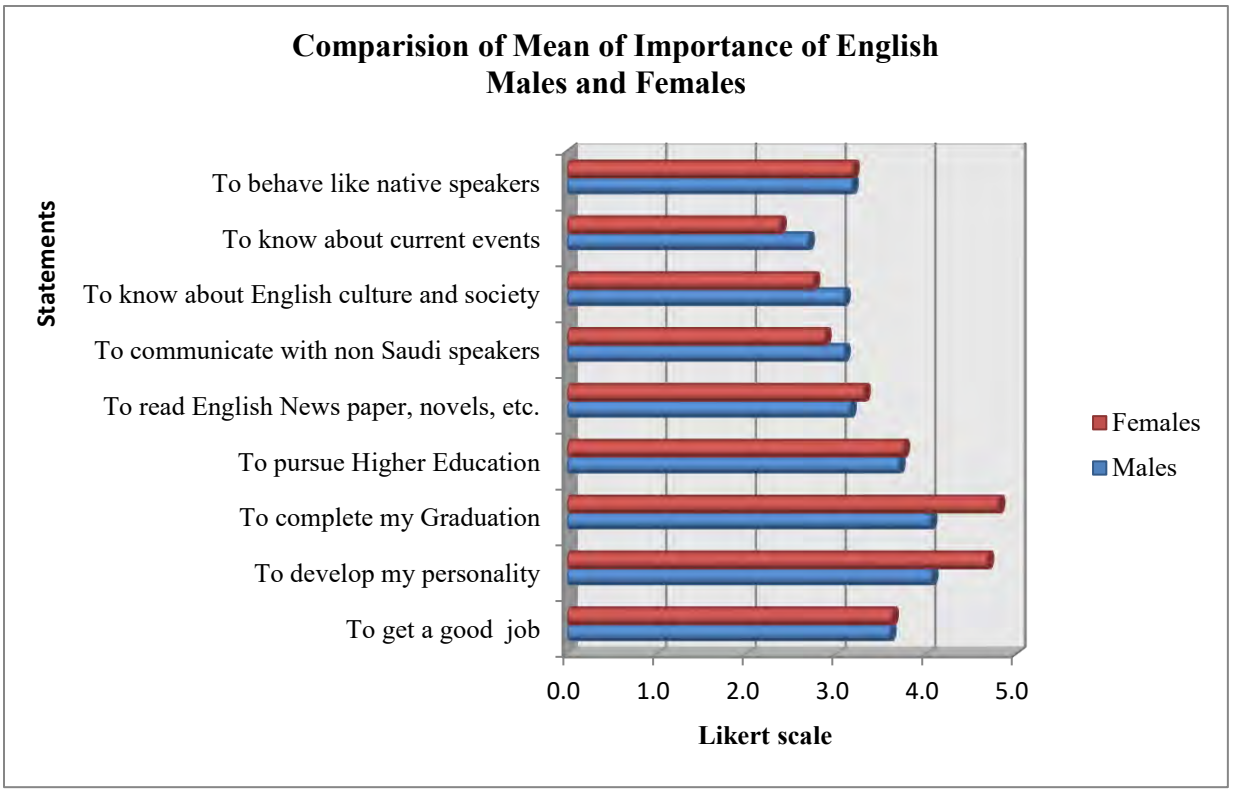


Fig.10

As we look at the opinions of males versus females, we find that both the genders have similar beliefs towards learning English to acquire native-like behavior; both seem to have no idea about it. However, to look upon English as a source of updating current affairs, males seem to have no idea about it, while females seem to be rejecting the idea. The importance of English in knowing about English society and culture is again met with more ignorance by males than females, who seem to be rejecting the idea. So is the case with using English as a tool for communicating with non-Saudi speakers, where males form no opinion and females a little edgy towards rejection. Again as males have an opinion about the importance of English to be able to read newspapers and novels, females, this time, seem to be moving towards an agreement with the idea. Both, however, seem to agree with the opinion that English is required to pursue higher education. Male

participants agree that English is necessary for framing one's personality and completing one's graduation. Females, at the same time, more than agree to these statements. With respect to getting a good job, both males and females form a similar opinion of moving towards acceptance of the idea.

Hence, the majority of the participants agree that English is important to shape one's personality and to complete one's graduation.

The final set of questions was a six-item questionnaire explicitly designed to identify whether learners are positive or negative towards English as a language. Here too, males and females were first analyzed separately, and then their means were compared to form a general opinion. Table.7 shows the details of responses of male participants-

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	No Idea (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean (x̄)	Mode
English is an important part of education program	81	9	Nil	Nil	Nil	**4.9**	**5**
English should not be a compulsory subject in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia.	Nil	Nil	12	27	51	**1.6**	**1**
Learning English is a waste of time.	Nil	Nil	7	25	58	**1.4**	**1**
English should be the medium of instruction in the secondary schools in Saudi Arabia.	7	12	5	31	35	**2.2**	**1**
The teaching of English should start as early as the first grade in the Saudi schools.	24	38	6	11	11	**3.6**	**4**
When I hear someone speaks English well, I wish I could speak like him.	64	26	Nil	Nil	Nil	**4.7**	**5**

Table.7

(Perception of Male Participants' Positive or Negative Perception towards English)

The responses of male students to this set of questions were analyzed to understand the attitude of male participants towards English, i.e., positive or negative. 81 males strongly agree with the fact that English is an important part of the educational program. Other 9 too, agree with the fact, and none disagrees. Hence, 51 male participants seem to be strongly disagreeing with the fact that English should not be a compulsory subject in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia. Their disagreement is joined with 27 more participants, and there are 12 who do not form an opinion about it. To the statement that 'Learning English is a waste of time,' there are 58 who strongly disagree and the other 25 who disagree. Still, there are 7 who have no view on this. When asked if 'English should be the medium of instruction in the secondary schools in Saudi Arabia.' There are 7 who strongly agree and 12 others who agree. A big population, 35 and 31, strongly disagree and disagree with the fact and 5 does not form an opinion on the same. There are, however, 28 who strongly believes that the teaching of English should start as early as 38 other participants support the first grade in the Saudi schools and them. The other 11 strongly disagree with this idea, joined by 11 more. 6 male participants cannot make their opinion on this matter. 64 male participants also admitted that when they hear someone speaks English well, they wish they could talk like him. This positive attitude towards the language is supported by the other 26 participants, too, and none disagrees with the wish.

The female students' opinions these matters were recorded and represented in the Table. 8 below-

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	No Idea (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean (x̄)	Mode
English is an important part of education program	12	4	Nil	Nil	Nil	4.8	5
English should not be a compulsory subject in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia.	Nil	Nil	3	8	5	1.9	2
Learning English is a waste of time.	Nil	Nil	3	9	4	1.9	2

English should be the medium of instruction in the secondary schools in Saudi Arabia.	**2**	**6**	**1**	**6**	**1**	**3.1**	**4,2**
The teaching of English should start as early as the first grade in the Saudi schools.	**9**	**5**	**Nil**	**2**	**Nil**	**4.3**	**5**
When I hear someone speaks English well, I wish I could speak like him.	**14**	**2**	**Nil**	**Nil**	**Nil**	**4.9**	**5**

Table.8

(Perception of Female Participants' Positive or Negative Perception towards English)

Female students' responses were analyzed to develop an understanding of what is the attitude of female participants towards English. It was found that 12 females strongly agree that English is an important part of an educational program, and the other 4 agree with the fact, and none disagrees. Hence, 5 female participants seem to be strongly disagreeing that English should not be a compulsory subject in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia, and their disagreement is joined with 8 more participants. There are 3 who do not form an opinion about it. To the statement that 'Learning English is a waste of time,' there are 4 who strongly disagree and the other 9 who disagree. Still, there are 3 who have no view on this. When asked if 'English should be the medium of instruction in the secondary schools in Saudi Arabia', there are 2 who strongly agree and 6 others who agree. At the same time, there is 1 participant who strongly disagrees, and the other 6 who disagree with the fact and 1 does not form an opinion on the same. However, there are 9 who strongly believe that the teaching of English should start as early as the first grade in the Saudi schools, and 5 other participants support them. The other 2 disagree with this idea. 14 female participants also admitted that when they hear someone speaks English well, they wish they could speak like him. This positive attitude towards the language is supported by the other 2 participants, too, and none disagrees with the wish.

Another comparison was made to analyze and develop an understanding of the participants' attitudes towards the English language of the male participants in contrast to the majority of female

participants' opinions to observe who has a stronger opinion of these statements. Fig. 11 shows a comparison of the mean of their opinions-

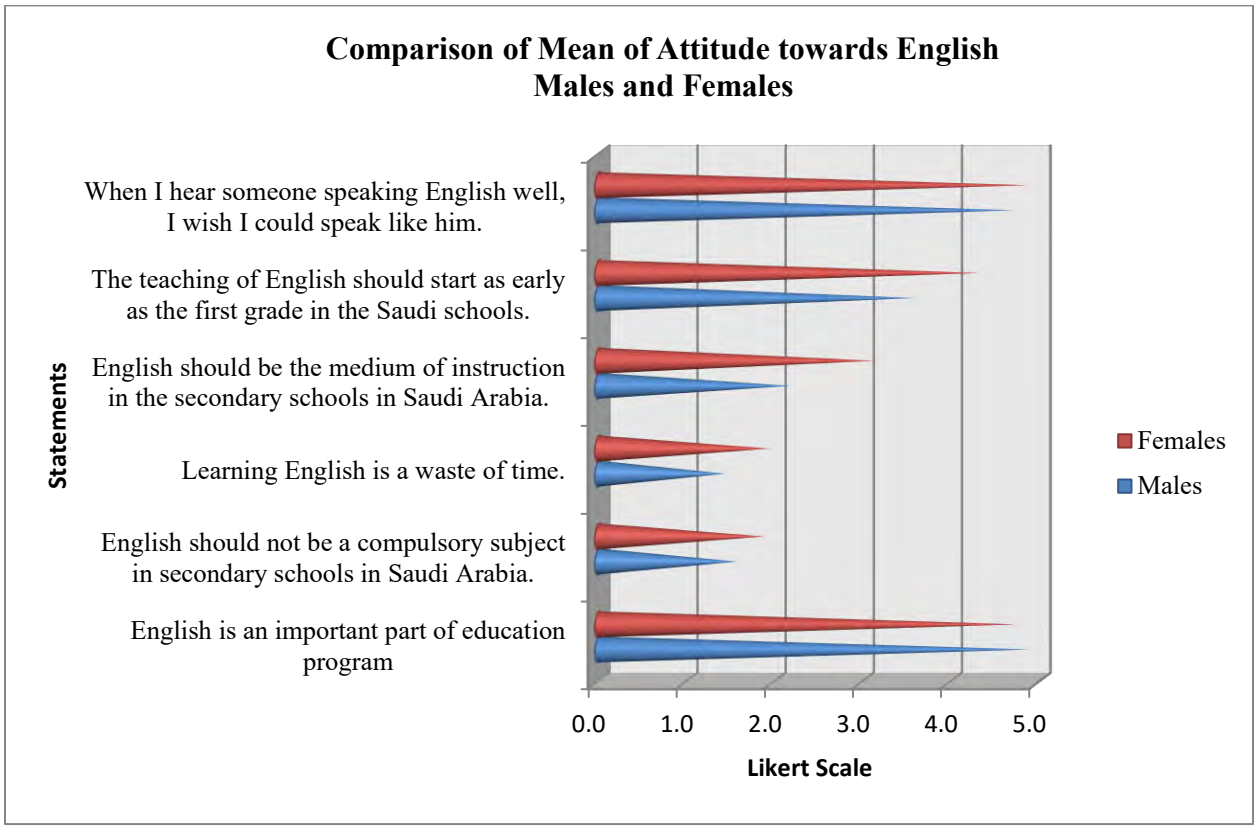


Fig.11

A glance at the opinions of males versus females gives us the idea that both the genders appear to strongly agree with the idea that when they hear someone speaking in English, they too wish they could do the same. In response to the statement, 'The teaching of English should start as early as the first grade in the Saudi schools' females seem to be agreeing with the opinion while males have started forming such opinion. When asked if English should be the medium of instruction in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia, females seem to have no opinion about it at all while males disagree with the fact. This highlights that these participants are more comfortable with their mother tongue as medium of instruction as compared to English. However, showing a positive attitude towards English as a language, these participants disagreed with the statement that learning English is a waste of time and that English should not be a compulsory subject in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia. This attitude marks a positive sign for the future betterment of

conditions of English in Saudi Arabia. Besides, it is delightful to notice that both genders strongly agree that English is an important part of the education program and should be strengthened.

Conclusion

In this exciting survey, many useful and encouraging findings were found. It is heartening to notice that females of Saudi Arabia have started taking more interest in using English in different situations and with different people compared to males. While friends are a group of people with whom these participants feel more relaxed and enthusiastic to converse in English, both the genders prefer to speak Arabic with parents at home. It is interesting to analyze that both genders realize the importance of English when traveling, which is a feather on the cap of 'English being the global language.' It was also found to notice that these participants frequently involve in watching English programs and movies, along with listening to English music. This may help in further improvement of their English. Teachers can also take notice of this fact and involve such Language learning activities that include watching and listening to English programs. The males and the females also realize the importance of the English language in getting good grades in their Graduation and in building up their dynamic personality, which is a big milestone covered by the teachers of Saudi Arabia. They see English as an important part of education and wish to attain a good command over English. The findings of the survey are highly motivating and encouraging, and it is hoped that the academicians will exploit it to the full in further betterment of the education level of Saudi Arabia.

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ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

Coronavirus (Covid-19) and Mental Health Concerns of University Students in KSA: An Empirical Study at Qassim University

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Abstract

Covid-19 has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has also been affected by the pandemic; and, as a result, has been taking many steps like suspension of Umrah pilgrimage, suspension of air travel, rail, and road transport, closure of malls, nation-wide curfew and closure of all the educational institutions. Such restrictive measures, though necessary, have crippling effects on the economy, the social life of the people, and the psychological health of the citizens. The closure of educational institutions and the pervasive atmosphere of fear and uncertainty can affect the mental health of the students in the KSA. The present study was undertaken to assess the mental health of the students during this critical period of Covid-19. The undergraduate students of EFL programme of Qassim University were randomly chosen for the study. Qualitative and quantitative questionnaires were sent to students via email. Stress levels were measured by Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10). Generalised

Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) was used to assess the symptoms of Anxiety among the students. Depression was studied with the help of the German version of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression scale (CES-D). 95.3% of the respondents were evaluated to have moderate to severe stress while 53.5% of the respondents showed symptoms of severe depression. The study clearly demonstrated that, the present environment of Covid-19 has affected the mental health of the students, and that there is an urgent need to address this aspect by the concerned authorities.

Introduction

Coronavirus disease (**COVID-19**) is a highly infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern on January 30, 2020, and on March 11, 2020it was declared a pandemic. Preventive measures, like wearing mask, social distancing, and isolation were recommended so as to contain its spread. KSA confirmed its first case on March 02, 2020; and, thereafter, took many measures as to contain the disease spread, like initially suspension of Umrah pilgrimage, suspension of international and domestic flights, trains, buses, and so on. Shopping malls, restaurants and parks were closed as well. Later on, nation-wide night curfew was imposed. On March 08, 2020 the Ministry of Education in the KSA ordered that, all educational institutions will be closed to contain the transmission of the virus. Such actions and restrictions affect every section of society and in every possible manner i.e. socially, economically, and psychologically. In this context, nevertheless, there are studies on the impact of the epidemic on the mental health of general public, medical staff, children, adults, and students (Q. Chen et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020).Although the complete impact of Covid-19 on education and the students is yet to unfold and thus still unknown yet, it is expected that the mental health of students has already been considerably affected(Araújo et al., 2020; Sahu, 2020). The closure of university, and the promotion of measures, like social distancing, may lead to a feeling of social isolation among students, which adversely affects their mental well-being (Bavel et al 2020). Students are likely to feel the immense pressure for academic performance due to disruptions in their studies, and the same may affect their mental health (Mikolajczyk et al 2008).

The Covid-19 pandemic has created an environment of fear and uncertainty, and it is going to significantly affect the mental health of the general population, including the students with

symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression (Kang et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). In this regard, the present study is an attempt to understand the mental state of the students on the psychological parameters of stress, anxiety, and depression in general; and the students of Qassim University in particular.

Stress, Anxiety, and Depression

Stress may be defined as a multi-dimensional pathology, which results quite often from a dynamic interaction between an individual and the environment (Yazdani et al, 2010). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define stress as an outcome of an individual's ability to manage the existing situation.

Stress may lead to the onset of anxiety and depression. A direct relationship between stress, anxiety, and depression is well-known (Manpreet & Maheshwari, 2015; Papazisis et al., 2008). According to the Psychology Foundation of Australia (2014), these are indicative of negative state of emotional symptoms. On the one hand, anxiety is associated with a state of excessive worry and fear that may happen due to a reaction to the perceived threat (Passer & Smith, 2009). On the other, depression is defined as a state of sadness, helpless feelings and hopelessness that an individual experiences (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, 2013).

Mental Health Scales

Stress levels were measured by the German version of the Perceived Stress Scale-10 (Klein et al, 2016). The PSS-10 has been found to exhibit excellent psychometric properties and good reliability among multicultural populations, different categories of population, including university students (Roberti et al, 2006; Örücü and Demir, 2009). The PSS is a self-reported stress level by the respondents to the 10-item questionnaire. Each question is rated on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 4 for never too often on the basis of the frequency of feelings about the 10 items of the questionnaire. The PSS-10 score is calculated as the sum of score of all the items. The score can vary from 0 to 40 for an individual. Higher the PSS-10 score the higher is the stress level (Cohen et al, 1983). Scores from 0-13 is considered as low stress. Scores from 14-26 is considered as moderate stress. Scores from 27-40 is considered as high perceived stress

Anxiety level was measured by the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) questionnaire. This is a self-report 7-item questionnaire to assess the mental health status of an individual during the last two weeks. The items in the questionnaire enquire about the frequency and degree to which an individual may have been bothered by feeling anxious, nervous, not able to control worrying, worrying too much, not able to relax, feeling so restless that it is difficult to sit still, and feeling afraid about future happening. GAD-7 questionnaire has been validated as a screening tool to measure anxiety even among general populations (Lowe et al 2008). A four-point Likert scale is used ranging from 0 to 3 for responses ranging from not at all to nearly every day regarding the frequency of experiencing each symptom. The final scores range from 0 to 21. 5, 10 and 15 represent the cut-off points for mild, moderate and severe levels of anxiety respectively. The GAD-7 has specificity of 82%, and sensitivity of 89% for anxiety disorder at score of 10. Cronbach's alpha of GAD-7 questionnaire for internal consistency is 0.79–0.91(Spitzer et al, 2006)

Depressive symptoms were measured by the German version of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression scale (CES-D). The CES-D was developed in 1976 in the United States of America [Radloff (a)] to study depressive symptoms in the adult population, but later on, it has also been found useful among young adults and adolescents as well [Radloff (b)]. The scale is, now, widely used to measure depression in general and clinical population throughout the world. The internal consistency of CES-D has been found good, and its Cronbach's alpha scores are consistently greater than 0.80 across youth populations in the west and non-western population, including Arabic(Kazarian and Taher). The questionnaire comprises 20 items, and all the items are evaluated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 to 3 for occurred never to always respectively in the past one week. The items include "I felt depressed, I felt lonely". To take care of the response bias, four items in the questionnaire at serial number 4,8,12, and 16 are positively worded. Their score is reversed while calculating the sum total of all the items. The final score ranges from 0 to 60. The CES-D provides score of 16 as cutoff score for identifying individuals, who are at risk for clinical depression with reliable specificity, sensitivity, and good internal consistency (Lewinsohn, Seeley, Roberts, & Allen, 1997). Rank of 0 to 15 -- No or mild depression 16 to 23 ---- Moderate depression 24 to 60 ---- Severe depression

Review of Literature

There are still not very many studies about the mental health of students during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be of help and interest to review the relevant literature on mental health of even other social groups not only during this pandemic but during earlier similar outbreaks as well. The stress and depression experienced by EFL students and professors should therefore take seriously by the university (Basser & Zeigler-Hill, 2020). In EFL learning, the value of communicative competence should be taken considerably for the students to develop language skills without fear or anxiety (Al-Ahdal, 2020; Alkhudiry & Al-Ahdal, 2020; Almakrob & Al-Ahdal, 2020; Almansour & Al-Ahdal, 2020).

Healthcare providers may also develop psychiatric symptoms, because they are closely associated with stress full community events. Lee et al (2018) studied the mental health of healthcare providers of Singapore during the outbreak in 2003. Their study showed that, 27% of healthcare workers reported symptoms related to psychiatry. According to Shantanu and Kearsley (2020), the healthcare providers of Korea dealing with MERS-CoV outbreak of 2015 had developed post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. Medical Health providers reported high levels of stress and anxiety during the ebola outbreak in Congo and Sierra Leone in the year of 2014 (Park et al, 2018). (Wang et al, 2020) administered an online survey among the general population. They employed Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-2) to study mental health. They found that, the 16.5% had moderate to severe depressive symptoms; 28.8% had moderate to severe anxiety symptoms while 8.1% showed moderate to severe stress symptoms. (Xiao et al, 2020a; 2020b) studied the mental health of the medical staff treating patients of Covid-19 and individuals in self-isolation for 14 days using a self-rated questionnaire. In both the studies, they found that anxiety was positively correlated with stress and negatively with sleep quality. Zandifar and Badrfam (2020) pointed out the role of uncertainty, information unpredictability, and social isolation in the context of Iran as factors contributing to stress and mental morbidity. (Shigemura et al, 2020) highlighted the economic consequences of COVID-19, and its impact on the well-being of the citizens, and the likely higher levels of panic hand fear they are to undergo. The study also identified the sections of population, which are at higher risk of mental health issues such as COVID-19 patients, and their families, Healthcare providers and individuals with pre-existing physical or psychiatric conditions. (Dong and Bouey, 2020) stressed that, covid-19 can potentially

lead to a mental health crisis, which would warrant a massive psychosocial crisis management. (Ho et al, 2020) advocated for increased screening of patient with mental disorders, and the role of accurate information in minimizing the pathologies such as paranoia and panic about the virus and its transmission. Asmundson and Taylor (2020a, b) have examined the effect of Covid-19 on the population from the angle of health anxiety. During an outbreak of highly contagious diseases, health anxiety may shoot to excessive levels due to incorrect, exaggerated, or irresponsible information from the mass media. The authors have highlighted the role of evidence-based studies, especially in awareness-raising campaigns. Healthcare providers are at risk of adverse mental conditions during the COVID-19 due to the reasons like the risk of infection, long duty hours, and loneliness (Kang et al, 2020). Liu et al (2020) have shed light on the need for mental health experts to work in close cooperation with the healthcare providers in critical care units in order to manage the stress levels, in addition to reducing the chances of depression. Tsai and Wilson (2020) particularly argued that, the homeless population has a greater risk of getting infected with COVID-19, and are more prone to mental health issues. Lockdown conditions imposed by various governments are likely to affect negatively the homeless people. Zhai and Du (2020a) addressed the issue of discrimination and isolation being faced by Chinese students in some countries in the wake of COVID-19. According to their study, the atmosphere of fear and alienation can affect the mental health of Chinese students studying abroad, and may lead to problems such as fear, denial, stress, and anxiety. They pointed out that care and advocacy can play a vital part in the maintenance of mental health. Along similar lines of inquiry, Zhai and Du (2020b) have studied the effect of COVID on the mental health of college students. 1 out of 5 college students globally have been diagnosed with one or the other mental disorder as per the study conducted by Auerbach et al. (2016) for WHO and Covid can lead to increase in this number.

In quite a different context, Van Bortel et al (2016) examined the psychological impact of Ebola outbreak on individuals, community, and international level. Not only did they they point out acute effects like fear, anxiety, stigma, and isolation; but they also highlighted long-term health issues and trauma. (Francisco Jonathan et al. 2020) contended that, the disruption in the schedule of studies due to closure of educational institutions as a consequence of Covid -19 and associated uncertainties is causing anxiety and depression among the students globally. They also warned that, the psychological effects like anxiety and depression will lead to negative physiological

manifestations in students. Measures taken by different countries as to contain the spread of the Covid virus shall cause loneliness among young people, and shall cause pain and suffering. Paula et al made an attempt to analyse the psychological effects of covid-19 on the university community that is both students and other University staff. They conducted an online survey on 2530 members of the University of Valladolid, Spain. Their study was conducted on a cross-section of the university using DASS-21 to assess the psychological impact of Covid 19 in the first week of the lockdown. 21.3 percent, 34.1 percent and 28.1 percent of the respondent reported moderate to extreme scores on DASS-21 scale. 15.4 percent of the respondents were analysed and found to have had severe effects of the Covid outbreak. Students from Law and Social Sciences scored higher on scale for anxiety, depression, and stress in comparison to students from Architecture and Engineering. Chang et al (2020) conducted an internet best survey on 3881 students of Guangdong province of China using Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7(GAD-7) and patient health questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9). This study found that, 69.4 percent of the students surveyed had good knowledge of Covid-19. 26.6 percent students had symptoms of anxiety while mild, moderate and severe anxiety incidences were 23.1%, 2.7%, 0.70% respectively. Similarly, overall 21.1% students reflected depressive emotions while mild, moderate and severe incidences of depression was found in 16.9%, 3.1%, 1.0 of these students respectively.

Statement of the Problem

Covid-19 has created an unprecedented situation of scare and uncertainty. The virus belonging to the SARS family, and is highly contagious. WHO has declared it a pandemic, and has advised measures like wearing masks and social distancing to contain the spread of the virus. KSA resorted to various measures like curfew in affected regions, stopping of public transport like railways and buses, suspension of air traffic and closure of all the educational institutions. There are studies that assert that such situations affect the mental health of very large sections of the society, including the students. There are still not very many studies on the effect of Covid-19 on the mental health of the students, and it is still premature to assess the full impact simply for the reason that we are still in the midst of it. Yet, the present study aims to understand the mental health of the students of KSA in general, and of Qassim University in particular on the parameters of stress, anxiety, and depression.

Population of the Study

The undergraduate students of English as a foreign language of Qassim University were chosen for the collection of data. The respondents were chosen randomly irrespective of their gender, age, or academic merit. The questionnaires were sent online, and were anonymous so that the privacy and confidentiality of the target population is ensured. The responses to detailed questionnaires were received from 43 students.

Research Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative questionnaires were sent through the email to the students of EFL of Qassim University who were chosen randomly. The questionnaires also included the set format of questions as suggested by PSS- 10, GAD- 7 and CES-D. The score for each respondent was calculated as described in the particular mental health scale. On the basis of this score, each student was categorised in different degrees of stress, anxiety, and depression as suggested by the respective methods used in this study. An attempt has also been made to quantify the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health of the respondents.

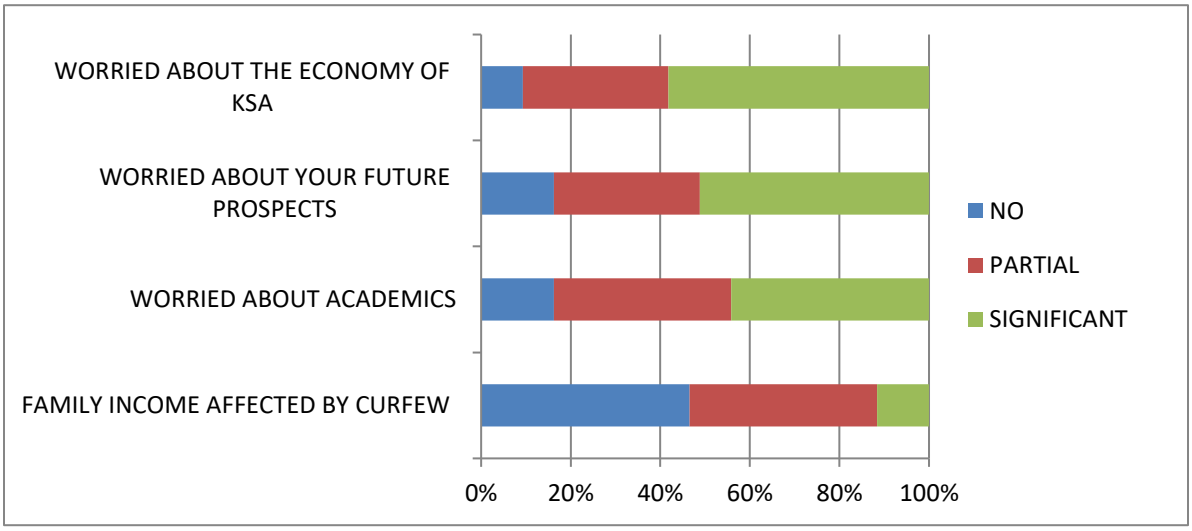
Data Analysis

The respondents were asked the following questions directly related to the impact of Covid-19. They were asked to choose the option between No / Partially / Significantly.

1. Is family income affected by curfew and other restrictions?
2. Are you worried about academics?
3. Are you worried about your future aspects?
4. Are you worried about the economy of KSA?

The responses of the respondents to the questions above have been tabulated in Fig.01 below.

FIGURE - 01



Family income of 53.5% of the respondents has been affected by the curfew, and other restrictions that have been imposed by the government since March 2020. 11.6% of the respondents have reported significant effect on their family income and partially in case of 41.8% while the income of 46.5% is not affected. The above data suggests that, more than half the respondents have been adversely affected by Covid-19 as far as their family income is concerned. Any decline in economic wellbeing of a family can be the reason for distress among the family members including the younger members. The closure of all the educational institutions has caused major disruption in the lives of students. Though the online teaching has been started by all the institutions, including Qassim University; yet, it cannot substitute the classroom teaching. In response to question no 2 an overwhelming majority of83.8% of the respondents are worried about their academics, out of which 44.2% are significantly concerned (Fig 1). It means that, the disruption in academics caused by Covid-19 has made most of the students worried about their studies.

The Covid-19 virus is highly contagious and WHO has warned that, most of the people are likely to get infected sooner or later till such time there is a vaccine for this virus. WHO has also made it known that, the chances for its vaccine in immediate future is unlikely. This kind of scenario has made the younger generation skeptical about their future. In response to Q.no. 3only 16.2% respondents are not worried about their future, and the rest of 83.8% are worried while more than 51% have expressed significant worry. Covid-19 has not only affected the economy of KSA but of almost all the countries. Such an economic environment has hit many vital sectors of KSA

economy like oil and tourism. 80.7% respondents have shown their worry about the economy of KSA out of which 58.1% see the threat to economy as significant. Only 9.3% of the respondent students are not worried about the economy.

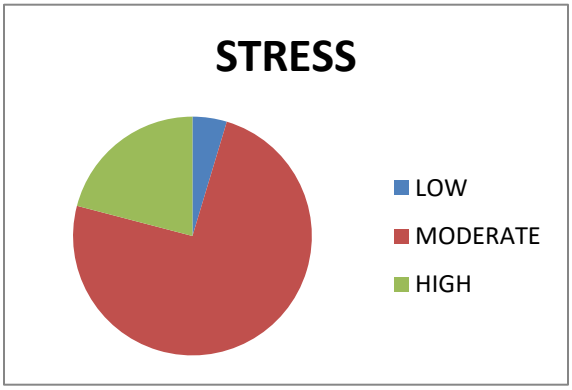
The analyses of the above data on the impact of Covid-19 clearly reveal that, most of the respondent students are tremendously worried about the future. Such an environment of uncertainty and pessimism can lead to mental health issues of the students, therefore, it is important that we study and understand the mental health of the students at this point of time so that the necessary steps may be taken at the level of the universities and the government.

Stress

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) questionnaire was used to assess the stress levels of the respondent students. Students were asked to rate the questions on the scale of 0 to 4, and each individual was assessed as per the total score of all the 10 questions computed as suggested by Cohen et al. (1988). The range of total score for an individual is 0 to 40. The students were categorized in one of the following as per their score:

Low or normal stress(0-13)	4.65%
Moderate stress (14-26)	74.41%
High perceived stress (27-40)	20.93%

FIG. 02

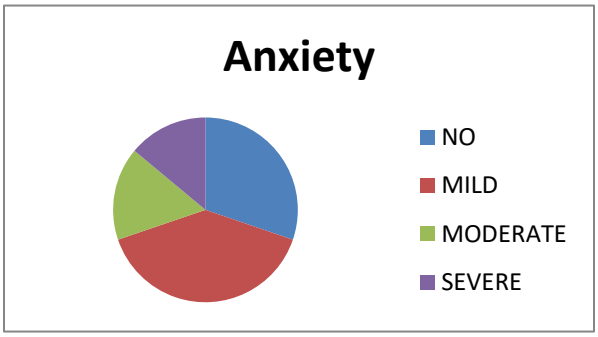


Anxiety

Anxiety levels were measured by 7 item Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) questionnaire, and students were asked to rate each question on a scale of 0 to 3. Each individual is assessed as per the total score which ranges from 0 to 21and categorized as follows:

No Anxiety (0 to 4)	30.23%
Mild Anxiety (5 – 9)	39.53%
Moderate Anxiety (10 – 14)	16.27%
Severe Anxiety (15 – 21)	13.95%

FIG. 03

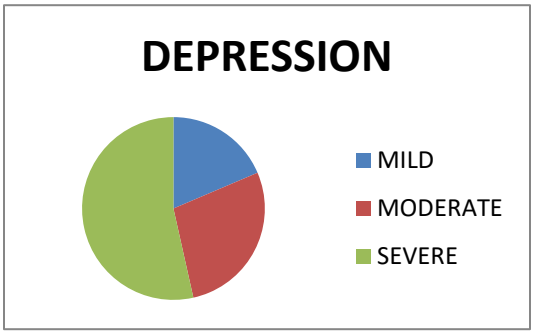


Depression

The German version of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression scale (CES-D) was used to measure depressive symptoms among the respondents. The 20-point questionnaire is rated on scale of 0 to 3, and respondents are categorized by the total of all the 20 items. The score ranges from 0 to 60 and respondents are categorized as following:

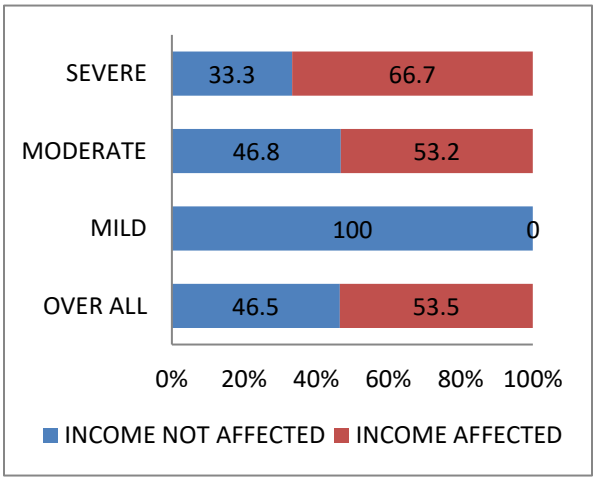
Mild depression (0 to 15)	18.6%
Moderate depression (16 to 23)	27.9%
Severe depression (24 to 60)	53.5%

FIG. 04



The data and the pie charts above depict the mental health of the representative students on the scales of stress, anxiety, and depression at the time of survey conducted (i.e. from June 28, 2020 to July 03, 2020). To better appreciate the effect of Covid-19 on the students, an attempt is being made to compare the mental health parameters of students, who are affected by Covid-19 with those who are not. We have taken two categories here **a.**whose family income is affected versus whose income is not affected **b.** not worried about their academic aspects versus those who are worried. The options of 'partially' and 'significantly' have been combined as per the requirements of comparison here.

PSS-10 FIG 05a FIG. 05b



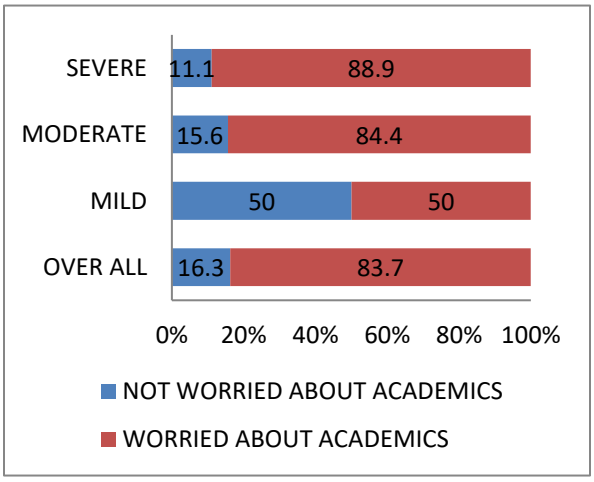
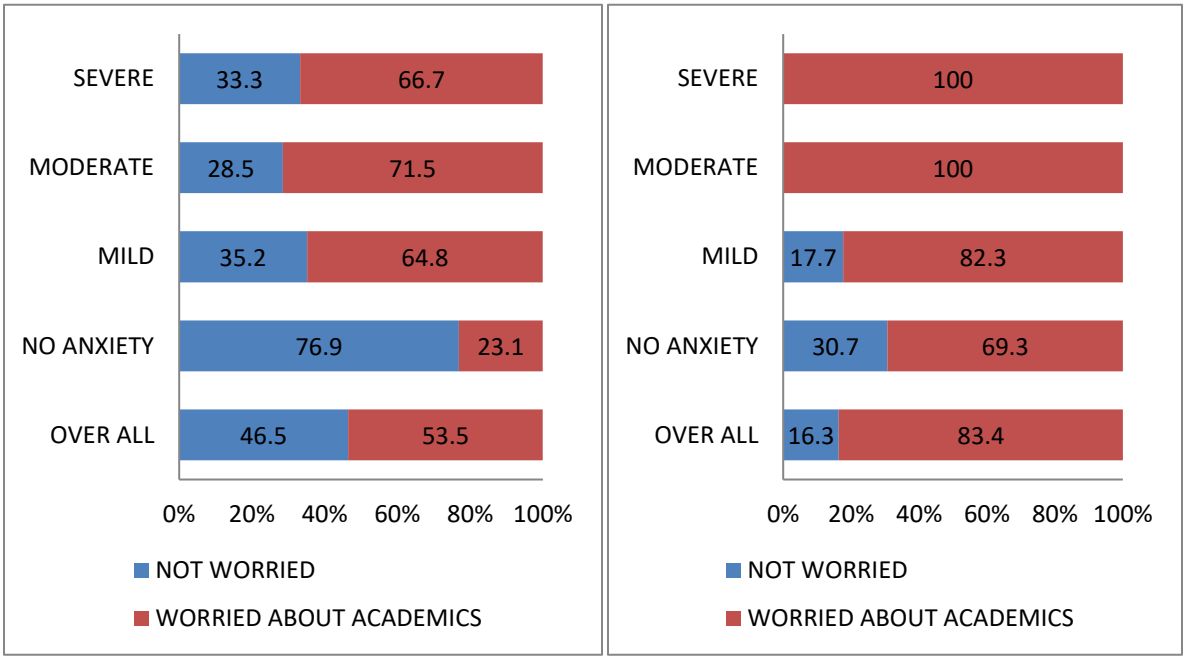


Fig 05a and b are graphic representation of percentage of cases of both the categories in each of the classification of the PSS-10 scale. 53.5% of students have reported that, their family income has been affected due to Covid-19. Of all the students who have reported severe symptoms of stress 66.7% belong to the category of students whose family income has been affected as against

33.3%. It is an indication of increased stress with the students, who are impacted by Covid. Fig 05b depicts the distribution of students in the stress classification as per their responses to their worry about academic aspects in the present circumstances. An overwhelming majority of 83.7% students have reported their concern for academics, but share of this category among students reporting symptoms of severe stress is 88.9%.

Figs 06a and b are graphical representation of Anxiety disorder of categories (a) and (b) on the scale of GAD-7. Fig 06a clearly shows that, proportionately the percentage of students reporting moderate and severe

GAD -7 FIG-06a FIG-06b

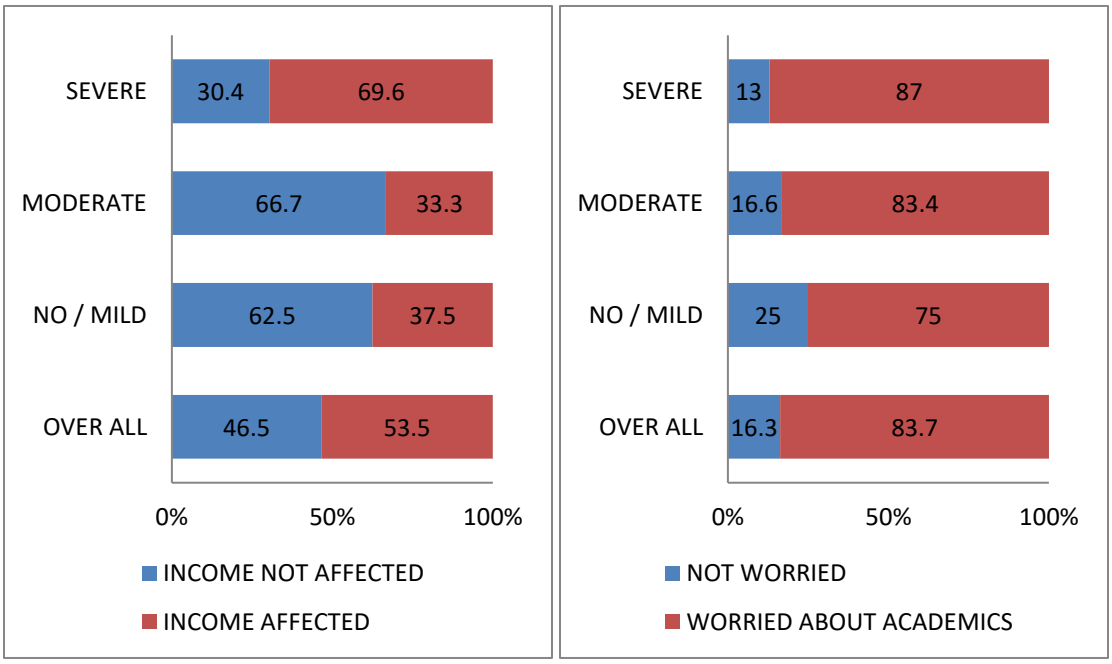


Anxiety levels are much higher in case of students belonging to the families, whose income has been affected. In contrast, 76.9% of the students reporting no anxiety are the ones, whose family income has not been affected due to covid-19. The GAD-7 data above clearly depicts that, the incidence of anxiety is higher among students whose family income has been affected by the prevailing environment of Covid-19.

Fig 06b shows that, all the students (100%), who have reported moderate or severe anxiety are those who are also worried about their academics. Therefore, it is clear that Covid-19 has heightened the anxiety level among the students.

The impact of Covid-19 on the depression aspect of mental health is shown in Fig 07a and b. While 53.5 percent of students have reported an effect on family income but almost 70% of students showing symptoms.

CES-D FIG 07a FIG 07b



of depression on CES-D scale belong to this category. Though majority of the students (83.7%) surveyed have expressed their worry about academic aspects in present times; yet, their percentage is more (87.0) in the category of severe depression.

Conclusion

Covid-19 has affected every country on the planet Earth. Wearing masks and maintaining social distance are the only measures to contain its transmission. Like the rest of the world, the KSA has taken the necessary measures from time to time to contain its spread including the closure of all the educational institutions. Such an environment, however, creates mental health issues in every section of society, including the students. Our survey conducted on the students of undergraduate courses of EFL at Qassim University shows that, the family income of 53.5% of student respondents has been affected due to Covid. An overwhelming majority (more than 80%) of the respondents have expressed their worry about their academics, future, and the economy of

the KSA. Our study of the mental health of the students during present times reveals fairly high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among the students for example 53.5% of the respondents have reported symptoms of severe depression. It has also been found that, the students affected by Covid-19 have shown higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. It is, thus, important that the government and universities should understand that the present measures to addressing the issue of mental health of the students are not sufficient; and, therefore, there is an urgent need to develop more effective mechanisms to help the students.

Recommendations

Isolation and remote studying are taking a toll on the student community. This is a global phenomenon. One area of training that is largely neglected as students enter the university system is life skills training and support. Much like online learning of academic content, measures to maintain mental hygiene should be taken by the universities with trained counsellors available round the clock for student support services. The importance of staying connected with people, avoiding burnout by sticking to a purely academic timetable, and allowing negativity to seep into their lives, are some of the issues that should be as much a part of the daily timetable as are the academic subjects. Non-academic and extra-curricular activities such as, pottery should be included in the curriculum. Short duration, free professional development courses, such as, English speaking courses should be launched to give the students a sense of empowerment.

Limitations

It is felt that similar future studies with a more controlled sample of respondents still need to be undertaken. In the present case, the participant base being random, we could not create benchmarks based upon age, gender, education or other such parameters. It appears that if these factors can also be individually linked to the mental health issues, greater specialized and targeted measures may be undertaken.

Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge Qassim University represented by the Deanship of Scientific Research, on the financial support for this research under the number UASC – 2020 – 1- 1- L – 10035 during the academic year 1441AH/2020AD.

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ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

Native versus Nonnative English writers' use of hedging in Linguistics Dissertations

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Abstract

This corpus-based study comparatively investigates the employment of hedging categories and their linguistic items in the discussion sections of linguistic PhD dissertations written by native English (NE) writers and Saudi nonnative English (SNNE) writers. Based on the analysis of the two corpora (15 PhD dissertations by NE; 15 PhD dissertations by SNNE writers), overall, findings revealed that NE writers hedge more than their SNNE counterparts. Findings also showed that both groups displayed a high degree of similarity in the use of the categories of hedging. Both groups mainly rely on lexical and downtoner hedging to lessen the certainty of their claims and arguments, and to a large extent, both groups avoid using adverbs of frequency to hedge their claims. Additionally, epistemic and possibility hedging were not primarily used by the two groups.

NE and SNNE writers differ in the use of the linguistic items of hedging. It is suggested that due to the impact of culture and L1, Saudi L2 writers tend to be more committed to their claims in order to be more persuasive.

Keywords*: hedging, native English writers, Saudi nonnative writers, academic writing*

Introduction

Presenting new ideas and claims is a fundamental function of academic writing in general and PhD dissertations in particular (Fløttum et al., 2006). While writing their PhD dissertations, writers are required to make meaningful and convincing claims that involve evidence and proofs. At the same time, these claims and arguments should be presented cautiously in order to convince the readers. One way to achieve this is possibly through the use of hedges which allows writers to lessen the strength and certainty of their claims so that they can have an influence on their audience (Hinkel, 2005; Hyland, 2005).

Hedging is one of the metadiscourse makers that can be employed by writers to make their arguments less authorial and assertive through mitigating the certainty of their propositions (Lee & Deakin, 2016). Hence, the influence of hedging devices in the text (oral or written) can, in turn, affect the meaning or the conveyed message (Taweel, et al, 2011). Hyland (1996) points out that "hedging devices are used to indicate a lack of complete commitment to the truth of the proposition, and a desire not to express the commitment categorically (p.115). Hedging can be expressed through the use of some linguistic items, such as modal verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs and so on (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

It is speculated in the literature that cross-culture variations influence the use of hedging in academic writing (Vassileva, 2001). For instance, the way Anglo-American writers perceive hedging is different from that one of Arabic-speaking writers of English. More specifically, Anglo-American tend to hedge more and thus are less committed to the claim while Arab L2 writers' use of hedging is limited because amplification and confirmation are features of the Arabic discourse (Hinkel, 2005). This kind of "cross-cultural misunderstanding" (Vassileva, 2001, p.84) has not been investigated in previous studies on the use of hedging by Arab L2 writers and Anglo-

American L1 English writers. It is hoped that the findings may contribute to alleviating the cross-cultural misunderstanding that results from the different perceptions of hedging.

Accordingly, the present study grew out of the aforementioned gap in earlier research to investigate the use of hedges categories and their linguistic items in the discussion sections of linguistic dissertations written by EN and SNNE writers. A comparison is made between the two groups of writers in terms of (1) the ovrall frequency of the use of hedging, (2) the patterns of choice of the different hedging categories and (3) the use of linguistic items of hedging. The main objective of this study is to provide an in-depth description of how hedges and their linguistic expressions are used by EN and SNNE writers. Hence, a better understanding of how hedges are utilized in academic writing for presenting new claims will be provided for Saudi L2 writers of English. This will, in turn, contribute to fostering Saudi L2 writers' L2 pragmatic competence and strategies of making arguments and claims.

To accomplish the aforementioned goals, this study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. As a whole, do NE writers use hedges more than SNNE writers or vice versa?
2. What are the similarities and differences (if any) between EN and SNNE writers in the use of hedging categories?
3. How are hedges realized linguistically by NE and SNNE writers?

Theoretical background and Literature review

Definition of hedges

It was Lakoff (1973) who first introduced the term "hedging" in writing. Since the notion of hedging has been studied intensively, it seems there is a consensus on the definition of hedging (Hyland, 1996). Lakoff used the term hedging to indicate fuzziness which indicates that the function of some words is to express ideas in an obvious or vague way. Some researchers used different terms to refer to the term hedging: vagueness, tentative language, indirectness and uncertainty (Hyland, 1998; Varttala, 2001). Hyland (1996) defined hedging as a way of producing tentative language which is crucial in academic writing whereby authors cautiously formulate claims and propositions.

In essence, hedges can be referred to the act of mitigating the strength of claims made by writers. Following Hyland (1995), in this study, hedging is concerned with any language devices utilized by authors to describe "(1) a lack of complete commitment to the truth value of an accompanying proposition or (2) a desire not to express that commitment categorically" (p.1). Hence, words and expressions like *may be, suggest, kind of and sometimes* are different forms of hedging. More examples are given in the following section.

Taxonomy of hedging

Hedges have been categorized by different researchers in different ways. For example, based on their functions, Prince et al. (1982) classify hedging into two types; shields and approximators. The former refers to hedging items that do not have an impact on the truth value of the propositions; however, they should display the authors' commitment to their conveyed messages (e.g., appear). By contrast, approximators are hedging devices that have an influence on the truth condition, and eventually impact the expressed ideas (e.g., according to) (Markannen & Schroder, 1997). Salager-Meyer's (1994) taxonomy is a further classification of hedges whereby she added three categories to Prince et al.'s (1982). This classification includes shields (e.g., might, seem, probably, suggest), approximators (e.g., approximately, occasionally), expressions of the authors' personal doubt and direct involvement (e.g., I believe, to our knowledge), emotionally-charged intensifiers (e.g., extremely difficult, absolutely interesting) and compound hedges (e.g., it may suggest that …, It would seem likely that …) (Salager-Meyer's, 1994, pp. 154-155). These two taxonomies are debatable because they were based on medical corpora and they are certainly influenced by the nature of the discipline (Varttala 1999).

Another classification to be presented here is that of Hyland (1994) whose classification of hedging was based on the grammatical classes. This taxonomy consists of "modal verbs (e.g. can, may, might), lexical verbs (seem, suggest, believe), modal adverbs (often, occasionally, a bit), modal adjectives (few, hardly, just) and modal nouns (possibility, assumption, estimate)" (Hyland, 1994, p.244). Noticeably, this classification is not comprehensive as it does not include assertive pronouns and downtoners, so that it was not considered as an analysis framework for this study.
Based on both the functions of hedging and part of speech, Hinkel (2005) classifies hedges into six categories: epistemic, lexical, possibility, downtoners, assertive pronouns, and adverbs of

frequency. Hinkel (2005, p. 39) provided a further explanation for her the six-way classification in the following way:

1. epistemic hedges refer to the limitations of the writer's knowledge (e.g. potentially, probably);
2. lexical hedges are similar to epistemic hedges but cannot modify phrases (e.g. many, several);
3. possibility hedges can also include probability (e.g. perhaps, hopefully);
4. downtoners function to delimit meaning and emotive implication of nouns, verbs, and adjectives (e.g. at all, a bit);
5. assertive pronouns can modify noun phrases (e.g. anybody, somebody); and
6. adverbs of frequency whose vagueness makes them "ubiquitously function as hedges" (e.g. daily, frequently).

Since this classification was based on a study conducted on L1 and L2 essays written by native and nonnative speakers of English, including Arabic-speaking learners of English, it is obtained in this study, and thus, the corpora data were analyzed according to the hedging categories and their linguistic realizations presented in Table 1. Full verbs category items appeared in the corpora, and they were not included in Hinkel's classification, so these devices were added to analysis framework.

Table1

Hedging categories and their linguistic realizations (Hinkel's 2005, pp. 37-38)

Hedging Categories	**Examples**
Epistemic	according to, actually, apparently, indeed, approximately, broadly, clearly, unlikely comparatively, essentially, likely, most, normally, potentially, probably, rarely, somehow, somewhat, theoretically.
Lexical	(at) about, (a) few, in a way, kind of, (a) little + noun, maybe, like, many, more or less, more, most, much, several, something like and sort of.

Possibility	by (any/some) chance, hopefully, perhaps, possible, in (the) case (of), if you/we know/understand (what [pronoun] mean(s)), if you catch/get/understand my meaning/drift, if you know what I mean (to say)
Downtoners	at all, a bit, all but, a good/great deal, almost, as good/well as, at least, barely, basically, enough, fairly, hardly, in the least/slight, just, merely, mildly, nearly, only, partly, partially, practically, pretty (+adjective), quite (+adjective), rather, relatively, scarcely, simply, slightly, somewhat, sufficiently, truly, virtually.
Assertive pronouns	any-word (anybody, anyone, anything), any, some-pronominal (somebody, someone, something), some.
Adverbs of frequency	annually, daily, frequently, monthly, occasionally, per day/moth/year, often, regularly, seldom, sometimes, usually, sporadically, weekly, sporadically
Full verbs	seem, appear, suggest, indicate, propose, argue, think, tend, estimate, assume, believe

Previous studies on hedging

A number of cross-cultural, cross-linguistic, single/cross-discipline, and single/cross-genre studies have been conducted to examine the use of hedging in academic writing, be it research articles or master and doctoral dissertations or undergraduate students' essays.

Few studies have examined the employment of hedging in academic writing by Arabic-speaking writers of English in single genres. For example, in a recent study, Al-Mudhaffari, Hussin and Abdullah (2020) investigated the use of hedging items in 34 applied linguistics research articles written by Yemeni L2 writers of English. Findings revealed that Yemeni L2 writers' use of hedging was limited in that they rarely hedge when they formulate their claims. Similarly, Gomaa (2019) examined the use of hedging in the abstracts of 100 English Linguistic master theses written by Saudi students. The results of this study revealed that the use of hedging by Saudi L2

writers of English was scarce. This finding was attributed to the students' lack of pragmatic competence and cross-cultural variation.

A number of cross-culture comparative studies have been conducted to examine the use of hedging devices in academic writing among native speakers and nonnative speakers of English in different disciplines. For instance, Hinkel (2005) comparatively examined the frequencies of using hedges in 745 essays written by native speakers and nonnative speakers of English. Findings indicated that L2 writers, including Arab L2 writers, use hedging devices highly less than L1 writers, but in oral conversations L2 writers use hedging devices largely. Similarly, ElMalik and Nesi's (2008) comparative study examined the employment of hedging in 20 medical articles written by Sudanese and British writers, showing that hedges were to some extent more in the British L1 articles than the Sudanese L2 articles. In the same line of research, Crompton (2012) comparatively explored the categories of hedging in texts written by Middle East undergraduate students and native speakers of English. The results revealed that hedging was used more in the native speakers' texts than in the Middle Eastern students' texts. Abdollahzadeh' (2019) study is a further investigation of the application of hedging in discussion sections of English master's theses written by Iranian and English graduate students of applied linguistics, and research article written by professional writers of applied linguistics. Findings showed that both L1 and L2 master graduates hedged highly less than the professional writers. On the whole, it seems that the findings of the aforementioned studies and other studies (e.g., Chen & Zhang, 2017; Demir, 2018; Kafes 2017; Rezanejad Lari & Mosalli, 2015; Salager-Meyer, 2011) confirm that L2 writers' employment of hedging is very limited in comparison to English L1 writers.

Several studies were also conducted to examine the use of hedging cross-linguistically. For instance, Akbas and Hardman (2018) compared the use of hedging in the discussion sections of 9 dissertations written by Turkish L1, Turkish L2 and English L1 writers. The results demonstrated that both Turkish L2 writers and English L1 used hedging in a similar way. Similarly, Bonyadi, Gholami, and Nasiri (2012) found that Iranian L2 and English L1 writers' use of hedging was not different, but Iranian L1 writers hedge less than English writers. Examining 60 conclusion sections, Abdollahzadeh (2011) also investigated the use of hedging devices in applied linguistic articles written by English L1 and Iranian L1 writers, revealing that the use of hedging devices is almost similar among the two groups. Examining the distribution of hedging devices in the

introduction and discussion sections of articles in medicine, chemistry and psychology written by English L1 and Iranian L1 authors, Falahati (2004) found that Iranian L1 writers hedged less than their English L1 counterparts. This finding was attributed to the language-specific factors and the type of discipline. Another cross-linguistic study is that of Hu and Cao (2011), which comparatively analyzed the utilization of hedging items in 649 abstracts of applied linguistics articles written by Chinese L1 English L1 writers. The findings revealed that hedges were used more in English abstracts in the Chinese ones. This finding was attributed to cross-linguistic/cultural variation and insufficient linguistic competence of English as a foreign/second language. Similarly, in a comparative cross-linguistic study, Martín-Martín (2008) investigated use of hedging by English and Spanish writers in 40 research articles in the genres of Clinical and Health Psychology. In general, the findings of this study found that the distribution of hedging items was greater in the English research articles than the Spanish ones, especially in the rhetorical sections. Broadly speaking, the nature of the language may have an impact on the distribution of hedging; for example, English L1 writers appear to be more cautious when making claims mare than other L1 writers, be Spanish or Farsi.

In conclusion, according to the studies reviewed above, the following points can be outlined: first, none of the above studies has compared the employment of hedging by Arab L2 writers and English L1 writers in an independent study. Although Hinkel' (2005) included some essays written by Arab L2 writers as part of the corpora, these essays were written by undergraduate students; second, most of the cross-cultural studies' findings suggest that L1 writers use hedging devices much better than L2 writers; third, some cross-linguistic studies demonstrated variant results in which hedging devices occur similarly among different writers from different backgrounds; forth, examining the use of hedges in different disciplines, such as medicine, chemistry, and psychology, resulted in different usage of hedges. More importantly, none of the reviewed studies above has comparatively explored the choice of the patterns of the hedging categories by Saudi/Arab L2 writers and English L1 writers, in which the focus has been on the overall use of hedging. Thus, the impetus of this study is to fill in these research gaps.

Methodology

Corpora

To address the research questions, thirty PhD dissertations of English linguistics written by NE and SNNE speakers (i.e., 15 by NE; 15 by SNNE) were selected randomly, and collected from ProQuest database. All the selected dissertations were submitted between 2011 and 2018, and their length is around 70000 –80000 words. To obtain consistency, all dissertations' structure was followed the IMRD standard format (Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion/Conclusion). All the Saudi nonnative writers did their PhD in the USA or the UK. The 15 native writers were American and British, Anglo-Americans. A number of criteria were used to identify the native English writer, namely their first and last names, their online CVs and biographies and their Twitter and Facebook accounts.

The only part of these dissertations to be analyzed was the discussion section because this portion is the one where graduate students state their claims and opinions as Hyland (1998) stated " it is in discussions that authors make their claims, consider the relevance of results and speculate about what they might mean, going beyond their data to offer the more general interpretation…., the level of generality, and therefore the density of hedges, is much higher here, as writers explore the ratifications of their results" (p.154). Moreover, examining the use of hedging in one discipline will provide clear clarifications for the variations in using the hedging discourse marker.

Procedures and data analysis

This study focuses on the discussion sections of the selected dissertations. First, Microsoft word was used to account the number of words in the discussion section of each thesis. The running words in the corpus of the NE dissertations consisted 49,601 while the corpus of the SNNE 46,593. Certain categories of hedging and their linguistic means were analyzed (epistemic, lexical, possibility, downtoners, assertive pronouns and adverbs of frequencies and full verbs hedges) (see Table 1 in section 2.2) in both corpora.

The hedging devices of each type in NE and SNNE dissertation were counted separately to get the frequency rates of their use in both corpora. To find out how similar or different hedging devices are used by NE and SNNE writers, the occurrences of the hedging devices including epistemic, lexical, possibility, assertive pronouns, frequency adverbials, downtoners and full verbs

in the corpora were tagged by hand and labeled in an Excel sheet. Then the total number of each hedging devices was computed by Microsoft Excel Program. To establish a balance between the two corpora, the original frequency of hedging was calculated per 1000 words for the purpose of comparison.

Results and Discussion

Distribution of the hedging categories across the NE and SNNE corpora

The purpose of this analysis is two-fold: (1) to present the overall frequencies of the use of the hedging categories by NE and SNNE writers and (2) to present the patterns of choice of various categories of hedging by the two groups.

Table 2 shows that the overall frequency of hedging in the NE corpus is 21.06 per 1000 words, far higher than that in the SNNE corpus which is 12.96 per 1000 words. This result indicates that SNNE doctoral students used less hedges than NE doctoral students. Thus, we suggest that SNNE writers tend to be less tentative in stating a claim when interpreting the research findings in the discussion sections. This finding supports earlier research which shows that L2 writers may not be ultimately competent to employ language means in order to lessen the certainty of their claims (e.g., Crompton, 2012; Hinkel, 2005; Ho & Li 2018; Hyland & Milton, 1997; Rezanejad, Lari, & Mosalli, 2015; Yang, 2013; ElMalik & Nesi, 2008). A further explanation for the insufficient use of hedging by SNNE could be a culturally-oriented factor whereby Arab inherently seem to prefer to be assertive and direct without mitigating the certainty of their claims and arguments to reach a high degree of persuasion (Hinkel 2005; Hyland 2005). Hence, L2 Saudi writers may attempt to strengthen their claims to be more persuasive. The effect of this cross-cultural variation in marking certainty (Vassileva, 2001) is evident in the obvious difference between NE and SNNE writers. The limitedness of hedging employment in the L2 English academic writing by Arabic-speaking writers is confirmed in some previous single genre studies (e.g., Al-Mudhaffari, Hussin & Abdullah, 2020; Gomaa, 2019). Moreover, the nature of the writers' L1 (Arabic) might have an effect on their distribution of hedging as found in previous studies of other languages (Akbas, & Hardman, 2018; Bonyadi, Gholami, & Nasiri, 2012; Hu & Cao 2011; Martín-Martín, 2008). However, the effect of Arabic requires a further investigations, exploring the way Arabic L1 writers hedge their claims in comparison with English L1 writers.

Table 2

Frequency and distribution of the hedging categories used by NE and SNNE writers

Hedging Categories	NE Writers		SNNE writers	
	Freq.	Freq. per 1000 words	Freq.	Freq. per 1000 words
Epistemics	130	2.62	69	1.48
Lexical	437	8.81	260	5.58
Possibility	51	1.03	36	0.77
Downtoners	232	4.68	106	2.28
Assertive pronouns	154	3.10	35	0.75
Frequency Adverbs	32	0.65	13	0.28
Full verbs	9	0.18	85	1.82
Total	1045	21.06	604	12.96

With regard to the pattern of choice of various categories of hedging, Table 2 above reveals that NE writers and their SNNE counterparts showed, to a large extent, a degree of similarity in the choice of hedging categories. Lexical hedges were the most frequent in both NE and SNNE corpora with frequency rates of 8.81 and 5.58 per 1000 word, respectively. The next likely hedging category to be employed in the two corpora was downtoners, with frequency rates of 4.68 and 2.28 per 1000 words, respectively. After downtoners, assertive hedging were preferred by NE writers whereas the SNNE writers' third choice was full verbs. Epistemics and possibility hedging came in the fourth and fifth positions in the two corpora. The least frequent hedging category in the NE discussion sections was full verbs whereas adverbial hedging was the least frequent marker in the SNNE discussion sections.

Based on these findings, it is suggested that both NE and SNNE writers tend to predominantly use lexical hedges for presenting their claims and arguments. It is also noticeable that NE and SNNE writers consider downtoners as an important means of their tentative language. Epistemic and possibility hedging seem to be secondary devices in the two corpora. Adverbial hedging devices were not important means for both native and non-native writers.

The dominance of the lexical hedges in the two corpora could be attributed to their prevalence in English, in particular in formal writing i.e., this category constitutes the largest classes of the mitigation devices (Hinkel, 2005). Dowtoners were the next class of hedging to be employed by both groups, which is not congruent with previous studies (Hinkel, 2005). This suggests that that both NE and SNNE writers prefer to reduce the degree of generalization of their claims. The occurrence rate of the assertive pronouns was higher in the NE corpus than the SNNE corpus, which means that native writers compose their opinion using this hedging marker to mitigate the generalizations degree of their claims (Hinkel, 2005). SNNE writers did not rely on assertives to hedge claims in their discussion because such devices are not commonly used in Arabic writing. Moreover, assertive pronouns are used to convey vagueness and give writers the chance to express their claims in a common way (Hinkel, 2002). The uses of adverbial hedging were the most infrequently used in the two corpora because they are to some extent few in spoken and written discourses (Channell, 1994).

In short, the data in Table 2 demonstrate that SNNE writers are more committed to propositions and claims than EN writers as they employed hedging categories less than the NE did. The culture-driven factors may contribute to the underuse of hedging by SNNE writers. Both L1 and L2 writers largely restricted their use of hedging to lexical and downtonres hedging. Epistemic and possibility hedging were not given a priority when making knowledge claims and stating suggestions and conclusions by both groups of writers. Finally, adverbial hedging devices were rarely used by both native and Saudi non-native writers of English. The following sections present the linguistic items of hedging used by NE and SNNE writers.

Linguistic items of some hedging categories

The purpose of this part is to give an analysis for the use of linguistic items, hedging devices, in the categories of hedging in the two corpora. Our focus here is on the highest ranked linguistic items where comparison is applicable, so assertive pronouns category is not included.

Linguistic items of epistemic hedges

Table 3 shows that the epistemic hedging device '*mostly*' was the most frequently used item in both corpora, with 14% difference in favor of the NE data (25% and 11%, respectively).

Then the form '*likely*' occurred 25 times (13%) in the NE data and 12 times (6%) in the SNNE data. The epistemic '*according to'* was also used in different rates in both NE and SNNE corpora (10% and 5%, respectively). The item '*apparently'* did not occur at all in the NE data while it occurred rarely in the ENNS data (0% and 4%, respectively). The devices '*comparatively, essentially* and *potentially*' were not used at all by SNNE writers, whereas they were relatively used by NE writers. Some other epistemic devices such as '*normally* and *somehow*' were not used at all by both NE and SNNE writers.

Table 3

The linguistic items of epistemic hedging

Epistemic hedging	NE Writers		SNNE writers	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
mostly	49	25%	21	11%
likely	25	13%	12	6%
according to	19	10%	9	5%
actually	13	7%	7	4%
clearly	9	5%	7	4%
somewhat	9	5%	3	2%
unlikely	6	3%	3	2%
apparently	0	0%	7	4%
normally/somehow	0	0%	0	0%

Linguistic items of lexical hedges

Of all the lexical hedges, as Table 4 illustrates, the form *'more'* was used more frequently by both NE and SNNE writers with different frequency rates, but it was used far greater by EN than SNNE writers (41% and 20%, respectively). Similarly, the hedging marker *'at about'* appeared to be used widely by NE writers while SNNE writers appeared to employ it rarely. The lexical means '*most'* used less frequently by SNNE (8%) than NE (6%). Reversely, *'may be'* was highly marked by SNNE in conjunction to EN writers (5% and 1% in that order). Some lexical hedges like '*sort of* and *something like'* did not occur at all in the SNNE data; however, they

occurred rarely in the EN data. The only lexical marker that was not used by both NE and SNNE writers was the form '*in a way'*.

Table 4

The linguistic items of lexical hedging

Epistemic hedging	NE Writers		SNNE writers	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
more	192	41%	94	20%
(at) about	41	9%	8	2%
most	38	8%	30	6%
a little + a noun	12	3%	6	1%
may be	3	1%	24	5%
kind of	2	0%	4	1%
more or less	0	0%	12	3%
in a way	0	0%	0	0%

Linguistic items of possibility hedging

As shown in Table 5, the most common linguistic expression in both corpora was the marker '*possible'* with a higher percentage in the EN data (45% in the NE and 26% in the SNNE data). '*Perhaps'* was also used more frequently by EN writers than SNNE writers (24% and 12% correspondingly). Interestingly, the possibility linguistic means, such as *'by some chance, if you understand, if you catch my meaning and if you know what I mean*' did not occur at all in the NE data while they occurred slightly in the SNNE data. One of the possibility hedging devices that did not occur in both NE and SNNE data is the device '*hopefully*'.

Table 5

The linguistic items of possibility hedging

possibility	NE Writers		SNNE writers	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
possible	33	45%	19	26%
perhaps	12	16%	2	3%
in case of	6	8%	0	0%

hopefully	0	0%	0	0%
by some chance, if you understand, if you catch my meaning and if you know what I mean	0	0%	1	1%

Linguistic items of downtoner hedges

Table 6 shows that the most frequently used downtoners marker was '*only'* in both NE and SNNE corpora, but it occurred more frequently in the NE data than the SNNE data (45% and 32%, respectively). '*Just'* was also preferred by EN writers more than SNNE writers with 4% difference. Some of the downtoners linguistic devices like '*sufficiently, merely, and barely*' did not occur in both corpora. Some other downtoners devices occurred in the NE data but not in the SNNE data and the vice versa.

Table 6

The linguistic items of downtoners hedging

Downtoners	NE Writers		SNNE writers	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
only	105	50%	34	%16
just	13	6%	2	%1
at all	10	5%	3	1%
at least	10	5%	3	1%
somewhat	8	4%	4	2%
relatively	5	2%	3	1%
a bit	3	1%	0	0%
almost	3	1%	4	2%
sufficiently, merely, and barely	0	0%	0	0%

Linguistic items of adverb of frequency

Table 7 shows that the adverb '*often'* was the most salient marker in both corpora*;* however, it appeared much more frequently in the EN data than the ENNS (33% and 9%, respectively). The

adverbs '*sometimes and frequently'* were the second and third choices by both groups, with higher percentages in the EN data. Some adverbs of frequency, such as '*weekly, seldom, regularly, occasionally and annually*' were absent in the ENNS data and in the EN data, too.

Table 7

The linguistic items of some adverb of frequency hedging

Adverbs of frequency	NE Writers		SNNE writers	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
often	15	33%	4	%9
sometimes	10	22%	3	7%
frequently	8	18%	2	4%
occasionally	3	7%	0	0%
weekly, seldom, regularly, occasionally and annually	0	0%	0	0%

Linguistic items of full verbs hedges

Table 8 shows that full verbs were not preferred by NE writes whereas ENNS writers highly marked them. For example, the verb *'seem'* occurred 30 times (48%) in the SNNE data, it was completely absent in the NE data. Likewise, the verbs '*believe and suggest*' also accounted for 30% in the SNNE data and 5% in the NE corpus. Both EN and SNNE writers did not use the verbs '*tensed*, *propose, estimate and argue*' in these corpora.

Table 8

The linguistic items of some full verbs

Full verbs	NE Writers		SNNE writers	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
seem	0	0%	30	48%
believe	0	0%	10	16%
assume	2	3%	2	3%
suggest	3	5%	9	14%
estimate	0	0%	0	0%

tend, propose, estimate and argue	0	0%	0	0%

In short, the percentages of the linguistic items used in both corpora showed a mixed picture. For example, it was found that terms like '*possible', 'more'* and *'often'* were the most preferable linguistic means by both NE and SNNE, but these hedges appeared much less frequently in the SNNE discussion sections. It was found that, as a second choice, NE writers also rely on linguistic expressions like, '*mostly', 'sometimes', 'frequently', 'perhaps', 'likely', 'according to', 'at about'* and *'mos*t'. On the other hand, SNNE writers largely used full verbs like '*seem', 'believe', 'suggest'* and *'appear'* to mitigate the certainty of their claims, whereas NE writers appeared, to a large extent, not to depend on such verbs. This finding is inconsistent with Hyland' (1998) findings, in which these hedges were the most common expressions for mitigating claims in scientific research articles. Added to this, Linguistic expressions like '*tend, 'propose', 'estimate'* and *'argue'* were not used at all by both groups, and this supports Varttala's (1999) finding, whereby such terms are not preferred by American writers in their scientific articles. The linguistic items, '*sometimes', 'most', 'likely'* and *'according to'*were not common in the SNNE writers because they may occur more in spoken discourse than written prose (Channel, 1994; Hinkel, 2005). Moreover, adverbs of frequency like '*weekly', 'seldom', 'regularly', 'occasionally'* and *'annually'* were not employed by both NE and SNNE writers, by which this finding is not congruent with the findings of (Channel, 1994) in that these adverbs are more common in conversations. To sum up, NE and SNNE writers differ in the use of hedging linguistic expressions.

Conclusion and Implications

The present study compares the use of hedging categories and their linguistic items in the discussion sections of NE and SNNE PhD dissertations. The findings showed that, altogether, the NE writers hedge more than their SNNE counterparts. However, it was found that both groups displayed, to some extent, a degree of similarity in the choice of hedging categories. Lexical hedges were the most widely used in both NE and SNNE corpora, followed by downtoners. Epistemic and possibility hedging were not given a priority when making knowledge claims by both groups of writers. Finally, adverbial hedging means were rarely used by both native and Saudi non-native

writers of English. The linguistic items of the hedging categories were used differently in the two groups, except the linguistic items, *possible, more and often* which were the most preferable linguistic means by both NE and SNNE, although they appeared much less frequently in the SNNE data.

Pedagogically, the results of this study suggest that EFL/ESL students may not have sufficient pragmatic knowledge to convey their propositions cautiously, which is a problem that brings with it several sociolingual issues. The lack of L2 pragmatic competence results from the ignorance of teaching discourse markers like hedging to students. Thus, the findings of this study raise students' awareness of the metadiscourse means (i.e., hedging) and how they are used in different texts. On the side of the instructors and theses' supervisors, it is suggested that more emphasis should be placed on the importance of hedging devices in academic writing because they can have a positive influence on the students' utilizations of hedging markers (Abbuhl, 2006). In addition, it is important to draw students' attention to the cross-culture variations in making claims and arguments because what might be appropriate in a certain culture might not be in another. Finally, it is thought that both explicit and implicit instruction of hedging and other metadiscourse markers would help students communicate their ideas effectively.

Acknowledgments

This research was supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University under the research project number 2020/02/11903.

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ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

The Impact of Using the Mind Map Strategy on Undergraduate Students' Achievement in Development of English Vocabulary

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Abstract

According to the study the Indian primary learners are incapable of conveying their ideas accurately in any target language as because they have limited vocabulary so the Kemmis and McTaggart Action Research Model was carried out to alleviate the vocabulary learning challenges aims to investigate the effects of the Poly Category Mind Map for vocabulary development of third-year students. For carrying out the study thirty students participated from the third-year suburban school in Mersing, Johor and the instruments used for data collection were Vocabulary pre-test and post-tests. The results of the post-test at the end of the second cycle of the study showed a significant difference between the mean scores before and after using Poly Category Mind Map to develop vocabulary ($p>0.05$). The study concluded that using the features of Poly Category Mind Map such as the pictures, keywords, and grouping of words encouraging the students for

learning vocabulary develops the hopes to encourage students, teachers, and curriculum designers to integrate Poly Category Mind Mapping strategy in English learning classrooms. The researchers can also utilize the Poly Category Mind Mapping in learning of the English Language such as reading and writing for further studies.

Keywords: *Mind Map, Learners, Action Research Model, Poly Category*

Introduction

The main element of learning any language is vocabulary because learner students can be successful in learning if they have adequate knowledge of vocabulary. According to the Cambridge University Press (2008) vocabulary can be defined as all "the words are known and used by a particular person or all the words that exist in a particular language or subject" (p. 2). The learners need to have sufficient knowledge of several different components of language such as grammar and syntax before they learn a language because vocabulary knowledge is the primary and vital component in acquiring a second language. This statement is also supported by Wilkins (1972), who argues that "there is not much value in being able to produce grammatical sentences if one has not got the vocabulary that is needed to convey what one wishes to say" (In Al Qahtani, 2015, p. 22). Hence, vocabulary knowledge is a significant main component of a language.

According to Asgari and Bin Mustapha (2010), vocabulary acquisition is one of the most challenging components of learning any language and the dilemma is the students do not have enough words in their minds to convey their statement because they are weak in their language proficiency. This claim is also supported by Misbah, Mohamad, and Yunus (2017) as revealed their study in seven Sekolah Kebangsaan (National) schools in Malaysia that "the most important factor contributing to the students' problems in learning English is the limited vocabulary of the target language" (p.2000) They stated and concluded that students face difficulty reading, writing, listening, and speaking English language if they have limited vocabulary and this is the most significant barrier in learning their target language

Purpose and question of the study

The Indian primary students faced a difficult time while getting excellent English language

qualifications because of the lack of adequate language vocabulary. This problem is also extended to the researcher's school as Indian Classroom-Based Assessment or also known as Pentaksiran Bilik Darjah (PBS) of third-year students which shows that most of the students scored low bands in their assessment and most students are average achievers who scored band 2, which indicates that students having limited language proficiency.

According to the researcher the learners need to gain more productive knowledge of vocabulary and build their vocabulary learning strategies. Since the CEFR syllabus is more effective about the communicative learning approach and teachers often ignore the method to teach individual words although these words can be learned incidentally and the vocabulary becomes more meaningful to the learners when provided with a language-rich setting. In other words, the learner students will get benefit from systematic and direct word instruction. Thombury (2002) also proposed that word "teaching" is as important as language learning and descriptive vocabulary learning is crucial to enhance the students' learning skills.

For instance, they will simply write the definition of a new word without the addition of language recall techniques. According to Muhamad and Kiely (2018), this strategy is similar in some of the schools in Malaysia.

One of the effective memory strategies to learn vocabulary is using Poly Category Mind Mapping, which is also a type of mind map. Mind map features consist of most of the elements in the memory strategies which are integrating new words into the acquired knowledge via imagery, grouping, use of keywords, and associating. (Schmitt, 1997). Buzan and Buzan (1993) also advocated the usage of a mind map as a learning tool as they stated that "the brain finds it easier to accept and remember visually stimulating, multi-colored, multi-dimensional mind map rather than monotonous, boring liner notes." (p.89) The Poly Category Mind Map is a type of mind map which has only three to seven branches. According to Buzan (1993), this type of mind map allows in splitting details of information up into manageable pieces.

Objective of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of the usage of the Poly Category Mind Map on third-year students' vocabulary development.

Significance of the study

Although it is agreed by the scholars that mind map a powerful way to improve memory but still there is a lack of study in Malaysia for vocabulary learning, particularly in primary schools. Abdul Aziz and Yamat (2016), in their research, supported the previously mentioned statement found that "most of the studies and aspects have been done were just for the secondary and university level" (p. 106). To bridge this gap, the researcher has agreed to apply the Poly Category Mind map among lower primary school suburban students in India and this strategy in developing students' vocabulary will hopefully act as a guideline for lower primary educators in India. Teachers, who are still practicing the usage of word list memorizing method, could try out this technique as an alternative technique to help students to enhance their vocabulary. The findings of this research also hoped to benefit many stakeholders. ESL textbook authors and curriculum designers may have practical solutions for vocabulary teaching.

Literature Review

Vocabulary Development Process

Vocabulary is usually regarded to be the most prominent instrument for learners to be successful in second language learning, and ESL students see it as the most challenging section. It is a truism, therefore, that the absence of adequate vocabulary knowledge restricts the understanding of language by learners and hinders their capacity to develop their vocabulary knowledge. It is due to the reason that vocabulary "plays a vital role in all language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing." (Robert Ayin & M. Shah, 2020, p.2).

It is stated in the study that vocabulary development is a complicated process involving distinct stages and inadequacy can be an obstacle to vocabulary learning in each step. Nation (2006) also suggested five phases of learning vocabulary to develop students' vocabulary knowledge including finding new words, knowing the word definition, consolidating the memory of the word form and meaning, and lastly using the word. In reality, the procedures listed show that more explicit teaching strategies are required for vocabulary teaching. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) believed that making vocabulary learning comprehensible and meaningful can be facilitated by using suitable cognitive learning strategies.

Vocabulary Learning Strategy

As stated earlier, vocabulary acquisition is a tricky subject among distinct fields of second-language learning, many academics think that excellent use of teaching strategies is needed for building a comprehensive vocabulary list and using them more precisely (Alharthi, 2014; Khoshsima & Rezaeian, 2014, Ajmal, 2020; Kumar, 2020). Folse (2004) stated that L2 learners have to memorize the form to get the definition and use the term. On the other hand, to obtain, remember, and use new words, it needs the learner to be disciplined. Dóczi (2011) thinks that acquiring vocabulary is an ongoing method so vocabulary learning strategies have an essential role to play in resolving insurmountable language learning problems. Maximizing the opportunity to succeed in teaching, remembering, and using words are the primary objectives of vocabulary teaching strategies that can be achieved through cognitive strategies. In reality, the cognitive strategy highlights the growth of thinking abilities. Scheid (1993) also supported this statement by stating that the goal of cognitive strategies is to allow all learners in their learning efforts to become more strategic, self-reliant, flexible, and productive.

Poly Category Mind Mapping Strategy

The Poly Category Mind Mapping Strategy is one of the cognitive learning techniques as it helps learners to become more pragmatic, self-reliant, agile, and efficient in their vocabulary learning. The Poly Category Mind Map is a form of a mind map. "Mind mapping involves writing down a central idea and coming out with new and related ideas from the centre." (Yunus and Chien, 2016, p.621) According to Buzan (2016) cited in Hawrani (2011), not only do Mind Maps display facts but they also demonstrate a subject's general structure and the comparative significance of individual components of it. These advantages are similar to the Poly Category Mind Map because the Poly category is also a form of a Mind map. However, according to Buzan (2016) cited in Hawrani (2011) Poly Category Mind Maps "can contain from three to seven branches" (p.17). This mind map allows the creation of mental classification capabilities because Buzan (2016) cited in Hawrani (2011) believed that in short-term memory the average mental capacity of beings is unable to recall more than seven parts of information.

Tony Buzan created Mind Map in the early 1970s as an instrument to help individuals more efficiently take notes and make it easy for us to remember a lot of data. Mind mapping is

generally like art because it uses many colorful photos and symbols. Buzan (2016) cited in Hawrani (2011) said mind mapping is a robust graphic method that offers a universal key for unlocking the brain's potential. The Poly Category Mind Maps which consist of both verbal depictions and mental images using pictures, colors, keywords to present thoughts, and the picture or topic in the central portion can assist learners' process input more effectively. All the characteristics of the mind map allow the brain to remember better and recollect the words as according to Dual Coding.

Past Studies of Using Mind Map to Improve Vocabulary

Studies describe that the use of Mind Map to develop students' vocabulary is discussed here to see the benefits gained by other researchers in their studies which could be related to the current study. The following studies below show how effectively the Mind Map has been used all around the world and they are also applicable for students in India. However, the researcher was unable to find any existing past research on vocabulary learning related to specifically to Poly Category Mind Map.

The first research was carried out in India by Lord Macaulay to investigate if the implementation of mind mapping method on Year 6 students can expand the vocabulary limit of sample students as well as to obtain a quantitative measure of the difference in vocabulary improvement among the students. The findings of the study show that there was significant evidence that mind maps had increased the students' scores in the post-test as compared to the pre-test. The second research was carried out by Heidari and Karimi (2015), which aims to explore the impact of mind mapping on vocabulary learning and its retention on 40 Iranian male high school students. The research result shows that the post-test mean score proved that the mind map was effective in increasing students' vocabulary. The fourth research was carried out by Kusuma (2015), which aims to examine the efficacy of mind mapping method on the vocabulary mastery of elementary school second-grade learners. The research found that there were no major differences between experimental group students who used mind mapping and those who used word lists.

In teaching and learning vocabulary the efficacy of mind mapping techniques for Vocabulary development explored by the researchers and the study carried out by Abdul Aziz, and Yamat (2016), Heidari and Karimi (2015), Kusuma (2015), and Sahrawi (2013) and they showed

the positive result after the implementation. The study by Sahrawi (2013) used the pre-experimental research since the researcher conducted the research in a school and the study reveals that the action research method is more suitable because the researcher will be able to improve their teaching method. Concerning the sample of the study, it has differed result from the previous study, and all the previous studies are carried out among different learners. Heidari and Karimi's (2015) studies on high school students, Kusuma (2015) researched the second graders but Sahrawi (2013) studied eight graders and Abdul Aziz and Yamat (2016) conducted a study on upper primary students. Hence all these studies indicated that mind map technique is a useful tool for learning for all levels of students.

Concerning the location of conducting the study, Kusuma (2015) and Sahrawi (2013) conducted their study in Indonesia, Heidari, and Karimi (2015) conducted their research in Iran and India.

Abdul Aziz and Yamat's (2016) research was conducted in India, Abdul Aziz and Yamat's (2016) conducted their research in India. Thus, it can be concluded that the mind map technique can be used for students all around the world including India because it showed positive results in students' achievement. Therefore, the current study is vital to be conducted among the lower primary students in India to find out if the Poly Category Mind Map technique works when used it to develop vocabulary.

Research Methodology

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007 proposed the researcher decided to embrace the technique of action research to reflect on the specific problem faced by the learners in the school, to collect and analyses information, and to execute modifications based on our results. The researcher also had chosen the mixed method design in action research that combines both qualitative research by doing classroom observation and quantitative research by doing vocabulary tests. The significant advantage is that the interpretation of both kinds of information can provide a better knowledge of the research problem than either type of information alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The study used by Kemmis and McTaggart Action Research Model-based action research design. The model is a spiral model containing: (a) planning, (b) acting and observing, (c) reflecting, and (d) re-planning (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005).

Planning

In the planning stage, the researcher used Poly Category Mind Map to fix the educational issue identified during the preliminary research which is the lack of vocabulary knowledge. The next step was to analyze items to be constructed in the test given before and after the intervention. The target vocabulary is based on Get Smart Plus 3's Teacher's Book, one of the books given to the teacher under Malaysian CEFR textbook. Topics 'Occupation', 'My House' and ' Seasons of a Year' that were used in the intervention were taken from the book. The participants were given a pre-test in the form of the worksheet before they started their lesson for the topic 'Occupations' in the first week.

After the pre-test was carried out the teacher gave the students input by teaching the topics based on the textbook. Then the teacher gave the students a mind map each and a whole class discussion was made to construct a mind map. This mind map was used to discuss the types of occupation based on the teacher's input. The mind map illustrations measure about 250 mm x 353 mm which is the size of B4 paper. Throughout this process, all mind map characteristics such as colors, images, keywords, and central image were used to encourage the memorization process. Both the verbal and non-verbal components of the mind map were combined to ensure a better memory of the students as suggested by the theory of dual coding.

The final phase was to strengthen the understanding learned in which the researcher conducted operations such as matching the image and phrases and writing simple sentences based on the vocabulary learnt. All these language skills practices were to reinforce the vocabulary learned.

Implementing and Observing the Intervention Process

During the implementation of the actions, the researcher carried out the intervention process that had been designed. These activities were introduced in one research cycle. The researcher taught new topics during the first, fourth, sixth session. The researcher taught the topic of 'Occupation' at the second meeting,' My House' at the fourth meeting. The topic of 'Seasons in a Year' was taught at the sixth meeting. When the new topics were taught, the students were asked to remember the vocabulary items in the mind map.

Reflection

The evaluation of the action was carried out by examining and analyzing the intervention process carried out in the classroom and the outcome of a post-test and classroom observation. Then the second cycle started as the revised strategy (planning) was then implemented again. The first cycle took about two weeks to be completed and the outcome was then reflected in the second study cycle to achieve the research's aimed criteria for success. The criteria of success aimed by the researcher are at least 70% of the participants must have a minimum score of 26 out of 40 questions. The minimum score of 26 is chosen because in Indian Primary School English Test for standard six, the percentage of 65% carries the grade of 'B' that concludes that students are in the satisfactory level of English vocabulary knowledge.

The formula used to find the criteria for success was as follows:

$\% X = X1/N \times 100\%$

% X: percentage of success

X1: number of learners who scored more than 26 out of 40 questions. N:

a total of learners

Participants

The selected participants for this study were twenty and 9-year-old primary school students from Delhi, India. All of them were learning English as their second language since they are the native speakers of Hindi as the city is dominated by the Hindu. Twenty students are from this region. All these participants converse in class using their mother tongue Hindi or the native language of Delhi, India. The performance of these students was based on the previous Pentaksiran Bilik Darjah with a band score ranging between 2 to 3. According to the Standards-Based Curriculum for Primary Schools or also known as Dokumen Standard Kurikulam dan Pentaksiran (2018), band 2 and 3 in terms of vocabulary knowledge informs that the students can spell some familiar words and use partially correct grammar. (Delhi, India, 2018). Thus, it can be concluded that the participants of the research students know the familiar words in English but do not have a wide knowledge of vocabulary to communicate effectively.

Instruments

The data collection method used in this study was conducted through the test and non-test instruments and Pre-and post-tests were one of the tools used in this research. The basic principle behind the design of pre-and post-tests requires a pre-test measurement of the outcome of interest before the treatment is carried out and followed by a post-test on the same measure after treatment (Salkind, 2010). Before being introduced to the Poly Category Mind Map, 30 students in Year 3 were provided with a pilot test of 40 items to determine the reliability of the test questions. The researcher made use of the computer program's assistance in finding the accuracy of the 40 test items using the Cronbach's Alpha statistics. It was known that the reliability of the 40 sample items was 915 based on the outcomes of reliability analyses. It implies that questions were highly reliable and the intervention was carried out. After two weeks of studying vocabulary using Poly Category Mind Map, the respondents were provided with the post-test. The products used in pre- and post-tests were the same except for manipulating the arrangement of the items. The next tool used is in this research is semi-structured classroom observation. This is because the researcher made a semi-structured observation that allows the teacher-researcher the flexibility to attend other concurrent occurrences in the classroom (Hubbard & Power, 2003).

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistical method used to analyses information from pre- and post-tests were the frequency and mean. In contrast, the inferential statistical method used was paired sample t-test as a means of answering the research question. On the other hand, the data from the semi-structured observation were coded and analyzed according to emerging subjects. After the process coding, the data were triangulated with data from the pre and post-tests to ensure credibility.

Findings of the Study

The findings of this study would be discussed based on the research question that was to prove the effectiveness of using Poly Category Mind Map in Vocabulary Development in the English language. The first data which was the scores of the participants in both pre and post-tests of the first cycle were recorded and analyzed through descriptive analysis in terms of frequency and mean

and inferential analysis by using paired sample t-test. The test was done through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Table one showed a comparison between these two tests in terms of frequency, mean, standard deviation, and significant value. Before that, the Shapiro-Wilk, the tests of normality of data was carried out to ensure the data is normally distributed.

Sample Characteristics:

Table 1: ***Tests of Normality***

Tests of Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
PRE-TEST	.100	20	.200*	.982	20	.957
POST TEST	.121	20	.200*	.977	20	.884

Shapiro Wilk's test (p>0.05) was carried out for the first cycle. Table one shows that the significance of the pre-test is 0.957 and the post-test is 0.884. Since the significance value for the pre-test and post-test are more than 0.05, it means that there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Thus, the pre-test and post-test are normally distributed because the significant value is greater than 0.05. The Paired sample t-test is run with the following hypotheses:

a) Null hypotheses: There is no significant difference between pre-test and first cycle post-test.

b) Alternative hypotheses: There is a significant difference between pre-test and first cycle post-test

Table 2: ***Paired sample statistics of the first cycle***

Paired Samples Statistics	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 PRE-TEST	18.4000	20	3.15228	.70487
POST TEST	23.5000	20	2.80038	.62618

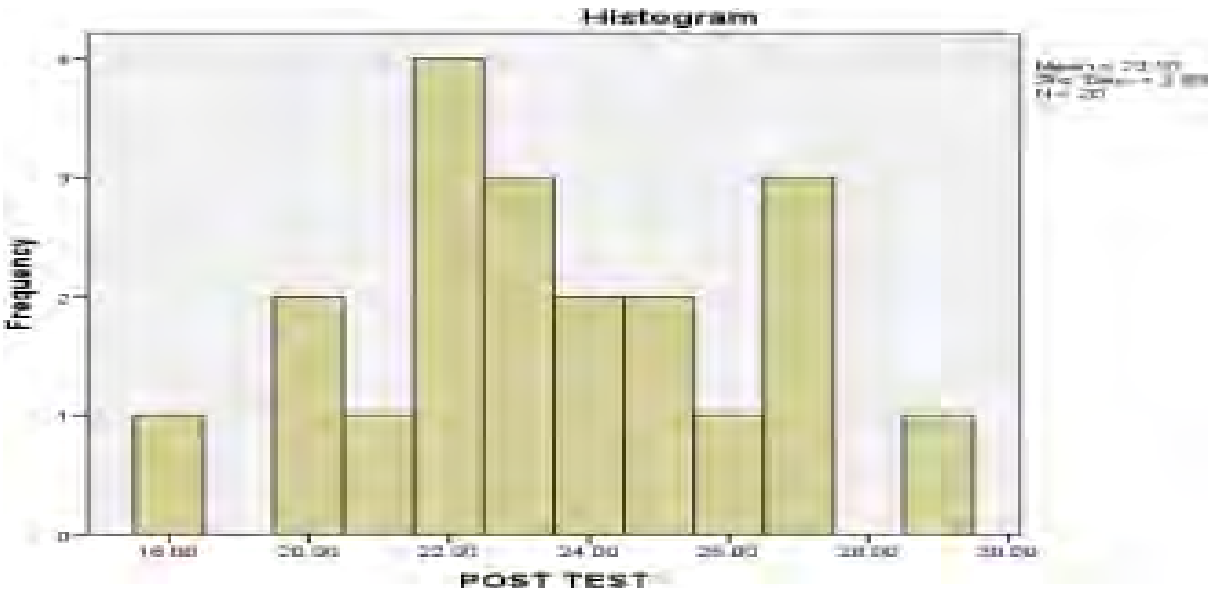

Figure 1: Histogram of Post-test in the first cycle

From the results, it is proved that participants' vocabulary knowledge significantly increases from the pre- to post-test. It specified a significant difference between the mean scores before and after using Poly Category Mind Map to develop vocabulary ($p>0.05$). These mean scores projected a significant increment in participants' scores after the usage of Poly Category Mind Map. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The score performance level as shown in Figure one below can also prove this analysis:

Although there is a significant improvement in the scores of the students, the first cycle results of the post-test revealed that it did not achieve the minimum criteria of success aimed by the researcher which is at least 70% of the participants must have a minimum score of 26 out of 40 questions. Based on the histogram, it was revealed that only 5 out of 20 students achieved the minimum score of 26 and above which revealed that only 25% of students achieved the minimum scored needed to enable a satisfactory level of vocabulary knowledge. The researcher did the reflection after the results of observation and the results of the vocabulary test were collected. From the observation in the first cycle, it was found that many learners still had problems in mastering vocabulary. It could be seen from the learners' answers in the vocabulary test. The next cycle is carried out with the inclusion of students' own drawings on the vocabulary learnt in the mind map.

Table 3: *Paired sample statistics of the second cycle*

Paired Samples Statistics	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 PRE-TEST	18.4000	20	3.15228	.70487
POST TEST	27.2000	20	3.94168	.88139

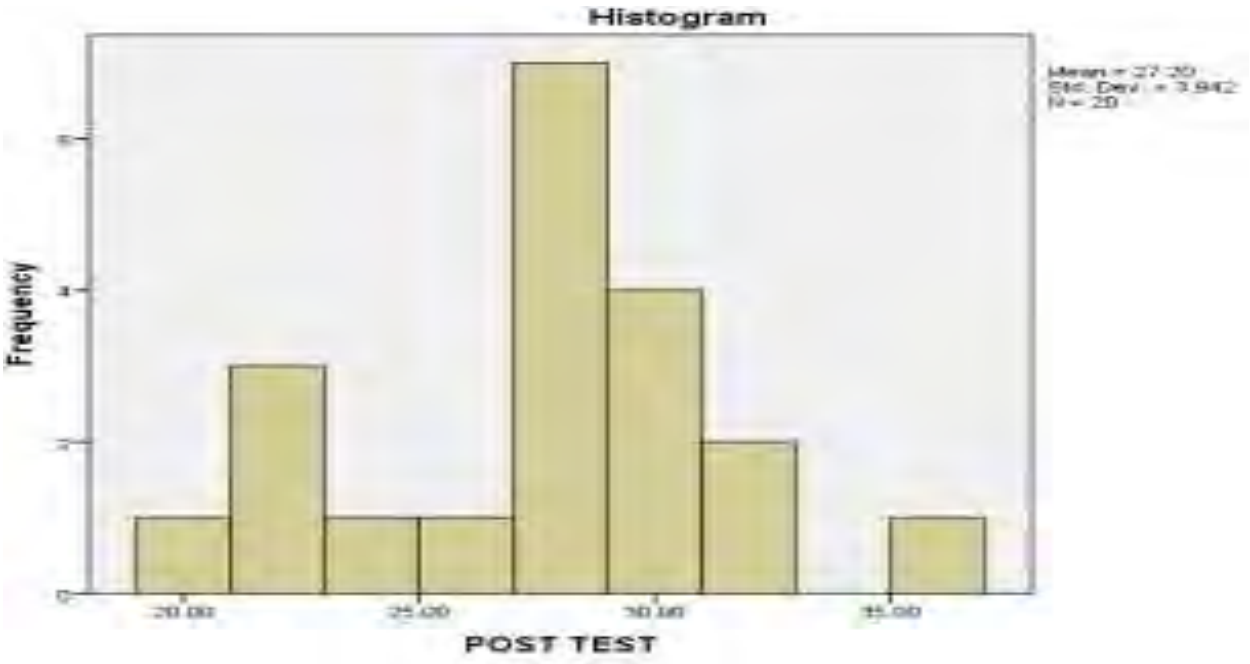

Figure 2: *Histogram of Paired Samples Statistics*

From the results of the second cycle, it proved that participants' vocabulary knowledge significantly increases from the pre-test to the second cycle post-test. It specified a significant difference between the mean scores before and after using Poly Category Mind Map with the personalized drawing of vocabulary to develop vocabulary ($p>0.05$). These mean scores projected a significant increment in participants' scores after the usage of Poly Category Mind Map with the personalized drawing of vocabulary. The score performance level, as shown in Figure two below, can also prove this analysis.

Based on the histogram of the second cycle revealed that 15 out of 20 students achieved the minimum score of 26 and above therefore in percentage value, 75% of students achieved the

minimum scored needed to enable a satisfactory level of vocabulary knowledge. This finding shows that the usage of Poly Category Mind Map with the personalized drawing of vocabulary is more effective and will allow the researcher to achieve the criteria of success aimed by the researcher which is to have at least 70% of the participants with a minimum score of 26 out of 40 questions.

Semi-structured Classroom Observation

The semi-structured observation carried out by the researcher had a few checklists that allowed for triangulation of the data gathered in pre and post-test. During the first cycle, it is observed that the ability of some students in understanding words and their meaning by relating the pictures with good words increased, some of the students, especially the ones that scored lower marks in the first cycle post-test had a problem recalling the vocabulary learnt when they were doing their mind map. It is observed that they had to ask their friends when they have to match the words with the correct pictures. Indirectly, it showed that students had trouble relating the images with the vocabulary learnt. However, during the second cycle, when the researcher asked them to draw the pictures, even the low achievers can recall the vocabulary to learn because they remembered their personalized drawing related to the images.

Next, the students also had trouble identifying the pictures of adjectives with the correct words. The students were always asking for the teacher's help to differentiate the images of 'misty' and 'foggy'. Although some students took the initiative to find the meaning of the words in the Malay language in the dictionary, they were still unclear about the meaning. Most of the students wrongly answered this question in their first cycle post-test. The students were still unclear about the meaning of the words because, in the dictionary, both stated 'breakups' (foggy or misty). However, when they drew the pictures of those words by differentiating the color used to color the drawing of 'misty' and 'foggy', they understood that 'foggy' is thicker than 'misty'. Some of the students also used darker blue to color 'foggy' and 'lighter' blue to color 'misty'. As a result, most of the students understand the concept of 'foggy' and 'misty' and they scored well in these questions during the second cycle post-test.

Discussion

This research aimed to investigate the effects of the usage of the Poly Category Mind Map on students' vocabulary development. The data analysis in the form of paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the results of the pre-test and first cycle post-test. There was a significant difference in the scores for pre-test (M=18.400, SD=3.152) and first cycle post-test (M=23.500, SD=2.800) conditions; t (19) =-12.256, p = 0.000. The statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores proved the effectiveness of the Poly Category Mind Map as a tool to improve students' vocabulary learning. However, the result did not attain the criteria of success because only 5 out of 20 students achieved the minimum score of 26 and above. Thus, it revealed that only 25% of students achieved the minimum score needed to enable the satisfactory level of vocabulary knowledge instead of 70% of the students achieving the minimum criteria of success as aimed by the researcher.

Thus, a second cycle of the study was carried out with the inclusion of personalized drawings of the words learnt and the results of pre-test and second cycle post-test were compared. There was a significant difference in the scores for pre-test (M=18.400, SD=3.152) and second cycle post-test (M=27.200, SD=3.941) conditions; t (19) =-10.614, p = 0.000. It was revealed that 15 out of 20 students achieved the minimum score of 26 and above. Therefore, in percentage value, 75% of students achieved the minimum scored needed to enable a satisfactory level of vocabulary knowledge. Thus, the main finding of the current study was the usage of Poly Category Mind Map was able to successfully develop the vocabulary knowledge of the students in terms of understanding and remembering the words and their spelling.

The results can be explained as follows. First, students who used Poly Category Mind Map strategy in learning vocabulary integrated the newly acquired words with the old previously learned ones. +He stated that not only do Mind Maps display facts, but they also demonstrate a subject's general structure and the comparative significance of individual components.

These findings are also similar to Sahrawi's (2013) findings in which it was found that students were more encouraged to using new words that were reinforced by keywords that they had already known. Second, Poly Category Mind Map helped the Year 3 students immediately learn and remember English vocabulary due to the 'visual appeal' of the strategy.). Third, the mixture of pictorial-verbal words in mind maps used in this study involved many parts of the third students' brain and indirectly gave intense cognitive concentration and mental power for acquiring and remembering words.

The most crucial feature of Poly Category Mind Map which played a positive role in vocabulary development among students was that they were personalized according to the learning needs or interests of the learners. Although the researcher did not give absolute freedom for the students in the designing of mind map similar to Haidari and Karimi (2015) in their research, it is found that personalized drawings of the students made the students understand and remember the vocabulary learnt better. Both the current research and the research carried out by Haidari and Karimi (2015) found that the freedom of students to construct their mind map by using diagrams, colours, shapes, and lines will eventually help students to acquire the vocabulary better. However, it is essential to note that the current research is carried out among primary school students instead of the high school students in the Haidari and Karimi's (2015) research. Thus, primary students' needs more guidance from the teacher instead of letting all the task to be done by them.

Since Poly Category Mind Map is useful in learning vocabulary, students can construct mind maps regularly after vocabulary lessons. Then, the students will use the mind maps that they have developed to write or tell a story in class. After the method has been mastered, students can easily apply the skills to memorize vocabulary and organize ideas for their writing and speaking assignments. Indirectly, students would be able to learn other language skills using the Mind Map technique. This statement overlaps with another study by Buran and Filyukov (2015) that found that their students developed skills in reading, writing, and speaking via the usage of the mind map. Hence, this study using Poly Category Mind Map to develop vocabulary can also be expanded into other language skills in the English Language to optimize the benefits gained.

Conclusion

In general, there is a significant improvement that has been justified in the findings. The differences obtained from the test results show that the use of Poly Category Mind Map was

practical and helpful in improving participants' performance in vocabulary learning. The students' second cycle post-test showed that the number of correct answers for each student increased, which showed improvement in terms of understanding of words learnt, remembering the meaning and the spelling of the words. It implied that the use of aspects in mind mapping such as key pictures, keywords, colors, and categorization made the presentation of vocabulary items easier.

In sum, all these outstanding features of Poly Category Mind map aided students to acquire more vocabulary efficiently.

This effectiveness of Poly Category Mind Map also gave insights on the importance of direct vocabulary teaching in the English language. As mentioned earlier, the current CEFR syllabus is more about the communicative learning approach. Consequently, explicit teaching of word instruction was considered outdated and often ignored. Poly Category Mind Map, which serves as one of the direct vocabulary teaching techniques, clearly proved that students still need adequate direct vocabulary instruction. This technique is necessary to help students, especially average learners, to develop their vocabulary knowledge. The success of Poly category Mind Map as a better learning strategy compared to word list also correlates with Buzan and Buzan (1993) opinion. They suggested that "the brain finds it easier to accept and remember visually stimulating, multi-colored, multi-dimensional mind map, rather than monotonous, boring liner notes."

This action work focused on using Poly Category Mind Map to improve the vocabulary skills of students. This study has proven to give the researcher meaningful data. Yet the study's results should also be complemented by those of additional studies. First, the study could be replicated with different student levels so the use of the Poly Category Mind Map could be validated further. The study could be conducted with a larger sample population if possible so that the study's generalizability could be increased. The current population, which is one third-year students' class, may not produce enough data to be commonly used.

Suggestions for Further Research

The future study can focus on the topics below:

1) Using Poly Category Mind Map on Indian to improve students' acquisition and retention of idioms and collocations
2) The Effect of Poly Category Mind Map on Indian male vs. female students' vocabulary development and retention

3) Using Poly Category Mind Map for in developing (listening, speaking, writing, and reading) skills of English in India.

Implications

For three particular groups, the findings of the current study are significant. Firstly, the results of this study may be conducive to Indian language learners, offering them some valuable insights into possible alternative forms of learning vocabulary. Secondly, it would be necessary for language teachers to gain a better understanding of the strategies of alternative vocabulary teaching that can promote the long-term retention and development of lexical items in the learners ' minds. Also, the findings of this study may assist materials designers in presenting words through a recommended technique that could promote vocabulary retention among learners.

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ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

Virtual Teaching Attitude and Technological Competence among English as Second Language (ESL) Teachers: Implications for the Management of Learning

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Abstract

Teachers are now faced with the demand of shifting from the traditional to the modern means of instruction known as virtual teaching. With this, teachers' attitude toward virtual teaching is an essential concern, especially when teachers are accustomed to the traditional approach (face to face) of education. In addition, as teachers are compelled to quickly adopt the new teaching

modality, determining teachers' technological competence becomes an interesting endeavor to take. This current study enlisted a total of 488 ESL teachers with years of experience ranging from 1 to 28 (mean [M] = 10.57, standard deviation [SD] = 9.57). The youngest of the respondents is 21, and the oldest is aged 59 (M=33.70,SD= 10.35). In terms of gender, females constitute 77.3% (377) of the total sample. Two research tools were adopted from Javier (2020) – the Online Teaching Tool (AtOTT) with the reliability of Cronbach's α = 0.862 and the Teachers' Technological Competence Tool (TTCT) with the reliability of Cronbach's α = 0.898. The study found that the teachers appraised themselves to be technologically '*competent*'; however, the ESL teachers were '*somehow negative*' toward teaching virtually. Additionally, the study's findings refute the existence of gender gaps in the attitude toward virtual teaching and technological competence. On another note, a significant relationship exists between the respondents' attitudes toward virtual teaching (interchangeably used with online teaching) and their technological competence. Finally, the study highlights the need for educational administrators to journey with the ESL teachers as they migrate from the traditional practice to the modern one as such is indeed a challenging thing to realize.

Keywords: *Virtual teaching, Attitude, ESL, Technological competence, Language teachers*

Introduction

Background of the study

Traditionally, formal teaching would require educators to physically meet learners in one definite place – in most cases, inside a classroom. Due to the dawning of technology, this has been changed. Through technological support, teaching is now possible even if the teachers stay at home – this is numerously termed by researchers - online teaching (Cross & Polk,2018), telementoring, electronic mentoring, e-mentoring (Omar,Hassan,&Atan,2012), and virtual teaching (Guasch,Alvarez,&Espasa,2010). The practice is called by many names, but one essential thing is suggested – the possibility of instructing students separated from their teachers in terms of both time and space.

Presently, teaching could be performed in three major approaches. The oldest is the face to face instruction. It is the kind that demands teachers to be in a physical classroom in order to realize the task of teaching. This is also known by the term traditional teaching. It is named as such

because it is the earliest and longest existing approach in education while the remaining two are modern and newly developed. The other type is virtual teaching. In this version, instruction is fully realized through technology-dependent communication tools (Eichelberger & Leong,2019). Relative to this, it is believed that although technology is also employed in regular classrooms, but '*teaching in the online environment necessitates a much-needed reliance on technology…than f2f (face to face) teaching does*' (Kearns,2016:76). The last kind is the combination of the previous two approaches. Thus, being a mixture of two approaches, this kind of education is called by terms such as blended, mixed, and hybrid (Alzahrani, & O'Toole,2017). Therefore, teachers and students nowadays, as suggested by the available modes on how to teach and be educated, have options to consider which was not the case some years ago.

However, the turn of events led by the Covid-19 outbreak restricted educators and learners. Attendance at schools across the world was suspended because of the fear that such a form of gathering would result in the spread of the disease, and endanger educators and students alike. Stuck in such a predicament, academic institutions considered the offering of online schooling. Left with not much of choice, teachers who were used to traditional teaching were asked to teach digitally.

Against this, it becomes relevant to investigate teachers' attitudes toward electronic mentoring, noting that attitude is an essential factor influencing choice, determining action, and prompting behavior (Erwin,2001). Moreover, equally essential is the objective of determining educators' technological competence as this is a salient factor affecting effective online teaching (Yücel & Koçak,2010). Additionally, it is also necessary to identify whether teachers' technological competence significantly correlates with their attitude toward digital teaching as such would be an essential source of information from which implications could be drawn. These are the impetus in the conduct of this investigation.

Review Of Related Literature

Virtual Teaching

An essential point that needs to be initially clarified relates to the definition of virtual teaching. Primarily, three types of teaching versions presently exist. Face-to-face teaching, is the oldest of the types; hence, it is considered traditional. This teaching requires teachers to meet their students in the classroom at a given and definite time. The other kind is referred to as virtual

teaching (interchangeably used with online teaching), also online instruction (Limperos,Buckner,Kaufmann,&Frisby,2014). This is teaching performed on a digital platform. Teachers would utilize and depend on communicative tools to deliver education among learners. This is said to be the kind of education realized in a new modality, which relies on technology. The last kind is the mix of the previous two discussed types known as blended or hybrid (Alzahrani, & O'Toole,2017).

Zeroing on virtual teaching means realizing discussion, lecture, and teaching in general by teachers in an approach that is '*inherently tied to technology*' (Clark & Paivio,1991:2). Similarly, Javier (2020:215) claimed that '*digital schooling owes its existence to technology*.' This means that virtual teaching does not only use technology but is dependent on it. Therefore, online teaching cannot be realized without the needed technology (Eichelberger & Leong, 2019) that would allow the teacher to reach and communicate with students without asking them to be in one place. This characteristic is unique to online teaching.

Hence, requirements for online teaching include three things – technological equipment, productivity software, and internet connection (Salvo,Shelton,&Welch,2017). The technological equipment is the technological gadgets and digital devices, while the productivity software, also known as productivity tools used to create, produce, and develop presentations and documents.

Benefits and Downsides of Virtual Teaching

Virtual teaching has both advantages and disadvantages. One of the gains of online teaching is that it provides convenience (Mupinga,Nora,&Yaw,2006). Teachers could perform the tasks of educating learners without leaving the comfort of their homes. Teaching in this modality would mean that teachers are spared from the troubles of traveling, which entails preparation and the hassle of being stuck in traffic.

Another is the flexibility of access (Bolliger & Wasilik,2009). Most online classes are realized through the use of online classrooms, allowing teachers to upload and provide notes, videos and other digital materials that students could access at their convenience. Moreover, unlike traditional teaching, the teacher may change schedules of online meet-ups without having much trouble. The teacher could also upload materials and schedule simultaneous viewing. These features are claimed to be two of the primary benefits of online teaching (Javier,2020).

However, teaching digitally is reported to have a negative side. Javier (2020) explained that online teaching is both taxing and demanding to perform. This is especially true in the case of teachers who are starting to migrate toward the said practice because that would mean that teachers must start all over again in terms of developing materials because teaching online does not simply mean digitizing hard copies of materials kept over the years. It also means exploring once more what strategies to use when teaching in a different modality as pedagogical practices and habits applied in traditional do not necessarily mean effective and could be used when teaching online (Knowles,Holton,&Swanson,2005). In other words, teaching practices found useful in the discharge of instructional duties in regular classrooms may not necessarily be of similar effect when teaching is done in the new and technologically-rich modality. Hence, Hogan and McKnight (2007) maintained that the shift, from face to face to digital instruction, is daunting (Spector,2005), which causes burnout among teachers (Hogan & McKnight, 2007).

Another is that online teaching is time-consuming (Spector,2005). When teaching online, teachers should expect that students would make queries through emails, instant messages, text messages, among others (Cooperman,2018). On top of this, teachers must provide feedback as promptly as possible. In addition, preparation for online classes demands time for setting up of needed devices as well as the venue where the teacher would be situated in the duration of the online class. These are not a complete enumeration of the things teachers need to do when conducting an online class.

In this section, both sides of the coin, which is online teaching, are presented in an attempt to provide a balanced view of the latest teaching platform. It is remarked at this point that consideration of the benefits and disadvantages of online teaching are considerations people take shaping their attitude; hence, their fair presentation. However, it is pointed out that there are other good and bad sides of virtual teaching that were not included in this discussion due to constraints in space.

Attitude toward Virtual Teaching

Attitude is considered as a form of assessment (Bohner & Wanke,2002 in Somblingo & Alieto,2019; Eagly & Chaiken,1993). Moreover, to further qualify, it is an active type of evaluation (Ajzen & Fishbein,1977) addressed to an object, person, idea, event, language, and what not which is, technically, called as the attitudinal object (Ricohermoso, Abequibel, & Alieto,2019).

Addedly, Eagly and Chaiken (1993) explained that attitude is a hypothetical construct. This means that, as a variable, it could not be directly observed, especially if we account for the Mentalist Theory in understanding the construction of attitude (Somblingo, & Alieto,2019). However, attitude as a research construct could be gauged through the use of a research tool that is validated and tested for reliability. Instrument's utilization would make it possible for the quantification, documentation, and measurement of latent variables such as attitude (Creswell,2012).

Attitude '*has become a topic of interest for many scholars*' (Eijansantos, Alieto, Dela Rama – Morgia, & Dela Rama – Ricohermoso,2020:308). Indeed, scholars ventured on developing instruments to measure respondents attitude toward different attitudinal objects such as the Philippine English (Alieto & Rillo,2018), English, Filipino, and Mother Tongue (Alieto,2018; Berowa, Devanadera, David,2018; Go Silk et al.,2020; Tonio & Ella,2019;), the teaching of *Chavacano* (Anudin,2018), Online Teaching (Javier,2020), Technology (Yavuz,2005), traditional and online training courses (Wasserman,2019), computer use (Shahaani,1993), and e-mentoring (Omar, et al.,2012). This listing of investigations is a support and justification that attitude is a variable that could be quantified.

Concerning attitude toward virtual teaching, Gasaymeh (2009) investigated the attitude of faculty members of Jordanian public universities toward internet-based distance education and found that the faculty, in general, are exhibiting positive attitudes toward teaching in the mentioned modality. Another and one of the most recent investigations on the said topic is that of Javier (2020), who enlisted 162 teachers teaching the Filipino language that revealed a different result. The said study disclosed that the respondents' attitude is '*somehow negative*,' which means that the teachers are inclined to be negative towards online teaching. The teachers perceive virtual teaching unfavorably and that preference for traditional instruction is prevalent. The author supposed differing views – students are excited to digitally learn while teachers prefer face to face teaching as suggested by their manifested attitude. It was claimed that teachers manifested such an attitude because of the difficulty and complexity of maneuvering online classes, especially that the teachers were not afforded training before the shifting to online teaching modality.

Thus, this study is a descendant of the investigation of Javier (2020) because exploring teachers' attitudes is both essential and necessary, especially now that teachers are pressed to teach

in a digitally-enriched environment, and because attitude is a determinant of behavior and choice (Erwin,2001).

Technological Competence

With the new modality of teaching, researchers led numerous investigations to identify factors and practices which would result in effective online teaching. One of the dimensions investigated is pedagogical practices. It could be noted that pedagogical practices found useful in the discharge of teaching duties in regular classrooms may not necessarily be of similar effect when teaching is done in the new and technologically-rich modality. Bailey, and Card (2009), drawn from the analysis of interviews conducted with seasoned and award-winning e-learning instructors, enumerated eight pedagogical practices useful for virtual teaching. These are fostering relationships, engagement, timeliness, communication, organization, technology, flexibility, and high expectations. For Cooperman (2008:4), apart from the obvious necessities, there are 'not-so-obvious but critical skills' needed for successful online teachings such as empathy, understanding, and human presence.

However, it is claimed that for teachers to virtually teach, they must first and foremost be able to possess the competence that would enable them to use the digital tools and navigate effectively across the wide-ranging control buttons of online applications. Relative to this, to be technologically literate is not an option among teachers (Yücel & Koçak,2010), especially for teachers involved in off-site schooling.

Survey of literature would provide that various studies utilize other terms synonymous with technological competence – although the term technological competence is the widely used terminology (Arballo & Núñez,2019). The authors found that researchers use terms such as digital competence, ICT competence, computer competence, and technological management.

Technological competence relates more to the capability and knowledge in using information communications technology – the numerous and varied functions in consideration of application contexts (Prendes, Paz, & Gutiérrez,2013). Thus, it is rational to think that teachers need to be technologically competent. Indeed, for Kubrickýa and Částková (2015), it is a vital

characteristic teacher must possess as it is now considered a part of teachers' professional competence.

In the study of Javier (2020), it was revealed that, overall, the teachers are competent in terms of their technological competence. However, the teachers reported that as regards two technologically-related skills, developing assessment through online tools and applications and troubleshooting internet connection issues, and device-related troubles, the respondents reported being 'not competent.' Taking the result in a positive light, the author contended that the study gave essential information as to what skills are needed to be developed and with urgency and to be addressed especially that teaching online is no longer an option, but the only means because of the pandemic that has altered many practices in education.

This current study, although a descendant of the investigation of Javier (2020), is novel in its entirety. The study of the author was with language teachers teaching Filipino, the national language of the Philippines. However, this present study is with English language teachers specifically taken from the Southern part of the Philippines. Additionally, the previous study on the same topic enlisted only 162 respondents. In this current investigation, the number was increased and extended to a total of 488. Moreover, data analysis in this study was geared towards drawing implications for the management of learning.

Gender in Attitude toward Virtual teaching and Technological Competence

It has commonly been understood that sex is not gender, and gender is not sex. This means that the two terms could not be used synonymously as there exists a semantic distinction between the words.

Concerning gender, Aydinoglu (2014 in Bacang,Rillo,&Alieto,2019) and Tannen (1990 in Torres, Pariña,Collantes,&Tan,2020) explained the idea that gender is a social construction. It means that it is the society that determines the qualities, characteristics, of what is feminine and what is masculine. Gender, therefore, is not based on the binary classification traditionally imposed. This suggests that different cultures provide varying construction and perception of what gender is. However, it remains that gender is an essential consideration across cultures and societies (Gormley,2015). Sex, on the other hand, is not socially determined, but biologically (Toraman & Özen,2019). This means that this is predetermined by the time of conception.

Intriguingly, research investigations to probe differences between males and females have blurred the distinction between gender and sex. In most cases, gender was used to mean the binary categorization (e.g. Antonio,Probitchado,Ricohermoso,Saavedra,&de la Rama,2020; Buslon,Alieto,Pahulaya,&Reyes,2020; de la Rama, et al.,2020; Devanadera & Alieto,2019; Horton-Ramos,2020; Miñoza & Montero,2019; Sicam & Lucas,2016). This is taken to mean that gender perceived to be a binary categorization is common (Robbins & McGowan,2016). Relative to this, in Javier (2020), gender was operationalized to mean as the clustering term with two categories – male and female. This step taken by the author aligns with the practice of other researchers in the field. With this, the study took the same direction in using the term gender to refer to the male and female categorizations.

There was no statistical difference found with regard to the attitude toward the online teaching of Filipino language teachers (Javier,2020). Both the male and female respondents possess a 'somehow negative' attitude. The author alluded the result to the slow internet connection, which posts trouble for teachers to smoothly and effectively teach online. In the same study, it was revealed that the males reported, overall, to be not technologically competent while the females claimed to be competent. However, the difference was not statistically significant (p-value = 0.209 > α = 0.05). Moreover, the study concluded that gender, as a variable, has a neutral effect on both attitude toward online teaching and technological competence of the respondents.

This study embarked on a similar journey not to debunk or confirm the results of the predecessors of this study. Instead, to contribute empirical results for a clearer understanding of the construct of gender when investigated alongside with attitude toward online teaching and technological competence.

Research Questions

This investigation was guided with three questions, viz :

1. What is the attitude of ESL teachers toward the virtual teaching and technological competence?
2. Are there significant differences in the attitude toward virtual teaching and technological competence of the ESL Teachers across gender?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the ESL teachers' attitudes toward virtual teaching, and their technological competence of the ESL Teachers?

Methodology

Research design

This current study employed a descriptive-quantitative-correlation design. Descriptive studies commonly carry the objective of investigating the immediate status of a phenomenon or phenomena (Singh,2006) as in this study, which aimed to determine the attitude of the respondents' toward online teaching, and their technological competence. In addition, this study, being descriptive, involved the activities of collecting, tabulating, and analyzing data to interpret and describe the investigated phenomena (Calderon,2006 in Rillo and Alieto,2018).

Addedly, the current study aimed to correlate the ELS teachers' attitudes toward online teaching, and their technological competence. As such, the study is considered as correlational (Kendra,2020). Moreover, the approach for data collection was through the use of research tools, which is an accepted means of quantifying latent variables (Creswell,2012 in Delgado & Kassim, 2019). This approach opted for its efficiency and practicability (Dillman,Smith, & Christian,2009 in Alieto, 2018), particularly that this study involved a large sample size of respondents.

Additionally, the study is further classified as cross-sectional, having gathered data in 'one-shot' and in a short span of time (Setia, 2016 cited in Perez & Alieto,2018). Finally, the study is targeted among respondents of shared characteristics as all of them are ESL teachers; hence, the study is noted to be population-based (Buslon & Alieto,2019). Further, the study is acknowledged as non-experimental. As such, no manipulation of variables was performed, nor were controlled and uncontrolled groups established (Torres & Alieto,2019a;Torres & Alieto,2019b).

Respondents of the study

The Philippines is noted to be one of the largest English speaking countries (Abdon et al.,2019), and the English language has become the '*comfortable*' tongue among Filipinos (Tanpoco, Rillo, & Alieto,2019:229) which may be attributed to the importance given to English as the medium of learning and teaching (Tendero,2019; Torres & Flores, 2017); thus, deemed vital in the attainment of quality education (Caparas & Gustillo,2017; Jarrah,2020) in the context of the country. At this juncture, it is noted that for the Filipinos, English is a second language.

This study, in particular, surveyed teachers of the English language referred to by the term ESL teachers. The respondents total to 488 with years of experience ranging from 1 to 28 (mean [M] = 10.57, standard deviation [SD] = 9.57). Moreover, the youngest of the respondents is aged 21, and the oldest is 59 (M=33.70, SD= 10.35). It is noted that the standard deviations for both the

years of service and age are high, suggesting that the ESL teachers are dispersedly distributed across the ranges for age and years of service. In terms of gender, females constitute 77.3% (377) of the total sample. This suggests that the respondents are predominantly females. This data confirms the trend in other studies that the teacher education course attracts more females than males (Alieto,2019; Ricohermoso,Abequibel,&Alieto,2019; Alieto,Devanadera,&Buslon,2019). With regard, educational attainment, the distribution is as follows: bachelor's degree – 62.1% (303), master's degree – 29.1% (142), and doctorate – 8.8% (43). This means that the majority are only holders of a bachelor's degree while holders of a doctorate are the least numbered.

Research tools

The study adopted the research questionnaires of Javier (2020), the Attitude toward Online Teaching Tool (AtOTT), and the Teachers' Technological Competence Tool (TTCT). No alteration in any form was made after having determined that the instruments are appropriate considering the context of the present study. Additionally, the questionnaires were reported to be both valid and reliable – AtOTT (Cronbach' $\alpha = 0.862$), and TTCT (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.898$). In addition, both reliability scores suggest that the instruments are of '*good*' reliability (George & Maller,2003; Tavakol & Dennick,2011 in Lim-Ramos, et al.,2020).

The AtOTT comprises, in total, of 30 items divided into three sections in consideration of the Tripartite Model of Attitude, which supposed that attitude is composed of three dimensions (affective, cognitive, and behavior). Addedly, the questionnaire is with a four-point Likert scale. There are equal numbers of positive and negative statements in the affective and cognitive sections of the attitude questionnaire; however, there are no negative statements present in the behavior section). On the other hand, the TTCT is a single factor questionnaire with only ten items answerable with a four-point scale.

Data Collection

The means of data collection was conducted with the use of an online application. It must be noted that the online forms were sent only to people identified by the researchers to ascertain that only the target respondents respond to the questionnaire. The adopted questionnaires were digitized to enable technology-assisted data gathering.

Coding

To enable analysis, the responses of the respondents were coded. The scheme is as follows: For the positive statements, 1 for disagree, 2 for somehow disagree, 3 for somehow agree, and 4

for agree. Reverse coding was employed to responses to negative statements. For the behavior section of the attitude questionnaire, the following is the scheme: 1 for never, 2 for rarely, 3 for often, and 4 for always. Furthermore, the responses from the TTCT were coded as follows:: 1 for not competent, 2 for somehow competent, 3 for competent, and 4 for very competent. Additionally, the dichotomous variable gender is coded as 1 for male and 2 for female. Moreover, to provide interpretation to the computed arithmetic mean, tables 1 and 2 were adopted from the work of Javier (2020).

Table 1

Teachers' Attitude toward Online Teaching Scale

Range		**Affective/Cognitive**	**Behavior**	**Interpretation**
3.25	4.0	Agree	Always	Positive Attitude
2.5	3.24	Somehow Agree	Often	Somehow Positive
1.75	2.4	Somehow Disagree	Rarely	Somehow Negative
1.0	1.74	Disagree	Never	Negative Attitude

Table 2

Teachers' Technological Competence Scale

Range		**Technological Competence**
3.25	4.0	Very Competent
2.5	3.24	Competent
1.75	2.4	Somehow Competent
1.0	1.74	Not Competent

Results and Discussion

ESL Teachers' Attitude toward Online Teaching

The responses of the respondents in the Attitude toward Online Teaching Tool were grouped and coded. The raw data were computed to determine the responses mean scores in the three aspects (Affective, Cognitive, and Behavior). In addition, to determine the overall attitude, the mean scores were added and divided into three. Table 3 presents the analysis. Included in the presentation are the mean [M], standard deviation [SD], and interpretation [Interp.].

Table 3.0

ESL Teachers Attitude toward Online Teaching

Aspects	Mean	SD	Descriptor	Interpretation
Affective	2.59	0.49	Somehow Agree	Somehow Positive
Cognitive	2.32	0.54	Somehow Disagree	Somehow Negative
Behavior	2.27	0.59	Rarely	Somehow Negative
Overall Attitude	2.39	0.42	-	Somehow Negative

***Scale**: 1.0 to 1.74 – Negative Attitude, 1.75 to 2.4 – Somehow Negative, 2.5 to 3.24Somehow Positive, and 3.25 to 4.0 Positive*

From the above table, it could be noticed that ESL teachers' attitude is characterized as '*somehow negative*' (M-2.39, SD-0.42). This means that the respondents are manifesting an attitude that is gearing toward becoming negative. This result supports the findings of Javier (2020) among language teachers teaching Filipino, who was found, in general, to have an attitude also described as '*somehow negative*.' It appears that language teachers, whether teaching English or other languages such as Filipino, are not sold to the idea of conducting language instruction virtually. Moreover, the table discloses that concerning of attitude, the respondents were found to manifest '*somehow negative*' in the cognitive and behavioral domains. This means that the ESL teachers possess beliefs moving toward becoming negative, and the same holds true in their actions and decisions relating to online teaching of English. However, the opposite is true as regards the affective aspects in which the respondents were found to hold an attitude described as '*somehow positive*.' This means that the teachers possess emotions or feelings that are gearing towards being positive about teaching English virtually. To further understand ESL teachers' attitude, the following tables present the descriptive analysis of the responses per aspect of the questionnaire. Included in the tables are the statements, mean score, standard deviation, and interpretation.

Table 3.1 shows the rating of the ESL teachers in every item of the effective section of the attitude questionnaire.

Table 3.1

Items in the affective/emotion section

No.	Statements	M	SD	Desciptor	Interpretation
1	Developing digital contents to be used for online teaching is enjoyable	2.97	0.78	Somehow Agree	Somehow Positive
2	Conducting recitation is a pleasurable experience when realized online.	2.64	0.75	Somehow Agree	Somehow Positive
3	Creating and administering online assessments is exciting to do.	2.77	0.81	Somehow Agree	Somehow Positive
4	Lecturing using online class platforms is stimulating.	2.67	0.75	Somehow Agree	Somehow Positive
5	Learning about new applications used in online teaching is interesting.	3.31	0.80	Agree	Positive Attitude
6	Gaining a stable internet connection to conduct online classes is frustrating.	2.14	1.09	Somehow Agree	Somehow Negative
7	Online lecture is disliked as teaching is realized in a discomfort-inducing platform.	2.32	0.79	Somehow Agree	Somehow Negative
8	Class interaction is detested because of the difficulty in managing it.	2.27	0.86	Somehow Agree	Somehow Negative
9	Managing class activities in online platforms is hated due to the complexity of the skills demanded by it.	2.33	0.83	Somehow Agree	Somehow Negative
10	Doing online class and having to take videos of one's self while instructing is awkward and non-engaging.	2.45	0.93	Somehow Agree	Somehow Negative

Scale: *For positive statements - 1.0 to 1.74 – Disagree/Negative Attitude, 1.75 to 2.4 – Somehow Disagree/Somehow Negative, 2.5 to 3.24 – Somehow Agree/Somehow Positive, 3.25 to 4.0 – Agree/Positive; For negative statements - 1.0 to 1.74 – Agree/Negative Attitude, 1.75 to 2.4 – Somehow Agree/Somehow Negative, 2.5 to 3.24 – Somehow Disagree/Somehow Positive, 3.25 to 4.0 – Disagree/Positive*

From the table above, only in item 5, the respondents reported having a 'positive attitude.' This suggests that the ESL teachers are favoring online teaching of English because of the possibility of learning to use new applications. This means that the respondents are excited about the idea of learning new things. This sense of excitement about novel things is translated as a positive attitude about language instruction in the new modality. Additionally, out of the ten items in the affective aspect of attitude, in four items (numbers 1, 2,3, and 4) the teachers manifested a 'somehow positive' attitude. In comparison, in five items (numbers 6,7,8,9, and 10) the respondents manifested a 'somehow negative' attitude. In addition, it could be identified that the least rated item is number 6 '*Gaining stable internet connection to conduct online classes is frustrating*.' The majority of the respondents rated the statement '*somehow agree*.' This points to the issue that teachers when teaching English online are confronted with internet connectivity. This mirrors the concern and reality explained in Javier (2020), that teachers in the Philippines could hardly have access to a stable internet connection. This is supported by the study of Salac and Kim (2016), who found that the internet connection in the Philippines is far from being fast and stable.

Table 3.2 gives the rating of the ESL teachers in every item of the cognitive section of the attitude questionnaire.

Table 3.2

Items in the cognitive/belief section

No.	Statements	M	SD	Desciptor	Interpretation
1	Online Teaching is engaging and stimulating for students.	2.22	0.92	Somehow Disagree	Somehow Negative
2	Online teaching is a viable alternative approach promising educational results better with those of face to face instruction.	2.14	0.95	Somehow Disagree	Somehow Negative
3	Developing digital content and delivering quality for an online class is possible and doable.	2.15	0.83	Somehow Disagree	Somehow Negative
4	The online class is attractive to students making them engaged and motivated learners.	1.95	1.00	Somehow Disagree	Somehow Negative

5	The online class is convenient for teachers and students as classes could be held anywhere, and no physical classroom is needed.	1.96	0.99	Somehow Disagree	Somehow Negative
6	Less interaction between learners and teachers and among learners themselves is attained in online teaching.	2.58	0.75	Somehow Disagree	Somehow Positive
7	Online discussion lacks feeling and depersonalization to a great extent as compared to face to face instruction.	2.41	0.82	Somehow Agree	Somehow Negative
8	Lecturing online is less useful as it appears impersonal, resulting in limited learning.	2.74	0.80	Somehow Disagree	Somehow Positive
9	Cheating (e.g., plagiarism) is more likely done by students doing online classes.	2.53	0.79	Somehow Disagree	Somehow Positive
10	Online learning posts financial burden to both teachers and students.	2.47	0.90	Somehow Agree	Somehow Negative

Scale: *For positive statements - 1.0 to 1.74 – Disagree/Negative Attitude, 1.75 to 2.4 – Somehow Disagree/Somehow Negative, 2.5 to 3.24 – Somehow Agree/Somehow Positive, 3.25 to 4.0 – Agree/Positive; For negative statements - 1.0 to 1.74 – Agree/Negative Attitude, 1.75 to 2.4 – Somehow Agree/Somehow Negative, 2.5 to 3.24 – Somehow Disagree/Somehow Positive, 3.25 to 4.0 – Disagree/Positive*

From the table above, out of the ten items in the belief aspect of attitude, seven items of them showed that ESL teachers claimed to manifest a 'somehow negative' attitude, and only three items showed a 'somehow positive' attitude. This means that, in general, the respondents possess beliefs moving toward being negative. Moreover, the least rated item is number 4 '*Online class is attractive to students making them engaged and motivated learners.* This means that the teachers do not find language instruction to be engaging and attractive when done virtually. It is conjectured that the reason for this is that teachers have been accustomed to the traditional means of teaching English. Further, it is supposed that teachers are used to preparing materials and activities possible in face to face instruction but are not applicable when instruction is performed virtually. Moreover, because of the non-applicability of the long-time used activities, teachers believe that online teaching is less attractive, resulting in having students being less engaged and less motivated. On another note, the

highest-rated item is number 6 '*Lecturing online is less effective as it appears impersonal, resulting in limited learning.'* This means that the majority of the teachers rated the item with '*somehow disagree.'* It implies that the ESL teachers, to an extent, believe that it is possible for teachers to establish rapport with students even though instruction is performed virtually in which students and teachers are separated in terms of time and space. Moreover, the respondents believe that it is somehow possible to remain personal and connected with students on online platforms. It is supposed that this perception has something to do with the cultural orientation of the respondents. Javier (2020) discussed that Filipino teachers exert effort to establish a connection with their students as they perceive it needed to do their jobs efficiently. This is supposed to remain and not altered among the respondents, even if the modality of teaching changes.

Table 3.3 provides the rating of the ESL teachers in every item of the behavior section of the attitude questionnaire.

Table 3.3

Items in the behavior section

No.	Statements	M	SD	Desciptor	Interpretation
1	I develop digital contents, even when having a face to face classes.	**2.62**	**0.80**	Often	Somehow Positive
2	I create online assessments as a means of evaluating students.	**2.25**	**0.87**	Rarely	Somehow Negative
3	I conduct online classes even before its being a required approach in school.	**1.89**	**0.92**	Rarely	Somehow Negative
4	I ask my students to submit requirements or output electronically.	**2.16**	**0.84**	Rarely	Somehow Negative
5	I require an online presentation of students' reports and activities.	**2.02**	**0.86**	Rarely	Somehow Negative
6	I perform online recitation with my students.	**1.71**	**0.92**	Never	Negative Attitude
7	I interact with my class using digital platforms	**2.22**	**0.88**	Rarely	Somehow Negative

8	I explore applications and online platforms to supplement my teaching practices.	**2.68**	**0.86**	Often	Somehow Positive
9	I read and study about new technology and applications that could be used in teaching.	**2.77**	**0.79**	Often	Somehow Positive
10	I buy digital devices to be used in doing teaching online.	**2.36**	**0.90**	Rarely	Somehow Negative

***Scale**: 1.0 to 1.74 – Never/Negative Attitude, 1.75 to 2.4 – Rarely/Somehow Negative, 2.5 to 3.24 – Often/Somehow Positive, 3.25 to 4.0 – Always/Positive*

From the table above, it could be identified that out of the ten items, in 1 item (number 6) the respondents manifested a 'negative' attitude, in six items (numbers 2, 3, 4,5,7, and 10) the respondents possessed a 'somehow negative' attitude, and in three items (numbers 1, 8, and 9) the respondents exhibited a 'somehow positive' attitude. Moreover, the least rated item is number 6, '*I perform online recitation with my students.'* This means that ESL teachers are unlikely to conduct online recitation. It is supposed that the teachers find the conduct of online recitation troublesome. This practice requires students to have a quality microphone and use communication tools to participate and perform oral discussion or presentation of ideas. This limits teachers from conducting this practice online. On the other hand, the highest-rated item is number 9 '*I read and study about new technology and applications that could be used in teaching*.' This implies that teachers have accepted the idea that online teaching would be the only viable option left for them to continuously teach despite the constraints on the part of the learners and teachers. Nevertheless, this could be a timely address for a new pedagogic way to reduce learners' anxiety levels, as this type of teaching modality could have a facilitative effect on learners (Abdon,2018). This further suggests that the teachers subscribe to the notion that virtual teaching is the 'future' that must be learned now.

ESL Teachers' Technological Competence

The responses of the ELS teachers in the Teachers Technological Competence Tool were coded. The arithmetic mean was computed to determine the technological competence of the respondents. Table 4 gives the analysis, and following suit is the discussion of the finding.

Table 4

Teachers' Technological Competence

Variable	M	SD	Interp.
Technological Competence	2.60	0.97	Competent

Scale: 1 to 1.74 Not competent, 1.75 to 2.4 Somehow competent, 2.5 to 3.24 Competent, and 3.25 to 4.0 Very competent

The analysis disclosed that the ESL teachers reported being 'competent; with respect to the use of technological applications and tools. This result supports the finding of Javier (2020), which revealed that the language teachers perceived themselves as '*competent*' in the use of technology.

Detailed analysis of the result provides that in terms of accessing various technological resources and tools (e.g., productivity tool, e-books, content management system, etc.) 7.8% of claimed that they are '*not competent*','48.4% declared themselves to be '*somehow competent*,' 36.1% rated themselves as '*competent*,' and 7.8% appraised themselves as '*very competent*.' Overall, the ESL teachers, for this technological skill, the respondents determined themselves as '*competent*' (M-2.54, SD-0.93). With respect to organizing and presenting the learning materials in digital format, in total, the respondents determined themselves as '*competent*' (M-2.66, SD-0.56). In detail, 8.0% appraised themselves '*not competent*,' 45.3% evaluated themselves to be '*somehow competent*,' 41.4% judged themselves as '*competent*,' and 5.3% considered themselves as '*very competent*.' As regards developing assessment through online tools and applications, the teachers, generally, declared themselves to be '*not competent*' (M-2.29, SD-0.64). In particular, 13.7 % of the respondents were noted to be '*not competent*', 4.1% '*somehow competent*,' 35.9% '*competent*', and 4.3% '*very competent*.' As for utilizing computers and other digital devices employed in online classes, the respondents, in total, were described to be '*competent*' (M-2.64, SD-0.88). The specifics are as follows: 8.8% of the respondents were noted to be '*not competent*', 44.1% '*somehow competent*', 38.5% '*competent*', and 8.6% '*very competent*.'

With regard to troubleshooting internet connection issues and device-related troubles, the teachers were noted to be '*not competent*' (M-2.15, SD-0.67). Details are as follows: 27% declared to be 'not competent,' 43% '*somehow competent*,' 21.5% '*competent*,' and 8.4% '*very competent*.' In relation to employing appropriate multimedia technologies appropriate for learning activities, the respondents claimed, in total, to be '*competent*' (M-2.60, SD-0.34). Specifics are the following:

10.2% of the teachers reported to be '*not competent*,' 42.6% '*somehow competent*,' 37.3% '*competent*,' and 9.8% '*very competent*.' For aligning content with pedagogical approaches and appropriate technology, overall, the respondents appraised themselves as '*competent*' (M-2.61, SD-0.87). Moreover, 7.0% evaluated themselves as '*not competent*,' 44.9% '*somehow competent*,' 37.9% '*competent*,' and 10.2% '*very competent*.' As for using online communication tools, the ESL teachers claimed to be '*competent*' (M-2.78, SD- 1.07). The particulars are as follows: 4.9% appraised themselves as 'not competent,' 44.5% '*somehow competent*,' 42.4 % '*competent*,' and 13.1% '*very competent*.' As regards designing learning activities considering available technologies, the respondents reported, in general, to be '*competent*' (M-2.68, SD- 0.55). Details are as follows: 6.4% of the teachers judged themselves as 'not competent,' 42.6% '*somehow competent*,' 40.0% '*competent*,' and 11.1% '*very competent*.' As regards using technology to facilitate collaborative creation and peer editing of students' work, the ESL teachers, in general, evaluated themselves as '*competent*' (M-3.0, SD-1.02). Moreover, 8.4% evaluated themselves as '*not competent*,' 42.4% '*somehow competent*,' 40.4 % '*competent*,' and 8.8% '*very competent*.' Evidently, the ESL teachers need training with respect to the three technological skills (troubleshooting internet connection issues and device-related troubles, developing assessment through online tools and applications and accessing various technological resources and tools) in which the respondents gauged themselves to be '*not competent*'. Therefore, training could be focused on the enrichment of professional knowledge and enhancement of their skill in relation to the identified deficient skills.

Difference in ESL Teachers' Attitude toward Virtual Teaching and Technological Competence across Gender

To determine whether a significant difference in the attitude toward the virtual teaching and technological competence of the ESL teachers, a t-test for the independent sample was used to analyze the raw data. On one hand, gender, in the case of this current study, is taken to be the independent variable or the one considered to affect another variable. On the other hand, the variables attitude toward virtual teaching and technological competence are noted to be dependent variables or the ones taken to be influenced in a relationship (Clarke-Carter,2004). Table 5 gives the analysis.

Table 5

Gender Difference: Attitude toward online teaching and Technological competence

Variables		Categories	M	SD	Description	Sig.
Dependent	**Independent**					
ESL Teachers' Attitude toward Virtual Teaching	Gender	Male	2.37	0.59	Somehow Negative	0.359
		Female	2.40	0.55	Somehow Negative	
ESL Teachers Technological Competence		Male	2.59	0.71	Competent	0.409
		Female	2.64	0.82	Competent	

N=488

The above table presents the difference analysis in the attitude toward virtual teaching and technological competence of the ESL teachers across the dichotomous variable gender. With respect the dependent variable attitude toward virtual teaching, the data revealed that females (M-2.37, SD-0.59) exhibit a '*better*' attitude as compared to male (M-2.40, SD-0.55) counterparts in the study; however, the difference is not statistically significant (sig. value = 0.359 > α = 0.05).

In terms of the dependent variable technological competence, the data disclosed that the females (M-2.64, SD-0.71) are 'more' technologically competent as compared to males (M-2.59, SD-0.82); however, the difference is not significant at α = 0.05. The results suggest that gender is not a factor influencing differences in the attitude toward virtual teaching and technological competence of ESL teachers. These results confirm the previous findings of Javier (2020) with language teachers teaching the Filipino language.

ELS Teachers' Attitude towards Online Teaching and Technological Competence

To determine whether a significant relationship between the variables, attitude toward virtual teaching and technological competence of the ESL teachers, the statistical tool known as Pearson r was utilized to treat the raw data. Table 6 presents the analysis.

Table 6

A significant relationship between respondents'attitude toward virtual teaching and technological competence

Variables		*p*-value	*r*-value	Interpretation
ESL Teachers' Attitude toward Virtual Teaching	ESL Teachers Technological Competence	0.000*	0.286	Significant

*Significant at alpha = 0.001 (2-tailed)

The above table shows the analysis of the relationship between the variables' attitudes toward virtual teaching and technological competence. The analysis revealed that there is significant correlation between the variables (p-value = 0.000 < α = 0.01). This means that there is a significant relationship; moreover, as provided by the *r*-value = 0.286, the relationship is positive. It means that as the responents' technological competence increases, their attitude toward virtual teaching is becoming positive. Conversely, the teachers with low technological competence are the ones manifesting negative attitude toward virtual teaching. Additionally, this result is supported by the investigation of Javier (2020). Further, from the result, it could be said that the technological competence of teachers influences their attitude toward online teaching.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions are made: One is that the ESL teachers needed support at multiple levels in order for their attitude toward virtual teaching to be enhanced and further developed. The second is that the teachers are deficient in terms of essential skills for them to be able to perform teaching effectively in virtual platforms. The third is that gender has a neutral effect on both the attitude toward virtual teaching and technological competence. Lastly, the technological competence is associated with a virtual teaching attitude.

Implications

The study provides essential implications enumerated as follows:

One is that teachers' technological competence should be appraised. This is believed to be a crucial and initial step that administrators should take before asking their teachers to teach virtually. This is to ascertain that the teachers are equipped with the knowledge and technical

know-how concerning the use and access of technology. Teacher, no matter how willing they could be would not be able to perform well when lacking in the technological skills demanded by the new teaching modality. Moreover, the assessment could also help identify individuals needing specific technological support and training. Along this line, it is pointed out that resistance, if they are noted among teachers, to adopt the new teaching modality may stem from teachers' lack or deficiency in terms of technological skills

Another is that Educational Administrators should continuously support teachers by providing them with sets of training and seminars aimed at developing teachers' technological competence. Although the teachers in the study appraised themselves to be '*competent*,' it must be noted that this does not mean that what the teachers can do are already sufficient to meet the demands of virtual teaching considering that the virtual platform is ever-changing and technology utilized to support virtual education is dynamic and upgrades now and then.

One more is that mentoring should be a practice that must be explored as such serves as a potent force in a capacity-building, especially for novice, inexperienced teachers (Ponce, 2018), which in this regard are those who have limited exposure in the use of virtual platforms to teach.

Further, teachers must be provided with training related to pedagogies and practices that would allow them to perform language instruction online effectively. This is essentially true because pedagogies found effective in traditional classrooms may not necessarily be effective in virtual ones. Thus, teachers should be guided in this important aspect.

Last, the study highlights the need for educational administrators to journey with the teachers as they migrate from the traditional practice to the modern one as such is indeed a challenging thing to realize.

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ASIAN EFL JOURNAL
The EFL Professional's Written Forum

An Analysis of the Cultural Content and Ideological Underpinnings of an English Language Textbook

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Abstract

This study examines the cultural content and the ideological underpinnings in an English language textbook designed for students learning English at governmental schools in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). A content analysis of the textbook "Bridge to Success" is used in this study. The textbook used for analysis is prescribed by the Ministry of Education in the UAE for grade six students (ages 11-12). This study examines textbook images, texts and tasks and how they facilitate or hinder promoting global citizenship while maintaining an Emirati focus. The research findings showed that the textbook under investigation represents cultural diversity on the local, national and global levels, however, images have no apparent cultural pedagogical purpose. Visual images are context-free and culturally neutral. Texts represent the target culture and the source culture; however, these cultures are disproportionally represented. Tasks provide opportunities for collaborative and participatory activities, yet the tasks related to learners' own culture lack contextualized phrases and vocabulary items. This study suggested the need to involve textbook

content, design and the type of tasks to foster learners' social identity and intercultural citizenship. Images and texts should be harnessed more explicitly to develop a critical and reflexive understanding of culture, self, and the other. Implications for more analyses of language education textbooks as both cultural and pedagogical artifacts are discussed.

Keywords: *Textbook Analysis, Images, Culture, Ideology*

Introduction

Curdt-Christiansen (2015) emphasizes that "Despite the copious literature on textbook analysis, especially on cultural contents in ELT textbooks, few studies have comprehensively examined the cultural contents and ideological underpinnings of the textbooks used for developing literacy skills and for learning English as a dominant language in the countries of the Outer Circle". He called for more studies which examine the ideological assumptions about the status, functions and nature of local cultures and how cultural knowledge provide opportunities or obstacles for language learners to enact their identity. Bora and Hausendorf (2006) emphasize that "The meanings and communication patterns constructed in the classroom interaction is usually mediated by textbooks".

Curdet (2015) emphasized upon the need to empower learners by providing a language to use to communicate with the world, to present their own culture and to have a critical means for reflecting on the environment in which they find themselves. His study on the ideological tensions and contradictions in lower primary English teaching materials in Singapore warns against the lack of local culture that may signify to young learners that their culture is of less value, less relevant and less significant (Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015).

Literature Review

Culture and language are intertwined in texts. Consequently, there are cultural messages embedded in different levels of language. According to Hong and He "Cultural messages can be expresses by a word, phrase, clause, sentence, text segment, or dialogue exchange". Martinez Marton emphasized "Living as a citizen includes valuing what is local, such as family, culture, nation, developing communicative competence to communicate and share with others its value, and learning to develop principles ensuring the possibility of living together within multicultural,

plural societies" (in Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015:70).

This study is a response to the calls in the foreign language education literature to foster learners' critical cultural consciousness. "Language education cannot be limited to training in language skills. It must be concerned with the role language plays in enacting social relations and promoting certain practices and discourses. Language use shapes and is shaped by society and constitutes knowledge and social identities. It is shaped by power relations and is ideologically loaded" (Curdt- Christiansen & Weninger, 2015: 69).

A textbook was selected for this study because of the importance of textbooks in learning language and culture. Textbooks are used widely in classrooms. They are looked upon as irreplaceable in both language learning and teaching (Cunningsworth, 1995; Dubin & Olshtain, 1986, O'Neil, 1982; Sheldon, 1988). In this study, texts and images are examined as representations to uncover the underpinning ideologies. Ideology in this study refers to the cultural beliefs that are manifest in cultural practices and materials (Weninger & Kiss, 2013).

Learners live in a world surrounded by visual images so the textbook should provide them with visual images that allow them to bring their own reality to the lesson. Textbooks should use pictures to stimulate their inner meanings. Weninger & Kiss (2013) argued that textbook analyses need to look at texts and images in textbooks as having meaning potential "as their ultimate interpretation will be based on how students are guided to make sense of them within the pedagogical context of the activity and of the lesson". They examined Hungarian EFL textbooks' use of images as visual reinforcement of vocabulary or grammar without digging deeper into the cultural/connotative meaning potential.

Visual displays are playing an increasingly important role in learning English. Second language acquisition research indicates that graphics can provide comprehensible input and make complex ideas more accessible and language more memorable (Wright, Tigue, Eslami and Reynolds, 2014). Tomlinson (2013) draws attention to the use of visuals for presentation and practice to provide meaningful context.

Zadina)2014(indicates that textbooks are using visuals to make materials meaningful and to increase comprehension and retention in language learners. However, she warned against using irrelevant graphics and decorative pictures as they are considered a waste of brain resource from a neuroscience point of view (Zadina, 2014: 41). "Images need to be much more than mere visual reinforcement or space-fillers. They need to be utilized as entry points for critical discussions about

students' cultural beliefs and stereotypes, complemented by task and text that foster awareness and reflection" (Weninger & Kiss, 2013). Texts and visuals should help developing learners' critical cultural reflectivity in EFL classrooms. Texts need to be accompanied by tasks that prompt learners to engage more deeply with the cultural assumptions implicit in them. (Kumaravadivelu, 2008: 181).

Analysis of language use and the use of images helps uncovering the assumptions underlying portrayal of cultures and the extent of the ideological harmony between the textbook content and the goals of using the textbook. In this study, language use in texts and dialogues such as content words/lexical choice and function words is analysed. The content analysis focuses on how language in context constructs the attributes of people, everyday events, and the cause for actions (Gee, 2005; Van Dijk, 2008). It explores interactions/relationship between words and images as images provide contextual information that enable learners to construct meaning. The researcher uses an analysis of image, text and task as "texts, images, and tasks that form an activity should be treated together because it is their interplay that facilitates learning and creates opportunities for cultural messages to surface in the lesson" (Weninger and Kiss, 2013).

There is an increase in the number of ministries of education in the Arab world such as in the United Arab Emirates (in addition to internationally - as mentioned by Tomlinson, 2013 - in Belarus, Bulgaria, Columbia, Ethiopia, Russia and Uzbekistan, India, Romania, Namibia, etc.) which produce their own locally relevant textbooks. "Bridge to Success" by Jane Boylan and Claire Medwell published in 2017 is chosen for analysis as it is introduced at governmental schools for the Emirati students. The school year is divided into three semesters. For each semester, there is a student book, an activity book, an audio track and a teacher's guide. The student book for each semester consists of, 5 units of 86 pages, each unit is made up of 15 lessons and a wordlist at the end of the book. All units are illustrated in color. At the end of each workbook, there are six pages of vocabulary and grammar exercises for each unit in greyscale. The teacher guide contains brief instructions for classroom applications of activities in the student book, an answer key and the CD script. There is a digital version of the student book on the UAE Ministry of Education website. The book jacket indicates that the book sets out to:

- Develop and extend listening, speaking, reading and writing skills
- Motivate and engage learners through real world tasks
- Build on and balance 21st century skills

- Encourage global citizenship whilst maintaining an Emirati focus
- Align with international benchmarks of the Common European Framework
- Prepare learners to meet the nations' goals set out for UAE National Agenda Vision 2020

Questions of the Study

Based on the review of the related literature, the current research has been guided by the following questions:

(1) To what extent does the textbook under investigation represent cultural diversity on local, national, and global level?
(2) How does text, task and images used in the textbook encourage global citizenship while maintaining an Emirati focus?
(3) To what extent are images used in the textbook cultural-specific?
(4) How far is language used as a communicative tool?
(5) What culture and whose cultures are represented?

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how and whether the textbook "Bridge to Success" embed textual and visual content in pedagogic activities that foster culturally reflective interpretation needed for global and intercultural citizenship while maintaining a local (an Emirati) focus. It also analyses how and whether text, task, and image interplay to provide opportunities for learning language and culture and understand cultural messages. This study aims at drawing the attention of textbook authors, curriculum designers and teachers to relating the cultural content to the objectives of the textbook and EFL learners' needs as global citizens.

Study Method

In this study, the content analysis method is used to analyse the culture content and ideological underpinnings in the "Bridge to Success" textbook. Content Analysis is defined as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of manifest content of communication" (Berelson, 1952: 74) and "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context" (Krippendorff, 1980: 21 in Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger,

2015: 96).

This analysis approaches language textbooks as both cultural and pedagogical artifacts. The approach in this study is analyzing language use, content words/lexical choice and the interaction between image, text and task as image provides contextual information for learners to construct meaning based on their early childhood experiences, cultural backgrounds and family socialization patterns with books and other literacies devices. Curdt-Christiansen advocates that this approach helps analyze assumptions underlying particular choices of cultural identity and absence of such (Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015: 136).

Data Collection

Qiao Ping identified nationality and subcategories were used for quantitative analysis (Ping in Curdt, 2015:172). In this study, cultural themes were coded and categorized for comparison. The coding and categorizing were done separately by the researcher and another coder to ensure high reliability. The researcher and the other coder discussed all discrepancies and reached agreement for inter-coder reliability. When the coding was performed, the cultural themes were categorized into three groups: local, national and global. Culture at the local level refers to the UAE culture, culture at the national level refers to the Arab countries culture, and culture at the global level refers to the international culture. Any reference to geography including country names and place names, languages, culture heritage including cultural practices, arts including paintings, calligraphy and martial arts, literature including expressions or discourse segments referencing literary works and idioms in language (Big 'C' Culture) was coded in addition to references to festivals, holidays and celebration; food, cultural values, and kinship and address systems (Little "C" Culture).

Data Analysis

The five units of the learner's book, volume 1 have the following topics: Life experiences, School, Sport, The Big Screen, Inventions. Of these, the researcher has chosen Unit 1, Unit 2 and Unit 4 to analyze because they contain materials which is considered particularly relevant for educating citizens to appreciate the self and the other and value their heritage and identity. Each unit compromises 15 lessons related to a particular theme. The evidence drawn from content analysis showed that the textbook reflects cultural diversity in the UAE as well as in different parts

of the world. The textbook includes characters of different cultural backgrounds. Representations of multiple cultures is observed verbally and visually in the textbook. On the local level historical figures and local people are represented and valued. On the global level, there is a representation of international cultures with a focus on the achievements of famous people. However, western people achievements are highlighted. This representation of the achievement of western people does not help provide learners with "empowering, multicultural portrayals of the world that sensitize them to issues of power, culture and social identity" (Weninger & Williams, 2005:159 in Curdt-Christiansen, 2015: 99). The following table shows the analysis of Volume 1, Units 1, 2 and 4 based on Qiao Ping identified national links and cultural subcategories followed by a qualitative analysis of image, text and task represented in the three units under investigation:

Table 1 Cultural Representations by National Links and Sub-categories
(Adapted from Ping, Ideologies in Primary Textbooks in China)

Nationality	Total	Geo	Ach	Pp	Act	NR	CF	MP	VB	NL
Emirates	6	2	1	1	1				1	
Egypt	3	2			1					
Bahrain	2	1			1					
Australia	2	1			1					
USA	7	2	2	1	1				1	
Britain	4	1	1	1	1					
Canada	2	1			1					
China	2	1			1					
Total	28	11	4	3	8				2	

Key: Geo=Geography; Ach=Achievements; Pp=People; Act=Activities; NR=Natural Resources; CF=Custom and Festival; MP=Material Products; VB=Values and Beliefs; NL=National Languages

The depiction of activities, achievements and persons of identifiable foreign origin are found more frequently. The culture of English-speaking countries dominated the textbook. Asian and African cultures are represented less frequently. In Unit 1, Lesson 5, page 10, there is no text, just

exercises with disconnected phrases to be put in the correct category about the founder of the UAE, His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan. There is an accompanying photo of Sheikh Zayed. There is no indication of geographical location or buildings in the background of this illustration that might place it in a specific cultural context. The background shows a garden which could be anywhere in the world. The photo is disconcerting as His Highness looks out of the picture, not looking directly at the viewer but looking away into the distance which creates no interaction with the viewer. The title of the lesson is "The Language of Presentation". There is no interactive task, thus the centrality of language as social, political and communicative tool is taken away. There is no development of the collaborative activity necessary for learning citizenship. Students are not required to go back to the photo to construct meaning. The words and phrases in the box to be used to fill in the table about Sheikh Zayed background, achievements and personal interests show three attributes, three doings and two personal interests ignoring human dimensions in terms of processes of feeling and thinking. Even the last exercise (Exercise #4), which is supposed to be interactive, is also limited to words or phrases to be added to the table.

On the contrary, in lesson 7 of the same unit, page 12 focuses on the achievements of J.K. Rowling where the title of the lesson is attractive and calls for inquisitiveness "The Power of Ideas". There is a photo of hers where she is directly looking at the viewer. Still there is no definite geographical location in the background. There is a photo of her accomplishment of 7 novels. The colourful illustrations serve the purpose of attracting the learners' attention. There is a three – paragraph biography of J. K. Rowling preceded by two prereading questions which can help students stay focused and aware of the purpose of the reading. The reading passage is followed by a true or false activity. The final activity is a discussion in pairs where interactivity can help students appreciate the hard work of JK Rowling and express their opinion on her as being inspiring or not. The use of positive evaluative words such as fabulous, interesting, creative, and the exclamation mark indicate excitement about and admiration for the work and the character of J.K. Rowling. The ideological underpinnings here is that the British culture is more positively depicted.

In unit 2 page 21, the text refers to an Egyptian boy. Decontextualization is clear in the use of the image accompanying the text. The illustration is culturally neutral. The boy represented in the photo is not associated with any specific culture that might enable the viewer to situate him in a particular context. Despite the reference to national culture through integrating texts about school

life in Egypt, students cannot connect the picture with the text. The same applies to the two dark-skinned and two pale-skinned girls on page 30.

On page 23 there are three children talking about school life in their countries: China, Bahrain and Canada. The illustration could have placed each child in a specific cultural context, but it did not. This leaves little space for understanding differences and otherness and constructing knowledge about citizenship. On page 27, there are pictures of four children whose culture is only identified through the flag of their countries. The visual images are context-free. In unit 2 page 28, the visual accompaniment to the activity is a photo of healthy food irrelevant to the activity.

On page 29 there is a picture of one boy sitting in a classroom and looking at another student while the other is looking away into the distance. This indicates a lack of interactivity which rarely exists in real classrooms. The background can apply to any classroom at any place in the world. It is not reflecting the UAE classrooms with its particular features with displays of the UAE leaders quotes which highlights citizenship and values. The teacher is wearing a national attire. There is no indication of the relevance of the picture to any of the speech bubbles except for the numbers on the board that indicate it is a maths class. The speech bubbles display vocalizing comments about problems at schools. The only relevant speech bubble is about a student who is too shy to ask the teacher for help in the maths class. The teacher in the picture looks angry, but the problem cannot be figured out from the image. The student in the picture is using his index figure to indicate his readiness to answer the teacher's question and the other student in the picture is smiling which does not reflect the problem indicated in the speech bubble. This activity does not boost students' engagement or investment in the use of language. Students will most probably focus on the words written in bold to match them with their definition in the next exercise. In this case, language learning is suggested to be an individual cognitive activity rather than a social and communicative activity.

Unit 4 is entitled the "The Big Screen". The content analysis shows that all the mentioned movies are western (Does this imply that there is not a movie industry in the Arab world?). Photos are not relevant to the UAE society or the Arab world. There is no picture from an Arabic movie except for a tiny photo of some people sitting at a movie theatre watching a film where a lady wearing a veil is on the big screen; only her face is shown with no definite background and no context. It is obvious that she is not a character in any actual film. The photo is duplicated from a picture from activity 1 page 57 shown earlier in the unit except for one thing: the actress in the

former photo has a blonde hair and a fair skin. This unit fails to establish a sense of home, cultural identity or local culture. Relevant literature shows "It is better for children to build upon their literacy skills from their familiar, culturally and socially – based experiences" (Curdt-Christiansen, 2015 :138)

In unit 4, there is a focus on the history of western films and the film industry with references to American movies, namely Mickey Mouse, Madagascar, Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, Shrek, Toy Story and Jurassic Park. On page 57, the pictures in the first activity are of non – Arabs. Reading activity 2 provides students with information about American movies. On page 59, students are asked to listen and choose the correct word about the movie "Rise of the Guardians". On page 60, students are asked to listen to the information they have read before on page 57 and match the information with the year. Pages 63-66 revolve around the movie "Jurassic Park" with varied activities such as reading, listening, speaking, and discussion in groups. Activity 3 on page 66 is on values "Looking after Yourself" where values are shown to be universal. Lesson 4 Page 58 "Films that I Like" has no pictures. The activity includes questions "Are any films made in your country? Can you think of two film names? What films do you like?". The lesson focus is the use of English. In Lesson 7 Page 61 "Creating Film Scenes", there are pictures of an Emirati young girl, her brothers and a housemaid. Students are asked to look at the storyboard, choose the best title from three alternatives or write their own titles and match the sentences to a picture on the storyboard. The lesson is about a story rather than a movie making. It is inferred here that the textbook may not help students foster a reflexive stance that can enable them to evaluate new and old cultural experiences. The local and national culture remain hidden while the western culture is portrayed in the images, texts, and tasks. This may not facilitate the learners' sense making of their own cultural world in the process of language acquisition.

As for lesson 6 "My Learning" on page 28, the repeated use of the register of individual food items photos does not help fostering critical attitudes towards the process of social change. The lack of connection between the illustration and the presentation of the new vocabulary does not help students to establish a connection between form and meaning. Awareness of this connection is an indispensable part of learning to use language successfully for social purposes. The omission of local food may encourage children to adopt social norms that value western culture. Weninger & Kiss (2013) argues that such omission "deprives the children of a linguistic repertoire and language prior to communicate with the outside world".

Results of the Study

The results of the analysis show that the textbook under investigation represent cultural diversity on local, national, and global level. However, the cultural content is disproportionally represented in the textbook. Culture at the global level is dominant where images are more representative, tasks are meaningful, and texts are longer whenever the western culture is referred to which answers the first question of the study. The answer to the second question of the study shows that texts, tasks and images used in the textbook do not foster learners' critical culture consciousness as the textbook content, design and the type of task does not focus on the development of the skills needed for students to participate in sharing ideas about their own culture. In addition, the omission of food items, famous Arab films and culture-specific images does not help foster learners' critical culture consciousness.

To answer the third question, the analysis shows that images used in the textbook are culturally neutral. There is no indication of the characteristics of home, school, family or society in the images of the textbook. To answer the fourth question, the results show that language is used as a communicative tool as the speech bubbles in front of activities indicate that students need to work in pairs or groups to do the exercise. However, students are provided with vocabulary and historical information to talk about the people, activities and achievements related to the American and British culture. They are not provided with the same to talk about role models and achievements in their own culture and the Arab culture. Although there are communicative activities such as role plays, student presentation and projects included in the textbook, they focus more on western culture such as activity 1 in unit 2, page 40 "A presentation on school life in another country". Students are asked to note down the most interesting fact searched by their classmates about a school life in another country and "Other ways that the school life is different compared to your country". On the other hand, activity 2 on the same page is "A role-play about adding something new to your school" where students are asked to decide on something that their school needs. The comparison of different educational contexts indicates the ideologies that reflect or refract broader beliefs and values (Curdt-Christiansen, 2015:5). To respond to the fifth question on what culture and whose cultures are represented, it is found out that the Emirati culture, the Arab nation culture and the western culture are represented in the textbook, however, they are not equally represented. The western culture is dominant over both the Emirati and Arab nation cultures especially when

talking about people achievements “inspiring people”, the history of films and food which might indicate cultural superiority.

Related research indicates that the differences in representing diverse cultures, the inclusion the dominance and marginalization of certain cultures can be taken as indices of power relations. The findings of this study correspond with the results of the study by Curdt-Christiansen in which he analysed two sets of textbooks in Singapore on the thematic topics of home and food. His study arrives at the imbalance between the representation of the local and the global culture where texts represent a typical and idealized western society (Curdt-Christanian & Weninger, 2015). This finding is also in agreement with the study done by Bahrami (2015) on the textbook “Total English Series” taught in Iran where it is concluded that the western culture is promoted more than the source culture. Moreover, the results of the survey of students' perception in Chen (2004) similarly concluded that the target-culture learning supersedes the source culture learning. These results contradict the advocacy that source culture plays a more significant role in promoting language learners' intercultural communicative competence.

Ping’s study on the cultural representations in a collection of English textbooks for primary students revealed a totally different result where the Chinese culture was promoted with an ideological purpose of societal control at the local level. Xiong’s 2012 study also yielded a different result as his analysis of two sets of English textbooks used in China showed how western cultural values and perspectives compete with traditional Chinese beliefs. Moss et al. analysed the implications for citizenship education in Colombian EFL textbook. The authors concluded that images and texts used to practise grammatical constructions without helping the use of language as a means of social interaction. They observed a lack of context, no interaction with culture either that of students or other cultures and no sense of community identity (Moss et al in Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015).

Limitations of the Study

This study is applied on grade 6 English textbook approved by the Ministry of Education in the UAE to be taught at public schools. This study is narrowed down and conducted on three units from the learner’s book, volume 1. A further study should be done to examine enrichment materials that can be used to integrate cultural content into foreign language learning.

Conclusion

The UAE is a country that takes actions towards promoting tolerance, multilingual development and multicultural ecologies. Textbooks often guide shaping learners' cultural and political identities. The textbook prescribed by the Ministry of Education in the UAE seeks to promote cultural values and social identity in addition to global culture awareness. Examining how the textbook describes the UAE culture and the global culture and how ideologies operate through the text helps answer the questions of this study. Results shed light on how textbook authors need to be aware of the local culture as well as the global culture. Although the textbook authors seem to have made a conscious effort to allow students to talk about their culture role models, activities and achievements and express their own values and ideals through discussions, students are often still guided towards admiring the western culture. They need to provide students and teachers with images, texts and tasks related to their own environment and the wider world to help them enact their social identity and develop global citizenship.

Recommendations and Suggestions

It is suggested that foreign language textbooks should include visual representation of different cultures. Images should be culture specific. Textbooks should include texts that represent linguistic and cultural plurality and complexities of students' own society. The achievement of people from the Emirati and Arab society is likely to evoke Emirati students' pride in and love for their country and their culture. Multiple viewpoints of different cultures at the local, national and global levels can offer students an amicable opportunity for cross-cultural reflection. This research draws textbook authors to realize that while exposing students to new ideas from other cultures is beneficial for developing intercultural communicative competence, students should still be given the opportunity to be exposed to ideas, texts and images related to their own culture. More research should be carried out on investigating the learners' and teachers' awareness of the cultural content and the ideologies embedded in the foreign language textbooks.

Statement of Competing Interests:

The author has no competing interests.

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Seeing the 'Hidden' Disability: A Quantitative Analysis of the Reading Comprehension in English of Learners Suspected with Dyslexia

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Abstract

Reading comprehension indeed is a gateway to academic progress and success (Alderson, 2000; Buslon & Alieto, 2019). Hence, research on reading comprehension have been conducted

extensively. However, studies on this essential macroskill were commonly realized among regular learners, and very limited are the investigations performed among learners with special needs. Certainly, there remains a dearth of investigation concerning special children much less among Filipino learners suspected with dyslexia. Set against this background, the current investigation, utilizing a descriptive-quantitative research design, purposed to determine the reading comprehension of 63 purposively enlisted learners from the southern part of the Philippine Islands aged 11 to 14 (mean age = 12.297, SD=0.87). This cross-sectional investigation also intended to determine whether a statistical gender and socioeconomic differences exist. From the analysis of the data, it was revealed that the students' reading comprehension is characterized as '*poor*.' This suggests that the learners in the study are lagging in their scholastic progress. Additionally, the dichotomous variable gender (p-value = 0.291 > α = 0.05) and the polychotomous factor socioeconomic status (p-value = 0.577 > α = 0.05) were found to have no significant influence on reading comprehension.

Keywords: *Dyslexia, Reading, Socioeconomic status, English, Gender*

Introduction

The Philippines, to this date, remains as the one of the largest English-speaking countries across the world (Rillo & Alieto, 2018 in Abdon et al., 2019; Torres, 2019; Torres & Flores, 2017). In a similar vein, Tanpoco, Rillo and Alieto (2019, p.229) claimed that English had become the '*comfortable tongue'* of the Filipinos. It has been used as the medium of instruction even in the education of the young in the Philippine islands before the implementation of the K-12 program which instituted the utilization of local languages, specifically mother tongues, as language of instruction (Alieto, 2018, 2019; Alieto, Devanadera & Buslon, 2019; Go Silk, et al., 2020; Lim-Ramos et al., 2020; Perez & Alieto, 2018; Ricohermoso, Abequibel & Alieto, 2019; Somblingo & Alieto, 2019; Tonio, & Ella, 2009). One speculation explaining this is the history of American colonization in the country who are speakers of the language (Alieto & Rillo, 2018; Antonio, Bacang, Rillo, Alieto, & Caspillo, 2019; Tanpoco, Rillo, & Alieto, 2019). Addedly, English has even been noted to be an important means of daily communications (Roomy & Alhawsawi, 2019) even in countries where the language has not originated. This is because English has been accepted and noted by many countries as second language (Gatcho & Hajan, 2019b) such as in the case of the Philippines. Additionally, English language has gained prestige in the Philippines (Global English, 2012 cited in Hajan, Castillo-Hajan & Marasigan, 2019) unprecented by other languages. Thus, the demand for learning English is both global and evident (Berowa, Devanadera & David, 2018).

Indeed, reading in English has key role in the learners' academic life, as the said language is the primary language of instruction (Roomy & Alhawsawi, 2019) in the country's educational system. However, in today's Filipino classrooms, the challenge in teaching how to read in the English language remains a significant issue for teachers in basic education. Hence, it is sad to note that the Filipino learners have consistently rated poorly in reading comprehension as provided by the result of the National Achievement Test (Ordinario, 2013 in Gatcho & Hajan, 2019a). This has been more accentuated to be a troubling concern when the country ranked least among 79 countries in the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (San Juan, 2019). The result of the said

examination provided that the Filipino learners had an average reading score of only 340, which is precisely 147 points less than the average score of 487. From these results, it could be deduced that the learners of the Philippines are performing below averages. Moreover, the result suggests that the educators are falling short from efficiently making the students literate. That failure is looming as regards the battle against literacy across the islands of the Philippines.

The struggles faced in teaching reading could be attributed to the complex nature of the skill, as reading is both a cognitive process (Julianna, 2017 cited in Buslon & Alieto, 2019) and a multitask activity (Block & Pressley, 2002). As a cognitive process, mental activities such as associating words with meaning considering context, summarizing, and synthesizing details and clarifying meanings among others are involved. Additionally, as these processes take place mentally, it could be noted as an invisible skill making the same challenging to develop among students. Moreover, because reading is a cognitive activity, an individual's mental capacity substantially comes into play. Meaning, the more intellectually capacitated an individual is, the faster and more able he or she is to read and comprehend. On the other hand, as a multitasking activity, researchers (e.g., Cheng & Wu, 2017) have claimed that multiple activities are performed for successful reading comprehension such as the use of posteriori knowledge (Guterman, 2003), employment of the knowledge of words, orthographic, semantic and phonological representation (Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe, 2008), and infer unfamiliar words (Buslon & Alieto, 2019).

Necessarily, formal education should result in developing learners capable of reading and comprehending (Miñoza, & Montero, 2019). This is exceedingly important because most learning depends on reading. Similarly, Erdem (2015 in Horton-Ramos, 2020) claimed that it is the most basic manner of gaining or acquiring information. Thus, as formal education depends much on reading tasks for students to acquire knowledge and gain new skills, it could be inferred that indeed reading is the 'bloodline' of education. Hence, as such, it has become a favorite topic of investigation among researchers (e.g., Shang, 2010; Tim Hsu, 2010; Miñoza & Montero, 2019).

However, it could be noted that the most empirical investigation on the construct of reading and comprehension involved regular students. The study of Shang (2010)

involved 53 regular first-year students majoring in English attending I-Shou University. For the study of Miñoza and Montero (2019), the target respondents were regular intermediate students in a laboratory school of a State University. In Tim Hsu (2010), the study included 102 regular students of a University in Kaohsiung City, Taiwan. The study of Weil (2008) included 19 Korean undergraduates either with junior or senior standing at Utah State University. The given enumeration provides that although reading as a topic was extensively investigated; however, investigations, most often, involved regular students. Hence, it could be noted that there remains a dearth of studies conducted towards students with a special case such as those with suspected dyslexia. Therefore, the impetus of this study is to fill the gap and provide a contribution to the limited pool of knowledge on the topic through the determination of the reading comprehension of students suspected with dyslexia. Furthermore, the investigation also intended to determine whether gender and socio-economic differences exist as regards the reading comprehension of the identified underserved population.

Review of Related Literature

Readings as a process

Reading is a process that begins with a perception of the written symbol (Kuşdemir & Bulut, 2018). This means that for an individual to read, in its common course, the symbols must be first seen and later on interpreted. Thus, it could be said that reading begins with seeing and ends with comprehension (Kuşdemir & Bulut, 2018). The reading process, in itself, is a complex language skill that requires the performance of varied activities such as vocabulary recognition and association of meaning to words (Schunk, 2014 in Kuşdemir & Bulut, 2018), evaluation of texts or symbols (Habibian, Roslan, Idris & Othman, 2015), infer the meaning of unfamiliar words (Buslon & Alieto, 2019), decoding words and reading sight words (Mason & Hagaman, 2012), use of previous experiences or knowledge (Gatcho & Hajan, 2019a) and other skills like prediction, skimming and scanning (Wallace, 2007 in Roomy & Alhawsawi, 2019) which are processes that pose problems to learners with dyslexia. Difficulty in performing the composite skills causes struggles for students for dyslexic students to read fluently (Therrien, Wickstrom & Jones, 2006).

Moreover, the process of reading bears the goal of comprehension (Kuşdemir & Bulut, 2018). Similar to contention, Oakley (2011) Buslon and Alieto (2019) opined that to comprehend or understand what is read is the purpose and desired result whenever an individual engages in the act of reading. Therefore, understanding written texts or symbols is the ultimate objective or the reading process (Tavakoli & Hayati, 2011).

Reading, therefore, as a process is a means and not an end in itself. However, comprehension is founded on the initial process of reading. Therefore, learners who find difficulty reading are eventually faced with the challenge of comprehending. Therefore, the need to investigate and provide empirical data as regards the performance of students suspected with dyslexia comes to the fore.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is defined as '*the process of making meaning from the text*' (Wooley, 2011, p.15). In line with this, it is an accepted fact that reading comprehension is the most needed skill to find success either at work and in school (Mason & Hagaman, 2012). Similarly, Özdemir and Akyol (2019) maintained that reading comprehension has an essential role to play in learning as a lifelong process. Likewise, Alderson (2000) claimed that reading comprehension is the cornerstone of students' scholastic progress. Buslon and Alieto (2019) explained that such is a logical take about reading comprehension because outputs demanded by the academic institution is a product of extensive reading. Related to this, Castillo-Hajan, Hajan, and Marasigan (2019) claimed that academic writing is a process of transporting ideas. Therefore, academic writings, the most demanding kind of all types of writing (Abdon, 2018), such as reaction papers, essays, and research, could not be possibly produced without gathering information needed for the composition. Thus, it could be said that for one to write one has to read. Along this line, Memiş and Kandemir (2019) noted that reading comprehension as an ability is the single most important means of obtaining information. Additionally, Habibian, Roslan, Idris, and Othman (2015) maintained that for students to perform well, they must attain a certain level of mastery in reading that they would be able to understand the curriculum adequately to their advantage.

Beyond doubt, reading comprehension is one of the most investigated constructs. It has been investigated in multiple contextualizations alongside with different variables. As an illustration, Bagci and Unveren (2020) purposed to investigate the relationship between metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and self-efficacy perception in reading comprehension. Kuşdemir and Bulut (2018), on the other hand, explored the relationship between reading motivation and reading comprehension. Meanwhile, the work of Mitra (2019) examined the effect of the internet on the reading comprehension of learners in a group reading. Another example is the research of Wu, Valcke, and Van Keer (2019) that analyzed whether student- and teacher-level factors correlate with reading comprehension. At this point, it is evident that understanding reading comprehension as a topic has caught the interest and attention of numerous researchers. However, in the enumerated investigations, the target population are regular students coming from different grade levels. None or at the very best limited studies exist having students with suspected dyslexia as respondents. It is supossed that this population remains underserved by research amidst the bountiful research works on research comprehension.

Dyslexia, the reading and 'hidden' disability

Reading disability has consistently been used to define dyslexia (Youman & Mather, 2013). Addedly, the terms are loosely and interchangeably utilized (Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowling & Scanlon, 2004). Additionally, there are three groupings of reading disabilities (Washburn, Mulcahy, Musante & Joshi, 2017). The first group refers to those who have no trouble decoding texts but are having trouble in making meaning of the read texts. In essence, these are those individuals with comprehension difficulties (Nation & Norbury, 2005 in Washburn et al., 2017). On the other hand, the second group are those individuals who have difficulties decoding words; however, they have strong language comprehension. They are the group noted to be dyslexic (Washburn et al., 2017). The last group is identified as those individuals who have trouble both in decoding writing language and comprehending oral language – they are labeled to be of mixed disability (Catts & Kamhi, 2005). From the three broad groupings of reading disability, people with dyslexia are the largest (Siegel, 2006). With this, it is the most commonly noted reading

disability in universities (Richardson & Wydell, 2003). However, it is also imperative to point out that not all reading problems or difficulties are dyslexia.

It must be noted that said disability is a neurobiological disorder which does not in any way relate to intelligence (International Dyslexia Association, 2002 in Johnston, 2019). This language-based learning disability affects an individual's ability to hear sounds – either of the distinctive letter or blended ones (Johnston, 2019). Moreover, dyslexic individuals are believed to be deficient in terms of the working memory section of the brain, which causes trouble in remembering a long string of instruction, spelling, rules of grammar, and even punctuation (Ramus, 2014).

Notedly, dyslexia has no physical manifestation as a disability; thus, it is also termed as a 'hidden disability' (Matthews, 2009). The same author explained that it is because the disability affects students' academic progress and everyday functioning, but the limitation is invisible; hence, students with dyslexia are treated with negligence of their particular need. Moreover, it is supposed that for this reason, there exist very limited studies that intend to provide a baseline and essential data which could help in supporting students with dyslexia as regards improving their reading comprehension. Furthermore, this research with the goal of assessing the reading performance of suspected students with dyslexia is in the realization of UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) goals, which the Philippines, as a country, subscribe to (Omaga & Alieto, 2019).

Reading Comprehension and Gender

Gender cannot loosely nor interchangeably be used with sex. Gender does not mean sex, and sex is not gender. There is an evident difference between the two terminologies. Lubaale (2020) claimed that sex is genetically dictated, while gender is socially constructed. In a similar vein, Toraman and Özen (2019) claimed that sex is biological characteristic that could not be changed (Lubaale, 2020) while gender is a social product (Aydinoglu, 2014 in Bacang, Rillo & Alieto, 2019; Tannen, 1990 in Torres, Pariña, Collantes, & Tan, 2020). This further means that sex relates to the biological makeup that makes up a boy or a girl, while gender is the cultural interpretation of what makes feminine and masculine.

Interestingly, a survey of literature provides that authors (e.g., Alieto,2018; Berowa, Ella, & Lucas, 2019; Buslon, Alieto, Pahulaya, & Reyes, 2020; de la Rama, et al., 2020; Devanadera & Alieto, 2019; Eijansantos, 2018; Eijansantos, Alieto, de la Rama - Morgia, & de la Rama - Ricohermoso, 2020; Wu, Valcke & Van Keer, 2019) operationalized the use of gender to mean and refer to the binary biological classification (male, female or boys and girls). It must be noted that there are studies that remained faithful to the semantic difference between gender and sex and have used sex to mean the biological classification as male and female (e.g., Karahan, 2017). It speculated that the euphemistic characteristic that the word gender carries had become the reason for researchers' preference for the use of the term in conducted investigations. Thus, for clarity and a similar frame of understanding, it is explicitly provided that in this study, the term gender would refer to the classification relation to respondents' being male or female.

On another note, gender as a demographic variable has been extensively investigated for reading comprehension, and differing results were found. In the study of Anjum (2015) with a total sample of 307 upper primary children (160 girls, 147 boys), it was determined that there is a gender difference in reading comprehension of the respondents with females outperforming their male counterparts. In a similar vein, Wu, Valcke, and Van Keer (2019) disclosed that there is a significant difference in reading comprehension across gender favoring the females. However, the study of Karahan (2017) with 183 secondary school students revealed that the male and female respondents do not significantly differ and that gender is not a factor influencing reading comprehension.

Mixed findings are found in the literature regarding the influence of gender on reading comprehension. The studies of Reilly, Neumann, and Andrews (2018), Lazarus (2020), and Francisco and Madrazo (2019) claimed that gender difference in reading comprehension exists with females outperforming males. However, Miñoza and Montero (2019) and Volkel, Seabi, Cockcroft, and Goldschagg (2016) found that gender has no significant influence on comprehension.

It could be noted that the investigation of the influence of gender on reading comprehension has been explored with students who have no disabilities. Research

abounds with regular students; however, as claimed by Lazarus (2020, p. 148), '*there seems to have been little focus on students with disabilities and their achievement in the aspect of text comprehension.'* Thus, the investigation of gender with respect to the reading comprehension of learners suspected with dyslexia essentially contributes to the limited pool of knowledge in this regard.

Reading comprehension and Socio-economic status

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a typical respondents' demographic profile accounted for in various investigations with respect to reading comprehension. Illustrative of this point are the studies of Cheng and Wu (2017) which studied the relationship between reading comprehension and SES of one hundred forty-nine Chinese first graders; and Miñoza and Montero (2019) who aimed to determine if a significant difference exists in the reading comprehension of the intermediate students across SES; Francisco and Madrazo (2019) which, as one of the objectives of their study, examined whether there exists a significant difference on the reading comprehension of 150 grade 5 learners. The list goes on, suggesting that there is a growing interest in the investigation of the influence of SES on reading comprehension.

Although commonly used as a factor in the investigation of reading comprehension, the variable SES has differently been measured. Commonly, SES is indexed by the incorporation of three indicators – family income, parents' education, and parental occupation (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Moreoever, the use of three indicators (income, education, and occupation) as a means of determining the latent variable SES was the method used by Shi and Shen (2007) in their study. Additionally, this manner of identifying the SES of respondents was adopted by Cheng and Wu (2017) when they aimed to draw a significant relationship between the variables' reading comprehension and SES. However, Warner, Meeker & Eells (1949) proposed that there are four dimensions to be considered in determining SES which are occupation, income, education, and living region. This means of identifying the SES of the research respondents were widely used in the research field in previous years (Cheng & Wu, 2017). Further, the list of indicators of SES may also include measures like occupational prestige

and family property, as in the study of Chen, Kong, Gao, and Mo (2018) with 2294 Chinese middle school children.

It must be noted that there are also investigators who identified the SES variable by simply determining the monthly family income of the respondents. An example of this is the investigation conducted by Sicam and Lucas (2016) in which they have determined the SES of the respondents without considering the previously mentioned other indicators. In the authors' study, the combined family income served as a sole indicator of SES. Moreover, the authors used the income brackets provided by Virola, Addawe, and Querubin (2007, cited in Sicam & Lucas, 2016). In the said brackets, there are six levels of economic status : Class E (lower class) – 10,000 to 25,000, Class D2 (lower middle class) – 25,001 to 50,000, Class D1 (Upper middle class) – 50,001 to 75,000, Class C (Upper class) – 75,001 to 100,000, Class B (Upper class) – 100,001 to 125,000, and Class A (Upper class) – 125,001 to 150,000. Additionally, this scheme of indexing economic status was utilized by Filipino researchers in their respective research works (e.g., Devanadera & Alieto, 2019; Delgado & Kassim, 2019).

However, the use of means in which parents were asked to disclose their income to the researchers was seemingly easy but was proven otherwise when the gathering of the said information was conducted. Parents were reluctant to share such private information. This case was documented by Chen et al. (2018) and claimed that the hesitation of parents in providing such information stems from the cultural orientation of the same parents. Thus, faced with such a challenge, the researcher adopted the approach of Miñoza and Montero (2019), who determined the SES of the respondents by allowing parents to choose from three categories of financial status: low, average and high. Through this modification, parents of the respondents willingly shared the needed information. The said action taken is not seen more of a limitation but a practical approach to effectively hurdle difficulties provided by the constraints and realities of data gathering.

The majority of research findings as regards reading comprehension and the variable SES point that the latter influences the former. In Cheng and Wu (2017), it was found that SES has an effect on comprehension at sentential level. Addedly, in Francisco, and Madrazo (2019), it was revealed that socioeconomic status influences reading comprehension. In their study, they found that students with low SES significantly differ

in comprehension as compared to those with high SES. The authors supposed that students coming from low SES are provided with limited resources as opposed to those who come from fianacially capable families. This contention is supported by Bergen, Zuijen, Bishop, and Jong, (2017) who maintained that parents with high economic status are more likely to invest in the education of their children. From this, it is inferred that the influence of SES is not direct but arbitrary. Additionally, Pan, Rowe, Singer & Snow (2005) reported that there is a correlation between SES and reading with those coming from low-level SES having low literacy as compared to those with high SES.

The findings stipulating that there exists a statistical difference in the learners' reading comprehension with respect to their SES is not universal and is not without contradictions. An example is an investigation of Washburn, Mulcahy, Musante, and Joshi (2017), which surveyed 834 learners across five public schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The study revealed that the reading comprehension of the respondents does not significantly differ across SES. Similarly, in the study of Miñoza and Montero (2019), it was revealed that the pupils across SES did statistically differ in their comprehension when performing the oral reading.

Indeed, the results on reading comprehension with respect to the influence of SES remains inconclusive. It is so because the studies conducted were set against different contexts. In this light, the present study would provide results set against a unique context that would aid in a thorough understanding of the role of SES in reading comprehension.

Statements of Research Questions

The objectives of this current study come from three directions. First is that it intends to descriptively characterize the reading comprehension of the learners suspected with dyslexia. The second is to determine the influence of gender on the respondents' reading comprehension. Last is to explore whether a significant difference in reading comprehension with respect to SES could be drawn. The following questions guided the investigation:

1. What is the reading comprehension of the respondents?

2. Is there a significant difference in the reading comprehension of the respondents across gender?
3. Is there a significant difference in the reading comprehension of the respondents across SES?

Hypotheses of the study

Prior to the analysis of the data, the following are the educated assumptions of the current investigation:

H_0 – There is no significant difference in the reading comprehension between male and female respondents.

H_a – The female respondents perform better than male respondents with respect to reading comprehension.

H_0 – There is no significant difference in the reading comprehension of the respondents across SES

H_a – The respondents with high SES performs better in reading comprehension as compared to those with low SES

Methodology

Research design

The current study employed a descriptive-quantitative design. This study purposed to describe the reading comprehension of respondents through the use of descriptive statistics [such as but not limited to, mean (M) and standard deviation (SD)].

Following the claim of Johnston (2019) that studies with the objective of describing trends and characterizing phenomena are classified as descriptive, this investigation is claimed as such. Moreover, this study intends to measure reading

comprehension and infer difference across the dichotomous variable gender and polychotomous factor SES; thus, the study is identified as quantitative. Moreover, Setia (2016) maintained that an investigation that carries out data collection in a relatively short period of time is considered as a cross-sectional investigation. In this study, data were gathered through the 'one-shot' administration of the reading comprehension test to the respondents. In addition, the study is noted to be non-experimental as neither treatment nor intervention was employed; moreover, no establishment of control and experiment was done (Torres & Alieto, 2019a; Torres & Alieto, 2019b).

Participants of the study

The study enlisted a total of 63 students suspected with dyslexia purposively selected. Thirty-five of the respondents are females. The age range of the female respondents is 12– 13. On the other hand, the youngest of the males is 11, and the oldest is 14. The mean age of the respondents is 12.297 (SD = 0.87). The students who form part of the study come from different schools in one district.

The reading comprehension test

The reading comprehension test administered consists of 200 words divided into three paragraphs. The chosen text was found in the resource materials used to teach the students; however, it was first confirmed that the said text was not yet introduced to the students. Moreover, the lexical items found in the text were checked to ascertain that they are familiar to students. The class adviser of the respondents played an essential role in the assessment. The text was intentionally chosen to be short so as not to induce anxiety on the part of the students. Afterward, the students were asked to answer fifteen questions. Their reading comprehension scores were given interpretation using the following table below.

Table 1

Level of Reading Comprehension

Score Range	Adjectival Description

7 to 15	High Reading Comprehension
6 to 10	Average Reading Comprehension
1 to 5	Low Reading Comprehension

The demographic profiles of the respondents were gathered by the researchers by accessing the data from the records kept by the class advisers of the students. Data limited to age and gender were noted from the record. However, as for the SES of the respondents, the parents were asked to provide the data. The identification of SES was made by merely having parents asked.

Coding Procedure

The demographic profiles gender and SES of the respondents were coded to allow the analysis of the data utilizing SPSS. The nominal and dichotomous variable gender was coded as follows: 1 for males and 2 for females. For the ordinal and polychotomous variable SES, the coding was 1 for low socioeconomic status, 2 for average socioeconomic status, and 3 for high socioeconomic status.

Statistical tools

The study employed the use of basic statistical tools. To determine the reading comprehension of the students, the researcher utilized descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. On the other hand, to determine the significant difference in the reading comprehension of the respondents with respect to their gender, t-test for the independent sample was used. For the determination of significant difference in the reading comprehension across SES, the non-parametric test Kruskal- Wallis H Test was employed.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary in nature. Not a single student was coerced to participate. The students were made to understand that the reading comprehension test was not graded and that they can opt not to participate. Before the

students were approached, the parents of the students were first asked whether they would allow their children to be part of the study. Approval of the parents did not right away mean that the students are enlisted. Consent of the students was also solicited; thus, there are students who did not take part although their parents consented. The names of the students were not solicited, and for the purpose of identification, a coding scheme was established.

Data gathering procedure

Correspondence seeking permission for the conduct of the study was produced and submitted to concerned individuals. Identified parents were given consent forms. The gathering of the respondents' profile and administration of the comprehension test was set in two separate days. The researcher personally administered the comprehension exam with the aid of the class advisers who are special education teachers after they were briefed of the procedures to be employed in the administration of the reading comprehension test. Three rooms were simultaneously utilized, with 21 students each. It is noted that each room has a holding capacity of 50 students. Each room was chosen in consideration of ventilation and conduciveness.

Results and discussion

Reading comprehension of the respondents

The responses of the students in the comprehension test were checked personally by the researcher. The scores were marked on the paper. The second round of checking was done to ascertain that no mistake was committed. The scores of the respondents were first encoded in a spreadsheet and checked for completeness and accuracy. The data were descriptively analyzed. Table 2 presents the analysis.

Table 2.0

Respondents' Reading Comprehension

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Reading Comprehension	3.31	3.32	Low Reading Comprehension

Range: 1 to 5: Low reading comprehension; 6 to 10: Average reading comprehension; 7 to 15 high reading comprehension

Table 2 discloses the reading comprehension of the respondents who were suspected to be dyslexic. The data provides that the respondents' comprehension level is low (M=3.31, SD=3.32). Most of the respondents fail to answer more than five items in the comprehension test correctly. This result is supported by the claim of Nation and Norbury (2005 in Washburn et al., 2017) that students with dyslexia have trouble decoding written texts, which results in difficulty in grasping the meaning, eventually leading to poor reading performance. Essentially, students with dyslexia may perform better in terms of listening comprehension because they struggle in reading if reading text is removed.

Further analysis of the result provides that the respondents find it most difficult to answer questions that would require them to analyze, synthesize, and critically judge. It is suspected that students fail to do so because these activities require the use of the working memory, which dyslexic students are having trouble with (Ramus, 2014).

The poor reading comprehension result mirrors the report of Ordinario (2013 in Gatcho & Hajan, 2019a) on the NAT achievement of the Filipino learners with respect to comprehension. The said report suggests that the Filipino students, in general, are unsatisfactorily performing. The result of this study is surprising in a negative sense. Although it may have been expected that the respondents would perform poorly, the present finding was shocking as the students rated so poorly. This suggests that the students' development and academic progress lag way behind their age.

Another implication is that the students are yet to receive a certain type of intervention. This is, to an extent, supportive of the claim of Matthews (2009) that learners with dyslexia are students whose special needs are often neglected. At this juncture, it must be highlighted that intervention as a task should not only be solely relied

on teachers. Instead, parents should be essentially involved as their participation is regarded as very imperative with regard to this. Furthermore, it is supposed that these students are struggling academically resulting from poor comprehension – the foundation of most academic performances. Therefore, reading comprehension indeed is a gateway to academic progress and success (Alderson, 2000; Buslon & Alieto, 2019).

Reading comprehension between the male and female respondents

For the determination of the gender gap with respect to reading comprehension, the data in reading comprehension were grouped according to gender and treated with an inferential statistic known as t-test for the independent sample. In table 3, the analysis of the data is presented.

Table 3
Reading comprehension across gender

Variables			Mean	SD	p-value
Reading Comprehension	Gender	Male	3.42	3.78	0.291*
		Female	3.63	3.30	

*Not significant at α = 0.05; N = 63

The above table gives the reading comprehension of the respondents when data are grouped between males and females. It could be noticed that there is a difference of 0.19 in the arithmetic means of the comprehension between the two groupings with the females having a better score. However, the significant value (p-value) of 0.291 is higher than α = 0.05, implying that there is no statistical significance on the noted difference. Therefore, the null hypothesis of this study with respect to the difference in reading comprehension across gender is accepted while the alternative is rejected. This study supports the claim that there is no gender gap in the construct of reading comprehension in English.

This finding corroborates with the works of Miñoza and Montero (2019) and Volkel, Seabi, Cockcroft, and Goldschagg (2016), which found that gender has a neutral

effect on reading comprehension. These authors concluded that there is no statistical difference in the comprehension of male and female respondents. Interestingly, the previous result stating the neutrality of gender's effect on comprehension was with students having learning difficulties. The present result however is with students suspected to be dyslexic. Conversely, the result counters the claim of Reilly, Neumann, and Andrews (2018), Lazarus (2020), and Francisco and Madrazo (2019) that gender impacts reading comprehension and that there is gender gap regarding the investigated variable.

Reading comprehension across scoioeconomic status

To determine whether a significant difference in research comprehension could be drawn with respect to respondents' SES, the data on reading comprehension were grouped and treated with inferential statistics known as the Kruskal-Wallis H Test, which is the non-parametric counterpart of the one-way analysis of variance test (One-way ANOVA). Table 4 gives the results of the performed analysis.

Table 4

Difference : Reading comprehension across Socioeconomic status

	Reading Comprehension
Chi-square	3.70
DF	5
Asym. Sig.	0.577*

*Not significant at α = 0.05; N = 63

The table above shows the treatment on the data determining the difference in reading comprehension of the respondents with respect to their socioeconomic status. The p-value = 0.577 is greater than α = 0.05 suggests that there is no significant difference in the reading comprehension of the respondents; thus, the null hypothesis is accepted while the alternative hypothesis is rejected. This further implies that the reading comprehension of the students coming from three different social statuses does not significantly vary.

Hence, socioeconomic status is not a factor influencing differences, and there exists no comprehension gap with respect to SES.

The result of the study supports previous research findings such as the study of Washburn et al. (2017), an investigation among African learners that claimed that the respondents of their study did not statistically differ when their SES was accounted for in the investigation. Another is the research endeavor of Miñoza and Montero (2019), a study involving Filipino intermediate learners, which disclosed that the reading comprehension of the respodents does not significantly differ among those who were noted to be of low, middle and high financial capacity.

However, the present result refutes other findings of Francisco and Madrazo (2019) and Bergen, Zuijen, Bishop and Jong (2017) which revealed that learners coming from low SES are performing significantly different from those with high SES with the latter better performing than the former which is a result of the resource investment parents with good financial capacity do as regards the education of their children.

Conclusion

This investigation on the classic research topic reading comprehension is directed towards an underserved population. Most investigations on the topic being carried out were with regular students, especially in the context of the Philippines. In addition, based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that the respondents are poorly performing in relation to comprehension, primarily due to a limiting disability. Moreover, the study revealed that the variables gender and SES do not significantly influence the difference in the reading comprehension of the learners suspected with dyslexia.

Implications

The results of the study are staggering that immediate attention has to be afforded for the learners of English suspected of a dyslexic condition. Curriculum specialists have to place a premium on the integration of a special curriculum to ascertain that the scholastic necessities of foregoing learners are addressed. The curriculum has to be made deep-seatedly subtle that addresses reading comprehension and memory. Along this

preceding line, special education teachers have to be adept in the expectations and demands put forth by the novel curriculum seeking to address the problem as confoundingly unearthed in the paper. From the administrators' end, an even close supervision ought to be executed to ascertain that what is due to special learners is made readily available to them by the special education teachers. The results of this scholarly investigation demands the adamant participation of the foregoing learners' parents and/or guardians in that a dynamic reinforcement in this respect is exceedingly necessary. Simply put, there is a consequential demand spanning from the home, the pedagogical grassroots, the authorities involved in the special education, and the curricularists to effectively and methodically address the academic concern beset among the learners of English exhibiting dyslexic proclivity.

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