

# Theory and Practice in Language Studies

ISSN 1799-2591

Volume 14, Number 6, June 2024

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# Despair and Alienation in T. S. Eliot's and Adonis' Poetry: A Comparative Study

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**Abstract**—This article sheds light on some outstanding topics that deal with modern literary themes like alienation and despair by showing their negative effects on modern individual's life. The definition of alienation, its types, and an analysis of the self and soul are done according to different philosophers who Eliot is influenced by. The paper also portrays the impact of the two world wars and how their related economic, social, and political events have worsened the physical and spiritual alienation. In their poetry, T. S. Eliot and Adonis accentuate this adversity throughout their quest for a meaningful existence. According to Eliot, returning to religion is a necessity for overriding the crisis of spiritual alienation and loss. On the other hand, writing poetry is Adonis' technique to surpass internal despair where realms of divine imagination are weaved to soothe the sense of isolation. The study also delineates how both poets have used symbolic and figurative language to present the bitter reality. Although Eliot uses an impersonal way for portraying alienation, Adonis tends to be biographical in depicting this trauma.

**Index Terms**—modernism, alienation, existence, despair

## I. INTRODUCTION

T.S. Eliot and Adonis, though belonging to different cultural and literary traditions, both delve into the themes of despair and alienation in their poetry, providing profound reflections on the human condition. T.S. Eliot, a prominent figure in modernist literature, explores these themes with a distinct blend of fragmentation, allusion, and cultural references. His seminal work, "The Waste Land (1922)", stands as a prime example of the modernist disillusionment with the post-World War I, portraying a society gripped by spiritual desolation and cultural decay (North, 2001, p. 91). However, Adonis' poetry often navigates the terrain of alienation, exploring the disconnection between the individual and society, as well as the ruptures caused by political upheavals and social transformations in the Arab world. Both Eliot and Adonis engage with the themes of despair and alienation, providing readers with a poignant understanding of the challenges and discontents that characterize the human experience in the modern era. Their unique perspectives, expressed through rich symbolism and evocative language, contribute to a nuanced exploration of these existential concerns in the realm of poetry.

Aristotle, an ancient Greek philosopher, defines the self as an intertwined component with the soul. In other words, the self encompasses psychological as well as spiritual dimensions. Aristotle argues that the soul gives life to living beings, considering it as the energy that moves the body. He believes that the mind differentiates the man from the animal and it is the highest domain of the soul that is responsible for thinking, contemplating, and understanding (Simpson, 2001, p. 309). Immanuel Kant, the philosopher of the Enlightenment age, defines the self or the "I" as something that cannot be known from direct experience but rather is the important entity to experience the world and shape the perception and organize empirical knowledge. The mind, from Kant's point of view, is the understanding of sensory information and retrieving it using certain concepts such as time and place. On the other hand, the mind also deals with a higher level of thinking and reasoning. According to Kant, the existence of the soul beyond the mortal world is something that cannot be proven because it is beyond the realm of empirical life. Kant's philosophy, concerning the self, mind, and soul, has a profound impact on the modern world and in shaping human consciousness as well as the knowledge of metaphysical concepts and empirical life (Fushihara, 1987, pp. 1-2). Charles Taylor, a Canadian philosopher, has a significant contribution to the philosophy of soul and self of individuals in the modern society. He argues that the self is a rich entity but it is shaped by different factors and circumstances such as environment, language, culture, traditions, and personal experiences which integrate to form one's sense of self. The soul, according to Taylor, is the core of human beings where the ethical perception lies. His exploration of the soul aligns with his identification with the self to guide human acts, beliefs, and behaviors. The mind to Taylor is the source of language, perception, interpretation, and meaning which has the role of understanding the world (Hittinger, 1990, p. 111).

In this way, Eliot's philosophy of the self can be explored from his literary experience, specifically from the modern state of individuals within his society. Eliot depicts the self as fragmented and disintegrated within the modern world and that is clear in his poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, the address to his estranged and alienated self is clear in this line:

Let us go then, you and I,

When the evening is spread out against the sky  
Like a patient etherized upon a table. (Eliot, 1963, p. 3)

Through the above two lines, the estrangement of the self is obvious in Eliot's poetry represented by the pronouns "you" and "I". It also implies that his self is divided into two personas. The disillusionment and alienation of the self are well portrayed in his literary works because his characters struggle for the existential quest and purpose in life (Eliss, 2022, pp. 8-9). These are regarded as modern movement topics which focus on how human innocence and spirituality are robbed and why modern man's existence is degraded into that of a machine without consciousness. The self, is depicted by Eliot, in a state of a perpetual paralysis represented by the image of "a patient etherized" (Eliot, 1963, p. 3). The self, according to Eliot, is a fusing of past experience, cultural impacts, and historical heritage. According to Adonis, the concept of self has been interpreted within a tension between tradition and modernity. Adonis breaks away from traditional forms, structures, and contents in his writings to depict the complex entity of the Arab self. Adonis delineates the self in its state of grappling for a sense of authenticity and belonging both spiritually and physically. Adonis also explores the theme of self-division in his poetry in the following line:

The I is not I, nor is it the Other  
Absence and exile constitute the only presence. (Adonis, 1994, p. xiv)

The above two lines reflect themes of despair and alienation. The first line: "The I is not I, nor is it the Other" suggests a sense of identity crisis or fragmentation. The poet struggles with the idea that the self (I) is not a stable or coherent entity. The reference to "the Other" suggests a disconnection or alienation from external entities or perhaps from societal norms. This could indicate a feeling of isolation or a struggle to define one's identity in the context of others. The second line: "Absence and exile constitute the only presence" emphasizes the dominance of absence and exile in defining one's existence. The use of the terms "absence" and "exile" implies a separation, reinforcing the theme of alienation. The assertion that these elements "constitute the only presence" suggests that the poet considers the experience of absence and exile as the primary, if not sole, aspect of their existence. This could signify a profound sense of loss, loneliness, or estrangement. So, these two lines from Adonis' poetry convey a deep sense of despair and alienation, exploring themes of identity, disconnection from others, and the overwhelming presence of absence and exile in the poet's lived experience. It is clear that Adonis explores the splitting and the estrangement of the self. His work offers a contemplative perspective into the layers of identity (Shboul, 2005, p. 62). According to modernists, Eliot is considered a pioneer figure of the modernist movement because of his two poems, "The Waste Land" (1922) and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915). He significantly influenced Arab poets who hoped to overcome the shackles of rigid classical Arabic styles and forms. Therefore, "The Waste Land" accelerated the spread of modernism throughout the world (North, 2001, p. 275). Eliot's characters reflect the spiritual quest of fulfillment and survival. The terms of identity, spirituality, unity, and tradition are weaved in his poetry as a kind of seeking the existential meaning and purpose in the face of the modern and disintegrated society.

Thus, Eliot's philosophy delineates the quest for identity and spirituality amidst the chaos of life and the perplexity of human existence. According to Eliot, through the connection with a divine power that is greater than the human potential, the self would find spiritual redemption, enlightenment, and coherence against "the bleak aspects of existentialism: alienation, nausea, absurdity, sanity, anomia, ennui, anxiety, estrangement, weightlessness, meaninglessness, purposelessness, and nihilism find expression in T.S. Eliot's poetry" (Pani, 2013, p. 303). Existentialism theory deals with human existential crises as well as the disappointment and confusion over their existence. Like existentialist belief in the construction of the self, Eliot explores the way of affirming the nature of the self and its interaction with the world. In this sense, Adonis has been regarded as a prominent Arab pillar of the modernist movement since the mid-1950s as he inspired by Eliot. He was recently recognized for his "radical critique of modernism" (Shboul, 2005, p. 62). Adonis portrays alienation and the estrangement of the self in modern man by repeating in his poetry images of wandering and the separation of the self from the body.

Karl Marx, a German intellectual, developed the term "alienation" which was derived from the German philosopher George Hegel's word "ent-fremdung" indicating people's problem of alienation in the modern capital society. Alienation emerges from an individual's sense of worthlessness and meaninglessness. According to Hegel, "alienation is categorized into two types: objective and subjective" (Sarfranz, 1997, p. 46).

Objective alienation occurs when individuals reside in a social realm far removed from their home, while subjective alienation manifests when individuals sense a detachment from both themselves and society, perceiving the social world as unfamiliar. In both forms of alienation, people experience profound disorientation in contemporary society. Marx sheds light on how economic pressures result in individuals becoming estranged from their household and home—symbols of belonging, stability, and comfort. These poets depict the distance individuals feel from their morality, spirituality, and identity, outlining the causes and consequences of losing a sense of individuality and continuity. Eliot's portrayal of home is steeped in an idealized past and cultural root, leading to a disconnected and dislocated life when these elements are absent. In contrast, Adonis explores themes of exile, the quest for identity, and the tension between traditions and modernity to define the concept of home. Unlike Eliot, Adonis seeks to break free from conventional content and structures due to dogmatic beliefs, senses, and decisions. Adonis illustrates how the notion of home crumbles under devastating elements like wars, political upheavals, colonization, cultural conflicts, and displacements. These factors collectively contribute to internal or external alienation in modern individual identity. Abrams and Hogg

(1990, p. 1) defined identity that it can be characterized as the perception individuals hold about themselves, the type of people they perceive themselves to be, and the manner in which they interact with others.

It possible to assert that Identity includes the values guiding individuals, influencing the decisions they make. It comprises various roles, such as being a mother, teacher, or U.S. citizen, each laden with meanings and expectations internalized into one's identity (Abrams & Hogg, 1990, p. 2). This sense of self undergoes continuous evolution throughout an individual's life, representing a dynamic phase interwoven with connections to land, culture, and people. Eliot underscores the significance of culture, land, and spiritual foundations in shaping identity, elements often lacking in modern and collective identities due to a sense of estrangement from the past, tradition, and a perceived purposelessness in a disconnected world. Adonis, too, observes the modern identity's struggle between the dynamic and static, past and present, and the clash between cultural heritage and modernism. Both poets express how modern identity is entwined with alienation, stemming from a feeling of detachment caused by the exploitative capitalist system. The theme of alienation permeates twentieth-century literary works, influenced in part by the devastating impact of the two world wars on Europe. The shock of humanity's capacity for darkness, evidenced by millions of innocent lives lost in wars and Nazi camps, spurred the modernist movement in the early 1900s—a rejection of the atrocities inflicted on unity, identity, and culture. Moreover, this movement reshaped literary writing, expressing nostalgia for pre-war life and rejecting old perceptions that failed to mirror the new culture, form, and societal life. Techniques like stream of consciousness and interior monologue were employed to shed light on the suffering of modern individuals in the wake of World Wars and industrialization (Jameson, 2007, pp. 156-157).

Throughout its political, aesthetic, linguistics, epistemological, and thematic concepts, modernity entails a plethora of philosophical meanings. It is a product of the Western enlightenment and industrial revolutions. Different key characteristics such as liberalism, freedom, secularism, and individualism have emerged from modernity and are criticized by Carl Schmitt, a German political theorist, due to their effects on people's unity and the state's power to make determined decisions in times of predicament (Sirczuk, 2010, pp. 4-5).

Eliot and Adonis have tried to provide answers to the dark nature of man. They were among the writers who experienced the external and internal alienation that both world wars produced in the people of their time. Eliot lived through both world wars, and Adonis witnessed several wars in Syria and Lebanon. Therefore, exile and alienation are present in the poetic writings of both poets. According to Eliot, "successful poetry is the fusion of experience, emotion, and intellect. For him, perfect poetry is the fusion of intellect and emotion, far from using the intellect to abandon emotion, as in seventeenth-century poetry, nor using emotion to neglect intellect, as in romantic poetry" (Mehsin, 2012, p. 10). Eliot's notion of impersonality underscores the importance of poets being objective rather than subjective in their poetic writing. According to Eliot, art is not an expression of the personality but rather an escape from it. Unlike Eliot, Adonis's poetry is having the tendency to personalize his poetry while revealing the modern malaise of alienation and other modern themes (Nsiri, 2018, p. 106).

## II. SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ELIOT'S AND ADONIS' PORTRAYAL OF ALIENATION

Eliot and Adonis, despite belonging to different cultural and literary traditions, share certain similarities in their imagery and themes, particularly in their exploration of modern identity and the impact of societal changes. Eliot investigates the importance of cultural roots and spiritual foundations, emphasizing the role of these elements in shaping one's identity. His works often reflect a nostalgic yearning for a past era characterized by a sense of cultural unity. Adonis engages with the theme of identity, but he approaches it from the perspective of the struggle between past cultural heritage and the demands of modernism. Both poets highlight the tension between preserving cultural identity and embracing the changes brought by contemporary society. Eliot portrays a sense of alienation and dislocation in modern life, often highlighting the disconnection individuals feel from their cultural and spiritual roots (North, 2001, pp. 77-78). This detachment contributes to a fragmented and disoriented existence. Similar to Eliot, Adonis explores the theme of alienation, emphasizing how modern man's identity is marred by detachment from society and the self. The influence of the exploitative capitalist system is a common thread in both poets' works. Eliot's representation of home is grounded in an idealized past, and he critiques the disruptions caused by the absence of traditional elements. His works reflect a tension between the stability associated with tradition and the chaos of modernity. On the other hand, Adonis also struggles with the conflict between tradition and modernity. His poetry explores the constant struggle that individuals face in reconciling the dynamic forces of change with the static nature of tradition. Eliot's poetry reflects the loss of individuality and continuity in modern society. The erosion of cultural and spiritual foundations contributes to a sense of purposelessness and dislocation. Adonis similarly addresses the loss of identity in the contemporary world, attributing it to factors like wars, political upheavals, colonization, cultural conflicts, and displacements (Shboul, 2005, pp. 62-63).

However, both Eliot and Adonis share thematic elements related to identity, cultural roots, alienation, and the struggle between tradition and modernity. While Eliot tends to idealize the past and mourn its absence, Adonis confronts the challenges of modernism and the impact of external forces on individual and cultural identity. The following sections illustrate the main similarities between Eliot and Adonis in analyzing the themes of spiritual and physical alienation that have plagued humanity around the world through wars, other deteriorating policies represented by dictatorial regimes, and other natural disasters.

### III. SYMBOLS AND IMAGES OF DRYNESS

The recurring poetic images in Eliot's poem stress and reflect internal and external spiritual and physical alienation. Stones and rocks represent the toughness of the heart, the absence of morality, and harsh reality which prevent an individual's introspection and thinking:

Here is no water but only rock

Rock and no water and the sandy road. (Eliot, 1963, p. 66)

The above lines convey a vivid and desolate landscape, embodying the themes of symbols and images related to dryness. The imagery of aridity and barrenness serves as a metaphor for spiritual and cultural desolation, reflecting the broader context of the modernist period. The repeated emphasis on "no water but only rock" underscores the theme of dryness. Water, a universal symbol of life, renewal, and vitality, is conspicuously absent. The barren landscape with only rocks symbolizes spiritual drought and a lack of rejuvenating elements. The rocky terrain and absence of water symbolize a barren and inhospitable environment. This imagery may be interpreted as a representation of the desolation and disillusionment experienced by individuals in a modern, fragmented world. The rocky landscape becomes a symbol for the spiritual wasteland that characterizes the poem. The sandy road winding through the mountains adds another layer to the symbolism. Sand, often associated with dryness and barrenness, reinforces the theme of spiritual desolation. The road itself implies a journey, but in this context, it appears to be a challenging and arduous path through a landscape devoid of life-giving water. Eliot describes the road as follows:

The road winding above among mountains

Which are mountains of rock without water

If there were water, we should stop and drink

Amongst the rock, one cannot stop or think. (Eliot, 1963, p. 66)

The above lines suggest that the barrenness has not only external, but internal consequences. The lack of water inhibits not only physical sustenance but also intellectual and contemplative activities. This imagery contributes to the overall sense of despair and hopelessness in the face of a spiritually dry landscape. The repetition of the phrase "mountains of rock without water" reinforces the starkness of the environment. Mountains, typically majestic and awe-inspiring, become symbols of lifelessness and sterility in the absence of water (North, 2001, p. 141). This repetition underscores the poet's insistence on the desolate nature of the landscape. However, the above lines use powerful imagery and symbolism to convey the themes of dryness, barrenness, and spiritual desolation. The absence of water in a landscape dominated by rock and sand becomes a potent metaphor for the cultural and spiritual challenges faced by individuals in the modern world, reflecting the broader concerns of the modernist movement.

Many images in Eliot's work symbolize the sterility, brokenness, and dryness due to isolation which is caused by the psychological, physical, and moral breakdown of the world after both wars. Eliot evokes the feeling of desolation and hopelessness that hovers over the modern landscape which seems inhospitable and also lacks nourishment and sustenance. For example, thunder is described as dry and sterile:

There is not even silence in the mountains

But dry sterile thunder without rain

There is not even solitude in the mountains

But red sullen faces sneer and snarl

From doors of mudcracked houses. (Eliot, 1963, p. 66)

The image of the mountain, here, symbolizes the higher spiritual power of faith and belief that acts as a strong protection which could be relied on in earlier times. According to Freud, who Eliot is influenced by, people need an exalted father; through him, they inspire their spiritual power, and through his fall, they become lost and ignorant. Freud highlights the symbolic relationship between high spiritual power and the psychology of human beings as he states:

Psycho-analysis has made us familiar with intimate connection between the father-complex and belief in God; it has shown us that a personal God is, psychologically, nothing other than an exalted father, and it brings us evidence every day of how young people lose their religious beliefs as soon as their father's authority breaks down. (Freud, 2002, p. 73)

To some degree, Bellour denotes that Eliot keeps repeating the imagery of "Christianity and Buddhism" to sustain modern individuals' survival by the psychological guidance, avoiding their physical loss and spiritual destruction (Bellour, 2016, p. 432). Meanwhile, this isolation and loss are also analyzed due to materialism, which has permeated the family structure's life and destroyed the people's inherited cultural and moral ideology (Spengler, 1926, pp.4-5). It might also indicate that Eliot, throughout the image of "stone", seems to emphasize that modern civilization cannot develop any cultural values. In this sense, Eliot explores a further philosophical inquiry into the possibility of spiritual and cultural growth amidst the overwhelming sense of alienation depicted by "stony rubbish" which symbolizes a waste lander's civilization:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow

Out of this stony rubbish? (Eliot, 1963, p. 53)

In Eliot's poem "What the Thunder Said," he depicts the sterility and deterioration of civilization through stony places, showing how people were once alive through the existence of civilizational and moral values while they are

recently dead. To this end, the line “those who were living are now dead” represents the transformation of humans’ awareness about their present existential level which is death in life (spiritual death):

After the agony in stony places  
The shouting and the crying  
Prison and palace and reverberation  
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains  
He who was living is now dead. (Eliot, 1963, p. 66)

To evoke more tantalizing emotions, Eliot delineates, in the following lines, the state of modern men’s state as if they are in the sense of a collective decay represented by “a heap of broken images”:

A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,  
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,  
And the dry stone no sound of water. (Eliot, 1963, p. 53)

People seek, from a traumatic life, a sanctuary to find relief, compassion, insight, and wisdom, represented by embracing Christianity (the “red rock”) for saving them from metaphorical death, alienation, and disillusionment:

There is shadow under this red rock,  
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock). (Eliot, 1963, p. 53)

As a matter of fact, there is an invitation to a divine refuge near the red rock that may eliminate the terror and fear of a mundane existence. It is a kind of promising transcendence from the dusky present. According to Kurraz’ quote, the literary talent of Eliot exists in manifesting the cons of modern spiritual nature and the pros of the pure spirituality of the past (Kurraz, 2011, p. 2779).

Adonis has been influenced by Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and collaborated in the translation of this poetic book. Meanwhile as a desire of transferring Eliot’s modernist poetry to Arab world, he wrote a comparable Arabic version entitled *Songs of Mihyar the Damascene* in 1961 (Adonis, 2019, p. xiii). These two works depict the barrenness and brokenness of modern life. Adonis’ poems are studied as similar to Eliot’s in that they have expounded on the themes of spiritual barrenness and physical desolation. Adonis summarizes the modern crises of life in these phrases quoted from his poems “an age that crumbles like sand,” “an age of submission and mirage,” and the phrase “perpetual decline” (Adonis, 2019, p. xiv). In all these hopeless images, the decline is evident in Arab’s life. In his poem “The Wound,” he portrays the image of “coming stone” as an external element that may bring either destruction or change (offering a crystal possibility for renewal) to the stagnant environment and withered world:

To the stone coming from afar  
to the dried-up world crumbling to dust  
to the time ferried on creaky sleighs. (Adonis, 2010, p. 32)

Adonis depicts a world in the throes of disintegration, symbolizing the collapse of culture, education, identity, and morality. This renders the global landscape lifeless, shattered, disassembled, and decayed in Adonis’s perspective. In his poem “Nothing but Madness Remains,” Adonis explores the stony attributes of humanity, depicting a resilient nature that emerged post-wars. This portrayal signifies the chaotic and unrefined realization of a collapsed societal structure, inviting scrutiny of both society and the human condition (Leavey, 2001, p. 81). To some degree, the surreal image of the “sleepless stone” conveys the existential restlessness inherent in human beings. The contemplation state for the individuals in the world is illustrated in the image of observation, seeking the understanding of the immutable side of present existence:

I see him now out of the window of my house  
sleepless among sleepless stones  
like a child taught by a sorceress  
that there is a woman in the sea  
who carried his history inside a ring  
and she will come  
when the hearth fire dies out  
and when night melts in sorrow  
among the ashes of the hearth. (Adonis, 1971, pp. 121-122)

The image of a “child taught by a sorceress” indicates the mysterious forces that guide knowledge and life. This poem projects the underlying chaotic elements of existence. The images of stones, bangs, whimpers, deserted streets, sterility, fragmentation, and death are recurrent themes in Adonis’s works also (Adonis, 2019, p. xiv). Adonis portrays a world where the laws and principles of life look alert; nevertheless, they are changing drastically. The Image of the rock in the water suggests a distorted truth in which he also inspects the boundaries of human perceptions, existence, and interaction in this surreal world:

I saw  
a child driving the wind  
and stones as if through water. (Adonis, 1971, p. 8)

The above lines “I saw a child driving the wind and stones as if through water” convey a vivid and imaginative image. The child symbolically controls powerful forces like the wind and stones, suggesting a sense of mastery or agency over

natural elements. The comparison of moving stones "as if through water" adds a dreamlike quality, possibly emphasizing the ease and grace with which the child navigates through challenges or obstacles. In the second set of lines: "Against them I fling the penance of this rock", there is a shift in perspective. The speaker contrasts their own actions against the child's control over the elements. The use of the word "penance" suggests a form of atonement or punishment. The speaker seems to be expressing a sense of guilt or remorse, perhaps feeling the need to counterbalance the child's power with a symbolic act of self-punishment (Arabi, 2015, p. 2). The use of "this rock" as the object of the penance adds a tangible and weighty element to the expression of remorse:

Others I know. Against  
them I fling the penance  
of this rock before I turn  
to face the time to come. (Adonis, 1971, p. 4)

The juxtaposition of these two sets of lines creates a rich interplay of symbols, contrasting the child's mastery of natural elements with the speaker's sense of guilt or responsibility. Adonis often employs vivid and symbolic imagery in his poetry, inviting readers to explore multiple layers of meaning and interpretation.

In the poem "The Fall (1958)", Adonis portrays images of clouds, wounds, and sparks, describing the profound balance for the two images the ethereal "clouds", which means the tangible and transcendent life, whereas the ephemeral "sparks" mean the fleeting and transient flashes of existence:

I live between clouds and sparks,  
in a stone that grows, in a book  
that knows secrets, and knows the fall. (Adonis, 2010, p. 36)

In the second line, Adonis depicts "a stone" as a dynamic entity growing in spite of its static state to imply the poet's transformative and growing wisdom from experiences and the evolving understanding of the mysteries of existence (Arabi, 2015, p. 6). This interpretation is boosted by the image of a "book that knows the secrets and knows the fall". The "book" means his developed wisdom, awareness, and understanding despite the limitations of the enigmatic existence. Personification is used to give the "stone" human characteristics as if it knows the profound truth concerning human existence.

#### IV. THE IMAGE OF MASK, SUPERFICIALITY, AND THE GENDER IDENTITY

Eliot and Adonis, influenced by him, have unveiled a widespread social malady represented by the mask and confusion of modern individuals who suffer from perplexity in their identity and tedious existence. Eliot, in his poetic writings, highlights the image of modern men's masks, which have plagued their psyches due to the lack of confidence. To hide their internal hesitation, and fear others' judgments, they start pretending something which is different in reality. Eliot also writes about the ambiguity of gender in the modern age. He addresses many issues, such as homosexuality, as well as the barrier in communication between people and how they begin to hide their true personalities behind masks as a kind of self-protection:

To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;  
There will be time to murder and create,  
And time for all the works and days of hands. (Eliot, 1963, p. 4)

To illustrate this recent social disease, Eliot tries in his poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" to criticize this developed crisis when he repeatedly and ironically asks himself "Do I dare? Do I dare?" (Eliot, 1963, p. 4). The poem, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", is considered a manifestation of modern man's dilemma with the surging traumas of superficiality, indecision, betrayal, hypocrisy, and hesitation. Eliot says, "for I have known them all already, known them all" (1963, p. 4). The line reflects Eliot's loss of confidence in people's outer faces and appearances. To project the focus on modern psycho-malady of foolishness, Eliot observes that "in the room the women come and go /talking of Michelangelo" (1963, p. 3). He sheds light on the triviality of modern people who have nothing to do, just the chit-chat (North, 2001, pp. 214-215). In this sense, he is insecure about his appearance and how people might criticize his thin arms, legs and long hair:

(They will say: 'How his hair is growing thin!')

[...]

(They will say: 'But how his arms and legs are thin!'). (Eliot, 1963, p. 4)

It seems that Eliot is so meticulous about his appearance because people have become so judgmental. They begin judging others by their outward appearance rather than their inner knowledge, wisdom, and experience. The poet penetrates even deeper into the psyche of modern man's deception: "I know the voices dying with a dying fall" (1963, p. 4). According to the surrealist movement, this poem is interpreted as a remarkable meditation on the difference between appearance and reality. Since its emergence in World War I, this movement has sought to "express the true operations of the mind" (WriteWork Contributors, 1996). Although Eliot is not a surrealist, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" attempts to express the subconscious of the mind through images that follow no order. Eliot's erudite knowledge of Bradley's philosophy reflects the appearance of things (the external form of Prufrock's world) and their reality, which depends on the subconscious mind's experience and interpretation of the internal world (Skaff, 1987, pp. 444-445). Eliot, through Prufrock's dramatic monologue, conveys this philosophy to the reader through poetry, highlighting the modern

individual's estranged and diseased psyche. Prufrock's character personifies a true picture of individual's inner feelings, social illness, and the reality of the modern world. He repeatedly compares himself with weak characters such as "Lazarus", "ragged claws", and other images of everyday life and common conversations to evoke thematic similarities, exposing the social crippling and self-depreciation due to "human voices" (North, 2001, p. 231).

His perception of women's powers of seduction and deception is in his poem "The Waste Land" represented by the image of the "perfume" of women's "dress" and "the mermaid singing", who "lured sailors to their death through the beauty of their songs" (Eliot, 1963, p. 56). William Skaff points to the philosophy of Eliot, noting that there is a significant connection between Eliot's poetic books, which are considered "nightmarish," and the works of surrealist painters who depict the hell of life during and after the war in dark and depressed images (WriteWork Contributors, 1996). Self-loathing and deprecation are evident in Prufrock's persona, who compares himself to "ragged claws" because modern individuals' identities have become as alienated and uncertain as the nature of this animal hiding at the bottom of the dark ocean. Eliot underscores this fact in his poetry to suggest the sense of fragmentation, incompleteness, and inadequacy as well as the feeling of incompatibility with the traditions of the society:

I should have been a pair of ragged claws  
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas. (Eliot, 1963, p. 5)

The image of "Scuttling across the floors" symbolizes the purposeless movement in the indifferent environment by depicting it as a "silent sea". Everything in the poem starts with the structure of short sections and disjointed and bewildered questions, such as "Do I dare?" "And how should I presume?" and "What is it?" pointing to the persona's confusion, anxiety, and helplessness (1963, pp. 4-5). In Eliot's poem "Preludes", the theme of the masquerade is also evident when he shows that time also resumes a masquerade from the monotony and meaningless lives that people lead and also refers to the varied metaphorical masks and roles that individuals adapt throughout their lives. This line depicts the urban and modern life state of individuals' dehumanization and alienation:

With the other masquerades  
That time resumes. (Eliot, 1963, p. 13)

In the poem "The Hollow Men," Eliot also exhibits the theme of masks and how men, in modern real life, disguise themselves to camouflage their shame from themselves and the world. They hide their misdeeds at night when they indulge in gambling, drinking, and sex by morning's mask of decency and consistency as they fear others' criticism (Dhakal, 2012, pp. 30-31). Covering up their true identity and personality behind masks is to hide their despising to themselves and the society they live within. "Rat's coat and crowskin" are symbols of the individual's disguise, escaping life monotony beside that of hiding one's true self:

Let me also wear  
Such deliberate disguises  
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves  
In a field  
Behaving as the wind behaves. (Eliot, 1963, p. 80)

The above lines suggest a complex exploration of identity, superficiality, and perhaps the societal expectations associated with gender roles. These lines explore the unreality of the fragmented nature of modern existence and people. These lines may be also seen as a reflection on the complexity of identity and the challenges individuals face in expressing their true selves within the confines of societal norms. The use of disguises and the metaphor of behaving like the wind evoke a sense of fluidity and a yearning for a more authentic and liberated existence. Actually, what modern individuals desire is being spontaneous and liberated rather than being under the imposed disguising that society and conditions forced on individuals "behaving as the wind behaves" (1963, p. 80).

Adonis also addresses the theme of the mask behind which modern man has hidden as a result of alienation. Many social diseases plague the world. One of these social and mental disorders is the concealment of one's true personality behind misleading masks. Adonis also argues, in his poetry, the blurring nature of gender roles which means that in every person there is a multifaceted identity that passes the conventional division and notion of masculinity and femininity besides the inherent duality within the individual as well as the encompassed characteristics that inherently exist beyond social norms and binaries (Arabi, 2015, p. 20). It also indicates the intersected distinction between the external feeling of the self and the internal sense of the self; in addition, to the shared common emotions, experiences, sufferings, and other traits of identity which surpass the social definitions and constructs. These two lines are regarded as delving into the inner complication of identity within human beings:

A face of a woman who is a man  
a face of a man who is a woman. (Adonis, 2010, p. 214)

Adonis's poetic talent is intertwined in the image of "A frog wears history's mask", indicating that even the interpretations of conventional history bear multifaceted narrations, whereas a frog is a symbol of transformations that history has passed through. The image of "A beggar keeps the book of glory" implies a subversion of the prevalent expectations of the authoritarian source of knowledge suggesting that true narrations of history, wisdom, and knowledge can be found in marginalized groups or places that oppose a larger one (Arabi, 2015, p. 28). This image also underlies that dichotomies, dualities, and contrasts coexist within human experiences:

A frog wears history's mask

A beggar keeps the books  
of glory. (Adonis, 1971, p. 43)

Adonis sets these striking images of frogs with history's mask and a beggar with the books to attract reader's senses and imagination besides the repetition of sounds, rhythm, and alliteration enhancing the fluidity of the poem and drawing the attention of the reader by his symbolic language. In his poem entitled "Underground," Adonis shows how modern people are alienated from each other and enclose themselves in shells. The state of being isolated, suppressed, and hidden is clear in this poem and is regarded as an obvious depiction of the internal uproar of the human soul, mind, and body. The metaphor of the shells represents many underlying meanings such as social constraints, political oppression, and dark, spiritual, and mental entrapments in modern individual's life:

we live like snails  
within their shells. (Adonis, 1994, p. 3)

Adonis uses comparison and evocative images and language to compare man's alienation to snails' shells which represents a kind of shelter and resilience against the world's toughness and adversity. Nevertheless, the poet seems to have claustrophobia (a fear of enclosed places). The fact of modern man being suppressed mentally, culturally, and politically is represented by the symbolic name of the poem "Underground". In his poem "A Dream for Any Man," Adonis also addresses the subject of disguising behind different masks to underlay the interplay meaning of the social and psychological sickness of duality and the complexity of the utopian desire of the modern individual which is represented by a "surging wave". It also may express the modern individual's quest for meaning and purpose:

I live in the face of a woman  
who lives in a wave  
a surging wave  
that finds a shore  
lost like a harbor under shells. (Adonis, 1971, p. 18)

He confesses that he lives in the face of a woman, by which he may mean he is like a woman, being weak, indecisive, and hesitant to take action or make a decision. The symbol of "the face of a woman" can also be interpreted as a longing for social, political, and cultural change (Arabi, 2015, p. 33). By using striking images, the poet aspires to attract attention and the reader's emotions. In addition, the enjambment technique eases the flow of the poem from one line to another by not using grammatical breaks at the end of his poetic lines. The yearning for social communication and gender dynamic relationships such as love is a theme that is weaved with the used complexity and ambiguity besides their existential and philosophical depth.

In his poem "Remembering the First Century," Adonis uses nature as a sanctuary and solace for the modern individual from the obstacles of society and chaotic existence. The plea to return to the elemental state besides, to seek remedy and shelter in the place of purification is an obvious request to forget his personal struggles. To this end, Adonis adopts the anonymity where no judging or expectations are imposed by any society or culture:

"O God, we seek  
some shelter in the earth.  
let rivers hide us  
from the final enemy". (Adonis, 1971, p. 36)

The second place of his safe sanctuary after nature is being alone and lives within his innermost self, spirit, and emotions which are represented by "the shade of the heart" (1971, p. 52). Adonis believes in the transformative and creative power of poetry and literary works to heal and entertain broken souls and traumatized psyches:

I take my books and go,  
living in the shade of my heart,  
weaving from my verse's silk  
a new heaven. (Adonis, 1971, p. 52)

The metaphoric image of "weaving from my verse's silk" is used to indicate that through the act of literary writing a new realm of hope, reality, and perception of life is the outcome of his literary imagination that enables him weaving his thoughts and emotions to craft a personal and universal shelter from world's unrealities. Mask, disguise, superficiality, and alienation have become the distinct characteristics of modern man due to the burden and suffering of post-war life, which has turned people into "mute" and "voiceless" (Leavey, 2001, p. 81).

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the presented analysis, alienation is the separation of the individual from his own self and the surrounding milieu. This study highlighted the suffering of people who have lost their soul due to their scattered identity that has been ruined by ruthless dictators, wars, and other deteriorated issues. As a matter of fact, alienation has become a distinctive topic as a result of the rapid development of technology and industrialization. World Wars and their backward effects upon the modern man have destroyed human beings physically, spiritually and morally. To this end, Eliot and Adonis, influenced by him, have depicted why desolation has become the current issue of modern era and how it takes different forms such as masks, superficiality, self-depreciation, and dehumanization. They have exposed how the meaning of gender has multifaceted concepts and complexities in modern interpretations. Eliot's depiction of



alienation has launched from his “impersonal theory” and philosophical readings while for Adonis it relies on his personal experiences, depicting the sense of detachment, and isolation. Adonis is inspired by Eliot’s philosophy, theories, literary themes, imagery and style. However, his style is slightly different being away from impersonality. His poetic books and criticism reflect Eliot’s deep study of the most famous works of different philosophers and the study of social, literary, and political critics. In his spiritual quest for idealism, Eliot rejects the division of the self, reflecting Freud’s study of the human psyche. According to Eliot, and based on Freud’s psycho-analysis, humans are always in need of a psychological guide (God), through him, they can survive spiritually. On the other hand, Adonis employs a different approach to overcome the spiritual loss, emphasizing on the significance of creative writing in weaving a safe shelter for soothing the trauma of alienation.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Prof. Dr. Santiago Rodriguez Guerrero-Strachan of the University of Valladolid due to his effort and useful notes in reviewing the manuscript of this article.

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# Scaffolding African Language Intellectualisation: The Case of Sesotho and Setswana at a South African University

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**Abstract**—The call for the intellectualisation of African languages has become a topical agenda towards their use as languages of teaching and learning in institutions of higher learning in Africa. In their enunciation of language policies, South African universities are guided by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)'s Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions (LPPHEI). The thrust of this paper is to interrogate how the language policy of one university in South Africa enables the intellectualisation of African languages. The study deploys Ruiz's notion of language as a resource to examine the potential embedded within the university's language policy to foster the intellectualisation of Sesotho and Setswana for use as LoTLs in a variety of disciplines. The university is one of the institutions of higher learning with the most recently revised language policy approved in 2022, hence its selection as the case study. The paper concludes that an enabling language policy that speaks to the linguistic realities, coupled with a variety of support structures within the university and also spelling out the implementation plan is what will result in the fruitful re-intellectualisation of African languages.

**Index Terms**—intellectualisation, African languages, university language policy, re-intellectualisation, languages of teaching and learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)'s directive on language policy, there has been an increasing trend to promote the use and advancement of African languages as Languages of Teaching and Learning (LoTLs) in South African universities. This drive has also amplified the debates about and efforts towards their intellectualisation. This paper analyses the language policy of a university in South Africa (The University) to establish the extent to which it provides for the intellectualisation of Sesotho and Setswana. Metz (2015) avers that one of the key tools that universities can use to Africanise their institutional culture is through policing language use. Subsequently, there have been calls by various researchers for the intellectualisation of African languages to function alongside ex-colonial languages in all academic discourses instead of merely teaching them as language subjects at certain academic levels. Accordingly, Alexander (2007) reiterates that intellectualised languages are capable of use in any academic discipline as LoTLs at all levels of education without any challenges. Similarly, Bamgbose (2011) notes that the intellectualisation of languages extends their use to wider domains. Intellectualisation is therefore a process of modernising languages so that they can function effectively in communicating ideas in all fields of academic discourse to share knowledge. Khumalo and Nkomo (2022) aver that the term 'intellectualisation' in relation to African languages is problematic because it presupposes that these languages have always been inherently deficient and incapable of functioning in higher-order domains. They argue that this attitude is a product of colonial ideologies that sought to discredit African languages and project them as inferior to English, leading to their stifled growth. The term 're-intellectualisation' is thus proffered to embody that dynamic (Khumalo & Nkomo, 2022). Alexander (2003) is of the view that every official language of South Africa should be used in the same way as English and Afrikaans. The most effective way to implement the use of African languages as LoTLs is to begin by re-intellectualising them.

Debates on the use of African languages as LoTLs or as Languages of Instruction (LoIs) at various academic levels and disciplines have been ongoing. Gumbi and Ndimande-Hlongwa (2015) argue that the use of ex-colonial languages as the sole LoTLs in schools in South African schools impedes access to education by learners who speak African languages as their first languages (L1s). Alexander (2003) therefore posits that all universities in South Africa should consider using African languages as LoTLs alongside English and Afrikaans. Scholars such as Alexander (2003) have therefore continued to agitate for the use of African languages together with English and other ex-colonial languages as LoTLs in academic contexts. One of the objectives of this paper is to demonstrate that a more realistic approach to the

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re-intellectualisation of African languages will be to consider the co-existence of languages. All languages that make up the institutional linguistic repertoire have to be utilised for teaching and learning in the classroom to facilitate effective communication.

It has been highlighted that proper implementation of a language policy without a firm policy in place is impossible (Kaschula & Maseko, 2014). This paper therefore argues that successful implementation of African languages as languages of academic discourse will not be possible if there are no effective institutional language policies to support the cause. It has been observed that the major challenge in the development of African languages for use as academic languages is also hampered by their lack of terminologies. Madadzhe (2019, p. 205) argues that “the use of African languages in higher education still leaves much to be desired”, while Khumalo and Nkomo (2022, p. 135) concur that “the use of African languages as academic languages in the country’s universities, remains handicapped by terminological problems”. There is therefore a need for universities to enact language policies that will provide roadmaps on how terminologies will be developed. University language policies that are predominantly based on status planning without paving the way for corpus planning and implementation may not be the best answer for the re-intellectualisation of African languages.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The intellectualisation of a language entails “the development of new linguistic resources for discussing and disseminating conceptual material at high levels of abstraction” (Liddicoat & Bryant, 2002, p. 1). Bamgbose (2011) views the intellectualisation of a language as a process that would empower it, improve its status and extend its functionality to intellectual contexts. According to Khumalo (2017, p. 252), “intellectualisation entails a carefully planned process of hastening the cultivation and growth of indigenous African languages so that they effectively function in all higher domains as languages of teaching and learning, research, science and technology”. The idea of language intellectualisation is to enable its use beyond general everyday conversation to other special domains such as academia, commerce, development, and compliance with technological advancements.

As already alluded to, the term ‘intellectualisation of African languages’ is problematic as it implies that these languages were never sufficiently developed to serve effective daily and specialised communication needs for their speakers. Khumalo and Nkomo (2022, p. 137) note that “in the precolonial context with a stable African epistemological order, African languages would undoubtedly serve their speakers optimally in all their intellectual activities”. One can therefore argue that African languages only began to appear inefficient with the advent of colonialism as they were now expected to carry the burden of communicating foreign concepts that were alien to them. On that note, Kaschula and Nkomo (2019) argue that because of colonisation, African languages were de-intellectualised hence the need to re-intellectualise them to catch up with English and Afrikaans and be able to handle the new intellectual order. Now that Sesotho and Setswana have to facilitate communication in a variety of disciplines in the academic arena, there is a need to scrutinise how the institution’s language policy facilitates and enables their re-intellectualisation.

In the South African academic context, the re-intellectualisation of African languages should entail the development of terms in various fields of knowledge to enable the functionality of these languages. Khumalo and Nkomo (2022) point out that terminology development and practical lexicography are the most important aspects of language re-intellectualisation. Practical lexicography is the actual process of dictionary compilation that also entails terminology development. It is not limited to the development of general dictionaries, but it also extends to specialised dictionaries in specialised fields of knowledge. Practical lexicography in this context does not entail the compilation of general dictionaries because terms for use in everyday speech are readily available in non-specialised African language dictionaries. Because African languages have been made to assume roles in academic spaces, their re-intellectualisation is imperative if they are to effectively function in these intellectual spaces. By conceptualising the development and promotion of African languages within the frame of re-intellectualisation (Khumalo & Nkomo, 2022), this paper scrutinises how the focal university’s language policy provisions support and feed into the re-intellectualisation of Sesotho and Setswana to function as academic languages.

Before a focused discussion on how the university’s language policy facilitates the re-intellectualisation of Sesotho and Setswana, it is prudent to provide a brief overview of how African language re-intellectualisation has been proceeding in other universities in South Africa. Letsoalo (2020) examined the intellectualisation of African languages at the University of Limpopo and found that although being a multilingual and multicultural institution of higher learning, the university did not adhere to its language policy as there was no parity between African languages and English. The language policy of the University of Limpopo recognises eight languages and aims to ensure parity and to promote the equitable use of English, Sesotho sa Leboa (Sepedi), Xitsonga, Tshivenda, isiNdebele, Setswana, SiSwati and Afrikaans as the main languages in the university’s hinterland (Letsoalo, 2020). The language policy stresses the need for multilingualism and equity between the co-existing languages, but this has not been fully implemented (Letsoalo, 2020). The current paper argues that there is a dialectical relationship between African language intellectualisation and university language policy implementation. This is because a language policy that calls for the use of African languages may foster their intellectualisation. On the other hand, an intellectualised language can be easily implemented for use as an academic language.

Nkwashu, Madadzhe and Kubayi (2015, p. 14) observe that, just like other official languages of South Africa, Xitsonga has undergone processes of standardisation and development so much that it can now be used in various fields of knowledge at both primary and secondary levels. However, Nkwashu et al. (2015, p. 8) note that the data that they collected “indicate that the majority of Xitsonga speakers believe that Xitsonga should not be used as a medium of instruction in tertiary education”. This is because both learners and lecturers at universities have established comfort in the use of English to the extent that it has become “extremely popular in higher education because it is viewed as the language of the corporate world as well as the language of science” (Nkwashu et al., 2015, p. 8). It is also believed that English facilitates upward social mobility and access to better economic opportunities (Lafon, 2008; Janks, 2014). It has been noted that this trend is not unique to South Africa but is also evident in other countries of the world (Groff, 2017; Kaveh, 2020). Other studies have also shown that some students have negative attitudes towards the use of African languages as academic languages. Lafon (2008), Heugh (2013), Mhlauli et al. (2015), Prah (2017), and Makhanya and Zibane (2020) argue that these negative attitudes are attributed to colonialism’s deliberate subjugation of African languages. However, Pillay (2017) notes that language attitudes are not static, but they shift as circumstances change. The dominance of English does not entail that African languages are abandoned by their speakers. Posel, Hunter and Rudwick (2020) conclude that there is no evidence that the L1 speakers of African languages have shifted to English as their L1. They also state that the English language shows no dominance in the everyday communication of African people. Ngcobo (2014) also observes how tertiary-level students’ attitudes towards the use of African languages as academic languages have been ameliorating. There is a noticeable shift from the perception of African languages by learners as incapable of functioning as academic languages. This positive attitude can be further buttressed if African languages are re-intellectualised.

The University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) has recorded successes in putting its language policy into practice and made strides towards the intellectualisation of isiZulu. Nkosi (2017) reports that in the College of Humanities, School of Education at the UKZN the use of isiZulu in teaching and learning is now taking place. Khumalo and Nkomo (2022) also note the successes of UKZN in the development and implementation of an institutional language policy and the subsequent intellectualisation of isiZulu. They note that UKZN has moved to intellectualise isiZulu through the successful compilation of three discipline-specific dictionaries. The compilation of discipline-specific dictionaries is important in the intellectualisation of a language because the process largely involves terminology development. Nkosi (2017) observes that the UKZN has also begun to offer tutorials in isiZulu. Three modules in Early Childhood Development (ECD), a component of the Post Graduate Certificate in Education, and four modules in the Bachelor of Education Honours Degree in the Languages and Arts cluster are also taught in isiZulu (Nkosi, 2017). While it may be a positive move to promote isiZulu to the status of English as an academic language, it can also be problematic by projecting isiZulu as a counter-hegemonic language that reproduces the cycle of dominance over other African languages in the university (Rudwick, 2018). It can also be another form of monolingualism that is disguised in a multilingual agenda. It could also feed the perception that the university is more interested in promoting isiZulu only as if there are no students from outside KwaZulu Natal (KZN) province who speak other African languages as their L1. The UKZN has also managed to have honours, master’s and PhD students write their dissertations in isiZulu. However, an interesting observation is that it is mostly students of literature or linguistics who write their research work in isiZulu (Nkosi, 2017). The journey towards the full intellectualisation of isiZulu should result in students from disciplines other than literature and linguistics also writing their dissertations in isiZulu. Naidoo and Gokool (2020) note that apart from the use of isiZulu as an academic language by L1 speakers, the university introduced a compulsory basic isiZulu language studies module for non-mother tongue speakers and basic isiZulu for medical students enrolled in the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) programme. However, Naidoo and Gokool (2020) note that some students have an aversion to the basic isiZulu language module because they feel the language will be of not much use after the completion of their academic programmes.

What the above reveals is that although the language policy directive from the DHET has been heeded by all public higher learning institutions in South Africa what remains problematic is the implementation of these language policies to an extent that they translate to the tangible transformation of university spaces (Drummond, 2016; Makalela & McCabe, 2013; Maseko & Siziba, 2023). In particular, the implementation of African languages as LoTLs is complicated by various factors including the attitudes of students and staff towards African languages and the colonially inherited ideology of English as the legitimate language that is equipped to handle all complex and scientific concepts, something that African languages are thought to lack (Dyers & Abongdia, 2015; Madadzhe, 2019; van der Merwe, 2022).

### III. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The arguments advanced in this paper are informed by Ruiz’s language as a resource orientation of language planning (Ruiz, 1984). Language as a resource is one of the three orientations to language planning with others being language as a right and language as a problem (Ruiz, 1984). The language as a resource orientation entails that every language should be valued as a “precious possession and a quintessential aspect of our humanity – one that ensures achieving or fulfilling social, economic, governmental and educational objectives (Mutasa, 2015). The language as a resource orientation is viewed in this paper as a foundation for viewing all languages as capable of communicating

knowledge in a variety of academic disciplines. For the resourcefulness of a language to be fully achieved, there is a need for it to be intellectualised in the process. The full functionality of a language in all spheres of life will render it a valuable resource. However, a language will never reach the level of full functionality without going through the process of intellectualisation first. It is therefore prudent to utilise the notion of language as a resource to understand the university's dispositions and attitudes towards indigenous African languages and their value in teaching, learning and research within the university.

#### IV. METHODOLOGICAL PATH

The paper uses a qualitative case study research approach as its methodology. The method of data collection is qualitative document analysis. We critically analysed the recently revised language policy of the university to make sense of its commitment to the intellectualisation of Sesotho and Setswana and foster their use as LoTLs. The chosen case is interesting because as a Historically White University (HWU), there are high expectations regarding inclusion of historically marginalised African languages in the university. HWUs are described as those universities that previously enrolled white students only (Makalela & McCabe, 2013). It is also used as a synonym for Afrikaans medium universities that used and promoted Afrikaans as a medium of instruction (Mwaniki, 2012). The university has also recently adopted its revised language policy in 2022. It is thus interesting to examine the changes that have occurred in the language policy in line with the ongoing discourses on the transformation of South African universities and initiatives aimed at eliminating language as a barrier to access and success for African language-speaking students who constitute a majority in universities (Thamaga-Chitja & Mbatha, 2012).

#### V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The current revised language policy of the university was adopted in June 2022 and is set to be reviewed in 2025. The first language policy of the university came into effect in 2006 and it spelt out the commitment to transform the university into a genuine functionally multilingual institution (Mutasa, 2015). Just like the previous policy, the current university policy aims “to pursue and provide for a fair and functionally multilingual university language environment” (The University, 2022, p. 1). Among other universities in South Africa, the university's language policy seems to be the only one that explicitly spells out the intellectualisation of Sesotho and Setswana as part of its goals. As part of its objectives, the university's language policy seeks to:

5.3. within the parameters of the principle of functional multilingualism, employ English, Setswana, Sesotho and Afrikaans as the University's languages of choice. (The University, 2022, p. 2)

According to the policy the “university's languages of choice” refers to the four languages identified by the university to be acquired, learned and developed (The University, 2022, p. 1). However, among these four languages, one gets a sense that the policy endeavours to protect English and Afrikaans as it cautions that the development of Sesotho and Setswana should not be at the expense of English and Afrikaans, even though the two languages have historically developed at the expense of African languages generally. The objective captured in section 5.4 below speaks to this disposition:

5.4 without diminishment of the use of English and Afrikaans, develop Setswana and Sesotho as languages of communication, engagement, and teaching and learning, understanding that:

5.4.1 as part of the development of Setswana and Sesotho, [the university] must develop regional, national and, where practicable, international partnerships and collaborative language development programmes with other universities and language bodies; and

5.4.2 such partnerships will aim to assist in the sharing of information and data relating to language and terminology development for various disciplines among such institutions and bodies, and

5.5 view the intellectualisation of African languages as a development concept that is given effect in an organised and organic manner.

(The University, 2022, p. 2)

By definition, “intellectualisation of African languages” refers to:

[ ] a language planning programme whereby the university's African languages of choice are developed and implemented to be languages for administrative, teaching and research purposes, but in particular to measures designed to ensure the scholarly use of the languages in such a way that it fosters the academic self-respect and values regardless of language preferences. (The university, 2002, p. 1)

From the above definition, one can deduce that the attitude of the policy is that African languages have some catching up to do. This policy disposition reproduces colonial ideologies that tend to project African languages as inherently lacking intellectualisation. This could also be a valid explanation for the protection of English and Afrikaans implied in section 5.4. However, several strengths can be derived from the university's language policy, the first being its acknowledgement and commitment to upholding the co-existence of the university's languages. Its explicit commitment to foreground and promote the intellectualisation of Sesotho and Setswana is an important indicator of the university's changing attitude towards African languages. However, its intention not to dislodge the dominant English and Afrikaans language tends to deflect from its original intention and therefore risks perpetuating the status quo.

In its endeavour to promote and develop Sesotho and Setswana, the policy commits to support the development of terminologies in the two languages. As noted by Khumalo and Nkomo (2022), terminology is a key aspect of language intellectualisation. Khumalo and Nkomo (2022, p. 142) also note that “terminology development remains a major priority enterprise in the intellectualisation of African languages”. When compared to the language policies of other universities, the language policy of the university stands out for its explicit and deliberate endeavour to intellectualise named African languages, whereas other universities merely proclaim their commitment to implement African languages as languages of instruction and only to have them taught as subjects in limited areas. The approach to the intellectualisation of Sesotho and Setswana by the university as spelt out in the policy is not intended to be haphazard, but one that should be pursued in a systematic, organised and organic manner (The University, 2022). One of the weaknesses of most institutional language policies in South Africa is that they do not specify their implementation plans (Mutasa, 2015). However, the language policy of the university is clear on implementation plans. As part of its objectives, the policy seeks to “provide a framework for the development and implementation of language plans” (The University, 2022, p. 2). The strength of the language policy is that it emphasises implementation, which is the bane of language policy in most South African universities (Dyers & Abongdia, 2015; Maseko & Siziba, 2023; Zungu, 2021).

As part of its implementation plan, the university envisages a language management environment in which “the language realities at the different campuses are continuously taken into account for practical implementation purposes” (The University, 2022, p. 2). The mention of ‘language realities’ means that the statistics of the speakers of each language present at each of the three campuses of the university are taken into consideration when implementing the language policy. This also entails that the intellectualisation of African languages may not only be limited to Sesotho and Setswana but extended to other languages that may have a significant number of speakers. However, the identification of only four languages as being the “languages of choice” for the university invisibilises and excludes languages that are not identified for development (Siziba & Maseko, 2023). However, the strength of the policy lies in its respect and acknowledgement of the institution’s language realities in its implementation plans, notwithstanding the limitations imposed by the notion of ‘languages of choice’.

As indicated in its language policy, the plans for the university are that:

7.1 Each Faculty and support department of the university must develop and implement a language plan approved by Senate in consultation with the University Management Committee (UMC),

7.3 Faculties and support departments are responsible for the operationalisation of and reporting on their plans to Senate and the UMC,

7.5 The Vice-Chancellor must annually submit a progress report to Council on the implementation of this policy.

(The University, 2022, p. 2)

The fact that the university strategically assigned the UMC to be responsible for implementing the language policy guarantees that the policy will be operationalised since there is a body that is responsible for overseeing policy implementation. The UMC is also tasked with ensuring sufficient resource allocation towards the development, implementation and monitoring of the policy. On roles and responsibilities, the policy tasks the Senate Committee for Language Planning and Advisory Services (SCLPAS) within the university to oversee the intellectualisation of African languages. Section 7.1 obligates all faculties to comply with the language policy. This means that the use of Sesotho and Setswana as LoTLs is provided for by the policy. Section 7.3 raises the question of roles and responsibilities towards the initiation of the intellectualisation and use of Sesotho and Setswana as academic languages. To this end, the roles of students, lecturers, heads of departments, deans and other stakeholders in the faculties are spelt out. The section also lays down protocols to be adhered to, including specifying whether the approach will be a top-down or bottom-up approach initiative. The requirement that the Vice-Chancellor submits yearly reports to the university council clarifying the progress on policy implementation is a positive aspect of the language policy as this will potentially foster accountability and commitment from top management.

Although it has its weaknesses, the university’s language policy should be applauded for its commitment to promoting the intellectualisation of Sesotho and Setswana languages. Its explicit directive for the setting up of support structures to enable implementation is also a welcome development that sets it apart from other universities. These support structures include the Vice-Chancellor, the UMC, SCLPAS, the Language Directorate, Faculties and Departments. All these structures have the mandate to contribute to the operationalisation and implementation of the language policy. If these support structures can also collectively work towards the intellectualisation of Sesotho and Setswana, there is no doubt that these languages would develop into effective LoTLs in a variety of academic disciplines and contexts.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This paper focused on the role of university language policies as scaffolds toward the intellectualisation of African languages. Through an interrogation of the language policy of a selected university in South Africa, the study sought to examine how the policy provisions enable the intellectualisation of Sesotho and Setswana as part of the university’s four languages of choice together with English and Afrikaans. Findings reveal that the recently revised language policy is explicit in its commitment to fostering the intellectualisation of Sesotho and Setswana. Not only does it specify

language development imperatives such as the need to support terminological development of the languages as part of African language intellectualisation, but it also spells out implementation plans. However, the paper has argued that the selection of Sesotho and Setswana goes against the dictates of promoting organic multilingualism since this approach excludes other languages spoken on the university's three campuses. This is in light of the university's language audit which has shown a growing number of isiZulu and isiXhosa-speaking staff and students in its campuses. There is therefore a need for these languages to be considered for intellectualisation as well. While the policy spells out implementation plans and support structures to operationalise and ensure adherence to the policy, there remains a lot that needs to be done for Sesotho and Setswana to be developed to the level of English and Afrikaans, which ironically are protected from diminishment in the university by the policy. However, there is hope that once these languages are intellectualised, then they will be used as LoTLs. There also needs to be clear timelines regarding when the two African languages will begin to be used as instructional languages in different academic disciplines within the university. This is important to transform the policy from being a mere statement of intent as most policies have turned out to be.

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# Speech Genre of Consolation in the Context of Foreign Language Learning at a Medical University

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**Abstract**—Empathy, which involves supporting the client, is a mandatory component of doctor-client communication. Sticking to the tactics of consolation in communication allows achieving greater effectiveness of the clinical activity of a medical worker. Since medical discourse as a sample of institutional discourse is characterized by a certain constant pattern, it has been proven that in the context of learning a foreign language it is appropriate to use a genre approach. The involvement of the genre approach in linguistic didactics is also explained by the dependence of the number of speech genres mastered by a foreigner and his level of formation of the secondary language personality. It is proved that consolation is a speech genre. The choice of film discourse for the study is justified by the specificity of the genre and the fact that it is a sample of authentic texts, the effectiveness of the auditory and visual channels of information perception. The "signals" of the use of the consolation genre, vocabulary and grammatical features are described. The verbal means of the main tactics within the secondary genre of consolation are listed. Methods of organizing the teaching of the Ukrainian language according to the genre approach are proposed.

**Index Terms**—speech genre, consolation, genre approach to learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

The training of future doctors is a complex and long process. Successfully obtaining a medical education at a foreign university primarily depends on the level of formation of the secondary linguistic personality: possession of communicative competences, knowledge of general literary and professional languages.

Among the shortcomings of modern medical education, scientists name the secondary nature of the professional and communicative aspect, insufficient readiness of doctors for professional communication. Communicative competence is basic for the professional training of a specialist, and especially doctors as a linguistically active profession. Shevel (2018) rightly observes: "If the patient does not get better after talking with the doctor, then he is not a doctor" (p. 111). Choudhary and Gupta (2015) refer to surgical skills and clinical acumen as the craft of medical practice and communication skills as a fine art. Balashov et al. (2022) propose to take measures for better training of medical students: to improve language teaching programs, paying due attention to the study of terminology, the development of coherent speech, the basics of rhetoric and communication, cultural features of communication, interpersonal communication. At the same time, it is important to focus to promote the formation of speech competences through the organization of the educational process, as well as during the teaching of specialized disciplines to involve such methods, techniques, approaches, forms of education, tasks that would require students to work on communication skills (p. 59).

Empathy as the ability to understand the mental state of anyone is quite important for successful clinical activity. It allows you to ensure an atmosphere of openness and trust in communication, the development of good relations between communicators, which contributes to the interaction process (Gonchar & Rogatyuk, 2013, p. 24). Scientists define the communicative parameter of empathy as the ability to use verbal and non-verbal means of communication to convey to the interlocutor an understanding of his experiences, a willingness to help, a desire to participate (Nefedchenko, 2016). Therefore, the future specialist must possess a sufficient range of verbal and non-verbal means, be aware of the peculiarities of conversation, speech strategies and tactics of medical discourse to listen and "hear" the client, successfully respond to speech units (even non-standard ones); to establish contact with the client, to influence the opinion of the interlocutor, to observe ethical and deontological norms of communication with the client.

Because the medical discourse is characterized by uniformity, this allows us to successfully study the professional language of doctors using a genre approach. The genre-oriented approach, a branch of communicative activity, is aimed at mastering speech activity in the genre aspect, through purposeful assimilation of the genre form of everyday, public, professional speech based on the model of speech genres relevant for the contingent of education seekers. The goal of the genre approach is to acquire genre literacy as a tool of genre competence, i. e. the ability of a linguistic personality

to consciously predict the genre organization of speech, to understand and produce texts / expressions of different genre nature depending on the communication situation, to manage the communication process (Sotova, 2017, p. 427).

The genre method of teaching a foreign language in a non-linguistic university is aimed at the formation of professional foreign language communicative competence for effective communication in the professional sphere (Petrova, 2019). According to the genre approach, students receive a model / sample that shows what specific linguistic work they have to do. The advantages of the genre approach are the possibility of involving authentic texts, directing educational activities to the understanding of communicative events in the professional field, focusing on speech material, as well as the fact that it connects the form and function of language, builds a conscious attitude to the text, understanding the process of continuing the text (Korneyko et al., 2014, p. 95). Genres in medical discourse were studied by Lytvynenko (2002), Shanina (2009), Gorpnich (2012), Orobchuk (2014), Tretyakova (2014), Kolesova (2016), Syvak (2020). Skab (2006), Balitska (2008), Daskalyuk (2009), Antoniv and Smereka (2013), Shvets (2016) consider the possibilities of speech genres in the linguistic didactic aspect. Tsurkan (2019) examines speech genres in medical discourse in the context of teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language in medical universities.

Speech genres are characterized by cultural marking: communicators of different nationalities understand them differently, considering the functioning of such components in their native language. Ignorance or ignoring the peculiarities of the use of certain speech genres in a certain audience leads to communicative and social failures (Korneyko et al., 2014), and especially in the communication of a medical worker (Lytvynenko, 2002; Scouten, 2006). Scientists emphasize the need to pay due attention to the formation of speech-genre competence during foreign language learning, since learning to construct an utterance means mastering speech genres, emphasize the importance of mastering typical speech genres as tools for acquiring practical professional skills: "It is obvious that for a foreign communicator, whose thinking and speech are regulated by another culture and, accordingly, other models of speech behavior, knowledge of Ukrainian speech genres are extremely important" (Shvets, 2016, p. 146).

Consolation has become the object of many studies: in Polish linguistic culture, Marcianesk, Shelz-Mays, Avdes; in German – Kohnovych (2014), in Spanish – Gyulamirova (2020), in French – Rabenko (2012), in English – Baranova and Protsenko (2010), Guzerchuk (2013), Ivanov (2019). The functioning of consolation in communication between parents and children is investigated by Baranova and Protsenko (2010). Kazachkova (2006) described language expression, the task of consolation and sympathy. Gedz (2016) made a formal-linguistic and pragmatic analysis of the realization of the intention of consolation using the speech act of advice on the material of Russian, Polish, and Czech languages. Kuzmina (2010), Kazantseva (2017), Lysanets (2018) dealt with the issue of the functioning of consolation in medical discourse. However, today the lexical-grammatical profile of the speech genre of consolation remains undefined; there is no comprehensive educational and teaching-methodical literature for the study of this genre in the language education system of foreigners.

During introducing the speech genre of comfort to foreigners, we find it is a fruitful work using video material - film discourse as a sample of authentic text, as a spontaneous live speech. The combination of audio-lingual and genre methods has a positive effect on the success of the communicative competence formation. Considering practicality as a criterion for the selection of educational material, the basis of the study was determined to be the Ukrainian television series, filmed by the Film.UA studio on the order of the Ukraine TV channel, "The Doctor on Duty" (first season). The object of the study is the speech genre of consolation as a manifestation of empathy in oral medical film discourse. The subject of the study is the linguistic and non-linguistic means of the speech genre of consolation in the context of teaching the professional language of a doctor. The source base consists of 200 units-excerpts of medical film discourse, in which the implementation of consolation tactics is recorded. The purpose of the article is to analyze and characterize the peculiarities of the teaching of the speech genre of consolation in classes on the Ukrainian language as a foreign language in medical universities.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

During the research, analysis was used for processing the scientific and scientific methodical literature, observations were used for studying the source base of the research, structural and classification methods were used to characterize the means of expression of the speech genre of consolation. The group for the implementation of the experiment was formed among students of authors' organization, who speak Ukrainian at a level no less than A2. The analysis of the success of foreign speakers mastering genre competence (on the example of the genre of consolation) is studied using the methods of observation, analysis, and comparison.

## III. RESULTS

The genre of consolation is implemented in medical colloquial language, in particular in the language of medical practice (discrete communication, during the communicative interaction between doctor and patient) and in the actual colloquial language of employees (non-discrete – doctor-doctor). Up to now there is no unified view on the qualification of consolation. Ivanov (2019) raises the question of indeterminacy between tactics, strategy, genre and the act of consolation. Scientists call such a language tool a cooperative expression, behabitives (Bacevich, 2002; Kutsenko, 2015), a statement of encouragement (Guzerchuk, 2013), a verbal form of empathic speech (Gonchar & Rogatyuk,

2013), a speech genre (Bacevich, 2002; Kazachkova, 2006; Kuzmina, 2010; Rabenko, 2012; Tretyakova, 2014; Smolina, 2018; Ivanov, 2019; Ponomarenko, 2019; Gyulamirova, 2020), by act (Baranova & Protsenko, 2010; Kondziola-Pich, 2012; Kohnovich, 2014; Gedz, 2016). Based on the questionnaire of Syvak (2020) we claim that consolation is a speech genre because it corresponds to 10 indicators:

TABLE 1

field of use	medical
genre goal	influencing the psychological state of the interlocutor in order to change it from negative to positive and promote further successful cooperation
factor of the past	existence of complaint
factor of the future	obtaining consent, gratitude, confirmation, request for information
image of an addressee	linguistic personality of a doctor, a medical worker who is endowed with communicative leadership in relation to the addressee
image of an addresser	the patient, relatives/acquaintances of the patient, colleagues
communication channel	natural (verbal and non-verbal), artificial
formal structure of genre texts	consolation itself, argumentation, confirmation of explanation
linguistic embodiment	imperatives, appeals, reduced-caressing forms, modal syntactic constructions, compound sentences with subordinating sentences of cause, purpose, consequences, exclamatory sentences, reduction of the official tone of speech
interaction with other genres	is a reaction to the genre of complaint, has promising connections with the genre of gratitude, consent, denial

The terms consolation, appeasement, encouragement, sympathy, empathy are units denoted to express understanding of the opponent's problem and to exert a psychological influence on the recipient to change his emotional state to a positive one, to express support in a difficult situation. According to the dictionary of the Ukrainian language (SUM), the studied units have a lot in common. In the research, we will use the terms speech genre / formulas of consolation, appeasement, encouragement as synonymous concepts to denote the action of helping someone getting rid of sadness, restlessness, excitement, anxiety. Appeasement is understood even more narrowly as a verbal tool designed to tame, stop some action of the addressee. Consolation in medical discourse is understood as satisfactory (reflective / reactive, because it is a reaction to a stimulus, for example, a complaint), complementary (does not directly relate to institutional discourse, but complements it), oral, monologic, ritual (mandatory for medical communication), non-executive for the communicative purpose (does not involve actions from the speaker himself), primary, complex in its structure, speech genre as part of the secondary doctor-client dialogue, which implements consolation tactics within the limits of the treatment strategy and the strategy of medical support, and it is used for the purpose of speech influence on the psycho-emotional state of the interlocutor. Bacevych (2002) suggests distinguishing two types of consolation: spiritual-normative (formal) – "consolation without consolation, it lacks humanity" and spiritual sympathetic, which "presupposes delving into mental experiences" (p. 102). The specificity of medical activity determines the superiority of the spiritually sympathetic type. Note that there is also another type of consolation, pretending to be sympathetic: it is used in those situations where the medical worker, not finding rationality and truthfulness in the patient's statements, tries to find out the truth.

Having analyzed the consolation formulas in the medical film discourse, we can draw a conclusion about the main characteristics of this speech genre what affects the ways of working with the genre of comfort in a foreign audience: the presence of an explanation in the consoling composition; the presence of a negative situation-stimulus.

The analysis of film fragments confirms the presence of formulas of reassurance, empathy and consolation. Reassurance in a narrow sense is very close to an order, it is an encouragement a participant in a communicative act to stop doing something: to stop shouting at a medical worker; stop fighting, etc. Unlike consolation, reassurance can be expressed with the performative calm down or another verb of similar semantics in the imperative form. Calming down can be a reaction to crying, shouting, quarreling, as a rule, relatives, acquaintances, and not the patients themselves. For example: a doctor says to an excited mother: *Well, mother! No panic here! Well, let's go, I'll take you to the reception room, you'll wait there, let's go, let's go!*

Another factor in the use of sedation is a claim / reproach from the client to the medical worker. In this case, reassurance is accompanied by shame, reproach: *What is this? What do you allow yourself? He's a doctor!*

The use of the official address *dear* is characteristic for appeasement; the adverb *enough*; imperative form of the verb to calm down; using only the official honorific plural *you*.

Empathy is actually an etiquette genre and expresses sympathy for the grief of the interlocutor. As a rule, it is expressed using the personal form of the verb to sympathize and quite often can be accompanied by consolation. In the analyzed discourse, cases of using the sympathy genre are isolated. For example, a doctor expresses sympathy for the concerns of a patient's father: *I sympathize, but don't worry, we will definitely check everything.*

Consolation aims to stop the patient's anxiety, to influence his psycho-emotional state to improve it. During the observation, it was found that 60% of consolation formulas in the medical spoken film discourse are addressed to accompanying persons, not patients, 7% of the formulas are addressed to colleagues.

According to whom the support is aimed at a distinction should be made between comforting patients, comforting accompanying persons (relatives, friends, witnesses) and comforting colleagues. Consolation as we have already defined is a reactive genre. For its successful use it is important to understand the factors that require such a reaction.

The foreigner's ability to identify the cue to use the speech genre of consolation will contribute to confidence in its use. Tactics of consolation in the studied discourse were implemented in cases of expression.

TABLE 2  
CASES OF REALIZATION OF CONSOLATION

patients	accompanying persons	colleagues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- feeling pain;</li> <li>- fear of expected medical manipulations;</li> <li>- recovering consciousness after its loss;</li> <li>- actual health complaints;</li> <li>- a feeling of regret for wrong actions;</li> <li>- lack of understanding of one's condition / state of health;</li> <li>- request</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- questions about the state of health of a relative;</li> <li>- explanation of what happened, questions about the performed operation / tests results / findings;</li> <li>- request for help;</li> <li>- the excitement of what will happen next</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hesitation / excitement;</li> <li>- despair from unsuccessful work</li> </ul>
Despair from what happened concerns about something are common factors for the three selected groups.		

The patient's consolation signals can be the expression of the feeling of pain, verbal (exclamations, the adverb hurts) and non-verbal (facial expressions). Non-verbal expression of unpleasant feeling takes place during a physical examination of the patient, a certain manipulation, for example, palpation, treatment of the wound. We should immediately note that in this case, medical workers use "elementary" consolation, expressed by exclamation, repetition of adverbs and imperatives: boyish expression of pain *s-s-s*, the doctor reassures: *Quietly, quietly, quietly, well, be patient, be patient, dear!* The doctor soothes the patient's painful reaction to touch, using only the sound *shh-sh-sh*. An example of non-verbal expression of pain, with the help of facial expressions, can be a passage in which a nurse treats a man's wound: *Be patient, be patient. Now I will wipe everything. It's good that the wound is shallow. It is not necessary to fill it.*

The ability to listen is necessary for medical communication, since the doctor is "forced to enter the personal space" of the client, and the latter is "forced" to reveal already unpleasant details of his private life. The doctor's ability to be a good listener is very important during consolation tactics. Patients, feeling support and favorable attitude, resort to stories of experiences, life situations and secrets. Frank conversations with patients not only have a psychotherapeutic effect, they give results during diagnosis: certain circumstances that somehow caused the development of the disease or provoked it are revealed. This confirms the need to know the national language: when learning a language for the needs of medical workers, it is appropriate to improve communication skills in general, expand the vocabulary, and practice the skills of using syntactic constructions. Talking about the personal is a signal for the use of the speech genre of consolation.

The speech genre of consolation is systematically used by medical workers when the patient regains consciousness, in the ambulance, after surgery, etc. The client's excitement is confirmed by his look, sometimes the question *Where am I? What happened?* and so on.

Consolation of accompanying persons is used as a response to a request for health information. It can be expressed by one question, a rhetorical question, a repetition of questions: *What does this mean? What, everything is bad? Have you learned something? Is it bad? What with (who)...? How (who)?*

Expressions of despair, complaints about the hopelessness of the situation, requests to influence improvement, crying and even sitting with the head down are indicators that require supportive tactics from the doctor.

In addition to the tasks of mastering the terms and learning to identify the signals of the speech genre of consolation, a genre-oriented approach should enrich or update students' linguistic knowledge: necessary vocabulary and knowledge of grammar. The considerable variability of consolation formulas has its own set of standard verbal and non-verbal means. Mastering such units, understanding the frame and structure of the genre of consolation, acquiring skills and abilities to use verbal and non-verbal means within its limits will contribute to the formation of genre competence of a foreign student of medical education. The linguistic expression of consolation was reflected in the scientific investigations of Kazachkova (2006), Baranova and Protsenko (2010), Kuzmina (2010), Ponomarenko (2010), Rabenko (2012), Guzerchuk (2013), Kohnovych (2014), Gedz (2016), Barsukova and Rumpel (2018).

Considering the peculiarities of the verbal expression of consolation, in special language classes, attention should be paid to phatic language means; imperative forms with the meaning of a person's emotional state in affirmative or negative forms; statement of explanation / definition / commenting on actions; impersonal constructions; means of expressiveness; compound sentences; proverbs (proverbs containing behavioral instructions).

When working with the speech genre of consolation, you should properly study the appropriate vocabulary, in particular, the verbs that realize this genre, remember the imperative form of the verb, the ways of creation, since approximately 50% of the recorded units contain the imperative form of the verb. The most common are imperative forms of verbs *to calm down* and imperatives of verbs *to worry, to fidget, to be nervous* with the negative participle "no". It is appropriate to learn imperative forms of the second person plural as etiquette forms. These verbal means can be used both in relation to patients and accompanying persons. The imperative form *to suffer* and *to fear* with the participle "no" is a comforting reaction to the patient's physical pain during an examination or a certain medical manipulation. During the first examination, the doctor palpates the abdomen: *Don't be afraid, I just have to carefully examine everything.* The imperative form *to cry* with the negative participle is not only used as a way of soothing and encouraging the crying to stop. Students should understand the calming power of exclamations *h-sh* or *tss-s* and

repetitions, in particular the adverb *quietly-quietly*.

The use of proverbs as an effective tool during communication with the patient, including in the case of support, is explained by the trust in paremias as the embodiment of folk psychology and philosophy (Gedz, 2016). The doctor turns to the boy, who is crying all the time: "*Don't cry, Cossack, you will become chieftain!*" – then the doctor begins the initial examination, having pre-programmed the conversation for frankness and openness.

A foreigner who is ready for an internship should be aware that the addressing is a mandatory element of communication with the client, as it emphasizes the importance of the interlocutor, attention to him. During the expression of support, the appeal increases the power of influence on the normalization of the mental and emotional state. It is appropriate to recall the ways of expressing address and their grammatical features. The analyzed material confirms cases of using the name, especially the unofficial version of the name. The official address *dear* is mostly aimed at reassuring, encouraging not / to do something, as a rule, accompanying persons, has a neutral-detached colour.

Addresses expressed by the names of family relationships used in a figurative sense are recorded: *uncle* (in the context of a joke); *baby* (as a gentle name for patients by junior medical personnel). The names of family relationships, *mom, dad / father, grandmother, grandfather* which are used in medical discourse as addressing in the direct sense to attract the attention of a patient's relative, should be in the foreigner's active dictionary.

Future doctors should be aware of the power of words when communicating with children. To reduce the stress of a visit to the hospital, you should resort to various verbal means, including gentle name-calling. For example: the use of affectionate suffixes; metaphorical names *Cossack, honey, pirate*; of substantive adjectives and names according to social relations. Observing the positive impact of such units on the course of the conversation, students may be interested in enriching their vocabulary with several expressive units: so, it is worth offering for familiarization the most typical affectionate suffixes, metaphorical names, and substantive adjectives.

In the analyzed film material, we systematically record the use of the pronoun *you* as an official etiquette addressing to a stranger - a client, and the corresponding form of the verb in the second person plural during the consolation tactic. Foreign students should pay attention to this and develop the skills of using the honorific plural during a conversation with a stranger in institutional discourse, since in other cultures such a phenomenon of officiality is absent. Addressing to *You* and corresponding forms of the verb of the second person singular are present in the conversation of colleagues, foreigners should pay attention to the appropriateness of the usage. Transitioning from a formal style of communication to a more private one is also one of the tools used when supporting a client by a medical professional the use of the pronoun *you* instead of *You* and, accordingly, verbs of the second person singular. The use of the pronoun *You* will not be appropriate, since given the traditions, it will increase the formality of the conversation, and therefore will cause the excitement of the small patient. Calling you and using the corresponding forms of the second person singular of verbs in medical communication occurs in the case of a frank conversation of adult clients who share with the medical worker some secrets, personal experiences on more intimate issues. Addressing to *you* also functions between colleagues.

Another language device used during the implementation of consolation tactics is the use of the pronoun *we*. The doctor turns to the elderly patient: *What do we have?* Further cooperation with this doctor will be significantly more effective than with someone who tries to perceive everything indirectly.

Means of emotional expression during consolation tactics can be jokes. Their task is to reduce the distance between the participants of communication, encourage openness, and receive positive emotions. Among the cases of using jokes recorded in the medical film discourse, jokes when communicating with children prevail.

The above analysis confirms our correct understanding of consolation as a complex, composite, secondary speech genre, since, as a rule, it consists of at least two primary ones: 99% of recorded examples. Such a quantitative advantage can be explained by the fact that "*the act of encouragement involves two illocutionary forces: calming the addressee, bringing him to a normal state, and encouraging him to make effective efforts on himself*" (Guzerchuk, 2013, p. 82). The number of possible options for the verbal expression of consolation tactics is so great that it is impossible to learn all of them while studying UFL at the university. Therefore, we offer to consider them, to highlight the most common and effective ones to attract them to the educational material. In this aspect, it is appropriate to create minimum dictionaries of speech genres. After analyzing the obtained results, we conclude that, in addition to the specified verbs in the imperative form, the following expressions have consoling properties:

TABLE 3  
STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS-EXPRESSIONS OF THE CONSOLATION GENRE

reporting good news, improving the situation
notice of improvement in health status
explanation of the situation, condition, results; the disease / causes; the performed manipulations;
commenting on the manipulation
notification of determination / possibility of treatment
explanation of the following manipulations
assumptions about the causes of the disease
expression of understanding
advice
encouragement for further examination, actions / insistence
denial of the client's negative assumption
prohibition to do something + explanation / warning
promise
hope
joke
understatement

The development of students' ability to express the listed communicative units will contribute to the formation of the skills of expressing verbal empathy in future specialists.

We agree with the opinion of Kohnovych (2014) regarding the importance of non-verbal communication. It is of great importance, especially emotional and expressive, when expressing consolation strengthens and complements verbal units. The studied discourse gives reason to say that the content of verbal means of support will be lost if they are not supported by non-verbal units. We also want to note that silence and non-verbal means can implement consolation tactics independently. The following paralinguistic means are important for expressing support:

- voice strength, volume, timbre, special diction, pronunciation, intonation, pause;
- facial expressions, postures, smile, nod, look;
- patting on the shoulder, touching the hand;
- distance.

After the analysis, it becomes clear that all the listed non-verbal means are not used alone; they are mixed, creating a favorable atmosphere of communication, and thus an increase in the level of suggestibility. A calm measured pace of speech, appropriate intonation, gestures, gaze, posture – all this helps to place the interlocutor towards you. A smile is very important during the doctor's communication; it has a calming effect on the client. A feature of communication between a medical worker and a client is the use of all possible means to achieve normalization of the patient's psycho-emotional state. Using the method of observation, it has been proved that the combination of verbal and non-verbal means of expressing consolation is more successful for medical discourse.

Every person knows how to use non-verbal means at a certain level, because this is partly an innate and acquired skill during life. Therefore, improving these skills (controlling the voice, following gestures and facial expressions, identifying those ones which necessary for a communicative situation, choosing the appropriate ones) will help the future specialist not only to avoid misunderstandings and failures, but also to strengthen the influence on the client.

About working with video fragments during the formation of genre competence of a future specialist in classes at UFL, we distinguish three stages of work: preparatory (lexical and grammatical work, preparation for perceiving a passage), viewing (listening, perceiving), analyzing the viewed. Since we propose to build knowledge and skills in the use of the consolation genre with the help of excerpts, we consider it necessary to watch the entire series as a possible homework of the previous lesson.

In our opinion, conducting an introductory class of a general theoretical nature will prepare students for productive work. Awareness of the importance of consolation tactics in medical activity motivates students to study the speech genre of consolation. To increase the interest of students, it is appropriate to offer them to conclude that empathy in general and support of the doctor in particular is a direct factor in successful clinical activity. At the beginning, it is necessary to form an understanding of the concepts of empathy, support, to comfort, to sympathize, to support. You should also familiarize yourself with the terms-communicative units (message, comment, explanation, description, advice, order, promise, prohibition, etc. according to Table 3) and their definitions. Tasks can be as follows:

- match the term and its definition;
- read the term and complete its definition;
- find errors in definitions of the terms.

Outlines of future work with the speech genre of consolation can be implemented by projects ("Components of successful doctor communication"), knowledge maps. The material for observation can be one's own experience of discrete medical communication or episodes of a TV series. For example,

- the general map "Professional communication of a doctor" will require a clear outline of the place, participants, time, conditions of medical communication;
- more specific map "What a client of medical field wants to say and hear" will help to understand the needs of modern clients;

- the knowledge map "Support role for clinical activity" can be compiled basing on questionnaires by patient / client recruiters (if students have practice and can conduct such a survey) or students' experience after viewing excerpts from the series demonstrating the effectiveness of consolation and consequences ignoring it.

The work with distinguishing the factors of successful medical communication and the causes of deviations seems to be fruitful.

When the audience concludes that support in general and consolation in particular is a necessary component of medical communication, it is advisable to narrow the field of analysis and consider the signals / incentives for the use of the genre of consolation. Based on the previously obtained results (Table 2), it is possible to develop different variants of tasks. For example: read statements that encourage consolation; from the suggested statements, choose such ones that can encourage the use of consolation tactics; list the stimuli that require the expression of consolation; read the statement descriptions and formulate possible customer responses.

Next, students should be introduced to possible language means of consolation (according to the results obtained during the research, Table 3): from elementary (imperative forms of verbs) to complex expressions of explanation, commenting, advice, etc. These can be ordinary lexical and grammatical or communicative exercises. During the lexical-grammatical work, the previously described linguistic units of the realization of the consolation genre should be considered. For memorization, you should provide language tools that are most often used during the implementation of consolation tactics. Considering the limitations of time and the capabilities of the human brain, we think it is appropriate not to burden the student's memory and focus on the most typical ones.

TABLE 4  
VERBAL MEANS OF CONSOLATION

Verbs: worry, trouble, nervous, cry, hold on, calm down, try, wait, stop, listen, endure, rest, learn, pass, become, operate, get, wake up, recover, recuperate, regain (consciousness).
Nouns: Mr. / Ms.; mother, father, grandmother, grandfather; patient, colleague, etc., used as addresses.
Adjectives and adverbs: quiet, well, better, less, painfully, okay
Sounds: h-sh, c-s

For the study of consolation, as we have seen, the form of the imperative is important, which should be submitted for practice. As the research results show, explanation, description, narration, assumptions, commenting play a decisive role in stabilizing the client's psycho-emotional state, so the future specialist should master such skills at an appropriate level. Of course, students should be aware of their superiority in knowledge over the interlocutor and the need to adapt to the client's knowledge, use a popular science style. An appropriate task will be to paraphrase a scientific statement into a more accessible version. During the preparation of the lesson, the teacher should pay attention to whether the material submitted for analysis was considered during the study of special disciplines. Explanations of medical manipulations performed or currently performed and commenting on one's actions can calm the patient's nervousness. Therefore, the student must skillfully describe this or that medicinal effect, be able to predict and characterize possible, mostly uncomfortable sensations.

A necessary skill of future doctors is the expression of options for proposals. When explaining the possible methods of treatment, the medical worker should skillfully suggest possible treatment methods, and incline the client to the most correct choice. Impersonal sentences as one of the simple ways of expressing hope, stating improvement should also be worked out in the lesson. English equivalents of recorded examples are "*He is better now!*", "*Everything will be fine!*" etc. Exercises with the task of putting the verbs in brackets into the correct form will be appropriate; fill in the blanks in the sentences, choosing the necessary verb from the reference; put the words in the correct order, etc. As a basis for working with lexical-grammatical material, the previously described means of the speech genre of consolation should be taken.

At the second stage, the video review is complete or in parts. Before starting, it is advisable to ask leading questions that will help the foreigner understand the communicative situation: Who are the participants in the conversation? Where is the conversation taking place? Why / what is the participant in the conversation excited about? What led to the negative situation?

Next, it is appropriate to do exercises to determine the factor that prompted the medical worker to apply consolation tactics. Possible tasks: review the fragment and explain the reasons for the doctor's use of consolation; from those offered, choose the factor that prompted the medical worker to resort to mental support of the patient. It is also necessary to analyze the linguistic and non-linguistic units, with the help of which support is provided by the medical worker. Variants of the task can be a) review and list the means by which the doctor supports the client; b) among the suggested ones, choose only those used in the conversation; c) match means of consolation and a fragment; d) what does the doctor NOT use; e) choose an extra one; e) place the means in the order used in the video clip, etc.

The following speech exercises are recommended for the last stage of work on the formation of genre competence:

- listen to the client (a certain factor is selected that requires the use of the consolation genre) and choose an appropriate answer from the list / suggest a possible verbal reaction of the doctor;
- listen to the doctor's consolation, guess what line could have preceded it, what could have been a factor in the use of this genre;
- before viewing the passage, assume what possible scenarios of conversation between such participants, compare the

assumptions with the fragment.

The genre approach requires a comprehensive understanding of the genre. That is why situational tasks are effective: given the description of the situation (different or similar to the one analyzed from the video), you should simulate a conversation. For example: 1) during the initial examination, the doctor wants to auscultate a small patient, explain your actions to the child in order to reduce nervousness; 2) at the second appointment, the doctor received the results of the analysis, calm the patient who is excited because of the previous diagnosis; 3) the parents are waiting in the corridor near the operating room, they are worried about the situation, the doctor who operated leaves the operating room, reassure the patient's parents, etc. It is necessary to organize the work in several stages: read the description of the situation, explain which tactics within the framework of the support strategy should be chosen (explanation, advice, reduction, etc.), produce statements. Questionnaires created in previous tasks can become auxiliary material during this task.

Game forms of education will also quite organically complement the set of exercises for the formation of genre competence:

1) one student improvises a certain factor that requires the use of consolation tactics, another expresses it, then we continue;

2) "Who will comfort faster": the group was asked to react as quickly as possible to the situations shown on the screen in the video or image (the patient said "ouch"; a relative is crying near the office; the patient looks confused, etc.);

3) filling in lines in comics (although this will require considerable skill of the teacher to create handout didactic materials);

4) puzzles - combine the "factor" (a picture of a certain manifestation of excitement) and comforting phrases (a photo of a client crying in the corridor who is waiting - "don't cry", "calm down", etc.; an illustration of an injection - "it doesn't hurt" etc.).

Exercises of a generalizing descriptive nature will be useful. For example, how to calm a patient who felt pain during the procedure; how to calm a patient who has just recovered from a surgery; how to reassure a patient about a complex disease, etc.

The video materials testify not only to the exemplary behavior of the doctor, but also to mistakes. We consider effective work with "What's wrong?" errors.

The three-level work organization scheme and task options indicated in the survey were tested with the 3rd year students of authors' organization in classes on the discipline "Ukrainian as a Foreign Language" during the course "Professional Doctor-Client Speaking". Considering the unusual approach, foreigners willingly accepted the video material, made maps of knowledge, participated in the project "Peculiarities of doctor's communication", discussions, resorted to comparisons of native and Ukrainian cultures of conducting a professional conversation. They liked puzzle games, "Who will comfort faster", comics, although in some places the speech situations required a high level of knowledge of the language and speaking skills.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Constant expressions as the lexical means of expressing consolation require additional study: not only the analysis of typical ones in modern colloquial medical discourse, but also those that would have the opportunity to implement consolation tactics. It is time to create a hybrid (to include not only medical terminology, but also general literary words) special dictionary-minimum of the speech genre of consolation as an auxiliary tool in the process of learning a foreign language in the field, professional native language improving the skills of verbal influence on clients of medical practitioners. Educational materials for the course "Ukrainian language for special purposes" would be enriched by the creation of a library of video / audio fragments presenting typical speech genres of medical workers, including consolation.

#### V. CONCLUSION

So, consolation is a speech genre, the task of which is to stabilize the psycho-emotional state of the client. In the medical discourse, consolation has its own characteristics: used at any stage of clinical activity, it is implemented using a complex of verbal and non-verbal means, and it contains the primary speech genres. This statement raises a different opinion about the need to improve the communicative competence of doctors paying due attention to the skills of expressing support to the client of the medical field.

Mastering the skills of formulating consolation will increase the speaking competence of a foreigner, will allow a student of a medical university to pass a practical exam better, and also confidently implement successful clinical activities. The interlocutor's reaction depends on many factors. It is, of course, impossible to predict a 100% result, but you can use all the necessary means to get closer to a positive result.

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# The Effectiveness of a Strategy Training Course in Enhancing Language Skills of Indian Engineering Students

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**Abstract**—In the contemporary professional landscape, engineers are confronted with the dual imperative of not only excelling in the core subject expertise but also possessing linguistic competence to remain competitive in the global job market. The current employment scenario is marked by a rise in demand but a decline in the number of qualified professionals graduating from colleges. Graduates are now expected to embody the qualities of techno-managers, adept at multitasking in their roles. Relying solely on technical skills has proven inadequate for many individuals. Recognizing the evolving job market requirements, it became apparent that students must excel in communication, particularly English communication skills, to thrive professionally. Effective communication fosters the development of confidence, astuteness, and outward skills in students. Language acquisition is a lifelong, active process that commences at birth. Textbooks play a crucial role in achieving the objectives of a course, serving as prominent elements in the teaching process. Language learning, facilitated by learning strategies, involves a set of tactics individuals employ to take control of their learning processes. In today's educational landscape, teachers play a pivotal role in enhancing strategies in second or foreign language classrooms. Their responsibility extends to facilitating learning among students and making their thinking processes visible. Effectively teaching a second language (L2) requires educators to consider the unique needs and backgrounds of each learner. By doing so, they can employ methods that help students in utilizing strategies to enhance their L2 learning experience. This paper provides insights into the trailblazer learning strategies that augment the language skills repertoire.

**Index Terms**—English language teaching, learning strategies, self-learning and communication

## I. INTRODUCTION

The globalization of English has had a significant impact, necessitating learners from diverse social and regional backgrounds to expand their English language skills. This shift in focus, from the product of teaching to the process of learning, has become crucial in addressing the evolving demands of English language acquisition. The increasing recognition of the procedure of learning has sparked interest in understanding how learners acquire a language. This acknowledgment underscores the prominence of exploring effective learning strategies and approaches to cater to the needs of a linguistically diverse and interconnected world.

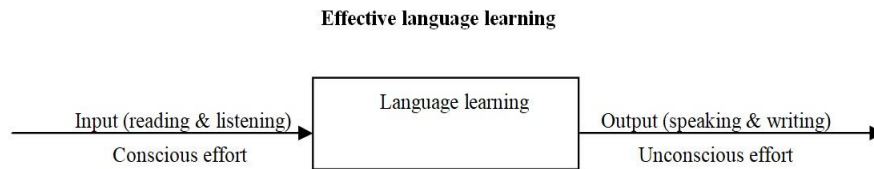


Figure 1.

Kausar Hussain (2004) emphasizes the fundamental aspect that learning a language involves both receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). The acquisition of productive skills, such as speaking and writing, necessitates active engagement in production tasks (p. 122).

In the natural acquisition of language, listening plays a pivotal role, akin to one's mother tongue. Conversely, in second language acquisition, reading assumes a major role. Reading allows learners to invest time in extracting knowledge from texts, and subsequently, writing activities based on their reading can further enhance language skills. Producing spoken language poses challenges for English learners, requiring awareness of fluent speech characteristics, including reduced forms, slang or idioms, fixed phrases, collocations, and the pace of speech delivery. Effective conversation practice in the classroom should encompass these elements to avoid sounding overly formal and unnatural. Real communication should be introduced and practiced within the learning process to prepare students for spontaneous communication in foreign environments.

Speaking is a crucial form of communication, as expressed by Rudyard Kipling (1923), highlighting the powerful impact of words. Therefore, the art of speaking should be approached carefully to avoid sounding bookish and unnatural. A good language learner is likely to exhibit a personal learning style and positive learning strategies, making the training in language learning strategies (LLS) a valuable approach to enhance language competence. The application of strategies is believed to influence the quality of learning, and explicit training in LLS can bridge the gap between actual and expected competence levels, fostering learner autonomy.

In the Indian context, web-based English language learning has become available, presenting an opportunity to leverage technology for language education. Proficiency in the English language is crucial for professional success, as effective communication is a key skill. Learners with self-confidence, high motivation, a positive self-image, and low anxiety levels are better equipped for success in L2 acquisition. Proficiency in English extends beyond basic interpreting skills to encompass discussing various topics, drafting letters, and expressing thoughts effectively.

Improving English proficiency requires more than superficial learning; it necessitates advanced-level learning. English Language Teaching in colleges involves organized curriculum and instructional methods to achieve predetermined learning outcomes. While systematic exposure is provided in schools, informal learning, both inside and outside the college, can be equally effective, if not more so, for language acquisition.

What do we have in common between teaching and learning?

1. In teaching, the individual teacher is involved. Methodology does not lie outside the individual.
2. Learning involves individual learning processes.

Both the points represent the individual cognitive readiness to learn and also involved in cognitive activity naturally differs from person to person. It also stresses the fact that learning involves the interaction of existing knowledge (be it attitude, content, worldviews, languages) within coming new knowledge. This activity naturally differs from person to person.

### **The Essential Profile of Engineering Students in India**

Engineering students at the tertiary level exhibit a diverse range of abilities, achievements, and learning capacities. Therefore, it is essential to establish a need-profile for engineering students concerning the acquisition of the English language. This profiling aids in identifying their challenges effectively.

The chart below illustrates that students enrolling in engineering courses in India come from two distinct backgrounds, each with varying English language learning capacities. Upon completing their secondary and Intermediate Board examinations, they gain admission to engineering colleges based on their performance in entrance exams. As revealed by the admission data under study, students entering the engineering stream have diverse backgrounds, with some originating from rural areas and others from urban environments.

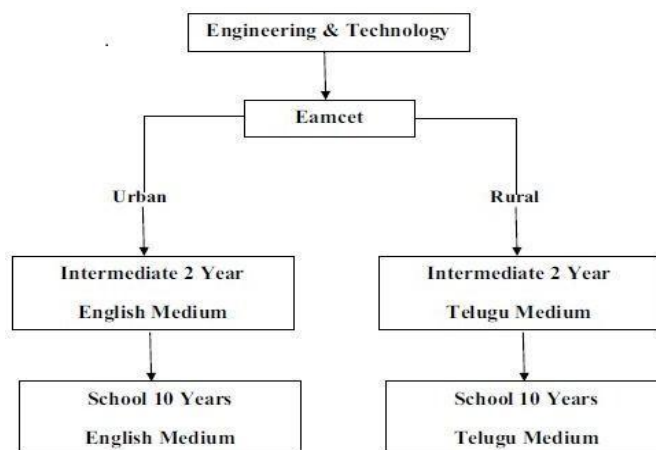


Figure 2.

### ***Urban and Rural***

The students also display a combination of languages, specifically English and Telugu (the regional language). Notably, there is a significant disparity in their proficiency levels, a common occurrence in tertiary education across various disciplines in India. Proficiency in English is crucial for engineering students, given that the medium of instruction in Indian engineering colleges is English. This extends beyond lectures, as textbooks, reference materials, and other subjects are also presented in English, making it both an academic and library language.

Within the classroom setting, students require English for various purposes:

- Listening: Understanding lectures, guest talks, and seminars.
- Speaking: Responding to questions in class and engaging actively in seminars.
- Reading: Engaging with textbooks, reference sources, and academic journals.
- Writing: Taking notes, generating study notes, finishing assignments, crafting reports, and taking exams.
- In professional situations, English is necessary for:
- Communicating with superiors and colleagues (Listening and Speaking).
- Extracting information from memos, reports, and technical manuals.
- Writing letters, memos, and reports (Harmer, J, 2007).

An examination of the English Language Teaching (ELT) environment in Indian engineering colleges is conducted to comprehend the circumstances under which both English instructors and students operate. English is used as the language of instruction, and it is noted that elements such as students' native language background, insufficient prior English training, their age, and proficiency levels have an impact on their vocabulary proficiency. It is apparent that while considerable emphasis is placed on students acquiring language skills as per the syllabus, there is a lack of attention to employing learning strategies that facilitate self-learning.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Malley and Chamot (1990) emphasize the importance of directing attention to the language learning process itself. They suggest that learners should comprehend the language learning process, understand the nature of language and communication, be aware of available language learning resources, and recognize specific strategies to enhance their vocabulary, grammar knowledge, and proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing (p. 20).

Rubin (1975) provides a definition for learning strategies as "the techniques or devices that the language learner may use to gain knowledge" (p. 43).

Hosenfield (1984) notes that the list of strategies employed by successful readers includes certain learning strategies like planning, grouping, reviewing, or assessing learning, which can also be applied in language learning (p. 17).

According to Jack C. Richards (1989), over the last thirty years, learners have assumed a central role in the language learning process. The traditional notion that good language teaching involves controlling the learner and that an effective teaching method guides the reluctant learner through the learning process has been reconsidered, giving way to a greater appreciation of the learner's contribution.

Anderson (2003), a Cognitive Psychologist has identified that Declarative Knowledge and Procedural Knowledge would help in learning a language. The structured reviewing helps in shifting information from the at the skill level, information is more readily accessible and less likely to be forgotten after a period of inactivity.

There is significant potential to integrate strategy training with self-learning or e-learning materials, as both involve interactive modes of learning within a one-on-one teacher-learner relationship. When strategies are trained, the learners move away gradually from dependence on the teacher to dependence on their own learning patterns. The advantage of such an approach to learning a language is that language is internalized and is used with greater confidence. A learner can follow the above learning strategies to improve his language.

### III. RESEARCH DESIGN

The design serves as the comprehensive framework for the research program. The rationale behind selecting the Pre-test and post-test single group design is rooted in the researcher's expectation that the experimental group's students will attain a mastery level in LSRW skills. To assess the achievement of objectives and the success of the experiment, the researcher aims to compare the observed frequency and expected frequency of a group, specifically in terms of an 80% score in each skill. The choice of a single group pretest and post-test design is employed for this purpose.

Variables, in research terms, refer to the conditions or characteristics that the experimenter manipulates, controls, and observes. In any experimental study, there is at least one dependent and one independent variable. In this study focused on enhancing language skills, the independent variable is represented by the language skill training program developed by the researcher. The training program includes written and oral tests, each with specific training components and various activities for students to complete either individually or in a group. The primary goal of the research, centered on language learning, is to assist students in improving language skills through diverse learning strategies. To gauge language proficiency development, achievement tests are administered. Consequently, the dependent variable in this study is the students' achievement, measured in scores on skill tests created by the researcher.

#### **Research Tools**

The current investigation utilized various research instruments, including classroom observation, questionnaires, interviews, pre-tests, post-tests, and surveys. The study adhered to the following appropriate measures:

- Collected information was analyzed to make a determination regarding the development of a strategy training course.
- Administered a pre-test to both the control (Group-A) and experimental (Group-B) groups of engineering students to assess their proficiency in English.
- Conducted a post-test exclusively for the experimental group to evaluate their enhancement in language skills.
- Analyzed the results of these tests to gauge the effectiveness of the strategy training course.

#### **Design of present research**

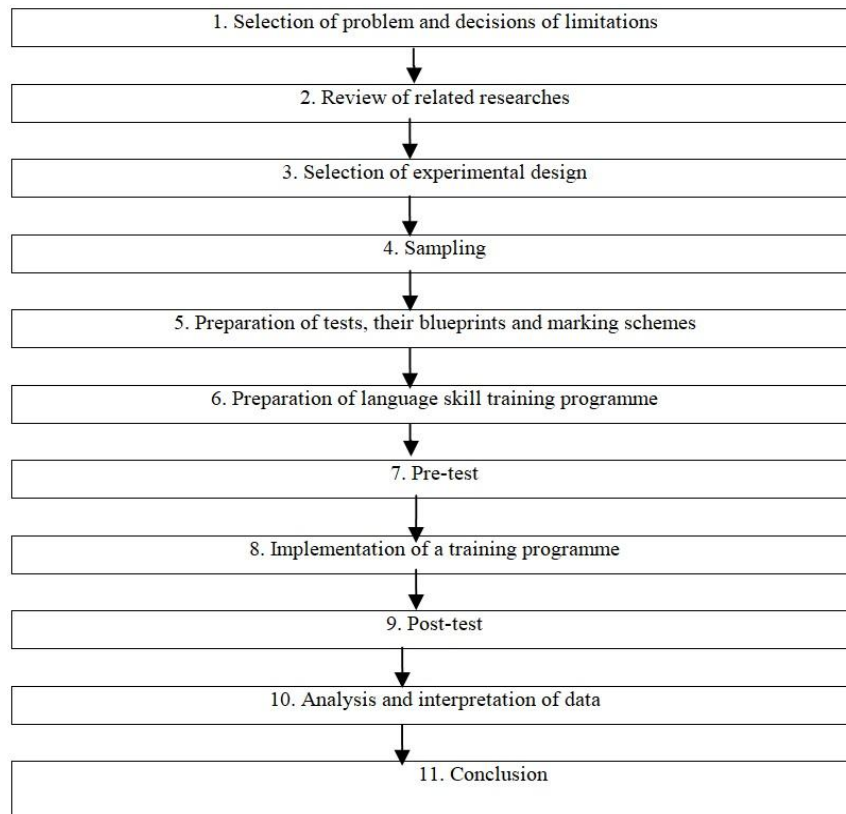


Figure 3.

#### **Development of a training programme**

The initial phase in the creation or formulation of a training program involves identifying the need and determining the task at hand. Once the task is established, the selection and arrangement of content, as well as language learning strategies, are also determined. The entire program is outlined in the flowchart below.

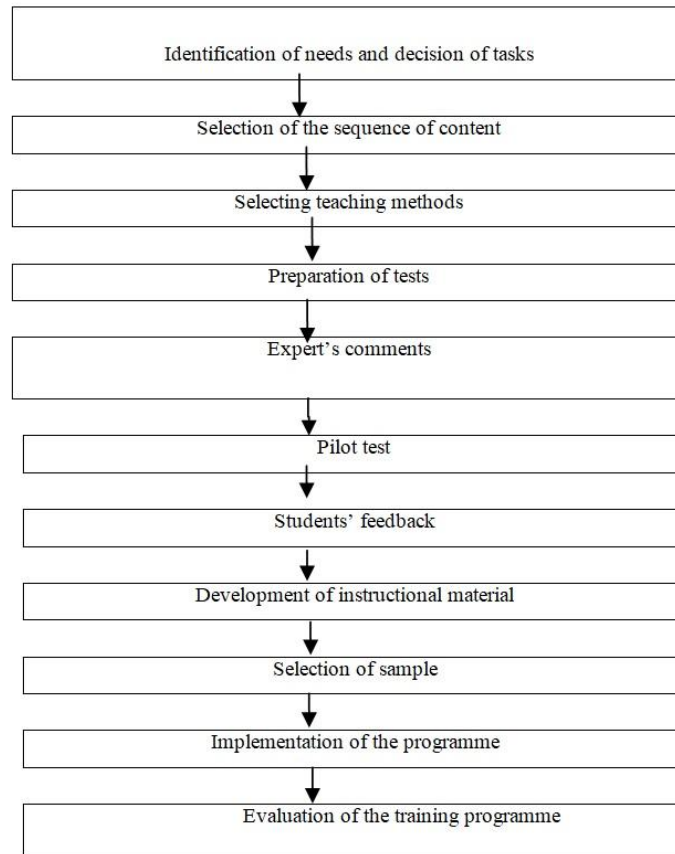


Figure 4.

**Strategy Training**

These are the stages in strategy training programme.

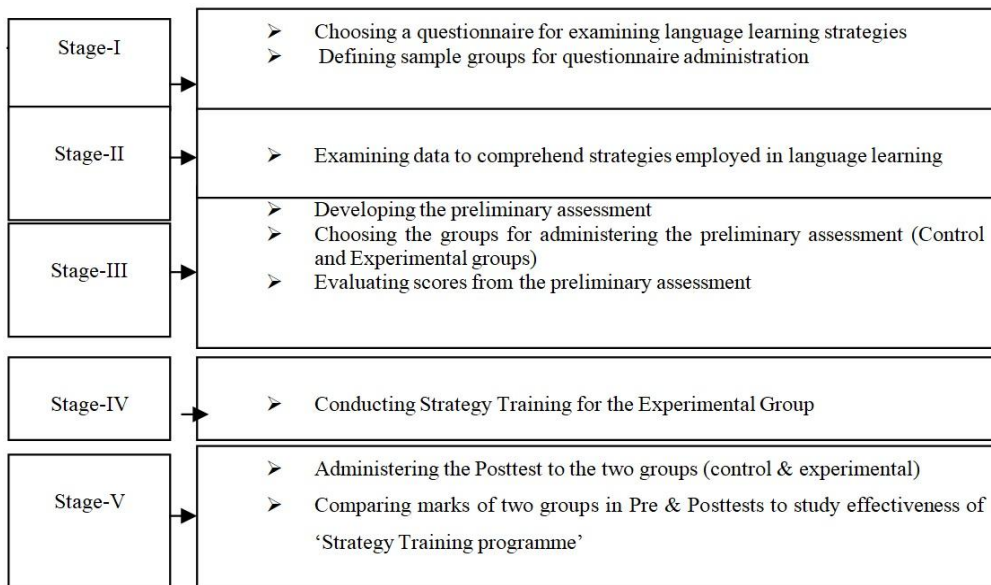


Figure 5.

**IV. PRE-TEST**

Proficiency in English language is a crucial component of the requirements for engineering students assessed by all entrance examinations. These exams evaluate English language competence through the utilization of memory strategies, employing four distinct sets.



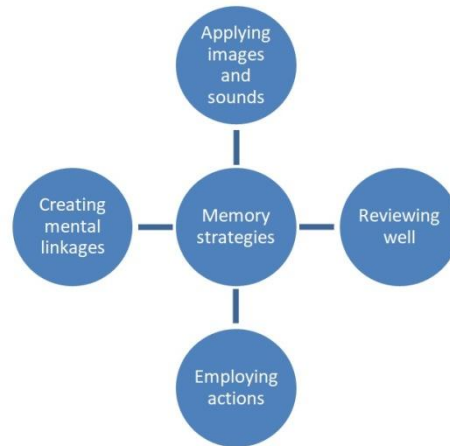


Figure 6.

The concurrent utilization of meta-cognitive strategies and affective strategies empowers students to employ memory strategies more efficiently. Therefore, Memory Strategies embody straightforward principles such as organizing information, forming associations, practicing, grouping, and reviewing. Given that language learners often encounter challenges in memorizing extensive information for achieving fluency, these Memory Strategies enable them to store verbal material and subsequently recall it during communication (Oxford, 1990). Consequently, the researcher has designed a Pre-Test to assess the four language skills of engineering students. This test aligns with the language skills covered in placement and other entrance exams, encompassing sentence correction, Pronunciation, sentence enhancement, sentence construction, word and sentence arrangement, statement completion, analogies, comprehension of written passages, antonyms, idioms and phrases, synonyms, single-word substitutes, transformation of voice and speech, listening understanding, error detection, critical reasoning, argument and issue analysis, and the creation of paragraphs. The Pre-Test, administered to engineering students, focuses on evaluating their proficiency in English and is constrained to duration of 60 minutes or one class period, recognizing the demanding schedules of engineering students. Hence, the preliminary assessment focuses on language abilities and vocabulary elements such as pronunciation, synonyms, idioms and phrases, reading comprehension as well as Change of voice. This table provides time and marks.

TABLE 1

Topics	Marks	DURATION
Synonyms	10m	12mts
One word substitute	10m	12mts
Speech	10m	12mts
Idioms & phrases	10m	12mts
Change of voice	10m	12mts
Total	50m	60mts

### ***Pre-Test***

The pre-test comprehensively addressed all four language skills: LSRW skills in the English language. In an effort to assess language proficiency standards among both the experimental and control groups, the researcher conducted a trial, the results of which are presented in the table below. This table illustrates the scores obtained by the two groups.

TABLE 2

Sources	Competency level	Group-A		Group-B	
		No	%	No	%
50 and above	A+	Nil	-	Nil	-
35-50	A	7	14%	14	28%
16-35	B	36	72%	36	72%
15 and below 15	C	7	14%	0	-
Total		50	100%	30	100%



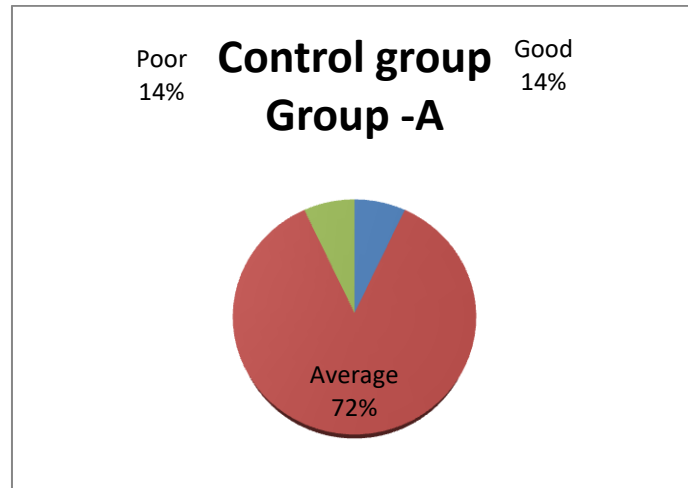


Figure 7.

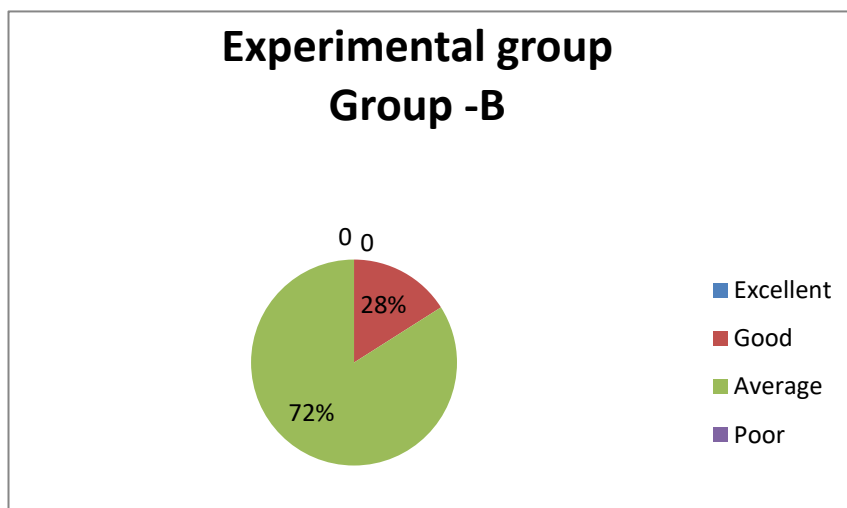


Figure 8.

The results of the preliminary assessment highlighted the crucial need for incorporating strategy training for engineering students. Acknowledging this requirement, the researcher administered targeted strategy training to the experimental group with the goal of evaluating and improving their performance. The pre-test results, when analyzed for both the control and experimental groups, indicated that only a limited number of engineering students exhibited a strong command of the language. Participants discussed their assessment results in group sessions. Subsequently, the researcher opted to organize training sessions for the experimental group during their free time, including activities like sports and meditation classes with the requisite approval from college authorities. The experimental group, comprising students from the Electrical Engineering department at P.V.P Siddhartha Institute of Technology in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, displayed eagerness and active participation throughout the training sessions. The strategy training encompassed a total of five activities, each targeting a specific element of language. Consequently, the experimental group underwent a total of four training sessions, each lasting 60 minutes.

#### V. POST-TEST

The researcher implemented strategy training over approximately four theory periods. Afterward, a post-test was administered to both the Group-A and Group-B groups to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. The post-test focused on the following topics as the basis for assessment: Pronunciation, Speech, Reading Comprehension, Antonyms & Synonyms, and Idioms.

TABLE 3  
POST-TEST

Topics	Marks	DURATION
Antonyms& synonyms	10m	12mts
Idioms	10m	12mts
Reading comprehension	10m	12mts
Pronunciation	10m	12mts
Speech	10m	12mts
Total	50m	60mts

The researcher carefully selected vocabulary elements, taking into account the strategy training offered to the Group-B.

#### **Study of Scores Achieved by Both Groups in the Post-Test**

The table below displays the marks obtained by both the Group-A and Group-B groups in the post-test. Additionally, a succinct finding is provided in this section.

TABLE 4

Sources	Competency level	Group-A		Group-B	
		No	%	No	%
50 and above	A+	Nil	-	28	56%
35-50	A	7	14%	15	30%
16-35	B	31	62%	7	14%
15 and below 15	C	12	24%		
Total		50		50	

After the experimental group underwent a short series of strategy training sessions, both the control and experimental groups took a post-test. This test aimed to compare the groups and evaluate the impact of the strategy training on the students. The post-test outcomes highlighted the significance of strategy training for engineering students. Additionally, a detailed analysis of the scores from both groups is provided in table format.

#### **Study of Scores achieved by Group-A in Pre-Test and Post-Test**

The post-test was administered to 30 students in the Group-A, all belonging to the Electronics and Communication Engineering branch. The table below presents the number and percentage of students categorized under different levels of competence in English.

TABLE 5  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CONTROL GROUP IN PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

Sources	Competency level	Pre-test		Post-test	
		No	%	No	%
50 and above	A+	Nil	-	Nil	-
35-50	A	7	14%	6	12%
16-35	B	36	72%	30	60%
15 and below 15	C	7	14%	14	28%
Total		50		50	

The marks indicate that there is minimal difference in the percentage of students with Good and Average proficiency in English between the two tests, despite a month of classroom coursework. Notably, the percentage of Average users has declined, while the percentage of Poor users has risen.

Furthermore, a comparative analysis was performed by assessing the average marks scored by the group in various sections of the two tests. The averages from both the Pre-Test and Post-Test are detailed in the table below.

TABLE 6  
SCORES OF GROUP-A IN FOUR SECTIONS- PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

Scores	Pre-Test					Post-Test				
	I	II	III	IV	V	I	II	III	IV	V
50 and above	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
35-50	3	8	5	2	9	2	3	10	10	6
16-35	3	6	3	4	5	1	2	2.8	4	2
15 and below 15	2	6	2	1	2	1.7	2.2	2	4.6	3.9
Total	8	20	10	7	16	4.7	7.2	14.8	18.6	11.9
Average	2.6	6.6	3.3	2.33	5.3	1.5	2.4	4.9	6.2	3.9

Therefore, the data in the table reveals that the section-wise scores of the two tests for the Group-A show no significant improvement, indicating that the group's skills have largely remained the same. However, due to their prior experience with a similar test, the control group did show slight improvement in a few sections.

#### **Study of Scores achieved by Group-B in Pre-Test and Post-Test**

The table below provides the number and percentage of students categorized under various levels of competence in the two tests.

**Number & Percentage of Experimental Group in Pre-Test and Post-Test:**

TABLE 7

Scores	Competency level	Pre test		Post test	
		No	%	No	%
50 and above	A+	Nil	-	19	59%
35-50	A	5	17%	9	33%
16-35	B	25	83%	2	8%
15 and below 15	C				
Total		30		30	

The examination of data in the provided table reveals a distinct rise in their performance from the pre-test to the post-test. It is increased significantly from zero to 59%, and the good user category saw an increase from 17% to 33%. In contrast, there is a notable decrease in average users in the post-test, potentially attributed to improved performance leading them to transition into the excellent or good user categories. As a result, the percentage of average users decreased from 83% to 8%. Noteworthy observations suggest that the strategy training has its impact on the students.

**Average Scores of Four Sections in Pre-Test & Post-Test by Group-B:**

Calculations of averages for each section were conducted, and the table illustrates the averages categorized by competence level. The overall class average was determined by examining the vertical averages within each category in the table.

**Averages of Sections in Pre-Test & Post-Test by Group-B**

TABLE 8

Scores	Pre-Test					Post-Test				
	I	II	III	IV	V	I	II	III	IV	V
50 and above	----	----	----	----	----	5	5	10	9	9
35-50	6	7	9	6	8	5	5	9	8	8
16-35	3	3	6	8	5	4	5	7	5	4
15 and below 15	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
Total	9	10	15	14	13	14	15	26	22	21
Average	4.5	5	7.5	7	6.5	5.1	4.6	8.6	7.3	7

The data shows that the class average in all sections increased following the implementation of strategy training. Students performed better in various sections of the post-test compared to the pre-test.

## VI. FINDINGS

The data indicates that the performance of students in the Group-B offers positive feedback on the effectiveness of strategy training. It is reasonable to conclude that the language skills of engineering students would likely improve with the implementation of strategy training.

**Study of Scores achieved by both groups Group-A and Group-B in Post-Test:**

A total of 60 students, including those from Group A and Group B, participated in the post-test. An earlier analysis compared the data from both groups across the two tests and evaluated their performances relative to their own pre-test results. The table below aims to further examine and compare the marks of the two groups.

TABLE 9

cores	Competency level	Pre-test		Post-test	
		No	%	No	%
50 and above	A+	Nil	-	29	58%
35-50	A	1	2%	19	38%
16-35	B	30	60%	2	4%
15 and below 15	C	19	38%		
Total		50		50	

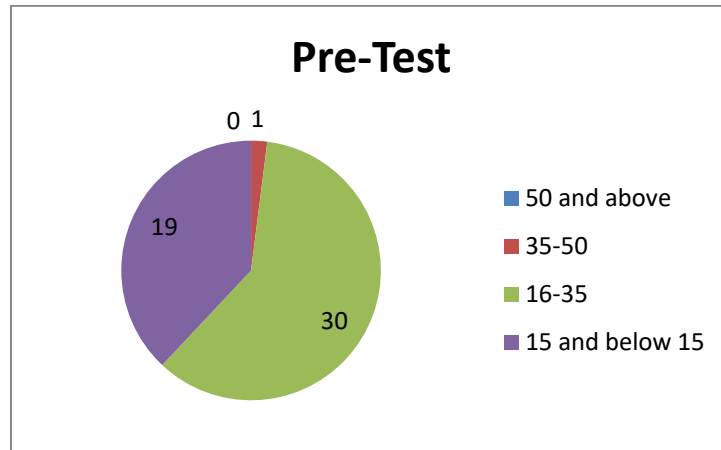


Figure 9.

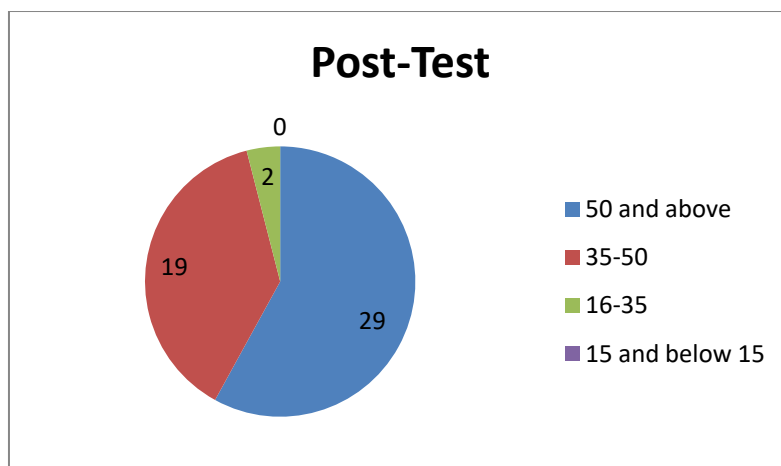


Figure 10.

The data provides evidence that a significant portion of the experimental group has achieved excellence and proficient skills attributed to the strategy training. Upon analyzing the data, it becomes apparent that the experimental group demonstrates a heightened level of English competence compared to the control group when their skills are assessed. The pre-training analysis profiling both control and experimental groups showed no notable difference in their English proficiency. Nevertheless, the post-training analysis presents a contrasting scenario. Additionally, a comparative examination of competence levels in the pre and posttest between the two groups indicates a noticeable disparity. These results affirm the positive influence of the strategy training program.

**Average Scores: Four Sections of Post-Test – Group-A & Group-B:**

Upon scrutinizing the data, it is evident that the experimental group showcases a higher level of English proficiency in all sections of the post-test compared to the control group. Despite the absence of significant differences during the initial profiling of the control and experimental groups, the subsequent analysis following the strategy training reveals a clear distinction. Significantly, there is a substantial disparity in competence levels across all sections. The sectional contrast between the control and experimental groups is outlined as follows:

TABLE 10

Scores	Group-A					Group-B				
	I	II	III	IV	V	I	II	III	IV	V
45&above	----	----	----	----	----	9.7	4.5	10.0	9.5	4.7
31-45	2.0	6.0	9.8	9.0	3.2	4.8	9.6	9.6	8.2	5.2
16-30	1.2	2.7	3.6	4.2	2.1	4.0	4.6	7.3	4.0	3.3
15 & less	1.7	2.5	4.9	2.6	14.7	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total	7.2	8.7	14.4	12.2	11.3	12.5	13.8	26.9	15.7	22.2
Average	3.6	4.3	7.2	6.1	5.6	4.1	4.6	8.9	15.2	7.4

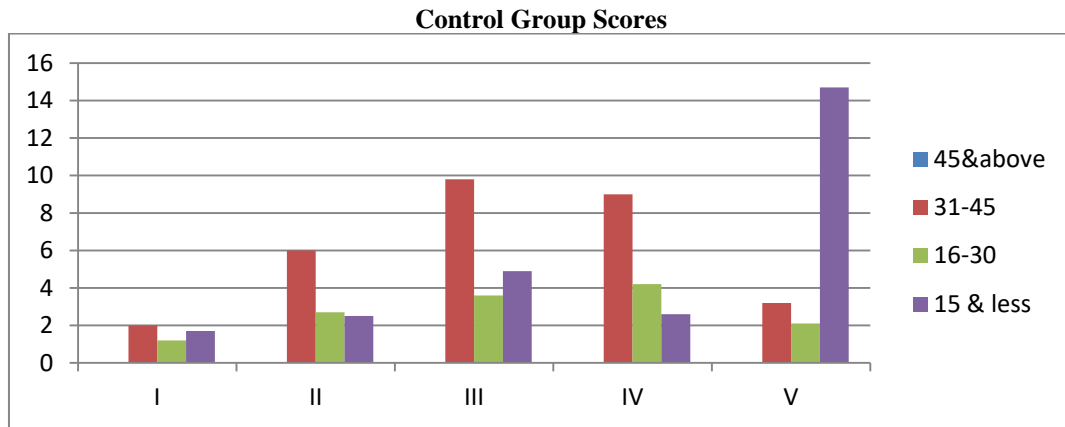


Figure 11.

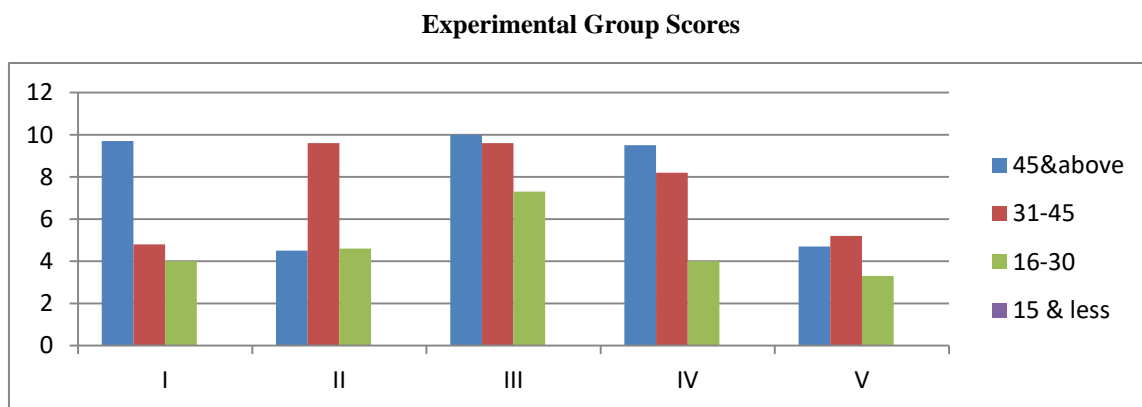


Figure 12.

These factors serve as indicators affirming the effectiveness of the strategy training course. Based on the above analysis, it is observed that the performance between the group-A & group-B was similar before the implementation of strategy training, but there is a noticeable difference in the post-strategy training results. This disparity strongly suggests that the training has proven to be beneficial.

VII. CONCLUSION

The objective of this research is to assess the effectiveness of a strategy training course in enhancing language skills among students. The study aims to instill an understanding of the significance of self-directed learning through the utilization of learning strategies. The findings underscore the vital role of classrooms in fostering pragmatic competence. While students recognize their responsibility in promoting pragmatic behaviors, there is a notable deficiency in the requisite skills. A majority of students believe that teachers play a pivotal role in introducing them to future opportunities. Language classes, in their view, should not solely focus on improving test scores, which primarily assess memorization, but should also guide students in identifying language weaknesses and exploring available resources. However, due to tight academic schedules and the emphasis on grades, overcrowded Indian classrooms struggle to offer personalized instruction for each learner. Nevertheless, society expects employees to be well-prepared to meet the demands of their profession and community.

The analysis suggests that the training in Language Learning Strategies has proven to be advantageous. This research could provide insights for future investigations involving larger groups and the development of additional teaching and learning strategies to enhance language skills. The advancement of the students' progress is delineated in the table below:

TABLE 11

Initial phase	Advanced Phase
Students engaged in collaborative learning	Attempted independent learning
Required encouragement	Voluntarily contributed to learning
Relying on peers	Contributed autonomously
Slowly finished tasks	Completed tasks at a faster pace
Preferred group settings	Independently increased their participation

Consequently, a noticeable transformation occurred in the students as they gained confidence, and their enthusiasm for learning the language grew. The training played a pivotal role in enabling students to undertake language learning

tasks with reduced stress levels and heightened confidence. Further research could explore the feasibility of integrating language learning strategies training into the current course material. There is substantial potential for intertwining strategy training with self-learning materials or e-learning resources, given their interactive nature in a one-to-one teacher-learner proportion. This integration enhances the learner autonomy scope under the able guidance of teachers.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are thankful to the PVP Siddhartha Institute of technology and Deanship of Scientific Research of Prince Sattam bin Abdul Aziz University, KSA for their kind support.

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# Readiness for Learner Autonomy in Online Environments: The Case of Thai University Students

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**Abstract**—In Thailand, learner autonomy has been introduced to enable students to manage their learning and engage with the abundant resources available, particularly for English language learning. This study examines the extent of learner autonomy and online language learning behaviors outside the classroom among Thai university students, as well as the factors influencing their autonomy. Quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire from 378 freshmen representing eight faculties: Allied Health Sciences, Medical Science, Public Health, Sciences, Agriculture, Law, Business, and Humanities. The findings revealed a relatively high level of learner autonomy among Thai university students. They were able to establish learning goals, select learning strategies and resources, and be aware of their weaknesses. However, the overall level of online language learning outside the classroom was moderate. Listening to English music was the most popular activity reported. Additionally, gender and English proficiency were identified as significant factors influencing the level of learner autonomy. These findings underscore the effectiveness of introducing learner autonomy but also highlight the need for teacher support in scaffolding online language learning outside the classroom.

**Index Terms**—learner autonomy, language learning, autonomous learning, out-of-class language learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

Given the current trends in English education, a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered approaches has become essential. Language learning now emphasizes students' readiness to take an active role in the learning process (Ardi, 2017). It is expected that all students develop the skills and habits of lifelong learners, adapting to the evolving needs of today's world. Proactive learning involves individual participation, self-initiation, adaptability, and self-assessment (Ke, 2016). This means that learners acquire knowledge by dedicating themselves to studying, selecting learning strategies, managing the learning process, and taking control of their emotional and cognitive abilities. Autonomous learning is a crucial solution to meet the demand for students' comprehensive development as lifelong learners.

Autonomy refers to "the capacity to take control of one's own learning" (Benson, 2011, p. 58). The critical element in this definition is that autonomous learners assume responsibility for determining learning purposes, creating a learning plan, taking ownership of learning content, actively participating in the learning process, and regulating factors such as time, frequency, setting, learning methods, and pace. In other words, learner autonomy requires self-management competencies, proactive learning, self-knowledge, responsibility, and self-control of the learning process. It is important to emphasize that learner autonomy develops gradually and is a complex process (Benson, 2011; Blidi, 2017). The complexity of learner autonomy development is influenced by personal attitudes, beliefs, motivation, personality, and culture (Chen & Li, 2014). This implies that promoting learner autonomy may vary across countries and require different timeframes and levels of support. Numerous researchers and scholars have shown that learner autonomy contributes to success in EFL learning (Hsieh & Hsieh, 2019; Koirala, 2020; Orawiwatnakul & Wichadee, 2017; Tayjanant & Suraratdecha, 2016; Tran, 2020). Little (1997; as cited in Sadaghian et al., 2020) stated that autonomous learners are motivated and reflective learners, leading to efficient and effective learning. Furthermore, the level of learning success depends on the degree of autonomy. Those who possess autonomy skills and habits have a greater chance of successfully acquiring English language skills. Little (2003) argues that these abilities cannot be fully developed within the confines of a classroom-only environment. Therefore, learners with high levels of autonomy are

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more likely to seek opportunities to develop their English skills through direct application outside the classroom, compared to learners with low levels of autonomy.

The emergence of recent online learning technologies has significantly contributed to the promotion of autonomy in English language learning. These technologies offer learners increased opportunities to take control of their English learning. Learners now have access to digital learning environments that allow them to engage in real-world activities and meaningful interactions with teachers or native speakers outside the classroom, regardless of distance. Tools such as video conferencing, Moodle, MOOCs, MS Team, Zoom, and Google Meet facilitate real-time communication. Discussion boards and chat rooms provide additional online resources that enable language learners to have social, collaborative, and authentic learning experiences, fostering cooperation and shared learning responsibility (Chan & Chan, 2011; Cheng et al., 2011). While technologies have the potential to facilitate autonomous learning and encourage a shift from passive content absorption to self-directed learning, learners need to be aware of their readiness to take charge of their learning in order to achieve the most beneficial learning outcomes.

In the Thai EFL setting, there is a lack of research on readiness for learner autonomy, particularly in the context of out-of-class online-supported activities that can foster lifelong learning. Most studies on learner autonomy in Thailand focus on conventional or offline classes and examine perspectives from learners and teachers regarding the success of training programs (Sangsawang, 2011; Rungwaraphong, 2012; Tayjasant & Suraratdecha, 2016; Tapinta, 2016; Orariwatnakul & Wichadee, 2017; Scheb-Buenner, 2019). As a result, there are limited studies that specifically address the implementation of learner autonomy in the Thai context using technology to support learning outside the classroom from the student's viewpoint. Given the rapid development of technology and the increasing opportunities for higher education, there is a pressing need for a more flexible learning model that allows students to have greater independence in managing their learning anytime and anywhere. Thus, this study aims to examine the readiness of EFL university students for autonomous learning modes and explore potential factors related to their level of autonomy. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the enhancement of technology-supported learning in Thailand, specifically by fostering the growth of student autonomy. Teachers and educators can utilize this study as a reference when designing extracurricular activities with technological support to promote the development of learner autonomy.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy has been interpreted in various ways by language educators and researchers, and it has gained popularity as a preferred teaching and learning approach in recent decades. The concept of learner autonomy emerged in the field of lifelong learning in the 1980s and has since become widely adopted in classrooms worldwide. It is generally defined as the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning. Autonomous learners are capable of identifying their learning goals, defining the content and process of learning, choosing appropriate methods and strategies, monitoring their learning progress, and evaluating their learning outcomes (Holec, 1981; as cited in Hidayati & Husna, 2020). Benson (2011) also highlighted three dimensions of autonomy enhancement. First is the management of learning administration, which refers to students' ability to determine when, where, and how to study the target language (Huang & Benson, 2013). The second aspect is the management of instructional materials, allowing learners to select resources that align with their learning goals rather than relying solely on materials provided by the teacher. The final dimension involves regulating the cognitive process for cognitive achievement, meaning learners have control over psychological factors that influence their learning performance, such as beliefs, emotions, and motivation (Benson, 2011). In essence, learner autonomy involves learners' ability to control their learning, mindset, willingness, and independence in directing their own learning process.

#### (a). Planning

Planning involves setting goals and selecting the resources needed to achieve them. A planning strategy called pre-planning is used before the task in the learning process. Learners set their goals and decide how they will achieve them. In contrast, planning can also occur during task performance, or what is called *planning in action*. This depends on how well learners are progressing with the task, how effective their strategies are, and how much they are learning. Goals can be changed or adjusted depending on individual progress.

#### (b). Monitoring

Holec (1985b; as cited in Benson 2001, p. 159) argues that "the learner needs to know at all times whether, on the one hand, his performances correspond to what he was aiming for and, on the other, whether he has made any progress towards his chosen objective." This means that self-monitoring aims "to provide the learner with all the information he needs to control his learning process and progress" (p. 157). Self-monitoring procedures thus must be "relevant to the learner in question and to the particular learning in which he or she is engaged." Students who act as participants and observe or monitor their learning may ask themselves, How am I doing? Am I making rapid progress on this learning task? Without any problems? After becoming aware of the problem, learners assess their knowledge and skills to look for the cause. At the same time, they use their level of knowledge to explain the situation and deploy strategies to accomplish the task.

### (c). *Evaluating*

Evaluating differs from monitoring because the former involves the consideration of the *outcome* of a particular attempt to learn or use a strategy, whereas monitoring results in statements of self-monitoring about students' level of proficiency *in the course* of learning. The focal point is development and success (i.e., the strategy). In the words of Wenden (1991), evaluation involves three mental steps: (1) learners examine the outcome of an attempt to learn, (2) they access the criteria they will use to judge it, and (3) they apply it.

Clearly, cognitive and metacognitive strategies are critical to the learning process in helping learners become more self-sufficient because cognitive strategies are operations performed directly on the content being learned. Metacognitive methods, on the other hand, use an understanding of cognitive processes to guide the learning process. When both strategies are combined, learners can learn independently.

### B. *Educational Technology and Learner Autonomy*

Holec, as mentioned in Benson (2011), highlights that autonomous or self-directed learning often involves the use of technology, such as computer-assisted language learning (CALL), distance learning, and face-to-face access learning. The use of media in education extends beyond traditional classroom settings and benefits both outside the classroom and in online education. Research on learner autonomy has explored "out-of-school" online environments, including self-study centers, virtual classrooms, and hybrid learning environments (Bedoya, 2014; Shams, 2013; Zhong, 2018; Hsieh & Hsieh, 2019; Alharbi, 2022). These studies confirm the importance of self-confidence and independence in learning for students' performance in online "extracurricular" environments, where students are encouraged to be independent, responsible, cooperative, and active in their learning process. According to Benson (2011), media, especially technology, provide abundant linguistic and non-linguistic input, offering new ways to represent and learn a new language. Technology plays a significant role in enhancing language skills and fostering learner autonomy. It enables students to study languages using their computers and other devices at home, providing convenience and flexibility compared to face-to-face instruction. Nowadays, technology is widely accessible through mobile phones and tablets, giving learners the opportunity to use the internet to find additional learning resources. Moreover, students have the freedom to choose their own time, place, and pace of learning. Mobile learning technology and electronic media have proven successful in promoting learner autonomy among language learners (Sung et al., 2015).

The shift from traditional classrooms to technology-enhanced learning environments has led to increased research on how learners independently acquire knowledge outside the classroom with the aid of technology. Numerous studies have examined learners' readiness for self-directed learning from the perspective of learner autonomy across different cultures. For instance, Zhong (2018) conducted a qualitative case study using interviews to explore how learners utilized technology-mediated environments to meet their learning needs and goals, and how their autonomy developed in online settings. The findings suggested that learners became critical users of diverse online resources beyond limited materials. Additionally, the learning conditions in New Zealand fostered the development of learner autonomy. Psychological factors, environmental factors, teacher guidance, and learning conditions are likely to play crucial roles in the development of various dimensions of learner autonomy. Similarly, Honarзад and Rassaei (2019) investigated the relationship between technology-based out-of-class language learning activities and three learner characteristics: motivation, autonomy, and self-efficacy, among Iranian EFL learners. The results indicated that the learners preferred receptive activities over productive ones, and a strong correlation was found between technology-based out-of-class language learning activities and learner characteristics.

### C. *Related Studies*

Yosintha and Yuniarti (2021) conducted a mixed-methods study on learner autonomy in EFL online courses among Indonesian students from eight universities. The findings revealed that participants had positive attitudes towards learner autonomy in online learning and recognized the need for autonomy and independence in this context. To enhance learning success, the study suggests that teachers should promote autonomous learning through the use of metacognitive strategies. Another study by Saywongpia and Kongthai (2018) explored Thai university students' extracurricular English learning activities and identified the influencing factors and participants' opinions. The results indicated a preference for receptive activities over productive ones. Participants perceived extracurricular learning activities as effective for English language development and emphasized the importance of learner autonomy for lifelong learning. The latest project by Hsieh and Hsieh (2019) investigated the independent learning behaviors and utilization of learning resources by Taiwanese EFL students outside the classroom, particularly in self-access centers (SACs). The study found a strong correlation between autonomous learning behaviors and overall resource utilization in SACs. The study recommends fostering students' engagement in out-of-class learning through pedagogical activities that connect classroom learning with learning center resources. Zhang and Cui (2010) conducted a survey on the learning beliefs of distance learners of English in China, mainly using educational media in the learning process. They found that distance learners with more experience in distance education believed more strongly in the benefits of an autonomous learning approach and showed lower levels of anxiety and frustration than novice learners and that there were no gender differences in learner autonomy among Chinese students.

However, some studies indicate an unsatisfied level of autonomy. Orariwatnakul and Wichadee (2016) investigated whether certain variables were related to Thai university students' attitudes toward autonomous language learning. The

study found that female students were more autonomous than male students since they seemed to have more responsibility. Even though the results showed a positive attitude toward autonomy, their autonomous behaviors outside of class were within the moderate range. Regarding the correlation between English proficiency and belief in autonomous learning, students with a high belief in autonomous learning show a high level of learning behavior, while students with a low belief show a low level of learning behavior. The finding highlights the need for increasing learning environments where responsibilities are shared between teachers and students. Along these lines, Ghobain and Zughaibi (2021) explored the readiness of first-year Saudi English language learners for online instruction. Study participants were moderately autonomous, meaning that both males and females had similar levels of aptitude and readiness to take responsibility for their learning. Interestingly, however, compared to those non-English majors, participants with English majors had relatively lower levels of autonomy than students with other majors. A similar situation was found in Andrzej et al. (2019), wherein Indonesian high school learners displayed low motivation to learn English and were unwilling to act as autonomous learners. The study suggests that Indonesian students need to be trained to plan their learning process, set goals, and take a more active role in shaping the teaching-learning process.

#### D. The Present Study

As can be seen from the previous review, the incorporation of technology into language instruction outside the classroom can play an important role in the success of L2 development, and the individual characteristics of L2 learners, such as motivation and learner autonomy, inevitably affect their learning performance. Learners' behavior outside the classroom reflects their motivation and autonomy (Mineishi, 2010; as cited in Orawiwatnakul & Wichadee, 2017). In fact, to our knowledge, little is known about students' learning behaviors outside the classroom when equipped with technology. In addition, certain factors, such as gender, could be examined in more detail to compare the results of the present study with those of previous studies in the Thai context. Therefore, to fill this gap in previous research, this study has three important objectives. First, it examines the extent of Thai students' perceived learner autonomy in an online learning environment outside the classroom. Second, the present study examines their learning behaviors in an online learning environment outside the classroom. Finally, it aims to investigate the relationship between students' level of language learning autonomy and other factors, including gender, grade, and language learning behavior in an online environment outside the classroom. To this end, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What degree of learner autonomy do students have in online environments outside of a class?
2. What are the students' language learning behaviors in online environments outside of a class?
3. Is there any statistically significant relationship between students' learner autonomy and their English proficiency?
4. Is there any statistically significant relationship between student learner autonomy and gender differences?
5. Is there any statistically significant relationship between student learner autonomy and their language learning behaviors in online environments outside the classroom?

### III. METHOD

#### A. Population and Samples

The population for this study comprised 6,057 undergraduate students who were enrolled in the English course "Critical Reading for Effective Communication" at Naresuan University in Thailand during the second semester of the 2022 academic year. These students were freshmen from eight faculties: Allied Health Sciences, Medical Science, Public Health, Sciences, Agriculture, Law, Business, and Humanities. It was expected that these students had prior experience with autonomous learning in high school, considering the heavy reliance on technology and online platforms for teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to an increased expectation of learning autonomy among students nationwide. The sample size was determined using the calculation formula of Yamane (1973), with a confidence level of 95% and a precision rate of  $\pm 5\%$ . A minimum sample size of 378 was required, and therefore, the researchers decided to select 378 samples using the simple random sampling technique.

The demographic characteristics of the samples are shown in Table 1. 46.3% of the respondents were male, while 53.7% were female. Regarding the English grade point average (GPA), 6.6% of respondents received a grade lower than 2.00, 20.6% were between 2.00 and 2.49, and 26.2% were between 2.50 and 2.99. 27.5% were between 3.00 and 3.49, and 19.0% were above 3.50.

TABLE 1  
FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE VALUES OF THE SAMPLE

	N	Percent (%)
1. Gender		
- Male	175	46.3
- Female	203	53.7
2. Grade Point Average (GPA)		
- Below 2.00	25	6.6
- 2.00 - 2.49	78	20.6
- 2.50 - 2.99	99	26.2
- 3.00 - 3.49	104	27.5
- 3.50 - 4.00	72	19.0

### B. Research Instrument

A questionnaire was employed to collect data for this study. The questionnaire was prepared in both English and Thai to address potential language barriers and ensure comprehension. It focused on two essential components: (a) autonomous language learning and (b) online learning behavior outside the classroom. The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from two sources: Cirocki et al. (2019) "Readiness for Autonomous English Learning" and Hidayati and Husna (2020) "Online English Learning Outside the Classroom". The questionnaire consisted of 25 items, and their translation into Thai was validated by two bilingual experts proficient in English and Thai. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding a value of .917.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Part I focused on students' demographic information, including gender and GPA. The GPA of this study represents the English proficiency of the students; therefore, it was determined from the average grade of the English courses that the students took. Part II assessed students' capacity to plan, organize, self-monitor, and self-evaluate. Part III examined students' online language learning behaviors. Except for the demographic information, all sections utilized a single-item Likert scale to rate the extent to which students engaged in autonomous learning modes (planning, monitoring, and evaluating) for each item, ranging from "least" to "most." Additionally, students' English online learning behaviors outside the classroom were evaluated with ten questions, measuring the frequency of their participation using a 5-point Likert scale: "never," "seldom," "sometimes," "often," and "usually".

### C. Data Collection and Data Analysis

Participants were invited to participate in the study and complete an online questionnaire using Google Forms. The data obtained from the questionnaire survey were analyzed separately for each section using the SPSS version 22 program for Windows. Data from the demographic characteristics section were analyzed using frequency and percentage to provide an overview of the participants' backgrounds. Data from the other two sections were analyzed to assess the general level of autonomous language learning and student behavior in online language learning outside the classroom.

Descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the means and standard deviations based on the following ranges: 1.00-1.50 = very low, 1.51-2.50 = low, 2.51-3.50 = moderate, 3.51-4.50 = high, and 4.51-5.00 = very high, respectively. These criteria were employed for the level of autonomous language learning and the level of online learning behavior outside the classroom. To answer research questions two and five, Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to determine the relationship among levels of learner autonomy, English proficiency, and online language learning outside the classroom behaviors. Chi-square tests were conducted to find out the relationships between students' levels of autonomous language learning and their gender (research question 4). The acceptable statistical significance level was set at  $\alpha < 0.05$ .

## IV. RESULTS

The results demonstrated in Table 2 showed that the overall mean score of students' beliefs about autonomous language learning was at a high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.78$ ). When considering all items, it was found that almost every item was at a high level, except item 15, "Being able to evaluate my classmates' works." This item was at a moderate level and had the lowest mean score ( $\bar{x} = 3.44$ ). The top three items were as follows: "Being able to choose appropriate learning strategies to achieve tasks" ( $\bar{x} = 4.05$ ), "Being aware of my academic weaknesses and able to improve them" ( $\bar{x} = 4.00$ ), and "Being able to find learning resources by yourself" ( $\bar{x} = 3.93$ ).

TABLE 2  
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF BELIEF ABOUT AUTONOMOUS LANGUAGE LEARNING

Statement	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level
1. Using planners/ diaries/ timetables to set learning goals.	3.50	.87	high
2. Always setting up learning goals.	3.92	.77	high
3. Being able to decide on time to achieve learning goals.	3.80	.79	high
4. Being able to select books or learning materials outside the classroom by myself.	3.83	.79	high
5. Being able to find learning resources by yourself.	3.93	.77	high
6. Being able to choose appropriate learning strategies to achieve tasks.	4.05	.72	high
7. Being able to check my understanding of the subjects being studied.	3.56	.73	high
8. Always following my learning progress.	3.78	.73	high
9. Being aware of my academic weaknesses and able to improve them.	4.00	.74	high
10. Being aware of my academic strengths.	3.73	.87	high
11. Being able to recognize my own learning mistakes.	3.85	.80	high
12. Being able to assess my learning progress and identify areas needed to develop.	3.82	.69	high
13. Having time for error-checking and correcting my mistakes in my work.	3.59	.75	high
14. Seeking feedback from teachers to correct learning mistakes.	3.75	.77	high
15. Being able to evaluate my classmates' works.	3.44	.83	moderate
Total	3.78	.53	high

The students' online outside-classroom language learning behaviors are presented in Table 3 below. The overall mean score was at a moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 3.27$ ). Only three items were at a high level, which were as follows: "Listening

to English music" ( $\bar{x} = 4.01$ ), "Watching English soundtrack movies without subtitles" ( $\bar{x} = 3.74$ ), and "Playing online games in English language settings" ( $\bar{x} = 3.69$ ). The rest were at the moderate level, and the lowest mean score was item 10, "Communicating with foreigners in English via online channels" ( $\bar{x} = 2.78$ ).

TABLE 3  
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF STUDENTS' ONLINE OUTSIDE-CLASSROOM LANGUAGE LEARNING BEHAVIORS

Statement	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level
1. Listening to English music	4.01	.89	high
2. Playing online games in English language settings	3.69	1.02	high
3. Watching English soundtrack movies without subtitles	3.74	1.04	high
4. Reading Academic books in English	3.14	1.01	moderate
5. Reading outside class reading materials in English	3.14	1.01	moderate
6. Attending online English courses	2.92	1.05	moderate
7. Communicating with online friends in English e.g., chatting	3.10	1.06	moderate
8. Talking with online friends in English	2.80	1.08	moderate
9. Watching English online programs e.g., TV, Variety, shows	3.40	1.03	moderate
10. Communicating with foreigners in English via online channels	2.78	1.22	moderate
Total	3.27	.78	moderate

In Table 4, the data on the student's beliefs about autonomous language learning was divided into four groups. The cut-point was determined by using the mean score based on the following ranges: 1.00-1.99 = very low, 2.00-2.99 = low, 3.00-3.99 = moderate, and higher than 4.00 = high. When the students were classified into groups according to the level of their belief, there were 130 students with high levels of belief, 231 students with moderate levels of belief, and 17 students with low levels of belief. And none of them had a level of belief below 2.

TABLE 4  
THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGES OF THE STUDENTS' BELIEF ABOUT AUTONOMOUS LANGUAGE LEARNING

Level	N	Percent (%)
High	130	34.4
Moderate	231	61.1
Low	17	4.5
Total	378	100.0

To answer research questions 3 and 5, Pearson correlation coefficients were used to investigate the relationships between students' English proficiency (grade), beliefs about autonomous language learning, and online outside-classroom language learning behaviors.

From Table 5, the results indicate a positive relationship between students' belief in autonomous language learning and their English proficiency (grade) ( $r = .122$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This suggests that as students' English proficiency increases, their belief in autonomous language learning also tends to increase. However, this relationship is at a low level. Furthermore, a moderate relationship exists between students' online outside-classroom language learning behaviors and their belief in autonomous language learning ( $r = .576$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This implies that as students engage in more online language learning activities outside the classroom, their belief in autonomous language learning also tends to be higher. Moreover, there was a weak relationship between English proficiency and online outside-classroom language learning behaviors ( $r = .139$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This means the students who got the higher English proficiency performed a higher level of online outside-classroom language learning behaviors.

TABLE 5  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (GRADE), BELIEF ABOUT AUTONOMOUS LANGUAGE LEARNING, AND ONLINE OUTSIDE-CLASSROOM LANGUAGE LEARNING BEHAVIORS

	Belief	Proficiency (grade)	Online outside-classroom language learning behaviors
Belief	1.000	.122*	.576**
Proficiency (grade)		1.000	.139**
Online outside-classroom language learning behaviors			1.000

\*\* $p < .001$  and \* $p < .05$

To answer research question 4, which aimed to examine the relationship between the student's gender and their belief about autonomous language learning, a Chi-Square test was employed to investigate their relationship. The result found that gender was related to the student's belief about autonomous language learning ( $\chi^2 = 8.96$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Male students tend to have higher levels of belief than female students, as follows: high (72), moderate (99), and low (4), whereas most female students had a moderate level of belief (132), followed by a high level (58) and a low level (13).

TABLE 6  
CHI-SQUARE RESULTS FOR STUDENT'S GENDER AND THEIR BELIEF ABOUT AUTONOMOUS LANGUAGE LEARNING

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Belief</i>			Total	<i>Chi-Sq</i> 8.962*
	High	Moderate	Low		
Male	72 (41.14)	99 (56.57)	4 (2.29)	175 (100.00)	
Female	58 (28.57)	132 (65.03)	13 (6.40)	203 (100.00)	
Total	130 (34.39)	231 (61.11)	17 (4.50)	378 (100.00)	

## V. DISCUSSION

This study is congruent with previous studies (Honarzar & Rassaei, 2019; Iamudom & Tangkiensirisin, 2020; Orawiwatnakul & Wichadee, 2017) in finding that students exhibited a high level of learner autonomy in learning the English language. Specifically, the activities that demonstrated the highest level of learner autonomy were the students' consistent establishment of learning goals and their ability to select learning strategies to achieve those goals. It is assumed that students use self-management or so-called metacognitive strategies (Wenden, 1991) to proactively manage and monitor their learning strategies, recognize, and correct errors, and assess and modify their learning as needed (Conttia, 2007). This may also be attributed to teachers providing clear class objectives and requirements, enabling students to plan and complete their tasks effectively. Additionally, teachers regularly updating students' scores during the course may have heightened their awareness of weaknesses, motivating them to improve. Furthermore, the availability of learning resources facilitated by technology allowed students to explore various sources and select those that aligned with their preferences.

Although this study found a high level of learner autonomy in learning the English language, the overall students' online outside-classroom language learning behaviors were rated at a moderate level. These findings are in line with the research by Orawiwatnakul and Wichadee (2017). Interestingly, while the earlier study identified watching English movies as an online outside-classroom activity performed at a high level, this study revealed that listening to English music was the most frequently reported activity. This discrepancy may be due to the abundance of open sources for English music that students can easily access in contrast to movies, which frequently have licensing restrictions.

The study findings indicated that students tended to engage in receptive skill activities, such as listening to music, watching TV programs, and reading English materials, at a higher level compared to productive skill activities like speaking or writing in English. This preference may be attributed to the student's daily life experiences, where they had more exposure to receptive skill activities and limited opportunities for productive skill activities. The English language used for communication in their real-life context was typically confined to the classroom setting. These findings are consistent with the research by Saywonpia and Kongthai (2018), suggesting that students often choose receptive skill activities outside the classroom because they feel more comfortable and find them more convenient. Receptive skill activities can serve as an easier platform for students to practice and develop learner autonomy independently, without the guidance of teachers. This study also aligns with the findings of Honarzar and Rassaei (2019), who reported that Iranian EFL learners preferred receptive skill activities such as searching English webpages, using online dictionaries, and watching English TV and movies.

In the Thai context, students have limited opportunities to engage in online communication in English outside the classroom, although they are exposed to the language through media. As a result, they mainly practice receptive skills like listening and reading, while opportunities to practice productive skills such as speaking and writing are scarce. Given this lack of opportunities for productive skill development in online environments, it is essential for teachers to take responsibility and create both in-curriculum activities and outside-class opportunities that encourage students to actively engage with productive skills, utilizing technology-enhanced activities like writing blogs or recording vlogs. These activities provide students with platforms they are familiar with or frequently visit, enabling them to use oral and written English in a natural and comfortable manner. By incorporating such activities, students can set communication goals, gain confidence, and eventually develop their proficiency in natural English communication.

Several statistically significant results in this study indicated that two factors, English proficiency, and online outside-classroom language learning behavior, were related to the level of belief about autonomous language learning. A significant relationship was found between English proficiency and learner autonomy, suggesting that students with higher English proficiency tend to take more responsibility for their learning. These students demonstrated the ability to set learning goals, choose appropriate strategies and resources, and actively address their weaknesses to improve. These findings suggest that students with high English proficiency could be considered autonomous learners to some extent.

The findings of this study confirmed a significant relationship between online outside-classroom activities and learner autonomy, which aligns with previous research. Saywonpia and Kongthai (2018) acknowledged that learner autonomy promotes students' responsibility and independence in English learning, enabling them to actively engage in online activities outside the classroom. Similarly, Orawiwatnakul and Wichadee (2017) investigated the association between these two variables and found that students with high learner autonomy demonstrated a high level of

engagement in managing online outside classroom activities, in addition to their in-class activities. Conversely, students with low learner autonomy exhibited a lower level of involvement in online outside-classroom activities.

This study revealed an interesting relationship between gender and learner autonomy. Male students exhibited higher levels of autonomy than female students, consistent with most of the research on learner autonomy and gender (Marjuki, 2018; Büyükahıska, 2017). They claimed that their male participants utilized greater external strategies of learner autonomy, such as the capacity to investigate learning sources and engage in collaborative work. In addition, Kırmızı and Kıraç (2018) found that male students appeared to rate self-direction readiness higher than female students. In the present study, this could be explained by the fact that the majority of male participants are students from medical science faculties who are conversant with science-as-practice processes. This means that they have practiced setting goals, asking questions, locating supporting evidence, linking their interests to other sources, etc., which are the very first steps in fostering learner autonomy.

However, the result of this study contrasts with a study by Zhang and Cui (2010) that found no gender differences in Chinese students' learner autonomy. Additionally, this finding contradicts the results of Orawiatnakul and Wichadee (2017), where female students displayed a higher level of autonomy than males. Therefore, the relationship between gender and learner autonomy remains unclear and requires further investigation to establish a more conclusive understanding of this association.

## VI. CONCLUSION

For several years, Thai students have been introduced to the concept of learner autonomy. Educators and teachers have made efforts to foster autonomy through various curriculum approaches. Numerous studies have been conducted to manipulate autonomy levels through different activities. These studies have confirmed the effectiveness of these attempts, as university students tend to exhibit a relatively high level of learner autonomy. One significant factor affecting learner autonomy is English proficiency. Proficiency in English is also linked to outside-classroom activities, as students require adequate proficiency to explore and engage in online activities beyond the classroom. This study further revealed a relationship between outside-classroom activities and the level of learner autonomy. Therefore, promoting both English proficiency and outside-classroom activities is crucial for enhancing learner autonomy. However, in English language classrooms, students still require scaffolding from their teachers to establish a conducive learning environment that enables the development of learner autonomy. This can involve encouraging students to set their own learning goals, choose learning strategies and resources, and become aware that they can manage their own learning and address their weaknesses. Additionally, gender was found to be related to beliefs about autonomous language learning, with males in this study exhibiting a higher level of belief compared to females.

## VII. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATION

Based on the findings of this study, teachers should continue to promote learner autonomy by providing opportunities for students to take charge of their own learning. This can be accomplished by encouraging students to establish their own learning objectives, select appropriate learning strategies and resources, and cultivate self-awareness regarding their learning process. In addition, for English language classes, teachers should prioritize the promotion of learner autonomy in English language learning both inside and outside of the classroom by improving students' English language skills through effective instructional strategies and engaging activities, such as providing students with opportunities to establish their own learning goals or designing ways to assess their learning achievement, allowing them to assess their progress, etc. In this way, students can participate more fully in the classroom, which contributes to the growth of learner autonomy. In addition to guiding and supporting students as they navigate their autonomous learning journeys, teachers should provide them with direction and assistance. This may include directing resources, facilitating discussions, providing feedback, and providing assistance when necessary.

## VIII. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further studies could expand on the current research by considering additional individual factors that may influence learner autonomy, beyond the three factors of English proficiency, gender, and online outside-classroom language learning behaviors examined in this study. As online learning continues to gain importance, students have the opportunity to choose from a vast array of resources, many of which are self-learning courses. Therefore, learner autonomy becomes an essential skill for managing their learning needs and available sources. Future studies could specifically focus on the online learning context to explore factors that might impact online learning autonomy. Another suggestion for future research is to delve deeper into the topic of gender, as it remains a debated factor. Previous studies, including the present one, have yielded inconsistent findings. While some studies have found no differences between male and female participants in terms of learner autonomy, others have shown that females have a higher level of autonomy. In this particular study, males were found to have a higher level. Hence, further investigation is warranted to better understand the relationship between gender and the level of autonomy.

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# Androcentrism in Arabic Educational Materials: A Linguistic Analysis of GCC Countries' Selected School Textbooks

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**Abstract**—This study seeks to investigate the existence of androcentrism in school textbooks used in the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. It attempts to unveil potential implicit biases ingrained in the language of these textbooks. The data for this study is derived from a corpus comprising six textbooks, encompassing a variety of courses representing the GCC secondary level education systems. The employed methodological approach entailed content analysis, wherein categories were discerned directly from the textual data during a comprehensive examination of the textbooks. The established framework facilitated the classification of gendered linguistic references into three distinct categories: nouns, verbs, and pronouns. The principal findings highlight preferential representation of male students and, consequently, underrepresentation of female students, permeating almost the entire research corpus. Contrary to assumptions suggesting an intrinsic gender bias within the Arabic language, this investigation argues that the locus of androcentrism seems to be rooted in the authors of the scrutinized textbooks. This discernment contributes valuable insights challenging prevailing notions and accentuates the role of textbook authors in shaping linguistic biases.

**Index Terms**—androcentrism, gender representation, Arabic school textbooks, GCC countries

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language, functioning as a channel for the transmission of cultural and intellectual content, assumes a pivotal role in shaping the cognitive frameworks and attitudes of individuals. Within the specific context of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council (henceforth GCC) countries – (alphabetically arranged as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) – instructional materials, particularly school textbooks, emerge as fundamental tools for the diffusion of knowledge and the cultivation of future generations' intellectual perspectives. Nevertheless, potential sexist language in school textbooks, characterized by the preferential representation of male students and, consequently, the underrepresentation of female students, can have serious consequences. It has given rise to apprehensions regarding the balanced representation of both genders in educational discourse.

The present study attempts to examine the presence of androcentrism within Arab GCC educational materials, employing a meticulous linguistic analysis to uncover potential implicit biases embedded in the language. Arabic is the official language of the GCC countries and the medium of instruction and educational communication; therefore, understanding its nuances is crucial for unearthing possible imbalances in the representation of gender roles in school textbooks. The term 'androcentrism' refers to the tendency to foreground male involvement, experiences, perspectives, and contributions, often at the expense of female voices, thereby perpetuating gender inequalities. According to Bailey et al. (2019, p. 308), “Androcentrism refers to a social system organized around men and evident in both individual biases and institutional policies”.

This study argues that female students are not adequately represented in the Arab GCC secondary school textbooks. By investigating this assumption, the study aspires to contribute to a broader conversation on gender inclusivity within educational frameworks in the Arabic context, advocating for linguistic practices that foster a more balanced representation of male and female audiences. The findings of this research may have implications for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers striving to create an educational environment that consolidates equality, challenges stereotypes, and nurtures a generation capable of tackling gender-based biases. As the present study engages in the linguistic analysis, the ultimate goal is to foster awareness and inspire positive changes in the construction of educational narratives within the Arab GCC region.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social movements during the 1960s and 1970s sparked widespread initiatives across the globe to resist racism and sexism in educational textbooks. Consequently, there has been a growing focus in textbook research on examining how race, class, and gender are represented in these materials (Chisholm, 2018).

School textbooks are not only sources of information related to different disciplines and fields of knowledge. They are also sources of ideas about social realities and agents of change (Torres & Hutchinson, 1994; Vu & Pham, 2023). They contribute to the development of students' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about their identities, social roles, and social involvements. This function of school textbooks is enacted through different types of representations including gender representation techniques. Several studies in the Arab context have examined how gender is represented in different contexts including the situation in the Arab world education. The findings of such research have highlighted the imbalances in the representation of both male and female students in terms of illustrations, roles, and themes. However, no study has thoroughly examined how both male and female students, who are the primary target and readers of Arabic school textbooks, are linguistically addressed and referenced by book writers given the fact that Arabic language has a rich grammatical gender system (Aljadani, 2019), i.e., Arabic is heavily gendered and “differentiates between males and females in the noun, [pronoun], verb, and adjective forms of words” (Wafa, 2021, p. 382; Alkohlani, 2016, p. 19). This linguistic feature of Arabic can possibly contribute to the reinforcement of or challenge to traditional gender roles. According to the UNESCO guidelines, textbooks should possibly avoid gendered representations by using gender inclusive language in order to avoid the promotion of relevant stereotypes (Edres, 2022).

Wafa (2021) explores the “reinforced” stereotypical gender roles as represented in the Egyptian primary school textbooks. This observation underscores the need for a critical examination of educational materials to mitigate the perpetuation of such limiting stereotypes. A similar study conducted by Batineh and Keyode (2018) found that first-grade school textbooks in Oman exhibit bias and imbalanced representation of gender. The study reached this conclusion after investigating gender illustrations, roles, and firstness in the Omani public schools' textbooks. In the same vein, Alkhadra et al. (2022) report sexist language and sexist content in Arabic Language and Social/Civic Education Jordanian textbooks. The findings illuminate a systematic portrayal of women as either absent, marginalized, or passive, relegating them to restricted societal roles. In stark contrast, men are consistently depicted as having complete ownership of resources and spaces. This critical analysis underscores the urgent need for a re-evaluation of educational materials to address and rectify the perpetuation of such biased representations. Aoumeur (2014) used the feminist critical discourse analysis framework to analyze male and female representations in three Algerian primary school textbooks. The results of this study suggest that gender roles reflect traditional, stereotypical, and binary male/female division. Moreover, the findings indicate that patriarchal assumptions about gender are still dominant in these textbooks. In the Jordanian context, Edres (2022) employed a qualitative methodology to analyze gender representation in three volumes of three mathematics textbooks. The findings demonstrate the “legitimatization of some unbalanced gendered representations” which are likely to affect female students' ability to project themselves into the labor market (Edres, 2022, p. 18). The situation in Indonesia where Arabic is taught as a foreign or a second language is not different. Kuraedah et al. (2023) examined gender representation in three Arabic textbooks by using thematic analysis methodology. The study found that gender representation in government-endorsed Arabic textbooks is verbally and visually dominated by men and conventionally stereotyped. Similarly, Muassomah et al. (2023) examined the representation of gender in *Al-'Arabiyyatu baina Yadaika* (ABY) Arabic language textbook tailored for non-native Arabic speakers and revealed significant imbalance in the representation of male and female textually and visually. The research contends that this series wields considerable influence in shaping students' views, beliefs, and cultural ideologies. The study by Izzuddin et al. (2021) reported similar findings after investigating gender representation in *Al-'Arabiyyah li al-Jamī* series in Indonesia. The findings claim a high degree of bias in women portrayal, order of mention, and male-to-female ratios.

While numerous inquiries have scrutinized the portrayal of gender and associated biases within Arabic school textbooks across diverse contexts, a discernible gap exists in the exploration of the linguistic methodologies employed by textbook authors to communicate with their primary audience—male and female students. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the linguistic strategies deployed by authors of Arabic school textbooks with the specific aim of promoting gender equality within educational materials. Central to the inquiry are the following research questions:

- 1) How do the authors of Arabic school textbooks address male and female students given the fact that Arabic verbs, nouns, and pronouns are inherently gendered?
- 2) Do the linguistic strategies employed in the school textbooks promote gender equality among the target students?
- 3) Do different Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Arab contexts exhibit variation in the use of gendered terms in school educational materials?

### III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

To answer the present research questions, this study utilizes qualitative content analysis research method which “uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text” (Krippendorff & Weber, 1987, p. 9). The inferences provide valuable insights about the reality of gender discourse in Arabic school textbooks and can be used to identify patterns, trends, and possible disparities. The content analysis methodology is informed by feminist stylistics (Mills, 1995) which “aims to account for the way in which gender concerns are linguistically encoded in texts” (Montoro, 2014, p. 346). Feminist stylistics has explored the grammatical and lexical elements of both literary and non-literary texts, as well as supra-sentential and discursal devices. The present study utilizes the investigation of lexical elements and how they contribute to gender representation.

#### A. Materials

The data for this study originates from a selection of secondary school textbooks employed in public schools across various subjects within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. This educational stage was targeted in this research because it is crucial in shaping students' characters and their future social and professional roles. The Bahraini context is represented by the textbook "Education for Citizenship and Human Rights (301)", published in 2021 and was designed for secondary school students. In Kuwait, the chosen textbook is "Dealing with Institutions", an elective course that was published in 2021 and intended for secondary school students. The Omani context is reflected in the textbook "Your Career Path", instructed to Grade eleven students and was published in 2020. In the Qatari educational setting, the selected book is the "Arabic Language Course", taught to tenth-grade students and published in 2022. The Saudi material involves the textbook "Decision-making in Business 1-1", published in 2022 and utilized in the second grade of secondary school. The UAE is represented by the textbook "Social Studies and National Education", taught to tenth-grade students, and published in 2017. All the textbooks used in this research are published by the respective ministries of education in the GCC countries, and they are readily accessible online at no cost. It is noteworthy that the educational policies of GCC countries are harmonized through the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS), an intergovernmental regional organization headquartered in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and can be accessed at this website (<https://www.abegs.org/home>).

### B. Data Collection

The data collection process involved an examination of the aforementioned textbooks, wherein distinct lexical choices employed by the textbook authors to reference or communicate with the target student audience were identified. The address forms utilized in each textbook were initially compiled individually, followed by a comparative analysis to discern variations across the different GCC countries.

### C. Sampling and Semantic Validity Checks

Sampling validity is integral to the methodological framework of this research, as it scrutinizes the extent to which the chosen sample accurately represents the broader population under investigation. The selection of textbooks in this study deliberately encompasses a diverse range of sources, each hailing from a distinct Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country and spanning various academic subjects.

Semantic validity, a crucial facet of this study's methodological approach, is employed to ascertain the coherence in meaning among diverse address forms used within the selected textbooks. This meticulous analysis serves the dual purpose of ensuring semantic consistency and categorically establishing that these forms pertain to the same conceptual domain. The corpus of this study, delineated by the assortment of textbooks, employs a spectrum of nouns to denote the recipients of educational material. These include terms such as *'aṭṭāleb*, *'almut'alleṃ*, *'aṭṭullāb*, *'aṭṭālibah*, *'aṭṭallibāt*, *zīl*, *'almut'allimīn*, *alqare'*, *'aṭṭalabah*, *'almut'allimūn*, and *'aṭṭalabah*. These nouns, in conjunction with their associated verbs and pronouns, collectively designate the students, who constitute the primary beneficiaries of the educational content encapsulated within school textbooks.

### D. Data Analysis

To ascertain the potential existence or lack of gender bias or asymmetry in the address forms directed towards the readers i.e., the targeted students within the designated collection of school textbooks, a methodological approach employing content analysis was adopted. The examination of qualitative data derived from the textual content necessitated the formulation of the coding frame, designed to concentrate on elements directly pertinent to the research questions (Schreier, 2012). Inductive categorizing was used, i.e., the categories were derived directly from the data upon reading the textbooks. The framework divided the gendered linguistic references into three categories, namely nouns, verbs and pronouns. The first category encompasses the various gendered nominal strategies used in the introductions of the textbooks that represent the corpus of this study. The nouns that refer to students comprise both singular and plural words. The verbal category classifies the occurrences into two types: gendered and gender inclusive verbs. The gendered pronouns are divided into second person and third person pronouns while the use of first-person pronouns in Arabic makes the verb gender inclusive.

## IV. RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study in relation to the research questions. The careful reading of the sample textbooks that represent the different GCC secondary education systems classified the gendered words into nouns, verbs, and pronouns. The primary scanning of the texts indicated that the gendered vocabulary noticeably occurs in the books' prefaces and the activities and exercises at the end of each lesson. Book prefaces usually introduce the goals, the book structure, and the target audience. The data relevant to the analysis is located in the texts that refer to or engage the book readers. The activities at the end of the lessons employ instructional verbs to directly ask the students to practice certain tasks and evaluate their learning. These verbs are usually gendered in Arabic grammar. The data is presented in the following sub-sections.

### A. Nouns

As Table 1 below shows, all nouns that refer to the Bahraini textbook readers are exclusively masculine. The most frequently used word is *'aṭṭāleb* (the student). The lexical item *'aṭṭullāb* (the students) occurred once. In two occurrences, the word *'almut'allem* (the learner) is used.

TABLE 1  
GENDERED NOUNS REFERRING TO STUDENTS IN THE BAHRAINI TEXTBOOK INTRODUCTION

English transliteration of the Arabic utterance	English Translation
iḥtiyāzāt 'aṭṭāleb (*sg-masc)	student's needs
alab'ād al sulūkiyyah liṭṭāleb (sg-masc)	student's behavioral dimensions
tamkīn 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc)	enabling the student
istaṭmaraha 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc)	invested by the student
yuhadded 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc)	the student decides
'adā' 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc)	student performance
yumakken 'almut'allem (sg-masc)	enables the learner
yu'alez 'almut'allem (sg-masc)	the student tackles ...
yatamakkan 'aṭṭullāb (*pl-masc)	the students are able

\*sg-masc stands for singular masculine and \*pl-masc stands for plural masculine

The introduction of the Kuwaiti textbook addresses mainly *'aṭṭāleb*, i.e., 'the male student' as demonstrated in Table 2 below. In nine out of ten occurrences, masculine nouns are used. The noun *'aṭṭāleb* (male student) and its derivatives appear six times; *'almut'allem* (male learner) appears three times, and the noun phrase *'abnā'ina wa banātina* (our sons and daughters) is used once. The last example contains the word *banātina* (our daughters) which is the only occurrence in the introduction to mention female students.

TABLE 2  
GENDERED NOUNS REFERRING TO STUDENTS IN THE KUWAITI TEXTBOOK INTRODUCTION

English transliteration of the Arabic utterance	English Translation
mawad tarbet 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc)	courses that connect the student
ta'wīd 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc)	getting the student used to
ṭāleb (sg-masc) al-marḥalah al-ṭhāniyyah	the secondary school student
ṭālebun (sg-masc) zād	a serious student
'azīzi 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc)	my dear student
'ism 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc)	student name
ṣaxsiyyat 'almut'allem (sg-masc)	the learner character
'asasiyyah lilmut'allem (sg-masc)	essential for the learner
'ila almut'allem (sg-masc)	to the learner
ḥādā alkitāb 'allaḍi nuqaddimuhu li 'abnā'ina wa banātina (pl-masc& pl-fem)	this book that we introduce to our sons and daughters

As illustrated in Table 3 below, the Omani textbook introduction contains ten examples of gendered nouns that refer to the book audience, i.e., the students. Six of these nouns address male students (*'aṭṭāleb*); one example refers to female students (*'aṭṭālibah*), and one occurrence addresses both male and female students in the plural form (*'aṭṭullāb wa 'aṭṭallibāt*). Two nouns in the data represent neutral gender, namely *zīl* which means 'generation' and *alfard* which means 'the individual'.

TABLE 3  
GENDERED NOUNS REFERRING TO STUDENTS IN THE OMANI TEXTBOOK INTRODUCTION

English transliteration of the Arabic utterance	English Translation
'ansītah tu'īn 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc)	activities that help the student
la ḡina liṭṭālibi 'anha (sg-masc)	it is indispensable to the student
xairu mu'īn liṭṭāleb (sg-masc)	the best help for the student
'azīzi 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc)	dear student (male)
'azīzati 'aṭṭālibah (sg-fem)	dear student (female)
mutāh'amam 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc)	available to student
'alxiyarāt liṭṭālabah (pl-masc)	options for students
'ilaikum 'abnā'ī 'aṭṭullāb wa 'aṭṭallibāt ḥādā 'alkitāb (pl-masc&pl-fem)	this book is for you my sons and daughters: the students
'izād zīl wa'ī (sg-masc)	creating an informed generation
binā' aṣṣaxsiyyah almutakamilah lilfard (sg-masc)	developing a holistic character of individuals

Table 4 demonstrates that, in the introduction of the Qatari textbook, only three gendered nouns are found that refer to the book readers, the students, and all are masculine. These nouns are *'almut'allimīn*, *'almut'allem*, *'aṭṭāleb*. The last example occurs as the head of the noun phrase *'azīzi 'aṭṭāleb* (dear student) which appears once in the beginning of each unit throughout the book.

TABLE 4  
GENDERED NOUNS REFERRING TO STUDENTS IN THE QATARI TEXTBOOK INTRODUCTION

English transliteration of the Arabic utterance	English Translation
tuqaddem lil mut' allimīn (pl-masc)	to introduce to the learners
āfāq 'almut' allem (sg-masc)	learners' horizons
'azīzi 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc) (Once in the beginning of every unit).	Dear student

The introduction of the Saudi textbook uses a variety of words to refer to students: the audience of the book. The plural masculine noun 'aṭṭalabah (the male students) occurs twenty-one times; another form of plural masculine nouns 'aṭṭullāb (the male students) is used six times, and the singular masculine noun 'aṭṭāleb (the male student) occurs eight times in the book introduction text. In addition to these three nouns that are derived from the same root *ṭalaba* (sought knowledge), two other nouns 'almut' allem (the male learner) and 'alqare' (the male reader) are used once each as a reference to the book audience. It is obvious that no example of any reference to the feminine noun exists in the introduction part of the book.

TABLE 5  
GENDERED NOUNS REFERRING TO STUDENTS IN THE SAUDI TEXTBOOK INTRODUCTION

English transliteration of the Arabic utterance	English Translation
ta' hīl 'aṭṭalabah, tamkīn 'aṭṭalabah, damz 'aṭṭalabah, naql 'aṭṭalabah, tazweed aṭṭalabah, 'abna' ina wa banātina 'aṭṭalabah (21 occurrences) (pl-masc) except the last phrase where banātina is pl-fem)	Qualifying students, enabling students, integrating students, transferring students, providing students, our sons and daughters the students
'al' afḍal liṭṭullāb, muṣammam liṭṭullāb, tumnah liṭṭullāb (pl-masc) (6 occurrences)	The best for students, designed for students, granted to students
'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc) (8 occurrences)	the student
dōr 'almut' allem (sg-masc)	the role of the learner
jashul 'ala al qare' (sg-masc)	easy for the reader

Table 6 shows a variety of nouns that refer to student audience in the UAE textbook. All example nouns identified in the introduction part are masculine. Majority of them are derived from the root *ṭalaba* (sought knowledge), such as *tullāb* (pl-masc), 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc), *ṭullāban* (pl-masc), 'aṭṭullāb (pl-masc), 'aṭṭalabah (pl-masc). The other nouns found are 'almut' allem (the male learner), 'almut' allimūn (the male learners), and 'alqare' (the male reader). The noun phrase *azzumalā' al' afādel* (Dear colleagues) is used once to address the teachers who are expected to teach the book. The phrase head and the adjective qualifying it are both masculine nouns.

TABLE 6  
GENDERED NOUNS REFERRING TO STUDENTS IN THE UAE TEXTBOOK INTRODUCTION

English transliteration of the Arabic utterance	English Translation
abnā' anā' 'ala 'izzā' ṭullāb aṣṣaf al' āṣer (pl-masc), 'aṭṭāleb al' imarati (sg-masc), ṭullāban (pl-masc) ladaihim fahm, liṭṭāleb min xilāl (sg-masc), qudurāt 'aṭṭāleb (sg-masc), yuṣāẓẓe' 'aṭṭullāb (pl-masc), žil žadīd min 'aṭṭalabah (pl-masc), 'aṭṭullāb (8 occurrences) (pl-masc)	dear sons: the students of the tenth grade, the Emirati student, students who have good understanding, to the student through, student's abilities, encourage the students, a new generation of students
almut' allem (6 occurrences), (sg-masc)	the learner
jaxtalifu almut' allimūn (pl-masc)	Learners are diversified.
lada alqare' (sg-masc)	for the reader
takūna mustami' an (sg-masc)	to be a listener
jakūna 'lqari' ū (sg-masc)	The reader should be
azzumalā' alafādel (pl-masc).	Dear colleagues

## B. Verbs

Arabic is a highly inflected language. The Arabic verb conjugates according to the gender of the utterance subject. In school textbooks, the authors are expected to address both audiences of male and female students, and this is performed by both gendered nouns and relevant verb conjugations. Careful analysis of the textbooks under study shows the following.

### (a). Bahraini Textbook

The book selected to analyze the Bahraini educational material demonstrates that all lessons' objectives commence with verbs that refer to a third person singular masculine. For example, *yata' rraf* 'He identifies', *judrek* 'He realizes', *juṭammen* 'He appreciates', *jumaiyyez* 'He differentiates', *jastakṣef* 'He explores', etc. No reference to feminine audience exists in all lessons' statements throughout the book.

### (b). Kuwaiti Textbook

The selected book seems to follow the inductive approach to make the learning experience student-centered. To present the lesson and assess outcomes achievement, the book utilizes imperative verbs to involve students in various tasks and activities. In Arabic, the imperative verbs conjugate to express gender. However, all the examples found in the Kuwaiti textbook engaging activities use directives that exclusively address second person singular male students. For instance, 'uḍkur 'mention', 'uktub 'write', 'istakmel 'complete', 't'allam 'learn', 't'arraf 'identify', 'fakker 'think' *naqeš* 'discuss', *hāwel* 'try'.

## (c). Omani Textbook

The Omani textbook verb usage resembles the Kuwaiti linguistic strategy, i.e., addressing generically second person singular male students. Directive verbs like *'iqra* 'read', *naqəš* 'discuss', *'ibhaθ* 'search', *'istantež* 'infer' etc. In addition to the use of directives, second person masculine verbs in the present simple tense are also frequent. Examples include clauses like *wa anta tašīlu*-masc. *'ila ha ḏhi almarḥalah* 'While you reach this stage', *tastantež*-mas.c 'you infer', *targhab*-masc. 'you want', *tahtadzuha*-masc. 'you need', *tabhaθ*-masc. 'you search', etc.

## (d). Qatari and Saudi Textbooks

The Qatari and Saudi textbooks are also similar to the Bahraini, Kuwaiti, and Omani ones in using masculine present tense verbs and directives. The introduction parts of both textbooks use present simple verbs that indicate the expected course outcomes such as *satat 'arrafu* 'ala 'You will identify', *sataadrus* 'You will study', *sataakashafu laka* 'It will be made clear to you', *satat 'arraf wa tadrus* 'You will know and study', *satakun qadiran* 'You will be able to', *satuwādzeh* 'You will face', etc. All these future verbs are masculine, and all can be feminine forms. However, the feminine forms are not represented in the current data. The activities and tasks to be performed by students are expressed in masculine imperative verbs across both textbooks which are similar to the examples found in the Bahraini, Kuwaiti, and Omani textbooks. The figure below from page four of the Saudi textbook illustrates this strategy in a lesson on problem solving. All highlighted verbs in this activity are in the positive and negative imperative form. An imperative verb that addresses female students in Arabic appends the morpheme 'ī' at the end of the verb. For example, *ḥadded* 'specify', *lā tastaslem* 'don't surrender' addressing male students will be *ḥaddidī* and *lā tastaslimī* to address female students.

**الجدول 1-1: حل المشكلات: ما يجب فعله، وما لا يجب فعله**

إرشادات	ما يجب فعله	ما لا يجب فعله
ثق في قدرتك على حل المشكلات	• كن واثقاً من قدرتك على حل المشكلة.	• لا تستسلم بسهولة إذا لم تنجح إحدى الأفكار.
تعرف على المشكلات	• أنظر في المشاكل كفرص لإيجاد حلول مبتكرة.	• لا تتجاهل المشاكل فقد تتفاهم ويصعب حلها. • لا تلتزم بفكرتك المبدئية عن المشكلة، إذا كنت تواجه مشكلة في إيجاد حل.
حدد طريقة	• اتبع حدسك لحل المشكلات البسيطة. • اتبع طرائق منهجية للمشكلات المعقدة. • راجع المشكلة وأعد النظر فيها، وكذلك أهدافك والحلول الممكنة. • أنظر في المشكلة من زوايا مختلفة.	• لا تعقد الحلول، فقد يسبب ذلك عرقلة حل المشكلة، أو تكرارها. • لا تسع إلى الاستنتاجات.
اتخذ القرارات	• ضع في اعتبارك جميع البدائل قبل اختيار أحدها. • ثق بحدسك، لكن تأكد من أن الحقائق تدعم قرارك.	• لا تتخذ قرارات متهورية. • لا تشكك في قدراتك إذا شعرت أنك اتخذت القرار الصحيح.

Figure 1. Sample of Exclusively Masculine Instructional Verbs in a Lesson From the Saudi textbook

## (e). UAE Textbook

The UAE textbook employs a variety of linguistic strategies of verbs usage, mainly third person singular masculine verbs to express lessons' outcomes, first person singular neutral gender verbs to express the activities and tasks students do inside or outside the class, and sporadic imperatives. Instances of third person singular masculine verbs appear frequently under the heading "learning outcomes" in the beginning of every lesson. Interestingly, all outcomes' statements have no openly pronounced subjects in Arabic, and all sentences start with action verbs. All these verbs have masculine conjugations. Below is an image of page 22, unit 1 in the Emirati school textbook Social Sciences and National Education. The verbs are highlighted, and they appear at the beginning of each unit to present the unit objectives and outcomes. In all examples, the first verbal clause consists of 'He + the verb' such as *junāqəš* 'He discusses', *juqadder* 'He appreciates', *jaṭrah*, 'He puts forward', *jubarhen* 'He proves', *jata 'arraf* 'He identifies', *juwaḍdeh* 'He clarifies', *jubajjen* 'He clarifies', *jubdi ra 'jan* 'He puts forward an opinion'.





Figure 2. Sample of Exclusively Masculine Action Verbs in the Learning Outcomes of a Lesson From the UAE Textbook

Using the first person singular neutral gender verbs for students' activities and assessment tasks is unique to the Emirati and Bahraini materials. Obviously, this linguistic strategy is utilized for the purpose of being gender inclusive. The first-person singular pronoun 'I' in Arabic is grammatically and naturally generic. The verbal clauses *aqra'u wa astantižu* 'I read and infer', *'u'arriřu mafhūm* 'I define a concept', *ubayyinu atfaul* 'I clarify the interaction', *uħaallilu wa ufakkiru* 'I analyze and think', *uřannifu* 'I classify', *ufassiru* 'I interpret'. This strategy occurs frequently in the activity section towards the end of each lesson.

### C. Pronouns

The primary concern of this section is to link the findings on verbs to pronouns with the aim of identifying whether it is the masculine or the feminine gender that is commonly represented in the textbooks under discussion. Because Arabic verbs agree with their subject and object pronouns in number and gender, the data analysis reveals that similar to verb behavior, associated pronouns exclusively refer to masculine addressees both singular and plural. For example, in the introduction of the Kuwaiti textbook, there is the sentence *ta'wīd atṭaleb 'ala atfaķīr wa albaħθ 'an alma'lūmah li musa'adatīhi* 'getting the student (masc.) used to thinking and searching for the information to help him'. In addition, all imperative verbs mentioned in the previous sections as frequently occurring in the Kuwaiti, Qatari, and Saudi textbooks activities and tasks assume the implied subjects that immediately follow are masculine. For example, the verb *'uktub* has the deep structure *'uktub anta* 'write-you-masc.'. The concluding statement of the Omani textbook introduction calls the readers of the book to take care of the book by saying: *wanaď'ūk liħmuħafaḏah 'alaihi liħ'umma alfa'idah 'alaik wa ala zumalā'ik min ba'dik* 'We call on you to preserve [the book] so that you and other students after you can utilize it.' The Arabic counterpart of the English pronoun 'you' is expressed through the utilization of the morpheme *kaaf alxītāb* which is appended as a suffix to the verb *wanaď'ūk*, the genitive *'alaik*, and the noun *zumalā'ik*. Notably, advanced-level textbooks commonly avoid using diacritic markers, thereby leaving a degree of ambiguity regarding the gender of the addressee in the words *wanaď'ūk* and *'alaik*. The word *zumalā'ika* 'your classmates-masc' serves as a clarifying element, dispelling any potential ambiguity arising from the absence of explicit gender markers in the aforementioned words. Therefore, it is obvious that the statement under discussion addresses male students.

Despite the learning outcomes in the Omani textbook, page 29 (See Figure 3 below) commencing with the salutation "Dear male student/Dear female student" and expressing the expectation that, "by the end of this activity, you are expected to....," it is noteworthy that the highlighted action verbs initiating each outcome exclusively feature a latent masculine subject pronoun.





Figure 3. Sample of Exclusively Masculine Verbs and Latent Masculine Subject Pronouns in the Learning Outcomes of a Lesson From the Omani Textbook

## V. DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate the utilization of gendered nouns, verbs, and pronouns by Arabic school textbook authors in reference to the readers: the concerned students. This is interpreted in the light of the fact that Arabic has extensive inflectional morphology (Alhafni et al., 2022) and “cannot be easily neutralized in terms of gender bias” (Pavlos & Terry, 1994, p. 6). Notably, the linguistic representation of both male and female students is usually located in specific segments of the textbooks, namely, the introductions, classroom activities, and assessment tasks. These three parts of any textbook are significant because they set goals and expectations and engage the students in task-oriented activities. Addressing the second research question concerning the maintenance of gender representation balance, the data reveals a pervasive androcentric tendency across all textbooks constituting the research corpus. The conspicuous manifestation of androcentrism should not be construed as indicative of an inherent male bias within the Arabic language as posited by Sidiqi (2006, p. 133). The language possesses a robust inflectional system and a requisite lexicon that enables the expression of both male and female genders across diverse contexts. It is imperative to recognize that the locus of androcentrism lies not within the language per se but rather within the purview of those who employ it. Specifically, in the contextual domain of this investigation, it is the authors of educational textbooks who contribute to the perception of an androcentric educational discourse, thereby attributing the semblance of gender bias to the language itself. As the data has clearly shown, nouns designating the readership across the six textbooks are exclusively masculine although there is a possibility of making the style gender-inclusive by referring to both male and female students. The Omani textbook reveals that majority of gendered references pertain to male and plural students ‘*aṭṭāleb* and *aṭṭullāb*’. The frequent usage of ‘*aṭṭullāb* and ‘*aṭṭalabah*’ both referring to ‘the male students’ accords with what Wafa (2021, p. 383) critically implies: ‘when speaking in the plural, the default is male.’ The Saudi textbook, upon scrutiny, conspicuously lacks any instance of reference to a feminine reader in its introduction section, with all identified nouns being masculine. This pronounced androcentrism may be ascribed to the overarching theme of the book encapsulated in its title: Decision Making in Business. Although the textbook was published in 2022, the discourse within the textbook does not align with the empowerment initiatives outlined in the Saudi 2030 vision (Almathami et al., 2021). Despite slight variations observed across the six GCC textbooks, a discernible pattern emerges, indicating that the Bahraini and Saudi textbooks exhibit a higher degree of androcentrism compared to their GCC counterparts.

Minimal reference is accorded to female students within the purview of the six examined textbooks. Limited efforts are expended by the authors to engender a linguistically equitable representation of male and female students. This conspicuous bias in gender portrayal carries potential ramifications for female students, fostering a sense of invisibility and insignificance. Moreover, it has the propensity to reinforce entrenched gender stereotypes pervasive in Arab societies (Muassomah et al., 2023). The attitude of female students towards this evidenced androcentrism provides a prospective avenue for future research.

In seeking to unravel the underlying causes of this asymmetry in gender representation, a plausible hypothesis emerges: the textbook authors may either lack awareness of the inherent bias within their writing, or, alternatively, they may think

they purposefully employ a gender-inclusive style. Should the latter hypothesis prove accurate, the resultant imbalance may be construed as indicative of a sexist orientation, a perspective substantiated by Aleasa (1996).

Turning attention to verbs, it is worth noting that the UAE textbook partially adopts a gender-inclusive approach, employing neutral gender verbs with first person pronouns in classroom tasks and assessment activities; a strategy that was also reported in the Jordanian textbooks (Edres, 2022). This practice should be encouraged by concerned authorities in the GCC ministries of education. It has been noticed that this inclusive linguistic strategy is notably absent in the other GCC textbooks except for the two nominal examples in the Omani textbook as illustrated in the results section. This observation underscores a noteworthy distinction in the linguistic treatment of gender across the examined GCC educational materials.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This research endeavors to scrutinize androcentrism within the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) school textbooks by means of thorough linguistic analysis. It aspires to broaden the focus of language and gender scholars of education beyond primarily emphasizing imbalances in the portrayal of male and female students concerning illustrations, roles, and themes, as identified in the existing literature. Instead, it directs attention to the examination of biased language employed in addressing students, who constitute the principal recipients of school textbooks. The discerned findings underscore a pervasive androcentric inclination saturating the entirety of the research corpus. In contrast to presumptions positing an inherent bias within the Arabic language, the study elucidates that the focal point of androcentrism appears to reside with the authors of the examined textbooks. Otlowski (2003) advocates that it is imperative for educators and curriculum developers to cultivate a heightened awareness of gender-biased language usage and to discern and rectify instances of sexist biases within the educational materials tailored for classroom instruction.

Despite the contemporary publication of the selected textbooks, a misalignment with women empowerment initiatives in the six GCC countries becomes evident. Remarkably limited endeavors are dedicated to realizing linguistic gender equity within the educational materials of the six countries. This skewed representation holds potential repercussions for female students, reinforcing entrenched gender stereotypes within Arab societies. Consequently, the study propounds further research to reflect on the underlying causes of this gender asymmetry, investigating its ramifications on female students and probing the prospect that authors may lack awareness of the observed gender representation disparities.

A noteworthy recommendation emanating from this study advocates the cultivation of a more inclusive linguistic approach, thereby fostering neutral educational discourse. An actionable initiative that could be readily implemented by the GCC countries, given their economic potential, involves the development of digitally interactive versions of school textbooks. Such versions would facilitate personalized addressing of students based on their gender; a concept exemplified by the implementation of a comparable initiative by X (formerly known as Twitter). This platform allows individuals to customize settings to receive communications according to their gender, exemplifying linguistic adaptability. For instance, the default Arabic verb *استكشف* 'Explore' (addressing men), could be electronically transformed to *استكشفي* (addressing a female student), thereby catering to a more gender-inclusive educational discourse and environment.

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# Exploring Interpersonal Meanings of Report Cards and WISC-V Scores: A Case Study of a Gifted Child

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**Abstract**—Using a discourse approach, this study examines interpersonal meanings and judgmental resources constructed in academic assessment reports and Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children—Fifth Version (WISC-V) results. This research opens fresh avenues for analyzing the linguistic and cognitive elements of a gifted child’s early performance. The target child is a gifted student with a Fluid Reasoning score of 132 (98th percentile). In-depth English text analysis was performed on his eight academic report cards from the playgroup, prenursery, kindergarten, first two years of primary school, and one WISC-V test. The appraisal system serves as the study’s theoretical foundation, providing an interpersonal analysis of how behavior is evaluated and judged in the areas of capacity, normality, tenacity, veracity, and propriety. The findings indicate that when teachers’ observations and the WISC-V are integrated, a gifted student’s cognitive abilities and academic performance strengths and weaknesses can be revealed comprehensively. The alignment of teacher evaluations in the areas of languages, mathematics and science, as well as work habits and social attitudes and WISC-V test results, is also examined. This study contributes to the understanding of the behavioural patterns of gifted student and the implications for their education development.

**Index Terms**—interpersonal meanings, judgement, report cards, WISC-V, gifted student

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language is critical in report cards as it serves to show academic achievements as well as a tool for evaluating and reporting on students’ progress. Understanding a child’s behavioral nature, especially during their early years of schooling, is important to their educational development (Ardoin & Bowers, 2020). This study focuses on the performance of a gifted child and explores the interpersonal meanings and judgement resources realized in texts of elementary report cards. This study aims to explore the complex relationship between evaluative linguistics patterns and cognitive abilities by scrutinizing the language choices used in these reports and comparing them to the results of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children—Fifth Edition (WISC-V). Gifted children are expected to demonstrate exceptional cognitive abilities, but it is also essential to support their academic journey by learning more about their behavioral patterns and performance. The WISC-V is a popular standardized psychological test for evaluating a child’s intellectual capacity (Wilson et al., 2023). However, a single test result obtained from a specific moment may not accurately reflect the entire profile of a gifted child. A trustworthy investigation into a child’s academic behavior and social development can be found in the ongoing teacher evaluations in the report cards. Languages, mathematics and science, as well as work habits and social attitudes, are valuable areas used to investigate and gain a clear picture of how a gifted child behaves and performs in school. A novel combination of these two assessment methods allows for a more thorough evaluation of a student’s giftedness. The present study examines the case of a gifted Hong Kong student who was assessed using a combination of teacher comments and WISC-V results. It is beneficial to acknowledge and develop a gifted child’s strengths while also focusing on areas that require improvement. Identifying and comprehending their strengths and weaknesses can aid in providing appropriate interventions and promoting optimal development. Drawing on the Systemic Functional Linguistic (SLF) framework, this study uses a linguistic appraisal system developed by Martin and White (2005) to analyze interpersonal meanings in academic report cards and WISC-V results. Table 1 illustrates interpersonal semantics in relation to lexicogrammatical features.

TABLE 1  
 INTERPERSONAL SEMANTICS IN RELATION TO LEXICOGRAMMAR (adapted from Martin & White, 2005, p. 35)

Register	Discourse semantics	Lexicogrammar
<b>Tenor</b>	Appraisal	- evaluative lexis
	- engagement	- modal verbs and adjuncts
	- affect	- polarity
	- judgement	- pre/numeration
	- appreciation	- intensification
	- graduation	- repetition
		- vocation

The three subsystems that comprise the appraisal system are engagement, attitude, and graduation. “Attitude is a framework for mapping feelings as they are construed in English texts” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 42). Attitude can be further divided into affect when evaluating feelings, judgement when evaluating behavior, and appreciation when evaluating objects. “Judgement is concerned with resources for assessing behaviour” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 34). The present study investigates how judgement resources manifested as lexicogrammatical features appeared in texts of academic and psychological evaluation of a gifted child. The analysis focuses primarily on the appraisal framework’s Judgement and develops the following research questions:

RQ1) How do evaluative judgement resources in report cards position a gifted student in early childhood?

RQ2) What is the frequency distribution of judgement resources found in different stages of report cards of a gifted student?

RQ3) Do WISC-V results relate to the judgement resources used in school evaluations? How similar are these methods of assessing giftedness?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) serves as the guiding linguistic theory in this study. The language system, society, and human activity are symbolically related (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Language is used to express meanings and experiences, negotiate relationships, communicate shared values, and advance social understanding (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Martin & Rose, 2007). SFL is widely regarded as a valuable “descriptive and interpretive framework for viewing language as a strategic and meaning-making resource” (Egins, 2004, p. 2). Semantics, lexicogrammar, and phonology are represented as tri-stratal systems in language (Martin, 1999). The following section will introduce a finer level of reviewing lexicogrammatical features that realize interpersonal meanings in the texts.

### A. Appraisal System

SFL allows a researcher to use a systematic framework to analyze interpersonal lexicogrammatical features in texts. The appraisal is the lexicogrammatical-level analytical system that informs the present study. It expands on the work of Labov (1972) and Martin (2004), focusing on the role of interpersonal meaning in narratives. It is intended to comprehend and systematize lexicogrammatical features in texts that realize interpersonal significance (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Lexical words and clauses can encode readers’ attitudes and evaluations of the appraised items (Egins & Slade, 1997). Earlier significant works on appraisal in academic discourse include Hood’s (2010) analysis of academic writing, Macken-Horarik and Martin’s (2003) investigation of the resources of appraisal in narrative texts, and Rothery and Stenglin’s (2000) study of the function of appraisal in literary texts. The resources used in this appraisal study help the reader to understand the various attitudes and interpersonal meanings constructed in the academic report cards.

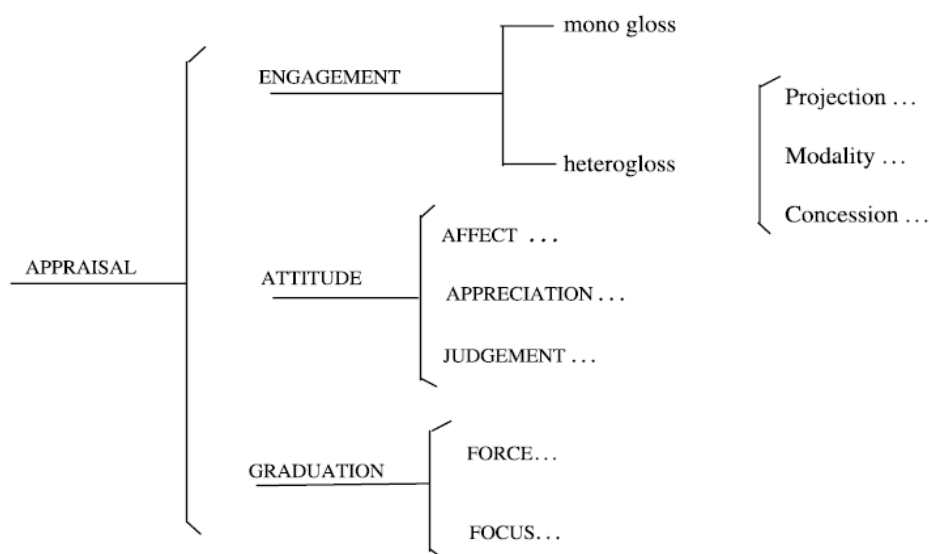


Figure 1. Model of Appraisal (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 54)

Attitude, engagement, and graduation are the three main areas of study within the appraisal (Martin & Rose, 2007). The semantic expression of these attitude-based meanings is primarily accomplished through lexicogrammatical choices. Affect, judgement, and appreciation are three subcategories of expressing and negotiating attitudes (Martin & Rose, 2007), depicted in Figure 1. Martin and White (2005, p. 52) define judgement as “our attitudes toward people based on how they behave and their character.” Judgement resources serve to evaluate behavior and ethics in terms of their

“normality,” “capacity,” “tenacity,” “veracity,” and “propriety.” Social esteem and social sanction are two examples of judgmental subcategories that we can either admire or criticize and praise or condemn (Martin & White, 2005). Examples of social sanction and esteem realizations are given in Tables 2 and 3.

TABLE 2  
JUDGEMENT-SOCIAL ESTEEM (adapted from Martin & White, 2005, p. 53)

SOCIAL ESTEEM	Positive (admire)	Negative (criticize)
normality “how special?”	normal, stable, familiar, often, usually, normal	unlucky, odd, peculiar, date, daggy, obscure
capacity “how capable?”	experienced, clever, learned, able to, capable, strong	mild, weak, sick, immature, helpless, stupid
tenacity “how dependable?”	careful, reliable, brave, cautious, patient, careful	timid, rash, impatient, weak, unreliable, unfaithful

TABLE 3  
JUDGEMENT-SOCIAL SANCTION (adapted from Martin & White, 2005, p. 53)

SOCIAL SANCTION	Positive (praise)	Negative (condemn)
veracity (truth) “how honest?”	honest, certain, true, honest, credible, probably	dishonest, deceptive, devious, blunt, deceitful, manipulative
propriety (ethics) “how far beyond reproach?”	good, ethical, fair, kind, caring, polite	unfair, corrupt, insensitive, arrogant, selfish, rude

According to Martin and White (2005, pp. 52-53), social esteem judgements involve the sharing of values in the formation of social networks (e.g., family, friends, colleagues, etc.). This category is concerned with the positive (admire)/negative (criticize) of “normality” (how special someone is), “capacity” (how capable they are), and “tenacity” (how resolute/dependable they are). Positive (praise)/negative (condemn) evaluations of behavior for “veracity” (how truthful they are) and “propriety” (how ethical they are) are examples of social sanction (p. 52). Furthermore, White (2008, p. 17) suggested that attitude must be differentiated further between inscribed (or explicit) attitude and invoked attitude (or implicit). In the inscribed/explicit category, the evaluation is explicitly realized through using a lexicogrammatical item with attitudinal value, such as *rudely talking* (White, 2008, p. 17). In the invoked/implicit category, attitudinal values are embedded within factual information; for example, *although he asked for quiet, the children kept on talking* (White, 2008, p. 17). As a result, the attitude subsystem can be realized either explicitly or implicitly. To summarize, in appraisal system, judgement resources are the tools that people use to evaluate and make sense of their experiences. These judgement resources are critical in shaping an individual’s behavior. When it comes to understanding gifted children’s behavior, examining judgement resources becomes especially important.

### B. Gifted Child and WISC-V

Gifted children have exceptional potential in one or more domains, such as intellectual, social, or other abilities (Porter, 2005). Their behavior frequently reflects their distinct cognitive and emotional processes. Early in life, gifted children can gradually reveal distinct cognitive traits, such as focusing and strong curiosity (Porter, 2005). Excellent memory, early reading ability, quick learning, and a strong desire to learn are just a few of the behavioral characteristics of gifted children that are frequently observed throughout their childhood and schooling (Gross, 1999). Numerous studies highlight the critical importance of early and accurate identification of children who may be gifted at creating educational programs that are tailored to their areas of interest and talent (c.f. Erden et al., 2022; Huang, 2008). The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) is currently the most popular intelligence test used by school psychologists and clinical psychologists to identify gifted children (Benson et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2020). It is a performance-based intellectual capacity test to evaluate general cognitive abilities in children and teenagers between the ages of 6 and 16 and 11 months (Wechsler, 2018). The test generates a full-scale IQ result by combining five subindex scores for verbal comprehension, visual spatial ability, fluid reasoning, working memory, and processing speed (Wechsler, 2018). The fifth edition of the WISC closely aligns with broad cognitive abilities in the significant psychological Cattell–Horn–Carroll theory (CHC) framework (Reynolds & Keith, 2017; Schneider & McGrew, 2018). The test has demonstrated strong reliability of its results and score interpretations because they reveal cognitive strengths and weaknesses, assisting numerous school psychologists and clinicians in determining whether gifted children require additional planning and recommendations (Dombrowski et al., 2018; Na & Burns, 2016).

## III. METHOD

A mixed-methods approach was used in the study, combining quantitative analysis of the WISC-V results with qualitative analysis of teachers’ comments. Written elementary report cards and WISC-V assessment of a gifted child serve as the study’s core data. Ernest, an 8-year-old Hong Kong Chinese boy, was chosen as the target child because of his exceptional cognitive abilities, ongoing academic success, and distinctive school progress. To investigate the interpersonal meanings and judgement resources embedded in the texts, a thorough linguistic analysis was conducted. These significant written texts create an extensive overview of the gifted child’s test results, teacher feedback, and

pertinent academic records. The following sections will discuss the target child's profile, specifics of the report cards, excerpts from the WISC-V results, and ethical concerns.

#### A. Profile of the Target Child

Ernest had some emotional difficulties in playgroup, nursery, and lower kindergarten, such as not speaking as much as other kids, sometimes crying uncontrollably during new tasks or hearing strange noises, and preferring routine and certain class rules. He is, on the other hand, very caring and respectful of his family, teachers, and peers. He could add and subtract negative and positive 20-digit numbers at the age of four, displaying excellent math abilities. He expressed a strong desire and an extraordinary memory to learn the phonics and vocabulary of English and Chinese, but he rarely initiated conversations. Due to his mixed behaviors, the community health specialist referred him to a pediatrician and a language therapist when he was four years old. Because Ernest is bilingual, two speech tests were given to him in English (US version) and Cantonese (Chinese version). Compared to a toddler at that age, the boy had a mild speech delay in English by one year and a more serious delay in Chinese by two years. He was diagnosed with no evidence of autism or Asperger's syndrome. Ernest later spent two years outside of school for language therapy training, and his speech delay improved significantly. He no longer has problems participating in school and is adapting well to the school program. The WISC-V test was given to him when he was 6 years and 8 months old. His classification as a gifted child made his behaviors more understandable. More of his behavior can be explained: for example, long attention span, rapid learning, and persistence. At the same time, his strong academic ability was sharply caught up and displayed after he entered primary 1. During these early years of schooling, Ernest received the same curriculum as other children in the school. No additional language enhancement or special gifted program was incorporated into his early education.

#### B. Summary of the Report Cards

In Hong Kong, children may start optional playgroup and pre-nursery school at age 2, one year before beginning fundamental kindergarten education at age 3. This study focused on observed behaviors, strengths, areas for improvement, and teacher–student interactions in school report comments for the target child from playgroup (age 2) to primary 2 (age 8). Through observations of the child's interactions with peers, participation in group activities, and general classroom behavior, teachers evaluated the child's social development and work attitude. The student's academic performance and social and learning skills were the main topics of the comments. The behavior of the student was assessed using written data derived from teacher comments that were gathered over six years. Information from the target child's report cards is summarized in Table 4.

TABLE 4  
SUMMARY DETAILS OF THE REPORT CARDS (PLAYGROUP TO PRIMARY 2)

Text(s)	School/Medium of Instruction	Date of Report	Age (year/month)	Areas of Assessment	Word(s)
Text 1	playgroup/English	2017 Aug	2Y2M	language, arts and crafts, music, physical development, social and self-care	197
Text 2	pre-nursery/English	2018 Jun	3Y	learning attitude and behaviors, social and emotional, English language, Chinese language, mathematics, physical fitness and health, music, arts and crafts	370
Text 3	kindergarten (K1) Chinese and English	2019 Jul	4Y1M	Chinese, English, Putonghua, preschool math, nature and life, individuals and groups, physical fitness and health, art and creativity	816
Text 4	kindergarten (K1) Chinese and English	2019 Jul	4Y1M	class observation report	218
Text 5	kindergarten (K2) English	2020 Jun*	5Y	comments from class teachers and Chinese teachers	79
Text 6	kindergarten (K3) English	2021 Jun*	6Y	comments from class teachers and Chinese teachers	118
Text 7	primary (P1)/English	2022 Jul	7Y1M	Chinese, general studies, physical education, conduct, English, mathematics, music and art	224
Text 8	primary (P2)/English	2023 Jul	8Y 1M	literacy, mathematics, mandarin, sciences, I.C.T., DT/ART, history and geography, music, physical education, work habits and social attitudes	925
Text 9		2022 Feb	6Y8M	WISC-V results and interpretations	330
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 reports</b>	<b>2017-2022</b>	<b>2Y2M-8Y1M</b>		<b>3277</b>

\*Note: These reports were created during COVID-19. The teaching and learning were conducted entirely via online recordings.

#### C. Remarks on WISC-V Results

The targeted student underwent a comprehensive intellectual assessment at 6 years and 8 months old using the WISC-V to evaluate his general cognitive abilities. Wechsler (2018) proposed that a child with an FSIQ of 120 or higher is gifted with superior intelligence. The target student achieved a Full-Scale IQ of 125. His overall performance

was classified as superior, placing him in the 95th percentile of intellectual functioning. That means he outperformed roughly 95% of the children his age in the American norm group. The target child is mildly gifted, with an FSIQ ranging from 120 to 129. Ernest is endowed with gifted intellectual potential in the fluid reasoning domain, with a score of 132.

TABLE 5  
COGNITIVE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE TARGET CHILD  
(WECHSLER INTELLIGENCE SCALE FOR CHILDREN-5<sup>TH</sup> EDITION AMERICAN ENGLISH VERSION)\*

Domains of Intelligence	Composite Scores	Percentile Rank	Classification
Fluid Reasoning	132	98th	Very Superior
Work Memory	125	95th	Superior
Processing Speed	120	90th	High Average
Visual Spatial	117	87th	High Average
Verbal Comprehension	95	37th	Average
<b>Full IQ Score</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>95th</b>	<b>Superior</b>

\* The mean of the scaled score is 100, with a standard deviation of 15.

As shown in Table 5, the child has exceptional abilities in the Fluid Reasoning domain, including fluid reasoning (98th percentile), working memory (95th percentile), processing speed (90th percentile), visual spatial (87th percentile), and verbal comprehension (37th percentile). Except for verbal comprehension (average), the student's scores in the other domains ranged from high average to very superior.

#### D. Ethical Concerns

All sensitive names, numbers, and information in the data that could reveal the identity of the target child were carefully coded. The targeted gifted child's parental consent was obtained in writing. With his parents' permission, the present study hopes to provide education professionals with a better understanding of the intricate behavioral patterns of gifted children to assist these children in their academic journeys.

### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research study highlight the significance of analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data in order to obtain a comprehensive assessment of a student's giftedness and behavior. The combination of the WISC-V results and teacher comments allowed for a reliable and meaningful evaluation of the student's early childhood behavior and development. The presence of various interpersonal meanings is revealed by an examination of the report cards. Evaluative terms such as positive or negative adjectives and modal adjuncts are used to express judgement, which is important in shaping the overall performance of the gifted child. An appraisal system evaluates a child's performance, accomplishments, and interpersonal meaning potential. It also denotes the teacher-student and peer relationship, frequently expressed using various evaluative lexis. The findings in this section will address the three research questions mentioned in the introduction. In Section A, an overview of evaluative judgement resources from report cards is presented. Section B examines the specific frequency distributions of judgement resources at various stages, and Section C looks at the connection between judgement resources and WISC-V results in the areas of languages, mathematics and sciences, and work habits and social attitudes.

#### A. Evaluative Judgement Resources in Report Cards

Martin and White (2005) define judgement as attitudinal resources toward people based on how they behave and their character, using two major categories: social esteem (i.e., normality, capacity, and tenacity) and social sanction (i.e., veracity and propriety). This section addresses the first research question, which is, "how do evaluative judgement resources in elementary report cards position a gifted student?" Table 6 illustrates appraising items, the lexicogrammatical realization(s) of Judgement categories.

TABLE 6  
EXAMPLE JUDGEMENT ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL ESTEEM AND SOCIAL SANCTION

Judgement	Subcategories	Selected appraising items	Example from the data [Text: Year (Y) Month (M)]
Social esteem	Normality	always	He <b>always</b> tries to complete tasks within the time constraints that have been set. [Text 8: 8Y1M]
	Capacity	good	He performs with a <b>good</b> sense of pulse and rhythm. [Text 7: 7Y1M]
	Tenacity	interest	He shows an <b>interest</b> in story books and enjoys reading with others. [Text 3: 4Y1M]
Social sanction	Veracity	certain	He has a <b>certain</b> understanding of himself and can distinguish the similarities and differences between himself and others. [Text 3: 4Y1M]
	Propriety	respect	He always <b>respects</b> the rights & property of other. [Text 8: 8Y1M]

Most judgement resources in report cards are "admire" in the social esteem categories and "praise" in the social sanction categories. In the texts, there are no direct and explicit "criticize" and "condemn" to describe negative behavior;



instead, negative behavior is expressed through invoked attitudinal resources. Normality describes the behavioral characteristic of being special or expected of a gifted child. “Modalities of usuality can be related to judgements of normality” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 54). In Text 8, for example, *he always tries to complete tasks within the time constraints that have been set*. The primary school teacher noticed he always completed the assigned tasks on time. Capacity is used to discuss a person’s ability; for example, *he performs with a good sense of pulse and rhythm* during the music lesson in Text 7. Tenacity is exhibited by someone who perseveres until they achieve their goal. This is about a person’s trustworthiness and dependability. In Text 3, *he shows an interest in story books and enjoys reading with others*. Lower kindergarten teachers express the gifted child’s consistency in developing reading habits through a lexical–grammatical choice of *interest*. The truthfulness or accuracy of behavior is addressed by veracity. The data’s use of veracity resources is extremely limited. In Text 3, for example, *he has a certain understanding of himself ... and others*. According to the lower kindergarten teacher, the gifted child has a clear and accurate understanding of the distinction between oneself and others. Propriety refers to the conduct that is proper and appropriate. In Text 8, the primary teacher praises the gifted child that *he always respects the rights & property of other*. A total of 176 appraisal items across 5 categories of judgement were found in the data, as shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7  
A SUMMARY OF THE DATA’S JUDGEMENT FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION

JUDGEMENT				
Social esteem	Subcategories	Grammatical realizations	Number	Percentage
	Normality	often (14), sometimes (7), average (6), always (5), familiar (1)	33	19%
	Capacity	can (64), able to (11), well (8), strength (7), good (6), excellent (4), superior (4), capable (3), produce (2), strong (2), better (2), great (2), powerful (1), smart (1), learned (1), sound (1), helpful (1)	120	68%
	Tenacity	interest (6), careful (4), reliable (2), initiative (2), enthusiasm (1), takes time (1)	16	9%
Social sanction	Veracity	certain (1)	1	0%
	Propriety	fair (2), caring (2), respect (1), sensitive (1)	6	3%
Total			176	100%

The appraisal items in the capacity and normality categories accounted for 68% and 19% of the total data, respectively. *Can* was the most frequently used item in the categories of capacity, *often* in the category of normality, *interest* in the category of tenacity, and *fair* and *caring* in the category of propriety. The frequency distribution of realizations of normality, capacity, propriety and veracity, is shown in Figure 2.

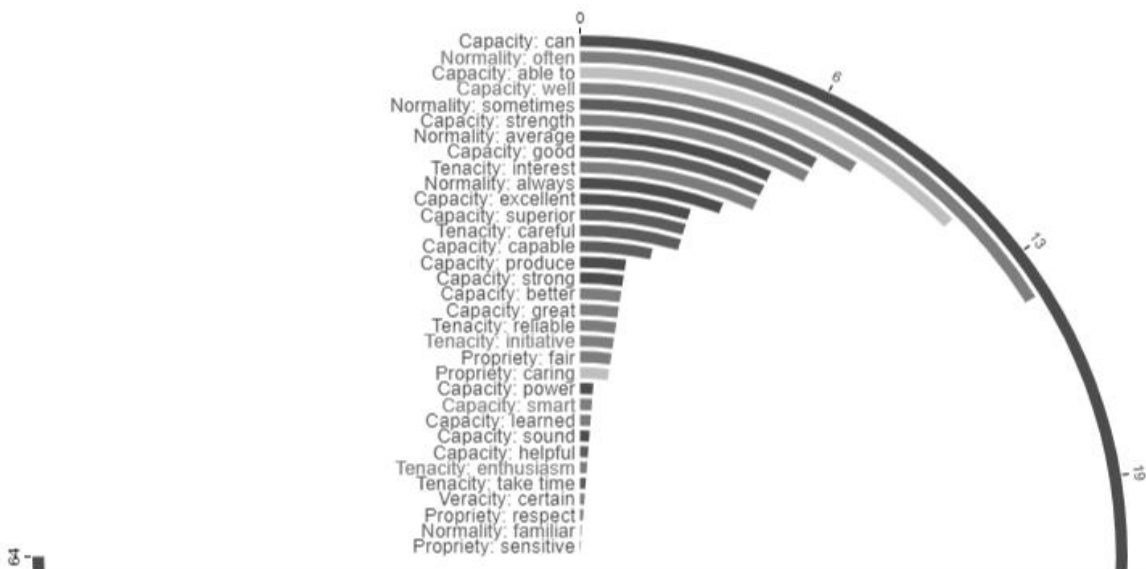


Figure 2. Examples and Frequency Distribution of Capacity, Normality, Tenacity, Veracity, and Propriety

*Can*, which had 64 items, was the most common item in the capacity category, as shown in Figure 3. The short extracts are introduced below as examples of capacity in the data.

- (1) He **can** complete various activities according to class instructions, get along with others harmoniously, and is willing to apologize and correct his behavior when he makes mistakes. [Text 4: 4Y1M]
- (2) He **can** identify and explain what it is to be a good team player. [Text7: 7Y1M]
- (3) He **can** plan investigations and can make careful observations in the lessons. [Text 8: 8Y1M]

(4) He **can** also move appropriately to a variety of music, as well as understanding and having awareness of how it is performed. [Text 8: 8Y1M]

The kindergarten and lower primary school teachers admired the gifted child’s capacity for social skills, like adhering to group rules and cooperating with others in extracts (1) and (2), as well as the gifted child’s own capacity for inquiry, observation, and comprehension of the lesson contents in extracts (3) and (4). The normality category’s most prevalent item, *often*, had 14 items. The extracts (5) to (8) are presented as illustrations of normality in the data.

(5) The toddler **often** responds to the teacher. [Text 1: 2Y2M]

(6) The toddler **often** enjoys himself while taking part in lessons. [Text 1: 2Y2M]

(7) The toddler **often** makes eye contact with the teachers. [Text 1: 2Y2M]

(8) During group activities, He picked up the number puzzles he **often** played and sat down to build them by himself. [Text 4: 4Y1M]

In Text 1 of the playgroup report, the teacher observes that the toddler behaves normally and consistently with other children his age: he *often* responds to the teacher, looks her in the eye, and enjoys the lessons in extracts (5) to (7). The gifted child’s interest in mathematics was first noticed by the lower kindergarten teacher in extract (8) of Text 4, who observed him frequently playing and building number puzzles. The target child has a relatively high score in fluid reasoning, which is commonly interpreted by school psychologists and teachers as mathematical talent (Green et al., 2017). Among all the reports, Text 4 is the earliest behavior observation related to mathematics. More detailed frequency distributions of these five judgement subcategories across different stages will be analyzed in Section B using data examples.

**B. Frequency Distributions of Judgement Resources in Different Stages**

This section offers valuable insights into the abilities, challenges, and areas of growth of the gifted child at three different stages, namely Stage I (playgroup and prenursery), Stage II (kindergarten), and Stage III (primary 1 and 2). Judgement resources in Texts 1 to 2 are counted in Stage I (playgroup and prenursery), Texts 3 to 6 are calculated in Stage II (Kindergarten), and Texts 7 to 9 are included in Stage III. Table 8 demonstrates the frequency distribution of the five Judgement subcategories across the three stages.

TABLE 8  
JUDGEMENT DISTRIBUTION PATTERNS OF DIFFERENT STAGES OF A GIFTED STUDENT

Judgement	Stage I (Playgroup and Prenursery)	Stage II (Kindergarten)	Stage III (Primary 1-2)
Social esteem: Normality	61% (n=17)	3% (n=2)	18% (n=14)
Social esteem: Capacity	36% (n=10)	79% (n=57)	70% (n=53)
Social esteem: Tenacity	4% (n=1)	13% (n=9)	8% (n=6)
Social sanction: Propriety	0% (n=0)	4% (n=3)	4% (n=3)
Social sanction: Veracity	0% (n=0)	1% (n=1)	0% (n=0)
<b>Total percentage (n=176)</b>	100% (n=28)	100% (n=72)	100% (n=76)

Figure 3 depicts the evolution of the Judgement categories over time in playgroup, preschool, kindergarten, and primary report cards. Stage I places a high proportion on normality (61%), Stage II emphasizes capacity (79%) and tenacity (13%), and Stage III concentrates on capacity (70%) and normality (18%). The disparity in Judgement resources may be caused by differences in educational goals and instructional approaches used at various academic levels.

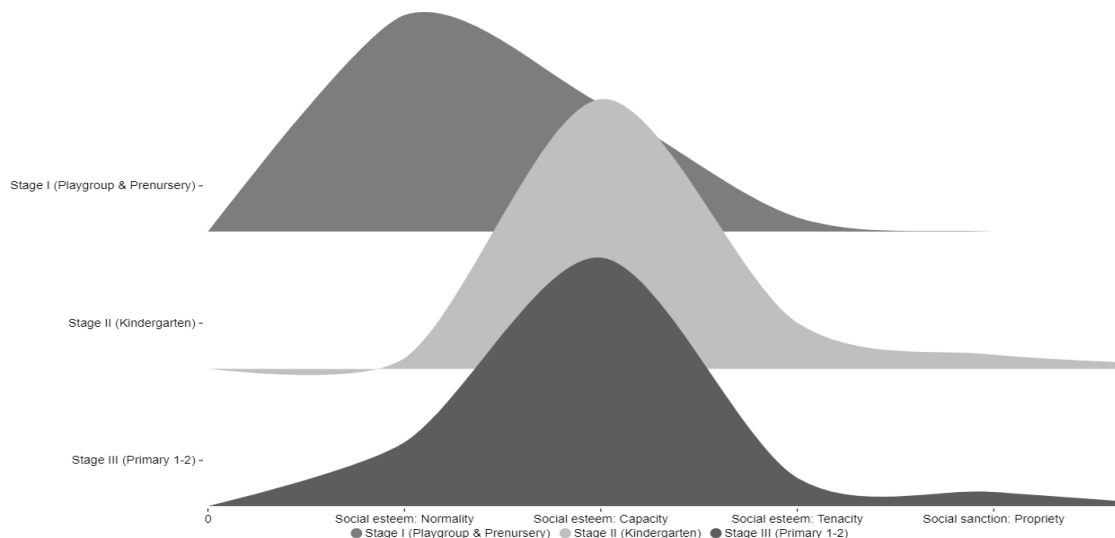


Figure 3. The Evolution of Judgement Resources in the Report Cards of a Gifted Student

In Stage I, playgroup and prenursery report cards frequently highlight normality (61%), as these are the age-appropriate milestones that children are expected to reach.

- (9) The toddler **sometimes** completes artistic tasks independently. [Text 1: 2Y2M]
- (10) The toddler can **sometimes** pick up small objects using a pincer grip. [Text 1: 2Y2M]
- (11) The toddler can **sometimes** express his/her emotions appropriately. [Text 1: 2Y2M]
- (12) The toddler is in **an early stage** of having **willingness** to communicate orally. (Text 2: 36M)

Teachers evaluate each student's progress to see if it is within the normal range for their age group. The emphasis is primarily on his typical development, as evidenced by the statements in extracts 9 and 10 that *he can sometimes pick up small objects using a pincer grip* and *can sometimes complete artistic tasks independently*, as well as the example in extract 11 that *he can sometimes express his emotions appropriately*. The emphasis on normality is intended to lay a solid foundation for future learning and social adaptation. Furthermore, teachers evaluate the child's language acquisition process, such as *in an early stage*. Although the speech assessment has not yet been conducted at the prenursery school, we can see in Texts 1 and 2 that the playgroup and prenursery teachers used the normality resources, *sometimes, an early stage* as invoked judgement patterns to describe how the student expresses himself verbally. In extract (12), *the toddler is in an early stage of having willingness to communicate orally*, implying that the student's verbal speaking ability may have a delay.

Stage II, kindergarten, marks the transition from prenursery to a more structured learning environment. Teachers at this stage are more concerned with a student's learning potential. The patterns of the judgement resource in the reports also shifted from normality to capacity and tenacity. Data indicate that in kindergarten reports, the focus is on the cognitive ability of the child's interest in extract (13) and learning ability in extracts (14) and (15).

- (13) He has an excellent memory and a **strong** sense of academic interests. [Text 6: 6Y]
- (14) His schoolwork is accurate, and his observation is **strong** and **powerful**. [Text 5: 5Y]
- (15) He is a **well-mannered** and **smart** learner. [Text 6: 6Y]

Additionally, at this stage, educational goals are more academically focused, and it becomes important for students to understand and apply new concepts, as shown in extracts (16) and (17).

- (16) He displays **excellent** understanding of the learning concepts in class. [Text 6: 6Y]
- (17) He **produces** attractively presented work in an organized way. [Text 6: 6Y]
- (18) Take the **initiative** to introduce your work to others, and be willing to display your work in the activity room. [Text 3: 4Y1M]

The teachers' recognition and appreciation of Ernest's talent is likely to be reflected. The reports made extensive use of words like *strong, powerful, well-, smart, excellent, and produces attractively presented work*. Apart from exceptional cognitive abilities, the report cards show the child's initiative to overcome the challenges presented by his speech delay, as found in extract (18). The gifted child with speech delay began to exhibit his giftedness more frequently in kindergarten than in prenursery, such as *a strong sense of academic interests, smart learner, powerful observation, and excellent understanding of the learning concepts*, as well as taking more *initiative* to communicate with others to fulfill the demands of the curriculum.

In Stage III, in addition to the child's normal behavior and social skills in kindergarten, primary report cards cover the child's capacity with regard to academic progress, performance, and assessment results, such as in extract (19), noting *he performs well* on musical instruments; in extract (20), noting his *good progress*; and in extract (21), where *he is able to carry out assignments to the best of his ability*.

- (19) He performs **well** when playing a number of music instruments. [Text 8: 8Y1M]
- (20) He has made **good** progress this year. [Text 8: 8Y1M]
- (21) He is receptive to the teacher's suggestions and is **able to** carry out assignments to the best of his ability. [Text 8: 8Y1M]

In Stage III, we discovered that the ability of gifted children to achieve academic excellence is well-established and acknowledged, as can be shown in extracts (22) and (23).

- (22) Award (s): gold award of English subject; gold award of Chinese subject; gold award of physical education; silver award in mathematics; silver award in music; champion for English scheme vocabulary & grammar 2022; year-end star student award [Text 7: 7Y1M]
- (23) Award(s): champion of in-class mathematics competition for 12 times; best spellers for English vocabulary for 15 times; weekly star student awards for 6 times; term star student awards for Chinese subject for 2 times. [Text 8: 8Y1M]

The gifted child's speech delay may still affect his language and communication abilities, so normality resources were still considered. The gifted child has shown evidence to overcome obstacles in order to succeed academically; for instance, the child is *well-behaved and actively joins discussions, always willing to share his ideas, is able to explain his findings in a group*, as demonstrated in extracts (26) to (28).

- (26) **Well-behaved** and actively joins discussion. [Text 7: 7Y1M]
- (27) He is a good team member who is **always** willing to share his ideas. [Text 8: 8Y1M]
- (28) He is able to work in a group to collect results and is **able to** explain his findings. [Text 8: 8Y1M]

In conclusion, the primary system demands students to attain a certain level of academic performance. In the data, the gifted child's report cards utilize judgement resources to realize his capacity and normality for effective communication and his development and performance in meeting age-appropriate benchmarks.

### C. Relationship Between WISC-V Results and Interpersonal Resources in Report Cards

This section demonstrated the relationship between the gifted child's WISC-V results and the judgement resources in the elementary report cards in the areas of languages and mathematical abilities, as well as work habits and social attitudes. In the WISC-V test, cognitive strength is indicated by a higher domain score, while a lower score suggests cognitive weakness (Schneider & McGrew, 2018; Wasserman, 2019). If a person has a high level of cognitive potential, specific behavioral traits can be observed as early as childhood (Renati et al., 2023). The gifted child of the present study was rated very superior in the domain of fluid reasoning, superior in the domain of working memory, high average in the domains of processing speed and visual spatial, and average in verbal comprehension. These cognitive abilities are the foundation for the growth of the behavior of the gifted child and are manifested in the various performance areas during early schooling.

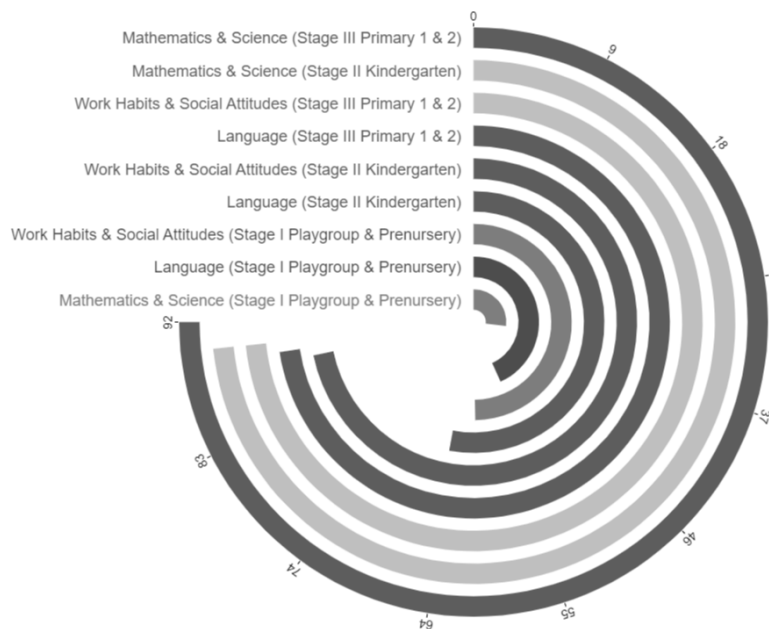


Figure 4. The Gifted Child's Performance in Key Subjects in Early Childhood Education

It is frequently thought that gifted children should be able to excel in different subjects due to their high levels of cognitive and intellectual ability (Koshy, 2012). Figure 4 depicts the gifted child's assessment/test marks in language, mathematics, and science, as well as work habits and attitudes, at Stages I, II, and III. Language (53%) and mathematics and science (33%) were significantly below average in Stage I; in Stage II, mathematics and science, as well as work habits and attitudes, caught up to 90% and 88%, respectively. In Stage III, all key subjects were performed excellently, with an average score of 90%, equivalent to Grade A.

Verbal comprehension (VC) is the ability to understand and communicate shared knowledge verbally (Wechsler, 2018). Compared to other superior domains in the WISC-V report, the target child's VC scores are only average. He had some difficulty understanding verbal instructions during the WISC-V test, and it is suggested that he work on areas such as public speaking. These WISC-V recommendations are also aligned with teacher evaluations at various stages. The gifted child's relatively weaker verbal skills are mirrored by the teachers in extracts (29) to (31):

(29) The toddler is in **an early stage** of following and carrying out instruction from teachers. [Text 2: 3Y]

(30) There is **still room for improvement** in its language development. It is advisable to encourage the expression of opinions and ideas. [Text 4: 4Y1M]

(31) Reading aloud texts and stories more **often** may help him become a more fluent speaker. [Text 8: 8Y1M]

According to Stanley (1990), male children who are mathematically gifted may not have exceptionally strong verbal skills. The target child is not very advanced in *following and carrying out instructions* in extract (29), so he is advised to *encourage the expression of opinions and ideas* in extract (30) and *read aloud texts and stories* in extract (31) to become a fluent speaker. In order to facilitate effective communication and support his overall academic growth, teachers advise him to develop verbal skills.

Visual *spatial* (VS) skill is the ability to recognize shapes and patterns in a specific order (Wechsler, 2018). Ernest has a high average score in this VS domain. The present study believes that spatial cognition is important in acquiring written language, especially in Chinese characters.

(32) The Chinese font is neat and beautiful. His schoolwork is accurate. The coursework's content is rich and creative. [Text 5: 5Y]

It can be seen in extract (32) that Ernest can write *beautiful*, *neat*, and *accurate* Chinese words. Chinese characters have a long history that began with hieroglyphics, which evolved from graphical representations over time. These characters are visual symbols that convey meaning rather than phonetic characters (Feldman & Siok, 1999). Ernest, who has advanced visual spatial skills, is aware of the subtleties of character formation, and he can accurately memorize and reproduce Chinese characters. This laid the groundwork for his further writing development.

Fluid reasoning (FR) refers to a person's ability to interpret complex patterns and predict the next step (Wechsler, 2018). It is closely related to analytical thinking and logic. The target child ranks very superior in FR skills, which are the strongest of all his intelligence domains. Strong FR skills enable the child to quickly process and interpret new information. Mastery of mathematical concepts indicates sophisticated problem-solving abilities combined with high fluid reasoning abilities, as shown in extracts (33) to (35):

(33) He is particularly **interested** in mathematics. He likes to play with mathematics teaching aids, and he already understands the basic concepts of number and various combinations. [Text 4: 4Y1M]

(34) His performance is above year group **expectation**. He assimilates new concepts **well** and has shown that he is **willing** to try new mathematical strategies. [Text 8: 8Y1M]

(35) He has demonstrated a **sound** understanding of division as the inverse of multiplication. [Text 8: 8Y1M]

The comments in the report cards were consistent with WISC-V results in noting the child's exceptional eagerness to learn and strong problem-solving skills in mathematics and sciences. With a very superior FR ability, Ernest also performs exceptionally well in written tests in general studies and languages. He uses his strong analytical thinking abilities in the multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank sections to interpret the questions, rule out the less likely options, and predict the right answers.

Working memory is the ability to memorize information while maintaining focused attention (Wechsler, 2018). The targeted child has ranked superior in this domain. The working memory capacity is essential for task completion, such as remembering task sequences and regulations. Extract (36) demonstrates his superior ability in the domain of working memory. The capacity resources of *can organize work* and *can work independently* are employed.

(36) He mostly takes pride in own work, **can** organize work, **can** work independently, and can operate in groups. [Text 8: 8Y1M]

Working memory ability is closely related to work habits, which include self-motivation skills to keep track of his own work in terms of time management and planning. Gifted students have high expectations of themselves, and they strive for excellence, as evidenced by extracts (37) and (38):

(37) He **produces** an exceptionally high standard of work. [Text 5: 5Y]

(38) He **always** exceeds expectation with the quality of his work. [Text 6: 6Y]

(39) He works confidently in all areas with **enthusiasm** and **initiative**. [Text 5: 5Y]

Tenacity resources *enthusiasm* and *initiative* are included in extract (39) to reflect his ability to maintain focus on tasks of interest. Domain of working memory is beneficial to the processing speed (Wechsler, 2018). Working memory aids in remembering and storing information, whereas processing speed is the capacity to quickly retrieve information and carry out repetitive cognitive tasks with ease (Wechsler, 2018). The present study believes that advanced processing speed aids not only in quickly comprehending individual tasks but also in adapting to social norms and expectations, allowing one to respond appropriately to group requirements.

(40) He is **willing to participate** in activities or work with friends. [Text 4: 4Y1M]

(41) He always **respects** rights and property of other, completes homework appropriately, is considerate and helpful, behaves appropriately, accepts responsibility, expresses needs and wishes. [Text 8: 8Y1M]

The target child demonstrated positive work attitudes, as realized by the Judgement propriety resources *willing to participate* in group projects and appropriate behavior such as *respects rights* and *considerate and helpful*, as shown in extracts (40) and (41). Positive propriety resources in the texts indicate that the student demonstrated good social skills by cooperating well with his classmates. These findings point to interesting connections between a child's cognitive ability and his behaviors evaluated by teachers in early education. The WISC-V result provides useful information about cognitive abilities; teachers' observations, based on firsthand knowledge of the child's performance in a classroom setting, provide accurate and ongoing information about the child's academic performance and social-emotional development. These combined perceptions can aid us in comprehending the strengths, weaknesses, and potentials of the gifted child.

## V. CONCLUSION

Using the framework of appraisal system, specifically judgement resources (Martin & White, 2005), this study aims to investigate the interpersonal meanings and judgement resources of a gifted student's report cards in his early years. This study demonstrates how appraisal system can work in conjunction with WISC-V scores to assess giftedness. The results from RQ1 showed that the two main categories of report cards that portray the gifted child as an exceptional learner with high academic achievement and potential are capacity and normal resources. *Can* and *often* are largely used to construct evaluative meanings about a student's ability, achievement, and potential. RQ2 findings revealed some

interesting patterns in the frequency distribution of judgement resources across the various stages of report cards. Stage I (playgroup and preschool) focuses on normality resources, whereas Stages II (kindergarten) and III (primary P.1 to P.2) focus on capacity resources. It has been noted that as students move through the various stages of the educational system, their educational needs alter, and so do their resources for evaluative judgement. Negative behavior, in particular, can be constructed through invoked expressions such as *sometimes, an early stage* for falling behind age-appropriate goals. The comparison of WISC-V scores in the specific areas of verbal comprehension, visual spatial reasoning, fluid reasoning, working memory, and processing speed with judgement resources was presented in RQ3. The WISC-V results overlapped with the evaluative linguistic practices used in report cards; thus, the two methods of evaluating giftedness have high similarities. In order to fully comprehend the capabilities and potential of a gifted student, the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches is also emphasized. The present study is a discourse analysis that provides insight into understanding gifted children's judgement resources. It does, however, have some limitations, including a lack of comparison with the reports of non-gifted students. This investigation could be extended to compare the judgement resources of non-gifted students and consider other factors that may influence the use of evaluative judgement resources, such as differences in how private and public teachers conduct school evaluations. The present study hopes to efficiently combine the efforts of educators, linguists, and psychologists in order to better understand the complex behavioral patterns of these gifted students and, ultimately, to maximize their strengths and successful development.

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# The Linguistic Features in the Poetry of Ismail Al-Saudi: A Study of Structure and Meaning

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**Abstract**—This study aims to investigate the prominent linguistic features in the poetry collection *I Feel Different* by the poet Ismail Al-Saudi. It seeks to highlight the role of language and grammar in constructing literary texts and uncovering their aesthetic and intended meanings. The study is divided into four main themes: the empty exception and its significance in the poetry collection, prohibition and command and their significance in the poetry collection, interrogation and its significance in the poetry collection, and justification and its significance in the poetry collection. The introduction provides an overview of the importance of language and its role in literary text interpretation. The study employs both descriptive and analytical approaches to explore the linguistic features. It begins by presenting an overview of the linguistic features as mentioned in language and grammar books. Subsequently, the analytical study reveals the purposes and full meanings of these linguistic features in the poetic verses.

**Index Terms**—exception, prohibition, command, interrogation, justification

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language is the active agent by which a writer's creativity and success are measured. It serves as an indicator of the writer's ability to construct and tighten the text. Language transforms the text from a mere piece of writing into an engaging reading experience that compels the recipient to seek interpretations embedded within the text. Consequently, the recipient transcends the original text to another text, as “the text is usually transcendent, meaning that it goes beyond its own boundaries” (Al-Khashab, 1995, p. 3).

The text is what creates questions before the recipient and leads them to ask them while reading. Its role lies in presenting the written material not as the writer wants it, but as dictated by the words and linguistic techniques used. It serves as the true revealer of the writer's purpose and serves as the foundation for a new text born from the reader's creativity that “is accomplished through their interaction with the text, employing a set of organized procedures in the reading process” (Abdulwahid, 1996, p. 19). Therefore, the reader is an active participant in presenting the written text according to the tools they possess for reading and analysis. Thus, we understand reading as an active process that generates the written material. This is because there is a need for a cognitive journey that the requirements of creativity demand, as it is a linguistic entity that does not cease to become, and it is a textual existence that continues to give birth to many other writings that are boundless (Ayashi, 1998).

So, the relationship between structure and meaning is deeply rooted, and for this reason, Mohammed Abdel Motaleb points out that the experience with the language's structures is also an experience with the purposes they convey. The grammarians have realized the strong connection between what is known as structures and what is known as meanings and ideas. The relationship between thought and language has occupied these grammarians in various aspects, leading some of them to play an important role by directing grammatical studies towards aesthetic and structural aspects. Among these aspects is their exploration of the Quranic text and its miracles. This led some grammarians to move beyond the realm of correctness and error to focus on the arrangement and structure. The matter is not merely putting words in front of meanings but goes beyond that into the process of composition according to the requirements of the meanings that the author wants to express (Abdul Motaleb, 1994).

Therefore, this study aims to explore the prominent linguistic and grammatical features in the poetry of Ismail Al-Saudi in his collection *I Feel Different*. The objective is to uncover the intentions of the text as presented by the prevailing linguistic features, which will reveal the poet's purposes and intentions behind the poems he has presented in his collection.

We will not be concerned here with collecting these styles and classifying them according to the rules of the Arabic language and its methods. Instead, the study aims to showcase the prominent linguistic and grammatical styles that have



constituted a distinctive feature in the poet's collection. Subsequently, these styles will be categorized under specific themes required by the nature of the research in the collection, based on the following:

**First theme: Empty Exception and its Significance in the Collection**

**Second theme: Prohibition and Command and their Significance in the Collection**

**Third theme: Interrogation and its Significance in the Collection**

**Fourth theme: The Style of Justification and its Significance in the Collection**

The nature of the study required following a methodology that begins with an introduction to the linguistic style based on what is mentioned in language and grammar books. Then, an attempt is made to uncover the purposes of this style in the poet's poems, employing both descriptive and analytical approaches.

## II. FIRST THEME: EMPTY EXCEPTION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN THE COLLECTION

The essence of negation and exception is to deny something the addressee denies, doubts, or is not at that level. It is evident when you say, "He is nothing but mistaken," you only say this to someone who denies that the matter is as you stated. Similarly, when you see an apparition from afar and say, "It's nothing but Ali," you say it only when the addressee imagines that it is not Ali. Regarding what pertains to this level, like when Allah says: "Muhammad is no more than a messenger; [other] messengers have passed on before him" (Surah Aal-e-Imran, Verse 144), it means limited to conveying the message" (Al-Muraghi, 1993, p. 153; see Jum'a, 2015, p. 81). This style is often used for emphasis, as pointed out by Mahdi Al-Makhzumi, who states that this style is not an exception. He says: 'Indeed, (illa) is not an exception; rather, it is preceded by negation, a tool of limitation, and its function is to restrict what comes after it based on what precedes it. This limitation always conveys emphasis and affirmation.' This is what distinguishes it from (illa) used in exceptions because the function of (illa) in exceptions is to exempt what comes after it from the ruling of what precedes it. Therefore, some grammarians mistakenly classified it as an exception (Al-Makhzumi, 1986).

The empty exception, as confirmed by grammarians, occurs in negation and indicates limitation (Ibn Aqeel, 2015). When you say, "nobody attended except Khalid," you have negated the attendance of everyone except Khalid, unlike if you say "Khalid attended," which allows the possibility of others attending with him. "Al-Muqtadab" states: I resorted to negation and exception because if you say 'Zaid came,' it is possible that others came with him, but if you say nobody came to me except Zaid,' you negate the entirety of what came, except for his coming" (Al-Samara'I, 2003, p. 214). Ibn Ya'ish confirms this with his statement: "The purpose of the exception in your statement 'nobody stood except Zaid' is to affirm Zaid's standing while negating it for others" (Ibn Ya'ish, 2001, p. 87).

Whatever the discussion may be about the empty exception, regardless of its name or whether it is called an exception or limitation, this style only serves to emphasize.

The style of empty exception or limitation has formed a prominent linguistic feature in the collection *I Feel Different*. The poet did not resort to using the exception except in this manner, and perhaps this reflects his emotional state and his desire to elevate the discourse from mere reporting to conveying and emphasizing what he wants to communicate. In this context, the poet starts his collection with the poem "Atr al-Maryul" (The Scent of the Green [female] Uniform), opening it with the style of limitation, saying: "The forgotten memories... nothing remains of them, except the scent of the green uniform" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 5).

The poet began his first poem in the collection with a nominal sentence, expressing his desire to affirm what he wants to say. From the very beginning, he declared that his memory had emptied of everything, except that he couldn't forget the image of his beloved, who wears her green uniform. The scent of her uniform has remained ingrained in his memory, never fading away. With this opening, the poet made a clear statement, revealing his determination that this fragrance had surpassed the bounds of forgetfulness and continued to dominate the scene of his memory. Perhaps, through this style, he presents an assertive sentence that indicates the intensity of his attachment to the beloved, whom he has loved for many years.

Then we find him in another place where the intensity of expression rises in his poem titled "A'oodu Bikhafi Hunain" (I Return Empty-Handed), where everything disappears, and only those tiresome dreams remain: "Then nothing remains of all the things in her possession... the building, the elevator, the office, the picture, the rose, and the smooth palm... except foolish dreams that persist" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 27).

In this passage, the poet declares that everything has been lost, and only stubborn dreams remain. He expresses this meaning using the empty exception style to capture the attention of the reader to what he feels. He did not just provide a passing informative sentence; instead, he chose to make his emotional state the subject of the poetic sentence. According to what the grammarians have stated, when he says, "Only foolish dreams persist," it is not at the level of conveying and affecting emotions compared to "Nothing remains except foolish dreams persist." Furthermore, in expressing his loss of everything, he does not settle for the word "dreams," which linguistically implies unreality, as dreams in language mean "to dream when one sees something in sleep" (Ibn Manzoor, 1414, p. 145). Instead, he goes further and describes them as "foolish dreams that persist." These additional qualifying descriptions amplify the intensity of his feelings and indicate the deep sense of despair he experiences due to this loss.

Then, in another instance, in his poem "Al-Jisr" (The Bridge), he reveals to us with his words: "The bridge was a separator... My eyes did not see in the night of the street... Except a passing apparition" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 79). The

vision of things has disappeared from him, and he could not see his beloved as the bridge stood as a barrier between them. However, that did not prevent her apparition from gliding before him.

This poetic line, presented in this manner, strongly indicates the poet's lack of vision for things, except for that apparition, which was more powerful than this absence. The phrase carries emphasis and determination, undoubtedly expressing a desire for this restriction. It could be argued that if his expression were "my eyes see an apparition passing," it would have allowed the possibility of seeing other things alongside it. However, presenting the vision in this way reveals his emotional state, as he longs for and is preoccupied with it.

In another phrase, we find his pessimism and sense of disappointment, as he feels a lack of hope due to the exile that has surrounded things. He employs the image of a shepherd addressing his camel, saying, "When the clouds of the heart dry up... and the wells in the soul run dry... there is nothing left for you in this exile... except the flower of the cactus" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 59).

The poet's use of this expression alleviates the intensity of his pain, as the words "dried up", "run dry", and "exile" serve as supporting factors for his despair and defeat. He concludes his despair with a negation, represented by the expression "there is nothing" and "except", isolating the cactus in the scene and eliminating any hint of hope he might have. Despite his attempt to console himself with the word "flower," which signifies optimism, he surprises the reader by coupling it with "cactus," bringing us back to the same circle from which he started: despair and defeat.

His pessimism continues as he takes us to his poem "Thaqb Fi Al-Qalb" (A Hole in the Heart), after he has lost everything in this universe and possesses nothing but the agony of his heart and pain. "I have nothing of this extended homeland... from the sea of exile, to the homeland, the sea... except a hole in the heart" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 60).

The use of the limitation style by the poet is a clear indication of the state of loss he is experiencing. He presents this definitive statement to convey his emotional state. Although initially hinting at optimism and hope, as the reader might expect the words following "illa" to be different from what precedes it, such as saying, "I have nothing but love or hope or strength," or other words that would fit the context. However, this is not what we find in the poetic text, as he follows all of that with the heart that is pierced, intensifying his pain and despair.

It appears that pessimism dominates his emotional state, as evident in his discussion about Sham (Syria), which forcibly separated its lovers. He expresses clear pessimism using the limitation style, saying, "Sham, the orphan, sent away its lovers in all directions... Only the night and the blind passion remain in its pigeon nest and jasmine" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 64). Sham lost everything: its lovers, pigeons, and jasmine, and the night now reigns while warm affection has vanished, replaced by false passion. Through this style, the poet conveys his evident sorrow over what has befallen Sham. Once again, in his usual manner, he suggests that what comes after "except" will be different from what preceded it when he mentions "love." However, he surprises us by describing it as "blind," returning us to the initial circle of sadness and pessimism.

It concludes with his visit to his grandfather's house, searching for any reminders of the cat that used to roam around the place. However, he finds nothing but the absence of his grandfather and the cat. Only the sound of the cat's meowing remains, lingering in his memory. He says, "I search for my grandfather's cat... But I hear nothing but the sound of meowing... and I see the cat as mere illusions" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 87).

This poetic style chosen by the poet clearly indicates the depth of his attachment to his memories, especially with his departed grandfather.

Furthermore, to reveal the role of the limitation style in the poet's linguistic performance, we can present the sequence of the limitation style as follows:

TABLE 1  
THE SEQUENCE OF THE LIMITATION STYLE

Negative (Negation)	Particle	Emphasized Element	Poetic Sentence	Emotional State	Supporting Factors
(Lam) - not [nothing in this context]		the scent of the uniform	nothing remains of them, except the scent of the green uniform	Longing and nostalgia	The forgotten memories
(La) - no, not [nothing in this context]		foolish dreams	Nothing remains except foolish dreams persist	Loss	persist
(Lam) - not		The beloved apparition	My eyes did not see in the night of the street... Except a passing apparition	Attachment to the beloved	passing
(Laysa) - not, is not		the flower of the cactus	there is nothing left for you in this exile... except the flower of the cactus	Pessimism and sadness	"dried up," "run dry," and "exile"
(La) - no, not [nothing in this context]		The pierced heart	I have nothing of this extended homeland... from the sea of exile, to the homeland, the sea... except a hole in the heart	Sadness	exile
(Lam) - not [Only in this context]		the night, the blind passion	Only the night and the blind passion remain in its pigeon nest and jasmine	Sadness and regret	orphan, sent
(La) - no, not [nothing in this context]		the sound of meowing	I hear nothing but the sound of meowing	Nostalgia	Ignites, illusions, stolen

The most prominent aspect of the empty exception style used by the poet is that it was not employed for something the reader would deny or doubt. Rather, its purpose was to indicate emphasis on limitation, as follows:

Absence of everything from memory □ limited only to the scent of the beloved's uniform.

Absence of all things remaining □ limited to foolish dreams □ returning to the initial state.

Absence of seeing all things □ limited only to glimpsing the beloved's apparition.

Absence of things in the homeland □ limited to the existence of the cactus flowers □ returning to the initial state.

Absence of possessing things □ limited to possessing the pierced heart □ returning to the initial state.

Absence of all beauty from Syria □ limited to the presence of the night and the blind passion □ returning to the initial state.

Absence of hearing voices □ limited to the sound of the grandfather's cat.

### III. SECOND THEME: PROHIBITION AND COMMAND AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN THE COLLECTION

Prohibition in the language is the opposite of a command, and it is its denial. When a prohibition is stated, it means to refrain from doing something (Al-Asriya, 1999). The discussions about prohibition are found in the fields of grammar, where it is distributed in the analysis of verbs, particles sometimes, and different types of negation, conditions, and the accusative noun of warning other times (Al-Ashqar, 2007). (La) is considered the negation particle in grammar, and it is used to express prohibition. When (La) is followed by a present tense verb, it conveys a prohibition, such as (La taqum) meaning "do not stand" and (La taq'ud) meaning "do not sit." As mentioned in the Quran: "So be not among the doubters" (Quran, 2: 60), "So do not argue with them except by way of an obvious argument and do not inquire about them among [the believers]" (Quran, 18: 22).

And (La) here negates the present/future verb to express reception, as it is opposed to 'li-taf'al' (do it), which is restricted to the present condition. So, if you say, 'La taf'al al-aan' (do not do it now), it implies bringing the future closer to the present, just as you say, 'li-taf'al al-aan' (do it now) (Al-Maalqi, 1985). Ibn Hisham clarifies the use of (La) in its prohibitive sense, saying, "And among the uses of (La) is when it is placed to request abandonment (tark) and is specifically related to entering the present verb, necessitating its jussive mood and acceptance equally, whether what is required of it is addressing someone, like 'do not take my enemies and your enemies as allies' (Quran, 60: 1), or it is absent, like 'the believers do not take the disbelievers as allies' (Quran, 2: 28), or it is spoken, like 'I will not show you here' (Ibn Hisham, 2000, pp. 320-321). And it may also be used for supplication, like 'do not hold us accountable if we forget or make a mistake'. For this reason, some have called it the Lam of Request to include negation in various contexts and usages (Al-Muradi, 1992).

Regarding the term “al-talab” (Request), we mean by it the statement that begins with an imperative verb, which signifies “requesting the recipient to perform an action in a commanding manner with obligation.” It has four forms: the imperative verb, like when Allah says: “O Yahya, take the Scripture with determination”(Quran, 16: 12); the present verb with (Lam) indicating a command, like when Allah says: “Let the one with abundance spend from his abundance”(Quran, 65:7); the verbal noun of the imperative, such as “Upon yourselves is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided”; and the substitute noun for the imperative verb, like “striving for the cause of goodness”.

Sometimes, the imperative forms deviate from their original meaning of “positivity and obligation” to other meanings derived from the context and circumstances (Al-Hashimi, 1944). The imperative might indicate supplication, request, guidance, and other meanings as required by the context (Al-Hashimi, 1944). Similarly, the present tense can function as a non-request form when it is used as a premise for the conclusion of a request. There is no difference between the request form and the non-request form when the non-request form is used as a basis for a conclusive request, as both are commands, like the request for spending generously in “Let the one with abundance spend from his abundance” or supplication, such as “Let your Lord decide between us” (Quran, 43:77), or a request like “Make so-and-so do such and such” when the intention is not to show authority (Ibn Hisham, 2000).

The poet entitles one of his poems with “La tarhali” (Do Not Depart), and then follows it with a continuous style of prohibition, repeating the phrase “Do Not Depart,” employing it to encompass all the meanings of pain and suffering. After the title, he starts with the first line, full of all the causes of pain and sadness, saying, “Do not depart... and my heart became filled with longing for all the pains... and yearnings clustered around my heart” (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 7). Then he immediately continues with another verse, combining a request wrapped in prohibition, “Do not depart... in my heart, there are sighs that I conceal... but the eyes betray them” (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 7). He, once again, expresses his groans and tears due to this departure, as he rises after that with his plea, as the morning turned into night because of this departure, saying, “Do not depart... the morning of the poems has become night within me” (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 7). Then he proclaims afterward that it finished him saying: “And I am the slain one, drenched... between words and gestures, asking... Where is the longing?” (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 8). Then prohibition combines with the request using imperative (Lam) in successive sentences, elevating the intensity of his desire for her to stay, “Do not depart... and let you cross... the bridge of those who walk through their tears... Do not depart... and let you inhabit... the wounds of the naked who go to their celebration... Do not depart... and let you inscribe... for the poets and lovers... a history of pains and dreams” (Al-Saudi, 2017, pp. 9-10).

The combination of prohibition against departure in these successive sentences is a clear indication of the poet's intense suffering and his wild desire for her to stay. He gathered with the prohibition against departure present tense verbs that start with imperative (Lam) in successive desires, as follows:

The steadfastness of the prohibition against departure □ accompanied by his plea for the beloved to cross the bridge of the weary and weeping, to alleviate their suffering.

The steadfastness of the prohibition against departure □ accompanied by his plea for her to stay, to heal the wounds of the lovers.

The steadfastness of the prohibition against departure □ accompanied by his plea to write about the poets and lovers, a history of pain and dreams.

There is no doubt that the combination of prohibition against doing something with the plea to do something else is a linguistic hint that reveals the extent of the poet's psychological difficulty. He did not settle for merely forbidding her departure, but he also asks her to fulfill his desired wishes.

The poet lost hope in the beloved's staying after all these unfulfilled requests she did not grant him. He demolished all these desires through a linguistic shift, altering the linguistic equation, transitioning from his desire for her not to depart to requesting her departure, trying to justify it with a futile excuse that her betrayals have multiplied, saying, “Do not depart... so go ahead and leave... and leave... your debts in betrayal have multiplied... and my heart is torn apart” (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 10).

Indeed, the repetition of the prohibition against departure in the poet's poem formed a clear indication, as the phrase “Do not depart” recurred seven times, including three instances of mere prohibition against departure, and three instances of prohibition against departure accompanied by a request to fulfill other desires. There was also one instance of prohibition against departure along with a request for departure.

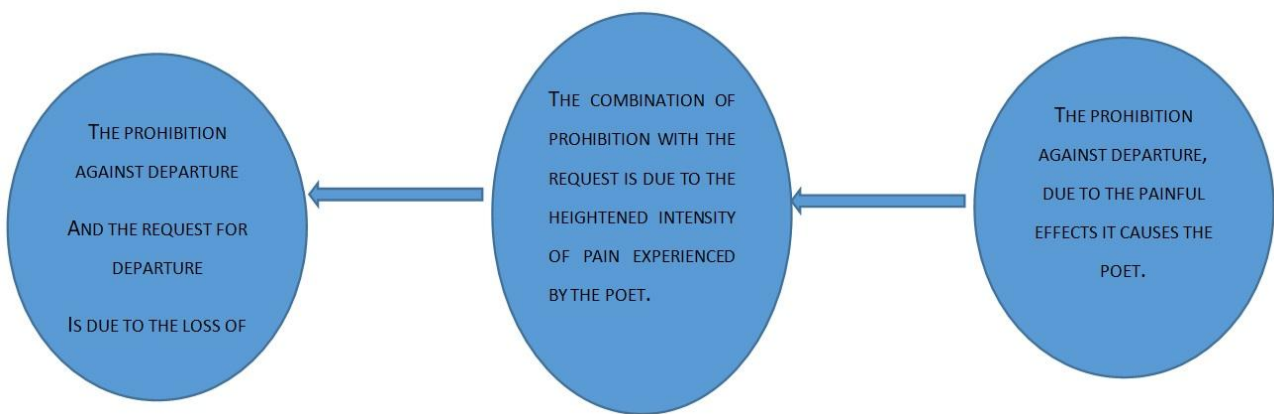
Each time, the style revealed underlying psychological motives and needs that we can elucidate as follows:

TABLE 2  
PSYCHOLOGICAL MOTIVES

Departure Section	Style Type	Psychological Effects and the Poet's Desires
Do not depart	Prohibition	Weariness in the heart, longing, pain, and sorrows
Do not depart	Prohibition	Sighs, tears
Do not depart	Prohibition	The morning turned into night
Do not depart, but cross over	Prohibition with a request	Tears, wiping away tears
Do not depart, but stay	Prohibition with a request	Wound, easing the wound
Do not depart, but stay	Prohibition with a request	Pain, writing the history of lovers
Do not depart, so go ahead and leave, and leave	Repetitive "contradiction" of prohibition with a request	The torn heart, losing hope in the beloved's staying

Based on that, the circle of prohibition in the poet's work has formed within three circles:  
The transition to the circle of disappointment and loss of hope.

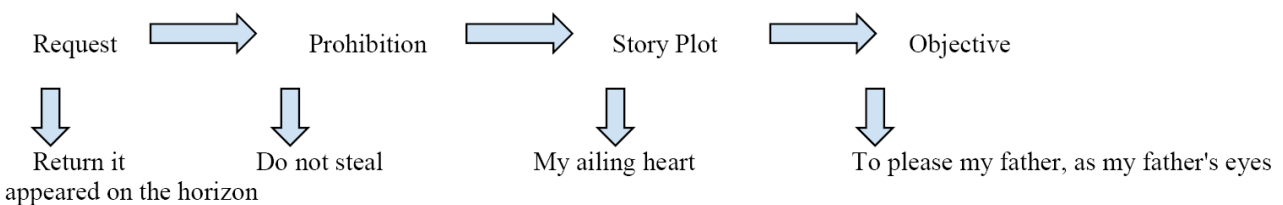
The transition to a higher circle



Then, we find in the poet's collection the continuation of the style of prohibition, which reveals multiple psychological motives. He signifies one of his poems with this style "la tukabir" (Do not be arrogant), where he asks himself not to be arrogant, as his body has become weary from this arrogance that leads to no avail: "Do not be arrogant... Do not be arrogant... Your weary body will reveal... How much you suffer... How much you endure... How much you risk" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 18). Then, he continues in the same poem with the same style, forbidding himself from attempting to hide his love, as it would be a futile attempt, as love shows in his eyes and in his thoughts, which are never absent from the beloved: "Do not attempt to conceal love... It shows in the eyes and thoughts" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 18).

The poet continues to use prohibition, revealing another reason for it: he does not want to lose the inspiration of the beloved, as she encompasses all the meanings of the poem, and it is through her that his words flourish. "So do not overpower the night of meanings... And leave the poem without imagination" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 24). In another instance, he instructs her not to startle at the sound of rain or disturb the silence of the fog. "Do not startle at the sound of the rain... Or disturb the silence of the fog" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 30). In his connection to the story of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him), he combines the request with prohibition, showing that the shirt he wears is his sanctuary. "Return to me my old shirt... And do not steal from it... My ailing heart" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 33).

In this, a clear psychological equation forms for him, as follows:



As for the act of requesting in his case, the psychological motives have followed in succession, employing the request with the imperative and the present tense with imperative (Lam), as follows:

TABLE 3  
THE ACT OF REQUESTING

The Result	The Objective of the Request	The Request Sentence	The Act of Requesting
Gather, advance	So gather the sadness of the riverbanks, and advance in love, with the yearning of a lover. (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 11)	Yearning in love	The creativity in writing poetry: The evening showered with poems of yearning, and I dozed off in the pain of rhymes
Hide me, Leave, Embrace me, Wipe away, Kiss me, Leave.  "The request continues in one poetic verse."	Hide me in my certainty, And let my doubt emigrate, Embrace me, Wipe away my dreams with tears, Kiss me, And leave the flowers of tales. (Al-Saudi, 2017, pp. 18-19)	The need for the other, Abandoning doubt, The need for the other, Desire for the end of sorrow, Longing, Desire for liberation.	Creativity in writing: And I have become a poet.
Come, come	Come to me, come. (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 44)	Longing	Clarity of vision, "So that I can see you
Bring [...] back	Bring me back my father's shirt, so that I can see you. (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 44)	Achievement of salvation.	Clarity of vision, "So that I can see you
Sleep	Sleep on two wounds of thirst. (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 50)	Longing	The permanence of the poem, "So that the poem remains bleeding
Bring forth	Bring forth the knives of identity (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 66)	Salvation	Life, "Yet, I will remain alive despite my death."
kill	And kill the dreams of my children. (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 66)	Salvation	Life, "Yet, I will remain alive despite my death."
Retrieve	And you will retrieve your death from the grasp of Mish'a. (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 66)	Rejecting the other	Life, "Yet, I will remain alive despite my death."
Bring	And bring the chambers of darkness and its gas. (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 66)	Rejecting the other	Life, "Yet, I will remain alive despite my death."
Let you bring forth	And let you bring forth the calf of delusion from your bewilderment. (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 66)	Rejecting the other	Life, "Yet, I will remain alive despite my death."

#### IV. THIRD THEME: INTERROGATION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN THE COLLECTION

The interrogative is a language tool, to "Inquire from so-and-so about the matter: [is to] ask him to disclose it" (Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasit, p. 704). To "ask, inquire, requested him to disclose it" (Umar, 2008, p. 1748). In terminology, it refers to seeking understanding of something that you have no prior knowledge of, using one of its particles such as: (hamzah) [a glottal stop sound, represented by the Arabic letter "ء" ], (hal) [equivalent to the English word "do" or "does"], (man) [who], (mata) [when], (ayān) [when], (ayn) [where], (anna) [how], (kayfa) [how], (kam) [how much/many], and (ay) [which]. It can be divided into three categories based on the request: sometimes it seeks an image, other times confirmation, and it uses the particle (hamzah). Sometimes it seeks confirmation only, using the particle (hal). And sometimes it seeks an image only, which is the rest of the particles (Al-Muraghi, 1993). It also means the request for something external or its acquisition in the mind. And it is not necessarily a real interrogation unless it comes from an inquirer who intends to be informed (Al-Ousi, 1988). Often, the question may deviate from its original purpose, just like other creative methods. For example, the poet's purpose may not be to seek understanding about something unknown to him; rather, he uses it to express his emotions and experiences through questioning. It becomes a means of expanding and enriching the meaning (Abdul Zahra, 2022). This is one of the linguistic and rhetorical

techniques commonly used by poets. Through it, the inquirer reveals what is going on in their mind (Ibrahim, 2020). Books on language and rhetoric have discussed the meanings that the interrogative form can convey depending on the context in which it is used. There is no doubt that the interrogative form adds an aesthetic value to the text, as each interrogative word carries its specific meaning depending on the context, in addition to the meaning it was originally assigned (Ibrahim, 2016).

The poet's collection contained various interrogative particles, each with different meanings depending on the poet's emotional state. Before clarifying these meanings, we briefly explain the most prominent interrogative particles as they appear in language books:

Firstly: The Hamzah (glottal stop): The Hamzah is considered the origin of interrogative particles (Sibawayh, 1998) and is used for pure questioning, as in the phrase: 'Do you have more or just one Umrah?' It can also express confirmation or reproach. Confirmation, as in the phrase: 'Aren't you generous? Haven't I been good to you?' And reproach, as in the phrase: 'Haven't you sinned, so that forgiveness may be granted to you?' (Al-Zujaj, 1986).

Secondly: "Hal" is a particle used to seek positive affirmation without any assumption or negative confirmation. It is not used with negative questions like "Hal Zaydā Darabta?" (Did you not hit Zayd?) because the use of the noun in such questions already indicates a degree of affirmation. Similarly, it is used in sentences like "Hal Zaydā Qā'imun Am 'Amrū?" (Is Zayd standing or 'Amr?) (Ibn Hisham, 2000) And it may be translated as "or." For example, "Hal Atā 'Alā Al-Insānī Hīnun Minad-Dahr?" (Has a time come upon mankind?) (Quran, 76: 1). They said its meaning is 'Has' come upon mankind (Al-Rummani, 1981).

Thirdly: "Ayna" is a locative adverb used for asking about a place. It is often followed by prepositions such as "min", "ila", and other prepositions. For example: "Ayna kunt ams?" (Where were you yesterday?), "Ila ayna tathhab?" (Where are you going to?), "Min ayna hadharta?" (Where did you come from?) (Umar, 2008). It seeks to specify the location (Al-Muraghi, 1993).

Fourthly: "Ma tha" is a question word that can be a single word used for interrogation. It can be used interchangeably with "ma" in sentences like "Ma ra'ayt" (What did you see?) (Al-Ousi, 1983). Some scholars consider it to be a compound word, consisting of the interrogative particle "ma" and the noun connector "tha".

Fifthly: "Lima tha" is a compound word consisting of the preposition "li" indicating causation or reasoning, the interrogative particle "ma" for questioning, and the noun connector "tha" for nominal connection. It is used to inquire about the reason or cause behind something. For example, "Lima tha ta'akhhartu 'an al-maw'id?" (Why were you late for the appointment?) (Umar, 2008).

Sixthly: "Kayfa" is an interrogative word used to inquire about the manner or condition of something. It is used to ask about the state, condition, or appearance of things. For example, "Kayfa abuuka sanie?" (How is your father doing?) or "Kayfa Zaydin?" (How is Zayd?). It is used to ask about the state or condition of something and its appearance (Al-Muraghi, 1993).

The interrogative expression emerged in the poet's collection as a clear feature reflecting his emotional state. He enriched the interrogative sentences with supporting factors that elevated their expressive value, making them highly impactful. At times, we find him explicitly stating the question after the interrogative particle, while in other instances, he follows the question with negation and explanation. In certain contexts, we observe him asking uncertain questions, accompanied by explanatory phrases that justify his state of uncertainty. Furthermore, he may attach one question to another in his eagerness to seek answers. He might even answer his own question with another question to emphasize the intensity of his emotions. Prior to posing his inquiry, the poet may present the reason that led to the question, or he may justify afterward why the question was raised.

To clarify the sequence of interrogation in the poet's collection, we present the most prominent meanings of interrogation as follows:

TABLE 4  
INTERROGATION

The Interrogative Particle	The Poetic Verse	The Significance	The Style
The Hamzah (glottal stop), Hal	"I have searched all directions, south. I asked the winds, 'Is there west and east in death as well? And is there also north?' The winds replied, 'Come to me, come to me.' So all directions are south." (Al-Saudi, 2017, pp. 43-44)	Nostalgia and attachment to a place.	The Declaration with the Question's Wording. A question that has an answer aiming to reinforce the idea of nostalgia: "All directions are south."
The Hamzah (glottal stop)	"Oh, my country, which was kneaded from my tears... Isn't there in you a righteous one to say: 'Enough?'" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 11)	Confusion and astonishment.	Following the Hamzah with "laysa" (not). A style that allows for the answer "bala" (yes) or "kalla" (no). An interrogation followed by justification.
Ayna (where)	"From where should I start, and the speech is blind." (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 86)	Perplexity	Introduction of a preposition. Expressing his perplexity: "The speech is blind."
Ayna (where)	"Where is my broken heart going this evening... Is it heading towards death, or towards the sun and the martyrs?" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 43)	The poet's desire to reach a destination.	Introduction of a preposition. A question followed by another question and the poet's desire for clarification.
Ma tha (what)	"The sun said to me when the night had wrapped us... 'What do you want?' My heart choked and collapsed... What do I want? My tears keep flowing." (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 77)	Grief and astonishment	Repetition of the interrogative particle. A question that is answered with a response starting with another question followed by an explanation of the reason for the pain
Lima tha (why)	"I have told you from the beginning that you are a child... So why do you deny your love out of shyness... and hide this child?" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 90)	Disapproval	Posing the question with a reason "that you are a child"
Kayfa (how)	"How can the way to reach her be found... How can it be found, while truth in its formation is like falsehood, And the definitive, cursed one in its formation is like the one who connects... How can the way to reach her be found... How can it be found?" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 23)	Lack of means	Repetition of the interrogative particle. Expressing the absence of a means after the question.

#### V. FOURTH THEME: THE STYLE OF JUSTIFICATION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN THE COLLECTION

In language, 'al-ta'leel' (Justification) refers to what is used as evidence for a cause or what indicates the effect, or the inference of the cause through the effect (Umar, 2008). And this is its 'illah' meaning; its reason or cause (Al-Fayyruzabadi, 2005).

Justification plays a significant role in understanding literary texts, as it is used when one wants to affirm a judgment or prove an event in a way that reassures the mind about the accuracy of that judgment or event. It strengthens its impact and the confidence in it. Mentioning something with justification is more effective than mentioning it without justification, and this is due to two reasons: firstly, because people are more comfortable with conveying justified judgments compared to other non-justified ones, and secondly, the stated reason necessitates the generality of what is justified (Naher, 1985). Justification clarifies the purpose behind the action or the reason for its occurrence (Abbas, 1999).



The Arabic language contains various methods of justification, and we will focus our discussion here on justification using the particles: "lām" (so), "kay" (because), and "ḥattā" (so that). In the poet's collection, we will attempt to highlight the poet's main intentions through their usage of these particles.

#### A. Justification With "al-lām"

Some grammarians refer to it as "lām kay" because it is used for indicating a reason, and one of its meanings is justification, as mentioned in the verse: "Indeed, We have revealed to you the Book in truth so you may judge between the people" (Quran, 4:105; Al-Andalusi, 1998, pp. 1659, 1707). It is connected to future verbs, and according to the Basri grammarians, the verb that comes after "lām kay" is in a state of implied 'an', while according to the Kufi grammarians, "lām" by itself is in the accusative case and serves as the subject for the verb. In both schools, it includes the meaning of "kay." For example, when you say "I visited you for you to be kind to me", the meaning is "so you can be kind to me", and its interpretation is "that you be kind to me" (Al-Zujaji, 1985, p. 66).

The justification with "al-lām" in the poet's collection carries various meanings as follows:

- Justification that carries optimism: "I return in the evening to carry my lost rose (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 13).
- Justification that carries hope: "Your lovers will remove the darkness from you... So your mihrab remains like a heart to you... And you remain, with determination and the first dream, a door to the open light" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 42). "And a girl crying for you to bring you back" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 56).
- Justification that carries salvation: "I am still waiting for the well's company of travelers... To rescue me from the abyss of betrayal" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 85).

#### B. Justification With "kay"

One of the prominent meanings of "kay" is justification similar to "lām" (Ibn Hisham, 2000). It is one of the operative particles, and its function is to make the verb accusative. For example, it is used in sentences like "I came to be kind to you" and "I went out to greet you." Its meaning is the reason or cause, indicating that what comes before it is the cause for what comes after it (Al-Zujaji, 1986).

The different meanings of justification in the poet's collection appear in various positions within the poems as follows:

- Justification that carries hope of returning to the beloved: "There is still ample time between us... So you may understand the sadness of the clouds (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 30).
- Justification that carries longing and nostalgia: "Good morning to the leaves... Falling from the autumn of life... And memories... To your eyes, so they can drink" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 35). "I need you to stop for a moment... So I can regain my childhood... And my age increases a moment before the evening" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 58).
- Justification for staying and continuing: "Be, as you used to be... So the poem remains bleeding" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 51).
- Justification for a rejected matter: "For there is ample time... So you can gather all the people to build your temple... From the people of peace" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 66).
- Justification with brokenness and disappointment: "When I saw my life falling over the uniform... So your heart can be left for disappointment" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 72).
- Justification for forgetting: "I walk with my companion to the café... Seeking to forget what the cold has ruined" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 75).
- Justification for hope: "I park my car and drive my heart... So I can see a house far away in the mist" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 76).

#### C. Justification With "ḥattā"

If you make the verb accusative after "ḥattā," it is permissible to interpret it with the meaning of "kay", as in your statement: "I walked until I entered it," where walking becomes the reason for entering (Al-Zujaji, 1986). Or in your statement: "My journey was until I entered the city," the meaning is "so that I enter," and what comes before it becomes the reason for what comes after it (Al-Maalqi, 1985).

The poet's use of justification with "ḥattā" carries meanings of pain, longing, the need for others, and continuity, as follows:

- Justification carrying pain: "Snow accumulates in the heart... Until it ignites the pains and memories... And the wounds flare up" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 52).
- Justification carrying longing: "A lonely rose breathes in sighs and tears... Waiting for its shadow until it returns to its warmth, becoming her obsession" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 80).
- Justification carrying the need for the other: "I need half a space for love... So I can complete the game in this emptiness" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 58).
- Justification carrying the sense of continuity: "Above the bed of desire, another shadow grows... Unnoticed by me in my distraction... Then swiftly I move until this visitor remains unnoticed by me as well" (Al-Saudi, 2017, p. 16).

## VI. CONCLUSION

After this study of the prominent linguistic features in the collection *I Feel Different* by the poet Isma'il Al-Sa'udi, the study concluded several important results:

- The instances of the empty exception were distributed in the poet's collection among feelings of longing, nostalgia, regret, pain, and other emotional states. The analysis revealed the ability of this style to enter the poet's world and explore all these reactions through his language.
- The poet did not use the style of the empty exception to deny or doubt something that others reject. Instead, he used it to emphasize and express his thoughts and emotions effectively.
- The poet combined between the style of prohibition and request in specific contexts based on his emotional state. Sometimes, his poetic lines exclusively featured either a prohibition or a request, depending on the poetic situation he was experiencing.
- The use of requests in the poet's collection revealed hidden intentions that the poet did not explicitly announce. However, the study managed to uncover those intentions through analysis.
- The poet employed various interrogative tools, each carrying psychological motivations dictated by his emotional state.
- The use of justification in the collection aimed to interpret the poet's actions and requests in his poems.

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# An Optimality-Theoretic Analysis of Syllable Structure in Najdi Arabic

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**Abstract**—This paper provides a constraint-based analysis of the syllable structure of onset consonant sequences in Najdi Arabic, spoken in central Saudi Arabia. Unlike Classical or Standard Arabic, Najdi is believed to allow consonant clusters in the onset. The study tested two assumptions. The first is that Najdi onset clusters result from a vowel deletion process, leading to different kinds of clusters with distinct sonority hierarchies and that these form complex onsets. The second is that Najdi inputs are different from Classical or Standard Arabic, in which there is no vowel in the underlying representation and hence no deletion occurs, resulting in simplex onsets. The paper adopted optimality theory to analyze the data, considering a phenomenon that occurs in the speech of Najdi speakers. Following this framework, constraints were utilized to demonstrate the syllable structure of the onset clusters in Najdi according to the above assumptions. The results revealed consonant sequences rather than consonant clusters, meaning the consonants were not parsed in the same syllable, agreeing with previous acoustic research.

**Index Terms**—Arabic, consonant sequence, Najdi, optimality theory, simplex onset

## I. INTRODUCTION

Arabic dialects are spoken in regions and countries across the Middle East and North Africa (Albirini, 2016; Bale, 2010). As such, they can be broadly divided into Eastern and Western dialects. The Eastern dialects can be further divided into those of the Arabian Peninsula (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen), the Syro-Lebanese dialects (Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria), and the Mesopotamian dialect (spoken in Iraq). The Western dialects are spoken in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, and Mauritania (Kaye & Rosenhouse, 1997; Versteegh, 2013). These dialects differ at the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels.

According to Versteegh (2013), there are four main groups of dialects in the Arabian Peninsula: the north-west Arabian dialects, the north-east Arabian (Najdi) dialects, the Hijazi dialects, and the south-west Arabian dialects. According to Ingham (1994), Najdi Arabic can be split into four regions: Mixed Central and Northern Najdi, Central Najdi, Northern Najdi, and Southern Najdi. Even though Ingham pointed out that they are phonologically almost the same, these subgroups may differ linguistically on a number of levels. The current study examined Central Najdi Arabic, the dialect spoken in Riyadh and the surrounding areas.

In Standard and Classical Arabic, consonant clusters are not permitted in the onset position, but they are permitted in some colloquial dialects, including Moroccan, Najdi, and Jazani Arabic. Some researchers have assumed that the onset consonant clusters in Najdi Arabic are the result of the deletion of a vowel in nouns, adjectives, and verbs of the syllable structure CVC.CVC, as shown in (1). These onset consonant sequences show different sonority profiles, including rising (a), plateau (b), and falling (c).

(1)	Standard Arabic	Najdi Arabic	Gloss
a. Rising sonority	[turab] [ħimar]	[trab] [ħmar]	“soil” “donkey” (Alghmaiz, 2013)
b. Plateau sonority	[baqarah] [fuħum]	[bqARAh] [fħum]	“cow” “fats”
c. Falling sonority	[rumuħ] [lisæn]	[rmuħ] [lsæn]	“eyelashes” “tongue” (Alkhonini, 2021)

Such consonant sequences raise the question of whether they are simplex or complex. Fortunately, this question has been addressed (see Alkhonini, 2021; Alkhonini & Kwon, 2023). In another direction, the present study examined Najdi onset consonant sequences acoustically to show they constitute simplex onsets. Based on these findings, the study provides an optimality theory analysis that complements the acoustic data.



latter is not accepted, although both combinations have the same sonority slope: stop > liquid.

Many studies have tested the validity of the SSP using the phonological and syllable structures of different languages (Carlisle, 1991). One method is to ask participants to pronounce some words that obey the SSP and other words that do not. Carlisle (1991), for instance, tested Spanish speakers' production of /st-/ and /sl-/ onset clusters. He recruited 11 native Spanish speakers, asking them to read a passage that contained 290 sentences including a word in each sentence with the target combinations. The results showed a significant difference between onset clusters. The participants tended to use epenthesis more (36%) when the cluster did not follow the SSP, namely with /st-/ because it reversed the sonority hierarchy from fricative > stop. With /sl-, they used epenthesis only 25% of the time since it did not violate the SSP.

However, some consonant combinations obey the SSP but are not allowed in certain languages. For instance, English allows two- and three-consonant onset clusters but not the onset combination /pn-/ or /ps-, while these are allowed in other languages, such as Greek *pnefmonia* "pneumonia" and *psycholgia* "psychology" (Roca & Johnson, 1999).

### C. Word-Initial Consonant Sequences and SSP in Najdi Arabic

Previous researchers have argued that Najdi Arabic onset consonant clusters result from the deletion of short high vowels (e.g., Alghmaiz, 2014). This assumption is based on setting Standard Arabic as a reference point for comparison with colloquial dialects like Najdi. Others have argued that the input or underlying representation for Najdi Arabic is not the same as Standard Arabic, given that Classical or Standard Arabic is not a native language for Arabic speakers acquired from early childhood. Thus, examples and explanations for both accounts are provided when possible.

Based on the first assumption, unstressed vowels tend to be omitted in casual speech in Najdi Arabic (Alghmaiz, 2013) and other varieties, such as Yemeni (Yaari et al., 2012), Ammani (Daana, 2009), and Palestinian (Abu-Salim, 1982) Arabic. This pattern has likewise been observed in other languages, such as English (Glowacka, 2001). For example, in Standard Arabic, the word /bū ður/ "seeds" is pronounced with no consonant clusters, but omitting the short vowel results in a word-initial cluster /b ður/ in Najdi Arabic (Alghmaiz, 2013; Alqahtani, 2014). Table 1 shows further examples of this phenomenon, adapted from Alghmaiz (2013).

TABLE 1  
WORD-INITIAL CONSONANT CLUSTERS IN NAJDI ARABIC

Consonant Pattern	Consonant Combination	Najdi Arabic	Standard Arabic	Gloss
Stop + Fricative	/ts/	/tsamoh/	/tasamoh/	forgiveness
Fricative + Nasal	/ðn/	/ðnub/	/ðnub/	sins
Liquid + Glide	/rw/	/rwajah/	/riwajah/	a novel
Nasal + Glide	/mw/	/mwafiq/	/muwafiq/	agreed
Stop + Liquid	/tr/	/trab/	/torab/	soil

According to the second assumption, these word-initial consonant sequences are not the result of vowel deletion and instead represent the underlying form in Najdi Arabic. This is because Arabic is defined by diglossia, where children acquire the colloquial varieties at home and through everyday communication with family and friends, while standard forms are taught in school and restricted to formal situations, such as government documents, mass media, and newspapers (Ferguson, 1959; Haddad, 2005). According to Arabic sociolinguists such as Jasim and Sharhan (2013), these colloquial varieties have different vocabulary, grammar, and phonology from that of Classical and Standard Arabic. Thus, native-speaking children of the Najdi dialect acquire it at home before they go to school, thereby learning Najdi before Standard Arabic (Alkhonini, 2021). Based on this, in this study it is assumed that the input in Najdi would correspond with the output unless shown otherwise.

In optimality theory, one can assume that the input corresponds to the output except when there is a reason to depart from that rule due to lexicon optimization (Kager, 1999). Lexicon optimization assumes that the selected underlying form is the one that corresponds to the surface form with the least violation. Since the inputs in the current study were derived from Najdi Arabic, those inputs were expected to correspond to the outputs in Najdi Arabic. Table 2, adapted from Alkhonini (2021), shows a sample of word-initial consonant sequences in Najdi Arabic with no comparison to standard forms.

TABLE 2  
WORD-INITIAL CONSONANT CLUSTERS IN NAJDI ARABIC

Consonant Pattern	Consonant Combination	Najdi Arabic	Gloss
Stop + Fricative	/k+s/	/kfuf/	injuries
Fricative + Liquid	/ʃ+l/	/ʃlædʒ/	cure
Liquid + Stop	/l+b/	/lbæn/	chewing gum
Glide + Liquid	/w+r/	/wrægəh/	paper
Nasal + Fricative	/n+f/	/nfus/	selves
Fricative + Fricative	/f+h/	/fhum/	fats

As illustrated by Table 2, Najdi Arabic allows word-initial consonant sequences with rising, plateau, and falling sonority. However, this production does not always occur. According to Alghmaiz (2013) and Alkhonini (2021), epenthesis sometimes appears. For example, Alghmaiz (2013) observed that the words /ħimar/ "donkey" and / ðnub/

“sins” were produced 80% of the time with a consonant cluster and 20% of the time with prothesis, as /iħmar/ and /u ħub/. Alkhnoini (2021) found that prothesis was used more with word-initial consonant sequences with falling sonority such as /iwrəgəħ/ “paper.” Such patterns were taken into consideration in the current study as they could form possible candidates.

### III. DATA

The primary sources of data were the studies by Alkhnoini (2021), Alkhnoini and Kwon (2023), and Alghmaiz (2013) on word-initial consonant clusters in Najdi Arabic spoken in and around Riyadh, the hub of this dialect, located in the Najd region of central Saudi Arabia.

### IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Syllabification of Word-Initial Consonant Sequences in Najdi Arabic

The association between the syllabification of word-initial consonant sequences and temporal patterns has been shown by previous research (e.g., Browman & Goldstein, 1988; Byrd, 1995; Goldstein et al., 2009; Hermes et al., 2013; Hermes et al., 2017; Shaw et al., 2009, 2011). That is, the syllabic parsing can be ascertained by timing the speech segments (consonants and vowels). In their pioneering articulatory study of American English, Browman and Goldstein (1988) found that no matter how many consonants were added to the word-initial consonant sequence, the mean of the midpoints of the consonant sequence (the c-center) remained stable to the end of the following vowel (the anchor). Consequently, the time interval between the midpoint of the rightmost consonant (the right edge) and the end of the vowel (the anchor) was reduced as more consonants were added word-initially. Their findings suggested that the English word-initial consonant sequences, which are typically thought to generate complex onsets, may have an observable c-center-to-anchor interval stability in the articulatory domain. This finding has since been replicated in different languages with complex onsets, such as Georgian (Goldstein et al., 2007), Italian (Hermes et al., 2013), Romanian (Marin & Pouplier, 2014), and Polish (Hermes et al., 2017), and languages with simplex onsets, such as Moroccan Arabic (Shaw et al., 2009, 2011). The temporal measurements have likewise been replicated acoustically in languages with complex onsets, such as American English (Ruthan et al., 2021; Selkirk & Durvasula, 2013), and simplex onsets, such as Jazani Arabic (Ruthan et al., 2021; Ruthan, 2020) and Najdi Arabic (Alkhnoini, 2021). The bottom line is that languages with complex onsets show a c-center stability pattern with word-initial consonant sequence syllabification being tautosyllabic, #CCVX, whereas languages with simplex onsets show right-edge stability with word-initial consonant sequences being heterosyllabic, #C.CVX. Such findings are important for understanding the syllable structure of Najdi Arabic through an optimality theory analysis.

#### B. Optimality Theory Analysis of Najdi Arabic Word-Initial Consonant Sequences

##### (a). Najdi Consonant Sequences as Complex Onsets

Syllable structures have been analyzed using various approaches. However, since its introduction in 1993, optimality theory has grown to be the most significant framework in this area (McCarthy & Prince, 1993, 1995; Prince & Smolensky, 2004). The power of this theory is that it accounts for the relationship between a provided input form and a specific output form. Accordingly, this framework is used to analyze the syllable structure of word-initial consonant sequences in Najdi Arabic and related processes such as prothesis.

According to McCarthy (2008), the optimality theory mechanism can be described as an input-output relationship where each input has a specific output. Both GEN (for GENERATOR), which produces an unlimited number of potential candidates, and EVAL (for EVALUATOR), which evaluates candidates through constraints, are essential parts of any grammar that are required for this mechanism to function (Kager, 1999). In optimality theory, there are two types of constraints, markedness and faithfulness constraints. The former provides broad generalizations about well-formedness, while the latter requires that the input and output match (Prince & Smolensky, 2004).

This section accounts for the analysis of word-initial consonant sequences in Najdi using optimality theory constraints pertaining to sonority and syllabic parsing. To clarify the variations of word-initial consonant sequences in this dialect, it was noticed that the constraint of syllabic parsing needs to be ranked higher to account for different types of these simplex onsets. Thus, a new constraint is proposed.

As mentioned earlier, the cause of word-initial consonant sequences in Arabic is debated. Some argue that vowels are part of the input for such words, while others claim they are not. The most important point here is the input needed to perform the optimality theory analysis. The author followed Alkhnoini (2021) in assuming that words with word-initial consonant sequences had an underlying representation of /CCVC/. Thus, the inputs in the optimality theory table would be, for instance, /gs<sup>s</sup>ur/ “palaces,” which is expected to be the optimal candidate for Najdi Arabic, while /gus<sup>s</sup>ur/ would be the optimal form for Standard Arabic, as demonstrated in Table 3. The ONS and FTBIN constraints are defined below:

ONS: A syllable must start with a consonant. (Prince & Smolensky, 2004)

FTBIN: Feet are binary under moraic or syllabic analysis. (Kager, 1999)

TABLE 3

/qus <sup>s</sup> ur/	*COMP-ONS	FTBIN	ONS	MAX-IO	CONTIGUITY-IO	DEP-IO
<sup>ESP</sup> a. (gu).s <sup>s</sup> ur						
b. (iq).s <sup>s</sup> ur			*!			*
c. (qs <sup>s</sup> ur)	*!	*				
d. (s <sup>s</sup> ur)		*!		*		
e. (qI.s <sup>s</sup> ur)					*!	*
f. (gur)		*!		*		

Table 3 picks (a) as the optimal candidate as it satisfies Standard Arabic phonology by avoiding a complex onset and an onsetless syllable structure, thereby not violating highly ranked constraints. The closest candidate to the optimal candidate is (e), which violates CONTIGUITY-IO and is thus eliminated. To eliminate the next closest candidate, candidate (c), Standard Arabic sets \*COMP-ONS and FTBIN constraints as highly ranked, which candidates (c), (d), and (f) violate, whereas candidate (b) violates the third highest ranked constraint, ONS.

In order for Najdi Arabic to pick candidate (c), the highest constraint, as the dialect presumably allows complex onsets, \*COMP-ONS needs to be ranked low and FTBIN removed from the set of constraints, as illustrated in Table 4.

TABLE 4

/qs <sup>s</sup> ur/	ONS	MAX-IO	CONTIGUITY-IO	DEP-IO	*COMP-ONS
a. qus <sup>s</sup> ur			*!	*	
b. iqs <sup>s</sup> ur	*!			*	
<sup>ESP</sup> c. qs <sup>s</sup> ur					*
d. s <sup>s</sup> ur		*!			
e. qI.s <sup>s</sup> ur			*!	*	
f. gur		*!			

As a result, candidate (c) is picked as the optimal candidate since it does not violate any of the constraints. Candidate (a) is the next closest since it violates the least fatal constraint, DEP-IO. Candidate (b) is eliminated because it begins with a vowel, violating the highest ranked constraint, ONS. Candidate (d) deletes the consonant /s<sup>s</sup>/ and candidate (f) deletes /g/, so both violate MAX-IO, while candidate (e) still violates the same constraint CONTIGUITY-IO, because of the epenthesis vowel.

However, if Najdi Arabic allows falling sonority onset sequences, allowing another candidate /s<sup>s</sup>gur/ “falcons,” the constraints in Table 4 will not produce the optimal candidate. Instead, there will be two winning candidates, as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

/qs <sup>s</sup> ur/	ONS	MAX-IO	CONTIGUITY-IO	DEP-IO	*COMP-ONS
a. qus <sup>s</sup> ur			*!	*	
b. iqs <sup>s</sup> ur	*!			*	
<sup>ESP</sup> c. qs <sup>s</sup> ur					*
<sup>ESP</sup> d. s <sup>s</sup> gur					*
e. s <sup>s</sup> ur		*!			
f. qI.s <sup>s</sup> ur			*!	*	
g. gur		*!			

Table 5 shows that both /qs<sup>s</sup>ur/ and /s<sup>s</sup>gur/ win, since they only violate the lowest ranked constraints. However, because the input is /qs<sup>s</sup>ur/, candidate (c) would be more ideal. Therefore, to get (c) as the optimal candidate, Table 6 adds the SSP constraint, as defined below:

SSP Constraint: Sonority increases towards the syllable peak and decreases towards the syllable margins. (Selkirk, 1984)

TABLE 6

/qs <sup>s</sup> ur/	ONS	SSP	MAX-IO	CONTIGUITY-IO	DEP-IO	*COMP-ONS
a. qus <sup>s</sup> ur				*!	*	
b. iqs <sup>s</sup> ur	*!				*	
<sup>ESP</sup> c. qs <sup>s</sup> ur						*
d. s <sup>s</sup> gur		*!				*
e. s <sup>s</sup> ur			*!			
f. qI.s <sup>s</sup> ur				*!	*	
g. gur			*!			

In Table 6, candidate (d) is eliminated because it violates the new constraint (SSP). Candidate (d) has a falling sonority onset; that is, /s<sup>s</sup>/ is a fricative and so is more sonorous and followed by /g/, a stop, which is less sonorous, where in onsets the sonority should increase and not decrease, according to the SSP. Thus, the constraint ensures that candidate (c) is the optimal candidate by not violating any constraint.

In addition to being a possible candidate, /s<sup>s</sup>gur/ also needs to be considered as an input. In other words, if /s<sup>s</sup>gur/ is



an input, the winning candidate must have an identical output, /s<sup>ɕ</sup>gur/. However, the constraints outlined above might not produce the desired candidate, as demonstrated in Table 7.

TABLE 7

/s <sup>ɕ</sup> gur/	ONS	SSP	MAX-IO	CONTIGUITY-IO	DEP-IO	*COMP-ONS
a. s <sup>ɕ</sup> ugur				*!	*	
b. is <sup>ɕ</sup> gur	*!				*	
<del>ESP</del> c. qs <sup>ɕ</sup> ur						*
d. s <sup>ɕ</sup> gur		*!				*
e. gur			*!			
f. s <sup>ɕ</sup> l.gur				*!	*	
g. s <sup>ɕ</sup> ur			*!			

Table 7 shows candidate (c) as the optimal candidate, while the desired candidate is eliminated by the SSP constraint. Re-ranking the constraints does not change the results, since candidate (c) does not violate any of the constraints. Thus, to get candidate (d) as the optimal candidate, another constraint is needed, namely LINEAR-IO (see Table 8). This constraint is defined below:

LINEAR-IO: No metathesis, no movement. (McCarthy, 2008)

S1 reflects the precedence structure of S2, and vice versa. (Pater, 1995)

TABLE 8

/s <sup>ɕ</sup> gur/	ONS	LINEAR-IO	MAX-IO	CONTIGUITY-IO	DEP-IO	*COMP-ONS
a. s <sup>ɕ</sup> ugur				*!	*	
b. is <sup>ɕ</sup> gur	*!				*	
c. qs <sup>ɕ</sup> ur		*!				*
<del>ESP</del> d. s <sup>ɕ</sup> gur						*
e. gur			*!			
f. s <sup>ɕ</sup> l.gur				*!	*	
g. s <sup>ɕ</sup> ur			*!			

The LINEAR-IO constraint eliminates candidate (c), which shows metathesis of the initial consonant sequence in the input. Note that this constraint does not determine whether /s<sup>ɕ</sup>g/ is possible or conforms to the SSP. Table 9 re-evaluates the previous word, /gs<sup>ɕ</sup>ur/ “palaces”.

TABLE 9

/gs <sup>ɕ</sup> ur/	ONS	LINEAR-IO	MAX-IO	CONTIGUITY-IO	DEP-IO	*COMP-ONS
a. gus <sup>ɕ</sup> ur				*!	*	
b. rgs <sup>ɕ</sup> ur	*!				*	
<del>ESP</del> c. qs <sup>ɕ</sup> ur						*
d. s <sup>ɕ</sup> gur		*!				*
e. s <sup>ɕ</sup> ur			*!			
f. gl.s <sup>ɕ</sup> ur				*!	*	
g. gur			*!			

Table 9 shows that the LINEAR-IO constraint solves the previous problem when the SSP constraint was used. The LINEAR-IO constraint eliminates candidate (d), the candidate with metathesis, regardless of whether /s<sup>ɕ</sup>g/ is a possible combination in the dialect or conforms to the SSP. What is important to the constraint is to have faithful output that looks like the input. Therefore, the optimal candidate in both cases is not the one that conforms to the SSP but the one that matches the segment sequence.

Candidates with prothesis have been eliminated in all previous analyses, which should not be the case. According to Alghmaiz (2013) and Alkhonini (2021), some words with word-initial consonant sequences, especially those with a falling sonority profile, are broken up by inserting an initial vowel (prothesis). For example, the word /wrəgəh/ “paper” is either produced as [wrəgəh] with a word-initial consonant sequence or /ɪwrəgəh/ with prothesis. This means that a Najdi Arabic speaker can choose to produce either of these outputs and both are correct. This raises the question of what set of constraints can produce two possible surface forms.

To account for these two possible surface forms, it is necessary to introduce the framework of local optionality, specifically partial grammar order (Anttila, 1997, 2006; Anttila & Cho, 1998). Partial grammar order gives the ranking flexibility, allowing a given input to yield two or more outcomes. Put differently, the process of producing optionality involves leaving out the order in which competing constraints should be ranked and then solving that unclear portion of the grammar in a different way depending on the evaluation. Thus, the constraints in Table 10 allow two possible outputs by lowering the constraint ONS and then not ranking the constraints \*COMP-ONS and ONS.

TABLE 10

/wɾəqəh/	LINEAR-IO	MAX-IO	CONTIGUITY-IO	DEP-IO	*COMP-ONS	ONS
a. wəɾəqəh			*!	*		
b. ɪwɾəqəh				*!		*
Ⓔ c. wɾəqəh					*	
d. rɾəqəh	*!				*	
e. rəqəh		*!				
f. wɪɾəqəh			*!	*		
g. rəqəh		*!				

Candidates (b) and (c) violate the lowest unranked constraints, but candidate (b) still violates a higher ranked constraint, DEP-IO, making candidate (c) the only optimal candidate. Therefore, the partial grammar order needs another step. That is, another constraint DEP-IO should be unranked so it can allow candidate (b) to be picked as an optimal candidate, as demonstrated in Table 11.

TABLE 11

/wɾəqəh/	LINEAR-IO	MAX-IO	CONTIGUITY-IO	DEP-IO	*COMP-ONS	ONS
a. wəɾəqəh			*!	*		
Ⓔ b. ɪwɾəqəh				*		*
Ⓔ c. wɾəqəh					*	
d. rɾəqəh	*!				*	
e. rəqəh		*!				
f. wɪɾəqəh			*!	*		
g. rəqəh		*!				

(b). Najdi Consonant Sequences as Simplex Onsets

The above analyses were based on previous assumptions that word-initial consonant sequences form complex onsets (Alghmaiz, 2013; Alqahtani, 2014). Therefore, SSP was used to eliminate some candidates and evaluate others as optimal. However, recent studies such as Alkhonini (2021) and Alkhonini and Kwon (2023) have acoustically shown that word-initial consonant sequences are simplex rather than complex onsets. That is, the syllabification of word-initial consonant sequences in Najdi Arabic is heterosyllabic (#C.CV#) and not tautosyllabic (#CCVX). This means the first consonant of the word-initial sequence does not belong to the same syllable as the prevocalic consonant. In other words, the first consonant of the word-initial sequences forms a prosodic word-level appendix (Kiparsky, 2003). Based on these findings, the inputs in previous analyses should be something like #C.CV#, not #CCV#. Consequently, some constraints (e.g., SSP) are either used incorrectly (since these consonant sequences are simplex onsets, meaning they are not in the same syllable and thus do not violate SSP) or need to be re-evaluated and ranked differently (e.g., \*COMP-ONS). In addition, the candidate that is optimal in previous analyses should not be due to the syllabification findings, as demonstrated in Table 12. For the sake of relevance, other possible candidates are not included in Table 12.

TABLE 12

σ μ     /g.s <sup>ɕ</sup> ur/	R-L/C-L	LINEAR-IO	MAX-IO	CONTIGUITY-IO	DEP-IO	*COMP-ONS	ONS
Ⓔ σ μ     a. /g.s <sup>ɕ</sup> ur/							
b. gs <sup>ɕ</sup> ur	*!					*	
μ μ     c. ɪg.s <sup>ɕ</sup> ur					*!		*
σ μ     d. s <sup>ɕ</sup> .gur		*!					
μ μ     e. gt.s <sup>ɕ</sup> ur				*!	*		
μ μ     f. gu.s <sup>ɕ</sup> ur				*!	*		

To eliminate the previous optimal candidate /g<sup>s</sup>ur/ and account for the actual optimal candidate /g.s<sup>s</sup>ur/, the input first needs to be different from the abovementioned inputs. Second, the constraints Remote-License-C-Left (R-L/C-L) and \*COMP-ONS should outrank other constraints:

\*COMP-ONS: Complex onsets are not allowed. (Prince & Smolensky, 2004)

R-L/C-L: Left-edge consonants are remotely licensed. (Mahfoudhi, 2005)

Following Mahfoudhi (2005), who examined consonant clusters in Tunisian Arabic and suggested the constraint R-L/C-L to account for the left-most consonant in the onset cluster by licensing it remotely, the present study proposes using R-L/C-L to account for a similar pattern in Najdi Arabic. For instance, Mahfoudhi (2005) suggested that, for an input such as /qlam/ “a pen,” the candidate [qlam] is eliminated by R-L/C-L, whereas the optimal candidate [q.lam] wins. In the present study, to account for /g.s<sup>s</sup>ur/, the constraints R-L/C-L and \*COMP-ONS rule out /g<sup>s</sup>ur/, which violates both constraints, as demonstrated in Table 12.

Table 12 shows candidate (a) as the optimal candidate, satisfying all constraints, while candidate (b) is ruled out due to violating R-L/C-L and \*COMP-ONS, and candidate (c) violates the third highest inviolable constraint, ONS. Candidate (d) has a different surface form from the input due to metathesis and so is eliminated by LINEAR-IO. CONTIGUITY-IO rules out candidates (e) and (f) due to epenthetic vowels inserted between the first and second consonants.

Thus, the full and final constraints for Najdi word-initial consonant sequences, given that they are simplex onsets, are the following: R-L/C-L >> LINEAR-IO >> MAX-IO >> CONTIGUITY-IO >> DEP-IO, \*COMP-ONS, ONS.

## V. CONCLUSION

In this study, optimality theory was used to discuss the syllabification of word-initial consonant clusters in Najdi Arabic. Unlike previous accounts, which considered consonant clusters as complex onsets, in this study Najdi consonant sequences were treated as simplex onsets. Therefore, the study proposed using optimality theory constraints that set apart simplex from complex onsets and suggested a specific constraint ranking for these sequences. Based on this analysis, other varieties of Arabic claimed to have consonant sequences as complex onsets could be revisited.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was supported by funding from Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University project number PSAU/2024/R/1445.

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# Analyzing Prefix /me(N)-/ in the Indonesian Affixation: A Corpus-Based Morphology

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**Abstract**—This paper presents a corpus-based study of the prefix /me(N)-/ in Indonesian, a productive affix used to form predicative constructions. The analysis was based on the Indonesian – Leipzig Corpora Collection (ILCC). It explored the prefix's distribution, functions, and productivity, focusing on its role in encoding semantic and syntactic features. The results showed that the prefix /me(N)-/ was predominantly used to derive verbs, accounting for over 68,7% at the mean value of 7,1. However, /me(N)-/ was also employed to derive adjectives, albeit less frequently (19,4%), at the mean value of 6,3, and about 12% of forming new words from noun stems (mean value was about 5,9). Semantically, the prefix can uniquely express causative (49,24% at a mean value of 43), instrumental (11,45% at a mean value of 10), reflexive (19,47 at a mean value of 17), possessive/state meanings (10,31% at a mean value of 9), and reciprocal (9,54% at a mean value of 8,3). Derived verbs with the prefix /me(N)-/ had syntactic functions influenced by their semantic meaning. Some of the most common and distinctive syntactic functions of /me(N)-/ are form monovalent (29,18% having a mean value of 27,33), bivalent (48,40% having a mean value of 45,33), and trivalent (22,42% having a mean value of 21). The study demonstrated that /me(N)-/ was highly productive. Future research could examine the cognitive and processing mechanisms involved in understanding /me(N)-/derived words.

**Index Terms**—affixation, corpus, Indonesian, prefix /me(N)-/, words construction

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian is known for having a complex and intricate morphological system that utilizes prefixes, suffixes, and infixes to derive words from stems (Isodarus, 2023; Nugraha & Baryadi, 2019; Sneddon, 1996). Among these affixes, the prefix /me(N)-/ is particularly noteworthy for its versatility and widespread usage. It can be attached to a wide range of stems, including both native and borrowed words, to form derived constructions. This prefix is crucial to Indonesian language structure since it encodes semantic and syntactic features. However, comprehending its meaning and usage has been challenging for researchers due to the limitations of traditional morphological analysis. The traditional approach relies on intuition and limited data sets, often leading to subjective interpretations and an incomplete understanding of affixation patterns. Researchers have adopted a more systematic approach to overcome this challenge (Dal & Namer, 2015; Gries & Paquot, 2020). This approach involves analyzing large data sets of actual language usage to obtain an objective and comprehensive understanding of affixation patterns. By adopting corpus-based morphology (Gries & Durrant, 2020; Paquot & Larsson, 2020), researchers can gain valuable insights into the usage and meaning of the prefix /me(N)-/, contributing to a more accurate and detailed understanding of Indonesian.

This research paper uses corpus-based morphology to explore the intricate workings of the prefix /me(N)-/ in the Indonesian language. We have relied on the Indonesian – Leipzig Corpora Collection (hereafter ILCC) as our primary data source. Our analysis comprehensively examines the prefix's distribution, functions, and productivity. Through our findings, we aim to provide a detailed insight into the roles the prefix plays in forming Indonesian words. Therefore, the following are the questions this study aims to answer: 1) what distribution does the prefix /me(N)-/ have in Indonesian words; which situations are the most frequent ones in which it appears? and 2) what syntactic and semantic roles does the prefix /me(N)-/ serve?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Theoretical Framework

The study of the prefix /me(N)-/ in Indonesian affixation is grounded in the principles of morphology. Morphology seeks to uncover how morphemes, the minor meaning-bearing language units (Embick, 2013), are combined to form words (Hathout & Namer, 2019). To analyze the prefix /me(N)-/, we rely on the Word and Paradigm Morphology (Bonami & Strnadov 2019). The paradigm consists of sets of words that share a standard stem and exhibit systematic changes in form due to affixation (Ronneberger-Sibold, 2015). This approach enables us to identify patterns using the prefix, which can help us determine its meaning in different grammatical contexts.

The prefix /me(N)-/ demonstrates a system of allomorphy where the form of the prefix changes depending on the initial consonant of the stem it is attached to. To understand and analyze the distribution and functions of /me(N)-/ better, it is essential to have a clear and comprehensive understanding of these allomorphic patterns (Dressler, 2015).

The prefix /me(N)- has several allomorphs: /me-/ , /men-/ , /mem/ , /meng-/ , /menge-/ , and /meny-/ . The choice of allomorph depends on the initial sound and vowel of the base word. The distribution of the allomorphs of /me(N)-/ can be explained by a general rule that states that the prefix /me(N)-/ takes the form /men-/ or /mem-/ if the base word starts with a consonant, it takes the form /me-/ or /meng-/ if the base word starts with vowel, it takes the form /menge-/ if the base word is monosyllabic, and it take form /meny-/ if the base starts with fricative consonant.

Furthermore, the present study adopts a corpus-based methodology to investigate the distribution, functions, and productivity of the Indonesian language's morpheme /me(N)-/. This research employs large datasets of Indonesian texts to conduct a rigorous and data-driven analysis of this morphological unit, scrutinizing a corpus-based approach (Gries, 2015; Kilgarriff, 2005). Corpus linguistics provides a systematic and empirical approach to linguistic analysis (Baayen, 2008; Bîbîe et al., 2021). In addition, the prefix /me(N)-/ can be analyzed from two perspectives: syntactic (Lieber, 2006a) and semantic (Cançado & Gonçalves, 2016). The syntactic analysis examines the grammatical roles of derived constructions in their respective sentences to determine how /me(N)-/ affects the structure of sentences and contributes to the expression of semantic and syntactic relationships. This analysis can provide insights into how /me(N)-/ modifies the meaning of words in context. A comprehensive understanding of the functions of /me(N)-/ requires both syntactic and semantic analysis, as these two approaches provide complementary insights into their effects on language structure.

### B. Previous Research

Uhlenbeck's (1952) seminal work analyzed the Indonesian grammar. According to Uhlenbeck, the prefix's primary function is causative, indicating that the agent of the action causes the action to occur. However, he also observed that prefixes can express a range of other semantic functions, including reciprocity, passivity, reflexivity, and possession. Additional research has contributed to our comprehension of the semantic and syntactic functions of the prefix. Teeuw (1962) introduced a more precise semantic categorization that distinguishes between primary and secondary causative connotations. Primary causative verbs reveal an action that the agent directly prompts. In contrast, secondary causative verbs convey an indirect causal connection, where the agent initiates the action, but the real cause may be external to the agent (cf. Blust, 1987).

Furthermore, Verhaar (1983) analyzed the distributional patterns of prefixes in terms of their compatibility with different types of stems. Verhaar's study included native Indonesian words, borrowed words, and complex words. Additionally, he examined the allomorphy patterns of the prefix, highlighting its assimilation with the initial consonants of the stem. According to Tampubolon's (1983) classification, the prefix is a causative affix, meaning that the derived word describes an action that the verb's agent causes. In addition, Chaer (2008) and Kridalaksana (2009) also explored the semantic functions of Indonesian affixes. Their research showcased the affixes' capacity to express causation by indicating that the agent of the action causes the event to occur. Additionally, they observed that the affixes can be used for reciprocal actions, signifying that the action involves two or more participants in a complementary manner. Lastly, recent study has adopted corpus-based and computational methods to research morphological processes in Indonesian (e.g., Amalia et al., 2021). Notable works by Denistia and Baayen (2022) utilize quantitative approaches to investigate the frequency, distribution, and usage trends of morphemes, providing empirical evidence to support theoretical frameworks. Nevertheless, the prefix /me(N)-/ has not been thoroughly covered in these researches.

Previous studies on the prefix in Indonesian affixation have often relied on small-scale corpora or manually selected examples, which limits the generalizability of the findings and may overlook essential patterns in using the prefix. However, there is a need to explore other syntactic and semantic functions of the prefix and how these functions interact with each other. On the other hand, traditional morphological analysis methods rely on intuition and limited data sets, limiting their ability to comprehensively understand complex morphological phenomena like /me(N)-/. In short, corpus-based morphology offers a more data-driven and systematic approach to analyzing affixation patterns.

## III. METHOD

In our Indonesian affixation study, we employed a corpus-based morphology approach. Specifically, we analyzed the prefix /me(N)-/ to better understand its linguistic properties and usage patterns. We drew upon the Indonesian – Leipzig Corpora Collection (ILCC) as our primary data source to do this (see Table 1). The ILCC is a comprehensive repository of Indonesian language data, containing over 1 trillion tokens spanning various genres and registers. Utilizing this corpus, we conducted a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the prefix /me(N)-/.

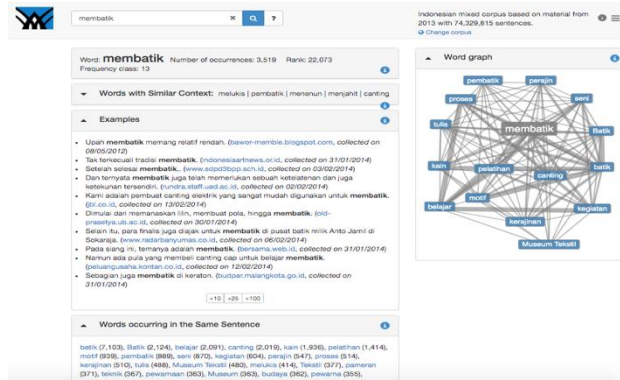


Figure 1. An Example of Occurrence Retrieval in the Corpus

TABLE 1  
DETAILS OF THE INDONESIAN – LEIPZIG CORPORA COLLECTION

1.	Description	Indonesian mixed corpus based on material 2013
2.	Name	Ind_mixed_2013
3.	Language	Indonesian
4.	Genre	Mixed
5.	Year	2013
6.	Sentences	74,329,815
7.	Types	7,964,109
8.	Tokens	1,206,281,985
8.	Annotations	coocSim; GDEX
10.	Link to corpus	<a href="https://corpora.uni-leipzig.de/?corpusId=ind_mixed_2013">https://corpora.uni-leipzig.de/?corpusId=ind_mixed_2013</a>

First, data collection. To begin the process, we carefully examined the ILCC, closely scrutinizing verb, adjective, and noun forms for occurrences of the prefix /me(N)-/. By utilizing the search features of the ILCC, we could accurately identify words that contain this prefix. This comprehensive search was conducted across the entire ILCC corpus, which includes various linguistic contexts, ensuring our findings are comprehensive and representative (see Figure 1). The data collection involved three types of matrices: one for verbal constructions (see Table 4), the second for adjectival constructions (see Table 6), and the other for nominal constructions (see Table 8). The former was constructed using the postulate of verbs (Viberg, 1983, 2014), while the latter was constructed using the premise of adjectives (Hundsnurscher, 1992, 2013), and the last one was constructed by using the hypothesis of nouns (Aikhenvald, 2017, 2020).

TABLE 2  
THE FREQUENCY OF THE PREFIX /ME(N)-/ IN THE WORD CONSTRUCTIONS

Grammatical Context	Freq. per Category			Rank	%
	I	II	III		
Verbs stems	3,848,263	2,817,588	1,455,449	8,121,300	68,7
Adjective stems	1,303,055	457,176	527,898	2,288,129	19,4
Noun stems	799,387	182,790	432,840	1,415,017	12,0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,950,705</b>	<b>3,457,554</b>	<b>2,416,187</b>	<b>11,824,446</b>	<b>100</b>

Second, annotation and classification. To acquire a more comprehensive comprehension of the context and functions of the prefix /me(N)-/, we engaged in a meticulous annotation process. This process involved identifying and labelling each instance of the prefix with the corresponding stem and identifying the semantic and syntactic functions of the derived word. We scrutinized the UDPipe, a trainable pipeline for tokenization, tagging, lemmatization and dependency parsing (website: <https://lindat.mff.cuni.cz/services/udpipe/>).

TABLE 3  
THE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTIC OF THE PREFIX /ME(N)-/ IN WORD CONSTRUCTIONS

	Verb stem	Adjective stem	Noun stem
Mean	7,1	6,3	5,9
Median	1,4	1,6	2,8
Sample Variance	26,6	85,2	49,6
Std. Deviation	5,2	9,2	7,0
Std. Error	1,4	2,3	1,7
Confidence level (95%)	3,0	4,9	3,6

Third, frequency and distributional analysis. We conducted a frequency analysis to determine the prevalence of /me(N)-/ in Indonesian affixation. This procedure involved calculating the frequency of occurrence of the prefix in various verb, adjective, and noun paradigms and across different semantic domains. This analysis gave us valuable

insights into the relative importance and distribution of /me(N)-/ in Indonesian word formation. Then, we looked for patterns and trends to explore further the distribution of /me(N)-/ across different types of constructions. Specifically, we examined the types of stems to which the prefix was attached. This analysis helped us better understand the behavior of /me(N)-/ in Indonesian morphology.

Lastly, syntactic and semantic analysis. To investigate /me(N)-/'s syntactic functions, we examined the grammatical roles of the derived verbs and adjectives in their respective sentences. Our goal was to gain insight into how /me(N)-/ influences the syntactic structure of the sentences and contributes to the expression of semantic and syntactic relationships. To further investigate the semantic functions of /me(N)-/, we analyzed the changes in meaning that occur when the prefix is attached to different types of stems. This investigation involved identifying the fundamental semantic associations of /me(N)-/ and how they contribute to expressing diverse semantic concepts.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

##### A. The Distribution of the Prefix /me(N)-/ Across Derived Constructions

The prefix /me(N)-/ holds significant importance in Indonesian morphology, as it serves as a versatile tool for creating new words from existing stems, i.e., verbs, adjectives, and nouns; consider the sentence (1) – (3) respectively. The verb /mendengar/ ‘heard’ ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 148,865) is derived by the prefix /me(N)-/ from the verb stem /dengar/ ‘hear,’ meanwhile the verb /memerah/ ‘blush or bloodshot’ ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 5,803) is derived by the same prefix from the adjective /merah/ ‘red,’ and the verb /merakyat/ ‘popular’ ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 2,470) is prefixed from the noun stem /rakyat/ ‘populace.’ Understanding its distribution and usage patterns across these stems is crucial for comprehending the intricate mechanics of Indonesian word formation (see Figure 2). To gain a comprehensive grasp of the prefix’s distribution, it is essential to examine its prevalence in verbal, adjectival, and nominal constructions and identify the most common contexts in which it appears (cf. Loukides et al., 2023; Michaliszyn et al., 2023).

- (1) *Tiba-tiba aku **mendengar** suara lirih memanggil namaku* (ILCC, 2013).  
Sudently.ADV I.PS1 hear.VERB voice.NOUN soft.ADJ call.VERB name-NOUN my-PS1  
‘Suddenly I heard a soft voice calling my name.’
- (2) *Matanya pun **memerah** karena kelelahan* (ILCC, 2013).  
Eyes.NOUN his/her.PS3 blush.VERB because.ADP fatigue.NOUN  
‘His/her eyes were bloodshot from fatigue.’
- (3) *Kini mereka lebih **merakyat*** (ILCC, 2013).  
Now.ADV they.PP3 more.ADV popular.VERB  
‘Now they are more popular.’

Our corpus-based analysis of the Indonesian prefix /me(N)-/ reveals a complex and nuanced distribution across verbs, adjectives, and nouns derivation (see Table 2). The prefix is predominantly used to derive verbs, accounting for over 68,6% of its occurrences in the corpus. This dominance of verbs reflects the prefix’s primary function as a causative affix, adding the notion of cause or agency to the meaning of the stem. However, /me(N)-/ is also employed to derive adjectives, albeit less frequently (19.4%), and about 12% of forming new words from noun stems. The descriptive statistic has been presented in Table 3. The data analyzes the usage of the prefix /me(N)-/ across three types of stems: verb, adjective, and noun. Each stem type has five descriptive statistical values. Based on the mean values, the prefix is most frequently used with verb stems (7,1), followed by adjective stems (6,3) and noun stems (5,9). These values suggest that the prefix may primarily facilitate the transformation of verb stems into verb constructions. The median values reveal a different pattern, with nouns having the highest median (2,8), followed by adjectives (1,6) and verbs (1,4). These values indicate a central tendency towards noun stems for prefix use. The sample variance and standard deviation are highest for adjective stems (85,2 and 9,2), suggesting more significant variability in prefix usage compared to verb (26,6 and 5,2) and noun stems (49,6 and 7,0). These values imply more diverse interpretations of prefix meaning with adjective stems. The estimated ranges for each stem type, with a 95% confidence level, offer insights into the possible spread of prefix usage. The broader range of adjectives (4,9) reinforces the observed variability compared to nouns (3,6) and verbs (3,0).



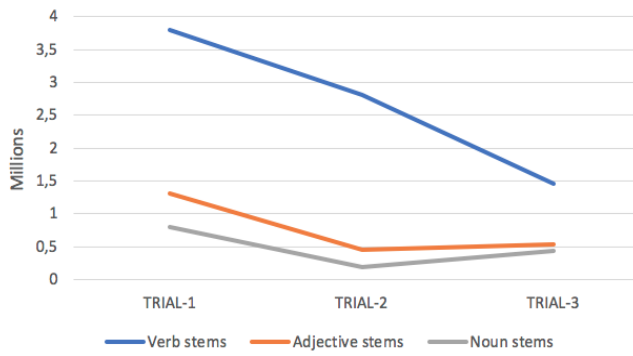


Figure 2. Comparison of the /me(N)-/ Prefixation in the Word Constructions

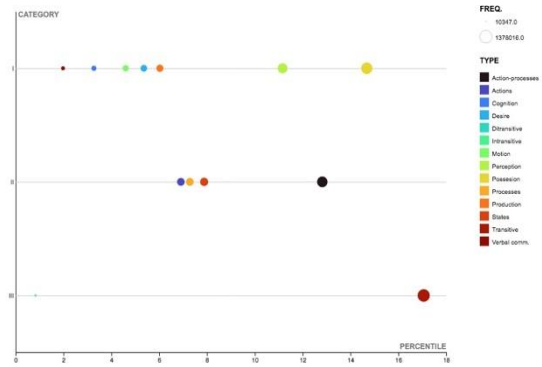


Figure 3. Distribution of Prefix /me(N)-/ in the Verb-Stem Constructions

One exciting aspect of the prefix /me(N)-/ is its versatile nature regarding its distribution across verb paradigms (see Figure 3). A detailed analysis of the verb stem constructions reveals that this prefix is most attached to stems of three types: transitive, possession, and action-processes. This graph displays the distribution of the prefix /me(N)-/ within the Verb-Stem Constructions of the Indonesian language. The x-axis indicates the frequency of the prefix (in percentile), while the y-axis displays the different types of verb stems. Based on this graph, the prefix /me(N)-/ is frequently utilized with verbs associated with an agent's actions and states or conditions that an agent causes. However, it is less commonly used with verbs attached to stems of two types: verbal communication and desire.

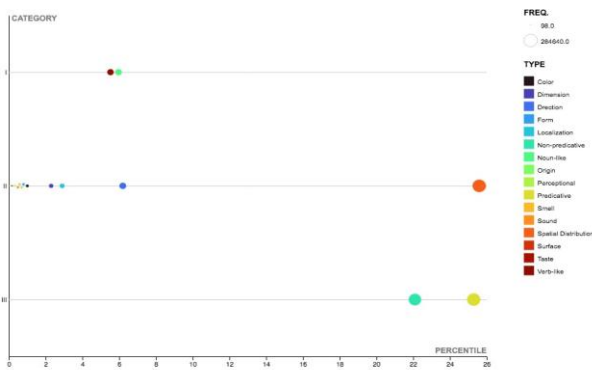


Figure 4. Distribution of Prefix /me(N)-/ in the Adjective-Stem Construction

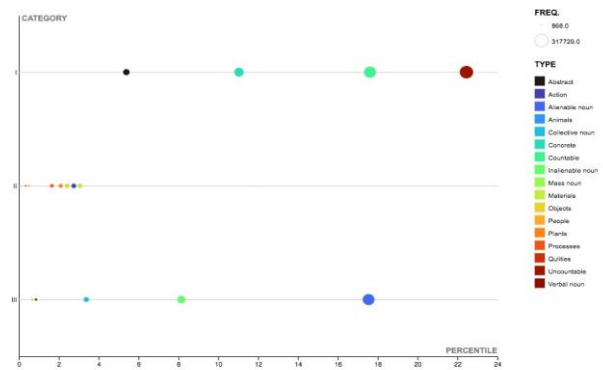


Figure 5. Distribution of Prefix /me(N)-/ in the Noun-Stem Constructions

TABLE 4  
THE TABULATION OF FREQUENCY OF PREFIX /ME(N)-/ IN THE VERB-STEM CONSTRUCTIONS

Category I: Typological Aspects		Freq.1	Category II: Semantic Aspects		Freq.2	Category III: Syntactic Aspects		Freq.3		
Motion	/menghilang/ 'disappear'	26,014	States	/menebak/ 'to guess'	5,412	Transitive	/meminjam/ 'to borrow'	17,775		
	/mendatang/ 'to come'	231,404		/menyentuh/ 'to touch'	43,751		/membawa/ 'to bring'	343,743		
	/mengalir/ 'to flow'	57,793		/memuja/ 'to adore'	4,119		/membayar/ 'to pay'	132,427		
	/mengejar/ 'to chase'	56,274		/merasa/ 'to perceive'	456,937		/membeli/ 'to buy'	208,964		
Possession	/memberi/ 'to give'	380,176		/mengukur/ 'to measure'	40,005		/menjual/ 'to sell'	130,584		
	/mengambil/ 'to take'	340,161		/menimbang/ 'to weigh'	4,923		/menghapus/ 'to erase'	30,433		
	/mengirim/ 'to ship'	64,365		/menyangkut/ 'to involve'	79,765		/memberi/ 'to give'	380,176		
	/mengunduh/ 'to have'	7,775		/menyanjung/ 'to laud'	1,214		/melewati/ 'via'	94,276		
	/menerima/ 'to receive'	393,274		/mencipta/ 'to create'	3,415		/melempar/ 'to throw'	13,329		
Production	/mengarang/ 'to compose'	4,201		Processes	/membakar/ 'to burn'		29,433	Intransitive	/melamar/ 'to apply'	11,900
	/membangun/ 'to construct'	316,211			/melukis/ 'to paint'		7,541		/menginjak/ 'to step'	14,409
	/membina/ 'to build'	22,598			/meledak/ 'to explode'		22,099		/meronta/ 'struggling'	1,628
	/memakai/ 'to use'	144,074	/mendapat/ 'to acquire'		483,245	/mengernyit/ 'frowning'	297			
Verbal communication	/menyanggah/ 'to say'	2,133	/menggoyang / 'to rock'		2,643	Intransitive	/melirik/ 'glance'		12,545	
	/menyapa/ 'to greet'	14,141	/menukar/ 'to change'		6,440		/melaju/ 'drove'		31,663	
	/memanggil/ 'to call'	50,610	/memotong/ 'to cut'		27,041		/memejam/ 'closes'		129	
	/menyebut/ 'to mention'	124,627	Actions		/memakan/ 'to eat'		57,359		/memicing/ 'squint'	52
	/menyanyi/ 'to sing'	14,079			/melompat/ 'to jump'		13,371		/melotot/ 'glared'	1,898
Perception	/melihat/ 'to see'	728,150			/menulis/ 'to write'		157,919		/menggelinjang/ 'rolling'	1,212
	/mendengar/ 'to hear'	148,865			/memasak/ 'to cook'		24,601		/merejan/ 'whooping'	12
	/menggeleng/ 'shook his head'	6,525			/menggeser/ 'to move'		11,423		/merosot/ 'degenerate'	16,626
	/mencium/ 'to smell'	17,731		/membaca/ 'to read'	227,845		/mengejan/ 'straining'	1,024		
	/mencecap/ 'to taste'	239	/menyanyi/ 'to sing'	14,079	Ditransitive		/menyematkan/ 'embed'	3,391		
Cognition	/mengerti/ 'to understand'	3,190	/menyusun/ 'to arrange'	63,235			/menjahitkan/ 'sewing'	165		
	/menyitir/ 'to cite'	753	/mengikat/ 'to bind'	27,967			/menugasi/ 'assign'	535		
	/mengenal/ 'to recognize'	118,603	/membuka/ 'to open'	270,784		/menidurkan/ 'lull'	735			
	/mengingat/ 'to remember'	141,425	/memeluk/ 'to hug'	23,178		/menulisi/ 'write'	104			
Desire	/mengembara/ 'to wander'	2,221	Action-processes	/memeriksa/ 'to verify'		61,654	/membangunkan/ 'wake'	5,322		
	/menjelajah/ 'to explore'	6,263		/menutup/ 'to close'		103,091	/menyeduhkan/ 'brew'	15		
	/mengharap/ 'hope'	8,432		/melatih/ 'to train'		40,679	/menggorengkan/ 'fry'	6		
	/meminta/ 'to ask'	385,164		/mengajar/ 'to teach'		92,742	/merebuskan/ 'boil'	7		
	/memohon/ 'to request'	30,792		/mencari/ 'to search'		409,678	/meniriskan/ 'drain'	67		
TOTAL		3,848,263	TOTAL	2,817,588		TOTAL	1,455,449			

The prefix /me(N)-/ is a productive prefix in Indonesian, forming a wide range of verbs. It can be added to the roots of both native and foreign Indonesian stem-forms to form causative, reciprocal, and reflexive verbs. Causative verbs describe the action of causing something to happen. For example, the verb /memasak/ 'to cook' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 24,601) derives from the root /masak/ 'to be cooked.' The prefix /me(N)-/ implies that the subject of the verb is causing the action of cooking to occur on something else. Reciprocal verbs describe how two or more people or things interact with one another. For example, the verb /memeluk/ 'to hug' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 23,178) derives from the root /peluk/ 'to be hugged.' The prefix /me(N)-/ signifies that two individuals are hugging. Reflexive verbs describe the action of someone or something doing something to itself. For example, the verb /membaca/ 'to read' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 227,845) derives from the root /baca/ 'read.' The prefix /me(N)-/ denotes that the subject of the verb wipes themselves. In general, the prefix /me(N)-/ can be appended to any root that can be combined to make a verb.

Furthermore, in Indonesian, the prefix /me(N)-/ is also a productive prefix for deriving adjectives (see Figure 4). It is most common in the formulation of causative verbs, which describe activities that cause a change in status or situation. When it comes to adjectives, /me(N)-/ is employed to transform static or descriptive adjectives into active verbs that indicate the process or act of achieving the quality or trait represented by the adjective. Adjective causativization is the process by which adjectives become verbs. The distribution of /me(N)-/ among Indonesian adjectives is determined by a number of elements, including the adjective stem's first consonant, the adjective's semantic character, and the existence of certain prefixes or suffixes on the stem. The prefix /me(N)-/ is typically applied straight to consonant-initial adjective stems. However, if the adjective stem starts with the consonant [b], the prefix becomes /mem-/. For example, the adjective /bahagia/ 'happy' can be used to form the causative verbs /membahagiakan/ 'felicitate' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 7,918). Besides, the prefix /me(N)-/ is more commonly used with adjectives that express static qualities, such as size, color, or physical state. For instance, from the adjective /besar/ 'big', we can derive the verb /membesar/ 'to grow' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 11,878). With adjectives that express abstract qualities or mental states, the use of /me(N)-/ is less common. Despite that, other causative prefixes or verbs are typically employed. For example, to express the action of 'making someone happy,' we would use the verb /menyenangkan/ 'to make something enjoyable or pleasant' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 83,909).

In terms of noun-stem constructions (see Figure 5), the prefix /me(N)-/ is most typically used to build verbs indicating activities performed by an agent. For example, the noun /buku/ 'book' can have prefixed with /me(N)-/ to form the verb /membukukan/ 'to chronicle' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 21,338), which meaning 'to perform the action of writing.' The prefix /me(N)-/ can also be used to build verbs describing states or conditions caused by an agent. The noun /panen/ 'growth' can have prefixed with /me(N)-/ to form the verb /memanen/ 'harvest' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 3,963), meaning 'to cause growth to be in a state of harvesting.' The prefix /me(N)-/ can be used to create verbs that refer to instruments or tools used to complete an action. For example, the noun /gunting/ 'scissors' can have preceded by /me(N)-/ to produce the verb /menggunting/ 'to cut' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 1,677) which means 'to use a scissors to cut something.' In some circumstances, the prefix /me(N)-/ can be utilized to create verbs that indicate changes in state or condition. For example, the word /beku/ 'freeze' can have prefixed with /me(N)-/ to generate the verb /membeku/ 'turn into freeze' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 3,848), which meaning 'to transition from a liquid to a solid state'.

#### B. Semantic Functions of Prefix /me(N)-/

The prefix /me(N)-/ is a highly productive and versatile affix in the Indonesian language. It is mainly used to form verbs but can also be added to stem of adjectives or nouns. The prefix can uniquely express causative (49,24% at a mean value of 43), instrumental (11,45% at a mean value of 10), reflexive (19,47 at a mean value of 17), possessive/state meanings (10,31% at a mean value of 9), and reciprocal (9,54% at a mean value of 8,3). This analysis explores the complex semantic functions of /me(N)-/ and how they transform derived words' meanings and grammatical roles (see Figure 6). We examine the prefix's role in expressing causation, highlighting how it introduces the concept of agency and an agent-initiated event. We also explore /me(N)-/'s role in encoding reflexivity, illustrating how it marks actions directed back at the agent. Additionally, we investigate /me(N)-/'s contribution to encoding reciprocity, revealing how it conveys the simultaneous involvement of two or more agents in an action. We examine the prefix's use in forming possessive and state adjectives, revealing how it denotes possession or a state of being. Analyzing these intricate semantic and syntactic functions gives us a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of /me(N)-/ and its pivotal role in shaping Indonesian word formation (cf. Cahyani, 2021; Nugraha, 2017, 2021).

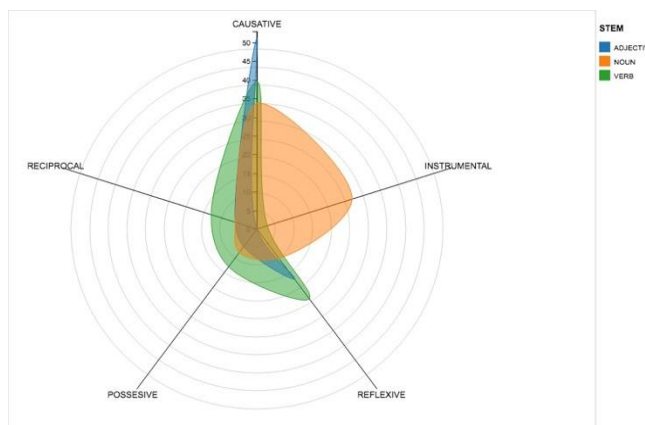


Figure 6. Spread of the Semantic Functions of the Prefix /me(N)-/ in Word Structures

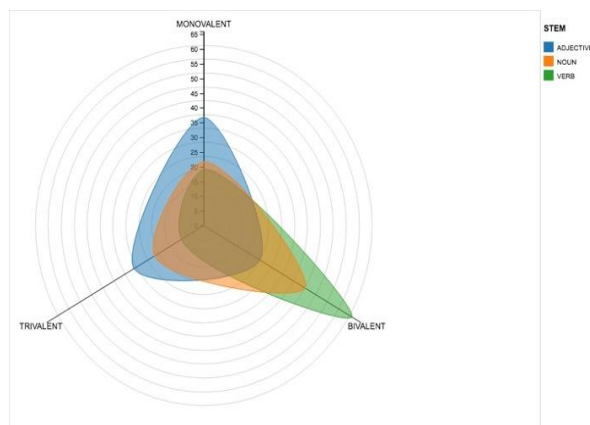


Figure 7. Propagation of the Syntactic Functions of the Prefix /me(N)-/ in Word Structures

The Table 5 displays the correlation coefficients between various functions associated with the prefix /me(N)-/ in Indonesian. The strongest correlation exists between Reflexive and Reciprocal functions, with a value of 0.866, indicating a positive and moderate to strong association. This suggests that verbs with a reflexive meaning are often also reciprocal, meaning they are performed by two or more entities on each other. Positive correlations exist between Reciprocal and Possessive (0.961) and Reflexive and Possessive (0.693), indicating that verbs with a reciprocal or reflexive meaning are more likely to have a possessive meaning. A negative correlation (-0.818) exists between Instrumental and Reflexive functions, meaning that verbs with an instrumental meaning (using a tool) are less likely to be reflexive (done to oneself). The remaining weak correlations, ranging from -0.454 to -0.141, suggest a limited relationship between these functions in the prefix /me(N)-/. While the matrix provides insights into the relationships between different functions, further analysis is necessary to understand the underlying reasons behind these correlations and how they interact in specific contexts.

TABLE 5  
CORRELATION TEST RESULTS ON THE MEANING PRODUCED BY THE PREFIX /ME(N)-/ IN WORD STRUCTURE

	CAUSATIVE	INSTRUMENTAL	REFLEXIVE	POSSESSIVE	RECIPROCAL
CAUSATIVE	1				
INSTRUMENTAL	-0,818	1			
REFLEXIVE	0,327	-0,818	1		
POSSESSIVE	-0,454	-0,141	0,693	1	
RECIPROCAL	-0,189	-0,410	0,866	0,960	1

Furthermore, the prefix /me(N)-/ is frequently used to create verbs that indicate actions carried out by an agent. This prefix is added to a noun and forms a verb that signifies the act of performing a particular action. For instance, the noun /gembala/ 'shepherd' can have prefixed with /me(N)-/ to form the verb /menggembala/ 'to herd' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 557) as in sentence (4). This construction is commonly used in the Indonesian language to create verbs and communicate actions carried out by a subject.

- (4) *Suatu hari aku menggembala cukup jauh dari desa* (ILCC, 2013).  
 One.DET day.NOUN I.PS1 to herd.VERB quite.ADV far.ADJ from.ADP village.NOUN.  
 'One day I was herding quite far from the village.'

The prefix /me(N)-/ is often used to form verbs denoting states or conditions caused by an agent. This prefix is particularly useful for expressing the causative aspect of a verb, which is the idea that an action or event is caused or brought about by another person or thing. For example, the noun /hukum/ 'law' can have prefixed with /me(N)-/ to form the verb /menghukum/ which means 'to convict' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 14,971) as in sentence (5). In this case, the prefix /me(N)-/ indicates that the agent performs the action of causing oneself to be in a state of punished (i.e., the person experiencing the punishment).

- (5) *Li menghukum banyak menteri setia yang menentangnya* (ILCC, 2013).  
 Li.PROPN punish.VERB many.ADV minister.NOUN loyal.NOUN who.PRON oppose.VERB nya.PS3  
 'Li punished many loyal ministers who opposed him.'

In Indonesian, the prefix /me(N)-/ forms verbs that indicate the tools or instruments used to perform an action. To illustrate, take the noun /gunting/ 'scissors' which can be combined with the prefix /me(N)-/ to form the verb /menggunting/ 'to cut.' This newly formed verb conveys the idea of 'using a scissors to cut something.' Therefore, the

prefix /me(N)-/ helps create verbs that are descriptive of the actions carried out with the help of specific tools or instruments.

- (6) *Rupanya, dia sedang **menggunting** sebuah kertas* (ILCC, 2013).  
 Apparently.ADV he/she.PRON currently.AUX cutting.VERB a piece of.DET paper.NOUN  
 ‘Apparently, he was cutting a piece of paper.’

Subsequently, prefix /me(N)-/ can also convey reflexive meanings. Reflexive meaning is conveyed when the action is done to oneself. Reflexive meanings refer to semantic meanings in which the agent and the patient of an action are identical. In other words, the action is performed by and on the same individual. Reflexive verbs, prevalent in many languages, such as Indonesian, convey these meanings. They express that the action of a verb is directed at the same person or entity that is performing it. This configuration can effectively highlight an action's self-oriented nature. For instance, consider the construction /membaca/ ‘to read’ as in sentence (7).

- (7) *Ammar memang suka **membaca**, apalagi buku-buku PTS* (ILCC, 2013).  
 Ammar.PROPN really.ADV like.VERB reading.VERB especially.ADP book.NOUN PTS.PROPN  
 ‘Ammar really likes reading, especially PTS books.’

TABLE 6  
THE TABULATION OF FREQUENCY OF PREFIX /ME(N)-/ IN THE ADJECTIVE-STEM CONSTRUCTIONS

Category I: Typological Aspects		Freq.1	Category II: Semantic Aspects		Freq.2	Category III: Syntactic Aspects		Freq.3
Verb-like	/memampukan/ 'enabling'	1,577	Perceptual	/menerangi/ 'illuminate'	5,242	Predicative	/meneliti/ 'research'	4,464
	/melayakkan/ 'make proper'	128		/mengg gelapkan/ 'darken'	2,149		/mencermati/ 'pay close attention'	10,613
	/mematutkan/ 'demanding'	12	Color	/memerah/ 'redden'	5,803		/menenangkan/ 'calm'	14,668
	/memerlukan/ 'need'	124,695		/membiru/ 'turn blue'	991		/melengkap/ 'to complete'	52,332
	/mewajibkan/ 'oblige'	16,803		/memudar/ 'faded'	4,633		/melapangkan/ 'to expand'	1,247
	/mengharuskan/ 'necessitate'	20,712	Sound	/mengeras/ 'become louder'	4,770		/memanjangkan/ 'lengthen'	1,731
	/mementingkan/ 'prioritize'	12,276		/melembutkan/ 'soften'	1,810		/membahagiakan/ 'felicitate'	7,918
	/memantaskan/ 'appropriate'	114	Taste	/memaniskan/ 'sweeten'	53		/menyenangkan/ 'delight'	83,909
	/memuliakan/ 'glorify'	6,929		/memasamkan/ 'acidify'	17		/menenteramkan/ 'reassure'	697
	/mewajarkan/ 'make neutral'	67		/mengasinkan/ 'marinate'	28		/menyedihkan/ 'sadden'	11,853
	/meninggikan/ 'elevate'	4,313	Smell	/mewangi/ 'fragrant'	287		/mengagetkan/ 'surprise'	4,083
	/merendahkan/ 'condescending'	9,819		/mengharumkan/ 'scented'	6,517		/memarahi/ 'reprove'	3,140
	/membolehkan/ 'enable'	9,261	Surface	/mengasari/ 'to rough'	138		/mengecewakan/ 'disappointing'	15,601
	/menentukan/ 'specify'	194,451		/menghaluskan/ 'to smooth'	2,416		/memuaskan/ 'satisfying'	48,904
	/memastikan/ 'determine'	133,796	Dimension	/memanjang/ 'elongates'	9,471		/membangunkan/ 'confusing'	9,380
	/menetapkan/ 'stipulate'	103,296		/memendek/ 'shorten'	630		/memalukan/ 'embarrassing'	10,745
	Noun-like	/menyulitkan/ 'complicate'		15,256	/melebar/ 'widen'		11,856	/menghitam/ 'blackened'
		/memudahkan/ 'simplify'	64,621	/menyempit/ 'narrows'	3,355		/memutih/ 'turned white'	1,089
		/memperbarui/ 'update'	5,490	Direction	/memajukan/ 'advance'		32,226	/menguning/ 'turned yellow'
/membesar/ 'grow up'		11,878	/mengesampingkan/ 'rule out'		6,095	/mengemas/ 'become golden'	10,124	
/mengecil/ 'wane'		5,410	/membawahi/ 'under'		5,598	/melemas/ 'exanimate'	441	
/membaik/ 'improved'		31,174	/mengedepankan/ 'put forward'		25,630	/merapuh/ 'fragile'	71	
/memburuk/ 'worsened'		11,930	Localization	/mendekat/ 'come closer'	13,328	/menguat/ 'strengthen'	51,765	
/melunakkan/ 'accentuate'		12,276		/merapat/ 'huddle'	5,978	/melemah/ 'weakened'	43,849	
/memurahkan/ 'cheapen'		62	Origin	/menjauh/ 'avoid'	12,635	Non-predicative	/meluas/ 'expand'	20,050
/memahalkan/ 'make high'		29		/mengasingkan/ 'isolate'	1,416		/membaik/ 'improved'	31,174
/memperbanyak/ 'increase'		14,027		/mengakrabkan/ 'familiarize'	1,449		/melucu/ 'crack a joke'	561
/memendek/ 'shortened'		630	Spatial distribution	/memenuhi/ 'fulfil'	284,132		/meredup/ 'overcast'	2,658
/menambahkan/ 'contribute'		252,002		/menyesaki/ 'to crowd'	508		/meredam/ 'muffled'	13,522
/mengurangi/ 'reduce'		204,549	Form	/melingkar/ 'form a circle'	5,887		/melayu/ 'wither'	8,964
/memberatkan/ 'incriminating'		14,902		/meruncing/ 'tapered'	2,094		/mengganas/ 'violent'	751
/meringankan/ 'lighten up'		20,570		/menumpul/ 'become blunt'	34		/melarang/ 'forbid'	58,153
TOTAL		1,303,055	TOTAL	TOTAL	457,176		TOTAL	527,898

Lastly, the prefix /me(N)-/ also has a semantic function in indicating reciprocity and the changes in state or condition. By adding this prefix to a noun, one can create a verb that denotes a change in the state or condition of that noun. For instances as in the sentence (8a) and (8b), the verb /memeluk/ ‘to hug’ derives from the root /peluk/ ‘to be hugged.’ This verb shows the process of hugging each other. Additionally, the noun /beku/ ‘freeze’ can be transformed into the verb /membeku/ ‘turn into freeze’ by adding the /me(N)-/ prefix. This verb means ‘to change from a state of being unfreeze to a state of being freeze.’ This prefix usage allows for a more precise description of a change in state or condition, making it a valuable tool in Indonesian communication.

- (8) a. *Dara memeluk Anita, hatinya sedih sekali* (ILCC, 2013).  
Dara.PROPN hug.VERB Anita.PROPN hati.NOUN nya.PS3 sad.ADJ sekali.ADV  
‘Dara hugged Anita, her heart was very sad.’
- b. *Madu asli tidak membeku di kulkas* (ILCC, 2013)  
Honey.NOUN real.ADJ not.PART membeku.VERB in.ADP refrigerator.NOUN  
‘Real honey does not freeze in the refrigerator.’

In addition, the prefix /me(N)-/ can be used in language to form another type of verb for denoting emphatic and descriptive verbs. Firstly, it can be utilized to form emphatic verbs that emphasize the intensity or degree of the action. For instance, the adjective /besar/ ‘big’ can have prefixed with /me(N)-/ to form the verb /membesar/ ‘to enlarge’ as in sentence (9a). The subsequent use of the prefix /me(N)-/ is to create descriptive verbs that describe the appearance or state of something. By adding this prefix to an adjective or noun, one can create a verb that describes the state or appearance of that adjective or noun. For example, the adjective /kuning/ ‘yellow’ can be transformed into the verb /menguning/ ‘turned yellow’ ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 1,896) as in sentence (9b).

- (9) a. *Tapi kini gurita usahanya terus membesar* (ILCC, 2013).  
But.ADV now.NOUN octopus.NOUN business.NOUN his/her.PS3 continues.ADV to enlarge.VERB  
‘But now his corporate business continues to grow.’
- b. *Tubuh dan mata akan menguning* (ILCC, 2013).  
Body.NOUN and.CONJ eyes.NOUN will.AUX turn.VERB yellow.NOUN/ADJ  
‘The body and eyes will turn yellow.’

### C. Syntactic Functions of Prefix /me(N)-/

Regarding syntactic functions, derived verbs with the prefix /me(N)-/ have syntactic functions influenced by their semantic meaning. In Indonesian, the prefix /me(N)-/ is adaptable and can be used for many syntactic functions. Some of the most common and distinctive syntactic functions of /me(N)-/ are form monovalent (29,18% having a mean value of 27,33), bivalent (48,40% having a mean value of 45,33) and trivalent (22,42% having a mean value of 21) (see Figure 7). Based on the correlation test (see Table 7), the study’s key findings reveal a clear pattern of mutual exclusivity between bivalent and trivalent verbs, with a solid negative correlation of -0.9977 between these two types. This indicates that verbs with two arguments are unlikely to co-occur with verbs requiring three. On the other hand, monovalent verbs display strong associations with both bivalent and trivalent verbs, suggesting a more complex relationship. The correlation coefficient of -0.9248 between monovalent and bivalent verbs suggests a robust negative association between these two verb types. In comparison, the correlation coefficient of 0.8967 between monovalent and trivalent verbs suggests a strong positive association between these two types. In short, verbs with one argument tend to have fewer instances of verbs with two arguments, and vice versa, while verbs with one argument are more likely to be found with verbs requiring three arguments (cf. Denistia & Baayen, 2022; Nugraha, 2024).

TABLE 7  
CORRELATION TEST RESULTS ON THE SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS INITIATED BY THE PREFIX /ME(N)-/ IN WORD STRUCTURE

	MONOVALENT	BIVALENT	TRIVALENT
MONOVALENT	1		
BIVALENT	-0,9248	1	
TRIVALENT	0,8967	-0,9977	1

Furthermore, the functions of language can be classified into six specific actions. These actions include transforming nouns into verbs, identifying the agent of a verb, specifying the object of a verb, denoting the instrument of the verb, indicating changes in the verb’s state or condition, and deriving adjectives that primarily function as possessive adjectives. In the following section, each of these functions will be explained in detail. First, forming verbs from nouns. In Indonesian, despite as the verb derivation affix, the prefix /me(N)-/ is frequently used to derive verbs from nouns. This is achieved by adding the prefix to the root form of the noun. To exemplify, take the noun /batu/ ‘rock,’ which can

have combined with /me(N)-/ to create the verb /membatu/ ‘harden’ ( -occurrence: 31,991), signifying ‘the act of remaining silent’ as in sentence (10).

- (10) *Semuanya membatu melayani perasaan masing-masing* (ILCC, 2013).  
 Everyone.ADV harden.VERB serve.VERB feeling.NOUN each.DET  
 ‘Everyone is petrified of serving each other's feelings.’

TABLE 8  
 THE TABULATION OF FREQUENCY OF PREFIX /ME(N)-/ IN THE NOUN-STEM CONSTRUCTIONS

Category I: Typological Aspects		Freq.1	Category II: Semantic Aspects		Freq.2	Category II: Syntactic Aspects		Freq.3	
Concrete	/menggambar/ ‘portray’	12,334	People	/merakyat/ ‘popularize’	2,470	Verbal noun	/membatik/ ‘make a batik’	3,519	
	/memotret/ ‘photograph’	9,213		/memasyarakat/ ‘civilize’	1,237		/membubur/ ‘mush’	10	
	/mengecat/ ‘paint’	2,004		/menua/ ‘aging’	1,967		/menyurati/ ‘write’	3,427	
	/menari/ ‘dance’	16,719		/memanusiakan/ ‘humanize’	1,441		/menenun/ ‘wave’	1,365	
	/menimba/ ‘draw’	9,121	Plants	/menguncup/ ‘bumps’	153		/mematung/ ‘sculpting’	1,047	
	/menyendok/ ‘spoon’	152		/merumput/ ‘grazing’	4,407		/melantai/ ‘to be listed’	1,465	
	/menggaraji/ ‘sawing’	379		/membuahkan/ ‘yield’	20,522		/meminyaki/ ‘oiling’	262	
	/menggunting/ ‘cut’	1,677		/mengakar/ ‘toughten’	4,604		/menelurkan/ ‘spawn’	4,254	
/mencetak/ ‘print’	104,585	Animals	/menggembala/ ‘herding’	557	Mass noun	/menguangkan/ ‘cashing’	211		
/menarasikan/ ‘narrate’	201		/mencicit/ ‘squeak’	128		/membungkus/ ‘wrap’	4,282		
/mendebatkan/ ‘debate’	153		/menernakkan/ ‘raise’	43		/membahasakan/ ‘speak’	406		
/mendiskusikan/ ‘discuss’	11,267		/mengembik/ ‘bleat’	140		/menyetrika/ ‘ironing’	1,192		
Abstract	/menganalisis/ ‘analyze’	29,266	Materials	/membatu/ ‘petrified’	31,991	Inalienable noun	/mengepalai/ ‘lead’	1,604	
	/mengklasifikasi/ ‘classify’	737		/membeku/ ‘freeze’	3,848		/menguliti/ ‘skinning’	567	
	/mengelaborasi/ ‘elaborate’	724		/menguap/ ‘evaporate’	6,590		/menangani/ ‘handle’	89,803	
	/menjustifikasi/ ‘justify’	1,091		/menggarami/ ‘salt’	138		/memperistri/ ‘marry a wife’	540	
	/mewacanakan/ ‘discuss’	1,805	Objects	/menelepon/ ‘call’	6,655		/menemani/ ‘accompany’	20,606	
	/mempromosikan/ ‘promote’	31,005		/merumahkan/ ‘lay off’	832		/menjiwai/ ‘animates’	2,199	
	/melaut/ ‘go to sea’	13,442		/membukukan/ ‘to chronicle’	21,338		/menggereja/ ‘active in church’	318	
	/membumi/ ‘grounded’	2,476		/menyekolahkan/ ‘educationalize’	5,473		/mempidanakan/ ‘convict’	358	
Countable	/menempatkan/ ‘put’	66,361	Qualities	/mendisiplinkan/ ‘discipline’	1,360	Alienable noun	/menghasilkan/ ‘produce’	227,463	
	/menggurui/ ‘patronize’	1,612		/memesona/ ‘charming’	1,829		/memanen/ ‘harvest’	3,963	
	/membentuk/ ‘form’	163,956		/memerdaya/ ‘deceptive’	1,953		/menandai/ ‘mark’	16,127	
	/menggariskan/ ‘outline’	1,378	Action	/merumuskan/ ‘formulate’	23,811		/memarkahi/ ‘mark-up’	7	
	Uncountable	/menghasilkan/ ‘produce’		227,463	/mempersoalkan/ ‘question’		7,526	/mengelompokkan/ ‘group’	3,126
		/menguntungkan/ ‘profitable’		66,729	/memerankan/ ‘act’		8,382	/mengelaskan/ ‘clusterify’	9
/mengoreksi/ ‘correct’		6,044	Processes	/memanggungkan/ ‘stage’	121	/mendaftar/ ‘register’	43,276		
/memerintah/ ‘reign’		14,241		/menghukum/ ‘punish’	14,971	/mengolongkan/ ‘classify’	1,317		
/mendakwa/ ‘accuse’		1,487		/memperkarakan/ ‘litigate’	828	/menjeniskan/ ‘separate’	10		
/mengetes/ ‘test’		1,765		/mempermasalahkan/ ‘concern’	7,475	/memaketkan/ ‘package’	107		
TOTAL		799,387	TOTAL		182,790	TOTAL		432,840	



Second, indicating the agent of a verb, a prefix called /me(N)-/ that can be added to a noun to create a verb. This prefix indicates the agent of the verb, which refers to the entity performing its action. When this prefix is added to a noun, it changes the noun into a verb that describes the action being performed by the noun. For example, take the sentence (11). In this sentence, the noun /batik/ 'batik' is being used as the agent of the verb /membatik/ 'to make a batik' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 3,519) which means that the batik is acting as the verb. In other words, the prefix /me(N)-/ shifts the sentence's focus from the person acting on the object performing the action.

- (11) *Bahkan, ia juga piawai membatik* (ILCC, 2013).  
In fact.SCONJ he/she.PRON also.ADV  
'In fact, he is also skilled at making batik.'

Third, indicating the object of a verb, in some cases, the prefix /me(N)-/ can be used to indicate the object of a verb. This is usually done when the verb is transitive and requires an object. For example, in sentence (12), the noun /surat/ 'letter' functions as the object-intensifier of the verb /menyurati/ 'to write a letter' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 3,427). Using the /me(N)-/ prefix helps clarify the relationship between the verb and its object in the sentence.

- (12) *Saya sudah menyurati Dewan Komisaris PTKA sepuluh hari yang lalu* (ILCC, 2013).  
I.PRON already.AUX write.VERB Board.NOUN Commissioners.NOUN PTKA.PROPN ten.NUM days.NOUN  
lalu.ADJ  
'I wrote to the PTKA Board of Commissioners ten days ago.'

Fourth, indicating the instrument of a verb, in some cases, the prefix /me(N)-/ can also be used to indicate the instrument of a verb. The prefix /me(N)-/ can be used to indicate the instrument of a verb. This usage is typically reserved for intransitive verbs, which are verbs that do not require an object. For example, the sentence (13), where the word /timba/ 'bucket' functions as the instrument of the verb /menimba/ 'draw from a well' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 9,121). In this context, the prefix /me(N)-/ is used to convey that the bucket is the tool used to specify act.

- (13) *Mereka seperti perempuan Samaria yang menimba air di sumur saat teriknya matahari* (ILCC, 2013)  
They.PRON like.ADP woman.NOUN Samaritan.PROPN yang.CONJ drew.VERB water.NOUN di.CONJ  
well.NOUN when.CONJ hot.VERB sun.NOUN  
'They are like the Samaritan woman who drew water from a well when the sun was hot.'

Subsequently, indicating changes of state or condition. The Indonesian language allows the usage of the prefix /me(N)-/ to indicate changes of state or condition. This prefix can be used to convey the idea of a shift in the state of a noun due to some external factor. For instance, if we take the sentence (14), the noun /gereja/ 'church' is the cause of the change of state of the noun. In this case, the prefix /me(N)-/ indicates that the /gereja/ 'church' has become an action as in /menggereja/ 'active in church life' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 318).

- (14) *Waktu itu hampir empat tahun aku lepas dari kehidupan menggereja* (ILCC, 2013).  
Time.NOUN itu.DET almost.ADV four.NUM years.NOUN I.PS1 away.VERB from.ADP life.NOUN  
churching.VERB  
'At that time, I had been away from church life for almost four years.'

Moreover, the prefix /me(N)-/ in Indonesian language is often used to derive adjectives that function primarily as a form of possessive adjective. These derived adjectives are used to indicate ownership or a state of being. An example of the usage of such adjectives can be seen in the sentence (15), where the derived adjective /penting/ 'important' conveys the idea of possession, while the prefix /me(N)-/ serves to add emphasis and emphasis on the possession as in /mementingkan/ 'prioritize' ( $\Sigma$ -occurrence: 12,276).

- (15) *Dia selalu mementingkan anak buahnya terlebih dulu* (ILCC, 2013).  
He/she.PS3 always.ADV prioritize.VERB subordinates.NOUN his.PS3 moreover.ADV firstly.ADV  
'He always puts his subordinates first.'

## V. CONCLUSION

This study applies corpus-based morphology to analyze the prefix /me(N)-/ in Indonesian affixation. Our analysis reveals that this affix is highly productive and versatile, expressing various semantic and syntactic concepts such as causation, reciprocity, instruments, reflexivity, and possession/state. The data indicate that /me(N)-/ exhibits a strong preference for verb formation, particularly in contexts involving physical actions and mental activities. Despite the analysis, our study has certain limitations. Our research was focused on the ILCC, which mainly covers formal and written language. Thus, future research should explore its usage in spoken Indonesian and informal contexts to gain a

more nuanced understanding of the distribution and functions of /me(N)-/ in everyday usage. Also, our analysis did not consider sociolinguistic factors that may influence the use and interpretation of /me(N)-/. Based on our findings, several avenues for future research can be explored. Firstly, the role of /me(N)-/ in discourse and pragmatics can be investigated to understand better how the prefix contributes to the overall meaning and context of sentences and utterances. Secondly, exploring the cognitive and processing mechanisms involved in understanding /me(N)-/-derived words can shed light on how our mental representation of the prefix and its semantic range influence our interpretation of derived words. Additionally, analyzing the diachronic development of /me(N)-/ in Indonesian can help us understand how the prefix's usage and meaning have evolved.

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# Genre-Based Instruction of English Reading in a Polytechnic University

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**Abstract**—The goal of genre-based instruction is to prepare students for success by continuously developing their English reading proficiency and expertise, allowing them to excel at a higher level. Genre-Based instruction "GBI" refers to teaching language based on the results of genre analysis in written and spoken form. This study examined the application of genre-based instruction in reading and comprehension classes in polytechnic universities in China. A mixed approach was adopted to fulfil the aim of this study, including different data collection approaches, such as questionnaires, quizzes, and semi-structured interviews. The quantitative study involved 100 students (control group: n = 50, experimental group: n = 50). Meanwhile, interviews were conducted with ten students from the experimental group in the qualitative study. The study findings demonstrate that genre-based instruction could improve students' reading proficiency and support the reading lessons in particular genres, contributing to significant practical implications. Students in the experimental group used headings, diagrams, and other information to predict the text content before reading, identified detailed information through scanning and searching, and summarised the main idea of passages and articles through genre teaching. Resultantly, students' reading efficiency improved, allowing them to quickly grasp the main idea of the text and correctly answer different questions, such as reasoning, judgment, and main idea.

**Index Terms**—Genre-based instruction, English reading, higher education, English learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

This section explores the formation and development of genre-based instruction, reading teaching, and understanding strategies. The genre-based instruction and reading teaching methods were combined to quote the research purposes, problems, and methods.

### A. Context of Research

#### (a). Genre-Based Instructions

The study of genre, also known as text type, began with literature and rhetoric and was later integrated into linguistics (Derewianka, 2003). The genre-based instruction teaching method began in Australia over 30 years ago, integrating reading and writing techniques into the learning process. This strategy analyses various writing styles and teaches students how to use them before evolving into reading and writing techniques (Richards et al., 2005).

Since the beginning of discourse analysis, linguists have grown interested in studying social and cultural aspects of the genre instead of purely language evaluation. Miller (1984) views genre as more than a category of discourse, particularly social behaviour. Meanwhile, Martin (1987) defines genre as a systematic, goal-oriented behaviour. Swales (1990) classified communicative events according to the genre, and Bhatia (1993) developed Swales' theory based on this school of thought. According to Bhatia, a genre is a recognisable and specific communicative event with a distinctive internal structure and a high degree of convention. Therefore, one must adhere to the conventions required by a particular genre when constructing a discourse. Furthermore, one can still communicate personal intentions and goals while observing the genre conventions and restrictions.

Teaching language establishes genre analysis outcomes in spoken, visual, and written forms. A thorough text organisation requires language analysis in the social context by identifying the subject matter, how to produce meaning, the interaction between persons, the global social purpose of a text, and the intent of people in communicating (Lukmawardani & Badriyah, 2022). In addition, discourse, grammar, spelling, and pronunciation patterns are recognised to comprehend or create a text. These outlines are essential in every school curriculum to ensure the coherence of education, such as syllabus relevant to the Genre and relevant patterns of meaning in a text, appropriate sentences, and words pertinent to each sentence. This approach enables the evaluation of college studying functions in a

general objective, composition, topic of study, meaningful exchange between tutors and students, and organisational methods using words, text, and sentences (Lukmawardani & Badriyah, 2022). The basis for developing learning activities that allow college students to review the content of their syllabus through reading, writing, and discussion is the evaluation of studying function. Recognising that reading comes first in the educational sequence before a report is crucial.

A tutor describes how the text develops to initiate the genre-based reading lesson. The students read the text and engage in conversation to identify the patterns of meaning in the sentences. An analysis of word and letter patterns in sentences follows sentence construction and spelling. Sentence writing and joint rewiring and building are covered in the series. As reading is primary in this study, the focus remains on the sequence of elements before the writing process intensifies. This order summarises the core of learning cycles in developing a learner's role (Nasihin, 2021). Carefully planning and evaluating each learning function would ensure the success of genre-based instructions.

Reading genre-based instruction in school entails reading factual texts to learn the syllabus and reading stories to engage in academic literature and elucidate various concepts (Lukmawardani & Badriyah, 2022). Preparing a detailed overview to summarise content of a text is the first step in the teaching sequence for each reading activity. Students will find it easier to follow the content once they understand the reading material. Reading comprehension is made possible for students through preparation for reading activities.

#### *(b). Reading Comprehension and Strategies*

The ability to read, absorb, and understand the meaning of a text is known as reading comprehension. According to Rodriguez Sánchez (2017), reading comprehension is an internal process where a reader connects prior knowledge and the current material to produce meaning. Therefore, a reader will achieve a high reading comprehension level using specific, explicit metacognitive techniques, which involve reading and understanding the language, sentences, and words. A significant understanding of the text is essential for students to establish an aim for reading, engage with and learn from the text, and enjoy what they are reading. Tutors utilise various techniques to improve pupils' comprehension and prevent mindless reading among students. These methods are designed to direct students' attention to specifics and aid in their comprehension of the sources, besides enhancing education and preparing them to write academic essays or reports.

According to research, exceptional readers use purposeful, active reading comprehension strategies. These students identify the reading objectives before reading and relate this activity with previous knowledge (Xian et al., 2019) while noting important information, learning, and addressing challenges in understanding the material. Using prior knowledge to construct and process meaning from text is crucial in reading (Rose, 2018). Moreover, students are more likely to engage with a new task when prior knowledge is activated and connected to the reading (Huang et al., 2019).

The alternative reading method is engaging in question-and-answer discussions with the author, tutor, or other students. The approach is conducted by creating questions for the entire reading process, including research, analytical, and current questions that promote comprehension throughout the learning process (Huang et al., 2019). The research question encourages students to seek additional information outside the reading material. Meanwhile, the analytical question enables them to consider what they have read, and the current questions concentrate on the goal and essence of the content.

Analysing a text structure aims to understand the patterns the author utilises to arrange the information for effective comprehension (Rose, 2018). Another visualisation technique for improved text meaning extraction is creating mental images in structure diagrams instead of visuals. The ability to summarise after reading improves comprehension (Xian et al., 2019). In addition, the translation technique locates the pertinent information in the text, links important facts, and condenses key concepts that reflect the purpose of the material. Research demonstrates that when applied appropriately, children may create stable knowledge structures and infer meaning from the text.

#### *B. Research Purpose and Questions*

The fundamental function of education, learning, and knowledge has been altered by globalisation. English has become the epicentre of international communication among the diverse world population and numerous languages (Rose, 2018). Additionally, reading comprehension standards and demands for college education are higher than kindergarten and high school levels (Xian et al., 2019). Research proposals, articles, and reports publication is a requirement for college students to advance academically and have their performance evaluated. Thus, students must understand the facts in specific fields, themes, and curricula (Rose, 2018).

Reading is an important basis for academic success. Earlier studies reported that genre-based education in students' activities aids in fulfilling their academic needs, helping them read and write fluently. Applying genre-based education to enhance writing has been studied by a variety of writing pedagogies, including process- and product-focused, to assess the reading importance. In conclusion, students must be proficient readers to grasp the craft of writing (Rose, 2018).

The present study focuses on the reading component of teaching and learning, as comprehending the context of reading is essential in producing good writing. This study offers a comprehensive understanding of reading comprehension by utilising college-level, genre-based education. Additionally, comprehending and implementing genre-based instruction for students in higher education helps narrow the literacy gaps between individuals from

different backgrounds and advance global language and literacy. The current study also attempts to outline various methods for recognising typical grammatical constructions and establish a guideline for text analysis and applying learned knowledge strategically.

The following questions are addressed in this study:

RQ1: How does genre-based training improve students' reading comprehension skills?

RQ2: Why should college education use genre-based reading instruction?

RQ3: Does a genre-based approach in teaching enhance students' reading comprehension?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Approaches to Developing Students' Reading Comprehension Skills via Genre-Based Instructions

Researchers have identified various causes for the lack of reading comprehension, making reading difficulties an important research area. According to several academics, inconsistent reading instruction using various teaching languages results in students' poor reading comprehension (Rahill & Kaiser, 2021, p. 71). Consequently, instructors have adopted strategies such as genre-based instructions that allow students to access texts conveniently, thus, producing excellent results (Montero-Arévalo, 2019). Studies on genre-based instruction demonstrated significant improvements in students' literacy abilities across various educational institutions. Different strategies for teaching reading comprehension by utilising genre-based instruction are discussed in this research.

Discrepancies have been highlighted concerning the purposes of a text in the reader's or the author's context for various strategies to improve reading competency (Rival Prakoso et al., 2021). The text meaning may vary depending on the opinions and relationships of readers. Still, every reader must be able to discern the intention of a particular text (Montero-Arévalo, 2019, p. 86). A reader should recognise and comprehend the context, type, and intended audience and interpret the material to form an original opinion. Furthermore, readers should be aware of a specific incident and comprehend the reason for the occurrence. The background, word picture, setting, time of publishing, the literary impact of the author, and personal biography contribute to the context of a reading material (Montero-Arévalo, 2019, p. 87). When reading literature, different interpretations are derived based on the context provided by the author. Some texts explicitly present the background, while others require the reader to study the text critically to understand the significance. English literature uses a variety of context devices to enhance reader understanding.

Rodríguez Sánchez (2017) stated that the setting in books establishes the physical background and controls how the plot develops. This technique determines how a reader perceives the characteristics of a place relating to character development. Historical context is represented by periods and events to illustrate behaviour, mood, and slang used throughout particular periods. The emphasis is on factors contributing to the text outcome, circumstances in which those events occurred, and the following implications. A thorough interpretation of the author's material also depends on cultural context, which includes elements such as religion or beliefs (Rival Prakoso et al., 2021). Cultural context aids in bridging the author-reader gap, ensuring the audience is not lost. Meanwhile, the situational context explains the rationale for the events in the text and elucidates the effects of an event on the elements or characters involved. Thus, understanding the context of the text facilitates reader comprehension and prevents misinterpretation of the author's intentions.

Establishing the text patterns and defining the characteristics of different texts are necessary for understanding the text type. According to studies, writings as a species and different text kinds hold literary value. The study distinguishes the literary text types, either informational, narrative, or poetic literature (Rodríguez Sánchez, 2017). While narrative texts deepen understanding, informative texts are frequently prepared for school curricula to offer new information about a topic. Stories that recount past occurrences are frequently referred to as narrative texts. Students may distinguish between informative and narrative literature by identifying genre-specific structures and patterns (Rival Prakoso et al., 2021).

Genre-based instructions with differentiation in social aim link distinct types of readers. Resultantly, genres refer to the grammatical structure of texts and the social setting in which they are performed. According to Montero-Arévalo (2019), genres depend on language as this concept serves as a form of literary adjudication in society. Every culture has norms for how genres fit into specific rituals and occasions. Therefore, genres reveal more than the organisation of texts but also convey the author's goals and societal customs and patterns.

The genre-based approach to reading comprehension utilises the recognition of text types. Research identifies strategies for reading comprehension study cycles through genre-based education. The first step is preparation before reading, an orientation for students to the text genre and discipline. This step entails comprehending the text in broad strokes, such as context, contents, and new words (Nasihin, 2021). The second step is detailed reading, which demands instructor direction and support by simplifying and making the text more comprehensible for students (Rival Prakoso et al., 2021). Subsequently, the student must rewrite texts using patterns recognised while reading (Rival Prakoso et al., 2021). In the final stage, students are subjected to independent writing, where they inform other readers about the text types and writing purposes, point out various levels in the text, and include components to help others understand a certain genre (Mirallas, 2021). These strategies used in genre-based training could guarantee reading comprehension among students.

Genre-based teaching exposes students to various studied texts' language, text structure, and features, developing them into effective readers and writers (Lukmawardani & Badriyah, 2022). Generally, these studies helped the researcher to understand the genre-based instruction strategies used in reading comprehension, which is useful in the subsequent research. Nevertheless, earlier studies did not address the reasons for using this teaching language in college (Mirallas, 2021). Thus, the necessity of using genre-based instruction in undergraduate education will be assessed in the following study.

### *B. Efficiency of Genre-Based Instruction in Improving Reading Comprehension*

Researchers have attempted to assess the efficacy of various language-teaching methodologies in school curricula to determine the best ways to connect theory with practice, as the English language is deemed a prerequisite, particularly at higher academic levels. In nations where English language instruction is not fully developed, such as Pakistan, the methodologies theory in language education and the search for new approaches have span generations. Meanwhile, an intervention study on the process of genre approach for several English courses at a university in China found that the class with methodology-structured lessons performed better than the control group (Huang & Zhang, 2020).

Language teaching was proven beneficial in several genre-approach studies, which utilised the reading-to-learn formula (Mirallas, 2021). Furthermore, a study by Lukmawardani and Badriyah (2022) aimed to provide readers with more information about the efficacy of genre-based training. According to the study, the teaching and learning method significantly impacted students' competency and success. Educational approaches ensure effective learning; thus, teachers should practice effective instructional strategies to transfer knowledge among students (Lukmawardani & Badriyah, 2022). A practical approach to teaching English by incorporating listening, reading, speaking, and writing would strengthen the students' speaking and writing skills (He, 2022).

Students need efficient strategies to learn English as a second language, grammar, and standard features to develop reading comprehension. A language-teaching strategy proven effective in enhancing students' reading and writing abilities is genre-based education, comprising six steps, as reported in numerous studies (He, 2022). These techniques are convenient and effective in helping students who lack the aptitude and drive to learn foreign languages. The technique encourages students to use straightforward methods from the initial stage of getting ready to read to the last stage of independent text construction. Moreover, this method integrates product and process techniques and promotes text-type knowledge (Rival Prakoso et al., 2021).

Genre-based approach guidelines are pertinent, helpful, and targeted in explaining the rationale behind the authors' grammatical and literary choices (Ghane & Mazdayasna, 2022). As a result, students who have gained knowledge can read and write proficiently in significant literary elements (Mirallas, 2022). On top of that, a student's self-efficacy also contributes to positive outcomes in addition to using a genre-based strategy (Ghane & Mazdayasna, 2022). This finding suggests that a student with a high self-efficacy level performs better regardless of the information required for writing and reading comprehension. Thus, studies on the relationship between a student's reading and writing abilities and self-efficacy seem justified.

Ganapathy et al. (2022) reported that students learning English as a foreign language found the curriculum uninteresting as the course excludes their heritage and instead focuses on civic and economic lives and popular practices. They also struggle to learn the language due to poor reading and writing abilities, minimal exposure to the English language, and inadequate educational infrastructures (He, 2022). Thus, there is an urgent need for a practical method of teaching languages that addresses these issues, considers cultural and social context, and develops student confidence.

Comparisons between various teaching methods indicated that the genre-based approach works best for students because reading and writing instruction was incorporated into social and cultural activities that reduce illiteracy among students. The genre-based approach encourages students to acquire knowledge and aids their language learning by focusing on linguistic resources rather than writing skills. Additionally, the genre-based method promotes student understanding of the Genre communicational goals and components in grammar, enabling them to comprehend texts well and achieve exceptional results.

Mirallas (2021) assessed students' perceptions regarding a scientific writing course. The study also explained that Genre approaches applied to teaching have been implemented to refine students' competencies and skills. The efficiency and effectiveness of the genre-based approach to language education have been reviewed but require further analysis due to new issues associated with globalisation. Therefore, this study aimed to provide new directions and ideas to ensure genre-based instruction strategies are up-to-date in improving English language proficiency among students.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methods and data collection protocol for further evaluation.

### *A. Research Approach and Method*

This study aims to determine the influence of a genre-based approach in improving students' reading comprehension in Chinese Polytech Universities. The RQ1 (How does genre-based training improve students' reading comprehension skills?) for this study focuses on the cause-and-effect relationship between genre-based approach and students' reading comprehension. In contrast, RQ2 (Why should college education use genre-based reading instruction?) explored the

student's experiences, ideas, and concepts within the context of a genre-based approach. Therefore, quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are used for this study, incorporating the mixed method approach. In addition, this study utilises the pragmatism philosophy and incorporates deductive and inductive approaches. Numerical data collection and statistical analysis were performed in the quantitative study to determine the association between the genre-based approach and students' reading comprehension skills. Meanwhile, the qualitative study evaluated the non-numerical data to identify relevant factors and approaches for the target population besides investigating, understanding, and concluding their circumstances and experiences in the field.

### B. Participants

This study was conducted in a Chinese polytechnic university with a medium ranking. Two college English courses for sophomores in the electrical engineering programme were selected for this study and randomly assigned as 1) an experimental class (genre-based instruction) and 2) a control class. Each class consisted of 50 students with moderate overall English proficiency in the university (see Table 1). They have basic knowledge of the English language but are lacking in reading and discourse skills. Furthermore, these students were uninterested in mastering the English language as they were enrolled in a science programme. Students with poor English vocabulary depended solely on a few words listed in the textbook, could not use appropriate reading strategies for texts, and had poor reading habits. These students will soon begin their senior year and exhibit positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning English despite the pressure of the Graduate Entrance Examination. Their motivation to learn and desire to improve their reading comprehension in English make them suitable candidates for this study.

TABLE 1  
FINAL EXAM RESULTS OF COLLEGE ENGLISH COURSE IN THE FIRST SEMESTER OF THE 2022-2023 ACADEMIC YEAR

Classes	Number of students	Average score in the College English Course
Experimental class	50	82.3
Control class	50	82.8

### C. Experimental Procedure

The researcher designed the flexible teaching activities of a specific genre during the implementation process as recommended in the teaching-learning cycle model by Martin and Rose (2005). The researcher's initial teaching-learning model was conducted over one semester (18 weeks) and consisted of four steps: 1) context creation, 2) modelling and analysis, 3) linking to related texts and independent analysis, and 4) consolidation exercises.

Context creation comprised a range of pre-reading activities designed to introduce students to the social context and background knowledge of the selected text. Secondly, modelling and analysis involved a model analysis where teachers demonstrated to their students the general patterns of various text genres, familiarised them with common text structures and essential elements of expository, argumentative, and narrative texts, and summarised structural similarities at this stage. Subsequently, linking to related texts and independent analysis consisted of the teacher carefully selecting different texts of the same Genre and allowing students to deconstruct and interpret them using the genre analysis knowledge they have learned in the second session. Finally, the consolidation and traditional genre-based reading comprehension exercises, such as text piecing, prediction, and writing simulation, can be open-ended to prevent students from losing interest and train their genre analysis skills.

At the end of the study, the researcher obtained the students' feedback on their understanding and mastery of genre knowledge through individual and group interviews, which provided the direction for the next phase of classroom improvement. The lesson plan provided to teachers who participated in this study is detailed in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
LESSON PLAN

Title	Activities
Learning aims and outcomes	Reading comprehension
Introduction	Initiating syllabus: presenting main ideas, text stages, Genre of narration, comprehension of text and terms. Assessment questions
Modelling	Developing sentences, spelling, and writing sentences. Assessment questions.
Joint text constructions	Reviewing keywords, discussing, formulating grammatically-correct texts, reconstructing texts to deepen comprehension, and correcting mistakes from previously-constructed sentences. Assessment question
Independent text construction	Syllabus conclusion, individual student construction, reading and writing outline collection, outlining student, and note-making. Assessment questions.
Assessment	Proficiency tests and evaluations.



#### D. Data Collection

The researchers used the main research approach for data collection due to the conclusive findings. Questionnaires and assessments, such as reading competency tests, were utilised for collecting the required data. The quantitative data collection consisted of questionnaires and quizzes to address RQ1. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were conducted for the qualitative approach to address RQ2.

##### (a). Questionnaires

The questionnaire is a popular tool for collecting primary data and information. In this study, the researcher administered questionnaires to the students at the beginning and end of the research. According to the School's Curriculum Objectives, 15 questions covering five dimensions (reading interest, reading confidence, reading habit, reading strategy, and genre awareness) were listed in this questionnaire to assess the student's understanding and application of the reading text genres and identify the problems. Moreover, the five dimensions accurately reflect the students' English reading performance.

The questionnaire included questions and statements with answer options to acquire the necessary information. Factual questions aimed to learn more about respondents, behavioural questions about their past behaviours, and attitude questions to learn their opinions.

##### (b). The Quiz Method

Separate pre-and post-tests were given to the experimental and control groups to determine their improvements after a semester of genre reading pedagogy. The first test was carried out before the study to assess the students' basic reading levels and problems and to ensure that the English levels of the two experimental classes were comparable for study reliability. The second test was administered at the end of the study to compare the reading performance pre- and post-genre reading training. The test papers consisted of reading texts of various genres selected from the school's archives of final test papers. The questions included detailed comprehension, main idea, reasoning, judgment, and predicting word-meaning questions. The tests had a full score of 30 points (1.5 points/question).

##### (c). Semi-Structured Interviews

A total of 10 students were selected randomly from the experimental group and subjected to a semi-structured interview. This interview aimed to determine the significance of genre-based reading instruction in college education. Six interview questions were formulated based on the literature as follows:

1. How does genre-based training in college education effectively improve students' ability to engage with different and complex texts from several academic disciplines?
2. How does the genre-based approach help the students' disciplinary literacy development?
3. Is a genre-based approach vital in developing crucial critical thinking skills among students, allowing them to evaluate and determine different arguments within different genres?
4. Do you think the genre-based approach has an impact on the research and writing skills of students? If yes, how can you support your argument?
5. How can you say that genre-based training is effective in facilitating genre knowledge transfer between various academic disciplines?
6. How does genre-based training prepare students for future professional careers?

#### E. Data Analysis

Each student's reading comprehension was evaluated on three levels; analyses of the critical, literary, and descriptive stories. Based on the data relevancy and requirement of the present research, Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Corp., USA) was adopted because it enables the users to format, arrange and evaluate data in a spreadsheet. Furthermore, this programme was used to analyse the scores of control and experimental groups and derive figures to support the findings in the quantitative study. The thematic analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018) was conducted using NVivo software (Lumivero, USA) to analyse the interviews.

#### F. Ethical Considerations

This research has been conducted with the fulfilment of all moral constraints and ethical requirements. Consent and proper permission were attained from the respondents to ensure their voluntary participation in the research. First, the researchers briefed the participants concerning the research objective, advantages, confidentiality of personal data, and other relevant information. The participants then consented to participate in the study by completing the consent form and agreeing to provide the necessary information in exchange for the right to voice their ideas freely. Additionally, the participants' consent was obtained through recorded interviews.

### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers encouraged their students to read more efficiently at every step. They created lesson plans and exercises to help students demonstrate an understanding of the social and practical significance of the English language. The first assignment for the lesson is improving the students' reading comprehension to fulfil the curricular goals and achieve the

expected results. The purpose of taking the course and what reading comprehension means are also discussed. Developing an understanding of the text is part of the introductory phase. Thus, for this study, quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted, and the results and their discussion are given below:

A. Answer the Questions (Quantitative Results)

Questionnaires were administered to the students (50 students = experimental class, 50 students = control class) to gauge their interest in reading before and after the study. A total of 200 surveys were distributed, and 200 valid surveys were returned on both occasions. Figure 1 illustrates the students' interest in reading before and after the experiment.

TABLE 3  
STUDENTS' INTEREST IN READING

		Interest in reading		
		Very interested	Interested	Not interested
Before experiment	Experimental class	50%	32%	18%
	Control class	44%	34%	22%
After experiment	Experimental class	68%	29%	3%
	Control class	51%	37%	12%

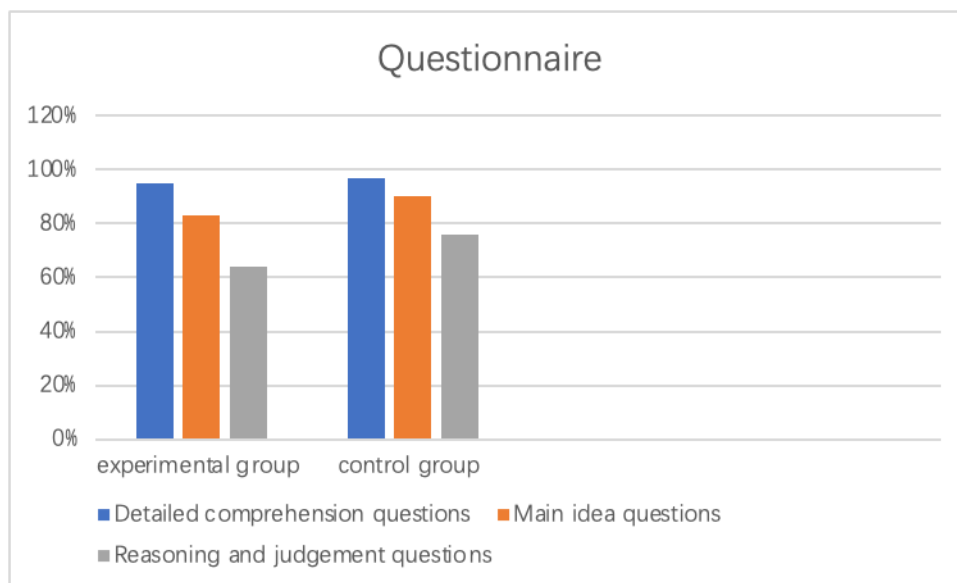


Figure 1. Students' Interest in Reading

Less than half of the students in both groups were very interested in reading before the experiment, while the percentage of students who did not like reading was around 20%. Thus, science majors at the polytechnic university do not have a strong interest in reading. Furthermore, students in both groups practised reading less frequently, and few consistently or regularly practised reading training. These findings indicated the urgent need to develop, improve and boost their confidence in reading.

At the end of the experiment, more students in the experimental class expressed a strong interest in reading than in the control class. This improvement was evident due to the increase in students who were very interested in reading and a decrease in the proportion of students who do not enjoy reading, suggesting that most are enthusiastic about reading in English. Moreover, this finding indicated that a semester of genre-based training could enhance students' interest in learning English reading and boost their confidence in English reading. Figure 2 demonstrates the students' scores in the final exam and various reading questions of the College English course at the end of the experiment.

TABLE 4  
STUDENT'S SCORES IN THE FINAL EXAM AND VARIOUS READING QUESTIONS OF THE COLLEGE ENGLISH COURSE

After experiment					
	Detailed comprehension questions	Main idea questions	Reasoning and judgment questions	Word meaning guessing questions	Average final score
Experimental class	95%	83%	64%	82%	86.5%
Control class	97%	90%	76%	84%	82.6%

English reading proficiency includes the knowledge of the following elements of reading: vocabulary, lexical, syntactic, discourse, suitable reading strategies, primary idea comprehension, recall of relevant details, inferring textual

information, overview skills, integration skills, reading fluency and speed, and evaluative and critical reading (Grabe, 2009). Students are taught how to identify the context, text, text type, language, and topic familiarity using genre-based pedagogy.

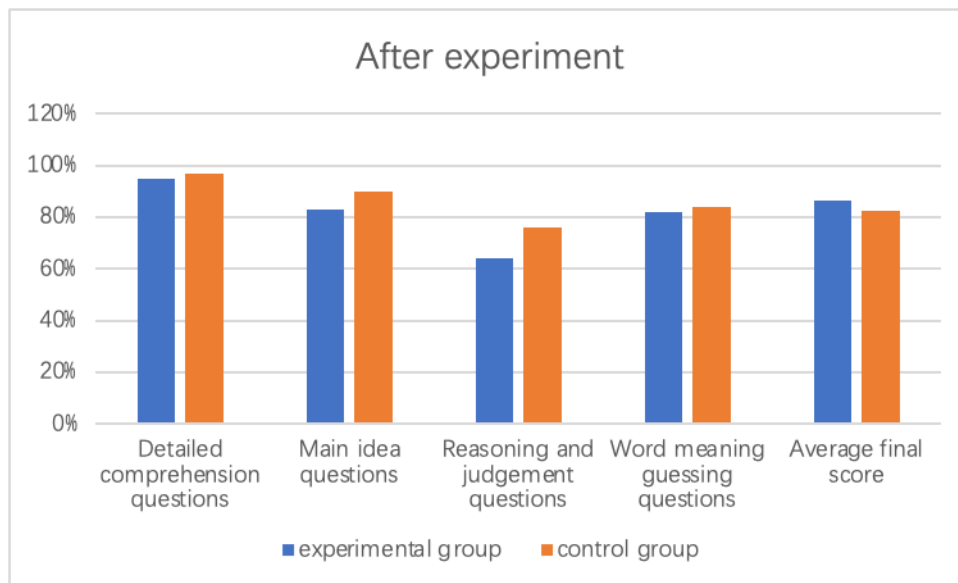


Figure 2. Student's Scores in the Final Exam and Various Reading Questions of the College English Course at the End of the Experiment

Based on Table 4, students in the experimental class scored highest for the detailed comprehension questions. This finding may result from their preference to read word for word and sentence for sentence, as they could not distinguish the meaning groups and read accordingly. When students understand a text well, they can complete their reading process efficiently. Otherwise, they tend not to read accordingly when some text meanings are unclear, as this obstacle disrupts their reading procedure. Therefore, understanding is important in reading to ensure an effective reading process. As a result, students in the experimental class scored lower for questions involving understanding the text as a whole, such as making reasonable inferences and grasping the main idea of the text. Students are accustomed to reading in such a way that they can only finish a text if they understand every word of it. When students encounter a sentence they do not understand while reading, they tend to dwell on a particular section and disrupt the reading process. This reading habit directly impacts their reading speed and makes it difficult for students to understand the text comprehensively. In addition, most students exhibited poor genre awareness and did not understand how to use the genre of a text to improve their overall grasp and understanding. Therefore, the genre teaching method is important and practical for college English reading instruction.

This study also revealed that students in the experimental class demonstrated a significant increase in reasoning and judgment scores, followed by a correct rate of the main idea. These improvements suggest that their reading habits were altered slightly, and their attempt to overcome the habit of reading word for word and sentence for sentence. Additionally, the students have learned to divide words into meaning groups and read accordingly. The results in Table 4 also showed that students had developed the ability to predict the text while reading and use techniques such as skimming, searching, and scanning to find detailed information to make judgments about the overall style and thematic ideas of the text. Therefore, implementing a genre-based teaching approach in English reading classes could develop students' ability to use different reading strategies and skills.

In addition to using the linguistic approach to describe the linguistic features of a discourse, genre analysis also incorporates the sociological and psychological approaches, which reveal the cognitive structure and constructive strategies of a specific domain related to a genre (Bhatia, 1993). The present study indicated that students in the experimental class significantly increased their interest in reading, changed their word-by-word and sentence-by-sentence reading, identified various genres of texts, used patterns of various discourse genres to direct their reading and summarised the frame structure and discourse features of texts after the implementation of the genre-based pedagogy method. Thus, genre-based teaching offers fresh viewpoints and approaches for enhancing students' reading levels and proficiency.

According to Krashen (1985), providing students with adequate and appropriate language input is a key component of language teaching. Reading broadens the students' exposure to language input, sparks their interest in learning, improves their capacity for independent learning, and aids in forming effective learning strategies. In this study, genre-based teaching effectively promoted reading comprehension abilities among college students. This study also helped students to develop new abilities at various reading comprehension levels, including the capacity to absorb complex and lengthy language in scholarly and professional writings at a higher reading level.

The study findings indicated that genre-based instruction in English teaching and learning positively influenced the development of learning-facilitating methods (Tajeddin et al., 2019). The instructional strategy creates a solid foundation for learning and enhances communication skills in English. Therefore, more universities should incorporate genre-based instruction into their curricula to improve teaching and learning and increase literacy worldwide.

### B. Thematic Analysis (Qualitative Results)

Edited transcripts of the interviews were obtained at the end of the sessions. Subsequently, important themes (see Figure 3) were developed using a content analysis strategy to address RQ2.

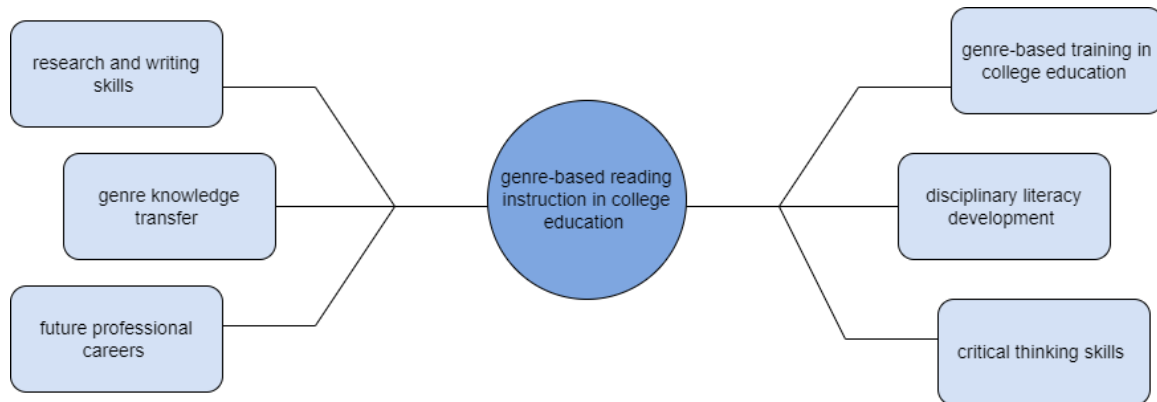


Figure 3. Mind Map of Thematic Analysis

#### Theme I: Genre-based training in college education

The promotion of genre-based training in college education is considered adequate by most respondents. They agreed that different academic disciplines have different genres, and this training helps improve students' knowledge of these genres. Furthermore, the pupils can ask questions regarding the texts depending on their degrees of understanding (Ghane, 2022). One of the respondents commented:

"In my opinion, genre-based training in college education is vital as it helps develop important learning and reading skills among the students."

#### Theme II: Disciplinary literacy development

Seven respondents supported the role of genre-based training in promoting disciplinary literacy development. This training exposes students to different academic disciplines, help them synthesise important information, and forms interdisciplinary connections (Lukmawardani & Badriyah, 2022). A student commented:

"Genre-based training has helped me in understanding complex topics."

#### Theme III: Critical thinking skills

Eight respondents agreed that the genre-based approach helps develop important critical skills among students, particularly in understanding logical phrases (Rose, 2018). A respondent commented:

"Genre-based approach effectively encourages the students to evaluate the assumptions within the context of different texts across various academic disciplines."

#### Theme IV: Research and writing skills

Genre-based training effectively improves essential skills among students, such as research and writing skills (Montero-Ar évalo, 2019). One of the students commented:

"Genre-based training has helped me in improving my research and writing skills."

#### Theme V: Genre knowledge transfer

According to six respondents, the genre-based approach effectively promotes genre knowledge transfer between academic disciplines by enhancing text interpretation (Rodrguez S áchez, 2017). One student commented:

"Genre-based approach is effective in interdisciplinary knowledge transfer."

#### Theme VI: Future professional careers

The genre-based approach helps develop extensive reading and learning skills among students, which is essential for their future professional careers. A respondent commented:

"I am confident of my capabilities after the genre-based training and look forward to a better future."

## V. CONCLUSION

Traditional teaching methods are evolving to fulfil the demand for language learning among college students. This study provides literature on genre-based training and background data on the study topic via a mixed research methodology using quantitative instruments (questionnaires) and a qualitative instrument (thematic analysis). The findings of this study indicated the possibility of simplifying and improving language teaching and learning in school curricula, including other subjects such as social sciences. The study results are crucial in demonstrating the efficacy of

a genre-based approach in helping students achieve outstanding comprehension and confidence to speak effectively and excel in their curricula.

The genre teaching approach helps students develop good reading habits and strategies, reading speed, and English proficiency, improves their overall English language performance, boosts their self-confidence in learning English, and produces better teaching outcomes. These enhancements were evident among students in the experimental class who learned pertinent reading strategies through the genre-based approach. They can now apply the necessary skills in reading flexibly and efficiently. For instance, the students could anticipate the text content based on headings, charts, and other information. In addition, they discovered and identified the passages and main ideas by scanning and searching the text.

## VI. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

A teacher that utilises the genre-based approach can stimulate students' engagement and influence their understanding of various grammatical ideas that could motivate them to strive harder to comprehend the language concepts. As English is an international mode of communication, teaching and learning the language serves corporate, cultural, and educational goals. Students will be able to become global citizens by being multilingual and interculturally competent. Therefore, teaching language should be implemented as early as kindergarten and subsequently in high school and college curricula. This practice will help students recognise various textual genres easily, comprehend various discourses of linguistic characteristics, and organise their knowledge using the genre-based approach. Students can also utilise various reading strategies to make sense of text content, depending on the Genre.

After each evaluation, researchers should gauge the student's progress. Future research should also study the constraints of genre-based instruction in the teaching and learning process to understand why some students do not prefer this language teaching method. These steps will help educators identify shortcomings in the approach and improve the language teaching methods. Additionally, the superiority and efficiency of genre-based instructions in developing language proficiency can be further elucidated by comparing this method with other language teaching techniques and identifying the limitations.

The study findings are also useful for academics and policymakers to implement the most efficient language-teaching practices in educational institutions. In summary, this study provides a foundation for future research on this subject, as information regarding genre-based training in fostering reading comprehension abilities worldwide is still lacking.

## VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The current study has several limitations that could be addressed in future research. For instance, this study did not focus on developing activities for genre-based training, thus, preventing a complete understanding of the concept. Furthermore, this study did not include the teachers' perception regarding the influence of genre-based training on students' reading comprehension skills. The sample size for this study was also small. Therefore, future studies can focus on understanding the development process and selecting activities for genre-based training. In addition, future studies should consider the teachers' perceptions of genre-based training to achieve effective outcomes. Finally, the large sample size is crucial for future studies to avoid bias.

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# Conceptual Metonymy of COVID-19 Pandemic in Vietnam's Online Newspapers

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**Abstract**—Conceptual metonymy which is based on the contingent relationship between a source concept and a target concept helps people perceive the world. The article discusses the concept and principles of conceptual metonymy and analyses the conceptual metonymy of COVID-19 pandemic used in official online newspapers published in Vietnam. 100 articles were selected for analysis. The study focuses on the "PLACE FOR EVENT" metonymy with the aim of shedding light on the Vietnamese's cognitive ways of thinking. Vietnamese people tend to use the geographical location where the COVID-19 pandemic occurs as a substitute for the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Index Terms**—conceptual metonymy, cognitive linguistics, COVID-19 pandemic, PLACE FOR EVENT

## I. INTRODUCTION

Conceptual metonymy is one important method of cognition that helps humans perceive things based on contiguity or association. In recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of lives worldwide posing a great threat to humanity. People have perceived this new phenomenon based on contingent relationships between related entities. This method of cognition is called conceptual metonymy. This study explores conceptual metonymy of COVID-19 pandemic using a corpus of 100 articles collected from official online newspapers in Vietnam. The results of this research provide insights into how Vietnamese people perceive the COVID-19 pandemic metonymically.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The corpus includes 100 articles on the COVID-19 pandemic published in official online newspapers in Vietnam, namely [baochinhphu.vn](http://baochinhphu.vn), [vnexpress.net](http://vnexpress.net), [vov.vn](http://vov.vn), [www.qdnd.vn](http://www.qdnd.vn), [covid19.gov.vn](http://covid19.gov.vn), [tuoitre.vn](http://tuoitre.vn), [vietnamnet.vn](http://vietnamnet.vn), [vtv.vn](http://vtv.vn), and [ncov.moh.gov.vn](http://ncov.moh.gov.vn). To ensure data reliability, the chosen websites are official information channels in Vietnam, including the government's newspapers and pandemic-related information websites.

The data collection process involves the following steps:

Step 1: Reading articles on the selected online newspapers.

Step 2: Selecting linguistic expressions containing information about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Step 3: Identifying linguistic expressions about the COVID-19 pandemic which have contingent relationships.

Step 4: Analyzing metonymic linguistic expressions.

## III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### A. What Is Conceptual Metonymy

Traditional linguists hold that metonymy is a way of naming one thing, phenomenon or concept by the name of another which is closely associated with it to make linguistic expressions more lively and effective. For example:

(1) How many *hands* do women have?

How many *faces* did women have in the past and how many *livers* do they have nowadays?

(Nguyen Du's poetry)

The words "*hands*", "*faces*" and "*livers*" do not carry their literal meanings which are physical body parts; they are used metaphorically to represent human beings. This is a figurative use of metonymy, with the body parts symbolizing the entire person. These temporary meanings are understood given specific communication contexts.

(2) That is a brilliant *mind*.

In this statement, the word "*mind*" is a metonym for intelligence. Since the brain is a vital part of the human body which controls all human activities, this metonymic linguistic expression is created based on the relationship between a body part and its function or position in the body. This type of metonymy falls under the category of vocabulary

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metonymy, whose meaning shift is based on the mechanism of metonymy.

Cognitive linguists hold that metonymy is not a substitution of words; it is a way of perceiving the world which operates at the mental level. If traditional linguistics considers metonymy as changes in meaning, a method of word formation, or a rhetorical device, cognitive linguistics holds that metonymy is associated with human thinking and activity.

In essence, a metonymic mapping involves the use of one entity to substitute for another. This type of mapping focuses on a specific aspect rather than the whole entity. For example:

(3) We need a cool *head* to solve the problem.

This metonymic expression not only uses a body part (*head*) to replace the entire person but also chooses a prominent characteristic of a person - his intelligence and problem-solving ability associated with his head for the substitution. Metonymy also helps people perceive things, serving as a tool for structuring thoughts and actions. For instance, the metonymy "FACE FOR PERSON" shows that we mainly collect information about a person through his face, rather than his posture, appearance, or anything else. This demonstrates that the face is a central part of the whole body. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that,

like metaphors, metonymic concepts structure not just our language but our thoughts, attitude, and actions. And, like metaphoric concepts, metonymic concepts are grounded in our experience. In fact, the grounding of metonymic concepts is generally more obvious than is the case with metaphoric concepts, since it usually involves direct physical or causal associations. (p. 39)

Conceptual metonymy influences our way of thinking and speaking through the systemization of knowledge of the associations between things. The relationship between the substitute (A) and the substituted (B) is based on their association. The mapping between A and B is always unidirectional which can be modeled as follows:

A is the substitute

B is the substituted

A and B have a contingent relationship. The substitution process occurs as A has the most prominent feature in a contingent relationship with B, enabling it to replace B.

Presented below are some examples of metonymic concepts:

FACE FOR PERSON

CAUSE FOR EFFECT

LOCATION FOR EVENT

In these examples, FACE/CAUSE/LOCATION is A, and PERSON/EFFECT/EVENT is B. A and B belong to the same conceptual domain from which the most representative and typical feature is selected for the metonymic mapping process. For instance:

(4) Let me lend a *hand*.

"*Hand*" is a concept which falls within the domain of the human body. Body parts such as leg, hand, eye, nose, mouth, and head have their own functions. In this case, a part responsible for activities like holding, grasping, carrying, and throwing is chosen as a typical entity to substitute for the whole person. The choice of which body part to use as a substitute depends on the focus of attention on body function. "*Hand*" is in the domain of human body; therefore, it belongs to the category "PART FOR WHOLE".

According to Lakoff and Turner (1989), "Metonymy is primarily used for reference: via metonymy, we refer to an entity by means of another in the same schema" (p. 103). This concept indicates that metonymic domains share the same cognitive structure. More specifically, in the same cultural context, the substitute and the substituted are interchangeable allowing us to perceive one thing by means of another without any confusion. This helps us receive information and gain a good understanding of the world. "Metonymy is a cognitive phenomenon, a "figure of thought," underlying much of our ordinary conceptualization that may be even more fundamental than metaphor. The use of metonymy in language is a reflection of this conceptual status" (Panther & Radden, 1999, p. 410). As Littlemore (2015) puts it, "Metonymy is a type of figurative language used in everyday conversation, a form of shorthand that allows us to use our shared knowledge to communicate with fewer words than we would otherwise need" (p. 1). Conceptual metonymy thus plays an essential role in shaping our perception of the world.

### B. Classification of Conceptual Metonymy

In "Metaphors We Live By", Lakoff and Johnson (1980) consider conceptual metonymy as the second most important cognitive mechanism (after conceptual metaphor), which works by the contiguity or association between objects or concepts. Later authors such as Ungerer and Schmid (1996), Kövecses and Radden (1998), Panther and Radden (1999) argue that conceptual metonymy involves the substitution of a specific object for an abstract one based on the former's prominent feature. Conceptual metonymy involves proximity and prominence. Ungerer and Schmid (1996) classify nine types of metonymy as follows:

PART FOR WHOLE

WHOLE FOR PART

CONTAINER FOR CONTENT

MATERIAL FOR OBJECT

PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT



PLACE FOR INSTITUTION  
 PLACE FOR EVENT  
 CONTROLLED FOR CONTROLLER  
 CAUSE FOR EFFECT

The classification of conceptual metonymy is entirely different from that of traditional metonymy for conceptual metonymy is a method of thinking which helps humans understand and perceive the world around them. "The identification of types of metonymic relationships was an issue that underlay much of the traditional research into metonymy. The classification of types of metonymic relationships was largely an attempt to understand metonymic processes" (Kövecses & Radden, 1998, p. 49). There is always a close relationship between language expressions and metonymic thinking. "Like metaphor, metonymy interacts in important ways with morphological structure, but also warns us against a virtually unconstrained conception of metonymy. The central claim here is that word-formation and metonymy are distinct linguistic components that complement and mutually constrain each other" (Brdar, 2018, p. 1). Therefore, cultures have different ways to select prominent features for the metonymy process. For example, in the past, Westerners often used "heart" to express love, while Easterners often used "bowel" to frame the same concept. This explains why the nine types of conceptual metonymy mentioned above have different frequencies of use in different languages.

### C. Mechanisms of Conceptual Metonymy

Besides conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy is another important cognitive means for people to know the world and to structure conceptual domains based on certain proximity principles.

Proximity is the guiding principle of conceptual metonymy. In terms of cognition, entities that are close to each other are often considered as one. Consequently, when two entities are closely associated with each other, one entity will be cognitively perceived by means of the other. People tend to use easily recognizable aspects or features of a particular entity to symbolize the whole entity or part of it. This cognitive process is called conceptual metonymy.

Conceptual metonymy is composed of a source concept and a target concept, both belonging to the same conceptual domain. There is a mapping between the two concepts. "Metonymy is a mapping within the same conceptual domain" (Barcelona, 2003, p. 95). The mapping occurs within a single conceptual domain, where one concept symbolizes the other within that domain or the entire conceptual domain.

For example:

(5) *Long face*

(6) *Blushing*

(7) *Shivering*

Expressions like "long face", "blushing" and "shivering" describe states caused by certain impact. Physiological states are usually the results of external physical and psychological factors. "Long face" is an expression of displeasure or dissatisfaction with something. In this example, a negative mood is used to express its cause. "Blushing" is a biological expression of anger. When people are angry, their blood pressure tends to elevate, creating a redder-than-normal face. In this case, the state is used to perceive metonymically its cause. Similarly, "shivering" is a biological reaction of the body which appears when one is too cold or scared. Therefore, *long face/blushing/shivering* is the result, which is used to express the cause. These are instances of the "EFFECT FOR CAUSE" metonymy.

Kövecses (2010) affirms that,

it is a basic feature of metonymically related vehicle and target entities that they are "close" to each other in conceptual space. Thus, the producer is conceptually "close" to the product (because he is the one who makes it), the place of an institution is conceptually "close" to the institution itself (because most institutions are located in particular physical places), gloves are conceptually "close" to baseball players (because some baseball players wear gloves), and so on. In the traditional view of metonymy, this feature of metonymy is expressed by the claim that the two entities are contiguously related, or that the two entities are in each other's proximity. In the cognitive linguistic view, this claim is accepted and maintained but given a more precise formulation; namely, it is suggested that a vehicle entity can provide mental access to a target entity when the two entities belong to the same domain, or as Lakoff puts it, the same idealized cognitive model (ICM). (p. 173)

This proves that metonymic mapping is structured based on the proximity of the two concepts, as illustrated in the above examples. Conceptual metonymy is a perceptual process that enables us to form and express new concepts to acquire new knowledge. Conceptual metonymy is the mechanism whereby we understand concept A based on concept B, which are often associated with each other. This way of thinking is used widely in our daily life.

## IV. RESULTS

### A. Research Results

The research results prove that conceptual metonymy is a means of perceiving the Covid-19 pandemic. Three subtypes of metonymy found in the corpus are presented in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1  
SUBTYPES OF CONCEPTUAL METONYMY

Subtype	Number of metonymic expressions	Percentage
PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT	35	27%
CAUSE FOR EFFECT	23	19%
PLACE FOR EVENT	66	54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	

As can be seen from the table, the conceptual metonymy "PLACE FOR EVENT" has the highest number, accounting for 54% of the total metonymic expressions examined. The other two conceptual metonymy types "PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT" and "CAUSE FOR EFFECT" account for 27% and 19% respectively. These figures reveal the Vietnamese's habit of associating the geographical location where the COVID pandemic occurs with its level of danger. Below are some typical examples:

Subtype	Examples
PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT	<p><i>Pfizer</i> is effective against the Omicron variant. (<a href="https://baochinhphu.vn/thuoc-cua-pfizer-co-the-chong-lai-omicron-102305558.htm">https://baochinhphu.vn/thuoc-cua-pfizer-co-the-chong-lai-omicron-102305558.htm</a>) In this example, "<i>Pfizer</i>" – the name of the producer is used to refer to a specific Covid-19 vaccine product. <i>Pfizer</i> is an American pharmaceutical manufacturer of vaccines so this example illustrates the "PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT" metonymy.</p> <p><i>Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson &amp; Johnson</i> are mostly supplied to wealthy countries. (<a href="https://vnexpress.net/pfizer-quyet-tam-bao-ve-cong-thuc-vaccine-covid-19-4392956.html">https://vnexpress.net/pfizer-quyet-tam-bao-ve-cong-thuc-vaccine-covid-19-4392956.html</a>) The U.S. recommends <i>Pfizer and Moderna</i> instead of <i>Johnson &amp; Johnson</i>. (<a href="https://vnexpress.net/my-khuyen-nghi-tiem-pfizer-moderna-thay-vi-johnson-amp-johnson-4404339.html">https://vnexpress.net/my-khuyen-nghi-tiem-pfizer-moderna-thay-vi-johnson-amp-johnson-4404339.html</a>) <i>Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson &amp; Johnson</i> are the names of vaccine manufacturers which are used to make reference to their products. This substitution is commonly used in everyday life.</p>
CAUSE FOR EFFECT	<p>The Battle Against <i>Covid-19</i> at Military Hospital 7A (<a href="https://www.qdnd.vn/tren-tuyen-dau-chong-dich/bo-doi-cu-ho-tren-tuyen-dau/cuoc-chien-chong-tu-than-covid-19-o-benh-vien-quan-y-7a-672778">https://www.qdnd.vn/tren-tuyen-dau-chong-dich/bo-doi-cu-ho-tren-tuyen-dau/cuoc-chien-chong-tu-than-covid-19-o-benh-vien-quan-y-7a-672778</a>) <i>Covid-19</i> causes deaths; therefore, in the linguistic expression above, "<i>Covid-19</i>" is a kind of metonymy in which the cause – <i>Covid-19</i> substitutes for the result – deaths. In this case, the use of metonymy helps us express the consequences of Covid-19 more quickly and clearly.</p> <p>Cases BN8614, BN8616 in Hanoi: F1 cases being isolated. Tested <i>positive</i> for Covid-19 on June 5. (<a href="https://covid19.gov.vn/ban-tin-covid-19-trua-6-6-them-102-ca-mac-moi-o-ha-noi-va-5-tinh-than-1717356063.htm">https://covid19.gov.vn/ban-tin-covid-19-trua-6-6-them-102-ca-mac-moi-o-ha-noi-va-5-tinh-than-1717356063.htm</a>) "<i>Positive</i>" is a medical term meaning viral infection. In this instance, this term is used to refer to the state of being infected with Covid-19. This is a kind of metonymy, which uses the cause to make reference to the result.</p>
PLACE FOR EVENT	<p>How to control Covid-19 <i>hotspots</i> in <i>South Korea, Italy, and Iran</i>? (<a href="https://tuoitre.vn/toan-cau-doi-mat-sieu-bao-covid-19-20200302074908744.htm">https://tuoitre.vn/toan-cau-doi-mat-sieu-bao-covid-19-20200302074908744.htm</a>) <i>South Korea, Italy, and Iran</i> are the names of locations where Covid-19 spreads quickly with increasing numbers of infected people. They are used in place of the disease itself. This is a type of metonymy in which the location replaces the event.</p> <p>Positive signs from the <i>Chinese infection hub</i>. (<a href="https://vnexpress.net/tin-hieu-tich-cuc-tu-o-dich-trung-quoc-4063858.html">https://vnexpress.net/tin-hieu-tich-cuc-tu-o-dich-trung-quoc-4063858.html</a>) Similarly, the use of "<i>Chinese infection hub</i>" is an example of mentioning the location instead of the event. The location where a large and increasing number of people are getting infected with Covid is used to refer to the pandemic itself. Due to this reference, the danger of the Covid-19 pandemic becomes more apparent. It indicates that the disease is spreading widely with a high number of infected people.</p>

From the examples above, it is clear that metonymy helps us perceive new phenomena by means of existing ones. Despite starting only several years ago, Covid-19 pandemic has caused great fear for many people and countries due to its terrible consequences. Based on their past experiences, people have spoken and thought about this pandemic based on associations or contiguity.

The metonymy "PLACE FOR EVENT" will be analyzed in more detail below as this category has the highest number of linguistic expressions.

## B. "PLACE FOR EVENT" Metonymy

### (a). Mapping Mechanism

In a metonymic mapping, both source and target concepts belong to the same domain, and they are closely related to each other. Due to this contingent relationship, the location where an event takes place can be used as a substitute for the event. The statement "*The White House* has decided to go on with the missile defense program," illustrates the "PLACE FOR INSTITUTION" metonymy where "*the White House*" represents the U.S. government and its activity. Via this projection, the implied meaning can be recognized from the explicit one.

In a "PLACE FOR EVENT" metonymy, locations will be mentioned instead of the events occurring in those locations. The mapping mechanism is shown in the diagram below:

**PLACE**  
(locations where events or phenomena occur)



**EVENT**  
(events, phenomena)

As can be seen from the diagram, the geographical location where a disease outbreak occurs is often used to project onto the disease itself. The name of the location projects onto the spread and danger of the disease. This is understandable because in case of a global scale disease, using locations to refer to the disease is a global way of thinking.

(b). *Metonymic Linguistic Expressions*

The numbers of different types of "PLACE FOR EVENT" metonymy are shown in the following table:

TABLE 2  
SUBTYPES OF "PLACE FOR EVENT" METONYMY

Subtype	Number of metonymic expressions	Percentage
Country	34	48%
Province/city	22	31%
Region/area	15	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	

The number of "COUNTRY FOR EVENT" metonymic expressions is the highest, accounting for 48%, followed by "PROVINCE/CITY FOR EVENT" and "REGION/AREA FOR EVENT" at 31% and 21% respectively. Let's examine some examples:

1. *Country*

Example:

In South Korea, there have been 1,261 positive cases of coronavirus with 11 deaths, making it *the world's second-largest Covid-19 infection hub* after China.

(<https://vietnamnet.vn/tiet-lo-ve-hoat-dong-cua-giao-phai-tan-thien-dia-o-o-dich-vu-han-619637.html>)

In this example, "*the world's second-largest Covid-19 infection hub*" refers to South Korea – a country with a high number of Covid cases. This metonymic expression proves that people often associate Covid-19 with a place which is experiencing a rapid spread of the disease and a situation that is beyond control.

Example:

As of October, India – *the world's second-largest Covid-19 infection hub* – has reported over 44.64 million confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2, including nearly 529,000 deaths.

(<https://vtv.vn/the-gioi/an-do-truoc-lan-song-covid-19-moi-do-bien-the-phu-xbb-nguy-co-dich-lan-rong-tai-lao-20221025195310373.htm>)

"*the world's second-largest Covid-19 infection hub*" presents a typical metonymic expression. It reflects the way of thinking in which the most dangerous place is referred to as a "*hub*". Hub refers to a place where there is an outbreak of the pandemic. In this case, India is an example of the "COUNTRY FOR EVENT" type of metonymy.

2. *Province/City*

Example:

*The Covid infection hub in Bac Giang* is spreading rapidly.

(<https://ncov.moh.gov.vn/>)

In the above example, "*the Covid infection hub in Bac Giang*" refers to the people being infected with Covid-19 in Bac Giang. This is a type of CONTAINER FOR THE CONTAINED metonymy in which the container – the *Covid infection hub in Bac Giang* – replaces the contained – the people infected with Covid-19 in Bac Giang.

Example:

The outbreak of Covid-19 turns *Wuhan infection hub* into a desolate "dead city."

(<https://laodong.vn/the-gioi/virus-corona-hoanh-hanh-o-dich-vu-han-hoang-vu-nhu-thanh-pho-chet-780631.ldo>)

Example:

Many countries try to excavate their citizens from *Wuhan infection hub*.

The term "*Wuhan infection hub*" has become familiar due to the devastating impact that Covid-19 caused globally. During the early stages when there was no vaccine for the Covid-19 virus, Covid-19 was as frightening as the death. Therefore, the term "*hub*" implies a place from which the disease spreads. "*Wuhan infection hub*" – a substitute for the state of people being seriously infected with Covid – belongs to the "PLACE FOR EVENT" metonymy.

3. *Region/Area*

A region/area generally refers to a piece of land or a relatively extensive space characterized by certain natural or societal characteristics making it unique from other surrounding areas. A region/area always indicates a specific geographical space. During the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, "*infection hub*" – a geographical area where many people are infected with COVID-19 – is used to replace the number of individuals infected with the virus. This is a case

of meaning shift based on proximity. An area with a huge number of infected people is used to replace the state of disease infection.

Example:

A class with only one teacher and one student in the *Covid-19 hotspot of Thai Nguyen*.

(<https://thanhvien.vn/xuc-dong-lop-hoc-chi-co-1-co-1-tro-o-vung-dich-covid-19-thai-nguyen-post1430475.html>)

"*Covid-19 hotspot of Thai Nguyen*" is a specific geographical name of an area currently under attack by the Covid pandemic. This indicates that the geographical area where humans live can be closely linked to all their activities and events.

Example:

What are the criteria for measuring the infection level of a *Covid-19 hotspot*?

(<https://vov.vn/xa-hoi/tin-24h/thay-doi-tieu-chi-danh-gia-cap-do-vung-dich-theo-huong-nao-post920683.vov>)

Although Associate Professor Dr. Tran Duc Phu claimed that it was no longer appropriate to categorize *infection hubs* based on the number of COVID-19 cases, he disagreed with the suggestion to stop daily counting of new cases.

(<https://vov.vn/xa-hoi/tin-24h/thay-doi-tieu-chi-danh-gia-cap-do-vung-dich-theo-huong-nao-post920683.vov>)

Mr. Phu believes that changing the criteria for measuring the infection level of a *Covid-19 hotspot* also aims at "the ability to adapt flexibly and effectively to control COVID-19."

(<https://vov.vn/xa-hoi/tin-24h/thay-doi-tieu-chi-danh-gia-cap-do-vung-dich-theo-huong-nao-post920683.vov>)

The traffic police force and local authorities in Yen Thanh district in Nghe An discovered two coaches carrying 40 people from *COVID-19 outbreak areas* including Hanoi, Bac Giang, and Ho Chi Minh City, who had returned to their hometown without making health declarations.

(<https://vietnamnet.vn/xe-khach-cho-40-nguoi-tu-vung-dich-covid-19-ve-nghe-an-tron-khai-bao-y-te-755898.html>)

"*a Covid-19 hotspot*" and "*COVID-19 outbreak areas*" are examples of a metonymy type in which the location where people live is used to describe the event taking place in that place. Metonymy is formed out of speakers' own experience and culture.

## V. DISCUSSION

Metonymy is a cognitive means for people to conceptualize the world around them. Humans perceive the world through their bodily experiences (specifically through senses like vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch). In the process of knowing the world, humans tend to connect things that are associated with each other, meaning that one object (object A) reminds us of another (object B). That A and B belong to the same conceptual domain is a basic principle underlying the formation of any metonymic expression. Although the Covid-19 pandemic has occurred recently, people have connected it with things that are closely associated with it. Thanks to this, we can fully comprehend this new phenomenon. Hence, the study of metonymy is crucial to understand the nature of human thinking and cognitive processes.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The authors conducted a research on the use of metonymy in official online newspapers in Vietnam. Three categories of metonymy were identified including PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT, CAUSE FOR EFFECT, and PLACE FOR EVENT. The research focuses on the "PLACE FOR EVENT" metonymy. The results show that metonymy is formed out of conceptual domains. The concept of Covid includes everything associated with it; therefore, the location where the pandemic occurs is used to project onto the Covid-19 pandemic and its catastrophic consequences. The COVID-19 pandemic did not exist until 2019; however, humans can still perceive this pandemic based on their past experiences and principles of thinking. This study highlights the principle of thinking based on contiguity relationships in human cognitive mechanism. Thanks to this perception, the COVID-19 pandemic can be perceived with all of its severity, characteristics, and attributes.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank the reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions.

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# Resistance in Mahmoud Darwish's "I Come From There": A Discourse Analysis

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**Abstract**—Postcolonial studies have dealt with the protest literature since they consider it as the voice of the oppressed people. In the same aspect, resistance literature begins in Palestine with Ghassan Kanafani and Mahmoud Darwish after 1948. Protest literature aims not only at freeing the oppressed from dominating powers and overturning the authority but also at liberating the humans from oppression. "The term resistance "Moqawamah" was first applied in a description of Palestinian Literature in 1966 by the Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanfani in his study "Resistance Literature in Occupied Palestine" (Harlow, 1987). Mahmoud Darwish has been involved in Palestine's political affairs throughout his entire life. In "I Come from There", Darwish tries to raise the voice of Palestinians; therefore, it can be heard all over the world. The theme of this poem assures his refusal to forget his country and unveils the struggle for a doomed homeland. By appropriating the descriptive and analytical method, along with the discourse analysis of Darwish's terms and phrases in the poem "I Come from There", this paper clarifies the symbolic meaning of the words to represent his sense of loss and sense of possession that he feels towards his land. Against this, the paper argues whether resistance protest literature succeeds in defending oppressed people and giving the subaltern their voices and whether literature helps the occupied people to get free and believe in non-violent resistance instead of violent resistance.

**Index Terms**—discourse analysis, Palestine, resistance, exile, protest

## I. INTRODUCTION

"Mahmoud Darwish was born in 1941 in Palestine. Darwish grew up in a large family as he was the second of eight children and his father and grandfather played a decisive role in his life, teaching him to read and write (Shahin, p. vii). During the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, his village was destroyed and his family fled to Lebanon. "In 1948, after the Israeli takeover of Al-Birwah where he was born, the family moved to Lebanon, but Darwish later returned to the Acre district to live in a town called Deir Al-Asad. He wrote poetry from a very early age and his first collection, *Asafir Bila Ajnihah* (Wingless Birds), which contained his popular poem "Identity Card" was published in 1960 when he was only 19 years old" (Shahin, p. vii).

Darwish is considered Palestine's most eminent poet, as he published his first collection of poems, *Leaves of Olives*, in 1964. Since then, Darwish has published approximately thirty poetry and prose collections which have been translated into more than twenty-two languages. Darwish died on August 9, 2008, in Houston, Texas, after complications from heart surgery. By his death, the Palestinian people lost their voice and lost the fighter who kept insisting on Palestinian's ownership of the land. <https://poets.org/poet/mahmoud-darwish#:~:text=Considered%20Palestine's>.

Mahmoud Darwish was involved in Palestine's political affairs throughout his entire whole life. In "I Come from There", Darwish tries to raise the voice of Palestinians; therefore, it can be heard all over the world. The theme of this poem assures his refusal to forget his country and unveils the struggle for a doomed homeland. Furthermore, Darwish reassures that the occupation cannot "whitewash" his country and replace it with the occupier's culture in a multiculturalism context (Abd-Rabbo, 2020). Darwish raises his voice to announce that he belongs there and not to any other part of the world. In this poem, he emphasizes one reality that his roots are deep in Palestine and his dreams are left there since he walked this land before anyone else.

Postcolonial studies have addressed the protest literature since they consider it as the voice of the oppressed people (Al-Ghammaz, 2023). In the same aspect, resistance literature starting in Palestine with Ghassan Kanafani and Mahmoud Darwish after 1948 aims not only at freeing the oppressed from dominating powers and overturning the authority but also at liberating the humans from oppression. Barbra Harlow explains that "the term resistance "Moqawamah" was first applied in a description of Palestinian Literature in 1966 by the Palestinian writer and critic Ghassan Kanfani in his study "Resistance Literature in Occupied Palestine" (Harlow, 1987, p. 2). Darwish is one of the most eminent protest poets in Palestine who used his words as weapons to show his opposition and his refusal to occupy the land as well as the people of the land.

Hence, this article aims to argue whether resistance protest literature succeeds in defending oppressed people and giving the subaltern their voices and whether literature helps the occupied people to get free and believe in non-violent resistance instead of violent resistance. This paper is, however, divided into five main sections apart from the introductory section and structured as follows. Section Two (2) explores the Literature Review. Section Three (3)

examines the Methods and Conceptual Theory. Section 4 presents the Discussions and Analysis. Section (5) presents the Findings. In Section (6), the Conclusion is presented.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many critics acknowledge that Darwish's achievement has been said in several poets' statements, the creation of poetry that is wholly contingent and yet makes of that very circumstance its power. Darwish recognizes that confrontation with the Israeli Occupier who threatens the lives of all Palestinians has been a constant presence in his life, a source of poetic energy as well as an impediment to poetic creation. Darwish explains "My early interest in poetry developed with my realization that I am a victim of some form of military and political aggression" (Mattawa, p. 2). In her study, *Metaphors Stemming from Nature in the Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish*, Nawal Al-Sheikh dealt with a metaphor which is the most artistic device used in Mahmoud Darwish's poetry. She classified the metaphors used by Darwish into "three basic categories and concluded that these poetic metaphors are a logical outcome of his rural atmosphere" (Al-Sheikh, p. 1). In her article *Challenging the myth of a land without a people: Mahmoud Darwish's Journal of an Ordinary Grief and in the Presence of Absence*, Hania, Nashef confirms that "I look at Mahmoud Darwish's *Journal of an Ordinary Grief* (2010) and in the *Presence of Absence* (2011), drawing on Edward W. Said's *After the Last Sky* (1999), in which the authors recount the untold story of their marginalized people to give voice to the silenced through accounts of a lived and observed experience" (Nashef, p. 1).

In a similar study, Abdallah Abd-Alrahim in his article "The Impact of Displacement and Exile on Creating Cultural Gap and Value Conflict Between the First and the Second Palestinian Women Generations in Light of "The Inheritance of Exile "Novel" confirms that the Palestinian writer knew his role in literary resistance, so he practiced it creatively, as we saw examples of Mahmoud Darwish's resistance poetry, Ibrahim Touqan, Samih AlQasim and others (Abd-Alrahim, 2023).

Based on a brief literature review and a discourse analysis of Darwish's poetry, it can be said that they lend themselves to argue whether resistance protest literature succeeds in defending oppressed people and giving the subaltern their voices and whether literature helps the occupied people to get free and believe in non-violent resistance instead of violent resistance. More tellingly, Darwish has made all the required efforts to ensure that the poetry has helped the in giving voices needed by the oppressed people and the subaltern ones in Palestine.

Abd-Rabbo, Muna et al. in their study "Decolonizing imperialist discourse in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*: A Saidian perspective" have tackled the issue of the misrepresentation of the colonized people in *Persuasion* by Jane Austen. The researchers confirm that "for Said, the marginalized representation of the colonized territory of Antigua as simply a "colonial garden" for the British imperial patriarch further accentuates the superior sense of colonialist entitlement" (Abd-Rabbo, 2023, p. 1).

## III. METHODS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Due to the nature of this study, the descriptive and analytical method and approach and the discourse analysis have been used to clarify the symbolic meaning of the words used by Mahmoud Darwish in "I Come from There". The reason to select this analytical approach is to analyze the implicit content of the text and pay attention to the words used by the poet. Therefore, the paper analyzes the terms and phrases used by Darwish in his poem representing the sense of loss and sense of possession that he feels towards his land. The study mainly pays attention to Darwish's language and the vivid imagery used to confirm that his similarity with other human beings. Drawish has a mother and a house filled with memories. In detail, his house was with many windows from which he can see the vast land and meadows of his ancestors. Darwish was like any other boy who has brothers and friends; he kept living his life normally until the day that his family was enforced to flee from their village.

The framework of this paper is restricted within the borders of this poem. By analyzing the poem, the paper tries to pay great attention to the psychological problems suffered by the speaker due to his exile. The article also sheds the light on the idea of homesickness and nostalgia that appears clearly as the main theme within the lines of the poem. Hence, the Palestinian-born philosopher, alongside the descriptive and analytical method and approach are outlined because of their role in exploring whether resistance protest literature succeeds in defending oppressed people and giving the subaltern their voices and whether literature helps the occupied people to get free and believe in non-violent resistance instead of violent resistance.

## IV. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Mahmoud Darwish is a Palestinian poet who considered himself the spokesman of his people since a great deal of which has been spoken and written on the subject of land ownership before 1948. This atmosphere has helped Mahmoud Darwish pay great attention to the issue of land ownership. Darwish was afraid that the deceiving history may change the facts about the ownership of Palestine. Among those who discussed this subject is Curtis et al. in their book "*Palestinians: People, History, and Politics*". They claim that:

The Arab case against Israel, in the matter of Jewish land purchases, rests mainly on two claims: (1) that the Palestinian Arab farmer was peacefully and contentedly working his land in the latter part of the 19th century

and the early part of 20th century when along came the European Jewish immigrant, drove him off his land, disrupted the normal development of the country and created a vast class of landless, dispossessed Arabs ; (2) that a small Jewish minority, owning an even smaller proportion of Palestinian lands illegally made itself master of Palestine in 1948. (Curtis et al., 1975, p. 247)

In his poem "I Come from There", Darwish announces his belonging to Palestine and not to any other land, as he believes that he is rooted in Palestine, and all of his memories were hidden there. Darwish refused to accept exile though he lived most of his life exiled, yet he doesn't accept that fact. Darwish kept living in Palestine, where he revived his country in his poetry. According to Darwish, the voice of Palestine needed to be heard all over the world.

Darwish used vivid imagery in his poem "I Come from There" when he announces that he was born as "mortals", in which he announces that he is like any other human being and that he has a mother, he was born to a mother like all the human beings. He wanted to confirm that he is not an alien who came from nowhere, but he is like other human beings, has a mother and a house filled with memories. His house was with many windows from which he can see the vast land of his father and grandfather. Darwish was like any other boy who has brothers and friends where he kept living his life normally until the day that his family was enforced to flee from their village.

Darwish moved from his house to his confinement which is a cell that has a window, but this window is not like the windows of his house. He confirms that although he was imprisoned within this cell, yet he possesses the wave when he announces "Mine is the wave, snatched by sea-gulls, I have my view". This protest announcement confirms that Darwish lives in his world, and he has his view of Palestine. Regardless of the cold cell, Darwish flees with his imagination away from his confinement. Here, Darwish does not accept the occupation of his country and his land. He insists that he has his own "extra blade of grass" and this is a kind of announcement that I belong here. He also mentioned that this land is mine, and I own the grass and the waves, and you can never detach me away from this land, I belong here and I will stay here. Darwish wants to declare that history itself says that I was a Palestinian was here before Israeli people came to this land. According to Darwish, nobody is capable of changing the history of this land. In detail, Israeli people can cover the truth, but the veil that covers the truth will never stay forever.

The idea of belonging appears clearly when Darwish says in his poem "I Come from There":

"Mine is the moon at the far edge of the words,  
And the bounty of birds,  
And the immortal olive tree  
I walked this land before the swords  
Turned its living body into a laden table

He wants his voice to be heard all over the world, as this declaration makes it clear that this land has owners, and the occupation even if it stays for a long time will never be able to change this fact. When Darwish says "I walked this land before the swords" it means that Palestinian people are rooted here for a long time ago, and not even a single man can oppose this fact. These words assert that Darwish suffers from displacement, and insists on his presence on his land. Darwish's body was exiled but his soul refused this exile; therefore Darwish was torn between his exiled body and his soul that does not accept to be exiled.

Darwish had suffered from dispossession; he could not find himself in any elsewhere. This feeling of dispossession created a whole sense of ownership of his land. The words he used to talk about being from there tell that he insists on his ownership of this land.

He tries to create that kind of similarity between him and the cloud , as both of them are rendering to the sky, calling for their mothers, and weeping for their loss , in his poem "I come from There" he says:

I render the sky unto her mother  
When the sky weeps for her mother.  
And I weep to make myself known  
To a returning cloud

In a literary analysis, Darwish compares himself to the sky that weeps for her mother, and he weeps for his motherland, he weeps for Palestine, he weeps to make himself known to a returning cloud. Darwish is afraid that one day his homeland will forget him; this sense of fear makes Darwish tries to clutch any hope of joining a cloud that is capable of crossing the borders to his homeland.

In the final lines of his poem, Darwish stops romantically rendering to his land, and now he turned to blood, as non-violent resistance now turned into a violent one. Darwish is convinced now that he must shed his blood for the sake of his country. He confirms that he is the owner of this land, but this ownership is in needs to be proven by shedding blood.

Darwish lived all of his life in a sense of dispossession, where he moved from one country to another as an exiled poet, yet he could not find himself anywhere except in Palestine. Palestine lived with Darwish in his exile because he could not accept any country as his homeland. The sense of the loss that he suffered from for long years could not enable him to live in peace.

As a protest poet, Darwish considered himself the voice of Palestine, and he was concerned with his nation; his mission as a poet was part of his resistance to the occupation of his homeland. He affirms within his poem that "I can break the rules", and Darwish does not accept the rules that say stop resisting. According to him, these rules can be broken easily; even he is capable of breaking all the words if they do not give him one word which is homeland. The



sense of dispossession that the poet lived left him in a vacant place where he cannot find himself a space to live. Darwish is obsessed with his homeland and can never think of any place which is equal to it. Resistance was part of Darwish's poetry, he as a poet of Palestine considered himself the voice of Palestine, and the words of his poems have the responsibility to convey his message to the whole world. Darwish is capable of rewriting the words, recreating the alphabetical order that will enable him to create one word which is homeland.

Harlow (1987) confirms that Resistance Literature mainly analyzes literary texts. It also informs readers about some of the urgent political and cultural debates taking place within liberation movements. Harlow provides a succinct account of recent social and political events in the various regions whose literature she takes up in Lebanon, South Africa, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Kenya, Egypt, and Nigeria. She discusses texts and culture itself as arenas of confrontation, frequently bound up with specific organized liberation movements but also with the collective struggles of people to seize control of their lives (Layoun, 1989) (<https://merip.org/1989/07/harlow-resistance-literature/>).

In "I Come from There", Darwish introduced his Palestine to the whole world and announced within this poem that his country has been stolen by others. He also mentioned that he is the exiled man who will never stop thinking about his country and about the way they have detached him from where he belongs. In detail, Darwish suffered from exile for long years, and he suffered from belonging to nowhere except Palestine. Darwish who died in exile could not forget his country; he was incapable of belonging to any other country than Palestine. For Darwish, Palestine is his mother, the place where his ancestors lived, where he was born and lived his early childhood.

"I come from There" is a poem that represents every Palestinian who suffers from, displacement, homesickness, and loss of identity. Darwish could not find himself new identity; therefore, he kept longing for his homeland. Being exiled and displaced make Darwish like any other refugee in a long search for a place where he can fit as a way to get rid of his sense of homelessness.

Importantly, Darwish who spent his whole life dreaming about his country has dreamed about the house that he lived in and wanted to make sure that every person knows about his house, to prove that this house belongs to him, although Israeli people sent him out of his country and his house. This house turned to be a holy place that Darwish will never allow himself to forget.

In "I come from There" Darwish says,  
 And a house with many windows,  
 I have brothers, friends

Darwish kept longing for his house that has many windows, this house is filled with sunshine, love, brothers, and friends, the warmth of this house stands in contrast with exile, with the coldness of his exile, as he says in "I Come from There":

And a prison cell with a cold window.

From his exile, Darwish kept telling the whole world that he owns this land, and no one can steal his memories from him, they may be capable of stealing his land and his property, but they are incapable of stealing his memories, he confirms

Mine is the moon at the far edge of the words,  
 And the bounty of birds,  
 And the immortal olive tree.

In other words, this holy olive tree proves his ownership of this land, as it is an immortal one and he thinks of himself as this olive tree. Darwish could not free himself from these memories. He imprisoned himself inside his homeland, this homeland belongs to him and he cannot accept his exile, he says

I learned all the words and broke them up  
 To make a single word: Homeland

Darwish forgot everything about the language except this holy word homeland; he doesn't care about the whole language if it doesn't mean one word, which is homeland. It is noted that the loss of homeland and the loss of his house caused Darwish to suffer from the loss of identity. Darwish could not find himself elsewhere, he kept insisting on having his homeland back again and all of his poetry was a kind of declaration that he owns Palestine and not anyone else, and because of this ownership he will never give up, and he will continue fighting for this right.

From the analysis of this poem, it can be said that protest literature helped Palestinian people let their voices be heard all over the world. Therefore, we can say that Darwish was a poet who spoke for his people during his life, and immortalized the Palestinian case in his poetry even after his death. Protest poetry could not free the people from their oppression, yet, it gave them space to talk about their sufferings in exile and to draw an image of their country to be known by all the people. In "I Come from There, Darwish concluded that non-violent resistance will never help Palestinians to gain their homeland back again.

## V. FINDINGS

In light of the literary previous analysis, the paper has revealed the psychological effect of diaspora and compulsory exile suffered by all the Palestinians kept suffering of. The displacement of Palestinians caused them to keep thinking about their homeland. It also encouraged all the poets, and Darwish is one of them to keep writing about their country to

prove their ownership of this land. Darwish employed his words and poems towards one target, which is to say that he belongs there, and he will never accept any negotiations about his right of being in Palestine.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In a few words, the current research paper concluded that this sense of nostalgia and homesickness did not let Darwish live peacefully. Also, Darwish was obsessed with his land, and he was afraid of losing his homeland. Besides, his poetry is considered as a record that will stay forever to tell whose land is this. Moreover, Darwish succeeded in his poetry to convey his message to the whole world about his historical ownership of the land of Palestine. Importantly, Darwish has proven to the whole world that words are sometimes mightier than swords since his poems have been read all over the world. More importantly, Darwish saved Palestine within his poems to make sure that these poems will stay, to tell the truth even after his death.

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# Beyond the Bubble: Unveiling the Multifaceted Landscape of Test Wiseness and Their Operationalization Among English-Language Majors

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**Abstract**—Test wiseness is viewed as learner tactics applied in a test situation without processing the test construct. Existing studies often on test-taking strategies attribute a single function to them, despite some acknowledging their multifunctionality. This study aims to provide a new reflection of test-taking strategies and test wiseness based on their multifunctionality and how they are operationalized. Forty male English-language majors at King Faisal University participated in a longitudinal study over two years. Think-aloud protocols and retrospective interviews were used for the qualitative analysis. The results showed that students used different test-taking strategies in chains and clusters, with various functions (cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social). The study also analyzed these strategies in terms of how they were operationalized. The study concludes that these strategies may work at cross-purposes with the goal if they are operationalized poorly, or if the choice of strategies is inappropriate for the task. In addition to theoretical and pedagogical implications for test-taking strategies, this study suggests recommendations for future studies.

**Index Terms**—test-wiseness, test-unwiseness, test-deviuousness, EFL learners' strategies

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language learning strategies (LLS) is still a constant field with consistent findings worldwide (Alyami, 2011). However, research on Test-taking strategies (TTS) has not produced new reflections that address the limitations of previous studies, such as the persistent use of the same research tools and uncovering the reality of those LLS (Cohen et al., 2023a). Cohen et al. (2023a) called for new reflections in LLS, which covered TTS as a subject within LLS. Most research on TTS has been questionnaire-based, and only looked at LLS on a macro level without investigating the complexities of using questionnaires to generate claims regarding LLS or TTS. The complexity of how learners look at LLS and TTS was never investigated, within the framework of whether they were validating what they report was their actual TTS or only their own beliefs about those strategies.

Previous studies classified TTS under categories and sub-categories (i.e., test management strategies, strategies for reaching an answer) (Cohen, 2011), signaling that a single strategy has only one function. While this prevailing notion persisted in the literature for several decades, it has become apparent that a strategy can have more than one function (Cohen et al., 2023a). Thus, this study seeks to contribute novel insights by delving into the self-reports of Test-Taking Strategies (TTS) among Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Specifically, it aims to explore how these learners employ diverse multifunctional TTS, often operating in interconnected chains and clusters (Al Fraidan, 2019), and their potential influence on test scores. Notably, this research marks the first attempt, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, to analyze the strategic operationalization of multifunctional TTS, distinguishing between wise and unwise application in the pursuit of reaching answers (Al Fraidan, 2014; Al Fraidan & AlSalman, 2023).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Definition of TTS*

TTS is defined as a cognitive process that facilitates or solves a test item/task (Al Fraidan, 2014). However, several TTS are neutral, and not inherently facilitating or debilitating. These positive or negative outcomes depend on how they are operationalized.

According to Cohen (1994, p. 119), TTS involves strategies that learners implement while answering test tasks, "viewed simply as learner strategies applied to the area of assessment." Allan and MacLennan (1997) present the term "test-taking strategy" as the capability to mark and explore the weaknesses in the objectives of the language test items, to attain keyed answers. This does not use either the knowledge or abilities of the things mentioned that were to be measured in in the test. TTS allows test-takers to utilize the design and features of a test to escalate their scores in test-taking conditions. For instance, they can comprise on reading the test's guidelines, distribute the time on each section

wisely, employ some of the keywords in the questions, postpone tackling challenging items, and revise the entire task to ensure the correctness of the answers (Rogers & Harley, 1999). This process is referred to as the test-wise strategy.

#### *TTS and construct validity*

TTS has been viewed as either construct-related or construct-unrelated strategies (Al Fraidan, 2014). As Cohen et al. (2023b) stated, TTS is either a language-use strategy or test deviousness (a newly introduced term for test wiseness). The first is when test takers use rehearsal, retrieval, coverage, and communication strategies. This implies that the individual performed actions related to its construct during the test task. The latter occurs when a test-taker does not refer to his/her essential knowledge in the process of taking a test, but rather avoids performing the construct to reach an answer (Cohen et al., 2023b). The term test deviousness is introduced later to clarify the ambiguity of the term test-wiseness, and suggests positive results and student cleverness. However, the word “avoid” in the later definition is not accurate. While it is true that students avoid showing their true knowledge in some cases, in others, test takers do not usually intentionally do so. Therefore, this definition could be considered inaccurate and misleading. In one case, a test taker chooses the correct answer and then changes it into an incorrect answer because they were conflicted between the two answers. Therefore, they are neither hiding their true knowledge of the tested construct nor avoiding showing it. This study proposes a new definition of TTS that includes test (un)wiseness.

Test-unwise strategies occur when students apply construct relevant strategies (Al Fraidan, 2011, 2014). This mostly occurs during language tests, when students have the knowledge and ability to answer the questions correctly. However, in the final stage of the answering process, students attempt to incorrectly change some correct answers (Al Fraidan, 2014; Al Fraidan, 2019; Al Fraidan & AlSalman, 2023). Thus, test-unwise strategies have a crucial role as real barriers to language test validity (Yang et al., 2019; Kivity & Huppert, 2016).

In summary, a comprehensive understanding of both test wiseness and test unwiseness contributes to refining TTS definition and coaching by highlighting effective approaches and addressing potential pitfalls, ultimately fostering improved test performance and outcomes.

#### *Classifications of TTS*

Previous studies have relied on the known classifications of TTS: (a) test management strategies, (b) test learner strategies, and (c) test-wiseness strategies (Cohen & Upton, 2006; Cohen, 2011). This classification has been prevalent for a long time, with few modifications, like introducing test unwiseness as a fourth category (Al Fraidan, 2014). However, it is not exclusive or illustrative of the reality behind TTS.

One persistent problem with this classification is the overlap of three or four categories. For example, using semantic knowledge to exclude distractors in a multiple-choice vocabulary test can be seen as a TTS for saving time (test management) and a wise strategy to reach an answer.

One prevailing categorization of TTS is given by Phakiti (2003), who introduced two main categories—cognitive and metacognitive strategies—to explain the discrepancy in the performance of 348 EFL Thai learners. With Cognitive strategies include deductive reasoning and summarizing to comprehend the intended language (Oxford, 1990). Meanwhile, metacognitive strategies play a role in monitoring cognitive strategies (Flavell, 1981). This means revising, testing, and examining any steps that need to be solved, assessing the strategies used by the learner themselves, preparing for further movements, and observing the use of actions (Baker & Brown, 1984). Limiting TTS to only two main categories is inaccurate as this would neglect other strategies, such as affective (e.g., overcoming test anxiety) and social strategies (e.g., asking for help from the teacher). Although this work holds significance in the realm of TTS, the existing classification proves inadequate, failing to fully encapsulate the reality and nuances of TTS usage.

Other studies worldwide have classified strategies according to skill (AlSafi, 2019; Rupp & Ferne, 2006). This kind of categorization has been ongoing for decades, and has been used by different researchers (see Addamegh, 2006; Alyami, 2011; Khan & Rasheed, 2019; Killi & Leu, 2019). The majority of previous TTS studies have predominantly employed questionnaires for classifying TTS into various categories and themes. However, a limited number of studies utilized think-aloud protocols, proving instrumental in capturing a deeper understanding of how TTS relate to construct and score validity through previously unexplored areas like multifunctionality, clustering, wiseness of operationalization, which this study is trying to substantiate.

Learners' utilization of TTS varies according to the numerous elements by which the nature of the given task needs to be fulfilled. Hence, it is essential to understand the mandatory test-taking strategies for EFL students in various types of tests such as speaking, reading, listening, and writing (AlSafi, 2019).

Building upon the aforementioned definitions and classifications of TTS, it becomes apparent that weaknesses exist, particularly in the predominantly questionnaire-based approaches. Conversely, verbal-protocol studies, though valuable, have their own limitations, often neglecting significant aspects of TTS, such as multifunctionality. Thus, a more nuanced and comprehensive approach is needed to address these gaps and offer a thorough understanding of the multifaceted nature of TTS.

#### *TTS and the PPP model*

One approach used to conceptualize TTS is the presentation, process, and production (PPP) model (Figure 1) (Al Fraidan, 2011). Teachers attempt to present the test task as providing students with a chance to practice what has been learned through controlled activities, while the learners apply what has been taught (process) to come up with answers to complete the task (product) (Flippo et al., 2018). However, this model is one method in which the second and last

steps are affected by the first step (presentation). Al Fraidan (2012) mentioned that there might be a two-way interaction between the product and process stages. At the product stage, learners may retrospectively modify, confirm, or change the product because of the different processes that occur before a final answer has been chosen. Thus, the answers chosen by the students involves operations such as crosschecking, changing, and reviewing solutions that do not fit, the learner's perspective. Therefore, through such a process, the dual-way interaction explains the unwise operationalization of strategies, as seen in vocabulary tests with multiple-choice questions, where students change the correct answer for the wrong ones (Al Fraidan & AlSalman, 2023).

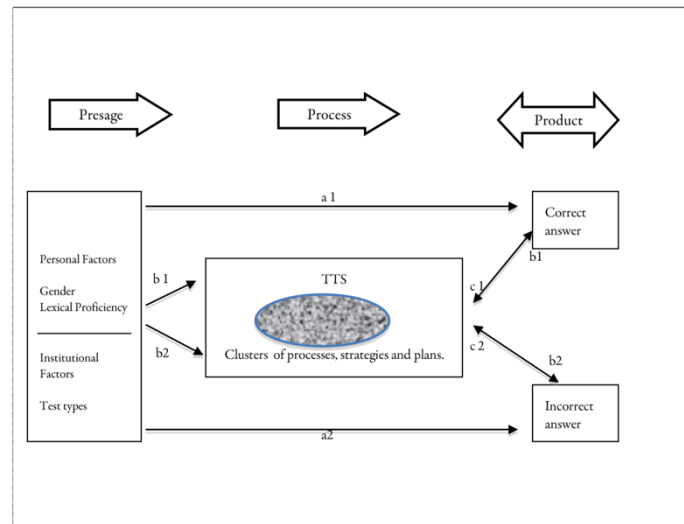


Figure 1. Al Fraidan's (2011) PPP Model

The PPP model serves as an indicator illuminating how TTS cluster and exhibit multifunctionality. The interplay among its three stages offers insights into the ways TTS are operationalized, either wisely or unwisely.

#### *Current insights on TTS*

There has been linear progression in the field of LLS in general, and TTS in particular, for several decades. TTS has been examined from similar perspectives for several decades. Nourdad and Ajideh (2019) noted that they are accurate tools for test-takers to obtain better test results by using cognitive and metacognitive strategies, where a constructive bond is strongly tied between test performance and TTS. Others see these strategies as learning or learner strategies, which are only used in test situations (Cohen, 2013; Al Fraidan, 2019). They have also been classified in different ways according to their nature (cognitive, metacognitive), skill (reading, writing, vocabulary strategies), task (TTS), or strategy (strategies for handling the gap in a gap-filling test). Even very recent studies (Han, 2023) focus on previous arguments about how the test task and student level affect TTS usage.

High-level students experienced metacognitive success, whereas low-level students experienced cognitive failure. However, highly successful test-takers are prone to using the metacognitive strategies compared to moderately successful students, who, in turn, implement the set-aside strategy compared to the unsuccessful test-takers. The PPP model shows how students can revise their answers through two-way engagement. Hence, it is essential to encourage students to use the right procedures when taking the test.

The focus should now be on the details of other characteristics of TTS that were established in earlier studies. Some of these characteristics are strategy clustering, being multifunctional, and its wise or unwise operation, which the current study attempts to explain thoroughly.

### III. METHODOLOGY

Many strategy elicitation studies have mainly relied on questionnaires, which are only one of the nine methodologies implemented when evaluating learning strategies (Oxford, 2010). This method includes real task verbal reports, individual interviews, observation, narratives such as students' diaries, color coding, discussion, group interviews, discourse analysis, and students' portfolios. Most studies have used questionnaires based on Schmitt (1997) and Oxford's (1990) taxonomies. Think-aloud protocols with careful, valid, and reliable coding and analysis are rarely used in TTS studies, because they are difficult to implement.

Think-aloud verbal reports are a vital method for investigating TTS. Many researchers have asserted that think-aloud is the best option so far to reach the most accurate results regarding the usage of TTS. From my own perspective, the need for additional examination of TTS through think-aloud protocols remains because they are not widely used in TTS literature.

#### *Participants*

The researcher aimed to collect as much data as possible to conduct a valid analysis of the claimed characteristics of TTS. 40 EFL Saudi students majoring in English Language from the Department of English Language at the College of Arts, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia were randomly selected through a computer randomizer. They were enrolled in a four-year bachelor's degree in English Language. Each year, students study a pool of core and optional courses in English language, Linguistics, Translation and Literature, over two semesters. The chosen participants were uniformly aged between 18 and 21 years, sharing similar English language backgrounds. Their academic levels were ascertained based on comprehensive evaluations, including tests, quizzes, and class participation, conducted throughout the two-year period. It is important to highlight that the role of language proficiency in relation to Test-Taking Strategies (TTS) remains a subject of ongoing debate. The inclusion of female students was impractical for several reasons, such as cultural constraints, the nature of the TA protocols (which necessitate the full presence of the researcher), and challenges related to access. Furthermore, previous research in the Saudi context has shown that gender was not a significant factor in relation to TTS (Al Fraidan, 2011).

#### *Data collection and procedures*

Data collection lasted for two years, beginning in their second year and ended in the last semester before graduation. In the first year, the data collection took place through think-aloud protocols and semi-structured interviews, while taking different teacher-made achievement tests in the "Study Skills" course in the first semester and in the "Building Vocabulary" course in the second semester. In the second year, courses included Reading Comprehension" and "Critical Reading. The researcher opted to focus on courses he personally taught to facilitate and streamline the data collection process. All tests gauged their vocabulary knowledge from the list of words in each course using multiple-choice gap-filling test formats. The selection of multiple-choice format is attributed to its widespread usage in Saudi Arabia (Addamegh, 2011; Al Fraidan, 2010). Furthermore, the distinctive characteristics of this format often prompt various TTS.

The longitudinal method was employed for several reasons. Firstly, it was chosen for a more profound and careful analysis of TTS. Secondly, the researcher aimed to identify valid instances of TTS used by the participants to ensure a reliable analysis, eliminating the capture of a single occurrence of TTS, and providing a more realistic picture of the strategic competence of the participants. Thirdly, the method was utilized to explore the evolution and development of TTS over time. However, it's important to note that this study did not focus on investigating the evolution and development of TTS, leaving it as a potential future line of inquiry.

The students were trained in performing think-aloud through various non-linguistic tasks, such as solving mathematical problems. Subsequently, individual verbalization sessions were conducted with each participant, followed by semi-structured interviews. The interviews primarily centered on obtaining further explanations regarding the use of TTS and the underlying reasons behind the selection of specific strategies or answers.

Transcriptions, translations, and transliterations of verbal protocols took place one month after each test. A total of eight tests were conducted. The analysis and coding of the TTS took two consecutive months and included validity and reliability checks by four faculty members from different universities, who were either independent associate or full professor. Each faculty member was provided with the same protocol to code TTS, ensuring consistency and robustness of the analysis. Owing to discrepancies in coding for certain TTS, a decision was made to exclude a particular TTS from the analysis if there was disagreement among three coders. The researcher opted for a longitudinal approach to authentically capture the utilization of TTS. This choice aimed to go beyond students merely expressing their strategy preferences and to ensure an accurate assessment of the actual frequency of TTS usage over time.

The focus of the analysis was on identifying multiple instances to demonstrate that TTS can serve multiple functions, manifesting in clusters and being operationalized both wisely and unwisely. Each TTS was assigned two codes, indicating its function and the wiseness of its operationalization. Subsequently, TTS clusters were determined based on the number of instances used to guess or achieve an answer.

## IV. RESULTS

The main focus of this research was to provide more insights into the three neglected characteristics of LLS in general and TTS in particular. These are strategy clustering, multifunctionality of strategies, and operationalization.

#### *Strategies clustering*

It was already found that a single strategy cannot be used alone to complete a language task (Graham, 1997; Neubach & Cohen, 1988; Laviosa, 2000; Macaro, 2001, 2003, 2006; Addamegh, 2003; Phakiti, 2006; Al Fraidan, 2019; Cohen et al., 2023a). This study aimed to further investigate the nature of the resultant clustering of TTS. For instance, when a student begins tackling a test item by re-reading the question, repeating key words, inferring the meaning of the gapped word, testing a potential candidate word, inserting the candidate word in the gap, reviewing the entire sentence with the candidate word to assess its fit, and reaffirming the entire sentence or candidate word for confirmation. The researcher identified 92 different strategy types from eight test occasions. They were classified into three main categories: TTS before attempting the task/question, TTS while tackling the task/question, and TTS after completing the task/question. Due to space constraints in this article, the researcher highlights the top four most frequently used TTS in each of the three main categories. This selection, totaling 12 TTS, serves as illustrative examples to elucidate the arguments

presented here (Table 1). The frequency of TTS was calculated according to the token/type ratio and its appearance on more than two test occasions.

TABLE 1  
THE THREE MAIN CATEGORIES OF TTS WITH EXAMPLES OF THE TOP FOUR MOST FREQUENTLY USED ONES

<b>A. TTS before attempting the task/question</b>	
1.	Reciting religious phrases to minimize anxiety.
2.	Getting acquainted with the nature of the task (test formats, number of questions, allocated time and scores)
3.	Deciding the order of attempting questions (by easiness or difficulty)
4.	Asking for more clarifications about test instructions/task conditions
<b>B. TTS while tackling the task/question</b>	
1.	Inferencing the meaning of the gapped word
2.	Inferencing the part of speech of the gapped word
3.	Eliminating possible distractors
4.	Translating the question from L2 into L1
<b>C. TTS after completing the task/question</b>	
1.	Revising the answer by checking other possible distractors
2.	Confirming all answers or suspected answers after finishing the whole test
3.	Changing a confirmed answer for different reasons (hesitation, bias on the test)
4.	Paraphrasing/ translating the full sentence with the selected answer

Table 2 shows descriptive analysis of the three main categories. It signals that category B is the main pool of the strategies, which was expected as this is where students try to struggle with finding an answer, facilitating a problem or compensating a deficit in their lexical knowledge.

TABLE 2  
DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE THREE MAIN CATEGORIES

TTS category	Me an	Std. Deviation
TTS A	2.1 875	2.22767
TTS B	6.2 500	3.49285
TTS C	.25 00	.57735
N= 20		

The data passed the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality; and the suitability of using the ANOVA test showed a significantly strong interaction between the three categories ( $F=25,000$ ,  $p=.000$ ). It illustrates how each category serves distinct functions in accomplishing a test task. Furthermore, the correlation analysis among the three categories was highly positive (Table 3). This can be considered as the main cluster required to complete any test task. The distribution of strategies under these three categories is not exclusive, as some strategies fall into more than one category (translating the questions from L2 to L1 can be in B or C). This is confirming the multifunctionality of the strategies, which will be discussed later.

TABLE 3  
CORRELATIONS AMONG THE THREE CATEGORIES

Category Pair	Correlation	
TTS A/ TTS B	Pearson correlation	<b>.808**</b>
	Sig. (2 tailed)	<b>&lt;.001</b>
TTS B/ TTS C	Pearson correlation	<b>.895**</b>
	Sig. (2 tailed)	<b>&lt;.001</b>
TTS A/ TTS B	Pearson correlation	<b>.814**</b>
	Sig. (2 tailed)	<b>&lt;.001</b>

The researcher examined the detail of TTS to identify frequent clustering among them. This deep analysis revealed different frequent clustering patterns among main categories. For example,

**Cluster 1:** A1, B1, C2

**Cluster 2:** A2, B3, C1

**Cluster 3:** A3, B4, C3

These examples only show clusters in three strategies. The remaining clusters contained 21 strategies. The analysis revealed several such clustering strategies, which could be further investigated to check different aspects such as interactivity between strategies within each category and cluster, and the efficiency or impact of each cluster on the answers. However, the researcher thought the patterns of clustering itself would shed more light on how some of the strategies clustered to complete a task. For example, one student used twelve strategies to answer a test item.

*The general manager decided to give a ..... to his secretary.*

- *professional*

- *promotion*
- *productivity*
- *prosperity*

The student attempted the question using 12 strategies in this order: rereading the stem more than once, rereading the distractors several times, attempting each distractor in the gap, eliminating possible distractors, questioning the possibility of more than one distractor, inferencing the meaning of the gap, eliminating distractors based on semantic knowledge, inferencing the part of speech of the gap, checking how the selected answer feels in the sentence, translating the full sentence from L2 into L1, changing the previously selected answer “promotion” to the new “prosperity,” confirming the answer, and then moving to another question. This example illustrates the logical clustering of strategies utilizing different types of knowledge (semantic and syntactic). It was one of the most frequently used clusters among participants. Other strategy clustering showed the illogical progression of strategies, such as identifying the meaning of a gapped word and then choosing an answer based on its weirdness. An example of a think-aloud protocol is as follows: “mmm.. This sentence needs a word that means a bonus.. mmmm this word “prosperity” looks so weird let me put it”.

This can be further explored to gain insight into illogical clustering and the underlying reasons behind it. This observation aligns with the earlier discussion of the three stages of the PPP model, emphasizing how diverse interactions of strategies within these stages contribute to distinct strategy clusters. The study highlights dual interactions, which, at times, result in the selection of the correct answer and, conversely, may lead to changing the initially correct choice to an incorrect one.

#### *Multifunctionality of strategies*

While it has long been established that TTS can be categorized based on their functions (cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective), a central assertion of this study is that these strategies are inherently multi-functional and multipurpose. Consequently, classifying them into a single functional category is deemed illogical. Cohen et al. (2023a) propose the structure shown in Figure 2 to prove that strategy functions fluctuate. One strategy for determining the meaning of a word in a context can have four functions.

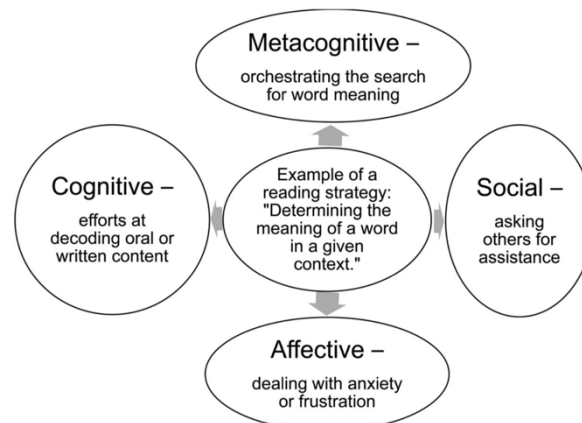


Figure 2. Fluctuation in the Functions of Any Given Strategy in the Performance of a Given Task (Cohen et al., 2023a)

This argument was proven in this study. However, this study adds a new characteristic which is multifunctionality. Each of these four functions can be used to serve different purposes. This study categorizes three main purposes (facilitating, compensatory, and problem solving). A strategy is facilitative when a student wants to overcome the difficulties faced while attempting a test item, such as rereading the test item or stem. The compensatory aspect of strategies occurs when a student possesses partial knowledge of the tested item, such as using different retrieval strategies for knowing the meaning of a gapped word, but not recognizing its form. A strategy is considered problem-solving when the student finds that the test item is very difficult for different reasons, such as skipping for not fully knowing the test item or facing problems with understating the test item/instructions. An illustration of this phenomenon occurs when a student repeats a key word in a test item. This repetition can serve as a facilitative approach to reaching an answer without encountering difficulties or struggling with the test item. Alternatively, it may be viewed as a method to compensate for a partially forgotten aspect of the gapped word, addressing a deficit in lexical knowledge. Moreover, this repetition can be seen as a strategy to solve the problem of the overall comprehension of the test item.

In previous studies, such as Addamegh (2006), Alyami (2011), Khan and Rasheed (2019), Killi and Leu (2019), Phakiti (2003), classifications of TTS were organized into reasonable and logical categories. However, these studies often overlooked the possibility that a strategy could serve multiple functions and roles. The current study challenges this notion, revealing that strategies indeed assume different roles and various functions within distinct clusters. Future



analyses exploring the correlation and interaction between these clusters and their intended purposes will enhance our comprehension of the dynamic nature of TTS.

#### *TTS operationalization*

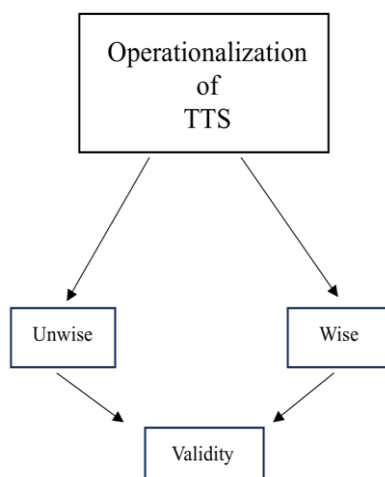


Figure 3. Operationalization of TTS

TTS were used in test situations with different degrees of wiseness by students. For example, in one test question, they may start by using test-wiseness strategies such as blind guessing but then finish with construct-relevant strategies, showing their true knowledge of the tested construct. In most cases, there is a mixture of wise and unwise operationalization. That is, a student can wisely operationalize a strategy or cluster of strategies to find the correct answer, or vice versa, sometimes changing the correct answer to an incorrect one. Figure 3 shows the important issue of how the operationalization of TTS can affect test validity. This study found that there are multiple instances of wise TTS that secures correct answers without processing the construct or possessing the required knowledge, which negatively affects the validity of the test scores. This occurred through wild guessing and the utilization of bias in the test. The unwise operationalization of the TTS can also affect test validity, when students change their answers from correct to wrong. It was found that 21% of test items had their answers changed from correct to wrong answers, among all the tests. This change was considered only when the student wrote an answer on the test paper, and then visibly crossed it off to write another answer. This behavior was found more frequently among high-level students (six students and three low-level students).

Students tended to experience fluctuating correct answers with incorrect answers, despite knowing the correct answers. This confusion occurs when students cannot distinguish between the alternatives.

The think-aloud protocols analysis revealed that verbalizing terms incorrectly caused students to alter their correct answers to incorrect ones. To illustrate, the word "sack," was verbalized "sick" leading students to choose the wrong answer or alter a correct one into wrong. Consequently, students' scores do not reflect their knowledge of the intended word. This would be considered deceptive if it is applied in high-level tasks that have life-altering consequences, such as placement and admission entry tests (Yang et al., 2019).

One reason for test-unwise strategies are test flaws such as repeating the same word, which might provide a hint to students or applying a surface match between the tested word and the choices. Another reason is that students roughly guess unknown answers without processing any relevant test constructs or meanings of the questions, for various hidden reasons, including their laziness. According to Al Fraidan and Al-Khalaf (2012), students sometimes do not want to spend time thinking of test items, as they lack the required knowledge to provide correct answers due to test anxiety or not having studied well for the tests.

A third reason is that participants did not read the instructions carefully. In this case, while attempting the tests, students tend to rush to use their previous experience or memory of standard tests instead of focusing on the actual test (Sagar, 2019). For example, when students answer a cloze test by inserting words from the text itself, they think that the right way to solve a cloze test is to find words from the text itself. In addition, the lack of clarity in test instructions can also result in poor behavior. Consuming more time with challenging items while simply skipping them and answering the easiest ones is another source of unwise strategies (Widyantoro, 2019).

The above findings can contribute valuable insights to test design. Instructors must recognize the significance of providing clear test instructions and ensure the accuracy of test items (Al Fraidan & Al-Khalaf, 2012). It is imperative for teachers to prioritize the meticulous crafting of tests, avoiding any potential confusion resulting from flaws in the test, as these can adversely impact the validity of the scores.

## V. DISCUSSION

Very often, an individual strategy, or a pair or cluster of strategies is the primary cause of success or failure for a given assessment item or task (Cohen et al., 2023b). Learners may sometimes obtain unfortunate results owing to a lack of awareness of how to effectively utilize TTS. The implementation of TTS is affected by different factors, such as students' background knowledge, proficiency, test design, and strategic competence. Some of these factors may lead to negative results such as invalidity of the results and test anxiety.

TTS is examined in a manner that enables students to avoid the development of interventions by boosting positive skills aimed at improving their academic performance (Sagar, 2019). In most cases, the test is expected to assess students' knowledge of different disciplines. However, with other factors coming into play, this could negatively or positively affect students' performance. The latter affects learner performance by rendering test scores ineffective (Kivity & Huppert, 2016). In addition, test-taking strategies become capable of increasing test score validity from a general perspective, thus enabling students to accurately reflect on what has been learned in the classroom and what they can comprehend (Flippo et al., 2018).

This study offers a comprehensive examination of TTS from various perspectives, leading to the introduction of a novel definition. The development of this new definition stems from critiques of previous definitions and classifications, which were deemed insufficient in capturing crucial functions and roles. While it is acknowledged that strategies cluster together to reach an answer, the focal point lies in understanding how these strategies are operationalized—whether wisely or unwisely. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of scrutinizing the functioning of TTS during a test and identifying the specific roles they assume, whether facilitative, compensatory, or problem-solving. Furthermore, it is essential to highlight that test-taking techniques do not have a limit to their implementation, as they fit within any content and institutional level. By engaging both students and instructors in understanding the complexities of how TTS is orchestrated and operationalized, it is easier for both groups to reach valid evaluations (Yang et al., 2019).

As a result, different research and academic methodologies should be implemented to enhance students' confidence, avoiding scenarios where they delete their correct answers before submitting the test. It is essential to note that poor performance in EFL tests is mostly attributed to poor management of time, carelessness, and confusion caused by unknown strategies and item formats. Therefore, as test scores are affected by test-wiseness, it is important for individuals involved in their administration, development, and interpretation to critically consider the construct of test-wiseness and how it affects students' scores (Kornejady et al., 2019).

## VI. CONCLUSION

One important contribution of this study is how it enhances the definition of TTS by adding three important characteristics: clustering, multifunctionality, and the degree of wise operationalization. The study further introduces the concept that TTS can assume three distinct roles in aiding the selection of an answer—namely, facilitative, compensatory, or problem-solving roles. Notably, these three characteristics have recently been identified as actual test behaviors. Despite their significance, researchers have not dedicated adequate attention to exploring these roles comprehensively.

This direction should be taken for further analysis, with different contexts, types of learners, and test formats. This longitudinal study was limited to one context: learner type, language skill (reading), and language component (vocabulary). Future studies can expand the scope of these factors, to produce more multifaceted analyses.

There is a need for an additional examination of how TTS is operationalized, since students perform different TTS clusters and with different degrees of wiseness of operationalization. In addition, another direction that was found in this study but could not be completely confirmed is that the relationship between various TTS clusters, as one cluster can lead to another cluster. In addition, the interactivity between the three characteristics and how all of these can affect test validity can also be explored further.

The think-aloud approach is a time-consuming tool with lots of efforts to be made in order to reach findings including transcriptions, translations, transliterations, and coding. It is highly recommended to start to improve this tool with Artificial Intelligence technology to help reduce time and efforts.

Lastly, Educators need to investigate test-unwise strategies in particular and offer more insights into why and how they occur. They are also required to provide practical illustrations to students to help them understand how they score lesser if they operationalize these TTS with different degrees of wiseness. The variance between test-unwise and test-wise students could be due to differences in cognitive monitoring.

Test-taking strategies coaching plays a pivotal role in empowering individuals to navigate assessments effectively. The ability to employ TTS during testing situations can significantly impact validity and reliability. Such coaching not only familiarizes individuals with various types of test formats but also imparts valuable insights into time management, question interpretation, and stress reduction. It equips learners with a toolkit of techniques, ranging from effective problem-solving methods to efficient resource allocation, fostering confidence and resilience in the face of challenging exams. Students need to understand that TTS work at cross-purposes helping them to be aware of how to operationalize the test wisely. Moreover, test-taking strategies coaching instills a deeper understanding of one's cognitive processes, promoting metacognition and enhancing overall learning outcomes. As assessments increasingly become gatekeepers for educational and professional opportunities, the importance of imparting effective test-taking strategies becomes instrumental in shaping individuals into adept and successful test-takers.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge all the people who facilitated this project including administrators, faculty members, family members and the research participants for their cooperation in this project. Special thanks to my lovely wife, AlAnoud Alwasmi for facilitating producing this research.

## FUNDING

This work was funded and supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research, Vice Presidency for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia [Grant No. 5,879].

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# Post-Editing a Google Translated Output: Experienced Translators vs. Trainees

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**Abstract**—The present empirical study reports on an experiment in which 20 participants (actual job applicants) were asked to post-edit a 394-word legal Google translated text (GTT) to investigate the type of post edits done in relation to the quality of the product as assessed by the recruitment test assessors in the translation service provider. For the purposes of the empirical research, participants were categorized in two groups; translators with practical experience between 3-5 years and trainees (recent translation graduates) with no practical experience. Assessors at the translation service provider used LISA QA model 3.1 version for quality assessment. The three factors investigated by assessors were time spent on the task, number and type of changes (post-edits) as well as the quality of the final post-edited text based on errors committed in the post-editing (PE). Results reveal a correlation between the type and number of edits done by participants and the quality of the final output and consequently a correlation between practical experience and the quality of the post-edited output. The research unveils some areas that need to be improved in the study plans at the translator training programs in Jordan, particularly in relation to PE efficiency. Results also imply that general experience in translation may not be enough to excel in post-editing specialized texts that require special knowledge in a given subject matter.

**Index Terms**—Google translate, LISA QA model, machine translation, PE, translation memory

## I. INTRODUCTION

Translation quality assessment for pedagogical purposes has been gaining momentum in recent decades (e.g. Brunette, 2000; PACTE, 2003; Colina 2008). With the development of translation technologies, software applications and programs such as *Translog* and *LISA QA* model started to be used in the assessment process as well as aid tools in translation empirical studies (e.g. Jakobsen, 2002; Temizöz, 2014). While some programs are used for translation assessment, others are used by practitioners as computer-assisted translation tools (e.g. *TRADOS* and *Omega T*, *Google Translate*, *DeepL*, *Reverso*). This development of translation technologies has changed the translation industry dramatically (e.g. Pym, 2006; Doherty, 2016). It led to creation of new jobs in the translation job market such as post-editors, revisers, terminologists, DTP specialists (e.g. Hartley, 2009; Carmo & Moorkens, 2020).

The first employment of technology in translation started more than 50 years ago with the use of computers in typing instead of scripting the target texts, followed subsequently by the emergence of digital dictionaries, terminology database, online dictionaries, web-based platforms in addition to translation memories and localization software (Alcina, 2009). As a result, manual translation solely -which is time-consuming- has become less-favored in the industry.

According to Hartley (2009) translation projects in the industry are no more practiced by individuals. It requires a teamwork comprising of translators, revisers, post-editors, subject matter experts, terminologists and DTP specialists. In response to the market needs, integrating translation technologies along with PE skills in translator training became a must (e.g. Optimale, 2013; PACTE, 2017; Pym, 2006; Fiederer & O'Brien, 2002).

O'Brien (2002) pointed out that in the beginning of the millennium, there were few translator training programs that teach PE as separate courses despite the growing need for these skills in the translation market. In the course of time,

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PE courses started to be integrated in translator training worldwide (Almaaytah, 2022). In the Jordanian context, recent research still reveals that computer-assisted translation in general and PE in particular are only integrated in few study plans (Khoury, 2021; Khoury, 2022). There have been several empirical studies investigating PE skills in terms of turnaround time and final quality of the post-edited output (e.g. Temizöz, 2014). However, to the best of the author's knowledge there have been no studies which compared between PE skills of experienced translators and trainees.

## II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the present study lies in being the first study to look into PE in the Jordanian context and the first to compare PE performance between experienced translators and trainees. The findings of the present study tend to answer the following research question:

'How trainees differ from experienced translators in the way they post-edit a google translated text (GTT) in terms of type and number of post-edits made, type and number of errors committed and the overall quality of the final post-edited output.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been different types of studies on translation memory (TM) tools and machine translation (MT) in terms of the quality of the output. Several empirical studies have been conducted on the suitability of TM especially for technical texts due to the peculiarity of specialized texts in terms of structure and jargon. A study by Christensen (2003) investigated the usefulness of TM for translating a specialized legal translation revealing that while it saves time by allowing access to corresponding source and target segments translated previously, it was found to fall short of dealing with translational problems of legal discourse. The study suggested pre-editing the source text before using the matching correspondents. Translation of specialized texts, especially authoritative ones, has its complexities in human translation. This gets more complicated when performed on translation memories (TM) or machine translation (MT) as it needs high linguistic and domain competence (e.g. Camelia, 2014) not only as a factual matter but from the perspective of translators (Alshaikh, 2022).

Apart from studies which investigated the appropriateness of translation memories and machine translation, there were studies on how machine translated texts are post-edited (e.g. O'Brien, 2006; Temizöz, 2014). By employing direct observation and Translog eye-tracking, the study revealed that more cognitive efforts are exerted when no matches are found and eye dilation change when the translation process is accelerated.

From a different angle, Krings (2001) intended to investigate the processing speed of PE showing that processing pace is higher when the target text is post-edited with no reference to the source text; i.e. when it is performed as pure editing of a given text. Bowker and Ehgoetz (2007) worked on an empirical study on evaluation of GT texts pointing that google translated texts – if left unedited- do not meet the standards of acceptability, accuracy and readability. The study conducted by Sumiati et al. (2022) showed that accuracy of google translated texts cannot exceed 80 % in procedural and technical texts.

A research paper by Almaaytah (2022) investigated the skills required for efficient PE and how to develop a university course in PE which is becoming a crucial component in translator training programs. Stasimioti and Sosoni (2022) compared in their study between the efforts exerted in translating manually and those exerted in PE. It revealed that PE needs less effort than manual translation and showed that experience contributes positively to the efficiency of the process. The research conducted by Dede and Antonova-Ünlü (2022) investigated the impact of having a formal training course of PE on the performance of post-editors. The findings showed that those who have been enrolled in PE courses were significantly more aware of the typical errors of machine translation than those who never had any formal training in PE. One of the studies tended to compare between two groups in PE a GTT in the domain of engineering. The two groups were engineers and professional translators where the former group showed more understanding of the subject-matter jargon and performed better at 33more than one level (Temizöz, 2014).

There have also been several empirical and theoretical studies on integrating and designing PE courses in translator training programs. There has been intensive work on the importance of learning PE skills to respond to the growing demand of translation market (e.g. O'Brien, 2002). Her study revealed that until the beginning of the millennium, there were few -if any- full PE courses in most translator training programs in Europe. O'Brien (ibid) suggests that PE needs to be taught in a separate module since it develops skills different from those developed in translation courses. Furthermore, PE courses need to be preceded by several courses as pre-requisites to guarantee proper development of PE skills. Those include but are not excluded to competence in specialized translation and machine translation (Wagner, 1987), technical instrumental competence in searching for information, use of sources and machine translation (PACTE, 2011; Gaspari et al., 2015) as well as domain text linguistics (Vasconcellos, 1986b). Kenny and Doherty (2014) showed that PE was incorporated in several courses, most of which were within the context of translation technology courses but not offered as full PE courses. According to O'Brien (2002), PE requires special skills which may be different from those required in translating. Therefore, PE needs to be developed in a separate module to develop different skills from those developed in translation courses.

The present study tends to research PE from a different angle which was overlooked in previous studies. It investigates the difference in PE performance between inexperienced graduates (named trainees throughout the research paper) and experienced translators. The aim is to investigate how practical experience can contribute to the type and number of post-edits, errors made, time spent on the task and the overall quality of the post-edited output. Results of the research are to provide indications on PE integration and efficiency in translator training programs.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

The present empirical study was conducted by employing a mixed quantitative-qualitative approach (an experiment that is evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively). The experiment comprised of post-editing an English Google translated legal text from Arabic. The purpose of the experiment was to investigate two main performance factors; speed of the process and overall quality of the post-edited text. For the experiment to have pedagogical implication, participants were grouped into experienced translators and trainees. It was carried out in a service provider recruitment test for an actual job vacancy. Assessors at the selected translation service provider monitored the experimental test, observed the time taken and subsequently carried out the assessment using LISA QA model 3.1. The assessment was based on error counting at the levels of accuracy, language, terminology, consistency and mistranslation in addition to investigating the type of changes made, which LISA QA cannot track.

##### A. Participants and Variables

In response to a translation job vacancy advertisement at a service provider in Jordan, forty-seven applications were received. For the purpose of the research, applicants selected for the recruitment test were categorized in two main groups; recent graduates of translation (trainees) with no practical experience and translators with general translation experience of 3 to 5 years. Applicants who did not meet either criterion were excluded. All participants were native speakers of Arabic whose first foreign language was English. The number of selected participants was twenty; ten trainees and ten experienced translators. The experiment was meant to be conducted in the same manner recruitment tests are.

As per the service provider, job applicants are normally asked to insert a given text to the web-based platform, Google translate it, conducting whatever post-edits it may need while time is being observed. The output text is then assessed by the in-house assessors. For objective judgement, assessors normally use LISA QA model 3.1. Best post-edited outputs are then short-listed for further evaluation such as face-to-face interviews. Gender and age were not found to be part of the selection criteria at the selected translation service provider. Thus, for the experiment to be authentic, it was conducted in the very same manner recruitment tests are without considerations of gender or age. The independent variable in the experiment was practical experience while the dependent variables were speed of PE and quality of the post-edited output.

##### B. Data Collection and Assessment Tools

A 394-word Arabic legal text (Appendix A) was typed and saved on 20 desktops to be inserted by applicants into Google Translate and post-edited afterwards. The choice of a legal text was made by the translation service provider which was an authentic text commissioned by an actual customer. It is worth mentioning that some previous studies conducted in Jordan found out that legal texts are demanded the most for translation in the Jordanian translation market (Yousef, 2004; Khoury, 2017).

Each participant was asked to insert the source text into Google Translate platform, post-edit it and then save the final output on the relevant desktop. Full access to internet sources was available while time spent on the task by each participant was observed. The post-edited texts were assessed by in-house assessors using LISA QA model 3.1 (software that provides data in a statistical form on error categories). It gives a quality mark of the processed document starting with a score of 100. The score decreases as it counts errors and recurring errors on an error log data. The minimum score acceptable to pass the recruitment test as set by the assessors was 80/100. LISA QA identifies errors according to *mistranslation*, *accuracy*, *terminology*, *language*, *style*, and *consistency* and *country norms*. However, it was found that the assessors normally exclude *style* and *country norms* in the recruitment test assessment. While LISA quality report (Appendix B) tracks the number of errors in each category, types of post-edits made are scrutinized manually by the assessors in terms of language and terminology. The translation service provider considers changes in capitalization, punctuation and restructuring as structure-related PE while additions and omissions are considered terminology-related PE. Differences between the type of post-edits and errors made by each group of participants were traced. No time restrictions were imposed but time spent on the task was calculated. No pre-experiment questionnaires were filled as personal data including academic qualifications and years of experience were mentioned in their submitted CVs, application forms and supporting documents.

#### V. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Post-edited texts were submitted by participants for evaluation and marking by assessors. They were inserted into the system for counting of errors and marking the output out of 100 in which pass mark was given for any score of 80 and above. After oral instructions were given, participants were all required to start at a specific time. Time taken to

complete the task was observed for each participant based on the time the document was last saved and submitted. The following sub-sections discuss the results arrived at in terms of time, count and type of errors, count and type of post-edits and overall score of the output.

#### A. Time

Work speed of translation and PE was considered a major sub-competence in translation competence (PACTE, 2003, 2017; OPTIMALE, 2013) and for being an essential skill for competitive translation markets (e.g. Hartley, 2009; Carmo, 2020) among other studies. On average, trainees and experienced translators completed the PE task in 58.95 minutes. Tables 1 and 2 reflect the total time spent by each participant in each group after which a discussion is provided.

TABLE 1  
TIME SPENT IN TRANSLATING USING (GT) AND PE (PE) TRAINEES

Participant	Total Time spent
Trainee 1	60.10
Trainee 2	57.20
Trainee 3	56.13
Trainee 4	54.19
Trainee 5	59.16
Trainee 6	56.01
Trainee 7	60.03
Trainee 8	56.17
Trainee 9	61.06
Trainee 10	60.15
Mean Time	58.02

TABLE 2  
TIME SPENT IN TRANSLATING USING (GT) AND PE (PE): EXPERIENCED TRANSLATORS

Participant	Total Time spent
Experienced Translator	60.11
Experienced Translator	57.21
Experienced Translator	62.14
Experienced Translator	59.18
Experienced Translator	63.17
Experienced Translator	59.09
Experienced Translator	57.06
Experienced Translator	61.19
Experienced Translator	59.06
Experienced Translator	60.44
Mean Time	59.87

The results shown in the tables above reflect that the time spent on the PE task by experienced translators was slightly higher than the time spent by trainees. However, the difference was not found to be significant as it did not exceed 2 minutes between the mean times of the two groups. The lowest time spent was 54.19 minutes reflected in the trainees group while the highest time was 63.17 reflected in the group of experienced translators. However, the results show that time spent by all participants in the two groups is significantly below the standard proportion of word count to minutes. In an empirical study by O'Shea et al. (2022), it was revealed that translators with PE experience over three months tend to post-edit an average of 700 words per hour. Similarly, Albarino (2023) points out that translators can post-edit between 700 and 1000 words in an hour regardless of the language pair.

In comparison with the participants of the present research, it was noticed that trainees and experienced translators took around an hour to post-edit 394 words. Surprisingly, results of the study conducted by Jia et al. (2019) point out that PE domain-specific texts takes less pause duration than PE general language texts due to the fact that equivalent pairs may be more fixed and less flexible than it is the case in everyday language texts. Similar findings were reflected in a study on PE of medical texts where the pace was found to be 35.6 words per minute; i.e. 2,100 words per hour (Liang & Han, 2022). Taking these empirical studies into consideration reveals that participants of this study took longer time than counter participants in different contexts. However, speed of PE seems here of a more serious issue for experienced translators since practical experience was found -in previous studies- to contribute positively to PE speed.

#### B. Type of Changes

Types of changes performed were categorized by assessors as follows; punctuation, capitalization and reorganizing as structure-related PE while omissions and additions as terminology-related PE. In each category, the mean number of changes made by participants showed difference in the count and type of changes performed in each group. Highest number of post-edits was reflected in the category of additions and omissions in the two groups with lowest number of capitalization and punctuation in the trainees' group and reorganization in the group of experienced translators. The following tables reflect changes made by each participant in more detail, followed by discussion.



TABLE 3  
POST-EDITS COUNT: TRAINEES

Trainees	Punctuation capitalization	and	Additions and Omissions	and	Reorganization and Restructuring	Total
Trainee 1	0		35		3	38
Trainee 2	12		33		4	49
Trainee 3	12		46		6	64
Trainee 4	9		29		0	38
Trainee 5	6		48		2	56
Trainee 6	8		40		3	51
Trainee 7	0		36		5	41
Trainee 8	16		37		1	54
Trainee 9	15		68		4	87
Trainee 10	9		40		7	56
Mean	8.7		41.2		3.5	53.4

TABLE 4  
POST-EDIT COUNT: EXPERIENCED TRANSLATORS

Experienced Translators	Punctuation capitalization	and	Additions and Omissions	and	Reorganization and Restructuring	Total
Exp. Translator 1	16		43		7	66
Exp. Translator 2	21		51		11	83
Exp. Translator 3	15		45		14	88
Exp. Translator 4	12		31		10	53
Exp. Translator 5	14		49		13	76
Exp. Translator 6	17		42		9	68
Exp. Translator 7	13		39		12	64
Exp. Translator 8	13		38		16	67
Exp. Translator 9	20		46		12	78
Exp. Translator 10	11		65		12	88
Mean	15.2		44.9		11.6	73.1

The data shown in Tables 3 and 4 reflect that the total number of edits in the three categories performed by trainees was significantly lower than the number of edits performed by experienced translators. The difference was found to be remarkable in reorganization and restructuring post-edits. While trainees performed an average of 3.5 per trainee, experienced translators performed an average of 11.6 per translator which is more than three-folds. Number of post-edits related to punctuation and capitalization made by experienced translators was almost double the number of those made by trainees while number of omissions and additions made in the output was close in the two groups. Further discussion is provided on the relationship between the types of changes made, count of errors, time spent and the final quality score in the following section.

The fact that experienced translators performed more post-edits might be attributed to the specific lexicogrammatical nature of legal language. Maaß and Rink (2021) point out that in addition to the peculiarity of the jargon of legal discourse, legal translation requires highly-specific linguistic knowledge in terms of structure which is more of an archaic style (Hijazi, 2013). Lin et al. (2023) point out that legal discourse features complexity of structure and terminology which makes translation less flexible as to the appropriate equivalent for a given segment. In a study conducted by Vidhayasai et al. (2015), Google Translate was found to result in lexical, syntactic and discursive errors in translation of specialized texts. This explains why PE is needed more in specialized machine-translated texts. Section 5.3 discusses the quality of the output after it was post-edited by each participant based on errors committed.

### C. Quality in Post-Editing

The quality of the output was evaluated by the assessors using LISA QA model. 3.1 in which errors are categorized according to five criteria; *accuracy*, *language*, *terminology*, *consistency* and *mistranslation*. To have a clear idea of each of the five criteria, a definition is provided for each especially in relation to translation of legal discourse. Starting with *accuracy* or *fidelity*; it was defined as 'rendering the message of the source text with exactitude (Flamand, 1983, p. 50). *Accuracy* can be achieved when the message obtained by the target language reader is the same as the message obtained by the source language reader (Hui-Juan, 2007, p. 107). For domain-specific texts, which legal texts are part of, *fidelity* was considered so essential. It has been argued that in translation of legal texts the translator is responsible to maintain highest level of fidelity from the source text into the target text (Šaršević, 2003). *Language* errors in translation refer to grammatical (syntactic and morphological errors) in addition to spelling, capitalization and punctuation errors. Richard et al. (2002) define language errors as 'use of a word, speech act or grammatical items in such a way that reveals imperfect or incomplete learning' (Richard et al., 2002, p. 184). *Terminology* in translation was defined by some scholars as 'set of terms used in specialized documents' (e.g. Arizpe, 2022, p. 2) pointing out that translating technical specialized texts may need a terminologist who is specialized in the subject-matter jargon unless the translator is specialized enough in the domain terminology.

According to the *American Translators Association* (ATA), a *terminology* error occurs when the translator chooses a word or phrase with an incorrect or inappropriate meaning in relation to the context of the source text (ATA, 2021).

Terminology error also applies when a term appropriate to a specific subject field is not used in the same sense its corresponding term is used in the source text. *Mistranslation* refers to incorrect translation in terms of content while *consistency* means ‘the repeated use of words and lemmas’ throughout the target text (Guillou, 2013). In an article on legal translation, Fouda (2019) states that providing different translations for the same source term at different places in the TT confuses the receptor and produces unprofessional translation. Based on the categorization of errors as identified above, errors related to *accuracy*, *language*, *terminology*, *consistency* and *mistranslation* performed by trainees and experienced translators are shown in Tables 5 and 6 below:

TABLE 5  
COUNT OF ERRORS: TRAINEES

Subject	Accuracy	Language	Terminology	Consistency	Mistranslation
Trainee 1	1	2	14	2	5
Trainee 2	5	2	24	4	3
Trainee 3	4	22	19	6	0
Trainee 4	2	2	28	7	2
Trainee 5	1	21	18	4	2
Trainee 6	4	36	21	1	4
Trainee 7	4	8	26	0	6
Trainee 8	1	10	31	0	1
Trainee 9	3	14	17	3	3
Trainee 10	5	19	24	2	1
Mean	2.6	13.6	22.2	2.9	2.7

TABLE 6  
COUNT OF ERRORS: EXPERIENCED TRANSLATORS

Subject	Accuracy	Language	Terminology	Consistency	Mistranslation
Exp. Translator 1	2	0	9	2	5
Exp. Translator 2	1	1	12	4	3
Exp. Translator 3	3	5	12	6	0
Exp. Translator 4	1	1	16	7	2
Exp. Translator 5	2	2	9	4	2
Exp. Translator 6	0	4	0	1	5
Exp. Translator 6	2	4	13	0	0
Exp. Translator 7	1	0	7	0	1
Exp. Translator 8	2	8	6	3	2
Exp. Translator 9	3	3	8	2	0
Exp. Translator 10	0	2	11	2	3
Mean	1.7	3.0	10.3	2.9	2.3

It was noticed that there is a remarkable difference in the number of errors committed by the two groups of participants in three of the five criteria investigated in LISA QA model. With reference to tables 5.5 and 5.6, it can be noticed that the errors made by trainees were almost double those made by experienced translators in the criteria of accuracy, terminology and more than four-folds in the criteria of language errors. There was no significant difference in the number of mistranslation and consistency errors between the two groups.

The data in Tables 5 and 6 reflect that the highest number of errors was made in the criteria of terminology by both, trainees and experienced translators which marked an average of 22.2 and 10.3 respectively. Translating terminology of specialized texts such as those of legal discourse requires high level of jargon knowledge to the extent that the aid of a terminologist may be needed in addition to the translator (Arizpe, 2022; Hartley, 2009). It is worth mentioning here that many English legal terms are considered now archaic in everyday English (Sabra, 2003). The study conducted by Temizöz (2014) showed that terminology of a highly specialized text was also an issue for experienced translators whose terminological choices were less appropriate than the choices made by experts of subject-matter. Similarly, terminological choices seemed to pose an issue in the present study even for experienced translators. Such a finding indicates that competence in translating specialized texts does not only come as a result of temporal experience but intensive practice of translating texts of the same domain (Hijazi, 2013). Obviously, what needs high level of human translator competence remains unresolved in machine translation without human interference (Öner, 2019; Biel, 2011).

To gain more insights on PE performance, this high number of terminology errors has to be related to the type of changes (post-edits) made by the two groups. PE of terminology is highly dependent on omissions of inappropriate terms and additions of appropriate ones. The number of additions and omissions was found to be somehow close in the two groups 45:41 for experienced translators and trainees respectively. The fact that each participant on average made above 40 additions and omissions and yet made the highest number of errors in terminological choices holds two possibilities. The first possibility would be that the terms chosen by google translate were inappropriate and left unedited to fit the jargon. The second possibility would be that google translate chose the appropriate terms but were unnecessarily changed by the participants. Either possibility indicates that the post-editor was not expert in the subject-matter terminology constituting an obstacle in an efficient PE process. The problem seemed mild in the case of experienced translators but crucial in the case of trainees since the number of terminology errors made by trainees was more than double those made by experienced translators (10.3: 22.2 respectively).

Language criterion featured error count of 13.6 per trainee participant vs 3.0 per experienced translator showing some drawback in the syntactic sub-linguistic knowledge that is appropriate for legal discourse in the group of trainees. According to Dewi (2017) language errors in translation are basically related to grammar and structure, i.e. morphological and syntactic errors. Legal language in English reflects some peculiar structures, specific use of adverbs and modal verbs which are either archaic or not used in the same sense they are in general language texts. For instance, *shall* is not used as a future modal in legal discourse; it rather indicates commitment and adherence. Similarly, *thereof*, *herein* are domain-specific terms that are used in lieu of prepositional phrases such as *of that document* or *in this document*) among other examples (Sabra, 2003).

Therefore, for legal translators to be competent, they need to acquire a domain-specific syntactic and morphological knowledge regardless of the pair of languages (Biel, 2011), in particular between Arabic and English (Sabra, 2003; Hijazi, 2013). This sub-linguistic knowledge seemed to be under-developed in trainees in comparison to experienced translators.

Apart from *terminology* and *language* there was no criterion of errors whether accuracy, consistency or mistranslation in which any participant exceeded 3 errors including recurrent ones. The errors count for accuracy made by trainees were double those made by experienced translators (1.7: 2.6) while mistranslations made by trainees were slightly higher than those made by experienced translators (2.3: 2.7) with an identical number of errors in the two groups for the criterion of consistency (2.9: 2.9). As it can be noticed, results of LISA QA report show that errors per participant in *accuracy*, *mistranslation* and *consistency*, were below 3 for the 394-word text which was -in proportion- acceptable in comparison with some other similar studies (e.g. Temizöz, 2014). In other words, the percentage of errors to the total word count (394 words) in *accuracy*, *mistranslation* and *consistency* was negligible (less than 0.008 %).

In addition to counting errors and recurrent errors in the five criteria: *accuracy*, *language*, *terminology*, *consistency* and *mistranslation*, LISA QA model associates the score to Fail: Pass result. Based on the assessment strategy of the translation service provider, 80 was set as the minimum level of acceptable quality for PE in recruitment tests. Below 80, the interface would register quality assessment as Fail and any score between 80 and 100 would be Pass. Results showed that a total of 8 experienced translators got Pass vs 5 in trainees. However, no statistically significant figures showed any relation between quality and time spent on the completion of the task but showed a correlation between number of changes performed and the Pass; Fail results ( $r = 0.71$ ). Overall conclusion, pedagogical implication and recommendations are discussed below.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The way experienced translators and trainees post-edited the legal text seemed to meet at some levels and differ at others. Shortest time spent on the PE task was 54.19 minutes in trainees vs. 57.21 in experienced translators while longest time was 61.06 in trainees and 63.17 in experienced translators. No statistically significant difference was found between the time spent on the task in the two groups. However, it was found that PE 394 words in an average of 58.95 (the average time of the two groups) was almost double the time experienced practitioners normally do PE which is an average of 700 to 1000 per hour (O'Shea et al., 2022; Albarino, 2023). Statistically, this means that if 700-1000 words are post-edited in 60 minutes, then 394 should not take more than 30 minutes. In the present study, the average time taken for this count of words was 58.95 which is almost double the time according to the expected standards in the job market.

When errors count was investigated in the five criteria in the two groups, it was found out that participants in the two groups made low percentage of errors in relation to mistranslation, accuracy and consistency. Trainees, on the other hand, showed drawback in their structure-related post-edits while all participants without exception made the highest number of errors in the criteria of terminology.

The difference in the performance of trainees versus experienced translators was apparent in two ways; the type of post-edits and the total count of errors in the post-edited output. As a result, the overall quality of PE by experienced translators was higher than PE by trainees as 8 participants passed in the former group vs 5 in the latter. Therefore, there was a correlation between type and number of post-edits and quality of the output but no correlation was found between time spent on the task and overall quality of the output. Overall results showed that there is a correlation between PE quality and experience in the translation profession. Nevertheless, general experience in the profession of translation (which experienced translators in the present study have) was not enough to make appropriate terminological choices in a specific-domain text. The conclusion revealed that half of the trainees passed the translation service provider recruitment test while 8 out of the ten experienced translators passed. The following section discusses the pedagogical implications of the findings and indications for translation industry in Jordan.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Results of the study show that, for legal texts, the quality brought about by experienced translators' PE was higher than the quality brought about by trainees' PE. However, there seem to be opportunities for improvement for both groups of participants in the Jordanian context.

Practical experience seemingly has a positive effect on the overall performance of PE in translation at all levels; i.e. *terminology, language, accuracy, consistency* and *mistranslation*. Translators with experience between 3-5 years post-edited the text in a slightly longer time than trainees, performing more post-edits at the levels of structure (capitalization, punctuation and reorganization) as well as at the level of additions and omissions of terms. As a result, 8 out of the ten translators passed according to LISA QA report.

Experienced translators' speed in PE in the present research was alarming as it was much slower than expected standards in translation industry. While expected standards should be a minimum of 700 words in an hour (e.g. O'Shea et al., 2022; Albarino, 2023), experienced translators in this study took almost double this time. Improving work speed in translation market is considered an indication of competence (PACTE, 2003; OPTIMALE, 2013) and of essential importance in competitive translation industry (e.g. Carmo, 2020; Hartley, 2009). Therefore, the results of the present study showed that PE speed is under-developed even among experienced translators, which needs to be improved through on-job training and workshops.

Another drawback in the performance of experienced translators was reflected in terminological choices which were better than trainees but marked the highest number of errors in the translators' PE. This might be attributed to the fact that the post-edited text was legal (domain-specific) requiring peculiar knowledge in legal jargon that apparently needed more development in experienced translators. This indicates that competence in translating or PE legal texts needs more than general experience in the profession, but specific experience in translating and PE legal discourse especially between Arabic and English (Hijazi, 2013; Sabra, 2003).

Similar to experienced translators, trainees -who had zero practical experience- showed under-developed skills in PE speed, terminological choices. In addition, trainees also showed drawback in structure-related choices (structure of legal discourse). This indicates that translators training programs need to enhance competence of translating and PE legal discourse at the levels of structure, terminology and work speed especially that previous studies (e.g. Khoury, 2017) showed that legal translation is demanded the most in the Jordanian translation market.

The recommendation that can be deduced from the findings and results of the present research would be enhancing PE courses in general and PE legal GTT in particular. For more than two decades, there have been calls for integrating PE skills in translator training programs (e.g. O'Brien, 2002). This came as a reflection for the need of translation industry which evolved dramatically in the past few years.

Previous studies on translator training in the Jordanian context (Khoury, 2017, 2021, 2022) revealed underdeveloped translation sub-competences in linguistic and instrumental sub-competences such as terminology management and efficient use of online sources on which editing and PE skills are built (O'Brien, 2002). Therefore, ability to do efficient and effective editing and PE starts with translation competence meaning that incompetent translators are definitely incompetence editors and post-editors. PE was only connected with machine translation (MT) or translation memory (TM); it has always been considered as a form of translation revision even before the boom of translation technology. Scholars have been talking for decades about the importance of revising and PE texts before submitting the final translation for the role it plays in improving the target text. This indicates that translator training programs in Jordan need to enhance students' abilities to edit, review and criticize a pre-translated text for improvement and adaptation to the target norms regardless whether the text is human or machine-translated. The nature of translator industry reflects that translators, post-editors and revisers are now equally required jobs.

In addition to their pedagogical implications, findings of the present study positively contribute to the selection and recruitment criteria in the Jordanian translation market. Recruiters at translation service providers should bear in mind that general experience in the translation profession or a degree in translation does not necessarily guarantee competence unless it is combined with a sound knowledge and experience in the jargon of the subject-matter. The errors count of terminology among experienced translators in this study showed that poor expertise in the jargon of a particular domain-specific text results in a poor output regardless of the temporal experience of a given translator.

#### VIII. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The limitation of the present study lies in more than one factor. The number of participants for sampling remained limited after excluding twenty-seven applicants who did not meet the sampling criteria. Thus, the results of the present research could not be generalized as the type of the research was a mixed method research and the evaluation method was for the assessors. It is highly recommended for a similar study to be repeated in the Jordanian context for the results to be more reliable and for generalization. Finding financial resources has always been a challenging step during the course of the research. When the researcher works with professional assessors as is the case in the present study, the experiment turns out to be relatively costly. However, the present study carries its own weight in providing answers to our research questions on post-editing a machine-translated output by trainees versus experienced translators while similar studies can be repeated either with similar samples, different category of samples or a text of different specialized domain to expand the pedagogical implications.

## APPENDIX A SOURCE TEXT

عقد ايجار

1. **التزامات وتعهدات المستأجر**
  - 1.1 يتعهد المستأجر ان يقوم بدفع الاجرة بالوقت والطريقة المتفق عليها.
  - 1.2 يتعهد المستأجر بالمحافظة على المأجور وتسليمه للمالك عند انتهاء مدة الايجار بنفس الحال التي كان عليها عند استلامه من المالك، باستثناء ما قد ينتج من تلف او تشقق نتيجة الاستخدام الاعتيادي.
  - 1.3 يتعهد المستأجر باستخدام المأجور بالكيفية المتفق عليها، وان لا يستخدمه باي حال من الاحوال بطريقة تخالف الشريعة أو القانون الاردني أو الأنظمة والأخلاق العامة.
  - 1.4 يتعهد المستأجر أن يقوم بدفع وتسديد كافة الفواتير الناتجة خلال استخدامه للمأجور، ومنعاً للخلط، وفي حالة عدم امكانية تركيب عدادات مستقلة او فرعية للخدمات من ماء وكهرباء وغيرها للعقار، فإن الفواتير وتكاليف هذه المنافع يتم تقسيمها على اساس عدد الافراد بين ساكني العقار إلا في حال اتفق الأطراف على خلاف ذلك.
  - 1.5 في حال وجود حفرة امتصاصية تخدم المأجور بشكل حصري، فان تكلفة تصريف محتويات هذه الحفرة الامتصاصية يتحملها المستأجر، و اذا كانت هذه الحفرة الامتصاصية تخدم اكثر من عقار فان تكلفة تصريفها يتحملها المنتفعين بالتناسب .
  - 1.6 خلال مدة هذا العقد ، لا يحق للمستأجر أن يقوم بأعمال إنشائية أو إدخال تحسينات للعقار موضوع هذا العقد دون الحصول على موافقة المالك الخطية.
  - 1.7 لا يحق للمستأجر أن يسمح لأشخاص آخرين -باستثناء المواليد الجدد للقاطنين في العقار - أن يسكنوا المأجور بدون الموافقة الخطية من المالك.
  - 1.8 لا يحق للمستأجر تأجير أي جزء من المأجور أو نقله لأي شخص آخر دون موافقة المالك الخطية.
  - 1.9 عند نهاية هذا العقد عقد يقوم المستأجر بإعادة أي اشياء اضافية كانت موجودة أصلاً في المأجور عند تاريخ ابتداء الايجار، بنفس الحال التي كانت عليها عند استلامها من المالك باستثناء ما قد يكون تلف منها نتيجة الاستعمال الاعتيادي للشخص الطبيعي .
2. **التزامات وتعهدات المالك**
  - 2.1 يتعهد المالك بدفع كافة الضرائب المفروضة على العقار والضرائب الأخرى والرسوم والنفقات والمستحقات المترتبة على ملك يه للعقار، بما في ذلك ضريبة المعارف ويسقط حقه بالمطالبة والرجوع على المستأجر بأي من هذه الضرائب .
  - 2.2 يتعهد المالك بدفع كافة الرسوم والضرائب ورسوم الطوابع المفروضة بموجب التشريعات النافذة والمترتبة على هذا العقد .
  - 2.3 يتعهد المالك ان يصدر ايصالاً للمستأجر بعد دفع الايجار وبعد مختلف المدفوعات.
  - 2.4 يتعهد المالك بتمكين المستأجر من استعمال المأجور والانتفاع منه طيلة مدة العقد بدون اي تعرض من قبل المالك او من اي شخص مفوض عنه او يعمل لحسابه او تحت سلطته.
  - 2.5 يتعهد المالك نفقته الخاصة خلال مدة العقد بإصلاح ما يحدث من خلل/خراب في العقار باستثناء ما قد ينتج عن سوء استخدام المستأجر

## APPENDIX B LISA MODEL 3.1 DATA SHEET

The screenshot shows the LISA Model 3.1 Data Sheet interface. At the top, there are fields for 'Def', 'Source language', 'Review', 'Quality' (54.75%), 'Target language', 'Translates', 'Review' (95%), and 'Score' (1.00). Below these fields is a table titled 'Error data collection' with three columns: 'Error Category', 'Minor', 'Major', and 'Critical'. The table contains the following data:

Error Category	Minor	Major	Critical
Doc Language			
Doc Formatting			4
Help Formatting			4
Help Formatting - Asian			21
Software Formatting			36
Software Functionality Testing			
Doc Formatting - Asian			1

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# Delving Into the Influence of Visual Input on the Load-Related Silent Pauses During SI: What About Gestures?

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**Abstract**—This research delves into the realm of simultaneous interpreting (SI) with a focus on the Portuguese-Chinese language pair, examining the interplay between visual inputs and cognitive load. This study posits that visual cues such as hand gestures may influence the cognitive load during SI, a topic that remains controversial in interpreting studies. To address this, we conducted an empirical study involving 18 trainee interpreters divided into two groups: a control group receiving only audio input and an experimental group with additional video input. Utilizing ELAN 6.3 software, we analyzed silent pauses exceeding 300ms to gauge the cognitive load. The research focused on how audio and video inputs impact these silent pauses, with a special emphasis on segments accompanied by semantically related hand gestures. The results revealed that the average duration of silent pauses was marginally shorter for interpreters with video input, although the differences between the two groups were not statistically significant. Intriguingly, for both groups, the duration of pauses significantly increased during segments with semantically related gestures, underscoring the inherent high cognitive demand of these segments, irrespective of visual input. A notable discovery was the marked increase in fluency for participants with visual access when interpreting segments accompanied by gestures, which suggests that semantically related gestures provide cognitive benefits. Overall, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on the role of visual inputs in SI, highlighting the potential of gesture input to alleviate cognitive load and improve interpreter performance.

**Index Terms**—visual input, semantically related gestures, silent pauses, SI, cognition

## I. INTRODUCTION

As a cognitive activity of meaning-making for communication, SI has been increasingly understood as a multimodal activity (Mikkelsen & Jourdenais, 2015, p. 293). There is evidence that the integration of information from multiple senses helps brain to disambiguate (Koelewijn et al., 2010; Sumbly & Pollack, 1954), speed up the response to the target stimuli (Miller, 1982; Molholm et al., 2006; Teder-Sälejärvi et al., 2002), promote temporary storage of information (Baddeley, 2000), and result in a better recall afterwards (Gieshoff, 2018, p. 31). According to Gieshoff (2018), these facilitating effects of “redundant” (Seeber, 2017, p. 464) multisensory information only exist when the stimulus from both sensory channels (audio and video) are spatially, temporarily and semantically congruent. However, the multiple cues received by the interpreters during the SI task may also compete for same pool of cognitive resources (Seeber, 2007), and cause an increase of cognitive effort especially during the stage of perception and cognition (Prandi, 2023; Seeber, 2017). By now, there are two opposite hypotheses under debate: 1) since multimodal input benefits language comprehension in L1 and L2, will it (in both acoustic and visual channel) reduce the cognitive load of interpreter due to the multisensory binding effect (Gieshoff, 2018, p. 30)? Or 2), on the contrary, in light of the Cognitive Resource Footprint (CFR) of Seeber (Seeber, 2011, 2012), will it cause increasing cognitive load, or even overload?

Although some empirical studies were conducted to reveal the impact of visual input on simultaneous interpreting, their results were inconsistent due to differences in object of study (lip movements, visual presentations, gestures, etc.) and measurement used to estimate cognitive load (cognate translations, silent pauses, eye movements, etc.) involved in task, which calls for further empirical studies to test the impact of different types of visual cues on the cognitive load and performance of interpreters. Rennert (2008), for example, reviewed types of visual input that can possibly influence the SI task and carried out an experiment. The results suggested no appreciable positive or negative effect of visual

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input, though some interpreters benefit from the additional or redundant information provided by the visual cues. In addition, the perception of interpreters in SI tasks was also studied to evaluate the influence of visual access. Moser-Mercer (2005), for example, conducted a study to investigate the parameters that influence the feelings of presence among professional interpreters in remote interpreting settings. The results of her meta-analysis indicated that the view of the speaker was the only positive value of remote interpreting that was announced by the interpreters, while other factors such as the view of the conference room, alienation from the conference room, and motivation did not have a significant impact on their feelings of presence (p. 733). In a study by Baxter (2016), the effect of using visual aids in interpreting was examined. Contrary to the initial hypothesis, the ear-voice span significantly increased with the use of visual presentation. Gieshoff (2017) examined the impact of lip movements on the cognate translation, which refers to words that share the same etymological roots in two languages and whose orthographic and phonetic representations significantly overlap (p. 316), for example, "configuration" in English and "configura ção" in Portuguese, as an indicator of cognitive load experienced by the interpreter. The study explored how the presence or absence of white noise in the source speech affected the interpretation, revealing an increase in cognate translations when no lip movements were present, particularly when white noise was introduced, implying a higher cognitive load without the presence of visible lip movements of the speaker. The same author (Gieshoff, 2021a) also tested the duration of silent pauses when the interpreters are (not) exposed to lip movements of the source speech speaker. The results indicate the interpreter benefits from the visual input, with significantly shorter pause duration compared with the control group, implying also the positive cognitive influence of lip movements. Previous studies on different language pairs such as German and English (Rennert, 2008) and Greek and English (Gieshoff, 2018), and to the best knowledge of the author, little research has been conducted concerning the Portuguese-Chinese language pair about the synergy between visual inputs and cognitive load, except the most recent one about the moment analysis by Han et al. (2023) in light of translanguaging theory and of the complex, dynamic system theory (CDST) approach, which focused on the process of interpreting, examining the workflow tasks of CI and SI. However, our present study is both process- and product-oriented, aiming to bridge the gap in academia, by further exploring the influence of visual input on the load-related disfluent performance during SI by delving into the silent pauses.

## II. SILENT PAUSES AS INDICATOR OF COGNITIVE FLUENCY IN SI

In interpreting studies, disfluencies reflect the difficulty of the source text, such as syntactic complexity (Shen et al., 2023), dependency distance (Jiang, 2020), informational load (Kajzer-Wietrzny, 2023), or lexical density. In fact, disfluencies such as hesitations (including lengthening of vowels and filled pauses), silent pauses with extend of more than 0.3 second and interruptions of expressions (including repetitions, false starts and self-correction) have been considered as indicators of cognitive load during interpreting tasks in previous studies (Mead, 2000; Skehan, 2003; Song, 2020), as they occur when the interpreter processes complex or unfamiliar information and needs more time or attention to produce a coherent output (Jiang & Jiang, 2020; Plevoets & Defrancq, 2016). In addition, disfluencies (especially silent pauses) may indicate the cognitive strategies that interpreters use to cope with high load, such as simplification, segmentation, anticipation, or monitoring (Zhao, 2022). To study the different cognitive load imposed on the interpreter by different types of dependency distance (long or short max dependency distance) of source speech, Jiang and Jiang (2020) examined the four categories of disfluencies (cf. Shreve et al., 2011), namely, silent pauses, filled pauses, repetitions and self-corrections. The researchers observed a significant higher frequency of disfluencies under the condition of long max dependency distance.

Among the various types of disfluent phenomenon, silent pauses are widely examined in previous studies regarding the cognitive load in simultaneous interpreting. Apart from Jiang and Jiang (2020) mentioned earlier, Gieshoff (2021b) also examined the duration of load-related silent pauses depending on the interpreter seeing or not seeing the lip movement of the source-text speaker. The researcher revealed that the duration of the silent pauses in interpreting was significantly shorter when the interpreter sees the lip movement of the source text speaker. Song and Li (2020) also examined various types of disfluencies including silent pauses in SI, indicating that the mean duration of silent pauses was shorter in the SI output of trainee interpreters with higher lexical retrieval efficiency. This finding implies that trainee interpreters with better cognitive capacity achieve better cognitive fluency during the SI tasks, which is observable through shorter silent pauses in their interpreting. Moreover, B. Wang and Li (2015) probed into the characteristics of and motivations for pauses, which offers the closest relevance to our study. Their study, which specifically examines the language pair of English and Chinese in simultaneous interpreting, offers valuable insights into the characteristics of pauses. The findings reveal that pauses in the target output speech occur less frequently compared to the source input speech but have longer duration. Furthermore, the pauses in the target output speech occur frequently at the moment of interpreting the source input speech with syntactic complexity, which indicates a correlation between language structure and pause during the process of interpretation.

Though some studies consider only unusually long pauses that lead to audience's discomfort are disfluencies in SI (Song, 2020), shorter disfluencies, ranging from 200ms to 300ms, are commonly employed to study the synergy between delivery of speech and cognitive fluency, and perceived as measure of cognitive fluency (Kahng, 2014; Xin, 2020). In the range of studies we have examined regarding various focus including the spontaneous speech in first and second languages, consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, the majority have identified a threshold for silent pauses

that falls between 0.25s to 0.4s. A seminal study by Goldman-Eisler (1958) proposed a threshold of 0.25 seconds for silent pauses and identified that a majority (71.5%) of pauses in oral speech fell within this time range. This standard was subsequently adopted in research conducted by Grosjean and Deschamps (1972). Raupach (2011) defined pause at intervals of 0.3 seconds or longer, either within or between sentences. Delineating hesitation from pauses, Riggenbach (1991) put forth distinct thresholds: 0.2 seconds for micro-pauses, a 0.3 to 0.4 second range for hesitation, and an unfilled pause spanning between 0.5 to 3 seconds (Goldman-Eisler, 1958). Other studies, such as Towell et al. (1996) and Mead (2000), suggested a minimum cut-off point around 0.28 seconds and 0.25 seconds respectively, with Mead setting an upper cut-off at 3 seconds (X. Wang & Wang, 2022).

Table 1 exhibits a variety of antecedent studies pertaining to different language-related domains and their respective thresholds for silent pauses. In consideration of the preceding researches on cognitive and utterance fluency, the present study adapts a threshold put forth by Yang et al. (2020). Their work, which explores the cognitive load in SI with text, aligns closely with the study object of our current investigation. Thus, in the context of simultaneous interpreting, we have established the minimum silent pause threshold for SI production to be demarcated at 0.3 seconds.

TABLE 1  
THRESHOLD ADOPTED IN PREVIOUS STUDIES

Font	Area of study	Types of discourse	Silent pauses threshold
(Kahng, 2014)	Second language acquisition	Oral production tests for English Foreign Language speakers	0.25s
(Xin, 2020)	Interpreting studies	Consecutive interpreting between Chinese and English	0.3s
(Hieke, Kowal, & O'Connell, 1983)	First language discourse	Political discourse in English and French	0.13s
(Yang, 2019; Yang et al., 2020)	Interpreting studies	SI with texts	0.3s

To sum up, previous empirical studies examined the cognitive load of SI tasks under manipulated conditions and manifested that different levels of cognitive load can be imposed on interpreters. The differentiated cognitive loads are reflected on the duration of silent pauses in SI output, and the pause duration, in its turn, was employed to examine cognitive loads. Moreover, the method by applying the pause duration as measurement permits a real work scenario of the interpreters, unlike the intervention of measuring devices such as eye-tracking tools or EEG headset. Therefore, we decided to adopt silent pause duration as indicator of the cognitive fluency of the trainee interpreters in the current study.

### III. EXPERIMENT

We enlisted 18 participants – trainee interpreters, all with one year of interpreting training experience, from the master's program in Chinese and Portuguese Translation and Interpreting from a university of Macau. These trainee interpreters are native speakers of Chinese with C1 proficiency level in Portuguese as second language and all signed informed consent forms to participate in the study.

The 18 participants were equally divided into two groups, control group and test group. The test group, composed of nine trainee interpreters, was tasked with performing simultaneous interpreting (SI) both from Chinese to Portuguese and from Portuguese to Chinese, with video input. In contrast, the control group, composed of the remaining nine trainee interpreters, carried out the same tasks but without access to video input.

To facilitate potential preparatory work by our trainee interpreters, we announced the discourse topic three hours prior to the commencement of the experiment. Moreover, for precise timeline alignment of the semantic gestures in the source speech, the interpreting performance' pauses, and the interpretation of the gestured source speech by the interpreters, we marked the start time of the source speech in the audio recording of the interpreting.

The source speech videos in Chinese and Portuguese were deliberately selected and edited to guarantee a similar frequency of the occurrence of gestures semantically related to the source speech. Both speeches are related with the socio-cultural aspects of reading habits: the Chinese speech has 36 semantic gestures and 48 beat gestures, while the Portuguese speech has 34 semantic gestures and 36 beat gestures in the edited video clip. The source speakers' hand gestures semantically related to the verbal language were marked on ELAN 6.3 (Wittenburg et al., 2006) for analysis, and the interpreting performance's silent pauses over 0.3s, detected and extracted first automatically and further revised by human researcher, were also imported into ELAN 6.3 (Wittenburg et al., 2006). Hence for each SI file, we have the silent pauses with start time and end time marked and the beginning and end of the gesture-accompanied source-speech segments. Apart from those, we also have the silent pauses of the critical segments for each trainee interpreters marked in the eaf. files of ELAN (Figure 1).

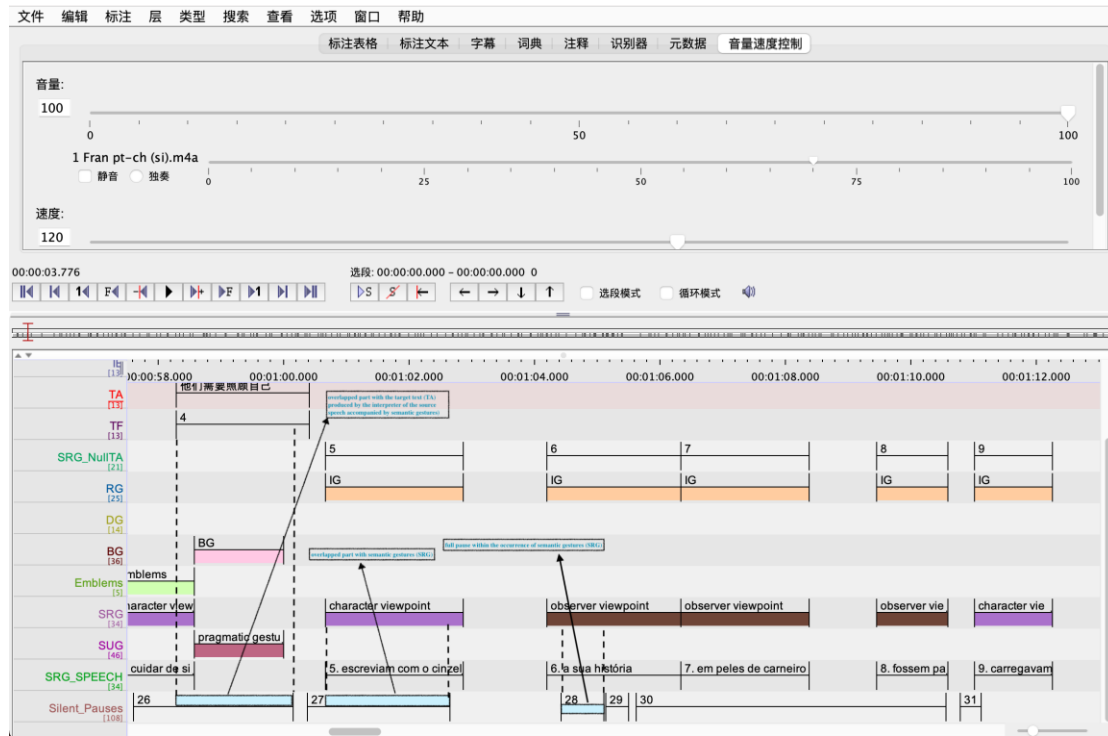


Figure 1. Screenshot for ELAN Layout

As shown in Figure 2, two kinds of the silent pause duration were calculated for the present analysis:

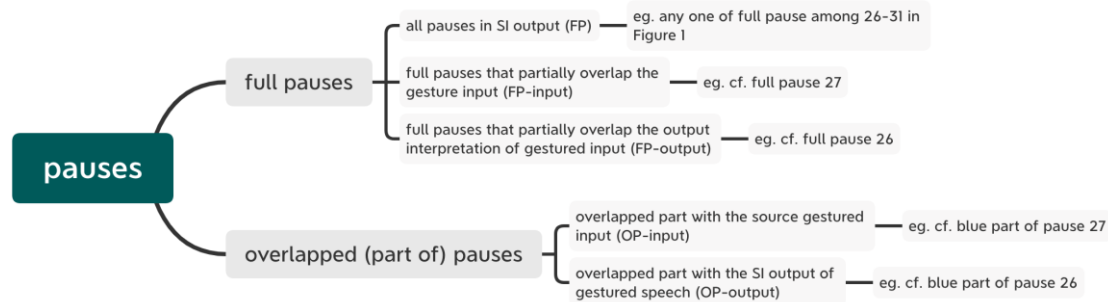


Figure 2. Types of Pauses for Analysis

By choosing FP and OP we aim to collect comprehensive data, to facilitate the latter data analysis from a comparative perspective.

For the data analysis, we used non-parametric analysis for the comparison of pause durations for different groups. Mann Whitney U test (McKnight & Najab, 2010) was used for the two sided test of mean difference comparison and for the monotonic analysis (see Table 2). We also adopted the Random Forest (RF) Regressor (Grömping, 2009), as a non-parametric regression analysis model, which permits a simultaneously processing of both categorical features (such as the 'input condition', 'direction', and 'different gesturing condition of the source speech' considered in this study) and quantitative features (like the 'pause duration' in this study) (see Table 3). The random forest (RF) model facilitates the computation of feature importance, helping to understand which characteristics lead to a significant impact by predicting the dependent variable's value through the regression model. In the present study, instead of relying on the regression model to predict the values of 'pause duration', we seek to understand, through the process of model fitting, which factors (such as 'direction', 'different gesturing condition of the source speech') have a more substantial impact on 'silent pause duration'. Beyond calculating feature importance, we also utilized partial dependence plots (PDP), a diagram about statistical data, to visualize the relationship between specific features and prediction outcomes. Partial dependence plots can demonstrate the influence of a particular variable on the dependent variable, assuming all other independent variables are held constant.

As shown in Table 2, different types of FP or OP were compared and analyzed for the SI output audios of the control group, the experimental group, the Chinese to Portuguese direction, the Portuguese to Chinese direction.

TABLE 2  
TYPES OF PAUSES EXAMINED FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSE WITH DIFFERENT DATASET USING MANN WHITNEY U TEST

Compared condition	Examined silent pause types	Examined groups
Audio input vs. video input	FP	Two directions separately
PT to CH vs. CH to PT	FP	overall
FP-input vs overall condition	FP-input vs. FP	All input conditions and directions separately
FP-output vs overall condition	FP-output vs. FP	All input conditions and directions separately
Audio input vs. video input	OP-input	Two directions separately
Audio input vs. video input	OP-output	Two directions separately

TABLE 3  
TYPES OF PAUSES EXAMINED FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSE WITH DIFFERENT DATASET USING RANDOM FOREST REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Purpose	Group	Pause types
Impact of each feature	All audios	FP+OP
Impact of directionality controlling input condition	Only audio input	FP+OP
	Only video input	FP+OP
Impact of input condition controlling SI directionality	Only CH to PT	FP+OP
	Only PT to CH	FP+OP

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

We first carried out a pre-processing of data, by examining the data’s distribution. The findings showed that the pause duration is still not normally distributed even after the log-transformation, box-cox transformation, and square transformation, so we used a non-parametric test, that is Mann Whitney U test to compare the differences between mean pauses duration (MPD) for different groups of interpretation. Figure 3 demonstrates the distribution of the duration of all pauses over 300ms extracted from our interpreting performance audios, from which we can know directly that the data is not normally distributed.

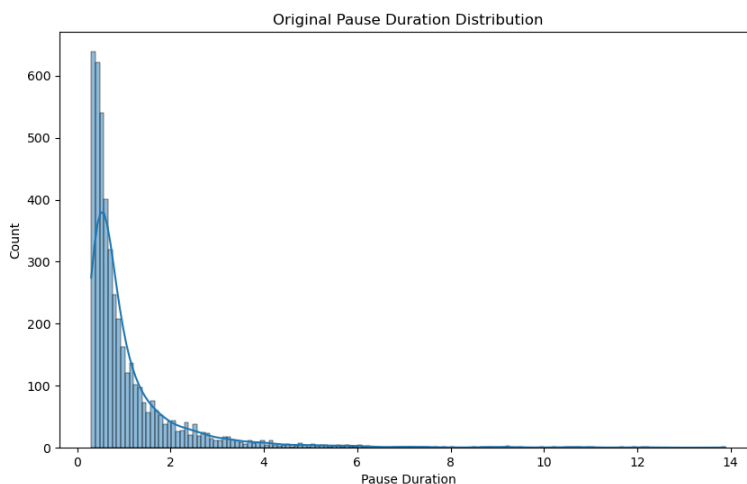


Figure 3. Distribution of Silent Pauses Duration

A. Comparison Between the Two Input Conditions of SI

We then analyzed the difference of mean silent pause duration between the video and the audio input condition. It is found that the mean silent pause is slightly shorter for the interpreting of the video input group. However, as shown in Table 4, the difference between the two is not statistically significant, with p-value in both directions of interpretations above 0.05.

TABLE 4  
DIFFERENCE ON PAUSE DURATION BETWEEN VIDEO AND AUDIO INPUT GROUP

Direction	FP duration for audio input group	FP duration for video input group	p-value	Test used
CH-PT	0.95	0.92	0.906	Mann Whitney U
PT-CH	1.39	1.34	0.385	Mann Whitney U

As shown in the boxplot, another diagram of statistical data, the mean duration of silent pauses does not significantly distinguish the interpreting performance of the video input group from that of the audio input group.

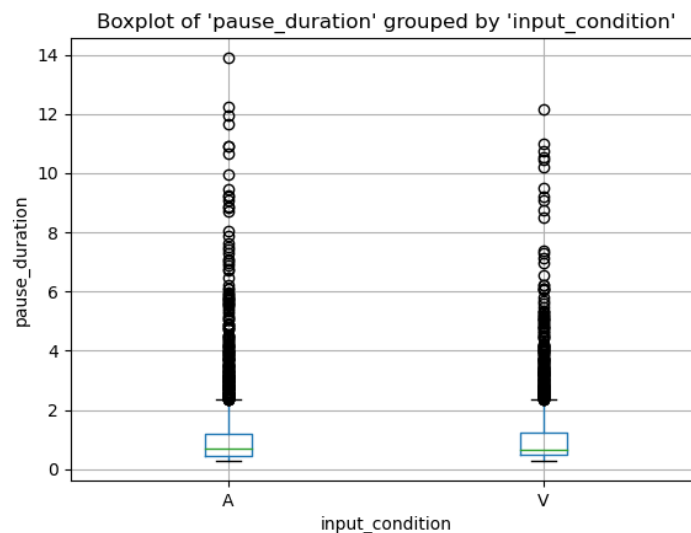


Figure 4. Comparison of Silent Pauses Duration for Video and Audio Input Groups

To discern the differentiated impact of the audio input and of visual input that might shed light on the cognitive processing involved, we further investigated one specific kind of visual input – the semantically related gestures. We examined the FP-input, that is, the silent pauses that concur at the speech gestured segments (pause 27 in Figure 1) and compared these to the overall duration level of pauses in the whole SI audio. The findings indicated that the mean duration of these pauses exceeded the overall average of pauses, not only across both directions of interpretation, but also under both video and audio input conditions.

As shown in Table 5, the differences are statistically significant and the results revealed that when the interpreter hears (or sees) the speech segments accompanied by the semantic gestures of the source-speech speaker, a significant longer pause occurs in their oral production, indicating the over cognitive load of the participants while trying to perceive this part of source speech. The findings suggest that during the perceptual/cognitive stage of SI activity, the presence of semantic gestures made by the speaker alongside the source speech imposes additional cognitive load on trainee interpreters. Consequently, this increased cognitive load incurred from both auditory and visual stimuli leads to a deterioration in the quality of online SI output for both experimental and control groups.

TABLE 5  
FP-OUTPUT DURATION VS. OVERALL MEAN PAUSE DURATION

Direction	Input Condition	Duration for all FP	Duration for FP-input	p-value	Test used
CH-PT	audio	0.95	1.19	1.24E-05	Mann Whitney U
CH-PT	video	0.92	1.22	4.55E-10	Mann Whitney U
PT-CH	audio	1.39	2.54	8.13E-10	Mann Whitney U
PT-CH	video	1.34	2.07	6.20E-09	Mann Whitney U

After that, we analyzed the duration of FP-output, that is, the duration of full silent pauses that concur at the interpretation of the speech gestured segments. As shown in Table 6, the duration of these pauses produced by both control and experimental groups of trainee-interpreters in both directions are above the average level of pause duration registered during their whole interpreting performance, although the difference is not statistically significant, with p-value exceeding 0.05.

Therefore, we consider that during the production of gesture-accompanied source speech, the participants may have experienced certain difficulties leading to the prolongation of the silent pauses during production, but we cannot reject the possibility that it may have been caused by certain abnormal data within the dataset. Furthermore, the p-values for the audio group are 0.065 and 0.080, while the p-values for the video group are 0.718 and 0.479. The higher the p-value is, the truer the null hypothesis becomes, since it posits no significant difference between the two data sets. We therefore consider the prolonged pauses during interpreting is marginally significant for the control group but not for the experimental group.

TABLE 6  
COMPARISON OF MEAN OP-INPUT DURATION BETWEEN EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS AT THE PERCEPTION STAGE

Direction	Input Condition	Duration for all FP	Duration for FP-output	p-value	Test used
CH-PT	audio	0.95	0.97	0.065	Mann Whitney U
CH-PT	video	0.92	0.90	0.718	Mann Whitney U
PT-CH	audio	1.39	1.55	0.080	Mann Whitney U
PT-CH	video	1.34	1.49	0.479	Mann Whitney U

To further explore the impact of the visualization of semantic gestures, we selected further the OP for analysis and continue to focus on two types of them: OP-input and OP-output. Also, we conducted a comparative analysis of the mean data between the test group with video input and the control group with only audio input. Furthermore, we analyzed the FP's duration of the two directions of SI.

We first compared the OP-input of the two groups. As shown in Table 7, the experimental group shows an advantage in both directions with shorter OP duration than that the control group. The results also suggest that in the direction from Portuguese to Chinese the experimental group shows a larger advantage in terms of OP duration (0.03s) than in the direction from Chinese to Portuguese (0.07s). It is understandable since the semantic gesture input helped the comprehension of source speech in Portuguese, which is the second language for the participants. On the contrary, the visual inputs of semantic gestures in Chinese speech result in split of attention distributed to gestures, possibly competing with production resources of the interpreter.

TABLE 7  
COMPARISON OF MEAN OP-INPUT DURATION BETWEEN EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS AT THE PERCEPTION STAGE

	direction of interpreting	mean pause duration with audio input	mean pause duration with video input	p-value	test used
OP-input	CH-PT	0.646143969	0.673553498	0.08533405	Mann Whitney U
OP-input	PT-CH	0.855604762	0.794993072	0.14264704	Mann Whitney U

Besides the mean pause difference shown in Table 7, though not statistically significant, the advantage shown by the experimental group at the time point of output of the respective content (see Table 8) provides further evidence that gestural visual input does result in shorter silence in the SI output.

TABLE 8  
COMPARISON OF OP-OUTPUT DURATION BETWEEN AUDIO AND VIDEO INPUT GROUP AT THE PRODUCTION STAGE

gesture condition	direction of interpreting	OP-output for audio input group	OP-output for video input group	p-value	test used
OP-output	CH-PT	0.73	0.50	2.2779E-10	Mann Whitney U
OP-output	PT-CH	0.99	0.42	3.3723E-16	Mann Whitney U

As shown in Table 8, we examined the duration of the parts of silent pauses within the SI output of the content of gesture-accompanied source speech segments, and a significant longer silent pause duration was found in the audio group (0.17s longer for Chinese to Portuguese direction and 0.57s longer for Portuguese to Chinese direction). These results indicate that with the visual access to the semantic gestures of the source speech speaker, the cognitive load of the experimental group was lower than that of the control group, which is demonstrated by a significant shorter pause duration while interpreting the content of these source speech segments. In addition, we elaborated a boxplot (see Figure 5) to demonstrate the differences between the audio and video group. As shown in the plot, the video group has a significant shorter pause duration in comparison with the audio group.

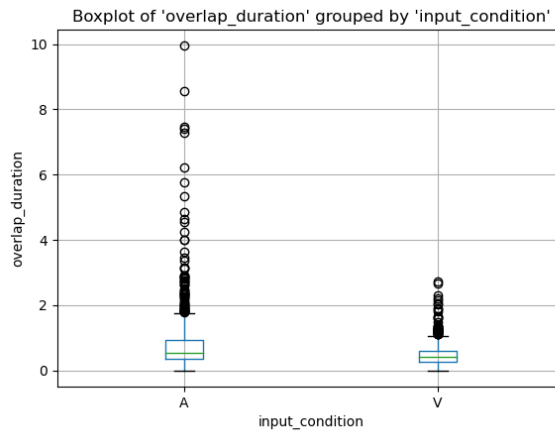


Figure 5. Boxplot for OP-Output Duration: Comparison Between the Video and Audio Input Groups

*B. Comparison Between the Two Directions of SI*

Apart from the gestures, we also executed an additional examination to the difference of full pauses in two distinct interpreting directions, that is, the Chinese to Portuguese direction and the Portuguese to Chinese direction. The results in Figure 6 and Table 10 showed that the overall pause duration for the retour direction, that is, from the L1 of interpreters (Chinese) to the L2 or interpreters (Portuguese) of the participants, is significantly shorter.

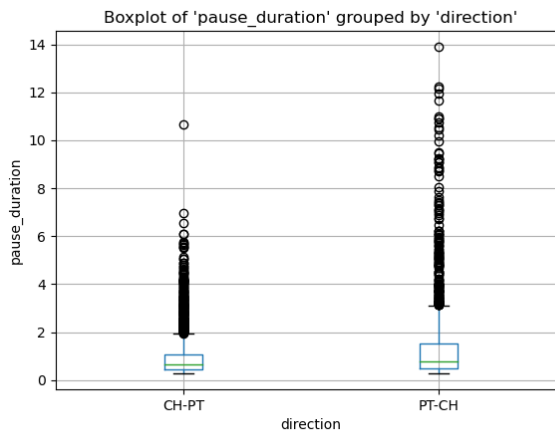


Figure 6. Boxplot for FP Duration: Comparison Between Chinese to Portuguese and Portuguese to Chinese Groups

TABLE 9  
DIFFERENCE ON PAUSE DURATION BETWEEN VIDEO AND AUDIO INPUT GROUP

	FP duration for PT-CH	U statistic	p-value
0.93s	1.36s	2119887.00	0.0000

However, despite the overall shorter pause for the Chinese to Portuguese direction, the OP-output of the video input group, as previously demonstrated in Table 8, is shorter in the PT to CH direction than vice-versa. The results imply that although participants achieve better fluency in CH to PT direction overall, when it comes to the SI performance regarding the gestured segments, the experimental group achieves better fluency in PT to CH direction. A possible reason is that the cognitive resource demanded by content retention and lexical retrieval was mitigated due to the previous gesture visual input.

V. FURTHER DISCUSSION

We are requesting that you follow these guidelines as closely as possible. In this section, we present a further discussion apart from the data analysis, with post hoc analysis to explore how the silent pause duration is influenced by different input conditions and different direction of interpreting.

We conducted an integral analysis of RF regression (see Figure 7) to examine how the dependent variables - the duration of silent pauses (FP) - varies in response to changes in several factors (independent variables, or feature, as designated in RF regression model). These factors or features refer to the type of input condition (either video or audio) (coded as 'input\_condition\_A' and 'input\_condition\_V'), the direction of interpretation (coded as 'direction\_CH-PT'



and `direction_PT-CH`), and the gesture-related condition (with FP represented by `Table_Table1`; FP-input represented by `Table_Table2_obs` and FP-output represented by `Table_Table2_int` in the figures below). All the features mentioned above are analyzed by the RF regression model and their importance is shown in Figure 7.

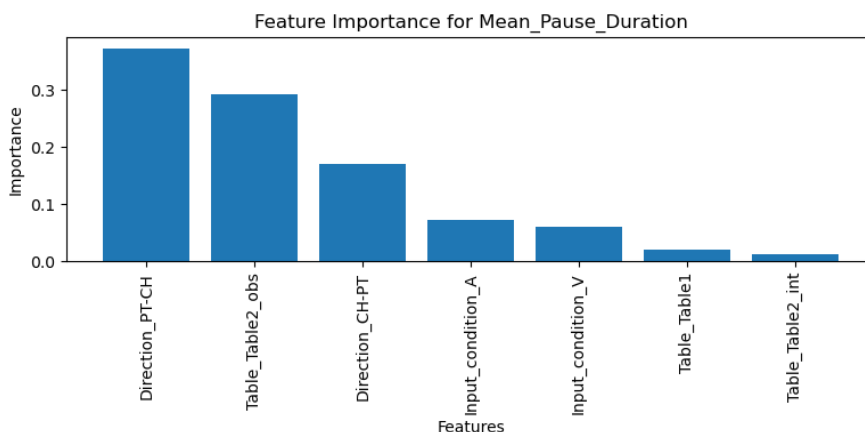


Figure 7. Feature Importance Analysis for Mean Pause Duration

The analysis of feature importance in Figure 7 shows that among all the features examined, the direction and the occurrence of gestures made by the source speech speaker (coded as `Table` features) have the most evident influence on the pause duration, while the input condition is of low importance when it comes to the prediction of the duration of pauses overall.

The partial dependence plots of Figures 8 (a), (b) and (c) show the extent to which different features influenced the prediction of the duration of FP. The x-axis in the PDP (partial dependent plots), ranging from zero to one, represents the non-occurrence or occurrence of a feature, such as `Direction_PT-CH` in Figure 8 (a), with non-occurrence represented by 0 and occurrence by 1. The y-axis depicts changes in pause duration.

As shown in the PDP plots, the directions (coded as `Direction_PT-CH` and `Direction_CH-PT`) and the input of gesture-accompanied source-speech segments (coded as `Table_Table2_obs`) have caused a variance of around 0.5s on the mean duration of silent pauses.

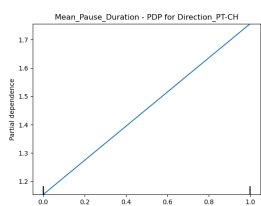


Figure 8 (a). PDP of PT to CH Feature for Integral Analysis of FP Duration for All Features.

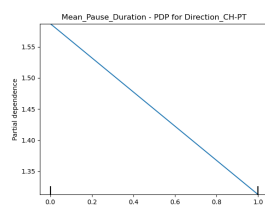


Figure 8 (b). PDP of CH to PT Feature for Integral Analysis of FP Duration for All Features.

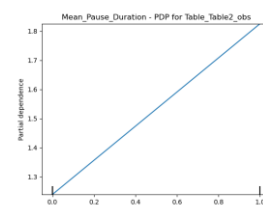


Figure 8 (c). PDP of Gesture Input Feature for Integral Analysis of FP Duration for All Features.

Figures 9 (a) and 9 (b) demonstrate the impact of the input condition on the duration of silent pauses in interpretation. It can be observed that as the audio input approaches 1, the duration of silent pauses tends to increase. Conversely, as the video input approaches 1, the duration of pauses tends to decrease. This suggests that when participants have visual input, the duration of pauses tends to become shorter. However, as we have mentioned in the analysis of feature importance in Figure 7, the input condition feature is of low importance for the RF regression model and the overall pause duration differences between the video group of interpreters and the audio group are not statistically significant (Table 2), we therefore consider relatively less relevant this variance caused by the video access to the source-speech speaker. Our results coincide with the earlier studies on the impact of visual input on the cognitive process of SI between English and German, as referred by Rennert, “for the most part, visual input appeared to have no appreciable positive or negative effect” (Rennert, 2008, p. 218). Early study about the impact of visual access on the performance of intelligibility and informativeness of professional interpreters conducted by Anderson (1994) also reported no statistical differences with the availability of visual input. At such, we consider that the visual access to the speaker may represent information highly automated for the interpreter, as it is identical to the visual information for daily audiovisual speech comprehension and demands no extra cognitive effort from the trainee interpreters (Wickens, 2002, p. 165). Indeed, it is our contention that a comprehensive investigation is required to determine whether visible speech relies on focal, ambient, or a combination of both visual resources. This examination can be conducted by employing physiological measures, such as eye tracking devices.

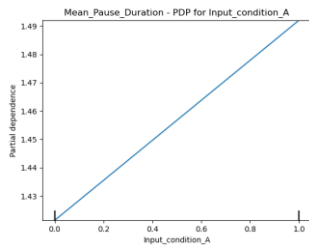


Figure 9 (a). PDP of Audio Input Condition Feature for Integral Analysis of FP Duration for All Features.

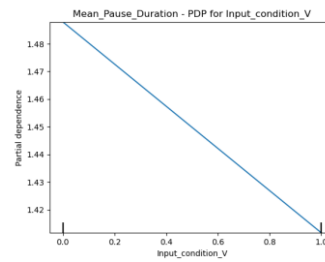


Figure 9 (b). PDP of Video Input Condition Feature for Integral Analysis of FP Duration for All Features.

Figure 10 (a) and (b) demonstrates the variation of OP (both OP-input and OP-output) duration caused by different input conditions. For the audio input group, the duration of OP increases, while for the video group, the OP duration decreases for about 0.125 seconds. In other words, when considering solely the SI output of the gestured segments in the source speech and the SI output during the input of these speech segments, the experimental group is expected to exhibit an average reduction of 0.125 seconds in silent intervals.

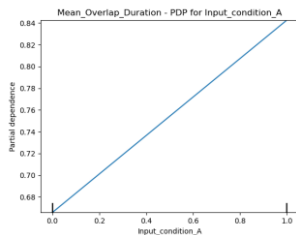


Figure 10 (a). PDP of Audio Input Feature for Integral RF Analysis of OP Duration for All Features.

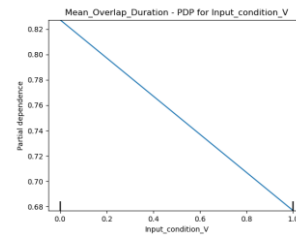


Figure 10 (b). PDP of Video Input Feature for Integral RF Analysis of OP Duration for All Features.

As for the gesture feature, we found that for the analysis of all the SI output audios, the overall OP duration is shorter during the interpretation of the speech gestured segments (code `Table_Table2_int` in Figure 11 (a)). When we further conduct an RF analysis separately for the experimental and the control group, we found that the OP-output duration is only shorter for the experimental group (Figure 11 (c)), and for the control group (Figure 11 (b)), the situation is the contrary. That is to say, the control group's silence pause is actually longer when the interpreters translate the gestured segments of the source speech.

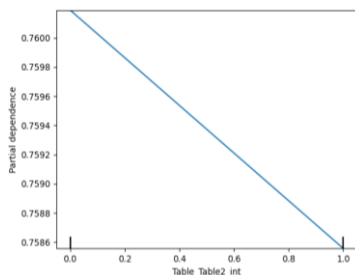


Figure 11 (a). PDP of OP-Output Feature in Integral RF Analysis of OP Duration for All Features.

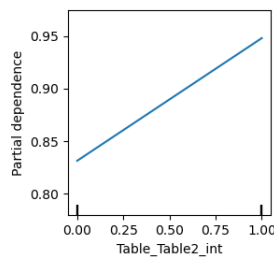


Figure 11 (b). PDP of OP-Output Feature in RF Analysis of OP Duration for the Audio Input Group.

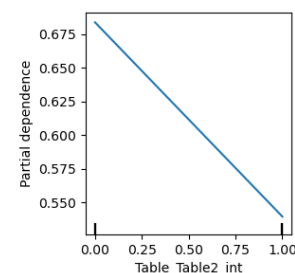


Figure 11 (c). PDP of OP-Output Feature in RF Analysis of OP Duration for the Video Input Group.

Regarding the direction of interpreting, we found a longer pauses on the direction from PT to CH (Figure 12 (a)), that is, longer pauses from second language (L2) to first language (L1) of the participants. This finding contradicts to some of the previous studies, which argues the longer pauses in the direction from first (L1) to second language (L2) of interpreter (Gumul, 2021; Lin et al., 2018). This unexpected finding might be related with the selection of source speeches. As for the two authentic Portuguese and Chinese speeches that we selected for experiment, the Chinese speech has relatively higher semantically related gestures (34 for Portuguese speech versus 36 for Chinese speech) and more beat gestures (36 for Portuguese speech versus 48 for Chinese speech). At such, we expect a future examination into the influence of directionality on the cognitive load of SI task and its interaction with the impact of various types of visual inputs available for the interpreter with video access to the source-speech speaker.

As previously mentioned in Table 3, a separate RF analysis was conducted to investigate the impact of the directionality on the duration of different types of pauses including OP-output, using data extracted separately from CH to PT and PT to CH interpretation audios. Figure 20 illustrates the modulation of OP-output duration by the video input

feature in PT to CH direction while Figure 12 demonstrates its influence on OP-output duration in the CH to PT direction.

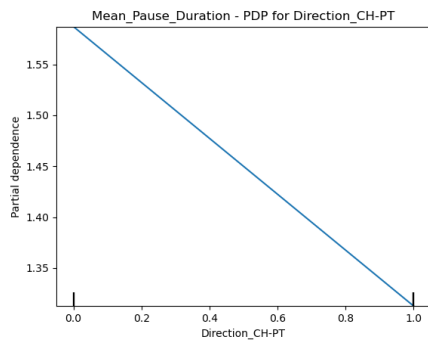


Figure 12 (a). PDP of CH-PT Feature for Integral RF Analysis of OP Duration for All Features.

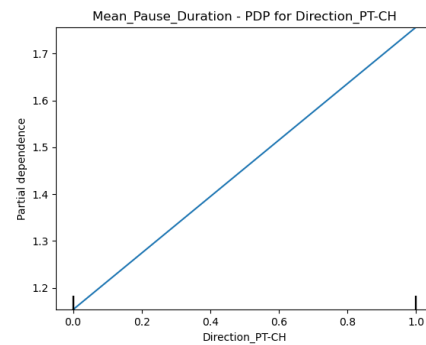


Figure 12 (b). PDP of PT-CH Feature for Integral RF Analysis of OP Duration for All Features.

We also found the facilitative effect of multimodal input to be more conspicuous in the direction from Language 2 to 1 (approximately 0.25 second) than From 1 to 2 (approximately 0.4 second) as shown in Figures 13 (a) and (b). The finding corroborates the beneficial effect of semantic gestures on the comprehension of SI second language information revealed in previous study conducted by Arbona et al. (2023). We consider that while rendering from Portuguese, the redundant verbal information provided by semantic gestures turns out to be more crucial for the comprehension and retention of Portuguese source speech than for the mother tongue of the interpreters.

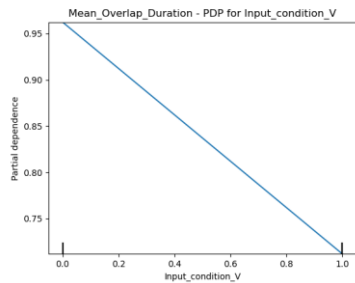


Figure 13 (a). PDP of Video Input Feature in RF Analysis of OP Duration for PT to CH Direction.

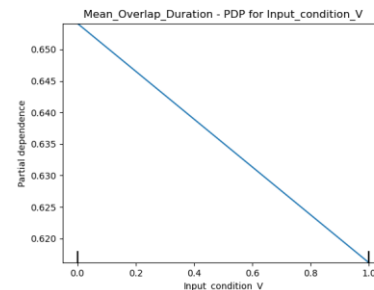


Figure 13 (b). PDP of Video Input Feature in RF Analysis of OP Duration for CH to PT Direction.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In the present study, we examined the cognitive influence of visual access to the source speech speaker on trainee interpreters between Chinese and Portuguese, by delving into the silent pause durations in SI output. For the purpose, we examined the duration of full silent pauses (FP), the overlapped pauses (OP) concurring at the speech gestured segments/input (OP-input) and concurring at the interpretation of the speech gestured segments/output (OP-output), through an experiment of trainee interpreters.

Through the experiment, we found that both experimental group (with video) and control group (with only audio) experienced longer silent pause around the moment of the gestured segments of the source speech, which indicates the source speech segments accompanied by semantic gestures may represent one of the most cognitively demanding part of the entire speech. Therefore, at the perception and cognition stage (Seeber, 2017) of these segments, i.e., when hearing or seeing the gestures source speech segments, both the experimental and control groups of trainee interpreters shows a longer silent pause (FP-input) than their average level.

Although the results showed no significant differences between the full pause duration of video and audio input groups, participants with visual access to the source speech speaker have significantly lower OP-output duration in comparison with the audio input group in the interpretation of the critical gestured segments of the source speech. Moreover, the gap is larger in the direction from L2 to L1. Therefore, we draw a preliminary conclusion that the visualization of semantic gestures may have contributed to better comprehension and retention of information of these critical segments, which has positive effect by resulting in shorter pauses in the interpretation performance. We believe, for the experimental group, the speech segments accompanied by semantic gestures are coded not only verbally but also spatially due to the presence of the gestures produced by the source speech speaker, can result in better memory performance (Bonnici et al., 2016, p. 5466) and therefore alleviated cognitive load during the SI output of the respective segments.

Also, there are some limitations for present study. When comparing the differences of pause duration for the speech gestured segments between the experimental and control groups, we could not exclude the possible influence of other visual cues received by the participants with visual access, such as facial expressions, lip movements, etc. Nevertheless, we believe that the no significant difference on the overall pause durations between the two groups partially eliminates the possibility of the results being disturbed by those visual cues.

Finally, we consider the present study as a good tentative for exploration of the impact of semantic gesture inputs on the cognitive fluency of the interpreters, which also calls for future studies about other factors with potential influence on the results, such as the lip movements or the facial expressions of the source speech speaker, to further examine human cognition and its synergetic factors or constraints in interpreting tasks.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by a Macao Polytechnic University Research Project (RP/FLT-11/2022).

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# A Socio-Pragmatic Study of Multifunctional Discourse Marker *i:h* in Algerian Spoken Arabic

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**Abstract**—The present study aims at investigating and describing the pragmatic functions of the discourse marker *i:h* in the Algerian Spoken Arabic, specifically in the eastern south, in the city of Ouargla. This piece of work is unique of its type in the Algerian context because it is the first to be conducted from a pragmatic perspective. Twelve different situations were included in the questionnaire which consists of one hundred items to collect data. The study adapted the pragmatic approach by Fraser (1990), which accounts upon a differentiation between content and pragmatic meaning. The findings revealed that, based on context, the discourse marker *i:h* is multifunctional in Algerian Spoken Arabic, and it conveys at least 12 meanings. Other functions were suggested by the participants. The distinction between the two groups at the level of both variables age and gender was not significantly marked.

**Index Terms**—*i:h*, discourse marker, ASA, pragmatic functions, context

## I. INTRODUCTION

Discourse analysis targets the study of language in use, and it explores the description of linguistic forms and their purposes and functions (Brown & Yule, 1983). Since the use of language is mainly to exchange meanings among the speech community members, it can be concluded that discourse can be understood from the pragmatic perspective. Yule (1996) defined pragmatics as the study of how meaning is communicated by the producer of the utterance, speaker/writer, and how it is interpreted by the receiver, listener/reader.

Discourse markers are linguistic elements that are mainly used in oral conversations in order to bring units of discourse together (Fraser, 1990; Lenk, 1998; Schiffrin, 1987) such as: *however, oh, well, but, still, and, hmm, okay, I mean, so, you know etc.* The importance of discourse markers is in evidence, first, at their contribution to the coherence of spoken discourse (Fraser, 1990; Lenk, 1998) and their fundamental role in the interpretation of a given utterance (Schiffrin, 1987), and, second at the clarification of the interlocutors' communicative intentions.

The study of discourse markers can be traced back to the 1970s. Ever since, they have become an interesting topic in the field of applied linguistics (Wang, 2011). Discourse Markers were first introduced by Labov and Fanshel (1977). They pointed out that discourse markers are considered to be linguistic elements existing in spoken discourse. They proposed that a discourse marker, for example “*well*”, points to a topic that is previously discussed and interlocutors already know. Likewise, it can also imply a topic shift or an interruption.

Discourse markers were later introduced by Levinson in his book entitled “Pragmatics” (1983) where he considered discourse markers a category of linguistic expressions which deserve investigation. Similarly to Labov and Fanshel, Levinson (1983) pointed that “there are many words and phrases in English, and no doubt in most languages, which indicate the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse” (p. 87). He introduced a list of discourse markers, as follows: “*but, therefore, in conclusion, to the contrary, still, however, anyway, well, besides, actually, all in all, so, after all, etc.*” (Levinson, 1983, p. 87).

It is generally conceded that such words have at least a component of meaning that resists truth-conditional treatment ... what they seem to do is indicate, often in very complex ways, just how the utterance that contains them is a response to, or a continuation of, some portion of the prior discourse”. (Levinson, 1983, pp. 87-88)

Undoubtedly, any linguistic unit is meant to cooperate with another unit to assist the understanding of the meaning of discourse. Linguistic elements help us understand the whole content that interlocutors wish to convey. Clark (1996) illustrated four main pieces of evidence for the fact that participants in talk-in-interaction are able to grasp what is communicated: “the use of presupposition of understanding occurs when interlocutors suitably respond to each other, assertions of understanding takes place when the interlocutors produce backchannels such as *huh, ah...* etc, displaying of understanding, i.e., answers to questions that display how the question was interpreted, and finally, exemplification, i.e., the repetition and paraphrasing also let interlocutors check for an acceptable understanding” (Clark, 1996).

Hockey (1993) mentioned that DMs do not really add to the meaning of the discourse. They are, actually, associated to the structure of the discourse. It is noticed that “interlocutors tend to produce backchannels, short responses usually

of acknowledgement". These responses make each other feel that they understood what was communicated in order to maintain the stream of communication.

The term 'discourse marker' could be seen as a 'fuzzy concept' (Jucker & Ziv, 1998, p. 2) due to the variety of labels applied by scholars, cue phrases (Knott & Dale, 1994), cue words (Horn et al., 2001), discourse connectives (Blakemore, 1987; Blakemore, 1992), discourse operators (Redeker, 1990; Redeker, 1991), discourse particles (Aijmer, 2002; Hansen, 1997; Hansen, 1998; Schourup, 1986), pragmatic connectives (Stubbs, 1983; Van Dijk, 1979), pragmatic markers (Anderson, 2001; Brinton, 1996; Fraser, 1996), and discourse markers (Fraser, 2006; Müller, 2005; Schiffrin, 1987; Algouzi, 2014). As the latter seems to be the term most widely understood and used, it is used in this study.

Andersen (2001) started his definition of discourse markers as 'a class of short, recurrent linguistic items that generally have little lexical import but serve significant pragmatic functions in conversation' (p. 39).

Based on Serper and Wilso's (1986) Relevance Theory Framework, Blackmore (1987) discovered that discourse markers do not have a fixed meaning, but rather there is a procedural meaning that consists of different instructions of how to affect the conceptual meaning of a given utterance. In addition, she contends that conveying information by an utterance can be relevant by some functions, as illustrated below:

- a. it allows generated contextual implication, as by the use of: "also, *therefore, so, too,*
- b. it assists an assumption (e.g., *moreover, furthermore, after all,*
- c. it contrasts a previous assumption (e.g., *nevertheless, however, but, still,*
- d. and it also identifies the function of an utterance in the discourse (e.g., *by the way, finally, incidentally, anyway,*)".

Researchers have always disagreed on how this particular category of linguistic expressions should be defined. Let us consider the following comments of Levinson's treatment of discourse markers in English:

...there are many words and phrases in English, and no doubt most languages, that indicate the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse. Examples are utterance-initial use of *but, therefore, in conclusion, to the contrary, still, however, anyway, well, besides, actually, all in all, so, after all,* and so on. It is generally conceded that such words have at least a component of meaning that resists truth-conditional treatment [...] what they seem to do is indicate, often in very complex ways, just how the utterance that contains them as a response to, or a continuation of, some portion of the prior discourse". (Levinson, 1983, p. 87 et seq.)

Regardless of the different terms applied to discourse markers, they share some specific defining characteristics. First, discourse markers are one of the features of oral discourse rather than written discourse (Brinton, 1996; Lenk, 1998; Schiffrin, 1987). Secondly, they relate utterances which are adjacent and non-adjacent (Halliday, 2004; Lenk, 1998; Schiffrin, 1987). Thirdly, discourse markers largely contribute to the organization of the coherence of oral discourse (Lenk, 1998; Schiffrin, 1987). Fourthly, they often come in initial positions owing to the fact that they, usually, introduce an upcoming sentence (Aijmer, 2002; Fraser, 1990, 1993; Lenk, 1998; Redeker, 1991; Schiffrin, 2001). However, they can appear as well medially and finally in an utterance (Fraser, 1993; Lenk, 1998). Finally, discourse markers are characterized as multifunctional (Lenk, 1998; Fraser, 1990; Schiffrin, 1987).

Based on the work of many scholars, Brinton (1996) categorized the functions of discourse markers into two groups, viz. textual and interpersonal. The textual category covers different functions such as: claiming the attention of the hearer, initiating discourse, closing discourse, indicating a topic shift, serving as filler or a turn holder, repairing discourse, indicating previous or new information, and highlighting sequential dependence. On the other hand, the interpersonal category involves effecting cooperation such as to confirm shared assumptions, to express understanding, to request confirmation, to express politeness, and to express a response to the preceding discourse.

The discourse marker "*i:h*" (yes) is a segment in Algerian Spoken Arabic which is widely used among people on their everyday life. Pragmatically, it has several meanings depending on the context it is used in. We should mention that we called the above expression as a discourse marker because it met at least one of the features proposed by Schourup (1999). She stated "...the typical DM referred to in the literature is a syntactically optional expression that does not affect the truth-conditions associated with an utterance it introduces and is used to relate this utterance to the immediately preceding utterance" (Schourup, 1999, p. 234). These features are optionality, non-truth-conditionality, connectivity, weak clause association, initiality, orality, and multi-categoriality.

The main goal of this study is to explore the different pragmatic functions of the discourse markers "*i:h*" in Arabic spoken in Algeria. We also aim at examining two variables: age and gender, and see how these variables can have an effect on presenting the pragmatic functions of this discourse marker.

Perspectives on DMs vary in terms of "their basic starting points, their definition of, and their method of analysis" (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 31). From a sociolinguistic perspective, discourse is not only a unit of language but also a process of social interaction. Schiffrin defined discourse markers as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" that is, non-obligatory utterance-initial items that function in relation to ongoing talk and text (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 31). Discourse markers, from this perspective, are distinguished as word classes such as Conjunctions (e.g., and, but, or), Interjections (e.g., oh), Adverbs (e.g., now, then), lexicalized phrases (e.g., y'know, I mean).

Another perspective is the pragmatic approach by Fraser. His framework depends upon a differentiation between content and pragmatic meaning. Content meaning is referential meaning: "a more or less explicit representation of some state of the world that the speaker intends to bring to the hearer's attention by means of the literal interpretation of the



sentence” (1990, p. 385). Pragmatic meaning concerns the speaker’s communicative intention, the direct (not implied) message the speaker intends to convey when uttering the sentence” (Fraser, 1990, p. 386).

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Discourse markers have been a field of many studies. For instance, Kanakri and Al-harashsheh (2013) investigated the pragmatic functions of “ʔa:di” which in Jordanian Spoken Arabic means *normally*. They analyzed twenty video-taped conversations. They used discourse analysis, conversation analysis and translation theory as a theoretical framework. The translation of the meanings of ʔa:di was based on the pragmatic strategy. And the findings revealed that the discourse marker ʔa:di occurred 105 times and served various functions. The pragmatic meaning of each time relies on the context in which it appeared such as; to ask for a permission, to express the meaning of disapproval and so on.

Kanakri and Al-Harashsheh (2013) also conducted a study on discourse markers. Their study was particularly on the Jordanian context. They investigated the pragmatic functions of the Arabic term “*ʔayyib*” and its cognate “*ʔaab*”. Their study is based on a mixed approach. The subjects of the study are thirty-six native speakers of Jordanian Arabic, university students. They found that this discourse marker is functional in Jordanian Spoken Arabic, and they serve ten pragmatic functions. Among which, we can mention: *to show a break of a certain discourse to show objection to what has been said so far, an introduction of a new topic, challenge or confrontation*, and others.

Highlighting one of the basic features of an interactive spontaneous speech, Naoum (2013) analysed the inferential function of “*I mean*” and its Arabic equivalents in literary discourse, along with translation. The conclusion of their study was:

*I mean* is another way of saying things. It identifies the process of deducing implicatures from the speaker’s preceding utterances which are (mostly) thought to convey weak and indeterminate implicatures. ‘I mean’ is not always associated with logical consequences (i.e. inferences); therefore, the effect that ‘I mean’ has on an utterance is to make things clear by identifying the intended implicatures of the speaker through making use of the unconscious (and sometimes conscious) shared cognitive environment between the speaker and the hearer”. (Naoum, 2013, p. 25)

Al Rousan (2015) conducted a study on the online conversations of young Saudis, where he investigated the use of the discourse marker “*maʕ nafsak*” in Saudi Arabic, which literally means “with yourself”. The data of the study comprised 262 natural online conversations collected from 17 young Saudi students through user-diaries, and 132 instances of “*maʕ nafsak*” occurred. The data analysis revealed 12 pragmatic functions for the discourse marker *maʕ nafsak* in Saudi Arabic. Al Rousan claims that the discourse marker “*maʕ nafsak*” facilitates producing and understanding processes of a specific oral interaction.

Buysse (2017) examined the pragmatic functions of the discourse marker “*you know*” in native and learners of English. The study aimed at giving a description to the multiple pragmatics interpretations of the discourse marker. The findings of the study revealed that nine pragmatic functions are attested for “*you know*”, among which we mention: introducing a proposition, elaborating on a previous topic, highlighting particular points in the discourse, and so on.

Al-Rawafi and Gunawan (2019) conducted a descriptive qualitative study on the term Insha’Allah in teachers’ talks in daily school activities. Their study was aimed at exploring the illocutionary acts of the conditional pragmatic marker (CPM) Insha’Allah in teachers’ talks. The findings of the study revealed that the CPM Insha’Allah in teachers’ talk performs different illocutionary forces. They are: commissives, assertive, directive, and expressive. They contend “CPM is a multi-purpose expression in different contexts of teachers’ talks and the possibility of the illocutionary force is varying according to the speakers’ faith background and the understanding of the expression itself” (Al-Rawafi & Gunawan, 2019, p. 522). They stated that a misuse of the conditional pragmatic marker Insha’Allah between the interlocutors may result at a face-threatening act; e.g. fail to promise.

Habib (2021) adopted both quantitative and traditional variationist sociolinguistic methods to study the interchangeable Syrian Arabic DMs /yaʕni/ and /ʔinnu/ meaning “I mean”. She analysed the speech of 72 speakers from the village Oyoun Al-Wadi in Syria, 22 adult couples and 50 children. Two factors were taken into consideration in this study, age and gender. Women and children were more likely to use /ʔinnu/. Women used more /ʔinnu/ than men did, while boys used it more than girls.

Helping communicators be aware of pragmatic functions in their communication and preclude any sort of misunderstanding, Alqahtani (2023) investigated the functions of the informal Arabic discourse marker /bʕdɪn/. Because social media provides natural communication contexts, the study analysed one hundred and five tweets containing /bʕdɪn/ by native Arabic speakers from different nationalities. Guided by the relevance theory, the findings revealed that /bʕdɪn/ was semantically used as a temporal adverb similarly meaning “then” and “later.” in English, and pragmatically serving seven pragmatic: “a marker of orientation shift, a marker of result, a conditional marker, a marker of disagreement, a coordination marker meaning “but,” a marker of agreement and a marker of reason” (Alqahtani, 2023, p. 58).

### III. METHODOLOGY

A mixed method approach has been used in this study in order to examine the use of pragmatic functions of discourse markers by Algerians. The researcher adopted a qualitative approach in order to find out and review the participants' interpretation regarding the different multi-functional use of the DM "i:h". Also, the quantitative approach helps measure the extent to which the investigated DM is used, and also how often it presents different meanings.

#### A. Instrument

Data for this study have been collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section was concerned with the information of age and gender. The second section was concerned with the aim of the research. In this section, there are different situations in which the discourse marker "i:h" was used differently from one situation to another. The rationale behind choosing this particular discourse marker is its widespread use. It is important to mention that the situations where different functions appear were prepared by the researcher, and presented for specialized people for validity. The last instruction in the questionnaire is to ask the participant for any other functions that have not been mentioned by the researcher for this discourse marker.

#### B. Subjects and Variables

The subjects of this study were 100 Algerians, males and females. Two main variables were taken into consideration, gender and age. The sampling strategy for this group of subjects was the convenience sampling. Consider the following:

TABLE 1  
SUMMARY FOR THE SAMPLE

	A	B
C	25 females (younger than 30 years old)	25 females (older than years old)
D	25 males (younger than years old)	25 males (older than years old)

A close look at Table 1 shows that four main groups were involved in this study; each two groups address a variable. To begin with, group A consisted of 50 Algerians, males and females, who are younger than 30 years old. Group B consisted of 50 Algerians, males and females, who are older than 30 years old. These two groups covered the investigation of the use of the multifunctional discourse marker *i:h* at the level of the variable of age. On the other hand, there is group C which consists of 50 Algerian females. Group D consists of 50 Algerian males. Group C and D were meant to serve the investigation of the variable of gender.

#### C. Data Analysis

Launching the analysis of the data, the researcher collected all the answers of the participants, and accounted for the extent to which the participants agreed or disagreed on the pragmatic meanings provided for the DM *i:h*. And then, she examined how frequently participants stated they use it, and each pragmatic meaning. The analysis of the data also took into consideration any pragmatic meanings suggested by the participants.

#### D. Framework

Discourse markers have been argued from different approaches, among which is the pragmatic approach by Fraser (1990). Fraser highlights that "discourse markers should be analyzed as having distinct pragmatic meaning". Fraser's framework accounts upon a differentiation between content and pragmatic meaning.

### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After a careful analysis of the collected data, we found that in Algerian spoken Arabic the discourse marker *i:h* serves a group of pragmatic functions. *i:h* is a term which literally means "Yes". It takes two forms, *i:h* and its cognate form *hi:h*. The analysis came out with twelve pragmatic different meanings according to the contexts they appeared in. The following is the representation of the findings of our study along with the discussion.

#### A. Agreement

Background: a girl asking her friend to go shopping with her. Her friend answers:

[Arabic Text]: إيه نروح معاك

[English Translation]: yes I'll go with you.

The girl wanted her friend to go with her, but she did not know whether or no she will. So, she asked. Her friend signals agreement by the use of the DM *i:h*. In our questionnaire, all the participants chose "agree" for the function provided in this context. And they also chose "Usual" for the frequency of using this pragmatic function. No significance was highlighted at the level of the variables age and gender.

#### B. Realizing

Background: two friends at university, one telling the second that he will call after he finishes class. The other replies: so!? The first clarifies that after class, he will call to confirm to meet. Then, his friend replies:

[Arabic Text]: إبيه... فهمتك، اوك

[English Translation]: yeah, got you now. Deal!

The friend at first did not understand what the call was for. After clarification, he realized what the friend wanted to say. By employing *i:h*, the speaker tries to express that he understood what was meant. Participants showed total agreement on the pragmatic function provided. And they all said they usually use it. Therefore, the assumption of this pragmatic function of the discourse marker "*i:h*" was proved to be true. The variables were not significant in this situation.

### C. Remembering

Background: a girl asking her older sister that they will go out tomorrow to buy the coat they spoke about, which the sister does not remember. When her younger sister tells gives more details. The sister replies:

[Arabic Text]: آيه، تفكرتو. غدوا عندي محاضرة، خلي الخميس ونروحو

[English Translation]: Yeah, I remember now. Tomorrow I have class, what about Thursday.

The sisters have spoken before about a coat they saw and liked in H&M, and the younger sister decided to buy it. When she asks her sister to go together in order to buy it, the older sister could not recall what coat. After her sister mentions the coat they saw in H&M, she signals that she remembered the coat by using the DM *i:h*, then she processed by answering the very first question of going tomorrow. The DM appeared at the beginning of the utterance supporting the following sentence "I remember now". All participants ticked "agree" for the function remembering. And again, all of them ticked "usual" for the frequency of their use to this specific function. No differences appeared at the variables of age and gender.

### D. Astonishment

Background: a lady telling her friend that Salma, a neighbor's daughter, is getting married, the friend says:

[Arabic Text]: آيه كبرت سلمى وتزوجت

[English Translation]: yeah, Salma's grown up and got married!!!

When the lady was told about the wedding, she did not know whose wedding it was. After her friend told her, she was clearly astonished how the little daughter has already grown up and got married. Very clearly, the DM was labeled by a new function that is astonishment. The same DM has different meanings which are, undoubtedly, based on a given context. Agreeing on the function expressed in this example, all the participants chose "agree". However, on the scale of use, 80% chose "usual", and 20% said "often". Regarding the variable of gender, 90% of the females said they use this function usually, while 10% said often. On the other hand, 70% males chose "usual". A difference of 20% appeared on the use of this function usually. Regarding age, 86% of the group younger than 30 years old chose "usually", and 14% chose "often". While 74% of the group older than 30 years old chose usually, and 26% chose "often". A difference of 12% appeared between the two groups.

### E. Nagging

Background: a student knew that her classmate wants her to help understand a chapter. Annoyed, she says:

[Arabic Text]: آيه، هادي كل يوم تجي. البارح كانت هنا

[English Translation]: yeah, she comes everyday! She was here yesterday.

In this context, the classmate is always in need of a help regarding lectures. This became very annoying. The speaker chose to employ *i:h* to show some sort nagging, because of being disturbed and annoyed. All the participants have chosen "agree" for the function provided for this context. This confirms that the DM *i:h* is pragmatically multifunctional. In regard to gender, forty four females, that is 88%, said they use this function usually. 12% have ticked "often". Males have shown a percentage of 82% choosing "usual", 14% choosing "often", and 4% choosing "never". The findings came out with a difference of 6%. Concerning age, 94% of the group younger than 30 years old chose "usual", and 6% chose "often". While 74% of group older than 30 years old chose "usual", 20% chose "often", and 4% chose "never". A difference of 20% has appeared.

### F. Get Rid of Someone Because of Insisting on Something

Background: a guy asking his friend, again and again, to go with him to a dentist. The friend did not assert going. After insisting from the guy, the friend replies:

[Arabic Text]: آيه آيه اوك

[English Translation]: yeah yeah okay

In the abovementioned example, context played a major role to give the DM *i:h* a new meaning. When the guy first mentioned going with his friend to a dentist, his friend was not into the idea of going and did not assert going with him. After that, the guy kept, for a while, insisting and asking for going together. The friend responded by using *i:h* twice, which make the guy understand that they are going together. It is crucial to mention that also in this context, the DM presents some sort of agreement, which is the first meaning explained above. The guy understood, of course, that his friend is going with him. However, from the perspective of the user of the DM, it is clear in this context that he wanted

to make his friend stop asking, and get rid of his insistence. This example has the privilege of having two meanings in the same context, however, from two different perspectives, which again proves the fundamental impact of context on building a meaning of an utterance. All the participants have agreed on the pragmatic function presented for this situation. This again proves how context uncovers new pragmatic meanings. Tackling the variable of gender, 86% of females chose 86% for “usual” in the scale of use, 8% chose “often” and 6% chose “never”. 84% of males, on the other hand, chose “usual”, 12% chose “often”, and 4% chose “never”. Regarding the variable of age, 92% of the young group has chosen “usual”, and 8% have chosen “often”. In addition, 76% of the old group has gone for “usual”, 20% for “often”, and 4% for “never”. It is worth mentioning that though there is a number of participants who said they never use the DM *i:h* to express this pragmatic function, they have agreed on the pragmatic function. This means that the context has clarified for them the meaning of the situation, and the desired function expressed by this DM.

### G. Praising

Background: a guy seeing his friend coming from far well dressed says:

[Arabic Text]: إيه رانا حطة اليوم

[English Translation]: yes, you are looking nice today.

In this simply put example, the guy saw his friend well-dressed and looking nice, so he used the term *i:h* supporting his sentence to express some sort of praising. The meaning of *i:h* as yes was completely absent in this context; another new meaning was highlighted, however. That is praising. All the participants agreed on the pragmatic function employed in this context. Also, all of them have chosen “usual” for the scale of use. On this ground, there is no notable difference concerning age and gender.

### H. Request Following Up

Background: a student telling his friend about an accident at university where there was a big noise at the library. His friend says:

[Arabic Text]: إيه [English Translation]: yes

The student adds that there was a girl who fainted. His friend says again

[Arabic Text]: إيه وش صرا مبعد

[English Translation]: yes what happened next?

The friend was not at university, so he does not know about the incident. The student told the story because he knew what happened and he is the one who has the details. When he was telling what he witnessed, his friend interrupted by employing the DM *i:h* to signal a request of following up. The witness precedes giving details about the incident. Again his friend uses the DM at hands to indicate a request of following up. Each time he uses the DM *i:h*, the friend continues telling the story providing more details. This marks that when telling the incident, he could understand that he was asked for following up. In this example, both interlocutors' needs were fulfilled. This proves how context gave the DM a new meaning which helped the piece of discourse go well. 92 participants agreed on the pragmatic function expressed in the abovementioned example. 8% were neutral toward this situation. Still, we can see that this pragmatic function is valid. Regarding the variable of gender, 94% females went for “agree”, and 6% for “neutral”. For the scale of use, 92% said they usually use this DM to express this pragmatic function, and 2% went for “often” and 6% for “never”. Moreover, 90% of males went for “agree”, and 10% went for “neutral”. For the scale of use, 88% of males chose “usually”, 2% chose “often”, and 10 for “never”. Regarding the variable of age, same percentage appeared for both groups at the level agreeing on the provided pragmatic function, that is 92% went for “agree”, and 8% went for “neutral”. 88% of the young group said they usually use this pragmatic function, while 4% said they often use it, and 8% said “never”. The 92% of the old group went for “usually”, and 8% went for “never”.

### I. Grief

Background: Two friends at work, one mentions that he passed by the high school they studies at. The second says:

[Arabic Text]: إيه كانوا يامات هاييلين، مايتنساوش

[English Translation]: yes, old days. I cannot forget those memories.

Two boys studied together at high school, and now they work together. One mentioned to the second that he passed by their high school. By employing the DM *i:h*, the speaker tries to express some sort of grief about the past happy times they had in high school. In this situation, all the participants agreed on the pragmatic function of expressing grief. And all of them said that they usually use it. Therefore, no significance appeared at the level of the variables.

### J. Encouraging

Background: a ten-month baby trying to walk for the first time, his mother says:

[Arabic Text]: هيا وليدي...أرواح لعندي... إبيه...إبيه

[English Translation]: come on son, come to me, yes yes

A mother sees her son trying to step for the first time. She got excited and wanted to support him so that he can do it. At first, she asks him to go to her, and then she repeats the DM twice to express some sort of encouraging her son to walk. Of course, in such a situation, any mother will be so excited to such experience, and therefore will try to support her son/daughter. In this example, the mother used the DM *i:h* validating another meaning of the DM *i:h* which is

encouraging. 99% of the participants have agreed in the pragmatic function suggested in this context, and 1% went for “neutral”. For the scale of use, 92% went for “usual”, and 8% went for “often”. Clearly, the DM *i:h* is pragmatically multifunctional in accordance with context. Regarding the variables of gender and age, the two groups shared equal percentages of 90% agreeing on the provided pragmatic function, 10% were neutral. Concerning the scale of use, 88% went for “usually”, 2% for “often”, and 10% for “never”.

#### K. Excitement to an Idea

Background: Two friends feeling bored. One says when exams are over, we go for a trip for a week. The second says:

[Arabic Text]: إيه هذاك وش لازم

[English Translation]: yes, that is what we need.

Two friends have some hectic days studying and preparing for their exams. It's been a while for outdoor activities, so they feel bored. One suggests going for a trip when the exams are over. The second uses the DM *i:h* expressing some sort of excitement to the idea of going on a trip especially after the exams. 99% of the participants have agreed in the pragmatic function suggested in this context. 1% went for “neutral”. For the scale of use, 92% went for “usual”, and 8% went for “often”. Considering the variable of gender, all females agreed on this pragmatic function, 94% of them have chosen “usual” for the scale of use and 6% sent for “often”. For the group of males, 98% went for agree, and 2% for “neutral”. For the scale of use, 98% of the males in this group went for “usual” and 2% went for “never”. Regarding the variable of age, all the participants of the young group agreed on the pragmatic function provided, while 98% of the old group went for “agree” and 2% went for “neutral”. On the scale of use, both groups shared the same percentages of 92% went for “usual”, 8% went for “often”.

#### L. Gloating at Someone

Background: a guy telling his friend that he saw a man stealing a girl's phone and running, while crossing the street, he fell and people caught him. His friend says:

[Arabic Text]: إيه يستاهل

[English Translation]: yes, he deserves it

The guy saw an incident, and told his friend about it. The friend found that the story of stealing a phone from a girl is unpleasant, and when he knew that the thief was caught, he was happy and expressed that by using the DM *i:h* to gloat at him. The hundred participants agreed in this pragmatic function, and they said they usually use it. Therefore, gender and age are not significant in this context.

The participants have suggested other functions that can be performed by the discourse marker discussed above. They are *boredom*, *mocking*, *confirming*, and *nostalgia*.

### V. CONCLUSION

The aim of the present paper was to investigate and describe the different meanings of the DM *i:h* in the Algerian Spoken Arabic from a socio-pragmatic perspective. The findings of our work revealed that the DM *i:h* is pragmatically multifunctional under consideration to perform a variety of functions. At least 12 different meanings and uses were accounted for in the study: *agreement*, *realizing*, *remembering*, *astonishment*, *nagging*, *getting rid of someone*, *praising*, *requesting following up*, *expressing grief*, *encouraging*, *excitement to an idea*, and *gloating*. The meanings have been suggested by the researcher and proved by the findings. It is also found that the most used functions are *agreement*, *realizing*, *remembering*, *praising*, *grief*, and *gloating*. Moreover, in this particular study, age and gender were not significant. Very slight differences appeared. Other meanings have been suggested by the participants; they are: *boredom*, *mocking*, *confirming*, and *nostalgia*.

We hope the study motivates other scholars to tackle such similar linguistic issues in the Algerian context.

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# Euphemism in Saudi Slang: An Attitudinal Survey Study

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**Abstract**—This study explores some euphemistic expressions in common usage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). It evaluates the degree to which Saudis are familiar with these expressions and how frequently they use them. The KSA covers a large area with a variety of dialects; thus, any socio-linguistic research which deals with slang should be meticulous. One enabling factor for this study is that Saudis are comparatively religious and avoidant of linguistic taboos, and consequently employ euphemisms often. Several research papers have tackled taboos in the KSA, but most of these have been contrastive to or comparative with British English or American English, while others have explored standard euphemistic expressions in classical Arabic. This study is unique in dealing with selective euphemisms used in Saudi slang through a survey devised to measure peoples' degree of knowledge as well as their usage of such expressions. After analyzing the results of the questionnaires, it is possible to derive several attitudinal results, the most important of which include the findings that present-day Saudis are generally well-acquainted with euphemism in their language and that they are inclined to employ it in everyday situations wherever appropriate. The population selected for this study is resident within the Al Riyadh region, or what can be called "Najid". As the heart of the KSA, this region has Saudis from various regions and with a range of linguistic differences. However, it is recommended that similar studies be taken up in different parts of the KSA so as to pinpoint regional variations.

**Index Terms**—euphemism in KSA, Saudi slang, socio-cultural taboos

## I. INTRODUCTION

Al-Azzeh (2010) underlines the concept that language acts as the embodiment and index of culture. Euphemism is therefore but one linguistic feature among many that reflect cultural characteristics and points of view. Wafi (1983) asserts that languages are considered to be the carriers of cultures and at the same time that they function as an accurate record of a people's history.

Hudson (2000, p. 261) writes that euphemism is defined as "the extension of ordinary words and phrases to express unpleasant and embarrassing ideas", while Willis and Klammer (1981, p. 193) define euphemism as "a mild or roundabout word or expression used instead of a more direct word or expression to make one's language delicate and inoffensive even to a squeamish person." Rawson (1981, p. 1) states that euphemisms should be seen as "powerful linguistic tools that are embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plainspoken, ever get through a day without using them". Moreover, Crystal (2003, p. 173) states that there are some words which many people avoid using because they may offend, harm or embarrass other members of the society where politeness is concerned. In addition, Allan and Burridge (1991, p. 14) take the view that euphemistic expressions may frequently be used "in order to avoid possible loss of face." In a later publication, Allan and Burridge (2006, p. 29) also indicate that the term "euphemism" is originally Greek and that it is the opposite of "dysphemism", which means 'bad' or 'unfavorable'. Burridge, however, outlines in "Blooming English" (2004, p. 187) the view that euphemisms are dishonest and that in their character, they recall the double speak that George Orwell exposes in his famous novel, *1984*. Moreover, Greenbough (1900, p. 300) sets out the view that euphemism, the *faux-pas*, politically correct words (PCWs) and "don'ts" flourish with civilization and that those who may be regarded as less civilized people "call a spade a spade". In other words, the more civilized the society, the more euphemisms it uses.

In the context of the Arabic language, Sadiqi (2003, p. 78) claims that the general meaning of "taboo" in Western culture correlates with the Arabic term "*Haram*". Moreover, Al-Azzam et al. (2017, p. 66) make the link between euphemism and religion, quoting the affirmative imperative (وليتلطف)<sup>1</sup> from the Holy Quran, which means "Euphemize", despite the fact that the translation is generally rendered as "And let him be careful"<sup>2</sup>. Holder (2002, p. 449) puts forward an index containing 70 euphemistic thematic categories: the author stresses however that it is not possible to avoid an overlap between these categories. For example, the category death can clearly be seen to overlap with the category of funerals, and so on.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The sensitive topic of euphemism has gained the attention of Arab scholars. Khanfar (2012) researched the topic of

<sup>1</sup> The Cave: 19.

<sup>2</sup> [https://publications-img.qurancomplex.gov.sa/?p=44&mushaf\\_page=344&imagewidth=550](https://publications-img.qurancomplex.gov.sa/?p=44&mushaf_page=344&imagewidth=550)

euphemism in Arabic, while Ibrahim and Sultan (2009) undertook an extensive study of euphemism in English. The authors of both papers concluded that euphemistic expressions are employed for a broad range of reasons: the wish to avoid a disagreeable or offensive term; the desire to use a more prestigious or elevated term; in order to soften the reality of what is being communicated; and with the intention to distort facts and deceive people. Euphemism can be a useful source for enriching language through the introduction of various new words and phrases, and the changing of old expressions by means of new users, new forms, shortened terms and abbreviations. Euphemisms are divided into various types, classified according to the themes around which they revolve. They generally deal with major themes such as death, illness, sex, politics and others.

Al-Qadi (2009) conducted a sociolinguistic comparison of euphemisms in English and in Arabic. He found that in both English and Arabic, euphemisms are mainly couched in three types of figure of speech: metonymy, synecdoche and circumlocution. Circumlocution is a strategy which involves the employment of more words than necessary to convey a meaning, and in particular with the intention of evading an issue or of speaking in vague rather than precise terms about it. Synecdoche involves the application of part of a phrase or meaning to represent the whole meaning, or conversely and less frequently, the use of a whole to refer to a part of that whole. Meanwhile, metonymy refers to the act of substituting a word for a characteristic or complement to an object for the actual object or idea being referred to. Therefore, metonymy, by definition, is the basic figure of speech used for euphemisms, and is also the one which is most difficult to address in teaching, learning and translation of English or Arabic as a non-native language. Galal (2014) conducted a study in which he compared the use of euphemisms for death in English and in Arabic. The researcher found that the implementation of death euphemisms in these two languages is almost the same, since speakers of both languages tend to refer to death as a better life, a better place and other words to that effect. Rabab'ah, Ghaleb and Al-Qarni (2012) conducted a comparative study of euphemisms in Saudi Arabic and in British English, finding no relationship between euphemism strategy choice and gender. Another significant finding produced by the study is for both languages; speakers resort to direct reference to taboos when handling death, and when referring to lying, but hardly ever do so for bodily functions.

Euphemistic language, as with language in general, is influenced by its users' cultural and religious beliefs, life-styles, and norms. Al-Khasawneh (2018) conducted a comparison of euphemistic strategies used by Saudis and Americans. He concludes that the most frequent strategies used by the Saudis are "part-for-whole, understatement and general-for-specific".

Qanbar (2011) investigated linguistic taboos in Yemeni society and examined ways in which speakers in Yemen tend to avoid being direct when communicating taboos in their speech. She implements the theory of "face" and "politeness" as a criterion in her study. The researcher concludes that the use of taboo can be avoided in Yemeni society by using euphemism, through either substitution or by means of circumlocution and other communication strategies. In another study, Ghounane (2014) deals with linguistic taboos and euphemistic strategies in Algerian society, with a focus on the Telmcen speech community. She concludes that the attitudes of Algerian speakers are linked to certain socio-cultural and psychological factors, including the social norms of the society, the social upbringing of its individuals and the social environment in which they come into contact with each other, in addition to their identity construction and other parameters. The findings also show that Algerian people have developed a rich vocabulary, which includes many euphemistic substitutions among its range. These substitutions can come about as the result of various kinds of societal, psychological and cultural pressures.

In an investigation which ranged from formal to informal language, Al-Shamali (1997) explored the euphemistic expressions used in the Jordan Valley dialect in regard to topics related to death, sickness, mental defects, cancer, and body parts. The study also aimed to identify the most frequent euphemisms in the aforementioned topics, euphemisms which were used by all groups, euphemisms which were used for specific meanings or by specific groups of people, and the effect of the variable of gender on the choice of certain euphemisms. The study concluded that, with the exception of excretory function, the range of taboo topics were violated by the majority of the participants. Al-Shamali (1997) concludes that traditional social variables have an impact on the choice of a certain euphemistic expression. Hence, euphemism is considered to be one type of "amelioration", which mainly focuses on employing socially acceptable words or expressions to replace others that cannot be expressed directly. Almoayidi (2018) goes further in comparing use of euphemisms in two different Saudi dialects: Hijazi and Southern dialects. The description given of the two dialects indicates that the speakers have the same intention in using euphemism to avoid being impolite through being too direct when talking about death, sex, body parts and bodily functions. Besides this result, it was also found that speakers of the two Saudi dialects are inclined to use certain other strategies, such as phonemic replacement, compounding, derivation and deletion, when avoiding directness.

Neaman and Silver (1983) assert that euphemism as a linguistic phenomenon flourishes in relation to religious subjects. Al-Barakati (2013) made an attempt to translate sex-related Quranic euphemisms into English. In addition to this translation, Al-Hamad and Salman (2013) consider a number of traditional Arabic euphemisms which are employed in the Holy Quran, as indicated in Table 1:



TABLE 1  
SOME TRADITIONAL ARABIC EUPHEMISMS USED IN THE HOLY QURAN

Verse in Arabic	Sura and verse number	Verse translated into English	Meaning
"لامستم النساء"	An-Nisa': 43	You have been in contact with women. <sup>3</sup>	Have sexual intercourse.
"فلما قضى زيد منها وترا"	Al-Ahzab: 37	So when Zaid had accomplished his desire from her. <sup>4</sup>	Divorced her.
"كانا يأكلون الطعام"	Al-Ma'idah: 75	They used to eat food. <sup>5</sup>	Used to go to the bathroom

### III. METHODOLOGY

An analytical method was used in this research paper which relied upon the statistical software program SPSS. A multi-axis attitudinal questionnaire was developed which contained 45 euphemistic words and phrases. Within this questionnaire, the participants' degree of knowledge and usage of the selected expressions was measured using a 5-point Likert scale for responses, with the possible answers ranging from: 1, 'I neither know it nor use it'; 2, 'I know it but I do not use it'; 3, 'I know it and I rarely use it'; 4, 'I know it and I usually use it'; to 5, 'I know it and I always use it'.

### IV. STUDY POPULATION

The population identified for the study amounted to 550 individuals, and this sample can be broken down by demographic variables including: gender; age group; residence in a village (rural), governorate or city (urban) area; level of education, ranging from none-grade 9 to doctorate level; employment status, including whether a student, looking for a job, in employment or retired; and marital status, whether married or single. The percentage breakdown of the sample population by each demographic variable is given in Table 2:

TABLE 2  
STUDY POPULATION BREAKDOWN

Variable	Type	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	308	56.0
	Female	242	44.0
	Sum	550	100
Age	Under 20	27	4.91
	21- 30	150	27.27
	31-40	197	35.82
	41-50	129	23.45
	51 and over	47	8.55
	Sum	550	100
Residence	Village	27	4.91
	Governorate	64	11.64
	City	459	83.45
	Sum	550	100
Level of education	None up to grade 9	6	1.09
	Secondary	85	15.45
	Diploma	44	8.0
	Bachelor	252	45.82
	Master	88	16.0
	Doctorate	75	13.64
	Sum	550	100
Nature of work	Student	120	21.82
	Job-seeker	60	10.90
	Employee	345	62.73
	Retired	25	4.55
	Sum	550	100
Marital status	Married	387	70.36
	Single	163	29.64
	Sum	550	100

### V. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The study incorporates six thematic axes: death, sickness, women, physical traits, unfavorable characteristics and 'other'. Figure 1 below shows the arithmetical mean of findings for frequency of euphemism use across the six axes,

<sup>3</sup> [https://publications-img.qurancomplex.gov.sa/?p=44&mushaf\\_pageno=116&imagewidth=550](https://publications-img.qurancomplex.gov.sa/?p=44&mushaf_pageno=116&imagewidth=550)

<sup>4</sup> [https://publications-img.qurancomplex.gov.sa/?p=44&mushaf\\_pageno=485&imagewidth=550](https://publications-img.qurancomplex.gov.sa/?p=44&mushaf_pageno=485&imagewidth=550)

<sup>5</sup> [https://publications-img.qurancomplex.gov.sa/?p=44&mushaf\\_pageno=152&imagewidth=550](https://publications-img.qurancomplex.gov.sa/?p=44&mushaf_pageno=152&imagewidth=550)

arranged according to the responses of the study sample. It is revealed that euphemistic substitutes for unfavorable qualities are the most known and used, while those for physical features come last. This reveals that the Saudi population shows lower tolerance towards discussing malicious or undesirable human behavior, but feels less reluctant to talk about physical appearance. It is suggested that this finding has much to do with religious background, as Islam shows zero tolerance towards vices, and the glorious Quran stipulates that God created man in the best form and that Muslims should appreciate the work of God.

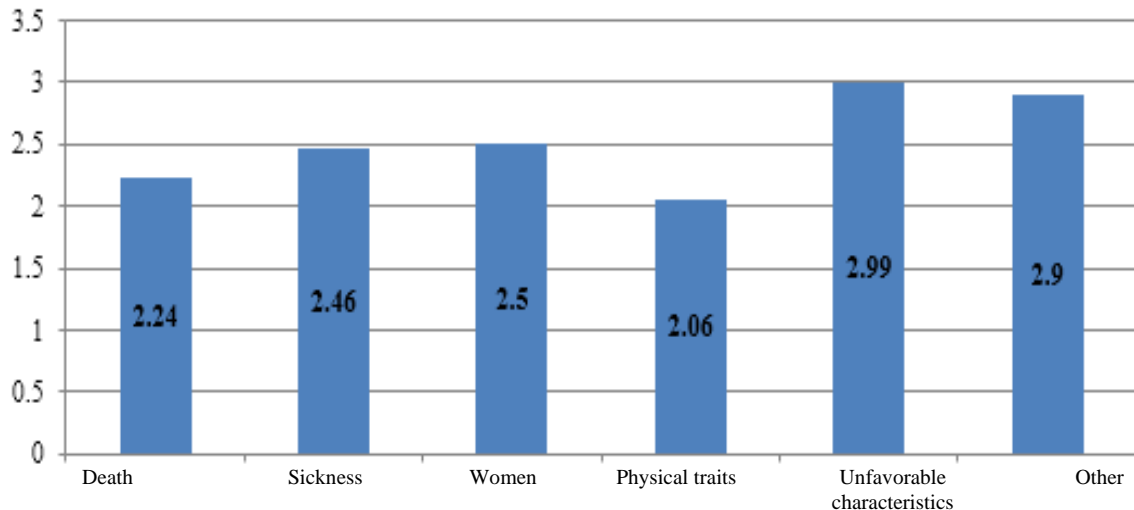


Figure 1. Mean Average Scores for the Six Thematic Axes in Line With the Responses of the Study Sample

The findings recorded from this study reveal a variance in the degree to which each of the 45 euphemistic expressions are known and used in speech. This is shown in Tables 3, 4, 5 & 6, which provide each expression investigated along with its direct meaning, and English translation, and the results for usage:

TABLE 3

SN	Euphemistic expression in Arabic	Literal Meaning in Arabic	Meaning in English	Arithmetic Mean				
				I know it and I always use it	I know it and I usually use it	I know it and I rarely use it	I know it but I do not use it	I neither know it nor use it
1	جاب العيد	أخطأ	Made a mistake		4.11			
2	ثقل دم	شخص ليس له قبول	---		3.81			
3	أبو وجهين	منافق	Two-faced person		3.80			
4	عينه حارة	حسود	Put the evil eye		3.70			
5	وجه قوي	قليل الحياء	Shameless		3.62			
6	لسانه طويل	بذيء الكلام	Use vulgar words		3.59			
7	قعيطي	بخيل	Stingy		3.50			

TABLE 4

SN	Euphemistic expression in Arabic	Literal Meaning in Arabic	Meaning in English	Arithmetic Mean				
				I know it and I always use it	I know it and I usually use it	I know it and I rarely use it	I know it but I do not use it	I neither know it nor use it
8	يعطي من الرخيص	يستخسر	Cheap (person)			3.50		
9	يملح / يبهر الكلام	كاذب	Liar			3.38		
10	ما عليها صلاة	حائض	Has her period			3.37		
11	بائع حياته	متهور	Reckless			3.34		
12	خال	أسمر اللون	Black (person)			3.26		
13	طيب	ضعيف الشخصية	Weak character			3.21		
14	على نياته	ضعيف الشخصية	Weak character			3.11		
15	الأهل	الزوجة	Wife			3.8		
16	علي قد عقله	مرض عقلي	Mental disorder			3.6		
17	أم العيال	الزوجة	Wife			2.98		
18	علي باب الله	فقير	Poor			2.97		
19	ذمته وسبعة	نصاب	Crook			2.94		
20	سبك	عبي	Stupid			2.93		
21	منسم	مريض عقلي	Mental disorder			2.89		
22	ذكي	عبي	Stupid			2.89		
23	يسوقها على الناس	نصاب	Crook			2.84		
24	فلان يطلبكم الحل	توفاه الله	Died			2.83		
25	جلدة	كاذب	Liar			2.82		
26	متخرفن	ضعيف الشخصية أمام المرأة	Weak character when dealing with women			2.81		
27	قربة مشوقة	يفشي السر	Reveal secrets			2.76		
28	زلاية	جبان	Coward			2.85		
29	وجه بارد	قليل الحياء	Shameless			2.64		

TABLE 5

SN	Euphemistic expression in Arabic	Literal Meaning in Arabic	Meaning in English	Arithmetic Mean				
				I know it and I always use it	I know it and I usually use it	I know it and I rarely use it	I know it but I do not use it	I neither know it nor use it
30	جاب راسه	إقناع الآخرين	Persuade				2.59	
31	يده طويلة	سارق	Thief				2.57	
32	بيت الراحة	دورة المياه	W.C.				2.50	
33	ينام مع أهله	الجماع	Have intercourse with his wife				2.49	
34	ماله قلب	جبان	Coward				2.47	
35	عطاه ركية	يخلف الوعد	Break a promise				2.43	
36	البيت	الزوجة	Wife				2.30	
37	لايس ثوب ما هو له	مغرور	Snobbish				2.24	
38	خلق الله حسن	أعور	One-eyed				2.10	
39	يحل الواجب	الجماع	Have intercourse with his wife				2.5	
40	كريم عين	أعور	One-eyed				2.1	
41	عنده مكالمة من سويسرا	قضاء الحاجة	Go to the bathroom				1.94	
42	بخور السوق	يفشي السر	Reveal a secret				1.84	

TABLE 6

SN	Euphemistic expression in Arabic	Literal Meaning in Arabic	Meaning in English	Arithmetic Mean				
				I know it and I always use it	I know it and I usually use it	I know it and I rarely use it	I know it but I do not use it	I neither know it nor use it
43	فلان توسدها	توفاه الله	Died					1.65
44	جاته الرحمة	الزكام	The flu					1.43
45	الشوفة	الزوجة	Wife					1.23

## VI. RESULTS

The findings of the study as presented in the previous section have uncovered that, although slang is generally thought to be obscene and profane, and that the word "vulgar" was originally synonymous to "slang", a good part of slang in fact has a courteous and face-saving component. The results also reveal that modern Saudis are very much acquainted with euphemisms in their language and that they are inclined to employ these in everyday situations wherever appropriate.

In addition, the findings also indicate that the attitudes of speakers towards the use of euphemisms vary according to their gender. It is revealed that women use euphemism more than men, perhaps pointing to greater timidity in language use on the part of women. This is in contrast to the findings of Rabab'ah, Ghaleb and Al-Qarni (2012), which did not find differences in strategic euphemism choice by gender in Saudi Arabic.

Moreover, the attitudes of speakers towards the use of euphemisms vary according to age, with those aged between 31 and 40 making the most extensive use of euphemisms. This is generally the age at which people are at their best in terms of mental and physical concentration and performance.

The study also suggests that the attitudes of speakers towards the use of euphemisms vary according to region. Urban residents use euphemism more than rural residents do. This finding is also normal and rather to be expected, since urban dwellers are considered more 'civilized' than rural and pastoral people, in which the latter group are generally considered to speak rather more freely and naturally.

The attitudes of speakers towards the use of euphemisms is shown in the study to vary based on educational background in the sense that the more educated a person is, the more he or she tends to use euphemism. The study also reveals that Saudis are generally conservative, and thus that they tend to euphemize many topics, such as descriptions of humans, genitals, bodily functions, women, occupations, sickness and death. This is considered to arise because of the potential in Saudi society for offense resulting from the direct use of speech in such events and situations and related to these areas. The findings also suggest that Saudis replace words relating to these topics with less direct expressions to avoid offense or embarrassment.

Based on the findings of the current study, the topic of sex is still the most sensitive and taboo subject from among the themes analyzed, and it is apparent that in general, people try to avoid mentioning this topic in public. Finally, the study finds that the population studied are euphemistic when describing undesirable or malicious human behavior, but feel less reluctant to talk directly about physical appearance. It is concluded that this finding has much to do with the strong religious background of the Saudi population, with Islam showing zero tolerance towards vices while the glorious Quran stipulates that God created man in the best form and that Muslims should appreciate the work of God.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the focus and findings of the current study, it is recommended that similar studies be carried out in different parts of the KSA. This will be useful in order to pinpoint regional variations and to create a more precise geographical picture of the use of euphemistic language across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, carrying out work to collect a glossary of euphemistic slang in use in Saudi Arabia would be a useful future direction for researchers in this area.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported and funded by the Deanship of Scientific Research at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) (grant number IMSIU-RG23161), for which I am very grateful. I am also heavily indebted to the University's Rector and other professors for their valuable insights and true guidance. They have been an inspiration to me throughout this study, and their useful advice has assisted me greatly with accomplishing this task. I am most appreciative of their kind help.

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# Joyful Learning Model for Javanese Speech Levels Course

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**Abstract**—As one of Indonesia's cultural heritages, regional languages, including Javanese, need to be preserved. The cultural richness of Javanese includes the politeness and manners values, as reflected in the so-called *unggah-ungguh* (speech levels). While it is taught as a course in the country's 12-year mandatory education, the teaching and learning process still follows the traditional, less appealing model. This research aims to create a Javanese speech levels learning model based on joyful learning. The model was both innovative and entertaining. The research used R&D ADDIE design with the following steps: analysis, designing, development, implementation, and evaluation. The model was developed based on two philosophies: progressivism and analytic philosophy. Syntagmatic, social system, support system, reaction principle, instructional impact, and accompaniment impact served as the model's components. Orientation, presentation of material, explanation of how to play, playing vocabulary, playing sentences, dialogue, assessment, and reflection comprised the syntagmatic model. The principles of joyful learning and the norms of honing, loving, and nurturing are included in the model social system. The model reaction principle included the teacher serving as a facilitator, planner, and assessor. Tools, media, and learning resources are all part of the model support system. Some of the instructional effects were increased Javanese vocabulary, fun learning activities, and some impacts of model accompaniment, including increased emotional sharpness, imagination, and cooperation.

**Index Terms**—Javanese speech levels, joyful learning model, politeness

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with a wide range of cultures. It is home to numerous ethnic groups. According to the Indonesia Statistics' (BPS) 2010 Population Census, approximately 1,340 ethnic groups live in the country. Javanese are its largest ethnic group. The group makes up 41 percent of Indonesia's total population. They speak their own language, the Javanese language. It is used in such provinces as Central Java, East Java, and the Special Region of Yogyakarta. There are approximately 84.3 million Javanese speakers (Wati, 2016). Some people in several countries, including New Caledonia, the Netherlands, and even South America, specifically Suriname, also speak Javanese (Quin, 2011).

The Indonesian government respects and preserves regional languages, including Javanese, as referred to in Article 32 of the 1945 Constitution. One of the government's attempts to preserve the Javanese language is granting universities permit to open a Javanese Language and Literature Education Study Program and teach Javanese language at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels in three provinces where Javanese is the native language, namely Central Java, East Java, and the Special Region of Yogyakarta.

Javanese is one of the politest languages. *Unggah-ungguh* (Javanese speech levels) is a linguistic variation in which the differences are determined by the speaker's attitude toward the interlocutor or the person being spoken to. The linguistic variation chosen will be determined by differences in age, degree, social status, and intimacy distance between the speaker and the interlocutor. When speaking, mistakenly selecting the linguistic variations will result in irregularities and might be considered impolite.

Javanese speech levels are distinguished by linguistic and non-linguistic factors. The linguistic factor is the speech itself in the form of words or sentences, whereas the non-linguistic factors are social factors in speech events, such as the speaker's social status, intimate relationship with the interlocutor, and age. In speech events, the two factors cannot be separated. Javanese has a distinct and clear speech levels used to convey politeness meanings in hierarchy. The subtle speech levels convey a high sense of politeness. Meanwhile, the medium and ordinary speech levels convey the meaning of moderate and low sense of politeness, respectively.

Poedjasoedarma (1968) classifies Javanese speech levels into three, namely: *krama* (deferential), *madya* (medium), and *ngoko* (informal). The *ngoko* speech level reflects the meaning of the interlocutor's distance from the speaker. This connotes a degree of intimacy in the relationship. Its purpose is to convey a sense of familiarity between the speaker and the interlocutor. The *krama* speech level denotes politeness and respect. Its purpose is to demonstrate courtesy or respect between the speaker and the interlocutor. Finally, the *madya* speech level has a meaning and function somewhere between *ngoko* and *krama*; it has a medium meaning and serves to demonstrate a moderate sense of politeness between the speaker and the interlocutor.

The *krama* speech is used by the speaker to communicate with an interlocutor who they have known yet, has a rank, or by a younger person to an older one, such as a student to their teacher, an employee to their superior, a servant to their employer, and a son/daughter-in-law to their parents-in-laws. Meanwhile, the *madya* speech is considered half-polite and half-rude. A speaker would use a *madya* speech level when addressing an interlocutor who is felt to be respected, but the level of appreciation and respect is moderate, such as people of low rank who are adults or of advanced age. Furthermore, the *ngoko* speech level is used by a speaker to an interlocutor to reflect a sense of distance (familiarity), such as between friends who are already acquainted, people of high social status to people of low social status, teachers to students, parents to their children, husbands to their wives or vice versa, and older siblings to their younger ones or vice versa.

Javanese speech levels regulate not only the use of *ngoko* or *krama* style, but also a person's attitude and manners when speaking. The polite way of selecting words includes moral values, characters, manners, and wisdom that can be used to develop the character of the nation's youth. However, the ability of the younger generation to master the Javanese speech levels is becoming increasingly concerning (Subroto et al., 2008; Hartono, 2013).

Based on interviews with Javanese language teachers and observations at schools, it is safe to say that students' ability to properly use Javanese speech levels is still very low. Students still stammer when speaking in Javanese *krama*, and some have the wrong idea about using Javanese speech levels. Many factors contribute to this, including the fact that they are accustomed to communicating in Indonesian or Javanese *ngoko* in their daily interactions. Obstacles to learning Javanese language in schools, according to Nurmasari et al. (2017), include Javanese language teachers' low competence, a lack of lesson hours in Javanese language learning, and the highly limited availability of Javanese language learning media. Furthermore, the Javanese speech levels course is still taught using the traditional learning model.

Based on this fact, an innovative speaking learning model is required. A learning model is a description of a learning environment (Joyce & Weil, 1996). According to Pateliya (2013), it is an instructional design that describes the process and creation of a learning environment that assists students in interacting with one another in order for behavioral changes to occur. The Javanese speech levels learning model developed in this study was designed based on language games to address the challenge of low Javanese speech level ability for elementary education level students. The model developed in this study was a joyful learning model.

A language game-based learning model is one type of joyful learning. Language game activities, according to Wright et al. (2006), are enjoyable and pleasurable. Game activities have rules and goals in addition to the element of fun (Hadfield, 2003). Language games are an effective, positive, and important method of language learning (Zhu, 2012; Korkmaz, 2013). Language games have a positive impact on learning by reducing students' anxiety (Wang et al., 2011), encouraging students to be confident to speak out (Al Jarrah et al., 2019), providing positive energy for students (Amrullah, 2005), improving students' vocabulary skills, and creating a fun learning environment for students (Huyen & Nga, 2003; Gozcu & Caganaga, 2016). Games can also be used to help children's cognitive development (Lai et al., 2018), as well as their physical, social, emotional, and linguistic developments (Lestari & Prima, 2017). Language games can be a means for (1) having fun while playing and (2) practicing specific language skills. A game cannot be called a language game if it is enjoyable, yet it does not involve practicing certain language skills. If the game is not enjoyable, even if it helps learners train specific language skills, it cannot be called a language game either.

Based on the previously mentioned opinions, the characteristics of language games are fun, friendly to children, and able to help increase children's learning motivation, develop children's imagination, spontaneity, sportsmanship, and cooperation, as well as improve students' language skills. Language games are extremely beneficial when used in language learning, be it Indonesian or foreign languages. For this reason, it can be assumed that language games can also be used in Javanese language learning, particularly in learning the Javanese speech levels.

Language games come in a variety of forms. Not all language games are appropriate for educational purposes. Several factors must be considered when selecting a language game, including the aspects of skills to be developed, student characteristics, learning objectives, supporting infrastructure, and student ability levels. Zhu (2012) discusses various types of language games, such as guessing games, picture games, sound games, mime, debates, jigsaw puzzle, and role plays. Buttner (2013) also discusses different language games that can be used to practice language skills, such as guessing words, card stack challenges, guessing games, hot potato sentences, circling words, labelling it in time, and college quiz bowl.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research and development (R&D) model used in this study is the one developed by Branch (2009) which offers a development model called ADDIE. The steps for developing the ADDIE model are analysis, designing, development, implementation, and evaluation.

### *Data Source*

The data in this study included teacher and student's needs for the Javanese speech levels learning model based on language games, as well as the expert validation on the developed learning model. The data on student's needs were collected from 100 junior high school students throughout Central Java Province, while the data on teacher's needs were collected from 10 Javanese language teachers throughout Central Java Province. The data were also validated by experts specializing in learning model, learning devices, teaching materials, and learning assessment.

### *Data Collection Technique*

Documentation, interviews, and questionnaires were used to collect the data. The documentation was the teacher's notes about the teaching and learning process, such as the students' Javanese speech levels grades, lesson plans, curriculum, assessment system, and textbooks used, as well as field notes about what they saw, heard, and experienced while out in the field. Javanese language teachers and students were interviewed. These interviews were intended to discover the true conditions of learning Javanese in schools. In addition, the researchers distributed questionnaires. Two questionnaires were used to figure out (i) the needs analysis for the learning model and (ii) the expert validation for the learning model to be developed.

### *Data Analysis Technique*

The data in this study were analyzed qualitatively in two stages, namely preliminary data analysis and development data analysis. In the preliminary stage, the data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1992) analysis model, which consisted of four steps: data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. The collected data were described as materials for developing a learning model prototype. Furthermore, the expert validation analysis was performed during the development stage. The expert data were tabulated, and the average of each component was calculated. The data were then clearly described to make the product's flaws visible. On the advice of these experts, various types of flaws were corrected. The researchers and the learning model experts continued to collaborate during the data analysis process to achieve the best possible results.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. Results

#### *(a). Learning Model Needs Analysis*

A questionnaire was used to collect the data on the needs for a learning model. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 junior high school students in Central Java. Out of this number, 25 students were from SMPN 3 Satu Atap Sayung, Demak Regency, another 25 from SMPN 5 Surakarta, still another 25 from SMPN 6 Magelang City, and the remaining 25 students were from SMPN 2 Jambu, Semarang Regency. These schools were chosen to represent the population of Central Java by alternating between schools in urban areas and schools in rural areas. Schools located in urban areas were represented by SMPN 5 Surakarta City and SMPN 6 Magelang City, and schools located in rural areas were represented by SMPN 3 Satu Atap Sayung, Demak Regency, and SMPN 2 Jambu, Semarang Regency. This study used Macalister and Nation's (2010) theory of needs analysis, which included necessities, wants, and lack. The following is an examination of student needs for a learning model.



TABLE 1  
ANALYSIS OF STUDENT'S NEEDS FOR LEARNING MODEL

Aspect	Question	Question Item	Percentage	
			Agree	Dis-agree
<i>Necessities</i>	The urgency and role of learning Javanese	Preserving Javanese language	99	1
		Cultivating ethical values and manners	97	3
		Replacing the role of Indonesian language	12	88
<i>Want</i>	Students' desires to learn Javanese speech levels	Model Concept		
		Designed with fun concept	99	1
		Combined with singing activities	81	19
		Learning Methods		
		Game method	95	5
		Discussion method	93	7
		Hands-on method	59	41
		Lecture method	26	74
		Learning Topics		
		Culture	95	5
		Health	78	22
		Social	73	27
		Economy	53	47
		Politics	20	80
		Learning Media		
		Audio visual	94	6
		Visual	82	18
		Audio	27	73
		Scoring System		
		Written	83	32
		Spoken & written	68	32
Spoken	31	69		
Teaching Materials				
Presented concepts and examples	96	4		
More than one color design	82	8		
<i>Lack</i>	Things students have not mastered in the Javanese speech level learning	Not fluent in Javanese <i>ngoko</i>	32	68
		Limited <i>krama</i> vocabulary	89	11
		Not fluent in Javanese <i>krama</i>	83	17
		Unable to compose <i>krama</i> sentences in Javanese	81	19
		Do not understand the concept of Javanese speech levels	55	45

### *Necessities*

The urgency and role of learning Javanese speech levels in society served as the *necessities* in this study. Based on the questionnaire responses, it was found that learning Javanese speech levels was considered urgent or important to introduce, preserve and inculcate ethical values and manners in the society. Nearly all (99%) students agreed that the Javanese speech levels course was needed to preserve the Javanese language. When a statement was made that Javanese language course was needed to replace the role of the national language, the majority of students disagreed.

### *Wants*

Students' desire to learn Javanese speech levels, which included the concept of models, learning methods, learning topics, learning media and assessment systems, served as the *wants*. Based on the questionnaire responses, it was found that students wanted a fun learning model concept. They disagreed with the concept of serious learning. They also wanted an interlude with singing activities to reduce the tension. Furthermore, the learning methods that students preferred were games (95%), discussions (93%), direct practices (59%) and they disliked lecture as the learning method. Regarding the learning topics that students liked, 95% of students liked cultures, 78% like health, 73% like social issues, while the topics that students disliked was politic. The questionnaire given to students also asked the learning media they used in learning. The result was that 94% of the students liked audio-visual media, 82% liked visual media, with no students really liking the audio media. The next issue was related to the assessment system. The questionnaire revealed that 83% of the students preferred written assessments, 68% preferred oral and written assessments and the 31% of them preferred oral assessment. Finally, on the teaching materials, students preferred teaching materials that presented concepts and examples and designed with more than one color.

### *Lacks*

*Lacks* referred to the things that students had not mastered in Javanese speech level learning. The questionnaire data showed that the students did not have much difficulty speaking Javanese *ngoko* style. They found it difficult to speak Javanese *krama* style. No less than 89% of the students stated that they had limited *krama* vocabulary, 83% were not fluent in speaking Javanese *krama*, 81% were unable to compose sentences in Javanese *krama* style, and 55% did not understand the concept of Javanese speech levels.

### (b). *Expert Validation Test*

The expert validation test was a process of testing the prototype learning models by experts. The experts involved in this process were those who had expertise in learning devices, learning models, teaching materials, and learning assessments. The validation test was carried out to get inputs, suggestions and an assessment of the learning model developed and to discover whether or not it met the eligibility standards as a learning model worthy of being tested in learning. Table 2 shows the results of the expert validation test.

TABLE 2  
EXPERT VALIDATION RESULTS

Aspect of Validation	Expert Judgment		Average	Category
	1	2		
Model concept	87	89	88	Valid
Learning Media	85	86	85.5	Valid
Teaching materials	89	90	89.5	Valid
Evaluation	82	84	83	Valid

(c). Final Version of Learning Model

The Javanese speech level learning model was developed based on two philosophies, namely a combination of the philosophy of education and the philosophy of language. The philosophy of education used herein was progressivism, and the philosophy of language was the analytic philosophy. The learning model developed had various components, namely syntagmatic, social system, support system, reaction principle, instructional impact and accompaniment impact. The syntagmatic model included orientation, presentation of material, explanation of how to play, vocabulary play, sentence play, dialogue, assessment and reflection.

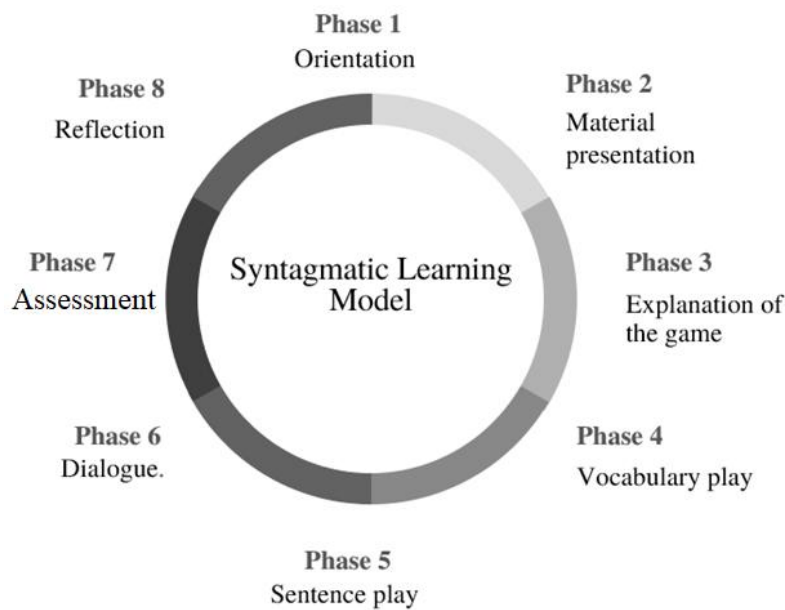


Chart 1. Syntagmatic Learning Model

In addition to the syntagmatic model, other components of the game-based learning model for Javanese speech levels course were social system, support system, reaction principle, instructional impact, and accompaniment impact. The model social system included the principles of joyful learning and the norms of *asah* (honing), *asih* (loving), and *asuh* (nurturing). The reaction principle required the teacher to serve as a facilitator, planner and assessor. The support system included tools, media and learning resources. The instructional impacts included increasing the number of Javanese vocabulary, improving the ability to appropriately use Javanese speech levels, and creating fun learning activities. Finally, the accompaniment impact involved honing emotional sharpness, imagination, and cooperation. The following is a chart of the components of Javanese speech level learning model.

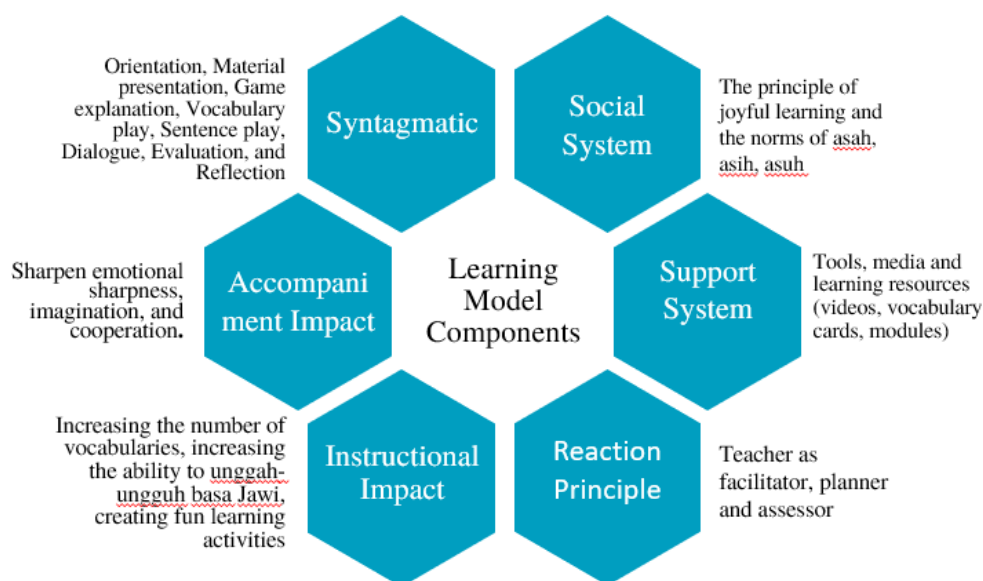


Chart 2. Components of the Javanese Speech Level Learning Model

## B. Discussion

### (a). *The Philosophy and Theory Underlying the Development of Learning Model*

The learning model was created with the progressivism and analytic philosophies in mind. The progressivism philosophy emerged as a reaction to traditional educational patterns, which continued to employ traditional teaching methods. In relation to the progressivism philosophy, Gezer (2018) argues that progressivism philosophy supports student-centered teaching and learning process. The flow of progressivism philosophy encourages new ideas that are thought to be better for the development of future education. The progressivism philosophy requires its followers to always advance and develop (progressive) and to act in a constructive, innovative, reformative, active, and dynamic way to develop the potentials that exist within themselves (Salu & Triyanto, 2017).

Humanism learning theory is the foundation of progressivism philosophy. According to this theory, students are human beings with various potentials and characteristics. As a result, in this perspective, students are positioned as both the subjects and objects of teaching and learning activities, while teachers serve as facilitators or dialogue partners (Jingna, 2012). Furthermore, Sanusi (2013) states that humanism education always emphasizes communication, personal and group relationships in the school setting. Humanization is the goal of learning according to the humanistic school of thought. Students are the center of teaching and learning activities in humanistic learning, with teachers acting as facilitators rather than dictators, focusing learning on students actively through cooperative and democratic education, and eliminating punishment. If a punishment is imposed, it should be educational rather than physical in nature.

Along with progressivism philosophy, the Javanese speech level learning model was developed based on analytical philosophy. The confusion in understanding the explanation of philosophies leads to analytical philosophy. Many theories and philosophical concepts are presented in perplexing language that is even more removed from everyday language. Because of the confusion and lack of clarity in the use of language in philosophy, philosophy is viewed as a difficult, confusing, and unclear science that many people find difficult to study.

Analytical philosophy has infiltrated the study of languages, particularly through pragmatism viewpoints. The term pragmatics is derived from the Latin word "pragma," meaning "intentional or conscious action." Language teaching from a pragmatic perspective assumes that structural language studies will be ineffective and will create numerous obstacles when combined with practical language use in the field. A person's pragmatic abilities are required in language activities. With its pragmatic form, it is expected that students will be able to use the target language in the context that underpins real-world language activities. It is not possible to achieve good communication skills solely by studying language structurally. This is due to the fact that many non-linguistic factors affect the communication process. In this case, the pragmatic approach to language learning is quite beneficial in a language learning that is oriented toward practical communication.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, with his two major works, *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations*, is the figure of analytical philosophy who has a complete and innovative concept. Language logic is explained in *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, while language games are explained in *Philosophical Investigations* (Kaelan, 2004). In essence, language games are enjoyable and can help individuals improve language skills (Djuanda, 2006). Language

games have long been used in Western countries such as the United States and European countries (Zhu, 2012). The goal of language games is to teach children while they are having fun (Lewis & Bedson, 1999).

(b). *Syntagmatic Model of Javanese Speech Level Learning*

Syntagmatic is a systematic series of activities, or the so-called stages, in the learning model. Each learning model has a different syntagmatic. The syntagmatic model of Javanese speech level learning included orientation, material presentation, instruction of how to play, vocabulary play, sentence play, dialogue, assessment and reflection.

TABLE 3  
SYNTAGMATIC MODEL OF JAVANESE SPEECH LEVEL LEARNING

Phase/Step	Activity
Phase 1 Orientation	Learning began with activities of describing the basic competencies to be studied, learning objectives, subject matter, benefits of learning and learning procedures. This stage was the initial stage for students to prepare themselves for the learning.
Phase 2 Material presentation	The learning materials presented in this model were related to the types of Javanese language lexicon, the concept of Javanese speech levels, the application of Javanese speech levels in society and materials about dialogue. The media used to deliver the learning materials were videos on Javanese speech levels and slideshow media.
Phase 3 Game Explanation	At this stage the teacher explained the steps of the game to be played. The teacher must make sure that the students understood the steps of the game. If needed, the teacher could demonstrate the procedure for the game. The Javanese speech level learning model consisted of 3 levels. Level 1 was the basic level. The purpose of the level 1 game was to improve students' ability in mastering the Javanese <i>ngoko</i> , <i>krama</i> and <i>krama inggil</i> lexicon. Level 2 game was the medium one. This level 2 game aimed to increase students' understanding of the concept of Javanese speech levels. Finally, the level 3 game aimed to improve students' skills in using Javanese speech levels properly.
Phase 4 Vocabulary play	It was important for students to master vocabulary, because it was what people need first for speaking a language. The first stage of vocabulary play was playing <i>ngoko</i> and <i>krama</i> vocabulary. At this stage, students matched the vocabulary of <i>ngoko</i> and <i>krama</i> with their friends. The vocabularies were written on a vocabulary necklace. The vocabulary necklaces were distributed in front of the class and then students were asked to choose and wear the vocabulary necklaces. For example, a student wore a "putih" (white) vocabulary necklace ( <i>ngoko</i> ), then he/she must find his/her friend who wore a "pethak" vocabulary necklace ( <i>krama</i> ). Upon the students' mastery of <i>ngoko</i> and <i>krama</i> vocabularies, then the level was raised to play the vocabulary of <i>ngoko</i> , <i>krama</i> , and <i>krama inggil</i> . Students matched the vocabulary of <i>ngoko</i> , <i>krama</i> and <i>krama inggil</i> with their friends. For example, a student wore the "omah" (home) vocabulary necklace ( <i>ngoko</i> ), then he/she had to look for his/her friends who wore the "griya" vocabulary necklace ( <i>krama</i> ), and "dalem" vocabulary necklace ( <i>krama inggil</i> ).
Phase 5 Sentence play	At this stage, students practiced on how to use the sentences based on Javanese speech levels. The tools used in sentence play were character cards and vocabulary cards. The character cards were those cards that contained figures in the community such as father, mother, older and younger brother/sister, grandmother, grandfather, uncle, aunt and so on, while the vocabulary card was a 10 x 7 cm card containing vocabulary of frequently used verbs in the society, for example eating, sleeping, bathing, walking, talking and so on. At this stage the class was divided into several groups. Each group consisted of 5 students. The character cards and vocabulary cards were placed in the middle of the group. The teacher opened a character card, and each student took one vocabulary card. Students must make sentences using the subject based on the character cards taken and the predicate based on the vocabulary cards taken by the teacher. When students made sentences, they must relate them to the most appropriate words.
Phase 6 Dialogue	This stage was when students showed their speaking skills. Students practiced dialogue by appropriately and correctly applying the concept of Javanese speech levels. The media used were dialogue cards. A dialogue card was a card that contained the context of a dialogue, for example having a dialogue with the village head discussing the commemoration of Independence Day. At this stage, students were divided into several groups. Each group consisted of 3-4 students. The dialogue card was placed in the middle of the group. One of the students took a dialogue card. Students read the instructions in the dialogue card, then they practiced it by applying the Javanese speech levels.
Phase 7 Evaluation	In this stage, the aspects being assessed included attitude, and knowledge and skills competencies. Students' attitude, both social and spiritual ones, was assessed during and after the teaching and learning process. The knowledge competency was assessed during the teaching and learning process and the skills competency was assessed after the teaching and learning process. The instrument used to assess the attitude competency was a questionnaire. Meanwhile, the knowledge and the skill competencies were assessed using a written test and a performance test, respectively.
Phase 8 Reflection	Learning reflection was carried out after the learning process took place, aiming to assess and observe the learning's strengths and weaknesses. Once found, the strengths were maintained, and the weaknesses were corrected. This was to make the developed model a better model.

(c). *Social System*

The social system referred to the norms and principles used in the model application. In the model application, the principles used were the principles of joyful learning, and the norms were honing, loving, and nurturing. The social system also depicted the relationships emerging between the teachers and the students. The social system in the joyful learning-based model for Javanese speech level course included: (i) the application of joyful learning by teachers, (ii) the honing, loving, and nurturing norms applicable in the implementation of learning model, (iii) the communication emerging between teachers and students, and between students themselves, (iv) students' improved learning motivation thanks to the fact that the learning was done outside the classroom through games, (v) students being not afraid of

speaking or expressing their opinions in the learning, (vi) students' increasingly honed imaginations with fun learning concepts and without psychological pressure; and (vii) students' improved senses of kinship, tolerance, and self-respect.

(d). *Reaction Principle*

The reaction principle was a set of activities that described how teachers should interact with their students, including how they should react to what their students did. The teacher in the Javanese speech level learning model should play the role of a facilitator, meaning that they should help students in such a way that their students had a genuine learning experience. The teacher also had to serve as a planner, who designed learning experiences that included teacher-student, student-student, and student-environment interactions. Furthermore, the teacher served as an assessor, meaning that they must be able to provide constructive feedback and assessment to students. When learning problems arose, the teacher acted as a counsellor, a consultant and sometimes a friendly critic.

(e). *Support System*

A support system was anything that could be used to help students achieve their learning goals. The tools, media, and learning resources used to support learning were referred to as the support system. Laptop computers and projectors were used as learning tools in the model. These learning tools were used in the classroom to teach theories. They were also linked to the media used in the learning model, such as cards and video. The media were used to help students practice to use Javanese speech levels properly. Furthermore, reference books, teaching materials, dictionaries, and teachers were used as learning resources in the Javanese speech level learning model. School culture, in addition to school facilities and infrastructure, could be used to support the learning process. The school culture that taught students to be polite could be used as a support for the learning process.

(f). *Instructional Impact and Accompaniment Impact*

The instructional impact was the direct impact of learning activities, whereas the accompaniment impact was an additional effect obtained by students while learning to use a language game-based learning model. The instructional impacts included: increased students' mastery of Javanese vocabulary, students' improved comprehension of the concept and correct application of the Javanese speech levels, fun learning activities, comfortable and relaxed learning conditions, students' higher confidence to speak and less fear of making mistakes in using the Javanese speech levels. Furthermore, the Javanese speech level learning model based on joyful learning was accompanied by the following benefits: developing a sportsmanship attitude, making students more active and creative in learning, honing emotional sharpness, imagination, and cooperation, as well as optimizing the right and left hemispheres of the brain, because it balanced the logic and emotions.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The syntagmatic, social system, support system, reaction principle, instructional impact, and accompaniment impact components were developed as part of the Javanese speech level learning model. The developed model had been tested. As a result, the model could be used effectively and efficiently in learning the Javanese speech levels. This could be seen in the test results of students who used the Javanese speech level learning model versus those who did not use the Javanese speech level learning model. The average score of students taught with the Javanese speech level learning model was 72.6, while the average score of students taught with other models was 64.5.

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# Exploring the Dynamic Relationship Between Caste and Gender in Bama's Two Novels

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**Abstract**—This research explores the dynamic relationship between gender and caste in the select novels of Bama, a prominent Tamil Dalit writer. Drawing on feminist and Dalit literary theories, this study analyzes Bama's novels, *Karukku* and *Sangati*, to reveal the nuanced ways in which gender and caste intersect that shape the lives of Dalit women. Through close readings of Bama's narratives, the article highlights the systemic violence, discrimination, and marginalization faced by Dalit women. She fearlessly scrutinizes the role of family, church, school, and government in inflicting both physical and psychological harm on the Dalit community. She emphasizes the need for collective struggle against this systemic favoritism as the key to individual liberation. Bama's literary work brings to the fore the critical importance of comprehending the complex interplay between gender and caste in the context of oppression. Through her writing, she illuminates the agency and unwavering determination of Dalit women as they strive for social justice and equality.

**Index Terms**—intersection, Dalit literature, caste, gender, marginalization

## I. INTRODUCTION

The intersection of gender and caste has enslaved the inner voice of women in Dalit community in India. Women and Dalits have been targets of violence instituted and practiced by upper castes and patriarchal structures. Any violation of hierarchy by Dalits or women is handled only by resorting to violence by the dominant structures of power. Dalit writers, in Tamil like Bama, probe how these institutions operate against Dalit women. Bama's literary works in Tamil Dalit fiction, known as writing from the margin, represent a groundbreaking and transformative contribution. As a Dalit woman, Bama brings her unique perspective to the forefront, unfolds her personal and professional experiences while exploring the various contexts that shape her life. Through her writing, she vividly portrays the intersectionality of her identity as a Dalit, highlighting the compounded marginalization she faces due to her gender, social class, and religious background, "thereby creating their (dalit) consciousness and dalit identity among the dalits" (Aziz, 2015, p. 78). In her literary works, Bama utilizes the lexicon and vernacular expressions of marginalized communities.

Bama's novels, including *Karukku* and *Sangati*, often commence by delving into the childhood experiences of the protagonists. Ruchi Tomar states that, "Dalit women's voices have been muted and kept in silence. Hence, there is a need to articulate their visions and build their own praxis and theory" (Tomar, 2021, p. 1). In a similar vein, Bama herself began these narratives by recounting her own childhood. During her school years, Bama faced mistreatment and discrimination based on her caste and race. The ugliness and stigma associated with untouchability puzzled her, as she witnessed her community being disregarded and despised by both teachers and classmates. Like many other Dalit girls, she was relegated to the last bench of the classroom, symbolizing the marginalization they endured.

In the early 1990s, Bama played a significant role in the examination of the interconnections between gender and caste in the lives of Dalits by actively engaging with the discourse of Dalit literature. Dalits need to have a political consciousness or enlightenment, not just more degrees from universities. If *Karukku* upholds education, *Sangati* foregrounds organized agitation. The paper intends to analyze the intricate ways in which gender and caste intersect in the lives of Dalits and underscores the violence, discrimination and violence faced by dalit women in particular in Bama's *Karukku* and *Sangati*. As Mangalam says, "An inquiry into the modes of violence against Dalit women as represented by Dalit writers would bring to focus the complex intersection of caste and gender principles as they operate in our society" (Mangalam, 2023, p. 11).

## II. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research are to analyze the portrayal of female characters within the Dalit context, exploring how caste hierarchies influence their experiences, identities, and agency. Additionally, it seeks to examine the ways in which Bama's narratives challenge or reinforce prevailing societal norms and contribute to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted relationship between gender and caste in contemporary Indian literature.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a multidisciplinary approach that integrates qualitative content analysis of Bama's novels. The aim is to identify prevalent themes and character portrayals concerning the dynamics of gender and caste. Furthermore, a



comparative analysis is conducted to juxtapose Bama's depictions with pertinent theoretical frameworks from gender studies and caste studies. This analysis aims to illuminate the intricate interactions between gender and caste identities, employing intersectionality as a guiding concept.

#### IV. CASTE AND GENDER IN *KARUKKU*

Within the domain of Tamil literature, Bama's *Karukku* stands out as a pioneering piece, as it represents the inaugural autobiography authored by a Dalit woman. Its publication in 1992 heralded a new era of self-expression and empowerment for Dalit women, giving voice to their experiences and challenging the prevailing social and literary norms. As Salini says, "A Dalit woman's autobiography should not be subsumed under the category of a mere personal narrative that traces the trajectory of her personal development; rather it is to be seen as a social discourse and commentary of her life experiences in a historical context that saw Dalit woman as non-existent and shaded by the mainstream upper caste men, women and the Dalit men (Salini Jayaprakash, 2016, p. 50). Thenmozhi observes, "While Bama's famous work *Karukku* speaks about the Dalit experiences, it attempts to how the author's childhood is interspersed with events that repetitively propel her to raise ultimate questions regarding equality, double oppression, and untouchability which the society considers unfeasible" (Thenmozhi, 2022, p. 66). The novel traces realization of Bama as a Dalit and a child's journey of spiritual growth within the Catholic faith.

Bama opines in her introduction, "*Karukku* means Palmyra leaves, that, with their serrated edges on both sides, or like double-edged swords. By felicitous pun, the Tamil word *Karukku*, containing the word *Karu* embryo or seed also indicates freshness and newness" (Bama, 2017, p. xv). The novelist observes in Hebrews 4:12 (New Testament), "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing to this decision of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Bama, *Karukku*, 2017, p. xv). In her life she had astringent experiences for being a Dalit woman. The novel portrays the struggles faced by the Paraiyar community and highlights the entrenched caste-based discrimination that permeates their existence.

##### A. *Double Marginalization*

Bama explores the notion of double marginalization experienced by Dalit women. They face discrimination both within the Dalit community and in society at large. The narrative serves as a compelling expression of a marginalized individual, reflecting the painful ordeals she and others endure as victims of both societal and linguistic exclusion. Bama's character and identity have been shaped by her own personal and deeply painful experiences, which she candidly reflects upon in the preface of her book *Karukku*. The intense and poignant suffering she endured from childhood onwards has played a pivotal role in motivating her writing. In Bama's Preface to the first edition, she states, "In order to change this state of affairs, all dalits who have been deprived of their basic rights must function as God's word, piercing to the very heart. Instead of being more and more beaten down and blunted, they unite, think about their rights and battle for them" (Bama, *Karukku*, 2017, p. xxiv). She further says,

the driving force that shaped this book are many: events that occurred during many steps of my life, cutting me like *Karukku* and making me bleed; unjust social structures that plunged me ... my own desperate urge to break, throw away, and destroy these bonds; and when the changed were shattered into fragments, the bold that was split- all these taken together. (Bama, *Karukku*, 2017, p. xxiii)

Dalit girls are subjugated, even within the confines of their own homes, where they are relegated to subordinate roles compared to their male counterparts. In Paraiyar village, these roles are further reinforced through games where boys assume the personas of Naickers, signifying upper-caste landlords, while girls are relegated to the roles of 'Pannaiyaals', symbolizing laborers on farms. These childhood games perpetuate a power dynamic where males consistently occupy superior positions. Girls, in their own Dalit households, bear the brunt of oppression, lacking protective figures. This vulnerable status sometimes drives them to extreme measures, such as digging for earthworms or catching fish from ponds to satiate their hunger, unless they are caught and harassed by upper-caste authorities. While boys and girls engage in communal play, certain pleasures are reserved exclusively for boys, like riding buffaloes or engaging in water snake hunting, further reinforcing gender disparities and discrimination.

Bama was in third grade when she first learned about untouchability. Her first encounter with this dehumanizing practice was both humorous and heartbreaking. One afternoon, on her way back from school, she noticed a respected elder from her community holding a tiny bundle of snacks fastened to a string. He was holding the string and walking towards a Naicker man in the village. Bama was amused by the sight of the elder man walking in such a strange way. She laughed out loud. But then she realized that there was nothing funny about the situation. The elder man was being forced to debase himself because of his caste. He was not even allowed to touch the packet of snacks that he was carrying. This incident had a profound impact on Bama. She realized that untouchability was a serious problem that needed to be addressed. She vowed to educate herself and work for the betterment of her community. Bama writes: "What did it mean when they called us 'Paraiya'? had the name become that obscene? But we too are human beings. Our people should never run these petty errands for these fellows. We should work in their fields, take home our wages, and leave it at that" (Bama, *Karukku*, 2017, p. 16). Bama, having endured the oppression of untouchability, began to seek ways to empower herself and her community. Her brother provided her with guidance, emphasizing that education was the sole means to attain equality. According to him, her brother expressed his opinion that:

Because we are born into the Paraiya jati, we are never given any honour or dignity or respect. We are stripped of all that. But if we study and make progress, we can throw away these indignities. So study with care, learn all you can. If you are always ahead in your lessons, people will come to you of their own accord and attach themselves to you. Work hard and learn". (Bama, *Karukku*, 2017, pp. 17-18)

The counsel from Bama's older brother left a deep and lasting impact on her. She was resolute to show herself and achieve her goals. From the day her brother spoke to her, she worked tirelessly in her studies, pouring all her heart and soul into her education. She was determined to be the best student in her class. Bama writes: "In fact, because of that, many people become my friends, even though I am a Paraichi" (Bama, *Karukku*, 2017, p. 18). During her educational journey, Bama constantly encounters a stark reminder of her marginalization through the persistent presence of untouchability wherever she ventures.

### B. *Patriarchy and Caste*

Bama discusses how women in her community are subjected to oppression not just from the upper-caste individuals but also from men within their Dalit community. Bama reflects on the rigid gender roles and expectations placed on women, their lack of agency, and the discrimination they face, both within their homes and in the broader society. Bama's personal experiences and observations as a woman within the Dalit Christian community provide a lens through which she explores the intersection of caste and gender discrimination. "What Bama faces in the society is that Dalits are denied self – respect and identity. They are refused to be recognized as a part of the mainstream society and are thrown out of the space. They are treated as untouchables and are considered impure because of their occupation associated filth are dirt. Moreover, they are considered 'outcaste' because they fall outside the four fold caste system i.e. Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, shudra and are excluded from the Vedas. In the name of caste and social hierarchical system, the Dalits are exploited" (Pandit, 2019, p. 13844).

Dalit women occupy the lowest rung of the social hierarchy, facing multiple forms of oppression: caste, class, and gender. They are forced to fight for survival, facing discrimination and violence from their own community. Dalit women work alongside men, but they receive lower wages and less respect. They are also more likely to be subjected to sexual harassment and assault. At home, Dalit women face the additional challenges of early marriage, absence of education, and health issues related to childbearing at a young age. Their position in society is still deplorable, and they suffer greatly for being both Dalit and female. They are not spared from anguish and harassment, and their lives are often characterized by struggle and hardship.

The novel is a powerful indictment of patriarchy and its oppressive impact on Dalit women, who is forced to endure a lifetime of suffering and humiliation at the hands of men, both within and outside of her community. Bama (2017), on the violence and exploitation of Dalit women by men of upper castes writes, "My father used to say that if a Dalit woman is beaten, it is not a crime. He said that it is like beating a dog" (Bama, *Karukku*, 2017, p. 15). Further asserts that "The upper-caste men would come and stare at the Dalit women while they were bathing in the river. They would make lewd remarks and gestures. Sometimes, they would even try to molest the women" (Bama, *Karukku*, 2017, p. 20).

Patriarchy is embedded in Dalit culture and traditions. She is forced to marry at a young age, even though she does not want to. She is also expected to obey her husband and father without question. It is used to justify the violence and exploitation of Dalit women and limits the opportunities and choices available to women. She emphasizes the need for Dalit men to become allies in the struggle for gender justice, highlighting the importance of collective liberation within oppressed communities. Bama underscores the need for dismantling not only caste-based hierarchies but also gender-based inequalities.

Dalits face caste discrimination in every aspect of their lives, including their search for jobs and housing. Bama secures a teaching position in a school, but she soon realizes the harsh reality of caste discrimination. Her colleagues are reluctant to accept her education because she is a Dalit. To her dismay, Bama also encounters caste discrimination within the convent institutions. She observes, "Before they became nuns, these women take a vow that they will live in poverty. But that is just a sham. The convent does not know the meaning of poverty" (Bama, *Karukku*, 2017, p. 77). Further, she states, "It is only the upper-caste Christians who enjoy the benefits and comforts of the Church ... And if Dalits become priests or nuns; they are pushed aside and marginalized first of all, before the rest go about their business" (Bama, *Karukku*, 2017, p. 80). Bama reveals the discrimination meted out to her by the Telugu nuns who look down upon Tamils. Bama declares that, "I began to understand, little by little, that in that order, Tamil people were looked upon as a lower caste. And then among Tamils, Parayas were a separate category" (Bama, *Karukku*, 2017, p. 24).

Bama recounts her personal experiences in the village she originated from, highlighting how even the concept of worship underwent a complete transformation based on one's caste. Power and authority act as a major role in this dynamic, and the belief in God takes on a curious form, influenced by wealth and influence. Even if individuals change their religion, their circumstances and treatment remain unchanged. The higher class Christian people enjoy the benefits provided by the church, while the ignorance of the Dalits is exploited, serving as a capital for their caste. This exploitation allows them to establish thriving businesses and further benefit their own caste.

I felt in my heart that I could go and speak directly to God without their intervention. I could no longer believe that God could only be reached, as they taught us, through prayer learned by rote, thorough pious practices, through the novena and the rosary. I came to realize that you could see God through the mind's eye, in nature and in the ordinary events of every day. So all the rituals that I had followed and believed in so far suddenly

began to seem meaningless and just a shame. The desire to become nun fell away from me entirely at this time. (Bama, *Karukku*, 2017, p. 102)

### C. *Liberation and Solidarity*

Bama's perspective on education centers on its role in liberating the Dalit community. According to her, education functions as a means of resistance and empowerment, providing a voice to those who have been marginalized in society. *Karukku* is not solely a tale of despair. It also illuminates the fortitude and tenacity of Dalit women who come together to challenge the oppressive system. Her work emphasizes the importance of solidarity, as the characters in the novel strive for collective liberation. In *Karukku* she comments in her afterword to the First edition,

Because I live by myself in this society, without supports of my own such as a family, a husband and children, I have to face many problems. But even though there are a thousand difficulties which beset a Dalit woman living on her own, yet the truth is that in my position as an independent woman, there are many opportunities for me to spend my life usefully, and especially, to work for the liberation of Dalits. (Bama, *Karukku*, 2017, p. 137)

*Karukku* serves as a powerful plea to Dalits, urging them to break free from the chains of caste and religious oppression. Bama's transformative journey in the book renews her belief in the potential of education to liberate individuals from manipulative communal systems. Bama emphasizes the importance of solidarity among Dalits and marginalized communities. She describes the support and unity within her community, which enables them to confront and challenge the oppressive forces that seek to keep them subjugated. The book illustrates the strength and resilience of the Dalit community when they come together to fight for their rights and dignity. Bama's writing also highlights the role of women in fostering solidarity within the community, challenging the patriarchal norms that exist in both castes Hindu and Christian contexts.

## V. CASTE AND GENDER IN *SANGATI*

Bama's *Karukku* provides a profound exploration of the sufferings endured by Dalit women. While *Sangati* incorporates elements of autobiography, it transcends the individual narrative to encompass the collective experiences of an entire community. Singh opines, "Bama very realistically, throws light on the ways how a Dalit girl child suffers a lot and faces the derogatory process of growing as a woman" (Singh, 2021, p. 74). Within *Sangati*, Bama exposes the struggles faced by numerous strong Dalit women who grappled with oppressive systems of authority. The plight of Dalits during that time was truly horrific, as they were systematically denied access to temples and educational institutions. Bama's acknowledgment reflects her deep awareness of the hidden women subjugation and exploited condition of Dalit women within the converted Dalit Christian society, which she has internalized at a profound level of her consciousness.

My mind is crowded with many anecdotes: stories not only about the sorrows and tears of Dalit women, but also about their lively and rebellious culture, their eagerness not to let life crush or shatter them, but to swim vigorously against the tide; about the self-confidence and self-respect that enables them to leap over threatening adversities by laughing at and ridiculing them; about their passion to live life with vitality, truth, and enjoyment; about their hard labour. I wanted to shout out these stories. (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. ix)

This form of discrimination, rooted in the notion of individual inferiority, can be likened to the insidious nature of racism. Through *Sangati*, Bama amplifies the voices of these women, capturing their anguish, anger, frustration, and courage. The language employed in the narrative sometimes includes explicit abuse with sexual undertones, serving as a stark reflection of the harsh realities faced by Dalit women.

### A. *Caste Based Discrimination*

Bama vividly portrays the deep-rooted caste-based discrimination faced by the Dalit community in the novel. The Dalit women in the story endure the social, economic, and political inequalities perpetuated by the dominant caste groups. These inequalities are embedded in various aspects of their lives, such as education, employment, and access to resources. Priti Sharma (2015) opines that, "The novel creates an image into dalit feminist perspectives and Explorers the carnival of multiple voices of the discriminated, oppressed, resistance and agency in life and suffering faced by dalit women Tamil Nadu (Sharma, 2015, p. 187). A song sung by young children can be considered as one such instance:

Crab, O crab, my pretty little crab, who wandered through all the fields I planted, I pulled off your claws and put you in the pot, I gave the pot a boil and set it down. I waited and waited for him to come home and began to eat as he came through the door. He came to hit me, the hungry brute. He pounced at me to kill me. He struck me, he struck my child. He almost crushed the baby in my womb. He beat me until my legs buckled. He thrashed me until my bangles smashed. (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. 30)

Dalit women face persistent threats of sexual harassment from upper-caste men. They are often objectified as symbols of sensuality and sources of pleasure. The novel narrates an unending narrative of profound despair, unfeeling subjugation, and deeply ingrained prejudice. This is exemplified when the grandmother offers caution to the girls collecting firewood: Bama cautions, "Women should never come on their own to these parts. If upper-caste fellows clap eyes on you, you're finished. They'll drag you off and rape you, that's for sure" (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. 8). It is often

observed that boys exploit their circumstances, and when women dare to protest, they are unjustly stigmatized as promiscuous individuals. The story of Mariamma serves as a striking example of this phenomenon. Mariamma, who is the narrator's cousin, bears witness to the pervasive issue of sexual harassment experienced by Dalit women, along with their struggles to assert themselves in the face of such atrocities. In Mariamma's case, Kumaraswamy, a landlord belonging to an upper caste, attempts to molest her, yet she finds herself unable to voice her objections against him. She thought that, "He's upper caste as well. How can we even try to stand up to such people?" (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. 20). But Kumarasami accused the guiltless girl who tried to save his face: "When she went innocently to get some water, he seized her hand and pulled her inside. Frightened out of her wits, she left everything and ran home, hardly knowing how she escaped" (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. 20).

The author also highlights the disdainful treatment Dalit women receive from upper-caste women. In this regard, she shows a parallel between the lifestyles of these women and those of the Paraiyar community. Bama embraces a sense of pride in emphasizing that the women in her community, unlike their counterparts, work diligently and earn their own income, thus achieving a measure of economic independence without relying solely on their husbands. Despite enduring physical and mental subjugation to men, these women find ways to resist and assert themselves by vocally expressing their frustrations through shouting and hurling obscenities. The author astutely notes that outcry and shrieking function as survival strategies for these women. She earnestly wishes for them to recognize their inherent "self-worth, honour, and self-respect" (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. 68).

### B. Gender Based Discrimination

*Sangati* underscores the gender discrimination experienced by Dalit women from an early age. Female infants are consistently deemed inferior and receive lesser care. Bama raises the issue of gender bias by saying, "If a boy baby cries, he is instantly picked up and given milk. It is not so with the girl. Even with breast-feeding, it is the same story; a boy is breast fed longer, with the girl, they bear them quietly, making them forget the breast" (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. 7). The narrator highlights the early distinctions in the treatment of boys and girls. Girls are discouraged from speaking loudly or expressing hearty laughter. They are not permitted to lie on their backs or stomachs while sleeping and are expected to maintain a posture with their heads lowered as they walk. Bama writes, "Even when our stomachs are screaming with hunger, we mustn't eat first. We are allowed to eat only after the men in the family have finished and gone" (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. 29).

Bama depicted inequality in payment between men and women, portraying women as workers who earn wages in occupations such as agricultural labor and construction work. However, they are consistently received lower pay than their male counterparts. Bama comments that, "The women, in any case, whatever work they did, were paid less than men. Even when they did the very same work, they were paid less. Even in the matter of tying up firewood bundles, the boys always got five or six rupees more. And if the girls tied up the bundles but the boys actually sold them, they got the better price" (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. 18).

Satyendra Prasad Singh (2016), while interpreting about gender discrimination, points out that, "Maikkanni is the first girl to climb into the factory bus and rushes to find a window seat. But the boy from Kakkalayakudi, who arrives later, pushes her away and grabs all the window seats. She is also beaten by her father for money and then by the maistri Annaacchi in the factory for throwing away two match-box labels" (Singh, 2016, p. 153).

Bama offers a critique of both patriarchy and casteism within the church. She strongly condemns the church's regulations on divorce and its subtle religious methods to subjugate women. In her view, parish priests show little regard for women's autonomy in choosing their life partners and often assign them to the least desirable roles within the church. The narrator, despite her efforts, is never granted access to the sacristy. In contrast, even the youngest boys, newly born, are permitted entry, while the church authorities consistently deny this privilege to girls. She points about the plight of Dalit women, "In the fields they have to escape from upper-caste men's molestations. At church, they must lick the priest's shoes and be his slaves while he threatens them with tales of God, Heaven, and Hell. Even when they go to their own homes, before they have had a chance to cook some kanji or lie down and rest a little, they have to submit themselves to their husband's torment" (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. 35).

### C. Resistance and Empowerment

Bama's narrative goes beyond the mere depiction of suffering experienced by Dalit women, serving as a testament to their resilience and active agency in challenging oppressive structures. Throughout the novel, she emphasizes the importance of education and empowerment as a means to challenge and overcome discrimination. Bama pictures their plight: "Everywhere you look, you see blows and beatings, shame and humiliation" (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. 118). Bama consistently shows concern for Dalit women, persistently urging them to stand up and confront the challenges: "If we continue to be frightened, everyone will take advantage of us. If we stand up for ourselves without caring whether we die or survive, they'll creep away with their tails between their legs" (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. 66). The primary cause of suffering among Dalits is the absence of access to education. Bama also implores her community to adopt certain measures to bring an end to these issues. She appeals them to treat both boys and girls alike, showing no difference between them as they grow into adults. Throughout history and across various cultures, the role of women in society has varied widely. However, a consistent theme across most societies is the lack of equal status and recognition for women compared to men.

Bama passionately advocates for the empowerment of girls, emphasizing the importance of granting them freedom. She inspires them to recognize and embrace their inner strength and vitality. She opines that, “there will come a day when men and women will live as one, with no difference between them; with equal rights. Then injustices, violence and inequalities will come to an end, and she is sure that the saying ‘Women can make and women can break’” (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. 123). The writer encourages the womenfolk that, we must bring up our girls to think these new ways from an early age. We should educate boys and girls alike, showing no difference between them as they grow into adults (Bama, *Sangati*, 2005, p. 123).

In *Sangati*, Bama skillfully offers a reflective glimpse into the emotions of Dalit women, highlighting their struggles and advocating for transformation and improvement in various areas of their lives. These areas include addressing sex and gender discrimination, promoting equal opportunities in the workforce, and fighting for education rights. The narrator, taking on the role of both an all-knowing narrator and a directing force, effectively shapes the incidents and events in the story, while also shedding light on the bygone facets of the Dalit people through a diverse range of characters. This narrative technique contributes to the overall development of the novel. Bama emphasizes that the responsibility for uplifting the hopeless women in her community rests solely on the women themselves. She recognizes that no outside help can truly transform their lives, and it is essential for Dalit women to take control of their own destinies. The novel vividly portrays the grueling toil and menace faced by Dalit women, which perpetuates a tradition of violence that permeates throughout the story. This theme underscores the urgent need for societal change and serves as a driving force behind the events in the novel.

## VI. CONCLUSION

According to S.K. Paul’s (2007) observations, Dalitness serves as a catalyst for conflict and confrontation “Dalitness is a matter of appreciating the potential of one’s total being. Thus, individual, culture, social burden, and Dalitness cannot be isolated ... For this new Dalit individual, social and cultural freedom has come because of his self-elevation and self-identification” (Paul, 2007, p. 35). In both *Karukku* and *Sangati*, Bama skillfully brings to the forefront the layered forms of domination experienced by women. She delves deep into the habitual tasks performed by Dalit women, both within the confines of their homes and in the outside world. Bama critically examines how violence against Dalit women is not only perpetuated but also legitimized and institutionalized by various powerful entities such as the state, family, religious institutions, and upper-caste communities. Through her fiction, Bama vividly portrays the arduous labor undertaken by Dalit women and the systematic subjugation they endure within their homes and beyond. They face sadistic treatment not only from upper-caste landlords, the panchayat, and the police but also from Dalit men within their households. Bama depicts Dalit women chiefly as laborers who enter the workforce from a young age and continue to toil throughout adolescence, womanhood, middle age, and even into their elderly years, persisting until their final moments. Regrettably, their tireless efforts often go unnoticed and unappreciated by both their own community and society at large, leaving them subjugated at every possible juncture.

Bama’s depiction of the life journeys of Dalit women is emblematic of the broader battle for empowerment and the pursuit of a life of dignity within the Dalit community. Through her narratives, she sheds light on the challenges faced by Dalit women at various stages of their lives, offering insights into their unacknowledged contributions and the obstacles they confront. Her powerful storytelling helps as a window into the ongoing struggle for empowerment within the Dalit community, highlighting the need for understanding and recognition of their unique experiences. It provides a meticulous portrayal of the trials faced by Dalit women, their triumphs, and their aspirations, ultimately documenting the broader striving for empowerment in social, economic, and political spheres within the Dalit community.

Bama’s writing explores the profound impact of a success-driven and consumerist society on children. She expresses deep concern for the well-being of young individuals who suffer the consequences of societal obsession with achievement and materialism. Amongst these children, Dalit students become particularly vulnerable targets for mockery, disapproval, and disgrace due to their social background. Bama shines a spotlight on the systemic biases and prejudices that perpetuate such mistreatment, emphasizing the urgent need for social change and a more inclusive education system that uplifts and nurtures all children, regardless of their caste or social group.

To conclude, this research has endeavored to illuminate the intricate and dynamic intersection between gender and caste within the narratives of Bama’s two novels. A comprehensive analysis of her works revealed the profound complexities, struggles, and resilient voices that characterize this intersection. The significance of Bama’s novels lies not only in their literary merit but in their ability to serve as a window into the lived experiences of individuals whose lives are entangled in the web of gender and caste-based discrimination. The findings reveal that Bama’s narratives challenge preconceived notions and stereotypes, offering a nuanced perspective on the multifaceted relationship between gender and caste. It is evident that these issues are not isolated but deeply interwoven, shaping the social fabric and individual identities of her characters.

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# Only Monsters Evolve From Wars: An Analogical Reading of *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

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**Abstract**—This article examines the absurdity of wars and grounds their intersecting contours of enormous death (physical and psychological), destruction, and trauma notwithstanding their location, grounds, pretext, or repercussions. It underlines the scathing critiques of their constituencies in Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969) and Ahmed Saadawi’s *Frankenstein in Baghdad* (2013, trans. 2018), two novels articulating a striking disdain for the ethics and myths of the so-called “just wars.” The researchers, sharing the novelists’ moral qualms about wars, bring these two novels together in a potent critique uncovering the cruelties of wars, which have led to the dislodgement and demise of millions of people all over the world, not to mention the psychological insecurities and anxieties instigated by war. To illustrate, the horrible car bomb explosions besetting Baghdad in the aftermath of the 2003-American invasion of Iraq are equated with the Allies’ firebombing and leveling of Dresden in Eastern Germany. Hence, Dresden and Baghdad lapse into waves of horror and massacres committed in the name of justice, and Vonnegut and Saadawi, whose awfully poignant firsthand war experiences enticed them to foreground the tragedies of war, interweave nonlinear antiwar narratives reminiscent of the mismatched body of Whatsitsname in *Frankenstein in Baghdad* and Billy Pilgrim’s disheveled appearance and lack of training as a soldier in Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five*.

**Index Terms**—*Frankenstein in Baghdad*, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Baghdad, Dresden, war

## I. INTRODUCTION

Despite belonging to different periods and cultures, Ahmed Saadawi’s *Frankenstein in Baghdad* and Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five*, or, *The Children’s Crusade* (hereafter *Slaughterhouse*) have much in common vis-à-vis their antiwar voices and the debilitating psychological aporia of war and death. With their anti-war impulses, they demythologize and de-glorify war by depicting its crippling effects on nature, city life, and family connections, but namely on the individual warrior, generally a young man whose wartime experience renders him psychologically troubled and physically marred. The researchers have not come by a single study collating or pairing these two novels to designate their subversive antiwar modes and undertones. At stake is utilizing “the supernatural, the uncanny, the monstrous, and the surreal to construct an aesthetic of horror that narrates unspeakable forms of violence” (Bahoora, 2015, p. 190). In particular, trauma has emerged as the most ubiquitous theme in any postwar literature, including the post-WWI, WWII, Vietnam, and Iraq wars, to mention but a few. In such traumas, “people lose touch with links to other humans, and to the sense of community or group so basic to human identity” (Kaplan, 1999, p. 148). Verging on this trend and to demonstrate the shocks of war, Saadawi’s *Frankenstein in Baghdad* and Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse* succinctly combine reality and fantasy to enmesh their readers in a portrayal of the myriad atrocities committed under the pretext of justice or heroism, disrupting any veneration of the war or pro-war attitudes. Thus, Vonnegut and Saadawi, provoked by the apotheosis of war, enact vigorous caveats of any rhetoric romanticizing or legitimizing war, reiterating, as Vonnegut puts it, that “there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre. Everybody is supposed to be dead, to never say anything or want anything ever again” (p. 19).

Ashley Dawson and Malini Schuelleur open their article “Rethinking Imperialism Today” by introducing the United States as the world’s most imperial power colonizing nations with a new form of imperialism, one of “a particularly

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insidious kind” (2007, p. 1). This imperialism is described as “punitive, unilateral, militaristic,” and exceptional in the sense that its benevolent preaching is discrepant with its practices and violations worldwide. Such practices can be seen as “an open-door imperialism” (p. 7). In their view, political and economic imperialisms are inseparable, and they are the main cause of the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. So, the whole war on Iraq has appeared like a Hollywood fantasy, and the American administration has used “a cowboy rhetoric” (Dawson & Schuelleur, 2007, p. 14) to justify war and to gain retribution. Dawson and Schuelleur conclude that the American administration was totally heedless to “the strategic efficacy and human costs of spectacular asymmetrical violence in Afghanistan and unilateralist preemptive warfare in Iraq” (p. 14). In the two novels, the researchers engage in this article, the United States stands as the imperial power that attacks Germany in WWII and Iraq in 2003, and this common denominator brings these two novels together in a dynamic tension.

Self-motivated, the American administration, diverting public attention from their real motives, included Iraq in “the Axis of Evil” and invaded it under the pretext of Iraq’s having weapons of mass destruction, but when they found no proof of their claims, the “Bush administration quickly seized on the notion of human, and, more specifically, women’s rights as a justification for the American military intervention around the world” (Dawson & Schuelleur, 2007, p. 25). Sponsoring such rhetoric, which veils the real economic-capitalist reasons for the invasion, complicates an already complex relationship between self and other or East and West. Because of its prevalence for two centuries, war (death) has become one of the most recurring themes in literature. In a letter to F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway described war as “the writer’s best subject. It groups the maximum of material and speeds up the action and brings out all sorts of stuff that normally you have to wait a lifetime to get” (qtd. in Khorrami, 2016, p. 217). Khapaeva (2017) articulates an alarming take on the commonness and normality of death in the last three decades. She questions: Why are grim reapers and skulls popular clothing designs for all ages, from infants to adults, while our personal interactions with the dead are extremely infrequent in comparison to prior epochs? “Why do vampires, zombies, and undead monsters enjoy such exceptional popularity? Why has watching movies or reading novels portraying violent death become part of our daily routine? (p. 24). She acknowledges that there were epochs of high mortality rates, and people have always been preoccupied with death as manifested in their literature and other art forms. However, death was never casually regarded as lighthearted amusement. Khapaeva argues that there has been a turn in the treatment of death and attributes this transformation to what she calls “gothic aesthetics” made popular by fiction and films.

The protagonist of *Slaughterhouse*, Billy Pilgrim, much like Vonnegut himself, is a personification of the folly and irony that characterized World War II because of his unpopularity and complacency as a soldier (as a joke). He is thrown into the Battle of the Bulge with little training, no weapons, and an inappropriate and ridiculous outfit. His mismatched garments, just like the body of the monster sewed up by Hadi in *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, underscore the novel’s irony that such a scrawny soldier survives the war while so many stronger, braver, and better-trained soldiers perish. Traumatized, Billy first becomes “unstuck in time” in this shocking and weary state, bouncing between his past and future, an elision cementing the cyclical nature of the narrative of the novel. Billy’s abduction by the Tralfamadorians and Hadi’s creation of his monster can be viewed as surreal, traumatic disorders emitting from Vonnegut’s and Sadaawi’s direct exposure to bloodshed, as there is no definitive evidence to prove or disprove the existence of these far-fetched events.

*Frankenstein in Baghdad* launches a comparable critique of the irony of war where the eccentric scavenger who is also known as “Hadi the liar” creates the Whatsitsname (as it is often called in the novel), a mythical being, obsessed with death, that goes on a murderous rampage in the name of justice in a country already ripped apart by the American invasion and the ensuing mayhem of partisan violence. The claims of the Whatsitsname for justice line up with the American justifications for the invasion: the war was not fought for liberation, against WMDs, or against the Taliban, all of which have been disproven. Ironically enough, Hadi, mirroring Billy, “was always disheveled, with an untrimmed forked beard, a body that was wiry but hard and energetic, and a bony face with sunken cheeks” (p. 29). Given the current political climate, Whatsitsname wonders if justice and peace are even possible in such a violent society. Hadi explains how he has created Whatsitsname by piecing together parts from the corpses of victims of ongoing cycle of terrorist attacks. Just like Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) who claims that he aims to create beauty and improve human conditions, Hadi, critical of the government’s inability to curb the escalating rate of violence, explicates that he endeavors to patch a human-like body, “so it wouldn’t be treated as trash, so it would be respected like other dead people and given a proper burial” (Sadaawi, 2018, p. 32). Hadi’s motivation stems, in part, from his penchant to honor the lives of those lost in the civil war, including his friend Nahem Abdaki, who was killed in a vehicle bombing. Hadi entirely metamorphosed after the death of Nahem: “He became aggressive. He swore and cursed and threw stones after the American Hummers or the vehicles of the police and the National Guard. He got into arguments with anyone who mentioned Nahem and what had happened to him” (Sadaawi, 2018, p. 30). The American invasion is humiliating to Iraqis and is bound to engender resistance from all the components of Iraq regardless of their ethnicity and religion. In the narrative, the competing poles and power centers represent and speak for the majority of Iraqis who are usually absent from decision-making processes.

Both Vonnegut and Saadawi, stimulating an antiviolence juncture in American and international literature, proffer intriguing interpretations of the unspeakable reality through fiction and fantasy, particularly in how their characters perceive and react to violence, uncertainty, time, and existence. Vonnegut’s and Saadawi’s physical and spiritual war



experiences inform these perspectives. Turning away from the prominent trend of demonizing the enemies (the other) and stripping them of their humanity and hailing “national heroes,” Vonnegut and Saadawi offer no heroes, simply because the outcome of war is death and loss, not to mention minimizing and distorting human agencies. Rather, they depict all parties as victims of preordained nodes, itineraries, and hierarchies driven by greed and prejudice and deconstruct the complex hierarchical power modes that feed war processes and propaganda. Vonnegut, particularly at the onset of the novel, unequivocally epitomizes this sense: “I have told my sons that they are not under any circumstances to take part in massacres, and that the news of massacres of enemies is not to fill them with satisfaction or glee” (p. 18).

The above quote is based on Vonnegut's rebuff of the ownership of firearms for whatever reason. Instead, firearms are referred to as “massacre machinery,” and no party is permitted to acquire them because their use invariably leads to massacres. Analogously, Saadawi via the creature of *Frankenstein in Baghdad* reiterates a defiant message, strongly reverberating with the reader, that “there are no innocents who are completely innocent or criminals who are completely criminal” (p. 184). In other words, war, which robs people of recognition, esteem, and dignity, transforms all those involved into monstrous beings capable of plundering human and nonhuman entities in cold blood.

Billy and Hadi are the most perturbed since they, willingly and coercively, attend to a large number of bodies, a task that causes them to endure uncanny experiences incommensurable with logical human expression in which Hadi creates a being and Billy lives with extraterrestrials. For example, after the firebombing and utter annihilation of Dresden, Billy and other prisoners of war are required to rifle the ruins for corpses. After many attempts, the excavators reach a timber pile over a building containing “dozens of bodies” (Vonnegut, 1999, p. 147). At this juncture, Billy must aid in hauling the corpses from the hole, an abysmal chore that will forever color his perceptions of the world. Hadi, likewise, spends most of his time searching for body parts in the debris in the aftermath of any explosion, a grisly activity that has left him psychologically distraught.

## II. VONNEGUT'S *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE*: A WAR AGAINST WAR

*Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut is a complex semiautobiographical nonlinear modern novel that raises questions about war, time, and morality and entangles the reader in its meaning due to its many twists, flashbacks, and intertwined mini-narratives. A number of readings of *Slaughterhouse* have, in fact, focused on the novel as a caution against warfare because it is uncommon to read a work of fiction with that pellucid morality and repudiation of violence, one that departs from previous practices and attitudes of negating or homogenizing the other but rather makes a leap into it. Instead, the novel's openness to the other transcends any reductionist thinking retaining valorizations that subordinate, dehumanize, or reduce the other. Overall, what is at stake in reading *Slaughterhouse* is not just the engendering of a nuanced reading, but, more essentially, how it can contribute to a deeper consideration of the consequences of warfare. Many literary commentators have difficulty locating the novel within a certain genre; they, however, have yielded valuable insights and come to a consensus that it is rife with antiwar sentiments. Still, they stress that it is not limited to the issue of war, which is why the novel has garnered so much criticism. In 1974, literary critic Arnold Edelstein, shining much light on “Billy's Tralfamadorian theory of time,” observed that *Slaughterhouse* is “consistent with the horror of Billy's experiences. The only way he can live with his memories of his past and his future and find meaning in both is to withdraw from reality into a pleasant but neurotic fantasy” (p. 138). This fantastic element, because of which Billy can discern all moments of life playing out simultaneously, complicates the novel and enriches its treatment of time. Unlike humans, Tralfamadorians understand time with a fourth dimension in which the past, present, and future all occur contemporaneously. Because of their multidimensional outlook on time, they submit to their fate, convinced that they cannot alter anything about it.

Additionally, Tralfamadorians believe that free will is an illusion held only by humans on Earth because of their linear perception of time and death. In “Mixing Fantasy with Fact,” Moody Jennifer (2009) highlights Vonnegut's use of several literary devices to achieve his goal of merging truth and fiction. To this end, Vonnegut uses the fictional character Billy to portray everyday events with a healthy dose of fantasy and imagination. Although Vonnegut dismisses *Slaughterhouse-Five* as a “lousy little book,” T.J. Matheson (1984) hails the novel for its structure, noting that it is intended to echo the irrationality and chaos of its subject matter—war. Thomas Marvin (2002) cogently remarks that “[c]reating the character of Billy Pilgrim allows Vonnegut to present his experiences indirectly, as if they had happened to someone else” (p. 131). Marvin regards Billy, in this manner, as an author surrogate mirroring Vonnegut's wartime experiences and aiding him in expressing his political and philosophical views about the war. Moreover, Roston (2021) musters evidence that Vonnegut and his buddy O'Hare, in an act of indignation and vengeance, “hunted down one of their sadistic German prison guards. Then they killed him” (p. 10). He even calls this chapter “Kurt Vonnegut: Nazi Slayer,” (p. 1), arguing that Vonnegut's stimulus for the novel emerges from his involvement in the war violence. However, since the novel's initial publication, the vast bulk of scholarly research has seen it through the lens of psychological trauma.

Clearly, Billy is traumatized and agonized by the carnage and vast murder he witnesses during the war, and thus, he has disconnected or unmoored himself from the constraints of time. Vonnegut included the time travel with aliens to highlight Billy's traumatic conditions and psychological pressure. Billy, in contrast to Hadi, doesn't make a monster; instead, he flies high above this globe ruled by humans and reaches another world where monsters and humans coexist

together. Billy appears in the novel's second chapter and rapidly becomes unstuck in time. Billy, a senile widower, woke up on his wedding day. He entered and exited doors in 1955 and 1941. He returned through that door to 1963. He claims to have seen his birth and death numerous times and randomly visited everything in between (p. 21). Billy has little control over his time, and his adventures aren't always pleasant. He claims to have stage fright since he never knows what part of his life he will play next.

War makes life transient and, thus, tantamount to death. Billy has witnessed unspeakable carnages and high fatalities to the point he internalizes an indifferent Tralfamadorian approach to death, elucidating that war-related death, because of its rifeness, has become a normal phenomenon. Simply put, death, which pervades the novel, becomes part of his daily routine to the point where he becomes accustomed to scenes of piles of bodies. The Tralfamadorians' indiscriminate philosophical response to death—"so it goes"—appears 108 times in the novel, and it recurs after any mortality, be it a single loss or the extermination of thousands of people. Critics interpret this frequent refrain (So it goes) in two incongruent ways. First, as a harbinger of death, it is used when

135,000 people died as a result of an air attack with conventional weapons. On the night of March 9th, 1945, an air attack on Tokyo by American heavy bombers, using incendiary and high explosive bombs, caused the death of 83,793 people. The atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima killed 71,379 people. So it goes. (Vonnegut, 1999, p. 130)

Some scholars believe that this inane observation foregrounds the novel's fatalistic tone, for it glosses over and evens out all mortalities, making them appear equally dreadful or rather ordinary. They retain this stance because Billy adopts this phrase from the Tralfamadorians who consider death as a smooth momentary occurrence.

A Tralfamadorian sees a corpse and thinks the deceased person is in a horrible shape at that moment but fine at other times. If I learn someone is dead, I shrug and say, 'So it goes.' (p. 23) as the Tralfamadorians do. The above position on death is consistent with the view of the first group of equating all deaths. Second, other critics presume that "So it goes" aggrandizes and accentuates each fatality in the text, requiring the reader to take heed of each one—killing one individual is equivalent to killing the entire human race. According to this perspective, the statement exemplifies a refutation of the Tralfamadorians' mellow, resinous acceptance of death. The researchers embrace the former exposition and raise questions similar to the ones raised by it because it adheres more to the events of the story and Billy's metamorphosis after encountering the Tralfamadorians and adopting their multidimensional acumen about time and death. Marvin (2002) postulates that "while it is true that the novel adopts the Tralfamadorian custom of saying 'so it goes' every time a death occurs, this relentless repetition shows that the fatalistic attitude behind the saying is ridiculous" (p. 128). Billy is not exemplary; rather, he is an illustration of how humanity should not react to war. He debates death as if it were inconsequential and without any repercussions, yet in actuality, death torments people and causes immense grief and suffering. This contradiction is used by Vonnegut to explain to the people that "death is inevitable, but some deaths are preventable, and the novel consistently demonstrates that human beings have the power to shape the present and the future" (Marvin, 2002, p. 128). In his turn, Simpson (2004) finds that Vonnegut "created Tralfamadore as a way of escaping his troubled past. In that light, his Tralfamadorian existence must be approached as an escape mechanism grounded in mental instability" (p. 267). Billy tries to escape the effects of post-war traumatic stress by traveling to Tralfamadore, where Tralfamadorians deny the reality of death.

In this sense, Vonnegut's novel can be seen as a strong statement that renounces war by all means. Warfare wreaks havoc on individuals and nations, killing more people than any other disease. Wars debase and disintegrate communities and families and affect national, social, and economic development and well-being. Warfare damages people physically and psychologically and reduces material and human capital. People typically take heed of the number of people killed (death toll) in armed conflicts and disregard other repercussions of conflicts. These effects constitute natural destruction, poverty, malnutrition, disability, economic/social deterioration, and psychosocial disorders to mention but a few. For example, Billy recaps the dialogue of the German guards as follows: "There was a fire-storm out there. Dresden was one big flame. The one flame ate everything *organic*, everything that would burn" (emphasis is ours, p. 123). Billy, who witnessed the burning of Dresden, recalls the time he and other soldiers hid in a meat locker. The conflagration's obliteration of all organic matter highlights the breach caused by war, where organic, delicate, beautiful, and living things are the easiest to destroy. Emotionally and physically dehumanized, Billy and the other prisoners are stranded in a slaughterhouse where they witness bloody scenes of slaughtered animals and even a sense of being less than human beings.

### III. AHMAD SADAAWI'S *FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD*: MONSTROSITY OF WAR

Most criticism of *Frankenstein in Baghdad* renders it as merely a parody or a replica of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. There is some truth to this assertion vis-à-vis the title and the cobbled monster, but *Frankenstein in Baghdad* has its own intrinsic merit, setting, cultural and social mechanisms, and vistas; thus, the researchers believe that it should be extolled and evaluated without only drawing on cultural icons. Shelley's (or Victor's) original *Frankenstein* is a quintessential example of utter macabre in the place of intended beauty, so no wonder one of the best Iraqi authors opts for it as the subject matter of *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, a revolutionary work in Arabic literature, both in its style and in its daring approach to reality and society's repressed fears, worries, and wants. Saadawi's fantasy-reality story combines good and evil, perpetrators and victims, and life and death. Hence, the novel's unambiguous antiwar

sentiments bring it closer to antiwar novels, exposing the reality of living in a war-torn city (a hub for greedy people) that is steadily disintegrating before one's eyes and divulging the everyday struggle of Baghdad's citizens as a result of the war. For example, the opportunist hotel owner "Faraj had taken advantage of the chaos and lawlessness in the city to get his hands on several houses of unknown ownership (Sadaawi, 2018, p. 21).

Sin éad Murphy (2018) scrutinizes *Frankenstein in Baghdad* as one of Mary Shelley's most recent reinterpretations or adaptations of studying "Frankenstein's legacy and longevity." She proposes that "Saadawi's Whatsitsname allegorizes a collective feeling that 'every day we're dying from the same fear of dying' in Iraq under conditions of [. . .] a dystopian pronouncement on the unequal distribution of vulnerability within a post-war environment of sociopolitical instability" (p. 273). Hala Amin (2022) centers on the prevalence of death in Iraq, especially after the American invasion, adding that normalizing death has become a global phenomenon. For her, "the novel resonates with the sound of the sirens of police cars, ambulances, and fire engines as well as of piercing screams and groans of pain and it reeks of the smell of 'the smoke, the burning of plastic and seat cushions, the roasting of human flesh' (p. 216). The boundary between Hadi (humanity) and his creature (monstrosity) is called into question, especially after Hadi's face is disfigured. Hadi, like Victor Frankenstein, turns into a monster himself. Saadawi adopts the concept of the creature from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, but we should not be tempted to scrutinize it merely as a replica of Shelley's, as Saadawi's has gained much acclaim because of its compelling story echoing the dilemma of random violence and the ephemerality of life in post-invasion Iraq.

Rawad Alhashmi (2020) attests to the grotesque manifestations in the novel and juts down a repertoire of parallels between it and Shelley's, listing points of divergence and at the same time acknowledging the spots of convergence between them. Webster (2018) contends that the plot "confronts readers with the body parts of Iraqi civilians who did not survive the violence that permeated post-2003 Iraq and whose remains, left unidentified and unburied on the streets of Baghdad, do not seem to be valued" (p. 445). Saadawi gives the world a work of art that captures how violence spreads through Baghdad, "a place of murder and gratuitous violence, after 2003 (p. 279). According to Teggart (2019), the novel verges heavily on gothic tropes to describe 2005 US-occupied Baghdad and the war and its aftermath. Saadawi deploys a blatant Frankenstein motif to scrutinize the worries, behaviors, lifestyles, and beliefs of postwar Baghdadis. The list of studies dealing with *Frankenstein in Baghdad* is extensive; however, our current research paper pairs two novels never studied together in a single project. The similar tropes of fantasy-reality, trauma, and death that both novels employ reflect a monotonous ideology that testifies to and proves the proposition that there are no winners in wars.

In the same vein as *Slaughterhouse*, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* interweaves fantasy and reality in order to pass on an antiwar dissent or opposition. According to David Hogsette (2022), "writers of fantasy must themselves explore the very limits of their imaginations and then create marvelous realms and fantastical plots that lead readers to vicarious transcendence" (Hogsette, 2022, p. 6). Such writers embolden their "readers to stretch their imaginations, challenging the limits of their willingness to suspend reductive disbelief" (Hogsette, 2022, p. 6). Rosemary Jackson (1981) dwells on the "fantastic traces" of culture's hushed, "invisible," "covered," and "absent" elements. For her, it is a fantastic work, "produced within, and determined by its social context," depicts the impossible struggle to realize desire, make the unseen visible, and find absence by moving from expression as a manifestation to expression as ejection (Jackson, 1981, p. 20). She adds that telling entails using the language of the dominant order and accepting its norms and dark zones. Since it originates from within the dominant cultural order, literary fantasy unearths its strictures. By adding the "unreal," the fantastic questions reality, and the fantastic fiction is perceived as a form of opposition to the established social order. As wonderful supplements, Saadawi's creature and Vonnegut's Tralfamadorians unveil the brutality of war on physical and psychological levels.

The phrases that occur most frequently in both works are associated with death and loss. Vonnegut employs the term "so it goes" as a sign of death, while Saadawi's most frequently used word in the novel is death itself; therefore, both novels prioritize the issue of death as prompted by conflicts. In all instances, the ubiquity and recurrence of death turned into a part of daily routine. To Alhashmi (2020), "[d]eath is roving the streets of Baghdad, hunting people randomly and tearing families apart. Due to the spiraling cycle of violence, people's deaths have become mere statistics" (90). In reality, the first word of Saadawi's work is an explosion, a daily fact of life in Iraq, which implies the loss of many lives. The phrase "So it goes" by Vonnegut can be utilized fittingly in Saadawi's novel. Due to the war, we can also observe the complete breakdown of the Iraqi family and the social fabric: "But then when the Americans invaded Baghdad, their missiles destroyed the telephone exchange, and the phones were cut off for many months. Death stalked the city like the plague, and Elishva's daughters felt the need to check every week that the old woman was okay" (p. 16). Thus, they wind up suffering more than they did under the Saddam regime.

The American invasion of Iraq transformed the country into a center of violence, particularly against minority voices. Principally, Iraqi Christians were shattered, and many of them were forced to escape the country, which had been a haven before the war because religious fanaticism and sectarianism had not been mentioned before the attack. Saadawi alarms us about the de-Christianization of Iraq's Assyrian community and urges Christians to stick to Iraq: "Things had been just as bad for the Assyrians in previous centuries, but they had stayed in Iraq and had survived. None of us should think only of ourselves" (p. 27). Prior to the invasion, Iraq existed as a mosaic, a miniature correlating with the country's constituent parts. After the invasion, however, widespread depression, broken homes, dejected individuals,

death, abandoned homes and hotels, and explosions ensue. Each group essentializes the other as inherently incompatible, and as such, they polarize and seek to alienate one another. Immediately after the invasion, Iraq was becoming a theocracy:

Ten minutes after Abu Anmar had left, Faraj removed the Orouba Hotel sign. He threw it on the ground and trod on it, then called on one of his young workers to take it to the sign writer and have him remove the name Orouba, or ‘Arabness,’ and rewrite it with the name Grand Prophet Hotel. He was confident he would succeed where Abu Anmar had failed. (p. 199)

There is considerable symbolism in the above provocative description of the transformation of Iraq, where “Arabness” propagates secularism and equality, yet the Grand Prophet Hotel signifies polarization and that Iraq is turning into a theocracy dominated by the biggest cult.

Saturated with symbolism, the new creature prowls the streets of Baghdad and strikes dread into the hearts of all people. Ironically, the government through the Tracking and Pursuit Department recruits a gang of magicians, astrologers, and fortunetellers to assist in locating and arresting the culprit responsible for the countless murders in Baghdad. In a sense, Whatsitsname is also viewed as a latent Anglo-American intruder conquering Iraq and deciding on its behalf in coercive and custodial capacities. Whatsitsname becomes an emblem of people’s edginess and vulnerability, especially with the numerous myths and images they construct about him depending on their whims and level of fear: “The definitive image of him was whatever lurked in people’s heads, fed by fear and despair. It was an image that had as many forms as there were people to conjure it” (Vonnegut, 1999, p. 131). Here, the so-called irrationality or reactionary of the natives, a key tenant underpinning Western metaphysics, legitimizes the intervention of the rational (Western) subject over the (Eastern) object of knowledge. The jumbled, fragmented, and chaotic body of the creature constitutes the image in which the United States and the United Kingdom envision and conceptualize Iraq. The creature is composed of various unharmonious parts, and, thus, such a superimposed coalescence begins to crumble at the threshold of this new era. The fabrication of the monster and the planning that went into it both provide further evidence that there is a dominant force that is controlling and maintaining this cycle of violence in order to ensure that these groups will consume and destroy one another. That is, the occupiers reduce Iraq into a mutant whose parts are always breaking off and which needs constant patronage by a superpower. This way, they guarantee not only their superiority but also a meddling hand in the affairs of this clumsily designed other.

The frequent explosions in *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, paralleling the Dresden firebombing, affect all life forms. They “cut electricity wires and killed birds. Windows were shattered and doors blown. Cracks appeared in the walls of the nearby houses, and some old ceilings collapsed. There was unseen damage too, all inflicted in a single moment” (Sadaawi, 2018, p. 27). In the aftermath of an attack, people start counting the human casualties, but they pay no heed to what happens to other organisms which constitute the invisible damage that goes unnoticed. Such monstrous conditions in post-war Iraq produced the unnamed (social, political, multi-ethnic, and nontraditional) monster Shesma/Whatsitsname. Whatsitsname is created from dismembered bodies and souls, different social backgrounds and classes, diverse ethnicities and races, and varied religions and sects. This monster claims that he represents “the impossible mix that never was achieved in the past. I’m the first true Iraqi citizen” (Saadawi, p. 129). The true Iraqi post-war citizen, innocent or criminal, is shattered by the atrocious circumstances that contribute to enhancing this monstrosity and confirm that wars create only devastated monstrous humans. The novel closes with a pessimistic note where all the characters are involved in the compilation of whatsitsname, and thus all play a role in ransacking Baghdad.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five* and Saadawi’s *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, not limited to a single point of view, break down the center/margins dichotomies, and thus generate vigorous fantasy-reality responses to the ethics, premises, and legitimacy of wars, presenting two dissident approaches to any tenet or doctrine celebrating war. Both novels engage with weighty predicaments about morality and time to cope with the tragedy of death and the trauma of war. Both problematize warfare as an ethical failure of establishing equal self-other relations, where the self is not superior to the other. In the place of such a morality, the other is, unfortunately relegated to the level of the inferior, irrational savage that should be suppressed and subjected to unprecedented onslaught. In both cases, the death toll of human and non-human entities is reduced to numbers engendering the same reaction, whether it is the death of one person or tens of thousands of people. Even when the number of casualties is reported, the majority of people just cast light on the quantity, paying little attention to the specific anguish that each victim of war endures. In the same fashion as Billy, Hadi treats all the corpses of the victims of the explosions as mere parts that can be compiled in order to form a full corpse. Both rely on overarching black irony to highlight the irrationality of the outcomes of war: Billy, notwithstanding being ill-fitted for a life of danger and hardship, survives the war and an aircraft crash. Another stark example pertains to the forty-year-old vagrant who was taken alongside the American soldiers. He repeatedly reassures his companions that he has “been hungrier than this” and “in worse places than this. This ain’t so bad” (p. 50), but after nine days of incarceration, he dies. Nahem, Hadi’s friend, “had already been dead for several months” (p. 35).

To paraphrase, traumatized by this gruesome scene of not being able to separate the flesh of his friend Nahem from the meat of the horse he was riding before the explosion, Hadi endeavors to build a complete body, one that would be treated as belonging to a human being. The mixture of human flesh and horse meat oversteps the line between animal

and human, suggesting that all life forms suffer as a result of war. The coffin contained only Hasib's "burned black shoes; his shredded, bloodstained clothes; and small charred parts of his body" (p. 38). After several attempts of finding a body where it can reside, his soul comes across the lifeless corpse in the house of Hadi. Hadi's soul and the body of the creature complement one another: "he touched the pale, naked body and saw his spirit sink into it. His whole arm sank in, then his head and the rest of his body. Overwhelmed by heaviness and torpor, he lodged inside the corpse, filling it from head to toe, because probably, he realized then, it didn't have a soul, while he was a soul without a body" (Sadaawi, p. 41). Still in denial of her son's death in the Iraq-Iran war, Elishva, the old Christian woman, desperate, "animated this extraordinary composite—made up of disparate body parts and the soul of the hotel guard who had lost his life. The old woman brought him out of anonymity with the name she gave him: Daniel" (Sadaawi, p. 51). She celebrates his "coming back" with a special meal and prayers. Hugely moved by Elshiva's loneliness and torment, Whatsitsname is adamant about relentless revenge on the perpetrators of such heinous crimes.

The notion that the security services in Baghdad plan to confront Hadi's monster by enlisting magicians and sorcerers to watch, trace, and arrest the creature intensifies the political, economic, and social chaos in post-invasion Baghdad, exposing the underlying causes behind the invasion. The Tralfamadorians and Whatsitsname are invested with supernatural qualities. The Tralfamadorians have power over time, and Whatsitsname, people wonder, "could take bullets without dying or bleeding,"—how hideous would he be? How could he be arrested without fear of death or gunfire? Was he superhuman?" (p. 111). This supernatural power problematizes the whole situation of war and chaos.

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# Writing to Learn: Reflective Writing as an Educational Method for Saudi EFL Students

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**Abstract**—This study explores the implications of training English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in reflective writing and its impact on their writing ability. Reflective writing refers to critical analysis of an experience, recording its impact on the self, and planning the use of the newly gained knowledge. The study was conducted with 28 EFL students at a Saudi university with half of them exposed to reflective writing techniques and writing output compared in the pre-post-test design. Results showed that students in the experimental group performed noticeably better on their writing assignments showing that reflective writing holds much promise as an instructional technique for enhancing EFL students' writing abilities. The study also found that the experimental group's attitude toward writing had improved as the intervention not only improved their writing abilities but also, helped them develop a more favorable attitude toward the writing process. Finally, it is reported that no correlation was found between students' attitudes and achievement in post experiment. The study emphasizes the need of reflective writing in the EFL setting on the premise that including these techniques in the writing curriculum would likely enhance students' writing in English.

**Index Terms**—EFL students, output-based writing, pedagogical tool, reflective writing

## I. INTRODUCTION

Given its attribute of enhancing students' critical thinking ability, self-awareness, and in-depth knowledge, reflective writing has gained much attention as an educational method (Smith, 2019). Teachers all over the world are experimenting with different educational policies for language acquisition and enhancement, especially where it concerns a foreign language (EFL) (Liu & Zhang, 2018). Reflective writing has today emerged as a great alternative with its positive effects on learners' cognitive and metacognitive processes (Brown & Lee, 2020). There is growing emphasis on the use of the latest educational technologies to fulfil the ultimate need for language proficiency in central, east, and North Africa (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2015). Countries in these regions are updating their curricula to include those techniques which not only enhance language proficiency but also, self-efficacy and a positive attitude to learning (Suleiman, 2017). In this scenario, reflective writing has established its place in the MENA colleges as an effective tool (Ahmed & Abouabdelkader, 2016). In Saudi Arabia particularly, EFL methodologies are undergoing much change. The Vision 2030 document (which highlights the value of education and welcomes educational reforms) has encouraged institutions to look for the latest developments in teaching pedagogies (Al-Seghayer, 2018). In this context, reflective writing is a veritable influencer in improving the writing abilities and attitudes to learning of university students (Alrabai, 2017).

However, despite the acknowledged benefits of reflective writing, there is still a dearth of concrete examples, particularly in the Saudi Arabian setting (Ahdal & Alqasham, 2020). Traditional output-based writing procedures are the primary emphasis of current instructional methodologies, perhaps neglecting the many advantages that reflective practices may provide. This study seeks to close the empirical gap by contrasting conventional writing techniques with reflective writing practices in the EFL environment of a Saudi institution by investigating how reflective writing affects students' attitudes about writing as well as how effective it is at improving performance. As they work to improve EFL teaching methods, educators, politicians, and curriculum designers, both inside and outside of Saudi Arabia, may find the conclusions drawn from this study to be quite helpful. This study explores these queries:

### **Research questions**

1. How does the inclusion of reflective writing practices affect EFL students' writing performance when compared with conventional output-based writing techniques?
2. What are the differences in attitudes of Saudi EFL students exposed to reflective writing methods as compared to those exposed to standard output-based writing techniques?
3. Does encouraging reflective writing in EFL students lead to a more positive attitude toward the writing process? If yes, how does this attitude show itself in their writing output and impressions of themselves?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reflective writing, which has a strong foundation in constructivism, has long been seen as a key tool in the teaching and learning process (Dewey, 1933; Piaget, 1967). The integration of reflective methods with EFL education becomes crucial because language learning, especially in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) milieu, lays great emphasis

on students actively creating knowledge. Writing instruction in EFL has traditionally been centered on the language's bare mechanics, stressing correctness and respect for structural standards (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Despite being helpful in building a strong foundation in linguistic patterns, such output-based writing tactics frequently ignore the dynamic, cognitive interaction inherent in the process of writing (Hyland, 2003). In contrast, reflective writing goes beyond these mechanics and encourages students to analyze, assess, and create meaning in order to provide a deeper understanding and enjoyment of the language (Moon, 2006). By distinguishing between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, Schön (1983) broadened the scope of Dewey's (1933) pioneering work on reflection and demonstrated how professionals, including educators, continually engage with and learn from their experiences, the most basic characteristic of the reflective model. Such introspective procedures are very important in the field of EFL. Reflecting on their written work while language learners wrestle with the subtleties of a foreign tongue enables them to manage the cultural, social, and contextual complexities that a new language usually entails, as well as to pinpoint knowledge gaps (Vygotsky, 1978). The sociocultural foundations of language learning have been deeply addressed by Vygotsky (1978) who also proposed a new outlook to language as a channel of thinking and social interaction and not merely as a medium of communication. Taking this idea forward, reflective writing enables EFL students to find their place in the larger linguistic community while simultaneously engaging in sociocultural discussion (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Research in contemporary times has begun to look at the specific effects of reflective writing, for instance, Yu and Li (2015) concluded that there was metacognitive development in those students who had used reflective writing technique as in addition to language enhancement; it had enhanced their awareness of the learning pathways. In another study, Zhang and Zhou (2020) found in a study of the comprehensive benefits of this technique, and how it had positively impacted their engagement and motivation. Despite of these recorded benefits, there are also some claims to the contrary. Most notable is the claim that too much scaffolding in shallow reflection may lead to the students not moving in the desirable direction, and ultimately not real learning will happen (Smith & Hatton, 2007). Therefore, there is a need for a balanced and thought-out strategy to ensure that reflective writing is not at the cost of learner-centeredness, and the onus for this lies on the supervision and knowledge of the teachers. One reliable conclusion is that reflective writing has the potential to be a ground-breaking and highly influential component of the EFL curriculum, bringing in its wake language competency but also a variety of cognitive, metacognitive, and sociocultural pros.

#### ***Theoretical Framework***

This study is based on Piaget (1967) and Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist epistemology which theorizes that new knowledge is built on learners' prior knowledge and that learning is a dynamic process. The utilization of reflective writing as a pedagogical method within this framework positions the learner as the central point of the learning process, fostering a more profound and self-reflective comprehension of the subject matter (Dewey, 1933). Aligned with Schön's (1983) reflective practice theory, this methodology asserts that individuals engage in an ongoing conversation with their experiences, aiming to facilitate cognitive restructuring and enhance understanding. The intricacies of acquiring a foreign language are closely interconnected with cognitive, metacognitive, and social facets of learning, particularly for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students (Flavell, 1979). This is consistent with the sociocultural hypothesis put forward by Vygotsky (1978), which contends that serving as a bridge, reflective writing empowers students to delve into their cognitive processes, evaluate their understanding, rectify any misconceptions, and strategically plan for future interactions. The acquisition of language, especially in an EFL setting, is markedly influenced by social interactions and cultural contexts, beyond just linguistic proficiency. Reflective writing serves as a conduit for these connections, providing students with a platform to deliberate on meanings, grasp cultural nuances, and carve out their role within the broader linguistic community (Zimmerman, 2002). Moreover, reflective writing empowers students to assume control over their learning journey by setting objectives, monitoring their progress, and adapting strategies. This process aligns with the self-regulated learning framework, enabling students to navigate the complexities of EFL effectively (Wenden, 1987). Combining constructivist concepts with reflective practice in the EFL environment, where language serves as both a tool and a goal, gives birth to a comprehensive, student-centered approach. The incorporation of these theoretical ideas confirms reflective writing's relevance as a transformational pedagogical tool in EFL instruction, promising to promote not just stronger language abilities but also, a proactive, upbeat attitude toward the learning process.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### ***Research design***

This study uses a quasi-experimental method to verify the effectiveness of reflective writing techniques in comparison to conventional output-based writing. The reason for choosing this method is that it is considered appropriate when researchers want to prove a causal link between the intervention (reflective writing) and the outcomes (writing performance and attitudes toward writing), but they are unable to randomly assign subjects to control and experimental groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The study was conducted in the academic year 1445 AH.

#### ***Participants***

28 EFL students at a university in Saudi Arabia comprised the study sample. Purposeful sampling method was applied to isolate the sample as the scope of the study required a homogenous group with common traits or experiences (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The participants were divided equally into control and experimental groups at the beginning of the treatment to ascertain the level of enhancement in each group and whether the intervention on the experiential group



helped significantly develop the students' writing skills. The purpose of the research was shared with the participants at the beginning of the experiment and their consent was duly obtained.

#### *Instruments*

The following two main research tools were used: (1) Writing Performance Assessment which is a standardized rubric used to assess students' writing based on criteria like coherence, grammar, vocabulary, organization, and creativity; and (2) Attitude Towards Writing Survey which is a Likert-scale based questionnaire used to assess students' attitudes toward the writing process, assessing factors like enjoyment, perceived difficulty, and confidence. A pre-test was given to both groups at the beginning of the experiment to ascertain their initial writing abilities and attitudes. The control group then undertook conventional output-based writing tasks over a predetermined length of time, whereas the experimental group was subjected to reflective writing tasks. A post-test was given after the intervention period to assess how, if any, writing skills and attitudes had changed.

#### *Data analysis*

SPSS (Version 25) software was used to examine quantitative data from the pre-post-tests and the attitude questionnaire. An independent-samples t-test was used to evaluate differences between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups, and a paired-samples t-test was used to compare pre-test and post-test scores within groups, with significance established at  $p=0.05$ . Results were computed in aggregates, making it impossible to identify particular participants, and all data was coded in order to ensure anonymity.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### **RQ1: How does the inclusion of reflective writing practices affect EFL students' writing performance when compared with conventional output-based writing techniques?**

Table 1 illustrates the pre- and post-test changes in the students' writing performance evaluations following the implementation of reflective writing. The mean score on the pre-test was 13.24, with a standard deviation (SD) of 2.32, situating the participants at the "Intermediate" level (11-15) according. In contrast, the post-test mean score increased to 16.34 with a slightly higher standard deviation of 2.43, elevating the students' performance to the "Advanced" level (16-20). As the p-value (0.002) is less than the significance threshold of 0.05, the results indicate a statistically significant improvement in the writing performance of students who used reflective writing. The t value of -3.1, with a degree of freedom (df) of 38, highlights the significance of this enhancement.

TABLE 1  
PRE-TEST POST-TEST DIFFERENCE ON THE WRITING PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

<i>Writing Performance Scores</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>T value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p value</i>
Pre-test	13.24	2.32	Intermediate	-3.1	38	0.002 *
Post-test	16.34	2.43	Advance			

\*= significant at 0.05 level; ns= not significant at 0.05 level

Legend: Advance (16-20), Intermediate (11-15), Basic (6-10), Beginner (1-5).

#### **RQ2: What are the differences in attitudes of Saudi EFL students exposed to reflective writing methods as compared to those exposed to standard output-based writing techniques?**

Table 2 compares the writing attitudes of students prior to and following the implementation of reflective writing. Clearly, there has been a significant transformation in the students' outlook to writing. The average mean score for the pre-test was 3.56 with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.37, which was interpreted as "High". The post-test average mean score increased to 4.58 with a standard deviation of 0.31, placing it in the "Very High" category. The increase in the mean score from the pre-test to the post-test, from "High" to "Very High" attitude indicates a positive change in the students' attitudes toward writing as a result of the reflective writing intervention. This change can be attributed to the reflective writing process, which may have enabled students to engage more deeply with their thoughts, emotions, and experiences, thereby fostering a more positive attitude toward the writing process. In addition, the smaller standard deviation on the post-test compared to the pre-test suggests that students' responses were more consistent after using reflective writing. This suggests that reflective writing not only enhanced the participants' general attitude toward writing, but also produced a more uniformly positive perception among them. At a 0.05 level, the T-value of -1, with 38 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.001, is statistically significant. This indicates that the difference between pre- and post-intervention attitudes is statistically significant. In other words, students felt more positively about writing after using reflective writing, and not by coincidence or by accident.

TABLE 2  
SAUDI EFL STUDENTS' ATTITUDES BEFORE AND AFTER THE USE OF REFLECTIVE WRITING

<i>Attitude</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>T Value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>
Pre-test	3.56	0.37	High	-1	38	<0.001*
Post-test	4.58	0.31	Very High			

\*= significant at 0.05 level; ns= not significant at 0.05 level

Legend: 4.20-5.00: Very High/ Strongly Agree/ 3.40-4.19: High/ Agree/ 2.60-3.39 Moderate/ Undecided/ 1.80- 2.59: Low/ Disagree/ 1.79: Very Low/ Strongly Disagree

**RQ3: Does encouraging reflective writing in EFL students lead to a more positive attitude toward the writing process? If yes, how does this attitude show itself in their writing output and impressions of themselves?**

The relationship between students' attitude post-intervention toward writing and their post-writing performance scores when using reflective writing is depicted in Table 3. The average writing performance score was 16.34, while the average writing attitude score was 4.58, and -0.0836 was the correlation coefficient (R) between writing ability and attitude. This correlation has a P-value of .736, which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The negative correlation coefficient indicates a modest inverse relationship between students' attitudes toward writing and their writing performance. This suggests that as an individual's outlook improves, their writing performance may change, and vice versa. This relationship is feeble and not statistically significant, as indicated by the P-value of .736, which is significantly greater than the significance threshold of .05.

TABLE 3  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STUDENTS' ATTITUDE POST-INTERVENTION AND POST-WRITING PERFORMANCE SCORES ON THE UTILIZATION OF REFLECTIVE WRITING

Variables	Mean	R	P-value
Writing Performance	16.34	-0836	.736 ns
Writing Attitude	4.58		

\*= significant at 0.05 level; ns= not significant at 0.05 level

The absence of correlation between students' attitudes toward writing and their writing performance when using reflective writing may appear surprising. One might intuitively assume that a more positive attitude toward writing would be associated with improved performance. However, this result suggests that other factors may be more influential than attitude alone in determining writing performance. It is also conceivable that the reflective writing process itself does not resonate equally with all students, resulting in a more nuanced relationship between attitude and performance. The potential presence of confounding variables that were not controlled for or considered in this analysis is another factor to consider. These results suggest to educators that merely boosting students' attitudes toward writing may not necessarily result in improved writing performance when applying reflective writing. In the context of reflective writing, it may be more beneficial to consider other pedagogical strategies or interventions that address the specific challenges and requirements of students. In addition, it may be beneficial to investigate why some students with a positive attitude toward writing do not necessarily perform better. It may be likely that they confront additional obstacles or challenges that reflective writing does not address. Consistent with those findings, the findings of this study indicate that, while attitude is essential, it is not the sole predictor of success in writing tasks. This study differs from other studies that concluded that in the context of writing, performance was affected by attitude, on the contrary, no such correlation could be found in this case. This difference in findings shows that context is an important factor to be considered when analyzing the factors that influence writing performance.

The major finding of this study is that reflective writing has significant impact on developing Saudi EFL students' writing skills. This improvement is significant as it elevated them from an intermediate to an advanced level of writing performance showing the potential of reflective writing as a pedagogical instrument for improving students' writing skills. The principal discovery of this research indicates that reflective writing exerts a substantial influence on enhancing the writing skills of Saudi EFL students. This notable improvement is particularly noteworthy as it pushes them from an intermediate to an advanced level of writing proficiency, underscoring the efficacy of reflective writing as a pedagogical tool for elevating students' writing abilities (Anderson, 2018; Bin-Hady et al., 2021; Jones & Ryan, 2017; Smith, 2019). Students are regularly motivated to assess and internalize their learning experiences through the practice of reflective writing. The results of this study offer essential insights into the efficacy of reflective writing as an instructional approach for improving both students' writing performance and their attitudes towards the learning process (Albelihi & Al-Ahdal, 2022; Jones & Ryan, 2017; Smith, 2019). Significant enhancements in both domains are evident post-intervention, aligning with a broader body of research that underscores the positive impacts of incorporating reflective practices in educational settings (Anderson, 2018). Consistently, reflective writing has been recognized as a vital tool for cultivating critical thinking, self-awareness, and a more profound engagement with course content. Within this study, the enhancement in writing performance from an "Intermediate" to an "Advanced" level post-intervention implies that reflective writing goes beyond merely serving as a platform for self-expression. It works as a cognitive tool, promoting a more profound interaction with the subject matter and a better presentation of ideas. This is consistent with the findings of Anderson (2018), noted that reflective practices aid students in consolidating their learning, thereby boosting their ability to express intricate ideas in writing. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the intervention resulted in a substantial change in students' attitudes toward writing. Moreover, the study revealed no significant correlation between students' attitudes and their academic achievement. This finding diverges from numerous prior studies that suggested a positive relationship between favorable dispositions towards academic tasks and increased engagement and performance (Brown & Ryan, 2016). However, our findings, which indicate an enhanced but insignificant correlation between attitude and writing performance, suggest a more nuanced relationship. This is consistent with the findings of Martin and Dowson (2019) argued that while a positive attitude is a crucial element of academic success, it may not always have a direct and explicit correlation with performance. Various factors, including prior experiences, feedback received, or personal challenges, can significantly impact performance outcomes. Though it may appear

counterintuitive, while it is commonly believed that a positive attitude precedes improved academic performance (Smith, 2019), our findings suggest that this relationship may not be linear. The existence of this non-linear relationship has been corroborated by several earlier studies. For instance, Jackson (2020) found that in specific contexts, students with high confidence and positive attitudes may refrain from exerting the necessary effort, under the belief that a positive attitude is adequate by itself. This could elucidate the subtle, non-significant correlation observed in our study. Additionally noteworthy is the variance in standard deviations between pre- and post-test scores in both writing performance and attitude. Moreover, a diminished standard deviation in students' attitudes implies that following the reflective writing intervention, there was increased consistency in both scores and attitudes. This hints at reflective writing having a normalizing effect, potentially benefiting a broader range of students beyond those who are already predisposed to writing (Jones & Ryan, 2017). The ramifications of the study findings are extensive. Educators should first consider incorporating reflective writing exercises into their curricula in light of their demonstrated ability to improve writing performance and attitudes. However, they should do so with the knowledge that attitude improvements may not directly translate into performance enhancements. Consequently, while cultivating positive attitudes is essential, educators should also prioritize other pedagogical strategies that directly target performance enhancement. In addition, the study highlights the significance of context when interpreting results. While reflective writing demonstrated significant benefits in our context, educators implementing similar interventions should first consider the specific needs and challenges of their students. It would be advantageous for future research to investigate the fundamental causes of the observed mild negative correlation between attitude and performance. To gain a deeper understanding of students' experiences with reflective writing, qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups could be employed.

These attributes of self-reflection and critical thinking enabled the students to develop a deep understanding of the subject matter, better organization and expression of ideas, together improving their writing scores. By writing reflectively on a regular basis, students can improve their cognitive abilities, be more aware of the shortcomings in their learning strategies, and improve their expression. These findings are in line with available research which emphasizes the role of reflection in enhancing students' understanding and perceptions. For instance, studies have shown that reflective practice helps bridge the gap between theory and practice, which in turn, can enable students to form logical connections and internalize knowledge more effectively. This study adds to the impressive literature that supports the inclusion of reflective writing.

These results also point out that reflective writing practice can motivate students to be more receptive to knowledge and it also enhances critical thinking and self-reflection. The consistency demonstrated by the post-test suggests that reflective writing can be a universal tool for a large number of students in different foreign language contexts. Reflective writing is by its very nature individualized and introspective. Writing becomes more than just a mechanical activity for kids as they become involved with their ideas, emotions, and experiences. Finally, this study has consequences outside of the immediate classroom setting. Learners' future academic and professional activities might benefit from reflective techniques.

## V. CONCLUSION

Reflective writing as a pedagogical instrument has demonstrated tangible benefits in terms of enhancing students' writing abilities and attitudes toward writing. Students exhibited progress from intermediate to advanced writing performance levels and from a high to a very high attitude towards writing as a result of a reflective writing intervention. This improvement demonstrates that reflective writing has the potential to enhance students' learning experiences and foster a more favorable attitude toward writing. However, the study also reveals a compelling paradox in the form of a negligible negative correlation between students' attitudes toward writing and their performance. This may appear counterintuitive at first, but it highlights the intricate relationship between attitude and performance, suggesting that other factors, whether external or intrinsic to the learning environment, play crucial roles in determining writing outcomes. Despite of the positive link that this study has established between reflective writing and heightened writing output, learning motivation, and learner engagement, the link (or lack thereof) between attitude and performance warrants additional exploration. This absence of correlation implies that, despite the importance of nurturing a positive mindset, it may not directly translate to enhanced writing proficiency, especially within the realm of reflective writing. This notion points to the multifaceted nature of writing skills, shaped by a complex interplay of factors, where some are more visible than others.

Reflective writing stands out as a promising pedagogical tool with the potential to significantly enhance students' writing skills and foster positive attitudes towards the writing process. However, given the delicate and pristine cultural and educational scenario of KSA, its integration into the educational institutions demand careful adaptation. Technology, teachers' training, and ongoing guidance will also need to be carefully implemented to ensure its success. Moreover, addressing the gap between attitude and actual performance calls for the development of targeted interventions. Sustained engagement with diverse student populations, the adoption of long-term assessment models, qualitative analysis, and a thorough examination of external determinants are imperative as we strive to unlock the full potential of reflective writing in Saudi Arabia. Drawing comparisons with other educational strategies in this context will allow us to discern its relative merits and determine the most effective modes of integration. Embracing context-

specific, evidence-based approaches will undoubtedly contribute to holistic student development as the educational landscape in Saudi Arabia continues to evolve.

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# Assessing Reading Texts for Non-Native Arabic Speaking Students at the University of Jordan in Light of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages From the Students' Perspective

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**Abstract**—This study aims to assess the extent to which reading texts for non-native Arabic-speaking students at the University of Jordan align with the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) criteria from the students' perspective. The study sample consisted of 64 students from the University of Jordan for the academic year 2021/2022. They were divided into 25 students from the first preparatory level and 39 students from the second preparatory level. A questionnaire was used as a data collection tool, and it included three areas: reading speed, linguistic richness, and accurate reading. The results indicated that all areas appeared to be moderate from the students' perspective, and there was no significant impact on the results attributed to demographic variables. Based on these results, the study demonstrates the importance of incorporating elements of CEFR in teaching language skills in Arabic for non-native speakers.

**Index Terms**—reading texts, Arabic for non-native speakers, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

## I. INTRODUCTION

Fostering the ability of learners to effectively communicate is a multifaceted endeavor that demands substantial dedication of time and energy. This undertaking involves a range of interconnected skills and is often influenced by various factors. These factors encompass linguistic and communicative aptitudes, but crucially, the learner, teacher, and the choice of teaching materials or textbooks play significant roles in either facilitating or impeding the progress of foreign language learners (Fareh et al., 2023). Teaching languages, in general, relies on mastering the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. By developing these skills, a language gradually becomes complete and takes shape in the learner's mind. Educators point to the existence of strong reciprocal relationships between these skills. The Arabic language, like other world languages, depends on this approach in its teaching and learning. Teaching Arabic language may have certain unique characteristics related to the learner's nature, culture, and other relevant variables.

When discussing the framework for foreign language teaching and learning, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (henceforth CEFR) is considered a highly credible and genuine reference. From a pedagogical perspective, it can be used as a comprehensive document for Arabic language teachers and learners. To achieve the goals of reading skills in Arabic for foreigners, given its widespread use in Europe for teaching Arabic as a foreign language, it aims to help foreign learners achieve a sufficient understanding of short and easy texts on familiar and specific topics, using contemporary, everyday language (Boukhnoqa, 2021).

The reference framework has become a general standard for the development of foreign language curricula throughout Europe. This framework serves as a globally recognized standard, influencing aspects of language education like curriculum, teaching materials, teacher training, and assessments in a comprehensive manner (Abdullah et al., 2023). It was first published in 2001 and has since been translated into forty languages, including Arabic. The framework was developed under the supervision of the European Union. The CEFR framework outlines five language skill categories, namely spoken interaction, spoken production, listening, reading, and writing, and it consists of six levels, indicating what a learner can achieve in their language proficiency at each level (Samsudin et al., 2023). These

levels are A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2, and they are called the 'global scale,' where A1 represents the lowest levels of the learner's language proficiency, while C2 represents the highest levels of language proficiency. Each level corresponds to one of three main categories: beginner (A1, A2), intermediate (B1, B2), and advanced (C1, C2) (Nordianto et al., 2019, p. 14).

Given the above, the European Framework for Languages provides a unified path to follow in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers. It offers both learners and teachers real-life examples of the learner's environment and their everyday experiences, particularly in the content of reading materials and texts used in their education. This framework serves as a scientific guide to assess the learner's linguistic competence, especially in their communicative skills, which they can use in schools, markets, homes, and other contexts (Boukhnoqa, 2012).

In the context of emphasizing the previously mentioned Arabic language skills, particularly the skill of reading, it is worth noting that educational literature related to its definition has provided various definitions. The reason may be attributed to the nature of the definition and the mechanism of interpreting the skill. Among these definitions, Mustafa (2007) defined it as a mental process that involves interpreting written symbols received by the reader, translating them into oral discourse. It also requires understanding meanings, interpretation, critique, and employing what is indicated by the context.

On the other hand, As'ad (2015) defines it as the visual reception of symbols, known as recognition, comprehending the thoughts expressed by these symbols, known as understanding, assessing their importance, truthfulness, and logical consistency, known as critique, and integrating these ideas with the reader's own thoughts, known as interaction. Meanwhile, Ta'ima (2010) sees it as a mental cognitive process that should be constructed as a complex organization consisting of various cognitive operations. It is an activity that should encompass all forms of thinking, evaluation, judgment, analysis, justification, and problem-solving.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### A. *The European Framework*

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a document developed by the Council of Europe as part of the "Language Learning for European Citizenship" project in 1989 and 1996. The English edition was published in 2000, and in November 2001, the European Union recommended the use of CEFR for establishing language proficiency assessment systems. The Arabic edition of CEFR was published in 2008, translated from the German edition released in 2001. It was published in collaboration with the Goethe Institut and Dar Elias for Printing and Publishing in Cairo. The book consists of 264 pages in a large format and bears the ISBN number 977-304-313 (Al-Hadqi, 2017).

CEFR is considered a general standard for the development of foreign language teaching curricula across all Europe, and it has had a significant impact on the teaching and learning of foreign languages since its publication in 2001. Educational institutions in Europe have used it to teach foreign languages, but it has also been used for the purpose of developing Arabic language teaching curricula as a foreign language (Gutshen, 2015). This framework serves the common overall goal of the Council of Europe, as outlined in the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers, particularly in achieving a major common unity formed by member states. Following this goal, there are common steps in the cultural field, and this unity is based on three fundamental principles (CEFR, 2008):

1. The vast heritage of linguistic and cultural diversity within Europe is considered a shared wealth that must be protected and developed. This requires dedicated efforts in the education sector so that diversity transforms from being an obstacle to understanding and communication into a source of enrichment and progress.
2. Only through a better understanding of modern European languages can communication and interaction between Europeans with different languages be facilitated. This, in turn, encourages movement within Europe, mutual understanding, cooperation, and helps overcome prejudices associated with oppression.
3. Member states can achieve significant convergence in policy at the European level through agreements that contribute to cooperation and continuous coordination, particularly in the field of teaching and studying modern languages. This can be achieved if they harmonize their local laws, especially in the field of modern language education.

The purposes for which this framework was established have been diverse and can be summarized as follows (CEFR, 2008):

1. Planning language study programs while considering:
  - Previous language studies and prior knowledge, especially at the intersections between the stages of basic education, upper secondary education, higher education, and lifelong learning.
  - Objectives.
  - Content.
2. Planning language certificates, taking into account issues such as:
  - Exam contents.
  - Assessment criteria that reflect the positive aspects of efforts and not only identify shortcomings and weaknesses.
3. Planning self-directed study, which includes:

- Developing learners' awareness of the knowledge they need to acquire.
- Learners setting their own logical educational goals.
- Selecting educational materials.
- Applying and using self-assessment tools.

Researchers believe that the study aligns with the primary goal of CEFR. Planning language study programs involves developing curricula for those programs, which necessarily requires the preparation of reading texts to enhance the reading skills of learners in those programs. The study aimed to investigate how reading texts align with the demanding criteria of CEFR, especially concerning those texts.

#### *B. Reading Texts*

Reading skills are influenced by several factors that contribute to improving these skills in learners. These factors can be categorized as follows (Halima, 2020):

1. Encouraging external factors, such as providing a conducive reading environment and offering a well-balanced and inclusive range of materials for various groups.
2. Internal factors, including respecting students' preferences, recognizing individual differences among them, paying attention to learners' cognitive nature, and focusing on their interests.

Reading remains a fundamental pillar in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers and is the primary focus of most foreign language teaching classrooms worldwide. The ease with which this skill can be practiced, compared to listening comprehension, has made reading texts a preferred choice for both teachers and students. For this reason, classrooms tend to emphasize reading more than listening, making both reading and listening active receptive skills (Abu Amsha et al., 2017). Reading texts hold significant importance in language skills development for learners, especially in the early stages of education, as they form the cornerstone of learners' personal development (Jama'i, 2019, p. 26).

#### *C. Previous Studies*

Within the scope of the researchers' review, only three studies were found that addressed the analysis of Arabic language textbooks. No study was found that specifically examined reading or Arabic reading texts in the context of the European Common Framework for Languages. One study was conducted by Mateen (2018) to assess the readability level of the Arabic language teaching book "Al-Natiq Al-Arabi" for non-native Arabic-speaking students at Shafana Islamic Middle School in Indonesia. The study involved a sample of 21 male and female students, and the results revealed that all students' responses fell into the frustration level.

Another example is Boukhnoufa and Dbaa'in's (2021) study which aimed at identifying the objectives of reading skills in their educational dimensions for non-native speakers of other languages at the A1 and A2 levels of the European Common Framework for Languages. The results showed that the Arabic language, at both studied levels, aligned with the skill dimension of the European Common Framework for Languages, which contributes to achieving the objectives of the educational learning process.

In Al-Khaza'leh (2021) also conducted a study that aimed to assess the readability level of the Functional Arabic Language book for non-Arabic speakers at Al al-Bayt University in Jordan. The study was conducted on a purposively selected sample of 33 male and female students, and the results revealed that all students' responses fell into the frustration level, with a percentage of 39.4%. The study also indicated the lack of progression in the readability of reading texts within the book.

In the context of previous studies, researchers benefited from the methodology of these studies and the available educational literature. However, this study differs from previous ones in that it aims to evaluate reading texts for Arabic language non-native speakers at the University of Jordan in light of the European Common Framework from the perspective of the students.

#### *D. Procedural Definitions*

- **Reading Texts:** These are the texts found in Arabic language textbooks for non-native speakers, as approved by the University of Jordan's Language Center for teaching non-native Arabic-speaking students.
- **Non-native Arabic-speaking Students:** These are students who are studying Arabic but are not native speakers of it. They are enrolled at the University of Jordan's Language Center during the first semester of the academic year 2021/2022.
- **The European Reference Framework (CEFR):** It is a reference framework established by the European Council to provide standardized and comparable language proficiency levels. This framework was developed during a seminar held in Switzerland in 1991 and was signed by member states in 1997. The framework emphasizes the importance of multilingualism and serves as an interconnected and comprehensive guide with the aim of clarifying the path for foreign language teachers and learners (Gutshen, 2015).



### III. STUDY ELEMENTS AND METHODOLOGY

#### A. Study Problem

All key components of language curricula must have clear objectives related to the intended content to be taught. Supportive measures that help students succeed and achieve their goals are essential. Hence, continuous efforts are made to improve these components to reach the desired objectives. It is worth noting that language curricula are built on communicative linguistic proficiency skills, which necessitates a constant review of these objectives to ensure their alignment with students' needs and the requirements of the times (CEFR, 2008). Furthermore, curricula should also consider their alignment with the primary goal of supporting linguistic diversity and multilingualism, which applies to the educational system as well (Ali, 2016, p. 204).

It is noteworthy that the reading proficiency of Arabic learners whose native language is not Arabic is declining, and this phenomenon is evident to anyone involved in the educational process. Many local and Arab studies have confirmed this. This calls for attention to several processes accompanying their curricula, including curriculum development. One of the most important aspects of curriculum development is assessing the suitability of reading texts for the reading abilities of learners. This criterion has not received much attention from curriculum developers, which contrasts with prevailing practices in advanced countries (Al-Khaza'leh, 2021).

To further emphasize the above points, drawing from the context of the researchers' work and their experience in teaching Arabic curricula to non-native speakers, they have observed that the reading texts used in Arabic courses for non-native speakers at the Language Center of the University of Jordan are diverse, including both prose and poetry. These texts vary in length and content. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following research question:

To what extent do the reading texts for non-native Arabic-speaking students at the University of Jordan adhere to the criteria of CEFR from the students' perspective at a significance level of ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )?

From this question, two sub questions arise:

1. Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the consideration of reading texts for non-native Arabic-speaking students at the University of Jordan concerning the criteria of the reference framework from the students' perspective, attributed to gender (male, female)?
2. Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the consideration of reading texts for non-native Arabic-speaking students at the University of Jordan concerning the criteria of the reference framework from the students' perspective, attributed to the level the student is studying (preparatory level one, preparatory level two)?

#### B. Study Hypotheses

The questions in the study give rise to the following hypotheses:

1. Reading texts for non-native Arabic-speaking students at the University of Jordan do not adhere to the criteria of CEFR from the students' perspective at a significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).
2. There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the consideration of reading texts for non-native Arabic-speaking students at the University of Jordan concerning the criteria of the reference framework from the students' perspective, attributed to gender (male, female).
3. There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the consideration of reading texts for non-native Arabic-speaking students at the University of Jordan concerning the criteria of the reference framework from the students' perspective, attributed to student's study level (preparatory level one, preparatory level two).

#### C. Significance of the Study

The importance of the study lies in the expected outcomes, which can be summarized as follows:

- Clarifying some of the criteria outlined in CEFR, specifically related to the reading skill and reading texts.
- Guiding those responsible for developing Arabic language curricula for non-native speakers towards the importance of carefully selecting reading texts.
- Providing solutions and suggestions that may contribute to improving Arabic language acquisition, especially the reading skill, among non-native Arabic-speaking students.
- Offering an assessment tool for evaluating reading texts in Arabic for non-native speakers from the students' perspective.
- Attempting to determine the suitability of reading texts and their alignment with the criteria outlined in the European Framework for Language Teaching.
- Enriching educational literature related to study variables.

#### D. Study Context

- Time Frame: The first semester of the academic year 2021/2022.
- Geographic Limitation: Jordan, the University of Jordan, Language Center.
- Human Limitation: A representative sample of non-native Arabic-speaking students at the University of Jordan.

- Subject Matter: Measuring the extent to which reading texts in Arabic for non-native speakers at the University of Jordan align with the criteria of CEFR from the perspective of the students.

#### E. Study Implementation Procedures

The researchers conducted the following procedures to complete this research:

- Developing the initial version of the study instrument (questionnaire).
- Presenting the instrument to a number of specialists and considering their opinions.
- Applying the study instrument to a sample survey to ensure its reliability.
- Preparing the questionnaire online using Google Forms to facilitate access to the sample. It is available at the following link: <https://forms.gle/cRDjYAmCtYhVBo8D8>.
- Summarizing the collected data and entering it into the SPSS software program for appropriate statistical analysis.
- Analyzing and interpreting the results and providing recommendations.

#### F. Statistical Criterion

The Likert five-point scale was adopted to score the study instruments. Each item in the scale was assigned one of its five ratings (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), which corresponded numerically to (5, 4, 3, 2, 1), respectively. The following scale was used for analyzing the results:

- 1.00 - 2.33: Low
- 2.34 - 3.67: Moderate
- 3.68 - 5.00: High

The scale was calculated using the following formula:

$$(\text{Upper Limit of the Scale (5)} - \text{Lower Limit of the Scale (1)}) / \text{Number of Categories Required (3)} = (5 - 1) / 3 = 1.33$$

This value (1.33) was then added to the end of each category.

#### G. Construct Validity

To determine the construct validity of the scale, correlation coefficients were calculated between each item and the total score, as well as between each item and the area to which it belongs, and between areas themselves and the total score. This was done using a sample outside the study sample, consisting of 15 participants. The correlation coefficients between the items and the tool ranged from (0.41-0.75), and with the areas from (0.51-0.86), as shown in the following table:

TABLE 1  
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN THE ITEM, TOTAL SCORE, AND THE RESPECTIVE AREA

Item number	Correlation coefficient with the area	Correlation coefficient with the tool	Item number	Correlation coefficient with the area	Correlation coefficient with the tool	Item number	Correlation coefficient with the area	Correlation coefficient with the tool
1	.76**	.67**	9	.59**	.41**	17	.81**	.75**
2	.80**	.73**	10	.65**	.47**	18	.82**	.67**
3	.66**	.58**	11	.73**	.54**	19	.60**	.60**
4	.75**	.68**	12	.78**	.64**	20	.73**	.56**
5	.80**	.66**	13	.66**	.56**	21	.86**	.72**
6	.69**	.55**	14	.69**	.61**	22	.82**	.65**
7	.79**	.64**	15	.57**	.58**			
8	.51**	.71**	16	.56**	.58**			

\* Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

\*\* Statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

It is worth noting that all correlation coefficients were acceptable and statistically significant. Therefore, none of these items were deleted. Additionally, a correlation coefficient between the area and the total score was calculated, along with the correlation coefficients between the area themselves. The following table illustrates this.

TABLE 2  
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS AMONG THE AREA WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH THE TOTAL SCORE

	Linguistic wealth	Accurate reading	Reading speed	Total score
Linguistic wealth	1			
Accurate reading	.602**	1		
Reading speed	.653**	.607**	1	
Total score	.862**	.877**	.850**	1

\* Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

\*\* Statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 2 shows that all correlation coefficients were acceptable and statistically significant, indicating an appropriate level of construct validity.

### H. Reliability of the Study Instrument

To ensure the reliability of the study instrument, a test-retest method was used by applying the scale and then reapplying it after two weeks to a group outside the study sample consisting of 15 participants. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between their estimates in the two times. Additionally, the reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's alpha equation, and Table 3 shows the internal consistency coefficient according to Cronbach's alpha equation. The stability of the retest for the area and the total score was considered suitable for the purposes of this study.

TABLE 3  
CRONBACH'S ALPHA INTERNAL CONSISTENCY COEFFICIENT AND REPEAT RELIABILITY OF THE DOMAINS AND THE TOTAL SCORE

Area	Retest stability	Internal consistency
Linguistic wealth	0.82	0.80
Accurate reading	0.81	0.72
Reading speed	0.80	0.76
Total score	0.85	0.82

### I. Study Sample

TABLE 4  
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES ACCORDING TO STUDY VARIABLES

	Category	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender	Male	44	68.8
	Female	20	31.3
Student's study level	Preparatory level one	25	39.1
	Preparatory level two	39	60.9
	Total	64	100.0

## IV. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

In the following section, the results of the study are presented and organized according to the study's research questions. The researchers also provided interpretations of the results for each question, particularly when statistically significant differences were found.

*To what extent do the reading texts for non-native Arabic-speaking students at the University of Jordan adhere to the criteria of CEFR from the students' perspective at a significance level of ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )?*

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations were calculated for the extent to which Arabic texts for non-native speakers at the University of Jordan align with the CEFR standards from the students' perspective. The table below illustrates these results.

TABLE 5  
CEFR CONSIDERATION SCORES BY ARABIC NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS AT UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN (DESCENDING ORDER)

Rank	No.	Area	Mean	Standard Deviations	Level
1	3	Linguistic wealth	3.43	.690	Medium
2	1	Accurate reading	3.42	.660	Medium
3	2	Reading speed	3.23	.620	Medium
		Total score	3.35	.564	Medium

Table 5 shows that the mean scores ranged from (3.23-3.43). Reading speed ranked first with the highest mean score of (3.43), while accurate reading ranked last with an average score of (3.23). The overall mean score for the consideration of reading texts by Arabic language non-native speakers at the University of Jordan regarding CEFR from the students' perspective was (3.35).

The result of all areas receiving an average rating could indicate that the curriculum, from the learners' perspective, meets all needs outlined in the items of the mentioned areas. Furthermore, the previous result showed that reading speed received the highest rating among the areas. This result can be interpreted to mean that reading texts significantly contribute to improving reading speed for learners. The second area, linguistic wealth, also received a medium-level rating, suggesting that the texts used in reading contribute moderately to enriching learners' vocabulary. Additionally, the last area, accurate reading, appeared at a medium level. This indicates that the texts used for reading contribute to consolidating the foundations of accurate reading and its criteria as mentioned in the questionnaire paragraphs.

*Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the consideration of reading texts for non-native Arabic-speaking students at the University of Jordan concerning the criteria of the reference framework from the students' perspective, attributed to gender (male, female)?*

To answer this question, the mean scores and standard deviations for the consideration of reading texts by Arabic language non-native speaker students at the University of Jordan regarding the CEFR were extracted based on the gender variable. To identify the statistical differences between the mean scores, a t-test was used, and the table below illustrates this.

TABLE 6  
GENDER EFFECTS ON CEFR CONSIDERATION BY ARABIC NON-NATIVE SPEAKER STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN

	Gender	No. of students	Mean	Standard Deviations	T-value	Degrees of freedom	Statistical significance
Linguistic wealth	Male	44	3.51	.690	1.495	62	.140
	Female	20	3.24	.563			
Accurate reading	Male	44	3.18	.667	-1.006	62	.318
	Female	20	3.35	.496			
Reading speed	Male	44	3.48	.691	.857	62	.394
	Female	20	3.33	.691			
Total score	Male	44	3.37	.607	.383	62	.703
	Female	20	3.31	.465			

Table 6 shows that there are no statistically significant differences ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) attributed to gender in all areas and in the total score.

*Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the consideration of reading texts for non-native Arabic-speaking students at the University of Jordan concerning the criteria of the reference framework from the students' perspective, attributed to student's study level (preparatory level one, preparatory level two)?*

To answer this question, the mean scores and standard deviations for considering reading texts by Arabic language non-native speaker students at the University of Jordan according to the CEFR, as perceived by the students themselves, were calculated according to the variable of the student's study level. To demonstrate the statistical differences between the mean scores, the t-test was used, as shown in the table below.

TABLE 7  
STUDENT STUDY LEVEL IMPACT ON CEFR CONSIDERATION BY ARABIC NON-NATIVE SPEAKER STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN

	Study level	No. of students	Mean	Standard Deviations	T-value	Degrees of freedom	Statistical significance
Linguistic wealth	Preparatory level one	25	3.89	.620	-.315	62	.754
	Preparatory level two	39	3.95	.692			
Accurate reading	Preparatory level one	25	3.64	.593	-.975	62	.334
	Preparatory level two	39	3.79	.637			
Reading speed	Preparatory level one	25	3.87	.516	-.630	62	.531
	Preparatory level two	39	3.98	.785			
Total score	Preparatory level one	25	3.78	.491	-.766	62	.447
	Preparatory level two	39	3.89	.608			

Table 7 demonstrates that there are no statistically significant differences ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) attributed to the student's study level in all areas and in the overall score.

Based on the study's findings, the researchers recommend the following:

1. Enhancing reading texts and aligning their content to a greater extent with the CEFR standards related to reading skills.
2. Ensuring comprehensiveness and integration in the availability of CEFR standards in reading texts and other language skills.
3. Conducting similar studies that explore other language skills to assess the presence of CEFR standards in Arabic language teaching curricula for non-native speakers.
4. Drawing the attention of curriculum developers to the importance of considering and incorporating CEFR into the prepared curricula.

## APPENDIX

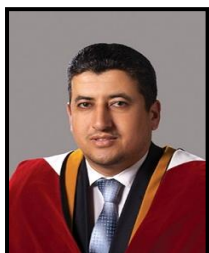
CEFR CONSIDERATION BY NON-NATIVE ARABIC STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN (DESCENDING MEANS)

No.	Item	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
1	The reading texts I studied contain real-life situations, such as on the bus or at the library.	3.31	.941
2	I learned several words that I use to communicate with people after reading the texts.	3.28	.899
3	The reading texts I studied include helpful dialogues.	3.70	.912
4	I learned several words and phrases to express my apologies and regrets to someone.	3.34	.859
5	I discovered new ways to introduce myself after reading the texts.	3.50	.909
6	The reading texts I studied covered various fields.	3.31	.814
7	I learned many verbs that contribute to my communication with others.	3.52	.845
8	The reading materials include dialogues that enhance reading.	3.64	.852
9	The reading texts contain new and challenging words in pronunciation.	3.13	1.106
10	The reading texts include sentences that convey feelings of anger.	2.52	1.175
11	The reading texts include sentences that express feelings of astonishment.	2.83	1.024
12	The reading texts I studied contain words that are similar in pronunciation but different in meaning.	3.31	.990
13	The reading texts I studied include words ending in various Arabic letters (e.g., taa' marbouta, taa' maftooha, haa').	3.38	.917
14	The content of the reading texts I studied is diverse.	3.47	.796
15	The texts I studied have helped improve my pronunciation of some words.	3.59	.938
16	The length of the reading texts is appropriate for the level I studied.	3.25	.943
17	The texts contribute to improving my oral reading speed.	3.56	.852
18	The texts help develop my oral reading skills.	3.64	.852
19	The reading texts cover similar topics in terms of word count.	3.17	.944
20	The ideas presented in the reading texts I studied make reading out loud enjoyable.	3.59	.849
21	My silent reading has improved after studying the reading texts.	3.34	.895
22	My silent reading speed has increased after completing the reading texts in Arabic courses for non-native speakers.	3.30	.962

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# Sci-Fi Neologism Translation: A Conceptual Blending Theory Perspective

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**Abstract**—Neologisms are ubiquitous in language, providing definitive evidence suggesting that humans can use language in a flexible and creative way. Science fiction (sci-fi) neologisms are the lexical manifestation of the creators' creativity, to which Conceptual Blending Theory constructs a solid theoretical basis. This paper finds that applying Conceptual Blending Theory to translation will provide new insights into sci-fi neologism translation. When there is no corresponding frame in the input spaces of the two languages, translators can choose to project the original word directly into the blended space or construct a new frame in the target language space. When the same or similar frames exist in the two input spaces, translators can directly map the original word to the target language space or adjust the frames according to the translators' experience, knowledge system, and target language culture to generate an optimal translation.

**Index Terms**—sci-fi neologism, lexical creativity, Conceptual Blending Theory, cognitive translation, translation strategy

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language contours the way we think, and, in turn, our unconstrained thoughts expand the limits of language. It seems that the human's creative mind can conceive new ideas and endow language systems with unlimited potential to conjure up new expressions that have never been seen elsewhere. Words, atoms of the system, are imbued with meanings that reflect extra-mental entities. The formation of a new word can not only witness the development of the human world but also empower us to share imaginative ideas (Adger, 2019, p. 15).

With the development of science and technology and the deepening of human understanding of the world, we constantly discover new things, create concepts that go beyond the direct reflection of objective reality, and find appropriate linguistic vehicles for them (Wen, 2018, p. 107), where sci-fi neologisms may be more challenging to understand and translate than other novel words. On the one hand, sci-fi neologisms are not direct reactions to objective reality so that translators may lack the related concepts or experience structures, resulting more or less in conceptual gaps. On the other hand, since sci-fi neologisms are the works of the authors' creative manipulation of the existing language elements, they cannot be found directly in the target language, which may lead to lexical gaps from the translator's perspective.

Thanks to the development of Cognitive Linguistics in the 1970s, the study of the relationship between mind and language progressed from philosophical speculation to comprehensive theoretical and empirical studies of psychology and physiology, which prepared the conditions for the revelation of the cognitive mechanism of language creativity and translation. Cognitive Linguistics clearly states that language is the externalization of our internal structures, so its creation, understanding, and translation can be explained through human cognition (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The ideas of Cognitive Linguistics also shed light on the field of Translation Studies and have brought about fruitful results. Traditionally, translators focus on the equivalence on a textual level and ask for a description of the source text when encountering a lexical gap. When referring to Cognitive Linguistics, translating a coinage requires an in-depth analysis of the translator's cognitive operations, whereby Conceptual Blending Theory is brought to the fore because it is a practical approach to integrating conceptual systems that have not been previously connected (Vo & Cater, 2010, p. 314), endowing it with high explanatory power for the creation of new structures.

This article first outlines the concept of science fiction and sci-fi neologisms. It then focuses on how sci-fi neologisms are conceptually integrated during the process of creation and translation based on Conceptual Blending Theory. Finally, the article proposes different sci-fi neologism translation strategies from a mental network perspective. Hopefully, this study may hasten the development of Cognitive Translation Studies, a rising discipline that encompasses paradigms probing cognitive science and traditional translation studies (Wen & Xiao, 2019), and shed light on the future translation practice of science fiction or other related literary genres.

## II. SCI-FI NEOLOGISMS

### A. An Overview

Science fiction reflects on technological advances and social development, considers how they can alter human living situations, and redefines what it means to be human. As a literary genre describing changes and progress encountered



by humankind, it is a web that elaborately interweaves reality and the author's imagination with the elements of estrangement and alienation. The Concise Encyclopedia of Britain, Volume IV, defines *science fiction* as a literary genre developed in the 20th century based on the actual or imagined discoveries of scientific theories. As Isaac Asimov puts it, science fiction is a branch of fiction that deals with human reactions to advances in science and technology. Since there is a gap between reality and the possibility of actualizing the authors' ideas, this literary genre puts fictional *novum* to the fore (Aloisio, 2019, p. 2), so sci-fi stories cannot be expressed in everyday vocabulary. According to Csicsery-Ronay's (2008) seven beauties of science fiction, fictive neology, the most perceptible by the audience, leads the list. Sci-fi neologism is not a mere window-dressing in science fiction but a representative creative technique of the genre, which displays the science fiction identity and takes on the role of stylistic signature (Westfahl, 1992, p. 223). Since new words are frequently used in the first moments of encounter with a strange new world, we can get a rough notion of the nature of new concepts in science fiction by studying the nature of neologisms (Westfahl, 1993, p. 291).

In accordance with the above description, we can tentatively define *sci-fi neologism* as a fictional word created by sci-fi authors based on the objective world and scientific knowledge, even if it may completely contradict existing common knowledge. At the conceptual level, these words often have no referent in the real world, and at the lexical level, obscure as they may be, sci-fi neologisms are primarily variants of existing lexical forms. Referring to Rey's (1995, p. 68) categorization of neologisms, sci-fi neologisms can be mainly allocated to new coinages, formal neologisms, and semantic neologisms. New coinages refer to completely made-up words, like "kipple" in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, meaning auto-replicated garbage. Formal neologisms, which are coined through existing vocabularies, consist of abbreviations and derivatives. Abbreviations indicate the extraction of certain letters in a primitive word (e.g., "precog" derived from precognition in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*), and derivatives are coined by adding affixes, taking "replicant" in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, signifying artificial human beings, as an example. Semantic neologisms comprise blendings and compounds: Blendings comprise parts of two words. For example, "chrononaut" (chrono plus astronaut), a neologism in *A Little Something for Us Tempnauts*, signifies time travelers, and compounds are coined by the combination of two or more words, taking "fluke-pit" in *The Days of Perky Pat* as the example, which refers to the underground shelter for survivors.

Besides sci-fi neologisms with a distinct linguistic structure, they may appear directly in the form of an existing word, acquiring new meanings in a new context, and some proper nouns may even be divorced from their original referents and take on new denotative meanings (Jiang, 2012, p. 57).

### B. The Translatability of Sci-Fi Neologisms

Translating neologisms is probably the biggest challenge for translators (Newmark, 2001, p. 140). Languages can look very different when judging superficially from the perspectives of phonology and morphology, but a deep analysis may lead us to an opposite viewpoint, stating that languages actually have common designs or patterns, and their creation may share basic principles.

The world can be the source of all inspiration, whether scientific or literary creation. We are in this shared objective world and feel the sensory stimulation it gives us, which eventually leaves an imprint on our mental network. The way languages work is closely related to human embodied experience, and it is what language users hear or see throughout their lives that shapes the structure of languages (Adger, 2019, p. 4). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999, p. 37), humans' conceptual system is critically anchored to our perception, body movement, and experience in the physical world, and we can further refine pieces of our experiences to a structured system of language. As humans have similar physiological structures and face the same objective world, we share universal natural laws and have similar perceptual and cognitive pathways, making different languages operate in similar ways, and this similarity makes the translation between languages possible.

Despite a sense of otherness, sci-fi neologisms cannot exist apart from reality. They are a fusion of imaginary ideas with different elements from reality, a combination of the experience and imagination of their creators. Sci-fi authors envision a fictive world in their minds, but deep down, the imaginary world is constructed on top of the natural world. For example, Mary created "Frankenstein" at the time when electricity was in full bloom; concepts created by Verne, including moon landing and space flight, have become a reality; and Herbert's *Dune* reflects the various threats and fears brought to society by the development of technology and society in the 20th century. Those examples demonstrate that sci-fi ideas are not just hare-brained fantasies, a depiction of something unknown, but the reasoning and prophecy of scientific research and social development.

## III. BLENDING IN WORD CREATION AND TRANSLATION

### A. Conceptual Blending Theory

In the 1990s, Fauconnier and Turner proposed Conceptual Blending Theory, which provides a powerful explanation for innovative thinking and the production of new concepts. Following this, they develop a complete conceptual integration network. As Figure 1 illustrates, the network consists of four conceptual spaces: input space I, input space II, generic space, and blended space, wherein elements in input spaces are selectively projected into the generic space and form an emergent structure in the blended space. The integration suggests not only a simple mapping of elements across

spaces and their projection but also a process where new elements are formed and new meanings are constructed (Li & Sun, 2021, p. 91).

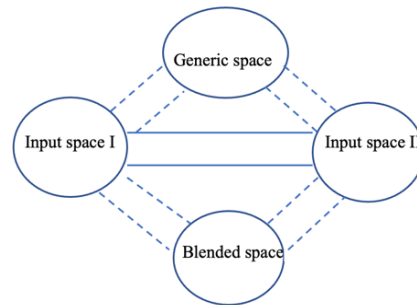


Figure 1. Basic Model of Conceptual Blending

The emergent structure is a result of the mental manipulation of material forms, and the innovative meaning it carries is not simply the sum of the projected elements (Wang, 2009, p. 56). For example, in the Middle East, a type of vehicle is called “ship of the desert”, where the elements “desert” and “ship” come from two different conceptual domains. However, once they are mapped and integrated, the novel meaning of a fast-moving vehicle in the desert can be obtained.

Conceptual blending refers to a psych-spatial network, and Fauconnier and Turner (1998) analyze how conceptual integration can blend frames, whereby they put forward four types of conceptual integration networks. A simplex network is a conceptual integration network in which one input space has an abstract frame, and the other has elements to fill the frame. For example, in “John is Mary’s brother”, input space I contains a blank “sibling” frame, while input space II contains the elements “John” and “Mary”. After a simple mapping across spaces, the elements of input space II are filled into the blank frame of input space I. In a mirror network, two input spaces share the same frame, and they are both inherited in the blended space. For instance, the two input spaces of “Chris is left speechless under Moran’s questioning” have the same “debate” frame, which forms an emergent structure that suggests “Moran trumps Chris”. A single-scope network consists of two input spaces with different frames, and one is projected into the blended space. Taking “Lenovo strikes hard at Dell” as an example, input space I has the frame of a boxing match and input space II a commercial war, and, from the emergent structure, the audience can perceive a bloody commercial battle. In contrast, blended space contains parts of both frames in a double-scope network, making the network highly innovative and generating novel meanings. The famous example “the surgeon is a butcher” displays two different frames, namely surgeon-patient and butcher-animal frames, and a conceptual integration leads to an emergent structure: the surgeon operates poorly.

Thus, we can conclude that no new concepts are created at a single leap, and every ingenious creation is a cognitive outcome of a series of mental activities. Through the projection and integration of different frames, one can create new meanings, and by projecting different elements of the frame, the same concept can be expressed in different ways.

### B. Conceptual Blending in Sci-Fi Neologism Creation

Every concept is scalable (Stockwell, 2016, p. 222), even those carried by sci-fi neologisms. Their prophetic nature may integrate science, sociology, philosophy, history, and literature into one, which fully and profoundly reflects the real world we live in and the way the creator sees it. The creation of neologisms goes on par with the development of the external environment, and the world provides the stimulus and inspiration for lexical creativity. In line with the idea of constructivism (Piaget, 1972) and social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1987), we rely on our mind to shape ideas of the world, both physical and social, we experience. We simulate the original perception of the world and recreate it in our mind, resonating with our experience, schematic knowledge, and personal judgment, which locate us forward in a positioning that shapes our focus of perception.

The creative construal of the physical world provides a portal but an insufficient stimulus to account for the activation of a new concept, and it still necessitates careful processing and integration by the human mind. Neologisms are fundamentally reflections of humans’ cognitive activities at the lexical level, and their formation is associated with the creator’s experience and knowledge system (Langlotz, 2016, p. 40). According to Fauconnier (1997), constructing a new meaning involves the formation of mental spaces and the mappings between them. Thus, analogically, a new concept carried by a sci-fi neologism can be conceived by a blend of real-world experience and the creator’s creative vision.

The model yields the potential to generate infinite meanings from our existing knowledge and capacity of imagination. When we think and construe, we set up mental spaces, from which mutual information shared with our creative inspiration is extracted. Afterward, a further projection from the input spaces generates the blended space, giving rise to a new structure that carries a new meaning that never exists in either of the input spaces.

Figure 2 illustrates a comprehensive cognitive process for sci-fi neologism creators. Word creators weave new concepts based on their perceptions of the world and combine them with their personal experience, creativity, and

imagination. After the new concept is formed in their mind, they develop an appropriate lexical carrier to satisfy their desire to express. Therefore, they must carefully parse the new concept, find corresponding lexical elements, and manipulate them to construct a new vocabulary.



Figure 2. Cognition Path of a Word Creator

Sci-fi neologisms may seem unrealistic, but they essentially signify new insights into how an author observes things and reflect his or her attitude toward the world (Lieberman, 2009, p. 34). The role name in *The Handmaid's Tale* offers a good example. In the novel, Margaret Atwood builds a patriarchal society where women are subjugated. The creative inspiration of Atwood can be found in her unsatisfying attitude towards women's status in the US during the 1980s, which serves as the prominence of her focus on the world she lives in. After spotting the stimulus, Atwood starts with her creation. The "blending" here suggests a fusion of the real world and the author's satirical view of it, which helps shape the imaginative and dramatized world in the novel. Under the setting of the world she builds, where fertile women are assigned to distinguished men, she needs new words suitable for the context, so the protagonist's name, "Offred", is coined. "Fred" is a familiar name in English for males, and the preposition "of" signifies a sense of subordination, and thus the name highlights the master-slave relation between the protagonist and her superior named "Fred", which displays the implicated meaning and sarcastic effect adequately.

In conclusion, the creation of neologisms reflects both the creators' construal of reality and excellent wording capacity. They are good at observing the world and have rich imagination and analogy skills, and their proficient language capacities also contribute to the creation of impressive or informative neologisms that can be understood and accepted by the audience.

### C. Conceptual Blending in Sci-Fi Neologism Translation

Being able to understand the construction and conception of a neologism is a good start, but its translation may be the most challenging hurdle to overcome. In the translation of sci-fi neologisms, there are potential lexical gaps and even conceptual gaps between two language systems, and thus it requires a thorough understanding of the neologism's context and structure before translators can render them into the target language.

When unfolding neologisms, cognitive construction can be found behind the scenes, where links are forged and emergent conceptual structure appears. Thus, translating neologism necessitates manipulation on a cognitive level. The translator must take into account the author's cognitive process and the rationale behind the linguistic structure, i.e., the conceptual knowledge, embodied experience, and semantic function (Wen & Xiao, 2019, p. 7), and, referring to the procedure of conceptual blending, map the source language into the target language based on his/her experience.

Compared with how creators invent neologisms, translators follow similar cognitive paths during their translation process. Figure 3 presents how translation can also be a process of blending. The first thing a translator is exposed to is neologisms, and there is no semantic representation in their mind by then. Thus, the translator engages first in the process of deconstruction, where the meaning of a novel word can be activated by unpacking its linguistic structure, and some seemingly discordant letter or character combinations may be acceptable by restoring its primitive structures and making resonance with their respective meanings (Wang, 2009, p. 58). Besides its superficial structure, the word works as an instruction for reproducing the concept. Thus, the translator also needs to unscramble the train of thoughts of the creator via encyclopedic knowledge and embodied experience. In the next phase, the translator needs to blend appropriate elements on both linguistic and mental levels to develop an emergent structure via completion and elaboration (Wang, 2009), which eventually leads to the translation product.

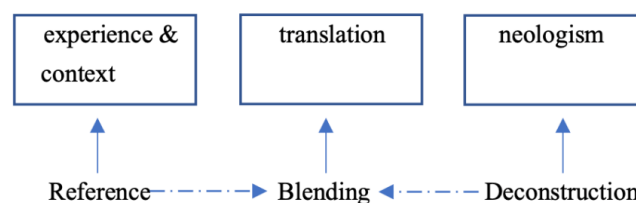


Figure 3. Cognitive Model of the Translator

Being able to provide an impressive translation of a neologism necessitates certain flexibility, and the translator should bring similar effects to the target audience as the original audience (Nida, 1964). A typical example is the translation of a name in *The Star My Destination*. The author constructs a world where people can move instantly through the power of thought, and the first person to have this power is called “Jointe”. An experienced translator will instantly notice that the word “joint” itself has the meaning of connection, and the context offers the key to the subtlety of the name. In contrast to direct transliteration, the translator chooses to externalize its meaning and create the name “斯东”. This translation fits the Chinese readers’ cognitive habits and is also a homophone for the word “思动”, which means to move through thought (Jiang, 2012, p. 58).

#### IV. TRANSLATION STRATEGIES OF SCI-FI NEOLOGISMS

Translation has long been considered a mere reproduction of what already exists in the source text with a stock of ready elements in a new linguistic and cultural system (Hewson, 2016, p. 12). However, based on the distinctiveness of neologisms, traditional translation strategies that emphasize equivalence and fidelity may not be feasible, and thus new countermeasures are required (Tan, 2012, p. 29).

##### A. *Translation on a Cognitive Basis*

The process of translation requires the participation of both linguistic and contextual knowledge: the translator needs not only to understand the meaning of the words but also to make a logical deduction based on his/her knowledge structure (Chen, 2008, p. 29). On the premise that the original word’s meaning is accurately expressed, the final translation will be based on the commonality of the two languages and must meet the target language’s cultural requirements.

Nevertheless, different physical environments, historical experiences, and cultural contexts may lead to the formation of different cultural models so that the lexicalization of concepts may distinguish from one another (Wen & Xiao, 2019, p. 16), which impedes the translation process. Besides, people may have different understandings of the same thing due to different perspectives, thus producing different expressions. Different perspectives and focus can bring about different expressions, yet the concept they activate are closely related (Wen & Xiao, 2019, p. 130). Since the same meaning can be expressed differently, the translation of neologisms does not need to abide by formal equivalence. By drawing closer or farther from the creators’ perspectives, translators can parse a word from different angles and land their focus where they can elaborate, taking advantage of their knowledge and language system. They can also create different expressions that convey similar meanings based on the norms of the target language and the predicted reader’s knowledge framework (Shi, 2009, p. 60). For neologisms that do not have an objective referent, the translator can trace the language form back to its origins, imaginatively construct or restore the construal scene of the creator, and then reselect appropriate elements for the translation to turn a seemingly untranslatable word into a translatable one.

##### B. *The Adaptability of Conceptual Blending Theory on Translation*

Although Conceptual Blending Theory is not a specialized translation theory, its use as a methodological approach to examining the cognitive process of translation can lead to enlightening findings, as it explains the process of generating new structures based on existing structures from a cognitive point of view (Wen & Xiao, 2019, p. 156). The translation process is a partial mapping across two input spaces, which can be regarded as the author’s and the translator’s mental space presented in linguistic forms or source language space and target language space to be concise. Different neologisms correspond to different networks, and the translator can operate on an element or a frame level to generate an optimal translation in the blended space.

##### (a). *Corresponding Mapping*

Even though sci-fi neologisms have no real-world counterpart, their creation is based on things, events, or objective truths in the world. Thus, for certain neologisms, the translator does not need to process them too much to come up with a translation that suits the target language.

In a mirror network, there are corresponding frames in the two input spaces with different elements. By applying it to translation, a neologism can directly map its translation in the target language space if the two input spaces have corresponding linguistic elements, share the same denotative meaning, and activate the same cognitive frameworks in the audience of both languages (Wen & Xiao, 2019, p. 159). This strategy mainly applies to old words with new meanings, where there are no cognitive difficulties in understanding the new meaning of the neologism endowed by the new context. For example, the three-body problem is originally a basic model in celestial mechanics, based on which Liu Cixin depicts “三体世界” [three-body world], and the translator can resort to a literal translation to cover the meaning of the original word.

In addition to old words with new meanings, this approach can also be applied to some blendings and compounds if their components reflect respectively common knowledge. When no connotative meanings are created during the manipulation, the translator can directly translate the neologism to achieve the effect it conveys in the source text. For example, “Astrogation” is a word often found in science fiction, which is a combination of “astronaut” and “navigation”,

and its meaning is obvious to be deduced, referring to cosmic navigation. As long as the translator can successfully infer the components contained in the original word, s/he can project them into the target language space for one-to-one correspondence and combine them to come up with a translation “宇宙航行” [space navigation]. Such a translation may lose some of its lexical novelty for the target audience, but it can best restore its meaning. Compared with blendings, the translation scenario of compounds is more straightforward. For example, in *Ghost in the Shell*, the human body and mind can interact directly with standard computers and networks, with the “geisha bot” being one of the technology’s products. Although such “geishas” exist only in the imaginary world constructed by the author, based on the audience’s understanding of the two components of the coinage, i.e., “geisha” and “bot” that stands for “robot”, the meaning of the new word appears vividly. Therefore, such compounds can be translated by the corresponding mapping of the neologism’s components in the two input spaces. Accompanying the accustomed expressions in the target culture, the translation “仿生艺伎” [bionic geisha] conforms both to the meaning accuracy and literary requirement.

In general, when the meaning of a neologism is based on the simple summation of its constituents, a direct cross-linguistic mapping will not cause difficulties in comprehension or cause a heavy cognitive load on the target audience. Since the constituents of a word activate the same cognitive frameworks in both language systems, the translator only needs to find the elements in the target language space that correspond to those in the source language space, and a direct projection into the blended space would be enough to lead to a satisfying translation.

#### (b). Direct Projection

In a simplex network, input space I contains an abstract frame, with no corresponding frame in input space II but only the elements to fill the frame after a simple cross-space mapping. The prerequisite for applying this strategy to translation is that a neologism has no translation equivalent in the target language space, nor can it activate corresponding representation in the cognitive frame of the target audience. In this case, the most appropriate method may be to adopt the original language frame directly, i.e., transliteration, to compensate for the gap in the two input spaces. The strategy is particularly suitable for translating new coinages, especially proper nouns.

The translator can translate coinages by directly selecting the appropriate elements from the target language space. For example, in the movie *After Earth*, aliens release a monster called “Ursas”. When translating this created moniker, the translator retains its original framework and translates it as “恶煞” [evil spirit]. The translator’s clever choice of elements in the target language frame not only preserves the linguistic features of the original word but also enhances the frightening prospect of the monster through the target language. In the translation of such words, the translator takes the pronunciation of the original word as the basis and, at the same time, considers the target audience’s knowledge system and aesthetic interest in the imaginative referent. The target elements are selected under the premise of harmonization, and a new word is intentionally created in the unity of form and meaning.

Another translation strategy involves affixing a meaning marker based on the source language frame to specify to which category the neologism belongs. In many sci-fi novels, authors often create and name a new world in order to make the worldview in their works believable. If the name chosen by the author has no special implied meaning, the translator can transliterate it and identify the category it belongs to by adding an appropriate suffix. For example, in *Rendezvous with Rama*, Arthur C. Clarke names an artificial planet forged by extra-terrestrial beings as “Rama”, which the translator can first translate phonetically to “拉玛”. Since the pairing of these two characters has no specific meaning in the target language and no other cognitive frameworks can be activated, it is all served to describe the new world created by the author. Meanwhile, to reduce the target audience’s cognitive load, the translator can also add the category-defining character “星” [planet] to further clarify the meaning of the coinage.

The sense of otherness is one of the most remarkable features of sci-fi neologisms, so translators should manage to avoid the loss of innovative meaning of the words caused by excessive naturalization in translation. Therefore, a direct projection of the frame from the source language space into the blended space can preserve the uniqueness of the neologisms and the reader’s right to embrace the exotic culture. On this basis, the translator can externalize the meaning of the original word by appropriately selecting elements from the target language space or adding corresponding meaning markers to reduce the reader’s cognitive burden in the comprehension process while promoting the activation of the same cognitive framework.

#### (c). Single-Scope Projection

In a single-scope network, the two input spaces have different frames, one of which can be projected to the generic space. From the perspective of translation, there are corresponding elements in input space I and input space II, but, unlike the circumstance of a mirror network, these two elements cannot activate the same imagery schema, i.e., they do not have a shared structure in the generic space. Therefore, the translator needs to escape from the original word and create a new frame in the target language space.

Such a translation strategy can be adopted when the author takes linguistic advantage. In *The Three-Body Problem*, Liu Cixin names an elegant girl in a kimono “智子”, a kind of intelligent micro-particle capable of communication and investigation that later materialized into a humanoid robot. The Chinese name means intelligence in form and proton in

sound, a wordplay that a direct translation or transliteration can hardly present. In this case, a direct projection of elements from the source language space may hinder the subtlety of the neologism, and thus the translator needs to construct a frame in the target language space while making the elements in the source language space an embellishment in the generic space. To artfully fuse both implications in the translation, Ken Liu first chooses the name “Sophia”, derived from Greek *Σοφία* that represents wisdom, extracts the first four letters of it, and grafts it on the last two letters of “proton” to coin the word “Sophon”. After the translator’s composition, elaboration, and extension, neither the sound nor the form of the original word can be traced, but its meaning is perfectly reproduced in the translation.

Besides word coinage, it is also a common writing technique in science fiction for authors to convey their ideas through existing words. However, unlike the above-mentioned old words with new meanings, sometimes these new words cannot be translated directly because the original objects they described already have a deep-rooted image in the target audience’s mind, so a direct translation may activate a wrong cognitive framework and lead to misunderstanding. For such neologisms, the translator needs to create a new frame in the target language space that corresponds precisely to the original word based on the information s/her has already obtained. Taking the film *After Earth* again as an example, the human army trains “ghosts”, so called because they are trained to fight without leaving a trace. However, in the target language culture, the image of “ghosts” is very different from that in the source language space, so the translator cannot translate it literally as “鬼” because it would activate a wrong cognitive framework. Instead, the translator chooses to translate it as “影子战士” [shadow warrior] via its description in the context. The translation does not originally exist in the target language space, and its innovative transformation of the imagery of “ghost” into “shadow” effectively conveys the meaning contained in the original word while avoiding unnecessary conceptual activation.

This translation strategy requires the translator to demonstrate great linguistic competence and marvelous creativity since creating a frame and projecting it into the blended space is much more complicated than searching existing elements in the target language space. The original word provides a creative idea for the translator, who, based on his/her understanding of the neologism and context, creates a different expression form that can activate the same cognitive framework in its target audience as that in the audience of the original work. In addition, the neologisms created by the translator effectively integrate the context and may greatly facilitate the audience’s cognitive associations. It endows the translator with much room to play, which may easily lead to surprising translation products if the translator plays it right.

#### (d). *Double-Scope Projection*

In a double-scope network, the two input spaces have different frames, and both are projected onto the blended space, making the generation of emergent structures particularly evident and highlighting the network’s creativity. In the translation process, the translator needs to cognitively manipulate the frame in the source language space to make it dovetail with the knowledge system of the target audience, and the versatility and hierarchy of a frame make the translator’s manipulation possible. The translation produced through the double-scope network preserves the original word’s form and incorporates the target cultural characteristics. With reference to Bayer-Hohenwarter and Kussmaul’s (2021, p. 316) cognitive shifts, three strategies, namely perspective shifts, upward frame adjustment, and downward frame adjustment, are developed.

##### 1. *Perspective Shifts*

Words can be regarded as a frame that highlights individual concepts and specifies a particular perspective from which the frame is viewed (Fillmore, 1977). For example, Fillmore (1976) suggests that the difference between “coast” and “shore” can be demonstrated by the respective activation of the “continental” and “oceanic” frames. The perspective of a frame refers to the viewpoint of the observer, and thus the versatility of frames can be reflected in the translation process in shifts of the observation perspectives of what describes the original word.

Sci-fi authors often create neologisms based on their culture and experience so that these words can reflect the author’s cognitive preference, and the translator can adjust the perspective of the original frame and find the cognitive perspective suitable for the target audience. For example, the coinage “Megatron”, referring to the villain in *Transformers*, originally refers to the tower-shaped electron tube, from which we can deduce that the author wants to underline its intimidating power through its colossal appearance. In Chinese, the translator chooses to highlight its great oppression from its characteristics and renders it into “威震天” [power shake sky], which means an arrogance of power in the context. The same strategy is adopted in the translation of “jaeger” in *Pacific Rim*. The word itself refers to an agile bird, but here it is used to refer to the enormous human-shaped machine created to fight against the invasion of monsters. The author selects “jaeger” to emphasize the high sensitivity of these machines, whereas the translator lays emphasis on their appearance and translates it to “机甲战士” [mech warriors].

Objectively speaking, there is no optimal perspective, and it may essentially be influenced by the overall environment the observer lives in. Translators may choose to translate from different perspectives because the target

audience is accustomed to observing things from certain angles, or it is a subjective choice of the translator after a comprehensive understanding of the original word, a presentation of his or her individual cognitive preference.

## 2. Frame Level Adjustments

Besides versatility, frames exhibit a hierarchical structure, with an upper frame representing abstract concepts. Cultural differences in different languages may lead to the failure of correspondence between the same frame level because a concept in the source language culture may not exist in the target language culture. Therefore, the translator needs to find a correspondence between the two languages by adjusting the levels of frames.

Upward adjustment is a common strategy in translation, where a more abstract concept is used to achieve meaning delivery between two languages. For example, in *Frankenstein*, considered the world's first science fiction, the protagonist Frankenstein tries to put together a giant and make it come to life. Since then, "Frankenstein" has been commonly used to describe sapient creatures created in scientific experiments. However, in the Chinese language space, it is evident that most audience knows little about the origin of the original word, so "Frankenstein" in Chinese often corresponds to "科学怪人" [scientific monster], which is found in a broader and more abstract frame level compared with that of the original word. Similarly, in *Ready Player One*, the scarcity of materials in the world set up by the author results in a "corn syrup drought", and since corn is the main agricultural product in the American culture, the "corn drought" logically activates the corresponding cognitive framework in its original audience. Concerning its translation, simply transplanting the original word into the target language space may not achieve such an effect, and replacing "corn" with "rice" may result in over domestication. Therefore, an appropriate strategy is to find a corresponding translation in the upper frame of "corn" and translate it to, for example, "big crop reduction", which can avoid excessive domestication and accurately activate the cognitive frame of the target audience.

In addition to more abstract expressions, translators may also look for more precise translations in sub-frames of the original word. A downward adjustment of frames as a translation strategy is demanding for the translator's capacity because it requires a thorough understanding of the original word and the translator's initiative and creativity to refine and describe the neologism more precisely, which may eventually lead to an optimization of the original word (Bayer-Hohenwarter & Kussmaul, 2021, p. 317).

In some sci-fi works, the author will first name a new character or object and then enrich its characteristics with explanatory descriptions. For example, in the novelette *The Days of Perky Pat*, the idea of "fluke" is one of the main subjects. "Fluker", coined by adding the suffix "-er", describes the adults who have survived by chance the hydrogen war. According to the author, "fluker" is "an ugly word", so a translation of "余民" [remainder people] is a subtle choice. The translation is also a coinage, with "余", meaning leftover, followed by a suffixed generic noun "民" [people]. The translation covers the idea of the ugly word because it is homophonic to "愚民", which means ignorant people. In this translation, the translator conveys two meanings of the original word in one word, which may bring a better cognitive experience to the target audience.

Similarly, in *Ready Player One*, the author names a suit as "X1 bootsuit", making whoever wears it sense the physical and psychological experience in the game. Here, the translator can integrate the functional characteristics of this garment and translate it as "零触感套装" [zero-touch suit]. Such a translation does not affect the original word's meaning but somewhat clarifies the characteristics of the object it describes.

In general, the hierarchical adjustment of the framework gives the translation of sci-fi neologisms a certain degree of flexibility and gives the translator room for creativity. However, the translation of them is not arbitrary. While translators translate with their understanding and preference, they still have to reflect the theme of the work and the author's conception.

## V. CONCLUSION

Sci-fi neologisms are products of human creativity that outline new worlds and concepts through the author's unique perspectives and cognitive processing. Thus, the concept of a sci-fi neologism is, to a certain extent, a combination of the author's embodied experience and imagination. Based on Conceptual Blending Theory, they project elements shared in the real and imaginary worlds into the generic space and generate neologisms in the blended space. Similarly, the translator places the neologisms in the context, combines them with his/her understanding and knowledge, and generates a translation in the blended space.

Even though sci-fi neologisms are challenging to translate, the difficulties also demonstrate great room for operation. When translators cannot find a corresponding word in the translation, they can either create new words based on the existing elements of the target language or construct an entirely new frame in the target language space. If there are corresponding elements in the target language space, translators can adopt literal translation; if the neologisms, primarily referring to proper nouns, do not carry special meanings, then translators can directly project the original frame into the blended space. In some cases, translators need to give full play to their creativity because they need to create new frames in the target language space or find the most suitable translation elements by adjusting the levels of the existing frames.

Given the complexity of linguistic phenomena, its translation is too sophisticated to be fully exploited. This article can serve as a modest spur to call for an expansion of research in this field, and future explorations can orient to cognitive impulses that prompt translators to foreground certain linguistic elements, the impact of genre varieties spawned on lexical creation and translation, and so forth. Besides, the models presented here may require further backup from empirical research, especially in terms of translation process research. The loan and compatibility of existing linguistic frameworks may be a shortcut in the development of Cognitive Translation Studies in its infancy, but within the discipline itself, its shaping-up will ineluctably require theoretical innovation and refinement.

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# The Semantic and Contextual Meanings of the Cognitive Words “*yʿqilu:n, yatafakaru:n, yatadabaru:n, yafqahu:n*” in Holy Qur’an

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**Abstract**—The current study endeavors to identify the semantic and contextual meanings of four cognitive words: “*yʿqilu:n, yatafakaru:n, yatadabaru:n, yafqahu:n*” in Holy Qur’an. The motive for this study comes from the vague semantic relations expressed by Muslim exegetes and interpreters of these words. Additionally, translating them into other languages such as English is considered challenging due to the cognitive resemblance, nature, and senses they express. Thus, the study aims to unravel the slight cognitive distinctions among these cognitive words by scrutinizing the micro and macro levels of structure and contexts of the Holy Qur’an. To accomplish the aims of the study, the Semantic Approach of Toshihiko Izutsu (2008) is adopted as a theoretical framework along with a contextual syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis of the targeted data. The findings reveal that the four cognitive verbs denote different semantic senses and are used in the Holy Qur’an in different contexts. They express different cognitive skills and mental abilities. Moreover, the findings show that these verbs are used differently in the Holy Qur’an to whom they are addressed and the consequences of using them.

**Index Terms**—cognitive words, Qur’an, semantic relations, Semantic Approach of Toshihiko Izutsu

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Holy Qur’an has attracted the attention of researchers of different scholarly disciplines (e.g. Jawad, 2023; Boulaouali, 2021; Raudatussolihah & Nawas, 2021; Mudakir & Taufiq, 2022). It is not just a religious spiritual book, but also considered a historical, moral, cultural, and linguistic guidance. It occupies a central place in Muslims’ lives and the entire world as well. The Qur’an is Allah’s literal words delivered by the prophet Mohammad to Arabs and other people in general. Therefore, it is worth researching and examining the deep meanings and messages residing in the Qur’anic contexts. There are several approaches of analysis conducted to study the Qur’an such as linguistic analysis, rhetorical analysis, narrative analysis, comparative semantics, and thematic analysis.

The semantics of the Qur’an is one of the ongoing studies that gains significant concern from Muslim expositors and linguists as well. Semantic research of the Qur’an boosts comparative religious studies and interfaith dialogue as it helps researchers explore the meanings and interpretations of Qur’anic texts. Additionally, semantic research seeks to elucidate the ambiguous and deep layers of meanings and interpretations that Muslim exegetes such as Ibn Katheer, al-Tabari, al-Qurtbi, etc. did not explore. Accordingly, researchers think that Muslim clerics have adopted contrasting views and interpretations of some central religious issues stated in the Qur’an such as grave torment, Inheritance, women’s rights, and freedom.

One of the main problems of the semantics of the Qur’an is the various possible interpretations of the same verse and word. There might be several interpretations of the same word in the Qur’anic context (Silverstein, 2021). Muslim

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exegetes mostly depend on social and historical context, reasons for the revelation, and ideological background in providing the meanings of words and verses. Currently, with the development of discourse and semantics analysis, a considerable number of Muslims and Non-Muslims feel that they would arrive at more accurate exegesis. In this regard, researchers interested in this field have adopted new approaches and methods to analyze and interpret the Holy Qur'an; intertextuality (Khawaldeh, 2017; Taha et al., 2013; Al-Jarrah, 2011), semantic analysis (Alimin et al., 2022), Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic analysis (Sazjini et al., 2021), discourse analysis (Salmani et al., 2021).

Relatively, some traditional interpretations of the Holy Qur'an have given rise to fundamental mistakes in the translation of the Qur'an. For example, traditional interpreters have viewed a significant number of Qur'anic words as synonyms. As a result, rendering the synonymous meanings of these words into another language causes a loss, or at least partial loss, of their connotative and denotative senses. For instance, words such as ‘?ab’ and ‘waalid’ are considered synonyms by Muslim exegetes in which “father” is the English equivalent of the two Qur'anic words. In this regard, Boulaouali states “The word *fitnah*, refers to a variety of meanings like testing, temptation, torture, punishment, idolatry, beauty, etc. (2021, p. 128).” Translation depends on meaning, if you do not define words accurately, especially synonyms, the translation will not be precise. On this point, various researchers (Al-Qinai, 2012; Ali et al., 2012; Fathi & Nasser, 2009) argue that using nonequivalent words of the Qur'anic words influences the intended meaning and correct interpretation of the Qur'an.

The above discussion demonstrates that examining the semantics of the Qur'an is a significant area of research. Despite the huge number of semantic studies of Qur'anic texts, the authors of the current study have not found a single study examining and defining the accurate meanings of cognitive words (“*yʿqilu:n*, *yatafakaru:n*, *yatadabaru:n*, *yafqahu:n*). The current study aims to fill the gap in the previous literature and investigate the intended meanings of these four cognitive words in the Holy Qur'an, which have been interpreted as near-synonyms. Additionally, the study endeavors to provide their semantic relations and shed light on the slight differences that are significant in understanding the contextual, social, and religious meanings. To achieve these aims, the current study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the precise meanings of the cognitive words “*yʿqilu:n*, *yatafakaru:n*, *yatadabaru:n*, *yafqahu:n*”?
2. What are the semantic relations drawn among the cognitive verbs in hand?
3. What are the proper English translations of the selected cognitive verbs?

The authors have drawn upon different methodical frameworks to understand the intended meanings of four cognitive words that have not been identified accurately in previous literature and Muslim exegetes.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies investigated the meanings of different words in the Holy Quran. Harahap et al. (2022) investigated the meanings of the lexical item ‘Al-Fitnah’ and its derivatives in the Holy Quran. The study used a qualitative approach. The findings of the study showed that ‘Al-Fitnah’ and its derivatives were used 57 times in the Holy Quran (30 verbs and 29 nouns). The study also revealed that ‘Al-Fitnah’ and its derivatives are associated with many meanings, such as hypocrisy, misfortune, and calamity.

Sazjini et al. (2021) explored the meanings of ‘*furqan*’ in the Holy Quran using the paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships. It also aimed to refute the assumption of the author of Letters for the Prophet Muhammad, which suggested that ‘*furqan*’ refers to a book other than the Holy Quran. The study found that the word ‘*furqan*’ collocates with guidance and piety. The findings also proved that the claim by the author of the book Letters for the Prophet Muhammad was false. It was found that the word ‘*furqan*’ was substituted for the book, the Quran and scale.

Harahap et al. (2020) adopted the Izutsu’s semantic analysis approach to unveil the meanings of the Qur'anic word *al-Nisa*. The results of the study revealed that at the syntagmatic level, *al-Nisa* referred to women. At the paradigmatic level, the word *al-Nisa* was used interchangeably with *Imra'ah* or *Mar'ah*, and *Al-untsa*. The findings of the study showed that *al-Nisa* in the pre-Qur'anic period was associated with weakness and helplessness. However, *al-Nisa* in the Qur'anic period was understood as a noble and honorable gender.

Mudakir et al. (2022) approached the relational meanings of *Hawa* in the Holy Quran using Toshihiko Izutsu’s perspective. The data included 38 instances of *Hawa* in the Holy Quran. The findings of the study revealed that the relational meaning of *Hawa* had positive and negative connotations. The positive relational meaning of *hawa* in the Qur'an was ‘to longing for Baitullah’ and ‘desire of obedience’. *Hawa* has a relationship with negative meanings such as Satan, prejudice, murder, lies, carelessness, arrogance, exaggeration in religion, denying the Day of Judgment, falsehood, injustice, imperfect faith, destruction, and misguidance.

Hardivizon and Mufidah (2021) adopted Thosihiko Izutsu’s semantic approach to explore how to control emotions in terms of *kazim* in the Holy Quran. The study aimed to investigate the basic meaning, relational meaning, and historical meaning of the term ‘*kazim*’ in the Holy Quran. The study demonstrates that the term ‘*kasim*’ was used 6 times in six Surahs. It also showed that four methods in the Holy Quran could control emotions, namely, patience, silence with prayer, and *dzikrullah*.

In another study, Almakrob and Al-Ahdal (2020) used collocational analysis to explore whether near-synonyms in the Holy Quran had different or similar meanings. The data of the study consisted of eight pairs of near-synonyms in the Holy Quran. The study elucidates that near-synonyms in the Holy Quran co-occurred to reveal different meanings.

Muhsinin (2019) investigated the semantic meaning of Muslims in the Holy Qur'an. The researcher compiled all verses containing the words Muslim or Muslims in the holy Quran and explored the meanings of these words in context. The findings of the study revealed that Muslims refer to those who follow the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed. The study also revealed some characteristics of Muslims including: they believe in the Quran and all prophets, they serve only Allah, they show Istiqomah in piety, they are not arrogant, they submit to Allah, and they hasten repent to Allah.

Nur Rochim et al. (2023) investigated the meaning of the word "wazir" in the Quran using Toshihiko Izutsu's Quranic semantic approach. The syntagmatic analysis showed that wazir was used to refer to very grave sin, while the Paradigmatic analysis showed that 'wizir' was a synonym of 'sin', ajr 'reward', and aduw 'helper'. Moreover, the diachronic and synchronic analyses showed that the meanings of wazir evolved over time. While it means 'heavy' in the pre-Qur'anic era, it is associated with 'sin' in the Qur'anic era.

In another study Fm et al. (2023) explored the meanings of the Qur'anic word 'khalafa' using Toshihiko Izutsu's approach. The study focused on the basic meaning of 'khalafa' and its relational meanings adopting the syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis. The findings of the study revealed that 'to create' is the basic meaning of khalafa in the Qur'an. Additionally, the study revealed that 'khalafa' is synonymous with many words in the holy Quran, such as sawara, ja'ala, bada'a, fa'ara, and shana'a. Moreover, the diachronic and synchronic analysis showed that khalafa is used with things created by Allah.

Despite the huge number of semantic studies of the Qur'an, there is not even a single study that investigated the meanings of cognitive verbs and uncovered slight differences among them. The current study endeavors to shed light on four cognitive verbs, "yʿqilu:n, yatafakaru:n, yatadabaru:n, yafqahu:n" that are mostly considered synonyms and near-synonyms and distributed across the whole Qur'anic text.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Data Collection

The selection of the cognitive words in hand is motivated by their semantic resemblance in which they are interpreted as near synonyms by Muslim expositors. Moreover, the abstract nature of these words makes them challenging, and then worthy of investigation to figure out the precise nuance among them.

The data were collected from the Holy Quran. The authors utilized a websites of a digital Qur'an researcher (QuranWow.com, <https://www.quranwow.com/#/ch/3/t1/ar-allah/t2/en-italia/a1/alafasy-64/a2/italia-48-b/v/191>) and <https://quran.com/20> to extract and translate all verses that contain the selected words and their variants over the stretches of the whole Qur'an. The number of verses containing the selected words is as follows: 'yʿqilu:n' occurs 49 times, 'yatafakaru:n' occurs 17 times, 'yatadabaru:n' occurs 9 times, and 'yafqahu:n' occurs 17 times.

#### B. Data Analysis

This study is a descriptive semantic study of Qur'anic texts that aims to interpret the intended meanings of four cognitive words namely, 'yʿqilu:n', 'yatafakaru:n', 'yatadabaru:n', 'yafqahu:n', and figure out the main differences between among them. To achieve this goal, the authors adopt a combination of two approaches: the semantic approach of Toshihiko Izutsu (2008) and the syntagmatic and paradigmatic approach. According to Izutsu, interpreting the meaning of words in the Qur'an can be achieved by creating a network of connected words. The stages of research initially start with investigating the original meanings of the selected words as viewed in Arabic dictionaries and by Muslim exegetes such as Ibn Kathir, Al-Qurtubi, and Al-Ma'anu. Then, a syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis is conducted to examine the relationship between the selected words and the other words used in the same chain of discourse. It is worth mentioning that analyzing the meaning of a word in the Qur'an requires tracing the network of the connected words to figure out the relational meanings. Finally, the authors deduce and describe the intended meaning of the examined words by deciphering the network of all verses containing the same word.

#### C. The Semantic Approach of Toshihiko Izutsu (2008)

Izutsu is one of the pioneering linguists who are concerned with the semantic study of the Quran. In his book (God and Man in the Qur'an), Izutsu (2008) presented a semantic methodology for Qur'anic studies. Izutsu (2008) states "Semantics as I understand it is an analytic study of the key terms of a language to arrive eventually at a conceptual grasp of the weltanschauung or world-view of the people who use that language" (p. 3).

The analytical method of Izutsu in interpreting the individual words of the Qur'an is based on the interdependent nature of Qur'anic words. Izutsu believes that Qur'anic words don't stand in isolation from each other, rather their meanings are derived from the entire system of relation. To this conclusion, analyzing words' meanings in the Qur'an entails deciphering the complicated conceptual network among words and dealing with the Qur'an as a concrete integrated structure.

The current study utilizes Izutsu's (2008) study as an analytical framework by which all the verses including the targeted words are gathered and analyzed to uncover the conceptual network among them and provide a precise and accurate interpretation of the intended meaning of each word as well as clarify the slight differences among them.

## IV. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the profound analysis of the verses containing the selected verbs (*yʿqilu:n*, *yatafakaru:n*, *yatadabaru:n*, *yafqahu:n*). The first part introduces the meaning of the selected words cited in Arabic dictionaries “*alma’ani* and *almuhi:t* dictionaries”. Section 4.2 presents the interpretations of the four cognitive verbs expressed by Muslim exegetes namely, Ibn-Kathir, Alta Bari, Al-Sa’di and Al-Kurtubi.

## A. Arabic Dictionaries Meanings

(a). Terminology of ‘*yʿqilu:n*’

The term ‘*yʿqilu:n*’ is derived from the root ‘*ʿaqila*’ which has several senses as cited in *Alm’ani* and *Almuhi:t* dictionaries. In the *Alm’ani* dictionary, the word means to perceive the nature of things, perceive and recognize, and understand. In the *Almuhi:t* dictionary, the word means to know the traits of things, to know good and bad traits of things, to understand, stretch and tie the camel’s arms and legs.

(b). Terminology of ‘*yatafakaru:n*’

In the *Alm’ani* dictionary, the verb ‘*tafakar*’ means to contrive, to consider, to preach, and to remember. *Almuhi:t* dictionary defines the verb ‘*tafakar*’ as the act of looking at something to get a result and to contemplate.

(c). Terminology of ‘*yafqahu:n*’

‘*Yafqahu:n*’ is derived from the verb ‘*faqaha*’ which means to learn and understand as cited in the *Alm’ani* dictionary. *Almuhi:t* dictionary defines the word ‘*faqaha*’ as to comprehend and understand things.

(d). Terminology of ‘*yatadabaru:n*’

In *Alma’ani* and *Almuhi:t* Arabic dictionary, the term ‘*tadabar*’ means to think of and consider things deeply to see their consequences.

As cited above in the Arabic dictionaries ‘*almuhi:t* and *alma’ani*’, the meanings of the four cognitive verbs (*yʿqilu:n*, *yatafakaru:n*, *yatadabaru:n*, *yafqahu:n*) are not stated explicitly and considered as near-synonyms. Accordingly, translating them into another language might be challenging and incompatible. The current study devotes itself to providing accurate and precise meanings of these cognitive words.

## B. Muslim Exegetes’ Interpretations of the Cognitive Verbs

This section presents some interpretations of the four cognitive words as provided by some Muslim exegetes namely, Ibn-Kathir, Alta Bari, Al-sa’di, and Al-Kurtubi. Each sub-section includes only one verse as a representative example.

(a). The Interpretation of the Cognitive Verb ‘*yʿqilu:n*’

{ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ }  
(Holy Quran, surah al-Hajj, verse, 46)

*Have they not journeyed in the land, and had minds to reason with, or ears to listen with? It is not the eyes that go blind, but it is the hearts, within the chests, that go blind, (QuranWow.com).*

In his interpretation, Ibn-Kathir explains that the verb ‘*yʿqilu:n*’ in the above verse is to be considered without explaining or providing a transparent illustration of the essence of the verb. Alqutubi in his interpretation uses the same verb “*yʿqilu:n*” without defining the accurate meaning of the verb. Additionally, Al-Tabari defines the verb as to think and consider.

(b). The Interpretation of the Cognitive Verb ‘*Yafqahu:n*’

{ أَنيَّمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِككُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّسَبَّحَةٍ وَإِن تُصِيبْهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ وَإِن تُصِيبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ سَيَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قُلْ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا }  
(Holy Quran, surah an-Nisa', verse, 78)

*Wherever you may be, death will catch up with you, even if you were in fortified towers. When a good fortune comes their way, they say, “This is from Allah.” But when a misfortune befalls them, they say, “This is from you.” Say, “All is from Allah.” So what is the matter with these people, that they hardly understand a thing, (QuranWow.com).*

Alta Bari interprets the verb ‘*Yafqahu:n*’ in the above verse as to understand or know.

Al-Sa’di interprets the verb ‘*Yafqahu:n*’ as understanding the speech.

(c). The Interpretation of the Cognitive Verb ‘*Yatafakaru:n*’

{ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِن تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثْ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَاقْصُصْ الْقِصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ }  
{

(Holy Quran, surah al-A`raf, verse, 176)

*Had We willed, We could have elevated him through them, but he clung to the ground, and followed his desires. His metaphor is that of a dog: if you chase it, it pants; and if you leave it alone, it pants. Such is the metaphor of the people who deny Our signs. So tell the tale, so that they may ponder, (QuranWow.com)*

Ibn Kathir doesn't provide a precise definition of the verb 'Yatafakaru:n'. He uses the verb to be cautious to illustrate the meaning of the verb in the verse.

AL-Tabari interprets the verb 'Yatafakaru:n' as knowing and understanding that what Prophet Muhammad said is from heaven. Al-Kurtubi doesn't provide any explanation or definition of the verb 'Yatafakaru:n'. He uses the verb itself taking into account that readers of the Qur'an know the meanings.

(d). *The Interpretation of the Cognitive Verb 'yatadabaru:n'*

{ أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْفُرْعَانَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالًا }

(Holy Quran, surah Muhammad, verse, 24)

*Will they not ponder the Quran? Or are there locks upon their hearts? (QuranWow.com).*

AL-Sa'sdi doesn't clarify the accurate meaning of the verb 'yatadabaru:n'. He uses the same verb as it is clear and understandable to the readers. Additionally, he uses the verb "mediate" as part of the meaning of the verb 'yatadabaru:n'.

{ أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْفُرْعَانَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا }

(Holy Quran, surah an-Nisa', verse, 82)

*Do they not ponder the Quran? Had it been from any other than Allah, they would have found in it much discrepancy, (QuranWow.com).*

Al-Kurtubi interprets the verb 'yatadabaru:n' in verse as to look and think of the results and learn lessons from events.

Based upon the aforementioned discussion, it is quite clear that the Arabic dictionaries and Muslim exegetes have not provided transparent and precise definitions of the selected cognitive verbs in the Holy Quran.

### C. *The Semantic Contextual Meanings*

This section encompasses a detailed analysis of the meanings of each one of the four cognitive verbs used in Qur'anic contexts.

(a). *Ya?qilu:n*

This section shows the semantic relations grid manifested from syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis of Qur'anic verses that include the verb 'ya?qilu;n,' which can be best translated into English as 'to reason'.

#### 1. *Arrogance and Thoughtlessness*

If we investigate the Qur'anic verses that include the verb 'ya?qilu;n', we will find that this verb is well related to the basic concepts of life that depend on very simple logical pieces of evidence. This level of mental ability requires people to think of evident signs and indications to realize that they were wrong. Examine the following verses.

{ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَابَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُهْتَدُونَ } 1

(Holy Quran, surah al-Baqarah, verse, 170)

*And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed," they say, "We will follow what we found our ancestors following." Even if their ancestors understood nothing, and were not guided? (QuranWow.com).*

{ إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَلُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْأَنْهَارِ وَاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلُوكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَأَخْتَبِ بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بِغَدِّ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ. }

(Holy Quran, surah al-Baqarah, verse, 46)

*In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of night and day; in the ships that sail the oceans for the benefit of mankind; in the water that Allah sends down from the sky, and revives the earth with it after it had died, and scatters in it all kinds of creatures; in the changing of the winds, and the clouds disposed between the sky and the earth; are signs for people who understand, (QuranWow.com).*

Tracing the verb 'ya?qilu;n' in the above verses contextually and syntagmatically shows that the addressees are asked to use the basic level of their cognitive ability to simply think of what Allah reveals in the Qur'an.' Allah asks them to draw logical conclusions from real premises. However, disbelievers do not swallow their pride and do not even give themselves the chance to use their basic ability to think of new reasonable beliefs as introduced by the messenger. They refuse this invitation and respond with 'we follow our ancestors' beliefs.'

#### 2. *Denial and Refusal*

Verses (3, 4, 5) and 6 below reveal that Allah confirms that Arabic is the language of the Qur'an, which is the mother tongue of the addressees. These contexts confirm that the act of denial (i.e., not reasoning) is not a result of missing or understanding the meanings of the Qur'an, but rather because of arrogance and thoughtlessness.

3 { أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِالْكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ قَرِيبًا مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ }  
(Holy Quran, surah al-Baqarah, verse, 75)

*Do you hope that they will believe in you, when some of them used to hear the Word of Allah, and then deliberately distort it, even after understanding it? (QuranWow.com).*

4. { إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ }  
(Holy Quran, surah Yusuf, verse 2)

*We have revealed it an Arabic Quran, so that you may understand, (QuranWow.com).*

5. { إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ }  
(Holy Quran, surah az-Zukhruf, verse, 3)

*We made it an Arabic Qur'an, so that you may understand, (QuranWow.com).*

In this regard, examining the verb 'ya?qilu;n' in verses (5, 6) reflects the genuine intent of its use in the Qur'an. In other words, it is used to address people's minds to recognize the existence of Allah and to believe in him as the one and only creator of the universe. Allah invites disbelievers to think of the creation of heavens and Earth, as clear evidence, to get the message that there is a great creator for the universe, which was not found haphazardly.

6. { وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ }  
(Holy Quran, surah an-Nahl, verse, 12)

*And He regulated for you the night and the day; and the sun, and the moon, and the stars are disposed by His command. Surely in that are signs for people who ponder, (QuranWow.com).*

### 3. Foolishness and Dumbing

Analysis of the verses below reveals another semantic relation grid of the verb 'ya?qilu;n,' which is its relatedness to the senses of "hearing, seeing and minding." In verses 1 and 2 Allah depicts people who do not reason (i.e., do not use their minds) to think of what they hear as animals or even worse living things which are deaf and dumb.

1 { إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ }  
(Holy Quran, surah al-Anfal, verse: 22)

*The worst of animals to Allah are the deaf and dumb—those who do not reason, (QuranWow.com).*

2. { أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا }  
(Holy Quran, surah al-Furqan, verse, 44)

*Or do you assume that most of them hear or understand? They are just like cattle, but even more errant in their way. (QuranWow.com).*

Verses (3, 4) below confirm that the verb 'ya?qilu;n' requires reasoning while reading the Qur'an. For example, in verse 3, Allah blames the addressees that they command people to virtuous conduct and forget themselves while they are reading the religious book. Additionally, verses (3, 4) indicate a significant correlation between the verb 'ya?qilu;n', on the one hand, and hearings and seeing on the other hand. They show that the verb 'ya?qilu;n' cannot be performed without rational hearing and seeing. Again, Allah attributes foolishness and dumbing to those who do not reason when reading verses of the Qur'an. Furthermore, the exclamatory tone in verse (6) indicates the foolishness of the addressee. In that, the Holy book contains the addressees' news, how for them not to read reasoningly!

3. { أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ }  
(Holy Quran, surah al-Baqarah, verse: 44)

*Do you command people to virtuous conduct, and forget yourselves, even though you read the Scripture? Do you not understand? (QuranWow.com).*

4. { وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءً وَنِدَاءً صُمُّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ }  
(Holy Quran, surah al-Baqarah, verse, 171)

*The parable of those who disbelieve is that of someone who calls upon someone who hears nothing except screaming and yelling. Deaf, dumb, and blind—they do not understand, (QuranWow.com).*

### 4. Disgrace

What distinguishes the cognitive verb 'ya?qilu;n' from the other cognitive verbs is its semantic relation to the concept of faith in Allah. It is considered the first cognitive process that all humans must use to know who Allah is. Consequently, without deploying the cognitive process 'ya?qilu;n', people cannot gain the right faith in Allah as shown in the following verse:

1. { وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَيَجْعَلُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ }  
(Holy Quran, surah al-Baqarah, verse, 171)

(Holy Quran, surah Yunus, verse: 100)

*No soul can believe except by Allah's leave; and He lays disgrace upon those who refuse to understand.* (QuranWow.com).

To get to the point, it seems that the cognitive verb 'ya?qilu:n' represents the most basic level of thinking. It could be best translated to 'reason' into English as it represents the mental ability that any sensible human can achieve. This claim is based on the semantic contexts in which this verb is used. To mention a few, this verb is used in contexts where Allah orders people to get rid of their superciliousness and ingratitude and to start thinking of what he has revealed in his book, Qur'an. Additionally, Allah invites people to reason about the reality of creating the heavens and Earth and what is between them to get his message(s). Finally, Allah likens people who do not use the most basic levels of mind to the worst living pieces, which are deaf and dumb. The overall context indicates that motivation is not eternal but rather external- an invitation from Allah to people to draw a logical inference out of what they hear and say and to get rid of arrogance and thoughtlessness.

### (b). *Yatafakaru:n* (Reflect)

The verb 'Yatafakaru:n' is one of the cognitive verbs used in the Holy an'Qur, with the frequency of 17. It communicates essential concepts that people need to understand the essence of the creation of life with all its features. Tracing the contextual use of the verb 'Yatafakaru:n' with the syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis shows that the verb 'Yatafakaru:n' is based on perceptible materials such as the creation of the heavens and the earth, food and water, mountains and rivers, and night and day. Put differently, people are asked to think of all these substantial signs to conclude that the globe was not founded by coincidence, but rather, by the discretion of a great creator.

#### 1. *Relatedness to Concrete Evidence*

However, this discussion makes no difference between the verb discussed above, 'ya?qilu:n', and the verb 'Yatafakaru:n'. In this regard, when examining the verses that include the verb 'Yatafakaru:n', it is plausible to argue that this verb is related to concrete evidence. For example, in verses (I, 2) below we can see visible signs like the creation of heavens and earth, the creation of man, and the concept of life and death.

1. { *وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ ۗ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لٰٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ* }

(Holy Quran, surah al-Jathiyah, verse: 13)

*And He placed at your service whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth—all is from Him. In that are signs for people who think.* (QuranWow.com).

2. { *اَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْا فِىْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ مَّا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۗ وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَاىِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكٰفِرُوْنَ* }

(Holy Quran, surah al-Rum, verse: 8)

*Do they not reflect within themselves? Allah did not create the heavens and the earth, and what is between them, except with reason, and for a specific duration. But most people, regarding meeting their Lord, are disbelievers,* (QuranWow.com).

#### 2. *Figurative Mapping*

In verses, one and two below, Allah asks people to draw up meanings out of mapping between the source and target domains to recognize the power of Allah. For example, verse (1) depicts a real scenario that all people experience in their lives; they see what happens when the rain falls, the earth flourishes, and then it turns back into stubble. Allah wants his servants to meditate on and deeply think of this natural frequency and to compare it to a life scene. This reflection helps people understand the truth of life and confess the power of Allah. This suggests that the best translation for the cognitive verb 'Yatafakaru:n' into English is to 'reflect' or 'meditate.'

1. { *اِنَّا لَنُرِيْكَ اِنْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنٰهٗ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهٗ اَخْلَدَ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هٗوٰهٖ ۗ فَمَثَلُهٗ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ اِنْ تَحَمَّلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ اَوْ تَتْرٰكُهٗ يَلْهَثُ ۗ ذٰلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۗ بَايٰتِنَا ۗ فَاقْصُصْ الْقٰصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ* }

(Holy Quran, surah al-Araf, verse, 176)

*Had we willed, we could have elevated him through them; but he clung to the ground, and followed his desires. His metaphor is that of a dog: if you chase it, it pants; and if you leave it alone, it pants. Such is the metaphor of the people who deny our signs. So tell the tale, so that they may ponder,* (QuranWow.com).

2. { *اَيُّوْدُ اٰخٰذِكُمْ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّجْوٰى وَاَعْنَٰبٍ تَجْرٰى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ۗ لَهٗ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ ۗ وَاَصَابَهٗ الْكِبَرُ ۗ وَاَلهٗ ذُرِّيَةٌ ضَعَفَاءُ فَاَصَابَهَا اِغْصٰنٌ فِيْهٖ نٰرٌ ۗ فَاَخْرَجَتْ ۗ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ الْاٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ* }

(Holy Quran, surah al-Baqarah, verse, 266)

*Would anyone of you like to have a garden of palms and vines, under which rivers flow—with all kinds of fruit in it for him, and old age has stricken him, and he has weak children—then a tornado with fire batters it, and it burns down? Thus Allah makes clear the signs for you, so that you may reflect,* (QuranWow.com).

#### 3. *Internal Motivation*

Another defining semantic feature of the verb 'Yatafakaru:n' is that it is based on the notion of monologue. That is, verse 1 below indicates that people who accepted the idea of the existence of Allah speak to themselves about the power





1. وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِرَ بُرْهَانَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاہُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوہُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا {

(Holy Quran, surah al-Kahif, verse, 57)

Who does greater wrong than he, who, when reminded of his Lord's revelations, turns away from them, and forgets what his hands have put forward? We have placed coverings over their hearts, lest they understand it, and heaviness in their ears. And if you call them for guidance, they will not be guided, ever, (QuranWow.com).

2. { يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي }

(Holy Quran, surah Taha, verse, 28)

So they can understand my speech, (QuranWow.com).

3. { وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلْنَا سُورَةً تَطَرَّ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ هَلْ يَرَاكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ ثُمَّ انصَرَفُوا صَرَفَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ بَأْسَهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ }

(Holy Quran, surah al-tawba, verse, 127)

And whenever a chapter is revealed, they look at one another, "Does anyone see you?" Then they slip away. Allah has diverted their hearts because they are a people who do not understand (QuranWow.com).

In verse (3) Allah describes people who have been exposed to his revelations but they rejected to consider and understand them. In the same line, verse (1) confirms that the addressees don't understand the messenger's words. All in all, the verb 'Yafqahu:n' requires a high cognitive ability to distinguish the core of things, the intended meanings of words, and the results of actions.

#### (d). Yatadabbaru:n (Ponder)

The verb 'Yatadabbaru:n' is the least manifested cognitive verb in the Qur'an, it is mentioned only 4 times. The few occurrences of the verb 'Yatadabbaru:n' indicate that it is oriented to a few people who have a high level of thinking and can unravel the deep meanings of verses that rely on micro and macro levels of analysis. A deep analysis of the Qur'anic verses that encompass the verb 'yatadabbar,' would provide us with an evident vision of the cognitive level of this verb. Examine the following verses:

1. { أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا }

(Holy Quran, surah al-Nisa'a, verse, 82)

Do they not ponder the Quran? Had it been from any other than Allah, they would have found in it much discrepancy (QuranWow.com)

2. { كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ }

(Holy Quran, surah Saad, verse, 29)

A blessed Book that We sent down to you, that they may ponder its Verses, and for those with intelligence to take heed (QuranWow.com)

3. { أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا }

(Holy Quran, surah Mohammad, verse, 24)

Will they not ponder the Quran? Or are there locks upon their hearts? (QuranWow.com).

#### The Deepest and the most Comprehensive Level of Analysis

The verb 'yatadabbaru:n' is related to the macro level of analysis and investigation, where God invites people to do a holistic examination of the Qur'an to check its veracity, and to find out if there are any differences. This requires a high level of cognitive abilities like understanding, analyzing, distinguishing, relating, and comparing results together. Moreover, mentioning the word 'book' (i.e., Qur'an) and its 'verses' (i.e., Ayat) indicates the relatedness between the verb 'yatadabbar' (ponders) and the comprehensiveness of the Qur'anic text.

All the above verses reveal that the verb "Yatadabbaru:n" differs from the other cognitive verbs in the sense that the three cognitive verbs "yafqilu:n, yatafakaru:n, yafqahu:n" are used with nature, actions, environment, stories, and ideas but the verb "Yatadabbaru:n" is employed only with Al-Qur'an. Moreover, the syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis of the verb "Yatadabbaru:n" confirms that there is no punishment for people who don't ponder the Holy Qur'an. It is used to address those who can deeply contemplate verses of the Qur'an and discover its secrets and underlying messages.

## V. DISCUSSION

The current study investigates the contextual semantic meanings of four cognitive verbs in the Holy Qur'an "yafqilu:n, yatafakaru:n, yatadabbaru:n, yafqahu:n". The findings revealed that the meanings of such cognitive verbs in Arabic dictionaries "al-muhi:t and alma'ani", are not defined explicitly and are considered near-synonyms and synonyms in some cases. Additionally, Muslim exegetes have not provided a clear interpretation of the aforementioned cognitive verbs in they do not show clear differences and relations among them. This has made it difficult for the readers of the Holy book to distinguish the accurate meanings of these verbs, and for the translators to give their proper meanings when rendering them into another language. Therefore, the current study endeavors to provide accurate and precise meanings of these cognitive words.

The profound analysis of the cognitive verbs provides fruitful findings regarding defining the verbs and showing the deep semantic and contextual meanings and definitions that would make these verbs distinguishable. This, in turn, would facilitate translating these verbs into other languages properly. The current study simulates, to some extent, Sajjini's (2021) study, which tried to figure out the semantic and contextual meanings of the word 'furqan'.

The findings provide that the four cognitive verbs are used to express different levels of cognitive abilities. The verb 'ya?qilu;n' refers to the basic concepts of life that all people can deploy via the use of simple logical pieces of evidence. Moreover, to answer the study's third question, the best translation of the verb 'ya?qilu;n' is 'to reason.' In this detail, the act of reasoning requires the addressee to start thinking of changing their premises based on evident proof. This finding distinguishes the verb 'ya?qilu;n' from the other cognitive verbs which require higher levels of thinking. Thus, the verb 'ya?qilu;n' could be the basic cognitive process that guides people to believe in the existence of God. The syntagmatic and contextual analysis of the verb 'ya?qilu;n' confirms that God delivered the Qur'an in Arabic (the language of addressees) to be able to read it and unravel the underlying meanings of its verses.

The findings also reveal that the verb 'Yatafakaru:n' is based on perceptible materials such as the creation of the heavens, earth, food, water, mountains, rivers, night and day. The verb 'Yatafakaru:n' requires a deep reflection in the visible and physical creations. Unlike the verb 'ya?qilu;n' (to reason) which is applicable to reading religious books and hearing religious talk. The verb 'Yatafakaru:n' is confined to thinking of the visible creation neither reading nor hearing of talk. The main function of the verb 'Yatafakaru:n' as cited in the Holy Qur'an is to prove and confirm faith in the heart of people through comparing and contrasting Allah's messages and secrets of creation. Thus, the proper translation of the verb 'Yatafakaru:n' into English is (to reflect).

The verb 'Yafqahu:n' is one of the cognitive verbs which provides an essential concept in Islam which is "al-fiqh". This verb is mostly contextual and bound to 'saying' and 'mind', and to the verb 'hear.' Such adjacency shapes the semantic relations of the verb in the sense that the ability to distinguish between the right and wrong of what people see, hear, and think. The paradigmatic and contextual analysis of the verb 'Yafqahu:n' shows that the organ of the body which is responsible for the cognitive process of the verb 'Yafqahu:n' is the heart. This finding distinguishes the verb 'Yafqahu:n' from the verb 'Yatafakaru:n' and 'Yatadabbaru:n'.

The two verbs 'Yafqahu:n' and 'ya?qilu;n' are relatively similar in the sense that they are near-synonyms of the verb understand. However, they differ in the sense that 'ya?qilu;n' refers to the act of understanding to reason new ideas, whereas 'Yafqahu:n' indicates an understanding that leads to distinguishing between right and wrong.

The findings point out that the verb 'Yatadabbaru:n' is the least mentioned cognitive verb. It requires the highest cognitive ability to understand the deep messages of the Holy Quran, and then to come up with religious provisions. Moreover, the findings show that the verb 'Yatadabbaru:n' is the highest thinking skill, which not all readers of the Qur'an are required to do. The proper translation of the verb 'Yatadabbaru:n' into English is to ponder. Additionally, it seems to the authors of this study that the two verbs 'Yatafakaru:n' and 'Yatadabbaru:n' are near-synonyms for the verb 'think.' The difference between them is that the verb 'Yatafakaru:n' (i.e., reflect/ meditate) processes at the syntagmatic level, where readers are required to think of specific evidence that is usually concrete such as the creation of night and day. As for 'Yatadabbaru:n,' it can be argued that the analysis of this cognitive ability proceeds at the paradigmatic level, where some readers are required to think vertically and relate meaning in various Qur'anic contexts to ensure the reliability of the Holy book.

After discussing the four verbs, it can be suggested that the four verbs represent four levels of mental abilities. The verb 'ya?qilu;n' represents the least level of cognition, which requires addressees to reason what they hear and see, and then to accept the idea of changing their minds. The verb 'Yatafakaru:n' occupies a rank higher than the verb 'ya?qilu;n', where addressees start thinking of the allusions explained in Qur'anic verses. The verb 'Yafqahu:n' represents a higher level than the verb 'Yatafakaru:n'. This level suggests that after accepting new premises and thinking of evidence, addressees can distinguish between right and wrong. The highest level of thinking goes for the verb 'Yatadabbaru:n'. This requires some readers of the Qur'an to think of the Qur'anic context comprehensively to achieve the deepest level of understanding of the Qur'an.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The current study is a descriptive qualitative study that aims to identify the exact semantic and contextual meanings of four cognitive verbs "*ya?qilu:n, yatafakaru:n, yatadabbaru:n, yafqahu:n*". Moreover, the study endeavors to provide the slight differences among the four cognitive verbs which have been interpreted and translated as semi-synonyms by Muslim exegetes and Arabic dictionaries. Authors have adopted the Semantic Approach of Toshihiko Izutsu (2008) as a theoretical framework along with a contextual syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis of the targeted data. The findings reveal that the four cognitive verbs denote different semantic senses and are used in the Holy Qur'an in different contexts. They express different cognitive skills and mental abilities. Furthermore, the findings show that these verbs are used differently in the Holy Qur'an about whom they are addressed and the consequences of using them. They could be categorized according to the mental and cognitive abilities they require where the verb 'ya?qilu;n' represents the least level of cognition, then the verbs 'Yatafakaru:n', and 'Yafqahu:n'. The verb 'Yatafakaru:n' requires the highest level of cognitive abilities. The study recommends further research on the other cognitive verbs such as "d'ana", "nasia", "falima", etc.

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# Are Poor Readers Also Poor Spellers: An Investigation Into the Malay and English Languages Among Young Multilingual Malaysians

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**Abstract**—Children with reading difficulties typically experience difficulties in both reading and spelling. Little is known about the use of spelling for identifying reading difficulties across languages that possess different orthographic depths, among multilingual readers. In the current study, we investigated whether multilingual Primary 1 poor readers were also poor spellers in two different orthographies, namely Malay and English. The sample comprised 866 Primary 1 Malaysian public school students from diverse backgrounds. A cut-off point of 25<sup>th</sup> percentile and below was used to operationalise students with deficits in word reading accuracy and spelling across both languages. A majority of the students who were poor readers in Malay and English, correspondingly, were also poor spellers in both languages. Spelling and word reading accuracy were highly correlated and considered as good indicators for identifying struggling young multilingual readers. These results indicate the importance of assessing spelling in both Malay and English for identifying reading difficulties, especially among young multilingual Malaysian learners. Implications for practice and future directions are addressed.

**Index Terms**—multilingual, reading difficulties, spelling, word reading accuracy

## I. INTRODUCTION

Adequate proficiency in reading crucially establishes the foundation for learning and excellence in school and at the workplace (McCloskey & Rapp, 2017). However, reading difficulties (RD) affect approximately 5% to 15% of students (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Individuals with RD typically have difficulties in linking the letter to its respective sound during word decoding (reading) and difficulties in linking the sound to the letter(s) during encoding (spelling), which leads to word recognition problems (Hudson et al., 2007; Snowling et al., 2019). RD occurs in all types of written languages, which vary in orthographic depth (Borleffs et al., 2019). Children from minority ethnic groups and children whose first language is not the language of instruction may struggle in learning to read (J. A. C. Lee et al., 2020). Those who grow up in a multilingual context may face challenges as they learn additional languages and scripts that possess unrelated and distinctive characteristics to their first language, thus limiting the transferability of reading-related skills (Winskel, 2020).

In a post-colonial and multi-ethnic nation like Malaysia, learning to speak more than one language is a norm for the people. One may speak one's native language at home, and the national language at school as well as acquire at least a foreign language such as English, Korean, and French (Duka & Aziz, 2019). The heart of the issue of learning multiple languages lies in the worrisome prevalence rates of Malaysian children with RD. A recent empirical finding reported that 24% to 35% of Primary 1 students from Malaysian public schools were at risk of RD (J. A. C. Lee et al., 2020). Other studies have reported that 10% to 15% of Malaysian primary students were affected by dyslexia, which is comparable to the international prevalence rate of 10% to 15% (Yuzaidey et al., 2018). These estimated prevalence rates suggest that the early detection of RD in early primary schools is an important agenda.

Various reading assessment batteries have been introduced to identify early RD throughout the decades, but most of these batteries are usually administered to monolingual English-speaking learners (e.g., American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Good & Kaminski, 2002; Wagner et al., 1999). To date, there are limited reading assessment batteries that are used in RD identification in the Malaysian context where children are expected to learn both Malay and English simultaneously in government primary schools (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). Given the

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emphasis on bilingual proficiency in both Malay and English, researchers have developed a reading assessment battery to determine the reading ability and difficulties in both languages among young children (J. A. C. Lee et al., 2020).

Although there is substantial support that reading and spelling are strongly related but dissociable skills (Kim & Petscher, 2023), there is limited empirical evidence on using spelling as a suitable approach to identify RD in the Malaysian multilingual context where Malay and English are learned at a young age. As spelling is one of the skills that can be conveniently assessed via children's work, determining the spelling errors made by children allows teachers and parents to have an instant initial identification of children who are at risk of RD. Drawn from a larger study (see J. A. C. Lee et al., 2020), the current study aimed to investigate whether poor readers are also poor spellers across two different orthographies, namely the Malay and English languages, among multilingual Primary 1 students. Specifically, the current study sought to answer two research questions:

1. Are poor readers in Malay also poor spellers in Malay?
2. Are poor readers in English also poor spellers in English?

#### A. *Word-Level Reading Acquisition in the Early Grades and Reading Difficulties*

The early reading acquisition process requires both phonological awareness and phonics, which are crucial for fostering word recognition skills (National Reading Panel, 2000). During reading, graphemes (symbols or letters in print) are decoded into phonemes (smallest unit of sounds) in alphabetic orthographies. Subsequently, after learning to decode rapidly, the goal of learning to read shifts to reading comprehension (Lohvansuu et al., 2021). In the Simple View of Reading, Gough and Tunmer (1986) suggested that both decoding and (listening) comprehension are necessary for reading success. The ability to decode is emphasised during early reading intervention because decoding exerts a larger influence on comprehension at lower grades where the text demand is still relatively simple compared to later grades (Vaughn et al., 2019). According to Nation (2019), decoding needs to be operationalised and measured as the fluency and expertise of a skilled reader. However, this operationalisation is inappropriate for children who are still learning to read, for whom word recognition and word reading are far from fluent and still lack expertise. Thus, word reading accuracy was used in the current study to measure the reading skill (decoding), where the appropriate developmental time-point is reflected, and the words used in reading are familiar to the children (Nation, 2019).

In learning to read, some children may encounter reading difficulties (RD), which are typically characterised by one's inability to decode and spell fluently (Snowling et al., 2019). RD is also operationalised as an unexpected disability in learning to read because the difficulties in reading and writing manifest despite adequate cognitive capacity and instructional or environmental opportunities, and are not prompted by impaired sensory, lack of motivation, emotional instabilities, or any other possible extraneous factors (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2020). A highly intelligent person may unexpectedly read at a below-average level even though he/she is expected to read well or above-average level if his/her education, intelligence, or professional status were taken into consideration.

#### B. *Reading and Spelling Across Different Orthographic Depths*

Reading and spelling are described as "two sides of a coin" because both rely on alphabetic knowledge and working memory that develop concurrently (Ehri, 2000, p. 19). The grapheme-phoneme correspondences between reading and spelling are closely related, involving the mapping of letters to sounds for reading and vice versa for spelling (van Witteloostuijn et al., 2021). As one of the earliest indicators of literacy skills (Ritchey et al., 2010), spelling serves as a window to observe the development of phonological knowledge and language orthography of children whose word-decoding skills are still rudimentary and the analysis of their reading performance reveals limited information (J. A. C. Lee & Al Otaiba, 2017; Stage & Wagner, 1992). Subsequently, early identification and early intervention relating to children's reading and spelling could be carried out with the help of spelling error analysis (J. A. C. Lee & Al Otaiba, 2017).

Nevertheless, despite being consistently correlated, it is possible for the grapheme-phoneme correspondences between reading and spelling to be affected by the orthographic depth of the spoken alphabetical languages and are therefore not identical skills (Kim & Petscher, 2023). A person's understanding of the sound structure of a language is greatly influenced by the variability in the orthographic depth of the language (Borleffs et al., 2019). Orthographic depth is positioned on a continuum from shallow to deep, depending on the grapheme-phoneme mapping consistency (Dixon et al., 2010). A shallow orthography (e.g., Malay, Finnish, and Serbo-Croatian) indicates a clear and predictable mapping between grapheme and phoneme (one-to-one grapheme-phoneme correspondence); a deep orthography (e.g., English, German, and French) demonstrates a more complex grapheme-phoneme correspondence where the same graphemes can represent different sounds across different contexts (Yap et al., 2010).

#### C. *The Orthographic Depths of Malay and English*

Malay and English possess distinct writing systems and orthographic depths (Aziz et al., 2020; Borleffs et al., 2019; L. W. Lee & Wheldall, 2011). The Malay language has a shallow orthography with simple syllable structures and transparent affixation (Yap et al., 2010). There are 34 graphemes in the Malay orthography, which comprise 26 letters of the alphabet, three diphthongs (*au*, *ai*, and *oi*) and five diagraphs (*gh*, *kh*, *ng*, *ny* and *sy*), except for the letter 'e' that carries two vowel sounds (/e/ in *ekor* [tail] and /ə/ in *emak* [mother]) (L. W. Lee & Wheldall, 2011). Malay words also have simple syllable structures, but different degrees of phonic structures (Aziz et al., 2020). For instance, *bapa* (father)

has both simple syllables and phonic structure (CV + CV); *perangai* (behaviour) has a simple syllable structure, but a more multifaceted phonic structure (CV + CV + CV with digraph and diphthong). Additionally, longer words with more complex syllable structures have CVC or VC syllables such as *mesyuarat* (meeting; CVC+CV+V+CVC) and *berlian* (diamond; CVC+CV+VC). There are also loanwords with phonic structures like CCV such as *graf* (graph) and *teleskop* (telescope).

Conversely, English is a deep orthography with a complex grapheme-phoneme correspondence (Borleffs et al., 2019; Larsen et al., 2020). The English orthography has evolved into a highly inconsistent writing system due to the changes in pronunciation, affected by various features such as derivations and inflections, the addition of suffixes, and changes in stress due to affixation (Frost, 2012). As a result, some graphemes can represent different phonemes during reading (i.e., 'oo' is pronounced as /ʊ/ in 'nook,' but /u:/ in 'noon'); while some phonemes can be represented by different graphemes during spelling, for example, /i/ in 'see' and 'sea' (Larsen et al., 2020).

Overall, Malay is a more consistent language compared to English due to its close-to-perfect grapheme-phoneme correspondences (Ng & Yeo, 2013; Yap et al., 2010). A deep orthography like English often hinders accurate pronunciation and subsequently correct spelling, unless the word is registered in the reader's vocabulary (Borleffs et al., 2019).

#### D. Bilingual Proficiency in Malay and English in Malaysia

In a multicultural country like Malaysia, Malay (the Standard Malay, known as *Bahasa Melayu*) and English are the two main spoken and written languages besides Mandarin, Tamil, and other local dialects, making Malaysia a multilingual nation (J. A. C. Lee et al., 2020). The aspiration for Malaysia is for every child to be proficient in both Malay and English at the end of secondary school education (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). Hence, both languages are taught in school. For instance, a student's first language may be Mandarin, but he/she would simultaneously receive formal instruction in Malay (the national language) and English in school.

Given the emphasis on bilingual proficiency among Malaysian students in both Malay and English, examining both languages simultaneously in this study is an important research focus. To date, most studies on literacy development and specific learning difficulties among monolingual speakers (e.g., J. A. C. Lee & Al Otaiba, 2017; Lonigan et al., 2013; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2020; Snowling et al., 2019). However, there has been a surge of interest in reading acquisition and language development in Malay and English respectively, as well as other languages among young multilingual learners (e.g., Jamaludin et al., 2015; Lim et al., 2015; L. W. Lee et al., 2019; L. W. Lee & Wheldall, 2011; Wang & Lee, 2020; Winskel, 2020).

## II. METHOD

### A. Participants

The sample, which comprised 866 Primary 1 students (47% females, 53% males; age range = 6.61-7.82,  $M$  age = 7.13,  $SD$  = 0.29) was drawn from a larger study on the development of an early reading assessment battery for multilingual learners in the Malay language (J. A. C. Lee et al., 2020; also see J. A. C. Lee, 2021) for the norms of the Malay and English assessment). The participants were randomly selected from 11 public primary schools in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. There were 67.1% Malays, 13.9% Ibans, 8.3% Bidayuhs, 3.1% Chinese, and 5.9% other indigenous peoples of Sarawak. Missing data was 1.7%. Only children whose parents provided informed consent participated in the study.

In the larger study, data on the first, second, and third languages used by the participants to understand their multilingual profiles were collected. The most spoken first language was Sarawak Malay ( $n$  = 563) of which Malay participants were the major users. Sarawak Malay is a dominant local dialect that serves as Sarawak's major lingua franca (McLellan, 2014). The first languages of other participants comprised Iban ( $n$  = 119), Malay language ( $n$  = 69), Bidayuh ( $n$  = 51), and Chinese ( $n$  = 18) (J. A. C. Lee et al., 2020). Besides that, the most spoken second language was the Malay language ( $n$  = 748), followed by English ( $n$  = 81) and Sarawak Malay ( $n$  = 15). Lastly, the most widely spoken third language was English ( $n$  = 745), followed by the Malay language ( $n$  = 34) and Sarawak Malay ( $n$  = 15).

### B. Measures

The students were individually assessed at the school premises during the second half of the school year in Primary 1 (J. A. C. Lee et al., 2020). Students' reading and spelling skills were assessed using word reading accuracy (WRA) and spelling tests, respectively.

#### (a). Spelling

The spelling proficiency for each word was measured using a 7-point scale, which is the phonological coding (PC) system developed by Tangel and Blachman (1992); see also J. A. C. Lee and Al Otaiba (2017) and Tang et al. (2018). The PC system was used in the spelling error coding procedure due to its high correlation with phonological awareness abilities and high sensitivity toward learners' spelling development over time (Ritchey et al., 2010; Tang et al., 2018).

There was a list of 10 words, each in Malay and English. The Malay words were selected from the Primary 1 Malay textbook (Abdul Hadi et al., 2010, 2012): *susu* (milk), *gula* (sugar), *kerusi* (chair), *epal* (apple), *penyu* (turtle), *Isnin*



(Monday), *menyiram* (watering), *terjatuh* (fell), *berhati-hati* (be careful), and *buah-buahan* (fruits); whereas the English words were selected from the Primary 1 English textbook (Zainuddin & Ahamad, 2011): *pretty*, *sick*, *thick*, *your*, *shark*, *shoulder*, *elephant*, *name*, *them*, and *want*. The spelling test was administered before the WRA test because the same words were used in both measures. The spelling outcomes were then coded using the PC system. PC determines students' phonological representations in spelling. The score for each word ranges between 0 and 6. Table 1 shows the description of PC rubrics, with an example each for Malay and English words (see also Tang et al., 2018).

TABLE 1  
DESCRIPTION OF PHONOLOGICAL CODING RUBRICS

Description	Malay word: <terjatuh>	English word: <pretty>
0 = No relation between the letters or random strings of letters	<n>	<F>
1 = A phonologically related letter (initial sound or another sound in the word)	<pepato>	<Ros>
2 = Initial sound represented by the correct letter, with and without any other letters.	<Te>	<Ph>
3 = Initial sound spelt correctly and there are more than one phonemes spelt correctly.	<trJtoh>	<periti>
4 = All phonemes are represented with phonetically related letters	<teHatul>	<preti>
5 = All phonemes are represented with conventional letters	<terJato>	<prety>
6 = Correct spelling	<terjatuh>	<pretty>

#### (b). Word Reading Accuracy

The word reading accuracy (WRA) test assessed the students' ability to read 10 single real words with no time limit. In the respective languages, students scored 1 for each word read correctly and 0 for words read incorrectly.

#### C. Validity and Reliability

The correlation coefficients between WRA and spelling tests for Malay and English were significant, with  $r$  values of .90 and .71, respectively. The strongest correlation was found between Malay WRA and Malay spelling,  $r = .90$ . Furthermore, by using Kuder-Richardson Formula 20, the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeded 0.9 between the interraters for all the spelling items in Malay and English. The test-retest reliability was high in both Malay WRA ( $r = .98$ ; J. A. C. Lee et al., 2020) and English WRA ( $r = .86$ ).

#### D. Operationalisation of Deficits in Reading and Spelling

A standard cut-off point was introduced to operationalise deficits in reading skills, which enabled efficient screening of participants who fulfilled the at-risk criteria. Numerous studies have applied a cut-off point of below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile to determine the presence of deficits across measures (Germano et al., 2017; J. A. C. Lee et al., 2020; Macaruso & Rodman, 2011; Snellings et al., 2009; Stanovich & Siegel, 1994). The terms "good" and "poor" were used for categorisation (Catts et al., 2003; J. A. C. Lee & Al Otaiba, 2017; Russak & Kahn-Horwitz, 2015). Students who were categorised as at risk of difficulties in reading were coded as "0" (poor) and those who were not at-risk were coded as "1" (good).

### III. RESULTS

#### A. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations

All statistical analyses were run on SPSS Statistics 26. The means and standard deviations of all the measures are shown in Table 2. The values of skewness and kurtosis signify that the measures were all normally distributed. The Pearson correlations of all measures are presented in Table 3. All the correlations were significant and moderately to highly correlated,  $r = .65$  to  $r = .90$ ,  $p < .01$ . The highest correlation was found between Malay WRA and Malay spelling ( $r = .90$ ), whereas the lowest correlation was found between Malay and English WRA ( $r = .65$ ).

TABLE 2  
DESCRIPTION STATISTICS OF THE TOTAL DATASET ( $N = 866$ )

Measures	Mean (SD)	Minimum – Maximum	Skewness (SE)	Kurtosis (SE)
Malay WRA <sup>a</sup>	7.34 (3.61)	0.00 – 10.00	-1.0 (.08)	-.64 (.17)
Malay spelling <sup>b</sup>	40.83 (18.77)	0.00 – 60.00	-.85 (.08)	-.63 (.17)
English WRA <sup>a</sup>	3.69 (3.68)	0.00 – 10.00	.51 (.08)	-1.25 (.17)
English spelling <sup>c</sup>	24.60 (16.44)	0.00 – 60.00	-.10 (.08)	-1.15 (.17)

Note. As a result of missing data, <sup>a</sup> $n = 865$ ; <sup>b</sup> $n = 864$ ; <sup>c</sup> $n = 862$ ; WRA = word reading accuracy; SD = standard deviation; SE = standard error.

TABLE 3  
CORRELATIONS OF MEASURES ( $N = 866$ )

Measures	Malay WRA	Malay spelling	English WRA	English spelling
Malay WRA	1			
Malay spelling	.90**	1		
English WRA	.65**	.70**	1	
English spelling	.71**	.80**	.76**	1

Note. WRA = word reading accuracy.  
\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### B. Categorisation of Students With Poor Reading and Spelling Skills

The students were classified according to the cut-off point at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile for the at-risk criterion (see Table 4). Based on this criterion, there were approximately 25% to 34% students who were categorised as having poor performance in reading and spelling across both languages. This study only focused on students who were at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile and below in Malay WRA (scores ranging from 0 to 4) and English WRA (score is 0). On the other hand, the scores at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile for Malay spelling (scores ranging from 0 to 27) and English spelling (scores ranging from 0 to 9) of the overall population ( $N = 866$ ) were used to determine the outcome of poor spelling performance among students who are poor in Malay WRA ( $n = 223$ ) and English WRA ( $n = 292$ ) respectively. Students who were poor in Malay spelling ( $n = 220$ ) and English spelling ( $n = 227$ ) were excluded from the inferential analysis.

TABLE 4  
POOR AND GOOD OUTCOMES BASED ON THE 25<sup>TH</sup> PERCENTILE CUT-OFF CRITERION

Measures	Poor		Good		Scores at the 25 <sup>th</sup> percentile
	$n$	%	$n$	%	
Malay WRA <sup>a</sup>	223	25.8	642	74.2	4
Malay spelling <sup>b</sup>	220	25.5	644	74.5	27
English WRA <sup>a</sup>	292	33.8	573	66.2	0
English spelling <sup>c</sup>	227	26.3	635	73.7	9

Note. As a result of missing data, <sup>a</sup> $n = 865$ ; <sup>b</sup> $n = 864$ ; <sup>c</sup> $n = 862$ ; WRA = word reading accuracy; Poor = 25<sup>th</sup> percentile and below; Good = above the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile.

### C. Inferential Analysis

For the inferential analysis crosstabulations with McNemar's test were conducted because the scores for WRA and spelling tests for Malay and English had been recoded into dichotomous values based on the scores at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile to categorise poor and good readers/spellers (see Table 4). McNemar's test is more appropriate for analysing paired dichotomous data compared to chi-square (Pembury Smith & Ruxton, 2020) and it tests the significance of change in related proportions (Adedokun & Burgess, 2012).

#### (a). Are Poor Readers in Malay Also Poor Spellers in Malay?

An asymptotic McNemar's test determined that there was no statistically significant difference between Malay WRA and Malay spelling,  $p = .81$ . There were 83.8% of poor readers in Malay were also poor spellers in Malay; a smaller percentage of poor readers (16.2%) were good spellers. The following are the proportions of poor readers who could not read and spell the words (scored "0" in WRA and PC): *buah-buahan* (67.9%), *berhati-hati* (66.1%), *menyiram* (65.6%), *Isnin* (56.1%), *terjatuh* (62.9%), *penyu* (52.9%), *gula* (38.5%), *epal* (36.2%), *kerusi* (35.3%), and *susu* (12.2%); see Figure 1).

Although categorised as poor readers, there was a small percentage of poor readers in Malay who could read the Malay words but could not spell them (scored "1" in WRA but "0" in PC). The proportions are as follows: *kerusi* (6.8%), *gula* (5%), *susu* (4.5%), *epal* (3.6%), *penyu* (2.3%), *Isnin* (1.8%), *terjatuh* (0.5%), and *buah-buahan* (0.5%); see Figure 2). There were also poor readers in Malay who could read and spell Malay words correctly. The words that were read and spelt correctly (scored "1" in WRA and "6" in PC) by the poor readers were *susu* (53.4%), *gula* (9.5%) and *kerusi* (4.5%) *Isnin* (2.7%), *epal* (0.9%), and *penyu* (0.5%); see Figure 2). See Table 5 for the examples of Malay spelling errors of poor readers in Malay.

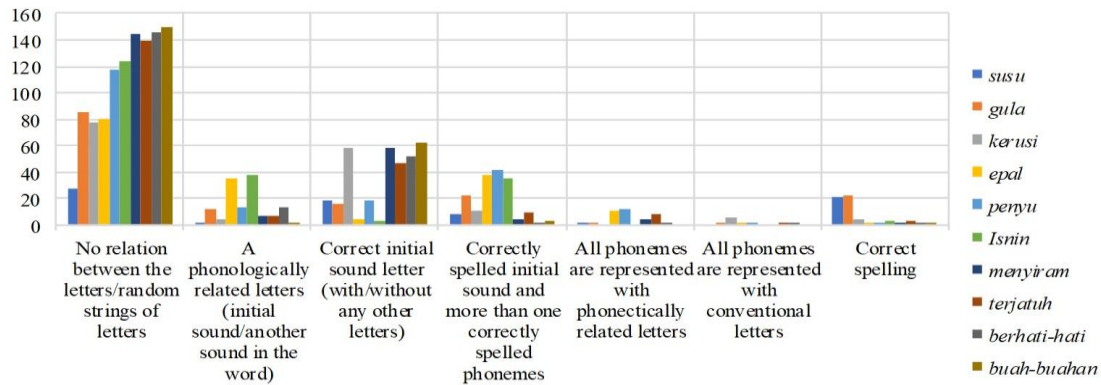


Figure 1. Spelling Performance Poor Readers in Malay Who Could Not Read the Malay Words  
 Note. As a result of missing data, n = 221.

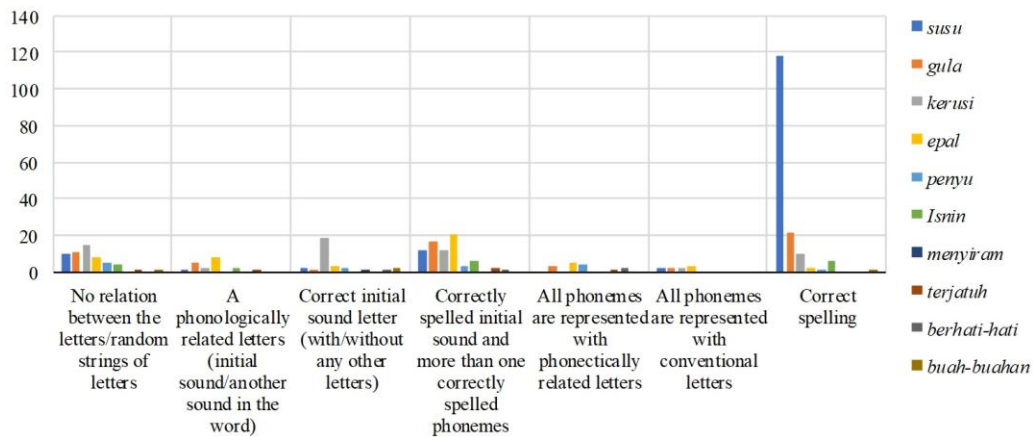


Figure 2. Spelling Performance of Poor Readers in Malay Who Could Read the Malay Words  
 Note. As a result of missing data, n = 221.

TABLE 5  
 EXAMPLES OF MALAY SPELLING ERRORS OF POOR READERS IN MALAY

Phonological coding descriptions	Examples									
	<i>susu</i>	<i>gula</i>	<i>kerusi</i>	<i>epal</i>	<i>penyu</i>	<i>Isnin</i>	<i>terjatuh</i>	<i>menyiram</i>	<i>berhati-hati</i>	<i>buah-buahan</i>
No relation between the letters or random strings of letters.	<i>TmT, p, J</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>ecghe, Aa</i>	<i>qla, BuBu</i>	<i>Aasw, baa</i>	<i>A, w</i>	<i>n, fam</i>	<i>baik, B</i>	<i>A, d</i>	<i>up, F, susu</i>
A phonologically related letter (initial sound or another sound in the word).	<i>Sata</i>	<i>k, jg, uknu</i>	<i>si, s, kuSi</i>	<i>A, Aha, pp</i>	<i>ua, uun, bune</i>	<i>S, SaSa, Selsn,</i>	<i>pepato</i>	<i>Ber, rila, r, N</i>	<i>B, at, mati, Pehaha,</i>	<i>uaua, n</i>
Initial sound represented by the correct letter, with and without any other letters.	<i>say, saya, sata</i>	<i>g, gia, gak, gigi</i>	<i>k, kuci, kere</i>	<i>e, ep, eak</i>	<i>p, pun, pg</i>	<i>Igaram, ia</i>	<i>t, Te, J, jatu</i>	<i>m, mene, Neria</i>	<i>B, berti, berti, hati</i>	<i>baba, buha, buha.</i>
Initial sound spelt correctly and there are more than one phonemes spelt correctly.	<i>usu, sus, sas, usas</i>	<i>ula, gua, gala, gual, Gla</i>	<i>kernsi, Keuc, kurusi</i>	<i>epa, eppl, Aple, Epla, pal</i>	<i>Pe, Panu, peru,</i>	<i>Isnin, sinin, seni, Isnii,</i>	<i>TeGaTo, trJtoh, tejtuh</i>	<i>Menira, merirun, melilan</i>	<i>behati-behati, betti hati-hata</i>	<i>duah-duah han, buha-buahan</i>
All phonemes are represented with phonetically related letters.	<i>suss, u</i>	<i>guna, gura</i>	-	<i>apel, apal, eapaL</i>	<i>penu, pegu, peneu</i>	-	<i>teHatul, tejtatos</i>	<i>meniram, meneram</i>	<i>behati hati</i>	-
All phonemes are represented with conventional letters.	-	<i>gola</i>	<i>Keresi, kerasi</i>	<i>epel</i>	<i>penyi</i>	-	<i>terJato, terjatoh</i>	-	<i>Berhati hati</i>	-

(b). Are Poor Readers in English Also Poor Spellers in English?

An asymptotic McNemar's test determined that there was a statistically significant difference between English WRA and English spelling,  $p < .01$ . All the poor readers in English could not read the English words as they scored "0" in WRA at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile. There were 57.7% of poor readers in English were also poor spellers in English; a slightly smaller percentage of poor readers (42.3%) were good spellers. Figure 3 illustrates the spelling performance of poor readers in English. The following are the proportions of poor readers who could not spell the words (scored "0" in PC): *want* (76.2%), *shoulder* (70.1%), *shark* (65.3%), *name* (65.3%), *your* (63.2%), *them* (60.8%), *elephant* (60.5%), *thick* (56.4%), *pretty* (50.9%), and *sick* (46.4%). Notably, a small percentage of poor readers in English could spell words like *sick* (1%), *name* (1%), *your* (0.7%), and *pretty* (0.3%). See Table 6 for the examples of English spelling errors of poor readers in English.

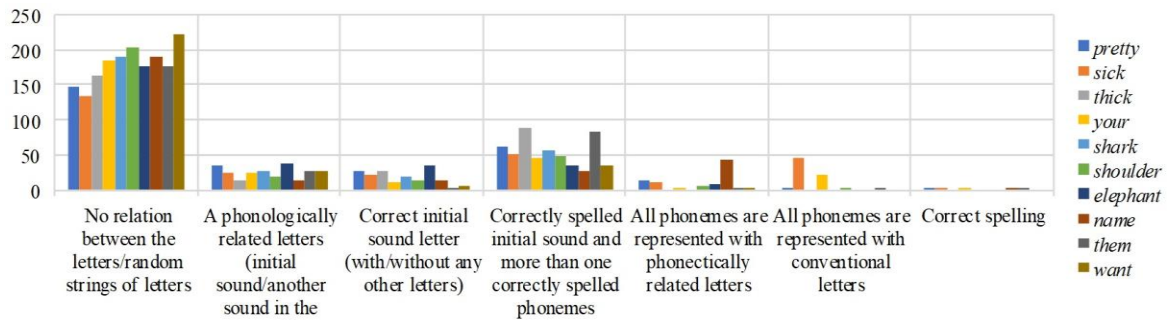


Figure 3. Spelling Performance of Poor Readers in English  
 Note. As a result of missing data,  $n = 291$ .

TABLE 6  
 EXAMPLES OF ENGLISH SPELLING ERRORS OF POOR READERS IN ENGLISH

Phonological coding descriptions	Examples									
	<i>pretty</i>	<i>sick</i>	<i>thick</i>	<i>your</i>	<i>shark</i>	<i>shoulder</i>	<i>elephant</i>	<i>name</i>	<i>them</i>	<i>want</i>
No relation between the letters or random strings of letters.	<i>F</i>	<i>db</i>	<i>lb, Mal</i>	<i>r, gah</i>	<i>Fi, na</i>	<i>b, Kr,</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>Kurn, tul, ai</i>	<i>bi</i>	<i>i, in, una</i>
A phonologically related letter (initial sound or another sound in the word).	<i>t, Ros</i>	<i>c, Knus</i>	<i>ke, wat</i>	<i>ro, O, ran, u</i>	<i>r, ca, h, aa, c</i>	<i>ros, L, O</i>	<i>l, al</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>maia, D, bm</i>	<i>one, tan,</i>
Initial sound represented by the correct letter, with and without any other letters.	<i>p, Ph</i>	<i>s, ss, sat</i>	<i>t, tb, tn</i>	<i>Ya, y</i>	<i>s, sot, smis</i>	<i>Sa, SAduh</i>	<i>ala, e, aley</i>	<i>n, nc</i>	<i>tiaa</i>	<i>w, way</i>
Initial sound spelt correctly and there are more than one phonemes spelt correctly.	<i>pit, periti, perti</i>	<i>Sit, syx, sis</i>	<i>tik, titi, tip, tig</i>	<i>yo, yours, jor, yr, yay</i>	<i>sat, Shyk, sar, shek, Sharr</i>	<i>holde, sobo, hoho</i>	<i>aLifen, LaliFe</i>	<i>nim, nin, nat</i>	<i>dem, Dam, den, tam</i>	<i>wan, wat, wane</i>
All phonemes are represented with phonetically related letters.	<i>peti, piti, preti</i>	<i>cik, seKe</i>		<i>yaar, uor</i>		<i>SoDer, Shodr,</i>	<i>EliFen, leafan</i>	<i>nam, nem, mene</i>	<i>Ymim, K</i>	<i>weant</i>
All phonemes are represented with conventional letters.	<i>prety, priti, pritty</i>	<i>six, sik</i>		<i>yor, you, your, yoir</i>		<i>SholDer</i>				

IV. DISCUSSION

The current study aimed to investigate whether poor readers are also poor spellers across two different orthographies, namely the Malay and English languages, among multilingual Primary 1 struggling readers.

Our first and second research questions addressed the performance of poor readers in spelling in Malay and English, respectively. The results show that a majority of the poor readers in Malay/English also performed poorly in spelling.

Most of the poor readers in Malay could not read/spell hyphenated doubled-word with diphthong 'ua' and suffix 'an' such as *buah-buahan*. Students who spelt it as <buha buha> or <bubu> might have captured some phonemes but did not blend the diphthong, thus could not produce a phonetically related word. Similarly, students would spell *menyiram* as <melilan> or <meniram>. They were unable to capture the base word – *siram*, and the changes in spelling when prefixes were added.

On the other hand, a high percentage of poor readers in English could not read/spell high-frequency words such as *want*. Some spelt it as <wan>, which was phonetically related and would be more acceptable in comparison to <one>, which was orthographically incorrect. Most English words used in this study are either with digraphs or diphthongs, and students had a hard time in reading or spelling these words out. For instance, they were unable to read/spell multisyllabic words like *shoulder* (with diphthong 'ou') and *elephant* (with digraph 'ph'). Some students spelt them as <holde>, <soeder> or <sholder>; <alifen> or <elifen>. The partially correct spellings (orthographically inappropriate but phonologically acceptable, Samuddin & Krish, 2018) may indicate a lack of awareness in both languages, therefore demanding explicit and individualised spelling instruction (J. A. C. Lee & Al Otaiba, 2017).

It is also worth mentioning that a small percentage of poor readers in this study were relatively good spellers. This could be due to high frequency and easily memorised words that they might have used at home or in school (e.g., *your*, *sick*, *susu*, and *gula*). This suggests that reading and spelling are not always a one-to-one grapheme-phoneme correspondence, as opposed to Ehri's (2000) "two sides of a coin". Even though most of the research that examines "two sides of a coin" was in the English-speaking context, it seems that Ehri's theory is more applicable towards transparent orthography (i.e., Malay) than deep orthography (i.e., English). Hence, some underlying factors may be present in this matter and warrant a future investigation.

A previous study that examined the English orthographic depth among primary school Malay learners revealed that they were prone to orthographic errors in English, specifically consonant and vowel errors, primarily due to the complexity of English orthography and the influence of the first language and secondarily the inadequate exposure to print (Samuddin & Krish, 2018). However, despite its shallow orthography, when Malay words become multisyllabic, poor readers may still be unable to recognise syllable structures accurately (L. W. Lee & Wheldall, 2011). Even so, since most students in this study spoke Sarawak Malay as their first language, it was apparent that their reading/spelling abilities might be greatly influenced by their first language.

Our findings suggest that students performed better in Malay compared to English because the reading and spelling scores in Malay were higher than that in English at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile (see Table 3). Besides, the high correlation between WRA and spelling in Malay also indicates that there is a high chance that students who have poor/good spelling skills in Malay also have poor/good reading skills in Malay. Therefore, Malay might be a more reliable medium to indicate the presence of reading deficits in the context of multilingual learners whose primary language is not English but Malay or the Malay dialect.

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, research on reading assessment in a multilingual context, especially in Malaysia is scarce. Thus, the present study offers valuable insights regarding the usage of spelling as an early indicator to identify at-risk struggling readers in a multilingual setting as well as the performance of poor readers/spellers across different orthographies. With the mounting prevalence rates of RD among Malaysian students, it is uncertain if the aspiration of being bilingually proficient in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025) can be accomplished by 2025.

### A. Implications for Policy and Practice

Early identification of RD is important for appropriate early interventions to take place. The findings bear crucial implications on how spelling can be used to detect RD in Malay and English among young multilingual learners and how orthographic depths can influence reading and spelling performances. Spelling as a good indicator for RD in Malay and English is evident. Nonetheless, our findings suggest that not every poor reader is a poor speller, and not every poor speller is a poor reader, irrespective of the language assessed. The responses in the assessments may also indicate students' inadequate exposure to print in both languages, thus there is an urgency to foster explicit and systematic classroom instructions, which are promising for improving foundational reading skills (Al Otaiba et al., 2021). Integrated spelling can also be implemented to improve systematic phonics or the letter-sound associations of children at risk of early RD (Møller et al., 2021). It is therefore important for teachers to fully understand the linguistics component of the language taught so that the most suitable literacy pedagogy can be practised in classrooms.

Additionally, teachers, parents and practitioners should be proficient in the knowledge of RD and its assessments, so that appropriate early intervention can take place and suitable instructions can be specifically designed for children with RD. The escalating prevalence rates of RD in mainstream Malaysian schools also signal a need for inclusive practice in Malaysian classrooms. In general, teachers should acquire the knowledge of special needs to enable them to meet the needs of students with any special needs in inclusive classrooms at the optimum level (Zegeye, 2022).

### B. Limitations and Recommendations

Several limitations of the current study are noteworthy. First, our samples cannot be generalised to all multilingual Primary 1 students in Malaysia because there was a high number of Malay students in the public schools in the larger study, which resulted in an oversampling of Malay-speaking students. The multilingual profiles and literacy development of the participants could have been more comprehensive if the impact of different first languages had been investigated. Second, the reading process was not video-recorded. Therefore, any presence of partial accuracy could not be observed. Third, the dichotomous rubrics in WRA did not permit partial correctness. Fourth, the current study only used the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile as the cut-off criterion. A wider range of performance across reading and spelling measures could have been observed if different percentile ranks were incorporated. Lastly, working memory assessments such as digit and visual span tests (Cabbage et al., 2017) that were not included in the current study should be investigated for a comprehensive understanding of the cognitive profile of children with RD. Other fundamental components in literacy such as phonological awareness and rapid automatized naming, which are powerful predictors of reading achievement (Vander Stappen & Van Reybroeck, 2018), should also be incorporated for better insights into the literacy profiles of the students.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by the Ministry of Education Malaysia under Grant [FRGS/SSI09(02)/983/2013 24]. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the Ministry of Education Malaysia. We thank Universiti Malaysia Sarawak for the financial support of this publication.

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# Construction of Gender Equality in Arab News Media: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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**Abstract**—Women in Arabia are often seen as subjects who need liberation from the constraints of patriarchal culture. Based on a report released by the United Nation in 2020, Saudi Arabia has big challenges in terms of women's empowerment and gender equality. The subject of limited space for women in Arabia has been extensively examined in earlier works from social and political science perspectives. However, there has been a lack of research on this topic from a linguistic viewpoint, particularly in the field of critical discourse analysis. This study aims to examine how Arab media portrays gender equality in the context of reporting on Arab government policy concerning women's rights. This research uses a critical discourse analysis approach initiated by Fairclough (1995) and a transitivity system approach introduced by Halliday (2014). This study discovered that the Arab media perceives Saudi Arabia's policy change on women's rights in a positive light. It is depicted as a demonstration of gender equality, a representation of the women's liberation movement, and a significant advancement that will propel Arab nations forward. In this particular instance, it pertains to the advancement of gender equality, which is being achieved through the implementation of policy reforms by the Saudi Arabian government with regards to women's rights. The reporting that is carried out can be a tool to guide public opinion, in this case, what is being constructed is gender equality which is realized through the Saudi Arabian government's policy reforms regarding women's rights.

**Index Terms**—Arabic, gender equality, CDA, transitivity

## I. INTRODUCTION

Saudi Arabia is revered by Muslims worldwide. Throughout history, Saudi Arabia has maintained strong affiliations with the Islamic faith. This country holds historical significance as the birthplace of the Islamic religion, as it is where the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the Prophet, and Messenger who introduced Islam, was born. Therefore, the existence of the Islamic religion is closely tied to Saudi Arabia, even the basis of the country's constitution refers to the Koran and Sunnah (Sharia Law) (Pamela, 2022). From an economic standpoint, Saudi Arabia is considered one of the wealthiest nations globally (Al-Ajalani, 1993, p. 18). It is a member of OPEC (The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) and ranks as the second largest producer and exporter of petroleum (quoted from <https://www.mappr.co/thematic-maps/richest-arab-countries/>). Consequently, Saudi Arabia is recognized as the fourth most prosperous country worldwide. Saudi Arabia is a prominent force in the Middle East, possessing substantial oil reserves and a formidable military capability. It holds the distinction of having the highest budget for importing weapons in the world, amounting to USD 6.46 billion (Dewi et al., 2020, p. 32).

Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia's economic advancements do not overshadow its reputation as an authoritarian nation with a deeply entrenched patriarchal society (Ibrohim, 2023; Joseph, 1996). This is evident in government policies that impose significant restrictions on the mobility of women. For instance, in Saudi Arabia, women are required to have a legal male guardian in order to travel, even for purposes such as studying and working. They must obtain the consent of their male guardian to pursue these activities (Ochsenwald et al., 2023). Additionally, in the education sector, there are provisions that discriminate between women and men in terms of their choice of study programs. Women are only allowed to select social and humanities study programs (Alwedini, 2016). Additional evidence of patriarchal practices in Arabia is shown in the 2020 United Nations Report, which highlights the significant difficulty of achieving gender

equality and women's empowerment in Arab countries (United Nations, 2020). The presence of restrictive policies on women's mobility in Saudi Arabia is shaped by the prevailing religion and belief systems (Yassine-Hamdan & Strate, 2020). The government's strategy of subordinating women is influenced by the teachings of the Islamic religion, particularly the principles of Salafus righteousness and the Hambali school of thought (Ardiansyah, 2013). Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia has demonstrated its endorsement of the role of Arab women by appointing Noura Al-Fayez as Deputy Minister of Education in 2009, during the reign of King Abdullah.

In 2015, King Abdullah's leadership was succeeded by King Salman, who promptly designated Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) as the Crown Prince. MBS's actions frequently garner global notice, such as his efforts to establish diplomatic relations with Iran and engage in peace negotiations with the Yemeni Houthis (Borck, 2023). Conversely, Saudi Arabia is gradually undergoing transformations under his guidance, particularly in the form of policy reforms. One such policy grants women the freedom to move, including the ability to drive, travel internationally without a male guardian, attend sports events in stadiums, and various other policies. These regulations have the potential to eventually eliminate Saudi Arabia's long-standing patriarchal society, granting women the same rights as males. This is Saudi Arabia's effort to accomplish its Vision 2030, which includes creating a vibrant society in which all citizens can develop and follow their interests (Arabia, 2023).

Mohammed bin Salman's policies have not been without problems. This strategy has sparked debate within Arab communities, particularly between men and women, as well as patriarchal and conservative organizations (Dewi et al., 2020). It is not uncommon for these regulations to get international attention and spark debate in other Muslim-majority countries. This is due to the intimate relationship between Arabia's patriarchal society and the teachings of Islam. Patriarchs and conservatives perceive MBS's policies as a manifestation of the long-standing erosion of culture and religion in Arab nations (Perdana, 2019). There are even scholars and clerics who suggest that pro-gender equality activists are people who do not believe and may be killed (Dewi et al., 2020, p. 39). Conversely, many enthusiastically welcome these policies (Saragih, 2018), particularly Arab women activists who have persistently advocated and battled for gender equality in Arabia.

The policy improvements enacted by MBS for women in Saudi Arabia are a contentious event, although they hold significant value for journalists. According to Shoemaker and Reese (1996, p. 216), numerous characteristics determine the news value of an event: (1) deviance, (2) sensationalism and controversy, and (3) uniqueness. When journalists interpret reality, they employ two methods: (1) fact selection, which acknowledges that journalists have their viewpoint when reporting, and (2) fact presentation, which refers to how a fact is communicated to the public. This pertains to the media's ability to shape a new societal reality by constraining perceptions and guiding them toward specific modes of thinking and beliefs (Badara, 2014, p. 57). According to Rolnicki et al. (2008, p. 4) while presenting factual information in news articles, it is important to present it engagingly to establish a connection with the reader or audience.

When constructing a narrative, journalists recount an incident based on their viewpoint. This suggests that the same event might be recounted in varying ways depending on the journalist's perspective. One way this is evident is through the utilization of diction, as the language employed in media texts is not isolated. The utilization of this vocabulary can demonstrate the presence of media bias inherent in the content. Diction can convey the perspective of the world from a particular category and reveal the ideological stance of the media or the author of the piece. For instance, the author's perspective and ideology are reflected in the use of terms like "freedom fighter" or "terrorist" (Davis & Walton, 1984, p. 130).

The debate around women's issues in Arabia is a longstanding topic, often linked to patriarchal culture, religious beliefs, and the feminist movement. Several studies have also addressed this topic, such as the research conducted by Joseph (1996), Mobaraki and Söderfeldt (2010), Hersi et al. (2013), Lihi (2013), Bovell and Durnwald (2014), Rajkhan (2014), Al Rakhis (2017), Bisharat and Bowirrat (2015), Balamoune-Lutz and McGillivray (2015), Alwedini (2016), Maktabi (2017), Glas et al. (2018), Alobaid et al. (2020), Moghadam (2020), and Parveen (2022). Prior research examining the relationship between gender and Arab countries from a linguistic standpoint has been conducted by Eltantawy (2007), Mustafa-Awad and Kirner-Ludwig (2017), Adams (2019), Harun and Ismail (2020), Hamid et al. (2021), Alhalholi and Awajan (2022), and Tabaza and Mustafa-awad (2022). However, based on the available literature, there is a lack of extensive research on critical discourse analysis about gender equality in reporting in the Arab media. The authors address this gap in their research.

Starting from this background, the Saudi Arabian government's recent policy change on women's rights is a topic worth examining further, particularly in terms of how it is portrayed by the Arab media. Hence, two research problem formulations have been put out. The first one investigates how the Arab media reshapes the concept of gender equality by covering the Saudi Arabian policy reform on women's rights. The second one aims to determine the underlying ideology employed by the Arab media in producing this report. The two research problem formulations will be examined concerning the conceptual framework established in this study.

## II. LITERATURE VIEW

### A. Conceptual Framework

The research will be examined utilizing the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology developed by Fairclough (1995), which relies on Transitivity analysis to assess textual elements. According to Fairclough, language serves as

both a symbol and a means of exerting power (Eriyanto, 2001, p. 285). In addition, Fairclough (1989, p. 6) asserts that language is not a self-contained entity, but rather a collection of sentences known as discourse. When implementing Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, a three-dimensional analysis model is used to integrate micro and macro factors in texts. This model consists of three components: texts, discourse practices, and sociocultural practices.

### *B. Gender Equality*

Gender equality is a contemporary social concern that has garnered significant attention and debate. Discussions on gender equality are inherently intertwined with matters of religion, patriarchal culture, and feminism. According to Abirafeh (2021), no nation on Earth has achieved complete implementation of gender equality. Gender equality, in terminological terms, denotes the presence of equitable rights between males and females. Consequently, there are no constraints that impede the mobility of women. Women have the freedom to openly manifest their thoughts, voice their opinions, and engage in any desired actions without being subject to any restrictions that impede their mobility. Abirafeh (2021) asserted that gender equality is not only a fundamental human rights ideal, but also a prerequisite for a secure, equitable, and enduring future.

Perhaps in certain democratic nations, the issue of gender equality does not generate as much controversy. However, in authoritarian and patriarchal nations, gender equality remains an issue for which women continue to advocate. Conversely, Lussier and Fish (2016) demonstrated that nations dominated by Muslims tend to exhibit gender inequality due to religious beliefs that seem to support a patriarchal cultural interpretation that disproportionately positions men in positions of authority over women. This is evident in Arab countries, where the policy of the Kingdom is to ensure that women receive an Islamic education so that they may become intelligent mothers and wives in the future (Rajkhan, 2014). According to the studies published by Human Rights Watch, the practice of male guardianship over women in Arab nations leads to the emigration of numerous women (HRW, 2019).

Gender equality is intricately linked to patriarchal culture, wherein women are positioned as subservient or inferior to men. According to Philips (2003, p. 255), patriarchy is the act of male supremacy over women, when men possess complete authority over women and can demand obedience from them. Conversely, women are portrayed as individuals who possess characteristics of vulnerability, lower intelligence, and heightened emotional sensitivity compared to men. Women lack complete autonomy in various aspects of their lives, including domestic affairs, professional settings, religious institutions, and even political spheres.

The emergence of discriminatory behaviors targeting women led to the inception of the feminist movement, which aims to enhance the status and worth of women in the face of a patriarchal society. Feminists, as a collective advocating for gender equality, highlight the disparities faced by women in domains such as politics, economics, social dynamics, and culture. They consistently assert that equal treatment based on gender is a fundamental entitlement for all individuals worldwide. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that some individuals perceive the feminist movement with skepticism, portraying it as a secular ideology that encourages women to relinquish their inherent characteristics in the pursuit of gender equality (Fajriyah, 2020).

### *C. Critical Discourse Analysis*

Critical discourse analysis is an analytical approach that examines spoken or written texts that aims to reveal the social issues behind the practice of these texts, such as representations of power, inequality, ideology, and dominance. van Dijk (2007) defines CDA as "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context". van Dijk (1993) similarly articulated the objective of CDA, which is to examine the societal aspects underlying the text, such as power dynamics, hegemony, dominance, and political practices.

Fairclough's (1995) approach to critical discourse analysis consists of three distinct dimensions: text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. The text serves as the primary phase in critical discourse analysis, focusing on the linguistic elements that underlie the text. This phase is referred to as the decryption stage. The subsequent phase is the analysis stage, wherein the outcomes of textual analysis are examined and subsequently interpreted by the underlying discourse practices. This is followed by the explanation stage, which establishes a connection between the outcomes of discourse practices and social aspects, thereby facilitating intertextual comprehension. The relationship between a text and existing hegemony is influenced by the nature of discourse practices in text production, which in turn affects the surface features of the text. Additionally, the way a text is interpreted is determined by the nature of the discourse practice of text interpretation (Fairclough, 1995, p. 97). The subsequent text provides a comprehensive elucidation of every facet encompassed within Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach.

### *D. Text*

Text is a unit of linguistic expression. Text is a record of situation processes that transcend language systems, according to the discourse perspective (Halliday & Hasan in Sinar, 2012, p. 3). Texts can analyze discourse variables, including situational context, culture, and ideology, in addition to morphemes, phrases, and clauses (Sinar, 2012, p. 4). According to Fairclough (2003, p. 5), the transitivity theory approach developed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) can be used to analyze texts, which includes processes (activities that occur), participants (people or objects involved in the process), and circumstant (environment, nature, or location where a process takes place). In this regard, Jorgensen

and Phillips (2010, p. 35) argue that text analysis is the first stage in critical discourse analysis before connecting characteristics of the text to other social dimensions.

#### *E. Discursive Practice*

Discursive practice refers to the production and interpretation of texts (Fairclough, 1995, p. 97). Discursive practice encompasses the process of producing and consuming texts. According to Eriyanto (2001, p. 287), discursive practices are tied to media institutions, which are the organizations that produce media texts. This comprises the structure and orientation of a specific institution. The creation of a certain text is a result of discursive practice. Furthermore, it is important to consider the author's perspective, whether he is neutral or actively participating in the development of a specific discourse (Eriyanto, 2001, p. 318).

#### *F. Sociocultural Practice*

Language is a kind of communication that is influenced by the way society is organized (Fairclough, 1989, p. 17). This sociocultural practice is associated with the author's ideology, which subsequently shapes the way a certain text is conveyed. This sociocultural technique results in the shaping of readers' viewpoints in alignment with the author's stance. Sociocultural practices encompass both textual and discourse aspects, with the discourse aspect serving as the connection between the two.

#### *G. Transitivity*

The utilization of transitivity in this research serves as a means to reveal linguistic elements inside the text. According to Halliday and Fowler (Matheson, 2005), transitivity is a semantic arrangement that determines how language constructs a clause with a specific meaning. Transitivity is a field of research in functional systems linguistics that examines how experiences are expressed through language. In addition, transitivity serves as the primary instrument for studying discourse within Fairclough's theoretical framework. Wodak and Meyer (2016, p. 2) also asserted that linguistics is a fundamental basis for critical discourse studies. According to Halliday (in Hart, 2014, p. 6), a critical discourse analysis that does not rely on grammar is not a valid analysis, but rather a mere subjective commentary on a text. Transitivity research reveals how language influences the portrayal of an object by concealing and excluding specific occurrences in the reported text (Simpson, 1994, p. 96). Transitivity studies involve analyzing the utilization of processes, participants, and circumstantial elements within the text. The realization of a process in a clause typically involves a verb, a participant is represented by a noun, and a circumstant is expressed through a prepositional phrase (Eggs, 2004; Halliday & Mathiessen, 2014). Nevertheless, this circumstance may vary based on the linguistic structure of each language. For instance, in Arabic, certain actions are not expressed by verbs, but rather through nouns. The function labels of process, participant, and circumstant are used to define how linguistic structures represent phenomena of experience in the world. Transitivity requires the presence of both processes and actors. Every process has a minimum of one participant, and certain processes have more than three participants, whereas the circumstant serves as an extra component of a clause.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as developed by Fairclough (1995) and transitivity theory as introduced by Halliday (2014) to examine how the media constructs women's freedom through reporting about Saudi Arabia's new policy regarding women's rights published in Arabic media. The study focuses on media discourse since news in the media can impact public opinion on contentious matters, such as Saudi Arabia's policy change concerning women's rights.

Three steps were included in the data collection process: description, interpretation, and explanation. First, data description means we demonstrate the data in the form of news discourse in Arabic newspapers. The data in this study were gathered from specific news items there are arabic.cnn.com and independentarabia.com concerning Saudi Arabia's policy reforms regarding women's rights in the Arab media. Due to its extensive coverage and subscriber base, this daily is regarded as a representative of newspapers in Arabia. Second, data interpretation which allows us to interpret pieces of news discourse in Arabic publications that contain news about Saudi Arabia's policy reforms regarding women's rights. Second, data interpretation enables us to analyze segments of news discourse found in Arabic publications that pertain to Saudi Arabia's policy revisions concerning women's rights. The final stage is the explanatory phase, in which the authors elucidate the process of critically analyzing the data by utilizing excerpts from news articles written in the Arabic language.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### *Textual*

The initial phase of this analysis centers on the linguistic elements of the news. Currently, the data is linguistically evaluated by examining the semantic and grammatical features of diction using a transitivity analysis framework. This framework specifically looks at the process, participants, and circumstant. The frequency of appearance of transitivity elements can be seen in the following tables.

TABLE 1  
DISPLAYS THE FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCES OF PROCESSES IN NEWS TEXTS

No.	Process Type	F	%	
1.	<i>Material</i>	48	39.3	
2.	<i>Mental</i>	9	7.38	
3.	<i>Relational</i>	<i>Attributive</i>	9	7.38
		<i>Identifying</i>	2	1.64
4.	<i>Behavioural</i>	1	0.82	
5.	<i>Verbal</i>	46	37.7	
6.	<i>Existential</i>	5	5.74	
<b>Total</b>		<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>	

Table 1 shows that the processes that most dominate news texts are material and verbal processes, with percentages of 39.3% and 37.7% respectively. This indicates that this news tends to be constructed as an event involving physical action or telling of an event, and this news also elaborates more on events from the perspective of the sources in the news. For example, the material and verbal processes that appear in the text are *في مَنْت يَف* which means "in building". In this particular word context, the process is not realized by the verb, but by the noun which functions as a verb. This discrepancy arises due to variations in the linguistic structure and mechanics of the Arabic and English systems. The emergence of the process cannot be separated from the participants. The frequency of participant appearances can be seen in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2  
FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPANT APPEARANCE

Participant				
No	Process	Participant	F	%
1	<i>Material</i>	<i>Actor</i>	23	11.8
		<i>Goal</i>	22	11.3
		<i>Client</i>	0	0
		<i>Recipient</i>	8	4.1
		<i>Range</i>	6	3.08
2	<i>Mental</i>	<i>Senser</i>	6	3.08
		<i>Phenomenon</i>	7	3.59
3	<i>Relational Attributive</i>	<i>Carrier</i>	11	5.64
		<i>Attribute</i>	11	5.64
4	<i>Relational identifying</i>	<i>Token</i>	2	1.03
		<i>Value</i>	2	1.03
5	<i>Behavioural</i>	<i>Behaver</i>	1	0.51
6	<i>Verbal</i>	<i>Sayer</i>	43	22.1
		<i>Receiver</i>	1	0.51
		<i>Target</i>	0	0
		<i>Verbiage</i>	41	21
7	<i>Existential</i>	<i>Existent</i>	11	5.64
<b>Total</b>			<b>195</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 demonstrates that the participants that dominate the news text the most are sayer and verbiage with percentages of 22.28% and 21.24% respectively. In line with the process, the dominance of the sayer in the text indicates that this report elaborates a lot on events from the perspective of the source as a participant who provides validity to the information conveyed in the report. To further clarify the process and participants, circumstant attendance is needed. The frequency of occurrence of circumstan can be seen in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3  
FREQUENCY OF APPEARANCE OF CIRCUMSTANT

Circumstances				
No	Circumstant Type		F	%
1.	Extent	Distance	0	0
		Duration	1	1.15
		Frequency	3	3.45
2.	Location	Place	14	16.1
		Time	15	17.2
3.	Manner	Means	3	3.45
		Quality	3	3.45
		Comparison	1	1.15
		Degree	2	2.3
4.	Cause	Reason	1	1.15
		Purpose	6	6.9
		Behalf	1	1.15
5.	Contingency	Condition	11	12.6
		Concession	0	0
		Default	4	4.6
6.	Accompaniment	Comitative	0	0
		Addition	0	0
7.	Role	Guise	7	8.05
		Product	0	0
8.	Matter		9	10.3
9.	Angle		6	6.9
Total			87	100

The circumstances that predominate in news texts are time and place, with 17.2% and 16.1%, respectively, as shown in Table 3. This indicates that this report makes a lot of explicit information about the place and time that accompanies the process. Some of the circumstantial places and times that appear in the text are the word *دالبل* which means "country". This suggests that the reporting focuses on information about where the incident occurred, namely in our country/Arab. Meanwhile, the circumstantial time that appears in the text, for example, is the word *جويلا*. Lexically, the word means "day", but in this context, it means "now" which indicates a time description that explains that currently, women can drive alone without needing to be accompanied by a man.

#### Discourse Practice

Discourse analysis will concentrate on the interpretation aspect, which pertains to the textual elements that underlie the news content, encompassing the process, participants, and circumstant details. From the process perspective, it is evident that the predominant processes in the text are material and verbal processes. This indicates the media constructs news by showcasing a greater number of activities, events, and information. The emergence of material processes can be found in one of the news headlines, namely:

السعودية تقرر السماح للمرأة بالسفر "دون موافقة ولي أمرها"

"Saudi Arabia has made the decision to grant women the freedom to travel "without the need for permission from their guardians".

The transitivity explanation in this clause is as follows.

السعودية	تقرر	السماح -	للرأة	بالسفر دون موافقة ولي أمرها
actor	Process	Range	Recipient	Circumstance contingency default

The headline indicates that Saudi Arabia is beginning to enforce gender equality by implementing a policy that permits women to drive independently, without the need for male accompaniment. From a lexicogrammatical perspective, the Arabic news headline indicates that women are positioned as recipients, implying that they are participants who derive advantages from the process carried out by the actor. This indicates that in its reporting the media places women as the parties who benefit from the process carried out by Saudi Arabia, the process in question is *قرّر* "enimreted ot" snaem hcihw "without the need for permission from their male guardian. The first paragraph in the report opens with a sentence explaining that women no longer need to ask permission and can go without their guardians. This media campaign aims to captivate readers' attention by highlighting the historic milestone achieved by Saudi Arabian women, who can now travel independently without the requirement of a male guardian. This clause is observable in the data provided below (1).

(1) وتمت المصادقة على القانون الجديد، وسيسمح للنساء من سن 21 عامًا فما فوق بالسفر خارج البلاد دون وصي، وسيدخل القانون الجديد حيز التنفيذ في نهاية شهر أغسطس من هذا العام، وفقًا لبيان وزارة الإعلام السعودية.

"The Saudi Council of Ministers has sanctioned a recent legislation that grants women aged 21 and above the freedom to travel overseas without the requirement of a guardian. As per an announcement by the Saudi Ministry of Information, the new legislation would be enforced by the conclusion of August this year."

The media portrays Saudi Arabia's policy reform allowing women to travel without a guardian in a favorable light, presenting it as a beneficial development. As can be seen in data (2) below.

(2) وقال البيان، إن اللائحة الجديدة هي "امتداد لسلسلة من الإصلاحات والمبادرات الرامية إلى تعديل وتطوير اللوائح والقوانين الحكومية بما يتماشى مع احتياجات المجتمع"، بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يقول البيان إنه يمثل "فرصة للنساء لشغل مناصب عليا في الحكومة، بما في ذلك منصب النائب أو مساعد الوزير أو السفير

*"The statement said that the new regulations are "an extension of a series of reforms and initiatives aimed at changing and developing government regulations and laws in line with society's needs." Additionally, the statement said that the regulations represent "an opportunity for women to occupy high positions in government, including the positions of deputy, assistant minister, or ambassador."*

Data (2) above explains that the new policy reforms implemented by Saudi Arabia can provide great opportunities for women to have careers by occupying important positions in government. The sentence "in line with the needs of society" indicates that the policy reform was constructed by the media as if it were a need for Saudi Arabian society in general. However, the interests behind the implementation of this policy are Arab women who want equality with men in terms of careers. This can be observed in the subsequent clause.

The news construction is further reinforced by the lexicogrammatical element, wherein the media gives a positive value to the new policies implemented by Saudi Arabia. This positive value is given through the use of the relational attributive process in the text, even in this clause the carrier participant is given emphasis through the use of the word "indeed" which in Arabic semantically functions as an affirmation of a sentence. In this case, the media highlights that the attainment of gender equality will lead to transformation and advancement in the Arab country.

إن اللائحة الجديدة	هي	امتداد لسلسلة من الإصلاحات والمبادرات الرامية إلى تعديل وتطوير اللوائح والقوانين الحكومية بما يتماشى مع احتياجات المجتمع
this new regulation"	is	This is an expansion of a sequence of reforms and efforts intended to modify and advance government regulations and laws in accordance with the requirements of society."
Carrier	Process Relational Attributive	Attribute

والام بادرات sa h aibarA iduaS tahw taht setacidni sevitaitini dna smrofer snaem hcihw تاحالصلاحإل done is a positive change and initiative that will make the Arab country better by releasing the patriarchal culture which for decades has discriminated against women in Saudi Arabia. As is known, Saudi Arabia is a country that adheres to a very strong patriarchal culture, which has an impact on the positioning of women as inferior compared to men. This interpretation cannot be separated from the etymology of the word تاحالصلاحإل which comes from the word صَلَحَ which means "good", so the change in the word will always have the meaning "good". This is also reflected in the clause which reads:

أمر ملكيا يسمح للنساء السعوديات باستخراج رخص لقيادة السيارات، وهو ما يعد خطوة إصلاحية كبيرة في حقوق المرأة السعودية  
*"royal order allowing Saudi women to obtain driver's licenses, which is considered a major reform step in Saudi women's rights"*

The word تاحالصلاحإل in this clause means "reforms", and the clause explains that the legalization of driving for women in Saudi Arabia which has been implemented by Saudi Arabia is a positive change that will free them from the shackles of conservative culture. Even with gender equality, women in Saudi Arabia will be free from the shadow of male domination. This is reinforced by clauses

للمساواة بين الجنسين من شأنه أن يخلق بلا شك تغييرا حقيقيا للمرأة السعودية  
*"Gender equality will undoubtedly create real change for Saudi women."*

The use of the word كفش الب is used as an emphasis that attempts to convince readers that gender equality will truly improve the quality of life for women in Arabia.

Furthermore, apart from the material process, the news text is also dominated by verbal processes, which indicates that the news report elaborates more on the news from the source's point of view. As seen in data (3) below.

(3) ذكرت هند الزاهد، وكيلة وزارة الموارد البشرية والتنمية الاجتماعية، أن قيادة المرأة للسيارة "لا تقتصر فقط على القيادة بحد ذاتها، أو الاستقلالية التامة في التنقل، بل تتعداها إلى الاعتماد على النفس وعدم الاعتماد على السائق، وعلى أفراد الأسرة الذكور، قيادة المرأة بالنسبة إلى هي رسالة من الحكومة السعودية للمرأة السعودية، وللمواطنات السعوديات بأنهن مواطنات من الدرجة الأولى على قدر من المسؤولية والكفاءة، ويحق لهن كنساء ممارسة حياتهن الطبيعية مثل الرجال".

*"Hind Al Zahid, Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, stated that women driving cars "is not limited to just driving alone, or complete independence in movement, but rather independence and not dependence on the driver and family members."*



*For me, driving by women is "This is a message from the Saudi government to Saudi women and Saudi female citizens that they are first-class citizens who have certain responsibilities and competencies, and they as women have the right to lead a normal life just like men."*

Data (3) provides an explanation of the legality of women driving in Saudi Arabia. Hind Alzahid has expressed that the legalization of women driving is not solely about promoting women's independence as individuals. Nevertheless, this serves as evidence that women possess equivalent capabilities to men in terms of competence. Regrettably, these abilities remain untapped due to the patriarchal rules enforced in Arabia.

Lexicogrammatically, this is realized through clauses with verbal processes that are reinforced by the participants who accompany the process. The explanation of the transitivity of this clause is as follows.

أن قيادة المرأة للسيارة "لا تقتصر فقط على القيادة بحد ذاتها، أو الاستقلالية التامة في التنقل، بل تتعداها إلى الاعتماد على النفس وعدم الاعتماد على السائق، وعلى أفراد الأسرة الذكور قيادة المرأة بالنسبة إليّ هي رسالة من الحكومة السعودية للمرأة السعودية، وللواطنات السعوديات بأنهنّ مواطنات من الدرجة الأولى على قدر من المسؤولية والكفاءة، ويحقّ لهنّ كنساء ممارسة حياتهنّ الطبيعية مثل الرجال	وكيلة وزارة الموارد البشرية والتنمية الاجتماعية	هند الزاهد،	ذكرت
Verbiage	Circ. Role Guise	Part. Sayer	Process verbal

The use of *sayer* ذنه .swen eht ni deyevnoc noitamrofni eht fo ytidilav edivorp ot aidem eht yb tpmetta na si الزاه Hind Al-Zahid is the deputy secretary of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development who has the authority to convey information related to community empowerment in social and economic development. This indicates that issues related to women's empowerment have implications for the country's economic and political development. This is reinforced by the clause *عياً، واقتصادياً، وسياسياً* "Saudi leadership has supported women at all levels, both socially, economically and politically". Through this clause, the media portrays this event as a demonstration of gender equality, emphasizing that women are not solely associated with home responsibilities but can also make significant contributions to the nation's progress. This can also be seen through the use of the sentence *لهنّ كنساء ممارسة حياتهنّ الطبيعية مثل الرجال* "Women have the right to lead a normal life just like men" accompanied by the word *تي عي بطلا* "natural," this suggests that the current existence women have experienced is abnormal life under male domination.

The pervasive patriarchal culture in Arabia has significantly constrained the mobility of women. As a consequence of the policies in place, women in Arabia are hindered from self-exploration, leading to discrimination against them in their daily lives. Hence, the policy enacted by MBS to legalize women's driving is a poignant occasion for the majority of Arab women who have consistently yearned for liberation. This can be seen in the clause excerpt in data (4).

(4) وما إن صدر قرار السماح بقيادة المرأة، شعرت أن العبء الثقيل قد تلاشى

"After the decision was issued allowing women to drive, I felt a heavy burden had been lifted"

This data elucidates the sentiment of women feeling confined within the traditional society prevailing in Saudi Arabia, with the media portraying this culture as an onerous *عبء* "burden" for women. Lexicogrammatically, this clause explores the semantic meaning experienced by Arab women. This can be seen through the following description of transitivity.

شعرت	أن العبء الثقيل	قد تلاشى
Process Mental+Senser	Goal	Process Material
	Phenomenon	

Through the description of transitivity, it can be seen that women become senser of the mental process *شعر* "felt". Even though the participant senser is not visible in the sentence structure because it is hidden in the process, it actually refers to "she" which is indicated by the presence of *ت*, which in the Arabic language system indicates that the subject is a woman. In this context, it refers to the participant "Al-Jazi Al-Rakan, a Saudi doctor and ambassador of Al-Nahda Association and Zahra Charity Association" who appeared in the previous paragraph.

*Socio-Cultural Practices*

Analysis of socio-cultural practices pertains to the societal framework that influences discourse in the media. Socio-cultural practices are related to the ideology held by the author of the text, which then influences the reporting of an event.

Saudi Arabia is renowned for its stringent limitations on women's mobility. Women frequently encounter discriminatory practices in multiple domains, including education, politics, household matters, and even routine tasks, where their autonomy is undermined. Nevertheless, with the transfer of power to the crown prince, Saudi Arabia has embarked into a new era under his governance. Due to its conservative nature, Saudi Arabia has implemented regulations that undermine the status and rights of women. Saudi Arabia is now implementing significant policy reforms as part of its Vision 2030 initiative. One of these reforms focuses on women's empowerment, aiming to liberate women from societal constraints that have historically placed them in an inferior position.

This policy raises pros and cons in most Arab societies, especially between men and women. In addition, this occurrence garnered attention from various perspectives and was reported in different ways. The author made a distinctive discovery that the reporting of the same incident in the same media varied depending on the gender of the writer. Typically, male journalists tend to portray it in a bad light, whereas female journalists choose to present it



favorably through the use of distinct language tactics.

To enhance their reporting, news writers employ strategic use of diction and participants (sources). This is evident from the deliberate choice of sources in the news, all of whom are female. The speakers included Rima Bandar Al Saud, who serves as the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United States, Hind Al Zahid, who holds the position of Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, and Al-Jazi Al-Rakan, a Saudi doctor and ambassador for the Al-Nahda Association and the Amal Zahra Association. All of these sources are lexicogrammatically positioned as 'sayer' who convey information regarding the urgency of gender equality for the survival of women in Arabia in particular and Arab countries in general.

Eriyanto (2012, p. 317) asserts that the inclusion of sources in news articles might impact readers' evaluation of the news. This is because the sources, who are perceived as authoritative figures, provide their responses to the problem at hand. Naturally, these sources will amplify the topic of gender equality as they consist of women who hold significant positions and occupy high-ranking roles in society. This was a difficult accomplishment at a period when patriarchal culture was still deeply ingrained, because they were battling against males who saw women as weak persons. Through the 'verbiage' conveyed, they recounted several negative experiences they encountered before the implementation of the new policy. Therefore, the verbal process that dominates the text is dominated by past tense verbs, such as *تتلاق*, *تترافذ*, and *تتعبات* to emphasize to readers that the current new policy can prevent them from acts of discrimination.

The construction of reporting as a form of gender equality carried out by the Arab media indicates that the ideology possessed by these journalists is the ideology of feminism. Feminism is an ideology that aims to advocate for gender equality in terms of rights and treatment (Rachman, 2023). The usage of all-female sources in the news reinforces feminist ideology. In addition, the news journalist is a woman, specifically Sarah Hasan in CNN media and Al-Anoud Al-Nahit in Independent Arabia media. The media employs this tactic to promote gender equality by amplifying the views of women, particularly those from intellectual and professional spheres. Varying outcomes may arise when utilizing a male source, as his perspectives may diverge from those of a female.

## V. CONCLUSION

Gender inequality is a prominent societal topic that consistently garners global attention. Conservatives and progressives in Saudi Arabia engage in extensive debates on gender equality. By using critical discourse analysis, it was found that several media viewed the issue of gender equality as something positive that should be implemented by countries adhering to a patriarchal culture. The media recontextualizes its news by highlighting the enduring detrimental effects of patriarchal culture on women in Saudi Arabia. Women have been confined by patriarchal culture, which has restricted their mobility. Representation of gender equality is reflected through the textual dimensions, discourse practices and socio-culture that underlie news texts. The aim of the reporting carried out by the media cannot be separated from the journalist's feminist ideology. By using media, journalists can speak out about gender equality through the construction of their reports. This indicates that the media has a role in voicing minority groups.

The study of gender discrimination is an intriguing topic to investigate through a critical discourse analysis lens. The challenges of gender equality in Arabia are intricately linked to cultural norms, religious beliefs, and the prevalence of violence against women. Hence, more investigation can delve into the framing of these three elements in Arab media coverage or can draw comparisons with the framing employed in other nations with mostly Muslim populations, such as Indonesia.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan (LPDP / The Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education), Balai Pembiayaan Pendidikan Tinggi (BPPT) Kemendikbudristek, and Pusat Layanan Pembiayaan Pendidikan (Puslapdik) for granting the scholarship and supporting this research.

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# When Saudis Stop Being Humorous: The Subtitling and Reception of Saudi Dark Humour in *Masameer County*

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**Abstract**—This study is designed to examine the effect that Netflix English subtitles might have on the way English-speaking viewers receive Saudi dark humour. To achieve this, the researchers analyse Netflix's English subtitling of two episodes of the Saudi adult animation *Masameer County*, which is known for its humorous discussion of sensitive issues in Saudi society. This study hypothesises that, partly due to sociocultural considerations, the humorous elements found in the Saudi animation is more appreciated and understood by Saudis than English speakers. It is also hypothesised that the inaccurate translation of specific humorous elements by the non-Saudi subtitler further aggravates the difficulty English-speaking audiences understanding the animation's dark humour. To assess these hypotheses, the active role of the subtitler is considered. This is achieved by employing the sociological lens of *habitus* developed by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. To understand the subtitler's habitus, the subtitler was interviewed to reveal the personal/social factors that affected her translation's decisions regarding specific humorous scenes. The outcome of these decisions is assessed by examining their reception by English-speaking viewers. A questionnaire was conducted with English-speaking viewers asked to watch the two episodes of *Masameer County* under examination. The questionnaire shows that the English-speaking viewers did not receive the Saudi humour with all its sociocultural associations. The findings reveal that the subtitler's habitus exerted powerful effects on her translational choices, which led to a loss of the Saudi humorous sense in the English-speaking viewers.

**Index Terms**—subtitling, habitus, Dark Humour, *Masameer County*, Culture

## I. INTRODUCTION

Adult animation has seen major growth in recent decades. Unlike children's animation, adult-oriented animation confronts serious issues that only adults can handle. One of the main ways adult animations discuss serious issues is through dark humour. Dark humour found in adult animation straddles a line between “funny and offensive” (Habib, 2020). Accordingly, humour in adult animation requires receptive viewers who are equipped with a relevant sociocultural background that enables them to understand and interpret the hidden meanings behind the visual, acoustic, and verbal signs (Al-Momani et al., 2017). This is the approach adopted by the Saudi adult animation *Masameer County*.

*Masameer County* provides Saudi society with a framework for discussing contentious issues through dark humour. The animation relays sociocultural messages drawn from Saudi realities to criticise unfavourable aspects of society. Malik Nejer, the series' producer, writer, and director said that the animation is mainly designed for Saudi and Arab (not international) audiences, in that a lot of cultural background and awareness of how Saudi society works is required to fully understand and enjoy the whole experience (Al-Farhan, 2017). This means that barriers to sociocultural understanding may emerge where non-Saudi/Arab viewers have to rely on some form of translation to fully understand Saudi humour.

Given the relatively recent release of *Masameer County* on Netflix, English subtitles directed at a global audience were provided by the platform, raising the issue of how this unusual Saudi product might be perceived and received by non-Saudi/Arab viewers due to the significant sociocultural gap between these disparate cultures. In this case, one of the questions worth investigating is the comprehensibility of the Saudi dark humour in *Masameer County*, as relayed through English subtitling.

Moreover, Netflix assigned Muriel Daou, a Lebanese subtitler, to provide English subtitles for *Masameer County* (AVA, 2022). Assigning a Lebanese subtitler to the Saudi animation presents questions as to her own understanding of the dark humour. This is due to the fact that the characters of the animation speak in local Saudi dialects which can be inaccessible even for Arab people (Hajjūz, 2021). This dynamic further complicates the question of if the subtitles manage to convey most of the humorous elements in the series to English-speaking viewers.

## II. RESEARCH AIMS

On the basis of these observations, there are two aims in this study:

- (1) To ascertain whether the Lebanese subtitler of *Masameer County* was successful in rendering the humorous effects through the English subtitles she provided.
- (2) To measure English-speaking viewers' level of understanding of the dark humour in two episodes of *Masameer County*.

## III. HYPOTHESIS

This study is based on a hypothesis that the inaccurate translation of specific humorous elements in the English subtitles, which may result from the subtitler's habitus, would be reflected in the way sampled viewers understand the animation's dark humour. More precisely, the expectation is that the more successful the rendering of dark humour in English, the higher the levels of understanding of the animation will be as far as humour goes. This leads us to the second hypothesis, that the Saudi dark humour of *Masameer County* will not be fully received by English-speaking viewers who merely rely on the English subtitles, due to its complex, sociocultural associations of Saudi society.

## IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

The existence of a well-established tradition for dark comedy in Saudi Arabia is reflected in the number of TV productions featuring dark humour. Many Saudi TV series that use humour to entertain people aim to present social criticism of Saudi society and deal with sensitive topics such as social, cultural, and religious issues, e.g., *Tash Ma Tash* (No Big Deal) (Saudi Gazette, 2022), *Barakah Meets Barakah* (2016) (Egypt Today, 2017). Recently, *Masameer* presented dark humour successfully. Alkhunaizi (2023) notes that despite the difficulty of doing dark humour well, *Masameer* succeeds and "does it adeptly, portraying a complex message in a clever and light-hearted manner". Although these listed TV productions differ greatly, they share use of dark humour to expose both individual and social flaws.

Researchers considered dark humour as any joke "making fun of situations usually regarded as tragic, such as death, sickness, disability, and extreme violence, or of the people involved or subject to them" (Bucaria, 2008, pp. 218-219). Many others associate dark humour with tackling taboo and sensitive issues. Collings (2015) argues that the "display within joking of subjects that are considered taboo is enough to indicate darkness". The latter definition is more applicable to the case of *Masameer County* in the sense that the animation discusses sensitive issues in Saudi society such as tribalism, gender discrimination, and racism.

In light of this definition, and dark humour's increasing popularity in Saudi TV productions, questions can be raised about the possibility of this kind of humour crossing national and cultural borders. Humour is subjective and "could have specific cultural background and context, which might make it difficult ... to be understood in other cultures" (Alkhunaizi, 2023). From a translational perspective, it could be noted that a considerable amount of literature has been published on the translation of humour. Bucaria (2008) highlights there has been a growing interest in translating humour, particularly in audio-visual media. Because this study is mainly concerned with the subtitling of dark humour from Arabic into English, it is important to mention that there is a shortage of research on translating humour, in general, in the Arab world.

Alharthi (2015) asserts that research on the subtitling of humour is a relatively new field in the Arab world. His research focuses on subtitling humour from English into Arabic. There is only one recent study by Al-Jabri et al. (2023) which investigates subtitling humour from Arabic into English. This lack of studies on subtitling Arabic humour in English highlights the need to shed light not only upon the production of such subtitles, but also their reception by English-speaking viewers. This is the first sociological study that offers a comprehensive discussion of subtitling Arabic dark humour into English, taking into consideration social factors that affect the subtitler's choices, and attempting to understand the reception of the humours sense by English viewers.

Most of the studies on subtitling of humour are descriptive in nature, rather than grounded in empirical study, e.g., Zabalbeascoa (1994); Martínez-Sierra (2006); Bucaria (2008); and Organ (2015). One important aspect the study of humour translation is "the varying degree of reception" (Ibharim et al., 2019, p. 1266). It is noteworthy that all of these studies, except for Bucaria's, examine humour generally, not dark humour. The reception of dark humour through audio-visual translation has been conducted with European languages/contexts, such as Luque (2003) and Bucaria (2005), but to the best of our knowledge, the only study examining Arab audience reception of cultural references in Arabic subtitling of English films is that of Alfaify and Ramos Pinto (2022). This indicates that the field has not yet focused on English-speakers' reception of Arabic, specifically Saudi, dark humour in audio-visual texts (i.e., through subtitling).

## V. METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Data for the study were collected by watching the second episode *Washingtonia*, and the sixth episode *Latrine of Secrets* with their English subtitles as presented by Netflix. To identify the humorous scenes in the two episodes, the study adopts Abomoati's (2019) approach, which categorises jokes within audio-visual products into: (1) language-restricted jokes (including taboo language, puns, and wordplay) and (2) reference-restricted jokes (including references to knowledge, and culture). The focus of this study is on reference-restricted jokes (i.e., references to culture-bound items). Language-restricted jokes are disregarded.

Culture-specific references "can be exclusively or predominantly visual (an image of a local or national figure, a local dance, pet funerals, baby showers), exclusively verbal or else both visual and verbal in nature" (Chiaro, 2009, p. 156). Bucaria (2008) notes the impossibility of extracting the visual component from a scene with humorous words, as other elements must be considered such as characters' expressions, tone, etc. Therefore, based on Bucaria's (2008) classification of dark humour, this study considers verbal and non-verbal humorous cultural references.

Cultural-humorous scenes refer to jokes involving a reference to someone or something. In order to identify the humorous techniques that the animators of *Masameer County* used to convey cultural messages with humorous effects, the study adopts Long and Graesser's (1988) taxonomy who classified the techniques of humour into 11 categories: (1) irony, (2) satire, (3) sarcasm, (4) overstatement and understatement, (5) self-deprecation, (6) teasing, (7) replies to rhetorical questions, (8) clever replies to serious statements, (9) double entendre (10) transformation of frozen expressions, and (11) puns.

The study also investigates the translation strategies used by the subtitler in subtitling the cultural-humorous scenes drawing on Pedersen's (2005) seven strategies for translating cultural references in audio-visual contexts: (1) official equivalent, (2) retention, (3) specification, (4) direct translation, (5) generalisation, (6) substitution, and (7) omission. These translation strategies for humorous cultural references are effectively used as a comprehensive model of translation strategies within audio-visual contexts (Al-Jabri et al., 2023).

Due to the sociological nature of this study, in its seeking understanding of not only the strategies of the subtitler in subtitling cultural references but also the social and personal factors behind particular translational choices, the study adopts a sociological apparatus of analysis from Bourdieu's theory: habitus. Habitus has proven a fruitful method within translation studies for understanding translators' agency (e.g., Simeoni, 1998; Gouanvic, 2005; Inghilleri, 2003). Habitus is considered a perceptive tool which helps in examining an agent's social settings and internal incorporated dispositions. Gouanvic (2005, p. 158) argues that the changes or restrictions imposed on a source text by a translator are not "a conscious strategic choice but an effect of his or her specific habitus". Habitus describes structured regularities in an individual's past and present experiences and social contexts (i.e., family upbringing and education). It is also structuring, in that it shapes individuals' present and future practices, beliefs, perceptions, and feelings (Maton, 2008). To best understand and explain the translatorial agency of the subtitler, this section details some of her experiences and cultural background to help understand her translation practices from a sociological perspective.

Muriel Daou is a Lebanese translator<sup>1</sup>. She lived in Lebanon till 2008. Then, she moved to the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, Al Khobar for eight years before permanently moving to Canada. She holds a bachelor's degree in Translation from the Lebanese University and has worked in the field of translation for 20 years. Although *Masameer County* is not her first audio-visual project, it is the first Saudi product she subtitled. The subtitler's residency in Saudi Arabia could be a contributing factor in being chosen for subtitling this Saudi animation. Nevertheless, it was not an easy task for her. Although Daou is a native speaker of Arabic, her linguistic habitus is not identical with that of Saudi dialects. In the interview, she revealed a striking awareness of the significant difference between the two Arabic dialects, and the impact of this difference on her product; she declared that the local expressions used by the animation characters were the most challenging part of the translation process. This demonstrates that, notwithstanding her residency in Saudi Arabia, she did not become fully proficient in the Saudi Arabic. This can be attributed to two factors; the subtitler only lived in one city and thus was not exposed to different dialects of Saudi society, and she did not have active socialisation with Saudis such that she could refer to them when needed during translation process, as she confirmed in the interview. From a Bourdieusian perspective, the Saudi culture with its varied dialects was not been fully instilled within her habitus. What is expressed by linguistic habitus is not only a language but all the class habitus the user belongs to (Bourdieu, 1991). This is evident in Daou's translatorial agency, particularly the linguistic choices she made during the translation of the project at hand. Supporting examples of this claim are provided in section (VI).

As the study also aims to understand how the product is perceived by end users, a questionnaire was designed to collect data about viewers' reception. Particular attention was paid to the participants' understanding of specific humorous scenes dealing with sociocultural issues in Saudi society. The questionnaire was structured in three parts. The first part consists of five questions about the participants' general background of the Arabic language, Saudi society and culture, and their experience of watching subtitled Arabic series/movies. The second part, which was answered after participants watched the two episodes of *Masameer County* under investigation, contains close-ended questions about their understanding of some of the humorous scenes. In the third part, participants were asked open-ended questions

<sup>1</sup> The information provided in this section was obtained from the subtitler during an interview with her on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2023 for the purpose of the study.

about the English subtitles of specific examples of dark humour, answering with a limited number of words.

Regarding the selection of the participants, 20 English-speaking viewers were chosen by circulating information about this research project among the researchers' social and personal networks in the UK and Saudi Arabia. The researchers motivated participants to participate in this study through rewards; £40 Amazon voucher for residents in the UK, and for those in Saudi Arabia, 200 SR in any Saudi store the participant chooses upon completion of the questionnaire. The participants were asked to watch the two episodes of *Masameer County* without being informed of the focus of the study, to aid the validity and accuracy of the results. Then, they were asked to fill out the web-based questionnaire.

## VI. DATA ANALYSIS

This section provides an analysis of the cultural-humorous elements which were mistranslated by the subtitler, and hence affected the target viewers' reception of the humorous aspects of the studied episodes. The questionnaire showed that 70% of the viewers were unsure if Netflix's subtitles of the animation conveyed the intended meaning of the cultural/social references (50% = maybe and 20% = not sure) (see Figure 1).

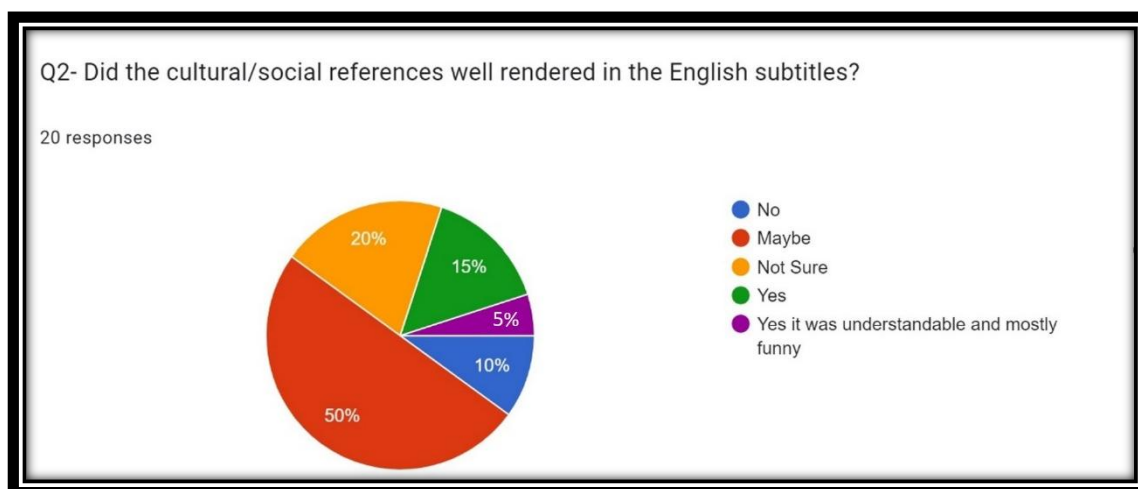


Figure 1. The English Viewers' Responses About the Subtitling of the Cultural/Social References

More specifically, the following question was asked: "What do you think of the English subtitles in these two episodes in general?". Responses indicate that 75% of the participants found the subtitles understandable but had some confusing parts (see Figure 2).

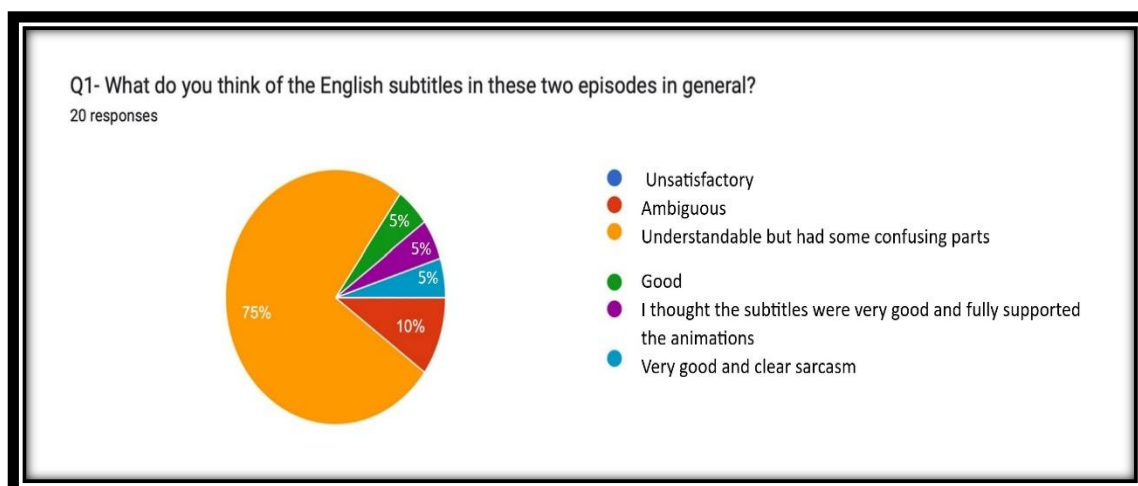


Figure 2. The English Viewers' Responses About the Two Episodes in General

As the figures show, viewers felt that there was something missed in translation. The collected data is classified thematically into two categories: (A) Saudi sociocultural issues, and (B) tribal traditions as presented in the following sections.

### A. Saudi Sociocultural Issues

One of the Saudi sociocultural issues humorously tackled in the animation is racism. It is presented through

stereotyping used by the characters as one of the main sources of humour globally (Eades & Alharthi, 2014). In episode two; *Washingtonia*, the characters of *Masameer County* presented racism humorously to discuss it as a Saudi sociocultural issue. In episode 2 (13:08-13:23 min), Khalaf calls a famous Saudi football show to express his rejection of the first performance of popular South Korean band BTS in Saudi Arabia, at King Fahad International Stadium in Riyadh in 2019. Khalaf believes that the Stadium is only dedicated to football. His depicted phone interview presents racism that is still pervasive in Saudi society when he refers to the K-pop band as “Omal Mac” (literally: workers at McDonald’s) as follows:

Example (1):

خلف: كل اللي نحتاجه نتوحد لأجل الساحرة المستديرة، قيل ما ينلحن جدفنا من عمال ماك.  
 المذيع: برأيك أن المشكلة لها علاقة بالبرجر؟  
 خلف: لا ياسطل عمال ماك طقاقات الكيبوب.

Netflix English subtitles:

Khalaf: We just need to unite for the sake of the bewitching ball. Before we meet our end at the hand of Omal Mac.

The presenter: you think this has to do with burgers?

Khalaf: No, you idiot! Omal Mac, it’s a K-pop band.

Literal Translation:

Khalaf: We just need to unite for the sake of the bewitching ball. Before we meet our end at the hand of McDonald’s workers.

The presenter: you think this has to do with burgers?

Khalaf: No, you idiot! McDonald’s workers, the low-class wedding singers of the K-pop band.

The expression “Omal Mac” is prevalent in Saudi use on social media platforms and everyday language (Ezzeddine, 2023). It shows that some Saudis see people from eastern Asia in a stereotypical image, as if they are one entity and have the same facial features (Ezzeddine, 2023). Hence, Khalaf like some Saudis humorously and contemptuously calls all eastern Asians, including the Korean members of BTS, “Omal Mac” since the majority of McDonald’s workers in Saudi are from south-eastern Asia (Ezzeddine, 2023), conflating the two regions in a disparaging fashion.

Two verbal techniques of humour, double-entendres and irony, are used here. The double-entendre appears in the term “Omal Mac”, which has two meanings; the workers at McDonald’s, or a popular expression used by some Saudis to stereotypically refer to people from East Asia. The humour is revealed when the show host says: “you think this has to do with burgers?” The question is used ironically to expose the superficiality of this racist expression and to mock the practice of racism and its associated sociocultural belief. Non-verbal signs are also used to sarcastically shed light on racism: Khalaf frowns using a loud sharp voice to express his anger and seriousness while making his racist comment. The background music is also very serious, however, in dark comedy animation, such music aims to make the comedy funnier and accentuate the humour (Greiving, 2016). Moreover, the host’s facial gestures are simultaneously used to convey the humour. When he is listening to Khalaf, the host first has a frozen face with raised eyebrows then he keeps one of his eyebrows raised and lowers the other to express his surprise about the nonsense of Khalaf’s comment while asking him the follow-up question. Furthermore, the host’s tone of voice in asking the question, in which he has a fall-rise intonation, shows his uncertainty about the relationship between McDonald’s workers and football. This tone can convey a satirical sense to the audience.

It is apparent that the racist dark humour in this scene stems from understanding its main verbal element “Omal Mac”. Nonetheless, the subtitler was unable to grasp the sociocultural feature of the humour. Consequently, she resorted to transliterating its main verbal component into English as the safest way; she retained the cultural reference as is in the target language, as though it is a proper name (Pedersen, 2005, p. 116). She elaborated on her decision, stating she was unfamiliar with the expression and thought that this was the actual name of the K-pop band. The context did not help her discover the intended meaning, she continued. She partly attributed this mistake to the Arabic transcript provided to her, which did not contain any annotations explaining Saudi-specific references. From a sociological perspective, the transliteration of the phrase “Omal Mac” can be attributed to the subtitler’s habitus. As previously mentioned, she is Lebanese and although she comes from Arabic background, she still cannot grasp all Saudi cultural references since there are great variations between Arab countries in terms of culture, dialects, and traditions. Bourdieu’s concept of habitus here explains the choice of the subtitler.

Accordingly, this failure in subtitling the humorous cultural reference affected the viewers’ reception of the humour. Analysis shows that 90% of the participants (18 participants) were unable to understand what “Omal Mac” refers to. This indeed indicates that the majority of the respondents did not successfully identify the humour. This suggests that the subtitler’s unsuccessful attempt at understanding, and hence translating, the humour led to the target viewers’ inability to realise the darkly humorous content in this scene.

Example (2):

In the same episode (12:22-12:29 min), the audience can also hear the show’s two guests, Abu Fahad and Abdullah (who are fans of Alhilal and Alnassr respectively) involved in a verbal spat with each other. The Hilal-Nassr football rivalry is seen as the biggest rivalry in Saudi professional football. The scene humorously depicts fanaticism as follows:



أبو فهد: ماشاء الله، أنت طلعت فقراوى .  
 عبدالله: وانت طلعت طافية.  
 أبو فهد: جحفلى .  
 عبدالله: دقيقة. نيشيمورا .

Netflix English subtitles:

Abu Fahad: Awesome, you're **a fan of the poor club**.

Abdallah: And you're **a fan of the hat club**.

Abu Fahad: **Jahfali**.

Abdallah: Wait. **Nishimura**.

Here humour is achieved verbally when each character is shocked to find out that the other is a fan of the opposing team, and they exchange derogatory nicknames widely used by the two clubs' supporters to annoy their rivals. "Faqrāwī" (literally: the poor club) is a nickname used by Saudi football fans as a derogatory label for Alnassr, after an instance in the club's history when it was not able to match other Saudi clubs in spending to buy players (Alkhulaif, 2022). The second nickname, "Tāqīyah" (literally: the hat club) was coined in the 1950s to refer to Alhilal when in a match they found that the opposing team was wearing the same colours as their team. Instead of asking Alhilal to change its uniform, the players were asked to wear hats to distinguish themselves from the other team's players (Abdulaziz, 2020). Therefore, the nickname "Tāqīyah" is still attached to the club. The last two nicknames refer to popular football figures for Saudi football fans. "Jahfali" refers to Muhammad Jahfali, an Alhilal player best known for scoring a last-minute equalising goal against Alnassr in the 2015 King Cup final, which led to victory for his side (Alnajjar, 2015). Alhilal's fans usually remind Alnassr's of this historical win by mentioning the player's last name. "Nishimura" refers to a Japanese football referee, who adjudicated the 2014 AFC Champions League Final between Alhilal and Western Sydney Wanderers. The match ended by crowning Western Sydney Wanderers AFC champions. In this game, Alhilal claimed that they had three strong appeals for penalties turned down by Nishimura, and demanded an investigation (Saudi Gazette, 2014). The supporters of rival clubs say "Nishimura" to antagonistically remind Alhilal fans of this incident. All these nicknames are presenting the idea of sports fanaticism.

Humour is also achieved through a visual sign; Abdallah reminds himself of Nishimura's name by taking a paper from his pocket during the verbal spat. Not remembering the name of the referee, and yet writing it on a piece of paper and keeping it to be used whenever needed against sports rivals is used to ridicule sports fanaticism as a social phenomenon. Such an action sarcastically represents sports fanaticism, where fans blindly echo slogans mocking opposing teams without necessarily realising what they mean.

Drawing on Pedersen's (2005) model of rendering culture in subtitling, it is clear that the subtitler adopted two different strategies to deal with references in the humour. For the nicknames, she opted for "calque direct translation" – a stringent literal translation which may appear exotic to the target text audience (Pedersen, 2005, p. 117). Although she was sure that "Faqrāwī" refers to Alnassr club, she was unsure what "Tāqīyah" refers to. Nevertheless, she managed to understand from the context that Abdullah was attacking Abu Fahad with this expression. Thus, she directly translated the nicknames as she wanted to preserve the joke by using official names. For Jahfali and Nishimura, the subtitler chose "retention strategy" (Pedersen, 2005, p. 116) as they are proper names. She explained that it was not possible to add any explanation of these names due to technical limitations; the maximum time allowed for a subtitle to appear on screen is 20 frames, according to Netflix's requirements.

The cultural references mentioned in this humour are monocultural, according to Pedersen's degrees of "transculturality" of cultural references (2005, pp. 122-123). They are "less identifiable to the majority of the relevant TT audience than it is to the relevant ST audience" (Pedersen, 2005, p. 123). However, by adopting these strategies, the subtitler had no choice but to depend on the audience's knowledge of Saudi culture, which would help them to know what they are referring to, as she declared in the interview.

Hence, appreciating this example of humour depends on understanding the references made. The questionnaire indicates that an overwhelming number of participants (90% = 18 participants) were unable to understand these references. It also shows that the rest of the participants (10% = 2 participants) thought they had understood the references, but actually did not, as they were unable to explain what these references when asked. They only provided a general answer, such as the guests are insulting each other's clubs. This signals that the English subtitle likely appears humourless because the monocultural references are completely unknown to the majority of the study's viewers. The result here supports Snell-Hornby's (1995, p. 42) alerting of the risks of "overestim[ing] the target- audience's familiarity with the source-language culture", as the subtitler took this decision based on her overestimated assumption of the viewers' familiarity with the Saudi culture.

### B. Tribal Traditions

The majority of the Saudi population is ethnically Arab, and descended from the Arabian tribes (Lacroix, 2011). Many aspects of Saudi culture are derived from traditional tribal culture (Evason, 2019). *Masameer County* dedicated episode 6 to humorously criticising some tribal norms and traditions that are seen as outdated in modern times. Findings indicate that the Saudi tribal issues in the episode posed challenges to the Lebanese subtitler during the translation process.

Example (1):

One of the humorous elements related to the Saudi tribal traditions which the subtitler faced difficulty in understanding and translating into English, is the term “As Sulūm”. The term, a thematic keyword in episode 6, refers to tribe-specific norms and traditions; knowledge of and adherence to which are requirements of Saudi Bedouin masculinity (Alqahtani, 2013). It is mentioned at the beginning of the episode as part of a “Raddīah”; a Saudi poetic genre where a poet orally improvises verses (in Bedouin dialect) in tune and a group of people standing behind him repeat what was said until another poet stops them in order to reply in the same style (Global Arabic Encyclopaedia, 1999).

Humour is achieved here by creating an acoustic representation of an abstract idea – tribalism. Symbolically, the Raddīah represents tribalism and shows how a segment of Saudi society still reveres outdated tribal traditions. The Raddīah takes place at the beginning of the ceremony that the episode revolves around, celebrating the reconciliation of an old feud between two tribes. Reciting the verses through Raddīah is meant to grab the viewer’s attention and make fun of the obsolescence of some tribal Sulūm and create a stronger humorous effect. The facial expressions of the participants symbolise their seriousness in obeying the tribal traditions. This is also evident in the third humorous technique used in the scene, which is verbal and is expressed in the verses themselves. The two poets sarcastically praise the tribes’ men as being able to solve the feud, and knowing the traditions of Arabia.

To effectively deliver this humour to viewers, the poetic lines need to be accurately translated, which the English subtitle failed to achieve in one of the main lines (01:26-02:19 min):

[الرجال] اللي تعرف السلوم وما يخونونها.

Netflix English subtitles:

Those born to know camels, and who know no treason.

Literal translation:

Those [men] who know Arabian norms and traditions, and never go against them.

This obvious mistake in translating the term was due to the subtitler’s failure to correctly hear and understand, in Pedersen’s (2005, p. 123) words a “monocultural” reference. The interview with the translator reveals that she was unsure if there was any link between “As Sulūm” and “camels” when she re-watched the episode before the interview. The subtitler admitted that the first time she encountered the term was during the interview. Therefore, she mixed it up during the translation process with a familiar phonetically similar word, “As Asunūm”: meaning the camels’ humps, although the linguistically correct plural of this word is: “Asnimah” not “Asunūm” (Almaany, 2023a). Thus, she thought that she used “shifted direct translation” strategy here (Pedersen, 2005, p. 117). However, she was unable to discover that her translation “camels” does not fit the context in which the line was meant to praise the men’s attributes.

Besides her ignorance of the term and inability to deduce its meaning from the context, the translator attributed the mistake to the transcription on which she heavily relied on during translation. She said: “The Arabic transcription must have had something else that led me to translate that as camels”. She continued to explain that when she was unsure of a word she heard in the animation, she considered the Arabic transcription as her “source of truth” as a native of the Saudi dialect supposedly would have created it, and thus it would serve as a more reliable reference point than what she may have heard.

From a sociological perspective, it could be argued that the subtitler’s choice of translating the term “As Sulūm” as camels can be seen as an effect of her habitus; a non-Saudi cultural. In the interview with the subtitler, she shed light on the challenge of subtitling this series due to the prevalence of colloquialisms spoken by characters. She acknowledged “the difficulties were obviously with the slang and the local expressions”. This statement strongly supports the presented hypothesis about the effects of the subtitler’s habitus on the final product of the subtitling. This, in turn, affects the viewers’ reception of the humorous references.

In response to the question of the clarity of this term, participants highlighted a problem in understanding it in context. As Figure 3 shows, 30% of the viewers (6 participants) indicated that the word “camels” is an incorrect English subtitle, and it affected their overall understanding. Some 25% of the participants (5 participants) were confused but they said they could understand the overall meaning. However, 40% (8 participants) indicated that the word “camels” can be read naturally and thought that the subtitle delivers the meaning. This may indicate that they failed to grasp the word’s nuances and were confused with the context. Accordingly, the humour in this verse could be lost and the audience potentially disconnected.

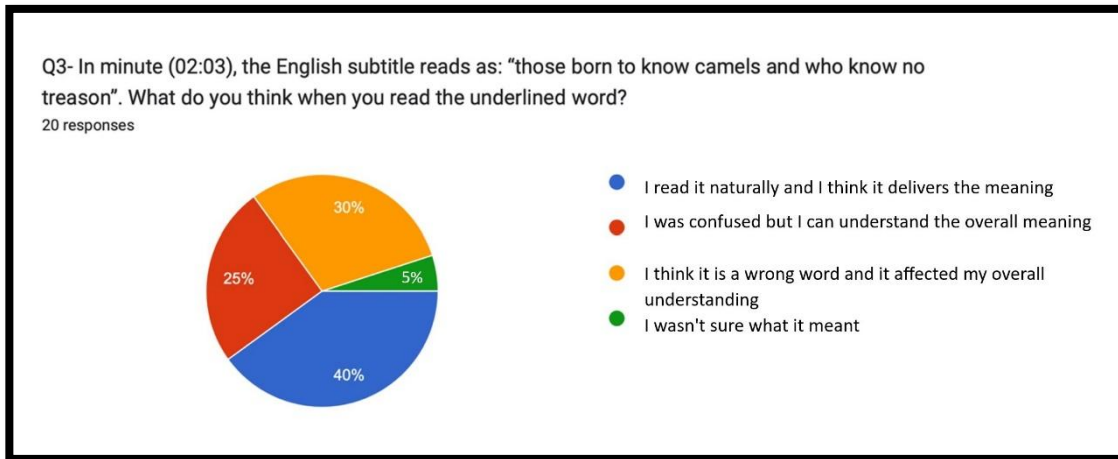


Figure 3. The English Viewers' Responses About the Subtitling of the Term "As Sulūm"

#### Example (2):

Another scene humorously presents two Saudi tribal expressions which the subtitler failed to understand and translate correctly. The scene lasts for about three minutes (2:30-5:36 min), showing the men of the two tribes eating a celebratory dinner while accidentally overhearing Maneah and Jaheer (the poets) insulting and gossiping about the tribes' men behind their backs, through a microphone gaffe. Two elements of this gossip concern bin Zouaitan and bin Zarooob. When tribesmen overhear the insult about the two, the tribes' sheikhs say the following two sentences addressing the two men (3:50 min and 5:30 min):

اسمع يا ابن زعيطان والله إنك أطيب من جا، ومن غير قصور في باقي الرجال، وابشر بالحق.

Netflix English subtitles:

Listen, bin Zouaitan. You're a good man. Truly. There is no better than you, **in all honesty**.

Literal Translation:

Listen, bin Zouaitan. You're the best among those who attended today, no offence to other men.

**I will make it up to you in accordance with our tribal traditions.**

تراها جتك يا ابن زاروب ... وابشر بالحق.

Netflix English subtitles:

**Fret not**, bin Zarooob ... **truth to be told**.

Literal Translation:

**I will marry her to you**, bin Zarooob. ... **I will make it up to you in accordance with our tribal traditions.**

The phrase "Absher Bi Alhaq" (which apologetically denotes: I will make it up to you in accordance with our tribal traditions) is used in Saudi Arabia when someone makes a mistake against someone else, with the former person or a witness saying it to the latter (Alqahtani, 2013). The second underlined humorous instance in the scene, which is the expression "Tarāhā Jatk", is closely linked to the first one. In the episode, after the characters overhear Maneah and Jaheer through the microphones insulting and bullying bin Zarooob and talking about his intention to marry a girl from the other tribe, the tribe's sheikh promises bin Zarooob that she will marry him by uttering "Tarāhā Jatk", despite her father's confirmation that she is promised to her cousin. This expression denotes the girl is yours and we will make her marry you. It is an ancient tribal expression, said by a girl's father or a tribal elder to a man he chooses as her husband. All this happens without the girl's knowledge, and she will be forced to marry that man.

Both tribal expressions are used as verbal elements of humour. They are sarcastic means of indicating the overdependence of some people on tribal traditions, mocking such beliefs and practices. The former expression shows how the two insulted characters are unable to defend themselves in front of the tribes' men because of the tribal elders' presence. Their faces are then saved by the Sheikhs when they say this well-known expression to them. The latter expression indicates how the sheikh will make amends to bin Zarooob by marrying the girl he wants to him, which provides a vivid example of an outdated tribal tradition in Arabia. Such traditions denigrate women and are seen sexist and objectifying (Alotaibi, 2022).

The verbal humour in this scene is mixed with visual and acoustic elements, which simultaneously appear onscreen and are closely linked to the verbal message, enhancing its dark humour. The facial expressions and body language of bin Zouaitan and bin Zarooob (such as frozen faces, bulging eyes, averting gaze, hanging heads, swallowing saliva, and loss of appetite) humorously show their shock and shame at what they heard, and their inability to defend themselves. Exaggerating the physical features is also humorous in that their facial features are totally different from the surrounding characters as the two look like animals more than humans. Moreover, their moustaches are drawn very thin, symbolising their weakness. The two sheikhs contrastingly have very thick moustaches, which serve as a symbol of their strength. It is widely believed among many Arabs that a long thick moustache symbolises manhood and power

(Harris & Hiltunen, 2014). Furthermore, the two sheikhs are frowning and gesturing with their hands, which get bigger as they speak. All these visuals symbolise power relations, wherein tribal men are the weakest since they are subjects to their tribe's sheikh who represent the power and strength of tribal traditions in some segments of Saudi society. In addition, during the sheikhs' utterance of these expressions, a rabāb is heard. The rabāb is a medieval Bedouin musical instrument (Britannica, 2023), which humorously signifies the archaic nature of tribal traditions, as it is now considered part of Arabian folk art (Abdulhafiz, 2017). However, the subtitler's failure to convey the accurate meaning of the key verbal elements of the scene in English did not help to establish the intended humour as appears in the ST.

When the subtitler was asked about her translation of "Absher Bi Alḥaq", she showed her unawareness of it, and thought that the word "Alḥaq" was used in its direct dictionary meaning; honesty (Almaany, 2023b). Hence, after assessing the context from her point of view, she resorted to "shifted direct translation" which makes a cultural reference "more unobtrusive" to the target audience (Pedersen, 2005, p. 117). Although her translation might fit the context, it failed to highlight the tribal dimension of the expression that was the source of the dark humour in the scene.

In addition, the expression "Tarāhā Jatk" is mistranslated by the Lebanese subtitler into English as "Fret not". In the interview, the translator admitted that she did not understand the expression, although she tried to find its equivalent online. Thus, she interpreted it based on the context; that it was used to put the listener's mind at ease. This unsuccessful attempt to understand the concept does not only indicate the translator's lack of knowledge about Saudi culture but also her lack of Saudi sources to consult. Her translation possibly renders the original humoristic intention mundane.

In response to the questions presented to the participants about the clarity of these terms, 95% (19 participants) indicated they seemed to represent literal meanings of "compliment" phrases. A considerable number of the participants were uncertain about whether these cultural/social references were adequately translated into English in the subtitles (50% = maybe, 20% = not sure, and 10% = no). This result is unsurprising if we consider how much this scene is oriented towards sociocultural-specific dark humour.

## VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present study was designed to assess the extent to which the producer of the subtitles of two episodes of *Masameer County* was successful in the translation of humorous scenes, and how this humour was perceived by the English-speaking viewers. Regarding the first hypothesis, in which a correlation was hypothesised between the subtitler's translation choices and her cultural background (non-Saudi), Bourdieu's analytical tool of habitus proved fruitful in understanding the subtitler's cultural and professional background. Through the use of habitus, it becomes clear that the subtitler comes from a cultural background, which although Arabic, differs greatly from Saudi culture. Most of the justifications she gave for her translational choices to specific humorous expressions ranged from ignorance of Saudi dialects, to an inability to provide explanations due to technical constraints of subtitling (limited time and space).

The study also set out to examine the English-speaking viewers' reception of Saudi dark humour. The hypothesis in which low humorous levels were expected for certain humorous elements in English subtitles of the two episodes was confirmed, with 75% (15 participants) finding the subtitles understandable, but with some confusing parts. Apart from the inaccurate translation of some humorous elements by the subtitler, another important influencing factor was found to be the viewers' limited knowledge of Saudi culture.

The present study provides additional evidence with respect to appreciating humour. The findings suggest that viewers who mainly rely on the English subtitles provided by Netflix are not able to fully enjoy and appreciate the animation. Although participants understood some of the animation's non-verbal humorous signs, their full enjoyment was hindered by inaccurate translations of cultural references. An implication of this is the possibility that subtitling can be a barrier in understanding humour, especially where humour is culture-specific.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was funded by the Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission, Ministry of Culture, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under [127/2022] as part of the Arabic Observatory of Translation.

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# Subverting Gender Bias: "The Manly Woman" in Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*

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**Abstract**—This paper examines the representations of the white woman in cross-cultural marriage in Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* in a contemporary deconstructive theory. The paper applies Judith Butler's revolutionary theory of gender and identity constructivism and performativity to clarify how the protagonist fights the gender norms and performances by having masculinity codes as a revolting means for emancipation. The paper tends to explore how colonial hegemony can create a cultural distance which is forced against the white woman by this marriage. It investigates the sociopolitical spatial divisions through the eye of the white woman who struggles because she chooses an ethnic husband. The paper applies a feminist theoretical framework to describe the prejudice and bias that appear after this marriage. "The manly woman" is the white woman who wears masculine features to subvert and oppose the gender bias which applies to her femininity.

**Index Terms**—cross-cultural, performativity, remapping, feminism, marriage, re-conceptualization

## I. INTRODUCTION

Women throughout history till now suffer from patriarchy, oppression, discrimination, social injustice and domination. Despite their ethnicities, women struggle to find their own spaces and have an equal peaceful environment in their societies. The representation of women in contemporary fiction is still biased and impractical. Diasporic Arab female writers try to pave the way to the reconciliation between the West and the East by representing stories of women from both arenas to create a historical political construction. These novels are set in Western contemporary societies which display heterogeneity due to several reasons such as globalization, racism, multiculturalism and decolonization. The cross-cultural marriage is the main topic that the selected novel of this paper represents.

Cross-cultural marriages are a controversial phenomenon, which has been triggered by colonialism and immigration to the "New World." Mestizo is an old name for this phenomenon, which is a mixed descent of white Europeans and Native Americans. Cross-cultural marriage is considered one of the aspects of a multicultural society in which groups of people with different traditions, values, religions and languages live together. This marriage may fall under the differences of expectation and reality for the couple. It can be introduced as an approach to accepting differentiation and as an aspect of a tolerant society of racial and cultural heterogeneity. Culture, which represents "people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (Hall, 1990, p. 223), plays a significant role in this marriage. As a result, it might give foreigners a chance to assimilate, to rebel or even to be lost in the new culture of their partners. The cultural identity or the "one true self" (p. 224) could be one of the barriers between the couple in this marriage.

Ahdaf Soueif is an Egyptian novelist, journalist and political critic. She grants a masterpiece novel which raises many questions about issues of colonization, diaspora, history, politics and cross-cultural marriage. She turns the love theme into a sociopolitical, cultural and historical reference. Many articles tackle different themes within diverse theoretical analyses and this novel succeeds in illuminating researchers' minds with contribution and motivation. *The Map of Love* is a travel family story. It contains different levels starting with the leading female characters. It is also a work that builds a permanent bridge between the East and the West through cross-cultural marriage. In an article written by Emily S. Davis, Soueif is appreciated for breaking the political-cultural conflict through romance; Davis declares that "Soueif's romance serves primarily to bring into contact colonial subjects and members of the populations they rule rather than disparate elements of the postcolonial nation" (2007, p. 2). The article also suggests the political success of this novel as "[i]nstead of bridging gaps to bolster the precarious state, the romance here evokes transnational coalitions—significantly, of women—and unearths genealogies of their resistance to critique and transform the postcolonial state and to comment upon the international balance of power in the wake of British imperialism" (p. 2). Thus, the novel represents a successful cross-cultural marriage especially when the offspring of this marriage successfully cracks the code of their family and creates new perspectives.

The novel portrays a period in which Egypt was under the British mandate in the early twentieth century. The story depicts the tense relationship between the colonized and the colonizer and how the latter applied hegemony and oppression toward the former. However, Soueif might portray the possibility of a healthy successful relationship between two different cultures and identities during the colonial era of Egypt, she "can bring down language and cultural barriers through tolerance, compassion and understanding" (Awad, 2018, p. 4). In this Article, which is titled "Space Transformation and Identity", Dr. Awad discusses space as a method of oppressing colonization, quoting the



work "make use of the characters' journeys and experiences to represent the racial and ethnic tensions and conflicts that separate the colonizer and the colonized" (p. 2).

*The Map of Love* is a postmodern novel that brings together different aspects of life within a historical cultural framework. Michael Silverblatt, a producer and a host of the radio program Bookworm, says: "The Map of Love brings to us the things that the novels are meant to bring not just politics but love, not just love but romance, not just romance but counter-romance; this is the real thing; this is the bright book of life" (2003, April 9). It gives voices for diverse tongues and minds to create a faithful story and leave the reader a chance to judge the whole story of women. Based on the novel, the British colonizer is divided into two parties; the first is the aristocratic and the other party chooses to indulge and live an unforgettable story in the land of the Orient. Despite the social, sexist, cultural and racial powers of the British colonization era, the heroine re-conceptualizes masculine oppression by rejecting the white oppressive stereotypes.

In *Gender Trouble* (1990), Judith Butler introduces her revolutionary theory of performativity which conceptualizes that "gender is performative". Butler deconstructs the cultural and biological norms; she questions the notion of "being a woman [as it] is more difficult than it perhaps originally appeared, for we refer not only to women as a social category but also as a felt of self, a culturally conditioned or constructed subjective identity" (p. 324). Butler defines gender as a social role performed and enacted by the individuals and validated and accepted by society. She also defies fixities and universalities related to the cultural and social role of gender. She sees gender as provisional, shifting, contingent and performed. Butler also fights the sociocultural norms which are opposed to the subject's gender and identity as she says "The body is figured as a surface and the scene of cultural inscription;" the body "is always under siege, suffering destruction by the very terms of history" (p. 177). Butler indicates that "identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as the normalizing categories of oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a liberatory contestation of that very oppression" (1993, p. 308). The opposing power regimes of restricting gender create a subverting process by subjects.

Butler claims that "acts, gestures, enactments, generally constructed, are performative in the sense that the essence of identity that they otherwise purport to express becomes a fabrication manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means" (1990, p. 336). She also adapts the theory of drag that "fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks identity" (p. 337).

This paper tackles cross-cultural marriage in a feminist theoretical frame. The paper attempts to show how the writer represents the Transvestite White Woman as a wife and her way to remap a successful cross-cultural marriage despite the cultural and political challenges she faces.

## II. THE TRANSVESTITE WHITE WOMAN

Gender is the basic issue of feminist movement. Bell Hooks in her book *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center* (1984) defines Feminism as "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (qtd. In *Feminism is for Everybody*, 2000, viii). The previous quotation implies that all sexist actions and thinking are rejected either by men or by women. It is not a movement against men but a practical way of liberty from patriarchy as the latter is seen as institutionalized sexism. Hook also identifies the term black gaze to determine that black people are also racist because "black people watch white people with a critical "ethnographic gaze, is itself an expression of racism" (qtd In Brown, 1999, p. 24).

White women were being criticized for being racist and for not living the experience of ethnic women. Whiteness studies want to shed light on the "universalism" in feminism to contribute to the issue of "understandings of race by suggesting that it should be a question of all women, and no less for white women than for any others" (Brown, 1999, p. 5).

Butler in her book, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, indicates her revolutionary theory of re-conceptualization and identity formation. She indicates that "identifications shift does not necessarily mean that one identification is repudiated for another; that shifting may well be one sign of hope for the possibility of avowing and expansive set of connections...[it] involves a substitution of oneself for another that may well be a colonization of the other's position as one's own" (p. 118). Accordingly, she challenges the social roles and their performances by creating alternative enacted acts and performances, an alternative to the way norms lead to mutually reversing visualization of gender relations and the genders' social practices. The notion of gender performativity appears in *The Map of Love* along with the first meeting between the white protagonist and the future ethnic husband. Gender for Anna, the white protagonist, is shown as an obstacle in her journey to discover Egypt not the one inside the British colonization's firm walls. To meet the real Egypt with its tradition and culture, she asks one of her servants, Sabir, to help her to achieve her dream who explains to her that it is very dangerous to have this experience not only as a woman, but also as a British. Anna might adopt Butler's performativity by deconstructing norms and obstacles. So, she chooses to disguise herself as a man to subvert her femininity to achieve her dream. The journey starts but it turns to be a terror journey. Anna (the man) is kidnapped by Sharif Basha who is a decisive opponent of the British Mandate. Anna thinks of all the scenarios except the one that happens, she says: "[F]or myself, the thought that holds most terror for me now is to become known in London as 'that Lady Anna Winterbourne who was abducted by the Arabs'" (Souief, 1999, p. 105).



She expresses her own racial and gender fears; she will be oppressed by this notion as an English white woman who is being taken by an Arab.

The kidnappers determine his/ her safety as "my person, possessions and horses were safe and would be returned to me as soon as their demands were met by the Egyptian government" (Souief, 1999, p. 106). Anna feels insecure and hesitates whether to show her "true identity" or her "feminine identity" (Souief, 1999, p. 106). She is aware that her femininity is not worth in this situation than being a male.

The protagonist of *The Map of Love*, Anna Winterbourne, literally and figuratively chooses to hide her femininity which controls her wishes and dreams to wear a masculine mask in her life in Egypt. She emancipates her cultural socio-political norms by having a cross-cultural man and her marriage succeeds by being a political masculine partner for her husband Sharif Basha. While Anna dreams of giving up gender and political norms, she has many questions about her colonial situation as a British and the death of her former British husband, Edward. She wants answers for the paranoia she has because she is considered by her race a part of colonization. She hates the British colonization as it was the cause of her previous misery and fragmentation. She refuses the British claim of colonization to civilize and free indigenous because of this claim she was being in a prison of sadness and a failed marriage. She is called a widow twice because of her own country. Anna prays "for the souls of all the men who were joined in that terrible event" (Souief, 1999, p. 34) in Sudan and all parts of the British "empire".

Whereas all the British people who visit the Egyptian colony stay at their fancy luxurious rooms and palaces, Anna describes that "there is something at the heart of it [Egypt] all which alludes me- something- an imitation which I felt in the paintings, the conversations in England, and which, now that I am here, seems far, far from my grasp" (Souief, 1999, p. 102). She has the feeling of displacement as she wants to dive into the normality and simplicity of the place away from the British hypocrisy and falseness. She wants to form a self-definition of Egypt away from what she learned and politically taught. Anna's process of transformation assumes to deconstruct her cultural feminine identity; it is a journey of discovering herself, a journey of persistence and courage to reconstruct her identity. Even her marriage is a part of the process of freeing and deconstructing the stereotypical image of herself as a woman.

Anna shows her admiration of Egyptian culture and identity from the minute she takes her feminine mask off and wears the masculine identity. She finds her path to go to the extreme and to have a true version of herself far away from the aristocratic British hypocrisy to indulge in real Egypt by being a man. She changes- disguising as a man- her gender to fit into colonial and cultural norms. By deconstructing her sex, she makes her gender socially accepted which gives her the right to be a new identity and be able to create her perspectives away from her British cultural colonizer. She puts aside biological, cultural and social significances that eliminate her womanhood.

While Anna shifts her gender, she makes her new identity provisional, accepted and validated in Egyptian society. Even though Anna is afraid of being called "that Lady Anna Winterbourne who was abducted by the Arabs" (Souief, 1999, p. 105), she is determined to hide the whole story of the abduction to protect her fame. Anna figuratively shares masculinity with her husband Sharif Basha. Their marriage is rejected by different levels. She is not just a wife; she is a political close partner to her husband.

### III. REMAPPING THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE THROUGH THE WHITE WOMAN

Egypt was under the British colonization from 1882 till 1956 after the Suez Crisis. This colonial period in Egypt was reflected in British fiction and theatre (Alhawamdeh, 2022). The British forces withdrew from the Egyptian lands after the Anglo-Egyptian agreement of 1954. The British claim of this colonization "is to civilise Africa in the interests of Europe and that to gain that end all means are good" (Souief, 1990, p. 32). Anna does not believe this claim as she lives the misery of her former husband Edward after coming back from Sudan. Edward suffers from psychological mental disorder because of what he witnesses by the British terrorism in Soudan. Anna is a white woman who belongs to the colonizer side but she gets a critical mind to see the truth of this war, she explains the hostility of the British army, "how Kitchener let the British and Egyptian soldiers loose upon the town for three days of rape and pillage" (Souief, 1999, p. 34). Anna feels worried about Edward as he will never handle the idea of taking part in these horrible deeds. The death of Edward leads to Anna's depression in a way she expresses: "If I could believe that he died for a noble cause. If I could believe that he died contented" (Souief, 1999, p. 41). She blames herself as she believes she couldn't save him from his psychological dilemma. Soueif explains Anna's feeling, by Isabel's words, as "[t]hat's the trap... we're trained, conditioned to blame ourselves. This guy was inadequate, and somehow she, the woman, ends up the responsibility..." (Souief, 1999, p. 42). As women are raised under blame discourse by men for any dysfunction in their families, Anna unconsciously keeps blaming herself for not being the loved wife who "would have found the key- when he was so ill-so desperate-" (Souief, 1999, p. 42).

Ahdaf Soueif draws on the history of Egypt under British colonization through Anna Winterbourne's diary entries and letters. The modes of confessional appear in these letters. Feminist writers indicate the honesty and clearness of confessional letters as a way to be close to the mind of the writer. Anna, the white woman, and Amal, the ethnic woman, both establish a new term of sisterhood by indulging in confessional concepts. Amal implies the full understanding of Anna's mind and behaviour through these letters, she says "I got to know Anna as though she were my best friend- or better; for I heard the worst and the best of her thoughts and I had her life whole in front of me...she became so present to me that I could swear she sits quietly by as I try to write down her story"(p. 43). Bell Hooks points to sisterhood

theme between women of all colors in her book *Feminism is for Everybody* as to "work with great diligence to confront racism and the conflicts it engenders with the conviction that sustained committed struggle will lead towards a liberatory feminist political agenda" (2000, p. 125). For hook Sisterhood "became yet another shield against reality, another support system" (1986, p. 129). Amal and Anna empower each other by convincing the reader of the strong connection they retain. Amal confesses how Anna's letters help her in her future decisions and Anna wants her letters to be memorized and read. This power, which Amal sustains through these letters, confirms hooks' theory of sisterhood that "[m]ale supremacist ideology encourages women to believe we are valueless and obtain value only by relating to or bonding with men" (1986, p. 127). Amal feels lonely in her life after her divorce; nevertheless, Anna's journal becomes her only consolation.

Anna's memories of the East are harsh and tough because of her former husband's death and the death of her Arab husband Sharif. Anna's mother died when she was only nine. She has trouble contacting her father, so she marries Edward seeking happiness and a stable life. However, this marriage doesn't last because of what Edward faced as being a part of the British forces. Colonization and war in the East brought death and sickness to soldiers and their families. Anna blames herself for Edward's death. She thinks that their marriage depresses him and lets him choose death," a well-loved man would not die with horrors eating silently, secretly at his mind. If she had loved him better, perhaps he would not have needed to go to Sudan. If she had understood him better, perhaps she could have nursed him back to death" (Souief, 1999, p. 41). Anna proves by her second cross-cultural marriage a remapping ideology from feminist perspectives.

Anna Winterbourne is not a common wife; she becomes a wife, a partner, and a male political friend to her husband Sharif. He argues with her on so many issues like politics, colonialism and also love. She completes him in a way that she couldn't forget him after his death. It is a marriage that stands against many contradictions and ambivalence. The way this marriage keeps going to enhanced levels shows how its extreme incompleteness could lead to its perfection.

The protagonist of this story is a white British woman who is very politician and reasonable. She fights her norms which are forced because of her gender. She chooses to think and practice to collect answers. She wants to find the real political truth of the colonized away from her country's claim. Anna refuses to track the colonizer's notion toward Egypt and its people. She chooses an approach which makes her see the true images of this country away from the British bias and prejudice as quoted "I am hoping to learn a little more of native life here, although I must say I have no idea how to put that hope into actual form" (Souief, 1999, p. 71). While she is in her room at Shephard's Hotel which depicts a mirror reflection of Britain, she has the feeling that "still I am not in Egypt" (Souief, 1999, p. 102).

Anna achieves a successful connection with nature as well as with her relationship with Egypt. She describes nature as "a vastness which I have never before experienced – the land, the sea and the sky, all stretching unbroken and united" (Souief, 1999, pp. 190-191). Anna's experience is due to her approach of clearness and authenticity. She explores the Egyptian desert where "no amount of reading of guidebooks or travelers' accounts, not even the stretch of desert I saw at Ghizeh, could have prepared me for this" (Souief, 1999, p. 190). She interlocks the landscapes "for peace of mind and peace of heart" (Souief, 1999, p. 197) which she never feels in Britain or in the walls of the British mandate palaces.

As the name of the novel holding the map, the couple succeeds in bringing out a new political map by love. They create a bridge between the West and the East by overcoming all circumstances and considerations surrounding them. They achieve a peaceful marriage full of compassion and understanding. Anna and Sharif Basha establish a new discourse that huge cunning political discourses could not establish. In her journey to Egypt, Anna succeeds in finding her peace and harmony. She explains how her meetings with Egyptian women "brought a certain awe into my heart and I realised it was like being in church" (Souief, 1999, p. 378). Even after the assassination of her ethnic husband by her own country, she actualizes her identity as a mother, as a person and as a wife who chooses her style of remapping a cross-cultural marriage in a feminist framework despite contradictions and rejection.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Arab women writers struggle to find their places in the literary milieu. They also struggle against their cultural social patriarchal circumstances to create a story to rebel against all the boundaries of their societies. They create a new process away from the assimilation of their counterparts and their cultural roots. Women writers in general fight the way men writers show the world. They create new perspectives in contrast to men writers' definition of the world. Ahdaf chooses to go too far to the story of a white woman to tell that not only ethnic women suffer from oppression but also white women.

By being the transvestite, the white woman, in this novel, succeeds in her mission to create a new different way of living not only by being a wife but also by presenting the collapse of the central colonizer castle. Anna remaps a successful ambivalent marriage. The beauty of this marriage lies in its extremeness and differentiation. Ahdaf shows Anna as a reasonable wife who decides her journey which is full of love and determination as women can be both a partner and a wife.

By being by the side of the colonized, Anna has established a complex code only women could crack it. Soueif, Anna, Amal present a feminist story that challenges other men's stories of colonization, patriarchy and assimilation. Also, the reader participates in this story by reflecting on the same stories of racism, multiculturalism, cross-cultural marriages and other ways of being on the other side of the binary opposition.

The manly woman is a woman with multiple faces; she refuses to be defined by her society by choosing her definition to be diverse, multiple, unique and the same. Anna does not only refuse to be a colonizer but also she refuses to be under men hegemony. From the beginning of her story, she rejects to see Egypt through the eye of colonial Britain as she also is overwhelmed by the real truth of everything. She gets what she asks for. She finds true love, a happy marriage, a sincere family and the peace that she always wants to have. Breaking all the restrictions whether cultural, political or gender, she finally sees her true self which ends up being a mystery and a puzzle that needs a lot of effort and experience to be solved. She gathers her own story and paves the way for other women to accept being away from the herd. Finally, the protagonist, Anna succeeds in remapping the whole history by reuniting the three generations in her family by abandoning the cultural boundaries of her gender and creating new aspects of her identity.

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# Revealing the Commonalities Existing in Depictions of Disabled Female Characters in Prose Fictions: A Study of Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* and Toni Morrison's "Recitatif"

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**Abstract**—Literature has numerous dimensions, among which novels and short stories are worth the mention. Stories from the past have been including disabled male and female characters in their plots, but the question of how these characters have been depicted is still debatable. When it comes to writers of the disability study, it has been noticed that they have been trying to establish the present state of people with impairments with the help of their deformed or disabled characters. It has been witnessed that novels and short stories concentrate on bringing out the darker side of a disabled person by focusing on his/ her issues and sufferings. The objective of this paper is to expose that literary works rarely focus on the brighter facet of a disabled character, especially a woman. It projects the differences that are endured by fictional individuals. The analysis undertakes the theory of Intersectionality to support its arguments of projecting the discrepancies in the picturisations of disabled female dramatic personas in novels and short stories. Hence, the research with the aid of select prose narratives brings out the conventional sketches of fictional impaired women.

**Index Terms**—disabled, supporting character, suffering, asexual, evil

## I. INTRODUCTION

Literature plays a vital role in aiding a writer to expose his/ her thoughts into language, among which prose narratives have been identified to take the major part. They are known to have significant roles in literature and literary writing. A novel and a short story not only help the writer to evoke his/ her creativity but also trigger the imagination of a reader as well. The characters present in these literary works play an extensive portion in enhancing the plots and structures. Both a novel and a short story at times directly or satirically reflect the realism of a community or the world.

### A. Objectives

The main aim of this paper is to exhibit that deformed or disabled female characters have been less exposed and explored in novels and short stories. It brings out that a novel and a short story predominantly depict the negative aspects of physically disabled female characters; where they have usually not been central characters, and whose identities remain implicit. The investigation also showcases that impaired female dramatic personas have been mostly immersed in traumas and tribulations in prose fiction.

### B. Methodology

The paper takes up the qualitative research methodology, wherein it undertakes the textual analysis of a popular novel and a short story. The two famous prose narratives that have been made use of in this paper have been the novel *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins and the short story "Recitatif" by Toni Morrison. The analysis of these two literary works has been the focal point of this study.

### C. Theoretical Framework

The article avails the theory of Intersectionality to support its study. Crenshaw in the year 1989 explains Intersectionality as the focus of the people who have been favoured, privileged and socially advantaged, which in turn have been marginalising the multiply burdened individuals. He states that the claims have been difficult to understand, which have been the result of discreet sources of discrimination (p. 140). He also argues that black women experience several differences, which is contrary to the assumptions of the world that their exclusion is always unidirectional (p. 149).

Bernstein (2019) puts forth that Crenshaw's definition of Intersectionality considering race is also related to literature. She states that when considering Intersectionality concerning literature, it has been identified that sometimes it has been

referred to the intersectional social categories while at other times it has been indicated to the oppressions faced by the members of the minority groups (p. 2). She also comments that although the Intersectionality Literature mostly points to the intersectional minorities' identity and the peculiar dimensions of discrimination that they have endured for centuries; it has to be noted that all the identities are to some extent intersectional in nature when considering the broader sense of the term (p. 3).

Similar to the statements of Bernstein, Schalk (2016) mentions that when reading from the intersectional dimension, where sexuality, gender, class, race and disability have been represented as the potential analytics, it is seen that there are opportunities where subversion of one or more in turn leads to the adherence of the other. He adds that this statement applies within and across groups (p. 1244). The paper takes into account this wider sense of Intersectionality for the study.

## II. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY AND THE DISABILITY MOVEMENT

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and its optional protocol for the rights of disabled people has been adopted on the 13th of December 2006 at the United Nations headquarters that is in New York. This is later opened up for signature on 30th March 2007 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007, para. 1). United Nations in the preamble defines that people with disability include those individuals who have long-term physical, mental, and sensory or intellectual impairments; which when having interactions with several hurdles or barriers might at times hinder their complete and effective participation in the society on equal bases with others (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, Article 1, para. 1).

People with disability and their issues have not only been addressed by many Governments but have also been voiced out by movements in the past, especially for the problems of disabled women by feminist activists. Wendell (1989) mentions that women with disabilities have been struggling with the oppression of being women and individuals with disabilities in abled and male-dominated societies. She adds that feminists have been trying to bring the concerns and knowledge of disabled women into feminism, and the feminists' perspectives into the Disability Rights Movement (p. 104).

In correspondence to the above statements, Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009) state that a broad feminist critic of disability studies has emerged in the 1980s, wherein many feminist activists from the northern hemisphere have been very much sensitive to the construction of more of a male agenda in the disability studies and the male control of the disability movement. They have argued that disabled women have found themselves lower than both the abled and disabled men in all socio-economic spheres, which has led to the origin of the concept of multiple disadvantages. They also mention that the lack of a theoretical framework in analysing these multiple-disadvantages has further led to the concept of intersectionality (p. 58).

## III. DISCUSSION

### A. Primary Sources and Disabled Female Characters

The paper avails two literary works that have been greatly celebrated to undertake the study. Throughout this paper Collins' *The Moonstone* and Morrison's "Recitatif" have been the primary sources that have been researched. The impaired or deformed female characters present in the primary sources have been examined in this research to obtain its objectives.

#### (a). Wilkie Collins-A Revolutionary Novelist

Wilkie Collins is a renowned English writer, who has attained immense fame as a fictionist. He is known for inventing the sensation novel; and has been a highly paid writer of the Victorian age. He has met Charles Dickens in 1951, with whom he has been in close association and has been popularly called Dickensian Ampersand. Collins has published No Name, a series in Dickens' second weekly journal All the Year Round. He has written 25 novels, more than 50 short stories, 15 plays and more than 100 non-fiction; among which his popular works include *The Woman in White* (1860) and *The Moonstone* (1867) (Allingham, 2021).

#### (b). *The Moonstone*

The first literary work that has been taken up for this study has been Wilkie Collins' novel *The Moonstone*; which is both a mystery and a sensation. This novel has been known for prefiguring and proceeding the modern-day detective novel. It has been narrated by many narrators and is about the disappearance of "The Moonstone". The plot of the novel revolves around the consequences that follow on the moonstone's disappearance and the search for it.

#### (c). Toni Morrison-An Acclaimed Writer

Toni Morrison is a famous American novelist, playwright and short story writer. Her works have been known to explore the identity of black women in the United States, where she has been focusing on bringing out the suffering and discrimination that black women have been encountering for centuries. Her major works include *The Bluest Eye*, *Beloved*, *Sula* and "Recitatif". She has been the recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Pulitzer Prize and the Noble Prize (Alexander, 2019).

(d). “*Recitatif*”

The short story that has also been undertaken for this study is Toni Morrison’s “*Recitatif*”; which strives hard to remove the racial codes existing in the society, by not explicitly revealing the skin colours of Twyla and Roberta. “*Recitatif*”, the only short story of Morrison has been constructed in five parts, which concentrates on Twyla and Roberta visiting the orphanage and their growing relationship. The story is also about their meeting with Maggie, and how the thoughts of Maggie haunt the girls.

(e). *Rosanna Spearman and Maggie*

In *The Moonstone*, Rosanna Spearman is one of the servant maids of Rachel Verinder. She has been depicted as a deformed woman, where one shoulder of hers is bigger than the other which marks her out from the rest of the characters. Likewise, in “*Recitatif*”, Maggie is the kitchen woman, who works at St. Bonny’s orphanage. She has been picturized as a disabled woman, whose legs are like parenthesis and who is shorter than the other girls in the orphanage. The paper analyses Rosanna Spearman and Maggie to justify its arguments.

B. *The Addressal of Female Impaired Characters*

Rosanna and Maggie have been addressed by names and words that have been related to their deformities and disabilities. Laurea (2020-2021) articulates that in the narration of the novel *The Moonstone*, the subaltern bodies in the narrative have been generally controlled by their constructions and deconstructions through their descriptions concerning their deficiencies; and insists that Betteridge has brought out the portrait of Rosanna through words that are related to her impairment like poor, she failed, troubled, far from strong, no beauty, plainest, plain (repeated twice), distanced, solitary ways, additional misfortune, one shoulder bigger than the other and silent tongue (p. 88).

In the same manner, Maggie has also been called names by Twyla, which has been connected to her deformity. Rennie (2022) voices that through Twyla the readers have been informed that though Maggie has been mute, she has not been a deaf woman. She also says that Maggie has been quiet on listening to the terrible names that have been addressed to her; and has been powerless to the abuses which have been targeted upon her (p. 62). “Dummy! Dummy! She never turned her head. Bow legs! Bow legs! Nothing. She just rocked on” (Morrison, 1983, p. 32).

C. *The Brutality in Physical Descriptions*

The prose narratives have been providing cruel picturisations of the physical disabilities of characters, especially when it comes to women. Wright (2008) mentions that in fiction the disabled and the disability of a person have been usually focalised through the eyes of another character (p. 97). Rosanna in *The Moonstone* is represented with ruthless words by the characters of the novel. Pšenková (2015) comments that Betteridge, the senior male servant in Lady Verinder’s house describes Rosanna as not very appealing in her appearance and has been plain in her attire and manner. He says that Rosanna is greatly sad about her deformity, which marks her out despite covering it with her shawl (p. 27). He also puts forth that Collins’ has portrayed Rosanna as pitiful, who has been unattractive, friendless, shoulder that has been crooked and has been suspected of stealing the diamond due to her past (p. 28).

Usually, the disability and deformity of a female character have been represented with clear visibility; wherein the story portrays her to think that it is her impairment that segregates her from other characters, thereby forcing her to hide her defect. O’Dell (2007) informs that though the readers have not been sure about the indifferences shown by Franklin towards Rosanna have either been due to her lower status or deformity, it has been clear that she thinks it has been her impairment that has been discriminating her, where besides hiding herself in the shrubbery and her shawl, her deformity remains explicit (p. 50). “There was certainly no beauty about her to make the others envious; she was the plainest woman in the house, with the additional misfortune of having one shoulder bigger than the other... there she was, in her little straw bonnet, and her plain grey cloak that she always wore to hide her deformed shoulder as much as might be” (Collins, 2017, pp. 427-452).

Similar to Rosanna, in “*Recitatif*”, since Maggie is a disabled woman, she has been brutally described and continuously teased for her appearance by the orphanage girls. Concerning this comment, Raengo (2013) states that Maggie in “*Recitatif*” is the mute and probably the deaf kitchen woman, who is short like a kid and has been wearing a funny hat which has been hated by the girls like how they despise her. He utters that Twyla describes Maggie’s legs are like semicircles which have been very short for her to rely on when catching the bus. He also argues that she has not been given a visual description of her race, but has been only depicted with joints and disjoints (p. 7). “Maggie couldn’t talk. The kids said she had her tongue cut out, but I think she was born that way: mute... I just remember her legs like parentheses and how she rocked when she walked... “She wore this really stupid little hat—a kid’s hat with earflaps—and she wasn’t much taller than we were”” (Morrison, 1983, p. 32).

D. *The Negligence in the Projection of Race and Character*

Generally, the readers have been unaware of the racial code of the disabled female character when reading a novel or a short story. In “*Recitatif*”, the skin colour of Maggie is not revealed until the end of the short story, which makes the readers get confused with her complexion throughout the narration. Murphy (2011) vocalises that Twyla and Roberta try to recall the race of Maggie, but the readers have been trying to determine the race of the girls and not of Maggie (p. 63); which thereby results in the race of Maggie remaining undetermined. Constructed as an unknowable structure of

race, Collier (2019) states that Twyla has been able to recall only a little about the character of Maggie; where she insists that Maggie's legs have been like parenthesis, who generally has to rock when she has to walk. She mentions that Twyla describes Maggie's body parts are mirroring the empty branches in the apple orchard, where she has been compared to the bigger woman in fairy tales (p. 55). In parallel to this statement, Rennie (2022) utters that Twyla has given the physical description of Maggie, who has not known anything about her in person; wherein through the narration of Twyla, the readers can get to know Twyla and not much about Maggie (p. 60). "I don't know if she was nice or not" (Morrison, 1983, p. 32).

#### E. *The Inconspicuousness in the Presentation of Identity*

A novel and a short story mostly do not concentrate on exposing the identity of a disabled character, especially when it comes to an impaired female dramatic persona. In *The Moonstone* and "Recitatif", the significance of Rosanna and Maggie is brought out through animate and inanimate objects, rather than exposing them explicitly. The invisibility of specification has been found in the character depiction of Rosanna. Ptacek (2015) says that the readers have not been informed about the private identity of Rosanna (p. 220). Similarly, Gibson (2014) mentions that the distinctiveness of Rosanna is invisible in the shivering sands, in which she ends her life (p. 12). "I think that my grave is waiting for me here... "Do you know what it looks like to ME?" says Rosanna... "It looks as if it had hundreds of suffocating people under it--all struggling to get to the surface, and all sinking lower and lower in the dreadful deeps!" (Collins, 2017, pp. 480-494).

This anonymity of identity has also been mirrored in "Recitatif"; wherein Monzón (2017) says that Twyla and Roberta have been seeing their dancing and sick mothers in Maggie, and have been projecting their childhood traumas in Maggie (p. 7). In the same manner, Kolehmainen (2011) voices out that Twyla and Roberta consider Maggie as resemblances of their mothers which informs the readers that Maggie is a surrogate body, whose self is invisible; where her primary importance in the text is to aid the girls to uncover their identities (p. 48). Çelikkol (2015) argues that the position of Maggie within the symbolic worlds of the girls reveals that Maggie has been the deposit of the girls' apprehensions of their mothers, their subject positions and the trigger of anger (p. 179). "Maggie was my dancing mother... She'd been brought up in an institution like my mother was and like I thought I would be too" (Morrison, 1983, pp. 49-51). Thus, the identities and the self of both Rosanna and Maggie have been overshadowed by the shivering sands and the mothers of the two girls respectively.

#### F. *The Separateness of Female Characters With Impairments*

In prose narratives, the female characters who have been disabled have generally been distanced from the other dramatic personas. Brittain (2004) vocalises that the second fiddle phenomenon of the six pitfalls of disability fiction includes the treatment of a disabled character as an outsider, who has been considered a figure of alienation and social isolation (p. 7).

The isolation of a disabled female character from the others has been witnessed in *The Moonstone*; where Agnew (1999) says that female characters with some deformity who have been from a lower status and who do not possess beauty have usually been isolated and do not have many friends. She puts forth that in novels the disabled characters' friends would also be disabled. She has also said that this has been noticeable in *The Moonstone*, where Rosanna has a real friend Limping Lucy, who has been a disabled female character as well (p. 30). "Visit to some friends of hers at Cobb's Hole. Those friends were the Yollands... Rosanna's acquaintance with them had begun by means of the daughter, who was afflicted with a misshapen foot, and who was known in our parts by the name of Limping Lucy. The two deformed girls had, I suppose, a kind of fellow-feeling for each other" (Collins, 2017, pp. 2254-2256).

Švegar (2018) also avers that despite being the underdog of *The Moonstone*, due to her past life, Rosanna has been deformed with one shoulder bigger than the other and has been an outcast to society (p. 19). "A heartbreaking sensation of loneliness kept with me... Somehow, I couldn't make friends with them" (Collins, 2017, pp. 5640-5641).

Keith (2004) strongly believes that a disabled character is a classic outsider, which aids the writer toward many possibilities to picturise the individual; and she insists that a teenager who is disabled in fiction is left alone by the rest of the characters (p. 5). This is seen in the "Recitatif", where Maggie has been discriminated against and has been distanced from the orphanage girls because of her deformity.

Vattöy (2020) stresses that Maggie has been inferior to the girls in the orphanage since she has been mute, old and a person of colour; and she brings out that these descriptions of Maggie reveal to the readers that she has been a suspended woman due to her social vulnerability (p. 22). Likewise, Rennie (2022) mentions that Twyla has reassured the readers that Maggie has most probably been mute, where there have been scandals that Maggie's tongue has been cut off thus making her an outsider (p. 61).

In addition to these, Adams (2012) states that Maggie has been looked at by the girls as a marginalised woman, who has been racially alienated as they think she is different from them (p. 146). Adie Nelson and Veronica Nelson (2016) thus argue that more than the male dramatic personas, the female disabled characters have been depicted as other (p. 93).

#### G. *The Evil Representation and Target of Prejudice*

The female character with a disability has been sketched as evil, sinister, prejudiced and a target of judgement. Beauchamp et al. (2009) argue that disabled characters have been portrayed as evils or monsters in literary works from

children's stories to adult novels and even in plays (p. 3). Keith (2004) informs that a disabled teenager has been represented in fiction as a victim, or a person who encounters prejudices and judgements (p. 5).

Likewise, Barnes (1992) reports that in media a disabled character has been exhibited as evil and sinister (p. 11); which could be noticeable in fiction as well, wherein Rosanna in *The Moonstone* has been portrayed as a robber. "Rosanna spearman had been a thief... and rob from thousands, instead of only robbing from one, the law laid hold of her, and the prison and the reformatory followed the lead of the law" (Collins, 2017, pp. 414-416). In *The Moonstone*, Rosanna too faces these kinds of differences in the incidences that are followed after the loss of the diamond, as she has been a thief in her past. "the Sergeant requesting that I would give him a room to himself, and then send in the servants (the indoor servants only), one after another... Rosanna Spearman went next. Reminded longer than any of them. No report on coming out--dead silence, and lips as pale as ashes... Rosanna Spearman has stolen the Diamond" (Collins, 2017, pp. 2080-2142).

#### H. *The Recipients of Violence*

The disabled female characters in novels and short stories have been the victims of violence, and have been portrayed and justified as human beings who deserve the violent acts and suffering directed upon them. Similarly, Barnes (1992) puts forth that a disabled person has been an object or victim of violence in the media (p. 10), which has also been seen in prose narratives; where Maggie in "Recitatif" has undergone extreme brutality. "Remember Maggie? The day she fell down and those gar girls laughed at her? "No, Twyla. They knocked her down. Those girls pushed her down and tore her clothes. In the orchard" (Morrison, 1983, pp. 42-43). The mentioned lines from the short story have been projecting how the girls laughed at Maggie due to her defects. Sklar (2011) argues that Maggie has been laughed at by the orphanage girls when she has fallen, which has been a treatment that has been triggered or prompted because of Maggie's appearance or disability or even both (p. 144).

Mizel (2021) states that Maggie's suffering is justified as Twyla thinks the kitchen woman has been disconnected from the rest of the community, which in turn has reinforced the possession of power by Twyla while withholding it from others (p. 14); where the other has been referred to Maggie. "I didn't kick her; I didn't really join in with the gar girls and kick that lady, but I sure did want to. We watched and never tried to help her and never called for help" (Morrison, 1983, p. 49).

#### I. *The Symbol of Pathos and Helplessness*

The disabled female characters have been the deposit of sympathy and pathos, which has been greatly visible in the character of Maggie in the short story "Recitatif". Barnes (1992) states that in media a disabled person has been depicted as pitiable and sympathetic (p. 7); which is apparent in prose narratives as well. Stanley (2011) argues that despite Maggie being older than the girls in the orphanage, the girls consider her as a helpless child (p. 75). "She wore this really stupid little hat—a kid's hat with earflaps—and she wasn't much taller than we were. A really awful little hat. Even for a mute, it was dumb—dressing like a kid and never saying anything a tall" (Morrison, 1983, p. 32).

#### J. *The Denial of Love and Romance*

In prose fiction, a deformed female character is depicted to be isolated from romantic relationships and has been believed to be a desire-free person especially when it comes to love. McLeod (2014) avers that there have been authors who depict disabled characters as asexual, and their illnesses and deficiencies as a barrier to romantic relationships (p. 16). In the same way, Banik (2016) says that disabled characters have not been regarded as human beings, who have feelings or desires like other self-respecting individuals (p. 200).

Rosanna is criticised by the characters in the novel *The Moonstone* when they come to know that she has a liking for Franklin and is in love with him. Prytz (2012) puts forth that though Rosanna has been given the right to be romantically ambitious, her love for Franklin has been considered hopeless (p. 11). Comparably, Branfield (2016) says that despite the novel projecting interest in Rosanna towards Franklin as significant, her love has been considered foolish and hopeless. He adds that Betteridge has described Rosanna's situation as an absurdity (p. 12). "He took about as much notice of her as he took of the cat; it never seemed to occur to him to waste a look on Rosanna's plain face" (Collins, 2017, pp. 1060-1061).

Rijzingen (2015) also states that many characters throughout the novel have been saying that Rosanna's love for Franklin is transgressive because she is both a disabled woman and a person who has been socially beneath him (pp. 50-51). In correspondence to the above statement, O'Dell (2007) stresses that Betteridge further discriminates against Rosanna by defining her love and affection for Franklin as laughable (p. 36). Additionally, Shutt (1990) says that despite sharing similar fundamental traits, Rosanna and Rachel have been polarised in the novel; and Betteridge when conversing with Scuff says that the love of Rosanna for Franklin has been the reflection of complete madness (p. 221). "Rosanna had been mad enough to set her heart on Mr. Franklin Blake" (Collins, 2017, p. 2061).

The abled-bodied characters in prose fiction have been picturised in a manner in which they have been surprised to know that impaired female characters have been in love. Agnew (1999) utters that the novel *The Moonstone* represents how Betteridge has been shocked to witness that Rosanna has been thinking of loving someone, despite her low status, a plain face that is without beauty and her deformity. She adds that, this has also been mirrored in Penalapi's statements, who stresses that a woman like Rosanna with physical disfigurement should not foresee her social position; where like



other characters Rosanna herself has been completely emersed in her social beliefs, thereby believing that their attitudes have been justified (p. 27).

#### The Restriction of Disfigured Female Character's Subjectivity

The disabled female characters in novels and short stories are denied the right to possess personal tastes and emotions. Ptacek (2015) articulates that Rosanna and Lucy, who have also been a disabled female character in the novel *The Moonstone* have been denied the usual subjectivity that the novel grants to the other characters, literally marking these women as abnormal and different due to their physical appearances. He also voices out that the novel reveals Rosanna's subjectivity after her death as it neutralises the text; in which it is clear that Rosanna herself thinks that her tastes and emotions have been different from others (p. 220).

#### K. *The Grounds for the Skepticisms in Storylines*

In novels and short stories, it has been clear that the impaired female characters have been the reason for the twists or confusions to arise, where these characters have been left unacknowledged till the end. Morris (2013) mentions that Morrison in "Recitatif" disrupts the notions of what Twyla and Roberta remember about their reactions to Maggie, which have never been objective and have always been informed by power hierarchy that has been based on race, gender, class and ability (p. 174). In parallel to the above comment, O'Dell (2007) says that in *The Moonstone*, the false detection revolves around the marginalised characters in such a manner that class, race and physical disability become the key signifiers of misleading incriminating evidence (p. 22).

#### L. *An Instrument for the Development of Other Characters*

The impaired female dramatic personas have generally been stagnant characters, who usually do not develop like the others in fiction. Brittain (2004) says in the second fiddle phenomenon of the six pitfalls of disability fiction that disabled characters have not been completely developed, who at times develop for the understanding of themselves and their disability, and merely for the central character as well (p. 7). Similarly, Keith (2004) mentions that the presence of a disabled character in fiction has been to promote the personal development of an abled-bodied character (p. 5). This has been witnessed in the "Recitatif"; where Stanley (2011) mentions that Maggie has been a character who has been fixed throughout the short story and has not been a transformable character like Twyla and Roberta (p. 71).

Banik (2016) vocalises that a disabled character enters a story to serve many purposes as and when the writer thinks, but has always been second fiddle to able-bodied characters unless the work is an autobiography that has been written by a disabled person (p. 198). This discrimination of the disabled character's portrayal has also been noticed in *The Moonstone*; where Nelson (2016) states that sometimes like Rosanna, many characters with grotesque appearances and inferior statuses have been designed to serve the central characters who have been useful tools in the plots (p. 20).

#### M. *The Tragic Fates of Deformed Female Characters*

Generally, a female dramatic persona with a deficiency has an unhappy ending or has been made to die at the end of a fiction. Brittain (2004) remarks in the second fiddle phenomenon of the six pitfalls of disability fiction that an author fails to exhibit a character with an impairment to have a happy and fulfilling life (p. 7). In addition to this, Keith (2004) implies that the death of an abled-bodied character in fictional books for children has been unusual, on the other hand, the death of a disabled or deformed character has been a surprisingly common element (p. 3); which can also be visible in adult's fictions. Apart from these, Banik (2016) avers that in novels and short stories, the tragic fate of the disabled or deformed characters does not bother the readers wherein the readers accept these as poetic or divine justice (p. 200).

The deaths of the fictional disabled female characters have been left unrieved by the others in fiction; where it has been noticeable that Rosanna's death has been forgotten by the major characters in the novel *The Moonstone*. Cirit (2015) avers that the novel *The Moonstone* experiences the first embodiment of loss by the suicide of Rosanna, wherein the death of Rosanna has gone unrieved by the characters and her impact in the novel has also been erased (p. 8).

Nelson (2016) puts forth that like Rosanna sometimes the disabled or deformed female characters have been sacrificed at the end of the story (p. 20). Howarth (2011-2012) foregrounds that the death of Rosanna symbolises the undertreatment of characters belonging to the lower classes; wherein though Rosanna is the central element in the mystery of the disappearance of the moonstone, her experiences exclusively rely on her suicidal letter which explicitly showcases that Rosanna has been a marginalised figure and whose death has been overshadowed by the moonstone (p. 31).

## IV. CONCLUSION

It has been greatly visible that the disabled or deformed female characters in prose fiction from the past till date have been facing numerous differences when comparing them to their male counterparts. Murray (2018) avers that though the disabled characters' presence informs the structure of the narration, the age-old tendency to configure disability to lack, loss, absence, tragedy and problematic individuals has not shown any disappearance; where there are examples in recent fiction too (p. 146). As Fois (2018) strongly puts forth for many decades now, scholars have been propelling writers to address disability in youth narration as it would promote the ideas of inclusion (p. 3).

Young (2020) believes that books about disabled characters erase the intersectional diversities of the disabled

community. He adds that some picture books may have been reinforcing the disability ideologies of segregation by emphasising otherness in the disabled characters, where they have been purposefully portrayed as different and have been isolated from imageries (p. 6). In close relation to the arguments of Young, Adams (2012) states that while the scholars of disability study have merely been working out of strong awareness of and commitment towards feminism, feminists have been neglecting disability, even when being attentive to other forms of differences that have been embodied (p. 4). He also states that intersectionality has never been about the addition of one term to the other, but how the differences define and reinforce one another (p. 6).

It is essential to look into fiction from the positive perspective of both disability and feminism, as it would aid in creating and representing cheerful and successful disabled and deformed female characters in novels and short stories as well. The writer must concentrate on breaking the stereotypes and traditional depictions of a differently abled female character by picturizing her as an exuberant and propitious individual, rather than portraying her as an inferior sex who has been doubly marginalised and depicting her darker side too. Therefore, as Banik (2016) says the negative depiction of disabled characters leaves a strong and everlasting impression in the minds of the readers, even after forgetting the storyline (p. 2). Thus, these stigmas that have been prevailing for centuries in the portrayal of a disabled female character have to undergo the essential change to bring out an optimistic image of the differently abled female sex.

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# Embedding Artificial Intelligent Applications in Higher Educational Institutions to Improve Students' Pronunciation Performance

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**Abstract**—This study investigates the integration of Elsa Speak, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) application, into higher education to enhance the pronunciation skills of English Foreign Language Learners (EFL) at a Jordanian university. Grounded in a comprehensive literature review, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach, utilizing a pre-post-test-controlled group design with a sample of 12 students. The seven-week intervention employing Elsa Speak demonstrates a significant improvement in pronunciation skills, supported by statistical analyses and positive student perceptions gathered through questionnaires. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on AI in education, highlighting the practical impact of such applications on language learning, specifically pronunciation improvement in higher education. The study advocates the continued exploration and strategic integration of AI tools, such as Elsa Speak, into language education practices.

**Index Terms**—pronunciation, performance, improvement

## I. INTRODUCTION

A range of studies have explored the application of Artificial Intelligence in education, with a focus on Latin American higher education (Salas-Pilco, 2022), K-12 education (Murphy, 2019; Zafari, 2022), and international student experiences in higher education (Wang, 2023). These studies have identified various AI applications, including predictive modeling, intelligent analytics, assistive technology, automatic content analysis, and image analytics (Salas-Pilco, 2022), as well as machine learning and intelligent tutoring systems (Zafari, 2022). They have also highlighted the potential of AI to support teachers in addressing classroom challenges (Murphy, 2019) and enhance the educational experiences of international students (Wang, 2023). However, they have raised concerns about privacy, cultural differences, language proficiency, and ethical implications (Wang, 2023).

The use of technology in society presents significant challenges for individuals and institutions worldwide. Artificial Intelligence (AI) stands out as a primary source of these challenges, offering opportunities and advantages, as well as potential drawbacks and disadvantages at various levels. As technology becomes hotter and as they advance faster, these matters arise, showing adaptation to technological developments that are not linear behind technological advancements.

The use of Artificial Intelligence in teaching speaking skills has not been widely discussed, or embarrassed as a stand-alone area. The complex role of English Departments in Higher Education Institutions is at the core to the debate about the effect of Artificial Intelligence on learners' performance and their response to it.

The core of this paper is to investigate students' perspectives on the use and implementation of Artificial Intelligence to improve their speaking skills in academic institutions, such as universities and colleges.

This will be achieved by analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of college-level students through interviews conducted at a Jordanian university by gathering their perspectives through a distributed questionnaire. The research aims to contribute the enrichment of the strategies used by universities in implementing recent technologies in teaching and learning processes. The finding of this study will also contribute to the existing literature in this field. This structure of this study begins with a literature review on the implementation of this modern technology in educational institutions, followed by a discussion of the used methodology used and any limitations. Moreover, after presenting the findings, the results will be presented with a conclusion and recommendations for higher education management.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Artificial Intelligence is becoming more prevalent in higher education, with different potential applications in bespoke learning, intelligent tutoring systems, collaboration facilitation, and automated grading (Crompton, 2021; Diwaker, 2021). However, the integration of AI in higher education also gives rise to the ethical concerns (Crompton, 2021). In the era of AI age, higher education institutions need to adapt to equip students with the necessary skills for the evolving job market, focusing on technical capabilities, industry requirements, and AI literacy (Ma, 2019).

In high school education, Artificial Intelligence is being implemented in areas including machine learning and deep

learning. China has emerged as a significant player and influencer in this field (Triansyah, 2023). Different forms of e-learning technologies have been developed, updated, and used for educational programs. Ministries of education and universities have invested enormous efforts into increasing the use of online learning applications and websites in all their forms to meet the requirements of competitive markets and to bring a variety of e-learning options for students studying foreign languages (Carstens et al., 2021).

Although the use of Artificial Intelligence in higher education is becoming an essential area with recent developments within societies, Artificial Intelligence-based applications and tools have not been widely embedded in the higher education field. This resulted in a lack of sufficient evidence regarding the pedagogical impact of Artificial Intelligence on teaching and learning (O'Dea & O'Dea, 2023).

#### *A. AI Applications in Education*

A range of studies has explored the use of Artificial Intelligence in educational settings, highlighting its potential to enhance learning experiences and improve teaching quality. Jones (1985) and Manhiça (2022) both discuss the development of intelligent computer-assisted instruction systems and learning management systems, with the latter focusing the use of AI for student performance assessment. Panigrahi (2020) and Fahimirad (2018) further emphasize the transformative impact of AI on education, particularly in personalized learning, and the potential for enhancing learning outcomes. However, challenges such as the integration of AI in educational institutions and the need for student support these studies also acknowledged. Overall, these studies suggest that AI has the potential to significantly shape the future of education.

According to Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas (2023), personalized learning is considered one of the essential benefits of consolidating Artificial Intelligence into language learning to provide personalized learning experiences. Learning that is based on the Artificial Intelligence mechanism can give and analyze the learners' performance to adapt the content of learning materials to meet the learners' needs and learning styles. Therefore, Artificial Intelligence in learning process applications found personalized content informatively improves learners' learning outcomes.

#### *B. Pronunciation Improvement*

Research has consistently emphasized the importance of pronunciation in language learning (Seyedabadi, 2015). Targeted pronunciation training, particularly in distance language learning context, has been found to significantly improve learners' perception and production skills (Martin, 2020). Computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT) has also been shown to be effective in improving word-level pronunciation skills, comparable to traditional teacher-led training (Neri, 2008). However, the neglect of English pronunciation in EFL/ESL classrooms, particularly in Asian contexts, has been attributed to the lack of available teaching strategies (Wei, 2006).

It has been stated in the literature that foreign language learners are still incompetent and suffer from weaknesses in oral communication (Al-Shallakh, 2023). Despite spending more than ten years learning English at school levels, learners may still lack the needed skills to master speaking. Personal reasons such as shyness and motivation on the one hand and inadequate teaching approaches employed by teachers may cause these weaknesses' outcomes (Diaab, 2016; Rahimi & Ong, 2023). These factors can contribute to the observed weakness in learners' speaking abilities.

The pandemic of COVID-19 uncovered many failing points in the traditional learning process since traditional learning depended on the physical attendance of the learners in the classroom, while the changed situation forced learners and institutions to work remotely. Therefore, all language-learning prospects have been changed accordingly to meet the learners' needs and improve the learning outcomes (Peng et al., 2023). Tang (2023) argued that investigating students' needs based on the needs theory is considered the basis for choosing the way of covering the gaps and improving the learners' performance based on their needs. This focus of tracking English for Academic Purposes has yielded in positive outcomes in the language domain.

Many studies have been conducted to investigate the learners' experiences in learning and teaching English as a second language. Approximately, the majority of these studies have highlighted the benefits of using technologies and Artificial Intelligence to improve language skills. This variation in the benefits derived from using AI can be attributed to factors such as learners' interests, motivation, and the selection of the appropriate application (Al-Shallakh, 2023; Fu et al., 2023; Liu, 2023).

Shefat (2023) stated that the importance of instructional technology lies in providing opportunities for students to have a variety of these experiences and develop their own. This allows them to think, observe, and understand. Overcoming the challenges of implementing this technology is important. The aim of the study was to examine the evidence of English language learners' use of instructional media and technology in English language teaching at Zerka Secondary School of Education from their perspective and identify the challenges they faced regarding information and education in the use of this technology.

The researcher employed a descriptive research method, and the research sample consisted of 166 teachers. A questionnaire with 23 items was used and distributed across two areas: English language learners use of instructional media and technology, and English language learners' challenges in using instructional media and technology. The results showed that the use of educational media and technology by the English language learners in Zerka Secondary Education Department was moderate, and the challenges they faced in utilizing media and technology functionality were also moderate. The results revealed no differences caused by academic variables (gender, academic level, and

years of experience) in the level of technology and media use or the difficulties English learners faced in implementing this technology. The findings (suggestions and contributions) recommended encouraging English learners to use modern educational technology in teaching.

### *C. Higher Education Context*

A range of studies have explored the application of Artificial Intelligence in higher education, especially focusing on learning management systems (Manhiça, 2022), academic support services, and institutional and administrative services (Ali, 2021). These studies highlight the potential of Artificial Intelligence to enhance education quality, learning and teaching processes, and future career prospects (Slimi, 2021). However, they also emphasize the need for further investigation into the pedagogical, moral, social, cultural, and economic dimensions of Artificial Intelligence in education (Ali, 2021). The challenges and ethical issues associated with the adoption AI in education are also acknowledged (Tahiru, 2021).

Chand (2021) stated that speaking skills are considered a direct indicator of overall proficiency, with fluency as a quality indicator of learning. Many students, both in schools and universities encounter challenges with their fluency in English. He recommended transitioning students from traditional theoretical approach to autonomous learning, allowing for increased individual practice. This can be facilitated with appropriate artificially intelligent applications.

Many studies conducted by Noviyanti (2020), Adityarini (2022), Liu (2016), and Cengiz (2023) collectively demonstrate the potential of AI-based pronunciation applications in improving pronunciation in higher education. Both Noviyanti and Adityarini observed significant improvements in students' pronunciation, with Noviyanti emphasizing the importance real of communication alongside with AI use. Liu's study further supports these findings by showing a significant improvement in pronunciation quality. Cengiz's review emphasizes the importance of teacher support in maximizing the effectiveness of AI-based pronunciation instruction. However, the studies also highlight the need for further research, particularly in non-English languages and across different educational levels.

A range of studies has also explored the use of AI in higher education, particularly in the areas of academic support services, institutional and administrative services, and intelligent tutoring systems (Ali, 2021; Tahiru, 2021). These applications have the potential to revolutionize the educational landscape by offering customized content, innovative teaching methods, and enhanced assessment (Chassignol, 2018). However, the adoption of AI in education presents challenges, including ethical issues and the demand for further investigation into pedagogical, social, and cultural dimensions (Ali, 2021; Tahiru, 2021). Despite these challenges, the potential benefits of AI in education are significant, particularly adaptive learning, online learning processes, human-AI interaction, and the utilization of AI-generated data (Bozkurt, 2021).

The existing literature on AI in education, particularly in higher education, has primarily focused on the opportunities, benefits, and challenges associated with AI adoption (Tahiru, 2021; Ali, 2021; Ahmad, 2020; Zawacki-Richter, 2019). However, there is a lack of research specifically concerning the use of AI for pronunciation improvement in higher education. This gap presents an opportunity for future studies to explore the potential of AI in this field, considering its growing importance in language learning and communication skills development. Such research could also address the need for critical reflection on the risks and challenges of Artificial Intelligence in education, as well as its ethical and pedagogical dimensions (Ali, 2021; Zawacki-Richter, 2019).

The use of Artificial Intelligence in higher education field, particularly for personalized learning and language improvement, has been widely extensively explored in literature (Ali, 2021; Lydia, 2023; Tahiru, 2021; Chen, 2021). AI applications in higher education have been found to be beneficial in areas such as academic support services, institutional and administrative services, and language learning (Ali, 2021; Lydia, 2023; Tahiru, 2021; Chen, 2021). However, the adoption of AI in education also presents four challenges, including issues related to privacy, data security, bias, and ethics (Lydia, 2023; Tahiru, 2021). Despite these challenges, students have demonstrated a positive behavioral intention to utilized AI for language learning in higher education (Chen, 2021). These findings suggest that while there are opportunities for the use of AI in higher education, careful consideration of ethical and practical implications is necessary.

The use of AI in education, particularly in higher education, has been a topic of extensive research and discussion. Zhai (2021) and Ahmad (2020) highlight the potential of AI in various educational applications, including grading, retention prediction, and intelligent tutoring. Zekaj (2023) further emphasizes the potential of AI language models to enhance instructional support, while Shrugare (2022) underscores the transformative impact of AI on teaching and learning. However, the specific application of AI to pronunciation improvement in higher education is an area that requires further investigation. The potential benefits of AI in this context, such as personalized learning experiences and improved language instruction, make it a promising area for future research.

The speaking proficiency of English learners offer poses significant challenge. This paper aims to investigate the effectiveness of Elsa Speak, an artificial intelligent application in improving the pronunciation skills of English Foreign Language Learners in Jordan. The artificial intelligence applications, such as Elsa Speak, can help the learners learn autonomously, and they provide the learners with real-time feedback on their pronunciation, which allows them to practice repeatedly many times and enhance their pronunciation skills.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the productiveness of the Elsa Speak tool as a functional tool in enhancing the pronunciation skills of English as Foreign Language learners in Jordan. By testing the potential cons and

challenges associated with integrating Elsa Speak into classrooms. This paper is also looking forward to contributing to the growing body of recent knowledge on the application of Artificial Intelligence-based technologies in language learners.

Therefore, the main purpose of this study is two-fold. Firstly, it aims to investigate the effect and impact of Elsa Speak on the pronunciation skills of a group of learners in Jordan. Secondly, it aims to explore the learners' perceptions of using an artificial intelligence mobile learning platform like Elsa Speak. By examining both quantitative and qualitative aspects of learners' experiences, the researcher of this study hopes to gain insights into how Elsa Speak can be used to improve pronunciation and facilitate learning autonomously among Jordanian learners.

The expected findings of this research are expected to provide valued insights to educators, content makers, and other researchers interested in integration artificial intelligence and recent distant learning technologies to support foreign languages learning and pronunciation instructions. Eventually, merging artificial intelligence platforms such as Elsa Speak has the potential to revolutionize foreign language learners in Jordan.

Therefore, this paper hopes to answer the following research questions:

- 1- To what extent does Elsa Speak improve pronunciation skills in terms of comprehensibility and intelligibility in spoken English?
- 2- What are Jordanian learners' perceptions toward the effectiveness of the Elsa Speak application in enhancing their pronunciation skills?

### III. METHODOLOGY

This experimental study aimed to examine whether the use of an application called Elsa Speak can enhance pronunciation skills and performance of Jordanian learners. To measure and evaluate learners' progress, a pre-post-tests controlled group design was applied to assess the comprehensibility and intelligibility of Jordanian learners' pronunciation of the English language.

#### **Sample and Setting of the Study.**

The current study's sample consisted of 12 students at the university still in the first academic year of 2023-2024. The students were majoring English language and literature program. The learners' language proficiency levels were approximately equal, they as were not allowed to enroll in the English department unless they pass the entrance exam with acceptable language competence. Additionally, they were not allowed to register for speaking courses unless their GPA was above 2.0. The pretest mean score was considered an important factor, which reflects that both groups did not significantly differ in terms of their English competence.

#### **Instrument of the Research.**

##### *A. Tests*

This research employs an experimental design that demonstrates the cause-and-effect relationship. In other words, it is applied in research to find the influence of one variable on another variable. Pre-test, treatment, and Post-tests were the methods used for collecting data from the participants. The procedures started at the beginning of the first academic semester. All participants' pronunciation skills were initially assessed by a pre-test to be the control point to measure the learners' performance progress at the endpoint of the research.

The students studied a seven-week period as a defined period to measure their performance in speaking and pronunciation skills and evaluate their engagement in the programs after getting the treatment. The post-test was conducted using Elsa Speak technology to measure their performance. The same lecturer conducted both assessments.

##### *B. Questionnaire*

The students' perceptions were collected through a questionnaire, which served as an effective tool for gathering learners' perceptions after they had utilized the Elsa Speak application to enhance their pronunciation skills within the proposed process. This questionnaire was answered by the students after applying the treatment. The questionnaire is a closed one that was answered by the same students. The questionnaire contains four options labeled strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree, and they are numbered from 4 to 1 accordingly. It is used gather data in-depth data about the effectiveness of the application in improving the learners' pronunciation mastery.

### IV. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS.

The researcher chose learners from the English Department at Amman Al-Ahliyya University. The sample included all students who had studied a course called Listening and Conversation.

Before beginning the classes, the researcher introduced the project objectives. Then, the researcher emphasized the importance of motivation for achieving the program's objectives. All the students took a pre-test to measure their pronunciation competence.

The researcher met with the learners for five weeks. During the first week, phonetic symbols were introduced to the learners along with their methods of production. In the second week, the researcher introduced the first group of diphthongs to the learners and instructed them to repeat them multiple times after hearing these diphthongs from an educated native speaker. The third week, the researcher applied the second group of diphthongs to be, as the second



week. In the fourth and fifth weeks, the researcher gave learners were given an access to Elsa Speak to apply and practice the same diphthongs. Learners autonomously at home also used this application to provide them with additional practice time for the diphthongs they learned in the classroom. Finally, learners were asked to practice what they had learned in front of the class.

After the applied treatment, a post-test was administered to the same learners. It contains 30 items about the learned diphthongs. The aim of this test was to determine if the students' pronunciation performance improved after applying the Elsa Speak application. The results of both tests then were computed to measure their performances.

Implementing the questionnaire is the last step after conducting the post-test, which is used to gain students' responses about the use of the Elsa Speak Artificial Intelligence application to enhance their pronunciation competence. A questionnaire was formed, including ten questions, and the answers were collected for analysis.

The results of both the tests and the questionnaire were analyzed and tabulated for further analysis.

## V. DATA ANALYSIS

After conducting the tests, the findings were used to determine the significance of differences between the two tests. The learners were labeled with the letters 'ST' followed by numbers ranging from one to 12, as presented in the class. The measurement of learners' pronunciation criteria was defined as follows:

TABLE 1  
PRONUNCIATION MEASUREMENT

Category	Range	Assessment Criteria
Excellent	86-100	The students' got 25 to 30 correct answers
Good	71-85	The students' got 22 to 24 correct answers
Average	56-70	The students' got 16 to 21 correct answers
Poor	Equal or less than 55	The students' got 1 to 15 correct answers

Based on the results of the tests, students' scores were categorized according to interpretation criteria, as presented in the table below:

TABLE 2  
STUDENTS' CLASSIFICATION SCORE FOR THE TESTS

Classification	Score Range	Ability Scale
Excellent	86-100	4
Good	71-85	3
Average	56-70	2
Poor	Equal or less than 55	1

The students' pronunciation test answers were calculated using the following equation:

Score=student's correct answers / total point X100

After conducting the treatment and tests, the researcher utilized SPSS for calculating the learners' pronunciation mastery by determining the mean score of the learners' pronunciation tests. The Likert scale was employed as a tool to evaluate the ratings and scoring criteria of the questionnaire, as outlined below:

TABLE 3  
LIKERT SCALE

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4	3	2	1

TABLE 4  
THE SCORE CRITERIA

Criteria	Score	Interpretation
Good	3.51 - 4.00	Most students strongly agree with the statement.
Quite Good	2.51 - 3.50	Most students agree with the statement.
Less Good	1.51-2.50	Most students disagree with the statement.
Not Good	00-1.50	Most students strongly disagree with the statement.

The data collected from the questionnaire were computed and analyzed using the following formula to compute the respondents.

$$\text{Mean} \rightarrow X = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

X= Average  
 $\sum X$  = Total Answer  
 N= Total question

Two-sample t-tests were employed to compare independent tests. The mean scores on the students' pronunciation tests and their standard deviations were used to investigate whether there was a significant difference between the tests. The researcher used version twenty-five of SPSS to analyze the collected data, with a significance level set at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

To interpret the collected data, the researcher formulated two hypotheses to determine and measure the significance of the study. First, the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>), which states that there is no significant difference between the tests means. Second, the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>), which suggests that there is a significant difference between means of the tests.

## VI. FINDINGS

In the pre-test, the researcher computed the learners' correct answers to analyze their understanding of pronunciation. As stated earlier, SPSS was used to statistically compute the results of tests. Table 3 presents the learners' scores on the pretests along with their corresponding classifications.

TABLE 5  
PRE-TEST STUDENTS' SCORES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Students	Score	Classification
ST 1	32	Poor
ST 2	45	Poor
ST 3	59	Average
ST 4	23	Poor
ST 5	12	Poor
ST 6	24	Poor
ST 7	32	Poor
ST 8	22	Poor
ST 9	13	Poor
ST 10	24	Poor
ST 11	23	Poor
ST 12	64	Average

The previous table showed that only two students achieved an 'Average' score, whereas the remaining ten students' results were classified as 'Poor'. None of the students obtained a 'Good' or 'Excellent' results on the same test.

After statistically applying the previous scores using SPSS, the results of the students can be seen as shown in the table below:

TABLE 6  
PRE-TEST STUDENTS' SCORES STATISTICS

Type of Test	N	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Test	12	12	64	31.01	15.976	4.611

Based on the data in the previous table, the number of students who took the pre-test was 12. The highest score was 64, while the lowest score was 12. The mean score was 31.01, with a standard deviation of 15.976.

In the post-test, the students' results were calculated using the same method as in the pre-test. The results are presented the results below:

TABLE 7  
POST-TEST STUDENTS' SCORES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Students	Score	Classification
ST 1	45	Poor
ST 2	73	Good
ST 3	87	Excellent
ST 4	46	Poor
ST 5	44	Poor
ST 6	60	Average
ST 7	72	Good
ST 8	55	Average
ST 9	24	Poor
ST 10	57	Average
ST 11	66	Average
ST 12	92	Excellent

The previous table shows students' scores after receiving treatment. Two students scored 'Excellent' scores, while another two students also scored 'Good' grades, while four students scored in the 'Average' range, and another four students scored 'Poor'.

The researcher statistically analyzed the students' post-tests scores using the same program employed for the pre-test. The results are as follows:

TABLE 8  
POST-TEST STUDENTS' SCORES STATISTICS

Type of Test	N	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-Test	12	24	92	63.75	18.504	5.341

As stated earlier, two sample t-tests were utilized to compare the mean of the independent tests.

TABLE 9  
THE PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST

Type of Test	N	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Test	12	12	64	31.08	16.6867	4.817
Post-Test	12	24	92	60.08	19.3271	5.5793

The previous table shows a paired sample t-test. The table shows data for 12 students who took both pre- and post-tests. The mean score for the pre- and post-tests were 31.01 and 63.75, respectively. Additionally, standard deviations for both tests were reported as 15.976 and 18.504. Finally, the standard error of the mean for the pre-test was 4.611, while it was 5.341 for the post-test.

TABLE 10  
THE PAIRED SAMPLE CORRELATION

Tests	N	Correlation	Sig.	p-value
Pre-test & Post-test	12	0.8662	0.333	0.00026

The correlation coefficient represented in the analysis is 0.866, indicating a strong positive correlation between the variables. The significance score of 0.422 suggests that there is no significant correlation between the variables. However, the p-value of 0.00026 indicates that the correlation is statistically significant, suggesting that the observed calculation is unlikely to have occurred by chances.

TABLE 11  
THE PAIRED SAMPLE TEST

Descriptive Statistics						
	Mean	Standard Deviation	n	Standard Error		Standard Error of Dif.
Group A	31.0833	16.6867	12	4.817		7.3710
Group B	60.0833	19.3271	12	5.5793		
Independent Samples t-Test						
t-Statistic	-3.9343					<b>Result</b>
Degrees of Freedom	22					Reject the null hypothesis.
Critical Value	2.0739					<b>Conclusion</b>
95% Confidence Interval	[12.2542, 45.7458]					The first group is significantly different from the second Group, $t(22) = -3.9343$ , $p < .05$ . There are 95% confident that the mean difference lies between 12.2542 and 45.7458.

The previous table shows the paired sample scores. The calculated (T-value) count is  $-3.9343$ , which falls below the degree of freedom (df) value of 22, and the t-critical value is  $-3.93$ , which is less than the p-value. This critical t-value from the table for corresponding degrees of freedom (df) of 22 leads to the rejection of Null Hypothesis (H0) and acceptance the Alternative Hypothesis (H1). This indicates that the use of the application Elsa Speak is effective in improving students' pronunciation mastery at the college level.

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the class after completing the treatment and post-test. Professional experts in the field, receiving an evaluation score of 3.6, indicating reliability of effectiveness, validated the questionnaire. The main purpose of using the questionnaire was to obtain in-depth knowledge about the use of Elsa Speak from the students' perspectives. The collected data from the questionnaire are as follows:

TABLE 12  
QUESTIONNAIRES' EVALUATION

Respondent No.	Responses' Mean	Category
1	3.21	Quite Good
2	3.60	good
3	3.64	good
4	3.22	Quite Good
5	2.88	Quite Good
6	3.43	Quite good
7	3.42	Quite Good
8	2.50	Less Good
9	2.12	Less Good
10	3.34	Quite Good
11	3.47	Quite Good
12	3.49	Quite Good
Total Average Mean	3.10	Quite Good

The previous table indicates that the students' average mean score of the students is 3.10, which is categorized quite good. This refers to students' agreeing with their statements presented in the questionnaire. It is also a clear indicator that the use of the Elsa Speak application enhances learners' performance in speaking and pronunciation. The results confirm that the learners' agreement regarding the use of Elsa Speak is acceptable and satisfactory in terms of helping them improving their speaking and pronunciation skills.

## VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the collected and computed results from the experimental session using the Artificial Intelligence application Elsa Speak to analyze the learners' performance mastery, there were notable positive differences in the post-tests results following conducting the treatment process. This positive improvement is obvious from the increase in the mean score from the pre-test score, which was 31.08, to the post-test mean score of 60.80. This indicates that the Artificial Intelligence application, Elsa Speak, achieved a significant improvement, as the post-test mean score was better than the pre-test mean score.

This research shows the effectiveness of the Artificial Intelligence Application Elsa Speak in mastering students' pronunciation performance, as indicated by the statistical score results. The data collected from SPSS and presented in the previous tables showed a significance value of  $-3.93$  for the t-tailed computation, which was greater than the standard significance level of 0.05. ( $-3.93 < 0.05$ ) This result directs the research to accept the alternative hypothesis and rejects null hypothesis indicating a significant difference in student's pronunciation mastery.

Our study seamlessly aligns with the prevailing literature on AI applications in education, particularly on the context of language learning and pronunciation improvement. Drawing from the rich tapestry of studies conducted by Salas-Pilco (2022), Murphy (2019), Zafari (2022), and Wang (2023), our research further contributes to the discourse by delving into the nuanced realm of AI's role in higher education, specifically focusing on pronunciation enhancement using Elsa Speak.

Indeed, Elsa Speak emerges as a corroborative example of the transformative potential of AI applications in an educational context. As highlighted in studies by Crompton (2021), Diwaker (2021), and Ma (2019), our findings affirm that AI, as exemplified by Elsa Speak, is not merely theoretical but yields tangible improvements in personalized language learning experiences, particularly in the domain of pronunciation.

Our study underscores the persistent importance of pronunciation in language acquisition, echoing the sentiments expressed by Seyedabadi (2015), Martin (2020), Shdefat (2023) and Neri (2008). By focusing on pronunciation in the context of higher education, the research responds to the challenges identified in the literature, particularly the neglect of pronunciation in ESL/EFL classrooms, as noted by Wei (2006). The research aims to contribute to the existing knowledge by shedding the light on the importance of pronunciation and offering insights into how AI applications like Elsa Speak can effectively address this area of language learning.

In addressing the specific needs of higher education, our study contributes to the ongoing dialogue initiated by Manhiça (2022), Ali (2021), and Slimi (2021). While acknowledging the potential benefits of AI in higher education, our research offers practical insights into the integration of Elsa Speak, shedding light on its efficacy in improving pronunciation skills at university level.

Methodologically, our study aligns with the rigorous approaches advocated by Jones (1985), Panigrahi (2020), and Ayala-Pazmiño (2023). The amalgamation of quantitative assessments through statistical analyses, including paired sample t-tests, with qualitative feedback from questionnaires reflects a methodological strength that resonates with broader literature on AI in education.

### Limitations and Future Research:

Transparently acknowledging the limitations, akin to Noviyanti (2020) and Cengiz (2023), adds nuance to our study. Future research endeavors, building on the foundation laid by our study, should explore larger and more diverse samples to enhance generalizability, as suggested by Liu (2016) and Adityarini (2022). The implications of our findings extend beyond the confines of our study, echoing the sentiments expressed by Ali (2021), Tahiru (2021), and Bozkurt

(2021). We recommend the strategic integration of AI applications such as Elsa Speak into language education programs, in alignment with the evolving landscape of technology in education.

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# Understanding EFL Students' Processing of Idiomatic Expressions Out of Context: Insights Gained From Think-Alouds

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**Abstract**—The current study examines how EFL students confront the difficulty of comprehending English idioms without supportive context. It aims to study the online processing strategies Saudi EFL learners employ when giving the meaning of English idioms. The Idiom Recognition Test (IRT) and Think-aloud protocol were used to vary and measure the idiom's difficulty and to analyze the processing of the idiom immediately after visual perception. Twenty frequently used idioms representing formal and informal English were selected. They were of three types: English idioms, which have identical forms and meanings of Arabic equivalents; English idioms, which have similar forms and meanings of Arabic equivalents; and English idioms, which differ from Arabic idioms. Results showed that most of the participants had difficulty interpreting the English idioms. Moreover, participants most often drew on the literal meaning, using the compositional parts of the idiom. Referring to an L1 idiom was the second most successful strategy but the fourth most often employed out of the six strategies. The third most effective strategy was background knowledge, yet it was the least used overall. Consequently, the results support all the idiom processing models that emphasize the literal meaning over the figurative one.

**Index Terms**—idioms, idiom processing, strategies, idiom comprehension

## I. INTRODUCTION

An idiom is a figurative expression whose meaning cannot always be derived from the meaning of the constituent elements. Because of the non-literal nature of the idiom, it would be difficult to acquire and comprehend it. The figurative meaning is unpredictable, and as Cooper (1999) states, idioms cause language learning problems for learners. English idioms are difficult for native speakers (Gibbs, 1994; Nippold, 1991), and they present problems to L2 learners (Cooper, 1998; Irujo, 1986).

In the field of EFL/ESL, some researchers (e.g., Liontas, 2002) who investigated the issue of L2 idiom processing suggested that EFL learners process idioms literally and then access the figurative interpretation. Others (e.g., Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Siyanova-Chanturia et al., 2011) claimed that L2 learners comprehend idioms by accessing the figurative meaning directly. The idea of reliance on the literal meaning is evident in the dual L2 idiom representation model, which was introduced by Abel (2003) to explain differences between native and nonnative speakers. It combines the lexical and conceptual levels and covers the requirements of the integration of L1 and L2 lexicon.

It is known that the literal and figurative meanings are different when processing idioms for native and nonnative speakers. L2 learners are familiar with the literal meaning of a lexical item before they come across the figurative meaning (Cieślicka, 2006). Therefore, it would be realistic to propose that there is a more salient status for the literal meaning than the figurative meaning. This led to the formulation of the L2 idiom comprehension model (the literal salient resonant model of L2 idioms) by Cieślicka (2004). The model assumes that the idiom constituents' literal meanings are more salient than figurative meanings in decomposable and nondecomposable idiomatic phrases. The reason behind this is that second language learners who receive formal L1 instruction encounter idioms after they become acquainted with the literal meanings of words in idioms, and these literal meanings are set up in their mental lexicons much more than the figurative meanings that were encountered recently. Results of Cieślicka's (2006) study show that "L2 results are much more compatible with general processing predictions of compositional models of idiom processing" (Cieślicka, 2006, p. 134).

Most of the Current research on the issue of idiom recognition by L2 learners has focused on two main issues. They are the effect of L1 on L2 idiom comprehension "L1 transfer" (Irujo, 1986; Arnaul & Savignon, 1997; Liontas, 2001), and strategies that learners use in L2 idiom comprehension (Bulut & Yazici, 2004; Chen, 2004; Hongshan, 2008; Saleh & Zakaria, 2013; Ranong, 2014; Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2016; Alhaysony, 2017; Orfan, 2020; Anjarini & Hatmanto, 2021). Results of Irujo (1986), Arnaul and Savignon (1997), and Liontas (2001) studies showed that the easiest idioms to comprehend and produce are the ones that are identical in L1 and L2 while the different ones in L1 and L2 are the most difficult.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the studies that investigated the strategies used by EFL students used the Idiom Recognition Test and Think-aloud protocol to gather data. The majority found that guessing from the context was the most used strategy by EFL learners. Cooper (1999), Bulut and Yazici (2004), Chen (2004), Ranong (2014), Angarini and Hatmanto (2021), Ta'amneh (2021), Nadeem and Almowalad (2022) examined strategies used by second language learners while processing English idioms from different perspectives.

In an exploratory study, Cooper (1999) investigated the online processing strategies employed by second language learners when processing English idioms. Eighteen nonnative English speakers were given an IRT in which they had to provide orally the meanings of twenty idioms. Think-aloud protocols were used to gather data while participants took the IRT. Results showed that the comprehension strategies of idioms are categorized into two main categories: preparatory strategies and guessing strategies. Preparatory strategies included discussing and analyzing the idiom, requesting information about the idiom, and repeating or paraphrasing the idiom. Guessing strategies included guessing from the context, using the literal meaning, using background knowledge, and referring to an L1 idiom. Results showed that the most used strategy was guessing from the context (28%). The second most used one was discussing and analyzing the idiom (24%). The least used one was Referring to L1 (5%).

Replicating Cooper's study, Bulut and Yazici (2004) examined the underlying processes of nonnative English speakers concerning idiom perception. Eighteen Turkish teachers of English were given an IRT that included 18 English idioms. A think-aloud protocol was used to elicit participants' thoughts. Results showed that the most employed strategy was guessing from the context. Differences between the other strategies were not statistically significant.

To examine EFL idiom comprehension by Chinese learners in the process of reading, and to determine what strategies they adopt, Hongshan (2008) used think-aloud protocols that showed idiom comprehension was easier when the similarity between the English idioms and L1 translation was greater. Several strategies have been used, such as analyzing the idiom, literal translation, and using background knowledge. Hongshan found that L2 learners relied on their L1 to interpret English idioms with direct Chinese equivalents. Therefore, participants have not used L1-related strategies with idioms that have no Chinese equivalents.

Ranong (2014) investigated the strategies Thai-L1 speakers use to comprehend and process English idioms and the factors determining the strategies used. 60 undergraduate Thai students took an IRT to verbalize their thoughts about English idioms shown on a screen. Results of the think-aloud protocol showed that the most frequent strategies were guessing from context, repeating and paraphrasing, using keywords, and using literal meaning, while the least frequent strategies were asking for clarification, using background knowledge, and referring to learners' first language idioms. Ranong (2014) found that learners' proficiency level is related to the score of the correct answers. High-proficient learners had the highest correct answers and used contextual information and background knowledge strategies, while low-proficient learners had the lowest scores and depended on the literal meaning of words.

Al-Khawaldeh et al. (2016) investigated the most helpful and frequently used strategies Jordanian students use to understand idioms. 150 English language learners had a test developed to test their knowledge of idiom expressions and a questionnaire. They found that the most frequent strategy is using context (69%), which is the same result as Cooper's (1999) study. They also found other more frequent strategies, such as similar idioms from L1, literal translation of words, retelling and rephrasing, and figuring out the meaning of individual words. More strategies that were not mentioned in Cooper's study were using different media and reading different kinds of texts.

Alhaysony (2017) conducted a similar study, which employed a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview to collect data. She investigated the strategies used by Saudi EFL students to facilitate understanding of idioms. Eighty-five students at Aljouf University participated in this study. Results of the questionnaire and the interview showed that subjects used a variety of idiom-learning strategies. They confirm the use of context as the most frequently used strategy. The most used strategies were guessing from context, predicting the meaning, and literal translation.

Angarini and Hatmanto (2021) conducted interviews to learn the strategies Indonesian students use to learn English idioms. They state that the first strategy students implement is the use of context. Subjects search the internet, use their first language, and ask others to understand English idioms.

In two similar studies, Ta'amneh (2021) and Nadeem and Almowalad (2022) used a questionnaire to discover the strategies employed by undergraduate Saudi students to learn English idioms. Results of Ta'amneh (2021) showed that the most frequently used strategies were predicting the meaning of the idioms, translating into Arabic, guessing the meaning from the context, using verbal and visual information, and using the dictionary. Nadeem and Almowalad (2022) found that the most used strategies were guessing the meaning from context, learning the idioms outside the classroom, and translating words to L1.

## III. AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aforementioned studies discussed a crucial theoretical consideration of bilingual idiom research and what strategies EFL learners use to understand an idiom's meaning. The current study investigates how EFL learners, such as Saudi students, tackle the problem of comprehending English idioms. It differs from Alhaysony's (2017), Ta'amneh's



(2021), and Nadeem and Almowalad's (2022) studies in that it aims to study the online processing strategies used by Saudi EFL learners of English while giving the meaning of English idioms.

The Idiom Recognition Test is used to measure the idiom's difficulty. Think-aloud protocol, an online measure of comprehension, is used to analyze the processing of the idiom immediately after visual perception. The use of online methodology presupposes that the task is done under time pressure and that results reflect immediate cognitive processes involved in the task (Marinis, 2003). Unlike previous studies, idioms in the current study were presented with no supporting context. The reason behind this was to find out what other strategies EFL learners employ to comprehend English idioms and enrich our understanding of EFL idioms processing.

#### IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- 1- Using the Idiom Recognition Test (IRT), to what extent do idioms differ in difficulty level?
- 2- What strategies do Saudi students employ to apprehend idioms when they are presented out of context?

#### V. METHODOLOGY

##### A. Participants

20 Saudi fourth-year undergraduate students at the Department of English, Umm Al-Qura University, participated in the study. They represent 44.4% of all fourth-year students. They were randomly chosen for the experiment. They are native speakers of Arabic and have been studying in the English department for four years.

##### B. Treatment

20 frequently used idioms were selected with reference to previous L2 idiom processing studies (e.g., Cooper, 1999; Bulut & Yazici, 2004; Al-Khwaldeh et al., 2016; Alhaysony, 2017), and some idiom dictionaries, such as Dictionary of American Idioms (Makki et al., 1995), Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms, and Oxford Dictionary of Idioms (Siefring, 2004). Table 1 shows the selected 20 idioms: 10 represent formal English idioms, and the other 10 represent informal English. Similar to Irujo's (1986) materials, idioms of this study are of three types: English idioms that have identical form and meaning Arabic equivalents (i.e. A drop in the ocean, in Arabic نقطة في بحر), English idioms which have similar form and meaning Arabic equivalents (To get cold feet, in Arabic, تجمدت أطرافه), and English idioms which are different from Arabic idioms (to pass with flying colors). Each idiom was typed on a separate card and was shown to the participants in sequence.

TABLE 1  
IDIOMS USED IN THE EXPERIMENT

Formal	Informal
To see eye to eye	To get into deep water
To roll up one's sleeves	To raise the dust
To tighten his belt	To have a green thumb
To burn the midnight oil	To let the cat out of the bag
To go round the houses	To be a pain in the neck
To reach for the stars	To get cold feet
A drop in the ocean	To be in the soup
To pass with flying colors	To catch some rays
To be the salt of the earth	To cost an arm and a leg
To rub salt into the wound	Off the top of your head

##### C. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Participants were tested individually so that their answers and thoughts would never affect the others' while processing the idioms. First, they were provided with The Idiom Recognition Test (IRT) and were instructed to read the idioms silently. Then, participants were asked to give the meanings of the idioms orally and to express their thoughts on how they recognized them through Think-aloud (TA). The same procedure was followed with each idiom. Think-aloud protocols have been audio-recorded for transcription, coding, and analysis.

With reference to earlier studies about L2 idiom comprehension (Cooper, 1999; Bulut & Yazici, 2004), two phases were used to analyze the data:

1st phase: The participants' definitions of idioms were scored on a scale of three points. One point was given to the wrong answer, two points to a partially correct answer, and three points to a completely correct answer.

2nd phase: Strategies used for idiom comprehension were analyzed and marked. They were divided into two main types:

Preparatory Strategies: strategies that are used to clarify knowledge about the idiom. They included requesting information about the idiom (RI), discussing and analyzing the idiom (DA), and repeating or paraphrasing the idiom (RP).

Guessing Strategies: Strategies that are used to lead to the interpretation of the English idiom include referring to a similar L1 idiom (L1), utilizing the literal meaning (LM), and relying on background knowledge (BK).

## VI. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

TABLE 2  
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

Idiom	M	SD
1. To roll up one's sleeves	2.20	1.005
2. To get into deep water	1.85	0.812
3. To see eye to eye	1.05	0.223
4. To have a green thumb	1.45	0.604
5. To burn the midnight oil	1.40	0.753
6. To let the cat out of the bag	1.55	0.825
7. A drop in the ocean	2.50	0.888
8. To catch some rays	1.35	0.670
9. To reach for the stars	2.60	0.680
10. To raise the dust	1.35	0.587
11. To go round the houses	1.60	0.753
12. To be in the soup	1.85	0.933
13. To be the salt of the earth	1.35	0.587
14. To cost an arm and a leg	1.65	0.875
15. To pass with flying colors	1.15	0.366
16. To be a pain in the neck	2.00	0.973
17. To tighten his belt	2.30	0.864
18. To get cold feet	1.20	0.523
19. To rub salt into the wound	2.25	0.966
20. Off the top of your head	1.35	0.670
Means of item means	1.7	

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for the idioms used based on the definitions given by subjects. The mean score of all idioms was 1.7. The average score ranged between 1.05 *To see eye to eye* to 2.60 *To reach for the stars*. The most difficult idioms for interpretation were *To see eye to eye*, *To pass with flying colors*, and *To get cold feet*. The average score on these idioms was 1.05, 1.15, and 1.20, respectively. The easiest ones to interpret were *To reach for the stars*, *A drop in the ocean*, and *To tighten his belt*. The average score on these idioms was 2.60, 2.50, and 2.30, respectively.

One idiom causing problems for participants was *To see eye to eye*. TA protocols revealed that participants translated the words into Arabic and tried to match them with any Arabic idiom or metaphor. They found it impossible to guess the correct interpretation because it does not have an Arabic equivalent. On the other hand, participants found *To Reach for the Stars* and *A Drop in the Ocean* the easiest, although they had never heard of them before. They indicated they knew them since there were very similar Arabic equivalents.

TABLE 3  
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL IDIOMS BETWEEN FORMAL AND INFORMAL

Formal Idioms	M	SD	Informal Idioms	M	SD
To reach for the stars	2.60	0.680	To be a pain in the neck	2.00	0.973
A drop in the ocean	2.50	0.888	To be in the soup	1.85	0.933
To tighten his belt	2.30	0.864	To get into deep water	1.85	0.812
To rub salt into the wound	2.25	0.966	To cost an arm and a leg	1.65	0.875
To roll up one's sleeves	2.20	1.005	To let the cat out of the bag	1.55	0.825
To go round the houses	1.60	0.753	To have a green thumb	1.45	0.604
To burn the midnight oil	1.40	0.753	Off the top of your head	1.35	0.670
To be the salt of the earth	1.35	0.587	To raise the dust	1.35	0.587
To pass with flying colors	1.15	0.366	To catch some rays	1.35	0.670
To see eye to eye	1.05	0.223	To get cold feet	1.20	0.523
Mean of Formal means	1.84	0.708	Mean of Informal means	1.56	0.747

Table 3 illustrates that only 10% of the means for informal idioms scored as high as 2 (a partially correct answer), while 50% of the means for formal idioms gained 2, and some were close to 3 (for an entirely correct answer). These higher means of partially correct responses on the formal idioms could be related to the idiom being closer to an idiom in the L1.

Of the formal idioms that had a mean score of 2 and above, Table 3 also shows the three highest mean scoring definitions: *To reach for the stars* (2.60), *A drop in the ocean* (2.50), and *To tighten his belt* (2.30), had a most used strategy of referring to the L1 (refer to Table 4, Strategies leading to the correct answers). Whereas the lower two of the

formal idioms drew on the literal meaning: *To rub salt into the wound* (2.25) used both L1 and LM, while *To roll up one's sleeves* (2.20), and the informal idiom, *To be a pain in the neck* (2.0), drew primarily on the LM.

TABLE 4  
FREQUENCY OF STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

Idiom	Strategy						
	Repeating or paraphrasing idiom	Discussing and analyzing idiom	Requesting information	Using literal meaning	Using background knowledge	Referring to L1 idioms	Total of strategies used for each idiom
<b>1. To roll up one's sleeves</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14 (30%)</b>	<b>12 (25%)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>47</b>
2. To get into deep water	5	12	0	25	7	0	49
3. To see eye to eye	12	20	0	12	3	2	49
4. To have a green thumb	12	12	12	8	5	0	49
5. To burn the midnight oil	17	12	5	12	0	2	48
6. To let the cat out of the bag	7	12	0	30 (61%)	0	0	49
<b>7. A drop in the ocean</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7 (10%)</b>	<b>46 (69%)</b>	<b>67</b>
8. To catch some rays	12	12	17	8	0	0	49
<b>9. To reach for the stars</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15 (35%)</b>	<b>18 (42%)</b>	<b>43</b>
10. To raise the dust	12	3	3	19	8	4	49
11. To go round the houses	5	12	0	21	5	6	49
12. To be in the soup	7	7	3	20	13	0	50
13. To be the salt of the earth	12	10	0	23	4	0	49
14. To cost an arm and a leg	20	5	7	18	0	0	50
15. To pass with flying colors	32 (67%)	7	0	9	0	0	48
<u>16. To be a pain in the neck</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>22 (48%)</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>46</u>
<b>17. To tighten his belt</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>48</b>
18. To get cold feet	17	15	0	10	2	3	47
<b>19. To rub salt into the wound</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>46</b>
20. Off the top of your head	12	15	0	16	5	0	48
Total	204	180	105	287	91	113	980
% of all uses	20.8	18.4	10.7	29.3	9.3	11.5	

- Total strategy uses on all items = 980
- Formal idioms with a result 2 or higher on the IRT (bold)
- Informal idioms with a result of 2 or higher on the IRT (underlined)

TABLE 5  
STRATEGIES BY FREQUENCY OF USE

Strategies	N	Total	Mean	Std. Deviation	% of all uses
1 Using literal meaning	20	287	14.35	7.541	29.3
2 Repeating or paraphrasing idiom	20	204	10.20	7.571	20.8
3 Discussing and analyzing idiom	20	180	9	4.952	18.4
4 Referring to L1 idioms	20	113	5.65	10.757	11.5
5 Requesting information	20	105	5.25	6.584	10.7
6 Using background knowledge	20	91	4.55	4.110	9.3

Tables 4 and Table 5 show a rank ordering of strategies employed by participants in descending order. They illustrate that the most frequently employed and predominant strategy was (using the literal meaning). It has been used 287 times with a mean of (14.35) and a percentage of (29.3%). It was followed by (repeating or paraphrasing the idiom) which was used 204 times with a mean of (10.20) and a percentage of (20.8 %). Discussing and analyzing the idiom was used 180 times with a mean of (9) and a percentage of (18.4 %). They were followed by referring to an L1 idiom (11.5 %), requesting information (10.7 %), and using background knowledge (9.3 %). Literary meanings and repeating or paraphrasing idioms were employed more frequently than others. They represent about 50% of the strategies employed by learners

TABLE 6  
STRATEGIES LEADING TO THE CORRECT ANSWERS

Idiom	Participant																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1. To roll up one's sleeve	LM	LM		LM	LM	L1	LM	LM		LM	BK		LM	LM						L1
2. To get into deep water		LM			LM					LM	LM									BK
3. To see eye to eye																				
4. To have a green thumb	BK																			
5. To burn the midnight oil	L1					LM									LM					
6. To let the cat out of the bag					LM				LM	LM			LM							
7. A drop in the ocean	L1	L1	L1	BK	L1	L1			L1	L1	BK	L1		L1	BK			L1		L1
8. To catch some rays					LM			LM												LM
9. To reach for the stars	L1	L1		L1	LM	L1	L1	L1	L1	BK		BK		BK	L1	BK	L1			LM
10. To raise the dust										L1										
11. To go round the houses							BK						LM					L1		
12. To be in the soup		LM							BK		LM		LM				BK		LM	BK
13. To be the salt of the earth																	BK			
14. To cost an arm and a leg				LM							LM			LM						LM
15. To pass with flying colors																				
16. To be a pain in the neck		LM			L1	LM		LM	LM		BK	LM	BK							LM
17. To tighten his belt	L1	L1	L1		BK		L1	LM		L1		L1		LM	LM					BK
18. To get cold feet	BK																			
19. To rub salt into the wound	LM	L1		L1	L1	LM		BK				LM	L1	LM	BK	LM		L1		
20. Off the top of your head														LM	LM					

TABLE 7  
FREQUENCY OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

Strategies	Total	% of all uses
1 Using literal meaning	52	46.5%
2 Referring to an L1 idiom	38	33.9%
3 Using background knowledge	22	19.6%
Total	112	100%

Table 6 and Table 7 show participants' strategies to interpret the idioms successfully and the frequency of effective strategies, respectively. Of the 400 items (20 idioms x 20 participants), 112 (representing 28%) were interpreted and comprehended correctly. This low number indicates the difficulty participants had in processing English idioms. The strategies that led to correct interpretations were: using the literal meaning (52 answers, 46.5%), referring to an L1 idiom (38 answers, 33.9%), and using background knowledge (22 answers, 19.6%). The following table shows whether the differences between the strategies used by subjects are statistically significant.

TABLE 8  
LSD MULTIPLE COMPARISONS MATRIX

		Using literal meaning	Repeating or paraphrasing idiom	Discussing and analyzing idiom	Referring to L1 idioms	Requesting information	Using background knowledge
Using literal meaning	Mean Difference (I-J)	0	4.15	5.35 <sup>*</sup> Sig.	8.70 <sup>*</sup> Sig.	9.10 <sup>*</sup> Sig.	9.80 <sup>*</sup> Sig.
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.073	.021	.000	.000	.000
Repeating or paraphrasing idiom	Mean Difference (I-J)		0	1.20	4.55 <sup>*</sup> Sig.	4.95 <sup>*</sup> Sig.	5.65 <sup>*</sup> Sig.
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.601	.049	.033	.015
Discussing and analyzing idiom	Mean Difference (I-J)			0	3.35	3.75	4.45
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.146	.104	.054
Referring to L1 idioms	Mean Difference (I-J)				0	.40	1.10
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.862	.632
Requesting information	Mean Difference (I-J)					0	.70
	Sig. (2-tailed)						.760
Using background knowledge	Mean Difference (I-J)						0

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level. ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ), N=20

Table 8 shows that the difference between the two most frequently employed strategies (using literal meaning and repeating or paraphrasing the idiom) is not statistically significant. This is due to the slight difference between their means (14.35 vs. 10.2). There are statistically significant differences between using literal meaning and discussing and analyzing idioms, referring to L1 idioms, requesting information, and using background knowledge.

The difference between repeating or paraphrasing idioms and discussing and analyzing idioms is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.60$ ), but the differences between repeating or paraphrasing idioms and referring to L1 idioms, requesting information, and using background knowledge are statistically significant ( $p=0.049$ ,  $p=0.033$ ,  $p = 0.015$ , respectively). Here are no significant differences between the least frequently employed strategies.

VII. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the online idiom comprehension processes employed by Saudi EFL learners. The first research question examined to what extent idioms varied in difficulty as they were measured by (IRT). The means from

the list of formal idioms suggest they were produced with greater accuracy, but there is a slight variance between the overall formal and informal mean.

The mean of the formal and informal idioms (1.7) indicates that learners' interpretations were not even partially correct. These low results revealed that most participants had difficulty interpreting the English idioms. Apart from a few, most English idioms caused problems for Saudi EFL learners. This result is consistent with (Cieślicka, 2006; Wu, 2003). This is because English idioms are not presented early on to EFL learners. Hence, the literal meanings of an idiom's constituents are more salient when compared to the figurative meanings. Furthermore, a lack of context prevented them from using a heuristic approach (Cieślicka, 2006). The strategies of using literal meanings and referring to similar L1 idioms may have also resulted in negative transfer (Iroju, 1986) and context guessing (Arnaud & Sauvignon, 1997).

The second research question examined other strategies Saudi students employ to comprehend English idioms. The results showed they most often drew on the literal meaning, thus using the compositional parts of the idiom. However, using the literal meaning only sometimes offered success in comprehending the idiom. This could reflect context guessing and, or negative transfer. Referring to an L1 idiom was the second most successful strategy but the fourth most often employed out of the six strategies. This strategy was also the most used accurate strategy in correlation to the highest mean scores. The third most effective strategy was background knowledge, yet it was the least used overall. These strategies were more frequently used in similar studies, such as those of Al-Kawaldeh et al. (2016) and Alhaysoni (2017).

The present study confirms that Saudi EFL learners quickly comprehended and interpreted English idioms with similar Arabic equivalents. English idioms without Arabic equivalents were the most difficult. This result was expected and confirms earlier studies that examined idiom similarity in L1 and L2, such as Iroju (1986), Liontas (2001), and Honshan (2008). Saudi EFL learners relied on their L1 to interpret the L2 idiom. Without the supporting context of a similar idiom between L1 and L2, the accuracy of literal interpretations was less successful.

This study's absence of an intended supportive context helped provide crucial information on other online processing strategies Saudi EFL learners employ when comprehending and interpreting English idioms. This study shows how learners relied on the literal meanings of the idiom's constituents. Those meanings have a high priming effect caused by the absence of the context. The figurative meaning, on the other hand, requires the presence of the context to be activated. This observation is in line with the findings of Colombo (1993), Cooper (1999), and Wu (2003), Bulut and Yazici (2004). It also shows that relying on L1 is the least used strategy according to Cooper (1999) and Bulut and Yazici (2004) studies.

The results of this study should be interpreted with or against models of idiom comprehension. It is very clear that the results showed a variety of strategies employed by the participants. The three non-compositional models are too limited to account for these strategies since the idiom-list and the lexical representation hypotheses' ideas reflect the strategy of using background knowledge (Cooper, 1999). The third model, the direct access model, downgrades the literal meanings. Thus, the L1 models of idiom comprehension are incapable of accounting for all the strategies employed by the learners. The results are compatible with some of the compositional models. The results support all the models that emphasize the literal meaning over the figurative one. EFL learners, including this study's subjects, lack metaphorical competence in L2 and, therefore, rely on the literal meaning and their L1 conceptual system (Kecskés, 2000). While the Phrase-Induced Polysemy Model (Glucksberg, 1993) extends beyond the idiom's constituents from either literal or figurative to polysemous, the Graded Salience Hypothesis (Giora, 2002) draws on direct access to the salient meaning, outside figurative or literal constituents, doing so through familiarity and frequency. The relevance of either of these positions accounts only for the L1. The L2 learner, with less exposure to the L2 language, is less able to assign a polysemous extension to an idiom's constituents. Likewise, their exposure to an L2 idiom is less frequent and, therefore, unfamiliar. This purports to be why the Saudi students in this study may have assigned literal meanings to the individual constituents of the idiom.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Idioms are an essential part of language. Therefore, comprehending and using them is crucial for foreign language learners. The present study sheds light on idiom processing by EFL students in the absence of supported context, an issue that has yet to receive much attention. The present study aimed to investigate how idioms' difficulty levels varied as they were measured by the Idiom Recognition Test (IRT). The intention was to also examine what strategies Saudi students employed to comprehend English idioms. The present study partially attempted to replicate Cooper's (1999) research.

The findings revealed that most of the participants had difficulty interpreting English idioms. They showed that participants drew on the literal meaning most often, which only sometimes leads to success in comprehending the idiom. The second most used successful strategy was referring to an L1 idiom. The third most effective strategy was background knowledge, yet it was the least used overall.

The results also showed that English idioms without Arabic equivalents were the most difficult. Saudi EFL learners appeared to rely on their L1 to interpret the English idioms. Consequently, the results supported all the idiom processing

models that emphasize the literal meaning over the figurative one. EFL learners, including the subjects of this study, rely on the literal meaning and their L1 conceptual system because they need metaphorical competence in L2.

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# Refusal Strategies by Young Jordanian Speakers in Arabic and English

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**Abstract**—This study aims to investigate refusal strategies used among Jordanian Arabic speakers and EFL learners of English in Jordan. Two Discourse Completion Tests (DCT), containing scenarios of refusal, were completed by 43 Jordanian Arabic speakers along with 37 EFL learners of English in Jordan. Data analysis reveals three main refusal categories used in the data: direct, indirect and adjuncts to refusals. Jordanian Arabic speakers used 7% direct refusals, 57% indirect refusals, and 36% adjuncts to refusals. In contrast, EFL learners used 13% direct refusals, 62% indirect refusals, and 25% adjuncts to refusals. Additionally, strategies such as insisting, insulting, praising the other, and invoking the name of God were observed. In conclusion, both groups preferred indirect refusal strategies over other types. It was also noted that EFL learners used more direct and indirect refusal strategies than Jordanian Arabic speakers but fewer adjuncts to refusals. Both groups produced similar strategies in response to the four types of situations, indicating that cultural background significantly influenced the way refusals were performed, despite the different languages used.

**Index Terms**—face-threatening acts, Jordanian Arabic, pragmatic competence, speech act theory

## I. INTRODUCTION

While acquiring a new language, one has to learn and understand how to utter and employ several grammatically correct words and sentences. However, grammatical knowledge of a language is not sufficient to communicate properly in the target language. A non-native speaker must know the cultural background and proper pragmatic knowledge to communicate sufficiently (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985). Pragmatic competence is the ability to use language effectively in a contextually appropriate fashion. Obtaining a pragmatic competence, in any language, is a necessity to fulfill a successful communication between interlocutors (Han & Burgucu-Tazegul, 2016).

Communication is essential in the sharing of thoughts, feelings, and information between individuals, and it serves to maintain associations and relationships (Kreishan, 2018). When communicating with others, a speaker and a responder perform speech acts between each other. One of those is to refuse which is to say 'No' in one way or another. A refusal is a negative response to an offer, a request, an invitation or a suggestion (Alkahtani, 2005). Refusals play a great role in one's life for their sensitive role in making relationships stronger or breaking them down. Even though a speaker is expected to say 'No' to a request or an invitation directly or indirectly (Han & Burgucu-Tazegul, 2016), how one says 'No' is much more important in many societies than the answer itself (Al-Kahtani, 2005; Sattar et al., 2012). Therefore, a refusal can be a difficult speech act to perform.

Refusals are face-threatening or face-damaging acts (Hsieh & Chen, 2005). In other words, when performing a refusal, a responder has to limit the needs of the speaker, and interlocutors pay greater attention to their strategies while performing the speech act of refusals to avoid losing and/or damaging the public self-image of the addresser and the addressee failing to meet the speaker's expectations threatens the face of the responder. That is to say, a "refusal, in virtue of its noncompliant nature, also impedes interactants' face want and hence falls into the type of face-damaging act that calls for maneuvers to reach politeness" (Hsieh & Chen, 2005, p. 3). Therefore, acting refusals is a challenging mission for the responder and is complicated because they depend on social and cultural backgrounds such as education, gender, and social status (Kreishan, 2018). In other words, refusals can cause a misunderstanding between the speaker



and the responder if they are not mitigated or softened. Hence, the study of the speech acts of refusals is especially interesting because it may require extensive planning on the part of the refuser" (Osborne, 2010, p. 36).

Austin's (1962) theory, known as Speech Act Theory, had a transformative impact on the field of pragmatics. Austin (1976) proposed a classification of speech acts into three main categories: (i) the locutionary act, which refers to the act of uttering or expressing something about the world; (ii) the illocutionary act, which represents the speaker's intention conveyed through an utterance, such as making a request or expressing a complaint; and (iii) the perlocutionary act, which aims to achieve a desired effect on the listener (H), such as influencing (H) to take a specific action to bring about happiness. Austin categorizes illocutionary acts into five distinct types: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives. Verdictives involve a speaker giving a verdict, such as acquitting or diagnosing. Exercitives involve speakers exercising powers, rights, or influence, such as excommunicating or resigning. Commissives involve speakers committing themselves to causes or courses of action, such as promising or betting. Behabitives pertain to attitudes and social behavior, such as apologizing or toasting. Expositives involve speakers clarifying how their utterances fit into lines of reasoning, such as postulating or defining (Green, 2007). To serve the purpose of this study, we are examining acts of refusal within the commissives category.

## II. RESEARCH ON EFL STUDENTS' REFUSAL STRATEGIES

Many recent studies have examined how EFL students from different cultures reject English. Interlanguage pragmatics of refusal studies is covered here. First, Han and Burgunen-Tazegul (2016) examine Turkish EFL students' refusal strategies. The data of the study was collected using DCT. 18 Turkish-speaking non-native English speakers and 18 native English speakers participated. EFL students used indirect methods more. Turkish EFL learners of English considered the interlocutor's social power when refusing. In another study, Rahayu (2019) examined Indonesian EFL students' refusal strategies. Rahayu studied 13 Indonesian native speakers, 13 EFL Indonesian learners of English, and 13 American native speakers to achieve the study's goal. The majority of refusals were indirect. Native Indonesian speakers refused directly more than the other two, and EFL learners regretted indirectly.

Boonsuk and Mbele (2019) found that Thai EFL students used indirect strategies the most. Their study found direct and indirect methods. Unlike Beebe et al. (1990), no refusal adjuncts were found. Thai EFL students refused without softeners. The results showed two important indirect strategies: advise and absence of empathy. Results also show that EFL Thai learners should emphasize pragmatic knowledge to improve refusal.

In the context of Jordan, Native speakers and EFL learners of English are being studied in Jordan. First, Al-Issa (2003) examined sociocultural transfer and its effects on Jordanian EFL learners' speech act refusal. The study participants numbered 150. 50 EFL Jordanians, 50 native Jordanians, and 50 native Americans participated. EFL students, like Jordanians, gave longer answers than Americans. All categories refused more indirectly than directly (excuse). EFL students used 'inshallah' or 'Gods willing' for future acceptance. Despite sharing subject groups, Al-Issa and the current study differ in the number of situations given to participants and the study's goal and methods.

Alshboul and Huwari (2016) compared Jordanian and American native speaker refusal models. The study had 30 participants (15 Jordanians, 15 Americans). Americans filled out an English DCT form and Jordanians an Arabic one. More Americans than Jordanians refused directly. Jordanians used indirect tactics like excuse. Jordanians used other crucial indirect strategies: use proverbs, God swears, Saying taboo, Self-defense, requesting divine favor. The main findings of this study match with those reported in Al-shboul and Maros (2020). According to Al-shboul and Maros, indirect refusal strategies are most common, followed by adjuncts and direct.

Al-Kayed et al. (2020) used another method to study refusals and pragmatic modifiers in Jordan. 24 hours were spent monitoring mixed- and same-sex conversations. Findings found that indirect and direct refusals were used less than complex strategies, which use multiple strategies.

An intercultural study by Al-Shboul and Maros (2012) examined Jordanian and Malay ESL post-grad refusal strategies. Six male Jordanian and Malay EFL students completed an English DCT form. Results showed both groups refused indirectly more than directly. Jordanians refused indirectly more than Malay students. Jordanians were less grateful to equals and inferiors, and they tended to be more sensitive to social power.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This study uses four common methods to assess speakers' pragmatic competence and speech act performance in different languages: naturally occurring speech acts, closed role-play, open role-play, and Discourse Completion Task. DCT tests with 12 scenarios are used in this research. The Background Questionnaire (BQ) collects participant information like age, gender, nationality, target language proficiency, and length of residence in the target country. Its ability to observe spontaneous speech in naturalistic settings makes the DCT test preferred. This method is time-consuming, difficult to collect demographic data, and difficult to handle unplanned responses.

The 1980s-developed naturally occurring speech act method is preferred in intra-lingual speech act research because it collects data from one language/culture. This method has been used to study student and Brazilian friend refusals (Osborne, 2010). Researchers often use role play to identify non-contextual speech act variations like gender, age, and social status. Open and closed role plays exist. Participants can have multiple-turn conversations in open role-plays,

improving response detection. Both methods identify non-contextual varieties, especially in Arabic, where dialects distinguish written and spoken language.

DCT is another popular ILP and cross-cultural data collection method. It lets researchers control context, compare native and non-native speakers, calculate semantic formulas, and analyze quantitative and qualitative data. DCTs also allow researchers to study how social status affects participant responses and quickly collect large datasets. DCTs limit participants to one-turn responses and miss sociopragmatic norms. Participants may think of the best way to respond, which may not be their true answer.

The current study uses an open-ended DCT with 12 scenarios targeting higher, equal, and lower social powers. Scenarios were inspired by Beebe et al. (1990) but written differently due to cultural norms and imposition levels. This study seeks to reconcile these differences and create new scenarios that fit Jordanian culture and life.

This study examines how social status affects university student refusals. It analyzes higher-status interlocutors' responses to show how social status affects each situation. Jordanian Arabic speakers (JAS) and EFL Learners of English in Jordan (EFL) were studied. The JAS group included 42 18-22-year-old university undergraduates, 37 females and 5 males. They were from Muta and Hashemite universities. The study did not consider participants' majors or academic years. Participants who lived in an English-speaking country were excluded to ensure validity. The study shows how social status affects university refusals. Understanding how social status affects student responses to requests can improve workplace communication and collaboration.

Two refusal strategy categories were examined in the study. Data was divided into semantic formulas for direct, indirect, and adjutant refusals. Direct refusals can be performative or non-performative, while indirect refusals are excuses, regret, wishes, or alternatives. Refusals have adjuncts that reduce their illocutionary force but cannot stand alone.

The study analyzed data quantitatively and qualitatively. For each group, semantic formula frequency was calculated, converted into percentages, and tabulated or graphically displayed. Semantic formula content and type were examined qualitatively. Direct (performative), non-performative, indirect (excuses/reason), consideration of the interlocutor's feelings, philosophy, wish, alternative, opinion/principle, consultants, sarcasm, request for more information, apology/regret, future acceptance/promise, proverbs, insisting, hedging, affirmations, invoking God's name, willingness, gratitude, and praising the other were refusal strategies. Each category had refusal strategies from the data in the table. The study sought to understand each group's common excuses and provide refusal strategies from the data.

A table from Alghmaiz (2018) was used to analyze answers as semantic formulas. The table lists direct, indirect, and adjunct refusals from 1 to 6. This research authors transliterated each answer using the table and placed semantic formulas under the appropriate strategy. For instance, the JAS response used gratitude, praise, and excuse. Three indirect strategies were used by EFL: regret/apology and excuses.

Direct, indirect, and adjunct refusals were calculated using another table. JAS had 129 answers and 298 refusal strategies. A form was emailed to two university professors and distributed to students for data collection. Author provided brief questionnaire content and duration summary. Automatically received and analyzed all answers. The study examined how semantic strategies affect responses in different situations.

#### IV. RESULTS

##### Refusal strategies and social status

This section provides the findings of how social status affected the use of refusal strategies. In other words, differences between refusing high, equal and low status of interlocutor are discussed and highlighted. Results indicate that social status affects significantly the way participants responded to refusals. Further, there are some differences in the results of social status relation with refusal strategies between the two groups.

##### Direct refusals and social status

In this part, direct refusals were studied in the light of social status. The percentage of direct refusals to high, equal and low status is provided. Results indicate a remarkable difference between the two groups.

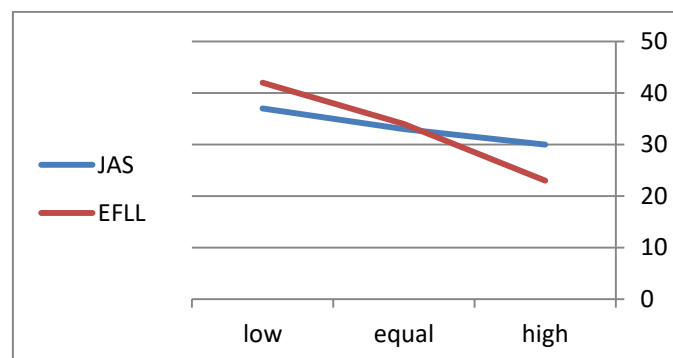


Figure 1. Direct Strategies by Status

Figure 1 shows that JAS used direct refusals mostly with interlocutors with low (L) and equal (E) with an average (37% and 33%). The lowest percentage of using direct refusals was when addressing an interlocutor with a higher (H) social status (30%). A significant difference in using direct refusals by JAS was not found. On the other hand, a remarkable difference in the use of direct refusal strategies by EFLL was noticed. The most frequently direct refusals were used when responding to (L) (42%), followed by the percentage of refusing (E) (34%). Refusing (H) directly was used the least by EFLL (23%).

It can also be seen that the use of direct refusal strategies as a response to (E) was nearly the same by the two groups. Thus, JAS used direct strategies with (H) more than EFLL. On the contrary, EFLL used more direct refusals when they refused (L) person compared to JAS.

#### Indirect refusals and social status

Indirect refusals, in this part, are discussed in terms of how frequently they were used with high, equal and low status interlocutor. Percentages of the use of them are given in this part. Findings indicate that there is a noticeable difference between the frequency of the use of indirect strategies in the light of social status between the two groups.

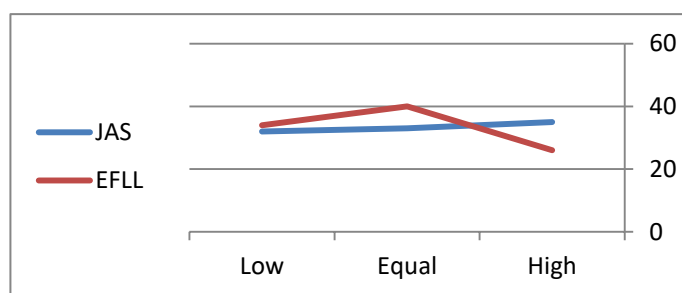


Figure 2. Indirect Strategies by Status

Figure 2 presents the percentages of using indirect strategies with high, equal and low interlocutors. The figure illustrates that JAS have used indirect strategies mostly with higher status interlocutors (35%). Similarly, the percentage of using indirect strategies with equal status interlocutors is (33%). Finally, the use of indirect strategies with a lower status person is (32%).

On another ground, refusing an equal status interlocutor by EFLL was the most frequent (40%). Secondly, participants refused a low status interlocutor (34%). Refusing a higher status interlocutor using indirect refusal strategies was the least frequently used (26%).

As a matter of comparing, refusing higher status by JAS was more common than EFLL. In contrast, participants in the EFLL group refused equal status using indirect strategies more frequently than JAS group. However, the difference in refusing a lower person status is not significant between the two groups.

#### Adjuncts to refusals and social status

In this part, the frequency of the use of adjuncts to refusals was investigated. As a response to high, equal and low social status, percentages of the use of adjuncts to refusals are presented. Results indicate that significant difference between the group EFLL and JAS exists.

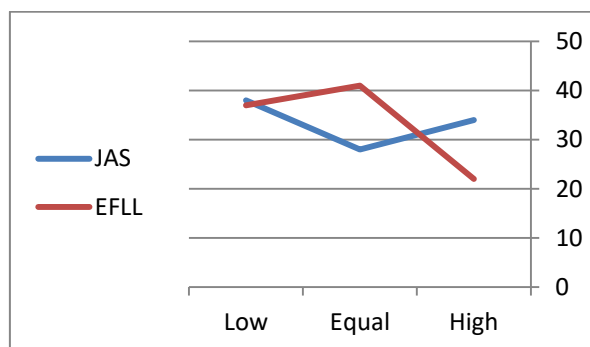


Figure 3. Adjuncts Strategies by Status

Figure 3 shows the percentages of the use of adjuncts to refusals in a relation with social status. The highest frequency of the use of adjuncts by JAS is when addressing a lower status interlocutor (38%). The second most frequent use is with high status interlocutor (34%). The least use of adjuncts to refusals is with an equal status interlocutor (28%).

On the other hand, the use of adjuncts to refusals is most commonly used by EFLL when responding to an equal status interlocutor (41%). Then comes refusing a lower status interlocutor with an average of (37%). Finally, adjuncts to refusals are used the least frequently with a higher status interlocutor (22%).

It can be concluded that there is a remarkable difference in the use of adjuncts to refusals with an equal status interlocutor between EFLL and JAS; EFLL used more adjuncts to refusals. The difference is also noticeable between

the two groups when refusing a higher status person; JAS used more adjuncts to refusals. However, there is no significant difference between JAS and EFL in using adjuncts to refusals when refusing a lower status person.

### Order of refusal strategies by status

While investigating the relation between social status and the use of refusal strategies, it is important to tackle whether social status has an influence on the strategies used to refuse and what the most frequent refusal strategies are used with each social status. For this reason, this part is providing the most commonly used strategies with high, equal and low social status interlocutors by JAS and EFL participants.

In Table 1, it can be seen that JAS participants started their refusals mostly with the statement of a positive opinion with higher status interlocutors. Then they used excuses or reasons to justify their refusals. And finally, they expressed their opinion or principle about the situation given. For example:

TABLE 1  
ORDER OF STRATEGIES WITH HIGH STATUS

Social status	Group	Order			
		1	2	3	4
High	JAS	Statement of positive opinion	Excuse	Opinion/principle	
	EFL	Statement of positive opinion	Apology	Excuse	

This example below gives the order of the most frequently used strategies while refusing a high-status interlocutor. Compared to answers by JAS, answers responded by EFL were much shorter, e.g. "congratulations...but I'm sorry... I'm busy".

"بشرفني أحضر هالحفلة وإشاركك فرحتك... بس بدني أقضي وقت مع العيلة... واننا عارف الجمعة يوم العيلة"

*I am honored to come and share your joy... but I want to spend time with my family... and you know that Friday is family day.*

It is seen that both groups used statements of positive opinion as the most frequent strategy to initiate their answers with. It can also be noticed that none of the two groups have started their answers with excuses. Further, EFL group preferred to apologize or ask for forgiveness before giving excuses when addressing a higher-status interlocutor.

TABLE 2  
ORDER OF STRATEGIES WITH EQUAL STATUS

Social status	Group	Order			
		1	2	3	4
Equal	JAS	Invoking the name of God	Excuse	Alternative	Future acceptance
	EFL	Gratitude	Apology	Alternative	

This table illustrates that JAS used invoking the name of God as an initial strategy to begin their refusals with. Then they used excuses as a refusal strategy, then giving alternatives and finally they promised for a future acceptance as shown in the example below.

"يا الله، حاليًا صعب بسبب ظروف الشغل، رح أقترحك اسم قناة عاليوتيوب بتفيدك كثير، أنا شخصيًا استفدت منها، وبعدها إن شاء الله إذا كان "لسا بدك كمان إشي ما بقصر، بالتوفيق يا رب"

*"Oh God... now it's due to work conditions... I will suggest you a name of a YouTube channel that is good...I personally benefited from it. And after that if you still need any help, I am in. Good luck and God bless you!"*

EFL on the other hand used Gratitude to begin their refusals when responding to an equal social status interlocutor. They also used apology or regret as the second frequent strategy. Then they provided alternatives, such as "Thank you... but I am busy... you can go to our neighbor he will help you".

It is noticed that both groups used the indirect strategy Alternative as the third in the order of the answer. Rarely had it been used in the first part of the answer.

TABLE 3  
ORDER OF STRATEGIES WITH LOW STATUS

Social status	Group	Order			
		1	2	3	4
Low	JAS	Statement of positive opinion	Excuse	Opinion/principle	Future acceptance
	EFL	Gratitude	Excuse	Opinion/principle	

This table indicates that JAS used the statement of positive opinion to refuse low-status interlocutors. Then they used excuse as an indirect refusal strategy. The third most commonly used strategy is opinion/principle and finally comes the statement of future acceptance. See the example below:

"الف مبارك بس الجمعه حاجز مع العيلة نطلع و انت عارف هاي وزارة الداخليه هاي و الواحد ماشي الحيط الحيط باجيك في غيرها ان شاء الله"

"Congratulations... but I have plans with my family on Friday, and you know it is like dealing with the Ministry of Interior, and one has to be careful. I'll visit another time".

Gratitude was the most frequently used strategy to begin with their answers by EFLL. Then, like the JAS group, they used excuses and finally, they used opinion/principle strategy, as in the example below:

"I appreciate your offer, but I need the laptop ...and I don't like anyone to see my laptop"

The table also shows that both groups were identical in the used of the second and third strategies to refuse low-status interlocutors. Further, both groups have started their answers with adjuncts to refusals.

**Overall refusal strategy use by all groups in all situations**

This part is discussing the frequency of the semantic formulas used by the two groups; JAS and EFLL in all situations.

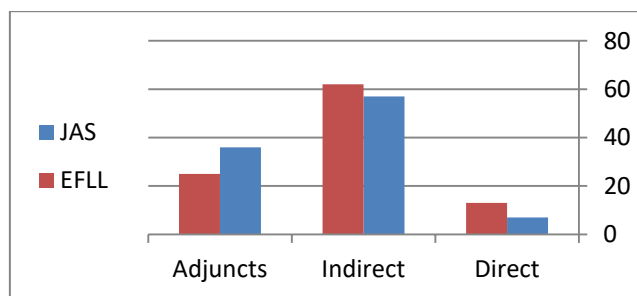


Figure 4. Direct, Indirect and Adjuncts by All Groups in All Situations

Figure 4 shows the overall use of the three main refusal strategies by the two groups in all situations. It can be seen that JAS used indirect strategies the most (57%). The second most frequently used strategies are adjuncts to refusals (36%), and the least are direct refusals (7%).

In rhyme, the most frequently used strategies by EFLL are indirect strategies (62%), then adjuncts to refusals (25%). Direct refusals by EFLL were the least frequently used (13%).

Although the difference is not significant, it is clear that EFLL used more indirect strategies than JAS. It is also noticed that the use of adjuncts to refusals by JAS is more than the use of them by EFLL. Furthermore, direct strategies were used by EFLL nearly two times more than JAS. In other words, differences between the two groups exist.

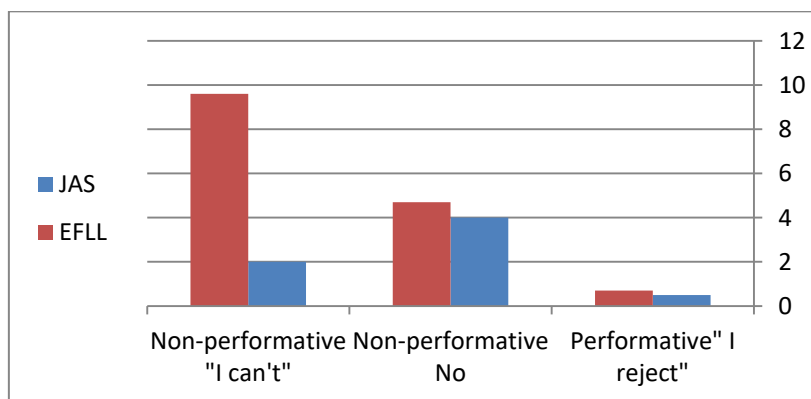


Figure 5. Direct Refusal Strategies by All Groups in All Situations

Figure 5 indicated the use of the three direct refusal strategies by JAS and EFLL in all situations. It can be clearly seen that both groups were close in the percentage of the use of Performative "I reject" and non-performative "No". However, there is a significant difference in the use of non-performative "I can't" between JAS and EFLL group (2% vs. 9%). That is to say, EFLL group used non-performative "I can't" nearly three times more than JAS.

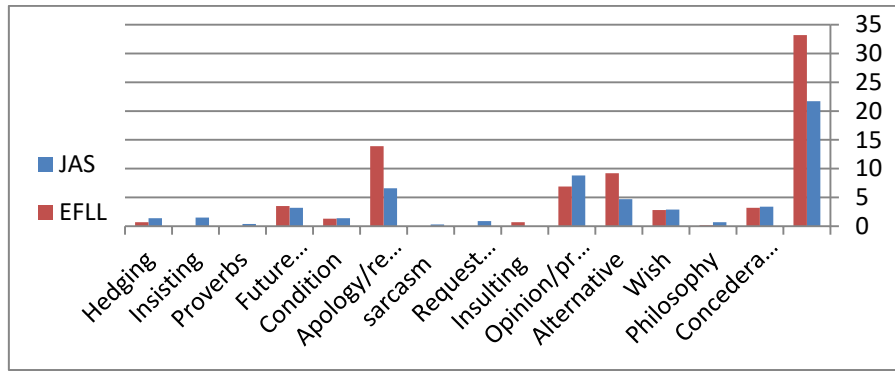


Figure 6. Indirect Refusal Strategies by All Groups in All Situations

In Figure 6 excuse is the most frequently used indirect strategy by the two groups in all situations. To start, the difference between JAS and EFLL in using excuses is remarkable. It can be seen that the percentage of using excuses by EFLL is more than the percentage of JAS use. This is also the case in using alternatives, apologies, and future acceptance. For instance, both the use of alternative and apology strategies by EFLL was approximately double the amount of the use of JAS group. Significantly, insulting was used by EFLL and was not used by JAS.

On the other hand, the use of consideration of the interlocutor's feeling, wish, opinion/principle, condition and hedging was more frequent by JAS than EFLL. It can also be noticed that strategies like requests for additional information, proverbs, and insisting were found only in the answers of JAS and never in the answers of EFLL.

Strategies like consideration of the interlocutor's feelings, wish, condition and future acceptance did not show a noticeable difference between the two groups.

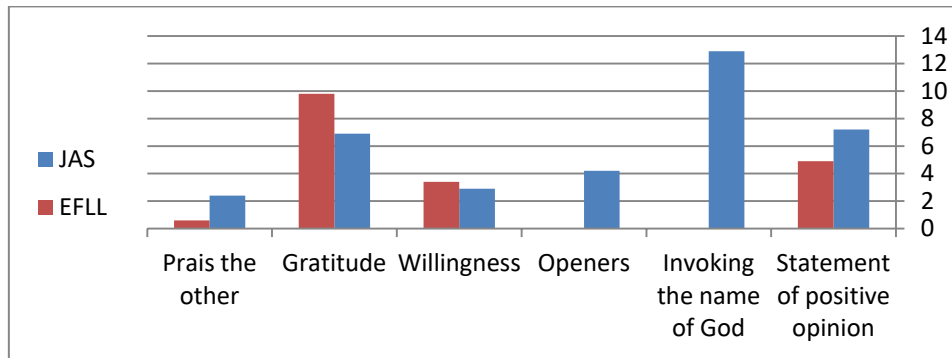


Figure 7. Adjuncts to Refusals by All Groups in All Situations

Figure 7 illustrates the use of adjuncts to refusals by the two groups in all situations. Invoking the name of God is the most commonly used strategy. It was found only in the answers of JAS and never in the answers of EFLL. On another ground, gratitude was the most frequently used strategy by EFLL and less frequent by JAS. The use of statement of positive opinion was also frequent by JAS and EFLL. However, JAS used more statement of a positive opinion than EFLL. Openers were also used only by JAS, and it was considered the fourth frequently used strategy by them. Willingness or agreement was the fifth common strategy used by the two groups. Findings in the figure show that EFLL used it more than JAS. The least adjuncts to refusal strategy that was used was praise the other. Significantly, this strategy was used by JAS nearly more than two times the use of it by EFLL.

TABLE 4  
THE FREQUENCY OF REFUSAL STRATEGIES BY ALL GROUPS IN ALL SITUATIONS

Strategies	JAS				EFLL			
	Suggestion	Offers	Requests	Invitations	Suggestion	Offers	Requests	Invitations
Direct strategies								
Performative "I refuse"	2	4	0	0	3	1	0	0
Non-perfomative "No"	17	22	5	3	15	5	1	4
Non-perfomative "I can't"	2	2	12	9	1	5	17	28
Indirect strategies								
Excuse/reason	27	33	108	94	19	28	56	73
Consideration of the interlocutors feelings	2	9	20	10	4	5	1	7
Philosophy	5	4	0	0	1	0	0	0
Wish	1	0	20	11	0	0	12	3
Alternative	13	34	10	0	14	22	13	0
Opinion/principle	62	43	1	1	28	3	4	2
Insulting	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Request for additional information	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apology/regret	3	3	45	29	5	4	44	21
Condition	4	10	1	3	2	1	2	2
Future acceptance	4	1	10	24	1	1	9	8
Proverbs	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Insisting	12	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hedging	7	0	3	7	0	0	0	0
Strategies	JAS				EFLL			
	Suggestion	Offers	Requests	Invitations	Suggestion	Offers	Requests	Invitations
Adjuncts to refusals								
Statement of positive opinion	0	5	2	80	0	0	0	29
Invoking the name of God	39	17	53	34	0	1	0	0
Openers	25	4	16	6	0	0	0	0
Willingness/ agreement	14	6	14	6	2	4	10	4
Gratitude	26	53	0	4	24	40	0	18
Praise the interlocutor	12	14	0	3	0	3	0	1

Table 4 above gives the frequency of the refusal strategies used by the two groups in the four situations. The most frequently direct strategy used is the non-performative "NO" by JAS as a response to an offer and the non-perfomative "I can't" by EFLL as a response to invitation situations. Participants from both groups did not use the performative "I reject" when answering a request and an invitation.

In the findings of indirect results, it can be seen that the most frequently used strategy is giving excuses/reasons. While JAS used excuses the most when refusing requests, EFLL group used it the most in refusing invitations. The use of philosophy is the highest when refusing a suggestion by JAS and EFLL. Remarkably, both groups acted identically in using wish as an indirect strategy to refuse; they both used the highest frequency of it to refuse requests. This is also the case in refusing using alternatives; both groups used alternatives the most when refusing an offer. Further, both groups used Apology/regret most commonly when refusing a request. Likewise, JAS and EFLL also used the statement of positive opinion as an adjunct to refusals most frequently in responding to an invitation. Gratitude was also used the most by both groups when refusing an offer.

The indirect strategy insulting was used by EFLL only as a refusal to a suggestion and never by JAS. On the other hand, using proverbs, insisting and invoking the name of God were found only in the answers of JAS.

TABLE 5  
REFUSAL STRATEGIES AND STATUS BY GROUP IN ALL SITUATIONS

Strategies	JAS			EFL		
	Low	Equal	High	Low	Equal	High
<b>Direct strategies</b>						
Performative "I refuse"	2	0	4	3	1	0
Non-performative "No"	14	21	11	12	9	0
Non-performative "I"	10	8	5	19	16	13
<b>Indirect strategies</b>						
Excuse/reason	84	89	91	58	67	51
Consideration of the	10	24	7	3	11	3
Philosophy	3	3	3	1	0	0
Wish	10	20	2	1	8	4
Alternative	21	34	4	16	30	3
Opinion/principle	37	8	62	21	12	5
Insulting	0	0	0	5	0	0
Request for additional	0	7	4	0	0	0
Apology/regret	22	24	34	21	26	27
Condition	5	4	8	2	4	1
Future acceptance	13	16	10	10	7	2
Proverbs	3	5	0	0	0	0
Insisting	0	0	12	0	0	0
Hedging	9	5	14	4	4	0

TABLE 6  
ADJUNCT TO REFUSALS ACCORDING TO SOCIAL STATUS

Strategies	JAS			EFL		
	Low	Equal	High	Low	Equal	High
Adjuncts to refusals						
Statement of positive opinion	42	4	41	10	2	17
Invoking the name of God	53	50	40	0	0	0
Openers	9	16	26	0	0	0
Willingness/ agreement	11	16	13	8	6	6
Gratitude	36	25	22	32	42	8
Praise the interlocutor	9	12	8	2	4	0

Table 5 provides the frequency of the refusal strategies used in a relation with the social status in all situations. The most frequently used strategy by JAS was the indirect excuse/reason when refusing a higher status interlocutor. However, excuse/reason was also the most frequently used but with an equal status interlocutor.

Both groups acted similarly in using wish and alternatives the most while refusing an equal status interlocutor. Further, the strategy opinion /principle was used most commonly by JAS when refusing a higher status interlocutor unlike EFL who used it the most with a lower status interlocutor. Both indirect strategies, insisting and hedging, were used most frequently with a higher status interlocutor.

The use of statement of positive opinion by JAS was nearly the same when refusing lower and higher status interlocutor, but there was a significant difference when refusing an equal status interlocutor. In rhyme, there was a notable difference in the use of statement of positive opinion by EFL with both higher and lower interlocutors and equal status interlocutors. Gratitude was used mostly by JAS with a lower status interlocutor when EFL used them the most with an equal interlocutor.

## V. DISCUSSIONS

This chapter discusses the use of refusal strategies in Jordanian Arabic (JAS) and English Foreign Language Learners (EFL) and their relation to social status by situation. The study found that JAS and EFL responses consisted of multiple semantic formulas, with JAS having more words and diversity in using refusal strategies. EFL responses were shorter and less diverse, with vague, ambiguous, and general responses.

The order of the three main refusal strategies was given in the study, with indirect refusal strategies being used most frequently, followed by adjuncts to refusals, and finally direct refusals. However, the order of the use of refusal strategies might vary across cultures, as seen in previous studies.

Direct refusal strategies were classified as either performative "I reject" or Non-performative "No", "I can't", "I won't". In this research, the second strategy was divided into two parts: Non-performative "No" and Non-performative "I can't", "I won't". Direct refusals were the least used by both groups, with EFL being more direct than JAS due to fewer ranges of words.



Indirect refusal strategies were the most commonly used, with the most common being excuse/reason, consideration of the interlocutor's feelings, and apology/regret. Excuse was the most commonly used strategy by JAS, while consideration of the interlocutor's feelings was used by Jordanian native speakers. Apology/regret was also found to be the most frequently used refusal strategy by Persian speakers, unlike the results of the current study where excuse was the most frequently used strategy by both groups.

In conclusion, the study highlights the complexity of refusal strategies in Jordanian Arabic and the importance of considering the interlocutor's feelings when refusing. By utilizing indirect strategies and considering the interlocutor's feelings, JAS and EFLL participants can effectively communicate their refusals and maintain their social status. Moreover, this study explores the use of sarcasm and proverbs in Jordanian language refusals. Sarcasm is a significant strategy used to add humor to refusals, making them less threatening. Proverbs and common sayings are also part of the culture of Jordanians, serving the same purpose of decreasing tension while refusing. Some proverbs can deliver messages better than normal talk.

Indirect refusal strategies found include insulting and insisting. Swearing is the most efficient way to refuse by insulting a lower-status interlocutor, which is not normal in Jordanian culture. Insistence is another strategy used when participants are not satisfied with only refusing, insisting on what they want.

Religion plays a significant role in Jordanian communication, with three purposes for invoking the name of God: swearing, praying, and implying uncertainty about the answer. Openers are an individual strategy under adjuncts to refusals, but their use may vary depending on the cultural background of the participants. Praise is a norm in Jordanian society, and it is also used when refusing.

Vague answers are common in the answers of EFLL, as participants feel that praising others eases the act of refusal and shows appreciation for the interlocutor. Social status has a great impact on how participants refuse, with the two groups acting differently considering social status. For example, JAS participants tended to use more indirect answers to refuse when the interlocutor was with a higher authority. Adjuncts were used most frequently when addressing a lower-status person, and direct strategies were least used when targeting a higher-status interlocutor.

EFLL participants were less sensitive to social status, using indirect refusal strategies the most with an equal-status interlocutor. Direct strategies were used less with higher-status interlocutors, and adjuncts to refusals were the least with a higher-status interlocutor. These findings contradict the results of JAS, suggesting that the language of refusing affects participants' sensitivity to social status.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study investigated refusal strategies used by Jordanian Arabic speakers and EFL Jordanian learners of English using a DCT test. The study involved 42 JAS and 37 EFLL participants, and results showed three main categories of refusal strategies: direct refusal, indirect refusals, and adjuncts to refusals. Indirect refusal strategies were the most commonly used by the two groups, followed by adjuncts to refusals and direct refusals. Significant strategies included invoking the name of God, sarcasm, praising the other, and the use of proverbs and common sayings. Both groups shared a range of age and cultural backgrounds, and similar responses were found when responding to each situation separately. However, there were differences between the two groups, such as the language of refusing and the power of the interlocutor. The study also found a strong relationship between the power of the interlocutor and the category of refusal used in the responses of JAS but not in the answers of EFLL. Limitations of the study include the difficulty in determining representative written answers and not considering the gender of the speaker. It is recommended to conduct further studies on other age groups of Jordanians, particularly schoolchildren, and to use observation as a method of data collection due to the downfalls of the DCT test.

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# Critical Discourse Analysis of G30S Representations in Grade XII Indonesian History Textbooks: A Comparative Study Across Different Curricula (1994-2013)

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**Abstract**—This paper presents a critical discourse analysis of the Gerakan 30 September (G30S) event's portrayal in Indonesian Grade XII history textbooks across various curricula from 1994 to 2013. By analysing four textbooks, the study reveals an evolving narrative of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) from a predominantly negative portrayal in earlier curricula to more nuanced and multiperspective representations in later editions. Early textbooks, aligned with the New Order's anti-communist ideology, depict the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) as a malevolent force, whereas later texts, especially under the 2013 curriculum, offer diverse viewpoints, reflecting a shift toward critical thinking and balanced historical understanding. This shift indicates changing political ideologies and educational approaches in Indonesia, highlighting the role of textbooks in shaping historical perception and national identity. The findings illuminate the transformation in educational narratives, emphasizing how these changes in textbooks are indicative of broader societal and political shifts and their significant impact on shaping collective memory and national consciousness in Indonesia.

**Index Terms**—CDA, G30S, textbooks, curriculum, narratives

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Gerakan 30 September 1965 (G30S) event remains a critical point in Indonesian history, profoundly influencing the country's sociopolitical narrative. This study focuses on a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of how G30S is represented in Grade XII Indonesian history textbooks across different curricula. This event represents not only a retelling of the past but also a complex intersection of history, politics, and ideology, which manifests differently in educational materials over time (Pratama, 2022; Roosa, 2006). Histories play a significant role in shaping students' understanding of historical events (Widiadi, 2021). However, as Roosa (2006) notes, narratives within these textbooks are often subject to prevailing political ideologies, leading to potential biases in the representation of events such as G30S. This notion aligns with Purwanta's (2013) assertion that textbooks are influenced by the perspectives of their authors and the prevailing political context.

According to Blackwell Wiley (2018) textbooks are crucial tools in the intellectual formation of young generations. They not only deliver historical knowledge but also shape perceptions of national identity and collective memory. The study of historiography, as Gottschalk (1975) explains, involves the imaginative reconstruction of the past based on available data. This approach is particularly relevant in analysing textbooks, where historical events are often reconstructed to align with current educational and political objectives. Kuntowijoyo (2005) identifies three waves of historiography in Indonesia, each characterized by its approach and focus. The third wave, pertinent to this study, involved revisiting and revising controversial historical narratives, particularly those shaped during the New Order regime. This wave is marked by a tendency to challenge established historical narratives and introduce previously unexplored perspectives and interpretations.

This research aims to explore the representation of G30S in Indonesian history textbooks, particularly focusing on how these representations evolved across different curricular reforms from 1994 to 2013. This period is crucial because

it spans the transition from the New Order regime to more recent democratic and educational reforms, likely influencing how historical events such as G30S are portrayed. Previous studies, such as those by Roosa (2006), Purwanta (2012), Arta (2012) and Mulyana (2013), have shed light on the complexities and ideological underpinnings of G30S representations in textbooks. However, there is still a gap in comprehensive analysis of these narratives across different curricula. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by conducting a comparative CDA of textbooks used in different curricular periods, uncovering the underlying narratives and potential biases, and understanding how they reflect broader sociopolitical changes in Indonesia. The goal is to contribute to a more balanced and critical historical education that acknowledges the complexities and multiple perspectives of significant historical events such as G30S.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)*

Critical discourse analysis, as conceptualized by Fairclough (1992), offers a lens through which language is not merely an instrument of communication but a medium for social influence and power relations. Fairclough asserts that discourses are practices that have significant interplay with the cultural and sociopolitical structures within which they operate. These structures are not only reflected in discourse but also shaped and sometimes transformed by it (Wodak, 2011). The analytical focus of CDA on the dialectical relationship between language and society allows for an exploration of how educational content, such as history textbooks, can perpetuate or challenge societal ideologies (Fairclough, 2013b). This framework will guide the investigation into the representation of the G30S event in Indonesian history textbooks, scrutinizing how language serves as a battleground for ideological expression and dominance (Chilton, 2004).

Moreover, the function of discourse extends beyond the confines of text, influencing and being influenced by omnipresent power dynamics and ideologies. Discourses, as explored by Fairclough (2023) are not merely passive conveyors of meaning but also active instruments in the construction and deconstruction of social realities. Through the application of CDA, we can discern how history textbooks do not simply narrate a sequence of events but are, in fact, engaged in a complex process of shaping students' perceptions and collective memories (Van Dijk, 1993).

The way in which G30S events are framed within these texts serves to either reinforce the prevailing power structures or provide a platform for critical engagement and resistance (McGroarty, 2010). By examining the subtle, and often unnoticed, linguistic choices of these educational resources, CDA aims to uncover the underlying messages that contribute to the perpetuation or questioning of historical narratives and the ideologies they espouse (Luke, 1995). In conclusion, the application of critical discourse analysis, as conceptualized by Norman Fairclough and others, provides a robust framework for dissecting the intricate interplay between language, power, and ideology, as reflected in educational texts. By delving into the nuanced linguistic and stylistic choices in Indonesian history textbooks, this study aims to illuminate the subtle yet profound ways in which the representation of G30S is not only a mere recounting of historical events but also a dynamic process that contributes to shaping societal beliefs, ideologies, and collective memory.

The critical examination of these texts through the lens of CDA offers an opportunity to understand not only how history is portrayed but also how it is constructed and disseminated, reflecting broader sociopolitical narratives and agendas. This theoretical framework thus serves as a cornerstone for a deeper, more critical engagement with historical discourse, opening avenues for a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the role of education in shaping historical consciousness and identity.

### B. *Ideology*

The concept of ideology is pivotal in understanding the construction and perpetuation of social realities, particularly in educational contexts. Althusser's (2006) interpretation of ideology as an intrinsic part of societal superstructures plays a central role in this analysis. According to Althusser, educational systems are among the key ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) that propagate dominant ideologies and reinforce existing power structures. This theoretical perspective is crucial for examining how history textbooks in Indonesia might not only convey historical facts but also subtly embed and reinforce specific ideologies.

Gramsci's (2020) notion of cultural hegemony further complements this framework by exploring how consent to the dominant ideology is culturally manufactured and maintained within a society. Gramsci's theory provides insight into how educational content can be a tool for the state and other dominant groups to establish and normalize their worldview as the status quo. Moreover, the work of Foucault (1972) on power-knowledge relationships is instrumental in understanding how knowledge production in textbooks is linked with power dynamics. Foucault's concept that 'knowledge is power' highlights how control over the content and representation of educational materials can be a form of exercising power and shaping societal norms and beliefs.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argue that the education system, far from being a neutral space of learning, actively plays a role in perpetuating social inequalities. They contend that the knowledge and cultural capital transmitted through schools are inherently biased towards the dominant social class. This perspective allows for an exploration of how textbooks not only disseminate knowledge but also serve to maintain the status quo by legitimizing the cultural capital

of dominant groups. The integration of these theoretical perspectives provides a comprehensive approach to understanding how the portrayal of the G30S in Indonesian history textbooks is potentially embedded with ideological messages. This study invites an examination of how these textbooks may reflect and reinforce the beliefs and values of dominant groups, thereby influencing the shaping of historical understanding and social consciousness among students. This ideological lens is essential for a critical analysis of history textbooks, challenging us to question not only what is taught but also how it aligns with broader societal ideologies and power structures. The exploration of these texts through this framework aims to shed light on the subtle yet impactful ways in which education can be a vehicle for ideological transmission, shaping perceptions of history and nationhood.

### *C. Representation*

The concept of representation, as articulated by Hall (1997) is essential for understanding how meaning is constructed and communicated through language and images, particularly in educational materials such as textbooks. Hall argues that the process of representation is central to how societies create and communicate meaning, shaping our understanding of the world around us. This is particularly relevant in the context of history textbooks, where the representation of events such as G30S can profoundly influence students' perceptions of history. Hall's framework suggests that representation is not a mere reflection of reality but rather an active process of encoding and decoding involving the use of symbols and language to convey specific interpretations (Hall, 1997).

This process is inherently linked to power, as the ability to control representations can shape societal narratives and ideologies. Additionally, the work of Barthes (1972) on semiotics provides insight into how signs and symbols in texts carry specific connotations that transcend their literal meaning. In the context of history textbooks, this means that images, language, and overall narrative structure can serve as a means to convey deeper ideological messages. Furthermore, Spivak's (2023) concept of 'subaltern' can be applied to explore how certain groups or perspectives might be marginalized in these representations, potentially perpetuating a biased view of history. This theoretical lens allows for an analysis of whose voices are heard and whose are silenced in the narrative of G30S within Indonesian textbooks. By integrating these theories of representation, this study aims to dissect the construction of the G30S narrative in Indonesian history textbooks, examining how they potentially shape collective memory and national identity. The analysis will focus on how these textbooks use language, imagery, and narrative structures to represent the G30S event and what these representations reveal about the underlying ideologies and power structures in the Indonesian context.

### *D. Collective Memory*

The concept of collective memory, especially in the context of how history is taught and remembered, has evolved significantly in recent years. Recent studies have emphasized the dynamic nature of collective memory, highlighting how it is not only a reflection of the past but also an active construction shaped by present needs and contexts. According to Baildon and Afandi (2018) collective memory in educational settings is a form of 'negotiated remembering', where different versions of the past are contested and reconciled. Building on this, scholars such as Wang (2019) have explored how collective memory is influenced by current societal values and political climates. In the context of history education, this suggests that the way events such as G30S are remembered and taught in textbooks is subject to contemporary reinterpretations, which may align with or challenge prevailing ideological narratives.

Furthermore, the work of Baildon and Afandi (2018) on the social representation of history underlines the role of educational media in shaping collective memory. They argue that textbooks, as a form of media, play a crucial role in mediating the relationship between individual memories and collective narratives. Additionally, the influence of digital media on collective memory has been a focus of recent studies. Olick et al. (2023) discusses how the digitization of information and the rise of social media have transformed the ways in which historical events are remembered and disseminated, potentially impacting how they are represented in more traditional forms of media, such as textbooks.

Recent research in memory studies emphasizes the role of educational materials in shaping collective memory, particularly among younger generations. Orianne and Eustache (2023) emphasize that textbooks are not just vessels of knowledge, but also tools for transmitting specific ideologies. This is particularly relevant for Indonesia, where textbooks play a central role in conveying narratives of significant events such as the G30S.

In the Indonesian context, the interplay between state narratives and collective memory is crucial. According to studies by Yefterson et al. (2020) the way history is taught in schools often reflects the state's perspective, which then becomes ingrained in the collective memory of both students and the broader society. This process illustrates how collective memory is not static but is continually shaped and reshaped by contemporary social and political influences. The impact of digital media on collective memory formation, especially among young people, has been a focus of recent scholarship. Mustafa et al. (2022) discuss how online platforms and social media are becoming increasingly influential in shaping the collective memory of younger generations, often providing alternative narratives to those found in traditional educational resources.

Furthermore, the work of Cordonnier et al. (2021) on the intergenerational transmission of memories underscores the importance of how historical events are discussed and remembered within families and communities, influencing the collective memory of younger generations beyond formal education. Through this framework, the study explored how the collective memories of the G30S event were constructed and transmitted in Indonesian society, particularly

among students. This study aimed to understand the role of textbooks in shaping this memory while also considering the influence of broader societal narratives and digital media.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research approach, specifically focusing on critical discourse analysis (CDA), as outlined by Fairclough (2023). This approach is ideal for examining how language and representation in textbooks reflect and construct societal ideologies and power relations, as discussed by Fairclough (2007).

#### A. *Materials*

The primary materials for analysis are the Indonesian history textbooks for Grade XII, specifically editions published under the 1994, 2004, 2006, and 2013 curricula. These textbooks, as official educational materials authorized by the government, provide a crucial lens into the state-sanctioned narrative of the G30S event.

#### B. *Procedure*

**Textbook Selection:** Textbooks will be chosen based on their prevalence and use in the Indonesian education system across the specified curricula, ensuring a comprehensive and representative analysis. 1994 Curriculum: "Buku Sejarah Nasional Indonesia Untuk SMA dan Sekolah yang Sederajat Jilid 3 (Indonesian National History Book for High Schools and Equivalent, Volume 3)" by Moedjanto, Nani Sunarti, Chr. Kristanto Dh., Anton Haryono, AA Padi. Published by PT Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia, Jakarta, 1992. "Sejarah Nasional Indonesia dan Umum Untuk SMU Kelas 3 (Indonesian National and General History for Senior High School Grade 3)" by I Wayan Badrika (I Wayan Badrika, 1997), published by Erlangga in 1997. 2006 KTPS Curriculum: "Eksplorasi Sejarah Indonesia dan Dunia Untuk SMA Kelas XII Program IPS (Exploration of Indonesian and World History for High School Grade XII Social Sciences Program)" by Ratna Hapsari and Abdul Syukur, published in 2008. 2013 Curriculum (Revised 2018): "Sejarah Indonesia" (Indonesian History) by Prof. Dr. Susanto Zuhdi, M.Hum, Dr. Linda Sunarti, Arif Pradono, S.S., M.I.Kom, and Dr. Abdurakhman, published by Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan, Balitbang, Kemendikbud in 2018.

**Critical Discourse Analysis:** Applying CDA to textbook content involves a meticulous examination of various elements. This includes delving into the linguistic features where the study scrutinizes the choice of words, use of metaphors, and overall language style to discern how these elements contribute to the portrayal of the G30S event. Special attention will be given to narrative structures, exploring how the sequence of events, characterizations, and the construction of plots serve to frame the historical narrative. Additionally, representational strategies will be analysed to understand how different aspects of the G30S event are highlighted or downplayed. This analysis will extend to the examination of syntax and sentence structure, investigating how the arrangement of words and sentences can influence readers' interpretation and understanding of events. Beyond the textual analysis, the study will explore the discursive practices surrounding the production and consumption of these texts. The chapter will look into the educational context within which these textbooks are used, considering how they are intended to be interpreted by student readers. Intertextual and interdiscursive elements will also be scrutinized to identify references or influences from other texts or discourses, shedding light on how the G30S narrative is connected to or distinguished from other historical narratives or events. The sociocultural analysis will assess the broader social, political, and cultural conditions in Indonesia that may have influenced the representation of G30S in these textbooks. Ideological framing will be a key focus for evaluating how specific ideologies might manifest in the portrayal of G30S based on the previously discussed theories of ideology. Finally, a comparative analysis across textbooks from different curriculum years will be conducted. This diachronic analysis compares how the representation of G30S has evolved or remained consistent from 1994 to 2013, providing insights into the shifts or continuities in historical narratives and ideological underpinnings over time. Comparative analysis: A comparative approach, as suggested by Bray and Thomas, will be used to analyse changes and consistencies in the G30S representation across different curriculum editions, highlighting any shifts in ideological and narrative framing over time (Bray & Thomas, 1995).

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. *Results*

This section presents the findings from the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Grade XII Indonesian history textbooks, focusing on the representation of the G30S event. The analysis is grounded in the theoretical framework of Norman Fairclough's CDA, which emphasizes the relationships among language, power, and ideology in textual content. By applying this approach, the study aims to uncover the nuanced ways in which language, narrative structures, and semiotic elements in textbooks contribute to shaping students' understanding of this significant historical event. The findings are organized into several key areas, each reflecting a different aspect of the discourse analysis. This includes an exploration of language patterns and narrative framing, the ideological representation of G30S, the comparison of representations across different curricula, and the implications of these representations for collective memory and national identity in Indonesia. Together, these findings offer a comprehensive view of how the G30S event is portrayed

in educational texts and of the potential impact of these portrayals on historical understanding and national identity formation.

(a). *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the G30S Representation*

The representation of the G30S event in the history textbook is explored through a detailed CDA, revealing the interplay of language, power, and ideology. The Critical Discourse Analysis of Indonesian Grade XII history textbooks across different curricula (1994-2013) demonstrated a notable shift in the representation of the G30S event and the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI). Curriculum 1994 (1992 Edition): These textbooks portray the PKI in a highly negative light, consistent with the New Order government's anti-communist stance. The narrative is centred around betrayal and vilification, emphasizing the PKI's radical actions. Curriculum 1994 (1997 Edition): While still reflecting some negative aspects, there has been a slight shift toward a more nuanced portrayal, introducing complexity into the narrative, although the core themes remain similar to those of the earlier edition. Curriculum KTSP (2006): A noticeable change in representation appears, with textbooks offering a broader perspective. The portrayal of PKI begins to move away from solely negative depictions, suggesting a shift in educational focus toward more balanced historical interpretations. Curriculum 2013: This curriculum represents the most significant change. Textbooks under this curriculum adopt a multiperspective approach, providing various viewpoints on the G30S event. This indicates an educational shift toward critical thinking and fostering a more comprehensive understanding of historical events. These changes reflect the evolving political landscape and educational reforms in Indonesia. The progression from a unidimensional narrative to a more pluralistic and critical approach in the textbooks mirrors broader societal and political shifts, highlighting the role of educational materials in shaping collective memory and national identity.

(b). *Language Use and Narrative Structure*

The language and narrative structure of the 1994 curriculum textbooks " Indonesian National History Book for High Schools and Equivalent, Volume 3," written by Moedjanto, Nani Sunarti, Chr. Kristanto Dh., and Anton Haryono, exhibit a specific framing of the PKI. The PKI is discussed in various contexts: in the early radical phase of the national movement, during the Indonesian War of Independence, and during the period of Guided Democracy. The portrayal of the PKI is largely negative and characterized by terms such as "pengkhianatan" (betrayal) and descriptions of subversive actions. The narrative suggests that the PKI was divisive, self-interested, and engaged in betrayal, particularly in events such as the Madiun Affair and the G30S/PKI. This representation aligns with the anticommunist sentiment of the time and serves to position the PKI as a primary antagonist in Indonesian history.

The history textbook authored by I Wayan Badrika, published in 1997 for the 1994 curriculum, exhibits a narrative approach to the G30S/PKI event that aligns closely with the prevailing political narrative of the era, echoing similar thematic elements found in other textbooks of the same curriculum, albeit published in different years. This consistency highlights the influence of the broader sociopolitical context on educational content during that period. Both textbooks, despite their different publication years, are entrenched in the anti-communist ideology characteristic of the New Order regime. The PKI is consistently portrayed as a malevolent force, with language and narrative structure employed to frame the G30S as an act of betrayal and subversion. The use of charged terms such as "pengkhianatan" (betrayal) in the chapter titles and the overall depiction of the events constitute a clear discursive strategy, aiming to predispose readers to a specific understanding of the G30S event, one that vilifies the PKI.

The history textbooks by Ratna Hapsari and Abdul Syukur, published in 2008 under the KTSP 2006 curriculum, maintain the consistent narrative seen in earlier textbooks regarding the G30S/PKI event. This book continues to negatively portray the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), emphasizing its role in the Madiun rebellion of 1948 and depicting it as a significant threat to Indonesia's stability. The textbook positions the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) as defenders against the PKI's subversive activities, highlighting the military's efforts to maintain national stability. It also discusses the complex political dynamics of the time, including the PKI's influence on Indonesian politics and its conflict with the military. This portrayal of the G30S/PKI in the Hapsari and Syukur textbooks aligns with the dominant anticommunist narrative prevalent in Indonesian history education. The consistent depiction of the PKI as the main perpetrator across different textbooks and curricula reflects the enduring influence of state-sanctioned narratives in shaping national identity and collective memory in Indonesia.

The 2018 edition of the history textbook "Indonesian History" by Prof. Dr. Susanto Zuhdi et al. under the 2013 curriculum presents a more progressive and multifaceted approach to the G30S event. This edition is marked by its presentation of multiple perspectives on G30S, moving away from a singular narrative. It offers various theories about the event's orchestrators, ranging from internal military issues to international intelligence involvement, including the CIA, and even implicating figures such as Soekarno and Soeharto. This approach allows readers to view the event from numerous angles, encouraging critical thinking and a more comprehensive understanding of history. However, the inclusion of the "PKI" in the narrative still emphasizes the PKI's primary role in the event, maintaining an element of the traditional narrative. This nuanced presentation reflects a significant shift in Indonesia's educational approach toward a more balanced historical discourse.

(c). *Ideological Representation*

In the narrative of Indonesian history textbooks, the portrayal of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) has evolved significantly across various curricula. Initially, in the 1994 curriculum (1992 Edition), the PKI was depicted negatively, aligning with the New Order regime's anti-communist ideology. This portrayal emphasizes the PKI's alleged duplicity and propensity for violence, reinforcing its image as a major national threat. The 1994 curriculum (1997 Edition by I Wayan Badrika) continues to follow this trend, portraying the PKI as dangerous insurgents central to the G30S event. A shift begins with the KTSP 2006 curriculum, which presents a less biased and more analytical view of the PKI and the G30S. This reflects a broader political transition in Indonesia, moving away from singular anti-communist propaganda.

The 2013 curriculum (2018 Edition) demonstrated the most significant change, offering a variety of perspectives on the G30S event. This curriculum moves beyond the singular narrative of the PKI as solely villainous, introducing various theories and promoting a balanced and critical historical interpretation. This evolution in the textbooks aligns with broader shifts in Indonesia's educational approach, transitioning from a rigid anti-communist stance to a more multifaceted understanding of historical events. This ideological representation in the textbook is a clear instance of how educational materials can be used to propagate a specific political narrative, influencing the perception of historical events and shaping collective memory in line with state-sanctioned ideologies.

*(d). Discursive Practices and Sociocultural Context*

The sociocultural context of the New Order period, during which this textbook was published, significantly impacts the portrayal of the G30S event, particularly in terms of its depiction of the military and major general Soeharto. 1994 Curriculum (1992 Edition and 1997): Reflects the New Order's narrative, valorizing the military and Major General Soeharto. The textbook's language frames its actions against the G30S/PKI as divinely sanctioned and morally upright, aligning with religious and nationalistic values. The portrayal of the military's response, described as "the protection of the Almighty God," and aligned with "the loyalty of the people" and "adherence to Pancasila," serves to legitimize the regime's rule through ideological reinforcement. This narrative strategy reflects the broader sociocultural context of the New Order period, where the state sought to establish legitimacy by promoting specific ideological standpoints. This part of the analysis reveals the profound impact of the sociocultural context on educational narratives, highlighting how textbooks can serve as tools for ideological reinforcement and the shaping of collective memory in line with state-sanctioned narratives.

KTSP 2006 Curriculum: This curriculum marks a shift away from the New Order's narrative, introducing a more nuanced perspective on sociopolitical dynamics. The representation of military and political figures becomes less glorified, indicating a departure from the earlier heroic depiction. This shift suggests a changing sociocultural context that no longer strictly adheres to the state-sanctioned narrative, allowing for a more diverse interpretation of historical events. 2013 Curriculum (2018 Edition): This edition demonstrates a significant change in discourse, moving toward a critical analysis of historical events. The narrative no longer solely focuses on valorizing specific figures or institutions but rather presents a multifaceted view of the sociopolitical context surrounding the G30S event. This shift reflects an evolving sociocultural landscape that embraces a more inclusive and analytical approach to history, moving beyond the previous emphasis on ideological reinforcement. The 2013 Curriculum (2018 Edition) represents a departure from the state-centric narrative, highlighting a more diversified perspective on the G30S event and its historical significance.

*(e). Comparison of G30S Representations Across Different Curricula*

The evolution of G30S representation across different curricula, starting from the 1994 Curriculum (1992 Edition) to the 2013 Curriculum, reflects significant shifts in narrative perspectives, ideological influences, and historical interpretations. The 1994 Curriculum (1992 Edition) aligns closely with the New Order regime's narrative, emphasizing the heroic role of the military and major general Soeharto in countering the G30S/PKI event. The language frames their actions as divinely sanctioned and morally upright, aligning with religious and nationalistic values. The portrayal reinforced the state's political agenda during that period, utilizing a specific lexicon and omitting alternative perspectives.

Wayan Badrika's textbook 1997, developed within the 1994 Curriculum, maintains a similar thematic approach by valorizing the military and major general Soeharto. The language used echoes the New Order's narrative, emphasizing divine protection and loyalty to Pancasila. While providing a more detailed account, it aligns with the prevailing political ideology of the time, reinforcing the state-sanctioned narrative and presenting the PKI as a significant threat. The portrayal of the PKI as the undeniable perpetrator and framing the entire event as an act of treachery by the PKI align with the state's political agenda during the New Order period. This suggests that historical education, through these textbooks, played a role in reinforcing and legitimizing the state's narrative, contributing to a collective memory that may have influenced societal perceptions for several years.

The KTSP 2006 Curriculum marks a notable departure from the New Order narrative. The representation becomes more nuanced, emphasizing the complexities of political dynamics, the discovery of coup documents, and the role of various political entities. This shift indicates a move toward a more critical analysis and a departure from the previous heroic depiction of the military. The curriculum acknowledges sociopolitical nuances, reflecting a changing sociocultural context. The 2013 Curriculum (2018 Edition) represents a significant transformation in discourse, moving toward a critical analysis of historical events. It breaks away from solely valorizing specific figures or institutions,



presenting a multifaceted view of the sociopolitical context surrounding the G30S event. The narrative focuses on historical complexities and encourages students to engage critically with the events, aligning with a more inclusive and analytical approach to history.

The comparison reveals a clear trajectory in the G30S representation. The 1994 Curriculum and I Wayan Badrika's textbook maintain a consistent narrative, emphasizing the state-sanctioned perspective. The KTSP 2006 Curriculum introduces a more nuanced view, acknowledging political complexities, while the 2013 Curriculum takes a critical approach, emphasizing historical analysis and presenting a more diversified perspective. The evolution from a singular narrative emphasizing state legitimacy to a more critical and inclusive approach underscores the impact of changing sociopolitical contexts on history education. This comparison across curricula highlights the dynamic nature of historical representations and the importance of critically engaging with diverse perspectives to foster a more comprehensive understanding of historical events.

*(f). Impact on Collective Memory and National Identity*

The representation of the G30S/PKI event in Indonesian history textbooks, spanning from the 1994 Curriculum to the 2013 Curriculum, has had a profound impact on collective memory and national identity. These educational materials, shaped by the ideological and political contexts of their respective periods, play a pivotal role in influencing how subsequent generations perceive and remember historical events.

The persistent narrative across earlier curricula, particularly the 1994 Curriculum, and textbooks aligned with the New Order regime has contributed to the construction of a collective memory that frames the military's actions as heroic and morally righteous. The portrayal of the PKI as a central villain, marked by terms such as "betrayal" and "treachery," has ingrained a specific interpretation of the G30S events in the minds of students. This singular narrative has, in turn, influenced national identity by reinforcing a particular version of history that aligns with the state's political agenda. The glorification of military actions and the demonization of the PKI have contributed to a narrative that emphasizes national unity under the protection of divine forces and loyalty to Pancasila.

The impact extends beyond the classroom, permeating societal perceptions and discussions about Indonesia's past. The consistent portrayal of the G30S/PKI event in textbooks has shaped public discourse, influencing how the nation's history is remembered and discussed. It has contributed to the formation of a collective identity that often reflects the perspectives embedded in historical education. However, with the introduction of more critical perspectives in the KTSP 2006 Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum, there was a potential shift in the impact on collective memory and national identity. The acknowledgement of historical complexities and the encouragement of critical engagement from multiple perspectives may contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Indonesia's past. This shift has the potential to foster a collective memory that embraces diversity of thought and encourages a reflective and critical approach to the nation's history.

The textbook, therefore, is not only a medium for transmitting historical knowledge but also a tool for constructing national identity and collective memory, which are deeply influenced by the sociopolitical context of its creation. The way history is taught in Indonesian schools has profound implications for collective memory and national identity, especially regarding events as charged as the G30S. Educators' approach to teaching this contested chapter of history is critical in shaping how future generations will remember and interpret these events

*B. Discussion*

The analysis of the representation of the September 30th Movement (G30S) in Indonesian history textbooks, particularly within the frameworks of the 1994 curriculum, the KTSP (education unit level curriculum), and the 2013 curriculum, reveals how history education is often utilized as a tool to promote nationalism and reinforce the legitimacy of the ruling power. As explained in the context of Althusser (2006) theory, education, particularly through history textbooks, functions as a dominant ideological state apparatus (ISA), playing a crucial role in shaping students' consciousness and subjectivity in line with the values and ideologies desired by the state.

Moreover, recent studies emphasize the nuanced ways in which educational materials can both reflect and shape societal values. In the context of Indonesia, Giroux (1984) notes that history textbooks not only convey historical facts but also subtly embed and reinforce specific ideologies, aligning with Althusser's notion of educational institutions as key sites for ideological reproduction. This alignment of educational content with state narratives is seen as a critical factor in shaping collective understanding and national identity, as argued by Hadiz (2006). Who posit that the narratives presented in history textbooks play a significant role in the construction of national memory and identity, particularly in postauthoritarian societies such as Indonesia.

In the context of the G30S, high school history textbooks tend to depict the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) as the primary actor behind the event, following the official narrative developed during the New Order era. This narrative is not only affirmative in building nationalism but also compulsive and manipulative in emphasizing the rulers' superiority and reducing the importance of narratives contrary to "official history". This finding demonstrates the use of history as a tool for legitimizing power, consistent with Pérez Huber and Solorzano's (2015) view of textbooks as "ideological weapons of the dominant group.

For instance, Nguyễn and Rydstrom (2022) highlight the significant role of educational materials in shaping students' understanding of social realities. Educational materials, such as textbooks, can present information and interpretations

of various social, political, and economic issues. These interpretations can influence how students understand the world and shape their views on various matters, recent research by Schmidtke (2023) underscores the pivotal role of textbooks in perpetuating state-endorsed narratives, highlighting their influence in shaping collective memory and identity, especially in societies with a history of political turmoil and ideological shifts. The controversy surrounding the 1965 events, as stated by Ahmad (2016) highlights the complexity of historical narratives and the role of textbooks in influencing collective understanding. According to the "Indonesian History Class XII" (2018) textbook, a more progressive approach is adopted by offering various alternative theories about G30S, aligning with the Indonesian government's efforts to enlighten the nation. However, the use of the phrase "G30S/PKI" in the title and conclusion indicates ongoing subjectivity that continues to influence this event's representation in education.

The controversy surrounding the 1965 events, as highlighted by Ahmad (2016) underscores the intricate nature of historical narratives and the significant influence of textbooks in shaping public perception. In the 2018 edition of the "Indonesian History Class XII" textbook, a commendably progressive approach is evident, as it presents various alternative theories about the G30S incident. This methodology resonates with the broader educational goal of fostering intellectual growth and encouraging a more nuanced understanding of history among students. However, the persistent use of the "G30S/PKI" label in titles and conclusions suggests a lingering bias, subtly guiding the reader's interpretation toward viewing the PKI as the primary antagonist in the G30S narrative. Such framing could be seen as a reflection of the enduring influence of past political ideologies on contemporary educational content.

This aspect of the textbook aligns with recent scholarly discussions about the persistent impact of political ideologies on educational content, even in ostensibly reformed curricula. For instance, Darmawan et al. (2018) argue that textbooks are not only educational tools but also instruments of ideological transmission, often carrying remnants of past political narratives. Similarly Fuchs and Vera (2019) emphasize that while educational reforms aim to depoliticize history teaching, the legacy of previous regimes often lingers in subtle ways, shaping how historical events are framed and interpreted. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in contexts where political transitions have occurred but without a complete overhaul of the educational apparatus, leaving room for older narratives to persist alongside new interpretations.

This approach aligns with Althusser's view of education's role in maintaining the values necessary for preserving power. While history textbooks attempt to open space for more dialectical and inclusive discussions, dominant representation continues to influence the general public's understanding of G30S. This shows how education, as part of the social institution, becomes a battleground for various interests, resulting in student subjectivity that aligns with the official narrative desired by the state. This perspective is further reinforced by recent scholarship, such as the work of Besgul (2023) who argues that history education often serves as a tool for perpetuating the state's preferred narratives, subtly influencing students' understanding of past events. Similarly Barkan and Lang (2022) underscore the role of textbooks in shaping collective memory and identity, particularly in transitional societies where historical narratives are contentious and politically charged.

While the "Indonesian History" (2018) textbook attempts to offer a broader perspective on G30S, the predominant representation continues to impact the general public's perception of the event, as observed by Wieringa and Katjasungkana (2018). They noted that even with the introduction of alternative viewpoints in history education, the legacy of past political narratives often prevails, subtly guiding the collective understanding of established state narratives. This phenomenon highlights the ongoing struggle within educational systems to balance the dissemination of diverse historical perspectives with the lingering influence of entrenched political ideologies.

## V. CONCLUSION

In essence, the case of G30S representation in Indonesian history textbooks exemplifies the complex interplay between education, ideology, and state power, reflecting Althusser's insights into the role of educational institutions as vehicles for ideological transmission and the construction of social realities. Thus, the analysis of G30S representation in Indonesian history textbooks from the 1994 to 2013 curriculums illustrates how the narratives presented serve not only educational purposes but also as tools to maintain and reinforce state-desired ideologies and values. This highlights the importance of a critical approach in understanding and analysing history education materials, given their significant role in shaping collective consciousness and societal identity. Future studies should include a broader range of textbooks across different regions and educational levels to gain a more comprehensive understanding of historical representation in Indonesian education. Incorporate testimonies and perspectives from various stakeholders, including survivors, historians, and educators, to enrich the analysis and understanding of historical events.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by Universitas Sebelas Maret Research Grant under the contract number 260/UN27.22/HK.07.00/2021.

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# Pain as a Force – A Study of the Conceptual Metaphors of Pain in Vietnamese

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**Abstract**—This study aimed to investigate the conceptual metaphors of pain in Vietnamese. Twenty-six Vietnamese women with cancer were involved as research participants who took part in one-to-one semi-structured interviews with the researcher to provide information about their pain experience and their cancer condition. Data obtained from the interviews was transcribed, coded and interpreted using qualitative content analysis. Talmy's (1988) force dynamic schema was employed to identify the structure of conceptual metaphors of pain. The findings indicated that a wide variety of pain metaphors were found in Vietnamese, with PAIN AS A FORCE being the general metaphor followed by many more specific ones. While Vietnamese conceptual metaphors of pain overlap in multiple ways with those typically found in English and Greek, new findings emerged from the Vietnamese data, including PAIN AS A FRIGHTENING ENTITY, PAIN AS AN ENEMY, PAIN AS A REWARD OR A VALUABLE ASSET, and PAIN AS A NET OR A TRAP. The study contributed to validating the role of language in describing pain, enriching the international work concerning the conceptualisation of pain, and facilitating Vietnamese healthcare professionals' understanding about their patients' communication about pain using language.

**Index Terms**—Vietnamese pain language, conceptual metaphor, pain as a force, Talmy's force dynamic schema, cognitive semantic perspective

## I. INTRODUCTION

Pain is one of the most challenging and frightening domains of ordinary human experience (Halliday, 1998). Pain is also a complex, private, central, and ubiquitous experience playing an unavoidable role in the human condition (Lascaratou, 2007). Different definitions about pain have been proposed; however, the one preferred by the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) is currently achieving consensus, in which pain is defined as “[...] an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage” (Merskey & Bogduk, 1994, p. 250). The definition itself has implied that pain is a bio-psycho-social phenomenon (Melzack & Wall, 1996; Sussex, 2009).

When the reaction to pain is made public, language serves as an important channel to validate pain. People can express, describe, and qualify pain, making pain become part of their social reality (Lascaratou, 2007). Research on the language of pain has been conducted from different perspectives, ranging from the philosophical (Wittgenstein, 1967) to the bio-psycho-social (Kortessluoma & Nikkonen, 2006; Kugelmann, 1999; Melzack, 1975, 1987; Söderberg & Norberg, 1995; Strong et al., 2009), the interpretive language-based perspective (Diller, 1980; Fabrega & Tyma, 1976a, 1976b; Pugh, 1991), and the theoretical linguistic perspective (Bacchini, 2008; Halliday, 1998; Kövecses, 2008; Lascaratou, 2007, 2008; Lascaratou & Hatzidaki, 2002; Lascaratou & Marmaridou, 2005). Nonetheless, systematic research on Vietnamese pain language is minimal.

The metaphors of pain have been largely examined in bio-psycho-social research (Kortessluoma & Nikkonen, 2006; Kugelmann, 1999; Söderberg & Norberg, 1995), and in interpretive language-based research (Fabrega & Tyma, 1976a, 1976b; Pugh, 1991). The findings obtained from these studies, however, were not developed from any particular framework. On the other hand, conceptual metaphors of pain have been thoroughly investigated in English by Kövecses (2008) and in Greek by Lascaratou and Marmaridou (2005) and Lascaratou (2007, 2008). In these studies, the discussion on the metaphors of pain concentrates on how pain as an emotion is conceptualized in cognitive semantics, based on Talmy's (1988) force dynamic schema. Nonetheless, conceptual metaphors of pain in Vietnamese have not been discussed in relevant research.

The current study investigates conceptual metaphors of pain in Vietnamese, using Talmy's (1988) *Force Dynamics*, a well-established schema and already validated in metaphorical language research of other languages, in order to verify the role of language in describing and expressing pain and enrich the international work of pain language as well.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Conceptual Metaphors of Emotion

From the cognitive perspective, metaphor is a cognitive process, which not only influences how people perceive reality but also structures how they experience that reality; this is particularly true for phenomena such as emotion that

are difficult to comprehend and discuss in concrete terms (Lakoff & Johnson, 1981). Given that human emotions are heavily dependent on language (Enfield & Wierzbicka, 2002) and metaphor is central in the conceptualization of human emotions, Kövecses (2000) suggested that we must take into account the language and conceptualization of emotions, particularly conceptual metaphors, if we wish to understand our feelings. As Kövecses (2000) put it, exploring the language of emotion and its metaphor not only captures diverse and abstract emotional experiences but also helps understanding them. The conceptual metaphors of emotion, as argued by Kövecses (2000, 2008), are instantiations of a general force dynamic schema, which was outlined by Talmy (1988). Talmy (1988) discussed *Force Dynamics* as a semantic category – how entities interact with respect to force. The category typically includes such concepts as: the exertion of force, resistance to such exertion, and the overcoming of such resistance.

### B. Conceptual Metaphors of Pain

Metaphorical pain language has been investigated in English and Greek systematically by Kövecses (2008), Lascaratou and Marmaridou (2005), and Lascaratou (2007, 2008), using Talmy's (1988) force dynamic schema to conceptualize pain from cognitive semantic perspective.

#### (a). Conceptual Metaphors of Pain in English

Kövecses (2008) discussed examples of evaluative metaphors and phenomenological metaphors of pain, which were taken from his student Sági's (2005) thesis. Evaluative metaphors include PAIN IS DOWN (e.g., We *descended* into pain and darkness), PAIN IS DARK (e.g., His eyes were *darkened* by pain), and PAIN IS HEAVY (e.g., I feel *weighed down* with pain). Typical phenomenological metaphors are PAIN IS A CAPTOR/PRISON (e.g., She was a *prisoner shackled* to her pain), PAIN IS A SHARP OBJECT (e.g., A *sharp stab* of pain made her sit back down), PAIN IS AN INTRUDER (e.g., People react in different ways to pain's *continued intrusion* on the daily activities of their lives), PAIN IS A TORMENTING ANIMAL (e.g., A massive killing pain came over my right eye [...] I clawed at my head trying to uproot the *fiendish talons from their iron grip*), and PAIN IS FIRE (e.g., Pain is *fire that can devour* the whole body). As Kövecses (2008) explained, physical, mental, or emotional pain may cause a person to be confined to a place, be hurt by a sharp object, burned, and so forth. Pain metaphors are therefore conceptualized in terms of the potential causes as revealed in the given examples.

In addition to evaluative and phenomenological metaphors, Kövecses (2008) suggested a number of general conceptual metaphors of pain which follow the general force-dynamic pattern as proposed by Talmy (1988). The general metaphors include PAIN IS PRESSURE IN A CONTAINER (e.g., He was not strong enough to hide the *exploding* pain), PAIN IS A NATURAL FORCE (e.g., He was trying to push back the *waves* of pain), PAIN IS A PHYSICAL FORCE (e.g., He was suddenly *knocked down* by pain), PAIN IS A SOCIAL SUPERIOR (e.g., My life is *ruled* by pain), PAIN IS AN OPPONENT (e.g., She's *struggling to overcome* pain), PAIN IS A CAPTIVE ANIMAL (e.g., My *pain got out of hand*), PAIN IS INSANITY (e.g., In the last hours, she *grew crazy* with pain), PAIN IS A FORCE DISLOCATING THE SELF (e.g., She was *beside herself* with pain), and PAIN IS A BURDEN (e.g., Life is too short *to carry pain around*).

#### (b). Conceptual Metaphors of Pain in Greek

The set of *ponos* nominal constructions were found to be the metaphorical conceptualization of pain in Greek (Lascaratou, 2007, 2008; Lascaratou & Marmaridou, 2005). A number of Greek pain metaphors have been reported.

When *ponos* functions as object of the verbs *exo* (*have*), *esthanome* (*feel*), and *njotho* (*feel*), the metaphor PAIN IS A POSSESSION/ A POSSESSED OBJECT is instantiated.

When *ponos* functions as subject in intransitive structures, the metaphor PAIN IS AN EVENT is activated. The *event structure* metaphor is also instantiated with PAIN IS HEAT/FIRE (e.g., *o ponos ezvise, o alos, o dikos mu*: The pain has faded away, the other, my own; *kapsimo exo edo*: I've got something burning here), and PAIN IS MADNESS/INSANITY (e.g., *kseris ti pono! trela pono!*: You know what kind of pain! Pain (which is) madness!). The location of pain is also expressed in the motion of pain, with the personification of pain derived from its metaphorical representation PAIN IS A MOVING ENTITY (e.g., *erxete o ponos, fevji, ksanarxete*: The pain comes and goes, comes back again). This metaphor is further configured as A VOLUNTARY, SELF-WILLED MOVING ENTITY and as AN INTRUDER, AN UNDESIRED, UNINVITED, AND UNWELCOME VISITOR.

When *ponos* functions as subject in transitive structures, it is, in functional terms, the Actor and also the Agent in the material processes, where the sufferer's self functions as the Goal. Pain is also metaphorically expressed in the event structure. Once established as A SELF-WILLED INTRUSIVE VISITOR OF THE HUMAN BODY, pain is further construed as AN EXTERNAL INVASIVE ENEMY setting on the sufferer's self (e.g., *apotoma mja mera m'epjase enas ponos*: Suddenly one day a pain sets on me), as A MALEVOLENT AGGRESSOR, i.e. A RUTHLESS TORTURER acquiring additional power of engaging in malevolent, aggressive actions directed against the sufferer's self (e.g., *tora, as pume, me kei me kei*: Now, for instance, it's burning me, it's burning me), and as A DYNAMIC AGENTIVE FORCE holding back the sufferer's self, which finally confine and imprison him/her (e.g., *de m'afini (o ponos) na sikoθo*: It (the pain) does not let me stand up; *exete kapja drastiriōtita ... i o ponos sas exi periorisi sto spiti...?*: Do you have any activity ... or has the pain confined you at home?).

When *ponos* functions as circumstance of cause, pain is understood as a condition under which the sufferer is tormented and forced to lose control by performing different external responses. For example, the metaphor PAIN IS A TORMENTOR/ TORTURER is instantiated in *lipoθimisa apo ton pono* (I fainted from (the) pain).

When *ponos* functions as object in transitive structures, pain is metaphorically construed as an OPPONENT that must be *placed under control* (e.g., *exo θesi ipo elenxo... tus ponus, iparxi ke kapja veltiosi me to voltaren*: I have got the pains under control, there is even some improvement with Voltaren) or *be endured at all costs* (e.g., *tin kardia petra ke θa ipomenuma ton pono*: We shall turn our hearts into stones so as to endure the pain).

### C. Research on Pain Language in Vietnamese

It can be observed that Vietnamese pain language has been scarcely examined. Specifically, back in 1980, Diller conducted a contrastive analysis of pain terms across languages in which Vietnamese pain terms were discussed. In Diller's study, two differentiated pain terms **đau** and **nhức** were found in Vietnamese, with the former being less focused, internal, and intense than the latter. It was also found that these two terms could be used to report muscular pain conditions, indicating changes in state. Recently, Nguyen (2018a, 2018b) investigated the association between the dominant religions in Vietnam and the Vietnamese communication about the nature of pain and pain coping strategies. Nonetheless, Nguyen's studies merely concentrated on Vietnamese pain communication, not Vietnamese pain language, although the studies helped confirm the language role in the Vietnamese communication about pain.

In summary, although language has been regarded as a key channel to validate pain and various studies have been conducted to investigate the language of pain, research on pain language in Vietnamese is still minimal. Moreover, while conceptual metaphors of pain have been systematically explored in languages such as English and Greek, research on the conceptual metaphors of pain in Vietnamese is almost absent. This indicates a need for a thorough investigation into Vietnamese conceptual metaphors of pain in order to not only validate the language role in the expression and description of pain but also contribute to enriching the international work with the conceptualisation of pain in Vietnamese.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### A. Research Participants

Participants in the study included twenty-six Vietnamese women with cancer of different types and at different stages, who were being treated in a large hospital in Vietnam. The cancer patients aged from 37 to 79; they were experiencing pain but felt well enough to take part in the interviews with the researcher. Cancer patients were selected so that they could provide rich data about their pain experience through which the pain language produced would also be abundant.

### B. Data Collection

Ethical approval for the study was granted by The University of Queensland Behavioural and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee and the Research Committee of the hospital in Vietnam. The researcher was also able to invite a treating doctor from the hospital to function as the contact person who connected the researcher with the potential patients. All the patients voluntarily agreed to participate in the research and have their interviews recorded.

The study employed one-to-one semi-structured interviews to collect data. Interviewing is preferred by most people because of its natural and socially acceptable way of collecting information (Dörnyei, 2007); moreover, interviewing is regarded as the single most reliable indicator of a person's pain experience (Bergh et al., 2005) and has therefore been utilized in different pain language studies. When taking part in the interview sessions, the patients were asked about their pain experience and their cancer condition such as types of cancer, stages of cancer, and cancer treatment. The interview protocol was designed in Vietnamese and the entire interview process was also conducted in Vietnamese. It was expected that the patients would feel comfortable and that the researcher would be able to capture any new ideas arising from the patients' answers, and then ask for clarification. The metaphors of pain were expected to emerge from the language the patients used to describe their pain experience.

### C. Data Analysis

The data collected from the interviews was transcribed, coded, cross-checked by a second coder and finally interpreted. The coding of the metaphors of pain was conducted on both sentential and discursal levels. The force dynamic schema developed by Talmy (1988) was employed to identify the structure of conceptual metaphors of pain in the current study. Based on Talmy's (1988) schema, pain in Vietnamese was typically coded as A FORCE; this is the general metaphor of pain followed by nine more specific ones which are also instantiations of Talmy's schema.

Both general and specific metaphors of pain in Vietnamese were presented. Qualitative content analysis was employed whereby interpretation of the data was based on the patients' pain talk as well as the relevant literature.

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Pain as a Force Impeding the Sufferer's Actions and Functions

The metaphor PAIN AS A FORCE IMPEDING THE SUFFERER'S ACTIONS AND FUNCTIONS can be extended to the lower-level metaphors PAIN AS IMPRISONMENT OR CONFINEMENT and PAIN AS A DESTROYER OF ONE'S CAPABILITY. First of all, pain was reported to prevent the patients from functioning properly; for example, they were unable to walk around (1):

- (1) Nó đau mà không đi đâu được.  
It (dummy subject) hurt then not walk where able.  
It hurts (so much that) I can't go anywhere.

Example (1) indicates the Vietnamese patient's desperate desire to escape from her current location but she could not. She was confined in one place because of pain. The concept of pain in (1) therefore initiates the metaphor PAIN AS IMPRISONMENT OR CONFINEMENT, which was previously discussed by Kugelmann (1999), Lascaratou (2007), and Sági (2005). PAIN AS IMPRISONMENT OR CONFINEMENT therefore reveals constrictions and inescapable limits, and can also be considered as being associated with the more general metaphor of emotion proposed by Kövecses (2000), such as EXISTENCE OF EMOTION IS BEING IN A BOUNDED SPACE.

The metaphor PAIN AS IMPRISONMENT OR CONFINEMENT, which has been exemplified in terms of physical space in the previous paragraph, can also be interpreted as preventing or inhibiting one's capability. The following examples illustrate pain being conceptualised as A DESTROYER OF ONE'S CAPABILITY to perform a number of actions or functions; for example, the sufferers were unable to lie on either their side or their back (2), they were unable to eat (3), or to sleep (4):

- (2) (Tã) đau mà phải ngồi, nằm-nghiêng không được, nằm-ngửa không được.  
(I) hurt then have to sit, lie on one's side not able, lie on one's back not able.  
I hurt (so much that) I can't lie on my side, I can't lie on my back.
- (3) (Tã) đau mà không ăn được cái gì  
(I) hurt then not eat able what.  
I hurt (so much that) I can't eat anything.
- (4) (Dì) đau mà không ngủ được.  
(Aunt-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro.) hurt then not sleep able.  
I hurt (so much that) I can't sleep.

Examples (2)-(4), in addition to expressing the limitations and boundaries caused by pain, also signal that the body machinery is not operating as it should. Therefore, the metaphor PAIN AS A DESTROYER OF ONE'S CAPABILITY is associated with the metaphors proposed by Aldrich and Eccleston (2000), including PAIN AS SIGNAL OF MALFUNCTION (e.g., *Pain as a sign of serious damage that needs repair*) and PAIN AS AN ALIEN INVADER (e.g., *Pain is a specific and dangerous kind of destroyer*).

#### B. Pain as a Force Impeding the Sufferer's Language

The data has so far described the physical constraints caused by pain. The current section now turns to discuss the cognitive constraints caused by pain: the inhibiting and destroying features of pain present the metaphor PAIN AS A FORCE IMPEDING THE SUFFERER'S LANGUAGE. Pain is therefore conceptualised as AN INHIBITOR and A DESTROYER in the sufferer's performance of language:

- (5) Nó (xương) đau mà khó tả lắm.  
It (bone) hurt then difficult describe very much.  
It (the bone) hurts in such a way that I can't describe it.
- (6) (Chị) đau mà không thể so-sánh với cái gì hết.  
(Elder sister-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro.) hurt then cannot compare with anything.  
I hurt (so much that) I can't compare it with anything else.
- (7) (Tui) nhức mà không nói.  
(I) ache then not speak able.  
I ache (so much that) I can't speak.

In the pain expressions (5)-(7), the patients were unable to describe pain, compare pain with anything else, or even simply speak. As Diller (1980) and Ehlich (1985) claimed, various ways of expressing pain include: crying and groaning, pain interjections, and pain descriptions. What the patient in (7) meant by being unable to speak is that she could not produce meaningful utterances in order to describe pain. The patient, however, was still able to cry and groan, or produce pain interjections as other ways of expressing pain.

When pain inhibits the sufferer's language, both the increasing intensity of pain and the indescribable aspect of pain make pain become conceptually separated from the sufferer, and contribute to impeding and destroying the sufferer's language. As Melzack and Wall (1996) stated, people in pain often find themselves at a loss for words; this notion was also supported in research conducted by Söderberg and Norberg (1995), DeSouza and Frank (2000), and Lascaratou (2007). Furthermore, Scarry (1985) and Woolf (2002) generalised pain as totally private and untransmittable, resisting and actively destroying language. In Vietnamese, when pain is conceptualised as A FORCE IMPEDING THE SUFFERER'S LANGUAGE, it obviously inhibits and destroys the patients' language ability; however, pain cannot totally destroy the patients' desire for language, and language remains as a channel through which pain is expressed and described.



### C. Pain as a Force Causing the Sufferer's Physical Deformation or Injury

Pain often results in suffering in different parts of the patients' body. This initiates the metaphor PAIN AS A FORCE CAUSING THE SUFFERER'S PHYSICAL DEFORMATION OR INJURY. As in the examples below, the stomach was pulled down (8), or rolling, boiling, and rotating (9), the limbs felt as if they were being separated from the body (10), or the breast became swollen (11):

- (8) (Cô) đau mà nó (cái bụng) trì xuống dưới này.  
(Aunt-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro.) hurt then it (CLF stomach) pull down under here.  
I hurt (so much that) my stomach is pulled down.
- (9) (Mệ) đau mà cái bụng cuốn-cuốn sôi-sôi xoay-xoay.  
(Grandma-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro.) hurt then CLF stomach roll roll boil boil rotate rotate.  
I hurt (so much that) my stomach rolls, boils, and rotates.
- (10) (Tôi) đau mà chân-tay rụng-rời.  
(I) hurt then limbs fall and lose.  
I hurt (so much that) my limbs feel as if they were being separated from my body.
- (11) (Chị) nhức mà cả cái vú sưng luôn.  
(Elder sister-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro.) ache then whole CLF breast swell PART.  
I ache (so much that) my whole breast gets swollen.

As Lascaratou (2007) suggested, a majority of the pain descriptors in the MPQ established by Melzack (1975) are metaphorical in nature, for example, pain is described as *beating, shooting, stabbing, flashing, burning, scalding, stinging, gnawing, and splitting*. These pain descriptors involve the sense of PHYSICAL DEFORMATION OR INJURY. The conceptualisation of pain as causing PHYSICAL DEFORMATION was specifically discussed by Fabrega and Tyma (1976a), Söderberg and Norberg (1995), and Lascaratou (2007). In their presentation of the English pain terms, Fabrega and Tyma (1976a) stated that the English terms such as *burning, cutting, and crushing* elaborate the pain experience, which is generalised as a PHYSICAL PROCESS being captured by PHYSICAL DEFORMATION, DESTRUCTION, DAMAGE, and HARM. Similarly, in Söderberg and Norberg's (1995) research, when the patients reported feeling as if they were being burned or boiled, these metaphorical expressions of pain also indicate the physical change being interpreted as A PHYSICAL DEFORMATION or A TORTURE-LIKE EXPERIENCE. Moreover, in Lascaratou's (2007) investigation of Greek pain language, pain is understood as A VICIOUS/RUTHLESS TORTURER or A MALEVOLENT AGGRESSOR, resulting in the sufferer's PHYSICAL DEFORMATION. These metaphorical expressions of pain, together with the Vietnamese pain expressions (8)-(11), all stress pain as A TORTURER causing PHYSICAL DEFORMATION OR INJURY in the sufferers, and the sufferers therefore become the VICTIMS of pain, who try to accept and adapt to the situation. Accordingly, the physical model of pain occurs not only in English language and culture as claimed by Fabrega and Tyma (1976a), but also in others, including but not limited to Swedish, Greek, and Vietnamese.

### D. Pain as a Force Causing the Sufferer's Involuntary Actions

In the current section where the metaphor PAIN AS A FORCE CAUSING THE SUFFERER'S INVOLUNTARY ACTION is the focus, pain can also be conceptualised as AN INTRUDER INTO THE SUFFERER'S LIFE. It is PAIN AS AN INTRUDER that causes the sufferer to perform involuntary actions, for example, keeping their eyes tight shut (12), wandering around ceaselessly (13), or holding another person's arm and pinching him/her (14):

- (12) (Tôi) đau đầu mà phải nhắm mắt vậy.  
(I) hurt head then have to shut eyes PART.  
I hurt in the head (so much that) I have my eyes tight shut.
- (13) Chị nhức mà cứ đi-quanh-đi-quất, đi-quanh-đi-quất vậy.  
Elder sister-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro. ache then keep wander around, wander around PART.  
I ache (so much that) I keep wandering around, wandering around.
- (14) (Dì) đau mà vớ được ai là phải cầm tay người đó mà nhéo họ như-vậy.  
(Aunt-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro.) hurt then catch someone then have to hold arm person that and pinch them so.  
I hurt (so much that) if I am able to catch somebody, I will hold his/her arm and pinch him/her.

The metaphor PAIN AS AN INTRUDER into people's daily life activities has been discussed by Sági (2005) and Lascaratou (2007). Specifically, Sági (2005) presented the example *People react in different ways to pain's continued intrusion on the daily activities of their lives*. Or Lascaratou (2007) stated that the pain actually invades the sufferer's self, although she did not specify how the invasion influences the sufferer's daily life activities. Similarly, PAIN AS AN INTRUDER in Vietnamese is definitely unwelcome and uninvited. It interferes with the sufferers' life, making them lose control over their actions. These actions are therefore beyond and against the sufferers' will, which affect either the sufferers themselves or both the sufferers and others. In particular, PAIN AS AN INTRUDER in a different sense in example (14) has seemingly turned the sufferer into AN ATTACKER, although the sufferer did not mean to be

AN ATTACKER; the actions of grabbing another person's arm and pinching him/her are merely signals of helplessness and distress.

#### E. Pain as a Force Causing the Sufferer's Involuntary Language

We now present the metaphor PAIN AS A FORCE CAUSING THE SUFFERER'S INVOLUNTARY LANGUAGE, where pain continues to be metaphorically understood as AN INTRUDER. In addition to causing physical and social interference in the patients' daily life activities, pain also causes more cognitive interference in the patients' performance of language by making them produce some language in an unwelcome and uninvited manner. Such language performance is beyond their will and control, for example, the patients cry out to their mother and father (15), cry out to Trời and Đất (16) (which can be roughly translated as *Heaven and Earth*), or even swear (17):

(15) (Tôi) đau mà kêu Cha kêu Mẹ.

(I) hurt then cry Father cry Mother.

I hurt (so much that) I cry out to my father and mother.

(16) Đêm nào (mẹ) cũng đau mà kêu Trời kêu Đất.

Night every (grandma-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro.) also hurt then cry Heaven cry Earth.

Every night, I hurt (so much that) I cry out to Heaven and Earth.

(17) Chị đau đến mức mà chửi-đồng lu ôn, em à

Elder sister 1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro. hurt to extent that swear PART, younger sibling VOC!

I hurt so much that I swear, you know!

The pain expressions (15)-(17) have contributed to emphasising the complex influence that pain places on language. Pain not only inhibits and destroys language but also causes involuntary language performance; or in other words, pain still cannot destroy the patients' desire for language. As AN INTRUDER, pain invokes language in order to liberate the patients from the unpleasant experience of pain or at least to reduce the uneasy feeling resulting from pain. For example, when swearing is employed, though involuntarily, as in (17), this type of undesired language can also be understood as pain coping because swearing has been associated with increased pain tolerance (Stephens et al., 2009). By its very nature, an INTRUDER is unwelcome and uninvited and tends to do harm to others; however, in the current section, PAIN AS AN INTRUDER into the patients' language performance can be interpreted as having a positive influence when the language performance itself, though undesired, can help in alleviating pain.

#### F. Pain as a Force Causing the Sufferer's Undesired Mental State

As a FORCE, pain also causes the sufferer to undergo an undesired mental state: the sufferer may grow crazy or lose consciousness because of pain. In the example (18) below, pain drives the patients crazy, allowing us to formulate the metaphor PAIN IS A FORM OF INSANITY:

(18) (Đì) đau mà điên luôn a đó.

(Aunt-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro.) hurt then crazy PART.

I hurt (so much that) I grow crazy.

The metaphor PAIN IS INSANITY was already discussed by Kövecses (2008) (e.g., *In the last hours, she grew crazy with pain*). Moreover, Lascaratou (2007) presented a similar metaphor BEING IN PAIN IS BEING INSANE. The concept of INSANITY or MADNESS, according to Lascaratou (2007), regularly represents severe pain intensity as well as indicates the distressing psychological effects of intense pain. The Vietnamese patients also employed the metaphor PAIN IS A FORM OF INSANITY to express these features of pain.

The undesired mental state experienced by the Vietnamese patients includes not only the feeling of MADNESS or INSANITY but also that of UNCONSCIOUSNESS. In the example (19), the patient loses consciousness as a result of pain, exemplifying the metaphor PAIN IS UNCONSCIOUSNESS:

(19) (Đì) đau mà bất-tỉnh không biết gì hết!

(Aunt-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro.) hurt then lose consciousness not know anything!

I hurt (so much that) I lose consciousness, not knowing anything!

#### G. Pain as a Force Causing Negative Affects in the Sufferer

Pain is also conceptualised as A FORCE CAUSING NEGATIVE AFFECTS IN THE SUFFERER. Pain results in the sufferer's thinking about death and fearing death (20), which initiates the metaphor PAIN AS A KILLER:

(20) Tôi sợ (tôi) đau quá thì chết.

I fear (I) hurt too much then die.

I fear that I hurt so much that I will die.

The metaphor PAIN AS A KILLER was discussed by Lascaratou (2007): the sufferer's self "is completely overcome by the devastating force of the pain [...] to the point that he feels as if he has ceased to live" (p. 167). The Vietnamese patients experience a similar feeling; they can sense death, which is brought about by pain, is approaching.

The sufferer's negative affects also include their unwillingness to live (21), or even their desire to terminate their own life (22). These affects indicate the tormenting experience suffered by the patients; pain has placed them into a situation where they actively wish to die. As a result, the metaphor PAIN AS A TORMENTOR / TORTURER is again instantiated:

- (21) Còn (mình) đau-đớn quằn-quại không muốn sống làm gì  
 And (I) hurt much agonizing not want live do what.  
 And I hurt a great deal, to such an agonizing extent that I do not want to live.
- (22) (Tôi) đau mà chỉ muốn chết thôi.  
 (I) hurt then only want die only.  
 I hurt (so much that) I just want to die.

The negative effects in the sufferer also include the fear for pain and the hatred for pain. It was found in the previous studies that the fear of pain is overwhelming and second only to the fear of death (Zborowski, 1969). Moments with intense pain give rise to fearful thinking about pain, and the fear of pain therefore increases (Crombez et al., 2013). The Vietnamese data has revealed that all the patients admitted that they not only feared but also hated pain:

- (23) Chị sợ đau, ghét đau lắm em ơi!  
 Elder sister – 1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro. fear pain, hate pain very much, younger sibling VOC!  
 I fear pain and hate pain very much, you know!
- (24) Nghĩ đến con đau là chị thấy sợ rồi.  
 Think about CLF pain then elder sister- 1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro. feel frightened already.  
 Thinking about pain already makes me feel frightened.

As the examples (23)-(24) indicate, the patients did not specify why they feared and hated pain, and they did not further elaborate their fear and hatred. Nonetheless, the fact that all patients repeatedly claimed they feared and hated pain instantiates the metaphors PAIN AS A FRIGHTENING ENTITY and PAIN AS AN ENEMY.

#### H. Pain as a Self-Willed Moving Entity

Pain can also be construed as a force in the metaphor PAIN AS A SELF-WILLED MOVING ENTITY, which is adopted from Lascaratou's (2007) research discussing pain in Greek as "AN INTRUDER, AN UNDESIRE, UNINVITED AND UNWELCOME VISITOR, who *appears* and *disappears arbitrarily*, actually invading the sufferer's self" (p. 154). The Vietnamese patients produced pain expressions in which pain arrives unexpectedly or gradually (25)-(26), moves to different places (27)-(28), and finally stops (29). These Vietnamese examples illustrate pain, as Lascaratou (2007) stated, "not simply as A MOVING OBJECT, but most importantly as A VOLUNTARY, SELF-WILLED and, therefore, ANIMATE ENTITY" (p. 153). The moving of pain is self-willed and voluntary, but the pain itself is undesired, uninvited, and unwelcome:

- (25) Nhiều khi con-đau tới bất-thình-lình.  
 Many times the pain come suddenly.  
 For many times, the pain comes suddenly.
- (26) Con-đau đến từ-từ thôi.  
 The pain come gradual only.  
 The pain comes gradually only.
- (27) Bây-giờ con-đau về nơi xương-cụt.  
 Now the pain move place sacrum.  
 Now the pain is moving down to the sacrum.
- (28) Rồi con-đau lên não vậy-đó.  
 Then the pain go up brain PART.  
 Then the pain goes up to the brain.
- (29) Bây-giờ thì con-đau vừa-mới hết xong.  
 Now then the pain just stop PART.  
 Now the pain has just stopped.

The fact that pain is conceptualised as A MOVING ENTITY was previously discussed not only in Greek by Lascaratou (2007) but also in English by Fabrega and Tyma (1976a) and in Swedish by Söderberg and Norberg (1995). For instance, as Fabrega and Tyma (1976a) argued, in the pain expression *The pain raced through my arm*, the experience has been anthropomorphized to the point that it can be conceived of as an agent capable of performing an action. Or pain was described as "being spread all over the body or as wandering from one location to another" (Söderberg & Norberg, 1995, p. 57).

#### I. Pain as an Undesired Possession

PAIN AS A POSSESSION is a common concept discussed in a number of studies, for example, Halliday (1998), Kugelmann (1999), and Lascaratou (2007). The possession of pain (e.g., *I have a terrible pain*), as Lascaratou (2007) claimed, is associated with the existence of an emotion (e.g., *He has a lot of trouble / anxieties*). Therefore, the metaphor PAIN AS A POSSESSION is associated with the metaphor of emotion EXISTENCE OF EMOTION IS POSSESSION OF AN OBJECT / POSSESSING AN OBJECT, presented by Kövecses (2000). The Vietnamese data further emphasises this POSSESSION as being undesired, which therefore initiates the metaphor PAIN AS AN UNDESIRE POSSESSION. Specifically, as an undesired possession, pain is endured and carried by the sufferer, acquired and labelled by the sufferer, received by the sufferer, or saved for and awarded to the sufferer by external super-human agencies, or the sufferer is caught in pain and thus has no option but to possess it. The possession is

undesired, and therefore is involuntary. Moreover, it is INALIENABLE POSSESSION in the sense that the possession is unable to be taken away or given away from the possessor and transferred to new ownership. In addition, this UNDESIRE POSSESSION possesses a number of undesired qualities and intensity.

In the example (30), the patient claimed she was able to endure pain and involuntarily accepted the existence of pain. In particular, the patient specifically admitted having to carry pain as a burden; this is another way to express the notion of enduring pain. Accordingly, when pain as an undesired possession is endured and carried by the sufferer, pain can also be interpreted as A FORCE, and the metaphor PAIN AS A BURDEN is formulated. This metaphor was also discussed by Kövecses (2008), who introduced *Life is too short to carry pain around* as an instantiation of PAIN IS A BURDEN:

- (30) Chị có thể chịu đựng đau, chị  
phải cố mà chịu đựng thôi.  
Elder sister – 1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro. can bear pain, elder sister – 1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro.  
have to try PART bear PART.  
I can bear the pain, I have to try to bear it.

In the following pain expressions, pain is received by the sufferer (31), saved for the sufferer (32), and awarded to the sufferer (33). PAIN AS AN UNDESIRE POSSESSION is ironically interpreted as A REWARD or A VALUABLE ASSET in these examples. Such a PROPERTY is actually of little cash value (Kugelmann, 1999); however, the sufferers were so upset about pain that they could not help mocking the existence of pain as being very rewarding and valuable. As a result, the metaphors PAIN AS A REWARD and PAIN AS A VALUABLE ASSET are instantiated:

- (31) Thiệt đó dì lãnh mấy cái đau đó hết-rồi.  
True that, aunt-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro. receive PART (plural noun) CLF pain those already.  
Definitely, I have received all those pains already.
- (32) Ông-Trời để-dành đau hết cho dì rồi. Dì  
cũng không-nên phàn-nàn chi nữa.  
Ông-Trời save pain all for aunt-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro. already. Aunt-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro.  
PART shouldn't complain what more.  
Ông-Trời has saved all the pains for me already. I shouldn't complain any more.
- (33) Mấy cái đau đó được tặng cho dì hết-rồi.  
PART (plural noun) CLF pain those be awarded to aunt-1<sup>st</sup> per.sing.pro. already.  
Those pains have been awarded to me already.

In another example, PAIN AS AN UNDESIRE POSSESSION functions as A NET or A TRAP, in which the sufferers are caught and they are forced to possess pain against their will (34). This example suggests another metaphor PAIN AS A NET OR A TRAP:

- (34) Tôi vướng-vào cái đau thể-xác lẫn đau tinh-thần.  
I be caught CLF pain physical and pain mental.  
I have been caught in both physical pain and mental pain.

## V. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that a wide variety of pain metaphors have been found in Vietnamese, with PAIN AS A FORCE being the general metaphor followed by more specific ones, including (1) PAIN AS A FORCE IMPEDING THE SUFFERER'S ACTIONS AND FUNCTIONS, (2) PAIN AS A FORCE IMPEDING THE SUFFERER'S LANGUAGE, (3) PAIN AS A FORCE CAUSING THE SUFFERER'S PHYSICAL DEFORMATION OR INJURY, (4) PAIN AS A FORCE CAUSING THE SUFFERER'S INVOLUNTARY ACTIONS, (5) PAIN AS A FORCE CAUSING THE SUFFERER'S INVOLUNTARY LANGUAGE, (6) PAIN AS A FORCE CAUSING THE SUFFERER'S UNDESIRE MENTAL STATE, (7) PAIN AS A FORCE CAUSING NEGATIVE AFFECTS IN THE SUFFERER, (8) PAIN AS A SELF-WILLED MOVING ENTITY, and (9) PAIN AS AN UNDESIRE POSSESSION. These metaphors can be interpreted as an instantiation of Talmy's (1988) force dynamic schema and corresponds to Kövecses's (2000, 2008, 2010) metaphor of emotion, namely, EMOTIONS ARE FORCES. Moreover, such metaphors of pain in Vietnamese overlap in various ways with those typically found by Kövecses (2008), Lascaratou (2007, 2008), Lascaratou and Marmaridou (2005), amongst others; however, they are investigated here with a focus on Vietnamese language and culture. In other words, many of the specific metaphors of pain have displayed similarities between Vietnamese data with data from English, Greek, and Swedish. Nonetheless, some new findings have emerged from the Vietnamese data, including PAIN AS A FRIGHTENING ENTITY, PAIN AS AN ENEMY, PAIN AS A REWARD OR A VALUABLE ASSET, and PAIN AS A NET OR A TRAP. These metaphors have therefore contributed to enriching the conceptualisation of pain in a much broader way.

The study has supported the idea that pain is difficult to describe, so that metaphors are a fundamental underlying part of the patients' attempt to communicate their pain experience. In addition to enriching international work in the area of pain language, this study contributes to Vietnamese healthcare professionals' understanding of how their patients use language to communicate about their pain experience, assisting them to provide more timely treatment and

encouragement for the patients. The study has also shed light on a number of new research domains for Vietnamese applied linguists who attempt to explore language problems in areas such as health, therapy, and counselling in order to make significant contributions which can go far beyond just education.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express her deep gratitude to the Vietnamese cancer patients who gave their time to be interviewed and the Vietnamese doctors and nurses for their support during the collection of the data.

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