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## Contents

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### REGULAR PAPERS

- Pre-Service Primary General Teacher-Students' Attitudes Towards Written Language Activities  
Based on Musical Stimuli  
*Eirini Nikolaou and Alexandra Galani* 1947
- The Flipped Classroom to Improve the EFL Listening Skill  
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- The Attributes of Postmodern Pluralism, Skepticism, and Relativism in Selected Kurt Vonnegut's Four Novels  
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*Mardi Widodo, Mohamad Syahri, Usep Supriatna, Sumadi Sumadi, and Sita Isna Malyuna* 2019
- Measuring the Efficiency of Post-Edited Text Generated by CAT Tools: An Experimental Study  
*Hind S. Alsaif and Ebtisam S. Aluthman* 2025
- The Historical Change of the Vowels a/ə/e in Turkic Languages  
*Zhumabayeva Zh.T., Ospangaziyeva N.B., Bazarbayeva Z.M., Fazylzhanova A.M., and Amanbayeva A.Zh.* 2037
- The Death of Monarchs: Front-Page Reporting of Queen Elizabeth II's Death  
*Ibrahim M. Darwish, Abdulaziz A. Alzoubi, and Noora Q. Abu Ain* 2046
- Short Stories and AI Tools: An Exploratory Study  
*Abdulrahman Mokbel Mahyoub Hezam and Abdulelah Alkhateeb* 2053
- Rhetorical Move-Step Analysis of Argumentative Essays by Chinese EFL Undergraduate Students  
*Hongjian Liu, Lilliati Ismail, and Norhakimah Khaissa Ahmad* 2063
-

Empowering Community Interpreters' Competence Through Appropriate Work Attitudes: A Case Study on Interpreting in a Religious Setting <i>Febrina Tobing, Rudy Sofyan, Syahron Lubis, and Umar Mono</i>	2073
Advancements and Impact of Medical Translation During the Golden Age: A Comprehensive Analysis <i>Yazid Abdulrahman Al-Ismail</i>	2080
A Contrastive Study of Conceptual Metaphor "Death is Rest" in Vietnamese and English <i>Ha T. X. Pham and Ha T. Trinh</i>	2086
The Impact of the Use of Agricultural Technology on Lexical Innovation in Rice Field Agriculture <i>Novita Puspahaty, Dian Indira, Wahya, and Susi Machdalena</i>	2097
A Conceptual Framework for Teaching Arabic as a Second Language <i>Sultan A. Almelhes and Hussain E. Alsaiani</i>	2110
The Translator as a Colonial Agent: Reframing the South in the English Translation of <i>Season of Migration to the North</i> <i>Areej Allawzi, Deema Ammari, Mousa Awwad, and Mais Al-Shara'h</i>	2119
Communicating With Ancestors: Paired Clauses in the Buntang Ritual of the Dayak Maanyan in East Barito, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia <i>Dwiani Septiana, Wakit Abdullah Rais, Sahid Teguh Widodo, and Andi Indah Yulianti</i>	2129
Conversational Norms in Speech Acts: A Study of the Effect of Deficits on Communication <i>Elamin Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed</i>	2135
Forging Alternative Resistance Through Empathy in Sahar Khalifeh's <i>Wild Thorns</i> <i>Samah Jarrad, Raihanah M. M., and Ravichandran Vengadasamy</i>	2142
Examining Social Actors in Investment Fraud News: A Transitivity and Appraisal Analysis <i>Eny Maulita Purnama Sari, Riyadi Santosa, Djatmika Djatmika, and Tri Wiratno</i>	2150
Development and Validation of Phonological Processing Assessment Tool in Kannada Language <i>Shwetha Prabhu, Vangmayee Subban, Jayashree Sunil Bhat, and Haralakatta Shivananjappa Somashekara</i>	2161
The Semantics of Stative Locative Events in Vietnamese: A Spatial Exploration <i>Ly Ngoc Toan</i>	2173
Student Engagement With Teacher Written Feedback in Online EFL Writing Context <i>Endar Rachmawaty Linuwih, Slamet Setiawan, and Ahmad Munir</i>	2186
Binding in Najdi Arabic: Types of Reflexives, the Argument Structure of Reflexive Constructions and Possessive Reflexives <i>Asma I. Alowayed and Yasser A. Albaty</i>	2193
Conversational Implicatures in Medical Discourse: An Analysis of Doctor-Patient Dialogues in Amman, Jordan <i>Sally Mohammad Ali Darweesh and Rajai Rashid Al-Khanji</i>	2203
A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Ideological Identity Endorsed on the University's Homepages <i>Pirman Ginting, Sri M. Murni, and Anni H. Pulungan</i>	2211
Addressing Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom: EFL Teachers' Perspective <i>Ibtesam AbdulAziz Bajri and Omer Elsheikh Hago Elmahdi</i>	2222

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When Women Terrorise: The Psychopathic La Femme Fatale in <i>East of Eden</i> by John Steinbeck <i>Zahraa Abdullah Mohan, Ida Baizura Bahar, Diana Abu Ujum, and Hasyimah Mohd. Amin</i>	2233
Exploration of Honorifics in Japanese-Balinese Intercultural Marriages <i>Anak Agung Ayu Dian Andriyani, Ida Ayu Putri Gita Ardiantari, and Kundharu Saddhono</i>	2242
Neural Machine Translation of Arabic to English Legal Texts Using Trados Studio: Efficiency and Consistency From the Perspective of Saudi Translation Students' Post-Editing Practices <i>Mimouna Zitouni, Fadia Alshehri, and Nadia Idri</i>	2251
Language Teachers' Adaptability to Digital Transformation: Online Assessment Practices in Vietnam Higher Education <i>Truc Tran-Thi-Thanh</i>	2263
Language Learning Plateau: EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Practical Recommendations <i>Dinara Utegulova, Kulpash Koptleuova, Nurkhanym Bauyrzhan, Sandugash Mukhtarova, Akhmaral Khairzhanova, and Danagul Assylzhanova</i>	2271
Challenges and Internal Conflicts of Refugees in Asif Currimbhoy's Play <i>The Refugee</i> <i>Kaliyappan S and Saravanakumar P</i>	2281

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# Pre-Service Primary General Teacher-Students' Attitudes Towards Written Language Activities Based on Musical Stimuli

Eirini Nikolaou\*

Department of Primary Education, University of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece

Alexandra Galani

Department of Primary Education, University of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece

**Abstract**—The paper investigates pre-service primary general teacher-students' perceptions of how music can act as a stimulus for writing, through short story group writing activities. More specifically, we look at their attitudes regarding i) team collaboration, ii) the enhancement of their creativity, iii) classroom atmosphere, iv) the suitability of the activities for their implementation in primary school classes in the future and v) the advantages the use of music can have for language development. In our study, pre-service primary general teacher-students' views were shaped by the experiences they gained from their participation in group activities which were implemented as part of an undergraduate elective course, entitled “Music Education”. The participants recorded their ideas on worksheets. Data were collected through observation, diaries and questionnaires with open and closed-ended questions. The results revealed that the pre-service primary general teacher-students had a positive attitude towards story inventing and story writing activities based on musical stimuli. Such activities boosted their creativity and gave them the opportunity to develop their teamwork skills as well as to participate in a pleasant and innovative classroom atmosphere. Finally, they were positive about the suitability of the activities for their future students and the advantages the use of music can have in language lessons for teachers, students and the educational process.

**Index Terms**—music and language, writing, creativity, pre-service primary general teacher education, arts in education

## I. INTRODUCTION

A creative person is not one who simply uses their imagination but one who gives birth to a new product through the knowledge and education they possess (Suciu, 2014). Education<sup>1</sup> ought to provide ways which contribute to the development of creativity, as the latter is not only a valuable skill for individuals and society in general but, in our time, it is also linked to the cultivation of economic growth (Shaheen, 2010). Creative-type activities enhance the development of divergent thinking, as they enable participants to find multiple solutions to a problem (Kratus, 2017). The integration of arts in education can contribute to the enhancement of creativity, as arts offer participants opportunities for personal expression and creation (Roeger & Kim, 2013) through processes that create “interest, fun and active participation” (Wallin & Durr, 2002, p. 30).

In our study, creative activities that connect music to other arts (i.e., visual arts and drama) and school subjects (e.g., Language) were designed and implemented as part of an undergraduate course, entitled “Music Education”. The course aims, apart from developing teacher-students'<sup>2</sup> musical skills, to familiarise them with the integration of arts—and more specifically of music—in education. Arts could function as teaching tools in an interdisciplinary and cross-curricular setting, within which the teacher-students will be employed—not as music specialists but—as generalist teachers. The researchers—who specialise in the subjects of Music Education and Greek as a foreign language, respectively—adopted the “subservient approach” to music in the activities. According to this approach, “the arts serve the basic academic curriculum in its contents, pedagogies, and structures” (Bresler, 1995, p. 5). Finally, the activities aimed to serve as “teaching strategies that challenge the students to write” (Setyowati, 2016, p. 80) and as stimuli and examples that the teacher-students could use in their future classrooms.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: in section II, the context of the study is briefly outlined. In section III, a complete account of the study is presented, whereas the results are discussed in section IV. The discussion is rounded off in section V.

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\* Corresponding Author. Email: [enikolau@uoi.gr](mailto:enikolau@uoi.gr)

<sup>1</sup> See Soulis et al. (2023) for a discussion on various current educational issues.

<sup>2</sup> In the rest of the paper, we use the term “teacher-students” to refer to “pre-service primary general teacher-students”. In Greece, they teach in Primary Education (first to sixth grade, ages 6 to 11).

## II. THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The integration of arts in education may “change the learning experience”, as arts can “reach students who are not otherwise being reached”, “connect students to themselves and each other”, “transform the environment for learning” and “connect learning experiences to the world of real work” (Fiske, 1999, pp. ix-x), among other things. A meaningful education through the arts, which aims beyond the entertainment of students, “can foster the creative and flexible thinking skills needed for coping with the new knowledge, dilemmas, technologies and inventions that constantly challenge our thinking and being” (Gibson & Ewing, 2020, p. 5).

Although music has a different place and a different meaning in each person's life, it is a language that can be understood by everyone, it has a social character and the power to engage people who may differ from each other (Heyworth, 2013). In education, pleasant activities that incorporate music can have a positive impact on participants (Hallam, 2010) and contribute to the enhancement of their creativity (Nikolaou, 2023a; Coulson & Burke, 2013).

The chosen instructional methods used in our study focused on the use of the collaborative model, which aims to develop students' collaborative skills (Kervinen et al., 2016) and stimulate their socioemotional ones (Jacobi, 2012). Group work has several benefits, among which are the following: respect for others, cooperation, communication with peers, impulse control (Varner, 2020), co-creation to achieve the final product, cultivation of empathy, critical thinking and the ability to manage conflict (Jacobi, 2012). Moreover, as the study's aim was to cultivate the participants' critical and creative thinking (Alter, 2009), they were encouraged by the trainer-researcher to produce original work that would also be of interest to their fellow teacher-students (Hickey & Webster, 2001).

The use of music for the development of students' language skills served as a “learning strategy” (Engh, 2013, p. 118) and a means to activate student interest in language (Dwayne, 2013), as it provides additional motivation for learning (Kao & Oxford, 2014) and enhances creativity (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Teachers, through the use of music in language teaching, can create a more pleasant and innovative learning environment in their classes (Israel, 2013; Pérez Niño, 2010), by adopting less traditional teaching methods<sup>3</sup>.

According to previous—relevant to our work—studies, it has been shown that music contributes to language development and the cultivation of language skills, through activities which involve “chanting and rhythmic speaking, singing, and listening” (Mizener, 2008, p. 11) or music composition of simple phrases or short poems (Brophy, 2001). The use of songs in language acquisition, especially in the early stages (Schön et al., 2008), and in English language teaching (Engh, 2013) is also widespread. In the context of foreign language classrooms, song texts and different musical styles can activate students' interest in other cultures (Failoni, 1993). Music is also effective in vocabulary teaching/comprehension (i.e., through the implementation of activities in which words are represented with sounds or in which texts are rendered with sounds and converted into sound stories (Lawson & Dickinson, 2020). Finally, as both music and language can describe emotions (Juslin & Laukka, 2003; Scherer, 1995), research has investigated active listening activities through which students can describe—orally or in writing—the feelings that music evokes in the listener.

Taking into consideration the afore-mentioned points, the present study aims to provide teacher-students with several ideas for incorporating more creative forms of teaching in their future classes. The significance of the implementation of such diverse activities is that they take place in an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary setting, where students—while working in groups—use musical stimuli for language development.

## III. THE STUDY

### A. Research Purpose and Questions

Our paper focuses on exploring teacher-students' perceptions of how music can act as a stimulus for writing through short story group writing activities. The following research questions are addressed:

- (a) What are the perceptions of teacher-students regarding the implemented activities in relation to 1) team collaboration, 2) the enhancement of their own creativity and 3) classroom atmosphere?
- (b) What are the beliefs of teacher-students about the suitability of the activities for their future students?
- (c) What are the perceptions of teacher-students as far as the potential benefits of the use of music for language teaching are concerned?

### B. Methodology

#### (a). Participants

The study took place at a Department of Primary Education in a Greek University during the spring semester 2022-2023, as part of an undergraduate elective course, entitled “Music Education”. The activities were implemented during a three-lesson sequence in a total of 13 teaching weeks. Two hours of each three-hour lesson were devoted to the activities' implementation (a total of six hours). The participants (N=35) (30 women and 5 men) were in the first year of their studies. The majority of the participating teacher-students had received some music education when at school.

<sup>3</sup> Similar benefits are obtained from the use of gamification in education (i.e., see Kapsalis et al. (2020) for a discussion on the effectiveness of Kahoot! as a formative assessment tool in foreign language teaching, among other studies).

(b). *Project Design*

The activities were designed around the following topics which were part of the course syllabus: Activity A—sound stories, Activity B—dramatisation of a musical work, Activity C—active music listening. The first two activities were based on material drawn from the textbooks of Physics and Geography which are used in Greek primary schools<sup>4</sup>. The aim was to demonstrate to the teacher-students how they can combine different subjects in an interdisciplinary and cross-curricular setting. The lessons were first designed by the researchers and the activities were then implemented in class by the first researcher, who also acted as the trainer. Once the implementation of each activity was completed, the researchers discussed the project's progress and made changes to the subsequent activities, where necessary.

The three activities of the study, in which music serves as a stimulus for writing, are the following:

- 1) Activity A: Represent the pictures with sounds/create and write a story/render the story with sound and convert it into a sound story,
- 2) Activity B: Represent a natural disaster with sound/create and write a sound story about natural disasters that can be dramatised.
- 3) Activity C: Create and write a short story based on a four-part musical collage.

The teacher-students worked in groups and recorded their ideas on worksheets that were given to them (see Section III.C.). In the activities, they were asked to use all possible means of musical expression (their voices, their bodies, percussion musical instruments, any sound-producing body, sounds from the internet, etc.) and to write their stories within an allocated time frame. This aspect of the activities also aimed to further develop teacher-students' problem-solving skills in a short period of time. Generally-speaking, the cultivation of such cognitive skills is particularly important for the students' mental development (Sotiropoulou-Zormpala & Argyriadi, 2015) and can be useful in their everyday lives (Eisner, 2002). At the end of each activity, each group presented their work to the class and a discussion followed. Questionnaire 1 was filled in, once the presentations of each activity were completed, whereas Questionnaire 2<sup>5</sup> when all four activities had been carried out.

In the following subsection, the three activities that were implemented in our study are discussed in detail. For each activity, we present one of the worksheets as completed by a teacher-student group as an indicative example.

C. *Activities*

(a). *Activity A: Represent the Pictures With Sounds/Create and Write a Story/Render the Story With Sound and Convert It Into a Sound Story*

The topic of the course syllabus was sound stories. Sound stories enable students to get acquainted with sounds and speech in a creative way. In sound stories, music and language are combined; "language through storytelling, and music through the rendering of the story with sounds" (Nikolaou, 2023b, p. 52). The texts used should be structured in such a way so that they contain words, phrases or meanings which can be rendered with sound.

More specifically, in the first activity, each teacher-student group had to choose four out of the five pictures that were given to them (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Pictures From the Physics Textbooks (5th and 6th Grade, Ages 10 and 11) Used in Primary Schools in Greece<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See footnotes 7 and 8 for information about the Greek textbooks.

<sup>5</sup> The questionnaires appear in the Appendices (1 and 2).

<sup>6</sup> Picture 1: [http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2190/Fysika\\_E-Dimotikou\\_html-empl/index\\_8.html](http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2190/Fysika_E-Dimotikou_html-empl/index_8.html)

Picture 2: [http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2011/Fysika\\_ST-Dimotikou\\_html-empl/index\\_2.html](http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2011/Fysika_ST-Dimotikou_html-empl/index_2.html)

Picture 3: [http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2011/Fysika\\_ST-Dimotikou\\_html-empl/index\\_6.html](http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2011/Fysika_ST-Dimotikou_html-empl/index_6.html)

Picture 4: [http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2011/Fysika\\_ST-Dimotikou\\_html-empl/index\\_1.html](http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2011/Fysika_ST-Dimotikou_html-empl/index_1.html)

Picture 5: [http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2011/Fysika\\_ST-Dimotikou\\_html-empl/index\\_10.html](http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2011/Fysika_ST-Dimotikou_html-empl/index_10.html)

They were then asked to find a way to represent each picture with a sound. Once they connected all four pictures in a conceptually meaningful way, they created and wrote a short story that included the pictures they had chosen. During the next step, the teacher-students invested the story with sounds which represented the pictures acoustically and added sounds to other parts of their story, hence turning it into a sound story. Finally, each group appointed a narrator and everyone else in the group performed the sounds to accompany the narrative, with all of this presented to the class.

In Table 1, the worksheet given to the teacher-students as well as the responses of group B are presented.

TABLE 1  
TEACHER-STUDENT GROUP WORKSHEET 1

Activity 1: Create a short sound-story based on pictures which can be found in the 5th and 6th grade Physics textbooks.				
Group number: <b>B</b>				
Underline the pictures that you used:				
<u>Picture 1</u>	<u>Picture 2</u>	<u>Picture 3</u>	<u>Picture 4</u>	<u>Picture 5</u>
Make a note on how you represented the pictures with sounds. <b>PICTURE 1: Dragging our feet for the sound of water, mouth blowing for the sound of wind and beats on cymbals.</b> <b>PICTURE 2: Using our own voices for a seagull's voice.</b> <b>PICTURE 3: Playing notes on the metallophone for birds chirping in the forest.</b> <b>PICTURE 4: Beats on the claves for horse galloping.</b>				
Write the sound-story you created on the basis of the chosen pictures. Put the sound and where this will be heard in your text in brackets: A castaway is in the rough sea (PICTURE 1: <i>dragging our feet, mouth blowing and beats on cymbals</i> ) trying to get ashore. Suddenly he sees a seagull (PICTURE 2: <i>seagull sounds using our own voice</i> ), which leads him to nearby land. When he comes ashore, he sees a forest and enters it (PICTURE 3: <i>playing notes on the metallophone for forest birds' chirping</i> ). He walks for hours in the forest ( <i>footsteps sound</i> ), listening to the chirping of birds ( <i>metallophone</i> ), when he suddenly finds a clearing in the center of which there are two horses (PICTURE 4: <i>beats on the claves for horse galloping</i> ) and a small village in the background. He gets on a horse and goes quickly to the village ( <i>claves and quick footsteps</i> ). The villagers greet him with joy and he is over the moon because he managed to save himself ( <i>metallophone and bell sounds</i> ).				

*(b). Activity B: Represent a Natural Disaster With Sound/Create and Write a Sound Story About Natural Disasters That Can Be Dramatised*

The topic of the course syllabus was dramatisation of a musical work (song, orchestral music, etc.). In the dramatisation of a musical work, “students can imitate the characters and the situations described in the music they listen to” (Nikolaou, 2023b, p. 51). During the course of the module (“Music Education”), the teacher-students had already participated in song dramatisation, sound-stories and works of programme music.

The second activity was based on the chapter entitled “Natural disasters and their consequences on people's lives” which is included in the 6th grade Geography textbook (for 11-year-old students)<sup>7</sup>. Each teacher-student group was invited to represent a natural disaster phenomenon of their choice (earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, etc.) with sound and write a sound-story that could be dramatised. They also had to provide information about the characters and where the action took place as well as to write the social message conveyed by the story. The message had to be related to the solidarity of people in such disastrous situations. In this way, the sound story might be more than just a way to teach Geography; it may also cultivate empathy and intercultural awareness. The teacher-students were not asked to dramatised the sound story in class, as there was only one activity goal set, namely, to write a story that could be dramatised. The worksheet given to the teacher-students and the responses of group C can be found in Table 2.

<sup>7</sup> [http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2272/Geografia\\_ST-Dimotikou\\_html-empl/indexB\\_16.html](http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2272/Geografia_ST-Dimotikou_html-empl/indexB_16.html)

TABLE 2  
TEACHER-STUDENT GROUP WORKSHEET 2

<b>Activity 2: Create a sound-story about a natural disaster phenomenon that can be dramatised.</b>
<b>Group number:</b> C
<b>Write which natural disaster phenomenon you chose to represent with sound and show how this was achieved:</b> Volcano sound: cymbals, tambourine, sleigh bells with simultaneous and prolonged playing
<b>Write a short story about a natural disaster phenomenon that can be dramatised. Choose the character(s) who participate(s) in your fictional story. Write the social message conveyed by the story; the message is related to the solidarity we should show to our fellow humans as individuals and as a society in the event of natural disasters. Render your story with sounds and describe people's feelings and actions.</b> A tribe of indigenous people lived at the foot of a volcanic island. It was dawn on a festive day and they were making preparations ( <i>glissando on the metallophone</i> ). The elders, though, were afraid that something bad was going to happen ( <i>one beat on the tambourine</i> ). The celebrations began and, while everyone was dancing around the fire, a loud explosion was heard ( <i>cymbals, tambourine, sleigh bells, with simultaneous and prolonged playing</i> ). Everyone was terrified when they saw the lava heading towards the village ( <i>beats on claves</i> ). They ran ( <i>stamping</i> ) to the boats to save themselves. As they boarded the boats, they realised that the wise man of the village was missing. A young man defied danger ignored the shouts of his fellow villagers and turned back to find the wise man. Once he released him, he carried him to the boat and they all went together to the island across the water ( <i>glissando on the metallophone</i> ).
<b>Write a short poem or a phrase that contains a social message related to your story:</b> Every person is important whether old or young, always help your fellow human beings Let go of fear, don't give up
<b>Describe how your story could be dramatised:</b> <b>Characters in the story. Main and secondary roles:</b> <b>Main roles:</b> Brave young man, wise old man of the village <b>Secondary roles:</b> The villagers <b>Where the story takes place:</b> A volcanic exotic indigenous island <b>Episodes of the story:</b> <b>Episode 1:</b> Preparation for and start of a feast <b>Episode 2:</b> The eruption of the volcano <b>Episode 3:</b> Terrified inhabitants run for their lives. <b>Episode 4:</b> The brave young man returns to rescue the trapped wise man.

(c). Activity C: Create and Write a Short Story Based on a Four-Part Musical Collage

The topic of the course syllabus was active music listening. Active music listening combines listening to music with at least one additional activity in which participants act. Generally-speaking, both professional musicians and those who have not received any special musical training can participate in music listening activities. By listening to music, each one of us can arrive at our own interpretation, which may focus on the musical elements (Johnson, 2013), the images (Kratus, 2017) or on the emotional impact that music can have on its listeners (Proverbio & Russo, 2022). Indeed, in an educational setting—where we want our students to be creative—the use of unfamiliar music can lead students to “original interpretations” (Johnson, 2013, p. 50).

In the third activity, a musical collage with four musical excerpts, the duration of which was 20 to 30 seconds each, served as a sound stimulus. Initially, each teacher-student was asked to record on the worksheet the images and the sentiments that came to their mind when they listened to each of the four pieces of music. This was followed by a class discussion about their views and the reasons for which they think music creates the same or different feelings in its listeners. Then they worked in groups and wrote a four-part short story; one part of the story for each part of the musical collage. They had to imagine that each part of the story is musically invested with the corresponding musical excerpt. They were not informed, though, about the composers of the musical excerpts or the genres of music they represent.

The musical collage included the following:

- 1) 20 seconds of hip-hop music,
- 2) 20 seconds of space sounds,
- 3) 30 seconds of the work “Lion” from “The Carnival of the Animals” by Camille Saint-Saëns,
- 4) 30 seconds of the work “The Blue Danube” by Johann Strauss.

In Table 3, the worksheet which was completed by one teacher-student is presented. The group worksheet, as completed by teacher-student group D, appears in Table 4. The teacher-students listened to the musical collage twice prior to completing the group worksheet.

TABLE 3  
TEACHER-STUDENT WORKSHEET 1

<b>Write down the feelings or the images that each of the four musical excerpts evokes for you.</b>
<b>Pseudonym of the participant:</b> Hero
<b>1<sup>st</sup> musical excerpt:</b> concert music, action, energy, start of an event, an excursion.
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> music excerpt:</b> suspense, fear, movie in which we expect a situation to culminate, unpleasant event, bad development.
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> musical excerpt:</b> peace, spring, nature with flowering meadows, optimism, time passing calmly.
<b>4<sup>th</sup> musical excerpt:</b> carefree, dancing, romance, return to the pleasant event, normality.

TABLE 4  
TEACHER-STUDENT GROUP WORKSHEET 3

<b>Activity 3: Create and write a story based on a four-part musical collage.</b>
<b>Group number: D</b>
<b>Write a short story based on the four musical excerpts you listened to.</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> musical excerpt:</b> On a sunny day in April, five friends decided to go on a picnic in the mountains. Once they organised their equipment, they started eating while listening to their favorite music.
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> musical excerpt:</b> Suddenly because of the music, a bear approached. When the group of friends heard its pacing and saw the animal, they burst into howls. A few seconds later, they started running around in agony, which reached its peak.
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> musical excerpt:</b> However, the bear did not approach them with ferocity. It was content with their food, and especially with the honey jar, which was lying open on the plaid tablecloth.
<b>4<sup>th</sup> musical excerpt:</b> About 10 minutes later, the children arrived home, relieved and having overcome the shock of this unforeseen experience. They blithely continued their picnic in the garden of their home.

#### D. Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected through observation, diaries and two questionnaires with open and closed-ended questions. The completion of the questionnaires was anonymous, as the teacher-students used pseudonyms. As for its analysis, once all three activities were implemented, the researchers examined the teacher-students' responses to the questionnaires as well as the observation/diary notes of the trainer-researcher and reflected on the research questions. The combination of the afore-mentioned methods ensures triangulation and it is consequently considered the most appropriate method for answering the research questions. For the analysis of the qualitative data drawn from the open-ended questionnaires, the method of content analysis was adopted.

#### IV. FINDINGS

Based on the data analysis and interpretation, the following key themes are:

- Teacher-students' perceptions of each implemented activity concerning: 1. Team collaboration, 2. Creativity enhancement, 3. Classroom atmosphere.
- Teacher-students' beliefs about 1. the suitability of the activities for their future students and 2. the probability of implementing the activities in their classes in the future.
- Teacher-students' perceptions about the advantages the use of music can have for language teaching based on the experience they gained in the current academic semester.

In IV.A., the teacher-students' indicative responses in relation to each key theme are presented for each activity separately, as these were obtained from questionnaire 1 which was completed straight after each activity's implementation. In IV.B.-C., their responses to questionnaire 2, which was completed once all three activities were implemented, relate to their overall views about the activities—in terms of the key themes—and this is why they do not refer to each activity separately.

##### A. Teacher-Students' Perceptions of Each Implemented Activity Concerning Team Collaboration, Creativity Enhancement and Classroom Atmosphere

###### (a). Team Collaboration

The teacher-students showed a positive attitude regarding the development of their collaborative teamwork skills, as they believe that the activities created conditions that enabled pleasant cooperation among the team members. They also provided opportunities for members with different ideas to come closer and work together in order to obtain a good result by incorporating everyone's ideas in the final work they produced. In what follows, we present indicative teacher-students' responses to the open-ended question 2 of questionnaire 1.

###### 1. Activity 1

The activity is certainly a way in which different people can communicate and work together to produce a story. Good coordination is needed for the story's presentation, so individuals must be willing to listen to others and prepare appropriately.

I really liked the way we all worked together as a team and we came up with a remarkable result.

The collaboration with my team was particularly pleasant and the best part is that each one of us had different ideas and so we put them together and the result was a good story. The presentation was very easy, as each one of us performed their role perfectly. We are working in a similar way on other such assignments.

In this activity I was given the opportunity to express my own ideas and as a result I also contributed to the creation of the story.

However, there were also less positive opinions. More specifically, two teacher-students commented:

The activity was very nice, creative and in general an assignment that excites the imagination. Nevertheless, the collaboration was not good at all, something which made the process slightly unpleasant.

There were a lot of ideas given for the plot of the story, but there were also disagreements, which is bad. The activity was interesting, but there was not good collaboration on the choice of the sounds we had to render the story with in specific parts.

## 2. Activity 2

Our collaboration on the representation of the natural disaster with sounds was particularly good. The activity helped in fostering team spirit.

The activity promotes collaboration and team spirit and also passes on social messages.

Although the second activity worked least well for collaboration (Table 5), there were no negative comments in the teacher-students' responses.

## 3. Activity 3

We collaborated very well to get the best possible result for the story we were asked to write.

There was very good collaboration with the team as we shared ideas and suggested different things. Nevertheless, there were also less positive views, as two students wrote:

Today's collaboration was not as effective as the previous ones, to be honest, but, despite all, we did our best.

We collaborated very well until the third musical piece, then time ran out and one person in the group wrote the last piece on his own without consulting the others. It could have gone better.

Furthermore, the teacher-students' positive attitudes concerning team collaboration are confirmed by their responses to the closed-ended question 1 of Questionnaire 1 (Table 5).

TABLE 5  
TEACHER-STUDENTS' RESPONSES ON TEAM COLLABORATION

Activity	Question 1/Questionnaire 1: How well do you think you cooperated with the team as far as the organisation of the activity and its presentation to the class are concerned?	
Activity 1	86.8%	extremely well/very well
	7.9 %	moderately well
	5.3%	slightly well
Activity 2	85.3%	extremely well/very well
	5.9 %	moderately well
	8.8 %	slightly well /not at all well
Activity 3	88.5 %	extremely well/very well
	11.5 %	moderately well

The above percentages show that the teacher-students' perceptions about their collaboration with their team members in all three activities were extremely good. The responses "extremely well" and "very well" are lumped together, since they indicate the respondents' positive attitude, "moderately well" is listed separately, as it indicates a less positive attitude, while "slightly well" and "not at all well" are lumped together as negative.

## (b). Enhancement of Teacher-Students' Creativity

The teacher-students also responded positively as far as the enhancement of their creativity is concerned. As can be seen from their indicative answers to the open-ended question 2 of questionnaire 1 below, they were given opportunities to activate their imagination, to imagine themselves in situations they have not previously experienced, to find solutions to problems through creative thinking and to creatively connect music with language.

## 1. Activity 1

The activity of representing the pictures with sound was creative and presupposed the activation of imagination. The same also goes for the process for the creation of the story.

The activity helped us to develop our imagination and our creative side through the rendering of the images with sounds and their capturing in the story we created.

Let us note that the teacher-students made no negative comments for this activity.

## 2. Activity 2

As an activity it seemed to me very interesting as it mobilised our imagination, something that will be useful to us as future educators.

These activities help us to expand our imagination. It makes us imagine what it would be like to live in difficult life conditions, such as an earthquake, a storm, etc.

It was a pleasant activity and quite creative.

The activity in class was very good, creative and cultivates our imagination.

Nonetheless, one teacher-student—who described the activity as creative—felt that the group did not respond well to the requirements of the activity.

The activity was pleasant and creative; it just happened that I and my team did not have ideas and inspiration to carry it out as we should have had.

## 3. Activity 3

It was a pleasant activity and activated our imagination. We also listened to the presentations of our fellow students and got even more ideas.

The whole activity was very creative and pleasant because we put our imagination to work and our ideas together.

It stimulates the imagination.

However, one teacher-student was not positive towards the activity's contribution to the development of their creativity and commented:

There was hardly any creativity and our story had no unexpected parts and seemed dull to me at least.

## (c). Classroom Atmosphere

The teacher-students' responses about the creation of a positive classroom atmosphere were equally encouraging. As shown by their indicative comments, they participated in a pleasant classroom atmosphere that brought them together not only with each other but also with the trainer-researcher. Additionally, it helped them not to feel stressed and enhanced their interest in the course, as there was more fun and joy—compared to the usual classroom atmosphere—which made it easier for them to present their work.

### 1. Activity 1

The activity was very fun and pleasant, breaks the ice between the students and between the students and the trainer.

Such activities are equally pleasant for both teachers and students.

The activity stimulates interest in the course and it was quite fun.

It was very interesting and pleasant to use musical stimuli to write stories and my appetite for learning was increased.

### 2. Activity 2

The activity seemed to me pleasant and fun and the lesson was made more interesting and enjoyable in this way.

Such activities are equally pleasant for both teachers and students because a stress-free classroom atmosphere is created.

### 3. Activity 3

When we started thinking about the story, different ideas were mentioned and we selected the one we all liked. I was happy with the team spirit, the collaboration and the excellent atmosphere between us and in the classroom during each group's presentation of the activity.

We spent this time creatively and fun and to tell you the truth I did not realise how time went by so fast.



*B. Teacher-Students' Beliefs About the Suitability of the Activities for Their Future Students and the Probability of Implementing the Activities in Their Classes in the Future*

The teacher-students were positive about the suitability of the activities for their future students, as they contribute to the development of children's critical thinking, allow them to be creative, entertain them and promote opportunities for collaboration. Indicative teacher-students' responses to the open-ended question 1 of questionnaire 2 are presented below:

*(a). They Develop Students' Critical Thinking*

The first activity was enjoyable and interactive, the atmosphere of collaboration was quite good, the ideas effective and efficient, and (the activity) can broaden a child's thinking and develop their critical thinking skills.

Activities such as the second one develop students' imagination and critical thinking as well as their composure in difficult situations. At the same time, it raises awareness of environmental issues.

*(b). They Provide Students With Opportunities to Be Creative*

The first activity stimulates the students' imagination and thus they become more creative and productive.

The implementation of the second activity in class is very beneficial for the students, as they can develop their imagination and creativity.

The third activity was very interesting, because by using our imagination and the stimuli we got from the musical excerpts, we created our own story. In class, I think that this activity will be excellent, as the children will work together and understand the importance of creativity.

*(c). They Entertain Children*

Activities like the first one can entertain children in a nice way.

The second activity is very interesting and can be implemented in a classroom and entertain children. It requires imagination, something that children have to a large extent, action and collaboration!

*(d). They Provide Opportunities for Student Collaboration*

The first activity is like a collaboration game, as children are asked to develop, with their team spirit, a fantasy story and represent it with appropriate sounds.

The second is a very good activity, especially for primary school children, because they can produce the sounds of nature themselves and perform them with their bodies. The most important, however, is the collaboration of the children so that a pleasant result is implemented and reached.

Such activities, as the third one, are very good to be implemented, as they are a pleasant break from everyday life routine, children are further familiarised with music, collaboration is encouraged and they provide occasions to make new friendships.

Almost all teacher-students (94.1%) responded that they would implement the activities carried out in the study with their future students (Figure 2).

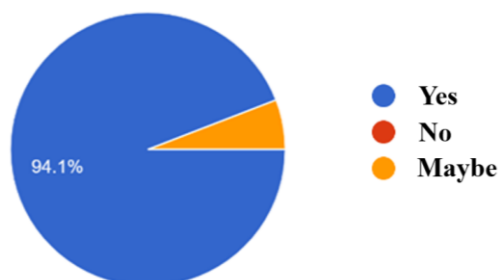


Figure 2. Answers to the Question "As Future Teachers Would You Implement Such Creative Activities in Your Classes?"

One teacher-student—whose answer was "Maybe" to question 1 in questionnaire 2—justified the answer:

I would perhaps apply such creative activities, because if the children are unruly, in my opinion, the lesson will be completely derailed.

This is an important point, as the behaviour and learning styles of pupils as well as the classroom atmosphere—among other considerations—should be taken into consideration when implementing such activities.

*C. Teacher-Students' Perceptions About the Advantages the Use of Music Can Have for Language Teaching Based on the Experience They Gained in the Current Academic Semester*

The teacher-students believed that music increases student interest in “Language”, provides a more creative and alternative way to teach the language classes, contributes to the students’ understanding and learning, activates their imagination and provides ideas for writing. Indicatively, their comments from the responses to the open-ended question 2 of questionnaire 2 for each key theme are listed below:

*(a). Music Increases Students' Interest in “Language”*

Activities that combine music and language stimulate student interest and make the lesson more pleasant and, at the same time, more interesting.

Through the presence of music, children will follow the lessons with greater interest.

Generally, the use of arts in education attracts the interest of the students and we get away from monotonous teaching.

With such creative activities, children show greater interest in the language classes, which become more creative and change the routine of the lesson.

Activities of this type which combine two subjects, are a pleasant way to teach the language classes but also a pleasant “break” for the children.

Such creative activities are expected to develop the child's interest in language and, at the same time, to expand their imagination.

*(b). Music Provides a More Creative and Alternative Way to Teach the Language Classes*

The use of music in Language teaching has advantages, as it enables teachers to teach in more creative ways and enriches their teaching, avoiding repetitions.

Teaching becomes more creative and pleasant for both teachers and students.

*(c). Music Contributes to the Students' Understanding and Learning*

I would implement such activities, as I think they can help children learn more easily.

Such activities, due to the presence of music, help children follow the language lessons with greater interest and maybe even retain the information of the lessons with more ease.

As music is part of everyday life, it can be used so that a better understanding of the meanings and a more active participation of the students are achieved.

*(d). Music Activates the Imagination and Provides Ideas for Writing*

Such activities can lead students to generate ideas, by activating their imagination and their creative side, and to write nice stories which are inspired by sounds.

Such activities can inspire students to write something without getting bored.

## V. DISCUSSION—CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present study exemplified the implementation of three activities which aimed at the production of written language through musical stimuli and examined the teacher-students’ reflections on them. It was conducted as part of an undergraduate course, entitled “Music Education”. An attempt was made to create a learning environment where the teacher-students could enhance their creativity and get ideas on how they could work in an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary setting as in-service generalist teachers at Primary level (ages 6 to 11) in the future.

The results revealed that the teacher-students showed a positive attitude towards the activities due to the following reasons: they were given opportunities to develop their teamwork skills, to stimulate their creativity and to participate in a pleasant classroom atmosphere. Moreover, they were positive about the suitability of the activities for their future

students, as such activities can develop students' critical thinking, allow them to be creative, entertain children and provide opportunities for collaboration. Additionally, they can increase student interest in the school subject of Language, allow teachers to be more creative and adopt alternative ways of teaching language classes, facilitate the understanding of concepts which are presented in the lessons, activate student imagination and offer students ideas for the production of written language.

Each one of the activities, or even all together, could be implemented with primary school students, either exactly as described in the study or with changes or they could be extended. For example, in the second activity in which we propose the creation of a sound story that can be dramatised, the story can be acted out in the classroom. Apart from rendering the story with sounds, a song can be also included in the activity. Its lyrics, which would be related to the plot of the story, can be written by the students and the song can be composed by the students themselves with the assistance of the music specialist teacher. All students can participate in the process of the story dramatisation in the classroom; one or more students can take on the role of the narrator, others the roles of the various characters, some can produce the sounds of the story while other can sing the song.

Such creative activities, which include “verbal spontaneity games, role playing, and physical movement” (Toivanen et al., 2011, p. 60), contribute to the students' language development (Liu & Ding, 2009) and strengthen their “social and emotional well-being” (Gibson & Ewing, 2020, p. 77). Additionally, by taking on characters different from themselves, students “can start to see things from another perspective” (Gibson & Ewing, 2020, p. 79), something which helps them understand others more easily, find solutions to problems and generally develop their creativity (Wee et al., 2013). Thus, such activities cultivate empathy.

In these types of activities, the teacher has the role of a facilitator and animator, who guides the group and intervenes, when necessary (Nikolaou, 2023c). During the implementation of creative activities, it is important to create an appropriate classroom atmosphere (Economidou Stavrou, 2022), so that students feel safe—on the grounds that they are not judged—while they are given the chance to experiment and create.

As this is mainly a qualitative study, there are some limitations. Although the sample size is sufficient, it does not allow us to make generalisations about the results. In addition, the validity of the results is subject to the teacher-students' truthful responses to the closed and open-ended questions. Nevertheless, considering the universality of music which transcends the boundaries of language, we would expect that such activities could be easily adapted—with the necessary modifications—to serve the educational needs of different learner groups and/or appeal to learners with different learning styles. Consequently, we hypothesise that similar benefits could be obtained by any group of learners. Moreover, the activities could be also implemented outside Primary Education (i.e., Secondary Education, training programmes) and by learners in different disciplines (e.g., foreign language learning, etc.). However, these issues remain open for future research.

The results of the present study should be viewed in the context of arts integration in an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary setting, where the utilisation of arts can creatively contribute to the teaching of other subjects (Eisner, 1999), thus creating a more attractive and interesting environment for students. This environment will allow students to be more active, will activate their imagination (Greene, 2008) and unfold their creative side.

#### APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE 1

1) How well do you think you cooperated with the team as far as the organisation of the activity and its presentation to the class are concerned?

Extremely well	Very well	Moderately well	Slightly well	Not at all well
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2) Reflect on the activity and comment on: your personal participation, the collaboration and coordination with the team, the opportunities you were given to develop your creativity, the classroom atmosphere, how you felt about the activity or anything else you would like to mention.

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## APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE 2

1) As future teachers, would you implement such creative activities in your classes?					
A)	Yes	B)	No	C)	Maybe

Please explain your answer:

.....

2) In your opinion, what are the advantages of the use of music in “Modern Greek Language” classes?

.....

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**Eirini Nikolaou** is a Senior Teaching Fellow in music education in the Department of Primary Education at the University of Ioannina (Greece). Her main research interests are in music education, arts in education, philosophy of music, music in ancient Greece, music and ICT.

**Alexandra Galani** is a Senior Teaching Fellow in Greek as a foreign language in the Department of Primary Education at the University of Ioannina (Greece). Her main research interests are in morphology and its interfaces as well as foreign language teaching and learning.

# The Flipped Classroom to Improve the EFL Listening Skill

Edgar Eduardo Heredia-Arboleda

Faculty of Education, Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo, Riobamba, Ecuador

Mónica Noemí Cadena Figueroa

Faculty of Education, Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo, Riobamba, Ecuador

Magdalena I. Ullauri Moreno

Faculty of Education, Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo, Riobamba, Ecuador

Alex Armando Chiriboga Cevallos

Faculty of Education, Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo, Riobamba, Ecuador

**Abstract**—This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the flipped classroom as a method to enhance English listening skills. The population in this study consisted of 26 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) first-year students registered in a Bachelor of Arts program in Teaching Local and Foreign Languages at a Public University. This study is quasi-experimental. A pretest and a posttest were applied to identify the differences in the students' listening comprehension skills before and after using this methodology. This study was conducted in three phases: preparation (where the contents and procedures of the flipped classroom were explained), implementation (where the lessons focused on the flipped classroom were administered), and evaluation (where the overall content of the flipped classroom was tested). Results (significance 0.000;  $p \leq 0,05$ ) showcase a significant improvement in participants' listening skills. In general, this study can be considered a further contribution to visualizing the occidental educational methodology as a friendly and effective teaching practice, which may be applied in multicultural milieus.

**Index Terms**—flipped classroom, listening, preparation, implementation, evaluation

## I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, several strategies are being implemented to ensure a precise command of English as a foreign language (EFL). The increasing growth of technology has become an essential part of the teaching-learning process due to its vast extent and flexibility in promoting dialogue, collaboration, and interaction. Considering such characteristics, it is necessary to adapt the different methodologies and pedagogical models to the technological factors to meet the needs of the students and achieve more meaningful learning (Sozudogru et al., 2019). Therefore, using conventional methods is less necessary in this new knowledge era. In the Ecuadorian educational context, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) must promote self-learning and reading comprehension, informational competences, the management of the distance educational model, and basic computer skills through learning technological resources and platforms (Consejo de Educación Superior, 2019, art 77, p. 34). Also, the Ecuadorian educational regulations require university students to have the English B1 level following the Common European Framework for languages. (Consejo de Educación Superior, 2019, art. 80, p. 35).

Despite all the effort made by both teachers and students, such a requirement has become a real challenge, exacerbated due to the strong impact of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) in Ecuadorian Education. Unfortunately, the lack of accessibility to technological tools becomes a disadvantage in the teaching-learning process even though there is permanent technological growth. This new normality has made students increasingly busy by leading them to more autonomous virtual learning and demanding technical resources, so virtual Education and technology are essential. For this reason, it is necessary to take advantage of the different methodologies and strategies fostering listening comprehension and optimizing time to achieve more meaningful learning that strengthens communication difficulties in listening skills. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of flipped classroom as a method to enhance the English listening skills in EFL students while the specific objectives seek to:

- Diagnose the level of students in the listening skill through a pre-test
- Apply the flipped classroom in 26 EFL first-year students to improve the listening skill
- Identify the progress that students had in the listening skill after utilizing the flipped classroom

Effective EFL command depends on the primary communication skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Speaking and writing are the most productive skills. However, to produce a language and transmit it, it is necessary to receive a message to decode it. This process emerges with the development of receptive skills such as reading and

listening. Although both are receptive, there are noticeable differences between them. For example, when a student develops reading comprehension, he/she can read the text as many times as possible to identify the main idea by giving it a logical context. On the other hand, the development of listening comprehension involves real-time interaction and requires immediate reception (Brown & Brown, 2014).

Zareinajad et al. (2015) studied the effects of receptive and productive task-based listening activities on Iranian EFL students' listening ability. They emphasize the significance of listening tasks and activities since, without good listening comprehension, it will be difficult to achieve effective communication. The findings determined that meaningful listening-focused activities are at the center of the learning process as they improve listening comprehension if the level of difficulty in the tasks is appropriate for the student's level.

This principle also lies in this study since the design of activities and tasks focus on the students' needs. The difference arises in the flipped classroom model in a virtual learning environment.

While it is true that successful listening comprehension largely depends on the design and purpose of different learning strategies and techniques, the students' attitude towards them and the degree of difficulty they experience are also determining factors. For example, a Comparative Study of EFL Listening Difficulties in Public and Private Ecuadorian High Schools demonstrates that Ecuadorian students' responses to listening activities vary due to their educational context. In other words, there is a difference in the degree of difficulty experienced by students from public institutions and private ones. Students from private institutions further develop their listening skills due to their increasing contact with properly designed teaching resources and to the fact that they have better learning conditions, including better-prepared teachers than students from public institutions, without leaving aside other factors such as the number of students per classroom and psychological factors such as worry and nervousness (Quinonez-Beltran et al., 2020).

A poor instruction schedule hinders the comprehensive development of EFL communicative skills in academic performance (Labinska et al., 2020, p. 234). In Ecuadorian public institutions, the number of students is higher, and class time is not enough to achieve successful listening; even more, the accessibility of students to the Internet is restricted generally due to socioeconomic factors. Listening activities in the classroom become more difficult for EFL students because they are unfamiliar with pronunciation and phonological patterns, thus listening, decoding, understanding, and interacting in real-time become a real challenge.

During this complex phase of the communicative process, many students experience frustration when they do not understand the task, activity, or what their teacher and classmates say. This situation, in turn, becomes a trigger for other negative states such as lack of motivation, anxiety (Wang & Cha, 2019, p. 123), stress, demotivation, and fear (Goh, 2000, p. 56).

These factors make interaction in class difficult and delay learning goals, especially in evaluative processes. Moreover, the fact of having insufficient interaction is a barrier to meaningful learning, which is why the need arises to implement innovative and promising methodological strategies such as the flipped classroom with a constructivist approach, whose principal premise is the construction of knowledge in an authentic or accurate context to generate more effective learning (Valetsianos, 2016, p. 68).

From a more contemporary perspective, the flipped classroom focuses on using technology. It is one of the most widespread pedagogical models today (Song et al., p. 180). Its outstanding versatility has made it possible to apply it in many subjects at the university level. This pedagogical model seeks to maximize the learning process through activities and resources that engage students actively with fundamental knowledge (Castro et al., 2019, p. 25).

Based on the constructivist foundations, the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is essential in the EFL teaching-learning process, especially after the global consequences caused by COVID 19. In this scenario, ICTs have largely assisted the educational needs at a worldwide level, which is why the traditional model is losing territory (Shumeiko & Nypadymka, 2021). This growing digital age arising from constructivism has given way to an emerging theory known as connectivism proposed by Siemens (2005), growing increasingly in the Educational System. The technological factor cannot be isolated from the learning process and offers enormous advantages for mastering EFL (Chien et al., 2019, pp. 2-4).

Phoeun and Sengsri (2021) evaluated the effect of the flipped classroom model combined with the Communicative Language Teaching Approach on the English-speaking ability of Cambodian undergraduate students. The findings reported improvement in students' speaking skills after implementing the communicative language teaching approach (CLT), since it is the most effective in promoting speaking and other communication skills (reading, listening, and writing) to strengthen interaction (Masoumpanah & Talebinejad, 2013). This approach covers communicative competence to a greater extent since class activities focus on accurate content and resources. In other words, both the implemented material and the planned activities are generators of meaningful learning (Graham et al., 2017). The common denominator between these two approaches is meaningful learning.

In this changing era, the communication needs of EFL students go hand in hand with the sociocultural context. In this dynamic process, the role of the teacher is crucial to promoting meaningful learning and generating more interaction among EFL students for effective communication.

Effective communication in EFL occurs after implementing innovative activities and engaging class materials that allow students to receive, decode, produce, and transmit information (Stakanova, 2018); that is, resources that boost

communicative skills for successful interaction. However, factors such as fear and anxiety are barriers to effective communication, both in receptive (reading and listening) and productive (speaking and writing) abilities.

Ekmekci (2017) determined the effect of The Flipped Writing Classroom in the Turkish EFL context by comparing traditional and flipped instruction. The procedure monitored students' performance through recorded video lessons and evaluated their progress in paragraph writing activities using a rubric and a survey. The findings demonstrated that students increased their EFL writing proficiency and felt more motivated, confident, and less nervous when writing. Considering the constructivist frame of flipped instruction, students engage actively in the learning process, and work collaboratively.

These related studies support the foundations of flipped instruction and how it boosts the EFL communicative skills of worldwide students. In these post-pandemic circumstances, intercultural communication has been enormously widespread by ICT for educational purposes. The flipped classroom has indeed been an effective tool for establishing somehow such intercultural communication. But how does the utilization of flipped instruction, particularly in the post-pandemic era, enhance the EFL communicative skills of students, with a specific emphasis on the listening skill role?

This research question was the initiative to begin this study with a group of 26 EFL first-year students who are part of a higher education institution in the highlands of Ecuador. As mentioned above, this study aimed to assess the efficacy of the flipped classroom as a method to enhance their English listening skills. This objective was materialized with the help of two hypotheses:  $H_0 = \mu_a > \mu_b$ , and  $H_1 = \mu_a \leq \mu_b$ . The results of this study also pretend to modify, in a modest manner, the pernicious insight that foreign and successful educational methodologies such as the flipped classroom are not applicable within the context of a developing-country educational setting.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Listening is the natural initiator of speaking. The early stages of language development in a person's first language depend on listening (Nation & Newton, 2009). L2 English students are to deal with different prosodic patterns found in the input language to decode incoming speech, such as accent, pitches, and intonation. This problem occurs, even if the listeners know all the words used in the communication. Although early views on the teaching of listening comprehension considered that listening was a passive skill that would develop naturally through speaking and reading. Today, listening is regarded as an active skill that can be taught directly (Rost, 2002).

The flipped classroom allows teachers to assign activities to students before class. Students then bring their doubts to the class, which becomes the place to solve problems and clarify advanced concepts together with the teacher (Tucker, 2012). Technology allows assigning tasks and pre-recorded videos in advance. This material helps students know the assigned homework before discussing it with the teacher during class. Teachers can then spend the whole class period helping students with complex concepts they do not understand; in this sense, teachers can personalize the Education thanks to the flipped classroom model (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). Besides, the flipped classroom approach allows students to learn the content of the course at their own pace, and students are not required to come to class unless they need help with asynchronous material, allowing them to make better use of their time (Davies et al., 2013). However, online learning activities should be monitored appropriately and recorded to ensure that students are concentrating on learning independently, even without contacting teachers and classmates (Yu, 2020).

The first step in the traditional classroom occurs during face-to-face class time, whereas the teacher assigned homework in the flipped classroom. Students are exposed to new learning outside and before class during the flipped classroom. In contrast, students work collaboratively with their peers and the teacher at the school, allowing the teacher to give immediate and corrective feedback whilst those students assimilate new information and develop their skills (Mehring & Leis, 2018). Finally, because teachers must evaluate any instructional change for their influence on student learning, student input is crucial in measuring the success and failure of this undertaking (Toto & Hien Nguyen, 2009).

Technology and online teaching platforms play a crucial role in the flipped classroom as they allow teachers to create a personalized learning environment. These digital tools provide the best results for synchronous and asynchronous teaching (Karalis & Raikou, 2020). Therefore, teachers who use flipped learning for their classes must make intelligent decisions about when, why, and how to use technology (Young & Moran, 2017). Students of this generation are very familiar with technology; therefore, teachers must adapt their instruction accordingly. Access to technology is more frequent than ever before, and the flipped classroom takes advantage of this resource (Etemadfar et al., 2020).

Lee (2021) implemented the flipped classroom model associated with technological tools for the different tasks aimed at students of an intermediate Spanish course. The findings emphasized the role of the design and purpose of activities and the monitoring during the EFL learning process. Flipping models contribute to autonomous learning by encouraging students to self-regulate their learning process and work collaboratively. Audiovisual learning resources are widespread due to the influence of virtual media on communicative competence in EFL.

Labinska et al. (2020) linked communicative skills and the improvement of listening skills in medical students through audiovisual materials and profession-oriented materials to determine how the skills of teachers and their ability to develop appropriate teaching materials influenced the students' motivation to improve their listening and speaking skills. The research showed the effectiveness of audiovisual media and how well-directed tasks generated a positive attitude even in students with low academic performance.



Bishop and Velerger (2013) conducted a comprehensive survey on flipped classroom use. The results were mixed, but overall, it was positive. Other evidence suggests that after comparing the flipped classroom with the traditional classroom using lecture capture as an adjunct to a traditional lecture, the results showed that the average examination scores were significantly higher for the students in the flipped classroom (Missildine et al., 2013).

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Design and Participants

A quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design was employed to measure the variation of the dependent variable (listening comprehension) with the stimulus of the independent variable (flipped classroom).

This design did not contemplate a control group but solely an experimental one. In this sense, 26 freshman students (6 males and 20 females) registered in a Bachelor of Arts program in Teaching Local and Foreign Languages of a Public University were purposefully selected and assigned to the experimental group as participants of this investigation.

All participants signed an informed consent form which contained the purpose and benefit of the study, the nature of the research, data collection steps, data treatment, and contact information of the project director. Educational authorities also approved this study.

#### B. Instruments

To verify the proposed hypotheses ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ), a pretest and a posttest were utilized. Both tests were assembled by following the listening comprehension structure of the B1 Preliminary English Test (PET) of Cambridge. These tests had similar components, with slight content changes in the posttest.

The components that helped measure the listening comprehension of the experimental group were pictures selection with audios of day-to-day situations, multiple-choice items oriented to radio conversations, gap-fill items bound with monologues, and true/false items centered on informal conversations.

In addition to that, an extra component to measure the spelling of our participants was included. The spelling component was attached to the gap-fill items. The decision to frame the spelling within the gap-fill items was because participants were making spelling mistakes in notetaking.

In this regard, an Upper-Level Spelling Inventory (USI) rubric was constructed to assess the spelling adequately. This rubric was adapted to the needs of our pretest and posttest so that the items of spelling component were the same as the gap-fill items, but focused on measuring the orthographic progress of participants. This USI rubric contained parameters of word patterns, derivational relations, plus syllables and affixes.

Overall, fifty items were used in the pretest and posttest; five items for each component above, giving a total of twenty-five items per test, which were rated over twenty-five points. The items of the tests, as well as the USI rubric, were reviewed by three experienced colleagues for their content validity. Based on their suggestions, a few modifications were conducted.

Cronbach's alpha was also executed to add reliability to the study, thus obtaining a coefficient of .77 for the pretest, .74 for the posttest, and .75 for the USI rubric. Pilot tests to get the Cronbach's alpha were administered to a population with similar demographic characteristics as the target group one month before the execution of this study.

#### C. Procedures

The study took place during the months of May and June 2021. Data were collected in eight weeks, including one week for the pretest/posttest and seven weeks for the intervention with the flipped classroom.

Due to the pandemic COVID-19, and the connectivity conditions of the participants, the procedure was organized as follows: 1) pretesting in thirty minutes and administered through the online modality, 2) using the flipped classroom via the online modality, 3) post-testing in thirty minutes and administered through the online modality.

The pretest was applied during regular class time. The administration of this instrument did not interfere with the practitioner's schedule since the educationalist participated as a researcher. Microsoft teams and an Institutional Moodle served as a means of data collection. In this regard, the investigator explained the test instructions to be followed by the participants, and played the audios once. Except for the spelling, students submitted their responses for the Institutional Moodle to rate the items automatically. Right after that, the researchers assessed the spelling through the USI rubric and annexed it instantaneously to Moodle by assuring so the twenty-five points of the pretest.

The use of flipped classroom was also materialized in the Institutional Moodle previously used and counted with three phases: preparation, implementation, and evaluation.

In the preparation stage, an extra syllabus, aside from the initial utilized as a guide for the topics covered in classes, was elaborated, and presented to participants. The additional syllabus included a detailed explanation of the course, digital materials, and methodologies. Besides, class orientation as to the online protocol of the flipped classroom was conducted. In addition, participants had expertise in using the Institutional Moodle, as before entering the first semester, they had to go through an adaptation period where they get familiar with institutional, technological tools.

In the implementation stage, lectures were attached to the syllabus above, with materials and methodology of the flipped classroom, such as using edited videos, online quizzes, forums, and infographics in their homes. In this way, the

face-to-face class via Microsoft Teams served as the space to verify how much of the topic students learned, thus investing more time in the practice and application by solving the doubts that arose during this process.

The standard procedure behind the flipped classroom implementation was to ask students, before they attend synchronous hours, to watch and listen to, in the Institutional Moodle, edited videos centered on contents of the Educational Philosophy subject. Then, they had to answer immediately a quiz, plus a collaborative open forum in which the drawbacks of the activity could be discussed. The edited videos were also explained with eye-catching infographics. In doing so, participants had more opportunities to strengthen the topics treated in the videos.

Concerning the evaluation phase, it was carried out on a regular basis, so much so that each edited video had an evaluation that appraised the listening comprehension of each class topic covered. However, since the flipped classroom seeks to fill the existing learning gaps in the course, a further evaluation was necessarily invoked. This evaluation measured the progress of student weaknesses identified in the classroom. In other words, topics that resulted difficult to students were first reinforced in the class and then evaluated once again. The components of these evaluations followed similar characteristics as the evaluation of the edited videos, and they were documented in the Institutional Moodle.

Once the phases were concluded, the posttest was administered, one more time, with the help of Microsoft teams and the Institutional Moodle, and with an identical procedure to that of the pretest. Next, the pretest and posttest scores were condensed in EXCEL tables so as to compute the means. Due to the size of the population, these means traversed the Shapiro-Wilk Normality test. As a result, a p-value of 0.08697 was obtained for the pretest, and 0.2511 for the posttest ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Based on these p-values, and considering again the size of the population, the parametric T-student test was selected.

Given also the fact that there was no comparison between an experimental and control group, but just a comparison of means between the pretest and posttest, a T-test for paired samples was required. It is worth saying that all this statistical procedure was assisted by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 27.0).

#### IV. RESULTS

Results of the present study were reported in two main findings: the descriptive statistical analysis to present a meticulous examination of the pretest and posttest applied to 26 students who belong to the experimental group, and the inferential statistics to test the hypothesis using T-test.

As mentioned in the methodology, the items for the pretest and posttest included 25 questions, divided into five components: comprehension, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

For the first component, comprehension, pictures with audios of day-to-day situations were used. Results in Figure 1 revealed a variation of 1,89 between the pretest and posttest.

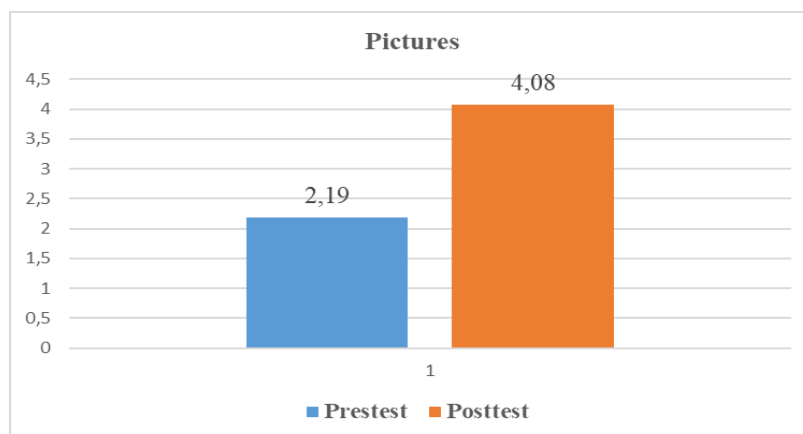


Figure 1. Comprehension, the Posttest Average Score Is Higher Than the Pretest

The evaluators assessed fluency's second component and considered multiple-choice items based on radio conversations. As shown in Figure 2, the posttest score is higher than the pretest one; a contrast of 1,85 is evinced.

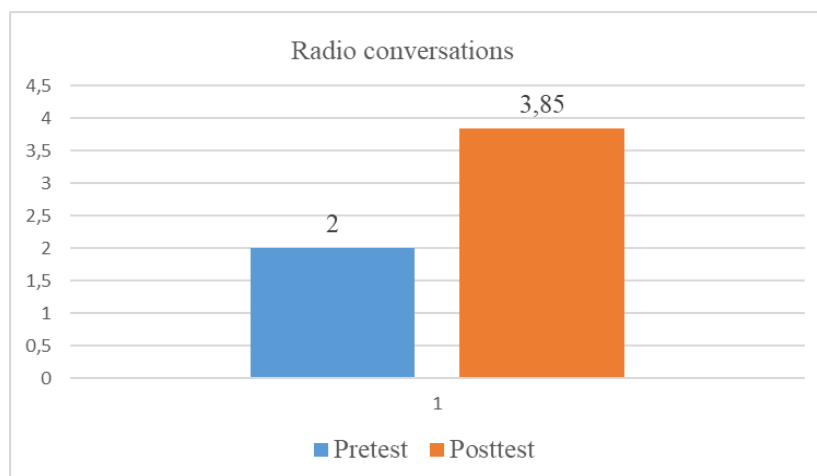


Figure 2. Fluency, the Variation Between the Pretest and Posttest Is 1,85

Concerning the third component, Figure 3 reveals that the posttest score was higher than the pretest one. The researchers used monologues to compile five gap-fill items. The score in the pretest was 1,85, whereas in the posttest 3,38.

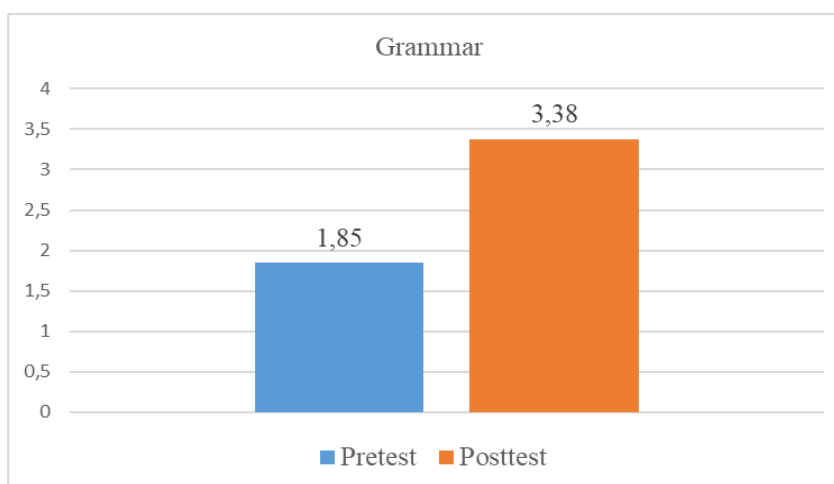


Figure 3. Grammar, the Posttest Score Is Higher Than the Pretest One

Regarding the vocabulary component, in Figure 4, it is clearly stated that there is a contrast between the pretest and the posttest score; in the posttest, students obtained a higher score. The researchers selected true or false items for this component centered on informal conversations.

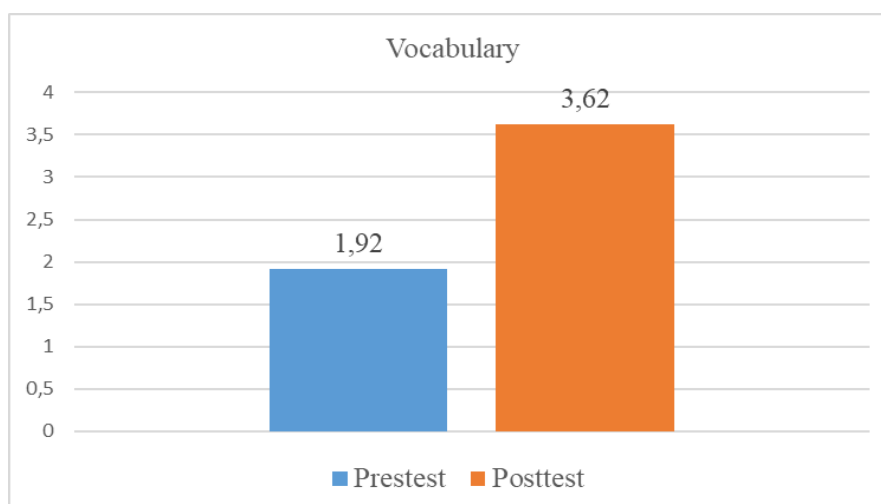


Figure 4. Vocabulary, the Variance Between Scores Is 1,7

Finally, for the fifth component, spelling mistakes in notetaking were evaluated through gap-filling items. The results in this component were predominant since the posttest average demonstrated spelling was the ability students mostly improved. As evidenced in Figure 5, the variability was 1,93.

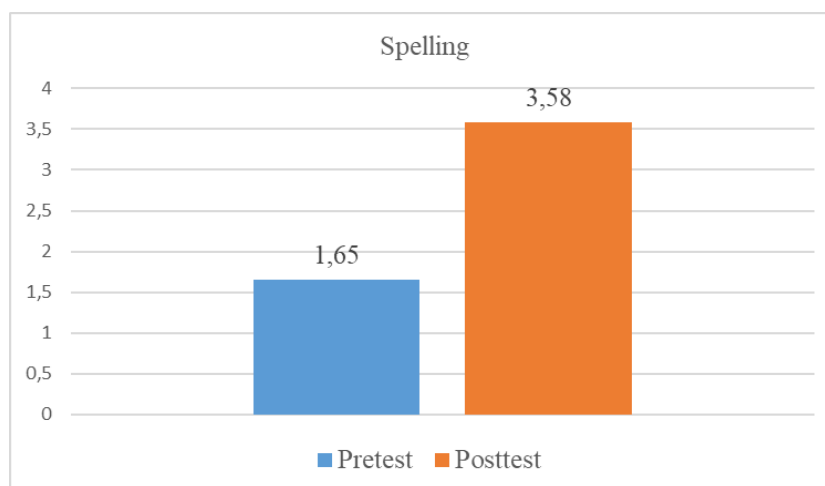


Figure 5. Spelling, the Variation Was 1,93

Additionally, the pretest and posttest median are presented, and the highest and lowest scores students obtained in the tests. In Table 1, it can be noticed that the average of correct answers is higher in the posttest.

TABLE 1  
MEAN OF PRETEST AND POSTTEST

Pretest	Posttest
9,62/25	18,5/25

Furthermore, in Table 2, the collected data presented relevant facts. In the posttest, students were able to achieve the highest score, which is 25/25, whereas, in the pretest, the highest score was 17/25. Concerning the lowest grades in the pretest, the lowest score was 5/25, and in the posttest, 9/25.

TABLE 2  
LOW AND HIGH VALUES OF THE PRETEST AND POSTTEST

	Pretest	Posttest
Lowest score	5	9
Highest score	17	25

#### A. Hypothesis Testing

First, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was selected to apply inferential statistics. Then, collected data was organized and tabulated in Excel spreadsheets. After that, the grades of the 26 students were entered in the SPSS package. The T-test for paired samples was run once data was correctly written in the statistical package. Finally, the significance level to verify the hypothesis was ( $\alpha \leq 0,05$ ), which corresponds to 95% reliability. The degrees of freedom corresponded to this formula  $df=n-1$ , considering that the n value refers to the number of students.

To offer a clear explanation, the hypotheses are presented.

$$H_0 = \mu_a > \mu_b$$

$$H_1 = \mu_a \leq \mu_b$$

As shown in Table 3, the significance value is less than 0,05. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative is accepted.

TABLE 3  
T-TEST FOR PAIRED SAMPLES

		Paired differences							
		95% of confidence interval of the difference							
		Mean	Standard deviation	Std. Error mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Significance (2-tailed)
Par 1	Pretest Posttest	-1,77692	1,25134	0,24541	-2,28235	-1,27150	-7,241	25	0,000

## V. DISCUSSION

### A. Research Question

How does the utilization of flipped instruction, particularly in the post-pandemic era, enhance the EFL communicative skills of students, with a specific emphasis on the listening skill role?

### B. Responding to the Research Question

The present study investigated the effectiveness of flipped classroom as a method to enhance the English listening skills in EFL students. The results indicated that students improved their listening skills regarding comprehension, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

In the implementation phase of the research, the content of the adapted syllabus was employed. Additionally, edited videos, online quizzes, collaborative open forums, and infographics were applied. Subsequently, in the evaluation phase, students took a posttest. The results of this instrument are the following. First, students had to listen to audios for their listening comprehension skills. Then, after applying the posttest, an increment of 1,89 points was evidenced. Concerning fluency, the variation is 1,85 points; the researchers used radio conversations to assess this skill. With regard to grammar, the difference is 1,53 points; students had to listen to monologues and complete gap-fill items for this component. As for vocabulary, in the posttest, students' scores were 1,7 points higher than the pretest; the evaluation of this component considered informal conversations. Finally, students practice notetaking during the intervention as a strategy to improve their listening skills, and students' enhancement was notorious since the difference between tests was 1,93 points.

In addition, the T-test was applied to analyze the hypothesis. Finally, the test corroborated that the flipped classroom enhances the English listening skills in the EFL student.

The results mentioned above are also supported by other investigations, which will be now described. Roth and Suppasetseree (2016) in their study entitled *Flipped classroom: Can it enhance English listening comprehension for pre-university students in Cambodia?* Concluded that Flipped Classroom helped EFL learners improve English listening skills since, according to the questionnaire results, students improved their listening comprehension and became independent learners, highly responsible for their learning while constructing rapport among teachers and students.

Moreover, Samah Zajereya Ahmd, from the Faculty of Education at the Suez University in Egypt, applied a pretest and a posttest to thirty-four students of the third year. According to the author, a paired-sampled t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in favor of the posttest ( $t=11.341$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The author affirms that the success of the flipped classroom implementation responded to the fact that participants were required to watch videos before class and answer an online quiz after listening attentively to these videos. Once students had an essential background of the content, they could actively participate in classroom discussions (Ahmad, 2016).

Tucker (2012) stated that Flipped Classroom does not translate into viewing audiovisual material from home; it is a well-structured combination of teaching practices and constructivist learning. In this context, it is necessary to comment on the limitation that was encountered in the study. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students and teachers were forced to reformulate the teaching-learning process. As a result, higher education students could have perceived that the advantages of the Flipped Classroom on skills development are not as noticeable as expected. The researchers determined that it would be essential that students have open access to computer equipment and Internet connection from their homes (Latorre-Coscolluela et al., 2021). The researchers could also observe that students had Internet connection problems. Therefore, they could not entirely participate in class. Nevertheless, students could watch the recorded lessons at their own pace and practice at home.

In sum, this study demonstrated that even though technology and Internet connectivity could become a barrier, the Flipped Classroom implementation in the English as a Foreign Language effectively enhanced students' listening comprehension skills.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The fusion of the constructivist, connectivism and communicative approaches applied to the Flipped classroom model helped effectively develop the listening comprehension skills of university students. In this study, the flipped classroom model improved students' listening skills. In addition, the students participated in collaboration and discussion activities in English during class time, which led them to develop their listening comprehension.

After designing and adapting the different activities and tasks through the Moodle platform, the findings showed that the EFL students increased their English listening skills, which determines the effectiveness of the Flipped classroom model. However, certain disadvantages, such as lack of access to digital media, should be considered. Although technology and internet speed have improved, one of the main difficulties of applying the flipped classroom in a public university in Ecuador is mentioned below.

Some students do not have a computer for themselves. Instead, they have to share it with other family members, making it difficult to adequately plan their study time, causing homework to pile up and feeling overwhelmed by having too many tasks to complete.

However, students who do have a personal computer for themselves can benefit from the flipped classroom method since this method allows them to learn anywhere and at any time, creating a positive habit in these students, helping them to develop their different skills such as communication, collaborative problem solving, and critical thinking.

There is no doubt that the didactic value of the flipped classroom as a method together with technological platforms, in this case for receptive and productive ability, improves listening, writing, spelling, and notetaking, offering more advantages than disadvantages. In addition, online tools like Moodle and Microsoft Teams allowed students to work on their assignments and participate in collaborative work with their peers and the teacher in class.

However, some English teachers might not be interested in implementing the flipped classroom method with their students since they would have to double their work time creating new material (videos, readings, homework) and learn some technical programs. For this reason, further research should examine the role of institutional incentives and recognition in encouraging teachers to adopt the flipped classroom as a method to improve language skills.

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**Edgar E. Heredia-Arboleda** is currently a Professor in the Career of Teaching Local and Foreign Languages at Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo. His bachelor's degree was granted by the same Institution where he is working. In addition, he completed his master's program at the Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral. In terms of his professional training, he has taken national and international courses in the assessment of the English Language. His research interests are focused on supporting minority groups. He is also concerned with developing, in his scientific contribution, a fundamental understanding within cultural studies.



**Mónica N. Cadena Figueroa** is currently the Academic Principal in the career of Teaching Local and Foreign Languages at Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo. She holds a bachelor's degree in Education and Teaching English. She possesses a higher diploma in English Methodology and a master's degree in Intelligence Development. Professor Cadena is currently studying a Doctorate Program in Letters and Cultures at the University of Extremadura, Spain. Her research interests are centered on English Language Learning and Inclusive Education. She has authored many book chapters as well as research papers targeted to the aforementioned research interests.



**Magdalena I. Ullauri Moreno** is currently a Professor in the Career of Teaching Local and Foreign Languages at Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo. She holds a bachelor's degree in Teaching English and French, also a higher diploma in University Teaching. Besides, she has a master's degree in University Academic Management and another in Applied Linguistics. Professor Ullauri is also a Ph. D. in Education. She was the coordinator of the Linguistic Skills Department at Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo, and Elected President by the Red Académica Nacional de Idiomas. Nowadays, Professor Ullauri is performing herself as the President of TESOL Ecuador. Her research interests are focused on learning styles and multiple intelligences from the EFL field. She has authored many academic works targeted to the aforementioned research interests.



**Alex A. Chiriboga Cevallos** holds a bachelor's degree in teaching Chemistry in Secondary Education and a Higher Diploma in Educational Planning and Management. Professor Chiriboga also owns a master's degree in Educational Management, and another in Training and Improvement of Practitioners in the Specialty of Biology granted by the University of Salamanca, Spain. He is currently the Headmaster of the Teaching Practice Department in the Faculty of Education at Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo. His research interests are gravitated to problem-based learning right from Chemistry, Biology, and Language Studies.



# Gender-Related Phonetic Variation of Vowels in Prishtina

Edona Jahiu

Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Philology, University of Prishtina, Prishtina, Kosovo

Shpëtim Elezi

Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Philology, University of Prishtina, Prishtina, Kosovo

**Abstract**—This study investigates how gender, as a sociolinguistic factor, affects the phonetic variation of low and mid vowels in the Albanian language. 156 Prishtina citizens (78 women and 78 men, mean age: 39) took part in an interview in which they answered questions about their daily and professional lives. They used vernacular style in their answers, which revealed information regarding the density of vowel usage in their native dialect. These vowels were numbered in each informant's discourse and measured based on their gender. They were classified as "prestigious" or "inferior", depending on their relation to the standard variety. Results proved that men use more locally colored and nasalized variants, which shows that they are less sensitive to potential negative social perceptions. On the other hand, women preferred to stay away from stigmatized speech, particularly when it came to low vowels. Furthermore, women played a leading role in creating innovative variants.

**Index Terms**—gender, phonetic variants, stigmatized pronunciation, innovative variants

## I. INTRODUCTION

Havelock Ellis (1929) first discovered that men's vocal cords are longer compared to women, while the larynx is positioned lower in women. Although culture and practices can influence the general innate voice quality (Yuasa, 2008), physical differences exert their effect. The vocal tract is the area where air moves, produces vibrations, and where the frequency and resonances change. The vowel's formant is determined by its length (Reetz & Jongman, 2020). Women's formant values are higher than men's because their vocal tract is typically 10–15 percent smaller. However, as Lieberman (1986, p. 359) points out, "people are not limited to their anatomy, but certain traits are culturally transmitted". This indicates that many of these differences cannot be entirely attributed to physiological developments and are partially explained by traditional social norms.

Phonetic attributes play a significant role in social perception, gender, and linguistic convergence (Stuart-Smith, 2020; Wang & Gu, 2022; Rustamov et al., 2021; Brown, 2015). Certain pronunciations show that "phonetic trajectory is influenced by external factors" (Riverin-Coutlée & Harrington, 2022, p. 42). It is therefore demonstrated that phonological characteristics, historical and social context, and other linguistic elements influence phonetic repertoire (Turton & Lennon, 2023; Holmes, 2020; Mahzari, 2023; Celata & Calamai, 2014; Bulgantamir, 2015; Zheng & Samuel, 2023; Riverin-Coutlée & Harrington, 2022). Geographical factors are also taken into account, as "such differences may occur at the level of dialects pertaining to the same language" (Al-Omari & Singh, 2023, p. 3299).

The purpose of this research is to explain vowel characteristics based on the gender of the participants in the capital city of Kosovo, Prishtina, which is geographically associated with the Gheg Albanian dialect. Regarding this variable, Labov (2001) has pointed out that women's careful speech, the propensity to create new forms, and their preference for standard variants are among the most consistent results worldwide. Chappell (2016) asserted that women should avoid non-standard variants because they lose more than they gain. They are criticized enough for other strikingly gendered behaviors that it would be excessive to add "lower class speech" to their repertoire. In the Albanian language, this was demonstrated to be the case (Osmani, 2016, 2020). Therefore, "gender identity is partly encoded by prosodic patterns and suprasegmental cues" (Dashdorj et al., 2023, p. 847).

Based on the findings from numerous countries worldwide (Regan, 2019; Kettig & Winter, 2017; Van Heuven et al., 2002; Holmes, 1992; Labov, 2006), one goal of the analysis will be to determine how consistently women use low and middle vowels and whether they correspond to lower status or 'privileged pronunciation'.

When it comes to phonetic differences in Albanian, vowels with low nasality, short vowels, and stressed shwa [ə] will be considered closer to the standard pronunciation because nasality and vowel length are generally absent in Tosk Albanian, which is the basic dialect of the standard variety of Albanian language (Munishi, 2013; Ismajli, 1998). On the other side, Gheg Albanian, the main dialect of Prishtina, has much more dialectical, low-prestige features (Munishi, 2013). Furthermore, "the northern Albanian macrosystem, or Gheg, is characterized by length and nasalization" (Myrtaj, 2015, p. 303). Because of this, the vowel system in Gheg is both richer and more distinct from that of Tosk Albanian, which is characterized by oral vowels (Gjinari & Shkurtaj, 2003).

There has been early and more contemporary research about the vowel system of Albanian within linguistic, lexical, historical, and dialectal aspects (Ismajli, 2021, 1987, 1998; Myrtaj, 2015; Topalli, 2005, 2007; Rugova, 2019; Gjinari, 1968; Çabej, 1976; Dodi, 2004). To the best of our knowledge, except for social influences on women's language generally (Osmani, 2016, 2019, 2020; Jahiu, 2023, 2020), no research has been carried out on the phonetic variations of Albanian vowels in the social dimension thus far. This study brings to light a fresh perspective on Albanian studies.

This paper seeks to find out the responses to three main questions:

1. What is the frequency of low and mid vowels (a, e, o) and their allophones in females?
2. What is the frequency of low and mid vowels (a, e, o) and their allophones in males?
3. Is there any tendency for innovative accents?
4. How does their distribution relate to the standard variety of the Albanian language?

#### A. *Related Studies*

As was briefly indicated, it is important to recognize that the Gheg dialect is underrepresented in the sociolinguistic framework. This underrepresentation highlights the difficulties faced in conducting a comprehensive comparison of data. Nonetheless, a large number of independent studies—particularly concerning the standard variety's phonetic characteristics, the phonetic structure of vowels, and the dialectology of Albanian—were very helpful in determining which vowels are (non-)prestigious. We shall quickly review the works that were relevant and helpful for our results.

Gjinari and Shkurtaj (2003) described the vowel inventory of Albanian cities and villages and identified those closest to Tosk and Gheg. They provided extensive data regarding the dialectal aspects of the Albanian language. Additionally, they emphasized some linguistic traits and how they relate to the standard variety, as well as unique qualities that “separate” the two main dialects. In-depth research on Albanian phonetics from a diachronic standpoint has been provided by Topalli (2007), who has also included some samples of common allophones in the Tosk and Gheg dialects. He discussed the evolution of unstressed vowels (p. 136) as well as the historical shifts that have brought the allophones of the existing vowels. Ismajli (2021) has recently conducted a thorough analysis of the phonetic inventory of Gheg Albanian and explained the relationship between nasality and Gheg dialect. Ismajli (2021, p. 144) claims that the absence of nasality in Tosk distinguishes the two dialects and is a result of internal linguistic developments. “Nasal pronunciation occurs when the voice doesn't flow towards the mouth, but it goes down to the palate, and then it transpires through the nose” (Çabej, 1976, p. 119).

Demiraj (2015) on the other hand, has contributed to the comparative method by emphasizing phonemes and morphemes that are comparable to those found in other Balkan languages and the Indo-European family. Regarding the Albanian language's vowels, Çabej (1976) provided broad and comparative data about several phonetic alternations and historical processes like metaphony and apophony. Munishi (2013) has strongly proven that the basic dialect of the standard variety of Albanian is Tosk Albanian, which contributed to growing awareness about the misbalance of the standard variety in relation to Gheg Albanian.

Osmani (2016, 2019, 2020) conducted detailed research on prevalent perceptions about women's language in Albanian, how they establish an image through it, tactics for speaking “correctly”, the use of euphemisms, and so on. These findings familiarize us with gender inequalities in the Albanian language, which we intend to demonstrate at the phonetic level.

All of these findings are strongly related to our research because they lay the framework for us to provide sociolinguistic explanations for certain allophone usages. Furthermore, in light of these and other valuable studies, this may be a starting point for future research on this topic. This would conduct a broader understanding of dynamics concerning the Albanian language's vowel system, i.e., to bring about the possibility of exploring and shedding light on vowels' variation depending on other sociolinguistic variables.

#### B. *Vowels Regarded as More or Less Standardized in the Albanian Language*

Standard Albanian comprises 36 phonemes, including 7 vowels (a, e, ë, o, i, u, y) and 29 consonants. Though the Albanian orthography was formally decided in Tirana in 1972 for both Albania and Kosova, two states that belong to the same nation, no officially written orthoepy describes a speech “according to the norms” in Albanian (Dodi, 2004). It is crucial to note that standard Albanian pronunciation differs noticeably from the Gheg dialect in terms of nasality and vowel length. Albanian vowels (except o) have nasalized counterparts that are largely part of the Gheg dialect's vowel system (Çabej, 1976, p. 120; Topalli, 2007, pp. 115-125; Gjinari & Shkurtaj, 2003). More prestigious varieties avoid these two characteristics. “The Gheg phoneme inventory of stressed vowel macrosystem consists of 23 phonemes; the phoneme inventory of unstressed vowel phonemes consists of 7 vowel phonemes” (Beci, 2002, p. 110; cited by Myrta, 2015, p. 303).

Ismajli (2021, p. 143) depicts the vowel system of the Gheg dialect with nasalized and long equivalents (as shown below):



## Distribution

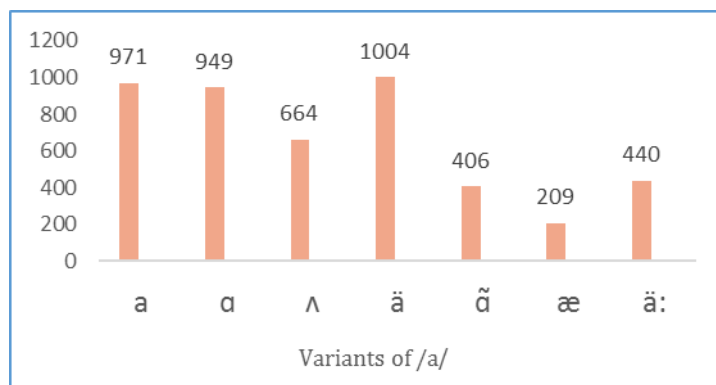


Figure 1. Quantitative Usage of Low Vowels in Females

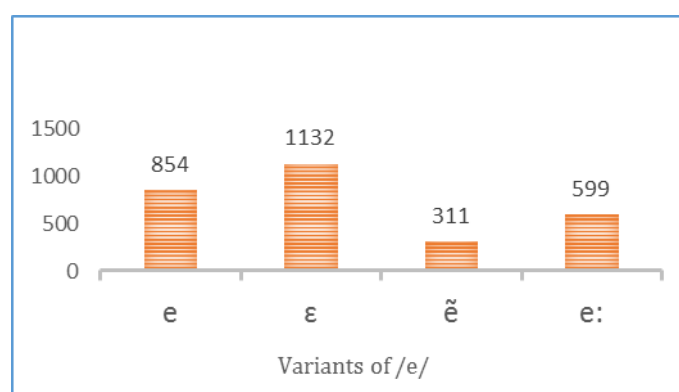


Figure 2. Quantitative Usage of Unrounded Mid-Vowels

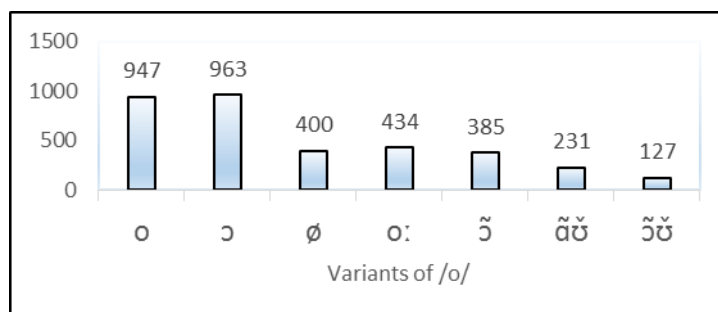


Figure 3. Quantitative Distribution of Rounded Mid-Vowels in Females

In Figure 1, the low central vowel [ä] along with the low front variant [a] have a higher distribution in the female gender, indicating a higher density of allophones that are often regarded as standard vowels in Albanian, as they are similar to the Tosk dialect (Topalli, 2007). The low-back variant [ɑ] is also quite present. The less widely distributed vowel turns out to be the near-front vowel [æ]. The dialectal nasal variant [ǣ] didn't display dense usage, along with [a:], which is in higher number compared to the nasalized one.

In Figure 2, the open variant of unrounded middle vowels [ε], as an innovative variant, is the most prevalent among women, while the second is the front variant [e], which is also the basic variant of this group of vowels in Albanian. The middle nasal vowel is less commonly noticed. Just like in low vowels, nasality among women, as a non-prestigious phenomenon, is also avoided.

In Figure 3, the open-mid back rounded vowel [ɔ] is the most common in women, followed by the close-mid back rounded vowel [o], which is known as the basic variant of these vowels in Albanian. Other allophones have a noticeable decline in usage compared to others.

The diphthongs [ǝũ] and [ǝũũ] were less commonly used. Also, “the consonants affect the vowels in terms of frequency and duration” (Mahzari, 2023, p. 805). This means that in many occurrences, such as [qe:nɪ qɪɛɦɪ] (dog, sky), the consonant ‘q’ has exerted its effect on the pronunciation, and vowel quality finds interpretation on phonemes that are near vowels (Bulgantamir, 2015).

Social characteristics of [ε] in women

The vowel [ε], though not highly present in standard variety, is esteemed with a dose of prestige and may have played a role in the high prevalence among women. E.g.

(1) *ideja, vjeshta, reja* [ideja] [vjɛʃta] [rɛja] ‘idea, autumn, daughter-in-law’

These examples constitute innovative articulations, especially noticed among young women seeking to “differentiate themselves” as most youngsters do (Koreinik et al., 2024; Trudgill, 1972).

Consistent with our result, Kettig and Winter (2017) conducted a study on inter-speaker variation (production and perception) of mid and low vowels in Montreal, Canada [ɛ æ]. Although they are not active in the standard variety, the findings of their investigation revealed that girls develop their own varieties (which are innovative), despite being regularly exposed to the conservative ones. Below are some words which female respondents mostly pronounced:

TABLE 1  
VOWEL REALIZATIONS OF /E/ IN DENSELY USED WORDS

WORD IN STANDARD VARIETY	INNOVATIVE REALIZATION	NUMBER TIMES	OF PERCENTAGE	COMMON VARIANT	NUMBER TIMES	OF
<i>vendi</i> ‘place’	[vɛndɪ]	63	80.7%	[vɛ:ndɪ]	15	
<i>sendi</i> ‘thing’	[sɛndɪ]	60	76.9%	[sɛ:nd]	18	
<i>shpendi</i> ‘poultry’	[ʃpɛnd]	70	89.7%	[ʃpɛ:nd]	8	
<i>elementi</i> ‘element’	[ɛlɛmɛ:ntɪ]	34	43.5%	[ɛlɛmɛ:ntɪ]	43	
<i>treni</i> ‘train’	[trɛnɪ]	51	65.3%	[trɛnɪ]	26	
<i>veshi</i> ‘ear’	[vɛʃɪ]	73	93.5%	[vɛʃɪ]	4	
<i>këndej</i> ‘right here’	[knɛj]	58	74.3%	[knɛ:j]	20	
<i>enë</i> ‘dish’	[ɛ:n]	43	55.1%	[ɛ:n]	34	
<i>ndejë</i> ‘party’	[nɛj]	66	84.6%	[nɛ:j]	12	

It is clear that the variants encountered in these words are with the two most used vowels of this group, but the open variant [ɛ] predominates. There are words like *kerr*, *vesh* [kɛr] [vɛʃ] ‘car, ear’, which all respondents generally articulated with the open variant, except in cases where the reference was made in the definite form with the suffix -i. In this case, the vowel moves to a more front variant: [ke:ɾɪ] [ve:ʃɪ], usually accompanied by vowel length.

Adding prestige to the vowel [ɛ] indicates a trend toward phonetic innovation since the vowel [e] is the typical standard variant in the above-mentioned words.

Factors affecting change in vowel quality in women

The phonetic variation within a single response is a common and interesting aspect of female speech. The reasons for the inconsistency in phonetic features throughout the interviews were found to be related to the topic of the conversation, the emotional content of the story being told, or the tendency to be more careful with the vocabulary. In this perspective, the following factors have been detected:

**Topic change.** The use of more “traditional” variants is related to the topic of conversation (Drager et al., 2010). As the topic shifts from work life to personal life, there is a slight change in phonetic variants. For instance, between the ages of 17 and 25, the vowel /e/ predominates. In informal questions, it switches to [ɛ], although in most words, both variants are potential.

**Expression of emotions.** Intonation has an important role in the expression of emotions (Scherer et al., 2001; Yuasa, 2008; Bachorowski et al., 1995). After emotional questions, e.g., *what is your weakness? Have you ever been betrayed in your life?*, the words were uttered carelessly and the vowels were longer.

**Tendency to sound more educated.** This was noted, particularly in questions concerning professional life. They considered the typical variants of the Tosk Albanian as a ‘décor’ to their discourse. E.g., the standardized stressed [ə] is the main feature that makes the difference between Tosk and Gheg Albanian (Munishi, 2013). When females inserted it in their speech, they claimed themselves to be more educated:

(2) *është ëpforesion i lodhsh ën* [əʃt pɹɔfɛsɪɔn ɪ lɔʃəm] ‘it is a difficult job’;  
*kom prit me or ët ët ëra* [kɔm pɹɪ:t mɛ o:r tɔ tɹä] ‘I have waited for hours’;  
*ënb ësira e pite* [ənbəlsɪrə pɪtɛ] ‘desserts and pie’;  
*ndodhin gj ëra t ëndryshme* [ndo ən dɹä tɔ ndrɪʃmɛ] ‘different things happen’;  
*e kom vra k ënb ën* [ɛ kɔm vrä kəmbən] ‘I hurt my leg’

TABLE 2  
STATISTICAL DATA OF FACTORS INFLUENCING VOWEL QUALITY CHANGE IN WOMEN

The factor that changes vowel quality	Number of times	Percentage
Topic change	49	36.5%
Expression of emotions	52	38.8%
Tendency to sound more educated	33	24.6%

Additionally, we noticed numerous phonemic changes that altered the word's basic vowel quality:

(3) *the mka marr* [ɛ ðe mka **mər**] 'he took me' ; *secili* [sɛcɪli] 'each of them' ; *ashtu* [aʃtʊ] 'in that way' ; *nuk muj* [nɔk **mɔj**] 'I can't' ; *i maj nmen* [ɪ mɔj **nmān**] 'I remember them'

Or reduce their sound quality to [ə]:

(4) *nuk osht q ěia kom vnu men ěi* [nɔk ɔʃt tʃə j äkom vnu ʃɔm **mənən**] 'I didn't pay attention';

*Pi njerzve q ěs din ěka dojn n ěšta npun njet* [pɪ nɛrzvɛ tʃə sɪn tʃka dojn **nəʃta** npun njet] 'from people who don't know what to do in life';

*mun ěn me vazhdu* [**munəm** mɛ vɔʒdu] 'we can continue';

*vet ěi* [**vetən**] 'myself';

*kur kejt merret dikush tjet ěr* [kʊr kejt **mɪrət** dɪkʊʃ tjetər] 'when somebody else deals with it';

*n ěšta me qit pun ě* [**nəʃta** mɛ tʃɪt pun] 'maybe with this affair'

This indicates that their linguistic behavior is a natural reaction to the nature of the questions but they also adjust their speech to fit the interviewer's informal variety.

### III. VOWEL VARIATIONS IN MALES

Encouraging men to speak in their vernacular has not been difficult, even for those who claimed to be economically well-off or highly educated. This higher independence is not related to any special biological organ or innate ability, but stems mainly from social conventions (Holmes, 1992).

Studies conducted worldwide on men's language reveal a consistent use of native varieties devoid of complexity that may indicate a low social status. Hay et al. (2010) note that /r/ in New Zealand English is related to gender. In their study, unlike women, boys insert it after the diphthong [aʊ], and upper-class individuals do not use it in this position, which is characteristic of the lower class. This result also connects women with the upper class. Dubois and Horvath (1998) conducted a study in the Cajun community, Louisiana, to see the effect of gender and age on the use of /ʃ/ /ð/, and generally boys, as an alternative to these phonemes, used /t/ /d/ much more than girls, which is a more stigmatized variant.

Distribution

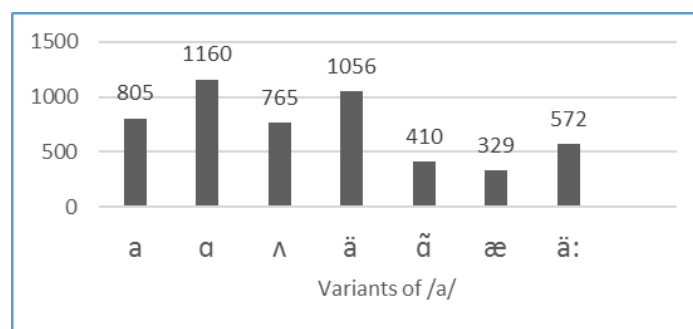


Figure 4. Quantitative Distribution of Low Vowels in Males

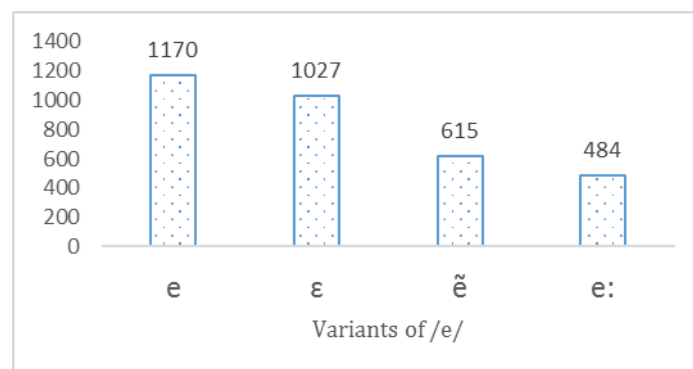


Figure 5. Quantitative Distribution of Unrounded Mid-Vowels in Males

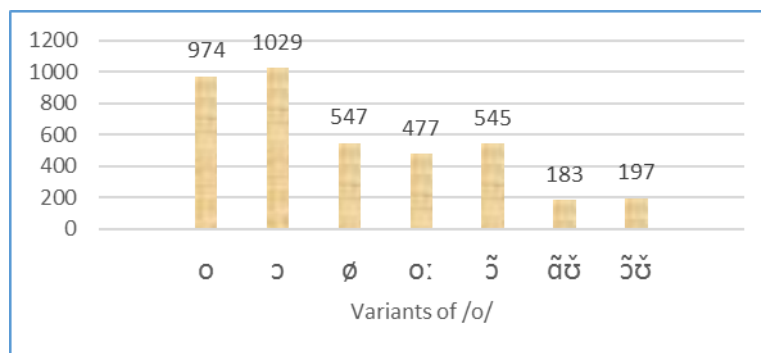


Figure 6. Quantitative Distribution of Rounded Mid-Vowels in Males

In Figure 4, the low back variant [ɑ] is the prevailing vowel, followed by the socially superior, low central [ä], which was the most used in the feminine gender. The variant [æ] has the lowest degree of distribution, preceded by the nasal-back low vowel, which appeared 410 times.

In Figure 5, the results are different for the unrounded middle vowels compared to the feminine gender. The most widespread variant turns out to be the front middle unrounded vowel [e], followed by the more open variant [ɛ]. Additionally, in contrast to the feminine gender, the non-prestige nasal vowel of this group occurs more frequently than [ɛ:].

In Figure 6, in the distribution of rounded mid-vowels, by a narrow margin, the variant [ɔ] is denser. Differences are seen in the nasal variant of the nasalized semi-open labial vowel [ɔ̃], which also prevails in men. This shows that this dialectal phenomenon is, to a certain extent, indicative of this gender.

#### IV. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Considering the usage scale of analyzed vowels and their respective allophones, the general results of their spread and standard deviation in each gender are given below:

TABLE 3  
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATION IN OVERALL USAGE OF VOWELS AND THEIR ALLOPHONES IN BOTH GENDERS

Gender		Variants of /a/	Variants of /e/	Variants of /o/
F	Mean	663.2	413.7	498.1
	St.dv	320.1	459.7	329.9
M	Mean	618.8	470.8	564.5
	St.dv	414.6	497.3	334.7

Pearson correlation shows a significant positive relationship between the standard variants of /a/ and /e/:  $r = .79$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ; /a/ and /o/:  $r = .73$ ,  $p = 0.03$ ; /e/ and /o/:  $r = .91$ ,  $p = 0.001$ .

With gender as a fixed factor, MANOVA shows significant differences at low vowels:  $F(6,149) = 2.65$ ,  $p = 0.01$ , unrounded mid-vowels  $F(4,151) = 3.05$ ,  $p = 0.01$ . However, there wasn't a significant difference in rounded mid-vowels  $F(7, 140) = 1.55$ .

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

The results show that there are gender differences in the frequency of low and mid vowels, although not to a drastic degree. Standard variants were rated according to Tosk Albanian's typical vowel system. Men lean more towards the back variant of the low vowels, [ɑ], while among middle vowels, more common are the close-mid front unrounded vowel [e] and the open-mid back rounded vowel [ɔ]. On the other side, women preferred the standard pronunciation of low vowels, since the most frequent realization is the central variant [ä], which is active mostly in formal language.

As for middle unrounded vowels, the predominance of the open variant [ɛ] is more related to innovative pronunciations and was more widespread among women. In the group of rounded mid-vowels, there is a similarity in the higher prevalence of [ɔ], but nasality as a dialectal phenomenon, also in this group of vowels, was more commonly encountered in men. The slight change in vowel quality after changing the topic or nature of questions seems to be a direct result of gender because it is characteristic of each girl to varying degrees but wasn't consistently noticed in men.

In summary, younger women are more attentive to their speech to be perceived and sound more educated, but they are also more innovative, which helps them reveal their identity as leaders in this respect. The phenomenon of nasality, characteristic of Gheg Albanian, is proven to be characteristic of the male gender, as there is a greater distribution in two of the three groups of analyzed vowels. Except for the low vowels, in the other two groups of middle vowels, the corresponding nasal variants are dominant compared to the female gender. The analysis of 156 interviews revealed that females have mastered the skill of turning some words into 'innovative' pronunciation and standardized or put into their

vernacular uncommon vowel variants in Kosova's dialect, such as the overuse of [ɛ]. Innovative approaches lead to creativity and are strongly linked to daily topics of language practice.

## APPENDICES

### A. Vowels Under Investigation (IPA Symbols)

#### Variants of /a/

- [a] - low front unrounded vowel
- [ɑ] - low central unrounded vowel
- [ʌ] - low-mid back unrounded vowel
- [ä] - low central unrounded vowel
- [ä̃] - nasalized low back unrounded vowel
- [æ] - near-low front unrounded vowel
- [ä:] - long low central unrounded vowel

#### Variants of /e/

- [e] - high-mid front unrounded vowel
- [ɛ] - low-mid front unrounded vowel
- [ẽ] - nasalized high-mid front unrounded vowel
- [e:] - long high-mid front unrounded vowel

#### Variants of /o/

- [o] - high-mid back rounded vowel
- [ɔ] - low-mid back rounded vowel
- [ø] - high-mid front rounded vowel,
- [o:] - long high-mid back rounded vowel
- [õ] - nasalized low-mid back rounded vowel
- [äö] - nasalized diphthong used mainly by elders
- [õö] - nasalized diphthong used mainly by elders

### B. Pieces of Conversations

#### (a). Innovative Pronunciations With Variant [ɛ]

[ngä äspe:kti **int̩lektuäl** b̩esoj k̩ä j̩ənu: **pr̩əgr̩es** p̩ər faktin t̩jə t̩j̩sja n̩ɪnf̩ərm̩aɪɔn s̩əd ɔft̩ s̩u m̩a ɛ l̩ɛ:t̩ n̩əse jo **f̩ɪz̩ɪk̩ɛft** librit̩ mujm̩ **m̩e** iu t̩j̩as m̩e n̩ɪ k̩ær̩k̩ɪm̩ d̩ɪs̩äsek̩ɔŋf̩ ngu:g̩əl̩ ɛ n̩ɪ f̩äkt̩ɔr̩ t̩jet̩ər̩ ɔft̩ f̩k̩əl̩im̩i k̩rah̩as̩u: d̩x̩ **d̩ek̩ada** m̩a p̩ɔ:r̩ k̩a t̩j̩e:n̩ f̩äk̩ult̩at̩iv̩ m̩a h̩e:r̩ət̩ k̩a t̩j̩e:n̩ t̩jud̩i: m̩e kry̩ st̩ud̩im̩e t̩äf̩ ɔ t̩jud̩i f̩ökt̩i t̩jet̩ər̩ t̩j̩ə d̩ɪk̩uɔf̩ n̩ök kry̩n̩ st̩ud̩im̩e k̩j̩t̩u ɔft̩ j̩ənu **pr̩əgr̩es** ɛ ð̩e **em̩äcip̩em̩** p̩o: t̩af̩ **p̩e** kujt̩oj̩ n̩ɪ r̩ast̩ n̩ə k̩ömu:n̩ k̩öm̩ f̩ku: m̩e m̩ar̩ n̩ɪ **ek̩str̩äkt̩ t̩l̩ind̩j̩es** ɔse d̩ɪt̩j̩k̩a t̩jet̩ər̩ k̩ä **q̩en** duft̩ m̩e fol̩ m̩e z̩yrt̩art̩ at̩r̩ ɛ n̩ɪf̩är̩ ar̩əg̩ance ɛ j̩äst̩z̩äk̩ɔŋf̩m̩e p̩rit̩j̩e **nr̩ē:n̩** d̩ɪt̩j̩k̩ä m̩ä t̩m̩að̩e jo: jo: asp̩äk̩ d̩i f̩ömt̩j̩k̩ä **m̩e** bo: p̩o i b̩oj̩ t̩kt̩j̩j̩ä ɔft̩ n̩ɪ nd̩z̩ar̩j̩e t̩j̩ə ɛ k̩öm̩ p̩ər̩j̩ets̩u: ɛ ð̩e **nt̩r̩eg̩em̩** se i k̩öm̩ d̩ə t̩ent̩at̩iv̩ä m̩e f̩k̩ru p̩o t̩k̩o:t̩ä m̩am̩i m̩θ̩ot̩ m̩e i ke:p̩ n̩ä d̩x̩ t̩j̩ar̩t̩f̩afa se f̩trat̩i i s̩aj̩ f̩ö̩m̩ i m̩äð̩ f̩k̩oj̩ t̩e r̩öb̩at̩j̩eps̩j̩ä ɛð̩e i **θ̩em̩** f̩trat̩in̩ **sp̩e** mbul̩ɔn̩ **v̩et̩f̩** ŋa:n̩i m̩θ̩ot̩ s̩ah̩o:r̩ä iä b̩ajm̩ n̩ɪ **t̩eg̩et̩** i θ̩əm̩ s̩a d̩uh̩ət̩ t̩ez̩j̩ä **s̩elv̩ij̩e** θ̩ot̩ s̩a t̩i k̩ɪf̩ ɛð̩e ɛ k̩t̩f̩yri ɛ ð̩e m̩ä̩m̩ət̩ p̩se p̩o l̩yp̩ k̩at̩f̩ p̩ak̩ se ɛð̩e n̩ɪ r̩öb̩ät̩j̩eps̩ ɛ **m̩en̩ɔn̩** s̩i h̩ero: i θ̩əm̩ jo: se f̩ö̩m̩ p̩ak̩ ɛ t̩j̩e:l̩i gr̩uɕt̩in̩ n̩ɪ **ɛv̩oɾ̩** ɛ d̩z̩ys]

#### (b). Long Vowels at Males

[ð̩z̩end̩ja ɛ tri:v̩e ɔft̩ **ala:rm̩us̩ē** p̩robleme m̩e f̩k̩oɫ̩ p̩ap̩ons̩ia ɛ **d̩z̩ä:na** t̩jera kto ɛ b̩öjn̩ s̩ituat̩ən̩ alar̩m̩us̩e **b̩es̩o:j̩** t̩j̩ə n̩kt̩ə aspe:kt̩ f̩te:t̩i d̩uh̩ət̩ m̩e k̩on̩ s̩a m̩a str̩i:kt̩ m̩e iä s̩ig̩oru n̩ɪ t̩ar̩ð̩m̩e d̩z̩iθ̩ tr̩iv̩e **t̩v̩e:n̩it̩** t̩ən̩ **p̩o:** k̩a **nd̩o:ð̩** m̩e n̩ɪ t̩j̩end̩ər̩ t̩mj̩eks̩is̩ n̩ök̩ ɛ k̩a kry̩ ɔblig̩im̩in̩ t̩j̩ə ɛ k̩a ɔblig̩im̩ m̩e kry̩ j̩öm̩ **d̩e:t̩yru** m̩e lajm̩ru **p̩öl̩it̩ci:n̩** n̩ɪ p̩unt̩or̩e **nu:k̩** ɛ k̩a kry̩ f̩ərb̩im̩in̩ t̩j̩ə ɛ k̩a **ɔblig̩i:m̩** m̩e kry̩ sk̩am̩ d̩it̩ as̩n̩ih̩er̩ t̩af̩ p̩ej̩ t̩j̩ə **j̩eto:j̩** n̩P̩r̩ɪst̩in̩ jam̩ ms̩ü̩ ng̩a p̩ak̩ m̩e b̩ö̩ ɔf̩t̩j̩im̩e t̩leta m̩a sm̩ir̩i d̩i m̩e **b̩ö:** mak̩ar̩on̩ä t̩j̩af̩ s̩a d̩i **u:n̩** n̩ök̩ m̩ka t̩ra ð̩u̩ **k̩ær̩ku:f̩** k̩oh̩ən̩ ɛ l̩ir̩ ɛ k̩al̩oj̩ t̩o k̩f̩j̩yr̩ **sp̩o:rt̩ d̩a:l̩** m̩e l̩ujt̩ n̩ɪ nd̩z̩ar̩j̩e t̩j̩ə s̩d̩ə t̩a **h̩aro:j̩** kur̩ ɔft̩ n̩f̩k̩oɫ̩ **t̩m̩e:s̩m̩e** b̩ajk̩ m̩e f̩ökt̩ **ɛ mi:** ɛ kem̩i v̩en̩o:s̩ n̩f̩it̩j̩e v̩etur̩ən̩ ɛ **k̩uj̩d̩est̩a:r̩əs̩** t̩klas̩əs̩ n̩ɪ f̩o:k̩ t̩m̩ir̩ **ku:r̩** un̩e jam̩ nm̩oment̩e m̩a t̩k̩f̩j̩ja n̩f̩jo k̩oh̩ n̩əse ɔft̩ ar̩ f̩öko t̩j̩at̩ ɛ θ̩iri f̩ök̩ t̩m̩ir̩ **n̩erv̩o:z̩** m̩bon̩ m̩em̩ **r̩e:j̩t̩]**

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**Edona Jahiu** was born in 1995 in Gjiilan, Kosovo. She has earned BA and MA degrees in Albanian language from the University of Prishtina, Faculty of Philology. She currently works as a teaching assistant at the University of Prishtina, where she is a PhD candidate in the Linguistics Department. She also works as a lector on one of the main televisions in Kosova, KTV-Kohavision,” and the journal “Koha Ditore” since 2015. She was awarded as a Distinguished Student by the Rectorate of the University of Prishtina in 2017. Her research work is related to sociolinguistics, phonetics, and discourse analysis.

**Shpëtim Elezi** was born in 1981 in Dragash, Kosovo. He started working as a teaching assistant in 2008 and was promoted to assistant professor at the University of Prishtina, Faculty of Philology, Albanian Language Department, in 2020. After graduating with BA and MA degrees from the University of Prishtina in Albanian Language, he received his PhD in Linguistics in 2018 from the Academy of Albanian Studies in Tirana, Albania. He has also earned many awards related to his teaching skills. Dr. Elezi’s research includes works related to historical linguistics, education, the standard variety of Albanian, etc.

# Ayn Rand's Edifice of Dramatic Characters in *We the Living*

Rehena. Sk

Department of Freshman Engineering, P.V.P Siddhartha Institute of Technology, Vijayawada, A.P. India

Santha kumari. K

P. B. Siddhartha College of Arts and Science, Vijayawada, India

Mani Bacchu

St. Peter's Engineering College, Hyderabad, A.P. India

Afsha Jamal

English Department, College of Arts & Sciences for Girls, PSAU, Wadi Aldwasir, KSA

Nidhi Mishra

H & S Department (English), CMR Technical Campus, Hyderabad, India

Hari kumar. B

K.L.E.F, Vijayawada, A.P. India

Rama Devi. A

K.L.E.F, Vijayawada, A.P. India

**Abstract**—Ayn Rand's philosophy of Objectivism sparked a lot of interest and inclination among her readers, and even inspired them to form the Atlas Society in the United States. Her bestselling books *The Fountainhead*, *We the Living*, and *Atlas Shrugged* made history under the banner of American literature and enjoyed tremendous economic success as well. This study analyzes her autobiography *We the Living*, where she describes the hardships that aristocrats and business people endured and the brutality of communists. She implied that those in positions of leadership ought to have compassion while using their authority. Otherwise, no law can bring equal rights or peace to the people. Ayn Rand claimed that the narrative edifices the dramatic characters and the conflict between the individual and the state. This article recounts the tale of *We the Living* and the author's own impressions.

**Index Terms**—leadership, equal rights, brutality, compassion, conflict

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ayn Rand, a Russian-American author, published her first book, *We the Living*, in 1936. Set in post-revolutionary Russia, *We the Living* is largely an autobiographical story that tells the tale of those who were oppressed by certain revolutionary people. Not only was it Rand's first book, but it was also the first piece of fiction written by a Russian that challenges both the communist ideology and the pre-civil war way of life in Russia. As a result, like *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*, two of Rand's later works, *We the Living* generated a lot of debate when it was first published. Still, it is this book that helps us most understand the origins of Rand's ideas and philosophical outlook that led her to be known as "The Russian Radical".

The main theme of *We the Living* is anti-communism and how communism stifles success - a theme similar to many of Rand's writings. The themes of family and the resilience of the human spirit are also covered. The events that take place in the book are real the characters and the plot are fictional. Moreover, though it is not one of Rand's most well-known books, it garnered generally favorable reviews upon publication and was acclaimed for its in-depth portrayal of Soviet politics. Still, reactions varied greatly depending on the reviewer's political beliefs.

## II. CHARACTERIZATION

Ayn Rand's *We the Living* (1936) focuses on Kira Argounova, the young daughter of a wealthy family whose comfortable life is upended when the revolution deprives them of their fortune and pushes them into a struggle for survival.

The story opens with a packed train carrying a large number of passengers from Crimea to Petrograd. During the Russian Civil War, a great number of families lost their homes and jobs and were forced to relocate. One family that had traveled to Crimea four years before but now wished to return to Petrograd where they had left their home, textile factory, and other possessions was the Argounova family.

Along with his wife, Galina Petrovna, and their daughters Lydia and Kira, Alexander Dimitrievitch Argounova was traveling back home to Petrograd which was, incidentally, also the home of red-flag-free capitalism. The Civil War had ended in 1922, and the remaining remnants of the White Army had been drained. The country was now mostly controlled by the Red Army, while the White Army still held on in the south.

Kira noticed two posters hanging at the exit door when the Argounovs arrived in Petrograd. One bore a husky worker and the words, "Comrades! We are the builders of a new life." The other presented a huge white louse on a black background with red letters reading "Lice Spread Disease! Citizens, Unite on the Anti-Typhus Front!" (p. 31). Up to then, Petrograd had seen five years of revolution.

Maria, Galina Petrovna's sister, lived in Petrograd. They traveled to Maria's home to spend a few days there. Before the revolution, Maria's husband Vasili Ivanovitch Dunaev ran a successful fur business. He led a comfortable life with his wife, daughters Irina and Asia, and his son Victor. However, the government nationalized both their home and their business during the revolution.

Maria only halfheartedly extended an invitation to her sister's family because she was concerned about her family's food supply. Only students and employees of the Soviet Union received ration cards. Victor was a student of engineering, as was 18-year-old Irina. However, Asia was only eight.

Vasili became a househusband while Maria worked outside the home because he believed that the communist regime would eventually come to an end, and he could go back to his fur business. He would rather have died than served in the Soviet government. As a result, the entire family was dependent on the two ration cards they had, and Maria found it very difficult to feed her sister's family, too. Purchasing anything in a private store is incredibly pricey. They billed ten times more than the cooperatives that provided rations.

One day while they were eating, Irina asked about the fresh fruit in Crimea.

"Kira! Did you eat fresh fruit in Crimea?"

"Yes. Some," Kira answered.

"I've been dreaming, yearning and dying for grapes. Don't you like grapes?" (p. 36).

This was the harsh reality for those living in Petrograd.

They talked about the kids' studies after their supper. Lydia wasn't interested in continuing her education, and in opposition to the wishes of her family, Kira aspired to enroll in an engineering program. It was against their policy to serve in the Red Army and Communist Russia, and according to her cousin Victor, if she had chosen an engineering course, she would have served the country and built bridges, offices, and other things for the country.

Victor, Kira's cousin, adored her and took a special interest in her. He took her away one evening to show her the city. He confessed his love for her that night in the city's Summer Garden Park. However, Kira asked him to leave the area after admitting that she had never felt love for anyone. Alone, she later encountered a tall man who mistook her for a streetwalker as she neared him in the dark. They chatted for a while and Kira learned his name was Leo, and that he was a counterrevolutionary. Following their talk, they agreed to meet again at the same location in one month.

Kira showed a great deal of enthusiasm for her studies, but she had never shown any interest in her meals. Galina Petrovna felt sorry for her disinterest in getting rations because the entire family had been dependent on her student ration.

While attending her university, Kira encountered some students holding party meetings where there were motivational speeches on the party's values given by chosen party leaders and members. At one of these gatherings, Kira met Victor Dunaev, Comrade Sonia, and Comrade Pavel Syerov, among others. She also encountered a man who was quite tall, had a scar on his right temple and was wearing a leather jacket and a cap. His slow, self-assured gait resembled that of a soldier (p. 75). He was Comrade Andrei Taganov, a trustworthy and loyal G.P.U. member.

In the meantime, Leo kept his promise to meet Kira at the same location after a month, and she spoke with him for a while and left. Leo once visited Kira at her workplace and took her with him to the place where they would often meet. Kira also met with Taganov frequently at the institute and invited him to her house which made her family nervous because he was a communist.

One day Leo came to Kira's institute and brought her to their meeting place. However, some party members at her institute recognized Leo and soon called Kira to the party office and insisted she tell them all the details she knew about Leo because they knew he was an anti-communist and the G.P.U. was searching for him. Pavel Syerov even threatened Kira, but Taganov saved her from that malicious situation.

After a few days, Leo met Kira and announced that he would leave for Germany via a smuggled boat. If the G.P.U. or the military men caught them, they would be ready to accept their punishment. Kira told Leo she wanted to go with him. However, their plans quickly went awry because when they were sailing, they were caught by a cop named General Timoshenko.

Timoshenko arrested Leo and sent Kira to her family's home. After three days Leo was acquitted and released because Leo's father was Kovalensky, a great White leader who always fought against the Red Army. Andrei Taganov

met Kovalesky in the battle of Perekop. However, when Kovalensky had observed the Red Army's flag in a nearby village, he blew his brains out.

Leo went to Kira's house after his release and took her to his father's three-room house. When Kira returned home the next day, however, her parents asked her to leave. As a result, Kira went back to Leo's house and settled there with Leo doing his university course while Kira attended her institute.

Kira often met Andrei at her institute but didn't say anything about Leo, though she did tell Leo about her communist friend Andrei. One day Vava, the girlfriend of Victor, invited Kira and Leo to a party. Kira asked Andrei to accompany her to the party. She planned to introduce Leo and Andrei to one another. Though Andrei was a communist and not interested in parties, he accepted Kira's invitation. However, Andrei showed no interest in meeting Leo, so Kira did not dare introduce Leo as her lover.

One day Leo received an order from the communist office that it was ridiculous to have three rooms for two people and thus, he must vacate one room for another person. They vacated one room and arranged their furniture in two rooms. Later Victor came to their house full of envious comments about having two rooms for two persons. As a result, a lady named Marisha Lavrova moved into the second room the next day. Kira and Leo took the case to the people's court, but the verdict nevertheless favored Lavrova because her father was a factory worker and her mother was a peasant. Thus, Leo and Kira now had only one room.

Again, because Leo and Kira were students, they had their ration cards. One day when Kira was fetching her ration, Irina met her and told her about her parents' stark poverty. Immediately Kira gave her ration to Irina and requested her to give that ration to her parents. At night, while Leo slept, she cooked food and never let on that she was tired when he was awake. Instead, she went about her studies at the institute.

A few days later, Leo was suffering from a severe cough, but they did not have enough money to visit a private doctor. Meanwhile, Kira observed the awful death of Maria, her aunt and became more and more scared about the drastic health condition of Leo. She remembered the last words of Maria "Kira! I want to live! I want to live!" (p. 188). She asked Andrei, "Andrei, why doesn't your Party believe in the right to live while one is not killed?"

"In our fight Kira, there is no neutrality".

"You may claim the right to kill, as all fighters do. But no one before you has ever thought of forbidding life to those still living".

"When one can stand any suffering, one can also see others suffer. This is martial law. Our time is dawn. There is a new sun rising. We are in the path of its first rays and they will wipe out decades of future sorrow for every minute of ours". (p. 189)

Nonetheless, after their conversation, Andrei was moved by Kira's pitiful condition and gave her a roll of cash and recommended her for a job where she would start immediately. As a result, Kira lost her seat at the institute. She would later meet Andrei and say, "It's alright, Andrei. I know you couldn't help it." He answered, "I'd give you my place – if I could" (p. 212). Leo also lost his seat at his university. Victor, however, lost nothing because he joined the All-Union Communist Party with the help of sponsors he had selected to vouch for his proletarian spirit. Kira started her job and Leo also had found a job for Sunday; working with a group of street repairmen, he broke the wooden bricks of pavements. Unfortunately, his health deteriorated day after day. Kira insisted that he go to a doctor who told her that Leo was suffering from incipient tuberculosis and that putting him in a sanatorium would be best for him.

They went to State Hospital where the official in charge told her that there were private sanatoriums in Crimea which cost money. She asked Vava's father and was rejected. She was ready to sell her body to get money but made one last plea to the state. Meanwhile, Kira also went to Andrei after not seeing each other for nearly two months. Andrei expressed his love for her and she accepted his love and slept with him that night. She met Andrei frequently afterward, and in their conversations, she mentioned her starving family. She did not even have to ask as Andrei gave her every cent of his monthly salary. With that money, she sent Leo to the private sanatorium in Yalta, lying to Leo and telling him she had an uncle in Europe who agreed to send money to her.

After a few months, Leo came back with recuperated health. Shortly after, Kira arrived home one day to find Leo talking to a woman. Leo introduced her as Antonina Pavlovna - a neighbor in the sanatorium. A few days later, another person, Karp Morozov, showed up at Kira's house discussing business with Antonina and Leo.

Kira was introduced to Morozov, an assistant manager of the Food Trust run by the State Food Trust of the Union of Socialist Soviet Union. Kira understood that they would invest some money in an illegal business in which Leo was the main member. They assured Leo that if there was any danger, they knew a young communist friend who had good connections in the G.P.U. and would be his protector. Of course, they would not dare to mention his name. Kira warned Leo that while the others were investing money, he was investing his life. Unthwarted, Leo said, "I'm glad to find some use for it" (p. 284).

Though Kira begged him not to have any part in the scheme, Leo ignored her pleas. He didn't want to spend his whole life under the shackles of Communist principles. He started his business with Morozov and Antonina and was ready to face risks. The mastermind behind their illegal business was Pavel Syerov, a famous communist party member.

Victor's sister Irina had an affair with a man named Sasha who was up to his neck in counterrevolutionary plots. As a result, Victor was against his sister's relationship with Sasha and informed the G.P.U. about Sasha. Soon after, the officials arrived at Victor's house and arrested both Sasha and Irina. Sasha was sentenced to ten years in a Siberian

prison for counter-revolutionary activity, and Irina was sentenced to ten years in a Siberian prison for assisting a counter-revolutionary. Before they were sent away, however, Irina asked permission to marry Sasha. The wedding was performed in a bare hall of the G.P.U. and Vasili and Kira were the witnesses. Afterward, Sasha and Irina were sent to different places in Siberia.

One day comrade Timoshenko, by then booted out of the G.P.U. for being unreliable and not revolutionary enough came to Andrei's home. He immediately started complaining about how hard it was to get a convenient house for the great soldier Andrei but how easy it was for the backbiter Syerov to do so. He said, "It wouldn't be hard for any bastard that uses a Party card as a butcher knife."

One day Kira received a phone call from Morozov telling her to come get Leo and take him home. Leo has gotten himself into some trouble after he and Antonina had a party the previous day where Leo had thrown money at the waiters and paid ten rubles for every cheap glass he had broken. Morozov asked Leo where he got the money he seemed to be so freely throwing around. Leo told him that Antonina had given the money to him. Morozov then asked Antonina about the money and she replied she got the money from his package. Morozov became very worried because he had to give that money to Syerov. If he did not, Syerov would kill him. He cursed at Antonina.

At that same moment, Syerov had promised a bracelet to a whore, but didn't have enough money to pay for it. He phoned Morozov and the Food Trust. Morozov did not answer. Instead, he hid in the darkness of his house. Eventually, Syerov went to Morozov's house and rang the doorbell in vain. When no one answered the door, Syerov wrote him a note: "Morozov You God-Damn Bastard! If you don't come across with what's due me before tomorrow morning, you'll eat breakfast at the G.P.U. and you know what that means. Affectionately, Pavel Syerov" (p. 366).

He dropped the slip under the door and left. After fifteen minutes Morozov picked up the slip of paper, read it and crammed it in his pocket. He reproached Antonina bitterly and went to the European roof garden to arrange money for Syerov. He whispered confidentially into the different ears of five corpulent men. At the end of two hours, he had the money in his wallet. There, comrade Timoshenko stopped him and talked to him about the party and the treacherous deeds of party members. When Morozov took out his handkerchief to swab his forehead, the crumpled paper fell to the floor. He kicked the paper with his foot and it rolled under an empty table. After Morozov's departure, Timoshenko picked up the paper, read it and wrote a letter to Andrei (p. 379):

Dear Friend Andrei,

I promised to say goodbye and here it is. It's not quite what I promised, but I guess you'll forgive me. I'm sick of seeing what I see and I can't stand to see it any longer. To you – as my only legacy – I'm leaving the letter you'll find enclosed. It's a hard legacy, I know. I only hope that you won't follow me too soon.

Your Friend,

Stephen Timoshenko

Andrei, wanting to take action against the situation, submitted the letter to a higher party official. However, the crafty Syerov deceived the higher authorities who ordered Andrei to check Leo's house and, if necessary, be ready to arrest him. Andrei, along with four soldiers, went to search Leo's house. In the closets, noticing the dresses of Kira and the smell of a French perfume that Andrei once presented her, he asked Leo, "Whose are these?"

"My mistress" Leo answered (p. 398).

When Kira entered the house soon after, Andrei's face was expressionless. He arrested Leo. Later Kira went to Andrei and expressed her deep suffering and struggle under the Red Flag's rule. She told him that she spent time with him only for money like a prostitute to save the life of Leo and now he himself carried Leo's life. Then she explained how much trouble she faced when putting Leo in the sanatorium. She told him about what the government doctor said and how the party commissar treated Leo and questioned him. "Why should one aristocrat die for the country, blemished by iniquitous proletariats?" She added, "You (party people) came and you forbade life to the living. You've driven us all into an iron cellar and you've closed all doors, and you've locked us, airtight till the blood vessels of our spirits burst!" (p. 404).

Andrei understood her anguish and said, "You've done me a great favor by coming here and telling me what you've told" (p. 405). He dropped her back off at Leo's house and assured her not to worry about Leo. He went to Syerov and persuaded him to liberate Leo from the party office by any means. He intimidated Syerov, telling him that if he did not try to set Leo free, he would give the Photostat copies of his letter to all the party members. Under Andrei's pressure, Syerov released Leo. Later, Andrei told Leo and Kira that if they faced any trouble with Syerov in the future, they would threaten him with the Photostats.

"And....the Photostats?" Kira whispered. "Where are they actually?"

"There are no Photostats", said Andrei.

She asked, "Andrei, why did you want to tell us about Syerov's letter?"

"So that you'd know in case . . . in case anything happened to me."

"What is going to happen to you, Andrei?"

"Nothing . . . Nothing that I know of". (p. 421)

When Andrei was leaving their house, Leo asked, "Just why did you do all this? Just what is Kira to you?" Andrei looked at Kira. She stood silent, erect, looking at them. She was leaving it up to him. He turned to Leo and answered: "Just a friend" (p. 422).

Andrei was transferred from G.P.U. because of a questionable speech he made at the next party meeting. He asked the party officials and members so many questions which, though reasonable, were considered not in line with the party's ideals. He asked why they should slay counter-revolutionaries so mercilessly. They also had the complete right to live in their country. Why should they tear husband and wife, father and children, lovers and send them to prison? They could not enslave man's mind. He said, "Do we want to feed a starved humanity in order to let it live? Or do we want to strangle its life in order to free it?" (p. 409).

Thus, he was transferred to another office as a librarian until one day when he could no longer bear his inner torment and committed suicide.

All the papers published news of his death. His funeral was a rather large one with all the workers of Leningrad marching behind his red coffin.

Kira also attended his funeral and questioned whether it was her who had killed him, the revolution or both.

When she returned home, Leo asked Kira about her relationship with Andrei, "Were you Taganov's mistress? Were you? Yes or no?"

"Yes."

"All the time I was away?"

"Yes."

"And all the time since I came back?"

"Yes" (p. 440).

Leo said that Syerov had told him that information. Until that time he felt that she was his last hold on his self-esteem, and he was afraid to face her and hurt her. He had decided to go abroad three days before with Antonina but hesitated to tell Kira because of her love and fidelity to him. Now, however, he had no feelings and no restraints in this country and was ready to go abroad. Kira went back to her parents. It was unbearable for her to leave Leo and spend her remaining life without him in this country. She applied for a passport to travel abroad, but it was declined. On her last attempt to leave the country, she was shot dead by the border guard Ivan Ivanov. Even in the last moments of her death, she was thinking about Leo. She remained loyal in her love for Leo, made clear in her own words: "When a person dies, one does not stop loving him, does one? (p. 443). She was swindled by the egotistical human Leo, and this was the end result of her struggle.

What is perhaps most unique about this novel is Ayn Rand never mentions the name of God or religion. Conversely, without mentioning religion, she has illuminated the concepts of loyalty, empathy, values, and so on. However, in countries like India, people believe that their religious stories and their culture teach them values and morals.

Most of the time, religion teaches us all of our morals and values through the use of mythological fables. After a certain age, we outgrow the dogmatic aspects of organized religion and other cultural conditions, despite the fact that they are unavoidably very important in developing a child's character. This is crucial since failing to do so would only result in the retention of stereotypes and other unconscious prejudices engendered by the culture and its variations. People in the modern world frequently experience life moments where they pause and reflect on their own existence, asking questions about the meaning of life and why they are here. Many people at various phases of life are struck by this point.

This query lights a fire in the minds of all philosophers that will not go out until they pass away. Normal individuals may have this subject on their minds, but they usually do not pursue it because doing so would require them to examine their own views and the personal prejudices that go along with them. Some individuals simply never ask. They simply exist and pass away. It is up to each person to reflect on and analyze their own values and beliefs. Our ideals change as we advance in human development.

When people claim to be looking for a purpose in life, they actually mean that they are trying to locate the ideas and behaviors within themselves that they have never before questioned and are prepared to stretch their minds beyond limitations and the bounds of convention. Because it takes a lot of patience to correct our ideals through the trial and error of our actual acts, this is frequently an existential struggle and a difficult journey. This initial discomfort of blindly adhering to social norms and expectations has had a significant influence on how some fans of Ayn Rand began their exploration of philosophy in general.

This is not because they neglect the concept of God or religion; rather it is because they never question the unquestionable in dogmatic viewpoints and frequently fail to grasp the big picture. Humankind can only advance as people by constantly asking "Why?" Then, they can discover that religion and God are concepts that humans created in an effort to create a feeling of community and order in life and avoid the chaos that follows from their irrational animalistic urges for survival by asking questions.

In order to ensure his survival throughout human history, man has evolved not as an individual but as a member of the pack. A man who is expelled from a pack is unable to survive on his own. The innate human desire to be a part of something larger than ourselves such as a group or society offers us a sense of security, and this sense of security is nothing more than a survival instinct that our ancestors had when they first roamed the African plains. Indeed, all ideas that have developed from human cognition have deeper origins in the instincts that have developed to maintain survival.

### III. ANALYSIS OF THE IDEOLOGY

Defining these ideas objectively and highlighting the crucial idea that people interpret facts and ideas in various ways that lead to various philosophies that they apply to their daily lives, religion is merely a philosophy that describes a particular way of living. Some people have spent their entire lives searching for the true meanings of various notions, including the idea of life. They often discovered the answers in philosophy.

A complete understanding of who we are and how we came to be is what philosophy is. It offers us a way of life with clear concepts and values to uphold. Furthermore, metaphysics is the most significant area of philosophy since it provides an answer to the question of existence and its purpose. Out of metaphysics comes epistemology where the origins and nature of knowledge are the focus. After this comes ethics which creates morals and values based on this knowledge and helps us guide our decisions through our actions. Finally, we move on to politics and aesthetics, which are just modern-day applications of philosophy.

Overall, philosophy affects our thinking so profoundly that we are unable to fight it. Everyone has their own philosophy of life, even if they aren't consciously aware of it. Everything we go through in life, particularly in our early years, is encoded in our subconscious. Our instincts are a reflection of our subconscious mind. Consequently, we should never dismiss our instincts with a simple sigh. Instead, we should challenge our instincts because doing so reveals much more about us, especially any hidden prejudices we may have.

Concerning Ayn Rand and her writings, it all begins when we understand the readers who have read *The Fountainhead* and experienced the kind of feeling that freed them from the guilt they had been carrying around for years for being different, for holding opinions that were contrary to the norm, for being open about their own thoughts and ideas, and generally for just being non-conformists. However, if we look at all of the historical advances in science, technology, and philosophy, nearly all were brought about by individuals who were free from the constraints of conventional thinking. Using that logic, Ayn Rand's book was a tribute to all the individualists who challenge conventional wisdom to pursue their aspirations.

The most significant idea in the book—rational self-interest—was examined because it forms the basis of Ayn's philosophy. Every living thing on this planet has a survival instinct built into it. Throughout the course of human evolution, every instinct we have developed has been focused on maintaining our survival. To put it simply, this is selfishness. However, being egotistical is necessary for our existence. To assure the survival of the progeny, every creature that reproduced throughout the ages acted selfishly. Dr. Richard Dawkins delves considerably more into this in his well-known book, "The Selfish Gene". Rand was referring to survival as a means to your own purposes when she spoke of rational self-interest.

The reverse of this is nothing more than living off of people as a means to your own purposes, leeching like a parasite. If success is attained via your own efforts, rational self-interest eliminates all the guilt connected with it. The protagonist of *The Fountainhead*, an architect who does not compromise his morals and pursues success despite all the conventions held in the architecture industry that prevent innovation, investigates this. The dynamics of those who endure rejection and social expectations in order to ultimately succeed against all odds by making sacrifices and having faith in their own ability are explored.

Her magnum opus *Atlas Shrugged* is the ultimate reflection of her philosophy of Objectivism. John Galt's speech from the book is Ayn Rand speaking indirectly to the whole world about the importance of philosophy and how it guides us through life. How important it is to never compromise your values and grovel to any adversities in any shape or form that stops you from chasing your goals.

*Atlas Shrugged*, her most famous work, represents the pinnacle of her Objectivist philosophy. Ayn Rand is subtly conveying to the entire world the significance of philosophy in life and how it helps us to navigate it in John Galt's speech from the book. How crucial it is to never compromise your morals and submit to any difficulties that prevent you from pursuing your objectives. Ayn Rand's capacity to define the ideas we hold dear is what the researchers find most fascinating about her. Her understanding of how the mind works, starting with the fundamentals of acquiring letters and words and connecting them to create concepts with meaning, is immeasurable. Her examination of the psychological significance of philosophy and the human mind is a hallmark of her intelligence.

Her capacity to provide unbiased definitions of ideas like love, friendship, and so on makes readers think in a unique way. For instance, everyone has a different definition of love. Some people claim that love is unselfish, unconditional, and so forth. These meanings are highly individualized since they develop throughout the course of your own life. However, one needs to consider in terms of higher abstractions in order to define love objectively. Love, according to Ayn Rand, is an emotional reaction to the virtues we perceive in others. There is no definition that can compare to this one. Everyone will experience this—people with compatible values will fall in love. The values in this situation can be substantial or terribly shallow. Because of how well their ideals align, two shallow individuals might also fall in love with one another.

Because they are a reflection of your ideals, the person you fall in love with might help you learn more about yourself. Furthermore, the concept of unconditional love is a myth. Love is the deepest form of selfishness because it makes you want the other person for yourself and teaches you to be unselfish via your actions.

Ayn Rand is a genius in both literary and psychological terms because of her deeper examination of human psychology on a subconscious level to challenge all of the emotions we feel and look into the causes of the origins of emotions. She strictly adhered to her morals throughout her life. She carried the torch for individualism in a more



general way. Her personal philosophy of life is evident in the fervor with which she lived her life. Everything dates back to her early years in the Soviet Union. Her family was still financially secure during the communist era, but she abhorred every facet of communism since it restrains human intellect and slows down progress.

Early in her life, Ayn was exposed to short stories that praised human potential and the power of nature's transformation. This idea of appreciating life and the human mind germinated, took shape, and developed into a tree that eventually became the most significant life philosophy - Objectivism. Greek literature served as her gateway into Western philosophy, and the impact of philosophers of the Enlightenment helped her to set the meaning of life into stone. She found herself a misfit in the Soviet Union while studying philosophy in college and was ostracized as an outcast for not adhering to the prevalent ideologies of communism.

As a result of being introduced to American Motion Pictures, she learned about the genuine potential of people and how it was honored without guilt-tripping viewers into achieving their goals and accomplishments. She then made the decision to permanently leave the Soviet Union. She traveled to the US and began her career in Hollywood as an extra. Being from a theatrical family since her undergraduate days, she initially pursued performing but later aspired to compose plays for the movies. She soon met her true love and married an American on one of these Hollywood film sets.

Rand's endeavor to fulfill her childhood dream of becoming a writer started at this point. She finished her novels while doing odd jobs to make ends meet. After first being turned down by a few publishers, her book *The Fountainhead* was eventually published to great success. It gave so many young people who were struggling with self-doubt and looking for a direction in life inspiration to follow their ambitions guilt-free. She quickly gained notoriety for her unreserved endorsement of capitalism and her primary philosophical tenet, which is rational self-interest. Even today, her Objectivism concept continues to influence countless people all over the world.

Her response to the most crucial branch of philosophy, metaphysics, is the primary factor in her philosophy's success. Any philosophy, whether it is one based on religion or one based on another "ism", must have a metaphysical foundation. Any religion you might examine has one thing in common with the others, namely a philosophy that emphasizes the primacy of consciousness.

Rand clarifies this by arguing that existence exists in her metaphysics. She simply accepted existence as something that exists in response to this vexing question of existence. A is A. Identity law. Without question, her epistemology, which establishes metaphysics, holds that the best method for acquiring and evaluating knowledge is logical reasoning and that the human senses are the primary source for understanding reality. This clarity of the underlying principles of her philosophy inspired her to develop impartial definitions for every subject in existence. The metaphysics of objectivism is "existence exists", and the epistemology of the human senses is applied to ethics as logical justification for morals and values.

Despite being an atheist, it is a great irony that Conservatives revere Ayn Rand as the leader of their respective groups. However, Rand outright dismissed these religious right-wing revolutionaries as crazy people. She was never interested in having any connection to them. She was pro-choice from the beginning and remained so to the end. In numerous news pieces, she expressed her opinions on a variety of national issues, including the Vietnam War, feminism, and abortion. She vehemently disagreed with Ronald Reagan's policies, which she said were driven by religious sentiments, and she foresaw the country's impending demise.

A trademark of an intellectual is the ability to foresee the future using logical reasoning based on an understanding of people's psychology and philosophy, in addition to analyzing and opining about the cultural and political milieu of a nation. According to her definition of art, reality is selectively recreated depending on metaphysical value judgments. A society's cultural attitudes are reflected in its art. You only need to look at a community's most well-known works of art to study its society or culture. The most widely recognized artwork represents the mindset of the majority because art is subjective. She foresaw the contemporary Western world's principles falling apart morally.

The ideology of Ayn Rand and its effects on the populace are revealed in the lengthy, intricate speeches of Howard Roark and John Galt. Nevertheless, if *We the Living* was the only thing she ever wrote, Rand would undoubtedly now be praised as one of the lesser 20<sup>th</sup>-century descendants of Dostoyevsky. The personalities of Andrei Taganov and Timoshenko, Pavel Syerov, Morozov, and Victor, Kira and Irina, Vava, Vasili, and Maria represent idealistic communism, cynical communism, defiant individualism, and hopeless individualism, respectively. However, she did write more, authoring *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*, which are significantly superior by the standards of the Russian intellectual tradition and with greater intensity. The individuals' beliefs are more intriguing, the storyline more effectively pits them against one another, and the epiphanies at the end are more profoundly compelling.

Victor, a devout nobleman, is compelled to change his mindset in order to live a peaceful life free from stress. Although he harbors aristocratic beliefs, he covertly suppresses them and appears to act in a communist manner for his personal gain. He lacks the courage to confront the difficulties and anxiety brought on by the Russian government. Galina Petrovna, Kira's mother, is initially a fierce aristocrat as well, but she gradually changes her opinion and turns proletarian. She takes pleasure in her job as a teacher. Andrei Taganov, a moral idealist who supported the communist cause during the revolution, valiantly repudiates it and even stops the death of the useless Kovanlensky. At the very end, Timoshenko goes against communist ideas by killing himself in an effort to end peonage. He has contributed greatly to

the party and taken part in the revolution, but after some time he becomes frustrated by the actions of communist leaders.

When we come to Ayn Rand's three great novels, *We the Living*, *The Fountainhead*, and *The Atlas Shrugged*, out of five protagonists, three are women and two are men. However, the great preponderance of her other characters, major and minor, are male. Her main female characters share certain characteristics. They have slender physiques, defiant stances, and inner calm. Rand's creation of women is different from others. It is a little bit eccentric and preposterous. In *We the Living*, though Kira Argounova has never seen Leo Kovalensky before, she is willing to let him believe she is a prostitute rather than let him go out of her life. Without asking her parent's permission she is ready to elope with Leo. She loves Leo dearly. She becomes Andrei's mistress in order to obtain the funds necessary to send him to a sanatorium in Crimea because she places such a high value on his health. She has already put herself in danger by trying to leave with Leo, even though she doesn't even know his name. To preserve Leo's life and honor, Kira tells lies to both Andrei and Leo. She lies to Leo about where she obtains her money and lies as a lover to Andrei in order to obtain cash.

In Valerie Loiret Prunet's opinion, "Rand has created in Kira an emotionally powerful monument to the feminist concern for synthesis. In the style and substance of *We the Living* more directly has than in her other works of fiction, Rand has provided with a model of integrated female hero, who seeks a triumph over dualities and who yearns for human synthesis that ultimately transcends gender." She has made the decision not to go back to Russia for these causes. She uses her novels to communicate her anti-communist ideas through monitoring the unrest among the populace.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In *We the Living*, the government workers and communist party officials stand in for the proletariat. Everywhere we look, we see nobles with distressed faces and party members with charming features. By their unintentional behavior, party members like Syerov and offspring of the proletariat like Marisha obstruct the chambers of aristocrats. Therefore they represent the bourgeoisie and engage in oppressive practices and subversive behavior. Children of powerful families who amassed fortune through ardor and hard work under imperial control, Kira and Leo are battling to free themselves from the oppressive system. Although Andrei Taganov is a party employee, he also exemplifies the bourgeoisie because he offers Kira money to feed her family and finds her a job right away. Aristocrats who lost their properties and businesses are leading a humiliating life while other communist leaders are living an exhilarating life thanks to their positions and party cash. The anguish of the proletariat is represented through Kira's voice and Irina's agony.

Rand's women characters are very strapping and dominating. When discussing the role of women in literature, there is one important change we must consider in the existence of women. "The representation of women in literature, then, was felt to be one of the most important forms of 'socialization', since it provided the role models which indicated to women, and men, what constituted acceptable versions of the 'feminine' and legitimate feminine goals and aspirations" (*Beginning Theory*, p. 122). Despite the fact that many people were unable to comprehend Rand's beliefs and philosophy, they were nonetheless impressed by her brilliance, literary prowess, objectivism, multifaceted personality, etc. She is indeed a gift for the writing community and a foundation rock for readers who are driven. She has reshaped writing culture and left an enduring imprint on literature.

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**Sk. Rehena** received B.A., M.A., M.Phil and Ph.D degrees from Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur. She has two Patent published in her name. She has been working in P.V.P. Siddhartha Institute of Technology as an Assistant Professor of English in the Department of Freshman Engineering since 2008. She has published over 23 articles in international journals of repute. She has published five articles as book chapters with ISBN. She has participated and presented research papers on 52 diverse topics in both national and international seminars and conferences across the country. She has also attended 15 workshops and 25 training programs as well.



**K Santha Kumari** is working as an Assistant Professor in English in P. B. Siddhartha College of Arts and Science. She received best student award for her Masters Degree in English. Some of her papers received best paper award. She received an award from Department of Language and culture on International Women's Day for her contributions in the field of literature. She completed her junior research fellowship from Ministry of Culture, CCRT, and New Delhi. She has got 2 translations to her credit. Barber, the King and Wandering Clouds are the titles of those dramas which are originally written by Dr. D. Vizai Bhaskar, a former CEO, Department of language and culture, Andhra Pradesh.



**Mani N Bacchu** has been working as an Assistant Professor of English at St. Peter's Engineering College since June 2022. She has nine years of experience teaching UG and PG students. Moreover, Dr. Bacchu has published four papers in highly reputable journals.



**Afsha Jamal** is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English Language and Literature in Wadi Aldwasir. Presently she works in Prince Sattam Bin Abdul Aziz University. She has published 27 research papers in International Journals and 3 in National Journals. A scientific research project entitled Action Research to Enhance Speaking Skills among Female Graduates of Arts @ PSAU at the College of Arts & Science for Girls was successfully completed in 2018.



**Nidhi Mishra** has been working as an Assistant Professor in CMR Technical Campus, Hyderabad - H&S Department (English) since 2017. She has three Patent published in her name. She has written a voluminous work of Hindi - Hindi English Dictionary (Enlarged Edition) for M.I. Publications. She has been a Session Chair for International Conference on English Language, Literature, Communication Skills and Soft Skills (ELLCS). She has been a subject expert of Board of studies for MRIET & CMR IT Hyderabad. She is also a Chairperson of Board of Studies for CMR Technical Campus.



**Hari kumar. B** started his career as lecturer. He feels blessed to become a part of MVGR College of Engineering in the year 2011 and continuing his services. During his services he presented 10 papers at various national and international seminars. He published 10 papers in various journals like ELTAI, IJOES as well as 2 papers in web of sciences to his credit. He posted 40 poems in storymirror.com an open platform for poets and story writers.



**Rama Devi. A** has been working as an English teacher since 2006. She has worked as an Asst. Professor at MVR Engineering College and GDMM Engineering College, Vijayawada for 10 years. Additionally, Dr. Amara has been an Assistant Professor at Koneru Lakshmaiah Educational Foundation for five years. Moreover, she has attended 30 national and international conferences and presented papers. Her articles (eight international and two national journals) were published in international and UGC-recognized journals.

# English Teachers' Post-Pandemic Motivation in Macau's Higher Education System

Yuying Wang

Faculty of Languages and Translation, Macao Polytechnic University, Macau, China

Wei Xu\*

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, City University of Macau, Macau, China

Kaining Guan

School of Education, City University of Macau, Macau, China

Jin Zhao

School of Education, City University of Macau, Macau, China

Ping Wu

Department of English Studies, Faculty of Foreign Studies, Beijing Language and Culture University, Beijing, China

**Abstract**—English teachers' post-pandemic motivational experiences within Macau's hybrid postcolonial context have not been extensively investigated, although teacher motivation is crucial to the quality of education and student outcomes. This qualitative study aimed to address this gap by interviewing 13 English teachers across Macau universities about their motivations. Semi-structured interviews were iteratively coded to identify key themes. The results indicated that intrinsic motivations included a passion for teaching and helping students, as well as an altruistic desire to contribute. Positive relationships between students and teachers motivated participants, while disengaged student behavior, a lack of participation in policies, unclear roles, and unbalanced workloads demotivated them. University culture, curriculum, and governance were viewed as a means of providing purpose and empowerment through social responsibility. The motivational sustainability process included recommendations regarding reducing teaching hours, improving teacher governance, improving research support, and clarifying faculty responsibilities as part of the motivational sustainability process. While the results were limited to an exploratory study, they provided insight into how to align practices with the intrinsic aspirations of Macau's university English teachers to re-engage them.

**Index Terms**—English teacher, teacher motivation, college English, higher education, Macau

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, extensive research has been conducted on the significance of teacher professional development in enhancing student outcomes and teaching quality (Barni & Danioni, 2019; Osman & Warner, 2020; Slemp et al., 2020), along with the importance of motivation among language teachers (Liu et al., 2020). Due to the dominance of English as a foreign language in the world (Gong et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2022), many studies on the motivation of language teachers are focused on English language teachers in primary (Bai et al., 2019), secondary (Glutsch & König, 2019), and tertiary schools (Liu et al., 2020; Bardach & Klassen, 2021). Furthermore, it is indicated that teacher motivation is integral to the overall success of the language teaching program, as it can have a direct impact on student learning outcomes (Bardach & Klassen, 2021).

College English courses have some distinctive features compared to other disciplines taught at the university level (Arnó-Macià et al., 2020; Hyland, 2017). Given their focus on developing students' practical language abilities, College English places heavy emphasis on interactive communication skills like speaking, listening, and group discussion. These skills require face-to-face instruction, direct feedback sessions, and hands-on practice that are more difficult to replicate effectively online. In addition, College English aims to not only develop students' grammatical and reading proficiency but also their intercultural knowledge and awareness and ability to apply English confidently in future careers or academic pursuits. This multi-dimensional skill-building nature of College English poses additional pedagogical challenges for remote teaching compared to courses with more traditional lecture-based formats or independent study coursework. The specialized expertise and unique student-centered, interactive approaches typically employed by College English teachers further underscore the importance of understanding their experiences and perspectives during the disruptions caused by the past COVID-19 pandemic. For English teachers to adapt to the

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\* Corresponding Author. Email: [weixu@cityu.edu.mo](mailto:weixu@cityu.edu.mo)

changing educational landscape, additional professional development opportunities or support systems may have been needed due to the pandemic. To design and implement effective training programs or support services, it is necessary to understand the motivations of English teachers of College English courses in Macau. Macau's special cultural and social context may have a distinct impact on their motivations. A comprehensive understanding of these motivations can provide insights into the challenges and opportunities specific to the region, resulting in targeted strategies and policies. It is therefore essential to determine how motivations change with the desire to become or remain a Macau English teacher following the pandemic.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In teachers' professional development, motivation appears to be one of the key factors regarding the sustainability of the education system (Yu et al., 2022). Teacher motivation is crucial to maintaining quality education over the long term (Liu et al., 2020). Highly motivated teachers are more likely to sustain their enthusiasm for teaching and remain committed to continued learning and growth in their profession. This translates into better student outcomes. Professional development initiatives that aim to boost teacher motivation need to focus on both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

### A. *Theorizing Teacher Motivation*

Teacher motivation has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct influenced by both intrinsic elements (e.g. passion for teaching, desire to make a difference) and extrinsic factors (e.g. compensation, status) (Doo et al., 2020; Rahmati & Sadeghi, 2021; Sato et al., 2022). Seminal theoretical frameworks like self-determination theory have played a key role in categorizing teacher motivations based on their source of energization (Rahmati & Sadeghi, 2021; Sato et al., 2022). Intrinsic motivations are driven by inherent satisfactions like interest and enjoyment, while extrinsic motivations relate to separable outcomes like rewards or punishment avoidance (Sato et al., 2022). Extrinsic motivations have further been divided into less self-determined types driven by external regulation and more self-determined types driven by personal importance and meaning. The L2 Motivational Self System has also elucidated connections between teacher motivation and identity, showing how teachers balance different "ought-to selves" derived from varied role expectations and norms (Rahmati et al., 2018). Possible selves theory suggests identity comprises ideal self-images as well as feared selves individuals aim to avoid. These conceptual models have informed recent empirical research probing the multifaceted nature of teacher motivation.

A substantial body of research has investigated the intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivations underpinning teachers' entry into and persistence in the profession (Abdullah, 2023; Balyer & Özcan, 2014; Salı, 2013). Both pre-service and in-service teachers exhibit strong intrinsic desires to make a positive difference, derive fulfillment from teaching itself, and experience personal growth (Salı, 2013). However, extrinsic motivations like job security, financial stability, social status, and career fallback options also play a role for some teachers. Gender differences have been observed, with female pre-service teachers in Turkey and Oman demonstrating significantly higher intrinsic career motivations (Balyer & Özcan, 2014). Extrinsic factors became more central for many once working compared to their pre-training motivations, illustrating shifts in teachers' career trajectories (Rahmati et al., 2018). Beyond intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, altruistic desires to benefit students and society emerge as central for many teachers (Balyer & Özcan, 2014; Salı, 2013). However, those choosing teaching as a backup option report lower altruistic motivations. Overall, contemporary research reinforces that multifaceted, complex motivational profiles underlie teachers' career choices.

### B. *Interpersonal Behaviors, Identity Development and Demotivation Factors*

Positive interpersonal relationships with students and colleagues represent another key motivational influence identified across settings (Burhan-Horasanlı & Ortaçtepe, 2016; Pishghadam et al., 2021; Song, 2021; Taqi et al., 2017). Students themselves are frequently cited as the primary motivator, tying closely to teachers' intrinsic desires to impart knowledge and support learner development (Kamstra & Salud, 2020). However, student disengagement, misbehavior, and lack of progress conversely demotivate teachers and undermine their sense of efficacy and accomplishment. Collegial cooperation, mentorship, professional growth opportunities, and administrative support likewise motivate teachers, while lack of community, competitiveness, or top-down leadership demotivates (Taqi et al., 2017).

To build positive teacher-student rapport, certain interpersonal teaching practices have been shown to enhance student motivation and prevent burnout (Derakhshan et al., 2022). Teacher behaviors like verbal praise, encouragement ("strokes"), empathy, humor, care, immediacy, and receptivity to questions strengthen social bonds and satisfaction (Burhan-Horasanlı & Ortaçtepe, 2016; Song, 2021). However, student perspectives reveal differences in practices deemed motivating across cultural settings and grade levels, highlighting a need for contextual attunement.

Teacher identity development represents another motivational influence, as perceptions of self, students, administrators, and societal expectations evolve over teachers' trajectories (Nue & Manara, 2022). Harmonizing different role identities and "ought-to selves" stemming from potentially conflicting expectations can be challenging but critical for motivation and commitment, especially at the university level (Guo et al., 2020). A Turkish study found that teacher identity negotiation involved balancing ideals with contextual realities, student needs, and emotionally

demanding conditions (Azari et al., 2020). Novice teachers face particular identity tensions as classroom realities clash with prior expectations, underscoring the need for mentorship and preparation.

Given its potential consequences for teacher attrition and burnout, demotivation stemming from challenging working conditions has received significant attention (Başok, 2020; Honarparvaran & Khaghaninejad, 2023; Ren & Zhou, 2023). Extensive workload, student behavioral issues, insufficient compensation, lack of resources, inadequate facilities, and absence of growth opportunities emerge as common demotivators. Teachers frequently cite a lack of input into decision-making, professional autonomy, and supportive leadership as factors undermining motivation. Those employed in higher education particularly struggle with pressures to conduct research and publish in English, often without adequate infrastructure or realistic expectations. Unfair promotion criteria, job insecurity, favoritism, and lack of constructive feedback from inspectors or administrators also demotivate teachers across settings.

### *C. Online and MOOC Teaching Contexts and Motivation Outcomes*

A developing subfield examines the motivations for online teaching, mainly the desire for flexibility, broad accessibility, and instructional innovation (Cruz & Al Balushi, 2018). However, substantial preparation time, lack of student interaction, and the need for informal learning about online platforms also pose challenges that can undermine motivation. Mixed findings regarding the value placed on collaboration in virtual environments highlight ongoing questions about applying constructs like teacher community to digital contexts. Studies comparing MOOC instructors across institutions also found that, while platform limitations cause frustration, many still perceive enhanced professional opportunities through online teaching (Doo et al., 2020).

Finally, an active area of research involves delineating empirical linkages between teacher motivation and salient outcomes like job satisfaction, burnout, classroom performance, student motivation, and learner achievement (Cheloti & Njue, 2023). Multiple studies reveal negative associations between teacher motivation and burnout, suggesting motivational enhancement may counter emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of accomplishment. Students' perceptions of teacher enthusiasm and passion, fueled by underlying motivation, positively predict their own learning effort, engagement, and course satisfaction (Zhang & Zhang, 2020). In terms of classroom practices, highly motivated teachers invest greater effort in pedagogical planning, activity preparation, and student support. Motivation is interconnected with – but partially distinct from – teacher competencies, with both feeding into professional performance (Boset et al., 2017). Explicit motivational training, teacher vision programs, and improved working conditions carry the potential to strengthen teacher motivation and fuel broader development (Burhan-Horasanlı & Ortaçtepe, 2016).

### *D. Well-Being and Social Responsibility in Education Settings*

Research on special educator motivation reveals strong intrinsic desires to make a positive difference for students as central, along with high levels of commitment and patience required to meet learning needs (Nue & Manara, 2022). Special education teachers derive fulfillment and meaning from assisting students with disabilities towards greater independence and confidence. Extrinsic motivators are less prominent in driving special educators compared to general teachers. As the focus shifts from student outcomes to teacher well-being, it is suggested that theories such as self-determination be integrated into conceptual models of teacher well-being to promote the development of human potential rather than dealing with pathologies (Zewude & Hercz, 2022). A detailed framework of ethical, educational, teaching, and research competencies for physical education teachers has been developed in China (Li & Hu, 2023) as part of a study examining core competencies. In addition, longitudinal research examined how resilience develops in early career English teachers, concluding that it follows a V-shaped trajectory that is influenced by both individual factors such as beliefs as well as contextual factors such as students (Duan et al., 2023).

Explicit social responsibility training can increase university students' sense of social responsibility and commitment to education. It was also found that teacher perceptions of corporate social responsibility influence organizational citizenship behaviors when mediated by job satisfaction and organizational identification (Cek & Eyupoglu, 2019), emphasizing the importance of corporate social responsibility initiatives. Some studies informed lifelong education policies in South Korea using surveys, literature reviews, and scenario planning to develop strategies for future policy plans (Jeong et al., 2023; Zhang & Jin, 2023). A variety of research methods, samples, and levels of analysis have been used to examine the relationship between teacher competencies, well-being, support, leadership, policy, and social responsibility in previous studies. These findings differ in their context, but collectively they emphasize the importance of addressing well-being as well as social responsibility within educational systems.

A special administrative region of China and a former Portuguese colony, Macau is a culturally and economically distinctive region. Macau is unique within the Chinese sphere due to its complex multicultural history and unique sociocultural character which is reflected in its higher education context (Xu & Sukjairungwattana, 2022). Despite facing pressures to integrate into mainland Chinese systems, Macau's universities retain their distinct regional identity.

## III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Language teacher motivation across diverse international contexts is demonstrated to be complex. Although teachers' intrinsic desires to support learners emerge, context-specific demotivating factors such as student behavior and

institutional policies negatively impact their experiences. Well-being, practices, identity negotiation, and student outcomes are demonstrably influenced by motivation. In Macau's higher education system, which has been under-researched, there remain gaps in understanding teacher motivation. As a special administrative region of China and a former Portuguese colony, Macau has a unique cultural mix. Despite its rapid internationalization, its universities continue to recruit a large number of faculty members from beyond its borders. However, motivational dynamics influencing the trajectory of non-local teachers in Macau are not fully understood, creating a significant research gap. Since very few studies have been conducted on the motivation of English teachers in Macau's higher education system, and because this topic is especially relevant in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do English teachers in Macau's universities perceive their motivation in the local context?
2. What contextual factors enhance or undermine motivation from teachers' perspectives?
3. How can social responsibility initiatives enhance English teaching motivation in Macau's higher education system?

This proposed mixed-methods study incorporating surveys and interviews with teachers can provide data-driven, context-attuned recommendations to foster motivational resilience and efficacy among Macau's English teaching workforce. Findings will carry valuable implications for locally responsive motivational frameworks and human resource initiatives across rapidly internationalizing universities globally.

#### IV. METHODS

##### A. Research Context and Participants

As a result of the limited number of English teachers in Macau's universities, this study utilized a qualitative approach incorporating semi-structured interviews with 13 English teachers in four universities. Purpose sampling was used to recruit participants. Interviews aimed to elicit in-depth narratives of teachers' motivational experiences, well-beings, perceived contextual supports and challenges, and suggestions for enhancing the sustainability of English teaching motivations system-wide.

An interview guide was developed based on key topics from existing teacher motivation literature (Burhan-Horasanlı & Ortaçtepe, 2016; Rahmati & Sadeghi, 2021; Salı, 2013) including entry motivations, current rewards and frustrations, relationships, institutional factors, and motivational change over time. The guide was piloted with 3 teachers and refined prior to broader use. Final interviews averaged 40-60 minutes, were conducted in English and Chinese, and took place in teachers' offices, classrooms, or public cafes per participant preference. Signed consent was obtained before interviews assuring confidentiality. The information of the participants can be found in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participant	Sex	Affiliation	Position	Years of Teaching
Participant 1	Male	University A	Assistant Professor	10
Participant 2	Male	University A	Lecturer	4
Participant 3	Male	University A	Lecturer	4
Participant 4	Female	University A	Lecturer	2
Participant 5	Male	University B	Lecturer	11
Participant 6	Male	University A	Assistant Professor	3
Participant 7	Male	University A	Assistant Professor	10
Participant 8	Female	University C	Lecturer	2
Participant 9	Female	University B	Lecturer	18
Participant 10	Male	University B	Assistant Professor	18
Participant 11	Female	University C	Lecturer	19
Participant 12	Female	University D	Associate Professor	21
Participant 13	Female	University D	Associate Professor	26

##### B. Data Collection and Analysis

Thirteen English teachers (7 men, 6 women) from diverse home regions (the Chinese Mainland, Macau, Hong Kong, the Philippines, etc.) were interviewed between May and June 2023. Teaching experience in Macau ranged from 2-21 years. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. To aid in the qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts, the data was processed using NVivo 12 software.

Data were analyzed iteratively using open and axial coding techniques from Grounded Theory. Initial open coding identified salient themes relating to motivations, challenges, support sources, and sustainability suggestions. Reflexive thematic analysis was adapted to investigate the topic, and focused analysis consolidated these initial themes into 8 central categories. Finally, axial coding elucidated relationships between categories and subcategories to synthesize a coherent motivational framework grounded in teachers' experiences. Member checking was utilized to validate emerging findings from participants. Several techniques were employed to improve the reliability and validity of this qualitative study. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to share their motivational experiences in their own words, thereby increasing the authenticity and trustworthiness of the data collected. To inductively identify and consolidate themes grounded in participants' perspectives, an iterative coding process utilizing open coding methods



and axial coding methods from grounded theory was utilized. Participation and feedback were further bolstered by member checking through sharing emerging findings. Using triangulation across 13 interviews with teachers from a wide range of universities, key themes and motivational influences were consistent. Research positionality was considered through reflexive thematic analysis, which facilitated rigorous and transparent analytical procedures.

## V. RESULTS

Through iterative coding of the interview transcripts, 8 key categories relating to English teacher motivation emerged: reasons for entering teaching, pandemic influences, student relationships, colleague relationships, professional growth, institutional expectations, demotivators, and enhancing sustainability. They can be further summarized into three types of motivations: Intrinsic, Altruistic, and Extrinsic Motivations (Figure 1).

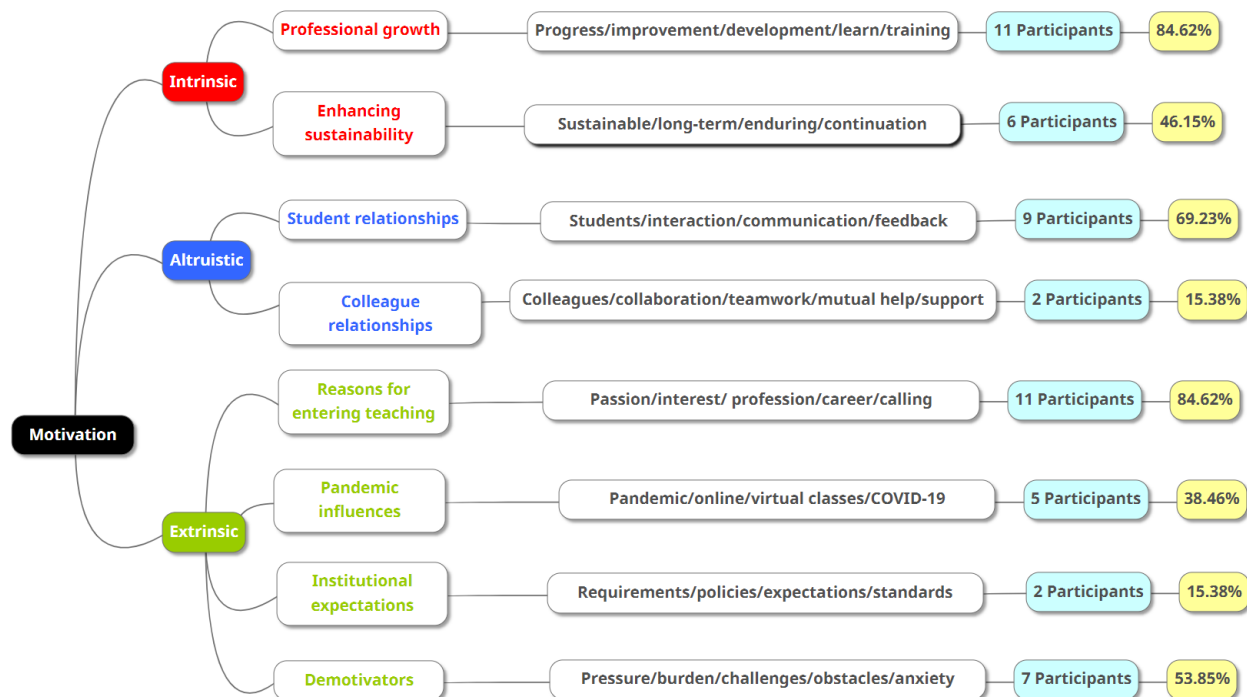


Figure 1. Types and Sub-Categories Motivations, Codes, Number of Participants and Their Percentages

### A. Intrinsic Motivation

#### (a). Professional Growth

Teachers were characterized by a lifelong learning mentality that manifested itself in their desire to enhance their skills, expand their knowledge, and develop their pedagogical skills. Participant 7 (P7) emphasized the need to “make progress both in teaching and research” through ongoing growth by staying abreast of emerging technological tools for enhanced teaching. Some teachers, however, felt unsupported by their teachers during the rapid shift to online learning during the pandemic as they attempted to develop the technological and pedagogical competencies necessary to provide effective virtual instruction. Insufficient training compounded the challenges of navigating unfamiliar platforms and approaches. The lack of institutional preparation for remote teaching hindered professional development for some.

A predominant demotivating factor was overwhelming work expectations, including teaching, research, service, and administrative duties. Participants criticized unbalanced work models that “skewed too much towards research” (P8) that demanded excessive publishing. High teaching loads, including multi-hour classes with large enrollments, reduced research time. This overload diminished job satisfaction. Teachers also felt excluded from decision-making processes surrounding policies relating to work expectations, evaluation, and resource allocation.

#### (b). Enhancing Sustainability

A variety of perspectives were expressed by teachers when discussing their institutions’ social responsibility. Several expressed appreciations for their universities’ service-learning programs in their local communities. P9 remarked, “(The university) encourages students to be socially responsible professionals.” Others, however, criticized the university’s corporate and commercial interests. P5 states that “Management only considers student numbers and income.” Many teachers voiced a desire for increased teacher involvement in decision-making and shared governance. According to P12, “Policies are too top-down, without teachers’ input.” Furthermore, some expressed concern about deteriorating



educational quality due to overemphasizing research productivity over teaching. P7 argued, “Research cannot be sacrificed at the expense of quality teaching and learning.” Others identified a need for balancing commercial and social responsibilities. P4 noted that “a university wants international recognition, but must also serve local needs.” Overall, it is indicated that perceptions of institutional responsibilities can be varied, and sometimes contradictory.

### *B. Altruistic Motivation*

#### *(a). Student Relationships*

Students’ relationships emerged as a central motivating force that drew many teachers into the profession and sustained their passion over time. Witnessing student growth and sharing in their learning journeys provided a profound sense of accomplishment (P3). As P7 explained, “interaction with students” and seeing their progress fueled persistence and passion for teaching. Student diversity and thoughtfulness relative to mainland Chinese contexts enriched these bonds for several teachers. Conversely, disruptive, unmotivated, or disengaged student behaviors demotivate participants by rupturing the teaching-learning process. As P9 described, “When I cannot see the fruit of what I’m doing...that’s depressing.” Cheating and talking in class signaled a lack of respect. Students “just staring at the screen” (P1) during online lessons exacerbated engagement challenges. Managing challenging behaviors exacted an emotional toll on teachers.

There were, however, times when student relationships were also a challenge, as larger class sizes made it difficult to provide personalized attention and foster close bonds between students and teachers (P13). During the pandemic disruptions, the shift to online learning modes limited interpersonal connections and real-time feedback loops that are more naturally facilitated in face-to-face classroom settings (P4, P6). In the absence of engagement, students were not turning on cameras or participating actively in virtual classes, resulting in uncertainty regarding whether learning was taking place effectively (P6). In addition to enhancing flexibility, asynchronous digital platforms made it harder for teachers to discern the comprehension and needs of students (P12).

#### *(b). Colleague Relationships*

When comparing the initial motivations for entering the teaching profession to factors such as a passion for the subject matter or a desire to nurture students, colleague relationships emerged as a less prominent factor. When participants began their teaching careers, positive collegial relationships continued to provide a supportive environment for retaining motivation and job satisfaction.

Several teachers highlighted the collaborative and encouraging nature of colleague interactions at their institutions (P11, P13). Having supportive peer networks to exchange ideas, collaborate on projects, and provide feedback promoted an environment conducive to professional growth and enthusiasm. Being part of a team motivating each other was valued in terms of camaraderie. The more experienced colleagues served as mentors for some participants who encountered new challenges such as developing online teaching competencies (P13) during the pandemic. Through this coaching, stresses were alleviated and motivation was sustained throughout periods of adjustment.

Meanwhile, most of the participants (P1-9, P10, P12) did not explicitly indicate that colleague relationships significantly affected their motivations either positively or negatively. It is therefore evident that collegial support strengthened intrinsic motivations when present, but its absence did not necessarily dampen core drivers such as passion for a particular subject.

### *C. Extrinsic Motivation*

#### *(a). Reasons for Entering Teaching*

Teachers were driven by distinct motivations that drew them to the teaching profession. Some were driven by a long-standing passion for English (P1) and saw teaching as a way to nurture language talents (P2). Many teachers enjoyed the interactive nature of teaching, which provided them with the opportunity to witness student growth and gain a sense of accomplishment (P3). Some participants (P4) also found the intellectual aspect of teaching to be attractive, such as the fact that participants engaged in research-like processes when they prepared lessons.

Several teachers (P5, P9) were inspired to become teachers as a result of early exposure through their own educational backgrounds. Another common motivator (P6, P12) was aligning with one’s academic major in English or education. Some believed teaching to be intrinsically motivating (P10), while others appreciated the way it combined passion with a sustainable livelihood (P11). The appeal of the university environment, including enjoying interactions with colleagues and appreciating a supportive environment for balancing teaching and research responsibilities, also contributed to reasons for entering and remaining in the profession (P13). There was a minority of respondents who did not explicitly state their initial motivations (P7).

Generally, a combination of personal interests, passion for the subject, alignment with educational backgrounds, desire to facilitate student growth and future talents, as well as pragmatic career considerations around financial sustenance underscored the diverse motivational forces that drove this sample of English teachers to pursue their chosen profession.

#### *(b). Pandemic Influences*

The pandemic necessitated an abrupt shift to online delivery, posing multiple challenges. The lack of in-person contacts and immediacy often hindered student engagement, as P4 described: “It’s very difficult to know if they are really listening.” Some students kept cameras off, avoiding visual presence. Classroom rapport and relationship building also suffered without face-to-face interactions. Teachers struggled to adapt active learning techniques like discussions to the virtual environment. Online instruction requires considerable preparation time to redesign materials and learn new technology interfaces. Teachers described needing to “rethink the classroom” (P2) through a digital lens. Staying abreast of evolving institutional platforms like Canvas while simultaneously modifying pedagogical approaches imposed heavy demands, especially without formal training. While mostly negative, some teachers cited the benefits of remote work like flexibility, less oversight, and strengthened technology skills. According to P6, pandemic-driven online shifts yielded both “negative and positive effects overall.” However, most voiced a preference for in-person teaching which they found more pedagogically engaging and intrinsically rewarding.

When discussing work stresses, research requirements were most cited, especially recently increased expectations. P13 explained “the main stress now is the research requirement from the university, because the timeline feels too rushed.” Heavy teaching loads and large class sizes also contributed to feeling overloaded. Administrative duties and job uncertainty added further stresses. Overall, most felt work stressors had accumulated in the return to campus amidst raised performance expectations.

### *(c). Institutional Expectations*

In terms of faculty motivation, institutions placed varying expectations on them. Initial institutional expectations were viewed by some as relatively relaxed, allowing them to concentrate primarily on teaching without excessive research demands (P13). Participants noted a rapid shift towards more stringent research requirements and quantitative metrics for outputs, which disrupted the initial appealing work-life balance. Research over teaching responsibilities became a dominant priority in the new institutional priorities (P8). Unrealistic deadlines for meeting high expectations for publishing in high-quality journals created immense pressure (P13). In addition to balancing teaching, research, and service commitments, maintaining job satisfaction while producing quality work was challenging (P13).

Top-down administrative directives lacking transparency bred feelings of coercion rather than autonomous motivation (P8), leading to a sense of lack of autonomy and exclusion from decision-making processes surrounding these policy changes (P8). There was also uncertainty surrounding shifting evaluation criteria and promotion requirements, resulting in a perceived lack of institutional support (P8). The high teaching load and large enrollments constrained the amount of time available for research activities that institutions anticipated (P8). In addition to this overload, concerns were raised regarding the development of skills for effective online teaching during crises such as the pandemic, which limited professional growth. Institutional expectations significantly influenced motivations - when perceived as balancing teaching/research and complemented by autonomy, they enabled professional enthusiasm. It is important to note, however, that abrupt policy changes prioritizing unrealistic research pressure without voice and transparency led to demotivation among researchers.

### *(d). Demotivators*

Many factors contribute to the well-being and burnout of teachers. Heavy workloads were frequently cited as having a detrimental effect on job satisfaction and work-life balance. P6 and P13 expressed concern that unreasonably high-performance expectations increased anxiety, with P13 stating that it was impossible to publish quality papers in such a short period of time. Several participants also expressed emotional exhaustion from online teaching during campus closures. According to P2, communication with students online and outside the classroom takes a significant amount of time. However, relationships with colleagues emerged as a key mitigating factor. Several participants mentioned collaborating to share expertise and provide emotional support. P11 stated that encouragement from colleagues and students’ progress helps counter negative workplace experiences. Kinship helped counter negative workplace experiences. Furthermore, it is important to maintain well-being by employing personal coping strategies, such as exercise and leisure activities.

Despite numerous pressures, most participants emphasized seeking balance and maintaining motivation. Reflecting on stress, P11 stated “appropriate pressures can generate power, but if it is too much, it becomes counterproductive.” Many participants valued the support and collaboration found in relationships with colleagues, as P13 explained, “We can help proofread for each other and give suggestions.” Enhancing wellbeing through leisure, exercise, and self-care was also cited. In terms of sustaining motivation, setting clear goals, adopting a growth mindset, and prioritizing student learning emerged as crucial strategies. P8 stated, “My competitive nature drives me to continually strive for greater effort.” Others emphasized maintaining perspective: “You have to do your job well before considering other things” (P1). Overall, participants exhibited conscious resilience building to manage an intensifying higher education environment.

## VI. DISCUSSION

### *A. Intrinsic, Altruistic, and Extrinsic Motivations*

Based on the results of this study and the literature review, the three types of motivation identified for English teachers within Macau's higher education system are generally consistent with previous research on teacher motivation. In this study, however, the following contexts and nuances are of particular importance:

The intrinsic motivations of passion for teaching, desire for professional growth, and interest in the subject matter align with findings from other studies (Salı, 2013). It was found that institutional support and a balanced workload were intrinsic motivators in this study, which may be of particular interest to Macau higher education institutions. As a result of altruistic motivations, helping students grow and nurturing future talents is consistent with previous research that has highlighted the significance of fostering student relationships and contributing to society. This finding echoes many studies that have focused on special education teachers who strive to positively impact marginalized communities (Nue & Manara, 2022). The extrinsic motivations identified, such as job security, financial stability, and institutional expectations, align with the existing literature on the role of external factors in teacher motivation (Rahmati & Sadeghi, 2021). It is important to recognize, however, that the study also emphasizes the unique challenges experienced by English teachers during the pandemic, including the sudden transition from classroom to online teaching and the need for professional development in digital teaching techniques. Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of institutional factors and policies in shaping teacher motivation, a finding that is consistent with previous research highlighting the influence of working conditions, decision-making involvement, and support systems (Taqi et al., 2017).

Each type of motivation influences and reinforces the others, resulting in complex interplay. The relationships between these motivations can be summarized in the following figure:

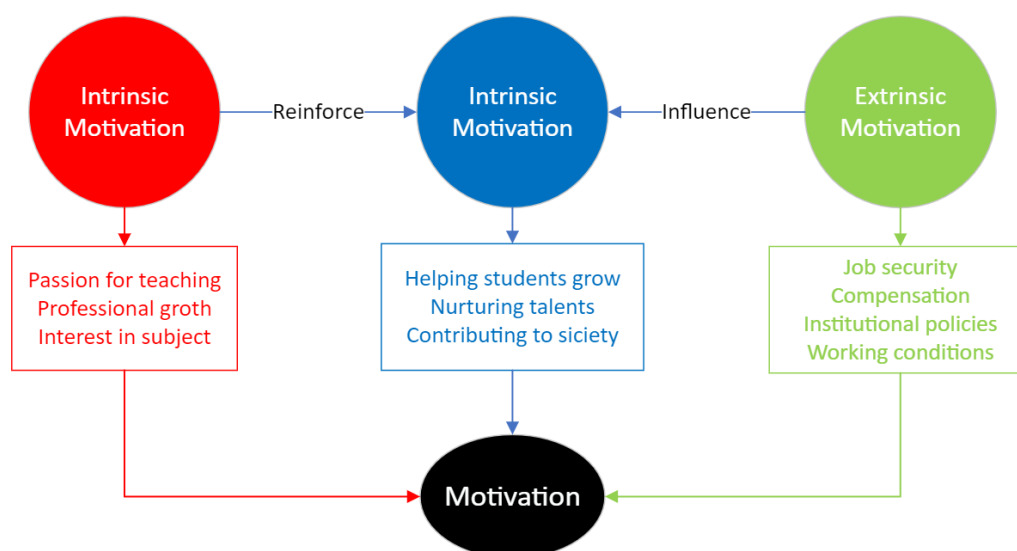


Figure 2. The Relationships Between the Motivations

The interplay between these three types of motivation is dynamic and can shift over time. Early on in a teaching career, intrinsic and altruistic motivations may be more prominent, but as teachers advance, extrinsic factors such as job security, compensation, and institutional support may become more important. For teachers to remain motivated and committed over the long term, a synergistic and balanced relationship between intrinsic, altruistic, and extrinsic motivations is ideal. As institutions and policymakers recognize the interconnected nature of motivations and the potential for each type to reinforce or undermine the others, they should strive to create environments that nurture and align all three types of motivations.

### B. Perceptions of Motivation

RQ 1: How do English teachers in Macau's universities perceive their motivation in the local context?

In line with previous research, English teachers in Macau universities expressed predominant intrinsic motivations centered on enjoyment of teaching itself, passion for the subject matter, desire to grow intellectually, and interest in advancing student learning (Osman & Warner, 2020). Making a positive difference in society by elevating English proficiency also reflected strong altruism and prosocial values, consistent with studies identifying such motivations among educators globally (Gong et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2022). This fusion of intrinsic and altruistic aims formed the primary motivational foundation. While intrinsic and altruistic factors took priority, findings also echoed past research in revealing a secondary role for extrinsic motivations related to job security, income stability, social standing, and external influences. However, these extrinsic motives were eclipsed by intrinsic and altruistic drivers for most teachers. Previous studies concur that internal desires furnish teachers' dominant motivational force (Barni et al., 2019).

During the pandemic, key supports for intrinsic motivation were undermined, including rapport and efficacy between teachers and students. Pandemic teaching has been shown to be highly demotivating, consistent with studies finding

pandemic teaching highly demotivating (Honarparvaran & Khaghaninejad, 2023; Ren & Zhou, 2023). The majority found online formats to diminish their motivational resources, despite some appreciating flexibility. Macau teachers' motivation and job satisfaction are significantly influenced by positive student and colleague relationships, confirming past research findings. In addition to disruptive student behaviors and disengagement, collegial cooperation and mentoring were also significant demotivators.

### C. Enhancing and Undermining Factors

RQ 2: What contextual factors enhance or undermine motivation from teachers' perspectives?

Following the theory of self-determination (Slemp et al., 2020), teacher autonomy, input into policy, and flexible working conditions were believed to be important factors for maintaining motivation. As compared to top-down directives on outputs, shared governance practices that valued teachers' voices were more effective in promoting intrinsic motivation. Transparency and compassion motivated teachers when expectations were not clearly communicated. A collaborative professional community that allows teachers to mutually support development, discuss challenges openly, and receive feedback fueled efficacy and engagement (Barni et al., 2019). Isolation and competitiveness undermined intrinsic desires to cooperate.

As in studies worldwide, teachers in Macau perceived mounting work expectations and role overload to be powerful demotivators because they caused burnout and limited their personal time. High teaching loads (Table 2) were deemed unsustainable in light of research and service commitments. As a result of disrespectful and disengaged student behaviors, teachers experienced significant demotivation, disrupting their sense of purpose, self-efficacy, and instructional goals (Taqi et al., 2017). Over time, classroom management challenges resulted in a depletion of intrinsic motivation. During the pandemic, a lack of training and guidance regarding online teaching hindered some teachers' professional growth, reflecting literature citing that lack of development opportunities is demotivating (Başok, 2020). An important motivating resource is ongoing skill enrichment.

TABLE 2  
CURRENT TEACHING WORKLOAD IN UNIVERSITIES IN MACAU

University	Position	Teaching hours/week
1	Lecturer	15
	Assistant Professor	12
2	Lecturer	12
	Associate Professor*	12
3	Lecturer and Assistant Professor (teaching)	16
	Assistant Professor (research)	12
4	Lecturer	12
	Associate Professor*	12

\*Assistant Professor is not applicable to these universities, and the information in this table was collected independently from the preview interviews, the numbers 1 to 4 are used for the universities rather than the letters A to D.

### D. Higher Education System and Social Responsibility

RQ 3: How can social responsibility initiatives enhance English teaching motivation in Macau's higher education system?

As a dominant recommendation for enabling manageable workloads, reduced course loads, class sizes, and teaching hours emerged as a prominent recommendation. Research indicates that excessive teaching hours undermine motivation and retention (Honarparvaran & Khaghaninejad, 2023; Ren & Zhou, 2023). Increasing teacher voice in policy decisions regarding evaluation, expectations, and resource allocation was considered paramount to supporting autonomy and preventing demoralization. Similarly, studies have demonstrated that perceived inadequacy in reforms demotivates teachers by dismissing professionalism (Osman & Warner, 2020). It may be necessary to strengthen research mentoring, writing groups, statistical assistance, conference funding, and protected research time to assist teachers struggling to achieve unrealistic publication targets. Empowering institutional support and community has been shown to improve motivation and research self-efficacy. The findings of this qualitative study may not be generalizable to a large number of teachers. Further investigation is required to explore how motivational processes differ across contexts. A quantitative analysis of teachers' motivation levels before and following a pandemic could help clarify how crises affect teachers' motivational trajectories. Furthermore, longitudinal studies examining motivational shifts across career stages merit attention. A comparison of public and private institutions may reveal divergent challenges.

In collaboration with teachers, universities may integrate social responsibility into their culture, curriculum, and governance to counteract the motivational decline caused by commercialization pressures and give teaching and learning a greater sense of purpose. In addition to providing meaningful service opportunities (Duan et al., 2023; Jeong et al., 2023), community outreach programs involving teachers and students volunteering to teach English together may provide meaningful service opportunities (Li & Hu, 2023); Moreover, partnerships between universities and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working to address social issues could provide teachers with engaging collaborative projects or events for their students to engage in topics such as sustainability or equality, thereby enhancing motivation by integrating classroom learning with real-world experiences (Başok, 2020). It would also be

beneficial to teachers to receive professional development training that incorporated social responsibility into English curricula to help them feel motivated and align their teaching with broader values, including planning lessons for critical thinking (Sali, 2013).

## VII. CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Within Macau's unique higher education context, this qualitative study provides valuable insight into the motivations of English teachers. The findings indicate that intrinsic motivations such as passion for teaching and subject matter, as well as altruistic desires to contribute to society, form the primary drivers for English teachers. The overall motivational experiences, however, are strongly influenced by extrinsic factors including institutional policies, compensation, and support systems. Disengaged behavior, excessive workloads, and a lack of participation in governance undermine motivation, whereas positive relationships with students and colleagues enhance it. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers-student connections were strained and online pedagogy shifts were necessitated without adequate training, disrupting key motivational resources.

English teachers should be motivated long-term by multi-pronged approaches involving reduced teaching hours, inclusive decision-making, research support infrastructure, transparent promotion criteria, and balanced expectations for their roles. While increasing commercial pressures, integrating social responsibility into university culture, curriculum, and governance may provide a meaningful purpose to re-engage teachers. It is concluded that the study illuminates ways to enhance the sustainability of English teaching within Macau's internationalized tertiary education environment by optimizing intrinsic and altruistic motivations while providing motivating extrinsic conditions.

This exploratory qualitative study has several limitations despite its contextualized insights. As an interview-based investigation, the sample of 13 participants from four universities may not represent the motivational experiences of all English teachers in Macau. These findings could be enriched by more comprehensive quantitative research that measures motivation levels. Longitudinal studies may also provide additional information about motivational trajectories across career stages. An analysis that compares public and private institutions may reveal differences in policy implications. A future study that incorporates these expanded methodological and sampling approaches may allow for a deeper understanding of language teacher motivation within this postcolonial, culturally hybrid regional context and beyond. Despite this, this foundational investigation provides an initial empirical basis for motivational enhancement efforts tailored to the specific needs of Macau's English teaching personnel.

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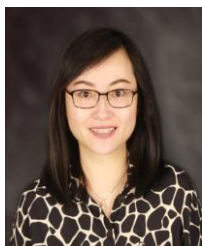
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**Yuying Wang** is an Associate Professor and Program Coordinator of the Bachelor of Arts in Chinese-English Translation and Interpretation at the Faculty of Languages and Translation of Macao Polytechnic University. Her research interests include pragmatics, English language teaching, language industry, interpretation studies. She is the Principal Investigator of Research Project No. RP/FLT-13/2022, Macao Polytechnic University.



**Wei Xu** (Corresponding Author) is an Associate Professor and PhD Supervisor at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, City University of Macau. He is also the Program Coordinator for the Bachelor of Arts in English and Bachelor of Arts in Applied Linguistics. His research interests include second language acquisition, foreign language education, educational technology, and multicultural studies.



**Kaining Guan** is a PhD candidate at the School of Education, City University of Macau, and a lecturer at Guangdong Ocean University, Yangjiang Campus. She received a Master's degree in TESOL from the Department of English at University of Liverpool. Her research interests include teaching English as a second language, second language acquisition and cross-cultural studies.



**Jin Zhao** is a PhD candidate at the School of Education, City University of Macau. Her previous experience includes teaching Chinese at Confucius Institute at Tajik National University and serving as a lecturer at Xinjiang University of Finance & Economics. Her research interests include teaching Chinese as a second language, second language acquisition and cross-cultural studies.



**Ping Wu** is a Professor in Linguistics and Intercultural Studies, Department of English Studies, Faculty of Foreign Studies, Beijing Language and Culture University. He is the Project Consultant of Research Project No. RP/FLT-13/2022, Macao Polytechnic University.

# Exploring the Relationship Between Working Memory Capacity and L2 Oral Fluency

Danh C. Vu\*

Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ton Duc Thang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Thanh V. Nguyen

Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ton Duc Thang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Nakhon Kitjaroonchai

Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Asia-Pacific International University, Muaklek Saraburi, Thailand

**Abstract**—This study investigated the relationship between working memory capacity (WMC) and L2 oral fluency and explored the maintenance of newly presented information in L2 speaking production. When performing speech production tasks, knowledge from long-term memory is at frequent use and hence involves the operation of the episodic buffer, one component of the working memory system, where information is retrieved from long-term memory and stored in chunks as we speak in chunks. In this study, we measured WMC by assessing chunk capacity and chunk size held in and retrieved from the episodic buffer. Chunk capacity was measured by Pair-word Speaking Task; chunk size was measured by Procedure Description Task; and oral fluency was measured by speech rate and mean length of run using an IELTS speaking task. Twenty-nine English-major students participated in this study. The results showed a strong positive correlation between chunk capacity and the two measures of fluency while chunk size negatively correlated with fluency. Data from the recall interviews revealed that participants employed various strategies for the maintenance of the presented information which involved different types of information binding.

**Index Terms**—working memory capacity, episodic buffer, chunk capacity, chunk size, L2 oral fluency

## I. INTRODUCTION

It is understandable that anyone who learns English as a second or foreign language has a desire to speak English with fluency and that people are much different from each other regarding this aspect of oral performance (Daneman, 1991; Mostafa et al., 2020). However, the factors contributing to the desired fluency that make a fluent speaker different from a regular one have remained the subject of an ongoing debate in L2 research (Aslan & Şahin, 2020; Ngoc & Dung, 2020). Since the introduction of the multi-component model of working memory (Baddeley & Hitch, 1974), the construct has been widely exploited in different areas of research. In L2 research the construct of working memory has been used to explain learner differences in language comprehension and performance. One of the common claims about working memory in previous L2 studies which employed the dual-tasks for the assessment of working memory capacity, i.e. the Speaking Span Test & Reading Span Test (Daneman & Green, 1986), is that its capacity is the predictor of success in L2 oral production (Bergsleithner, 2011; Finardi, 2006; Rezai & Okhovat, 2016; Vieira, 2017; Weissheimer & Mota, 2009). The results of those previous studies showed a positive correlation between the storage capacity and oral fluency. However, a limitation of measuring working memory capacity using dual-tasks is its exclusive emphasis on the maintenance of individual words that are not related to each other. This may not accurately capture the nature of the functional working memory in authentic speaking tasks, as these tasks often involve the maintenance of related information. Moreover, the maintenance of information in the functional working memory during oral production has been under-researched, and thus, much is unknown about how an L2 speaker manages to maintain the information to produce speech. The present study first sought to validate the claim about WMC as a predictor of L2 oral fluency. It also explored the mechanisms involved in retaining newly introduced information during L2 oral production, referred to hereafter as "the input." Furthermore, new assessment tools were developed to accurately measure working memory capacity based on real-life speaking events.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Models of Working Memory

Working memory is referred to as a limited capacity "brain system" that temporarily stores and manipulates necessary information for the performance of such complex cognitive activities as comprehension, learning, and

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\* Corresponding Author (<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8518-6818>; Email: [vuconganh@tdtu.edu.vn](mailto:vuconganh@tdtu.edu.vn))



reasoning (Baddeley, 1992, p. 281). With that conceptualization, Baddeley and Hitch (1974) originally proposed the model of working memory that comprises the three-component system and that simultaneously stores and processes information. The three components are (1) the Central executive, which is capable of focusing attention, storing information, and making decisions, and two active slave systems, namely (2) the Visuospatial Sketchpad, which holds and manipulates visuospatial information, and (3) the Phonological Loop, which keeps speech-based information. The original model of working memory by Baddeley and Hitch (1974) received a great deal of attention from other researchers in the field as it primarily emphasizes the active manipulation of information rather than passive storage, which distinguishes it from earlier short-term memory models (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1971; Miller, 1956). This model was adopted by many researchers studying span and loop capacity and its influence on language (Daneman & Carpenter, 1980; Daneman & Green, 1986; Just & Carpenter, 1992; Just et al., 1996). Different from other researchers, Engle and others (Conway & Engle, 1996; Towell et al., 1996; Engle et al., 1999) argued that working memory is a unitary, domain-free construct that is strongly related to general fluid intelligence. They highlighted the importance of the focus of attention rather than domain-specific processes. Unlike Baddeley's model, Cowan (1999, 2005) proposed an embedded-processes model of working memory which emphasizes the connection between long-term memory and attention. Cowan's (1999) model comprises four elements including central executive, long-term memory, activated memory, and the focus of attention, the core of working memory. Cowan's model tackles the issue of access to long-term memory, which Baddeley's original model fails to explain why complex cognitive tasks can be done without accessing the resources from long-term knowledge.

It was not until 2000 that Baddeley's model was substantially revised, with the proposal of a new component of the working memory system, the 'episodic buffer'. In this revised multi-component model of working memory, the episodic buffer is assumed to hold integrated episodes or chunks in multidimensional codes. It, therefore, acts as a buffer store between the components of working memory, and it links working memory to perception and long-term memory. However, it is noted that the episodic buffer is capacity-limited and that the retrieval from the buffer occurs through conscious awareness (Baddeley, 2012). Baddeley's (2000) influential model of working memory is believed to be easier to get hold of and to help explain many important phenomena, e.g. individuals with short term memory deficits are capable of storing and manipulating complex information in the limited-capacity slave systems. Cowan (2005) also considered this model as a basis on which "many predictions have been made and tested" (p. 21). Hence, this model serves as a theoretical framework for the present study.

### *B. Measuring Working Memory Capacity*

Over the past two decades, a plethora of L2 research has been conducted to investigate the relationship between working memory capacity and L2 speech production (e.g. Ahmadian, 2012; Finardi, 2008; Finardi & Prebianca, 2006; Mizera, 2006; Mota, 2003; Prebianca et al., 2014; Rezai & Okhovat, 2016; Tavares, 2016) mainly by using the dual-tasks which are assumed to simultaneously measure the processing and storage functions of working memory. Among the most frequently-employed measures are the Speaking Span Test (Daneman & Green, 1986) and the Reading Span Test (Daneman & Green, 1986). These kinds of tests assess the capacity of working memory by counting the number of sentences produced by the speakers after they are presented with sets of individual words. In doing this, the tasks require the coordination between the storage and processing functions of working memory (Daneman & Green, 1986). A speaker, therefore, needs to plan what to speak and temporarily store lexical input until readily articulate them in sentences. Researchers argued that L2 learners with larger working memory capacity tended to outperform the ones with lower spans in speaking tasks due to their greater efficiency in spoken production processes (Finardi & Prebianca, 2006), whereas Daneman and Tardif (1987) posited that the greater a learner's efficiency in processing information, the greater the capacity left available for storage of the products of the processing and of material retrieved from the long-term memory.

The present study supports the view that working memory is a task-specific capacity (Daneman & Green, 1986; Daneman, 1991; Fortkamp, 1999) which means WMC in speech production varies across tasks and differs from other cognitive tasks such as language comprehension, learning, and reasoning. Furthermore, in performing spoken tasks, knowledge from long-term memory seems to be at frequent use and hence involves the function of the episodic buffer where information is retrieved from long-term memory and stored in chunks as we speak in chunks (Brown, 1974). Therefore, it is argued that the capacity of the episodic buffer (EBC) is an indicator of WMC in oral production. In the present study, we assessed WMC by measuring the capacity of the episodic buffer or the number of chunks as well as the size of the chunk maintained and retrieved during L2 speech production.

### *C. L2 Oral Fluency*

The definition of L2 fluency may vary across different studies. It can encompass various aspects such as vocabulary range, grammatical correctness, pronunciation, idiomaticness, appropriateness, and relevance of speech, or alternatively, or alternatively it may refer only to the speed of oral production without hesitations (Lennon, 1990). In this study, we focus on two categories proposed by Segalowitz (2010): cognitive fluency and utterance fluency. Cognitive fluency refers to an individual's ability to plan and deliver their speech while utterance fluency pertains to the actual performance during speaking (Fortkamp, 1999). Perceived fluency is not relevant for this study as it reflects the listener's judgment rather than cognitive abilities.

Previous research has examined utterance fluency by analyzing various speech characteristics. For instance, a study conducted by Bui and Huang (2016) investigated different aspects of L2 oral fluency using 18 measures related to speed, stretch, voicing, pauses within clauses (mid-clause pauses), independent clause pauses, dependent clause pauses, filled pauses and repairs. In this study, the researchers adapted the speed-related measures from Bui and Huang's work and recall interviews for assessing cognitive and utterance fluency during an L2 speaking task. The purpose was to explore if there is a correlation between working memory capacity and L2 oral fluency while also examining how input is maintained in L2 speech production. To address these objectives, the following research questions were posed:

- 1) Are there any relationships between WMC in a speaking task as indicated by the episodic buffer capacity and L2 oral fluency as measured by the speech rate and mean length of run?
- 2) How do the participants manage to maintain the input for L2 speech production?

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. *Setting and Participants*

The research took place at Asia-Pacific International University, a private university situated in Saraburi province, Thailand. The study involved 29 Thai undergraduates majoring in English, aged between 19 and 23 years old. Their English proficiency levels ranged from low intermediate to advanced (A2 to C1 on the CEFR scale). Out of these participants, there were 25 females and five males. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study and provided verbal consent to participate voluntarily. Measures were taken to protect participants' privacy and anonymity in data analysis and reporting. Data collection was carried out during a term break and after final exams had been completed, ensuring that exam results did not influence the findings of the study.

#### B. *Research Instruments*

The study employed three different instruments: (1) an IELTS Speaking Part 2 Task, (2) a Pair-word Speaking Task (PST), and (3) a Procedure Description Task (PDT). In the IELTS speaking task, participants were given a topic and allotted one minute to prepare for a two-minute monologue aimed at evaluating their proficiency in L2 oral fluency. To assess the capacity of the episodic buffer in working memory, both PST and PDT tasks were utilized. The former measured chunk capacity whereas the latter measured chunk size that could be stored in the episodic buffer.

The PST was developed based on the Speaking Span Test proposed by Daneman and Green (1986), with a significant modification in terms of using paired words to measure chunks. In the PST, participants were presented with sets of seven pairs of words, intentionally selected to have semantic or phonological associations. The word pairs were simultaneously displayed both visually and audibly on a computer screen for two seconds each. After each set, participants were asked to produce one grammatically correct and meaningful sentence for each pair of words they could recall. Oral production of a sentence using the words in the same pair can be regarded as the evidence for the binding processes. In this study, these include both semantic and phonological bindings.

The PDT was adapted from the story recall task developed by Kapikian and Briscoe (2012). In the PDT, participants were presented with five steps of a procedure in which each step was presented in a phrase, one step at a time. Each step consistently consisted of five words, comprising three content words and two function words. The steps were presented in both written and spoken forms. After viewing the steps, participants were asked to retell the procedure while maintaining as many original words as possible. The syntactic units in the steps produced should be grammatically correct and semantically acceptable. The assumption is that reproducing the procedural steps may indicate an above-sentence level of binding process beyond just having pair-words construct sentences in PST.

For the designs of PST and PDT, a list of words was compiled with the following criteria: all of the words were taken from the Cambridge KET Vocabulary list (CEFR A2), they were one-syllable words and they were all content words.

To further investigate the binding process as possibly observed in the participants' performance in the PST and PDT, we employed recall interviews. While PST and PDT can show what participants held in their working memory, they do not offer much insight into how the participants stored this information. Recall interviews serve as a valuable method for exploring this matter for two reasons. Firstly, by conducting interviews, we can identify any words or information that participants remembered beyond what was assessed in the tests. Secondly, we can gain a better understanding of how specific words or information were either forgotten or retained during and after the speaking tasks. These insightful data can only be gathered from the perspectives of the participants themselves and may not necessarily reflect actual processes occurring within their working memory; nonetheless, they have potential to illuminate the strategies employed by participants to maintain the input.

#### C. *Data Collection Procedure*

The data collection took place in two days. The first task, PST, took approximately 25 minutes and the second task, PDT, took another 10 minutes for each participant. The recall interviews were conducted immediately after the participants finished doing each word set in the PST and at the end of the PDT. Generally, the participants were interviewed about: (1) What word(s) they remembered but could not manage to make a sentence and (2) how they managed to remember the presented pairs of words. One of the techniques we used in the recall interviews was to tell

the participants a random word from the pairs that they failed to make a sentence. This was done to assess their ability to remember the other word in the pair. Then we proceeded with questioning them about the ways that they could recall the other word of the pairs, otherwise, asking them why they could not. It is noted that while participants had the option of being interviewed in Thai or English, only two of them preferred conducting their interviews in Thai. The IELTS speaking task was subsequently administered after the interviews.

#### D. Data Analysis

Data obtained in the IELTS speaking task were transcribed verbatim and calculated for (1) the speed rate (SR) which is the total number of words per minute after the deletion of vocal fillers, incomplete words, and repeated words and (2) the mean length of run (MLR) which is the average number of words before the participants encountered any vocal filler or incomplete word or repetition or unnatural pause of more than 2 seconds. These measures of L2 oral fluency were adapted from Bui and Huang (2016). For the calculation of SR and MLR, refer to the formula below.

$$SR = \frac{(total\ words\ produced - vocal\ fillers - incomplete\ words - repeated\ words) \times 60}{total\ time\ of\ speech\ (in\ second)}$$

$$MLR = \frac{\sum words\ in\ all\ stretches}{number\ of\ stretches}$$

In the PST, every word reproduced by the participants was given strict or lenient scores. Strict scores were given when the two words of each pair were reproduced exactly as originally presented to them. However, lenient scores will be given if the reproduced words are synonyms or derivational forms of the words presented in the word set. Additionally, in all circumstances, the words should be used in (1) grammatically correct sentences (if not, the score is reduced half) and (2) semantically acceptable (according to native speaker's norms).

Regarding the PDT, the measure was the chunk size (CS) which is the total number of content words in a step. Content words can be reproduced in a derived form, however, the syntactic units in the steps reproduced should be (1) grammatically correct (if not, the score is reduced half) and (2) semantically acceptable.

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed for the contents by two researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The coding process was carried out to reduce data into easily locatable segments. Three researchers performed the cross-checking of data coding to increase the level of inter-rater reliability and agreement on data coding was reached among the researchers before any further categorization of the data. The analysis aimed to explore the participants' memory strategies used during the performance of PST and PDT in order to seek explanations for the participant's performance in the tasks as well as to explore the quality of the maintenance of the input in the speaking tasks. The analysis was guided by the two following questions:

How did the participant manage to remember the words for speech production?

What are the words they could remember but failed to produce when doing the tasks?

#### IV. RESULTS

Twenty-nine English majored students performed in three different tasks and the results of which were rated manually by the three researchers and then processed by SPSS for further statistical analysis. The first task PST measured the chunk capacity as indicated by the strict scores (PSTS) and lenient scores (PSTL). The second task PDT measured the chunk size (CS). The IELTS speaking task measured L2 oral fluency as indicated by the speech rate (SR) and the mean length of run (MLR). Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of each measure in the three tasks.

TABLE 1  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PST, PDT AND IELTS SPEAKING TASK (N = 29)

Task	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
PSTS	29	1.00	18.0	8.4138	4.11024
PSTL	29	2.00	9.00	5.2241	1.65608
CS	29	0.20	3.00	1.3517	0.63898
SR	29	5.00	.90	13.5704	19.27698
MLR	29	.18	.33	9.5214	11.66742

Note. PSTS = pair-word speaking task strict scores; PSTL = pair-word speaking task lenient scores; CS = chunk

As shown in Table 1, the strict scores of PST range from 1.00 to 18.00 ( $M = 8.41$ ,  $SD = 4.11$ ) and the lenient scores range from 2.00 to 9.00 ( $M = 5.22$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ). The chunk sizes (CS) range from 0.20 to 3.00 ( $M = 1.35$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ). The speech rates range from 75.00 to 151.90 words per minute ( $M = 113.57$ ,  $SD = 19.28$ ), whereas the means length of run range from 7.18 to 50.33 words per stretch ( $M = 19.52$ ,  $SD = 11.66$ ).

To address our research question 1: Are there any correlations between the measures of working memory capacity (WMC) and the measures of L2 oral fluency? Spearman's correlation coefficient ( $\rho$ ) was employed. Table 2 shows how the WMC measures correlated with the L2 oral fluency.

Regarding the relationship between chunk capacity and oral fluency measures, it was found that the lenient measurement of chunk capacity (PSTL) positively correlated with both measures of oral fluency, evident by a strong

correlation between PSTL and speech rate ( $\rho=.732$ ,  $P=.000$ ) and a moderate correlation between PSTL and mean length of run ( $\rho=.506$ ,  $P=.005$ ). In contrast, the strict measurement of chunk capacity negatively corresponded with the speech rate, despite its relatively low correspondence ( $\rho=-.449$ ,  $P=.015$ ).

Interestingly, the statistical analysis of the measurement of chunk size and speech rate also revealed a low, negative correlation ( $\rho=-.411$ ,  $P=.027$ ) but showed no significant relationship with the length of run. Thus, it appeared that the size of the maintained chunk tended to negatively respond to the number of words the participants could produce per minute.

TABLE 2  
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE MEASURES OF WMC AND THE MEASURES OF L2 ORAL FLUENCY (N = 29)

Spearman's rho		SR	MLR
PSTS	$\rho$	-.449*	-.180
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.350
	N	29	29
PSTL	$\rho$	.732**	.506**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.005
	N	29	29
S	$\rho$	-.411*	-.074
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.027	.705
	N	29	29

Note. PSTS = pair-word speaking task strict scores; PSTL = pair-word speaking task lenient scores; CS= chunk size; SR = speech rate; MLR = mean length of run. \*\* $P < .01$ , significant correlation. \* $P < .05$ , significant correlation

In Table 3, simple linear regression showed a significant relationship between PSTL and speech rate ( $F(1,27) = 20.324$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). The slope coefficient for PSTL was 7.628. The  $R^2$  value was .429, so it could be suggested that 42.9% of the speech rate can be explained by the model of PST with lenient measurement, and 57.1% could be explained by other factors that contributed positively to the speech rate. This indicated that PSTL can be a good predictor of L2 oral fluency in terms of speech rate.

TABLE 3  
REGRESSION RESULTS

Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Predictors (constant)	<b>73.720</b>	9.258		7.962	<b>.000</b>
PSTL	<b>7.628</b>	1.692	.655	4.508	<b>.000</b>
$R^2$	.429				
F	20.324				

Note. Dependent variable: Speech rate

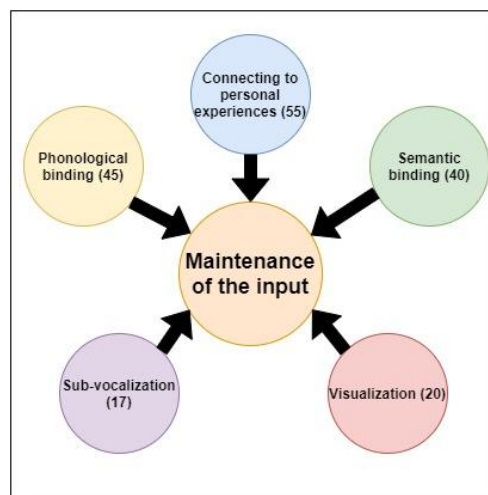


Figure 1. Strategies Used for Maintaining the Input in the PST

To respond to Research Question 2: *How do L2 speakers maintain the input for speech production?*, which examines how L2 speakers retain information for speech production, immediate recall interviews were carried out immediately after participants finished each set of pair-word speaking tasks and procedure description tasks. The data was transcribed and analyzed following the methods described in the previous section. Figure 1 illustrates the five primary strategies used by participants to maintain the information presented during the first task, the PST. The frequency count of mentions for each strategy is provided in brackets.

#### A. Connecting to Personal Experiences

As found in the analysis of the recall interviews, there were 55 times the participants mentioned that they benefited

from their own experiences. This means that for maintaining the information presented to them in a very short time many of the participants tried to link these pieces of information with their personal experiences. The following excerpts illustrate this most frequently mentioned strategy. The two participants explained how they managed to maintain the pair-words *guest – room* and *field – trip* during the task:

I can remember the last pair well because I used to work in the university guestroom before. (E13-S6)

During I studied here in the first and second year we went on a field trip, so I remember that word. (E22-S5)

### B. Phonological Binding

The second frequent strategy was to maintain the pair-words by creating a connection based on the phonological similarity of the words rather than meaning. The following excerpts demonstrate some mentions of this strategy:

I can remember these pairs because they are similar in sound like cheap and chips even though I'm not quite sure at first about the meaning. (E10-S3)

The ship and the sheep is like almost the same. It sounds the same. (E20-S5)

### C. Semantic Binding

Alternatively, many participants described a strategy that helped connect two words by their meaning rather than their phonological features. These words are often co-occurring items in discourse. The following excerpt shows a typical mention of this strategy: “When I saw the words in pairs and they go together like the sun set, or the boys go with toys, the road goes with the map and they are easy to remember” (E20-S7).

### D. Visualization

Some participants reported that they visualized the presented verbal information in order to hold it for later spoken production. The following excerpts illustrate these instances.

I remember these words because I pictured it in my mind, like a town people feed a cow. (E09-S2)

I think I make a picture in my mind about the beach and when activities there always in the beach is sports. (E22-S1)

### E. Sub-Vocalization

The least mentioned strategy was the use of sub-vocalization of the input. To sub-vocalize the input, the participants simply repeated the presented information in mind. Below are some participants' descriptions of this strategy.

I try to repeat. I have to spell the word like ‘red’ and ‘green’ in mind but without noise. (E28-S5)

Normally I choose the words that are short and easy or the ones that I already know the meaning to repeat in my mind. When I do this I can make a sentence easily. (E26-S6)

The procedure description task (PDT) required the subjects to describe five steps of a procedure of planning for a summer vacation by using five phrases that were previously presented in sequential order. From the analysis, it was found that the participants also employed some of the strategies they used for the pair-word speaking task when performing PDT. Figure 2 illustrates the four underlying strategies the participants used to complete the task.

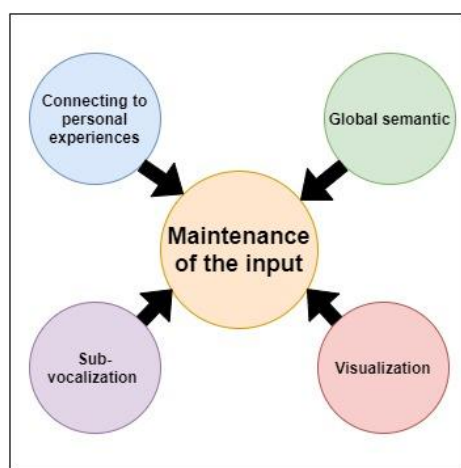


Figure 2. Strategies for Maintaining the Input in the PDT

Like the PST, the participants revealed that they made use of their personal experience connection, visualization, and sub-vocalization strategies. For example, some of the participants explained that the task was somewhat related to their past experiences when they had to go on a tourism class field trip in which all the students in the class were required to collaboratively plan for the trip and activities. In the following excerpt, a participant described the use of this strategy:

I tried to recall these phrases by closing my eyes and think about my task in my tourism class this semester. I think to link it with my tourism class field trip when we were asked to plan for a class field trip together. We

need to go through many steps in making our plan which is similar to the task here. (E05-T2)

At least four of the participants stated that they picturized the verbal input and organized them in a situation or a story in order to assist them in maintaining the information. This excerpt depicts such strategy use: “I tried to picture things like I used to do and when I saw these phrases I tried to make picture of the situation and put it as a story” (E10-T2).

#### *F. Global Semantic Structuring*

The most common strategy used in the PDT was global semantic structuring, a derived strategy of semantic binding. The assumption of global semantic structure is that language comprehension processes are hierarchically constructed, that is to say, words comprising sentences are bound together and an overarching structure binds together groups of sentences in order to create global meaning in relation to propositional content (Kapikian & Brisco, 2012). Sentences or phrases that have causal event structure or presented in intact order can be better recalled or bound than the same constituent sentences that are presented in a different order (Christoffels, 2006). In the PDT the participants explained that they could retrieve the presented information because those phrases came in sequential order. The following excerpts demonstrate such strategy use.

They already list the steps for us. I just see the main point of the sentence and I will put it together. I notice these phrases are in order and after you know the first one, you will know the second one and the third one. (E23-T2)

I can remember these three phrases because they are the process of going for a trip and when we plan a trip we need to follow the steps. (E01-T2)

In brief, the results from the immediate recall interviews suggested that the participants in this study used a range of strategies to enhance the retention of information, some of which were common across both tasks. Furthermore, it is argued that these strategies may not be exclusively used at once but can be simultaneously exploited for maintaining the input. In the next part of the paper, we will provide some explanations for the results that have been discussed in this part.

### V. DISCUSSION

#### *A. Chunk Capacity and L2 Oral Fluency*

The concept of chunking in this study refers to the cognitive process of binding individual pieces of information together and storing them as a cohesive unit. This chunking process is an integral part of the comprehension process in which meaning is built by filtering and binding the extracted pieces of information so that they fit with the mental structure (Baddeley et al., 2009; Gernsbacher, 1990). What is different from the structure-building model of comprehension (Gernsbacher, 1990) is that chunking information in our study does not necessarily imply only semantic binding but also involves all types of binding, ranging from semantic, phonological, visual, spatial, experiential, perceptual et cetera bindings. According to Baddeley's (2000) model of working memory, these bound pieces of information, or chunks, are stored in multidimensional codes in the episodic buffer which prepares the resources for speech production. Our results showed that there was a positive close correspondence between the participants' chunk capacity, measured by the lenient scores, and how fast they can produce L2 speech, measured by the speech rate. There was also a moderate positive correlation between the number of chunks the participants could retain and the average number of words they could produce before they encountered any hesitation in speech production. One explanation for the observed relationships is that chunking can reduce the processing demands and promote the overall fluency because chunks are easier to remember and faster to retrieve and produce as compared to recalling individual pieces of information separately (Newell, 1990; Taguchi, 2008). As mentioned earlier, binding the individual units of information together and maintaining these units as chunks can allow more information to be stored, which caters more ready-to-use resources for oral production (Taguchi, 2008). As Pawley and Syder (1983) suggested, fluent speakers make use of 'ready-made memorized chunks' because they help to lower the load of information processing in speaking and thus would allow more space for other processes. Many researchers also supported the idea that improving chunk capacity and efficiency can improve L2 oral fluency (Amir Mahdavi & Zafarghandi, 2015; Schmidt, 1992; Shen, 2015; Towell et al., 1996). Our study seems to support that view. As evidenced from the regression statistical analysis we believe that chunk capacity, or the number of chunks stored in the episodic buffer, can facilitate L2 oral fluency and it can be a reliable predictor of L2 oral fluency.

Interestingly, however, in this study we measured the chunk capacity in a speech production task in two distinct ways, reflecting the strict and lenient ways of maintaining the chunks, and only the lenient way of maintaining the chunks positively correlated with the measures of speech fluency while the other, the stricter way of maintaining the chunks, negatively corresponded with the participants' oral fluency. This means that maintaining the bindings of the input in a strict, accurate manner may be responding to less fluent speech production. Our assumption is that maintaining the bindings in such strict and accurate way may require more attentional resources (Baddeley, 2012) and thus may leave less capacity for other cognitive processes of speech production, often referred to as the 'trade-off effects' (Daneman, 1991; Finardi & Prebianca, 2006; Fortkamp, 1999; Skehan, 1998). This trade-off effect is based on the view that working memory is a dual function system, consisting of processing and storage. Since the two functions compete for

the limited capacity of working memory, a greater effort dedicated to the strict maintenance of bindings means that less space is spared to the processing function. Therefore, trading off the capacity for maintenance may lead to a decrease in processing capacity, meaning a slowdown in speech production.

### *B. Chunk Size and L2 Oral Fluency*

In the present study, we examined not only the chunk capacity but also the chunk size. In the PDT, we aimed to measure the size of the chunk and we were particularly interested in finding out if the chunk size had any relationship with the measures of oral fluency. The results revealed that chunk size had a low correlation with the speech rate but what was surprising was that it was a negative correlation, meaning that maintaining a large size of a chunk is not a good thing to oral fluency. The observed phenomenon can be explained by Newport's (1990) 'less is more hypothesis'. Newport (1990) claimed that the difference in language acquisition between children and adults lies in the differences in their working memory capacity. Children's low capacity leads them to processing language input in its minimal components thus allowing them to easier maintain more accurate and meaningful chunks rather than larger but misleading chunks. This hypothesis is supported by several studies such as Chin and Kersten (2010), Jones (2012), Kersten and Earles (2001), and Smalle et al. (2016), to name just a few. Our findings also suggested that the larger the size of the chunk to be maintained tended to be responding to the less fluency in L2 speech production, which fits well with Newport's (1990) less-is-more theory.

### *C. The Maintenance of the Input in L2 Speech Production*

Regarding the research question about the maintenance of the input in L2 speech production, the data from the interviews provided evidence for the chunking process which assisted the participants in the maintenance of the input. As discussed in the results section, participants reported the various types of binding that they used to maintain the information when they performed in the speaking tasks. These included phonological, semantic, and visual binding as well as using personal experiences and repeating the pairs of words. These bindings of information preparing necessary resources for later speech production can be explained with reference to the different functions of working memory's components.

Firstly, phonological binding was most frequently used in the first task, the PST, in which the maintenance of the word-pairs was achieved by binding the two words based on their phonological similarity. As Baddeley (2012) stated in his multi-component model of working memory, phonological similarity is one of the fundamental characteristics of the phonological loop. Likewise, participants also retained the information by chunking it based on the semantic similarity of the input. The results from the PDT suggested that participants could benefit even greater in the maintenance of the input when the information was presented semantically connected with a theme and in a meaningful order. This finding was in line with Kapikian and Briscoe (2012) whose study concluded that semantic binding could generate stronger memory representations than words or texts that lack global semantic structure.

Participants also maintained the input by connecting it to their personal experiences. This was done by accessing the long-term memory where personal knowledge and experiences are stored. As noted in the model of working memory, this access to long-term memory can be made possible through the episodic buffer which links perception, knowledge, and personal experience with the working memory system. The binding itself may not take place in the buffer, however, the bound pieces of information or the resulted chunks, are stored there (Baddeley, 2012).

Some participants reported the use of visualization in the maintenance of the input. As mentioned earlier, the visual system is responsible for processing and storing visual and spatial information (Baddeley, 2000). In this case, it is interesting that the presented verbal information was processed and converted into visual codes and bound together. This was probably done by the visual system before being sent to and stored in the episodic buffer.

Other participants told us that they repeated some pair-words in mind to maintain them for later speech production. The mechanism underpins this strategy of information maintenance largely relies on the function of the phonological loop. As mentioned earlier in the model (Baddeley, 2000), the phonological loop has two sub-systems, which are the phonological store and the articulatory control process. While the former is responsible for storing information in speech-based codes, the latter is responsible for rehearsing information from the phonological store by subvocalizing the articulatory codes. These two sub-systems work together as the inner ear and inner voice to maintain the subvocalized information for speech production.

In addition, one interesting observation from the interviews was that some participants could recall some of the pair-words that they failed to do earlier in the task. We found out that when they were given the first word in a pair, in many cases, they could tell us the remaining word in that pair which they insisted to be forgotten during the task performance. One possibility is that the maintenance of the bound information rather than the binding process requires additional attention from the central executive (Baddeley, 2012), and hence maintaining the information and retrieving it from the episodic buffer is restricted to the central executive control. In other words, the participants did store the bound information in their episodic buffer, however, because the central executive did not allocate attentional resources for the retrieval of the stored chunks but for other cognitive processes for speech production, which resulted in the failure to retrieve the maintained chunks. Until later, when the burden of performing the task was over, the central executive reconnected with the episodic buffer and the retrieval of the maintained chunks was made possible again.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The results of this study have reinforced the claim about the close relationship between working memory capacity and L2 oral fluency. Moreover, it was found that working memory capacity indicated by different chunk measures exhibited various types of relationship with L2 oral fluency. Firstly, since chunk capacity closely relates to speech fluency, the learning of chunks should be promoted in L2 speaking classrooms. Instead of introducing a list of individual, unrelated words, it is suggested that teachers should present the input in ways that facilitate the students' chunking process as this will benefit both the maintenance of the presented resources and speech production. What is more, since the chunking process can happen not only when there are semantic similarities but phonological and visual resemblances or experiential connections as well, the practice of chunking all possibly noticeable features of the presented information should be advocated. Secondly, however, it is noteworthy that because only the lenient way of maintaining the chunks can predict the fluency, using chunks in a flexible, creative, personalized way should be encouraged among L2 students. Especially in fluency-based activities, the importance of maintaining the input in a flexible way needs to be highlighted. More importantly, our study revealed that although learning many chunks is necessary, maintaining large-sized chunks might not be a good thing for oral performance. It is, therefore, whilst we recommend the practice of chunking in L2 speaking, presenting long and complicated chunks to students might be avoided, especially for less proficient students, as it can add an extra burden on the maintenance of the input in their oral production.

One limitation of this study is that L2 oral fluency was only measured in terms of quantity, i.e. speech rate and length of run, but the language quality of the speech was completely neglected. It is thus recommended that future studies may include accuracy measures of the speech so that it can reflect fluency in a more meaningful way. In addition, the group of participants in the study was homogeneous in terms of their academic discipline and English proficiency, consisting of only English majored students. Future research can also cover a wider range of participants with various academic disciplines and levels of English proficiency, for example, recruiting non-English major students. Another limitation of the study is that the chunking effect was only validated by the data from the retrospective interviews. In fact, in addition to the experimental condition, we originally intended to have a control condition for the two tasks measuring WMC, which could assist to claim the chunking effect. However, we failed to have enough participants for the two conditions. The control condition for the PST can be done by rearranging the words in each word set so that the words in the same pair do not share semantic or phonological similarity any longer. Likewise, the steps in the PDT can be rearranged to eliminate the effect of the sequential, logical order of the procedure. It is highly recommended that future research may need to include a control condition for the validation of the chunking effect as a useful way to back up the qualitative data. Finally, the present study is a correlational study in which we found a prediction, hence, future researchers can conduct an experimental study to explore the causal relationship between WMC and L2 oral fluency so that more pedagogical actions can be suggested and implemented.

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**Danh C. Vu** is a lecturer in applied linguistics at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ton Duc Thang University, Vietnam. He is interested in exploring the potential of technological affordances and how to use interdisciplinary knowledge to make practical applications for second language education. His research interests include technology-based approaches to second language learning and teaching, personalization in language learning, second language listening and speaking, and corpus linguistics. His recent research involves developing a technology-based learning platform for L2 listening comprehension. (Email: [vucongdanhtdtu.edu.vn](mailto:vucongdanhtdtu.edu.vn))

**Thanh Van Nguyen** is an English lecturer at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ton Duc Thang University, Vietnam. He completed his PhD at Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand. His current research interests include the learning theory of Connectivism, Technology Enhanced Teaching and Learning, Innovation in English Teaching and Learning, Online Teaching and Learning, applications of Instructional Design in ELT, and student engagement in online learning environments.

**Nakhon Kitjaroonchai** is a lecturer at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Asia-Pacific International University, Thailand. His research interests include second language acquisition, learning motivation, and L2 learning achievement.

# The Attributes of Postmodern Pluralism, Skepticism, and Relativism in Selected Kurt Vonnegut's Four Novels

Abdulhameed A. Majeed  
University of Anbar, Iraq

**Abstract**—This paper explores pluralism, skepticism, and relativism in Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano*, *The Sirens of Titan*, *Cat's Cradle*, and *Slaughterhouse-Five*. The study attempts to reveal Vonnegut's depiction of contemporary postmodern politics, society, and culture. It looks into postmodernism as the inclusive term of the thematic attributes of pluralism, skepticism, and relativism which apparently imprint the typical image of postmodernism life. Therefore, the study sheds light on the selected novels' perception of postmodernism on the verge of social and cultural change stimulated by politics that plays a crucial role in shaping postmodern man and his capacity to cope cultural pluralism. In this way, the study unravels such pluralism via highlighting the characters' skepticism of their ability to grasp the relativism of postmodern life. The study examines Vonnegut's postmodern dexterity as a critique of contemporary political actions that lead to new life styles. In addition, it discovers the selected novels' narrative structure as a postmodern device of exposing contemporary socio-cultural reality that is spoiled by contemporary politics. In this way, it identifies Vonnegut's postmodern fictional theme of relativism i.e., dealing with political sequences as challenging reality; and this reality should be amended by controlling postmodern politics.

**Index Terms**—pluralism, postmodernism, skepticism, relativism, Vonnegut

## I. INTRODUCTION

This study aims at enriching the scholarship of Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano*, *The Sirens of Titan*, *Cat's Cradle*, and *Slaughterhouse-Five* by exposing their postmodern thematic elements through using the concepts of pluralism, skepticism, and relativism. Studying the allegorical factors of the novels might lead researchers to locate the authorial postmodern ideology on contemporary politics, social state of affairs, and culture. Interpreting the selected novels from multidisciplinary approaches, e.g., postmodern and post-structuralism with regard to thematic concerns would lead to new understanding of postmodern political fiction projected in the selected novels because "postmodernism has been looking at literature from various critical perspectives. It merges fictional forms with their predecessors to synthesize new literary modes capable of coping with the reviving narrative fiction and protecting it from artistic decline" (Abu Jweid, 2023, p. 21). Discussing the role of Vonnegut's postmodern fiction relies on science fictional structure which might provide academic studies with key implicit authorial ideology regarding postmodern intellectuality and view of life.

The application of the concepts of pluralism, skepticism, and relativism to the selected works might open the door of researchers to discover latent meanings of World War II. Consequently, the political regimes could be analyzed in terms of narrative fiction, which give it different perspectives. Vonnegut's fiction, moreover, would be interpreted as fictional critiques of both war and individuals. On the one hand, researchers might tackle Vonnegut's fiction through experimental fiction that is extremely significant to discerning the function of narrative fiction in giving various meaning to reality. The fictional peculiarities of Vonnegut's fictional works pave the way for classifying the selected novels within postmodern contexts. Additionally, the study of science fictional qualities might confront new narrative horizons. That is, the scrutiny of science fiction through postmodernism helps researchers to locate the allegorical aspects of the selected novels within the scope of modernism.

Being so, Vonnegut's fiction would be of symbolical significance which assists future studies on how science fiction provides different meanings of reality during the first part of the twentieth century. On the other hand, individuals will also be highlighted by utilizing the findings of this study. The individuals I mean here are those representatives of postmodern life who led the most radical social and cultural changes. Accordingly, the study provides researchers with the authentic tools to identify the roles of postmodern society where "postmodern civilisation surviving the destructive events and their related ethical dilemmas" (Abu Jweid & Al-HajEid, 2021, p. 99). Studying the individuality of these leaders could tell researchers – through postmodern science fictional narrative – about the psychological motives behind their unjustified actions during the first decades of postmodernism; which is projected in the selected novels.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several studies which tackle the postmodern implications in the selected works; Jirgens (1999) approaches elements of “disjunction, dialogism, and multistability” in Vonnegut’s *The Sirens of Titan*. These elements exemplify Vonnegut’s obsessive concerns with science fiction (p. 153). Tahir Wood (2012) tackles the allegorical narrative structure of Kurt’s *Cat’s Cradle*. Wood argues that “we can conclude allegorical discussion without considering what it is that makes the novel different from any other genre and why it is that readers read it” (p. 361). Here, a postmodern study found that Kurt, in his novel, repudiates the traditional narrative structure. By concentrating on postmodern fictional techniques, Majeed Jadwe (2009) unravels the inherent intertextual literary elements of *Slaughterhouse-Five* by means of a critically-oriented view, whereby intricate components of the role of narrative fiction could shape its literary subjectivity, authentic reality, and pertinent moral consequences by dint of storytelling which anticipates some of the main concerns with postmodern fiction; Jadwe writes: “Kurt Vonnegut’s extensive use of intertextual references in his seminal 1969 novel *Slaughterhouse-Five: Or the Children’s Crusade. A Duty Dance with Death* is essentially postmodernist in appeal” (p. 33).

Abdalahdi Abu Jweid (2020) studies Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five* as a dystopian novel dealing with the demanding political sequences in Germany and America. He (2020) concentrates on the negative experience of the characters that became the victims of the war when their lives had been devastated by political atrocities. Consequently, Abu Jweid (2020) traces the theme of time travel in order to explore the novel as a dystopian satire of such politics: “time travel carries out the sense of satire. In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, corrupt politics is highly critiqued. The narrator describes his bitter experience at the hands of corrupt German and American politicians” (p. 105). Abu Jweid (2020) adds that the novel’s characters are the fictional exemplification of the author’s voice. In this case, He (2020) scrutinizes the novel’s discourse to delve deep into the narrative attributes of its postmodern plot: “another characteristic of postmodern reality is the discourse by which the author’s revelation of his/her “identity” as the creator of the work. In the course of events, the author appears on the narrative level. The author appearance is manifested in the discourse initiated by the fictional characters he/she creates” (p. 105).

However, this study applies the concepts of pluralism, skepticism, and relativism in Vonnegut’s *Player Piano*, *The Sirens of Titan*, *Cat’s Cradle*, and *Slaughterhouse-Five*. They will be used to explore to analyze the multiplicity of the allegorical quality of these novels and how they exemplify postmodern fiction. They will be used to describe the selected novels’ as science fictional replicas that stand as critiques of post-World War II politics which had been rarely studied in previous studies. The study also applies these concepts to the novels’ structure as a tool for critiquing the contemporary changing reality. These concepts have been scarcely applied to interpret the selected novels’ themes and characters. Hardly any study applied pluralism, skepticism, and relativism to discuss the selected novels’ oppositional state against reality, specifically, political reality. Therefore, my study studies postmodernism to argue that the novels are critical postmodern indictments against of the scientific devastation of human beings’ reality.

In turn, in specifying the nature of narrative fiction as a particular object of the analysis, this study sets out many of the study’s focus which will be persistent as a central concern for pertinent narrative theorists’ concepts. However, the main narrative concepts will be reliant on pluralism, skepticism, and relativism and their postmodern narrative insights. They will be branched out through narrative themes that are going to be discussed later in the following sections. Yet for foremost orientation of the nature of postmodern theory, authorial background and its projection in the novels will be tackled.

### III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Vonnegut is a prolific American novelist, dramatist and short story writer (Drabble, 2013, p. 1065). He was born in Indianapolis, Indiana. He is mostly renowned for his novels which treat the political condition of America after the great world wars. He tackles the comprehensive impact of wars on American and its position in the world. Military power is one significant peculiarity of Vonnegut’s fictional issues (p. 1065). Yet, he only focuses on the American political power, especially after the Second World War in the bulk of his works. There literary fabric of Vonnegut’s writing involves an all-encompassing visualization of the war and people’s suffering made by the war’s sequences (p. 1066). Moreover, he deals with the harsh conditions that stormed in world before the World War II. More precisely, the Great Depression is a representative example such conditions. It is inevitably connect with his references to these conditions and their influence upon them, as he once stated that he is the son of the Great Depression.

Vonnegut died in 2007, Manhattan. He had been mortally brain injured after falling from his house in New York. Vonnegut left a legacy of prolific novelistic production (Leeds & Reed, 2000, p. 183); his major novels are *Player Piano* (1952), *The Sirens of Titan* (1959), *Mother Night* (1961), *Cat’s Cradle* (1963), *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* (1965), *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), *Breakfast of Champions* (1973), *Slapstick* (1976), *Jailbird* (1979), *Deadeye Dick* (1982), *Galápagos* (1985), *Bluebeard* (1987), *Hocus Pocus* (1990), and *Timequake* (1997). His other fictional writings are *Canary in a Cathouse* (1961), *Welcome to the Monkey House* (1968), *Happy Birthday*, *Wanda June* (1970), *Between Time and Timbuktu* (1972), *Sun Moon Star* (1980), *Bagombo Snuff Box* (1997), and *God Bless You, Dr. Kevorkian* (1999). In some of these works, and other non-fictional writings, Vonnegut critiques destructive politics and war in a satiric tone (Tally, 2013, p. 111). He depicts the atrocities of war in actions. They function as real documentation of humanity deterioration.

Vonnegut's opinions and description of the Great Depression is a direct allusion to his own sufferings from depression through cultural pluralism. From this point of view; we could trace the biographical elements in Vonnegut's work. He often fictionalizes some of his experiences in his writings, especially the novels (Tally, 2013, p. 29). His fictional writings, consequently, serve as biographical documentation of some periods of his life. However, he indirectly universalizes his experiences through fiction. This universal documentation comprises his society as a victim of depression created by postmodern pluralism. The harsh economic conditions, therefore, had left their apparent impact upon his literary talent. He conveys the life of his sufferings through fiction. When he writes his own experiences, he provides us with Americans' suffering from depression as a whole (p. 29). In this case, his experience becomes universal i.e., his life as a stereotype of all Americans who underwent the harsh depression goings (p. 29). The narrator, in *The Sirens of the Titan*, immediately speaks about this depression: "The following is a true story from the Nightmare Ages, falling roughly, give or take a few years, between the Second World War and the Third Great Depression" (p. 8).

Vonnegut does not only tackle his economic experiences, but also about the political experiences he saw in the World War II. The most obvious actions in his plots are about the war and the destinies of people who participated in the war by means of postmodern pluralism (Bloom, 2009, p. 1). Vonnegut treats the consequences of war in the bulk of his fiction. He depicts the economic, social and the psychic influences of the war upon people. He tells the events from a military perspective. This is because he experienced the bitter devastation of war (p. 1). The reason for his military experiences was that he had been chosen as one of the Americans who must follow the American army in Europe. But Vonnegut went to German war fronts where he met his military roles.

These violent strifes lead Vonnegut to reconsider the human conditions regarding war and its creation of postmodern pluralism. It seemed to him that people lost confidence in their political regimes (Farrell, 2008, p. ix). As such, politics was inspirational issue of his imaginary plots. He found politics corrupted and in need of restoration. He did not believe in peace pacts among political combatants to resolve the blood war status quo. He thought of the probable exit from the contemporary crises to save the human race from annihilation (p. 3). He thought over recompilation among war political fronts. Ultimately, he found fiction as the easily obtainable vehicle for abating war at any expense. For this reason, he inserts his authorial voice in his works to critique the corrupt politics in order to find peaceful outlets from war (p. 4). His *Cat's Cradle* is a fine example of his discontent with war politics. He severely attacks arm race which resulted in a sense of skepticism among the fictional characters. The arm race would bring about new harsh experiences. The nuclear arm race, for example, could annihilate vast lands and crowded nation in one military attack; as the narrator puts it simply: "I found that the picture was of an humble little war memorial in front of a small-town courthouse. Part of the memorial was a sign that gave the names of those villagers who had died in various wars" (p. 27).

War experiences have profound sense in Vonnegut's fiction. This is because they are the true motivation of postmodern pluralism. He treats the reality of war through fictional episodes. The treatment of reality is one representative token of postmodern fiction. Vonnegut is always associated with postmodernism because he treats reality in its meticulous fragments (Davis, 2006, p. 14). In fact, pluralism had been an exemplary feature of postmodern literature. Fragmentation is the perception of reality as a part not as a whole. Being so, the postmodern writer perceives reality according to his/her own experience. Vonnegut, similarly, treats reality in terms of his experience. He implicitly tells the reader of his harsh life during the war. This postmodern quality puts Vonnegut in the position of postmodern fiction. Pluralism and skepticism, in Vonnegut's fiction, resemble the real wars to a great extent (p. 15). This is the serious connection between his fictional and postmodernism.

Moreover, the multiplication of voices in the literary text is a definitive feature of postmodern plots since "realistic narrative in postmodern fiction formulates a technical construction of the text in order to represent reality relatively; perceived by individuals according to their judgment of the world outside the text" (Abu Jweid, 2020, p. 338). That is, the plot is told from different voice narrative voices. In like fashion, Vonnegut tells his fictional plots from different narrative points (p. 15). In *The Sirens of Titan*, the Vonnegut refers to his harsh life through omniscient narrative point of view in the opening sentence: "Everyone now knows how to find the meaning of life within himself" (p. 8). Nevertheless, in several narrative stances, the fictional events are narrated by the first narrative point of view in terms of fictional dialogues: "Every failure of Earthling leadership has been traceable to a lack on the part of the leader," says Rumfoord" (p. 85). The multiplicity of these narrative voices are appropriated within postmodern narratives points of view. More important, such narrative voices are the essential nexus of postmodern cultural relativism dominating the American society.

Vonnegut's fiction bears a contiguous affinity to the issue of absurdity of cultural relativism (Bloom, 2009, p. 5). He tackles absurdity and meaning of life on the majority of his work. The meaning of absurdity in his novels is annexed to relativism (p. 5). Melancholic characters do not find any meaning of life as they undergo new social pluralism and skepticism. This is due to their experiences and social backgrounds. When they are attacked by tyrants or ruthless accidents, they lose their confidence in life. They get immersed into absurdity. To use the critical insights of Vonnegut's novels, there is an indicative allusion to melancholy together with destitute; the characters are devoid of their human sense. Scenes of bereavement, for example, lead these characters to be in melancholic conditions (p. 6). Valencia Merble, who is Billy Pilgrim's wife in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, dies in a car accident. Billy is completely overwhelmed by his memories of war becomes more melancholic. Though the accident does not affect him immensely, yet it complicates his

melancholy since it reminds him of war accidents. In essence, the story is all about Vonnegut's melancholic vision of life as he witnessed the war's devastating havoc stimulated by cultural pluralism.

Another science fiction element of Vonnegut's novels is space invasion. Such space invasion has a close relationship with postmodern cultural relativity. In essence, the intrinsic themes of space invasion are to provide people with alternative home of residence in case the earth is destructed by physical powers (Goodbody, 2007, p. 293). Vonnegut, who is aware of quantum physics, knows that the world is threatened by negative powers. These powers are mainly political (p. 295). They are the combatant fronts in the war. They had previously met in the World War I. They also met in the World War II. These wars, as psychical science claims, might threaten the live of human beings. For this reason, hum beings must find shelters another than earth (p. 298). These shelters are other planets. From this premise, the idea of space invasion was gradually occupying the public interest (Goodbody, 2007, p. 299). Science fiction writers dealt with these ideas in their fictional works in serious narrative tones. They used their narrative's discourse to provide new solutions to the destruction of Earth (p. 312). Vonnegut is prominent writer among those authors. He tried his hand to expose the war destruction in his fiction. Consequently, he wrote some fictional pieces to emphasize the importance of space invasion with regard to cultural relativism.

Vonnegut's *The Sirens of Titan* depicts the American obsession with Malachi Constant. This obsession is the core of the American postmodern cultural relativism per se. It is the archetype of the richest man in America. Any person who searches for good fortune must follow the steps of Malachi Constant. This man decides to take a journey from Earth to Mars. In fact, he embodied man's interest in space invasion to achieve good luck and wealth. He travels through interplanetary journeys. He encounters several terrestrial wars. Hence, the novel holds a symbolical function. It does not foreshadow the invasion of space to take shelter from the destructing Earth. Notwithstanding, it predicts the spread of destruction of other planets if human beings proceed combating in ruthless fights. Vonnegut symbolically wars people of the world against the political destruction everywhere.

Technology is considered as another definitive attribute of Vonnegut's use of science fictional themes. He approaches technology within the broad scope of postmodern aspiration to space invasion. To put it another way, in modernism, the traditional technological prosperity was not perfect due to the lack of pluralism (Thurschwell, 2006, p. 164). Technology was taking its way towards perfection. The invention of planes and moving automobile, for instance, was still in the initial production phases (p. 164). Moreover, companies of the world were not able to device new models and shape for their production. They did not collaborate or reciprocate their scientific experience. They are depending on their initial theories about scientific inventions (p. 165). Technology, thereupon, substituted human labor to make work easy and quick (pp. 169-68). This automation prosperity is palpable in Vonnegut's science fictional works. *Player Piano* is an overt example of this technological accomplishment.

Furthermore, Vonnegut's *Player Piano* portrays employs such kind of automation to depict the dystopian sequence of technology i.e., the excessive over-utilization of military technology will lead to the annihilation of human race, which is the essence of postmodern pluralism and skepticism. Thus, he critiques the unjust political combatants of World War II. The invention of airplanes is another illustrative example. Airplane was invented in 1902 by the American Wright brothers (Karen, 2010, pp. 12-13). They contributed a great deal of scientific authenticity to the world. This invention stimulated the imagination of literary writers (p. 14). G.H. Wells, for example was immensely interested in this kind of discovery. He wrote a number of his novel to provide the world the conceptualization of the airplane's ability to enhance people's means of transportation. Wells's *The First Men on the Moon* serves as an important model of this scientific obsession. It was written in the first decade of the twentieth century when the possibly of landing on the moon was mere imagination; and this is the authentic exemplification of postmodern relativism reflected in Vonnegut's fiction.

The sense of science fiction was present before Wells's works (Bleiler, 1953, p. 72). In the nineteenth century, we could have some scientific imaginative modulation through the works of Jules Vern (p. 73). He wrote a well-known science fictional novel *Around the World in Eighty Days* in (1873). In this novel, Vern conceptualizes the possibility of crossing the world in short time. In 1873, the idea of crossing or roaming the world in eighty days was only imaginative. Nowadays, we could cross the world in eighty hours. The sense of belonging has changed the original features of places. Fiction, therefore, deals with this change through literary works. Wells's *The Time Machine*, written in 1895, tells us of the clear difference between Victorian England and modern England. In the Victorian England, the time machine was only a dream (Burns, 2010, p. 91). Yet, in modern England, it became reality when new scientific inventions became more than before. Just so, science fiction, in modernism, was prediction the unknown discoveries that might happen in the future (p. 91). Literary authors, like Vonnegut, in this sense, imagined the shape of the world that could be in near or distant futures by means of cultural relativism via "the author's implied voiced articulated by the characters' explicit voices" (Abu Jweid & Sasa, 2020, p. 340). They only have imaginative insights about science.

In postmodernism, nonetheless, science fiction relates to the scientific discoveries that had been already known (Asimov, 1981, p. 86). But postmodernism tackles the improvement and evolution of those discoveries in the future; and this is could be achieved by social pluralism and skepticism (Conte, 2002, p. 37). Vonnegut, for example, tackles the issue of space invasion in *The Sirens of Titan*. He imagines the terrestrial interaction between the human race and space aliens. More importantly, Vonnegut tackles the issue of space invasion that he had already known. The idea of space discoveries is not his own. He depends on previous discoveries and ideas about space. Wells's novel *The War of*

*the Worlds* (1897), for example predicts the Martian invasion of earth. This scientific idea was not known to Wells when he wrote the novel in 1897. He only predicts space invasion through fiction. In contrast, Vonnegut's *The Sirens of Titan* was written approximately in 1959, approximately 62 years after Wells's novel. This means that Vonnegut has pre-existed knowledge about science and space invasion. But the function of science fiction in Vonnegut's novel is the point of departure.

In *The Sirens of Titan*, Vonnegut uses science fiction not for entertainment. He uses it as a critique of war (Asimov, 1981, p. 54). Wells uses science fiction for the sake of predicting the future invasion of earth. He has complete imaginary literary artifice. However, Vonnegut uses science fiction as a means of amendment with regard to social pluralism and skepticism. He seeks to rectify the political defects in the World War II. He resents the political destruction of human race; which leads to the culmination of postmodern relativism. He compares the human destruction of the countries that participated in the war to the space invasion i.e., earth might be destroyed by invasions that are similar to space invasion. The following section will study the science fictional qualities of Vonnegut's fiction.

Correspondingly, Vonnegut tackles time temporality in *The Sirens of the Titan*. In modernism, time temporality is conveyed via texts that resemble real life situations, such as social problems and everyday life. In postmodernism, however, reality and time temporality are conveyed via science fiction. Similarly, Vonnegut conveys the reality of World War II through science fiction in his novel i.e., space invasion as the essence of postmodern pluralism and skepticism. To explain, Vonnegut's usage of reality in *Cat's Cradle* imitates the reality of destructive politics during World War II. The initiation of arm race, for example, exemplifies the real obsession with power and supremacy. Yet, Vonnegut deals with this real obsession by using science fiction, namely, arm race and its possible threat in the future.

The true sense of postmodern cultural relativism is appropriated in Vonnegut's science fictional discourse. The discourse of Vonnegut's fiction, as reflected in *Cat's Cradle*, is directed towards World War II. The novel indirectly opposes the atomic bombs thrown to Japan. The plot's fictional discourse is inherently Vonnegut's implicit voice against the atrocities of War. The author utters the subject of his story through polyphony. In the opening page of *The Sirens of the Titan*, for example, Vonnegut's dialogic voice straightforwardly reveals the subject of the novel which is about World War II: "The following is a true story from the Nightmare Ages, falling roughly, give or take a few years, between the Second World War and the Third Great Depression" (p. 1).

The focalization narrator, in *Cat's Cradle* for example, conveys the narrator's voice. This voice is a fictional channel of Vonnegut's polyphonic voice in the novel. Nestor Aamons is a character who suffers from the same hardships that Vonnegut met during World War II, yet this suffering is told from the novel's focalized narrator's perspective: "Nestor Aamons was captured by the Russians, then liberated by the Germans during the Second World War" (p. 53). In *Player Piano*, Vonnegut projects his authorial insights about technological automation through the narrator's focalization point of view: "During the past three wars, the right of technology to increase in power and scope was unquestionably, in point of national survival, almost a divine right. Americans owe their lives to superior machines, techniques, organization, and managers and engineers. For these means of surviving the wars" (p. 181). Such science fictional incidents are narrated by the omniscient narrator that highlights one of the novel's major characters, Paul that seems to be a narrative replica of Vonnegut's political reality during the events of the World War II: "Objectively, Paul tried to tell himself, things really were better than ever. For once, after the great bloodbath of the war, the world really was cleared of unnatural terrors - mass starvation, mass imprisonment, mass torture, mass murder" (p. 13). Thus, the political experience of these characters is created by Vonnegut's experimental postmodern style which leads to the culmination of socio-cultural pluralism, skepticism, and relativism in the American society.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This paper explores pluralism, skepticism, and relativism in Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano*, *The Sirens of Titan*, *Cat's Cradle*, and *Slaughterhouse-Five*. The application of these concepts is solely significant to understand Vonnegut's writing style that reflects the true spirit of postmodern life. This is because he uses experimental narrative style that represents the postmodern political changes that influenced the society and culture of different nations, including America. Therefore, literary experimentation is one key finding of the study. That is, Vonnegut experiments with the literary narrative components to deal with the intricate politics after the World War II and its massive aftermath upon the mentality and living conditions of people in America. Such literary experimentation is the clue to grasp the implied thematic features of postmodernism which had become the topical image of life in America; and how Vonnegut meticulously depicts it by utilizing fictional plots.

Pluralism is another significant finding of the study. It refers to the multi-cultural and the diversity of ethnic and social grounds that had led to the formation of new lifestyles and ways of life in America. Consequently, the study highlighted plurality in order to offer new key socio-cultural factors within the American society. More important, the study accentuated such plurality by polarizing the science fictional peculiarities of the selected novels. Skepticism, in this regard, is empathized as a definitive finding; whereby it includes the selected novels' characters' mentality. In other words, the characters embody the postmodern people who underwent influential political changes.

These changes are stimulated by the World War II; and they are the laying premise for the advent of postmodernism. Skepticism, accordingly, is discussed as human beings' ability to endeavor science in order to reach the ultimate extremes of power and knowledge. As a result, they created unprecedented enterprises to invade space and the outer

edge of the universe. Relativism is the last finding of the study. As a matter of fact, it refers encompasses the social and cultural fragmentation in postmodern world. At the beginning of postmodernism, the American people embarked new challenges influenced by politics. They had felt that there had been nothing beyond their capacity. Being so, their life had transformed onto social fragmentation which is the core of relativism where everyone views life as he or she believes in it.

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**Abdulhameed A. Majeed** is an assistant professor at University of Anbar, Iraq.



# An Appraisal System Analysis of Slogans in Political Campaign of Legislative Candidates in Tuban Regency, Indonesia

Mardi Widodo

Pancasila and Citizenship Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe, Tuban, Indonesia

Mohamad Syahri

Pancasila and Citizenship Education Study Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Malang, Indonesia

Usep Supriatna

Pancasila and Citizenship Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe, Tuban, Indonesia

Sumadi Sumadi

Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe, Tuban, Indonesia

Sita Isna Malyuna

Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe, Tuban, Indonesia

**Abstract**—This study aims to examine the use of the appraisal system, especially the attitude subsystem, and the judgement of appraisal in the political campaign slogans of legislative candidates in Tuban Regency. There have been many studies on political campaign slogans, but similar studies using appraisal theory have not been found. In fact, appraisal system analysis can help text readers understand the attitudes and judgments of text creators towards the things they communicate. The data in this study were analyzed using appraisal system theory. The data were obtained through the listening method and analyzed using the referential pairing method. The results show that judgment is the most widely used attitude subcategory in slogans. This shows that the advertisement creators emphasize judgment on human behavior, both towards themselves and others (society). Meanwhile, the most dominant subject and object of judgment is the legislative candidates themselves as slogan creators. This finding shows that legislative candidates in Tuban Regency tend to make subjective claims about their own qualities without quoting or displaying opinions from other parties in their political advertisements.

**Index Terms**—political discourse, appraisal system, campaign

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language in politics or political discourse is often used to influence others (Mazlum & Afshin, 2016, p. 16). Especially in the current era of democracy, the access to rule (one of which is through direct elections) opens opportunities for every citizen to sit in executive or legislative institutions. Everyone who feels called, able and willing to carry out the mandate as a leader then rushes to socialize their candidacy in the public space. Political advertisements were scattered to attract support.

Language research on slogans in political campaigns has been conducted, for example, Handono's (2017) research discusses the implicature of political campaigns in public banner. In the study, Handono (2017) argued that the language in political campaigns on public banner contains many implicatures, both conventional and conversational. However, language research that specifically examines appraisal tools in slogans in this medium has not been found. In fact, the appraisal system has an important role in revealing the ideology of the creator. By examining appraisal tools in political campaign slogans, the slogan creator's attitude towards the reality that surrounds him: how he evaluates himself, others, and his environment can be known and understood.

Relevant appraisal research has been conducted by Nugraheni (2011), Rohmawati (2016) and Mazlum and Afshin (2016). In her research, Nugraheni (2011) identified the appraisal system in commercial advertising texts in tabloids. The results of her research show that positive appreciation appears the most in the advertising texts studied. This can be interpreted as a method employed by product owners to encourage readers, who are potential consumers, to purchase the advertised products.

Rohmawati (2016) examines the use of the appraisal system, especially attitude, by Barack Obama in his inauguration speech as President of the United States. The results of her research show that judgment is the attitude subsystem that appears the most. Meanwhile, Mazlum and Afshin (2016) examined the use of appraisal tools in the

political speeches of two world figures, namely former American President Barack Obama and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. In a study that only focused on the use of affect, they found that both figures used more adjectives and nominalizations than verbs and adverbs to express their feelings.

In contrast to these two studies, in this study the author took the political campaign slogans of legislative candidates as the data source. Specifically, this study aims to identify the subcategories of attitude that appear most in the political campaign slogans of legislative candidates in Tuban Regency. In addition, this study also aims to identify the sources of judgment in these slogans, which are related to the subject and object of judgment. By examining the domain of attitude and the source of judgment, the attitude and judgment of the author of the text towards the things it communicates will be known and understood.

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach. According to Arikunto (in Nugraheni, 2011), descriptive qualitative research aims to describe and explain data based on categories to obtain conclusions. The object of this research is the political campaign slogans of Tuban Regency legislative candidates for the 2023 elections. The data was collected from 15 slogans which represent 15 legislative candidates in Tuban Regency. The data was collected for three months from October to December 2023. The research data was obtained through observation or direct observation of campaign slogans displayed in public spaces. This observation method is also referred to as the listening method, as it involves gathering data through attentive listening to language use (Sudaryanto, 2015).

The data analysis technique employed in this research utilizes the referential pairing method, an analytical approach that relies on external, independent criteria not inherent to the language itself (Sudaryanto, 2015). The data in the form of phrases and clauses are identified, classified, and analyzed based on the subcategories of attitude (affect, judgment, and appreciation) that have been described in the appraisal system theory according to Martin and White (2005). The data that has been analyzed is then presented using the informal method, which is a method of presenting the results of data analysis through formulation with ordinary words (Sudaryanto, 2015).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The appraisal system is a linguistic feature that pertains to how a writer or speaker conveys emotions or feelings, establishes a connection with the listener or reader, takes a stance on what is expressed, and manages the intensity of these feelings in their speech or writing (Martin & White, 2005). Appraisal theory is an extension of one of Halliday's meta functions of language, specifically the interpersonal meta function (Martin & White, 2005). The interpersonal meta function generally deals with how language constructs personal and social relationships (Halliday, 2014, p. 30). In essence, this meta function refers to using language as a tool for interaction and expressing attitudes and obligations (Suparto, 2018).

Martin and White (2005) categorize the appraisal system into three subsystems: attitude, engagement, and graduation. Attitude encompasses the expression of the speaker's or writer's feelings, including emotional reactions, judgments of people's behavior, and evaluations of objects. Engagement addresses how the speaker or writer positions themselves relative to the text and the listener or reader, as well as how they establish a connection with the listener or reader. Graduation pertains to the scaling or gradation of judgment involving both attitude and engagement.

This research will focus solely on one of the three subsystems, namely attitude. As previously mentioned, the attitude subsystem pertains to evaluations of oneself, others, events, circumstances, or actions, as expressed through both speech and writing. These evaluations can be either positive or negative. Martin and White categorize attitude into affect, judgment, and appreciation. Affect is specifically related to emotional responses to various entities, including other people, oneself, or events. Affect can be in the form of adjectives, such as: sad, happy, angry; verbs such as: like, hate, happy; adverbs, such as: joyfully, angrily; and nominalizations (verbs or adjectives turned into nouns): happiness, sadness, anger, and hatred. Judgment pertains to evaluations, both positive and negative, of human behaviors. Essentially, judgment involves ethical assessments, which may include the practice of religious values. Judgment is divided into two types: judgment of esteem and judgment of sanction. Judgment of esteem concerns normality (how typical someone is), capacity (how capable someone is), and tenacity (how persistent or resilient someone is). In contrast, judgment of sanction pertains to veracity (how honest or trustworthy someone is) and propriety (how ethical someone's behavior is) (as cited in Ma'mun & Riyono, 2021).

Meanwhile, appreciation pertains to the evaluation of natural phenomena, particularly in terms of aesthetic judgments. Besides the aforementioned three subcategories of attitude, the concepts of the appraiser and the appraised are also significant and will be examined in this study. The appraiser is the individual or subject who experiences or provides an assessment, whether it be in the form of affect, judgment, or appreciation. In contrast, the appraised refers to the entity or object being evaluated, which can include people, objects, or activities (Ma'mun & Riyono, 2021).

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data showed that the three subcategories of attitude, namely affect, judgment, and appreciation appeared in the whole data, namely nine times; affect and appreciation were used the least, namely three times each. This finding is different from research (Nugraheni, 2011) which found that positive appreciation appears most in commercial advertisements because producers try to persuade potential consumers by explaining the advantages of the products

offered. This difference in findings is due to the fact that political advertisements, despite having the same purpose as commercial advertisements, which is to persuade, offer different "products". Commercial advertisements often offer products in the form of tangible goods, while political advertisements offer more "services". Meanwhile, there is a similarity between the results of the research conducted by the author and the research conducted by Rohmawati (2016), which states that judgment is the attitude subsystem that appears most in political speeches, in this case the inauguration speech of Barack Obama as President of the United States. This confirms that in political discourse, discourse creators emphasize the assessment of human behavior or a group of humans, both the assessment of themselves and of others (society). This is acceptable considering that the object they will lead if elected is human. Further explanation of each data will be presented in the following section.

#### A. *Affect in Political Campaign Slogans of Legislative Candidates*

As explained in the theoretical foundation section, affect refers to the feelings or emotional reactions that are raised by the writer to be captured or understood by the reader. The slogans in the political campaigns studied in this paper contain positive affect in the form of a sense of solidarity and brotherhood in data (1A and 3A); the desire to make people happy in data (2A); as shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1  
AFFECT IN SLOGANS ON POLITICAL CAMPAIGN FOR TUBAN REGENCY LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES

Appraisal	Data
Positive Affect	(1A) Choose <i>wonge dewe</i> (2A) Together we work, it's time for the people to prosper (3A) Putra Bumi Ronggolawe for a better Tuban
Negative Affect	-

In data 1A, the phrase that shows affect is "wonge awak dewe", which is a local language (Javanese) phrase that in Indonesian means 'our own people'. In this slogan, the slogan creator, who is a candidate for Tuban Regency legislative member, is trying to attract sympathy from Tuban Regency residents by raising the issue of togetherness. By using this phrase, the candidate triggers the emotional reaction of potential voters through a sense of brotherhood and belonging to Tuban Regency. By using the word "awak dewe", this campaign slogan creates positive feelings in potential voters because "awak dewe" is an inclusive form that dissolves the boundaries between the slogan creator as a legislative candidate and the slogan reader as a potential voter.

The same thing is also found in data 2A. In this data, the affect that raises positive feelings in readers as prospective voters is the phrase "together we work." The words "together" and "we" can cause positive feelings because the reader as a prospective voter feels merged with the slogan creator as a prospective candidate. Through the selection of these words, the slogan creator impresses himself as a leader who will involve all parties from various circles of society when he becomes a leader. In addition to the phrase "together we work", this data also contains positive affect markers in the form of happy verbs. Through the verb phrase, it's time to make the people happy, the candidate wants to convey a message to the community that his main goal is solely to make the people of Tuban Regency happy.

In data 3A, positive affect is evoked by the phrases "Putra Bumi Ronggolawe" and "Better Tuban". Putra Bumi Ronggolawe can mean 'a son of the region who really comes from Tuban'. The effect of these phrases on the reader as a potential voter is the emergence of positive feelings or sympathy for the candidate because he is someone who comes from Tuban Regency so he understands the economic, social and cultural conditions of the Tuban people. Meanwhile, the phrase for a better Tuban reinforces the positive feelings generated by the phrase Putra Bumi Ronggolawe. In general, the positive affect in data 1A-3A expressed in the form of togetherness markers creates a positive feeling of security in the reader because the slogan creator as a legislative candidate is part of the reader, who is his potential voter.

#### B. *Judgment in Political Campaign Slogans of Legislative Candidates*

Judgments found in the data consist of four types, namely honesty judgment in data (1B) and (5B); capacity judgment in data (2B), (3B), (4B), (6B), (7B), and (9B); appropriateness judgment in data (3B) and (5B), and persistence judgment in data (7B), (8B), and (9B). These judgments are directed not only at the slogan creator himself, as shown by data (2B), (3B), (5B), (6B), (7B), (8B), and (9B), but also directed at something outside the slogan creator, in this case the people who live in the area where the slogan creator is nominated, as shown by data (1B) and (4B).

TABLE 2  
JUDGMENT IN SLOGANS ON POLITICAL CAMPAIGN FOR TUBAN REGENCY LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES

Appraisal	Data
Positive Judgment	(1B) Tuban is Physically and Spiritually Clean (2B) Working Fast and Smart for Tuban Regency (3B) Servant Leader (4B) SMS Taqwa (Healthy, Independent, Prosper, Taqwa) (5B) Clean, Character, Popular (6B) Ready to serve Tuban (7B) Fighting for People's Welfare (8B) Doing with the People (9B) Fighting for Prosperous Tuban
Negative Judgment	-

Judgment of honesty in data (1B) is shown by the phrase "clean inside and out", which refers to the values of honesty. By using this phrase, the slogan creator wants to show readers or potential voters that if elected as a regional leader, he will realize an honest and non-corrupt society and government. In data (5B), the judgment of honesty is also shown by the word "clean" which also refers to the values of honesty. In addition, the judgment is also reflected in the word character. The term "character" is defined as 'one of the qualities or traits that constitute and differentiate an individual'. (Merriam-Webster, nd). The word "character" in this slogan can be associated with positive behavior, which does not contradict ethical values in society. Judgment related to capacity or ability in data (4B) is shown by the words "healthy, independent, and prosperous". In addition, the word "prosperous" also appears in data (9B) in the phrase "Tuban sejahtera" and the noun form "welfare" in data (7B). The three adjectives contain the judgment of capacity, which indicates a person's ability to manage life well, avoid disease (healthy), not depend on others (independent), and live sufficiently and be able to fulfill all needs (prosperous). These three traits or behaviors must be owned by the community and become indicators of the success of a regional leader. In contrast to the capacity judgment addressed to the community who are potential voters as can be seen in data (3B), (7B), and (9B), the capacity judgment in data (2B), (4B), and (6B) is addressed to the slogan creators themselves who are legislative candidates. In data (2B), the capacity judgment is shown by the phrase "fast, precise, smart". These three adjectives show the effective behavior possessed by the candidate to solve public problems. The candidate claims to have the ability to work in a way that is not only fast, precise, but also smart.

In data (3B), the assessment is shown by the phrase "who serves". By using the verb "to serve", the slogan creator gives a positive assessment of himself as a potential leader or official who does not ask to be served by his citizens. In data (6B), the capacity judgment is also addressed to the slogan creator himself through the phrase "ready to work". This phrase emphasizes the candidate's readiness and ability to work to lead the people of Tuban Regency.

Judgment of appropriateness refers to the norms or ethics believed in society, including religious norms. In data (4B), the judgment is shown by the word "taqwa". In this data, the judgment is not addressed to the slogan creator, but to the community or slogan readers. Although the slogan creator in the cloth advertisement does not explicitly state "SMS Taqwa (Healthy, Independent, Prosperous, Taqwa)" as his priority program in advancing society, this can be easily understood as such because in the context of campaigns, the issues that are often raised by politicians to attract votes from the public are economic issues (independence, welfare), health, and education or morality (piety). In this data, the slogan creator states his assessment that a society must have the nature of piety. Meanwhile, in data (5B), the assessment is shown by the word "popular". This adjective refers to simple behavior and does not create distance with the people. "popular" is an ethical behavior that a leader must have. Judgment of persistence in data (7B), (8B), and (9B) is shown by the verbs "struggle, do, and serve" respectively. The judgment is addressed by the slogan creators to themselves. In data (7B), the most appropriate meaning with the word "strive" is 'to devote serious effort or energy' (Merriam-Webster, nd). By using this word, the slogan creator claims that he will strive to the end to improve the welfare of the people, no matter how difficult and difficult the challenges will be. The word "doing" in data (8B), means "to do or do something", in a positive context, this word implies the willingness of the slogan creator as a legislative candidate to work for the benefit of the people.

### C. Appreciation in Political Campaign Slogans of Legislative Candidates

Appreciation in the studied political campaign slogans is found in data (1C), (2C), and (3C) as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3  
APPRECIATION IN SLOGANS ON POLITICAL CAMPAIGN FOR TUBAN REGENCY LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES

Appraisal	Data
Positive Appreciation	(1C) Tuban is too great to be ordinary (2C) New Tuban, New Leader (3C) For a more prosperous Tuban
Negative Appreciation	

In data (1C), appreciation is shown by the phrase "too great to be ordinary". Unlike "Tuban" in data (3A), (1B), (9B), and (10B) which refer to the people or society of Tuban, in data (1C) the word "Tuban" refers to Tuban as a system, produced by human thoughts and actions. Therefore, the word Tuban in this data can be embedded with the phrase "too

great" as a form of positive assessment of human 'work'. Meanwhile, in data (2C), positive appreciation is reflected in the word "new". Similar to the previous data, Tuban in this data also refers to human work, so it can be labeled as new or old. By using the phrase "New Tuban", the slogan creator offers a Tuban that is different from the previous one. Meanwhile, in data (3C), Tuban is given a more advanced nature as a form of positive appreciation from the legislative candidate for the area he leads if elected in the future.

#### *D. Appraiser Subject and Appraised Object in Political Campaign Slogans of Legislative Candidates*

As explained in the theoretical basis in the previous section, appraiser is a term that refers to the person who provides the appraisal or the source of the appraisal, while appraised refers to something that is appraised, either in the form of other people, circumstances, events, or natural phenomena. The sources of appraisal in the fifteen slogans studied are shown in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4  
SOURCE OF APPRAISAL IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SLOGANS FOR TUBAN REGENCY LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES

Data	Source of Appraisal
1A) Choose wonge dewe	Subject: slogan maker Object: Tuban people
(2A) Together we work, it's time for the people to prosper	Subject: slogan maker Object: Tuban people
(3A) Son of the Bumi Ronggolawe for a better Tuban	Subject: slogan maker Object: slogan maker
(1B) Tuban is Physically and Spiritually Clean	Subject: slogan maker Object: Tuban
(2B) Working Fast and Smart for Tuban Regency	Subject: slogan maker Object: slogan maker
(3B) Servant Leader	Subject: slogan maker Object: slogan maker
(4B) SMS Taqwa (Healthy, Independent, Prosperous, Taqwa)	Subject: slogan maker Object: Tuban people
(5B) Clean, Characteristic, Popular	Subject: slogan maker Object: slogan maker
(6B) Ready to serve Tuban	Subject: slogan maker Object: slogan maker
(7B) Fighting for People's Welfare	Subject: slogan maker Object: slogan maker
(8B) Moving with the People	Subject: slogan maker Object: slogan maker
(9B) Fighting for Prosperous Tuban	Subject: slogan maker Object: slogan maker
(1C) Tuban is Too Special to Ignore	Subject: slogan maker Object: Tuban
(2C) New Tuban, New Leader	Subject: slogan maker Object: Tuban, slogan maker
(3C) For a more prosperous Tuban	Subject: slogan maker Object: slogan maker

In Table 4, it can be seen that all assessment subjects are the slogan creators themselves, which in this case are legislative candidates. The slogan creators did not use testimonials or quote from other parties to support their statements. Therefore, the statements given in the slogans are only one-sided. As for the object of assessment, out of fifteen slogans, ten are directed at the slogan creators themselves. This again shows that in their political campaign slogans, legislative candidates tend to make subjective claims about their quality, as shown by data (3A), (2B), (3B), (5B), (6B), (7B), (8B), (9B), (2C), and (3C). These findings also confirm what Maulana said in (Retnowati, 2013), that advertisements for political campaigns are often not credible, less relevant, and still perceive the public or potential voters as unintelligent.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The results and discussion of this research show that all three subcategories of attitude, namely affect, judgment, and appreciation are used in political campaign slogans in Tuban Regency. The emergence of judgment as the most dominant subcategory is motivated by the nature of the legislative election political campaign itself, which indeed offers "services to lead" so that it cannot be separated from ideal assessments of human behavior (society). Of all the appraisal tools found, all of them show positive assessments. Meanwhile, from the aspect of the appraisal source, the slogan creator appears dominantly as both subject and object. This shows that Tuban legislative candidates in their campaign slogans predominantly make subjective positive claims about their quality, without quoting or presenting testimonials from other parties.

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**Mardi Widodo** is an associate professor at Pancasila and Citizenship Education Study Program (PPKn) at the Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe (UNIROW), Tuban, Indonesia. He obtained Masters degree from IKIP Jakarta before become to Universitas Negeri Jakarta and Doctoral Degrees at the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) Bandung Postgraduate in Citizenship Education. He can be contacted at [mardiwidodo@unirow.ac.id](mailto:mardiwidodo@unirow.ac.id) or [mardiwidodo57@gmail.com](mailto:mardiwidodo57@gmail.com).

**Mohamad Syahri** is an Associate Professor in the Pancasila and Citizenship Education study program at the Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia. He obtained a master's degree from the Post Graduate Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang in the field of sociology, and obtained a doctorate from the Postgraduate School of the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, in the field of Citizenship Education. He can be contacted at [syahri@umm.ac.id](mailto:syahri@umm.ac.id).

**Usep Supriatna** is a Lecturer in the Pancasila and Citizenship Education Study Program ((PPKn) at the Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe (UNIROW) Tuban, East Java. He obtained Master's and Doctoral Degrees at the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) Bandung Postgraduate in General Education. Can be contacted at [usepsupriatna@unirow.ac.id](mailto:usepsupriatna@unirow.ac.id).

**Sumadi Sumadi** is a lecturer at Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program at Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe, Indonesia. He obtained his doctoral degree from Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia in the field of instructional technology studies. He can be contacted at [63sumadi@gmail.com](mailto:63sumadi@gmail.com).

**Sita Isna Malyuna** is a lecturer in the elementary school teacher education study program at Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe Tuban, Indonesia. He has obtained a bachelor's degree from the Universitas Islam Indonesia in the field of Islamic Religious Education and a master's degree from the Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia in the field of Islamic Religious Education. He can be contacted at [sitaisna93@gmail.com](mailto:sitaisna93@gmail.com).

# Measuring the Efficiency of Post-Edited Text Generated by CAT Tools: An Experimental Study

Hind S. Alsaif

Decision Support Centre, Royal Court, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Ebtisam S. Aluthman\*

Department of Applied Linguistics, College of Languages, Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**Abstract**—Motivated by the technological advancements in computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools and the notable lack of academic research regarding their application in the Arabic-translation context, this study aims to investigate the differences in translators' performance when comparing traditional human translation and post-edited CAT tool-generated text in terms of speed and effort. This study investigates the performance of professional translators in Saudi Arabia through traditional translation from scratch (TFS) and post-editing (PE) approaches. Data was collected from nine translators with 5–12 years of experience who had exposure to CAT tools. The participants translated an Arabic educational article into English using both methods. This study utilized Phrase CAT and Translog-II software to analyze the participants' time and keystrokes. The results indicate that PE was significantly faster than TFS, with PE requiring 65.1% less time. PE also demanded significantly fewer keystrokes, suggesting lower technical effort. Correlations between keystrokes and time indicate a strong positive relationship in PE, implying that more technical effort correlates with increased temporal effort. These findings emphasize the efficiency of PE in enhancing productivity and suggest the importance of CAT tools and PE training for translators to meet industry demands effectively. Furthermore, this study underscores the need for continuous updates in CAT tool courses and the integration of PE training to prepare translators for constantly evolving technological landscapes.

**Index Terms**—post-editing, traditional human translation, translation technology, computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, translation memories

## I. INTRODUCTION

The development of interactive translation technologies began in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a period marked by significant advancements in the field (Kay, 1980; Melby, 1979, 1981, 1982). This era marked a paradigm shift in translation studies, with researchers exploring various methodologies for leveraging tools and computers to enhance translators' work (Hargrave & Savourel, 1997). This exploratory phase led to the establishment of what is now known as computer-assisted translation (CAT), a term coined and elaborated upon by Hutchins (1998). According to Bowker (2002), CAT technology includes a broad range of computerized tools that aid translators in their professional tasks: "CAT technology can be understood to include any type of computerized tool that translators use to help them do their job" (p. 6). This definition highlights a distinct difference between CAT tools and machine translation (MT). When using CAT tools, a human translator performs the translation, but computer assistance is incorporated into the process (Christensen & Schjoldager, 2010).

This human role of translators has significantly contributed to the growing practice of post-editing (PE), in which translators or post-editors refine machine-generated translations to meet specific quality standards. PE has emerged as an essential process, capitalizing on the strengths of MT while leveraging human expertise to ensure accurate and fluent translations. In the early phases of the editing process, a post-editor selects the correct translation and rearranges it according to the rules of the target language based on suggestions provided by a computer dictionary (Hutchins, 1986; as cited in Koponen, 2016a). According to Hutchins (1986, p. 73), the purpose of PE is "to produce out of the raw output [...] a readable translation in a fraction of the time it would take a bilingual expert to produce a translation with the traditional procedure".

The aforementioned rationale has prompted this study, which involves an experiment aimed at assessing the performance of professional translators in both PE and traditional translation approaches. The main objective is to contribute to the advancement of translation technology research and to direct the translation industry's attention toward

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\* Corresponding Author. Email: [esaluthman@pnu.edu.sa](mailto:esaluthman@pnu.edu.sa)

the impact of translation technology, especially within the Arabic-language context. Nine professional translators from Saudi Arabia were chosen to participate in the experiment, and their performance was assessed in terms of speed (time taken) and effort (number of keystrokes). In the PE approach, the translation was generated using the Phrase CAT tool, which is known for its high-quality features. Translog-II software was utilized to record the time spent by the translators on each approach and the number of keystrokes they made. This research is expected to contribute to the existing literature on the assessment of the efficiency of PE technologies, especially within the Saudi translator community, where there is a lack of studies on this topic. This study aims to address this gap and investigate the differences in translators' performance via a comparison between traditional human translation and post-edited CAT tool-generated text in terms of speed and effort. Accordingly, the research questions of this study are as follows:

1. RQ1: Which of the two approaches (PE of CAT tool-generated text and traditional human translation) requires more time (speed)?
2. RQ2: Which of the two approaches (PE of CAT tool-generated text and traditional human translation) requires more keystrokes (effort)?

Furthermore, this research is designed to test two primary hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Performing PE on CAT tool-generated text helps with expediting the process, which results in higher productivity rates.

The study aims to determine whether the process of performing PE on CAT tool-generated texts leads to a quicker translation process compared to the traditional method of human translators translating texts entirely from scratch (translation from scratch [TFS]). By measuring and comparing the time taken to complete translations using these two approaches, this research intends to provide insights into the efficiency and practicality of PE with CAT tools relative to conventional human translation methods.

Hypothesis 2: PE is less cognitively demanding than traditional human translation.

Testing the validity of this hypothesis entails comparing the effort involved in the two aforementioned translation methods. In this context, "effort" is quantified by the number of keystrokes needed to complete a translation. A higher number of keystrokes typically signify more input from the translator, suggesting greater effort. By analyzing and contrasting the keystroke counts for both post-edited CAT tool-generated texts and traditional human translations, this research provides insights into the relative effort demanded by each method. This comparison is crucial for understanding the efficiency and workload implications associated with the use of CAT tools in translation processes.

## II. PE IN TRANSLATION

### A. Definition and Classification

Veale and Way (1997; as cited in Allen, 2003, p. 297) initially defined PE as the correction of machine-translated text by human linguists or editors, emphasizing the human role in refining machine-generated translations. Allen (2001) expanded on this, describing PE as an integrated process within MT in which professional translators correct machine-generated translations and fuzzy matches from translation memories (TM). This collaborative process aims to produce higher-quality translations in less time. Schäfer (2003, p. 3) further defined PE as the task of refining machine-translated text to achieve an acceptable level of quality for end users, highlighting the focus on enhancing raw MT output for user satisfaction.

PE is classified into two types. These classifications are also known as levels or degrees of PE, which are based on the number of corrections and the effort needed to reach the required quality translation. A few terms have emerged to describe these classifications, such as light and full PE; rapid and conventional PE; and partial and full PE (Arenas, 2019). In the 1990s, rapid PE was commonly referred to as "minimal or minimum" in the industrial and corporate sectors (Allen, 2003). In light PE, the translator lightly edits the MT translation to produce "understandable and usable" output (Hu & Cadwell, 2016), as the main purpose of the translation is to be understandable and grammatically correct. Allen (2003) explained the concept of light PE as a process in which "the post-editor ensures there are no linguistic or terminology errors or mistranslation. Its main purpose is to make the text understandable without altering its style" (p. 297). In contrast, a full PE process emphasizes producing a translation that is human-like and sounds as natural as possible (Hu & Cadwell, 2016). Similar to light PE, full PE should also eliminate any grammatical errors, typographical errors, punctuation errors, and other basic issues. Furthermore, it should address stylistic aspects, bearing native readers in mind (Allen, 2003). In essence, the post-editor should also pay attention to the cultural references of the translated text to make it as fluent as possible (Densmer, 2014).

### B. The Speed of PE and Traditional Human Translation

The first hypothesis of this study posits that PE may be a more practical method than TFS, potentially leading to increased translation productivity. This hypothesis is grounded in the notion that CAT tool-generated text, which involves refining and correcting machine-translated texts, could streamline the translation process. The rationale behind this hypothesis is that MT provides a base translation that can be modified and improved by a human translator, potentially reducing the time required compared to TFS.

Different measurements of speed have been utilized in empirical studies comparing the speed of PE and traditional human translation. Vazquez et al. (2013) examined the speed of the PE process compared to human translation. They



utilized the ACCEPT PE tool to record the time spent editing each section, and it was found that performing PE on MT was the fastest process, while TFS scored lowest in terms of speed. Läubli et al. (2013) proposed a translation productivity experiment to compare PE with computer-aided translation. Their study involved six participants majoring in German-to-French translation, who were allowed to use terminology and translation memories via a fully functional translation workbench. Screen recordings were used to precisely capture time without requiring the participants to track or report it. The controlled experiment demonstrated that PE yields faster translations of consistent quality compared to computer-aided translation. Aranberri et al. (2014) compared the speed of PE among professional translators and untrained users. The participants in both groups were tasked with translating and performing PE on two different texts using the Bologna Translation Service, a tool equipped with statistical MT and time-tracking capabilities. Despite varying factors, such as text complexity and MT quality, the results indicated a productivity gain for PE, with translators' and users' speeds increasing by 17.66% and 12.43%, respectively.

Within the context of Arabic–English translation, Haji Sismat (2016) conducted an experiment involving non-native student translators majoring in Arabic and competent in English. The students, inexperienced with CAT tools but familiar with MT engines, translated legal and journalistic texts and undertook PE tasks using texts pre-translated by Google and Bing Translate, as well as the MemoQ TM CAT tool. Comparing the approaches showed that the participants completed PE tasks faster than TFS, indicating that PE improved the students' speed to levels comparable to those of professional translators. Additionally, Samman's (2022) study explored the productivity of PE and translation tasks, employing paired sample t-tests and repeated measures analysis of variance to compare the total task duration between the control and experimental groups. The results suggested significant productivity gains in both groups, with the experimental group exhibiting higher gains. The comparison between human translation and MT PE methods showed that MT PE led to greater productivity gains. These findings underscore the importance of considering diverse factors and methodologies when evaluating productivity in translation and PE tasks.

### *C. Translators' Effort in PE and Traditional Human Translation*

The second hypothesis of this study is that PE, in addition to having quality equal to that of traditional human translation while being faster, consumes less cognitive effort. O'Brien (2007) conducted a study on PE effort in machine-translated texts to quantify the level of temporal and technical effort. The study included two groups of English–German translators. One group was instructed to post-edit a machine-translated text, while the other was instructed to translate the same text from English into German. Furthermore, text segments containing negative translatability indicators were isolated to demonstrate the difference in effort required to post-edit and translate segments with and without such indicators. Across all segments, PE effort was lower than translation effort.

Vazquez et al. (2013) utilized the ACCEPT PE tool to count keystrokes during each translation process. This method was employed as a metric for measuring effort. Their findings revealed that performing PE on MT involved the least number of keystrokes, indicating lower effort compared to other methods. In contrast, the process of TFS, in which no translation proposals and no MT options were offered, required the highest number of keystrokes, signifying a greater level of effort.

Expanding this investigation, Daems et al. (2017) compared PE and human translation processes among master's students (10 participants) and professional translators (13 participants). The study focused on the effort, among other variables, involved in these translation processes. Articles from newspapers, assessed for complexity and comprehensibility using Lexile measures, served as the texts for translation. The MT inputs were sourced from Google Translate. The CSMACAT PE tool, which can track both keystrokes and eye gaze, was employed to evaluate cognitive effort. The study concluded that the cognitive demand of PE was less for both student and professional groups, with their performance levels being nearly identical.

Collectively, these empirical investigations emphasize that performing PE on TM or MT is more productive than traditional translation methods. The body of research, including studies by O'Brien (2007), Vazquez et al. (2013), and Daems et al. (2017), consistently shows that performing PE on TM or MT demands less effort and yields better quality outcomes than traditional translation. However, it is critical to note the diversity in participant profiles across these studies. Not all participants were professional translators; some were lay users (Aranberri et al., 2014), non-native language students (Haji Sismat, 2016), or translation trainees (Garcia, 2010).

Motivated by the technological advancements in CAT tools and the lack of academic research regarding their application in the Arabic-translation context, the present study aims to address this gap in the existing literature by exploring the utilization of CAT tools among Saudi professional translators. The focus on Saudi translators specifically aims to provide a well-rounded view that enriches the broader understanding of the translation industry. Despite the wealth of literature available, there remains a notable absence of experimental research examining the aspects of effort and speed in English–Arabic translation, a domain yet to be thoroughly explored. The outcomes of this study are expected to be beneficial to translators, academics, and educators, aiding them in recognizing implications, insights, and recommendations that are pertinent to the various facets and sectors of translation at a local level.

## III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The hypotheses of this study were examined based on the performance of professional translators. Data were

collected from nine Saudi translators who possessed bachelor's or master's degrees in translation and who had adequate training in CAT tools. With the exception of one translator, who had 2 years of experience, all translators had 5–12 years of experience working as full-time professional translators. The TM tools reported to be used by the translators were Trados (three translators), MemoQ (one translator), Matecat (three translators), Memsource (one translator), and Wordfast (one translator). Based on the translators' qualifications and experience, nearly all translators had been exposed to and were familiar with both traditional translation and PE approaches. However, from the provided information, the degree of exposure varied among the participants.

The participants were requested to translate the selected texts using both approaches. For this study, an Arabic article (from Mawhiba) was selected for translation into English. This text type was chosen because "the style of a non-literary text generally contains fewer or more controlled ambiguities, gaps, and possibilities for engagement" (Boase-Beier, 2011, p. 76). The selected text, being from an educational genre, did not contain any implied meanings. This choice was also based on the recommendations of three researchers and academics in the field. The researchers involved in the present study reached an agreement that approximately 350 words would be sufficient to indicate the results. Furthermore, the texts were taken from the same article to ensure a parallel level of complexity. Consequently, the final corpus for the study consisted of an Arabic text (330 words) to be translated into English and an English text pre-translated using the Phrase CAT tool (346 words) to be post-edited.

To address the research questions posed in this study, the researchers chose to use two tools for collecting, recording, and analyzing data. The first tool was Phrase CAT, formerly known as Memsource, which was used to produce the text that would be post-edited by the participants and to analyze the quality of their final output. The other tool was Translog-II, which was used to record the participants' time and keystrokes in both approaches. The Translog software was developed in Copenhagen Business School in 1999 under Professor Arnt Jakobsen (Munday, 2016). This software was chosen because its primary function is to collect quantitative data for translation research. Translog-II, the upgraded version of the software, was used in the present study. The program allows the researcher to follow the translation process, recording the particular actions performed (keystrokes) and the amount of time a translator spends on speed, pauses, and arrow movement (Karwacka, 2013). An enormous body of literature has demonstrated the effectiveness of these tools by evaluating the PE approach (Balling et al., 2014; Guerberof, 2009). The use of CAT tools has been perceived as having a fundamental impact on translation accuracy and could transform the translation industry. A screenshot of Phrase is given in Figure 1.

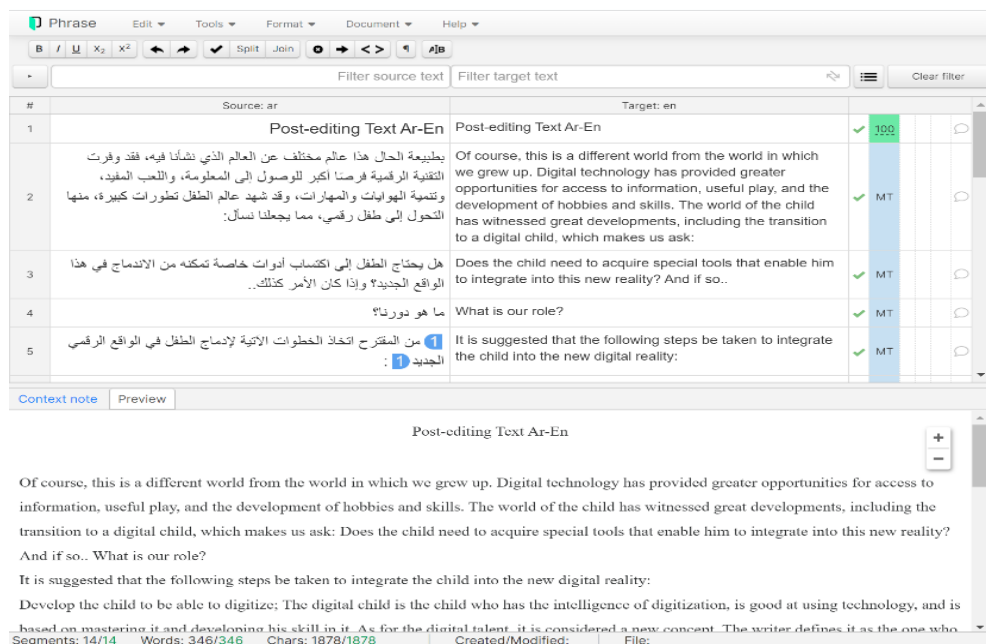


Figure 1. Screenshot of the Phrase Platform

The participants were requested to participate in a language lab, where they used devices to record the process of the PE and TFS approaches on Translog-II. For TFS, the participants were given the text and requested to translate it into English using Translog-II; they were allowed access to dictionaries and online resources but were instructed to avoid using MT. For PE, the participants were given the unedited text and requested to edit all errors in the translation until its quality matched that of human-edited text.

The researchers utilized Translog-II to extract the speed and effort of each participant. The researchers were able to calculate and compare the participants' time and speed because the data .xml file on Translog-II displays the precise start time and end time for both approaches (see Figure 2). To analyze time, the *p*-value was calculated to indicate the statistical significance in relation to the total time difference between the two approaches, as the *p*-value could serve as

an indicator of whether the observed differences resulted from randomness or reflected the actual differences between the approaches.

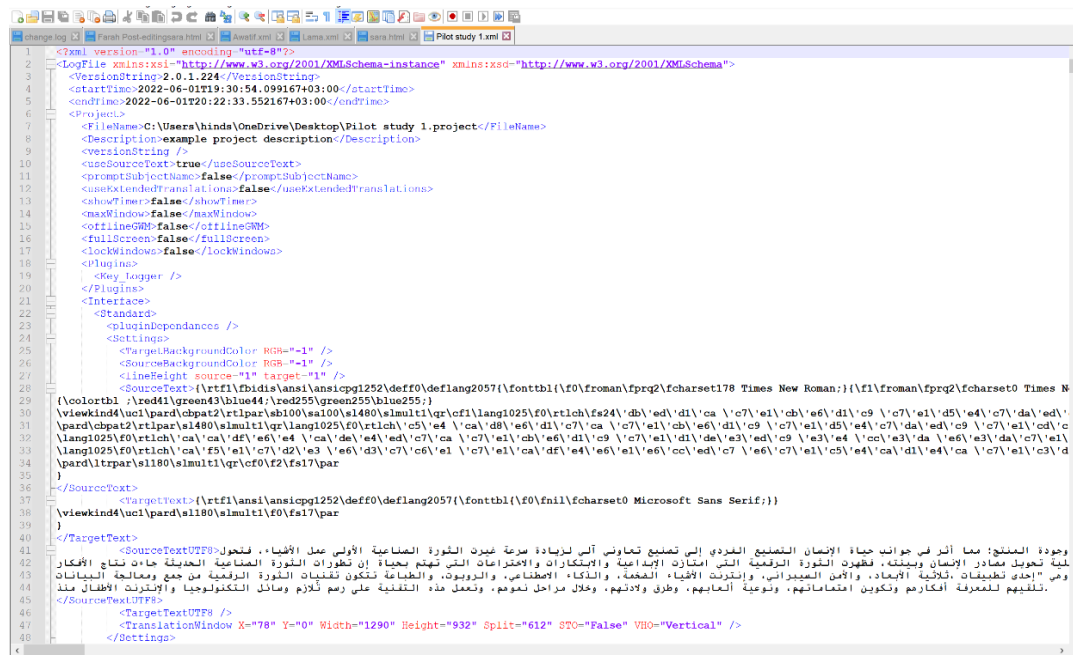


Figure 2. Translog-II Screenshot Logging Time

To address RQ2, which is concerned with investigating which of the two approaches requires more effort, the researchers collected data about the participants' keystrokes using Translog-II software, saving it as an .xml file. The "insert" and "delete" keystrokes of the participants in each approach were utilized as an indication of their effort during the translation process (Béchara et al., 2021; see Figure 3). In this study, time was utilized not only to measure speed but also as an effort indicator (Koponen et al., 2012).

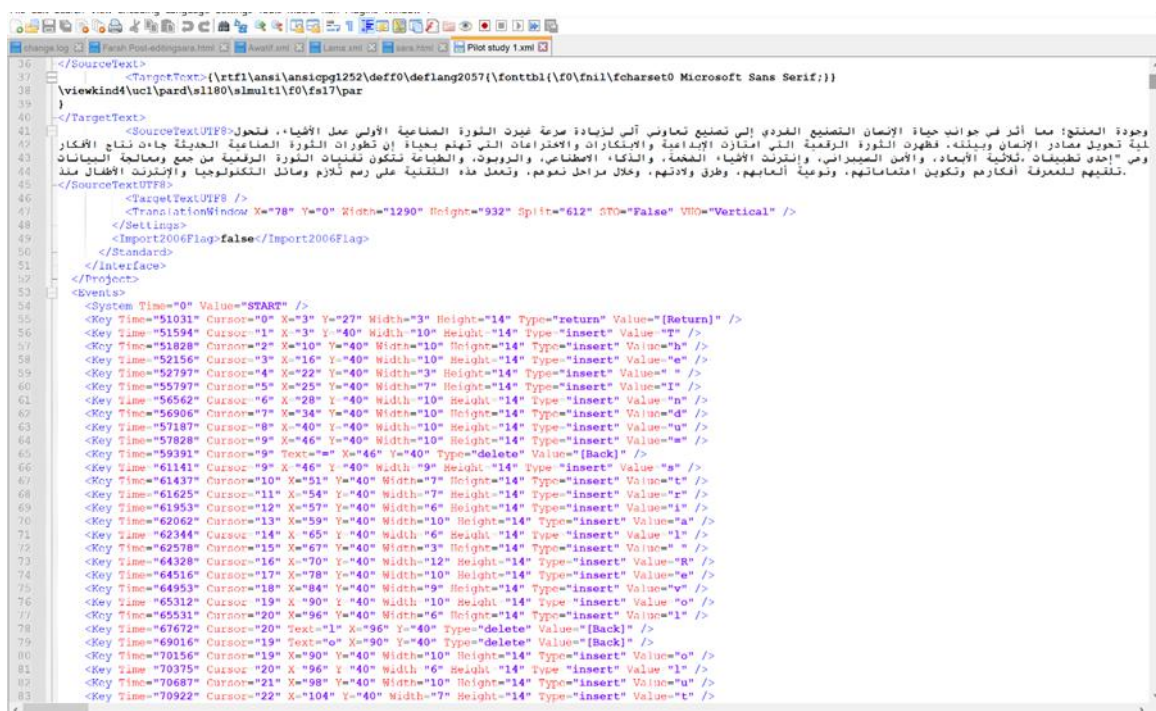


Figure 3. Translog-II Screenshot Recording "Insert" and "Delete" Keystrokes

## IV. RESULTS

### A. Participants' Speed in TFS and PE

The researchers used time as an objective and easily quantifiable measure to answer RQ1. This is because time is considered a simple numerical measure rather than a complex function (Tatsumi, 2010). To obtain the necessary data, the researchers referred to the participants' start and end times recorded in Translog-II, as shown in Figure 3. Subsequently, the researchers calculated the time spent on each approach by subtracting the start time from the end time.

Figure 4 illustrates that there is a noticeable pattern among the participants in terms of the difference in speed between the two approaches. There was a significant difference between the PE time and the TFS time for most participants, with the former being considerably lower than the latter. For example, the lowest value for PE time was 5 minutes (P8), while the highest value was 63 minutes (P6). In contrast, the lowest value for TFS time was 53 minutes (P4), while the highest value was 103 minutes (P3).

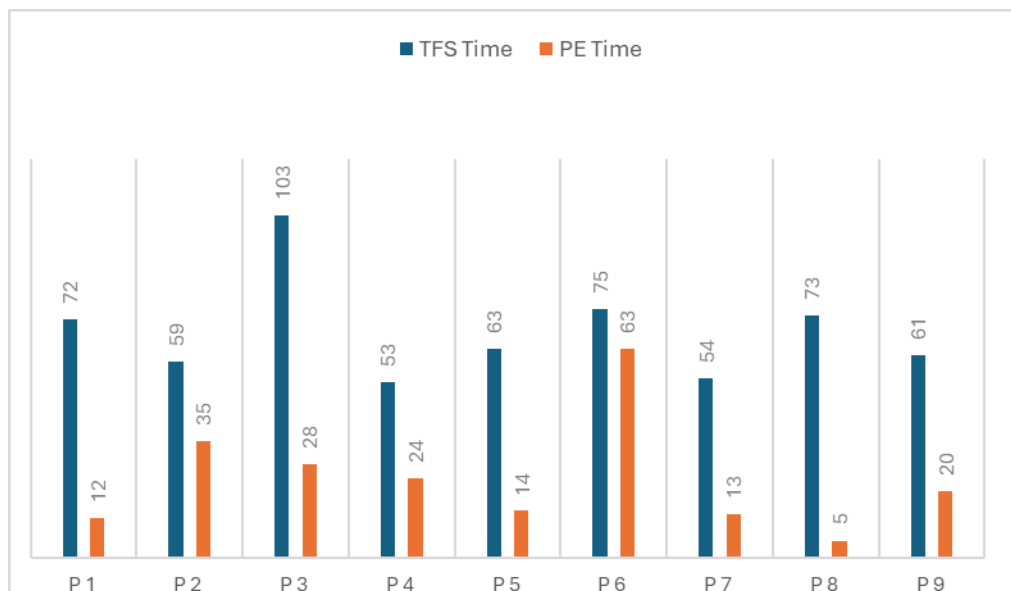


Figure 4. Participants' Times in TFS and PE

The speed difference between the two approaches also varied considerably among the participants. For instance, P8 took only 5 minutes in PE but required 73 minutes in TFS. Thus, their PE time was only 6.8% of their TFS time; this was the largest time difference among all participants. In contrast, P6 had the smallest time difference between the two approaches; they required 75 minutes in TFS and 63 minutes in PE, which was the longest PE time among all participants and was 84% of their TFS time.

In general, these results show that PE is substantially faster than TFS. However, the speed rate can vary among individuals. One possible explanation for the faster speed of PE is that, in PE, the translator's role is to examine and correct the existing translation instead of translating the entire text on their own, as in TFS. However, it is important to note that the quality of the final translation is also a critical factor in evaluating the effectiveness of PE.

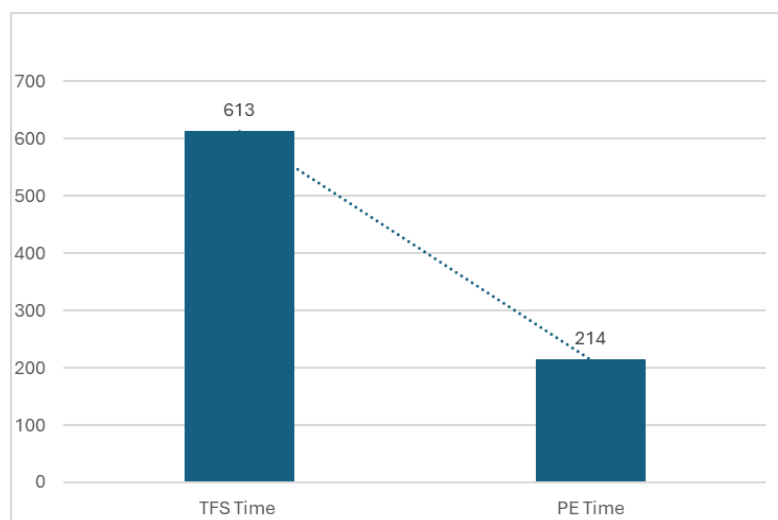


Figure 5. Total Time in TFS and PE

The total time spent on TFS was 613 minutes, whereas the time spent on PE was 214 minutes, indicating a considerable difference in the overall time taken between the two approaches. Specifically, the results show that the PE

approach was 65.11% faster than the TFS approach. Furthermore, the  $p$ -value obtained was 0.00003, clearly indicating that the difference between the TFS and PE times was statistically significant at the conventional significance level of  $p < 0.05$ . This suggests that random chance is not likely to explain the observed difference in means, and it may have been caused by an actual difference between the two groups. These findings provide evidence to support the hypothesis that performing PE on CAT tool-generated text helps with expediting the process, which results in higher productivity rates.

### B. Participants' Effort in TFS and PE

The analysis of the participants' effort in the TFS and PE approaches confirms the validity of the study's second hypothesis, which proposes that PE requires significantly less effort than traditional human translation. The researchers used Translog-II to collect data on the number of keystrokes logged (insertion and deletion) for each participant as well as the recorded time spent on each approach by seven of the participants. Figure 6 presents the number of keystrokes for each approach, facilitating a closer examination of the effort required for each one. The results show that the total number of keystrokes was significantly higher in TFS than in PE. Specifically, the number of insertions and deletions in TFS was more than 23,258 strokes and more than 4,133 strokes, respectively, accounting for approximately 15.1% of the total keystrokes in TFS. In contrast, the number of insertions and deletions in PE was more than 2,527 strokes and more than 1,236 strokes, respectively, accounting for approximately 32.8% of the total keystrokes in PE. Thus, the total number of PE keystrokes was only 13.74% of the total number of TFS keystrokes, indicating that PE required significantly less technical effort than TFS. Furthermore, PE required less time than TFS, indicating that PE also required less temporal effort.

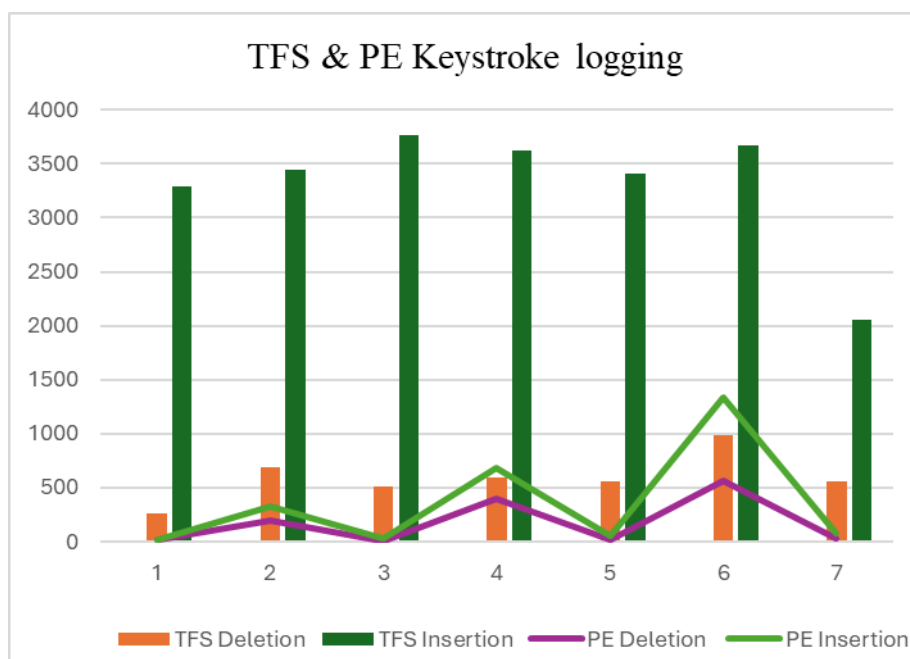


Figure 6. Participants' TFS and PE Keystroke Logging

Analyzing the time and keystrokes of each participant in the two approaches showed noteworthy discrepancies. For instance, a comparison of participants P1 and P2 in both approaches revealed significant differences. In the TFS approach, P1 recorded an approximate keystroke rate of 49.3 strokes per minute, while P2 recorded a very high rate of 69.98 strokes per minute. However, in the PE approach, P1 recorded a slower rate of 3.5 strokes per minute, while P2 recorded 14.9 strokes per minute. Thus, P2 displayed a 30% speed advantage over P1 in TFS and a substantial 76.5% advantage in PE. These patterns of differing speeds were consistently observed among all participants in the study. This finding indicates a notable performance difference between the participants in both approaches, and it may be worth exploring the factors contributing to these differences in performance.

### C. Correlations Between Participants' Keystrokes and Time

The correlation between the variables analyzed in the previous section, specifically the participants' number of keystrokes and time taken in both approaches, was observed and identified to determine the level of effort required. A moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.40$ ) was found between the participants' keystrokes and time taken in TFS, as demonstrated in Figure 7. Additionally, a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.85$ ) was found between the participants' keystrokes and time taken in PE, as illustrated in Figure 8. This implies that, in PE, a higher number of keystrokes (indicating greater technical effort) tend to result in more time expended by the translator (indicating greater temporal effort).



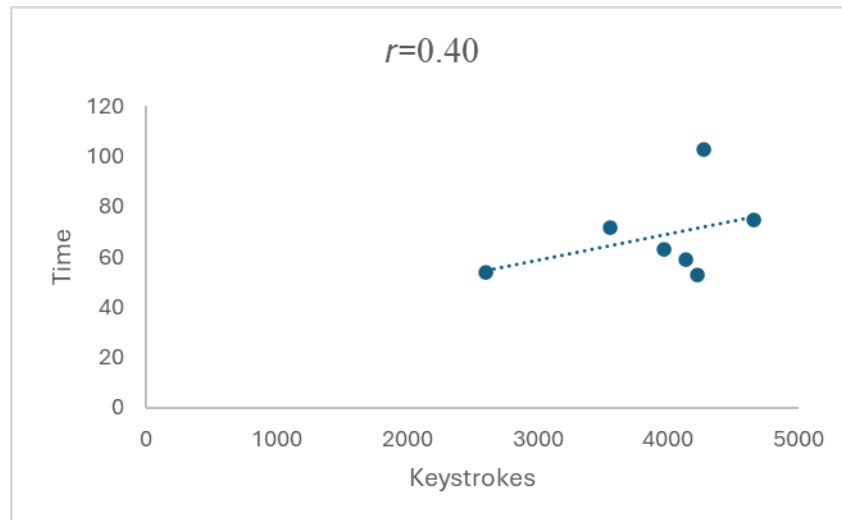


Figure 7. Correlation Between Participants' Keystrokes and Time Taken in TFS

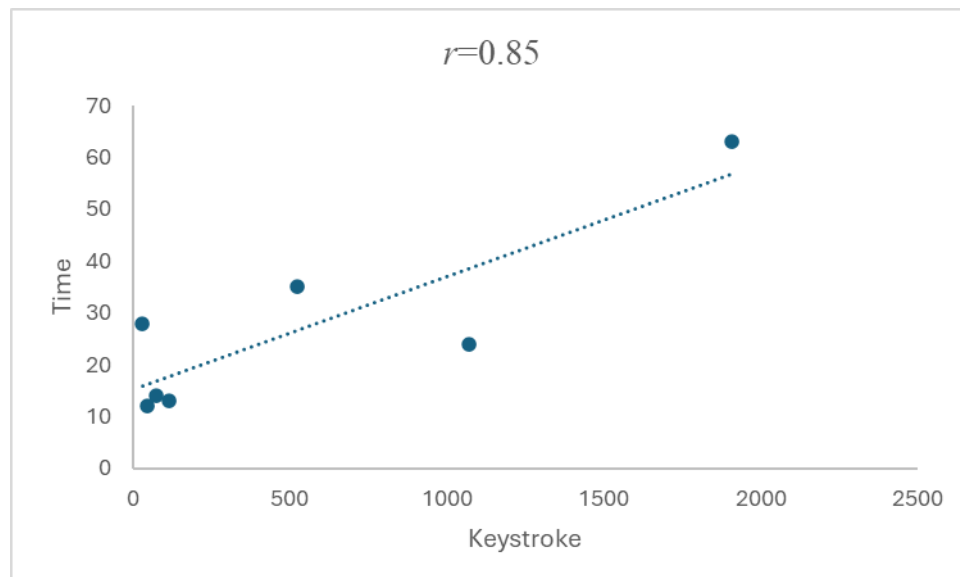


Figure 8. Correlation Between Participants' Keystrokes and Time Taken in PE

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study revealed a distinct time difference between the two approaches, showing that PE was significantly faster than TFS by 65.1%. Specifically, PE required only 214 minutes, whereas TFS required 613 minutes. Notably, the range varied, from the quickest TFS completion time being 53 minutes to the longest being 103 minutes. In contrast, the lowest PE time was only 5 minutes (i.e., 9.4% of the lowest TFS time), while the highest PE time was 63 minutes (i.e., 61.1% of the highest TFS time). These results suggest that PE could significantly increase productivity and help the translation industry keep up with the substantial increase in translation volumes in a timely manner. These findings align with previous research. Studies by Vazquez et al. (2013), Läubli et al. (2013), and Aranberri et al. (2014) also identified differences in PE time and TFS time across different translators. Similarly, Haji Sismat (2016) and Samman (2022) noted varying efficiency levels between these methods; this is in line with the present study's outcomes. Building on this, the present study's findings highlight the significance of high-quality translations produced through TM or MT in achieving promising speed-related outcomes. Furthermore, the involvement of translators with PE proficiency played a significant role in contributing to these beneficial results. This finding supports the overall pattern arising from the literature, namely that PE can increase the productivity of translators in terms of speed. Koponen (2016a) obtained similar findings, noting that speed and productivity could be affected by conditions related to the high quality of TM or MT translation and post-editors' familiarity with the tools and processes involved in the PE task.

Regarding technical effort, the results indicate that translators required significantly more technical effort in TFS than in PE, with an 86.3% increase. Temporal effort was also found to be much lower in PE than in TFS, with the effort required in PE being only 35% of the effort required in TFS. These findings suggest that PE requires less effort both technically and temporally compared to TFS. Furthermore, it was observed that there were significant variations in the

number of keystrokes per minute logged by different participants in each approach. For example, P1 logged approximately 49.3 keystrokes per minute in TFS, but only 3.5 keystrokes per minute in PE. Similarly, P2 logged 69.98 keystrokes per minute in TFS but only 14.9 keystrokes per minute in PE. These differences suggest that fewer keystroke logs and longer time could indicate a higher cognitive effort required to detect errors and plan the corresponding corrections. Overall, the results of this study indicate that PE requires less effort than TFS in both technical and temporal aspects. However, it is important to note that cognitive effort may vary among different participants and may require further investigation.

Based on this observation, the researchers found interesting correlations between the participants' keystrokes and time taken in TFS, which had a moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.40$ ). Furthermore, the correlation between the participants' keystrokes and time taken in PE had a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.85$ ). This indicates that, in PE, the higher the keystrokes (technical effort), the more time a translator takes (temporal effort). Koponen (2016b), whose study on PE and the effort involved yielded similar results, asked whether MT PE is worth the work. Other researchers found that editors vary considerably in terms of editing speed (Plitt & Masselot, 2010) and that they seem to differ more in terms of how much time they take and how many keystrokes they use rather than how many changes they make to the text. These studies also discovered that editors have different styles: Being fast or using several keystrokes does not necessarily mean more changes, and editors approach PE differently.

The increase in translation volumes and the imperative to enhance productivity have resulted in a growing need for translation technologies. This emphasizes the necessity for translators to acquaint themselves with CAT tools and understand how to utilize them effectively through PE (Bowker, 2015). Nevertheless, there is a pressing need for enhanced local training in CAT tools. A recent study (Al-Rumaih, 2021) highlighted deficiencies in CAT tool courses in Saudi Arabia, with students lacking the requisite technical expertise to navigate the demands of the professional sphere. However, Kiraly (2014) observed the following:

Translator competence does not primarily refer to knowing the correct translation for words, sentences, or even texts. It does entail being able to use tools and information to create communicatively successful texts that are accepted as good translations within the community concerned. (p. 13)

This statement is particularly true at present, with advanced translation technologies being developed while the demand for them rises. Furthermore, limited experience with CAT tools will not allow translation students to gain a realistic understanding of the functioning of these tools (Bowker, 2015). This can also be applied to PE training, which is an intrinsic part of using translation technology in general; as mentioned before, these technologies cannot replace human translators and will always require human intervention to match the quality of human-edited text. Nevertheless, nearly all translators—especially local translators—need to receive training in PE. In a study on PE, Koby suggested that “the translator must be trained in post-editing” (Krings & Koby, 2001, p. 12). Furthermore, McElhaney and Vasconcellos (1988) argued that, since translation and PE are varying processes, translators are most suitable for undertaking this task, as they can identify linguistic errors and have rich knowledge about cross-language transfer. Therefore, in line with Al-Rumaih's (2021) implication, CAT tool course plans should be reviewed yearly to ensure they are up to date with technological advancements. Furthermore, PE training should be incorporated into CAT tool course. Workshops for students should sufficiently cover translation technology and ensure the practical use of these tools, in addition to providing PE training.

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**Hind S. Alsaif** earned a Master of Translation from Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 2022.

She has extensive professional experience as a translator, with a particular focus on translation technologies, Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT), and specialized translation fields. Prior to her current position, she held various roles that expanded her expertise in both the practical and academic aspects of translation. She currently works at the Decision Support Centre-Royal Court, located in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Alsaif is actively involved in professional societies related to her field. Her contributions to translation studies and related technologies underscore her commitment to advancing this field. Her work has been recognized in several professional circles, although specific awards and committee roles are not mentioned.

**Ebtisam S. Aluthman** earned a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from the University of Manchester, United Kingdom. Additionally, she obtained her Master's in Applied Linguistics and a Bachelor of Arts in English Language from Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

She is currently working as the Secretary-General of the Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman Award for Women's Excellence and Advisor to the President of Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University. Dr. Aluthman is an esteemed member of several academic societies and is evidently interested in the intersection of computing and linguistics. This may involve developing or studying software and tools that support language learning and processing, such as natural language processing (NLP) applications.

# The Historical Change of the Vowels a/ə/e in Turkic Languages

Zhumabayeva Zh.T.

The Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly, Almaty, Kurmangazy St., 29, Kazakhstan

Ospangaziyeva N.B.

The Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly, Almaty, Kurmangazy St., 29, Kazakhstan

Bazarbayeva Z.M.

The Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly, Almaty, Kurmangazy St., 29, Kazakhstan

Fazylzhanova A.M.

The Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly, Almaty, Kurmangazy St., 29, Kazakhstan

Amanbayeva A.Zh.

The Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly, Almaty, Kurmangazy St., 29, Kazakhstan

**Abstract**—The history of Turkic sounds is the history of the phonetic structure and phenomena system of the contemporary language. Historical phonetics aims at explicating the ways of contemporary sound formation, the structure of the phonetic system and the development of its tendencies. The article focuses on the historical development of the phonemes a, ə, e in Turkic, namely in Kazakh linguistics. While the mentioned sounds were identified historically in the works of Turkologists, the formation of ə and e is approached differently. Based on certain research data, the vowel ə is considered a sound borrowed from Arabic and Persian. Other scholars identify the vowel ə as the sound originating in the ancient Turkic language or view it as a sound formed between ə and e. From this standpoint, the issue of identifying the phonemes ə and e based on scientific data becomes crucially relevant. In this regard, the peculiarities of the local usage of the vowel phoneme ə and the language data accompanying the sounds a/ə are examined. Apart from this, the historical change of the phonemes a/ə/e is scrutinized according to the conceptions of scholars. The vowel content of the Kazakh language is described based on scientific data. The study justifies the existence of nine vowel phonemes in the Kazakh language and identifies the vowels ə and e from the historical viewpoint.

**Index Terms**—Turkic, phonetic, sounds, Kazakh linguistics, Turkic language

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the scope of linguistics, the role of historical phonetics is crucial. It identifies the nature and the development path of the sounds which change, modernize, or reemerge throughout the process of their development. Particularly, it is significant to study the phenomenon of vowel phonologization within the sound system from the historical viewpoint. In Turkic studies, it is necessary to mention the works of V. Tomsen, V.V. Radlov, S.E. Malov, G.I. Ramstede, M. Ryasyanin, V.A. Bogoroditsky, B.A. Serebrennikov, N.Z. Gadzhieva, A.M. Scherbak, N.A. Baskakov, M. Tomanov, Sh.H. Akbayev, A.T. Kaidar, B. Sagyndykuly, K. Sartkozhauly, M. Yeskeeva and M. Sabyr which describe the phonetic-phonological side of the sound system and its development, and the works of A. Baitursynuly, K. Zhubanov, I. Kenesbayev, Zh. Aralbayev, T. Talipov, A. Iskakov, S. Myrzabekov, A. Zhunisbek, N. Uali and Z.M. Bazarbayeva which relate to Kazakh phonetics. There are also experimental works (Khassenov, 2021; Khassenov et al., 2022) related to the ontogenesis of speech. The article is based on the above-mentioned works of local and foreign researchers.

It is obvious that the vowel system of Turkic languages did not obtain its contemporary form immediately. The path of vowel development encompasses long periods of history. Throughout the process of language development, vocalism has been undergoing phonetic-phonological changes, transforming and becoming systematized. In particular, vowels, fulfilling the function of sense-distinguishing units, have been developing, shortening, being selected and complemented by phonemes. They have become phonologized – the process which encompasses the stages unknown to us. In this regard, there are unsolved problems in the field of phonetics within Kazakh linguistics, one of which relates to certain issues of historical phonetics. Apart from European languages, studying the sounds of the Kazakh language from the standpoint of historical phonetics (phonology) along with comparing them to other Turkic languages allows for the identification of their developmental path. Furthermore, the functional sense of Turkic vowels, i.e., the scope of their phonemic utilization and the sound changes during their development were closely connected to the additive structure of the language, the vowel harmony law, assimilation and dissimilation, and the processes of divergence and

convergence. Such phenomena in sound changes, as is seen, influenced the systematization of contemporary vowels. In the basis of those changes lie the authentic features which characterize the common vowels in related languages and the paths of their development. In this regard, studying, identifying and analyzing linguistic elements, categories and phenomena lead to defining and identifying the interrelation between the old and the new. That is, formation of vowels as phonemes is a historical phenomenon.

The article discusses the establishment and formation paths of the phonemes **a/ə/e** within nine vowels of the Kazakh language from the historical standpoint. Our main focus is the vowel phoneme **ə**. The reason for that lies in the existence of numerous scientific approaches and views related to the formation of the vowel phoneme **a** in the Kazakh language. Hence the given paper compares the systems of vocalism of the Turkic languages, identifies their similarities and peculiarities and, as a result, describes the formation path of the sounds **a/ə/e** based on scientific data.

To describe the historical changes of the vowel phonemes **a/ə/e**, to analyze and contrast the information based on linguistic data.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Comparative-historical, descriptive and analytical methods were utilized in the article. Comparative-historical method is the important instrument of studying the history of language, which encompasses the methods and techniques of investigating related languages and identifying the historical tendencies of language development. The main goal of utilizing this method is to reconstruct the ancient form of our language, to explain the development and division of languages belonging to the same group, to profoundly understand the history of our mother tongue. The history and the stages of Turkic vocalism system development is described via comparative-historical methods. In this regard, based on the comparative-historical method, dialectal materials have also been considered in the scope of creating the mother-tongue model of vocalism. Additionally, in relation to the comparative-historical method, the sound systems of genealogically related languages were taken into account, which resulted in describing the vowels of the languages belonging to Kypchak group. The descriptive method involved analyzing the features of phonemes.

The primary information related to the sound system of the Kazakh language is witnessed in I. Ilminsky's (1860) "Materialy k izucheniyu kyrgyzskogo narechiya" (Materials for studying the Kyrgyz tongue) work written in 1860s. The scientist classifies Kazakh sounds into two groups and demonstrates eight types of vowels. They are: **a –ä, e, ы, i, o, ö, y, ŷ**. He views the front, open sound **ä (ə)** not as an independent phoneme, but as a variant of the phoneme **a**.

In the work of Melioransky (1894), sounds are classified into vowels and consonants, and nine vowels are indicated. They are: **a (a), o (o), ö (ö), ы (y), i (i), e (e), ä (ə), y (y), ŷ (y)**. These sounds, first identified by Melioransky (1894), are currently in use in the Kazakh language.

V.V. Radlov notes that the vocalism of the Kazakh language consists of nine vowels **a, ə, e, o, ö, ы, i, y, ŷ**. The scientist also noted that the hard vowels correspond to soft vowels.

A. Baitursynuly (1992), the scientist who presented the exact number of the vowel sounds in the Kazakh language, indicates the nine vowels as follows: **/a/, /o/, /ʏ/, /ы/, /e/ and ə, ö, y, i**. A. Baitursynuly does not attach signs to every vowel, but he shows the softness of vowels with a sign of hamza (◌◌). As A. Baitursynuly explains that: "This sign is put before the word, complementing it, and shows that the word is about to be read softly, that is, when this sign is there, the sounds within the word are pronounced softly".

After A. Baitursynuly, K. Kemengeruly was the one who systematized the sound structure and content of the Kazakh language in a scientific way and developed its main principle. The scientist's views related to the Kazakh phonetics were encompassed in the works "Grammar of the Kazakh language" and "Language tool", and in the speech he gave at the scientific-orthographic conference held in Kyzylorda in 1929. The scientist identified five vowels and seventeen consonants, including four letters referring to semi-vowels, and used the hamza sign to demonstrate the softness of a word.

K. Zhubanov (1999) is one of the scientists who provided the base for the sound system of the Kazakh language. Classifying the Kazakh sounds into three groups, K. Zhubanov notes: «the vowels are – **a, e, o, y, ы, yu, ый** – seven of them". I. Kenesbaev (1962) shows eleven vowel sounds in the Kazakh language. The scientist claims: "The modern Kazakh language has the following nine bare vowels (*monophthongs*): **a, e, ы, i, ə, y, y**. In addition, there are two compound vowels (*diphthongoid*): **и, у**". Aralbayev (1988) is a scientist who has shown the uniqueness of Kazakh vocalism. He claims: "There are eleven vowel phonemes in the modern Kazakh language. Nine of them are monophthongs. Bare vowels: **a, e-ə, o, ö, ы, i, y, y, ə**, while the remaining two are diphthong vowels: **и, у**". A. Zhunisbek (1972) in his work "Vowels of the Kazakh language" shows nine vowel phonemes characteristic of the Kazakh language: **a, ä, o, ö, y, i, u, ü, e**. In addition, the problem of the algorithm of Kazakh language vowels was also considered in several studies (Bazarbayeva et al., 2023).

Thus, scientists consider the composition of vowels in the Kazakh language from different angles, and we see that there is no single trace in the research. That is, a system of thirteen, eleven, and nine vowel sounds was given. It is known that the reason is related to the inclusion of vowels that have entered from the Russian language. In the following years, the system of nine native vowel sounds characteristic of the Kazakh language was determined and thoroughly considered in scientific research. In the article, the nature of the vowel phonemes **a/ə/e** among the nine

native vowels characteristic of the Kazakh language is determined and the way of development is given. The nature of these sounds is revealed by comparing them with sounds in Turkic languages.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Historical phonetics is one of the most neglected issues today. The reason for this is that the historical change of vowels is still not fully revealed. In this article, vowel phonemes **a/ə/e** are considered starting from ancient Turkic written monuments and then compared with Turkic languages. In the article, the peculiarity of the phonemes of vowels **a** and **e** in the Kazakh language was mentioned and illustrated with related examples.

There are different scientific views on the history of the formation of the phoneme vowel **a** in the Kazakh language. One of them makes a scientific conclusion that it is a sound that came from the Arabic-Persian language, while the other considers it as an indigenous sound coming from the ancient Turkic language. The reason for such discrepancy lies in the fact that the vowel phoneme **a** can be witnessed in both Kazakh words (*әке* “father”, *кәрі* “old”, *және* “and”, *ағуу* “cockerel”) and in the words borrowed from Arabic and Persian (*әден* “etiquette”, *әдебиет* “literature”, *әскер* “army”). The vowel phoneme **a** is sometimes in the first, sometimes in the second syllable. For instance: *әже* “grandmother”, *әке* “father”, *әбзел* “equipment”, *әбігүл* “plant”, *әдді* (*әддін білу*) “the limits”, *әдемі* “beautiful”, *әден* “etiquette”, *әдет-ғұрып* “traditions”, *әділ* “just”, *әжім* (*әжім түсу*) “wrinkle, becoming wrinkled”, *әзер* (*әзер дегенде*) “barely”, *әзіл* “joke”, *әйбат* “force”, *әйел* “woman”, *әйнек* “glass”, *әке* “father”, *әке-көке* “relatives”, *әлдекім* “someone”, *әлдеқайда* “somewhere”, *әлди-әлди* “lullaby”, *әлжуаз* “weak”, *әлек* “interest”, *әлеует* “potential”, *ән* “song”, *әнші* “singer”, *әңгіме* “story”, *әртүрлі* “different”, *әскер* “army”, *әсия* (plant type), *әуез* “melody”, *әуен* “melody”, *әулие* “a saint”, *әшекей* “decoration”, *бәйге* “baige – a traditional horse race”, *бәйшешек* “snowdrop”, *бәсіре* “a horse”, *дәйек* “supplement”, *дәм* “taste”, *дән* “seed”, *дәстүр* “tradition”, *дәстүргүл* (plant), *жәрдем* “aid”, *қамшат* “otter”, *кәрі* “old”, *кәде* “present”, *ләйлек* “stork”, *мәуе* “fruit”, *мәсі* “boot”, *сәби* “baby”, *сән* “fashion”, *сәтен* “sateen”, *іңкәр* “eager”, *сірә* “perhaps”, *шүбә* “suspicion” etc. In speech, the vowel **a** preserves its softness, and sometimes the hard vowel **a** is pronounced softly as **ə**. For instance, the vowel **a** softens when it comes between **ж**, **ш** and **й**, becoming closer to **ə**. For example, *шай* “tea” – *шәй*, *жай* “simple” – *жәй*, *жайлы* “comfortable” – *жәйлі*, *шайшөп* “camellia” – *шәйшөп*. However, when the sound **a** comes between **ж**, **ш** and other consonants, it is pronounced hardy: *jarğaq* (not *järğaq*), *januar* (not *jänuar*), *jaqtau* (not *jäqtau*). Contemporary orthoepy contains the law of softening the vowel **a** when it comes between **ж** and **й**. Shcherbak (1970) connects the hard pronunciation of the vowel **a** with a historical change. It can be seen from the scientist's conclusion: «Along with **ä** in Kazakh language, there is the sound **ä** in borrowed words, compare. *äl* ‘force’, *cām* ‘luck’, *cān* ‘luxury’, и в словах типа *жәј* (*жәј*) ‘place’, *шәј* (*шәј*) ‘tea’, in which **ä** developed from **a**” (p. 35). We notice the view that the vowel **a** was formed on the basis of **a**.

Some words with the vowel sound can also be observed from local language features. For example, Omarbekov (1985) examines the language of the Mangistau Kazakhs in his study “Local features of the Kazakh spoken language”. In his study, the scientist states that “one of the phonetic features that often stand out in the local folk language is the hard or soft pronunciation of some words, as opposed to the literary language” and gives the following data about it. Some words that are pronounced softly in the literary language are pronounced hardy in the language of Mangistau residents: *ары-бери* ‘to and fro’ – *әрі-бери*, *бары* ‘all’ – *бәрі*, *алдағандай* – *әлдеқандай* ‘like that’, *алдақашан* – *әлдеқашан* ‘long time ago’, *араң* – *әрең* ‘hardly, barely’, *азар* – *әзер* ‘barely’, *қары* – *кәрі* ‘old’, *жандық* – *жәндік* ‘insect’, *қаде* – *кәде* ‘present’. In addition, on the contrary, it is shown by the following linguistic data that the words that are pronounced hard in the literary language sound soft in that region: *қатты* – *қатты* ‘hard’, *дәне* – *дана* ‘piece’, *маусым* – *маусым* ‘season’, *уәйім* – *уайым* ‘worry’, *бәжірею* – *бәжыраю* ‘to stare’, *әміз* – *атыз* ‘field’, *зәлім* – *залым* ‘evil’, *кәте* – *қате* ‘error’, *қәуіп* – *қайып* ‘danger’, *қәйтеуіп* – *қайтеуіп* ‘what shall I do’, *қәсиет* – *қасиет* ‘characteristic’. It can be seen that the sounds **a** and **ə** are used equally in some words. In connection with this, S. Amanzholov said: “The formation of the Kazakh national language did not follow the same path as the people themselves. Individual tribes, sometimes entire tribal unions within it, joined other nations in the future. “Because it lasted for a long time, such a situation has left some marks and traces in the language of individual tribes, and through them in the entire Kazakh language.” Saying that “the fact that the Kazakh language was not formed in a direct way is proved by the many sound elements and grammatical characters preserved in the Kazakh language itself and its features,” he gives the following examples. For instance, **a** // **ə** (*шаңғы* ‘ski’ – *шәңгі*, *батишағар* ‘an outrageous one’ – *бәшәғар*, *баға* ‘price’ – *бәкә*); **ə** // **a** (*әйел* ‘woman’ – *айал*, *нәубет* ‘disaster’ – *наббет*, *және* ‘and’ – *жана*). Then it can be seen that the exchange of vowel **a** and **ə** in local regions is also influenced by other languages. In local regional features, in the spoken word, one can see the exchange of **a/ə**, **e/ə**. In his study, Omarbekov (1985) shows some words from the Arabic-Persian language in which the sounds **ə/e** alternate: *мертебе* – *мәртебе* ‘respect’, *дәстір* – *дәстүр* ‘tradition’, *дереже* – *дәреже* ‘degree’, *нәтиже* – *нәтиже* ‘result’, *селле* – *сәлде* ‘chirma, turban’. The variant with **e** sound is characteristic of certain Turkic languages, for example, *мертебе* – Kyrgyz, Turkmen; *дереже*, *нәтиже*, *селле* – Turkmen. Here it seems that it should be taken into account that each language acquires words from the Arabic-Persian language according to its articulatory features. It is known that the words that are pronounced hard in the literary language are generally pronounced soft in the southern region. Some researchers associate the reason for this

with the fact that softness *a* is a characteristic sound of many Arabic-Persian kerbs in our southern dialects, as well as in Uzbek and Karakalpak languages.

Summing up, in the work "Sound System of Our Spoken Language" it is said that "the sound of *ə* in some words seems to be separated from foreign language influence. Some of these are ancient signs that continue to exist in our language, and others may be signs that were born in our language due to the positional changes of sounds. The dispersion in their geography points us to this. And the sound "*ə*" can be witnessed in the native lexicon of our language, though quite rarely. For example: *әке* 'father', *кәрі* 'old', *әлі* 'still', *әммең* 'regret', *және* 'and'". This scientific view indicates that the sound *ə* either existed in the Kazakh language from the ancient times or occurred due to the positional change.

There are different scientific conclusions about the formation of the sounds *ə* and *e* in the system of 8-9 vowels in the Turkic (Kazakh) languages. Some of the modern Turkic languages do not have the vowel *ə* sound. "In the Azerbaijani, Uyghur, Tatar, Bashkir languages, *ə* is pronounced both in the root and in additions, and in the Kazakh language, it is pronounced only in the first syllable. In terms of frequency of use, Azerbaijani and Uyghur are the most common, followed by Tatar and Bashkir languages. The sound is the least frequent in Kazakh and Turkish" (1981). In the course of the development of Turkic languages, in some languages, the sound of "*ə*" was preserved, and in some languages, the sound of "*e*" was preserved. Baskakov (1988) considers the phoneme *a* as a borrowed sound in the modern Kazakh, Nogai, Karakalpak languages of the Kypchak-Nogai group. As the scientist claims, "The vowel system of the Nogai language includes eight vowels characteristic of native Nogai words: *a, e, y, ɨ, o, ɔ, u, ü* and one vowel *ä* which occurs mainly in borrowed words and as an exception in complex root words". For Karakalpak language, he indicates the same: "The vowel system of the Karakalpak language includes eight vowels characteristic of native Nogai words: *a, e, y, ɨ, o, ɔ, u, ü* and one vowel *ä* which occurs mainly in borrowed words and as an exception in root words, not included in organic composition and corresponding regularities of contrast with other vowel phonemes". The scientist believes that the given sound is borrowed in the Kazakh language as well (Baskakov, 1988). However, in the Kazakh, Karakalpak, and Nogai languages, in addition to the words that came from the Arabic-Persian language, the vowel phoneme *ə* can be found in native words and dialects. For example, the Nogai language has nine vowel phonemes. They are: *a, ɔ, o, ɔ, ɨ, u, y, ɨ, ə*. Here [ɔ], [ɔ], [ɨ], [y] are native to Nogai language. Within vowels, the sounds *a, ɨ, u, e* can be met in every position, while vowels *o, ɔ, y, ɨ* are only met in the first vowel. Similarly, the sound *ɔ* (*ə*) is only witnessed in the first syllable. For example, *аьзир* "now", *аьел* "woman", *аьдет* "habit", *аьдеттеги куьн* "a regular day", *аьпме-аьзир* "ready-made", *аьр заманга* "for every time", *аьр* "every", *аьринлер* "letters", *даьри* "medicine", *даьриин* "cinnamon", *даьм* "taste", *маьметекей*, *маьлек*, *маьнели* "meaningful", *маьнесиз* "meaningless", *наьлет* "curse", *саьбийлер* "babies", *саьли* "Tuesday", *саьрсемби* "Wednesday", *саьат* "hour/clock", *таьтли* "sweet". As Baskakov (1988) supposes, the vowel [ɔ] is mainly borrowed from Arabic-Persian: *аьрекет* "activity", *аьлемет* "enormous", *маьлек* "angel", *даьри* "medicine", *аьвел* "woman". Also, the sound *ɔ* is also met in the original Nogai words: *аьпте*, *баьний*, *маьметекей*, *аьше*, *маьмике*, *таьтли*.

The Karakalpak language has nine vowel sounds: *a, ə, e, o, ɔ*. For instance, *dān* "seed", *āje* "grandmother", *ādil* "just", *āke* "father", *kāsip* "craft", *g'ārip* "bizarre", *āngime* "story", *āmir* "order", *ālem* "world", *āmir* "story", *bāri* "all", *dāiyl* "evidence", *dāreje* "degree", *dāri* "medicine", *dāstūr* "tradition", *dāwir* "era", *māleniy* "cultural", *mājilis* "conference", *mān* "meaning", *māngilik* "eternity", *māsele* "issue", *Tānir* "creator", *tāriya* "upbringing", *shārshembi* "Wednesday".

When comparing some words in the northern dialect of the Karakalpak language, the following sound changes can be observed. Instead of *e* sound in literary language, the vowel *ə* is used. *Кесе-кәсә* 'cup' // *кәса: кәсаларға шай күйүп ишип отыра берің, тартымбай* (*Pour tea into the cups and do help yourselves, do not be shy*). *Дерек-дәрек* 'track': *жойтылған ылақтың дәрегі табылмай, бираз қыйланып йотырмыс* (*The vanished goat's tracks are nowhere to be found, and we are worried*). Also, depending on the dialect of some regions, one word sounds differently. For instance, in Shymbai accent the word is *қәлә гүн*, in Hozheli accent it is *қала күн*. These examples show the interchange of the sounds [ə] - [a]. Some researchers associate its reason with the influence of the Uzbek language in that region (Kaypnazarova, 2018).

Thus, the vowel *ə* is preserved as a separate phoneme in some dialects of the Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Uyghur, Tatar, Bashkir, Kazakh and Uzbek languages. For instance: in Azerbaijani *əl* «hand», *әр* «every», *мән* «I», *тәкә* «male goat»; in Bashkir *әтәс* «атеш», *кәрәк* «necessary»; in Kazakh *әңгіме* «story», *бәйге* «baige», *мәсі*; in Tatar *тәкә* «теке», *әтеч* «атеш»; түркмен тілінде *кәсе* «кесе», *дәне* «дәнек», *нәзик* «нәзік»; in Uyghur *кәл* «кел», *мән* «мен», *кәң* «кең». In the Azerbaijani and Uyghur languages, we notice that the vowel *ə* is used instead of the vowel *ä* in the ancient Turkic language. Also, in Tatar, Bashkir, and Khakas languages, if the vowel *ɨ* was used as opposed to *e* in Kazakh. For example: the Azerbaijani *сән*, the Uyghur *сән*, the Altai *сен*, the Kazakh *сен*, the Karakalpak *сен*, the Kyrgyz *сен*, the Kuman *сен*, the Nogai *сен*, the Tuvan *сен*, the Turkmen *сен*, the Uzbek *сен*, the Shor *сен*, the Yakutian *эн*, the Bashkir *хин*, the Tatar *син*, the Hakas *син*, the Chuvash *эсе*.

To clarify, the ancient Turkic *ä* (*ə*) corresponds to the sounds *ə, e, ɨ* in contemporary Turkic languages: *кәл/кәл/кел/кил* 'go'; *бәр/бәр/бер/бир* 'give'; *кәс/кәс/кес/кис* 'cut'; *сән/сән/сен/син* 'you'; *мән/мән/мен/мин* 'I'. According to the laws of language development, there are languages in which the sound *ə* is used as it is, in some languages it has changed to the vowel *e*, and in some it has changed to the sound *ɨ*.

Sagyndykuly (1994) believes that the sound **ə** was the first soft vowel to appear, and he supports that view with the examples of such Kazakh words as *әлді-әлді* 'lullaby', *ән* 'song'. He also explains the formation of the sound **ə** in the first syllable through such words as *әке* 'father', *әже* 'grandmother'. Furthermore, the scientist indicates that the ancient Turkic languages had no soft vowels during the initial stage of their development, and the oldest of the sounds **a**, **e**, **ə** is the soft sound **ə**. He even claims that the fact of the sound **ə** being a softened allophone of **a** is evident from the monuments. He explains the formation of the sound **e** through the merging of **u** and **ə**, forming a diphthong (Sagyndykuly, 1994). K. Musaev contrasts the phoneme **ä** with the phoneme **e** in the Kazakh language and says that if the word came from the Arabic-Persian language, then the following example can be given: *el-ä*, *sel-sä*, *eli-ä*. Such an opinion was in accordance with the opinion of other scientists that the phoneme **ə** in Turkic languages is a sound that entered from Arabic-Persian languages.

The vowel **e** is preserved in modern Azerbaijani, Altai, Bashkir, Kazakh, Karakalpak, Kyrgyz, Kuman, Nogai, Tatar, Tuva, Turkmen, Uzbek, Uyghur, Khakas, Chuvash, and Shor Turkic languages, but not in Yakut. For instance, general Turkic \*et 'et (meat)' Bashk. *um*; Tat. *um*; Gag. *et*; Az. *üt*, Turk., CTat., Karakalp. *et*; KBalk., Kum. *et*, Nog., Kaz., Kyr., Alt., Uzb. *et*, Uyg. *üt*, Hak. *it*; Tuv. *iht*, Yak. *et* 'the corpse of a slaughtered animal', Chuv. *üt*. The prolonged **i:** in the contemporary Turkmen language corresponds to the ancient prolonged vowels **i:** and **e:**. For instance: Turkmen. *gi:r* 'enter' ~ Yak. *ki:r*; Turkmen. *gi:n* 'wide' ~ Yak. *kien*. The coincidence of the sounds **i:** and **i:** < **e:** in the Turkmen language broke the system of open, non-labial vowels and led to the emergence of new mutually opposite vowels: **ä** – **e**. Also, the Turkic languages were divided into different languages, and in the process of development, the period of formation of the vocalism of the Bulgarian language coincided with the vocalism system of the Kipchak language. We can see it in the process of narrowing of open vowels or opening the narrow, closed vowels. This phenomenon is reflected in the sounds **ä** > **e** > **i**. For instance: *käl* > *kel* > *kil* 'come', or the representation of the sounds **e** > **i**. The ways of formation and establishment of these sounds were different and unique. For example: in the Kazakh language there is *kem* 'go', in the Azerbaijani *kem*, in Bashkir *kum*, in Karakalpak *kem*, in Kyrgyz *kem*, in Kumik *zem*, in Nogai *kem*, in Tatar *kum*, in Turkish *git*, in Turkmen *zum*, in Uzbek *kem*, in Uyghur *kam*.

Scientist Eskeeva (2007) concludes in her work: "It can be seen that the transition of the phoneme **a** to the phoneme **ä** in the monosyllabic roots and root-bases in the language of the Orkhon, Yenisei, Talas monuments is more common in the languages of the Kypchak-Bulgarian group than in the languages of the Kypchak-Nogai group: Bashk. *bäj* (län), 'knitting', *baj* (läneš) 'connection', *jäj* 'summer', *jäš* 'young', *jäš* (en) 'lightning, thunder', *säs* 'hair' ~ Kaz., Karakalp., Nog. *baj* (lam), *baj* (lanis), *žaz*, *žaj*, *šaš*'. The scientist says that monosyllables used with the phoneme **ä** in the languages of the modern Kipchak group are rendered with the phoneme **a** in the language of the Russians, which is not a sufficient reason to consider the sound **ä** as a later phenomenon. It can be concluded that the scientist describes the vowel **ä** as an indigenous sound.

According to Karzhaubayuly (2003), a researcher of ancient Turkic writing graphics, according to the ancient Turkic worldview system, vowels (soul) are divided into two groups. They are:

- Аман 'A way, a method' (male): back, hard, non-labial – **a** **y** (**ы**), **o**, **u** (**у**). Four sounds.
- Білік 'Knowledge' (female): front, soft, labial – **e**, **i**, **ö**, **ü**. Four sounds.

These eight sounds consist of four forms (**a**, **e**), (**y**, **i**), (**o**, **u**), (**ö**, **ü**), the phonemes **a**, **e** are not marked at the beginning and middle of the word, and the phonemes **y** (**ы**), **i** (in some positions it is not written at the beginning of the word) are marked at the end of the word, and the phonemes **o**, **ö** are marked at the beginning and middle of the word. In his research, the scientist gives the classification of the researchers who determined the composition of vowel sounds in the Orkhon monuments according to the following table.

Scholars	Thomsen	Radlov	Orkun	A. Gaben	Malov	Tekin	DTS	Kormushin	Amanzholov	A.M. Scherbak
□	a, e	a, ä	a, e	a, ä	a, e	a, e	a, e	a, e	a, ä, e	a, ä, e
□	y, i	y, i, e	y, i	y, i, e	y, i	y, i	y, i, e	y, i	y, i, e	y, i, e
□	o, u	o, u	o, u	o, u	o, u	o, u	o, u	o, u	o, u	o, u
□	ö, ü	ö, ü	ö, ü	ö, ü	ö, ü	ö, ü	ö, ü	ö, ü	ö, ü	ö, ü

According to scientist Karzhaubayuly (2003), the image **ᠰ** in the text of the Orkhon monuments was read by V. Thomsen as the phoneme **a**, **e**, while the Russian V. Radlov read it as the phoneme **a**, **ä** (**e**). However, V. V. Radlov read the image **ᠰ** as **ᠰ**, **i**, **e**. In the meantime, V. V. Radlov tried to give the phonetic features of two dialects of the indigenous Turkic written language (not possible). In connection with this, according to the statement of the scientist V. Radlov, he says that in the process of examining and comparing several texts, there is not a single text marked with the vowel **ä** (**e**) phoneme. V. Thomsen's methodology includes H. Orkun, S. E. Malov, T. Tekin, G. Aidarov, S. G. Klyashtorny, A. N.





words *en/eb/un/ub/or/yb* «house» and claims that the ancient Turkic, Kuman languages have the sound *ɛ* in the first syllables of the forms *ue* and *ye*. That is, if A.M. Scherbak claims that the first syllable of the given words contains the sounds *ä~ ӓ* while E.V. Sevortyan believes that the sound is the closed *ɛ*.

\**äm* «healing» (in the work by A.M. Scherbak); *em* «healing, cure» (in the work by E.V. Sevortyan). The sound *ä* in the given words is represented as *im* in Uyghur, while in Kazakh it is *em*, and in Tatar, Bashkir, Chuvash, Hakas languages it is *im*. E.D. Polivanov provides the following opinion related to this sound change: «The connection between closed and open vowels led to the change in the degree of the distinctive feature of closeness/openness. Here the vowel *ä* transformed into *i*; while the sounds *o, ӧ* turned into *y, ӱ*».

\**ä* «meat» (in the work by A.M. Scherbak); *et* «meat» (in the work by E.V. Sevortyan). Azerbaijani and Uyghur languages of modern Turkic languages have preserved the form with the vowel *ä* *ä*. In Tatar, Bashkir, and Khakas languages it is called *î*, in Chuvash it is *iü*, in Kazakh it is *et*. Then A.M. Shcherbak believes that the *ä* sound in Turkic languages is indigenous, while E.V. Sevortian considers the *e* sound to be ancient.

Related to the phoneme *ə*, A. Iskakov notes in his work: «...Although the sound *ə* has disappeared permanently in some modern Turkic languages, it is still used in all syllables of words in languages such as Tatar and Uyghur. And there should be no doubt that it is an indigenous sound preserved only in the first syllable in the Kazakh language» (Iskakov, 1999). Also, the scientist believes that the sound *ə* is the soft pair of the ancient Turkic sound *a*. F.G. Iskhakov also supports this view. The scholar notes that the word *map* «sweat» of the Chuvash language is *māp* in the ancient Turkic, while in other Turkic languages it can be *mep* // *mep* // *mup*.

S. Myrzabekov believes that the sound *ə* is an indigenous sound and claims, «Out of 67 thousand words encompassed in the 10-volume explanatory dictionary of the Kazakh language, the number of words starting with *ə* is 870, the number of words starting with *a* is 4440, and the number of words starting with *e* is 2249» and analyzes the oppositions of the remaining vowels. He adds that «according to orthography, the letter *ə* is encountered in the first syllable of around 2.5 thousand words». Overall, the scientific conceptions mentioned above indicate the presence of various viewpoints related to the formation of the vowel sound *ə*.

Words from the Arabic-Persian language were mastered and used according to the peculiarities of each language. According to Yakshi (2010), the author of the work "Borrowed Arabic words common to the Kazakh, Uzbek, and Turkish languages", the vowel sounds in Arabic become hard and soft due to the preceding consonant. The transcription of this sound was given by the letters *ə, a*. However, the sound *ə* in Arabic is pronounced slightly thicker than the sound *ə* in Kazakh. In the same way, the sound of *a* in the Arabic language is different from the Kazakh language (Yakshin). Of course, words from the Arabic-Persian language are acquired according to the acoustic and articulatory features of that language. In connection with this, the table shows how some words with the sounds *a/ə/e* in Turkic languages were acquired from the Arabic-Persian language.

Arabic and Persian words	Kazakh The language	The Karakalpak language	The Kyrgyz language
адат	Әдет “tradition”	a'det	адат
тәнәкер	Дәреже “degree”	da'reje	даража
дәрак	Дерек “data”	derek	дарек
шәгірт	Шәкірт “student”	sha'kirt	шакирт
дәрд	Дерт “burden”	-	дарт
аруах	аруақ, әруақ “spirit”	a'rwat	арбак
адабиат	Әдебиет “literature”	a'debiyat	адабият
адаб	Әдеп “etiquette”	a'dep	адептүү
адл	Әділ “just”	a'dil	адил
айал	Әйел “woman”	hayal	аял
алам	Әлем “world”	a'lem	аалам

Similarly, Yakshi, who examined the Arabic words in the Kazakh, Uzbek and Turkish languages, makes the following conclusion: "The marking and sounding of the Arabic vowels in the words entered into the Kazakh, Uzbek and Turkish languages is different. In Kazakh and Turkish languages, when a word with the Arabic hard consonants is encountered, the Arabic short *ə* (*a*) sound is conveyed through the hard *a* sound, for example: *نَظَرَ* [nazar] > *назар* - *nazar*, *قَرَارَ* [qarar] > *қарап* - *kara:r*, *صَبْرَ* [sabr] > *сабыр* - *sabır*, *طَبَقَ* [tabaq] > *табақ* - *tabak*, and in the words which contain soft consonants, the soft sounds *ə* and *e* in Kazakh, the sound *e* in Turkish is used, for instance: *دَرَجَةُ* [daraja] >

дәреже - *derece*, بَرَكَة [baraka] > береке - *bereket*, سَبَب [sebeb] > себен - *sebeb*. However, in the words with the prolonged *ä*: (a:), the Kazakh language hardens the soft vowels, while the Turkish lets them remain soft, for instance: ثَوَاب [saya:b] > *cayan* – *seva:p*, جَوَاب [jaua:p] > *жayan* – *ceva:p*. There are Kazakh words which are pronounced softly although they contain hard Arabic vowels, for instance, نَصِيْب [nasi:b] > *həcin*, صَبِيْ [sabi:y] > *cəbu*, and on the contrary, there are words which contain soft Arabic vowels but are pronounced hardly, for instance, سَفَر [safir] > *canap*” (Yakshi, 2010). From this we can see that when the words with the vowel *ä* sound were introduced from the Arabic-Persian language, they were assimilated according to the peculiarities of that language. If we take into account the peculiarities of a certain language, then it is not for nothing that some words in the Arabic-Persian language are learned with the sound of *ä*. If so, it can be said that the speech organs are quite ready to master words with the sound of *ä*.

In fact, Z.M. Bazarbaeva makes the following conclusion: "Kipchak-Nogai group part is very close to Kuman group part. This includes Nogai, Karakalpak, and Kazakh languages. They have nine vowel sounds: a, ä, e, y, i, o, ö, u, ü. The ninth vowel ä is believed to have come from Arabic and Persian. However, the origin of this vowel has recently become a controversial issue. It makes sense to consider it as a pure Turkish sound. Because the articulation character of this sound is characteristic of Kazakhs, especially the cry of small babies from the front articulation apparatus is proof of this. The vowels of this part of the group have been transformed and subjected to historical reduction. Open vowels a, ä, e, o, ö did not undergo any changes (Bazarbaeva, 2023). Evolution of vowels (vocalism) in Turkic (Kipchak) languages.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

In linguistics, no postulate stays unchanged and untouched. Every branch of linguistics develops and changes throughout the centuries. One of such changes is closely connected to internal and external factors. Among the language phenomena which are altered and formed by extralinguistic factors while reappearing and replenishing based on the different tendencies of internal factors, phonetic sounds may be mentioned. The branch of historical phonetics explains the nature of the acoustic-articulatory alteration, namely, the reasons for the articulatory changes of sounds. It is obvious that sound changes in the phonetic structure initially occur in their articulatory base. Nonetheless, such sound changes encompass not only the alteration of articulatory base adapted to the authentic speech apparatus of a nation, but also the increasing function of sounds.

The development of the ninth Turkic vowel – a cause of heated debate among the scientists – has been considered. The vowel *ä*, witnessed in such Kazakh words as *дәм*, *ән*, *дәл*, *иңдә*, is believed to originate from the ancient times. The vowel *ä* is preserved in some Turkic languages but lost in the rest. It acts as an independent phoneme in the Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Uyghur, Tatar, Bashkir, and Kazakh languages, and it may be witnessed in the synharmonic accents of the Uzbek language. In the scope of contemporary Turkic languages, the sound *ä* is not witnessed in the Turkish and Turkmen languages that consist of 18 vowels and the Uzbek, Yakutian, and Kyrgyz languages that have six vowels. Throughout the development of Turkic languages, some languages preserved the sound *ä* and others the sound *e*. Azerbaijani and the new Uyghur languages have the short variant of the sound /ä/: *кәл* “come”, *дәл* in Azerbaijani and *кәл* in Uyghur. In some words of the Tatar, Bashkir, Hakas and Chuvash languages, the vowel *ä* transformed into *u*: \**әм* “meat”, tat. *um*.

The article considered distinct scientific conceptions related to the formation of the sound *ä*. This issue requires further exploration. For this reason, the next article will also discuss the given problem.

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**Zh.T. Zhumabayeva** is candidate of philological sciences. She is Lead researcher at the Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly. E-mail: janar\_tolendi@mail.ru.

**N.B. Ospangaziyeva** is Junior researcher at the Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly. E-mail: nb\_ospangazievan@inbox.ru

**Z.M. Bazarbayeva** is Chief researcher at the Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly, Doctor of philological sciences, professor. E-mail: zeynepmb@mail.ru

**A.M. Fazylzhanova** is Lead researcher at the Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly, Candidate of philological sciences. E-mail: nar20@bk.ru

**A.Zh. Amanbayeva** is Lead researcher at the Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly, Candidate of philological sciences. E-mail: AAisaule@mail.ru

# The Death of Monarchs: Front-Page Reporting of Queen Elizabeth II's Death

Ibrahim M. Darwish\*

Translation Department, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Abdulaziz A. Alzoubi

Department of English for Applied Studies, Jordan University of Science and Technology, Jordan

Noora Q. Abu Ain

Department of English, Jadara University, Irbid, Jordan

**Abstract**—This is a linguistic and semiotic study of the newspaper front pages that reported the death of Queen Elizabeth II. A sample of 61 front pages was collected from various British and non-British newspapers on Friday 9 September, 2022. The headlines reporting the death of the Queen were linguistically analysed focusing on euphemistic means. The pictures accompanying the headlines were semiotically investigated to see how the Queen was visually mourned and if there were any subtle semiotic euphemisms. Reporting the death of the Queen, linguistic and semiotic polarities can be observed on the newspaper front pages under investigation: direct versus indirect reporting. The findings reveal that 70.5% of the headlines reported the tragic news indirectly avoiding the verb 'die', the noun 'death' and the adjective 'dead'. Similarly, the semiotic analysis shows that more newspapers displayed coloured (67%) recent (57%) pictures of the Queen showing her cheerful (56%). Avoiding the words 'die', 'death' and 'dead' and displaying the Queen in coloured cheerful pictures demonstrate that newspapers favoured both subtle linguistic and semiotic euphemisms in reporting the death of Queen Elizabeth II. The findings illustrate how humans, consciously and unconsciously, safeguard themselves against the discourse of death by utilizing both linguistic and semiotic euphemisms.

**Index Terms**—euphemism, death, Queen Elizabeth II, semiotics, front pages

## I. INTRODUCTION

The longest-reigning British Monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, passed away on Thursday afternoon 8 September, 2022 at the age of 96 at Balmoral Castle, her favourite Scottish estate. She spent 70 years on the British throne after succeeding her late father, George VI, on 6 February, 1952 at the age of 25. The Royal Family first announced her death by a tweet that read "The Queen died peacefully at Balmoral this afternoon..." The news of her death was reported by different news agencies and various media platforms all over the world. The news about her death appeared on the front pages of various newspapers inside and outside the UK. A good number of them dedicated entire front pages to report the sad news accompanied with portraits of the late queen. The way the news appeared on newspaper front pages was intriguing as different semiotic and linguistic means were utilised to report the heart-breaking news. Some newspapers (e.g. *The Guardian*) displayed old portraits of the late queen when she was young, like the one showing her coronation in 1953. Others chose recent portraits of the queen showing her aging yet graceful figure (e.g. *The Daily Telegraph*). Some accompanied the portraits with short death announcements (e.g. Our beloved Queen is dead), very short epitaphs (e.g. Elizabeth II: 1926-2022), one of her famous quotes (e.g. "Grief is the price we pay for love), expressions of gratitude (e.g. A life in service), or short 'lead stories'. Some portraits were coloured, and some were greyscale.

In Richard II (3.2, pp. 145-157), William Shakespeare philosophically discusses death, mortality and monarchy. He explains that death controls all mortals, monarchs included. There is no way to prevent monarchs from dying; alas, all we can do is to remember them with words of sorrow.

No matter where; of comfort no man speak:  
Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;  
Make dust our paper and with rainy eyes  
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth,...  
For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground  
And tell sad stories of the death of kings.

When Queen Elizabeth was born on 21 April, 1926, *The Times* announced the news in the following manner: "The Duchess of York was safely delivered of a Princess at 2.40 this morning. Both mother and daughter are doing well" (see Owen, 2021). The same paper reported the death of Queen Elizabeth II in a headline that read "A life in service"

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\* Corresponding Author

followed by a short epitaph “Queen Elizabeth II April 21, 1926-September 8, 2022”. This study investigates how various newspaper front pages around the world reported the queen’s death focusing on the semiotic and linguistic aspects of the reports.

#### A. *Death Discourse*

Discussing issues related to ‘death’ or ‘the dead’ is restricted in almost all cultures the world over. In fact, the discourse of death is even taboo with varying degrees in various present and past societies (Cebrat, 2016). Fraser (1922) categorised taboos into four major types: tabooed persons (e.g. witches, menstruating women and the dead), tabooed things (e.g. sex organs and body waste), tabooed words (e.g. names of rulers, mothers and the dead) and tabooed activities (e.g. incest, adultery and abortion). In primitive cultures the ‘death taboo’ was manifested in various activities including touching the dead, entering graveyards and mentioning the names of the dead (Cebrat, 2016). Primitive people thought that violating death taboos incurs grave consequences (see Fraser, 1922). Modern cultures also have taboos that are mostly related to religion, politics and morality. Although many taboos have evolved over time, modern speech communities are still influenced by some of the ancient taboos to varying degrees. Perhaps, people of today are concerned with the so-called ‘linguistic taboos’ more than other types. Modern societies try to sound socially and politically correct by avoiding using the wrong words in wrong domains. In other words, religious, social, moral and political correctness prevails in modern discourse.

Ljung (2011) categorises modern taboo words into major and minor themes. The former encompasses religion, body waste, sex organs, sexual activities and family. The latter, on the other hand, refers to ancestors, animals, death, disease and prostitution (for more details, see Darwish & Abu Ain, 2020). Leszczynski (1988) claims that taboos originate from either psychological or social factors. The psychological factor is often associated with feeling uncomfortable about discussing certain topics while the social element is frequently coupled with social politeness. Taboos are not absolute though, as they constantly change inter-culturally, cross-linguistically and cross-temporally. For this reason, “every taboo must be specified for a particular community of people, for a specified context, at a given place and time” (Allan & Burridge, 2006, p. 11).

Death is tabooed for a principal reason, death itself. The fear of death is, in fact, the driving force behind restricting the discourse of death. As death is inevitable and is the “most original form of the possibility of Existence” (Shariatnia, 2015, p. 92), language has evolved to cope with the taboo topic of death through two major linguistic means, euphemism and dysphemism. Put differently, humans have no control over their “death, which certainly explains why death is tabooed and spoken of euphemistically” (Jamet, 2013, p. 2). Fernandez (2006, p. 101) avers that “some experiences are too intimate and vulnerable to be discussed without linguistic safeguards.” Euphemism is like a ‘protective shield’ against the fear of death (Allan & Burridge, 1991). According to Adams (1985, p. 48), euphemism serves as the ‘deodorant of language’ necessary to cut through the feared odour of the rotting corpse of the topic of death.

The word ‘euphemism’ comes from *euphemismos* in Greek that means ‘good omen’ and was first spotted in English print in 1656 in a book titled *Glossographia* by Thomas Blount (Jamet, 2010). Euphemism is not a mere linguistic device; it is rather a genuine linguistic choice made by a speaker or writer to reflect social change. Allan and Burridge (1991, p. 4) argue that “euphemism and dysphemism are principally determined by the choice of expression within a given context: both world spoken of, and the world spoken in.” By ‘deodorising’ the rotten odour of death, euphemism mitigates the fear of death by helping in keeping it at bay (Jamet, 2010). What applies to the use of euphemism in dealing with death applies, mutatis mutandis, to the use of dysphemism. Dysphemistic expressions have offensive connotations that also have the power to conceal death by avoiding calling it what it is, i.e., death (Jamet, 2010). In other words, while ‘passed away’ is a euphemism for death, ‘croaked’ is a dysphemism for death. Perhaps people, need to humourously use dysphemistic metaphors to refer to death in order to escape the fear of it by pretending that it is not a serious issue. Metaphors, such as ‘brown bread’, ‘checked out’, ‘dead meat’ and ‘permanently out of print’ are all cases in point.

In March 2017, The Guardian national British newspaper revealed that “for years, arrangements have been in place by the palace and the government for the death, funeral and internment of the Queen. There is even a codename to be used in the event of the inevitable eventuality: Operation London Bridge” (Jobson, 2018, p. 87). Perhaps, there are no euphemistic reasons behind camouflaging the death of the queen in this context, but rather security and political concerns. This is supported by the fact that other code names are used to refer to the way the coffin might be transported. Operation Unicorn refers to the transportation of the coffin by the royal train, while Operation Overstudy refers to its transportation by plane.

#### B. *The Aim of the Study*

This study investigates how the headlines of various newspaper front pages around the world reported the death of Queen Elizabeth II focusing on the semiotic and linguistic aspects of the reports. Specifically, it tries to answer the following research questions: 1) “Was the death of Queen Elizabeth II reported directly or indirectly in the front-page headlines of British and non-British newspapers?,” 2) “Did British and non-British newspapers use similar linguistic structures in reporting the death of the queen?” and 3) “How did British and non-British newspapers semiotically portray the dead queen in their front pages?”.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. Sample and Data Collection

The sample consists of 61 newspaper front pages published on 9 September, 2022, i.e., the day after the death of Queen Elizabeth II was officially announced by Buckingham Palace. Only those newspapers that dedicated their front pages to report the death of Queen Elizabeth II are included in the sample from inside and outside the UK. No doubt, the majority of the collected front pages are from British newspapers for obvious reasons. Those British front pages are compared and contrasted with non-British ones to see if the pattern is the same or not. The principal sources of the data are the official websites of the newspapers in question and some newspaper reports written on the topic itself, such as the BBC, HuffPost UK and Metro, amongst others.

### B. Data Analysis

Both linguistic and semiotic aspects of the collected front pages are systematically and thematically described and analysed. The photos displayed are meticulously investigated for any semiotic significance. For instance, some of the used photos are coloured while others are just in black-and-white. This might be a mere reflection of diachronic changes in technology, i.e., the old photos are black-and-white while the modern ones are in colours. Nevertheless, we argue that the choice was predominantly semiotic, as the photos that appeared in our sample were not originally black-and-white but rather intentionally grey-scaled to mirror grief and mourning. Such choices are scrutinised and so are the choices to display a young queen or an old queen, a smiling queen or a sad queen on the front pages. The accompanying text is also linguistically analysed. To illustrate, some newspapers just displayed a photo of the queen with a short epitaph that read “Elizabeth II: 1926-2022” while others wrote additional phrases of grief, thanks, gratitude and of her famous quotations. Few newspapers accompanied the photos with short lead stories announcing the death of the queen and some extra information that often appears in obituaries. The verbs used to announce or report the death of the queen are studied syntactically and pragmatically looking for any uses of euphemism or dysphemism. Finally, a short comparison is made between British and non-British front pages to see if the patterns are similar or not.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study are detailed in this section. Choices of words or phrases reporting the death of Queen Elizabeth II in the selected front-page headlines of British and non-British newspapers are analysed and discussed in terms of directness, indirectness and structure. Additionally, the semiotic significance of the pictures that accompanied the headlines is discussed in relation to the general discourse of death. As a result of the linguistic and semiotic analyses of the data, the following key findings emerged:

### A. Direct vs. Indirect Reporting

The analysis shows that the death of Queen Elizabeth II was reported directly in 18 of the front pages under investigation. In other words, only 29.5% of the studied front pages made use of the verb ‘to die’ or the noun ‘death’ in reporting Queen Elizabeth II’s death. On the other hand, 43 (70.5%) front pages reported the tragic news indirectly or implicitly. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of direct and indirect reporting of the death of Queen Elizabeth II in British and non-British newspaper front pages.

TABLE 1  
DIRECT VS. INDIRECT REPORTING AMONGST BRITISH AND NON-BRITISH FRONT PAGES

	Direct	Indirect
British front pages	9	25
Non-British front pages	9	18
Total tokens	18	43
Percentage	29.50%	70.50%

In view of the percentages in Table 1, the majority of front-page writers chose to report the tragic news in an indirect way avoiding the headword ‘die’ and its related forms. It was surprising to learn that the front-page writers did not use conventional linguistic euphemisms typical of Western cultures, such as ‘pass away’. A meticulous analysis of the indirect death reports reveals that none of the front-page writers employed the most frequent explicit euphemistic phrase ‘pass away’. Instead, they opted for implicit euphemistic means. First, one of the most frequent implicit means was writing a short epitaph to accompany a photo of choice of Queen Elizabeth II. A few examples include “1926-2022”, “Queen Elizabeth 1926-2022”, “Elizabeth II 1926-2022”, “Isabel 1926-2022”, “HM Queen Elizabeth II 1926-2022”, “Elizabeth R 1926-2022”, “Queen Elizabeth II April 21, 1926-Septemer 8, 2022”, and “Our Queen April 21, 1926-Septermber 8, 2022”. Second, few front-page writers utilised words of ‘farewell’ to implicitly report the death of the Queen. Among the examples are “Farwell, our noble Queen” and “Farwell to the Queen”. Third, expressing sadness was a common method to implicitly report the death of the queen, especially in British and Commonwealth front pages. Some cases in point include “A nation mourns”, “Nation mourns Monarch”, “Our hearts are broken”, “A moment of the greatest sadness” and Queen Elizabeth II’s famous quote “Grief is the price we pay for love”. A fourth way to implicitly report the death of the queen was expressing love and gratitude, such as “We loved you, Ma’am”, “You did your duty,

Ma'am", "Thank you", "We loved her so much", "Remembering our Queen" and "Our gracious Queen". Fifth, some front-page writers referred to the end of Queen Elizabeth II's reign as a sign of her death. A few examples include "Her reign has ended", "The last majesty" and "The woman who defined an era". In the same vein, on September 9, 2022, any reference in the front pages to the new king of the United Kingdom, King Charles III, was a shrewd implicit and poetic method to refer to the death of the queen, such as "King Charles III and Royal Family mourn" and "King Charles III leads tribute".

A meticulous analysis of the 18 front-page direct reports of Queen Elizabeth II's death reveals that the verb 'die' appeared 7 times, 6 in the simple present tense form and 1 in the present perfect. The noun 'death' appeared in 6 front pages, and the adjective 'dead' was employed as a subject compliment of the queen in 5 front pages. Table 2 displays the distribution of the structure of direct reporting of Queen Elizabeth II's death amongst British and non-British newspaper front pages.

TABLE 2  
STRUCTURE IN THE DIRECT REPORTING OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II'S DEATH

	Verb 'die'	Adjective 'dead'	Noun 'death'
<b>British front pages</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Non-British front pages</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total tokens</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>33%</b>

The verb 'die' is predominantly intransitive and cannot occur in passive sentences. Table 2 shows that it was preferred by non-British newspapers (6 occurrences) compared to British newspapers that used it only once. In all 7 occurrences, it was used in finite clauses and always in the present tense. Although the front-page headlines under investigation appeared on 9 September, 2022, i.e., a day after the death of Queen Elizabeth II was officially announced, the use of the present tense to report past events conforms to the grammar rules of newspaper headlines. Newspaper headlines belong to a unique linguistic register that has its own syntactic rules. Mardh (1980) calls this register 'headlines' and explains that the 'present tense' is generally preferred in headlines even when the events have already taken place. Conventionally, even though the present tense is used, "the reader knows by his[her] familiarity with HL [headlines] that the event has actually already occurred when [s/he] gets the news. It places the reader in the middle of the action, which may give him[her] a feeling of participation" (p. 169). The following examples illustrate some of the Headlines in British and non-British front pages:

Nation Mourns as monarch dies, aged 96, at Balmoral. (British)

Elizabeth II, whose 7-decade reign linked generations, dies at 96. (Non-British- USA)

UK's oldest and longest-serving monarch dies at 96. (Non-British- USA)

The Queen dies, long live the King. (Non-British- Nigeria)

Syntactically, 'monarch', 'Elizabeth II', '...monarch' and 'the queen' occupy the subject position of die-verb phrases. Semantically, though, these syntactic subjects play an 'experiencer' role rather than an 'agent' or 'patient' role as the death was of a natural cause, old age.

Perhaps this explains why the native English writers in the British newspapers preferred to use the adjective 'dead' (3 occurrences) and the noun 'death' (5 occurrences) instead of the verb 'die'. The structure of the adjective 'dead' headlines in both British and non-British front pages was uniform, 'The Queen is dead'. Syntactically, the adjective 'dead' is the subject compliment of the subject 'the queen'. This simple structure is perhaps the "most common sentence pattern: 'Something is something'" (Kolln & Gray, 2012, p. 19). The linking verb 'be' links the subject with its modifier 'the adjective'. The adjective 'dead' post-modifies the subject and completes the linking verb; hence, it is called a subject compliment. The 'something is something' bare structure is often used rhetorically by famous writers as a paragraph opener, especially the first paragraph of a narrative (Kolln & Gray, 2012). Semantically, the thematic role of 'the queen' is 'experiencer'. The nominal headline "Death of the Queen" does not have a verb. Verbs add life, vigour and colour to headlines (Garst & Bernstein, 1963). In other words, "the verb makes the headline live in contrast to most headlines without one" (Mardh, 1980, p. 81). The literature reveals that there is a consensus that non-verbal headlines are bad ones because they do not bring life and colour (see Garst & Bernstein, 1963; Evans, 1974; Conon, 1976; Mardh, 1980). The nominal headline, 'Death of the Queen', employs the noun 'death' followed by post-modification. It emphasises 'death' by placing it first in the phrase. Similarly, the seemingly verbal headline, 'The Queen is dead', emphasises the 'predicate'. The linking verb or "the copula is only a dummy, or empty, verb which serves as a carrier" (Mardh, 1980, p. 179). In other words, "the subject complement position puts greater emphasis on the adjective" 'dead'; "an alternative way of modifying the subject is to shift the adjective to the position before the noun headword" (Kolln & Gray, 2012, p. 21): a dead queen. It is safe to argue, then, that native English headlines writers intentionally favoured verbless or semi-verbless headlines to reflect the lack of action, vigour and life in the news reported; i.e., the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

### B. Semiotic Reporting

It has been said that "a picture is worth a thousand words." Therefore, a semiotic analysis of the front-page pictures that accompanied the headlines reporting the death of Queen Elizabeth II is in order. However, as the relationship between the signifier and the signified is often arbitrary and conventional in nature (Saussure, 1983), we expect to see

variation in the choices of these pictures. Barthes (1977) claims that pictures “comprise two messages: a denoted message, which is the analogon itself, and a connoted message, which is the manner in which the society to a certain extent communicates what it thinks of it” (p. 17). In our case, the denoted message of the pictures under investigation is a simple semiotic representamen-referent relation of what is inside the ‘frame’, i.e., a representation of Queen Elizabeth II. The connoted message, on the other hand, is more fluid and subject to change infinite number of times as it varies amongst individuals, cultures and times (see Chandler, 2002). By way of explanation, all front-page pictures in our sample represent portraits of Queen Elizabeth II, but they differ in their connoted messages. Some of them show an old sad queen; others show a young jubilant queen. Such connotative semiotic variation merits meticulous analysis. Table 3 shows how British and non-British newspapers contrasted in their choices of the front-page images displayed on Friday 9 September, 2022; i.e., the day following the one in which Queen Elizabeth was announced dead.

TABLE 3  
FRONT-PAGE IMAGES REPORTING QUEEN ELIZABETH II'S DEATH

	Young	Old	Coloured	Grey-scale	Cheerful	Reserved
<b>British</b>	16	18	20	14	19	15
<b>Non-British</b>	10	17	21	6	15	12
<b>Total tokens</b>	26	35	41	20	34	27
<b>Percentages</b>	43%	57%	67%	33%	56%	44%

Fourteen British and six non-British newspapers opted for grey-scaling the chosen portraits of Queen Elizabeth II. Black and white have long been associated with life and death; good and evil; and light and darkness. For instance, the “Romans marked their lucky days with a piece of chalk, their unlucky days with charcoal. From this custom of marking unlucky days with charcoal a rose the phrase ‘Black-letter day’” (Brokaw, 1932, p. 4). In most cultures, it is most appropriate for mourners to wear black clothing as colourful clothes are usually associated with life and joy. It is as if the loss of colour mirrors the loss of life. Similarly, black ribbons and black armbands are used to display grief publicly. As a matter of fact, “in Britain at a time of death both black and white are traditionally used. Although the colour of mourning is black the traditional laying out room is white and the body is normally given a white covering” (Hutchings, 2003, p. 58). To some scientists, black is not a colour, but it is the ‘absence of colour’ whereas white is the ‘sum of all colours’ (see Caivano, 2021). Perhaps the social semiosis of grey-scaling pictures of dead people is a reflection of this scientific opinion pertaining to spectrums and colour radiations. We can safely argue that 33% of the pictures under investigation are grey-scaled because the respective newspapers wanted to show respect by mourning the tragic death of the queen. Nevertheless, as the semiotics of black and white differ from one culture to another and even from one person to another, we can equally safely argue that 67% of the pictures are coloured because the respective newspapers wanted to hide or, at least, mitigate the tragic news. Put differently, those who opted for grey-scaled pictures of the queen might have wanted to emphasise the dark side of death while those who opted for coloured pictures might have wanted to emphasise the bright side of death by projecting the colourful journey of the diseased. We can argue that using coloured pictures to accompany front-page headlines reporting death is a form of semiotic euphemism. Thus, the choice of those pictures was not random but guided by conscious and unconscious knowledge of visual semiosis (Economou, 2009). Caivano (1998) explains that colour as a sign is not predefined but subject to “various factors and of the context in which it is taken as such. Color may function as a sign for a physical phenomenon, for a physiological mechanism, or for a psychological association” (p. 390). Pictures vary from one newspaper to another because colour as a sign is arbitrary and conventional in its connoted meaning. A case in point that demonstrates this arbitrariness is the fact that in Western cultures, black often denotes death whereas in oriental cultures, it is the white that denotes death because “lack of hue means lack of life” (Caivano, 1998, p. 397). Furthermore, “while in the West and in some oriental countries such as Japan the color of the bride’s dress is white, the Hindu brides and those of the Han tribe in China wear red, the brides of the Dong tribe in China wear black, and the Chinese brides living in Singapore wear red or pink with gold” (Caivano, 1998, p. 398). Similarly, in his international colour survey, Hutchings (2003) found wide variations in the symbolism of colour in international folklore. He found that the colour of the bride’s dress varies by culture; in many countries the bride is expected to wear a white dress, but in India they wear red and yellow dresses. In some parts of Iberia, however, the bride wears a black dress.

In the late stages of her life, Queen Elizabeth II looked very old and tired, especially after she contracted COVID-19 in February, 2022. To accompany their headlines reporting the death of the queen, 57% of the newspapers displayed recent portraits of the queen showing her aging yet graceful figure. However, 43% chose old portraits of the late queen when she was young, like the one showing her coronation in 1953. This juxtaposition illustrates how newspapers show respect to the dead in semiosis: either by emphasising death (old age/lamented loss) or by celebrating life (youth/unlamented past). We argue that there is something semiotically euphemistic about the latter as it tries to mitigate the sadness of the tragic news through a change in perspective. This subtle semiotic symbolism is employed more by British newspapers (16 pictures) than non-British ones (10 pictures).

The semiotic polarity of reporting the death of the queen (direct vs. indirect) is repeated in relation to her emotional state displayed in the pictures chosen to appear on the front pages in question. A cheerful queen appeared in 56% of the pictures. At the other end, 44% of the pictures showed a reserved queen (serious, saddish, sickish or neutral). Showing a cheerful queen is presumably a semiotic way of hiding the harsh effect of the tragic news, i.e., it is a semiotic



euphemism for reporting death. Compared to non-British newspapers, British newspapers preferred this subtle semiotic way of depicting the queen on the front pages reporting her death.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Grief is a personal experience that varies from one individual to another whether they share the same cultural background or not. Death itself has intrigued human beings since the beginning of time. Some people are very open in expressing their feelings when death knocks at their doors and take one of their loved ones. Others are more discrete about it. People who appear indifferent towards death are thought to keep their feelings of sadness hidden inside. Likewise, oral and written death announcements and condolences are done differently depending on various religious, social and ideological factors. Some people might approach the topic of death from a negative angle and stress the void left by the dead and how those close to them must be missing them. However, others may approach death from a positive angle by emphasizing how the dead are in a better afterlife, thanks to all the love and happiness they have spread during their lives. All of these contradictory aspects of dealing with death were manifested in the headlines reporting the death of Queen Elizabeth II as some of them concentrated on the loss of a dedicated and loved 'Ma'am' and others concentrated on remembering her good 'service' to the nation, Commonwealth and world. The findings of this study reflected both linguistic and semiotic means of expressing grief and mourning. Future research, though, can further investigate the discourse in the full stories that elaborated on the tragic news. Moreover, future research can focus on how the death of the queen was reported in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in comparison with England. There is no doubt that there is a need to learn more about how front-page headlines report the deaths of monarchs, celebrities and ordinary people in the modern world.

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**Ibrahim M. Darwish** is an associate professor of linguistics at the Translation Department at Yarmouk University, Jordan. His research interests include socio-pragmatics, phonetics, phonology, translation studies, localisation and media analysis. Email: [darwish1470@yu.edu.jo](mailto:darwish1470@yu.edu.jo)

**Abdulaziz A. Alzoubi** is an assistant professor of linguistics at the Department of English for Applied Studies at Jordan University of Science and Technology, Jordan. His research interests include sociolinguistics, dialectology and English language attitude. Email: aalzoubi@just.edu.jo

**Noora Q. Abu Ain** is an assistant professor of linguistics at the Department of English at Jadara University, Jordan. Her research interests include sociolinguistics, dialectology and phonetics. Email: nooraain@jadara.edu.jo

# Short Stories and AI Tools: An Exploratory Study

Abdulrahman Mokbel Mahyoub Hezam

Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Taiz University, Yemen;

Department of Languages and Translation, Faculty of Science and Arts, Taibah University, Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia

Abdulelah Alkhateeb

Department of English, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences (KSAU-HS), Saudi Arabia;

King Abdullah International Medical Research Center (KAIMRC), Saudi Arabia

**Abstract**—This study investigated the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in teaching literature, specifically focusing on short stories. An online survey of literature teachers was used, in which 40 literature teachers from different Saudi universities participated. The survey results indicated that literature teachers recognized the potential benefits of AI tools, including personalized learning experiences and increased student engagement. Teachers believed that AI tools could improve learning outcomes by enhancing students' comprehension of literary techniques and devices. However, the survey also revealed challenges related to teacher training and concerns about the quality of AI-generated content. The study suggests several recommendations, including stakeholder engagement, comprehensive teacher training, ethical guidelines, continuous evaluation of AI tools, and ensuring that AI complements rather than replaces human expertise. The study concludes that AI tools, when implemented thoughtfully and supported by ongoing research, have the potential to enhance short story education by providing customized and engaging learning experiences that enhance interactions between students and texts.

**Index Terms**—artificial intelligence, short story, personalized learning, learning outcomes, motivation, engagement

## I. INTRODUCTION

Short stories are a useful pedagogical tool for developing students' critical thinking and analytical abilities. As Mohammad and Mehrgan (2012) assert, engaging with literature nourishes these higher-order cognitive skills and supports second language acquisition. The compact yet nuanced nature of short fiction lends itself well to critical responses and questioning from readers (Pardede, 2019). Murdoch (2002) emphasizes that judiciously selecting stories and designing thoughtful activities, such as role-plays based on crafted dialogues, can significantly enrich English language teaching for intermediate learners. Through close reading exercises involving theme identification, character analysis, and examination of literary techniques, learners hone skills in analytical reasoning and written expression (Murdoch, 2002). Such textual analysis cultivates proficiency in higher-order thinking. Nazara (2019) further notes that the engaging nature of stories motivates students to participate actively in learning. Participating respectfully in discussions requires dexterity in self-expression and listening comprehension, skills that exploration of short stories may augment. In sum, incorporating short fiction provides opportunities to develop core academic abilities in critical thinking, writing, vocabulary, and discussion (Nazara, 2019). With advances in artificial intelligence, story-based pedagogies could be reimaged to offer personalized, immersive learning experiences.

Artificial intelligence tools show promise for enriching literature pedagogy through personalized, engaging learning experiences. Asthana and Hazela (2020) note that AI is rapidly transforming education by developing new student competencies and collaborative learning models. When integrated thoughtfully, AI offers advantages like individualized instruction, improved understanding of literary concepts, time-efficient grading, comprehensive text analysis, and immersive learning environments. However, it is vital to prioritize meaningful student engagement, ethical use, and the cultivation of core literary abilities (Asthana & Hazela, 2020). This study explores the potential of AI tools specifically for short story teaching and their impact on learning outcomes, motivation, and involvement. Through a review of relevant literature and an analysis of learning analytics from an AI-assisted short story module, the research aims to evaluate the integration of AI in enhancing short story education. It also seeks to identify challenges and limitations to inform the development of innovative, evidence-based approaches that judiciously apply AI technologies. Findings could contribute to crafting engaging, skill-centered literature pedagogies leveraging new technologies.

Traditional approaches to teaching short stories present several challenges for educators. A key limitation is the lack of personalized instruction, making it difficult to meet individual student needs effectively (Asthana & Hazela, 2020). In addition, the time-intensive nature of traditional feedback and support constrains differentiated learning (Murdoch, 2002). As a result, traditional methods can feel less engaging for students, potentially reducing motivation (Nazara, 2019). Artificial intelligence (AI) tools show promise for addressing these barriers by enabling personalized, collaborative learning experiences (Pardede, 2019). However, research is still needed to evaluate the efficacy of AI in enhancing short story instruction.

The current study aims to explore literature teachers' perspectives on the potential of AI tools to transform short story pedagogy and overcome the limitations of traditional methods. A questionnaire was conducted in which 40 teachers participated to assess perceptions of how AI may impact student learning outcomes, motivation, and participation. The goal is to determine whether AI can augment short story teaching in a meaningful way and inform innovative practice. In other words, the objectives of this study are as follows: a) evaluating the effectiveness of AI tools in improving student learning outcomes, b) exploring the impact of AI tools on motivation and engagement levels among students, c) and identifying the challenges and limitations of using AI tools in teaching short stories. Findings will provide insights into how AI tools promise to support individualized, engaging instruction while also identifying challenges to guide ethical application.

The significance of the study is to provide findings that could guide the development of innovative, AI-augmented short story methodologies addressing the limitations of traditional approaches. By exploring how AI tools may facilitate personalized, engaging learning experiences, this research seeks to evaluate their potential to transform short story instruction. Specifically, the study investigates AI's role in supporting differentiated learning pathways and feedback to better meet students' individual needs. Evaluating the effectiveness and challenges of AI integration aims to advance short fiction teaching through technology-enhanced solutions promoting student-centered, skills-based learning. Findings may contribute new knowledge to revolutionize short story pedagogies leveraging AI and augment traditional methods for a more tailored educational experience.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past few years, the extensive utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) and smart classroom technology has opened up new avenues for the modernization of education. These technologies provide a wide range of resources and offer flexible and diverse formats, which greatly contribute to the comprehensive transformation of teaching practices, both in terms of conceptual approaches and instructional formats (Zhang et al., 2023). These technologies have also been used to teach literature as a discipline and as a means for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning and teaching. Liu et al. (2019) explored the use of a machine-learning algorithm for detecting and evaluating literary style in Chinese poetry. The researchers found that the algorithm successfully recognized different stylistic elements. It also improved students' understanding and interpretation of the poems. By applying machine learning techniques to literary analysis, this research demonstrated the potential for AI to enhance comprehension and appreciation of written works. Among various literary genres, short stories have been recognized as particularly effective for integration into EFL classrooms (Ceylan, 2016). The inclusion of short stories holds great significance as it offers students a platform to cultivate their critical thinking and analytical abilities (Crumbley & Smith, 2000). By immersing themselves in these concise yet intricately crafted literary pieces, students are provided with valuable prospects to refine essential cognitive and communicative skills (Pardede, 2011). Skills like analysis, writing, and vocabulary positively impact students across disciplines by enhancing their abilities to communicate, understand new concepts, and empathize with varying views (Ceylan, 2016).

Literature is often used to promote personal growth and intellectual development because it allows learners to understand and appreciate certain communities, environments, and philosophies that vary from themselves (Carter & Long, 1991). The brevity of short stories keeps students engaged while exploring diverse cultures, issues, and perspectives. Beyond skills and cultural literacy, short stories offer creative inspiration and enjoyment. Analyzing different writing styles nurtures students' creative talents. Relating to characters builds perspective-taking. Short stories are likewise transferable skills applicable in further education and careers. Reading comprehension deepens as students infer meaning concisely (Kirkgoz, 2012).

In the past, educators used various digital tools at their disposal to bring short stories to life in engaging ways for students. Multimedia like images, videos, and audio can be incorporated into presentations to help visualize settings and characters. Learners can also develop creativity and storytelling abilities by producing their digital narratives using apps. Online libraries, websites, and e-books give ubiquitous access to literary works. Interactive activities, quizzes, and games found on websites and apps support comprehension development at different levels. Immersive technologies like virtual and augmented reality can immerse students in a story's world. Digital forums, platforms, and social media facilitate collaborative analysis and interpretation. For example, Teach Nouvelle ELA offers comprehensive short story ideas for English class, including teaching tips, story recommendations, timesaving resources, and full lesson plans for each topic, plus handouts, rubrics, presentations, and tests that can be used digitally or on paper. The resource also suggests ways to simplify and streamline short story units. The General Education Literature website at the University of Iowa provides strategies for teaching short stories, including introductory ideas and activities, highlighting characters, and using round table reading to encourage discussion and observation. Much Ado About Teaching offers four ways to teach short stories well, including teaching students to see themselves in the stories, using images to explore the dominant image of the story, and exploring human experiences in the story. The website also provides a list of 50 human experiences that can be used to explore any story. These digital methods make short story lessons lively while fostering critical thinking, technical proficiency, and interactive learning.

The future direction of higher education is closely connected to advancements in new technologies and the growing capabilities of intelligent systems. In this domain, continued progress in artificial intelligence will lead to novel

opportunities and challenges for teaching and learning. The rapid developments in AI technology are likely to profoundly impact how knowledge is delivered and acquired at higher education institutions in the years ahead. Only a few studies have explored this area. Roy and Putatunda (2023) argue that the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) into the teaching of English literature has the ability to improve conventional teaching methods and transform the learning process. Through the utilization of AI's capabilities, English literature teachers can provide customized learning experiences, encourage student participation, and foster critical thinking and analytical skills. Similarly, Cox (2021) examined the impact of artificial intelligence and robots on higher education through literature-based design fiction. He argues that AI and robotics are likely to have a significant long-term impact on higher education, but the full scope of this impact is difficult to grasp as the relevant literature is siloed and the technologies themselves are evolving. Developments in using AI and robots for education purposes are surrounded by controversies regarding what is technically feasible, practical to implement, and pedagogically or socially desirable. To help explain and interrogate the technological possibilities, Cox develops eight design fictions based on a narrative literature review. These design fictions aim to vividly imagine future scenarios of AI and robotic use in learning, administration, and research to prompt wider discussion. Specifically, the fiction depicts issues like how AI and robots could enable the teaching of high-order skills or change staff roles.

There is still a need to explore how AI's application can change the way short stories are taught and studied. The integration of AI into EFL classrooms has the potential to revolutionize the teaching and studying of short stories. AI can facilitate personalized learning experiences by analyzing learners' proficiency levels and interests to recommend appropriate stories and activities. It can provide automatic feedback on written assignments, check for errors, and offer immediate suggestions for improvement. Interactive activities, such as virtual tours or plot simulations, can be created to enhance engagement and immersion. AI's adaptive learning capabilities allow for real-time adjustments to lesson plans based on learners' mastery of concepts. Automated assessments through voice recognition technology enable frequent evaluations of reading comprehension and language proficiency. AI can provide personalized explanations of grammar or literary devices based on learners' questions. Advancements in AI can create immersive storytelling experiences, bringing story events, characters, and settings to life. Ultimately, AI-guided learning allows learners to progress at their own pace with personalized support and enrichment, transforming the way short stories are taught and studied in EFL classrooms.

### III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To achieve the research objectives, the study will answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of literature teachers about the use of AI tools in teaching short stories?
2. What are the challenges and limitations of using AI tools in teaching short stories?

### IV. METHODOLOGY

#### A. *Participants and Instrument of the Study*

This study employed a survey to address the research questions. The target population consisted of college literature instructors with varying years of teaching experience. A non-probability sample of 40 participants was collected. An online questionnaire was developed relating to the research objectives, examining perceptions of AI integration challenges and their impact on learning processes, motivation, and outcomes. Both closed-ended and open-response items were included to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative responses were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequencies, percentages, measures of central tendency, and variance. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to identify major themes. The triangulation of survey findings was used to conclude AI's potential role in transforming short story pedagogy. Key results were interpreted in the context of prior research on personalized learning technologies. This quantitative approach aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of AI implementation in teaching short stories from the perspective of instructors.

#### B. *Data Collection and Analysis Procedures*

The survey was distributed online using Google Forms software. Respondents received a link to access the digital questionnaire. Using this online format allowed the questionnaire to be conveniently distributed remotely to participants from different universities. The survey responses were examined using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of each item's results. Inferential statistics were employed to compare answer patterns.

### V. RESULTS

This section addresses the two research questions after presenting a thematic analysis of multiple data sources from literature instructors collected over the period covering the 2022-23 academic year. More specifically, this section will pertain to detailed findings and discussion for the following emerging themes:

- 1) common utilizations of AI tools in teaching short stories.
- 2) challenges and limitations experienced by literature instructors when using AI tools in teaching short stories.

### 1- AI tools can be helpful in providing a personalized learning experience for students in short story education.

30 responses

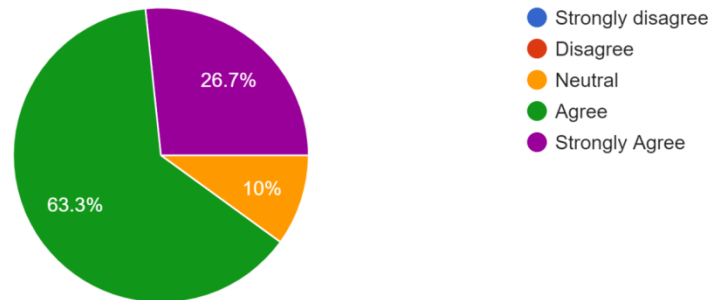


Figure 1.

The survey assessed perceptions of AI's capacity for personalized short story instruction. An overwhelming majority (90%) strongly agreed or agreed that AI can enable individualized learning, while 10% remained neutral and none disagreed (Figure 1). This consensus suggests AI may tailor lessons, activities, feedback and recommendations based on student profiles. Its computational abilities support short fiction analyses. Respondents viewed AI as augmenting rather than replacing teachers through collaborative enhancement of personalized approaches. Findings indicate AI may meaningfully benefit learning by offering differentiated support alongside traditional methods. The data show the perceived potential for highly tailored education according to learner characteristics. Preliminary results suggest integrated AI promises engaging, skill-based instruction that addresses diversity. Further research is needed on the impact of this on student outcomes and experiences.

### 2. AI-generated content, such as stories and analysis, can effectively teach literary devices and techniques

30 responses

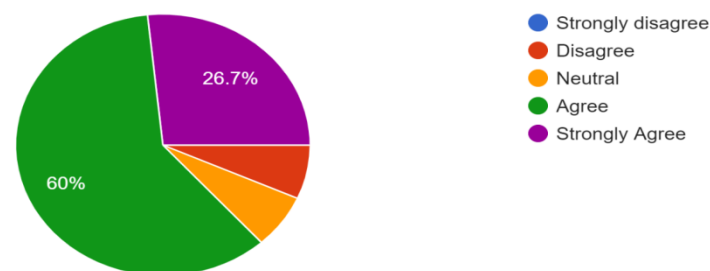


Figure 2.

The survey examined perceptions of AI's efficacy in teaching literary devices and techniques through generated content. The majority (60%) of respondents agreed that AI can effectively impart this knowledge, indicating overall positive views. Encouragingly, over a quarter strongly agreed, demonstrating confidence in AI's instructional abilities in this domain. Neutral responses were minimal at 6.7%, suggesting indifference rather than skepticism. A small percentage disagreed, signaling some lingering doubts. Thus, there was a strong consensus among respondents that AI is capable of generating content to teach literary techniques effectively. Skepticism was limited, with most expressing openness and optimism about harnessing AI's potential usefulness for literary education, despite residual hesitations among a minority. In summary, the findings revealed confidence and interest in AI's instructional power for conveying literary knowledge, with only a small proportion retaining uncertainties - representing a generally positive outlook.

3. AI tools have the potential to save time for teachers by automating tasks such as grading assignments and providing feedback to students.

29 responses

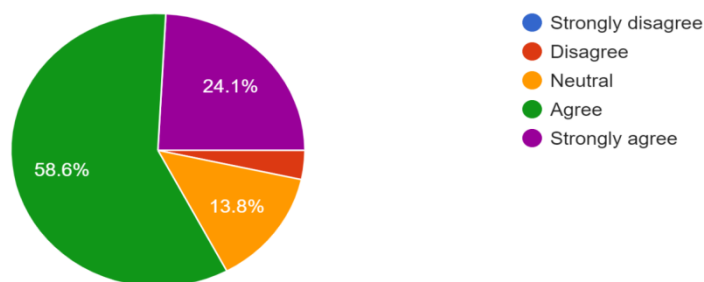


Figure 3.

The survey analyzed perceptions of AI's potential to save teachers' time by automating grading and feedback through results in Figure 3. The majority (82.7%) strongly agreed or agreed with this notion, revealing robust support. A small percentage disagreed (3.4%), suggesting not all are fully convinced but most recognize AI's time-saving potential. Over a quarter strongly agree emphasizes the anticipated significant efficiency gains from offloading administrative duties. Neutral responses were relatively minor (14.8%), without disputing the idea. Importantly, no respondents rejected it, indicating AI is not viewed as replacing educators. Overall, findings suggest AI is optimistically perceived as a practical solution to alleviate workloads by automating repetitive tasks, allowing focus on pedagogical expertise. The strong consensus, small dissent, and lack of outright rejection portray AI as a pathway to enhance productivity rather than diminish the profession. Most see the potential for technology to optimize limited hours for more impactful teaching.

4. AI tools can aid in analyzing and explaining literature to students by identifying literary devices and techniques used in the text.

30 responses

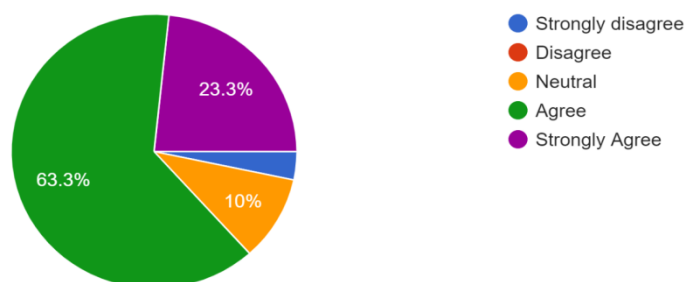


Figure 4.

The analysis of responses revealed a strong consensus, with 86.6% strongly agreeing or agreeing that AI tools can aid in analyzing and explaining literature by identifying devices and techniques. This indicates a positive outlook on AI's potential for enhancing student understanding. Neutral responses (10%) suggest some neither fully support nor oppose the idea, possibly due to a lack of familiarity with AI in this context. A small percentage disagreed (3.3%), signaling skepticism about AI's effectiveness. Dissenting views were in the minority. Overall, the results indicate a generally positive outlook on using AI tools for literary analysis and explanation, with a strong majority agreeing. The findings suggest that many believe AI can provide valuable insights for students. However, some reservations and neutral perspectives were also present.

5. AI tools can create engaging and interactive learning experiences for students through gamification and other interactive features.

30 responses

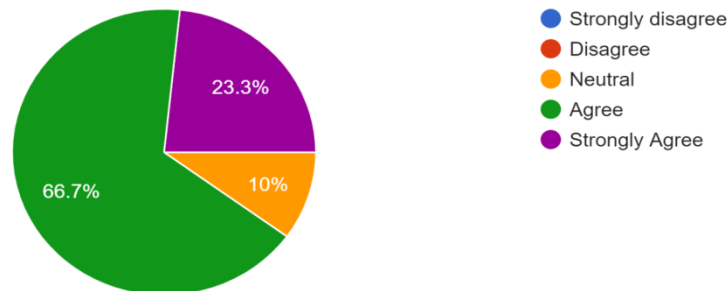


Figure 5.

The analysis shows a strong consensus among participants that AI tools can create engaging and interactive learning experiences for students through gamification and other features. A majority (66.7%) agreed, while a significant portion (23.3%) strongly agreed with this view. No disagreement indicates unanimous positive sentiment about the potential of AI to improve student engagement and interactivity. The 10% neutral response suggests a range of perspectives, including those needing more information to form an opinion. Overall, the results highlight a strong consensus and optimism that gamification and interactivity enabled by AI can enhance student engagement and promote effective learning. The findings indicate participants see significant value in leveraging AI tools this way.

6. Ethical implications of using AI-generated content in teaching literature should be considered.

30 responses

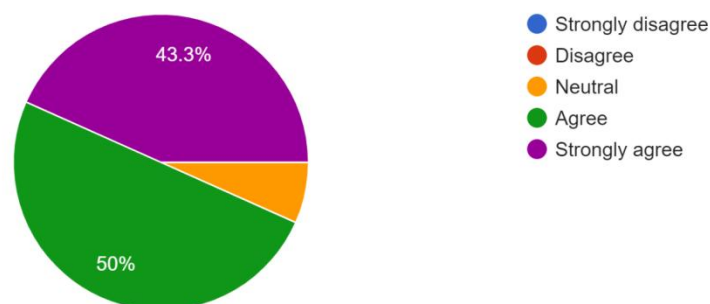


Figure 6.

The analysis shows a significant consensus among participants on the need to consider the ethical implications of using AI-generated content in teaching literature. A majority (50%) agreed, and a substantial portion (43.3%) strongly agreed that ethical factors must be addressed when integrating AI into literature education. No disagreement indicates unanimous recognition of the importance of ethics when leveraging AI in this domain. A small neutral response suggests some variation in perspectives. The strong agreement reveals that participants view ethical considerations as critical when adopting AI for literature instruction. The results demonstrate awareness among participants of potential ethical challenges with AI in literature education. There is a clear consensus on the importance of responsible and thoughtful integration of AI to ensure ethics are accounted for. The findings show participants believe ethical implications must be considered when using AI-generated content for teaching literature.



7. AI tools have the potential to significantly improve student learning outcomes in short story education.

30 responses

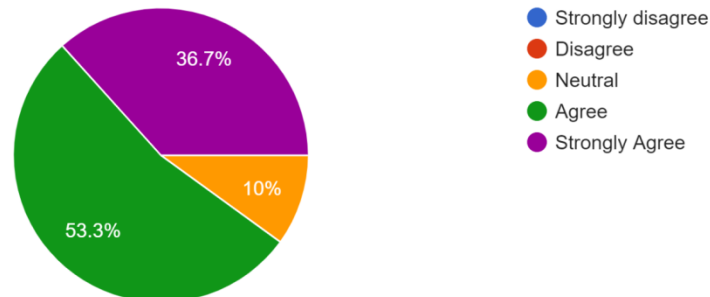


Figure 7.

The analysis of responses in Figure 7 showed that the majority of participants (89.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that AI tools can greatly improve student learning outcomes in short story education, indicating an overall positive sentiment and high confidence in AI's learning enhancement capabilities. There were no opposing views, demonstrating unanimous optimism among respondents. However, 10% responded neutrally, suggesting a range of perspectives requiring more information. The results revealed strong consensus and optimism about AI's transformative power to significantly boost learning outcomes. The findings indicate participants recognize AI's potential to transform education in this area, highlighting its value as a tool for improving learning experiences and achievements when teaching short stories.

8. The use of AI tools in teaching short stories can positively impact student motivation and engagement.

30 responses

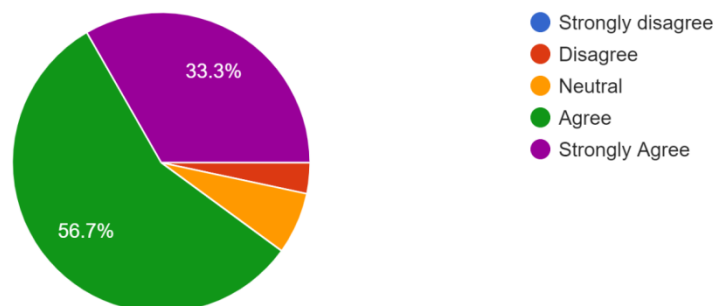


Figure 8.

The majority of participants (90.5%) strongly agreed or agreed that using AI tools in teaching short stories can positively impact student motivation and engagement. This indicates a widespread belief among participants in the potential benefits of AI tools for enhancing student motivation and engagement. A small percentage responded neutrally (6.7%), suggesting varying perspectives requiring further information or holding mixed views. A minority disagreed (2.8%), indicating they do not believe AI positively impacts motivation and engagement. Overall, the results highlight significant agreement among participants regarding AI tools' positive impact on motivation and engagement for learning short stories. While some differing opinions and neutral responses existed, the majority expressed confidence in AI's potential to enhance these experiential aspects.

### 9. Integrating AI tools into existing teaching practices is feasible and sustainable in the long term.

30 responses

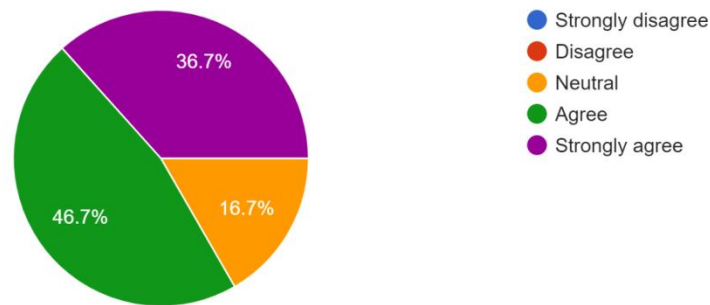


Figure 9.

The survey results reveal that the majority of respondents (89.9%) agree or strongly agree that AI tools can create engaging and interactive learning experiences for students, indicating a positive outlook on AI's potential to enhance education. Among those surveyed, individuals with personal experience of AI-powered learning tools (23.3%) strongly agree with this statement, while others (66.7%) agree, showing openness to the idea. A smaller percentage (10%) remains neutral and may require more information or experience to form an opinion. Notably, there was no disagreement or strong disagreement, suggesting limited opposition to AI's potential in education, although the survey sample may not represent all sceptics.

### 10- There are significant challenges and limitations associated with using AI tools in teaching short stories.

30 responses

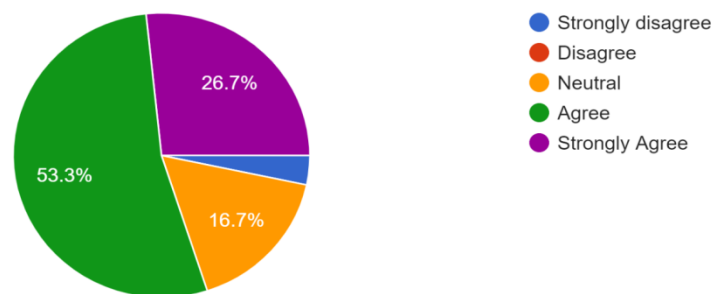


Figure 10.

The analysis showed a majority of participants, including 80% who strongly agreed or agreed, recognize the challenges and limitations associated with using AI tools to teach short stories. This indicates widespread acknowledgment among participants of potential difficulties and constraints. A notable 16.7% were neutral, suggesting varied perspectives needing more information or consideration. In contrast, a minority (3.3%) strongly disagreed that there are no challenges, expressing differing opinions. The results highlight recognition among participants that employing AI tools for short story instruction does present challenges and limitations. While some differences of opinion and neutral views exist, a significant portion acknowledges potential implementation difficulties in this educational domain.

## VI. DISCUSSION

A total of 40 college literature teachers participated in the survey, with the majority (66.7%) aged 40-50. Respondents were optimistic but also pragmatic about AI's role in literature education. The potential for personalized learning tailored to individual students' abilities and interests was seen as complementing traditional instruction. AI was viewed as an effective tool for teaching literary concepts through interactive stories, examples, and analyses. Automating repetitive tasks like grading could free up time for higher-value teaching. Comprehensive AI text analysis

was believed to improve student comprehension by explaining devices (Miller, 2022). Immersive, gamified activities were thought to promote active, collaborative learning, and critical thinking.

While acknowledging limitations, respondents strongly felt AI could positively impact student motivation, and outcomes through enhanced understanding. Interacting with literature should supplement, not replace, active student exploration. Potential challenges included a lack of creativity, over-reliance on tools, and plagiarism risks. Effectiveness compared to human teaching interactions was also a concern.

Broad stakeholder engagement is needed to ensure AI integration addresses the concerns of teachers, parents, students, and policymakers. Their input should guide development. Providing teachers with training on effective AI pedagogy and ongoing support can ease adoption concerns by helping AI augment expertise. Developing ethical AI guidelines addressing privacy, bias, and data protection is also important. Continuous research is recommended to evaluate tool effectiveness on student outcomes, engagement, and motivation through gathering user feedback. A holistic approach sees AI strengthen, not narrow, learning by complementing established methods through supplemental means of engaging learners. AI should not dominate or circumvent the curriculum but rather enhance it. An evaluation framework for ongoing assessment over time should quantitatively and qualitatively capture impacts on literacy learning while acknowledging technical, accessibility, and usability challenges to facilitate continuous enhancements. Overall, thoughtful, evidence-based integration upholding quality multimedia experiences and human roles in balanced education can help to realize AI's benefits without compromising standards.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The integration of AI tools in teaching short stories was explored in this study through a literature review and an online educator survey. The survey results revealed widespread agreement among middle-aged respondents regarding the potential benefits of AI, including personalized learning, improved comprehension of literary devices, and increased engagement through gamification. Educators expressed confidence in AI's ability to positively impact student outcomes and motivation, despite acknowledging challenges such as teacher training and ethical concerns surrounding AI-generated content. Overall, the study's findings point to AI's promising role in transforming story teaching by providing tailored support based on individual needs. It is crucial to implement AI judiciously, with ongoing research and stakeholder input, to enhance literacy education through personalized and engaging experiences while preserving the expertise of human teachers. While further work is needed, the results suggest that AI has the potential to revolutionize pedagogy by augmenting, rather than replacing, meaningful student-text interactions at the core of literary study. Continued evaluation of AI tools' real-world impacts will be essential to fully realize their potential in supporting and motivating learners.

The fact that the research was conducted solely in Saudi universities may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions and cultures. Yet the respondents belong to different nationalities, age groups, and levels of experience. Another limitation is the substantial underrepresentation of younger adults and older demographics compared to the dominant middle-aged group. A more balanced distribution across different generations could have provided greater insight into varying attitudes across age groups toward AI tools in literature education.

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**Abdulrahman Mokbel Mahyoub Hezam** Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Taiz University, Yemen; currently working as an associate professor at the Department of Languages and Translation, Faculty of Science and Arts, Taibah University, Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia. arahmanhezam@gmail.com ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9624-906X>

**Abdulelah Alkhateeb** King Abdullah International Medical Research Center (KAIMRC), Saudi Arabia; King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences (KSAU-HS), Saudi Arabia. a-12311@hotmail.com

Abdulelah Alkhateeb is an assistant professor of English studies and a coordinator of the Department of English in the College of Applied Medical Sciences, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences. Dr. Alkhateeb holds an MA in TESOL from Arkansas Tech University and Ph.D. in English Studies from Illinois State University, USA. Dr. Alkhateeb's research interests include English medium instruction, teaching English as a foreign/additional language, language policy in higher education, teacher education, pedagogical and instructional language curricula design. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7025-0342>.

# Rhetorical Move-Step Analysis of Argumentative Essays by Chinese EFL Undergraduate Students

Hongjian Liu

Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

Lilliati Ismail\*

Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

Norhakimah Khaiezza Ahmad

Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

**Abstract**—Rhetorical move-step analysis, an analytical approach within discourse analysis, is commonly employed to scrutinize the rhetorical structures inherent in various community genre practices. This method has also been extensively applied in academic and professional writing, particularly in published research articles and doctoral dissertations. However, little research has investigated the rhetorical move-step structures evident in argumentative writing by Chinese undergraduate students. Therefore, this study explores the rhetorical move-step structure of argumentative essays in Chinese EFL contexts. A corpus comprising 30 argumentative essays authored by undergraduate students at a Chinese university was assembled for analysis. The move-step structure of the data was analyzed using Hyland's (1990) analytical framework. The results indicated that most students utilized Hyland's model in crafting their argumentative essays. Additionally, the findings revealed that the argumentative essays by Chinese undergraduates adhered to a structure consisting of five obligatory moves, three conventional moves, one optional move, and multiple obligatory, conventional, and optional steps beyond the established analytical framework. These findings' implications extend to pedagogical practices and further research in the domain of EFL students' academic writing.

**Index Terms**—rhetorical move-step analysis, argumentative writing, Chinese undergraduates

## I. INTRODUCTION

Argumentative writing is a crucial academic genre that demands adherence to standardized structures and appropriate linguistic features to achieve communicative objectives in educational contexts. Constructing persuasive arguments is considered pivotal for success in academic and professional settings (Wingate, 2012; Schneer, 2014). The efficacy of an argumentative essay lies in its rhetorical structure. Rhetorical move-step analysis, an approach employed to examine rhetorical structures and the embedded steps of community-specific genre practices, is widely acknowledged to be closely linked to the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) school of genre-based approach (Swales, 1990, 2004). Generally, moves represent the components of a genre that serve a specific rhetorical function (Swales, 1990).

Additionally, moves are characterized as rhetorical or functional units operating coherent communicative functions within texts (Swales, 2004, pp. 228–229). As a functional unit, a move can be manifested in a phrase, a sentence, and a paragraph. On the other hand, steps are defined as functional text fragments aimed at realizing the rhetorical moves. Moreover, the steps associated with a move fulfill the purpose of the move to which they belong (Biber et al., 2007). The distinction between moves and steps lies in the specificity of the explanation provided at each level. The elucidation of a given text at the step level is more precise than at the move level, often involving identifying a gap and establishing a niche.

Under the influence of Swales's (1990) Create-a-Research-Space (CARS) model and Bhatia's (1993) Sales-Promotion-Letter model, many scholars have utilized the rhetorical move-step analysis framework to unveil the rhetorical structures of some academic genres, such as published research articles and theses or dissertations. Notably, attention has also been directed towards professional genres like promotional business English emails and spoken genres like three-minute thesis and spoken student presentations. Rhetorical move-step analysis is a versatile method for studying learner and expert texts (Kessler & Polio, 2023). Most previous research focused on the rhetorical organizations of disciplinary academic genre practices for expert L2 writers. However, there needs to be more literature concerning the rhetorical structure of texts produced by undergraduate L2 learners, particularly in Chinese settings. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the rhetorical move-step structure of argumentative essays written by Chinese EFL undergraduate students. The research questions of this study are as follows:

RQ1: What rhetorical moves do Chinese EFL undergraduate students employ within the argumentative writing genre?

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\* Corresponding Author. Email: [lilliati@upm.edu.my](mailto:lilliati@upm.edu.my)

RQ2: How do Chinese EFL undergraduate students utilize rhetorical steps to construct each move in the argumentative writing genre?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Studies on Rhetorical Move Analysis*

Rhetorical move-step analysis is closely linked with the ESP school of genre theory. Genre, as defined by Swales (1990), refers to a category of communicative events utilized by discourse community members who share common communicative intentions. Similarly, Martin (1992) defines genre as staged, goal-driven, and purposeful communicative activities. Tardy (2023) highlights that genres are shaped by groups of people who share social practices and language use. In the context of argumentative essays by undergraduates, the communicative purpose is to persuade teachers that argumentative writing can be executed appropriately. Consequently, argumentative essays by undergraduate students qualify as authentic genres.

Academic discourses, including the argumentative writing genre, contain various rhetorical moves. Parkinson (2017) depicted them as essential elements for recognizing discourse as an instance of the genre. According to Swales (2004), discourses comprise numerous sections, with each section classified into moves and each move further divided into multiple steps. A move can be realized by one or more steps, with steps serving as the fundamental building blocks that form a move.

Rhetorical move analysis is a prime example of genre analysis, representing a prevalent approach to scrutinizing the rhetorical conventions inherent in community-specific genre texts. This analytical framework has spurred extensive research into the rhetorical structures of various academic and professional genres initially devised to examine the rhetorical structures within research articles (RAs) (Swales, 1990). Its application in academic writing extends across disciplines, encompassing sections such as RA Abstracts (Friginal & Mustafa, 2017; Alyousef, 2021), RA Introduction (Loi, 2010; Dong & Lu, 2020), RA Methods (Lim, 2006; Cotos et al., 2017), RA Results (Yang & Allison, 2003; Kanoksilapatham, 2007), and RA Discussions (Swales, 1990; Basturkmen, 2012). Examining academic genres such as theses or dissertations, Hyland (2004) formulated a generic structure of acknowledgments in dissertation writing and analyzed variations among theses from diverse disciplines. Neupane Bastola and Ho (2023) conducted an in-depth analysis of the rhetoric structures in 60 literature reviews from Ph.D. dissertations using Swales's revised CARS model. The results revealed limited disciplinary distinctions between Moves 1 and 2 strategies but highlighted significant differences in Move 3 strategies.

Additionally, professional genres have been subject to scrutiny through rhetorical move analysis, encompassing genres such as business emails (Park et al., 2021; Herck et al., 2022) and promotional genres (Kessler, 2020; Wang, 2023). In a comparative move analysis, Park et al. (2021) examined request emails written by L1 and L2 professionals, contributing to an intercultural understanding of request emails in a business English context with cross-cultural insights. Similarly, Herck et al. (2022) employed move analysis to examine rhetorical organizations and linguistic patterns of 150 English email responses to customer complaints. The author identified conventionalized moves and sub-moves within the texts. The research also emphasized the significance of emails in service recovery.

Addressing promotional genres, Kessler (2020) examined the rhetorical strategies of undergraduates applying for a Fullbright English Teaching grant using a move-step analysis model. The result showed that successful applicants employed four specific moves, offering implications for prospective grant applicants. Meanwhile, Wang (2023) investigated the rhetorical moves and steps within 100 teaching philosophy statements, identifying common and less common moves. The research also discussed pedagogical implications for future research.

Another facet of rhetorical move-step research has examined rhetorical structures in spoken genres, such as three-minute thesis presentations (Hu & Liu, 2018) and spoken student presentations (Ädel, 2023). In their cross-disciplinary study, Hu and Liu (2018) investigated the rhetorical structure of 142 Three Minute Thesis presentations, identifying six obligatory and two optional moves in the 3MT presentations. The results bear pedagogical implications for graduate students. Similarly, Ädel (2023) further explored the metadiscourse of 13 spoken student presentations through a move-based approach. The findings revealed the distribution of various sorts of metadiscourse and the significant discourse functions.

In summary, previous studies highlighted the efficacy of rhetorical move analysis as a potent tool for analyzing the rhetorical structures inherent in academic and professional genres. Moreover, rhetorical move analysis has been applied to investigate pedagogical genres within undergraduate university contexts, notably in analyzing genres such as argumentative essays (Kessler & Polio, 2023).

### B. *Studies on Rhetorical Move Analysis of Argumentative Essays Using Hyland's (1990) Model*

The growing interest in investigating rhetorical moves within the argumentative writing genre has prompted the development of various analytical frameworks, with notable contributions from Hyland (1990), Swales (1990, 2004), and Toulmin (2003). Within the current landscape of rhetorical move analysis, Hyland's (1990) model holds particular significance in analyzing the rhetorical moves of argumentative essays written by EFL undergraduate students.

For instance, Najlaa Alharbi (2023) applied Hyland's analytical framework to explore the rhetorical moves in the introductions of 49 argumentative essays written by Arabian undergraduate students. The findings revealed the utilization of Move 1, Move 2, and Move 3 in the introductions, while Move 4 was absent in some cases, and Move 5 was omitted from all the discourses. These outcomes carry pedagogical implications for enhancing the academic writing skills of EFL undergraduates.

In addition, Kanestion and Singh (2021) conducted a corpus analysis of rhetorical moves in the argument stage of 60 argumentative essays by Malaysian university students. The results revealed three moves and five steps within the argument stage of these essays. Accordingly, the study's findings provided insights into rhetorical moves, steps, and pedagogical implications for novice writers in argumentative writing.

While previous researchers focused on the introduction and argument stages of argumentative essays using Hyland's model, Liu's (2015) analysis stands out for its comparative rhetorical move analysis of conclusions in 184 argumentative essays by Chinese students, employing Hyland's model. The results showed the rhetorical structures of conclusion sections written in Chinese compared to those composed in English.

Based on previous studies, a noticeable gap exists in the literature concerning a comprehensive examination of the moves across all stages of argumentative writing by Chinese EFL undergraduate students. Furthermore, the existing body of work is yet to explore the rhetorical steps employed by Chinese EFL undergraduates in crafting each move within the argumentative essay. Given these identified gaps, the current study investigates the rhetorical moves and steps Chinese EFL undergraduate students employ in constructing argumentative essays.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The study involved addressing the two primary research questions. This section focuses on the methodological procedures employed in the study. First, the research context and the sampling considerations were examined, followed by introducing an analytical framework. Argumentative essays were evaluated by an L2 expert and the researcher, with subsequent identification and analysis of the underlying moves and steps.

#### A. *Study Context and Sampling*

The study was conducted at a private university in China during the spring semester of 2023. Data were gathered from sophomores majoring in English who enrolled in an academic writing course for the first time. This course occurred twice a week, with each session lasting 45 minutes. Students were required to compose argumentative, narrative, and descriptive writing across the semester. For this study, argumentative writing was explicitly chosen, aligning with the analytical frameworks proposed by Hyland (1990) and Swales (1990, 2004). Ethical considerations were prioritized, with students providing informed consent and having the option to withdraw from the study at any point. Participants who had studied overseas were excluded from the study.

During the data collection stage, 32 undergraduate students were tasked with composing argumentative essays within 40 minutes. However, only 30 essays were successfully obtained and included in the study. The exclusion of the remaining two argumentative essays was attributed to one student withdrawing from the course while the other student still needed to sign the consent form. The chosen topic for the argumentative essay was "University education is very important. Do you agree or disagree?" The students' manuscripts were stored and labeled as AE (argumentative essay), with numbers ranging from 1 to 30. For instance, AE-1 refers to an argumentative essay authored by student number.

#### B. *Analytical Framework*

Hyland's (1990) analytical framework was the basis for examining the rhetorical structures of 30 argumentative essays written by Chinese EFL undergraduate students. Hyland's (1990) analytical framework comprises three essential stages, namely Thesis, Argument, and Conclusion, which are embodiments of the overall structure of an argumentative essay. Each stage is further classified into distinct moves, delineating a series of steps. All stages of Hyland's model were utilized as an analytical lens to investigate the rhetorical structures within the 30 argumentative essays written by Chinese EFL undergraduates to fulfill the study objectives. Table 1 below outlines the fundamental components of Hyland's model. The selection of Hyland's analytical framework was deliberate, chosen for its ability to offer a systematic and comprehensive approach to analyzing argumentative essays. Moreover, the reliability of the model was affirmed by Hyland through the analysis of 65 argumentative essays composed by EFL students.

TABLE 1  
HYLLANDS' (1990) MODEL

Stage	Move
1. Thesis Introduces the proposition to be argued.	(Gambit) Attention Grabber-controversial statement or dramatic illustration.
	(Information) Presents background material for topic contextualization.
	Proposition Furnishes a specific statement of position.
	(Evaluation) Positive loss-brief support of proposition.
	(Marker) Introduces or identifies a list.
2. Argument Discusses grounds for thesis. (Four-move argument sequence can be repeated indefinitely)	Marker Signals the introduction of a claim and relates it to the text.
	(Restatement) Rephrasing or repetition of the proposition.
	Claim States the reason for acceptance of the proposition.
	Support States the grounds which underpin the claim.
3. Conclusion Synthesized discussions to affirm the validity of the thesis.	(Marker) Signals conclusion boundary.
	Consolidation Presents the significance of the argument stage to the proposition.
	(Affirmation) Restates proposition.
	(Close) Widens the context or perspective of the proposition.

### C. Rhetorical Move-Step Annotation of the 30 Argumentative Essays

The study adhered to Hyland's (1990) framework for rhetorical move-step analysis. The students' manuscripts were compiled into a distinct Word file. Subsequently, the moves were identified, employing Hyland's move classification across all three stages (see Table 1). The definite rhetorical steps constituting each move in the argumentative essay were then identified. Next, the researcher meticulously annotated all 30 argumentative essays through the following three stages to ensure the credibility and consistency of the coding process.

During the initial stage, the researcher consulted an expert on rhetorical move analysis. Subsequently, the researcher independently annotated 20 AEs from the corpus using a top-down approach. This process involved a meticulous and close reading of all texts in the data, resulting in the development of an initial framework. This framework included a definition and explanation for each move or step identified. The researcher then presented this framework to the expert for verification and revised it based on the expert's feedback.

In the second stage, a university lecturer with expertise in move analysis participated in inter-coder reliability testing. A training session was conducted to introduce the argumentative writing genre and Hyland's analytical framework. A pilot coding was conducted to ensure mutual agreement on identifying moves and steps within the texts. The coder was provided sufficient time to annotate 20 AEs, mirroring the work previously done by the researcher. According to Rau and Shih (2021), the inter-coder reliability was 83%, and any disparities in coding were diligently addressed and resolved to secure a consensus.

The frequency of moves and steps was manually calculated in the third stage. Employing a combination of Kanoksilapatham's (2015) and Wang's (2023) criteria, the status of moves and steps was categorized as "obligatory" (occurring in 80-100% of the texts), "conventional" (60%–79%), or "optional" (below 60%) within the argumentative essays corpus. Adopting this criterion is based on clarity, making the distinctions among categories more readily understandable.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are discussed from two perspectives. The first offers an analysis of the overall rhetorical moves of argumentative essays based on occurrence frequency. The second focuses on the distribution of rhetorical steps within argumentative essays.

### A. Overall Occurrence Frequency, Percentage, and Status of Rhetorical Moves in Argumentative Essays

In general, the results indicated that not all moves from Hyland's (1990) model were utilized in the argumentative essays of undergraduates. Moreover, none of the 30 argumentative essays introduced new moves beyond the scope of Hyland's analytical model. A noteworthy finding is that all 30 argumentative essays adhered to most of the rhetorical moves in Hyland's model. Although the Thesis, Argument, and Conclusion stages comprised fewer moves than Hyland's rhetorical moves model, the standard rhetorical moves were consistently sequenced as Gambit, Information,



Proposition in the Thesis stage, Marker, Claim, Support in the Argument stage, and Marker, Consolidation, Affirmation in the Conclusion stage, respectively.

TABLE 2  
OCCURRENCE FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE OF MOVES IN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS

Stage	Move	Frequency	Percentage	Status
Thesis	Move 1: Gambit	21	70%	Conventional
	Move 2: Information	28	93%	Obligatory
	Move 3: Proposition	27	90%	Obligatory
Argument	Move 4: Marker	17	57%	Optional
	Move 5: Claim	29	97%	Obligatory
	Move 6: Support	28	93%	Obligatory
Conclusion	Move 7: Marker	23	77%	Conventional
	Move 8: Consolidation	27	90%	Obligatory
	Move 9: Affirmation	20	67%	Conventional

Table 2 presents the results of move analysis in argumentative essays. In the Thesis stage, Move 2 (Information) dominated, accounting for 93% of the argumentative essays. This finding aligns with Najlaa Alharbi's (2023) discovery, where Move 2 occurred at a high frequency of 95% in students' theses. The prevalent use of Move 2, involving background information, implies that Chinese EFL undergraduates proficiently incorporated background information in their introductions.

The second most popular move in the Thesis stage is Move 3 (Proposition), comprising 83% of the argumentative essays. This result closely mirrors Najlaa Alharbi's (2023) research. The gradual increase in the use of this move may be attributed to the fact that most students directly stated their thesis in the introduction while composing argumentative essays (Chang, 2023). In addition, 21 students (70%) utilized Move 1 (Gambit) to capture the reader's attention. Hyland (1990) stated that the gambit was frequently utilized in texts and required a specific skill to engage readers. The frequency and percentage of Move were closely parallel to a previous study (Najlaa Alharbi, 2023).

Moves 4 (Evaluation) and 5 (Marker) did not appear in undergraduates' argumentative essays. This absence may be attributed to English writing textbooks in China emphasizing the rhetorical moves of Gambit, Information, and Proposition while neglecting Evaluation and Marker. For instance, consider the following example from the Thesis stage.

- (1) **[Information]** Since the "great leap" of college education in 1999, a bachelor's degree is not able to secure a job as easily as it did 20 years ago. **[Gambit]** In this context, many people question the necessity of university education, saying that the input is falling short of output. **[Proposition]** Despite this, I think university education is very important. (AE-7)

Among the three moves in the Argument stage, Move 5 (Claim) and Move 6 (Support) are deemed obligatory, indicating their crucial roles in organizing this stage. One states why the thesis is accepted, while the other provides evidence supporting the claim (Hyland, 1990). The former relies on shared assumptions, evidence, and the force of conviction, while the latter seeks examples or evidence to reinforce these claims. Move 1 (Mark) occasionally marks the sequence and connects the move to the steps and thesis in the argument. It is considered an optional move in students' argumentative essays.

The Conclusion stage, although brief with three moves, Move 7 (Marker), Move 8 (Consolidation), and Move 9 (Affirmation), exhibits nearly identical frequencies and percentages as observed in the conclusions of argumentative essays by Chinese students (Liu, 2015). This finding indicates a consistent approach among Chinese EFL undergraduates in organizing the concluding sections of their argumentative essays. An example of identified moves in argumentative essays is provided in Appendix.

As presented in Table 2, Chinese EFL undergraduate students demonstrate distinct patterns in using moves across the three stages of argumentative essays. For instance, in the Thesis stage, Move 1 and 2, classified as optional in Hyland's analytical framework, emerge as conventional and obligatory moves in students' argumentative essays, appearing in 70% and 93% of the Thesis stage, respectively. Additionally, specific moves in Hyland's model, such as Evaluation, Restatement, and Close, do not occur in the argumentative essays of Chinese undergraduates.

#### B. Identification of Rhetorical Steps in Each Move of Argumentative Essays

This section explores the rhetorical steps Chinese EFL undergraduates employ to construct the moves within their argumentative essays. The results are presented through the frequency of moves observed in students' argumentative essays. It is essential to note that the instances of these steps are quoted directly from students' authentic writing without any modifications. Table 3 outlines the nine moves that constitute argumentative essays, each encompassing multiple steps (refer to Appendix A for an example of identified moves or steps in argumentative texts). This part addresses research question 2 by identifying and explaining the steps associated with each move in argumentative essays.

##### (a). Rhetorical Steps in the Thesis Stage

The thesis stage comprises three moves, each consisting of two or three steps. These steps are described and exemplified in the following sections. In Move 1, the author strategically aims to capture the reader's attention through three steps: raising a question related to the topic (Step 1), providing an overall statement about the topic (Step 2), and offering quotations related to the topic (Step 3). As shown in Table 3, 21 students utilizing Move 1 tended to raise questions to engage readers. Another prevalent step, accounting for 29% of the thesis, involves presenting an overall statement about the topic. The third step is less frequently utilized in Move 1, comprising 19% of its usage. Examples of these steps are shown in (2), (3), and (4).

(2) (M1S1) "Is university education very important? Why can this question be put up?" (AE-2)

(3) (M1S2) "Many people question the necessity of a university education, saying that the input falls short of the output". (AE-7)

(4) (M1S3) Winston Churchill once said, "The privilege of a university education is a great one; the more widely it is extended, the better for any country." (AE-13)

The analysis shows that students utilize various steps in composing Move 2. As shown in Table 3, describing the background to the topic (Step 1) emerges as the most popular step, occurring in 89% of the argument stage. Moreover, 29% of students explained issues relevant to the topic (Step 2), particularly emphasizing historical backgrounds. Additionally, 21% of students introduced opposing ideas related to the topic (Step 3) to provide additional information. Examples of these three steps are illustrated in (5), (6), and (7).

(5) (M2S1) "With the development of society, people's living conditions are getting better and better, and an increasing number of people are aware of the importance of university education". (AE-12)

(6) (M2S2) "Since the "great leap" in college education in 1999, a bachelor's degree is not able to secure a job as easily as it did 20 years ago". (AE-7)

(7) (M2S3) "There are two different viewpoints on university education. Some people think that university education can help them have a successful life, while others argue that university education is not so important". (AE-19)

In Move 3, stating a position (Step 1) is a conventional step, indicating that Chinese undergraduate students can explicitly articulate their viewpoints on the given topic. Stating the thesis statement (Step 2) is the sole obligatory step, consistent with its status in Hyland's analytical framework (1990). This move indicates that Chinese undergraduates possess the flexibility to express their thesis statements. Examples illustrating these steps are presented below:

(8) (M3S1) "From my point of view, I think university education is vital for a successful life". (AE-23)

(9) (M3S2) "I am firmly convinced that people with a university education can have a successful life". (AE-14)

#### (b). *Rhetorical Steps in the Argument Stage*

The argument stage plays a vital role in the structure of an argumentative essay. A standard argumentative essay requires the author to assert a position on a contentious issue and support that claim with evidence to persuade the reader (Wood, 2001). Based on Table 3, the argument stage encompasses three moves, namely, Marker (Move 4), Claim (Move 5), and Support (Move 6). In Move 4, the sequence is framed, connecting it to the steps in the argument and the thesis statement (Hyland, 1990). Move 4 comprises two steps: signaling a list (Step 1) and signaling a transition (Step 2). The two steps of M4 are demonstrated in Example (10).

(10) (M4S1) There are a number of reasons. First and foremost, university education is undeniably important. If people received a university education, they would get a proper salary in their careers (M4S2). In addition, our knowledge and experience can be enriched. (M4S1) Last but not least, university education helps people better shape their outlook on life and values. (AE-21)

Following M4 is the Claim (M5), which entails providing reasons for the argument (M5S1), making comparisons (M5S2), or offering examples or anecdotes (M5S3). In M5, brief stories or personal experiences are highlighted (M5S4). Examples (11)-(12) illustrate the four steps of M5.

(11) (M5S1) University education can influence a person's future development and run through their entire life, and its importance is self-evident. (M5S2) Compared with high school education, university education puts more emphasis on the development of morality, intelligence, and physical fitness. (AE-20)

(12) (M5S3) For one thing, as Cai Yuanpei, an influential Chinese educator, puts it "Five Domains" ... (M5S4) For another thing, education improves people's learning ability that makes them know more about the world. When they encounter problems in work or life, they can consult others humbly and make progress. (AE-15)

Following the claim in M5 is the support for the argument in M6, which involves four steps: presenting reasons for the idea (M6S1) and showing the comparisons (M6S2), as displayed in Example (13), providing examples or evidence (M6S3) and presenting facts to support the idea (M6S4), as illustrated in Example (14).

(13) (M6S1) The advantage of university education not only benefits students but also affects our society. (M6S2) When more and more people receive university education, cultural literacy and professional knowledge are also higher, the society is more harmonious. (AE-11)

(14) (M6S3) "University education places more emphasis on practical activities. (M6S4) There are many clubs where you can meet many like-minded people". (AE-2)

The four steps in Move 6 share similarities with several aspects of steps in Move 5, where authors present reasons (M6S1), make comparisons (M6S2), provide examples (M6S3), and present facts (M6S4). This relationship exists because the Support move is directly related to the Claim move, intending to demonstrate the relevance of the claim to

the thesis statement. The Claim represents the central assertion in the argumentative essay, where the writer argues for a position, and the Support comprises arguments that help readers accept the claim (Hyland, 1990). In summary, the rhetorical steps in Move 5 and Move 6 are optional, providing additional space for authors to assert, support, and enhance multiple layers of students' argumentative writing competence.

(c). *Rhetorical Steps in the Conclusion Stage*

The conclusion is the final stage of an argumentative essay. Following an analysis of Chinese undergraduate students' argumentative writing corpus, the author identifies that students construct the Conclusion stage by utilizing Move 7 (Marker), Move 8 (Consolidation), and Move 9 (Affirmation). Table 3 indicates that Move 7 (Marker) manifests in two steps: summarizing ideas (Step 1) and inferring results (Step 2). Summarizing ideas (Step 1) can be accomplished through various discourse markers, such as "in a word," "in summary," "all in all," and "to sum up." Inferring results (Step 2) primarily involves discourse markers like "in conclusion," "therefore," and "to draw a conclusion." Examples of these two steps are shown in (15) and (16).

(15) (M7S1) "To sum up, university education plays a vital role in people's lives". (AE-17)

(16) (M7S2) "In conclusion, individuals, societies, or countries need a university education to provide strong support for their future development". (AE-19)

Move 8 (Consolidation) is deemed an obligatory move in this study, with 90% of argumentative essays including such a move, aligning with Hyland's findings in 1990. Move 8 comprises restating the main arguments (Step 1) and establishing connections among the thesis, argument, and conclusion (Step 2). M8S1 is the sole obligatory step of the Conclusion stage, occurring in 81% of students' argumentative essays. M8S2 is an optional move with an occurrence rate of 33%. The two steps are exemplified in (17) and (18).

(17) (M8S1) "In one word, university education can not only make people intelligent but also teach people how to deal with interpersonal communication". (AE-9)

(18) (M8S2) "Therefore, we should attach importance to university education, ensure its development, and train more outstanding talents for the future world". (AE-19)

The above analysis suggests that students are conscious of the significance of Consolidation (Move 8) and adept at employing this move as a strategic approach in argumentative writing. While some students focus on summarizing claims supporting the thesis statement through Move 8, others restate their thesis statements through Move 9: Affirmation. This move comprises two steps: echoing the introduction (Step 1) and restating the thesis statement (Step 2). These two steps are optional and appeared in 45% and 55% of students' argumentative essays. It may occur before and after the Consolidation move. For example:

(19) (M9S1) "Therefore, it can be concluded that it is very important to have a university education, which will bring us many benefits and make us live better". (AE-5)

(20) (M9S2) "In conclusion, university education is indeed indispensable and important. It provides students with skills and knowledge for their future careers and has a positive impact on society". (AE-10)

In summary, the frequency of steps in the Conclusion stage varies significantly, indicating that Chinese EFL undergraduate students tend to select their steps flexibly to achieve their communicative purposes.

TABLE 3  
DISTRIBUTION OF STEPS IN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS

Stage	Move	Step	Frequency	Percentage	Status
Thesis	M1 Gambit	S1 Raising a question related to a topic	11	52%	Optional
		S2 Giving an overall statement to the topic	6	29%	Optional
		S3 Offering quotation to the topic	4	19%	Optional
	M2 Information	S1 Describing the background to the topic	25	89%	Obligatory
		S2 Explaining the issues related to the topic	8	29%	Optional
		S3 Presenting opponents' ideas on the topic	6	21%	Optional
	M3 Proposition	S1 Stating a position	20	74%	Conventional
		S2 Stating the thesis statement	23	85%	Obligatory
Argument	M4 Marker	S1 Signaling a list	13	76%	Conventional
		S2 Signaling a transition	4	24%	Optional
	M5 Claim	S1 Providing the reasons for the argument	14	48%	Optional
		S2 Making comparisons	12	43%	Optional
		S3 Offering examples or anecdotes	15	54%	Optional
		S4 Presenting facts or evidence	5	18%	Optional
	M6 Support	S1 Presenting reasons for the idea	14	48%	Optional
		S2 Showing comparisons	15	54%	Optional
		S3 Providing examples or evidence	13	46%	Optional
		S4 Presenting facts for supporting the idea	7	25%	Optional
Conclusion	M7 Marker	S1 Summarizing ideas	15	65%	Conventional
		S2 Inferring results	8	35%	Optional
	M8 Consolidation	S1 Restating the main arguments	22	81%	Obligatory
		S2 Connecting thesis, argument, and conclusion	5	19%	Optional
	M9 Affirmation	S1 Echoing the introduction	9	45%	Optional
		S2 Restating the thesis statement	11	55%	Optional

## V. CONCLUSION

The study investigated the rhetorical move-step structure of argumentative essays written by Chinese EFL undergraduate students. Hyland's (1990) model was the analytical framework for analyzing the data from 30 argumentative essays. Five out of the nine moves were deemed obligatory at the rhetorical move level, and their occurrences generally aligned with Hyland's model. Nevertheless, the study excluded specific moves, such as Evaluation, Restatement, and Close, from the three stages of Chinese undergraduate students' argumentative essays. Most students adhered to a nine-move rhetorical pattern outlined in Table 2 throughout the three stages (i.e., Thesis, Argument, and Conclusion) of their argumentative writing. The motivation behind students adopting the nine-move rhetorical pattern in Hyland's (1990) model stems from Chinese English writing instructions, which rely on writing textbooks and emphasize these move patterns as the rhetorical structures of argumentative essays.

Meanwhile, the study revealed significant disparities in frequencies and percentages at the rhetorical step level. Classifying the steps into stable and flexible became feasible (Ye, 2019). The obligatory or conventional steps, considered stable, were presumably identified in M2, M3, M4, M7, and M8. On the other hand, the optional steps were likely found in M1, M5, M6, and M9. Most students employed a single step to construct each move. The frequent use of optional steps in argumentative essays indicates that Chinese undergraduate students use steps flexibly to accomplish their communicative objectives.

Based on the study's findings, there are significant pedagogical implications for genre-based second language writing. The study enhances the awareness of second language writing teachers regarding the correlation between rhetorical move-step analysis and argumentative essays, enabling them to develop a profound understanding of Hyland's (1990) model in argumentative writing. Consequently, teachers can prioritize teaching the rhetorical structures of argumentative essays based on Hyland's (1990) model. For example, teachers can familiarize students with the rhetorical structures using Hyland's model and guide them in analyzing the rhetorical moves and steps in argumentative genre exemplars. This approach helps students identify the similarities and differences between their writing and the model through explicit discussion and activities in the classroom.

Simultaneously, teachers can ask students questions, such as, "What rhetorical moves does the author utilize to achieve their communicative purposes in the Thesis stage?" and "What rhetorical steps does the author use to construct each move in the argumentative essay?" This interactive approach encourages critical thinking and a deeper understanding of rhetorical strategies. Furthermore, teachers can illustrate the various moves, steps, and variations in argumentative essays to enhance students' sensitivity to genre knowledge. This approach bridges the gap between standardization and variation (Cheng, 2015), better-preparing students to write well-organized argumentative essays. Integrating these pedagogical strategies into second language writing instruction can contribute significantly to students' knowledge of argumentative essay writing.

Despite the findings and pedagogical implications, this study has some limitations. One constraint is the small number of argumentative essays utilized, which may have influenced the obtained results. Future research could address this limitation by investigating many argumentative essays written by Chinese EFL undergraduate students, enabling a more robust examination of the proposed model's effectiveness across a wider population.

Another constraint lies in the study's exclusive focus on analyzing the rhetorical move-step structures of argumentative essay genres without exploring the linguistic features of argumentative genres and their relevance to the identified moves and steps. Future research should examine how the moves and steps identified in this study manifest through various linguistic features of the argumentative genre, encompassing lexical (Khany & Malmir, 2020) and syntactic elements (Zhang & Cui, 2023). This examination would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how linguistic choices contribute to constructing the moves and steps within argumentative essay genres.

## APPENDIX. AN EXAMPLE OF IDENTIFIED MOVES AND STEPS IN ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTS

[M2S2] Since the "great leap" of college education in 1999, a bachelor's degree is not able to secure a job as easily as it did 20 years ago. [M1S2] In this context, many people question the necessity of a university education, saying that the input falls short of the output. [M3S2] Despite this, I think university education is very important.

[M4S1] First of all, [M5S1] college education makes us specialized in a certain field. [M5S2] Upon high school graduation, we know something about everything. But, in university, we are supposed to know everything about something. [M6S2] For instance, I had to learn about chemistry, physics, biology, history, geography, English, Chinese and math in senior high school. In university, I majored in English. [M4S2] Therefore, I turned into a specialist in English after college education. [M6S3] Instead of wasting time and energy in every possible field, I could devote my heart and soul to one major and excel in it. [M4S1] Secondly, [M5S1] university education makes us a well-rounded person. [M5S3] Through presentations, interest groups, research groups and other activities, we not only gain valuable knowledge but also sharpen our skills, such as communication skills, research skills and teamwork. [M6S4] All these will benefit us for our entire life.

[M7S1] In conclusion, [M8S1] university education is very important in that it improves us into experts with multiple capabilities. [M9S1] In general, university education is a must.

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**Hongjian Liu** is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Language and Humanities Education, Faculty of Education Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. His research interests are in the fields of academic writing, EAP, ESP, pragmatics, and Translation. E-mail: [gs60760@student.upm.edu.my](mailto:gs60760@student.upm.edu.my)

**Lilliati Ismail** is an associate professor in the Department of Language and Humanities Education, Faculty of Education Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests are task-based language teaching, grammar instruction, and language assessment. Email: [lilliati@upm.edu.my](mailto:lilliati@upm.edu.my)

**Norhakimah Khaissa Ahmad** is a senior lecturer in the Department of Language and Humanities Education, Faculty of Education Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests are teacher identity, metaphor, and grammar instruction. E-mail: [norhakimah@upm.edu.my](mailto:norhakimah@upm.edu.my)

# Empowering Community Interpreters' Competence Through Appropriate Work Attitudes: A Case Study on Interpreting in a Religious Setting

Febrina Tobing

Linguistics Doctoral Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Rudy Sofyan\*

Linguistics Doctoral Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Syahron Lubis

English Literature Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Umar Mono

English Literature Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

**Abstract**—An interpreter should have special knowledge, skills, and appropriate work attitudes and behavior, reflected in their performance while doing their interpreting tasks. This study aimed to investigate the work attitude possessed by the Community Service Interpreters in Religious Settings in Indonesia and its relations to develop their competencies. This study used a descriptive method. The source of data was videos of two interpreters doing their tasks in two different religious activities. Three professional interpreters were taken as the respondents of this study, who were asked to assess the work attitudes implemented by each of the interpreters in the videos. The data were analyzed using a 5-Point Likert Scale. The results indicate that the two interpreters have good and appropriate work attitudes, and their attitudes positively contribute to their interpreting competence.

**Index Terms**—interpreting, religious setting, community interpreter, work attitude, interpreter competence

## I. INTRODUCTION

Along with science and technology development, the transfer of information from foreign language has made English skills and translation activities crucial. As a global language, English is used to communicate between countries that speak different languages. Therefore, the role of a translator or an interpreter is increasingly important. Interpretation does not only occur in the fields of science and technology, but it also occurs in other fields, including economic, social, political, and religious fields. Today, many religious events in Indonesia invite evangelists (preachers) from abroad to preach or give a lecture. Such events obviously need interpreting services. Moreover, in this era of development, many churches conduct online services, which can be watched by everyone from all around the globe. This is one of the reasons behind the emergence of interpretation in the religious sector.

Interpretation within any religious activities requires caution, concentration, and accuracy since it is a sensitive area and every religion has different teachings and beliefs. Therefore, community interpreters who are assigned to interpret lectures or sermons must be competent in order to provide accurate messages contained in the lectures. This is also a reason why not everyone can be assigned to be the interpreter in a certain sermon or religious event. Misinterpretation of the preacher's actual message can give dire consequences for the viewers/listeners (in this case, all Christians who watch the online service, or who attend it directly). The actual message of the preacher will not reach them; hence misleading them.

Therefore, community interpreters (especially those who are assigned on religious events) must be competent. Their good competence will lead to accurate and correct messages of the sermon delivered to the audience; without any hidden or incorrect meaning. Interpreter competence has four important components, all of which are equally crucial for an interpreter. One of them is work attitude. Having knowledge and skills alone is not enough for interpreters to do their duties perfectly since they also act as the speakers accompanying the preacher. Therefore, other than mastery of

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\* Corresponding Author. Email: [rudy@usu.ac.id](mailto:rudy@usu.ac.id)

language, culture, and skills, the interpreters must also have a good work attitude, with which they can be more professional in doing their duties and responsibilities.

Translator and interpreter associations usually have competency standards guiding translators and interpreters in doing their professional tasks and evaluating their performance. However, the associations of translators and interpreters in Indonesia do not yet have their own competency standards. As a result, they use the competency standards that are established in a foreign country (e.g., in Australia), named NAATI, which is basically a certification body for both translators and interpreters there.

NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters), or the Certification Institute for Translators and Interpreters in Australia, has established a certification scheme to protect the public interest, namely by ensuring that the practitioners (translators and interpreters) have an agreed level of knowledge and skills as a minimum standard to engage in professional translation and interpretation practices. It will contain identification of the competencies and KSA (Knowledge, Skills, Attributes - or Knowledge, Skills, and other supporting Attributes) that must be possessed by an interpreter.

Several interpreters' competencies proposed by NAATI include: (a) linguistic competency; (b) intercultural competency; (c) research competency; (d) technological competency; (e) thematic competency; (f) transfer competency; (g) service provision competency; (h) ethical competency; etc. (NAATI. 2016). They must also be balanced with appropriate work attitudes and behavior since the latter (i.e., ethical competency) greatly contributes to the interpreter's competency and affects the effectiveness of the interpreter in doing their tasks. In other words, although mastery of knowledge and skills is the basic asset for an interpreter; work attitudes and behavior are the ones able to improve their ability and competence. This confirms Van Looy et al. (2003) who argue that competence is "a human characteristic related to how effective a person's performance can be seen from their action, behavior, and way of thinking".

Interpretation, especially in religious events, is a hard task. In addition to having good knowledge and skills, the interpreters must also possess appropriate work attitudes and behavior to help them on stage. Mastery of language and culture, good skills, and appropriate work attitudes and behavior will determine the professionalism of the interpreter, hence showing their competence. Work attitudes and behavior are often referred to as "interpreter's characteristics" or "interpreter's attribute". According to NAATI (2016), some of the crucial attributes required by either simultaneous or consecutive interpreter in professional interpreting include: (i) observant, being observant to details and thorough in completing the whole duty; (ii) thrives to excel, motivated to improve and work consistently; (iii) reliable, dependable and responsible in fulfilling all duties; (iv) willing to learn, willing to be active and constantly improve knowledge and skills; (v) objective, able to separate personal feelings or opinions; (vi) respectful, being sensitive to others' feelings, desires, and rights; (vii) collaborative, able to work effectively and efficiently with others; (viii) self-reflection, aware of one's own limitations (knowledge and skills, behavior and beliefs, as well as the influence that they possess on stage); and (ix) problem solving, able to identify and find effective solutions to existing problems so as to achieve the established goals.

Furthermore, Pochhacker (2004) argues that interpreter competence can be divided into two areas, i.e., personal qualities and abilities and special skills and expertise. The personal qualities include tact, discretion, alertness, confidence, professionalism, responsibility, optimism, and poise. This indicates that an interpreter must reflect wisdom, professionalism, responsibility, optimism, calmness, and confidence in doing their duty. This idea confirms the previous literature that interpreters must possess appropriate work attitudes in doing their duties (Gile, 2000; Gentile et al., 1996). Furthermore, Gile (1995) and Gentile et al. (1996) also proposed several other work attitudes, such as stress resistance, the ability to control oneself (having good emotional stability), and the ability to work with others, that must also be owned by an interpreter; be it simultaneous or consecutive.

Other than the various work attitudes mentioned above, the Decree of the Indonesia's Minister of Manpower Number 205 of 2021 regarding Indonesian National Competency Standard (SKKNI) for the category of Professional, Scientific, and Technical Activity in the Occupation of Community Interpreters states that a professional attitude at work, responsibility to complete any work, and responsibility to uphold the code of ethics and code of conduct of an interpreter must be considered before starting to work on the interpretation (Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021).

Considering the absence of competency standards for interpreters in Indonesia and the fact that Indonesian interpreters use the interpreter competency standards applicable in the other country (i.e., Australia), the empirical study on interpreter competency standards for Indonesian interpreters is necessary to be conducted. In addition, the importance of work attitude in doing professional interpreting mentioned in the previous studies needs further investigation. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the work attitude possessed by the Community Service Interpreters in Religious Settings in Indonesia and its relations to develop their competencies.

## II. METHODS

This study used a descriptive method. The source of data was videos of two interpreters doing their tasks in two different religious activities. Each of the videos showed different interpreters. The first video (downloaded from <https://youtu.be/T5r0htv7Vz4?si=CsscIVr4viwDnjaI>) contained the interpreting to the English speech delivered by Ev. John Hartman in a Christian religious event through a spiritual refreshment program. The second video (downloaded



from <https://youtu.be/dpkCickZ7yE?si=Srxz5ywD6kqeP5GX>) was the interpreting to the English speech delivered by Ps. Benny Hinn in a Revival Meeting. In the video, both speeches were interpreted by two different Indonesian interpreters. For the research ethics reason, the names of the interpreters are not mentioned in this paper, they are identified as Interpreter 1 (I1) and Interpreter 2 (I2). Three professional interpreters meeting the desired criteria were taken as the respondents of this study, who were asked to assess the work attitudes implemented by each of the interpreters in the videos. They were then called the raters in this study. They were asked to carefully watch the videos and observe the attitude performed by each of the interpreters.

The assessment used a closed questionnaire containing 10 items with five responses, i.e., Very Good (VG), Good (G), Fair (F), Bad (B), and Poor (P). The items were related to the interpreter work attitude while doing their tasks. The items were formulated based on the parameters of consecutive interpreting competencies formulated by NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters); the Decree of the Indonesia's Minister of Manpower Number 205 of 2021, and several authors' works (including Gentile et al., 1996; Gile, 2000; Pochhacker, 2004). The data were analyzed using a 5-Point Likert Scale, and the results were displayed in a table.

### III. RESULTS

The results of the assessment on the interpreters' works attitude while interpreting the speeches are displayed in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
THE RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT ON THE INTERPRETERS' WORK ATTITUDE

No	Statement	P		B		F		G		VG		Score		Percentage	
		I1	I2	I1	I2	I1	I2	I1	I2	I1	I2	I1	I2	I1	I2
1	Work Endurance (Interpreter's ability to interpret within a long work duration).	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	15	15	100%	100%
2	Interpreter's professionalism (able to position oneself in understanding the existing duty and responsibility, as well as to focus on the duties at hand)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	14	15	93%	100%
3	Responsibility in finishing all assignments (until the event is finished) and in time management at work.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	15	15	100%	100%
4	Interpreter's emotional stability (able to control the emotion, hence hindering it from tampering with the duties at hand).	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	15	15	100%	100%
5	Interpreter's cooperation with other people (in this case, the preacher)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	14	15	93%	100%
6	Impartiality in conducting the task of a consecutive community interpreter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	15	15	100%	100%
7	Interpreter's pro-active attitude during the interpretation process	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	13	15	87%	100%
8	Interpreter's wise attitude (able to decide the appropriate behavior in a hard situation or when a problem occurs in the interpretation process)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	14	14	93%	93%
9	Interpreter's quick response	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	15	14	100%	93%
10	Interpreter's optimism (able to maintain positivity throughout the whole interpretation process)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	15	14	100%	93%
<b>ATTITUDE (TOTAL)</b>		0	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	25	27	145	147	97%	98%

The results of the observations and assessments done by the raters indicate that both interpreters have very good interpreter attitudes and behavior. The first interpreter (I1) possesses 6 out of 10 interpreter attitudes and behavior, while the second interpreter (I2) possesses 7 out of 10 interpreter attitudes and behavior. Furthermore, the results show that the total score of both interpreters is almost 100 (I1 gains 97 and I2 gains 98). These results confirm that both interpreters are very good interpreters in terms of their attitude and behavior.

Moreover, the results displayed in Table 1 also show that both interpreters were given a perfect score (100%) in the four questionnaire items – endurance, responsibility, emotional stability, and impartiality. This means that (i) they have the ability to interpret within a long work duration; (ii) they have the ability to manage their interpreting tasks timely; (iii) they have the ability to control their emotion, hence hindering it from tampering with the duties at hand; and (iv) they have the ability to place themselves in a neutral position by not taking sides to any party.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

##### A. *Work Endurance*

Based on the results of the data analysis, both interpreters (as the objects of this research) have perfect work endurance (with a total score of 15 and a percentage of 100%). This means that the three raters have given the highest score to both interpreters. Their ability to complete their services is the reason behind their very good endurance. They remain enthusiastic in interpreting the sermon and revival meeting although each lasted more than 1 hour (the duration of the sermon led by Ev. John Hartman lasted 16 minutes per scene, while the one led by Ps. Benny Hinn, the first scene lasted 55 minutes and the second lasted 2 hours 22 minutes). The constantly loud and clear volume, bright facial expressions, and upright posture show how good their work endurance is.

Maintaining physical strength to remain healthy and have high endurance is the first step that interpreters must take before doing their duties, especially in various events in community interpreting, which usually only involve one interpreter (Hale, 2007; Nolan, 2005). Moreover, good work endurance can also contribute positively to the interpreters' competence and affect the quality of their interpretation. It can be seen clearly through the interpretation done by both research objects.

This research finds that Stern and Liu (2019) research is in accordance with the concept of "interpreter's competence" provided by Pochhacker (2004) and Nolan (2005), which says that regarding an interpreter's competence, the first thing that must be paid attention to by interpreters is to maintain their stamina, so that they can stay healthy during the interpreting session. In addition, the concept mentioned by Hale (2007) also states that, "Even a simple attitude can significantly affect an interpreter, especially in producing accurate interpretation".

##### B. *Professionalism*

A professional interpreter certainly has competence and good work performance. Based on the results of the data analysis in this research, the total score for the interpreter work attitude component given to the first interpreter is 145, while the second interpreter gains the total score of 147. Therefore, it is safe to say that both interpreters belong to the category of very good "consecutive interpreters", meaning they are competent. The good performances done by both interpreters are apparent through the quality of their interpretation, in which they can deliver the messages uttered by the preachers fluently and accurately. The results confirm the previous studies' findings that interpreter's competence can greatly affect the quality of their interpretation (Kaczmarek, 2010; Khrisna, 2008; Liu, 2020).

##### C. *Responsibility*

Based on the data analysis, the rating of this component for all research subjects is 15 - with a percentage of 100%. The results of this study confirm that both interpreters are responsible to complete their duties and are very capable of managing their interpreting time. They do not ask other interpreters to replace them before they complete their interpreting tasks. By relying on their knowledge and various interpretation skills, both interpreters have successfully completed their work flawlessly.

The results of this study are consistent with the concept of interpreter competence proposed in the previous studies and literature (Dai, 2021; Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021; Pochhacker, 2004). A good sense of responsibility at work is significantly related to a worker's (in this case, an interpreter) competence, in which it also positively contributes to the quality of the duties done (in this case, the interpreting).

##### D. *Emotional Stability*

The results of this study show that both interpreters have excellent emotional stability. With a long work duration, they can still control themselves to complete their duties. The long events, which require them to keep accompanying the preachers in a long duration, certainly make them exhausted. However, they still manage to control their fatigue by showing cheerful and enthusiastic facial expressions, even until the end of the events. This excellent emotional stability positively affects the quality of their interpretation. It is apparent through the videos which show that each of them is still focused on listening, observing, and even delivering all the messages conveyed by the preachers.

In addition, good self-control and emotional stability possessed by both interpreters also contribute positively to the accuracy of the messages delivered, as well as significantly related to their interpreting competence. This is why having good emotional stability when interpreting is important for a community interpreter. The result of this study confirms the concept of "interpreter's characteristics" proposed in the previous studies (Gentile et al., 1996; Gile, 2000; Lee, 2008; Pochhacker, 2004). These studies propose that the competency of a community interpreter is not only determined by their mastery of knowledge and skills, but also by various work attitudes, including their emotional stability.

##### E. *Cooperation*

The form of cooperation done by both interpreters can be seen through their communication and interaction with the preachers. All the speeches delivered by the preachers can be well understood by the interpreters, and they can also deliver them to the audience fluently and accurately. The results of this study signify that both interpreters can cooperate with other people, including with the implementation committee. This is apparent from their smooth and fluent interpretation. The results then conform the concept of interpreter competency proposed in the previous studies

and literature (Gentile et al., 1996; Gile, 2000; NAATI, 2016), which states that other than mastery of knowledge and skills, consecutive and simultaneous interpreters must also possess good sense of cooperation (can cooperate) with other people.

#### *F. Impartiality*

An interpreter must also be impartial (neutral) to any party. This work attitude is one of the ethical codes which an interpreter must do. Doing duties based on the professional code of ethics can indicate the interpreter's professionalism at work. Interpreters are categorized as professional interpreters if they fulfill three professional codes of ethics, one of which is being impartial. In their professional interpreting practice, interpreters often work with lawyers, doctors, pastors, and other professional workers who have certain areas which normally cannot be accessed by other parties (Khrisna, 2008). Therefore, impartiality is important for an interpreter with which an interpreter must not add, subtract, or disregard the original message delivered by the speaker. The results of this study show that both interpreters can already be considered as professional interpreters. This is proven through the way they deliver the preachers' messages in the target language to the audience. They can deliver the messages correctly and accurately; without any additions, subtractions, or even omission which may misguide the faith and confidence of the audience/viewers (all Christians around the world). The results of this study confirm the previous studies and literature that community interpreters must be neutral (impartial) at work (Dai, 2021; Puspani, 2010; Zhang & Wang, 2021; Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021).

#### *G. Proactiveness*

The results of this study indicate that both interpreters have the initiatives and are active during the interpreting process. The different scores given to the interpreters are caused by the type of the event. The second interpreter is involved in a much larger scale event which makes him look more initiative and active. In addition, the event where the second interpreter does his tasks is more complex that requires him to act on his own initiative more frequently. The results are consistent with the previous research finding that different interpreting types require different cognitive loads and complexity (Lin et al., 2021).

#### *H. Wisdom*

Interpreting activities can be conducted in different events (big or small events) or in different places (indoor out outdoor); therefore, many factors can affect the quality of the interpretation (Khrisna, 2008; Pochhacker, 2004; Puspani 2010). For instance, the limited time and speed of the speaker's speech may cause the interpreter to experience difficulties (Chunli et al., 2021). Furthermore, the condition in the room that is not conducive (maybe due to malfunctioning sound system or lighting) can also disturb the interpreter, including the background noise (Quoc, 2022).

In order to deal with these problems, an interpreter must be able to act wisely, evaluating the problems carefully before making a decision (Tarigan et al., 2022). By thinking quickly, the interpreter must decide what to do so that those problems will not disturb their focus while interpreting. The results of this study show that both interpreters are wise in dealing with the obstacles encountered in the interpreting process. They manage to deal with all the problems during the events smoothly. This finding confirms the previous studies arguing that choosing the appropriate interpretation strategies or techniques wisely can positively affect the quality of the interpreting (Dai, 2021; Gentile et al., 1996; Gile, 2000; Pochhacker, 2004). This implies that interpreting wisdom is determined by the interpreter's ability to cope with certain difficulties or obstacles during the interpreting.

#### *I. Responsiveness*

The results of this study found several factors related to the interpreters' level of responsiveness. First, the interpreters' responsive ability is apparent through their interpreting speed. Second, none of the messages in the source language is overlooked or ignored by them. Third, a quick-response ability is also apparent from their ability to respond to everything that happens during the events. They are not only responsible for completing the interpretation of the sermon (which is their main duty), but they also have to observe everything that happens during the event. They are required to respond to various unexpected situations or conditions, which may disturb their interpretation process (Luo, 2018). Fourth, their good responses are also caused by their ability to think quickly, in the sense that they can quickly think about the naturalness and acceptability of their words to the target language viewers. This finding confirms that quick-thinking and quick-response are significantly related to the quality of interpretation and the work performance of an interpreter on stage (Dai, 2021; Khrisna, 2008; Syahputra, 2017).

#### *J. Optimisms*

An example of this component is shown by the interpreter's ability to interpret from the beginning to the end of an event. Moreover, having the courage to make mistakes when interpreting and learning from them also manifests optimism at work. Another example is by completing the interpretation duty to which they are assigned. When starting an interpretation, although sometimes one cannot hear all the speaker's speech clearly, the interpreter should still try to finish the duty - hence the optimism (Luo, 2018). By having optimism, the interpretation results will most likely be good (Pochhacker, 2004). The concept of optimism proposed by Luo (2018) is shared by both interpreters. The results of this study show that they are equally optimistic in doing their work. This is proven through their performances in the

events. The need for having optimism in interpreting is consistent with the findings of the previous studies revealing that being an interpreter takes a lot of optimism since it can positively influence the success of an interpreter in making accurate and acceptable interpretation (Da Silva et al., 2018; Dai, 2021; Luo, 2018; Pochhacker, 2004).

## V. CONCLUSION

Some of the work attitude components possessed by the community interpreters in the religious settings in Indonesia include: (a) work endurance; (b) professionalism; (c) responsibility; (d) emotional stability; (e) cooperation; (f) impartiality; (g) wisdom; (h) proactiveness; (i) responsiveness; and (j) optimism. The results of the study confirm that each of the interpreters shows the aforementioned components perfectly while doing their interpreting tasks. Both have succeeded in finishing their duties fluently. Both the spiritual refreshment program led by Ev. John Hartman and the revival meeting event led by Ps. Benny Hinn have ended well. The success of these interpreters proves that a good and appropriate work attitude can positively contribute to the interpreter's interpreting competence.

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**Febrina Tobing** was born in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, on February 5<sup>th</sup> 1988. She completed her undergraduate program on English literature in Universitas Methodist Indonesia, Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, in 2009. He earned his master's degree on linguistics from Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, in 2012.

She is a student at Doctoral Program in Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. She has published an article on interpreting studies entitled Tracking the mastery of social interpreters' knowledge of religious activities in Indonesia in 2023.

Febrina Tobing, S.S., M.Hum. is a lecturer at English Education Study Program of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education in Universitas HKBP Nommensen Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Her research interests are interpreting studies and TEFL.



**Rudy Sofyan** was born in Kabanjahe, North Sumatra, Indonesia, on November 13<sup>th</sup> 1972. He completed his undergraduate program on English linguistics in Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, in 1996. He earned his master's degree on translation studies from Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, in 2009. He earned his doctoral degree on translation studies from Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, in 2016.

He is a Professor in Translation Studies at Linguistics Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. He has published a number of articles on translation studies. Some of his recent published articles are Thematic characteristics of the orientation part of the English version of Hikayat Deli text (2021), Typology of translation weaknesses: A study on the translation of professional translators (2022), and Becoming professional translators: Developing effective TAP course for undergraduate students (2023). His current research interests are translation and interpreting studies.

Prof. Dr. Rudy Sofyan, M.Hum. is the member of university senate in Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia. He is the member of Association of Indonesian Translators (HPI) and Indonesian Forensic Linguistics Community (KLFI). He is also a visiting lecturer in some universities in Indonesia. He is currently a reviewer in several journals, including Studies in English Language and Education (SiELE) and Lingua Didaktika.



**Syahron Lubis** was born on October 13<sup>th</sup> 1951. He completed his undergraduate program on English linguistics in Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, in 1975. He earned his master's degree on linguistics from Macquarie University, Australia in 1985. He earned his doctoral degree on translation studies from Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, in 2009.

He is a Professor in Linguistics at Linguistics Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. He has published a number of articles on linguistics and translation studies. Some of his recent published articles are Strategies of translating English idiomatic expressions in paper towns into Bahasa Indonesia by Angelic Zaizai (2021), The translation's techniques to avoid the error translation of Indonesian tourist resorts signs into English (2022), and Lexical errors made by Instagram machine translation in translating the account of "CNN Indonesia" news article. His current research interests are translation studies and macrolinguistics.

Prof. Dr. Syahron Lubis, M.A. was the former Dean of Faculty of Cultural Sciences of Universitas Sumatera Utara.



**Umar Mono** was born on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1960. He completed his undergraduate program on English linguistics in Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, in 1985. He earned his master's degree on linguistics from Universitas Sumatera Utara, North Sumatra, Indonesia, in 2002. He earned his doctoral degree on translation studies from Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, in 2015.

He is a Senior Lecturer at English Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. He has published a number of articles on translation studies and linguistics. Some of his recent published articles are Translation shift of Google Translate in translating sports news on CNN (2021), Critical stylistics in advertisement of Wardah and Revlon products (2022), and Time management and translation method in translating a scientific article: A case study on a professional translator (2023). His current research interests are translation and linguistics.

# Advancements and Impact of Medical Translation During the Golden Age: A Comprehensive Analysis

Yazid Abdulrahman Al-Ismaïl

Department of English Language & Translation, College of Arabic Language & Social Studies, Qassim University, Buraydah, Qassim, Saudi Arabia

**Abstract**—This article presents a comprehensive analysis of the advancements and impact of medical translation during the Golden Age of Translation. It focuses on the fundamental role that translators and scholars played in disseminating medical knowledge, shaping medical practices, and fostering intellectual and cultural exchange. It also discusses the significance of the House of Wisdom in Baghdad, key translators and their contributions, as well as the influence of translated medical texts such as Avicenna's Canon of Medicine, Al-Razi's Book of Healing, and Al-Zahrawi's Comprehensive Book on Medicine. Also examined is the impact of translation on the standardization of medical terminology and the transmission of medical knowledge across cultures and regions. The article concludes by highlighting the lasting legacy of translations in terms of their impact on global medical knowledge and suggests possible areas in which to conduct further research on medical translation history, as well as the role of modern technology in understanding and interpreting historical medical texts.

**Index Terms**—medical translation movement, Arabic translation history, the golden age of translation, medical translators

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Golden Age of Translation, which lasted from the ninth to the twelfth century, was a time of remarkable cognitive expansion, one that was driven by the desire of the Islamic world to acquire, translate and share knowledge (Gutas, 1998). The transfer of medical information was a significant component of this movement, as translators and scholars played a crucial role in improving and refining the science of medicine (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007). This period saw the translation of relevant medical texts from Greek, Persian, and Indian into Arabic, which influenced the development of medicine in the Arab world, and later in Europe (Savage-Smith, 1996).

It is impossible to overestimate the value of medical translation during the Golden Age. As the Islamic empire grew, its scholars came to realize the importance of preserving and assimilating the medical knowledge of the cultures they encountered (O'Leary, 2010). Medical books were translated in order to aid the development and improvement of medical procedures in the Arab world, as well as to preserve old knowledge (Al-Khalili, 2011). The European Renaissance and ensuing advances in science and health were also made possible by these translated works, which eventually found their way to Europe (Makdisi, 1989).

Moreover, because numerous translators and scholars were also physicians, they were able to offer a special perspective and advance the subject (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007). One of the most significant institutions of this time was The House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikma) in Baghdad, which attracted intellectuals and translators from all backgrounds and permitted the translation of countless medical texts (Gutas, 1998).

The aim of this article is to thoroughly examine the developments and effects of medical translation throughout the Golden Age, focusing on the contributions made by translators, scholars, and important medical books to the development of medicine. This analysis will clarify the long-lasting impact of these translations on international medical knowledge, as well as new directions for further study in this intriguing field.

The following section will offer a comprehensive review of the existing literature on this topic, presenting key findings and identifying areas where further research is needed.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

An outpouring of intellectual gems from Greek, Persian, and Indian sources occurred throughout the Golden Age of Translation (Gutas, 1998). Indeed, the persistent work of several translators and academics who facilitated the flow of medical knowledge across cultural borders made this a historically notable era. The eminent physician and scholar Hunayn ibn Ishaq (809–873) was one of the most important figures in this movement. His innovative translation of a wide range of Greek medical texts into Arabic laid the groundwork for greater information distribution and prepared the path for developments in the medical arena (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007, p. 23).

A useful source of information on the scope of translation activities during this time is Ibn Al-Nadim's detailed tenth-century bibliography. This manuscript sheds light on crucial works by prominent medical authorities such as Galen, Hippocrates, and Dioscorides that were subsequently translated and helped to shape the medical landscape of the time (Ibn al-Nadim, 1970). Additionally, the historical accounts of Al-Qifti and Ibn Abi Usaybi'ah provide a wealth of information on the lives and contributions of translators and scholars involved in medical translation. These narratives reveal the dedication, passion, and expertise of individuals who played a crucial role in the transfer and preservation of medical knowledge across cultures (Ullmann, 1978).

The accumulation and preservation of medical information from multiple sources characterized the Golden Age of Translation. The enormous contributions of translators and scholars in influencing the development of medical history during this period have been highlighted by significant figures such as Hunayn ibn Ishaq and priceless manuscripts such as that of Ibn al-Nadim and the reports of Al-Qifti and Ibn Abi Usaybi'ah.

Thus, the translation of numerous important medical writings into Arabic had a significant and long-lasting effect on the development of medicine, not just in the Islamic world but also on a global scale. The writings of Galen and Hippocrates were among the most relevant translations. These foundational works established Islamic medicine and provided a framework for subsequent research and advancement in the profession (Savage-Smith, 1996, p. 908).

Another significant translation that provided the Islamic world with crucial knowledge about the use of medicinal herbs was the influential book *De Materia Medica* by the ancient Greek physician Dioscorides. This key work on pharmacology and botany proved to have considerable utility between 50 and 70 CE, helping the medical community to understand herbal remedies and how to utilize them in various therapies (Levey, 1966, p. 49). It became a principal source of information for doctors, herbalists, and pharmacists throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance and is considered to be one of the most significant and influential medical works from antiquity. *De Materia Medica* lists in detail more than 600 medicinal plants, 35 animal products, and 90 minerals, providing information on their therapeutic characteristics, preparation techniques, and suggested dosages. The material is divided into five books, each of which focuses on a different class of drugs:

Book I: Aromatic and oleaginous plants, as well as various herbs and spices

Book II: Animals and their by-products, such as honey, milk, and fats

Book III: Roots, seeds, and herbs, with a focus on their medicinal uses

Book IV: Plants with therapeutic properties, including those used for treating specific ailments

Book V: Wines, minerals, and other substances used for medicinal purposes

The empirical method and emphasis on direct observation distinguish Dioscorides' writings. He frequently discusses the physical traits, locations, and ideal times to pick the plants for maximum therapeutic potency. *De Materia Medica* also offers detailed images of plants that aid readers in determining the appropriate species for various treatments (Scarborough, 1994; Osbaldeston, 2000; Riddle, 1985).

It is, therefore, impossible to exaggerate the importance of *De Materia Medica* in the development of medicine. The text was translated into a wide range of tongues, including Arabic, Latin, and Syriac, making it easier for people throughout the Islamic world, medieval Europe, and beyond to learn about Dioscorides. It affected the growth of pharmacology, botany, and medicine for centuries, and many of the treatments and cures it describes are still used in herbal medicine today.

Alongside the contributions from Greek sources, translations of Persian and Indian medical writings also had a significant impact on the development of medicine in the Islamic world. One famous example is the *Kitab al-Mansuri* by Al-Razi (Rhazes), a Persian medical text that significantly expanded the amount of medical knowledge available to Arab physicians (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007, p. 37).

Basic Ayurvedic medicinal concepts were also disseminated to such physicians through the translation of Indian works such as the *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*. These writings advanced medicine by supplying knowledge on the connections between the body, mind, and environment, as well as holistic therapeutic methods that were central to the Ayurvedic philosophy (Zimmermann, 1986, p. 215).

The development of medicine across the globe was significantly influenced by the translation of important medical works from Greek, Persian, and Indian sources throughout the Golden Age. These supported the cross-cultural interchange of medical knowledge, facilitating a deeper comprehension of healthcare and therapeutic approaches. They also created a solid foundation for further advancement in the area.

#### A. *Translation Methodologies*

Scholars have delved into the methods used by translators during the Golden Age, specifically focusing on their accuracy, adaptability, and their role in fostering the growth and transmission of medical knowledge.

For instance, Gutas (1998) underlines the importance of the philological and hermeneutical perspectives that translators employed throughout this period. These enabled translators to preserve translation integrity while making complicated medical texts more accessible and understandable to their intended audience. Hunayn ibn Ishaq, for example, devised a technique that valued accuracy and adaptability, emphasizing the significance of comprehending the context and authorial meaning of the source text (Gutas, 1998, p. 123). This method facilitated the precise translation of Greek medical concepts into Arabic while allowing requisite changes to be made to align with the Islamic world's cultural and intellectual surroundings (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007, p. 23).

During the Golden Age, the complex interactions between translators and medical professionals played a crucial role in the development of translation procedures and the consequent influence on medical knowledge. Numerous translators, including Al-Razi and Ibn Sina, were also skilled medical professionals, enabling them to provide unique insights into the translation process (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007, p. 37). Their dual skills in medicine and translation meant these scholars were able to contribute to the improvement of medical practices due to their in-depth knowledge of the source materials. This demonstrates the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation in the development and distribution of knowledge and how the intellectual interchange between medical practitioners and translators acted as a driving force in the evolution of medicine throughout this period.

#### *B. Evolution of Medical Knowledge in the Islamic World*

Translation of important medical texts throughout the Golden Age was a crucial factor in the development of a medical tradition distinctive to the Islamic world. This distinctive Islamic medical tradition, marked by its synthesis of multiple cultural elements, successfully combined aspects from several sources, including the Greek, Persian, and Indian medical systems, to produce a comprehensive and novel body of medical knowledge (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007, p. 14).

These translations not only played a crucial role in the transmission of ancient information but also acted to facilitate the fusion of that knowledge with already-practiced Islamic medicine. Drawing on the rich intellectual history contained in these translated writings, Arab doctors had the tools they needed to advance and perfect the existing body of medical knowledge (Gutas, 1998, p. 145). This blending of several medical traditions emphasizes the profound impact translation can have on how information is developed and disseminated across cultural and chronological barriers.

#### *C. Medical Knowledge Across Cultural and Geographical Boundaries*

Academic studies have probed the crucial function of translation as a means of spreading medical expertise among various cultures and geographical areas. In time, the translated books made it to Europe, where they had a significant impact on how European medicine developed during the Renaissance, particularly in areas such as pharmacology and anatomy (Savage-Smith, 1996, p. 961). This procedure reveals the lasting impact of the Golden Age on the global growth and development of medical knowledge and is supported by translations from Arabic into Latin (Burnett, 1996).

This intercultural interchange of ideas and information emphasizes the importance of translation as a tool for furthering knowledge and encouraging intellectual development. Additionally, it highlights the interdependence of human knowledge and the significance of communication and cooperation among civilizations in determining the course of medical advancement.

### III. DISCUSSION

During the Golden Age of Translation, the Baghdad-based House of Wisdom, founded in the ninth century, was extremely important in the translation of medical texts (Al-Khalili, 2011). It attracted researchers and translators from diverse backgrounds to become a center of study and information, facilitating the flow of ideas between various civilizations. By making essential materials available to a larger audience, the translations it generated made a substantial contribution to the advancement of medical knowledge. For instance, the translations of Greek medical works by Hunayn ibn Ishaq and his team laid the groundwork for the development of medical science in the Islamic world (Savage-Smith, 1996, p. 43). The House of Wisdom promoted additional advancements in the field of medicine by helping to disseminate medical knowledge throughout the Islamic empire and beyond.

#### *A. Key Translators and Their Contributions to Medical Translation*

##### *(a). Hunayn Ibn Ishaq*

Born in Al-Hira, Iraq, around 809 CE, Hunayn ibn Ishaq also known as Johannitus in Latin, was a distinguished scholar and translator. He played a significant role in the Islamic Golden Age translation movement (Savage-Smith, 1996). He rose to prominence as the foremost expert in translating Greek medical writings into Arabic and Syriac as a result of his exacting and thorough translations. His work profoundly influenced the advancement of medical research in the Islamic world, as it not only maintained the knowledge contained in these ancient writings but also made it available to a wider audience (Savage-Smith, 1996, p. 45).

His highly esteemed abilities meant that Hunayn ibn Ishaq was chosen to lead a translation workshop for the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad (Savage-Smith, 1996, p. 46). Along with his team, he translated numerous Greek works on science and philosophy into Arabic. Hunayn's translations were distinguished by their precision and clarity, which made it easier for Arabic-speaking intellectuals to interact with Greek knowledge. Thus, the work of Hunayn ibn Ishaq was instrumental in shaping medical knowledge during the Golden Age and laid the foundation for other scholars, such as Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ibn Matar, to further expand on

##### *(b). Al-Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf Ibn Matar*

Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ibn Matar, a renowned translator born in Baghdad in 786 CE, played a crucial role in converting Greek medical knowledge into Arabic. He was particularly renowned for his translations of Hippocrates and



Dioscorides (Ullmann, 1978, p. 69). In addition to introducing Islamic scholars to the medicinal use of plants and other natural resources, Al-Hajjaj's translation of Dioscorides' *De Materia Medica* paved the way for the establishment of Islamic pharmacology (Ullmann, 1978, p. 69).

The Aphorisms, among other works of Hippocrates, were translated by Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ibn Matar and were crucial in spreading the essential ideas of Greek medicine to the Islamic world. One of the main concepts he introduced was the doctrine of the four humors, which include blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile (Ullmann, 1978, p. 69). This theory states that when these humors are in balance within the body, health is attained, and when there is an imbalance, sickness ensues. This idea was revolutionary at the time because it underlined how crucial it is to comprehend the internal functioning of the body in order to maintain and recover health.

Through his translations, Al-Hajjaj also made Muslim physicians aware of the value of clinical observation in medical practice. Hippocrates' writings emphasized the value of closely monitoring patients' symptoms, how they develop, and how different therapies are working. This observational method helped doctors to gain a more precise understanding of illnesses and how to treat them, improving patient outcomes. This led to the establishment of evidence-based medicine, a cornerstone of contemporary medical practice.

Al-Hajjaj's translations of Hippocratic literature also raised awareness of medical ethics in the Islamic world. Hippocrates is credited with creating the Hippocratic Oath, a fundamental ethical rule that emphasizes the doctor's responsibility to care for patients and to respect their privacy. A sense of professional responsibility and trust between doctors and patients was established following the introduction of these ethical concepts to Muslim physicians, qualities that remain crucial in modern medical practice.

In addition, Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ibn Matar's translations of Hippocratic books aided the flow of medical knowledge between the Greek and Islamic traditions. This interaction not only improved the understanding of medicine throughout the Islamic world but also helped to prepare for further advancements in the subject. Al-Hajjaj's contributions to medical translation, therefore, had a significant impact on how medicine was practiced and understood both within and outside of the Islamic world.

#### *B. Evaluation of Significant Medical Texts Translated at This Time*

##### *(a). Avicenna's The Canon of Medicine (Ibn Sina)*

One of the most important medical texts of the Golden Age was *The Canon of Medicine* which was composed by the Persian polymath Avicenna (Ibn Sina) in the eleventh century. It served as the fundamental medical textbook in both the Islamic world and Europe for centuries, as it compiled and synthesized the medical knowledge of classical Greek, Roman, and Islamic sources (Bakhtiar, 1999, p. 25). In the twelfth century, Gerard of Cremona translated the *Canon of Medicine* into Latin, facilitating its extensive spread and influence in European medical circles (McVaugh, 1988, p. 39). The cornerstone of evidence-based medicine was formed by Avicenna's emphasis on the value of clinical observation and experimentation in medical practice.

##### *(b). The Book of Healing by Al-Razi (Rhazes)*

Al-Razi, also known as Rhazes, was a prominent Persian physician and philosopher who authored *The Book of Healing*, a comprehensive medical work (*Kitab al-Hawi*) that collected his medical observations and experiences, as well as those of his forebears, including Hippocrates and Galen (Pioreschi, 1996, p. 144). The Latin translation of the book in the twelfth century contributed significantly to the growth of medical knowledge in Europe (Pioreschi, 1996, p. 146). Al-Razi's work had a significant impact on medicine due to his emphasis on clinical experience and observation, as well as his novel treatments for a number of illnesses.

##### *(c). The Comprehensive Book on Medicine by Al-Zahrawi (Abulcasis)*

*The Comprehensive Book on Medicine* (*Kitab al-Tasrif*) was written in the tenth century by Andalusian physician Al-Zahrawi, also known as Abulcasis. This important work served as a medical encyclopedia, covering topics such as surgery, pharmacology, and medical ethics (Savage-Smith, 1996, p. 112). Al-Zahrawi's revolutionary improvements in surgical methods, including the use of ligatures and the development of a range of surgical equipment, had a notable impact on both the Islamic world and Europe (Savage-Smith, 1996, p. 113). In the twelfth century, Gerard of Cremona translated *The Comprehensive Book on Medicine* into Latin, which increased its influence on European medical practice (Hammond, 2009, p. 65).

#### *C. The Influence of Translation on the Development of Medicine*

The development and standardized use of medical language across cultures was facilitated by the translation of medical writings during the Golden Age. Translators such as Hunayn ibn Ishaq played a crucial role in creating a coherent and consistent medical vocabulary in Arabic, which facilitated the communication of medical knowledge and ideas between scholars (Dols, 1984, pp. 29-31). This standardized terminology made it possible for physicians from different backgrounds to understand and collaborate on medical research, leading to a more comprehensive and interconnected body of medical knowledge.

The translation of medical texts during this time aided in disseminating medical knowledge across a plethora of cultural and geographic areas. Islamic medicine was founded on the translated writings of classical Greek and Roman

physicians such as Galen and Hippocrates, which were later incorporated into the works of Islamic scholars such as Avicenna and Al-Razi (Bakhtiar, 1999, p. 24). Moreover, as the translated writings of Islamic scholars were incorporated into European medical practice during the Middle Ages, this information exchange also occurred in the opposite direction (McVaugh, 1988, p. 40). This resulted in a global flow of medical information that significantly expanded the discipline of medicine and provided the foundation for contemporary medical procedures.

#### *D. The Significance of Medical Translation During the Golden Age*

The Golden Age of Translation, which saw the integration of various medical traditions and the cross-cultural exchange of ideas, was crucial in facilitating the development of medical knowledge and practice. The establishment of a distinctive Islamic medical tradition was considerably influenced by the preservation, incorporation, and diffusion of ancient medical knowledge made possible by the translation of Greek, Persian, and Indian medical literature into Arabic (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007, p. 14). Future developments in medicine, both within and outside of the Islamic world, were made possible through the work of outstanding translators such as Hunayn ibn Ishaq, Al-Razi, and Ibn Sina (Gutas, 1998).

#### *E. The Enduring Impact of the Golden Age of Translation on Global Medical Knowledge*

The enduring effect of the Golden Age of Translation on medical knowledge and practice worldwide influenced the advancement of European medicine throughout the Renaissance and beyond (Savage-Smith, 1996, p. 961). Avicenna's Canon of Medicine and Al-Razi's Kitab al-Hawi fi al-Tibb, among other important medical works, were translated into Latin, thereby helping to disseminate medical knowledge throughout Europe, laying the groundwork for later medical advances (Gracia, 2008, p. 137). The analysis of medical translation during this era illuminates the evolution of medical theory and practice, as well as the role that translation plays in the exchange of ideas across cultures. Continued study in this field is crucial in enabling greater comprehension of the subtleties of the translation procedures employed at the time and for analyzing how translation enhanced the development of particular medical practices and therapies (Pormann & Savage-Smith, 2007, p. 23). Studying the legacy of the Golden Age can also serve to motivate future cross-cultural interactions and cooperative efforts to develop medical theory and practice.

The establishment of a distinctive Islamic medical tradition and the cross-cultural exchange of medical knowledge during the Golden Age meant that for generations to come, the advancement of medicine was influenced by the translation work completed during this period, which was essential in conserving and distributing old medical knowledge. Further research and examination of this period will yield important insights into how translation affects medical knowledge and practice. It will also serve as a source of inspiration for future cross-cultural partnerships and medical achievements.

### IV. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The Golden Age of Translation had a significant influence on the growth and transfer of medical knowledge. The inventions made by Avicenna, Al-Razi, and Al-Zahrawi, as well as the medical knowledge of ancient Greek and Roman physicians, were all preserved and transmitted as a result of the translation work performed during this time, especially by eminent people such as Hunayn ibn Ishaq and Gerard of Cremona (Savage-Smith, 1996, p. 45; McVaugh, 1988, p. 40). The House of Wisdom in Baghdad was a crucial hub for education and translation, promoting intercultural dialogue and the creation of standardized medical terminology that facilitated inter-professional communication (Al-Khalili, 2011, p. 56; Dols, 1984, p. 31).

These medical works had a tremendous impact on medical knowledge and practices in both the Islamic world and Europe. In addition to synthesizing and advancing existing knowledge, works such as Avicenna's Canon of Medicine, Al-Book Razi's of Healing, and Al-Zahrawi's Comprehensive Book on Medicine introduced novel approaches to medical practice, advocating a focus on clinical observation, experimentation, and surgical techniques (Bakhtiar, 1999, p. 25; Pioreschi, 1996, p. 144; Savage-Smith, 1996, p. 113). For decades, these volumes served as the cornerstone of medical education, influencing the growth of medicine in all areas and cultures.

The contributions made by the Golden Age of Translation to medical translation have had a lasting effect on medical knowledge worldwide. Modern medicine owes a great deal to the innovations introduced by Islamic scholars, as well as the preservation and transfer of historic medical knowledge (Al-Khalili, 2011, p. 57). These publications established crucial ideas such as the standardization of medical language and the importance of clinical observation and experimentation, as well as creating the foundation for evidence-based medicine (Dols, 1984, p. 29; Bakhtiar, 1999, p. 25).

Additionally, the translations of medical literature aided in the dissemination of medical knowledge worldwide, enabling the blending of multiple medical traditions and the development of the discipline as a whole (McVaugh, 1988, p. 40). The influence of these translations is still evident today in common medical jargon and the principles underlying both Western and Eastern medical practice. As such, the Golden Age of Translation not only advanced medical knowledge at the time but also left a permanent imprint that continues to influence and shape medicine today.

Further investigation into the history of medical translation can be facilitated by examining the effects of medical translation during the Golden Age. The influence of lesser-known translators and scholars whose contributions may not

have been as generally acknowledged as those of Hunayn ibn Ishaq or Avicenna is one prospective field of study. A deeper understanding of the people involved in medical translation during this time may further elucidate the collaborative character of knowledge production and transmission throughout the Golden Age.

Examination of the translation process itself is another intriguing field of inquiry. Understanding the methods and procedures used by translators during the Golden Age could offer insightful information into the difficulties these scholars faced and the methods they used to solve them. Highlighting potential areas of knowledge loss or distortion during the translation process could potentially offer a more nuanced understanding of the historical transfer of medical knowledge.

Moreover, modern technology may offer a rare opportunity to improve our comprehension of old medical texts and translation attempts during the Golden Age. Large volumes of translated texts can be analyzed digitally to identify patterns and trends and gain fresh insights into the evolution of medical knowledge at this time. This can be performed using text analysis software (Rockwell & Sinclair, 2016, p. 18).

Furthermore, improvements in machine learning and artificial intelligence may aid in interpreting medical literature from the Golden Age that has not yet been translated or fully comprehended (Mehdad & Negri, 2017, p. 365). By fusing human skill with the capabilities of cutting-edge technology, researchers may be able to acquire novel insights that deepen our understanding of the medical knowledge and practices of the Golden Age.

In conclusion, there is enormous potential for future research and the use of modern technology in studying medical translation during the Golden Age. This period had a lasting impact on the field of medicine; therefore, by examining these paths, scholars can further our understanding of the historical development of medical knowledge.

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**Yazid A. Al-Ismail** is an Associate Professor of Translation Studies at Qassim University. He received his MA from Durham University-UK in Arabic/English Translation and Interpreting and a Ph.D. degree in Translation Studies from Kent State University-USA. His research interests include cognitive translation studies, terminology and translation competence, translation history, and translation training/pedagogy.

# A Contrastive Study of Conceptual Metaphor "Death is Rest" in Vietnamese and English

Ha T. X. Pham

English Faculty, Thuongmai University, Hanoi, Vietnam

Ha T. Trinh\*

Department of Applied Linguistics, Institute of Linguistics, Vietnam

**Abstract**—The conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST is a metaphor that appears with great frequency in discourse expressing the concept of "death" in Vietnamese and English. Its basic structure is a partial mapping schema with the characteristic of "rest" activated in association with the abstract idea of "death". Through analyzing the two languages used, Vietnamese and English, the results of this study aim to point out similarities and differences as well as provide some insights into the mechanism of perceiving "death" in Vietnamese and English through the mindset of "rest". The conclusions of the study can be used as a reference source for other studies on conceptual metaphors and applied language teaching relating to cultural factors.

**Index Terms**—conceptual metaphor, mapping mechanism, death, rest, sleep, relaxation

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to the contents written in the book namely "Metaphor We Live By", Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have changed the traditional views on metaphor, it was no longer just a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish, a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language, "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life" (p. 3). The two authors also affirm that metaphor is not simply a matter of language but also a matter of thought and action. Metaphors allow the speaker to express briefly, concisely, and vividly, reflecting a person's way of thinking, perspectives, and physiology.

The category of "death" is the one that has received a lot of attention and interest in scientific fields. Specifically, in the field of language research, the expression of an abstract concept "death" also reflects the way of thinking, belief, perception, and cultural influence of people in different cultures. Through a survey on linguistic materials in Vietnamese and English, applying the theoretical background of conceptual metaphors by Lakoff and Johnson and other authors, we identify a set of characteristic features belonging to source and target domains in the cognitive model, create mapping schema and explain the mechanisms of movement and copying of attributes between the two spatial domains "Source – Target" in the metaphor DEATH IT IS REST. Based on the results found, the study points out the similarities and differences in the ways of thinking and expressing "death" of Vietnamese and British people, and explain the influence of those factors as culture, ideologies, religions, and living environment, etc. on the language used of people who speak Vietnamese and English. The results of the research can be used as one of the reference sources serving a more specialized research fields in comparative linguistics, conceptual metaphor in different languages, and foreign language teaching that relating to intercultural factors in the context of international integration.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### A. Previous Studies

The common but abstract concept of "death" have various implicit linguistic expressions in different languages, and it can even be affirmed that the conceptual metaphor of death is always clearly, naturally, and widely present in everyday life. Because of the popularity in language used denoting "death", metaphorical expressions of "death" has become the main research topic or analysis in the works of many authors around the world and in Vietnam.

In the world, the studies of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Lakoff and Turner (1989), Mar -Arrese (1996), Bultinck (1998), Fern ndez (2006), etc. have applied Conceptual Metaphor Theory to build up the mapping schemas, which related the concepts such as departure, loss, journey, sleep, etc. into the awareness of death.

In "More Than Cool Reason – A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor", Lakoff and Turner (1988) had devoted a large part of chapter 1 "Life, Death, and Time" to list and analyze conceptual metaphors of life, death and time in the poetic works of Dickinson, T.S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, Fitzgerald, etc. Conceptual metaphors of "death" are named, DEATH IS THE DEPARTURE, DEATH IS THE DESTINATION which comes from the metaphor HUMAN LIFE IS A JOURNEY, DEATH IS DARKNESS, DEATH IS WINTER comes from the metaphor HUMAN LIFE IS ONE DAY / ONE YEAR, DEATH IS THE WITHERING PERIOD OF TREES comes from the metaphor HUMAN LIFE IS A PLANT, DEATH

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\* Corresponding Author

IS SLEEP, DEATH IS REST comes from the similarity in image between the person sleeping / resting with the dead, DEATH IS THE LOSS OF FLUID IN THE CONTAINER comes from the metaphor LIFE IS FLUID IN THE BODY, DEATH IS DELIVERANCE comes from the metaphor LIFE IS BONDAGE (The human body is the container that "imprisons the soul", the event "death" brings "release" to the soul from "prison" body).

In the article "To die, to sleep - A Contrastive metaphors for Death and Dying in English and Spanish", Marín-Arrese (1996) approached metaphorical analysis of the concept of death by explaining the reason for using source domains from human experiences and social experiences, such as physiological factors and bodily experiences, associations, personification of "death" with dangerous people or animals, religious factors and beliefs, social factors and cultural practices in different communities who speak English and Spanish. The study also grouped expressions referring to the concept of "death" according to the physical experience of spatial domains such as: container, path, up-down orientation, or time interval.

Also from the cognitive linguistics approach, Bultinck (1998) conducted the study "Metaphors We Die by: Conceptualizations of death in English and their implications for the theory of Metaphor", in which he surveyed metaphorical expressions of death on a corpus of English dictionaries. He concluded that, in general, linguistic metaphors on the concept of death can be divided into the following conceptual metaphors:

- Physiological effects of death
- Death as movement
- Death as downward movement
- Death as sleep
- Death as loss
- Death as surrender
- Feelings concerning the death
- Death as the light gone out
- Religion, mythology and "folk stories": Personifications
- Religion, mythology and "folk stories": "Stories/tales about death"
- Eschatological expression
- Miscellaneous

From the pioneering studies mentioned above, especially based on the metaphorical classification of the concept of death that Bultinck proposed, a series of metaphorical studies on death were specifically conducted on linguistic data of countries or discourses in specific contexts such as Hebrew Bible (Adriaan, 2015); euphemism of death (Amy, 2011; Damaris & David, 2012); the obituaries (Crespo, 2006; Mari, 2014; Anashia, 2018), poetry (Elena, 2014), language used hospital environments, memorial speeches etc. relating to death (Cornelia, 2008; Danijel, 2016; Erich, 2012) or approaching from a comparative and contrasting perspective (Cong, 2014; Charles, 2020).

In Vietnamese language, the conceptual metaphorical studies of "death" have only been appeared as small parts in larger works, such as the treatise "Vietnamese Mind Through Several Key Words - Essay on Linguistics of Culture - Cognition" by Van (2017). The study explains Vietnamese's perception with keywords such as "*destiny*", "*body*" or "*soul*" to see the experience of the body, the way of thinking and the language used when referring to these notions of Vietnamese people.

The treatise "Conceptual Metaphors in Trinh Cong Son's Lyrics" written by Hanh (2015) also mentions the concept of "*death*" in the conceptual metaphor HUMAN LIFE IS A DAY with time segments of a day (morning, noon, afternoon, night, ...) correspond to the stages in a person's life (birth, adulthood, middle age, old age (death)); and Metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY with conceptual metaphor models expressing Trinh Cong Son's perception of life and people based on the processes in a particular journey (space, vehicle, destination, passenger status, ...). From this basic metaphor, the author has inferred metaphor DEATH IS SLEEP to further clarify the notion of life in the musician's view. Besides, through surveying and analyzing lyrics, the author has shown that directional metaphors are also used to reflect thinking about "death" – Diseases and Death oriented downwards.

In addition, in the thesis entitled "Contrastive Analysis Conceptual Metaphor of Death in Vietnamese and English corpus" by Ha (2023) and related articles, the author has generalized the conceptual metaphorical expressions used in two languages English and Vietnamese, pointed out the similarities and differences in the use of metaphorical expressions to indicate the concept of death between the two languages, explained the difference coming from factors related to living conditions, culture, belief, religion, etc.

In general, the above foreign and domestic researches help to form initial understandings of conceptual metaphor of death in English and Vietnamese. However, there is no truly in-depth research to compare the similarities and differences in expressing "death" between the two languages Vietnamese and English. Therefore, this research can be regarded as a part of contribution to the research field.

Besides, there are various books on cultural, customs and religion aspects relating to death, such as the explanations of Buddhism or Christian of karma, life and death (Tung, 2018; Joseph, 2023) and worshiping of Vietnamese (Lan, 2012; Binh, 2021). The information introduced in those books has been used as a source for reference in explaining the differences of thoughts and language used.

## B. Theoretical Framework

(a). *Domain*

According to Langacker (1987), “Domains are cognitive entities such as mental experiences, representational spaces, ideas, or conceptual complexes” (p. 147). For cognitive linguistics, the term “Domain” is always associated with conceptual metaphor theory and has a relatively complex knowledge structure, related to unified aspects of experience. For example, when referring to the conceptual Domain JOURNEY, the representative aspects included in it can be mentioned as tourists, transportation methods, routes, destinations, difficulties along the way, etc. Domain is considered a collection of closely related ideas about mental content such as cognitive entities, attributes, or relationships. Perceptual entities are also called elements of the domain and are named by nouns or noun phrases. Attributes and relationships form a system of aspects of the conceptual domain and are expressed by adjectives or verbs.

(b). *Source Domain and Target Domain*

Source Domain and Target Domain are two terms that refer to conceptual domains in the conceptual metaphor structure. Kövecses (2002) defined source domain as the conceptual domain from which people draw metaphorical expressions so that another conceptual domain can be understood; Target Domain is the conceptual domain understood through the usage of Source Domain. From this definition, it can be generalized: Source Domain is formed mainly by people's own experiences through spatial perception activities and the use of six senses to perceive the outside world. Therefore, it is concluded that the images of Source Domain are specific things that can be touched, grasped, and contacted by the senses. On the contrary, Target Domain is a domain that lacks specific images such as thoughts, emotions, life, death, etc., or in other word, Target Domain contains abstract ideas that cannot be contacted through the senses.

In the Source - Target domain relationship, Target Domain needs Source Domain to copy the structure, borrow labels, or build image schemas, etc. to help understand abstract concepts and knowledge easily and appropriately, compatibly with the existing cognitive foundation. For example, LOVE, LIFE, ARGUMENT are abstract and difficult-to-define target domains. To make it easier to understand those abstract entities, these target domains are projected into familiar and specific source domains such as JOURNEY, PRECIOUS ENTITY, and WAR.

The conceptual domain is relatively independent and exists in human spirit, and the Source – Target domains are associated with conceptual metaphors. In specific cases, the conceptual domain can be either the source domain or the target domain. In this study, the author investigated universal and specific source domains to attribute to abstract target domain "death".

(c). *Mapping*

According to Kövecses (2002), mapping is "a set of systematic correspondences between the source and the target in the sense that constituent conceptual elements of B correspond to constituent elements of A" (p. 7). Therefore, understanding conceptual metaphors is often concretized through understanding the mapping mechanism between the source domain and target domain. Fauconnier (1997) also examined a central component of meaning construction: the mappings that link mental spaces.

Mapping in conceptual metaphors has a number of features: *First*, mapping is not conventional but comes from human movement in space, or personal experiences and perception of the outside world in everyday life; *Second*, mapping is partial, does not represent all the attributes of the source domain to the target domain, only highlights some prominent aspects, the remaining unsuitable aspects and characteristics are hidden; *Third*, mapping is unilinear, it is only structured from the source domain to the target domain, not reversed.

To conclude, from the above concepts, some basic arguments which serve as theoretical background to survey and analyze the source domain REST expressing the target domain DEATH in Vietnamese and English are:

- i) Metaphor is a mechanism of thinking, reflecting human thinking of the objective world;
- ii) The structure of a conceptual metaphor includes a source domain and a target domain;
- iii) Mappings are the projection of elements from the source domain to the target domain and must be based on bodily experience, hands-on experience, and knowledge.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### A. *Research Objectives*

This study uses a corpus of memorial messages written in Vietnamese and English by relatives of victims who passed away due to the infection of Covid-19 during the time between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2021 (The high time of Covid-19 epidemic). The language used in those messages mentioning “death” and “rest”. Specifically, 92 Vietnamese messages were extracted from the section "Remembrance of Covid-19 victims" posted on website [www.VnExpress.net](http://www.VnExpress.net); 104 English messages were taken from "Memorial" column posted on [www.Rememberme2020.uk](http://www.Rememberme2020.uk). Data sources are collected randomly in the order they appear on the website, then the author carried out classifying and identifying the conceptual metaphor of death, basing on research method given.

#### B. *Research Methods*

Specific research methods used include:

- Descriptive method: used to describe the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST in Vietnamese and English discourse.
- Conceptual metaphor analysis method: used to analyze the mapping schema. The corpus was surveyed and identified according to the metaphor identification process MIP (Metaphor Identification Procedure) proposed by Pragglejaz Group (2007), performed with 4 steps.
- Statistical and classification methods: used to show the popularity of the cognitive model and are the basis for quantitative comparisons between Vietnamese and English.
- Interdisciplinary analysis methods: used to explain the reasons for the appearance of conceptual metaphors in two languages, Vietnamese and English.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### A. Research Results

The conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST has the correlation in physical experience of visually perceptible manifestations of "rest" (Source Domain) onto the concept of "death" (Target Domain). The target domain selectively acquires some attributes of the source domain. The source domain REST, which contains several attributes such as: state of relaxation, positivity, sleep (state of body inactivity), etc. are activated and irradiated onto the target domain DEATH. The target domain is selectively acquired according to the principle of partial projection, reflecting human thinking when referring to abstract categories. At the same time, in terms of religion and psychology, people tend to avoid mentioning experiences that cause negative feelings such as "death", therefore, expressing this experience as "rest" is considered as an explanation or expression of "avoidance" to reduce the psychological "fear" or "grief" of facing the loss called "death". The quantitative statistics below list the attributes of "the rest" in source domain which are activated in the metaphor DEATH IS REST in both Vietnamese and English languages.

TABLE 1  
ATTRIBUTES OF SOURCE DOMAIN ACTIVATED IN CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR DEATH IS REST IN VIETNAMESE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

No.	Attributes	Number of discourses used conceptual metaphors relating DEATH IS REST		Number of metaphorical expressions relating DEATH IS REST		Number of allegories	
		Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese	English
1	Physical and mental release	27	37	53	54	4	7
2	Feeling of enjoyment/ positivity when resting	21	29	24	44	5	4
3	Caring for the rest	6	2	6	2	3	2
4	Sleep / posture, state of the body during sleep	22	18	24	21	4	3
5	Nature/perception of sleep	12	17	12	22	2	2
6	Sleeping place	4	1	4	1	3	1
	Total	92	104	123	144	21	19

Based on 6 typical attributes of the source domain REST, a mapping schema has been activated with the correlations in experience and perception between the source domain and the target domain. The mapping mechanism also operates on the principle of partiality and unidirectionality. Table 2 below models this experiential correlation.

TABLE 2  
MAPPING SCHEMA OF "DEATH IS REST" METAPHOR

Source domain: REST		Correlates to	Target domain: DEATH
(1)	Physical and mental release	→	The state of stopping human perception when dying
(2)	Feeling of enjoyment/ positivity when resting	→	Positive psychology towards the event of "death"
(3)	Caring for the rest	→	The good conditions that the deceased receives after death (in religious/religious beliefs)
(4)	Sleep / posture, state of the body during sleep	→	Motionless position and body manifestations at death
(5)	Nature/perception of sleep	→	The peace of mind towards the event of "death"
(6)	Sleeping place	→	The resting place of the dead

From the attributes of the source domain REST relating to factors such as the release of the mind and body from problems, feeling of enjoyment, conditions of care, state of body, feelings about sleep and sleeping place, there are two inferences from basic metaphor DEATH IS REST, namely, DEATH IS THE STATE OF RELAXATION and DEATH IS SLEEP. In metaphors with the source domain RELAXATION STATE, death is conceptualized through the correlation

between the nature of rest as relaxation, allowing the body and mind to rest, stop working, enjoy good care to restore the body to its best state, compensating for the obstacles and injuries people encounter in life.

Although it is the same state of rest, the metaphor with the source domain SLEEP focuses on expressing the sense of correlation between the dead person's position with the sleeping person's motionless position and the ceasing of perception when sleeping. The use of the REST metaphor is a typical illustration of how to choose language to avoid talking about things that are taboo or cause discomfort to the listener. The image of rest brings comfort and ease to both the speaker and the recipient of the information. Therefore, in many condolence messages, the metaphor with the source domain REST is used universally.

#### B. Conceptual Metaphor DEATH IS REST in Vietnamese

In Vietnamese discourse, typical characteristics of rest are selected and projected onto the target domain DEATH, including: the state of stopping work, the feeling of relaxation, enjoyment, sleep, etc., thereby forming specific inference metaphors: DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION and DEATH IS SLEEP.

##### (a). Conceptual Metaphor DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION

Conceptual metaphor DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION appears in 54 Vietnamese discourses, with 3 attributes belonging to source domain, and 83 metaphorical expressions. Metaphorical expressions in the discourse commemorating the dead are activated from the dominant attributes of the source domain STATE OF RELAXATION, such as the body and mental release from problems in life such as “*không phải lo toan*” (no longer worried), “*không còn vất vả*” (no longer working hard), “*không còn đau đớn*” (no longer painful),... or the positive thinking, enjoyment feelings of relaxation as “*thanh thân*” (calmly), “*an vui*” (happily), “*bình yên*” (peacefully) or the feeling of being cared “*trong vòng tay ấm áp của nội*” (grandmother's warm embrace), “*an nghỉ nơi miền cực lạc*” (rest in the land of bliss), etc. (Table 3)

TABLE 3  
METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS DENOTING DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION METAPHOR IN VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE

No.	Source domain	Metaphorical expressions	Frequency
1	Physical and mental release	<i>ngủ ngơi</i> [resting]	19
		<i>không phải lo toan / vướng bận / vất vả</i> [no more worried / busy / working hard]	13
		<i>không còn đau đớn / bệnh tật / mệt mỏi</i> [no more painful / diseases / tiresome]	16
		<i>siêu thoát</i> [sublimity]	5
2	Feeling of enjoyment/ positivity when resting	<i>thanh thân</i> [calm]	7
		<i>an vui</i> [joyful]	8
		<i>bình yên</i> [peaceful]	5
		<i>hạnh phúc hơn</i> [happily]	3
		<i>cười tươi</i> [smiling]	1
3	Caring for the rest	<i>bên vòng tay của Chúa/ hưởng nhan Chúa</i> [In the arms of God / receive God's rewards]	2
		<i>an nghỉ nơi miền cực lạc</i> [rest in the land of bliss]	2
		<i>trong vòng tay những người thân yêu / vòng tay ấm áp của nội / tổ tiên</i> [in the arms of loved ones / grandmother's warm embrace/ ancestors]	2
	Total		83

Some typical examples illustrating the activation of those attributes are shown below:

With the viewpoint "life is suffering", life experiences are challenges for the living, "death" is seen as physical and mental liberation from difficulties and obstacles in social life.

(1) *Hôm qua, cái Thất đầu tiên của Út. Út đi rồi nhưng chưa kịp nhắn nhủ với ai điều gì. Thì thôi không còn mệt, không còn mất ngủ nữa Út nhì!*<sup>1</sup>

[Yesterday, Ut's first week. Ut left but didn't have time to say anything to anyone. Well, **no more tiredness, no more insomnia**, Ut!]

<sup>1</sup> <https://vnexpress.net/nguyen-van-dung-1962-2021-4392285.html>



(2) *Ba cuối cùng đã không còn phải đau đớn khi phải sống dựa vào máy móc hàng tuần nữa rồi. Cũng không phải khó chịu khi ăn uống nữa. Và quan trọng là cuối cùng ba đã được giải thoát<sup>2</sup>*

[Dad finally **no longer has to endure the pain of having to rely on machines for weeks anymore. No more discomfort when eating or drinking.** And most importantly, Dad **was finally released**]

Metaphorical expressions such as, “*không còn phải đau đớn khi phải sống dựa vào máy móc*” (finally no longer has to endure the pain of having to rely on machines), “*không còn mệt, không còn mất ngủ*” (no more tiredness, no more insomnia) in the two examples above reflect the thinking of death as a state in which people no longer have to face physical problems (pain caused by illness) or are no longer responsible for their relationships, or social constraints (worrying and worrying about making a living)

The feelings of enjoying physical and mental relaxation, and being cared for are expressed as follows:

(3) *Bác ơi, con tin là giờ này bác đã được an nghỉ trong vòng tay ấm áp của nội. Bác qua với nội, con ở nơi này nhớ hai người!<sup>3</sup>*

[Uncle, I believe that you are now **resting in my grandmother's warm arms**. You came over with my grandmother, I miss you two here!]

(4) ... *Và y như rằng điều con không muốn đã thành sự thật, sáng Mẹ báo Di Hải đã đi. Di Hải luôn là người con, người chị và người đi đặc biệt là người Mẹ hiền hậu nhất, yêu thương, hy sinh cho mọi người trong nhà nhất ... Di Hải luôn cười tươi và bình yên nhé. Gia đình mình luôn thương và nhớ nụ cười đẹp như cô Tiên của Di Hải.<sup>4</sup>*

[And just like what I didn't want had come true, in the morning Mom told me that Aunt Hai had left. Auntie Hai is always the daughter, sister and especially the gentlest mother, loving and sacrificing for everyone in the family... Auntie Hai **always smiles brightly and peacefully**. My family always loves and remembers Auntie Hai's fairy-like beautiful smile.]

Those metaphorical expressions as “*an nghỉ trong vòng tay ấm áp*” (resting in my grandmother's warm arms), “*cười tươi và bình yên*” (smiles brightly and peacefully), etc. help specify the source domain RELAXATION. The use of positive references, associated with relaxation, enjoyment, resting, and psychological comfort to express “death” makes the original negative meaning of it less intense, and avoids causing fear and awkwardness in communication when mentioning “death”.

#### (b). Conceptual Metaphor DEATH IS SLEEP

This conceptual metaphor is found in 38 discourses (Table 1) with frequency of 40 appearances (Table 4). The mapping schema from the source domain SLEEP to the target domain DEATH is based on the perception of body experience. When sleeping, people fall into an unconscious state, and through visual observation, the image of the sleeping person will be in a motionless body state with a lying position, associated with the image of a sleeping person. Because of the similarities in the inference, when talking about the concept of “death”, to avoid having to mention it directly, the speaker can refer to “sleep” with the states related to sleep such as “sleeping”, “lying”, etc., positive feelings about sleep such as: (sleeping) peacefully, soundly, “spacious”, “cool” sleeping place, etc.

TABLE 4  
METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS DENOTING DEATH IS SLEEP METAPHOR IN VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE

No.	Source domain	Metaphorical expressions	Frequency
1	Sleep / posture, state of the body during sleep	<i>nằm</i> [lie]	4
		<i>an giấc</i> [sleep peacefully]	5
		<i>ngủ</i> [sleep]	12
		<i>không tỉnh dậy</i> [not wake up]	3
2	Nature/perception of sleep	<i>(ngủ) yên / ngon</i> [(sleep) well / deeply]	11
		<i>Mơ</i> [dream]	1
		<i>nơi Ba nằm rộng rãi, kang trang, mát mẻ</i> [the place where Ba lies is spacious and cool]	1
3	Sleeping place	<i>dưới mộ</i> [in grave]	2
		<i>Trong Chúa</i> [in God]	1
	<b>Total</b>		<b>40</b>

Below are some typical examples:

(5) *Thầy ơi, tuy con chỉ mới học với thầy được một thời gian ngắn, nhưng biết tin thầy đi lòng con tiếc nuối nhiều lắm. Thầy thật sự rất giỏi, hiền và là người cha tốt. Thầy hãy ngủ thật ngon thầy nha, thầy đã vất vả nhiều rồi!<sup>5</sup>*

[Teacher, although I have only studied with you for a short time, knowing that you had left makes me feel very sad. You are really very good, gentle and a good father. Please **sleep well, teacher**, you have worked hard!]

(6) *Xin vĩnh biệt hai em và nhớ mãi sự đau thương, mất mát này. Hân nay giờ trăm ngày, hai em hãy ngủ yên trong Chúa và ra đi bình an.<sup>6</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> <https://vnexpress.net/nguyen-cong-thinh-1953-2021-4393197.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://vnexpress.net/nguoi-bac-tan-cao-hien-hau-cua-con-1966-2021-4405304.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://vnexpress.net/di-hai-2021-4392612.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://vnexpress.net/thay-nghe-2021-4392819.html>

[Goodbye to both of you and I will remember this pain and loss forever. Today is the hundred-day anniversary of your death. Please **sleep peacefully in God** and go in peace.]

In the above example, sleep is also identified with rest. When sleeping, people no longer must face with problems in life, their body and mind are in an inactive state. That state of rest is described by positive adjectives “*ngủ ngon*” (sleep well), “*ngủ yên*” (sleep peacefully).

The reference to the burial place of the dead is expressed as a place to live, a comfortable place to rest, but does not cause a feeling of horror when being mentioned.

(7) *Cuối cùng hôm qua 28/11 vợ chồng con và Má cũng hoàn thành được tâm nguyện trước khi mất của Ba là tổ chức lễ an táng cho Ba an nghỉ ở Hoa Viên Bình Dương, vì lúc sống Ba muốn có chỗ để con cháu lúc nào cũng tới thăm Ba được. Nơi Ba nằm khá rộng rãi khang trang, mát mẻ, cây cối được chăm sóc tỉ mỉ. Ba hãy an giấc thanh thản Ba nhé*<sup>7</sup>

[Finally, yesterday, November 28, my husband and I and Mom had fulfilled Dad's wish before he passed away, which was to organize a funeral ceremony for him to rest in Hoa Vien Binh Duong, because when Dad was alive, he wanted to have a place for his children and grandchildren can come to visit. **The place where Dad have lied down forever is located is quite spacious, cool, and the trees are meticulously cared for. Please sleep in peace, Dad.**]

In the example above, the state of "death" is described by “*an giấc thanh thản*” (sleep in peace) and the burial place is perceived as a place to sleep with a resting attitude “*nằm*” (lie), “*rộng rãi*” (spacious), “*mát mẻ*” (cool).

### C. Conceptual Metaphor DEATH IS REST in English

In the English corpus, conceptual metaphors with the source domain REST appear in 104 discourses with 144 metaphorical expressions (Table 1). The basic metaphor DEATH IS REST in English also gives rise to two inference metaphors: DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION and DEATH IS SLEEP.

#### (a). Conceptual Metaphor DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION

In English corpus, conceptual metaphor DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION also appears with relatively high frequency, specifically in 68 linguistic expressions, 13 metaphorical expressions with frequency of 100 (Table 5). “*Pain / cancer/ (...) free*”, “*isn't suffering*” are examples that help think about the vague concept of "death" more specifically, making it easier to imagine that it is just like rest, the dead person is just enjoying the freedom with no pain and no more suffering.

The expressions “*relax*”, “*rest*”, “*find peace of mind and happiness*” etc., combined with words showing emotional states such as “*peacefully*”, “*enjoy*”, or words mentioning caregiver and resting place “*God cares in heaven*” bring positive emotions when talking about death. It can be seen from quantitative statistics that the target domain DEATH is expressed through the source domain RELAXATION by the verb “*rest*” combined with words such as “*peaceful*”, “*at peace*” which are used with the greatest frequency to indicate the quality of a “state of relaxation”.

TABLE 5  
METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS DENOTING DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION METAPHOR IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

No.	Source domain	Metaphorical expressions	Frequency
1	Physical and mental release	(pain/ cancer/...) free	18
		no longer suffering	9
		can't get sick anymore	3
		doesn't have trouble	1
		relax / singing	1
		Rest	21
		found peace of mind and happiness	1
2	Feeling of enjoyment/ positivity when resting	Enjoy	1
		(rest) in peace / at peace / peacefully	32
		Easily	8
		Happily	3
3	Caring for the rest	God cares	1
		God takes care in heaven	1
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

In the example below, the expression “*rest in peace*” is used to refer to the state of death. This is a positive approach referring death to a relaxing break after struggling with the pain of illness.

(8) *Rabah Bensifi - I had 25 happy years with Rabah. He was visiting family in Algeria when he caught Covid. His funeral had been held before I even knew he had died so I was unable to be with him. Rest in peace my darling I miss you.*<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> <https://vnexpress.net/pham-van-ngoc-pham-van-hung-1970-2021-4392609.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://vnexpress.net/le-van-thang-1949-2021-4396347.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.rememberme2020.uk/page/10/#memorials>

The following example is typical of the way of perceiving "death" with the privilege of being cared for, protected, and surrounded by the divine (God in Christian belief). God saves people, frees people from physical fatigue and brings people "home", freeing them from pain.

(9) *God saw you getting tired when a cure was not to be, he wrapped his arms around you and said come with me, you fought so hard to stay but that was all in vain, he took you to his loving home and free you from your pain.*<sup>9</sup>

Purposely, to avoid talking about death directly, people use source domains such as "relaxation state", and activate attributes of the nature of rest to refer to the concept of "death". It is regarded as a positive approach, expressed in euphemisms to ensure the politeness, and reduce the feeling of fear or difficulty in communicating in case mentioning "death", a theme relating to taboo and embarrassments.

#### (b). Conceptual Metaphor DEATH IS SLEEP

The conceptual metaphor DEATH IS SLEEP appeared in 36 discourses, of which 6 metaphorical expressions appeared 44 times (Table 6), helping to relate the abstract concept of "death" with a specific physiological experience of humans - Sleep. This metaphor mainly depicts source domain attributes such as the physical experience of sleep such as a state of motionless, human posture when sleeping such as the "laying" position, the greeting "goodnight", adjectives such as "peaceful", "tight", "deep", "well" are used in combination with verb "sleep" in many linguistic expressions to indicate the quality of "sleep". By adding adjective or adverb describing positive state when "sleeping" such as "sleep tight", "sleep safe", "sleep peacefully", "sleep well", people find it easier expressing "death" in many contexts.

TABLE 6  
METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS DENOTING DEATH IS SLEEP METAPHOR IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

No.	Source domain	Metaphorical expressions	Frequency
1	Sleep / posture, state of the body during sleep	Lays	2
		never wake up	2
		Sleep	17
2	Nature/perception of sleep	(sleep) tight / safe / peacefully / well	17
		Goodnight	5
3	Sleeping place	in bed	1
	<b>Total</b>		<b>44</b>

Considering the following metaphorical expressions:

(10) *Forever in our hearts. **Sleep tight** our beautiful man. You were a diamond. We will cherish the memories of our loving Son, Dad, Partner, Brother, Grandson and Friend.*<sup>10</sup>

(11) ***Goodnight**, God bless. Always in our hearts, we love you forever.*<sup>11</sup>

The messages used in the above examples have activated attributes of source domain such as the sleeping state "sleep tight" and the greeting "goodnight" to partially structure the target domain DEATH.

The following examples relate sleep to the ceasing of perception. When sleeping, people fall into a state of rest where the brain does not control the senses to perceive objective things. In the following case, it is the cessation of feeling pain caused by illness "pain free".

(12) *To my darling Richard, taken from me and our family too soon. You can **sleep at peace now, pain free**. Thankful for the wonderful memories we had together. Love you always. Eileen Kim Sally and Stephen.*<sup>12</sup>

This way of perception helps to think about the abstract concept of "death" more specifically, making it easier to imagine that "death" is like sleep, the dead person is just enjoying his forever sleep. These positive ways of thinking and expressing help to approach the fear and sadness about death as well as mentioning "death" somewhat less difficult.

#### D. Discussion

From the survey results of 92 Vietnamese discourses and 104 English discourses (on two data sources, Vnexpress.net and Rememberme2020.uk), the similarities and differences between the way of perceiving "death" have been revealed and presented in conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST in Vietnamese and English:

##### (a). Similarities

First, the use of conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST is popular in both languages: in both Vietnamese and English languages, this conceptual metaphor is used with high frequency (Statistics shows that in Vietnamese language, out of 92 discourses surveyed, there are 123 metaphorical expressions; in English language, out of 104 discourses containing metaphors, there are 144 expressions). From this quantitative data, it can be concluded that in the way of thinking of not only Vietnamese, but also British people, the perception of "death" is as a "rest" with the inference of "a state of relaxation" and "sleep" are common. This conclusion proves the universality of the DEATH IS REST metaphor in expressing "death".

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.rememberme2020.uk/page/15/#memorials>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.rememberme2020.uk/page/15/#memorials>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.rememberme2020.uk/page/6/#memorials> posted June 12, 2021

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.rememberme2020.uk/page/6/#memorials>

*Second*, the way to perceive and activate knowledge in the specific source domain is similar: perception through the physiological experience of sleep and the influence of ideology and belief. Regarding physiological experience, both Vietnamese and British people rely on the attributes of "sleep" to "death" such as the state of motionless of the body or the cessation of perception. Besides, referring to ideological aspect, although the approach and explanation of the phenomenon "death" is different, the similarity in relating the source domain of REST with the belief of "death". In the belief of both Western and Eastern cultures, "death", especially caused by deceases or illness, is the liberation of the body from difficulties, problems, and challenges.

*Third*, the use of conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST is the positive approach when mentioning "death". Psychologically, "death" is a kind of "taboo" in language which causes awkward feelings or embarrassment in communication. Metaphorizing the concept DEATH IS REST is a way to interpret objective reality in a positive direction using euphemisms.

#### (b). Differences

From the quantitative data and the mapping mechanism from the source domain REST to the target domain DEATH, two main differences in the ways "death" are perceived by Vietnamese and English people throughout conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST are as follows:

*The first* is the difference in caregiver-related factors at rest. In Vietnamese discourse, "*beside God*", "*in the arms of ancestors*", etc. refers to the various "care-giver" (God / Buddhist / Ancestors) that the dead are cared for and taken care of when resting, depending on the beliefs of the alive, while in English discourse, people only use the expression "*God cares in heaven*" in which "God" is referred to the "care-giver" for the dead ones when they have eternal rest in heaven (Joseph, 2023). This difference can be explained by the religious beliefs of Vietnamese and British people. Vietnamese people, influenced by diverse life of religious beliefs, from indigenous ancestor worship beliefs, the long-standing existence of Buddhism to the intrusion of Christianity in centuries ago. Each belief and religion has different way of explanation on how the dead ones can enjoy rest and care after death. That is why, in Vietnamese discourse, there are diverse appearances of subjects who care for the dead (Buddhist, God, Ancestors, relatives, etc.) (Lan, 2012).

The British's main religion is Christianity and the belief in a happy life after death in Heaven, so the image of God represents the one who protects and takes care of the pious people. Therefore, in English, generally, the "care-giver" is believed to be God.

*The second* difference is the resting place. Resting places in Vietnamese people's conception include both tangible resting places (graves) and invisible resting places that are symbols according to religious beliefs such as "land of bliss" (according to Buddhism) (Tùng, 2018), "in the arms of loved ones" (Ancestor Worship belief), "God's arms" (according to Christianity). Meanwhile, the British only use metaphors to refer to an invisible, symbolic resting place such as "Heaven". In English corpus, there is no expression describing the resting place as the grave where the dead are buried.

Regarding the intangible and symbolic resting place, the difference comes from the influence of various religions and beliefs on the thinking of Vietnamese people. In Eastern culture in general and Vietnamese culture in particular, symbolic resting place maybe *Suối Vàng* (the Golden Stream), the place of the ancestor or the heaven. On the contrary, the British think about the place of rest as Heaven, where God resides according to Christian belief.

Regarding the tangible resting place, namely "grave", in Vietnamese discourse, there are expressions describe the resting/sleeping place of the dead as "*spacious, cool*". This difference is explained from the Eastern and Western views on Life and Death. Vietnamese people, with their belief in ancestor worship, attach great importance to graves, which are the places where the dead are buried. Binh (2021) has affirmed "Vietnamese people believed that ancestors and descendants are interconnected by blood, if the ancestors' graves are well-cared, the descendants will be at peace. The descendants have the duty to respectfully look after the buried places of the pass-away" (p.29). Therefore, Vietnamese people are very careful in choosing land and choosing the direction to place and build a grave for the deceased, showing their complete affection by taking care of the deceased to have a peaceful and beautiful grave.

For Westerners, they pay more attention to the issue of 'birth', so birthdays are often highly emphasized and celebrated every year, and death days are hardly something they think about much. In the East, on the contrary, the date of birth is paid little attention, but the date of death is remembered more carefully and celebrated every year, called the taboo day or death anniversary. Eastern people considered life as temporary and limited, death is the true return; therefore, the burial places of Eastern people are often highly respected. That way of thinking is reflected in the fact that Vietnamese people describe the resting place of the dead while British people do not tend to talk about graves or burial places.

## V. CONCLUSION

Conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST appears with great frequency in discourses expressing the concept of "death" in Vietnamese and English. Through a survey of 196 Vietnamese and English discourses, the study has shown that the source domain REST is used to express the abstract target concept DEATH. The study also demonstrated that knowledge about humans (psychology, physiology) and culture has influenced the way Vietnamese and British people think and express "death". Finding this common source domain also provides suggestions for people from other cultures

on how to choose and use language appropriately when practicing communication in international environments, avoiding causing confusion, awkward or uncomfortable communication in situations that mention "taboo" content.

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**Ha T. X. Pham**, who received a Doctorate in Comparative and Contrastive Linguistics in 2024 at Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, is currently the Head of Department of English Practice, English Faculty, Thuongmai University. She has 17 years of experience working as a lecturer teaching English for majored and non-majored undergraduates. She participated in compiling 02 reference books to serve her teaching work, and wrote domestic and international scientific articles relating to linguistics and teaching pedagogy. The main research fields are English teaching methodology, Cognitive Linguistics and Comparative Linguistics.



**Ha T. Trinh**, Ph.D. in Linguistics in 2015 at the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, is currently the Head of the Applied Linguistics Department at the Institute of Linguistics, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. Her main research areas include applied linguistics, language and culture, language in literature, language in education, comparative linguistics, among others. She has authored three monographs on linguistics, published numerous articles in domestic and international scientific journals, and has been the principal investigator of various research projects in her fields of study.

# The Impact of the Use of Agricultural Technology on Lexical Innovation in Rice Field Agriculture

Novita Puspahaty

Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia;  
English Department, Faculty of English and Communication, Universitas Islam “45”, Bekasi, Indonesia

Dian Indira

Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia

Wahya

Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia

Susi Machdalena

Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia

**Abstract**—This study explores the dynamic nature of lexical innovation and the impact of agricultural technology developments that occur in agriculture in the Bekasi Regency. The influx of modern agricultural equipment has shifted the traditional farming system. The linguistic landscape of Bekasi Regency has also been adjusted to the occurrence of lexical innovations in the rice field agricultural sector. This study used an ethnolinguistic approach. Data are obtained through observation and interviews and then presented descriptively based on field conditions and relevant lexical innovation theories. The results obtained in this study are that the use of modern agricultural technology contributes to lexical innovation in agriculture in the Bekasi Regency. The lexical innovations found are not only internal but also external. The lexicon which is a category of internal innovation undergoes a process of forming new words, namely: affixation, blending, and onomatopoeia. External innovation occurs by borrowing, as well as the expansion of meaning. The next finding is that lexical innovation due to the development of agricultural technology in the Bekasi Regency turned out to be threatened by the loss of several words in agriculture. They are lexicons related to traditional agricultural equipment and processes.

**Index Terms**—lexical innovations, lexicons, morphological processes, new vocabulary, lost vocabulary

## I. INTRODUCTION

Technology and innovation are always able to make changes in various fields, including the field of language in agriculture. The emergence of agricultural equipment with increasingly sophisticated technology resulted in lexical innovation. These new lexicons appear to add, or shift, lexicons that are no longer used as the field of agricultural technology emerges. According to Umiyati (2023, p. 1067), a lexicon is a list of words found in a language. In line with Umiyati, Takwa et al. (2022, p. 980) call the lexicon a language component containing information about the meaning and usage of words, and the richness of words a language has. Lexical innovation in question refers to changes in terms, words, and language used in rice field farming. Wahya (2005, p. 49) argues that innovation or renewal occurs due to changes in lingual units from the original unit. More specifically, Wahya et al. (2017, p. 220) added, that lexical innovation is an update related to changes in the structure and replacement of the lexicon. Its embodiment can be both full lexical innovation and partial lexical innovation or phonological innovation. This difference occurs due to the addition, subtraction, or replacement of some of the sounds that make up the new lexicon.

The field of agriculture can be said to have a unique distinctive lexicon. This is all because based on these lexicons, we can see the characteristics of the culture of the user community. This is in line with Wierzbicka's (1997) statement which states that words reflect and tell the characteristics of the way of life and the way of thinking of its speakers to provide very valuable clues in understanding the culture of its speakers. However, technological developments also contribute to changes in the lexicon of agriculture. The lexicon of *arit*, *ani-ani*, and *etem* (tools for cutting rice), for example, is in danger of being lost, because many farmers in Bekasi Regency no longer use these three tools to harvest their rice crops. Instead, people use *komben* in the harvesting process. *Komben* is a machine with advanced technology that can cut rice plants, threshing rice grains, as well as putting the rice grains into sacks.

The lexicons mentioned above, are lexicons that appear in agriculture in Bekasi Regency. This area is located directly adjacent to Jakarta the capital of Indonesia, even though it is within the territory of West Java Province. As a

result, the majority of the language used by the people of Bekasi Regency is Betawi with little influence from Sundanese and Javanese. So the characteristics of the Bekasi Betawi language are slightly different from the Jakarta Betawi language. The difference between Betawi Bekasi and Betawi Jakarta can be seen in the table below.

TABLE 1  
COMPARISON OF BETAWI BEKASI LANGUAGE WITH BETAWI JAKARTA LANGUAGE

Betawi Bekasi (BB)	Betawi Jakarta (BJ)	Meaning
<i>Biluk</i>	<i>Biluk</i>	Turn
<i>Encing</i>	<i>Encing</i>	Aunt, mother/father's sister
<i>Encang</i>	<i>Encang</i>	Uncle, brother, mother/father (BJ)
		Children of grandparents (BB)
<i>Mamang</i>	<i>Encang</i>	Uncle, brother, mother/father
<i>Cebrik</i>	<i>Dekil, kumel</i>	Not neat, dirty, rundown
<i>Kita, gua</i>	<i>Gua</i>	Me, I

In addition to the differences in the characteristics of the two languages, Bekasi Regency is interesting to be used as a place for research on lexicon related to agriculture, because this area is industrial. Although this area has shifted its status from an agricultural area to an industrial area, the Bekasi Regency government still pays attention to agriculture in its area. This is reflected in the Bekasi Regency Regional Government Regulation No. 33 of 2001, taking into account the Vision of National Development and the Vision of West Java Province. The vision of Bekasi Regency is "Superior Human Beings who are religious based on agribusiness and sustainable industry". This vision is then supported by the fifth point of the District Mission, namely: "Improving the quality of farmers and the quality and quantity of agricultural products".

To realize this vision and mission, the local government of Bekasi Regency encourages farmers to use equipment that is considered more effective and efficient. This technologically advanced equipment can cut farmers' rice planting cycles. On the other hand, the use of technology in agriculture has a considerable impact on the vocabulary of agriculture in Bekasi Regency. In the explanation above, it can be seen that lexicons such as *arit*, *ani-ani*, and *etem* are in danger of being lost and are very likely to be replaced by new vocabulary according to technological developments. *arit*, *ani-ani*, and *etem* are equipment used by farmers to harvest rice crops. These three types of tools are increasingly rarely used by farmers to cut rice plants in the harvesting process. Instead, there is now a technologically advanced machine combo capable of doing several things at once; Cutting the rice, threshing the grain, and separating the grain from the rice stem. Therefore, recording and data collection of new agricultural lexicons that emerged in the Bekasi Regency due to the use of technology in agriculture is considered necessary.

In this study, the lexical innovations that will be discussed are lexical innovations that occur in the field of rice field agriculture in the Bekasi district. More specifically, the focus of this research is on lexical innovations that occurred in rice cultivation in rice fields after Bekasi Regency farmers switched to using modern agricultural technology and the impact of using these technologies on the lexicon of rice field agriculture in Bekasi Regency. Thus, this study is expected to provide a view of how rice field farming technology has added and removed several lexicons. And how this lexical innovation can provide consideration for related parties to be able to increase the productivity of farmers while still being able to preserve traditional rice farming culture.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The dynamic nature of language makes language change a natural thing that constantly happens. All of this is of course also the influence of human creativity in producing and understanding language. Sibarani (2004, p. 211) states that language changes caused by cultural changes are more prominent in aspects of the lexicon (vocabulary) than other linguistic aspects, both regarding form and the meaning of the lexicon. Lexicon language changes can be seen from several aspects, namely: (1) omissions, (2) additions, (3) expansions, (4) narrowing, and (5) exchanges. This is in line with the opinion of Fromkin (2003), that lexicon changes can occur in several ways: (1) the emergence of new lexicons, (2) *borrowing*, and (3) semantic changes, such as expansion, narrowing, and change of meaning.

Pura et al. (2022, p. 81) state, that thanks to the property of human language—language creativity; we can produce and understand new forms of language. Language productivity and creativity seem very related and difficult to distinguish from each other; Lyons (1977) argues that creativity and productivity are complementary terms, indicating different ways of creating new terms and using new terms. He goes further and proposes to understand creativity and productivity as hyponyms of innovation, distinguishing whether regulation is foreseen. This position is indirectly held by Dal and Namer (2018). Because they state that creativity should be viewed as a subcase of productivity. That is, it corresponds to the low pole of the productivity continuum. And, as Munat (2007) confirms, there is no apparent reason to advocate a theoretical distinction between productivity and creativity. Hockett (1958) in Bauer 2001 give the label 'productivity' to that property of language that allows us to say things that have never been said before, the design feature that Chomsky (1965) calls 'creativity'.

However, Maledo (2021) states that productivity and creativity are two different things. There is a distinction between morphological productivity and creativity related to lexical innovation and nonce formation. This distinction is



related to the conflict between intentionality and unintentionality (Dal & Namer, 2016). Morphological productivity is understood as the potential for language users to unintentionally create a multiple of new morphologically complex words (Dal & Namer, 2016). Bauer (2001) defines morphological creativity as the ability of native speakers to extend the language system in a motivated but unpredictable (non-rule-governed) way, contrasting it with productivity, which is, instead, defined as rule-driven innovation. In his research, Maledo (2021) found that there are several lexical innovations in the process of forming new words contained in the poems by Joe Ushie he studied. These processes are compounding, affixation, blending, lexical hyphenation, and lexical bracketing.

Research that is also related to lexical innovation is research from Pura in 2022. Pura researches lexical innovations related to the COVID-19 pandemic such as self-isolation, social distancing, pandemic, and so on. Of the 590 words taken from *News on the Web (NOW)* from January 2020 to October 2021, it was found that the process of forming new words was: compounding, blends, affixation, acronyms, and back-formation; with the highest percentage of occurrence is *compounding*.

Further research, research from Takwa et al. (2022) on the shift in meaning in the lexicon of traditional technology in Tolaki, South Sulawesi states that there is an extinction of the majority of the lexicon of the traditional agricultural system. Data was obtained from a book entitled "Tolaki Culture" by Abdurrauf Tarimana. In addition, Takwa also provided a questionnaire containing 115 lexicons to 7 informants from the Tolaki community. Of the 115 traditional technology lexicons in Tolaki, about 50 lexicons (44%) experienced extinction, 29 lexicons (25%) experienced a shift, and 36 (31%) did not experience a shift. The lexicon's shifting meanings include: (1) the lexicons for farming tools, (2) the lexicons for sago-smoking tools, (3) the lexicons for containers, (4) the lexicons for tools of making and lightning fires, (5) the lexicons for eating and drinking utensil, (6) the lexicon for clothing and jewelry tools, and (7) the lexicon for means of transportation

Kuswoyo (2023, p. 957) mentions the rules for making a new terminology from a piece of news or information in society are called the word formation process, and the process of forming words is called the morphological process. Filatkina in Arndt-Lappe et al. (2018, p. 3) argues that as word formations, formulaic patterns are considered an important means of lexical expansion and innovation. Filatkina found substantial differences and characteristics in the way formulaic patterns contribute to expanding the lexicon. There are several ways in the word formation process, ranging from affixation, coinage, borrowing, backformation, conversion, derivation, compounding, blending, acronyms, and so on. However, Ayto (1990) and Steinmetz and Kipfer (2006) in Fandrych (2008) stated that non-morphemic processes in acronyms, blending, and clipping are as important as morphemic processes. They added that this is due to the increasing popularity of these three non-morphemic processes in the 20th century as the use of computers and electronic communications increased.

Compounding is the process of forming a new word by combining two or more words. O'Grady (1996) argues, that compounding is the combination of lexical categories (Noun, Verb, Adjective, or Preposition) to form a larger word. Plag (2002) states similarly, that compound, or compounding, or compositions may consist of more than two member words. In line with O'Grady and Plag's statement, Hacken (2017) says compounding is a word formation process based on the combination of lexical elements (words or stems). This process of word formation is one of the most productive processes in recent years. Moehkardi (2016, p. 325), mentions compounding has vast growing potential, especially those found in internet-based media.

Affixation is the process of forming a new word by adding an affix (it can be a prefix, infix, or suffix). Affixing is a word-forming process in which an affix is attached to the root or base of a word to form a new word. The process of affixing in English can be divided into prefixes, suffixes, and infixes, depending on whether the affix is added before, after, or at a particular place within the base. Thus, the affix itself can be a prefix, a suffix, or an infix (Mathews, 1991). Affixes themselves, are morphemes that must be attached to a root word because they cannot stand alone (Haspelmath & Sims, 2010). However, not all types of affixes and root words can be combined to obtain affixations; Haspelmath and Sim (2010) call it the combinatory potential of the affix. For example, -un and intelligent can be combined using affixes to produce the new word unintelligent. But not -able and intelligent, the two morphemes cannot be combined to form a new word, because the suffix -able can only be attached to verbs and intelligent is an adjective.

Lieber (2009) calls blending a process of word formation in which parts of words that are not themselves morphemes are combined to form a new word. Blending is a process of forming new words by combining parts of the root word (Haspelmath & Sim, 2010). Both statements are in line with O'Grady's (1996) opinion many years earlier; blend is a word that is created from parts of two already existing items. Thus, it can be concluded that blending is the process of forming a new word by combining certain parts of the words that make it up. Based on the formula given by Plag (2003) in Beliaeva,  $AB + CD = AD$ , the beginning of the first source word and the ending of the second source word are combined. The constituent words usually consist of two pre-existing words, for example, breakfast and lunch can be turned into brunch by combining br- from the first word and -unch from the second word. In meaning, the new word that undergoes this process is a combination of the meanings of the two words that make it up. In this case, brunch which is a combination of breakfast - breakfast and lunch - lunch, means eating activities that are in the time between breakfast time and lunch time.

All languages have words that represent something based on their sound (O'Grady, 1996; Yamamoto, 1993). Onomatopoeia is a word formation process in which the new word is taken directly from the sounds around it.

Onomatopoeia is the process of forming new words by imitating/imitating the sound of an object or other sounds from nature. Carstairs-McCarthy (2002, p. 6) states it is true that there are some words whose sound seems to reflect their meaning fairly directly. O'Grady (1996) himself called onomatopoeic words as words that have been created to sound like the thing they name.

O'Grady (1996) refers to borrowing as a source of language change that involves adopting aspects of one language into another. Borrowing is the process of borrowing words derived from other languages and then borrowing with or without modification from the local language. Ulfah (2019, p. 116) stated that borrowing is usually used in terms of new technical or unknown concepts, to overcome a gap. Hadithya (2014) in Ulfah (2019, p. 116) mentions two types of borrowing, pure borrowing and naturalized borrowing. Furthermore, Hadithya explained that naturalized borrowing is a case where a word or an expression is taken from the source language and used in the target language, but it is in a naturalized form, that is, it is made to conform the rules of grammar or pronunciation of the target language. Conversely, when a word is borrowed directly without changing or adjusting to the target language, then the word undergoes a process of pure borrowing.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This research is ethnographic research, where the author describes and interprets the language of a community group. Based on Harris' explanation, in Creswell (2007, p. 68), "ethnography is a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture sharing group". Agar (1980) in Creswell (2007, p. 68) added,

ethnography is a way of studying a culture-sharing group as well as the final, written product of research. As a process, ethnography involves extended observations of a group, most often through participant observation, in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people and observes and interviews the group participants.

In this study, data were obtained from observations, interviews, photo shoots, document analysis, and field notes. Data is divided into two types; primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained or collected by researchers directly from their data sources. In this study, the data is in the form of a lexicon in agriculture in Sukakarya District, Bekasi Regency obtained from observations and interviews in the field. Secondary data is data obtained and collected from various existing sources such as books, research reports, and journals, as well as the Internet.

The informants selected in this study are natives of Bekasi Regency who still use their mother tongue. In this study, 4 (four) informants were selected, these informants were representatives of residents of Sukakarya and Sukamanah sub-districts who were active in agriculture and still used their mother tongue actively so that they were considered able to provide information about the lexicon in agriculture accurately and accurately. The selection of informants is under what Patton (1990) stated that there are two informant selection techniques (sampling strategies) in qualitative research as data sources. The first is a way of randomly retrieving informants from the population by taking into account the number of informants with the aim that informants can be generalized to the population. The second is that informants are selected depending on the purpose of the study without regard to their generalization ability.

Stages of analysis:

1. The vocabulary obtained is grouped by its word class.
2. After being grouped by word class, word meanings were searched based on the KBBI dictionary, Betawi dictionary, and Sundanese dictionary.
3. Grouping new vocabulary as a result of the use of new agricultural technologies.
4. Looking for vocabulary formation processes based on lexical innovations in agriculture in Bekasi district.
5. In the last step, the author grouped vocabulary that was threatened with loss due to no longer being used in the planting process until harvesting rice plants.

### IV. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

57 lexicons of rice field agriculture used by farmers in Bekasi Regency were obtained after conducting interviews and observations. Once the data is obtained, the author then groups the vocabulary based on the word class. At this stage, the 5 vocabulary consists of 28 verb classes and 29 noun word classes (see Appendix A). In the next stage, the author grouped the vocabulary that emerged due to the use of technology in agriculture. Then 8 new lexicons were obtained with details of 4 lexicons with noun word classes and 4 lexicons with verb word classes. Findings in the field show that several lexicon innovations produce new lexicons due to the use of rice field agricultural technology. Meanwhile, the impact of the use of modern agricultural technology is threatened by the loss of 11 lexicons, especially those related to traditional agricultural tools and processes. The new lexicon and lexicon that are threatened with loss in rice field farming in Bekasi Regency are:

TABLE 2  
NEW LEXICON OF RICE FIELD FARMING IN BEKASI REGENCY

No.	New Lexicon	Word Class
1.	<i>Nraktor</i>	Verb
2.	<i>Nyempret</i>	Verb
3.	<i>Ngorea</i>	Verb
4.	<i>Nyintok</i>	Verb
5.	<i>Sintok</i>	Noun
6.	<i>Grabag</i>	Noun
7.	<i>Komben</i>	Noun
8.	<i>Ojeg Onlen</i>	Noun

TABLE 3  
LEXICON OF AGRICULTURE IN BEKASI REGENCY WHAT'S IN DANGER OF BEING LOST

No.	Lexicon in danger of loss	Meaning
1.	<i>Arit</i>	Tools for cutting rice plants
2.	<i>Ngarit</i>	Conducting a bumper harvest using <i>arit</i>
3.	<i>Etem</i>	Tools for cutting rice plants
4.	<i>Ngetem</i>	Conducting a bumper harvest using <i>etem</i>
5.	<i>Ani-ani</i>	Tools for cutting rice plants
6.	<i>Papan gebot</i>	Board used for threshing rice grains
7.	<i>Ngegebot</i>	Threshing rice grains using a <i>papan gebot</i>
8.	<i>Pedang</i>	A type of cleaver with a longer size
9.	<i>Babad</i>	Mowing or eradicating plants
10.	<i>Cacag</i>	Cut into small pieces, chopped
11.	<i>Agon</i>	Soaking the <i>damen</i> that has been soaked and whipped before using the feet

Wahya (2017, p. 220) divides innovation into two types, internal innovation and external innovation. Internal innovation is an update triggered by the internal system of an isolect. External innovation is renewal triggered by other isolects due to contact between isolects. The new lexicon that falls into the category of internal innovation is *nraktor*, *nyempret*, *ngorea*, *nyintok*, *sintok*, and *grabag*. The lexicons undergo the following word formation process:

#### A. Afiksasi

*Nraktor* is the process of cultivating the land using a tractor engine. A tractor is a tool used by farmers to plow their land, this tool uses a machine as a drive. The soil is made looser by turning the soil. *Nraktor* is carried out at the preparatory stage of rice planting. Farmers prepare their arable land so that the land is ready for replanting.

Tractor engines are very helpful for farmers because they can cut the length and duration of the process of plowing the land. The word *nraktor* comes from the root word tractor (a machine used to plow fields) which has the addition of the -n sound and removes the -t sound at the beginning of the word. This process changes the class of words as well as the meaning of the root word; the process of word formation that occurs in the word *nraktor* is affixation. The process of word formation can be seen in the following chart.

<b>-n</b>	+	<i>Traktor</i> =>	<b><i>nraktor</i></b>
prefix		nomina	verba

Before knowing the tractor machine, traditional people generally cultivated the land in the rice fields by hoeing or plowing (turning the land) using cow or buffalo power. In the Sukakarya and Sukamanah sub-districts themselves, farmers do not use buffaloes or cows but *pedang* (a type of cleaver with a longer size). This is because the types of rice fields in both areas are deep rice fields and not land fields, so it is not possible to use cows or buffaloes to plow their fields.

In the early stages, *damen* (the remaining rice plants that have been harvested and harvested for rice) are then *babad* (cut) using a *pedang*. After that, the *damen* is soaked in water for ten days. After the *damen* rots, the farmer then cuts it into small pieces (*cacag*). While waiting for the seedlings that have been sown to be ready for planting, the *damen* is then *diagonin* (buried into the soil using feet). *Diagonin* is the last stage in plowing the land, after which the land is ready for replanting.

The *nraktor* process has eliminated some processes in plowing the land. Peasants no longer needed *pedang*, no longer needed to do *babad*, *cacag*, and *agon damen*. As the process is not needed, the use of the four vocabularies above is also no longer used in agriculture in the Bekasi Regency.

*Nyempret* is the process of spraying rice using a special tool for spraying plants. The liquid sprayed on rice plants is a pesticide to overcome rice plant pests. Based on the <http://cybex.pertanian.go.id/mobile/artikel/58883/9-Teknik-Menyemprot-Tanaman-Padi-Yang-Baik-Dan-Benar/>), spraying is an activity in plant cultivation that aims to control pests and diseases that disturb plants. The process is done by mixing pesticides and water with a certain dose, then the solution is put into the spraying tank and the last step is to spray the mixture of pesticides and water on the plants. Spraying is usually carried out in the morning on a sunny day. This is because it takes about an hour for plants to absorb fertilizers and pesticides. So spraying can not be done on rainy days.

The word *nyempret* comes from the word *sempret* which means spray. So the process of forming the word *nyempret* is included in the affixation where the word *sempret* gets the prefix *-ny* and removes the *-s* sound at the beginning of the word. This results in changes in meaning as well as word class. The process of forming a *nyempret* word can be seen in the following chart.

-Ny prefix	+	Sempret nomina	=>	Nyempret verba
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*Ngorea* is an activity to provide fertilizer to rice plants during seeding and planting. The word *ngorea* is formed by adding the prefix *-ng* to the word *orea*. *Orea* (urea) is an artificial fertilizer that is included in the class of nitrogen fertilizers in farming (<https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/urea>). Urea fertilizer contains 45% Nitrogen and is hygroscopic, does not acidify the soil, is easily soluble in water, flammable by sunlight and easily absorbed (Subarijanti in Fitriana, 2011) in addition to urea fertilizer, farmers also use TSP fertilizer. This type of fertilizer contains elements of phosphorus (Fitriana, 2011). In the process of applying fertilizer, farmers still use the word *ngorea* regardless of the type of fertilizer they use. The process of forming the word *ngorea* can be seen in the following chart.

-ng prefix	+	Orea nomina	=>	Ngorea Verba
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Before chemical fertilizers were used, traditional farmers of Bekasi Regency used manure and compost to fertilize their rice plants. The manure used comes from goat, cow, and buffalo manure, while compost is obtained from leaves. Based on practical information sheet no.1 released by the Office of the State Minister of Environment on Environment Day, June 5, 2000, compost is an organic fertilizer sourced from household waste, plant waste, market waste, and others and is made through a composting process.

Still based on the circular, compost is made through several stages: (1) waste sorting; Composted materials should come from fresh garbage, so it will avoid the emergence of flies, and odors, and to maintain the quality of compost. (2) garbage accumulation; Arrange piles of selected garbage into air tunnels made of bamboo. Water evenly on the pile. Furthermore, the tiny body will work on the weathering process. This process takes approximately three days. (3) temperature monitoring; Monitoring the temperature for 2-4 days is very important. If the temperature is too high, then it is necessary to carry out a reversal. (4) weathering; The weathering process usually lasts for approximately 35 days until the color of the compost turns dark brown or blackish. (5) maturation; After the compost is shaped like soil, it is necessary to carry out ripening for 14 days. This ripening is necessary to ensure that compost is safe to use as a fertilizer for planting. (6) harvesting; Mature compost is separated using a sieving device to separate fine grains and coarse grains. Fine granules are used for pots or medium seedbeds of large granules for plantations.

*Nyintok* is the process of threshing rice grains using a threshing machine (*sintok*). Farmers will install tarpaulins as a base before the *nyintok* process is carried out. In the *nyintok* process, rice plants that have been harvested are included in the *sintok* that is operating. The *sintok* will separate the *grain* (rice grain) from the *damen* (rice stem). Rice stalks will fly and pile up while the *grain* will be accommodated on a tarp that has been installed as a base.

The word *nyintok* is a combination of the prefix *-ny* with the word *sintok*. In principle, this word is a new word that undergoes 2 (two) times the process of word formation. The first process is called *blending* and the second process is affixation. The process of forming the word *nyintok* can be seen in the following chart.

-Ny Prefix	+	Sintok Noun	=>	Nyintok Verb
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Based on the affixation process that occurs in the new words above, it can be seen the pattern of formation of the new word, namely:

**Prefix + Noun => Verb**

The prefixes that appear in Betawi Bekasi are *-n*, *-ng*, *-ny*. The three prefixes give the same properties to the formed word, which is to change the class of base words (nouns) into verb classes. In addition, in the process, new words also undergo a process of completion or removal of the first sound in each root word. The process of dissolution occurs when the prefix meets a root word that has a consonant initial letter (sound) as in the word:

*traktor* => *nraktor*, sound /t/ undergoes dissipation;  
*sempret* => *nyempret*, the sound /s/ is dissipated; and  
*sintok* => *nyintok*, the sound /s/ is sed.

The process mentioned above is similar to nasal substitution in Indonesian where the *-t*, *-k*, *-p*, and *-s* sounds are melted and replaced by the nasal sound *-ng*. This process can be seen in the following examples.

*Meng* + *urus* => *mengurus* (take care)  
*Meng* + *tulis* => *menulis* (write)  
*Meng* + *irim* => *mengirim* (send)  
*Meng* + *pakai* => *memakai* (wear)  
*Meng* + *sewa* => *menyewa* (renting)

Haspelmath et al. (2010) call this Indonesian nasal substitution a productive morphonological alternation. Specifically, they explain in this alternation, that the initial voiceless stop of a verb root is replaced by a nasal stop at the same place of articulation when the active-voice prefix *meng-* is attached to the root.

### B. Blending

*Sintok* is short for rice grain threshing machine. This word formation process is included in the blending criteria, where two morphemes are freely combined and partially removed from the morphemes. The process of forming such words can be seen in the following chart:

Mesin machine	+	Perontok thresher	=>	Sintok Threshing machine
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Based on Plag's (2003) statement in Beliaeva, the blending process can use a formula, where the first syllable of the first word is combined with the second syllable of the second word (AB + CD = AD). However, he added, there are many ways to implement this process. In this case, the word *sintok* is a combination of the first syllable of the word "*mesin-machine*" and the third syllable of the word "*perontok-thresher*". Beliaeva (2019) mentions it is not surprising, that blends are often used as expressive means in various domains including slang, popular media, political terms professional vernacular, company names, names of musical bands, and other cultural groups.

In this case, the people of Bekasi regency use two different lexicons with two different morphological processes for the same object. Some people call it *gerabag*, while others call it *sintok*. The process of threshing rice grains using *sintok* or *grabag*, is referred to as *nyintok*. *Sintok* is a rice grain threshing machine with diesel fuel. In a day, farmers can produce at least 25 quintals of grain using this tool.

Before the *nyintok* process begins, the harvested rice plants are collected at a point in the rice field. Farmers will then install tarpaulins near the pile of rice plants. Tarpaulins are used as a base to hold *gabah*. *Sintok* will separate the *damen* from *gabah*. The *gabah* is then collected and put into sacks. After the sack is full enough, it will be closed by sewing using a special needle and raffia rope. After sewing, the sacks containing the grain are ready to be moved to the rice field owner's warehouse.

Traditional farmers of Bekasi Regency use *papan gebotan* to threshing rice grains. Farmers beat harvested rice plants on *papan gebotan*; this process is referred to as *gebot*. In addition to draining a relatively lot of time and energy, the traditional threshing process also requires more people to do it. Therefore, farmers now no longer use *papan gebot* in the rice harvesting process.

### C. Onomatopoeia

*Gerabag* is a machine used to threshing rice grains. *Gerabag* is another name for *sintok*. People call it that, because of the sound and vibration produced by the device when operating (*gerabagan*). In morphology, the process of the formation of this word is included in the onomatopoeia criteria. This process is also called sound symbolism, where sounds that come from nature, animals, humans, or objects, are imitated and symbolized as a word. *Gerabagan* itself has the meaning of not being calm and tends to produce something untidy. In the Betawi language, there is a term *gerabag-gerubug* which means looking for something in a hurry and untidy. This seems to be an additional cause of *sintok* also known as *gerabag*. The fast but noisy way of working, excessive engine vibration, and the flying stems of rice plants after being separated from the rice stems make it look rushed and untidy.

The new lexicons that constitute the category of external lexical innovations are: *komben*, and *ojeg onlen*. The following will be presented as an explanation of the two lexicons.

### D. Borrowing

The word *komben*, comes from the English combine which means combination. *Komben* is a combination of a rice plant mower, a rice grain thresher, and a rice grain reservoir. So that by using only one machine, farmers can save time and energy in the process of harvesting their rice. The size of the *komben* is much larger than *sintok*. *Komben* requires three operators, each of whom is tasked with operating the *komben*, accommodating rice grains that have fallen out using sacks, and tidying up sacks that have been filled with rice grains.

Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) categorize borrowing into two types; pure and naturalized. Pure borrowing occurs when there is no change in either the form or meaning of the word in its native language. Naturalized borrowing occurs when there is a change in the form of a word even though it does not change the meaning of the word from the original language. In this case, the word *komben* falls into the category of naturalized borrowing. The sounds in the initial language /kɔmbain/ are naturalized by adjusting the sound characteristics of the local language. There are two naturalized sounds, /ɔ/ becomes /o/ and /ai/ becomes /e/. Therefore, in form, this word has changed, while for its meaning, there is no change.

The word *komben* undergoes a change in the borrowing lexicon, where the language of origin of the word is a foreign language (English) which is then absorbed into *komben*. Borrowing is the process of borrowing foreign language words. There is a change in the form of the word as in the description below.

Combine	/kɔmbain/	=>	komben /komben/
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Due to the use of *komben*, farmers no longer use *sickles*, *etems*, or *ani-ani* to harvest their rice crops. Therefore, the process of *crying*, *ngetem*, and *ani-ani* is also lost. In addition, for threshing rice grains also no longer use *papan gebot*. So the process of *ngegebot* was also lost. *Komben*, on the other hand, is the answer to the difficulty of finding agricultural workers due to the industrialization of the Bekasi Regency. Besides of course accelerating the process of harvesting rice plants so that farmers can sell their crops faster.

It can be seen that one tool using agricultural technology that can grind several things at once results in the threat of the existence of traditional harvesting tools and processes. Thus, the lexicon threatened by its existence is not one, but seven lexicons at once. *Komben* created a lexicon such as:

<i>Arit</i>	=>	<i>ngarit</i>
<i>Etem</i>	=>	<i>ngetem</i>
<i>Ani-ani</i>	=>	<i>ani-ani</i>
<i>Papan gebot</i>	=>	<i>ngegebot</i>

It is no longer used by farmers.

#### E. Expansion of Meaning

*Ojeg onlen* is a term used for the carrier (person who transports) rice using a motor to transport harvested rice. In the Betawi language, *ojek* or *ojeg* means rent, ride services for motorcycles, bicycles, boats, and so on. *Ojeg onlen* is a new phrase in agriculture inspired by the type of work that offers shuttle services using cars or motorbikes by utilizing certain applications on devices. This service uses an online platform to make it easier for service users to access anywhere and anytime.

In the people of Bekasi Regency, the use of the term *ojeg onlen* began when fewer and fewer people wanted to transport rice from the rice fields to the place of the rice owner by placing rice sacks on the shoulders or shoulders. For rice field owners themselves, the use of *ojeg onlen* helps speed up rice field owners selling their crops. This is because if you use the services of a *tukang panggul* (a person who moves rice manually) takes more than one day to collect the harvested rice to the rice field owner, then with the help of *ojeg onlen*, the rice transfer process can be completed in just one day. In addition, *ojeg onlen* is also able to reach parts of rice fields that are difficult to access due to rain. When rain makes the *galengan* wet and slippery, *tukang panggul* will find it difficult to carry sacks of grain from the fields. Therefore, the existence of *ojeg onlen* is currently considered very important and very helpful for rice field owners.

Linguistically, *ojeg onlen* undergoes semantic changes, that is, expansion of meaning. From being limited to a shuttle service that uses an online platform, it now has additional meaning, to a rice pick-up service that has been harvested (without an online platform). Sibarani (2004) mentions lexicon language changes can be seen from several aspects, namely: elimination, naming, expansion, narrowing, and exchange. Fromkin (2003) argues lexicon changes can occur in several ways: the emergence of new lexicons, borrowing, and semantic changes such as expansion, narrowing, and change of meaning.

#### V. CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that lexical innovation is also present in agriculture in Bekasi Regency. This lexical innovation occurred due to technological developments in agriculture. The process of planting rice, from preparation to harvesting which is increasingly dominated by machines produces a new lexicon in each process. The word formation process that seemed most productive in the study, was affixation. However, there is also a process of forming words *blending*, *onomatopoeia*, and *borrowing*. There is also an expansion of meaning in lexical innovation in agriculture in Bekasi Regency. In addition to causing lexical innovation, technological developments in agriculture also have an impact on the threat of losing the lexicon of agriculture when farmers still use traditional equipment. This is because traditional agricultural equipment is no longer used so the lexicon related to traditional agricultural equipment and processes is also no longer used. The lexicon includes: *pedang*, *agon*, *gebotan*, *ngegebot* and so on. Therefore, it is important to make certain efforts to preserve these lexicons without compromising the productivity of farmers.

## APPENDIX A LEXICON OF AGRICULTURE IN BEKASI REGENCY BASED ON WORD CLASS

NO	Leksikon Noun Word Class	Meaning
1.	<i>Arit</i>	Tools for cutting rice plants
2.	<i>Etem</i>	Tools for cutting rice plants
3.	<i>Gerabag</i>	Tools (machines) for threshing rice grains
4.	<i>Sewa</i>	The system of agricultural cooperation in the distribution of crops with certain conditions
5.	<i>Maro</i>	The system of agricultural cooperation with the distribution of crops is divided in half between cultivators and rice field owners
6.	<i>Negade</i>	The system of lending money with rice field guarantees from rice field owners to money owners, with the consequence that crop yields are regulated according to agreement.
7.	<i>Gundukan</i>	Piles of rice stalks after cutting
8.	<i>Gabah</i>	Grains of rice
9.	<i>Singgang</i>	Rice plants that grow again after the bumper harvest
10.	<i>Padi gabug</i>	Rice plants that do not have rice grains due to leafhoppers or caterpillars
11.	<i>Galengan</i>	Rice paddy ripens
12.	<i>Wereng</i>	Pests of rice plants in the form of small insects
13.	<i>Walang sangit</i>	Pests of rice plants in the form of small locusts
14.	<i>Kiong mas</i>	Pests of rice plants of the type of gold snails
15.	<i>Lembing</i>	Pests of rice plants of the insect type
16.	<i>Uler</i>	Pests of rice plants of the caterpillar type
17.	<i>Kupu-kupu</i>	Pests of rice plants of the small butterfly type
18.	<i>Lompat pucuk</i>	Rice plants affected by leafhopper pests
19.	<i>Okeman</i>	Sprinkling rows of rice plants during planting
20.	<i>Galengan</i>	Path in rice fields
21.	<i>Petakan</i>	Rice fields
22.	<i>Sintok</i>	Grain threshing machine
23.	<i>Papan gebot</i>	Board used for threshing rice grains
24.	<i>Damen</i>	The rest of the rice plants that have been harvested and taken rice
25.	<i>Pedang</i>	A type of cleaver with a longer size
26.	<i>Komben</i>	A combination machine that can be used to cut rice plants while threshing rice grains
27.	<i>Ojeg onlen</i>	People who transport rice grains from rice fields to the place of rice field owners using a motorcycle
28.	<i>Tukang panggul</i>	People who transport rice grains from rice fields to the place of the owner of the rice field by means of pelvis

No.	Lexicon of verb word classes	Meaning
1.	<i>Namping</i>	Tidying up rice paddies using a hoe
2.	<i>Mopok</i>	Fertilizing the paddy fields by adding mud to the paddy fields to the paddy fields
3.	<i>Nraktor</i>	Cultivate (plow) the land using tractor machines
4.	<i>Sebar bibit</i>	Sowing rice plant seeds by spreading
5.	<i>Ngratain</i>	Leveling rice fields manually using boards
6.	<i>Nyempret</i>	Provide nutrients or drugs to overcome diseases in rice plants by spraying them on rice plants
7.	<i>Ngorea</i>	Fertilizing rice plants during seedling or planting
8.	<i>Ngoyos</i>	Cleaning rice plants that have been planted from grass
9.	<i>Nandur</i>	Performing seed embedding from the nursery
10.	<i>Nanjangin</i>	Adding rice plants that are depleted due to planthoppers or gold snails
11.	<i>Ngedederin</i>	Prepare rice plant reserves to anticipate if there are rice plants that have been eaten by leafhoppers or gold snails
12.	<i>Nandur op</i>	Planting rice plants from seedlings together with 30-40 people
13.	<i>Ngewatun</i>	Cleaning rice plants from mapped grass
14.	<i>Ngebabad</i>	Cleaning grass on rice paddy fields, to avoid nesting rodents
15.	<i>galengan</i>	Rice paddy ripens
16.	<i>Nyilakin</i>	Arranging rice plants that are ready to harvest so that they are not scattered in the rice fields
17.	<i>Motong</i>	Harvest using manual tools or mowers
18.	<i>Ngarit</i>	Conducting a bumper harvest using sickles
19.	<i>Ngegebot</i>	Threshing rice grains from the trunk using <i>papan gebot</i> made of wood and bamboo
20.	<i>Nyintok</i>	Threshing rice grains from the stem using a <i>sintok</i> machine
21.	<i>Ngetem</i>	Harvesting rice plants by cutting them using <i>etem</i>
22.	<i>Ani-ani</i>	Harvesting rice plants by cutting them using <i>ani-ani</i>
23.	<i>Nimbangin</i>	Weighing the weight of rice that is already in sacks after the rice plants are harvested
24.	<i>Naker</i>	Dividing the harvest, from the owner of the rice field to the farm laborer
25.	<i>Ngangkut</i>	Bringing the harvest from the middle of the rice field map to the place where the owner of the rice field
26.	<i>Manggulin</i>	Bringing the harvest from the middle of the rice field map to the place of the rice field owner by carrying it on the shoulders
27.	<i>Cacag</i>	Cut into small pieces, chopped
28.	<i>Agon</i>	Soaking <i>damen</i> after being chopped
29.	<i>Babad</i>	Mowing or eradicating plants



APPENDIX B OVERVIEW OF FARMER ACTIVITIES



Figure 1. The Narktor Process



Figure 2. Nyempret Process (Source: Tabloid Sinartani.com)



Figure 3. Ngorea Process (Source: mertani.co.id)



Figure 4. Nyintok Process





Figure 5. Grabag/Sintok



Figure 6. Komben



Figure 7. Ojeg Onlen



Figure 8. The Process of Transporting Rice From the Rice Field to the Place Where the Owner of the Rice Field Is by *Tukang Panggul*

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**Novita Puspahaty** is an assistant professor at English Department Universitas Islam "45" Bekasi, Indonesia. She obtained her master's degree from Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia, and conducted her doctoral degree at the same university. She actively conducts research in the fields of Syntax, Morphology, Sociolinguistics, Antropolinguistics, and Education. She can be contacted at [novita@englishunisma.org](mailto:novita@englishunisma.org).

**Dian Indira** is an associate professor of the German language in the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural Science Universitas Padjadjaran. She actively conducts research mainly in linguistics and social science. She can be contacted at [Dian.Indira@unpad.ac.id](mailto:Dian.Indira@unpad.ac.id).

**Wahya** is an associate professor of the Bahasa Indonesia in the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural Science at Universitas Padjadjaran. He took his master's and doctoral degrees at Padjadjaran University. He actively conducts research and writes books mainly Sundanese language and linguistics. He can be contacted at [wahya@unpad.ac.id](mailto:wahya@unpad.ac.id).

**Susi Machdalena** is an associate professor of the Russian language in the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural Sciences Universitas Padjadjaran. She holds a Ph.D. in Russian linguistics and culture from the Russian State Institute named Aleksandr Sergevich Pushkin Moscow, Russia. She has been teaching Russian for 33 years at the Russian Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences Padjadjaran University. Her research interests are ethnolinguistics, onomastics, anthroponyms, culture, and phraseology. She can be contacted at [machdalena@unpad.ac.id](mailto:machdalena@unpad.ac.id).

# A Conceptual Framework for Teaching Arabic as a Second Language

Sultan A. Almelhes

Teacher Preparation and Development Department, Islamic University of Madinah, Saudi Arabia

Hussain E. Alsaiari

Curriculum and Instruction Department, Jouf University, Sakaka, Saudi Arabia

**Abstract**—Despite the increasing demand for learning foreign languages such as Arabic, approaches to teaching this language remain under-explored. The increasing complexity of classrooms renders the task of ensuring that learners with diverse backgrounds and experiences attain the stated objectives, challenging. To address this challenge, this study proposes the 3Cs approach, which combines communicative language teaching, collaborative learning and social constructivist theory, to improve the teaching and learning of Arabic. This approach integrates communicative techniques based on social constructivist theory and is implemented through the acquisition of shared knowledge of the environment. The 3Cs-based approach, which promotes students' active involvement, has the potential to facilitate comprehensive learning and real-world applications, offering new opportunities for both teachers and students to improve outcomes and address classroom difficulties.

**Index Terms**—Arabic language, second language acquisition, communicative language teaching approach, collaborative learning, social constructivist theory

## I. INTRODUCTION

Effective teaching of a second language is vital to enable students to develop strong language skills. However, the traditional method of language teaching, with its emphasis on grammar rules and vocabulary memorization, has been criticized for its shortcomings. Students often struggle to grasp language concepts without collective communication and experience limited engagement which hinders their overall language acquisition. Thus, traditional methods alone are insufficient to meet the diverse needs of modern learners (Smith, 2019; Smith & Renzulli, 1984; Mokhtar, 2016). Albantani and Madkur (2019) reported that Arabic was the fifth most spoken language in the world in 2019 with 422 million speakers in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Since then, the Arabic language has continuously attracted worldwide attention, which has spread beyond traditional Muslim countries (Keshav et al., 2022). Berbeco (2017) reported a growing demand for Arabic in elementary, middle and high schools in America. Similarly, an increased demand for learning Arabic in the US, UK and the rest of Europe has been observed from pre-school to tertiary education (Soliman & Khalil, 2022). These observations highlight the importance of the Arabic language and the need to focus on effective ways of teaching it in educational institutions.

Despite its increasing growth and popularity, teaching Arabic as a second language is challenging for teachers mainly due to the lack of training in teaching and assessment methods, teaching materials and resources and the high variation in Arabic dialects (Soliman & Khalil, 2022). Furthermore, traditional Arabic teaching methods cannot address challenges posed by the diversity of background and experiences of students, especially bilingual ones. Soliman and Khalil (2022) reported a preference of Arabic teachers for traditional grammar-based rather than a more pragmatic communicative teaching approach, which often poses challenges to students learning Arabic as a second language. Similarly, while teachers may be aware of novel and more practical approaches to teaching Arabic, they do not always apply them, preferring their own conservative and traditional teaching methods (Snowden et al., 2016). Furthermore, due to the growing demand for Arabic and the evolving needs of learners, teachers have been forced to adjust their Arabic teaching approaches in order to achieve the desired goals and objectives (Berbeco, 2017). Without this adjustment, the teaching of Arabic as a second language could be problematic.

The teaching of Arabic as a second language in the Saudi context is impeded by various challenges. Although Arabic is taught as a compulsory subject and medium of instruction in Saudi public schools from primary to secondary schools, the ability of teachers to teach this language to students learning Arabic as a second language has proven to be insufficient (Albaha & Li, 2012). Early evidence of the gap between language teaching advancements and teacher preparation has been reported by Alghamdi and Li (2012). They noted that while there have been advancements in the teaching of the language, teacher preparation has not been adjusted to match these developments. This is further emphasized in a later study by Taha (2017) reporting that Arabic teachers in Saudi Arabia faced challenges in equipping their students with 21st century skills, such as critical thinking and collaboration. More recently, Batakji-Chazy (2020) has argued that the pedagogy of Arabic language teachers should be revisited, noting that most teachers relied on



impractical, out-of-touch teaching approaches that did not lead to the attainment of the established goals and approaches. Therefore, the teaching approaches used in teaching Arabic as a second language in the Saudi context merit more attention. In the present study, the use of the 3Cs approach which combines the communicative language teaching (CLT), collaborative learning (CL) and social constructivist theory (SCT), is proposed as a promising alternative to facilitate effective teaching of Arabic as a second language.

The literature on the challenges of teaching Arabic as a second language in colleges highlights the shortcomings of traditional approaches (Albantani & Madkur, 2019), while studies on new approaches suitable for addressing this problem are limited. Under this light, this paper discusses the current status and limitations of current approaches in teaching of Arabic as a second language and the use of the 3Cs approach, namely, the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, collaborative learning (CL) and social constructivist theory (SCT). Specifically, this study had the following objectives:

- i. To provide a comprehensive overview of current approaches in teaching Arabic as a second language and their shortcomings.
- ii. To discuss the concept of the 3Cs approach for teaching Arabic as a second language.

## II. LIMITATIONS OF TRADITIONAL APPROACHES IN TEACHING OF ARABIC AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Despite the implementation of innovations, traditional language learning methods have exhibited limitations in adapting to new approaches (Akbaria, 2015). Scholars learning Arabic as an additional language should focus on improving their delivery and pronunciation of the language to align with the specific community that uses it for conversation and communication, as suggested by Almelhes (2016). Although there is no single method that can satisfy all language seekers' needs, CL and the application of SCT have recently become more valuable in addressing these needs.

According to Gass (2017) and Jeffreys (2015), individuals interested in learning a second language such as Arabic need to acquire spoken language capabilities not only via obtaining information on vocabulary, diction and grammar but also through the practice of conversation. Furthermore, Kang (2010) and Long (2014) have both argued that second language learners often resort to their first language when faced with new challenges for understanding and exploring the vocabulary in comparison to ideas or instances they have learned. Similarly, Ilhan and Oruc (2016) observed that during initial steps of language acquisition, a major problem arises when people learn to solve Arabic letters. This highlights the need for an approach -or set of approaches- that can be employed to improve the acquisition of Arabic as a second language. An ideal standard for classroom learning that enhances speaking and literacy skills, promotes students' communication proficiency, and understanding of the language in their community, can be achieved through a learner-centered approach emphasizing active participation. Acquiring a second language is a powerful and demanding skill. The significance of the learning environment in learning Arabic as a second language cannot be overemphasized. Obaki (2017) suggests that a learning environment should be suitable for the grade level of the students and should enhance their learning through encouraging communication and collaboration with others. An ideal learning environment should foster the acquisition of new skills and ideas, as well as help learners communicate in a new language through familiar concepts and forms. Furthermore, as students' comprehension deepens, they may encounter misconceptions and seek to replace them with new ideas. In some instances, they may realize that multiple types of syntactic rules can be applied. Padurean and Margan (2009) noted that students' perspectives shift as their understanding and expertise grow. Overall, in such learning environments students can enhance their comprehension using research, developing new strategies to replace outdated ones and examining existing knowledge to gain a deeper understanding (Almelhes, 2016).

According to Nor and Ab Rashid (2018), the acquisition of fluency in a language, including Arabic, is influenced by various interconnected factors, and no single linguistic approach can ensure this outcome. This highlights the importance of combining more than one teaching approaches to achieve the desirable outcome. This paper, therefore, aims to outline the benefits of implementing the 3Cs approach in the instruction of Arabic as a second language and the administrative considerations for training Arabic language teachers in Saudi colleges and other similar settings to adopt the standards of the suggested model. It also explores methods to reform and enhance current pedagogical methods, which have mainly relied on instructor-centric methods. The outcomes of this study could be beneficial in enhancing Arabic teaching techniques for individuals learning a second language who are not native Arabic speakers and may inspire teachers to support Arab organizations that concentrate on Arabic education.

## III. APPROACHES TO TEACHING ARABIC AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

The 3Cs approach proposes the integration of the communicative language teaching (CLT), collaborative learning (CL) and social constructivist theory (SCT).

### A. *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)*

The communicative language teaching approach considers a foreign language as a method of conversation rather than a set of rigid grammatical rules and complex phrases (Mitchell, 1988; Rabiah, 2018). This approach discourages rote

repetition, excessive translation exercises, and drilling of specific speech samples. In addition, each class can be made vibrant, exciting and dynamic using a communicative teaching approach (Dörnyei, 2009). The unique characteristics of the CLT approach are highlighted by Eisenring and Margana (2019) and Al-Khafaji (2015), which conclude that this approach specializes in interactions among college students through the use of the language outside the classroom setting.

Researchers reported that the CLT approach emphasizes the communicative length instead of focusing on grammatical language traits (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). They also concluded that interplay in and outside the classroom is essential in communicative language education (Nunam, 1991; Tiwari, 2021). According to Illés and Akcan (2017), foreign language teaching should prioritize real-life conversation, implying that CLT is focused on the practical acquisition of language skills. Furthermore, CLT approaches allow beginners to use the target language directly. Dos Santos (2020) and Yuan (2013) both noted that the central focus of the CLT approach is on student-centered methods, which empower the learner to take control of their learning. This emphasis provides students with a significant advantage in their second language acquisition efforts.

The CLT approach differs significantly from traditional language teaching approaches. The major goal of the traditional way of teaching a second language, often known as the grammar-translation method, is to provide college learners with a conceptual understanding of the grammatical and lexical shape of sentence structures (Eisa, 2020). In this method, university students memorize norms and texts, as well as translating them (Richards, 2005) instead of being introduced to communication behaviors by asking questions, questioning what they hear and expressing joy, surprise or anger. In contrast, the CLT approach tends to use linguistic context in terms of real communication (Abdulkader, 2016). When adopting a CLT approach, students must utilize the target language's forms, meanings, and functions to effectively communicate (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Furthermore, Byram and Mendez (2009) conducted research aimed at establishing clear guidelines for a communicative approach to language teaching. They proposed that students should refrain from using their native language in the classroom, while being able to engage in natural conversations in pairs. These language proficiency requirements imply the need for total separation from the native language environment.

Several other researchers have studied the CLT approach including Dos Santos (2020), who stated that the essential precept of the CLT approach is to operate with real language in real situations. This develops the ability to communicate effectively and fluently, enabling the learner to speak without hesitation and avoid awkward pauses in conversations (Irmawati, 2012). Relatedly, Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) and Belchamber (2007) suggested that the CLT could be enhanced with recreational elements, such as function-gambling games, where students are asked to imagine a secure setting and engage in dialogues using the vocabulary or grammar they have learned. Furthermore, Hiep (2007) asserted that learning is most effective in situations that are as authentic as possible. According to Gurunathan and Geethanjali (2016), working in groups of two or more is best. Marpuah (2019) noted that one of the particular problems Arabic learners faced is understanding Arabic grammar. Under the framework of the CLT approach, grammar must be studied in context to improve understanding. In this regard, the learner should be aware of the circumstances in which a particular grammatical form should be used. Belchamber (2007) emphasized that the 'direct to speech' principle may be exceptionally valuable when studying grammar as students use what they learn in context. Furthermore, in the implementation of the CLT approach, the student not only learns to speak in Arabic and acquire information but also communicates with others. To understand what a person is saying, a student must possess the ability to engage in a complete conversation and develop their listening skills (Belchamber, 2007). It is important to link language instruction in the classroom with opportunities for language learning outside the classroom (Nunam, 1991). The CLT method, therefore, requires the use of assets that offer a wide variety of several auditory and videotape samples recorded locally (Çakir, 2006; Chamba & Gavilanes, 2019).

Another advantage of CLT is the diverse range of teaching methods it employs, such as small group activities, the use of video games, and engaging cognitive materials and videos to facilitate learning (Thamarana, 2015). Another important aspect of the CLT concerns the role of the educator, which is to coordinate the students' learning procedure by providing guidance, stimulating their speech, and engaging them in active conversation (Hasim et al., 2016). The communicative method of teaching Arabic is suitable for individuals who have not had prior experience in speaking Arabic.

Much work has been done to determine how the CLT approach affects SLA. For instance, Haron (2015) designed a 14-week series of classroom activities based on the communicative approach using a sample that included learners of Arabic as a second language (ASL). Their findings indicated that the students' perception of Arabic and their capacity to speak improved during the training, which helped them to overcome their speaking difficulties. Using the CLT approach, Marpuah (2019) observed a favorable impact of studying Arabic on skills such as speaking, sentence formation, vocabulary and enhanced comprehension of the scriptures. Furthermore, Bahrudina et al. (2021) suggested that some activities to aid Arabic language acquisition might include questioning, speaking and problem solving among a group of students. In addition, Alsaiani (2016) documented the perspectives of 24 male primary educators of Arabic on teaching through CLT approaches, which were informed by the new literacy theory in Saudi Arabia.

#### *B. Collaborative Learning (CL)*

Collaborative learning (CL) has been shown to be an efficient way to enhance students' understanding (Altamimi &

Attamimi, 2014; Chamberlin, 2010; Keser & Ozdamli, 2012; Pattanpichet, 2011; Sugianto, 2022). It has changed the role of the instructor from a mere source of information to that of a helper who supports students in understanding and obtaining knowledge (Altamimi & Attamimi, 2014). Furthermore, CL helps learners acquire knowledge at a rate that suits their capabilities. Pallof and Pratt (2005) perceived that CL techniques can help most students learn a language more efficiently. Furthermore, students who learn in groups perform better than those who work individually, particularly in terms of improved learning outcomes and higher scores on standardized and teacher-made tests (Van Leeuwen & Janssen, 2019).

Many studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of CL. Scager et al. (2016) reported that students who participated in a CL environment learned how to absorb information and confidently interact in group settings. Additionally, they learned how to appreciate their success and accomplishments when working collaboratively. West et al. (2015) concluded that students learning in groups were not only responsible for their own learning but also helped their peers learn. Rosen and Rimor (2016) discovered that CL is influenced by two factors: the subject being taught and the institution where it is taught. They first discussed the evolution of the concept of a collaborative education system, and then they analyzed different collaborative conditions from various perspectives such as the individual, persuasive elements, societies, the group of individuals and their relationship with each other in a collaborative learning environment. Therefore, mastering the collaborative technique plays a central role in learning any language (Le et al., 2018), including Arabic, where this approach has been found to be even more effective (Al-Shehari, 2017).

Due to the interactive nature of language acquisition, and since students often talk loudly during their classroom sessions, language mastering varies based on the surroundings and the different educational topics. According to researchers, CL can enable inexperienced individuals to respond with a degree of autonomy and develop their personal understanding base (Hussain, 2012). Furthermore, sports activities that are related to collaboration in communicative methods can provide crucial means for learning Arabic. Additionally, collaborative reading is a successful method used by teachers to enhance the communicative competencies of students (Al-Shehari, 2017).

Benefits from applying the CL approach have been reported by a number of researchers. Farha et al. (2017) studied a group learning environment for Arabic by gathering information from teachers with the help of survey forms containing questions based on a CL scheme for Arabic. The teachers discovered that CL not only enabled pupils to learn by strengthening their linguistic abilities but also increased their fondness for Arabic, philosophy and literature. In a related study, Alwaleedi et al. (2018) studied collaborative writing procedures, reactions and consequences in the classes of two ASL teachers. The study focused on the writing skills of 64 pupils. It was a combination of a qualitative case study and a quasi-experimental design. And the researchers collected information by monitoring the learning facilities and using tape recordings of conversations. They compared the results of collaborative and traditional learning groups before and after the experiment. Different ways of interaction between students and teachers during collaborative writing were established. They concluded that the students' involvement in the collaborative writing method accounted for the marked differences in the grades of the collaborative and traditional learning groups.

Further evidence for the effectiveness of CL was provided by another study conducted by Mei et al. (2017) which examined the views of Arabic teachers toward CL methods for non-Arabic speaking learners, using a sample of instructors. The researchers concluded that CL practices were valuable inside as well as outside learning facilities as they enhanced the linguistic expertise, connections with their fellows and socialization of students. Additionally, Alwaleedi et al. (2018) analyzed the impact of CL on the writing skills of 64 pupils who were learning ASL. The researchers studied the differences in the interaction patterns during collaborative writing exercises in the control and experimental groups. They discovered that the involvement of students in collaborative writing methods was the cause of the marked differences between the grades earned by the students in the groups. This suggests that learners involved in CL can academically benefit, which is likely to be also true for those undertaking ASL. While collaborative learning is instrumental to the acquisition of second language, it is not sufficient on its own. The nature of collaboration within CL and the human interaction that can elicit the benefit of language acquisition may need further exploration, a fact which makes the use of other approaches such as social constructivism necessary.

### *C. Social Constructivism Theory (SCT)*

According to the SCT, human development is socially located (Segre, 2016), where knowledge is created through social interaction. In SCT, individuals collaborate to create meaning. The emphasis of group work is placed on the learning that occurs as a result social interactions rather than on the products of the group. The language, history and social setting of a person's culture impact its cognitive development. SCT learning depends on the motivational methods used and the learning abilities and environment of learners (Zajda, 2018). SCT does not focus on the memorization or regurgitation of facts. Instead, it encourages learning by removing gaps in learners' knowledge and consequently helps students to experience things within groups (Huang & Liaw, 2018). In conclusion, SCT does not prioritize information memorization. Instead, the theory enhances the learning process by promoting student-centered learning, group study and differential techniques (Lam et al., 2021).

In SCT, learners are expected to participate actively in lessons and engaging language learning activities with groups as well as to develop independent learning skills. Furthermore, the importance of speaking is paramount and interconnected with other linguistic abilities (Rajendran & Yunus, 2021). It is possible to convey how individuals perceive their environment when there are diverse viewpoints about a specific subject (Xu & Shi, 2018). According to

Bruner (1985), SCT is an interaction-based approach to language learning. It assesses the formation of communicative concepts, linguistic expressions, and the role of engaging circumstances of linguistic use in early life, as well as the contribution of parents' input and scaffolding behavior to the learning of language expressions. This interaction enhances the ability of comprehension and learning new things among learners (Altaftazani, 2020).

Bruner's (1985) conception of constructivism serves as an example of generating common meaning through inter-personal, inter-subjective and collaborative processes. Constructivism contributes in learning a second language by providing new insights and innovative ways of comprehending and learning novel things (Jung, 2019). Students are required to take responsibility for and oversee their own learning process based on their specific requirements. Furthermore, constructing a sentence structure can enable language learners to rapidly grasp information conveyed (Kim & Rah, 2019). The roots of constructivism can be traced to Vygotsky's theory which focuses on the mechanism of social and cultural learning. The main points of this theory are the attention to the social context of learning and the interplay between internal and exterior components of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). It explains the creation and acquisition of knowledge (Shah, 2019). According to Vygotsky, social interactions within a cultural environment play a significant role in shaping human cognitive functioning.

The constructivist method is based on the premise that knowledge is not transferred from one individual to another. Instead, acquired knowledge must be created or constructed (Vintere, 2018). Additionally, according to Vygotsky (1978), knowledge is acquired when students engage in activities that are novel, yet within their grasp. However, this procedure is affected by their ability to solve issues on their own and the degree of their development potential, which is defined as the capacity to solve difficulties while being guided by peers or more competent adults. Instructors play an equally vital role as they must develop a learning environment to enable students to discuss their issues and assess their learning abilities (Anagün, 2018).

Furthermore, active participation in trials and experiences coupled with engaging in discussions, leads to students acquire and comprehend information. Inter-personal conversation helps to create meaning; learners in this situation require interaction with the experience of others to complement their physical experience. Constructivism theory promotes a multidisciplinary environment for learning (Kara, 2019). Hence, it promotes and complements collaborative learning. Cooperative, learning-based classroom management can assist students in creating goals and strategies for cooperating and interacting with others. Grouping, cooperative learning and class organization are three important factors in classroom management. This approach helps to cultivate oral communication skills and encourages students to take an active role in their own learning (York & Dehaan, 2018). More recently, the constructivist approach has utilized modern-day technology, such as computer- and mobile-assisted language learning, for the acquisition of a second language (Zhang et al., 2020). Overall, this theory places a strong emphasis on the socio-cultural context in which learning occurs and sees students as active creators of their own learning environments. Furthermore, constructivist strategies have obtained widespread acceptance in various educational environments (Neutzling et al., 2019).

#### IV. PROPOSED 3Cs CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Realizing that an individual approach may not be sufficient for efficient second language acquisition, this paper proposes the 3Cs approach which integrates the three approaches already discussed (i.e., CL, SCT, and CLT). Generally, the aim in the 3Cs approach is to capitalize on the benefits or advantages of each of the three language acquisition methods. Fundamentally, SCT is at the center of the 3Cs approach. The foundational principles of the CLT CL approaches are based on various educational theories, with the most influential being SCT, which is due to its deeper connection with language learning theories and curricula. According to SCT (Vygotsky, 1978), language is the most powerful social learning tool, and improves the expression and transmission of ideas in the process of social communication. Vygotsky (1978) identified two sources of knowledge for the individual learner; the first is interaction with the environment (everyday knowledge), which is influenced by interactions with peers, language use and experiences that the individual has (CL). The other source is the classroom, where teachers interact with their students (CLT approach).

As noted by Dewey (1983), individuals tend to discover knowledge and build meaning through personal experience and interpersonal interactions in a supportive environment. Similarly, Piaget (2005) argued that social experience, knowledge, language, grammar, values and ethics are traits acquired through the interaction with others. Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that in a CL context, learners can exchange ideas and knowledge to achieve common goals. Moreover, CL considerably benefits language education by providing learners with opportunities to communicate and negotiate meaning under a social context (Richards, 2005). In CL, learners have the opportunity to listen to each other, exchange ideas and engage in dialogue and debate (CLT approach). For instance, many CLT activities such as role playing, storytelling and debate, require CL between students themselves or between the students and the teacher.

To provide a clearer explanation of the 3Cs approach, it is essential to grasp the significance of negotiation in SCT. Vygotsky (1978) highlighted the role of the teacher in encouraging students to have a negotiated dialogic discussion (CLT approach and CL), focusing on the interaction between students and between students and teachers. For this negotiation to take place, it is necessary for the teacher to ask open-ended questions, allowing students to use the target language in a communicative and collaborative manner. SCT suggests that learners acquire knowledge through social



negotiation with others rather than in isolation. The role of the teacher in the 3Cs approach is centered on providing students with interactive educational situations (CLT). For students to be able to learn through communicative and collaborative language activities, the teacher should arouse the interest of learners and encourage their social interactions. The role of the student in the 3Cs approach is that of a social learner where knowledge is acquired not only individually but also within a social framework through social negotiation. Furthermore, through the exchange of ideas with others, collective ideas are formed. Notably, the role of the learner in the 3Cs approach is centered on being an active learner as knowledge is acquired through discussion and dialogue, the essence of which is the CLT approach. The overall characteristics and benefits of the proposed 3C's approach are summarized in Figure 1, which presents the conceptual framework for this study.

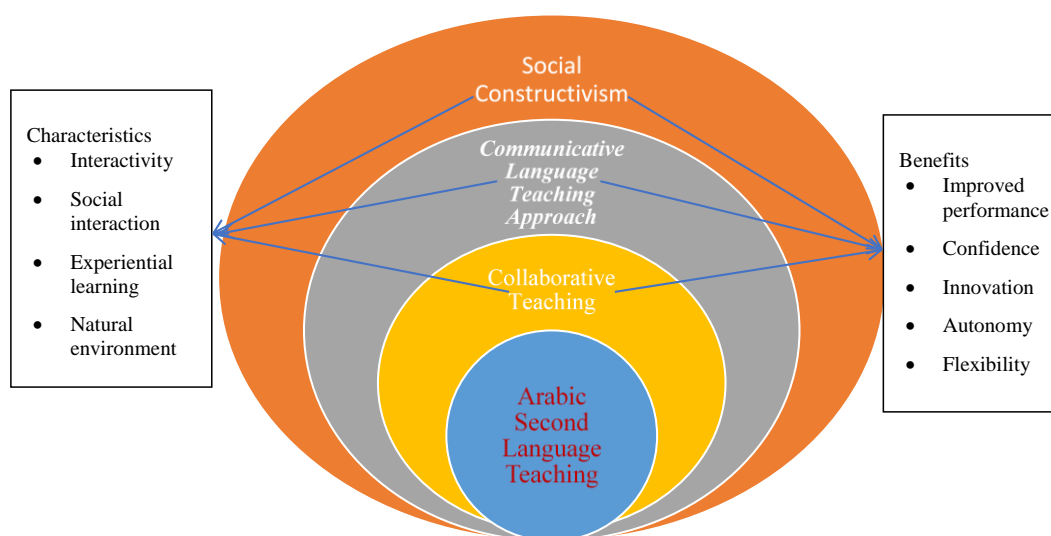


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the 3C's Approach in Arabic Teaching as a Second Language

In brief, the communicative approach, social constructivist theory, and collaborative learning are interconnected concepts that enhance language teaching and learning. These methods prioritize interaction, social context, and student engagement as crucial elements for acquiring a new language. By incorporating these approaches into language acquisition, educators can establish immersive learning environments that foster meaningful communication, knowledge building, and collaborative problem-solving.

## V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Inexperienced second language teachers can have a significant impact in spreading the linguistic component of foreign languages. Specifically, a lack of proper mastery strategies and study materials for second language acquisition can hinder the recognition of a foreign language. This paper highlights an approach that may help teachers and students acquire skills, competence and knowledge required for ASL. Under this light, the present study explores three established approaches: CLT, CL and SCT. Additionally, the paper establishes possible relations among the SLA study environment and the effects of the 3Cs approach on new learners of a second language.

Over the past few years, university students have been placing renewed emphasis on an important aspect of the learning process. They have become enthusiastic about the study of languages with the help of communicative theories. The 3Cs approach provides a supportive environment for active, context-specific and social-based learning. Based on the 3Cs approach, learners can actively construct meaning for themselves during the learning process. This means that they need to take responsibility for their learning. Furthermore, the 3Cs approach has been shown to be an effective approach to learning Arabic because it encourages learning via the student's individual learning style.

For instructors at Saudi universities, adopting a combined approach to ASL can provide numerous benefits for both learners and teachers. Specifically, the use of the 3Cs approach can provide learning innovation, flexibility, improved performance, autonomy, and even increased learner confidence.

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**Sultan A. Almelhes** is an associate professor of Philosophy of Education. He holds a PhD in Philosophy of Education from Western Sydney University, Australia. 2016; an MA in Educational technology, Yarmouk University of Irbid, Jordan, 2005. He works at higher education sectors and is currently, an associate professor of educational linguistic. Moreover, he is a vice dean of Arabic language institute for non-native speakers at the Islamic University of Madinah. He is a member of multiple committees at the Islamic university of Madinah. Moreover, he works as an advisor at the Deanship of Scientific Research in addition to his job as a second language lecture. He published a couple of articles:

- Almelhes, S. (2022). Motivational factors for learning Arabic as a second language abroad in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of the Faculty of Education - Menoufia University*, 2(1), 39–64.
- Almelhes, S. (2021). Evaluation of students' remote learning experience of learning Arabic as a second language during the Covid-19 Pandemic *International Education Studies*, 14(10), 40–52.
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- Almelhes, S. (2020). Second language acquisition through the flipped learning paradigm a systematic literature review. *Journal of the Islamic University of Educational and Social Sciences*, 7(2), 525–558.



**Hussain E. Alsaiari** is an assistant professor of Arabic teaching methods. He holds a PhD in Philosophy of Education from Western Sydney University, Australia. 2016; an MA in Education, Griffith University, Australia in 2009 and a Bachelor in Primary Education, Tabuk University, Saudi Arabia, 2004. He works at the department of curriculum and instruction at College of Education, Jouf University. He is a member of several committees at the Jouf university such as permanent committee of academic plans and programs at Jouf University. A member of scientific research committee at College of Education. He published 4 articles. Finally, he is a consultant and expert in academic program and planning development.

# The Translator as a Colonial Agent: Reframing the South in the English Translation of *Season of Migration to the North*

Areej Allawzi

Department of English Language and Literature, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Deema Ammari

Department of English Language and Literature, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Mousa Awwad

Department of French Language and Literature, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Mais Al-Shara'h

Department of English Language and Literature, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

**Abstract**—This paper sets out to examine the translation of Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* in light of Narrative theory. In his work, Salih is writing back to the empire as a form of resistance against British Colonialism. The translation seems to tone this resistance down by constructing a narrative that underlines the superiority of the North over the South. The paper attempts to offer a fresh perspective as it explores how the South is reframed in the target text to be represented to the target audience. It also attempts to answer the question of how the East/South is narrated and whether it has been (dis)empowered in the novel's translation. Given the importance of the text, It is essential to investigate how the novel has been introduced in the West using a strong and adaptable framework capable of capturing the complexities of the interactions among various powers involved. Narrative theory offers such a framework and is particularly suitable for the current study.

**Index Terms**—postcolonial translation, narrative theory, Tayeb Salih, reframing, *Season of Migration to the North*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between language, translation and colonialism became a key topic for research in translation studies (Robinson, 2011, p. 38). In a colonial context, translation plays a vital role in reconstructing power imbalance and representing the image of the colonized, on the one hand, and the colonizer, on the other. In this paper, we examine the English translation of Tayeb Salih's most seminal novel *Season of Migration to the North* (1966). In his novel, Salih is reporting back to the British Empire, as a form of resistance against the colonial powers, and he is claiming an equal position to the colonizer (Said, 1994, p. 211). Despite the importance of this classical postcolonial Arabic novel, few researches (Hammad, 2016) have discussed the disempowered representation of the South/East in the translation of this novel. This paper tries to find if the translator has used the translation to eroticize the target text, disempower the Orient and produce an exotic image of the colonized. Thus, it attempts to answer the question of how the East/South is narrated and whether it has been (dis)empowered in the translation. To examine patterns of discrepancies between the source text *Mawsim Al-Hijra Ela Al-Shamal* and its English translation *Season of Migration to the North*, we use Mona Baker's (2006) narrative theory that examines how translation can be used to promote alternative or less dominant narratives of reality. This paper utilizes narrative theory to find out whether the translator, might have produced a narrative that undermines Salih's resistance provided in the original text.

In his work, Salih is writing as a way of resistance against the Western's hegemony over the South. Yet, the translator seems to subdue the author's voice in occasions where the latter directs criticism towards the West. The translator, in different occasions, appears to frame the narrative that the colonized (Sudanese people) do not reject colonial powers. This is read as a method to manipulate the reader by constructing a narrative that is different from the one produced in the source text. Salih's original text aims at empowering the South and at the same time, claims an equal position to the colonial North. Nevertheless, in the narrative generated by the translator, the former looks up to the latter and acknowledges its superiority. This paper examines strategies used by the translator to change the narratives that resist colonizer into narratives of exoticism and eroticism; and thus, undermining the resistance intended by the author.

### A. *Season of Migration to the North*

In the words of *the Guardian*, Tayeb Salih is “one of the best known Arabic novelists of the 20th century” (Alison, 2009). His *Mawsim Al-Hijra Ela Al-Shamal*, published in Beirut 1966, is significant for resisting British colonialism and reinterpreting the power dynamics between the North and the South. The novel is concerned with the imposition of European modernity on contemporary Arab societies. Makdisi describes Salih’s seminal work as “a radical intervention in the field of postcolonial Arab discourse, which has long been centered on the debate between “traditionalism” and “Westernism”” (Makdisi, 1992, p. 805).

Denys Johnson-Davies translated the novel in 1969. The translation received mostly a great response in Western and Arab literary circles. Yet, some Sudanese scholars, like Aisha Musa, still believe the translator to have “failed” in providing an accurate translation of the novel, particularly, in rendering the Sudanese cultural-specific terms despite the important value they add to maintain an original taste to the novel. Johnson-Davies, instead, changed these terms into Western concepts of rhetoric (al-Fayya, 2013).

### B. *Season of Migration as a Form of Resistance*

In his work, Tayeb Salih is writing back to the British empire as a Sudanese person who has received his education in the UK and went back to Sudan. Writing back to the empire serves as a form of resistance, reclaiming personal ownership by challenging hegemony and dismantling Orientalist tropes. This act overturns imperial narratives and disrupts colonial discourse (Burney, 2012, p. 106). In his *Culture and Imperialism* (1994, p. 216), Said identifies writing back to the empire as form of resistance. He explains how this type of writing is used by the subaltern to resist colonialism and to create a counter-discourse against power and imperialism. Said further explains that writing back to metropolitan cultures disrupts European narratives about the East and Africa, replacing them with a more powerful style (Said, 1994, p. 216).

Salih, in his text, strives to claim an equal position to the British colonizer and criticizes its existence in his country. Salih’s work “is and is not a novel; it is and is not a ‘Hakawati’ oral tale; it is like *Heart of Darkness* as much as it is unlike it; it draws its formal inspirations from Europe as much as it seeks to distort and undermine them; it remains, finally, an unstable synthesis of European and Arabic forms and traditions” (Makdisi, 1992, p. 815). For many Arab critics, *Season of Migration to the North*, projects a “final closure of imperialism.” They interpret the novel as a strong voice against Westerner’s influence and interference in the East (Makdisi, 1992, p. 815). Ba’li Hafnawi explains that “Saleh wanted his protagonist to be strong enough to settle accounts between the East and the West” (Hafnawi, 2015, p. 34, our translation).

Other critics contend that accepting the novel as a work against imperialism is imaginary (Makdisi, 1992, p. 815). It is rather in a limbo between the West and East. Nonetheless, the work is seen by most critics, even those arguing its stand in between the North and the South, as an attempt to distort and undermine connections to the West (Makdisi, 1992, p. 815).

Through comparing between Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* and Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, Said explains that Conrad’s river is now the Nile whose waters “rejuvenate its people” (Said, 1994, p. 211). In Salih’s novel, there is a reversal of the theme of the river “as rejuvenating, rejoicing and healing is in stark opposition to the dark and ominous river of the *Heart of Darkness*” (Burney, 2012, p. 112). Conrad’s European protagonist and first person British narrative are also reversed through the use of Arabic. Similarly, the trip is reversed; instead of going from North to South, Salih’s protagonist goes from Sudan to Europe; that is South to North. As for an unnamed narrator, he does not speak as a Westerner, but from the perspective of a Sudanese villager from the East. Thus, the margin becomes the center of the novel (Burney, 2012, p. 112). In light of this, one can argue that, in Salih’s work, the oriental represents himself and speaks for himself instead of being represented by the West and spoken for by Westerners.

Postcolonial works can be translated to propose cultural inequalities and to suggest power imbalances between colonizers and colonized. In a postcolonial context, translation has three “subsequential but overlapping roles”. It is a “channel of colonization,” a “lightening-rod for culture inequalities continuing after the collapse of colonialism” and a “channel of decolonization” (Robinson, 2011, p. 31). This can be achieved by constructing, highlighting, or undermining certain realities about the South and North in the novel. It can create narratives that do not exist in the source text, which ultimately contributes to the creation of other realities that the original text did not insinuate. The translation of Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* can be an example on this emphasized/deemphasized power struggle that the translation provides.

## II. NARRATIVE THEORY

After the cultural turn in translation studies, translation is no longer seen as a prescriptive model that dictates how translators should translate; it rather describes how translators function. The importance of this descriptive approach in translating is seen in the inclusion of the extra-linguistic factors that influence the production of the translation. An important backdrop of the descriptive approach is Baker’s narrative theory.

In 2006, Baker, in her *Translation and Conflict*, introduces the concept of narrative in translation studies by describing translation as narration with the translators acting as narrators to the original text. Baker develops her theory based on the work of Somers (1992) and Somers and Gibson (1994, p. 41). They perceive the narrative as “the principle



and inescapable” mode of communication through which we experience the world rather than an optional mode of communication. Hence, everything we know is “the result of numerous crosscutting story-lines in which social actors locate themselves.” Baker uses that narrative approach from a sociological perspective (Baker, 2006, 2013, 2014; Harding, 2012). Baker's approach is founded on the constructive understanding that narrative is the exclusive means by which we can relate to the world and our place within it (Baker, 2014, p. 159).

Baker (2006) elaborates that translators contribute to the constructing and circulating of narratives about the world. Whereas other scholars have emphasized the importance of examining the final product of the translation to reveal the impact of the translator's interference (Tourey, 1995; Venuti, 1995; Sch  fner, 2003), it is Baker who first suggests examining the translation, as a renarration that does not represent the source text, but rather constructs events and characters in another language. According to Baker, narratives are “public and personal ‘stories’ that we subscribe to and that guide our behavior. They are the stories we tell ourselves, not just those we explicitly tell other people, about the world(s) in which we live” (Baker, 2006, p. 19).

Narrative theory allows us to move beyond a longstanding tradition, in the field of translation studies that examines the pattern of abstract decisions made by translators such as Tourey's norms theory (1995) and Venuti's theory of domestication and foreignization (1995). It uses, instead, the “narratives being elaborated within and across texts allows us to engage with the potential motives for both repeated and individual (one-off) choices, and encourages us to look beyond the text into the political and social context of interaction” (Baker, 2014, p. 159).

Baker identifies four types of social narratives: ontological, public, conceptual, and meta-narratives. Ontological, or personal narratives, are the stories individuals tell themselves about their place in the world and their personal experiences throughout history (Baker, 2006, p. 28; 2010, p. 350). For example, biographies, including autobiographies, are all considered to be personal narratives. Public narratives are a group of ontological narratives shared by people as a group and circulated among social and institutional formations such as family, religious institutions, and media (Baker, 2006, p. 28; 2010, p. 350). The third type is conceptual or disciplinary narratives, which consist of concepts and explanations that academic scholars and researchers elaborate for themselves and others about their object of inquiry. The last kind of narrative is meta- narratives (master narratives) which are “public narratives that persist over long periods of time and influence the lives of people across a wide range of settings” (Baker, 2010, p. 351; Allawzi et al., 2018, p. 3). Meta-narratives can be about capitalism versus communism, the individual versus society, and barbarism/nature versus civility.

In her work, Baker (2006, 2007, 2010, 2013, 2014) uses the concept of frame as a tool to explain how the source text can be narrated in different ways by different translators. Translators exploit features in the source text to “frame or reframe a text or utterance for a set of addressees” (Baker, 2007, p. 158). They can achieve this in the body of the translation by using techniques such as lexical, semantic, and syntactic changes or around the translation and by using paratextual elements; like the insertion of images and footnotes, and spatial arrangement (Baker, 2007, p. 158).

Baker perceives this act, or framing, as a work of activism since it directs the way people see certain events by choosing specific meanings or words in a dominant discourse (Allawazi et al., 2023, p. 1327). She adds that “narrative is often linked to the moralizing impulse in human beings, which is partly what makes it an attractive framework for engaging with forms of activism” (Baker, 2013, p. 24; Dubbati & Abudayeh, 2017, p. 150). This position allows the studying of a translator's partiality in a postcolonial context; and thus, enables colonized nations “to participate in the dialectic of power, the ongoing process of political discourse, and strategies for social change” (Tymoczko, 2000, p. 24; Dubbati & Abudayeh, 2017, p. 150). In the junction between postcolonial studies and translation studies, translators, like colonized objects, realize that cultures of different narratives are not equal in power since one overpowers the other (Tymoczko, 2007). In this context, a target text either perpetuates or resists the colonialist discourse (Dubbati & Abudayeh, 2017, p. 150). Let's take the example of al-Bujairami's translation of Joe Sacco's graphic novel *Footnotes in Gaza*. In his translation, al-Bujairami sees himself as “an activist who has a mission to reframe his people's cause as a struggle for independence. We locate several patterns of interferences that aim to affect readers' perception of the Palestinians and Israelis in Sacco's recounting of the events of Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip in 1956” (Dubbati & Abudayeh, 2017, p. 147). This shows how the translator becomes an editor to the source texts, and his/her ideologies impact the translated text.

### III. TRANSLATION AS A TOOL OF COLONIZATION

Translation is a means to express the cultural power of the colonizer (Simon & St-Pierre, 2000, p. 10). Colonizers; including orientalists, anthropologists and missionaries, translated specific text that are compatible with the image they wanted to construct of the subjugated world (Simon & St-Pierre, 2000, p. 10). Munday demonstrates that “translation to have always played an active role in the colonization process and dissemination of an ideologically motivated image of colonized people” (Munday, 2006, p. 134). Translation has always been used as a tool to colonize and deprive the colonized from voicing themselves (Behnam et al., 2017, p. 566). In this context, one of the cultures claims a superior role by gaining control over the subservient culture, the culture of the colonized. Thus translation, in such occasions, shifts the scale of power in favor of the colonizer (Bassnett & Bush, 2006, p. 4).

By the same token, Niranjana, in her *Sitting Translation, History, Post-structuralism, and the Colonial Context*, clarifies how translation was used in order to establish and preserve imbalanced relations of power and dominance

(Niranjanan, 1992). A particular case is manifested in the translations of Indian texts into English for the interests of British colonizers (Snell-Hornby, 2006, p. 94). The work of the orientalist Sir William Jones makes a clear example as he used translation to “domesticate the Orient and thereby turn it into a province of European learning” (Said, 1978, p. 78). Niranjana further adds that Jones’s work had a “long lasting impact” on scholarly work explaining that it contributed to the construction of a false image of a submissive and idle Hindu nation adopted by later writers (Snell-Hornby, 2006, p. 94). The same assumption is made, here, about the translation of Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* whereby the translator seems to be changing the power balance and refuting the equal position that Salih claims in his novel.

Bassnett and Trivedi (1999) demonstrate that translation is not an innocent act, but is rather associated with the various phases of colonization. Accordingly, they assert that defamiliarising the language highlights the source text differences to readers. Similarly, Niranjana (as cited in Hodges, 2010) believes that translators must preserve the source text peculiarities even if seemingly difficult to readers, claiming that the opposite would foster the Western orientation and further pave the way for domination.

This postcolonial aspect to translation is further enriched by Jacquemond (1992) when he examines translation inequalities between France and Egypt. One of Jacquemond’s hypotheses in this context suggests that a dominant culture will only translate works from a subordinate culture that align with its preexisting perceptions of that culture (Jacquemond, 1992). Robinson (2011, p. 34) notes that when dominated culture-texts are translated by hegemonic cultures they are typically presented as mysterious, esoteric, and interested to only a small group of specialists or full of critical apparatus to impose an academic or specialist interpretation on the reader. Jacquemond, further, elaborates that by providing the example of the Nobel Laureate Naguib Mahfouz whose fame in the West can be attributed to adopting European values in his writings. The chosen texts fit the European preconceived image of the Egyptian society (Jacquemond, 1992, p. 34).

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

The narrative approach utilized by Baker (2014, p. 159) does not conduct analysis based on “recurrent linguistic patterns”. Instead, it considers the body of analysis an independent narrative representing a certain perspective of an event “with characters, settings, outcomes or projected outcomes, and plot” (Baker, 2014, p. 159). This fits with Harding’s view, who maintains that “it was especially revealing to discover, through the textual analysis, how eyewitness accounts were marginalized, manipulated, selectively appropriated into, or simply deselected from, each primary narrative text” (Harding, 2012, p. 292).

The paper, therefore, adopts a textual approach to address the main question of how the East/South is narrated and whether it has been (dis)empowered in the translation. The analysis is carried out through a comparison between the narrative constructed by the Arabic source text and the one constructed by the target text.

In order to demonstrate a coherent narrative, translators may employ linguistic and non-linguistic features to detect translational behaviors used in reframing realities (Baker, 2014, p. 159). The researchers thus observe changes at the linguistic level by finding examples of omission, addition and shift in the connotative meaning. The examples are classified into categories corresponding to the strategy used to convey a different meaning. After comparing the source text with the target text, it has been found out that the translator changed the meaning of the target text in 25 instances.

In light of the aforementioned, and in selecting the examples, the researches’ first attempt was to look for repetitive linguistic choices such as omission, addition, shift in connotative meaning, etc. Nonetheless, in most of the examples the difference in the meaning revealed in target text was conveyed through shifts in the meaning. Thus the researchers’ then relied on two measures to select the examples based on Jacquemond (1992) and Robinson’s (2011) submission (see Translation as a tool of colonization): Firstly, examples that appear to change the meaning of the text to emphasize Western’s hegemony over the East by using linguistic features that emphasizes the West’s superiority and mitigate critical accounts of the West.

Secondly, examples that use linguistic features and, in some occasions, highlights sexual references to produce an image that disempowers the Orient and satisfies European’s expectations of Eastern societies, particularly, that the Sudanese one.

##### A. Empowering the North

In his work, Salih is writing as a way of resistance against the Western’s hegemony over the South. Yet, as can be observed in the table below, the translator seems to subdue the author’s voice in occasions where the latter directs criticism towards the West. The translator frames the narrative that the colonized (Sudanese people) do not object the colonizer’s existence. In the narrative generated by the translator, the former looks up to the latter and acknowledges its superiority. For example, the following phrase in the source text, *تأكد أنهم احتضنوا أرواح الناس*, describing the English colonizer (Salih, 2005, p. 50) means “be assured that they embraced the most despicable of people”. Yet, it is translated as “be sure they will direct our affairs from Afar. This is because they have left behind them people who think as they do” (Salih, 2003, p. 53). Salih is herein encountering the colonizer to claim superiority according to Foucault’s interpretation of interlingual power relations when he has often highlighted the authority power has on all forms of communication; that is to say there is really no neutral or politics-free encounter. To achieve this, Salih introduces the



character of the protagonist Mustafa Said who avenges his colonized homeland through his mischievous and vicious behavior in the land of colonizer. Mustafa Said is, thus, presented as “evil, savage, exotic, mysterious black god” pursuing for his desires and pleasures just to reverse the colonial phase as a way of taking revenge on colonizers” (Süreci, 2015, p. 476). The translator, in comparison to the source text, changes the meaning the author intends to convey by choosing milder terms to describe Western interference in the East. He uses the word “direct” to refer to Western colonization of the East, in particular, Sudan. The translation in this example is a more passive version of the novel that originally reads as a postcolonial text aspiring to reshape the relationship between the North and the South. Shamma, on this account, does not redeem this interlingual encounter (translation) in a postcolonial context as a power-free mode. He rather elaborates that power asymmetry could be emphasized and brought to focus. A translator from an ex-colonizing nation can thus use translation as an arena to re-establish power relations and claim dominance as an ex-colonizer over the ex-colonized (Shamma, 2009, p. 187). By interfering with the narration and re-narrative processes, the translator does not copy texts but creates cultural realities (Baker, 2013).

In another example, one of the characters in the novel describes the practices of the English colonizer in Sudan saying: *أرذال الناس هم الذين تبوأوا المراكز الضخمة أيام الإنجليز كنا واثقين أن مصطفى سعيد سيصير له شأن يذكر* / *arthāl annās hum allathīn tabawā’ū almarākiz aḍakhma ‘ayyam alinglīz kunnā wāthiqīn anna muṣṭafā sa’īd sayāṣīr lah sha’n yuthkar* (Salih, 2005, p. 50). The statement means that the most despicable of people are the ones attained the best positions during the English rule. Nevertheless, the aforementioned statement is translated as “this because they left behind them people who think as they do. They showed favour to nonentities” (Salih, 2003, p. 53). The translator once more, in this example, reduces the criticism that the source text is directing toward the English colonizer. He selects certain terms to describe those who were assigned best positions during the English colonization only as people of no importance. Reducing criticism in this instance might indicate that the translator is changing the meaning of the text to construct a less negative narrative of the English colonizer. According to Baker (2010, p. 61), translators and interpreters accentuate, undermine or modify aspects of the narrative(s) encoded in the source text or utterance to create a narrative different from the source text. The translation reframes a narrative that empowers the North and makes it stronger than the South.

In the source text, one of the Sudanese characters named Mansour rhetorically asks Richard, an English man: *ماذا أعطيتونا غير حفنة من الشركات الاستعمارية نزفت دماءنا وما تزال* / *what did you give us except for colonial companies that drew off our blood – and still do?* The translator selects “capitalist companies” (Salih, 2003, p. 60) to replace *شركات* / *colonial companies* (Salih, 2005, p. 56). On this account, Young (2015, p. 278) explains that the word ‘colony’ is “(introduced into English in the mid-nineteenth century, into French at the beginning of the twentieth) increasingly lost the positive aura that had been retained from the Roman *coloniae* and by 1919 came to be used as a derogatory term by its opponents, with the implication that all colonialism represented a form of exploitation of subaltern peoples by too-powerful nations”. Capitalism, on the other hand is defined as “an economic and political system in which property, business, and industry are controlled by private owners rather than by the state, with the purpose of making a profit” (Cambridge Dictionary). As a result, the translator seems to be eliminating any references to colonialism attached to Britain and thus, dismissing allegations of colonialism against Britain. One can argue that using capitalist companies instead of colonialist companies alleviates the criticism intended by the author against the West and Britain in particular. Using the word ‘capitalist’ can also give the implication that by controlling Sudan, Britain brought capitalist companies that contributed to the growth and development of the African country. Based on the aforementioned, it can be opined that the translator frames a narrative that doesn’t associate Britain with colonialism and exploitation, but rather seems to commend it for bringing capitalist companies, investment and progress in Sudan. This is substantiated by Baker (2006, 2007) who elucidates that translators alter their translations to reframe a narrative different from the one delivered in the original text.

Although the translation received mostly a great response in Western and Arab literary circles, the translator seems to have “failed” in providing an accurate translation of the novel, particularly, in rendering the Sudanese cultural-specific terms despite the important value they add to maintain an original taste of the novel. He, instead, transferred Western concepts of rhetoric. For example, for the word *اهلي*, which means ‘my family and relatives’, the translator chose ‘my people’, eliminating the intimate dimension the Arabic text has (al-Fayya, 2013).

TABLE 1  
EXAMPLES DEMONSTRATING EMPOWERING THE NORTH

Source text	Target text
تأكد أنهم احتضنوا أرذال الناس. أرذال الناس هم الذين تبوأوا المراكز الضخمة أيام الإنجليز كنا واثقين أن مصطفى سعيد سيصير له شأن يذكر <i>ta ākkad ānnahum iḥṭadanū ‘ardhāl annas. ‘ardhāl annās him allathīn tabawā’ū almarākiz aḍakhma ‘ayyam al’inglīz kunnā wāthiqīn ‘anna muṣṭafā sa’īd sayāṣīr lah sha’n yuthkar</i>	Be sure they will direct our affairs from afar. This is because they have left behind them people who think as they do
شركات استعمارية <i>Sharikāt isti’māryya</i>	Capitalist companies
وكانوا يتصرفون كالآلهة، يسخروننا نحن الموظفون الصغار أولاد البلد لجلب العوائد. <i>Wakānū yattaṣarrafūn kal’āliha, yusakhirūnana naḥn almuwāḏfūn aṣighār ‘awlād albalad lijalb al’awā’id</i>	- Omitted
أم تحسب أننا خواجات <i>ām taḥsab anna khawājāt</i>	Or do you reckon we’ve become anglicized.

### B. Disempowering the South

As demonstrated in the table below, the translator seems to highlight sexual references even if they are implied in the text. For example, the protagonist Mustafa Sa'eed states "سأحرر أفريقيا بـ..." /sa ūḥarrir 'afriqiā bi... (Salih, 2005, p. 111) which can be translated as "I will liberate Africa with...". The protagonist here alludes to his phallic organ without making any explicit reference to it. Nevertheless, the translator is changing the implied meaning to an explicit one by selecting the word 'penis' in order to translate the statement as "I'll liberate Africa with my penis" (Salih, 2003, p. 111). The translator here creates an erotic image by highlighting the discourse of pornography. The discourse of sex might gain currency in the West and can be easily commercialized in a Western context. The translator seems to have manipulated the text and highlighted the discourse of eroticism to meet the expectations of the target readership. This fits hand and glove with Robinson who explains that texts translated from dominated cultures into European languages often conform to European values and canons of writing (Robinson, 2011, p. 35). He, thus, constructs a narrative that reinforces an orientalist image of the East as an exotic and inferior non-European other. The discourse of eroticism seems to be one of the reasons that have motivated the translator Denys Johnson-Davies to translate the novel. The translator, in an interview by Ferial Ghazoul, states: "yes erotic has always interested me [...] while the humorous, the dramatic, the tragic only too often fail when translated across the linguistic frontiers, the erotic remains effectively erotic" (Johnson-Davies & Ghazoul, 1983, p. 83).

In the following examples, the translator selects the word 'infidel' to refer to the Arabic term نساء النصارى which means 'Christian women'. The term Christian is positively used in the Quran and in the Arabic culture, and Muslims are commanded not to abuse the term since they believe in Christianity as a religion.

“حريم النصارى لا يعرفن لهذا الشيء كما تعرف له بنات البلد. نساء غلف, الحكاية عندهن كشرب الماء. بنت البلد -تعمل الدلكة و الريحة و الدخان” (Salih, 2005, p. 67).

ḥarīm annaṣārā lā ya`rifn lihāthā ashai' kamā ta`rif lah banāt albalad. nisā' ghulf, alḥikāia `indahunn  
kashurb almā'. Bint albalad ta'mal addalkha wa ariḥa wadukhān

'The infidel women aren't so knowledgeable about this business as our village girls,' said Bint Majzoub. 'They're uncircumcised and treat the whole business like having a drink of water. The village girl rubbed herself all over with oil and perfume [...]. (Salih, 2003, p. 81).

- قالوا نسوان النصارى شئ فوق التصور - (Salih, 2005, p. 73)

Qālū niswān annaṣārā shai' fawq attasawur

They say the infidel women are something Unbelievable (Salih, 2003, p. 80)

- هذا يكفي. خمر النصارى هذه جبارة, ليس كعرق التمر - (Salih, 2005, p. 114)

Hādhā yakfī. Khamr annaṣārā hādhīh jabbara, lais ka'irq attamr

That is enough of the heathen's drink, said Bint Majzoub, it's certainly formidable stuff and not a bit like date arak. (Salih, 2003, p. 125)

The translator disregards using the word 'Christian' and instead he opts for the word 'infidel' that applies to nonbelievers. This word creates a derogatory image of Christians and imposes violence on the source text. Using this term highlights the binary opposition that categorizes people as believers vs. infidels and thus, the translation constructs a narrative projecting the colonized (people of the South) as extreme and fanatic. However, one wonders "how far can we argue that the village in the Sudan is so dogmatic, indoctrinated, and fanatic, bearing in mind that Islam is not a major force in their everyday life inasmuch as the social rituals they vehemently adhered to?" (Hammad, 2016, p. 119). The translator of the novel, based on the aforementioned, seems to be producing a text that disempowers the South. He generates a target text that, instead of challenging the ethnocentricity and interference of the North, describes the subjects of the South as submissive and, to some extent, content with the colonial presence. The reader of the translation, consequently, becomes "a disempowered spectator" (Scott, 2000, p. 71).

In a different occasion, the narrator of the novel describes the protagonist Mustafa Sa'eed as ابن الإنجليز المدلل / ibn alinglīz al mudallal which means 'the spoilt son of the English' (Salih, 2005, p. 49). Yet, this statement is translated as 'He was the spoilt child of the English' (Salih, 2003, p. 52). Selecting the word 'child' instead of 'son' depicts the protagonist as immature, naive, unskilled and inexperienced subject. Accordingly, the hero, whom the author wanted to be strong and intelligent to confront the West, is now projected as an immature, vulnerable and weak hero who will never be able to stand against the colonizing West.

Similar studies by Shamma (2009), Faiq (2001), and Sengupta (1996), examine translations from the periphery to the centre, i.e. translations into hegemonic languages, reaching a similar conclusion. These studies explain how the culture of the colonizer enforces its norms and expectations upon works coming from former colonies. These works "are expected to conform to a particular set of images of what an "authentic" representation of that culture should be" (Shamma, 2009, p. 190). Rafael, in a similar note, argues that translation corresponded with the colonial powers during colonization (Rafael, 1988, p. 213). Cheyfitz agrees by illustrating that translation was 'the central act of European colonization and imperialism in America' (Cheyfitz, 1991, p. 104).

The deliberate choices of exoticism and eroticism that the translator has made seem to construct a narrative that provides an exotic representation of the Other, Orientals in this case, leading one to question the ethical credibility of similar texts representing different races, societies and cultures. In a similar link, Jaber explains that Western media

channels construct an exotic narrative of the Other to be represented as inferior in comparison to Western cultures. He opines:

Using particular linguistic and translational choices during the global media's representation of the Other can impose ethical dilemmas since they represent different humans, races, religions, and civilizations. In this sense, Western media represents and sometimes stereotype Eastern cultures and societies as inferior in comparison to Western cultures and societies. They emphasize "the West's" political, economic, and cultural domination over "the East". (Jaber, 2016, p. 69)

The narrative framed by the translation reflects an acknowledgment of the superiority of the North or the West and, and at the same time, inferiority of the East or the South. Hence, it can be best described as disempowering the South. The translation of Salih's novel can be described as exotic, mysterious and difficult to understand. When a dominant culture translates a work produced by a dominated culture, the translation is usually seen as exotic, mysterious, difficult and in need of intellectuals to interpret them (Robinson, 2011, p. 31). Furthermore, hegemonic cultures will only translate works by authors that are compatible with the former's preconceived notions of the latter and that conformity to hegemonic stereotypes. Through the act of translation, hegemonic cultures make colonized cultures abide by their will (Robinson, 2011, p. 31).

Another assumption developed by Jacquemond (1992, p. 152) is that authors in dominated cultures, who seek fame and publicity, tend to write for their work to be translated into hegemonic cultures. This requires a certain degree of conformity with Western's perception of the East. Jacquemond (1992, p. 153) provides the example of the Nobel Laureate Naguib Mahfouz who gained fame because of his compliance with European values in his works. The translations of Mahfouz's works are compatible with the European's preconceived image of Egyptian society. On the other hand, Mahfouz's other works, particularly his post-1967 short stories, do not seem to meet European's expectations values and are hence not selected to be translated into European languages (Jacquemond, 1992, p. 153).

Jacquemond's assumption can be applied to Salih's *Season of Migration to The North*. Though Salih mainly writes this work as a form of resisting colonial powers by reporting back to the empire, he adds includes sexual scenes throughout the novel. This work was published in the age of sexual revolution 1960s-1980s in which many European writers and authors included erotic segments in their works to meet the expectation of the audience. These European expectations might have motivated Salih to add eroticism to his novel. Salih is writing back to the empire as a form of resistance against the hegemonic colonial discourse and for this resistance to gain publicity in the west, he tries to satisfy European taste by including eroticism in his work. Accordingly, eroticism in this case becomes a means of resistance, yet, the translator is not only using, but also emphasizing eroticism as a means to sexualize the Orient and to fit the North's preconceived notions of the South.

TABLE 2  
EXAMPLES DEMONSTRATING DISEMPOWERING THE SOUTH

Source text	Target text
حريم النصاري لا يعرفون لهذا الشيء كما تعرف له بنات البلد. نساء غلف الحكياء عندهن كشرب الماء. بنت البلد - تعمل الدلكة و الريحة و الدخان ḥarīm annaṣārā lā ya'rifn liḥāthā ashai' kamā ta'rif lah banāt albalad. nisā' ghulf, alḥikāia 'indahunn kashurb almā'. Bint albalad ta'mal addalkha wa arīḥa wadukhān	The <u>infidel women</u> aren't so knowledgeable about this business as our village girls," said BintMajzoub. "They're uncircumcised and treat the whole business like having a drink of water. The <u>village girl</u> rubbed herself all over with oil and perfume
قالوا نسوان النصاري شيء فوق التصور Qālū niswān annaṣārā shai' fawq attasawur	They say the <u>infidel women</u> are something unbelievable.
هذا يكفي. خمر النصاري هذه جبارة. ليس كعرق التمر Hādhā yakfi. Khamr annaṣārā hādhīh jabbāra, lais ka'irq attamr	That is enough of the <u>heathen's</u> drink, said Bint Majzoub, it's certainly formidable stuff and not a bit like date arak.
سأحرر أفريقيا ب...ي sa ūḥarrir 'afriqiā bi	I'll liberate Africa with my penis
علي الطلاق هذه أجمل حمارة في البلد كلها 'alai atalāq hādhīh 'ajmal ḥimārah fī albalad kullaha	I swear I'll divorce if she isn't the most beautiful donkey in the whole place
وأنا سوسن جارياتك wa'anā sawsan jariatuk	I am Sausan, your slave girl.

### C. Undermining a Reversed Colonialist 'Attack'

Salih writes his novel as a form of resistance as he attempts to create a counter-discourse against the colonial North. He tries to establish a position that is equal to the colonizer. In the source text, the protagonist Mustafa Sa'eed addresses English people (colonizers) saying: إني جئتكم غازيا (Salih, 2005, p. 56) which means "I have come to you as an invader". The translator, nevertheless, chooses the word فاتحا 'conqueror' instead of غازيا 'invader' and the translation, is thus, read as "I have come to you as a conqueror" (Salih, 2003, p. 60). According to Collins Dictionary the word غازيا 'invade' means to "enter forcibly or hostilely; come into as an enemy"<sup>1</sup> and 'conquest' is defined as "to overcome (an enemy, army, etc); defeat".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/invade>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/conquer>

The target text changes the way the protagonist views himself in the colonial West from an invader to a conqueror. Salih, in his novel, wants the protagonist Mustafa Sa'eed to be strong enough to stand against the West (Hafnawi, 2015, p. 34). Thus by using the word 'invader' he is claiming the role that the English colonizer is playing in the South. He is describing the Southern subjects as colonizers invading the North by force and accordingly claiming a higher position than that of the English ex-colonizers. Additionally, the author seems to have deliberately used غازي and not فاتح as the latter has a positive connotation in Arabic indicating legitimacy and noble cause that usually comes with the Islamic conquests. It is used in Arabic and Islamic history when referring to the conquer of Mecca مكة فتح, the conquer of Jerusalem القدس فتح, and the conquer of Constantinople القسطنطينية فتح. The author seems to have deliberately selected غازي 'invader' seeking revenge from the colonial and invading North. Yet, the translator, despite his knowledge of Arabic language, history and culture and despite his probable knowledge of the difference in meaning and connotation between both words in Arabic, uses 'conqueror'. In English the direct equivalents for غازي is 'invader' and the one for فاتح is 'conqueror'. In light of this, and instead of conveying Salih's claim of achieving an equal, even superior, position to the North, the translation uses a milder tone by selecting the word 'conqueror' rather than 'invader'. While Salih claims the people of the South to forcibly enter and take control over the North (British colonizers), the translator's choice seems to dismiss the author's claim and keeps the North's superiority over the South. Accordingly, the translator denies the power of the once colonized other to which Salih attempts to attribute power and authority. The translator's choice of conqueror vs. invader reframes a narrative that empties the text from reversed colonialist 'attack'. "Conqueror," especially in a sexual context, does not have the same historicist impact of the word "invader." This supports the argument of translator's attempt to protect the western culture and power from being emasculated, which is the intention of the novel's protagonist's "invasion". This example illustrates Faiq's submission which considers translation to be a powerful tool in constructing representations of foreign cultures. The selection of the texts to be translated and the choices taken during translation can sometimes create domestic canons of foreign literatures and cultures. These canons assimilate to domestic values in the new culture that might be inaccurate representations of the canons of the original culture and literature (Faiq, 2004, p. 37).

In a different example, Bint Majzoub, one of the female characters in the novel, is describing one of her former husbands' sexual potency. Bakri, is making fun of Bint Majzoub's husband, doubting his sexual power as he says كانت العنز تاكل عشاhe/kanat al'anz ta'kul 'ashāh. This is an idiomatic phrase in Arabic which is said to describe one's weak physical potentials. Wad Rayyes, in this example, forges a link between Bakri and goats indicating that Bakri is as physically weak as a goat. Instead of choosing an equivalent idiom in English, the translator opts for a literal translation that represents the other exotically. This exotic image, constructed by the translation, feeds into the narrative that satisfies the European expectation of an exotic version of an Oriental Sudanese society. The translator's refusal to attempt to properly appropriate a Sudanese/Arabic idiom, produces an exoticized image of the Sudanese culture, making it unrelatable and unfamiliar; thus, presenting it as untranslatable. The exoticization of the Sudanese culture reframes a narrative that others it and makes it unequal for confrontation and reverse colonization. The same view is shared by Hammad on the translation of the same example as she explains that translating this idiomatic expression literally in English, instead of paraphrasing, explicating, or finding a reasonably corresponding expression, is "an act of colonization" (Hammad, 2016, p. 115).

## V. CONCLUSION

This study examined the translation of Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* in light of Mona Baker's (2006) narrative theory. It attempted to answer the question of how the East/ South was narrated and whether it was empowered in the translation. The translation produced by Johnson-Davies can be an attempt to manipulate the text in the service of emphasizing a stereotypical image of the South. The findings demonstrated that, Johnson-Davis makes certain selections in his translation to change the narratives resisting the North to ones claiming power and hegemony over the South. As it unfolds, the narrative of the English version changes the power-balance, that Salih claims in his novel, by representing the South as an inferior non-European other. The translation also manipulates the reader by fabricating a narrative different from the one produced in the source text. This new narrative produces the discourse of eroticism and reflects an exotic image of the colonized. Even though the source text attempts at empowering the South, the English version disempowers the South and seems to empower the colonial North instead.

One final and concluding question is that why Johnson-Davies made these changes in translating Salih's novel. To answer the question, we came to the conclusion that Johnson-Davies made an attempt to construct a narrative that, as Jacquemond explains (1992, p. 154) fits into the European preconceived knowledge of the South. He therefore involved himself in the translation in an act that Tymoczko (2007) describes as 'self-reflexivity'. In an interview, Johnson-Davies expressed that the discourse of eroticism was the main motive behind the translation of the novel into English. Despite the importance of the current study's finding, a further analysis of texts translated by Johnson-Davies may reveal more interesting discoveries and shed more light on how the translator's choices may have informed the narratives of other translated works.

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**Areej Allawzi** is an associate professor of translation and cultural studies in the Department of English at the University of Jordan. She obtained her PhD from Durham University in The United Kingdom. Her area of research is translation theories, comparative studies, translation in conflicts, ideology and media discourse analysis and postcolonial translation. Allawzi's most recent publication is 'Translation as a political action: reframing 'the deal of the century' in the translations of the BBC', 'Building Translator-Oriented English-Arabic Physics Glossary from Domain Corpus'.

**Deema Ammari** is an associate professor of English literature and comparative studies in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Jordan, Amman. Dr. Ammari obtained her Doctorate of Philosophy in "Post-Colonial Feminist Literature" from the School of Arts and Humanities, Oxford Brookes University, England in Sept 2007. She obtained her MA Degree in "English Studies: Modern and Contemporary Poetry" from the School of Arts and Humanities, Oxford Brookes University, England in Sept 2003.

**Mousa Awwad** is an assistant professor at the University of Jordan. He teaches French and French linguistics in the French department at the Faculty of Foreign Languages since 2018; specializing in lexicology and syntax. His fields of research relate to the lexical borrowing, lexical borrowing theories, neologism, language contact and syntax theories. He completed his Ph.D at Lyon 2 University – France with thesis entitled: *La confrontation au système de la langue française des emprunts lexicaux à l'arabe dans le domaine de la finance islamique: étude graphique, morphosyntaxique, morpholexicale, sémantique et syntaxique*.

**Mais Al-Shara'h** is an Assistant Professor of English Literature at the Department of English Language and Literature in the University of Jordan. She received her PhD in English Literature and Criticism, USA, in 2018. Her doctoral dissertation, entitled "Documenting Gender Equity in Renaissance Anthologies: A Study of the Contemporary," examines the contemporary canonization of Early Modern English female-authored literature. Her main areas of research are women's literature, English literature, and literary canon studies.

# Communicating With Ancestors: Paired Clauses in the Buntang Ritual of the Dayak Maanyan in East Barito, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

Dwiani Septiana

Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, Indonesia;

Research Center for Language and Literature Preservation, National Research and Innovation Agency, Jakarta, Indonesia

Wakit Abdullah Rais

Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, Indonesia

Sahid Teguh Widodo

Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, Indonesia

Andi Indah Yulianti

Research Center for Language and Literature Preservation, National Research and Innovation Agency, Jakarta, Indonesia

**Abstract**—This study documented the structure and meaning of the language used in the Buntang ritual, as practised among the Dayak Maanyan in East Barito, Kalimantan, Indonesia. This is a special language spoken by this group, living in the southern part of Borneo, to communicate with their ancestors' spirits. In our documentation, we observed the Buntang ritual, the location of the ceremony, the participants involved, and the interactions between participants to obtain a complete record of the Buntang ritual. We then interviewed a wadian, "priest", for a complete transcription of the speech used during the ritual. The language used in ritual features constructions of paired clauses. Drawing on the awakening and summoning practices for ancestors' spirits in this ritual, we documented 2,868 paired clauses. The first clause of the pair uses words from daily use in the Maanyan language, while the second clause uses words that are only used in the ritual. Pairs are a combined form of two clauses with the same meaning in an unequal number of words. This inequality occurs because of verb, noun, or adverb reductions at the beginning of the second clause and word additions at its end.

**Index Terms**—Buntang ritual, Dayak Maanyan, East Barito, pairing clauses, ritual language

## I. INTRODUCTION

The language used in the traditional rituals of the Dayak Maanyan (DMn) is considered sacred. It is believed to have the magical ability to communicate with ancestral spirits (Fox, 2014). This ritual language differs substantially from everyday language at the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical levels (Saville-Troike, 2003; Umaña, 2019). Siegel (2018), in his notes on rituals carried out by American Indian community groups, said that such a language was considered to be a pure language, not mixed with any foreign words.

A study of the language used in rituals of the Dayak tribe in Kalimantan was first performed by Hardeland (1858), who provided an overview of the spiritual language of the Ngaju Dayak community, called Sangiang. Follow-up work was later developed by Schärer (1966). Complete documentation of the death ceremony in the Ngaju Dayak community was provided, along with texts related to the Sangiang language used in the ceremony. Hardeland and Schärer succeeded in documenting the rituals and language used in death rituals for the Ngaju Dayak community. However, this research did not produce an analysis of sentence structure in ritual language.

Ritual language in DMn was documented by Mage (2014) in the context of traditional wedding ceremonies, using a form of ritual language known as Pangunraun. Mage examines the meaning in the language of traditional wedding ceremonies. Linarto (2015) describes the clause structure of the DMn language Pangunraun in wedding ceremonies and analyzes it to determine its relative clause structures, complementary clause structures, and basic sentence structures. The most prominent linguistic structure in the Pangunraun is words or groups of paired words that have the same meaning. The language approach that seeks alignment in meaning for words or phrases occupying the same function with the same grammatical form is called parallelism (Keraf, 2004). The two previous studies on ritual language in the DMn community have not yet produced an analysis of the parallel form of communication with ancestral spirits.

Parallelism was first proposed for ritual language by Lowth (Fox, 1986), who suggested a form of synonymous parallelism, antithesis, and synthesis. Later, during the first half of the twentieth century, a series of studies were conducted on parallelism in ritual language in various languages, such as, Vietnamese, Chinese, Classical Maya, Quechua, Russian, Turkish, etc. (Fox, 2014; Jakobson, 1992). Parallel languages in Indonesia have hitherto mainly been studied in research on languages in the eastern part of Indonesia. One recent study was conducted by Asplund (2017), who researched parallel forms in ritual language in Sumba. He identified a reduction in the coordination of paired clauses but did not yet show any semantic relation between parallel lines in Sumba. This study has a broader scope, as it examines ritual language in parallel clause structures and the meaning connections between words in pairs. To provide documentation on these types of language, we studied the Buntang ritual and documented the language. How are these paired clauses constructed, and what is the meaning of these paired clauses? This paper fills the gap in the structure and documentation of ritual language in DMn.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

The study was conducted in the village of Jaar in the East Barito district, Central Kalimantan province, from July 2019 to March 2020. The DMn community resides in this area and maintains its ancestral heritage and traditional rituals.

### A. Data Collection Procedures

The primary data in this study is *wadian* speech in the Buntang ritual. Observations, interviews, and recordings were used to collect the data. We observed the Buntang ritual, the location of the ceremony, the participants involved, and the behavior and interactions between participants to obtain a complete record of the ritual. We interviewed a *wadian*, or priest, to obtain a complete transcription of the *wadian* speech that is used during the ritual. Speech transcription was performed following the observation of the Buntang ritual with the assistance of the *wadian*.

### B. Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis followed the stages of linguistic data analysis proposed by Santosa (2021): domain analysis, taxonomy, componential, and cultural themes. For the domain analysis, we identified the main domains playing a role in supporting, managing, and providing the unique structure of the ritual that is under study. Then, we sorted data and non-data for each domain. Next, we collect data to conduct a detailed description of the section to help identify hierarchical groupings in taxonomic analysis.

In the taxonomic analysis, we organized data based on the natural categories of research object reality to organize knowledge into logically separate categories. The category of paired clause structures and the relationship of meaning between paired clauses use the concept of semantic relation.

Componential analysis connects all domain and taxonomic categories into one matrix (Santosa, 2021). We use this approach to relate all components in the domain, ritual stages, and paired clauses to components in taxonomy, clause structures, and meaning relations.

## III. RESULTS

The DMn community categorizes their language into language for daily use and *Pangunraun*, which is only used in rituals (Mage, 2014; Septiana et al., 2019). The categorization of the two languages is based on the culture of the DMn, which assumes that everything involved with the relationship to the ancestors must be something sacred, different, and valuable, including the sacred language used to communicate them.

*Pangunraun* in use is structured like a poem with stanzas using different words from everyday DMn language (Linarto, 2015; Mage, 2014; Septiana et al., 2019). The structure of the sentences that are spoken by *wadians* in the Buntang ritual is divided into two categories: words that are commonly used in everyday language and words that are used only ritual.

In practice, utterances come in paired clauses. A first clause uses the everyday language, and a matching clause uses variants the ritual language. Evans (1953) and Fox (2005) found that word variants in ritual language could derive from several sources. The words in ritual are from (1) the daily language of the local community; (2) special word variants that are easy to understand albeit appearing in a poetic form; (3) word variants that are not in daily use in the local community but are found in the language used in other villages; (4) word variants borrowed from Malay; and (5) word variants that are only used in sacred language related to rituals.

TABLE 1  
PAIRED CLAUSES

No	Transcription	Meaning
(1)	a. <i>lawu ma hi ammah</i> nutu gunting b. <i>ma bapang*</i> nyumit walu	fell on to the father scissors to the father of cutting
(2)	a. <i>hatur taring ma damung datu tatau,</i> b. <i>muis lalai ma raden bugawan sugis*</i>	handing fangs to rich <i>damung datu</i> handing fangs to rich <i>raden bungawan</i>
(3)	a. <i>lawu damung</i> lamuara, b. <i>patis* kijang amau jangkau</i>	fall into <i>damung lamuara</i> path of long step deer



The first clause (a) in Table 1 is commonly used in everyday language. The second clause (b) uses a word variant that appears in the ritual language. Variants of these words come from the DMn language itself and only appear in rituals. Some come from other languages that are used around the DMn. The word *ammah* under heading (1) in Table 1 includes the variant *bapang* “father,” derived from a word in Dayak Ngaju. The word *tatau* “rich” in (2) is a variant of the word *sugis*, which comes from Banjar or Malay. The title *damung* “leader of a region” in heading (3) in Table 1 has the variant *patis*, or *patih*, which comes from Javanese.

Words in categories (a) and (b) in Table 1 have the same or parallel meaning; this confirms Fox’s (1989) statement regarding how the language used in rituals forms paired structures. These pairs, variants of common words and others that are not commonly used, manifest the sacred and the profane in the beliefs of the DMn community. As Durkheim (2017) noted, all religions divide the universe into two categories: the sacred and the profane. The profane includes all things that can be observed empirically or known through common everyday experience. The sacred, on the other hand, consists of wondrous things that can only be understood through extraordinary experiences. The words that appear in this Buntang ritual and are commonly used in everyday language are profane word forms, whereas words that are not commonly used and that only appear in ritual contexts are sacred word forms. Certain variants of everyday words that are common and can be understood and used by everyone fall into the profane realm, and variants of words that are not commonly used cannot be used carelessly because of their sacred status.

The words used in both categories have the same meaning. The difference is that the unusual words from the second clause (b) are categorized as sacred and are only used to communicate vertically, with the ancestors’ spirits, and the common words from the first clause (a) are used horizontally, to teach people about the universe and values.

A clause pair combines two parallel clauses with the same meaning. Parallel pairs of clauses that have the same meaning are described on the basis of the word elements in a given clause. In general, the number of words in paired clauses is the same, but in some cases, they are not. A paired clause is categorized in perfect parallelism with repetition of the same number of words and word classes. Word elements that are unequally paired can be organized in imperfect parallelism through repetition of an unequal number of word elements.

#### A. Perfect Parallelism

The parallelism of word elements in a paired clause with the same number of word elements entails that each word in the first and second lines of the paired clause has the same meaning. The first and second clauses also have the same basic construction. See, for example, the transcriptions in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
PAIRED CLAUSES WITH EQUAL NUMBERS OF WORDS

No	Transcription	Meaning
(4)	<i>tawah anak datu teka purun gunung</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6	the king’s son cleans from the bottom of the mountain
	<i>jupak bunsu raja teka lea watu</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6	
(5)	<i>hanang ateı kala neah ubang langit</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6	heartache is like opening a hole in the sky
	<i>sakit raya alang ngubak wingkir anrau</i> 1 2 3 4 5 6	
(6)	<i>ngele gunung kala kumar bawang</i> 1 2 3 4 5	wake up mountains like layers of onions
	<i>nungkui watu nimang hapat sabe</i> 1 2 3 4 5	

Transcription (4) in Table 2 has six paired word elements. Both clauses (a and b) have the same construction: predicate + subject + adverb of place. Transcription (5) is similar; the six words in the first clause have the same meaning as their counterparts in the second clause, and they are built with the same clause construction. Again, transcription (6) has five words elements paired between clauses, and both clauses have the same construction.

These paired clauses can exhibit perfect parallelism because they show has the same number of words that share a meaning between the first and second clauses. Asplund (2017) notes that the first line of a paired clause in ritual language refers to women and has an unimportant meaning, whereas the second line refers to men and has an essential one. This study found a different interpretation. The first clause of the paired clause in the DMn ritual uses common word variants in everyday language. The second clause uses word variants that are not commonly used and are only used in ritual contexts. These common and uncommon languages relate to Durkheim’s (2017) separate domains of the sacred and the profane life. Pals (2011) added that the sacred is high, majestic, powerful, respected, and, when one is in a profane condition, is not to be touched. Meanwhile, the profane is every day, ordinary life. These sacred and profane categories are represented in variations of the DMn language in ritual speech, which is only used in the context of ritual as sacred and used daily as profane.

#### B. Imperfect Parallelism

The parallelism of word elements in paired clauses is not always the same in terms of the number of words. This inequality occurs because of the reduction and addition of words.

### C. Word Reduction

Word reduction does not impact the spelling of any particular element in a sentence or text (Alwi et al., 2003; Asplund, 2017). It occurs in the second clause and at the beginning of the clause as seen in Table 3. Fox (2014), in his work on parallel language in Rote, found that nonparallel forms occur because there are half-paired lines. Asplund (2017) identified this as a reduced coordination generally occurring at the beginning of the second clause. Fox and Asplund did not mention what elements are lacking in a coordinated and paired clause. In this study, we call this the reduction of coordination. Table 3 presents some examples of word the reduction of coordination in paired clauses.

TABLE 3  
VERB REDUCTION IN PAIRED CLAUSES

No	Transcription	Meaning
(7)	<u>ngamule papaken ure</u> 1 2 3 <u>kayu murung walang wua</u> 2 3	planting papaken does not bear fruit the tall tree does not bear fruit
(8)	<u>tunuk punsak gunung weah</u> 1 2 3 4 <u>pangkat watu wungentaun</u> 2 3 4	bow the top of the mountain of rice the top of the hill of annual flowers
(9)	<u>inau wadian teka itik watu</u> 1 2 3 4 <u>balanut teka hansa lili</u> 2 3 4	down the Wadian from the end of the rock the Balanut from the rock
(10)	<u>lawu ma hi mantir gelung</u> 1 2 3 4 <u>uria bujang tanang</u> 3 4	down to the Mantir gelung the calm knight

Verb reduction eliminates a verb element in a sentence construction. Transcriptions (7), (8), and (9) in Table 3 show the same pattern of reduction of verbal elements at the beginning of the second clause. There is also a reduction in verbs of motion and in direction markers that follow them. Transcription (10) shows the reduction of the verb, followed by a word marking direction, namely, *ma* “to”.

The reduction can occur in the noun at the beginning of the second clause. Noun reduction removes a noun or a noun phrase that has the function of a subject in a clause construction. Table 4 provides an example of noun reduction in the paired clause.

TABLE 4  
NOUN REDUCTION IN PAIRED CLAUSES

No	Transcription	Meaning
(11)	<u>ulun pasiau jari tunun</u> 1 2 3 4 <u>barabut janang tangkai</u> 2 3 4	people fight to be a stump fight to become a stalk
(12)	<u>weahku nyindalu ramai</u> 1 2 3 <u>nyikahung repun sumu</u> 2 3 4	my rice comes to the crowd join the crowd

Noun reduction is found in the second clause of the same meaning pair. Transcriptions (11) and (12) present the same pattern of reducing noun elements as subjects in the second clause. The first clause is not said again in the second clause to avoid repetition (Quirk et al., 1985). The reduction may also have occurred because the speaker believed that the interlocutor could correctly conclude what or who is meant, as the subject removed in the following clause (Nariyama, 2004).

There is also a noun and verb reduction at the beginning of the second clause. The noun and verb function as subjects and predicates in clause construction. Table 5 shows an example of noun and verb reduction.

TABLE 5  
NOUN AND VERB REDUCTION IN PAIRED CLAUSES

No	Transcription	Meaning
(13)	<u>aku ngele uyu agung</u> 1 2 3 4 <u>laluma tanru tatau</u> 3 4	I wake up to the sound of a gong the retorts crow wealth
(14)	<u>aku manumbak ka liang agung</u> 1 2 3 4 5 <u>ka liang ganing</u> 3 4 5	I speared into the gong hole into the gending hole

In clause construction, noun and verb elements are reduced in the second clause of paired clauses with the same meaning. Transcriptions (13) and (14) show the same pattern: reducing the noun element as the subject and the verb as the predicate in the second clause.

The reduction of the adverb is also found in the paired clause. The following table shows adverb reduction.

TABLE 6  
ADVERB REDUCTION IN PAIRED CLAUSES

No	Transcription	Meaning
(15)	<u>wau widi teka tanyung jawa</u> 1 2 3 4 5 <u>tuket teka tane pilayaran</u> 2 3 4 5	just bought from Tanjung java buy from shipping land
(16)	<u>haut manaharak lalan rampu</u> 1 2 3 4 <u>mananrukui enui piguruan</u> 2 3 4	have followed the path of the teacher follow the path of the teacher

Transcriptions (15) and (16) exhibit the reduction of adverb elements to explain the verb. The similarities between *wau* “new” and *haut* “already” at the beginning of the first clause do not appear in the second clause.

Reduction of word elements appears at the beginning of the second clause and may be of the noun, verb, or adverb. The reduced part continues to have the same form as the first one, and the speaker can assume that the speech partner can correctly understand the reduced element. To avoid repetition and increase efficiency, some parts of the second clause are reduced. The highlighted information in the second clause regards the repetition or similarity of the verb and the object elements or complements in the form of other language variants. The word elements are also related to cultural concepts in the DMn. There are sacred and profane categories in the language that is spoken in rituals, so the information that should be highlighted in the second clause is the similarity of the words in the first clause to those only used that are in rituals.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The most prominent characteristic of ritual language is its poetic form and the use of parallelism or pairing of meanings in its instantiations, which can create the effect of beautiful sound. The language in the ritual reflects the sacred and profane aspects of the community's beliefs. The first clause of the parallel pair uses the DMn that is used daily as the profane aspects. The second clause uses ritual-specific words that only appear in a ritual context to communicate with ancestral spirits as the sacred aspects. The paired clauses form perfect and imperfect parallelisms. Perfect parallelism occurs in pairs of clauses with the same number of word elements, where each word has the same meaning in the first and second clauses. In imperfect parallelism, the two halves do not match due to the reduction of verbs, nouns, and adverbs in the initial position in the second clause with the addition of word elements at the end of the second clause.

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**Dwiani Septiana** was born in Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. She received her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Linguistics at Diponegoro University, Semarang. She obtained her doctoral degree in Linguistics from the Program Study Linguistics Doctoral, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, in 2022. After completing her doctorate, she continued to advance his career as a Junior Researcher at the Research Center for Language and Literature Preservation, National Research and Innovation Agency, Jakarta, Indonesia. Her scholarly concentration is in language documentation, indigenous languages, ethnolinguistics, and language typology. She has been actively involved in linguistic research, particularly in Language Documentation and Description, Preservation of endangered languages and revitalisation efforts in Kalimantan. The results of his research have been widely published in several national and international journals. Contact her via email at [dwia019@brin.go.id](mailto:dwia019@brin.go.id)



**Wakit Abdullah** was born in Ngawi, Central Java. He obtained his doctoral degree in Linguistics from the Program Study Linguistics Doctoral at Sebelas Maret University in 2013. Then, in 2017, He became an ethnolinguistic professor for local wisdom. He serves as deputy dean at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences at Sebelas University. He actively teaches doctoral students in linguistic and cultural studies programs. Contact him via email at [abdullahwakit@yahoo.com](mailto:abdullahwakit@yahoo.com). You can search his research and publications via Google Scholar. <https://scholar.google.co.id/citations?user=P5AGKycAAAAJ&hl=id>



**Sahid Teguh Widodo** was born in Grobogan, Central Java. He obtained a PhD in applied linguistics from the University of Utara Malaysia in 2010. He is currently a professor in applied linguistics at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Sebelas Maret University. Currently, he serves as head of the Javanology Institute. He actively teaches and researches the language and culture in Indonesia. Contact him via email at [sahidteguhwidodo@yahoo.com](mailto:sahidteguhwidodo@yahoo.com). You can search his research and publications via Google Scholar. <https://scholar.google.co.id/citations?user=3kKmXbgAAAAJ&hl=id>



**Andi Indah Yulianti** was born in Banjarbaru, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. She finished her undergraduate program at Hasanuddin University and continued to Brawijaya University, Malang. She is a junior researcher at the Research Center for Language, Literature and Community, National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia. Her research interests are endangered language, language documentation, and language and literature preservation. Contact her via email at [andi047@brin.go.id](mailto:andi047@brin.go.id)

# Conversational Norms in Speech Acts: A Study of the Effect of Deficits on Communication

Elamin Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed

Department of Language & Translation, University College of Duba, University of Tabuk, Duba, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Abstract**—The present study aimed to investigate secondary school students' lack of mastering the conversational norms of speech acts, and the ability to express themselves in a foreign language. The case study was in Gezira State-Al-Manaqil Locality- El-Kremiet Secondary schools. The research used a descriptive-analytical method; the tool for collecting data was a questionnaire consisting of 12 distinct items administered to 60 teaching members, encompassing both male and female participants. Results showed that participants overwhelmingly agreed on the significance of the lack of conversational norms both inside and outside the classroom, with an average agreement rate of 73.42%. Moreover, a substantial majority, totaling 91.77% of participants, strongly agreed on the influential role of disability among EFL learners in executing situational speech acts. Additionally, a significant consensus was reached, with 84.6% of participants strongly agreeing that weaknesses in pronunciation contribute to the non-productivity of EFL learners in the classroom. The findings of the study emphasized the necessity for EFL Learners to acquire the basis core of conversation to perform the various speech acts in different situations.

**Index Terms**—deficits on communication, lacking conversational norms, speech acts production

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since every language has a distinct system that is governed by a set of linguistic criteria, speakers of that language attempt to use their communicative skills to be able to produce appropriate and understandable utterances during communication (Aprianto & Zaini, 2019). Similarly, for pupils to speak a foreign language correctly, they must be aware of the speaking skills and cultural criteria that underlie the language's linguistic patterns. Acquiring an understanding of the pragmatic applications of language in the target culture is just as important as learning all the grammatical and structural rules (Leech, 1983). Therefore, it is impossible to achieve successful cross-cultural communication in second language in mastering vocabulary, but also learners are required to master pragmatic competence and knowledge about the culture of the target language. There has been a great consensus among second language acquisition (SLA) scholars that negative pragmatic transfer in which the L2 learners assimilate their first language (L1) speech acts (apologizing, requesting, inviting, complimenting, and so forth) can lead to communication breakdowns due to their lack of L2 pragmatic competence. For example, Meznah (2018) notes that "the negative pragmatic transfer occurs usually when the L2 learners erroneously generalized to L2 context from pragmatic knowledge of L1" (p. 18). Additionally, English as foreign language (EFL) students need to understand that speech acts have a clear relationship between language forms, language functions, and social context. Speech acts include requests, greetings, refusals, apologies, and more. Syntactic forms and tactics for achieving speech acts are typically taught alongside context factors that dictate how indirect and courteous the forms should be (Al-Khateeb, 2009; Taguchi, 2013). According to Austin (1962), speech acts are actions that allude to the action.

### *Statement of the problem*

The study's issue is that many EFL students struggle to communicate in English in the classroom (Günes & Sarigöz, 2021). Additionally, because they are unaware of the fundamental rules of the speech act, pupils avoid face-to-face interactions and miss out on chances to acquire language through real-world interactions (Al-Ahdal, 2020). With the advent of the communicative approach, the emphasis has changed to obtaining functional competency in the target language, with the goal being the comprehension and production of language appropriate for communicative contexts within socio-cultural bounds. It is acknowledged that there are challenges in conveying such abstract knowledge directly to pupils whose command of the English language may be insufficient. With this difficulty in mind, the current study explores the status of speaking problems associated with lack of understanding speech acts in the Sudanese context. This study aimed at:

1. Investigating the effect of the lack of conversational norms of speech act inside or outside the classroom of EFL students.
2. Highlighting the influence of the ability of EFL learners to perform situational speech acts during their English classroom.
3. Clarifying the difficulties involved in presenting speech acting directly to EFL learners whose English fluency may be limited.

### **Research questions**

1. To what extent does the lack of conversational norms regarding speech acts impact Sudanese EFL students, both within and outside the classroom?
2. What is the influence of the notability of EFL learners in performing situational speech acts in their English classroom?
3. What are the difficulties that engaging in giving direct speeches to English language learners, some of whom may have low fluency in the language?

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Teaching speech acts to EFL students**

Because they do not yet fully understand the conversational norms that are necessary to produce speech acts, foreign language learners may have challenges when conversing with native speakers. Interethnic communication breakdowns may result from these conversational challenges (Gumperz, 1990). Nonnative speakers frequently run the eternal risk of unintentionally breaking conversational (and politeness) norms and losing their claim to be treated as social equals by their interactants when they deviate from speech act realization patterns that are typically used by native speakers of a target language (Escandell-Vidal, 2012; Kasper, 1990). When conversationalists are not equally aware of the nuanced laws of conversation, communication problems arise.

### **Speech Acts**

Austin (1962) developed the speech act theory, which is a theory of language that Searle (1969) expanded upon. The speech act theory considers non-linguistic communication situations as well, in contrast to linguistics and semantics, which limit their work to the linguistic structures produced. In this sense, Austin (1962) focuses on the connection between act and language. This suggests that when people use language, they do more than just construct discrete sentences—they also act. To put it another way, they either act or force others to act through the language they use. Among them are expressions of gratitude, requests, assurances, and so forth (Marquez, 2000).

According to Searle (2000), speech acts are demonstrated in contexts where language is used. As a result, he claims that the fundamental tenet of the speech act theory should be that the performance of kinds of acts constitutes the smallest unit in human communication. Bachman (1990) links these acts in communication scenarios to the functional aspects of language. The pragmatic dimension is related to creating and comprehending speech acts, as opposed to the morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical dimensions, which deal with the arrangement of language structures. When it comes to communication, these two aspects work together.

Furthermore, Hidayat (2016) claimed that speech acts, a subset of pragmatics and a type of verbal communication, frequently occur in both verbal and nonverbal communication. When a speaker speaks, some goals go beyond the words or phrases. According to Austin (1962), making a statement can involve three acts happening at once. Among these is the act of locution. This merely explains the act of speaking. Conversely, an illocutionary act is the act of doing something by saying something. The act of perlocution has to do with how something is said in the end. It describes the impact it has on the listener.

Depending on the speaker's intent and attitude, Searle (1975) divided speech acts into five major categories: Assertive: the speaker portrays the propositional content—reporting, announcing, responding, etc.—as a depiction of a situation in the actual world; Commissive: the speaker promises, swears, guarantees, or takes some other action in the future; Directive: the speaker tries to persuade the listener to adopt a specific.

Recognizing the particular speech act a speaker performs is a basic aspect of pragmatic competence. Many different things can be done with language. Furthermore, a key element of effective language use is the capacity to identify the actions that individuals carry out through their utterances (Huth & Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006). Therefore, in the target language classroom, it is imperative to teach students appropriate pragmatic realization patterns of speech acts.

Research conducted in classrooms focusing on the pragmatic development of FL/L2 learners strongly suggests that teaching pragmatic components (such as speech acts) explicitly is more effective (Huth & Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Takimoto, 2008). With explicit instruction, FL/L2 learners seem to accelerate their ability to express more native-like speech act performance. According to Koike and Pearson (2005), the results of the studies in SLA support the use of explicit or implicit instruction to help English language learners (ELLs) recognize pragmatic norms and, as a result, produce speech acts in a contextual dialogue.

In actuality, the most researched aspect of pragmatics is speech acts. Most studies concentrate on one or more speech acts, such as requests (Holtgraves, 2008). Many empirical studies have used speech acts to investigate how instruction affects pragmatic features (Grossi, 2009).

In a study conducted in the UK by Halenko and Jones (2011), Chinese ESL students who received six hours of explicit instruction on request strategies exhibited a notable enhancement in their pragmatic comprehension on a post-test, in contrast to those who did not receive any instruction. This research underscores the potential impact of instruction in accelerating learning, despite both groups of learners being regularly exposed to an English language environment.

Alzebaree and Yavuz (2017) investigated request and apology strategies among Kurdish EFL undergraduate students (KEFLUS) compared to native English speakers (NSE), utilizing a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and



researcher-developed rating scale. Results revealed differences between KEFLUS and NSE groups, as well as among universities, but no significant gender-based distinctions among KEFLUS. Overall, KEFLUS responses were deemed pragmatically and structurally appropriate.

Hussein and Albakri (2019) highlighted the growing emphasis on mastering English language skills, particularly pragmatic aspects like the speech act of request, in non-English speaking countries such as Iraq. It underscores the importance of incorporating pragmatic instruction, particularly in speech acts, to enhance English communication among Arab learners. Additionally, the paper discusses the lack of utilization of speech acts of request among English as foreign language students in Arab countries, emphasizing the need for effective teaching methods to improve learners' pragmatic abilities in requesting within specific contexts.

### III. METHODS

The study used descriptive quantitative design. A questionnaire was employed in the study to gather data. The study took place at Sudan, Al-Manaqil Locality. The researcher built closed ended questionnaire. The questionnaire included 12 statements; they were broken down into three sections. The study examines various factors impacting English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' speech act performance within and outside the classroom. It evaluates the effects of the absence of conversational norms on speech acts for EFL learners through items 1 to 4. Additionally, it explores the influence of disabilities on situational speech act performance during English classroom interactions, covered by items 5 to 8. Furthermore, the research investigates challenges associated with presenting abstract material directly to students, particularly those with limited English proficiency, as indicated by items 9 to 12. The Teacher's questionnaire is summarized in the Table 1.

TABLE 1  
SUMMARY OF TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Variable measure	Items
Effect of the lack of conversational norms of Speech act inside or outside the classroom of EFL students	1-4
The influence of disability of EFL learners in performing situational speech acts during their English classroom.	5- 8
The difficulties involved in directly presenting such abstract material to students, some of whom may have limited proficiency in English.	9-12

#### *Participants*

The participants of the study were recruited from secondary school teachers in Al-Manaqil Locality. Sixty-teachers were chosen randomly from different schools at Al-Manaqil Locality. All the teachers spent between 5 to 20 years teaching the English language at secondary schools. Table 2 illustrates the distribution of gender among a sample of 60 individuals. Among these, 18 participants identified as male, constituting 30% of the total sample, while 42 participants identified as female, making up 70% of the sample. This indicates a notable gender imbalance within the sample, with a higher representation of females compared to males. Such a gender distribution could potentially influence various aspects of the study or research being conducted, as gender may play a role in shaping perspectives, experiences, and responses to certain questions or topics. Therefore, it is essential for researchers to consider and account for such demographic differences when analyzing and interpreting the data obtained from their studies.

TABLE 2  
DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE ACCORDING TO THE GENDER

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	18	30%
Female	42	70%
Total	60	100%

#### **Validity and reliability**

The researcher ensured that the questions and responses within the questionnaire were meticulously crafted with deliberate intentionality, flexibility, and a clear alignment with the research objectives. Additionally, there was a conscious openness to diverse methodologies to elicit varied responses effectively. Validation of the questionnaire was conducted by a panel comprising three assistant professors proficient in the English language. Their evaluation criteria encompassed assessing the clarity of statements, items, and instructions, as well as the ease of use and relevance of the objects to the research topic. They also scrutinized the wording employed throughout the questionnaire. Furthermore, particular attention was paid to tailoring options to suit the sample, fostering an environment conducive to attentive listening to policymakers' advice and facilitating the elicitation of insightful responses.

The study utilized the split-half method to evaluate the reliability of the test, a common approach in statistics to assess the consistency of measurements. In this method, the test is divided into two parts, and the results of each part are compared. Ten teachers responded to the questionnaire, and the correlation was computed using the coefficient correlation formula. This method helps gauge the extent to which the test produces consistent results over different administrations, providing insights into its reliability and effectiveness in measuring the intended constructs.

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

According to the analysis, there was a significant positive correlation between the responses provided to the following questions:

PsQ = 067%. The questionnaire was distributed to the sample of the study, and then it was given enough time to respond and fill out the questionnaire.

#### IV. RESULTS

The teacher's questionnaire, which consists of 12 items split into three sections, covers a variety of topics that aid in examining the impact of not fully grasping the conversational norms required in the production of speech acts.

**RQ1: To what extent does the lack of conversational norms regarding speech acts impact Sudanese EFL students, both within and outside the classroom?**

TABLE 3  
THE LACK OF CONVERSATIONAL NORMS CAUSES THE WEAKNESS OF THE SPEECH ACT FOR EFL LEARNERS

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The lack of conversational norms causes the weakness of the speech act for EFL learners.	83.3	13.3	3.3	0	0
The awareness of conversational norms helps EFL learners to be more active in speech acts.	57.	36.4	5	1.6	0
It is very necessary for EFL learners to be familiar with the principles of conversational norms.	78.4	18.4.	1.6	1.6	0
Teachers must encourage EFL learners to acquire the norms of conversation to be more active in the classroom.	75	23.4	1.6	0	0
Average	73.42	24.36	2.87	0.8	0

As seen in Table 3, with an average of 73.42% the participants strongly agree about the impact of lack of conversation norms on students inside and outside the classroom. Table 3 indicates that (50) (83.3 %) of the sample strongly that the lack of conversational norms causes the weakness of the speech act for EFL learners, while 8(13.3%) agree that the lack of conversational norms causes the weakness of the speech act for EFL learners, and 2(3.3%) with the lack of conversational norms causes the weakness of the speech act for EFL learners.

Based on the information in Table 3, 34 (57. %) strongly agree that the awareness of conversational norms helps EFL learners to be more active in speech acts. While 22(36.4. %) agree with the awareness of conversational norms helps EFL learners to be more active in speech acts, and 3(5. %) not sure that the awareness of conversational norms helps EFL learners to be more active in speech acts. And 1(1.6%) disagree with the awareness of conversational norms helps EFL learners to be more active in speech acts.

Table 3 showed that, 47 (78.4. %) of the sample strongly agree with that It is very necessary for EFL learners to be familiar with the principles of conversational norms, while 11(18.4. %) agree that it is very necessary for EFL learners to be familiar with the principles of conversational norms, however one of the samples not sure about that and one is disagreed with It is very necessary for EFL learners to be familiar with the principles of conversational norms.

Based on the information in Table 3, 45 (75 %) from the sample of the study were strongly agree that Teachers must encourage EFL learners to acquire the norms of conversation to be more active in the classroom, 14(23.4.) of the teachers were agree with above statement, while one the sample is not sure that Teachers must encourage EFL learners to acquire the norms of conversation to be more active in the classroom.

TABLE 4  
THE INFLUENCE OF DISABILITY OF EFL LEARNERS IN PERFORMING SITUATIONAL SPEECH ACTS

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Conversational disability of EFL learners leads to a boring classroom	88.5	6.7.	3.2	1.6	0
EFL Learners conversational disability may affect in their collection levels	93.4	5.0	1.6	0	0
Participating EFL learners in situational speech encourage the teachers to renew the discussion's issues during the classes	91.8	5	3.2	0	0
It is very necessary for EFL learners to be very active in performing situational speech acts.	93.4	5	1.6	0	0
Average	91.77	5	2.4	0.4	0



With a total average of 91.77% of the participants strongly agreed on the role of disability of EFL learners in performing situational speech acts. Based on the information in the Table 4, 53 (88.5 %) of the sample of the study strongly agree with that) conversational Disability of EFL learners leads to a boring classroom, whereas 4 (6.7%) agreed with the above statement, 2 (3.2%) of the sample of the study were not sure that conversational Disability of EFL learners leads to a boring classroom, while 1 (1.6%) disagreed with that conversational Disability of EFL learners leads to a boring classroom. Table 4 shows that, 56 (93.4 %) of the study sample strongly agree that EFL Learners' conversational disability may affect in their collection levels, and 3 (5.0%) of teachers agreed that EFL Learners' conversational disability may affect in their collection levels, while one member of the targeted sample was not sure about that the unable conversational of the EFL learners may have an effect on their outcome.

Based on Table 4, 55 (91.8 %) of the study sample strongly agree that Participating of EFL learners in situational speech encourages the teachers to renew the discussion's issues during the classes, whereas 3 (5.0%) agree, and 2 (3.2%) were not sure that participating of EFL learners in situational speech encourages the teachers to renew the discussion's issues during the classes.

According to the information in Table 4, 56 (93.4 %) of the study sample emphasized that EFL learners must be very active in performing situational speech acts, while 3 (5.0%) agreed with the same questionnaire statement, and 1(1.6%). I was not sure about that.

TABLE 5  
THE WEAKNESS IN PRONUNCIATION LEADS TO NON-PRODUCTIVE EFL LEARNERS IN THE CLASSROOM

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The weakness in pronunciation leads to non-productive EFL learners in the classroom.	85.2	10.0	1.6	3.2	0
Acquiring the basic rules of English grammar represents the core of performing speech acts for EFL learners.	68.2	10	1.6	3.2	17
Avoiding using oral tasks, activities, and dialogues inside the classroom contributes to non-active EFL learners.	95	3.3	1.7	0	0
The shyness of EFL learners leads to non-performing Speech acts for EFL learners inside the classroom.	90	5	5	0	0
Average	84.6	7.07	2.47	1.6	4.25

With a total of 84.6% of the participants strongly agreed that the weakness in pronunciation leads to non-productive EFL learners in the classroom. Based on the results in the Table 5, 51 (85.2 %) of the targeted sample strongly agree that the weakness in pronunciation leads to non-productive EFL learners in the classroom, and 6(10.0%) of the sample agree with this statement, while 1(1.6%) was not sure about that and 2(3.2%) were disagree that the weakness in pronunciation leads to non-productive EFL learners in the classroom.

Table 5 also indicated that 41 (68.2 %) of the sample of the study strongly agree that, Acquiring the basic rules of English grammar represents the core of performing speech acts for EFL learners, and 6(10.0%) agreed while 2(3.2%) of the sample were disagree that, the necessity of knowing the basic of grammar represents the core of performing speech acts for EFL learners, and about 10(17%) of the sample strongly disagree that, acquiring the basic rules of English grammar represents the core of performing speech acts for EFL learners.

According to the results in Table 5, 57 (95 %) of the study sample of the study were strongly agree that avoiding using oral tasks, activities and dialogues inside the classroom contributes to non-active EFL learners, while, 2(3.3%) agreed with this statement, and 1(1.7%) marked as not sure that, avoiding using oral tasks, activities and dialogues inside the classroom contribute to non- active EFL learners.

Table 5 showed that 54 (90 %) of the targeted sample strongly agreed with the statement that the shyness of EFL learners leads to non-performing Speech acts for EFL learners inside the classroom, and 3(5%) agreed and not sure consequently.

## V. DISCUSSION

Results showed that the lacking conversational norms of speech act inside or outside the classroom of EFL students. The sample of the study assured that the lack of conversational norms causes the weakness of the speech act for EFL learners. As well as the awareness of conversational norms helps EFL learners to be more active in speech acts, so the levels of fluency may rise up due to these activities, furthermore, EFL learners must be familiar with the principles of conversational norms to interact with native speakers of the target language easily and professionally, besides to Teachers must encourage EFL learners to acquire the norms of conversation to be more active in the classroom, which enables EFL learner to acquire the basis of conversational norms that assist them to communicate with others. These results agreed with Meznah (2018) who highlights the occurrence of negative pragmatic transfer among L2 learners when they mistakenly apply their pragmatic knowledge from L1 to L2 contexts. Furthermore, Taguchi (2013) affirmed that speech acts entail syntactic forms and strategies taught alongside contextual factors determining their indirectness and politeness. Even just carrying on a conversation in English, as Gallo (2014) notes, calls for a certain level of

understanding to underpin replies that encourage a speaker to go on, demonstrate comprehension, offer support, express agreement, elicit a strong emotional response, supplement, or correct the speaker's information, or request more details. Hussein and Albakri (2019) also affirmed that Iraqi students lack the utilization of speech acts of request among English as foreign language students in Arab countries, emphasizing the need for effective teaching methods to improve learners' pragmatic abilities.

The study reported that the disability of EFL learners has an impact in performing situational speech acts during their English classroom. The majority of the study sample emphasized that: the conversational disability of EFL learners leads to a boring classroom, as well as EFL learners conversational disability may affect in their collection levels more over EFL learners conversational disability may affect in their collection levels, furthermore Participating of EFL learners in situational speech encourages the teachers to renew the discussion's issues during the classes also EFL learners must be very active in performing situational speech acts. Results are confirmed by Huth and Taleghani-Nikazm (2006), Taleghani-Nikazm (2006), Koike and Pearson (2005), and Takimoto (2008). For example, Huth and Taleghani-Nikazm (2006) mentioned that pragmatic competence involves recognizing the specific speech acts performed through language use. Furthermore, it is agreed upon that effective language use entails identifying the actions conveyed through utterances. Thus, in FL/L2 classrooms, teaching appropriate pragmatic realization patterns of speech acts is crucial (Huth & Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Takimoto, 2008). This ensures that during the teaching speech act, the teacher will discuss the students' expectations, perceptions, and awareness of the parallels and discrepancies between speech act behavior in English and their native tongue. It will also be the teacher's responsibility to explain things to the students as needed and assist them in identifying areas of negative transfer where communication breakdowns could happen. At a higher level, asking students to continue talking will be a helpful exercise. The teacher will need to get some slips of paper ready with a scenario that calls for the students to respond with a speech act. You can use this activity to go over every speech act that the teacher gave you in a special list when you first started teaching.

Finally, the study reported that among the difficulties involved in directly presenting such abstract material to pupils, some of whom may not speak English well, most of the targeted teachers agreed that, the weakness in pronunciation leads to non-productive EFL learners in the classroom as well as acquiring the basic rules of English grammar represents the core of performing speech acts for EFL learners, more over avoiding using oral tasks, activities and dialogues inside the classroom contribute to non- active EFL learners, in addition to the shyness of EFL learners leads to non- performing speech acts for EFL learners inside the classroom, have great influence in the activities which performed by EFL Learners inside and outside English language classroom. These findings agreed with Koike and Pearson (2005) who emphasize the efficacy of explicit or implicit instruction in helping ELLs understand pragmatic norms and improve speech act performance in contextual dialogue. Notably, speech acts remain the most extensively researched aspect of pragmatics, drawing significant attention in studies focusing on FL/L2 learners' development.

## VI. CONCLUSION

For non-native speakers, speech acts and conversational norms present a practical challenge. Teachers' job in the process of helping their students learn speech acts is to gather data on the way native speakers carry out specific speech acts. You can find this information in certain textbooks. If there is a deficiency of this kind of information, one legitimate way to fill it in is to watch speech acts in their natural setting. EFL instructors should make it clear to their students how important it is to have good speaking abilities in EFL in general and speech act production in particular. They should also highlight how crucial it is to learn conversational conventions so that you can use the English language in a variety of contexts.

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**Elamin Mohammed Ahmed**, he was born in Sudan in January 1977, he graduated in Sudan University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Education, English language Department in 2001, with the degree of Second class upper. Then he was awarded the Master in ELT with the degree of very good from the same university in 2011 as well as the PHD in Applied Linguistics from the same University in Sudan, Khartoum State in 2016.

He worked as secondary school teacher in Gezira State from 2004 till 2012, he worked as Lecturer for English language in Sinnar University from 2012 till 2015, also he worked as an assistant professor in Al-Butana University from 2015-2016 October. Now he works at the University of Tabuk, KSA from 2016 right now. He published 8 research papers like: The Effect of Using Communicative language Teaching on EFL

Learner's Speaking skill- THE PROBLEMS THAT CONFRONT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AT FACULTY OF EDUCATION SINNAR UNIVERSITY- The Effects of Pragmatics Competence in EFL University Learners.

Dr. Elamin, The Supervisor of Community Services Unit in University College of Duba, and English language Department Supervisor from 2016 till 2021 now the supervisor of Students Affairs in University College of Duba.

# Forging Alternative Resistance Through Empathy in Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns*

Samah Jarrad

Department of Postcolonial Literature in English Language, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National  
University of Malaysia (UKM), Malaysia

Raihanah M. M.

Department of Postcolonial Literature in English Language, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National  
University of Malaysia (UKM), Malaysia

Ravichandran Vengadasamy

Department of Postcolonial Literature in English Language, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National  
University of Malaysia (UKM), Malaysia

**Abstract**—Until recently, Palestinian nonviolent resistance has historically been overshadowed by the narrative of armed and violent resistance. This article contends that the reality of Palestinian resistance is relatively nonviolent and explores alternative nonviolent approaches drawing on Sahar Khalifeh's novel *Wild Thorns*. Originally published in 1976 and translated into English in 1985, Khalifeh's novel serves as a blueprint for nonviolent resistance, emphasizing empathy. This research demonstrates how interethnic connections between antagonistic groups, particularly in workplace settings, can mitigate violence by humanizing the face of the perceived enemy. Through documenting the violence of imperial imposition and scrutinizing the means by which a nation can resist its occupier nonviolently, Khalifeh creates a readership that is ready to empathize by acknowledging the trauma experienced by the Other.

**Index Terms**—alternative resistance, antagonistic groups, empathy, humanizing the enemy, interethnic connection

## I. INTRODUCTION

The exploration of resistance realities within Palestinian literature finds its foundation in the historical context of 1948 Arab-Israeli war which is considered by researchers and historians the baseline of contemporary Palestinian history. The war, which is referred to as Nakba (catastrophe) by Palestinians and is otherwise marked as independence war by Israelis, terminated in the declaration of the establishment of the state of Israel and drastic changes in the geography and demography of the historical land of Palestine (Sanbar, 2001).

In addition to the documented massacres and the organized ethnic cleansing of the original inhabitants of historical Palestine chronicled by historians like Ilan Pappé in *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006), the war also redefined the region's geographical landscape. The historical land of Palestine was de facto divided, with Israel claiming 77 percent of Palestinian territory (Sa'di & Abu Lughod, 2007), the West Bank coming under the administration of the Jordanian Kingdom and Gaza annexed to Egypt. Subsequently in 1967, both territories fell under military occupation (Hadawi, 1967). The residents of historical Palestine had a different fate as more than 80 percent were expelled and uprooted from their land gaining the status of refugees settling in refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza while others were now living in refugee camps in neighboring lands where they experienced excruciating circumstances in countries that relegated them to second-class citizens and restricted their access to basic human rights (Sa'di & Abu Lughod, 2007).

Although historical Palestine was depopulated of the majority of its Arab inhabitants, around 170 thousand Palestinian Arabs, now totalling 1.3 million (Daoud, 2012), resisted denationalized and remained in their homeland, thus becoming 'internal refugees' (Daoud, 2012, p. 82) and constituting a minority within their own country. This led to rapid demographic shift, witnessed in regions like the Galilee district, where Jewish forces transformed a predominantly Palestinian area into an almost exclusively Jewish territory within a remarkably short span (Pappé, 2006).

Despite the inimical relations between the two nations, there has always been a common space of interaction resulting from historic collision over the past decades which has led to unavoidable interaction and to the creation of a new space that transcends national identity, thus rendering a simplistic binary approach to Palestinian-Israeli space reductive. Drawing on concepts and debates in the field of postcolonial literature and in light of the view that "fiction reveals truths that reality obscures" (West, 1957, p. 77), this paper aims to show how through her novel *Wild Thorns*, Sahar Khalifah reveals the truths about the reality of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and addresses the gaps concerning a third space of interconnection between the two nations. Originally published in Arabic in 1976 and translated into

English in 1985 (Mahmoud, 2019), *Wild Thorns* stands as Khalifeh's most renowned and critically acclaimed work. It portrays a realistic praxis of the Palestinian trajectory navigating between revolutionary aspiration, the necessity to defend one's home and the humane empathetic approach that is the product of collective human interactions.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

*Wild Thorns* debuted in Arabic in 1967 and was then translated into various languages including French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Greek and English in 1985. The novel is Khalifeh's registration of the events of occupation and Palestinian resistance as well as the dialectic relationship between resistance and nationalism that unfolds through the events of the novel.

Most analyses of the novel have centered on Khalifeh's personal and intellectual affinities as well as on the complexities of resistance and steadfastness that are represented in the novel. For example, Cotter (2011) complicates the reality of life under occupation all the while providing a "space for reflection on varying methods of resistance to military occupation, namely a contrast between nonviolent steadfast resistance versus armed violent resistance" (p. 24). Moreover, Cotter (2011) makes it clear that much of Khalifeh's work underscores the important role of acts of *Sumud* (steadfastness) as a part of the greater notion of resistance. By the same token, Metres (2010) examines Khalifeh's work in the context of alternative resistance options advocating less violent responses to occupation.

Dissimilarly, Tahboub (2009) believes that Khalifeh's literary productions focus on "the internal battle with men and institutions of patriarchy more than the battle of the Palestinians against the occupation, and [are] a call for the freedom of women prior to the freedom of Palestine" (p. 188). Correspondingly, Abdulqader (1998) argues that all women in Khalifeh's works are under the subjugation of men citing examples from *Bab Alsaha* (1990) to illustrate the troubled reality they face as a result of male dominance. Likewise, Mohamadi and Sadeghi (2014) examine the novel through the lens of double colonization by both patriarchy and Israeli occupation.

While the majority of studies on *Wild Thorns* primarily focus on themes of resistance, particularly in terms of steadfastness amidst political turmoil, as well as women's liberation, my analysis offers a departure from this focus. Rather than focusing on these themes, the researchers seek to fill a gap in the existing analyses by examining the role of empathy as a tool for nonviolent resistance as highlighted within the narrative.

### A. Navigating Nonviolent Resistance: Exploring Palestinian Literary Terrain

The occupation of Palestine spurred a resistance movement that was "not a choice but a necessity" (Abu-Remaileh, 2014, p. 192). Anti-imperial resistance infuses many elements and is by no means monochromatic; it takes many forms ranging from armed resistance to intellectual resistance. The reality of resistance to occupation in Palestine, however, is relatively non-violent. In fact, Awad (1984) is of the opinion that nonviolent resistance is not a novelty in the Palestinian struggle. In the same sentiment, Mason and Falk (2016) assert that Palestinians have a long history of non-violence that dates back to the Ottoman and British Mandate periods and persists through modern history, nonetheless the story of unarmed resistance has been relatively invisible by the international community and mainstream media as "violence has far greater media appeal than nonviolence" (p. 167).

In addition to strikes and protests, nonviolent resistance took the form of written word that sought through the creative expression of its producers to restore the voices that have been lost due to oppression of Israeli forces. Through their writing, Palestinian creative practitioners have been "bearing witness" (Hamdi, 2011, p. 23). In other words, Palestinian artists in various realms have been archiving chronicles that are essential for the survival of the collective memory of the Palestinian narrative against the premeditated "assassination of liberation" (Hamdi, 2011, p. 24). Hence, poetry, fiction and novels became sites of resistance against occupation and the imposed cultural isolation and intellectual restraints.

Though Palestinian writing has often been situated in the realm of "resistance literature", a term first introduced by Ghassan Kanafani in his book, *Palestinian Resistance Literature Under Occupation* (1966), it "has questioned, complicated, and sometimes rejected romanticized representation of the resistance fighter... [in fact] Palestinian writing often demonstrates the struggle within Palestinians between an abhorrence of violence and war and the necessity to defend one's rights and homeland" (Metres, 2010, p. 86). Hence, despite the prolific production of literature among Palestinians confirming to themes of belonging and resistance and despite the propagated social antagonism between the Palestinians and the Israelis, there is always a common space of interaction between the two nations leading to the creation of a hybrid space.

This hybridity was elucidated by Mahmoud Darwish in a Landmark 1996 Interview with Helit Yeshurun in which he contends that it is impossible to evade the place that the Israeli has occupied in my identity. He exists, whatever I may think of him. He is a physical and psychological fact. The Israelis changed the Palestinians and vice versa. The Israelis are not the same as they were when they came, and the Palestinians are not the same people that once were ("Exile" 63).

In this excerpt, Darwish asserts the interdependence between the Israeli and Palestinian identities; the two have become interconnected as a result of historical processes of "national intertextuality" (Ebileeni, 2016, p. 225) in addition to increased contact between the two nations.

In this sense, the "personal strikes back at the political" (Cohen, 2016, p. 1) making it impossible but to recognize the humanity among antagonistic social groups resulting in an 'inbetween' space that Bhabha (2012, p. 37) calls "third space

of enunciation" which is "a transcultural space, a contact zone" (Ashcroft, 2009, p. 108). In this new space both the colonized and the colonizer renegotiate their fixed sense of identity as both inform each other's identities making communication possible. Henceforth, themes of mutual humanity began to infiltrate into Palestinian literature reflecting the realities of the third space and its consequences as with regards to alternative resistance patterns.

#### *B. The Contours of the Current Palestinian- Israeli Connections: Dynamics of Interaction in the Context of Separation*

Since its inception, Israel has been trying to separate Palestinian and Israeli spaces. This separation aims to disconnect the two populations and restrict the movement of Palestinians under security pretences (Kotasińska, 2020). Alongside with blockage, checkpoints, flying checkpoints and closures, Israel has also enforced a "three-dimensional system of Israeli control over the Palestinian territories [which] includes roads and tunnels, hilltop settlements, control over underground aquifers and sewage systems, as well as dominance of the air" (Collins, 2011, p. 92).

The separation has culminated in the erection of the Israeli "security fence", or what has been defined by Palestinians as "Apartheid Wall" or "racist Wall of separation" (Kotasińska, 2020, p. 46). The establishment of the Wall which commenced in 2002 stretching over 700 kilometres (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2006, p. 104) was a response to the second Intifada constituting not only a physical-material structure, but a "psychic one between a 'civilised us' and 'uncivilised them'" (Busbridge, 2013, p. 655).

Despite the seemingly impenetrable Israeli separation policies and its discriminatory practices against Palestinians alongside with the social distance the occupied keeps from the occupier and vice versa (Mi'Ari, 1999), there has been inter-ethnic contact between the two communities. The first instance of contact has been a result of chronic unemployment in the Palestinian territories which coincided with strong economic growth in Israel after 1967 war this led to an influx of Palestinian unskilled cheap manual laborers seeking employment opportunities in Israel, totalling approximately 150.000 workers (Sella, 2023). Some of these laborers entered Israel legally by obtaining work permits while others did so illegally through smuggling.

Furthermore, beyond inter-ethnic connections created as a result of employment in Israel and its settlements in the West Bank, there has also been direct contact between the two populations inside Israel. Approximately 170 thousand Palestinians, who have mounted today to 1.6 million (Molavi, 2013), remained inside what became Israel's internationally recognized borders post 1948 war. This minority Palestinian community living in Israel has been granted Israeli citizenship. Nonetheless, they face institutional discrimination where their integration into state institutions is conditional, leading to a complex situation of both inclusion and exclusion within the system (Daoud, 2012, p. 83).

Due to the increased contact between the Palestinians and the Israelis in these contexts, social distance, which refers to "the degree of closeness or acceptance that members of a group feel towards members of another group" (Yuchtman-Yaar & Inbar, 1986, p. 284) has decreased between the two nations. Nonetheless, research has proven that Palestinians have shown a more positive attitude towards Israelis than vice versa (Mi'Ari, 1999, p. 340). This asymmetry in social interaction can be interpreted by mutual dependency theory which maintains that the group with less control over resources tends to be more reliant on the other, thus seeking reciprocity and clarity in their interactions (Yuchtman-Yaar & Inbar, 1986). Applied to the Palestinian Israeli context, Israel exerts more dominance over resources making the Palestinians subordinate, thus creating an "asymmetrically contingent" (Hofman, 1985, p. 249) relationship between the two nations. In this sense, Palestinians are disproportionately dependent on the Israelis for resources and opportunities (Hofman, 1985).

Despite disparity in working conditions and privileges such as "cost-of-living increments...social security, pension and disability payments" (Khalifeh, 1985, p. 110), increased contact between the Palestinians and Israelis fostered mutual empathy and sparked new political possibilities and discourses. This mutual contact at work encouraged the hostile groups to share their personal narratives, thus "humaniz[ing] the face of the enemy" (Dajani Daoudi & Barakat, 2013, p. 54). This process challenges the prevailing narratives which often depict the 'other' in a deeply polarized manner (Hammack, 2011). By demonstrating individuality, emotions and beliefs, individuals engage in a form of resistance against the dehumanizing function of the Israeli occupation (Hammack, 2011).

#### *C. Theoretical Framework: Empathy as Non-Violent Resistance*

Empathy is often recognized as a powerful tool in conflict resolution across various disciplines such as "political theory, neuroscience, applied linguistics, social psychology, and philosophy [as well as] conflict resolution" (Apter & Desselles, 2019; Halperin & Gross, 2011; Head, 2016). In the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, empathy has taken on a transformative role, being viewed as a form of non-violent resistance (Head, 2016). Here, empathy has transcended its traditional connections to emotional response to being a conducive environment for fostering understanding and positive societal transformation. This shift challenges conventional notions, unsettling the traditional categories of "'empathiser' (stronger) and 'sufferer' (weaker party)" (Head, 2016, p. 105). In this dynamic, marginalized groups like Palestinians demonstrate nonviolent resistance through the act of choosing to extend empathy despite their own trauma and disadvantaged political position (Pedwell, 2014).

The cultivation of empathy is facilitated through mutual contact which according to Hammack (2011, pp. 259-60) can be "potentially transformative – even potentially subversive – activity" in contexts of conflict as it offers a platform for cultivating resistance and rejection of the perpetuation of antagonistic social order (Hammack, 2011). Notably, this mutual contact is primarily realized in the workplace as evidenced by a 2022 survey conducted by the Palestinian

Central Bureau of Statistics which revealed that 193 thousand Palestinians are employed in Israel or in Israeli settlements.

This empathetic engagement finds expression through language as highlighted by Head (2016) who explains that the recognition of empathy relies heavily on discourse analysis. In a similar vein, Cameron (2013) underscores the capacity of language to express connections between people, which she terms "gestures of empathy" (p. 53). This highlights the significance of linguistic expressions in communicating empathy and fostering understanding between individuals.

### III. DISCUSSION

Palestinian and Israeli narratives diverge and that is quite predictable as narratives of conflicting nations tend to multiply (Scham & Pogrund, 2013). However, the Palestinian narrative is seldom recognized with the Palestinians frequently denied the power to communicate their history (Scham & Pogrund, 2013). Consequently, "Palestinian creative practitioners have sought to counter this narrative suppression by formulating their own multi-layered accounts of Palestinian experience and identity through the mediums of film, literature, art, and criticism" (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, p. 1). In this sense, resistance is not restricted to armed guerilla, but rather extends to resistance writers who are "actively engaged in an urgent historical confrontation" (Harlow, 1987, p. 100) by reclaiming their lost narrative.

Among the pioneering Palestinian female writers and resistance practitioners is Sahar Khalifeh with her work *Wild Thorns* standing as a testament of this struggle. Albeit a dated corpus that goes back to its initial publication in 1976 and subsequent translation into English in 1985, the novel remains relevant today. It offers valuable insights inside Palestinian resistance viewed from both a confrontational and reconciliatory perspective. Despite its age, *Wild Thorns* is still extensively researched and recognized as Khalifeh's most prominent work both regionally and internationally (Cohen, 2014). The novel which is set in 1972 five years after 1967 War (also known as Six-Day War) seeks to dramatize life under occupation and to present different approaches to resistance through the depiction of the details of the lives of two cousins.

Sahar Khalifeh is a contemporary Palestinian author who is renowned for her prolific literary production. She has penned eleven novels which have garnered significant critical acclaim and have been translated into several languages including English, French, Hebrew, German, Spanish, and many other languages. One of her works, *The Image, the Icon and the Covenant* achieved notable success winning the Najīb Maḥfūz Medal in 2006 (Interlink, 2007). Later in 2013, Khalifeh was awarded the Mohamed Zafzaf Prize in recognition of her long-established career as a Palestinian writer authoring several novels that delve into the realities of the Palestinian society.

Central to Khalifeh's literary corpus are themes of women's liberation and resistance (Mahmoud, 2019). Her advocacy for women's liberation is deeply rooted in her own experience as a Palestinian woman living under dual oppression of both patriarchy and occupation. In fact, in an interview with Khalifeh, she asserts that the liberation of women is a fundamental prerequisite for the liberation of the nation (Nazareth & Khalifeh, 1980, p. 82). Khalifeh's encounter with occupation prompted her exploration of themes of resistance in her various novels including *Assubar* (The Cactus) which was translated as *Wild Thorns* in 1985. Throughout the novel, Khalifeh challenges the commonly held views of resistance and adds depth to our understanding of the struggle in face of colonialism, occupations and political corruption (Cotter, 2011).

The novel which is set in 1972 narrates the events of Palestinians living under the Israeli occupation in the West Bank city of Nablus. The novel which chronicles the lives of Usama, Adil, Nuwar, Zuhdi, Basil and Abu Sabri, opens with Usama's journey back to Palestine from the Gulf countries. Usama's return to Palestine is, as we learn later, a part of his mission to blow up Egged buses which carry workers from the West Bank to their jobs in Israel.

Upon his return, Usama is shocked with the changed reality of Palestinians who have to submit to searches, interrogations, and checkpoints and who have become economically dependent on Israel both for jobs and consumer products. Usama is further outraged once he learns that his own cousin, Adil, whose family is striving economically, has abandoned his family's farm and is working in an Israel factory.

The narrative also follows the lives of Nuwar and Basil Al-Karmi, Adil's siblings. Nuwar, a young college student, faces pressure from her father to marry a wealthy physician, but she defies her father's wishes by pursuing a relationship with Salih, an incarcerated resistance fighter. Basil, who is a high school student, is imprisoned as a result of his political activism. While in prison, he is indoctrinated with political ideals by his fellow inmates and resolves to join resistance movement following his release.

Secondary characters like Zuhdi and Abu Sabir, Adil's coworkers, also play pivotal roles in shaping the events of the novel. Zuhdi, a young father, is imprisoned for assaulting an Israeli coworker while Abu Sabir is denied rightful compensation following a workplace injury.

The novel concludes with Basil helping Usama harbouring weapons in a secret vault in the family's estate. Usama meanwhile engages in a fire of arms with Israeli soldiers, resulting in his and other Palestinians death. The Israeli army later discovers the weapon vault underneath Abu Adil Al-Karmi's house, leading to the demolishing of Al- Karmis' ancestral home.

Significantly, through the portrayal of the two characters and the narration of the events that evolve in relation to them, Khalifeh complicates the notion of resistance which no longer solely aligns with Usama's concept of armed resistance. Nonetheless, although Usama is a fictional character, his beliefs resonate with those of many in the



colonized part of the world in general and in Palestine in specific. In fact, Fanon (1965) argues decolonization, regardless of its form or label is inherently violent, serving to purge the colonized from its "inferiority complex" (Fanon, 1965, p. 1). Fanon's sentiment finds support in the renowned words of the former Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, who governed over Egypt between 1956 and 1970, asserting "what was taken by force, can only be restored by force". This expression still reverberates among some Palestinians today who believe that armed resistance or '*muqawama*' is the only inalienable path to liberation (Public Opinion Poll No (84), PCPSR, 2022).

Although Usama proposes armed resistance as the only approach towards gaining freedom, the narrator highlights his detachment from the reality of life under occupation as he has lived abroad in the Gulf countries for the past five years departing only "three months after the occupation started" (Khalifeh, 1985, p. 13). Usama places blame on everyone in the country, asserting "Arabs inside [referring to Arabs living inside Israel] are to blame...you're the ones to blame. You're the ones who hold the key to the situation" (Khalifeh, 1985, p. 22). However, despite Usama's insistence that nothing has changed during his time abroad, as he states, "nothing had changed...hands of the clock still moved on slowly and silently, marking the passage of time. Only trees and plants had grown taller" (Khalifeh, 1985, p. 26), the country has undergone significant transformation. Despite Usama's professes, life under occupation has become the new reality, marked by economic deterioration, and scarce employment opportunities. These circumstances compelled many Palestinians, like Zuhdi, to seek employment in Israel. Zuhdi recounts his experiences stating [w]hen I came back from Kuwait, I worked in an olive-oil factory. The owner exploited me because unemployment was so high. I was disgusted. I left there swearing I'd rather die of hunger than go back. Then I worked as a taxi driver on the Rafidiyya line. That was okay, but then the bastards [Israelis] took my license. For no reason... One day I was sitting brooding in the café and I had just seventy piastres in my pocket. Abu Nawaf told me about a job as a driver for some company [in Israel]. (Khalifeh, 1985, p. 77).

Although Usama moans the reality of Palestinians and struggles to comprehend the present circumstances as evident by his laments "Oh, what's happened to us? ...'what's happened? I don't understand. I don't understand anything." (Khalifeh, 1985, p. 43), other characters like Adil, Zuhdi, Abu Sabir and the rest of the unalienated Palestinians understand the situation completely.

Adil is burdened with a barren farm and must support "nine mouths and one machine [his father's kidney machine]" (Khalifeh, 1985, p. 28). Zuhdi's employment history spans Kuwait, Dharan and Germany engaging in various types of professions. Upon returning to Palestine, he faces the harsh reality of the scarce job opportunities and is often exploited by employers who capitalize on the high unemployment rate and his need for a job. Meanwhile, Abu Sabir, an elderly man in his sixties, is tired of queuing in long lines of charity organizations and the ill treatment of Arab employers who either cut the wages of the workers, or refuse to raise them in line with the escalating cost of living.

Due to these circumstances Adil, Zuhdi, and Abu Sabir find themselves compelled to join the ranks of Palestinian working class in Israel subjecting them to both social stigmatization and workplace discrimination. The social ostracization faced by this class is exemplified in Adil's reluctance to disclose his workplace to Usama. Meanwhile, the disparity in treatment in the workplace between Arab and Israeli workers is highlighted in Zuhdi's observation: "there's a big difference between Muhammad and Cohen: Muhammad gets the heavy work, Cohen the light. The Jewish workers have cafeterias with tables and chairs, but we [Arab workers] sit on the ground to eat, in the sun or in the garage" (Khalifeh, 1985, p. 76). Additionally, being a member of the working-class Arabs in Israel also entails the denial of essential services such as ambulances and fair compensation in the event of work accidents, as demonstrated in Abu Sabir's workplace accident.

Despite the challenges posed by these asymmetrical power dynamics, the workplace serves as a space for sharing thoughts and experiences through conversations and linguistic expressions which in turn creates a space for the development of empathetic relationships. In light of the above discussion, the term "resistance" needs to be re-evaluated "inviting a broader conception of resistance that may include armed struggle but also a host of other, less bloody and absolute responses to occupation" (Meters, 2010, p. 88). Khalifeh illustrates these alternative options through characters like Adil, Zuhdi and Abu Sabir along with the other working-class individuals who choose empathetic engagement over violence despite power imbalance and difficult working conditions.

Throughout the novel there are various instances where Palestinians express empathy towards Israelis and vice versa. For example, in a conversation about sugar prices in Amman and Syria in comparison to those of Israel, Zuhdi empathizes with them stating "[m]aybe they were oppressed after all, like everyone else" (Khalifeh, 1985, p. 110). This interaction represents a departure from the struggles of hegemony, inequality, land annexation and illegal settlement. Instead, it portrays two conflicting nations engaging in discussions about mundane day to day concerns free from the influence of politics and geography.

However, as a result of the uneven nature of empathetic engagement (Pedwell, 2012, p. 175) we see Zuhdi losing his control and injuring his coworker Shlomo with a wrench. This incident occurs after Shlomo expresses his resentment with the violent actions of the Palestinians who attacked Bisan city burning a house and killing a civilian. Zuhdi responds by reminding him of massacres of Arab civilians in the villages of Bahr al-Barq, Deir Yassin and Qibya, thereby minimizing Shlomo's trauma. Instead of bonding over loss and using the traumatic memories as transformative power to a common space, this altercation between Shlomo and Zuhdi escalates eventually leading Zuhdi to violence.



Later while in prison, Zuhdi undergoes a transformation by reflecting on his reactive passion despite his own Palestinian background and his incarceration experience. He feels remorse and a profound sense of responsibility, stating: "Shlomo wasn't bad...But Shlomo wasn't bad at all. He was just a human being like you and me" (Khalifeh, 1985, p. 128). At this point, Zuhdi recognizes Shlomo's humanity, transcending the conflict and opting to act empathetically by humanizing the other side and recognizing their trauma.

Like Zuhdi, Adil Alkarmi, who comes across as a cultured and composed character, demonstrates his ability to empathize with his adversaries. He offers solace to an Israeli woman whose soldier husband is killed before her eyes by muttering comforting words and leading her away from the body of her dead husband. Adil also takes the initiative to console the woman's child and carries her off on his shoulder.

Similarly, Um Sabir extends a hand to the widow, offering prayers and expressing sympathy: "[s]omething was shaking the locked doors of Um Sabir's heart. She softened and responded to the woman's unspoken plea. 'God have mercy on you!' she muttered" (Khalifeh, 1985, p. 159). Um Sabir further expresses empathy by covering the daughter's exposed thighs "murmuring as she bent over the unconscious child, I'm so sorry for you my daughter" (Khalifeh, 1985, p. 159). This moment contrasts with Um Sabir's previous anger towards the Israelis who denied her husband medical care post an injury at an Israeli factory. Here, Um Sabir is able to transcend her anger and to demonstrate empathy towards the Israeli woman's grief representing an act of nonviolent resistance.

These feelings of shared empathy are occasionally reciprocated by Israelis although such instances are notably fewer given the political privilege they hold. An example of this is evident when Israeli prison guards struggle to conceal their tears upon witnessing the reunion of Abu Nidal, a Syrian prisoner in Israel, with his son after five years of being denied visitation.

In these episodes we see Khalifeh acknowledging the losses of the two opposing sides of the conflict by not diminishing the Israelis' sufferings while at the same time acknowledging the plights of the Palestinians. Proceeding in this fashion, the novel compiles evidence of compassion between the two nations all the while exploring the common humanity "without outright calling on readers to show empathy but by performing a narrative that acknowledges the cultural trauma of the other side" (Fischer, 2020, p. 3).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The aim in this article has been to investigate Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* novel in the context of alternative nonviolent resistance which is often overlooked in existing research which predominantly focuses on violence and armed resistance. It has been demonstrated that Khalifeh's novel effectively portrays the Palestinian reality, particularly highlighting the interconnections Palestinians have developed with Israelis in workplace settings and how these shared environments foster empathetic relationships. Furthermore, Khalifeh's work demonstrates how these relationships contribute to humanizing the Other from both sides, thereby offering a critique that challenges the prevailing matrix of hatred. Finally, Khalifeh's narrative exposes the atrocities of occupation and demands equality and improved conditions for the Palestinians.

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**Samah Abdul Hakeem Fareed Jarrad** was born in Tulkarem, Palestine. She completed her Bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature at An-Najah National University, Palestine, in 2013. Following this, she pursued a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics and Translation at the same university in 2017. Currently, Samah is a PhD candidate in Postcolonial literature at UKM, Malaysia, since 2020.

In terms of professional experience, Samah has held various roles in academia and translation. She is currently the head of the English Language department at Palestine Technical University- Kadoorie since August 2021. Prior to this, she worked as a Full-time ESL lecturer at the same university from July 2018 to the present. Samah has also served as a Part-time lecturer at Al-Quds Open

University from January 2018 to 2020 and gained experience as a Translator and International Relations Officer at Palestine Technical University- Kadoorie from May 2015 to June 2018.

In her academic pursuits, Samah has contributed significantly to research and publications. Notable works include 'To Exist is to Resist'– TEFL-ePal: A Reflective Account of Developing a Paradigm Shift in Palestinian Teaching and Learning Practice, published by Athabasca University Press, Canada in 2020. She has also conducted research on discourse analysis, women's resistance, and translation of modern English poetry into Arabic, which have been published in reputable journals and platforms.

**Raihanah M.M.** is an associate professor of literary studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, UKM where she teaches, among others, language and intercultural communication. Her research and publication focus on aspects of intercultural dynamics in minority contexts. Her latest works include "Intercultural dialogue in manga: Building friendships, sharing spaces and values" (2023, East Asian Journal of Popular Culture) and Voicing the heterogeneity: Inventing the literary tradition of South Indian Muslim women writers (2023, UKM Press).

**Ravichandran Vengadasamy** graduated with a Bachelor's degree in English Language Studies in 1990 from Universiti Sains Malaysia (University of Science, Malaysia). After several years of service as a language instructor, he completed a Masters degree in English studies in 1996 and received his PhD in 2011, both at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (the National University of Malaysia), where he currently serves. Dr. Vengadasamy is a senior lecturer and currently the Head of the Postgraduate Programme at the Centre for Research in Language and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia. His research and teaching interests include postcolonial literature, Malaysian literature in English, cognitive and literary stylistics, and academic writing. He has published widely in his research areas and completed 35 research projects. He is a member of the editorial board of GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies and Journal of Southeast Asian Ecocriticism.

# Examining Social Actors in Investment Fraud News: A Transitivity and Appraisal Analysis

Eny Maulita Purnama Sari

Linguistics Study, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, 57126, Indonesia

Riyadi Santosa

English Department, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, 57126, Indonesia

Djarmika Djarmika

English Department, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, 57126, Indonesia

Tri Wiratno

English Department, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, 57126, Indonesia

**Abstract**—This study examined media-framed investment fraud issues through critical discourse analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (1995). It analyzed the impact of context on text, employing van Dijk's (2009) theory of news discourse and van Leeuwen's (2008) framework for social actors (SAs) in investment fraud news, they were the affiliate (AF), the investor (IF), and the police (PL). Transitivity analysis (TA) was used to assess power relationships, while the appraisal system (AS) was used to identify SA's attitudes. Framing served various purposes, enhancing salience in news contexts. In investment fraud news, the AF was portrayed as a target with immoral attitudes, the IF as un/fortunate behaviors, and the PL as trustworthy sayers. The data obtained from Indonesian online media during the investment fraud reports were analyzed. The study utilized systemic functional linguistics (SFL) within CDA, integrating transitivity analysis for power relations and the appraisal system for attitude analysis of each social actor. The results demonstrated how the social actors shape the construction of social and economic values, influencing the public perceptions and beliefs of the business investment.

**Index Terms**—framing, social actor, transitivity, appraisal

## I. INTRODUCTION

Investment fraud is a subtype of financial fraud that occurs when someone "knowingly misleads an investor using false information for the purpose of monetary gain" (Beals & Deevy, 2015). Ponzi schemes, high-yield investment program fraud, pre-IPO scams, oil and gas scams, penny stock scams, and other scams are examples of investment fraud. Broadly speaking, financial fraud encompasses various forms of economic fraud, such as scams involving lotteries and sweepstakes, as well as scams entailing worthless or nonexistent products, such as counterfeit mementoes or weight reduction products. Investment fraud has the potential to damage economic systems and individuals in several nations. In America, a cryptocurrency has no intrinsic value, and problems relating to day-to-day valuation and pricing arise (Barnes, 2018). Approximately \$50 billion is reported to be lost annually to consumer financial deception in the United States, according to the Financial Deception Research Centre (FFRC) of the Stanford Centre on 276 Longevity (Deevy et al., 2012). Investment fraud is estimated to cause an annual loss of £1.2 billion, with an average loss of £20,000 per investor, according to the Financial Conduct Authority of the United Kingdom (Graham, 2014). Similarly, illicit activities involving investment fraud have increased in several European nations as well (Skjensvold et al., 2023). Furthermore, instances of investment fraud that resulted in substantial financial losses for investors in Asia have brought this subject to light (Endriyana et al., 2023; Mohamed et al., 2023; Roswantoro, 2023).

The current phenomenon of investment fraud in Indonesia has revealed illegal binary options investment business through two online trading platforms, Binomo and Quotex (Kurniawan et al., 2022). The Indonesian news media extensively covered fabricated investments in 2022. The issue became well known after victims alerted the authorities about a powerful investor influencer. Public interest in counterfeit investment news is indicative of a need for transparency regarding the procedures involved in managing cases (Tan et al., 2017). Tribunnews.com, a prominent Indonesian news media outlet, highlighted regional concerns with worldwide ramifications through its comprehensive coverage of fraudulent investment cases. An extensive examination of how public relations considers the responsibilities of social actors and presents their personas in news articles is a component of media coverage. Tribunnews.com enhances comprehension of the intricacies associated with these cases by examining four news texts that meticulously detail the development of a simulated investment scenario. This media engagement emphasizes the significance of news media in disseminating and mirroring particular political and social discourses (Kazmi, 2022).

Investment fraud news, a recurring social phenomenon, holds pivotal cultural relevance, as studying news texts deepens our understanding of societal dynamics (Stokes, 2023). Criminal news, particularly regarding investment fraud cases reported by *Tribunnews.com*, involves social actors who are the affiliate in this case (AF), investors (IV), and police handling investment fraud cases (PL). Investment frauds pose substantial risks to personal and economic stability. A comprehensive understanding is crucial for implementing measures to enhance consumer protection, raise awareness, and refine regulations. This research addresses urgent needs such as assisting victims, improving law enforcement, revealing power dynamics, and advocating for policy changes.

Some researchers have analyzed social actors through the SFL in news discourse. The social actor's representation in online news in Malaysia during elections (Asad S. et al., 2019), the representation of social actors in the graduate employability issue in Malaysian online news (Noor, 2017), the social actor's realization in Pakistan online newspapers (Abbas & Talaat, 2019; Afsheen & Umrani, 2021; Kazmi, 2023), and the representation of the social actor in the press statement (Megah, 2020). Overall, these studies highlighted the social realization of social actors in online news through transitivity analysis. Other studies have evaluated news discourse through an appraisal system. Considerable judgment was present in news reporting (Gunawan et al., 2019; Santosa et al., 2014). In the corruption case, negative judgment was the dominant attitude in the news (Chalimah et al., 2023; Kholifah, 2021; Santosa et al., 2014). These evaluating studies showed the attitude of the news. This provided evidence that the news media has a significant influence as a provider of information and a shaper of public opinion.

This research utilizes systemic functional linguistics (SFL), focusing on transitivity analysis (TA) and the appraisal system (AS), to examine the framing of social actors in investment fraud news. By integrating social actors' roles in power relations and attitudes within the news structure, this study broadens critical discourse analysis (CDA) through SFL. The findings contribute to CDA on media by situating social actors within the context of false information, revealing journalists' role in news production. This study enhances SFL-based CDA by providing a nuanced understanding of power relations, social actor attitudes, and journalists' perspectives on fictitious online trade investment news, improving the applicability of SFL in analyzing news content.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. CDA: Social Actors

Language is a type of social practice in CDA (Galantomos, 2011). CDA is a method that applies a critical perspective to the use of language in both spoken and written texts to recognize implied values or ideologies. This analysis aims to uncover how power relations are reflected in social and constitutional contexts through the way speakers use language in the texts they produce (Baker & Ellece, 2011; Hyland & Paltridge, 2011; Wiratno, 2018). Fairclough (1995) states that discourse analysis is a way of looking at things that include describing the language used in discourse, explaining the links between discourse and social processes, and determining how productive and interpretive discourse processes relate to texts. His research establishes a link between language and social actuality in social life via CDA. Discourse and communicative activities have emerged as crucial components of CDA. Examining how language manifests, describes, influences, justifies, and other similar phenomena can help identify critical social imbalances (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). CDA analysis of SA representation in the news is possible (Asad S. et al. 2019; Kazmi, 2023; Sari et al., 2023). Language is not a neutral instrument for conveying messages; rather, all communicative occurrences are regarded as investments by the CDA (Van Dijk, 1993). Van Leeuwen (2008, p. 28) defines representation as how concepts, organizations, and individuals are portrayed in the mass media. In the context of discourse, there is the concept of a generic social actor (SA), or a general category of entities that has a role or presence in a discourse. The social actors are the affiliate in this case (AF), the investors (IV), and the police handling investment fraud case (PL).

### B. Framing of Social Actors

Gregory Bateson coined the term "framing" in 1972. According to framing theory, the media manipulates public consciousness by connecting particular occurrences to a domain of significance (Arowolo, 2017). Framing is a symbolic expression that utilizes words or visuals to create patterns or categorizations in the audience's mind (Kasim & Ismail, 2018). It is widely acknowledged that news reports cover only certain events from a particular perspective (Chong & Druckman, 2007). By framing social actors (SAs), news texts have the power to shape the public's perceptions of a specific event or issue. Chong and Nahmias (2003) distinguish between individual and media framing as two distinct categories of framing. The utilization of media framing in communication pertains to the presentation styles, vocabularies, images, and visuals utilized by an orator to impart knowledge regarding a particular matter or occurrence to the audience (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, 1989). The writer's perspective on how the audience should read their writing affects media framing. The writer takes a stance to influence the audience's view of the phenomenon. On the other hand, individual framing refers to what audiences consider the most prominent aspects of an issue. In the case of fraud, it typically tends to be negative, involving elements of deceit, fraud, or legal violations.

Framing power relations and the attitude of SA based on the stages of news text structure can be used to weave a certain perspective on an event. The structure of news text consists of a headline, lead, body, and tail (Kosasih & Kurniawan, 2019; Mukhlis et al., 2020; Van Dijk, 2013). The selection of details, facts, quotes, and languages used in

each stage of the structure of a news text can significantly influence the way readers understand and respond to the event or issue at hand and ultimately shape their framing of the social actors involved.

### C. *SFL: Transitivity and Appraisal*

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL), according to Halliday (1978), refers to language as a metafunction consisting of ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions (Caffarel et al., 2004, p. 26). The idea is also followed by Butt et al. (2010) and Noor (2016), who provide the following explanations: a) Ideational meaning is employed to make statements regarding the present, future, and past; b) Interpersonal meaning is utilized for communication and the expression of opinions or judgments; and c) Textual meaning is employed to synthesize the outcomes of the two preceding functions into a unified entity. Ideational metafunctions are used to explain experience and activity, while interpersonal metafunctions are used to actualize social ties, power, and identity. Language is a composite of physical and biological, social, and symbolic reality. These three elements form the basis for ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions (Wiratno, 2018).

### D. *Power Relations: Transitivity Analysis*

Transitivity analysis (TA) grammatically represents a significant shift in the ongoing event, highlighting the central arrangement of elements in the process. An orderly process consists of an assortment of different categories of processes. Different models or schemes exist for interpreting a specific domain of experience as a particular form of figure for each process category. For example, there is an illustration as follows: The cat chases mice agilely in the garden. The clause can be decomposed into the cat [participant] + chased [process] + the mouse [participant] + agilely [circumstance: description of how] + in the garden [circumstance: description of place] (Wiratno, 2018).

The processes encompass various categories, including material, behavioral, mental, verbal, relational, and existential processes. The material process (MP) is as follows: occurring [being created]; creating, changing; doing (to); and acting while the behavioral process (BP) can be summarized as behaving. The mental process (Men. P) is as follows: seeing, feeling, and thinking while the verbal process (VP) is outlined by actions. The relational process (RP) encompasses symbolizing, having an identity, and possessing attributes, whereas the existential process (EP) involves being, doing, and sensing, representing a comprehensive category of processes. Then, following the assertion mentioned earlier, transitivity is a grammar that examines the structure of experiential clauses representing ideational meaning. This framework makes sense of the meaning of experience, which is composed of three components: circumstance, participant, and process (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Santosa, 2003; Santosa et al., 2023).

### E. *Attitude: Appraisal System*

An appraisal system (AS) is an interpersonal means used to regulate social relationships by examining things, a person's attitudes, and principles (Martin & Rose, 2007; Thompson, 2014). In addition, there are three causes of appraisal, which is a component of discourse semantics. First, one's attitude tends to be reflected in the use of phrases in discourse, and this becomes especially evident when phrases are amplified or enhanced (amplification). Second, attitudes can be expressed through grammatical categories such as adjectives (adjectives or epithets), verbs (processes), and adverbials (comment adjuncts). Furthermore, a third justification is the presence of grammatical metaphors that need to be taken into account by paying attention to the extent to which words and meanings are interconnected (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 10–11). An appraisal is a process that involves analyzing and understanding the interpersonal meaning conveyed in a communication (Martin & White, 2005). This process involves three interconnected domains: attitude (affect, judgment, and appreciation), engagement (monogloss and heterogloss types), and graduation (force and emphasis).

## III. METHODOLOGY

### A. *Corpus*

This research utilizes online news articles regarding fraudulent investments from the top five media outlets widely consumed by readers (Similarweb, 2023). The news media is Tribunnews.com. The texts were selected based on news articles that reported progress in handling fraud investment cases from March 2022. The SAs, who conducted the investigation on the news, identified social actors as the affiliate in this case (AF) as the mastermind behind the case. Moreover, investors (IVs), who were investors affected by fraud, were targeted by the perpetrator. And police-handling investment fraud (PL) cases involving police officers are currently being handled. A summary of the collected news articles is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
CORPUS OF THE STUDY

Article No.	Title	No. of words	Date published
Article 1	Doni Salmanan was reported on suspicion of the Quotex fraud case, unlike Indra Kenz	361	March 05, 2022
Article 2	Doni Salmanan asks that the alleged Quotex fraud case involving him be processed fairly	567	March 08, 2022
Article 3	After being interrogated for 13 hours, Doni Salmanan was named a suspect and detained	351	March 09, 2022
Article 4	In the online gambling case under the guise of Quotex, suspect Doni Salmanan, the police have questioned 54 witnesses	394	March 25, 2022

### B. Procedure

The present research involved a descriptive-qualitative design. The framing of social actors drew upon the ethnographic analysis by Spradley (1997) in the online news to investigate both the social actors' power relations and their attitude evaluation from the news text. Four news articles focused on investments fraud were taken from the online media, Tribunnews.com, from February to March 2022. The data source for the research, downloaded from <https://www.tribunnews.com/>, underwent validation and reliability assessment through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

The analysis of the data involved a four-step process by Spradley (1980, 1997), consisting of domain, taxonomy, componential, and cultural theme analysis. The analytical framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

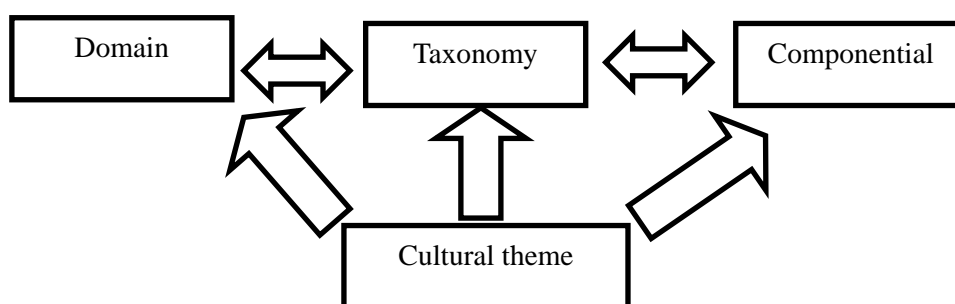


Figure 1. Analytical Framework by Spradley (1980) Developed by Santosa (2021)

The domain analysis of fake investment news consisted of included terms (news structure) and covered terms (social actors). Taxonomic analysis revealed SFL categories based on transitivity and appraisal. Breaking transitivity involved examining both the processes and participants. The appraisal system included tools for evaluating attitudes, graduation, and engagement. The componential analysis stage was used to link components within the domain and taxonomy (Santosa, 2011).

## IV. DATA ANALYSIS

### Framing of SA: Power Relation and Attitude

Grammatical analysis that explains experiential meaning can be performed through transitivity systems. Transitivity analysis (TA), which includes processes, participants, and circumstances as a method for expressing experiential meaning and negative representation (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), is also shown from CDA through TA (Gómez-Jiménez & Bartley, 2023). The framing of SA's power relation is illustrated in Figure 2.

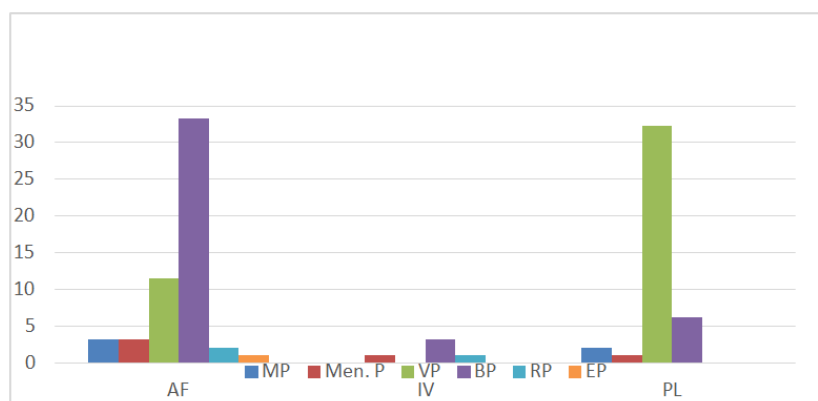


Figure 2. Framing of SA's Power Relation

Figure 2 indicates that the TA is used to investigate the framing of social actors by examining the role of power relations in fake investment news. The AF was the most framed in BP as a target, the IV was the most framed in BP as a behavior, and the PL was also the most framed in the VP as a sayer.

The presence of a hierarchy of power among the AF, IV, and PL is readily apparent. The AF is the main focus of media coverage, but the IV, as the reporter, has less impact on the news narrative. PLs have the authority to communicate information to the media and the public, controlling the flow of information and narratives. Therefore, power in reporting tends to be centralized among those who manage the material and stories that are released.

The SA's attitude was also shown in the news articles. The journalists used most of the judgments, such as immoral, unfortunate, and trustworthy. However, affect; insecurity is found, as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
THE SA'S ATTITUDE: APPRAISAL SYSTEM

NS	SA	Types	Subtypes	Frequency	Percentage
Headline	AF	Judgment	Social sanction	5	7,94%
Lead	AF	Judgment	Social Esteem	2	3,17%
	AF		Social sanction	7	11,11%
Body	AF	Affect	Insecurity	3	4,76%
		Judgment	Social sanction	36	57,14%
	IF	Judgment	Social esteem	1	1,59%
	PL	Judgment	Social sanction	2	3,17%
Tail	AF	Judgment	Social sanction	7	11,11%
Total				63	100%

Table 2 shows that, based on the news structure, the appraisal system (AS) evaluates social actors' portrayal of themselves in the fake investment news that Tribunnews.com publishes. In the headline, the attitude framing showed the following social sanction: propriety (immoral) to the AF. At the lead, the framing of the attitude toward AF was shown in terms of social esteem: normality (fortunate), but most framing was immoral. The body frames the AF's attitude as disquiet and immoral, the IV is framed as fortunate, and the PL is framed as trustworthy. The last step is tailing; in this step, only the preparator is framed as an immoral person. From Table 2, it can be concluded that AF is immoral, IV is fortunate, and PL is trustworthy.

The most influential grammatical role in Haig's (2012) power hierarchy is in the SA, and it plays an active grammatical role within van Leeuwen's (2008) framework. The SA is conceptualized as the 'doers,' the agents of social actions. The SFL approach analyses the framing of SA on the power relation and attitude in fake investment news; transitivity analysis (TA) frames the power relation, while the AS frames the attitude. The TA focused on investigating the participants represented in the news (Abbas & Talaat, 2019; Chen, 2018; S. et al., 2017; Sari et al., 2023; Suwarno & Sahayu, 2020). The attitude was evaluated using AS, which represented the attitude (Martin & White, 2005; Pascual & Unger, 2010; Santosa et al., 2014). The news structure is the frame of the SA that consists of a headline, lead, body, and tail (Kosasih & Kurniawan, 2019; Mukhlis et al., 2020; Van Dijk, 2013). Based on the componential analysis in Tables 1 and 2, the SA was framed based on the news structures.

Based on the findings of the research on the all-fake investment news structure, first, AF is the most framed in VBP as a target, the receiver in a negative process. The second is VP as verbiage, which is something that the speaker says. AF is realized in BP (Ong'onda, 2016), and it plays a passive role in crime news (Sari et al., 2023). Second, the IV is framed in the VBP as a behavior, a participant who is doing the VBP. Third, most of the VP paints the PL as a sayer. The IV and PL are realized in their activation roles in the crime news related to Sari et al. (2023).

#### A. At the Headline

The headline is the title, or summary, that appears at the top of the text. This study found that the framed SA is an AF target and behavior. The PL is framed as a behavior, while the AF is framed as a target, as analyzed in excerpt 1;

1. *Doni Salmanan (AF/target) is reported (VBP) for an alleged Quotex fraud case, different from Indra Kenz. (circ. Of cause)*

Doni Salmanan was identified as the AF in the fake investment case using the Quotex™ application. The victims claimed that IV was the cause of the fake investment and that Indra Kenz used a different application in the same case. The headline shows the framing of the AF, which attracts the reader's attention to read the entire content of the news. The AF as a behavior, as analyzed in excerpt 2;

2. *Doni Salmanan (AF/behavior) asks (VBP) about the alleged Quotex™ fraud that entangled him to be processed fairly (verbiage).*

Excerpt 2 shows that the AF has a request to the PL using the word minta (asks) so that the case that ensnares him can be processed fairly. The SA of PL is not implicit in the title because the media assumes that readers can understand that AF has expectations for PL to be able to process cases. Another realization is that PL is analyzed as a behavior in excerpt 3.



3. *An online gambling case under the guise of Quotex™ Doni Salmanan was a suspect (circ. causes), police (PL/behavior) have examined (VBP) 54 witnesses (target).*

Excerpt 3 shows that the police (PL) are the authorities who handle online gambling cases under the guise of Quotex™, which makes AF determined as suspects. The PL has examined 54 witnesses involved in the case. The phrase Online Gambling Case Under the guise of Quotex, Doni Salmanan, a suspect, becomes a circumstance of cause in the clause.

Headlines show AF and PL's attitudes. In Example 3, the phrase suspect, which is aware of the AF's attitude toward social sanction: propriety (-), frames the AF as an immoral person. Meanwhile, a PL's attitude is framed as that of trustworthy people who can do their work fairly. Example 2, the Case of Alleged Quotex™ Fraud That Entangled Him to Be Processed Fairly, which is the AF's verbiage to the media, is shown. It is appraised to the PL to process the AF's case fairly. The word fairly appraises the PL's attitude in terms of social sanctions: veracity (+). The AF believes in the performance of the PL in handling its case.

#### B. At the Lead

The lead is the introductory part of a news text that aims to provide the most essential information to the readers. The framing of the SA showed that the AF was the target and that the PL was the receiver.

4. *The man named Crazy Rich Bandung (AF/target) was charged (VBP) with a case of alleged fraud under the guise of trading binary options through the Quotex™ platform (verbiage).*

Excerpt 4 shows that the AF is called the crazy rich Bandung, a wealthy young individual from Bandung that serves as an influencer for Quotex™. He attracts investments from IVs by promising substantial profits. He was charged with a fraudulent case because of the illegal application that he used to invest IV's money. The realization of AF as a target and PL as a behavior is described in excerpt 5.

5. *Doni Salmanan (AF/target) was officially declared (VBP) as a suspect (verbiage) by the police (behavior).*

Excerpt 5 shows that AF is targeted in the investigation. PL, as a law enforcement agency, determines the status of AF as a suspect after sufficient evidence related to the case is collected. The PL confirms that the legal steps taken follow the applicable procedures.

The lead only frames the attitude of the AF. The lead frames AF's attitude as crazy rich, a metaphor used to praise their wealth in Bandung. The phrase is raised in the intensifier class, indicating extreme wealth. The lead also frames AF as immoral, with the phrase declared as a suspect in a fraud case. The graduation is on an attitudinal lexis, condemning the police's determination of AF status in the case.

#### C. At the Body

The body of the news text contains the main content, details, and context related to the news text. The AF is most framed as a target, the IV is framed as a behavior, and the PL is most framed as a sayer, as analyzed in excerpt 6.

6. *The victims (IV/behavior) reported (VBP) to the Dittipideksus Bareskrim or Directorate of Economic and Special Crime under the Criminal Investigation Agency (PL/receiver) on February 3, 2022 (circ. local time), and allegedly (Men. P), the total loss reached an IDR of 3.8 billion (phenomenon).*

In excerpt 6, the phrase discusses the concept of reporting incidents to authorities, specifically IVs, in the context of ke Dittipideksus Bareskrim. This highlights the IV's attitude toward judgment: normality, with a total loss of IDRs of 3.8 billion and it was a mental projection. The AF is also framed in Men. P as a phenomenon analyzed in excerpt 7;

7. *According to Kombes Gatot (circ. Agle), Doni Salmanan (AF/phenomenon) allegedly (Men. P) has violated various articles of law (phenomenon).*

Excerpt 7 explains that PL believes the AF is in public's attention, with the phrase allegedly indicating suspicion of criminal activity but no certainty. The various articles of law suggest that the AF experienced a dangerous situation and was threatened with prosecution under applicable legal articles. The AF also frames MP as an actor, as analyzed in excerpt 8:

8. *Doni Salmanan (AF/actor) has been languishing (MP) in the Police Bareskrim Detention Centre, South Jakarta. (Circ. Loc. Place).*

Excerpt 8 describes the AF as an actor who is currently in custody at the South Jakarta Police Bareskrim Detention Centre, serving a period of MP detention. The AF was also realized as a speaker in the VP, as analyzed in excerpt 9:

9. *"My case is being processed by the police. I entrust it to the police. Everything has been processed fairly, (verbiage) said Doni Salmanan (AF/sayer)."*

Excerpt 9 reveals that the AF's confidently stated PL is handling the case, expressing confidence in fair legal proceedings. Quotation marks indicate direct quotes, while graduation expressions can be classified as attitudinal lexis or verbal projection. Another excerpt realized both AF as the target and PL as the behavior, as analyzed in excerpt 10:

10. *The Directorate of Cyber Crime Bareskrim Polri (PL/behavior) finally raised (VBP) the status of the case related to the case of alleged fraud under the guise of binary options™ trading on the reported Doni Salmanan (AF/target) from inquiry to investigation. (verbiage)*

Excerpt 10: PL as a behavior. The PL has escalated fraudulent investment involving AF, citing sufficient evidence for legal proceedings. AF's attitude was deemed immoral, resulting in an investigation process. Next, the most common PL in the VP is the sayer, as analyzed in excerpts 11 and 12;

11. *Karo Penmas of the National Police Public Relations Division, Police Brigadier General Ahmad Ramadhan (PL/sayer), said (VP), [Doni Salmanan was determined to be a suspect after undergoing questioning for more than 13 hours] (verbiage).]*

Excerpt 11 explains that the PL is a sayer in the VP, which may reflect the latest information regarding the progress of the AF case and the PL's decision to designate him as a suspect after an intensive examination process.

12. *"It has been decided that the DS case has been upgraded from preliminary investigation to formal investigation," said (verbiage) (VP) Gatot (PL/sayer).*

Excerpt 12 explains that PL is a sayer. PL said that a decision had been made regarding the fake investment by the AF case, where the status of the case had been raised from the inquiry stage to the investigation stage. This statement indicates that the authorities consider that there are sufficient grounds or evidence to continue further investigation in the form of an investigation into the case.

#### D. At the Tail

Furthermore, at the tail, the AF is predominantly framed as a target and immoral. The AF is realized in a passive role (Sari et al., 2023), so he does not have any power in the news. The subject of the news that the media journalist reports is AF.

13. *The figure nicknamed Crazy Rich Medan (AF/phenomenon) is suspected (Men. P) of committing online gambling crimes and spreading false news through electronic media, as well as fraud, cheating, and TPPU. (Phenomenon).*

Excerpt 13 implies that the AF is suspected of committing several criminal acts, including online gambling, spreading fake news through electronic media, fraud, fraudulent acts, and money laundering. Crazy Rich Medan is referred to as a phenomenon in this context. It meant that AF is facing serious allegations related to activities involving violations of the law, including online crime, spreading false information, fraud, and money laundering. It also evaluates the AF's attitude toward normality (+): fortunate. "The maximum sentence is 20 years, (verbiage) wrote (VP) Kombes Gatot. (PL/sayer)

14. *"The maximum sentence is 20 years, (verbiage) wrote (VP) Kombes Gatot. (PL/sayer)*

Excerpt 14 explains that the AF outlines a potential 20-year penalty for a criminal act or violation of the law, possibly to emphasize the severity of the offense or the potential legal consequences for the offender.

15. *The article alleged against Doni Salmanan (carrier) is similar to the ARP case of Indra Kenz. (AF/attribute).*

Excerpt 15 implies that the law applied to AF as a carrier shares similarities with the case of Indra Kenz, implying that AF may face similar criminal acts or violations, emphasizing the similarities in punishments. The AF in VBP as a target in the tail, as analyzed in excerpt 16;

16. *For his unlawful acts (circ. cause), Doni Salmanan (AF/target) was threatened (VBP) with a maximum of 20 years in prison (verbiage).*

Excerpt 16 states that AF faces a 20-year prison sentence for unlawful conduct, highlighting his immoral attitude and potential legal consequences due to his actions violating the rule of law.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The AF is often portrayed as a target, known as an immoral person in news stages, starting with a headline, followed by a lead, body, and tail (Kosasih & Kurniawan, 2019; Mukhlis et al., 2020; Van Dijk, 2013). This study complements the research by Abbas and Talaat (2019) about the transitivity analysis of news headlines depicting crimes committed against women in Pakistan. Ong'onda (2016) and Sari et al. (2023) described the preparation of crime news using transitivity analysis.

In this study, the media tends to use VBP in news texts. The AF is framed as a target to receive negative behavior carried out by the behavior (Santosa et al., 2023). Journalists frame AF as a person who commits crimes and emphasizes AF in the news. The grammatical structure used tends to be passive (Sari et al., 2023; Suhandano et al., 2023). This is related to the Ong'onda's (2016) realization of the preparator in VBP as a behavior; moreover, in this study, AF tends to be framed as a target that is realized using passive construction. Budhiono (2018) asserts that journalists use passive constructions to present the identity of a suspect in a criminal case. This means that the media framed AF as the news focus, and framing shows how the process of handling fake investment cases experienced by AF is visible.

The AS evaluates AF attitudes by critiquing social actors based on moral judgment, deeming them immoral. AF's attitudinal lexis assesses their ethics, identifying them as unfavorable and lacking ethical principles, leading to suspicion of their fake investment in the Quotex™ application. Gunawan et al. (2019), in line with Biadi and Fallaki (2023), confirm that negative attitudes are more prevalent in news texts. Chalimah et al. (2023) mention various types of Social Consequences: Adverse Politeness and Social Consequences: Unfavorable Truth in Online News Corruption In line with Santosa et al. (2014), judgment is an attitude that masters the text. It indicates that the news conveys information about the imposition of social sanctions on them and tells people how important politeness and honesty are.

The framing of the IV is only found in the body of the news text; the IV was framed as a behavior who is a fortunate person who reported the fraud case to the police. The reporting process is a VBP in TA that serves to describe the outward physical signs that participants in the text can see and do (Ismayatim et al., 2018; Isti'anah, 2019). In this study,

the process that the IV goes through causes another process to occur in other social actors. In the VBP carried out by the IV, PL social actors carried out their duties and obligations as authorities in handling fraud cases so that there were no more cases of fraudulent investment fraud. The IVs' attitude was fortunate because they had much money invested in the investment application.

The PL was mostly framed as sayers who were known as trustworthy people. This finding is consistent with studies conducted by Sari (2023) on police involvement in fraudulent news in Indonesian online media, government representation as a sayer by Noor (2017) in Malaysian newspapers, Knox and Patpong (2008) in Thai newspapers (both in Thai-language and English-language), Vo (2013) in Vietnamese English newspapers, and Seo (2013) in Chinese English newspapers. In this study, the PL is an Indonesian police work unit with complete control over the fictitious investment case.

Journalists often frame PL as a sayer, while AF refers to verbiage. The data are presented using direct quotes, marked with quotation marks, and indirect quotes, which provide a summary or paraphrase of the speaker's words. It confirms the results of research by Dewi et al. (2021) suggesting that reported speech is applied both directly and indirectly in news texts. Journalists either relay information verbatim from sources or provide interpretations based on their understanding. Bell (1991) states that the text of the news is embedded in the existence of sources, attributes, places, and time and states that direct quotations are strong evidence, irrefutable facts written by journalists. Journalists emphasize the PL as the main actor who has power in reporting fraud cases; as stated by Nordlund (2003), in newspaper headlines, social actors can be emphasized, minimized, or eliminated. In line with the results of Etikawati (2021), the TA can represent forms of police performance.

The PL's attitude toward fictitious online trade investment issues was evaluated through social sanctions, trustworthiness, and attitudinal lexis. The engagement was heterogloss, with the author quoting another person's statement. This finding is in agreement with Santosa et al.'s (2011) research, who claimed that the appraisal system for news uses descriptive words and that the attitude system is reasonable and not excessive in providing facts and phenomena. According to the description above, the main purpose of news is to expose the facts of the phenomena that are occurring in society. The police, who are in charge of the fraud case, provide the information on which journalists base their news articles.

Furthermore, the results of the graduation analysis of SA attitudes were much greater in the attitudinal lexis (raised). Graduation analysis uses the theories of Martin and Rose (2004) and Martin and White (2005). The results revealed that graduation is a widely used type of force: the attitudinal lexis (raise), which is a lingual unit that contains or expresses feelings or attitudes. According to Indonesian legal regulations, the police or PLs summoned the AF as a reported person during the investigation process before declaring it a suspect by the PL. The Criminal Procedure Law (Undang-undang Hukum Acara Pidana/KUHAP), as a rule for the implementation of criminal procedural law in Indonesia, does not mention the term reported. However, the Criminal Procedure Code explains the definition of a report contained in Article 1 number 24, which reads, "A report is a notification delivered by a person due to a right or obligation under the law to an authorized official about the occurrence or being or suspected of a criminal event".

The dominant engagement was the monogloss type, originating from journalists or writers themselves, to reflect the authors' perspective on the 'perpetrators' of fraudulent investment fraud under the guise of trading. While the use of heterogloss is found in verbal projections, metaphor projections, and modalities, it illustrates that in the text of the scam news, journalists quote statements from social actors in the text, namely, from the police, to convince their readers. The presence of heteroglossia in news texts confirms the results of research by Gunawan et al. (2019). His findings show that the use of heteroglossia in articles in online media aims to make it seem that journalists are in a neutral position by quoting several statements from social actors in the text.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The AF, IV, and PL are fairly represented in the news; their framing conveys their attitude and authority level. The public relations representative of the AF is presented in all news structures as a target and immoral person; despite being granted a voice in the text, the AF's message is limited to their aspirations for the case they are handling. In addition, the IV is lucky and well behaved. The IV also lacks reporting authority. Since he is merely a reporter on the matter, IV has no authority to handle it. In addition, PL personnel are presented as trustworthy and kind. The PL is framed as a powerful SA in the news. The results of the PL press conference are the source of all the news coverage. This is demonstrated by the quantity of directly and indirectly quoted statements in the news. Frequently, attitude analysis reveals engagement: although monogloss is composed of the authors' own words and knowledge, this does not imply that the media lacks objectivity; in contrast, the media's monitoring ensures that the truth is documented and presented as news content to the public.

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**Eny Maulita Purnama Sari** is a Doctoral candidate of Linguistics study at Sebelas Maret University who is interested in media studies, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Systemic Functional Linguistics.

**Riyadi Santosa** is a University Professor at Sebelas Maret University who is interested in systemic functional linguistics, critical discourse analysis, and translation.

**Djarmika Djarmika** is a University Professor at Sebelas Maret University who is interested in pragmatics, critical discourse analysis, and systemic functional linguistics.

**Tri Wiratno** is a University Professor at Sebelas Maret University who is interested in systemic functional linguistics, discourse analysis, genre-based pedagogy, sociolinguistics, and translation.

# Development and Validation of Phonological Processing Assessment Tool in Kannada Language

Shwetha Prabhu

Department of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, Kasturba Medical College Mangalore, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Karnataka, Manipal, 576 104, India

Vangmayee Subban

Department of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, Kasturba Medical College Mangalore, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Karnataka, Manipal, 576 104, India

Jayashree Sunil Bhat

Nitte Institute of Speech & Hearing, Deralakatte, Mangalore, India

Haralakatta Shivananjappa Somashekara\*

Department of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, Kasturba Medical College Mangalore, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Karnataka, Manipal, 576 104, India

**Abstract**—The research evidence in orthographically transparent language Kannada indicates that phonological processing significantly influences reading acquisition, and deficits increase the risk of dyslexia. A comprehensive assessment of phonological processing that includes phonological awareness, phonological memory, and phonological naming is crucial for implementing effective intervention strategies, thereby reducing the risk of dyslexia. However, there is a notable absence of phonological processing assessment tools specifically designed and validated for children learning to read alphasyllabary Kannada. The present study addresses this gap by developing and validating a phonological processing assessment tool for children between Grade I and Grade III learning to read alphasyllabary languages such as Kannada. The study was conducted in two distinct phases. The first phase consisted of developing and piloting a phonological processing assessment tool. It included the stages of task selection, item generation, content validation, pilot testing, and reliability analysis. In the second phase, the developed tool was validated by administering it to both typically developing children and children at-risk for dyslexia from Grade I through Grade III. Subsequently, the developmental appropriateness of the tool was tested by comparing the performance of typically developing children between the grades. Additionally, diagnostic validity, including sensitivity, specificity, and area under the curve, was established by comparing the performance of typically developing and at-risk children. The study makes a substantial contribution to research on reading in Akshara orthographies, offering a valuable clinical tool for identifying children at-risk for dyslexia.

**Index Terms**—phonological processing, phonological awareness, phonological naming, phonological memory, Akshara orthographies

## I. INTRODUCTION

Phonological processing is a fundamental cognitive-linguistic skill for children's language acquisition and literacy development. It is one's metalinguistic skill of utilizing the phonological information, especially the sound structure of one's oral language, in processing written and oral information (Anthony et al., 2006, 2007). According to Catts et al. (1999), phonological processing refers to the perception, storage, retrieval, and manipulation of the sounds of language during the acquisition, comprehension, and production of both spoken and written codes. Wagner and Torgesen (1987) proposed a comprehensive framework for phonological processing, positing three distinct yet interconnected phonological dimensions such as phonological awareness, phonetic encoding in working memory or phonological memory, and phonological recoding in lexical access or phonological naming. Cassano and Steiner (2016) define phonological awareness as the "ability to detect, manipulate, or analyze the components of spoken words such as syllables, onset-rimes, and phonemes, apart from consideration of their referents" (p. 1). Phonological memory codes acoustic information in a sound-based representation system for temporary storage, generally assessed using memory span tasks. Lastly, phonological naming is the rapid retrieval of phonological codes from long-term memory, usually

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\* Corresponding Author. Email: [som.shekar@manipal.edu](mailto:som.shekar@manipal.edu)

assessed through Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) of letters, objects, colors, or digits. All three skills are cognitively distinct and evaluate the same area of language subsumed within the construct of phonological processing. However, the contribution of phonological processing to reading acquisition is of substantial theoretical and practical importance.

#### *A. Theoretical Foundation*

Phonological processing skills significantly impact literacy development in children, mutually enhancing the acquisition of reading skills (Swaroop & Prema, 2001). Studies in alphabetical languages like English consistently reveal that critical reading skills such as word recognition, fluency, and comprehension heavily rely on phonological processing abilities (Nelson et al., 2012). Phonological processing plays a significant role in reading acquisition and, therefore, is regarded as a primary cognitive determinant of word reading (Share & Stanovich, 1995). It predicts reading skills and plays a causal role in reading development (Anthony et al., 2007; Loucas et al., 2016). Longitudinal and correlational research consistently identifies phonological processing skills as the strongest predictors of reading development, with phonological awareness particularly highlighted (Caravolas et al., 2013; Clayton et al., 2020; Melby-Lervåg et al., 2012). Some others have shown phonological memory as the unique predictor of reading (Maridaki-Kassotaki, 2002; Nevo & Breznitz, 2011) and also indicated that children with reading impairment have poor phonological short-term memory skills (Fischbach et al., 2014; Schuchardt et al., 2013). Other studies have shown RAN as a significant predictor of reading (Wolff, 2014).

Diverse evidence converges, suggesting that Developmental Dyslexia (DD) can be characterized by observable deficits in phonological awareness, short-term memory, and naming (Rack et al., 1992). Ramus and Szenkovits (2009) clarified the commonalities that underlie these three constructs, elucidating how phonological representations are implicated in distinct yet interrelated ways. The impairments within these “triads” constructs signify deficiencies or degradation of phonological representation frequently observed in children with developmental dyslexia (Boada & Pennington, 2006; Farquharson et al., 2014). According to the phonological processing deficit hypothesis, a core deficit in phonological processing abilities is a plausible cause for word-level reading problems or dyslexia (Ramus et al., 2003; Vellutino et al., 2004). The findings of the systematic review verified that the phonological processing deficits model for explaining dyslexia in all types of writing systems, such as ideographic, syllabic, and logographic, as well as alphabetic orthography, with different levels of orthography phonology consistency (Navas et al., 2014).

Converging lines of evidence suggest that DD can be characterized by one of several phenotypic manifestations of a phonological deficit (phonological awareness, Phonological Short-term Memory (PSM), phonological naming assessed using RAN). The impairment in single or multiple components of phonological processing abilities among children with developmental dyslexia has been observed in diverse orthographies exhibiting different levels of transparency, such as English (Vellutino et al., 2004), Dutch (Knoop-van Campen et al., 2018), French (Mañónchi-Pino et al., 2010), German (Steinbrink & Klatte, 2008), and Chinese (Cheng et al., 2021).

#### *B. Study Context and Need*

The role of phonological processing in learning to read more consistent Indic orthography represented using Akshara has also been widely investigated in different languages spoken across the Indian sub-continent, including Kannada (Nag, 2007; Nag et al., 2014; Nag & Snowling, 2012; Nakamura et al., 2017) Tamil (Paramadhyalan, 2015), Telugu (Nakamura et al., 2017), Malayalam (Joy et al., 2023; Somashekara et al., 2014), Marathi (Singh & Sumathi, 2019), Hindi (Gautam et al., 2019), Punjabi (Gautam et al., 2019), and Bengali (Sircar & Nag, 2013). Several studies involving poor readers of Akshara orthographies have confirmed the phonological processing deficits in one or more domains in children with developmental dyslexia (Gupta, 2004; Khan & Bajre, 2018; Nag & Snowling, 2010; Nag-Arulmani, 2003; Wijayathilake & Parrila, 2014). The extensive empirical research validates the importance of phonological processing, whether considered as a cohesive construct or individual skills, in acquiring literacy skills across various orthographic systems. These consistent findings persist even within Akshara-based orthographic systems, as previously elucidated. Consequently, they have been incorporated into screening and diagnostic instruments to identify children with dyslexia or reading disabilities. Considering the theoretical, research, and clinical implications of phonological processing skills in reading, numerous tests have been developed and validated in many languages spoken worldwide.

The languages vary in phonology and orthography, thus necessitating language-specific assessment tools to facilitate identifying and remedying children with reading disabilities. The Kannada orthography has greater consistency in orthography to the phonologic mapping of units. It is more transparent than the Alphabetic language of English. Kannada, one of the prominent Dravidian languages, is predominantly spoken in the Indian state of Karnataka. It is the state's official language and is spoken by a population exceeding 60 million. The children in schools of Karnataka are taught to read and write Kannada right from the onset of formal literacy training in private and public schools. Most studies conducted in Kannada have used investigator-developed assessment tasks and lack psychometric properties. The assessment tasks have been the least standardized across the studies conducted in the Kannada language, and validated for content, development, and diagnostic accuracy. For example, phonological awareness tasks can vary in many dimensions, including the phonological unit, the position of the linguistic unit within the word, cognitive operation, the mode of stimulus delivery, and stimulus comparison. The variation in the task may lead to divergence in the results and compromise the sensitivity and specificity of the assessment tool in identifying children with reading disabilities. Hence,



the present study aims to develop and validate phonological processing assessment tools in orthographically transparent Akshara orthography Kannada.

## II. METHOD

The research protocol received approval from the Institutional Ethics Committee, Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore. A cross-sectional study design and convenient sampling method were employed to select the participants. The study was conducted in two phases.

### A. Phase I - Test Development and Pilot Testing

The construct of phonological processing encompasses a spectrum of language-based skills. The conceptual framework for identifying crucial domains encompassed by the overarching concept of phonological processing was grounded in the seminal investigations and extensive reviews by Wagener and Torgesen and the publication of the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP) (Wagner et al., 1999). The researcher-designed developmentally appropriate and clinically relevant tasks for the assessment tool were derived from the studies in Akshara orthographies (E.g., Nagaraja & Sampathkumar, 2016; Nakamura et al., 2014, 2017; Siddaiah et al., 2016; Siddaiah & Venkatesh, 2014; Wijaythilake et al., 2019) and comprehensive analysis of widely used assessment tools. These instruments include the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP) (Wagner et al., 1999), Phonological Awareness Test-2 (PAT – 2) (Robertson & Salter, 2007), Phonological Abilities Test (PAT – M) (Muter et al., 1999), Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) (Denckla & Rudel, 1974). A pool of 400 Kannada words was selected from school books with syllables ranging from two to six with CVCV syllable structure and validated for children familiarity by three classroom teachers rating the item using a 5-point rating scale through a continuum of familiarity from 'not at all' to 'extremely familiar.' Words with consistent moderate and high familiarity ratings were chosen and allocated to each task. The phonological awareness task complexity varied in three dimensions, including linguistic unit (syllable, rime, and phoneme), cognitive operation (segmenting, blending, and manipulation), and position of the target linguistic unit within the word (initial, medial, and final) in manipulation tasks. The complexity of blending and segmentation tasks was increased by increasing the syllable length of the word from two to five syllables.

Conversely, words comprising two to three syllables were opted for tasks assessing phoneme awareness, given that phoneme awareness emerges slowly compared to syllable awareness according to the developmental data in the Kannada language. However, for syllable/phoneme manipulation tasks, the complexity was increased by varying the position of the target syllable/phoneme within the stimuli words, such as word-initial, medial, and final position. The rhyme oddity and production task stimuli consisted of bi/tri syllable words. The number of test stimuli under each task was unequal and vast before content validation by experts and a pilot study.

All the tasks had three practice items, followed by ten test stimuli. For both phonological awareness and phonological memory, the tasks were administered in the auditory modality, the response eliciting modality was verbal, and the response format was verbally constructed responses. The RAN-O was administered visually, elicited responses were verbal, and the response format was verbally constructed responses. Scoring for all phonological awareness tasks was based on the accuracy of responses, where correct answers were assigned a score of '1' and incorrect answers were given a score of '0'. In the case of Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) tasks, naming speed was measured. It is the total time the child takes to name all items on the sheet.

Once the initial set of tasks and stimuli (trial and test items), with instructions and scoring procedures, were finalized, the designed assessment tool was subjected to content validated by five Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) with ten years of experience. The experts validated the contents, including task, instruction, stimuli, and scoring procedures, using a 5-point Likert's rating scale to gauge the appropriateness. The scale ranged from '0' for absolutely inappropriate, and '4' indicated appropriate. The content-validated assessment tool was piloted on a small sample group of children with characteristics similar to those of the participants in this study. A total of thirty, ten each from every Grade, were randomly selected, and the test was administered individually. The mean performance across all the tasks except phoneme awareness tasks depicted the sensitivity to age. The floor effect was observed for syllable addition and substitution in the medial position and all the phoneme awareness tasks; hence, it was excluded from the assessment tool. However, the responses for each item for the rest of the tasks were carefully analyzed across grades based on item difficulty and item discrimination. Items with an item difficulty index ranging from 0.15 to 0.85 were deemed suitable and incorporated into the test, as Wagner et al., (1999) outlined. Likewise, items displaying an item discrimination index of 0.30 or higher were included in the test, following the criteria stipulated by Aiken and Groth-Marnat (2006). Subsequently, both test-retest and inter-rater reliability were established.

The finalized assessment tool included 14 tasks classified into different dimensions. The phonological awareness tasks included Sentence Segmentation (SS), Syllable Segmentation (SyS) and Blending (SyB), Syllable Stripping at Initial (ISSt), Medial (MSSt), and Final (FSSt) positions, Syllable Addition at Initial (ISA), and Final (FSA) position, Syllable Substitution in Initial (ISS), and Final (FSS) positions, Rhyme Oddity (RO), Rhyme Production (RP). All the tasks included 10 meaning words as stimuli, auditory modality of presentation, oral modality of responding, and scoring for accuracy of response as '0' for incorrect and '1' for correct responses. The phonological naming included Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) of objects (RAN-Objects) task. It consisted of five bi-syllabic pictures of familiar objects

such as /mi:nu/ (fish), /hu:vu/ (flower), /tʰʌtri/ (umbrella), /se:bu/ (Apple), and /mane/ (house). These images were repeated ten times and arranged randomly in ten rows and five columns, constituting fifty items. The items were printed on A4 size paper for visual presentation. A trial card was prepared to familiarize the task, consisting of five items repeated four times in two rows and ten columns randomly. The child was instructed to begin naming the objects from the upper left top corner and progress row by row until the lower right corner of the page and the total time calculated. The phonological memory was assessed using a pseudoword repetition task. The pseudowords were generated by either interchanging the syllable positions or substituting a syllable (CV structure) or phoneme (either C or V) within the meaningful words ranging from two to five syllables without violating the phonotactic constraints of Kannada language (Patel et al., 2022). The complexity of the test stimuli for pseudowords was increased by increasing the length of syllables from monosyllable to multi-syllable pseudowords while varying syllable structure from simple (CVCV) to complex (CCV).

## B. Phase 2- Validation

### (a). Participants

The study included both typically developing children and children at-risk for dyslexia. In order to evaluate the developmental appropriateness, a typically developing group included a total of 300 children, 100 each from Grade I, Grade II, and Grade III, with the corresponding Grade-specific age ranges of 5.6 to 6.6 years, 6.7 to 7.6 years, and 7.7 to 8.6 years respectively were selected. Similarly, a small age-matched group of children at-risk for dyslexia was included to evaluate the diagnostic validity of the assessment tool. It comprised 26 children, each from Grade I to III, with an equal male-to-female ratio. The children were selected from twelve public schools in the Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka, with a curriculum affiliated with the Karnataka state board. The demographic details of typically developing and children at-risk for dyslexia are shown in Table 1. The participants were selected based on the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria for typically developing and children at-risk for dyslexia. The typically developing children fulfilled the inclusion criteria by demonstrating age-appropriate language development as assessed by the 'Assessment of Language Development' test (Lakkanna et al., 2021). Additionally, they had attended preschool for a minimum of two years. They belonged to families with a middle socio-economic status according to the Kuppuswamy socio-economic status rating scale (Kumar et al., 2022), with parents achieving a minimum literacy level equivalent to completing class 10th. Only the children who passed the Dyslexia Assessment for Languages of India - Junior Screening Tool (DALI- JST) were included.

TABLE 1  
DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF TYPICALLY DEVELOPING CHILDREN AND CHILDREN AT-RISK FOR DYSLLEXIA

Group	Grade	n	M (Years)	SD (Months)
Typically developing children	I	100	5.10	0.3
	II	100	6.11	0.4
	III	100	7.10	0.3
Children at-risk for dyslexia	I	26	5.80	0.3
	II	26	6.10	0.3
	III	26	7.11	0.2

The exclusion criteria for both typically developing and children at-risk for dyslexia was the same, where children with documented histories or complaints of significant speech, language, hearing, developmental, intellectual, or neurological disorders, as determined through the implementation of the WHO ten-question disability screening checklist (Singhi et al., 2007) were excluded. Additionally, the children who had experienced class retentions, irregular school attendance, and changes in the medium of instruction according to the school record were excluded. However, the at-risk children were selected based on the teachers scoring the child with significant difficulties in literacy skills using the Dyslexia Assessment for Languages of India - Junior Screening Tool (DALI- JST) by the Ministry of Science and Technology, Govt of India (2015) in Kannada across the literacy-related areas such as sound awareness, skill acquisition (reading, writing, and number concepts), communication, motor coordination, and behavior based on their close observation for at least six months. Children whose scores exceeded the predetermined cut-off score were categorized as at-risk for dyslexia.

### (b). Data Collection

The test was administered after obtaining permission from the school administrative authority and consent from parents towards the end of the academic year. The testing was carried out individually after establishing the rapport. The stimuli were presented verbally using live voice for phonological awareness and memory, whereas, for phonological naming, the stimuli were presented visually using the stimuli cards. All the tasks were initially familiarized with test stimuli before assessment. A constant sequence of testing was maintained across all the participants. The assessment sequence was phonological awareness (word level, syllable level, and rhyme level), phonological memory, and phonological naming.

## C. Statistical Analysis

The raw data was subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS 17.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 17.0). The assessment tool was subjected to three reliability analysis types: internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, test-retest reliability, and interrater reliability using intraclass correlation coefficient. The content validity was assessed by calculating the Content Validity Index (CVI) based on expert ratings. Developmental validity is evaluated by employing the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test to compare the performance of typically developing children across grades, followed by post-hoc pair-wise comparisons using the Mann-Whitney U Test. Diagnostic validity was established by comparing the performance of typically developing children with age-matched 'at-risk' children for dyslexia, using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test followed by receiver operating characteristics (ROC) analysis to ascertain cut-off scores, sensitivity, specificity, and the Area Under the Curve (AUC).

### III. RESULTS

#### A. Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach's alpha ranged as low as 0.71 and high as 0.94 for phonological awareness tasks. The pseudo-word repetition task had 0.87. However, it was not calculated for the RAN task, as it contained only one item, which is unsuitable for the speeded naming task. Each task exhibited reliability coefficients exceeding 0.70, satisfying the psychometric reliability criteria. The intra-class correlation coefficients, computed to assess test-retest reliability across all tasks, ranged from 0.85 to 0.94. Similarly, for inter-rater reliability, the coefficients ranged from 0.83 to 0.94. All these coefficients were statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

#### B. Validity Analysis

##### (a). Content Validity

A subjective method of content validation was employed, where the SLP validated the appropriateness of tasks, stimuli (trial and test items), instructions, and scoring procedures using a 5-point rating scale. The content validation index (CVI) was calculated for every item by dividing the number of speech-language pathologists providing the desired rating by the total number of speech-language pathologists (Lynn, 1996).

In summary, a rating of '3' or '4' was considered the desired rating as it indicates the higher relevance of a particular item. According to Polit and Beck (2004), the criterion point of CVI is 0.80, and the item with a CVI more significant than or equal to 0.80 was included. The results indicated that all the tasks and scoring procedures received a unanimous rating of 'absolutely appropriate' from the experts, suggesting no further modification. Stimuli items below the CVI threshold were replaced, as experts reported low familiarity with the item among children. The experts expressed concerns regarding the instructions for specific tasks and suggested reframing so that the length and complexity could be further reduced. According to experts, the instructions may impose a load on the working memory, resulting in poor performance.

##### (b). Developmental Validity

The mean and SD across the grades for phonological processing skills are shown in Table 2. The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that statistically significant difference between the grades on sentence segmentation ( $H(2) = 114.32, p = 0.000$ ), syllable segmentation ( $H(2) = 176.81, p = 0.000$ ), syllable blending ( $H(2) = 189.06, p = 0.000$ ), initial syllable stripping ( $H(2) = 81.70, p = 0.000$ ), medial syllable stripping ( $H(2) = 171.96, p = 0.000$ ), final syllable stripping ( $H(2) = 79.19, p = 0.000$ ), initial syllable addition ( $H(2) = 124.32, p = 0.000$ ), final syllable addition ( $H(2) = 162.32, p = 0.000$ ), initial syllable substitution ( $H(2) = 132.32, p = 0.000$ ), final syllable substitution ( $H(2) = 119.32, p = 0.000$ ), rhyme oddity ( $H(2) = 167.40, p = 0.000$ ), rhyme production ( $H(2) = 46.90, p = 0.000$ ), pseudoword repetition ( $H(2) = 45.22, p = 0.000$ ), and RAN-O ( $H(2) = 114.65, p = 0.000$ ). The subsequent pair-wise comparisons using the Mann-Whitney U test revealed that the performance of Grade III children was significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) higher than those of Grade I and Grade II children in all the phonological awareness tasks. Also, children from Grade II performed significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) better than those from Grade I in all the phonological awareness tasks.

TABLE 2  
MEAN, AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR PHONOLOGICAL PROCESSING SKILLS ACROSS GRADES

Variables	Number of items	Grade I			Grade II			Grade III		
		n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
SS	10	100	4.45	1.14	100	5.5	1.18	100	7.03	1.44
SyS	10	100	6.24	1.56	100	8.68	1.38	100	9.72	0.57
SyB	10	100	5.43	1.83	100	8.82	1.38	100	9.66	0.68
ISSt	10	100	7.32	1.95	100	9.11	1.30	100	9.56	0.67
MSSSt	10	100	5.59	1.91	100	8.86	1.87	100	9.85	0.43
FSSSt	10	100	8.3	1.62	100	9.27	1.03	100	9.89	0.31
RO	10	100	3.35	2.25	100	5.52	1.91	100	7.23	2.30
RP	10	100	2.14	3.46	100	3.4	2.70	100	5.25	2.85
ISA	10	100	3.32	4.42	100	5.50	3.28	100	7.20	2.53
FSA	10	100	2.40	3.2	100	5.26	2.2	100	7.57	3.2
ISS	10	100	2.50	2.3	100	3.54	2.1	100	5.67	3.1
FSS	10	100	1.14	1.43	100	3.84	2.43	100	5.58	2.36
PwRep	20	100	15.14	2.77	100	17	2.33	100	19.23	1.8
RAN-O		100	1.16	0.23	100	1.01	0.43	100	0.56	0.29

Note: SS = Sentence segmentation; SyB = Syllable blending, SyS = Syllable segmentation, FSSSt= Final Syllable Stripping, ISSSt= Initial Syllable Stripping, MSSSt=Medial Syllable Stripping, ISA = Initial Syllable Addition, FSA = Final Syllable Addition, ISS = Initial Syllable Substitution, FSS = Final Syllable Substitution, RO= Rhyme Oddity, RP= Rhyme Production, PwRep= Pseudoword repetition, RAN-O= Rapid Automatized Naming of Objects.

### (c). *Diagnostic Validity*

The comparison between typically developing and children risk of dyslexia using the Mann-Whitney test revealed a significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) higher performance of typically developing children at every Grade level. The median scores of children at-risk were found to be lower than typically developing children at each Grade level, suggesting the poor performance of children at-risk for dyslexia on all the phonological processing tasks. Although the inferential analyses showed significant group differences in phonological processing, it does not imply that phonological processing tasks can correctly discriminate children 'at-risk' for dyslexia from typically developing children. Therefore, an ROC curve analysis was performed for the NC versus children 'at-risk' for dyslexia. The more accurately a task discriminates between the groups, the higher the AUC value. As shown in Table 3, all phonological processing measures were significant variables for discriminating between the subjects with good to excellent diagnostic accuracy.

TABLE 3  
THE RESULTS OF ROC ANALYSIS OF PHONOLOGICAL PROCESSING TASKS FOR GRADE I, II, AND III CHILDREN

	Grades	Cut-off scores	Sensitivity (%)	Specificity (%)	Area Under the Curve (AUC)	p-value
SS	I	$\geq 3.5$	83	80	0.83	0.001
	II	$\geq 4.5$	94	92	0.94	0.001
	III	$\geq 6.5$	90	89	0.96	0.001
SyB	I	$\geq 4.5$	82	93	0.81	0.000
	II	$\geq 7.5$	88	90	0.92	0.000
	III	$\geq 8.5$	93	94	0.95	0.000
SyS	I	$\geq 5.5$	82	93	0.82	0.000
	II	$\geq 7.5$	92	96	0.92	0.002
	III	$\geq 8.5$	95	92	0.95	0.004
ISSt	I	$\geq 5.5$	88	90	0.87	0.000
	II	$\geq 7.5$	92	94	0.92	0.000
	III	$\geq 8.5$	91	93	0.90	0.002
MSSt	I	$\geq 4.5$	95	93	0.89	0.000
	II	$\geq 6.6$	88	94	0.92	0.000
	III	$\geq 7.5$	89	90	0.94	0.000
FSSt	I	$\geq 6.5$	84	89	0.83	0.008
	II	$\geq 7.5$	90	94	0.91	0.004
	III	$\geq 9.5$	93	96	0.94	0.000
ISA	I	$\geq 2.5$	92	87	0.83	0.001
	II	$\geq 4.5$	88	86	0.91	0.001
	III	$\geq 6.5$	93	90	0.94	0.000
SA	I	$\geq 1.5$	95	83	0.82	0.001
	II	$\geq 3.5$	89	94	0.93	0.000
	III	$\geq 4.5$	88	90	0.96	0.001
ISS	I	$\geq 1.5$	88	91	0.81	0.001
	II	$\geq 2.5$	92	88	0.93	0.001
	III	$\geq 3.5$	96	86	0.94	0.000
FSS	I	$\geq 0.5$	89	92	0.86	0.001
	II	$\geq 2.5$	85	93	0.94	0.000
	III	$\geq 4.5$	90	89	0.91	0.001
RO	I	$\geq 3.5$	90	94	0.89	0.002
	II	$\geq 5.5$	89	92	0.92	0.001
	III	$\geq 7.5$	94	92	0.97	0.000
RP	I	$\geq 2.5$	96	94	0.89	0.002
	II	$\geq 5.5$	92	96	0.91	0.004
	III	$\geq 7.5$	88	95	0.92	0.003
PwRep	I	$\geq 11.5$	89	94	0.90	0.000
	II	$\geq 13.5$	88	91	0.92	0.000
	III	$\geq 15.5$	94	95	0.97	0.000
RAN-O	I	$\geq 1.36$	87	92	0.88	0.009
	II	$\geq 1.22$	86	91	0.90	0.001
	III	$\geq 0.58$	92	97	0.96	0.000

Note. SS = Sentence segmentation, SyB = Syllable blending, SyS = Syllable segmentation, FSSt= Final Syllable Stripping, ISSt= Initial Syllable Stripping, MSSt=Medial Syllable Stripping, RR= Rhyme Recognition, RP= Rhyme Production, PWRep= Pseudoword repetition, RAN-O= Rapid Automated Naming of Objects.

The level of significance is maintained at  $p < 0.05$  level.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The present research aimed to construct and validate a phonological processing assessment tool in the Kannada language. The assessment tool development followed a systematic approach, including a literature review for task selection, item selection, and allocation. The adequacy of test content was determined through expert judgments using the Content Validation Index (CVI). The selection of tasks and items adhered to the criteria of CVI established by Polit and Beck (2004), where a threshold of  $\geq 0.80$  was considered acceptable. The CVI analysis revealed that the tasks assessing phonological awareness, phonological memory, and phonological naming collectively measure a singular construct related to phonological processing, in agreement with previous studies (Nelson et al., 2012; Ramus & Szenkovits, 2009). Additionally, the ICC for test-retest and inter-rater reliability results indicates that the phonological processing had good to excellent reliability. These findings align with earlier observations in developed test materials with good to excellent test-retest and inter-rater reliability for phonological awareness (Muter et al., 1999; Rosner, 1999; Wagner et al., 1999), phonological naming (Wolf & Denckla, 2005a), and phonological memory (Nicolson & Fawcett, 2003).

According to Anthony and Francis (2005), children become increasingly aware of the sound structure of spoken language with age and follow a universal hierarchy of development across all languages. With age, it advances from shallower or larger units, such as words and syllables, to finer or discrete units, such as phonemes. However, they

emphasize the variability in the pace of acquisition of this hierarchy across languages. A similar hierarchical development of phonological awareness was also reported in school-age children speaking Arabic (Tibi, 2010). In Kannada-speaking children, Nagaraja and Sampathkumar (2016) reported no statistically significant difference between the grades when syllable awareness was assessed in Grade IV through Grade VI. The performance was at the ceiling as early as Standard IV, indicating mastery over syllable awareness. These findings were complemented and extended by the present research by investigating the sensitivity of phonological processing skills to lower grades. The results indicated grade-related differences in all the syllable awareness skills across the grades. The performance in Grade III was at the ceiling, indicating the mastery of syllable awareness skills across all the tasks. In conjunction with earlier findings, the present research results show that children master syllable awareness skills by Grade III on segmentation, blending, and syllable stripping at the initial, medial, and final positions. The present study reported scores greater than 80% obtained by Grade II for all the syllable awareness tasks, which almost reached the ceiling, depicting mastery of syllable awareness as early as Grade II and Grade III. This finding is supported by Anthony and Francis (2005), who emphasized that a linguistic environment with highly prominent and clear syllable boundaries in the spoken language aids the early development of syllable awareness compared to a linguistic environment with less salient syllables. The early acquisition of syllable awareness has been proven in several languages with prominent syllables in spoken language.

Past studies have evaluated phonological memory using diverse stimulus types such as non-word repetition, digit span, and word span in children, and found age-related increments in the phonological memory capacity (Bayliss et al., 2005; Gathercole et al., 2004) are in line with the observations of this research. Generally, the developmental progressions can be attributed to an increase in the rapidity of sub-vocal articulatory rehearsal while gradually gaining phonological experience. As a consequence of the rehearsal rate, children can actively maintain more items in the phonological store, thereby increasing the functional capacity of the phonological loop. The findings indicate that the naming speed assessed using RAN-O increases significantly with grades. The increase in naming speed indicates that the speed with which phonological codes are retrieved for lexicons from long-term memory increases with age. The findings complement earlier studies on English monolinguals (Albuquerque & Simões, 2010; Wolf & Denckla, 2005b) and Kannada - English biliterates (Siddaiah et al., 2016).

In addition to content validity, the present research investigated construct validity by comparing the performance of typically developing children with those at-risk for dyslexia using a developed phonological processing assessment tool. The results of the Mann-Whitney test indicated that typically developing children outperform children at-risk for dyslexia in terms of phonological awareness, phonological memory, and phonological naming at all Grade levels. These results indicate a clear developmental lag of children at-risk for dyslexia across all the phonological processing skills compared to typically developing children. Specifically, a slower development in phonological awareness among children at-risk for dyslexia could be due to lower linguistic proficiency, especially vocabulary knowledge (Durgunoğlu, 2002). The wider dispersion of phonological deficits in the clinical group indicates a greater risk of developing reading disabilities in subsequent years of academic life. These results complement the earlier proposal that reading disabilities in children stem from deficits in phonological processing (Boets et al., 2013; Ramus & Szenkovits, 2008). A clinically significant sensitivity and specificity of all the phonological processing tasks included in the present research could differentiate typically developing children from children at-risk for dyslexia. These findings are consistent with previous findings that phonological processing assessment effectively identifies the children at-risk for dyslexia observed in alphabetical languages (Hindson et al., 2005; Neilson, 2009; Schneider et al., 2000). There is substantial evidence to advocate that the primary cause of early failure in word decoding would be due to deficits in phonological awareness (Share, 1995; Torgesen et al., 1994). The poor performance of children at-risk for dyslexia indicates the underspecified phonological representations at all levels of phonological awareness, which would have probably affected their ability to convert grapheme to phoneme during word decoding.

The poor performance of the at-risk group on RAN is probable additional deficits besides phonological deficits, earlier theorized as a double-deficit hypothesis by Wolf and Bowers (1999). The findings of the present research support earlier studies that have acknowledged the role of phonological naming in identifying children at-risk for dyslexia (de Jong & van der Leij, 2003; Puolakanaho et al., 2007). According to ROC analysis, RAN-O differentiated typically developing children with at-risk children at high sensitivity and specificity. The developed tool had good diagnostic validity, as indicated by the area under the ROC, which was closer to 1. In addition to double deficits, the children at-risk for dyslexia group underperformed consistently across the grades on phonological memory tasks. The deficits in phonological memory indicate that the children at-risk of developing reading problems are inefficient in coding information in a sound-based representation system for temporary storage. These findings align with other studies that demonstrated a deficit in different aspects of phonological memory leading to reading disabilities in children (Beneventi et al., 2010; Nevo & Breznitz, 2011).

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study addressed a critical need for phonological processing assessment tools for Kannada-speaking children. The tool was a robust instrument for evaluating phonological processing skills across different age groups through rigorous content and empirical validation with a sample of Kannada-speaking participants. The validation of

this assessment tool demonstrated its reliability and validity in effectively measuring phonological processing abilities in Kannada. In practical terms, this phonological processing assessment tool can be a valuable resource for educators, psychologists, SLPs, and researchers involved in literacy assessment and intervention in Kannada.

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**Shwetha Prabhu**, Ph.D. Scholar at Department of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, Kasturba Medical College Mangalore, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Karnataka, Manipal, 576 104, India. She pursued her post-graduation from Dr. M. V. Shetty College of Speech and Hearing and worked as an assistant professor for about 6 years in the same institute. With a profound commitment to enhancing communication outcomes, she leverages her expertise to serve individuals with speech, language,

and hearing disorders. Her dedication extends beyond clinical practice, as she actively contributes to research and academic endeavors, enriching her field and students' educational experience. She is pursuing her Ph.D., and the research concentrates on early literacy skills assessment and intervention in children. Some of her recent publications include:

1. Prabhu, M., Shwetha, P., & Somashekara, H. S. (2024). Phonological Awareness and Alphabetic Knowledge in Typically Developing English Language Learners Between the 3.6 to 6.6 Years. *Reading Psychology*, 45(3), 242–260. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2023.2276463>
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**Vangamayee Subban**, post-graduate student at the Department of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, Kasturba Medical College Mangalore, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Karnataka, Manipal, 576 104, India. She has developed a keen interest in literacy development and disorders in children.

**Jayashree S Bhat**, Professor at Nitte Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mangalore. She has 40 years of experience in speech-language pathology and audiology in various capacities, such as administrator, clinician, researcher, course coordinator, and consultant at multidisciplinary hospital setups, training centers, government organizations, and school setups. She is a Ph.D. holder from the Manipal Academy of Higher Education. She completed her post-graduation in Speech and Hearing from the University of Mysore and completed her MA in Psychology. Her areas of interest are Language disorders in children and adults, Voice and swallowing disorders, and Cognitive Communication.

**Haralakatta Shivananjappa Somashekara**, Associate Professor at the Department of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, Kasturba Medical College Mangalore, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Karnataka, Manipal, 576 104, India. He has 16 years of professional experience. He obtained a Ph.D. from the Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal. His research and clinical expertise concentrated on child language development and disorders, as well as literacy development and disorders.

# The Semantics of Stative Locative Events in Vietnamese: A Spatial Exploration

Ly Ngoc Toan

Department of Legal English, University of Law, HCM city, Vietnam

**Abstract**—This study utilizes mathematical formalism and Figure-Ground argument mapping to categorize stative locative events in Vietnamese as surjective or bijective. Bijective events exhibit a one-to-one mapping of Figures and Grounds, while surjectives allow a single Figure to map onto multiple Grounds. Through analysis of Vietnamese sentences, the paper demonstrates how bijective and surjective locatives encode deterministic and ambiguous spatial relations between Figures and Grounds, respectively. This novel distinction aids in enhancing the understanding of locative event typologies and provides an explanatory model for cross-linguistic analysis. The proposed integrated formal framework combines predicate logic, set theory, and lexical semantics to account for complex locative meanings, with significant applications in computational and theoretical linguistics, as well as cognitive science.

**Index Terms**—stative locatives, bijective events, surjective events, figure and ground, formal semantics

## I. INTRODUCTION

The investigation of stative locative events is crucial in understanding the interplay between language, cognition, and spatial representation. This study examines the semantics of stative locative prepositions (SLPs) and verbs (Vs), drawing from works by Keenan and Faltz (1985), Crow (1989), Nam (1995), Kratzer (2004), and Gehrke (2008). A stative locative event can be defined as a linguistic expression delineating a static state of being situated within a spatial locus, lacking dynamic action or positional change. The goal is to investigate the factors affecting how stative locative occurrences happen in language by understanding the lexical semantics of SLPs and verbs as building blocks from which stative locative events are composed. Event recognition is crucial, as these elements interact within verb phrases following semantic composition rules. The main research question is: "How do Vietnamese people use language to express static spatial relationships between entities?" The observation motivating this study is that Vietnamese has a large and diverse set of spatial expressions. Understanding these phrases' workings is essential for cognitive science, linguistic theory, and natural language processing. Gaining insights into static locative events illuminates the intricate relationship between language and cognition, impacting theoretical linguistics and real-world applications. It contributes significant knowledge to both domains and is particularly relevant in Vietnamese linguistics, facilitating cross-linguistic comparisons and contributions to cognitive linguistics. While previous studies have paved the way for comprehending stative events, a gap persists in understanding these constructs' manifestation in Vietnamese. This research endeavor constitutes a semantic exploration into spatial locative expressions as they manifest in Vietnamese linguistic constructs.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed underscores the multifaceted nature of locative expressions, emphasizing their pivotal role as linguistic vehicles for expressing spatial relations. Vietnamese, with its rich spatial vocabulary, emerges as a fertile ground for exploring the semantics of locative expressions. Cultural and environmental influences, as well as variations in proficiency and exposure, add layers of complexity to the study. This extensive literature review provides a robust foundation for the present investigation into the semantics of locative expressions in Vietnamese.

### A. Figure and Ground

Talmy (1975) laid the theoretical groundwork for this study in his seminal work, directing attention to the centrality of conceptual organization within sentence structure. He introduced the pivotal figure/ground dichotomy from visual perception: The figure object is a moving or conceptually movable point whose path or site is the salient issue. The ground object is a stationary reference-point, against which the figure's path or site is characterized.

Talmy (1975) extended this construct to linguistic analysis, proposing the figure-ground distinction fundamental in perception is equally salient in linguistic expression. In language, the figure is the foregrounded information in focus, while the ground is the background. He argued these categories are assignable in motion events with one moving object (figure) and one stationary (ground), highlighting how they contribute meaning by organizing information. Talmy (1975) emphasized the arrangement of figure and ground influences the mental representation of described events/situations.

Jackendoff (1983) adopted Talmy's framework to analyze spatial prepositional phrases (PPs), arguing PPs decompose into ontological categories like PLACE/PATH and functions like TO/FROM/IN/ON. He showed figure/ground relations like Jon hung the paintings (figure) on the wall (ground).

In positional research, the figure/ground concepts (trajector/landmark in cognitive linguistics) are employed consistently. Nam (1995) notably disassembled PP conceptual structures into distinct locative (Place) and directional (Path) components, influencing spatial expression analyses. This study focuses on stative locative events, expressions associated with Place functions, examining semantics of specific spatial PP and verb combinations. Understanding static locative events illuminates the language-cognition relationship, impacting linguistics and applications like NLP. While previous studies paved the way, a gap persists in understanding these constructs' manifestation in Vietnamese. This research explores spatial locative expressions in Vietnamese linguistic constructs like "Nam is in the garden" and "The children are swimming in the pool".

### B. Stative Locative Events

The notion of events presented by Talmy (1983, 2000b) differs from Davidson's (2001) view of events as concrete particulars in the world. Talmy sees events as cognitive constructions formed by the human mind's capacity to bound segments of spatiotemporal continuity into unified, discrete representations. Jackendoff (1990) proposed a taxonomy classifying events into ontological categories like actions, processes, and states, and distinguished bounded and unbounded events, developing hierarchical conceptual structures to link events' syntactic and semantic properties to underlying representations.

Drawing on Talmy and Jackendoff, a stative locative event can be defined as a subtype of state event encoding the persistent spatial configuration between an entity/figure and its reference ground/landmark, contrasting with dynamic actions tracing the same semantic roles across space.

Nam (1995) delineates predicate modifiers and predicate extensors in argument structure analysis. Locative PPs can serve as predicate modifiers when combined with single-place predicates, specifying localized context without increasing valency, or as predicate extensors augmenting the predicate's argument structure by allowing an additional argument slot.

Based on Nam's (1995) syntactic properties of argument construction, this study categorizes stative locative events into two mathematical types: **bijective events** and **surjective events**. A bijective event refers to a one-to-one mapping process where a single argument is mapped onto another single argument as in Figure (a). In contrast, a surjective event denotes a mapping process where one argument is mapped onto one or more other arguments as in Figure (b). This concept can be formally represented as follows:

#### Definition of bijective event

*Let  $X$  and  $Y$  be two sets representing syntactic arguments. A bijective mapping  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  satisfies the condition that for every element  $y$  in  $Y$ , there exists exactly one element  $x$  in  $X$  such that  $f(x) = y$ . This represents a one-to-one correspondence between the sets  $X$  and  $Y$ .*

#### Definition of surjective event

*On the other hand, a surjective mapping  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  satisfies the condition that for every element  $y$  in  $Y$ , there exists at least one element  $x$  in  $X$  such that  $f(x) = y$ . Here, the mapping covers or surjects onto the entire set  $Y$ .*

This conceptualization is illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Stative Locative Events

This study has formally defined stative locatives as state events encoding enduring figure-ground relations. Adopting Nam's predicate semantics, two mathematical categories are proposed - bijectives as one-to-one argument mappings and surjectives as one-to-many mappings. This theoretical groundwork enables analyzing compositional semantics of stative locatives cross-linguistically.

### C. Previous Work on Stative Locatives

This section reviews foundational analyses of locatives by Creary et al. (1989) and Nam (1995) to identify limitations motivating a new integrated framework. While their seminal treatments captured key properties through unified and Boolean semantic models, they had shortcomings in explanatory scope. Creary et al. overlooked temporal aspects of

dynamic locatives and syntactic variations. Nam primarily focused on static locatives with limited exploration of verb types. A novel synthesized framework is needed to address these gaps and account for complex locative semantics.

#### **Creary et al. (1989)**

Jackendoff (1983) made foundational observations about parallels between locatives and nominals, including establishing discourse referents. Building on this, Creary et al. (1989) proposed a unified semantic analysis of locatives as denoting regional entities, accounting for locative-nominal parallels like anaphoric "there" while using modern formal semantics. However, it did not capture locatives' lack of scope ambiguities compared to nominals. Additionally, Creary et al. argued locatives should be treated as arguments rather than adjuncts, proposing iterative locatives conjoin to jointly modify an event, contrasting with an adjunct analysis allowing iterative readings. However, their approach focused only on static locatives, without considering time-dependence, and modeling locatives as denoting singular regions fails to fully capture semantic complexity. The present work disputes locatives as universally arguments, citing their omittability, verbs taking multiple locative types, and standard intersective semantics suggesting adjunct status.

#### **Nam (1995)**

Extending Keenan and Faltz's (1985) boolean semantic framework for locatives, Nam (1995) provided new evidence for the intersective semantics of static locatives, demonstrating through syntactic analyses that static locatives combine compositionally with the verb phrase via boolean semantics to yield the clause's full semantics. However, Nam uncovered limitations in Keenan and Faltz's notion of orientation, revealing that locatives can locate subjects or objects, a complexity their simpler model failed to capture. Additionally, Nam broke new ground by extending boolean semantic analysis to directional locatives, discovering consistent verb type constraints on orientation patterns and integrating boolean and lexical semantics to generate theoretical insights. Nam's qualitative syntactic findings and quantitative lexical semantic results revealed deeper complexities than previous models, and his integrated approach addressing prior limitations substantially advanced formal semantic analysis of locatives.

#### *D. Additional Studies in Vietnamese*

Nguyen Dinh Hoa (2004) proposed classifying Vietnamese spatial prepositions into topological *trong* 'in', *trên* 'on', projective *trước* "in front of", *sau* "behind", and metric *gần* "near", *xa* "far" categories, arguing the preposition's semantics is crucial for understanding locative constructions' meaning. Nguyen Hung Tuong (2010) focused on verb-preposition interactions, observing verb types impose semantic restrictions on compatible prepositions. Stative verbs like *ngồi* "to sit" and *đứng* "to stand" prefer topological prepositions, while motion verbs like *đi* "go" and *chạy* "run" are more compatible with metric/projective prepositions. Tuong argued these restrictions stem from verbs' inherent spatial semantics constraining expressible spatial relationships. Both researchers emphasize analyzing preposition semantics and verb lexical semantics as crucial for understanding Vietnamese locative constructions' meaning through the complex interplay of components' semantic properties.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed methods approach combining corpus analysis and experimental elicitation tasks to comprehensively investigate stative locative event semantics in Vietnamese. Corpus analysis captures the diversity of language use, while experimental tasks provide controlled insights into cognitive processes, offering a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between lexical verbs, prepositions, argument structure constructions, and cognitive processes in forming stative locative semantics.

#### *A. Corpus Analysis*

This study utilized corpus analysis to investigate stative locative constructions in Vietnamese discourse, combining a large annotated Vietnamese Treebank corpus and a specialized 2000-sentence corpus of informal language. Quantitative analysis of the Treebank revealed common patterns of locative phrases, prepositions, and verbs, while close reading of the conversational data enabled qualitative analysis of nuanced spatial semantics. By leveraging the Treebank's breadth and the specialized corpus's depth, the study captured distributions and intricacies, providing empirical grounding to comprehensively investigate stative locative semantics and develop a robust theoretical framework accounting for complexities in expressing static spatial relationships in Vietnamese.

#### *B. Participant Recruitment*

To comprehensively investigate the research question, 25 native Vietnamese speakers with diverse backgrounds representing the three main dialect regions (Northern, Central, and Southern), linguistic proficiency levels, ages, education levels, and origins were recruited. This diversity allowed exploring the impact of linguistic background on stative locative expression and aimed to capture potential preposition and locative phrase usage differences across dialects, skill levels, and language segments. The diverse participant pool ensured a range of linguistic perspectives, contributing to the findings' generalizability and reflecting broader patterns and variations in static spatial expression across Vietnamese.

#### *C. Experimental Elicitation Tasks*

The awareness that controlled tasks can offer unique insights into real-time cognitive processes linked with stative

locative constructions led the researcher to the adoption of experimental tasks. This recognition is the driving force behind the incorporation of experimental tasks. While corpus analysis is able to capture language use in its natural state, experimental tasks offer a controlled setting in which unique locative constructs can be elicited in a variety of circumstances. The data collected from eye-tracking and reaction time provide a dynamic view on cognitive processing, offering information on how participants interpret and produce stative locative utterances. The experimental method is not meant to take the place of corpus analysis; rather, it is intended to complement it by offering a more concentrated investigation of cognitive characteristics that may not be entirely reflected in natural language usage.

#### D. Data Analysis

This study utilizes three analytical frameworks to analyze the data: Talmy's Figure-Ground model, Jackendoff's event structure representation, and Nam's predicate argument structure theory. Talmy's framework categorizes linguistic elements into figures and grounds, revealing patterns in how they are encoded across locative expressions. Jackendoff's representation decomposes expressions into conceptual primitives, providing insight into the conceptual building blocks underlying stative locatives. Nam's theory distinguishes predicate modifiers from extensors, revealing how locative phrases modify predicates' argument structures. These frameworks offer complementary perspectives on figure-ground relationships, conceptual structures, and syntactic interactions, providing a comprehensive analytical approach to understanding stative locative semantics in the corpus.

TABLE 1  
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

Frameworks	Key Concepts	Applications
Talmy	Figure vs. ground distinction	Reveals figure-ground patterns
Jackendoff	Decomposes expressions into conceptual primitives	Elucidates conceptual structures
Nam	Distinguishes predicate modifiers vs. extensors	Shows argument structure changes

### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Stative Locative Prepositions in Vietnamese

An examination and classification of locative prepositions in the Vietnamese language is undertaken by employing the two theoretical frameworks: (i) frames of reference as expounded by Talmy (1983); and (ii) the arguments of predicates proposed by Nam (1995).

##### (a). Frames of Reference

This framework is central to the analysis of how languages delineate spatial relationships and how speakers cognitively represent and articulate the relative placements of objects within a given spatial context. Table 3 provides a succinct summary of the stative locative prepositions found in Vietnamese, along with their respective semantic attributes. To be more convenient, these prepositions are provided in the two versions including in Vietnamese and the equivalence of English.

TABLE 2  
CLASSIFICATION OF SLPs IN TERMS OF FRAMES OF REFERENCE

Intrinsic frame of reference		Relative frame of reference	
Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese	English
Trên	On	Phía trên	Above
Trong	In	Phía dưới	Under
		Phía trước	In front of
		Phía sau	Behind

##### 1. Intrinsic Frame of Reference

The intrinsic frame of reference of stative locative prepositions, namely *trên* and *trong*, is pivotal for understanding spatial relationships within the Vietnamese linguistic context. The identification of semantic properties of these prepositions relied on the inherent attributes and properties of objects to delineate their relative positions. In this paradigm, spatial arrangements are defined by the innate characteristics of the objects themselves, devoid of external reference points. Examine the following example.

- (1) Cuốn sách ở **trên** bàn.  
'The book is on the table.'

In Vietnamese, the preposition *trên* 'on' encapsulates the intrinsic frame of reference. Here, the concept of *trên* is intricately tied to the physical attributes of both the book and the table, underscoring the profound influence of intrinsic characteristics in spatial descriptions. This cognitive framework permeates spatial language in Vietnamese, contributing to the unique linguistic expression of spatial relationships in the culture.

Likewise, the preposition *trong* "in" is a locative term in Vietnamese, denoting containment or inclusion within a defined spatial area. It is used to express that an object or entity is situated inside or within another object or space.

When *trong* is employed in a sentence, it conveys the idea of being enclosed or contained within a particular entity, whether it be a physical object, a place, or an abstract concept. This preposition is integral in expressing various spatial relationships, such as being inside a room, container, or a larger conceptual framework. To illustrate this point, consider the following example.

- (2) Cô ấy đang ở **trong** phòng.  
'She is in the room.'

In this example, *trong* is used to indicate that the subject *cô ấy* is located within the defined space of the room. Also, the preposition *trong* emphasizes the containment of the subject within the spatial boundaries of the room.

## 2. Relative Frame of Reference

The relative frame of reference of locative prepositions in Vietnamese such as *phía trên*, *phía dưới*, *phía trước*, *phía sau* helps in understanding how spatial relationships are conceptualized and communicated. In this frame, spatial arrangements are determined by the position of one object in relation to another. Specifically, it emphasizes the observer's perspective as a crucial factor in defining spatial relationships.

The preposition *phía trên* signifies a position or direction that is higher in relation to an object or a surface. Furthermore, it is used to describe something situated at an elevated position as in (3a). Meanwhile, *phía dưới* denotes a location or direction that is lower in relation to an object or a surface and signifies something positioned beneath or at a lower level as in (3b).

- (3) a. Cái hộp đặt **phía trên** bàn.  
'The box is placed above the table.'  
b. Con mèo đang nằm **phía dưới** giường.  
'The cat is lying beneath the bed.'

Next, *phía trước* pertains to a location or direction that is positioned ahead or in front of a particular object. This preposition signifies something situated in the forward direction as in (4a). Conversely, *phía sau* refers to a location or direction that is situated behind or at the rear of an object or a surface and signifies something positioned in the backward direction as illustrated in (4b).

- (4) a. Cậu bé đứng **phía trước** lớp học.  
'The boy is standing in front of the classroom.'  
b. Ngõ nhà nằm **phía sau** hàng cây.  
'The house is behind the trees.'

## (b). Spatial Relationships

This section examines the stative locative prepositions in the spatial relationships, which are grouped into two subcategories such as **topological locatives** and **orientational locatives**. Topological locatives describe properties unaffected by transformations, providing a stable framework for spatial descriptions. Orientational locatives offer insights into how language communicates direction in relation to fixed points. Together, these concepts illuminate the fundamental principles guiding the linguistic expression of spatial information. Table 4 summarizes the classification of stative locative prepositions in terms of spatial relations.

TABLE 3  
CLASSIFICATION OF SLPs IN TERMS OF SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Spatial relationships	Prepositions		Quantity	Frequency
Topological invariants	Tại	At	4	257
	Trên	In		
	Trong	On		
Orientational locatives	Phía trước	In front of	6	185
	Phía sau	Behind		
	Phía trên	Above		
	Phía dưới	Below		
	Phía phải	On the right of		
	Phía trái	On the left of		

## 1. Topological Locatives

The topological locatives in Vietnamese are grounded in geographical concepts and properties, denoting elemental relations between spatial regions, aligning with the concept of topological invariants. The three prominent topological locatives, *tại*, *trên*, and *trong*, respectively embody the notions of intersection, inclusion, and tangential association, enabling precise articulation of subtle spatial configurations and relationships within linguistic discourse. These locatives exhibit noteworthy prevalence across Vietnamese genres and textual compositions, though distinguishing between intersection and inclusion can be challenging.

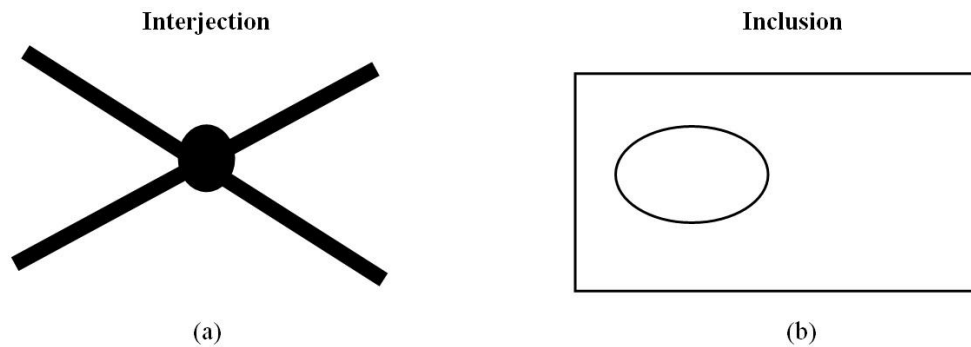


Figure 2. Locatives of Interjection and Inclusion

### *Tại*

The topological locative *tại* denotes an intersecting spatial relation between separate regions in Vietnamese, conveying proximity with a region located amid the Figure and Ground where the absence of a shared empty space indicates their intersecting condition. *Tại* embodies the particular topological invariant of intersection - where two regions partially overlap without one being wholly contained inside another, differing from inclusion which entails complete enclosure. By encoding this fundamental topological concept of intersection, not mere closeness, *tại* enables nuanced expression of topological configurations in Vietnamese.

#### Definition:

$\langle F G \rangle \in \parallel \text{ tại } \parallel \text{ iff } p [F] \subseteq \text{PROX} [G]$

- (5) Hoa ở **tại** cơ quan của cô ấy.  
'Hoa is at her office.'

This example exhibits the spatial relationship between the Figure (Hoa) and the Ground (her office). The symbol  $\langle F G \rangle$  consists of the spatial relationship subsisting between the Figure and the Ground. The stative locative preposition is conventionally denoted by the symbol  $\parallel$ , while the variable  $p$  designates the positional attribute ascribed to each respective object or event. The symbol  $\subseteq$  signifies the inclusivity of the Figure within the spatial domain defined by the Ground. Additionally, the notation  $\text{PROX} [G]$  conveys that the Figure maintains a proximate spatial relation in relation to the Ground.

In summary, the locative *tại* in Vietnamese specifically expresses an intersecting relationship between distinct spatial zones. The differentiation of *tại* from proximity is vital, as it disambiguates the technical topological meaning. This illustrates how Vietnamese grammar semantically distinguishes locatives based on precise geometrical concepts like intersection. The ability to explicitly encode invariant topological invariants enables articulate description of spatial configurations and scenes.

### *Trong*

The preposition *trong* in Vietnamese encodes a specific type of spatial relationship characterized by inclusion or containment. More specifically, *trong* signifies an asymmetric relationship between two distinct regions - a figure and a ground - where the figure is fully encompassed within the interior boundaries of the ground. This containment is delimited by precise spatial parameters inherent to the ground object. While *trong* prototypically expresses this inclusive relationship, there are several noteworthy prepositional alternatives in Vietnamese that provide more nuanced specifications. For instance, *bên trong* can denote containment with respect to the inner side or region of the ground. *Phía trong* emphasizes the directional notion of being positioned inside the ground. Finally, *phía ngoài* encodes the opposite orientation, specifying the exterior side or outer region of the ground object. Crucially, these alternatives are not completely interchangeable with *trong*. While they share the general characteristic of expressing inclusion, each alternative highlights a unique spatial perspective or orientation. Their distinctions underscore the importance of examining how subtle variations in locative terminology can reveal different construals of the same basic relationship between figure and ground.

#### Definition:

$\langle F G \rangle \in \parallel \text{ trong } \parallel \text{ iff } p [F] \subseteq \text{INTER} [G]$

- (6) Bọn trẻ đang ở **trong** vườn.  
'The children are in the garden.'

In this context, the locative *trong* plays a vital role in elucidating the complex spatial relationship between the Figure, represented by *bọn trẻ* "children", and the Ground, identified as *vườn* "garden". Specifically, *trong* signifies that the designated point  $p$  within the Figure constitutes an internal component situated within the boundaries of the broader spatial entity, the Ground. This delineates a containment relationship, with the Ground enveloping and encircling the Figure in an inclusive manner. Beyond functioning as a static spatial descriptor, *trong* conveys a nuanced relational disposition, providing a linguistic vehicle to articulate not merely the Figure's location, but also its interaction and configuration vis-à-vis the encompassing Ground. The precise usage of *trong* in this way establishes a sophisticated framework for analyzing the intricate spatial dynamics and relationships between the Figure and Ground in this context. The semantics of the preposition underscore *trong's* vital capacity to encode the complex notion of inclusive interiority



that defines the Figure-Ground relationship.

#### *Trên*

The stative locative term *trên* in Vietnamese, denoting "on" in English, consists of a multifaceted semantic dimension. Specifically, it encodes the notion of tangentiality or contiguity between two entities, signifying direct surface contact unaltered by continuous elastic deformation. When employed in spatial contexts, *trên* denotes a configuration where one entity lies atop and in immediate contact with the surface of another entity, exhibiting a resilient contiguous relationship despite potential deformations. In this way, *trên* embodies both the geometrical contiguity of adjacent entities sharing a common boundary and the physical support of the upper entity relying on the lower surface for stability. This contrasts with a pure intersecting relationship defined solely by the absence of an empty region between entities, without requiring direct surface contact. The complex semantics of *trên* underscore its capacity to encode nuanced notions of both contiguity and support that persist despite elastic deformations in the Figure-Ground relationship.

#### Definition

$\langle F G \rangle \in \parallel \text{trên} \parallel \text{iff } p[F] \subseteq \text{TANG}[G]$

- (7) Con mèo ở **trên** hàng rào.

'The cat is on the fence.'

In this example, the locative *trên* plays a vital role in elucidating the complex spatial relationship between the Figure, represented by *con mèo* "the cat", and the Ground, characterized as the *hàng rào* "fence". *Trên* specifically denotes a state of tangentiality and direct surface contact between the Figure and the Ground. This signifies a contiguous and uninterrupted adjacency, where the cat shares an immediate common boundary with the fence despite continuous deformation. Moreover, *trên* delineates that the designated spatial point within the Figure constitutes a component tangentially connected to the broader spatial entity of the fence serving as the Ground. This dual perspective highlights *trên*'s capacity to encode nuanced notions of resilience, contiguity and connection between Figure and Ground. The semantics of *trên* underscore its vital role within the Vietnamese spatial lexicon in providing precise delineation of complex Figure-Ground relationships. While semiformally *trên* may potentially overlap with other locatives, its usages in specific linguistic contexts and tests can further reveal its distinct semantic contributions. Overall, *trên* establishes a refined framework for comprehending the intricate spatial dynamics at play in relational scenarios like this illustrative instance.

## 2. Orientational Locatives

The orientational locatives in the Vietnamese linguistic framework assume a pivotal role in establishing spatial orientation, encompassing *trước/sau*, *phải/trái*, and *trên/dưới*. These locative expressions serve as fundamental linguistic constructs employed to delineate directional relationships within a given spatial context.

#### *Trước/sau*

The orientational locatives *trước* and *sau* in Vietnamese provide a clear and distinct means of establishing anterior and posterior spatial orientations. *Trước* pertains to the frontward or anterior position of an object or entity in relation to a reference point. Conversely, *sau* designates the rearward or posterior orientation, indicating the position behind a reference entity. This complementary pair of locatives is particularly significant in contexts necessitating precise spatial description or navigation, such as providing directions or delineating object arrangements. The availability and mutual exclusivity of *trước* and *sau* enables subtle specification of relative positioning between entities while also contributing to the linguistic variety within Vietnamese spatial semantics. Their binary contrast allows for unambiguous differentiation between front and back orientations, thereby enhancing the language's capacity to convey detailed spatial information.

#### Definition:

$\langle F G \rangle \in \parallel \text{trước/sau} \parallel \text{iff } p[F] \subseteq \text{EXTER}[G, \text{ANTER/POSTER}]$

- (8) a. Cây bàng ở **trước** trường của tôi.

'The banyan tree is in front of my school.'

- b. Cây bàng ở **sau** trường tôi.

'The banyan tree is behind my school.'

This pattern elucidates the spatial correlation between the Figure, denoted as *cây bàng*, and the Ground, designated as *trường tôi*, signified by the notation  $\langle F G \rangle$ . This correlation is contingent upon the condition that the position, denoted as 'p', of the Figure must occupy an external position in relation to the Ground, situated either anteriorly or posteriorly in comparison to the Ground's location.

#### *Bên phải/bên trái*

The orientational locatives *bên phải* and *bên trái* in Vietnamese serve to establish lateral spatial orientations, specifically indicating rightward and leftward positions relative to a reference point. *Bên phải* denotes a rightward orientation, signifying the side or direction positioned to the right of the established reference. Conversely, *bên trái* designates a leftward orientation, referring to the side or direction to the left of the reference. This complementary pair is highly useful in contexts necessitating precise spatial descriptions or navigation instructions by enabling unambiguous communication of lateral positioning. The availability of *bên phải* and *bên trái* as mutually exclusive terms enriches the Vietnamese language's capacity to convey detailed spatial information. Their juxtaposition

underscores Vietnamese's ability to articulate nuanced orientation relationships between entities, while enhancing practical utility in situations involving spatial localization, positioning and direction. In summary, the lateral locative pair *bên phải* and *bên trái* provides lexical distinction between rightward and leftward orientations relative to a reference point. Their binary nature both enhances specificity in spatial description and highlights Vietnamese's sophistication in encoding spatial semantics.

#### Definition

$\langle F G \rangle \in \parallel b\hat{a}n\ ph\hat{a}i / b\hat{a}n\ tr\hat{a}i \parallel \text{ iff } p [ F ] \subseteq EXTER [ G, RIGHT/LEFT ]$

- (9) a. Những người lính ở ***bên phải*** chiếc xe tải.  
'The soldiers are on the right of the lorry.'  
b. Những người lính ở ***bên trái*** chiếc xe tải.  
'The soldiers are on the left of the lorry.'

The spatial configuration, designated as  $\langle F G \rangle$ , elucidates the positional alignment between the Figure, represented as *Những người lính*, and the Ground, characterized as the *chiếc xe tải*. Within this relational framework, the Figure possesses the flexibility to assume a placement either to the right or the left of the Ground. In adherence to this relational construct, the specific location denoted as 'p' pertaining to the Figure is required to manifest as an external facet. This implies that it must be situated in such a manner that it exists distinctly apart from the Ground. Furthermore, 'p' must be positioned either to the right, indicated as option (15a), or to the left, designated as option (15b), in relation to the Ground for the stipulated relation to be considered valid.

#### *Phía trên/ phía dưới*

The Vietnamese orientational locatives *phía trên* and *phía dưới* convey the information about vertical spatial relationships between a Figure and a Ground. *Phía trên* denotes a configuration where the Figure is positioned at a higher elevation or upper level compared to the Ground object serving as reference. This term provides invaluable linguistic means to describe the vertical arrangement of objects or points within a given space. Conversely, *phía dưới* refers to a spatial relation where the Figure is located at a lower level or position relative to the Ground. It serves as a crucial tool for articulating the depth or height of elements within a particular spatial context. These complementary locative terms play a fundamental role in diverse contexts necessitating precise communication of vertical positioning, ranging from providing directions to discussing architectural configurations. The availability of *phía trên* and *phía dưới* enables nuanced specification of relative elevations and levels between figures and grounds, while enriching the vocabulary for vertical spatial relations in Vietnamese.

#### Definition

$\langle F G \rangle \in \parallel ph\hat{a}i\ tr\hat{a}i / ph\hat{a}i\ du\hat{o}i \parallel \text{ iff } p [ F ] \subseteq EXTER [ G, \pm VERT ]$

- (10) a. Bức tranh ở ***phía trên*** cửa sổ.  
'The picture is above the window.'  
b. Bức tranh ở ***phía dưới*** cửa sổ.  
'The picture is under the window.'

In Vietnamese, the orientational locatives *phía trên* and *phía dưới* are characterized by their spatial relationship between the Figure (referred to as *bức tranh*) and the Ground (referred to as *cửa sổ*), denoted as  $\langle F G \rangle$ . To be classified as such, this relationship must adhere to specific criteria. Firstly, the location "p" of the Figure must pertain to its external aspect in relation to the Ground. Secondly, both *phía trên* and *phía dưới* locatives convey the vertical orientation between the Figure and Ground. Nevertheless, *phía trên* designates the upper vertical section relative to the Ground, whereas *phía dưới* pertains to the lower portion relative to the Ground.

#### B. Stative Locative Events in Vietnamese

This section classifies stative locative constructions in Vietnamese into bijective and surjective event types based on the mapping between Figure and Ground arguments. The mathematical conceptualization reveals differences in determinism, ambiguity, and multiplicity in the localization relationships denoted. By examining argument mappings as formal bijective or surjective functions, this analysis uncovers key semantic distinctions encoded in the spatial language. Table 5 provides a comprehensive overview of Vietnamese verbs, along with subcategories indicating serialization capability with linguistic elements for stative locative events (+) or incapability (-).

TABLE 4  
VERB CLASSIFICATIONS IN VIETNAMESE

Types of verbs		Stative locative events	Quantity
Placement		+	6/6
Judgment		+	3/6
Intention		+	5/5
Psychology		+	2/5
Communication		+	3/3
Housing		+	7/7
Attaching		+	3/3
Position		+	5/5
Entertainment		+	14/14
Sports		+	26/26
Dative	Goal	+	21/21
	Source	-	0/9
Perception	Vision	+	8
	Hearing	+	1
	Smell	+	1
	Taste	-	0/1
	Touch	+	2
Motion	Path	-	0/38
	Manner	+	224/ 224
	Cause	+	88

(a). *Bijjective Stative Locative Events*

**Definition:**

A bijjective event refers to a locative construction that denotes a one-to-one mapping between two sets of syntactic arguments, a Figure (X) and a Ground (Y). Formally, this can be defined as follows:

Let X and Y be sets representing distinct syntactic arguments in a clause. A locative mapping  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  is bijjective if:

1.  $f$  maps each element  $x$  in  $X$  to exactly one element  $y$  in  $Y$ .
2. For each element  $y$  in  $Y$ , there exists exactly one element  $x$  in  $X$  such that  $f(x)=y$ .
3. There is a one-to-one correspondence between elements in  $X$  and elements in  $Y$  under the mapping  $f$ .

This means a bijjective locative event unambiguously maps a Figure to a Ground. There is no surjectivity or multiplicity in the mapping. In Vietnamese, lexical verbs license bijjective locative constructions including placement, judgment, intention, psychology, communication, housing, attaching, position, entertainment, and sports often denote bijjective events. For example:

Consider sentence (26):

- (11) T ã bơi ở trong hồ.  
'I swim in the lake.'

Let  $X = \{t \tilde{a}\}$  represent the set of Figure arguments, containing the single element 'T ã'.

Let  $Y = \{\text{trong hồ}\}$  represent the set of Ground arguments, containing the single element 'ở trong hồ'.

The locative preposition 'ở/at/in' denotes a function  $f$  that maps elements of set  $X$  to elements of set  $Y$ :

$f: X \rightarrow Y$

This function  $f$  has the following properties that characterize a bijjective mapping:

- $f$  is injective: Each element of  $X$  maps to a unique element of  $Y$ . There are no two distinct elements  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  in  $X$  such that  $f(x_1) = f(x_2)$ . This is satisfied because  $X$  contains only a single element 'T ã'.
- $f$  is surjective: For each element  $y$  in  $Y$ , there exists at least one element  $x$  in  $X$  such that  $f(x) = y$ . This is satisfied because for the single element 'ở trong hồ' in  $Y$ , there exists a corresponding element 'T' in  $X$  that maps to it under  $f$ .
- $f$  is one-to-one: Each element of  $X$  is mapped to exactly one element of  $Y$ . The single element 'T' maps to a single element 'ở trong hồ'.
- $f$  is onto: Each element of  $Y$  has exactly one element of  $X$  mapping to it. There are no unfilled elements in the range  $Y$ .

Therefore, the locative preposition 'ở' denotes a bijjective mapping between the sets  $X$  and  $Y$  in this example. It unambiguously maps the Figure 'T ã' to the Ground 'Hồ' in a one-to-one correspondence. There is no surjectivity or multiplicity in the mapping. This provides a formal semantic analysis of the deterministic, unambiguous locative relationship denoted by the preposition in this simple sentence. The bijjectivity captures the precise localization of the Figure relative to the Ground.

(b). *Surjective Stative Locative Events*

**Definition**

A surjective event refers to a type of locative construction in which a Figure argument (set  $X$ ) maps surjectively onto one or more Ground arguments (set  $Y$ ).

Formally, this can be defined as follows:

Let  $X$  and  $Y$  be syntactic argument sets representing the Figure and Ground. A locative mapping  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  is surjective if:

1. For each element  $y$  in set  $Y$ , there exists at least one element  $x$  in set  $X$  such that  $f(x)=y$ .
2. The mapping  $f$  covers or surjects onto the entire set  $Y$ .

This means a single Figure argument can map ambiguously to multiple Ground elements under a surjective mapping. The localization relationship expresses multiplicity rather than a one-to-one correspondence. In Vietnamese, the verbs of dative, intension, attaching, social interaction, co-motion and perception denote this event. We can analyze the example sentence as follows:

- (12) Tôi nhìn thấy anh ấy ở trong vườn.  
'I saw him in the garden.'

Let  $X = \{\text{Tôi, anh ấy}\}$  be the set containing the Figure arguments 'Tôi' and 'anh ấy'.

Let  $Y = \{\text{vườn}\}$  be the set containing the single Ground argument 'vườn'.

The locative preposition ở establishes a mapping  $f$  from  $X$  to  $Y$ :

$$f: X \rightarrow Y$$

$f$  maps:

$$\begin{aligned} f(\text{Tôi}) &= \text{vườn} \\ f(\text{anh ấy}) &= \text{vườn} \end{aligned}$$

This satisfies the definition of a surjective mapping:

- For the single element 'garden' in set  $Y$ , there exist two elements 'Tôi' and 'anh ấy' in set  $X$  that both map to 'vườn' under  $f$ .
- The mapping  $f$  surjects onto the entire set  $Y$ .

Therefore, similar to the previous example, the locative expression establishes a surjective mapping between the Figure set  $X$  and the Ground set  $Y$ . Both 'Tôi' and 'anh ấy' map ambiguously to the single Ground element 'vườn'. The surjectivity arises from the multiplicity of having two Figures localize to the same Ground. This introduces ambiguity in the semantic mapping denoted by the preposition ở. The analysis demonstrates the flexibility of surjective locative constructions in Vietnamese.

### C. Concept-Oriented Stative Locative Events

This section elucidates a semantic attribute inherent to locative expressions in the Vietnamese language. Within this framework, locative expressions manifest as functions pertaining to the conceptual categories, which are located, wherein they facilitate the identification of the spatial placement of said conceptual categories. This process of ascertaining the locational attributes of conceptual categories is largely contingent upon the linguistic attributes of verbs and prepositions. Table 6 is a summary of expressions denoting conceptual categories in a state of being located within the Vietnamese linguistic context.

TABLE 5  
ARGUMENT ORIENTATIONS OF SLES

Linguistics elements	Argument orientations of stative locative events			
	Figure	Ground	Figure-Ground	Figure and Ground
	Bijective events		Surjective events	
Verbs	judgement, position, entertainment, sports, manner motion	cause motion, placement, communication, psychology, housing,	dative	intension, attaching, social interaction, co-motion, perception
Total	5	5	1	5
Prepositions	trên, trong, ph ả trên, ph ả dưới, phía trước, ph ả sau	trên, trong, ph ả trên, phía dưới, phía trước, ph ả sau	trên, trong, ph ả trên, ph ả dưới, phía trước, ph ả sau	trên, trong, ph ả trên, ph ả dưới, phía trước, ph ả sau

#### (a). Figure- Oriented Stative Locative Event

This pattern examines a linguistic phenomenon particular to Vietnamese known as a figure-oriented stative locative event. In this construction, the primary focus is determining and elucidating the stationary position or location of a designated object or entity, referred to as the Figure. The Figure's precise location is established through the use of stative locative prepositions that pinpoint its position relative to a contextual reference or Ground. Vietnamese contains five distinct semantic verb groups that can denote this type of stative locative event: judgement verbs like *cho rằng* "to judge/consider", position verbs like *nằm* "to lie", entertainment verbs like *xem* "to watch", sports verbs like *chơi* "to play", and manner of motion verbs like *múa* "to dance". The capacity of these disparate verbs to participate in the stative locative construction reveals its productivity in Vietnamese for encoding fixed locational relationships. Linguistic research has identified these five categories as central to this phenomenon through extensive analysis of Vietnamese grammar patterns and lexical semantics in this domain. Their possibilities illuminate the subtlety of Vietnamese in statively expressing Figure-Ground localizations.

- (13) Ông chủ tr ỉt ớ ch nh ấ n vì ấ n m ãh trước đám đông.  
'The boss criticized his employees in front of the crowd.'

Example exemplifies the concept of a figure-oriented stative locative event in Vietnamese. In this instance, the sentence portrays a scenario where the Figure, represented by the *Ông chủ* 'the boss', takes on the role of presiding over a gathering, indicated by *trước đám đông* 'in front of the audience'. This underscores the linguistic pattern's focus on elucidating the stationary position or location of the Figure in relation to its surroundings. While the specific stative locative prepositions are not explicitly mentioned, the context implies their presence, as the boss is positioned in front of a crowd. The verb *trì trịch* 'presiding over' falls under the category of position, highlighting the Figure's specific action and position of authority. This example vividly showcases how Vietnamese employs this linguistic structure to precisely convey static positions or locations of objects or entities, demonstrating the language's capacity for nuanced spatial descriptions.

(b). *Ground- Oriented Stative Locative Event*

In contrast to previous event types, ground-oriented stative locatives encode the location of the Ground or landmark argument within the relational predicate. That is, ground-oriented functions uniformly treat sets of coordinates in binary relations as specifying the spatial context of the ground element.

For instance:

- (14) Anh ấy đặt quả bóng **trên** bàn.

'He put the ball on the table',

The locative prepositional phrase *trên bàn* 'on the table' exemplifies a ground-oriented stative locative. It identifies the location of the ground argument *bàn* 'table' in relation to the figure *quả bóng* 'ball'. Crucially, this ground-oriented locative entails that the table holds a particular spatial configuration within the relation, rather than simply modifying the action of ball placement. Therefore, ground-oriented stative locatives encode the localization of the reference object or landmark itself, contrasting with figure-oriented locatives that specify the position of the located entity. In Vietnamese, there are five miscellaneous types of verbs denoting this event including cause motion, placement, communication, psychology and housing.

(c). *Figure and Ground -Oriented Stative Locative Event*

Stative locative prepositional phrases in Vietnamese specify the location of both a Figure and a Ground participant independently. There are four major lexical classes of verbs that license this type of construction: intention, attachment, social interaction, and co-motion. For example:

- (15) Lan gặp Hùng trong cơ quan.

'Lan met Hung in the office.'

The locative prepositional phrase *trong cơ quan* 'in the office' in (15) expresses the location of both the Figure (Lan) and the Ground (Hùng) simultaneously. This yields a surjective semantic interpretation, as demonstrated by the decomposed clauses in (16):

- (16) a. Lan ở trong cơ quan.

'Lan is in the office.'

- b. Hùng ở trong cơ quan.

'Hung is in the office.'

The stative locative *trong cơ quan* 'in the office' relates both the Figure and Ground to the same spatial Ground (the office) independently, rather than expressing motion or directionality. The surjective nature of the locative construction in (1) arises compositionally from the ground-locating function of the preposition *trong* 'in' applied to two discourse referents. Thus, the lexical semantics of certain stative verbs in Vietnamese interact with the semantics of locative prepositional phrases to allow independent and simultaneous spatial predication of Figure and Ground. This demonstrates the complex interplay between a language's lexical classes, verb semantics, and function of spatial particles in giving rise to particular locative event types.

(d). *Figure- Ground Oriented Event*

The Figure-Ground oriented locative event expressed in example (17) demonstrates surjective semantics, as the stative locative prepositional phrase *ở Hà Nội* 'in Hanoi' refers to the location of three distinct arguments - the Figure *Tôi* 'I', the secondary Figure *cái áo khoác* 'the coat', and the Ground *anh ấy* 'him'.

- (17) Tôi mua cho anh ấy cái áo khoác ở Hà Nội.

'I bought him a coat in Hanoi.'

The surjectivity arises because the ground-locating PP potentially expresses two distinct situational meanings:

**Interpretation 1:** The PP locates both the Figure *Tôi* and the secondary Figure *cái áo khoác* in relation to the spatial Ground *Hà Nội*, as in (18):

- (18) a. Tôi ở Hà Nội.

'I am in Hanoi.'

- b. Cái áo khoác ở Hà Nội.

'The coat is in Hanoi.'

**Interpretation 2:** The PP locates the secondary Figure *cái áo khoác* and the intended recipient Ground *anh ấy* in Hanoi, as in (19):

- (19) a. Cái áo khoác ở Hà Nội.  
'The coat is in Hanoi.'  
b. Anh ấy ở Hà Nội.  
'He is in Hanoi.'

The ambiguity arises from the stative semantics of the verb *mua* 'to buy' and the ground-locating function of the preposition *ở*. The surjectivity demonstrates how a single PP in Vietnamese can locate multiple arguments in a clause independently, arising from the complex interaction between lexical semantics and locative syntax. Further research could investigate what factors determine the contextual interpretation of the locative semantics in examples like (19) - whether it is determined by information structure, plausibility, or other pragmatic principles. This phenomenon highlights the importance of understanding the mapping between semantic roles and syntactic expression in explaining locative event types cross-linguistically.

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has proposed a novel mathematical formalism of stative locative events in Vietnamese using the concepts of bijective and surjective mappings. Through exemplary analysis of authentic sentences, the classification of locative constructions based on Figure-Ground argument mapping reveals clear semantic differences between bijective and surjective events. The findings demonstrate how bijective locatives unambiguously map arguments one-to-one, while surjective locatives permit flexible many-to-one mappings between a Figure and multiple Grounds. This novel typology based on mapping surjectivity provides valuable insights into the determinism, ambiguity, and multiplicity encoded in Vietnamese spatial language. This research paper shows how the different parts of a language's vocabulary, its word meanings, the purpose of prepositions, and the building blocks of argument structure all work together to create spatial meanings. Using mathematical functions to look at locative meanings is one way to do this. To study static locative events across languages in the future, the integrated formal method that combines predicate logic, set theory, and grammar might be helpful. The bijective/surjective difference has made it much easier to understand the different types of stative locative events and how their syntax and meaning are put together.

In the future, the ramifications of these results will extend beyond the field of linguistics, with substantial applications in the fields of computational and theoretical languages, as well as neuroscience. Not only does this research contribute to our understanding of Vietnamese spatial language, but it also paves the way for cross-linguistic studies on how languages conceptualize and linguistically reflect persistent spatial relationships. This finding opens the door for more research into how natural languages think about and store long-lasting spatial relationships and configurations between things in a way that is both geometrical and linguistic.

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**Ly Ngoc Toan** is an esteemed teacher of English with over 25 years of experience. Holding a doctoral degree in English language, he currently serves as a faculty member at the University of Law. His primary interests lie in teaching and researching language, areas in which he has made significant contributions. His dedication to profession and passion for linguistic exploration have earned him widespread respect within the academic community.

# Student Engagement With Teacher Written Feedback in Online EFL Writing Context

Endar Rachmawaty Linuwih\*

Department of English Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia;  
English Department, Universitas Widya Kartika, Indonesia

Slamet Setiawan

Department of English Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

Ahmad Munir

Department of English Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

**Abstract**—Advanced technology offers new opportunities for language learning and teaching. Indeed, the way students receive the teacher's written feedback has adopted innovative technology in an online English as Foreign Language (EFL) writing context. This narrative inquiry investigates six Indonesian students' affective, behavioral, and cognitive engagement with written feedback provided by the teachers in the context of online EFL writing. Data analyzed was gathered from teacher-written comments mediated through the Ms. Word comment column and semi-structured interviews. The research has revealed that the students showed positive affective, behavioral, and cognitive engagement. In behavioral and cognitive engagement, the students show different ways to understand the teacher's written feedback, especially the indirect one, since the level of language proficiency among the students is different. The findings illustrate that the written feedback encourages the students to have a balanced emotion (affective engagement), learn to write collaboratively (behavioral engagement), and assist the students to enhance their writing (cognitive engagement). In conclusion, the findings lead to a greater understanding of how EFL students engage with written feedback from teachers in an online environment.

**Index Terms**—EFL writing, online context, student engagement, teacher feedback, written feedback

## I. INTRODUCTION

Writing feedback is essential for students in their writing process. Tai et al. (2015) discovered that teachers' written feedback significantly affects students' holistic writing abilities in content, organization, grammar, mechanics, and design. Hattie et al. (2021) conducted additional research and discovered that students who receive feedback show increased performance in their updated drafts and a greater comprehension of the writing skills needed to tackle more challenging writing tasks. Students that receive extended feedback respond more constructively, engage the assigned content, and subsequently make substantial changes to the text's arguments.

Students are critical to their learning and should, therefore, be actively engaged as feedback recipients. Many factors impact student engagement, such as support from teachers and peers, but only teachers' role significantly influences students' commitment to learning (Vayre & Vonthron, 2017). There have been numerous previous researches that interpreted students' engagement with written feedback as the perceptions of learners (Ferris, 1997; Lee, 2004), the consistency of revision (Razali & Jupri, 2014), implementation (Guo et al., 2014), and incorporation of feedback and self-checking (Ferris et al., 2012). Learner engagement with feedback refers to how students react to feedback (Ellis, 2010). Additionally, three perspectives on the subject were examined: affective, behavioral, and cognitive. Students' views regarding feedback are examined from an affective perspective. The behavioral perspective concerns students' responses to criticism and how and when they alter their responses. The cognitive perspective examines how students use their thinking assets to respond to feedback about their learning outcomes. According to Han and Hyland (2015), students' engagement with feedback entails affective, behavioral, and cognitive responses. According to previous studies, students' responses to teacher feedback are manifested in three dimensions: affection, behavior, and cognition. Under the theory framework, the three viewpoints are inextricably linked. The following figure describes the conceptual structure for learner engagement in response to teacher feedback.

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\* Corresponding Author.



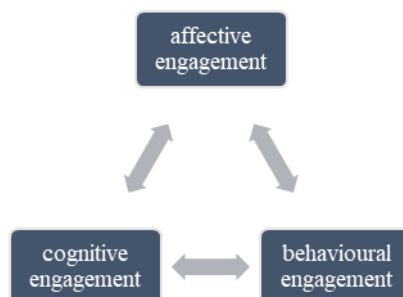


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework for Learner Engagement With Teacher Written Feedback

The conceptual framework presents that affective engagement equals students' attitudes (Martin & Rose, 2007), including affection, judgment, and appreciation. Ellis (2010) added that the affective perspective in student-teacher engagement could be seen from students' attitudinal response to the feedback. Martin and Rose (2002) elaborated on this point by stating that attitudinal responses fall into three categories: affection, which refers to expressing an emotion; judgment, which refers to judging character; and appreciation, which expresses the worth of things or individuals. In light of this, students' feelings and emotions conveyed in response to teacher feedback are referred to as affection (personal judgments of criticism or admiration), judgments (moral judgments of praise toward teacher feedback as the judgment), and appreciation (valuing the worth of teacher feedback).

Behavioral engagement with the teacher is considered the students' action when receiving the teacher's feedback. Numerous studies were conducted to see what the students do with the teacher feedback and the strategies in revising (Ferris et al., 2012; Hyland, 2003). Hyland (2003) revealed that behavioral engagement was manifested in students' textual changes comparing the student's original texts and revised ones. Ferris et al. (2012) interviewed students to elicit information about their strategies for editing texts in response to teacher feedback.

Cognitive engagement refers to the cognitive investment in handling teacher feedback (Ellis, 2010), demonstrated in an in-depth teacher feedback process to notice and understand the feedback. Students' cognitive engagement is essential to indicate students' cognitive operation. It teaches students how and to what degree their texts should be modified and how to modify them. Additionally, cognitive involvement can be observed in students' monitoring and regulating the mental effort required to respond to teacher feedback.

Several studies examined learners' engagement with automated written corrective feedback (Koltovskaia, 2020), teacher-written corrective feedback (Zheng & Yu, 2018; Han & Hyland, 2015), both peer and teacher-written feedback (Nguyen, 2021), both teacher and automated feedback (Zhang, 2017), student and teacher attitudes toward the written feedback (Cinkara & Galaly, 2018), and students' preferences for supervisors written feedback (Nurie, 2020). Given the numerous studies demonstrating the benefits of feedback in the language classroom, it becomes a vital stage in the writing process (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). This phase can help learners collaborate with teachers and improve their writing quality (Elfiyanto & Fukazawa, 2020).

Most previous research examined how learners engage with feedback in a classroom context. Teacher feedback engagement in an online EFL writing situation is under-researched. The emergence of digital technology has significantly influenced the tradition of providing written feedback through online means, impacting how classes operate, how teachers teach, and how students learn and benefit from educational tools. These examples demonstrate the importance of academic institutions in responding to such dynamic changes in education. As such, this study explores how learners engage with teacher-written feedback through an online platform.

## II. METHOD

This study aimed to establish students' engagement with written feedback from teachers. The teacher's written feedback was mediated asynchronously through the Ms. Word comment column. This present study used the narrative inquiry to reveal student engagement with teacher feedback on an online platform. Clandinin et al. (2007) stated that the design of a narrative inquiry study is used to gather information about someone's experiences. The design aided in obtaining the students' experience of engaging themselves with teacher written feedback mediated by an asynchronous online platform, and the experience was further analyzed profoundly and thoroughly.

This study involved six participants who wrote their thesis writing and applied mediated writing feedback in their thesis writing process in the academic year of 2019-2020. They were students of the English Department at a private university in Indonesia who finished their thesis in six months. The following table summarizes the students' demographic information who participated in the study.

TABLE 1  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants	Gender	Linguistics Background	Educational Background	Length of English Learning Experience
Learner 1	Male	East Javanese Central Javanese Indonesian	Undergraduate study	13 years
Learner 2	Male	East Javanese Indonesian Chinese	Undergraduate study	13 years
Learner 3	Male	East Javanese Indonesian	Undergraduate study	13 years
Learner 4	Female	West Javanese East Javanese Indonesian	Undergraduate study	13 Years
Learner 5	Male	Javanese Indonesian	Undergraduate study	13 years
Learner 6	Female	Javanese Indonesian	Undergraduate study	13 years

Semi-structured one-on-one interviews (in Bahasa Indonesia) were conducted to collect data. The interviews were performed for approximately 30-45 minutes, and the entire process was video recorded using ZOOM Cloud Meeting. Interview data aims to find out students' experiences with online teacher feedback. The directed questions were formed using the conceptual framework as a reference. During the interview, the participants were asked about their thesis writing process in terms of online written feedback.

The researchers transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews and had them proofread by a colleague. The data were analyzed using a conceptual framework for student engagement with teacher feedback. Initially, the data was coded using only engagement-related information. At the second level, the data were coded according to affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions, as well as sub-dimensions within each critical dimension.

### III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Findings

The conceptual framework of how students affectively engage with teacher written feedback examines students' affection, judgment, and appreciation. Affection deals with students' emotions and feelings when receiving teacher feedback to make revisions. In this study, every student expressed interest in receiving teacher feedback and engaging with online teacher feedback. Two students stated in the interview.

*I always look forward to feedback from the teacher. My teacher has read my written work, as shown by the given comments. I believe my efforts have been acknowledged, regardless of whether her feedback is positive. The experience of interacting with online writing feedback made it possible for me to practice collaborative writing, which encouraged me to continue to write and revise.*

*This is my first experience in doing online writing feedback, and it is completely different from what I have done before. I have to admit that there is a limitation in terms of communication compared to face-to-face discussion. However, I am getting used to it since the guidance provided by the teacher assists me in refining my paper, then I start enjoying it.*

The majority of students responded positively to receiving online feedback. They are grateful for the teacher's time spent providing feedback on the draft. The students stated that teachers should motivate them to write by mediated writing feedback. It enables them to collaborate on writing. They also admitted that the feedback was sufficient to help them learn to write. The discussion between the teachers and students about writing the context and evidence showed the engagement with the teacher in online feedback. As the teacher allowed the student to refine their writing, it made them self-regulated learners. As a result, the students kept writing their papers simultaneously.

On the other hand, one student responded with a slightly different attitude. She felt discouraged when the teacher marked similar grammar errors in their previous drafts. In this respect, it occurred to her that she did not make any progress. Thus, it made her frustrated. The student stated in the following report:

*It is hard for me to use gerund appropriately; sometimes, it is quite confusing to differentiate the verbs that must be followed by gerund or to-infinitive. My teacher has corrected the errors about gerunds in the previous draft, but I still repeated the errors. I think my grammar is very poor, and during the student-teacher engagement with online feedback, I feel that my grammar is still not good enough.*

Regarding judgment and appreciation as the other sub-dimension of affective engagement, the students involved their personal judgment of admiration or criticism toward mediated writing feedback. All students stated that the teacher's online feedback was working well, though they admitted it would have been better if the teachers provided more opportunities to have teacher-student virtual meetings, in which students can ask questions and receive oral feedback synchronously. In respect of the appreciation of online teacher feedback, the students expressed their admiration directly. One student's interview response seemed to represent the majority opinion.

*I really appreciate what my teacher has been doing regarding the feedback he provided. I think I am getting used to this mediated teacher feedback since we have been doing it for almost one semester. I think it is not a big deal for me to adopt this new normal version of receiving feedback, as the teacher gives us full support by responding to our draft accordingly.*

The response to the revision demonstrates a student's behavioral engagement with the teacher's written feedback. In revising, the student corrected the errors and modified the text. Using appropriate language use is a situation that is frequently encountered in writing. This result is in line with previous analysis (Nanda et al., 2016; Alharbi, 2019), which found that grammar errors in writing are still a major problem in the EFL context. All the students modified based on the received feedback in terms of textual modifications, even though some did not meet a teacher's expectations. In this regard, the interviews provided more perceptions that direct feedback performed better for successful modification than indirect teacher feedback. Arifin et al. (2019) stated that accurate revisions are best produced based on direct correction, and students find direct feedback the quickest and easiest way to revise the drafts. However, because indirect feedback requires a higher level of cognitive engagement to interpret the teacher input and a higher level of linguistic ability to self-edit, it would be more demanding for students to respond to indirect teacher feedback (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

In the interviews, the students stated that they used different strategies to improve both the English language competence and the accuracy of their draft, which also showed their behavioral engagement with mediated teacher feedback. Three students reported that they read through the text after looking at the highlighted words or phrases as the teacher's feedback when revising. They stated that they made the revisions under the suggestions made by the teachers. Two students shared their experience of revising their draft based on the mediated teacher feedback in the interview.

*I began my writing by composing the text in Bahasa Indonesia and then translating the words into English. My teacher sometimes commented, "This is Indonesian English" identifying the inappropriate words and language use. The teacher also provided some alternatives to make it English native-like, then I found it very helpful. Therefore, I revised all the words, phrases, and sentences that had received teacher feedback and replied to the teacher's comment in Ms. Word's comment column, clarifying that I had followed the suggestions.*

*When revising my draft, I also seek extra assistance by consulting the internet and friends. Sometimes, I also text my teacher directly since we cannot see each other in person to discuss my draft further.*

These interviews interpreted how the students were seeking extra assistance as a revision strategy. They might have different strategies for revising the draft, but they all do the revision suggested by the teacher. It indicated that they behaviorally engaged with the mediated teacher feedback.

The degree to which students engage with teacher feedback cognitively can be determined by using cognitive operations to process and refine their draft in response to the feedback received. Some students had difficulty comprehending the message conveyed by the teacher through indirect feedback. They were confused about revising as they thought they had provided sufficient information and details to support the sentences. One reported in the interview.

*Despite my best efforts, I was confused when the teacher marked the sentences and wrote "What does it mean?" I guess there is something unclear in my sentences, but I have no idea what I should exactly revise. Consequently, I did not modify the sentences in my second draft.*

Another student expressed confusion about one case of indirect teacher feedback. The teacher underlined the sentences then wrote, "A bridge is needed to connect these two sentences". Instead of adding a bridging sentence, she changed the whole sentence into the new one. This indicated the student's inadequate knowledge of context.

Although some students remarked that they could not fully understand the teacher's feedback, most of the students were engaged in collaborative writing through mediated writing feedback. The feedback helps them to generate ideas and develop their drafts. As the feedback is recorded in a written form in a soft file, it allows the students to have ample time to read the draft repeatedly to understand the received feedback better. When students processed mediated teacher feedback, it appeared as though they engaged in a variety of metacognitive processes to adapt their intellectual effort. They stated that they thoroughly revised the draft and made adjustments despite the fact that the correct forms were not provided because the teacher provided only indirect feedback. Additionally, they occasionally contacted the teacher directly to ensure that they made the appropriate revisions based on the indirect feedback obtained. They used their intellectual ability to connect the concepts and get a better grasp of the language.

The students' interviews revealed that they had different cognitive operation levels, but generally, their cognitive operation was moderate. Three students admitted that they focused on correcting the words, phrases, and sentences that the teacher had corrected. Two students conveyed their cognitive process during the interview as follows.

*I try to follow teacher's feedback to detect the errors effectively. So, I examined the feedback intensely and read the underlined passages.*

*I noticed the errors only from the words marked. Then I knew the correction must have been provided in the revised draft.*

A cognitive operation was conducted, but it was too general. The students did not mention specifically what to do with the received feedback. One student straightforwardly expressed that she consistently tried to understand what the teacher expected in the given feedback and how to do her revision accordingly in reading the teacher's feedback.

*I was thinking about what my teacher expected when I revised my draft. Was it acceptable? Why were some words crossed out? What did the teacher want me to explain by underlining some sentences? I had to read the incorrect sentences more to revise them.*

The student believed beyond the teacher's feedback and focused more on her teacher's intentions. Nonetheless, it was most likely due to her limited linguistic skills, as she often could not detect other errors in her draft when the teacher provided the indirect written feedback without providing the corrected version.

### *B. Discussion*

The students were encouraged to engage actively in receiving teacher feedback through the online platform. It is consistent with Vadia and Ciptaningrum's (2020) argument that teacher feedback in an online forum fosters communication and provides opportunities for meaningful English practice. It also encourages students to participate in the writing process by allowing them to revise (Ene & Upton, 2018). The engagement resulted in active participation and discussion, which led to the students engaging in reflective practice. Liu (2020) asserted that online feedback is less threatening and thus promotes student-teacher interaction. Mediated writing feedback provides interactive feedback to students, scaffolding their interaction. This study exposed the complexities of students' engagement with teacher feedback and offered new insights into the process by observing Indonesian EFL students as they dealt with online feedback on affective, behavioral, and cognitive levels.

From the affective perspective, most participants respected the teacher's time spent providing the mediated feedback online. The students also showed their positive attitude toward the engagement with the mediated teacher feedback. Most participants expressed appreciation for teacher feedback in the interviews: five students responded that teacher feedback was insightful and helped them revise their drafts. Only one student answered that she felt discouraged by the feedback received since she could not see the teacher's facial expression when she made the same errors. Although the majority praised the mediated feedback, the students also expected synchronous oral feedback, but the teacher did not fulfill the expectation due to the limited time and desire. Some of them realized that they only made little progress but could not find an alternative to improve.

Regarding the behavioral perspective, a noticeable engagement can be seen in the students' revised drafts. The students put some effort into error correction and language modification. Additionally, students' behavioral engagement with teacher feedback significantly resulted in better writing. Although some students had difficulty revising the draft if the feedback was absent or implicitly provided, they tried to find alternative assistance. Numerous students indicated that one of the obstacles to behavioral processes could be indirect feedback, but their solid linguistics knowledge enabled them to identify some faults or the target forms specified in the teacher's feedback. This may also result in successful adjustments. This means that, as indicated by their successful adjustments, the participants' language proficiency as an individual factor and mediated teacher feedback may have affected their behavioral engagement. It was also fascinating to see how the students revised the sentence level. Students recorded this because feedback included not only linguistic problems but also ideas and textual organization. The teacher's feedback practice seemed to interfere with the students' revision behaviors significantly.

In term of the cognitive perspective, most students did not encounter major difficulty in noticing the teacher feedback. They had sufficient knowledge to comprehend both direct and indirect feedback. The students demonstrated cognitive engagement with teacher feedback in order to participate in an online discussion (Guo et al., 2014). Writing feedback that was moderated encouraged students to write more efficiently. Creating ideas, drafting, writing, reviewing, revising, and publishing are all part of the writing process. It also provides students with guidance and effective revision of their thesis. Furthermore, online writing feedback had an impact on writing well.

According to Kadwa and Alshenqeeti (2020), linguistic competency is required to understand feedback, especially the indirect one. Direct feedback allows students to see the right forms and simply adapt them into the revised draft, whereas indirect feedback requires students to self-edit using their linguistic ability. As a result, in this current study, the students' adequate comprehension of feedback could be associated to their adequate linguistic competence, which enabled them to correct the ungrammatical patterns marked by the teacher. It is worth noting that many students misunderstood what the teacher was trying to express through indirect feedback. In this regard, other researchers, in their findings, discovered that students considered teacher feedback challenging (Nematzadeh & Siahpoosh, 2017; Henderson et al., 2019). Aside from the language competence discussed above, the current research found that the participants' behavioral participation affected their interpretation of teacher feedback. They sought more assistance in responding feedback and refining drafts. Confusion among the students could be overcome, and there was adequate knowledge.

The results of this study have three significant implications for increasing students' engagement with mediated teacher feedback. Firstly, the teachers should pay close attention to the feedback's explicitness to ensure that teacher-written feedback is thoughtfully given to students. The study discovered that a few students had cognitive difficulties interpreting the indirect feedback. Since they were unable to specifically communicate to the teacher what to do about the feedback, it is recommended that teachers take students' language proficiency into account, especially in an online writing class, when deciding whether feedback should be direct or indirect. Ferris et al. (2013) stated that teachers' explicit feedback is more beneficial to students' cognitive involvement.

Secondly, teacher feedback should be justified or clarified deliberately and thoroughly using a synchronous online platform to reduce confusion and encourage students' affective and cognitive engagement. They can do this by having Zoom cloud meetings or G meet directly with the students about feedback, especially the indirect ones. This virtual conference also allows students to clarify the feedback and develop an affective engagement with the teacher's feedback.

Thirdly, the findings suggest that students' training might be needed to respond to mediated teacher feedback affectively, cognitively, and behaviorally. During the training, the students should be reminded that teacher written feedback is intended to help them develop knowledge of error patterns and skills to self-edit to prevent certain forms of errors. Teachers may also guide students in having discussions in pairs or groups about their feedback. This task differs from peer reviews in that it allows students to explore the obtained feedback from various perspectives. As a result, students with varying levels of proficiency can learn from the exercise, especially the lower ones who can benefit from scaffolding from the higher ones. This scaffolding and peer sharing can help the students to become cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively engaged.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate students' engagement with written feedback in an EFL online context. The teacher provided feedback through mediated writing feedback. Using qualitative analysis, data from six university students and their drafts with teacher-written feedback were analyzed to determine how the students reacted affectively, behaviorally, and cognitively to teacher feedback on their English thesis writing. According to the report's findings, mediated writing input inspired and trained students to learn to write collaboratively. It also aided students in coming up with ideas for their writing. As a result, this feedback prepared students to learn to write using an online forum. This study also demonstrates the complexities of students' engagement with teacher feedback online, implying that students' linguistic competence can influence their cognitive and behavioral engagement with teacher feedback. Although most students demonstrated positive behavioral and cognitive engagement, two students demonstrated limited behavioral and cognitive engagement. Even though every effort was made to remove errors, this study had limitations. As a result, further research into this subject is highly recommended. Future studies could separate students into high and low-proficiency groups and evaluate their interaction with written input from teachers in the online writing setting. Finally, future research is planned to examine multiple approaches to providing feedback to students in order to improve their writing quality.

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**Endar Rachmawaty Linuwih** is a lecturer at English Department of Universitas Widya Kartika Surabaya. She is currently doing her Doctorate Degree in English language and literature education at Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Her research is situated in the field of English teaching with special focus on the teaching of specific skills.

**Slamet Setiawan** is a professor of linguistics at Universitas Negeri Surabaya's English Department. He earned a B.A. in English Language Teaching from Universitas Negeri Surabaya, an MA in English Language Teaching from the University of Auckland in New Zealand, and a Ph.D. in English Language Teaching from the University of Western Australia (both in Linguistics). As a result of his educational background, he is interested in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics (English Language Teaching). *Heliyon*, *Asian EFL Journal*, *Asian ESP Journal*, *GJAT: Global Journal of Al-Thafaqah*, *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature*, *LLR: Language Related Research*, *TESOL International Journal*, and *CALL-EJ* have all published his works.

**Ahmad Munir** Ahmad Munir is a lecturer at Universitas Negeri Surabaya's Postgraduate School. He earned master's and doctoral degrees in English language education from Monash University. His research interests include the education of English teachers and classroom conversation. He is now the head of Universitas Negeri Surabaya's graduate English teacher education program.

# Binding in Najdi Arabic: Types of Reflexives, the Argument Structure of Reflexive Constructions and Possessive Reflexives\*

Asma I. Alowayed

Department of English Language and Literature, College of Languages & Humanities, Qassim University, Buraidah, 51452, Saudi Arabia

Yasser A. Albaty<sup>1</sup>

Department of English Language and Literature, College of Languages & Humanities, Qassim University, Buraidah, 51452, Saudi Arabia

**Abstract**—The present paper investigates reflexives in Najdi Arabic (NA). We start by examining how the encoding of reflexivity in NA can be attained lexically, morphologically, and syntactically. We also investigate the argument structure of reflexive constructions in NA in accordance with Reinhart and Siloni's (2005) bundling approach. Finally, possessive reflexives and their cross-linguistic distribution with definiteness marking are examined, providing empirical coverage to this area in NA.

**Index Terms**—reflexives, locality, argument structure, theoretical study, Arabic syntax

## I. INTRODUCTION

The present paper examines reflexives in Najdi Arabic (henceforth, NA), a dialect spoken by about ten million people in central Saudi Arabia (Lewis, 2013). NA has various dialects, one of which is the Qassimi dialect, which is the focus of this research.

Reflexives are a subset of anaphors which are “referentially defective elements that must depend on a linguistically expressed antecedent for their interpretation” (Reuland, 2017). Cross-linguistically, languages differ on how to treat reflexives. In this paper, we intend to investigate reflexives in NA by answering the following questions: a) how they are encoded; lexically, morphologically, and syntactically, b) what is their argument structure, and c) whether or not they are permitted in possessive constructions.

The linguistic theory over the last fifty years has paid close attention to the study of anaphoric relationships, which has in turn influenced syntactic theorizing. Not only is this work relevant to general theories of anaphors cross-linguistically, but it may also enrich the literature on reflexives in various Arabic dialects. This, in turn, can help to make broader generalizations about the consistency and inconsistency of reflexive properties specifically across Arabic dialects. This work serves to fill this gap by investigating reflexives in NA, a dialect which to my knowledge has not yet been investigated in this regard.

The present paper is structured as follows. Section 2 gives an overview of previous studies related to the topic. Section 3 discusses in detail the three strategies of encoding reflexivity in NA. Section 4 investigates the argument structure of reflexive constructions. Section 5 discusses possessive reflexives in NA. Finally, section 6 provides a final summary of the paper.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. A Typology of Reflexives

The term *anaphor* is used to refer to reflexives and reciprocals, two different and yet related linguistic concepts. As demonstrated in (1a), a reflexive is typically used to refer to an action that has been carried out on oneself. Conversely, a reciprocal can be described as “one in which there are two participants, A and B, and where the relation in which A stands to B is the same as that in B stands to A” (Lichtenberk, 1985, p. 21). This is shown in (1b).

1)

- a. Mark<sub>i</sub> hit himself<sub>i</sub>.
- b. The boys<sub>i</sub> hit each other<sub>i</sub>.

According to Reuland (2006), world's languages use two types of reflexives: simplex reflexives (SE-reflexives) and complex reflexives. A SE-reflexive is defined as “a non-clitic pronoun that lacks a gender and number specification and

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Author. Email: [ybty@qu.edu.sa](mailto:ybty@qu.edu.sa)

is thus deficient in phi-features” (Reuland, 2006, p. 271). According to Reinhart and Reuland (1993), SE-reflexives are exempt from principle A of the BT, and if the predicate is not intrinsically reflexive, they cannot grant a verb a reflexive interpretation on their own. Among other languages, SE-reflexives are found in Dutch such as *zich* ‘himself’, and in Scandinavian such as *seg* ‘themselves’ (Volkova & Reuland, 2014). Complex reflexives on the other hand consist of two parts; a pronoun or simplex reflexive, and another element. One type of complex reflexive is SELF-reflexives such as *himself* in English, *zichzelf* ‘himself’ in Dutch, or *sjálfan sig* ‘yourself’ in Icelandic, etc. Arabic language uses SELF-complex reflexives (*nāfs*-pronoun) as shown in (2). Consequently, NA also uses SELF-complex reflexives as shown in (3).

- 2) Nourah<sub>i</sub> tūheboi **nāfsāhæ**  
Nourah loves herself  
‘Nourah loves herself.’
- 3) Nourah tūhib nāfsāh  
Nourah loves herself  
‘Nourah loves herself.’

Haspelmath (2019) describes reflexive constructions as a grammatical structure employed when two clause participants share a coreference that must be conveyed by a “reflexivizer”. He then divides reflexivizers into three types that are found in many languages around the world: reflexive nominals (or pronouns), reflexive voice markers (verbal affixes), and reflexive argument markers, which are “very similar to object person indexes in that they occur in the same paradigmatic slot as the person index and cannot cooccur with a person index of the same role” (p. 8).

Reflexivity can be encoded lexically in addition to being represented syntactically (that is, one of the predicate arguments is a SELF-anaphor) or by morphologically marking the predicate. Certain verbs may be intrinsically reflexive; these verbs are also known as lexical reflexives or intrinsically reflexive verbs. This type of reflexivity occurs when a verb, like *behave*, *disgrace*, or *betake* in English, is syntactically transitive yet semantically intransitive, as Buring (2005) noted. Other naturally reflexive verbs, such as English grooming verbs like *wash* and *shave* are syntactically intransitive but semantically transitive. Usually, this kind of verb indicates self-directed actions.

#### B. Argument Structure of Reflexives

A long-going debate in the literature has been about whether to treat reflexive verbs (lexical and morphological reflexives) as intransitive or not. One treatment of reflexive verbs is that of Reinhart and Siloni’s (2005) where they argue against the unaccusative approach of reflexives, instead, they offer to treat such verbs as being detransitivized through the *Bundling* operation developed by Reinhart (2002) and Reinhart and Siloni (2005). Through this operation, they assume that the  $\theta$ -role of the verb’s internal argument is bundled with the  $\theta$ -role of the verb’s external argument.

Against the bundling approach, Doron and Hovav (2007) argue that the complex  $\theta$ -role assigned to the verb’s internal argument should not allow an independent focus on one of the two  $\theta$ -roles, however, they argue that this is not the case.<sup>2</sup> For instance, in the German example in (4) an independent focus on the agent or the theme can be achieved in a reflexive context.

- 4) Morgens wäscht sie sich immer/erst mal selber.  
at.morning washes she REFL always/first-of-all self  
(i) agent focus: She washes herself, no-one else washes her. (context: She is a disabled patient.)  
(ii) theme focus: She washes herself, she washes no-one else. (context: She is a nurse.)

(Schäfer, 2012, p. 17)

While Reinhart and Siloni’s (2005) approach does not treat SE-reflexives and clitics as anaphors, Doron and Hovav (2007) conclude that as in German (and French) verbs have a transitive derivation where the pronoun/clitic serve as an anaphor argument that bears the internal  $\theta$ -role.

#### C. Possessive Reflexives

Some languages allow reflexive possessives, whereas others do not. Reuland (2007, 2011) attributes such difference to definiteness. He argues that reflexive possessives are only possible in languages that lack definiteness marking or encode definiteness postnominally. For instance, English encodes definiteness prenominally as in (5a), whereas languages that lack definiteness marking such as Swedish allow possessive reflexives, as illustrated in (5b).

- 5)
  - a. \*Mike likes himself’s boss.
  - b. John<sub>i</sub> angrep **sina**/**\*hans**<sub>i</sub> vänner. (Swedish)  
John attacked self’s/his friends  
‘John attacked his friends.’

(Kiparsky, 2002, p. 16)

<sup>2</sup> Here, Doron and Hovav’s (2007) argument is against the bundling approach in ‘syntax-languages’.



### III. REFLEXIVE TYPES IN NA

This section investigates the strategies used in Najdi Arabic (NA) to encode reflexivity: lexical, morphological, and syntactic. In lexical reflexivization, the reflexive reading is inherent in the verb, whereas in morphological reflexivization, reflexivity is obtained through attaching special reflexive morphemes to the verb. In syntactic reflexivization, complex reflexives are used to encode reflexivity. In addition to these three strategies, cross-linguistically, reflexivity can be encoded through numerous and varying strategies (see Faltz, 1977; Geniušienė, 1987; Heine & Miyashita, 2008; Reinhart & Reuland, 1993; Schladt, 2000). For instance, Schladt (2000) offered an overview of 147 languages, all of which require special marking of reflexivity through techniques such as clitics, verbal affixes, duplication of the bound element, or even the embedding of the bound element within a PP.

The following three sub-sections show how reflexivity in NA is encoded lexically, morphologically, and syntactically.

#### A. Reflexive Types in NA

Reflexivity can be encoded lexically when a verb inherently encodes a semantic reflexive reading. This way of reflexivizing involves no overt encoding of the verb except that of the inherent semantic argument. This mode is found in English, as demonstrated by examples (6):

- 6)
- a. The man behaved.
  - b. The man shaved.
  - c. The man bathed.

As shown above, no additional marking of the verb was added to indicate reflexivity. All the examples in (6) imply only one reading, that *the man* performed the action to himself (e.g., *The man behaved himself*). NA permits lexical reflexivization in a few cases, as illustrated in (7):

- 7)
- a. Omar həllæg.  
Omar shaved.  
'Omar shaved.'
  - b. Omar ɣæssæl  
Omar washed  
'Omar washed.'

As shown in the examples in (7), each sentence can be read reflexively with no overt encoding. In other words, both verbs may take *himself* as an uninterpreted internal argument. Note that the verbs here are used as semantically transitive but syntactically intransitive, which has been described by Reinhard and Siloni (2005) as *lexical bundling*. Nonetheless, these verbs may also be used as two-place predicates when a direct object is used overtly, which in turn may or may not reflect a reflexive reading (e.g., it may take an independent NP or a referential NP 'SELF-reflexive' as an object), as shown, respectively, in (8).

- 8)
- a. Omar<sub>i</sub> həllæg nəfsuh<sub>i</sub>.  
Omar shaved himself  
'Omar shaved himself.'
  - b. Omar ɣæssæl Muhammad.  
Omar washed Muhammad  
'Omar washed Muhammad.'

Sportiche (2023) has argued that lexical reflexives are not transformed into intransitive verbs. In English, for example, the verb *wash*—as in *Charles washed*—is not a transitive verb that is turned into the intransitive reflexive verb *wash<sub>R</sub>*, according to Sportiche. Instead, Sportiche (2023, p. 25) suggested that verbs, when used reflexively, involve a canonical body part and that this body part denoting the noun joins and remains (recoverably) silent. However, Sportiche did not discuss verbs such as *behave*, where the verb clearly denotes only a reflexive reading and yet cannot take a canonical body part, covertly or overtly. This situation is illustrated in (9).

- 9)
- a. The man behaved.
  - b. The man behaved himself.
  - c. \*The man behaved his body.

As shown in (9), *behave* can only imply a reflexive reading, either by using the lexical reflexive verb alone, as in (9a), or by adding a SELF-reflexive, as in (9b). It cannot, however, either covertly or overtly take a body part as an argument.

To sum up, NA uses lexical reflexives that denote an inherent reflexive reading with no additional markers on the verb. Nonetheless, NA does not have solely lexical reflexive verbs (such as *behave* in English) but instead uses transitive verbs that can bear a reflexive interpretation (such as *washed* in English). Such verbs are typically grooming verbs that occur without complex reflexives unless needed for clarification (i.e., to avoid confusion if there is a contrastive situation in which the act might have been performed on someone else).

### B. Morphological Reflexives

Reflexivity can be obtained by marking a verb morphologically. The Arabic language allows reflexivization through the attachment of reflexive morphemes to verbs (see Al-Raba'a, 2017; Glanville, 2018; Holes, 2004; Ryding, 2005; Wright & Caspari, 1896). Building upon Haspelmath (1990), Glanville (2018) introduced a likely path for the development of the two Arabic reflexive morphemes /t/ and /n/, proposing that these two morphemes were once full reflexives appearing in conjunction with unmarked verbs; over time, they became phonetically reduced and attached to verbs (probably derived from *šiat* 'self' and *nafs* 'spirit, self') (p. 52). In contrast, whereas Glanville (2018) considered reflexive morphemes in Arabic to comprise only /t/ and /n/, Al-Raba'a (2017) asserted that Arabic has four reflexive morphemes: the prefix /ta/ and the infixes /t/, /n/, and /st/. In this section, we adopt Al-Raba'a's classification of the Arabic reflexive morphemes, as it is more precise and will thus allow for a more detailed investigation.

First, NA employs the morphological encoding of reflexivity by attaching the morpheme /tæ/ to the verb, which could also be changed to /ti/ due to phonological changes in NA. Consider the examples in (10):

10)

- a. Nourah **tæ**rawwæfæt.  
Nourah <sub>REFL</sub>.bathed  
'Nourah bathed herself.'
- b. Omar **ti**læbbæs  
Omar <sub>REFL</sub>.dressed  
'Omar dressed himself.'
- c. Nourah **ti**ʔddæbæt  
Nourah <sub>REFL</sub>.behaved  
'Nourah behaved herself.'

The morphemes /tæ/ and /ti/ in (10) assign a reflexive reading to the verb. Those reflexive marked verbs indicate an action done to oneself (i.e., the subject) in which the morpheme takes the role of the object of the unmarked verb and assigns it to the subject. Therefore, all reflexive marked verbs are intransitive verbs (for additional discussion on this matter see Section 4). As reported in Ryding (2005) and Wright and Caspari (1896) for MSA and CA, in NA the verbs in (10) carry the reflexive reading from the verb form 5 in Arabic '*taCIVC2C2VC3*', which is derived from form 2 '*CIVC2C2VC3V*'.

Second, verbs in NA can also be reflexively marked via the morpheme /t/. The examples in (11) illustrate this process:

11)

- a. Omar ʔirttæz  
Omar <sub>REFL</sub>.postured  
'Omar postured himself.'
- b. Nourah ʔintæhræt  
Nourah <sub>REFL</sub>.killed  
'Nourah killed herself.'
- c. Omar ʔiytisæl  
Omar <sub>REFL</sub>.showered  
'Omar showered.'

In (11), the morpheme /t/ is used to mark the object role of the unmarked verb. Moreover, as reported in Ryding (2005) and Wright and Caspari (1896) for MSA and CA, in NA the verbs in (11) are form 8 in Arabic, '*ʔiC1tVC2VC3V*'. The prefixation of 'ʔi' in the verb form 8 is due to the infixation of 't', as it separates the first radical from its vowel (Wright & Caspari, 1896, p. 41).

Third, reflexivization may occur in NA via the incorporation of the morpheme /n/. This process is exemplified in (12):

12)

- a. Nourah ʔinsæhbæt  
Nourah <sub>REFL</sub>.withdrew  
'Nourah withdrew.'
- b. Omar ʔinzæwæ  
Omar <sub>REFL</sub>.set aside  
'Omar set himself aside.'

The morpheme /n/ can also assign a reflexive reading to the verb, as it takes the object role of the unmarked verb and assigns it to the subject. Also, as reported in Ryding (2005) and Wright and Caspari (1896) for MSA and CA, in NA the verbs in (12) are form 7 in Arabic, '*ʔnC1VC2VC3V*'. The 'ʔ' is added to form 7 after the infixation of *n*- as consonant clusters are not allowed to ease its pronunciation (Wright & Caspari, 1896, p. 40).

Last, verbs in NA can be reflexively marked via the morpheme /st/. Consider the examples provided in (13):

13)

- a. Nourah ʔistæslæmæt  
Nourah <sub>REFL</sub>.surrendered  
'Nourah surrendered herself.'

- b. Omar ʔistæʃæd  
Omar<sub>REFL</sub> prepared  
'Omar prepared himself.'

The morpheme /st/ inserted into the verbs in (13) entails a reflexive interpretation. The verbs in (13) are form 10 in Arabic, 'ʔistVC1C2VC3V' as reported in Ryding (2005) and Wright and Caspari (1896) for MSA and CA. In (13a), the form 10 verb is considered to be the reflexive of the form 2 verb, 'C1VC2C2VC3V', whereas the form 10 in (13b) is considered to be the reflexive of form 4, 'ʔaC1C2VC3V' (Ryding, 2005; Wright & Caspari, 1896).

Note that reflexive morphemes cannot be treated as distinct objects; however, they do express an inherent reflexive semantic that they assign to the verb. To support this argument, Doron (2003) performed the linguistic test illustrated in (14) on the reflexive morpheme *hit-* in Hebrew:

- 14)  
a. *dani raxac et ackmo*  
Dani washed ACC himself  
b. *dani hitraxac*  
Dani washed-MID

(Doron, 2003, p. 58)

According to Doron, (14a) can be used to describe a situation in which *Dani* washed a wax figure of himself, whereas the morphologically reflexive verb in (14b) cannot denote the same reading. Therefore, reflexive morphemes cannot be used as arguments, and hence, they do not denote an object role. Accordingly, a distinction must be drawn between reflexivization within a clause using a complex reflexive and that within a verb using a reflexive morpheme. Such conclusion applies to NA as the example in (15a) can describe a situation where Omar bathed a wax figure of himself, whereas the morphologically reflexive verb in (15b) cannot describe the same situation.

- 15)  
a. Omar rawwæʃ næʃsuh  
Omar bathed himself  
'Omar bathed himself.'  
b. Omar tærawwæʃ  
Omar<sub>REFL</sub> bathed  
'Omar bathed himself.'

In addition to the reflexive interpretations they assign to verbs, reflexive morphemes can also appear with other verb constructions. Cross-linguistically, the same reflexive morphology (verbal affixes and clitics) can appear with unaccusatives, subject-Experiencer verbs, middles, impersonals, or passives (see, e.g., Chierchia, 2004; Koontz-Garboden, 2007, 2009; Reinhart & Siloni, 2005). To illustrate such possibilities, consider the examples in (16):

- 16)  
a. baagil-u muchi-koND-itu  
*door-NOM close-PP-REFL.PST-3SN*  
The door closed. (Kannada)

- b. Si mangia le mele.  
*SI* eats the apples  
'One eats the apples' (Lidz, 2001, p. 2)  
(Italian)

(Reinhart & Siloni, 2005, p. 2)

In Kannada, the reflexive morpheme *koND* is used with decausatives, as in (16a). Moreover, in Italian, the reflexive clitic *si* is used with impersonals, as in (16b). The same occurs in NA, which is demonstrated by the examples in (17).

- 17)  
a. Al-bæ:b ʔmʃæk  
The-door closed  
'The door closed.'  
b. Omar ʔixtɪfæ  
Omar disappeared  
'Omar disappeared.'

In (17a), the reflexive morpheme *n* is used with an unaccusative verb. In (17b), the reflexive morpheme *t* is used with a mediopassive verb.<sup>3</sup>

In conclusion, NA allows reflexivization via the four reflexive morphemes /tæ/, /t/, /n/, and /st/, although these reflexive morphemes do not seem to be limited solely to assigning the reflexive interpretation to the verb.

### C. Syntactic Reflexives

A third strategy to encode reflexivity in NA is the use of SELF-reflexives. Arabic uses several different forms of reflexives, such as *næʃs* 'self', *ðæ:t* 'spirit', *ʃaien* 'eye', and *ru:h* 'soul', although *næʃs* 'self' and *ru:h* 'soul' are the most

<sup>3</sup> For further discussion on reflexives and unaccusatives, see Chierchia (2004).

frequently used forms in NA.<sup>4</sup> The use of SELF-reflexives allows the verb to have two coreferential arguments, one of them being the SELF-reflexive. Consider the examples in (18) for illustration:

18)

- a. Omar<sub>i</sub> rawwæf **næfsuh<sub>i</sub>**.  
Omar bathed himself  
'Omar bathed himself.'
- b. Nourah<sub>i</sub> tihb **næfsæh<sub>i</sub>**.  
Nourah loves herself  
'Nourah loves herself.'
- c. al-ʕyæ:l<sub>i</sub> fæ:fæw **anfushum<sub>i</sub>** bæ-l-mræjæh.  
The boys saw themselves in the-mirror  
'The boys saw themselves in the mirror.'

Each sentence in (18) has a predicate with two coreferential arguments, one of which is the complex SELF-reflexive as indicated by the indices, and each of these arguments bears a semantic role. SELF-reflexives are dependent on another NP for their interpretation and can never be referentially independent.

So far, we have discussed the different strategies for encoding reflexivity in NA. One point remaining is how such strategies may be combined. It is allowed to combine lexical and syntactic encoding while constructing a sentence, but this is not the case with reflexively encoded verbs. As examples, consider the sentences in (19):

19)

- a. Omar<sub>i</sub> hællæg (**næfsuh<sub>i</sub>**).  
Omar shaved himself.  
'Omar shaved himself.'
- b. \*Nourah<sub>i</sub> **tærawwæfæt næfsæh<sub>i</sub>**.  
Nourah<sub>REFL</sub> bathed herself  
'Nourah bathed herself.'

As shown in (19), lexical and syntactic combination is allowed, as in (19a). However, the combination of the syntactic and morphological encoding of reflexivity is not allowed, as shown in (19b).

#### IV. THE ARGUMENT STRUCTURE OF REFLEXIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN NA

In this section, we discuss the argument structure associated with the three reflexive constructions used in NA: syntactical, morphological, and lexical. The term *argument structure* here refers to the syntactic configurations that are projected by a lexical entry—in other words, the lexical representation of the syntactic properties of a predicate (Grimshaw, 1990; Hale & Keyser, 1998). The arguments of a predicate can be external or internal, depending on their position relative to the scope of the predicate. In other words, internal arguments are within the scope of the predicate, whereas external arguments are not. Moreover, external arguments occupy a higher position within the argument structure, as they are the most prominent; in contrast, the prominence of internal arguments depends on their relationship to one another. Universally, the organization of the argument array is determined by the semantics of the arguments. Thus, argument structures are constructed correspondingly to the thematic hierarchy, where Agent is the highest argument, followed by Experiencer, then Goal/Source/Location, and, lastly, Theme (Grimshaw, 1990).

The argument structure of syntactic complex reflexives is generally straightforward, as it is the most productive way to produce reflexivity. A syntactic reflexive is an internal argument of a transitive verb, where its subject—the external argument—is the binder of the reflexive. Consider the example in (20):

- 20) Nourah<sub>i</sub> tihb **næfsæh<sub>i</sub>**.  
Nourah loves herself  
'Nourah loves herself.'

The verb *tēheb* 'loves' is a transitive verb that requires two arguments: the subject *Nourah* as its external argument and the object *næfsæh* 'herself' as its internal argument.

For morphological and lexical reflexives, however, this is not the case.<sup>5</sup> Consider the sentences from NA given in (21):

21)

- a. Al-ʕjæl yæssælæw  
The-boys cleaned  
'The boys cleaned themselves.'
- b. Al-ʕjæl tarawwæfæw  
The-boys<sub>REFL</sub> showered  
'The boys showered themselves.'

<sup>4</sup> Note that *næfs* 'self' can also mean 'the same'.

<sup>5</sup> In the literature, lexical and morphological reflexives are often referred to as *natural* reflexives (Reinhart & Siloni 2005; Alexiadou et al., 2014 among others).

In (21), the examples project a reflexive interpretation without the use of argument binding, hence making them SELF-reflexive. Consequently, the question arises of how to account for the reflexive interpretation. Moreover, is the syntactically unrealized argument available semantically or eliminated altogether? The literature includes numerous proposals seeking to explain how reflexivity is encoded without the use of reflexive pronouns (i.e., SELF-reflexives).

Reinhart and Siloni (2005) established a theory in which valence changes under a lex(icon)-syn(tactic) parameter, where operations on the syntactic valence of the verb can be applied in the syntax or the lexicon. The lex-syn parameter is presented in (22).

## 22) The Lex-Syn Parameter

UG allows thematic arity operations to apply in the lexicon or in the syntax.

(Reinhart & Siloni, 2005, p. 10)

According to Reinhart and Siloni (2005), Romance languages are syntactic languages, whereas Semitic languages are lexicon languages; thus, in Arabic—a Semitic language—the reflexivization operation takes place in the lexicon. They have argued that in the reflexivization operation, no  $\theta$ -role is eliminated, unlike the case with decausativization. In decausativization, an entry is derived by an arity operation from a basic transitive entry, with its external role fully eliminated. To support this conclusion, it has been widely assumed that an unaccusative entry, such as that in (23a), is derived from the basic transitive entry *melt* by an arity operation, yet its external role is fully eliminated (Burzio, 1986; Chierchia, 2004; Levin & Rappaport, 1994; Reinhart, 1996, 2002). In contrast to (23a), (23b) shows a passive entry that is derived by an arity operation from a transitive entry, where its blocked argument is still available semantically (Reinhart & Siloni, 2005):

## 23)

- a. The ice<sub>i</sub> melted  $t_i$  (\*with a candle).
- b. The ice<sub>i</sub> was melted  $t_i$  (with a candle).

(Reinhart & Siloni, 2005, p. 10)

To test this assumption, an instrument can be licensed only with the passive derivation, where the Agent role is available semantically. In contrast, with the unaccusative derivation, no instrument can be licensed, as the external role of the transitive entry is completely eliminated, as illustrated in (23) (Reinhart & Siloni, 2005). Given this situation, it becomes clear that an argument can be eliminated syntactically and semantically. The reflexivization operation, however, does not eliminate a  $\theta$ -role; instead, it only disables the argument assigned to this role syntactically, while it is still realized semantically.

Chierchia (2004) presented a different view of the reflexivization operation. According to Chierchia, the external remaining role of lexical and morphological reflexives is not a simple Agent but an Agent that operates on itself—that is, an Agent that is also a Theme, while eliminating the internal role altogether. Nonetheless, under Chierchia's view, the Theme role is not actually fully eliminated. Accordingly, Reinhart and Siloni's (2005) view of the reflexivization operation appears to be more explicit.

Reinhart and Siloni (2005) referred to an operation called *bundling*, arguing that under reflexivization, two  $\theta$ -roles are taken to form one complex  $\theta$ -role, the external  $\theta$ -role, as defined in (24).

## 24) Reflexivization Bundling

$[\theta_i] [\theta_j] \rightarrow [\theta_i\text{-}\theta_j]$ , where  $\theta_i$  is an external  $\theta$ -role.

(Reinhart & Siloni, 2005, p. 12)

Giving that the bundling operation enables two  $\theta$ -roles to be assigned to one syntactic argument, Reinhart and Siloni (2005) summarized the reflexivization operation as stated in (25):

## 25) Reflexivization in the Lexicon

- a. Bundling: Reflexivization bundling applies to the verb's  $\theta$ -grid.
- b. Case: The accusative Case feature of the verb is reduced.

(Reinhart & Siloni, 2005, p. 13)

As an example of this reflexivization operation, Reinhart and Siloni (2005) presented its effect on the verb entry *wash*, given in (26):

## 26)

- a. Verb entry: wash<sub>ACC</sub> [Agent] [Theme]
- b. Reflexivization output: wash [Agent-Theme]
- c. Syntactic output: Max<sub>[Agent-Theme]</sub> washed.

(Reinhart & Siloni, 2005, p. 13)

In accordance with this view, in NA, lexical and morphological reflexives do not eliminate their internal argument, and the reflexive reading is applied through a reflexivization operation where the  $\theta$ -role of the syntactically unrealized internal argument is bundled with the  $\theta$ -role of the external argument to form one complex external  $\theta$ -role, this is illustrated in (27). Finally, the presence of the verbal morphology is a sign that an arity operation is applied to the verb's  $\theta$ -grid.

## 27)

- a. Omar     yæssæl  
Omar     washed

- ‘Omar washed.’
- b. Verb entry: *yasi:l* [Agent] [Theme]
  - c. Reflexivization output: *yasi:l* [Agent-Theme]
  - d. Syntactic output: Omar<sub>[Agent-Theme]</sub> *yæssæl*.

## V. POSSESSIVE REFLEXIVES IN NA

In some languages, contrast is drawn between direct objects and direct object adnominal possessors (Haspelmath, 2008). Consider the examples in (28) and (29):<sup>6</sup>

28)

- a. Bob<sub>i</sub> admires (himself<sub>i</sub> / \*him<sub>i</sub>).
- b. Bob<sub>i</sub> admires (his<sub>i</sub> / \*himself's) boss.

(Haspelmath, 2008, p. 40)

29)

- a. Ali-diz (wič<sub>i</sub> / \*am<sub>i</sub>) akuna.  
Ali-DAT self him saw  
‘Ali saw himself.’
- b. Ali-diz (wič-in<sub>i</sub> / \*adan<sub>i</sub>) ruš akuna.  
Ali-DAT self-GEN him girl saw  
‘Ali<sub>i</sub> saw his<sub>i</sub> daughter.’

(Lezgian)

(Haspelmath, 1993, pp. 408–414)

As illustrated by (28a), English uses reflexive pronouns as direct objects when a coreference relation with the subject is projected. However, when the object is an adnominal possessor, a reflexive pronoun is not licensed, as shown in (28b). In contrast, other languages such as Lezgian require reflexive pronouns in both constructions—direct object and adnominal possessor—as shown in (29) (Haspelmath, 2008). Reuland (2007, 2011) attributed such distinctions between languages to definiteness, asserting that languages that lack definiteness marking or encode definiteness postnominally allow reflexive possessives, whereas languages with prenominal definiteness marking do not allow reflexive possessives. Reuland (2011) observed this phenomenon in a subset of several Indo-European languages, including Dutch, English, German, Italian, Modern Greek, and Spanish, which lack reflexive possessives and mark definiteness prenominally. Other languages, such as Bulgarian, Icelandic, Romanian, Latin, and Russian, allow reflexive possessives but either lack definiteness marking or mark it postnominally. Supporting Reuland's observation, Despić (2011, 2015) conducted a survey of languages outside of the Indo-European family in which the same distinction has been found. For instance, languages such as Afrikaans, Frisian, and Misantra do not allow reflexive possessives because they mark definiteness prenominally, whereas languages such as Danish, Chinese, Malayalam, and Turkish allow possessive reflexives since they either lack definiteness marking or mark it postnominally.

Given this cross-linguistic distinction of reflexive possessives, Arabic—and, by extension, NA—falls within the group of languages that lack reflexive possessives because they mark definiteness prenominally. As an illustration, consider the example in (30), where al- ‘the’ is used to mark definiteness prenominally in NA:

- 30) Al-bint qiræt al-ktæb  
The-girl<sub>Def</sub> read the-book<sub>Def</sub>  
‘The girl read the book.’

NA also draws a distinction between direct objects and direct object adnominal possessors, as suggested by the examples in (31):

31)

- a. Omar<sub>i</sub> jħīb(\*-uh<sub>i</sub> / næfsuh<sub>i</sub>).  
Omar loves -him<sub>i</sub> himself  
‘Omar<sub>i</sub> loves himself<sub>i</sub>.’
- b. Omar<sub>i</sub> jħīb s<sup>ç</sup>idi:g(-uh<sub>i</sub> / \*næfsuh<sub>i</sub>).  
Omar loves friend-his / himself  
‘Omar<sub>i</sub> loves his<sub>i</sub> friend.’

As shown in (31), NA follows Reuland's (2007, 2011) cross-linguistic classification of possessive reflexives, as it distinguishes between direct objects and direct object adnominal possessors, where a reflexive pronoun is not permitted in possessive constructions. Nonetheless, there are situations in NA in which this distinction is not applied. Consider the examples in (32):

- 32) Allah jækfi:k<sub>i</sub> ʃʃær næfsik<sub>i</sub>  
Allah protect-you evil yourself  
‘May Allah protect you from the evil of yourself.’

In (32), a reflexive is used in a possessive construction even though NA does not allow possessive reflexives because it marks definiteness prenominally. To the best of my knowledge, similar cases have not been observed in other

<sup>6</sup> The original arrangement of the examples has been changed for consistency.

languages that do not permit reflexive possessives. Nonetheless, we assume that the reflexive ‘*næfs*’ in (32) is not treated as a reflexive pronoun but as a separate spiritual entity—that is, it is treated the same as any other part of the body. Consider the examples in (33):

33)

- a. Hæ:ðæ: xæ:tæm ʔsʔbɪ-i: a-sʔi:ɪ:r  
This ring finger-my the-little  
‘This is my little finger ring.’
- b. ʃelt ʃæʃær ʔi:ð-i:  
removed hair arm-my  
‘I removed my arm hair.’

In (33a), the body part ‘*ʔsʔbɪ*’ ‘finger’ is the possessor and ‘*xætæm*’ ‘ring’ is the possessee, while in (33b) ‘*ʔi:ð*’ ‘arm’ is the possessor and ‘*ʃæʃær*’ ‘hair’ is the possessee. The same, we argue, applies to ‘*næfs*’ ‘self’ in (32), where it is the possessor and ‘*ʃʃær*’ is the possessee. Moreover, ‘*næfs*’ possessive constructions are only permitted with intangibles. Consider the examples in (34) for illustrations of this restriction:

34)

- a. Omar<sub>i</sub> tɪm-uh ʃɪzzæt næfsuh<sub>i</sub>  
Omar care-he esteem himself  
‘Omar cares about his self-esteem.’
- b. \*Nourah<sub>i</sub> tæqræ ktæ:b næfsæh<sub>i</sub>  
Nourah read book herself  
‘Nourah is reading her book.’

In (34a), the possessee is an incorporeal entity, and a reflexive possessive is thus permitted. In (34b), however, the possessee is a tangible object, and, consequently, a reflexive possessive is not permitted.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we concluded that there are three strategies to encode reflexivity in NA: (a) lexically, showing that reflexivity can be inherent in the verb without the need to express reflexivity overtly; (b) morphologically, showing that reflexivity in NA can be expressed through attaching special reflexive morphemes to the verb; and (c) syntactically, in which reflexivity is encoded through the use of the complex SELF-reflexives. In addition, the paper investigated the argument structure of reflexives in NA in accordance with Reinhart and Siloni’s (2005) reflexivization bundling process, showing that NA falls under their classification. In other words, in NA, the internal  $\theta$ -role of lexical and morphological reflexives is not eliminated but is instead bundled with the external  $\theta$ -role, thereby generating one complex external  $\theta$ -role. Finally, we examined the availability of reflexive possessives in NA, showing that reflexives are not allowed in possessive constructions, lending further support to Reuland’s (2007, 2011) argument that languages with prenominal definiteness marking do not allow reflexive possessives. We also showed that the available reflexives in possessive constructions in NA are treated not as reflexive.

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**Asma I. Alowayed** holds an MA degree in Linguistics from Qassim University, College of Languages and Humanities, Department of English Language and Literature, Saudi Arabia. Her research interests include syntax, morphology, and semantics.

**Yasser A. Albaty** is an assistant professor of linguistics and the chair of the Department of English Language and Literature, College of Languages and Humanities at Qassim University. He is interested in syntax, syntax-semantics interface, and Arabic linguistics.



# Conversational Implicatures in Medical Discourse: An Analysis of Doctor-Patient Dialogues in Amman, Jordan

Sally Mohammad Ali Darweesh  
The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Rajai Rashid Al-Khanji  
The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

**Abstract**—Effective communication is crucial in medical practice, and adherence to Grice's conversational maxims (quantity, quality, relevance, and manner) can improve communication between doctors and patients. In medical practice, doctors must provide clear and concise information while being honest about medical conditions and treatment options. It is also essential for doctors to communicate using simple language to ensure that the patients understand. This study analyses conversational implicature considering medical discourse in Amman. Twenty-six observations (tape-recorded doctor-patient dialogues) were randomly selected from private and government clinics in Amman, Jordan. The data was sorted and analyzed using the qualitative method of a six-phase framework. This study identifies the cooperative principles, their functions, and conversational implicature in doctor-patient discourse. Our results indicate the significance of all four conversational maxims in medical discourse, with manner being the most prominent aspect, followed by quality, relevance, and quantity. The function of cooperative principles observed in presenting the concepts of expression, direction, assertion, and declaration enhances the quality of medical discourse and promotes clarification in conversation. We observed that non-cooperative conversational implicatures are more frequently used in the doctor-patient dialogue, flouting Grice's maxims. This flaw could lead to ineffective communication and negative health outcomes. In medical discourse, 66.7% of instances violated the Grice maxim, indicating non-cooperative conversation, while 33.3% involved cooperative implicature. The effective observance of the conversational maxims can positively impact doctors' communication with patients and promote better understanding of medical condition and treatment options that may lead to improved health outcomes.

**Index Terms**—conversational implicatures, medical discourse, doctor-patient dialogues, Grice's maxim, cooperative principles

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a crucial tool for human communication, allowing individuals to convey their ideas, thoughts, knowledge, intentions, and emotions to others (Risdiyanto, 2011). Discourse refers to the linguistics of language used to comprehend social interactions and explore language and development within social, cultural, medical, economic, and political contexts (Akinwato & Ogundele, 2021; Statham, 2022). Discourse Analysis (DA) is an approach to analyzing written, vocal, or sign language that examines related speech or written discourse, aiming to integrate linguistic analysis with a social analysis of relations (Bloor & Bloor, 2013; Fryer, 2022). DA is an interdisciplinary approach combining elements from various disciplinary perspectives, such as psychology, sociology, politics, medicine, history, semiotics, linguistics, and cultural studies (Fryer, 2022; Malik et al., 2022; Verschueren & Östman, 2011).

Pragmatics in linguistics concerns the meaning of words transmitted by a speaker and comprehended by a listener in a specific instance of a speaker's deliberate activity (Huda, 2013a). Pragmatics examines how language is perceived in a particular situation rather than merely the literal meaning of words. It entails considering how speakers organize their thoughts in light of the circumstances around their speech, including whom they are speaking to, where they speak, when, and how (Yule, 1996).

The conversational implicature refers to an additional meaning implied when speaking about another item and is a crucial communication feature that individuals should be aware of. The cooperative principle, a Grice (1975) notion, is essential to understanding conversational implicature. It asserts that participants in a conversation work together and try to make their comments pertinent to the conversation. Four maxims make up the cooperative principle: *the maxim of amount* (speak neither more nor less than is necessary), *the maxim of quality* (say what you firmly believe and for which you have proof), *the maxim of relevance* (be relevant to the current discourse), and *the maxim of manner* (be clear, brief, and orderly). The idea of conversational implicature with DA has been examined in some research. In addition to its literal meaning, implicature is a term used in linguistics to describe an expression's meaning. Grice first proposed the concept in 1967, defining it as what is conveyed instead of what is stated (Grice, 1975a). Gazdar described it as

anything that may be inferred from utterances without regard to their reality (Gazdar, 1979). The implicature establishes a link between what has been stated and what has been transmitted. For instance, Channell (1994) studies the use of implicature by speakers in discourse to further their communicative objectives (Channell et al., 1994). Another study explains the function of implicature regarding reference and deixis (Clark & Marshall, 1981). Similarly, the processes by which speakers conclude and how they employ implicature in discourse have also been studied (Levinson et al., 1983).

Grice distinguished between two types of conversational implicature: Generalized Implicature and Particularized Implicature. A generalized conversational implicature emerges without any specific essential circumstance or setting. No unique context-specific information is mentioned during this wide conversational implicature (Grice, 1975b). On the other hand, the particularized implicature depends on particular context elements and is only understood to be obtained in certain circumstances (Gibbs Jr & Moise, 1997).

The following information is used to understand implicatures: (1) the conventional meaning of the words used, together with the identity of any references that may be involved (2) the cooperative principles (present expression, direction, assertion, and declaration to improve medical discourse and clarify the conversation) and their maxims (3) the context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance (4) other items of background knowledge and (5) the fact (or supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case (Davis & Davis, 2016; Zalta et al., 1995).

Medical discourse between doctors and patients is crucial for gathering information, making diagnoses, creating plans, and attaining compliance. Poor communication between doctors and patients can lead to adverse outcomes such as misunderstandings, irritation, and even disasters (Anestis et al., 2022; Channell et al., 1994; Gordon & Edwards, 1997). Therefore, paying attention to medical discourse's social, linguistic, and cognitive contexts is significant in medicine. However, the pragmatic study of doctor-patient interactions employing cooperative principles has not received much attention in the Jordanian context, and further studies are recommended (Lazaraton, 2002; Schegloff, 1999).

This study aims to analyze the conversational implicatures of medical discourse in the case of doctor-patient conversations. To investigate the implementation of the cooperative principles in doctor-patient discourse and the functions they serve in facilitating effective communication. The study focused on identifying the cooperative principles in doctor-patient discourse, understanding their functions, and examining how conversational implicatures are implemented in this context.

The current study on doctor-patient discourse and conversational implicatures can provide new insights into the importance of effective communication in healthcare. Examining doctor-patient discourse's cooperative principles and functions offers learners, teachers, policymakers, healthcare organizations, and language speakers/writers' valuable information about the challenges of miscommunication and adverse effects. Therefore, we aim to explore the concept of conversational implicature in DA while focusing on cooperative principles.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study is a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies to analyze doctor-patient discourse. The quantitative method is used to quantify the frequency of collected data, whereas the qualitative method is used to analyze the doctor-patient discourse using themes. The triangulation design is used to contrast and compare results directly. This approach is robust in providing reliable, valid, and concrete findings.

### A. Study Sample

The study chose twenty-six observations from doctor-patient discourse using purposive sampling, which is suitable for understanding research questions. The data was collected from two clinics in Amman, a private clinic and a government clinic. Qualitative studies typically have smaller samples than quantitative studies, and participants can be added during the process.

### B. Sampling Technique

The study collects primary data by selecting a sample of twenty-six tape-recorded doctor-patient dialogues from two Amman clinics. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, and the sample is discussed with experienced colleagues to ensure credibility. The research design is descriptive, and the researcher aims to analyze conversational implicatures in doctor-patient conversations. The reliability was achieved by avoiding bias in data collection and analysis. The objective procedures, notes, and processes describe and interpret the phenomena.

### C. Thematic Analysis

Qualitative data analysis can encompass various activities and approaches, from creative speculation to structured analytical techniques. In contrast to quantitative data analysis, which relies on statistical methods to summarize data and answer research questions, qualitative data analysis seeks to identify themes and patterns within the data. For this study, the researcher has chosen to use Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework (generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and writing up the findings) for thematic analysis, which involves becoming

familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and writing up the findings. This approach provides a structured and systematic way to analyze the data and identify key themes related to the doctor-patient discourse.

Thematic analysis is essential for its versatility and accessibility, and it can be applied in various ways, making it adaptable. The researcher has various dynamic decision-making options, including the thematic analysis type, how to interpret the results, and the rationale behind the method selection (Westcott et al., 2020).

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study highlights Grice's cooperative principles, which describe how individuals behave in conversations, including quality, quantity, manner, and relevance. These maxims may overlap, and when a speaker willfully violates a maxim to create an implicature, this is known as flouting. Flouting can add meaning to the utterance's literal meaning, allowing the recipient to search for another meaning rather than being deceived.

This study used Grice's conversation theory to identify conversational implicatures and analyze doctor-patient dialogues.

Answers to three questions were addressed here:

- What are the cooperative principles (quantity, quality, manner, and relation maxims) in doctor-patient discourse?
- What are the functions of these cooperative principles?
- How are conversational implicatures used in doctor-patient discourse?

#### A. The First Research Question, "What Are the Cooperative Principles (Quantity, Quality, Manner, and Relation Maxims) Presented in the Conversational Implicatures of Doctor-Patient Discourse?"

The cooperative principle was employed through Grice's maxims to present the frequency of four maxims. The cooperative principle defines how listeners and speakers behave cooperatively and mutually accept one another to be understood in a particular way to produce effective conversational communication in everyday social contexts (Grice, 1975b). Grice's four conversational maxims—quantity, quality, relation, and manner—also known as the Gricean maxims—are separated into the cooperative principle. These four maxims outline particular rational guidelines that those who adhere to the cooperation principle and seek good communication follow (Kordić et al., 1991).

The principle describes how individuals behave in conversation despite being expressed as a prescriptive mandate. According to Jeffries and McIntyre (2010), Grice's maxims encapsulate the assumptions we prototypically hold when conversing. The presumption that the maxims will be adhered to makes it easier to read statements that, on the surface, appear to flout them; such flouting reveals silent implicatures that enhance the meaning of the statement (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010).

We identified the expressions presented in the doctor-patient dialogue based on their frequencies of occurrence regarding quantity, quality, manner, and relation maxims. **Table 1** shows that the most frequent maxim is the manner, with a percentage of 24.1% in all situations, including doctor-patient dialogues. It is followed by quality being 3.8% and then relevant maxim with the percentage of 3.7%. Lastly, the quantity maxim is 1.3%. The findings can be logically accepted, supported by a previous study by Zhang (2015), which stated that there is a link between manner and quality. If patients present the quality maxim during their conversation, the manner maxim can be presented more (Zhang & Zhang, 2015). However, the manner maxim can be flouted if the quality maxim is flouted. On the contrary, Mandarani (2020) found that quality is the most frequent maxim in doctor-patient communication (Mandarani, 2020). In addition, Haugh (2015) also revealed that quality maxim was more frequent among other studies (Haugh, 2015).

TABLE 1  
FREQUENCY OF QUANTITY, QUALITY, MANNER, AND RELATION MAXIMS

Maxims	Frequency	Percentage	Non-flouting	Percentage
Quality	80	3.8%	Cooperative	33.3%
Quantity	36	1.3%		
Manner	501	24.1%		
Relevant	76	3.7%		

#### B. The Second Research Question, "What Are the Functions of the Cooperative Principles (Quantity, Quality, Manner, and Relation Maxims) Used in Doctor-Patient Discourse?"

To answer this question, the researcher highlighted the function of cooperative principles. Indeed, such function can serve the idea of expressive, directive, assertive, and declarative as presented in the conversation between doctors and patients. **Table 2** shows some examples of the functions using the four maxims.

TABLE 2  
FUNCTION USE OF THE MAXIMS

Expressions	Flouting/Non-flouting	Cooperative/Non-cooperative	Functions
Dr: penicillin allergy, Sullpha allergy, fish or eggs allergy, spring allergy?	flouting manner	non-cooperative	directive
Father: she has an allergy but mmmm	flouting quantity	non-cooperative	expressive
Dr: seasonal?	flouting relevant	non-cooperative	assertive
Father: no no no, the allergy is in her parts here from wool, chips, and others	flouting quantity	non-cooperative	assertive
Dr: great so it is like Eczema	flouting quantity	non-cooperative	declarative
Father: Exactly	flouting quantity	non-cooperative	assertive
Dr: do you see that she feels tired more than the kids of her age?	flouting manner	non-cooperative	directive
Father: no no	flouting quantity	non-cooperative	assertive
Dr: Shortness of breath Chest tightness while doing exercise medical term (wheezy chest)	flouting manner	non-cooperative	directive
Father: no no	flouting quantity	non-cooperative	assertive
Dr: Thank God for that	flouting relevant	non-cooperative	expressive
Father: yea Thank God	flouting relevant	non-cooperative	expressive
Dr: so tell us what is going on with our princess? What she suffers from?	flouting manner	non-cooperative	directive
Father: first, she felt pain in her eyes then a headache and she was feverish	quantity	cooperative	directive
Kid: And I cough	flouting quantity	non-cooperative	assertive
Dr: when you touched her, was there a fever?	manner	cooperative	assertive
Dr: yea now she is feverish	flouting quantity	non-cooperative	assertive
Dr: I wish you a speedy recovery dear, okay, so now we will check up and give you a very nice sticker, we want to check that everything is okay and I wish she will get well soon	flouting manner	non-cooperative	expressive
Father: are you off today from the hospital?	flouting relevant	non-cooperative	directive
Dr: yes, I am on a leave today and tomorrow	flouting quantity	non-cooperative	declarative
Father: nice	flouting quantity	non-cooperative	expressive
Dr: yes I want the leave to relax and take my wife and son and do some activities	flouting relevant	non-cooperative	expressive

**Table 2** reveals that each expression has its function as it intends to recognize one of the four functions to direct someone to do something or understand something, express feelings, declare something to the listener, or assert some facts. For example, when a doctor asked, "Penicillin allergy, Sullpha allergy, fish or eggs allergy, spring allergy?" this doctor intended to direct the listener to what exactly you feel the status of the case. In addition, in this expression, the speaker asserts, "No, the allergy is in her parts here from wool, chips, and others." The doctor, declares, "Great, so it is like Eczema." The doctor can declare as they are in the position that allows them to declare something.

These functions can be presented in most expressions and can be somehow linked to the maxims as they share the same characteristics. For example, assertive to assert something true, which is directly related to the quality maxim. In addition, the directive is mostly related to the manner maxim, as the idea is to be precise and clear by directing the listener to your needs. Such links can be essential to ease the functional use of the four maxims. The findings agree with Huda (2013), who stated that the four maxims could be presented in the following function (directive, declarative, expressive, assertive, and commissive) (Huda, 2013b). It also agrees with Riyanti and Sofwan (2016), who found connections between directive, expressive, assertive, declarative, and Grice's maxims of the cooperative principles (Riyanti & Sofwan, 2016).

### C. Third Research Question; "How Are the Conversational Implicatures Implemented in Doctor-Patient Discourse?"

We pinpointed the following frequencies and percentages of the maxims' used to answer this research question. **Table 3** shows that non-cooperative conversational implicatures are more frequently used in the doctor-patient dialogue. More specifically, it is shown that 66.7% of the dialogue nature follows the non-cooperative implicature by flouting Grice's maxims. The highest frequency is for flouting quantity maxims, with a percentage of 41.9%. This can be due to the nature of discourse, as medical discourse may need more explanation or shortened answers to direct the listeners to the point, as seen in **Table 4**.

TABLE 3  
CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES IMPLEMENTED IN DOCTOR-PATIENT DISCOURSE

Maxims	Frequency	Percentage	Non-flouting	Percentage
Quality	80	3.80%	Non-cooperative	66.7%
Flouting Quality	51	2.5%	Cooperative	33.3%
Quantity	36	1.30%		
Flouting Quantity	871	41.9%		
Manner	501	24.10%		
Flouting Manner	237	11.50%		
Relevant	76	3.70%		
Flouting Relevant	232	11.20%		
Total	2084			

TABLE 4  
FLOUTING QUANTITY MAXIMS

Dialogue	Maxims	Flouting/non-flouting
Dr: do you have pain in your tonsils?	manner	cooperative
P: yes	Flouting quantity	non-cooperative
P: he said I have a lot of pus discharge and thus I have Tonsil's enlargement	Flouting quantity	non-cooperative
Dr: mmmm	Flouting quantity	non-cooperative
P: yea it came back but after that....	Flouting quantity	non-cooperative
Dr: after that you took a treatment needle?	Flouting quantity	non-cooperative
P: he gave me two	Flouting quantity	non-cooperative
Dr: great, Samixon green	manner	cooperative
P: yes	Flouting quantity	non-cooperative
Dr: okay great	Flouting quantity	non-cooperative

In addition, 24.10% of the dialogues follow the manner maxim because doctors need to ask direct and precise questions to the patients, as shown in **Tables 3, 5, and 6**.

TABLE 5  
MANNER MAXIMS

Dialogue	Maxims	Flouting/non-flouting
Dr: Did the Dr give him any medications?	manner	cooperative
Dr: Okay, great, antibiotic, anti-inflammatory,	manner	cooperative
Dr: and did he ask for this x-ray?	manner	cooperative
Dr: he is number one, number two: if we look backward to the vertebrae of the spine which is clearer in this picture	manner	cooperative
Dr: we see Calcareous changes because of what? Age.	manner	non-cooperative
Dr: this is a consequence; we need to know about the existing Calcareous	manner	cooperative
Dr: okay, other than that, the heart muscle is good for a patient who did an open-heart surgery	manner	cooperative
Dr: Okay so also there are no liquids in the lungs and thank God in both lungs	manner	cooperative
Dr: in addition, there is an increase in the blood flow to the extremities, we call it: Bronchitis	manner	cooperative
Dr: also the muscle's size is good and there are no liquids in the lungs	manner	cooperative

TABLE 6  
FLOUTING MANNER MAXIMS

Dialogue	Maxims	Flouting/non-flouting
Dr: I wish you a speedy recovery, tell me, what is your name?	flouting manner	non-cooperative
Dr: yea, no worries, leave your father away; you made him mad hhhhh. I wish you a speedy recovery. All is good, dear?	flouting manner	non-cooperative
Dr: oh I wish you a speedy recovery. I thought it is our little princess	flouting manner	non-cooperative
Dr: allergic to any medications, no right? Gynecological problems / polycystic ovary syndrome? They went away and the menstrual cycle is back and you stopped taking the medications?	flouting manner	non-cooperative
Dr: Thank God, diabetes or blood pressure?	flouting manner	non-cooperative
Dr: this for normal people but you are an athlete and you do not have fat man hhhh	flouting manner	non-cooperative
Dr: okay it dissolves but the most important thing is that the cumulative remains under seven	flouting manner	non-cooperative

Further, it shows that 11.50% of the expression follow flouting manner maxims as Zhang (2015) states that flouting manner can appear in doctor-patient dialogues more frequently when speakers are not being clear or brief during the conversation (Zhang & Zhang, 2015). It also illustrates that 11.20% of dialogue follows the flouting relevant maxim in **Table 3**. This can be observed in the doctor-patient conversation shown in **Table 7**.

TABLE 7  
FLOUTING RELEVANT MAXIM

Dialogue	Maxims	Flouting/non-flouting
<b>Dr: any vaginal secretions?</b>		
<b>P: Yesterday I did the tests you told me about</b>	flouting relevant	non-cooperative
<b>Dr: we will check them, give them to me. Let me see</b>		
<b>Dr: okay, so madame, so the situation is that because you are now in the ninth month, you should walk one hour a day to check that the baby is in the pelvis; other than the one-hour walking, you should use the Papaya pills that can help to expand the uterus, and you should eat Pineapple every day in addition to dates every day also, and Squat exercises, do you know what is that?</b>	flouting relevant	non-cooperative
<b>P: yes, I do</b>		
<b>Dr: okay, and you should walk for a whole one hour, every day the uterus will become soft and this will help the uterus expansion, it will not be like that instantly but when the cervix becomes thin, it helps to expand, now we will see your tests and inshallah all will be good and then we will check you, your blood type is AB+, great, this blood type is already common</b>	flouting relevant	non-cooperative
<b>Dr: I wish you a speedy recovery, any burning or acidity at the top of the stomach?</b>		
<b>P: yes, this is because of the pregnancy</b>	flouting relevant	non-cooperative

Moreover, the other maxims have fewer frequencies, as shown in **Table 3**. More specifically, 3.8% of the conversations followed the quality maxim, and 3.7% followed the relevant maxim. It is also shown in the same table that the lowest frequency was for flouting quality and quantity maxim being as follows: 2.5% for flouting quality and 1.3% for quantity.

In the twenty-six doctor-patient oral interactions, doctors and patients obey the non-cooperative principles most of the time, occupying nearly 66.7% of the time on average and 33.3% for cooperative implicature. In the four types of conversation, twenty-six conversations for diagnosis were collected. The analysis was carried out based on different types of doctor-patient oral interaction. It is found that a complete doctor-patient oral interaction in the outpatient department can be generally divided into four functions: directing, expressing, declaring, and asserting. The doctor-patient conversation should be a focus of researchers paying attention to the whole context of a conversation to provide the implied meaning. Since using the relevance maxim seems to hide some meaning, readers may not be able to understand the context. In addition, the pragmatics theory of Grice could help understand the context of conversations.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study focused on using cooperative principles, specifically the maxims of quantity, quality, manner, and relation, in doctor-patient discourse and their relation to conversational implicatures. The findings indicate that understanding the function of such maxims is crucial for comprehending the implicated meanings of conversational implicatures. The shift of the addressee is also a significant factor in the interpretation of conversational implicatures, and listeners must pay attention to it. This study emphasizes the need to understand the function of these maxims and the role of interpreters in facilitating comprehension.

#### V. FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

This study utilized the Grice theory to facilitate the identification of the implications of the utterances in doctor-patient discourse. However, other theories, such as the theory of Gan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, could also be employed to further assess the implications of the utterances. This approach may lead to discoveries that were previously unknown. Therefore, we recommend further investigating target text modification, potentially utilizing other theories to enhance understanding of the implications of utterances in doctor-patient discourse. By incorporating multiple theories, researchers may gain a more comprehensive understanding of the communicative strategies employed in such interactions, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of language use in medical settings.

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**Sally Mohammad Ali Darweesh** is a dedicated and ambitious PhD student pursuing research in Linguistics. With a passion for knowledge and a drive for academic excellence, he actively pushes the boundaries of Linguistics through his innovative research and contributions. He developed a keen interest in Linguistics from an early age. He demonstrated exceptional academic prowess throughout his educational journey. He is pursuing a doctoral degree in Linguistics at the University of Jordan. His research focuses on Linguistics, aiming to contribute valuable insights and advancements to the field. He collaborates with esteemed professors and researchers, engaging in rigorous study, experimentation, and analysis to further the understanding of Linguistics.

**Rajai Rashid Al-Khanji** is an accomplished Linguistics researcher and mentor known for much research in the field of Linguistics. He developed an early love for literature and began writing in his field of academics. He embraces the challenges and opportunities that come with his journey, driven by the desire to advance Linguistics and make a meaningful difference in his chosen field. He is a professor of Linguistics at the University of Jordan. His work has garnered critical acclaim and has been recognized in several researches. He looks forward to sharing his literary journey with his readers and exploring new horizons in linguistics.



# A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Ideological Identity Endorsed on the University's Homepages

Pirman Ginting

Doctoral Program of English Applied Linguistics, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia;  
Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Sri M. Murni

Doctoral Program of English Applied Linguistics, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

Anni H. Pulungan

Doctoral Program of English Applied Linguistics, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

**Abstract**—Whilst a plethora of research has taken into account the exertion of website homepages as a conduit for effectively conveying information, it is acknowledged that the matter of ideological values and how these ideals are manifested through such digital communication media has been somewhat overlooked. Thus, the research at hand attempts to go over how the university advertises its ideological construal on its homepages by way of the adoption of multiple modes, involving both linguistic and aesthetic dimensions, and video. In this investigation, multimodal approaches encapsulated by Kress (2010) and Pauwels (2012) were employed to address the ideological values through visual components on the university homepages. Drawing from the attainable data, the university's homepage is crafted utilizing two fundamental categories of semiotic methods such as a combination of visual and textual elements, as well as video to reinforce the aesthetic, nevertheless, it neglects to incorporate any semiotic resource that places particular emphasis on visual components. The strategic utilization of diverse multiple modalities of communication on the homepage has effectively promoted an array of constructive ideological ideals that hold significant worth for stakeholders and the public, considering the pivotal role that universities play in shaping societal beliefs and perspectives.

**Index Terms**—ideology, semiotic resources, multimodality, textual and visual components, university homepage

## I. INTRODUCTION

In tandem with the swift change of communication brought on by the proliferation of digital multimedia, such as websites, a plethora of multimodality-oriented analyses on communication modes via the Internet or digital media has provoked academics and educators to engage in a broad spectrum of studies on how communication by way of such modes makes meaning. Through situational configurations of image, gesture, gaze, body position, sound, writing, music, speech, and other media, multimodality devotes attention to meaning as it emerges (Jewitt, 2008). As electronic communication tools, websites have gained widespread use by users including higher educational institutions or universities. Upon the widespread use of the Internet, university websites have shifted from merely informational or highly promotional platforms, liable for providing a substantial portion of the institutional identity of university profiles electronically (Laba, 2020), earlier contrasted with hand-printed advertising pamphlets. As well, the visual appearance and layout of websites are also strongly determined by the changing social context of their usage (Zhang & O'Halloran, 2013). Accordingly, leveraging distinct channels (modes) offers varying meaning potential, and the potentially distinct meaning comes with different societal consequences (Bezemer & Kress, 2016).

The wide-ranging utilization of websites as an avenue of propagating their details has evoked academics to undertake an assortment of studies on university websites or homepages to reveal how meaning-making is advocated by multiple semiotic resources endorsed upon the web. Despite the fact that many studies have echoed the nature of university websites through critical discourse analysis, such as promotion, brand endorsement, and other marketing purposes, queries about university homepages addressing the ideological basis viewed from a multimodal perspective have received less attention from academia. Therefore, there is room for research into how multimodal design principles contribute to ideological identity construal as an institutional context-bound mode of discourse. By embracing multimodal analysis, the current study looks into how the ideological construction of universities is brought to light on their homepages through multimodal representation. Ideology, inextricably linked with language as a means of communication (Wodak, 2007), is attributed to underlying patterns of meaning, frames of interpretation, world views, or forms of everyday thinking and explanation, and presumed as a subject worthy of investigation (Verschuere, 2011). While taking account into the role of ideological construal in educational circumstances, a university's ideology matters

because it determines the fundamental tenets, beliefs, and values that direct the organization's decisions, policies, and actions.

What's more, alongside improving their environmental communications and reaching the general public more effectively (Jos é-Santiago & Fernández-Vázquez, 2020), this research through a multimodal methodology thereby can shed light on how multimodal communication involving verbal and nonverbal texts should be utilized for advancing the ideological character of universities, bearing in mind that universities do not merely serve as conduits for the dissemination of academic information, but more than that, that value or the perception of their readers and the public, in general, becomes institutionally responsible for universities. Moreover, the findings of this study provided insights into the multimodality subject matter to aid in the development of a rich and substantive understanding of multiple modes of communication in contemporary technological forms (Flewitt et al., 2018), especially within the realm of the educational milieu.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### A. *Multimodality and Its Research Foci*

The term multimodality refers to the practice of communicating via more than one media at once, such as text, images, sound, and video, offering a theoretical foundation for a thorough examination of visual texts, accounting in painstaking depth for the meaning feasible of aesthetic elements of graphic shapes (Wagner & Sherwin, 2014), such as font type, size, and resources for "framing," such as punctuation (Bezemer & Kress, 2008), and how the semiotic and epistemic functions of modality shape meaning, even though the recognition of the embodied meanings is reliant on the readers' abilities to perceive the multiple modalities (Jaipal, 2010). Furthermore, a multimodal framework could bear some potential for critical analysis, shedding insight into viewers/readers' social conceptions, affinities, and moral principles (Adami, 2015).

As a field of study, multimodality conceives representation and communication as reliant on a wide range of modalities, each of which has been socially evolved into meaning-making resources. Modes such as gesture, sound, image, colour, or layout are considered a series of structured resources that people, societies, and institutions have shaped meaning and articulate and draw values, ideologies, and power relations (Jewit et al., 2021; Knox, 2013). Additionally, as a phenomenon that discourse is always multimodal, multimodality designates that several semiotic modes (such as language and picture) are merged into a particular form of discourse or kind of discourse. Intonation, voice quality, facial expression, gesture, posture, and other facets of self-presentation like clothing and hairstyle, for instance, are all integrated into spoken discourse, while typographic expression and, more recently, illustration, layout, and color are integrated into written discourse (van Leeuwen, 2015). This bears a meaning that the multiple resources that appear in a community need to be noticed as an unbreakable, integrated field of - nonetheless different - resources for resulting in meaning, meaning that a multimodal approach intends to move beyond approaches in which mode was often inextricably associated with a theory and a discipline. In this oncoming, writing was evaluated through linguistics, images were looked at by art history, and so forth. Despite their apparent differences in material potential and social shaping, all modes have the possibility of imparting meaning to a complex semiotic entity (Kress, 2011). As such, in its application, it draws not solely on ideas and approaches from linguistic aspects but also from other pertinent domains like design, and aesthetic thoughts.

### B. *Multi-Semiotics via Webpage-Based Digital Communication*

The continual development of technological advancements has expanded the scope of communication beyond a singular modality, covering a diverse range of modalities (Haneef, 2018), encompassing web pages, films, animation, children's books, comic strips, print and television advertisements, newspapers, documents, museums, architectural spaces, home decor, websites, hypermedia applications, face-to-face interactions, and multimodal texts across different academic disciplines, and becoming a broad spectrum of multimodal text analysis (O'Halloran et al., 2013). This trend is also attributed to the growing prevalence of web-mediated communication in the contemporary era of globalization. Webpages, according to Swan (2017), as up-to-date media of communication, are unique hybrid genres that incorporate various modes of meaning-making, such as digital, verbal, aural, kinetic, and visual. These modes possess specific affordances that are inherent to the medium. Over the past decade, university websites have undergone enhancements through the incorporation of multimedia elements such as videos, images, and interactive pages. The aesthetically pleasing design and ideal layout of the webpage significantly streamline user accessibility, augment the browsing encounter (Wu et al., 2016), and enhance the interactivity of the pages, given the contemporary reality that students are immersed in a world of e-communication and are less inclined to engage with written information passively (Nasti et al., 2017). Therefore, universities have to be cognizant of cultural preferences while dealing with the issues of their website design, such as layout, animation, color, and other elements (Turra, 2020).

When looking at websites as social and cultural data sources, Pauwels (2012) proposes six distinct analysis phases following a specific logic of discovery, moving from an initial examination of readily apparent features and basic measurements to a more comprehensive interpretation of the constituent elements and their complex interrelationships, as displayed below.

TABLE 1  
A MULTIMODAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING WEBSITES

A Multimodal Framework for Analyzing Websites	
1.	Preservation of First Impression and Reactions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Categorization of 'look and feel' at a glance</li> <li>▪ Recording of affective reactions</li> </ul>
2.	Inventory of Salient Features and Topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inventory of present website features and attributes</li> <li>▪ Inventory of main content categories and topics</li> <li>▪ Categorize and quantify features and topics</li> <li>▪ Perform 'negative' analysis: significantly absent topics and features</li> </ul>
3.	In-depth Analysis of Content and Formal Choices <div> <div>3.1 Intra-Modal Analysis (fixed/static and moving/dynamic elements) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Verbal/written signifiers</li> <li>▪ Typographic signifiers</li> <li>▪ Visual representational signifiers</li> <li>▪ Sonic signifiers</li> <li>▪ Layout &amp; design signifiers</li> </ul> </div> <div>3.2 Analysis of Cross-Modal Interplay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Image/written text relations and typography-written text relations</li> <li>▪ Sound/image-relations</li> <li>▪ Overall design/linguistic, visual, and auditory interplay</li> </ul> </div> <div>3.3 In-depth 'negative' analysis</div> </div>
4.	Embedded Point(s) of View or 'Voice' and Implied Audience(s) and Purposes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analysis of POV's and constructed personae</li> <li>▪ Analysis of intended/implied primary and secondary audience(s)</li> <li>▪ Analysis of embedded goals and purposes</li> </ul>
5.	Analysis of Information Organization and Spatial Priming Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structural and navigational options and constraints (dynamic organization)</li> <li>▪ Analysis of priming strategies and gatekeeping tools</li> <li>▪ Analysis of outer-directed and/or interactive features</li> <li>▪ Analysis of external hyperlinks</li> </ul>
6.	Contextual Analysis, Provenance, and Inference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identification of sender(s) and sources</li> <li>▪ Technological platforms and their constraints/implications</li> <li>▪ Attribution of cultural hybridity</li> </ul>

The research, thereby, moves on from fairly simple data to quantify and code to a more interpretive analysis that focuses on uncovering the metaphorical and symbolic dimensions of websites.

### C. Unmasking Ideology Through Semiotics

If ideology is considered a comprehensive framework of ideas, then semiotics, the field of study concerned with sign systems, is poised to make a significant contribution to the examination of ideology (Noth, 2004). The presence of multiple codes and subcodes within culture illustrates that the same message can be interpreted from various perspectives and cater to different systems and conventions. The message is safeguarded by the fundamental denotation of its significance, although various connotations can be ascribed to it (Nescolarde-Selva & Usó-Doménech, 2014). The codes can be visually represented through a range of various facets, such as photographs, pictures, images, signs, paintings, movies, gestures, dance, and others. Even though such semiotic codes are confined to expressing and articulating abstract ideological beliefs more overtly, these visual messages are comparatively easier and simpler than discourse (van Dijk, 1998).

Semiotic ideology denotes individuals' fundamental assumptions regarding what signs attribute, their functions, and the potential outcomes they may generate (Keane, 2018). It determines various aspects, such as individuals' perceptions regarding the significance of intentions, the potential existence of different agents (such as humans, animals, or spirits) to which acts of signification can be attributed, whether signs are arbitrary or fundamentally connected to their objects, and other related inquiries (Keane, 2003). In this sense, what semiotic ideology might be encoded extends beyond merely the linguistic elements like vocabulary, syntax, and related variables. Keane claims that it directs attention to the whole spectrum of potential sign vehicles and the sensory modalities with which they might engage, including sound, smell, touch, muscular movement, pain, affect, and other somatic phenomena. This suggests that semiotic ideology pertains to the raw affordance of signs, which later affects the interpretation of their meanings (Khafaga, 2022).

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since this study attempted to provide a thorough comprehension of the particular meanings and behaviors associated with a certain social phenomenon, that is the ideological construal within a higher educational institution through the subjective experiences of participants (Palmer & Bolderston, 2006), a qualitative research methodology was opted for. The adoption of qualitative research was to explore how individuals or a community in the educational institution create their social meaning, in this case, dealing with ideological identity (Flick, 2013), as represented through daily routines and practices (Patton & Cochran, 2004). In this current research, the construction of the ideology was assessed from

various semiotic resources, including verbal, visual, and the combined textual and visual components, and audio-visual facets, encountered on the homepages of a university; therefore, leveraging a multimodal analysis was deemed appropriate for thoroughly comprehending the messages conveyed via such various sorts of data. The practice of multimodal analysis entailed looking at multiple resources, such as text, pictures, audio, video, gestures, and other modalities, as well as the processes of meaning-making within the framework of ideology made by the university (Jewit et al., 2021).

As it falls within the parameters of qualitative inquiry, the researcher occupies a central position as the key instrument in collecting, interpreting, and presenting the findings. When gathering data, several relevant methods were taken into account to ensure that the data were accurate, while also minimizing the frequency of erroneous, as follows; (a) determine the specific sections of the university website that were examined for the study, (b) select a representative sample of each section (visual and verbal components) to ensure a balanced and comprehensive analysis, (c) for visual data, images, screenshots, or photographs of relevant visuals were manually captured, (d) in the light of auditory data, recording devices were employed to collect and extract the audio clips or dialogues from videos, (e) to obtain spatial data, screenshots or photographs depicting spatial arrangements, layouts, and designs were captured, and (f) each piece of data including its source, purpose, and any pertinent background information was carefully interpreted to provide contextual information.

For the current research endeavor sought to unveil the construal of ideological identity as articulated on the university's website via a range of distinct channels of expression, multimodal theoretical frameworks were put forward for the investigation. Typically, the material was divided into two discrete modalities: verbal and visual. The data was systematically encoded and categorized following its distinctive attributes to enable the researcher to organize and group similarly coded data into categories or "families" based on their shared similar characteristics to encapsulate the meaning and provide a comprehensive explanation of the data (Saldana, 2013). The visual materials, such as images, writing, layout, music, gesture, and video as socially and culturally shaped semiotic resources displayed in the university's homepages were interpreted by adopting Kress' (2010) and Pauwels' (2012) multimodal approaches to gain what values and ideologies are being articulated.

#### IV. FINDING

##### A. Ideological Values Looked at From the Combined Textual and Visual Elements

The university's ideology communicated through the integration of textual and visual elements as displayed on its homepage has emerged as a prominent method for promoting the university's ideological brand, surpassing other communication systems as the university can effectively convey its core values and beliefs to a wide audience, as exemplified in the image below.



Figure 1. A Hero Image

The interaction between linguistic and visual elements as depicted in the image depicted in Figure 1 can be initially examined in terms of *information reinforcement*. The visual impact of the woman's upward gesture serves to reinforce the message of "*reaching your future*," creating a clear connection between the written call to action and the aspirational visual cue. From a *cohesive design* standpoint, the utilization of a *blue color* scheme in both the woman's attire and the background of the text constitutes a visual representation of the university's branding. This particular color choice is often associated with qualities such as *trustworthiness* and *academic excellence*, which align with the university's values. The text and image collectively narrate the experiences of prospective students who take decisive actions in their pursuit of a bright future, with the university serving as the impetus for this endeavor.

When reviewing the concept of *visual hierarchy*, the placement and sizes of both textual and visual components play a crucial role in establishing a clear visual hierarchy that effectively directs the viewer's attention and guides them through the intended message. In the specific example provided, the visual hierarchy is constructed in a manner that leads the viewer's gaze in a specific sequence: first to the woman's face and gesture, then to the primary text message, and finally to the university's name. This arrangement of elements effectively organizes the information in a persuasive and logical sequence, enhancing the overall impact of the message. In conclusion, by interweaving the textual and

visual aspects, the website's homepage seeks to create a captivating story that not only educates but also emotionally and inspirationally interacts with its viewers. The design choices selected in both text and image work in harmony to depict the institution as a place where students can actively shape their futures, reflecting both the potential for personal development and the promise of academic success.

### B. Ideological Values Portrayed From Audio-Visual Elements

In order to gain insight into the underlying significance ingrained within the video, four distinct modalities including linguistic and verbal modes, visual cues, gestural expressions, and audio components were elucidated.

#### (a). A Delve Into Linguistic and Verbal Facets

The podcast commences with warm greetings in both Arabic and Indonesian languages, a noteworthy gesture that sets the tone for the ensuing discussion, firmly grounding it within the cultural and religious milieu of the university. As represented in the commencing discussion, the repeated use of the phrase "*Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh*" by the moderator and the vice-rector when extending greetings and salutations holds great significance. It serves as a powerful representation of the cultural and religious identity that resonates with the Islamic principles upheld by the institution. This is further emphasized by the seamless switch between Indonesian and English languages signifying its transcultural and translingual nature. This linguistic fluidity not only highlights the institution's global outlook but also underscores its commitment to fostering international dialogue. Meanwhile, the adoption of *formality and register* during interactions serves to convey a sense of formality within the conversation. The practice of employing formal titles, such as "The Honorable Miss," when referring to a U.S. representative and utilizing the academic title of vice-rector (Dr.) for an individual, serves as a sign of respect and acknowledgment of their esteemed position and specialized knowledge. The utilization of a formal register in the podcast serves to enhance the overall institutional atmosphere and academic essence of the content. The usage of such formal terms not only maintains the academic and professional decorum of the institution but also demonstrates a deep respect for the cultural norms prevalent in both the United States and Indonesia. In academic institutions, the use of formal terms is highly valued as it signifies a level of seriousness and professionalism.

When going over the *narrative structure*, the conversation covers the introduction, background exposition, discussion of partnership, and concluding comments. The utilization of a well-defined structure serves the purpose of effectively organizing the information and facilitating the comprehension of the intended audience. In addition to that, the use of a moderator implies a discourse that is well-structured and balanced. This structure enables an equitable sharing of thoughts, showcasing a respectful acknowledgment of both speakers' perspectives. The sequential arrangement of speakers (beginning with the vice-rector followed by the U.S. embassy envoy) reflects an underlying respect for institutional hierarchy or protocol. In the exploration of its *content and vocabulary*, the conversation involves *academic and diplomatic terminologies*, pointing out the significance of international collaboration, cross-cultural interaction, and the potential for educational advancement. In the realm of international cooperation, certain terms have gained prominence for their ability to highlight the advantages and opportunities that arise from collaborative efforts. Phrases such as "*collaboration*," "*exchange programs*," and "*intercultural learning*" have been carefully selected to highlight the positive outcomes that can be achieved through such collaborative endeavors.

#### (b). Going Over Visual Mode

When taking into account the *spatial arrangement*, the presence of a round table and the strategic positioning of participants contribute to the overall atmosphere of democratic and inclusive discussions as displayed in the figure below.



Figure 2. A Visual Representation of the Audio-Visual Element

This arrangement implies a space that fosters equal participation and encourages the exchange of ideas. In creating a formal atmosphere, the strategic placement of microphones and water bottles serves to reinforce the official nature of the discourse. The availability of microphones, carefully positioned throughout the space, signifies the importance of the event. They symbolize the need for clear and amplified communication, ensuring that every word uttered by the speakers reaches the audience with utmost clarity. Meanwhile, concerning the *backdrop color*, the showcase of the university's branding, set against a dominant green backdrop, presents a visual representation of the institution's identity

and values. This display may potentially establish an affinity to the Islamic tradition and the principles of growth and harmony. The incorporation of green in conjunction with the wood paneling creates a visually appealing blend that evokes a sense of traditional aesthetics. This deliberate choice of color and material suggests a possible appreciation for cultural heritage.

Furthermore, in the light of *typography and imagery*, the prominent showing of the university's name asserts its institutional identity. The logo of the podcast is prominently displayed in the center, anchoring as a focal point that firmly establishes the podcast within the realm of education. This strategic placement not only draws attention to the logo but also underscores the podcast's commitment to academic excellence, lending it a sense of credibility and authority. When it comes to the *production techniques* of the video, one important aspect is the opportunity for speakers to speak in turn. This technique promotes a balanced conversation where each participant's contributions are given equal importance. By allowing speakers to take turns, the video ensures that everyone has a chance to express their thoughts and ideas. This approach fosters a sense of fairness and inclusivity, as it ensures that no one person dominates the conversation.

(c). *Insight From Gestural Expression*

When witnessing the *participants' body language*, it becomes evident that they consistently display open and relaxed postures throughout much of the discussion as shown in the images below.



Figure 3. Gestural Expressions Represented in the Audio-Visual Element

The figures above display the sitting conditions of the individuals, exhibiting gestures such as *leaning forward* and *hand movements*. During the allotted time for speaking, the participants displayed a notable level of interest and enthusiasm towards engaging in the discussion. The speakers' body languages reveal important insights about their level of engagement and the significance of the topic at hand. It is noticeable from their sitting style, as they lean forward in their seat. These postures indicate a heightened level of interest and attentiveness towards the conversation. Additionally, the speakers' *hand movements* contribute to the overall impact of their message. This particular movement was sanctioned when she intended to draw attention to a point, as substantiated by the subsequent instance of an extract.

... ada lebih dari ribuan universitas, empat ribu universitas di Amerika Serikat, dan banyak kesempatan untuk siswa-siswa (mahasiswa-mahasiswi). Tapi, mungkin itu terlalu banyak informasi. Harus mencari sesuatu yang cocok untuk setiap orang... (... there are over thousands of universities, four thousand universities in the United States, and offer abundant opportunities for students. However, perhaps that's too much information. So, it is essential to find something suitable ...).

The emphasis was effectively conveyed by the speaker through the purposeful chopping motions that accompanied her delivery of the information, "... Tapi, mungkin itu terlalu banyak informasi. Harus mencari sesuatu yang cocok untuk setiap orang... (However, perhaps that's too much information. So, it is essential to find something suitable ...). The explicit intention behind employing such physical gestures was to underscore the significance and relevance of the information being presented. The speaker's deliberate use of these gestures was aimed at capturing and maintaining the attention of the audience, as well as reinforcing the key points being conveyed. Added to that, the act of maintaining *eye contact* while interacting with the conversation holds substantial significance constituted as a potent sign of active involvement and mutual agreement between individuals. They are observed *listening attentively and nodding*, reflecting mutual respect for one other's ideas and fostering a sense of collaborative engagement. Their facial expressions also share *attentiveness* and *openness*, which are essential for cultivating an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. Along with that, their *smiles* during introductions and while discussing potential programs represent enthusiasm, sincerity, and optimism regarding the collaboration.

(d). *An Extract From the Audio Component*

Getting acquainted with the tone and its variations is another crucial aspect when trying to decipher the message conveyed in the video. The initial focus of the scrutiny revolved around the speaker's use of language. The seamless transition between Indonesian and English languages by the moderator in the greeting and introduction sections of the talk appears to be a harmonious blend of cultural influences from the respective countries represented by the speakers, as denoted in the following excerpt.



“... *Walaikum'salam. Wah... selanjutnya, ini kita ada kedatangan tamu kita yang spesial, the Honorable Miss, the Honorable Miss Emily Yasmin Norris. Selamat sore, miss*”.

“Ok. miss Emily, ini adalah perwakilan dari Cultural Fairs Officer dari U.S. atau Amerika. Jadi, miss Emily bersama pak WR III saat ini akan berbicara tentang U.S. Indonesia Cultural Corporation.”

The incorporation of both Indonesian and English in the provided setting signifies a cultural interchange and the convergence of linguistic and ideological principles between the two agents. “Walaikum'salam” is an Islamic salutation often used in Indonesian culture to convey respect and recognize cultural differences. The transition to English signifies a change in the atmosphere of the discourse to be more formal or authoritative, consistent with the presence of a United States representative. The inclusion of “the Honorable Miss” in the introduction of Miss Emily Yasmin Norris imparts a sense of formality and reverence, reflecting the customary usage of honorifics in Indonesian society. By employing such an honorific, a sense of reverence is bestowed upon Miss Norris, highlighting her esteemed status.

In referring to the vocal modulations of the speakers, a *formal yet optimistic tone* is adopted, notwithstanding the presence of some variations in *pitch, volume, and pace* throughout the discussion. The vocal alterations employed by speakers during the interactions can reveal their underlying attitudes, intentions, and the nature of the discourse. The variation in of tone voice may be depicted by the snippets of utterances from speakers, as demonstrated by the moderator when welcoming the two guest speakers during the introductory segment, as exemplified below.

*Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, selamat sore, sahabat UMSU sekalian. Bertemu lagi di podcast Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. Hari ini, dengan saya Wida Akasa, Broad member dari Office of International Affairs and Corporation. Saat ini kita sudah bersama tamu spesial kita. Kita sudah ditemani oleh Bapak Wakil Rektor Tiga Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. Bapak Dr. Rudianto M.SI, selamat sore pak.* (Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, good afternoon to all UMSU friends. We meet again on the podcast of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. Today, with me Wida Akasa, a board member at the Office of International Affairs and Cooperation. At present, we are honored to have our special guest, Dr. Rudianto, M.Si., deputy rector three of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. Good afternoon, Sir).

During her warm greeting, she began with the traditional Islamic salutation of “*Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh*,” which translates to “May peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.” She then extended her greetings to all the friends and members of the university, wishing them a pleasant afternoon with the words *selamat sore sahabat, UMSU sekalian*. In the podcast, she enthusiastically greeted the audience with a lively tone and quick tempo. Although some intonations in the middle of the expression fell, overall, the opening statement was delivered with clear, high, and rapid tones. The moderator's use of a high pitch and rapid tone illustrates her enthusiasm and sense of urgency regarding the ideas being communicated. Following the initial greeting, the moderator proceeded with her speaking by adjusting the volume to a softer level and slightly slowing down her intonation. This was noticeable when she said, “*Hari ini, dengan saya Wida Akasa, Broad member dari Office of International Affairs and Corporation. Saat ini kita sudah bersama tamu spesial kita. Kita sudah ditemani oleh Bapak Wakil Rektor Tiga Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. Bapak Dr. Rudianto M.SI, selamat sore pak*”. By speaking at a slower volume and with a deliberate intonation, she intended to create an air of seriousness and emphasize the essential nature of the subject being addressed. This intentional approach to communication signals to others that the issue at hand is of significant importance and warrants careful attention.

## V. DISCUSSION

### A. Ideological Embodiment Through a Fusion of Textual and Visual Resources

Bringing forth an idea goes beyond just words; it can also involve combining text with visual elements to create an appealing representation (Allam, 2017). The interplay of different modalities generates a unique space where the possibilities for meaning go beyond what each component can achieve on its own (Kilby & Lennon, 2021). As endorsed in the current study, blending various methods can result in a more comprehensive grasp of ideology. This is due to the fact that conceiving ideological messages in a more comprehensive and nuanced manner can be facilitated by combining diverse resources, including textual and visual materials. As portrayed in Figure 1, the infusion of written and visual elements enhances the impact of messages, rendering them more potent and thorough. The juxtaposition amplifies the flow of information, resulting in messages that are not only more powerful but also provide an elevated and extensive understanding of the subject matter. For instance, the selection of imperative verbs in the headline “*Tentukan keputusan dan raih masa depan mu di Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara*” effectively prompts the viewers to make decisions, while also hinting that the university is a transformative institution where one's future is sculpted (Nasti et al., 2017). The message delivered in the text becomes more efficient and expansive with the use of images (Elmiana, 2019). The image depicts an aesthetically appealing young woman with a warm and amiable grin, thus conveying a positive connotation that coincides with the message of the text of creating a promising future at the institution.

What's more, the woman's gaze upward enriches the visual representation of “attaining your future”, establishing an alignment between the written call to action and the aspirational visual cue. Along with that, the utilization of suitable

hues, exemplified by the incorporation of shades of blue in both the attire of the female model and the background components of the website, can be associated with the typical color often attributed to educational establishments, thus effectively imparting an aura of trustworthiness, intelligence, and reliability. The color of the image appears to be a key criterion for selecting and pinning the image (Jewitt & Henriksen, 2016). This suggests that the amalgamation of colors present within the image, in conjunction with their aesthetic attributes, not only fulfills a decorative function but also plays a crucial role in effectively communicating the intended message of the image. In doing so, these colors act as indicators or signifiers that further reinforce and augment the overall meaning that is being subtly conveyed, although their interpretation can vary across diverse cultural and societal contexts (Bezemer & Kress, 2016).

About the web design under scrutiny, the concatenated use of various modes, such as color, gesture, writing, dress code, and the like, possess an array of resources that facilitate the creation of meaning (Adami, 2015), and the projection of values that contribute to the establishment and portrayal of identity (Adami, 2018). He further contends that the formation of identity is achieved semiotically, as opposed to being exclusively linguistic, and is inextricably linked with a broader societal construction of preference (Adami, 2018). Referring to the specific homepage of the university under being considered, it is notable that the adept integration of both linguistic and visual components crafts a compelling narrative. The well-integrated mix of text and imagery on the homepage are not isolated entities, instead, they form integral components of a comprehensive design strategy of effectively conveying the core values, opportunities, and inclusive nature of the university (Pauwels, 2012).

### *B. The Portrayal of Ideology Through the Medium of Video*

Video messages are deemed to be significantly more impactful compared to audio messages since individuals tend to place more trust and are influenced by visual content rather than auditory information (Gunay, 2021). As evidenced in the present investigation, videos are employed as an instrumental mechanism to portray and disseminate the ideological persona of the educational institution. In the video, diverse forms of communication modes, including linguistic, visual, gesture, and audio elements, synergistically reinforce one another, resulting in a significantly enhanced conveyance of meaning as compared to the utilization of auditory elements in isolation or relying solely on linguistics (Mora & Golovátna-Mora, 2020; Lin et al., 2021). As illustrated in Figure 3, the process of communication, which serves as a fundamental pillar in human interaction, is aptly conveyed through a plethora of dimensions that collectively contribute to its overall functionality and efficacy in transmitting messages between individuals. Despite the fact that each element possesses its own distinct traits, the cohesive integration of linguistic and visual semiotic resources constructs impactful and enduring messages (Suphabornrat & Pankasirikul, 2022). To illustrate, when she was conveying information, she was observed elevating his hand, with fingers extended, while simultaneously executing a circular motion. The synchrony of speech and hand movements establishes the conditions for a dialectical relationship between images and verbal expression (McNeill, 2005), thus effectively conveying her intent to persuade individuals that the institution to which she pertains boasts a multitude of significant programs that can be fruitfully collaborated upon, thereby fostering enhanced cooperation (Wong, 2019; McNeill, 1992).

In addition to this, the adoption of formal and composed tones that were nonetheless optimistic generates a linguistic framework that extends beyond mere natural meanings (Clark, 2007), that is to emphasize the favorable elements of the collaboration between the United States and Indonesia. The speakers employed a well-balanced combination of assertive and diplomatic languages, expressing eagerness for potential prospects while acknowledging the current frameworks in place. When considering the attire of the participants, all the speakers were attired in a formal manner, which mirrored their official roles. In alignment with this, Bouvier (2017) holds that clothing can govern and manage people in a significantly more overt manner. Uniforms, in particular, suppress differences, establish shared identities, or emphasize the position above the individual. The vice rector's attire leaned toward the academic formal, whereas the embassy representative's attire adhered to diplomatic dress codes. This amalgamation embodies a fusion of cultural identities and underscores the professional essence of the occasion, thus pointing out a formal and earnest approach to the topic under discussion. The backdrop showcases the university branding set against a verdant backdrop, potentially embodying the university's sense of self and principles. Additionally, the choice of this particular hue, traditionally linked to Islam, serves as a means of representing the cultural and spiritual beliefs of the institution. The aesthetically appealing hue combinations in the background and foreground (font) can greatly generate a positive effect, particularly for a commercial website (Hall & Hanna, 2004), and potentially facilitate users in perceiving text with greater ease due to the distinct clear contrast, thus augmenting visual exploration, when compared to other color combinations (Ling & van Schaik, 2002). The infusion of various semiotic resources strives to generate coherent meanings that collaborate harmoniously in organizing our comprehension of the intended messages (O'Halloran et al., 2019).

## VI. CONCLUSION

As the findings of this empirical investigation have demonstrated, the university's homepage is designed by employing prominently two categories of semiotic resources, encompassing a fusion of textual and visual constituents, and video. The deliberate arrangement of visual elements, and how participants interact in the video harmoniously blend to effectively convey a unified and purposeful message ultimately resulting in the successful communication of a cohesive message that aligns with the overarching goals of international ties, educational advancement, and cultural



understanding. The well-defined ideological identities accomplished through the extensive utilization of multimodal resources, such as words, images, and videos, may support stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and alumni to effectively navigate and engage within the context or system, and line up the values of the university. In a broad sense, the ideologies that are embraced and promoted within the university setting through which the institution's website shares can exert its influence and shape the perceptions of the wider public. By actively engaging with and promoting certain ideological frameworks, the university is capable of molding and directing public opinion and constructing the dominant discourse within society. More notably, the proliferation of digital technology has facilitated the integration of resources, making it more convenient than ever to create meaning through many modalities and media (Magnusson & Godhe, 2019), as delineated by websites, film, and video characterized by its dynamic, multifarious, and multidimensional nature (Tan et al., 2020), and each is regarded as having equal potential to contribute meaning to a complex semiotic entity (Kress, 2011). In an endeavor to gain comprehension and record diverse multimodal occurrences, employing multimodal discourse analysis emerges as a relevant instrument for analysis due to its aptitude to extract and deduce essential attributes, such as ideological identity from a multitude of modalities (O'Halloran et al., 2021).

As endorsed in the above discourse, a plethora of semiotic resources are employed to engender meanings that coalesce harmoniously to organize and shape our comprehension of the ideological attributes that are manifested in the digital interface of the website. Each of the employed semiotic resources possesses distinct internal structures that enable the construction of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning in various manners (O'Halloran et al., 2019). While this study exclusively utilized a qualitative research approach to unravel the multifaceted phenomena, within this context of study which is of the realm of ideological identities, it is highly recommended to adopt a more all-encompassing and thorough analysis by integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This suggestion is driven by the recognition of the highly intricate and nuanced nature of the subject matters under examination, warranting a holistic and comprehensive approach to fully comprehend and explore their underlying intricacies. For institutional websites as digital platforms are increasingly becoming more prominent in the recruitment and marketing strategies of universities due to their capacity to rapidly convey substantial amounts of information to a wide audience (Nasti et al., 2017), it is imperative to carefully examine these sites in terms of their design and thorough analysis of the messages they generate, whether they function as informative, illustrative, or decorative information (Elmiana, 2019). To achieve this, it is crucial to comprehend multimodality as a field of investigation and the increasing interest in its focus on facilitating a more nuanced and profound comprehension of multimodal communication, particularly in light of the expanding context of digital platforms for interaction and communication (Flewitt et al., 2018), such as the universities' homepages.

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**Pirman Ginting** is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in English Applied Linguistics at Universitas Negeri Medan. Additionally, he is a lecturer in the Department of English Education at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. His area of expertise encompasses various fields such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis, and Applied Linguistics.

**Sri Minda Murni** is a professor at the Faculty of Languages and Arts at Universitas Negeri Medan. With a bachelor's degree in English Language Education, a master's degree in American Studies, and a doctorate in linguistics, her academic qualifications are extensive. She has been actively engaged in both research and teaching activities, overseeing numerous higher education dissertations and theses. Areas of particular interest within her research scope encompass language teaching and learning, linguistics, culture and literature, and other applied linguistics-related fields.

**Anni Holila Pulungan** serves as a senior lecturer at Universitas Negeri Medan, situated within the Faculty of Languages and Arts. Engaged in various research and educational activities, she has overseen a multitude of dissertations and theses at the tertiary level. Her academic pursuits encompass English language teaching and learning, linguistic studies, and other areas within applied linguistics.

# Addressing Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom: EFL Teachers' Perspective

Ibtesam AbdulAziz Bajri\*

Department of English Language, College of Languages and Translation, University of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Omer Elsheikh Hago Elmahdi

Department of Languages & Translation, College of Science and Arts, Taibah University, Saudi Arabia

**Abstract**—This study examines the issue of language anxiety in the EFL classroom from the perspective of EFL teachers, aiming to understand their views, experiences, and strategies for addressing anxiety while offering practical recommendations. It takes a comprehensive approach by exploring the creation of supportive environments, the use of communicative activities, the provision of explicit strategy instruction, and the implementation of relaxation techniques. The study integrates relevant research with teacher input to identify gaps in the literature and emphasize individualized support. Ultimately, focusing on teachers' viewpoints and endorsing a multilayered approach across professional learning, classroom practices, and student services, the study contributes unique insights and recommends establishing an anxiety-reducing learning environment through communication, collaboration, coping strategies, and a holistic framework coordinated across levels of the education system.

**Index Terms**—language anxiety, foreign language teaching, EFL teachers, classroom interventions, student-centered approach

## I. INTRODUCTION

Debilitating anxiety is a significant issue facing many English language learners and can negatively impact the learning process if not addressed properly. As researchers have shown, language anxiety refers to the feelings of worry, tension, and fear associated with studying or using a foreign language in the classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986). For students learning English as a foreign language (EFL), high levels of anxiety are a serious concern as it often results in struggles with core language skills like speaking, listening, vocabulary acquisition, and grammar (Soflianti et al., 2023).

The experience of excessive anxiety in EFL students has been linked to impairments in memory, focus, cognitive processing and achievement, potentially leading to avoidance of language activities and a lower persistence in studying (Andrade & Williams, 2008, 2009; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). While a normal amount of anxiety is common and may even motivate learning to some degree, too much anxiety becomes debilitating for the language acquisition process.

Therefore, it is crucial for EFL teachers to gain a strong understanding of language anxiety and how to address it effectively through their instruction and classroom environment (Sparks & Ganschow, 2007). Specifically, creating a low-pressure classroom where students feel encouraged and comfortable taking risks helps reduce anxiety (Young, 1991; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Javid, 2014).

Research has shown that combining environmental, instructional, and therapeutic strategies provides the most comprehensive approach for EFL teachers to help manage students' language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; Sparks & Ganschow, 2007). Specifically, creating a supportive and low-pressure atmosphere where students feel encouraged to take risks can help reduce anxiety levels (Gregsersen & Horwitz, 2002; Young, 1991). This paper aims to explore EFL teachers' perspectives and experiences with language anxiety and provide recommendations for incorporating evidence-based practices that support language learning for all students.

The purpose of this study is to examine research on language anxiety in the EFL classroom and suggest effective ways to address it. In the realm of EFL teaching, this study holds significance for various reasons. Language anxiety can have detrimental effects on students, leading to reduced cognitive abilities, avoidance of language learning, decreased confidence and achievement, and lack of persistence. Students with high levels of anxiety face challenges in speaking, listening, vocabulary acquisition, grammar comprehension, and overall performance. While some level of anxiety can be motivating, excessive anxiety hinders learning and enjoyment of a foreign language, impeding progress, pleasure, and development as language learners. There is a gap in studies that consolidate strategies and offer practical guidance for EFL teachers in managing anxiety in their classrooms. While most research focuses on anxiety and its consequences, few integrate evidence-based recommendations into a cohesive framework. Severe anxiety disorders like social anxiety may coincide with language anxiety and necessitate treatment such as therapy. Failing to acknowledge and address these issues can hinder the success of highly anxious students. A nurturing learning environment and

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\* Corresponding Author. Email: [iabajri@uj.edu.sa](mailto:iabajri@uj.edu.sa). ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0516-9820>

effective, empathetic teaching empower all students to achieve their full potential, overcome obstacles, and foster a lifelong passion for learning. By comprehending anxiety and implementing strategies to meet learner needs, teachers can establish such an environment for their students. Given the increasing diversity in today's classrooms, there are likely numerous anxious language learners who require extra support. Recommendations for managing anxiety can contribute to the creation of an inclusive learning setting where all students can flourish. Consequently, this study aims to equip EFL teachers with recommendations and resources for handling language anxiety based on research findings, while highlighting the importance of effectively addressing anxiety for student well-being, success, and development.

Anxious students often experience impairment in speaking, listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, grammar, and overall achievement (MacIntyre et al., 1997; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999; Andrade & Williams, 2009). Anxiety may also lead to avoidance of language learning activities, lower persistence, poorer memory and focus, loss of interest, and lower self-efficacy (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994).

Although some anxiety is normal and may be motivating, excessive amounts prevent students from fully benefiting from language learning opportunities and experiences. By developing an understanding of anxiety and employing evidence-based strategies for addressing it, teachers can create supportive learning environments where all students can succeed, progress in their development, overcome obstacles, and cultivate a lifelong passion for learning. A comprehensive approach integrating both environmental and instructional elements, with therapeutic support for severe anxiety, has been shown most helpful for managing concerns and enabling students' growth (Alkhodimi & Al Ahdal, 2019; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 1999; Zeidner, 2007). Key strategies include providing encouragement, allowing mistakes, teaching coping strategies, giving choices, when possible, collaborative opportunities, tailored guidance, and practice opportunities.

In summary, the problem addressed in this study is language anxiety and its debilitating effects on students, with the goal of providing EFL teachers with recommendations and resources for effectively managing anxiety and creating inclusive learning environments where all students can thrive. By developing a foundation of support, teachers inspire students to persevere in challenges, achieve more than believed possible, and discover the joy of learning. Overall, this supports well-being, success, and progress toward becoming fluent and confident language users.

### **Research objectives**

Here are the research objectives related to addressing language anxiety in the classroom:

1. To investigate the effectiveness of different strategies for creating a supportive learning environment that reduces language anxiety.
2. To examine the impact of communicative and collaborative activities on students' language anxiety levels and their engagement in the language learning process.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies in equipping students with the skills to manage their language anxiety effectively.
4. To assess the effects of incorporating relaxation techniques, such as meditation, on reducing language anxiety and improving students' language learning outcomes.
5. To develop a comprehensive approach for addressing language anxiety in the classroom and evaluate its effectiveness in reducing anxiety levels and enhancing students' language learning experiences.

These research objectives cover a range of important areas, including classroom environment, instructional strategies, individual coping mechanisms, relaxation techniques, and a holistic approach to addressing language anxiety.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Research has found language anxiety to negatively impact students' language achievement, confidence, motivation, and persistence. Young (1991) studies language anxiety from students' perspectives. She recommends understanding their concerns, providing encouragement rather than judging their ability, scaffolding activities, and reducing the emphasis on grades or tests. In addition, researchers (e.g., Al-Ahdal & Abduh, 2021; Dewaele, 2012; Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015; Gregersen et al., 2014) have found a link between test anxiety, trait anxiety, and poor performance on listening comprehension tests. They suggest teaching relaxation techniques, reframing mistakes positively, and giving students more control over their own assessment.

On the other hand, Andrade and Williams (2009) provide a summary of the studies on anxiety related to learning a foreign language before delving into the responses that Japanese university students expressed to anxiety-inducing events in

EFL classes teach English as a foreign language. One observation to keep in mind is that many university students enroll in EFL classes expecting to encounter an anxiety-provoking setting, and that worry is likely to considerably impair certain students' performance. They recommend that teachers should be aware of events that cause anxiety in students and take action to reduce these situations' negative effects in order to maximize learning for all students. Additionally, teaching students how to handle these circumstances effectively would be beneficial.

However, anxiety can also lead to avoidance of language learning activities, impairment of memory, and distortion of learning processes. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) suggest that anxiety reduces working memory capacity, hampering language comprehension and production. It also undermines confidence and persistence, as students perceive themselves as inadequate. Moreover, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) indicate that anxiety impairs memory, attention,

and cognitive processing. They suggest reducing anxiety by creating a low-pressure atmosphere, allowing for mistakes, teaching coping strategies, and giving praise or feedback.

Zulfikar (2022) attempts to reduce that anxiety through the use of group work and selective error correction. They highlight the need to establish close-knit learning communities that promote genuine interactions in L2 and give opportunities to be more engaged in oral language use, as well as a positive and supportive learning environment that encourages students to freely experiment with L2.

In addition, Oteir and Al-Otaibi (2019) provide a comprehensive review of studies on language anxiety in the EFL classroom, focusing on its causes, effects, and strategies for alleviating it. It makes the idea of foreign language anxiety clear and explains how it differs from other types of anxiety that are similar to it. Finally, it outlines the principal factors causing and affecting language learners' anxiety about learning a foreign language.

Furthermore, Gannoun and Deris (2023) review the literature on language anxiety in EFL classes, analyzing its reasons, consequences, and potential treatments for it. This review attempts to examine the current state of the field's research, identify knowledge gaps, and recommend future study avenues. Through a methodical, thorough search of teaching anxiety among foreign language teachers, this review offers a narrative synthesis of the literature on FLTA.

Aatif (2022) reviews the body of knowledge already available on language anxiety and provides more information on its types and how it relates to other variables. The origins of language anxiety are now made clear, along with how it impacts the skills of language learners. On the other hand, encouraging anxiety has been shown to have good effects on learners' motivation and attitudes over time and to be a powerful predictor of language accomplishment.

Kaczurkin and Foa (2015) provide an overview of cognitive-behavioral treatment and exposure and cognitive therapy techniques as well as summarize and discuss the most recent empirical research on their effectiveness for treating various anxiety disorders. These techniques are two of the most frequently used therapy techniques for treating anxiety disorders.

From another perspective, different studies on language anxiety in the EFL classroom, emphasize the importance of teacher training in addressing language anxiety, promoting learner autonomy, and using effective teaching strategies to reduce anxiety. Petersén (2020) looks into the connections between motivation, achievement, and foreign language anxiety (FLA) in EFL learners in secondary and tertiary education. He reviews many studies prior to 2009, they typically have come to the conclusion that students who are more motivated have lower FLA and higher achievement, while students who have higher FLA have lower motivation and achievement.

Furthermore, Piniel and Csizér (2023) explore in connection to anxiety, self-efficacy, and second language learning motivation. They show that the motivation process is complicated and influenced by other individual difference variables, and it may be more useful to investigate these variables in constellations rather than alone in order to comprehend language learner variations.

Many studies emphasize the need for a supportive classroom environment, effective learning strategies, individualized guidance, relaxation methods, and realistic views of learning. For example, Horwitz et al. (1986) conduct a seminal study showing that foreign language anxiety is distinct anxiety that stems from learning a non-native language which is different from general anxiety or shyness. It impairs cognitive ability, achievement, and persistence. Though normal anxiety motivates, excessive anxiety debilitates learning. Therefore, they recommend developing a supportive learning environment, teaching effective learning strategies, and providing individual support for anxious students.

Moreover, Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) identify factors associated with foreign language anxiety like fear of negative evaluation, low self-esteem, and perfectionism. They recommend fostering collaboration, tailoring instruction to needs, encouraging good relationships with teachers, and providing support counseling for severe anxiety.

Furthermore, Chou (2018) shows cooperative learning activities reduce anxiety and improve speaking ability. Group work helps students feel less judged, gain confidence through peer interaction, practice discussing differing viewpoints sensitively, and develop better productivity and focus.

In addition, Melouah (2013) studies the type of anxiety that first-year Algerian students of English at Saad Dahlab University encounter when performing oral presentations. The researcher also analyzes the causes of anxiety and offers teachers some suggestions and solutions to reduce anxiety when speaking a foreign language.

As EFL learners, Liu and Chen (2015) examine high school students' language anxiety and learning motivation. They discovered that academic track students have higher levels of total learning drive and extrinsic motivation than their vocational track counterparts. Additionally, a substantial inverse link between the crucial affective variables of motivation and anxiety is found. The study raises significant pedagogical issues for English teachers.

Liu and Cheng (2014) study how language anxiety and motivation are related to other affective learner characteristics for freshmen Taiwanese EFL students at universities. They reveal that when pupils are more motivated, anxiety levels are noticeably lower. It is also discovered that the relationship between motivation and anxiety is stronger than the relationship between motivation and language ability. The three proficiency levels' advanced students show the largest correlation between anxiety and motivation. Additionally, it is discovered that for students at this competency level, learner attitude has a substantially greater association with anxiety than the other motivating factors.

Consequently, the role of EFL teachers in reducing language anxiety is significant. Teacher-student interaction, classroom management, creating a supportive learning environment, and the use of technology in EFL classes are all recommended. Encouragement, constructive feedback, praise for progress, flexibility, and autonomy support are useful.

For example, Wu et al. (2022) highlight the significance of motivation and anxiety in learning a second or foreign language. According to them, language learning orientation and use of English anxiety are strongly inversely linked with one another and with other measured variables as the above examples. In addition, the use of English and self-efficacy moderated the effects of English use anxiety and language learning orientations on the participants' English achievements.

Kalsoom et al. (2020) examine how learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English in the classroom in a Pakistani EFL context is influenced by social support and foreign language anxiety (FLA). According to the social support research, learners' L2 WTC is influenced by their father's support, teachers' support, best friends' support, and other friends' support. Additionally, the results suggest that social support and techniques for reducing L2 anxiety can improve L2 learners' volitional preparation for L2 communication. The results of this study have consequences for the use of the target language in EFL classroom participation and provide insight into the planning and policy around the use of English in an EFL context.

Valizadeh (2015) studies the usage of movies in EFL classrooms, looking at how sitcoms affected the motivation and foreign language anxiety (FLA) of EFL learners. The data are gathered using the FLA instrument and the FLLMQ, or Foreign Language Learning Motivation Questionnaire. The findings show that watching sitcoms have a big impact on the EFL learners' desire to learn. Sitcoms also reduce test anxiety and FLA in students. In multimedia contexts, the use of sitcoms in the classroom is also possible and useful. While watching the videos, language learners can laugh and enjoy themselves. Teachers are encouraged to suggest sitcoms to help language learners be ready for listening and speaking courses. Language teachers can apply the findings both theoretically and practically.

Meditation, coping strategies, and effective learning strategies decrease anxiety and increase independence. Jones et al. (2019) believe that training in mindfulness meditation (MM) enhances wellbeing and health. Flexibility in coping (i.e., the capacity to track and adjust coping methods based on situational needs and strategy efficacy) may be one possible mechanism linking MM and health. Multilevel modeling results show that both those who practice meditation more frequently and those in the MM condition have more coping flexibility. This study offers preliminary evidence in favor of the claim that MM improves coping strategy monitoring and modification under stress.

In summary, anxiety continues to negatively impact students but can be managed with evidence-based strategies, support, and practice. A comprehensive approach creates an inclusive learning environment enabling all to achieve and grow as language learners. Guidance is provided for reducing anxiety and optimizing enjoyment, progress, and lifelong learning.

### III. METHODOLOGY

In this section, the researchers are going to describe the research design, population, and sample selection criteria. They also explain the data collection and method based on Likert survey/questionnaire. This would be a practical way to gain insights from EFL teachers on language anxiety in the classroom.

#### **Research questions**

Here are the research questions corresponding to each of the objectives:

1. What are the most effective strategies for creating a supportive learning environment in the classroom that reduces language anxiety among students?
2. How do communicative and collaborative activities in the classroom contribute to the reduction of language anxiety levels in students and enhance their engagement in the language learning process?
3. Which teaching and learning strategies are most effective in equipping students with the skills to manage their language anxiety effectively?
4. To what extent do relaxation techniques, such as meditation, reduce language anxiety in students and improve their language learning outcomes?
5. How can a comprehensive approach for addressing language anxiety in the classroom be developed, and what is its effectiveness in reducing anxiety levels and enhancing students' language learning experiences?

#### **Participants**

A total of 56 participants contributed to this research consisting of 62.5% males and 37.5% females. They are from different countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, the USA, and Canada. Their ages vary from 20 to 60 years, with most of the participants being from the age group of 40-49 with a percentage of 41.1%, then from 50-59 years with a percentage of 28.6%. Moreover, in the age group of 60 years and above this percentage is 10.7%. Other small age groups are of 30-39 years with 12.5% and 20-29 years with 7.1% also participate in this research.

Also, it is found that 71.4% of the participants are doctoral degree holders, 19.6% of master degree holders, and 8.9% of bachelor degree holders.

Concerning the participants' years of EFL teaching experience, it is found that 37.5% of the participants have an experience of more than 20 years, 23.2% of them have experience between 16-20 years, 19.6% of them between 11-15 years, 8.9% between 5-10 years, and finally, 10.7% have experience less than 5 years. Furthermore, 66.1% of the participants have not received any training on addressing language anxiety, while 33.9% have received it.

Whereas most of the participants 87.5% teach in colleges and universities, while a few amounts of them 8.9% in private language schools. Others, i.e., 3.6% teach either in public schools or as private tutors.

When investigating the participants' level that the participants are currently teaching, it is found that 53.6% teach advanced level, 17.9% upper-intermediate, 16.1% intermediate, 10.7% pre-intermediate, and 1.7% elementary level.

### **Instruments**

The survey is designed with closed questions to gather quantitative data of 5-point Likert scale items to rate the effectiveness of different approaches. Also, there is an important section on teacher demographic information. The anonymized online survey is distributed to a large sample of EFL teachers through professional organizations and networks. This would allow for broad participation across different teaching contexts, levels, and aggregation of common themes/strategies. Using a questionnaire maximizes input across a large/diverse sample in an efficient, low-cost manner. It provides breadth for this complex phenomenon and lays an informative groundwork for it.

Data were analyzed to identify the factors that contribute to language anxiety and the strategies that EFL teachers use to address it. Quantitative survey/scale data is one of the approaches to analyzing the data on language anxiety. It can be analyzed statistically using SPSS or similar software. Descriptive statistics (means, SDs, ranges, frequencies) describe anxiety levels and causes. Inferential stats (correlations, regressions, t-tests, ANOVA) examine relationships between anxiety, factors that contribute to it (perfectionism, failure fears, learning disabilities, etc.), and strategy use/effectiveness.

## **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

To start data analysis and based on the research questions, the questionnaire questions can be classified into the following groups. Note, that the classification is based on the alignment of the questionnaire questions with the research questions. Some questions may overlap and address multiple research questions simultaneously.

### **Strategies for Creating a Supportive Learning Environment (Group1)**

Statement 1. Language anxiety negatively impacts students' language learning.

Statement 2. Creating a supportive classroom environment can help reduce students' language anxiety.

Statement 6. Individualized support is necessary for students with severe language anxiety.

Statement 10. Addressing language anxiety requires patience, empathy, and consistency from teachers.

TABLE 1  
THE RESPONSES OF GROUP 1

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
S 1	66.0%	30.4%	0%	1.8%	1.8%
S 2	55.4%	42.9%	0%	0%	1.8%
S 6	37.0%	37.5%	21.4%	3.6%	0%
S 10	66.1%	33.9%	0%	0%	0%

### **Comments on the Responses**

S1. Language anxiety negatively impacts students' language learning:

- 66.0% of participants strongly agree that language anxiety negatively impacts students' language learning.
- 30.4% of participants agree with this statement.
- Only a small percentage of participants (1.8%) disagree or strongly disagree.

S2. Creating a supportive classroom environment can help reduce students' language anxiety:

- 55.4% of participants strongly agree that creating a supportive classroom environment can help reduce students' language anxiety.
- 42.9% of participants agree with this statement.
- Only a small percentage of participants (1.8%) strongly disagree.

S6. Individualized support is necessary for students with severe language anxiety:

- 37.0% of participants agree that individualized support is necessary for students with severe language anxiety.
- 37.5% of participants also agree with this statement.
- 21.4% of participants are neutral.
- A small percentage of participants (3.6%) disagree.

S10. Addressing language anxiety requires patience, empathy, and consistency from teachers:

- 66.1% of participants strongly agree that addressing language anxiety requires patience, empathy, and consistency from teachers.
- 33.9% of participants agree with this statement.
- No participants expressed disagreement.



Overall, the majority of participants in Group 1 show a positive response to the statements related to creating a supportive learning environment. They recognize the negative impact of language anxiety on students' language learning and acknowledge the importance of a supportive classroom environment, individualized support for students with severe anxiety, and the need for patience, empathy, and consistency from teachers in addressing language anxiety. The high percentages of agreement and strong agreement indicate a consensus among the participants regarding the significance of these strategies. However, it is worth noting that a small percentage of participants had neutral or disagreeing responses for some statements, suggesting a potential diversity of perspectives within the group.

### Communicative and Collaborative Activities (Group 2)

Statement 3. Using communicative and collaborative activities in class is effective for reducing anxiety.

Statement 8. Frequent opportunities for low-risk language practice help students overcome anxiety.

TABLE 2  
THE RESPONSES OF GROUP 2

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
S 3	66.6%	30.4%	0%	0%	0%
S 8	50.0%	46.4%	1.8%	1.8%	0%

### Comments on the Responses

S3. Using communicative and collaborative activities in class is effective for reducing anxiety:

- 66.6% of participants strongly agree that using communicative and collaborative activities in class is effective for reducing anxiety.
- 30.4% of participants agree with this statement.
- No participants expressed neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree responses.

S8. Frequent opportunities for low-risk language practice help students overcome anxiety:

- 50.0% of participants strongly agree that frequent opportunities for low-risk language practice help students overcome anxiety.
- 46.4% of participants agree with this statement.
- 1.8% of participants are neutral.
- 1.8% of participants disagree.
- No participants strongly disagree.

The feedback from Group 2 shows general agreement among the participants that communicative and collaborative work is helpful in decreasing anxiety and allowing for regular low-stress language practice. Most respondents said they strongly agree or agree with both statements, indicating they see these methods as useful for managing language anxiety. There were no neutral or strongly disagree answers for the first statement, underscoring a strong conviction in communicative and collaborative activities. However, a small portion gave neutral or dissenting responses to the second statement, representing some differences in viewpoints. It is valuable to consider possible reasons for these responses, such as personal preferences or histories, which could underlie the assortment of perspectives within the group.

### Teaching and Learning Strategies (Group 3)

Statement 7. Explicit strategy instruction equips students to overcome language anxiety.

Statement 9. Teachers play an important role in identifying and supporting anxious language learners.

TABLE 3  
THE RESPONSES OF GROUP 3

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
S 7	48.2%	48.2%	3.6%	0%	0%
S 9	44.6%	35.7%	19.6%	0%	0%

### Comments on the Responses

S7. Explicit strategy instruction equips students to overcome language anxiety:

- 48.2% of participants strongly agree that explicit strategy instruction equips students to overcome language anxiety.
- 48.2% of participants agree with this statement.
- Only a small percentage of participants (3.6%) expressed a neutral response.
- No participants disagreed or strongly disagreed.

S9. Teachers play an important role in identifying and supporting anxious language learners:

- 44.6% of participants strongly agree that teachers play an important role in identifying and supporting anxious language learners.
- 35.7% of participants agree with this statement.
- 19.6% of participants expressed a neutral response.
- No participants disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The feedback from Group 3 shows general consensus among participants about the significance of instructional methods and teacher support for addressing language anxiety. For both statements, close to 50% strongly agreed or agreed, demonstrating collective thinking on the value of explicit strategy teaching and the teacher's role in recognizing and assisting anxious language learners. The neutral responses for the second statement signify some diversity in perspectives, potentially owing to varying degrees of self-assurance or cognizance relating to a teacher's part in alleviating language anxiety. However, the lack of any dissenting or strong disagreement responses points to a common comprehension of the importance of pedagogical techniques and teacher involvement in managing language anxiety.

#### **Relaxation Techniques (Group 4)**

Statement 4. Teaching relaxation techniques can help students better manage their language anxiety.

Statement 5. Incorporating relaxation techniques (e.g. meditation, deep breathing) into lessons is feasible.

TABLE 4  
THE RESPONSES OF GROUP 4

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
S 4	51.8%	39.3%	7.1%	1.8%	0%
S 5	46.6%	48.2%	5.4%	0%	0%

#### **Comments on the Responses**

S4. Teaching relaxation techniques can help students better manage their language anxiety:

- 51.8% of participants strongly agree that teaching relaxation techniques can help students better manage their language anxiety.
- 39.3% of participants agree with this statement.
- 7.1% of participants expressed a neutral response.
- Only a small percentage of participants (1.8%) disagreed.
- No participants strongly disagreed.

S5. Incorporating relaxation techniques (e.g., meditation, deep breathing) into lessons is feasible:

- 46.6% of participants strongly agree that incorporating relaxation techniques into lessons is feasible.
- 48.2% of participants agree with this statement.
- 5.4% of participants expressed a neutral response.
- No participants disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The responses in Group 4 suggest a generally positive attitude towards the use of relaxation techniques for managing language anxiety. For both statements, a substantial percentage of participants (around 50%) either strongly agree or agree, indicating a consensus on the effectiveness and feasibility of teaching and incorporating relaxation techniques. The presence of neutral responses suggests that some participants may have reservations or uncertainties about the impact or feasibility of relaxation techniques. However, the absence of any disagreement or strongly disagreeing responses suggests that overall, participants recognize the potential benefits of relaxation techniques in helping students manage language anxiety.

**Based on the data analysis and comments from the four groups, the comprehensive analytical research outcome could be as follows:**

The data analysis revealed consistent patterns across the four groups, indicating the importance of addressing language anxiety in language education. The majority of participants agreed that language anxiety negatively impacts students' language learning (Group 1) and that creating a supportive learning environment and using communicative and collaborative activities (Group 2) are effective strategies for reducing anxiety. Furthermore, participants recognized the role of explicit strategy instruction, teacher support, and the need for professional development in addressing language anxiety (Group 3). Additionally, participants acknowledged the potential benefits of teaching relaxation techniques (Group 4) to help students manage their anxiety.

These findings highlight the significance of addressing language anxiety as a priority in language education. Language educators should be aware of the negative impact of language anxiety on students' learning outcomes and strive to create supportive and inclusive learning environments. They should incorporate communicative and collaborative activities that provide low-risk language practice to reduce anxiety. Furthermore, explicit strategy instruction should be integrated into language instruction to equip students with effective coping mechanisms. Teachers play a crucial role in identifying and supporting anxious language learners, and their professional development should include training on addressing language anxiety.

The research outcome emphasizes the necessity of individualized support for students with severe anxiety and highlights the importance of patience, empathy, and consistency from teachers in addressing language anxiety. Moreover, integrating relaxation techniques into language lessons can help students better manage their anxiety.

By implementing these comprehensive strategies and interventions, language educators can foster a positive learning environment that supports anxious language learners, enhances language acquisition, and promotes overall well-being. Addressing language anxiety should be a priority in language education to ensure optimal learning outcomes and promote students' emotional and psychological well-being.

**Based on the comments and responses from the previous four groups, a comprehensive approach to addressing language anxiety could include the following components:**

1. Awareness and Training: Raise awareness among language educators about the prevalence and impact of language anxiety. Provide training and professional development opportunities to equip teachers with knowledge and skills to identify and address language anxiety in students.
2. Classroom Strategies: Incorporate communicative and collaborative activities into language instruction to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment. These activities can help reduce anxiety by providing opportunities for low-risk language practice and fostering peer interaction.
3. Explicit Strategy Instruction: Provide explicit instruction on strategies that students can use to manage and overcome language anxiety. This includes teaching relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing and mindfulness exercises, which have been shown to be effective in reducing anxiety.
4. Teacher Support and Involvement: Recognize and emphasize the important role of teachers in identifying and supporting anxious language learners. Promote ongoing communication and collaboration between teachers and students to address individual needs and provide necessary support.
5. Classroom Adaptations: Implement classroom adaptations that accommodate the diverse learning needs of anxious language learners. This may involve flexible assessment methods, extended time for tasks, or alternative modes of expression to alleviate performance pressure and promote a more inclusive learning environment.
6. Collaborative Partnerships: Collaborate between language educators, school counselors, and mental health professionals to comprehensively address language anxiety. This collaboration can provide additional resources and support for students experiencing heightened levels of anxiety.
7. Research and Evaluation: Encourage ongoing research and evaluation of the effectiveness of different interventions and strategies for addressing language anxiety. This will help inform best practices and ensure continuous improvement in supporting anxious language learners.

By implementing this comprehensive approach, language educators can better address language anxiety by acknowledging the challenges associated with implementing anxiety-reducing interventions in the classroom and prioritizing the overall well-being of students in language education.

## V. CONCLUSION

### A. Findings

This study stands out for several reasons, making it distinctive in the field of language education and anxiety research:

1. Teachers' Perspective: The study specifically focuses on EFL teachers' perspectives on addressing language anxiety. While there is existing research on language anxiety from the students' perspective, this study brings a unique and valuable contribution by exploring the viewpoints of teachers. Understanding teachers' insights, experiences, and strategies in addressing language anxiety provides a comprehensive understanding of the issue and allows for practical recommendations that can be implemented in the classroom.

2. Comprehensive Approach: The study takes a comprehensive approach to addressing language anxiety by considering multiple components and strategies. It examines the importance of creating a supportive learning environment, incorporating communicative and collaborative activities, providing explicit strategy instruction, and implementing relaxation techniques. By encompassing these various aspects, the study offers a holistic perspective on addressing language anxiety, providing a wide range of strategies that can be tailored to different contexts and learners.

3. Integration of Research and Practice: The study effectively integrates research findings with practical implications. The literature review draws from both seminal and recent studies, providing a solid theoretical foundation. Additionally, the study incorporates comments and responses from four groups, including teachers, which adds a practical dimension to the research. By combining research evidence with real-life perspectives, the study bridges the gap between theory and practice, making its recommendations more applicable and relevant to language educators.

4. Identification of Gaps in the Literature: The study identifies gaps in the existing literature, specifically regarding the lack of compiling best practices into teacher-focused guidance. By recognizing this gap, the study positions itself to fill the identified need and provide practical recommendations for teachers. This focus on addressing a specific gap in the literature enhances the study's distinctiveness and contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the field.

5. Emphasis on Individualized Support: The study highlights the necessity of individualized support for students with severe anxiety. Recognizing that different students may have varying levels of anxiety, the study emphasizes the importance of patience, empathy, and consistency from teachers in addressing language anxiety. This emphasis on

personalized support adds a nuanced perspective to the study, recognizing the diverse needs of anxious language learners and promoting a student-centered approach.

### B. Implications

Overall, the distinctive elements of this study lie in its focus on teachers' perspectives, comprehensive approach, integration of research and practice, identification of gaps in the literature, and emphasis on individualized support. These aspects contribute to the uniqueness of the study and make it a valuable contribution to the field of language education and anxiety research.

### C. Recommendations

Based on the findings and the stated research objectives, here are some recommendations:

#### 1. Create a Supportive Learning Environment:

- Foster a positive classroom atmosphere where students feel comfortable and supported.
- Encourage open communication and establish rapport with students to address their concerns and anxieties.
- Provide clear expectations and instructions to reduce ambiguity and anxiety-inducing situations.
- Incorporate cooperative learning activities that promote peer support and collaboration.

#### 2. Implement Communicative and Collaborative Activities:

- Design language learning activities that encourage active participation and interaction among students.
- Incorporate group work, pair work, and discussions to create a low-stress environment for language practice.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in authentic communication and apply language skills in meaningful contexts.
- Offer regular opportunities for students to receive constructive feedback from peers and the teacher.

#### 3. Teach Effective Coping Strategies:

- Provide explicit instruction on coping strategies for managing language anxiety, such as deep breathing, positive self-talk, and visualization.
- Introduce relaxation techniques, such as meditation or mindfulness exercises, to help students calm their minds and reduce anxiety.
- Incorporate activities that promote self-reflection and self-awareness, allowing students to identify their anxiety triggers and develop personalized coping mechanisms.
- Offer ongoing support and guidance to help students practice and refine their coping strategies.

#### 4. Integrate Relaxation Techniques:

- Introduce relaxation techniques like meditation or guided imagery as part of regular classroom routines.
- Allocate specific time for relaxation exercises before or during language learning activities to help students relax and reduce anxiety.
- Provide resources or recommend apps that offer guided meditation or relaxation exercises that students can use independently.

#### 5. Develop a Comprehensive Approach:

- Encourage professional development opportunities for teachers to increase their awareness of language anxiety and effective strategies for addressing it.
- Foster collaboration among language educators, school counselors, and mental health professionals to provide comprehensive support to anxious language learners.
- Develop guidelines or a resource package for teachers that compile best practices and practical strategies for addressing language anxiety in the classroom.
- Continuously evaluate and review the effectiveness of the comprehensive approach, making adjustments and improvements based on feedback and research.

By implementing these recommendations, language educators can create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that addresses language anxiety, enhances language learning outcomes, and promotes the overall well-being of students.

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**Bajri, Ibtesam AbdulAzizi** works at the Department of English Language, University of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia as a Professor of sociolinguistics. She got her Master's Degree in stylistics from Girls' College in Makkah as a lecturer in the Department of English Language, Makkah, Saudi Arabia in 1994. She got her Ph.D. Degree in sociolinguistics from Girls' College of Jeddah as an assistant professor in the Department of English Language, Jeddah 2005. She teaches sociolinguistics, language and identity, discourse analysis, language and culture, special topics in linguistics, research projects, semantics and pragmatics, corpus linguistics, introduction to translation political and diplomatic translation, and seminars in linguistics. Her research interests involve sociolinguistic studies, discourse analysis, and graphology studies. Moreover, her writings have expanded to cover language and technology, education, and communication sciences in a variety of contexts.

**Omer Elmahdi** is a distinguished researcher and professor in the Department of Languages and Translation at Taibah University. He has expertise in communication sciences, translation, law, education, and educational technology. Prof. Elmahdi holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics and multiple master's degrees reflecting his diverse interests. He has authored numerous books in applied linguistics, English language teaching, translation, distance education, communication sciences, and educational media. His research also focuses on these areas. Elmahdi has held editorial roles with academic journals and is a leading researcher recognized for his published works. He has established intellectual and research centers and contributed to the expansion of open and distance learning. Elmahdi has extensive international experience collaborating with institutions around the world including the University of South Africa, Open University UK, Indira Gandhi Open University, British Council, University of Westminster, London Academy of Communication Sciences, University of Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Libyan Open University, Open University Malaysia, Elmadina International University, and Qatar University. Through collaborations, training initiatives, curriculum development activities, research projects, and more, Prof. Elmahdi has promoted learning internationally. His publications have advanced knowledge in communication sciences, languages, education, and technology across contexts and languages. Overall, Professor Elmahdi is a highly accomplished and multidisciplinary scholar with worldwide impact through his research, teaching, publishing, and collaborations in emerging fields of education.

# When Women Terrorise: The Psychopathic La Femme Fatale in *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck

Zahraa Abdullah Mohan

Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Ida Baizura Bahar\*

Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Diana Abu Ujum

Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Hasyimah Mohd. Amin

Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

**Abstract**—This study focuses on the issue of female psychopathy and the portrayal of an emotionally and mentally disturbed female character in *East of Eden* (1952) by the contemporary American author, John Steinbeck. Although female characters are like male characters regarding their psychological complexity, the issues of antisocial personality disorders and psychopathy have only been examined in previous studies concerning male characters. Hence, this study focuses on the issue of psychopathy as an antisocial personality disorder explored through the leading female character based on the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) by the American psychiatrist, Robert Hare (1991). A prominent view on the mentally disturbed female characters is that they are not analysed with equal attention as male characters; thus, this presumption that women are disqualified from psychological conceptions on account of their gender is a predicament by itself. Accordingly, this study examines the non-traditional la femme fatale personified through the female character, Cathy Trask, and investigates the author's portrayal of a female character with antisocial personality disorder tendencies. The findings show that, from a young age, Cathy reveals her lethal inclinations, harnessing her beauty and intelligence not only to her advantage but also to exploit those around her. Cathy also embodies the two "Personality Traits" and "Antisocial" factors and experiences many short-term marital relationships based on Hare's (PCL-R).

**Index Terms**—East of Eden, female antisocial personality disorder, John Steinbeck, la femme fatale, psychopathy

## I. INTRODUCTION

The main issue with antisocial personality disorder comes from the definition itself since psychopathy is a very intriguing psychological condition; yet, most of its psychological constructions were formed on the observation of male cases. For the past fifteen years, all efforts to understand the psychopathic structure and its unpredictable violence were "involved primarily if not exclusively on male samples of prison inmates and forensic patients" (Warren et al., 2003, p. 224). Thus, many academic and literary studies regarding psychopathy and antisocial personality disorders were and are limited to male samples and male characters (Logan, 2011). Postmodern literature, however, offers a counter understanding of psychopathy by pushing female psychopathic killers into the spotlight; thus, the traditional definitions of 'la femme fatale' and 'psychopathic disorder' are, rightly, not exclusive to men.

Although psychopathy, as an antisocial personality disorder, has been found in both men and women (Lee & Salekin, 2010; Lehmann & Ittel, 2012), nonetheless, different studies have posited the view that male psychopaths and female psychopaths are different, especially when it comes to stress reactions, shamelessness, risk levels and aggression rates (Hicks et al., 2010; Lee & Salekin, 2010). Even when the differences between male and female psychopaths have already been established, only limited research and efforts have been undertaken to examine gender differences regarding psychopathy, specifically, and antisocial personality disorders in general. Men scored the highest when it comes to psychopathic studies and the examination of antisocial personality disorders as test subjects (Forth et al., 1996; Hicks et al., 2012; Verona et al., 2012).

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\* Corresponding Author

Unlike the traditional belief that female psychopaths are not regarded with the same degree of fear and damage as male psychopaths since women are not physically and internally harmful to the same extent as men, women do not frequently attack or harm strangers without any reasonable cause. Thus, this scenario can be the same for female psychopaths (Weizmann-Henelius et al., 2003). Female psychopaths are just as harmful and damaging to others as male psychopaths but maybe even more since they attack and damage not only the physical well-being but also the emotional, self-esteem, self-worth, and psychological aspects of their victims (Wynn et al., 2012).

More importantly, when it comes to the portrayals of immoral, deadly female characters, psychopathic female characters in fiction have always been labeled as “calculating gold-diggers, sinful sirens, the evil stepmother, twisted stepsister, crazy beautiful women” (Logan, 2011, p. 121). They have also been labeled as “evil and twisted” (Grossman, 2007, p. 19); more traditionally and frequently as “la femme fatales” (Hanson & O’Rawe, 2010; Doane, 2013). Although la femme fatales in literature have been categorised under different versions of ‘bad’ women, yet even research on harmful and potentially dangerous female characters has been overlooked in literary studies (Atwood, 1994; Aguiar, 2001). Atwood (1994) herself questions whether this is “somehow unfeminist to portray a woman behaving badly” (p. 1). However, Atwood (1994) also proposes that fiction needs such female representations now more than ever as “female bad characters can also act as keys to doors we need to open, and as a mirror in which we can see more than just a pretty face. They can be explorations of moral freedom since everyone’s choices are limited and woman’s choices have been more limited than men’s” (p. 8).

In particular, the novel *East of Eden* (1952) by the contemporary American novelist, John Steinbeck (1902-1968), depicts the present-day issue of female representations that challenge the traditional perception of women. The novel represents a critical and essential medium to fully understand and analyse contemporary female psychopathic complexity especially since Steinbeck’s female characters tend to challenge the typical female identity as depicted in works of literature.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *The Concepts of Psychopathy and La Femme Fatale*

When it comes to studying and analysing psychopathic individuals, gender plays an important role in understanding and diagnosing the condition; this is simply because psychopathy has been primarily, if not exclusively, observed in male subjects only. The issue can also be seen in works of literature as many psychopathic female characters and la femme fatales are being labeled as mentally disturbed or crazy without any proper psychological analysis simply because psychopathy has been classified as a male condition. Consequently, many female characters that have been identified as exhibiting psychopathic and antisocial behaviours in previous studies on the subject were unfairly overlooked due to the psychological limitations that have been set. However, contemporary psychological studies and literary works have presented a radical outlook on psychopathy by portraying female characters as criminals rather than victims.

Psychopathy and antisocial personality disorders are among the foremost challenging and intriguing psychological conditions; until now, both disorders are difficult to research, understand and fully recognise (Lykken, 1995). Most studies and models concerning psychopathy were either personality models or behavioural examination (Lilienfeld, 1998) until the American psychiatrist, Hervey M. Cleckley (1903-1984), provided the very first comprehensive structural study on psychopathic and sociopathic personalities in his book, *The Mask of Sanity* (1941). During the past two hundred years, psychopathy has been investigated with massive attention clinically and scientifically in the psychological, medical and psychiatric fields (Warren et al., 2003, p. 223). It was not until later that the Canadian psychologist, Robert D. Hare (b. 1934), constructed the Psychopathy Checklist (PCL) and the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) in 1991 followed by the Psychopathy Checklist: Screening Version (PCL-R: SV) in 1995 by Stephen Hart and David Neil Cox, which was originally based on Cleckley’s articulated clinical psychopathic description in 1941.

Hare’s PCL-R consists of twenty criteria used to assess various personality and behavioural traits associated with psychopathy. These twenty psychopathic characteristics are divided into two factors: the first factor is the “Personality Traits” factor, which consists of glibness or superficial charm, grandiose sense of self-worth, pathological lying, conning and manipulation, need for stimulation and proneness to boredom, lack of remorse or guilt, emotional shallowness, callousness and lack of empathy, parasitic lifestyle, and poor behavioural control. The second factor, the “Antisocial” factor, consists of early behavioural problems, juvenile delinquency, revocation of conditional release, criminal versatility, promiscuous sexual behavior, many short-term marital relationships, and failure to accept responsibility for one’s actions.

After clinical studies, psychopathic conditions became more attractive to vigorous research fields due to their intriguing states. Therefore, psychopathy is defined as “a clinical construct defined by a pattern of interpersonal, affective, and behavioral characteristics, including egocentricity; deception; manipulation; irresponsibility; impulsivity; stimulation-seeking; poor behavioural controls; shallow effect; a lack of empathy, guilt, or remorse; and a range of unethical and antisocial behaviours, not necessarily criminal” (Hare & Neumann, 2009, p. 893) Psychopaths, thus, are described as “social predators who charm, manipulate, and ruthlessly plow their way through life” (Hare, 2003, p. 1).

It has been argued that psychopathy, as an antisocial personality disorder, can be found in both genders yet it has



been recognised that male psychopaths are different from women psychopaths in different features, such as feelings of shame, stress reactions, and risk-takings (Lee & Salekin, 2010; Lehmann & Ittel, 2012). Nevertheless, at the same time, they acknowledge that there are limited clinical and scientific studies that have focused on psychopathic gender differences or have covered gender differences when it comes to psychopathic disorder. When it comes to antisocial and psychopathy, most studies have been on and about men, and very limited research has examined the possibility of whether psychopathy can even exist in women at all (Wynn et al., 2012). In fact, most studies have been more male-focused because male characteristics and behavioural structures relating to the disorder were untransferable to women (Cale & Lilienfeld, 2002; Forouzan & Cooke, 2005; Rogstad & Rogers, 2008; ref. in Wynn et al., 2012, p. 257).

In literature, there have been a few studies that have explored, analysed, and examined portrayals of psychopathic or psychologically disturbed male characters from different literary lenses (Dashti & Bahar, 2015; Shokri et al., 2016) yet very limited studies have examined portrayals of psychopathic or antisocial female characters in literature. Logan (2010) proposes that a psychopathic character in literature is a term that historically and literarily has always been associated with a male character and never a female character; suggesting that this antisocial personality disorder and psychological condition is only applicable to men and exclude women. Due to this literary limitation, many portrayals of potentially destructive female characters have been overlooked and undermined for years in literature. This is the gap of knowledge in scholarship on the issue of dangerous and deadly female characters in contemporary fiction which this study focuses on.

#### B. *John Steinbeck and East of Eden (1952)*

John Steinbeck, born in Salinas, California in 1902, is considered one of the most celebrated and recognised American writers of his time. Working and studying at Stanford University, Steinbeck spent most of his life in New York to establish himself as a full-time writer. After failing to publish any of his works for years, he achieved recognition after the publication of his short stories, *Tortilla Flat* (1935). Although Steinbeck is mostly known as a social novelist, many of his writings deal with economic, labour and social issues, such as his Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939). However, many of his writings also explore different themes, such as psychological complexity, as many of his characters illustrate different psychological elements. In particular, *East of Eden* (1952) is a notable example of Steinbeck's novel which portrays a psychologically challenging female character and is one of the most remarkable villains in contemporary literature (Warnick, 2014).

*East of Eden* is a postwar contemporary depiction of good and evil that challenges the traditional characterisation and psychological structure, especially when it comes to Steinbeck's portrayal of the female character, Cathy Ames. A study by Warnick (2014) investigates Cathy's character by applying the concept of monstrosity which has moved into a new direction; focussing not only on gothic literature by depicting supernatural and gothic elements, which is the traditional way that monsters have been explored and understood. Warnick applies the concepts of monstrosity and social fears in the novel by analysing only Cathy's characterisation. Although Steinbeck defines Cathy as a 'monster', Warnick (2014) argues that she is much more than that as she represents "a non-traditional female character that has stood against social norms" (p. 5). In addition, Mostafaei and Shabanirad (2015) examine Steinbeck's portrayal of Cathy as the devil incarnated while also focussing on the male/female relationships to address the concepts of social and gender dominations. In contrast, a study by Garcia (2016) highlights Steinbeck's female characters in three of Steinbeck's works, namely *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), *East of Eden* (1952), and the short story "The Chrysanthemums" (1937). According to Garcia (2016):

Strong women trying to break out against the social norms that force them into the background of Steinbeck's fiction [...] the female characters Elisa Allen, Ma Joad, and Cathy Trask working toward a new way of living in a male-dominated society and at times threatening or participating in violent behaviour in order to be accepted and understood. (p. 5)

Although different studies have focused on Cathy's characterisation, there is yet to research on the issue of her psychopathic personality or whether she reflects the characteristics of a contemporary *la femme fatale*. Therefore, this is the research objective in which this study will address.

### III. DISCUSSION

#### A. *Cathy as a La Femme Fatale*

It is very difficult to overlook Steinbeck's intentions in portraying Cathy as nothing more than an evil creature; Steinbeck does not introduce Cathy until later in the novel and the style in which he introduces her tells us everything we need to know about Cathy:

I believe there are monsters born in the world to human parents. Some you can see, misshapen and horrible, with huge heads or tiny bodies ... and just as there are physical monsters, can there not be mental or psychic monsters born? The face and body may be perfect, but if a twisted gene or a malformed egg can produce physical monsters, may not the same process produce a malformed soul? (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 71)

For Steinbeck (1952), just as there is a physical evil that we can see, there is also an evil soul: "If one can be born with a twisted and deformed face and body, one can surely also come into the world with a malformed soul" (p. 41). Steinbeck makes it clear from the beginning that evilness and wickedness can exist physically and psychologically.

Cathy's character represents a textbook portrayal of a contemporary *la femme fatale* since the re-emergence of the *la femme fatale* equals social change (Harvey, 1978). This is especially true in a postmodern society where women are increasingly entering the work market; "the apparent frustration of the institution of the family in this era and the boredom and stifling entrapment of marriage and how *femme fatale* threatens to destroy traditional family structure" (Harvey, 1978, p. 62). Cathy's rejection of the standardised social norms adds more ambipolarity to her role in society since, as a woman, she rejects her role as a wife and strongly refuses her role as a mother. As discussed earlier, a *la femme fatale* is known for her uniqueness and her firm rejection of anything traditional and anything considered as a rule.

In addition to that, a *la femme fatale* uses her beauty and sexuality as she weaponises her beauty and sexual knowledge to her advantage. In the novel, Cathy's character is always linked to her outstanding beauty and physical charm combined with her sexual power which makes her even more feared and rejected by society and male authority. In the beginning, Cathy is portrayed in an angelic form, who possesses a certain charm that she uses to make men fall in love with her, including the male character, Adam Trask, who perceives her as the purest woman he has ever met:

You don't know this Eve; she will celebrate my choice. I don't think anyone can know her goodness [...] I had a gray life [...] then Cathy came [...] a kind of light spread out from her. And everything changed color. And the world opened out. And the day was good to awaken too. And there were no limits to anything [...] I'm going to make a garden so good, so beautiful, that it will be a proper place for her to live and a fitting place for her light. (Steinbeck, 1952, pp. 167-169)

A classical description of a *femme fatale* is as a modern representation of Lilith, the female demonic figure of Mesopotamian folklore, and the same can be argued about Cathy since Cathy is described in the novel as an embodiment of Lilith. Bragg (2000) argues:

Steinbeck's characterisation of Cathy owns as much to the Lilith legends as it does to the Eve myth [...] Cathy like Lilith, corrupts both young boys [her children and the young boys from her childhood] and young girl [her harlots while working as a Madam] and is invariably described in terms of demonic imagery and wickedness. (p. 442)

Cathy's rejection of the traditional female role and her disobedience to the typical female responsibilities that are set upon her do not appear until she becomes an adult, yet her counter-rebellious character has manifested at a very young age. When Cathy was just a little girl, she exhibited irregular sexual energy and unusual erotic behaviour that do not suit her age; for example, when she was only 10-years-old, her mother found her "naked to the waist" (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 75) in the carriage house tied and bound by two teenage boys. Although the two boys were punished for their actions, Cathy acted as if nothing had happened even when she was found in a very bizarre situation; "Mrs. Ames saw that Cathy's wrists were tied with a heavy rope. She screamed and flung herself down and fumbled at the knots. She carried Cathy into the house and put her to bed" (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 75). Even at the age of ten, Cathy had everything under control, and she was the one who took advantage of the two teenage boys:

Their crime was bad enough, but the lies proved an evil that not even the whip could remove [...] Cathy, they said, had started the whole thing, and they had given her five cents. They had not tied her hands. They said they remembered that she was playing with a rope. (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 75)

Everyone believed that Cathy was the victim based on the physical evidence, especially since Mrs. Ames had seen Cathy in that state: "Mrs. Ames settled down to a steady hysteria, she had been there. She had seen. She was the final authority. And out of her hysteria a sadistic devil peered. She wanted blood" (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 75). In actuality, Cathy's father is the only one who believed that Cathy was the guilty one as Mr. Ames knew of his daughter's abilities of seduction and manipulation even as a child:

There were things he did not understand, but he did not bring them up to anyone [...] in her father's mind, another question stirred, and he shoved it down deep and felt dishonest for thinking about it at all. Cathy had remarkable luck in finding things – a gold charm, money, a little silken purse, a silver cross with red stone said to be rubies. She found many things, and when her father advertised in the weekly courier about the cross no one ever claimed it. (Steinbeck, 1952, pp. 76-77)

Since Cathy was a child, she had used her intelligence and wit to gain power over men. Cathy's father was the only man who suspected that she had a maleficent soul and wicked nature, but Cathy was smart enough to convince him otherwise and forced him to forget all his suspicions, "[h]e would have felt bad if two boys were in the house for something they did not do [...] it was better if he didn't know anything, safer, wiser, and much more comfortable" (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 77). Just like the traditional *la femme fatale*, Cathy possesses power and control over men, "she exercised a powerful effect on both boys and girls. And if any boy could come on her alone, he found himself drawn to her by a force he could neither understand nor overcome" (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 77). When Cathy became a little older, she had a dream of becoming a teacher but that dream soon changed when she met Adam. Later, she starts working as a prostitute and then becomes the Madam. Antonio (2015) notes that "men created *femme fatales* in their work as an expression of what they saw in women who were beginning to declare their sexual and political freedom" (p. 3).

In the novel, Cathy is portrayed as a female character who celebrates her liberal lifestyle and freedom, especially when it comes to her rejection of her role as a wife and a mother. Antonio (2015) explores the ideology of marriage in general as "an institution for social and economic reasons" (p. 3) yet the postmodern notion of marriage views marriage

as “companionship and affection” (p. 3). However, the postmodern *la femme fatale* represents an alternative to the traditional limitation whereby women choose not to be mothers and wives; instead, they choose to have a life “without men” (Antonio, 2015, p. 4). Here, Cathy makes many men fall in love with her and abuses them for a certain lifestyle without committing to any of them; she views relationships and marriage as unnecessary and slavish to her and women in general. In fact, Adam is not the only male character who falls prey to Cathy’s charms but also Mr. Edward who spends all his life savings to buy her gifts, lands and luxurious items:

In their sexual relations, she convinced him that the result was not quite satisfactory to her, that if he were a better man, he could release a flood of unbelievable reactions in her. Her method was to keep him continually off balance. (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 93)

Traditionally, *la femme fatales* are very sexual beings whereby they use their sexuality and beauty to manipulate and lure men into submission. For Cathy, any sexual and physical experimentation is just a tool used to control and abuse men, “[w]omen such as Cathy [...] lay with a man’s sexual desire and then reject him, or engage in sex and then disparage his performance, all in an attempt to destroy his sense of worth as a masculine being” (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 138). Therefore, according to Tryforos (2018), *la femme fatales* in general “have more freedom to express their sexuality and overly seduce men for power rather than masquerading as someone they are not” (p. 40). In the novel, Cathy’s profession as a prostitute makes it easy for her to exercise all sexual liberty without limits but it does come with its risks; for instance, Mr. Edward starts to physically abuse Cathy for obedience and submission, “Every blow had been intended to crush her” (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 98). After being abused, Cathy learns that she must “never hurry” (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 238) and that she should be more aware, more intelligent and more patient until she completely asserts her domination over men.

*La femme fatales*, in general, challenge the traditional gender roles although they represent the fatale female personification whereby, they are both beautiful and deadly. Cathy is portrayed in the novel as nothing more than a monster, a demon, Lilith and a very dangerous *la femme fatale*. Yet, it is interesting to note that, according to Naremore (2002), *la femme fatale* characters are normally extended from fantastical supernatural worlds; thus, they normally exist in a “nightmarish world, which is typically a grotesque mirror wherein death, violence, treachery, illicit relationships rule the night as does the femme fatale” (p. 45). Broe (2009) also argues that, normally, *la femme fatales* exist in an unpredictable world whereby men have to adapt to the new system and the new gender roles that have been challenged after the two world wars. Notably, Cathy is rejected by her society for not playing her part according to the new gender role; as a result, she changes her name to “Kate” and gains control over the brothel house to create her world and kingdom according to her image:

She owns a whorehouse, the most vicious and depraved in this whole end of the country. The evil and ugly, the distorted and slimy, the worst things humans can think up are for sale there. The crippled and crooked come there for satisfaction. But it is worse than that. Cathy and she is now called Kate, takes the fresh and the young and the beautiful and so maims them that they can never be whole again. (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 304)

Cathy does not create chaos and destruction to her male clients but also to the man who loves her the most, namely Adam. When she leaves him and her children alone without a word and he later finds out that she is working in a whorehouse, he does not believe it, “Now, there’s your medicine [the truth about Cathy or Kate]. Let’s see what it does to you. ‘You are a liar.’ said Adam”. (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 304)

### *B. Cathy’s Psychopathy*

Cathy’s characterisation as Lilith, a demon and a monster takes away the psychological complexity of her characterisation especially since she represents more than a fantastic beast in the oldest story in history. According to Hare (2003), if there is one thing that all psychopaths seem to have in common, they are all charming yet almost always deadly and dangerous individuals. Cathy’s psychopathy comes directly from her sadistic methods to exercise control; her positions as a prostitute and a Madam in a whorehouse give her the control that she needs over men and become conduits to her psychopathic needs. One of the key characteristics highlighted by Hare (2003) is that psychopaths display dangerous behavioural problems at an early age. These might consist of persistent dishonesty, deception, larceny, arson, truancy, destruction behaviour and/or precocious sexuality. When Cathy was small, she displayed a series of behavioural problems, such as violent behaviours; for example, one major incident that comes to mind is where the two young boys were punished. The crime itself is not just violent but rather also reveals an insight into Cathy’s sadistic sexual conduct, “Cathy, they said, had started the whole thing, and they had given her five cents. They had not tied her hands. They said they remembered that she was playing with a rope” (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 75).

Furthermore, Cathy’s father was also aware that his daughter had been known to steal and lie to others, and this had often happened in the town. Cathy’s profession as a prostitute and a Madam, later, helps her to demonstrate and exploit her power over men, where she possesses compromising pictures as a blackmailing tool not meant for her safety but, rather, she takes great pleasure in holding something against them. The true reason behind her blackmailing her clients is only to torture them psychologically; thus, by blackmailing them, Cathy has full control over her brothel and her clients. Cathy also displays her lack of guilt and empathy toward others many times; working as a Madam, she holds enough power to control others for her sadistic indulgence, “No one has ever escaped [...] if anything should happen to me anything one hundred letters, each one with a picture, would drop in the mail, and each letter will go where it will do the most harm” (Steinbeck, 1952, pp. 320-321).

Hare (2003) also notes that one of the main psychopathic characteristics is their arrogance and their aptitude for falsehood and manipulation; as recalled, Cathy's father knew from an early age that Cathy was more than capable of manipulating and lying to others using her intelligence and charm. Cathy does not believe that lying and manipulation are wrong especially if she employs them for her advantage as she sees herself as better than others, "I'm smarter than humans. Nobody can hurt me" (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 321). Since she believes herself to be a superior version of everyone else, this narcissistic behaviour prevents her from connecting or relating to others. Cathy, as Kate, stands as proof of her lack of empathy and understanding for human emotions, such as psychologically torturing her clients and abusing little girls to provide the requested pleasures. As Kate, Cathy is proud that no one can harm her or "no one knew [her]" (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 319). Cathy's characterisation is directed toward sadism and sexual control, and this is evident in the manner in which Kate is able to become the Madam. Kate tortures and murders the previous brothel owner, Madam Faye, who is loved by all, "a pretty damn good citizen [...] had a nice place, quiet, well run" (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 211).

Hare notes that it is a fact that both psychopathy and crime seem to connect on so many levels and that psychopaths tend to exhibit many antisocial characteristics and violent behaviours, such as "a sense of entitlement and general lack of behavioural inhibitions; also, their need for power and control constitute what might be described as a prescription for the commission of antisocial and criminal acts" (Hare, 2003, p. 12). Hare (2003) also states that psychopaths have a high tendency for violent and criminal offenses which would "explain why psychopaths find it so easy to victimise the vulnerable and to use intimidation and violence as a tool to achieve power and control over others" (p. 12). In the novel, Kate's ruthlessness and violent behaviours towards Faye are disturbing not only due to the brutality itself but rather it is unjustifiable especially since Kate does not have any motive or cause for torturing and killing Faye.

Although Cathy or Kate is said to be both beautiful and intelligent, it seems that she does not have any long-term goals even though her murder of Faye is only for money and to take control of the brothel. Kate appears to only be motivated by financial growth. Kate's lack of remorse and reasonable motives for her violent inclinations stands as another testament to her psychopathic tendencies; instead of just simply killing Faye, she wants to torture her first because Kate finds pleasure in hurting and torturing others, "[s]he had no feeling about Faye [...] there had been a time during her dying when the noise and the smell of her had made anger rise in Kate so that she considered killing her quickly to get it over" (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 500). This then corresponds to one of the main psychopathic characteristics, which is a lack of remorse or guilt and criminal versatility (Hare, 2003).

Here, Faye's murder depicts just how inhuman and brutal Kate can be and, if given the chance, she would do it again without any guilt or remorse. Toward the end of the novel, Kate becomes a well-known businesswoman:

... If they followed the rules she laid down [...] Kate would take care of them and protect them [...] the girls did have the security of knowing that they would not be punished without cause. (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 468)

Hare (2010) is also of the opinion that psychopaths and murders tend to appear to be "more predictive to general violence and sexual violence" (p. 13) and "significantly more gratuitous and sadistic violence" (Porter et al., 2003, p. 467; Hare, 2003, p. 14). Although Kate becomes the Madam for the wrong reasons and uses violent methods, it seems that Kate treats everyone fairly except her clients but even the blackmailed photographs of her clients come to an end after her death as they are found and destroyed (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 558).

Traditionally, characters who are cast as wives and mothers always seem to be presented as gentle and feminine, they are the protectors of their family and their partners. Nevertheless, Cathy acts as an unusual representation of a female figure which counters the rest of the female characters that act with empathy and kindness; even the prostitutes in the novel stand as strongly moral characters, such as Jenny, Faye, The Nigger and Fartin. Cathy is the solo character who has a destructive psychopathic nature as Gladstein (1986) states:

She [Cathy] occupies both of the categories Steinbeck reserves for women; she is both a mother and a whore. But, contrary to his usual sentimentalisation of those roles, Steinbeck shows Cathy as a malevolent mother, one who tries to abort and then abandons her children. She is also a far cry from his usual whore with a heart. (p. 98)

Conventionally, characters tend to shift from negative to positive as part of their character developmental journeys and, in many of Steinbeck's novels, the female characters cross the boundaries from being harlots to mothers. However, Cathy's character development is depicted in a psychopathic malevolent style since she has no empathy and morals for her family, clients, working girls and herself. As outlined in Hare's psychopathic checklist, one of the psychopathic tendencies displayed by many psychopaths is their rejection to take responsibility and accountability for their actions. Indeed, Cathy's refusal of her supportive and nurturing role as a wife and a mother reflects her psychopathic character. Cathy has no intention of being a mother and this is shown early on when she discovers that she is pregnant; thus, she decides to travel to California for an abortion.

However, her plan fails only because her doctor refuses to operate. After all, he witnesses "something inhuman about her" (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 134). Cathy then decides that, the moment she gives birth to her children, she will immediately leave Adam and the children alone; she even informs Adam that she will leave him soon despite his constant denial of her plan, "I am not going to stay here. As soon as I can I will go away" (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 172). It is not only that Cathy has rejected the motherhood role, even her body seems to reject birth and childbearing, "her breasts did not grow, and her nipples did not darken. There was no quickening of milk glands, no physical planning to feed the newborns" (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 182).

The moment Cathy can move physically, she leaves Adam and her twins after shooting Adam in the shoulder and telling him that she does not want anything to do with the children or him, “throw them in one of your wells” (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 199). By shooting Adam and choosing her freedom over her motherly responsibilities, she shows poor behavioural controls and failure to take responsibility and accountability for her as these two characteristics are two main traits in psychopaths (Hare, 2003; Hare & McPherson, 1984; Hare et al., 1990, 1991, 2012). Hare (2003) suggests that “psychopathic individuals are more aggressive than non-psychopathic individuals and institutionalised samples showed verbal peer and covert aggressions are highly correlated to psychopathy” (p. 13).

Hare (2003) also notes that women psychopaths display higher aggression and abuse levels than non-psychopathic women and, normally, their aggression is not only internalised but also expressed externally. Cathy’s neglect of and loathing for her role as a wife and a mother are essential for the portrayal of her psychopathic character; her elimination of being emotionally connected to anyone, even her children, stands to prove her lack of remorse and guilt. By choosing to leave everyone for her selfish reasons, her husband starts to suffer from abandonment issues and her children also grow up without a mother; both Aron and Cal are psychologically damaged by their mother’s absence, and this is established thoroughly throughout Aron’s need for a mother, “[Aron] pretended like [Abra] is his mother” (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 422).

In the novel, Cathy is portrayed as having very feminine and gentle physical characteristics which hints to us that she is innocent and weak, giving men, such as Adam, the feelings of protection and providing “a helpless child” (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 119). However, it is later that we come to fully understand Cathy’s psychopathic nature. Even when Cathy’s physical portrayal centers around her feminine energy and fragile female identity, Cathy’s psychopathic tendencies are also depicted in many scenes in the novel; for example:

Cathy’s voice could cut like a file when she wished [...] she exercised a powerful effect on both boys and girls. And if any boy could come on her alone, he found himself drawn to her by a force he could neither understand nor overcome. (Steinbeck, 1952, pp. 72-77)

In the final chapter, Cathy commits suicide which is her way of taking control of her death; yet she leaves everything she owns to her son, Aron, and signs the papers as “Catherine Trask” (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 550). Ironically, she implicitly feels that this moniker represents her original identity. Until the very end, Cathy does not display any feelings of guilt and empathy for leaving and choosing her happiness and freedom are the only thing that seems to matter to her, “[n]obody can hold me. Nobody can trap me” (Steinbeck, 1952, p. 461).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Steinbeck’s *East of Eden* portrays the psychopathic la femme fatale character, Cathy, in a different and more complicated light by illustrating her as a psychopathic character, highlighting not only a very dangerous contemporary la femme fatale but also a psychologically non-traditional female character. With regards to the objective of this study, which is to examine Cathy’s non-traditional la femme fatale characterisation as a counter to Steinbeck’s traditional female characters, it is safe to state that Cathy displays her fatal nature from an early age in which she utilises her beauty and intelligence to her favour and also to abuse others.

Conventionally, la femme fatales are known for their extraordinary beauty and their intelligence as they are women who employ their sexuality and attraction to seduce and harm men. In connection to the next objective of the study, namely to investigate Cathy’s psychopathic nature with regard to her la femme fatale persona, it has been found that both issues seem to be intertwined, to some extent. Cathy clearly shows disturbing early behaviour, cunning and manipulation, zero accountability and failure to take responsibility, sexual advantages, and pathological lying to others like it is her nature. She rejects every role given to her as a daughter, a wife and a mother all for the sake of wealth and freedom. Finally, Cathy also demonstrates mutable dimensions for violence and abuse, which are key characteristics of psychopathic individuals.

After careful examination following Hare’s Psychopathic Checklist-Revised, it is determined that Cathy or Kate embodies both the two “Personality Traits” and “Antisocial” factors listed in the psychopathic checklist, namely criminal versatility, pathological lying, conning and manipulative, lack of remorse or guilt, emotionally shallow, lack of empathy, failure to accept responsibility for own actions, impulsivity, irresponsibility, poor behavioural control, early behavioural problems, promiscuous sexual behavior, and many short-term marital relationships as outlined by Hare (2003). In future studies, therefore, an analysis of psychopathic female figures, such as the femme fatale, can be conducted by employing the trauma theory by Cathy Caruth to explore whether these characters might implicitly experience post-traumatic stress disorder, contributing to their psychopathic inclinations. Furthermore, delving deeper into this subject could involve applying the standpoint theory by Sandra Harding to examine if non-traditional female characters in fiction manage to establish their unique perspectives, even after enduring marginalisation during their formative years.

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**Zahraa A. Mohan** was born in Iraq on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994. M.A. in World Literature (Universiti Putra Malaysia). Ph.D. candidate at the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang in Selangor, Malaysia. Her research is on postmodern English Literature and Psychological Feminist Studies.



**Ida Baizura Bahar**. Ph.D. (S.E.Asian Studies) (The School of Oriental and African Studies, London), M.A. in English Language in Literary Studies (The University of Nottingham) and B.Ed. (Hons) in TESOL (The University of Warwick). Her areas of specialisation are English Literature, English and Malay Literary Texts on the Malay World, Comparative Literature and Sociology of Literature.



**Diana Abu Ujum**, Ph.D. (English Literature) (Universiti Putra Malaysia), M.A (English Literature) (Universiti Putra Malaysia) and B.Ed. (TESL) (Universiti Putra Malaysia). Her research fields are Postfeminist Fiction, Young Adult Fiction, Contemporary Fiction and Popular Fiction.



**Hasyimah Mohd Amin**, Ph.D. (Arts) (University of Sydney, Australia), M.A (English Literature) (Universiti Malaya), B.Hsc. (English Language and Literature) (International Islamic University Malaysia). Her research focuses on English Literature and Contemporary African American Women Writers.

# Exploration of Honorifics in Japanese-Balinese Intercultural Marriages

Anak Agung Ayu Dian Andriyani

Faculty of Foreign Language, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar, Indonesia

Ida Ayu Putri Gita Ardiantari

Faculty of Foreign Language, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar, Indonesia

Kundharu Saddhono

Faculty of Education, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

**Abstract**—In Bali, honorifics serve as interactional tools determined by the situational context of discourse. In this regard, the present research aimed to uncover patterns of honorific usage in intercultural marriages between Japanese and Balinese individuals within the realm of pragmatic studies. The researchers employed observation along with data collection techniques involving listening, note-taking, and interviewing families of Japanese-Balinese intermarriages. Primary data consisted of dialogues among intermarried families in the districts of Badung, Gianyar, and Denpasar City, considering the high frequency of intercultural marriages in these regions in Bali. The findings revealed a dynamic interplay of honorifics within the context of cross-cultural marriages, shedding light on how language interaction reflected and shaped social interaction norms based on the context of cross-cultural marriages. Specifically, honorifics for Balinese women and children followed the social status of the father's family. Naming conventions for women from the Wangsa Jaba caste, including foreign citizens married to men from the Tri Wangsa caste, involved a process termed "perkawinan naik status" (status-elevating marriage), where the woman was given the honorific "jero" followed by her first name. In contrast, those not belonging to the Wangsa Jaba caste were named according to the birth order of the Japanese woman. This condition also applied to children born from intercultural marriages. Considering these results, this research is expected to contribute significantly to the academic literature on cultural anthropology, linguistics, and cross-cultural studies, offering insights into tolerance, appreciation of differences, and the ability to adapt to cross-cultural relationships.

**Index Terms**—honorifics, intercultural marriage, sociolinguistics

## I. INTRODUCTION

Honorifics are expressions used to greet, address, or refer to individuals (Chaer, 2000). Across languages, each possesses a system of honorifics utilized as tools for communication and interaction. They are essential and profoundly influenced by specific interactional contexts (Kartomiharjo, 1988). Accordingly, communication can be directed appropriately by focusing on honorifics uttered by speakers (Rusbiyantoro, 2011). This signifies that every language globally incorporates various honorifics that address interlocutors in diverse interactional settings (Kridalaksana, 1974). Honorifics can also serve as a medium for communication, not merely for greetings, but also for addressing, admonishing, or referring to the second party or interlocutor (Chaer, 2010). Generally, honorifics can take the form of morphemes, words, or phrases employed as tools for communication and interaction among speakers in societal life, contingent upon different conversational contexts or situations based on the nature of the relationship between speakers (Kridalaksana, 1982).

Every language worldwide harbors a system of honorifics, as the appropriate usage directed towards interlocutors manifests linguistic politeness (Rusbiyantoro, 2014; Saddhono et al., 2024). The system of honorifics also extends to the Balinese language. In this context, the caste system influences the terminology of kinship honorifics (Aryasuari, 2020), leading to the utilization of the Sor Singgih Basa Bali levels, which reflects an individual's level of politeness when communicating (Savitri & Dewi, 2019). The Balinese populace employs these linguistic levels as a direct reference for the speaker's level (Narayana, 1984). Sor Singgih Basa Bali comprises levels closely associated with the degree of eloquence in the Balinese language. It is better recognized as Anggah Ungguhing Basa Bali. The utilization meticulously considers the interlocutor's position, as knowledge of someone's identity and status facilitates the speaker's selection of the appropriate address level (Tinggen, 1994).

Due to the concept of linguistic politeness, honorifics become crucial in initiating communication. In Balinese society, the honorific system is generally observed through familial structures closely tied to participants' age, familial status, gender, and direct familial relationships. The forms of Balinese honorifics vary depending on the situation and the social status of the participants, owing to the persistence of traditional stratification based on birth (lineage), which categorizes individuals into the Tri Wangsa, a system of nobility carried from birth, consisting of three classes:



Brahmana, responsible for religious affairs such as priests and religious scholars; Ksatrya, responsible for governance such as kings and officials; and Wesya, responsible for societal welfare such as merchants. Additionally, in the Catur Wangsa categorization, the Sudra class, the lower caste responsible for assisting the Tri Wangsa, is also included (Parta et al., 2021; Saputra et al., 2023). This condition reflects that honorifics used among the Wangsa Jaba family or ordinary people are informal or in the standard language form, contrasting with the Tri Wangsa or aristocratic families who utilize refined or polite Balinese language (Suwija, 2018; Temaja & Bayu, 2018; Debi et al., 2023). This honorific system mirrors the social hierarchy and lineage status in Balinese society, where birth status and family caste play significant roles. Moreover, it reflects the high values of honor and respect towards royal families and prevailing social structures in Bali.

In contrast to the Balinese honorific system, in the Japanese language, the manner of addressing individuals is highly complex, reflecting social hierarchy, status, age, gender, and interpersonal relationships among speakers and interlocutors (Kabaya, 2010). This condition illustrates that both Japanese and Balinese honorific systems possess distinct characteristics. This linguistic phenomenon is evident in intercultural marriages between Japanese and Balinese individuals on Bali region. Interlingual marriages with different cultural backgrounds not only create unique individual relationships but also foster rich and intricate cultural exchanges. In today's digital era, many people from various countries marry partners from different cultural backgrounds. Correspondingly, intercultural marriages between Bali and Japan may present unique communication and cultural adaptation challenges, including the use of honorifics.

Previous studies have examined the phenomenon of honorifics, revealing that variations in pronoun forms, including kinship terms, are influenced by factors such as social status, familiarity, emotions, and activities. Additionally, politeness strategies are employed by speakers towards their interlocutors to prevent communication errors, which could lead to conflicts among individuals, families, and speech communities (Trijanto, 2022). Furthermore, a study on the use of honorifics in Makassar movie dialogues in YouTube videos identified Indonesian honorifics with a Makassar dialect (Herisanti, 2021; Rohmadi et al., 2023). In contrast, an investigation by Sartika (2016) on the Manggarai language found that honorifics were based on kinship relations, professional and hierarchical titles, personal names, and pronouns. The determinants included not only differences in profession and status but also social class defined by gender, familiarity, age, and kinship relations. Mixed-marriage interactions, particularly those between different nationalities, are characterized by daily familial interactions marked by tolerance and sympathy towards partners, supported by flexibility and openness to differences. This effort aims to foster harmony in cross-national marital life (Sirait, 2014). These various research findings highlight the nuanced nature of honorifics, while the present study focused on exploring honorifics in Japanese-Balinese intercultural marriages. This research is expected to elucidate the dynamics of honorifics as reflections of social norms and hierarchical relationships within each respective society.

## II. METHOD

This research explored the use of honorifics in intercultural marriages between Japanese and Balinese individuals. The method employed was observation incorporating data collection techniques involving attentive listening to directly observe the daily lives of Japanese-Balinese couples and study their interactions, including the use of honorifics in various contexts. Recording and conducting in-depth interviews with intermarried couples, their families, and local community members could provide valuable insights into the use of honorifics and their significance within broader cultural and social contexts. The data utilized was primary data, referring to the information obtained directly from the source (Marzuki, 1986), consisting of dialogues among Japanese-Balinese cross-cultured families residing in the districts of Badung, Gianyar, and Denpasar City, considering the high rate of intercultural marriages in these three districts in Bali. The techniques employed in data analysis were pragmatic equivalence and referential equivalence. The pragmatic equivalence involved analysis techniques using conversation partners as tools (Sudaryanto, 1993), while the referential equivalence employed analysis techniques using references that distinguished actors, recipients, beneficiaries, etc. In data analysis, based on Sudaryanto (1993), once the data were acquired, they were categorized based on the exploration of honorifics and underlying factors. This was followed by data validation through data triangulation, which involved comparing and matching results from various data sources to verify findings. The data analysis results were subsequently presented using an informal presentation method, which refers to presenting norms in formulations using ordinary language that contains detailed results of data analysis (Sudaryanto, 1988).

## III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this exploratory study provide a deeper understanding of communication dynamics and cultural values within Japanese and Balinese societies through an analysis of honorifics. It was evident that the usage of honorifics varied significantly depending on the situational context in which speakers uttered them to their interlocutors. Additionally, social factors, including the cultures of Japanese and Balinese societies, as well as social hierarchy and power structures, strongly influenced the usage of honorifics. In essence, social class, interpersonal relationships like familial (kinship), friendly, collegial, or societal status, and customary religious rituals played significant roles. Hence, children born from Japanese-Balinese intermarried couples typically inherit the social status of their father. This is because Balinese society adheres to patriarchy, known in the Hindu concept as *purusa*, denoting "the backbone of the

family." This concept asserts that a man's status is inherited through marriage. The role of men as *purusa* confers a particular privilege upon them, and when children are born from such marriages, they indirectly follow the paternal lineage. For women of the *Wangsa Jaba* caste who marry men of the *Tri Wangsa* caste, this union is termed a "*perkawinan naik status*" ("status-elevating marriage"). In this type of marriage, the woman receives a new name, typically connoting fragrance and beauty, such as "*jero sandat*" (frangipani flower) or "*jero cempaka*" (champaka flower). In this context, the women are given the prefix "*jero*" in their names, intending to invite them into the *griya* or *puri* (Balinese royal palace or residence). Below are various honorifics among intermarried couples between Japanese and Balinese individuals.

TABLE 1  
EXPLORATION OF HONORIFICS IN JAPANESE-BALINESE INTERCULTURAL MARRIAGES

Contexts of Situation	Honorifics	Locations
Japanese women married to men from the <i>Tri Wangsa</i> caste	- <i>Bu Jero</i> - <i>Jero</i> - <i>Jero Melati</i> , etc.	Balinese royal palace or residence ( <i>griya</i> or <i>puri</i> ) of the <i>Tri Wangsa</i> caste
Children of Japanese women married to men from the <i>Tri Wangsa</i> caste	- <i>Gung ...</i> - <i>Gung Ayu</i> - <i>Dayu ...</i>	Balinese royal palace or residence ( <i>puri</i> )
Japanese women meeting their Japanese friends	- Actual names (e.g., Aiko, Hiromi, etc.)	Outside the Balinese royal palace or residence ( <i>puri</i> )
Japanese women married to men from the <i>Wangsa Jaba</i> caste	- Names adjusted based on birth order in Bali (e.g., <i>Komang</i> Hiromi, <i>Putu</i> Aiko, etc.)	At home
Children of Japanese women married to men from the <i>Wangsa Jaba</i> caste	- Names adjusted based on birth order in Bali (e.g., <i>Gede R.</i> , etc.)	At home
Japanese women meeting their Japanese friends	- Actual names typically used; family name for those not well-acquainted and first name for those known well.	Outside the house

#### Context of Situation (1)

Speaker : Gung Mas (Balinese relative)  
 Interlocutor : Jero (Japanese woman)  
 Location : Ancestral home  
 Situation : Gathering for *Galungan* religious ceremony

#### Dialogue:

Speaker : *Jero, sudah sembahyang?*  
 Interlocutor : *Belum. Nanti saja sama anak-anak.*  
 Speaker : *Iya, ajiknya mana?*  
 Interlocutor : *Masih di sana.*

(Speaker : Jero, have you prayed yet?  
 Interlocutor : Not yet. I'll do it later with the kids.  
 Speaker : Okay, where's your husband?  
 Interlocutor : He's still over there.)

#### Analysis:

The dialogue occurred between the speaker, a native Balinese relative of the "*Anak Agung*" caste, and the interlocutor, a native Japanese woman, at the ancestral home during the religious ceremony of *Galungan*. The honorific used by the speaker towards the Japanese woman was "*Jero*." It is a term used to address individuals from a caste outside the *Tri Wangsa* or, in Balinese, known as *pungkusan*. In addition, "*Jero*" is an honorific bestowed upon individuals as an appreciation for being accepted into the *Tri Wangsa* caste, typically used by family members, relatives, or non-palace residents. However, it is usually not used by a Balinese husband towards his Japanese wife; instead, the honorific typically consists of the Japanese wife's given name or the term "*mama*," as commonly used by children towards their mothers. This communication pattern aligns with Manggola (2021), who suggests that married couples from different cultures indirectly possess different attitudes, habits, thought patterns, and cultures. Nevertheless, these disparities can be overcome through mutual understanding. Furthermore, the term "*Jero*" is often accompanied by flower names such as *Jero Puspa*, *Jero Melati*, *Jero Sandat*, and others. Thus, even though a Japanese woman is addressed as "*Jero*" within the family, relatives, or household environment, the variation in forms of honorifics for relatives is influenced by status, familiarity, feelings, and activities (Trijanto, 2022). On the other hand, the use of honorifics changes when the Japanese woman interacts with friends from Japan or locally. The honorific used would be her given name, comprising the family name and given name. For example, if her family name is Kawaguchi and her given name is Aiko, intimate friends from Japan would call her by her name, Aiko, with the suffix "*~san*" added. However, when meeting someone new, the honorific would be the family name, "Kawaguchi," followed by "*san*" as a form of respect in Japanese.

#### Context of Situation (2)

Speaker : Banjar resident  
 Interlocutor : Gung Maki (the father is a man from the *Ksatria* caste, and the mother is a Japanese woman)  
 Location : In front of the Banjar  
 Situation : Banjar resident asking whether it was a working day or a holiday

#### Dialogue:

Banjar resident : *Gung Maki, libur niki napi mekarye?*  
 Gung Maki : *Nggih, libur.*

(Banjar resident : Gung Maki, is today a working day or a holiday?  
 Gung Maki : It's a holiday.)

#### Analysis:

Context of Situation (2) depicts a dialogue between a Banjar resident and a child of a Japanese-Balinese intermarried couple who hailed from the *Ksatria* caste. The honorific used was "*Gung*," an abbreviation of "*Anak Agung*," indicating respect. The register of language employed was *alus mider* (polite and respectful but not overly formal), evident in the choice of words such as "*niki*," meaning "this," and "*mekarye*," denoting "working." The honorifics used in this context for the child of a Japanese-Balinese intercultural marriage adhered to the caste of the Balinese parent. For instance, a boy born to a *Brahmana* caste would be addressed as "*Ida Bagus*," while "*Ida Ayu*" would be used for girls. Similarly, for the *Ksatria* caste, the honorifics for boys are "*Anak Agung Gede*" or "*Anak Agung Ngurah*," while for girls are "*Anak Agung Ayu*," "*Anak Agung Sagung*," "*Anak Agung Mas*," or "*Anak Agung Istri*." Additionally, for the *Wesya* caste, "*Gusti Ngurah*" or "*Dewa Gede*" is used for boys, while "*Gusti Ayu*" or "*Dewa Ayu*" is used for girls. This phenomenon illustrates that the social status and caste position of children from Japanese-Balinese intermarried couples followed the social status of the father, who was typically Balinese, regardless of the mother's origins. This is because Balinese society follows patriarchy, known in Hindu concepts as "*purusa*," which dictates that their father's lineage determines a person's status. The role of men as "*purusa*" confers certain rights, and children born from such marriages indirectly follow the father's lineage (Kemalasari, 2019).

#### Context of Situation (3)

Speaker : Grandfather  
 Interlocutor : Granddaughter (the father is a man from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste, and the mother is a Japanese woman)  
 Location : At home  
 Situation : Grandfather asking about granddaughter's school departure time

#### Dialogue:

Grandfather : *Ayu, hari ini tidak sekolah?*  
 Granddaughter : *Sekolah, kak, ini sedang siap-siap.*  
 Grandfather : *Mau hujan ini, hati-hati ya.*  
 Granddaughter : *Iya, kak.*

(Grandfather : Ayu, aren't you going to school today?  
 Granddaughter : I'm going to school, grandpa, just getting ready.  
 Grandfather : It might rain. Be careful.  
 Granddaughter : Okay, grandpa.)

#### Analysis:

Context of Situation (3) presents a dialogue between the grandfather (referred to as "*Pekak*" in Balinese, shortened to "*kak*" in spoken discourse) and his granddaughter named Ayu. Ayu was born from the marriage between the grandfather's son, named Wayan, and a Japanese woman named Kyoko. She is their first child. Ayu's full name is Putu Ayumi Dewi, a combination of Balinese and Japanese names. Hence, many of her friends called her "Ayu." This honorific indirectly identified Ayu as the first child of a Balinese father from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste group despite being born to a Japanese mother. This aligns with research findings that children born from intercultural marriages tend to follow their father's lineage (Kemalasari, 2019).

#### Context of Situation (4)

Speaker : Balinese husband  
 Interlocutor : Komang, a Japanese woman who married a Balinese man from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste

Location : At home  
 Situation : Asking whether their son (Putu) has eaten or not

**Dialogue:**

Speaker : *Mang, Komang, Putu sube makan?*  
 Interlocutor : *Sube, Bli Wayan.*

(Speaker : Mang, Komang, has Putu eaten?  
 Interlocutor : Yes, he has, Bli Wayan.)

**Analysis:**

When a Japanese woman marries a Balinese man, numerous religious ceremonies are conducted by the Japanese woman, as she is considered to be reborn as a Balinese person. Based on observations and interviews, Japanese women do not receive the honorific title "*jero*" when marrying into the *Wangsa Jaba* caste but typically adopt names similar to Balinese ones based on their hierarchical birth order. In this context (4), being the third child, the Japanese woman's name was Komang, followed by her original name. This name change was not widely known but only by relatives, those in the immediate environment, and siblings. The honorific term "*Komang*" is usually used by speakers within the same community or upon hearing relatives and family members using it, thereby indirectly prompting the person to use it too. However, the honorific changed based on the context of the speaking situation; when meeting outsiders and fellow Japanese women, her given name was still used. The data above reflects that to maintain harmony within the family, Japanese women adopt an attitude of tolerance and sympathy towards their partners, supported by flexibility and openness (Sirait, 2014).

**Context of Situation (5)**

Speaker 1 : Pak Yan (a neighbor from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste)  
 Speaker 2 : Bugek (an aunt from the *Ksatria* caste)  
 Interlocutor 1 : Tugek (the first child of an intermarried couple)  
 Interlocutor 2 : Bu Jero Melati (a Japanese woman married to a man from the *Ksatria* caste)  
 Location : In the *Puri* of Tugek and Bu Jero  
 Situation : Preparing for a religious ceremony at the place of worship (*Merajan*)

**Dialogue:**

Speaker 1 : *Bu Jero, dimana ditaruh linggis? Mau masang penjor di merajan.*  
 Interlocutor 2 : *Ada di belakang gudang dekat merajan.*  
 Speaker 1 : *Ya...ya...ya*  
 Interlocutor 1 : *Pak Yan, silakan diminum kopinya nggih.*  
 Speaker 1 : *Nggih tugek, suksma.*

(Speaker 1 : Bu Jero, where did you put the crowbar? I want to set the *penjor* (tall and curved bamboo pole adorned with young coconut leaves) in the *Merajan*.  
 Interlocutor 2 : It's behind the warehouse, near the *Merajan*.  
 Speaker 1 : Ah, I see.  
 Interlocutor 1 : Pak Yan, please have some coffee.  
 Speaker 1 : Yes, Tugek, thank you.)

**Analysis:**

The context of situation (5) occurred in the *Puri* where Bu Jero Melati and Tugek lived. Pak Yan was a neighbor who often helped in the *Puri* during religious ceremonies. The term "*Puri*" refers to the house of the *Tri Wangsa* lineage, namely the *Ksatria* caste. *Merajan* implies a place of worship for Hindus within each household. *Pak Yan* was an honorific abbreviated from *Bapak Wayan*, identifying a Balinese person from the *Sudra* caste (*Wangsa Jaba*) born as the first child. *Tugek* was also an honorific, abbreviated from "*Ratu Jegeg*" or "beautiful queen," used to address the *Ksatria* caste in Bali. A Japanese woman marrying into the *Ksatria* caste family is also honored with the title "*Ibu Jero*." Nevertheless, in the above context, Tugek still respected Pak Yan by offering coffee and concluding the conversation with "*nggih*," a respectful form of agreement meaning "yes." This demonstrates that the traditional stratification system implemented through honorifics still exists in Balinese society, especially in customary situations. The phenomenon in context (5) illustrates that a child's status in Bali follows that of the father, as does the wife's (the Japanese woman) when she marries into a Balinese family of the *Tri Wangsa* caste. Moreover, Balinese people unfamiliar with Japanese culture do not use the term "*~san*" as an important characteristic of honorifics to address

others. It is one of the honorifics used in Japanese, often employed to show politeness and respect towards someone, especially when speaking to someone unfamiliar, older, or of higher social status (Surya et al., 2020).

#### Context of Situation (6)

Speaker 1 : Mother (a Japanese woman married to a man from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste)  
 Speaker 2 : Father (a husband from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste)  
 Interlocutor 1 : Made Hiroshi (the first son of an intermarried couple)  
 Interlocutor 2 : Komang Yurina (a daughter)  
 Location : At home  
 Situation : Asking about tomorrow's activities

#### Dialogue:

Speaker 1 : *Komang, ben mani megae?*  
 Interlocutor 2 : *Megae semengan.*  
 Speaker 2 : *Yurina kuliah? Made masuk?*  
 Interlocutor 1 : *Iya, besok ada dua mata kuliah.*

(Speaker 1 : Komang, what are your plans for tomorrow?  
 Interlocutor 2 : It's just like any other day.  
 Speaker 2 : Are you going to campus, Yurina? And, you, Made?  
 Interlocutor 1 : Yes, we have two classes tomorrow.)

#### Analysis:

The dialogue between a husband, a wife, and their two children occurred within the context of a family situation. The wife, married to a man from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste, adopted her husband's social status, thus making her and the children part of the *Wangsa Jaba* caste. Consequently, the children's names followed the caste naming convention based on birth order. The first child is typically named Wayan or Putu, the second is Made or Kadek, the third is Nyoman or Komang, and the fourth is Ketut. This tradition is also observed in women marrying Balinese men, who often adopt diminutive names or those associated with the Balinese community. This process is known as the *Sudhi Wadhani* ceremony, a Hindu ritual for those embracing Hinduism (Daniel, 2017; Hartaka & Gunawan, 2020).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The analysis in this descriptive study indicates that the respective cultures and traditions heavily influence the exploration of honorifics in Balinese-Japanese intermarriages. Honorifics are uttered by speakers to their interlocutors and are significantly determined by contextual factors such as location, age, social status, and the position of women upon marrying Balinese men. Social hierarchy and power structures in Japanese and Balinese societies also significantly shape the usage of honorifics. This means that social status, interpersonal relationships within families (kinship), friendships, professional relationships, and status in society or customary religious rituals all play pivotal roles. Children from Balinese-Japanese intermarriages typically inherit the social status of their father's family. Naming conventions for women from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste and foreign individuals marrying into men from the *Tri Wangsa* caste are referred to as "status-elevating marriages." In this concept of marriage, new names are given to women from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste, often connoting fragrances or pleasant scents, such as "jero sandat" (frangipani flower) or "jero cempaka" (champaka flower). In addition, the women from the *Wangsa Jaba* caste married to men of the *Tri Wangsa* caste are given the prefix "jero" to signify their entry into the *griya* or *puri* (Balinese royal palace or residence). Balinese-Japanese intermarried couples undergo a complex procedure of cultural adaptation and integration in their daily lives, with the usage of honorifics being one aspect of this process. These couples demonstrate the ability to adopt and incorporate honorifics from each other's cultures, creating a unique blend that reflects flexibility and adaptation in cross-cultural language interactions. Despite cultural differences in the usage of honorifics, couples tend to achieve harmony in their marital relationships by integrating elements from both cultures, creating an inclusive and harmonious communication environment. This can be observed in the combination of Balinese names at the beginning of their children's names, indicating the Bali family's caste affiliation, followed by Japanese names. Moreover, the fusion of traditional Japanese and Balinese names can create a unique combination that represents both cultural aspects of the couples involved.

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**Anak Agung Ayu Dian Andriyani, S.S., M.Hum** is a lecturer in the Japanese Literature Study Program at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar. One of the guiding principles that she always adheres to in her work is "learning abundantly and extensively." This motto drives her to continually produce various types of publications, which have been featured in nationally indexed (SINTA) journals and reputable international journals. She has actively participated as a speaker in national and international seminars and as a guest lecturer, focusing on the patterns of interaction in applying Japanese hospitality, particularly within the tourism domain. Her extensive experience as a Japanese-speaking Guest Relation Officer at a prominent travel agency in Bali for 10 years, from 2005 to 2015, has provided her with valuable insights and inspiration for her work in the tourism domain. Her research projects have been funded by both institutional and government bodies, including the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education. Likewise, she has had the opportunity to conduct comparative research as part of the Sandwich-like PKPI program at Shizuoka Bunka Geijutsu (SUAC) Shizuoka, directly observing the hospitality practices in the Japanese business domain. Furthermore, her research collaboration with LPDP (Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education Agency), Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, HPI (Association of Indonesian Translators) of Bali, Kadisparda (Bali Government Tourism Office) Province of Bali and Bangli region, focused on formulating Special Tourism Governance as a Strategy for Engaging Local Communities and Developing Bali's Tourism Resources through the Cultivation of Tourism Hospitality Based on the Values of Tri Hita Karana. Email: [agungdianjepang@unmas.ac.id](mailto:agungdianjepang@unmas.ac.id)





**Ida Ayu Putri Gita Ardiantari, S.S., M.Hum.** is an English lecturer at Faculty of Foreign Languages, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar. She completed her undergraduate education in English Literature at Udayana University and his master studies at the same university in the Linguistics Study Program. Currently, she is the co-chief editor in Elysian Journal, an English Linguistic, Literature, and Translation Journal in Faculty of Foreign Languages, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar. She loves to learn many things related to language, art and culture. She interests to linguistic, applied linguistic and discourse study. She loves to teach English as foreign language and for specific purpose. She presented her research in several reputable international journals indexed by Scopus and national journals accredited by Sinta as well as various national and international proceedings. She joined some community services related to social humanities especially in

facilitating foreign language learning. She also got several Intellectual Property Rights for her community service activities. She has two textbooks published by an ISSN publisher and several unpublished teaching modules to support his activities as a lecturer. Email: [idaayupugitaa@unmas.ac.id](mailto:idaayupugitaa@unmas.ac.id)



**Kundharu Saddhono, S.S., M.Hum., C.Ed., CISHR.** is a lecturer in Indonesian Language Education at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta. He was born in Magelang on February 6, 1976. He completed his undergraduate and master's degrees in Linguistics at Universitas Sebelas Maret and his Ph.D. in Education at Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta. Additionally, he holds certifications in editing and social humanities research, namely Certified Editor (C.Ed.) and Certified International Social-Humanities Researcher (CISHR). Currently, he is ranked as the top language expert in Indonesia according to the AD Scientific Index for Language and Literature. As of early 2023, he has over 100 Scopus-indexed publications. He is actively involved in the Indonesian Language and Literature Lecturers Association (ADOBSI) in the Division of Argumentation and Scientific Publication and as an

Affiliate Teacher and Advocate for Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (APPBIPA) specializing in Publications and Publishing. These two activities focused on the Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA). Hence, through his work in BIPA, he has traveled extensively to teach and conduct research in countries such as the United States, Japan, India, Thailand, Turkey, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, and others. His professorial inauguration highlighted the topic of Indonesian Language towards an International Language from a Sociolinguistic Perspective. In support of this effort, he continues to conduct research, community service, and visiting lectures in the field of BIPA in collaboration with various universities worldwide, including Yale University (USA), Kokushikan University (Japan), The Australian National University (Australia), Thammasat University and Fatoni University (Thailand), University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University (VNU-USSH), Jawaharlal Nehru University (India), and others. Email: [kundharu\\_s@staff.uns.ac.id](mailto:kundharu_s@staff.uns.ac.id)



# Neural Machine Translation of Arabic to English Legal Texts Using Trados Studio: Efficiency and Consistency From the Perspective of Saudi Translation Students' Post-Editing Practices

Mimouna Zitouni

Translation Department, College of Languages, PNU, Riyadh, KSA

Fadia Alshehri\*

Translation Department, College of Languages, PNU, Riyadh, KSA

Nadia Idri

Faculty of Arts and Languages, LESMS Laboratory, University of Bejaia, Bejaia, Algeria

**Abstract**—This article examines the efficiency and consistency of Trados Studio in Arabic-English legal translation by analyzing the post-editing practices of 15 female Saudi translation students. The legal texts used are moderately complex, laden with Saudi-specific legal terminology and Islamic rules, sourced from Adel Azzam Saqf Al-Hait's "The Reliable Guide to Legal Translation" (2012). The Trados Studio Machine Translation Post-Editing Questionnaire (TMTPEQ) was employed to gather users' insights. The study utilizes mixed methods, combining qualitative content analysis of Trados Studio-translated texts and student post-editing tasks with descriptive quantitative analysis of the questionnaire. The results reveal the ongoing challenge of achieving precision and extra-linguistic significance in written texts, especially in legal translation, exacerbated by specialized terminology, cultural nuances, and complex syntax. They also underscore the significance of qualitative assessments in post-edited translations, emphasizing the multifaceted role of translators encompassing linguistic, cultural, and specialized content precision and functional and legal equivalence.

**Index Terms**—Legal Arabic-English Translation Trados Studio, post-editing, Saudi Arabia female translation students

## I. INTRODUCTION

Legal translations, which are in high demand nowadays, require a high level of precision and consistency to prevent misunderstandings or disputes. Determined by the contextual and functional aspects of the legal language (Glogar, 2023), they vary across contexts, countries, and cultures. In the context of translation into and from Arabic, Hadj Aissa (2021) and Hoballah (2022) showed that the interplay of intercultural and interlingual differences contributes to making the task of the translator an arduous one. Hoballah also highlighted the heightened sensitivity of language use within the Arabic legal environment, where a dearth of research in the English-Arabic language combination is noted.

Most often, translation functions as a crucial link in legal situations, promoting efficient communication between stakeholders, clients, and attorneys while removing linguistic barriers existing between various legal systems. When hinged upon accuracy and reliability, translation in legal settings ensures due process, safeguards legal rights, and promotes international legal interactions. The imperative of accuracy and reliability is rooted in the inherently technical nature of legal vocabulary (Škop et al., 2019), characterized by precision, complexity, specialization, and practicality, aligned as it is with specific legal systems and societal distinctions (Gibbons, 1999).

The field of legal translation presents various challenges when translating documents from Arabic to English due to, among other factors, the distinctive features of the Arabic language (a view shared by El-Farahaty, 2015). Arabic legal texts possess unique lexical (Altarabin, 2018) and structural and stylistic characteristics (El Ghazi & Bnini, 2019), which make translation into English a challenging task. The differences in the structures, languages, and cultural nuances of Arabic and English legal systems further complicate the legal translator's task, rendering an exact translation a daunting endeavor. Preserving the integrity and precision of translated legal materials necessitates, therefore, a nuanced understanding of context and cultural sensitivities, as well as a precise use of legal terminology.

In response to the various translation challenges, computer-assisted translation (CAT) software tools and neural machine translation systems have gained prominence within the translation field in the last decades. However, even

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\* Corresponding Author.

though CAT technologies, like Trados Studio, which provides this study's case, are widely used in the translation industry to enhance efficiency and consistency, they often struggle with the complexity of context and meaning found in legal writings, necessitating human post-editing to assure the required quality. The concern about the ability of these technologies to ensure translation quality, particularly in the legal context, has been raised by recent studies such as Zou et al. (2020) and Yu (2023).

Nevertheless, with the advent of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, research in MT might necessitate an overhaul of the scholarship accumulated to date on the practice of post-editing. In their exploration of editors' use of AI, Khasawneh and Khasawneh (2023, p. 7126) referenced a number of studies to praise AI-powered software's ability to engage the challenges of translation by "processing massive amounts of linguistic data" and to learn "complex nuances of language and provide translations that are more suited to their context." Moreover, the two authors express optimism in future enhancements of the software, since "AI driven systems demonstrate continuous improvement over time." Trados Studio, in their official website, praise their solutions for the same reasons claiming they are "Designed to speed up the translation process, improve consistency and boost productivity", by incorporating three technologies: Translation Memory (TM), Technology Management, and Machine Translation (Trados Studio, 2023).

One cannot deny that AI language models and chat box tools are becoming part of the revolutionary advancements in translation technology. Trados Studio 2022 added an app that brings the largest language model, ChatGPT, to Trados Studio. In this, we can quote from the Trados Studio website:

This app works as a translation companion. It can help you refine your work and tackle a wider range of linguistic challenges, ultimately elevating the overall quality of your translations. Using a list of predefined or custom prompts, you can do things such as:

- Generate alternative translations for the current translation proposal;
- Provide additional information about the source/target content;
- Change the tone of voice of a translation;
- Reduce the length of a translation;
- Avoid gender bias;
- ... and endless other new exciting possibilities (Loney, 2023).

In KSA, Trados Studio solutions are widely available; however, an in-depth analysis is yet to be conducted on the post-editing stage of translating legal texts from Arabic to English to enhance legal translation quality. Indeed, evaluating the efficiency and consistency achieved through the post-editing of Trados Studio-translated samples in the Saudi context is essential for comprehending the technology's effectiveness in managing legal translations. This is why this study assumes that post-editing is indispensable for refining machine-translated content and maintaining quality standards in translation training in the Arabic-English language pair.

#### Research questions

This study addresses the issues of the efficiency and consistency of Trados Studio legal translations from Arabic into English and the post-editing process among female Saudi students of translation. It entails a multi-faceted endeavor whereby the female students' experiences, perspectives, and challenges are examined. For this objective to be attained, the following research questions are raised:

- a) To what extent does Trados Studio contribute to ensuring consistency and efficiency in Arabic-English legal text translation?
- b) How does the application of Trados Studio affect the quality of post-edited legal translations from Arabic to English?
- c) How do female translation students in KSA perceive the consistency and efficiency of Trados Studio?
- d) What are the key challenges faced in preserving consistency and efficiency while post-editing the automatically translated legal texts by Trados Studio?

When evaluating the performance of Trados Studio within the niche domain of legal translation and in exploring the practitioners' post-editing, we aim to provide insights into the software's benefits, limitations, and challenges, offering valuable information for Arabic translation experts and Saudi stakeholders. We also intend to help trainees and practitioners make informed decisions about integrating Trados Studio into translation workflows upon graduation. In so doing, our ultimate goal for this study is to serve as a practical guide for enhancing the efficiency and consistency of legal text translation from Arabic to English in the context of Saudi Arabia.

## II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Over recent years, the integration of technology, specifically TM tools like Trados Studio, has significantly impacted the field of legal translation. These tools help save time and effort by reusing previously translated segments. They are designed as software applications that aid human translators by providing features such as translation memory, terminology management, and alignment, ultimately enhancing the efficiency and consistency of human translation. However, they also bring their own set of issues, particularly when dealing with the complex syntax and specialized terminology commonly found in legal translation. The following review highlights those issues, defining efficiency and consistency and focusing on the challenges posed by post-editing in Saudi higher education training.

### A. *Efficiency and Consistency*

Efficiency and Consistency Efficiency and consistency are two highly valued aspects in legal settings, where there is a constant demand for swift and accurate translation of extensive, multi-volume texts. TM tools like Trados Studio help to achieve efficiency by allowing the quick recycling of previously translated segments when dealing with repetitive language forms and expressions, such as the standardized terminology found in contracts and legal agreements. At the same time, they also clear up any potential ambiguity or misinterpretation resulting from different translations of the same term or expression. For this, they keep suggesting previously employed translations for specific legal terms and phrases to ensure a uniform usage of terminology throughout the entire translated document.

### B. *Challenges in Post-Editing Legal Texts*

While TM tools offer considerable advantages, they also introduce a number of complexities. Legal texts, as previously underlined, are known for their intricate syntax and specialized terminology, demanding extensive post-editing to balance efficiency with maintaining legal accuracy and style. This is why, despite the sheer amount of scholarship accumulated to date, a need is still felt for research to understand how these tools handle legal translations during the post-editing phase, depending on both context and function.

The impact of machine translation errors on post-editing is investigated by Daems et al. (2017), who utilized keystroke logging and eye-tracking to assess the influence of error types on various effort indicators. By utilizing these techniques and classifying errors into various types, the authors shed light on the errors that were found to have a great impact on post-editing in terms of cognitive efforts. Thus, the most recurrent error types fall within the categories of grammar, syntax, terminology, and coherence, leading the authors to stress the accuracy of MT output, suggesting that for the latter to be more efficient, accuracy must be improved.

The correlation between different types of errors generated by MT systems and the cognitive effort required to post-edit them is also studied by Hu (2020). Relying on empirical data represented by the participants' pauses during the post-editing process, Hu (2020) finds a correlation between the length of the text in which the error is found and the cognitive effort to correct it.

Working on automatic post-editing methods and focusing on neural automatic post-editing systems, Shterionov et al. (2020) have analyzed factors affecting automatic post-editing performance, such as data augmentation, with a specific focus on enhancing translation quality in commercial contexts. In their conclusions, the authors stress the positive effects of neuronal post-editing (NPE) on improving the output of machine translation (MT) content production workflows in commercial environments and suggest areas for further research and improvement, such as handling long inputs and investigating how APE can improve the output of neural machine translation (NMT) systems.

Always in the context of CAT tools and legal translation, Herbig et al. (2020) have introduced multimodal post-editing (MMPE), a prototype that combines various input methods for post-editing MT, including pen, touch, and speech modalities. The findings indicate that pen and touch input methods are effective for tasks involving deletion and reordering but have limited utility for longer insertions. Conversely, speech input and combinations of various modalities, such as selecting and speech, are relevant for tasks involving replacements and insertions but may not be as conducive for deletion and reordering.

In an attempt to improve the MT post-editing skills of Trados 2021 outputs, Emara (2023) integrates error identification techniques into the post-editing process using a task-based approach applied to university students. The results of the experiment include the experimental group's enhanced ability to identify a range of machine translation (MT) errors, particularly those related to coherence, register, style, grammatical, lexical, and word sense errors. While post-editing time did not significantly decrease, it reflected improved performance, causing a changing role for translators in MT post-editing.

### C. *Legal Translation in the Saudi Context*

Drawing on the post-editing scholarship reviewed above, the practice of post-editing in the Saudi context necessitates the consideration of a number of relevant issues pertaining to the legal translation from Arabic to English. These issues encompass the high technical nature of legal vocabulary (Škop et al., 2019), terminology precision, complexity, specialization, and practicality, and the focus on the peculiarities of the Saudi legal system and societal distinction, as deduced from Gibbons (1999). Furthermore, the notable disparity between the structure, language, and culture of the Saudi and English legal systems further intensifies the challenge of achieving an accurate legal translation.

As legal texts adhere to stringent rules and conventions to maintain both legal validity and clarity, Saudi female MA students employ a number of strategies and navigate various concepts when rendering legal texts. These translation strategies and concepts are hereby defined for the purpose of the study:

- **Equivalence / Literal translation:** The translation maintains a literal or equivalent meaning to the source text.
- **Transliteration:** it refers to representing words from one script into another, typically from a non-Latin script to the Latin alphabet.
- **Explanation:** it may involve providing additional context or clarifications to ensure the translated text is understandable.
- **Transposition:** it involves changing the order or structure of words or phrases to fit the target language's conventions.

- **Functional equivalence:** it ensures that the translated text conveys the same function or effect as the source text, even if the wording differs.
- **Paraphrasing:** it involves rephrasing the source text to convey the same meaning using different words or expressions.
- **Borrowing:** it entails a direct use of a word or phrase from the source language in the target language text.
- **Modulation:** it involves adjusting the translation to convey the intended meaning, which may include changes in tone, perspective, or emphasis.
- **Omission:** it is to leave out certain words or phrases from the source text in the translation.
- **Extra-linguistic level:** This indicates that changes or considerations in translation go beyond language, possibly involving cultural or contextual aspects.
- **Syntactic and extra-linguistic levels:** They suggest that changes or considerations involve both syntax (sentence structure) and extra-linguistic factors.
- **Lexical and extra-linguistic levels:** The two categories combine lexical (vocabulary choice) and extra-linguistic considerations in translation.
- **Transliteration + paraphrase:** This is a specific case that combines transliteration and paraphrasing for a particular term.

All in all, the above strategies and concepts employed by Saudi female MA translation students reflect the prevailing trend within the translation industry, marked by a transition from traditional translation to enhanced and accurate post-editing. In this evolution, the focus is on rectifying errors in machine-translated texts, acknowledging the inherent imperfections of machine translation.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The study's methodology involved selecting a sample of legal texts utilized in a Saudi legal setting, which was then integrated into the translation course as a class assignment. The translation tasks were performed using Trados Studio, and students were instructed to undertake post-editing by focusing on the morphological, syntactic, lexical, and extra-linguistic aspects while also assessing translation consistency and efficiency for challenging segments. Additionally, they were required to delineate strategies for enhancing translation quality. The resulting data were analyzed using the content analysis method, with a focus on the three essential criteria of a high-quality translation outlined by Pan and de La Puente (2005): reliability, fluency, and appropriateness.

The quantitative aspect of the study relied on a questionnaire administered to students, offering insights into their attitudes, practices, challenges, strategies, observations, and suggestions, thus complementing the dataset.

#### A. Sample Selection and Data Collection

The participants in this study were 15 MA female students attending a translation class in a public university in Saudi Arabia. They have an upper-intermediate level in English, and sufficient knowledge of forensic terminology and concepts. Before the experiment, they had sufficient training in using Trados Studio.

#### B. Instruments and Data Collection

##### (a). Post-Editing Through a Classroom Task

To collect data, a task was designed to evaluate the efficiency and consistency of Trados Studio in the Saudi legal context. This assignment was intended for MA translation students to form an integral part of the study sample.

The task instructions comprised the following sequential steps, designed in the form of a table:

**Trados Studio evaluation:** In the first column, students are required to assess the efficiency and consistency of Trados Studio's translations, focusing on how well the Trados Translation (TT) segments align with the Source Text (ST) segments in terms of accuracy and fluency. This assessment aims to gather insights into the performance of the machine translation tool.

**Post-editing for consistency:** In the second column, students are tasked with post-editing the TT segments whenever necessary to achieve a high level of consistency between the TT and ST segments. This step reflects the practical application of translation skills and highlights the areas where machine translation may fall short.

**Explanation of post-editing:** In the third column, students are required to underline the parts of the TT segments that they post-edited and provide explanations in blue. The explanations should address the reasons behind the post-editing and the strategies employed to enhance consistency. By doing so, students demonstrate their critical evaluation skills and their ability to make necessary adjustments to maintain translation consistency.

**Student information:** The table includes a section where the student's name and the affiliated ST segments are listed. Each student is assigned a range of ST segments to assess and postedit.

**Research connection:** This task is an integral part of an ongoing research study focusing on the effectiveness of Trados Studio in legal text translation from Arabic to English, specifically tailored to the context of KSA. By evaluating Trados Studio's efficiency and consistency, this task contributes valuable data to the research, allowing for a deeper understanding of the strengths and limitations of machine translation in the legal domain.

(b). *Trados Studio Machine Translation Post-Editing Questionnaire (TMTPEQ)*

The scale employed in the second phase of data collection focuses on the participants' perceptions, knowledge, and practices related to post-editing and the automatic translation of legal texts. It is structured as a Likert-type scale with six response options, allowing participants to indicate their level of agreement with various statements.

The response options for each item are as follows:

- Strongly Disagree;
- Disagree;
- Neither Agree nor Disagree;
- Agree;
- Strongly Agree;
- I have no idea.

This six-point scale captures a range of responses, enabling a refined assessment of participants' attitudes and experiences regarding post-editing and automatic translation in the context of legal texts. The scale includes items covering diverse aspects such as understanding post-editing, its application and goals, the importance of terminology and style, and participants' revision strategies.

The use of "I have no idea" as a response option acknowledges that not all participants may possess equal familiarity with certain concepts or practices, ensuring that responses are accurate reflections of their knowledge and experience.

The scale was carefully designed to align with the research objectives of investigating post-editing practices and attitudes in the context of legal translation from Arabic to English. It underwent a thorough development and validation process, including expert reviews and pilot testing, to ensure its reliability and validity.

#### IV. RESULTS

##### A. *Content Analysis of the Post-Editing Task of the Corpus*

Table 1 shows the segment assigned to each student. Fulfilled task and missing parts are added. It displays the results obtained by students (St) in the tasks involving Source Text (ST) segments and the subsequent post-editing procedures they carried out.

TABLE 1  
ASSIGNED SOURCE TEXT SEGMENTS TO EACH STUDENT

Student's code	Affiliated ST segments	Task fulfillment	Missing Parts
St 1	14-23	Partly: Only the Yes/No part was fulfilled	- Post-editing - Changes -Explanation in blue. -Level of intervention - Used strategy.
St 2	24-32	Yes	- None
St 3	33-46	Partly, most segments are not covered.	- Changes -Level of intervention - Used strategy
St 4	47-60	Yes	- None
St 5	<b>61-71</b>	Yes	- Changes
St 6	<b>72-80</b>	Yes	- None
St 7	<b>81-89</b>	Yes	- None
St 8	<b>90-98</b>	Yes	- None
St 9	<b>99-107</b>	Yes	- None
St 10	<b>108-117</b>	Yes	- None
St 11	<b>118-127</b>	Yes	- None
St 12	<b>128-137</b>	Yes	- None
St 13	<b>138-148</b>	Yes	- None
St 14	<b>149-158</b>	No	All of them, nothing achieved.
St 15	<b>159-167</b>	Yes	- None

The analysis of the participants' task performance revealed that, out of the fifteen students, the majority (Sts. 2, 4, 5, and 15) completed the work effectively, yielding an almost 80% completion rate. This rate is encouraging since it reflects students' ability to review Trados Studio translations, justify the need for post-editing, and specify the strategy needed by the post-editor each time an error in the direct MT is encountered.

Conversely, St 1 and St 3 partially completed the task, addressing specific segments but also introducing post-editing changes, explanations, and interventions, indicating a 13% partial fulfillment rate. St. 14, on the other hand, had difficulties completing any of the assignment segments, accounting for a 7% non-fulfillment rate. The failure to complete the assignment highlights variations in the students' abilities to meet the task requirements, emphasizing the need for support and guidance to enhance their post-editing skills in legal translation.

The students' responses to the final two task requirements, which encompass post-editing as needed and providing explanations covering "what," "why," "what level" (morphological, syntactic, lexical, or extra-linguistic), and the

applied strategy, were systematically analyzed. Subsequently, the results are quantified by tabulating the frequencies of identified error types and the recurring strategies employed in the segments. The frequencies of each translation category were calculated by thoroughly examining the provided data and counting how many times each category appeared.

TABLE 2  
CATEGORIES DERIVED FROM 154 TRANSLATED SEGMENTS AFTER STUDENTS POST-EDITING

Category derived from 154 segments	Frequency	Rate (%)
Equivalence /Literal translation	20	12.99
Paraphrasing	15	9.74
Explanation	13	8.44
Borrowing	5	3.25
Transposition	4	2.60
Transliteration	3	1.95
Omission	3	1.95
Modulation	2	1.30
Syntactic	4	2.60
Morphological (suffix)	4	2.60
Lexical	3	1.95

This table shows the findings of the post-editing translation procedures used on 154 translated segments. It displays the students' ability to detect MT errors as well as the various translation strategies deployed to improve the accuracy and readability of machine-translated content.

According to the frequencies, equivalence, or literal translation, comprises the most widely used strategy, as it accounts for 20 segments, representing approximately 13% of the total. Paraphrasing follows closely with 15 segments, contributing to around 10% of the instances. Explanation, with 13 segments, makes up approximately 8.4% of the total post-editing actions. Borrowing and transposition are less frequent, each appearing in 5 and 4 segments, respectively, making up around 3.25% and 2.60% of the cases. Transliteration and omission both have three instances each, accounting for approximately 1.95% of the total. Modulation and syntactic changes are even less frequent, with 2 and 4 segments, respectively, contributing to approximately 1.30% and 2.60% of the post-editing actions. Lastly, morphological (suffix) and lexical changes are relatively infrequent, each appearing in 4 and 3 segments, respectively, making up approximately 2.60% and 1.95% of the total post-editing actions.

These results provide insights into the distribution of post-editing categories, highlighting the most common and less frequent types of post-editing actions. This means that literal translation of syntactic structures (that need paraphrasing and explaining to convey meaning) is the most problematic issue for CAT tools. In other words, literal translation should be avoided because it merely employs translating text word-for-word without taking into consideration the proper grammatical and structural conventions of the target language. In this context, it suggests that when translating content using Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools, one of the most challenging issues is translating sentences that require a direct, word-for-word translation, even though this might not convey the intended meaning effectively. These types of translations often need paraphrasing and additional explanation to ensure that the meaning is accurately conveyed in the target language.

These are the most frequent errors detected by the students who underwent post-editing for the selected legal texts. They can be attributed, firstly, to the distinctive features of the Arabic language, which significantly differs from English, and to the forensic field of KSA, which includes a specific terminology that extends beyond linguistic differences to encompass cultural and religious aspects.

## B. Scale's Results

### (a). MT and Students' Translation Practices

The mean scores and standard deviations for each item in Section I of the TMTPEQ are summarized in Table 3, allowing for a quick comparison of responses. Here, the attitudes and behaviors of respondents towards the use of MT and general translation are examined.

TABLE 3  
MT AND STUDENTS' TRANSLATION PRACTICES

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
I often use machine translation when translating texts	2.16	1.75
Using automatic translation helps to save time	3.25	1.25
Using automatic translation economizes energy	2.36	1.53
Machine translation is cost-saving	2.63	2.09
I can easily notice the errors in the machine-translated texts	2.74	2.11
Machine translation post-editing is necessary to improve machine memory	2.68	2.11
It is mandatory to combine machine translation and post-editing	2.50	1.75
It is beneficial to combine machine translation and post-editing	4.16	1.09
Automatic translation cannot translate properly all types of texts	3.32	0.99
Automatic translation is helpful but we need to post-edit all the translated texts	3.84	0.82
When post-editing the automatic translated text, I transform long sentences into shorter ones	2.36	1.46
When post-editing the automatic translated text, I revise punctuation marks	2.26	1.84
When post-editing the automatic translated text, I format the text very well	3.95	0.22
When post-editing the automatically translated text, I try to revise all fragment sentences	3.37	0.99
It is difficult to use the automatic translation for Arabic legal texts	2.42	0.99

The survey reveals that MT is seen as a helpful tool in the translation process with a generally positive perception of MT contribution in the translation process. Respondents frequently utilize machine translation (MT) for text translation (Mean = 2.16, SD = 1.75) and agree that it has the potential to save time (Mean = 3.25, SD = 1.25), supporting the widespread belief that MT may be a useful, time-efficient resource. The respondents do acknowledge the limits of MT, particularly the fact that it cannot faithfully translate all different kinds of texts (Mean = 3.32, SD = 0.99). They also acknowledge that post-editing is frequently required to raise the caliber of translations produced by MT (Mean = 3.84, SD = 0.82), indicating a realistic view of MT as a tool that requires human intervention to achieve the desired level of quality.

Interestingly, the majority of respondents (Mean = 2.50, SD = 1.75) concur that combining machine translation and post-editing can save time, supporting the notion that MT is an important part of the translation workflow. As part of their efforts to enhance the overall quality and coherence of translated texts, they also emphasize several aspects during post-editing, including sentence structure, punctuation, and text formatting (e.g., Mean = 3.95, SD = 0.22), demonstrating their dedication to improving the overall quality and coherence of translated texts. Furthermore, the data reveals that respondents are attentive to specific challenges linked to post-editing MT, encompassing the identification and correction of various error types (e.g., Mean = 2.74, SD = 2.11). This suggests a dedication to maintaining the highest standards of quality in their translation work.

(b). *The Use of Trados Studio*

Table 4 provides revealing statistical results that shed light on respondents' perceptions and practices related to Trados Studio.

TABLE 4  
THE USE OF TRADOS STUDIO

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Trados Studio is a very performing software for translation	3.18	1.83
Trados Studio can translate specialized texts	3.45	1.84
Trados Studio has little memory when it comes to legal texts	2.82	2.19
Trados Studio needs more performance in terms of legal texts	2.82	2.19
The Trados Studio course helped me to manipulate translation technology	3.18	1.83
It is easy to manipulate Trados Studio	3.82	1.22
I use Trados Studio in all my translations	2.00	1.73
Terms related to religion (mainly Charea) are not all existing in Trados Studio memory	3.09	1.68
Terms related to the KSA culture are not all existing in Trados Studio memory	3.18	1.73
Trados Studio makes the translation text easy to read	3.55	1.34
Trados Studio makes the translation text easy to revise	3.36	1.30
Trados Studio offers a high degree of efficiency	3.45	1.30
Trados Studio offers a high degree of accuracy	3.45	1.30
Trados Studio offers a high degree of accuracy for legal texts	3.00	1.78
I often go through the self-revision or self-checking step when I get the Trados Studio translated text	2.27	1.76
I find it easy to revise the translated text by Trados Studio when I am familiar with the source text	3.82	1.22
I generally set my own translation approach before and after using Trados Studio	2.18	1.66
Proofreading the legal texts translated by Trados Studio is necessary to reach a human translation quality	3.09	1.68
I post-edit the Trados Studio translated text to make it understandable	2.18	1.54

Respondents, as shown in Table 4, generally hold positive opinions about Trados Studio. They perceive it as a piece of performing software for translating specialized texts in general, enhancing text readability, and aiding in the revision process, as indicated by mean scores ranging from 3.18 to 3.82, with standard deviations generally below 2. However, there are notable concerns regarding Trados Studio's performance when it comes to the specific case of legal translation. Respondents express that it has limited memory for legal terminology, as reflected in mean scores of 2.82 (SD = 2.19), suggesting room for improvement in this aspect.

While they appreciate the software's efficiency and accuracy overall, the mean score of 3.00 (SD = 1.78) for accuracy in legal texts indicates that respondents believe there is room for enhancement specifically in this domain. Respondents also emphasize the importance of proofreading legal texts translated by Trados Studio to achieve human translation quality, as suggested by a mean score of 3.09 (SD = 1.68), highlighting their commitment to maintaining translation standards. Despite these concerns, respondents frequently use Trados Studio in their translations, showing a mean score of 2.00 (SD = 1.73), indicating its integration into their translation workflows.

Furthermore, the data illustrates that respondents are confident in their ability to manipulate Trados Studio, with mean scores as high as 3.82, indicating their comfort and proficiency with the software. Additionally, respondents prefer to set their own translation approach before and after using Trados Studio, demonstrating their desire for a personalized translation process.

### (c). *Post-Editing and Legal Text Automatic Translation*

Table 5 presents the statistical analysis, including mean scores and standard deviations, for each item in Section III of the TMTPEQ, focusing on post-editing and the automatic translation of legal texts. Respondents' attitudes and practices regarding post-editing and the automatic translation of legal texts are highlighted, providing valuable insights into their preferences and strategies.

TABLE 5  
POST-EDITING AND LEGAL TEXT AUTOMATIC TRANSLATION

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
I know what post-editing is	3.55	1.40
I know how to apply post-editing	3.00	1.84
My goal when post-editing is to reach a highly consistent translation	3.18	1.73
Post-editing is a useful stage for a better-quality translation	3.09	1.73
I know how to apply post-editing to legal texts	3.00	1.84
My academic course included post-editing in its content	2.82	1.80
My course showed how to apply post-editing through practical activities	2.91	1.67
I often ask help from my instructors when I post-edit legal texts	2.64	1.90
I often ask help from experts when I post-edit legal texts	2.91	1.67
I post-edit to correct grammatical errors	2.82	1.73
I post-edit to correct conceptual errors	2.55	1.91
I post-edit to reformulate sentences	2.82	1.70
I post-edit to check the style	3.18	1.67
I verify cultural clues when post-editing	3.27	1.51
It is important to properly use legal terminology in the machine translation post-editing stage	2.82	1.67
It is important to deeply correct the tone in the machine translation post-editing stage	3.09	1.51
Style is important to consider in the machine translation post-editing stage	3.09	1.51
In legal texts, I pay attention to context-specific terminology	2.82	1.84
Post-editing legal texts need more post-editing compared to other kinds of texts	2.64	1.66
I often use the unilingual revision of the text in the post-editing stage	2.82	1.73
I often use a comparative revision of the text in the post-editing stage	2.91	1.67
Combining machine translation and post-editing saves time	2.91	1.67
I correct grammatical errors while post-editing when this affects meaning	2.82	1.73
I correct spelling errors while post-editing when this affects meaning	2.64	1.90
I rewrite confusing sentences when this affects meaning	2.91	1.67
I revise terminology in legal texts translation in accordance with the KSA context	3.09	1.51
I substitute terminology in legal texts translation in accordance with the KSA context	3.09	1.51
My post-editing approach relies on detailed correction	2.82	1.73

The data displayed in Table 5 reveals that KSA students of translation have a good understanding of post-editing, as reflected in a mean score of 3.55 with a standard deviation of 1.40, indicating a moderate level of consensus in their knowledge about this translation stage. They generally recognize post-editing as a valuable step for achieving highly consistent and better-quality translations, as indicated by a mean score of 3.09 with a standard deviation of 1.73, reflecting a degree of agreement among respondents.

In terms of practical application, respondents report a moderate level of confidence in their ability to apply post-editing, with a mean score of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 1.84. This suggests some variability in their self-assessed



skills. Moreover, they acknowledge the importance of post-editing in legal text translation, with a mean score of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 1.84, indicating recognition of its relevance to their field of study.

Respondents also highlight the role of their academic courses in shaping their post-editing knowledge and skills, with a mean score of 2.82 and a standard deviation of 1.80, suggesting a degree of consistency in the inclusion of post-editing content in their courses. Practical activities related to post-editing are similarly emphasized, with a mean score of 2.91 and a standard deviation of 1.67, indicating a moderate level of agreement among respondents.

Interestingly, respondents seek assistance when post-editing legal texts, both from instructors and experts, as reflected in mean scores of 2.64 and 2.91, respectively, with standard deviations of 1.90 and 1.67. This demonstrates their willingness to collaborate and improve their work.

Not to ignore that the respondents pay close attention to various aspects during post-editing, including grammar, conceptual accuracy, sentence structure, style, and cultural nuances. They prioritize the use of legal terminology and tone correctness, indicating a commitment to preserving the text's legal and cultural integrity.

While respondents believe that legal texts require more post-editing compared to other types of texts, they also highlight the value of combining machine translation and post-editing for time-saving purposes, with a mean score of 2.91 and a standard deviation of 1.67.

## V. DISCUSSION

When dealing with legal matters, where specialized terminology, cultural quirks, and syntactical intricacies greatly affect how well translated materials are received, it is difficult to achieve accuracy and extra-linguistic significance. Therefore, legal translators are required to successfully negotiate the complexities of language and to adopt a sophisticated approach to their task. This explains why this article has joined efforts to explore the automation of legal texts (Soavi et al., 2022) and placed a strong emphasis on the qualitative evaluation of post-edited translations, as evidenced in many research studies in various fields (Tatsumi, 2010; Flanagan & Christensen, 2014; Daems et al., 2017; Vardaro et al., 2019; Alshehri & Alowed, 2023).

This study reports data obtained from a questionnaire, completed by 15 Saudi Arabian female translation students. To discuss its findings in the Saudi context, a first reference can be made to a recent quantitative study conducted by Khasawneh and Khasawneh (2023), which involved a larger participant pool of 193 editors to explore practices related to the use of AI and post-editing. Their main findings acknowledge the developments in CAT with the advent of AI, and underscore the crucial role of the human input performed by editors. They align with our own findings, which have shown that translation students are keen on combining the use of Trados Studio and practicing post-editing, at various levels, including grammar and spelling errors, and terminological consistency and accuracy.

A crucial finding emerging from Khasawneh and Khasawneh's (2023) survey is the imperative of post-editing of machine translated texts. This aspect is taken up in our study in the context of legal documents transferred from Arabic to English within the Saudi Arabian academic setting, when utilizing Trados Studio. The analysis of our respondents' attitudes and practices, presented in Table 4, reveals that they hold a positive view of Trados Studio. They particularly appreciate its contribution in enhancing text readability and facilitating the revision process. Nevertheless, they also express concerns about its performance in the translation of legal texts, indicating the necessity for improvement in this specific domain. According to Zemni et al. (2021), as found out from their study, the human intervention is more than necessary while translating legal texts in Saudi Arabia, and such a claim aligns with the present study while we advocate that post-editing is an important stage. These findings directly address research questions 1, which pertains to the extent to which Trados Studio contributes to ensuring consistency and efficiency in the translation of legal texts.

The respondents' attitudes and practices related to post-editing and automatic translation of legal texts are shown in Table 5, which provides insights into their awareness of post-editing, their proficiency in applying it effectively, and their academic preparation in this regard. Respondents acknowledge the value of post-editing in achieving consistent and high-quality translations, aligning with research questions 2 and 3, which explore the impact of Trados Studio on the quality of post-edited legal translations and the perspectives of female translation students. These findings contrast with the varying perspectives of Samman's (2022) students who initially held mixed opinions about MT post-editing. Nevertheless, they harmonize with the study's post-intervention phase, as Samman observed a "transition towards greater acceptance" each time training in MT usage and practice was provided.

Finally, Table 3 offers a comprehensive overview of respondents' attitudes and practices concerning general translation and MT usage, including Trados Studio. This section underscores respondents' frequent utilization of Trados Studio in their translations and their confidence in manipulating the software. Their emphasis on the importance of proofreading legal texts translated by Trados Studio reflects their commitment to upholding translation standards. This directly addresses research question 4, which explores the challenges encountered in maintaining consistency and efficiency during post-editing.

The data derived from the three questionnaires collectively contributes to a balanced understanding of Trados Studio's efficiency and consistency in translating legal texts. Furthermore, it provides insights into the experiences and perspectives of female translation students in Saudi Arabia. These insights directly align with our research objectives and offer comprehensive answers to the research questions, providing a holistic view of the software's impact on the translation process and the challenges faced by the respondents.

The content analysis and the questionnaire analysis led to categorize the types of errors detected from the MT output, on the one hand, and the post-editing intervention levels and strategies used, on the other. The strategies students used when post-editing can be summarized as follows:

- **Terminology and syntactic refinement:** They underscore the importance of refining terminology for clarity and addressing syntactical errors in translations. The translator's role in specifying legal terminology and improving sentence structures is crucial for accurate communication. Nevertheless, legal terminology presents unique challenges due to differences in legal systems between Arabic-speaking and English-speaking countries (El-Farahaty, 2015, 2016; Alwazna, 2019; Kandeel, 2021).
- **Cultural adaptation and extra-linguistic cultural integration:** This theme emphasizes the cultural adaptation of translations, including transliteration, to achieve cultural relevance. It also highlights the integration of extralinguistic cultural elements to maintain cultural specificity (See Alwazna, 2019; Kandeel, 2021).
- **Functional clarity and completeness:** Functional equivalence in translation is the focus of this theme. It involves lexical and syntactic corrections (i.e. means modifying the choice of words and the sentence structure) by addressing omissions (i.e. missing elements in the translation) and modulation for effective conveyance of meaning (i.e. adjusting the tone or style to match the original text (See Moisieieva & Savostina, 2020; Alshaikh, 2022).
- **Proper names and institutional recognition:** This theme pertains to the challenges of translating proper names and recognizing institutions and companies. It covers various aspects, including transliteration, translation of specialty sciences, handling names of institutions and companies, toponyms, and the impact of ambiguity in the source text (See Tang, 2022).
- **Implications for the translation industry in Saudi Arabia:** The population surveyed in this study being translation students means that they are prospective graduates whose current training at the university shapes their future practices in the workplace. Any intervention made in their present training is, therefore, likely to influence their future performance in the translation profession. This is why, the implications of this study outlined below must consider the rapidly evolving requirements of the profession:
  - **Enhanced TRADOS Training:** The study suggests the need for more comprehensive training in Trados Studio, focusing on its professional application beyond higher education settings. This addresses research question 3, concerning the perspectives and experiences of female translation students in Saudi Arabia.
  - **Three S's Approach:** In the realm of professional translation, the "three S's" - Speed, Security, and Success - are seen as key pillars. These aspects are instrumental in achieving efficient and consistent results with Trados Studio.
  - **The challenges in legal terminology and syntactical refinement highlight the need for specialized training and expertise among translators in handling legal documents.** This aligns with research question 1, which explores Trados Studio's contribution to consistency and efficiency in legal text translation.
  - **Transliteration and cultural adaptation are essential in maintaining cultural relevance.** This connects with research question 2, which investigates the impact of Trados Studio on the quality of post-edited legal translations.
  - **Functional equivalence is crucial in ensuring the clarity and completeness of translations.** This relates to research question 2, which explores the value of post-editing in achieving consistent and high-quality translations.
  - **Translating proper names accurately and handling ambiguity in the source text are vital considerations for effective translation.** These points align with research question 4, which addresses the challenges faced in maintaining consistency and efficiency during post-editing.
- **Recommendations for improving efficiency and consistency in post-editing.**
  - **Specialized training:** Provide specialized training to KSA translation students for handling legal terminology and addressing syntactical challenges, as these areas significantly affect translation quality and consistency.
  - **Cultural competence:** Emphasize the importance of cultural competence in translation to ensure cultural relevance and accuracy.
  - **Effective modulation:** Encourage the use of modulation techniques to adjust translations effectively, preserving the intended meaning.
  - **Addressing ambiguity:** Develop strategies for handling ambiguity in the ST to prevent inaccuracies in the translated content.
  - **Quality assurance:** Implement quality assurance measures to ensure that proper names, especially those of institutions and companies, are correctly translated or transliterated.
  - **Continual learning:** Promote ongoing professional development and learning to keep up with evolving translation tools and techniques.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study has addressed the complexity of translating legal texts, with an emphasis on the Trados Studio post-editing process among Saudi female translation students. It clarified several important concepts, such as MT efficiency, terminology consistency, cultural adaptation, functional equivalence, and proper names' management, offering insightful information about the difficulties and methods for producing accurate and consistent legal translations.

Prospective Saudi translation graduates hold positive views on the use of MT in translating specialized texts, even when the latter are laden with a complex terminology. This positive perception is shared by the majority, if not the

totality, of the studies conducted on users' perceptions and practices in translation, in the Saudi Arabian context or elsewhere. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm in using MT felt by the majority of the surveyed population is tempered down by the necessity of post-editing. The respondents keep applying post-editing strategies to improve the translated text at various levels, including grammar, spelling, style, concept, terminology and culture. This practice points to the need for more improvement in the domain of MT.

The other area begging for sustained and directed efforts to be made in the light of the main findings reached in this study has relevance to the Saudi Arabian translation market. This is the necessity for improved Trados Studio training, training which emphasizes its professional use and recognizes the significance of "Speed, Security, and Success" in effective and reliable translations. Our recommendations, which underscore specialised training in legal terminology, cultural competency, effective modulation, dealing with ambiguity, quality assurance, and ongoing learning, are meant to increase post-editing speed and uniformity.

To end, this study deepens understanding of translation processes and offers professionals practical advice. It is poised to contribute to the field of legal translation by bridging the gap between theoretical research and real-world application in Saudi Arabian legal settings and CAT use in the country.

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**Mimouna. Zitouni** holds a PhD in sociolinguistics from University of Oran, Algeria. She is currently professor of translation studies and linguistics at the College of Languages, PNU. She acted in 2017-2018 as a distinguished Fulbright ‘SIR’ visiting scholar to Coastal Carolina University (USA). She took part in several international conferences and published widely about language use and translation studies.

**Fadih Alshehri** is an assistant professor of translation studies at the College of Languages, PNU and head of the Translation Department there since 2021. Dr. Fadih is an active member of the Saudi Translation Association and translated several works. She ran large national translation projects and participated in several international conferences.

**Nadia Idri** is an educator with 18 years of teaching experience, currently holding the rank of professor. She served as a project manager at 3ENL+ for English Teaching MOOC Design and Delivery at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Algeria from 2022 to early 2024. She is the head of the translation bureau at the Global Institute of Arabic Renewal in Spain. With over 60 publications both nationally and internationally, Nadia is a prolific scholar and an active participant in various pedagogical and scientific initiatives, including teacher development, doctoral training, conference organization, and quality assurance efforts within her university. She is the editor-in-chief of the Journal of Studies in Language, Culture, and Society (JSLCS) and founder of the Creative Writing and Academic Writing Competitions in Algeria (CWAAC).

# Language Teachers' Adaptability to Digital Transformation: Online Assessment Practices in Vietnam Higher Education

Truc Tran-Thi-Thanh

Faculty of Legal Languages, Ho Chi Minh City University of Law, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

**Abstract**—This qualitative study conducts three in-depth interviews with language educators representing the Faculties of Chinese, English, and Russian Linguistics at a university in Vietnam. The research aims to explore their experiences and perspectives amid the rapid digital transformation catalyzed by the post COVID-19 pandemic, with a particular focus on their adaptation to online assessment. Utilizing a semi-structured interview format with open-ended questions, the study comprehensively examines various aspects of online assessment techniques, the challenges faced during the pandemic, and the future implications of blended learning in higher education. The findings highlight the remarkable adaptability and resilience of language educators in responding to the multifaceted challenges. Despite the abrupt shift to online assessment methods, these educators effectively embraced innovative approaches, reflecting their commitment to upholding academic standards amidst adversity. The research underscores the critical importance of higher education institutions prioritizing investments in the professional development of educators and equipping students with essential digital skills. Beyond preserving the educational advancements made during the pandemic, it positions higher education for a future in which technology drives profound transformations in learning and assessment methodologies. In essence, this study offers valuable insights into the adaptability and resilience of language educators, illuminating the path forward for higher education in an increasingly digital landscape.

**Index Terms**—digital transformation, adaptation, online assessment, higher education

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the current educational landscape, online teaching has become a ubiquitous instructional model worldwide, and Vietnam is no exception, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era. The exploration of both the theory and practice of online teaching has garnered substantial attention from researchers globally. This emphasis stems from the desire to develop effective methods and practical tools that facilitate a seamless transition for educators and learners into this evolving teaching paradigm. Simultaneously, it seeks to establish robust assessment methods that align with the learning outcomes expected in diverse subjects when employing online teaching methodologies.

A notable study by Abduh (2021) examined the perspectives of foreign language teachers on online assessment methods. The results show that most teachers have positive attitudes towards online assessment methods and related techniques/methods. These teachers perceive many benefits, including improving IT application skills, automating student assessment and grading, accurately measuring learning outcomes, and supporting student learning activities to improve teaching effectiveness. Furthermore, this study also shows that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers' views on online assessment (Abduh, 2021).

In contrast, some studies show differences in opinions on male and female teachers regarding online assessment. Specifically, differing views on factors such as validity, reality, reliability, and security of online assessments were observed. Similarly, another study by Chung and Choi (2021) also showed that more than half of EFL teachers felt quite satisfied with the methods and tools of online assessment, because it helps students develop their ability to learn independently. Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that teachers who have a positive attitude and are willing to accept the application of technology in online assessment are often more innovative in accepting these new methods. Although initially faced with many challenges, not only in terms of technology, teachers independently found solutions and adapted to address these challenges, consistent with the actual circumstances of online assessment amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recent research on online education in Vietnam has underscored the necessity of addressing crucial aspects when integrating information technology into teaching and evaluating learning outcomes. In a study by Nguyen (2021), the importance of assessing effectiveness when technology is employed in teaching, particularly in conjunction with traditional methods, was emphasized. Le and Nguyen (2021) conducted an analysis of trends in technology application for assessing learners' capabilities and proposed a framework comprising three levels of technological integration within the Vietnamese education system. In another study, Vu (2020) emphasized the importance of investing in sustainable online education models at the university level and presented national policies and lessons for our country. Additionally, Do and Hoang's (2020) study proposed a process for implementing the flipped classroom model in online education at

Hung Vuong University, aiming to improve online teaching quality in schools and education overall (Do & Hoang, 2020).

Nevertheless, these studies have primarily overlooked the perspectives of educational administrators, educators, following the implementation of technology-supported assessment activities. Their primary focus has been on recommending online testing methodologies for foreign language subjects and prescribing specific technological tools for their implementation. Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge that these studies have not addressed the contemporary landscape of online testing and assessment, particularly in response to the prevalence of online teaching during and post COVID-19 pandemic. This represents a significant research gap concerning the current state of online testing and assessment within higher education institutions in Vietnam.

#### ***Statement of the Problem:***

Despite the growing popularity of online teaching in educational contexts, there remains a significant gap in understanding the nuanced experiences and perspectives of language teachers, especially in the online review scene in Vietnam higher education. Although the existing literature has shed light on various aspects of online education and assessment, including recommendations on methods and technological tools, there is notable oversight in addressing the specific challenges and adaptations faced by language educators. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by conducting a qualitative exploration of language teachers' experiences and perspectives in the field of online assessment. Specifically, this study investigates how language teachers adapt to online assessment methods in the context of rapid digital transformation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this study, a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, innovations and best practices surrounding online assessment will be provided in language education, thereby contributing to improving the pedagogy practice and teaching effectiveness in the context of online language learning.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Having addressed the growing popularity of online teaching in the global educational landscape, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, further research into the nuances of online assessment practices is a must, especially in the field of foreign language education. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive review of the existing research focusing on the examination of online testing and assessment practices, especially within the context of foreign language programs at the university and college levels within educational institutions and research establishments.

### ***A. Perspectives of Language Educators and Students Regarding Online Assessment***

Several scientific articles have delved into the exploration of foreign language teachers' perspectives concerning online assessment within the realm of online teaching. A noteworthy example is Abduh's (2021) study which scrutinized English teachers' viewpoints on online assessments. The research findings illuminate that the majority of English teachers exhibit a positive disposition towards online assessment and the accompanying techniques/methodologies due to the myriad benefits it confers. These advantages encompass the enhancement of technology application skills, the automation of student assessment and grading processes, the precise evaluation of learning outcomes, and the facilitation of endeavors aimed at augmenting teaching efficacy (Abduh, 2021).

Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2021) have corroborated that English teachers who possess a positive attitude and a propensity to adapt to technological innovations in testing tend to manifest greater inventiveness when introducing novel assessment methodologies. In the initial stages, teachers grappled with various challenges, spanning not only technological hurdles but also pedagogical complexities. However, they actively identified pedagogical solutions and adeptly adapted to the circumstances to resolve issues that arose during the teaching process. This adaptability empowers them to align with the realities of online assessment within the intricate backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic (Zhang et al., 2021).

The findings from Ghoulali and Cecilia's (2021) research highlight that most students attain a similar level of knowledge through online teaching and learning as they do in traditional classroom settings. Utilizing evaluation tools like online meeting rooms, forums, blogs, and websites that support interactive exercises holds promise for boosting students' interest and active engagement during online learning (Ghoulali & Cecilia, 2021). Consequently, this enhanced interaction contributes to significantly improved learning outcomes when students engage with online teaching and learning methodologies. However, it's worth noting that some students have reported investing more effort into their online learning experiences but achieving similar results to those obtained in traditional face-to-face lecture hall settings, as observed in Hidalgo et al.'s (2021) study.

Overall, teachers' perspectives encompass a range of attitudes and experiences related to online assessment: positive attitudes; adaptability and creativity. Teachers' viewpoints reflect a complex interaction between attitudes, experiences, and outcomes related to online assessment and teaching in the context of foreign language education.

### ***B. The Use of LMS in Vietnam Higher Education***

In Vietnam higher education, learning management systems (LMS) have been implemented in numerous universities (Cao, 2021). To effectively manage online teaching, many educational institutions have adopted LMS based on the open-source Moodle code. Several studies have explored the utilization of LMS in various Vietnamese universities

(Dang & Robertson, 2010a, 2010b; Ngo, 2020). These studies indicate that LMS provides robust support for document management, information exchange, and organization of learning activities.

With the LMS, learners can engage in learning tasks and practice exercises in class or remotely with an internet connection. LMS supports a wide range of exercises, including multiple-choice questions, essay questions, matching, and fill-in-the-blank questions. Moreover, LMS includes features for closely monitoring learners' work, such as setting test deadlines, regulating time for each test attempt, and limiting the number of test attempts per learner, aiming to prevent cheating during online exams. The system also records information about when learners start the exam and the electronic device they use, allowing teachers to track and monitor each student's exam progress. Besides its assessment functionalities, LMS integrates tools for conducting surveys and opinion polls, facilitating interaction between teachers and learners. This enables timely adjustments to teaching methods and assessments to align with the evolving needs of the learning environment (Tran, 2022).

### *C. Online Assessment Challenges for Language Educators*

The realm of online testing and assessment presents various challenges for language educators, particularly regarding their proficiency in information technology, time constraints, and large class sizes. Additionally, alignment between instructional content and assessment outcomes can be an issue (Mahapatra, 2021; Zou et al., 2021; Afshar & Ranjbar, 2021).

#### *(a). Proficiency in Information Technology and Assessment Methods*

Many language educators struggle with limited proficiency in information technology, hindering the effective implementation of online assessment methods (Mahapatra, 2021; Zou et al., 2021; Afshar & Ranjbar, 2021). To address this, they have developed assessment strategies focused on project-based learning, fostering intercultural awareness, competence, problem-solving skills, and student engagement. However, adapting these methods to traditional summative assessments can be challenging due to logistical constraints (e.g., large class sizes) (Mahapatra, 2021; Zou et al., 2021; Afshar & Ranjbar, 2021). The effects of assessment strategies, besides evaluating student's learning outcomes, focused on enhancing students' IT proficiency; improving competence and problem-solving skills and prioritizing student engagement.

#### *(b). Cheating in Online Assessment*

Based on research conducted by Alghammas (2020), Ghanbari and Nowroozi (2021), and Hamdan et al. (2021), it is evident that cheating poses a significant concern for English educators during the implementation of online assessment and evaluation methods. Alghammas (2020) specifically notes that the prevalence of cheating behaviors has prompted teachers to increase their reliance on platforms like Blackboard for the execution of diverse assessment and evaluation techniques. This choice is primarily driven by the perception that such systems can effectively mitigate the challenges associated with cheating in online examinations (Alghammas, 2020).

#### *(c). Time-Intensive Assessment Design*

Studies by Wu and Wang (2021) concluded that creating online assessment activities is time-consuming and demands experience, which can affect educators' well-being, which is confirmed by other authors Chung and Choi (2021). These studies also observe that development of high-quality assessments requires substantial time investment, relatively contributing to stress to teachers (Ghanbari & Nowroozi, 2021).

#### *(d). Class size and Connectivity Issues*

Another challenge is managing large class sizes and poor internet connectivity, which may hinder proper classroom supervision (Zhang et al., 2021). Thus educators strive to select and implement online assessment techniques in alignment with policies, contextual factors, and their academic expertise. In addition, some students have raised concerns regarding online learning acting as a hindrance to their academic advancement (Olga & Victor, 2021; Hanafiah et al., 2022; Poonpon, 2021). As pointed out by Hidalgo et al. (2021), insufficient investment in equipment, unstable internet connections, or potential technical shortcomings can adversely affect students' psychological well-being while undertaking the online assessment.

#### *(e). Knowledge Gap in Information Technology*

Many educators lack essential knowledge of IT and language assessments, impacting their assessment practices. A study assessing the assessment literacy of technical English language teachers in engineering revealed significant gaps in their abilities, highlighting the need for comprehensive professional development (Ghanbari & Nowroozi, 2021; Saleem et al., 2021).

#### *(f). Misalignment Between Teaching and Assessment*

The misalignment between teaching and assessment, especially evident in subjects such as intercultural communication competence, poses significant challenges for both teachers and learners. One of the fundamental problems arises from disconnection between course content and assessment practice. While theoretical courses aim to

impart foundational knowledge and conceptual frameworks in intercultural communication, practical e-assessment objectives often require demonstration of applied skills and competencies in real-life situations (Saleem et al., 2021).

In essence, the literature review has shown that while many studies have addressed various aspects of online teaching, a notable gap exists in the in-depth exploration of online testing and assessment practices, especially in the context of foreign language programs at the university and college levels. These studies have illuminated language educators' perspectives on online assessment, highlighting their positive attitudes and adaptability in embracing new assessment technologies and methodologies. However, it is evident that language educators encounter several challenges, including limited information technology proficiency, time-intensive assessment design, issues related to large class sizes and connectivity, knowledge gaps in information technology, and occasional misalignments between instructional content and assessment outcomes. These challenges underscore the importance of further research and the need for comprehensive professional development to enhance language educators' online assessment practices and ensure the effectiveness of online language education.

The literature review provides an insight into various aspects of online assessment in the field of foreign language education. Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into language educators' perspectives on online assessment, a gap remains in comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of different forms of assessment and the challenges language teachers face in online assessment practices. Therefore, the following research questions are raised:

1. *How do language educators perceive the effectiveness of different forms of assessment, including formative assessment, summative assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment?*
2. *What are the key challenges encountered by language educators when conducting online assessments, particularly in the context of language skills?*
3. *What are the attitudes and practices of language educators towards academic dishonesty in the context of online assessments during the COVID-19 pandemic, and what strategies do they employ to prevent and address instances of cheating and plagiarism?*

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

#### A. Research Design

The research involved conducting comprehensive interviews with three teachers, with a primary focus on exploring various facets of online assessment and the challenges it presents within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the study sought to gather insights from educators regarding the future of online testing and assessment.

Utilizing a semi-structured interview format with open-ended questions, the study comprehensively examines various aspects of online assessment techniques. To ensure interviewees understood sampling process and research design as well as terminology related to online assessment before answering interview questions, the following steps were taken:

(1) A comprehensive written explanation of the sampling process and research design was provided together with clear descriptions of online assessment terms. Examples illustrating each concept were also provided to ensure interviewees clearly understand the meaning of key terms.

(2) A pre-interview briefing was conducted to discuss the research objectives, methods, and terminology in more detail to avoid any misunderstandings and ensure that interviewees are on the same page before the interview. After the interview, data acquired were aggregated and analyzed to address the research inquiries.

#### B. Samples

The study will purposefully select three language educators, ensuring representation from different departments to capture diverse perspectives. In this case, the departments include Chinese Linguistics, English Linguistics, and Russian Linguistics. This purposive sampling method allowed for a comprehensive exploration of online assessment methods in higher education.

TABLE 1  
PROFILE OF INTERVIEWEES

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Years of teaching	Faculty
1	Female	40	15	Faculty of Chinese Linguistics
2	Female	50	25	Faculty of English Linguistics
3	Female	36	8	Faculty of Russian Linguistics

Table 1 provides a snapshot of the interviewees' profiles, including their gender, age, and respective faculties within the university, highlighting their teaching experience in addition to demographic information. Interviewee 1, 40 years old, teaches in the Faculty of Chinese Linguistics and has 15 years of teaching experience. Interviewee 2, 50 years old, works in the Faculty of English Language and brings 25 years of teaching experience to the discussion. Interviewee 3, 36 years old, is a teacher of the Faculty of Russian Language and has 8 years of teaching experience. They were chosen because of their extensive experience in teaching in their respective language fields, ensuring a deep understanding of online assessment practices in language education. This diversity in faculty backgrounds contributes to a well-rounded



perspective on the topic of online assessment practices, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of their experiences and insights.

### C. Data Collection and Analysis

Each participant joined a two-hour semi-structured interview to make sure all the important subjects about the online test were covered. Open-ended interview questions are intended to elicit in-depth answers regarding participants' experiences, challenges, and viewpoints regarding online assessment methods.

A thematic analysis was conducted on the verbatim transcriptions of the acquired data. In order to effectively address the research inquiries, thematic analysis entails detecting recurrent themes, patterns, and insights within the data. Transcripts will be coded in order to group data into relevant topics about online assessment process, challenges, and potential consequences in the upcoming future.

### D. Validity and Reliability

Cross-referencing interview responses with previously published material on online assessment were treated as part of a triangulation of data sources technique to assure the validity and reliability of the findings. To verify the precision and reliability of the interpretations, participant sharing of preliminary findings can also be used for member checking.

## IV. FINDINGS

Based on the outcomes of the in-depth interviews, we present a summary of the research findings categorized by the following main themes that teachers raised in the interview: assessment practices; subjects and assessment methods; challenges in online assessment; the use of LMS; addressing cheating in online assessments assessment practices; teachers' support for post-COVID-19 online testing and assessment; promoting ICT application in education.

### A. Online Assessment Practices

Regarding the application of various assessment types such as formative, summative, student assessment, self-assessment, or assessments via social networks and group chat voting, the teachers shared their experiences. As it was their first experience with online assessment, they predominantly utilized *"attendance scores, oral presentations, homework assignments, classroom exercises, peer evaluations, and project assessments"*. Within group settings, they employed the group chat voting function for assessment purposes. Teacher 3 noted that *"midterm and final exams remained conventional, following the previously established format, resembling direct learning assessments rather than the distinctive features of online assessment."* In essence, the educators embraced a more diverse range of assessment methods compared to traditional teaching methods.

### B. Subjects and Assessment Method Alignment

The educators taught a variety of subjects, including Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing skills, language theory/linguistics, and specialized subjects like translation and interpretation, as well as teaching methods. For practical skills subjects, such as Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing, teachers predominantly used the LMS to administer exercises. Teacher 2 mentioned that *"these exercises encompass multiple choices, true or false, fill in the blanks, and drag-and-drop formats"*. For language theory, linguistics, and translation and interpretation subjects, *"oral exams were maintained in online teaching, while subjects with in-class essay exams required students to take pictures of their written work and submit it via the LMS"*, Teacher 1 confirmed that.

### C. Challenges in Online Assessment

In terms of difficulties encountered during online assessments, the teachers reported *"minimal issues with oral and essay exams"*. However, all teachers claimed that *"designing diverse tests on the LMS platform proved time-consuming and was considered a primary challenge"*. Additionally, teachers said that they *"needed plenty of time to adapt to the design of online assessment"*. External factors, such as *"unstable internet connections and noisy exam environments at students' locations"*, posed challenges to online assessment. Furthermore, teachers faced *"difficulties in ensuring exam fairness and preventing cheating"*, as they could not monitor students closely. Some students also *"refused to turn on their cameras during exams"*, creating additional challenges for exam invigilators, Teacher 1 noted.

### D. The Use of LMS

All teachers acknowledged *"the advantages of using the LMS for online testing and assessment"*. These benefits included *"convenient lesson reviews, efficient assignment of supplementary exercises, easy exam collection, time-saving in paper grading, secure storage of test results for later review, and the ability to create interactive and multimedia-rich tests"*, Teacher 1 noticed. However, they also pointed out limitations, primarily *"the absence of a rigorous security process"*. Teacher 2 highlighted the contrast between onsite exams, where the Testing and Quality Assurance Department duplicates exam questions, and online exams, where teachers are responsible for uploading each question, a time-consuming process that raises concerns about exam security.

On the whole, the interviews revealed a transition to more diverse assessment methods in response to online teaching, driven by the adoption of the online assessment. Despite some challenges related to online assessment, educators recognized the benefits of the LMS system while expressing concerns about the security of online exams.

#### E. Addressing Cheating in Online Assessments

When queried about their stance on cheating during online assessments, teachers unanimously acknowledged it as a pervasive challenge in the realm of evaluation. Teacher 3 emphasized that, *“despite the sophistication of modern technology and stringent protocols, complete eradication of fraud remains elusive”*. To mitigate cheating, teachers have employed various strategies, including the distribution of scores across multiple exams to prevent any single test from carrying excessive weight. They have also implemented a higher frequency of oral exams compared to traditional essay-based assessments and have utilized multiple cameras or, at a minimum, one camera covering the entirety of the student's workspace.

Furthermore, teachers have taken proactive steps to educate themselves on anti-cheating techniques, including the creation of anti-copying safeguards within the LMS. During exam periods, Teacher 3 noted that she has *“established comprehensive online exam regulations encompassing student conduct and examination environment requirements, aligned with institutional and faculty guidelines”*. Foremost, another teacher underscored *“the paramount importance of instilling a sense of honesty and integrity in students, recognizing this as the foundational measure to combat cheating”*. While acknowledging the potential efficacy of advanced online monitoring systems, they noted the considerable cost implications, rendering their widespread implementation challenging.

#### F. Teachers' Support for Post-Covid-19 Online Testing and Assessment

In response to their support for the continuation of post-COVID-19 online testing and assessment, all interviewed teachers affirmed their endorsement of the online assessment format. Teacher 2 expressed that she *“intended to integrate it partially into post-pandemic teaching activities”*. Another teacher contended that online assessment could be *“effectively employed by diversifying examination formats, such as incorporating oral and open-ended essay assessments”*. For added security, *“essays could be administered under camera surveillance, and handwritten exams could be retained without transitioning to typed responses”*.

Teachers emphasized the necessity of a well-defined roadmap for developing a robust distance learning system, accompanied by the allocation of essential human resources. This roadmap should encompass the formulation of appropriate evaluation criteria and forms tailored to distance learning contexts. Additionally, Teacher 1 recommended *“a post-test auditing mechanism to address suspected cases of cheating”*. In this process, the teacher suggested that *“a student retakes a randomly selected exam question, and any discrepancy between their original response and the test answer would raise concerns about potential misconduct”*.

#### G. Promoting ICT Application in Education

To promote the continued ICT application in education, teachers proposed a three-fold approach. Firstly, they advocated for *“compensating teachers adequately for the time and effort invested in preparing online exams within the LMS”*, recognizing the substantial workload associated with designing online assessment materials.

Secondly, teachers highlighted *“the imperative need to enhance the school's LMS system with anti-fraud features to bolster security during online assessments”*. This would not only safeguard the integrity of evaluations but also alleviate concerns related to cheating.

Lastly, teachers recommended *“establishing a dedicated department responsible for uploading exam questions to the LMS on behalf of educators”*, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Such a measure would streamline the process, ensuring efficiency and transparency in handling online assessments.

### V. DISCUSSION

The interviews revealed a notable shift in educators' assessment practices as they adapted to online teaching, aligning with the broader trend observed in the literature (Abduh, 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). While traditional assessment methods continue to hold sway in specific domains, educators are increasingly aligning with the innovation wave. This transition underscores educators' adaptability, mirroring their openness to exploration and innovation.

The contrast between assessment techniques in practical skills subjects and theoretical subjects, as identified in the interviews, echoes the findings in Saleem et al.'s (2021) study and raises questions about alignment across diverse educational contexts. The prioritization of online assignments for practical skills subjects aligns with the adaptability of digital platforms in skill development. However, the retention of oral examinations for essay-based subjects underscores the need for flexible and context-sensitive assessment strategies.

Educators' articulated challenges in designing online assessments closely align with the literature's emphasis on time-intensive test creation within LMS (Mahapatra, 2021; Zou et al., 2021; Afshar & Ranjbar, 2021). These challenges underscore the necessity of providing educators with resources and training to streamline assessment processes. Concerns about internet connectivity and examination environments mirror the need for equitable access and conducive conditions discussed in the literature (Mahapatra, 2021; Zou et al., 2021; Afshar & Ranjbar, 2021).

Educators' unanimous acknowledgement of cheating as a persistent issue aligns with broader discussions on academic integrity in the literature (Ghanbari & Nowroozi, 2021; Saleem et al., 2021). The strategies employed by educators to mitigate cheating, such as score dispersion and fostering a culture of academic honesty, resonate with the multifaceted approach highlighted in the literature (Ghanbari & Nowroozi, 2021). Cost considerations for advanced surveillance systems parallel the need for pragmatic solutions within resource constraints. The unanimous consensus among educators in favor of continuing online testing aligns with the literature, emphasizing the potential long-term benefits of online education (Abduh, 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). The adaptability to incorporate diverse assessment formats, including oral and open-ended essays, reflects educators' awareness of the evolving educational landscape, as noted in prior studies.

Drawing from our findings, educators' policy recommendations for promoting ICT application in education resonate with discussions in the literature. Adequate compensation for educators involved in online exam preparation aligns with recognizing the labor-intensive nature of this transition. The enhancement of LMS systems with anti-fraud features mirrors the ongoing necessity for secure online assessment environments. Lastly, the establishment of a dedicated department for test administration reflects a pragmatic approach to streamlining the online assessment process, echoing similar calls in the literature (Fluck, 2019).

The alignment between the findings from the interviews and the existing literature reinforces the significance of educators' experiences in shaping the landscape of online assessment, offering valuable insights and directions for further research and policy development in the field of education.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The higher education landscape has undergone a significant transformation due to the rapid digitization in the post-COVID-19 era. Foreign language teachers have emerged as innovative educators, addressing the shift to online assessment while upholding academic integrity. Insights from our interviews underscore their adaptability, resilience, and unwavering commitment to maintaining educational standards amid adversity.

Despite the multifaceted challenges presented by this digital revolution, educators have showcased their ability to adapt and implement a diverse array of online assessment methods. Ranging from formative to summative assessments, encompassing practical skills and theoretical subjects, educators have harnessed digital tools effectively to gauge student learning outcomes. This adaptability not only ensures educational continuity during crises but also offers a wider range of assessment techniques, enriching the overall learning experience. Continuous professional development for educators is vital to refine their remote teaching skills, leverage the full potential of digital tools, and navigate the evolving educational landscape. Equally critical is equipping students with the digital literacy skills required to thrive in a technology-driven world. Advanced training in information technology applications empowers students to engage effectively in online assessments, collaborate in virtual environments, and adapt to emerging educational technologies.

### **Recommendations**

Looking beyond the pandemic, it becomes evident that the remote learning approaches employed by educators hold lasting potential for higher education. To capitalize on this potential, institutional leaders must act promptly. They should assess the viability and effectiveness of remote learning, taking into account lessons learned during the pandemic. Additionally, institutions should embark on a dual mission: providing professional development opportunities in remote teaching for educators and delivering advanced training in information technology for students. By adopting a comprehensive approach that addresses the needs of both educators and students, higher education institutions can ensure the sustained success of online assessment practices. Furthermore, this approach fosters a culture of innovation and adaptability, positioning institutions at the forefront of educational excellence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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**Truc Tran-Thi-Thanh** holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Linguistics from University of Social Sciences and Humanities – Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City and has been actively engaged in academia for over two decades. She currently serves as a lecturer at the Ho Chi Minh city University of Law, contributing significantly to the institution's academic community.

Dr. Tran's scholarly pursuits encompass various facets of linguistics, with a primary focus on cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphors, intercultural communication and computer-assisted language learning. Her extensive research and pedagogical experience have contributed significantly to the advancement of linguistic studies, particularly in understanding the intricate dynamics of language acquisition and cross-cultural communication. Email address: [tttruc@hcmulaw.edu.vn](mailto:tttruc@hcmulaw.edu.vn).

# Language Learning Plateau: EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Practical Recommendations

Dinara Utegulova

K.Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University, Kazakhstan

Kulpash Koptleuova

Baishev University, Kazakhstan

Nurkhanym Bauyrzhan

K.Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University, Kazakhstan

Sandugash Mukhtarova

K.Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University, Kazakhstan

Akhmaral Khairzhanova

Kh. Dosmukhamedov Atyrau University, Kazakhstan

Danagul Assylzhanova

Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages, Kazakhstan

**Abstract**—This study explores EFL teachers' perceptions of the language learning plateau and identifies the recommendations teachers have for overcoming it. Thematic analysis is used to analyse the data from ten English teachers who teach students from intermediate to advanced levels. The findings show that there is a lack of awareness of the term among EFL teachers, yet the idea of the plateau is familiar. Surprisingly, some teachers are found to be in the plateau themselves. This study also discusses the issues teachers are struggling with, and some useful strategies they use to help students move beyond the plateau.

**Index Terms**—language acquisition, language learning plateau, perceptions, teaching EFL

Each individual's experience of learning a new language is unique and challenging in its own way. According to Murphy (2017), learning a foreign language is easy for some people, thus they succeed in reaching the advanced level of language proficiency; however, for others it is a struggle to master their foreign language skills and it is interesting why people do not make any improvements despite their efforts. Those who do not see any progress in their learning process may feel anxious and frustrated, which sometimes makes them give up on learning a foreign language (Richards, 2008). Such students might feel like they have got stuck in the same level of language proficiency as they need to start learning it over and over again (Yi, 2007). There are numerous cases when foreign language learners claimed that they lack skills or have no aptitude for learning foreign languages. However, it is very important for learners to understand and for teachers to explain to their students that there is a phenomenon in the language learning which might explain the reasons for such a struggle; this phenomenon is called a language learning plateau.

The plateau phenomenon in the language learning is not studied properly. It should be highlighted, that in almost all the studies about language learning plateau researchers focused on the factors causing the plateau and gave some pedagogical implications that could possibly address it (Mirzae et al., 2017; Richards, 2008). However, no studies were conducted about the techniques and activities that are being used by teachers in practice to overcome it. Most of the times researchers were interested in students' perspectives about the plateau, and almost none of them discussed teachers' perceptions.

Despite the fact that our knowledge about the language learning plateau is limited, researchers who investigated this topic claim that teacher's role is crucial in helping learners to overcome the plateau (Yi, 2007; Richards, 2008). That is why, teachers should, first of all, be aware of the existence of such a phenomenon in the language learning; without this knowledge both students and teachers might have hard times, because not only students, but also teachers struggle a lot when they do not see the outcomes of their work. So, indeed, this is an important period not only for a student, but also for a teacher.

This study may help foreign language teachers who have students in the plateau phase. Findings of the study can be used for further research of this problem. This research, as any other researches in this field, will be a valuable input to the existing literature.

## I. BACKGROUND

### A. *What Is a Language Learning Plateau?*

The term 'learning plateau' was first used in educational psychology (Collins et al., 1973). This phenomenon implies that a learner does not make any significant improvements although she practices and puts enough efforts for learning new skills. According to Xu (2009), the learning plateau can be demonstrated as a flat part on the learning curve, which comes right after making a quick improvement by the learner in the learning process. This phenomenon is widely encountered in the field of second and foreign language learning.

According to many researchers, such as Richards (2008), Yi (2011), Shormani (2013), Murphy (2017) and others, the language learning plateau might be considered as a temporary state and can be overcome when treated correctly. Murphy (2017) describes the language learning plateau as a point where a learner continues to make progress but does not seem to advance to the next language benchmark; however, he differentiates language learning plateau from fossilisation, which is sometimes called as a 'temporary plateau', saying that the former is 'only a temporary slowing or stopping of learning', whereas the latter is a 'permanent stabilisation'.

Lightbown and Spada (2006) define fossilisation as errors that appear in the speech of students despite progress in other areas of language development. These errors do not affect our understanding of the speaker, thus, in lower levels of proficiency are less irritating (Richards, 2008).

### B. *Research Evidence About the Language Learning Plateau and How It Happens*

Some researchers believe that students experience the language learning plateau at a particular level of the language proficiency, namely, when transiting from intermediate to more advanced levels (Richards, 2008; Yi, 2011; Murphy, 2017). That is why, the language learning plateau is sometimes called an 'intermediate plateau'. According to Yi (2011), students tend to be highly motivated to learn and to memorize at the early stages of language acquisition because of the following reasons: all the input in language is new to learners and they assume that they are able to immediately use what is being learnt in communication with native speakers. Richards (2008) suggests that as learners progress and reach the intermediate level, improvement slows down than it used to be in the beginning, making learners' efforts elusive and leading learners to frustration and feeling that they may have reached the plateau. Although intermediate/upper-intermediate learners' characteristics and needs may differ, there are some common problems that they will experience: an overuse of lower-level vocabulary, fluency which progresses at the expense of complexity, inadequate productive skills, fossilised language errors, and limited awareness of collocations usage, which makes students' speech lack native-like characteristics (Richards, 2008).

Much in the same way, Yi (2011) points out insufficient productive skills as one of the problems leading to plateau. He believes that learners need to develop their productive skills instead of constantly improving only their receptive skills, as the productive work may be a key for overcoming the plateau. The reason is that when students try to express their ideas, they feel the demand in higher language proficiency. It makes them realize that being able to understand the foreign language is not enough, and what they lack is the ability to actually use it in conversations. This makes students more persistent in their learning and they try to overcome frustration. It means that more communication-oriented learning should take place in the learning process.

However, there might be some cases when intermediate students can have relatively fluent and accurate speech, but lack complexity (Richards, 2008). In order for learners to make their language complex, they need to acquire new linguistic forms and use them in their speech. Richards (2008) gives the following example: learners have already learned and are comfortably using present and past tenses, now when they learn the perfect tense learners' linguistic systems are to be restructured for incorporating the perfect tense. Normally, this restructuring takes some time, as learners tend to overuse the structures they have already mastered. This situation may have 2 scenarios: 1) learners gradually acquire newly learned linguistic items; 2) restructuring never happens, so new forms do not pass into their linguistic systems, which may lead to the plateau.

In their grounded theory study, Mirzaei et al. (2017) investigated the plateau phenomenon in the EFL setting and found that three main factors contribute to the language learning plateau, such as instruction-related variables, learner-related variables, and going through problems. All these factors cause the plateau in the order they are presented, so 'it (i) starts off with instructional variables, (ii) becomes reinforced by the learners' characteristics, and (iii) finally comes to surface when the learners undergo unpleasant experiences which are the signs of reaching learning plateau' (Mirzaei et al., 2017, p. 204). The instruction-related variables are strongly connected with teachers: types of materials they use, methods of teaching, teaching styles, and their interaction with students. Learner-related variables include such categories as learners' affection, their cognition and meta-cognition, and the learning strategies they use. Finally, the third variable, which is going through problems, means a stage when learners start to understand that they are on plateau and experience anxiety and frustration. It is believed that students who are anxious cannot perform well (Horwitz et al., 1986; Krashen, 1981). At this stage they become very sensitive and lose their confidence, in other words the affective factors become more obvious. That is why, learners should review their own personalities which may hinder them from moving beyond the plateau and further progress in their learning.

### C. *Extensive Reading as One of the Ways to Overcome the Plateau*

Solution to some of the problems which students experience in the language learning plateau may be found in the researches related to an extensive reading, where its positive effect on language learning and, particularly, on vocabulary growth was proven (Suk, 2017; Lao & Krashen, 2000; Aliponga, 2013; Webb & Chang, 2015; Krashen, 2004; Nation, 2001).

The extensive reading is defined by Hafiz and Tudor (1990) as “the reading of large amount of materials in the L2 for personal pleasure and interest, and without the addition of productive tasks or follow-up language work” (p. 4). Renandya (2007) explains the theory behind extensive reading by quoting Christine Nuttal (1992, p. 168): ‘The best way to improve one’s knowledge of a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers. The next best way is to read extensively in it.’ He believes that language is learnt when there is continuous input and this input is comprehensible. However, in EFL setting it is quite difficult to create such an immersive input-rich classroom environment. Thus, he believes that providing students with large supply of books that suit their interests and levels, preparing enjoyable after-reading activities and discussions will help them to dramatically improve their language proficiency.

Study conducted by Horst (2005) also showed the benefits of extensive reading. According to the author, previous research on this topic had not fully examined the effectiveness of the extensive reading on expansion of students’ vocabulary. He conducted extensive reading program to twenty one adult immigrants, who were studying at Montreal community centre. The group met twice a week during a six week period, spending 3 hours together each class. Overall, students were given thirty-five graded readers of different levels; and they were free to choose and read any book they prefer. By the end of six weeks each of them read on average 10.2 books. One hour of the class was devoted to discussion of the book, completion of the worksheets, and vocabulary notebooks. The author used a pre-/post test method. For this he took part of the part of the books and electronically scanned them. Then with the help of the lexical frequency profiling software he divided the words from the readers into four categories. The last step was creating and using a hundred-word checklist for pre-and post-tests. Results show that the extensive reading program was successful, and students were able to learn half of the words from off-list category- less frequent words- occurred in the graded readers.

The main peculiarity of the extensive reading is that learners are recommended to choose materials which are “near or even below their current level” (Renandya, 2007, p. 145), this is done to make comprehension easier and reading experience more enjoyable, therefore majority of learners usually choose graded readers for extensive reading. According to Hill (1997), graded readers are ‘extended texts, mostly fiction, written in the language reduced in terms of structures and vocabulary’ (p. 57). Many researchers have used graded readers in their studies (Horst, 2005; Suk, 2017; Bell, 2001; Waring, 1997; Waring & Takaki, 2003) and proved that graded readers are beneficial not only in expanding student’ vocabulary, but also in developing reading comprehension, reading speed, reading strategies, and in general, help to improve students’ language proficiency.

However, it is a well-known fact that graded readers, namely adapted and abridged texts, may sound unnatural due to the fact that vocabulary and grammatical structures are simplified according to the level of students. Hafiz and Tudor (1990) also argue that due to simplified syntactic structures and lack of complexity of graded readers, there is a possibility that syntactic features in a foreign language will not be developed. It means that graded readers may be less beneficial for intermediate/upper-intermediate learners and may not contribute to overcoming intermediate plateau. Moreover, as it has been mentioned above, the language learnt by means of graded readers, may lack the characteristics of natural speech, which is considered as one of the main reasons why students hit the plateau. It is recommended for teachers to find authentic materials that will correspond to students’ levels of proficiency.

In another study on extensive reading conducted by Nishino (2007) both graded readers and authentic books were used to investigate Japanese middle school students’ motivation to read in English and the strategies they used while extensively reading. The author chose Harry Potter 4, Harry Potter 5, and Stravaganza as authentic reading materials for the participants. According to the results, during the 2,5-year study students’ reading comprehension and intrinsic motivation increased, each of the students developed their own strategies to read and to comprehend the texts. At first, when their proficiency level was lower, they enjoyed reading graded books; however, after finishing Harry Potter 4, they lost their interest for graded books and did not find them enjoying anymore, so they continued reading authentic books. This research demonstrates that intermediate/upper-intermediate level students might not prefer reading graded books, as the result their motivation to read may decrease as well. Despite the fact that Nishino did not investigate students’ vocabulary acquisition, her study might be useful and helpful for teachers in their choice of appropriate materials for higher level students. In fact, there are not so many studies devoted to investigating the effect of extensive reading on intermediate and above level students.

It is worth mentioning that extensive reading is not a panacea for all the problems that students may face when hitting the learning plateau. However, taking into consideration all the above mentioned information, it is clear that extensive reading proved to be a good way to enlarge students’ vocabulary and overall improve their foreign language proficiency.

#### *D. Teachers’ Role in Helping Learners Overcome the Plateau*

Many researchers come to the conclusion that teacher’s role is crucial in helping learners to overcome the plateau. Yi (2011), for instance, claims that a teacher’s role is so important, that she can prevent plateau stage even before students hit it. One way of addressing plateau is adjusting teaching techniques and teaching philosophy. Another way is that

teachers should encourage students at the plateau stage, be patient and tolerant of students' errors; teacher's anxiety will only worsen the situation.

Thus, first and foremost, teachers should be aware of the plateau phenomenon in the language learning; without this knowledge they will be unable to help their students. Secondly, as an integral part of the learning process, teachers may also struggle a lot when they do not see the outcomes of their teaching. So this is an important period not only for a student, but also for a teacher, as a good and positive rapport between them may become a key for successfully overcoming the plateau. However, it needs to be pointed that the plateau phenomenon in the language learning is not studied properly. Furthermore, it should be highlighted, that in almost all the studies researches were focused on the factors contributing to the plateau and on some pedagogical implications for addressing it, but no studies were conducted on the teachers' perceptions of the plateau and what strategies are being used in practice to overcome it. It means that we do not have a clear understanding of what the actual picture is.

## II. METHOD

### A. Research Questions

This study explores English teachers' perceptions of language learning plateau, how to overcome it, and seeks teachers' practical recommendations by answering the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers of the language learning plateau?
2. What strategies do teachers use in helping students overcome the language learning plateau?

### B. Method of Data Collection

This study uses a semi-structured interview as the method of data collection. Wellington (2015) states that interviews are 'designed to elicit views and perspectives' and can 'reach the parts which other methods cannot reach'. Unlike other methods, through interviewing we can investigate the things which are not easily observable or measurable, such as interviewees' views, perceptions, thoughts and feelings (Wellington, 2015).

According to Creswell (2013), qualitative researchers are considered as key instruments in the study, and they usually employ instruments which are designed by them using open-ended questions. In semi-structured interviews researchers tend to use a checklist or a guideline with a list of questions; they have a flexibility in arranging the order of these questions and their wordings, and adjust them depending on situations (Merriam, 2009; Wellington, 2015). Much in the same way, Creswell (2013) assumes that forms of data collection and questions might be modified in the process of conducting research once the researcher begins collecting data.

The researcher used different types of interviewing modes which are convenient for participants, such as telephone, face-to-face or online interviews via Zoom or Webex. Interviews were conducted in English and lasted from thirty to fifty-five minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants and then transcribed for the analysis.

### C. Research Participants

Participants of this research are 10 English teachers who teach students from intermediate to advanced levels. All the participants are females. Their years of teaching experience vary from 1 to 17 years. There are 2 university teachers, 2 state school teachers, and 6 teachers from private language centres. There is a probability that the participants may have encountered the problem of plateauing, because it is believed that foreign language learners usually hit plateau at the intermediate level (Richards, 2008), and they may have had students in upper-intermediate and advanced levels who successfully overcome the plateau. Thus, they can share their experiences and recommendations to address this problem.

### D. Data Analysis

Data is analysed using the following six-step thematic analysis introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarising yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, producing the report. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the thematic analysis is "searching across the data to find repeated patterns of meanings" (p. 86). The first step includes transcription of the interviews, reading and re-reading of the transcribed data; all verbal and non-verbal utterances, such as coughs, pauses should be retained in the transcript (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This step is very important, as a researcher starts creating meanings and interpreting the data when transcribing and reading the collected data (Bird, 2005; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). The second step is initial coding, where codes are assigned to chunks or segments in the transcript to identify reoccurring patterns (Miles et al., 2014), and combining the data relevant to each code (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The next step is combining the codes into themes and sub-themes, which can be done using tables and maps with codes and their small descriptions (Braun & Wilkinson, 2003). The fourth step is reviewing the themes by deleting or combining them, ensuring that extracts are relevant to the themes, and finalising the map (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The fifth step is giving names to the themes, which appear in the final work, and finally, the last step is selecting appropriate extracts and writing up the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### E. Ethical Considerations



Participation in the research was on a voluntary basis and the researcher took measures to protect the confidentiality of the participants. The researcher substituted the participants' real names with pseudonyms and did not indicate their workplaces. Interviews were recorded only with the permission of the participants. Audio recordings of the interviews, transcriptions and other written materials are stored on researcher's personal tablet in a separate folder with the adequate protection (password, researcher's fingerprint). The researcher ensured that the purpose and the content of the research were understood by all the participants. Written consent was obtained from the participants prior to collecting data. Final work is given for participants' review of the researcher's interpretation of their stories, perceptions and words.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. The Language Learning Plateau Term Is not Well-Known Among Teachers and Students

The majority of those interviewed suggested that there is a lack of awareness of the language learning plateau term among both EFL teachers and the language learners. Some of the teachers even stated that they were first introduced to such a term due to the invitation to participate in the given research. However, the concept itself was familiar.

Further, almost all of the teachers highlighted the importance and actuality of the problem, and that it should be properly explained to students in order to avoid many different issues they are facing because of it. The following vignettes illustrate this point:

*When I was first introduced to this topic, I did not know that it existed. I think that every teacher should be aware of this problem. Because if you do not know what the plateau is, you do not know that your students are having it. The problem is actually very important and needs to be solved (Participant 4).*

*Well, actually I do not think that they know exactly this term, but they just feel that they got stuck. It is important to let them know about it (Participant 8).*

Surprisingly, three interviewees even claimed that they are still experiencing the language learning plateau themselves; however, they also did not know that such problem existed. Because of the lack of knowledge about the problem, they suffered from the idea that they have no aptitude for learning a foreign language, they doubted their abilities. The following vignettes illustrate this point:

*I think I am myself in this plateau. Sometimes I just feel that my language skills are not sufficient enough. I start doubting myself as a teacher, as a person who speaks English (Participant 1).*

*Well when I was a learner I did not know about it, and I thought: I am stupid, I cannot learn the language. It was very difficult. Unfortunately, nobody told me that there was a term like learning plateau (Participant 3).*

#### B. A Comfort Zone Feeling Is One of the Indicators of the Plateau

Over half of the participants suggested that intermediate and upper-intermediate level students usually have quite good level of language proficiency; by the time they reach these levels, they may have developed all four skills, such as listening, reading, writing and speaking considerably to the point that they can comfortably use the language and be easily understood by the native speakers. So most of the times students think that the level they have is enough to communicate, and they do not need further improvement. However, this might be the time to make some changes, as it indicates that students probably hit the language learning plateau. This can be illustrated by the following vignette:

*This usually happens when children are experienced enough; they feel comfortable with the knowledge which they already have. It is like a zone of comfort, I think, when they do not really need to improve anything. Learning is too comfortable both for a teacher and for a student, and that is the point where people have to understand that they need to change something (Participant 5).*

Some teachers believe that students in plateau might feel as if they have reached their maximum, because they do not see the results of their hard work, and they find it difficult to move further for different reasons. Since they are already independent language users, they just do not change the situation.

*Maybe they think that it is all they can do or able to do, and they do not need to improve their current situation, because it is too difficult (Participant 2).*

A small number of those interviewed suggested that students in plateau, because they do not see visible results of their work, stop learning for some time and then come back in order to practice and not forget that they already know. One interviewee said that for one of her students did attend classes regularly; she took individual classes from time to time, because for her it was more important to remain at the same level than going up to the next one.

*She is still learning English to practice her speaking. She tries to keep it at the same level, so that she makes maybe a little progress, but more importantly that she does not make a regress (Participant 10).*

#### C. Peers, Affective Factors, and Relationship With a Teacher Important Factors Leading to the Language Learning Plateau

When the participants were asked about the reasons leading to the plateau, each participant gave several possible reasons, such as lack of motivation, grades, the lack of practice and discipline, and tens of others. However, the majority of the interviewees highlighted the following factors to be the most influential: peers, affective factors, and relationship with a teacher. Participants believe that students who are shy and not confident enough, those who have low self-esteem tend to hit the plateau more often compared to the ones who have high self-esteem and are outspoken. This point is in

agreement with the findings of Zapata-Becerra, which show that the above mentioned affective factors cause the plateau (2001). Such students tend to have difficulties in speaking mostly, in those activities, where they have to communicate with others. There is also the assumption that more extraverted students tend to succeed in the language learning (Littlewood, 1984; Brown, 1980; McDonough, 1981).

*She was not ready not because her English was poor, but mostly because of her emotional conception, the anxiety. She could not believe she had enough knowledge to be successful (Participant 10).*

*First of all, psychological barriers, they were too shy to speak with natives. They were sometimes afraid when they came to our discussion club, they were afraid to say a word (Participant 5).*

Some participants argued that peers are crucial when seeking a solution to the problem of plateauing, because they are the ones who can make the negative sides of plateau reinforced, or vice versa, they can help a student to move beyond the plateau and help to overcome those problems. Especially, if the plateau appeared as the result of some affective factors, such as, anxiety and frustration, teachers should change students' learning environments, groups and peers; their combination might worsen the situation with plateau.

*We need to choose groups carefully for them. One of my students could not improve in her previous group, because her ex-group mates, as she said, were more competitive, like "A" students, the smartest ones. So she was afraid to make mistakes in front of them (Participant 6).*

*Peers actually have this powerful influence. I have one weak class, and they are weak, because they feel like they are weak, they already perceive themselves weak. And it is not a problem of one student - the whole class think that they are weak, and they stopped kind of studying (Participant 9).*

Interviewees also expressed the opinions that teachers themselves can make students enter the plateau because of different reasons: sometimes there is a misunderstanding between them, they might not get on very well, teaching and learning styles of the teacher and the student might not suit, or simply, the student might not like the teacher. In this case students usually start missing classes, stop learning and making progress.

*It can also be teachers, why not? If there is any conflict, for example, with teacher, or that student does not like the teacher, or there is a communication failure or connection problems, then that might be another reason to stop learning or maybe to stop progressing (Participant 9).*

#### *D. Students in the Plateau Face Difficulties in Grammar Accuracy and Vocabulary Richness*

All the participants claimed that students struggle with speaking, namely, there is the lack of vocabulary and problems with the grammar accuracy. Teachers said that students in the plateau have limited vocabulary, because they are not able to activate newly learned words, meaning that they usually have them in their passive vocabulary. When asked spontaneously, they are not able to use them in their speech. That is the reason why they keep over using a lower level vocabulary, which comprises their active vocabulary.

*They know the words, they can use them in writing, they can understand them in texts, but they cannot use them in their speech (Participant 1).*

*Vocabulary is a huge problem for us. For example, we learn new vocabulary, but after some time, they forget everything and start using "simple", elementary level vocabulary (Participant 2).*

As for the grammar, the common problem shared among the interviewees was about the grammar accuracy. Teachers believe that the root cause of such grammar mistakes is fossilisation, so called learned mistakes, which are very persistent and difficult to get rid of. According to the participants, explaining-and re-explaining the rules and structures do not improve the situation.

*Of course, they know present simple, they for sure can tell its usage and structure, but when they start speaking, they usually forget the things like, endings -s, -es, for example. They fully understand how to use it, but cannot use it in practice (Participant 4).*

*Speaking and writing are usually about his learned mistakes (Participant 3).*

#### *E. The Most Challenging Thing About Teaching Students in the Plateau is Motivating Them*

All the participants suggested that motivating students is the most challenging part of their work. Moreover, one third of the teachers have also indicated the lack of the motivation as the main factor which can lead to the language learning plateau. It means that they completely understand the importance of it in the students' learning experiences. Yet most of them expressed their frustration about not being able to motivate their students for a long period of time, as they tend to quickly lose their motivation when faced with new difficulties and challenges in their learning process.

*I do not know how I can extra motivate this student; I find it challenging (Participant 9).*

*Motivating them is really difficult, because, even though I give some interesting and challenging assignments they lose their motivation quickly (Participant 7).*

*Priority for now is to keep them motivated. But I have no idea how to do it, like, nothing works on them (Participant 6).*

This finding is in agreement with Richards' (2008) work which showed that students in the intermediate and upper-intermediate levels are not that excited about learning the foreign language compared to the times when they have just started learning it. Thus, it becomes more difficult to motivate and make them learn.

#### F. EFL Teachers Might Experience Negative Feelings Due to the Plateau

Almost two thirds of the participants said that they understand that plateau is a natural thing and they should not be too pessimistic about it, though they feel sorry about their students. However, there were some EFL teachers who stated that they sometimes felt anxious and even depressed about their students' results, because they were responsible for their learning process. For some of them it felt like a burden, others started blaming themselves. So it means that plateau affects emotionally not only the students, but also the teachers. Below is the illustration of such example:

*That he is not progressing is not a burden only on him, but it's also a burden for me. I start asking my colleagues how to deal with these learned mistakes, because no matter how hard I try, he is still having these issues, so it bothers me. Maybe my teaching methods are not working out, they are not well enough, they do not suit him. I start seeking for problems in me, my teaching, and it feels like a burden (Participant 9).*

#### G. Supportive Environment, Praising and Good Relationships With Students Key to Overcoming the Plateau

When the participants were asked to give recommendations to their colleagues who might have students in the plateau phase, the common answers among them were supporting, praising, and being friendly with their students. They all agreed that students in the plateau are those who need constant support from the teacher's side, as they already might feel frustrated because of their situation. According to the participants, the teacher might be the only person who observes students' struggles, knows all of their mistakes and weaknesses in their language learning journey, so she is the one who needs to help them move beyond the plateau. One interviewee compared the plateau to swimming; she said that even though a person knows the techniques of swimming, and maybe tried to swim herself, she still needs someone to assist her when swimming, so does the language learner in the plateau, although she has developed some skills to speak the foreign language, she still needs someone to support, to tell that she can do it.

*I could not swim until I was 20 years old, and once I started learning. My boyfriend taught me to swim. One day he and I were swimming, and I was swimming, and I could not believe that I was swimming. So when the next time I was alone, I could not do it myself, because I needed someone who tells me I am ready, or assists me. So I guess that's one of the examples of plateau. Because like in this case, you have the skills, but you do not accept or do not truly understand or process that you already own those skills (Participant 10).*

Half of the interviewees expressed the belief that the atmosphere in the class should be friendly and supportive too. Students should not be scared to talk or worried to make mistakes. They should feel comfortable, especially those who are shy and are afraid to speak in English. Participants emphasized that teacher's positive attitude towards her students, tolerance to their repeated mistakes will return in the form of students' improvements and progress.

*Do not spread negativity, spread positivity. Try to understand, be in their shoes. If you do not blame each other and try to learn together, there will be no failure, even if there is no progress (Participant 9).*

*English should be fun, not scary (Participant 2).*

Some of the participants gave advice to praise the students in plateau, as they already have low motivation to learn, and most of the times feel worried about their mistakes. However, they argued that the praise should not be for the sake of praise, but it should be reasonable, because students usually know their weak sides. If to praise them for every small detail, they will not take teacher's praise seriously. It should be done to reinforce their real accomplishments. One of the teachers shared her experience, saying that she sometimes gave her student in plateau the tasks that he could manage to do well and afterward praised him for that. It was done to increase his motivation, according to her words. The following vignettes illustrate it:

*I try to praise them considerably by showing their strong sides in assignments, examinations, in the classroom (Participant 7).*

*I gave the tasks that they could handle, and then praised them for that (Participant 8).*

#### H. Use a Variety of Learning Approaches Helps to Successfully Overcome the Plateau

Since the majority of students in plateau have difficulties in speaking skills, namely the lack of vocabulary, teachers mostly shared the activities that they used to practice speaking; most importantly, those activities that worked well and eventually helped their students overcome the language learning plateau. Almost all the teachers found utilizing active learning most useful in developing speaking skills. Such activities included speaking and debate clubs, making projects and presentations, watching and discussing films and various video materials, peer feedback, group and pair works, and playing games. Participant stated that the above mentioned activities motivated students, attracted them to continue to learn the language, and somehow helped to move them beyond the plateau.

*I mean engaging students, making them work in groups and pairs, move, teach each other, do the projects – to actively engage them (Participant 9).*

*We concentrated on using new words and on making projects (Participant 1).*

Over the half of the participants highlighted that using games was very useful, students were interested in them. Games helped students feel at ease, to relax and forget about their mistakes, which they always tried to control. Interviewees stated that using games worked well in different age groups - both with adults and teenagers. Several teachers suggested that gamification is the best method that helps to solve a lot of problems connected to the plateau. Vignettes below present teachers' opinion about using games:

*Everyone likes playing games, even adults, because they are just grown up kids, so you can use more games to*

*practice active speaking (Participant 10).*

*I tried to use games, you know the most popular and trendy ones like, Kahoot, Wordwall, team games, and even Mafia. They were helpful and students loved them (Participant 2).*

Almost half of the interviewees recommended attending speaking clubs. Most of them mentioned the speaking clubs organized by the American Corners, if there are some in their cities, because of the English speaking environment and other interesting events for students. Teachers claim that most of the people attending these clubs have the purpose of improving their speaking skills, so students will find people to practice their speaking. In addition to that, they might have common problems and can work on their skills together without worry, because there is no assessment and judging in such clubs. Students are free in many aspects, like choosing the topic, or sharing their opinions freely.

*My student is attending the American Corner, where speaking clubs and debates are organized weekly. Each lesson one of them is picked to be a facilitator of the whole session. So he got really interested and inspired in it. It helps to keep him motivated to work (Participant 1).*

When it comes to the passive learning, the majority of the participants found listening to podcasts as one of the most helpful activities, because first of all, it improves students' listening skills: they start to get used to native speakers' different accents, natural flow and speed of their speeches. Second reason is its availability; listening to podcasts does not require special preparation, equipment or additional materials, as students usually use their mobile phones for that. There is also a possibility to listen to them anywhere - on the way to school, to work, on the bus, and so on.

*He has been listening to some podcasts while walking, while commuting to school. So he did pretty well on his last examination. He said that it actually helped, because now he can understand the fluency, the flow of native speakers (Participant 3).*

In general, the interviewees mentioned that in order to make real progress in the foreign language learning, it is important to combine active and passive learning activities. The reason is that active learning is useful in waking students up, making them activate all the knowledge they already have, whereas passive learning helps to support the gained knowledge and, in some ways, to check their progress.

#### *1. Authentic Materials and Native English Speakers Important for Overcoming the Plateau*

The majority of those interviewed suggested that using authentic materials in teaching students in the plateau phase is quite helpful. In their opinion, nowadays it is not appropriate to teach students using old academic textbooks with the information that is not topical anymore, which is common in Kazakhstan and many post-soviet union countries, for example. Teachers believe that materials should be more up-to-date, more valid to students, to their interests and to their lives. They could be interested in discussing current news, current situations happening in the world, their favourite series or popular TV shows.

*Whenever I have time, I try to show them TedTalks videos, parts from different movies. Once we watched the Night show together. Such authentic materials, listening to native English speakers, make you closer to the language, I think (Participant 6).*

By authentic materials the participants mean not only video, audio or printed materials, but also some socio-cultural events that will introduce the students to the culture and traditions of the foreign country. From one hand such events might educate students, from another hand they can attract students, inspire them and keep them motivated, in general. The vignette below this point:

*In 2008 there were elections in the USA, when Barack Obama won. So we conducted mock elections - so called false elections. We called our students and they voted for their presidents. There were about 10 American Corners in Kazakhstan and we were connected with the Embassy (Participant 5).*

Approximately two-thirds of the interviewees suggested that communication with the native English speakers can be a good way to improve speaking, and eventually can help in overcoming the plateau. According to the participants, it can be beneficial for students in several ways. First of all, being able to understand and to be understood by a native speaker might boost students' confidence; they might feel that they are independent users of the language and hopefully will get rid of their psychological barriers. Second, they will get used to the flow and speed of the native speakers. Finally, with all the above mentioned, it may speed up the progress of the learner in the learning process. The vignette below this point:

*Our students made lots of friends among Americans. I could see our students have changed, their language became more authentic. They lost maybe barriers and became fluent (Participant 5).*

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of the language learning plateau and to identify the recommendations teachers have for their colleagues who might have students in the plateau phase. This study has shown that there is a lack of awareness of the term among EFL teachers. Yet the idea of the plateau was familiar. Surprisingly, some teachers are found to be in the plateau themselves. It turned out that not only students, but also teachers can have negative feelings due to the plateau. Another finding showed that teachers struggle with motivating students in this phase. Finally, teachers shared some useful strategies that helped their students to move beyond the plateau.

The findings from this study make valuable contributions to the existing literature by exploring the problem of plateauing from the teachers' side, sharing their perceptions, opinions and thoughts, and gives practical recommendations to other teachers, or those who hit the plateau.

The current research was limited by the number of participants. Another limitation was the absence of a small questionnaire regarding teacher's backgrounds; it could have speeded up the data transcription and data analysis process.

Another possible area of future research would be to investigate the language proficiency levels of Kazakhstani school teachers and understand if there are any teachers experiencing the plateau. Other areas in which it would be important to develop further research are language learning plateau issues in English medium instruction, which is actively implemented in Kazakhstan and beyond (Nurshatayeva, 2020; Nurshatayeva & Page, 2020). Finally, it would be important to explore how advanced technology solutions such as chatbots (Nurshatayeva et al., 2020, 2021) would help learners overcome the plateau.

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**Dinara Utegulova** is an EFL teacher at the Department of World Languages at K. Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University. Her research focuses on areas such as language learning plateau, extensive reading, and the professional development of EFL teachers.

**Kulpash Koptleuova** is an Associate Professor of Linguistics at Baishev University. Her research interests are in the areas of Theory of Language, Languages in contact, Multilingual Education and EFL.

**Nurkhanym Bauyrzhan** is a Senior lecturer at the Department of English and German languages at the Zhubanov University. Her research interests are English literature, Comparative Linguistics, English for specific purposes.

**Sandugash Mukhtarova** is a Senior lecturer of the Department of English and German languages at K. Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University. Her fields of research are Translation of Non-equivalent vocabulary, Comparative Linguistics, AI in Teaching.

**Akhmaral Khairzhanova** is an Associate Professor of the Department of Translation Studies and Foreign Languages at Kh. Dosmukhamedov Atyrau University. Her main research interests: theory and practice of translation, modern methods and technologies of teaching foreign languages.

**Danagul Assylzhanova** is a PhD student of the Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages at the Department of Teacher training on languages and literature. Her research interests are Multilingual education, Foreign Language Teaching and English learning.

# Challenges and Internal Conflicts of Refugees in Asif Currimbhoy's Play *The Refugee*

Kaliyappan S

Department of English, Sri Vijay Vidyalaya College of Arts & Science, Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu, 636 807, India

Saravanakumar P

Department of English, Sri Vijay Vidyalaya College of Arts & Science, Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu, 636 807, India

**Abstract**—Asif Currimbhoy's play *The Refugee* presents a compelling examination of the challenges and internal conflicts faced by refugees, set against the backdrop of the Indo - Pakistan war of 1971 and the resulting partition. This narrative explores the tumultuous experiences of individuals who are forced to navigate the complexities of identity, belonging, and survival amidst geopolitical strife. The play delves into the psychological and emotional turmoil of refugees through its characters, portraying their struggles with loss, displacement, and the quest for a sense of home in an unfamiliar and often hostile environment. Through the journey of its characters, the play intricately details the multifaceted aspects of the refugee experience. The play serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring human spirit amidst adversity, offering deep insights into the challenges and internal conflicts of refugees through a rich tapestry of characters and settings that resonate with the complexities of real-world refugee experiences. The study focuses on the need for a humane approach to the refugee crisis, one that transcends bureaucratic and administrative measures and acknowledges the complex human emotions and needs at play.

**Index Terms**—refugees, internal conflicts, challenges, survival, partition

## I. INTRODUCTION

Asif Currimbhoy's *The Refugee* stands as a seminal work in South Asian English literature, bringing to the fore the poignant and complex narratives of refugees against the backdrop of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 and the subsequent creation of Bangladesh. This play not only captures the geopolitical upheaval of the time but also delves deep into the personal and internal conflicts experienced by individuals uprooted by war and sectarian violence. The introduction to the challenges and internal conflicts of refugees as depicted in Currimbhoy's play requires an exploration of the historical context, character analysis, and thematic considerations that underscore the refugee experience. Rani (2013) mentioned about Currimboy.

Currimboy handles his subject matter with ease. His plays include comedy, tragedy history, farce, melodrama, etc. In his plays, he deals with different aspects and problems of life. He does not worship beauty and does not present idealism. He presents life with its reality. In his plays, we find Art finds itself telling the truth. He has taken unusual themes from contemporary Indian society and skillfully used them in plays. (Rani, 2013, p. 40)

At the heart of *The Refugee* is a narrative that unfolds within a war-torn landscape, where the demarcation lines are not just geographical but deeply etched in the psyche of those displaced. The play commences with the harrowing events of March 25, 1971, known for the mass killings in East Bengal, which catalyzed a massive exodus of refugees to West Bengal. Through this setting, Currimbhoy articulates the immediate and visceral responses to displacement, loss, and the quest for survival in an increasingly fragmented world. Readers have been presented with the events in a genuine manner by Asif. "In fact, Currimbhoy's humour is generally bitter, cynical, and seldom joyful. One such example from his play *The Hungry Ones* can be found in the scene where the two Americans are introduced. The yogic feats of the two Americans produce humor" (Chelliah, 2018, p. 1666).

The characters in the play are emblematic of diverse refugee experiences, each navigating their own path through the turmoil. The protagonist's journey is emblematic of a broader quest for identity amidst the disorienting forces of war and migration. This search for self-amidst the chaos of displacement is a recurring motif, highlighting the internal conflicts that accompany physical dislocation. Characters grapple with questions of allegiance, identity, and the possibility of return, embodying the psychological and emotional turmoil that defines the refugee experience. The play also addresses the societal and communal reactions to refugees, exploring themes of empathy, alienation, and the complex dynamics of host - refugee interactions. These narratives underscore the multifaceted challenges refugees' face, not only in terms of physical survival but also in seeking acceptance and understanding from the communities that receive them.

Because his plays are connected to significant historical or present events or happenings, they all have an element of reality. His focus is on how societal issues affect people's lives. He thinks that literature should serve as a social commentary. Asif Currimbhoy's ability to depict the minor changes that affect the characters deftly exposes him as a

psychologically skilled playwright. He demonstrates his skill as a social critic by accurately describing the state of society in the modern era. The topics covered in Currimbhoy's plays include politics, religion, society, human life, and relationships.

No other dramatists had ever produced the number of dramas compared to Asif Currimbhoy in the field of theatre. He is a writer who emphasized the Indian ethos, cultural values, heritage, political ideology, historical views, and many more aspects to present India in Indian English drama and earned worldwide as an Indian English dramatist. (Dalwadi, 2019, p. 553)

He gives a realistic portrayal of a specific incident in the nation. In Indian English dramatic literature, Asif Currimbhoy has made a remarkable and significant contribution through his plays meant for acting. At the same time, his predecessors, like T.P. Kailasm, Chattopadhyay, and Sri Aurobindo, wrote plays that are lyrical, symbolic, and allegoric in form (Selvam & Ganesan, 2012, p. 20).

At different times, Bengal and its issues have been on their minds. *Inquilab*, set in Calcutta and the gorgeous, verdant countryside, explores the Naxalite uprising that shook Bengal in the 1960s. *The Refugee* tells the story of the 1971 Bangladeshi refugee crisis in India, with the backdrop of West Bengal's west Dinajpur area. Sonar Bangla depicts the paths leading up to the creation of an independent Bangladesh, using the border villages of Bengal as its backdrop. Currimbhoy has gone to great lengths to convey his ideas through innuendo, indirection, and insinuation rather than outright declaration, even though he is not an explicitly political writer. His play *Inquilab* is a direct reaction to the violent Naxalite uprising in West Bengal, where the rural population chose to use force. The play is an unbiased and truthful portrayal of the terrible events that swept over Calcutta in 1970, delving deeply into the Naxalite revolt. *Inquilab* introduces the issue of migrants as a side topic, but in *The Refugee*, it takes the front stage. Currimbhoy has a strong interest in the 1971 migration of 10 million Bangladeshi migrants to India. The drama also aims to investigate how the status of refugees in 1947 and 1971 differed.

The internal conflicts of refugees, as portrayed in *The Refugee*, stem from a profound sense of loss - loss of home, identity, and a sense of normalcy. The play meticulously explores how these losses compound the external challenges faced by refugees, including cultural dislocation, economic hardship, and the often inhospitable environments of host countries. Through its nuanced portrayal of refugee life, the play calls for a reevaluation of our responses to refugee crises, advocating for a more humane and compassionate approach that recognizes the deep-rooted complexities of displacement and loss.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gopi and Sambaiah (2015) pointed out the refugees' political and economic issues in response to the political unrest in East Pakistan. Currimbhoy reacts to things around him dramatically and quickly. Asif intertwines significant difficulties with communalism, which is also influenced by other factors. It implies that one issue leads to other problems. The current play centers on the challenges arising from the arrival of refugees. Rajkumar (2017) discussed the distress and challenging circumstances during the Partition. It also highlights how refugees are victimized by political turmoil. Bhargavi's (2017) research examines the refugee situation through the characters Yasin and Ramul, highlighting the contemporary topic of migrants and refugees and comparing the condition of refugees in the past and present. The artwork portrays the embrace and integration of refugees while addressing humanitarian issues that realist stories have previously criticized.

## III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the detailed exploration of Asif Currimbhoy's play and the complexities surrounding the themes of displacement, identity, and the struggle for peace, the following research questions are formulated to guide a deeper investigation into these issues:

1. How do the personal narratives of Yassin and other characters in the play reflect the broader human costs of political turmoil and decisions during the Indo-Pakistan war and the partition of Bengal in 1971?
2. What are the systemic and societal factors that contribute to the inability of refugees to find peace and stability in their new environments?
3. In what ways does *The Refugee* challenge the conventional narratives of independence associated with the partition of India and Pakistan, revealing the complexities and contradictions of freedom for individuals caught in the crossfire?

## IV. METHODOLOGY

For this investigation, the researchers employed a variety of qualitative research methodologies and procedures. An investigation of the experiences of refugees was carried out for the study. Through the use of this research, one can gain an understanding of the visual culture and daily life of those who are affected by political issues.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS



### A. *Historical Portrayal of the Refugee*

The drama *The Refugee* opens with a recounting of the first intellectual massacre that took place on March 25, 1971, at universities in East Bengal. Consequently, a few thousand refugees go from East Bengal to West Bengal. The partition case was the Indo-Pakistan conflict of 1971. The first wave of refugees arrived in West Bengal during the East Bengali liberation movement. Yassin is one of the refugees who fled East Bengal, which Pakistan seized during the 1947 Great Partition. He gave Yassin a warm welcome.

The 1971 India-Pakistan War not only led to a stunning and comprehensive victory for India and the people of East Pakistan, with the highest standards of military professionalism and timely strategic decisions, but it also saw the birth of a new nation-Bangladesh. War represents one of the most significant events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It changed national boundaries, and this was achieved over 13 days after the commencement of hostilities on the part of Pakistan on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 1971. (Chinoy et al., 2022, pp. 3-5)

He feels sorry for him. Yassin reminds him of recollections from his past, he finds. He urges Yassin to move past his painful past. Sen Gupta changed all of a sudden. Being an Indian immigrant, he distinguished between Pakistani refugees, the majority of whom are Muslims. Because he was a refugee from Pakistan, he departed from Yassin. Sen Gupta is not interested in harming him. He is unhappy because Yassin is treated kindly by him. Sen Gupta's son, Ashok, is eager to participate in the Mukti Bahini battle. Babu and Swamalatha (2017) states, "Through these parallels and contrasts, each character grows and evolves. The skill with which Asif Currimbhoy traces the subtle change that comes over the characters reveals him as a playwright of great psychological skill" (p. 61). He claims he is acting in a patriotic manner. Sen Gupta is not in favor of it. Sen Gupta is more concerned with his son's well-being than his nation, despite Ashok's assertion that Bengalis must fight for their freedom.

Though Yassin is not his son, he is willing to accept him as a fighter. "There are other able-bodied men from East Bengal who should do so... Go now," he tells his son (Currimbhoy, 1971, Act I, Scene ii, p. 16). The issues faced by the refugees paradoxically impacted the psychological well-being of Yassin and Ramul. Yassin saw thought and action as complementary. He said, "I became involved—through no choice—and now I'm searching for a way. . . to abstain" (Currimbhoy, 1971, Act I, Scene i, p. 15) in the independence struggle. He was going to be put to death. He had to excavate his grave, but he got away and made it to West Bengal. Ramul is deeply worried about the camp's refugees.

He misses his native land. Being somewhat of a half-madman, he keeps saying that the territory he encroaches on is his. He even claims Sen Gupta's house as his own. He anticipates pity from Indians such as Sen Gupta. He felt upset when he realized Sen Gupta had no sympathy for the refugees. He desires to deploy every capable body to fight in the conflict. However, he is refusing to leave the community. Similar to Yassin, he does not take action but acts as though he does. Mita, life encounters. Sen Gupta changed all of a sudden. Being an Indian immigrant, he distinguished between Pakistani refugees, the majority of whom are Muslims. According to Gupta (2021):

The play explores the Naxalite revolt in depth and is a non-partisan and honest account of the violent events that overtook Calcutta in 1970. The problem of refugees, introduced as a minor theme in *Inquilab*, becomes central in *The Refugee*. Currimbhoy is deeply interested in the exodus of ten million Bangladeshi refugees into India in 1971. The play also seeks to explore the change in status between the refugees of 1947 and those of 1971. (Gupta, 2021, p. 278)

Because he was a refugee from Pakistan, he departed from Yassin. Sen Gupta is not interested in harming him. He is unhappy because Yassin is treated kindly by him. Sen Gupta's son, Ashok, is eager to participate in the Mukti Bahini battle. He claims he is acting in a patriotic manner. Sen Gupta is not in favor of it. Sen Gupta is more concerned with his son's well-being than his nation, despite Ashok's assertion that Bengalis must fight for their freedom. The issues faced by the refugees paradoxically impacted the psychological well-being of Yassin and Ramul. Yassin saw thought and action as complementary. Mita, Yassin, and Sengupta's Voyage Two individuals similar to Sengupta and Yassin are at the story's center. Yassin is a young scholar who, in a complicated society, tries to find his conscience. Yassin is a refugee who runs away from East Pakistan to India at the start of the play. Sengupta, a self-assured middle-aged man of approximately fifty, welcomed him. As long as there is food to distribute and a place to stay in his home, Sengupta declares that he is prepared to accept migrants. Since Sengupta and Yassin's mother were born in India, they grew up and completed their schooling there, which is why Sengupta's family has shown Yassin so much love. Ultimately, Sengupta maintains that all East Bengalis, Muslims or Hindus, have a deep longing for their former hometown. In the wake of Partition - the break-up of British India in 1947 millions of people moved across the new borders between Pakistan and India. Although much has been written about these 'Partition refugees,' a comprehensive picture remains elusive (Rahman & Willem, 2003, p. 551).

Afterward, Gupta asks Comilla University in West Pakistan about the Awami league. Gupta was infuriated by the Awami League, which encouraged the students to engage in cruel and immoral behaviors. Asif has depicted the communal strife between Sengupta and Yassin here. "YASSIN: The university . . . learning . . . offered a way of life...nonpolitical, non-party; scholarship became an end in itself. Do you understand? SEN GUPTA: No! (Currimbhoy, 1971, Act I, Scene I, p. 6). Sen Gupta concludes that since they have wasted so much time up to this point, it is time to declare war and march in. "PROF. MOSIN : (Feeling old and weak) What...What would you have us do? SEN GUPTA: Huh? (His reverie broken) Do? Adopt a more aggressive posture. The refugee exodus is an undeclared war by Pakistan. (Yassin comes in unnoticed) We've wasted too much time already. It's costing us money and lives anyway. We've

wasted too much time already. It's costing us money and lives anyway. A quick kill, that's what we need to do. Declare war and march in! (Currimbhoy, 1971, Act I, Scene I, p. 21).

Yassin cuts them off at this point and disputes Gupta's assertion regarding Pakistanis. We are unable to profit from this kind of killing, which instead harms innocent people. In addition, he must be Pakistani as he was born there. Yassin's sentimental demeanor: "Nobody! But if you'll push me, I'll tell you. It was born in Pakistan not India like Mosin here. If I am anybody, I have to be Pakistani!" (Currimbhoy, 1971, Act I, Scene iii, p. 22). Since other issues also drive Currimbhoy, it blends the main themes with additional topics like communalism. It implies that one issue leads to several issues. In addition to causing social upheaval, the refugee crisis in certain areas also gave rise to communalism. History plays a vital role. According to Kumar and Prakash (2023), "New Historicism theory is a tool to analyses literary theory that re-reads the literary text in the light of history" (p. 20).

### B. Religious Crisis

Tension arose between Hindus and Indian Muslims as a result of the majority of the refugees being Hindus who arrived in India in such a vulnerable situation. Another crucial factor is politics, a major factor in the refugee crisis. Bangladesh's refugee dilemma necessitates a political solution. According to Ollapalay (2008):

South Asia is home to a range of extremist groups from the jihadists of Pakistan to the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka. In the popular mind, extremism and terrorism are invariably linked to ethnic and religious factors. Yet the dominant history of South Asia is notable for tolerance and co-existence, despite highly plural societies. (Ollapalay, 2008, p. 2)

He also discusses the status of the Muslim community in India. Sengupta and Professor Mosin's roles in this play reveal it. Sengupta's expression: "Well, you can't deny it, Mosin! There's a massacre taking place out there—in a Muslim country—and their Islamic brothers keep quiet here! (Currimbhoy, 1971, Act I, Scene iii, p. 17). Asif Currimbhoy goes on to illustrate how the significant refugee inflow caused a divide between Muslims in Pakistan and India. It embodies Yassin's and Professor Mosin's personalities. Professor Mosin discusses Indian Muslims, their mindset, and their standing in the country.

Additionally, he draws comparisons between Indian and Pakistani Muslims. Lastly, he backs Muslims who are Indian. Professor Mosin's expression. In society, there is a delicate and natural balance. As a minority, Indian Muslims have adapted to coexist, sometimes in dangerous situations. The refugees upset the equilibrium when they arrived, as they were primarily persecuted Hindus. "There is a difference between the Indian Muslim and Pakistani Muslim" (Currimbhoy, 1971, Act I, Scene v, p. 25).

Here, Yassin misinterprets the views of Prof. Mosin regarding Muslims in Pakistan. Mosin then attempts to persuade him. Yassin later realizes this and says he doesn't want to sour the bond between Mosin and the Gupta family. Furthermore, Mosin must spend his entire life in India. The way Yassin expressed herself: "No, no, Professor. I thank you...for your liberalism . . . your frankness. Our friendship matters to me too, and I would rather it were on a realistic basis" (Currimbhoy, 1971, Act I, Scene v, p. 26).

On May 24, 1971, Mrs. Indira Gandhi addressed the Indian parliament and expressed her deep concern over the influx of refugees into Indian Territory. She said, "We all felt our country was poised for rapid economic advance and a more determined attack on the age-old poverty of our people" ([https://hcidhaka.gov.in/History\\_02](https://hcidhaka.gov.in/History_02)). This strained relations between India and Pakistan and placed a heavy burden on the Indian economy. She said in a thoughtful tone. We were getting settled into these new responsibilities when we were suddenly overwhelmed by a massive new issue that wasn't our fault. There has never been a large migration in such a short time. Three and a half million have arrived in the last eight weeks; according to current estimates, the aid provided to the Indian government might have helped more than 180 corers over the six months.

In this play, Asif has taken a realistic approach to present the economic difficulties. He also illustrates the impact on the lives of middle-class people. As a result, the individual's idealism diminishes. According to Heizmann and Huth (2021), particular mechanisms link the current state of the economy to the conception of immigrants as a potential threat. As a result, we also contribute to theoretical discussions based on the notion of group threat and realistic group conflict by revealing the dominating source of competition relevant to these connections. The character Sengupta makes it extremely evident. He first took in all the migrants and gave them food and shelter. His idealism begins to fade as the number of refugees rises.

The grating looks on Sengupta's face. "I didn't mean my own garage. Next, they'll be moving into my stud... (Stops halfway from saying "study" and guiltily lowers his voice) Shhh...do you think he heard me." (Currimbhoy, 1971, Act I, Scene ii, p. 17). Asif Currimbhoy's talk represents his opinions on the subjects. Numerous characters in this drama reveal something to us. Mita, Sengupta's daughter, is another significant character in this play. She has a strong interest in volunteer social work. She even participates in the rehabilitation of refugees. Mita questions Assi on his mindset. In particular, even though he is a refugee, the motive is to avoid refugees. Even so, he acts as if they don't exist and doesn't discuss or assist them. Although Yassin is better than others in understanding the difficulties refugees face, he cannot demonstrate concern for these issues. Ita's manifestation of emotion.

MITA: (Looking at him) You...you avoid the refugees. You don't talk about them, or help them. As though they didn't exist. (In Yassin's eyes a haunted expression) (He still does not reply, then softly) Why don't you come with me. With me, Yassin. YASSIN : No. MITA: There is so much you can do. You'd understand their

problems better than the others. You could help...in their rehabilitation. (Currimbhoy, 1971, Act I, Scene iii, p. 24)

She also eloquently describes the real-world difficulties faced by refugees, and as she reads this, tears well up in her eyes because she can't bear to see them suffer. Mita says, They bring tears to my eyes, their suffering touches my heart. I can't bear to leave them alone. All of life draws me...the human condition. The need and its recognition. If...if all of us were to abstain the way you do, we'd be doing harm, don't you see, the kind of harm that is deliberately done through neglect" (Currimbhoy, 1971, Act I, Scene iii, p. 27). She has provided a clear account of refugees and their situation in the camp through her comments. Yassin changes his perspective on refugees after hearing Mita's words, saying, "I shall try, Mita, I promise you I shall try" (Currimbhoy, 1971, Act I, Scene iii, p. 27). Mita uses an emotive tone as she reports the epidemic of cholera in the camp. She expresses concern for the refugees, saying that many of them perish like flies and that no one can see it. In particular, she prays to God to relieve their difficulties and worries.

Mita: (Looking straight at Yassin, the tears at last streaming down her face.) They...at last... (Laughing and crying hysterically) ...the conscience of the world is aroused. At last in crises. The conscience. THE CONSCIENCE. What a word, oh, my God, what a meaning. Don't tell me it escaped us all along. The morality of it all. Here we are talking about politics and rescue and refugee and war and even taking sides. It's not the lack of\* commitment that matters; it's the lack of morality that does. And we must...both for aggressor and giver of shelter...search for our own conscience. (Currimbhoy, 1971, Act I, Scene iii, p. 30)

### C. Political Issues

His strong commitment has influenced his language, conveying a sense of urgency through physical movements, inquiries, exclamations, and shifts in tone that captivate our attention. It illuminates the speaking character, the character being discussed, advances the plot, and serves as a form of irony by expressing a different meaning to the viewer compared to the characters. Currimbhoy's language throughout the play is highly impactful and significantly enhances the theatrical aspects of the production. Kaur (2015) pointed out Currimbhoy as a social commentator; Currimbhoy demonstrates his skill in capturing the state of society as it exists in the present. Drama production is something that Asif Currimbhoy is interested in doing, and he thinks that literature should reflect society. His plays make clear how deeply he cares about dramatic impact. His plays are mostly intended for theatrical productions. He created 'actable plays' with great success. He is referred to as "India's first authentic voice in theatre" by Faubion Bowers. "Currimbhoy bases his plays on themes about human existence, relationships, politics, religion, and society" (Kaur, 2015, p. 23). Sen Gupta household and refugee camp depictions are vivid and detailed. Yassin vividly and descriptively recounts the 'intellectual carnage'. Currimbhoy deserves praise for his ability to adjust tiny variations in tone and style in the conversation to match the character's changing mood.

The playwright demonstrates keen political insight and employs language with creativity and precision. The playwright demonstrates keen political insight and employs language with creativity and precision. The play's structure deviates from the typical one-act play format. Currimbhoy has condensed a complete drama into a single act. The play *The Refugee* contains all the essential elements of a well-crafted play, including exposition, rising action, climax, denouement, and conclusion. It also features dramatic settings and elevated conversation. The initial scene serves an explanatory purpose by setting the background and introducing nearly all the characters. The plot gradually builds up to a climax with Mita's frantic outburst, motivating Yassin to overcome his laziness and reflect on his morals (Scene III). The drama's climax occurs in Scene IV when Yassin departs from the Sen Gupta household. Mita's dramatic declaration of the cholera outbreak and emotional speech connect Currimbhoy with his Western-inspired, well-crafted plays.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The climax of the play unfolds as Yassin opens the cupboard, retrieving the uniform of the "Mukti Fauj" and a rifle, signifying his resolve to join the Mukti Bahini in their fight to free East Bengal from the grip of West Pakistan. This moment marks his departure from a state of indecision to one of determined action. He bids a heartfelt farewell to Mita, who has been instrumental in his journey of self-discovery. He assures her that she will continue to be his beacon of inspiration across the border, mirroring the way his mother was a guiding light for her father. *The Refugee* is crafted with a clear narrative structure, encompassing a beginning, middle, and end. The narrative commences with Yassin's arrival, transitions into his transformative stay at Sen Gupta's residence, and culminates in his commitment to the liberation of East Bengal. Initially, the play maintains a slow, steady pace, reflecting Yassin's internal disorientation and search for purpose. However, as he resolves to assist his fellow countrymen in their plight, the tempo of the narrative notably intensifies. This dynamic shift in pacing not only heightens the dramatic tension but also mirrors Yassin's internal journey from a state of confusion to one of clarity and purpose. Throughout the play, we witness Yassin grappling with his conscience, challenging circumstances, and interactions that test his beliefs. Ultimately, he discerns truth from tumult and elects the path of righteousness, marking his evolution and the thematic progression of the play. Through the characters' journeys, Currimbhoy emphasizes the resilience of the human spirit. Despite the immense challenges, refugees find ways to cope, hold onto hope, and rebuild their lives.

In conclusion, Asif Currimbhoy's *The Refugee* delves deeply into the multifaceted challenges and internal conflicts faced by refugees, offering profound insights into their experiences. Through the protagonist's journey, the narrative highlights the complexities of displacement, trauma, and the struggle for identity and belonging. The play underscores the urgent need for empathy, support, and systemic changes to address the plight of refugees worldwide. By engaging with these themes, Currimbhoy prompts readers to reflect on the human cost of conflict and displacement, urging society to foster inclusivity and compassion towards those forced to seek refuge. Ultimately, the play serves as a poignant reminder of the resilience and humanity of individuals caught in the midst of upheaval, advocating for a more compassionate and equitable response to their plight.

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**Kaliyappan S.** Ph.D Research Scholar - English, Sri Vijay Vidyalaya College of Arts and Science, Nallampalli, Dharmapuri, India. E - Mail: [selvamkali2@gmail.com](mailto:selvamkali2@gmail.com). He did his Bachelor degree (B.A - English) in Arignar Anna College (Arts & Science) Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu, India on 2010. He did his Master degree (M.A - English) in Kongunadu Arts and Science College (Autonomous) Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India on 2013. In addition he did his Bachelor of Education (B. Ed - English) in 2011. He has completed his Master of Philosophy (M.Phil - English) in Sri Vijay Vidyalaya College of Arts and Science, Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu, India on 2015. And in 2018, he had cleared the State Eligibility Test (SET) for Assistant Professors conducted by Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, India. Currently he is pursuing Ph.D - English in Sri Vijay Vidyalaya College of Arts and Science, Nallampalli,

Dharmapuri, India.



**Saravanakumar P.** Assistant Professor, Department of English. He has completed M.A., B.Ed., M.A. (Edu), M.A.(Ling), M.Phil., Ph.D., in English. He has Produced 10 M.Ed., students and 5 M.Phil., Scholars. He has published more than 20 Articles in National and International journals. He published two books and also received three awards. He started his career as a Post Graduate teacher and later worked as a lecturer in College of Education. At present he is working as an Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sri Vijay Vidyalaya College of Arts and Science, Nallampalli, Dharmapuri, Tamilnadu, India.



# Call for Papers and Special Issue Proposals

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The following information should be included as part of the proposal:

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Binding in Najdi Arabic: Types of Reflexives, the Argument Structure of Reflexive Constructions and Possessive Reflexives <i>Asma I. Alowayed and Yasser A. Albaty</i>	2193
Conversational Implicatures in Medical Discourse: An Analysis of Doctor-Patient Dialogues in Amman, Jordan <i>Sally Mohammad Ali Darweesh and Rajai Rashid Al-Khanji</i>	2203
A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Ideological Identity Endorsed on the University's Homepages <i>Pirman Ginting, Sri M. Murni, and Anni H. Pulungan</i>	2211
Addressing Language Anxiety in the EFL Classroom: EFL Teachers' Perspective <i>Ibtisam AbdulAziz Bajri and Omer Elsheikh Hago Elmahdi</i>	2222
When Women Terrorise: The Psychopathic La Femme Fatale in <i>East of Eden</i> by John Steinbeck <i>Zahraa Abdullah Mohan, Ida Baizura Bahar, Diana Abu Ujum, and Hasyimah Mohd. Amin</i>	2233
Exploration of Honorifics in Japanese-Balinese Intercultural Marriages <i>Anak Agung Ayu Dian Andriyani, Ida Ayu Putri Gita Ardiantari, and Kundharu Saddhono</i>	2242
Neural Machine Translation of Arabic to English Legal Texts Using Trados Studio: Efficiency and Consistency From the Perspective of Saudi Translation Students' Post-Editing Practices <i>Mimouna Zitouni, Fadia Alshehri, and Nadia Idri</i>	2251
Language Teachers' Adaptability to Digital Transformation: Online Assessment Practices in Vietnam Higher Education <i>Truc Tran-Thi-Thanh</i>	2263
Language Learning Plateau: EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Practical Recommendations <i>Dinara Utegulova, Kulpash Koptleuova, Nurkhanym Bauyrzhan, Sandugash Mukhtarova, Akhmaral Khairzhanova, and Danagul Assylzhanova</i>	2271
Challenges and Internal Conflicts of Refugees in Asif Currimbhoy's Play <i>The Refugee</i> <i>Kaliyappan S and Saravanakumar P</i>	2281

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Measuring the Efficiency of Post-Edited Text Generated by CAT Tools: An Experimental Study <i>Hind S. Alsaif and Ebtisam S. Aluthman</i>	2025
The Historical Change of the Vowels a/ə/e in Turkic Languages <i>Zhumabayeva Zh.T., Ospangaziyeva N.B., Bazarbayeva Z.M., Fazylzhanova A.M., and Amanbayeva A.Zh.</i>	2037
The Death of Monarchs: Front-Page Reporting of Queen Elizabeth II's Death <i>Ibrahim M. Darwish, Abdulaziz A. Alzoubi, and Noora Q. Abu Ain</i>	2046
Short Stories and AI Tools: An Exploratory Study <i>Abdulrahman Mokbel Mahyoub Hezam and Abdulelah Alkhateeb</i>	2053
Rhetorical Move-Step Analysis of Argumentative Essays by Chinese EFL Undergraduate Students <i>Hongjian Liu, Lilliati Ismail, and Norhakimah Khaïssa Ahmad</i>	2063
Empowering Community Interpreters' Competence Through Appropriate Work Attitudes: A Case Study on Interpreting in a Religious Setting <i>Febrina Tobing, Rudy Sofyan, Syahron Lubis, and Umar Mono</i>	2073
Advancements and Impact of Medical Translation During the Golden Age: A Comprehensive Analysis <i>Yazid Abdulrahman Al-Ismail</i>	2080
A Contrastive Study of Conceptual Metaphor "Death is Rest" in Vietnamese and English <i>Ha T. X. Pham and Ha T. Trinh</i>	2086
The Impact of the Use of Agricultural Technology on Lexical Innovation in Rice Field Agriculture <i>Novita Puspahaty, Dian Indira, Wahya, and Susi Machdalena</i>	2097
A Conceptual Framework for Teaching Arabic as a Second Language <i>Sultan A. Almelhes and Hussain E. Alsaïari</i>	2110
The Translator as a Colonial Agent: Reframing the South in the English Translation of <i>Season of Migration to the North</i> <i>Areej Allawzi, Deema Ammari, Mousa Awwad, and Mais Al-Shara'h</i>	2119
Communicating With Ancestors: Paired Clauses in the Buntang Ritual of the Dayak Maanyan in East Barito, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia <i>Dwiani Septiana, Wakit Abdullah Rais, Sahid Teguh Widodo, and Andi Indah Yulianti</i>	2129
Conversational Norms in Speech Acts: A Study of the Effect of Deficits on Communication <i>Elamin Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed</i>	2135
Forging Alternative Resistance Through Empathy in Sahar Khalifeh's <i>Wild Thorns</i> <i>Samah Jarrad, Raihanah M. M., and Ravichandran Vengadasamy</i>	2142
Examining Social Actors in Investment Fraud News: A Transitivity and Appraisal Analysis <i>Eny Maulita Purnama Sari, Riyadi Santosa, Djatmika Djatmika, and Tri Wiratno</i>	2150
Development and Validation of Phonological Processing Assessment Tool in Kannada Language <i>Shwetha Prabhu, Vangmayee Subban, Jayashree Sunil Bhat, and Haralakatta Shivananjappa Somashekara</i>	2161
The Semantics of Stative Locative Events in Vietnamese: A Spatial Exploration <i>Ly Ngoc Toan</i>	2173
Student Engagement With Teacher Written Feedback in Online EFL Writing Context <i>Endar Rachmawaty Linuwih, Slamet Setiawan, and Ahmad Munir</i>	2186

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