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Language Advocacy in the Post-WVU* Era – Challenges and New Directions: Perspectives From French¹

Enza Antenos

Montclair State University, Upper Montclair, NJ, USA

Mary Helen Kashuba

Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia, PA, USA

Loraine Piroux

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, USA

Kathleen Stein Smith

Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck, NJ, USA

Abstract—In an interconnected and multilingual world, language and cultural knowledge are essential global skills, as they are locally in an increasingly multilingual United States. Within the context of declining enrollments in languages in US colleges and universities and elimination of foreign language majors at WVU, language advocacy is more important than ever. This article examines the rationale, importance, theory and best practices of language advocacy, with an overview of advocacy challenges and of strategies for success. Examples from three higher education institutions provide inspiration and pathways to effective advocacy that can be applied in a variety of institutional environments.

Index Terms—multilingualism, languages, advocacy, French, Francophone

I. INTRODUCTION

Following a period of decline in enrollment in languages other than English in colleges and universities, the global COVID pandemic created additional challenges for higher education and for language programs, among the most recent of which has been the elimination of foreign language degree programs and most language courses at West Virginia University (WVU).

The fact that such an unprecedented action took place at a state public flagship institution not only impacts local students and faculty, but also has the potential to further disrupt language learning in colleges and universities and beyond (Aiken, 2023; Kingson, 2023). Advocacy is needed now more than ever in order to strengthen language programs, to defend those that are in danger, and to encourage expansion of existing programs and the development of new ones.

In order to be effective, advocacy must be grounded in our belief in the importance of multilingualism both globally and locally, and informed by relevant data. Key elements of advocacy include partnerships among language educators and interdisciplinary partnerships, as well as K-16 and community partnerships. Successful initiatives have included double majors, and joint and interdisciplinary programs. Technology also plays a key role in increasing accessibility and availability of language learning through the development of online courses and Open Educational Resources (OERs), offering practical and affordable options for all our students. The current national context for language advocacy and for French language advocacy includes therefore both serious challenges to language learning and use in the US, but also many organizations and initiatives, educators and language advocates, and language stakeholders in our educational institutions and communities.

It is critically important at a time when the unprecedented elimination of the foreign language and other programs – if successful – at WVU may well serve as encouragement for other institutions to implement similar actions against programs in languages and literatures as well as in other programs in the humanities and beyond, for language educators and stakeholders to stand together and to speak out (Aiken, 2023; Simpson, 2023).

The authors will discuss the theory and best practices of advocacy, which include the psychology of persuasion, blue ocean strategy, disruptive innovation, public relations, social marketing, and social movements. They will also discuss the use of technology in advocacy as well as the role of lobbying, petitions, etc. In addition, authors will also provide an

* West Virginia University, where foreign language majors and many foreign language courses were eliminated in 2023.

¹ This article is inspired by a panel presented by the authors at the 2024 MLA Convention in Philadelphia.

overview of advocacy challenges and successes, as well as success stories and strategies for success. The authors bring a breadth and depth of experience to the conversation on advocacy, which they hope to share. In addition, their goal is to encourage questions, interactions, and discussions in order to encourage present and future collaborations in advocacy and beyond. The following sections illustrate just a few of the many perspectives on French language learning, use, and advocacy, with a special focus on the college and university level.

II. LESSONS IN LANGUAGE STUDIES: GEN Z, CAREER READINESS, CREATING THE BA, CURRICULAR DESIGN, AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Aligning with the advocacy mission and vision of the Joint National Committee for Languages-National Council for Languages and International Studies, language educators are seeking interdisciplinary intersections to highlight how multilingualism moves our world and that languages are a valuable skill in any profession. Montclair State University in northern New Jersey has recently added a B.A. in Language, Business & Culture (LBC) to complement its offerings in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish. The degree, a joint program between the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Feliciano School of Business, enriches the traditional narratives of language programs and advocates for new directions in teaching and student success through integrative education in language and business, emphasizing the centrality of cultural and linguistic competency to the business world. LBC's innovative approach not only prepares students for success in today's globalized marketplace but also expands traditional language pathways and emphasizes practical applications of language proficiency in diverse professional settings.

A. *Seizing Opportunities and Responding to Industry Demands*

Adding LBC to the Montclair curriculum was an obvious choice: the University's unwavering commitment to students, its designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), and its location are all favorable to the major's success. First, there is no other public university in the State that offers an interdisciplinary degree in language and business. Second, as an HSI, students who identify as Hispanic can hone their intercultural communicative competence for the workplace. Spanish is only one of the over 100 languages spoken in NJ homes, according to 2022 census data, so it presents a fertile ground for language study. Finally, New Jersey's ecosystem offers significant opportunities for LBC majors as it is a hub for international business, home to the headquarters of over 200 foreign companies. Case in point, a review of the 2023 Economic Report of the French Embassy underlines the French footprint in New Jersey, and its "deep and mutually beneficial relationship" (Embassy, 2023, p. 38). Supporting data indicates that France ranks #1 in the State for job creation, with French firms accounting for 14.4% of jobs created by foreign companies, for a total of 41,400 jobs.

Connecting majors to this vibrant local network spanning different industries and sharing common business interests will strongly appeal to contemporary students, Gen Zers, who perceive education to be more transactional and less transformative (Katz et al., 2021). If they are simply learning to get a job, students will regard a major in Language, Business & Culture as instrumental to career readiness. Montclair's target students are those who have strengths in a target language and are interested in pursuing an interdisciplinary degree. What's more, they will easily distinguish themselves as prospective candidates for jobs compared to the over 350,000 U.S. students who graduate annually with just a business degree (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). Rooted in recognizing the evolving needs of today's workforce, as reported by ACTFL (2019), employers' demands for employees with foreign language skills will only continue to increase both domestically and internationally due to the evolving conditions of the U.S. marketplace. LBC responds to the industry demands.

B. *Designing (and Redesigning) a Dynamic Curriculum*

Language, Business & Culture was shaped by faculty in two language departments in the College of Humanities and numerous programs in the School of Business and comprised of a series of core courses (fundamental business courses and the target language business course) and a concentration in one of seven languages and conclude with an international experience and a capstone. Foreign language skills are honed through applied language classes ranging from business to professional-related fields. Students develop the skills that employers seek, including intercultural competence, writing skills, oral and business communication, critical thinking, cognitive flexibility, and the knowledge base of international business, accounting, economics, finance, and technology. Badges representing technical skills are earned in their first-year spreadsheet course (the MS Excel Expert certification exam) and their senior year, with the Oral Proficiency Interview.

Prior to graduation, there is a required international experience for all majors, which serves as a prerequisite for the capstone course. This experiential learning opportunity encompasses a range of options, including studying abroad, participating in an international internship (either abroad or with an international company in the US), or a faculty-led short-term trip abroad. Montclair also offers courses with collaborative online courses with some frequency and has developed a relationship with the University of Bordeaux Montaigne for translation (Loysen et al., 2023), and Business English, which is currently ongoing. The expectation of the international experience is to activate diverse forms of knowledge within a practical context, facilitating direct engagement with the cultural products, perspectives, and practices connected to their target language in academic or professional environments.

The capstone course was developed especially for the major and is a meeting point for seniors across all seven language tracks. Through critical assessment and focused reflection, students compare and contrast linguistic and cultural gaps identified in their international experience and navigate these cross-cultural interactions. They gain insights into strategies to address the interactions and develop the necessary tools to narrow the gaps in multilingual and multicultural negotiations. After addressing the challenges, they apply the strategies and skills to a collaborative team project representative of real-world scenarios, in which their lived experiences extend to possible business situations. One student commented in the course evaluations: "I enjoyed taking this course very much as it brought about how to do business with different cultures. [...] Dr. Antenos challenged us intellectually and academically. I especially enjoyed working on our final project, where we were to take an American-made product and sell it to our target countries. [...]. The advertisements were something about this project that I did enjoy working on because we were able to use our language skills and make an ad that was creative while incorporating our language".

The major has enjoyed much success and has become a benchmark for similar interdisciplinary programs at other institutions. However, it is prudent for us to periodically assess and maintain checks and balances as the program grows. To this end, the LBC curriculum has been reviewed to streamline the program and enhance its coherence, informed by ACTFL's *Making Languages Our Business* report (2019). Core courses have been revisited and some business courses will be substituted to ensure students are prepared to meet the demands of U.S. employers. Additionally, a gateway course, *Introduction to Intercultural Business Communication*, was created to present the major more comprehensively earlier on in the curriculum. The course will equip students with the necessary insights, skills, concepts, and tools to understand the pivotal role of language and culture in business communications and actively engage in self-examination, addressing their own multilingual and multicultural identities.

C. Empowering Student Success

Unlike conventional language programs that may compartmentalize language learning from other academic disciplines, and business programs that compartmentalize business culture from language, LBC emphasizes the interconnectedness of language, business, and culture. By bridging these domains, the program equips students with a comprehensive skill set that extends beyond linguistic proficiency, empowering them to navigate complex global challenges with confidence and agility.

For instance, a recent major in the French concentration, now in the MBA program, fulfilled the international experience requirement by working as a virtual research assistant and dispatcher during the pandemic for the online French news outlet *Al-Ahram Hebdo*. The student's supervisor shared that the student "a également participé, avec moi et avec d'autres journalistes, à la rédaction de plusieurs articles, en faisant le travail de collecte des dépêches d'agences puis en effectuant un plan de travail." The teamwork and planning served her well when the following summer she had a *Sherwin-Williams Sales and Management* internship and her team won the *Outstanding Team Award* for the program.

Another major exemplifies the program's commitment to providing students with career readiness skills in which linguistic and cultural competence are indeed valued. Following her graduation, this major in the Italian concentration secured an internship position at *Ferrero USA*. Drawing on her language skills and cultural awareness, she became an asset to the company and was promoted. She wrote: "I wanted to reach out as we are looking for an individual to fill my spot here in workplace management. I am moving to [another department] and wanted you to assist in finding a replacement. I would love to recommend a fellow LBC student if you know of anyone who may be interested!" In this instance, LBC provides the skills students need to be offered positions at this multinational confectionery company and have upward mobility.

The interdisciplinary major *Language, Business & Culture* is making a difference for students who wish to pursue language study while forging innovative career trajectories. The success of LBC will not be measured solely by the number of majors but by the accomplishments of these majors as multilingual and multicultural business leaders.

III. ADVOCACY AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE 2024

While the study of World Languages has never been the highest priority in the United States as compared with most other countries, industrialized or developing, the post-covid period has seen a dramatic decline. Data from the *MLA Report* show a 16% drop in language study from 2016-2021. Colleges and Universities have seen the elimination of World Language Programs. As early as 2016-2017, 44 states and the District of Columbia reported a lack of qualified K-12 FL and bilingual teachers (US Dept. of Education). Added to this is a decline in the study of the humanities throughout the country. What does this imply for the future of World Language study? More importantly, what does it mean for the future of our society? How can we reverse the tide? We shall attempt to respond to these questions.

The knowledge of world languages and cultures is not an option for our society. It is essential for mutual understanding, social justice, and peaceful relationships among nations. The *Joint National Commission on Languages (JNCL)* has demonstrated that "Multilingual and multicultural perspectives are essential to our national security ... and to our national economy" (JNCL, n.d.). Language and culture are inseparable. Can we understand the perspective of another country if we do not know its culture and its values? Would the Vietnam War have persisted, or even occurred, if we had understood that nation and spoken their language? We will never eliminate all the obstacles to mutual understanding, but we can minimize them by expanding our knowledge of language and culture.

As advocates for the study of language and culture, we must find ways to stem the tide of monolingualism and cultural isolation. Administrators must learn the necessity and the value of these studies for all students, including minorities and socially disadvantaged members of our society. Students must see the same reasons for studying another language. The knowledge of another language and culture will show them another way of looking at the world. We need government help and parental support. Social Justice demands that all students have access to heritage languages.

There are many positive avenues available to teachers to foster the study of language and culture. Among them are the Seal of Biliteracy, Language across the Curriculum, collaborative majors and minors, and recognition of successful programs. Others may require more direct advocacy such as obtaining government aid, especially for minorities and disadvantaged students, subsidizing existing programs, and study abroad opportunities.

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award granted by a school, district, organization or state in the United States of America, "in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation" (ACTFL, n.d.) Thanks to the efforts of many language advocates, this designation is available in all 50 states. Usually, students receive it in high school, with a recommended level of Intermediate mid. However, the Global Seal of Biliteracy is available to anyone in higher education and beyond. As language advocates, we can publicize this option and invite students to pursue it.

Pennsylvania has a similar designation, which will further develop the cultural aspect of language learning. It is called PSMLA Global Scholars Program (PSMLA, 2024a). It includes four years of the same language, extracurricular activities related to world language study, service, and literature and media review. Any school can adapt it as appropriate, and need not introduce any new courses. It has grown rapidly in Pennsylvania, and can serve as a model for other states. Among other advantages, it will "develop global awareness/competency and help students to better prepare themselves for personal and professional success in an increasingly global society".

Language across the Curriculum gives students the opportunity to extend their language study beyond their language classes. They can integrate world language and culture into non-language courses through reading or research in the target language, followed by reports or presentations in the target or native language. This is a way for teachers to identify and encourage qualified students to continue their language study in a meaningful way. They can see practical applications in such courses as history, political science, and communications. It gives teachers an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues, who in turn can appreciate the value of language study. It can help language majors or minors to add extra breadth or to complete requirements. Some successful examples include the interpretation of political cartoons in the target language, use of primary sources in a history class followed by a presentation or written report, or exploration of religious texts and poetry, such as Theresa of Avila.

Students are not always able nor do not wish to follow a traditional major with its emphasis on literature. They look for practical courses, which they feel will help them in their career. Double majors or collaborative majors can address these issues. For example, International Business, emphasizing proficiency in at least one world language along with courses for the business world can provide much better candidates than a major in only one of these fields. In addition, the collaboration between departments will cultivate mutual understanding. Other successful options can maintain the usual number of credits for a major, with the majority in the language, and the remaining in another field accompanied by Language across the Curriculum. Some examples are French plus diplomacy (with courses in Political Science), Spanish plus Human Services, Russian plus Criminal Justice.

Advocacy succeeds best when it emphasizes success. World Language associations can establish recognition awards for exemplary programs. These can be models for other schools, and help administrators defend their programs. The American Association of Teachers of French has honored over 70 schools since 2015 (AATF, 2024). Among the criteria are stable or increasing enrollment, teacher excellence and professional development, student activities, use of key instructional practices, innovative curriculum, connection to the community, and creative plans for the future. These schools have maintained and increased their programs. Pennsylvania has a similar program called the Pennsylvania Exemplary Program (PEP) Award, (PSMLA, 2024). It addresses all languages in all high schools. It too has encouraged teachers, students, and administrators to maintain and expand language and culture study.

The Commission on Language Learning, launched in 2015 by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences at the behest of eight members of Congress, has made similar recommendations (America's Languages, n.d.). The members represent academe, government, business, and NGO's. They continue their study of ways to expand the study of world languages. Their recommendations include identifying schools that teach specific languages in order to encourage well-articulated language sequences from elementary through middle and high school and continuing through college. They also propose identifying schools that may be interested in a relationship with a teacher training institution, such as sponsoring student teachers, mentoring undergraduates, or collaborating in other ways. Other recommendations include identifying schools that could serve as national model programs for their language taught and/or program design. Finally, they urge the exploration of student participation in government-sponsored extracurricular foreign language opportunities. They are especially attentive to the needs of minority and heritage learners.

Although we need more government support, a number of agencies offer subsidized programs. Among them is the Department of Education, which offers Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships (FLAS) and Language Resource Centers. The Department of State offers many programs, among them the Critical Language Scholarships Program (CLS).

The Department of Defense sponsors the Language Flagship programs. Title VI and the Fulbright Program are other opportunities (America's Languages, n.d.a).

However, government funding is always dependent on the National Budget, which fluctuates according to political and economic conditions. It will always be necessary to advocate with the government agencies. JNCL is a guide and support in the promotion of world language and culture advocacy. Each year they offer a virtual advocacy day as they did in 2023 (JNCL, 2023). Their Newsletters contain the latest updates on government funding possibilities and engagement in advocacy (JNCL-NCLIS, n.d.).

While the future looks bleak, things can and have turned around. We can motivate our students, and show them the benefits of language and culture study. We can show them better critical thinking skills through the study of world languages. Some other advantages are higher test scores, an asset in employment, and global awareness. We need to make advocates of our teachers and parents. Good teaching techniques will encourage students and make them successful. They in turn will interest others.

We need to advocate for more teachers, the preservation of existing programs, government and state funding, especially for minority schools and early/dual language learning. We must join forces with other disciplines through collaborative programs and Language across the curriculum. It is important to be creative, to propose programs that will bring both language competency and practical applications to our students. We must increase visibility, and highlight student and program successes. Finally, we must be the very best teachers we can be, because the most successful way to advocate is through interpersonal relations and mutual understanding.

IV. FOREIGN TO LANGUAGE: NOTES ON LANGUAGE EDUCATION ADVOCACY IN 21ST- CENTURY HIGHER EDUCATION

In the aftermath of the pandemic and the elimination of language programs at West Virginia University, advocating for world language studies in higher education is proving both more urgent and more challenging than ever. With the exception of Korean, Biblical Hebrew, and American Sign Language, most language programs saw their enrolments decline dramatically during the pandemic, after a decade of already dwindling numbers (MLA, 2021; MLA, 2023). Often confronted with tremendous budgetary pressures, language programs have been scrambling to respond to this daunting crisis. Sweeping curricular measures are being introduced with the hope of meeting the challenge of relevance in an academic context marked by the erosion of the traditional Humanities and rapidly changing student demographics with evolving needs and interests.

Forcibly aligned with the strategic planning of their schools or colleges, these curricular strategies are primarily developed to remedy levels of enrollment judged unsustainable, at the expense of any in-depth consideration of the mission and nature of the discipline. Increasing numbers of language programs now promote language learning with the promise of providing students with global citizenship skills and meeting their professional aspirations while ensuring on-time graduation. Hence the widespread development of courses, certificates, Minors and Majors in languages for the professions, including business, health care, tourism, translation, teaching, and international affairs. Language programs today know that they must integrate readiness for professional careers in the global world into their mission statement in order to thrive. In departments like the Rutgers-NB French Department, which I'm chairing, French Commerce stands as the one upper-level course taught in French that is consistently well-enrolled and attracts both non-majors and majors. The need to realign language studies with students' professional interests has not gone unnoticed outside of the US. The French Government, for instance, has become increasingly concerned with the rapidly declining interest in the national language in the US, both in K-12 and higher education institutions. It recently launched, through the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, a program of partnerships and grants designed to incentivize the integration of courses and programs in French for the professions into the language curricula of colleges across the US.

Another common curricular shift is the turn to teaching advanced content courses in English in an effort to attract non-minors and non-majors to language departments. Most European language faculty have by now become accustomed to teaching literature, culture, or film courses in English that were once taught in French, Italian, German, or Russian. At the same time, language programs are revamping their majors to make it possible to major in four years with no prior knowledge of the target language by lowering proficiency requirements to the intermediate level. As a consequence, language proficiency at the advanced level is plummeting, and it has become increasingly challenging –if not impossible– for most students to do well in upper-level content courses taught in the target language. Understandably, few students currently opt for language-intensive majors, knowing that they won't reach the language proficiency they would need to succeed. Instead, most chose to pursue Majors in "Interdisciplinary language studies," allowing them to do the largest part of their coursework in English.

While there is no question that student access ought to be an absolute priority of all public institutions of higher learning, facilitating access is a particularly fraught—and in the present context perhaps inextricable—issue when it comes to language education. Enhancing student access to language learning by offering Minors and Majors with reduced language requirements and mostly taught in English inevitably jeopardizes our ability to offer actual language education. This is if by language education, we mean learning to understand, speak, and write in languages other than English at a level of proficiency enabling the study of world cultures in their own words. The reality today is such that very few language departments can still afford to make good on that promise, and those who still do must continually fight for the survival of under-enrolled advanced courses in their language-intensive tracks.

When we add to the mix that most programs now resort to teaching their introductory and intermediate language courses in asynchronous-remote delivery mode (AR) in order to survive, the picture of learning outcomes in terms of actual language proficiency looks very grim. To be sure, AR or even hybrid language courses are tremendously effective in boosting enrollments because they allow students in all kinds of majors to fit language courses into their schedule. But the hard truth is that these courses are completely ineffective when it comes to reaching language proficiency. Furthermore, those courses, which are designed to serve a population of non-traditional students, are taken by “traditional” undergraduates who are counting on them to raise their GPA thanks to the near impossible task of enforcing academic integrity in the AR setting. Whether we want to admit it or not, learning to speak a language in an academic context cannot be done successfully without an actual classroom anymore than learning to act can be done without an audience. We will come back to the performance analogy later. The point here is to draw attention to the limits and consequences of the widespread curricular shifts we have made in the past decade to promote language education among students and advocate for its survival with the university leadership.

How, then, can we advocate more compellingly for language learning in higher education? It is necessary to make clear that this is not an argument for a return to the traditional and more elitist model of language studies where acquiring knowledge of a world culture required securing prior mastery of its language. It goes without saying that the interests and professional needs of 21st-century college students must drive our pedagogical mission and strategic goals. But this should happen in tandem with advocating for the means allowing us to continue to also offer exciting opportunities to study world cultures at an advanced level in the languages in which they are produced. In other words, it is important to argue emphatically that catering to pragmatic goals must not be undertaken at the expense of catering to those students who aspire to an education in world languages per se but might be deterred from doing so by our own defection.

At Rutgers, most students who take two semesters of introductory French courses do not continue to the intermediate level primarily for want of both scheduling options and engagement with real instructors in real time and in real classrooms. Senior seminars in literature and culture taught in French are becoming extinct in the current financial climate. Furthermore, few students have the means to study abroad in semester or year-long programs. It is not an exaggeration to say that, currently, only a very small minority of non-heritage speakers who graduate with a Major in French is equipped with a level of proficiency adequate to navigate the professional, intellectual, and creative cultures of the global Francophone world. If we don't set higher goals for 21st-century world language education—in other words if we don't advocate for the means to offer audacious small-classroom programs to teach global cultures in their own words—not only do we risk failing our best students but soon we'll also find ourselves in the paradoxical position of advocating for world language learning in English only.

In 2023, Rutgers launched the Year of Languages, an innovative initiative designed to celebrate, promote, and advocate for language studies on a campuswide scale. Spearheaded by Rutgers-NB SAS Dean of Humanities Rebecca Walkowitz and organized by the language departments and programs of the School of Arts and Sciences, this year-long series of events featured essay and video contests where students were invited to share the reasons why they chose to learn languages. It was quite striking to see, among dozens of submissions, that while students predictably stated that they learn languages to communicate with non-English speakers in professional, social, or personal settings, they also expressed more ambitious aspirations. Their essays captured the excitement of confronting the irreducible thickness of foreign² languages which, as they learn in our classrooms, filters all deep encounters with cultural diversity. Ezra Campos-Pereira, one winner of the essay contest who majored in Finance and French, explained that “I learn languages because otherwise, I'll never know the music of the untranslatable.” Andi Craciun, another essay contest winner majoring in Visual Arts and Philosophy with a Spanish minor, recounted that “to [her], learning another language ... has never been solely about learning how to communicate.... Spanish has brought [her] closer to understanding [herself].” Another winning essay written by Luis Sanchez-Gonzalez, a linguistics and biological sciences major learning Italian, Japanese, German, French, and Mandarin, argues quite eloquently that “language in education is presented as a means to worldliness but its value varies from one person to the next. To some it is the ability to see the world, and to others, a pursuit of knowledge. We often overlook, however, that to others still, it is the opportunity for a better life, leaving home.” The authors submit that this experience of “leaving home”, when taken in the many senses of the word, is fundamental to language studies. It is precisely what we teach in our language classrooms: namely, leaving that native part of our speaking selves behind; becoming someone else by learning to perform in languages that are not our own as well as those that do not entirely feel like our own even if we were born into them.

It seems to me that we owe it to our students to advocate for language education in ways that are as audacious as are their goals and aspirations when they consider studying a language. What captivates students in our language classrooms is as much the experience of confronting the incommunicable foreignness of the languages they learn as their ability to start communicating in them. Therefore, we shouldn't be shy about arguing for the means to provide them with both the language communication skills they need and the opportunity for the self-transforming experience to which they aspire of being granted access to the vast expanse of the languages of others, including those other than English they already speak. Large public institutions like Rutgers, whose mission statements typically promise a transformative education

² The term “foreign” is used purposely to designate the fundamental otherness of a language in which one did not grow up and whose mastery is quite difficult to achieve. This connotation gets lost when we prefer qualifiers like “word language”, “additional language”, “a language other than our own”, etc.

preparing for the world stage,³ ought to be taken at their word. As language education advocates, we should strengthen our resolve to rescue and expand—rather than shrink—such programs in what we might call transformative language learning by arguing for them on ethical as well as practical grounds.

Transformative language learning is hard and humbling work. It is about transitioning into linguistic identities shaped by the cognitive and embodied grammars of life in tongues other than English. It is done through imitation and repetition without any guaranty of mastery. As a simultaneously intellectual, technical, and experiential pursuit, it takes language education to the point where it meets performance studies. As any language instructor knows, effective language acquisition is quintessentially mimetic, immersive, and performative. It happens in the physical body of the learners—their voice, gestures, posture, and movements—through persistent and often tedious repetitions and rehearsals.

Therefore, we should no longer accept that language education be reduced to mere interaction with dematerialized language structures on virtual learning platforms. In fact, promoting language studies in higher education compellingly may rest on developing interdisciplinary curricula, in partnership with Performance Studies programs, which cultivate performative relationships with the languages to which we are foreign. Just like actors learn to voice and embody the words they perform, to be a language learner is to grapple with that material aspect of languages, including one's own, that resists translation and only makes sense when it is inhabited.

There is much to gain from presenting language studies as a discipline that teaches students to engage, in embodied encounters, with the foreignness of language, whether it be a foreign, literary or a creative language, a stylistic register, a sociolect, a scientific or a professional idiom. By educating students in the arts and ethics of being foreign to language—foreign, therefore, to both oneself and others, we build upon what we, in language programs, already do and are uniquely equipped to provide: an education in 21st-century global humanism. This, it seems to me, is a cause well worth fighting for.

V. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGES AND LANGUAGE ADVOCACY IN THE US: PERSPECTIVES FROM FRENCH

We live in a multilingual world, where half the global population uses more than one language, and only 25% of the world population speaks English (Grosjean, 2010, 2020; British Council, 2013). “Language education, and the accompanying linguistic and intercultural competencies, are a necessity for social, political and economic development, and for effective collaboration” (AMACAD, 2020, p. 1).

In addition, the linguistic context in the United States is framed by both our history and by the rise in the number of speakers of languages other than English in the home, which stands at almost 70M and has increased over 50% since 2000. Those who speak French in the home in the US currently number over 2M, and this number includes “Cajun, Patois, Creole, Haitian,” reflecting the global nature of the French-speaking world and of those who speak French in the US, as well as the significant increase in French-speakers in recent years (over 35% since 1980) (Dietrich & Hernandez, 2022, p. 3). French is also the second most studied language in the world and in the US, with 1.3M enrolled at the K-12 level and 135K at the college and university level (American Councils, 2017; MLA, 2023).

Advocacy has been defined as “persuading people who matter to care about your issue,” and includes “getting listened to,” as well as speaking and writing” (Daly, 2011, p. 15). Beyond this general description, advocacy has a political dimension as a social movement and can be considered a social movement, among “small groups that are loosely connected but united by a shared purpose that have created transformational changes (Satell & Popovic, 2017, p. 1). In empowering language advocates to engage in “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal,” advocacy is also a possibility for language educators to develop their leadership skills (Northouse, 2013, p. 5).

French language advocacy has been described in terms of *francoresponsabilité*, a term which originated in Quebec, and which has been described as “développer l’usage de la langue française au quotidien” and of *franco-activisme* (France-Amérique, 2019, p. 1; Ambassade, 2023). At the global and international level, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), Alliance Française, and a number of French government related programs play a leading role. In the United States, many organizations are involved in language advocacy and in French language advocacy, including organizations of language educators such as the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the Joint Committee for Languages – National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL, n.d.; JNCL, 2023), and the Modern Language Association (MLA) at the national and international level, along with regional, state, and local organizations and groups. In addition, a number of organizations of different types, including the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), the Franco-American Centre (FACNH), and the Nous Foundation play a role, along with regional and local social media initiatives across the country like the French-Canadian Legacy Podcast, French Maine USA, Récits Francophones au Coeur de l’Amérique, and community initiatives like the NH PoutineFest.

It is important to consider the nature of advocacy, whether it is “everyday” advocacy, intended to support French language learning and use within the context of a multilingual United States and a global world, or whether it is “emergency” advocacy, intended to support and defend a program that is at risk or in danger (Peckham & Stein-Smith, 2021).

³ The Rutgers' motto is "Jersey Roots, Global Reach".

It is also useful to consider advocacy from a variety of perspectives, including the roles of organizations and the importance of the individual, as advocacy can occur in a variety of circumstances ranging from global and national initiatives to the work of dedicated language educators in the classroom, in their institutions, and in their communities. It is also necessary to consider the environments where advocacy may take place – through organizational activity, personal interactions and social media, as well as through research, writing, and speaking, among others.

Advocacy is both a challenge and an opportunity. While the addition of yet another activity to the schedule of an already busy language educator may initially seem difficult, and the term may seem somewhat abstract at first, advocacy begins in the classroom through our teaching and can take place during a conversation with a local parent or institutional decision-maker. Beyond the classroom, whether onsite or online, advocacy is an opportunity for each language educator or stakeholder to engage in encouraging and strengthening language learning and use as an individual, bringing to advocacy their own interests and strengths, and using a wide variety of strategies and methods ranging from psychology of persuasion and blue ocean thinking, to social media, and to lobbying and political action.

VI. CONCLUSIONS – CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The advantages of multilingualism for the individual and for society are well known, and range from personal and professional benefits for the individual to better understanding and appreciation of other cultures both globally and locally. “The future in America, and everywhere, is multilingual. And so is the present” (Montlaur, 2019). Challenges that remain include the opportunity, affordability and accessibility of language learning, and these are being addressed through the development of more affordable and flexible online courses and educational materials (OERs), through the development of professional and other specialized language programs at the college and university level, and through the growth in immersion programs. The good news is that language educators, in collaboration and partnership with educators and language stakeholders, including prospective employers and – most importantly – parents and communities, are working together to encourage learning of both heritage and world languages and to strengthen and encourage the use of additional languages in the workplace and in society.

Current and future advocacy priorities include building awareness of the benefits of language skills. Expanding opportunity for language learning, through development of additional programs, especially at the elementary level where only 15% of public elementary schools offer languages is an advocacy priority (AMACAD, 2017). Affordability is another challenge, where the cost of a language course and the required materials may prevent students from enrolling in an extra, after-school, or other course. Cost also includes the opportunity cost of beginning or continuing a language due to scheduling, curriculum, or other issues. Accessibility, which includes the needs of non-traditional learners as well as those with learning and other disabilities, requires both accessible materials and flexible online learning.

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Enza Antenos serves as the Director of the BA program in Language, Business & Culture, a joint program between the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Feliciano School of Business. She has numerous roles with Montclair State's Department of World Languages and Cultures: Italian Professor, Teacher Education Coordinator, and Chair of Teaching Italian, the professional development symposium now in its 17th year. Dr. Antenos regularly presents at numerous national and international conferences and also hosts webinars addressing themes of curricular innovation. Her contributions to the field include publications on elementary language acquisition, professional development for educators, and leveraging social media and online platforms for language learning. Her scholarly agenda is centered around advancing curricular frameworks tailored for specific language purposes and research into experiential learning. She fosters authentic learning environments by engaging students in initiatives like internships, collaborative online projects, and cooperative education programs, focusing on the university and target-language communities on local and global scales. Dr. Antenos also serves as the undergraduate language coordinator and instructor at Middlebury College's Scuola Italiana.



Sister Mary Helen Kashuba SSJ is professor of French and Russian and Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia PA, where she has taught since 1963. She received her advanced degrees from Fordham University and Middlebury College. She is also the Past President of the American Association of Teachers of French and is active in many other Foreign Language associations, where she presents regularly and helps organize conferences. She has received numerous awards, including a Fulbright grant to France, Commandeur in the Palmes Académiques from the French Government, the Lindback Award for Excellence in Teaching, and the Nelson Brooks Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession. She has published *Tradition and Risk*, the history of Chestnut Hill College, chapters in books, and numerous articles.

Lorraine Piroux is an associate professor of French at Rutgers University - New Brunswick, where she also serves as Chair of the French Department. Her research focuses on Enlightenment print culture, authorship studies, and literary plagiarism. She is the author of *Moins que livres: essai sur l'illisibilité, du livre des Lumières à la boîte de Cornell* (Éditions Nota Bene, 2010) and *Le livre en trompe l'œil ou le jeu de la dédicace* (Editions Kimé, 1998), as well as several articles on Diderot, Rousseau, Graffigny, and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre.



Kathleen Stein-Smith, PhD, Officier dans l'Ordre des Palmes académiques, is a dedicated foreign language educator and advocate. She serves as Chair of the AATF (American Association of Teachers of French) Commission on Advocacy, an America's Languages Fellow, and as a member of the ATA Education and Pedagogy Committee and the MLA Delegate Assembly. She is also active in foreign language education associations, including the NECTFL Advisory Council, CSCTFL Advisory Council, and as a SCOLT sponsor. She has presented at numerous professional conferences at the state, regional, and national level, is the author of nine books and numerous articles about the foreign language deficit and the importance of multilingualism, has given a TEDx talk on the U.S. foreign language deficit, has been interviewed by press and radio, and maintains a blog, "Language Matters" <https://kathleensteinsmith.wordpress.com/>. She earned a Baccalauréat

spécialisé and Maîtrise in Québec, where her master's thesis on the comparative stylistics of French and English was written under the direction of Jean-Louis Darbelnet. Email kathysteinsmith@gmail.com

Portrayal of Indian Contemporary Society in Chetan Bhagat's *Five Point Someone* and *One Night @ the Call Center*: A Comparative Analysis

Vimal A

Department of English, Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education, Kumaracoil, Tamil Nadu, India

Subramania Pillai R

Department of English, Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education, Kumaracoil, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract—This comparative analysis explores the representation of Indian contemporary society in Chetan Bhagat's iconic novels, *Five Point Someone* and *One Night @ the Call Centre*. These novels, which have gained immense popularity, provide unique insights into the social, cultural, and economic fabric of modern India. This article critically examines the themes, character dynamics, and societal commentary within the narratives, shedding light on the author's portrayal of contemporary India. Through a comprehensive exploration of key elements, including the education system, corporate culture, interpersonal relationships, and generational gaps, this study uncovers the social intricacies and evolving values of Indian society.

Index Terms—Indian literature, contemporary Indian society, social commentary, young generation, cultural traits

I. INTRODUCTION

India proudly holds its position as the world's most populous democratic nation, a source of great national pride. Since the hard-fought struggle for independence, the political landscape of our country has remained a complex and intriguing phenomenon. Neil DeVotta (2010) claims that "India's biggest characteristics are its united democracy and diverse backgrounds". In this context, Chetan Bhagat has risen to prominence as one of the most influential fiction writers in contemporary Indian English literature. Bhagat has established a unique trajectory in the realm of Indian literature composed in the English language, earning recognition as a skilled narrator in the modern era. Bhagat's literary works exhibit a distinctive attribute that resonates deeply with a diverse readership in India, a nation where English is often a secondary or tertiary language. Consequently, he has amassed a significant following, particularly among the younger demographic, and has made a substantial contribution to nurturing a literary culture among India's youth, even amidst the widespread prevalence of smartphones and tablet technology.

While Bhagat's narratives frequently explore postmodern themes, including the aspirations of young people, love and sexuality, marriage, urban middle-class perspectives, corruption, politics, and education, his work illuminates the significant influence of these factors on contemporary Indian society. Bhagat's literary oeuvre primarily centers on the contemporary urban milieu of Indian society in his fictional works. While often categorized as non-serious literature, Bhagat's novels have effectively kindled a profound sense of concern and responsibility among Indian youth toward their nation and its challenges. His narratives revolve around romantic themes, yet consistently bring to the fore political and contemporary issues that are pervasive in Indian society.

In Bhagat's literary works, the focus is on elucidating the challenges faced by middle-class households in contemporary India. His primary protagonists are characterized as perceptive and empathetic youths who steadfastly uphold their principles in the face of societal norms. These literary personas are often interpreted as hyperbolic depictions of the diverse ethical and moral attributes prevalent within modern-day Indian culture. Bhagat demonstrates a notable proficiency in realistically portraying prevailing societal circumstances, allowing readers to vividly envision the contemporary Indian landscape. The aim of this research article is to conduct a comprehensive examination of specific literary pieces authored by Chetan Bhagat, with a particular emphasis on his adept portrayal of political concerns and the dynamics of contemporary Indian society within his storytelling.

The novels of Chetan Bhagat have emerged as cultural phenomena in the literary landscape of contemporary India. Known for their relatable characters, breezy narrative style, and astute social commentary, Bhagat's works have struck a chord with a diverse audience. Among his notable creations, *Five Point Someone* and *One Night @ the Call Centre* stand as quintessential representations of the dilemmas and aspirations of Indian youth in the 21st century. These novels transcend their status as mere pieces of popular fiction and instead serve as mirrors reflecting the complex fabric of Indian

society. (Diksha Sahni, 2011) This article embarks on a comparative analysis, delving deep into the portrayal of Indian contemporary society within the pages of these two iconic works.

Chetan Bhagat's novels are characterized by their ability to engage readers with the seemingly mundane yet highly relatable experiences of everyday life. Through the lenses of his protagonists, Bhagat weaves tales that explore the intricacies of the Indian educational system, corporate culture, familial relationships, and societal dynamics. In *Five Point Someone*, he takes us into the hallowed halls of an engineering institute, exposing the relentless pressure and the pursuit of unconventional dreams. In *One Night @ Call Centre*, the focus shifts to the soul-crushing grind of a call center, where the characters grapple with professional monotony and personal crises. This comparative analysis seeks to unravel the rich tapestry of contemporary Indian society woven into the narratives of these novels. It strives to shed light on the societal commentaries implicit in Bhagat's storytelling. By examining the overarching themes, character dynamics, and the subtle nuances of the author's craft, this study aims to discern the underlying commentary on the evolving values, generational shifts, and cultural idiosyncrasies of modern India.

The chosen novels offer a unique vantage point, reflecting not only the aspirations, struggles, and ambitions of young Indians but also the broader socio-cultural context in which they navigate their lives. Through a meticulous analysis of these texts, this article endeavors to offer fresh insights into the ways in which Chetan Bhagat's works resonate with readers and contribute to a nuanced understanding of Indian contemporary society. Intriguing and impactful, Bhagat's novels continue to be the subject of discussion and debate in literary circles and beyond. This analysis aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation about the significance of these works in the realm of Indian literature and society, as well as the enduring appeal of storytelling as a medium to articulate the complexities of the human experience.

II. REPRESENTATION OF INDIAN SOCIETY IN *FIVE POINT SOMEONE*

Chetan Bhagat's literary works consistently offer a profound portrayal of contemporary urban middle-class society, drawing upon his own lived experiences within this social stratum. His deliberate depictions skillfully capture the essence of modern urban life in India. Bhagat's debut novel, *Five Point Someone*, although primarily intended to provide readers with entertainment, transcends its engaging exterior to offer valuable insights into the multifaceted challenges confronting present-day Indian society. While the novel prominently addresses issues within the education system, it also illuminates other pressing concerns, including dowry, intergenerational differences, the struggles of Indian families in upholding traditional values, and the hardships endured by the lower middle class. Through these interconnected themes, Bhagat's work provides a comprehensive representation of the many facets of Indian society (Vats & Sharma, 2011).

Five Point Someone paints a vivid picture of Indian society, particularly focusing on the lower middle class and the various challenges faced by this segment of the population. The heart of the novel revolves around the portrayal of the educational system within contemporary Indian society and the complex challenges it presents. Education unquestionably stands as a cornerstone of society, with the progress of civilization closely tied to the quality of education provided to its citizens. When education is delivered effectively, it not only imparts knowledge but also nurtures a heightened sense of humanity, fostering a more humanistic perspective on life. In a democratic nation like India, education plays a pivotal role by instilling democratic and nationalistic values in its citizens. Those who prioritize the welfare of the nation are more likely to become conscientious and responsible citizens, contributing significantly to the progress and cohesion of society as a whole.

The portrayal of the education system in the novel reflects a deep sense of disillusionment with the current state of education in contemporary Indian society. It is evident that the educational system is inflicting adverse consequences upon students. This has led to a noticeable lack of self-assurance among individuals, impeding their pursuit of personal endeavors. As a result, many experience feelings of frustration and even depression in their daily lives. The novel vividly illustrates the challenges faced by the youth of India through its portrayal of the hostel setting. For the novice students, their introduction to this new environment involves encountering the troubling issue of hazing. Additionally, the quality of the food provided in the hostel mess falls far short of expectations. To exemplify this, consider the following passage from the novel:

Several weeks later, we found ourselves in the Kumaon mess, having dinner. It was, I believe, a Thursday, as that's when Kumaon claimed to serve a 'continental dinner.' In reality, it seemed more like an excuse for the mess workers to avoid offering us real food. The menu sounded promising - noodles, French fries, toast, and soup. However, the actual taste was far from pleasant. The noodles seemed to have been fused together with some sort of superglue, forming a single, unappetizing mass in the large serving pan. The French fries were served cold, and they were either severely undercooked or burnt to the point of resembling charcoal. The cream of mushroom soup could easily have been mistaken for muddy water, except it was warmer and saltier. (Five Point Someone, 2004, p. 155)

This passage serves to underscore the substandard conditions and the disappointments that the characters face within the hostel's dining facility, highlighting the challenging and disillusioning aspects of their college life. The novel's depiction of the educational system evokes concerns about its inherent limitations. It frequently appears as rigid and steeped in tradition, potentially stifling the creative and authentic expression of students' intellectual abilities. The grading system, in particular, is portrayed as a hindrance to students' creativity, constraining their capacity to generate innovative ideas. Many students are hesitant to challenge this established system, well aware of the potential risks such defiance

might pose to their future prospects (Sreeramulu, 2021). Characters in the novel, such as Alok and Hari, consistently grapple with psychological stress stemming from academic assessments, their academic performance, and the inherent unpredictability of it all. Within the academic establishment, faculty members, including Professor Dubey, Professor Vohra, and Professor Cherian, are entrenched in their resistance to embracing any changes to their traditional teaching methods. They persist in employing outdated approaches in their interactions with students and in their overall academic careers. Consequently, there exists a notable lack of harmonious rapport between the students and these traditional instructors at the educational institution.

As a consequence, students find themselves vulnerable to adopting detrimental coping mechanisms, such as smoking and alcohol consumption, as a means of dealing with the overwhelming stressors they face. The intensity of their distress leads some to consider resorting to unethical practices like stealing examination papers in a misguided pursuit of academic success. The novel paints a disheartening picture of an educational system that fails to adequately nurture creativity, hinders individual growth, and results in negative consequences for its students. In the absence of care and compassion, students may be at risk of veering off the path to a positive future. The absence of adequate support can leave individuals struggling with a lack of self-assurance, which, in turn, hampers their ability to pursue their goals. Consequently, individuals might engage in unproductive pursuits, squandering valuable time (Five Point Someone, 2004, p. 123).

When these individuals eventually transition from educational institutions to the broader world, they may carry with them a sense of confusion or disillusionment that could impede their capacity to make meaningful contributions to themselves, their employers, society, and the nation at large. Chetan Bhagat masterfully portrays the contemporary educational system in Indian society, rendering it with a poignant sense of authenticity. Within this system, students often find themselves dissatisfied and unfulfilled, lacking the essential elements of positivity and support necessary for instilling significant life principles and values. Consequently, they grapple with overwhelming feelings of frustration, depression, and anxiety when faced with the uncertainties surrounding their future prospects. Their attempts to challenge the system often result in adverse consequences, as the system tends to respond with resistance.

Chetan Bhagat offers a practical solution to address the rigidity ingrained in the educational framework. He highlights the exemplary qualities of Professor Veera, an educator who employs modern pedagogical methods to enhance the learning experience. Unlike other instructors, Professor Veera's lectures consistently draw students due to his engaging and relatable teaching style. Professor Veera embodies qualities of compassion, empathy, and genuine concern for his students' well-being, readily offering assistance when they encounter obstacles. Through the character of Professor Veera, Chetan Bhagat underscores the importance of educators embracing a contemporary perspective and adapting to the evolving demands of the education sector.

In the absence of compassionate treatment and consideration during their educational journey, students may struggle to develop a deep appreciation for the values of altruism and compassion. The potential implications of this phenomenon extend beyond the immediate impact on individual students, encompassing broader societal and national consequences. Hence, it is imperative for educators to establish a nurturing and comprehensive environment that fosters the growth and development of their students. Chetan Bhagat's work extends beyond the educational sector, delving into the challenges faced by the lower middle class in contemporary Indian society. His literary endeavors effectively illuminate the obstacles confronting individuals belonging to this specific socioeconomic group. The central protagonists, namely Hari, Alok, and Ryan, hail from households situated within the lower or middle socioeconomic strata, each grappling with a distinct set of challenges.

Alok's family serves as a quintessential representation of the lower middle class in today's Indian social milieu, persistently burdened by financial constraints. The family's limited financial resources necessitate numerous sacrifices in their daily lives. Despite Alok's passion for painting, he is compelled to pursue engineering to quickly secure employment and alleviate his family's financial burdens. The prospects for his elder sister's marriage appear bleak due to the family's inability to provide a substantial dowry. Unfortunately, his father's declining health has left him immobile, forcing him to resign from his teaching position. The family's matriarch has taken on the role of the primary breadwinner, working as an educator. However, half of her income is allocated to cover her spouse's healthcare expenses, leaving limited resources to meet other essential needs. The family's financial constraints have even prevented her from acquiring a new sari for six months. These economic challenges are further compounded by rising inflation, resulting in considerable hardship given their limited income. These conditions, as depicted in the literary work, serve as a reflection of the struggles faced by families in the middle socioeconomic stratum (Spencer, 1992).

As Bhagat writes, "One Monday, the geyser that had been repaired five times broke down again, and there was no money for a new one. On Wednesday, the TV antenna malfunctioned, and a replacement was deemed too expensive, leaving the family with grainy reception until they could save enough money. On Friday, Alok's father fell off the bed, requiring a doctor's visit that cost an additional hundred bucks. Other challenges included the ration shop doubling the price of sugar, and their maid missing work twice that week" (Five Point Someone, 2004, p. 122). This passage provides a stark illustration of the financial hardships and daily struggles faced by lower-middle-class families, emphasizing the impact of economic limitations on their lives.

Ryan, born to a middle-class Non-Resident Indian (NRI) couple, whose primary focus is on their income generation in the United States, has experienced his entire academic journey in boarding schools and hostels. As a result, he has been deprived of the customary parental care and affection, leading to a noticeable detachment within the family unit. Ryan's

inclination towards smoking and drinking stands in contrast to his inherent intellectual and imaginative abilities. The Cherian family is depicted as deeply unsettled in the novel, serving as a representation of the educated segment of Indian society. They undergo significant emotional turmoil due to the erosion of their traditional Indian family values in the face of modernity, despite their otherwise comfortable lifestyle. Sadly, Samir, the only child of Professor Cherian, succumbs to suicide due to the immense pressure imposed on him by his parents to uphold his father's scholarly legacy. Professor Cherian had high expectations for Samir, envisioning him excelling in the IIT entrance examination and pursuing a career as an engineer. Samir faces recurring setbacks, leading to his father cutting off all communication with him. Furthermore, Professor Cherian initiates a pattern of refraining from conversing with his spouse, partly blaming her for Samir's academic struggles.

Samir's tragic demise occurs by his own hand near a railway track, accompanied by a heart-wrenching suicide note addressed to his younger sibling, Neha. Neha, who maintains a distant relationship with her father, finds solace in her bond with Hari, one of the three principal protagonists in the literary work. Neha's decision to engage in a romantic relationship with Hari is not influenced by his smoking and drinking habits or his perceived lack of commitment towards life. While the professor effectively maintains order and control among his students, his personal household lacks tranquility and harmony. In Chetan Bhagat's literary work, *Five Point Someone*, he adeptly portrays the realities of contemporary Indian society. This work not only serves as a source of entertainment but also functions as a societal critique, shedding light on the prevalent issues in Indian culture and their consequences on people's lives.

The novel offers profound insights into the challenging realities and poignant experiences of individuals by delving into the milieu of the Indian urban middle class. The author delves into the salient concerns of the Indian societal structure and their profound impact on the lives of individuals.

III. REPRESENTATION OF INDIAN SOCIETY IN *ONE NIGHT @ THE CALL CENTER*

Chetan Bhagat's literary work, *One Night @ the Call Center*, offers a remarkably accurate portrayal of the present-day urban social environment in middle-class India. It adeptly depicts a society that departs from the idealized notion of a perfect world, reflecting the contemporary Indian urban landscape with striking resemblance to the real social fabric of our time. Through an analysis of the personal, professional, and social lives of the characters, the novel skillfully portrays the three primary limitations that shape their existence. It offers a comprehensive understanding of the representation of modern Indian society within these constraints.

The novel features six primary characters, each representing a unique societal concern of their era. The personal challenges experienced by these individuals reveal that the difficulties they face are a consequence of their interactions with the dynamic societal milieu. A prevailing factor contributing to these challenges is their persistent sense of unrest. Shyam, Priyanka, Varun, Esha, Radhika, and Military Uncle exhibit varying degrees of dissatisfaction with their respective life circumstances (*One Night @ the Call Center*, 2005, p. 115). These individuals harbor ambitious aspirations that surpass their current conditions. Often driven by their desires, they may feel compelled to conform to prevailing societal norms and standards in pursuit of their goals. Shyam, for example, longs for greater fulfillment and satisfaction within his present circumstances (*One Night @ the Call Center*, 2005, p. 165).

The character Esha displays a strong sense of individualism, being unwilling to compromise on her personal pursuits, leading to strained interpersonal dynamics with her mother and romantic partner. Her ambition is such that she is even willing to compromise her ethical principles to achieve her objectives. In her pursuit of a modeling assignment, she engages in a sexual relationship with a designer much older than her, only to be rejected due to her height. This experience leaves her disillusioned and disappointed.

"Military Uncle" inadvertently creates familial distance and eventually becomes geographically separated from his relatives as he seeks to establish familial dominance. The novel depicts a society that closely resembles modern-day Indian society, where individualism, especially among the middle-class population, has gained prominence. These individuals value personal space and are reluctant to compromise in their personal lives. They believe that their quality of life has improved and prefer not to be labeled as indigenous (*One Night @ the Call Center*, 2005, p. 165).

These individuals strive to project a modern image and have been notably influenced by the forces of modernization and westernization. They often find it challenging to come to terms with the inherent limitations of their lives. Their aspirations are high, yet they face numerous barriers that hinder the realization of their goals. Consequently, they grapple with a persistent sense of unease and restlessness in their daily lives. The existence of a comparative and competitive environment adds to the stress and discomfort experienced by these individuals. The author adeptly illuminates the realities of modern middle-class society.

The novel paints a picture of a hybrid society that blends Indian and Western cultural influences. It effectively illustrates how Indian society has been significantly impacted by the processes of modernization and westernization. The traditional values that once dominated Indian society have undergone substantial transformation and disruption due to these influences. The conflict between conventional and contemporary values has given rise to a multitude of unexpected changes in the quality of life for individuals in the present day. The author of this literary work has taken a realistic approach to effectively portray urban Indian society, its inhabitants, and the challenges they face. The novel adeptly captures the fundamental characteristics of contemporary Indian social organization, where ordinary individuals experience varying degrees of apprehension, concern, or despondency due to the inevitable circumstances of their lives.

The novel's depiction of middle-class society exudes a genuine and authentic essence. The characters in the narrative display a contemporary perspective in their preferences, attitudes, and behavior. They have a penchant for modern fashion trends, such as denim trousers and leather outerwear, and show a fondness for consuming items like tobacco products, cellphones, pizza, cheese sandwiches, milk-based beverages, potato crisps, and carbonated beverages. These choices reflect their attraction to a Westernized way of life. Furthermore, these individuals have a keen interest in attending nighttime gatherings hosted by disc jockeys, where they partake in Western-style drinks and cocktails, underscoring their embrace of Western cultural norms in their social interactions (Ritu Sharma, 2014).

Within the novel, the characters frequently explore high-end shopping malls, indulging in their penchant for consumerism. Esha, one of the female characters, particularly enjoys foreign perfumes and body sprays, while the entire group takes pleasure in wearing luxurious clothing. When it comes to dining out, they have a proclivity for visiting upscale restaurants to savor gourmet fast food offerings. The narrative emphasizes the youth's inclination towards Westernized lifestyles. The portrayal in the text mirrors the current state of the younger generation in India, aligning with contemporary trends and preferences (One Night @ the Call Center, 2005, p. 59).

In today's Indian society, the younger generation exhibits a strong attraction to globally recognized clothing brands, branded footwear, and fast-food chains like McDonald's, Dominos, KFC, Subway, Pizza Hut, and US Pizza. They enthusiastically embrace foreign elements, considering them indicative of a modern way of life. The literary work titled *One Night @ the Call Center* effectively portrays the collective life experiences of the contemporary Indian middle class through its diverse ensemble of characters. The novel primarily delves into the complexities of family life and the challenges arising from processes of modernization and westernization. It portrays several families representing distinct social concerns prevalent in today's Indian middle-class society. Initially, Priyanka, the primary female protagonist, shared a positive relationship with her mother during her formative years. However, as she grew older, their relationship could not withstand the changes. Priyanka's evolution into a contemporary and self-reliant woman is characterized by her steadfast refusal to tolerate any encroachment upon her personal affairs.

Radhika grapples with the challenge of balancing her professional responsibilities while tending to the various requests of her mother-in-law, necessitating several concessions in her personal life. In contrast, Esha departs from her family home with a strong determination to pursue a modeling career in a thriving urban center, resolute in her efforts to overcome any obstacles arising from parental authority. Shyam, the central character, finds it challenging to fully engage in family festivities due to the burdens imposed by his occupational responsibilities. Varun faces numerous challenges in life as a result of his parents' divorce. The paternal figure, deeply rooted in military background and traditional beliefs, is compelled to leave his child's home.

The novel portrays these characters as contemporary, embodying a generation characterized by a preference for denim clothing and alcoholic beverages. Their inclinations, leisure activities, and customary practices are significantly influenced by American or European cultural norms. They opt for denim trousers and casual shirts, participate in social gatherings, and engage in tobacco and alcohol consumption. Their desire for autonomy motivates them to resist external interference in their personal choices, asserting their right to live according to their own will. These representations provide an accurate portrayal of current urban Indian life within the middle-class social context. This theme is particularly evident in the female characters, Esha and Priyanka. Esha's persistent pursuit of modeling assignments, despite her parents' objections, is noteworthy, considering her physical limitation in terms of height. Her fervent desire to pursue a modeling career is so strong that she has chosen to live apart from her parents to avoid unnecessary interference.

The chapter entitled "My Past Dates with Priyanka-II" in the novel features a poignant scene that sheds light on the issue of dowry, effectively highlighting the prevailing mindset and the challenges faced by women in modern Indian society. Shyam's former partner, Priyanka, who has recently ended their romantic relationship, remains professionally connected with him. Priyanka expresses contentment with her engagement to a Non-Resident Indian (NRI) and her desire for a stable and comfortable lifestyle. However, she emphasizes her independence and resists her mother's overbearing involvement in her decision-making. Priyanka acknowledges the importance of getting to know her fiancé better before entering into matrimony and, therefore, seeks an extension of time.

Despite her mother's eagerness for her marriage, Priyanka disregards it and places more importance on her own understanding and assessment. Radhika, a woman juggling both her professional and domestic responsibilities, yearns to regain the autonomy and confidence she once had, particularly the freedom to dress casually in jeans and T-shirts. She feels limited by her family obligations following her marriage, although she may not explicitly admit it; her nonverbal cues hint at a strong desire for independence and self-sufficiency. Eventually, she summons the courage to break free from conventional norms and embark on a self-determined path. The novel offers a thought-provoking exploration of the dowry issue and sheds light on the challenges faced by women in contemporary Indian society by depicting these experiences.

The novel effectively portrays the professional culture reflective of contemporary Indian society. It revolves around a group of six individuals employed in a call center, all grappling with job dissatisfaction and persistent concerns about their job security. The employees' predicament can primarily be attributed to their supervisor, Mr. Bakshi, whose lack of leadership skills and inadequate qualifications make him ill-suited to manage such a significant commercial enterprise. Unfortunately, he exhibits a disregard for the well-being of his subordinates, prioritizing his own interests and professional advancement. Mr. Bakshi's egocentric behavior drives him to exploit the abilities and skills of call center representatives,

specifically Shyam and Varun, who dedicate two months to the demanding task of developing a web design project. Regrettably, Mr. Bakshi shamelessly takes credit for their work without giving them due recognition.

The novel adeptly portrays the challenges faced by these characters, reflecting the harsh reality of around 300,000 individuals working in India's Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry. The depiction of office politics serves as a vivid representation of the real dynamics within India's current professional environment. The author effectively highlights the impact of globalization and liberalization on employment prospects in India. While it has created a surge in job opportunities, it has also brought about specific concerns and obstacles, particularly for the middle-class demographic and the younger generation.

A detailed analysis of the literary work *One Night@ the Call Center* offers valuable insights into various aspects of contemporary Indian society, yielding both favorable and unfavorable outcomes. Chetan Bhagat skillfully integrates contemporary Indian realities into a straightforward narrative that revolves around the experiences and lives of call center agents. The story gradually unfolds over a single evening, devoid of exaggerated excitement or unexpected plot twists. However, the author's insightful storytelling keeps readers engaged until the end, without disrupting their sense of calm. The text effectively establishes a profound connection between the reader's inner thoughts and the events unfolding in the novel, bridging the divide between the fictional narrative and the real world. The characters in the novel are so compelling that readers become fully immersed in their lives and challenges, often drawing parallels between their experiences and those in their immediate surroundings.

The author demonstrates a sincere commitment to understanding the complexities of contemporary issues faced by the Indian middle-class community, profoundly affected by the forces of modernization, Westernization, and globalization. The novel, beyond being a touching love story, serves as a mirror to the common struggles of Indian youth as they seek genuine happiness and fulfillment while navigating life's intricacies.

IV. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

A. Educational System

Five Point Someone: The novel provides a critical examination of the Indian education system, particularly through the lens of the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). It sheds light on the rigidity, competitiveness, and pressures faced by students.

One Night @ the Call Center: While not primarily focused on education, this novel addresses the challenges of the middle-class workforce in the evolving business process outsourcing (BPO) industry. It reflects the changing dynamics in career choices and job satisfaction.

B. Job and Career

Five Point Someone: The characters grapple with the pressure to excel academically and secure lucrative job opportunities. The book highlights the significance of education in securing a stable future.

One Night @ the Call Center: The story revolves around employees in a call center, offering insights into job dissatisfaction, professional ethics, and the impact of globalization on job prospects. It portrays how career choices are evolving.

C. Relationships

Five Point Someone: The novel explores personal relationships among friends and with their families. It portrays intergenerational differences, parental expectations, and the difficulties of balancing friendships with academic demands.

One Night @ the Call Center: This book delves into the personal and professional relationships of a group of friends who work together at a call center. It touches on relationships with colleagues, romantic partners, and family members.

D. Lifestyle and Culture

Five Point Someone: The story offers glimpses of college life and traditional Indian cultural elements, such as arranged marriages and societal norms.

One Night @ the Call Center: This novel depicts a more urban and modern lifestyle influenced by globalization. It showcases elements of Western culture and consumerism, reflecting contemporary middle-class aspirations.

E. Social Issues

Five Point Someone: It primarily addresses issues within the academic realm, such as the pressure to conform, the pursuit of personal passions, and questioning societal norms related to education.

One Night @ the Call Center: The novel has a broader scope and addresses issues related to employment, professional ethics, and the impact of globalization on the middle-class segment of society.

F. Tone and Style

Five Point Someone: It combines humor, introspection, and emotional depth, using a light-hearted and relatable tone.

One Night @ the Call Center: It employs a more serious tone, dealing with complex professional and personal issues, and using the backdrop of a single night to create tension and reflection.

In summary, *Five Point Someone* and *One Night @ the Call Center* both provide valuable insights into contemporary Indian society, but they focus on different aspects of life and use distinct settings and narratives to address various social issues. *Five Point Someone* primarily centers on the education system and personal relationships, while *One Night @ the Call Center* extends its scope to address job-related issues and the impact of globalization on the middle class.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Chetan Bhagat's *Five Point Someone* and *One Night @ the Call Center* provide a valuable comparative analysis of the portrayal of Indian contemporary society, each from a distinct perspective. While both novels present insights into the challenges faced by urban middle-class Indians, they do so in different contexts.

Five Point Someone primarily explores the Indian education system, emphasizing the pressure on students to conform to societal expectations and excel academically. It delves into the impact of this educational system on the mental health, relationships, and aspirations of its characters. Bhagat uses humor and a conversational style to shed light on the absurdities and challenges faced by students within this system. *One Night @ the Call Center*, on the other hand, shifts its focus to the professional sphere, particularly the rapidly growing BPO industry. It delves deeply into the professional lives of its characters, highlighting job dissatisfaction, unethical work practices, and the ethical dilemmas that employees face. The novel also emphasizes the influence of globalization, modernization, and Westernization on urban middle-class life. It portrays a wide range of challenges faced by its characters, from familial expectations and societal pressures to ethical decision-making.

Both novels offer valuable insights into the lives of middle-class Indians in the contemporary urban landscape. *Five Point Someone* centers on the academic world, while *One Night @ the Call Center* examines the challenges of the corporate sector. Together, they present a multifaceted view of the complex realities and societal changes that define Indian contemporary society. Bhagat's ability to connect with readers through relatable characters and engaging narratives makes these novels not only insightful but also accessible to a wide range of readers.

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Vimal A is a Full-time Ph.D. Research Scholar at Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education in Kanyakumari, India. His area of interest in Cultural Studies, Postmodernism, and Indian Writing in English. He published research articles in international peer-reviewed journals and the presentation of research papers at both national and international conferences.

R. Subramania Pillai is working as a Professor in the Department of English at Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education in Kanyakumari, India. His expertise lies in English Language Teaching and Indian Writing in English. His contributions to the field are well-documented through publications in reputable international journals and invited talks at various educational institutions.

Confronting English Speaking Anxiety: A Qualitative Study of Jordanian Undergraduates at Zarqa University

Rashad Faleh Alhasan

Translation Department, Saif Bin Zayed Academy for Police Science and Security, UAE

Ibrahim Fathi Huwari

Department of English, University of Petra, Amman, Jordan

Marwan Harb Alqaryouti

Department of English Language, Literature and Translation, Zarqa University, Zarqa, Jordan

Ala Eddin Sadeq

Department of English Language, Literature and Translation, Zarqa University, Zarqa, Jordan

Ali Ata Alkhaldi

Liberal Arts Department, American University of the Middle East, Kuwait

Kamal Ahmad Alruzzi

Department of English Language, Literature and Translation, Zarqa University, Zarqa, Jordan

Abstract—Oral communication plays a pivotal role in language learning. Although essential, many learners of English as a second language face distinct challenges when speaking. This qualitative research aimed to investigate and understand the coping strategies Jordanian students use to manage and alleviate their English Language Speaking Anxiety (ELSA) in both classroom and non-classroom environments. Fifteen undergraduate students from Zarqa Private University's (ZU) English Language Department in Jordan were selected for the study. A qualitative research approach was adopted to gather insights into the students' views and methods for dealing with their anxiety about speaking English, whether in class with instructors or in more casual settings. The findings of this study revealed that undergraduates at ZU employed five key coping strategies to manage and reduce speaking anxiety when using the English language. These strategies are self-regulation, self-confidence, a supportive environment, practice/preparation, and humor. The findings revealed that students who faced unavoidable communication scenarios adopted self-soothing techniques to mitigate the effects of ELSA.

Index Terms—English language, speaking anxiety, Zarqa University, undergraduates

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential life skill necessary for personal and professional success. However, many people struggle with speaking anxiety, which is defined as the fear or apprehension associated with communication situations (McCroskey, 1984). For students, speaking anxiety can be particularly challenging, especially when they are required to give presentations or participate in group discussions. Research has shown that up to 75% of college students experience some form of speaking anxiety (Johannsen & Korsgaard, 2017). To achieve language proficiency, it is essential to master the four key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, researchers have identified speaking as the most important and valuable skill in learning English (Hajar, 2019; Huwari, 2019; Zughoul & Taminian, 1984; Saed et al., 2021). Studies indicate that a lack of confidence, often stemming from a perceived inadequate level of English proficiency, can lead to anxiety in foreign language learners (Alrabai, 2017; Huwari & Hashima, 2010; as cited in Alkhaldi et al., 2023). Additionally, speaking anxiety can be a significant obstacle for students. Mulyono (2019) stated, "Uncontrolled foreign language speaking anxiety can exceptionally influence EFL learners' existing speaking performances, achievements, and motivation impactful for their continual communicative growth. Learners ingraining a higher degree of foreign language speaking anxiety are more liable to communicate less owing to the excessive perturbation, negative emotions, and incapability in amplifying their self-confidence".

The study involved Jordanian undergraduate students pursuing an English language and literature program at ZU. It revealed that a certain level of language proficiency is necessary to handle the linguistic demands of their academic

pursuits effectively. The study also found that students who used coping strategies were likelier to succeed academically. These coping strategies can be effective in helping Jordanian undergraduate students cope with the linguistic and academic challenges of learning English. The effectiveness of these strategies may vary depending on the individual student's needs and preferences. This study examines their methods to cope with or reduce the linguistic and academic difficulties arising from ESA.

Problem statement

Speaking skills is an integral part of language learning because it allows students to communicate with others verbally. It is also a way for students to express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings (Pakpahan & Gultom, 2021). Speaking skills can be improved through practice and listening to others speak (Alhasan et al., 2024; Saldaria et al., 2019).

Speaking serves as a vital means of communication, enabling individuals to express their ideas, foster relationships, and engage in personal development (Raja, 2017). According to Suparlan (2021), the enthusiasm of certain EFL learners for acquiring communicative competence significantly influences their determination and success in becoming future professionals. Conversely, a negative experience in speaking instruction can severely reduce EFL learners' motivation, self-confidence, and dedication to improving their proficiency in the target language. This challenging learning environment arises from the learners' heightened levels of foreign language speaking anxiety (Huwari et al., 2023).

Arab students experience high levels of speaking anxiety when speaking English, which can negatively affect their language learning and academic performance (Alahmadi & Aljohanim, 2021). ESA among Jordanian undergraduate students needs to receive more attention from researchers. There needs to be a greater understanding of the problems faced by these students and the coping strategies they use. Jordanian undergraduate students have substantial levels of oral language anxiety in both formal and informal settings, which inhibits them from undertaking smooth communications with English. (Alhasan et al., 2023). The methods students use to manage their anxiety when speaking English are vital for improving their language proficiency and overall learning experience. Therefore, this study examined the coping mechanisms that Jordanian students at ZU utilize to address their fear of speaking English as a foreign language and identified recommended strategies for the university to implement.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking anxiety (SA) is a fear of interacting with others verbally. Various factors, including learned behaviors, innate traits, and genetic predispositions, can contribute to its development. SA can manifest in both mild and severe forms, hindering an individual's ability to communicate effectively in social, academic, and professional contexts. Individuals can implement several strategies to manage SA, such as practicing relaxation techniques, visualizing success, setting attainable goals, rewarding themselves for their achievements, confiding in a trusted individual, and seeking professional assistance (Abdulraheem, 2022).

According to the standard biological perspective, social anxiety (SA) is a biological trait that, while not curable, can be managed. In contrast, the social learning perspective views SA as a learned behavior that can be unlearned. Hazel et al. (2014) summarized the distinction between these two viewpoints. The social learning perspective advocates for SA interventions as a potential cure, positing that individuals with high social anxiety (CA) are capable of benefiting from treatment. Conversely, the standard biological perspective regards SA as a trait and considers interventions as a means to mitigate its lifelong effects.

On the other hand, the standard biological view views SA as a trait and sees interventions as an aid to reduce its lifelong effects. The social learning view of social anxiety (SA) suggests that SA can be learned through a process of classical conditioning. This means that SA can be learned through association, whereby a neutral stimulus (e.g., public speaking) is paired with an aversive stimulus (e.g., anxiety). Over time, the neutral stimulus (public speaking) elicits the aversive response (anxiety).

The standard biological perspective on social anxiety (SA) posits that it is a biological characteristic shaped by both genetic and environmental influences. In other words, SA arises from the interaction of these factors. Since McCroskey introduced the concept of communication anxiety (CA) in the 1970s, researchers have explored its origins, treatments, experiences, and effects on students' academic performance and success. SA can negatively impact students' academic outcomes. For instance, students with high levels of SA may be less inclined to engage in classroom discussions, ask questions, or participate in presentations, which may result in lower grades and lost learning opportunities.

Several things can be done to help students overcome SA. One is to provide them with practical communication skills training. This can help them feel more confident and prepared when communicating with others. Another is to create a supportive and encouraging classroom environment where students feel comfortable speaking up. According to a study by Alhasan et al. (2023), Jordanian students displayed seven types of anxious behaviors linked to speaking English, categorized into two major psychological groups: Fear of negative evaluation, reduced social, concerns about employability, diminished self-confidence, and disorganized thinking. Al-Khawaldeh and Al-Ali (2021) looked at the fear of speaking among Arab students enrolled in American universities. According to the study, Arab students have significant levels of speaking anxiety in English-speaking settings, which might hurt their ability to integrate socially and academically in their new nation. Arab students may have speaking anxiety due to a lack of exposure to English outside of the classroom, apprehension about receiving a poor grade, and cultural communication gaps. According to the study, language teachers should employ communicative language teaching (CLT) strategies that prioritize interaction and

teamwork, allow students to practice speaking in a safe setting, and provide feedback and encouragement to lower speaking anxiety and improve language learning outcomes.

Alzu'bi and Alsheikh (2021) studied how Jordanian students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) cope with anxiety related to public speaking. The study found that these students employ various coping strategies to manage their anxiety, such as avoiding the situation, seeking social support, changing their thinking patterns, and using relaxation techniques. The study also revealed that the effectiveness of these strategies varied depending on the level of anxiety and the context in which it was experienced. The authors suggest that language teachers educate their students about coping mechanisms for speaking anxiety and provide guidance on appropriate coping strategies. They also recommend adopting a learner-centered approach to teaching speaking skills, which can help reduce speaking anxiety and improve language learning outcomes.

Language teachers have used the strategies and techniques recommended by numerous research to lower language anxiety in students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Donley (1997) divided these strategies into four categories: (1) language-related activities and programs; (2) methods that encourage emotional self-regulation by increasing students' awareness of and control over their emotions; (3) strategies to deepen students' understanding of the nature of language learning; and (4) suggestions for lowering anxiety levels in language classes.

III. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the coping mechanisms used by students at Zarqa University in Jordan to overcome their fear of English Speaking Anxiety (ESA). The study was conducted using a qualitative case study approach. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of participants. Interviews were conducted with 15 students from the English Language department at Zarqa University. According to Creswell et al. (2017), qualitative research aims to understand people's thoughts, opinions, and impressions of a phenomenon or experience.

A. Research Instrument

Interviews served as the main research tool in this study. The study employed this approach to compile in-depth and complex data regarding students' ESA coping mechanisms. Since they enable researchers to examine participants' thoughts and experiences in their own words, interviews are essential for qualitative investigations. Additionally, the open-ended interview format allows researchers to go deeper into participants' experiences and collect valuable data. Interviews were performed as part of this study to understand the experiences and coping mechanisms of students at Zarqa University dealing with ESA.

B. Data Analysis

The researchers used content analysis to examine the data gathered for this study. In order to do this, the audio recordings of the interviews had to be converted into text, and the major themes and underlying themes that arose from the data had to be noted. During the data coding phase, the themes and sub-themes considered pertinent to the study's phenomenological data were highlighted, circled, and color-coded to ensure correctness. Saldana (2013) asserts that researchers might find patterns and connections in the data through this technique. Following the method described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), the linguistic categories were then condensed into themes and sub-themes associated with apprehensive oral communication.

C. Sample of the Study

A study was conducted at Zarqa University in Jordan to investigate the coping strategies used by Jordanian undergraduate students from the English Language Department to overcome their experiences of speaking anxiety. The study used a purposeful sampling approach to select 15 participants who were hesitant to speak English. The participants were interviewed to collect data about their experiences of speaking anxiety and the coping strategies they used to deal with it. The relevance of the study and its contribution to bettering language instruction were explained to the participants, who were also assured that they would maintain their anonymity and that they could withdraw whenever they felt it was necessary (Braggs, 2017).

D. Research Questions

The following research questions were formed to explore the processes and strategies used by Jordanian undergraduate students at Zarqa University to cope with and reduce their ESA.

1. What strategies do students use to overcome or reduce their English anxiety and improve their English proficiency?

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Based on the analysis of the data collected from interviews with Jordanian undergraduate students from the English Language Department at Zarqa University, several themes emerged regarding their coping mechanisms and strategies for dealing with speaking anxiety. The students reported using various coping mechanisms, such as self-regulation and self-

confidence, which involved controlling their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to reduce their anxiety levels. Students also sought a supportive environment from peers and instructors for encouragement and feedback to improve their speaking skills. Practice/preparation and a sense of humor enhanced their confidence and reduced anxiety levels during communication.

A. *Self-Regulation*

Self-regulation refers to controlling one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to achieve desired outcomes or goals. Self-regulation is a crucial skill in language learning that can help students manage their language anxiety and improve their performance. Students who can regulate their emotions and behavior can use coping strategies, including positive self-talk, relaxation techniques, and goal-setting, to manage their anxiety. In addition, self-regulated learners are more likely to engage in metacognitive processes, such as monitoring their learning progress and adapting their study strategies to achieve better results. Research has shown that teaching self-regulation strategies can effectively help students manage their language anxiety and improve their language proficiency. The consequences of failing, speaking in front of an audience, and feeling uneasiness during language tests are the main factors that cause students to be stressed (Ravshanovna, 2023).

"Before speaking in class, I attempt to manage my breathing and relax. Before answering a question, I sometimes take a few deep breaths and count to ten".

"I listen to the Quran before class to get in the right frame of mind." It makes me feel more prepared and confident" (Participant 7).

"I try to converse with native speakers outside of class, such as at a language exchange event or with international students." It allows me to practice and become accustomed to diverse dialects and speaking styles" (Participant 1).

"I remind myself that making mistakes is normal and necessary for learning." It makes me less nervous about speaking out in class" (Participant 5).

"During class, I take notes and write down key phrases or vocabulary that I can use later when speaking." It makes me feel more prepared and less worried about what to say" (Participant 13).

B. *Self-Confidence*

The data collected from the interviews with Jordanian undergraduate students from the English Language Department at Zarqa University revealed that self-confidence emerged as a critical theme in coping with ESA. Participants recognized the importance of self-confidence in reducing ESA levels, believing that it could help them overcome the adverse effects during presentations or group discussions.

Participants' responses further identified positive thinking, specifically "self-motivation," as a cognitive strategy for managing ESA. Positive thinking involves using their minds to develop confidence when communicating in English. While only three participants mentioned it, positive thinking encouraged self-motivation to confront speaking apprehension successfully.

Participant 15 emphasized the importance of learning and overcoming the fear and anxiety of speaking in front of others. According to Participant 9, building self-confidence is crucial for establishing new relationships with people. Participant 6 highlighted the need to trust oneself and face the initial apprehension when communicating in English. In addition, Participant 9 stated that it is essential to have confidence in oneself when facing speaking anxiety. Participant 7 received advice from a friend to avoid holding a paper during presentations to prevent the audience from noticing any trembling in their hands.

The following extracts from the participants highlight the view:

"Students must attempt to learn and overcome their fear and anxiety of speaking in front of others" (Participant 15).

"You have to trust yourself. As they say, no pain, no gain. We have to face our challenges and fears. We have to force ourselves to speak relationships and enhance our speaking skills." (Participant 9).

"I have been advised by a friend not to hold the paper in my hand while presenting as audiences will see my hand shaking" (Participant 7).

The participants' responses indicate that they strive to manage their English-speaking anxiety (ESA) by developing self-confidence. Students with ESA can manage their anxiety by building self-assurance. When students have faith in themselves, they are less likely to feel anxious or nervous when speaking in front of others. Jordanian students experienced

substantial psychological pressure during speaking tasks and employed different processes to minimize their oral communication in English. Their main motivation was to protect their self-confidence and self-esteem, which were severely threatened by oral situations (Alhasan et al., 2024).

C. Practice/Preparation

Preparing and rehearsing is an effective strategy for coping with ESA, according to the participants in the study. Many students shared that they would prepare themselves before participating in class discussions or presentations, which helped to improve their confidence levels and reduce anxiety. Preparation is identified as one of the most effective strategies for managing ESA, and twelve out of fifteen participants used this technique to reduce their anxiety when practicing their speaking skills. The participants in the study found that preparing and rehearsing helped them feel more confident and prepared when communicating in front of others. The participants participated in various activities to improve their communication skills, such as listening more intently, speaking more often, reading, taking classes, and studying diligently.

The following extracts from the interviews highlight the students' narration of the way they apply this strategy to manage their ESA experience in different communication contexts.

"I usually prepare by thinking about the topic and mentally practicing what I want to say." I often practice in front of a mirror to check my appearance and whether I am making odd facial expressions" (Participant 8).

"Whenever I have to give a presentation, I practice at home beforehand." I record myself speaking and review it to see where I can improve. This makes me feel more secure regarding the present" (Participant 12).

"I find it useful to write out what I want to say beforehand and then practice saying it aloud." This makes me feel more structured and prepared, reducing the likelihood of me stumbling over my words" (Participant 15).

The above narrations demonstrate that students in ZU use preparation as a coping mechanism for ESA. They describe various techniques, such as mental rehearsal, practicing in front of a mirror, recording and reviewing their presentations, and writing and practicing what they want to say. Through these strategies, students aim to improve their confidence levels and reduce anxiety associated with communication. The participants' emphasis on preparation highlights the importance of investing time and effort into honing their speaking skills to manage their ESA experience.

D. Supportive Environment

Students who experience Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (ESA) usually look for a supportive environment where they can practice speaking English without feeling judged, feel safe, and comfortable taking risks and making mistakes. They often rely on external social support as a coping mechanism to manage their anxiety levels. Seeking emotional and practical support from friends, teachers, or family members is a typical strategy these students adopt. Emotional support can include seeking comfort from friends or instructors, while practical support may involve seeking assistance in language learning. Family members can also provide inspiration and assistance. Research has shown that seeking social support is an effective way to alleviate language anxiety. Seeking social support helped reduce language anxiety levels (Horwitz et al., 1986).

"I discuss language learning with my classmates and offer advice on developing speaking abilities. This makes my challenges feel less isolated" (Participant 11).

"I try to talk to my friends who speak English better than me, and they give me some advice on how to improve my speaking skills and reduce my anxiety" (Participant 14).

"After class, I always seek assistance from my teachers." They provide me with comments and constructive criticism, which helps me improve my public speaking skills and gain confidence" (Participant 7).

"I occasionally practice speaking English with family members or friends who struggle with it to encourage one another" (Participant 8).

"I sometimes use social media to find people who speak English fluently. This way, I can practice my speaking skills with them, or at least I can imitate them" (Participant 3).

The comments above highlight social support as a strategy for managing anxiety among some of the students interviewed. Some students reported that they were able to manage their anxiety by utilizing social support. They found that having friends, family, and teachers who supported their efforts to learn English helped them feel less anxious and more motivated. This, in turn, helped them to become more proactive in their language learning and to reduce their anxiety levels.

E. Sense of Humor

Humor and anxiety are two concepts that are closely linked when it comes to public speaking. Many people find public speaking to be a terrifying experience, and anxiety can make it even more difficult. However, incorporating humor into a presentation can be an excellent method of dealing with speaking anxiety. A sense of humor can help speakers connect with their audience and make their speech more engaging and memorable. Additionally, finding humor in a situation can help to reduce stress and develop a positive mindset. As a result, a sense of humor can be a valuable tool for dealing with fear and making public speaking more enjoyable and successful. The participants described their use of this approach as follows:

“I usually try to create a positive environment for myself by using a sense of humor. It is changing my mood” (Participant 6).

“I realized that humor was a way for me to connect with my audience. By making them laugh, I felt nothing scared me” (Participant 10).

“If I am scared and worried, I will always try to make the audience laugh; I found that I could relax and enjoy the experience. It also helped me remember what I wanted to say” (Participant 3).

Humor can be an effective strategy for managing anxiety and improving performance in public speaking. A study by Bitterly (2018) found that speakers who incorporated humor into their presentations experienced less anxiety and were perceived as more competent and persuasive by their audience. However, practice makes perfect when using humor in public speaking, as noted by Lydon and Buckner (2022). The study participants also discussed their use of unique and humorous strategies to manage their anxiety during presentations, such as adopting an alternate persona and pretending to be confident. Bragg (2017) describes this technique as taking on a particular role or feigning confidence during communication. While these strategies can be helpful, using them in moderation and with appropriate judgment is essential to maintain professionalism and credibility during public speaking. Incorporating humor and adopting an alternate persona can lead to successful public speaking and effective communication.

V. DISCUSSION

What strategies are used by Jordanian students at ZU to reduce ESA? The research was conducted to identify the strategies students in ZU used to manage ESA during communication. The students were asked to describe the strategies they used to manage their English-speaking anxiety (ESA). The literature on ESA was also consulted to identify additional strategies that could be used to minimize or control ESA, such as corrective feedback and visualization.

Bowman (2018) and Bragg (2017) suggest that corrective feedback and visualization are two effective strategies for managing ESA. Corrective feedback involves providing students with feedback on their English-speaking skills, such as grammar and pronunciation. Visualization involves having students imagine themselves speaking English fluently and confidently. Alruzzi and Yunus (2019b) stated, “To produce a specific effect in language, speakers deviate and shift from the semantic norm. Therefore, figurative shift is a mechanism of semantic change”.

The students described various strategies they used to manage ESA during communication scenarios. These strategies included self-regulation, self-confidence, a supportive environment, practice/preparation, and humor. The students' customized techniques were identified by describing how they managed their ESA. Students have reported voluntarily engaging in activities and classes that involve other students. They believe that this will help them improve their English language speaking skills, which will, in turn, reduce their ESA.

The findings revealed that building self-confidence is an effective strategy for managing ESA. When students have confidence in their abilities, they feel more capable of handling communication situations, even in the presence of ESA. This allows them to focus on and deliver their message effectively rather than being distracted by anxiety or nervousness. Encouraging self-confidence-building strategies should be essential to language learning curriculums to help students overcome ESA. This result tallied with the findings of the research by Choi et al. (2015) and Marshall (1996), who found that students who received coaching on building their self-confidence could reduce their anxiety levels and improve their speaking skills. The coaching included setting realistic goals, celebrating successes, taking risks, and surrounding oneself with positive people.

The students in the study also reported seeking support from others, such as friends, family members, and teachers. They would ask for feedback and constructive criticism to improve their public speaking skills and reduce anxiety. Some students also turned to social media to find people who spoke English fluently so that they could practice their speaking skills with them or even imitate their speaking style. These strategies are consistent with previous research, which has shown that practicing and seeking support can effectively reduce ESA in students (Bragg, 2017; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

The analysis of the interview data showed that Students at ZU found that practicing and preparing were effective ways to manage their anxiety when communicating in English. They listened to native English speakers and English news channels and practiced speaking English regularly. This strategy was beneficial when students were faced with presentations and group discussions. This strategy is usually adopted when the students face presentations and group discussion scenarios. Alruzzi and Yunus (2019a) stated that “this explains why its compiler does not give the pronunciation, for example, and other information that may not be necessary for them from his point of view”.

Furthermore, the study findings also revealed that the students believed that external motivation, such as being forced to speak by an instructor or teacher, could help them manage their anxiety during communication encounters. They believed this could be done by adopting a self-soothing strategy, such as deep breathing or positive self-talk. The students' descriptions of this strategy suggest that they believed that if one is forced to speak through external pressure from the instructor or teacher and threats of being expelled from the class, one could manage one's level of communication anxiety by adopting a self-soothing strategy. This result corresponds with the findings of Bragg (2017), who found that when students were confronted with unavoidable communication scenarios, they adopted self-soothing techniques to mitigate the effects of communication anxiety.

The study findings also identified how students adopted a humor strategy to cope with English-speaking anxiety (ESA) situations. The humor strategy involves the student pretending to be confident by assuming a specific role or adopting an alternate persona. Bragg (2017) reported a similar ESA mitigation strategy in which students were found to devise self-soothing techniques to minimize ESA. Additionally, participants believed that self-confidence could be a beneficial strategy for overcoming communication anxiety (CA). They believed that one can overcome anxiety and deliver a speech effectively by building self-assurance. These findings are consistent with those of previous studies, such as those conducted by Ravshanovna (2023), Alhasan et al. (2023), Almusharraf (2020), Kristiansen et al. (2019), Liu (2018), Namaziandost et al. (2019), Vakilifard et al. (2020), Yasmin and Sohail (2018), and Zamani and Ahangari (2016). Alruzzi et al. (2022) stated that “English learners as a foreign language around the globe strive to develop their proficiency level in speaking” (p. 2458).

VI. CONCLUSION

The research explored the strategies Jordanian undergraduate students used at ZU to reduce or overcome their ESA. The study used a qualitative research design and interviews to collect data. It looked at the lived experience of students with ESA, with specific reference to their perceived levels of ESA, the strategies they used in mitigating ESA, and the effects of ESA on their academic and social life. The outcome of the research revealed that Jordanian students studying at ZU used various strategies to mitigate the extent of ESA during communication encounters. They used strategies that included self-regulation, self-confidence, a supportive environment, practice/preparation, and the use of humor. The students' customized techniques were identified by describing how they managed their ESA. The results reveal that when confronted with unavoidable communication scenarios, students adopt self-calming techniques to mitigate the effects of ESA.

The study aimed to explore the strategies used by Jordanian undergraduate students at ZU to reduce or overcome their English-speaking anxiety (ESA). The study used a qualitative research design and interviews to collect data. The study looked at the lived experience of students with ESA, with specific reference to their perceived levels of ESA, the strategies they used in mitigating ESA, and the effects of ESA on their academic and social life. The study's findings revealed that Jordanian students studying at ZU used various strategies to mitigate the extent of ESA during communication encounters. These strategies include self-regulation, self-confidence, a supportive environment, practice/preparation, and humor. Self-regulation involves learning to control anxiety by using techniques such as deep breathing and positive self-talk. Self-confidence involves building confidence by practicing speaking English in safe environments, such as with friends or family. A supportive environment involves finding a supportive environment where students feel comfortable speaking English, such as a conversation group or an English-speaking class. Practice/preparation involves practicing speaking English in advance of communication encounters, such as rehearsing a presentation or reading a book in English. The use of humor involves using humor to make communication encounters less stressful. These strategies can be used individually or in combination to help students reduce or overcome their ESA.

The students' customized techniques were identified by describing how they managed their ESA. The findings reveal that when confronted with unavoidable communication scenarios, students adopt self-soothing techniques to mitigate the effects of ESA. The study findings have implications for educators and policymakers interested in helping students with ESA. The findings suggest that various strategies can effectively mitigate ESA and that the most effective strategy for a given student will vary depending on the student's individual needs and preferences.

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Rashad Faleh Alhasan is an English Language Legal Translator/interpreter and EFL instructor at Saif bin Zaid Academy for Police and Security Science. His main research interests are oral communication apprehension and speaking difficulties in English language learning, writing apprehension, and translation anxiety.

Ibrahim Fathi Huwari received his PhD in Applied Linguistics from Universiti Utara Malaysia. He is currently an Associate professor at the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Petra, Jordan. His research interests include language anxiety, writing anxiety/apprehension, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics.

Marwan Harb Alqaryouti was born in Zarqa, Jordan in 1969. He is a PhD Candidate of English Language Studies / Literature / Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin / Malaysia. He is currently a Lecturer at Zarqa University / Jordan. His research interest includes Literary Criticism. Dr. Alqaryouti is a member of the Jordanian Translators and Applied Linguists Association and Jordanian Translators.

Ala Eddin Sadeq was born in Zarqa, Jordan, in 1971. He received his PhD in Literature from the University of Rajasthan, India, in 2000. He is currently a Professor at Zarqa University / Jordan. His research interest includes English Literature. Prof. Ala Eddin Sadeq is Vice President of Zarqa University for Academic Affairs. He is a member of the Jordanian Translators and Applied Linguists Association and Jordanian Translators Association.

Ali Ata Alkhaldi is an Assistant Professor of applied linguistics at the American University of the Middle East, Kuwait. He teaches a variety of ESP/EAP courses. Moreover, he is a reviewer of several international journals. He has published many research papers in international journals, and his main research interests are materials development, creativity, creative writing, academic writing, technical writing, discourse analysis, SLA research, TESOL, ESP/EAP, and SLA theories.

Kamal Ahmad Alruzzi was born in Amman, Jordan in 1978. He is a PhD Candidate in English Language Studies / Linguistics / at Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin / Malaysia. He is currently a Lecturer at Zarqa University / Jordan. His research interest includes Language studies. Alruzzi is a member of the Jordanian Translators and Applied Linguists Association and Jordanian Translators Association.

Cultural and Situational Constraints on Undergraduate Students' Performance of Learner Autonomy in EFL Learning

Tin T. Dang*

Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Abstract—The complexities and variations of learner autonomy in language learning, both conceptually and operationally, have been extensively examined in recent literature. With the current shift towards a social perspective, there is contemporarily greater emphasis on socio-cultural factors and their connection to local contexts. Acknowledging the significant contribution of individual preference, attitude, and motivation from a particular Asian context, the study employed a retrospective approach to understand the factors that mediated EFL students' performance of learner autonomy in Vietnam, where learning independence has been significantly encouraged recently. The research participants were guided to talk about (i) the learning activities that they had done, (ii) their reflections on those activities, and (iii) their future plans in individual semi-structured interviews. The analysis showed that students' performance of learner autonomy was basically mediated by attributes at personal and situational and cultural levels. Available learning opportunities, familial expectation, and examination scheme in a certain context appeared to be the most dominant factors in shaping students' autonomous learning behaviors. Further analyses indicated a significant impact of teachers on students' adoption of a learning activity or behavior. The study calls for a holistic approach to fostering learner autonomy in the higher education sector in Vietnam and beyond.

Index Terms—learner autonomy, culture, personal preference, higher education

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most challenging problems in Asian educational reforms lies in fostering independence in students' learning approaches, particularly in cultures that traditionally emphasize obedience in class participation (Dang, 2010). The multifaceted nature of learner autonomy in language learning, both conceptually and operationally, has been extensively deliberated in contemporary literature (Benson, 2011). As the construct has undergone a social turn, scholars increasingly highlight the significance of socio-cultural factors within local contexts (Chong & Reinders, 2022). This study critically examines the contributions of a specific context to students' performance of learner autonomy, offering insights for enhancing this capacity within the educational reform agenda in Asian contexts. The investigation utilizes a socio-cultural theoretical framework to analyze mediating factors at personal, situational, and cultural levels, contributing to the understanding of autonomy promotion in diverse educational settings.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Learner Autonomy in Second Language Learning

Learner autonomy in foreign/second language learning is described as a very 'complicated' (Little, 2003) or 'multifaceted' construct (Smith & Ushioda, 2009). It is often defined as a capacity which enables learners to control their learning activities more effectively and engage in them more actively in both school and life-long learning (Dam, 1990; Little, 1991). This capacity is illustrated by students' ability to initiate, monitor, and evaluate learning processes (Little, 2003). Learner autonomy is shaped by students' readiness to learn; their access to peer support through the learning community, and opportunities for topic selection in resource-rich language laboratories (Healy, 2007; Chik et al., 2018). The formation of learner autonomy is also resulted from how these attributes interact with one another and the level of control over these processes that learners wish to take. Learners are seen as both independent individuals who want to modify their living situation for their own sake and members of generalized socio-cultural groups who are attached to specific values and relationships. As a result, learner autonomy is identified as a socially and culturally situated variable, affirming the multifaceted nature of this construct.

The concept of learner autonomy has principally been examined from four different perspectives, namely *technical*, *psychological*, *socio-cultural*, and *political-critical* (Benson, 2006; Healy, 2007; Oxford, 2003; Sinclair, 2000). These perspectives might initially seem different and even conflicting, but they actually complement each other. The influence of the learning environment (a technical perspective) and individual traits (a psychological perspective) are two crucial,

* Corresponding Author.

interconnected factors in the formation and growth of learner autonomy (Dang, 2012). Negotiations and interactions between an individual with their situation (socio-cultural perspective) are in a shared space. These interactive behaviors in a community are driven by a desire for more effective learning outcomes, more agency and better life quality (political-critical perspective). It has been suggested that research should cover as many perspectives as possible as they are not mutually exclusive but rather contribute to a holistic understanding (Oxford, 2003). Driven by these four perspectives on learner autonomy and considering the contemporary social turn, this research study acknowledges the significant contributions of socio-cultural factors in shaping students' perceptions and their performance of learner autonomy. Therefore, the socio-cultural perspective of this construct is employed as the theoretical foundation for the current investigation.

B. Mediating Factors of Learner Autonomy

Major factors that may have direct influence on the performance of learner autonomy include personal preference, attitude, and motivation. Students with different learning preferences may be interested in different levels of activity flexibility and interaction (e.g., Braine, 2003; Figura & Jarvis, 2007; Nguyen, 2009; Smith, 2003). Some may prefer to work on their own, while others like to cooperate with peers in groups. In addition, some are more active in the online learning space, while others tend to engage more in offline learning activities.

Similarly, students with different learning attitudes and beliefs may also perceive similar learning opportunities differently (e.g., Trinh, 2005; Wallis, 2005). For example, while some students with rote learning habits probably favor grammatical lessons and drills, others may prefer learning by completing projects. Part of the students' autonomous learning capacity is associated with attitude (Dam & Legenhausen, 2010), and it can contribute to students' EFL proficiency. Benson (2010, 2016) argues that positive attitudes can lead to high expectations, and this enables students to implement their learning plans and monitor their learning progress. Although learner autonomy and attitude are not always observable and measurable, a positive relationship between the two appears to be obvious.

The relationship between learner autonomy and motivation has also been argued to be strong (Jiang & Peng, 2023; Murray et al., 2011). Motivation is suggested to be influential on students' performance of learner autonomy (e.g., Aoki, 2001; Miller et al., 2005; Schwiendorst, 2003, 2008). Those who are more motivated may be more eager in looking for learning opportunities and maintaining more effective learning engagement (Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011). Motivated students are also suggested to take part in autonomous learning behaviours more frequently (Tok, 2011). Other research shows that the relationship between learner autonomy and motivation is very complex (Lamb, 2010). Hozayen (2011) argues that motivation can empower learner autonomy, while others (Lamb, 2001; Lamb & Fisher, 1999) suggest that an increase in learner autonomy can enhance students' motivation. It seems that this relationship is interactive rather than unidirectional.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Taking an exploratory perspective, the study reported in this paper aims to understand the factors that foster and inhibit students' performance of learner autonomy in the context of EFL learning in Vietnam. Participating in the study were eleven EFL undergraduate students in a public university. They were eighteen or nineteen years old and at the upper-intermediate or advanced level of English proficiency. Data was generated from the semi-structured interviews, and theme analysis was employed for data interpretation.

The teaching practices with which these students experienced were mainly teacher-dominated, given that there were 45-55 students in each class. Teachers had to use a sound system in the classroom to be heard by students. Although collaborative activities such as group work and pair work were not the primary mode of class interactions, they were sometimes used by the teachers. Some entertainment-oriented activities, such as listening to English songs and watching movies, were also conducted apart from the regular lessons. Native speakers of English were invited to have informal talks with students once or twice during the semester, depending on each teacher's network of contacts.

A. Research Instrument

To gain insights into students' performance of learner autonomy and possible mediating factors, the data collection process of the study was designed to be able to accommodate the widest possible range of responses from the participants. An individual semi-structured interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Cohen et al., 2018) was the tool selected to give students opportunities to report their learning behaviors and judgments in their learning contexts according to a set of guided questions. Interview questions were kept fairly open to give students enough space for expression while taking into consideration the local socio-cultural insights such as relationship maintenance, a positive atmosphere, and suitable motivating stimuli during the interviews (Dang & Robertson, 2010). Closed-ended questions were often used first to direct the conversation and culturally build up the participants' confidence and motivation around the topic.

The interview questions for students to reflect on, in the semi-structured interview, focused on students' behaviors of initiating, monitoring, and evaluating their learning processes with particular consideration to those reported by Martinez (2008) and Smith and Erdogan (2008). For example, to address the initiating process, the study used questions such as '*Do you often look for opportunities to communicate in English such as making friends with English-speaking people, speaking English to friends, going to the English-speaking clubs, reading newspapers in English? Why do/don't*

you do that? What encourages or prevent you from continuing to do that? Similarly, to understand students' monitoring process, employed questions were *'Do you often stick to a learning plan? Do you often make modifications to your original plans such as changing the deadline of a task or replacing an activity with another? How often do you do that? Why do (not) you do that? What does that mean to your learning? Can you give some examples?'*.

B. Interview Protocol

All interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, the mother tongue of students to maximize the level of reliability and validity of the data collected. During the semester, the whole cohort of 247 students was invited, and eleven of them voluntarily participated. At the interview, participants were given time to express themselves. They were also encouraged to talk about any events that were of interest to them, and to provide examples to illustrate their retrospective descriptions. In addition, they were advised that they could use any English words or phrases convenient for them to express their opinions during the interviews (Dang & Robertson, 2010).

After pseudonyms were applied, the interview data were transcribed and translated into acceptable English for analysis. An overall investigation of the transcripts was conducted to understand the data as a whole. A code list was developed and revised during the coding process. The personal background and experience of the interviewer was used to support the interpretation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). General themes emerged from the data along with the participants' exercise of the autonomous learning processes. The factors that were indicated to mediate the participants' performance of learner autonomy were categorized and discussed.

IV. FINDINGS

To extract groups of factors contributing to students' performance of learner autonomy in the local learning context, a theme analysis was conducted with the interview transcripts collected from students' reflective descriptions of their learning behaviors. The analysis showed that personal preference, motivation, and attitude were the most important factors that influenced students' autonomous learning behaviors in the offline learning space. These three mediating factors were reflected at both personal and situational levels. For example, students might be motivated by a friend's impressive achievement and make a learning plan, but they would probably ignore it soon after that because they preferred a more flexible learning arrangement to working with a set plan. It could be seen that the motivation triggered by situational attributes contributed to the shaping of students' autonomous learning behavior. However, this behavior was not successfully maintained because it did not match the students' preference.

A. Effect of Preference

A between-subjects theme analysis indicated that personal preference was one of the most influential factors in mediating students' autonomous learning behaviors. Of the eleven students participating in the interviews, ten said that they performed planning activities as part of their monitoring learning processes. Their plans could be made for a year, a semester, a month, a week, or even a day. They fully understood that a learning plan could help them monitor their learning activities successfully. However, they were not always interested in doing this. For example, Student 9 was a very task-oriented female. She made a semester plan for her EFL study at the beginning of the semester and weekly plans based on the school schedules and her living place, given that she shared a room with some others in the school dormitory.

Whilst Student 9 appeared to be very well-organized, Student 10 seemed more relaxed and only made learning plans sometimes, depending on particular situations. He said:

I make no plan for my learning because it is me. I learn what I like at a particular time, [not guided or regulated by a plan]. However, if the examinations come, I'll make a detailed plan... [because] I'll be more motivated to study... I am not sure if I'll make learning plans in the future because I am an unplanned person. (Student 10)

Student 10 knew that making learning plans was useful for time management and effective learning. However, this learning behavior was not aligned with his personality, and he therefore performed it only in special situations where his personally driven methods were not effective enough. Other situational factors, such as time constraints and entertainment activities, also influenced students' preferences for making plans. For example, Student 7 indicated that she had to give up planning activities because she commuted to school every day, and the local bus service was not reliable. It always took her more time than expected. Even if she had a learning plan, it could not help her monitor her study effectively. Meanwhile, Student 3 said that she was not a well-disciplined person, and her learning plans were often delayed due to other social activities.

In contrast to the ten students who had at least some level of planning for their learning activities, Student 6 did not do any planning at all. This female described herself as a romantic person and claimed that her learning activities could be only driven by her psychological mood. These differences suggested that planning was not always one of the local students' preferences for learning activities. Those who were more task-oriented and practical, such as Student 9, tended to perform more planning activities for their learning. Meanwhile, those who were more relaxed, such as Student 6, did not value planning much. These two extreme approaches of students tended to demonstrate who they were in their learning activities. In contrast, those who did not have a strong personality, such as Student 10, tended to use different

learning preferences in different situations. These examples suggested that both personal and situational attributes played a role in their preference for the adoption of an autonomous learning behavior.

Personal preference was also reflected in the students' adoption of goal-setting behaviors. Ten of the eleven students in the interviews said that they set goals for their EFL learning. Their goals were usually general, such as reading a few books and improving their spoken skills. However, three students presented very specific goals. Student 3, an ambitious girl with a tight learning plan, targeted a grade point average of 8.0 for the semester to win a scholarship. Student 1 aimed to increase his grade point average by 0.2, and Student 11 wanted to achieve a score of more than 750 in a TOEIC test. It seemed that strongly task-oriented and competitive students tended to set specific goals for their learning. Meanwhile, those who thought that their learning performance was lower than the others in the class did not make their goals specific. However, based on the data collected in this study, there was insufficient evidence to draw any firm conclusions on goal setting behaviors.

The only student who did not set any learning goals described herself as a shy girl. She came from a province and stayed in the school dormitory. Therefore, her social activities in the city where she studied were limited. She indicated that it was not necessary to set goals because learning EFL was her interest. She seemed to suggest that goal setting was only necessary for those who did not want to study hard. They needed such learning goals to remind them of their EFL learning activities. In her case, because she was fully aware of her EFL study and always tried her best, she did not need to set any learning goals. She also implied that it was better to be guided by a personal desire than a goal in EFL learning.

Students' preferences were also evidenced in their choice of learning initiatives and evaluation behaviors. Nine of the eleven students interviewed indicated that they either went to an English-speaking club to look for speaking opportunities or formed a group of friends to practice English speaking skills. In addition, they often asked their friends to evaluate their learning performance. Although these nine students were all interested in working with others, their engagement in these initiating and evaluating learning opportunities was different. For example, Student 2, who appeared to be extroverted in her behaviors and served on the organizing committee of an English-speaking club, was very interested in the speaking activities of the club. She said:

I think that my English is not good yet. The English-speaking club is a very good environment for me because I can speak English and improve my communication skills there... [As a committee member], I also have opportunities to practice public speaking skills. (Student 2)

Learning alone, particularly, appeared to be the learning preference of Students 5 and 11. Although they were somewhat confident about their English competence, they were not interested in interacting with others. Student 5 initiated her learning processes by speaking and reading to herself and recording it. She then listened again to the recordings and evaluated her own performance. Student 11 often looked for new learning opportunities in books and practice tests. He evaluated his learning by checking his answers to a test with the answer key and continued to learn from that. Both Students 5 and 11 knew about the availability of opportunities for interactive learning around them, but they were not attracted to participate. They seemed to be introvert in their learning behaviors.

B. *Effect of Motivation*

Data analyses suggested three sources of motivation that contributed to the shaping of students' learner autonomy. The first was related to personal interests. Some students were interested in some areas of knowledge or skills, and they would perform any autonomous learning activities to satisfy their interest. The second came from the learning successes of their friends or peers. Students with this type of motivation like to be as successful as some other people that they know. The third was associated with a bright picture of high achievement profiles. These students wanted to attain high scores and become an outstanding member in their group. It could be seen that these three primary sources were both internally and externally motivated. While the one originating from personal interests seemed to be more internal; the one associated with friends' successes seemed to be more external; and the one of being outstanding in a group implied both internal and external attributes.

Of the eleven students interviewed, only Student 6 reported that her learning behaviors were not much motivated by learning achievements. She was primarily motivated by her interest in the literature of different nations in the world. Therefore, she always looked for literature works and read them no matter the language in which they were written. She sometimes read both Vietnamese and English versions of a work to comprehend it better. She also added that:

I rarely pay attention to my classmates' learning achievements. I don't care much about that... I sometimes check with my teachers if I do not feel happy with my assignment grades... but I never check with my friends. (Student 6)

What Student 6 said indicated a non-interactive pattern of learning behaviors. She seemed to be alone in pursuing her own interests because it might be difficult to find someone who could share the same interests. In addition, she seemed to enjoy reading alone and did not want to be bothered. Her learning behaviors were mainly directed by the motivation for a better understanding of literature works. The motivation associated with gaining better learning achievements than friends and becoming outstanding in the class did not have a strong impact on her learning behaviors. The following examples further illustrate the effects of the three sources of motivation on students' variations in adopting learning behaviors.

As the study participants majored in EFL, it was understandable that they all had a certain degree of interest in mastering English language skills and developing their understanding of English-speaking countries. They often looked for friends with the same interests and formed study groups to enhance their English language competence. For example, Student 2 reported that:

A friend of mine from the University of Finance and Banking was very interested in improving her English skills... Therefore, she and I invited two others, and we meet every Friday and Saturday evening. Each of us presents a topic to practice English speaking skills in general and public speaking skills in particular. (Student 2)

Similar behavior of creating collaborative learning opportunities was also adopted by Students 3 and 9 in more casual situations. These two often paired with another friend and talked about their concerns in daily life. If it was difficult to find a suitable partner, they tended to study alone or interact with the internet. For example, Student 1 affirmed that she would prepare her lessons very carefully in advance if the topic was one of her interests such as Hemingway or English and American literature. She also looked for more information on the internet. However, if she was not interested in the topic, she would only have a glance at it. This pattern of learning behavior resembled many others such as Students 3, 4, and 7.

Given a cultural tradition of community orientation in Vietnam, the cohort of students in the study generally knew about one another. In addition, students' learning results were always publicly released. Therefore, students generally knew of their friends' learning performance, and this had an impact on their autonomous learning behaviors. Apart from Student 6 who was internally motivated only, nine of the other ten reported that they often used their friends' learning achievements to inform their own learning behaviors. Different aspects of their friends' learning performance were taken into consideration. For example, in class, when a friend said something, Students 1 and 3 often paid attention to his/her pronunciation and intonation; meanwhile Students 2 and 4 focused on word usages, tenses, and grammatical structures.

In addition to personal interests and friends' achievements, three students reported that their autonomous learning behaviors were motivated by the possibility of securing a bright future by holding many successful positions. This source of motivation was interpreted as being triggered by both internal and external attributes. Students might develop intrinsic motivation for being successful during their growth in a certain socio-cultural situation. This kind of motivation could also be developed during their EFL learning as they sought to compete with all their peers. Student 5, for example, looked for more learning challenges by taking extra EFL classes in another language school. She liked to catch up with her friends and attain good scores. She wanted to successfully enhance her language competence to secure a good job. A similar example was reported by Student 6, whose desire for learning success was expressed in a continuous learning plan.

As I aim to be a high achiever, I often prepare the lessons in advance. I examine the topic, look up new words, and read through the lessons... [After each lesson,] I look for additional information about that topic from other resources. (Student 6)

C. *Effect of Attitude*

As identified from the analysis, attitude was an important factor in mediating students' performance of learner autonomy. Nine of the eleven students reported that their school textbooks were boring, and that was why they did not care much about reading them. For a typical example, both Students 2 and 10 agreed that the textbooks were not interesting enough for them to read and they did not find them useful for their learning. Therefore, they did not enjoy reading them. Such comments were also firmly acknowledged by Student 11, who said:

I think there is nothing to read in [those textbooks]. I just need to improve my four language skills [speaking, listening, reading, and writing]. Attending classes and reading the textbooks do not help me learn better. Really, nothing at all... So, it is better to make my own learning plan and follow it. (Student 11)

It appeared that because these students had a negative attitude towards the school textbooks, they tended to look for learning opportunities in other places. Student 10 looked for interesting materials in local bookshops, while Students 1 and 4 were more interested in materials on the internet. In contrast, because Students 5 and 6 did not hold a negative attitude towards the textbooks, their learning behaviors were developed around the textbook activities. Therefore, the learning behaviors of Students 5 and 6 tended to be less interactive but more task-oriented. Meanwhile, students such as 1 and 4 preferred more interactive learning behaviors and even aimed to develop soft skills such as teamwork and public speaking. These differences also suggested that students' attitudes towards the school textbooks could mediate their levels of working with reference materials.

The impact of attitude on autonomous learning behaviors was also evident in the students' activities of checking their work. Student 9 was the only one who reported that she did not check her work before submission because she did not want to read her work again and felt disappointed with it. Her comments suggested that she might never think that she did her work well, and self-evaluating her work could not make her work better. However, the other ten students disagreed with this idea. They thought that reviewing their own work before submission was necessary and they always did this. Further analyses indicated that the students' levels of review were dissimilar. Seven students said that they often looked over their work for spelling and grammatical mistakes because they thought such mistakes had to be avoided. Meanwhile, three other students said that they reviewed their work very carefully because they loved reading

their own work (Student 4) or wanted to express their respect to their teachers (Student 1). Student 11 even sent his work to his peers for evaluation because he thought that an independent reader could more easily identify his mistakes.

The mediating effect of attitude was also reflected in several other learning behaviors of students. Student 10, for example, indicated that one of the reasons that he did not regularly participate in the speaking activities in English speaking clubs was his uncertainty about its effectiveness. Similarly, both Students 1 and 2 said that they would give up writing small essays and planning activities in the future if their language competence was not improved. This suggested that an attitude towards a learning behavior was constituted by reflective judgments. Students often became interested in a learning activity, tried it for a while and evaluated the outcome. If they were satisfied with that outcome, it was likely that they would develop a positive attitude towards that learning behavior and continue to perform it. Otherwise, they would substitute it with another one of their interests.

Importantly, the requirements from class teachers had a strong impact on students' learning behaviors. Nine of the eleven students participating in the interviews agreed that the textbooks were boring, and generally their learning activities were developed independently from the textbooks. However, all of them said that they would read the textbooks carefully if it was required by their teachers. Such an obedient behavior suggested the important role of the course requirements and the teachers themselves in students' learning behaviors. Students seemed to think that the requirements from the teachers were those of the course and needed to be fulfilled. They might also tend to strongly believe that their teachers' advice was important, and they should follow this. In either of these two cases, the teachers' advice played a much more important role in mediating students' learning behaviors.

V. DISCUSSION

A. Factors Associated With Preference

Variations in students' personal preference were suggested to direct their autonomous learning behavior into different orientations. Students who are confident about their EFL competence prefer to overcome challenging learning tasks. Therefore, they tend to make their learning goals and plans specific (Students 9, 11, and 1, for example). In contrast, students who are passionate about EFL learning appear to focus less on planning activities and form general goals. It seems that they enjoy the learning process rather than the ultimate outcome. Although most EFL teaching practices such as communicative language teaching, cooperative teaching, or student-centeredness aim at facilitating interactive and collaborative learning opportunities for students, it is difficult to measure if such process-oriented learning behaviors can produce better quality learning than the outcomes-oriented approach.

Findings on students' preference of interactive learning patterns also suggest the importance of personality and trust as also reported in Yu (2021). For example, Students 2 and 4, who favor interactive learning, appear to be sociable. In contrast, Students 5 and 11, who favor individual learning, appear to be reluctant to work with others. Prior research in the context of Japan (Nelson & Carson, 1998) and China (Yang et al., 2006) emphasizes that students have skeptical perceptions of working with peers. They value their friends and peers' contribution to their learning, but they do not always think that it is useful. Therefore, it is likely that they tend to detach from their peers when given a chance. As they do not trust their friends' collaboration for their EFL development, they often do the learning task alone, as reported by Student 1 in the interview. This also implies that the method of member allocation in group work is critical. An inappropriate group formation technique can negatively affect the quality of learning engagement and hinder the promotion of learner autonomy.

Apart from individuals with extreme personalities, the mediation of learner autonomy is described as socially conditional. For example, students would have joined English speaking clubs regularly if they had lived near the clubs (Student 10) or if they had had a friend with whom to go (Student 8). Hence, they sometimes chose to stay at home and work with other materials. These students tend to be flexible in their learning behaviors which are primarily shaped by the contemporary situation. It seems that these students are more capable of managing different learning contexts as reported in Basri (2023). Nonetheless, this does not necessarily guarantee optimum success, especially for students with a low level of learner autonomy because the situational factors play a decisive role in their learning behaviors. This also means these students may respond positively to different teaching approaches. They can adopt an interactive or individual learning behavior without hesitation for the completion of a learning task.

B. Factors Associated With Motivation

The three sources of motivation which contribute to the shaping of students' autonomous learning behaviors appear to be associated intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and motivation intensity (termed by Gardner, 1985 and Ely, 1986). Reports from students in the current study indicate that these three patterns of motivation tend to trigger different patterns of autonomous learning behaviors. Students with intrinsic motivation in an area of knowledge, for instance, seem to prefer to work alone with the materials of their interest. They tended to detach from the class activities and did not care much about their classmates' learning performance. They planned, created, and engaged in the learning activities regardless of the social constraints from the learning environment. Nevertheless, it seems that such students will be able to engage very actively in class activities if they find a match between their learning motivation and the course objectives. To do this, apart from the suggestion by Aoki (2001) to engage students in a learning activity to

gradually increase their motivation, the current study suggests developing mutually shared learning content and objectives during the course.

The students who appear to be more motivated by external factors, such as peers' success, opt for flexible learning behaviors. As they would like to be better than their classmates, they often form pairs or groups with close friends and initiate learning opportunities. If finding a partner from their class is difficult, they tend to use other channels or even just study alone. This again implies the importance of grouping techniques and activity organization to facilitate students' learning engagement. It also reflects a shortcoming of the current teaching practices in creating study groups. Meanwhile, students motivated by both internal and external factors appear to perform more diverse patterns of autonomous learning behaviors. They tend to detach from their classmates in their learning behaviors. They seem to like learning alone with their highly personalized plan and in their own way or collaborating with people other than their classmates. In addition, they use their peers' achievement and progress for the development of their own learning goals. They also seem more committed to their learning plans regardless of social distractors or obstacles.

Students' perceived level of EFL competence in relation to that of their peers is important in predicting their autonomous learning behaviors, and this is applicable for different types of motivation. In such a collectivist society as Vietnam, learners often value the relative performance of an individual in comparison with others within the group rather than in reference to an absolute set of indicators. Therefore, students tend to regulate their learning behaviors according to their friends' performance. If they think that they are making better progress than their peers, they probably become more motivated in their learning (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Nevertheless, if they think their peers are more successful in learning achievements, their motivation needs to be fostered by teaching practice. Prior research shows that explicit instructions (Wacho, 2006) and motivational strategies (Guilloteaux & Dornyei, 2008; Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2011) can increase students' learning empowerment and motivation. However, this has not been validated in the context of Vietnam.

C. *Factors Associated With Attitude*

Students holding a positive attitude towards course textbooks tend to develop their learning behaviors based on the textbook activities. Meanwhile, other students' learning behaviors are initiated and shaped by people and resources elsewhere. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for the development of various learning attempts that may not necessarily match with the course objectives. It is also noted that students' attitude towards a learning activity can be reshaped during their learning process, which changes their autonomous learning behaviors. This conclusion is an addition to the argument that different students can have different attitudes towards the same learning activity (Hart, 2002). In other words, teaching practice can play an important role in changing students' attitudes towards a learning space by helping them recognize the advantages of taking part in it.

Further analyses also suggest that even when students hold the same attitude towards a learning activity, their autonomous learning behaviors can be performed at different levels. For example, some students only do spell and grammar checks when reviewing their assignments, while others tend to focus more on the content although they all have a positive attitude towards this learning activity. This suggests either a difference in the level of attitude or the anticipation of social factors. However, an interactive combination between these two alternatives should be more logical, as attitude can be governed by both individual and situational factors (Dornyei, 2003). More noticeably, it can be changed according to experience (Elyildirim & Ashton, 2006). These suggestions again emphasize the complex pattern of mediating factors on the performance of learner autonomy.

Of the factors influencing students' attitude, the teachers' instruction appears to be the most significant. It is likely that students in the study context strongly believe their teachers' advice. Although nine of the eleven interviewees reported that they did not develop their learning activities around the textbook, if their teachers asked them to do an activity in the book, they would definitely do so. They seem to automatically modify their attitude as instructed by the teachers. Their obedience seems to reflect the cultural and educational philosophy which is deeply rooted in the Vietnamese culture. Of course, there should be the anticipation of a power relationship and course requirement, but students did not seem to perceive any zone for learner autonomy development when teachers are involved. On one hand, this makes the role of teachers even more critical in nurturing learner autonomy because they need to help students understand the possibility of negotiating and debating with them. On the other hand, it is easier for teachers to facilitate the class activities in the way they want. Students may have a negative attitude towards an initiative at first, but they have a chance to modify it because they actually take part in that initiative.

VI. CONCLUSION

The investigation reported in this paper shows that different patterns of autonomous learning behaviors are triggered by variations in preference, motivation, and attitude. Although the analyses attempted to separate these factors when examining the performance of learner autonomy to maintain the clarity of the presentation, it is suggested that these factors interact with one another before having an effect on a learner. Such evidence is also aligned with the argument that there is a positive relationship between motivation and attitude (Dornyei, 2003) or an association among preference, belief, and attitude (Bullock, 2011). These suggestions call for a large-scale project on learner autonomy promoting

pedagogies, particularly in such a context as the contemporary Vietnam where both deep and surface learning orientations co-exist.

Preference, motivation, and attitude are in turn mediated by personal, situational, and social factors. Thus, teachers need to allow opportunities for students to tailor learning activities to suit their own self. Of course, this teaching and learning approach needs to be negotiated with students. They can be encouraged to use their prior learning experience and personal strategies flexibly during learning processes. They also have opportunities to reflect on their performance and modify their behaviors, if necessary, to obtain better outcomes (Dam & Legenhausen, 2010). Hence, when carrying out a learning activity, they are guided to target linguistic objectives (Lamb, 2010) and enhance their learner autonomy capacity. To design these activities properly, it is necessary for teachers to draw on social attributes in the local context.

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Tin T. Dang is an EFL and TESOL lecturer at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Vietnam. He currently works as a dean of Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education. He has also been supervising research students at several institutions. He completed his MA in TESOL at University of Queensland and PhD at La Trobe University. His research primarily focuses on learner autonomy, teaching methodology, curriculum development, and technology in education. He has published in *TESOL in Context*, *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, *The Asian EFL Journal*, *The Internet Journal of Language, Culture and Society*, and a few others. He has chaired *Language Teaching and Learning Today Conference (LTLT)* in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2023.

From the Bible to the Quran: A Journey of Existence in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*

Ahmed H. Kadhim Al-Abedi

English Department, College of Education for Humanities, University of Karbala, Karbala, Iraq

Zena D. Mohammed Hassan

English Department, College of Education for Humanities, University of Karbala, Karbala, Iraq

Abstract—Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1588) intricately explores the interplay of religious motifs, cosmic exploration, and themes related to Space, Heaven, Hell, and repentance. By incorporating biblical and Qur'anic references, Marlowe crafts a compelling narrative that deeply resonates with the human experience. The central character, Faustus, embodies the conflict between good and evil and between human ambition and spiritual limitation. The play's depiction of celestial realms parallels biblical narratives like the 'Tower of Babel' and Qur'anic visions, emphasizing humanity's persistent quest for knowledge and divine understanding. This study examines how Marlowe integrates religious concepts, and angelic and cosmic themes with theological and moral conflicts, highlighting the thematic parallels with sacred narratives from the Bible and the Qur'an. To conclude, *Faustus'* mythology remains a poignant and thought-provoking narrative that resonates across different cultural and religious contexts.

Index Terms—Faustus, Bible, Qur'an, existence, space

I. INTRODUCTION

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), a prominent poet and playwright of the sixteenth century, was born in Canterbury, England. During his short life, Marlowe crafted significant theatrical works including *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587), *Doctor Faustus* (1588), *The Jew of Malta* (1590) and *Edward II* (1592) (Cheney, 2004). Known for his innovative use of blank verse and exploration of complex characters and tragic themes, Marlowe's work significantly influenced the development of Elizabethan drama and his literary legacy left an indelible mark on the works of his successor, William Shakespeare (1564-1616) reshaping the trajectory of his writing career, theatrical techniques, 'verbal dexterity', and his adaptability in reshaping conventional genre concepts (Logan, 2016, p. 231).

Despite Marlowe's being a student of theology, he was known for his unconventional and rebellious attitude against religious conventions. Thus, he faced charges of heresy and atheism, a serious accusation in a society where religious conformity was closely monitored and deviations from orthodox beliefs were met with severe consequences (Bezio, 2017). Notwithstanding accusations of Marlowe "showing contempt for religion" (Slotkin, 2014, p. 410), it's important to recognize that Marlowe's writings, demonstrate an intricate engagement with religious themes, including both Islam and Christianity. This nuanced engagement with religious subjects is evident in works like *Dr. Faustus*.

There is no question that *Dr. Faustus* is a play about religion. By hinting reference to biblical and Qur'anic implication in *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe displays a careful and shrewd selection of ideas in his theatrical presentations. *Doctor Faustus* is a tragic play about a brilliant scholar, Faustus, who makes a pact with the devil, Mephistopheles, in exchange for magical powers. Despite warnings, Faustus squanders his gifts, indulging in worldly desires. As his time runs out, he faces the consequences of his choices, leading to his damnation.

Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, as Ahmed (2019) discusses, continues to captivate modern and postmodern scholars, who debate its religious or anti-religious essence when pondering upon Faustus's transition from a philosophy student to an accused atheist. Ahmed's study suggests that Faustus's fate aligns with the religious interpretation, focusing on Islam's perspective on the human mind, repentance, and salvation as instantiated within the play. Accordingly, the eternal battle between good and evil is portrayed through the Good Angel (Ilham) and the Bad Angel (Waswasa).

Faustus's uncontrolled sexual desire, symbolized by the Wolf, prevents him from forming a genuine companionship (Ahmed, 2019). In Marlowe's world, some sins seem unforgivable, contrasting with Islam's belief in God's boundless mercy. From an Islamic perspective, faith and hope are emphasized, as stated: "No one despairs of God's soothing mercy except those who have no faith" (Ali, 2011, p. 87). Faustus rejects the Old Man's Christ, seeking solace in his distorted, individualistic version of Christianity.

To fulfill his pact with the devil, Faustus demands that Mephistopheles bring him Helen, a symbol of destructive beauty from Greek mythology. Deluded, Faustus believes that Helen embodies heavenly bliss, unaware that he is inviting damnation. He eagerly anticipates her kiss: "Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss/ Her lips suck forth my soul,

see where it flies” (Marlowe, 2005, 5.1, p. 49). The identity of Helen given to Faustus is ambiguous, as she could either be a demonic entity or the genuine Helen (Lodine-Chaffey, 2021). Unbeknownst to him, Helen is a devil in disguise, and this embrace seals Faustus’s irreversible damnation, depicting his tragic descent into demonic seduction despite his misguided pursuit of immortality. W. W. Greg in “The Damnation of Faustus”, argues that Faustus commits the sin of ‘demoniality’ the moment he longs to have sexual intercourse with Helen’s spirit, who is merely a manifestation of the devil (Cited in Amor, 2024, p. 14). Accordingly, it seems that Marlowe resorts to Christianity and the Quran similarly, though in different manners.

This paper aims to explore the theme of existence and its significance in Marlowe’s mythology, examining how his religious awareness influenced his theatrical works during the Renaissance. By analyzing his portrayal of space exploration, the presence of angels, and the psychological impact on characters, the study provides insight into Marlowe’s desire to provoke thought and evoke biblical and Quranic religious concepts in the minds of his audience.

Throughout theological sources in both the Bible and the Qur’an, it is indicated that Pharaoh “denies and repudiates the invitation of Moses to submit to God and have mercy over his people. Pharaoh arrogantly claims that he needs no God since he is the great god of his people” (Shalabi et al., p. 51). The tale of Moses and Pharaoh is recounted in both the Qur’an and the Old Testament. In these holy scriptures, Moses urges Pharaoh to abandon tyranny, show mercy to the Israelites, and repent before God. The Qur’an describes Pharaoh’s cruelty while the Exodus narrative depicts Moses’ efforts to liberate the Israelites from his oppression. Despite textual differences, both emphasize Pharaoh as a villain- arrogant and defiant against God. Pharaoh’s self-deification is highlighted in the Qur’an, where God instructs Moses to guide Pharaoh toward the right path.

II. RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS IN MARLOWE’S THEATRICAL PRESENTATIONS

In Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*, religious concepts are intricately woven into the narrative, reflecting the eternal struggle between good and evil, salvation and damnation. Faustus, the protagonist, embodies the human condition torn between spiritual redemption and worldly desires. His pact with the devil, reminiscent of biblical temptations, symbolizes the lure of sin. The character of Faustus mirrors the biblical figure of Adam, tempted by knowledge and power. By rejecting traditional Christian salvation, Faustus echoes the biblical warning against worshiping false idols. His pursuit of magical knowledge parallels the story of King Solomon, who, according to Islamic tradition, was granted wisdom but later led astray by his desires.

Faustus’s constant internal conflict is akin to the Quranic concept of the struggle between human desires and the guidance of Allah. His ultimate despair and plea for mercy echo Quranic verses emphasizing God’s forgiveness for those who repent sincerely. Marlowe’s nuanced portrayal of Faustus’s internal torment resonates with various religious texts. In “The Faustian Motif in the Tragedies by Christopher Marlowe” (2013), Milena Kostic draws a parallel between Faustus and biblical characters which deepens the understanding of Marlowe’s religious themes. Moreover, Islamic interpretations of inner struggles and repentance shed light on Faustus’s internal conflict from an Islamic perspective. Despite his deepening despair, Faustus struggles to repent sincerely, ultimately sealing his tragic fate. His internal conflict and attempts at repentance are expressed in his remorse over his decision to sell his soul and seek repentance. “I do repent, and yet I do despair:/ Hell strives with grace for conquest in my breast” (Marlowe, 2005, 5.1, p. 48). And Faustus pleads for mercy and laments his fate saying: “See, see where Christ’s blood streams in the firmament! / One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah, my Christ!” (Marlowe, 2005, 5.2, p. 52). In his desperation for repentance, Faustus realizes the gravity of his actions and confesses: “My heart’s so hardened I cannot repent!” (Marlowe, 2005, 2.3, p. 82). In the final moments, he tries to repent, but it is too late: “O, I’ll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down? / See, see where Christ’s blood streams in the firmament! / One drop would save my soul-half a drop: ah, my Christ!” (Marlowe, 2005, 5.2, p. 52). These textual instances highlight Faustus’s inner turmoil and his desperate attempts to repent, underscoring the tragedy of his inability to find salvation despite his regrets.

Similarly, in the Quran, it is mentioned that those who die as disbelievers, having rejected faith until their death, are not allowed to repent. The Quran states that repentance is open to all individuals during their lifetime. However, once death approaches and a person is on the verge of passing away, their repentance is no longer accepted. This is emphasized in the verse: “Nor is repentance accepted of those who [continue to] do evil deeds up until, when death comes to one of them, he says, ‘Indeed, I have repented now,’ or of those who die while they are disbelievers. For them, we have prepared a painful punishment” (Ali, 2011, p. 18). This verse indicates that repentance is not accepted by those who die in a state of disbelief or persist in committing evil deeds until their death. It highlights the importance of sincere repentance during one’s lifetime for it to be accepted by Allah.

In turn, individuals who willingly persist in disbelief, reject faith and die without repentance face a different fate. According to Islamic belief, those who die as disbelievers, without accepting Islam and without repenting, are destined for punishment in the afterlife. The Quran mentions various verses about the consequences of disbelief. For instance, Surah Al-Baqarah (2:161-162) states: “Indeed, those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers- upon them will be the curse of Allah and of the angels and the people, all together. They will abide therein eternally, and the punishment will not be lightened for them, nor will they be reprieved” (Cited in Rassool, 2021, p. 8). Additionally, in Surah Al-Imran (3:85), it is stated: “And whoever desires other than Islam as religion- never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers” (Cited in Abdelnour, 2023, p. 857).

In the Bible, the concept of "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" is often interpreted as an unforgivable sin. In the Gospel of Matthew, this is specifically referenced in the New Testament, in the Gospel of Matthew: "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come" Matthew (12:31-32) (New Testament, ESV). This verse has been interpreted in various ways within Christian theology. While interpretations differ, some theologians understand the "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" as a deliberate and willful rejection of God's grace and forgiveness, characterized by persistent unbelief and a hardened heart. In this context, those who commit this sin are seen as incapable of repenting because they have knowingly and persistently rejected the divine guidance and forgiveness offered by the Holy Spirit. When comparing this biblical concept to the fate of Doctor Faustus, his tragedy lies in his persistent rejection of repentance and divine forgiveness despite multiple opportunities for redemption. His pride, arrogance, and pursuit of worldly desires lead him to reject God's grace, paralleling the concept of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. In this sense, Faustus's fate aligns with the idea of an unforgivable sin, as he knowingly rejects repentance and seals his own damnation.

III. THE EXPLORATION OF SPACE AND WORLDS

Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* explores the profound theme of bridging the gap between the earthly and the divine. One compelling motif that emerges from Marlowe's oeuvre and specifically *Doctor Faustus* is the exploration of space and the quest to unravel the mysteries of the heavens. This theme resonates deeply with both biblical and Qur'anic references, painting the cosmos as a realm of wonder, spiritual significance, and the eternal pursuit of knowledge.

In the Bible, the Tower of Babel narrative in the *Book of Genesis* serves as a potent metaphor for human ambition and curiosity. In this story, humanity, unified by a common language, attempts to construct a tower that reaches the heavens, symbolizing their aspiration to attain divine knowledge and power. This narrative illustrates the human desire to explore the unknown, transcend earthly limitations, and seek comprehension of the divine (Callahan, 2008). Similarly, in *Doctor Faustus*, the protagonist Faustus embodies this relentless thirst for knowledge and power, akin to the builders of the Tower of Babel. Faustus's pact with Mephistopheles and his pursuit of magic reflects a profound longing to transcend human limitations and explore the mysterious and magical realms beyond ordinary human understanding.

In Islamic tradition, the Qur'an describes the heavens as vast and awe-inspiring realms, inhabited by angels and divine wonders. Qur'anic verses evoke the cosmic wonders, portraying the heavens as a testament to Allah's creative power and majesty. For instance, Surah Al-Mulk (67:5) states, "And We have certainly beautified the nearest heaven with stars and have made [from] them what is thrown at the devils and have prepared for them the punishment of the Blaze." This description of the heavens, as adorned with stars, emphasizes their enchanting beauty and cosmic significance. In Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, the portrayal of the heavens aligns with this Qur'anic imagery, capturing the mystery and allure of space as a realm of divine craftsmanship and celestial wonders.

In *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe weaves a compelling narrative around Faustus whose insatiable curiosity and ambition drives him to explore the realms beyond ordinary human comprehension. When he conjures Mephistopheles, the devil, Faustus embarks on a journey into the supernatural, seeking knowledge and power that transcend mortal boundaries. This quest mirrors the human fascination with the heavens, echoing the ancient biblical tale of the Tower of Babel. In Act 5, Scene 2, Faustus summons Helen of Troy, expressing his desire to explore heavenly beauty and wisdom. He exclaims, "Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flies!" (Marlowe, 2005, 5.2, p. 90), capturing the essence of his cosmic exploration. Faustus's interaction with Helen symbolizes his pursuit of celestial knowledge and the wonders of the universe, akin to the heavenly beauty described in both biblical and Qur'anic texts.

Marlowe's exploration of space and worlds in *Doctor Faustus* intricately weaves together biblical and Qur'anic motifs, exploring the human fascination with the unknown and the divine. The parallels between Faustus's cosmic curiosity and the biblical Tower of Babel narrative, as well as the Qur'anic descriptions of the heavenly realms, highlight humanity's enduring quest for knowledge, power, and spiritual enlightenment. Through Faustus's journey, Marlowe captures the timeless allure of the cosmos, depicting it as a realm of wonders, mysteries, and eternal significance.

IV. ANGELIC PRESENCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCE

One of the prevalent motifs in Marlowe's plays is the presence of angels and their profound influence on the characters' decisions and perceptions. This motif is most vividly observed in his magnum opus, *Doctor Faustus*. Drawing inspiration from both the Bible and the Qur'an, Marlowe skillfully employs angelic figures to underscore the moral dilemmas faced by his characters, delving into themes of repentance, divine judgment, and the intricate consequences of human actions.

In both the Bible and the Qur'an, angels are depicted as intermediaries between humanity and the divine realm, serving various roles such as messengers, guardians, and agents of divine intervention. These beliefs form the basis of Marlowe's exploration of the complexities of human nature and the relationship between humans and the divine. Marlowe's central character, *Faustus*, grapples with his decisions and is confronted by angelic and demonic forces, emphasizing the eternal struggle between good and evil. In terms of Biblical implications, Marlowe draws parallels between Faustus's moral dilemma and the story of Job in the Bible, where Job faces immense suffering and is tempted by Satan, highlighting the

theme of divine testing. In *The Fall of Lucifer* (Isaiah 14:12-15), Lucifer's fall, as depicted in the Bible, mirrors the descent of Faustus into darkness, symbolizing the consequences of pride and rebellion against the divine order.

Furthermore, Faustus's encounter with the Good and Bad Angels in the play represents the eternal struggle between good and evil. This dichotomy mirrors the cosmic balance portrayed in religious texts, where the heavens are depicted as a battleground between celestial forces. In *Doctor Faustus*, Act 2, Scene 1, Marlowe presents the Good and Bad Angels, who engage in a dialogue embodying the struggle between Faustus's conscience and temptation. The Good Angel urges Faustus to repent and seek God's mercy, while the Bad Angel tempts him with the pleasures of magic and worldly power. This internal struggle mirrors the cosmic battle between good and evil, illustrating Faustus's internal conflict. Similarly, in the Bible (Ephesians 6:12, ESV), it is stated: "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." This passage emphasizes the spiritual battle between good and evil in the heavenly realms. It aligns with the cosmic balance portrayed in religious texts, where celestial forces engage in an eternal struggle for influence and control.

In addition, in the Qur'an, Surah 15:16-17 states: "And We have certainly made firm the heaven with Our hands and We did not create them to waste away. So, we protected them with Our hands, that they might return [to obedience]." This Qur'anic verse describes the heavens as being protected and maintained by divine hands, symbolizing the cosmic order established by God. The reference underscores the idea of the heavens as a battleground, where celestial forces preserve order and combat forces that seek to disrupt it. Similarly, in the Bible (Revelation 12:7, ESV), it is stated: "Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back." This passage portrays a heavenly battle between the archangel Michael and the dragon, representing the eternal struggle between good and evil. It highlights the celestial conflict, echoing the cosmic balance depicted in religious narratives.

In the Qur'an, the story of Iblis refusing to bow to Adam serves as a cautionary tale, reflecting Faustus's defiance against divine authority and his ensuing damnation. In case of divine mercy and repentance (Qur'an, 39:53), the Qur'an emphasizes God's mercy and the possibility of repentance, offering a contrasting perspective to Faustus's ultimate fate and highlighting the significance of human choice. One poignant moment illustrating this theme occurs in Act 5, Scene 2, where Faustus is tormented by his impending damnation. Mephistopheles urges him to repent and seek God's forgiveness, but Faustus remains unyielding in his defiance. As Faustus laments his fate, he exclaims:

Faustus: See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament! One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah, my Christ!

Mephistopheles: Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ! Yet will I call on him: O, spare me, Lucifer!

Faustus: Where is it now? 'Tis gone: and see where God/ Stretched out his arm and bends his ireful brows! / Mountains and hills, come, come and fall on me, / And hide me from the heavy wrath of heaven! No!

Good Angle: Faustus, repent; yet God will pity thee.

Bad Angle: Thou art a spirit; God cannot pity thee.

Faustus: Who buzzeth in mine ears I am a spirit? / Be I a devil, yet God may pity me; Ay, God will pity me, if I repent.

Bad Angle: Ay, but Faustus never shall repent. (Marlowe, 2005, 5.2, p. 52)

In this passage, Faustus is confronted with the opportunity to repent, and Mephistopheles, despite being a devil, acknowledges the possibility of God's mercy if Faustus repents. However, in his pride and stubbornness, Faustus refuses to repent and declares that he never will. This moment encapsulates the significance of human choice in the play, emphasizing Faustus's free will and the tragic consequences that result from his refusal to seek redemption.

Free will suggests that human beings have the power to shape their own destinies through their actions and decisions. It emphasizes the significance of individual freedom and personal responsibility, denoting that "existence precedes essence", suggesting that individuals exist first before they determine the very essence of themselves through actions and decisions (Mallah, 2016, p. 2). As stated by Jean-Paul Sartre, humans are radically free, but this freedom comes with the burden of responsibility: "Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does. It is up to you to give [life] a meaning" (Sartre, 2007, p. 12). According to this view, even in modern times, prosperity and domination depend on individuals' decisions. Sartre's words underscore the existentialist belief in human freedom and the imperative to take responsibility for one's own existence. According to Sartre, individuals are not predetermined to be a certain way; they define themselves through their choices, actions, and the values they embrace. This perspective emphasizes the profound impact of free will on the course of one's life and the importance of conscious decision-making in shaping one's identity and destiny. The contrasting ideas of Marlowe and modern materialist views in depicting the fate of the protagonist highlight Marlowe's focus on the religious discourse and dependence on angelic influence. Angels appear as moral guides, attempting to steer Faustus away from damnation, which underscores the psychological and spiritual struggles within Faustus's conscience. Despite this angelic intervention, Faustus succumbs to his desires and the influence of demonic forces, leading to his tragic downfall.

V. CONCEPTS OF HEAVEN, HELL, AND REPENTANCE

Rooted in religious awareness and drawing inspiration from the Bible and the Qur'an, Marlowe crafts a narrative that intricately weaves together the concepts of heaven, hell, and repentance. Marlowe's excerpt, "Oh, I'll leap up to my God!

Who pulls me down? See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament! One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah, my Christ!" (Marlowe, 2005, 5.2, p. 52), refers to heaven and salvation deemed by Christ. In turn, Marlowe writes about hell, stating: "Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed in one self-place, ribbed in one self-place, but where we are is hell, and where hell is there must we ever be" (cited in Lazar, 2019, p. 133). Furthermore, Faustus reflects: "Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it. Think'st thou that I who saw the face of God and tasted the eternal joys of Heaven am not tormented with ten thousand hells in deprived of everlasting bliss?" (Marlowe, 2005, 1.3, p. 17). Observing heaven and hell, when Faustus repents, he laments: "I do repent, and yet I do despair. Hell strives with grace for conquest in my breast. What shall I do to shun the snares of death?" (Marlowe, 2005, 5.1, p. 48).

The internal struggle of Faustus regarding his choices, the temptation of worldly pleasures, and the eternal consequences of his actions, reflect the themes of Heaven, Hell, and the possibility of repentance. In both the Bible and the Qur'an, the concepts of heaven and hell are deeply ingrained in religious teachings. Heaven is portrayed as a place of eternal bliss and reward for the righteous, while hell signifies eternal punishment for those who stray from the path of righteousness. Marlowe's characters grapple with the fear of damnation and the allure of worldly pleasures, reflecting the eternal consequences that hinge upon human actions and faith.

Repentance, a fundamental tenet in Christianity and Islam, embodies the concept of seeking forgiveness and turning away from sin. Marlowe's characters, especially Faustus, exemplify the struggle for redemption. The parable of the prodigal son, who squanders his inheritance but is welcomed back by his father, mirrors Faustus's journey. This story emphasizes divine mercy and the possibility of redemption even after straying from the righteous path (Parable of the Prodigal Son Luke 15:11-32). In 'The Rich Man and Lazarus' (Luke 16: 19-31), the parable illustrates the consequences of living a life characterized by selfishness and neglect of the poor. It serves as a cautionary tale, reflecting Faustus's choices and eventual fate. Faustus's inner conflict and wavering between repentance and damnation serve as a powerful allegory for the human condition, illustrating the constant struggle between temptation and the desire for salvation.

The story of Pharaoh's repentance (Ali, 2011, pp. 90-92) recounts how Pharaoh sought repentance when faced with imminent death. This narrative emphasizes the opportunity for repentance even in the face of grave sins, resonating with Faustus's internal struggle and his fleeting moments of remorse. Additionally, Divine Mercy and Forgiveness (Ali, 2011, p. 53) emphasize God's infinite mercy and forgiveness, highlighting the possibility of redemption for those who sincerely repent and turn back to God.

The Quran emphasizes God's infinite mercy with numerous verses highlighting His willingness to forgive sincere repenters, regardless of the gravity of their sins. This mercy is often portrayed as boundless and all-encompassing. The Quran often narrates stories of individuals, including Pharaoh, who repent at the last moment before their death or punishment, highlighting the availability of repentance until the final moments of one's life. While the Bible also emphasizes God's mercy, it places significant focus on His love and grace. Repentance is often viewed as a response to God's love, with forgiveness granted through God's grace. In many parts of the Bible, there is a requirement for atonement for sins. In Christianity, the concept of atonement through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ is central. Repentance is often linked with accepting Jesus as the Savior. In the New Testament, particularly within Christian theology, repentance is often associated with faith in Jesus Christ. The idea is that repentance and faith in Jesus lead to salvation, highlighting the importance of a personal relationship with Christ. Although both the Quran and the Bible stress the importance of repentance, the nuances lie in the specific theological beliefs and narratives of each religion. Islamic repentance emphasizes God's mercy, the opportunity for repentance until the last moment, and sincere turning back to God. In contrast, Christian repentance is often closely tied to God's love and grace, with a focus on atonement through Jesus Christ. However, in both religions, procrastination of repentance until the last opportunity can undermine the chance to gain divine grace.

VI. THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION AND AUDIENCE CONTEMPLATION

Through its theatrical representation and emotional intensity, the play not only captivates the audience but also serves as a reflective mirror, compelling spectators to ponder their spiritual dilemmas. Marlowe's dramatic portrayal prompts deep introspection in the audience, encouraging them to confront their beliefs, doubts, and moral choices.

Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* employs powerful imagery and symbolism to create a vivid representation of heaven, hell, and the human condition. Faustus's pact with the devil, Mephistopheles, unfolds through a series of intense and visually striking scenes. One such instance is Faustus's summoning of Mephistopheles, during which the stage is brought to life, with supernatural elements, captivating the audience's attention. The vivid description of hell in Act II, Scene 1, serves as a chilling reminder of the consequences of Faustus's choices. Marlowe's masterful use of language and stagecraft intensifies the emotional impact, evoking a range of feelings from awe to terror among the spectators.

Faustus's moments of remorse and his genuine desire to repent highlight the human capacity for change and spiritual redemption. In Act V, Scene 2, Faustus pleads for mercy, expressing his willingness to repent: "See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament! One drop would save my soul, half a drop." This poignant moment challenges the audience to consider the power of genuine repentance and its potential to alter the course of one's destiny. Through Faustus's ultimate fate, Marlowe compels the audience to reflect on the importance of moral choices and the possibility of redemption, even in the face of overwhelming despair. In her article "The Theatricality of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus," Smith (2018) explores how Marlowe's use of spectacle and visual effects creates a transformative theatrical experience.

Smith argues that the play's visual elements, such as Faustus's magical feats and encounters with supernatural beings, enhance the audience's emotional engagement, prompting reflection on the play's profound themes. Similarly, Johnson (2017) examines Marlowe's manipulation of time and space, emphasizing how the play's non-linear narrative structure intensifies the audience's sense of foreboding and moral reflection. These scholarly perspectives underscore the significance of Marlowe's theatrical craftsmanship in eliciting contemplation among spectators.

The character of Faustus becomes a medium through which the audience contemplates their own moral choices and desires. Faustus's ambition and thirst for knowledge resonate with human aspirations, making him a relatable figure. As the play progresses, Faustus's internal conflict and eventual despair become palpable, forcing the audience to question the limits of human ambition. In Act V, Scene 1, Faustus's soliloquy reveals his deep regret and the realization of his impending damnation: "O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?" This moment of profound despair invites the audience to empathize with Faustus's struggle, leading them to reflect on their desires and the ethical boundaries they might cross in pursuit of their goals. However, Faustus's skepticism and eventual defiance of religious teachings mirror the audience's uncertainties, forcing them to confront their beliefs and consider the consequences of disbelief. In Act II, Scene 2, Faustus represents the Renaissance's uprising against religion and medieval views of heaven and hell, embodying the era's spirit of skepticism (Gaddawi, 2023). This scene prompts the audience to question established norms and contemplate the nature of salvation. Faustus reflects on his torment with the following lines:

Faustus: Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it. Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God and tasted the eternal joys of Heaven, am not tormented with ten thousand hells in being deprived of everlasting bliss?" (Marlowe, 2005, 1.3, p. 17)

Faustus challenges the conventional beliefs about heaven and hell, suggesting that he is already in hell due to his deprivation of heavenly joys. His skepticism forces the audience to confront their own beliefs and consider the consequences of disbelief, encouraging them to question established norms and contemplate the nature of salvation. However, drawing on Biblical and Quranic implications, Marlowe established a discourse of skepticism that remains somehow ambiguous, seemingly due to the constraints of his time, an ambiguity that is addressed more directly in Shakespeare's plays.

VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* stands as a timeless masterpiece that implores the intricate intersections of religious beliefs, human nature, and the eternal struggle between good and evil. Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, drawing inspiration from both the Bible and the Qur'an, weaves a complex narrative that challenges the audience to confront their own spiritual dilemmas and moral choices. Through Faustus, Marlowe presents a character whose insatiable thirst for knowledge, power, and worldly desires mirrors the timeless human struggle between spiritual redemption and material indulgence. Marlowe's masterful theatrical representation intensifies the emotional impact, prompting deep introspection among spectators. Through Faustus's skepticism and defiance, Marlowe encourages the audience to question established beliefs, making the play a profound exploration of faith, free will, and the human struggle for salvation in the face of eternal consequences.

The play's exploration of religious concepts, such as heaven, hell, and repentance, is profound and multifaceted. Marlowe deftly incorporates Biblical and Qur'anic motifs, creating a rich tapestry of symbolism and allegory. Faustus's internal conflict, vividly depicted through his moments of remorse and despair, resonates with the audience, prompting deep introspection about the nature of free will, divine mercy, and the consequences of one's choices. Through the character of Faustus, Marlowe forces the audience to grapple with essential questions about the human condition: the pursuit of knowledge and ambition, the temptations of the material world, the power of repentance, and the concept of divine judgment.

The exploration of space and worlds in *Doctor Faustus* further amplifies the play's thematic depth. Marlowe's portrayal of Faustus's cosmic curiosity mirrors the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel, symbolizing humanity's ceaseless quest for knowledge and understanding of the divine. The play's vivid imagery of the heavens and the cosmic balance between good and evil, drawn from both religious traditions, immerses the audience in a world of wonder and mystery. This exploration not only captivates viewers but also challenges their perceptions of the universe and its place within it.

The presence of angels and their psychological influence on Faustus adds another layer of complexity to the play. Marlowe's use of angelic characters underscores the eternal struggle between good and evil, free will, and the human conscience. Faustus's moments of remorse and his desperate attempts at repentance evoke empathy from the audience, leading them to reflect on the nature of divine forgiveness and the significance of sincere repentance in the face of damnation. The play's portrayal of angels as both moral guides and tempters highlights the constant battle within the human soul, encouraging viewers to examine their own inner conflicts and moral choices.

Marlowe's theatrical representation and the emotional intensity of the play serve as a catalyst for audience contemplation. The vivid imagery, striking visual effects, and powerful soliloquies create a transformative theatrical experience, drawing the viewers into Faustus's moral quandary. The play serves as a mirror, reflecting the spectators' own beliefs, doubts, and ethical dilemmas. Through Faustus's journey, the audience is compelled to question their aspirations, ambitions, and spiritual convictions. They are confronted with the boundaries of human knowledge, the allure of material desires, and the potential for redemption even in the face of profound despair.

In the grand tapestry of *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe synthesizes religious doctrines, philosophical inquiries, and human emotions. He explores the complexities of faith, skepticism, and the eternal struggle between good and evil. Through Faustus, Marlowe challenges traditional religious norms and societal expectations, inviting the audience to engage in a profound introspection of their own beliefs and values. The play's enduring relevance lies in its ability to evoke timeless questions about the human condition, the nature of divinity, and the moral choices that define our existence.

In the realm of *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe invites the audience to confront the very essence of their humanity. Through the character of Faustus, he beckons the viewers to consider the consequences of their choices, the depths of their desires, and the possibility of redemption. In the amalgamation of religious symbolism, cosmic exploration, angelic presence, and psychological turmoil, Marlowe crafts a narrative that transcends the boundaries of time and culture. *Doctor Faustus* becomes not merely a play but a profound philosophical discourse, challenging each generation to grapple with the profound questions it poses.

Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* serves as a timeless testament to the complexities of the human soul and the perennial struggle between the divine and the worldly. It stands as a monumental work that continues to inspire contemplation, debate, and self-reflection, urging audiences to confront their existential dilemmas and seek meaning amid life's profound uncertainties. Through its rich tapestry of religious concepts, cosmic exploration, angelic presence, and psychological depth, *Doctor Faustus* remains an enduring masterpiece that resonates with the deepest recesses of the human spirit, prompting us to question, seek, and reflect upon the very essence of our existence.

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Ahmed H. Kadhim Al-Abedi was born on April 28, 1979 in Baghdad, Iraq. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in English Language from the College of Arts, University of Kufa in 2012. He obtained a Master's degree in English Literature from the Faculty of Foreign Languages University of Tehran, 2018. He contributes his expertise to the English department at the University of Karbala. He specialized in English Drama and Literary Criticism.



Zena D. Mohammed was born on April 17, in Baghdad, Iraq. She got her Bachelor of Arts degree in English Language from the College of Languages, University of Baghdad in 2002; subsequently, she pursued and achieved a Master of Arts in English Literature in 2014. Presently, she contributes her expertise to the English department at the University of Karbala. Her areas of specialization and passion encompass Comparative Literature, American Drama, and Literary Criticism.

An Inquiry Into How Simulation Experiment Can Facilitate Speaking Skills of Foreign Language Learners

Abdulrahman Almosa*

Department of English, Faculty of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—The oral proficiency of language learners has been bolstered through a variety of instructional methods. The goal of using simulated experiments to enhance conventional teaching techniques is to address various issues related to the acquisition of a FL through conversation. Difficulty acquiring fluency in an FL (Foreign Language) may be attributable to a number of factors, including inadequate educational materials, improper teaching technique, and an inappropriate learning setting. This study represents an effort to uncover how the use of simulation method can improve FL learners' speaking skills. One hundred Intermediate-level FL learners, fifty female and fifty males, were chosen at random for this research. In this scientific study, learners are randomly assigned to either "experimental" (EG) or "control" group (CG). Learners in the CG were instructed using more conventional lecture, the EG instructed using simulation models. The findings of a pre- and posttest are contrasted to evaluate the effectiveness of the simulation strategy on the EG's learning. The current study evaluated two hypotheses: (a) that learners in the EG performed better on the speech test than those in the CG; and (b) that there was a substantial difference in the performance of females and male learners in the EG. The research employs a quasi-experimental approach, with data gathered and evaluated numerically using SPSS. The findings revealed that the EG outperformed the CG, and that the female learners also outperformed the male learners by a small margin. The findings support both hypotheses, demonstrating the validity of the claim that simulation can be used to help learners of an FL improve their speaking skills.

Index Terms—simulation, speaking skills, FL Learners, Experimental Group (EG), Control Group (CG)

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, where communication across borders is increasingly important, the ability to communicate effectively is a vital asset. As can be seen, learners and workers who are able to master effective communication skills do extremely well in all areas (Gimpao, 2005). Many learners of English as an FL place a premium on improving their speaking proficiency. In an effort to improve learners' oral communication skills, teachers of English have traditionally relied on exercises or memorization of conversations. However, modern society recognizes the value of communication skills owing to their educational and applied importance for learners in real-world, cross-cultural settings. According to Richards (1990), those studying English as an FL should focus on improving their command of the language. Learners rate their own progress based on how well they can convey their ideas to others.

The linguistic assistance and language educational industries have experienced fundamental transformations in the 5G and AI era, with the conventional teaching and learning in academic institutions being converted into a smart system following the unavoidable trends in technology.

Researchers in the field of FL education are currently focusing their attention on the creation and implementation of "FL" data tools like MOOC (Han Yanhui, 2019), flexible classroom (Su Xiaoli et al., 2019), and mixed instruction (Liu, 2019). Sadly, neither domestic nor international study has been conducted on the topic. An investigation into the efficacy of direct instruction as a means of delivering the English language to English learners using computer-generated imagery is apt.

Using computer-generated imagery is apt. The goal of the simulation is to improve speaking skills (Bambrough, 1994). Effective simulation models foster fluent language acquisition. Once the process of acquiring a new language via simulation is underway, it provides motivation to continue. Just as nuclear power production doesn't require any outside spark or force to get going, an effective simulation method leads to further excellent interaction and the implementation of more models, culminating in a ripple effect of effective interaction. The forward momentum of simulation aids the student in maintaining effective communication (Jones, 1982).

Learners are better prepared for the actual world when they engage in simulation. In this manner, learners acquire a contextualized and practical command of the speaking skill. Unexpected events take place and genuine conversation takes place during a simulation. Theatrical activities, character playing, acting, and simulation models are just some of the theatrical methods that have been used to teach speaking skill. Learning through simulation is comparable to role-

* Corresponding Author.

playing, but it allows learners to bring special effects to class so that the performance feels more authentic. It is common practice to model a simulation's complex group interaction and individual idea sharing on actual real-world experiences (Brown, 2001). A simulation, as defined by Bygate (1987), is a decision-making activity in which the participants may either assume their own personas or those of other people in the group.

A. *Statement of Problem*

The ability to express oneself orally is honed using a wide variety of practices. Historically, the Auditory Lingual Technique was used to hone communicative speech skills. In response to its limitations, however, new approaches emerged, such as "Community Language Learning and Communicative Language Education", which focused on improving learners' ability to use the target language in everyday situations. Language teachers worldwide struggle with a common issue: learners don't get enough time to practice speaking the FL in class. Many learners avoid participating in class discussions out of fear of making fool of themselves or embarrassing themselves in front of their classmates, which contributes to a general atmosphere of nervousness among the learners.

Therefore, simulations may be useful for overcoming barriers like nervousness and turning speaking skills into a pleasurable experience. Learners can improve their pronunciation of phrases with the proper tone and intonation by using an exercise. In addition to bolstering learners' self-assurance, this strategy can aid in the development of their communication skills by providing a framework within which they can practice various kinds of discussion.

This inquiry seeks to answer the following question: When comparing the effects of modeling on the spoken language abilities of "male and female" language learners, is there a gender gap?

B. *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this research is to determine the impact of using simulation to improve English language speaking competence in the areas of verbal and nonverbal communication and ease, subject and information order, and speech, inflection, syntax and lexicon.

C. *Research Hypothesis*

- i. Learners in the EG (EG) performed better on the speech test than those in the CG (CG).
- ii. There is a substantial difference in the performance of male and female learners in the EG.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *What Is Simulation Experiment*

Simulation experiment is a teaching method where learners' current knowledge is assessed, real-world examples are addressed, learners are practically and intellectually prepared, and cognitive transformation is supplied in order to effectively manage their education. Concurrently, these classroom settings should provide learners chances to review and internalize new information. FL education must shift away from its conventional focus on the teacher in favor of a more student-centered approach if it is to foster the learners' cognitive development and improve their problem-solving abilities (Ergun, 2010). The adoption of unique approaches, such as making connections between the material and real-world examples and eliminating tedious grammatical procedures, would prevent learners from being forced to memorize and would encourage them to actively engage in the learning process.

The term "Computer-based education" emerged as computers were introduced into formal learning environments like schools and universities. Including computer usage in physics classrooms has numerous positive outcomes. It aids in making abstract ideas more concrete and facilitates learning at the student's own pace. Multimedia tools make learning more engaging and successful since they can be tailored to each individual learner. If we want a high-quality education system, we need to be able to quickly adapt new programs and materials in response to technological developments. Therefore, it is important to regularly update programmes that are designed for FL instruction, taking into account the developments in science, technology, and education. There is a critical need for student-centered learning in the field of FL education.

Present-day technological advancements have been quite quick. These technological advancements are also seen in the realm of education, necessitating the redesign of classroom settings. So, to simplify and understand in-class instruction and to stimulate learners' attention, educators must use a wide range of strategies that make use of technology resources.

One such method that has become integral to modern technologies is the simulation approach, which may be used in conjunction with computers as part of computer-assisted learning. This strategy, which is popular in classrooms throughout the world, offers invaluable chances to explain and demonstrate to learners a broad range of phenomena that would otherwise be challenging or difficult to study in the classroom. Simulation, a sort of technology that puts theoretical knowledge into reality, takes complex, abstract tasks and makes them concrete, allowing for rapid problem-solving. In this way, not only are resources conserved while also providing a more solid, realistic, and long-lasting setting for education, but education itself is also facilitated.

The fast progress of computing has made it feasible to do tests with values that are very similar to the real ones, utilizing software like simulation. When used to aid in the learning process, simulation—which may be thought of as

the actualization of a model of a topic, system, or phenomena inside a digital setting—plays a crucial part in preparing people for adulthood.

Simply put, simulation is the practice of utilizing computers to generate artificial environments that are meant to mimic their real-world counterparts as closely as possible. Especially when instructing the learners in a practical situation with actual instruments is difficult, risky, or expensive, simulation provides the most effective technique to educate the learner on a realistic environment. Teachers avoid waste and any mishaps this way. The learning settings it provides are also permanent and may be accessed at any time.

If a program or setting is to be considered a simulation, it must have certain characteristics with other simulations. The first step is for the simulation to be consistent with reality, or represent it in every detail. This element ensures that the actions taken and the events encountered are true to life. Additionally, users are assigned roles that have direct relevance to the actual world. This will allow the individual to practice for real-world scenarios. Lastly, the participant may use a variety of approaches depending on how the prevailing context, value, or other variable changes. If the simulations contain these qualities, then the learners will have the ability to transfer their learnings from the virtual world to the actual world.

Owing to their low price, accessibility, and capacity to be repeated independently of time and geography, simulations have become more popular in many facets of human existence in recent years. In addition to its security uses, simulations are utilized as a teaching tool in many application-based scientific disciplines, including business, aerospace, engineering, and medicine. It is also widely used in the fields of mathematics and language instruction. Thus, the simulations, as a newly developed tool, have succeeded to attract attention to their usage in learning in a short amount of time, from elementary school to higher education.

B. Application of Simulated Experiment in FL Learning

In higher learning, the quest for and validation of successful instructional techniques for teaching FLs to learners is one of the most major challenges. The needs of learners who want to explore more, learn new skills regularly, and gain access to more professional resources in languages other than their native one cannot be met by the conventional methods of education. There are currently a plethora of techniques and technological innovations available; among these, simulations stand out as ones that have not been examined thoroughly enough and could benefit from trial testing.

Jones (2013, p. 87) argues that simulation is the "reality of functions in a virtual and structured environment" to guide our understanding of this technique for teaching a language. Essentially, it means having learners act out or simulate the roles they will have to play in a variety of career and real-world contexts while learning a new language. In other words, the simulation is a technique for developing a transformed oral communication atmosphere (a projection of everyday life) in and structures, which integrates language education and the advancement of skill set, stimulates characterization with the social context and minimises the language intervention, and provides learners the realistic optimism (Methods, 2013, p. 39).

In light of its focus on application, simulation can be categorized as a practical learning strategy, the theoretical foundation for which was laid by Kolb and Kolb (2017). The basic principle of the idea is rooted in the reality that data is assimilated in learning via specific experiences and thinking critically, leading to four phases of development: encounter (first stage), interpretation (second stage), perception, extrapolation, and hypothetical sweeping statement (third stage), and ultimately, empirical validation and utilization of the procured experience (fourth stage). Researchers like Hawk and Shah (2019), Li (2019) and Li et al. (2022), Beames and Brown (2021), etc., expanded on the concepts of Kolb and Kolb (2017).

There are also some drawbacks to using a simulation approach; in some cases, it can find in miscommunication, a skewed comprehension of the material, and a failure to fully incorporate new words and grammar structures into one's speech. Learners who aren't interested in participating or haven't had enough time to practice their oral communication abilities can "hide underneath the backs" with their better prepared classmates in a group exercise. It's important to keep in mind that simulating a real-world situation is a slow method of instruction that necessitates a lengthy period for planning, execution, and debriefing. Learners participating in exercises should have some work experience and instruction in addition to a solid grasp of the target language. This is supported by a number of methods (Methods, 2013).

C. Review of Findings of Previous Studies

A large body of research has established the value of simulation for acquiring a FL. There are a multitude of studies looking at various approaches to improving one's communication skills, including the computer exercise, and each one has their own unique strengths and weaknesses. A summary of relevant research is required.

The effect of modeling and role-play on ESP (English for Special Purpose) pupils' oral communication skills is compared in Wahyuni (2012). The research found that the effect of modeling was greater than that of role play in helping pupils improve their public speaking abilities. The findings of this study indicate that compared to the group instructed through role play, the learners who participated in the exercise were more driven and liked the speaking action more. This confirms the theory put forth by Hammer (2002) and Hyland (2002), which states that learners are more likely to practice their public speaking skills in an enjoyable and encouraging setting if they are involved in an exercise. By expanding their vocabularies in this manner, learners are able to better express themselves in conversation

and gain insight into the intricacies of the English language. In a nutshell, the finding supports the claim that learners' 640 speaking proficiency is enhanced through modeling. This study provides preliminary evidence that using realia, such as pee and blood, can increase learners' interest in and enthusiasm for language learning.

Ayudhya (2015) investigated pupils of varying skill levels. In order to evaluate the simulation model, he used messaging software applications. Posttest scores were higher than pretest scores for all skill levels, indicating that pupils learned from the experience. In addition, the findings demonstrated that simulation was more effective in influencing learners with lower levels of competence. Lynch and Cross's (2009) proposed model, a "performance pyramid," correlates well with the findings of the research. A novel performance evaluation method can be developed with the aid of this model. As one moves up the grid, one's focus shifts from acquiring more general information to honing their specific abilities. Learners' communication abilities at all levels, from novice to expert, are impacted by this simulation strategy.

There is another study by Febrianti (2012), wherein learners in the "CG" were instructed through a role-playing method. Febrianti (2012) investigated the impact of simulation on enhancing learners' speaking abilities. The EG, on the other hand, received their education via simulation methods. Findings from this research demonstrated a statistically substantial improvement in learners' oral communication skills after utilizing the simulation method. The study's findings also indicated that this method could be used as a substitute by English language instructors to improve their learners' oral communication skills.

Silvia's (2012) research on the effectiveness of simulation versus more conventional methods of instruction led her to conclude that learners would benefit more from being taught through simulations, which would help them develop better communication skills. Castaneda (2011) argues that teaching a language through simulating rather than role-playing lets learners acquire the language more naturally, become fluent within a brief discussion, start asking short questions and words, and recognize and rectify the errors of their peers. Learners were observed to be open to new information and eager to learn. It was discovered that learners learned a language much faster when instructors played a more facilitative role in the classroom.

Ahmad and Khazaei (2015) argue that the basic tenet of using simulations in education is that it forces learners to work together to find solutions to issues, which in turn strengthens their interpersonal and communication skills. According to Ardriyati (2012), using a modeling approach is a great way to get pupils excited about learning. He thinks simulation is great for boosting learners' interest in corporate English courses. It is recommended that the teacher offer comments, writing prompts, and PowerPoint presentations.

Nugrahani (2011) argues that using simulation methods in the classroom can enhance the educational experience for both learners and teachers. After using the simulation method, learners are going to be quite invested in their education. Learners' high levels of drive and excitement indicate a positive reaction to the introduction of the simulation method.

According to Suryati (2010), a comparison of learners taught using a traditional technique with those taught using a simulation program reveals that the latter group has substantially better oral communication skills.

D. Theoretical Bases of the Study

The Social Constructivist Theory is the theoretical model proposed to be suitable for this research. Following the Social Constructivist Theory, learners ought to not only acquire information but also connect such material with their past knowledge in order for them to be able to gain a deeper grasp of the learning process. This philosophical basis of the constructivist paradigm emphasizes this point, and further proposes that the ability of an individual to converse socially between several people is a necessary condition for the creation of new knowledge. This is a foundational assumption of constructivism, and it suggests that learning requires communication and can only be accomplished in conjunction with other people. This might be accomplished with only a little bit of cooperation and coordination among classmates or with the assistance of professors. In the context of this research, the notion of simulation experiment was examined to unveil the impacts of learners' achievements in speaking skills, and the learning procedures were communicated to the participants via the use of simulation exercises led by the instructor. Learners are given the opportunity to engage in social interaction with both their instructor and the other learners in the class, to evaluate their experiences, and to develop a meaningful knowledge of the material being presented by virtue of using this simulation system. Learners' cognitive abilities were put to the test via the implementation of a self-guided inquiry exercise, which was made possible due to the simulation procedures.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Approach

This research takes a quantitative strategy by utilizing a quasi-experimental methodology to randomly assign study participants to one of two groups: EG and CG.

B. Research Design

The participants have been split into two categories, as has been stated. In the CG, learners are exposed to the conventional method of teaching English as a FL, which involves reading aloud and breaking down challenging vocabulary. The EG, on the other hand, engages in virtual versions of the same conversations. After receiving

instructions from the researcher, participants play their designated parts. The learners also watched related movies during this time. Seven weeks passed with each week having a unique focus.

A final test was given after some time. Statistical methods are central to this approach because they allow for the precise demonstration of relationships between factors through the use of numerical data. Both teams took a pretest to measure their prior understanding of the topics and their level of oral communication competence. On the other hand, the posttest assessments were designed to evaluate the success of the simulation model and the acquisition of any new vocabulary or linguistic abilities.

C. Sampling Procedure

There is a total of one hundred learners used in this study; 50 male and 50 female participants were selected at random from different locations. The majority of these learners are secondary school learners taking English as a FL. There were two groups of learners used to gather the statistical data. Twenty-five female and twenty-five male learners make up the CG. There are also 25 female and 25 male learners in the EG. Participants in the research were divided into groups with specific instructions for achieving their goals. The 25 male learners in the EG were split into five groups of five. The same process is used with female pupils. It is necessary to divide the EG (EG) into subgroups to measure the effects of the simulation procedures as well as keep track of them easily.

D. Criteria for Rating Speaking Skills

The researcher used Vallette's "Foreign Service Institute" scoring method to evaluate the learners' performance on the speaking skills test (1975). James's (1985) work "FL Mastery in the Classroom and Beyond, National Association of Teachers of FLs." provides further explanation of this criterion for measuring speaking skills in FL learners. Learners' proficiency in pronunciation, syntax, vocabulary, speed, and understanding are evaluated using this grading method. One possible interpretation of this grading scheme is as follows:

TABLE 1
SPEAKING SKILLS RATING SCHEME BY FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE (FSI) NUMERICAL

Proficiency Inputs	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Grammar	7	14	21	28	35	43
Pronunciation	4	9	13	18	23	28
Fluency	4	9	13	18	23	28
Total	15	32	47	64	81	99

The above is adopted from FSI document, and it is implemented in rating the speaking fluency of learners in FL learning. FL learners are consistently evaluated on the premise of the FSI criteria. A developed descriptive detail of the rating criteria from FSI are contained in the table below:

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTION OF FSI SPEAKING SKILLS RATING

Levels	Scores of Ratings	Description of Rating
1.	32	Able to meet the bare necessities of daily life, such as social expectations
2.	47	In a position to meet minimal job and societal expectations
3.	64	Possessing an adequate grammatical and lexical foundation for engaging in more official and casual discussion on interpersonal, realistic, and corporate subjects
4.	81	Capable of using the language in all the ways that are necessary for work
5.	99	Fluency comparable to that of a well-educated native person

The table provides the criteria and the description of the criteria for rating speaking skill as contained in FSI. The table indicates that the speaking ability of FL learning can be rated at different criteria.

E. Data Collection Procedure

Initially, the School Administrators and particular instructors all gave their confirmation to the selected classes. Two of the scripts are from the required reading list for the second year of Advanced Level. The school administration was consulted for their approval before proceeding. After obtaining permission, the researcher contacted English teachers to collect data, such as the details of 25 male learners who would serve as the EG and 25 male learners who would make the study's CG. Female participants went through the same steps. To guarantee that the Entrance Test is fair for all learners, the amount of points awarded to each section is kept relatively constant.

After talking with English teachers at different schools, the first discussion was set up. The "King Lear" lesson served as the basis for the practice test. Reading comprehension, proficiency, and pronunciation were the primary focus areas for evaluating the extent of the participants' FL proficiency. Each student is scored using the same factors used by the FSI criteria as listed in the Table 1 and 2 above.

Therefore, familiarizing themselves with literature presented no challenges for the learners. Each session has 5 learners, and those learners are split up into four for the CG and another the same number for the EG. They were instructed on the exercise method and provided written descriptions of their duties.

Their assigned parts required them to act accordingly. It was also utilized to seek the help of educators. Five to ten minutes were spent evaluating each class. All 25 learners were tested in a single 40-minute session. Identical processes were used in parallel with similar classes.

The learners were split up into five different sections at the second session. The script was distributed to each discussion group. The simulation method is explained to the learners. Videos from "The Merchant of Venice" were shown to them to set the scene. Learners were cautioned to pay close attention during these videos. Before beginning the simulation lesson, learners are instructed to get themselves ready. The learners are helped in choosing an appropriate outfit. The exercise method was discussed and taught to the pupils in the fourth gathering. Some of the more challenging terms and sentences are pronounced and explained. The learners were urged to be creative in their role-playing. They were provided with aids. There was an attempt to create a realistic scenario. Learners will put their newfound knowledge of modeling to use in the fifth and final gathering. During the role-playing exercise, various groups receive instructions and hints. The sixth gathering is when the final learners are invited to act out their parts. Some changes are made whether or not there is input from the final learners. Learners' ability to communicate orally was evaluated during the most recent encounter using the FSI evaluation method. It was the same for the remaining male and female groups.

F. Procedure for Analysis

The data were analyzed using the T-test method, which was used to find statistically substantial variations between the averages of the control and EGs. The purpose was to demonstrate the effectiveness of simulation in improving pupils' oral communication skills. The t-test formular is stated below, as adopted in the analysis:

$$t = \frac{M1 - M2}{\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma X_{12} + \Sigma X_{22}}{N(N-1)}}}$$

The above statistical model is explained as thus:

- i. M1 represents the mean value of the EG
- ii. M2 represents the mean value of the CG
- iii. ΣX_{12} represents a sum of combined square values of the EG
- iv. ΣX_{22} is the total of the square value of the CG
- v. N represents the total number of learners that participated in the study

Pronunciation, fluency, and syntax are tested in all of the assessments. Learners' oral communication skills were evaluated using a quantitative method developed by FSI. Totaling 99, with scores of 43 and 28, respectively, for grammatical proficiency and articulation. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS -14. Comparisons between the experimental and CGs are made using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The purpose of this study's analysis was to find out how learners in the EG responded to the simulation method.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A. Finding

Different tables are used here to present the finding of the study. The tables contain information on the values derived from the rating computed using the FSI criteria.

TABLE 3
COMPARING THE MALE AND FEMALE LEARNERS' FINDING IN EG FOR SPEAKING SKILLS TEST ON PRETEST

Variables	N	M	SD	T	p
Female group	25	45.66	5.09	-3.20	0.03
Male group	25	42.8	4.08		

The above Table 3 contains basic calculations of the outcome of the pretest of the EG. In the table, N stands for the total number of FL learners that participated in the EG pretest stage. M is the mean value; SD is the standard deviation. The rest include the t-test value and the p-value of the calculation. The outcomes of the EG's pretests can be found in Table 3. The number of learners of FLs who took part in the EG pretest is denoted by N in the table above. The standard deviation is the number of points from the mean. The remainder consists of the calculated t-value and p-value. It can be seen from the data that there is no statistically substantial disparity between the mean values of the male and female groups on the pretest (average mean for the EG = 43.7 and average mean for the female group = 45.66 with t= -3.20 and p > 0.03). According to the findings, the pretest levels of the female and male EG participants were practically comparable.

TABLE 4
COMPARING THE MALE AND FEMALE LEARNERS' FINDING IN CG FOR SPEAKING SKILLS TEST ON PRETEST

Variables	N	M	SD	t	p
Female group	25	42.53	6.44	-3.51	0.002
Male group	25	45.63	6.05		

As already explained, N represents the total number of FL learners in the group. The M is the mean value, the SD is the calculated standard deviation, then the t-score and p-values. The table 4 contains data on the pretest for the CG (CG). As can be seen in Table 4, there is no statistically substantial distinction between the mean values of female and male learners on the pretest (45.63 and 42.53, respectively; t-value = -3.51; $p > 0.002$).

According to the data, both the experimental and CGs start out at nearly the same measure of proficiency. It is clear from Table 3 and 4 that there is little to no variation between the female and male CG pretest scores in terms of cumulative accomplishment.

B. Validating the Impact of Simulation Experiment on the Speaking Skills of the FL Learners

One thing that can be taken from the data in Tables 3 and 4 is that there is no statistically different between the speaking skills performance of the male and female participants in both CG and EG at the pretest stage. The individuals in both groups have nearly the same degree of fluency in speaking, as shown by statistical analysis and comparing of the CG and EG ratings. After assigning learners to positions, showing them pertinent clips, and instructing them on their responsibilities, a simulation method was used to give assessment to the EG. In the final session, the researcher did a simulated role-playing and evaluated everyone's speaking abilities. The members of the CG, on the other hand, received their instruction via a seminar in which challenging terms were defined, pronunciation errors were addressed, and concluding tasks were assigned. This research also prioritized considerations of gender at every step of the process.

To properly validate the research questions, it is necessary to test the hypotheses. The two hypotheses are tested also. Hypothesis one proposes that learners in the EG performed better on the speech test than those in the control condition.

The posttest findings of the male participants in the EG and CG are presented in the table below:

TABLE 5
POSTTEST FINDING OF THE MALE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CG AND EG FOR SPEAKING SKILLS

Study Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
CG	25	25.23	4.31	15.76	0.000
EG	25	65	5.56		

A statistical analysis was performed on this data set utilizing "Independent Sample Test" module of SPSS. Table 5 shows that the average score of the EG was 65 on the test, which is substantially higher than the average score of the CG, which was 25.23. The substantial variation between the EG and CG of the male participants is also reflected in the values of $t = 15.76$ and $p > 0.00$. As a finding, there was a substantial difference in outcomes between the experimental and CGs. The table shows that the EG participants outperformed the members of the CG.

After obtaining the statistical values of the male participants in the posttest, for EG and CG, it is necessary to present the finding of the CG and EG posttest of the female participants in the speaking skills.

TABLE 6
POSTTEST FINDING OF THE FEMALE CG AND EG PARTICIPANTS IN THE SPEAKING SKILLS TEST

Participant Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
CG	25	54.33	7.55	18.53	0.000
EG	25	73.83	4.38		

As it is in Table 5, the data in table 6 shows substantial difference in the performance of the female participants at the EG and CG categories. Independent Sample Test is used to conduct statistical analysis on this data as well. In comparison to the CG, the EG had a higher mean test score (73.83, see Table 6). (54.33). The substantial variation between the EG and EG of female participants is also reflected in the t-test finding (18.53), with a value of $p > 0.00$. Participants in the EG group thus showed substantial improvement compared to those in the CG group. As can be seen in Table 6, EG learners outperformed CG learners. This points to a substantial effect of the experimental simulation process on the speaking proficiency of those learning a FL.

In the following table, it will be seen how the ratio of male to female participants in the EG different, comparatively.

TABLE 7
COMPARING THE FINDING OF THE POSTTEST OF THE MALE AND FEMALE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EG FOR SPEAKING SKILLS

Participant Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
Female group	25	71.54	4.41	-4.28	0.000
Male group	25	65.29	4.58		

The data in Table 7 confirms the position of the second hypothesis proposed in the study. "The independent sample test" is used for statistical analysis of this data. According to Table 7, the average exam score for males is 65.29, which is marginally lower than the average score for females at 71.54. There was a statistically substantial variation between female and male participants, as indicated by the values of $t = -4.28$ and $p > 0.00$. Both groups, however, exhibit substantial increase in test scores after the simulation experiment. As can be seen in Table 7, the female group did moderately higher than the male sect altogether.

C. Findings and Discussion

Following the presentation of the data in the various tables, a couple of findings have been drawn. According to the findings of the examination of the pretest data, the performance of male and female participants in the CG and EG is not substantially different from one another. The cumulative mean value for the EG is 43.70, while the cumulative mean value for the CG is 44.56. The average cumulative score on the EG for participants who are females is 45.66 scores. On the other hand, the mean of the EG is 41.98, which also demonstrates that there was hardly any difference in the level of competency of the people prior to the simulation exercise.

Further analysis of the data reveals that the implementation of the simulation method findings in the observation of a substantial deviation from the expected outcome. The general mean value of male participants increased from 43.7 to 65, and participants who had previously been classified as falling into the sufficient degree are now promoted to the level "excellent" in compliance with the suggested FSI evaluation method developed by Vallette (1975). The average score that learners achieved on evaluation tests rose from 45.66 to 73.83 when female participants were involved. It was demonstrated that the simulation methodology has a substantial effect on enhancing the learners' ability to communicate orally, particularly in the case of female learners.

The data also indicates that there is not much of a difference in the learners' ability to communicate English after the conventional method of instruction has been implemented. The cumulative mean value of the male participants only increased from 49.56 to 25.18, whereas the cumulative mean value of the female learners increased from 48.48 to 54.34. Both sets of data point to the fact that the traditional method of instruction has not led to much of a development in the learners' speaking abilities.

In conclusion, the findings of the examined data that were gathered after the application of the simulation strategy demonstrate that the mean value of the female group increased by 25 points, in contrast to the 18 points gained by the male learners. It demonstrates the strong curiosity that people of both sexes have in gaining knowledge. It is further evidence of the disparity in attitude that exists between the sexes. A marginally greater interest in schooling was demonstrated by females.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATION

The findings of this study, which indicate that simulation has a beneficial impact, lend support to the findings of earlier studies such as Anggrahini (1996) and Suryati (2011). This research demonstrates that the simulation strategy is superior to any other traditional process by comparing it to those other methods. However, due to the fact that the population was comprised of both males and females, the procedure was not coincidental. The findings support the hypothesis that learners exhibited a higher level of interest in learning as a direct finding of the utilization of simulation. In comparison to the CG, this one had a higher level of interactivity and inspired greater participation from the learners. The members of the CG exhibited less activity. The findings provided support for the second hypothesis, which stated that there was a disparity between the ways in which male and female participants approached the learning process.

The majority of learners favor adopting more modern teaching strategies, such as learning by doing, which is a relatively new method. One of the methods that falls under the umbrella of "learning by doing" is simulation. After performing their assigned parts, learners reported feeling more self-assured. After completing this exercise, they were able to overcome my shyness. The learners improved their speaking skills by using their own thoughts when speaking about topics relevant to their roles. The learners' progress in enhancing their pronunciation was also aided by watching the recordings.

At the beginning of this investigation, the investigator was unable to find any previous research that had been conducted on speaking abilities. Learners will benefit from this research, which will also make a contribution to the field of education. The findings are encouraging to say the least. The only prerequisite is to adhere to this instructional method exactly as outlined, both in terms of its letter and its essence. By implementing this strategy, experts in the field of curricular development may also benefit from using it. It is possible to broaden the scope of this research to include additional contexts and stages. It's possible that there weren't that many questions on the exam because that was another reason for the restriction. Before oversimplifying the findings and applying them to other situations and settings, additional research must be conducted to resolve this limitation.

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Abdulrahman Abdullah Almosa has a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Monash University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics in 2017. He also has Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics (Second Class Honours) Griffith University, School of Humanities, Languages and Social Science, Department of Linguistics in 2009.

He worked as a Dean of Academic Affairs and Development, Faculty of Languages and Translation since 2022. In 2018, he worked as a Vice- Dean of Quality and Development, Faculty of Languages and Translation. He also held the position of an Assistant Professor at English Department, KKU and a Coordinator, Building Leadership for Change Through School Immersion Program, Monash University Program offered to Saudi Teachers.

The Application of Linking by Jordanian EFL Students While Pronouncing English Words That Begin With Vowels

Naji M. AlQbailat

Department of English Language and Literature, Al-Balqa Applied University, Amman, Jordan

Ahlam A. Elkouz

Department of English, French and German Philology, University of Malaga, Malaga, Spain

Nizar M. Qpilat

Arabic Language department, MBZUH, UAE;
University of Jordan, Jordan

Abstract—This paper investigates the application of linking as a feature of connected speech by Jordanian English Language senior university students at the Hashemite University. The paper specifically examines Consonant-Vowel (CV) and Vowel-Vowel (VV) environments using audio-recordings of students reading a controlled set of sentences. The recordings were converted into waveforms to facilitate their analysis and comparison with those of a native speaker. The main results show that students applied linking in the CV environments in percentages that exceeded those in the VV environments. Furthermore, when collectively analyzed, data showed that students in the sample failed to apply linking in more than half of the environments of the instrument. The research recommended that EFL teachers should be trained on methods of teaching pronunciation as students could benefit from receiving instruction regarding the application of linking.

Index Terms—L1 interference, linking, phonology, pronunciation, foreign language acquisition

I. INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is an essential component of learning a foreign language. Mispronouncing words during free speaking could lead the listener to misunderstand the message behind what is being said. Furthermore, mispronunciation negatively affects the comprehensibility of the learner. Being accustomed to mistaken pronunciation of words reduces the ability of the learner to recognize correctly pronounced words when uttered by a native speaker.

When introducing students to English pronunciation, it is crucial to introduce them to the target behind teaching and learning pronunciation. According to Burns and Claire (2003), English pronunciation is taught to achieve the below objectives:

1. “intelligibility (the speaker produces sound patterns that are recognizable as English)
2. comprehensibility (the listener is able to understand the meaning of what is said)
3. interpretability (the listener is able to understand the purpose of what is said)”. (p. 5)

Harmer (2007) defines pronunciation as the way the sounds of a language are made, including the correct placement of stress in words and sentences and the use of pitch and intonation as indicators of the speakers’ feelings and intended meanings. Richards and Schmidt (2002) define pronunciation as the way in which sounds of a language are produced. They believed pronunciation is an essential component of English because mispronunciation hinders the listener’s correct comprehension of the meaning of sentences.

English pronunciation covers segmental and suprasegmental aspects. Segmentals are phonemes that can change the meaning of the word if pronounced incorrectly (Burns & Claire, 2003). Suprasegmentals on the other hand are features of speech that exceed the boundaries of single consonants and vowels (Ladefoged, 2006). They can be referred to as prosodic features because they extend beyond the singularity of the sound in an utterance, such as intonation and stress (Clark et al., 2007).

According to Coniam (2002), segmental features of phonology are comparatively easier to explain and teach than suprasegmental features. Therefore, the majority of research in the area of pronunciation tends to shed light on segmental elements. This paper, however, will tackle one of the suprasegmental features of pronunciation known as linking.

A. Research Questions

Do senior EFL students at the university level apply linking to English words that begin with a vowel?

B. Problem and Objective

Practicing the teaching of English as a foreign language at the university level for years, the researchers came to notice that a majority of students in Jordan fail to apply linking in CV and VV environments. Instead, a linking environment is substituted for a slight pause followed by a glottal stop, such as pronouncing ‘stop it’ as [stap.ʔit] instead of [stapɪt] and ‘cup of’ as [kʌp.ʔʌv] instead of [kʌpəv]. In some cases of VV environments, students might apply linking, but when they do, they use the wrong glide sound.

The present study aims at understanding the level of application of the phenomenon of linking by EFL learners of English at the university level, bearing in mind the impact of applying this suprasegmental feature on learners’ comprehensibility.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Instruction on English Pronunciation*

It is important to note that applying a feature as specific as linking is not an easy task for learners, especially if they did not receive any instructions regarding its application. Jordanian schools and universities tend to ignore the teaching of speaking. Mainly because teachers and professors did not receive suitable training on methods of teaching pronunciation (Murphy, 2014) nor did they have confidence to teach English pronunciation due to limited subject matter knowledge (Dixo-Lieff & Pow, 2000). Furthermore, Jordanian curriculum sections addressing English speaking are marginal and small, which allows teachers to ignore them and focus on other skills such as writing, reading and grammar.

Students at the school level scored the lowest in speaking compared to reading and writing in the Quality Control National Test conducted annually by the Jordanian Ministry of Education (Directorate of Examinations and Tests, 2019). Furthermore, students at the university level are argued to have ‘low’ speaking proficiency levels due to negligible instruction of speaking skills within university courses affiliated to both the faculties of languages and those of educational sciences (Al-Jamal & Ghadeer, 2014).

Limited instruction on English language oral skills negatively affects segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation. The assumption is that students in the sample received limited instruction on English speaking in general and on suprasegmental features (linking) in particular, which explains why they failed to apply linking in more than half of the environments within the controlled sentences of the instrument.

B. *Differences Between L1 and L2*

It is acknowledged by many researchers that learning to speak a different language is by far the most difficult part of learning (Alonso, 2014). Speaking “involves a complex process of constructing meaning which requires speakers to make decisions about why, how and when to communicate depending on the cultural and social context in which the speaking act occurs” (Martínez-Flor et al., 2006, p. 139). English pronunciation is a difficult skill to master for students whose mother tongue is Arabic due to several reasons (Szyra-Kozłowska, 2015, p. 5), among which are the lack of correspondence between English phonology and Arabic phonology (several sounds exist in Arabic that do not exist in English) and lack of correspondence between English spelling and pronunciation as “English spelling is probably the least satisfactory example of (an alphabetic writing system where one letter is representing one sound), partly because there are only (26) letters available for the (44) phonemes and because the spelling of many words represent the way they were pronounced centuries ago” (Marks & Bowen, 2012, p. 17). The Arabic language has (28) letters that represent (28) phonemes, and the spelling of words depend almost entirely on the pronunciation of those words as the spelling of Arabic is intensely regular (Kharma & Hajjaj, 1997, p. 14). When learning English, Arabs face a problem in speaking because they are used to pronouncing words as they are spelt. “In their Arabic classes, students are encouraged to give great attention to the written forms and consequently develop spelling pronunciations. They carry over this habit when learning English with disastrous results because of the non-phonemic nature of English spelling” (Elhalees, 1986).

Weak pronunciation capacities of Arab EFL learners forces them to resort to paying attention to every word within any natural oral production in English, which results in their speech sounding robotic and choppy (Morley, 1994). Treating words as separate units could be attributed to differences between Arabic and English regarding the number of sounds in the utterance and their distribution, which may encourage students to “insert a temporal pause and a glottal stop to compensate for what is missing in the phonological schema of their first language” (Melenca, 2001, p. 17). The treatment of words as separate units could also be attributed to an interlanguage phenomenon in relation to the orthography, that is, where there is white space on the page; students reflect this space in their speech (Gilbert, 2005) causing unnecessary stops after words and resulting in robotic speech.

C. *Linking as a Concept*

In order to fully comprehend the “Linking” feature, two different concepts will be discussed. The first is the use of “linking” as a synonym of connected speech, which entails pronunciation changes happening to a word when combined to other words in connected speech that do not occur when the same word is pronounced in isolation. This kind of linking takes the shape of two common phenomena: Elision and Assimilation. Elision entails omission of syllables, sounds or phonemes when in a final position while assimilation entails “moving the place of articulation (of a sound) to a position closer to that of the following sound” (Alameen, 2007, p. 1). The second concept of linking entails “combining two sounds

at word boundaries without changing their phonetic qualities, as in (1), (2), (3), and (4), or by inserting a brief [w] or [j] sound between the sounds, as in (5)” (Sardegna, 2011, p. 105).

- “First type: Consonant-to-Vowel Linking: an_əerror; is_əawesome; give_əin.
- Second type: Consonant-to-Same-Consonant Linking: some_əmusic; Sue’s_ssnake.
- Third type: Consonant-Stop-to-Other-Consonant-Stop Linking: enthusiastic_{əd}dad; adept_t.
- Fourth type: Consonant-to-Similar-Consonant Linking: come_əback; improve_əfurther.
- Fifth type: Vowel-to-Vowel Linking: so_əexciting; di_əagonal; go_əin; play_əout”. (Sardegna, 2011, p. 105)

Linking is one of the important suprasegmental features of English pronunciation. Kenworthy (1987, p. 9) states that when speaking, native speakers do not generally make pauses between words, they rather move smoothly from one word to the following. Linking is one procedure that natives of English use for their speech to sound connected and natural. However, a “closer examination of linking shows it has a more profound effect on English pronunciation than is usually recognized, and that its neglect leads to misrepresentations and unnatural expectations” (Temperley, 1987, p. 65).

The present paper tackles two of the linking types (Sardegna, 2011, p. 105) that are associated with words starting with a vowel: Consonant-Vowel linking (CV- Type 1) and Vowel-Vowel linking (VV- Type 5).

In a consonant-vowel linking environment (CV), the final consonant of one word is followed by the vowel beginning the next, forcing the consonant to be “pronounced as a medial consonant, i.e. a consonant occurring in the middle of a word” (Alameen, 2007, p. 8). According to Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996), in both (CC+V) and (VC+V) clusters, the consonant ending the cluster is uttered within the following syllable, a process that simplifies the consonant cluster by breaking it down (Hewings & Goldstein, 1999). An example of (CC+V) sequence is the phrase ‘find out’ which is pronounced as [faɪnd aʊt] rather than [faɪnd ʔaʊt] (Kodera, 2012, p. 182), while an example of a (VC+V) sequence is ‘give in’ which is pronounced as [ɡɪv ɪn] rather than [ɡɪv ʔɪn] (Alameen, 2014, p. 14).

Vowel-to-vowel linking (VV) takes place when the final sound of a word is a vowel and is followed by a word that is initiated with a vowel as well. Errors in vowel production are argued to be the most common among Arab learners (Bauman-Waengler, 2009). This is because Arabic has only six monophthongs, three long vowels [a:], [i:], [u:] and three short ones indicated with diacritical marks. English, on the other hand, has more than twenty vowels that have diverse lengths depending on the variety of English in question.

In a VV environment “speakers insert a junctural glide, a very short [w] or [j] sound to link the two vowels together and avoid a gap between the sounds” (Alameen, 2014, p. 15). The type of the vowel at the end of the first word determines the choice of the linking glide. If the first word ends with a high front vowel, such as [ɪ], then the junctural glide will be [j] as in ‘my ear’ [maɪj ɪr] (Alameen, 2014, p. 15). If the word ends with a high back vowel, such as [u:], then the linking sound will be [w] as in ‘blue ink’ [blu:wɪŋk] (Kodera, 2012, p. 182). In the case of other vowels that are usually smoothly linked, no junctural glide is needed (Hewings & Goldstein, 1999).

D. Waveforms

In her book, Low (2014) describes how the fluctuation of air pressure caused by the vibration of the speaker’s vocal folds causes the listener’s eardrums to vibrate thus enabling the hearing of sounds being produced. Sound traveling over the distance between the speaker and the listener causes what is known as the sound wave. Low used visual sound waves of speakers to study features of pronunciation. She concluded that vowels have more energy than consonants, voiced sounds have more energy than voiceless sounds and that sounds differ in terms of pitch, loudness and duration (Low, 2014, p. 39). Waveforms were also utilized in practicing English intonation, rhythm, stress, and syllables (Anderson-Hsieh, 1992).

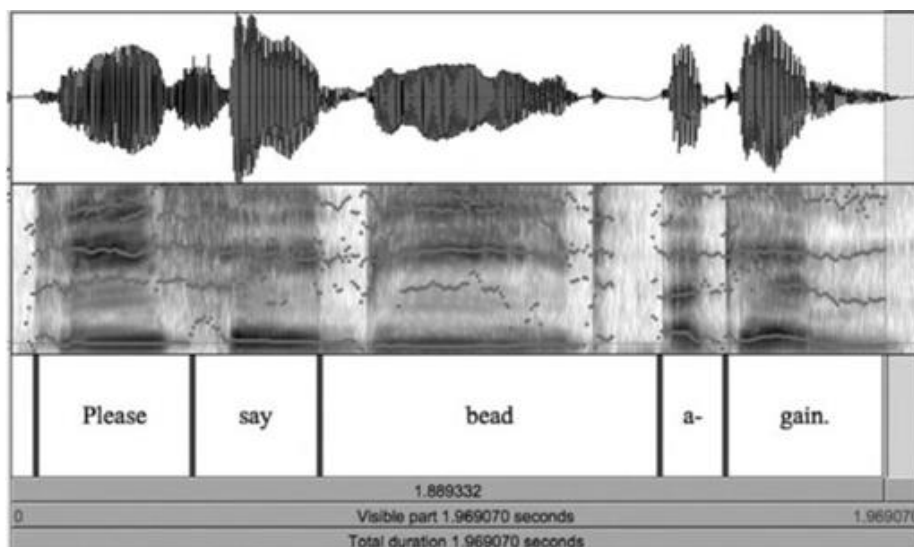


Figure 1. Sound Wave and Spectrogram of a Female Speaker Producing the Sentence “Please Say Bead Again” (Low, 2014, p. 39)

Waveforms were used in this paper to study the application of linking following the lead of Alameen (2014). Looking at the waveform can simply tell a viewer if a link or no-link was applied. The wave resulting from a well performed CV or VV linking is connected and chained, while unlinked words have a narrow or interrupted waveform as the examples shown in Figure 2. In the first visualization, representing the sentence I am on the train uttered by a native speaker, the wave is long and connected. However, the visualization of the same sentence takes the shape of two separated clouds that are connected with a thin line when uttered by one of the students in the sample.

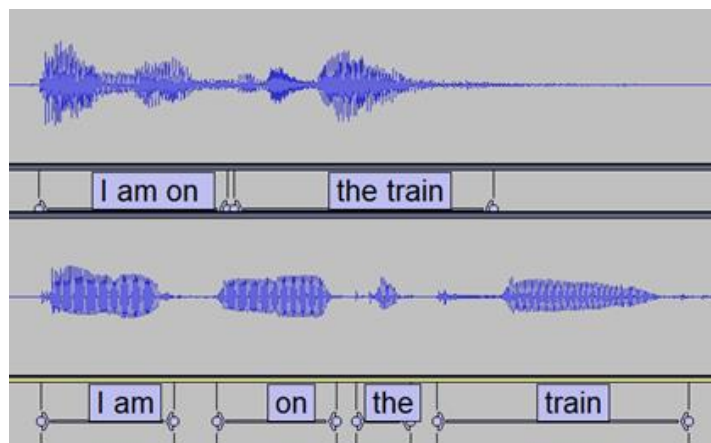


Figure 2. Waveforms of the Sentence 'I Am on the Train' by a Native Speaker and by a Student From the Sample

E. Error Analysis

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Lado, 1957) was built on the assumption that where the first and second languages share linguistic structures, a process of positive transfer takes place, resulting in native-like utterances. On the other hand, negative transfer occurs when structures of the first and second languages are distinct, resulting in errors and non-native-like speech (Wong et al., 2021, p. 4). During the 1970s, the Contrastive Analysis (CA) faced harsh criticism as empirical studies conducted by linguists such as Nemser (1971); Corder (1981) and James (2013) showed that learner's first language interference is not the only cause of errors made in L2. Furthermore, it showed that a learner goes through various stages of acquisition; each has its own errors depending on the level of competence the learner reaches (Al-Sobhi, 2019, p. 52).

In his Speech Learning Model (SLM), Flege (1995) agrees that differences between the first and second languages create pronunciation difficulties for learners. He also suggests that similarities between languages might be problematic. The model was based on the notion of equivalence classification. It argues that sounds of L2 that are similar or equivalent to sounds of L1 might be challenging to acquire accurately because the learner classifies both sounds in the same cognitive category. On the contrary, if a sound from L2 is distinct from its closest sound of L1, it is more likely for a learner to accurately produce it because a new phonetic category is cognitively established for this sound. Thus, the learnability of L2 is dependent on the learner's perception of the L2 in relation to the L1, which agrees with Major's (1987) earlier Similarity Differential Rate Hypothesis (SDRH) which suggested that dissimilar phenomena are acquired at faster rates than similar phenomena.

However, Major's (2001) Ontogeny Phylogeny Model (OPM), which he defined as "the life cycle of an individual's language" (p. 81), argues that transfer plays various roles at the different stages of L2 phonological development; the pattern of interlanguage development in the OPM is: "L2 increases, L1 decreases, and U increases and then decreases" (p. 82) with the U element referring to developmental processes of acquisition, substitutions and errors.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

An equal number of male to female English Language senior students of The Hashemite University participated in the study. The eight participants were randomly chosen from English language courses. They volunteered to participate in this study and their consent was secured via email.

Participants were fourth-year students majoring in English language and literature, they were chosen on the assumption that they have already obtained intermediate English language skills, have good fluency and accuracy, effectively use English language for various situations and have the ability to express their ideas on complex topics. Authors used pseudonyms to protect the privacy of participant identity.

B. Recording Procedures

Participants were asked to record themselves reading a set of selected sentences sent to them via WhatsApp (to circumvent constraints on face-to-face meetings imposed by COVID19) and send the recordings back to the researchers.

Individually recording WhatsApp voice messages reduced the impact of transferred learning and eliminated any shortcomings resulting from participants feeling that they are being observed by their colleagues. The recordings were then gathered and analyzed by comparing them to those of a native speaker uttering the same set of sentences. The researchers used a system called Audacity (audacityteam.org) to compare the model pronunciation of the native speaker to that of the students to measure the frequencies of applying linking while speaking. The software made possible instant comparisons between pronunciation of the learners and the native speakers through visualized waveforms.

C. Stimuli

The researchers used ten sentences (Table I) with ten linking positions as an instrument for the study. The sentences which are simple in nature and could be easily produced by students, focused on the two types of linking the researchers are interested in studying, namely CV and VV environments. The sentences were taken from two videos (https://rb.gy/vmdl18 and https://rb.gy/vbbucx) for an American native speaker.

TABLE I
POSITIONS AND TYPES OF LINKING IN THE TOOL

Phrase	CV or VV	Phonetic Transcription
What is it?	CV	[wʌs dɪ zɪt]
It's his anniversary.	CV	[ɪts hɪ zæənə'vɜːɪsəri]
I am on the train.	CV	[aɪ mɒn]
That's what I thought.	CV	[wʌs daɪ θɒt]
Forget about it.	CV	[fəɪ geɪ də'baʊdɪt]
I actually did.	VV	[aɪ j'æk tʃu ə li did]
Don't fence me in.	VV	[doʊnt fens mi:jɪn]
She wants to be alone.	VV	[ʃi wʌnts tə bi:lə'loʊn]
I'd like the yellow apple	VV	[ɪd ə'jeləʊw'æpəl]
I like Woody Allen movies.	VV	[aɪ laɪk 'wɒdi:j'ælən'mʊvɪz]

IV. RESULTS

Results displayed in the pie charts below show percentages of students who applied linking to the sentences of the stimuli (in blue) and students who failed to apply linking to the same set of controlled sentences (in orange) in both the CV and the VV environments.

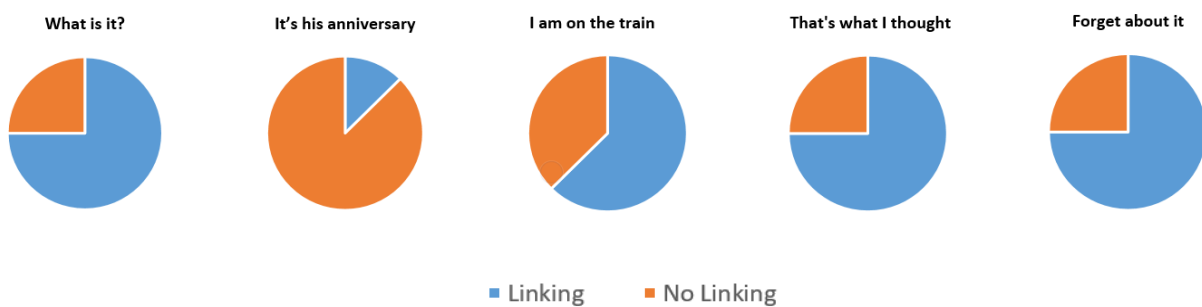


Figure 3. CV Environments Representation in Pie Charts

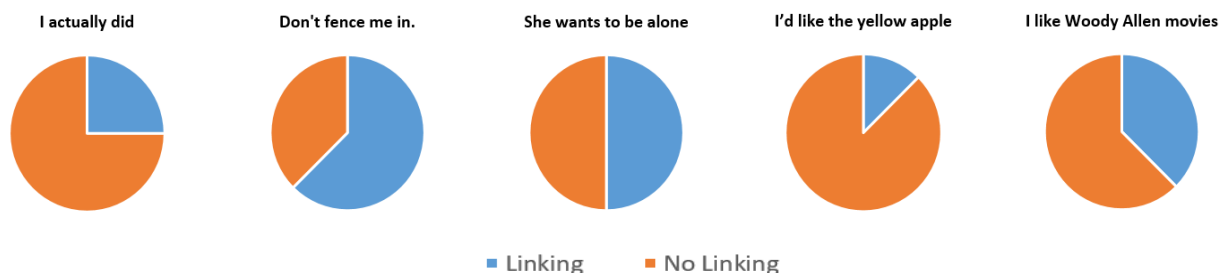


Figure 4. VV Environments Representation in Pie Charts

It is observed in the first set of pie charts (Figure 3), that the percentage of students in the sample who applied linking in the CV environment exceeded those who failed to apply it, with the exception of the sentence It's his anniversary, where only one student managed to apply linking.

Figure 4 shows that percentages of students in the sample who failed to apply linking in the VV environment exceeded those who managed to apply it, with the exception of the sentence Don't fence me in, where five students of eight applied linking.

The total percentage of students who applied linking to those who did not among both of the environments tested was (48.75%) to (51.25%), which indicates that students in the sample failed to apply linking in more than half of the environments of the instrument.

V. DISCUSSION

The size of the sample of this exploratory study is too small to make any conclusive findings. However, the results of the data collected suggests that Jordanian students at the university level apply linking in higher percentages in CV environments than in VV environments and that they fail to apply linking in more than half of the environments they encounter.

Students in the sample failed to apply linking in more than half of the environments tested. That is, they failed to combine the two sounds at word boundaries in each of the controlled environments of the stimuli, inserting a glottal stop at the beginning of the second word instead.

“Unintentional insertion of glottal stops could be attributed to a number of reasons including lack of or insufficient knowledge of the rules of linking, stumbling over speech, L1 interference, phonological environment, and word frequency” (Alameen, 2014, p. 98). Although more than one of those reasons could explain the results of this study, researchers are interested in shedding light on the impact of L1 interference on the application of linking.

Glottalization is a common sound pattern for persons whose first language is Arabic. Producing a glottal stop “entails a full closure of the vocal folds followed by a short release burst” (Skarnitzl et al., 2021, p. 3). A process that is easy for speakers of Arabic to perform as the glottal stop is a basic variant of a phoneme in Arabic (Maddieson, 1984, p. 263) and is represented by the Hamza (ء) (Parkinson, 1990, p. 270).

Hamza (ء) is a pharyngeal sound that is produced along with five other different sounds; (غ،خ،ع،ح،ه) showed below in Figure 5.

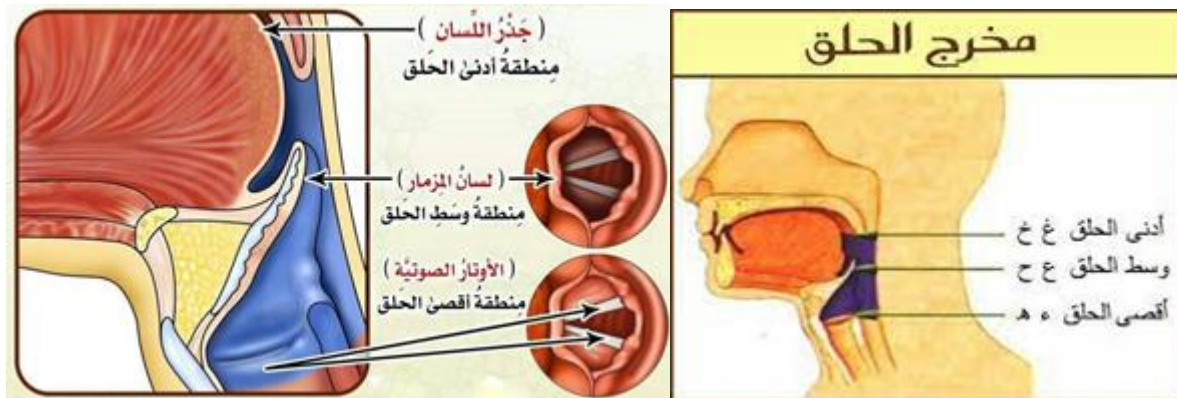


Figure 5. Glottal Stop - Hamza (ء)

Linking is common in Arabic as well. Arabic phonological system has three main long vowels [ɑ:], [u:], [i:] (Ryding, 2005, p. 25) and three short vowels represented by small symbols (Harakaat) added above or beneath letters; those are the Kasrah / ِ / [i], the Fat-ha / َ / [e] and the Dhamma / ُ / [u] as in /بِ/، /بَ/، /بُ/، [bɪ], [be] and [bu].

Linking mainly takes place in Arabic when two silent sounds meet (a silent sound has none of the three symbols (Harakaat)). The meeting of two silent sounds results in choppy and slurred pronunciation that speakers of Arabic avoid by applying linking. Arabic speakers use the three short vowels (Harakaat) as glides to link two words, the first of which ends with a silent sound and the second begins with one. The following examples from (Mubarak & Rahi, 2017, p. 33) demonstrate the usage of Harakaat as glides:

- Kasrah / ِ / [i]: 'أن اضرب (to hit) (Ash-Shu'ara, verse. 63) 'أن اضرب'
- Fat-ha / َ / [e]: 'من الجنة (from the Jinn) (Al-Nas Surah, verse. 6) 'من الجنة'
- Dhamma / ُ / [u]: 'اشتروا الضلالة (bought misguidance) (AL-Baqarah, verse. 16) 'اشتروا الضلالة'

Arabic glides entail the integration of orthography when applying linking in Arabic. The language has high correspondence between the said and the written. When Harakaat are used to link, they are reflected in the written form and in the oral form.

Linking as a phenomenon takes place in both Arabic and English. It is used mainly to avoid hiatus and interruption. Glides in English are [w] and [j] ([r] as well, although not discussed in this paper), all of which are consonant sounds.

However, glides in Arabic are [ɪ], [e], and [o], all of which are short vowels which could explain why students applied linking more in CV environments than in VV environments. Researchers believe that an Arabic speaker cognitively accepts a CV formation as it is a main morphological formation of Arabic segments. It is hard however, for an Arabic speaker to produce a VCV formation resulting from the VV linking and the addition of the glide in between ([^w] or [j]), because Arabic segments never start with a vowel. However, researchers could not find any literature that provides an explanation for the tendency of Arabic speakers to produce CV linking at a higher frequency than VV linking.

Results of higher frequency of application of CV linking over VV linking agrees with the results of Zhang (2011, p. 137) who examined the recordings of 42 Chinese EFL learners reading 20 English sentences at two different times, one in their first semester and the other in their fourth semester at university. Zhang found that CV linking was applied in around (60%) of the contexts in both times, while VV linking was seldom used, with a percentage of about (10%). Zhang (2011) did not provide an explanation of the result that is related to the acquisition of the language, instead she thought that students at the university level were capable of producing CV linking more than VV linking the reasons being that 'i) CV linking occurs frequently in connected speech, ii) the condition under which it takes place is relatively easy to remember and iii) CV linking is often introduced in English textbooks in high schools in China'.

It is important to note that the use of glides (Harakat) to prevent the meeting of two silent sounds in Arabic is one way of linking words, as it is mainly applied in CC and VC environments. Another, is the insertion of the glottal stop, that is mainly used when the second word starts with a vowel (which is the area of interest of this paper). In Arabic, no word or syllable begins with a vowel. Arabic speakers, therefore, use a glottal stop (Hamza) before any of the three vowels of the language when they appear at the beginning of a word such as:

- [ɑ:]: ?Amal: Hope أمل
- [u:]: ?umma: Nation أمة
- [i:]: ?iftar: Breakfast إفطار

Arabic speakers inserting the glottal stop [ʔ] to make their pronunciation easier when uttering words with initial vowels in Arabic, explains their tendency to insert the glottal stop while linking in English. Linking vowels is related to the glottal stop in the schemata of an Arabic speaker in a plain example of L1 interference.

A. *It's His Anniversary*

Only one student managed to perform linking in the sentence 'It's his anniversary' [hɪz ænə'vɜrsəri] (see Figure 6), other students, however, inserted a glottal stop and uttered a chopped version of the sentence [hɪz ʔænə'vɜrsəri].

The Arabic words never start with a vowel- rule makes linking vowels one of the most difficult skills to acquire for Arab learners. Arab learners insert the glottal stop phoneme before English words beginning with a vowel because that is what they do when faced with a word that starts with a vowel in Arabic. The glottal stop is a very common phoneme in Arabic, but inserting it before words that begin with vowels in English "distorts the natural stress pattern and results in a staccato-like rhythm. For example, in English an Arab would tend to say [ʔAnn's ʔoffice ʔis ʔalways ʔopen]. To counteract this tendency, students must be taught to link the sounds so that there is a smooth, unobtrusive transition from one sound to another" (Yorkey, 1974, p. 11).

It is worth mentioning though that Anderson-Hsieh, Riney and Koehler (1994) study results showed that in CV and VV clusters, the word boundaries were maintained through the insertion of glottal stops although participants were ten Japanese ESL learners whose insertion of a glottal stop in VV linking could not be attributed to L1 interference. Authors could not explain the failure of participants to link word-initial vowels with other segments at word boundaries. They thought "it is possible that the tendency to keep vowels intact may be related to a concern for intelligibility, although it is not clear why vowels, and not consonants, would be singled out" (Anderson-Hsieh et al., 1994, p. 45), which may suggest that adding a glottal stop before vowels is a more natural or universal process than linking.

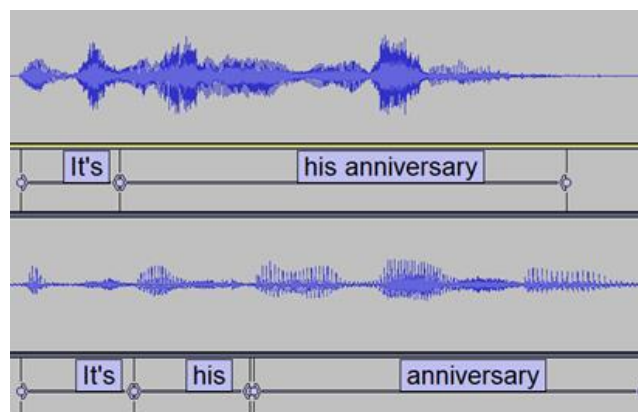


Figure 6. 'It's His Anniversary' No Linking by Student (Hassan)

B. *Don't Fence Me in*

Five students applied linking to *me in* [mi: ɪn] in the sentence ‘Don't fence me in’ (see Figure 7). Although the sentence is an example of VV linking, which was applied less frequently than that of the CV linking, students managed to apply linking to this sentence. A possible explanation could be that the long [i:] in ‘me’ is compatible with the short [ɪ] in ‘in’. Justifying the natural application of this type of linking, Underhill (2005, p. 67) states that [ɪ] and [i:] form the starting point for the semi-vowel [j], which facilitates the insertion of the glide that enables the application of linking.

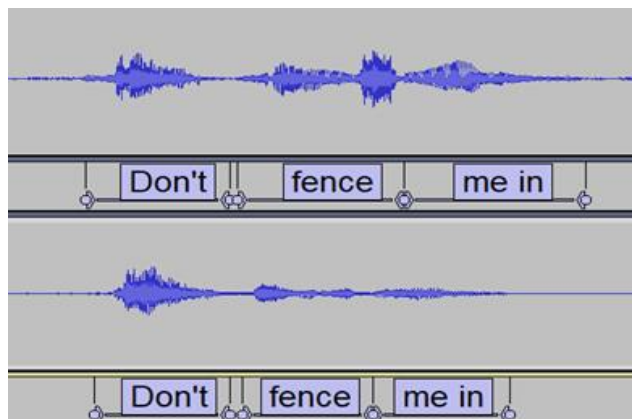


Figure 7. ‘Don't Fence Me in’ Linking by Student (Yazeed)

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusion

In more than half of the CV and VV environments of the tool, senior students from the Hashemite University failed to apply linking. They unintentionally applied more linking in CV environments than in VV environments. Difficulties in applying linking were mainly due to the lack of instruction on the linking and the negative interference of L1 in the practice of L2. The natural use of glottal stops before vowels at the beginning of Arabic words was systematically and unintentionally carried over to L2 by students in the sample. They used glottal stops before words starting with vowels in English.

“The prevalent tendency of a language to either link words together or to separate them using glottalization is an important part of the prosodic patterning of a language, contributing to each language’s specific rhythm” (Skarnitzl et al., 2021, p. 3). Therefore, while glottalization and linking are opposites in English, Arabic speakers use glottalization as a linking technique which explains the tendency of students in the sample to add a glottal stop when linking in English.

B. Recommendations

It is recommended that students be instructed on the proper application of linking during school and university classes. Teaching linking in EFL classes requires the training of teachers on methodologies of teaching pronunciation features. Teaching the feature requires the modification of the curriculum and equipping schools and universities with audio labs that facilitates the acquisition of English phonological features.

Instruction on linking will result in students applying this feature while speaking. This assumption is verified by the findings of Kuo (2009), Melenca (2001) and Sardegna (2011), all of which have examined the effectiveness of linking instruction on L2 learners and found positive improvement.

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Naji M. AlQbailat holds a PhD in Computational Linguistics from UC3M, Spain, 2020. He is a language expert with over 24 years of experience in teaching, managing and developing language programs. He is currently serving as the director of Language Center at Al-Balqa Applied University in Jordan, where he had already been given the same position twice.

He has held various positions in his career including a coordinator of Teletandem Arabic and English exchange program at Georgetown University, Lecturer of Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages at Middlebury College, and Assistant Dean for Practicum and Development at Princess Alia University College.

Throughout his career, he has shown a commitment to improving language education and has made significant contributions to the field. He is also a Social Media Interaction Analyst and has extensive experience in using technology in language teaching and learning.

Ahlam Elkouz holds a PhD in Linguistics, Literature and Translation from the University of Malaga, Spain, 2022. With 15 years of experience in education, she works as an education consultant with various non-governmental organizations including USAID and Global Affairs Canada as well as governmental entities- mainly the Jordanian Ministry of Education and the National Center for Curriculum Development- to enhance learning experiences and advance educational opportunities for diverse student populations through updating policies, frameworks, and practices.

Her deep commitment to driving positive change in the field of language education and empowering learners to achieve their full potential led her to teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in various institutions among which are the University of Jordan, King Khalid University, Luminous for Education and Al Hussain Technical University.

Proficient in Arabic, English, and Spanish, her excellent communication skills enabled her to connect with individuals from diverse backgrounds, while also embodying principles of cross-cultural sensitivity. With skills in educational policy research, curriculum development, educational technology, and teacher training, she is committed to continuous learning, innovation, and collaboration, always seeking opportunities to contribute to the transformation of educational systems and create meaningful learning experiences for all learners.



Nizar Qpilat earned his PhD in Arabic literature from The University of Jordan in 2010. He has extensive experience in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers and has contributed his expertise to several international universities, spanning across countries such as the USA, Russia, and the UAE.

He has held various positions in his career including a coordinator of language programs. In addition, he trained teachers at other universities in Norway, Germany, and UAE. Prof. Qpilat is also a one-off interested in critical novel and creative literature and has a lot of books and research.

The Influence of Digital Comic Folktale Learning Media on Fantasy Text Writing Skills in Junior High Schools

Nugraheni Eko Wardani*

Department of Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

Abstract—This study aimed to describe (1) influence of digital comic folktale learning media on fantasy text writing skills; (2) students' perceptions of using digital comic folktale learning media to improve fantasy text writing skills through the adoption of quantitative and qualitative mixed methods. The data were sourced from pretest, posttest, student's interviews, and questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. Quantitative methods used t-test in SPSS 27 with questionnaire, while qualitative methods used student interviews. Subsequently, the qualitative and quantitative data were integrated through thematic analysis. The results showed that students' posttest scores increased compared to the pretest. The maximum score for fantasy text writing skills in the pretest was 90, with minimum and average scores of 70 and 78.57, as well as a standard deviation of 4.18. Meanwhile, the maximum score for fantasy text writing skills in the posttest was 95, with minimum and average scores of 72 and 83.87, as well as a standard deviation of 5.17. Based on the questionnaire results and interviews, students were interested and motivated to participate in fantasy text using digital comic folktale learning media.

Index Terms—digital comic, folktale, learning media, fantasy texts, writing skills

I. INTRODUCTION

Folktale is a type of folklore found in oral form among the community and a story passed down over generations (Fang, 2011; Danandjaja, 2007). According to Bascom (1991), folktale consists of myths, legends, and fairy tales. McNeill (2013) stated that myth was a story about truth and holiness in society. Meanwhile, legend is a type of semi-historical folktale in which a historical figure or a place is shown (Haviland, 2003). Rusyana et al. (2000) reported that the characters in legend were figures who lived in the past and were prominent in society. Additionally, Haviland (2003) stated that a fairy tale was a creative fictional story recognized as someone's imagination for entertainment. Rusyana et al. (2000) classified the concept into 2, namely fairy tales with human and animal characters. In the real world, fairy tales with animal characters represent human behavior (Wardani, 2022).

Folktale is an intangible cultural heritage recognized worldwide UNESCO (2022) and contains various local wisdom still relevant in the 21st century. The story should be preserved as part of learning in schools and universities. Different efforts are carried out to conserve folktale by transferring oral to written and digital stories. To adapt to the demands of TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) based learning in the 21st century, folktale transfer is developed into digital comic and becomes learning media in schools. The development is a conservation effort that must be implemented.

Education today has the aim of creating a future generation that has 21st century life skills. 21st century life skills are the government's efforts for the future young generation to be able to face the challenges of the industrial revolution 4.0 and society 5.0. A future life full of challenges not only requires young people who have good quality hard skills, but also have good quality soft skills too. 21st century skills consist of (1) critical thinking competencies; (2) creative and innovative thinking; (3) communication skills; (4) ability to collaborate; (5) self-confidence (Ariyana & Pujiastuti, 2018). Modern learning must also be technology-based (TPACK). The use of technology increases students' curiosity and improves their critical thinking skills (Rubio, 2024). Based on TPACK, technology is an important part of learning (Heleem et al., 2022). Technology can be applied in the use of technology-based learning media or in technology-based textbooks and textbooks. One form of technology that is applied as a learning medium is digital folktale comic media.

21st century learning must also be HOTS based. Resnick (1987) states that Higher Order Thinking Skill is a complex process of describing material, making conclusions, building representations, analyzing, and building relationships involving the most basic mental activities. Lewis and Smith (2019) stated that higher order thinking skills will occur if someone has information stored in memory and obtains new information, then connects, organizes and develops this information to achieve goals or obtain solution answers. HOTS includes critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, and decision making. HOTS and TPACK aspects should be integrated in learning plans, learning implementation, textbooks, learning models, learning media, and learning assessments.

*Corresponding Author. Email: nugraheniekowardani_99@staff.uns.ac.id

Much research has been conducted on learning media. Dwiputra et al. (2020) researched comics that can be used in social studies learning. This comic integrates the concepts of geography, sociology, economics, and history in the learning process. Research by Maharani et al. (2019) examines comics used in physics learning. Research by Yonanda et al. (2019) examines printed comic learning media used for learning in elementary schools. Rokhayani et al. (2014) researched printed comic strip learning media for learning English vocabulary. Research by Yulianda et al. (2019) researched printed comic learning media for learning narrative stories. There has not been much research regarding the learning media for digital folktale comics for learning to write fantasy texts for junior high school students. Thus, the research questions proposed for this research are:

1. How does the use of digital comic folktale learning media influence students' fantasy texts writing skills?
2. What are the students' perceptions of using digital comic folktale learning media to improve fantasy texts writing skills?

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. *Digital Comic as Learning Media*

Comic is defined as juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequences, intended to convey information and produce an aesthetic response in the viewer. Digital comic are media that can attract the attention of people of all ages due to the advantage of being easily understood. Simple pictures and words in daily language increase the readability of digital comic (McCloud, 1994). According to Darmawan (2012), the language of images is a system of visual symbols to convey certain information or messages using special drawings. The comic is identical to cartoon images of characters and drawn either in traditional or digital stationery (Fatimah et al., 2019).

Comic that combines visual graphics, as well as textual information is developed to be educational resources. Educational comic, which are designed to entertain and educate, can engage students in complex literacy practices crossing formal and informal experiences (Matuk et al., 2019). The sequence consists of stories, containing pictures and several words (Marianthi et al., 2001). The use of pictures allows students to create a story by generating ideas without difficulty and in chronological order. Comic combines pictures, text, and other visual components permitting students to receive information as well as express ideas. The usage can be an effective and efficient tool in bridging knowledge or learning concepts formally presented into a language closer to students' daily personal experiences (Matuk et al., 2019).

B. *Folktale*

Folktale is a story that developed among the people, is oral, contains moral values and local wisdom for the community (Rusyana et al., 2000; Danandjaja, 2007; Wardani, 2022). The oral folktales are then collected, re-recorded, and can be published in print. These folktales, which are very useful for the younger generation, are then used in learning in schools. Many efforts have been made to make Indonesian folktale attractive to the younger generation because it is an intangible world heritage for Indonesia, one of which is through inventions in the form of digital folktale learning media. Through this invention, it is hoped that learning media that uses folktale in the form of digital technology can attract students' interest in language learning, especially learning to write fantasy texts.

C. *Learning to Write Fantasy Texts*

Writing skills are HOTS-based learning in developing C6 competency, namely being creative with the operational verb. In learning to write, students' critical and creative thinking aspects are developed. These skills are reasoning and imagination activities that show a person's cognitive style. According to Vygotsky (2004), imagination is the basis of all creative activities and part of the cognitive process that plays a role in all aspects of life. Individuals with writing skills as part of daily life are certainly more organized in language, critical thinking, reasoning, and creative thinking competence. As an important skill, writing is part of learning outcomes in Elementary and Junior High Schools as well as College.

Writing fantasy texts is an important part of learning language and literature. According to Aghagolzadeh and Tajabadi (2012), literature could provide media to improve language skills through reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This was also consistent with Febriani et al. (2022) where the importance of teaching literature covered language enrichment, authentic materials, personal participation, and cultural enrichment.

According to Nurgiyantoro (2023), fantasy story features characters, plots, settings, or themes serving as a combination of reality and imagination, including the whole or only part of the story. Types of fantasy stories include (1) total and Sliced Fantasy, and (2) contemporaneous and cross-time fantasy. Mahsun (2020) stated that fantasy story texts were a literary genre with the social purpose of telling events having pleasant resolutions. The structure includes introduction (orientation), problem (complication), and problem-solving (resolution). Wright (2004) reported that fantasy stories contained an alternative reality setting. In this context, creativity can be developed by writing fantasy story (Arnett, 2005). Students tend to show enhanced learning outcomes when engaging with fantasy narratives compared to real-life stories (Vidal, 2014). Fantasy stories are very important for developing creativity and can guide students to practice writing and conduct imaginative creations (Yusmaliana & Suyadi, 2019). Meanwhile, literature learning educates students to be able to write literary works. Students can write complete fantasy texts when accompanied by learning media to support learning process.

III. METHOD

A. Research Design

This research is a mix method. According to Creswell (2009), mix method research was a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The design used qualitative data obtained from interviews, while quantitative data sources included pretest and posttest learning data, as well as questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. The strategy was an explanatory sequential design, which included collecting and analyzing quantitative pretest and posttest data. Subsequently, qualitative data collection and analysis were conducted based on student interviews (Creswell, 2009).

B. Research Sample

This study was conducted at a Junior High School in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. The subjects were 40 students for the pretest and posttest stages and 5 students for interviews. Questionnaire data was distributed to 40 students. A total of 20 male and 20 female students participated in the Indonesian language learning by creating fantasy text material.

C. Data Collection Method

The quantitative data collection method comprised the conduction of pretests and posttests on 40 students to assess the effectiveness of digital comic folktale learning media in teaching fantasy text writing. In this context, the pretest and posttest data were supported with questionnaire responses. The questionnaire was distributed using Google Forms and qualitative data collection techniques comprised the conduction of interviews with students. Furthermore, the interviews were conducted with 5 students coded as S1 (Student 1), S2 (Student 2), S3 (Student 3), S4 (Student 4), and S5 (Student 5).

D. Data Analysis Method

The collected pretest and posttest data were subjected to statistical analysis. The analysis started with prerequisite tests such as normality and homogeneity tests, and a t-test was conducted using SPSS 27. The questionnaire results were analyzed by converting quantitative data into five-scale qualitative data (Sukardjo, 2018). Each statement on the strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree aspects was scored 1,2,3,4, and 5, respectively. Meanwhile, the percentage of digital comic media was calculated using the following formula, $P\% = \frac{\sum q}{\sum r} \times 100\%$. $P\%$ = percentage of each aspect, $\sum q$ = total score for each aspect, $\sum r$ = maximum score for each aspect. The score was calculated using the following formula, $N = A\% + B\% + C\% + D\% + E\% + F\% + G\% + H\% + I\% + J\%$. N = Score obtained for each type, $A-J$ = Percentages of scores for numbers 1–10. The range was determined by the maximum score of 10 and since the score of digital comic media was 100% (Sukardjo, 2018). Qualitative data analysis was based on the results of interviews with 5 students. Moreover, the results of the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and recorded in data cards. Then the results of qualitative and quantitative data analysis are integrated through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting the results of quantitative and qualitative analysis within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

IV. RESULT

A. The Use of Digital Comic Folktale Learning Media Influence Students' Fantasy Text Writing Skills

(a). Comparison of Fantasy Text Writing Skills Between Pretest and Posttest

1. Normality Test

The data was subjected to a normality test to ascertain the distribution before conducting the comparative analysis. Parametric methods were used for subsequent testing when normal distribution was reported. Conversely, non-parametric methods were adopted when there was a deviation from normality. The test was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk test, as reported in Table 1.

TABLE 1
RESULTS OF NORMALITY TEST DATA

Group	Statistic	n	Sig.	$\alpha = 5\%$	Conclusion
Pretest	0,949	40	0,072	0,05	Normally Distributed
Posttest	0,957	40	0,137	0,05	Normally Distributed

Based on the normality test, the p-values for pretest and posttest data were 0.072 and 0.137, respectively. The data were normally distributed since the pretest and posttest groups had p-values more significant than $\alpha = 5\%$ or 0.072 and 0.137 > 0.05.

2. Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test was used to determine the equality of the data variances, as reported in Table 2.

TABLE 2
RESULTS OF DATA HOMOGENEITY TEST

Group	Sig.	$\alpha = 5\%$	Conclusion
Pretest	0,217	0,05	Homogenous
Posttest			

Based on the homogeneity test results, the p-value obtained was 0.217. Since the p-value was more significant than $\alpha = 5\%$ or 0.05 ($0.217 > 0.05$), the pretest and posttest data had the same variance (homogeneous). The subsequent test used a parametric method of the paired t-test because the data were normally distributed and homogeneous.

3. Paired T-Test

Based on the paired t-test calculation, the comparison of fantasy text writing skills between the pretest and posttest groups is reported in Table 3.

TABLE 3
PAIRED T-TEST RESULTS

Group	Sig.	$\alpha = 5\%$	Conclusion
Pretest and Posttest	0,000	0,05	There is a significant difference

Based on Table 3, the obtained p-value is 0.000. The p-value $< \alpha$, or $0.000 < 0.05$ when compared to $\alpha = 5\%$ or 0.05, rejecting the null hypothesis (H_0) and reporting a significant difference between the fantasy text writing skills in the pretest and posttest groups. The descriptive statistics Table shows the difference in fantasy text writing skills between the groups.

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fantasy Text Writing Skills (Pretest)	40	70.00	90.00	78.5750	4.18108
Fantasy Text Writing Skills (Posttest)	40	72.00	95.00	83.8750	5.17483

Based on Table 4, the fantasy text writing skills in the pretest group have maximum and minimum values of 90 and 70, as well as an average value of 78.57, with a standard deviation of 4.18. Meanwhile, the posttest group has maximum and minimum values of 95 and 72, as well as an average value of 83.87, with a standard deviation of 5.17. Since the average learning outcomes in the pretest ($78.57 < 83.87$), there is a difference between the groups. This is significant based on the paired t-test results where the p-value $< \alpha$ or $0.000 < 0.05$. Due to the difference in the average pretest and posttest scores, there is an influence of using digital comic folktale learning media to improve fantasy text writing skills for junior high school students.

B. The Students' Perceptions of Using Digital Comic Folktale Learning Media to Improve Fantasy Text Writing Skills

(a). Results of The Students Questionnaire

No	Perception Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	I am interested in learning fantasy texts and writing fantasy texts using digital comic folktale learning media.	0%	0%	10.5%	72.5%	17%
2.	I feel that digital comic folktale learning media makes it easier to learn fantasy text material.	0%	0%	8.2%	46.3%	45.5%
3.	I like the pictures and colors in digital comic folktale learning media.	0%	0%	5%	80%	15%
4.	I find it easy to observe and read the written text in digital comic folktale learning media.	0%	0%	3.4%	80.2%	16.4%
5.	I feel that the written text and images in comics are closely intertwined to support the story.	0%	0%	6%	80%	14%
6.	I feel that the language used in digital comic folktale learning media is easy to understand.	0%	0%	2%	82.4%	15.6%
7.	I find it easy to access digital comic folktale learning media with a smartphone or laptop.	0%	0%	4.5%	77.5%	18%
8.	I can identify that the story in digital comic folktale learning media contains the beginning, middle, and end stages of the story.	0%	0%	6.3%	78.7%	15%
9.	I benefit from learning and writing fantasy texts using digital comic folktale learning media.	0%	0%	6.5%	78.5%	15%
10.	I feel that digital comic folktale learning media helps me when writing fantasy texts during class assignments.	0%	0%	2.2%	77.8%	20%

(b). Interview Results From Students

Digital comic was offered as an alternative technology-based learning media for fantasy text writing material. The following were students' opinions after observing the digital comic folktale learning media and carrying out learning to write fantasy texts.

- (1) I am very interested in your digital comic folktale learning media. Very interesting. We like it because there are pictures. Moreover, the pictures are colorful. It's easier for me to imagine composing stories (S1).
- (2) Wow, I agree if fantasy text learning media is in the form of digital comic folktale. Fantasy text contains stories and pictures. Makes it easier for us to understand learning material. We can access it practically through our respective devices (S2).
- (3) Digital comic folktale learning media have attractive pictures and colors, showing different expressions of sadness or happiness. The sequence is easily arranged because the story is easy to understand (S3).
- (4) The text in digital comic folktale learning media is harmoniously composed with the pictures, and the language is easy to understand. Therefore, the plot of the story is easily arranged (S4).
- (5) The balloons, pictures, story, colors, and font sizes are harmonious. With this learning media, the plot of the fantasy story is easily arranged (S5).

V. DISCUSSION

The students in the experimental group improved in the posttest after using digital comic folktale learning media. Fantasy text writing skills in the pretest group had maximum and minimum values of 90 and 70, as well as an average of 78.57, with a standard deviation of 4.18. Meanwhile, the fantasy text writing skills in the posttest group had maximum and minimum values of 95 and 72, as well as an average value of 83.87, with a standard deviation of 5.17. Based on the paired t-test results, the $p\text{-value} < \alpha$ or $0.000 < 0.05$. Due to the difference in the average scores, there was an influence of using digital comic folktale learning media to improve the learning outcomes of writing fantasy texts for junior high school students. This study was consistent with Maharani and Rahayu (2019), where the Toondoo comic was used as physics learning media, resulting in high ratings from material experts. Furthermore, Yonanda et al. (2019) explored printed comic learning media in elementary schools to enhance students' critical thinking skills.

Based on the questionnaire data, 89.5% of students strongly agreed that digital comic folktale learning media was attractive for learning and writing fantasy texts. This result was consistent with Hietajärvi and Tuominen (2015); Lawrence and Tar (2018); Reis et al. (2021); Rubio (2024); Lawrence and Tar (2018), where learning with comics increased learning interests and literacy. Students became enthusiastic about reading comic content and following the storylines through high motivation to participate in activities. From the questionnaire results, 91.8% strongly agreed that digital comic learning media increased the easiness of learning fantasy text material. This was consistent with Reis et al. (2021), where visual aspects captured students' interest in reading comics. The use of visuals allowed students to generate sequential ideas when writing stories (Darsalina et al., 2016). According to Berlian et al. (2021), comics as visual-based media facilitated understanding, strengthened memory, and enhanced student interest.

Approximately 95% of students strongly agreed that digital comic folktale media had good images and colors. This was consistent with the opinion that the choice of color, font size, image layout, clarity of title, image material, design attractiveness, and illustrative images was very influential (Artha, 2020). Furthermore, 96.6% strongly agreed that digital comic folktale learning media contained written text in balloons or story introductions. This corresponded to the findings of Pattemore and Munoz (2020), where the right type of text size influenced the readability. The size and type of letters used influenced the readability of the text. The smaller the letters in digital comic media, the more the font became blurry, resulting in poor readability. Moreover, 94% expressed strong agreement that written text and images in comics were closely connected to support the story. This was consistent with the findings of Farinella (2018), where comics combined words and images to transmit information in language learning. The visual aspect could attract students' interest in reading comics and persist in reading the content (Reis et al., 2021). Furthermore, 98% strongly agreed that digital comic folktale learning media used language easily understandable by students (Keskin et al., 2020). A total of 95.5% strongly agreed that digital comic folktale media was easily accessible with smartphones and laptops. Karademir and Alper (2021) reported that integrating technology and digitizing learning has made the process more effective, practical, and diverse. Moreover, 93.7% of students agreed or disagreed that the story's beginning, middle, and end stages could be identified in digital comic folktale learning media. This was consistent with McCloud (1994), where the comic storyline was easy to understand with interesting pictures.

Nurgiyantoro (2023) stated that a good plot should have plausibility, suspense, surprise, and unity at the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Additionally, 93.5% of students strongly agreed that there were benefits to learning and writing fantasy texts with digital comic folktale media. This was consistent with Cimermanová's (2015) opinion that learning with comics shaped personalities because good character values caused students to behave well. Moreover, 97.8% strongly agreed that digital comic media rendered assistance during fantasy text writing learning tasks in class. This corresponded to Wilson's (2015) finding that comic media assisted students in learning writing skills. Based on the interview results, there was an increased level of enthusiasm due to digital comic folktale learning media. This media had attractive pictures and colors, as well as easy-to-understand language and stories in writing fantasy storylines. The use of digital comic folktale learning media could improve the writing skills of junior high school students.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study was carried out to describe the influence of digital comic folktale learning media on writing fantasy texts using quantitative and qualitative mixed methods. The quantitative method showed a significant difference in the average scores between the pretest and posttest groups. This difference was significant between the fantasy text writing skills in the groups based on the paired t-test results where the p-value $< \alpha$ or $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, digital comic folktale learning media could improve the learning outcomes of fantasy text writing skills for junior high school students. According to the questionnaire, students found digital comic folktale learning media appealing for learning and writing fantasy texts due to the presentation of attractive, colorful pictures, easily comprehensible storylines, and the assistance provided by the narratives in composing fantasy texts. Meanwhile, the t-test, questionnaire, and student interviews showed student enthusiasm when digital comic folktale media was used in the learning process. Students have fantasy text writing skills and critical & creative thinking competencies.

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Nugraheni Eko Wardani is an associate professor of Indonesian Language and Literature Education at Universitas Sebelas Maret Indonesia. She focuses on the field of learning Indonesian language and literature, literary studies, cultural studies, folktales studies, postcolonial studies. She has been a speaker in national and international seminars. She is a reviewer of several reputable journals in Indonesia. She has published books and e-books, including *The Meaning of Totality in Literary Works*, *Literary Theory*, *Folklore of Surakarta and Yogyakarta*, *Folktales of Central Java and East Java: Content and Analysis of Structuralism*, *Implementation of Learning Indonesian During the Covid-19 Pandemic*, *Princess Tawangalun and The King*. She actively publishes scientific articles in various national and international journals.

Artificial Intelligence for English Language Learning and Teaching: Advancing Sustainable Development Goals

Omar Ali Al-Smadi

School of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800, USM, Penang, Malaysia

Radzuwan Ab Rashid*

Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, 21030, Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia;
Applied Science Research Center, Applied Science Private University, Amman, Jordan

Hadeel Saad

English Language and Translation Department, Applied Science Private University, Amman, Jordan

Yousef Houssni Zrekat

Faculty of Linguistic Studies, Arab Open University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal

School of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800, USM, Penang, Malaysia

Gaforov Ikboljon Uktamovich

Faculty of English Language and Literature, Fergana State University, 150100, Fergana, Uzbekistan

Abstract—This study explores the affordance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to English language learning and teaching, focusing on its alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It aims to investigate the role of AI in enhancing language education and fostering student-centered learning. Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews with 18 English teachers to gather qualitative insights into their experiences with AI-powered language learning tools. The findings reveal that the teachers have positive appraisals of AI that its use has six major impacts: i) enhancing the personalization of learning; ii) contributing to improved learning outcomes by advancing students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills; iii) playing a fundamental role in bridging educational gaps; iv) enhancing students' engagement and motivation; v) empowering educators with professional development opportunities; vi) and encouraging self-directed learning. This study argues that, if implemented thoughtfully, AI can enhance language learning outcomes and create an environment conducive to student engagement and success.

Index Terms—artificial intelligence, English language teaching, sustainable development goals, language learning

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the fusion of technology and education has birthed a transformative force that is reshaping the way we learn and teach. Artificial Intelligence (AI), once relegated to the realms of education, has stepped out of the pages and into our classrooms, offering a potent promise of enhancing the educational experience. Its integration into the field of education is marked by innovations that are both exciting and far-reaching, with AI's capabilities extending to various facets of the learning process.

While AI's influence on education is profound, its implications for English language learning and teaching are particularly noteworthy (Dreimane & Upenieks, 2020; Biletska et al., 2021; Haleem et al., 2022). The significance of English proficiency in today's interconnected world cannot be overstated. English is not just a language; it is a gateway to opportunities, a means of communication that transcends borders, and a key skill demanded by employers worldwide (Adriansen et al., 2022). As a lingua franca of business, science, diplomacy, and the internet, proficiency in English can open doors to education, employment, and global collaboration (Al-Smadi et al., 2020).

In the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Quality Education (SDG 4), this article scrutinizes the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English language learning. It explores AI's fundamental role in enhancing accessibility, effectiveness, and inclusivity within language education,

* Corresponding Author. Email: radzuwanrashid@unisza.edu.my

aligning with the broader mission of global sustainable development. The primary objective of this study is to investigate AI's impact on English language learning and teaching, with a specific focus on Quality Education (SDG 4), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), and Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), gathering insights through semi-structured interviews with English language teachers. The central question guiding this inquiry is: How do English language teachers perceive AI's influence on language education, considering its alignment with the SDGs? By incorporating English teacher perspectives, this article provides a comprehensive understanding of AI's role in language education, enhancing the discussion and analysis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *AI in English Language Learning*

In the realm of English language learning, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force, offering personalized and adaptive learning experiences that traditional classrooms often struggle to provide (Liao et al., 2021; Kamalov et al., 2023). AI-powered platforms such as TalkPal, Languate, and Praktika AI excel in addressing the diverse needs and learning paces of individual students. These platforms possess the remarkable ability to analyze a learner's strengths and weaknesses, continuously monitor progress, and dynamically adapt content accordingly (Shemshack et al., 2021). For instance, if a student excels in vocabulary but struggles with pronunciation, the AI system can allocate more time and resources to pronunciation exercises, ensuring that learners receive customized support. This adaptability leads to more efficient and effective language acquisition (Bilad et al., 2021).

AI's influence extends beyond adaptability, ushering in an era of convenience and accessibility in language education. Mobile apps, chatbots, and virtual tutors powered by AI are accessible 24/7, allowing learners to practice and improve their English skills at their own pace and convenience (Bilad et al., 2021; Biletska et al., 2021). Language learning apps like Duolingo, Babbel, and Rosetta Stone employ AI algorithms to offer interactive and engaging lessons, utilizing gamification and real-time feedback to keep learners motivated while tracking their progress (Wei, 2023). AI-driven chatbots, exemplified by Microsoft's popular chatbot, provide conversational English practice with immediate responses and corrections, facilitating authentic language usage and conversational skill development. Additionally, virtual tutors offered by companies such as VIPKid and iTalki leverage AI to schedule sessions, match learners with appropriate tutors, and deliver personalized teaching materials. These platforms have gained popularity for offering interactive, engaging, and effective language learning experiences, all made possible by AI-driven personalized and adaptive approaches (Wei, 2023; Kamalov et al., 2023).

AI's evolving role in English language learning promises even more innovative solutions in the future. As technology advances, the potential for AI to make language learning more accessible and effective becomes increasingly evident (Kessler, 2018; Wei, 2023). These developments align seamlessly with the broader goals of education and sustainable development, ushering in an era where language proficiency is more attainable and relevant than ever before (Vinuesa et al., 2020; Kamalov et al., 2023).

AI-enhanced language education brings forth distinct advantages that reshape English language learning's landscape, focusing on accessibility, affordability, and scalability (Bilad et al., 2023). Traditional barriers, often linked to geographical constraints, dissolve as AI-powered tools provide high-quality materials and resources, catering to remote or underserved learners. This newfound accessibility pairs with affordability, with AI-driven platforms frequently offering cost-effective or free alternatives, mitigating the financial burden often associated with language courses (Bilad et al., 2023). Learners can also sidestep commuting expenses, rendering AI-enhanced language learning a budget-friendly choice. Furthermore, AI's scalability ensures quality instruction for a vast number of learners simultaneously, essential in addressing the growing global demand for English education (Markauskaite et al., 2022).

Beyond accessibility and affordability, AI significantly bolsters learning outcomes. Personalized learning tailors the curriculum to each learner's strengths and weaknesses, allowing limitless practice in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, alongside instant feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary usage (Shemshack et al., 2021; Wei, 2023). Gamification and interactive elements engage learners, potentially boosting retention and outcomes (Xu et al., 2023). Notable examples, such as VIPKid's use of AI algorithms for student-tutor matching, Pearson's AI-Powered English Test, and Education First's success with AI-enhanced English learning through EF English Live, underscore AI's positive impact on enhancing language education. These advancements render language learning more effective, accessible, and aligned with the goals of sustainable development, as AI's potential to transform language education becomes increasingly evident with evolving technology (Vinuesa et al., 2020; Kamalov et al., 2023).

Although AI's affordance and capability in language education are substantial, it also brings forth critical challenges and ethical concerns. Data privacy and bias in AI algorithms stand as prominent issues, necessitating stringent data protection measures and diverse development teams for bias mitigation (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Moreover, the risk of overreliance on technology potentially hindering holistic language development calls for a balance between AI-enhanced and traditional teaching methods (Abioye et al., 2021). Ethical considerations emphasize transparency, accountability, user consent, continuous monitoring, equity, and ethical education, reinforcing the need for responsible AI use. Developers must clarify AI capabilities and data usage, while learners should provide informed consent, and equitable access to AI-driven resources is crucial (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Abioye et al., 2021).

Some scholars argue that AI introduces conflicts and disruptions in traditional educational settings, impacting the roles of both learners and teachers (Leahy et al., 2019; Schiff, 2021). This divergence in opinions underscores the need for a comprehensive understanding of the concerns and perceptions within the educational community. The literature also reveals conflicting views on how AI affects the dynamics of education, presenting a landscape where opinions on its efficacy and potential pitfalls diverge. Some argue that AI in education empowers learners, providing personalized and adaptive learning experiences (Wei, 2023). Others, however, express reservations about the potential dehumanization of education and the depersonalization of the student-teacher relationship (Leahy et al., 2019; Schiff, 2021; Abioye et al., 2021).

To encapsulate the literature review section, it is evident that the discourse around AI in education is dynamic and multifaceted. By acknowledging the divergent perspectives and conflicts in the literature, we establish a foundation for the significance of our research. Additionally, in understanding the concerns and perceptions of teachers, we contribute valuable insights to the ongoing dialogue about the responsible and effective use of AI in language education. This, in turn, ensures responsible, equitable, and inclusive language education through AI.

B. Theoretical Framework

This study employs the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as the theoretical framework to investigate English language teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language education. TAM, initially proposed by Davis (1989) and later extended by Venkatesh and Davis (2000), is a widely recognized model for understanding users' acceptance and adoption of technology, particularly in educational contexts.

At the core of the TAM framework are two key factors that influence individuals' technology acceptance: Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU). PEOU refers to the extent to which users perceive that using a particular technology is effortless and straightforward. On the other hand, PU reflects users' beliefs regarding the technology's capability to enhance their performance and effectiveness in their tasks.

In the context of language education, PEOU and PU are of paramount importance. English language teachers' perceptions of the ease with which AI-integrated language education tools can be incorporated into their teaching practices (PEOU) and the extent to which these tools are viewed as beneficial in enhancing students' language learning experiences (PU) significantly influence their willingness to embrace AI in their classrooms.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, as it aims to explore the perceptions and experiences of English language teachers regarding the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language learning and education.

B. Data Collection Method

The primary data collection method consists of semi-structured interviews with English language teachers. This approach allows for in-depth exploration of teachers' perspectives, experiences, and insights on the topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Ethical considerations were carefully addressed, including obtaining informed consent from all participants for both participation in the study and audio-recording of semi-structured interviews.

C. Sampling

Purposive sampling was meticulously utilized to enlist English language teachers with significant experience in AI-integrated language education, ensuring participants possess pertinent knowledge and insights vital for this study. The research selectively recruited 18 English language teachers, all of whom are university lecturers with a minimum of two years of experience in integrating AI into language teaching. The composition of the group includes 8 individuals with master's degrees and 10 with Ph.D. degrees, all specializing in English language-related fields. The gender distribution comprises 7 males and 11 females, with an age range between 28 to 49. This methodological approach aims to capture a diverse range of perspectives and experiences within the cohort, enhancing the richness of the study. The sample size was determined through careful consideration of data saturation and the depth of analysis, aligning with the recommendations by Guest et al. (2020).

D. Data Analysis

The data in this study were audio-recorded to ensure accurate data capture. Subsequently, the recordings were transcribed to facilitate data analysis. The names of participants were replaced by pseudonyms (Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C etcetera). Data in this study were analyzed inductively in accordance with Brown and Clark's (2006) thematic approach. The thematic analysis involved multiple stages, including data familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation.

IV. FINDINGS

There were seven themes that emerged: i) enhanced personalization, ii) improved learning outcomes, iii) bridging educational gaps, iv) student-centered learning, v) engagement and motivation, vi) professional development for educators, and vii) ethical concerns and data privacy.

A. *Enhanced Personalization*

In the interviews with English language teachers, a resounding theme emerged, underscoring the remarkable capacity of AI-powered language learning tools to offer enhanced personalization in education. All the teachers who took part in this study praised these tools for their ability to provide highly tailored learning experiences, adapting to individual students' unique needs, preferences, and progress.

Teacher G, with evident enthusiasm, articulated the essence of this theme, stating,

"The beauty of AI-powered platforms is that they understand each student's strengths and weaknesses. It's like having a personal language coach. Students feel like the lessons are designed just for them".

This sentiment encapsulates the heart of AI-driven personalization—an experience akin to one-on-one guidance, where each student's journey is meticulously crafted to cater to their specific learning requirements.

Teacher L shared a compelling narrative, adding depth to the discussion:

"I've seen students who were struggling with grammar or pronunciation make remarkable improvements. The AI analyses their errors and adjusts the exercises accordingly. It's like having a virtual tutor by their side".

This vivid illustration of AI as a virtual tutor underscores its dynamic adaptability. The platform's ability to recognize and address individual challenges empowers students to overcome obstacles and improve their language proficiency.

Personalization, as Teacher C emphasized, serves as a cornerstone for maintaining student engagement: "Personalization is key to keeping students engaged. AI remembers their progress and adapts the difficulty level. It's not one-size-fits-all; it's tailored learning." Here, the concept of tailored learning emerges as a potent tool to sustain learners' interest. By calibrating content and pacing to suit individual needs, AI ensures that each student remains actively engaged.

Teacher M provided a practical perspective, highlighting the tangible benefits of personalized learning:

"AI platform's recommendations for extra practice are spot on. When students receive exercises that match their current level, it boosts their confidence and motivation".

The notion of boosting confidence resonates strongly. Personalized content not only aids in skill development but also nurtures a sense of accomplishment and enthusiasm, encouraging students to strive for further progress.

Furthermore, Teacher H highlighted the broader cultural context, remarking, "Personalization even extends to cultural context. AI offers content related to students' interests and backgrounds, making language learning effective and enjoyable." This insight underscores the holistic approach of AI in personalization. By integrating cultural relevance and catering to individual interests, language education becomes a vibrant and engaging experience, transcending mere efficacy to embrace enjoyment.

These insightful remarks collectively underscore the profound impact of AI in addressing diverse learning styles and individual student needs, positioning it as a transformative force in language education. In an educational landscape marked by diversity, AI serves as a unifying thread, tailoring instruction to cater to the unique tapestry of each student's learning journey. It fosters a sense of empowerment, motivation, and cultural inclusivity, shaping the future of language education into one that truly celebrates the individuality of every learner. As AI advances and refines its personalization capabilities, the promise of more effective, engaging, and individualized language learning experiences beckons—a promise that educators and students alike eagerly embrace.

B. *Improved Learning Outcomes*

The analysis of data highlighted the significant and positive impact of AI-powered language learning tools on students' learning outcomes. The teachers overwhelmingly attested to the transformative potential of these tools, emphasizing improvements in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

Teachers spoke with genuine enthusiasm about the tangible benefits they observed. "I've witnessed students who were grappling with grammar and pronunciation make remarkable progress," noted Teacher B, vividly capturing the essence of this theme. The AI-powered platforms diligently analyze students' errors and adjust exercises accordingly, serving as a constant companion in the journey towards language proficiency.

Improved proficiency extends beyond grammar and pronunciation, as Teacher F highlighted:

"The AI's interactive exercises and language activities have had a profound impact on students' speaking and listening skills. It's like they have a conversation partner available anytime".

The power of AI to foster speaking and listening skills is particularly striking. Students gain the confidence to engage in real conversations, bridging the gap between classroom learning and practical application.

Equally significant is the impact on reading and writing skills. Teacher D underscored this point, stating,

"The platform's recommendations for extra practice are just great. When students receive exercises that match their current level, it improves their confidence and motivation".

Stimulating confidence and reinforcing motivation translate into more adept reading and writing, enabling students to express themselves fluently and effectively.

Moreover, as Teacher I pointed out, the benefits extend beyond linguistic proficiency: "Improved learning outcomes also encompass cultural awareness. AI tailors content to students' interests and backgrounds, enriching their understanding of the world." This broader perspective aligns with the holistic goals of education, transcending language skills to encompass cultural fluency and global awareness.

The unanimous consensus among teachers is that AI-driven language learning tools yield improvements that transcend traditional educational boundaries. Teacher A encapsulated this sentiment: "AI is a game-changer. It refines students' language skills, empowers them to communicate effectively, and ultimately prepares them for a globalized world".

These testimonials underscore the transformative potential of AI in language education, making it not merely a supplement but a catalyst for improved learning outcomes. The data from these semi structured interviews highlights that AI empowers students to navigate language confidently and fluently, equipping them with the skills to communicate effectively in a diverse and interconnected world. As AI continues to evolve, the promise of further improvements in learning outcomes beckons—a promise that educators eagerly embrace in their quest to provide the best possible education for their students.

C. Bridging Educational Gaps

AI-powered language learning tools are crucial in bridging educational gaps, particularly in underserved or remote areas. The teachers (75%, n=?) fervently endorsed the potential of these tools to extend access to quality language instruction, levelling the educational playing field for students regardless of their geographical location.

Teacher J emphasised the transformative impact of AI in this regard:

"In remote areas where access to language instruction is limited, AI can be a game-changer. It brings quality education right to the doorstep of those who need it the most".

This sentiment encapsulates the essence of bridging educational gaps through technology—offering educational opportunities where they were previously scarce.

Teacher C echoed this perspective, stating,

"AI doesn't discriminate based on location. It ensures that students in remote regions have access to the same resources and opportunities as those in urban areas".

The ability of AI to transcend geographical boundaries effectively dismantles the barriers to quality education.

Furthermore, Teacher K noted that in areas with a shortage of qualified language educators, AI steps in as a reliable resource, providing consistent and standardized instruction. This underscores the role of AI as a dependable ally in regions where staffing constraints may limit educational options.

The unanimous consensus among teachers is that AI-powered language education is a means to bridge the educational divide, leveling opportunities for all. It serves as a catalyst for achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 10—Reduced Inequalities—by ensuring that quality language education reaches even the most remote and underserved communities.

These insights from teachers provide a compelling narrative of how AI in language education transcends traditional educational boundaries, making quality learning experiences accessible to all, regardless of their location. As Teacher D succinctly put it, "AI levels the educational playing field. It doesn't matter where you are; quality education comes to you".

In a world characterized by diversity and disparities in access to education, AI emerges as an equalizer, offering the promise of a brighter future for learners in even the most remote corners of the globe.

D. Ethical Concerns and Data Privacy

The interviews with English teachers uncovered a critical theme—while acknowledging the benefits of AI in language education, the teachers (84%, n=15) expressed legitimate concerns regarding ethical considerations and data privacy. The deployment of AI in the educational landscape has raised complex ethical questions that demand thoughtful examination and clear guidelines.

Teacher A voiced a common sentiment, stating, "We must strike a balance between personalized learning and respecting students' privacy. AI collects a lot of data, and it's vital that we safeguard that information. "This concern resonates with educators who are acutely aware of the sensitive nature of student data.

Teacher O added, "Students have started asking questions about how their data is being used. We need transparent policies and ethical practices in place to address these concerns." The importance of transparency in AI-driven language education is paramount, as it fosters trust among students and their families.

Moreover, Teacher E emphasized, "Bias in AI is a significant ethical concern. We need to ensure that AI tools are fair and don't perpetuate stereotypes or discriminate against certain groups of students." This concern highlights the need for ongoing scrutiny of AI algorithms to prevent unintended biases.

The consensus among teachers is that ethical considerations and data privacy concerns are integral to the responsible integration of AI in education. Teacher B noted, "We have a responsibility to protect our students' data and ensure that AI is used ethically. This includes clear policies, informed consent, and ongoing oversight".

Teacher J underscored the importance of education on these matters, stating, "We need to educate students about data privacy and ethics in the digital age. It's an essential part of their digital literacy".

These remarks collectively highlight the critical need for ethical AI development and usage in education. As AI continues to evolve, teachers emphasize the importance of ongoing dialogue, policy development, and transparency to ensure that the benefits of AI are harnessed while mitigating potential risks.

In an era where technology plays an ever-expanding role in education, ethical considerations and data privacy must remain at the forefront of discussions. By addressing these concerns thoughtfully and proactively, educators can ensure that AI contributes positively to language education without compromising the trust and privacy of their students.

E. Engagement and Motivation

AI platforms and tools afford to enhance student engagement and motivation in language learning. The teachers (90%, n=?) praised AI-driven language learning tools for their ability to transform the learning experience, making it more interactive, dynamic, and ultimately more captivating.

Teacher A eloquently summed up this theme, stating, "AI makes learning come alive. Interactive exercises, real-time feedback, and gamification elements create an engaging environment that students can't resist." This emphasis on interactivity reflects the important role that AI plays in reshaping language education into a more immersive and motivating experience.

Teacher N provided a firsthand account, sharing,

"Students become more proactive in their learning when they see immediate results and receive constructive feedback from AI. It's like having a learning partner who's always there".

This concept of AI as a constant and supportive learning companion underlines its ability to bolster students' motivation by providing them with timely and meaningful feedback.

Teacher F emphasized how AI's adaptability fuels motivation, stating,

"AI keeps students challenged at their level. It's not about making things too easy or too hard—it's about striking the right balance to keep them motivated to progress".

This adaptability is particularly crucial in maintaining students' enthusiasm for language learning.

Furthermore, Teacher R highlighted the impact of gamification, noting,

"Gamified elements, like rewards and badges, turn learning into a fun and competitive journey. Students strive to excel, not just because they have to, but because they want to".

Gamification strategies embedded within AI-driven platforms foster healthy competition and a sense of achievement.

The overarching sentiment among teachers is that AI transforms language learning from a passive endeavor into an active and engaging experience. Teacher E encapsulated this transformation, stating, "AI taps into students' curiosity and keeps them coming back for more. Learning becomes not just a requirement but a genuine pursuit".

These remarks underscore how AI-driven language learning tools have the potential to reignite students' passion for learning, instilling a sense of ownership and enthusiasm that transcends traditional pedagogical boundaries. As AI continues to evolve, its capacity to sustain and amplify student engagement and motivation stands as a testament to its transformative influence on language education.

F. Professional Development for Educators

This theme revolves around how AI is not only transforming the learning experience for students but also redefining the professional development opportunities available to teachers.

Teacher B aptly noted,

"AI is not just a tool for students; it's a resource for educators as well. It streamlines lesson planning, offers data-driven insights, and provides continuous support for our growth".

This sentiment encapsulates how AI is augmenting teachers' roles, empowering them with AI-assisted tools to enhance their teaching practices.

Teacher D provided a practical perspective, stating,

"AI-driven analytics help us understand how our students are progressing and where they need additional support. This data-driven approach informs our instructional decisions and helps us become more effective educators".

AI serves as a valuable partner in educators' ongoing professional development, offering insights that facilitate data-informed decision-making.

Teacher F emphasized the transformative potential of AI in teacher training, stating, "Professional development is no longer limited to workshops and seminars. AI offers personalized training modules that cater to our individual needs, helping us stay updated with the latest teaching methodologies and technology".

This aspect highlights AI's capacity to foster continuous growth among educators.

Teacher M shared insights into the evolving dynamics between teachers and AI, noting, "We're no longer just instructors; we're facilitators of personalized learning journeys. AI enables us to support each student's unique path to success." This shift toward a more facilitative role underscores how AI is reshaping teachers' roles in the classroom.

Teacher Q echoed the importance of educators' adaptability, stating, "We need to embrace AI as a tool for our professional development. It opens up new possibilities and challenges us to stay innovative and responsive to students' changing needs".

These remarks collectively emphasize how AI is ushering in a new era of professional development for educators, one marked by personalized training, data-driven insights, and a more facilitative approach to teaching. As AI continues to advance, it holds the promise of supporting educators in their quest to provide the best possible learning experiences for their students.

G. Student-Centered Learning

This theme centers on how AI-powered language learning tools are facilitating a shift towards student-centered learning, empowering learners to play a more active role in their language education.

Teacher C aptly noted, "AI has put the learning journey in the hands of students. They can set their pace, explore their interests, and truly own their learning process." This shift embodies the essence of student-centered learning, where learners take the reins of their education.

Teacher G shared an insightful perspective, stating,

"With AI, students can explore topics that genuinely interest them. It's not just about following a prescribed curriculum; it's about nurturing curiosity and fostering independent exploration".

AI's ability to adapt to individual interests and provide personalized content aligns with the principles of student-centered education.

Moreover, Teacher N emphasized how AI promotes differentiation and inclusivity, stating, "Student-centered learning means catering to diverse needs. AI allows us to provide customized support for every student, regardless of their learning style or pace." This inclusivity is a cornerstone of student-centered approaches.

Teacher H highlighted the positive impact on student agency, stating,

"Students are actively making choices about their learning path. They feel a sense of ownership over their education, which translates into higher engagement and motivation".

AI encourages students to become architects of their learning journey.

Teacher J underscored the broader implications of student-centered learning, stating,

"This approach not only fosters language proficiency but also nurtures critical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning skills which are essential competencies for the 21st century".

These remarks collectively emphasize how AI-powered language learning tools are reshaping language education into a more student-centric experience. As educators facilitate this transition, they are witnessing students embrace their roles as active, curious, and independent learners. In an educational landscape that increasingly values personalized and student-driven learning, AI stands as a catalyst for fostering a deeper sense of ownership and empowerment among learners.

V. DISCUSSION

At the heart of this discussion lies the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a global blueprint for a better and more sustainable future (Haleem et al., 2022). Among these goals, Quality Education (SDG 4) stands as a beacon, highlighting the fundamental role of education in fostering human development, reducing inequalities, and promoting sustainable societies. The pursuit of these goals necessitates innovative approaches to education, and AI offers a promising avenue for progress.

The insights gained from the semi-structured interviews with English language teachers underscore the transformative potential of AI in language education. Teachers consistently praised AI for its capacity to provide highly personalized learning experiences, fostering a deeper sense of engagement and motivation (Shemshack et al., 2021; Kamalov et al., 2023). This aligns with the principles of student-centered learning, resonating with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), which emphasizes the importance of individualized learning to enhance educational outcomes (Vinuesa et al., 2020; Kamalov et al., 2023).

Similarly, the impact of AI on learning outcomes is evident in the enhanced proficiency of students across various language skills (Bilad et al., 2021). Through interactive exercises, instant feedback, and adaptive content, AI empowers students to improve their speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities (Biletska et al., 2021). The findings here align with Shemshack et al. (2021) and Xu et al. (2023).

In the same vein, AI's role in enhancing student engagement and motivation is undeniable (Xu et al., 2023). Interactive exercises, real-time feedback, and gamification elements make language learning an enjoyable and rewarding experience (Shemshack et al., 2021). These strategies resonate with the principles of effective pedagogy and contribute to SDG 4 by fostering a positive learning environment that keeps students actively engaged in their education. The findings here align with Shemshack et al. (2021) and Xu et al. (2023).

One of the most promising aspects of AI in language education is its role in reducing educational inequalities (Vinuesa et al., 2020). By transcending geographical barriers and providing access to quality language instruction in remote or underserved areas (Kamalov et al., 2023), AI contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Our findings suggest that AI has the potential to level the educational playing field, ensuring that learners in less privileged regions have access to the same opportunities as their urban counterparts. This finding aligns with Vinuesa et al. (2020) and Kamalov et al. (2023) that AI technologies have the transformative capacity to bridge the educational divide. By breaking down traditional constraints associated with geographic location, AI interventions

facilitate a more inclusive educational landscape. Learners in remote or underserved regions benefit from access to high-quality language education that might otherwise be limited. This aligns with and contributes significantly to Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), emphasizing the power of AI to create more equitable opportunities for education, irrespective of geographic disparities. The integration of AI in language education, as demonstrated by both Vinuesa et al. (2020) and Kamalov et al. (2023), emerges as a promising avenue to foster a more inclusive global educational environment.

AI is not just transforming the student experience; it is also reshaping the role of educators (George & Wooden, 2023). Teachers are benefiting from AI-powered tools that streamline lesson planning, offer data-driven insights, and provide continuous support for their professional growth. This evolution aligns with the need for educators to continually adapt and develop their skills, as emphasized in SDG 4 (Kamalov et al., 2023).

Perhaps one of the most profound shifts facilitated by AI is the move toward student-centered learning. By empowering learners to set their pace, explore their interests, and take ownership of their learning journey, AI aligns with the principles of learner agency and autonomy. This approach resonates with the educational ideals of SDG 4, which calls for a learner-centric approach to education (Wei, 2023; Kamalov et al., 2023).

While AI holds immense promise, it also raises important ethical considerations. Teachers have expressed legitimate concerns about data privacy, bias, and the need for transparency. This is in line with previous findings of Abioye et al. (2021) and Dwivedi et al. (2021) in the sense that addressing these ethical concerns is critical to fostering trust among students and their families. Sustainable Development Goal 4 underscores the importance of ensuring that education respects privacy and upholds ethical standards, making it imperative for educational institutions and AI developers to establish clear policies and practices.

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive exploration of the transformative potential of AI in English language learning, revealing its positive impact on personalized education, enhanced proficiency, and equitable access. These findings underscore the significant contribution of AI to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). While AI brings the promise of improved language education, it also highlights the importance of addressing ethical concerns, ensuring that the potential benefits are realized responsibly and inclusively.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study offers a compelling narrative of how AI is shaping the future of language education. The themes that have emerged from the semi-structured interviews with English language teachers underscore the multifaceted impact of AI, from personalized learning experiences to improved educational outcomes and the bridging of educational gaps. However, it is crucial to navigate the ethical considerations and data privacy concerns that accompany this transformation. As AI continues to evolve, it holds the promise of fostering greater engagement, motivation, and student agency, while also supporting educators in their professional development.

The findings of this study underscore the significant role of AI in advancing Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and its potential contributions to other SDGs, particularly Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10) and Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8). However, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of our study. While our research sheds light on the positive aspects of AI in language education, the scope of our findings may be influenced by the specific characteristics of the sample and the chosen context. Additionally, the dynamic nature of AI development may result in changes that could impact the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of AI-driven language education. As we look ahead, it is essential for educators, policymakers, and AI developers to collaborate in harnessing the benefits of AI in language education while addressing its challenges. The future of language education is undoubtedly shaped by AI, and it is a future that celebrates individuality, inclusivity, and lifelong learning. Further research and collaboration in this field will be instrumental in realizing this vision.

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Omar Ali Al-Smadi is a senior lecturer at the School of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia in the field of Applied Linguistics. Throughout his career, He has taken on several academic and administrative roles and has made significant contributions to the academic community through his research. As an editor and a reviewer for various regional and international journals, he remains actively engaged in the scholarly discourse of his field. He aims to expand his expertise in technology-enhanced learning, thereby further enriching his contributions to the field of Applied Linguistics.

Radzuwan Ab Rashid is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia. He obtained his PhD in Education from the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom and he completed his postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Leeds exploring Applied Linguistics in an educational context. His research interests include teacher education and professional development, and contemporary discourse in online settings. He is the Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Nusantara Studies (Jonus)*, a social science journal indexed in the Web of Science. He has had research articles published in *Discourse Studies*, *Discourse & Society*, *Policy Futures in Education* and many other Scopus and WoS journals. In 2019, Clarivate Analytics (Web of Science) nominated him for the Malaysia Research Star Award in the category Research and Innovation Excellence, Researcher in Arts and Applied Arts.

Hadeel Saad is an Associate Professor in the English Language Department at the Applied Science Private University in Amman, Jordan. With a focus on English language education, her dedication to teaching and research has made her a respected figure within the academic community. Her scholarly interests encompass linguistic analysis, cross-cultural communication, and pedagogical

innovation. Renowned for her dynamic teaching methods and insightful contributions to language education, Hadeel inspires students and colleagues alike. She remains committed to advancing knowledge in her field and fostering a vibrant learning environment.

Yousef Zrekat holds a PhD in English Language Studies and Applied Linguistics from the National University of Malaysia. Currently serving as an Assistant Professor at the Arab Open University (AOU), he brings extensive academic experience, including roles as Acting Dean and Head of the Intensive English Programme. Dr. Zrekat excels in teaching, leadership, and research, with numerous publications and conference contributions. His skills in writing, project proposals, programme development, and research evaluation, coupled with fluency in Arabic and English, make him a valuable asset in English Language Studies.

Lin, also known as **Siti Soraya Lin**, is a senior lecturer at the School of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia. With a fervent passion for education and research, Lin's academic pursuits center around ESL learning, parental involvement, home reading activities, and the social contextual factors influencing children's development. Renowned for her expertise in both research and teaching, Lin continually strives to bridge the gap between theory and practice in education. Eager to collaborate with fellow researchers worldwide, she is committed to making meaningful contributions to academia, fostering innovative approaches to learning, and empowering future generations.

Gaforov Ikboljon Uktamovich is a senior lecturer within the Faculty of English Language and Literature at Fergana State University. With a rich and varied career, he has not only excelled in academic instruction but has also undertaken various administrative responsibilities. His invaluable contributions to the academic community resonate through his dedication to advancing knowledge and fostering a dynamic learning environment. Currently, he is driven by a passionate pursuit to augment his proficiency in technology-enhanced learning and TESOL.

The Impact of L1 Transfer on Learning English Adjective Order by Saudi EFL Learners

Mohammed A. Alrashed

Department of English Language and Literature, College of Languages and Translation, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU), Riyadh, KSA

Abstract—This study examined the impact of first language (L1) on adjective ordering among Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The main hypothesis posited that the presence of a common adjective ordering convention in both Arabic and English would influence the proficiency and accuracy of Saudi EFL learners in generating this specific ordering in English. To test this hypothesis, 36 Saudi EFL learners representing high and low levels of proficiency were selected. They were instructed to arrange a set of adjectives in three combinations: non-absolute + absolute (NA), absolute + absolute (AA), and non-absolute + non-absolute (NN). Statistical analyses revealed that the performance of the NA combination, which exists in both languages, was superior to the NN and AA combinations for all participants. Additionally, a significant interaction was observed between the participants' proficiency levels and the adjective combinations, with the high-proficiency group outperforming the low-proficiency group in all combinations. These findings suggest that L1 influence may have a role in learning English adjective ordering and emphasize the importance of considering L1 transfer in EFL instruction.

Index Terms—L1 transfer, English adjective ordering, absolute adjectives, non-absolute adjectives

I. INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of accurate grammatical rules holds immense significance within the realm of language acquisition, as it plays a pivotal role in enabling learners to engage in effective communication with others. In English language, speakers employ diverse varieties of modifiers to effectively describe nouns, verbs, and sentences, with adjectives being notably prevalent in this context (Baker, 2003). It is worth highlighting that due to the extensive vocabulary present in English, speakers possess the ability to choose from a wide array of adjectives to modify a given noun, exemplified by phrases such as "a red apple" or "a tasty apple". However, an important aspect that should be taken into account is that English adheres to a specific order when employing multiple adjectives preceding a noun (Flanagan, 2014). Numerous studies have observed a consistent pattern of preference among native English speakers with respect to the arrangement of adjectives. For instance, a significant majority of native speakers would instinctively opt to say "a long thin pencil" rather than "a thin long pencil" (Stringer, 2013). While the latter phrase, "a thin long pencil," does not violate any grammatical rules, it fails to resonate naturally with a vast majority of native speakers (Cinque, 2010).

Despite the limited focus on adjective ordering as a subdomain of English grammar, it is vital for EFL instructors to possess a deep comprehension of the challenges encountered by EFL students in this area. Fries (1945) emphasized the importance of creating instructional materials based on a scientific analysis of the target language, as well as the learner's native language. Consequently, acknowledging the profound impact of the learners' L1 background becomes essential when curating an EFL curriculum that is tailor-made to meet their developmental needs. This study specifically delves into the experiences of Saudi EFL learners, whose L1 is Arabic, scrutinizing the potential impact of L1 transfer on their learning of English adjective order.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review delves into the intricate topic of adjective ordering in English and Arabic while specifically focusing on the L1 transfer and Universal Grammar (UG) on second language (L2) learners. To commence, the section covers the classification of adjectives into absolute and non-absolute groups, accentuating the gradability of non-absolute adjectives. In addition, a comparison between the syntactic patterns of adjectives in English and Arabic is presented, particularly highlighting the post-nominal placement of adjectives in Arabic and the conditional utilization of prenominal adjectives. Moreover, the review investigates the preferences in adjective ordering within both languages, placing a concerted emphasis on the influence of absoluteness on the positioning of adjectives.

A. Ordering of Adjectives in English

Adjectives can be categorized into two main groups: absolute and non-absolute. The term "absolute" denotes an adjective that lacks the qualities of comparison or gradation. In contrast, "non-absolute" refers to adjectives that possess comparative and gradable attributes. To illustrate, adjectives pertaining to size, such as "large" or "tiny," demonstrate gradability. It is feasible to make a comparison between objects in terms of their size, asserting that one object is larger or smaller than another.

Conversely, adjectives describing material composition are inherently ungradable, as an object is either constructed from a particular material or it is not (Kennedy, 2007; Kennedy & McNally, 2005).

In the English language, it is customary to encounter dual adjective phrases composed of combinations of adjectives. These combinations can be categorized into three primary types: NA, AA, and NN (Scontras, 2022). Notably, when employing a combination of an absolute adjective and a non-absolute adjective to modify a noun, it is generally observed that the non-absolute adjective assumes a closer proximity to the noun. For instance, the phrase "a large metal desk" is more commonly employed than "a metal large desk." Similarly, when two absolute adjectives or two non-absolute adjectives co-occur, English speakers consistently adhere to a preferred ordering of adjectives (Carter, 1991). For example, phrases like "a strong wooden chair" and "a short beautiful girl" are more commonly used than "a wooden strong chair" and "a beautiful short girl" by most native speakers. It has also been suggested that individuals have an innate sense of the correct adjective order from early childhood (Bever, 1970).

B. Ordering of Adjectives in Arabic

In contrast to the syntactic patterns observed in English, where adjectives are typically placed before the noun they modify, Arabic exhibits a default syntactic pattern whereby adjectives are attached to nouns post-nominally. This means that in Arabic, adjectives are predominantly positioned after the noun they modify (Belazi et al., 1994). However, it is important to note that pre-nominal adjectives do exist in Arabic grammar as well. In specific contexts, there are instances where pre-nominal adjectives can be used, influenced by factors such as emphasis, rhetorical impact, or poetic expression (Fehri, 1999; Kachakeche & Scontras, 2020). These pre-nominal adjectives, however, possess distinct syntactic properties and carry their own interpretations. Overall, post-nominal adjectives in Arabic occur more frequently in comparison to pre-nominal adjectives. Furthermore, these post-nominal adjectives exhibit agreement with the noun in terms of definiteness, case, number, and gender (Fehri, 1999). This frequency and agreement between the noun and the post-nominal adjectives emphasize the significant distinction in adjective placement between English and Arabic. Therefore, when investigating how Arabic learners of English acquire adjective ordering, it is crucial to consider the impact of their L1.

Considerable scholarly attention has been devoted to investigating the intricate nature of adjective ordering in Arabic. Various researchers, such as Abdo Alnuzaili (2017), Al Mahmoud (2014), Altakhaineh (2017), and Kachakeche and Scontras (2020), have contributed to this line of research. However, while substantial research has been conducted on the overall adjectival system and adjective constructions in Arabic, the specific inquiry into the ordering of multiple adjectives within a single phrase remains relatively unexplored. Sproat and Shih (1991) posit that adjectives in Arabic can assume a flexible ordering when combined, implying that they do not adhere to a fixed sequence. Conversely, Shlonsky (2004) casts doubt on this notion, asserting that the literature on Arabic fails to offer definitive evidence supporting unrestricted adjective ordering. Fehri (1999), on the other hand, proposes that post-nominal adjectives in Arabic adopt a reversed order compared to pre-nominal languages, resulting in a mirror image pattern.

Adjective ordering preferences among native Arabic speakers, similar to their English counterparts, are influenced by absoluteness. According to their research by Sproat and Shih (1991) and Kachakeche and Scontras (2020), adjective ordering is closely tied to absoluteness, and adjectives that express absolute properties, such as shape, color, and nationality, tend to occur closer to the noun. On the other hand, adjectives that convey relative properties, such as size and quality, are positioned farther away. These researchers maintain that both English and Arabic exhibit a hierarchical organization of adjectives based on increasing absoluteness, leading to similar preferences. Consequently, the transfer of adjective ordering preferences from English to Arabic would likely result in analogous patterns.

C. Universal Hierarchy Hypothesis

The efficacy of current teaching materials for adjective ordering has been called into question by Stringer (2013), who argued that these materials do not adequately address the specific needs of L2 learners based on their L1 background. As a result, Stringer suggested that performance in adjective ordering may vary among L2 learners depending on their L1. Stringer (2013) conducted studies involving EFL students from Arabic, Chinese, and Korean backgrounds. He examined NN and NA adjective combinations. The results revealed that the three groups demonstrated strong proficiency in the NA adjective ordering, whereas performance in the NN adjective ordering was comparatively lower. Interestingly, although Arabic and Korean lack a direct prenominal adjective structure, the participants from these language backgrounds still achieved commendable scores in the NA combination, suggesting a solid understanding of this specific combination in English.

Accordingly, Stringer (2013) put forth the hypothesis that the Universal Hierarchy may have an impact in acquiring adjective ordering in English among L2 learners. Recent research in the field of adjective ordering has revealed that while there is variation in the specific hierarchies of adjective ordering across different languages, there are certain common rules that govern these hierarchies. The NA combination, known as "Size > Shape," has been seen to be widespread in several languages, including English, Italian, Thai, Celtic, and Chinese (Sproat & Shih, 1991; Stringer, 2013). Stringer posited that the presence of this shared characteristic implies that the NA order might potentially be a constituent of UG, a linguistic framework that aids in the acquisition of information pertaining to the NA combination. This observation further elucidates the exceptional proficiency shown by Arabic and Korean speakers in the NA combination, since Arabic and Korean do not include direct pre-nominal adjectives. Nevertheless, the examination of NN and AA combinations has not been sufficiently explored in other languages, and there is a lack of definitive evidence supporting the existence of universal principles dictating the order of adjectives within these combinations.

D. L1 Transfer and UG

In previous decades, scholars have posited that the transfer of knowledge from one's L1 may play a role in the learning of an L2 across several domains, including syntax and morphology (Montrul, 2000). Therefore, it is anticipated that there may be proof of how the L1 affects how EFL learners with a specific L1 background acquire ordering of adjectives in English. Motivated by encouraging results from research into L1 influence in other areas, the researcher set out to examine the impact of the L1 on English ordering of adjectives among Saudi EFL learners.

Therefore, it is anticipated that there will be evidence of the impact of the L1 on the L2 learning of English adjective ordering among EFL learners with a specific L1 background. The researcher was inspired to explore the potential effect of the L1 on English adjective ordering among Saudi EFL learners, based on the positive outcomes shown in previous studies investigating L1 influence in other domains.

Besides the influence of L1 transfer, UG is an additional component that might potentially affect L2 acquisition. The term UG encompasses the inherent linguistic principles that form the foundation of language structure and are absorbed by language learners without conscious awareness. White (2012) states that there is an ongoing debate over the acquisition of universal principles of UG by both L1 and L2 learners. One possible benefit of using UG is the cultivation of a robust and implicit understanding of language among learners. In the context of adjective ordering, it is anticipated that learners would find it comparatively easier to internalize adjective orders that adhere to the universal standards outlined in the Universal Hierarchy.

Nevertheless, there has been a scarcity of study investigating the extent to which the Universal Hierarchy impacts the ordering of NN and AA, and NA pairings in adjectives. Although the universality of noun-adjective order has been established, it has not been said that the ordering of adjectives in NN, AA, and NA combinations is similarly subject to universal principles. Importantly, none of the aforementioned studies have adopted experimental approaches to examine this phenomenon, highlighting a gap in the existing research. Additionally, prior research on the order preferences within Arabic adjectives has not fully elucidated the reasons behind this phenomenon. Consequently, a comprehensive inquiry utilizing experimental approaches is imperative to clarify the intricacies of Arabic adjective ordering, explore the underlying factors influencing these preferences, and examine the potential influence of L1 transfer on the learning of English adjective ordering among Saudi EFL students.

III. AIM OF THE STUDY

The study seeks to provide detailed insights into the relationship between language proficiency and native-like adjective ordering production among Saudi EFL learners. Specifically, this study aims to investigate whether high-proficiency language learners demonstrate superior performance in producing adjective ordering preferred by native speakers compared to low-proficiency language learners. Another aim is to explore whether Saudi EFL high-proficiency learners are anticipated to exhibit fewer grammatical errors in adjective ordering and generate adjective combinations that resemble those of native speakers to a greater extent than their low-proficiency counterparts.

IV. QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

Drawing upon the understanding of the rules governing adjective ordering in both English and Arabic, as well as the interest in the learning of English adjective ordering by Saudi EFL students, the study addresses two research questions as follows:

- 1- To what extent does L1 transfer impact the learning of English adjective ordering among Saudi EFL students?
- 2- Do Saudi EFL high-proficiency students exhibit distinct performance in producing English adjective ordering preferred by native speakers compared to low-proficiency students?

V. PROCEDURE

The methodology section aims to provide comprehensive insights into the intricate relationship between language proficiency and the production of native-like adjective ordering among Saudi EFL learners. Additionally, it examines whether learners with high proficiency exhibit fewer grammatical errors and generate adjective combinations resembling those of native speakers more closely than their low-proficiency counterparts. Building upon the research methodology employed by Scontras et al. (2017), the researcher implemented a methodology to measure English adjective ordering preferences within the Saudi Arabic-speaking context, employing the concept of the absoluteness of adjectives. This section offers detailed information about the participants and meticulously outlines the procedures undertaken in this study.

A. Participants

The study involved the participation of 36 male Saudi students, ranging in age from 19 to 22 years. The average age of the participants was determined to be 20.74 years, with a standard deviation of 1.78. All the participants commenced their journey of English language learning during their years of primary education. For the purposes of this study, the participants were selected in a random manner to include level-six male students from College of Languages and Translation at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU).

All participants were identified as native Arabic speakers, actively pursuing English as their principal field of study at the university level. The group chosen for this study exhibits homogeneity in terms of their linguistic backgrounds and socioeconomic status. The selection process involved random sampling, with a specific focus on the inclusion of level-six students. The rationale behind this selection was based on the assumption that such students possess a proficient grasp of the English language and have received ample exposure to the syntactics associated with the phenomena under study, namely adjective ordering. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the chosen participants have undergone comprehensive grammar training, encompassing Grammar 1, Grammar 2, as well as writing and academic writing courses. The enrollment of these students occurred during the second semester of the academic year 1443-1444 H. The participants were required to indicate their L1, that is the language predominantly utilized within their households. Accordingly, they were categorically identified as native Arabic speakers who reported Arabic as their L1.

B. Phrases of Adjective Ordering

A compilation of 30 phrases was generated based on Stringer's (2013) study, encompassing three separate groups of adjective arrangements. Each combination consisted of 10 phrases, namely: (1) NN, which denotes the arrangement of non-absolute adjectives with other non-absolute adjectives (e.g., a new expensive pen), (2) AA, representing the arrangement of absolute adjectives with other absolute adjectives (e.g., a square silver shape), and (3) NA, indicating the combination of non-absolute adjectives with absolute adjectives (e.g., a small gold statue). The researcher did not include the AN combination, since the overwhelming preference for non-absolute order in English renders the reversed order uncommon.

In each arrangement, a predetermined order was designated as the anticipated order. The participants were awarded a point if they selected the anticipated order, while no points were awarded for selecting the contrary order. In the NA combination, the anticipated sequence consistently exhibited NA as opposed to AN. The anticipated sequence for the NN and AA classifications was established by referencing Stringer's study conducted in 2013.

C. Testing Procedure

This study aims to investigate whether Saudi EFL high-proficiency learners demonstrate superior performance in producing adjective ordering preferred by native speakers compared to their low-proficiency counterparts. Additionally, the study explores whether Saudi EFL high-proficiency learners exhibit fewer grammatical errors in adjective ordering and generate adjective combinations resembling those of native speakers more closely than their low-proficiency counterparts. To address these two aims, two tests were administered to the participants: a cloze test and an adjective ordering test. The cloze test entailed selecting the most appropriate alternative for each of the 30 omitted words from a given set of options. Additionally, the adjective ordering test encompassed a selection task in which the participants indicated their preferred sequence for 30 double-adjective phrases presented via PowerPoint. The two tests serve as objective measures to assess the participants' proficiency in English adjective ordering.

VI. INSTRUMENTS OF THE STUDY

A. The Cloze Test

The participants were initially instructed to do a cloze test. This particular test has been widely used in L2 acquisition research to assess the general proficiency of English as a second language (ESL) learners since the 1970s (Ajideh & Mozaffarzadeh, 2012). The selected test used in the study was the same as the one employed by Ionin and Montrul (2010) who demonstrated the reliability of this test, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .817. The researcher used a cloze test format, whereby a total of 30 words were deliberately omitted from the paragraph. The participants were required to choose one alternative from a set of three provided choices for each blank, based on their perception of the best match. The cumulative score for this test was 30, with each participant receiving one point for correctly answering a single blank.

The aim of conducting the close test was to organize the 36 participants into two distinct groups, namely the high-proficiency group and the low-proficiency group. Upon analyzing the test results, it became apparent that the participants displayed a comparatively high level of overall proficiency, as evidenced by a mean score of 20.85 and a standard deviation of 1.41. While the highest score acquired was 27 out of 30, none of the participants managed to attain the maximum score of 30, nor did any individual receive a score below 17. In order to delve deeper into the varying levels of proficiency, it was deemed appropriate to categorize the participants into two distinct groups, as exemplified in Table 1, with the low-proficiency group achieving scores ranging from 15 to 20, and the high-proficiency group attaining scores ranging from 21 to 27, based upon the results derived from the cloze test.

TABLE 1
THE CLOSE TEST RESULTS OF THE PARTICIPANTS' PROFICIENCY

	No.	Min. score	Max. score	Mean	SD
Proficiency Mark	36	17	27	20.85	1.41

B. The Adjective Ordering Test

Following the completion of the close test, the participants were instructed to do the adjective ordering test using an automated PowerPoint presentation shown on the classroom projector. All participants were instructed to provide their

responses to the stimuli. A selection of 30 double-adjective phrases were carefully curated as target stimuli and afterwards shown on the screen. There was a series of slides whereby each slide had two sentences positioned at the center. These phrases shared the same adjectives but were arranged in different sequences. The participants were given a time limit of 10 seconds in order to minimize the influence of contextual thinking and the application of learned rules when selecting the item with their preferred adjective order. They were instructed to indicate their preference by writing either "A" or "B" on a response sheet, with "A" representing the top item and "B" representing the bottom item. The participants were awarded one point for correctly selecting the anticipated order within each combination, whereas zero points were given for selecting the opposite order. Each combination had a maximum score of 10, resulting in a total score of 30 for the test of ordering adjectives.

In order to prevent the participants from becoming aware of the underlying objective of the study, which is to assess their intuitive understanding of adjective ordering in English, the researcher included a total of 30 additional stimuli into the task as distractors. There were a total of 30 examples provided, with 10 focusing on the order of adverbs in a sentence (e.g., walking quickly in the street or quickly walking in the street), another 10 discussing the order of verb phrases (e.g., turn off the light or turn the light off), and the remaining 10 exploring sentence-level orders (e.g., He sent a gift to his fiancée or He sent his fiancée a gift). Furthermore, subsequent to providing explicit instructions on the objective of sorting adjectives, a set of 10 items was administered to each participant for the purpose of practice.

VII. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The study results provided answers to the two research questions as presented in the following section.

A. Research Question 1: To What Extent does L1 Transfer Impact the Learning of English Adjective Ordering Among Saudi EFL Students?

This section provided the answer to research question 1 through presenting the detailed findings pertaining to the overall adjective ordering stimuli as experienced by both the high-proficiency and low-proficiency participants based on examining the average scores for the NA, NN, and AA combinations. The results show to what extent L1 transfer impacts the learning of English adjective ordering among Saudi EFL students as displayed and organized in Tables 2, 3, and 4, which effectively exhibit the hierarchical ranking of the items based on their respective mean scores.

TABLE 2
MEAN SCORES OF NN ADJECTIVE COMBINATIONS

Phrase	Mean	Adjective combination
A lovely red rose	0.767	NN
a spotless white shirt	0.741	NN
a huge noisy classroom	0.662	NN
a smooth plump hand	0.662	NN
an excellent stylish dress	0.662	NN
a small outdated house	0.601	NN
a tiny dirty box	0.601	NN

TABLE 3
MEAN SCORES OF NA ADJECTIVE COMBINATIONS

Phrase	Mean	Adjective combination
An electronic official document	0.921	NA
a solid metallic container	0.921	NA
A carved natural object	0.873	NA
a smooth synthetic material	0.873	NA
a shiny artificial object	0.873	NA
a cracked wooden table	0.846	NA
a pointed plastic weapon	0.820	NA
a plain natural fabric	0.794	NA
a clear liquid substance	0.741	NA
a Chinese woven textile	0.688	NA

TABLE 4
MEAN SCORES OF AA ADJECTIVE COMBINATIONS

Phrase	Mean	Adjective combination
a cheap rectangular radio	0.794	AA
An Indian metal tiger	0.767	AA
a suitable solvent ointment	0.715	AA
a safe stone building	0.688	AA
An interesting paper book	0.688	AA
a rude Turkish driver	0.688	AA
a tasty grilled steak	0.615	AA
a new silk blouse	0.611	AA
An attractive open museum	0.544	AA
a fascinating vegetarian meal	0.406	AA

In light of the results in Table 2, 3, and 4, it is evident that the performance of the NA combination surpassed that of the NN and AA combinations among the study participants. However, it is worth noting that a select few phrases demonstrated exceptional performance, as indicated by their significantly high mean scores. In this specific combination, it was found that two phrases incorporating color adjectives, specifically "a lovely red rose" and "a spotless white shirt," exhibited superior performance compared to other items. This observation is consistent with the results obtained in a previous study conducted by Stringer (2013). In that study, color adjectives were classified as absolute adjectives and positioned in the NA order. As a result, it was hypothesized that these adjectives would receive higher ratings compared to items in the NN combination.

In relation to the impact of phrase frequency, as shown in Table 3, the phrase "a smart old man" exhibited a surprise pattern. Specifically, the constituent "old man" was seen to occur more often than the constituent "smart man". The participants, however, had the lowest performance on this particular issue, with a mean score of 0.357. Furthermore, the participants demonstrated exceptional performance in various tasks, such as identifying items "a huge noisy classroom", "a smooth plump hand", "a cracked wooden table", "an Indian metal tiger", and "a cheap rectangular radio". It is worth noting that these items deviated from the expected pattern of "less frequent + more frequent + noun".

In response to the research question 1 exploring the impact of L1 transfer on the learning of English adjective ordering among Saudi EFL students, the results of this study align with previous research, indicating that the performance of the NA combination exceeded that of the NN and AA combinations (Kennedy, 2007; Huang, 2017). These findings suggest that the participants possess a certain degree of sensitivity to the syntactic structures of their native language, influencing their production of English adjective order (Montrul & Ionin, 2010). However, it is worth noting that the exceptional performance of specific phrases incorporating color adjectives, such as "big blue house," supports previous findings on the saliency of color terms in adjective order (Stringer, 2013). On the other hand, unexpected patterns of phrase frequency emerged, potentially reflecting the participants' struggles in acquiring the specific ordering rules of English adjectives (Amer, 2013; Carter, 1991). These results emphasize the complex and nuanced nature of L1 transfer and its impact on the learning of adjective ordering in English among Saudi EFL learners. Further research is warranted to explore additional factors that may contribute to these findings and to develop instructional strategies that address the challenges faced by learners in this context.

B. Research Question 2: Do High-Proficiency Students Exhibit Distinct Performance in Producing English Adjective Ordering Preferred by Native Speakers Compared to Low-Proficiency Students?

To address research question 2 comparing the high-proficiency and low-proficiency participants' performance on the adjective ordering test, it was found that the 36 participants completed the adjective ordering test. Independent samples t-tests were used to compare the high-proficiency and low-proficiency participants' performance in producing English adjective ordering preferred by native speakers with regard to each combination (i.e., AA, NN, and NA) as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5
T-TEST RESULTS OF THE HIGH-PROFICIENCY GROUP VS THE LOW-PROFICIENCY GROUP REGARDING THE AA, NN, AND NA ADJECTIVE COMBINATIONS

Adjective combination	Experimental group pre-test		Control group pre-test		DF	t-value	Significance at 0.01 level
	M	SD	M	SD			
AA	7.93	1.41	6.37	1.27	34	3.90	Significant
NN	7.16	1.35	5.98	1.65	34	3.38	Significant
NA	8.94	.70	7.13	.95	34	4.84	Significant
Total	8.16	1.72	6.67	1.70	34	4.04	Significant

The results of the t-test indicate significant differences in the performance of the high-proficiency group compared to the low-proficiency group across all three adjective combinations. For the AA combination, the high-proficiency group (M = 7.93, SD = 1.41) outperformed the low-proficiency group (M = 6.37, SD = 1.27) with a t-value of 3.90 ($p < 0.01$). Similarly, for the NN combination, the high-proficiency group (M = 7.16, SD = 1.35) showed better performance than the low-proficiency group (M = 5.98, SD = 1.65) with a t-value of 3.38 ($p < 0.01$). Furthermore, in the NA combination, the high-proficiency group (M = 8.94, SD = 0.70) demonstrated significantly higher performance compared to the low-proficiency group (M = 7.13, SD = 0.95) with a t-value of 4.84 ($p < 0.01$). These findings indicate that the high-proficiency group outperformed the low-proficiency group in all three adjective combinations, suggesting a positive impact of language proficiency on the production of native-like adjective ordering.

In light of the results obtained from comparing the performance of high-proficiency and low-proficiency students in producing English adjective ordering preferred by native speakers, this study provides compelling evidence to answer research question 2 by affirming that high-proficiency students exhibit a distinct advantage in their capability to accurately generate native-like adjective ordering patterns. Analysis of the significant differences between the high-proficiency and low-proficiency groups across all three adjective combinations yielded consistent findings. Specifically, the high-proficiency group outperformed the low-proficiency group in the AA, NN, and NA combinations, as indicated by the t-test results. These robust findings are consistent with prior studies (e.g., Alotaibi & Alotaibi, 2017; Wulff, 2003), further reinforcing the understanding that language proficiency plays a pivotal role in the acquisition and production of target language structures. It is plausible to interpret these results as indicative of the positive influence of high language

proficiency on attaining native-like proficiency in English adjective ordering. Therefore, the present study substantiates the notion that higher proficiency levels significantly enhance the ability to produce adjective ordering patterns that closely resemble those of native speakers.

VIII. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Numerous studies have uncovered the challenges that individuals who are not native speakers of the English language encounter when attempting to grasp the correct ordering of adjectives, particularly when multiple adjectives are used to modify a noun (e.g., Al-khresheh & Alruwaili, 2023; Rosato, 2018; Sproat & Shih, 1991). This issue arises due to L1 interference, a phenomenon that has been subject to criticism by a number of scholars. The aim of this study was to examine how interference from one's L1 affects the positioning and ordering of adjectives in English among Saudi EFL speakers. To accomplish this goal, a quantitative approach was adopted, utilizing a combination of an adjective ordering test and a rigorous error analysis to gather and analyze the data. This section places specific emphasis on the in-depth interpretation of the study's findings, as well as the conclusions they have for the instruction of EFL adjective ordering among Saudi EFL speakers and for further exploratory linguistic investigations into the ordering of adjectives.

The present study sought to examine the impact of L1 transfer on the intuitive comprehension of adjective ordering in English among Saudi EFL learners. Specifically, the first research question aimed to determine the extent to which L1 transfer influences the intuitive understanding of adjective ordering among these participants. Through a comparative analysis of performance on an adjective ordering test, this study examined two groups of Saudi speakers categorized as high proficiency and low proficiency. The study also compared performance across three types of adjective combinations: NN, AA, and NA. The results suggest significant differences in the performance of Saudi speakers on the NA combination compared to the NN and AA combinations. Additionally, both high and low proficiency Saudi speaker groups exhibited similar performance on the NA combination, indicating a strong grasp of this particular combination. These findings strongly indicate the potential influence of L1 transfer in the learning of adjective ordering within the L2 context for Saudi English learners.

These findings suggest that Saudi EFL learners have difficulties in gaining the knowledge of NN and AA adjective ordering in English. The participants possess a high level of proficiency in generating NA ordering without having received any formal instruction on the specific rules governing the ordering of adjectives in English. These findings contribute to the existing body of research on L1 transfer and its impact on the learning of adjective ordering in an L2 context. When instructing Saudi speakers in English adjective orderings, it is important for EFL instructors to take into consideration their existing knowledge and identify areas that need further development. Previous studies have also highlighted the influence of L1 transfer on learners' intuition and understanding of adjective ordering patterns (Abdo Alnuzaali, 2017; Alotaibi & Alotaibi, 2017; Fehri, 1999; Kachakeche & Scontras, 2020). The present study adds to this body of knowledge by demonstrating that L1 transfer potentially plays a pivotal role in Saudi EFL learners' learning of adjective ordering in English.

According to Lado (1957), native English speakers perceive correct grammar more as a feeling of correctness rather than following strict rules. When speaking and writing, English speakers tend to naturally use patterns that are preferred by native speakers without consciously recognizing these patterns. By the same token, this observation typically applies to the ordering of adjectives. However, the observed patterns of adjective ordering among English speakers are not as rigid as initially anticipated. In this study, both high and low proficiency student groups did not achieve a perfect score on every combination of adjective ordering. This finding underscores the insufficiency of exclusively depending on rigid syntactic rules as a means to elucidate the arrangement of adjectives in the English language. In her groundbreaking work, Annear (1964) was the initial scholar to challenge the notion of employing these rules, positing that their application, rooted in categorizing adjectives based on class (such as size or color), lacks generalizability to explain other linguistic phenomena beyond adjective ordering.

The ordering of adjectives can also be influenced by the focus of communication. In certain cases, the usual order of adjectives may be inverted when a specific adjective is given prominence. For instance, in a study conducted by Danks and Schwenk (1972), participants were asked to describe a car as both big and red. The findings of the study demonstrated that when the emphasis was placed on the color red, 57% of the participants expressed a preference for the inverted order, saying "a red big car." In the current study, the adjective ordering for the phrase "Indian metal tiger" generated the most controversy. Among the participants, both high-proficiency (29 out of 38) and low-proficiency (25 out of 34) students favored this order. It is worth noting that "Indian metal" is designated as the "correct" order based on the prevailing rule in many EFL textbooks. This rule, which prescribes that the adjective denoting origin should be placed further away from the noun than the adjective indicating material (Origin > Material), serves as the guiding principle. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that a significant percentage of high-proficiency students (21 out of 38) and low-proficiency students (19 out of 34) preferred the opposite order – "a metal Indian tiger." One possible explanation, as reported by some high-proficiency students, is that they were referring to a metal tiger that was Indian in origin, and thus their emphasis was on the material aspect.

Furthermore, Byrne's (1979) research findings also give credence to the flexible preference for adjective orders among the high-proficiency group. He posited that this phenomenon is highly possible due to the inherent variability in individual "linguistic competence," which could result in different preferences for adjective ordering. The concept of "linguistic

competence" encompasses various factors, such as multilingual fluency and exposure to specific adjective + noun combinations. For instance, the phrase "old man" is more frequently encountered than the phrase "smart man," leading individuals to more likely say "an old smart man" rather than a "smart old man" based on their exposure and social-psychological influences (Fyshe et al., 2019).

While the study results indicate that the high proficiency participants display consistent and robust preferences, there is the possibility for them to accept less common patterns in specific contexts without deeming them "grammatically incorrect." Therefore, it is essential for EFL instructors to go beyond introducing the established "patterns" of English adjective ordering and also provide alternative strategies to effectively handle the presence of multiple pre-nominal adjectives. Ultimately, an L2 serves as a tool for effective communication for EFL learners, and instruction should consider the broader communicative purposes (Al-Hassaani & Ja'ashan, 2017; Amer, 2013).

IX. CONCLUSIONS

The subfield of adjective ordering within English grammar has received relatively limited attention in academic research. The investigation of effective methodologies for teaching adjective ordering remains a sparsely explored domain. Despite the wide availability of ESL grammar learning and instructional materials, there is a striking similarity in the approaches utilized to elucidate adjective ordering rules. These resources commonly present a simplified or advanced hierarchical structure for learners to commit to memory and subsequently apply in spoken and written contexts. In light of this, Stringer (2013) advocated for ESL educators to consider alternative, more efficacious strategies for facilitating the learning of English adjective ordering knowledge among learners. Instead of relying solely on rote memorization of rules, Stringer emphasized the value of immersing EFL learners in environments rich with extensive exposure to native speaker-preferred adjective orderings. By nurturing an intuitive understanding of adjective ordering in English through increased input, learners may enhance their linguistic proficiency in this aspect.

Based on the results of this study, it is evident that the Saudi EFL learners exhibit a commendably high level of proficiency. It should be noted, however, that for the purpose of the study, the participants were categorized into groups based on their proficiency levels, namely high and low. Despite this categorization, it is imperative to recognize that even the participants placed into the low proficiency group displayed a proficiency level ranging from high-intermediate to advanced. Consequently, it becomes apparent that the conclusion cannot be extended to encompass all proficiency levels exhibited by Saudi EFL learners. It remains uncertain as to whether the influence of their L1 impacts beginners and intermediate level Saudi learners, and if so, to what extent it differs from the L1 influence observed among the advanced Saudi EFL learners. Consequently, it is paramount that future research encompasses a wide spectrum of English proficiency levels among Saudi participants to ascertain the manner in which their proficiency impacts their intuition pertaining to the ordering of English adjectives.

To conduct such investigations, it is imperative to recruit a diverse range of Saudi participants representing different proficiency levels. This is crucial as it not only enables a comprehensive analysis of the impact of proficiency on the learners' intuition of English adjective ordering but also facilitates a comparison of the potential influence of L1 transfer across these various proficiency levels. By adopting this approach, researchers will be able to disentangle the intricate relationship between language proficiency and the potential effects of L1 transfer on the learning of ordering of adjectives in Saudi EFL learners. It is noteworthy that previous studies have demonstrated the significance of evaluating a wide proficiency range in similar studies (e.g., Bialystok, 2001; Flanagan, 2014; Kachakeche & Scontras, 2020). Hence, incorporating a diverse range of language proficiency levels will enrich the understanding of the complex interplay between language proficiency and the learning of English adjective ordering among Saudi EFL learners.

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Mohammed Alrashed is assistant professor of linguistics at the College of Languages and Translation, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU), Saudi Arabia. With a long-standing record of initiative and innovation, he has developed and executed a number of studies in syntax and language variation. Dr. Alrashed's research interests lie mainly within syntactic complexity, syntactic reconstruction, construction grammar, and psycholinguistics.

Uncovering the Norms of Subtitling Taboo Language Into Arabic: *Two and a Half Men* From Past to Present

Linda Alkhawaja*

English Language Department, Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Amman, Jordan

Abdulazeez Jaradat

English Language Department, Applied Science Private University, Amman, Jordan

Fida Ghnaim

English Language Department, Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Amman, Jordan

Abstract—Subtitling of obscene language has been the subject of extensive study in the field of audio-visual translation. Nevertheless, most studies have primarily focused on collecting quantitative and qualitative data concerning translation strategies, often overlooking the critical dimension of subtitling norms. Attempting to discern these norms presents substantial methodological challenges, as they are not readily observable. This research addresses this significant gap by meticulously observing and analyzing the norms in English-to-Arabic subtitling of taboo language within a corpus of TV episodes subtitled by independent translators on DVDs spanning the years 2003 to 2015. Through this investigation, we propose a novel methodology for comprehending the dynamic nature of translation norms and their evolution over time. Our analysis provides valuable insights into the prevalent subtitling strategies employed during two distinct historical periods, specifically 2003 and 2015. Furthermore, this research endeavors to establish a plausible norm for subtitling taboo language in the context of English-to-Arabic translation within the specified timeframes. The findings of this study not only enrich the field of audiovisual translation academically but also offer practical insights that empower practitioners with a deeper understanding of the prevailing subtitling norms. This knowledge equips them to make informed decisions during the subtitling process, ultimately enhancing the accessibility and cultural resonance of audiovisual content on a global scale.

Index Terms—audio-visual translation, taboo language, norms, translation strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

It is difficult enough to translate cultural allusions connected to taboos without the added difficulty of spatial and chronological limits. Previous studies showed that audio-visual translation AVT is often toned down in translation using euphemism or deletion, especially when space and time are at a premium (Ávila Cabrera, 2015). Space and scheduling limits sometimes necessitate reducing the impact of potentially harmful or taboo language while subtitling. However, there is an exclamatory function to this language which helps the listener get a sense of the speaker's quirks and personality, and it may also be employed gratuitously for insults (Allan, 2014). Jay (2000) admits that there are several causes of inappropriate language. In his view, forbidden expression is 'never chaotic, meaningless, or arbitrary behaviour, but rather intentional and rule-governed' (Jay, 2000, p. 22).

This is why eliminating such language components may not always be the ideal approach. As Daz Cintas and Remael (2007) point out, the translation of a taboo term 'depends on the context and how it is perceived' (2007, p. 199), as it is tied to local communities and customs and utilised differently depending on the specific religious and social milieu. If you remove swear words from a text, you risk losing the 'communicative effect and social implicature' (Greenall, 2011, p. 60) and silencing the 'other', or someone who does not adhere to standard speech (Daz Cintas & Remael, 2007). Offensive language and taboo terms help define characters and advance plots (Daz Cintas & Remael, 2007, p. 197), but their translation may be difficult to pin down.

Tackling taboo words and phrases might be challenging, but they are still essential to understanding cultures, communities, and languages. Dáz Cintas puts it perfectly when he calls the translation of taboo language 'one of the most difficult challenges' in this area (2001, p. 51). This is mostly because subtitling involves several additional considerations, such as translating from one medium to another.

For that reason, we built on research in the field and examined whether the degree of toning down of taboo language stayed the same from 2003 and 2015. This research aimed to answer the following questions: 1. What were the strategies

* Corresponding Author. Email: l.alkhawaja@ammanu.edu.jo

employed in translating taboo language from English into Arabic in *Two and a Half Men* in 2003 and 2015? 2. Did the norm of toning down the taboo language change over time?

It is important to investigate the written form of offensive and forbidden terminologies as they may profoundly affect the readers/audience (Daz Cintas, 2001). Moreover, certain approaches should be used when subtitling depending on the target culture and language, such as the Arabic language. Subtitling audio-visual material is a complex task that requires a wide range of skills and approaches from translators, all of which are relevant to our investigation.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Taboo Language

A taboo term or phrase is one ‘whose usage is limited or banned by social custom’ (Daz-Cintas & Remael, 2021, p. 181). This is because ‘taboo words are typically defined as unpleasant or ugly-sounding and why they are misclassified filthy words’; they are ideas and phrases deemed disparaging, harsh, and offensive (Allan & Burridge, 2006, p. 242). Offensive language (Dáz Cintas, 2012; Hughes, 2006), emotionally charged language (Daz Cintas & Remael, 2007), rude language (Hughes, 2006), taboo language (Jay, 2009), bad language (McEnery, 2006), foul language (Azzaro, 2005), and strong language (Scandura, 2004) are all terms that refer to taboo words. Due to this discrepancy in terminology, the phrase ‘taboo language’ (Ávila Cabrera, 2015) has been used as an umbrella term for any expression that might be seen as offensive, inappropriate, or otherwise unacceptable.

Based on the previous literature (Ljung, 2011; Jay, 2009; Hughes, 2015; Allan, 2018), taboo language can be classified under the following categories:

- a) Death: Taboos related to death.
- b) Name calling: Defining terms that refer to race or ethnicity.
- c) Religion: Words and phrases deemed profane due to their association with a certain religion.
- d) Cursing: Swear words, terms related to sexual and other forbidden topics, terms referring to body excrement, and other filthy language are all included.
- e) Sex: Reproductive systems, body parts, and behaviours fall under this umbrella.

Due to social and cultural considerations, it is illegal in some nations to use certain curse words and forbidden phrases. Movies often face backlash for their obscene language and taboo topics, including sexuality, the human body and its functions, and insulting characters and audiences (Chen, 2022). Working with taboo language often involves accepting it as inherent to the culture and responding to it as such (Almijrab, 2020). Therefore, the strategies for subtitling culturally bound terms proposed by Pedersen (2011) have been adopted by several studies on culture (Yuan, 2015; Ávila-Cabrera, 2015; Abdelaal, 2019).

Pedersen (2011) summarises translation methods from the audio-visual translation literature. He maintains that a good taxonomy of subtitling procedures requires a baseline of tactics that may be generalised or defined based on the goals of each translation project. This baseline is comprised of six strategies: direct translation, specification, retention, generalisation, omission, and substitution.

- Direct translation is maintaining all ST characteristics while switching the language used to express them.
- Specification is providing more information in the TT, making it more precise than the ST original.
- Retention is retaining the foreign phrase or word in the TT.
- Generalisation is using a more general phrase or term in the TT.
- Omission is deleting the ST word or expression from the TT.
- Substitution is replacing the ST word or expression with its equivalent in the TT.

Following Almijrab (2020), we can further classify these strategies under two wider dichotomies: euphemism and dysphemism. Euphemism refers to using a more polite alternative to a term/phrase that may be seen as unpleasant in the target language. The use of fewer swear words and other profanities is also part of the plan. Euphemism is ‘softening’, as Nida (2000) describes, since it mitigates a term’s negative connotations and emotional impact. The use of euphemisms, a linguistic device common to both spoken and written discourses, is widespread. English-Arabic translation is heavily influenced by euphemism. Generalisation, substitution, and omission fall under euphemism. Conversely, the employment of a negative or offensive phrase in place of a neutral or positive one is known as dysphemism. Retention, specification, and direct translation fall under dysphemism (Nida, 2000).

B. Norms in Translation

Descriptive translation lays the groundwork for constructing the ‘decision-making process involved in translation, and the norms operative in translation’, which is necessary to study translations as cultural realities (Kruger, 2012, p. 103). The translated text ‘should be the starting point for any descriptive investigation’ (Hermans, 1985, p. 13).

Finding and describing norms is crucial to any empirical study in descriptive translation studies (DTS) because ‘under the descriptive paradigm, norms represent the initial level of abstraction and the first step towards an explanation of the choices and judgments which translators make’ (Hermans, 1999, p. 79). Specifically, this is accomplished using a backwards-looking methodology that examines translations as the final results of norm-governed behaviour.

Toury (1995) maintains that text analysis is the superior technique for discovering customs. You start with a text and attempt to generalise; next, you add other texts and test your generalisations; finally, if your results are consistent, you may have discovered a norm. From a scientific perspective, a 'norm' may be either a consistent pattern of behaviour or the underlying process that produces that pattern. There are psychological and social components of the process. It acts as a go-between between the group's beliefs, values, and preferences and the individual's intents, selections, and actions (Hermans, 1999, p. 80).

What translators do and how they tackle an issue are codified in norms, which encapsulate the profession's collective wisdom (Toury, 1995). According to Hermans (1999), translation norms serve as a roadmap and decision-making aid. The underlying assumption is that translation is a social behaviour since it is a type of communication. Translators may rely on norms instead of coming up with novel approaches to problems. A translator's conduct is considered proof of norm-governed behaviour when it exhibits regularities shared with other translators, i.e. s/he follows the same standards as the rest of the team.

According to Toury (1995), norms advise translators on the most suitable approach for every scenario. The tactics used throughout the translation process may be reconstructed from the final translation. On the other hand, they are not orders. They are, rather, choices; they are approaches to the issue of translation. In the ST, the translator may encounter a controversial term that necessitates a choice. Now, consciously or unconsciously, s/he may interpret the ST message in various ways. Strategies like generalisation, specification, and omission fall under this category. Various options for dealing with the problem are presented to the translator through tactics (Toury, 1995).

Toury (1995) claims that in order to establish norm validity, a large sample size of linked pairs must be examined. Therefore, this study examined many taboo words and expressions from the ST and TT in two different periods to learn whether the norm in subtitling taboo language differed over time.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since Pedersen's (2011) and Daz-Cintas and Remael's (2007) extralinguistic cultural references give a solid foundation upon which to build a taxonomy of forbidden-language subtitles, several researchers have used their subtitling methodologies of culture-bound terminology. Dabbas and Haider (2020) studied the challenges of translating the American animated comedy *Family Guy* into Arabic, focusing on the subtitling strategies for cultural allusions such as taboo and curse words. They concluded that there are limitations on how freely they may be utilised. The audience's characteristics limit what may be spoken. Due to these limitations, the translator has to make choices like using euphemistic language or leaving out details. Parallel research was conducted by Almijrab (2020) to determine how well taboo terms and phrases translate into other languages. In light of the Islamic upbringing of the majority of the Arab audience, he reasoned that euphemism was the best approach when translating forbidden terms. Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah (2019) compared the Arabic subtitling of American hip-hop films with their original English dialogue to determine whether the connotations of prohibited phrases were preserved (AVT). Cultural differences between English and Arabic likely led to the adoption of omission and euphemism as translation strategies by Arab amateur subtitling teams.

These prior studies analysed offensive language in subtitled versions of popular media such as movies and television. They showed that euphemisms and omissions are often employed to replace offensive language. To this end, Daz-Cintas and Remael affirm that emotionally charged language, or taboo language (Daz-Cintas & Remael, 2007, 2021), is often diluted in AVT through the use of euphemisms or eliminated if time and space are limited (Daz-Cintas & Remael, 2007, 2021, p. 189). This idea is supported by several additional studies (such as Han & Wang, 2014; Lie, 2013) on the presentation of forbidden language in AVT. Though Daz-Cintas and Remael make a bold assertion, some research contradicts them. More than half of the time, the amount of curse words grows, while omission and toning down only account for 13.88%, according to an analysis of 412 pairs of curse words in 4 series (*Eyewitness*, *Brothers & Sisters*, *Chicago PD*, and *The IT Crowd*) by Valdeón (2020). In addition to euphemism and omission, Alsharhan (2020) outlined many other subtitling procedures to convert forbidden language into Arabic.

Recent analyses of reception (e.g. Briechele & Eppler, 2019) and comparison studies (e.g. Al Adwan & Yahiaoui, 2018; Dore & Petrucci, 2019; Al-Jabri et al., 2021; He, 2018) shone light on the topic of forbidden language in the audio-visual medium. For example, Al Adwan and Yahiaoui (2018) analysed the challenges faced by Arab subtitlers when translating amusing scenes involving sexuality. They used DTS to analyse the Arabic subtitling of the American comedy *Two and a Half Men* and found that the language was almost unchanged. They concluded that this sitcom's taboo humour, which depends on sexuality and other 'distasteful issues', such as curse words and provocative bodily functions, presents a formidable challenge for translators. In addition, they discovered that Arab subtitlers often use the same tactics when dealing with potentially humiliating or inappropriate comedic moments for Arab audiences.

He (2018) looked at Chinese subtitles for 51 English films and came to the same conclusion, saying that the fan-dubbed version 'transferred a greater severity of profanity than the professional subtitlers' version' (p. 80). After comparing an identical American TV show in Italian with dubbed, subtitled, and fansub versions in Italian, Dore and Petrucci (2021) broke out of the 'toning down or not' dichotomy and observed the diverse approaches to harsh language in each of these versions. They attributed this to the ease with which both professional and amateur subtitling may be used.

Research on audio-visual translation in the Arab world has grown rapidly over the last decade, although it has only touched on a few cultural and linguistic difficulties (Adwan & Yahiaoui, 2018). Also, research on subtitling comedic

audio-visual content into Arabic is lacking. Moreover, little research has examined translation strategies and norms in subtitling taboo language, and none has examined them in two different time periods or even explained translation norms through different variables.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study used a parallel corpus based on the American TV show *Two and a Half Men* to address the research questions. Original airdates ranged from 22 September 2003 to 19 February 2015. We gathered the data from the first 10 episodes of the first season and the first 10 episodes of the final season, both in Arabic subtitles and English ST. Considering the inflammatory nature of the series, it seemed like a good candidate for a case study. It includes prostitution, lesbianism, copious sex, drug usage, and even mockery of religious beliefs.

To ensure that the subtitling of the same series happened at two different times, the older subtitling was collected from DVDs sold around 14 years ago, while the newer subtitling was taken from recent DVDs. All episodes were translated by different freelance translators, as mentioned at the end of each episode.

The extraction of taboo language was done by hand, mostly because of the specific kinds of taboo language use that this research aimed to examine. The target was prohibited language, not just particular swear words or ideas. This ruled out a fully automated search for keywords. Furthermore, there were cases where the banned phrase was not expressly stated in the ST but was more clearly stated in the TT subtitles. Sometimes, the ST used metaphorical language whose connotation was deemed inappropriate. Consequently, hand extraction provided the most accurate findings, ensuring that no instances of prohibited language were missed.

This study applied a comparative analysis following Toury's (1995) methodology for DTS. It compared the TT and ST to examine the strategies adopted in subtitling using the euphemism and dysphemism dichotomies. Moreover, since Pedersen's (2011) taxonomies in subtitling taboo language are frequently used for professional subtitling, including DVD production and TV broadcasting (Chen, 2022), we used them in our analysis. We identified particular norms during these two different time periods. Consequently, the TTs were compared with the STs for shifts to identify 'relationships between "coupled pairs" of ST and TT segments' (Munday, 2001, p. 112).

V. DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, AND DISCUSSION

When analysing translation strategies in the corpus, we adopted Pedersen's (2011) taxonomies in subtitling taboo language, which are based on some of the mainstream subtitling strategies for culture-specific items, as taboo language is considered part of culture.

Following Toury's model of norms, this study used his three-stage methodology. First, we identified translation strategies by examining STs and their translations. Following this, we drew a parallel between STs and TTs by transposing the corresponding segments of the target text into the corresponding parts of the source text. Finally, we generalised the norms of translational equivalence, the translational models used in the target language, based on the patterns revealed by translators and translation shifts (Toury, 1995, pp. 36–39, 102).

Table 1 presents examples of taboo language from season one of *Two and a Half Men*, translated using different strategies of euphemism and dysphemism.

TABLE 1
EXAMPLES OF TABOO LANGUAGE FROM SEASON ONE

ST	TT	Strategy Adopted	Euphemism/ dysphemism	Back Translation
Meeting chicks	تواعد الحسناوات	Generalization	Euphemism	Meeting beautiful ladies
I will kick your ass	سأرفسك	Omission	Euphemism	I will kick you
Do you want to have sex?	هل تريد ان تمارس الحب؟	Substitution	Euphemism	Do you want to make love?
Oral sex	الجنس الفموي	Direct translation	dysphemism	Oral sex

Table 2 presents examples of taboo language from season 12 of *Two and a Half Men*, translated using different strategies of euphemism and dysphemism.

TABLE 2
EXAMPLES OF TABOO LANGUAGE FROM SEASON TWELVE

ST	TT	Strategy Adopted	Euphemism/dysphemism	Back Translation
Pick up chicks	تعاشر الجميلات	specification	dysphemism	Having sex with beautiful ladies
Hot women	نساء جميلات	substitution	Euphemism	Beautiful women
Whose penis is too large	لديهم قضيب كبير	Direct translation	dysphemism	He has a large penis
The hot nurse	المرضة	Omission	Euphemism	The nurse
Vagina	الاعضاء الانثوية	generalization	Euphemism	Female organs

From season 1, 69 instances of taboo language were taken from the first 10 episodes. Based on the authors' analysis, 33 out of 69 instances were euphemised, and subtitlers' strategies included generalisation, substitution, and omission. Thirty-six out of 69 instances were dysphemism, with subtitlers using direct translation in all instances. This means that subtitlers used 52.2% dysphemism and 47.8% toned-down taboo language. However, in season 12, only 11 out of 45 extracted instances of taboo language were euphemised. Subtitlers adopted 24.4% euphemism in comparison to 75.5% dysphemism. This means that the subtitlers of season 12 adopted less euphemism than those of season 1.

As shown in Table 3 and 4, subtitlers' strategies were either mainly direct translation for dysphemism or substitution and generalisation for euphemism. This means that they adopted the same strategies but with different frequencies. This indicates a particular norm at play among the subtitlers of seasons 1 and 12.

TABLE 3
RESULTS OF DTS- SEASON ONE

Season one/ Strategies adopted	Frequency		Percentage
Substitution	18	Euphemism	47.8%
Generalization	14		
Omission	1		
Direct translation	36	Dysphemism	52.2%

TABLE 4
RESULTS OF DTS- SEASON TWELVE

Season twelve / Strategies adopted	Frequency		Percentage
Substitution	5	Euphemism	24.5%
Generalization	5		
Omission	1		
Direct translation	31	Dysphemism	75.5%
Specification	3		

Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that there is a significant shift in the subtitlers' approach to dealing with taboo language between seasons 1 and 12 of the studied TV series. Season 1 had a very equal use of euphemism and dysphemism, with a slight preference for dysphemism at 52.2% versus 47.8% for euphemism. This result can be interpreted as an attempt to conform to societal norms and maintain cultural propriety of the Arabic culture.

However, this tendency changed dramatically in season 12, when subtitlers overwhelmingly preferred dysphemism, using it in 75.5% of situations, while euphemism played a minor role, accounting for only 24.4% of the cases. This movement highlights the changing nature of subtitling norms through time, which may be influenced by changes in cultural standards, viewer expectations, the changing dynamics of television censorship or other external factors. This shift over time may be attributed to the increased and greater acceptance of direct and explicit language in the media.

Table 3 and 4 present the subtitlers' selected norms for dealing with taboo words. Direct translation for dysphemism and substitution/generalization for euphemism were clearly the two key strategies adopted across both seasons. The subtitlers' continuous use of these strategies shows the existence of a distinct norm or convention that they adhere to throughout both seasons. This discovery raises important concerns about the underlying variables impacting subtitler decisions, such as the sensitivities of the intended audience, the broadcasting network's expectations, or even linguistic complexities in the Arabic language, as direct translation may be viewed as a more straightforward and transparent approach to maintaining the original message's impact.

Overall, these insights on the changing patterns of subtitling strategies and norms highlight the dynamic character of audiovisual translation practices as well as the complicated interplay between language accuracy and cultural adaptation in the industry. The evolving subtitling norms identified in this study not only reflect changes in societal attitudes but also

highlight the dynamic interaction between language, culture, and the translation process. Understanding these shifts within the context of the Arabic language and culture is essential for audiovisual translation practitioners, emphasizing the significance of adaptability and cultural sensitivity in delivering content that effectively resonates with Arabic-speaking audiences.

These findings offer valuable insights for both the field of audiovisual translation and the broader domain of cross-cultural communication. That is, the observed shift in subtitling norms during the analysed historical eras emphasizes the fluid character of translation conventions. This implies that subtitlers must adapt their strategies to changing cultural sensibilities and audience expectations in order to ensure effective communication. The study also emphasizes the importance of conducting more research into the delicate interplay between linguistic fidelity and cultural adaptation in subtitling, since it has consequences for keeping the integrity of source information while making it culturally relevant to target audiences.

Furthermore, the methodology proposed in this work for understanding translation norms, even when they cannot be directly observed, provides a useful tool for researchers investigating similar topics in various linguistic and cultural contexts. Finally, these findings encourage reflection on the ever-changing nature of translation processes and the significance of remaining aware of the societal forces that drive them.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study yielded original findings and provided insights into the norms of subtitling taboo language from English into Arabic. Using a DTS approach, we examined how taboo language was translated in two different time periods. Based on the findings, it would appear that dysphemism strategies were more used over time.

The research provided important insights into the changing norms for subtitling obscene language in English-to-Arabic translation. It not only documented the prevalent strategies used over the two historical periods, but it also suggested a possible normative trajectory for this unique translation environment. These findings help us understand the dynamic nature of audiovisual translation techniques, as well as the importance of considering norms in subtitling. Using larger samples over different time periods can clearly identify norms and their changes over time. Researchers can use our findings to embark on further research in the field of audio-visual translation. They can identify translators' tendencies and approaches in translating audio-visual material, leading to future revisions of subtitling practices. Moreover, future studies can go further in the investigation of changing norms and closely examine subtitlers' behaviour based on Bourdieu's theoretical framework, the field of cultural production, and translators' habits. For translators, the findings can elucidate the adopted strategies in translating taboo language and thus facilitate their future work.

APPENDIX. DATA FROM SEASON 1 AND 12

TABLE 1
DATA RELATED TO SEASON 1

ST word or expression	TT	Strategy adopted	Euphemism or Dysphemism	Type of taboo language
You SOB	ابن العاهرة	Direct translation	dysphemism	cursing
Damn	تيا	substitution	euphemism	cursing
Sex	الجنس	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
I sleep with beautiful women	انام مع نساء جميلات	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Monkey man	الرجل القرد	Direct translation	dysphemism	Name calling
ass	حمار	Substitution	Euphemism	Name calling
A musky smell	رائحة ممسك	generalization	euphemism	sex
Babe magnet	مغناطيس الفتيات	generalization	Euphemism	Name calling
Who I sleep with	مع من انام	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Shaking up with her	يمارس الجنس معها	Direct translation	Dysphemism	sex
I'm gay	انا شاذة	generalization	Euphemism	sex
Gay stuff	اشياء الشواذ	generalization	Euphemism	sex
You SOB	ابن العاهرة	Direct translation	dysphemism	cursing
Damn	تيا	substitution	euphemism	cursing
What the hell is going on	ما الذي يجري بحق الجحيم؟	generalization	Euphemism	Cursing
Do you want to have sex?	هل تريد ان تمارس الحب؟	Substitution	Euphemism	sex
Meeting chicks	تواعد الحسناوات	Generalization	Euphemism	sex
Casual sex relation	علاقة جنسية	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
I will kick your ass	سأرفسك	substitution	Euphemism	cursing
Bastards	او غاد	substitution	euphemism	cursing
The damn thing	اللعيبة	substitution	euphemism	Cursing
Dating chicks	مواعدة الجميلات	generalization	Euphemism	sex
His poop	قذراته	substitution	Euphemism	cursing
Tampon commercial	اعلان تجاري	Omission	Euphemism	sex
One night stand	علاقة ليلة واحدة	substitution	euphemism	sex

Lick	العق	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
My snow white ass	مؤخرتي الثلجية البيضاء	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
She doesn't like sleeping with men	انها لا تحب ان تنام مع الرجال	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Sissy sauce	الصلصة المخنثة	Direct translation	dysphemism	Cursing
Intimacy	العلاقة الحميمة	generalization	Euphemism	sex
Damn her	تيا لها	Substitution	euphemism	cursing
Oral sex	الجنس الفموي	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
My lesbian wife	زوجتي ساحقيه	Direct translation	dysphemism	cursing
I lay naked on your bed	أتمدد عاريه على سريرك	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
I'm an ass	انا اخرق	Substitution	Euphemism	Cursing
He thought I was doing her	اعتقد انني امارس الجنس معها	Direct translation	Dysphemism	sex
I'm at the peak of my sexuality	انا في قمة نشاطي الجنسي	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
My Sexual appetite	رغيتي الجنسية	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Little titsy	منشبية	Direct translation	Dysphemism	sex
Hot	مثير	Generalization	euphemism	sex
My new beau	عشيقتي الجديد	Direct translation	Dysphemism	Name calling
Bastard	سافل	substitution	euphemism	cursing
Sexy	مغري	generalization	euphemism	sex
Don't sass me	لا تجاوبني باحتقار	generalization	euphemism	cursing
Half-naked woman	نصف عارية	Direct translation	dysphemism	
Casual sex	المضاجعه	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
You're not sleeping with her	الاتضاجعها	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
I don't sleep with every chick	انا لا اضاجع كل مثيرة	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Her butt	مؤخرتها	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
We slept together once	تضاجعنا مرة واحدة	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
A woman's behind	مؤخرة امرأة	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Am I gay or straight?	هل انا شاذة او مستقيمة؟	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Sex objects	ادوات للجنس	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Breasts	ثديان	Direction translation	dysphemism	sex
Boobs	أثداء	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Fat ass	المؤخرة السمينة	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Gay kid	فتي شاذ	Direct translation	dysphemism	cursing
Dumb-ass	اخرق	Substitution	euphemism	cursing
That bitch	تلك اللعينة	Substitution	euphemism	cursing
You had sex	لقد تضاجعت بالامس	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Penis	عضو ذكري	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Cute ass	مؤخرة لطيفة	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Nuts	احمق	substitution	euphemism	cursing
You suck	انت سيء	substitution	euphemism	cursing
Notorious	سيء السمعة	generalization	euphemism	cursing
That crap	هذا الهراء	generalization	euphemism	cursing
Big ass	وعد	substitution	euphemism	cursing
You Knocked her up	جعلتها تحبل	Substitution	euphemism	sex
Manhood	رجولة	generalization	euphemism	sex

TABLE 2
DATA RELATED TO SEASON 12

ST word or expression	TT	Strategy adopted	Euphemism or Dysphemism	Type of taboo language
Slutty	وقحة	Direct translation	dysphemism	Name calling
Fart	تضرط	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Your nipple	حلمتك	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
My butt	مؤخرتي	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Your package	بضاعتك	generalization	euphemism	sex
My penis	قضيبتي	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
A pregnant stripper	متغرية حامل	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Sexist	عنصري حسب الجنس	generalization	euphemism	sex
A freaking baby	طفلا لعينا	Substitution	euphemism	cursing
Broken condom	واقي مخروق	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Lady body	شخص من جنس ثالث	specification	dysphemism	sex
We will not have sex	لن نمارس الجنس	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Vagina	الأعضاء الأنثوية	generalization	euphemism	sex
Amazing breasts	أثداء خلابة	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Mom's boobs	أثداء أمي	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
You're not gay	لست شاذا	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex

Pick up chicks	تعاشر الجميلات	specification	dysphemism	sex
My beau	الجميل خاصتي	substitution	euphemism	Name calling
Same sex couple	الازواج المثليين	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
A lot higher	منتشبة اكثر	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Asses	مؤخرات	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
When you masturbate	عندما تمارس العادة السرية	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Physical affections	الوضعيات الجسدية	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
She wants to have sex with me	تريد ان تمارس الجنس معي	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
crap	هراء	generalization	euphemism	cursing
I'm a gay	أنا مثلي	Direct translation	dysphemism	Name calling
You're gay	انتم مثليين	Direct translation	dysphemism	Name calling
You bitch	ايتها العاهرة	Direct translation	dysphemism	cursing
You've been hitting on me	لم تضربني من قبل	substitution	euphemism	sex
Nude photos	صور عارية	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
One penis	قضييب واحد	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
The hot nurse	الممرضة	Omission	Euphemism	sex
Unless she's begging your husband	عدا انها تضاجع زوجك	specification	dysphemism	sex
Constant need for sex	حاجتهم الملحة للجنس	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Animated penis	القضييب الكرتوني	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Hang out	تتشكع	generalization	euphemism	sex
Banged Santa	ضاجعت سانتا	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Hot women	نساء جميلات	substitution	euphemism	Name calling
Whose penis is too large	لديهم قضييب كبير	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
I'm not having sex	لن أمارس الجنس	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Bra	حمالة الصدر	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Jackass	احمق	Direct translation	dysphemism	cursing
Gay couple	زوج من الشواذ	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
Gay	شاذ	Direct translation	dysphemism	sex
What the hell	سحقا	substitution	euphemism	cursing

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Linda Alkhawaja is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Translation Studies at Al-Ahliyya Amman University in Jordan. She holds an MA in Translation and Interpreting Studies from Salford University/Manchester and PhD in Translation Studies from Aston University/Birmingham. She is actively engaged in various projects exploring the sociology of translation, cultural studies, and Machine Translation. Her work delves into the complex relationship between language, culture, and society, unraveling the transformative power of translation in different contexts. She took on, for two years, the role of the Director of the Language Centre and the Head of the English Language and Literature and English Language and Translation Departments.



Abdulazeez Jaradat is an Associate Professor of Linguistics at Applied Science Private University, Amman, Jordan. He holds a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Ottawa in Canada. He worked in different universities and colleges in Saudi Arabia. His research interests are mainly related to Phonetics, Phonology and Syntax; syntax-phonology interface, morphosyntax and grammaticalization and language change.



Fida Ghnaim is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Translation Studies at Al-Ahliyya Amman University in Jordan. She holds a Ph.D. in Arabic language, literature, and ancient criticism from Yarmouk University in Jordan. She is actively engaged in teaching Arabic for non-native speakers in the Department of English Language and Translation. She has held various administrative positions at Al Ahliyya Amman University, including the Head of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Deputy Dean for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and Deputy Dean for Accreditation and Quality Assurance.

An Assessment of the Quality of Post-Edited Text From CAT Tools Compared to Conventional Human Translation: An Error Analysis 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—This experimental study aims to evaluate the quality of post-edited texts, originally translated using computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, in comparison with traditional human translation. This study investigates the quality of post-editing (PE) compared to traditional translation from scratch (TFS) in the context of Arabic–English translation, utilizing the Phrase CAT tool. The main hypothesis posits that PE yields a final product whose quality is similar or equivalent to that of TFS. The participants' scores and error frequencies were evaluated using the American Translators Association framework for standardized error marking, and terminology, word choice, mistranslation, addition/omission, spelling, punctuation, case, inconsistency, style, and grammar in both approaches were compared. Data from nine professional Saudi translators showed that PE generally outperformed TFS in terminology, spelling, punctuation, and case, whereas TFS exhibited strengths in consistency, style, grammar, and literal translation. Statistical analysis confirmed the similarity in overall error rates between PE and TFS. The difference in mean error numbers between TFS and PE was not statistically significant. Thus, the disparity in means likely resulted from random chance and might not indicate substantive differences between the two groups. These results imply that PE yields quality that is comparable or equivalent to that of TFS, proving the aforementioned hypothesis. The implications highlight the need for CAT tool training and PE skills among translators to meet the demands of evolving translation technologies. Furthermore, this study underscores the importance of integrating PE training into translation curricula and organizing workshops to improve CAT tool usage.

Index Terms—post-editing, traditional human translation, computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, ATA framework, error analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools represents a significant advancement in the field of translation, primarily aimed at enhancing the speed and efficiency of the translation process while maintaining the integrity of the translated material, as noted by Esselink (2000). Nevertheless, these technological advances have not entirely met the high expectations set for them, encountering obstacles arising from technological and cognitive constraints (Garcia, 2012). Furthermore, the development of translation technology, dating back to 1952, was met with skepticism from pioneers in the field of translation, such as Bar-Hillel, who doubted the feasibility of such endeavors. In addition, many translators felt threatened by the possibility of these technologies replacing them (Mossop, 2017). Despite these concerns, it is imperative to recognize that these tools are not intended to replace human translators but to enhance their capabilities. This is evident in their primary objective of reinforcing human productivity. Once it was established that translation technology, regardless of its quality, would never attain the quality of human-edited text and would largely require human intervention, the concept of post-editing (PE) came into existence (Allen, 2001, 2003).

The emergence of PE in the domain of translation has been a crucial development, addressing the shortcomings inherent in translation technologies. PE tools are integrated with various CAT tools, providing a practical solution. O'Brien (2011) highlighted the procedural and qualitative aspects of PE. He described it as a process in which human translators enhance the output of machine translation (MT) in accordance with specific guidelines and quality measurements. This enhancement of technology-generated translations has been substantiated by a growing body of research (Jia et al., 2019) claiming that the application of these technologies can significantly enhance the translation process in terms of productivity. Such enhancement is achieved without compromising the quality of the output, and it concurrently reduces

* Corresponding Author. Email: esaluthman@pnu.edu.sa

the overall effort required in the translation process. Despite these advancements, a degree of skepticism persists regarding the reliability of the quality of post-edited texts generated by CAT tools. In relation to the context of the present study, this reluctance to trust translation technologies has been observed among Arab translators. Previous studies (Alanazi, 2019; Al-Jarf, 2017; Alotaibi, 2017), as cited in Alkhatnai (2021, p. 73), highlight that, although CAT tools and other digital tools are being utilized more frequently worldwide, there is a sense of reluctance among researchers, particularly in the Arab world, with regard to adopting these modern technological tools.

This experimental study is designed to evaluate the quality of post-edited texts that have been translated through CAT tools, in comparison with traditional human translation, within the Arabic–English translation context. This comparison seeks to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse in translation studies, particularly concerning the usability of integrating technology into the translation process and its implications for the quality of the output, with a specific focus on Arabic–English translation. The experiment in this study addresses the question of whether performing PE on CAT tool-generated text results in quality that is similar or equal to that of human translation. The data analysis for comparing CAT translation and traditional translation comprises three steps: assessing the total scores achieved by each participant in both approaches, examining the occurrence of errors across various criteria in both approaches, and tallying the overall count of errors and subsequently computing the means in both approaches.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Translation Quality Assessment*

In the early stages of translation studies, Nida (1969) proposed four tests to determine the translation quality: the cloze test, reactions to alternatives, verbal reading of the text, and explanation of the content. However, House (1997, p. 136) criticized these tests for their lack of specificity and failure to reveal qualitative differences between translations. In the late 1980s, Newmark (1995) introduced an assessment approach that involved specific steps for analyzing a text. These steps included evaluating the extent of deviation from the original, determining if the translator misrepresented the author, assessing the deculturization of the text, and evaluating semantic and pragmatic accuracy (Newmark, 1988; as cited in El-Zeini, 1994). However, Newmark's approach faced criticism for its vagueness and potential subjectivity (El-Zeini, 1994).

Another significant development came from House (1997), who proposed a model for translation quality assessment that focused on identifying “mismatches” or “errors” (Munday, 2016, p. 147). This approach aligned closely with the “error typology” approach, which aims to reduce subjectivity by utilizing consistent classification models (O'Brien, 2012). The error typology approach for translation assessment is currently the most widely used method for evaluating a translation. Its significance lies in reducing the subjectivity of evaluation processes through methodical and consistent classification models (Secară, 2005). The field of translation quality assessment has witnessed various approaches over time. These developments have contributed to the ongoing exploration and refinement of translation quality evaluation methods.

In the present study, the researchers applied the American Translators Association (ATA) framework for standardized error marking for quality assessment to evaluate the translation and PE output of the participants. This framework refers to the guidelines provided by the ATA for marking errors in translated texts. The ATA is a professional association that sets standards and provides resources for translators and interpreters. This framework outlines a systematic approach to identifying and categorizing errors in translations, helping translators and reviewers ensure the accuracy and quality of their work. It typically includes categories such as grammatical errors, mistranslations, omissions, additions, inconsistencies, and stylistic issues. Each category may be further divided into subcategories to provide more detailed feedback.

B. *The Quality of PE and Traditional Human Translation*

PE has been defined and conceptualized by various scholars over time, each adding depth and perspective to its understanding. Veale and Way (1997; as cited in Allen, 2003) offered an initial definition of PE, describing it as “the term used for the correction of machine translation output by human linguists/editors” (p. 297). This definition emphasizes the role of human linguists or editors in refining the output produced by MT systems. Allen (2001) provided a more comprehensive description. He characterized PE as an integrated process within MT, involving professional human translators. These translators engage in correcting machine pre-translated texts and fuzzy matches, which are translations generated from the translation memories (TM) that bridge an original language (source language [SL]) to a translated language (target language [TL]). This process aims to produce translations of higher quality in less time, highlighting the efficiency gains achieved through human–machine collaboration. Further adding to the discourse.

Fiederer and O'Brien (2009) explored whether post-edited MT output is inherently inferior to human translation. Their study involved a comparison of 30 sentences evaluated for clarity, accuracy, and style by 11 qualified raters. Out of these, three versions of each sentence were assessed: one translated version and two post-edited versions. The findings revealed that the PE of machine-translated content yielded higher clarity and accuracy, whereas human translations were superior in terms of style. Guerberof (2009) conducted research on the speed and quality of performing PE on TM or MT outputs. The study involved nine professional translators with experience ranging from 1 year to over 10 years. For the experiment, 791 words were used, divided into new segments needing translation, segments from Trados translation memories (fuzzy

matches), and segments from Language Weaver MT. A web-based PE tool was employed to time each task, and the Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA) standard was used for error measurement and classification. The study found that post-edited TM outputs had the highest error count, namely 91% higher than the MT segments and 26% more than the human-translated segments; this was attributed to the less apparent nature of errors in naturally flowing language compared to MT, in which errors are more conspicuous.

Garcia (2010) conducted a study to evaluate the benefits of MT in segments that received a “no match” result in the Google Translation Toolkit, particularly focusing on the quality of translations and their utility for translators. Instead of professional translators, this study involved trainee translators who were directed to use the Google Translation Toolkit to translate passages from English to Chinese, either from scratch or by filling in the blanks using Google Translate. The translation quality was assessed by experienced raters using the criteria set by the Australian National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). The comparative analysis revealed that, in 33 out of 56 cases, the passages translated via Google Translator Toolkit and then edited by humans were rated more favorably. These results suggest that performing PE on MT output could be a more effective and advantageous method in the field of translation.

Elming et al. (2014) conducted a case study focusing on the comparative quality of post-edited MT segments and segments translated by humans. The results indicated that the human-translated segments contained a higher number of errors. Notably, stylistic errors were three times higher in the human-translated segments than in the PE segments. This finding contrasts with the results of Fiederer and O’Brien (2009) at Dublin City University, which suggested that human translation achieved better style than post-edited MT. Yang et al. (2020) carried out a study comparing human translation and PE approaches. Unlike other studies conducted in professional settings, this experiment was carried out in an educational context, aiming to assess the effectiveness of PE. The researchers employed the multidimensional quality metrics (MQM) framework to objectively analyze translation errors in both human translation and MT, focusing on accuracy and fluency. They found that the participants scored higher in PE tasks compared to human translation, with a tendency for more accuracy errors than fluency errors in post-edited outputs.

Samman’s (2022) study, one of the few conducted in Saudi Arabia, aimed to evaluate the efficacy of MT PE training within a female undergraduate translation program. The study, adopting a mixed-method design and based on the Kirkpatrick model of learning evaluation, compared MT PE with human translation in terms of quality and other factors. The translations, which were from English to Arabic, were evaluated using the DipTrans Examiners’ Mark Sheet. The analysis revealed that MT PE was effective in reducing deletion and technical errors but increased errors in accuracy, register, grammar, comprehension, mistranslation, word order, and overall text organization. Despite showing potential for improvement, the study highlighted challenges in achieving accurate and fluent translations. PE was found to be beneficial in addressing errors in capitalization, punctuation, numbering, and agreement. The error count analysis showed only a slight difference in scores between the human translation and MT PE groups, suggesting that PE can achieve results comparable to human translation but does not significantly outperform it. The study underscored the potential benefits of PE for inexperienced translators and non-professionals, emphasizing the need for improved Arabic MT output and specific skill development for effective MT PE.

The present study, motivated by the significant progress in CAT tools and the evident scarcity of scholarly research on their application in the context of Arabic translation, is designed to fill this gap in the existing literature. The main hypothesis of this study posits that the PE of texts translated using CAT tools yields a final product whose quality is similar or equivalent to that of traditional human translation. The key metric for assessing quality in this context is the frequency of errors in the translated texts. This research seeks to ascertain whether performing PE on CAT tool-generated translations can produce a final product with fewer errors and, hence, of higher quality compared to translations completed entirely by human translators without the aid of such technology. This comparison illustrates the effectiveness of CAT tools in enhancing translation quality and the overall accuracy of the final translated product.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *Sample, CAT Tools, and Text*

The quality of PE performed on texts originally translated using CAT tools, in comparison with traditional human translation, was evaluated based on the performance of professional translators, with data collected from nine Saudi translators holding bachelor’s or master’s degrees in translation and possessing 5–12 years of experience. The translators were familiar with both traditional translation and PE and had used various CAT tools, such as Trados, MemoQ, Matecat, and Memsourc. They were asked to translate an Arabic educational text into English using both approaches. The researchers utilized the Phrase CAT tool to produce the text for PE and to analyze the quality of the final output. A screenshot of Phrase is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

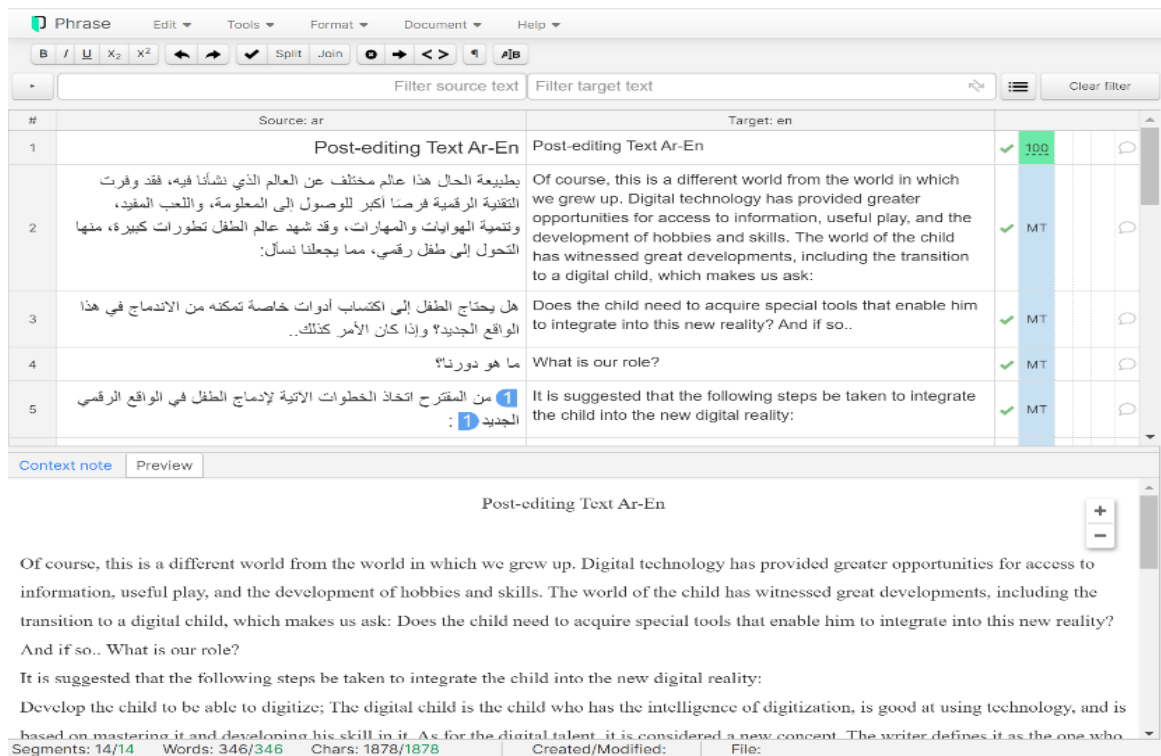


Figure 1. Screenshot of the Phrase Platform

The participants were requested to participate in a language lab, where they used devices to record the process of the approaches on Translog-II in both translation from scratch (TFS) and PE. The selected text was chosen for its suitability in evaluating the translators' performance in handling non-literary, unambiguous educational content.

B. Evaluating Rater Agreement Using Cohen's Kappa

Cohen's Kappa (1960), a statistical measure of inter-rater reliability, was employed to evaluate the consistency and agreement between assessments made by the rater and an inter-rater. This approach ensured that the error assessments were dependable and coherent across the raters. The kappa value was calculated using the following formula: $k = (Po - Pe) / (1 - Pe)$, where Po stands for the observed agreement and Pe represents the expected agreement by chance. The Kappa values were interpreted using a scale to determine their agreement levels. It generates a value between -1 and 1, with different ranges indicating varying levels of agreement:

- 0: by-chance agreement
- 0.1–0.2: slight agreement
- 0.21–0.4: fair agreement
- 0.41–0.6: moderate agreement
- 0.61–0.8: substantial agreement
- 1: perfect agreement

C. ATA's Framework for Standardized Error Marking

In this study, the ATA framework for standardized error marking (2002) was utilized to assess the quality of the final texts produced by the participants in TFS and PE. This framework is one of the most commonly adopted error typologies (Doyle, 2003; Koby, 2015; Phelan, 2017). ATA certifications are among the most respected certifications in the world, and this framework is its grading system for certification exams to assess the language skills of potential translators. To identify translation errors and assign points to each error, ATA evaluators refer to a list of error categories. The evaluation of translation quality is conducted by applying the ATA framework for standardized error marking. In this study, the total scores obtained by each participant, errors across various error criteria, and the score means in both approaches were calculated. However, some criteria, such as the false cognate, accent, and other diacritical markers, were not applicable to this study's language pair (Arabic–English). Furthermore, the incomplete passage criterion was not included in the assessment since the participants were instructed to complete the passages and were not restricted by a time limit.

IV. RESULTS

This section presents the quality analysis investigating the hypothesis that performing PE on a CAT tool-generated text yields quality that is similar or equal to that of human translation. The ATA framework for standardized error marking (Doyle, 2003) was used to assess the quality. Subsequently, the participants' final scores in both approaches were

determined by counting the number of errors, taking into account the severity level of the errors. Considering the severity level of errors is essential, as two translations may have an equal number of errors, but one may contain more significant errors, resulting in lower quality. This is followed by a detailed examination and description of the error types and their frequencies in each approach. In addition, this section offers a comprehensive analysis of the total errors found in the TFS and PE approaches.

The first part of the quality analysis compared each participant's final scores in the two approaches. The score calculation involved deducting one point for minor errors, two for major errors, and none for neutral errors. The total points determined the final scores. Figure 2 illustrates those six participants (P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, and P9) performed better in PE, only one participant (P8) achieved equal scoring (P8), and two performed better in TFS (P1 and P7). The TFS scores ranged from 54% (P3) to 86% (P9), while the PE scores ranged from 76% (P4 and P5) to 86% (P9).

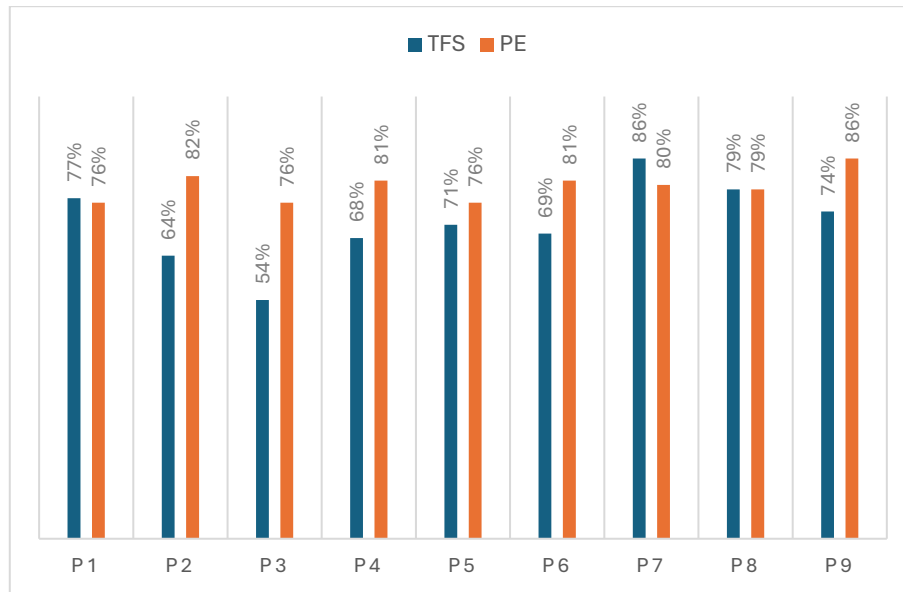


Figure 2. Participants' Scores in TFS and PE

An inter-rater reliability analysis was conducted using Cohen's kappa to assess the level of agreement between two raters in the evaluation of error criteria. It was conducted with two participants: P1 and P3. For P1, the calculated kappa value for the observed agreement (P_o) was found to be 17 divided by 22, which means that the two raters agreed on 17 error criteria out of 22. This yielded a Kappa value of 0.77, indicating a substantial level of agreement beyond what would arise from random chance. This suggests that the two raters generally concurred in their assessments of error categories.

To further evaluate the agreement, the expected agreement by chance (P_e) was calculated and found to be 0.194. The Cohen's kappa statistic was then calculated using the formula $(P_o - P_e) / (1 - P_e)$, resulting in a kappa value of approximately 0.715. This value signifies a substantial level of agreement between the raters, suggesting that their evaluations of error categories were consistent and likely not due to random chance.

For P3, the calculated kappa value for the observed agreement (P_o) was determined to be 0.95, which was calculated by dividing the number of agreed-upon criteria (21) by the total number of criteria (22). The expected agreement by chance (P_e) was also calculated and yielded a value of 0.83. Subsequently, Cohen's Kappa statistic was calculated using the formula $(P_o - P_e) / (1 - P_e)$, resulting in a kappa value of approximately 0.897. This kappa value signifies a high level of agreement between the raters, affirming the consistency and reliability of the assessments for P3 as well.

Figure 3 illustrates the frequency of errors in each criterion and reveals that the TFS approach was most susceptible to errors related to terminology and word choice, with a total of 85 errors, representing 21.8% of all TFS errors. In contrast, the PE approach had 38 errors of this type, accounting for 15% of all PE errors. This suggests that the number of terminology errors made by the participants was 44% higher in TFS compared to PE. The results in Figure 3 highlight the prevalence of linguistic errors in both TFS and PE. Notably, TFS had a higher frequency of errors in categories such as mistranslation, addition/omission, and register. Specifically, the data show that TFS had 12 more mistranslation errors than PE, with 36 total TFS errors compared to 24 PE errors. Furthermore, TFS had more errors related to addition and omission, with 28 total errors compared to 19 in PE. Despite these discrepancies, the figure also demonstrates that PE was effective in improving the translation quality for these categories, with improvements of 32.1% and 33.3% for addition/omission and mistranslation errors, respectively.

In terms of inconsistency, style, grammar, and literal translation errors, the data highlights that TFS outperformed PE. The numbers show that PE had a higher frequency of errors in these four areas, with 43, 38, 33, and 16 errors, respectively, while TFS had significantly lower error rates, with only 6, 27, 19, and 10 errors, respectively. In addition, the data highlights a significant difference between the two approaches regarding inconsistency errors, with PE having 43 errors compared to 6 errors in TFS. These errors can lead to confusion and misinterpretation, resulting in negative impacts on

the quality of the translated text. Hence, addressing these errors is crucial for preventing inaccurate translations and improving the quality of translated texts in both approaches. Furthermore, there was a substantial difference in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors between the two approaches. In particular, spelling errors occurred 77 times in TFS, the second-highest total after terminology, but only 5 times in PE. Similarly, case errors were more prevalent in TFS; it had 37 errors, compared to only 14 errors in PE, representing a 62.16% reduction. TFS encountered more difficulties in punctuation as well, with 30 errors compared to only 25 errors in PE. These findings suggest that TFS and PE have different strengths and weaknesses, and that both approaches require improvements to enhance the overall translation quality.

The results suggest that PE has a significant positive impact on non-linguistic errors, such as spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, in addition to improving translation accuracy by aiding the translator in avoiding omission/addition and mistranslation. However, PE does not seem to have a noticeable effect on issues such as literal translation, grammar, style, and inconsistency.

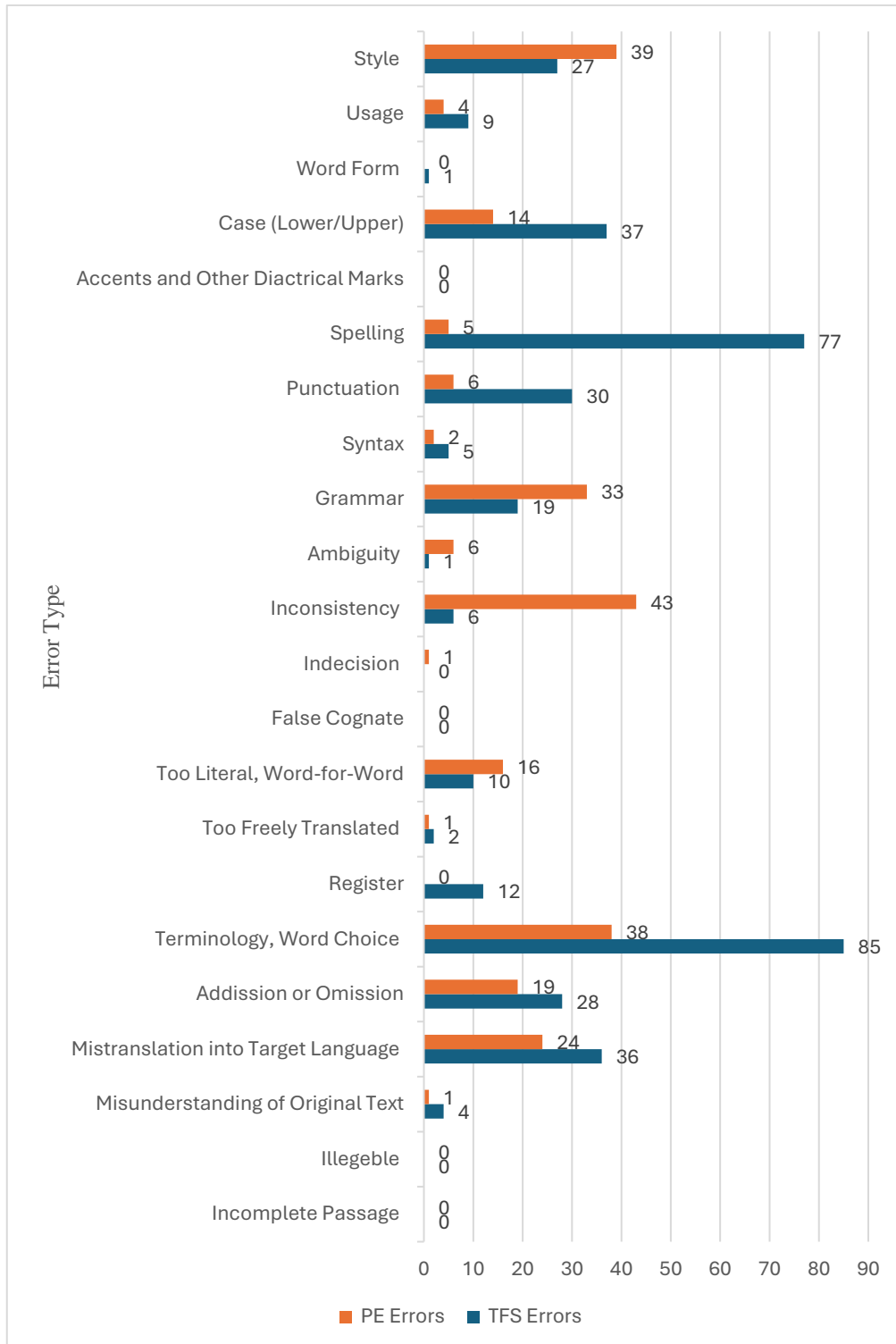


Figure 3. Participants' Error Frequencies in TFS and PE

The final step in the quality analysis was calculating the total number of errors and then finding their means for the TFS and PE approaches, as presented in Figure 4. To obtain this total, the researcher counted the frequency of errors according to the ATA error criteria for each approach and subsequently determined the means of the errors for each approach. The mean number of errors was 17.9 for TFS and 11.5 for PE. A p -value of 0.289961119 was obtained, suggesting that the difference in mean error numbers between TFS and PE was not statistically significant at the conventional significance level of $p < 0.05$. This suggests that the disparity in means likely resulted from random chance and might not be indicative of substantive differences between the two groups. In essence, these results imply that PE yielded quality comparable or equivalent to that of TFS, proving the hypothesis that performing PE on CAT tool-generated text results in quality that is similar or equal to that of human translation.



Figure 4. Means of Participants Errors in TFS and PE

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, the quality of the texts produced by the participants in the TFS and PE approaches was evaluated by the researcher using the ATA framework for standardized error marking. To compare the errors found in both approaches, the researcher assessed the quality of these approaches in terms of terminology, word choice, mistranslation, addition/omission, spelling, punctuation, case, inconsistency, style, and grammar. Overall, the number of errors in TFS was higher than in PE: 389 errors and 252 errors, respectively. The results showed that the quality of terminology and word choice was better in PE than in TFS. In TFS, 85 errors (21.8% of total errors) were found in this criterion, whereas in PE, only 38 errors (15% of total errors) were identified. This suggests that translators may struggle with choosing the right terminology, whereas the CAT tool used in PE automatically provides appropriate equivalents most of the time.

Furthermore, regarding errors, this study found that mistranslation and addition/omission errors were less frequent in PE compared to TFS. Mistranslation accounted for 24 errors (9.5% of total errors) in PE and 36 errors (9.25% of total errors) in TFS. This could be caused by different factors, such as misunderstanding the source text, expressing meaning in the wrong manner, or misreading the source text. These are factors mostly related to and caused by human cognition and linguistic expression. Addition/omission errors comprised 19 errors (7.54% of total errors) in PE and 28 errors (7.19% of total errors) in TFS. While exceptions may apply, it is generally preferred to avoid inserting material for clarification in translation and to avoid omitting necessary information. In terms of spelling mistakes, TFS had significantly more errors than PE. In TFS, 77 errors (19.79% of total errors) were identified, while in PE, only 5 errors (1.98% of total errors) were found. This suggests that translators may rely on automatic correction when translating, but since the software used in this study did not correct or indicate spelling mistakes, the participants were often unaware of their errors. In contrast, in PE, the translation was provided by a CAT tool, which reduced the occurrence of spelling mistakes. Compared to PE, TFS exhibited a higher frequency of punctuation errors, with 30 errors (7.7% of total errors); in contrast, PE had only 6 errors (2.38% of total errors) in this criterion. In addition, PE showed a better performance in case errors, with only 14 errors (5.6% of total errors), whereas TFS had 37 errors (9.5% of total errors) in this category. These discrepancies may be attributed to the inherent differences between Arabic and English regarding cases and the use of punctuation. The results indicate that PE and TFS exhibit similar quality, with room for further improvement in PE. This observation aligns with the high-quality MT offered by the Phrase CAT tool. Notably, PE showcased notable enhancements in errors related to spelling, case, punctuation, and translation fidelity. It also helped translators avoid omission/addition and mistranslation. However, errors related to literal translation, grammar, style, and inconsistency did not show significant improvement in PE. This could be due to the natural flow of errors in a high-quality CAT tool translation, which may prevent translators from noticing these errors, as previous research has suggested (Guerberof, 2008, 2009; Yamada, 2019).

The implications of the results are multifaceted and provide valuable insights into the efficacy of PE compared to TFS, as well as the role of CAT tools in translation processes. The findings suggest that PE yields better quality in terms of terminology and word choice compared to TFS. This implies that the CAT tools used in PE are effective in automatically providing appropriate equivalents, potentially enhancing translation accuracy and consistency. Furthermore, PE demonstrates a reduction in mistranslation and addition/omission errors compared to TFS. This indicates that the use of CAT tools in PE may help mitigate errors caused by human cognitive and linguistic factors, such as misunderstanding or

misreading the source text. TFS exhibits a significantly higher frequency of spelling mistakes compared to PE. This highlights the importance of CAT tools in reducing spelling errors by providing automatic correction, thereby enhancing the overall quality of translated texts. Moreover, PE demonstrates better performance in punctuation and case errors compared to TFS. The discrepancies observed could be attributed to inherent differences between Arabic and English, as well as the use of CAT tools, which may facilitate more accurate punctuation and case usage. Overall, the results suggest that PE with CAT tools offer advantages over traditional TFS in terms of accuracy, consistency, and efficiency. However, they also underscore the need for translators to be adequately trained in utilizing CAT tools and PE techniques effectively. In addition, the findings emphasize the importance of periodically reviewing and adapting translation training curricula to incorporate technological advancements and address specific linguistic challenges, such as those related to Arabic–English translation.

There is a growing demand for translation technologies due to increased translation volumes and the need to increase productivity. This demand requires translators to be familiar with translation technologies and how to interact with them through PE (Bowker, 2015). This 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 incorporate CAT tool courses. 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.

Revision as Part of Translation Process: A Case Study of Mandarin-Indonesian Translation by Chinese Language Students at Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

T. Kasa Rullah Adha*

Chinese Language Study Program, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Julina

Chinese Language Study Program, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Intan Erwani

Chinese Language Study Program, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Abstract—The translation attempts to re-express messages from one language into another by prioritizing the equivalence of meaning, primarily determined by the translator's ability to understand the source text and the target text. Translators use revision to solve problems in the text to be translated. Revision is part of a translator's cognitive ability, which includes re-examining the translation results and looking for internal and external reading sources to get the right message or information in the source text. This study aims to explain the revisions made by the translator to the source text, namely Mandarin into Indonesian as the target text, and the reading sources they used in translating the text. This qualitative descriptive study employs a triangulation strategy: interviews, observations, and field notes with two students in the 7th semester of the Mandarin Language study program, Universitas Sumatera Utara, as participants. The findings show that student translators perform several revisions, such as Word substitution, Meaning Correction, Word addition, Grammar Correction, Deletion, and Spelling Correction. During the revision, they used online reading sources to find the terms used in the target text, such as Google Translate, KBBI, and Wikipedia. In translation, the revision of the source text aims to make the information in the target text easy for readers to understand.

Index Terms—revision, source text, target text, translation

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation is the process of transferring meaning from the source text (ST) into the target text (TT) by considering the equivalence or equivalent of words. One of the studies on translation that are currently developing is about the translation process (Mees et al., 2009; O'Brien, 2013; Shreve & Angelone, 2010). The translation process is a subsection of a descriptive translation study focusing on the translator's cognition (Toury, 1995). A translator has a very important role in the translation process, which is related to his creativity and knowledge in transferring messages or information from the source text to the target text (Hartono, 2017; Xianbin, 2005).

Translators use self-correction or revision to solve problems in the translated text. Revision or self-correction is part of a translator's cognitive ability, which includes checking and reviewing translation results by rereading, evaluating, correcting, and looking for internal and external reading sources to get the right message or information in the source text (Arthern, 1987; Breedveld, 2002; Hayes et al., 1987; Helene & Dam, 2016; Mossop, 2007; Robert, 2008). During the translation process, revision is related to pauses. Rosa et al. (2018) in their study observed four respondents, namely student translators and professional translators, to see the pauses in the translation process. The results of this study indicate that the pauses for student translators tend to be longer in the preparation phase and find terms from the source text into the target text, while professional translators tend to be longer in the post-compilation phase and they ensure whether the target text is following grammar and terminology of the target text. Antunović and Pavlović (2011) examine the translation process and the correlation between revisions of English and Swedish texts in 10 respondents. The study results indicate that revision relates to knowledge, pauses spent, and reading sources used in translation.

Pause is one of the cognitive indicators of a translator in the translation process and is a plan for finding a suitable alternative target text equivalent to explain the message contained in the source text (Alves, 2006; Alves & Vale, 2011; Jakobsen, 1998). Besides the pauses, what is interesting in the revision of the text is the use of reading tools and sources that are considered to assist in the production of translations (Uotila, 2017). The previous studies and observations that

* Corresponding Author. Email: kasa@usu.ac.id

have been carried out also show that most translators make revisions to the target text after using the translation tool. Therefore, the revision results are influenced by the translator's level of knowledge and insight.

Each translator has their way of editing their work to find reading material and produce translations (Antunović & Pavlović, 2011; Mossop, 2007; Uotila, 2017). Based on this, this study is intended to observe the process of revisions in translation. The purpose of this study is to explain the revisions made by the translator to the source text, namely Mandarin, into the target text, Indonesian language, and the reading sources they used in translating the text.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Researches on translation have been carried out variously around the globe. However, until now, the research is still being carried out because of the uniqueness of converting information from the source text into the target text in another language (Ferreira & Schwieter, 2017). Translation process research (TPR) is a branch of descriptive translation study that functions as a paradigm or experimental model of the translator's cognitive-behavioral methodology, where the translation process activities are related to keyboard activities, observations, and decision-making on translations carried out by translators (Jakobsen, 2006; Schubert, 2009). Translators involve cognitive processes in understanding the language of the text to be translated, and at the same time, the translator must produce texts in other languages and carry out the transfer process between the two languages (Dimitrova, 2010; Göpferich, 2008).

Apart from the cognitive point of view, metacognition or subconscious processes are also related to translation (Alves, 2015; Lin, 2019). Bruning et al. (1995) stated that metacognition is generally related to two dimensions of thinking, namely: (1) self-awareness of cognition, namely the awareness that a person has about his or her thinking; (2) self-regulation of cognition, namely the ability of a person to use his consciousness to regulate his thinking process. On the other hand, Woolfolk (1998) explains that metacognition refers to a way to increase awareness about the process of thinking and learning that is carried out. This awareness will be realized if a person can start thinking by planning, monitoring, and evaluating the results and cognitive activities. The translation process has a broad understanding (a linguistic operation) carried out by the translator to transfer the source text information into the target text (Silalahi, 2009).

There are three translation processes: analysis, transfer, and adjustment Nida and Taber in (Suryawinata & Haryanto, 2016). The first is the analysis stage. This stage involves studying and analyzing the source text's grammatical, sequence, and meaning. The next stage is diverting after understanding the information or messages contained in the source text, and the last is the adjustment stage related to changing the information or source text messages into the target text following the rules. However, in the translation process, another stage is evaluation and revision to re-match the translation results with the source text (Suryawinata & Haryanto, 2016). Overall, translators use their first knowledge in revising the source text information. According to Allman (2008), three things are needed when revising, one of which is their knowledge or experience in translating. Revision relates to translators changing the text and looking for internal and external reading sources to get the right solution in translating the text (Breedveld, 2002; Hayes et al., 1987).

III. METHOD

This study used qualitative descriptive study that aims to examine, explore, and understand phenomena based on an existing fact (Creswell, 2009; Raco, 2010). The researcher observed the participants doing the translation process. Researchers use an investigator triangulation strategy involving interviews, observations, and field notes, to obtain accurate information or data. The researcher involved three assessors with the following qualifications: 1) mastery of the source language and target language, especially Mandarin and Indonesian, from the results of HSK level 6 with a score of 250 and *Uji Kompetensi Bahasa Indonesia (UKBI) (Indonesian Language Competency Test)* with a score of 578-640 in the "excellent" category. HSK is often known as TOEFL Chinese, a standardized Chinese language competence test for non-native speakers, students who wish to study in China, and Chinese people living abroad. The "excellence" category in UKBI means having adequate skills in communicating using the Indonesian language, both oral and written, and not having any problems communicating for professional purposes, both simple and complex; 2) translation competence and understanding of translation theory as assessed from the translator's certificate; and 3) understanding of financial information in the trade sector assessed from expert translators in the field of economics and working in companies related to trade.

After that, the assessor determined the application of source triangulation by searching for several texts and discussing them in forum groups or forum groups discussion. The data source is the text of the book *新丝路*, "New Silk Road Business Chinese," published by Peking University Press. The results of the forum group discussion using the text entitled "中国手机市场调查报告" (China mobile phone market research report). Two students from the Mandarin language study program at the University of North Sumatra participated in the translation process. They are native Indonesian speakers and have completed the HSK level 4 and UKBI tests. The researcher applied several criteria to participants:

1. Had never worked as a professional translator.

2. Had studied Mandarin-Indonesian translation theory on campus with a minimum score of B and a maximum of A.
3. Had studied business Mandarin on campus with a minimum score of B and a maximum of A.
4. Have passed the HSK level 4 test with a minimum score range of 180 and a maximum of 300.
5. Have passed the UKBI test with a minimum score of 482 to 577 with the predicate "intermediate" (Test participants have adequate proficiency in communicating using the Indonesian language, both oral and written. With these skills, the person concerned can communicate well for survival and social needs).

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher chose the 7th-semester students of the Mandarin language study program at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, North Sumatra University, as the research object. The number of students is 59, but 2 students have met these criteria. Student A passed the HSK 4 with a score of 240, the UKBI test with a score of 530, student B with an HSK 4 score of 220, and the UKBI test with 486. The two students were asked to use a laptop with the translog program installed and a VLC (Video Lan Client) media player as a tool to record the activities of the translation process.

The results of the translog and VLC media player recordings showed that students A and B moved the source text into the google translate screen to find out the results of the translation of the text into Indonesian (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Figure 1 is the result of the translog recording. Here the researcher found that there was a pause made by student A during the translation process. Jakobsen (1998) investigated the translation process that took place using the Translog tool and found that pauses were related to the cognitive process of a translator in producing a translated text by systematically arranging a series of words. In line with Krings (2001), the pause duration can be identified as verbalization in the translation process. Figures 1 and 2 are linear views of Translog. The linear view in the two images has different intervals (see the red circle in Figures 1 and 2). The pause results can be concluded as a student's cognitive process in the translation process to produce a target text. In Figures 3 and 4, the researcher found that students A and B visited and used the google translate site (translate.google.com) to produce the first draft as a reading source to find out information on the source text (ST). Google Translate is a machine translation used because it is practical and easy, but the translation results still need to be revised so that the meaning of the source text can be explained (see Fauziah, 2012; Lopez, 2008).



Figure 1. Linear View Translog Student A



Figure 2. Linear View Translog Student B

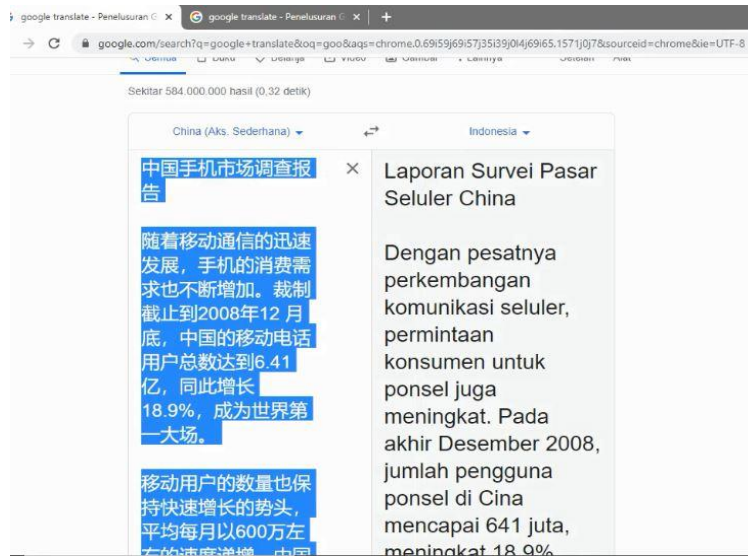


Figure 3. Use of Google Translate Initial Draft (Student A)

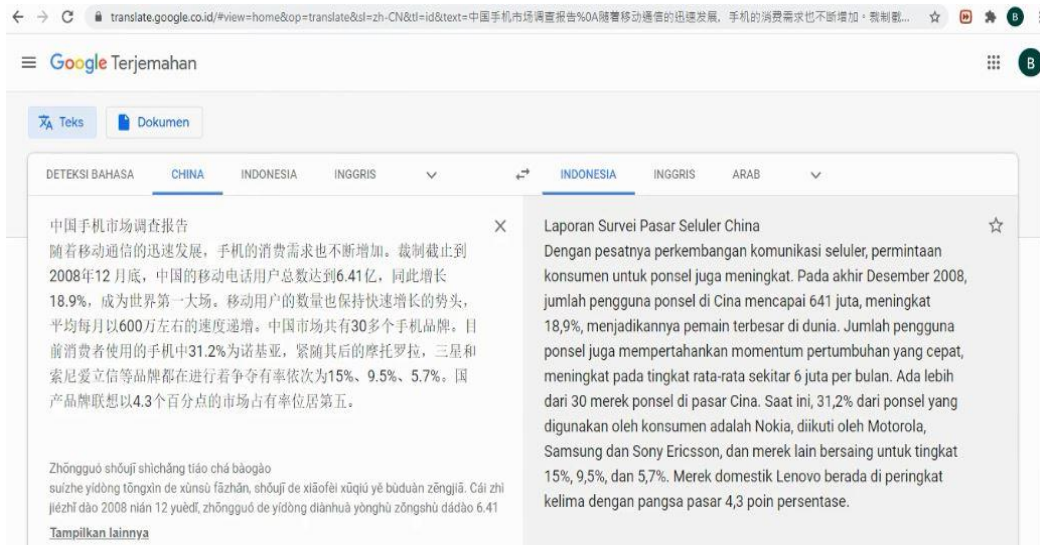


Figure 4. Use of Google Translate Initial Draft (Student B)

After getting the source text translation on google translate, student A revised the translation of the source text into Indonesian as follows (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
RESULT OF REVISED TRANSLATION

Data	Source Text	First Draft	Final Draft	Self-correction
1	中国/手机/市场/调查/报告	Laporan Survei Pasar Seluler China	Laporan Survei Pasar Telepon Genggam Tiongkok	Meaning correction Word substitution
2	随着移动通信的迅速发展，手机的消费需求也不断增加。	Dengan pesatnya perkembangan komunikasi seluler, permintaan konsumen untuk ponsel juga meningkat.	Seiring berkembang pesatnya komunikasi seluler, permintaan konsumen terhadap telepon genggam juga meningkat.	Grammar correction Word substitution
3	截制截止到 2008 年 12 月底，中国的移动电话用户总数达到 6.41 亿，同比增长 18.9%，成为世界第一大场。	Pada akhir Desember 2008, jumlah pengguna ponsel di Cina mencapai 641 juta, meningkat 18,9%, menjadikannya pemain terbesar di dunia	Pada akhir Desember 2008, pengguna telepon genggam di Tiongkok mencapai 641 juta, meningkat 18,9%, menjadikannya sebagai pengguna nomor satu terbesar di dunia	Word substitution Meaning correction Word addition
4	移动用户的数量也保持快速增长的势头，平均每月以 600 万左右的速度递增	Jumlah pengguna ponsel juga mempertahankan momentum pertumbuhan yang cepat, meningkat pada tingkatan rata-rata sekitar 6 juta per bulan	Jumlah pengguna telepon genggam juga mempertahankan momentum pertumbuhan yang cepat, meningkat dengan tingkatan rata-rata sekitar 6 juta per bulan	Word substitution Meaning correction
5	中国市场共有 30 多个手机品牌	Ada lebih dari 30 merek ponsel di pasar Cina	Pasar Tiongkok memiliki total lebih dari 30 merek telepon genggam	Grammar correction Word substitution Word addition
6	目前消费者使用的手机中 31.2% 为诺基亚，紧随其后的摩托罗拉，三星和索尼爱立信等品牌都在进行着争夺有率依次为 15%、9.5%、5.7%	Saat ini, 31,2% dari ponsel yang digunakan oleh konsumen adalah Nokia, diikuti oleh Motorola, Samsung, Sony Ericsson dan merek lain yang bersaing untuk tingkat 15%, 9,5%, 5,7%.	Saat ini, sebanyak 31,2% dari telepon genggam yang digunakan oleh konsumen adalah merek Nokia, diikuti oleh Motorola, Samsung, Sony Ericson serta merek lain dan sebagainya yang bersaing untuk tingkat sekitar 15%, 9,5%, 5,7%.	Word addition Word substitution
7	国产品牌联想以 4.3 个百分点的市场占有率位居第五。	Merek domestik Lenovo berada diperingkat kelima dengan pangsa pasar 4.3 persentase.	Merek dalam negeri yaitu Lenovo berada diperingkat kelima dengan pangsa pasar sebesar 4.3 persentase.	Word substitution Word addition

Data 1

Source Text : 中国/手机/市场/调查/报告

Zhōngguó/ shǒujī /shìchǎng/ diào chá / bàogào
China/ seluler/ pasar/ survei/ laporan

First Draft : *Laporan /Survei /Pasar /Seluler/ China*

Final Draft : *Laporan Survei Pasar Telepon Genggam Tiongkok*

Data 1 of the source text shows that student A performs a type of self-correction, namely correction of the meaning of the translation of the source text, namely.

手机 (shǒu jī), which means 'cellular' to 'mobile phone.' The word 'cellular' has two types of meaning; the first relates to the shape of the cell (related to biological terms), while the second understanding is a system that is contained in the telephone and can be used simultaneously by the user directly (see the online one Indonesian dictionary at <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/>). The term 手机 (shǒu jī), has the meaning of 'cellphone' or 'mobile phone', which means 'telepon genggam' or 'ponsel' in Indonesian.

In addition, student A uses word substitution in the translation of the word 中国 (zhōngguó), namely 'China', into the word 'Tiongkok'. In the first draft, the word 'China' still used the English spelling, so the word was changed to the Indonesian term 'Tiongkok'.

Data 2

Source Text : 随着/移动/通信/的/迅速/发展/, 手机/的/消费/需求/也/不/断/增加。

Suízhe/ yídòng/ tōngxìn/ de/ xùnsù/ fāzhǎn/, shǒujī/ de/ xiāofèi /xūqiú/ yě /bù/duàn/ zēngjiā.

Dengan/ pesatnya/ perkembangan/ komunikasi/ (partikel de)/ cepat/ perkembangan/, seluler/ (partikel de)/ biaya/ permintaan/ juga/ tidak/ putus/ bertambah.

First Draft : *Dengan pesatnya/ perkembangan/ komunikasi/ seluler/, permintaan konsumen/ untuk/ ponsel/ juga/ meningkat.*

Final Draft : *Seiring berkembang pesatnya komunikasi seluler, permintaan konsumen terhadap telepon genggam juga meningkat.*

Data 2 shows student A using grammatical corrections to the first draft, namely 随着移动通信的迅速发展 (suí zhe yídòng tōngxin de xùnsù fāzhǎn) which is 'dengan pesatnya perkembangan komunikasi seluler' to 'seiring berkembang pesatnya komunikasi seluler'. Grammatical correction is used for the first draft translation because, in the first draft, the translation result is still in the form of a Mandarin grammatical structure, so structural changes are used to adjust to the structure of the target text, namely Indonesian. In translating a source text, a translator must understand the text as a whole, decipher the wording, and rewrite it into the structure of the target text, such as grammar, lexicon, and punctuation (see Angelelli, 2009; Bachman, 1990; Cao, 1996).

Word substitution is applied to the word 'untuk' after the phrase 'permintaan konsumen...' to be 'terhadap'. The substitution of these words does not change the meaning because the words 'untuk' and 'terhadap' have the same function as particles to indicate the object being discussed. In addition, substitution is also used for the word 'seluler' to become the word 'telepon genggam'. It is used because the word 手机 (shǒu jī) has the same meaning as 'ponsel' or 'telepon genggam'. If you look at it, there is a change from the word 'ponsel' to the phrase 'telepon genggam'. A shift in formal correspondence caused this change. According to Catford (1965), the shift was due to a different formal correspondence between TSu and TSa. Furthermore, when there are two languages to be translated from TSu to TSa, the formal correspondence from TSu already has a grammatical unit similar to TSa.

Data 3

Source Text : 裁制/截止/到/2008 年/12 月/底, 中国/的/移动/电话/用户/总/数/达到/6.41/亿, 同此/增长/18.9%, 成为/世界/第/一/大场。

Cái zhì/ jiézhǐ/ dào/ 2008 nián/ 12 yuè/dǐ/, zhōngguó/ de/ yídòng /diànhuà/ yònghù /zǒng/shù/ dá dào/ 6.41/ Yì/, tóng cǐ/ zēngzhǎng/ 18.9%, Chéngwéi/ shìjiè/ dì/ yī/ dà chǎng.

Pemotongan/ waktu/ tiba/ tahun 2008/ bulan desember/ akhir, china/ (partikel de)/ pesat/ telepon/ pengguna/ total/ jumlah/ sampai/ 6,41/ juta, bersama ini/ bertambah/ 18,9%, menjadikan/ dunia/ ke/ satu/ pasar terbesar

First Draft : Pada akhir /Desember/ 2008, jumlah pengguna ponsel di Cina mencapai 641 juta, meningkat 18,9%, menjadikannya pemain terbesar di dunia

Final Draft : Pada akhir Desember 2008, pengguna telepon genggam di Tiongkok mencapai 641 juta, meningkat 18,9%, menjadikannya sebagai pengguna nomor satu terbesar di dunia

Data 3 shows that student A uses word substitution for the word 'ponsel' to become 'telepon genggam'. In the source text, the phrase 移动电话 (Yídòng diànhuà) has the meaning of 'telepon genggam', which has the same meaning as 'ponsel'. So that the word change does not change the information from the source text. In addition, word substitution is used for the word 'Cina' to become 'Tiongkok'. In Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, the word 'Cina' means a country in Asia. However, the word 'Cina' means discrimination, so in the final draft, the word 'Cina' was changed to 'Tiongkok' (see Presidential Decree Number 12 of 2014).

Correction of meaning is used for the word 'pemain' to be 'pengguna', and the word 'terbesar' is changed to 'nomor satu'. In the first draft, the word 'pemain', which was placed after the word 'menjadikannya...' was changed to 'pengguna'. The change in the term is because the word 'pemain' means 'orang yang bermain', so the word is changed to 'pengguna' to indicate 'orang yang menggunakan'. Other words used in the final draft are 'sebagai' and 'nomor satu'. The word 'sebagai' is a particle in Indonesian used to describe a change in something or become. The addition of 'nomor satu' is used because, in the source text, there is the word 第一 (dì yī) which is not translated by google translate.

Deletion is used for the first draft, namely the word 'jumlah', which comes before the phrase '... pengguna ponsel'. The deletion of the word does not affect the source text information because the text already describes the number of cellular phone users, namely 641 million. According to Farahzad (1992), the reduction or addition of words in the translation correction can be made as long as it does not reduce the message or information in the source text.

Data 4

Source Text : 移动/用户/的/数量/也/保持/快速/增长/的/势头/, 平均/每/月/以/600/万/左右/的/速度/递增。

Yídòng/ yònghù/ de/ shùliàng/ yě/ bǎochí/ kuàisù/ zēngzhǎng/ de /shìtóu/, píngjūn/ měi/ yuè/ yǐ /600/ wàn/ zuǒyòu/ de/ sùdù /dìzēng

Pesat/ pengguna/ (partikel de)/ jumlah/ juga / mempertahankan/ pertumbuhan/ pertambahan/ (partikel de)/ momentum, rata- rata/ setiap/ bulan/ tingkatan/ 600/ sepuluh ribu/ sekitar/ (partikel de)/ level/ bertambah

First Draft : Jumlah pengguna ponsel juga mempertahankan momentum pertumbuhan yang cepat, meningkat pada tingkatan rata-rata sekitar 6 juta per bulan

Final Draft : Jumlah pengguna telepon genggam juga mempertahankan momentum pertumbuhan yang cepat, meningkat dengan tingkatan rata-rata sekitar 6 juta per bulan

Data 4 shows student A's two types of self-correction: word substitution and meaning correction. The word substitution is applied to the word 'ponsel' to become 'telepon genggam', while the meaning correction is applied to the word 'momentum' to become 'kecendrungan' and the word 'pada' to 'dengan'. The word 'ponsel' is an abbreviation of 'telepon seluler', which refers to a wireless communication device. The meaning is the same as 'telepon genggam', so the substitutions used do not affect the word's meaning.

Next, student A uses the meaning correction of the word 'pada' into the word 'dengan', which is placed after the word 'meningkat...' in the final draft. In the final draft, the word 'dengan' serves as a conjunction to explain a particular reason, while the word 'pada' indicates a position in the relation. However, the use of the word 'dengan' is not appropriate because the word change changes the information in the sentence.

Data 5

Source Text : 中国/市场/共/有/30/多/个/手机/品牌

Zhōngguó /shìchǎng /gòng/yǒu/ 30 duō/ gè/ shǒujī/ pǐnpái
China/ pasar/ total/ memiliki/ lebih 30/ sebuah/ seluler/ merek

First Draft : Ada lebih dari 30 merek ponsel di pasar Cina

Final Draft : Pasar Tiongkok memiliki total lebih dari 30 merek telepon genggam

The application of self-correction is grammar correction, word substitution, meaning correction, and word addition. Grammatical correction is applied to the first draft of 'pasar Cina', which is placed at the end of the sentence to be at the beginning of the sentence in the final draft. The correction is used to adjust to the grammatical structure of the target text, namely Indonesian. Word substitution is used for the word 'ponsel', which is placed in front of '... di pasar Cina' to become 'telepon genggam' in the final draft. The substitution is used to explain the meaning of 'ponsel'. The meaning correction was used for the word 'Cina' to become the word 'Tiongkok' in the final draft. The change is because the word 'Tiongkok' has a positive meaning while the word 'Cina' has a discriminatory meaning. Currently, Indonesia uses the term 'Tiongkok' to denote China because the use of the term Chinese can lead to psychosocial discrimination in social relations (Sari et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the addition of the phrase 'memiliki total lebih...' is placed after the phrase 'Pasar Tiongkok' in the final draft. The addition was because there was a phrase in the source text, namely 共有 ... 多 (Gòngyǒu... Duō), which was not translated by google translate, so student A added the meaning of the phrase in the final draft.

Data 6

Source Text : 目前/消费者/使用/的/手机/中/31.2%/为/ 诺基亚/, 紧随其/后/的/摩托罗拉/, 三星/和/索尼爱立信/等/品牌/都/在/进行着/争夺/有/率依/次/为/15%/、 9.5%/、 5.7%.

Mùqián/ xiāofèi zhě/ shǐyòng/ de/ shǒujī/ zhōng/ 31.2%/ Wèi/ nuòjīyà/, jǐn/ suí qí/ hòu/ de/ mótuōluōlā/, sānxīng/ hé/ suǒní àilìxìn/ děng/ pǐnpái/ dōu/ zài/ jìnxíng zhe/ zhēngduó/ yǒu/ lǜ/ yī/cì/ wèi/ 15%,9.5%,5.7%

Saat ini/ konsumen/ menggunakan/ (partikel de)/ seluler/ pertengahan/ 31,2 %/ menjadi / nokia/ diikuti/ oleh/ (partikel de)/ Motorola/ Samsung/ Sony Ericsson/ dan lain- lain/ merek/ keseluruhan / di / progress/ bersaing/ memiliki/ persentasi / kali/ menjadi / 15%/、 9.5%/、 5.7%.

First Draft : Saat ini, 31,2% ponsel yang digunakan oleh konsumen adalah Nokia, diikuti oleh Motorola, Samsung, Sony Ericsson dan merek lain yang bersaing untuk tingkat 15%, 9,5%, 5,7%.

Final Draft : Saat ini, sebanyak 31,2% telepon genggam yang digunakan oleh konsumen adalah merek Nokia, diikuti oleh Motorola, Samsung, Sony Ericsson serta merek lain dan sebagainya yang bersaing untuk tingkat sekitar 15%, 9,5%, 5,7%.

Data 6 shows that student A applies self-correction, namely word addition and word substitution. The addition of the word 'sebanyak', which is placed before '31,2% dari....', The use of the word 'sebanyak' in Indonesian, explains the amount of the object being discussed. In the final draft, it can be seen that the word 'sebanyak' is followed by the

percentage of the number of objects discussed, namely 'telepon genggam'. The addition of the word 'merek' in the final draft is placed before the word '... Nokia'. The word 'merek' in Indonesian is usually followed by the name of a particular product as an identifier. The addition does not only occur at the word level. There is the addition of the phrase 'dan sebagainya,' which is placed after the phrase 'merek lain...' in the final draft. The use of the phrase 'dan sebagainya' describes similar objects, and it can be seen that the final draft describes several brands, such as Nokia, Motorola, Samsung, and Sony Ericsson, which are similar goods, namely mobile phones. Word substitution is used in the word 'ponsel' to 'telepon genggam' in the final draft. The word 'ponsel' is an abbreviation of 'telepon seluler', which has the same meaning as 'telepon genggam'.

Data 7

Source Text : 国产/品牌/联想/以/4.3/个/百分点/的/市场/占有/率/位居/第/五。
 Guóchǎn/ pǐnpái/ liánxiǎng/ yǐ/ 4.3/ gè/ bǎifēn/diǎn /de /shìchǎng /zhànyǒu /lǜ /wèi jū /dì wǔ.

Domestik/ merek / Lenovo/ sebagai/ 4.3 / buah/ persen/ (partikel de)/ menguasai/ persentase/ diposisi/ ke/ lima

First Draft : Merek domestik Lenovo berada diperingkat kelima dengan pangsa pasar 4,3 persentase.

Final Draft : Merek dalam negeri yaitu Lenovo berada diperingkat kelima dengan pangsa pasar sebesar 4.3 persentase.

Data 7 shows that student A uses word substitution, namely the word 'domestik', which is placed after the word 'Merek...' into the phrase 'dalam negeri'. The word 'domestik', according to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, has the same meaning as 'dalam negeri'. In translation, unit shifts can occur from words into phrases, phrases into words, or clauses (Catford, 1965, p. 79). Self-correction is the addition of the word used by student A to the word 'yaitu' placed before the word '... Lenovo' in the final draft. The function of the word 'yaitu' in Indonesian as a conjunction is used to detail a sentence's description.

Next is a table of student B who has revised the results of the translation of the source text from google translate as follows (see Table 2).

TABLE 2
 REVISED TRANSLATION DONE BY STUDENT B

Data	Source Text	First Draft	Final Draft	Self-correction
8	中国手机市场调查报告	Laporan Survei Pasar Seluler China	Laporan Survei Pasar Seluler Tiongkok	Word substitution
9	随着移动通信的迅速发展, 手机的消费需求也不断增加。	Dengan pesatnya perkembangan komunikasi seluler, permintaan konsumen untuk ponsel juga meningkat.	Seiring pesatnya perkembangan komunikasi seluler, permintaan konsumen untuk ponsel juga meningkat.	Meaning Correction
10	截至到 2008 年 12 月底, 中国的移动电话用户总数达到 6.41 亿, 同比增长 18.9%, 成为世界第一大场。	Pada akhir Desember 2008, jumlah pengguna ponsel di Cina mencapai 641 juta, meningkat 18,9%, menjadikannya pemain terbesar di dunia	Pada akhir Desember 2008, jumlah pengguna ponsel di Tiongkok mencapai 641 juta, meningkat 18,9%, menjadikannya pengguna terbesar di dunia	Word substitution Meaning Correction
11	移动用户的数量也保持快速增长的势头, 平均每月以 600 万左右的速度递增	Jumlah pengguna ponsel juga mempertahankan momentum pertumbuhan yang cepat, meningkat pada tingkatan rata-rata sekitar 6 juta per bulan	Jumlah pengguna ponsel juga mempertahankan momentum pertumbuhan yang sangat cepat, meningkat pada tingkatan rata-rata sekitar 6 juta per bulan	Word addition
12	中国市场共有 30 多个手机品牌	Ada lebih dari 30 merek ponsel di pasar Cina	Ada lebih dari 30 merek ponsel di pasar Tiongkok	Word substitution
13	目前消费者使用的手机中 31.2% 为诺基亚, 紧随其后的摩托罗拉, 三星和索尼爱立信等品牌都在进行着争夺率依次为 15%、9.5%、5.7%	Saat ini, 31,2% dari ponsel yang digunakan oleh konsumen adalah Nokia, diikuti oleh Motorola, Samsung, Sony Ericsson dan merek lain yang bersaing untuk tingkat 15%, 9,5%, 5,7%.	Saat ini, 31,2% dari ponsel yang digunakan adalah Nokia, diikuti oleh Motorola, Samsung, Sony Ericsson dan merek lain yang bersaing untuk tingkat 15%, 9,5%, 5,7%.	Deletion
14	国产品牌联想以 4.3 个百分点的市场占有率位居第五。	Merek domestik Lenovo menempati peringkat kelima dengan pangsa pasar 4,3 poin persentase.	Merek domestik Lenovo menempati peringkat kelima dengan pangsa pasar sebesar 4.3 poin presentase.	Spelling Correction

Data 8

Source Text : 中国/手机/市场/调查/报告
Zhōngguó/ shǒujī /shìchǎng/ diào chá / bàogào
China/ seluler/ pasar/ survei/ laporan

First Draft : Laporan Survei Pasar Seluler China
Final Draft : Laporan Survei Pasar Seluler Tiongkok

Student B in data 8 source texts made a self-correction, namely correcting the spelling of the word 'China' to 'Tiongkok' in the final draft. The spelling correction is used because the term 'China' is still in English, so the use of the word is not appropriate in the target language, namely Indonesian.

Data 9

Source Text : 随着/移动/通信/的/迅速/发展/, 手机/的/消费/需求/也/不/断/增加。

Suízhe/ yídòng/ tōngxìn/ de/ xùnsù/ fāzhǎn/, shǒujī/ de/ xiāofèi/ xūqiú/ yě/ bù/ duàn/ zēngjiā.
Dengan/ pesatnya/ perkembangan/ komunikasi/ (partikel de)/ cepat/ perkembangan/, seluler/ (partikel de)/ biaya/ permintaan/ juga/ tidak/ putus/ bertambah.

First Draft : Dengan pesatnya perkembangan komunikasi seluler, permintaan konsumen untuk ponsel juga meningkat.

Final Draft : Seiring pesatnya perkembangan komunikasi seluler, permintaan konsumen untuk ponsel juga meningkat.

In Data 9, the type of self-correction used by student B is the word substitution of the word 'dengan' into the word 'seiring' in the final draft. The word 随着 (suízhe) in 现代汉语词典第五本 (The fifth modern Chinese dictionary) has the meaning of 'dengan' which functions as a preposition to indicate the same time occurrence. The same is the case with Indonesian, the word 'seiring' also has a synonym for 'dengan', so the substitution does not change the meaning.

Data 10

Source Text : 截至/到/2008年/12月/底, 中国/的/移动/电话/用户/总/数/达到/6.41/亿, 同此/增长/18.9%, 成为/世界/第/一/大场。

Cái zhì/ jiézhǐ/ dào/ 2008 nián/ 12 yuè/dǐ/, zhōngguó/ de/ yídòng /diànhuà/ yònghù /zǒng/shù/ dá dào/ 6.41/ Yì/, tóng cǐ/ zēngzhǎng/ 18.9%, Chéngwéi/ shìjiè/ dì/ yī/ dà chǎng.

Pemotongan/ waktu/ tiba/ tahun 2008/ bulan desember/ akhir, china/ (partikel de)/ pesat/ telepon/ pengguna/ total/ jumlah/ sampai/ 6,41/ juta, bersama ini/ bertambah/ 18,9%, menjadikan/ dunia/ ke/ satu/ pasar terbesar

First Draft : Pada akhir Desember 2008, jumlah pengguna ponsel di Cina mencapai 641 juta, meningkat 18,9%, menjadikannya pemain terbesar di dunia

Final Draft : Pada akhir Desember 2008, pengguna ponsel di Tiongkok mencapai 641 juta, meningkat 18,9%, menjadikannya pengguna terbesar di dunia

Student B uses the type of self-correction of deletion, word substitution, and meaning correction in the final draft. Deletion is used for the word 'jumlah' in the final draft. Deletion or addition of words in the translation process is not a problem as long as the removal or addition does not reduce the meaning in the source text (see Farahzad, 1992; Waddington, 2001). Word substitution was used for the word 'Cina' to become 'Tiongkok' in the final draft. The substitution was made because the word 'Cina' means discrimination, so presidential decree number 12/2014 explained the term 'Cina' to Tiongkok so as not to cause discrimination. In the final draft, a meaning correction was made to the word 'pemain' to 'pengguna', which was placed after the word 'to make it...'. The word 'player' means the person who plays, and 'user' means the person who uses it. In the source text, the word 用户 (yònghù) means the person who uses or the user. So that meaning correction is done to get the correct diction in the final draft.

Data 11

Source Text : 移动/用户/的/数量/也/保持/快速/增长/的/势头/, 平均/每/月/以/600/万/左右/的/速度/递增。

Yídòng/ yònghù/ de/ shùliàng/ yě/ bǎochí/ kuàisù/ zēngzhǎng/ de /shítóu/, píngjūn/ měi/ yuè/ yǐ /600/ wàn/ zuǒyòu/ de/ sùdù /dìzēng

Pesat/ pengguna/ (partikel de)/ jumlah/ juga / mempertahankan/ pertumbuhan/ pertambahan/ (partikel de)/ momentum, rata- rata/ setiap/ bulan/ tingkatan/ 600/ sepuluh ribu/ sekitar/ (partikel de)/ level/ bertambah

First Draft : Jumlah pengguna ponsel juga mempertahankan momentum pertumbuhan yang cepat, meningkat pada tingkatan rata-rata sekitar 6 juta per bulan

Final Draft : Jumlah pengguna ponsel juga mempertahankan momentum pertumbuhan yang sangat cepat, meningkat pada tingkatan rata-rata sekitar 6 juta per bulan

Data 11 shows that student B uses the addition of the word 'sangat,' which is located after the phrase 'pertumbuhan yang...'. The addition is made to emphasize that the monthly mobile phone users increase is increasing very fast.

Data 12

Source Text : 中国/市场/共/有/30/多/个/手机/品牌
Zhōngguó /shìchǎng /gòng/yǒu/ 30 duō/ gè/ shǒujī/ pǐnpái
China/ pasar/ total/ memiliki/ lebih 30/ sebuah/ seluler/ merek

First Draft : Ada lebih dari 30 merek ponsel di pasar Cina

Final Draft : Ada lebih dari 30 merek ponsel di pasar Tiongkok

Student B uses self-correction, namely the language substitution of the word 'Cina' into 'Tiongkok', which is placed after the phrase 'di pasar.....'. Substitutions were made to avoid discrimination on the word 'Cina', so in the final draft, the term 'Tiongkok' was used to denote the geographical entity of a country in East Asia.

Data 13

Source Text : 目前/消费者/使用/的/手机/中/31.2%/为/ 诺基亚/, 紧随其/后/的/摩托罗拉/, 三星/和/索尼爱立信/等/品牌/都/在/进行着/争夺/有/率依次/为/15%/、 9.5%/、 5.7%.

Mùqián/ xiāofèi zhě/ shǐyòng/ de/ shǒujī/ zhōng/ 31.2%/Wèi/ nuòjīyà/, jǐn/ suí qí/ hòu/ de/ mótuōluōlā/, sānxīng/ hé/ suǒní àilìxìn/ děng/ pǐnpái/ dōu/ zài/ jìnxíng zhe/ zhēngduó/ yǒu/ lǜ/ yī/cì/ wèi/ 15%,9.5%,5.7%

Saat ini/ konsumen/ menggunakan/ (partikel de)/ seluler/ pertengahan/ 31,2 %/ menjadi / nokia/ diikuti/ oleh/ (partikel de)/ Motorola/ Samsung/ Sony Ericsson/ dan lain- lain/ merek/ keseluruhan / di / progress/ bersaing/ memiliki/ persentase / kali/ menjadi / 15%/、 9.5%/、 5.7%.

First Draft : Saat ini, 31,2% dari ponsel yang digunakan oleh konsumen adalah Nokia, diikuti oleh Motorola, Samsung, Sony Ericsson dan merek lain yang bersaing untuk tingkat 15%, 9,5%, 5,7%.

Final Draft : Saat ini, 31,2% dari ponsel yang digunakan adalah Nokia, diikuti oleh Motorola, Samsung, Sony Ericsson dan merek lain yang bersaing untuk tingkat 15%, 9,5%, 5,7%.

In data 13, student B uses self-correction of the phrase 'oleh konsumen', which is placed before the phrase '.... yang digunakan'. In the source text, there is the phrase 消费者 (xiāofèi zhě) which means consumer. The structure of the source text (ST) sentence is a passive sentence, with the subject being 'konsumen'. Thus, the deletion of the phrase 'oleh konsumen' can affect the information in the source text.

Source Text : 国产/品牌/联想/以/4.3/个/百分点/的/市场/占有/率/位居/第/五/。

Guóchǎn/ pǐnpái/ liánxiǎng/ yǐ/ 4.3 /gè/ bǎifēn/diǎn /de /shìchǎng /zhānyǒu /lǜ /wèi/ jū /dì wǔ.
Domestik/ merek / Lenovo/ sebagai/ 4.3 / buah/ persen/ (partikel de)/ menguasai/ persentase/ diposisi/ ke/ lima

First Draft : Merek domestik Lenovo menempati peringkat kelima dengan pangsa pasar 4,3 poin persentase.

Final Draft : Merek domestik Lenovo menempati peringkat kelima dengan pangsa pasar sebesar 4.3 poin presentase.

In data 14, student B uses spelling correction on the word 'persentase' to 'presentase' after the word 'poin...'. However, student B's spelling correction affected the source text's information. In the source text, the word 百分 (bǎi

fēn) has the meaning of percentage, which shows a comparison to express a fraction of one hundred symbolized by %. The word 'presentase' has no meaning at all, so the researcher assumes that it is interference in the translation process.

Online (Reading) Resources

In the translation process, translators need tools intending to revise the translation. Tools can be printed or online resources. Today, everyone can access information around the world through the internet. The internet has significantly changed life, communication, and studies so that everyone can quickly get the latest information and knowledge (Shao, 2020). The development of internet media can facilitate one's activities and is the most important thing, especially in the field of translation in search of developing information (see Byrne, 2007; Xiong et al., 2020). One part of the development of internet media is online resources. Online resources are data available online that can help find information, especially for a translator translating text (Akbari, 2018; Kourouni, 2012). Translators prefer online resources at this point. This is because technological developments towards online resources are faster to get the information they want, are practical, easily accessible, and save time (see Halim, 2019; Şahin & Dungan, 2014). The results of the VLC recording show that several online resources are used to revise the translation, as follows.

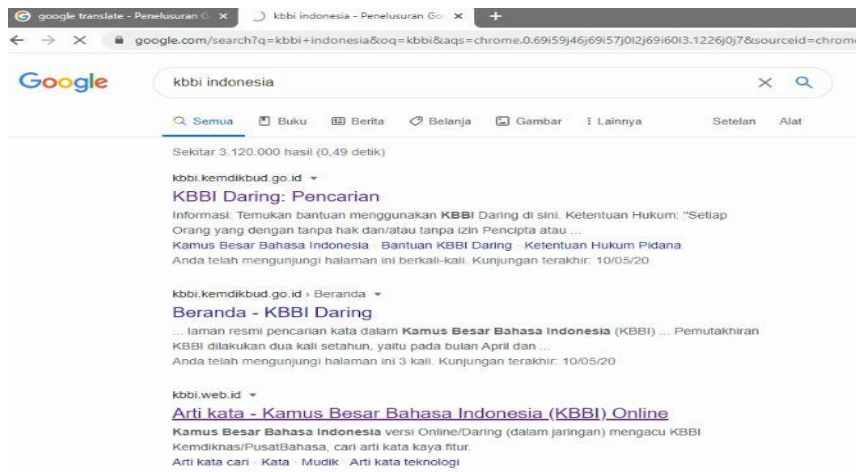


Figure 5. Use of Google Sites in Searching for Online Resources

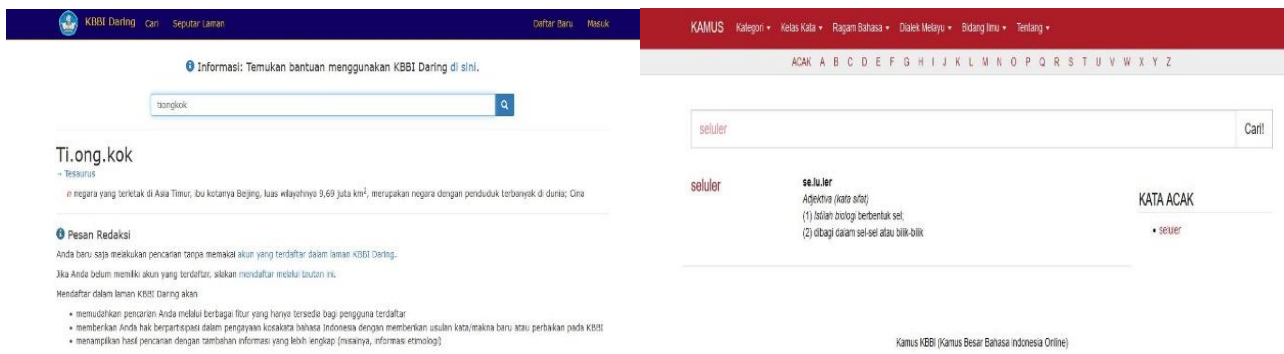


Figure 6. and Figure7. Using the KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia) Online to Look Up Vocabulary

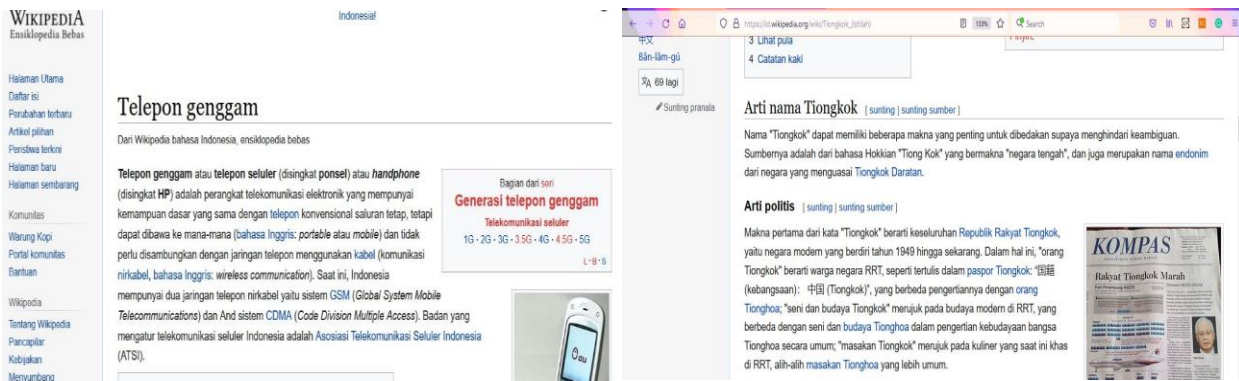


Figure 8. and Figure 9. Using Wikipedia to Look Up Terms

The recording results show that students A and B use several sites such as Google Translate, KBBI, and Wikipedia. Google Translate (see Figures 3 and 4) makes it very easy for translators who want to know or change source text information into the target text, especially the Chinese-Indonesian translation. However, the use of Google Translate is not a reference that the results of the translation are reasonable; there is even the use of terms or untranslations that are not following the source text information (Bozorgian & Azadmanesh, 2015). The results of the Google Translate translation show that there are terms that have changed from the translation of the source text, such as the words "selular", and "China". In addition, there are untranslated terms such as "第一" which means "nomor satu". The untranslation may affect the information in the source text. Students A and B use KBBI in changing terms in the results of the Google Translate translation such as the word "pemain" is changed to "pengguna", the word "China" becomes "Tiongkok", the word "dengan" becomes the word "seiring" and so on. The use of the KBBI is beneficial for students in changing the word because the KBBI service explains the meaning and the use of the word in a sentence. In addition, Google Translate and KBBI also use the Wikipedia site to search for specific terms such as "telepon genggam" and "Tiongkok". Wikipedia also helps them understand the meaning of the terms used in the target text.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that student translators perform several types of revisions to the source text, such as Word substitution, Meaning Correction, Word addition, Grammar Correction, Deletion, and Spelling Correction. During their revision, a pause is indicated by a translator's cognitive process in changing the target text information. The revisions they made to the translation of the source text were aimed at making the information in the target text easier to understand. During the revision, they also used online reading sources to find the terms used in the target text, such as google translate, KBBI, and Wikipedia.

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T. Kasa Rullah Adha is a lecturer of Chinese Language Study Program, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. He obtained his doctoral degree in linguistic from Universitas Sumatera Utara.

Julina is a lecturer of Chinese Language Study Program, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia.

Intan Erwani is a lecturer of Chinese Language Study Program, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia.

Translation Ethics in Saudi Universities' Translation Curriculum

Mubarak Alkhatnai

Department of English Language and Translation, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—Translation is a pivotal bridge connecting different cultures and languages, enabling effective communication in the globalized world. As the demand for high-quality translation services in Saudi Arabia continues to rise, there is an urgent need to assess and enhance the curricula of translation programs at the country's universities. This descriptive-evaluative-correlational research/study investigates the implementation of Translation Ethics within the curriculum of Translation programs at selected Saudi universities. The data-gathering instrument that was utilized is a survey questionnaire made by the researchers. A sample of 48 students enrolled in Translation programs in 3 selected Saudi universities: King Saud University, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, and King Khaled University, were selected using stratified random sampling. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counting, percentage, weighted mean, rank, and Spearman rank correlation. The study reveals that there is a moderate integration of translation ethics within the translation curriculum of Saudi universities. Similarly, translation ethics education was found to have an average impact on students' ethical awareness and decision-making capabilities. However, there is a significant negative correlation between the extent of translation ethics instruction and students' ethical competence implying that as the extent of translation ethics instruction increases, students' ethical competence tends to decrease. Various underlying factors were identified that contributed to the data-driven policy recommendations and action plan suggestions of the study.

Index Terms—translation, ethics, curriculum, Saudi, universities

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation is a pivotal bridge connecting different cultures and languages, enabling effective communication in the globalized world. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 plan emphasizes the nation's commitment to globalization and international collaboration, underscoring the increasing demand for highly skilled translators and interpreters. As the demand for high-quality translation services in Saudi Arabia continues to rise, there is an urgent need to assess and enhance the curricula of translation programs at the country's universities. One critical aspect of this evaluation is incorporating translation ethics into the curriculum.

The field of Translation Ethics in the curriculum of Translation programs at Saudi universities is currently confronted with an evident and critical deficiency in understanding and emphasizing translation ethics, leading to suboptimal ethical competencies among students. The current curriculum's lack of comprehensive integration of translation ethics poses a substantial challenge, impacting the quality, integrity, and professionalism of translation services in Saudi Arabia. Also, translation ethics encompasses a wide array of ethical considerations that guide the behavior and decision-making of translators and interpreters, including issues such as impartiality, confidentiality, cultural sensitivity, and intellectual property rights. The effectiveness of these ethical considerations in the curriculum is central to the quality, professionalism, and societal implications of translation services in Saudi Arabia.

In response to this perceived need, this study aims to investigate the implementation of Translation Ethics within the curriculum of Translation programs at selected Saudi universities, using a quantitative research methodology. Specifically, it intends to (a) quantitatively evaluate the extent of integration of translation ethics within the Translation curriculum of Saudi universities; (b) measure the impact of translation ethics education on students' ethical awareness and decision-making capabilities; (c) identify any existing correlations between the extent of translation ethics instruction and students' ethical competence; and (d) provide data-driven recommendations for enhancing the integration of translation ethics into the curriculum for improved program-level learning outcomes.

This research is also motivated by several key factors: the need for professional excellence to support Saudi Arabia's international presence, the importance of cultural harmony through ethical translation practices, the enhancement of the global reputation for Saudi universities and their graduates, and the necessity to address legal and social implications of translation. Integrating translation ethics into Saudi university curricula is critical for industry practice, ensuring graduates bring integrity to their work and meet the rising demand for high-quality translation services, while also contributing to knowledge advancement in the field by improving the education of future translators and interpreters.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The majority of previous research and articles in the field of translation ethics have primarily focused on various aspects of translation ethics education and its implications for the translation profession. This body of work underscores the crucial role of ethical training in maintaining the quality and professionalism of translation services (Newmark; as cited in McAlester, 2003; Baker, 2013; Drugan, 2017). However, traditional approaches to translator and interpreter education often overlook the ethical dimension, emphasizing professional codes of conduct without delving into the complexities of ethical decision-making in practice. In the context of late modernity, where translators and interpreters are increasingly thrust into service on an unprecedented scale, the ethical terrain becomes even more complex (Drugan & Tipton, 2017). The proliferation of translation agents, both human and non-human, challenges the traditional ethical landscape, highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding of translation ethics. Chesterman (2018) provides valuable insights into the theoretical underpinnings of translation ethics, drawing from utilitarian and contractual theories to elucidate the ethical dimensions of translation practice.

Extending the discussion to the role of educators, Schwimmer (2018) emphasizes the ethical responsibility inherent in translating knowledge for educational practice. This underscores the need for translators and interpreters to navigate ethical dilemmas not only in professional settings but also in educational contexts. Floros (2020) further emphasizes the importance of ethical reasoning, reflexivity, and responsibility in shaping the behavior of future professionals, highlighting the pedagogical aspects of teaching ethics within academic and professional training institutions. Koskinen and Pokorn (2020) offer a comprehensive overview of ethical theories applied within Translation Studies, tracing the historical trajectory of translation ethics and emphasizing the multifaceted nature of ethical concerns faced by translators and interpreters. Moorikens and Rocchi (2020) elaborate on the ethical challenges inherent in the translation industry, including power disparities, environmental sustainability, and the impact of automation.

While existing research provides valuable insights into translation ethics, limited attention has been given to the specific context of Saudi Arabia. Little to no research focuses on curriculum analysis to determine the implications of translation ethics for program-level learning outcomes (PLOs) in Saudi universities. However, the importance of cultural sensitivity, confidentiality, and impartiality in translation practice in Saudi Arabia is underscored by Yehia (2007) and corroborated by Al-Amer et al. (2016), who shed light on translation challenges in cross-cultural research. Moreover, Alahmmari and DipOdp (2016) emphasize the significance of cultural communication competence in healthcare settings in Saudi Arabia, highlighting the ethical imperative for translators and interpreters to possess cultural sensitivity and competence. Alenezi's (2016) investigation into the relationship between undergraduate translation curricula and market demands in Saudi Arabia underscores the importance of aligning educational programs with industry needs, including the integration of translation ethics into the curriculum. Additionally, Alshaikh's (2022) study on the challenges encountered by Saudi translation students when translating legal contracts highlights the practical implications of ethical considerations in translation practice. These findings collectively underscore the importance of equipping students with the necessary ethical competencies to navigate linguistic and cultural challenges while maintaining the integrity and accuracy of translated texts. Integrating translation ethics into the curriculum of Saudi universities is crucial for preparing graduates to meet the ethical demands of the profession and contribute to the advancement of ethical translation practices.

However, there are weaknesses in the existing body of research. First, the majority of these studies have been conducted in the contexts of different countries and industries, making it challenging to generalize their findings to the context of the Saudi Arabian Translation industry, which has its unique cultural and socio-political dynamics. Secondly, there is a lack of quantitative research that quantifies the extent of translation ethics integration and its impact on students' ethical awareness in Saudi universities. Many previous studies have relied on qualitative methods, thus potentially limiting the depth of analysis and the generalizability of their findings.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *Research Design*

This research will employ a quantitative research design to gather and analyze data systematically. A stratified random sampling method will be employed to select students from various Saudi universities offering Translation programs. This will ensure a representative sample. This research holds significant implications for Saudi Arabia's translation industry and the broader field of translation studies. The findings will inform universities about the current state of translation ethics education and enable them to enhance their programs. By producing data-driven recommendations, the study will contribute to the development of a highly competent and ethically aware cadre of translators and interpreters in the Kingdom. Lastly, the estimated timeline for the conduct of the study is 2 to 3 months.

B. *Respondents*

The respondents were the forty-eight (48) students enrolled in Translation programs in three (3) selected Saudi universities. Specifically, seventeen (17) students, or 35.42% are from the College of Languages of King Saud University, sixteen (16), or 33.33% of the respondents were from the College of Language and Translation of Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, and fifteen (15) or 31.25% are from Department of English of King Khaled University, all shown in Table 1. These respondents were taken for the year 2023.

TABLE 1
PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Selected Saudi Universities	Total	
	<i>f</i>	%
College of Languages, King Saud University	17	35.42
College of Language and Translation, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University	16	33.33
Department of English, King Khaled University	15	31.25
Total	48	100

C. Data Gathering Instrument

A survey questionnaire will be administered to students enrolled in Translation programs at selected Saudi universities. Data will be collected through a structured survey questionnaire. The questionnaire will include closed-ended questions to assess the extent of translation ethics integration within the curriculum and students' ethical awareness. Likert scales will be utilized to quantify responses.

Part I was about the profile of the respondents, Part II was on the extent of integration of Translation Ethics within the Translation Curriculum of Saudi Universities, and Part III was about the impact of Translation Ethics education on students' ethical awareness and decision-making capabilities. A total of sixty (60) questions were included in this study, with a particular focus on the indicators with Part II and III having thirty (30) questions each. The questionnaire was proofread by the Dean of the College of Languages from King Saud University who checked the instrument and validated by ten (10) selected students from the participating universities. The reliability of the instrument has been tested after the validation using Cronbach's Alpha resulting in an alpha value of above 0.70, proving the entire questionnaire structure shows internal reliability. Thus, the said questionnaire can be deployed for large-scale sampling. Suggestions and recommendations on each item of the questionnaire have been acquired for the improvement of the instrument.

D. Data Analysis

Data analysis will involve statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics to summarize the extent of translation ethics instruction and correlation analysis to identify relationships between the extent of translation ethics education and students' ethical awareness. Mean (\bar{x}) was used to generate the extent of integration of Translation Ethics within the Translation Curriculum of Saudi universities and the impact of Translation Ethics education on students' ethical awareness and decision-making capabilities. It was interpreted using the following scale:

Scale	Numerical Rating	Descriptive Rating	
		Extent of Integration of Translation Ethics within the Translation Curriculum of Saudi Universities	Impact of Translation Ethics Education on Students' Ethical Awareness and Decision-Making Capabilities
4.50-5.00	5	Highly Integrated (HI)	Highly Affected (HA)
3.50-4.49	4	Moderately Integrated (MI)	Moderately Affected (MA)
2.50-3.49	3	Integrated (I)	Affected (A)
1.50-2.49	2	Rarely Integrated (RI)	Less Affected (LA)
1.00-1.49	1	Not Integrated at all (NAA)	Not Affected at all (NAA)

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Extent of Integration of Translation Ethics in Saudi Translation Curriculum

The extent of the integration of Translation Ethics in Saudi Translation Curriculum was determined by eight (8) indicators namely: (a) incorporation in course objective; (b) frequency of ethical discussions; (c) ethics-embedded assignments; (d) case studies and simulations; (e) pre- and post- assessment; (f) integration in capstone projects; (g) guest lecturers and industry experts; (h) alumni feedback and career success, as presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
EXTENT OF INTEGRATION OF TRANSLATION ETHICS IN SAUDI TRANSLATION CURRICULUM

Indicators	KSU			IMISIU			KKU			TOTAL		
	\bar{x}	Int	R	\bar{x}	Int	R	\bar{x}	Int	R	\bar{x}	Int	R
1. Incorporation in Course Objectives	4.20	MI	1	2.67	I	1	2.62	I	2	3.16	I	1
2. Frequency of Ethical Discussions	3.88	MI	3	2.50	I	7	2.51	I	6.5	2.96	I	5
3. Ethics-Embedded Assignments	3.90	MI	2	2.59	I	2	2.62	I	2	3.04	I	2
4. Case Studies and Simulations	3.76	MI	7	2.56	I	4	2.51	I	6.5	2.94	I	7
5. Pre- and Post- Assessment	3.67	MI	8	2.48	RI	8	2.42	RI	7	2.86	I	8
6. Integration in Capstone Projects	3.79	MI	6	2.53	I	6	2.53	I	4.5	2.95	I	6
7. Guest Lecturers and Industry Experts	3.82	MI	5	2.54	I	5	2.62	I	2	3.00	I	3
8. Alumni Feedback and Career Success	3.86	MI	4	2.58	I	3	2.53	I	4.5	2.99	I	4
Total	3.86	MI		2.56	I		2.55	I		2.99	I	

From the results of the data analysis, it is revealed that there are nuanced strengths and still, some areas for improvement across the eight (8) indicators, offering valuable insights for enhancing the ethical dimensions of the educational programs. The first indicator, Incorporation in Course Objectives, received the highest rating of 3.16, indicating a strong commitment to embedding ethical considerations in the core learning outcomes. This suggests that Saudi universities prioritize the explicit integration of translation ethics within the overarching goals of their curriculum. The top ranking of this indicator signifies a foundational emphasis on ethical competencies in shaping the educational journey of translation students. However, it is also recommended to utilize more task-based or competence-based integration in the learning objectives. Alenezi (2016) further emphasizes the importance of learning objectives or competencies as he reiterated the statements of Hurtado Albir last 2007 who said that competencies act as a primary reference point in curriculum design, dictating the formulation of learning objectives, allocation of discipline-specific content, and guiding the sequencing of teaching units, learning activities, and assessment procedures. In her Competence-Based Training (CBT) model, Albir underscores the utility of competencies for designing tasks that effectively measure student competence. This approach provides instructors with a valuable tool to identify and prioritize the development of specific competencies among students. The task-based approach proposed by Hurtado Albir has been recognized for its innovation in designing and planning learning activities within the broader field of education.

However, the study also highlights certain areas for refinement. Notably, the fifth and eighth indicators, Pre- and Post-Assessment, and Alumni Feedback and Career Success were rated the lowest, ranking 8th and 7th, respectively. The lower ranking of Pre- and Post-Assessment implies a potential opportunity for more strategic implementation of assessment tools to measure students' ethical awareness and development over time. This might involve revisiting the design of assessments to ensure they effectively capture the progression of ethical understanding throughout the course.

The results of this indicator could be supported by the multiple existing research on the field. Liang et al. (2023) delved into the dynamics of peer-mediated Dynamic Assessment (DA) in shaping the translation revision competence (TRC) of master's degree students in Translation and Interpreting (MTI) programs in China. Thirty participants initially undertook three revision tasks, and subsequently, their performance was categorized as either high or low level based on average scores from the first two tasks. The results suggested that peer mediation exhibited the potential to enhance both the mediators' and learners' TRC. However, the study acknowledged the presence of additional factors influencing the outcomes. The process of peer engagement facilitated improvements in participants' TRC, particularly in areas such as justification and interpersonal skills.

Similarly, Grami (2010) also investigated the impact of integrating peer feedback into university-level classes, which traditionally rely on teacher-led instruction. Through a comprehensive three-phased, three-month-long project employing various data collection methods, the study observed that the introduction of peer feedback not only enhanced existing skills but also facilitated the acquisition of new ones among students. The final phase, a comparative study involving pre-and post-tests, revealed significant progress in students' writing abilities. While both groups exhibited improvement, those engaged in peer feedback consistently outperformed their counterparts across all aspects of writing. The study emphasizes the profound effect of peer feedback on students' perception, noting their eagerness for more similar sessions in the future. The findings suggest that with proper training, peer feedback can yield substantial benefits, prompting a recommendation for education policymakers and ESL writing instructors in Saudi Arabia to consider the widespread incorporation of peer sessions in ESL writing classes.

On the other hand, the ranking of Alumni Feedback and Career Success suggests that while the curriculum is integrated, there may be areas for improvement in leveraging alumni experiences to further enhance and validate the efficacy of the translation ethics education provided. Previous research like those of Tanis (2020) who underscores the importance of systematically gathering and analyzing alumni experiences for continuous improvement in education, could also support the emphasis for improvement on this specific area of academic management and development.

Furthermore, the Frequency of Ethical Discussions, and Case Studies and Simulations were ranked 5th and 7th, respectively. The mid-range rankings indicate that while there is some integration, there is room for improvement in fostering more frequent and diverse discussions on ethical topics, as well as incorporating immersive case studies and simulations to enhance the practical application of ethical principles.

In relation to ethical discussions in class, some research shows that underlying factors like student participation, self-esteem, and literacy could affect the effectiveness of this particular teaching methodology. The results of a study by Khasawneh et al. (2023) also proposed that translation students perceived that there is a paradigm shift in the pedagogical approach of translation, pushing students to be more proactive with increased student participation and verbal recitations in class that sometimes intimidates translation students. Traditionally, translation education often focused on linguistic proficiency and technical skills, emphasizing a prescriptive approach to language transfer. However, the contemporary landscape of translation demands a more dynamic and multifaceted skill set. The paradigm shift involves a broader recognition of translation as a complex cognitive and communicative process that goes beyond linguistic equivalence. They also mentioned that the evolution of the translation domain has resulted in a gradual shift from traditional teaching methods to more sophisticated approaches. These include student-centered methodologies, experiential learning, technology-enhanced instruction, differentiated teaching, collaborative learning, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Thus, strategies for improvement in this area might include faculty development programs focused on integrating ethical discussions into various courses, fostering a culture of continuous ethical reflection, and enhancing the overall ethical literacy of translation students.

On the other hand, when it comes to case studies and simulations, another study by Khasawneh (2024) suggests that internships in translation serve as invaluable opportunities for students to connect academic knowledge with practical application in real-world contexts. Actively participating in professional translation environments and conducting other similar activities or simulations in the classrooms, to be significantly followed by an ethical discussion or reflection on the activity, allows students to apply theoretical concepts learned in class, improve their language skills, and develop a deeper understanding of the complexities within the translation industry.

The sixth-ranking indicator, Integration in Capstone Projects, suggests a moderate level of integration. This indicates that while capstone projects incorporate ethical considerations, there may be opportunities to further optimize the alignment between these projects and real-world ethical challenges faced by translators. Multiple research and articles underscore the importance of capstone projects in the field of translation. Taufik and Nurhayati (2023) argue that exposure to real-life ethical challenges is instrumental in developing effective decision-making skills. The study results align with this perspective, highlighting the importance of integrating practical exercises to enhance students' ability to resolve ethical dilemmas. Another research by Muftah (2023) also highlighted the importance of clear integration frameworks to ensure that ethical considerations are seamlessly woven into the fabric of capstone experiences. One framework she studied was the integration of social responsibility (SR) in translator training through situated learning in translation projects. Social responsibility can be effectively integrated into capstone projects, which are often culminating experiences in educational programs and provide an ideal platform to incorporate social responsibility, emphasizing the application of knowledge and skills to address real-world challenges. The qualitative results of her study demonstrated a predominantly positive outlook among students regarding Social Responsibility (SR). Additionally, the findings underscored the effectiveness of collaborative, project-based education in enhancing both translation-specific and generic skills, while concurrently fostering an increased awareness of the importance of Social Responsibility for sustainable learning. In light of these outcomes, the study suggests valuable pedagogical insights for university faculty and curriculum designers, urging them to either develop new or modify existing curricula to align with the principles of situated translator training that prioritize learning sustainability.

On a positive note, the second, third, and seventh indicators—Frequency of Ethical Discussions, Ethics-Embedded Assignments, and Guest Lecturers and Industry Experts—were rated 2nd, 3rd, and 3rd, respectively, suggesting a strong commitment to integrating external perspectives and interactive elements within the curriculum. Lambert (2023) in his book “Translation Ethics” discussed the importance of using assignments to reinforce previously learned concepts on Translation Ethics in classes. He mentioned multiple samples of ethics embedding on assignments, adding comprehensive questions and advanced research tasks on topics for presentations to facilitate active student engagement, contrary to the traditional “read-only” tasks and “close-ended” questions. Educators could enhance the impact by refining the curriculum to incorporate these elements, ensuring a more robust integration of translation ethics within the Saudi translation education landscape. On the other hand, the study by Ha (2022) investigated the participation of industry professionals in Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) within the context of three Vietnamese public universities employing the Profession-Oriented Higher Education (POHE) framework. The findings revealed a limited engagement of industry professionals in designing WIL content and evaluating students' workplace performance. Barriers identified included the university departments' preference for industry professionals in managerial roles, insufficient support from university departments, and time constraints faced by industry professionals. These challenges indicated a lack of conducive conditions for professional involvement in WIL, highlighting the need for substantial efforts on the part of universities to foster deeper engagement. Polmear et al. (2022) significantly agree with Ha, as the results of their study highlighted the significance of tapping into industry knowledge, engaging in conversations with professionals, and utilizing personal experiences and relationships. In totality, the success of these indicators implies that Saudi

universities are actively engaging students with practical ethical scenarios, leveraging industry expertise, and infusing real-world insights into the learning experience.

Specifically, the average rating of 2.99 interpreted as Integrated, reflects a commendable effort by Saudi universities to integrate translation ethics into their curriculum. While some indicators demonstrate strong integration, the nuanced rankings indicate areas for enhancement, particularly in assessments, alumni engagement, and the practical application of ethical principles. The reason for this rating may also stem from the underlying challenges of teaching translation ethics and even the ambiguity of the concept of translation ethics in the Saudi context. Studies like those of Asiri (2022) found that even the translator respondents faced difficulties related to eleven (11) fundamental aspects of translation ethics, as outlined in existing codes of ethics and literature on ethics, with these challenges falling within the mid-frequency range. Thus, continuous refinement and adaptation of curriculum components to the latest code of ethics in translation, strategic use of assessments, and leveraging alumni experiences can contribute to further strengthening the integration of translation ethics within the Saudi Translation Curriculum.

The results of the Test of Significant Agreement on the Rank Orders of the Extent of Integration of Translation Ethics in Saudi Translation Curriculum, as shown in Table 3, suggest that there is no statistically meaningful agreement or consistency in the ranking of the integration of translation ethics among the surveyed universities. This outcome, though holds implications for the reliability and uniformity of the integration process and may indicate divergent perspectives or practices across the participating institutions.

TABLE 3
THE TEST OF SIGNIFICANT AGREEMENT ON THE RANK ORDERS OF THE EXTENT OF INTEGRATION OF TRANSLATION ETHICS IN SAUDI TRANSLATION CURRICULUM

Indicators	Incorporation in Course Objectives	Frequency of Ethical Discussions	Ethics-Embedded Assignments	Case Studies and Simulations	Pre- and Post-Assessment	Integration in Capstone Projects	Guest Lecturers and Industry Experts	Alumni Feedback and Career Success
Summation of squares of the difference	8	22	7.5	57	9.5	4.5	9.5	2
Number of cases	3	5	4	5	3	4	3	3
Number of groups of respondents	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Coefficient of Concordance W	0.44	0.24	0.17	0.63	0.53	0.10	0.53	0.11
Computed X^2 Value	2.64	2.93	1.53	7.60	3.18	0.90	3.18	0.67
Degree of Freedom	2	4	3	4	2	3	2	2
Tabular X^2 Value								
0.05	5.99	9.49	7.81	9.49	5.99	7.81	5.99	5.99
0.025	7.82	11.67	9.84	11.67	7.82	9.84	7.82	7.82
0.01	9.21	13.28	11.34	13.28	9.21	11.34	9.21	9.21
0.005	10.60	14.86	12.84	14.86	10.60	12.84	10.60	10.60
0.001	13.82	18.47	16.27	18.47	13.82	16.27	13.82	13.82
Decision on the Null Hypothesis H_0	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted
Significance of Agreement	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>

One plausible implication is that there may be considerable variability in how different Saudi universities interpret and implement the integration of translation ethics within their curricula. This lack of consensus in rank orders could stem from differences in institutional priorities, teaching methodologies, or even the understanding of what constitutes effective integration of translation ethics. It may point to a need for standardized guidelines or benchmarks to ensure a more consistent approach to incorporating ethical considerations into translation education across Saudi universities. Furthermore, the absence of significant agreement suggests a potential lack of communication or collaboration among institutions regarding best practices in integrating translation ethics. Collaborative initiatives, benchmarking, and other knowledge-sharing platforms could be established or utilized to facilitate a more uniform understanding of the importance and methods of embedding ethical considerations within translation curricula.

In practical terms, universities could consider engaging in cross-institutional dialogues, workshops, or conferences focused on the integration of translation ethics. These collaborative efforts can foster a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities in teaching and assessing ethical competencies in translation programs. Moreover, it may lead to the development of standardized frameworks that guide curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices, ensuring a more consistent and effective integration of translation ethics across institutions. Furthermore, these implications highlight the need for a more unified and standardized approach to the integration of translation ethics in Saudi universities. It calls for a reevaluation of evaluation criteria, collaborative initiatives among institutions, and the development of shared frameworks to enhance the consistency and effectiveness of ethical education in translation curricula.

B. The Impact of Translation Ethics Education on Students' Ethical Awareness and Decision-Making Capabilities

The impact of translation ethics education on students' ethical awareness and decision-making capabilities was also determined by eight (8) indicators namely: (a) incorporation in course objective; (b) frequency of ethical discussions; (c) ethics-embedded assignments; (d) case studies and simulations; (e) pre- and post- assessment; (f) integration in capstone projects; (g) guest lecturers and industry experts; (h) alumni feedback and career success, in alignment with the extent of integration and is presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4
THE IMPACT OF TRANSLATION ETHICS EDUCATION ON STUDENTS' ETHICAL AWARENESS AND DECISION-MAKING CAPABILITIES

Indicators	KSU			IMISIU			KKU			TOTAL		
	\bar{x}	Int	R	\bar{x}	Int	R	\bar{x}	Int	R	\bar{x}	Int	R
1. Incorporation in Course Objectives	4.00	MA	1	2.31	LA	8	2.27	LA	8	2.86	A	8
2. Frequency of Ethical Discussions	3.89	MA	2	2.49	LA	4	2.67	A	1	3.02	A	1
3. Ethics-Embedded Assignments	3.79	MA	5	2.44	LA	6.5	2.38	LA	7	2.87	A	7
4. Case Studies and Simulations	3.76	MA	6	2.51	A	3	2.57	A	2.5	2.95	A	3.5
5. Pre- and Post- Assessment	3.84	MA	3	2.58	A	1	2.42	LA	6	2.95	A	3.5
6. Integration in Capstone Projects	3.82	MA	4	2.48	LA	5	2.57	A	2.5	2.96	A	2
7. Guest Lecturers and Industry Experts	3.71	MA	7	2.44	LA	6.5	2.51	A	4	2.88	A	6
8. Alumni Feedback and Career Success	3.69	MA	8	2.56	A	2	2.49	LA	5	2.91	A	5
Total	3.81	MA		2.48	LA		2.48	LA		2.93	A	

On the other hand, the Impact of Translation Ethics Education on Students' Ethical Awareness and Decision-Making Capabilities as shown in Table 3, offers a detailed insight into how translation ethics education influences students' ethical awareness and decision-making skills, evaluated through eight primary indicators. Examining the outcomes exposes disparities in the efficacy of distinct components in the curriculum, highlighting potential avenues for enhancement.

The indicator "Incorporation in Course Objectives" is rated at 2.86 and ranks 8th. This result suggests a relatively lower impact of explicitly integrating translation ethics into course objectives. Possible reasons for this could include the need for clearer guidelines on how to align course objectives with specific ethical learning outcomes. Strengthening the connection between stated objectives and ethical competencies may enhance the impact of translation ethics education in this context. This could be supported by Lim et al. (2023) who highlighted the importance of a strong theoretical foundation for ethical understanding in their study, wherein the results support the idea that a more robust focus on theoretical aspects may enhance students' awareness of ethical considerations. Similarly, Ray (2023) argues that a strong alignment between ethics education goals and real-world application is crucial for fostering consistent ethical behavior. In this context, the results support the notion that a well-structured curriculum emphasizing practical application enhances students' consistent application of ethical principles.

On the other hand, "Frequency of Ethical Discussions" is rated at 3.02, ranking 1st. This indicator's top ranking suggests that frequent ethical discussions significantly contribute to students' ethical awareness and decision-making capabilities. The top rank highlights the importance of fostering an environment that encourages regular ethical discussions as a means to enhance students' ethical awareness. In their book, Hartman et al. (2023) highlighted the significance of creating a supportive and engaging atmosphere that encourages open and continuous ethical discussions, leading to increased student engagement and awareness. If the frequency of ethical discussions is not complemented by an environment that fosters active participation and critical engagement, students may not fully internalize ethical principles. Reiche (2023) also reiterated the benefit of designing consciousness-raising experiences inside and outside the classroom and encouraging students to explore beyond the classroom content. Though different in context than Hartman et al.'s and Reiche's, Alonzo et al. (2023) agree with the general point and importance of aligning theoretical knowledge with practical applications to ensure effective learning outcomes, supporting the results for the third indicator, which obtained a rating of 3.02 and indicates that there is room for improvement in translating theoretical insights into practical application. Possible reasons could include the need for more explicit connections between theoretical discussions and practical assignments.

"Ethics-Embedded Assignments" is rated at 2.87 and ranks 7th. While the impact is recognized, the lower ranking suggests that the current approach may need refinement. Enhancing the authenticity and relevance of ethics-embedded assignments may further elevate their contribution to students' ethical awareness and decision-making capabilities. Previous research like those of Pope et al. (2023) emphasizes the importance of aligning theoretical knowledge with practical applications to ensure effective learning outcomes in ethics education. A gap between theoretical principles and their application in assignments could limit the overall impact on ethical awareness and decision-making capabilities. Additionally, the nature and complexity of the ethics-embedded assignments may play a role. Tremblay et al. (2023) also argue that the authenticity and complexity of assignments influence their effectiveness in ethics education. Assignments that lack real-world relevance or fail to present intricate ethical dilemmas may not sufficiently

challenge students to enhance their ethical awareness. In relation to this, London et al. (2023) also indicated that feedback in assessments is instrumental in promoting self-awareness and improvement in ethical decision-making skills.

"Case Studies and Simulations" and "Pre- and Post-Assessment" both have a rating of 2.95, ranking 3.5th. The tie-in rankings indicate a notable impact but leave room for improvement. Incorporating realistic case studies and simulations that mirror complex ethical dilemmas faced by translators, could enhance the practical applicability of these tools. The effectiveness of case studies in enhancing ethical awareness aligns with findings from a study by Kaya and Boz (2023) which underscores the significance of case-based learning in developing students' ethical reasoning skills, though in the context of the nursing industry. Implications of this result highlight the need for continued emphasis on case studies in translation ethics education, potentially expanding the variety of cases to further challenge students and deepen their ethical insights. Additionally, refining pre- and post-assessment measures to capture a more nuanced understanding of ethical reasoning may contribute to a more robust evaluation of the curriculum's impact. Cristea et al. (2023) also suggests that self-reported measures may not always align perfectly with actual behavioral changes and that a more comprehensive understanding of ethical awareness requires multi-dimensional assessments. Meanwhile, "Integration in Capstone Projects" is rated at 2.96, ranking 2nd. The high ranking suggests that capstone projects effectively contribute to students' ethical awareness and decision-making capabilities. The positive result highlights the potential of capstone projects as a strategic component in the translation ethics curriculum. Also, as highlighted by the results of the studies conducted by Carless (2023) and McGinness et al. (2020), feedback mechanisms in capstone projects play a crucial role in enhancing ethical awareness, and refining feedback strategies may further strengthen students' commitment to iterative improvement.

"Guest Lecturers and Industry Experts" is rated at 2.88, ranking 6th. While guest lectures contribute to students' ethical awareness, the moderate ranking suggests that there may be opportunities for improvement. Enhancing the diversity of guest speakers may enhance the impact of this component. Previous research, such as that by O'Mathúna et al. (2020) emphasizes the importance of integrating diverse ethical perspectives to foster a comprehensive understanding of translation ethics for better real-time but significantly ethical translation. This also aligns with findings by Toh et al. (2020), emphasizing the role of mentorship and networking in shaping ethical behavior. The top-ranking suggests that fostering ongoing engagement and support through networking and mentoring programs is a highly effective strategy that should be sustained and potentially expanded. Lastly, "Alumni Feedback and Career Success" is rated at 2.91, ranking 5th. The moderate ranking implies that while alumni feedback is recognized, there is room for improvement in leveraging it for curriculum enhancement. Establishing structured mechanisms to capture and incorporate alumni experiences may further enhance the impact of this indicator. Studies like those of Enríquez Raído et al. (2020) also highlighted the dynamic nature of ethical challenges in translation and advocates for a curriculum that adapts to the changing landscape, potentially explaining the moderate rating.

The overall impact of translation ethics education on students' ethical awareness and decision-making capabilities is rated at 2.93, interpreted as 'Affected' with an average rating. This suggests that while the curriculum has a positive impact, it falls within the moderate range. Potential reasons for this could include the need for a more holistic and interconnected approach to curriculum design. Li and Li (2023) highlight the importance of integrating various elements, such as specialized, diversified, individualized, and innovation-centered education pedagogies and strategies, seamlessly to create a cohesive ethical education experience. Strengthening the interconnectedness of the different indicators may lead to a more profound and sustained impact on students' ethical awareness and decision-making capabilities.

With reference to the data in Table 5, the lack of significant agreement on the rank orders of the impact of translation ethics education on students' ethical awareness and decision-making capabilities among Saudi translation university students can be attributed to various factors inherent in the educational context and diverse perceptions within the student body.

TABLE 5
THE TEST OF SIGNIFICANT AGREEMENT ON THE RANK ORDERS OF THE IMPACT OF TRANSLATION ETHICS EDUCATION ON STUDENTS' ETHICAL AWARENESS AND DECISION-MAKING CAPABILITIES

Indicators	Incorporation in Course Objectives	Frequency of Ethical Discussions	Ethics-Embedded Assignments	Case Studies and Simulations	Pre- and Post-Assessment	Integration in Capstone Projects	Guest Lecturers and Industry Experts	Alumni Feedback and Career Success
Summation of squares of the difference	2	8.7	1	54	0.5	6.5	14	4.5
Number of cases	3	5	4	5	3	4	3	3
Number of groups of respondents	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Coefficient of Concordance W	0.11	0.10	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.14	0.78	0.25
Computed X ² Value	0.67	1.20	0.20	7.20	1.80	1.30	4.68	1.50
Degree of Freedom	2	4	3	4	2	3	2	2
Tabular X ² Value								
0.05	5.99	9.49	7.81	9.49	5.99	7.81	5.99	5.99
0.025	7.82	11.67	9.84	11.67	7.82	9.84	7.82	7.82
0.01	9.21	13.28	11.34	13.28	9.21	11.34	9.21	9.21
0.005	10.60	14.86	12.84	14.86	10.60	12.84	10.60	10.60
0.001	13.82	18.47	16.27	18.47	13.82	16.27	13.82	13.82
Decision on the Null Hypothesis H ₀	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted
Significance of Agreement	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>

One primary factor contributing to the lack of consensus is the individualized nature of ethical considerations. Ethical awareness and decision-making are subjective processes influenced by personal values, cultural backgrounds, and individual experiences. Different students may prioritize specific aspects of ethical education differently based on their perspectives, making it challenging to achieve a unified consensus on the ranking of these impacts. Cultural nuances and linguistic diversity further complicate the matter. Saudi Arabia has a rich cultural and linguistic heritage, and students may interpret ethical principles in translation differently based on their regional or linguistic backgrounds. The variety of interpretations may lead to diverse opinions on the effectiveness of translation ethics education in addressing the specific ethical challenges relevant to each student.

The curriculum variations across different universities and translation programs could also contribute to the lack of agreement. Institutions may adopt different approaches, teaching methodologies, and emphasis on certain aspects of ethics education. For example, one university might prioritize practical application through case studies, while another might focus more on theoretical discussions. These differences can result in varying perceptions of the impact of ethics education among students. Implications of this lack of significant agreement include the need for tailored and adaptable ethics education programs that consider the diverse needs and perspectives of students. Recognizing the cultural and linguistic diversity within the student body, educators should strive to develop curricula that resonate with the unique ethical challenges faced by individuals from different backgrounds. This might involve incorporating case studies and examples that are culturally relevant to Saudi Arabia and addressing the linguistic complexities specific to the region.

Creating an open dialogue among students, faculty, and administrators is crucial for understanding the varying perceptions and expectations regarding ethics education. Regular feedback sessions, focus groups, and surveys can provide valuable insights into the aspects of the curriculum that resonate most with students and those that require refinement. This collaborative approach can help identify specific areas for improvement and guide the development of a more effective and universally appreciated ethics education program. Additionally, fostering a sense of community and shared values within the student body can contribute to a more cohesive understanding of ethics education. Encouraging peer-to-peer discussions, collaborative projects, and opportunities for shared experiences can enhance the collective understanding of ethical principles and promote a more unified perspective on the impact of ethics education.

Continuous assessment and reassessment of the curriculum are imperative. Regularly reviewing and updating the content based on emerging ethical challenges in the translation field and incorporating feedback from students can ensure that the education provided remains relevant, impactful, and aligned with the evolving needs of the students. Addressing the lack of significant agreement on the rank orders of the impact of translation ethics education among Saudi translation university students requires a multifaceted approach. This involves recognizing the individualized nature of ethical considerations, tailoring curricula to the cultural and linguistic context, fostering open communication, and continuously refining educational strategies based on student feedback. By embracing these strategies, educators can work towards creating a more universally impactful and appreciated translation ethics education experience for students in Saudi Arabia.

C. Correlation Between the Extent of Translation Ethics Instruction and Students' Ethical Competence

Understanding how the intensity and depth of ethics instruction align with the development of ethical competencies among students holds significant implications for the quality of translation practices and professional conduct. By examining the effectiveness of ethics education through the correlation of these two variables, the study aimed to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on enhancing the ethical preparedness of future translators within educational settings.

The results generated a Spearman rho coefficient of -0.77 and the corresponding t -value of -4.59 at infinitum degrees of freedom in the test for the correlation between the extent of translation ethics instruction and students' ethical competence which reveals a significant negative correlation. This implies that as the extent of translation ethics instruction increases, students' ethical competence tends to decrease. In the context of Saudi Universities and their translation education, this unexpected result could be attributed to various factors. Firstly, the lower rating for the incorporation of translation ethics in course objectives (3.16) might indicate a potential misalignment between stated objectives and the actual integration of ethical content. This discrepancy may contribute to students perceiving a lack of congruence between what is intended to be taught and their actual ethical competence. Additionally, the lower impact rating (2.93) for the overall impact of translation ethics education on students' ethical awareness and decision-making capabilities, despite the moderately integrated curriculum, suggests a need for refinement. This could indicate that the current instructional methods might not be sufficiently engaging or fail to resonate with students, impacting their ethical competence negatively.

To address these implications, Saudi Universities can consider adopting best practices. They could enhance the integration of translation ethics by revising course objectives to ensure explicit alignment with real-world ethical challenges, promoting interactive and engaging instructional methods, and fostering regular assessments that authentically measure ethical competencies. Emphasizing the practical application of ethical principles in assignments, case studies, and simulations could further bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and its real-world relevance.

Additionally, seeking feedback from alumni regarding the practical implications of translation ethics in their careers can inform curriculum improvements. By implementing these best practices, Saudi Universities can work towards a more congruent and impactful translation ethics education, aligning course content with intended outcomes and positively influencing students' ethical competence.

V. CONCLUSION

To enhance the integration of translation ethics within Saudi Universities' Translation Curriculum, a multifaceted policy framework and action plan are recommended.

First and foremost, there is a need for a thorough review and alignment of course objectives related to translation ethics across programs, ensuring they resonate with real-world ethical challenges faced by translators. Establishing a unified and transparent integration strategy is crucial; guidelines should be developed to help faculty seamlessly embed ethical considerations in different course components. The promotion of interactive instructional methods, including discussions, case studies, and simulations, should be encouraged through faculty development initiatives. A systematic approach to regular and authentic assessments of students' ethical competencies is essential, with assessments designed to mirror real-world ethical dilemmas. Also, emphasizing the practical application of ethical principles in assignments and projects will bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and its practical relevance. Engaging with alumni for feedback on the practical implications of translation ethics in their careers is invaluable, informing ongoing curriculum improvements. Faculty development programs should be implemented to keep instructors abreast of best practices, emerging ethical challenges, and effective instructional methodologies. Collaboration between universities and industry professionals should be fostered, providing students with diverse perspectives and practical insights. A continuous curriculum review process, facilitated by a dedicated committee, will ensure that the translation ethics curriculum remains dynamic and aligned with industry standards. Lastly, clear communication of learning outcomes related to translation ethics is essential for transparency and goal alignment.

Through the implementation of comprehensive policies and strategic action plans, Saudi universities can significantly enhance the efficacy of translation ethics education. This proactive approach aims to cultivate a heightened sense of ethical awareness and foster advanced decision-making capabilities among students within the continually evolving professional landscape of translation. Such measures are designed to address the multifaceted challenges presented by the dynamic and interconnected global realm of translation. By tailoring educational initiatives to align with the demands of the contemporary translation profession, universities can play a pivotal role in equipping students with the ethical competencies needed to navigate the complexities of the ever-changing translation landscape. This approach not only responds to current challenges but also positions students to thrive in the diverse and dynamic global context of translation.

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Mubarak Alkhatnai is a full professor at the College of Language Sciences at King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He holds a PhD in applied linguistics from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA and another PhD in information and communication technologies from the University of Edinburgh. His research interests include CALL, translation teaching and quality, HE quality and strategic leadership.

“Computer” as the Source Domain for “Brain”: A Case Study of Online Vietnamese Articles

Nguyen Thi Bich Hanh

Faculty of Culture - Linguistics, Graduate Academy of Social Sciences, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi, Vietnam

Le Vien Lan Huong

Department of Foreign Languages, Vietnam Military Medical University, Hanoi, Vietnam

Ngo Thi Tuyet

Department of Foreign Languages, Vietnam Military Medical University, Hanoi, Vietnam

Phi Thi Thu Trang

English Department, Thang Long University, Hanoi, Vietnam

Vo Thi My Hanh

Faculty of Basic Science, Vietnam Youth Academy, Hanoi, Vietnam

Abstract—Based on the theory of cognitive linguistics, this article investigates computer-related conceptual metaphors in discourses in online Vietnamese newspapers to clarify how Vietnamese people conceptualize the target domain of "brain" via the source domain of "computer". This study aimed to answer two questions: "In online Vietnamese articles, which thinking mechanism is used to conceptualize the human brain as a computer?" and "What similarities from the target domain are activated and mapped onto the source domain?" With the correlations in experience and knowledge projected from the source domain to the target domain, the logical relationship in organizing the mapping scheme of conceptual metaphors, the article points out a type of thinking in the conceptual structure dominated by the 4.0 industrial civilization which is both universal and typical of Vietnamese people's mind.

Index Terms—conceptual metaphors, human brain, computer, mapping

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), "most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature" as metaphors "structure how we perceive, how we think and what we do" (p. 4). Conceptual metaphors refer to the understanding of one idea in terms of another, which is a systematic mapping from a source domain to a target domain to form a cognitive model reflecting what happens in the mind. The cognitive view of conceptual metaphors is realized by the model "A (Target Domain) is B (Source Domain)" in which a conceptual domain is defined as "any coherent organization of experience" (Kövecses, 2002, p. 4). The source domain provides relatively rich knowledge for the target domain, which takes place through schematic mappings (Kövecses, 2002, p. 12). These mappings play a vital role in explaining why specific attributes of the source domain are used to understand the target domain.

Through the source domain of "machine", the conceptualization of humans, including their minds and bodies, has attracted the attention of scientists, especially cognitive linguists, some of whom strongly support this view (Johnson, 1987, pp. 130-131; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, pp. 247-255; Kövecses, 2005, pp. 111-112; Kövecses, 2010, pp. 155- 161).

The conceptualization of humans in general and the human mind in particular as a machine dates back to the 18th century; however, 20th-century technology has brought a new concept as a replacement for the machine – the computer. For a long time, the metaphor of the brain as a computer has been used by neuroscientists to explain the brain's powerful computational powers and mind behavior. Still, there hasn't been much research on how this metaphor is realized linguistically. Therefore, the conceptual metaphor model "THE BRAIN IS A COMPUTER" in online Vietnamese newspaper articles will be discussed in detail.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The metaphor of the human body as a machine can be traced back to the late 15th and early 16th centuries when a large number of concepts and types of discourse appeared and allowed for the analysis of the body as a steam engine or an internal combustion engine (Gleyse, 2013). More specifically, the BRAIN AS COMPUTER metaphor has facilitated the comprehension of a number of multifaceted phenomena about the human body and mind based on operating principles

and a normative anthropological stance in the universe (Patrzyk et al., 2017). With Industry 4.0 and the rise of smart electronic devices, the focus on digital technology has caused more metaphors to appear in the discourse with the source domains of “electronic devices” or “computer” and the target domains mainly related to “human”. In fact, the metaphor “A HUMAN IS AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE” was studied in the context of online Vietnamese electronic newspapers, demonstrating that the components and operating mechanisms of electronic devices are mapped onto the “human” domain, causing human body parts to be thought of as electronic devices such as *chargers, batteries, screens, speakers, switches, screws, transmitters, microprocessors, control buttons*; moreover, the operating mechanism of the human body is visualized the same as electronic devices such as *power down, battery drain, short circuit, IC dampness, switch on, switch off, programming, set up, log out* (Nguyen et al., 2023).

According to neuroscience researchers, brain models are viewed as computers and the mind as its software (Patrzyk et al., 2017). In an article titled “On the Computational Model of the Mind,” Radovan (1995), following Searle (1992) and Dennett (1993), also examined the role of figurative language in cognitive science, focusing on the “COMPUTATIONAL METAPHOR OF MIND” metaphor, comparing the brain to a digital computer, or more precisely, proposing an analogy that the mind to the brain is like the software to the computer. According to Pinker (1997), the brain's information processing activities are similar to the activities of a computer in which input information, or raw data, is required to be processed before being used in computational steps and output information. The various functions of the brain are directly compared to computer components where, for instance, the hard drive is the memory, peripheral parts are sensory organs, and so on.

Thus, like other scientific metaphors, the BRAIN IS A COMPUTER metaphor is a valuable tool for explaining complex scientific problems and generating useful ideas (Taylor & Dewsbury, 2018). In terms of communication, computer metaphors are clearly shown in our daily conversations, through linguistic expressions such as *brain lagging, ping me later, my mind can't process it*, and so on (Baria & Cross, 2021).

There has been much discussion on the BRAIN IS COMPUTER metaphor (Searle, 1984, 1992; Johnson-Laird, 1988; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Searle (1984) states that “Because we do not understand the brain very well we are constantly tempted to use the latest technology as a model for trying to understand it” (p. 44). Therefore, the BRAIN IS A COMPUTER metaphor is becoming controversial as the more science develops, the more people see its limitations in explaining the cognitive activities of the human brain, especially in scientific discourse. From a linguistic perspective, the BRAIN IS A COMPUTER metaphor is still an effective cognitive tool for providing knowledge about the human brain, especially for non-experts.

Our research found that, in online Vietnamese newspapers, there are a substantial number of metaphorical expressions in articles with content about or content related to the brain derived from the BRAIN IS A COMPUTER metaphor. The underlying principle is that the human brain is conceptualized as a computer – a smart electronic device – whose various attributes are projected. Some of the examples include *software, operating system, server, CPU, PC, hard drive, security holes, programming, installation, F5, charging battery, switch on, switch off, battery saving mode, shortcut key, hang up, lag, hacked, hijacked, disconnected, stored information, copy, paste, overwritten data*, and more. Therefore, this article will examine metaphorical discourses in Vietnamese electronic newspapers that use the attributes of a computer to clarify the operating mechanism of the brain, thereby pointing out the distinctive features of the source and target domains in this conceptual model.

III. METHODOLOGY

In order to research the BRAIN IS A COMPUTER metaphor in online Vietnamese newspapers, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods – mainly discourse analysis – was employed. Moreover, statistics and classification techniques were combined in the analysis to achieve the predetermined research goals.

The data was collected from 204 articles on drugs and health taken from the health, entertainment and education sections of 28 official hospital websites, all of which are managed and censored by the Ministry of Information and Communications of Vietnam. These articles were selected from a wide variety of sources to diversify the data using “computer” as a source domain and metaphorize both health issues and human biological functions.

With the collected data, the researchers proceeded to identify conceptual metaphors on the basis of the metaphor identification procedure (MIP) proposed by Pragglejaz Group (2007) as this process is highly applicable and recognized by many other researchers. The MIP process is carried out in four steps as follows:

1. Read the entire discourse in the articles to establish a general understanding;
2. Highlight the words or phrases that have semantic conflict in context;
3. Check if the dictionary definitions of the highlighted words or phrases are understandable or appropriate in relation to other words and phrases in context or not;
4. If not, determine them as verbal metaphors.

The words or phrases that drive this semantic conflict become “metaphorically-expressed words” (which are also known as “tokens” or “vehicles”); the discourses that contain metaphorical references are called “metaphor expressions”.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Exactly 326 references to the metaphor THE BRAIN IS A COMPUTER were gathered from 204 articles. According to the principle of partial and unidirectional mapping, the attributes from the source domain “computer” are activated and mapped onto the target domain “brain” which causes the target domain to take on some attributes of the source domain.

Based on the research data from 204 articles found in online Vietnamese newspapers, the conceptual model THE BRAIN IS A COMPUTER is visualized through the mapping scheme shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1
THE MAPPING SCHEME OF “THE BRAIN IS A COMPUTER”

Source Domain: COMPUTER		Target Domain: BRAIN
Structure of a computer	→	Structure of the brain
Features of a computer	→	Features of the brain
Operating mechanism of a computer	→	Operating mechanism of the brain
Hazards occurring to a computer during operation	→	Hazards occurring to the brain during biological process

In the research corpus taken from online Vietnamese newspapers, many expressions that contain the metaphor THE BRAIN IS A COMPUTER appear with specific metaphorically-expressed words that correlate to each attribute of the source domain. The typical expressions belonging to technical and electronic terminology of the source domain are selected and mapped onto the target domain “brain”. In accordance with the hierarchy principle of metaphor, four subordinate conceptual models were derived from the basic metaphor THE BRAIN IS A COMPUTER.

A. Conceptual Metaphor “THE STRUCTURE OF THE BRAIN IS THE STRUCTURE OF A COMPUTER”

The survey found that the discourses in online Vietnamese newspapers contain a number of metaphorical expressions that take the attribute of the structure of a computer to metaphorize the structure of the human brain. The brain’s ability to analyze and memorize is so superior that even the latest supercomputers cannot compete with its efficiency. In these metaphorical expressions, metaphorical tokens related to the structure of a computer are found: *memory, operating system, hard drive, CPU, PC, capacity, sensor, hardware, software, configuration, server, security vulnerability, Delete button, pause button, camera button, shortcut keys, and on/off power button* to name a few. These metaphorical expressions appear in online newspaper discourses with relatively high frequency (52 references) shown in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2
CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR “THE STRUCTURE OF THE BRAIN IS THE STRUCTURE OF A COMPUTER”

Source Domain’s Attributes	Metaphorically-Expressed Words	Frequency	Source Domain’s Attributes	Metaphorically-Expressed Words	Frequency
Structure of a Computer	Bộ nhớ [Memory]	11	Structure of a Computer	Công tắc bật/tắt nguồn [On/off power button]	5
	Hệ điều hành [Operating system]	6		Nút tạm dừng [Pause button]	5
	Dung lượng lưu trữ/ kho lưu trữ [Storage capacity]	5		Phần mềm [Software]	3
	Phân cứng [Hard drive]	2		Nút chụp ảnh [Camera button]	2
	Cục CPU [CPU]	2		Cấu hình [Configuration]	2
	ô cứng [Hardware]	1		Cảm biến [Sensor]	2
	Máy chủ [Server]	1		Phím tắt [Shortcut keys]	3
	Phiên bản số [Digital version]	1		Nút Delete [Delete button]	1
Total					52

It is obvious from the table above that there are similarities in the mapping structure between the computer and the brain in the conceptual thinking of Vietnamese people. The prominent and preferred expressions in the attribute “structure of a computer” are prioritized to be activated and mapped onto the structural attribute of the brain such as *memory* (11), *operating system* (5), *on/off power button* (5), *pause button* (5), *storage capacity* (4), *hardware* (3), *software* (2), and so forth. These expressions are used to metaphorize the structure of a brain which serves as an operating system with hardware, software and function keys that control all body activities. With such mapping, the human brain is structured like a computer with “hard drive”, an information storage device with a particular capacity. For example:

1. Nếu bạn không thể nhớ một cái gì đó, điều này hoàn toàn hợp lý bởi "ô cứng" của bạn đang chứa quá nhiều những kỷ niệm vô giá trị, và chúng sẽ kết nối sau đó làm ảnh hưởng tới những điều bạn cần ghi nhớ (genk.vn, 08/02/2015).

[If you cannot remember something, this is completely reasonable because your “hard drive” is filled with too many worthless memories, and they will connect and affect things you need to remember] (genk.vn, February 8, 2015).

2. “Theo ước tính thì **bộ nhớ não người** có **dung lượng** vào khoảng **vài petabyte**,” (1 petabyte bằng 1 triệu gigabyte) giáo sư Reber cho biết (ngaynay.vn, 31/01/2016).
[“The **human brain memory** is estimated to have a **capacity** of **several petabytes**, (1 petabyte is equal to 1 million gigabytes)” said Professor Reber] (ngaynay.vn, January 31, 2016).

The human brain also functions like a CPU (*Central Processing Unit*) of a computer. In a computer, the CPU acts as the central processor which includes the electronic circuits in the computer, executing computer programming commands by performing arithmetic, logic and comparison calculations as well as basic data import and export operations specified by the code. Based on mapping correlations in the computer-related metaphorical expressions, the center of the human brain is conceptualized as the CPU of a computer, controlling all operations of thinking as a given programming program. Neurons in the brain act as a “server” controlling the operation of this CPU. When health factors or the body’s biological state are unstable, the CPU’s operation will be directly affected. For example:

3. *Bộ não của chúng ta có cấu hình rất cổ hủ và cũ kỹ [...]* (vietcetera.com, 28/10/2020).
[Our brains have a very old and outdated **configuration**, [...]] (vietcetera.com, October 28, 2020).
4. *Não bộ con người cũng như cục CPU của máy tính, một đằng thiếu điện thì chạy cà giết, đằng khác thiếu máu thì sống không yên! Đặc biệt, CPU của người già lại càng rắc rối* (tuoitre.vn, 21/08/2007).
[Human brains are similar to **CPUs in computers**; the latter functions slowly without power while the former, in the absence of blood, puts life in trouble! In particular, the **CPUs of the elderly** are even more problematic] (tuoitre.vn, August 21, 2007).
5. *Một số nghiên cứu trước đây từng phát hiện, “máy chủ” là một bó tế bào thần kinh trong một vùng não có tên gọi nhân trên trao đổi chéo (SCN)* (vietnamnet.vn, 06/02/2024).
[Some previous studies have found that the “**server**” is a **bundle of nerve cells in a brain area** called the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN)] (vietnamnet.vn, February 6, 2024).

Belonging to the structure of the computer, the *operating system* is software used to control and manage all components (including hardware and software) of the computer. When the brain is considered as a computer, metaphorical expressions have viewed “mind” as the “operating system” of the brain. In other words, “mind” is the “software” installed inside the brain to control the human machine. While the computer software might encounter problems such as the incompatibility of programs, leading to errors, or creating security vulnerabilities, the human brain functions as an “operating system” which also experiences the problems of program errors or security vulnerabilities and thus, error correction solutions are needed. For example:

6. *Hệ điều hành của con người bao gồm mối quan hệ của chúng ta với những người khác hoặc chính chúng ta, thế giới xung quanh cũng như kết nối tâm linh [...]. Hệ điều hành cập nhật sự không tương thích của các chương trình, lỗi được phát hiện và lỗi hỏng bảo mật* (mlv.pace.edu.vn, 24/10/2029).
[The human **operating system** includes our relationships with others or ourselves, the outside world as well as spiritual connection [...]. The **operating system** updates **program incompatibilities**, detected **errors** and **security vulnerabilities**] (mlv.pace.edu.vn, October 24, 2029).
7. *Có thể tưởng tượng cơ thể chúng ta như một cỗ máy, một phần cứng, còn tâm trí giống như hệ điều hành, chứa các phần mềm được cài đặt để điều khiển phần cứng ấy* (genk.vn, 05/11/2021).
[We can imagine our body as a machine, like hardware, while our **mind** is similar to an **operating system**, containing **software installed to control that hardware**] (genk.vn, November 5, 2021).
8. *Điện hình là meme bộ não tìm ra cách sửa lỗi chương trình dưới đây”* (vietcetera.com, 31/7/2021).
[The typical examples include the memes of the brain that manage to **fix the program errors** below] (vietcetera.com, July 31, 2021).

A computer with a strong configuration will have better performance. When it becomes necessary to update the configuration, people can use a variety of techniques to upgrade the operating system which improves the device’s performance and makes it more compatible with contemporary software. When this attribute is projected onto the target domain “brain”, the upgradability of the computer is transferred to the target domain, creating metaphorical discourses explaining the impact and enhancement of the brain’s flexible operation like upgrading a computer’s PC. The following examples illustrate this mapping with particular metaphorical expressions:

9. *Kỹ thuật nâng cấp não bộ như “lên đời” PC* (khoahoc.tv, 23/02/2021).
[The technique of **upgrading** the brain like **upgrading a PC**] (khoahoc.tv, February 23, 2021).
10. *Những giải pháp phát triển hệ điều hành não bộ của trẻ* (laodongtre.laodong.vn, 28/04/2023).
[Solutions to develop children’s **brain operating system**] (laodongtre.laodong.vn, April 28, 2023).

In addition to its CPU and operating system, the structure of a computer includes function keys that facilitate the effective execution of commands such as *shortcut keys*, a *pause button*, a *camera button*, and a *delete button*. Similarly, when the human brain is examined within the conceptual framework THE BRAIN IS A COMPUTER, it includes the same function keys as a computer which are expressed by many metaphorical references found in online Vietnamese newspapers. For instance, the “pause” button in the brain is activated when the light is shone on sensitive nerve cells in the brain to turn them on/off as an induction rule, rendering them immobile. The brain also has a mechanism to automatically “clean up” outdated and useless materials to make room for new flows of information and knowledge. The

microglial cells are responsible for this cleaning action. They specialize in cutting away excess connections between neurons to liberate and purify the brain. This is known to scientists as the brain’s “Delete button”. For example:

11. *Vỏ não thị giác sở hữu "nút" chụp ảnh, cho phép ghi lại hình ảnh của môi trường xung quanh với tốc độ rất nhanh* (cand.com.vn, 09/08/2021).
[The visual cortex possesses a **camera “button”**, allowing images of the surroundings to be captured at a very fast speed] (cand.com.vn, August 9, 2021).
12. *Nhà khoa học đã tìm thấy một nút "Tạm dừng" trong không bộ nhớ, khi nhấn vào, toàn bộ cơ sở sẽ không hoạt động* (congnghe.vn, 27/08/2023).
[Scientists discovered a **“pause button”** in the human memory that, when pressed, causes the entire facility to become inactive] (congnghe.vn, August 27, 2023).
13. *5 “phím tắt” kích hoạt bộ não tư duy ngay lập tức* (cafebiz.vn, 21/09/2022).
[5 **“shortcut keys”** that instantly activate the brain] (cafebiz.vn, September 21, 2022).
14. *Não bộ của bạn có nút Delete, đây là cách để sử dụng nó hiệu quả* (genk.vn, 06/02/2016).
[Your brain has a **Delete button** that facilitates effective brain function] (genk.vn, February 6, 2016).

B. Conceptual Metaphor THE FEATURES OF THE BRAIN ARE THE FEATURES OF A COMPUTER

A computer is an information and data control device with the primary tasks of storing, retrieving and processing data. Considering “computer” as a source domain, metaphorical discourses in online Vietnamese newspapers have activated attributes related to the computer’s features to indicate similar attributes of the brain’s function. Metaphorical tokens that appear with high frequency include *information processing, data loading, storing, accessing, programming, setting, copying and pasting, backing up, activating, automatically translating, data overwriting* and so on totaling 133 metaphorically-expressed words. Below, Table 3 displays the frequency of these metaphors.

TABLE 3
CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR “THE FEATURES OF THE BRAIN ARE THE FEATURES OF A COMPUTER”

Source Domain’s Attributes	Metaphorically-Expressed Words	Frequency	Source Domain’s Attributes	Metaphorically-Expressed Words	Frequency
Features of a Computer	Lập trình /tái lập trình [Programming/ reprogramming]	39	Features of a Computer	Truy xuất/truy hồi/tái tạo [Accessing/ retrieving/ recreating]	12
	Sao chép [Copying]	18		Nạp dữ liệu/thông tin [Data/ information loading]	9
	Sao lưu/ lưu trữ thông tin [Data backing up/ storing]	14		Xử lý thông tin [Information processing]	9
	Kích hoạt [Activating]	7		Cài đặt [Setting]	6
	Tải [Loading]	6		Copy và Paste [Copying and Pasting]	4
	Phép tính toán/ thuật toán [Calculation/ algorithm]	2		Thiết kế [Designing]	1
	Hiệu suất [Performance]	1		Kết nối mạng lưới dữ liệu [Data network connecting]	1
	Nảy số [Generate]	1		Tự động dịch [Automatically translating]	1
	Lọc thông tin đầu vào/đầu ra [Input/ output information filtering]	1		Ghi đè dữ liệu [Data overwriting]	1
Total		133			

A relatively large number of computer-related metaphorical expressions are found in online Vietnamese newspapers. These discourses use the background knowledge structured from the mapping of operational features of a computer onto those of the brain as the central microprocessor of the human machine. Obviously, Vietnamese people demonstrate their preferences for activating metaphors related to some outstanding features of computers such as *programming* (39), *copying* (18), *accessing/ retrieving* (12), *information backing up and storing* (14), and *setting* (6) to metaphorize the features of designing the memory, copying, storing and retrieving information in the brain’s memory. The mapping shows that there is an almost 1-1 similarity between the source domain and the target domain in terms of their operating features. The human brain is compared to a computer with the ability of loading data and processing them to create information, knowledge, behaviour, emotion, and so on in humans.

The reflex mechanism installed and preprogrammed into computers also shows how the brain responds when it has to analyze and solve situations. When there is a data network connection, it will automatically “generate” to choose the most suitable solution. For example:

15. *Quá trình mà thi ca nhạc họa dành cho cái tên bay bổng là “lọc tìm ký ức”, với ngành não học được gọi đơn giản là quá trình truy xuất và tái tạo thông tin từ bộ nhớ* (cuoituan.tuotire.vn, 20/10/2011).

[In brain science, the process that poetry, music and art give the highfalutin name “searching for memories” is actually just the process of **retrieving and reproducing information from memory**] (cuoituan.tuoitre.vn, October 20, 2011).

16. *Lúc này bộ não của bạn đang chuyển sang chế độ tư duy phân tán, giúp bạn **kết nối mạng lưới dữ liệu** và sáng tạo cùng lúc để “**nảy số**” cách giải quyết mới cho các vấn đề cũ* (vietcetera.com, 29-6-2021).

[At this time, your brain is switching to the diffuse thinking mode which enables you to simultaneously **combine data network** and creativity to “**generate**” new solutions to old problems] (vietcetera.com, June 29, 2021).

In terms of computer features, some distinctive properties of the computer such as *programming*, *setting* and *activating* utility software are also mapped onto the target domain. According to the analysis of neuroscientists, the brain is “programmed” to learn a language, enhance thinking ability, and control emotion or behavior just like programming a computer. Thoughts, experiences as well as sad and happy emotions can be programmed into the brain in the fashion people install software in a computer CPU and can be turned on or activated when necessary. For example:

17. *Bộ não được “**lập trình**” để học ngoại ngữ một cách tự nhiên* (thanhvien.vn, 17/12/2015).

[**The brain is programmed** to learn foreign languages naturally] (thanhvien.vn, December 17, 2015).

18. *Thay vào đó, ông cho rằng chúng ta nên rèn luyện não bộ của mình để tiếp nhận những trải nghiệm tích cực bằng cách dành thời gian tập trung vào những trải nghiệm này và “**cài đặt**” chúng vào não bộ* (tamlyhoctoipham.com, 15/11/2017).

[Instead, he suggested that we should train our brains to accept positive experiences by spending time focusing on these experiences and “**installing**” them into our brains] (tamlyhoctoipham.com, November 15, 2017).

19. *Mệnh lệnh khiến bộ não **bật** khả năng phòng vệ và tạo ra những phản ứng chống đối* (vietcetera.com, 28/2/2020).

[Commands cause the brain to **turn on** its defense mechanism and create adverse reactions.] (vietcetera.com, February 28, 2020).

Furthermore, computer software can theoretically be copied and pasted into another memory in order to exchange and store information. These attributes motivate metaphorical discourses expressing that data in the brain can be copied and pasted into another browser like working with an electronic database. For example:

20. *Công ty Samsung đang phát triển phương pháp “**sao chép và dán**” bộ não vào chip máy tính với sự hỗ trợ của các nhà nghiên cứu ở Đại học Harvard* (vnexpress.net, 28/9/2021).

[Samsung Company is developing a method of that involves “**copying and pasting**” the brain into a computer chip with the support of researchers from Harvard University] (vnexpress.net, September 28, 2021).

21. *Não người **sao lưu** hồi ức và duy trì sự sống khi đã chết* (spiderum.com, 20/2/2020).

[The human brain **backs up** memories and maintains life after death] (spiderum.com, February 20, 2020).

Since the brain functions like a computer, it becomes the “digital version” of the mind, which is considered the “software” of the human brain. In some metaphorical expressions, the brain itself also functions as digital software that can be digitized, “uploaded”, and “installed” into another mechanical device to fulfill various goals in artificial intelligence technology. For example:

22. *Tải trí não lên máy tính (mind uploading) là quá trình **số hóa mọi ký ức, cảm xúc, trải nghiệm, tính cách...** của một người, rồi chuyển toàn bộ dữ liệu vào máy tính hoặc robot để tâm trí người đó có thể sống mãi dù xác thân vật lý đã biến mất* (thanhvien.vn, 15/12/2021).

[**Uploading mind to a computer** (mind uploading) is the process of **digitizing all memories, emotions, experiences, personality...** of a person, then transferring all data to a computer or a robot to keep so that the person’s mind can live forever even though the physical body has disappeared] (thanhvien.vn, December 15, 2021).

C. Conceptual Metaphor THE OPERATING MECHANISM OF THE BRAIN IS THE OPERATING MECHANISM OF A COMPUTER

The mapping resemblance between “computer” and “brain” is also demonstrated in the attribute of an operating mechanism. Computers need to maintain an energy supply to operate. The depletion of energy leads to battery drain and power loss. In order to restart the computer, the battery must be charged to supply and maintain power. Some manufacturers design computers that have additional smart features such as turning on/off preprogrammed modes of battery and energy saving. In online Vietnamese newspapers, there are many metaphorical expressions that use the “operating mechanism” attribute of the computer to describe the operating mechanism of the brain, as in the following examples: *battery charging*, *turning on/turning off*, *battery saving mode*, *super battery saving mode*, *powering off*, *disconnecting*, *automating*, and *maintenance*. The 77 metaphorically-expressed words are presented in Table 4 below:

TABLE 4
CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR “THE OPERATING MECHANISM OF THE BRAIN IS THE OPERATING MECHANISM OF A COMPUTER”

Source Domain's Attributes	Metaphorically-Expressed Words	Frequency	Source Domain's Attributes	Metaphorically-Expressed Words	Frequency
Operating Mechanism of a Computer	Tắt/bị tắt/ tắt điện [Turning off/ being turned off/ powering off]	21	Operating Mechanism of a Computer	Nâng cấp hệ điều hành [Operating system upgrading]	5
	F5/Nhấn F5 [F5/ pressing F5]	6		Ngắt kết nối/hoạt động [Disconnecting/ operation interrupting]	5
	Sạc pin [Battery charging]	5		Khởi động [Starting]	6
	Tiết kiệm pin/siêu tiết kiệm pin [Battery saving/ super battery saving]	5		Tồn năng lượng [Energy wasting]	2
	Cơ chế vận hành [Operating mechanism]	3		Đóng/tắt chức năng [Closing/ turning off a function]	3
	Bật chế độ tiết kiệm pin [Turning on battery saving mode]	2		Tắt chương trình [Turning off background programs]	2
	Chế độ tiết kiệm năng lượng [Energy saving mode]	2		Truy cập [accessing]	2
	Đủ điện [Enough power]	1		Ngắt tạm thời [Disconnecting temporarily]	1
	Tự động hoá [Automatizing]	1		Bảo dưỡng [Maintenancing]	1
	Mạng trạng thái nghỉ [resting-state network]	1		Sửa lỗi chương trình [Fixing program errors]	1
Mạng chế độ mặc định [Default mode network]	1	Tiết kiệm bộ nhớ [Memory saving]	1		
Total	77				

It is evident from the statistical table above that Vietnamese people generally choose to use metaphors related to the mechanism of turning on/off computers (21); charging the battery (5); battery saving mechanism (5); upgrading the operating system (5) and cleaning up memory via F5 key (6) to map onto the target domain “brain”. That is entirely in line with the role of the “brain” as the central nervous organ that governs all human activities and minds.

In the structure of a computer, apart from hardware and software, the battery plays an important role in energy storage that allows users to be independent of power cords. Each computer’s battery has different storage capacities depending on the brand. When the battery runs out of energy, it is time to recharge it. When mapping this attribute to the “brain” as a battery-powered computer, if the brain runs out of “battery” after stressful and energy-consuming working hours or falls into the “power off” state when running special programs, the brain needs charging to maintain its operation. For example:

27. **“sạc pin” cho não thế nào đúng cách?** (vietnamnet.vn, 16/4/2014).
How to properly **“charge” the brain?** (vietnamnet.vn, April 16, 2014).
28. **Món ăn nào giúp sạc pin cho não?** (thuonggiaonline.vn, 12/01/2018).
[What kinds of food help **charge the brain?**] (thuonggiaonline.vn, January 12, 2018).

It is evident that the operating mechanism of the computer and the human is similar in that both require energy sources to function. During operation, they consume energy and require recovery as well as compensation for lost power when restarting. In Vietnamese metaphorical discourses, the computer’s exhaustion of energy is compared to the depletion of the brain’s biological energy supply. Charging the computer is mapped onto the operation of brain “charging”; “turning off” computers to charge battery is projected to the act of “turning off” brain activities to charge; and the “power-off” phenomenon of the computer which causes it to stop working is conceptualized as a “power-off” feature of the brain when it falls into a temporary disconnection, as illustrated in the following examples:

29. **Để não hoạt động tối đa công suất vào ban ngày, ta buộc phải cho nó “tắt” để sạc pin vào ban đêm** (www.prudential.com.vn, 30/11/2021).
[For the **brain** to operate at maximum capacity during the day, we must **turn it off** to **charge its battery** at night] (www.prudential.com.vn, November 30, 2021).
30. **Phim mát khiến não “tắt điện”?** (vietnamnet.vn, 26/04/2012).
[Sex movies **cause** the brain to **power off?**] (vietnamnet.vn, April 26, 2012).

The history of inventions reveals that mechanical computers first emerged in the early 19th century while electrical computers were created in the 20th century. For nearly a century since the invention of the first computer in history, computers have advanced in all aspects, including design, performance, and size. They now enable users to store vast

volumes of information and carry out a wide range of intricate tasks. More sophisticated computers are being designed with the ability to turn on *battery saving or super battery saving mode* to save energy and extend the battery life. With the mapping of these attributes onto the target domain, the brain has the ability to “turn on” or “turn off” its consciousness, or automatically “turn on battery saving mode” when the body’s energy level drops. For example:

31. *Khi bạn đói, não bộ có thể bật "chế độ tiết kiệm pin" và giảm độ phân giải thị giác của bạn xuống* (ttvn.toquoc.vn, 02-07-2022).
[When you are hungry, your **brain** can **turn on** the “**battery saving mode**” and lower your visual resolution] (ttvn.toquoc.vn, July 2, 2022).
32. *Do đó, các nhà khoa học tin rằng bộ não cũng phải phát triển các cơ chế "tiết kiệm pin" cho những tình huống khẩn cấp như thế* (ttvn.toquoc.vn, 02-07-2022).
[Therefore, scientists believe that the **brain** must likewise develop “**battery saving**” mechanisms for such emergencies] (ttvn.toquoc.vn, July 2, 2022).
33. *Phát hiện “công tắc” bật - tắt ý thức trong não bộ người.* (www.vietnamplus.vn, 08/07/2014).
[Detecting the **on-off “switch” of consciousness in the human brain**] (www.vietnamplus.vn, July 8, 2014).

When the body is short of energy, the brain automatically switches to a “super battery saving” mode to prioritize energy storage for survival tasks. These biological mechanisms operate instinctively, like preinstalled software on a computer. For example:

34. *Nguồn năng lượng dự trữ khi não chuyển sang chế độ "siêu tiết kiệm pin" thường được ưu tiên dùng cho việc nghĩ cách tìm thức ăn, đặc biệt ở người* (tuoitre.vn, 13/07/2022).
[The energy stored when the **brain switches to “super battery saving” mode** is often prioritized for thinking about how to find food, especially in humans] (tuoitre.vn, July 13, 2022).
35. *Các nhà nghiên cứu nhận ra não bộ lúc này có thể "quay xe". Nó sẽ giảm hoạt động, tắt các quá trình tiêu tốn nhiều năng lượng nhất để đi vào trạng thái "tiết kiệm pin"* (ttvn.toquoc.vn, 02-07-2022).
[Researchers realized that the **brain** is capable of “making a U turn” (make a completely opposite change). It will reduce its operation and **stop the most energy-consuming processes** to enter a “battery saving” mode] (ttvn.toquoc.vn, July 2, 2022).

D. Conceptual Metaphor THE HAZARDS THAT OCCUR IN THE BIOLOGICAL PROCESSES OF THE BRAIN ARE THE HAZARDS THAT OCCUR IN THE OPERATING PROCESS OF A COMPUTER

Computers are the most advanced machines that humans have yet invented. After nearly a century of development, supercomputers are produced with the ability to perform extremely complicated tasks as well as simulate a part of the superior brain structure. However, like all types of machinery, computers also encounter a number of technical problems during operation. Since the brain is conceptualized as a computer, this attribute is also mapped onto the problems that the brain may encounter while carrying out biological processes, impairing the brain’s “performance”. Some metaphorical tokens that describe hazards during the operation of a computer such as *crash, full hard drive, lag, error, hacked/ hacker, hijacking, security vulnerability*, and the like are found in online Vietnamese newspapers (with 64 references) to explain the most common hazards that the brain may encounter while functioning biologically. The frequency of these metaphorical references is shown in Table 5 below:

TABLE 5
CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR “THE HAZARDS THAT OCCUR IN THE BIOLOGICAL PROCESSES OF THE BRAIN ARE THE HAZARDS THAT OCCUR IN THE OPERATING PROCESS OF A COMPUTER”

Source Domain's Attributes	Metaphorically-Expressed Words	Frequency	Source Domain's Attributes	Metaphorically-Expressed Words	Frequency
Hazards That Occur in the Operating Process of a Computer	Quá Tải [Overload]	25	Hazards That Occur in the Operating Process of a Computer	Bị Lag [Lag]	7
	Hack/Hacker [Hack/ Hacker]	11		Treo Máy [Crash]	6
	Lỗi [Error]	4		Chiếm Quyền Điều Khiển [Hijacking]	2
	Bị Full [Full]	2		Tồn Năng Lượng [Energy Waste]	2
	Hết Dung Lượng [Capacity Exhaustion]	2		Lỗ Hổng Bảo Mật [Security Vulnerability]	2
				Bị Chập [Short Circuit]	1
Total			64		

A computer that executes too many programs concurrently or stores too much data on it can easily become overloaded. Similarly, one of the most common problems of the brain is “being overloaded” when having to receive and process excessive information simultaneously. This, of course, can lead to a state of tension, anxiety, lack of emotional control and memory loss. Table 5 demonstrates that in metaphorical discourses of online Vietnamese newspapers, there is a preference for metaphorically expressed words that reflect the hazards during computer operation such as *overload* (25);

hacked and hijacked (13); *lag* (7); *crash* (6); *error* (4) and so forth to represent similar brain disorders. In fact, the phenomenon of overload which is caused by full memory, crash or lag (error) occurs frequently with the computer. In these cases, the “crashed” computer will temporarily cease operating all commands. Likewise, when the brain has “crashed”, humans will suffer memory disorders, temporarily stop exploiting their memory, cease adding more data, or even experience a state of abrupt emptiness. For example:

36. ... Dân dần xuất hiện triệu chứng của rối loạn giấc ngủ, tỉnh tỉnh trở nên trầm lặng, ít muốn giao tiếp, hiện tượng này giống như hiện tượng “**treo máy**” (tuoitre.vn, 20/05/2005).
[... The symptoms of sleep disorder gradually appeared and they became quiet and unwilling to communicate. This phenomenon is comparable to the **crash** of a computer] (tuoitre.vn, May 20, 2005).

37. [...] khi bộ óc của các em hoạt động căng thẳng trong thời gian dài, cùng lượng kiến thức khổng lồ muốn nạp thật nhanh trong những ngày cuối cùng nước rút để sinh ra hiện tượng “**quá tải**” khiến đầu óc bị “**đơ**” ra, học không vào nữa. Sẽ rất nguy hiểm nếu tình trạng “**treo máy**” này xảy ra đúng vào ngày thi quan trọng của các em (vtc.vn, 04/07/2014).

[...] when children’s brains are working intensely for a long time with a huge amount of knowledge that they want to load quickly in the last few days, it is easy to create the phenomenon of “**overload**” which leads to their mental “**freezing**” and inability to do anything. It will be dangerous if this “**crash**” occurs on their important exam day] (vtc.vn, July 04, 2014).

Being crashed, a computer needs technical intervention such as reinstallation or refreshing. *Refresh*, known as the *F5* key, is a command on computer operating systems that can “revive” the most recent information. It has the ability to assist the computer in clearing off memory and cookies that were previously left on the device. In the same manner, the brain sometimes needs to be refreshed on the outdated interface with “F5 presses”. For example:

38. Các bạn trẻ thế hệ công nghệ cao ví tâm trạng mình như một chiếc máy tính đang “**nặng**” vì phải hoạt động quá nhiều “**chương trình**” một lúc, có thể vì lỗi trong vận hành một phần mềm nào đó, tóm lại đang bị “**treo máy**”, vậy nên cần một cú nhấn **F5**, tức làm mới, refresh bản thân [...] (tuoitre.vn, 23/11/2014)

[The younger generation of techies compares their **mood** to a “**heavy**” computer because it has to operate too many **programs** at the same time, or possibly due to **errors in operating certain software**. In short, it is being “crashed”, so an **F5 press** will help them refresh themselves [...] (tuoitre.vn, November 23, 2014).

A computer can clear up space and fix problems caused by software errors or unwanted information accumulation by restarting. Obtaining this attribute from the mapping, the human brain also has a similar mechanism.

39. Sử dụng tám kỹ thuật trong bài hướng dẫn này để học cách thư giãn tâm hồn và **khởi động lại bộ não** của bạn khi không được nghỉ ngơi trong một thời gian dài (business.tutsplus.com, 10/8/ 2021).

[Use eight techniques in this guide to learn how to relax your mind and **restart your brain** when you haven’t rested for a long time] (business.tutsplus.com, August 10, 2021).

A computer can be in the state of internet connection or disconnection. This is mapped onto the human brain, where two hemispheres can be operated by purposefully turning off or disconnecting one to prevent a certain bodily reaction for medicinal purposes. For example:

40. Việc “**tắt**” (ngắt kết nối) một trong hai bán cầu não sẽ giúp bán cầu bị bệnh không gây ảnh hưởng đến bán cầu khỏe mạnh, chấm dứt hoàn toàn những cơn động kinh (tuoitre.vn, 13/10/2023).

[“**Turning off**” (**disconnecting**) one of the two hemispheres will prevent the diseased hemisphere from affecting the healthy hemisphere, completely stopping epileptic seizures] (tuoitre.vn, October 13, 2023).

In the 4.0 digital technology era, computer users still confront hazards such as virus attacks, hacking and hijacking, or data deletion. All of these attributes are mapped onto the target domain “brain”. Likewise, the human brain is also susceptible to being attacked, illegally accessed or hijacked by hackers. For example:

41. Nói cách khác, **bộ não** của bạn có thể bị **hack** và bạn có thể bị ... **chiếm quyền điều khiển** (baochinhphu.vn, 03/04/2014).

[In other words, you **brain** can be **hacked** and you can be ... **hijacked**] (baochinhphu.vn, April 03, 2014).

42. Liệu những thiết bị này có thể cho phép những **hacker** với ý đồ xấu **truy cập** vào tâm trí của chúng ta? (spiderum.com, 19/03/2020).

[Could these devices allow **hackers** with bad intentions to **access** our minds?] (spiderum.com, 19/03/2020).

V. CONCLUSION

The study’s clarification of the cross-domain mappings in the conceptual metaphor model THE BRAIN IS A COMPUTER on Vietnamese electronic newspapers affirms that the connection circuit between “computer” and “brain” in the thinking of the writers is firmly rooted in both physical and emotional experiences of electronic devices in general and computers in particular. The writers were relatively consistent in perceiving the human brain as a computer with various features. As a consequence, the study established four subordinate structural metaphors, including THE STRUCTURE OF THE BRAIN IS THE STRUCTURE OF A COMPUTER, THE FEATURES OF THE BRAIN ARE THE FEATURES OF A COMPUTER, THE OPERATING MECHANISM OF THE BRAIN IS THE OPERATING MECHANISM OF A COMPUTER, THE HAZARDS THAT OCCUR IN THE BIOLOGICAL PROCESSES OF THE BRAIN ARE THE HAZARDS THAT OCCUR DURING THE OPERATING PROCESS OF A COMPUTER. With so

much diversity and complexity to the computer, the human brain is fully encoded, offering rich imagery for powerful visualizations in writing.

It is apparent that the entire conceptual thinking of THE BRAIN IS A COMPUTER in online Vietnamese newspapers is represented by the image schemas available in the writer's subconsciousness, formed from correlations in experience and background knowledge about “computers” in the era of the 4.0 Technology Revolution when everyone has knowledge and understanding about them. This conceptual thinking lies within a universal cognitive framework and is a continuation of machine metaphors that have prevailed throughout history. The appearance of the source domain “computer” in the metaphor with the target domain of “brain” has contributed to affirming the variability of the metaphor, the influence of the context of the time and the native cognition.

In conclusion, the analysis of THE BRAIN IS A COMPUTER metaphor in Vietnamese makes a significant theoretical addition to metaphor literature and presents an engaging exploration of potential elaborations in this conceptual model that can be of great importance when investigating native people’s conceptual processes.

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Nguyen Thi Bich Hanh received a doctorate in Linguistics in 2015 from the Vietnam Academy of Social Science and is currently the Head of Linguistic Studies in the Graduate Academy of Social Sciences at Vietnam Academy of Social Science. Her main relevant fields are Cognitive Linguistics, Semantics and Pragmatics. She has published three monographs on Cognitive Linguistics, written a variety of scientific journal articles both domestically and internationally in relation to her fields of research, and was head of two ministerial research topics on conceptual metaphors. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5928-4613>



Le Vien Lan Huong, who received her Ph.D. in Linguistics in 2023 from the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, is currently a lecturer of English at Vietnam Military Medical University. She has written multiple scientific papers published domestically and internationally. Her major research interests include Cognitive Linguistics, Contrastive Linguistics, and English Language Teaching and Learning. <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-9566-1685>



Ngô Thị Tuyet, who received her Master's degree in Linguistics in 2015, is currently a Vietnamese language lecturer at Vietnam Military Medical University. She has published multiple scientific works in the field of linguistic studies.



Phi Thi Thu Trang currently serves as the Deputy Head of the English Department at Thang Long University, Vietnam. In 2022, she was awarded a doctorate in Linguistics from the Graduate Academy of Social Sciences, Vietnam. Her research interests are in the areas of linguistics, cognitive linguistics and teaching methodology. She has authored a number of journal articles and conference articles regarding conceptual metaphors and other linguistic issues. <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-7935-4656>



Võ Thị Mỹ Hạnh currently serves as the Deputy Dean of the Basic Science Faculty at Vietnam Youth Academy. In 2021, she was awarded a doctorate in Linguistics from the Graduate Academy of Social Sciences, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. Her research interests are in the areas of linguistics and teaching methodology. She has authored a number of ESP textbooks, monographs, and dictionaries in addition to a wide range of scientific articles. <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0730-7523>

Investigating Factors Influencing EFL Learners' Behavioral Intentions to Adopt ChatGPT for Language Learning

Noha Almansour

College of Languages and Translation, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—This study explores factors that influence English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' behavioral intention to adopt ChatGPT for language learning. To explore this topic, a research model based on the technology acceptance model (TAM) was proposed and used to evaluate hypotheses on the relationship between model constructs. The proposed model includes the constructs perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEoU), behavioral intentions, and computer self-efficacy. In addition, the study examines the effect of the moderating variables, gender and education level, on the relationships between the proposed model constructs. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to the data of 211 EFL learners to analyze causal relationships between the model constructs and the effect of the moderating variables. Findings indicated that EFL learners' behavioral intentions to adopt ChatGPT for language learning were greatly impacted by their PU. In addition, computer self-efficacy was a powerful determinant influencing learners' PEoU and PU. Furthermore, education level had no significant moderating effect on learners' perceptions or intentions to adopt ChatGPT. However, gender only moderated the relationship between computer self-efficacy and PEoU, with the relationship being stronger for women. All the proposed hypotheses on the relationships between the model constructs were supported; therefore, this study contributed to the validation of TAM for predicting learners' acceptance and adoption of ChatGPT for language learning.

Index Terms—technology acceptance model, ChatGPT, artificial intelligence

I. INTRODUCTION

Recent years have brought rapid progress in technology, especially in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). These developments have significantly impacted education. Several generative AI tools have been used for educational purposes, and one of these tools is the chatbot. Zumstein and Hundermark (2017) defined a chatbot as a computer program that utilizes a text-based dialogue system to imitate human language. Chatbots have emerged following advancements in natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning (Adamopoulou & Moussiades, 2020). In language learning, chat-based tools have received attention due to their ability to engage in natural conversations with learners and their valuable pedagogical applications (Huang et al., 2022). Five pedagogical uses of chatbots in language learning have been identified: interactive interlocution, simulation, content transmission, learner support, and resource recommendation (Huang et al., 2022).

An increasingly popular chatbot that has recently attracted significant attention is the Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer (ChatGPT). ChatGPT relies on a large language model (LLM) that leverages a vast amount of data and generates human-like text on a wide range of topics (Van Dis et al., 2023). The release of ChatGPT in November 2022 sparked discussions and debates about the potential benefits, limitations, and ethical considerations of using language models in different contexts (Van Dis et al., 2023). These controversial debates have positioned ChatGPT as “the most high-profile and controversial form of AI to hit education so far” (Williamson et al., 2023, p. 2).

The integration of ChatGPT in education for English language learning represents an innovative and revolutionary approach that has the potential to bring about a significant shift in the field by enabling personalized, interactive learning; automated rating; and real-time feedback (Javaid et al., 2023). The incredible benefits offered by ChatGPT have convinced many researchers that investigating students' perspectives on its acceptability is essential for embracing this emerging technology in education. Students' acceptance or rejection of ChatGPT can significantly influence its integration into educational settings. Therefore, understanding learners' behavioral intentions to adopt ChatGPT is essential for helping educators, practitioners, and instructors make decisions regarding the use of this emerging technology in educational settings. However, the implementation of ChatGPT in education presents some challenges, including ethical issues, insufficient evaluation, user attitudes, data integration issues, plagiarism, and language proficiency challenges (Kooli, 2023).

Although many studies have examined the benefits and drawbacks of adopting ChatGPT in education, there is a limited body of research specifically focused on learners' adoption of ChatGPT in language learning settings. This study addresses this gap in the literature and contributes to expanding knowledge on Saudi EFL learners' perceptions and intentions to adopt ChatGPT for learning English in higher education. Additionally, this study validates the use of the

technology acceptance model (TAM) in predicting language learners' adoption of ChatGPT. To achieve these aims, this study investigated factors affecting Saudi EFL learners' behavioral intentions to adopt ChatGPT for language learning in higher education using the TAM framework. Moreover, the study examined the effect of the moderating variables gender and education level on learners' behavioral intentions to adopt ChatGPT for language learning.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

A. TAM as a Conceptual Framework

For over two decades, user technology acceptance has been a significant area of research, providing insights into the successful adoption of technological innovations (Davis, 1989). Several models of technology acceptance offer a suitable framework for researchers to explore users' acceptance of new technologies. One of the most popular models is TAM, as proposed by Davis (1989). Since its introduction in 1989, TAM has gained significant attention and has been extensively used and tested by numerous researchers (Venkatesh & Davis, 1996; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

Many factors can influence users' acceptance of a technology (Davis, 1989). TAM provides a theoretical framework for understanding and predicting users' adoption and acceptance of new technologies. The original framework of TAM highlighted four key constructs: perceived ease of use (PEoU), perceived usefulness (PU), attitude, and behavioral intentions (Davis, 1989). According to Davis (1989), PU refers to users' perceptions of a particular technology in terms of its productivity potential, effectiveness, and efficiency in accomplishing specific tasks. PEoU, on the other hand, relates to users' perceptions regarding the effort involved in using a particular technology. Behavioral intention describes users' decisions to engage in actions related to the use of a particular technology (Davis, 1989). Finally, attitude toward use describes an individual's attitude towards using a specific technology and is considered a mediating variable in the original TAM (Davis, 1989).

A modified model proposed by Venkatesh and Davis (1996) excluded the construct attitude and included external variables as factors influencing the perception of ease and usefulness. Additionally, some studies have excluded the attitude construct from their model because it partially mediates the relationship between PEoU and PU towards behavioral intentions (Davis & Venkatesh, 1996; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Venkatesh & Bala, 2008). Therefore, this study excluded the attitude construct from TAM and focused primarily on PEoU, PU, and computer self-efficacy in relation to learners' behavioral intentions to adopt ChatGPT.

In the technology acceptance literature, several studies have confirmed that individuals' behavioral intentions are influenced by their perceptions of ease of use and usefulness of a technology and that behavioral intentions can predict actual use (Davis & Venkatesh, 1996; Davis, 1989; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Davis et al., 1989). Chin and Todd (1995) stated that the likelihood of adopting a particular technology is strongly determined by the associated perceptions of its usefulness or ease of use. Many studies reported in the literature have revealed that PEoU has a strong direct effect on PU (Venkatesh & Davis, 1996; Agarwal & Prasad, 1999). In the original model of TAM, both PU and PEoU predict individuals' attitudes towards a particular technology, and PEoU can predict users' intentions to use this technology through the mediating variable of PU (Davis, 1989).

Research on technology acceptance in education and language learning has revealed that teachers' PEoU and PU were the most influential factors determining their use of technology in the classroom (Teo et al., 2018). Similarly, Mou et al. (2022) found that learners' PU and PEoU greatly influenced their behavioral intentions to adopt a digital platform for learning purposes. Based on TAM and previous studies, the following hypotheses are proposed in the present study:

H1: PEoU positively affects PU.

H2: PU positively affects behavioral intentions.

H3: PEoU positively affects behavioral intentions.

Several studies reported in literature have added different external variables to TAM. Commonly added variables include computer self-efficacy, computer anxiety, computer playfulness, and computer experience. For this study, only computer self-efficacy was added as an external variable to the proposed model.

B. Computer Self-Efficacy and TAM

The concept of self-efficacy, defined as individuals' beliefs about their own capabilities to perform a specific task (Bandura, 1977), is considered an important element in social cognitive theory and has significant implications in the field of technology acceptance. Compeau and Higgins (1995) used the term computer self-efficacy to describe individuals' beliefs about their own capabilities to complete certain tasks. Venkatesh and Davis (1996) found that computer self-efficacy influenced users' PEoU. Several studies have reported that computer self-efficacy plays a significant role in influencing individuals' behavioural intentions to use a new technology and that it is mediated by two important variables: PEoU and PU (Venkatesh & Davis, 1996; Terzis & Economides, 2011). Terzis and Economides (2011) indicated that computer self-efficacy influenced behavioral intentions indirectly through its impact on other intermediate factors, such as attitudes, PU, and PEoU. They also revealed that computer self-efficacy had a direct impact on PEoU.

Based on the reviewed studies, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H4: Computer self-efficacy positively affects PU.

H5: Computer self-efficacy positively affects PEoU.

H6: Computer self-efficacy positively affects behavioral intentions.

C. TAM And Gender

Studies investigating the effect of gender as a moderating factor on TAM constructs have yielded inconsistent findings. A study conducted by Venkatesh and Morris (2000) demonstrated that gender has an insignificant moderating effect on the relationship between PEOU and PU, but it has a significant moderating effect on the impact of PEOU and PU on behavioral intentions. On the other hand, Ong and Lai (2006) found that gender moderates the relationship between the two constructs, PEOU and PU, with a stronger effect for women. Based on the previous research, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H7a: Gender moderates the relationship between PEOU and behavioral intentions.

H7b: Gender moderates the relationship between PU and behavioral intentions.

H7c: Gender moderates the relationship between computer self-efficacy and PU.

H7d: Gender moderates the relationship between computer self-efficacy and PEOU.

H7e: Gender moderates the relationship between PU and PEOU.

D. TAM and Education Level

Several studies have investigated the role of education level as (i) a moderating variable on the relationship between users' perceptions and attitudes towards behavioral intention and (ii) as an antecedent variable influencing users' PU and PEOU (Agarwal & Prasad, 1999; Burton-Jones & Hubona, 2006). Findings have suggested that education level has a significant impact on the relationship between individuals' PU and PEOU and behavioral intention to adopt a particular technology (Agarwal & Prasad, 1999; Burton-Jones & Hubona, 2006). Burton-Jones and Hubona (2006) found that education level moderates PU. However, Agarwal and Prasad (1999) revealed that there was no significant relationship between educational level and PU. They added that education level was significantly related to PEOU. Based on the previous research, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H8a: Education level moderates the relationship between PEOU and behavioral intentions.

H8b: Education level moderates the relationship between PU and behavioral intentions.

H8c: Education level moderates the relationship between computer self-efficacy and PU.

H8d: Education level moderates the relationship between computer self-efficacy and PEOU.

H8e: Education level moderates the relationship between PU and PEOU.

E. Research Proposed Model

To understand the adoption of ChatGPT by EFL students, a conceptual framework based on TAM and hypotheses was proposed (see Fig. 1). Six hypotheses on the relationship between the model constructs and 10 hypotheses on the moderating effect of two moderating variables were tested. The model consists of three constructs from TAM: PEOU, PU, and behavioral intentions and one external variable, computer self-efficacy. The study excluded the construct of attitude from the proposed model based on Davis' (1989) findings that a model relying on only three constructs, namely, behavioral intentions, PU, and PEOU, is considered valuable for predicting users' intention to adopt a particular technology. Thus, the proposed model integrated three different categories of variables, including three independent variables, a dependent variable, and two moderating variables.

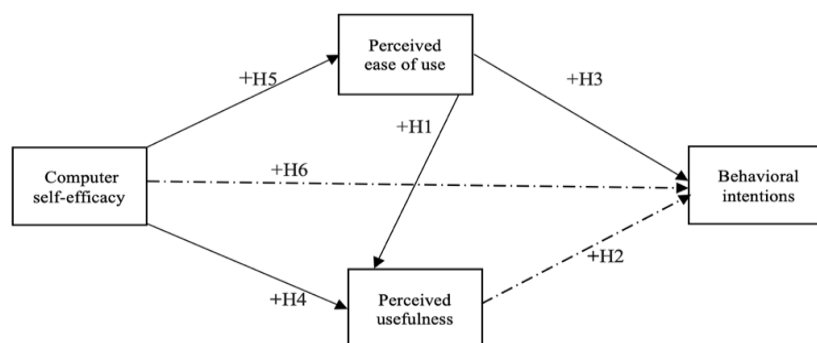


Figure 1. The Research Model

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The study utilized a cross-sectional design, employing a self-reported questionnaire administered at a single timepoint to undergraduate and postgraduate male and female EFL students enrolled in English language departments at three Saudi universities. The sample consisted of 211 EFL students, divided into four subgroups: 72 female undergraduates, 42 female postgraduates, 70 male undergraduates, and 27 male postgraduates (see Table 1). The sample average age ranged from 18 to 24 years. All participants reported being familiar with using ChatGPT, as determined by their responses to the

familiarity question in the questionnaire. Students were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary, and it took approximately 20 minutes to complete the self-reported questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to exclude any respondents who were not familiar with ChatGPT. The first question thus was, “Are you familiar with ChatGPT?” If the respondent selected “No”, it would lead them to the end of the questionnaire. If the answer was “Yes”, the respondent was allowed to answer the self-reported questionnaire.

TABLE 1
DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Category		Participant	Percentage
Gender	Male	97	45.97%
	Female	114	54.03%
Education level	Postgraduate	69	32.70%
	Undergraduate	142	67.30%
Total	211		

B. Instruments

The study utilized a self-reported questionnaire with three parts. The first collected demographic information from the participating learners, including their age, gender, education level, and familiarity with ChatGPT. The second part assessed learners’ perceptions of and intentions to use ChatGPT, based on Davis’ (1989) theoretical framework TAM and adapted from Belda-Medina and Calvo-Ferrer’s (2022) work. This part of the questionnaire involved three constructs with 15 items: PEoU (five items), PU (eight items), and behavioral intentions (two items). A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure learners’ perceptions and intentions. The third part consisted of 10 items, measured on a 7-point Likert scale, to assess learners’ computer self-efficacy. This part was adopted from Holden and Rada (2011) based on Compeau and Higgins’ (1995) scale. Holden and Rada (2011) updated the original scale and used a 7-point Likert scale instead of a 10-point scale.

C. Data Analysis

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to examine the measurements and structural model. Prior to performing SEM, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was computed to assess the appropriateness of the gathered data for conducting the analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS; version 28). The results indicated that the KMO value (0.93; $p < .001$) was suitable for running SEM. Furthermore, normality was tested to confirm that the gathered data were normally distributed with appropriate skewness and kurtosis values.

IV. RESULTS

A. Measurement Model Assessment

In the measurement model assessment, convergent validity and discriminant validity were assessed. The convergent validity was evaluated using three tests (Fornell & Lacker, 1981). Firstly, the reliability of items was tested by examining the factor loadings to verify that each individual item loaded into its corresponding construct group with an adequate value above 0.5 (Hair et al., 2006). Table 2 displays item factor loading, which ranged from 0.71 to 0.92 and exceeded the suggested acceptable value. Secondly, the composite reliability of the constructed items was above the minimum acceptance value of 0.7 (it ranged from 0.70 to 0.97). Thirdly, the average variance extracted (AVE) was assessed, and the results indicated appropriate values. Table 3 indicates that the convergent validity was satisfactory, as all constructs met the recommended values of $AVE > 0.50$ and $CR > 0.70$ (Fornell & Lacker, 1981). Furthermore, the internal consistency of items was evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha test. The results demonstrated that the reliability of the constructs, which ranged from 0.82 to 0.96, exceeded the desired value of 0.70.

TABLE 2
FACTOR LOADINGS OF TAM CONSTRUCTS

Item	Factor loading			
PEoU1	0.800			
PEoU2	0.834			
PEoU3	0.849			
PEoU4	0.796			
PEoU5	0.794			
PU1		0.710		
PU2		0.816		
PU3		0.832		
PU4		0.797		
PU5		0.819		
PU6		0.802		
PU7		0.830		
PU8		0.823		
BI1			0.929	
BI2			0.912	
CSE1				0.842
CSE2				0.844
CSE3				0.857
CSE4				0.874
CSE5				0.874
CSE6				0.904
CSE7				0.923
CSE8				0.897
CSE9				0.885
CSE10				0.894

*Behavioral intentions (BI); computer self-efficacy (CSE)

TABLE 3
AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED (AVE), COMPOSITE RELIABILITY (CR), AND CRONBACH'S ALPHA

Construct	AVE	Cr (rho-c)	Cronbach's alpha
PEoU	0.664	.908	.873
PU	0.647	.936	.922
BI	0.847	.917	.820
CSE	0.774	.972	.968

The discriminant validity was evaluated based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The results revealed that the AVE value for each construct exceeds the squared correlations with other constructs (see Table 4) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, discriminant validity was satisfactory for all constructs.

TABLE 4
DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY (FORNELL-LARCKERS CRITERION)

	BI	PEoU	PU	CSE
BI	0.921			
PEoU	0.227	0.815		
PU	0.434	0.534	0.804	
CSE	0.507	0.345	0.649	0.880

* Square root of AVE is on bold

The model fit was assessed using two informative indices: SRMR and NFI. The results of the estimated model indicated that the SRMR value was 0.08 and the NFI value was 0.80 (see Table 5). According to Hair et al. (2014), the results suggest that the model provides a good fit of the SEM and satisfies all criteria.

TABLE 5
MODEL FIT INDICES

Indices	Saturated model	Estimated model
NFI	0.80	0.80
SRMR	0.07	0.08

B. Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was assessed using Smart Partial Least Squares (SmartPLS) software to conduct SEM analysis. In SEM analysis, two informative indicators were used to predict the accuracy of the proposed relationships: the estimated standardized path coefficients (β) and the squared multiple correlations (R^2).

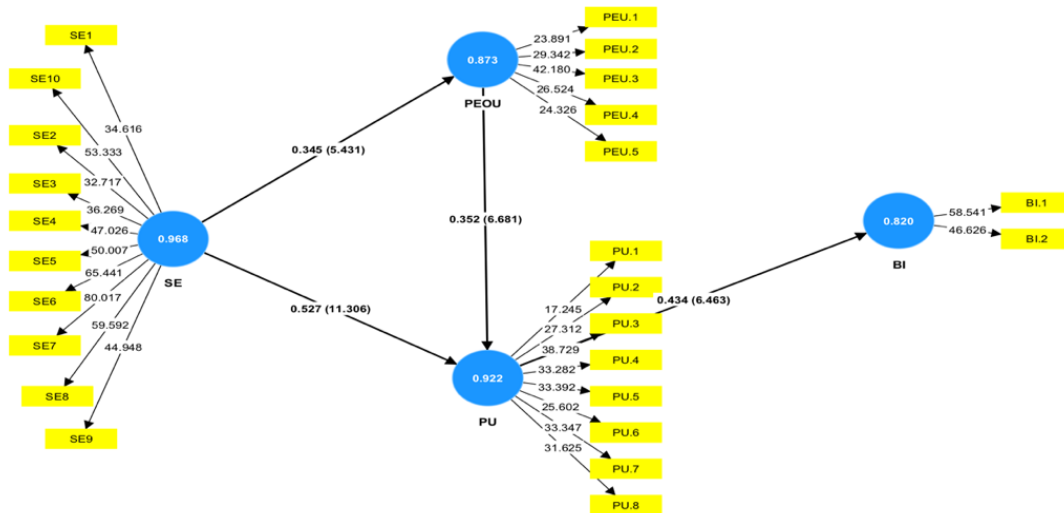


Figure 2. The Structural Model

C. Main Effects and Hypotheses Testing

The structural model employed the bootstrap resampling technique in SmartPLS to enhance the reliability of the results. The study examined hypotheses concerning direct and indirect effects on learners’ intentions to adopt ChatGPT using path analysis. This analysis involved standardized path coefficients and associated *t*-values (see Figure 2). The *t*-value served as a criterion for accepting or rejecting a hypothesis, with acceptance criteria being a *t*-value above or equal to the range (-1.65 to 1.65) and a significant *p*-value ($p > 0.05$). Table 6 indicates that all the proposed hypotheses were supported with a significant *t*-value ranging from 5.436 to 11.319. The data revealed significant findings. First, PU was the strongest determinant, positively impacting learners’ behavioral intentions to adopt ChatGPT ($\beta = 0.433$). Second, computer self-efficacy had a significant effect on both PU and PEoU ($\beta = 0.526$ and $\beta = 0.345$, respectively), and the strongest relationship existed between the two constructs computer self-efficacy and PU ($\beta = 0.526$). Third, PEoU has a significant effect on learners’ PU of ChatGPT ($\beta = 0.352$).

TABLE 6
HYPOTHESIS TESTING OF MAIN EFFECTS USING PATH COEFFICIENT ANALYSIS

Path coefficient	β	Mean	Sd	T value	P value	Result
PEoU->PU	0.352	0.351	0.053	6.681	0.000	Supported
PU->BI	0.433	0.438	0.074	5.829	0.000	Supported
CSE->PEoU	0.345	0.349	0.063	5.436	0.000	Supported
CSE->PU	0.526	0.529	0.046	11.319	0.000	Supported

D. Mediating Effects and Hypotheses Testing

To test the indirect effects of one variable on another, a standardized path coefficient analysis is used (see Table 7). Results indicated that PEoU had a positive, indirect effect on learners’ behavioral intentions ($\beta = 0.153$; $p > 0.001$); this relationship was mediated by their PU towards ChatGPT. Moreover, learners’ computer self-efficacy indirectly influenced their behavioral intention to use ChatGPT ($\beta = 0.282$; $p > 0.001$); this result was mediated by their PU and PEoU.

TABLE 7
HYPOTHESIS TESTING OF INDIRECT EFFECTS USING PATH COEFFICIENT ANALYSIS

Path coefficient	β	Mean	Sd	T value	P value	Result
PEoU->BI	0.153	0.154	0.032	4.703	.000	Supported
CSE->BI	0.282	0.289	0.053	5.288	.000	Supported

E. Moderating Effects and Hypotheses Testing

This study employed a multi-group analysis to investigate the existence of moderating variables. In this analysis, the data were divided into two groups based on a specific grouping variable. Table 8 illustrates the path strength between the model constructs and the effect of moderators. Education level was found to be an insignificant moderator for the relationship between the research model variables. All hypotheses related to the role of education level as a moderator were rejected. Furthermore, Table 9 reveals that gender only moderated the effect of computer self-efficacy on PEoU ($\beta = 0.162$; $p > 0.001$). Female learners’ computer self-efficacy had a positive influence on their PEoU; however, computer self-efficacy had no positive effect on male learners’ PEoU.

TABLE 8
MULTI-GROUP ANALYSIS OF THE MODERATING ROLE OF EDUCATION LEVEL

Path	Postgraduate (N=69)			Undergraduate (N=142)			β Differences	Result
	β	t value	p value	β	t value	p value		
PEoU -> BI	0.02	0.178	0.859	-0.002	0.019	0.985	0.018	Rejected
PEoU -> PU	0.219	2.021	0.044	0.349	5.538	.000	0.130	Rejected
PU -> BI	0.398	3.971	.000	0.429	4.816	.000	0.031	Rejected
CSE -> PEoU	0.427	3.643	.000	0.248	2.947	0.003	0.179	Rejected
CSE -> PU	0.569	6.125	.000	0.514	9.43	.000	0.055	Rejected

TABLE 9
MULTI-GROUP ANALYSIS OF THE MODERATING ROLE OF GENDER

Path	Male (N=97)			Female (N=114)			β Differences	Result
	β value	t value	p value	β value	t value	p value		
PEoU -> BI	-0.143	1.224	0.222	0.126	1.232	0.218	-0.017	Rejected
PEoU -> PU	0.337	4.753	.000	0.408	5.345	.000	0.071	Rejected
PU -> BI	0.382	3.63	.000	0.445	4.674	.000	0.063	Rejected
CSE -> PEoU	0.162	1.561	0.119	0.534	8.539	.000	0.372	Supported
CSE -> PU	0.536	7.535	.000	0.484	7.207	.000	0.052	Rejected

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A. Summary Key Findings

The main purpose of the study was to investigate factors influencing EFL learners' behavioral intention to adopt ChatGPT for language learning and how such factors are moderated by gender and education level. Using SEM, this study tested the proposed hypotheses on the relationship between PU, PEoU, computer self-efficacy, and behavioral intention and evaluated the moderating effects of gender and education level on learners' behavioral intentions to adopt ChatGPT. The results can be summarized as follows: first, all six hypotheses on the relationship between the model constructs were supported with a *t*-value ranging from (5.436) to (11.319). This result validated the use of the TAM framework for ChatGPT and its capability to predict EFL learners' behavioral intention to adopt ChatGPT for language learning purposes. Second, the results of the hypothesis testing revealed several significant findings. The strongest determinant of learners' behavioral intention to adopt ChatGPT for language learning was their PU ($\beta = 0.433$; $p > 0.001$) supporting previous findings (Davis, 1989). Results revealed that PEoU and computer self-efficacy had a significant, positive, indirect effect on learner's behavioral intentions that was mediated by the variable PU ($\beta = 0.153$, $p > 0.001$, $\beta = 0.282$, $p > 0.001$, respectively). This finding aligns with those of previous studies (Venkatesh & Davis, 1996; Terzis & Economides, 2011). Moreover, data revealed that computer self-efficacy had a positive direct effect on learners' PU ($\beta = 0.526$, $p > 0.001$) and PEoU ($\beta = 0.345$, $p > 0.001$) of ChatGPT. Finally, the study found that the moderator variables gender and level of education had no significant effects on the model constructs except for the relationship between computer self-efficacy and PEoU, which appeared to be moderated by gender. These findings contrast previous studies (Agarwal & Prasad, 1999; Burton-Jones & Hubona, 2006; Venkatesh & Morris, 2000; Ong & Lai, 2006) that confirmed the role of moderating variables such as level of education and gender on the relationship between TAM constructs and behavioral intentions.

B. Implications

Understanding EFL learners' reactions towards ChatGPT in language learning is an important, yet understudied, issue. To fill the gap in the literature, this study provides an empirical analysis to help explain variables influencing EFL learners' acceptance of ChatGPT in language learning and presents a framework for future research on EFL learners' adoption of ChatGPT.

The results have several theoretical and practical implications. The results of the study contribute to the validation and applicability of the TAM model in the field of AI chatbots. The study's validation of the TAM model strengthens the theoretical foundation of the model and its applicability in the context of AI chatbots. Moreover, the study provides theoretical implications by advancing our understanding of user acceptance in relation to different factors, including PU, PEoU, and behavioral intentions, and the role of moderating factors in the adoption of ChatGPT. These implications can provide useful recommendations for policymakers, educational researchers, and faculty members to enhance user's experiences and promote widespread acceptance of ChatGPT as a sustainable tool of language learning by, for example, motivating training sessions to ensure that students are capable of effectively using these tools.

C. Limitations and Suggestions

There are several limitations to this study that future studies can address. Firstly, the study focused only on factors influencing learners' behavioral intentions to adopt ChatGPT. Further research is needed to investigate learners' actual use of ChatGPT. Second, the study adopted a cross-sectional method to investigate learners' adoption of ChatGPT, but a longitudinal study may be useful to better understand learners' acceptance and perceptions of integrating this technology

into language learning after a longer period of use. Finally, further future research could investigate teachers' perceptions towards ChatGPT integration in EFL classrooms in terms of language skills development, interactions, and ethical considerations.

D. Conclusion

This study explored factors influencing EFL learners' behavioral intentions to adopt ChatGPT for language learning. It also examined the role of individual differences, gender and education level, as moderating variables influencing learners' adoption of ChatGPT. The results provide a new perspective on how ChatGPT is being adopted by Saudi EFL learners. The study concluded that the strongest determinant that affects learners' intention to adopt ChatGPT is their PU. Learners who consider ChatGPT useful are more likely to adopt it. Further, learners with high levels of computer self-efficacy were more likely to consider ChatGPT useful and easy to adopt. The study confirmed that individual variables, gender and education level, had no significant moderating effect on learners' intentions to adopt ChatGPT except for the relationship between learners' computer self-efficacy and PEOU, which was higher for female participants. The study results will empower educators, practitioners, and researchers to develop effective interventions that facilitate the integration of ChatGPT to enhance the language learning experience.

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Noha Almansour is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics at the Department of English Language and Literature, College of Languages and Translation, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University. She has been teaching different courses in linguistics and language skills. She is interested in the areas of second/foreign language teaching and learning, pragmatic development, e-learning, and teacher cognition.

Towards Establishing Standards for Children's Stories

Huda M. Saif*

Arabic Language and Literature, Amman Arab University, Amman, Jordan

Lina Ali Mahmoud Al-Jarrah

Arabic Language and Literature, Amman Arab University, Amman, Jordan

Faisal Faleh Alasmar Alrqbban

Arabic Language and Literature, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Majid M. E. Al-Bahrat

Arabic Language and Literature, Al-Zaytuna University, Amman, Jordan

Rab'aa A. Sninah

Arabic Language and Literature, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Abstract—This study aimed to determine key criteria for developing narrative compositions for children aged 6 to 9 years. This study examined narratives created from 2000 to 2014 to assess their linguistic and cultural value, as well as identify any limitations or complexities that may not be suitable for the target audience. The study also assessed the degree to which authors of children's literature followed these criteria. The study employed a descriptive-analytical approach and a researcher-developed tool to gather and analyze data, leading to multiple findings. Deficiencies and limitations were found in narratives for young children, but there were also positive aspects in terms of vocabulary, terminology, sentence structure, idiomatic expressions, and overall suitability for young audiences. The study found that the current narrative output does not sufficiently consider the developmental needs of children. The researchers recommended establishing standards to improve children's narrative production in line with their developmental stages. The recommendations were stated in the research's conclusion.

Index Terms—children's literature, children's stories, standards for children's stories

I. INTRODUCTION

In Jordan, there has been a notable surge in interest in children's literature, particularly from the year 2000 to 2014, spanning a period of three decades. The burgeoning number of publications in this domain and the emergence of fresh authors are indicative of the growing interest in this area. Furthermore, there has been a notable enhancement in the caliber of literature produced by Jordanian publishing firms, coupled with the participation of select governmental entities in promoting children's literature. The increasing attention given to the subject matter has necessitated the provision of resources that aid Jordanian writers in enhancing their literary output, fostering their competencies, and advancing the domain of children's literature in Jordan in accordance with established benchmarks for children's narratives. These guidelines facilitate authors in utilizing a language in their narratives that is proximate to the realm of juveniles, devoid of intricacy, and captivating for children to engage with (Shehata, 1994). A curation of narratives intended for children was conducted, utilizing standards that were pertinent to the subject matter of the investigation. The aforementioned criteria encompass narratives that are most proximate to the child's immediate environment, narratives that are composed in prose and thus afford greater command over language and phrasing in contrast to poetry, and narratives that enjoy a more extensive dissemination. During the study period, there was a notable disparity in the quantity of literary works produced by Jordanian authors, with a significantly higher number of stories than poetry pieces.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kucirkova (2019) investigated the impact of children's literature on psychological and linguistic development, emphasizing the need for critical evaluation of various genres. The study revealed that children's reading significantly influences personality development and integration, instilling religious, educational, social, cultural, and other values.

* Corresponding Author

Paris et al. (2014) explored the connection between children's reading and character development, highlighting its relevance in contemporary literature studies and educational programs for children. Children's literature was found to promote positive character traits while discouraging delinquency, deviance, intolerance, and extremism, contributing to cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development.

Savsar (2018) focused on how global children's literature, particularly storytelling, affects displaced child characters and found that it enhances their personalities, teaching resilience, emotional healing, spirituality, empathy, and compassion. In "Poetics of Children's Literature" (Shavit, 2014), the impact of children's reading on character development and its reflection of evolving cultural attitudes about childhood were examined. The study highlighted the growing recognition of children's literature as a valuable tool for education and character development, contrasting with previous views that underestimated its literary significance.

Study Novelty and Importance

This unique study explores a wide range of Jordanian children's stories for 6-9 years-old, departing from the theoretical focus in contemporary literary criticism. It emphasizes inclusivity by examining how these stories shape children's personalities, impacting children's literature development and education. Moreover, the study delves into the overlooked realms of early childhood development, storytelling, language, and creative education, offering valuable insights for crafting age-appropriate stories. These insights have the potential to enhance learning for children aged 6-9 across different levels.

III. METHODOLOGY

Problem Statement and Study Questions

The study critiques Jordanian children's storytelling for lacking discipline, commitment, and age-appropriate content. It aims to establish criteria and principles for children's literature that support academic, personal, and social development, addressing specific research questions:

1. What are the developmental characteristics of children aged 6-9 years?
2. What is the linguistic vocabulary of children in the age range of 6-9 years?
3. What are the appropriate specifications for words, expressions, and linguistic structures for children in the age range of 6-9 years?
4. To what extent do children's story writers in Jordan adhere to the literary, creative, and artistic standards and characteristics in the field of storytelling for the age group of 6-9 years? From this, the following sub-questions arise:
 5. Are the appropriate artistic and linguistic standards considered in producing children's stories?
 6. Are the developmental characteristics of childhood considered in producing children's stories?
 7. Do authors rely on necessary sources and references for accurate scientific documentation of knowledge and information when producing children's stories?
 8. Do authors of children's stories in Jordan possess evaluation criteria and standards for stories before they reach the recipient, especially the child?

Data collection and study instrument

The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach to achieve its objectives.

Validity and Reliability of the study tool

Study Population and Sample

The study population consists of all fictional texts that were authored between the years 2000 and 2014. It was challenging for the researchers to precisely determine the quantitative and qualitative aspects of this literary output because they could not encompass all the works produced during this period. Instead, she relied on an estimation based on the available fictional productions. Therefore, a sample of fictional texts from the study population was employed for the research. The study sample represents 25% of the fictional output that the researchers came across, and this sample was randomly selected.

Validity: The researchers designed the study instrument and presented it to 10 experts in the field. Necessary modifications were made based on their observations and opinions, ensuring the content validity of the instrument.

Reliability: The researchers applied the study instrument to a random sample estimated at 10% of the study population. The instrument was reapplied two weeks later, and a correlation coefficient of 0.9 was obtained between the responses in both applications, indicating a strong reliability of the study instrument.

Data Analysis

The collected information and data from the study sample were transcribed and organized in statistical tables for analysis and deriving study results. This was done to achieve the study objectives and provide answers to the research questions.

Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Developing a set of criteria that contribute to the selection of words, expressions, sentences, and texts that are preferred to be included in early childhood stories (6-9 years). These criteria should be applicable and measurable.

2. Analyzing a number of stories to identify any structural, phonological, or semantic deficiencies or complexities present in the studied stories. This analysis aims to avoid encountering similar issues when producing such types of creative literary stories for children.
3. Highlighting the positive aspects found in some stories, especially in terms of words and expressions that are enjoyable and easily understood by children of this age group. These aspects can be presented in a more formal or colloquial language style, based on the child's level of comprehension.
4. Examining the extent to which Jordanian writers adhere to the necessary standards regarding language, meaning, technical specifications for book production, developmental characteristics of early childhood, and the appropriate framework for the story, including the knowledge and sciences that contribute to the child's development at various levels.

Terminology

Developmental characteristics of children: These characteristics are defined procedurally as the set of traits possessed by children at a specific age stage.

Child's dictionary: It refers to the commonly used words among children within a specific timeframe. However, such dictionaries are scarce in Arabic compared to the availability of English language resources (Mahfouz, 1983).

Story: It is a narrative that revolves around a series of events aimed at resolving the main character's problem. It includes elements such as the problem, the solution, characters, time, place, general environment, events, introduction, narration, dialogue, and conclusion (Al-Rajabi, 2014).

Criteria: In language, criteria refer to what is used as a measure for comparison with others. In this context, it is a set of conditions or rules that serve as the basis for quantitative or qualitative judgment by comparing these conditions with the existing ones to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses (Mahfouz, 1983).

Children's literature: Literature is defined as the production of beautiful prose and poetry that depicts emotions, describes scenes, or presents images of life or nature. (Abd al-Majid, 1961) In the context of children's literature, it is the creative work intended for children, including poetry and prose, presented in a manner suitable for the targeted age group (Zalat, 1997).

Age group: The age group is defined procedurally as a specific time period during which children share cognitive, emotional, and behavioral characteristics within a stage of their development.

Contextual expressions: Expressions are defined procedurally as the words and terms used by children to express their thoughts, which may be challenging for children. Typically, expressions consist of more than one word and also include linguistic structures with specific meanings used in verbal, expressive, emotional, and intellectual situations.

Criteria for Children's Literature

Children's books Writers' standards impact children's reading experiences, despite current children's literature's solid roots. Writers' viewpoints, literary genres, education, society, culture, philosophy, and children's literature's intended age groups affect these criteria's ambiguity and diversity (Abdel-Fattah, 2000). Engaging, developmentally appropriate children's books require certain parameters. First, make the content fun and straightforward to get them reading. Children's literature has special needs, approaches, and requirements. Even simplified, some topics are only for youngsters. Simplified books may also lack child-friendly language (Abdel-Fattah, 2000). Exciting books interest kids. Thirdly, competition analysis and teacher insights reveal children's choices. Documentary-style, realistic novels and authentic science fiction enrich children's literature (Abdel-Fattah, 2000). Finally, children's novels need interesting plots and characters. To encourage reading, engage kids with diverse characters and a well-crafted plot (Abdel-Fattah, 2000).

1. Linguistic and Artistic Criteria Required in Children's Stories for the Age Group of 6-9 Years:

Table 1 provides evidence that writers of children's stories for the age group of 6-9 years vary in their use of linguistic and artistic criteria. Some writers consistently use these criteria, while others occasionally or infrequently employ them. Moreover, a considerable number of writers do not utilize certain linguistic and artistic criteria at all. The results also reveal that the most commonly used criterion is the use of noun phrases in story writing, with 27 writers (approximately 77%) consistently using it. On the other hand, the least used criteria are the selection of sophisticated words close to spoken language and the use of flashbacks in story writing, each utilized by only 10% of the writers (3 writers). The use of violent expressions in stories is also minimal, with only 3% of writers employing them (1 writer).

TABLE 1
LINGUISTIC AND ARTISTIC CRITERIA FOR CHILDREN'S STORIES (AGES 6-9)

Linguistic criteria	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 Using words that indicate more tangible concepts rather than abstract ones.	5	16.7	16	53.3	9	30.0	0	0.0
2 Using short sentences.	6	20.0	14	46.7	10	33.3	0	0.0
3 Avoiding obsolete and unused words.	8	26.7	18	60.0	4	13.3	0	0.0
4 Selecting elegant words that are close to the spoken language.	3	10.0	12	40.0	15	50.0	0	0.0
5 Using conjunction words like "that" and "which" in your sentences.	10	33.3	18	60.0	2	6.7	0	0.0
6 Using words that are difficult to read due to the proximity of similar letter sounds.	4	13.3	13	43.3	11	36.7	2	6.7
7 Using nominal sentences in your storytelling.	23	76.7	7	23.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
8 Emphasizing descriptions in your stories.	13	43.3	16	53.3	1	3.3	0	0.0
9 Emphasizing the expression of emotions in your stories.	12	40.0	15	50.0	3	10.0	0	0.0
10 Using punctuation marks in your writing.	22	73.3	7	23.3	1	3.3	0	0.0
11 Using words with contradictory meanings in your stories.	4	13.3	11	36.7	12	40.0	3	10.0
12 Using a technique of presenting and delaying actions and names in your storytelling.	4	13.3	19	63.3	7	23.3	0	0.0
13 Using rhyming in sentences aimed at children.	5	16.7	10	33.3	12	40.0	3	10.0
14 Using Exaggeration in Children's Story Descriptions.	8	26.7	18	60.0	3	10.0	1	3.3
15 Writing the events of the story in a sequential manner.	20	66.7	8	26.7	2	6.7	0	0.0
16 Using flashback technique in your storytelling.	3	10.0	12	40.0	14	46.7	1	3.3
17 Avoiding the use of swear words in the story.	21	70.0	3	10.0	4	13.3	2	6.7
18 Using words that indicate violence in the story.	1	3.3	4	13.3	12	40.0	13	43.3

2. The criteria related to developmental characteristics, which writers should adhere to for the age group of 6-9 years:

In analyzing Table 2, it becomes evident that writers of children's stories for ages 6-9 exhibit varying levels of consideration for developmental characteristics. Around 60% consistently address the child's affinity for dialogue. Approximately 53% consider the child's interest in independence, self-confidence, and curiosity about life topics. However, only a few writers consistently account for other characteristics. Roughly 7% acknowledge the child's preference for gender segregation, 7% consider their tendency to distance from the family, and 7% recognize their inclination towards introversion.

TABLE 2
CRITERIA DISTRIBUTION FOR CHILDREN'S STORIES (AGES 6-9) DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Developmental Characteristics of Children in the Age Group of 6-9 Years	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 Desire for separation of each gender, males and females.	2	6.7	11	36.7	13	43.3	4	13.3
2 Love for argumentation and discussion.	4	13.3	15	50.0	10	33.3	1	3.3
3 Tendency towards order and adherence to rules.	10	33.3	15	50.0	5	16.7	0	0.0
4 Strong attachment to the family.	14	46.7	13	43.3	2	6.7	1	3.3
5 Attachment to both the father and mother.	15	50.0	13	43.3	1	3.3	1	3.3
6 Desire of the child to imitate older children and teenagers.	7	23.3	8	26.7	8	26.7	7	23.3
7 Interest in the world of imagination.	12	40.0	13	43.3	4	13.3	1	3.3
8 Interest in trips and participation in social activities.	10	33.3	14	46.7	5	16.7	1	3.3
9 Love for competition.	8	26.7	10	33.3	9	30.0	3	10.0
10 Interest in independence and self-confidence.	16	53.3	11	36.7	3	10.0	0	0.0
11 Influence of peers on the child.	10	33.3	10	33.3	9	30.0	1	3.3
12 Curiosity of the child to ask questions about various aspects of life.	16	53.3	13	43.3	1	3.3	0	0.0
13 Interest of the child in having a beautiful appearance.	12	40.0	12	40.0	6	20.0	0	0.0
14 Desire of the child to be very strong.	14	46.7	14	46.7	2	6.7	0	0.0
15 Relationship of the child with other family members.	16	53.3	12	40.0	1	3.3	1	3.3
16 Child's thinking about the Creator and His abilities.	14	46.7	15	50.0	1	3.3	0	0.0
17 Considering the child's awareness of their gender.	5	16.7	11	36.7	13	43.3	1	3.3
18 Ensuring that the heroes of the story are from the same target age group.	4	13.3	13	43.3	13	43.3	0	0.0
19 Love for dialogue.	18	60.0	12	40.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
20 Family rejection.	2	6.7	12	40.0	14	46.7	2	6.7
21 Tendency towards chaos.	6	20.0	12	40.0	11	36.7	1	3.3
22 Child's love for seclusion.	2	6.7	14	46.7	13	43.3	1	3.3

3. The references and sources that writers rely on when writing children's stories for the age group of 6-9 years:

TABLE 3
REFERENCES & SOURCES USED BY WRITERS FOR CHILDREN AGED 6-9

References and Sources	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 Educational Books	7	23.3	7	23.3	14	46.7	2	6.7
2 Books related to children's literature	3	10.0	13	43.3	12	40.0	2	6.7
3 Books related to child psychology	6	20.0	17	56.7	7	23.3	0	0.0
4 Books related to literary criticism	0	0.0	4	13.3	13	43.3	13	43.3
5 Books related to child language	6	20.0	14	46.7	9	30.0	1	3.3
6 Books related to expressive means	6	20.0	11	36.7	12	40.0	1	3.3
7 Heritage books such as "One Thousand and One Nights"	2	6.7	4	13.3	10	33.3	14	46.7
8 Modern electronic communication methods	14	46.7	14	46.7	2	6.7	0	0.0

4. Writers' methods of evaluating stories:

The analysis of Table 4 reveals that approximately 90% of the writers consider children's interests when crafting their stories. Furthermore, around 43% of these writers publish their stories and eagerly await feedback for evaluation. On the other hand, about 33% never present their stories to specialists in children's literature, and roughly 33% do not compare their stories with those of other authors.

TABLE 4
USAGE OF QUALITY STANDARDS IN PRINTING STORIES FOR CHILDREN AGED 6-9 BY WRITERS

The methods of evaluating a story	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 Reading your story to children after writing it.	4	13.3	16	53.3	7	23.3	3	10.0
2 Research on criteria for selecting vocabulary and expressions in stories for 6-9-year-olds.	3	10.0	4	13.3	19	63.3	4	13.3
3 Consulting a language editor to review and edit your writing.	6	20.0	10	33.3	10	33.3	4	13.3
4 Assessing story comprehension in 6-9-year-olds to identify challenging words or phrases.	2	6.7	11	36.7	13	43.3	4	13.3
5 Presenting your story to experts in children's literature.	0	0.0	3	10.0	17	56.7	10	33.3
6 Publishing your stories and waiting for feedback.	13	43.3	12	40.0	5	16.7	0	0.0
7 Comparing your storytelling with the writing of other authors.	1	3.3	5	16.7	14	46.7	10	33.3
8 Paying attention to the reactions of children to the story you have written.	21	70.0	8	26.7	1	3.3	0	0.0
9 Considering the interests of children when writing the story.	27	90.0	3	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

5. The quality standards in printing children's stories are as follows:

The analysis of Table 5 reveals that 80% of the books incorporate colored illustrations in children's stories aimed at the age group of 6 to 9 years. Additionally, approximately 17% of the authors consider the word count of the story, while about 7% pay attention to the number of words per page.

TABLE 5
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ADHERENCE TO QUALITY STANDARDS IN PRINTING CHILDREN'S STORIES (AGES 6-9)

The criteria for printing stories	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 Considering the word count of the story.	5	16.7	10	33.3	12	40.0	3	10.0
2 Considering the number of words per page.	2	6.7	12	40.0	13	43.3	3	10.0
3 Considering the size and format of the book.	4	13.3	8	26.7	15	50.0	3	10.0
4 Using colorful illustrations in the book.	24	80.0	6	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
5 Choosing between close-up or distant shots for the illustrated image.	2	6.7	22	73.3	6	20.0	0	0.0
6 Including multiple elements within the illustration.	2	6.7	17	56.7	10	33.3	1	3.3

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The statistical analysis assessed the linguistic and creative criteria for 6–8 years old children's stories. Key findings:

- Sensory-rich terms:** Only 16.7% of the studied authors used sensory-rich words. 53.3% of authors occasionally utilized sensory-rich words, indicating poor adherence to this essential criterion. 30% rarely used sensory terms.
- Short sentences:** Only 20% of the sample regularly used short sentences in their writing for this age group, demonstrating a lack of attention to their importance. 46.7% used short sentences occasionally.
- Avoiding neglected and unused terms:** Only 26.7% of participants regularly avoided such words, whereas 60% occasionally did so. 13.3% seldom avoided these terms.
- Selection of elegant terms in colloquial language:** Only 10% of participants used such words in their 6-8 years old essays. 40% occasionally chose such words, while 50% rarely did.

5. **Use of linking words like "who" and "that" in sentences:** 7% of participants omitted "who" and "that" in age-appropriate stories, showing limited attention to this criterion. Meanwhile, 60% used these conjunctions infrequently, with only 10% consistently incorporating them.
6. **Terms with near letter sounds that are hard to read:** 3% of participants always used such terms, while 43.3% sometimes did. However, 36.7% rarely used them, and 6.7% never used them, suggesting inadequate consideration of the reading difficulties faced by children at this age.
7. **Nominal sentences over verbal sentences in story writing:** Most participants used nominal sentences in their stories for this age group, matching children's preference for sentences that start with nouns, which are more engaging to read.
8. **Description in stories:** 3% of individuals consistently described their stories, whereas 53.3% rarely did. 3.3% is rarely described. Most writers used descriptions.
9. **Describing emotions in stories:** 40% usually, 50% occasionally, and 10% rarely did so. Some writers neglected emotional details, but most did.
10. **Story writing punctuation:** 3% of writers always utilized punctuation, 23.3% sometimes, and 3.3% rarely. This highlights how most participants punctuate their stories well.
11. **Narrative writing with contradictory words:** approximately 13.3% used contradictory words, while 36.7% did so occasionally. Around 40% used such vocabulary infrequently, and 10% never used it. This indicates that many participants employed words with multiple meanings, possibly overlooking the potential confusion they might create for young children, who tend to see words as having only one meaning.
12. 3% of the sample used introducing and delaying verbs and nouns in tale writing. These authors used this strategy in stories for 6-8-year-olds. The introduction and delay technique, which is frequently used in Arabic, can increase children's reading engagement, but the observed percentage is low.
13. **Rhyme Patterns in Children's Stories:** 7% of participants acknowledged rhyme in children's stories. These stories targeted 6–8-year-olds. 33.3% reported occasional use, and 40% reported infrequent use. Additionally, 10% of individuals do not rhyme.
14. **Hyperbole in children's stories:** 7% of the sample used exaggerated words in children's stories. 60% used this aesthetic device sometimes. 10% of the respondents used this storytelling style infrequently, while 3.3% said they never used exaggerated language.
15. 7% of sample participants wrote tales of events sequentially. 26.7% occasionally used this method, while 6.7% rarely wrote tales of events sequentially.
16. **Children's story flashbacks were explored:** 10% of the sample used flashbacks in their narratives, according to the study. 40% of individuals used this strategy occasionally, and 46.7% rarely. 3.3% of participants reported never using flashbacks (Mafela, 1997).
17. **Swear Word Usage and Narrative Influence:** 70% of the group doesn't swear, and 10% of the sample occasionally uses similar terminology in their stories. 13.3% of people rarely use such terms, while 6.7% never do. Some writers used these terms to guide the youngster toward a narrative outcome during the dialogue. This reinforces that such words are wrong and socially unacceptable.
18. **The study explored narrative aggression:** 3% used violent language often, 13.3% occasionally, 40% infrequently, and 43.3% never. Positive outcome.
19. **To maintain continuity, the main characters should match the intended age group.** 3% of participants always consider this when writing stories for 6-9-year-olds. 43.3% of respondents occasionally contemplate this, whereas 43.3% rarely do. Many writers in the study sample do not prioritize age-appropriate characters, even though children often prefer them.
20. In the survey, 60.0% of participants prioritized conversation in their 6-9-year-old stories. 40.0% said they occasionally use conversation in their stories. The sample writers' awareness of dialogue's importance in children's lives is positive, as shown by the percentages.
21. 7% of study participants mentioned family rejection, which they frequently included in their tales for 6–9 years old. 40% of respondents occasionally incorporate familial rejection into their experiences, whereas 46.7% rarely do. Western literature is more likely than Arabic literature to address familial rejection in a minority of youngsters. The researchers hypothesize that our societies' strong familial bonds may have reduced the sample's emphasis on this trait.
22. **Tendency toward Disorder:** 0% of study participants consistently included this feature in their narratives for 6-9-year-olds. 40.0% claimed occasional inclusion and 36.7% infrequent use. 3.3% disregard this property completely. Several sample members focused on this trait, requiring special attention. Children may sometimes be naughty, but they usually follow rules and instructions.
23. 7% of the study's participants wrote stories for 6-9-year-olds on a child's love of solitude. 46.7% occasionally included this trait, while 43.3% rarely did. 3.3% disregard this property completely. The study's creators seem to value the attribute that's hard for some kids (Joyson & Michael, 2021).

References and sources relied upon by the author in writing children's stories for the age group of 6-8 years.

1. **Educational books:** 3% of survey respondents always use instructional materials when writing for this age group (6-9 years), whereas 23.3% occasionally do. 46.7% rarely use educational literature, and 6.7% never do. These percentages are low, showing that sample authors are not interested in following educational rules in their writing for this age range.
2. **Books related to children's literature:** 0% of respondents constantly refer to children's literature before writing for this age range (6-9 years), whereas 43.3% occasionally do. 40.0% rarely mention such works, and 6.7% never do. The sample authors' poor use of children's literature books suggests they don't realize how much they can improve their writing and make it more acceptable for this age group.
3. **Books related to child psychology:** 0% of respondents always use child psychology books before writing for this age range (6-9 years), whereas 56.7% rarely do so. 23.3% rarely cite such literature. Most of the sample lacks a theoretical foundation in child psychology to better comprehend the intended age range in their works.
4. **Books related to literary criticism:** None of the sample respondents said they always considered this in their 6-9-year-old stories. 13.3% occasionally consider it, 43.3% seldom do, and 43.3% never do. The researchers think the sample doesn't want to read literary criticism or understand children's literature or what they write. To explain why, more research is needed (Dredge et al., 2016).
5. **Books related to children's language:** 0% of respondents always consulted children's language books before writing for this age group (6-9 years), whereas 46.7% occasionally did so. 30.0% rarely mention children's language books, and 3.3% never do. This shows a lack of interest and a failure to use age-appropriate language.
6. **Books related to expressive means:** 0% of respondents always consulted expressive means books before writing for this age range (6-9 years), whereas 36.7% rarely did so. 40.0% rarely mention such works, and 3.3% never do. Even though these books help writers tell stories, some of the sample didn't realize their relevance.
7. **Heritage books such as "One Thousand and One Nights" and "Kalila and Dimna":** 7% of respondents always use heritage books to improve their writing for 6-9-year-olds, while 13.3% do so occasionally. 33.3% rarely read heritage books, and 46.7% never do. Despite the importance of referring to literary heritage books in honing writing talent and making the author more professional, most sample respondents did not do so, indicating a lack of awareness among some sample individuals.
8. **Modern Electronic Communication Methods:** 7% of respondents said they use current technology communication to keep up with 6-9-year-old children's stories. 46.7% occasionally and 6.7% rarely do so. These percentages show good interaction between sample participants and modern communication methods.

Evaluation Methods Used by Authors for Children's Stories Targeted at the Age Group of 6-8 Years

1. **Reading the story to children after writing it:** 3% of respondents always read their stories to children after composing them, while 53.3% occasionally do (Dredge et al., 2016). 23.3% rarely do this, and 10.0% never do. Only a small fraction of sample participants uses this strategy to evaluate stories and determine their acceptability for children, despite its importance. This suggests that some sample participants are unaware of how this approach improves stories for this age range.
2. **Seeking references that provide criteria for selecting vocabulary and expressions in children's stories for the age group of 6-8 years:** 0% of respondents said they always try to locate references for choosing language and expressions in 6-9 years old children's books. 13.3% do it occasionally, 63.3% rarely, and 13.3% never. 10% is low and suggests that sample participants don't prioritize choosing appropriate terms for children this age. Lack of awareness slows finding a solution, delaying the growth of children's stories and making them less engaging to youngsters.
3. **Linguistic editing of the story:** 0% of respondents said they always use a language editor for 6-9-year-old stories. 33.3% do it occasionally, 33.3% rarely, and 13.3% never. Some sample participants were unaware of the value of linguistic editing, which improves story language. A linguistic editor may know more than the writer.
4. **Reading stories to children and encountering difficulties in understanding certain words and expressions by children:** 7% of sample respondents read children's stories to their 6-9-year-olds, who had trouble understanding some terms and idioms. 36.7% said this happens occasionally, 43.3% rarely, and 13.3% never. The researchers feel that these replies are imprecise or that people who read stories to children did not apply the optimal way to assess the difficulty of language meant for children (Chen, 2006). The researchers detected difficult terms in children's stories during reading workshops.

Consideration of story printing standards

1. **Considering the word count of the story:** 7% of respondents always consider the story's word count adequate for 6-9-year-olds. 33.3% said they occasionally consider the word count, 40.0% rarely do, and 10.0% never do. It is important to note that a narrative for 6-9-year-olds should not surpass a certain amount of lines or words (Lloyd et al., 2022). Despite its importance, most sample respondents did not consider this matter. This suggests that children's book authors writing for this age group are unaware of this criterion's value.
2. **Consideration of Word Count on Each Page:** 7% of respondents said they always consider putting a certain number of words on each page of a 6-9-year-old book. 40.0% occasionally do, 43.3% rarely do, and 10.0% never do. Since youngsters aren't well-trained in reading, the researchers think reading and comprehension should be considered at this age. Each book page should have a few words. However, most authors who write for this age

group do not consider this matter in their printed books, demonstrating a lack of understanding among this demographic about the importance of this criterion.

3. **Consideration of Book Page Size and Format:** 3% of respondents said they always consider book form and size for 6-9-year-olds. 26.7% occasionally do, 50.0% rarely do, and 10.0% never do. This age group values book size and format. Many youngsters love square books or uncommon shapes like "books cut in the shape of a flower, a star, a triangle, or resembling a house, etc." (Adnan H., 2015). This study found that some sample respondents do not prioritize book size and format for this age group.
4. **Use of Colored Illustrations in Children's Stories:** 0% of survey respondents always use colored illustrations in their books for 6-9-year-olds, whereas 20.0% rarely do. This high percentage shows that survey respondents understand the relevance of colored pictures for children this age. Coloring entices kids to read.
5. **Close-Up or Wide Shot of the Illustrated Image in Children's Stories:** 7% of sample respondents constantly evaluate if the illustrated image in their 6-9 years old stories should be close-up or wide. 73.3% said they sometimes do, whereas 20.0% rarely do. Close-up shots are good for kids this age because they don't show much.
6. **Presence of Multiple Elements in the Image:** 7% of sample respondents said they always consider several visual aspects in their 6-9-year-old stories. 56.7% do this occasionally, 33.3% do it seldom, and 3.3% never consider it. Too many pictures can distract and impair attentiveness in children's stories for this age range (Chen, 2006).

The study found a difference in Jordanian children's reading, particularly for 6-9-year-olds. The researchers think the study confirms this disparity. Many of the study sample's authors fail to meet target audience writing requirements. The researchers also find that some authors' culture, education, and specialization prevent them from using scientific sources, knowledge, societal culture, and human civilization to benefit from their linguistic, intellectual, moral, and philosophical contents in preparing the required narrative text. This emphasizes the importance of sociology, social psychology, educational psychology, and the language sciences and their branches.

The researchers believe that the study's results indicate significant warning signs for the future of this literature if there are no proficient writers with language skills, scientific knowledge, and expertise to produce advanced literature that serves children's culture at all levels and adheres to the criteria examined in this academic dissertation, which hopes for its acceptance and understanding of all its objectives and aspirations.

V. CONCLUSION

This study examines how authors of children's writing for 6-8-year-olds incorporate developmental traits and linguistic and creative criteria (Woodard & Pollak, 2020). The findings show both strengths and weaknesses in young-reader fiction. Language and art suggest various areas for advancement. Given the importance of sensory-rich terms in boosting children's creativity and comprehension, 16.7% of authors use them. In a similar vein, just 20% of writers consistently use short sentences, highlighting the need for sentence structure and readability. Connective terms like "who" and "that" indicate a low level of thoughtfulness (10%), offering a way to improve narrative coherence and fluency. The text's capacity to engage young readers may be hampered by the 10% use of complex terminology next to informal language.

The study also shows writers' criterion proficiency. 43.3 % describe, whereas 40% feel. Deliberately using descriptive words and phrases makes the story more vivid and emotional. Punctuation marks—73.3% of the text—clarify and guide young readers. Children's growth criteria display judgment. 60% of authors value conversation, indicating teens' social and communicative nature. 66.7% write narrative events sequentially. The developmentally organized narrative may explain this tendency. Some places require more work. 13.3% of writers use age-appropriate protagonists. This may help young readers relate to fictional characters. This study illuminates the challenges of writing narratives for 6- to 8-year-olds. The study analyzes these stories' language and art while considering this age group's growth. The findings stress the importance of continuing improvement and adaptation in children's literature to maintain its relevance, appeal, and influence on young readers. Writers can improve children's literature experiences by using their abilities. This encourages reading and cognitive and emotional development. This study also provides a foundation for future research and the creation of guidelines to help authors write high-quality children's literature that empowers and connects with young readers.

Findings

The present study presents findings pertaining to the examination of linguistic and artistic criteria in children's stories targeting the age group of 6-8 years.

1. The utilization of vocabulary that appeals to the senses: A mere 16.7% of the authors included in the sample utilized language that evokes sensory experiences, suggesting a notable disregard for this significant criterion. A significant portion of the participants (53.3%) indicated that they occasionally employed sensory-rich language in their communication, whereas a substantial proportion (30%) reported infrequent utilization of such vocabulary.
2. The utilization of short sentences in the writings for this age group was consistently observed in only 20% of the sample, indicating a relatively low level of attention given to this aspect. Nevertheless, it was found that 46.7% of the participants acknowledged employing short sentences on an occasional basis.

3. The utilization of neglected and unused words was consistently avoided by a minority of participants (26.7%), while a majority (60%) engaged in occasional avoidance, and a small percentage (13.3%) rarely refrained from using such words.
4. A mere 10% of the participants opted for the use of eloquent words that closely resemble colloquial language in their compositions intended for children between the ages of 6 and 8. Furthermore, 40% of the participants in the study indicated that they occasionally chose to use such words, whereas 50% of them reported rarely selecting them.
5. In the sample population, it was observed that 10% of individuals consistently employed conjunctions such as "الَّذِي" (who) and "الَّتِي" (which/that) in the sentences of the stories they composed for the age range of 6-9 years. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the participants (60%) reported occasional utilization of conjunctions, whereas a minority (6.7%) abstained from their usage entirely.
6. In the study sample, it was found that 13.3% of individuals consistently utilized words with similar letter sounds, whereas 43.3% occasionally employed such words. Furthermore, it was found that 36.7% of the participants in the sample exhibited infrequent utilization of said items, while 6.7% abstained from using them entirely.
7. The prevalence of nominal sentences in story writing was observed among the participants in the sample, who demonstrated a sufficient understanding of this criterion when crafting narratives for this particular age group.
8. In the context of narratives, it was observed that 43.3% of the participants consistently incorporated descriptions within their stories, whereas 53.3% engaged in this practice occasionally. Merely 3.3% of the participants indicated infrequent inclusion of descriptions.
9. In the analysis of the sample population, it was observed that a significant proportion, specifically 40%, consistently incorporated descriptions of emotions within their narratives. Additionally, a slightly larger percentage, namely 50%, occasionally included such emotional portrayals in their storytelling. A mere 10% of the participants exhibited infrequent articulation of emotional experiences.
10. The utilization of punctuation marks in the context of story writing was found to be prevalent among a substantial majority (73.3%) of the participants, indicating a noteworthy and favorable practice.
11. The utilization of words possessing contradictory meanings in the context of narrative composition was observed among the majority of the participants in the sample, accounting for 36.7% of the total. Conversely, a notable proportion of 10% abstained from employing such words altogether.
12. The utilization of the technique of introduction and delay in verbs and nouns in the context of story writing was found to be employed by a mere 13.3% of the participants included in the sample. These individuals specifically incorporated this technique in their stories, which were intended for children between the ages of 6 and 8.
13. The utilization of rhyme in sentences within children's stories was reported by a mere 16.7% of the participants included in the sample. These stories were specifically intended for children between the ages of 6 and 8.
14. The utilization of hyperbolic language in depictions within children's narratives was reported by 26.7% of the participants in the sample.
15. In the study, it was found that a substantial majority (66.7%) of the participants in the sample expressed a preference for sequentially organizing the events of their stories.
16. The utilization of the flashback technique in the composition of children's stories was observed to be consistent among only 10% of the individuals included in the sample.
17. The majority of the sample participants, specifically 70%, refrain from employing profanity in their narratives.
18. The utilization of violent language within the narrative is observed to be absent in 43.3% of the individuals comprising the sample population.

The research findings pertain to the criteria based on the developmental characteristics of children within the age range of 6-8 years.

1. Ensuring that the protagonists of the narrative belong to the same specific age demographic. A relatively small proportion (13.3%) of the participants in the sample consistently took into account this particular attribute when constructing their narratives.
2. A sizable portion (60%) of the sample participants consistently valued the quality of love for dialogue when writing their narratives.
3. The characteristic of family rejection was consistently considered by a minority (6.7%) of the respondents in the sample.
4. A notable proportion (20%) of the participants in the sample consistently exhibited a proclivity towards chaos as a prominent characteristic in their narratives.
5. The characteristic of a child's love for solitude was consistently mentioned by a minority (6.7%) of the participants in the sample when recounting their experiences.

The results suggest that there are areas for enhancement in the adherence to linguistic and artistic standards in children's stories targeted at the age range of 6-8 years. Furthermore, it is worth noting that although certain writers demonstrate an understanding of developmental traits in their narratives, there exists potential for enhancement in the consideration of specific elements pertaining to the preferences and experiences of the intended audience within the target age range.

Implications

This study shows that many children's authors don't use sensory-rich vocabulary and succinct sentence patterns. These factors engage and aid young readers; therefore, writers must pay attention to them. Advanced vocabulary, informal language, and conjunctions can improve young people's literature experiences. Many writers utilize terms that sound alike, which may confuse young readers. To write for young readers, authors must know their reading and cognitive capacities. Young readers enjoy stories with descriptive and emotional aspects. The sample shows that many tales incorporate descriptions. Encourage emotional writers. Children interact with tale characters and events through emotions. Writers must balance innovative narrative with readability. Flashbacks and contradictions add narrative intricacy. Literary devices can confuse young readers.

The study reveals familial rejection and chaos themes are neglected due to cultural and societal conventions. Encouraging culturally sensitive writers to explore varied issues can enrich children's literature and provide young readers with new views. The writers' emphasis on dialogue and rhyming is encouraging. These aspects make stories more engaging and rhythmic for younger listeners. Children's stories can be improved by encouraging conversation and rhyming. The study found that many authors avoid violent language in their stories. Positive language and moral themes can help young readers develop morality. The results imply that few writers regularly include protagonists of the same age as their audience. Literature with relatable characters of similar ages helps increase children's involvement and empathy. The study emphasizes language, art, and topics in 6-8-year-old children's literature. Careful consideration and advocacy can help authors write more engaging, relatable, and suitable children's fiction. This improves reading and encourages a lifelong love of reading. These findings can help educators choose and teach high-quality, meaningful literature that enhances children's cognitive and emotional development.

Recommendations

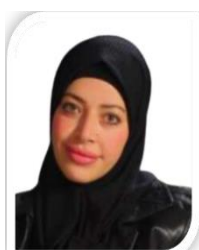
The researchers recommend the following:

1. The necessity of focusing on standards and ensuring the quality of texts during the production of narrative texts for children at different stages of their development.
2. The importance of conducting educational training courses for children's story writers, delivered by experts in the field, with the aim of increasing awareness among children's story authors regarding the importance of writing according to linguistic standards, making their stories easier, smoother, and more appealing to children.
3. The requirement for narrative texts to undergo arbitration before being published and broadcast to all segments of society.
4. The need to educate children's story writers about the developmental characteristics of children, considering them while writing for children.
5. The necessity of enriching narrative texts with visual elements (illustrations) appropriate to the story content, prepared by specialists.
6. The importance of promoting gender equality, starting from the story's title and extending to the role of the protagonist, with the aim of changing stereotypical images in society and creating an atmosphere of social justice in the children's environment.
7. The importance of paying attention to the geography of the story, taking into account the place, time, individuals present, and the possibilities of human existence from early childhood stages to an individual's life in society.
8. The need for further research and studies in this field, particularly in the linguistic standards for children in the age group of 6-9 years.
9. The necessity of assigning the task of developing a comprehensive guide to an academic institution in the fields of education and culture, which would serve as a guide for children's story writers, encompassing the appropriate linguistic standards for them as well as suitable and unsuitable topics, in addition to the writing techniques that can be used by authors targeting the age group of 6-9 years.

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students alike.

Huda M. Saif, a distinguished Jordanian scholar, was born in Amman in 1981. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Jerash University, a Master's degree from the University of Jordan, and a Doctorate degree from the University of Jordan, all focused on Arabic Language and Literature. She began her career as an Arabic Language Teacher and later conducted courses on storytelling and screenplay writing. She also worked at the Strategic Studies Center at the University of Jordan. Currently, she serves as a lecturer for Arabic Language at the University of Jordan and has contributed research articles to publications like *Andalus Magazine*. Her research focuses on children's story standards in Jordan and the assessment of creative teaching skills among Arabic Language teachers. Dr. Saif's unwavering dedication to Arabic language education and cultural enrichment cements her as a prominent figure in Arabic Language and Literature, inspiring educators and



Lina Ali Mahmoud Al-Jarrah is an Associate Professor specializing in Arabic Language and Linguistics at the Arab Open University's College of Arts and Sciences in the Department of Basic Sciences.

She earned her Ph.D. and Master's degrees in Arabic Language and Linguistics from Yarmouk University. Additionally, her Bachelor's degree in Arabic Language and its Literature is from Al al-Bayt University. She spent a year as a part-time lecturer at Yarmouk University and has been teaching at the Arab Open University since 2016. Her research contributions include numerous papers published in various Arabic journals and prestigious Scopus-indexed ones. She has also actively participated in both local and international conferences and has benefited from various workshops and courses that have enhanced her role as a faculty member.

Faisal Faleh Alasmar Alrqbban is a Jordanian national who was born in Amman in 1982. He holds a PhD in Literary and Critical Studies from the World Islamic Science & Education University (WISUE), a Master of Arabic Language and Literature from WISUE, and a Bachelor of Arabic Language and Literature from Al-Balqa Applied University.

He has over 6 years of experience as a faculty member at the University of Jordan, Al-Balqa Applied University, and Al-Israa University. He is also an Arabic teacher and has conducted research on the challenges of teaching Arabic language to non-native speakers.

Dr. Alrqbban is a passionate educator and researcher with a strong commitment to the Arabic language and its literature. He is committed to providing his students with the highest quality education possible and to helping them develop their love of Arabic language and culture. He is also interested in conducting research on the challenges and opportunities of teaching Arabic language to non-native speakers.

Majid M. E. Al-Bahrat is a Jordanian scholar specializing in Arabic Language and Literature. He holds a Ph.D. in Arabic Language from Yarmouk University, earned in 2015, and has completed his Master's and Bachelor's degrees in the same field. Currently affiliated with Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan in Amman, Dr. Al-Bahrat was born on October 16, 1981.

His Ph.D. dissertation, completed in 2015, focused on "Textual Coherence in the Sermons and Commandments of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq" at Yarmouk University. He serves as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Arabic Language at Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan and has taught part-time at various institutions, including the University of Jordan, Petra University, and Princess Sumaya University of Arabic Language. He offers courses in grammar, Arabic communication skills, research study skills, and more.

Dr. Al Baharat actively participates in academic conferences and workshops, including the 2022 Conference on Teaching Foreign Languages and Modern Approaches at Istanbul University. He has presented research papers on topics such as "Digital Literature." His research contributions are published in reputable journals, such as "Dirasat Journal" and "Jerash Journal for Research and Studies." His publications cover diverse subjects, including the characterization of women in novels and textual coherence mechanisms in speeches.



Rab'aa A. Sninah, born on May 28, 1979, is a scholar and educator with expertise in Arabic Language and Literature. She earned her Bachelor's degree from the University of Jordan in 2021, followed by a Diploma from Al-Balqa Applied University in 2017. Her commitment to excellence is evident in her 2023 Master's degree with an excellent grade from the University of Jordan.

Driven by her passion for language and literature, Rab'aa is an Arabic language instructor at Ajyal Al-Ilm School in Amman, Jordan, since 2022. Beyond her teaching role, she is a distinguished University Poet, securing first place at the University of Jordan in 2020 and among Jordanian Universities in 2021. Poetry is one of her cherished hobbies.

Mrs. Sninah is a skilled educator and scholar known for her dedication to Arabic Language and Literature. Her academic journey includes earning a Master's degree and recognition as a University Poet. As an Arabic language teacher, she continues to shape young minds in Amman, Jordan, leaving a significant mark in her field.

Assessing the Efficacy of Artificial Intelligence-Enabled EFL Learning and Teaching in Saudi Arabia: Perceptions, Perspectives, and Prospects

Mohammad Jamshed*

English Department, College of Science & Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

Abduh Almashy

English Department, Al Qunfudah University College, Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia

Fatimah Albedah

English Language and Translation Department, College of Science and Theoretical Studies, Saudi Electronic University (SEU), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Wahaj Unnisa Warda

English Department, College of Science & Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—This study attempts to investigate Saudi EFL learners' perceptions, perspectives, and the prospects for AI-enabled learning and teaching in higher education in Saudi Arabia. As the study deals with how certain independent variables (levels of study, gender, and employment profile of learners' parents) shape the dependent variables (perceptions, perspectives, and prospects), a quantitative approach (descriptive quantitative design) was selected, and a questionnaire was prepared with partial adoption of modified items from existing studies. A simple random sampling method was used to collect responses from 258 Saudi EFL learners studying at different levels of the undergraduate programs at the College of Business Administration and College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, KSA. The findings revealed that Saudi EFL learners were highly positive in their perceptions and perspectives toward AI-enabled learning, and they strongly favored the adoption of AI-powered tools for learning and teaching a language. It was also revealed that the Saudi higher education system offered great prospects for the integration of AI-powered technology into EFL classrooms. One-way ANOVA analysis revealed that there is no statistically significant difference among the study participants based on gender and parents' employment profile. However, a certain difference of statistical significance was found among them based on their study levels. The study holds implications as the findings will help the course instructors and administrators for effective integrations of AI-enabled technology to equip students with effective English skills.

Index Terms—AI-enabled learning, effective English language skills, employment profile of learners' parents, Saudi EFL learners' perceptions

I. INTRODUCTION

The unusual times of the pandemic and its aftermath saw an increasing and unprecedented adoption of technology in educational institutions and academic environments across the globe. The socially altered conditions brought about unexpected changes in all spheres of human life including education. As a result, the use of technology became an effective tool for continuing with educational activities and led to new experiences and significant improvements in education. Some technologies exclusively utilize artificial intelligence which has emerged as a driver for learning and teaching activities in the post-pandemic world (Hockly, 2023). AI integration in educational institutions has enhanced technology-based learning environments apps and learning experiences (Khan et al., 2023). The utilization of artificially intelligent powered technology for classroom instruction has increased in prominence in the last few years (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). As a result, it is becoming an increasingly common practice in the field of learning and teaching foreign languages. These AI-enabled resources offer innovative techniques and fresh perspectives on the task of acquiring language understanding as well as enhancing the different skills of ESL/EFL learners (Alotaibi, 2023).

In the years following the pandemic, as educational technology became more sophisticated, universities and academic institutions displayed interest in integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into education (Asthana & Hazela, 2020). In their attempts to conform to the changing tastes of the learners and meet their changing learning styles, teaching pedagogies and methodologies underwent tremendous changes. For example, from being teacher-centered, it

* Corresponding Author

became technology-driven learner-centered. With an increasing requirement for English language proficiency on a global level, technology-driven language learning and teaching occupy pivotal roles. Thus, English language teachers and students need to understand how AI could enhance learning and teaching (Alotaibi, 2023).

The last few decades have witnessed an increased use of computers and technology in educational institutions. However, computer-based training and computer-aided training lacked specialized and individualized attention to the specific problems and issues of students (Back et al., 1996). As an alternative, artificial intelligence is increasingly being touted as a strategic tool for education (Seldon & Abidoeye, 2018). Today, the emergence of AI-powered learning and teaching bridged this gap and provided learners and teachers with specially designed Apps to address their specific needs and requirements. AI is an effective tool for learning as it can reduce teachers' and students' workloads and help instructors engage with students using new and innovative ways such as gamification, and individualized and tailored learning (Loeckx, 2016). We, now, have AI-powered apps for learning Grammar, improving pronunciation, and developing reading and writing skills, etc.

As Saudi Arabia embarks upon its 2030 ambitious mission of economic diversification and massive social transformation, developing digital infrastructure in Saudi Arabia's higher educational institutions draws the attention of policymakers and administrators. As a result, there is a greater push toward integrating AI-enabled learning and teaching into EFL classrooms. In addition, the tech-savvy young generation of Saudi Arabia actively responds to AI learning and teaching in EFL classrooms as it offers them novel opportunities to experiment with new and innovative learning and teaching pedagogies. While there are serious attempts to adopt AI-powered tools, there is a lack of substantive research focusing especially on Saudi EFL learners' perceptions and perspectives on the integration of AI-enabled learning and teaching into EFL classrooms.

A. Research Problem

Saudi Arabia emphasizes the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) across multiple domains. As a result, universities and educational institutions are equipped with state-of-the-art digital infrastructure. However, Alotaibi and Alshehri (2023) argue that AI-enabled learning and teaching is in its early stage in the kingdom. As a result, there is a lack of substantial literature dealing with students' perceptions and perspectives on how they respond to the integration of AI-enabled technology in EFL classrooms. This study is an attempt to bridge this gap and investigate Saudi EFL learners' perceptions and perspectives on the adoption of AI-powered tools in EFL classrooms.

B. Research Purpose Statement

The purpose of the research study is to investigate Saudi EFL learners' perceptions, perspectives, and prospects Saudi university education offers for the integration of AI-enabled powered technology into EFL classrooms. It also seeks to investigate how the differences in Saudi EFL learners' demography shape their perceptions and perspectives on AI-powered learning and teaching.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Aljohani (2021) examined Saudi EFL learner's and teachers' perspectives on using AI to enhance English language learning. A closed-ended questionnaire was designed and used to collect data from 5 teachers and 16 students. Qualitative analysis showed that both teachers and students believed that adopting artificial intelligence could enhance English language learning. Zheng et al. (2021) discussed how the AIED has gained popularity as education adopts AI-based technologies. The study asserted that no quantitative meta-analysis had ever investigated AI's impact on perspective and comprehension. Artificial intelligence (AI) has a significant effect on learning achievement and an insignificant effect on learning perception, according to a meta-analysis of twenty-four studies involving 2908 participants from 2001 to 2020. Utami and Winarni (2023) examined perceptions, challenges, and recommendations for using AI in Indonesian academic writing instruction. It chose three central Java senior high schools, gathered data via Likert scale questionnaires and extensive mobile instant messaging talks, and utilized quantitative and qualitative approaches. The findings showed that AI-enabled applications assist learners in performing their academic research, especially in the planning phase of determining and creating topics. It also showed that learners prefer to use AI technology in the classroom to enhance learning. Du and Gao (2022) investigated determinants of teacher adoption with the help of technology acceptance theories. Based on previous investigations, the VAM framework was employed to develop a multi-criteria decision-making model with 10 sub-factors and four primary variables. The results showed that efficiency, effectiveness, and complexity were the primary variables guiding EFL teachers to accept AI-based applications. The study offers insights into teachers' perspectives on the adoption procedures of AI applications in addition to the component evaluations.

Hussain (2020) investigated university students' and teachers' perspectives on artificial intelligence (AI) powered learning and teaching. Two questionnaires were developed for collecting data from 323 university students and 196 teachers. Descriptive analysis showed favorable perspectives among university students and professors concerning AI and its pedagogical role. Limna et al. (2022) examined digital learning and education with AI-powered tools. With the help of systematic review and narrative analysis, the data was obtained from Scopus, Google Scholar, EBSCO, and Web of Science. The results revealed that AI has already entered academic spaces with both teachers and students

benefiting and getting material for various courses. However, it found certain challenges regarding implementation and observations among learners about safety, security, and privacy. The study holds immense implications as it could provide deeper insights into AI-powered learning and assist administrators, teachers, and students. AlZaabi et al. (2023) investigated medical specialists' and students' perspectives on AI in healthcare. An email with a link to an online survey was emailed to physicians and learners of medicine. The findings revealed that medical professionals and students demonstrated favorable perspectives and willingness to learn about the uses of artificial intelligence in healthcare.

Rawas (2023) argued how AI learning could revolutionize higher education teaching and learning. He stated how the Open AI developed language model gave specific guidance, improved interaction and collaboration, enhanced learning, and investigated both the pros and cons of ChatGPT in institutions of higher education. Celik et al. (2022) examined research on instructors' employment of artificial intelligence and machine learning and showed that AI could help teachers plan, implement, and assess their teaching by identifying the needs of the students and getting them familiar with those requirements. The results showed several challenges to using AI in teaching, which would contribute to future development. Hwang and Chang (2021) studied educational applications such as chatbots by reading relevant papers in SSCI-indexed journals and accessing the Web of Science (WoS) database. Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the US contributed most to the study, which used descriptive statistics, ANOVA, t-test, and correlation methods. The research suggested multiple ways in which AI-enabled learning education could improve learning processes and results. Okonkwo and Ade-Ibijola (2021) argued how Artificial Intelligence (AI) empowered chatbots to be employed in a variety of educational environments. It asserted how institutional employees and students could benefit from chatbot technology's rapid and tailored support. Chatbot research in education was explored and a systematic review method was employed for evaluating 53 publications from reliable digital databases. The study examined education chatbot research, including findings, benefits, drawbacks, and prospects for research. Sumakul et al. (2022) investigated how EFL teachers viewed the integration of artificial intelligence in their lecture rooms. Four EFL professors from Indonesian universities who used artificial intelligence in their lessons were interviewed for the data. The survey's results showed that all teachers felt positive about integrating artificial intelligence into their particular classrooms. The implications called for assessing students' motivation and teachers' technological and pedagogical ability while integrating AI into EFL classrooms.

A. *Research Questions*

1. What are the perceptions of EFL learners of Saudi Arabia towards AI-enabled learning and teaching?
2. What are the perspectives of EFL learners of Saudi Arabia towards AI-enabled learning and teaching?
3. What prospects does Saudi Arabia's higher education offer for AI-enabled teaching and learning?
4. Do EFL learners of Saudi Arabia differ in their perceptions/perspectives on AI-enabled learning and teaching based on differences in their demography?

B. *Hypothesis*

H01: There is no difference of any statistical significance in Saudi EFL learners' perceptions/perspectives towards AI-enabled learning and teaching based on gender.

H02: There is no difference of any statistical significance in Saudi EFL learners' perceptions/perspectives towards AI-enabled learning and teaching based on study level.

H03: There is no difference of any statistical significance in Saudi EFL learners' perceptions/perspectives towards AI-enabled learning and teaching based on parents' employment profiles.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *Design*

As the study deals with numerical data and tests how certain independent variables (levels of study, gender, and employment profile of learners' parents) shape the dependent variables (perceptions, perspectives, and prospects), a quantitative approach (descriptive quantitative design) was selected. Creswell and Creswell (2017) recommend a quantitative approach when the research involves data comprising numerical and statistical findings.

B. *Participants' Description*

The study sample comprises students learning at several levels of Bachelor programs at the College of Business Administration and College of Science & Humanities, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, KSA. All respondents are Arabic native speakers and use English as a foreign language. They have had English as the mandatory course for the last seven or eight years. They are in the early years of their twenties. 258 students were randomly selected using a simple selection approach. Of the total population, 171 (66.30%) are male, 87 (33.8%) are female. And 3 participants did not specify their gender.

TABLE 1
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Description	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	171	66.30%
	Female	84	32.60%
	Neutral	3	1.20%
Year/Level of Study	Level 6th to 8th	46	17.80%
	Level 3rd to 5th	99	38.40%
	Level 1st to 2nd	113	43.80%
Parents' profession	Government job	185	71.70%
	Private job	24	9.30%
	Self-employment	23	8.90%
	No job/employment	26	10.10%

C. Data Collection Instrument

Before designing the questionnaire, an in-depth investigation of earlier studies was carried out. Thus, a questionnaire was developed. While some items were designed, other ones were adapted from existing studies (Alhalangy & AbdAlgane, 2023). The questionnaire's first component contains items on the participants' demographic profile. Of the next 14 items, 7 items each examine Saudi EFL learners' perceptions and perspectives on AI-powered learning and teaching. The next 7 items investigate the prospects for AI-enabled teaching and studying in Saudi Arabia university education. The study respondents were asked to express their opinions/preferences on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree).

D. Validity

As the study participants had low English proficiency, English questions were translated into Arabic. Language experts in English and Arabic validated this translation. For confirmation of the questionnaire and questions, a pilot study was undertaken. Expert comments and suggestions were incorporated into the questionnaire.

E. Method for Data Collection

A questionnaire was used to obtain data from the study participants. The course instructors and learners were sent a link to the questionnaire. The respondents were given the Arabic translation along with the English content to help them better express their opinions. They were asked to read the instructions for each section carefully. Since they were assured that their responses would be kept anonymous and utilized only for academic and research purposes, they felt safe expressing their choices.

F. Data Analysis and Interpretation

As sufficient responses were collected, a Google Form containing responses was downloaded and put into an Excel sheet. Once the numeric codes were assigned (5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= neutral, 2 disagree, and 1= strongly disagree), the data was moved to SPSS. As the questionnaire comprised only closed-ended questions, the data collected was tabulated and examined quantitatively. The latest SPSS version was utilized for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were utilized to calculate the means of the data, the frequency, and the standard deviation. One-way ANOVA was employed to identify differences between participants based on demographic characteristics. The following criteria were applied for interpreting and categorizing the degree/level of perception/perspective.

TABLE 2
PERCEPTION/PERSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTS LEVEL MEASURING SCALE

Mean Square	Level
3.01 – 4.50	High
1.51 – 3.00	Moderate
1.00 – 1.50	Low

IV. RESULTS

The study revealed that Saudi EFL students exhibited favorable attitudes toward the integration of AI-enabled learning and teaching in Saudi EFL classrooms. It also revealed that Saudi EFL learners strongly supported EFL learning and teaching and that the Saudi higher education system offered great prospects and opportunities for EFL-powered learning and teaching. In addition, the one-way analysis identified no statistically significant variations in the mean responses of participants based on gender and parental occupation. However, a statistically significant difference was found in the means of the responses of the respondents based on the year/level of study.

TABLE 3
REPRESENTING SAUDI EFL LEARNERS' PERCEPTION OF USING AI-ENABLED TOOLS FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING ENGLISH

Questions/Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Level
1	106 (41.1%)	98 (38%)	37(14.3%)	9 (3.5%)	8 (3.1%)	4.1	High
2	86 (33.3%)	66(25.6%)	61 (23.6%)	35(13.6%)	10 (3.9%)	3.7	High
3	93(36%)	106(41.1%)	46(17.8%)	10 (3.9%)	3 (1.2%)	4.06	High
4	90 (34.9%)	109(42.2%)	47 (18.2%)	8 (3.1%)	4 (1.6%)	4.05	High
5	90(34.9%)	101(39.1%)	47 (18.2%)	16(6.2%)	4 (1.6%)	3.99	High
6	52(20.2%)	56 (21.7%)	79 (36.6%)	58(22.5%)	13 (5%)	3.29	High
7	70 (27.1%)	76 (29.5%)	90 (34.9%)	19 (7.4%)	3 (1.2%)	3.74	High
Overall Mean						3.84	High

A. Analysis of Saud EFL Learners' Perception Regarding AI-Powered Learning and Teaching English

The items measured through items 1 to 7 represent the Saudi EFL learners' perceptions of AI-powered tools for EFL learning and teaching. In item no. 1, 79.1% (SA 41.1% & A 38%) of the participants agreed that artificial intelligence-based learning was an important means for enhancing personalized and self-learning. While 14.3% of the participants stayed neutral, 3.5% disagreed and 3.1% expressed a strong disagreement with the given opinion. The mean score is 4.1%, which is thought of as high. In the next item no. 2, 58.9% (SA 33.3% & A 25.6%) of the participants worried that AI-powered learning and teaching caused unemployment and led to the degradation of human talent. 23.6% chose to remain neutral, 13.6% disagreed and 3.9% strongly disagreed that AI-powered learning caused joblessness and devaluation of human intelligence. The mean is 3.7 which shows that a significant number of students are concerned about the adverse impacts of using artificial intelligence in educational settings. As far as item no. 3 is concerned, 77.1% (SA 36% & A 41.1%) of the participants believe that artificial intelligence-based learning helps EFL learners to develop their skills and acquire proficiency. While 17.8% did not express their opinion, 3.9% didn't agree and 1.2% completely disagreed. The mean score is 4.06, which is believed to be high. Regarding item no. 4, 77.1% (SA 34.9% & 42.2%) of the participants believed that the implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) in second-language classrooms increased EFL learners' self-confidence and learning efficacy. 18.2% of participants chose to stay neutral, 3.1% disagreed, and 1.6% of the participants did not believe that the use of artificial intelligence in EFL classrooms enhanced EFL learners' self-confidence and learning efficacy. The mean score is 4.05 which is thought of as high. Concerning item no. 5, 74% (SA 34.9% & A 39.1%) of the participants believed that artificial intelligence-based teaching made learning and teaching an active and engaging process. 18.2% of the participants remained neutral. While 6.2% disagreed, and 1.6% of participants strongly opposed the opinion that artificial intelligence-based teaching made learning and teaching an active and engaging process. The mean score is 3.99 which is thought of as high. Regarding item no. 6, 41.9% (SA 20.2% & A 21.7%) of the respondents believed that artificial intelligence-based learning damaged the relationship between the teacher and students. While 36.6% of participants remained neutral, 22.5% disapproved and 5% completely disagreed with the assertion. The mean score is 3.29 which is thought of as high. In the last item, 7, 56.6% (SA 27.1% & A 29.5%) of the participants believe that artificial intelligence-based learning turns emotional learning activity into a mechanical process. 34.9% of students remain neutral. 7.4% disagreed and 1.2% of the participants expressed strong disagreement with the statement. The mean is 3.74 which shows that a substantial number of students are apprehensive about the mechanical aspect of AI-powered language learning. The overall mean of all the items is 3.84, which falls within the higher range. The findings of the study address the first research question.

TABLE 4
REPRESENTING SAUDI EFL LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVES REGARDING USING AI-ENABLED TOOLS FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING ENGLISH

Questions/Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Level
8	76(29.5%)	82(31.8%)	70(27.1%)	24(9.3%)	6(2.3%)	3.76	High
9	76(29.5%)	101(39.1%)	61(23.6%)	16(6.2%)	4(1.6%)	3.88	High
10	68(26.4%)	118(45.7%)	52(20.2%)	15(5.8%)	5(1.9%)	3.88	High
11	74(28.7%)	96(37.2%)	71(27.5%)	14(5.4%)	3(1.2%)	3.86	High
12	79(30.6%)	98(38%)	46(17.8%)	27(10.5%)	8 (3.1%)	3.82	High
13	75(29.1%)	101(39.1%)	60(23.3%)	20(7.8%)	2(0.8%)	3.87	High
14	79(30.6%)	111(43%)	48(18.6%)	17(6.6%)	3(1.2%)	3.95	High
Overall Mean						3.86	High

B. Analysis of Saudi EFL Learners' Perspectives Regarding AI-Enabled Learning and Teaching English

The items measured through items 8 to 14 represent the Saudi EFL learners' perspectives about using tools powered by AI to enhance EFL learning and instruction. In the first item of this category, 61.3% (SA 29.5% & A 31.8%) of the participants believed that artificial intelligence-enabled learning must be adopted in EFL classrooms. 27.1% of the participants were undecided. While 9.3% of the participants disagreed, and 2.3% strongly disapproved of the adoption of AI-powered tools in EFL classrooms. The mean is 3.76 which is thought of as high. In item no. 9, 68.6% (SA 29.5% & A 39.1%) of the respondents believed that employment of artificial intelligence improved English language instruction (ELT). 23.6% of the respondents were undecided. While 6.2% disagreed, a negligible 1.6% of the participants expressed a strong disagreement with the opinion. The mean score is 3.88 which is thought of as high. In

the next item no.10, 72% (SA 26.4% & A 45.7%) of the respondents thought that employing artificial intelligence in English classrooms raised challenges for both teachers and students. 20.2% of the participants preferred to stay silent. 5.8% disagreed and 1.9% strongly disapproved of the statement. The mean score is 3.88 which is thought of as high. Regarding item no. 11, 65.9% (SA 28.7% & A 37.2%) of the respondents believed that the use of artificial intelligence (AI) reduced the stressful process of learning via trial and error. 27.5% of respondents did not express their opinion. While 5.4% disagreed, 1.2% of the participants strongly disagreed with the opinion that AI-powered language learning minimized the stressful process of learning via trial and error. The mean score is 3.86 which is classed high. As far as item no. 12 is concerned, 68.6% (SA 30.6% & A 38%) of the study participants believed that artificial intelligence-enabled learning encouraged collaborative and interactive learning. 17.8% of the respondents were undecided. 10.5% disagreed, and 3.1% strongly disliked the statement. The mean score is 3.82 which is thought of as high. In the next item no. 13, 68.2% (SA 29.1% & A 39.1%) of the respondents believed that incorporating artificial intelligence was monotonous and demotivating for EFL learners. 23.3% of study participants remained neutral. While 7.8% disagreed, and 0.8% of the participants expressed strong disagreement with the assertion. The mean score is 3.87 which is thought of as high. In the last item no. 14, 73.6% (SA 30.6% & A 43%) of the respondents believed that artificial intelligence-enabled learning made students independent and self-learners. 18.6% of the study participants stayed silent. 6.6% disagreed, and 1.2% of the participants strongly opposed the statement that AI-powered learning made students independent and self-learners. The mean score is 3.95 which is classed high. The overall mean score of all the items under this category is 3.77. The findings of this analysis provide an answer to the second research question.

TABLE 5

REPRESENTING THE PROSPECTS FOR AI-ENABLED TOOLS FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING IN SAUDI ARABIAN EFL CONTEXTS							
Questions/Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Level
15	86(33.3%)	109(42.2%)	45(17.4%)	14(5.4%)	4(1.6%)	4	High
16	81(31.4%)	110(42.6%)	48(18.6%)	17(6.6%)	2(0.8%)	3.97	High
17	89(34.5%)	105(40.7%)	52(20.2%)	9(3.5%)	3(1.2%)	4.03	High
18	98(38%)	97(37.6%)	52(20.2%)	10(3.9%)	1(0.4%)	4.08	High
19	84(32.6%)	109(42.2%)	51(19.8%)	11(4.3%)	3(1.2%)	4	High
20	86(33.3%)	100(38.8%)	57(22.1%)	12(4.7%)	3(1.2%)	3.98	High
21	90(34.9%)	94(36.4%)	58(22.5%)	12(4.7%)	4(1.6%)	3.98	High
Overall Mean						4	High

C. Analysis of the Prospects for AI-Enabled Learning and Teaching in Saudi Arabian EFL Contexts

The items measured through items 15 to 21 represent prospects for AI-enabled tools for learning and teaching in Saudi Arabian EFL contexts. In the first item no. 15, 75.5% (SA 33.3% & A 42.2%) of the participants agreed that artificial intelligence could enhance technology's ability to adapt to learners' demands and needs and help them improve their knowledge and skills. While 17.4% chose to stay neutral. 5.4% disagreed and 1.6% of the participants strongly opposed the assertion. The mean score is 4 which is thought of as high. In the next item, 16 74% (SA 31.4% & A 42.6%) of the respondents believed that artificial intelligence-based learning offered the opportunity to enhance comprehension, conversation, review grammar, and vocabulary. 18.6% remained undecided. While 6.6% disagreed, 0.8% completely rejected the opinion. The mean score is 3.97 which is thought of as high. Regarding item no. 17, 75.2% (SA 34.5% & A 40.7%) of the respondents believed that artificial intelligence-based educational apps might create customized interactive lessons, distribute them to learners, and quickly assess their advancement. 20.2% of the participants did not express their opinion. Only a tiny number of 3.5% of the participants disagreed and 1.2% of the respondents rejected the opinion. The mean score is 4.03 which is thought of as high. Concerning item no. 18, 75.6% (SA 38% & A 37.6%) of the respondents believed that artificial-enabled tools could be used to experiment with frequent speaking, improve language, and enhance pronunciation skills. 20.2% of the participants did not say anything. While 3.9% disagreed, 0.4% of the respondents disapproved of the opinion. The mean score is 4.08 which is thought of as high. In the next item no. 19, 74.8% (SA 32.6% & A 42.2%) of the respondents believed that AI-powered applications might be used to grade student essays, interact with them, and provide cost-effective, scalable, and personalized learning. 19.8% of the participants were undecided. 4.3% disagreed 1.2% of respondents completely disagreed with the assertion. The mean score is 4 which is thought of as high. About item no. 20, 72.1% (SA 33.3% & A 38.8%) of the respondents believed that artificial intelligence (AI) could aid in academic degree management, addressing specific problems, research experiences, and assessment for outcomes of learning. 22.1% of the respondents did not express their opinion. 4.7% disagreed and 1.2% of the participants completely disagreed with the opinion. The mean score is 3.98 which is thought of as high. In the last item no. 21, 71.3% (SA 34.9% & A 36.4%) of the participants believe that EFL learners could use artificial intelligence-powered tools to achieve their learning goals. While 22.5% of the respondents stayed neutral, 4.7% disagreed, and 1.6% of the participants strongly opposed the opinion. The mean score is 3.98 which is thought of as high. The overall mean score is 4, which is classed high. This analysis provides an answer to the third research question.

V. DIFFERENCE IN SAUDI EFL STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON AI-ENABLED LEARNING BASED ON THEIR SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND

A. Saudi EFL Students' Perceptions of AI-Enabled Learning and Gender

Table 6 given below shows the one-way ANOVA findings regarding Saudi EFL learners' perspective of AI-enabled learning. The calculated F value (2.791825) is smaller than the F critical value (5.192168), suggesting that no significant variance was noticed in the means of the responses of Saudi EFL students based on their gender differences. Hence, HO1 is accepted.

TABLE 6
REPRESENTING ONE-WAY ANOVA RESULT FOR EFL LEARNERS' PERCEPTION BASED ON GENDER

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	2349.6	4	587.4	2.791825	0.145041	5.192168
Within Groups	1052	5	210.4			
Total	3401.6	9				

B. Saudi EFL Learners' Perspective of AI-Powered Learning and Their Level of Study

Table 7 below represents the one-way ANOVA findings of Saudi EFL learners' perspectives toward AI-powered learning in Saudi Arabia. The calculated F value (6.918728) surpasses the crucial F value (3.47805), suggesting a statistically significant variation in the mean responses of Saudi EFL students based on their study levels. Hence, HO2 is rejected.

TABLE 7
REPRESENTING ONE-WAY ANOVA RESULT FOR EFL LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVE BASED ON LEVEL/YEAR OF STUDY

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	1566.4	4	391.6	6.918728	0.006156	3.47805
Within Groups	566	10	56.6			
Total	2132.4	14				

C. Prospects for AI-Powered Learning and Parents' Educational Level

Table no. 8 given below shows the one-way ANOVA result regarding Saudi EFL students' perspectives toward AI-powered learning in Saudi Arabia. The findings show that there is no statistically significant difference in the means of Saudi EFL learners' responses based on parental educational level. The calculated F value (0.831383) is smaller than the F critical value (3.055568), hence HO3 is accepted. This analysis addresses the fourth research question.

TABLE 8
REPRESENTING ONE-WAY ANOVA RESULT FOR AI-POWERED LEARNING PROSPECTS BASED ON PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	1174.8	4	293.7	0.831383	0.525848	3.055568
Within Groups	5299	15	353.2667			
Total	6473.8	19				

VI. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The study investigated Saudi EFL learners' perceptions and perspectives and the prospects for AI-enabled learning and teaching in the Saudi Arabia system of higher education. The findings reveal that Saudi EFL learners have highly positive perceptions of AI-powered learning and teaching. This finding is in line with many studies (Syed & Basil, 2023; Mousavi Baigi et al., 2023; Buabbas et al., 2023; del Carmen Ramírez-Rueda et al., 2021). The findings of these studies show that despite a lack of awareness, people hold positive perceptions regarding AI and its utility for different purposes, particularly for EFL learning and teaching. There are also certain studies (Jimoyiannis & Komis, 2007) that are inconsistent with our findings and those that support it. The findings of our study also demonstrated that Saudi EFL learners have positive perspectives on AI-powered adoption in EFL classrooms. This finding aligns with many other existing studies (Ahmed et al., 2022; Abid et al., 2019). However, there are certain studies (Su & Yang, 2023; Tlili et al., 2023) that have noted some concerns regarding the habits of special learning and the erosion of students' critical and social thinking with particular reference to ChatGPT. The study also found great prospects and opportunities for AI-enabled learning and teaching in the Saudi Arabian system of higher education. Many studies (Gašević et al., 2023; Jabir Othman, 2023) confirm the findings of this study. However, certain studies contrast with our findings (Alotaibi & Alshehri, 2023). They deal with certain potential challenges regarding issues of the utilization of AI-powered instruction in the Saudi Arabian context. This discussion addresses the first three questions regarding Saudi EFL learners' perceptions, perspectives, and prospects for AI-enabled learning in Saudi Arabia's higher education. As far as research question 4 is concerned, our findings revealed that there is no difference of any statistical significance in Saudi EFL learners' perception towards AI-powered learning based on gender. This finding is consistent with one study

carried out by Jindal and Bansal (2020) as they found no difference of any statistical significance among the study participants based on gender. However, our study findings revealed that there is a difference of statistical significance in Saudi EFL learners' perception toward artificial intelligence-enabled learning and teaching based on their study levels. As the calculated *F value* (6.918728) is higher than *the F critical value* (3.47805), this leads to the rejection of HO2. The study also demonstrated that there is no difference of any statistical significance in Saudi EFL learners' perceptions towards AI-enabled English language instruction based on the difference in educational level of the study participants.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study was carried out to assess Saudi EFL learners' opinions, perspectives, and the prospects for AI-enabled learning and teaching in Saudi higher education institutions. The results revealed that Saudi EFL learners have a very high degree of positive perception toward artificial-enabled learning. It also revealed that they are very positive about the adoption and integration of artificial intelligence-enabled learning into EFL classrooms. The findings also showed that the university higher education system offers bright AI-enabled learning and teaching prospects. There is no significant difference among Saudi EFL learners based on gender. In addition, no difference of any significance was found among Saudi EFL learners based on the different professions of the parents of the study participants. However, a difference of statistical significance was found among Saudi EFL learners based on their level of study. The study holds implications as the high degree of positive perceptions, attitudes, and prospects can facilitate adopting AI-enabled learning into EFL classrooms for enhancing Saudi EFL learners' effective language skills.

Recommendations: Based on the results of the study and the highly positive attitudes among Saudi EFL learners toward the use of AI-powered tools for learning and teaching in EFL classrooms, it is highly recommended that teachers make frequent use of AI-powered tools for teaching in EFL classrooms and encourage students to use AI-powered tools for developing their different skills of the language. As the young generation of Saudi Arabia is tech savvy, spends a larger part of their time using electronic devices, and responds more to technology-powered learning, AI-powered learning can help them develop excellent English skills.

APPENDIX

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. AI-enabled learning enhances individualized and self-learning.					
2. AI-facilitated learning disregards human skills and causes unemployment.					
3. EFL learners gain skills and proficiency through AI-based learning.					
4. AI strengthens English students' self-confidence and learning efficacy.					
5. AI-based teaching makes learning and teaching interactive and dynamic processes.					
6. AI-based learning undermines teacher-student relationships.					
7. AI-based learning mechanicalizes emotional learning.					
8. English as a Foreign Language classes should include AI-based learning.					
9. Artificial intelligence enhances EFL learning and teaching.					
10. AI in English classes comes with challenges for teachers and students.					
11. I think AI reduces the stress of learning by making mistakes.					
12. I think AI-enabled learning promotes collaboration and interaction.					
13. Using AI can be monotonous and unpleasant for EFL students.					
14. I think AI-based learning helps students become independent learners.					
15. AI can help technology meet learners' needs and develop their skills.					
16. The use of AI can improve comprehension, conversation, grammar, and vocabulary.					
17. AI-driven educational apps quickly generate, distribute, and assess student progress.					
18. Audio, video, and AI-based pronunciation activities help EFL learners speak more.					
19. AI powered Apps could grade essays, interact with students, and offer personalized, cost-effective, and scalable learning.					
20. AI might manage degrees, solve problems, research experiences, and assess learning.					
21. EFL Learners can use artificial intelligence-powered tools to achieve learning goals.					

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Mohammad Jamshed got his Ph.D. degree in 2018 from Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, UP (INDIA). His areas of interest include postcolonial literature, travel writings, comparative studies, and ESL/EFL teaching. He has presented papers at conferences and published many articles in journals of repute both in literature and ESL/ESL teaching. He is currently working as an Assistant Professor, at the Department of English, College of Science & Humanities, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Al Kharj, 11942, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Abduh Almashy is working as Assistant professor in applied linguistics at Umm Al-Qura University and the head of the English Department. His research interests include L2 Acquisition, EFL Speaking Assessment, Extensive Reading Activities, and Communication Skills.

Fatimah received her PhD degree in Education from Western Sydney University. Fatimah is currently an assistant professor at Saudi Electronic University (SEU). Her research focuses on mobile Assisted Language Learning, self-managed learning, and learning technologies.

Wahaj Unnisa Warda has been working in the Department of English Language and Literature, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia for the past ten years. Before that, she worked as a senior lecturer in India for thirteen years. She has presented and published papers at various International conferences and journals in London, India, Australia, and Saudi Arabia. She is a member of various national and international organizations besides being a reviewer for international journals. Her areas of interest are psychoanalysis, Classical Mythology, and detective fiction of the 19th century.

Sula Malay's Hate Speech in the Sanana Jurisdiction: A Pragmatic Study

Mujahid Taha

National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia

Fida Febriningsih

National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia

Dedy Ari Asfar

National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia

Achril Zalmansyah

National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia

Ahmad Rabi'ul Muzammil

Department of Indonesian Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tanjungpura University, Pontianak, Indonesia

Ali Ajam

Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Khairun University, Indonesia

Sri Ayu Budi Lestari

Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Khairun University, Indonesia

Firdaus Zar'in

Department of Early Childhood Teacher Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Pontianak, Indonesia

Ramis Rauf

Department of Indonesian Literature, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Khairun University, Indonesia

Lucia Arter Lintang Gritantin

Department of History, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Khairun, Indonesia

Abstract—Hate speech – harsh or menacing words or writing that propagate bigotry based on sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, or other comparable categories – is prevalent in nearly every language, including Indonesian. In fact, hate speech in Indonesian society is also spoken in its regional languages such as Sula Malay in North Maluku Province. This hate speech is of interest and should be studied because literal and metaphorical meanings, along with cultural context, are important for learning and understanding the vocabulary of a language. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze hate speech in the Malay Sula language with data taken from the webpages of the Directory of Decisions of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia. The research population consisted of ten decisions, out of which five were selected as samples. Data analysis uses lexical-grammatical semantic theory, while pragmatic theory focuses on illocutionary speech acts, which is a tool of forensic linguistic analysis. Types of illocutionary speech include commissive speech in the form of threatening and insulting using curse words; directive speech in the form of commanding, which means to insult using curse words; and expressive speech in the form of regret that intends to inform by using insulting and cursing words. Another form of hate speech was found in the form of defamation.

Index Terms—hate speech, sula malay language, sanana jurisdiction, pragmatic studies

I. INTRODUCTION

Hate speech, whether spoken or in writing, is a criminal act that is not only committed on social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and the like (UU ITE, 2016), but is also carried out in the real world. Hate speech is an expression that contains negative values or shows discriminatory characteristics towards a person or group

(Strossen, 2018). Minority groups, like religious and ethnic groups, are often the targets of hate speech. When minority groups create problems, the hater takes advantage of this opportunity to claim it as part of an insult or blasphemy; as a result, they direct their hate towards these minority groups, inciting them with their hate-filled vitriol (Nursahid, 2019).

The Council of Europe defines hate speech as all speech that spreads, incites, and justifies hatred concerning race, xenophobia, or other acts of hatred based on intolerance. These include expressions of narrow nationalism and aggressive ethnocentrism that constitute discrimination, as well as hostility towards minority groups, immigrants, and people of immigrant descent. Thus, a recommendation was made by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to foreign ministers and nations of the Council of Europe to continue upholding the law in their respective countries and punish individuals or groups who carry out acts of hostility, discrimination, and violence based on hatred (Ahnaf & Suhadi, 2014).

Hate speech can be verbal or non-verbal and includes expressions that are aimed at humiliating and degrading a person or group of people based on their ethnicity, religion, race, class, or nationality. From a legal aspect, hate speech is prohibited because it can cause violent actions, reactions, or prejudice from the complainant or reported party (Taha, 2022). For example, insulting, defaming, or looking down on a group of minorities, referring to their poor social background, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, religion, or beliefs, or other physical-social forms, are actions that have criminal elements (Brown & Jeffrey; in Masyhur, 1994). Royani (2018) explains that hate speech is a crime that is related to verbal utterances or texts that curse or insult individuals or groups based on religion, ethnicity, and race. Meanwhile, the KBBI explains that hate speech is speech that expresses hatred towards a person or group of people (Indonesian Language Agency, 2016).

This research explores the types of hate speech found in one of the North Maluku regional languages on the Facebook social media platform, namely Ternate Malay. The use of Ternate Malay tends to be less polite than other dialects of the region. For example, the language uses swear words in the form of animals such as dogs and pigs, insults to body parts or functions of the human body such as *trada*, or "mindless brain", and insults in the form of professions such as *treasurer with only a high school diploma, kong? or* "The treasurer only has a high school diploma, right?" As a result, this speech has implications for personal and communal defamation – damaging someone's good reputation (Febriningsih, 2020).

The criminal sanctions related to insults or defamation are regulated in the Criminal Code (KUHP) in Chapter XVI, Article 310 (1), which regulates insults:

Any person who deliberately attacks someone's honor or good name by accusing someone of something, with the clear intention of making it known to the public, is threatened for defamation with a maximum imprisonment of nine months or a maximum fine of four thousand five hundred rupiah. (p. 70)

The latest sanctions related to the crime of insult are regulated in Criminal Code Number 1 2023 in Chapter XVII, Article 433, Paragraph 1 (KUHP, 2023):

Any person who verbally attacks the honor or good name of another person by making accusations a thing, with the intention of making it known to the public, is punished for defamation, with imprisonment for a maximum of 9 (nine) months or a maximum fine of category II. (p. 148)

Types of hate speech are also regulated in the Republic of Indonesia Police Circular No. 6/X/2015 concerning Handling Hate Speech, which outlines seven types of hate speech: 1) insults, 2) defamation, 3) blasphemy, 4) unpleasant acts, 5) provoking, 6) inciting, and 7) spreading fake news (National Police Chief Circular No. 6/X/2015 Concerning Handling Hate Speech, 2018).

"Jarimu Harimaumu" and "The Phenomenon of Kendari City Community Hate Speech on Facebook Social Media", both written by Gunawan, are articles that discuss the study of hate speech using forensic linguistic analysis and pragmatics. The research data used in Gunawan's research shows that words and sentences contained on Facebook social media often contain types of hate speech. The research results found five types of hate speech: 1) defamation, 2) insults, 3) blasphemy, 4) incitement, and 5) spreading hoaxes. It was also found that the factors causing hate speech were internal factors, including hurt feelings and fads, while external factors were political interests, class, and SARA (Gunawan, 2022).

Sanubarianto (2021) also conducted forensic linguistics research under the title "Social Media Analysis as an Alternative for Providing Linguistic Expert Witness Opinions: Forensic Linguistic Studies". One of the findings was that the use of Kupang Malay on Facebook social media results in grammatical words or sentences in the language, meaning Facebook also has the potential to provide complete evidence, making it easier for linguists to analyze defamation cases using a forensic linguistic approach (Sanubarianto, 2021).

In pragmatic studies, Dwi Kurniasih wrote an article titled "Hate Speech in Public Spaces: Pragmatic Analysis of Data from the Solo Raya Center for Religion and Peace Studies (PSAP). The data sources from this research are words and sentences written on banners or billboards that contain types of hate speech, namely: 1) insults, 2) provocation, 3) oppression, and 4) criminal speech (Kurniah, 2019). The three types of research can be classified according to the object of study, namely, two texts on the social media site Facebook and one text in the public space in the form of billboards. Two use the East Nusa Tenggara Malay dialect of Indonesian and the South/Southeast Sulawesi Malay dialect, and the other uses Indonesian.

The data in the study mentioned above is still general in nature; that is, it is data that does not yet have legal status (Susanto, 2021). Meanwhile, the present research uses data from the Directory of Decisions of the Supreme Court of the

Republic of Indonesia page via the page: <https://bangunan3.mahkamahagung.go.id/search.html>, which is legal and inkrah (“in force, final, and binding, with prejudice”) (Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, 2009). This study focuses on different kinds of hate speech, like insults and defamation. It does this by using a forensic linguistic approach to look at the core of lexical semantic analysis, which includes grammatical and pragmatic analysis, especially the compulsive, directive, and expressive illocutionary speech acts (Taha, 2022). Referring to this description, research related to "Hate Speech in Sula Malay in the Sanana Legal Area: A Pragmatic Study" seems necessary to be carried out.

The special attraction of this research is that the object of study (lingual data) uses regional languages. By using regional languages, readers can find out and learn regional languages related to cursing speech, which is a type of hate speech. In addition, it is imperative to educate the public on the fact that profanity that makes reference to specific body parts or animal species—whether aimed at people or groups, depending on the situation—is considered hate speech and may be subject to legal repercussions.

This research aims to reveal and describe commissive speech acts in the form of threats, accusations, and insults using swear words; directive speech acts in the form of ordering with the intention of insulting using swear words; and expressive speech acts in the form of regret with the intention of informing using insults and curse words in Sula Malay. These three speech acts are simultaneously assertive in the form of states. The benefits that will be gained from this research are that speakers, listeners, and the general public of North Maluku, Indonesia, can discover insults and insulting speech that could result in defamation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The analytical tools used in this research, apart from the basic meaning of lexical-grammatical semantics, namely analyzing the meaning of words and the unity of a sentence (Wijana & Rohmadi, 2011), are also linked to a forensic linguistic approach. Pragmatic theory is the main analytical tool used in this research. One of its functions is to discuss illocutionary speech acts proposed by Searle, which is also part of one of the tools of forensic linguistic analysis.

Carnap Levinson and Nababan in Yuniarti (2014) define pragmatics as a science that studies abstract concepts. Indeed, pragmatics is a science that studies the relationship between concepts, which are signs. Montague explained that pragmatics is the study of the “indexical” or “deictic”. The study of pragmatics is a theory of reference, or deixis, namely the use of language that refers to a reference according to its use.

The area of pragmatic study is the use of language from a functional perspective. This analysis explains how non-linguistic influence causes and affects certain aspects of language structure. The role of pragmatics is also found in the use of language in communicating something with the existing linguistic context based on the context and situation of the user. Other areas of pragmatics study include presuppositions, implicatures, conversation, speech acts, and discourse analysis.

Leech (1993) explains that pragmatics is the study of the usage and meaning of speech in a given situation. Moreover, pragmatics is different from other fields of study in corpus linguistics. Pragmatics investigates the co-textual patterns of linguistic items which include lexico-grammatical features such as collocations or prosody semantics. However, the added value of pragmatics lies in the insistence that these patterns be considered in explaining the situational, interpersonal, and cultural context of knowledge spoken. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that discusses what constitutes language structure as a tool for communication between speakers and listeners and as a reference for language signs in extra-lingual things that are discussed.

According to Yule (2006), pragmatics is the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of those forms. Meanwhile, Nadar (in Islam et al., 2021, pp. 242-243) states that pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies the language used to communicate in certain situations. So, it can be said that pragmatics is the study of linguistics, which discusses its use in conversations that have the aim of conveying certain meanings by involving certain situations.

Speech acts are a pragmatic study, a branch of linguistics that studies speech acts from their actual aspects. According to Chaer (2004, p. 9), speech acts are individual symptoms that are psychological in nature, and their continuity is determined by the speaker's language abilities in dealing with certain situations. Pragmatic studies on illocutionary speech acts are divided into assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. These speech acts can be described as follows:

1. Assertive illocutionary is also known as representative speech, namely speech acts that are related to stating something, for example, expressing an opinion, claiming, speculating, and reporting. Assertive illocutionary markers are forms of stating;
2. Directive illocutionary is speech that is intended for the speaker to act according to his words, for example, suggest, order, request, advise, and recommend;
3. Commissive illocutionary is a speech act that requires the speaker to commit to doing something in the future, for example, promising, swearing, refusing, threatening, and guaranteeing;
4. Expressive illocutions are expressions of attitudes and feelings regarding a situation or can also be said to be reactions to people's attitudes and actions, for example, the types of words congratulating, grateful, regretful, apologizing, welcoming, and grateful; and
5. Declarative illocution is an illocution that causes change or conformity between proposition and reality; examples include the words “baptize”, “fire”, “name”, and “punish”.

The following are examples of illocutionary speech acts, which can be explained as follows:

1. Assertive: "I stated that it was raining." and "I predicted he would come." This is a form of stating speech that refers to emphatic verbs, namely "classify" and "identify" with intent to know;
2. Directive: "I order you to go." and "I order you to stand up straight." This is a speech with the functions of "asking" and "ordering" with directing intent;
3. Commissive: "I promise to give you money." and "I swear to take revenge." The speech takes the form of verbs in the function of promising and swearing and intends to inform and threaten;
4. Expressive: "I'm sorry for stepping on your toes.", "I am congratulating you on winning the race.", and "I thank you for giving me money." This is speech in the form of a verb with the function of apologizing, congratulating, and thanking are words to be grateful; and
5. Declarative: "Now I declare you as husband and wife", "I appoint you chairman.", and "You are fired, I am resigned." The function of declarative speech is to baptize, name, and punish (Searle, 1979, pp. 21–26).

III. METHODOLOGY

Hate speech research is a type of qualitative research that relies on the study of language and law known as forensic linguistics. The steps in this research are investigation, discovery, description, and explanation of social values (problems) that cannot be described using a quantitative approach. This technique is used as a means of evidence in making decisions that have legal impacts and can also reveal language-related crimes, leading to the belief that there is a language crime that results in an unlawful act (Hugo, 2017).

Language studies using a forensic linguistic approach can decipher and reveal forms of insult and defamation contained in the texts of Indonesian Supreme Court decisions. This research uses ten populations and five samples sourced from the RI Supreme Court Decision Directory page. The hate speech contained in the decision has the status of an insult, which leads to defamation. This research uses lexical-semantic analysis—grammatical and pragmatic analysis—whose contextual meaning has been identified as evidence of verbal criminal acts. The steps in this research are identification, classification, and analysis of the data obtained. Language description aims to describe language as it is (Sudaryanto, 2015). The analysis begins by describing the context of the background of the speech being carried out or the place where the speech occurs. Followed by the meaning of lexical semantics—grammatical and pragmatic, especially in illocutionary speech acts or qualitative descriptive depiction (Nadar, 2009). This method can express, investigate, and identify the meaning and purpose of speech according to the linguistic context and speech background that contains forensic elements.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Referring to the results of the analysis, different types of Sula Malay hate speech were found on the Directory of Decisions of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia page with the following forms of speech acts: 1) commissive speech acts in the form of threatening with the intention of insulting using swear words; 2) directive speech acts in the form of ordering with the intention of insulting using swear words; and 3) expressive speech acts in the form of regret with the intention of informing using insulting and cursing words or sentences. These three forms of speech acts are also assertive speech acts in the form of states. These speeches are also types of hate speech, namely insults or defamation. In the classification, the types of hate speech were found to be in the form of words, phrases, and sentences; reference: body members, animals, and spirits/humans; word class: *nouns* and *verbs*; and categorized: cursing, insulting, and defaming.

A. Commissive Speech Acts in the Form of Threats in Decision Number: 10/Pid.B/2022/PN Snn. and Decision Number: 28/Pid.B/2019/PN Snn.

The following is the form of speech in data one and two as follows:

(a). Data 1: "*jang urus beta, cuki mai lubang puki, ose itu pake ilmu setang, sewaktu-waktu beta akan bunuh ose, percuma ose shalat kalo ose pake ilmu setan*"

"Don't mess with me! Fuck your mother! I'll stab your vaginal opening! You are using black magic/witchcraft! At any time, I will kill you! It's useless for you to pray if you use black magic or witchcraft!"

Context: This statement was uttered by the defendant with the initials AU and addressed the victim with the initials SU verbally in public on October 14, 2021, around 20:30 WIT at Mangon Village, Sanana District, Sula Islands Regency, Prov. North Maluku. This utterance is a commissive illocutionary speech act in the form of a threat in the sentence: *sewaktu-waktu beta akan bunuh* ("At any time, I will kill you"). Here, the speaker (AU) is threatening to murder SU one day, whenever he wants to. Apart from that, there is also an assertive illocutionary speech act when AU swears and insults SU, as seen in the utterance *cuki mai lubang puki* ("fuck your mother's vagina hole"); *ose itu pake ilmu setang* ("you are using black magic/witchcraft"); and *percuma ose shalat kalo ose pake ilmu setan* ("It's useless to pray if you use black magic or witchcraft!") The defendant's speech was intended to inform the general public about the victim's situation or condition.

The sentence above is also a sentence that is classified as an insult and defamation, mostly where the defendant utters "*cuki mai lubang puki*" or "fuck your mother's vagina hole". The word *cukimai* means "fuck your mother" in the local

cultural context. Meanwhile, the phrase *lubang puki* meaning vagina literally translates to “copulation hole”. This phrase is used to curse and refers to parts of the human (female) anatomy.

(b). Data 2: “S. (*initial*) *pake fa basa kamu keluar saya bunuh kamu*”
 “S. uses black magic; you come out, I will kill you!”

Context: The statement was spoken by the defendant with the initials AT and addressed to the victim with the initials SAR in front of the victim's house on May 28, 2018, in Titdoy Village, District. East Mangoli, Kab. Sula Islands, Prov. North Maluku. This utterance is a commissive illocutionary speech act in the threatening form in the sentence *kamu keluar saya bunuh kamu* (“You get out, or I'll kill you.”). This speech means that the speaker is committed to the act of killing. Apart from that, this speech act is also an assertive illocutionary act in the form of state, namely telling a person's condition; in this case, it was the defendant who said in public that the victim (S) uses black magic.

The speech mentioned above is also a type of insult that leads to defamation. “Black magic”, literally *ilmu hitam*, can mean “wisdom about the heart” which is related to spirits or activities that are used to persecute humans. For example, causing people to have mental disorders or taking or stealing with the help of supernatural beings.

The classification of insults or defamation in Sula Malay consists of words, phrases, sentences, references, and categories, as seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1
 CLASSIFICATION OF DEFAMATION IN DATA 1 AND 2

Form Words, Phrases, & Sentences	Reference	Category
<i>cukimai</i> (“Fuck your mother”)	human body parts	cursed
<i>lubang puki</i> (“vaginal hole”)	human body parts	cursed
<i>pake ilmu setang</i> (“use black magic”)	humans/spiritual creatures	defiling
<i>Ilmu hitam</i> “black magic”	humans/spiritual creatures	defiling

B. Directive Speech Acts in the Form of Government in Decision Number 17/Pid.B/2019/PN Snn.

The following is the form of speech in data three as follows:

(a). Data 3: “*cuki kamong pung mai punya lubang puki, siapa bilang anak saya pencuri, kalau tidak mampu cuki kamong pung mai, mari saya cuki*” dan “*umar... umar... ajar istri kamu, anak perempuan kamu hamil kalau bukan saya yang urus baru bisa kawin*”
 “Fuck your mother's vaginal hole! Who says my son is a thief? If you can't have sex with your mother, let me fuck you!” and “Umar! Umar! Teach your wife, your daughter is pregnant. If I don't take care of it then you can get married.”

Context: This statement was uttered by the defendant with the initials AU and addressed to the victim with the initials SU verbally in public on October 14, 2021, at around 20:30 WIT at Mangon Village, Kec. Sanana, Kab. Sula Islands, Prov. North Maluku. This utterance is a directive illocutionary speech act in the form of commanding in the sentence “*umar... umar... ajar istri kamu...*” (“Umar! Umar! Teach your wife”). In this speech, the speaker intended to order the victim to teach his wife. Apart from that, it is an assertive or representative speech act in the form of stating something in the sentence “*cuki kamong pung mai punya lubang puki*” (“Fuck your mother's vagina hole.”) and “*...kalau tidak mampu cuki kamong pung mai, mari saya cuki...*” (“If you can't fuck your mother, let me fuck you!”). Moreover, apart from the form of stating, the function of reporting can be seen in the utterance “*...anak perempuan kamu hamil kalau bukan saya yang urus baru bisa kawin*” (“Your daughter is pregnant. If I don't take care of her, then she can get married.”) The purpose of this form of stating or reporting this speech is to insult or defame someone.

The sentence above is classified as an insult or defamation, as seen in the sentence “*cuki kamong pung mai punya lubang puki*” (“Fuck your mother's vagina hole...”). The word *cuki* in the linguistic context of North Maluku literally means to have sexual intercourse. This context is reaffirmed in the phrase *lubang puki* which has the same meaning as “copulation hole”; and *kalau tidak mampu cuki kamong pung mai, mari saya cuki* (“If you can't fuck your mother, let me fuck you!”). This sentence contains the word *cuki* which also has the same meaning as in the explanation above, namely having sex; and *anak perempuan kamu hamil kalau bukan saya yang urus baru bisa kawin* (“Your daughter is pregnant. If I don't take care of her, then she can get married.”) Even though this sentence does not contain swear words or phrases, there is a meaning behind the text is that her child was pregnant out of wedlock, and because of his help, the child was able to get married. As a result, it can be said that this is an insulting sentence. Overall, in the linguistic context and local cultural context, these utterances are a category of insults that refer to parts of the human (female) body, whether in the form of words, phrases, or sentences.

The following is a classification of insults or defamation in Sula Malay, consisting of words, phrases, sentences, references, and categories:

TABLE 2
CLASSIFICATION OF DEFAMATION IN DATA 3

Form Words, Phrases, & Sentences	Reference	Category
<i>cuki</i> ("fuck")	human body parts	cursed
<i>lubang puki</i> ("vaginal hole")	human body parts	cursed
<i>anak perempuan kamu hamil</i> ("your daughter is pregnant")	human body parts	insulting

C. Expressive Speech Acts in the Form of Regret in Decision Number 18/Pid.B/2019/PN Snn. and Decision Number 25/Pid.B/2019/PN Snn.

The following is the form of speech in data four and five as follows:

(a). Data 4: "*Fataha curi uang dari Program PAMSIMAS dan beli pipa kacili kaya kemaluannya, dan air mengalir seperti air kencingnya, bagaimana onal, betul ka seng*"

"Fataha stole money from the PAMSIMAS program and bought a small pipe like his penis, and the water flowed like urine. How about it, Onal? Is it true or not?"

Context: This statement was uttered by the defendant with the initials AU, and addressed to the victim with the initials AFF orally in public on July 22, 2018, at around 8:00 a.m. WIT, at Jalan Raya Kabau Pantai Village, Kec. West Sulawesi, Kab. Sula Islands, Prov. North Maluku. The expressive illocutionary speech act in the form of regret can be seen in the sentence *beli pipa kecil seperti kemaluannya dan air mengalir seperti air kencingnya* "(Buy a small pipe like his penis, and the water flows like his urine.*)" These utterances are expressions of attitudes and feelings about a situation or reactions to people's attitudes and actions. In this case, the defendant's speech was directed at the victim, accusing him of stealing money from the PAMSIMAS program and buying a water pipe that did not meet the community's expectations. This utterance is also an assertive illocutionary speech act in the form of stating in the sentence "Fataha stole money from the PAMSIMAS program".

The statement above is also classified as having insulting or defamatory content as in the phrase "*Fataha curi uang dari Program PAMSIMAS*" ("Fataha stole money from the PAMSIMAS program") is an accusatory sentence that is intended to defame someone's good name. (PAMSIMAS is an Indonesian community-based drinking water and sanitation program). Meanwhile, the phrase *beli pipa kecil seperti kemaluannya* ("bought a small pipe like his penis") is a form of an insulting sentence because it compares the size of the pipe to a man's (victim's) genitals. Furthermore, in the sentence is the phrase *air mengalir seperti air kencingnya, bagaimana onal, betul ka seng* ("the water flows like his urine. How about it, Onal? Is it true or not?") With the intention of insulting, this speech uses a statement sentence and a question sentence.

(b). Data 5: "*Mantri Djamin Limatahu makan pancuri uang BUMDES (Badan Usaha Milik Desa) dan bersekongkol dengan aparat desa untuk memperkaya diri sendiri dan tidak menghargai orang lain, cuki mai, babi, anjing binatang*"

"Mantri Djamin Limatahu, ate (from the proceeds), stole money from the BUMDES (Village-Owned Enterprises), collaborated with village officials to enrich themselves, does not respect others, and has sex with pigs, dogs, [and other] animals."

Context: This statement was spoken by the defendant with the initials AES who addressed the victim with the initials DL verbally in public on August 6, 2018, at around 13:30 WIT, in Bajo Village, Sanana District, Sula Islands Regency, Prov. North Maluku. This speech is an expressive illocutionary speech act in the form of regret, which is an expression of attitudes and feelings about a situation or reaction to a person's attitudes and actions in the sentence *Mantri Djamin Limatahu makan pencuri uang BUMDES (Badan Usaha Milik Desa) dan bersekongkol dengan aparat desa untuk memperkaya diri sendiri dan tidak menghargai orang lain* "Mantri Djamin Limatahu, ate (from the proceeds), stole money from the BUMDES (Village-Owned Enterprises), collaborating with village officials to enrich themselves, does not respect others..." This speech was an expression of regret conveyed by the defendant, AES, to the victim, DL. This was because there was a conspiracy between the victim and village officials to manage the BUMDES money. Apart from that, the aim is to enrich yourself, not respect other people. This utterance is also an assertive illocutionary speech act in the form of stating, which is related to stating something.

The sentences mentioned above are also types of hate speech in the form of insults and defamation using swear words. This can be seen in the phrase *makan mencuri* ("consuming something by stealing"). The word *makan* in this context means "to obtain something; achieve something", while *mencuri* means "taking something that belongs to someone without permission or illegally by secret means". Therefore, both meanings of the word can also mean "taking something that is not one's right or by existing regulations" (which could also mean "corruption"). Apart from that, there is also the phrase "enrich yourself". This phrase is a reaffirmation that is closely related to the previous phrase, namely *makan mencuri* ("to enrich oneself").

There were also forms of swear words that had references to human and animal body parts, namely the word *cukimai* which means "*puki makmu*" (used for insults); *pig*, which is a very harsh curse word; *anjing* which means "pet mammal

in guarding the house, taking part in hunting, etc.” (“dog”); and *binatang*, a curse word that refers to different types of animals in general. In the linguistic context of the culture in North Maluku, these words are spoken to curse, taking into account the context of the speech.

The following is a classification of insults or defamation in Sula Malay, consisting of words, phrases, sentences, references, and categories:

TABLE 3
CLASSIFICATION OF DEFAMATION IN DATA 4 AND 5

Form Words, Phrases, & Sentences	Reference	Category
<i>kamaluannya</i>	human body parts	cursed
<i>kencingnya</i>	human body parts	cursed
<i>Fataha mencuri uang dari program Pamsimas</i>	-	defiling
<i>cukimai</i>	human body parts	cursed
<i>anjing</i>	animal	cursed
<i>babi</i>	animal	cursed
<i>binatang</i>	animal	cursed
<i>pencuri</i>	-	defiling
<i>memperkaya diri</i>	-	defiling

The total number of insults and defamation using swear words in Sula Malay consists of words, phrases, sentences, references, and categories are visible in the graph as follows:

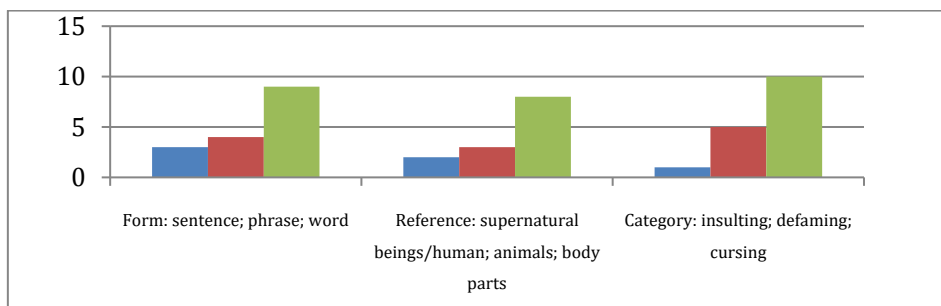


Figure 1. Classification and Number of Types of Hate Speech

V. CONCLUSION

Referring to the results of the analysis above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1) semantic analysis can explain the meaning of words and sentences as well as the literal meaning of a word in Indonesian or regional languages based on the local linguistic context;
- 2) pragmatics can describe form, function, and intent as in the analysis of commissive illocutionary, declarative illocutionary, and expressive illocutionary speech acts; and
- 3) forensic linguistics describes the types of hate speech with the articles charged, namely article 310 of the Criminal Code or article 433 paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code Number 1 of 2023 concerning insults committed in public.

In their classification, insults or defamation are dominated by speech in the form of words, referencing body parts, and being categorized as cursing. Thus, this research can help organizers and legal parties in law enforcement, especially in cases of insult or defamation. Furthermore, it is hoped that the citizens of Sanana, as well as North Maluku, Indonesia, will always be wise in their speech, namely the act of using insulting or cursing words or sentences, both orally and in writing in regional languages or Indonesian, because there are criminal elements to using them.

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Mujahid Taha is a linguistics researcher at the National Research and Innovation Agency in Indonesia. He currently holds a Masters in Linguistics. He has written many articles on linguistics, focusing on Pragmatics, Forensic Linguistics, Discourse Analysis, and the phonology-morphology of regional languages. His research interest is Forensic Linguistics through a pragmatic analysis approach. muja004@brin.go.id



Fida Febriningsih is a linguistics researcher at the National Research and Innovation Agency in Indonesia. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Indonesian Literature and is currently working on her Master's Degree in Linguistics. She has written many articles on linguistics, mainly focusing on documenting regional languages in North Maluku and eastern Indonesia. Her research interest is Comparative Historical Linguistics. fida001@brin.go.id



Dedy Ari Asfar is a researcher at the Research Center of Language, Literature, and Community, National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia. He has published several articles on linguistics. His research interests are mainly focused on forensic linguistics, corpus, lexicography, comparative linguistics, and ethnopoetics. dedy018@brin.go.id



Achril Zalmansyah is now an employee at the Research Center for Language, Literature, and Community, National Research, and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Republic of Indonesia. His works focus on language, literature, culture, and education. zzalmansa@gmail.com



Ahmad Rabi'ul Muzammil is an Assistant Professor of Indonesian Language and Literature at the Department of Indonesian Education, Tanjungpura University, Pontianak, Indonesia. He has published several articles on linguistics and education. His research interests are mainly focused on learning technology, communication, and rhetoric. ar.muzammil@fkip.untan.ac.id



Ali Ajam is an assistant professor in the English Language Department of Khairun University, Indonesia. He obtained his master's degree (2008) from the Islamic University of Malang, Indonesia, and his Doctorate Degree (2018) from Sam Ratulangi University, Indonesia. His research interest is mainly in discourse analysis. aliajam@unkhair.ac.id



Sri Ayu Budi Lestari is an assistant professor in the English Language Department of Khairun University, Indonesia. She has published some articles mainly focused on English Language Teaching and Linguistics. sriayu@unkhair.ac.id



Firdaus Zar'in is a lecturer in Early Childhood Teacher Education at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Universitas Muhammadiyah Pontianak in Indonesia. He has published several articles on education for early childhood, linguistics, and sociology. firdauszarin999@gmail.com



Ramis Rauf was born in Asinua on May 1, 1993. Ramis Rauf is a Lecturer at Indonesian Literature Department at Universitas Khairun. Ramis is a doctoral student in Humanities Sciences at Universitas Gadjah Mada with a scientific specification in literature. Ramis Rauf is the 2013 National Language Ambassador, Editor of the Kandai Journal (SINTA 2), and Editor of Etnoreflika Journal (SINTA 4). ramis.rauf@unkhair.ac.id



Lucia Arter Lintang Gritantin is a history lecturer at Universitas Khairun, Ternate, Indonesia. Her research interest is sexual diseases among the Dutch Indies Military Corps, 1860s—1920. luciagritantin@unkhair.ac.id

Toward Strategic EFL Learners: A Correlational Study Between Proficiency Level and Grammar Learning Strategies

Safaa M. Khalil

Department of English, Zulfi College of Education, Majmaah University, Al-Majmaah, 11952, Saudi Arabia;
Department of English, Faculty of Languages & Translation, Sadat Academy for Management Sciences, Cairo, Egypt

Abstract—Gaining competency in a foreign language is a challenging task, but learners can make progress in their language-learning endeavors by implementing suitable techniques and strategies when learning different language skills. With the aid of these strategies, students can improve their understanding and communicative application of different language skills effectively. Grammar learning strategies (GLSs) are a critical aspect of language learning, as they enable learners to refine the rules and practices of the target language. By investing in effective GLSs, foreign language learners can become more successful in the long run. Therefore, the present study aims to explore GLSs that Saudi EFL learners use and consider effective. To achieve this objective, the current study employed a mixed-method approach to examine a cohort of 102 Saudi EFL learners. These students were both high and low achievers. They were provided with an Arabic-translated version of Pawlak's (2018) Grammar Learning Strategy Inventory (GLSI). Collected data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The study concluded that high achievers employ a greater variety of grammar learning strategies compared to low achievers. The two groups agreed on prioritizing two types of GLSs which are cognitive GLSs that enhance grammar comprehension and production and GLSs that address corrective feedback. However, they differed in the utilization of other types of strategies. This implies the need for further investigation of EFL low achievers to diagnose the drawbacks of their use of GLSs in order to fully take advantage of these strategies.

Index Terms—English as a Foreign Language, grammar learning strategies, language learning strategies, proficiency level, strategic learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language can be a challenging task. However, using the right approach and strategies, learners can make progress. Among language learning strategies, grammar learning strategies (GLS) constitute a crucial aspect of language acquisition. They provide learners with the means to refine the principles and practices of the target language. These strategies, which fall under the umbrella of language learning strategies, encompass the conscious and intentional methods employed by language learners to augment their comprehension and production of grammatical structures. The development and customization of GLS can have a transformative impact on the proficiency and fluency of the target language (Cancino et al., 2022; Khatib & Ruhi Athar, 2015). Personalization of GLS is crucial, considering factors such as the learner's age, level of experience, and preferred learning styles. However, creating effective learning activities for grammar instruction requires constant motivation and pedagogical expertise (Refat et al., 2019). To effectively construct such activities, it is necessary to explore students' perceptions and experiences of GLS.

Despite the abundance of research conducted on language learning strategies used by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and their impact on acquiring the target language, there has been a noticeable dearth of studies examining grammar learning strategies (Pawlak, 2018). This research gap becomes particularly apparent in the context of EFL learners whose native language is Arabic. Consequently, the current study endeavors to make a contribution in this domain by addressing the following research inquiries:

- 1) Are there significant differences between Saudi EFL low and high achievers in their use of GLSs?
- 2) Drawing upon their trajectory in EFL learning, which GLS do Saudi EFL learners deem most effective?

The introductory section of this paper commences with a comprehensive survey of relevant literature. Subsequently, the methodology section delineates the characteristics of the participants, measurement instruments, and research protocols adopted in this study. Following this, the results derived from data analysis are presented. Finally, a discussion of the results is presented, and a recommendation is made.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Strategic Language Learning

Since the mid-seventies, Rubin (1975) noted the importance of learning strategies as techniques or devices that learners can use to gain knowledge. Oxford (1990) further espoused the notion that these strategies foster learner engagement in the language acquisition process, facilitating the encoding and retrieval of linguistic information. Expanding upon this discourse, Anderson (2005) showed a more generalized meaning, positing that learning strategies encompass intentional actions employed by learners to cultivate their language learning abilities. Research on LLS persisted until Oxford (2017) took the topic to the next level. She proposed that LLS may be used to help learners become more strategic language learners. After conducting a content-analytic study to provide an accepted definition for learning strategies, Oxford (2017) came to the conclusion that all definitions that either directly or indirectly referenced a mental or internal foundation "such as thoughts, cognitions, knowledge acquisition, learning in general, or specific mental learning processes" (p. 22). She agreed with the theory that learning techniques are treated by the mind as discrete pieces of information that begin in working memory and, with further processing, are stored in long-term memory.

Various scholars have studied the role of language learning methods in foreign language acquisition as they have been acknowledged as a key component in helping learners become more autonomous and efficient in their language studies (Abteu, 2021; Srisopha, 2022). Furthermore, it has been acknowledged that one of the biggest barriers to students starting their postsecondary education in foreign language acquisition is the lack of usage of learning strategies (Baybakova & Hasko, 2021). Moreover, by strengthening their capacity to learn and adjust to changing circumstances while taking responsibility for their own education, learners who were aware of and employ learning techniques could also benefit from an increase in autonomy, confidence, and general language competency (Srisopha, 2022).

B. Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS)

Oxford (2017) declared that grammar learning strategies in a second language are characterized as deliberate cognitive processes and actions that learners actively choose and apply within specific contexts. These strategies were revealed to enhance learners' self-regulated, autonomous development of second language grammar, thereby facilitating effective task performance and long-term efficiency (Dewantono & Murtisari, 2023).

According to Pawlak (2013), Grammar learning strategies (GLSs) have a distinct focus on acquiring and mastering grammatical structures within a language. GLSs aim to develop learner's ability to understand and use the grammar of a target language effectively. These strategies may include techniques for memorizing grammar rules, practicing grammatical structures, and applying grammar in communication. While grammar learning strategies are a distinct category within language learning strategies, they often interact with and complement other strategies, contributing to the overall development of language proficiency.

Recent research revealed that students who integrate grammar learning strategies into their language learning practices demonstrate enhanced proficiency in English grammar. This, in turn, leads to improved comprehension and production of the language. Zekrati (2017) found out that Iranian high school EFL learners use cognitive and social affective strategies with a positive relationship between strategy use and language achievement. Accordingly, Tılfarlıođlu and Yalçın (2005) concluded that the use of grammar learning strategies positively impacts student achievement in English preparatory classes. Furthermore, these strategies also contribute to the retention and application of grammar rules, allowing learners to use them accurately and appropriately in real-life communication (Prasetyaningrum et al., 2023; Zhou, 2017).

However, it is worth noting that language learning strategies are not a one-size-fits-all approach. Individual learners may have different preferences and learning styles, so it is crucial for educators to provide a variety of strategies and resources that cater to the diverse needs of their students (Li, 2022).

C. Grammar Learning Strategies Inventory (GLSI)

Investigating language learning strategies poses a challenge due to the limited number of strategies that can be directly observed. In contrast, the majority of strategies can only be deduced or inferred from the observable behaviors exhibited by language learners (Griffith, 2003). The Grammar Learning Strategy Inventory is a tool developed by Pawlak (2013, 2018) to assess the strategies used by learners in acquiring English grammar in a second or foreign language. The Grammar Learning Strategy Inventory (GLSI) comprises four scales, each of which taps into a different type of grammar learning strategy. The GLSI contains statements about learning English grammar, and respondents are asked to rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicates that this item does not apply at all to the student whereas 5 indicates that this item exactly captures the students' beliefs and behaviors. The four scales of the inventory include metacognitive, cognitive, affective, and social GLSs. The metacognitive scale measures planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's own learning of grammar. The cognitive scale measures the manipulation and organization of grammar rules and structures. The social affective scale measures interaction with others and managing emotions related to learning grammar. The social scale measures using grammar to communicate effectively in real-life situations.

III. METHODS

Following the mixed method approach, the present study examined the effect of proficiency level on Saudi EFL learners' use of GLSs. For this purpose, the study explored the grammar learning strategies used by Saudi EFL high and

low achievers. Data were collected using a questionnaire and an interview to be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

A. Participants

One hundred and two Saudi freshmen were randomly selected and voluntarily accepted to participate in the study. They were all from the Applied College at Majmaah University, KSA. Their ages ranged from 19 to 22. All the participants were administered an English proficiency placement test. Consequently, the participants were divided into 53 low achievers and 49 high achievers. The study took place during the fall semester of the academic year 2022 - 2023.

B. Research Instruments

Three instruments of measurement are used in the present study: The Applied College English placement test, Pawlak’s (2018) Grammar Learning Strategy Inventory (GLSI), and focused group interviews. The college’s English Proficiency placement test was used to distinguish students who excelled in English (high achievers) from those with a lower proficiency (low achievers). As the study aims to investigate the difference between the students with the two levels in using GLSs, Pawlak’s (2018) Grammar Learning Strategy Inventory (GLSI) was employed. GLSI is based on the belief that grammar learning strategies are of four types: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. GLSI is composed of 70 items that cover the four strategy types. The cognitive strategies are subdivided into four categories: GLSs used to assist comprehension and production (referred to in the results of the present study as Cognitive_1), GLSs used to develop explicit knowledge of grammar (Cognitive_2), GLSs used to develop implicit knowledge (Cognitive_3) and GLSs that deal with corrective feedback (Cognitive_4).

This tool was verified to be highly valid and reliable by its designer in a recent study (Pawlak, 2018). The inventory was translated into Arabic and reviewed by two faculty members who are specialists in EFL. To ensure the reliability of GLSI in the Saudi context, the inventory was piloted before administering it in the present study and appeared highly reliable ($\alpha=.96$). Participants are asked to rate each item based on a 5-point Likert scale.

C. Research Procedures

After classifying participants based on their English proficiency levels, GLSI was administered. The students were asked not to reply to the inventory until they listened to a 15-minute orientation in which the researcher explained the nature of the questions, what they assess, and what the five-point Likert scale means. After responding to the questionnaire, a random group of high achievers (n=15) were invited to join semi-structured interviews. During the interview, subjects were prompted to recall a situation in which they had to study an English grammar rule for a serious purpose and the outcome was a success. The interviewees were asked to write down their stories explaining the techniques they followed to understand and remember the rule. The interviews were transcribed for further analysis.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In the following two subsections, data collected in the present study were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, each in order, to provide answers to the two research questions.

A. Quantitative Results

Using SPSS, descriptive and inferential statistical tests were applied to analyze the collected data quantitatively to answer the first research question: Are there significant differences between Saudi EFL low and high achievers in their use of GLSs?

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR HIGH ACHIEVERS’ MEANS IN THE GLSI

GLS Type	n	M	SD
Cognitive_1	49	4.2345	.47077
Cognitive_4	49	4.1839	.65970
Social	49	3.9862	.91641
Cognitive_3	49	3.9103	.77245
Metacognitive	49	3.8405	.63816
Cognitive_2	49	3.6810	.53246
Affective	49	3.6502	.83525
All GLSs	49	3.8729	.49884

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR LOW ACHIEVERS’ MEANS IN THE GLSI

GLS Type	n	M	SD
Cognitive_1	53	3.4530	.70006
Cognitive_4	53	3.2329	.91403
Affective	53	3.0685	.86278
Metacognitive	53	3.0577	.82963
Social	53	3.0411	.87810
Cognitive_2	53	3.0063	.70965
Cognitive_3	53	2.9164	.86362
All GLSs	53	3.0912	.66667

Based on the data presented in Tables 1 and 2, the results of the descriptive analysis suggested that the overall use of grammar learning strategies by high achievers was high (M= 3.78). However, low achievers displayed moderate use of GLSs as their total mean was M=3.09. When examining each type of GLSs in detail, results revealed that there is a similarity between the two groups in the results. Both high achievers and low achievers use the same two types of cognitive strategies most frequently. They are GLSs that assist grammar comprehension and production (Cognitive_1)

and GLSs used to deal with corrective feedback on grammatical errors (Cognitive_4) as their mean score were $M=4.23$ and $M=4.18$ for high achievers and $M=3.45$ and $M=3.23$ for low achievers respectively.

Concerning the other types of GLSs, the two groups were similar in the absence of statistically significant differences between GLS types within each group. However, higher achievers showed high frequency in using all GLSs, while low achievers displayed moderate use. Starting from the third most commonly used GLSs to the least ones, high achievers use the social strategies in third place ($M=3.98$), followed by the cognitive strategies for implicit knowledge ($M=3.91$), then, metacognitive strategies ($M=3.84$). The least frequently used strategies were the cognitive strategies for explicit knowledge ($M=3.68$) and the affective strategies ($M=3.65$). On the other hand, low achievers revealed them in a different descending order. They mostly used affective GLSs followed by metacognitive, social, GLSs used to develop explicit knowledge then GLSs used to develop implicit knowledge as their means were $M=3.07$, 3.06 , 3.04 , 3.01 , and 2.91 respectively.

TABLE 3
INDEPENDENT-SAMPLE T-TEST OF THE PARTICIPANTS' SCORES IN THE GLSI

GLS Type	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
Cognitive_3	.000	-.99391-	.18418	-1.35932-
Cognitive_4	.000	-.95103-	.18669	-1.32142-
Social	.000	-.94511-	.19514	-1.33226-
Metacognitive	.000	-.78279-	.17138	-1.12280-
Cognitive_1	.000	-.78151-	.14139	-1.06203-
Cognitive_2	.000	-.67476-	.14593	-.96427-
Affective	.000	-.58175-	.18771	-.95417-
All GLSs	.000	-.78167-	.13702	-1.05352-

To compare the performance of the two groups that participated in the present study, an independent t-test was used. As displayed in Table 3, results revealed that the significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) for all GLS is reported as 0.000, indicating that the observed mean differences are statistically significant. The negative values in the mean difference column indicate that high achievers tend to utilize these strategies more frequently than low achievers. For each strategy type, the difference in mean between the two groups was the largest when using the cognitive GLSs for implicit knowledge ($M=0.99$), then GLSs used to deal with corrective feedback on grammatical errors ($M=0.95$) then social strategies ($M=0.94$). On the other hand, the mean difference between the other types of GLSs ranged from $M=0.78$ to $M=0.58$, in the case of the affective GLSs.

B. Qualitative Results

The interview transcripts of 15 students were analyzed using thematic content analysis (TCA) as it is one of the most common ways to analyze interviews qualitatively. Anderson (2007) described it as "the most foundational of qualitative analytic procedures and in some way informs all qualitative methods" (p. 1). TCA conducted in the present study followed Vaismoradi et al.'s (2016) stages of theme development which consist of four phases: initialization, construction, rectification, and finalization. As a result of the analysis, eight themes were drawn from participants' responses as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
RESULTS OF THE PARTICIPANTS' INTERVIEW ON THE MOST EFFECTIVE GLSS

Themes in students' experiences	GLS Type	Percentage of Use
1. Use grammatical rules in everyday situations	Cognitive_1	46.7%
2. Tell stories		
3. Use internet resources (YouTube or Google search) to help understand the rules		
4. Use mobile applications to practice the rule and receive feedback	Cognitive_4	40%
5. Teach the rule to peers	Social	33.3%
6. Organize the grammatical rule in a table	Cognitive_2	26.7%
7. Memorize the rule by repetition		
8. Translate the rules into Arabic		

When asked to recall the most effective strategies they followed to study a difficult grammatical rule, most of the participants (46.7%) agreed that practicing the rule in real sentences helped them understand and remember that rule. They reported using them in everyday situations either orally or in written forms. One of the participants replied, "I used to tell stories using the tenses so that I do not forget them". Another student confirmed, "When I study a

grammatical rule I make sure to use it too much in my everyday speech". A third responded, *"I search for examples on the Internet to help me understand better"*. The second most reported GLSs (40%) were concerned with corrected feedback. Here are some examples of the students' responses:

"A good method that helped me a lot is watching a YouTube video with the wrong sentence being corrected. I watch it several times."

"I prefer using apps like Duolingo which showed me my score and mistakes in each level of the game."

"I remember when I got a problem with grammar, I started to use an application that presents tests to several proficiency levels after explaining the rule."

On the other hand, the least reported GLSs were the social strategies and GLS used to develop explicit knowledge of grammar. Thirty-three percent of the interviewees confirmed using social strategies such as studying with other students or teaching the rules to their colleagues. They reported it as an effective strategy to preserve and retain the grammatical rules. In addition, the smallest percentage of students (27%) reported that using GLSs used to develop explicit knowledge of grammatical rules. They summarize the grammatical rules in tables and add examples. One of the participants replied, *"My teacher asked me to make a summary of all the rules that I have studied in the course, so I drew a table and divided it into the name of the rule the structure, and an example then it became a reference to all my siblings."* Another student confirmed, *"I collect all the similar rules in one table then I put my own examples."* Interestingly, only one interviewee referred to using Arabic translation when studying grammar.

V. DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate the differences in the use of grammar learning strategies between low achievers and high achievers in English language learning. The purpose of the study is to provide answers to two research questions: 1) Are there significant differences between Saudi EFL low and high achievers in their use of GLSs? 2) Drawing upon their trajectory in EFL learning, which GLS do Saudi EFL learners deem most effective?

The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that overall, high achievers demonstrate a high level of utilization of grammar learning strategies (GLSs), whereas low achievers exhibit a moderate level of GLSs usage. However, when examining each type of GLSs in detail, results revealed that both high and low achievers tend to employ two particular types of cognitive strategies most frequently. These strategies are cognitive GLSs that aid in grammar comprehension and production and GLSs that deal with corrective feedback of grammatical errors. Concurring with this conclusion, Zekrati (2017) examined Iranian high school EFL learners' use of cognitive and social affective strategies and concluded that there is a positive relationship between strategy use and language achievement. Moreover, recent research confirmed the crucial role that cognitive strategies play in helping students understand and effectively learn grammar (Wardani et al., 2023; Ghannam, 2019). Such confirmation of the importance of cognitive strategies in grammar learning encourages the implementation of cognitive-thinking assisting tools, such as mind mapping, which proved their effectiveness in various language skills including grammar (Bataineh & Al-Majali, 2023).

Concerning GLSs that address corrective feedback, TCA for interview scripts provided intriguing results. Most of the interviewees reported using websites or mobile applications to help them understand and practice grammatical rules that are difficult for them. They prefer online platforms as they offer instant feedback on grammar mistakes, allowing students to swiftly identify and rectify their errors. In general, corrective feedback was proclaimed to have a substantial effect on EFL grammar learning. Hashemifardnia et al. (2019) investigated the effectiveness of giving grade, corrective feedback, and a combination of both on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL students' learning tenses. The study concluded that providing feedback along with grades significantly impacted grammar learning. Similar results that acknowledge the impact of corrective feedback were verified (Basturkmen & Fu, 2021; Daneshvar & Rahimi, 2014; Giacon, 2022).

Using these two types of GLSs simultaneously is not unexpected because the contexts in which EFL learners employ these strategies are quite similar (Pawlak, 2018, p. 369). What is surprising is the finding that there is a similarity in the pattern of strategy usage between the two groups. However, the inferential statistical analysis revealed significant differences between the two groups in the frequency of usage. This result may be justified by the difference in their habits (Looyeh et al., 2017; Sasi & AnjuA, 2020; Sharma, 2017; Siah & Maiyo, 2015). Another possible interpretation is the variance between high and low achievers in their self-regulation skills (Difrancesca et al., 2016; Morales, 2021; Teng & Zhang, 2022). This implies the need for further investigation of EFL low achievers to diagnose the drawbacks of their use of these particular strategies in order to fully take advantage of them.

When considering the other types of GLS, the results show notable differences between the two participant groups. High achievers appear to demonstrate a higher frequency of use for a wider range of GLS types. However, it is important to note that the standard deviations also vary across the scales, which suggests some degree of variability within each achievement level. This variability may indicate individual differences or other contextual factors that influence the relationship between proficiency level in English as a foreign language and the use of GLS. This result coincides with Li (2022) who came to the conclusion that EFL learners' individual differences such as their desire to learn, motivation, and willingness to communicate, positively impact their use of grammar learning strategies. Similar findings were achieved by Mohamed Salleh et al. (2020) who conducted their study on Malay-English bilingual primary school children. They concluded that there are individual differences between bilingual children in grammar learning.

These differences are affected by various factors such as language aptitude, environmental influences, and developmental stages of grammar acquisition.

Notably, higher achievers tend to employ social, cognitive (enhance implicit knowledge), and metacognitive GLSs more than cognitive (enhance explicit knowledge) and affective GLSs. On the other hand, low achievers are inclined to use affective, metacognitive and social GLSs over cognitive GLSs that enhance both explicit and implicit knowledge of grammar. These findings do not fully comply with Taheri et al. (2020) who concluded that Iranian EFL high achievers prefer to use compensation, affective, and cognitive strategies, while low achievers favor social, metacognitive, and memory strategies.

The results of the interview confirmed the conclusions drawn from the quantitative analyses. Nevertheless, the high achievers interviewed did not report some crucial GLSs such as strategies that develop implicit knowledge, and metacognitive strategies. For implicit knowledge strategies, a logical interpretation may be due to the nature of implicit knowledge as information that is acquired and utilized without conscious awareness but can be identified through actions (Dienes & Perner, 2002; Rebuschat & Williams, 2013). However, when metacognitive strategies are discussed, the case is not the same. Metacognitive strategies encompass implicit and explicit processes (Frith, 2012; Sun & Mathews, 2003), therefore, explicit metacognitive processes were expected to be reported. In addition to the previously mentioned types, affective GLSs were not revealed in the interviewees' responses. Overall, the findings of the present research implied the need for further thorough investigation to provide satisfying explanations.

VI. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to investigate the differences in the use of grammar learning strategies between low achievers and high achievers in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. The results of both quantitative and qualitative analyses revealed statistically significant mean differences across all scales of measurement, indicating that high achievers employed a greater variety of grammar learning strategies compared to low achievers. The observed differences in mean scores across achievement levels highlight potential connections between academic achievement and these variables. However, additional research is needed to deepen our understanding of these relationships and to explore potential underlying mechanisms.

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Safaa M. Khalil is an Assistant Professor in Applied Linguistics. She is currently a faculty member at Majmaah University, KSA. She has more than 20 years of experience in teaching in higher education in Egypt and KSA and published research articles and papers in various indexed journals, her areas of interest are Applied linguistics, CALL and Discourse Analysis. Author ORCID: <https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0000-0003-4278-642X>.

Analyzing War Metaphors in the Context of the COVID-19: A Critical Metaphor Analysis

Tran Thi Thanh Truc

Faculty of Legal Languages, Ho Chi Minh City University of Law, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Abstract—The emergence of the coronavirus, officially known as SARS-CoV-2, posed an immediate threat to national security and public health. Despite initial attempts to downplay its seriousness, the pandemic swiftly induced widespread fear worldwide. President Donald Trump positioned himself as a "wartime president", advocating for a comprehensive campaign and declaring war on SARS-CoV-2. This novel framing was widely embraced by the media to help the public grasp the severity of the virus. Consequently, coverage of COVID-19 proliferated across various media platforms, making it one of the most dominant topics of discussion. This paper applies Critical Metaphor Analysis to examine the utilization of war metaphors in American media discourse during the global health crisis caused by the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. Focusing on The New York Times' political journalism between June 1 and July 1, 2020, the study scrutinizes twenty news articles to assess the prevalence and implications of war analogies in pandemic coverage. The analysis reveals a diverse and vigorous deployment of such metaphors, highlighting their pervasive influence in framing COVID-19 as a conflict. Additionally, the paper presents a conceptual model of the war metaphor in this context, supported by various mappings of the conceptual metaphor, elucidating the portrayal of COVID-19 as a war-like scenario within the broader global health crisis caused by the novel coronavirus.

Index Terms—Critical Metaphor Analysis, conceptual metaphor, global health crisis, novel coronavirus

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, which originated in December 2019, has inflicted significant human and property damage, profoundly impacting daily life worldwide. In response, politicians globally employ various communication strategies to garner public support and instill a sense of security amidst the crisis. Central to these strategies are conceptual metaphors used in political discourse disseminated through the press.

Political discourse analysis theory scrutinizes linguistic elements, including vocabulary, syntax, and text structure, to elucidate how discourse shapes political decisions, conveys political ideologies, and exercises power. Furthermore, it examines how language is wielded by politicians, leaders, and the media, serving as a framework to analyze the impact of discourse on policy formulation, electoral management, and the cultivation of political culture. Thus, this research is pivotal in comprehending the role of metaphorical language in political communication during public health crises like COVID-19. By shaping images and ideas, these linguistic constructs wield considerable influence over public opinion and political action.

This study aims to delve into how news media utilize metaphors to articulate their responses, policies, and narratives concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing upon established conceptual metaphor research theories such as Critical Discourse Analysis Theory by authors Van Dijk (1993) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), the Theory of Conceptual Metaphor Analysis by Kövecses (2017), and the Theory of Political Discourse Analysis by Van Dijk (2008), the study explores the intricate dynamics of news media communication.

To captivate readers' attention amidst the pandemic, media outlets have extensively employed war metaphors, imbuing COVID-19 discourse with renewed significance. Globally, the notion of a COVID-19 war has gained widespread acceptance among politicians, scientists, and journalists, serving as a rallying cry for collective action against the virus. This trend is evident in various forms of media, including scientific publications, journals, mass media, and social platforms, where phrases like "*virus the enemy*," "*front-lines*," "*heroic doctors*," and "*battle against Covid-19*" have become commonplace. This study aims to address the prevalence and implications of war metaphors in framing COVID-19 issues, examining twenty political media discourses published between June 1st and July 1st, 2020, by The New York Times, a prominent American newspaper. Through Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), the study seeks to elucidate the usage and functions of war metaphors in political media discourse.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Metaphors From the Perspective of Critical Metaphor Analysis

Charteris-Black (2004) introduced the Critical Metaphor Analysis approach in *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis*. This is a meaningful continuation and complementarity for both Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Conceptual Metaphor Analysis (CMT). This approach combines CDA, corpus linguistics, pragmatics, and cognitive

linguistics to offer new perspectives on both CDA and CMT. Its goal is to reveal the potential underlying intentions of speakers, while also acknowledging the interplay between ideology, power dynamics, and language within social and cultural settings.

Charteris-Black (2004) asserted that metaphor analysis should incorporate semantic, cognitive, and pragmatic criteria since a single theory alone cannot fully explain the complexity of metaphor. In other words, the framework used for metaphor analysis must combine the following three components: semantics, cognition, and pragmatics, since any single component is inadequate to fully explain the metaphorical expressions.

CMA is an approach to analyzing metaphors that aims to uncover a hidden (consciously or unconsciously) intention of language users (Charteris-Black, 2004) but does not deny the conceptual nature of metaphor. CMA is founded on the central tenet of CMT, which posits that metaphor plays a fundamental role in shaping our cognitive processes and patterns of thought.

In addition, this approach is also close to the traditional viewpoint of metaphor, in which metaphor is perceived as a way of reasoning as well as plays a certain role in discourse structure and style. Speakers choose to use metaphorical expressions rather than other literal words not only because it is a means of decoration, but also for persuasion purposes. The fact is that the main function of metaphors in certain contexts is to influence listeners' psychology and thoughts. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of metaphors requires contextual consideration. The pragmatic view of metaphor holds that cognitive semantics alone cannot give a complete explanation of metaphor because it would be impractical to understand what metaphor means without basing on its context. To reinforce this, Levinson (1983) argued that the pragmatic approach will be based on the assumption that metaphorical content of the words will not derive from the principle of semantic explanation; instead, Semantics primarily deals with the literal or conventional meaning of words, providing characteristics of their straightforward content. In this framework, along with contextual information, pragmatics becomes essential for explaining metaphorical expressions by elucidating how language is used in specific contexts to convey intended meanings beyond literal interpretations.

On the above-mentioned facts, CMA has been chosen as theoretical framework for metaphor analysis in this study, which consists of three phases: i) metaphor identification: in this stage, the identification process for metaphors is listed by Charteris-Black (2004) who ascertains whether there is conflict between the literal source domain and the metaphorical target domain; Phase ii) is known as metaphor interpretation, and it entails identifying the ways in which metaphorical expressions are systematically related to one another both on the textual and conceptual levels. Phase iii) is known as metaphor explanation, and it entails both the identification of these relationships as well as a discussion of the pragmatic and rhetorical elements that influence them.

B. War Metaphors and Their Impacts on US Political Discourse

Linguistic analysis shows that one of the main functions of war metaphor is to evoke a sense of fear (Alexandrescu, 2014; Coleman, 2013; George et al., 2016; Mirghani, 2011). In political discourses, politicians prefer using war metaphor as a hyperbole, paired with superlatives to highlight common social political issues such as poverty, drugs or terrorism in order to attract public attention and create influence (Bartolucci, 2012; Larson et al., 2005).

War metaphors themselves are a powerful rhetorical tool for politicians. By using war metaphors to imply the country is at war, presidents could quickly gather armies and other resources to fight against the enemies. There would be little time and opportunity to consider and choose the right policy because above all the country is at war. During the war, the president is a commander in chief and domestic policy will shift from the leadership of Congress to the White House.

Being in several wars and a state of national emergency has dramatically changed the way political policy is implemented in the US. In particular, presidents have found that declaring war and a state of emergency is an appropriate way to wield greater executive power. Instead of having to get involved in long-term policy development, presidents can quickly formulate a domestic policy through speeches and declarations of domestic war. These domestic wars never seem to end, from the fights against poverty to unemployment, from battles against diseases to economic war, etc... But basically, very few domestic problems are fully resolved. Inevitably, battles against enemies like poverty, crime or drugs become the long-term framework for policy formulation and decision-making. However, political leaders have fully embraced war metaphors in an extreme way that they sometimes ignore pre-policy considerations, instead, have largely given way to urgent decisions, emergency action and war declaration.

C. The Usage of Metaphors Related to COVID-19 Pandemic

In June 2020, COVID-19 pandemic spread around the world, unveiling skeletal fragility of the healthcare systems, the local government ineffectiveness and global health agencies' incompetence in their ways of handling the pandemic. In this chaos, many people were concerned about inequalities and injustices happening globally. The endless conflicts related to Covid-19 issues between countries led to violent actions against human values. Politics turned brutal when some countries tried to seize personal protective equipment (PPE) from other countries. The world witnessed vigorous attacks and interference by governments on aircrafts carrying essential goods and PPE during the pandemic. Stockpiling essential goods for selling at higher profitable prices and raising prices of medical equipment and medicine became common things in COVID-19 pandemic. In other words, humanism can no longer be a veil for the healthcare system's failure and government ineptitude in controlling the situation.

Conceptual metaphors are frequently employed in political and news media discourse to tackle pressing societal issues like crises, political dilemmas, or diseases (Nerghes et al., 2015; Semino et al., 2018). Previous studies have demonstrated that the use of different metaphors can influence individuals' reasoning, emotions, and behaviors (Cienki & Müller, 2008; Gibbs, 2014; Lee & Schwarz, 2014; Nicaise, 2014; Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic discourse has recently drawn substantial attention to the social impact of metaphors (Oswick et al., 2020; Rohela et al., 2020; Sabucedo et al., 2020; Semino, 2021).

Firstly, research has investigated the utilization of conceptual metaphors in political discourse worldwide. Studies by Tran (2021) reveal the widespread use of war metaphors by political leaders like President Xi Jinping, French President Emmanuel Macron, Queen Elizabeth, and President Donald Trump through news media. These leaders have employed wartime language to underscore the seriousness of the pandemic situation. Similarly, Rajandran's (2020) study explored the use of conceptual metaphors by the Prime Ministers of Malaysia and Singapore, shedding light on how metaphors contribute to the political communication of these nations. This study also examines metaphors related to direction, journey, and flexibility adopted by politicians in political and news media discourse.

Secondly, research delves into how conceptual metaphors have influenced individuals' psychology and perception of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tran and Ha (2021) suggested that studying metaphors in epidemic-related news enhances our understanding of the impact of communication on public health and explores the interplay between epidemiology and national culture in specific social contexts. Additionally, Doquin de Saint Preux and Masid Blanco's (2021) study found that metaphorical framing influenced the intensity of negative emotions and fears among Spanish speakers. The research by Sabucedo et al. (2020) opposes the use of war metaphors in COVID-19 media reports, citing its potential to exacerbate negative emotions and influence readers' behavior. Similarly, Scherer et al. (2015) noted that metaphors can influence vaccine acceptance, a critical aspect of COVID-19 response. At the individual level, Wicke and Bolognesi (2020) highlight the persuasive power of metaphors in the healthcare sector, impacting patients' health and well-being.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

A. Data Collection

The corpus in this descriptive study included 20 political media discourses. They are the online news reports in The New York Times published from June 1st to July 1st, 2020. The data collection method consisted of three steps. The first step was collecting randomly twenty political media discourses on the website of The New York Times (www.nytimes.com). Secondly, these political discourses were read carefully to understand the general meaning of each of them. The last step of the data collection was identifying conceptual metaphors using Pragglejaz Group (2007) theory about Metaphor Identification Procedure.

B. Instrument

Quantitative methods were used to identify proportions of lexical tokens in the corpus. After that, qualitative methods were mainly employed to analyze the data collected. Methods of classification, description and analysis were also used to find out the main features of metaphorical usage in the corpus. The last step was making conclusions on the analysis of the data based on Critical Metaphor Analysis which was chosen as a discursive approach in this study and mainly focused on the interaction of social political context and metaphor usage.

IV. FINDINGS

After analyzing the data, the study found that there were total of 48 metaphorical expressions with 22 types of lexical tokens containing metaphorical concepts. The most dominant type of token was '*protect*' taking a percentage of 14.6% in the total number of tokens. To make it clearer, a table with frequency and percentage of the lexical tokens was provided below:

TABLE 1
LIST OF METAPHORICAL LEXICAL TOKENS AND THEIR FREQUENCY IN THE CORPUS

Lexical tokens	Source Domain	Frequency	Percentage
batter	WAR	3	6.25
battle	„	2	4.17
combat	„	3	6.25
confront	„	2	4.17
destroy	„	1	2.08
enemy	„	2	4.17
failure	„	2	4.17
fight	„	3	6.25
force	„	2	4.17
front-line	„	4	8.33
hero	„	1	2.08
hit	„	1	2.08
match	„	1	2.08
mobilize	„	1	2.08
onslaught	„	1	2.08
protect	„	7	14.6
shield	„	1	2.08
surrender	„	2	4.17
sword	„	1	2.08
threat	„	6	12.5
victory	„	1	2.08
wartime	WAR	1	2.08

Under the following analysis, the study looked into the conceptual metaphors reflected through a few excerpts cited from the corpus, since space constraints preclude a more in-depth analysis.

A. Metaphor 'COVID-19 War'

The metaphor 'the war against Covid-19' appears to be one of the most common conceptual metaphors used in media discourse in pandemic context. A wide range of war-related lexical terms can be found in COVID-19 news like 'battle', 'march', 'threat', 'damage', 'risk', 'combat', 'surrender'... This metaphor gives a sense of urgency in the pandemic and through it writers want to send a call to health agencies and the public in order to raise people's awareness about the COVID-19 dangers. In addition, it also implies the assumption that the government has prepared enough manpower, national strategy, weapons and protective measures to deal with the war.

(1) While everyone is facing the **battle** against coronavirus, black people in America are still facing the battle against racism and coronavirus,"...

(2) ... the rate of new coronavirus infections could more than double to 100,000 a day if current outbreaks were not contained, warning that the **virus's march** across the South and the West "**puts** the entire country **at risk**.""

In the examples (1) (2), words belonging to war field such as 'battle', 'march', 'put at risk' were found to form a conceptual framework for the metaphor of the war against viruses.

B. Metaphor 'Virus the Enemy'

It is necessary to determine who the enemy is in a battle. In the case of a pandemic, the opponent is the Coronavirus. Around the world, politicians have declared war on SARS CoV-2. Great efforts have been made to find ways to stop its spreading, as well as research has been done to develop medicine and vaccines. But so far there is not yet a truly effective countermeasure. It is easily to find in political media discourses metaphorical expressions that illustrate 'virus - the enemy':

(3) Now, they see his behavior as self-defeating and his bursts of both anger and self-praise as futile against an invisible **enemy** like the virus...

(4) "The **enemy** is the riots and COVID-19 and whatever else is going on in the government they aren't telling us."

In some other metaphorical expressions exemplifying the COVID-19 war, the image of the incumbent President Trump appeared as a commander in chief who declared war on the Coronavirus. He was described as a 'loser' with metaphorical expressions such as 'surrender', 'failure to defend', 'termite potential coronavirus threat' etc... This fact indicated that the New York Times holding a consistent liberal view has downplayed and criticized the policies made by the incumbent Republican President in the war against Coronavirus, as it was described in the following examples:

(5) Biden says Trump '**surrendered**' to coronavirus in a blistering speech.

(6) President Trump's Democratic opponent criticized him for **failing to protect** the American people from the virus...

C. Metaphor 'Victory Over COVID-19'

When the country is at war, victory is the most expected outcome. Winning pandemic means returning to normal life; public health is guaranteed; social security and freedom of movement are restored; politics and economy is stabilized

like before the pandemic. Therefore, the metaphor of victory over the pandemic appeared frequently in media as in these examples:

(7) After a week of unrest in the capital, Mr. Trump had gone to the Rose Garden to declare **victory** over a coronavirus pandemic that has ravaged the economy...

(8) This year, diplomats have already had to grapple with representing a president and government that have been widely criticized for their **failures** in handling the coronavirus pandemic...

D. Metaphor *MEDICAL STAFF IS HERO/ SOLDIER*

The metaphor *MEDICAL STAFF IS HERO/ SOLDIER* helps to illustrate a positive icon while empowering the medical staff. However, this metaphor also indirectly acknowledges the significant risks that health-care workers face in the war against COVID-19, including their health safety and their families' security. The metaphorical expressions '*heroes fighting*', '*the doctors and nurses on the front lines*' are symbolic forms of praise. But at the same time, it puts certain pressures on doctors and medical staff. As heroes, they do not have the right to give up the fighting position in COVID-19 war. Even they have to sacrifice both their health and life to fight and save patients' lives. These following examples supported this fact:

(9) Meet the **heroes fighting** on the **front lines** against COVID-19.

(10) As the first COVID-19 patients started showing up in New York City emergency rooms, **the doctors and nurses on the front lines** were resolute. After months fighting the coronavirus's early **onslaught** — often without adequate protection and support — they were confused, frightened and exhausted.

In examples below, the study found that there was an army with '*task force*', '*the head*', '*wartime president*' who were in the battle to '*combat the coronavirus*':

(11) ... where he aimed to rebrand himself as a "**wartime president.**" But those efforts quickly devolved into fights with reporters as the president made stunningly inaccurate claims; including a suggestion that injecting disinfectant into the human body could help **combat the coronavirus**.

(12) As **the head** of the administration's virus **task force**, Mr. Pence has frequently used his public appearances to play down the seriousness of the pandemic.

Metaphor '*soldiers*' or '*task force*' fighting in the '*front-lines*' emphasizes the risk of infection from those who actually come into contact with the virus. On the flip side, this metaphor increases the ignorance of people who are not really exposed to the virus. Thus, it can reduce the risk that medical staff and other health-care staff are facing and decrease the importance of their work.

Therefore, it should be recognized that the metaphor *MEDICAL STAFF IS HERO/ SOLDIER* implies that health-care workers choose to put themselves in danger and accept the possibility of COVID-19 infection, although many of them do not want this. In addition, this metaphor emphasizes the important role of healthcare staff while degrading the effort of people working outside the healthcare field. This is exactly the point where the war metaphor is recommended not to be overused when it comes to health and medical issues.

E. Metaphor *PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT IS ARMOR and TESTING IS WEAPON*

Examples below illustrate how personal protective equipment (PPE) was metaphorized as armor by the terms '*shield*' and '*protect*', as well as testing is considered to be a '*sword*' serving as weapon to fight against the virus:

(13) The West Point band played with plexiglass **shields** to **protect** against the virus.

(14) Testing was derided as a "double-edged **sword**," ...

Obviously, the metaphor *PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT IS ARMOR* highlights the urgency of the lack of PPE in local and national health agencies. However, this metaphor could exacerbate the lack of PPE as it might increase a higher demand on PPE from the public and at the same time creates fear by developing an assumption on the spread of the disease.

F. Metaphor *THE ECONOMY AND POLITICS ARE COVID-19 VICTIMS*

Not only threatening public health, COVID-19 indirectly but strongly affected the economy and politics. Trading and traveling were all delayed resulting in unemployment and layoffs in many of the companies. COVID-19 did have a serious impact on the economy, politics and society, illustrating by the metaphorical expressions '*battle*', '*hit*', '*ravage*'... showing the severity of the crisis:

(15) **Fighting for their political lives** amid twin domestic crises — **a pandemic that has battered** the economy...

(16) He suggested that the leftover money in the Paycheck Protection Program should be repurposed **to help industries** that had been **hit hardest by the pandemic**...

(17) After a week of unrest in the capital, Mr. Trump had gone to the Rose Garden to declare victory over a coronavirus **pandemic that has ravaged the economy**...

G. Metaphor '*Front-Line*'

The front-line is the fiercest battleground in a war. In the pandemic, the front-lines included many different places such as: airports and border gates where there was a high possibility of spreading diseases; quarantines where people

returning from epidemic areas temporarily lived waiting for test results; hospitals, clinics where doctors and patients were fighting against the virus. These were all illustrated in detail in the following metaphorical expressions:

(18) His organization has received about \$10 million so far to help **front-line** coronavirus responders in the West Bank, Italy and Haiti.

(19) Trina Moore, 61, drove 10 hours from Denver to attend the rally. Her children are essential workers on the **front lines** of the pandemic, she said.

V. DISCUSSION

Conceptual war metaphors are universally perceived and commonly associated with illness in many cultures. One of the most popular conceptual metaphors is FIGHTING DISEASES IS A WAR. In this conceptual metaphor, a variety of mappings can be identified including: A DISEASE IS AN ENEMY, MEDICAL STAFF IS ARMY, BODY IS BATTLEFIELD, MEDICINE AND MEDICAL EQUIPMENT ARE WEAPONS, etc. Therefore, this conceptual metaphor appears in media discourse on topics about COVID-19 and other fatal diseases such as cancer. We can observe the encounter between doctors (warriors) and viruses (enemy); the different targets of the two forces and the diverse battlefields that humans must fight. It is not just the battles between viruses and healthy cells on the 'body battlefield'.

The emotional stimulation generated by the metaphor is probably the most important feature. This stimulation depends on the context in which the metaphor is created, and is shaped by the way it is perceived and shared. In conceptual metaphors with the source domain of illness, politics, human relationships, business etc..., basically our understanding of the target domain is not necessarily entirely based on the source domain. It partially depends on the context and the communicators' background knowledge. Definitely, the influence of these conceptual metaphors is enormous since they create a strong impact on people's perception and acts as a whole.

War metaphors are context-dependent: they can create a positive or negative emotional effect depending on how they are used. For example, war metaphors used in COVID-19 pandemic context can stimulate people's emotional psychology, help them be aware of a dangerous threat to public health, and make them respect their community obligations like in wartime rather than satisfying their individual needs. In addition, this projection can create a defense mechanism: fears and worries are mapped into the concept of war between human vs. tiny virus, providing a sense of outstanding government power and their capability to take control of the situation.

However, the matter is if it is practical to abuse war metaphors in media discourse? By using war metaphors, news writers have reduced various options into 'war', and thus divide the world into I/ We (Good) and They/ It (Evil). The complexity and diversity of the ethical category have condensed into Yes/ No; True/ False. Consequently, the abuse of war metaphors can result in an excessively simple combative worldview that might evoke provocative violence. It can limit the way people discuss and argue about a problem, prevent or delay examining and searching for more effective solutions. In addition, as in this case study, the analysis showed that war metaphors can bring undesirable consequences. Perhaps the most obvious outcome can be seen in the mapping MEDICAL STAFF IS HERO. During the war, soldiers would never be asked to fight without proper protective equipment. However, the doctors and medical staff which are mentioned as 'soldiers' in COVID-19 war were not well-equipped during the time this research was conducted (as mentioned in theoretical background). In June 2020, the lack of N95 masks and other medical protective equipment widely reported around the world. But these 'heroic warriors' - doctors and medical staff do not have the choice to give up fighting since they were titled as heroes by the public. They had to take risk of their life and health to save the lives of others.

VI. CONCLUSION

The usage of war metaphors in media discourse regarding the COVID-19 outbreak can have unanticipated negative implications, although initially inspiring a sense of urgency and unity. COVID-19 is portrayed as a war, with winners and losers, which could exacerbate tensions and impede coordinated efforts to effectively combat the virus. Furthermore, the idealized portrayal of medical personnel as warriors could mask the structural obstacles they encounter, like insufficient safety gear and dangerous working environments. In addition to downplaying the complexity of healthcare, this representation puts frontline workers' wellbeing at risk.

It is crucial to reevaluate the usage of war metaphors in media discourse about COVID-19 and other health emergencies in light of these worries. Other conceptual metaphors that provide more beneficial frameworks for comprehending and tackling public health issues include "TREATING AN ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY" and "ILLNESS IS DOWN, HEALTH IS UP." Media sources may encourage greater empathy, teamwork, and resilience in handling the ongoing pandemic and beyond by embracing more complex and inclusive metaphors. This change toward more deliberate and accountable communication can enhance the wellbeing of people and communities everywhere by fostering a more comprehensive awareness of health-related concerns.

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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

Characteristics of Chinese Higher Education EFL Teachers' Behaviors Based on Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

Mingxing Yang*

Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia

Joanna Joseph Jeyaraj

Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia

Norhakimah Khaieessa Binti Ahmad

Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia

Wei Yang

Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia

Abstract—Technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) is pivotal for enhancing both learning and teaching processes, and it has garnered a share of scholarly attention in recent years, although few quantitative studies have been found on English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers of higher education in Guizhou, China. This study provides a comprehensive quantitative analysis of the integration of TPACK among EFL teachers in higher education in Guizhou province, China. A detailed EFL-TPACK framework coding protocol was employed to analyze the teaching videos of six EFL teachers with varying proficiency levels. These six teachers were selected from a survey that investigated 286 EFL teachers in higher education in Guizhou Province. The analysis categorized the teaching behaviors observed in the videos into seven distinct factors, meticulously quantifying the integration of technological (TK), pedagogical (PK), and content knowledge (CK), revealing significant disparities between the teachers. High-level teachers excelled in TPACK integration more than medium-level and low-level teachers, especially older ones. This study not only enables a deeper understanding of the practical application of TPACK in classroom settings but also emphasizes the dynamic nature of EFL-TPACK frameworks. The findings highlight the urgent need for targeted professional development strategies, including comprehensive technological training, a balanced emphasis on pedagogical and content knowledge, and the establishment of collaborative learning environments. These strategies are essential for enhancing TPACK integration skills across proficiency levels.

Index Terms—EFL teachers, higher education, video analysis, teaching behaviors, EFL-TPACK framework

I. INTRODUCTION

Advances in information and communication technology (ICT), including innovations such as ChatGPT and Google Bard, have revolutionized the educational domain, prompting extensive research on technology's role in pedagogy. This evolution has emphasized the importance of teachers' mastery over subject-matter knowledge, technological fluency, and pedagogical skills—collectively termed "technological pedagogical content knowledge" (TPACK). TPACK encapsulates the essential competencies that teachers must integrate to navigate the nexus of teaching, technology, and content knowledge (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). In this context, the integration of ICT tools in education has become increasingly significant. Extensive background research highlights the transformative impact of ICT on teaching methods, learning environments, and educational outcomes. Studies have shown that effective integration of technology in teaching not only enhances student engagement and learning but also prepares students for a technology-driven world. The role of teachers has thus evolved from mere providers of knowledge to facilitators of learning, leveraging technology to make the learning process more dynamic and student-centered. This shift necessitates a comprehensive understanding of how technology can be blended with traditional pedagogical approaches to optimize learning outcomes. It is in this vein that the present study aims to explore this EFL-TPACK framework in EFL teaching in Guizhou's higher education sector, with observations and analyses of EFL teachers' teaching videos, which allows for the detailed observation of teachers' real-time interactions and technology use in the classroom, providing concrete evidence of TPACK application and pedagogical effectiveness.

* Corresponding Author

In recent years, rapid advancements in ICT technologies have focused on integrating technology across diverse educational landscapes, leading to notable progress in pedagogical methodologies for both teaching and learning (e.g., Cha et al., 2020; Singhavi & Basargekar, 2019; Willis et al., 2019). Consequently, teachers' subject-matter knowledge, technological insights, and ability to fluidly weave technologies into the educational milieu play a pivotal role in shaping the teaching and learning trajectory (Backfisch et al., 2020; Kali et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2022; Koehler et al., 2017).

Given that English is a mandatory course in China's higher education, the TPACK of EFL teachers is pivotal for enhancing both learning and teaching processes (Abubakir & Alshaboul, 2023; Alotumi, 2023; Wang, 2022). Well-organized technology integration requires complicated pedagogical knowledge and subject-content knowledge, which are the central focus of the TPACK framework. However, few quantitative studies have investigated EFL teachers' TPACK in higher education (e.g., Chuang & Ho, 2011; Liang et al., 2013), and even fewer investigations have been conducted in Guizhou, China. As one of the undeveloped provinces in China, Guizhou's education system is still inferior (Gao & Yang, 2016), not to mention EFL teaching. Many EFL teachers graduated from non-teaching English majors, having not received systematic educational training, and lack basic knowledge of the teaching theory and teaching methods (Chen, 2019; Yu, 2006; Zheng, 2021; Zhou, 2019). Most EFL teachers are non-teaching English majors who have studied mainly English literature or English linguistics; Although their English competency is quite good, they still lack knowledge in language teaching and pedagogical psychology (Jiao, 2013; Wang, 2018). Additionally, the EFL teaching method is one-dimensional, and passive learning approaches are still prevalent among many tertiary teachers in Guizhou province (Ma, 2019; Wu, 2020). Besides, EFL teachers in Guizhou are unfamiliar with the use of technology and have little motivation to use technology to assist in teaching (Fan & Yang, 2021). When the age ranges of teachers increase, teachers become more unfamiliar with the use of technology (Kazu & Erten, 2014). Therefore, the focus of this study is this region, which is currently underrepresented in literature. A greater understanding of EFL-TPACK within this context is important because it can provide insights into localized teaching strategies, enhance pedagogical outcomes, and address the unique challenges of EFL education in Guizhou, thereby improving the overall quality of English language education in the region.

For the purpose of this study, six EFL teachers with varying levels of proficiency in TPACK and representing diverse backgrounds and teaching experiences were identified. Using a selected modified TPACK coding protocol, which enabled a detailed examination of their teaching behavior to be obtained, an analysis of their video-recorded EFL lessons was conducted. Through this video analysis, insights into the practical integration of technology, pedagogy, and content in the EFL classroom setting were obtained.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Building upon the Shulman (1986) theory of pedagogical content knowledge, Mishra and Koehler (2006) contributed to the pedagogical paradigm by integrating technological knowledge (TK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and content knowledge (CK). They delved into the intersections between these knowledge forms, delineating aspects of technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK), technological content knowledge (TCK), and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK; Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Rosenberg & Koehler, 2015). Figure 1 shows the original TPACK framework.

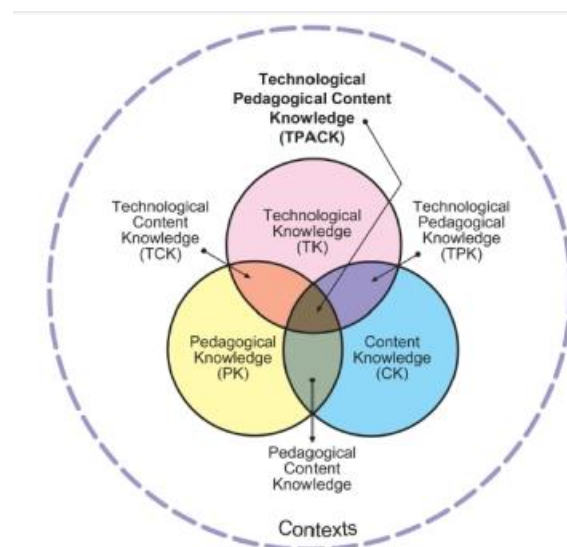


Figure 1. Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) Framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006)

This study is intended to provide a detailed examination of EFL teachers' TPACK in higher education in Guizhou, China. It rests on the understanding that TPACK offers teachers a knowledge map, guiding them in effectively integrating technology into their teaching practice (Saubern et al., 2020). Given the growing prominence of educational technology in contemporary classrooms, it is imperative that teachers possess the technological know-how needed to harness educational tools and amplify student engagement and learning outcomes (Cheok et al., 2017).

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study investigates EFL-TPACK by observing the behavior of a sample of teachers in class. In this way, it addresses the following research question: What are the observed characteristics of the EFL-TPACK frameworks of EFL teachers in higher education in Guizhou Province, China?

IV. METHODOLOGY

To investigate the observed EFL-TPACK framework of teachers in the classroom, this study explored videos of six teachers of varying levels of proficiency. This use of video recordings allows a researcher to repeatedly play and analyze the behaviors on display. Moreover, video analysis can facilitate the systematic quantification of teaching, which is a common practice in educational research. For example, Nagro and Cornelius (2013) conclude that video analysis is a promising tool for exploring teacher development, and many other researchers have conducted video analyses to study teachers' knowledge and development (Li et al., 2019; Li et al., 2019; Maeng et al., 2013; Vinothinivasodavan et al., 2019). Quantifying EFL-TPACK behaviors in the higher education context of Guizhou Province helps to understand the real situation of EFL teachers' integration of technological pedagogical content knowledge in the classroom, guiding targeted improvements and curriculum development for policymakers. In general, video analysis can facilitate comprehensive and objective analyses of teachers' EFL-TPACK frameworks and may provide valuable references for the promotion of teachers' professional development.

A. Instrument

The instrument in this study is an EFL-TPACK coding protocol based on TPACK theory. The EFL-TPACK-based observation protocol (see Table 1) was adapted from the TPACK behavior observation protocol developed by Luo (2019).

TABLE 1
EFL-TPACK FRAMEWORK BEHAVIOR OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Coding	Definition	Behaviors
CK	English subject-content knowledge to be acquired by the student.	Behaviors involved with teaching vocabulary, grammar, and any other content knowledge will be coded as CK.
PK	Knowledge of teaching methods and teaching practices.	Behaviors only involved with teaching strategies and methods will be coded as "PK."
TK	Knowledge of ICT tools.	Behaviors only involved with technological knowledge, such as ICT tools, will be coded as "TK."
TCK	Knowledge of how to use technology to present EFL content knowledge.	Behaviors will be coded as "TCK" when teaching only involves the use of technological knowledge to deliver content knowledge.
TPK	Knowledge of how to use technology to accomplish instructional strategies.	Behaviors will be coded as "TPK" when teaching only involves technological and pedagogical knowledge.
PCK	Knowledge of how to use strategies and methods to deliver content knowledge in a way that students can easily acquire.	Behaviors will be coded as "PCK" when teaching involves only using teaching strategies or methods to deliver content knowledge.
TPACK	Knowledge of how to integrate technological pedagogical content knowledge into teaching.	Behaviors will be coded as "TPACK" when EFL teachers deliver content with pedagogical knowledge and technological knowledge in their classrooms.

B. Participants

Six participants were selected based on an EFL-TPACK survey, among which EFL teachers were grouped into quartile levels based on their overall EFL-TPACK score. SPSS was used to calculate the quartile percentile for each range. The possible score range of EFL-TPACK is 36-180, but the survey results for this study produced a range of 93-180. Table 2 shows the levels of EFL teachers' EFL-TPACK quartile percentiles.

TABLE 2
LEVELS OF EFL TEACHERS' EFL-TPACK

Level	Range	Number	Percentage
Lower quartile	36-120	76	26.6%
Middle quartile	121-144	140	48.5%
Upper quartile	145-180	70	23.8%

The lower quartile, with a range of 36-120, consists of 76 teachers, accounting for 26.6% of the total respondents. The middle quartile, ranging from 121-144, includes 140 teachers, representing 48.5% of the respondents. Lastly, the

upper quartile, with a range of 145-180, comprises 70 teachers, making up 23.8% of the total respondents. For this study, EFL teachers in the lower quartile were classified as having low EFL-TPACK level, EFL teachers in the middle quartiles were classified as having average EFL-TPACK level, and EFL teachers in the upper quartile were classified as having high EFL-TPACK level.

The findings of the EFL-TPACK survey revealed a significant gender disparity, with 80.44% of the EFL teachers in Guizhou being female and a majority (82.25%) holding a Master's degree. That is why the six chosen teachers for this study, under EFL-expert recommendations and the EFL-TPACK scale, all hold a Master's degree, and five out of six are female. Their basic demographic information is presented in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3
OBSERVATION PARTICIPANTS

Number	Code	Age	Teaching Age	Educational Background	Gender	Level
1	H1	30	4	Master	Female	High
2	H2	32	6	Master	Female	High
3	M1	33	7	Master	Female	Medium
4	M2	38	21	Master	Female	Medium
5	L1	29	3	Master	Female	Low
6	L2	54	30	Master	Male	Low

H1 and H2 belong to high-level EFL teachers who have been teaching English for 4 and 6 years, respectively. M1 and M2 belong to medium-level EFL teachers who have been teaching English for 6 and 7 years, respectively, and L1 and L2 belong to low-level EFL teachers who have been teaching English for 3 and 54 years, respectively. Generally, the selected teachers in the study can represent the general EFL population in higher education in Guizhou Province, reflecting prevalent gender and educational qualifications within this group.

C. Sampling Scheme and Data Collection

We used the purposive sampling method to select videos of six EFL teachers of varying levels of EFL-TPACK, teaching regular classes in universities in Guizhou. Then, the teaching behaviors were coded in chronological order. For instance, in the first minute of Teacher L1's class, the observed behaviors included turning on the computer and presenting slides. There was no teaching strategy or CK involved, so the behavior was coded "TK." The frequency and duration data of all the behaviors were calculated in this way.

D. Data Analysis

We employed a rigorous and systematic approach to analyze the EFL-TPACK frameworks of the six teachers. The instructional videos were played carefully so that each teacher's instructional behavior could be meticulously documented and coded in Microsoft Word, capturing the nuances of the classroom dynamics. This coding involved identifying, timestamping, and recording the frequency and duration of each teaching behavior.

Our analysis centered on the following metrics: the frequency and duration of the behaviors and the frequency and duration of each category as a percentage of the total teaching behaviors. Frequency was calculated as the number of times a behavior occurred, while duration was the total time spent engaging in each behavior. To contextualize these behaviors within the instructional environment, the researchers computed the frequency and duration of each behavior as a percentage of the total number of behaviors and total teaching time, respectively.

This detailed analysis provided a granular view of how the teachers had integrated TK, PK, and CK into their teaching practices. This quantification allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of each teacher's EFL-TPACK framework, providing empirical data crucial for understanding the effectiveness of technology-integrated teaching strategies in EFL classrooms. The statistical results for each factor of the EFL-TPACK frameworks of the six EFL teachers are given in the following chapter.

V. FINDINGS

The findings present a comprehensive analysis of the EFL-TPACK behaviors observed in teachers of varying proficiency levels. Here, we meticulously dissect and interpret the frequency and duration of seven key EFL-TPACK factors – TPACK, PCK, TCK, TPK, PK, CK, and TK – as exhibited by high, medium, and low-level EFL teachers. The findings illustrate the disparities and commonalities in the application of EFL-TPACK among EFL teachers. Table 3 shows the frequency and duration statistics for each factor of EFL-TPACK frameworks of high-level teachers.

TABLE 4
FREQUENCY AND DURATION STATISTICS FOR EACH FACTOR OF EFL-TPACK FRAMEWORKS OF HIGH-LEVEL TEACHERS

Factor	H1				H2			
	Frequency	Frequency Percentage	Duration (Seconds)	Duration Percentage	Frequency	Frequency Percentage	Duration (Seconds)	Duration Percentage
PK	5	13.51%	455	8.43%	8	11.76%	334	6.19%
CK	3	8.11%	104	1.93%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
TK	1	2.70%	39	0.72%	2	2.94%	23	0.43%
TCK	5	13.51%	489	9.06%	2	2.94%	78	1.44%
TPK	4	10.81%	256	4.74%	1	2.94%	131	2.43%
PCK	1	2.70%	237	4.39%	14	20.59%	634	11.74%
TPACK	18	48.65%	3820	70.74%	41	60.29%	4200	77.78%

Table 1 shows that Teacher H1 engaged in TPACK behavior on 18 occasions, PK 5 occasions, TCK 5 occasions, TPK 4 occasions, CK 3 occasions, and TK once. The TPACK behaviors lasted for 3,820 seconds, TCK for 489 seconds, PK for 455 seconds, TPK for 256 seconds, PCK for 237 seconds, CK for 104 seconds, and TK for 39 seconds. For Teacher H2, the behaviors ranged in frequency (from highest to lowest) as follows: TPACK (41 observations), PCK (14), PK (8), TCK (2), TK (2), TPK (1), and CK (0). The duration of the behaviors was as follows: 4,200 seconds for TPACK, 634 seconds for PCK, 334 seconds for PK, 131 seconds for TPK, 78 seconds for TCK, 23 seconds for TK, and 0 seconds for CK.

There was generally a direct correlation between the frequency of a behavior and its duration, with a higher frequency typically aligning with a longer duration (Na et al., 2017). Teacher H1 received her highest scores for both frequency of TPACK behavior (18 observations) and duration (3,820 seconds). PK and TCK behaviors were observed only five times, with durations of 489 seconds and 455 seconds, respectively. This was because Teacher H1 spent more time on reading practice in their class. When the students read independently, Teacher H1 presented the reading materials with slides. As a result, PK and TCK behaviors were second only to TPACK behaviors in terms of frequency and duration in Teacher H1's classroom.

Teacher H2's highest frequencies were for TPACK and PCK behaviors, which were observed 41 times and 14 times, respectively. H2 engaged in more TPACK behaviors than H1 (who recorded just 18 observations), as H2 performed more practice activities. As a result, H2's TPACK duration was as high as 4,200 seconds. Teacher H2 also scored higher for the proportion of TPACK behaviors than for any other behavior teachers, accounting for 77.78% of the total, indicative of H2's effective integration of pedagogical, technological, and content knowledge. This accounted for up to 77.78% (4,200 seconds) of classroom time—closely followed by PCK, which accounted for 634 seconds. This implies that, even without using technological knowledge, H2 was able to effectively integrate pedagogical knowledge with content knowledge. H2 spent the least amount of time on TCK and TK, seldom using technological or content knowledge by themselves in class, instead preferring to integrate that knowledge. This is further confirmed by the zero utilization rate for CK.

The findings for high-level teachers, showcasing a robust integration of TPACK, resonate with the core tenets of EFL-TPACK research that emphasize the necessity of harmonizing technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge to foster effective language teaching environments (Schmidt et al., 2009). This highlights the advancement in applying TPACK among proficient teachers.

For medium-level EFL teachers, the frequency and duration statistics for each factor of EFL-TPACK frameworks are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5
FREQUENCY AND DURATION STATISTICS FOR EACH FACTOR OF THE EFL-TPACK FRAMEWORKS OF MEDIUM-LEVEL TEACHERS

Factor	M1				M2			
	Frequency	Frequency Percentage	Duration (Seconds)	Duration Percentage	Frequency	Frequency Percentage	Duration (Seconds)	Duration Percentage
CK	4	8.16%	121	2.24%	12	29.27%	2140	39.63%
PK	2	4.08%	67	1.24%	3	7.32%	69	1.28%
TK	3	6.12%	201	3.72%	2	4.88%	137	2.54%
PCK	2	4.08%	64	1.19%	3	7.32%	65	1.20%
TCK	3	6.12%	131	2.43%	2	4.88%	61	1.13%
TPK	13	26.53%	2037	37.72%	4	9.76%	688	12.74%
TPACK	22	44.90%	2779	51.46%	15	36.59%	2240	41.48%

Teacher M1 engaged in TPACK behaviors 22 times, followed by PCK (13), PK (4), TPK (3), TK (3), TCK (2), and CK (2). The TPACK behaviors had a total duration of 2,779 seconds, while PCK behaviors lasted 2,037 seconds, TK 201 seconds, TPK 131 seconds, PK 121 seconds, CK 67 seconds, and TCK 64 seconds. These data are consistent with those of the high-level teachers, with higher-frequency behaviors also tending to have longer durations (Li et al., 2019).

For Teacher M1, TPACK behaviors were observed most frequently, occurring 22 times and having the longest duration (2,779 seconds), followed by PCK behaviors, which occurred 13 times and had a total duration of 2,037 seconds. This indicates that, even without TK, Teacher M1 was able to integrate PK and CK effectively. This mirrors the findings for Teacher H2, with both receiving their highest percentage scores for TPACK behaviors, followed by

PCK behaviors. On the other hand, the frequencies and durations of the TPK, TCK, PK, CK, and TK behaviors of M1 were relatively low, which may imply that M1 is more inclined to integrate TK into PCK than to rely on PK or CK alone.

Teacher M2's behaviors, from highest to lowest, were as follows: TPACK (15 observations), PK (12), PCK (4), CK (3), TCK (3), TPK (2), and TK (2). TPACK accounted for 2,240 seconds, PK 2,140 seconds, PCK 688 seconds, TK 137 seconds, CK 69 seconds, TCK 65 seconds, and TPK 61 seconds. These data indicate that Teacher M2 allocated a significant amount of time to PK, predominantly by engaging the students in extensive independent reading. During this time, M2 did not use TK to present the reading material or questions, nor did she present anything related to CK. In terms of duration, PK was closely followed by PCK behaviors, which accounted for 688 seconds, indicating that M2 had fully integrated PCK in her classroom.

For M1, TPACK behaviors accounted for the largest percentage of her total behaviors, at 51.46%, followed by PCK at 37.72%. Thus, these two factors combined accounted for 89.18% of the total. TK accounted for 3.72% of the total, followed closely by TPK (2.43%) and PK (2.24%), while CK and TCK were just 1.24% and 1.19%, respectively.

For Teacher M2, TPACK accounted for the largest percentage of the total behaviors, at 41.48%. CK followed closely, with a significant 39.63%—a figure 37.39% higher than that of Teacher M1 for CK (i.e., 2.24%). This high figure is due to Teacher M2's dissemination of self-reading exercises for the students, during which no TK or CK behaviors were observed. As a result, M2's percentages for CK and TK behaviors alone were very low, at 2.54% and 1.28%, respectively. For the same reason, the percentages for TCK and TPK behaviors were also very low, at 1.20% and 1.13%, respectively. Furthermore, the duration of M2's PCK behaviors as a percentage of her total teaching time was 12.74%, which is in third place for M2's behaviors and is much lower than M1's PCK figure of 37.72%. Thus, although they all belong to the same category of teachers—each having a medium EFL-TPACK level—their PCK classroom behaviors vary significantly.

M1 and M2 share a commonality in their EFL-TPACK behaviors: namely, the TPACK constitutes a relatively large portion of their total behaviors, exceeding 40% in each case. However, these figures are much lower than those of the high-level teachers in H1 and H2 (with the latter surpassing 70% of the total durations). Meanwhile, for both M1 and M2, TK and CK behaviors accounted for relatively small percentages, which is consistent with the results for the high-level teachers (H1 and H2).

Generally, the observed discrepancies in EFL-TPACK application among medium-level teachers align with recent discussions in EFL-TPACK literature, pointing toward the varying levels of technological pedagogical integration and its impact on teaching efficacy (Tondeur et al., 2017). It underscores the complexity of achieving TPACK fluency.

TABLE 6
FREQUENCY AND DURATION STATISTICS FOR EACH FACTOR OF EFL-TPACK FRAMEWORKS OF LOW-LEVEL TEACHERS

Factor	Frequency	L1			L2			
		Frequency Percentage	Duration (Seconds)	Duration Percentage	Frequency Percentage	Duration (Seconds)	Duration Percentage	
CK	8	23.53%	1808	33.48%	16	34.78%	637	11.80%
PK	2	5.88%	81	1.50%	1	2.17%	154	2.85%
TK	3	8.82%	301	5.57%	4	8.70%	138	2.56%
PCK	1	2.94%	72	1.33%	3	6.52%	177	3.28%
TCK	2	5.88%	302	5.59%	3	6.52%	185	3.43%
TPK	4	11.76%	315	5.83%	15	32.61%	3720	68.89%
TPACK	14	41.18%	2521	46.69%	4	8.70%	389	7.20%

Teacher L1's most frequently observed behavior was TPACK, which occurred 14 times and for a total duration of 2,521 seconds. This was followed by PK (8 observations, 1,808 seconds), PCK (4 observations, 315 seconds), TPK (2 observations, 302 seconds) and TK (3 observations, 301 seconds), CK (2 observations, 81 seconds), and TCK (1 time, 72 seconds). In contrast, Teacher L2 exhibited PCK behaviors most frequently, with 15 occurrences lasting a total of 3,720 seconds. This was followed by PK (16 observations, 637 seconds), TPACK (4 observations, 389 seconds), TPK and TCK (3 observations each, 185 seconds and 177 seconds, respectively), TK (4 observations, 138 seconds), and CK (1 time, 154 seconds).

For Teacher L1, the most frequent behavior was TPACK, occurring 14 times over 2,521 seconds. This was unexpected, as this duration was comparable to that of the EFL teachers with medium EFL-TPACK levels. This suggests that L1 is paying significant attention to TPACK in the classroom. Additionally, PK behavior was observed 8 times, lasting a total duration of 1,808 seconds. The other factors—namely, CK, TK, TCK, TPK, and PCK—were less frequent.

For Teacher L2, the behavior observed with the highest frequency (15 observations) and lasting the longest duration (3,720 seconds) was PCK, followed by PK behavior, which was observed 16 times and accounted for 637 seconds. TPACK behavior was the third-most frequent in Teacher L2's classroom, occurring only four times, with a total duration of 389 seconds, indicating that Teacher L2 is a traditional EFL teacher with very traditional teaching methods. Specifically, L2 did not integrate TK, PK, and CK in the class and instead relied on traditional teaching tools, such as chalk and a blackboard. In this setting, TK tools seem to be more of a decorative element than an integral part of the learning environment.

Despite L1 and L2 being categorized at the same low EFL-TPACK level, Teacher L1 more frequently exhibited TPACK behaviors than Teacher L2 did, perhaps because Teacher L1 was younger and more willing to embrace the integration of TK, PK, and CK in the classroom. These differences reflect the different emphases of the two teachers in their respective applications of TPACK in EFL teaching, thus providing valuable perspectives on teachers' individualized strategies for using technology in foreign-language teaching.

TPACK behaviors accounted for 46.7% of the total in Teacher L1's classroom, indicating that Teacher L1 was able to incorporate TK, PK, and CK appropriately in her classroom. The second-highest percentage was for PK, which accounted for 33.5% of the total. In contrast, PCK accounted for the largest percentage of the behaviors observed in Teacher L2's classroom (68.9%), which implies that Teacher L2 is a very traditional teacher who rarely incorporates TK in his classroom. PK received the second-highest score in L2's classroom (11.8%). This highlights a commonality between Teachers L1 and L2 at the very basic level, with pedagogical knowledge (PK) accounting for a substantial proportion of their classroom time (i.e., being the second-most dominant factor in both cases).

In teaching, PK primarily involves knowledge and methods toward engaging more students in the class, including in non-content-related conversations that do not involve CK. However, in a standard EFL classroom, PK behaviors are less common because teaching focuses on developing language skills (Alsowat, 2017; Kawinkoonlasate, 2019). However, in the classrooms of L1 and L2, the rate of PK as a percentage of the total behaviors reached as high as 33.5% and 11.8%, respectively, indicating that these two teachers spent unnecessarily too much time on PK. Conversely, CK, TK, TCK, and TPK were much less commonly observed in both teachers' classrooms.

In summary, although both L1 and L2 exhibited EFL-TPACK behaviors in their classrooms, there was significant variation among the rates of their EFL-TPACK factors. L2 appeared to be more of a traditional EFL teacher, with a teaching approach that primarily relied on conventional methods. In comparison, Teacher L's TPACK behaviors accounted for 46.7% of the total, while PK alone occupied 33.5% of the classroom time and PCK 5.8%. This suggests that L1, when not integrating TK into the lessons, spent too much time on PK and failed to integrate it with CK. The challenges faced by low-level teachers in effectively integrating EFL-TPACK into their teaching practice mirror concerns highlighted in contemporary EFL-TPACK research, stressing the barriers to technology adoption and the urgent need for comprehensive professional development programs (Ertmer et al., 2012). This reflects broader systemic issues in technological integration within EFL contexts.

Meanwhile, the high-level teachers possessed a solid foundation in basic TK, PK, and CK. These teachers had in-depth understandings of CK and PK, including grammar, vocabulary, and cultural context; how to design instructional activities; and which methods to use to motivate students. Furthermore, these high-level teachers studied TK in depth, enabling them to use technology proficiently in the classroom and integrate it smoothly into their teaching (Alhababi, 2017). Additionally, the high-level teachers could seamlessly integrate TK, PK, and CK into their classrooms through a wide range of practices, with TPACK behaviors ultimately accounting for over 70% of all the teaching behaviors observed in their respective classrooms. Even when technology was not being used, the use of PCK remained relatively frequent.

The medium-level teachers, as characterized by their individual EFL-TPACK frameworks, exhibited solid foundational level TK, PK, and CK. However, their integration of these elements—as evidenced by their TPACK behaviors—was weaker than that of the high-level teachers. Their TPACK behaviors usually accounted for around 50% of the total duration of all teaching behaviors, a figure much lower than those of the high-level teachers (which were all over 70%).

Furthermore, considering the TPACK behaviors of low- and medium-level EFL teachers, ranging from 7.2% to 51.46%, which is far less than the 70.74% to 77.78% of high-level teachers, there is a need for low- and medium-level EFL teachers to catch up with high-level teachers. In addition, both medium- and low-level EFL teachers tend to invest too much time in PK, with these teachers often sharing their personal opinions and life experiences in their classrooms in order to improve the relations between themselves and the students. This suggests that medium-level teachers have a relatively average ability to integrate TK, PK, and CK into their classrooms (Yang et al., 2023).

In contrast, low-level teachers lack TK and PK and do not understand how to integrate TK into PCK. For older teachers, there was a lack of competence in the use of technology to assist teaching, an unfamiliarity with modern teaching tools, and difficulties effectively integrating these tools into teaching practice (Liang et al., 2013; Nursiah et al., 2021). This reduced the potential for integration of TK into teaching. Instead, this group of teachers was characterized by a greater integration of PK and CK, leading to higher frequencies of PCK behaviors in their classrooms.

The gap between traditional low-level teachers and high-level teachers in terms of their respective TPACK behaviors reached up to 70.58%, highlighting significant disparities in their teaching approaches. The younger teachers, who generally possessed stronger TK than their older counterparts, actively sought to integrate TK, PK, and CK in their classrooms, though this integration was not always reflected in higher percentages of use. In addition, both young and older EFL teachers evidenced some limitations in their PK, which is reflected in the classroom as a monotonous teaching activity; for instance, their classes have repetitive chit-chats and less dynamic and interactive sessions, reducing opportunities for students to participate actively in learning.

Every EFL teacher has an EFL-TPACK framework that is dynamic, complex, and influenced by many factors (Taopan, 2020). EFL teachers' own teaching experiences and teaching topics all have an impact on the frequency and

duration of their EFL-TPACK behaviors (Baser et al., 2016; Hsu, 2016). Among teachers of varying proficiency levels, there are both similarities and differences that are attributable to numerous factors. Although all of the teachers in this study attempted to incorporate technology into their classrooms, they each had a different focus, with high-level teachers focusing on the integration of TK, PK, and CK. As a result, the high-level teachers had the highest frequency of TPACK behaviors, followed by the medium-level teachers and then the low-level teachers. Teachers at the lower level exhibited predominantly PCK behaviors, which can be attributed to the less-effective integration of technology into their teaching practice (Çam & Erdamar Koç, 2021). These results underscore the need for targeted professional development in the integration of TK, PK, and CK.

This study's limitations lie in the potential observer bias and the limited observation participants. Hence, future research could explore longitudinal changes in TPACK application post-intervention or examine similar frameworks in different cultural or regional contexts. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the TPACK framework in EFL instruction, emphasizing the importance of ongoing teacher development in educational technology integration.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of EFL-TPACK behaviors among EFL teachers of varying proficiency levels, revealing significant disparities and commonalities in the application of TPACK. High-level teachers demonstrated superior frequency and duration in TPACK behaviors, reflecting their adept integration of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge. In contrast, while medium-level teachers possessed foundational TPACK frameworks, their integration capabilities fell short of those exhibited by high-level teachers. Low-level teachers showed considerable gaps in the TPACK application, predominantly relying on traditional teaching methods and showing lower technological integration skills. These findings underscore the challenges faced by EFL teachers of different levels in enhancing teaching efficiency and student learning, highlighting the urgent need for targeted professional development and technology integration training. Improving teachers' TPACK abilities, especially in the use of technology, is crucial for enhancing the quality of language teaching and student learning outcomes. This study offers deep insights into the TPACK framework within EFL instruction and emphasizes the importance of ongoing teacher development in educational technology integration.

VII. IMPLICATIONS

To address the disparities between EFL teachers in Guizhou's higher education settings in terms of EFL-TPACK frameworks, it is imperative to devise strategies that cater to varying levels of teaching proficiency. The study's findings indicate a pronounced gap in the effective integration of these components, particularly between high-level and low-level teachers.

One pivotal implication strategy involves the enhancement of technological integration skills. This is crucial for low-level teachers who demonstrate a less-effective integration of technology in their practice. Comprehensive training sessions focusing on the utilization of digital tools and their incorporation into language teaching are essential. These sessions should be interactive and practical, allowing teachers to experiment with and adapt to various technological tools relevant to the teaching context. Furthermore, the establishment of mutual-learning programs in which high-level teachers can share their successful practices and experiences could significantly benefit less-experienced teachers. This would foster a collaborative environment and provide a platform for ongoing professional development.

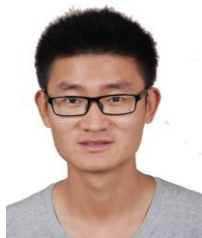
In addition, a balance between emphases on pedagogical and content knowledge is crucial. This study has highlighted instances of disproportionate focus on PK, necessitating a more-balanced approach to lesson planning. This balance could be achieved through workshops and training sessions that focus on innovative pedagogical strategies and content-delivery methods tailored to the needs of EFL learners. In addition, reflective teaching practices in which teachers analyze their instructional videos to identify strengths and areas for improvement could lead to more effective and engaging teaching methodologies. Such reflective practices should be complemented by regular assessments and constructive feedback, facilitating a continuous learning and improvement process for teachers.

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Mingxing Yang is a Ph.D. candidate at Universiti Putra Malaysia. His main research interests are Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) and language studies. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-0094-0990>



Joanna Joseph Jeyaraj obtained a Doctor of Philosophy from the Higher Education Development Centre (HEDC) at the University of Otago. She is currently a senior lecturer at Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her main research interests are Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL), Critical Pedagogy, and Teaching of Literature in English. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0185-2585>



Norhakimah Khaiessa binti Ahmad is a senior lecturer at Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her main research interest is Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL). ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0788-4553>



Wei Yang is a Ph.D. candidate at Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her main research interests are diplomatic discourse translation, literary translation, and English teaching. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-1770-9520>

Effectiveness of English E-Learning Classes: University Students' Perspectives

Nibal A. M. Malkawi
Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan

Luqman Mahmoud Rababah
English and Literature Department, Jadara University, Jordan

Sarp Erkir
American University of the Middle East, Kuwait

Baker Bani-Khair
Department of English, Faculty of Arts, The Hashemite University, Jordan

Basma Mohammad Al-Hawamdeh
Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Jerash, Jordan

Sana Kamel Al-Omari
Irbid University College, Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan

Mahmoud Ali Rababah
Jadara Research Center, Jadara University, Irbid, 21110, Jordan

Abstract—Owing to technological growth, new educational models have emerged that depend on technical advancements to accomplish learning goals. One of the applications that stand out is e-learning, which has altered both the roles and duties of instructors and students, as well as the way traditional education is conducted in academic institutions. This study investigates how Jordanian university students view the value of the online courses they take. A questionnaire with ratings for the quality of e-learning and students' satisfaction was used to collect the data. The study's sample consisted of 566 university students from Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan. The findings indicated that the e-learning courses' overall content quality was average. The quality of the form of the e-learning lessons was high, and the students' degree of satisfaction with the quality of the e-learning courses was moderate. The study found that the most effective way to facilitate learning is to present courses in a clear hierarchy or framework.

Index Terms—Al-Balqa Applied University, English e-learning courses, university students' satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

All academic disciplines and the sciences have advanced rapidly in the modern era. Many aspects of society are impacted by modern technology, particularly schooling (Bany Yassien et al., 2023; Wolor et al., 2022; Yassien et al., 2023). The rapid development of electronic learning (e-learning) is one of the modern concepts utilised in education, due to significant advancements in information technology, communication, and media (Sakarneh et al., 2022; Salah et al., 2022). E-learning is a form of learning where all educational activities take place electronically, engaging learners actively, positively, and effectively. It combines active learning with teaching technologies, develops higher-order skills, and accommodates different learner characteristics, such as learning pace, suitable time and place, and learner preferences.

E-learning is a method of learning using modern communication tools, including computers, networks, multimedia, electronic libraries, and internet portals, whether remotely or in classrooms (Al Fawareh et al., 2023; Banikalef, 2019, 2020). It is an innovative method of delivering well-designed, interactive learning environments focused on the learner, accessible anywhere and anytime, by utilising various digital technologies along with other suitable educational materials for open and flexible learning environments (Danaa et al., 2022; Obeidat et al., 2022; Rababah et al., 2023).

E-learning is a creative method within an interactive environment centred on learners, designed in advance to be readily available to individuals anywhere and anytime, utilising the internet and digital technologies (Al Smadi & Al-Taweel, 2013; Alshare et al., 2019). In light of these definitions, e-learning can be characterised as an integrated system using modern electronic educational media for learning, research, and accessing required information anytime and anywhere, through advanced and diverse technological communication channels (Alkhaldi et al., 2023; Al-Saidat et al., 2023; Bani-

Khair et al., 2023; Melhim et al., 2023). It fosters the development of higher-order skills in learners, tailored to their characteristics, preferences, and capabilities.

Students' level of satisfaction with the calibre and scope of education offered by colleges is a critical metric for assessing how well educational institutions have achieved their objectives. They will therefore keep using e-learning efficiently and reap the rewards of successful learning (Alazzam et al., 2021; Alghazo et al., 2023; Papagianni & Eteokleous, 2021; Salah et al., 2021). However, if students are dissatisfied with online learning and have a negative opinion of it, their interactions with one another may worsen. According to Jordan and Duckett (2018), e-learning enables students to collaborate with peers and lecturers by enabling them to share materials. The researchers claim that students' contentment with online learning depends on the design of the learning experience. Students will be more satisfied with e-learning and more likely to use it, if it is made easy for them to access workouts, tests, and other activities, and to navigate their way through electronic content. According to Papagianni and Eteokleous (2021), e-learning facilitates the development of a collaborative environment among students. It enables people to fulfil their ambition of taking advantage of online e-learning options and overcoming the challenges associated with education. E-learning differs from traditional learning approaches in that it is extremely flexible and does not place limitations on the location or timing of learning. Additionally, it creates a community of learners that promotes inquiry, facilitates research, and inspires innovation. It costs less than regular education as well (Aljedayah et al., 2022; Al-Jezawi et al., 2023; Sakarneh, 2019).

A. Problem Statement

The concept of e-learning has evolved rapidly due to significant technological changes over the past few decades. In the early 21st century, advancements accelerated in information technology, communication, and multimedia, leading to the emergence of new systems and software referred to as "Web 2.0." This concept encompasses a range of new technologies and network applications that changed the behaviour of the internet, shifting users from passive consumers to active participants in services and applications. It transitioned from a pre-prepared content focus to interactive media produced by users and shared with others (Malkawi et al., 2023; Rababah et al., 2023).

These developments have led to the emergence of new concepts in online learning management systems, such as Wikis, blogs, and other social internet programmes, supporting the formation of learning communities across networks. The Second Generation of E-Learning can be defined as learning that occurs through internet networks, utilising Web 2.0 technologies that allow participation in activities such as commenting, uploading media files, and updating web page content by users, without the need for programming languages or specialisation in those technologies (Algurashi, 2019; Ali, 2022; Almsbheen, 2023; Alwagfi et al., 2020).

The importance of e-learning lies in its ability to provide students with opportunities for communication with each other, teachers, and educational institutions. It enables students to have equal opportunities to participate in the educational process, express their opinions, ask questions, and adapt learning materials and activities to suit their individual needs. Additionally, it allows for revisiting lessons multiple times until students grasp the content fully (Alzboon et al., 2022). However, e-learning cannot achieve its objectives fully unless it adheres to the principle of quality in its implementation mechanisms. Quality is considered one of the most important factors in improving and developing learning in general and e-learning in particular. Subjecting these mechanisms to quality principles contributes to identifying obstacles that hinder the achievement of desired objectives.

B. Research Questions

In light of this problem, the study attempts to answer these questions:

1. To what degree are university students satisfied with the quality of the e-learning process?
2. How satisfied are the students with e-learning in terms of form and substance?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Al-Harbi (2013) proposed suitable criteria for assessing the quality of e-learning in Saudi Arabia using content analysis methodology. The study presented the main international standards used in e-learning. These standards include increasing productivity and effectiveness by reducing the time and cost of delivering education, flexibility in modifying and improving educational content, the importance of simplification in e-learning programmes to ensure understanding, enabling learners to conduct research and evaluation, and using educational units appropriately. The study revealed the necessity of having standards to measure the quality of e-learning, including institutional funding, simplicity of university systems in e-learning, achieving the contentment of all the beneficiaries of e-learning, continuous improvement of learning processes, suggesting developmental programmes to ensure achievement of these goals, identifying the necessary skills for university students in light of e-learning, using modern and appropriate technologies for e-learning programmes, evaluating and assessing e-learning programmes, including policies and procedures enabling the university to evaluate and assess e-learning, as well as flexibility in improving and modifying the educational content provided to students in light of e-learning.

Al-Otaibi (2019) highlights the importance and objectives of quality in the educational process, reviews the concept and importance of e-learning, and reveals the most important standards adopted for the quality of the e-learning system. The researcher used descriptive analytical methodology and concluded that quality management is a relatively new

concept that has begun to spread worldwide, with great importance in improving and developing the educational process. The study also found that the quality of e-learning programmes increases when they adhere to the standards of non-profit international organisations. There is also variation in the standards and indicators related to the quality of e-learning education based on the diversity of studies and institutions that address these standards.

Hayat (2019) studied the quality standards and criteria that should be adopted in e-learning. It reviewed educational literature in this field and concluded that standards are necessary to ensure the quality of e-learning, including educational standards related to educational objectives, content, learners, activities, learning environment strategies, evaluation, and feedback. These can be achieved through designing an integrated e-learning system, considering quality standards in various stages of the programme and course design, reviewing, developing, and updating course content regularly based on feedback, aligning courses with educational objectives and assessment mechanisms, considering the needs of beneficiaries and individual differences among learners, managing e-learning programmes according to quality standards, enabling self-directed learning, empowering learners to control their educational progress, and reviewing the assessment procedures used in e-learning programmes. Technological and technical standards encompass text, images, static and video graphics, interactive links, navigation methods, website interface design, assistance, guidance, and search methods.

Muianga (2019) explored blended learning on the internet and face-to-face in Eduard University's Faculty of Education. The aim was to develop the computer and internet usage skills of students at the Faculty of Education using a blended learning programme. The researcher used performance observation cards to assess the performance of 170 students from the Faculty of Education, concluding the effectiveness of the blended learning programme in developing computer and internet usage skills. The study emphasised the importance of integrating traditional and modern electronic methods in education to achieve better educational outcomes.

Shraim's (2020) study aimed to determine the e-learning system's guiding principles, regulations, and standards. It examined 72 published papers and the educational literature, using content analysis methods in order to develop a framework for ensuring the quality of learning enhanced by technology. The study came to the conclusion that there is not a complete framework for e-learning quality and suggested using the ISO/IEC 40180 framework instead, which is adaptive to organisational change and meets the requirements of educational institutions.

Al-Rashidi (2020) explored the degree to which e-learning was employed at Kuwait University from the perspective of faculty members. The study employed a questionnaire to collect data and used a descriptive approach to analyse the data. The study sample consisted of 510 faculty members at Kuwait University. It found that the overall estimates of faculty members at Kuwait University for employing e-learning were high, with no statistically significant differences in the estimates of faculty members in the degree of employing e-learning attributed to the variables of years of experience and type of college.

Alonso-Garcia et al. (2021) investigated the degree of university students' satisfaction with e-learning in Herzegovina. The researchers used a descriptive survey methodology, utilising a questionnaire to gather data. The study addressed the domains of e-learning as well as the topic of student contentment. The results revealed that, although students' self-efficacy characteristics and goal-setting have an indirect effect on their level of satisfaction, the area of meta-knowledge approaches has directly improved students' enjoyment of using e-learning. Students' level of satisfaction is also influenced by social characteristics and the design of the learning environment.

El Kharki et al. (2021) looked at how satisfied Moroccan institutions' students were with their e-learning platforms. A sample of one hundred and thirty-four Moroccan university students received a questionnaire. The findings showed that a variety of assessments, social connections, and the speed at which courses are completed online, the quality of the online platform, and the perception of convenience all have an impact on how satisfied students are.

Topping et al. (2022) investigated the effectiveness of using blended learning strategies in teaching and learning, including the use of new information technologies in teaching and their impact on academic performance. Their systematic analysis looked at research on the efficacy of computer-supported cooperative learning (CSCL), computer-assisted instruction (CAI), educational games, and blended and online learning from schools—all of which had potential applications outside of the classroom, but were primarily utilised in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers looked through eight research databases. After excluding non-school, pre-2000, non-English, lack of data, and duplicate studies, 1,355 studies remained: 7% were online, 13% were mixed, 7% were CSCL, 26% were games, and 47% were CAI. In 85% of the trials, digital technology was shown to be more effective (better) than normal instruction, 8% to be the same, and 3% to be worse. Online learning was much inferior to blended learning.

Malkawi et al. (2023) examined the level of implementation of quality standards at Al-Balqa Applied University. The study constructed standards for measuring the quality of e-learning, to improve e-learning programmes and plans to ensure their quality and efficiency. The study measured the level of implementation of e-learning management quality through an electronically distributed questionnaire and concluded that the dimensions of the standards obtained were descending percentages and means as follows: physical facilities quality, planning and preparation quality, support and communication quality, human resources quality, e-learning training quality, instructional design quality, development quality, evaluation quality and, finally, economic quality in e-learning management.

Games and CSCL came after blended learning, with CAI being the most successful. However, it goes without saying that neither of these was extensively utilised outside of schools, nor was CAI looked for. The most successful grades were in primary and early childhood/kindergarten (87% better), followed by secondary/high (80%). The most successful

interventions were in English as a foreign language, followed by writing and STEM, thinking, arts and music, humanities, health and science, reading and maths, and foreign languages, in that order, even though science and maths were the most popular disciplines. In general, women outperformed men. Children classified as "low ability" and second language learners performed very well. Children with special needs and disabilities performed somewhat worse than disadvantaged children. Better results were strongly correlated with self-efficacy.

III. METHODS

A. Population and Sample of the Study

The study's population encompassed all BAU students enrolled for the academic year 2022–2023. A sum of 566 university students made up the study sample. The sample was randomly chosen. The students received the questionnaire through their emails. Table 1 shows the characteristics of sample members by gender, college, and educational attainment.

TABLE 1
THE STUDY SAMPLE MEMBERS ACCORDING TO GENDER, SCIENTIFIC FIELD, AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Variable	Category	No.	Percentage
Sex	Female	326	47.6
	Male	240	42.4
	Total	566	100.0
College	Humanities	356	62.9
	Scientific	210	37.1
	Total	566	100.0
Educational Level	Fourth Year	68	12.0
	Third Year	111	19.6
	Second Year	243	42.9
	First Year	144	25.4
	Whole	566	100.0

B. Study Tool

To get input from the study's participants, the researchers created a questionnaire based on previous models. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: a sketch of the study sample participants (including gender, major, and educational attainment) was given in the opening portion of the report. The subsequent segment comprised of two ratings: a 20-item survey gauging students' contentment with virtual education, and another 12 items assessing the overall quality of virtual education, divided into two categories: a six-item assessment of virtual education's content quality and another six-item assessment of its form quality.

(a). The Validity of the Study Tool

To ensure the validity of the tool, it was given to six reviewers who possess an expertise in evaluating the level of clarity and integrity of the linguistic formulation of the items, and their applicability in assessing the goals for which they were created. The reviewers also had the ability to add, edit, remove, or modify any questions they felt were inaccurate. The questionnaire's components were altered by consensus after the reviewers' suggestions were taken into consideration. After the changes were made, the questionnaire was eventually created in its final version.

(b). Stability of the Study Tool

A pilot sample of 26 students from the study population, outside the real sample, was chosen so as to ensure the consistency of the study tool's signals. The scales were subjected to the tool stability test (Cronbach's alpha), as indicated in Table 2.

TABLE 2
CRONBACH'S ALPHA COEFFICIENTS AND STUDY SCALE REPLICABILITY

Domain	Number of Items	Cronbach's Coefficient	Alpha	Repetition Stability
The quality of e-content learning at this level	6	0.87		0.86
The formal nature of virtual education	6	0.86		0.88
the general standard of form and content for online learning	12	0.89		0.86
Student satisfaction with online learning on a scale	20	0.86		0.85

Table 2 demonstrates that every Cronbach's alpha coefficient and recurrence matches the goals of the investigation, considering that the Cronbach's alpha dependability coefficient was greater than 0.78.

C. Statistical Analysis

Likert scale, which has the following ratings: The study sample members (5) were asked to rate their opinions using the following scale: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (1) on the study. The study's questions were approached using the following statistical methods: The study sample participants' replies were

analysed using SPSS to determine the frequency and percentage of the variables, as well as the means and standard deviations of the responses for each location and set of metrics.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the study's findings. Its purpose is to gauge how satisfied students were with the general calibre of the e-learning experience. The study's conclusions are based on the following questions:

A. *The Form and Content Quality of Online Learning*

The averages and standard deviations of the form and content-related items measuring students' satisfaction with the quality of the e-learning were computed to appropriately respond to the first research question, which asks, "To what extent are students studying social studies satisfied with the general quality of the e-learning process?" Table 3 displays the results of this calculation.

TABLE 3
CONTENTMENT WITH THE CALIBRE OF E-LEARNING

No.	Degree of contentment with the e-learning quality	SMA	Stand. Devi.	Rank
1	Regarding substance, form and figures	2	0.78	3.60
2	Overall quality of e-learning	1	0.88	3.66
	Degree of contentment with the e-learning quality		0.84	3.65

Table 3 demonstrates that people were satisfied with the quality of e-learning to a medium degree (3.64), with the item "in terms of shape and figure" reaching a high degree (3.68). Table 4 demonstrates the means and standard deviations of the items that evaluate students' satisfaction with the e-learning programme in terms of structure and content.

TABLE 4
THE QUALITY OF E-LEARNING: CONTENT (N = 566)

Item	SMA	SD	Rank
The component's information makes sense.	3.70	1.12	2
The component's content meets strict linguistic standards.	3.54	1.09	5
The level of expertise is comparable to that of the academy.	3.68	1.11	1
The data was methodically arranged into a framework or grading scheme that promotes learning.	3.44	1.10	6
Instructional tactics consider the way in which students interact with the subject matter.	3.68	1.05	3
The stated objectives of the course and learning product can be achieved using the full course content that e-learning offers.	3.66	1.01	3
Total	3.58	0.88	

Table 4 shows that students' average satisfaction levels with the e-learning "content" quality ranged from 3.44 to 3.72. The highest rating was given to item (3), which states that "the content of the component meets the age stage of the students." Then item 1, which states, "The content of the component is logically adequate," came with a high degree of average. Item 5, "Instructional actions echo the interaction between the student and the content," has a high degree of overall average (3.68), and item 6, which states, "E-learning provides the course with all-inclusive content that is adequate to attain the stated objectives of the course and learning products," has an overall average of (3.66).

Item number 4, which states, "The content was reasonably arranged into a framework or grade that simplifies learning," came with the lowest score, which had a mean score of 3.44 with a medium rating. Moreover, the average score for "content" was 3.58 overall, indicating a medium degree. This finding emphasises that, in terms of resources and electronic modules, e-learning provides relevant, high-quality content that is on par with traditional education. Additionally, the knowledge aligns with the students' learning style, improving their academic performance.

These remarkable figures demonstrate Al-Balqa Applied University's commitment to collaborating with gifted educators who consistently provide state-of-the-art education to enhance the virtual learning environment. This result is consistent with the research conducted by Malkawi et al. (2023), who emphasised the quality of the online system, social connections, leanness of online courses, and diversity of assessments, in addition to showing favourable effects on student satisfaction. This outcome agrees with that of Ali et al. (2019), who found that all e-learning domains—with the exception of a few group SMS messages—have a positive correlation with student satisfaction.

B. *The Quality of E-Learning Relating to Form*

Table 5 presents the learning quality in terms of form.

TABLE 5
THE QUALITY OF E-LEARNING: FORM (N = 566)

No.	Item	SMA	SD	Rank
1	It illustrates the colour differences between the instructional object's figure and background.	3.58	1.01	5
2	The e-learning tasks and instructional strategies match the goals of the course.	3.71	1.01	3
3	The formats and images utilised are superb.	3.76	0.95	1
4	There are enough reasons in the course's instructional design to persuade students to concentrate on studying the subject matter.	3.72	1.01	2
5	The information is presented in accordance with the goals of the content.	3.71	1.01	3
6	The many colours and patterns of the material enhance learning.	3.54	1.08	6
	The overall form.	3.68	0.87	

As indicated in Table 5, the average of students' satisfaction with the quality of e-learning varied from 3.55 to 3.77. The items with the highest scores were: item no. (3) "The graphics and visual forms used are flawless," with a high degree; item no. (4), which states that "The course instructional design contains satisfactory explanations that aid students to focus their efforts in studying the course," with a high average score of 3.72%; items (2) "E-learning incorporates teaching and learning methodologies and teaching activities that are relevant to the course objectives" and item (5) "The information is given along the lines of the content," both of which had a mean score of 3.71 at a high degree.

Regarding "form," students' average satisfaction scores with the calibre of e-learning varied from 3.55 to 3.77. Item 2, which states that "E-learning combines teaching and learning approaches and teaching activities that are relevant to the course objectives," had a high degree. Item number 5, which states that "The information is presented along the lines of the content," had a mean of (3.54) and a medium degree. As seen, a high degree of 3.68 was the average for the "form" as a whole. This explains why students communicate with their lecturers via text messages, emails, the internet, and other gadgets. Nearly every student can readily access classes and acquire the content because of the BAU's straightforward structure.

At an average of 3.68, the "shape" as a whole came high. This explains why students communicate with their teachers on a frequent basis through email, text messages, electronic devices, and the internet. Due to the university's simple approach, almost any student can access lessons and receive resources with ease. The university improves cooperative learning settings, where students can engage (in ways that are appropriate for the curriculum's presentation) with classmates and teachers. As a result, learning happens more quickly, and demands less time and effort from both teachers and students. Students' motivation to utilise e-learning is increased when appropriate images, forms, and colours are used. This finding is consistent with study by Al-Qurashi (2019), which demonstrates how teachers employ strategies to boost self-efficacy, teacher-student relationships, and student engagement with the material during online instruction.

C. Learners' Contentment With the Calibre of Online Education

The mean and standard deviations for every aspect of students' overall satisfaction with the calibre of e-learning have been calculated, as illustrated in Table 6.

TABLE 6
STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH E-LEARNING (N = 566)

No.	Item	SMA	SD	Rank
16	Task completion times are shortened in part by the remote education system.	4.01	0.71	1
11	Anytime I choose, I can use online learning to further my education.	3.89	0.70	2
12	I find that using online learning to further my education is not too difficult.	3.84	0.67	3
1	My online learning experience has pleased me.	3.51	1.03	4
17	I sense that people in charge of the electronic training are paying constant attention to me.	3.25	1.09	5
2	Students have access to a multitude of materials through online learning that enhance the scientific content.	3.25	1.12	6
19	I have an impartial way to assess the professors, thanks to the distant learning programme.	3.25	0.81	7
14	I am capable of using online education to complete my tasks and homework.	3.21	0.78	8
18	I am capable of using the fundamentals of online learning resources.	3.16	0.83	9
15	The different ways that distant education offers make it easier to give students the knowledge they need.	3.06	1.24	10
9	I am able to manage my time effectively.	3.06	1.08	11
3	My academic performance improves when I use e-learning.	3.04	1.12	12
5	Online learning resources have been helpful to me while I've been studying.	3.02	1.18	13
8	I'm encouraged to take part in all activities using online learning.	2.95	1.23	14
10	My educational demands are taken into consideration with distance learning.	2.93	1.23	15
13	My ability to learn is improved by the consistency of online instruction.	2.93	1.15	15
4	The efficiency of education is increased by my use of online learning.	2.82	1.09	17
6	I have observed that when students use an online learning programme, their educational attainment increases.	2.5	1.19	18
7	Every student is subjected to fair assessment procedures throughout their courses.	2.75	1.15	18
20	The method of distance education fosters an attitude of initiative and inventiveness.	2.50	1.05	20
	Students' general satisfaction with remote learning services.	3.16	0.36	

The average student satisfaction scores with e-learning materials are shown in Table 6, with scores ranging from 2.50 to 4.02. Item 16, which states, "E-learning systems contribute to shortening a lot of time to accomplish tasks", scored a high degree average of 4.01, and obtained the highest score. Item 11, which states that "I can use e-learning in education at any time I want" followed with a high degree average of 3.89. Then the item which states that "The e-learning system helps to promote the spirit of invention and initiative" came with the lowest average and medium degree. Students' overall satisfaction with e-learning resources was rated as medium. These findings support the claim made by Ali et al. (2018) that self-efficacy and e-learning material have a favourable impact and are positively connected with students' general happiness and the purported benefits of e-learning, which influences university students' willingness to use e-learning. Since students are the cornerstone of education, it is the responsibility of those overseeing e-learning to give them the best resources and guarantee their satisfaction. Administrators are under pressure to provide services that pique students' interest in e-learning and capture their attention.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to determine the extent of university students' satisfaction with the quality of e-learning. The results of this study show that, although overall learning quality was at a high level in terms of form, and in terms of content, it came at a medium level. Students' contentment with the quality of e-services was found to be moderately high. The aforementioned results can be ascribed to the distinct experience, the prompt adoption of e-learning systems by the educational establishments, and the training programmes they offer to their staff, instructors, and students.

To provide students with educational experiences that required the least amount of time, money, or effort, teachers were also expected to create educational software. The present study contributes to the body of literature by developing a scale to gauge students' satisfaction with e-learning and the calibre of instructional software for use in future research. These results can be linked to the outstanding experience, the quick adoption of e-learning platforms by the educational institutions, and the staff development programmes for teachers, staff members, and students. To offer students learning opportunities while requiring the least amount of time, effort, and cost, teachers needed to build instructional software. By developing a particular scale to gauge students' satisfaction with educational software standards and e-learning, the study adds to the body of information. The study's conclusions state that to promote learning, lecturers should arrange their material logically, include students in the online session, and consider their input.

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Nibal A. Malkawi is an associate professor of curriculum and methods of teaching English. She is a dean's assistant for quality assurance at Amman College/BAU. Her areas of interest are curriculum development, e-learning, blended learning, teacher training, and educational evaluation.

Luqman Mahmoud Rababah is an associate professor of applied linguistics at the English and Literature Department, Jadara University, Jordan. He is the director of the languages centre. His areas of interest are linguistics, curriculum development, e-learning, blended learning, teacher training, and educational evaluation. rabah80@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3871-3853>

Sarp Erkir is currently an Associate Professor at the American University of the Middle East in Kuwait. His research interests include ways of incorporating educational technologies and using the Internet in the language classroom, along with curriculum design and curriculum development. He has a particular focus on online technology integration in education and has published several articles on the topic of curriculum design and technology integration.

Baker Bani-Khair is an associate professor at the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, The Hashemite University, Jordan. His areas of interest are literature and linguistics. bakribakr@yahoo.com

Basma Mohammad Al-Hawamdeh is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Jerash, her areas of interest are curriculum development, e-learning, blended learning, teacher training, and educational evaluation. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1523-0661>, b.hawamdeh@jpu.edu.jo

Sana Kamel Al-Omari is a senior lecturer at Al-Balqa Applied University, Irbid University College, Department of English Language and Literature. Her areas of interest are socio-pragmatics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and translation. alomaris@bau.edu.jo, 0000-0001-6928-5612.



Mahmoud Ali Rababah has a PhD in Applied Linguistics from UUM Malaysia. He is a researcher at Jadara Research Center, Jadara University, Irbid, Jordan. His areas of interest are socio-pragmatics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and translation. www.jadara.edu.jo, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0930-4030>.

The Motivational Divide: EFL Teachers' Beliefs About Student Motivation

Sultan M. Al-Sharief

Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—Researchers and practitioners typically view motivation as a key factor in successful language learning. As teachers strive to motivate their students in language classrooms, they develop divergent opinions regarding the extent to which their students are motivated. Characterizing this as a motivational divide, this study attempts to affirm the existence of this divide and closely investigate other related teachers' beliefs that may further reinforce it. A questionnaire was employed to explore 48 English teachers' beliefs about learner motivation. Three groups of teachers were identified: the largest percentage believed that students were motivated, followed by almost equal percentages of those who believed that students were unmotivated or those neutral. Several related beliefs seem to contribute to this divide, especially the stereotypical perceptions of Saudi students and beliefs that students do not appreciate the future value of studying English as a foreign language, along with judgments about the signs of student classroom engagement. Generally, a pattern was observed in the teachers' responses to most statements, indicating the existence of a motivational divide. This study concludes by stressing the importance of teachers' beliefs about learner motivation in effective motivational classroom practices.

Index Terms—L2 motivation, teachers' beliefs, motivational divide, classroom motivation

I. INTRODUCTION

The significance of motivation in successful language learning has been thoroughly documented. Researchers of L2 acquisition regard motivation as a crucial factor influencing language learning (Dörnyei, 2005). Drawing on their professional experience, EFL teachers also speak favorably of students who actively participate in class and show interest during lessons; they are often described as being “motivated” students. Owing to its perceived importance, the concept of motivation has attracted the attention of language acquisition researchers for several decades.

As indicated by Woods (1996), over the years, the focus of research within the field of language learning and teaching has shifted from methodology to learners, and only recently to teachers and classroom practices. Ushioda (2022) noted that “this relative lack of emphasis on language teachers' perspectives” (p. 8) is also true regarding the long history of L2 motivation research (cf. Cowie & Sakui, 2011, p. 213). She referred to Dörnyei's (1994) distinction between focus on “motivation” (the theoretical/conceptual perspective) and “motivating” (the practical/educational perspective). As an emerging concept, motivation must first be defined and conceptualized, and its importance must be demonstrated. Classroom-based language learning has become widespread, and attention must be paid to the role of educational settings. Teachers represent a key component of the teaching environment.

Consistent with recent trends in motivation research, the present study investigated EFL teachers' beliefs and perceptions of their students' motivation. It attempted to survey teachers' opinions on various aspects of learner motivation, including signs and causes of lack of motivation, possible interventions for motivating learners, and general perceptions of learner motivation. The existing literature that considers teachers' perspectives focuses more on classroom motivational teaching practices and student behavior than on the viewpoint of teachers.

II. MOTIVATION AND TEACHERS' BELIEFS

For EFL teachers, motivation probably needs no definition, as it manifests itself in a wide range of auspicious behaviors demonstrated by *motivated* students in the classroom. Teachers “are not usually concerning themselves with the student's reason for studying, but are observing that the student does study” (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, p. 7). However, researchers have considered student classroom behaviors simply as symptoms of high or low motivation. Motivation itself drives and encourages learners to exhibit these behaviors. Following Gardner's (2010) affirmation that “a simple definition is not possible” (p. 8), it is not surprising that several definitions of motivation in the literature are rather complex and elaborate (for an earlier attempt to categorize and criticize definitions of motivation as a psychological construct, see Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). For the purposes of the current study, a more straightforward, succinct definition reflecting the conception of a typical EFL teacher could be Schunk et al.'s (2014) characterization of motivation as “the process whereby goal-directed activities are instigated and sustained” (p. 5). Despite its simplicity, this definition, as explained by Schunk et al. (2014), captures important aspects of motivation. For instance, motivation is a *process* that can be observed indirectly through student behavior; *goals* are important for motivation to be initiated and sustained; and effort, patience, and other academic *activities* are characteristics of motivated students.

For over six decades, the motivation behind learning another language has been extensively studied. Al-Hoorie (2017) provided a comprehensive overview of this extensive history of motivation research (see also Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, pp. 72–105), distinguishing between two major early phases (in addition to the current phase). The first, pioneered by Gardner (2010), centers on the idea that language learning entails not only common external factors, but also a willingness to embrace the people and culture associated with the language (instrumental vs. integrative orientations). However, Gardner's model, primarily concerned with broader social factors affecting motivation, has faced criticism for "not being classroom-friendly" (Al-Hoorie, 2017, p. 2). One aim of the second phase of motivation inquiry was to narrow the focus of the analysis to actual learning settings, most notably the language classroom. An influential line of research within the second phase is Dörnyei's (1994, 2001) proposal of a comprehensive list of motivational strategies that are "consistent with the perceptions of practising teachers and [...] in line with the current results of mainstream educational psychological research" (Dörnyei, 1994, p. 273). Researchers worldwide have attempted to validate these motivational strategies through numerous surveys of both teachers' and learners' views (Lamb, 2019b). From a historical perspective, shifting attention to the learning situation, including learners and teachers, is clearly indicative of its importance in understanding the various components of motivation.

A motivational research theme that appears to have progressively emerged from the emphasis on the learning situation is the detailed exploration of teacher beliefs and attitudes. A belief system may be defined as a "set of beliefs which is coherent, which is focused around some central issue, and which is not held by everyone in a given culture" (Linde, 1980, p. 10; quoted in Woods, 1996, p. 69). As noted by Woods (1996), a belief system is "a social system of beliefs shared by more than one person" (p. 69). It is equally important to simultaneously consider the knowledge possessed by teachers and their divergent views and beliefs about language, teaching, and students. There are distinct differences between beliefs and knowledge; beliefs, for instance, are characterized by a lack of consensus, referring to the existence/nonexistence of entities, being affective and evaluative (good/bad), containing anecdotal material (such as past experiences), and having varying degrees of strength (strong/weak) (Abelson, 1979). "Teachers' beliefs appear to reflect longstanding attitudes, 'common sense,' and their experiences in education rather than research-based knowledge" (Turner et al., 2009, p. 361). Although the distinction is not always clear-cut, when most or all of these distinctive features can be attached to a particular proposition or event, one can be confident that they may be associated more with beliefs than with knowledge. Turner et al. (2009) discuss a key element that plays an active role in teachers' beliefs—teacher expectations. These are inferences that teachers make about students' future performance and potential successes. Research suggests that inaccurate expectations may "create situations in which only confirming evidence is possible" and that "initial perceptions can also bias what teachers see and how they interpret student behavior" (Givvin et al., 2001, p. 324). Teacher expectations are critical, as they may influence learning and motivation both positively and negatively. Research on teachers' beliefs—expectations included—is best conducted internally. Rather than relying on an outside observer's interpretation of certain classroom events, Woods (1996) proposed "research on participants' understanding of events in context" (p. 15). This partly implies exploring how teachers and learners understand events in context, and how this relates to a particular theoretical framework.

An inextricable link exists between teachers' beliefs and their motivational strategies. As Glas (2016) noted, "if and how teachers put motivational strategies into action depends on their own beliefs about motivation and their perceptions of the context in which they work" (p. 442). If we further accept that "almost everything a teacher does in the classroom has a motivational influence on students" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 32), it would be reasonable to acknowledge the importance of the recently growing interest in teacher beliefs about motivational classroom practices and their effectiveness. Initially, significant consideration was directed toward understanding teachers' convictions about which motivational strategies they deemed most effective and incorporated into their teaching (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Guilloteaux, 2013). Specifically, some studies have addressed the question of how closely teachers' perceptions of motivation and motivational strategies align with those of their students (Gedik, 2017; Ruesch et al., 2012; Wang & Lee, 2019). Of particular relevance to this study are further investigations into teachers' beliefs that highlight less-studied details, such as teachers' conceptualization of motivation and their familiarity with common research concepts related to motivation (Cowie & Sakui, 2011), challenges teachers encounter as they strive to motivate students (Glas, 2016; Sakui & Cowie, 2012), teachers' general conceptions about motivation and their motivating practices (Muñoz & Ramirez, 2015), and the sources and manifestations of demotivation among learners (Afshari et al., 2019; Pawlak et al., 2024).

Parallel to this broad and exhaustive scrutiny of teachers' motivational beliefs, few roughly comparable studies have been conducted specifically in the setting where this study takes place—a Saudi educational setting (for a general overview of research on motivating Saudi EFL learners, see Moskovsky, 2019, pp. 16–19). Focusing exclusively on motivation techniques, Alrabai (2014a) investigated EFL teachers' beliefs regarding the techniques they employ to motivate, and matched them with the reported motivational outcome effects experienced by students. Similarly, Alshehri and Etherington (2017) studied the perceptions of motivational strategies, matching the level of agreement between teachers and students regarding the need to utilize an extensive list of strategies. Altalhi (2019) utilized instruments similar to those used in the latter study; however, similar to the former study, she also evaluated students' attitudes toward language learning. These studies primarily aimed to align teachers' perspectives with those of students; nevertheless, to attain this goal, they explored teachers' senses and insights of motivational practice, which is what the present study aspires to accomplish. Gregersen and AlKhateeb's (2022) study is distinct in how it approaches beliefs about motivation.

In an attempt to confirm the viability of the spread of “motivation contagion” between language teachers and learners, eight teachers and their students self-rated their motivation over several weeks, both immediately before and after each lesson, and various comparisons were drawn. Three additional studies are important to acknowledge, although they are relatively limited in scope or relevance. AlTwijri (2019) assessed teachers’ and students’ opinions about whether motivation positively or negatively affected learning. Asif (2017) examined teachers’ perspectives on anxiety (an affective factor closely linked to motivation) among Saudi EFL learners. Finally, in a setting that is similar to Saudi Arabia, Bahous et al. (2011) examined why Arab Lebanese students are not motivated to learn English, from the perspectives of both teachers and students.

As evident from the cursory review above, the increasing interest in EFL teachers’ beliefs and perceptions of learner motivation offers compelling evidence that a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of classroom motivation necessitates further investigation into motivation from the perspective of teachers, which has only recently received scrutiny. Many studies, including those reviewed above, have provided recommendations for future research that highlight this concern. For example, at a practical level, Bernaus and Gardner (2008) recommended that “teachers assess their students’ perceptions of any strategies they employ” (p. 399). To ascertain whether teachers regularly conduct such assessments, research should delve deeper into teachers’ beliefs about learner motivation and address any misconceptions that teachers may harbor about their classroom practice. On a more theoretical level, Cowie and Sakui (2011) cautioned against complex, abstract frameworks of motivation and suggested that “one way to gain a wider picture of motivation is that theories of learner motivation include teacher perspectives” (p. 226). Achieving this requires further research on teachers’ beliefs about motivation across diverse teaching contexts. In response to the call for further consideration of teachers’ motivational beliefs, this study seeks to complement existing research by highlighting the Saudi classroom context, wherein many important issues remain unexplored.

III. THE STUDY

This study employed a questionnaire that investigated EFL teachers’ beliefs about their students’ motivation. A useful starting point when considering this issue is to seek teachers’ judgments of their students’ motivation levels. Motivation is not simply a key success factor in language learning, but an outcome that teachers seek; therefore, teachers never miss the opportunity to express their views about how motivated their students are (Ames, 1990). Notably, although learner motivation is a fundamental point and an issue frequently raised by many practitioners, it has been widely overlooked in research on teachers’ beliefs about motivation. Useful insights can be obtained by grouping teachers into those who consider learners in their classrooms to be generally motivated and those who hold a contradicting belief. As the analysis below indicates, some teachers do not have strong opinions in either direction; therefore, a third “neutral” group may also be considered.

The perspective on whether learners are motivated provides an excellent springboard for further investigation into teachers’ beliefs about learners’ motivation. Therefore, this study seeks to answer two fundamental questions regarding learner motivation from the perspective of EFL teachers:

1. Do EFL teachers believe that learners are generally motivated or not?
2. How do the beliefs about various aspects of motivation (signs, causes, and motivating practices) held by teachers who believe learners are motivated compare to those held by teachers who believe that learners are not motivated?

The participants were 48 full-time EFL teachers (35 men and 13 women) from an English language teaching institute belonging to a Saudi Arabian university. All teachers had at least three years of teaching experience in the classroom, and only six participants were native English speakers. Three participants had doctoral qualifications, and the rest had master’s degrees in TESOL. All the participants were chiefly involved as full-time EFL instructors in a preparatory year program for university medical, engineering, and scientific colleges. Almost half of the one-year program was dedicated to English courses (both general English and English for Specific Purposes), whereas the other half comprised specialist courses, mainly scientific courses. The program primarily aimed to help students cope with the English learning environment.

The study employed a 20-item questionnaire as its main instrument. Participants were required to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). The printed questionnaire was distributed to the teachers during a half-hour break at one of the orientation sessions that took place in the week preceding the official commencement of the academic year. Teachers are believed to have had increased self-awareness during these sessions, as many practical issues related to teaching and learning were discussed and contemplated. The timing of the distribution of the questionnaire was also deliberate to ensure that the participants did not base their responses on their immediate incidental experiences, but on their overall teaching background.

The primary source of the questionnaire items was five 30–45-minute initial explanatory interviews with five teachers (four men and one woman) who did not subsequently participate in the original questionnaire study. The aim of the interviews, which occurred a week before the distribution of the questionnaire, was to provide pilot answers to a comprehensive research-based preliminary list of statements about motivation and motivational strategies. One important takeaway from these interviews was that teachers were not familiar with the bulk of research on motivation. Only one teacher remembered reading a section in a reference book about how to motivate students, but he was unable to specifically remember any of the strategies discussed. Furthermore, teachers did not recall taking part in discussions with colleagues about motivating students, although they commonly reported hearing comments from other teachers about

how motivated or otherwise their students were. This is not surprising, as language learning research suggests that teachers' beliefs "are overwhelmingly experiential in origin and make little reference to SLA theory" (Lamb, 2019b, p. 299).

Another noteworthy takeaway was that all five teachers agreed that, although admittedly with varying degrees of success, motivating students is one of their responsibilities in the classroom. This appears to be a universal belief among teachers; as Matassarin (2006) observed, surveys of teachers' beliefs in general education show that "the most relevant role of teachers is to motivate their students, and that their failure to do so effectively is a major stressor" (p. 3). Nevertheless, most teachers voiced frustration because a substantial percentage of students in nearly every language classroom experienced a "chronic motivation problem" and did not react positively to whatever strategies were used to motivate them.

The interviews demonstrated that, if this study seeks to mirror the subject teachers' perceptions of motivation, then the questionnaire statements should be jargon-free and as general and explicit as possible. After reviewing several teacher-oriented practical guides and resource books (e.g. Alrabai, 2014b; Renandya, 2014), 20 items addressing classroom motivation from four different angles—sources of motivation, reasons for low motivation, signs of low motivation, and general motivational perspectives—were included in the questionnaire. These are broad areas of motivation that cannot be comprehensively surveyed through a few questionnaire items. Therefore, the items included were only those related to issues repeatedly raised by teachers during the initial interviews.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' judgment of students' level of motivation was elicited through the first item of the questionnaire: "*Students are generally not motivated to learn English.*" In addition to being a key outcome of the study, answers to this item helped categorize the participants, according to their judgments of how motivated the students were, into three groups: motivated (Group M), neutral (Group N), and not motivated (Group NM). Responses to the other items were considered in light of this classification.

The item was intentionally negatively worded so that participants would be more thoughtful when responding. Additionally, most teachers in the initial interviews leaned toward labeling students as generally unmotivated; this holds true of several studies on EFL students' level of motivation, especially in the Saudi context (e. g. Almaiman, 2005; Alrabai, 2011). On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree), choices 1–4 were regarded as indicating disagreement with the statement (i.e., students were generally motivated; Group M), 7–10 as agreement (i.e., students were generally not motivated; Group NM), and 5 and 6 as neutral (Group N). As shown in Figure 1, almost half of the teachers believed that students were generally motivated (Group M), while the other half were almost equally divided between those who believed that students were not motivated (Group NM) and those who were neutral (Group N). This distribution is inconsistent with teachers' reports during the initial interviews, as well as what appears to be the general consensus in motivation research (Afshari et al., 2019).

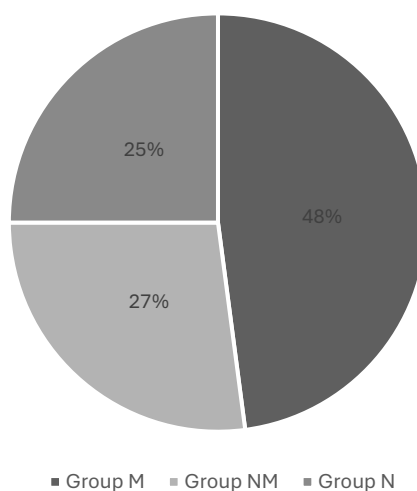


Figure 1. Distribution of Teachers Based on Their Judgments of Students' Level of Motivation

A possible explanation for this distribution is that the preparatory year academic program is highly competitive; students' achievement decides which specialization they will be allowed to join. This does not necessarily entail "true" intrinsic motivation, as it may simply be driven by an external reward, or instrumentally oriented motivation. According to Dörnyei (2001), most motivation research maintains that it is "an unfounded myth" (p. 92) that competitive classrooms are motivating, advocating more cooperation than competition. Nevertheless, competition should be encouraged to an extent that does not foster an "unhealthy competition in which some students win and others lose" (Renandya, 2015, p. 186). A balanced view of the effect of competition on motivation is that it is a double-edged sword; in a competitive

educational environment, a student may be highly motivated to succeed or may avoid engagement altogether because of fear of failure (Williams & Burden, 1997).

A. Teachers' General Perspective on EFL Students' Motivation

In addition to the first questionnaire item discussed above, six additional items addressed the teachers' general perceptions of learners' motivation. For these six items (and the rest of the items, as demonstrated below), and to facilitate comparisons, the average scores for each of the three groups of teachers—Groups M, NM, and N—were extracted and plotted diagrammatically.

Overall responses to the first item in Figure 2 (“*There is no way to motivate students who are not motivated*”) indicate that teachers' beliefs align with the relatively recent cognitive conceptualization of motivation as a dynamic construct (Dörnyei, 2001; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Pawlak, 2012). This implies that learner motivation should not be viewed as static or unchangeable; over the course of study or even during a single lesson, some learners may begin motivated but end less so, or vice versa. These fluctuations may stem from various internal and external factors (Dörnyei, 2001). Interestingly, as noted by Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) this dynamic perspective on motivation “implies that teachers...should not label students as ‘motivated’ or ‘not motivated’ in some global fashion” (p. 313).

How can this perspective be reconciled with the feedback on the first item, where three-quarters of the respondents labeled students, albeit to varying degrees, as either motivated or not (Groups M and NM)? The author believes this may be linked to what was mentioned earlier about teachers in the interviews acknowledging that motivating students is one of their crucial roles in the classroom, although some students need to be encouraged to be engaged. This notion is further supported by responses to the second item in this set (“*It is one of our essential responsibilities as teachers to motivate students*”). Evidently, teachers do not perceive learners as lacking the potential to be motivated; rather, some learners may struggle to exert the necessary effort for various reasons. Motivation can only occur through close coordination between teachers and students. To borrow a common phrase, teachers “load the gun” (by exploiting many classroom variables to foster learner motivation), but it is the responsibility of students to “pull the trigger”.

Some studies establishing a direct correlation between language proficiency and motivation have yielded contradictory results. For example, Sung and Padilla (1998) concluded that advanced students were more motivated than beginners, whereas Shaaban and Ghaith (2000) confirmed the opposite. The teachers' opinion on this question, which turns out to be rather weak, is sought through the third item (“*Students whose language is weak are particularly unmotivated*”). This response indicates that teachers consider language proficiency to be a less important factor in determining student motivation.

The last three items, related to teachers' general perceptions of student motivation, are comparable. They explore teachers' perceptions of variations in student motivation between learning English as a school subject and other subjects, between students from this institution and other students, and between current and past students. Not all respondents had experience or knowledge of these different contexts, yet understanding how teachers view student motivation in such juxtapositions is important, especially because reference to them is occasionally made in research on motivation. For example, because language learning is linked to several personal and social factors, it is regarded as different from other school subjects (Dörnyei, 2001). The participants of this study responded in line with this conclusion; they did not support the view that students who are not motivated to learn English are also not motivated to learn other subjects.

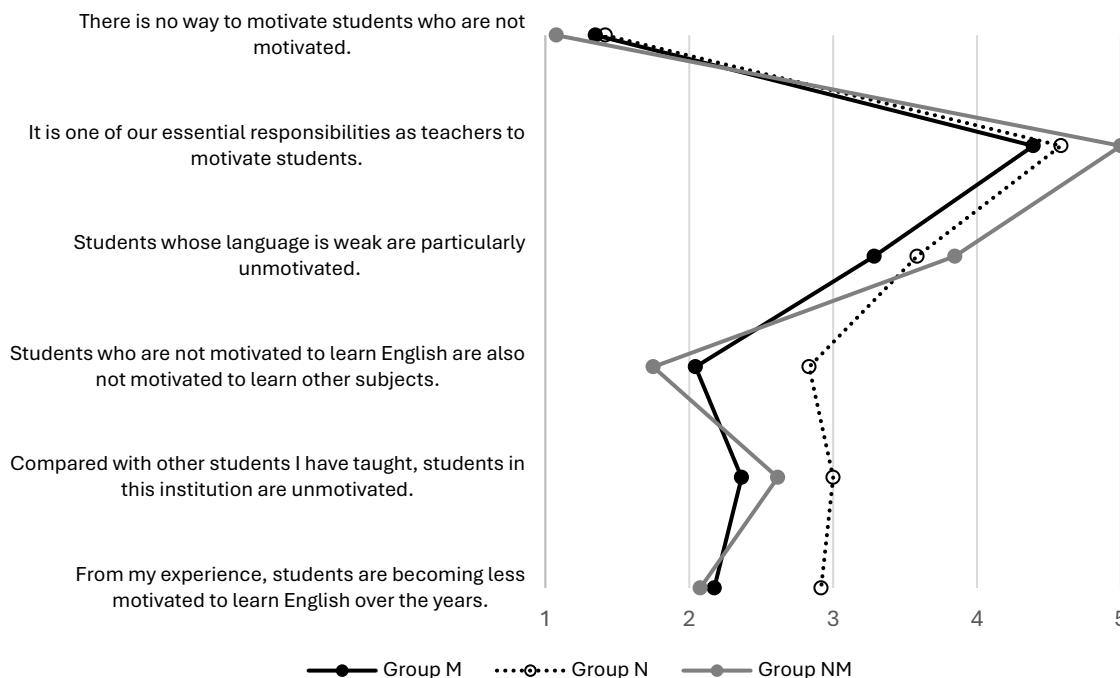


Figure 2. Teachers' General Perspective on EFL Students' Motivation

Regarding the other two comparisons, most participants did not draw a distinction in motivation levels between students from this institution (where they are currently employed) and other institutions (where they have prior work experience), or between current students and previous generations. This last observation is somewhat counterintuitive, as teachers often complain about the deteriorating quality of contemporary students, including problems with motivation and enthusiasm, relative to former students. A final notable observation is that, unlike the two extreme groups of teachers, Groups M and NM, Group N was, as expected, unequivocally neutral in these three comparative items.

B. Teachers' Beliefs About What Might Motivate Students

If teachers accept that motivating students is a crucial role in the language classroom, they must hold beliefs about which methods or strategies may or may not work. As discussed in the literature review, classroom motivation strategies are a thoroughly researched topic, and it is not possible to investigate teachers' beliefs concerning specific strategies in this broad study. The four items subsumed under this theme of questionnaire items covered four broad motivational classroom factors: technology, classroom management, communicative teaching, and assessment (Figure 3).

Technology is becoming a part of almost every aspect of our lives, including education and language learning. Despite this, few studies (e.g. González-Mujico, 2022) have investigated the effect of technology on L2 student motivation, a particularly promising line of research (Al-Hoorie, 2017; Lamb, 2019a). This classroom motivational impact of technology is recognized by participants' overall response to the first item in this part of the analysis ("One way to motivate students is to introduce new technology into teaching") (cf. Pawlak et al., 2024). This also applies to the use of communicative language teaching ("One way to motivate students is to use more communicative teaching methods"). It is clearly motivating to be in contact with meaningful and authentic language most of the classroom time (Brown, 2013). However, compared with the other two groups, Group M appeared reluctant to concede that technology and communicative teaching were motivating; Group NM had the strongest opinions on these two items.

Unlike the positive response concerning the motivational effect of using technology and communicative teaching in the language classroom, the other two items in this part of the questionnaire, which pertained to classroom management ("Using more formal, strict procedures of class management is one way to make students more motivated") and assessment ("One way to motivate students is to use more difficult assessment methods"), received negative rankings. The wording of these items was based on concerns raised by the teachers interviewed, who expressed their dissatisfaction with the testing procedures and complained about student behavior in the classroom.

For teachers in non-Western test-driven educational cultures, such as the Chinese culture (Huang, 2012), test results can be used as a motivating factor, akin to materialistic rewards, as they encourage students to study harder. Nonetheless, the respondents in this study concurred that learning contexts requiring high-stakes testing are detrimental to student motivation (Falout et al., 2009; Mora, 2011). Teachers appear to prefer the more motivating "alternative or authentic assessments" (see Renandya, 2015, p. 187) over formal, high-stakes testing. Similarly, regarding the question of "how to discipline students in a motivational (or at least not de-motivational) manner," (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 47) teachers seem particularly averse to exerting pressure on the students or threatening them to comply with class norms. As demonstrated in Figure 3, Group NM held a slightly weaker opinion on the assessment and classroom management items compared

with the other two groups. For this group of teachers, assessment and classroom management might be deemed less demotivating, with the issue of low motivation being intrinsic to the learners themselves.

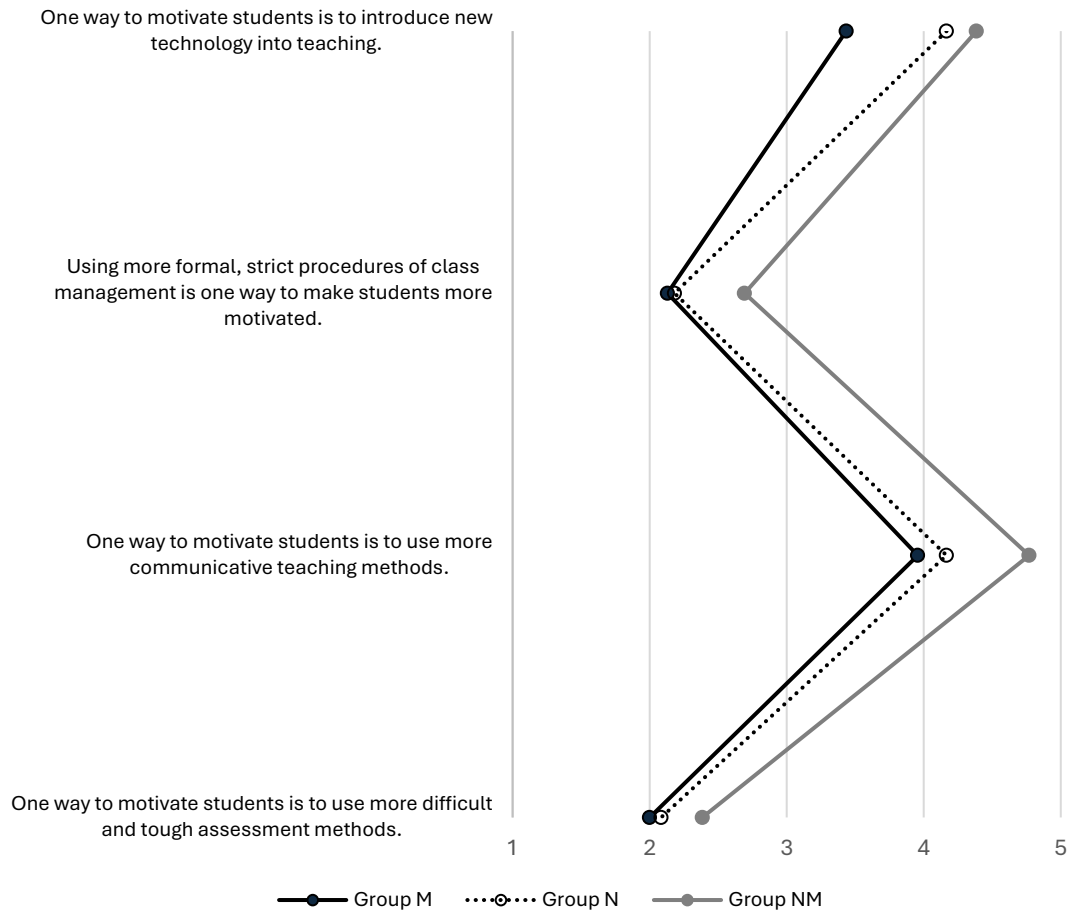


Figure 3. Teachers' Beliefs About What Might Motivate Students

In summary, the responses of all three groups of teachers to the four questionnaire items on beliefs about what motivates students in the classroom generally align with common assertions in the motivation literature. The concurrence of opinions among all three groups of teachers was a significant observation. We can tentatively conclude, without underestimating the value of the subtle nuances noted in the discussion above, that teachers' positions on student motivation do not drastically affect their beliefs regarding what may or may not function as a classroom motivator.

C. Teachers' Beliefs About the Main Reasons for Low Motivation

Teachers necessarily hold beliefs about what may influence learner motivation, either positively or negatively. The wording of the six items in this section of the questionnaire reflects the teachers' concerns during the preliminary interviews. All items were formulated such that agreeing with an item would be interpreted to mean that what the item says somehow contributes to a lack of motivation; however, disagreeing does not necessarily mean the opposite, that is, the encouragement of motivation. This is important because the goal is to allow teachers to vocalize their beliefs strictly regarding internal and external variables, which might be conducive to low motivation in the classroom.

The first two items (Figure 4) overlapped with two items discussed in the previous two sections (those related to low language proficiency and communicative language teaching), and the responses corresponded to those observed earlier. The subsequent two items explore teachers' judgments of the extent to which students value English as a university course (relative to other courses) and consider it a valuable future tool. Group M did not subscribe to the notion that students do not envisage the significance of English mastery for their future. They hold a neutral stance toward the idea that English as a subject is deemed inferior and unimportant compared with their other specialist courses. The other two groups agreed with these statements, especially regarding the inferiority and insignificance of English language courses. This outcome is unexpected because the nature of the teaching program that the teachers are largely involved in is more of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) where most of the other university subjects, such as mathematics, chemistry, and physics, are supposed to be taught, at least partially, in English, making language learning more relevant and hence acting as "a booster for student engagement" (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020, p. 21; see also: Lorenzo, 2014). The contradiction can be resolved by referring to the doubts surrounding the conclusion that CLIL programs boost motivation "since, currently, the results obtained are far from conclusive and may be grounded on stakeholders' opinions" (Lasagabaster, 2019, p. 359).

The teachers' beliefs reported here appear to confirm Lasagabaster's viewpoint, which, as he maintains, calls for more investigation especially into how divergent the preferences of CLIL students from different cultures are.

Responses to the fifth item ("Poor materials we use represent one of the main reasons for students' lack of motivation") were somewhat positive, although Group N agreed slightly more than the other two groups. Teaching materials are a key demotivating factor in EFL classrooms (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009), and several variables related to both format and content (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991), such as authenticity (Peacock, 1997) and relevance (Wachob, 2006), can contribute to the motivational effect of language materials. The participants in this study expressed not being completely satisfied with the motivational effects of the textbook series published by a well-known Western publisher. The teachers may have felt that the content was not pertinent to the students' specific needs and culture, and therefore, was not sufficiently stimulating.

The final questionnaire item pertaining to beliefs about the reasons for low motivation ("One of the main causes of lack of motivation is the Saudi students' lenient, less strict view of the process of learning in general") is particularly important. Unlike Group M, which, despite being very close to the neutral borderline, did not agree with the item, both other groups unequivocally agreed, characterizing this item as exhibiting the most variation among the groups. The motivational divide underlying this analysis may be partly attributable to these stereotypical views. Group M did not conform to this seemingly popular stereotype and consequently did not believe that students lack motivation, whereas the other two groups embraced this stereotype, holding the belief that most students are not motivated (or adopting a neutral position). Stereotypes are related to teachers' expectations; when these stereotypes are negative, they may pose a "threat" that can influence student academic performance and intrinsic motivations (Macklem, 2015, p. 64). In addition to the question of whether they are legitimate or biased, we must determine whether these sweeping expectations and related teaching practices can be adjusted.

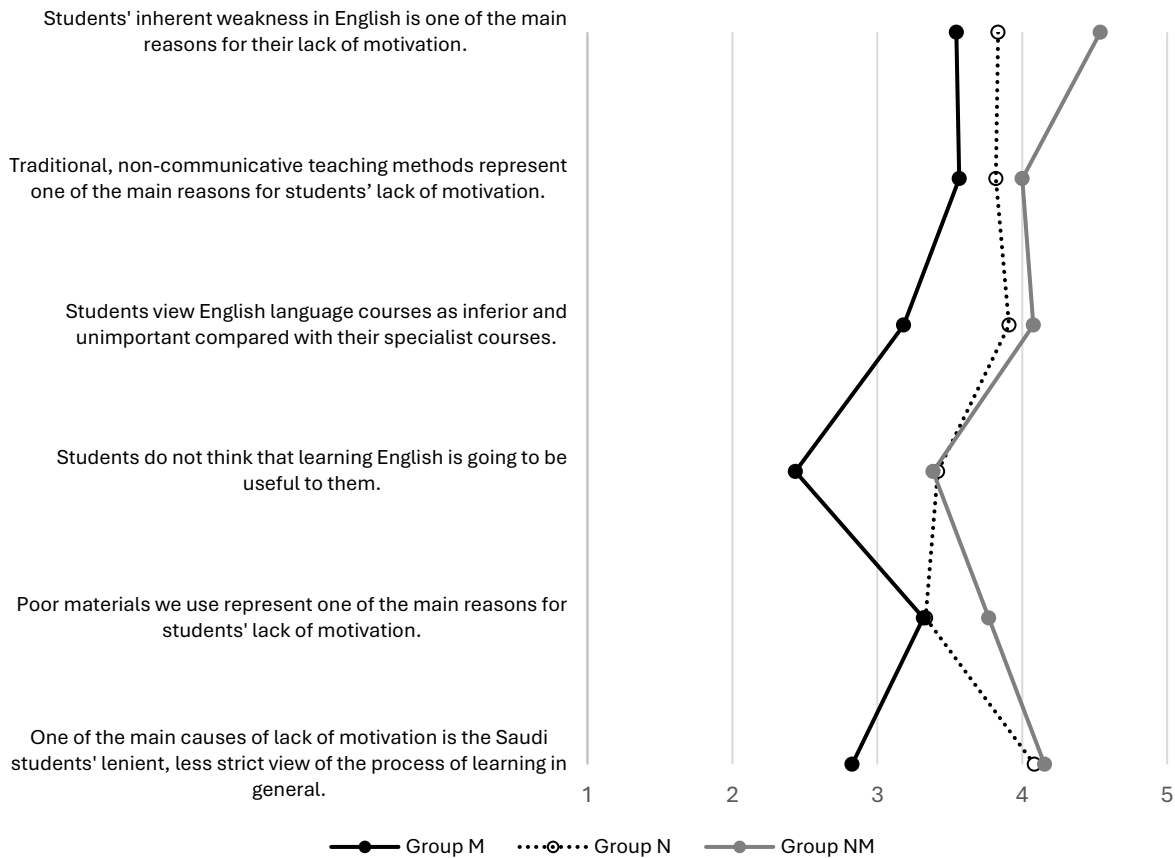


Figure 4. Teachers' Beliefs About the Main Reasons for Low Motivation

In conclusion, when responding to at least two of the six items subsumed in this section, teachers belonging to different groups did not share homogenous beliefs equally. Group M, in particular, did not accept—or at least seemed reluctant to accept—that the students' lack of motivation resulted from them being lenient and less strict about learning in general, or their view that English is inferior to other subjects and not useful in the future. Regarding the other statements, Group M agreed, but not as strongly as the other two groups, especially Group NM. Teachers' beliefs about the reasons for students' lower motivation clearly highlight a divide among teachers regarding student motivation.

D. Teachers' Beliefs About Signs of Low Motivation

The final part of the questionnaire comprised three items related to the degree of effort exerted in learning English. The most pronounced sign of learners' lack of motivation was anticipated to be not paying attention during lessons, followed by unwillingness to participate in class; the weakest sign was not using English outside of the classroom. The reference to "activities" in the definition of motivation cited above is an example of the importance placed on effort as the main component in almost all theoretical models of motivation. At the task level, teachers described students who focus attention, participate, and exert noticeable effort in general as motivated; these indicators are often referred to using the term "engagement" in the literature (see Philp & Duchesne, 2016).

As shown in Figure 5, the responses to the three items related to learner engagement ranged from neutral (Group M) to more or less definitive agreement, especially in Group NM. Unexpectedly, however, there was practically no difference in the strength of opinion on each of the three items, except that exhibited by Group N regarding the item on using English outside class. It may not seem entirely logical for Group NM, for instance, to agree equally strongly with all three statements about expending less effort, even though each statement represents a different level of learner engagement. Nonetheless, this finding suggests that such judgments are not separable from the overarching belief that students are generally unmotivated. Group NM did not believe that the students were motivated, and accordingly, did not observe any signs of active engagement. By contrast, Group M was more neutral, as they believed that students were generally motivated and did not notice serious indications of low engagement. Thus, teachers' beliefs about signs of low motivation also mark a divide among teachers regarding how motivated students are.

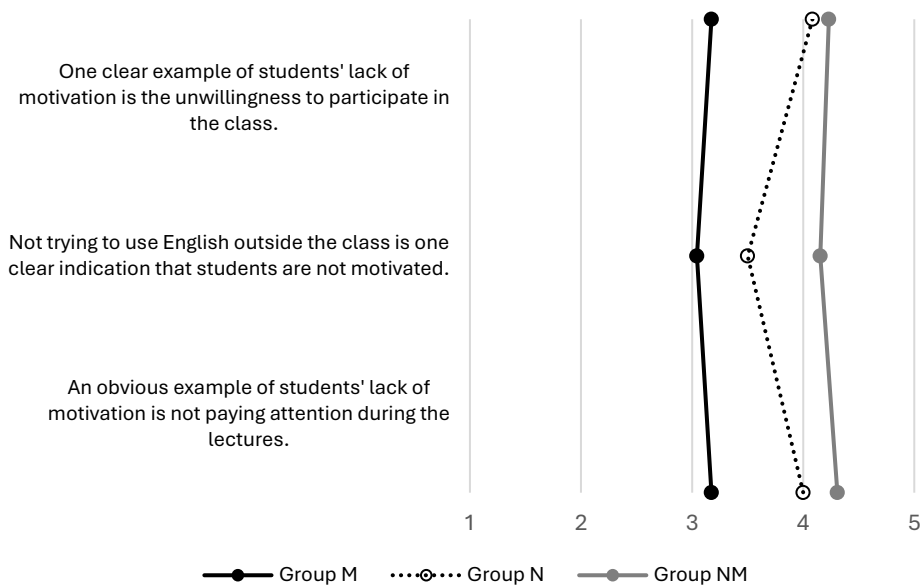


Figure 5. Teachers' Beliefs About Signs of Low Motivation

V. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore EFL teachers' beliefs about learners' motivation. Three groups of teachers were identified: those who represented the majority and believed that the learners were motivated, those who were neutral, and those who believed that the learners were not motivated. The study compared the opinions of these three groups on various aspects of learner motivation to identify specific belief variables potentially contributing to this motivational divide. Two such beliefs, related to reasons for lack of motivation, are stereotypical representations of Saudi students' attitudes toward learning, in addition to conceptions of students' underestimation of the importance of English for their future. Beliefs about the signs of learner engagement during lessons were another contributing factor. However, views related to what might motivate students and judgments about the signs of low motivation do not seem to contribute to the motivational divide. In general, there is a pattern that can be perceived as an indication of the existence of a motivational divide: for most of the statements, Group M is closest to the agreement extreme, followed by Group N, whereas Group NM is closest to the disagreement end.

This apparent pattern of motivational divide among EFL teachers is consistent with that demonstrated by Givvin et al. (2001) who noted that teachers have stable ratings for student motivation across time. Consequently, if "classroom structures have sources in teachers' beliefs" (Nespor, 1987, p. 326), research should pay more attention to teachers' perceptions and "subjective interpretations of classroom processes" (Nespor, 1987, p. 325). These results may inform pre-service teacher education programs to assist teachers in making effective classroom decisions (Mansfield & Volet, 2014). As indicated by Paran (2017) "intuitions and beliefs are not reliable when complex issues such as teaching and

learning are concerned” (p. 501); therefore, as attempted in this study, an important goal of education research is to explore and determine the root causes of such beliefs and intuitions.

Notwithstanding its limitations, especially because of its focus on one specific context of EFL learning, this study broadens the horizon for further research on teachers’ perspectives on student motivation in different settings. Research on beliefs about motivation in different contexts is clearly not just useful (e.g. Hufton et al., 2003), but it should also be a crucial research objective; for instance, we should inquire into whether the motivational divide is culture-specific and what factors might contribute to this. The present study has demonstrated that researching EFL teachers’ beliefs about learner motivation may provide key insights into EFL teaching practice, and that “even if teachers turned out to be ill-informed, there would be good reason for gaining more knowledge about their beliefs” (Nolen & Nicholls, 1994, p. 58). Familiarity with the “theories” and conceptions teachers (and students) bring to the classroom is essential for setting realistic goals, overcoming obstacles and struggles, and eventually providing effective language teaching (Kern, 1995).

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Sultan M. Al-Sharief was born in Turabah, Saudi Arabia, in 1970. He obtained his MA in linguistics from Liverpool University, UK in 1996. He earned his PhD in Applied Linguistics from Liverpool University, UK in 2001.

He is an assistant professor of applied linguistics at the Department of English, College of Social Sciences, Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia. His research interests include L2 motivation, EFL writing, and educational technology.

Ecological Criticism in the Pastoral Narrative *Luka Perempuan Asap* by Nafi'ah al-Ma'rab

Ceisy Nita Wuntu

English Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia

Devilito Prasetyo Tatipang

English Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia

Olga A. Rorintulus

English Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia

Merlin M. Maukar

English Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia

Muhammad Ilham Ali

English Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia

Abstract—There has recently been a growing concern about the ecological crisis, which is particularly evident in Indonesia's escalating environmental degradation. Recognizing the pivotal significance of the environment in sustaining human existence, Indonesian writer Nafi'ah al-Ma'rab eloquently articulates the profound neglect and apathy towards environmental concerns in her novel *Luka Perempuan Asap*. Through a meticulous examination of the ecological crisis within the oil palm plantation settings of Riau, the novel serves as a primary data source for this study aimed at delineating the ecological criticism and pastoral narratives embedded within its narrative fabric. Employing a qualitative approach, the researchers adopted both a pastoral narrative and ecocritical perspectives to scrutinize the text. The findings reveal the deleterious consequences of deforestation on oil palm cultivation depicted in *Luka Perempuan Asap*, manifesting in various calamities such as pollution, habitat loss, fauna extinction, and the exacerbation of global warming. The novel elucidates diverse attitudes towards environmental conservation, including reverence for nature as a source of peace, love, friendship, harmonious living, and conscientious stewardship, as well as proactive measures humans can take to safeguard the environment, as demonstrated by its protagonist characters. Moreover, *Luka Perempuan Asap* is a poignant reminder of the imperative to protect the environment and caution against heedless exploitation. It underscores that undue aggression towards nature engenders multifaceted adversities, harming the environment and its inhabitants.

Index Terms—ecological criticism, pastoral narrative, *Luka Perempuan Asap*, ecological damage

I. INTRODUCTION

Humans are continuously challenged by progressive development and technological achievement, and one of those challenges has been the emergence of urban society a particular advancement that has notoriously infiltrated all parts of the globe, simultaneously increasing the complexity of the problems people face all over the world. Indeed, people from every corner of the globe are coming together to protest the endless progress that overtakes and eradicates the surrounding natural beauty and peace of mind that stimulates brotherhood and avoids hostility. Certainly, living close to nature and enjoying the beauty of natural creation can free humans from various burdens. After all, joy, peace, and harmony are essential human needs. Today, however, peace and happiness do not seem compatible with urban expansion. Environmental damage is evident when it comes to human activities subduing nature. Moreover, environmental crises have become an important issue that calls upon all humans to take the situation into account.

Earth is an ideal ecosystem and is referred to as a “mother” who provides life and nurtures it. Thus, preserving an ecological balance on Earth, particularly because it is our only “home”, is imperative. The principle of interconnectedness of all elements in the ecosphere requires all people, as the loftiest beings, to have a sense of responsibility and wisdom to preserve the balance. The sustainability of life requires human beings to be stewards of the planet and give priority to implementing various ways to preserve the environment worldwide.

This is especially true concerning the world population and population density, which have ironically caused the extinction of many species of plants and animals. The imbalance between birth and death rates as a result of population growth has forced people to open up new areas in which to live; thus, this urban spread has destroyed a variety of flora and fauna. Furthermore, it has also had a profound effect on water catchment areas and has caused other environmental

problems as the production of household waste significantly increases and leads to water, air, and land pollution. As the population increases, ecological damage increases even more (Schneider-Mayerson et al., 2020). Moreover, men's progressive attitudes toward making money are other reasons humanity has adopted a destructive spirit that exploits natural resources such as wildlife hunting and illegal logging—activities that continue to be problems in the modern world (Charles et al., 2022). As a result, efforts must be made to make everyone aware of maintaining the ethical use of natural resources to address this condition.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In response to the ecological issues that started to emerge in the late 20th century, most academics, literary writers, and government officials have put forth efforts to highlight activities for preserving natural ecosystems (James & Morel, 2018). In American literature, the topic was written about as far back as the 19th century by the likes of writer James Fenimore Cooper and poet and essayist Henry David Thoreau. Likewise, in British literature, it emerged in the works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth in the early 19th century, raising awareness of environmental concerns and promoting the preservation of natural resources and the environment as well. Today, one of the more prominent literary works that deals with environmental concerns and eco-criticism is Nafi'ah Al-Ma'rab's *Luka Perempuan Asap*.

Bladow (2022) states that eco-criticism is a form of criticism that seeks to examine the relationship between ecology and its various problems through literary texts. Nabulya (2018) declares that eco-criticism is a term coined by intellectuals and academics. It is a theoretical approach that elucidates the position of humans on Earth (Bracke, 2018). Afzal (2020) posits that eco-criticism aims to evaluate the significance of a literary text by considering its ecological aspects. Indeed, eco-criticism endeavors to interpret a literary text while considering the environment. This criticism considers ecology, nature, and environment as foundational elements in the literary texts. Wiyatmi (2016) further asserts that eco-criticism scrutinizes literary texts to elucidate how nature and various issues are intertwined. A literary work does not exist in a cultural vacuum. It exists to guide its readers and teach them how to overcome some of life's problems. Thus, the representation of environmental issues in a literary text serves to enhance people's environmental awareness.

Literary research that focuses on the environment is growing, although it has yet to be as prevalent as other literary research. This undoubtedly poses a challenge for literary researchers to become aware of the importance of conducting environmental research. One of the studies on the environment stated that the roles of social sciences and humanities also carry the same responsibility and significance in environmental matters (Afzal, 2020). Sukmawan (2016) mentioned that ecocritical texts exhibit several characteristics, including pastoral features and apocalyptic narratives. Pastoral literature constitutes an integral component of ecocritical texts found within literary works. Herein lies the importance of the researcher's role in aiding the critique, criticism, and dissemination of knowledge concerning environmental degradation (Dahlan, 2021). As a form of eco-criticism, pastoral narratives can reflect insights into the activities that damage the environment. Therefore, this pastoral narrative has been selected as one of the subjects for studying ecocritical texts, aiming to provide theoretical and practical explanations about environmental awareness.

III. METHODOLOGY

This investigation adopts a qualitative approach, grounded in an ecocritical perspective, to examine the subtleties of pastoral narratives and ecological criticism within the novel *Luka Perempuan Asap*. The primary data source for this study is the aforementioned novel, authored by Na'Fiah al-Ma'rab and published by Solo Tinta Medina in 2017. The methodology of the study involves the immersion of the researcher in the exploration of the text of *Luka Perempuan Asap*. Data collection entails meticulous reading and note-taking from various texts to identify instances of pastoral narrative representations and ecological criticism. Analysis techniques include classification, interpretation, and synthesis to draw conclusions. Additionally, a central objective of this research is to instill a reverence for the environment through the lens of pastoral literature. Data collection primarily involves a documentary study, where the researcher meticulously reads and analyzes textual documents. Data selection is stringent, aligning with the research inquiries to provide relevant insights.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Na'Fiah al-Ma'rab's *Luka Perempuan Asap* addresses ecological issues such as smog created by fires burning in Riau, causing global warming and air pollution which impact all aspects of life. Indeed, smoke from the burning of forests and land has plagued Riau for years, even resulting in the loss of life. The industrial world, pioneered by capitalists, was capable of altering the culture and civilization established by our ancestors (Wuntu, 2020). For instance, farming communities that traditionally relied on agricultural land for their livelihoods often found themselves compelled to surrender their land, which was "rather forcefully" purchased by capitalists for industrial or commercial purposes. As a result, they were compelled to relocate to the outskirts of town or to become involved in these very industries that took their land away and damaged the environment. Consequently, those who transitioned away from agriculture experienced cultural alienation, which included shifting their lifestyle from a simple agrarian existence to a consumerist pattern, mirroring the lifestyle of those around them. Undeniably, the depletion of natural resources and the rapid growth of the

human population exacerbate the problem of global warming, and the industrialization of the village by capitalists has led to endless suffering for the villagers.

Ecocriticism posits that every object can be viewed within an ecological framework. Ecology can serve as a complementary science in literary criticism. The emergence of ecocriticism is a logical consequence of the growing significance of ecological existence which has increasingly captured human attention. Amidst the dominance of cosmocentric, theocentric, anthropocentric, and logocentric orientations, ecology has been marginalized and often overlooked, distancing it from the central focus of thought (Anggarista & Nurhadi, 2018). These conditions are caused by an imbalance of cultural dominance that excessively exploits nature. This appears to stem from the dichotomous mindset of nature-culture which pits culture against nature. Tatipang et al. (2022) observe that humans often feel physically and culturally marginalized due to the advancements in science and technology, which strongly promote the emergence of industrialization. Moreover, recent unpredictable weather patterns and various natural disasters have compelled the global community to pay closer attention to nature. Humans become apprehensive as nature becomes less hospitable to them. al-Ma'rab employs language as a medium to vividly describe nature, allowing readers of this work to empathize with the story's circumstances, in particular as they are experienced by its protagonist, Mun, the daughter of a capitalist in the village.

Based on the results of studying Na'Fiah al-Ma'rab's work, *Luka Perempuan Asap*, the researchers have identified various pastoral narratives and ecological criticisms in the text. Tables 1 and 2 show examples of both pastoral narratives and ecological criticism, respectively, below.

TABLE 1
FORM OF PASTORAL NARRATIVE IN AL-MA'RAB'S *LUKA PEREMPUAN ASAP*

Pastoral Narrative	Description
Respect for Nature	<i>As proof of respect for nature, the novel's characters try to explain the critical role of nature.</i>
Love and Care the Nature	<i>The characters in the novel try to keep loving and caring for nature by arguing with several people who support environmental destruction.</i>
The Feeling of Responsible and Protect the Nature	<i>Several figures are trying to maintain and protect the forest by collecting evidence of forest damage so that it can be reported to the authorities.</i>

In al-Ma'rab's *Luka Perempuan Asap*, the pastoral narrative vividly depicts various thematic elements, as outlined in Table 1. One of the prominent themes is the profound respect for nature exhibited by the characters. This respect is not merely superficial but deeply ingrained in their actions and beliefs. Through their interactions and dialogues, the characters articulate the importance of nature and its intrinsic value, highlighting its role in sustaining life and maintaining balance. By providing explanations and reflections on the significance of nature, the characters convey a sense of reverence and awe toward the natural world, fostering a deeper connection with it. Furthermore, the narrative emphasizes love and care for nature, portraying the characters as staunch advocates for environmental preservation. Despite facing opposition from individuals prioritizing economic gain over ecological concerns, the characters remain steadfast in their commitment to protecting the environment. Through their unwavering dedication and passionate arguments, they strive to instill a sense of responsibility and empathy toward nature in others. By advocating for sustainable practices and opposing environmental destruction, the characters embody the values of stewardship and guardianship, underscoring the importance of preserving the natural world for future generations.

Moreover, the narrative delves into the theme of responsibility and proactive engagement in protecting nature. In response to the escalating threats to the forest, several characters take proactive measures to document and report instances of environmental degradation to the authorities. By collecting evidence and raising awareness about the detrimental effects of deforestation, they seek to hold accountable those responsible for the destruction of natural habitats. This proactive stance reflects a sense of agency and empowerment, as the characters actively work toward safeguarding the environment and advocating for sustainable practices. Through their actions, they demonstrate a deep-seated commitment to environmental justice and the planet's well-being, embodying the ethos of responsible citizenship and environmental stewardship.

Al-Ma'rab's *Luka Perempuan Asap* masterfully employs the pastoral narrative form to explore themes of respect for nature, love and care for the environment, and a sense of responsibility toward its protection. Through the interactions and actions of the characters, the novel advocates for a harmonious relationship between humanity and the natural world, emphasizing the importance of preserving ecological balance and fostering a sustainable future. The narrative inspires reflection and action by depicting the characters as champions of environmental justice and Earth's stewards, inviting readers to contemplate their relationship with nature and their collective responsibility to safeguard the planet for future generations. Table 2 presents the nuanced exploration of ecological criticism within al-Ma'rab's *Luka Perempuan Asap*, revealing how the work scrutinizes interactions between humans and nature. Themes like ecological imbalance, exploitation of resources, and the ramifications of environmental degradation are meticulously dissected, offering profound insights into humanity's complex relationship with the natural world.

TABLE 2
FORM OF ECOLOGICAL CRITICISM IN AL-MA'RAB'S *LUKA PEREMPUAN ASAP*

Ecological Criticism	Description
Pollution	<i>Irresponsible people carry out air pollution by burning land. They deliberately did this to open new land to plant oil palm—thick smoke everywhere, which causes air pollution.</i>
Land Damage	<i>The crisis of wilderness conditions and new land opening is usually carried out by irresponsible persons' mass burning of land. The purpose of burning the forest is to allow planting oil palm seeds to be carried out more quickly.</i>
Soil Drought	<i>An impact of opening new oil palm lands is the occurrence of drought and long-term drought. Temperature changes, reduced water sources, and rain that does not go down are some of the things caused by land burning.</i>
Extinction of Flora and Fauna	<i>The summer season has lasted a long time because many areas were deliberately set on fire to clear oil palm land. This condition also worsens with the rain that does not go down either, so the flow of water, rivers, lakes, and other springs starts to dry up. Residents who used to go fishing in the river no longer go there because the fish that used to inhabit the river have gone somewhere.</i>
Global Warming	<i>Global warming occurs due to the large amount of land being burned, which increases Earth's average temperature damaging the layer of ozone that protects the planet.</i>

Table 2 illustrates the intricate portrayal of ecological criticism within al-Ma'rab's *Luka Perempuan Asap*, shedding light on the profound impacts of human activities on the environment. One of the central themes explored is pollution, notably air pollution resulting from the deliberate burning of land to clear space for oil palm plantations. This irresponsible practice not only contributes to air pollution but also leads to the destruction of natural habitats and the loss of biodiversity, highlighting the interconnectedness of human actions and environmental degradation. Furthermore, the narrative delves into the repercussions of land damage caused by mass burning, emphasizing the crisis of wilderness conditions and the accelerated pace of deforestation. Opening new land for agricultural purposes exacerbates drought, leading to long-term consequences such as reduced water sources and altered precipitation patterns. This degradation of the land not only threatens the stability of ecosystems but also exacerbates the vulnerability of communities that are dependent on natural resources, underscoring the urgent need for sustainable land management practices and environmental conservation efforts.

Moreover, the narrative explores the dire consequences of human-induced environmental destruction, including the extinction of fauna and the exacerbation of global warming. The prolonged summer season and reduced water sources resulting from land burning devastate wildlife populations, forcing species to migrate or face extinction. Additionally, the large-scale burning of land contributes to global warming, further exacerbating climate change and its associated impacts on ecosystems and human societies. Through its nuanced examination of these ecological issues, *Luka Perempuan Asap* underscores the urgent need for collective action to address environmental degradation and mitigate the impacts of climate change, emphasizing the importance of fostering harmonious relationships between humanity and the natural world for the well-being of future generations.

Regarding the increasing amount of environmental damage, especially in Indonesia, it is necessary to pay attention to all groups (Charles et al., 2022). "As a member of society, the author does not close his ears and eyes to the increasingly damaged nature. These observations are then poured into a work that the public reads. It is hoped that readers of the work will gain an understanding of various environmental problems and the necessary solutions to prevent environmental damage. One of the works addressing environmental damage is the novel *Luka Perempuan Asap* by Nafi'ah al-Ma'rab. This environmental-themed novel depicts the ecological crisis that occurred in Indonesia. The author adeptly describes various problems of the ecological crisis in the oil palm plantation environment in Riau, such as forest fires, the depletion of springs, and the prolonged haze disaster.

A. Pastoral Narrative in al-Ma'rab's *Luka Perempuan Asap*

Agusryana Syarif and Rapi Tang (2021) stated that the environment is a place for actualization, existence, and interaction for humans. The relationship between fellow humans and other creatures can flourish if there is a symbiosis of mutualism based on the principle of mutually beneficial cooperation. Environmental wisdom is the keyword for establishing a balance in life. Take, for example, a tree. A tree is a living thing that, from birth to death, always surrenders, whether during the dry season with scorching hot conditions or a frigid, rainy season (Rahman & Purwanto, 2020).

The data analysis found forms of representation of pastoral narratives and ecological criticism that Nafi'ah al-Ma'rab is trying to convey. Subsequently, she describes the representation of pastoral narrative forms and ecological criticism in the novel *Luka Perempuan Asap* by explaining through the pastoral narrative the heroic actions (heroism) shown by humans in saving natural ecosystems. This heroic or pastoral attitude is demonstrated by prioritizing ethics (attitudes) in utilizing nature, such as respect and responsibility for nature. Respect for nature entails a moral obligation for humans to acknowledge and honor nature. Such an attitude stems from the awareness that humans are an integral part of nature, as nature holds intrinsic value (Dahlan, 2021). From the perspective of environmental ethics, respect for nature as an ecological element is grounded in public acknowledgment of nature's inherent worth, thus deserving of reverence. Nature is entitled to respect not only because human life depends on it but also primarily due to the ontological reality that humans are inherently connected to nature. Hence, humans are members of the ecological community. The integration between

humans and nature within this ecological community reflects the existence of interconnections, attachments, inseparability, and the integrity of relationships. In Eastern philosophy, for example, reality is not divided into separate and unrelated fields; rather, it is perceived as a unified whole. Essentially, the Eastern perspective views social interactions and attitudes toward nature as having social relevance. Furthermore, Sukmawan (2016) explains that within the concentric-spiritual perspective of the East, humans and nature are viewed as harmoniously united. Respect for nature is demonstrated through the ability to acknowledge its inherent value, recognition of its entitlement to respect, acknowledgment of its integrity, and respect for its ability to exist, thrive, grow, and develop naturally, according to its own goals and purpose of creation. This concept is exemplified in the following quotation:

Sawit memang mencemari lingkungan dan pertumbuhannya harus dicegah. Lingkungan kita harus sehat. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, pp. 131-132)

"Palm oil pollutes the environment and its growth must be prevented. Our environment must be healthy". (al-Ma'rab, 2017, pp. 131-132)

Jangan berpikir egois, mereka bisa saja bahagia sekarang, tapi bagaimana dampaknya yang akan datang? Lingkungan akan hancur. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, pp. 131-132)

Don't think selfishly. They could be happy now, but what will the impact be in the future? The environment will be destroyed. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, pp. 131-132)

From these quotations, the characters' attitude of respect for nature becomes evident. This is demonstrated through their awareness that the environment possesses inherent value due to its ability to sustain a diverse range of biodiversity, making it crucial to respect it. Additionally, the characters' respect for nature is reflected in their explanation of the detrimental effects of waste and oil palm plantations on the environment. Furthermore, respect for the environment is evident in the character's emphasis on the importance of treating the environment with care, as any damage inflicted upon it can have hazardous consequences; for example:

"Apa yang kusaksikan sebenarnya bukan sesuatu yang asing. Pun di kampung banyak orang membakar lahan. Tetapi, kali ini aku punya status yang berbeda sebagai peneliti. Ku lihat Bu Wilda sibuk menelepon ke sana sini. Meski dalam kondisi asap yang kian mendekat, wajah Bu Wilda justru tampak kian girang. seharusnya, jika dia memang seorang peneliti, mestinya dia prihatin dengan apa yang terjadi"

"Mun, kita akan berhasil."

"Berhasil apanya, Bu?"

"Mencegah proyek ini. Kamu masih simpan foto-foto tadi, kan? Ini akan jadi delik dan kita akan menang". (al-Ma'rab, 2017, pp. 104-105)

"What I saw was actually nothing strange. Even in the village, many people burn land. However, this time I have a different status as a researcher. I saw Mrs. Wilda busy calling here and there. Even though the smoke was getting closer, Mrs. Wilda's face looked even more excited. "If he is a researcher, he should be concerned about what is happening."

"Mun, we will succeed."

"What did you do, ma'am?"

"Prevent this project. You still have those photos, right? This will be a crime, and we will win". (al-Ma'rab, 2017, pp. 104-105)

As seen above, Ms. Wilda's concern for the environment was criticized by Mun, who disapproved of the project involving foreign parties. On the other hand, Mun also declined to participate. However, Mrs. Wilda persisted in her efforts, despite working with foreign parties, because her actions were deemed appropriate.

Love and care for nature are the qualities of pastoral narrative, and they arise from the understanding that, as fellow members of the ecological community, all living things have the right to be protected, nurtured, and not harmed. This principle embodies a moral obligation to extend care to others without expecting reciprocation. The more individuals love nature, the more they evolve into mature human beings, fostering a strong sense of identity (Dahlan, 2021). An affectionate attitude towards nature fosters the desire and behavior to protect and preserve it optimally. Cosmic tranquility and harmony are manifested through an attitude that does not disturb or interfere with cosmic elements. Thus, maintaining cosmic harmony embodies affection and preserves cosmic continuity. Affection can be sustained if humans strive to behave, speak, and act with love towards other living beings (Syarif, 2022). Nature animates humans not only in the physical sense but also in the mental and spiritual realms. Therefore, an attitude of human affection and concern for nature is essential to ensuring human well-being.

In its "psychic" presence, nature consistently prompts caution, thoroughness, and spiritual control over human attitudes and behaviors to prevent damage, exploitation, and subjugation of nature, while also striving for harmonious relationships and inner harmony in life. The attitude of compassion and concern for nature stems from the awareness that all living things have the right to be protected, cared for, and not harmed, and that the protection and care of all living things should be carried out without expecting anything in return. This can be observed from the following quotation:

kenapa kita memikirkan nasib satu orang, lalu mengabaikan nasib ribuan orang? Lihatlah sekarang, Mun, sudah hampir tiga bulan hujan tak turun di Riau. Kamu tahu apa sebabnya? Cuaca sangat gersang. Titik api mulai muncul di mana-mana. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, pp. 133-134)

“Why do we think about the fate of one person and then ignore the fate of thousands? Look now, Mun; it has not rained in Riau for almost three months. Do you know why? The weather is very dry. Hotspots started appearing everywhere”. (al-Ma’rab, 2017, pp. 133-134)

From this quotation, it is evident that the attitude of compassion for nature is reflected in the expressions of the characters. This can be observed through their awareness that deforestation leads to permanent changes, where rain no longer falls on the once-forested land. This prompts the characters in the novel to emphasize the importance of forests for humanity and the urgent need to protect them from destruction, especially considering the declining rate of forest growth:

Begini samua, sekarang ada proyek analisis dampak lingkungan. Kamu tahu tanaman sawit itu sangat membahayakan lingkungan, termasuk tanah yang ada di sekitarnya. Konon dalam sehari, sebatang sawit bisa menghabiskan banyak sekali air untuk kehidupan akarnya. Tugas kamu menghitung berapa banyak air yang diserap oleh sawit itu per batang per hari. Dengan data ini maka semakin kuat upaya kita untuk memerangi sawit di provinsi Riau. (al-Ma’rab, 2017, p. 58)

“Look, everyone. Now there is an environmental impact analysis project. You know that oil palm plants are very dangerous to the environment, including the land around them. It is said that in one day, palm oil can use up a lot of water for the life of its roots. Your task is to calculate how much water palm oil absorbs per stem per day. With this data, our efforts to fight palm oil in Riau province will be stronger”. (al-Ma’rab, 2017, p. 58)

This quote illustrates Mrs. Wilda's love and concern for the forests in Riau through her behavior and attitude upon witnessing the land ablaze due to the actions of irresponsible individuals. According to her perspective, setting fire to the forest constitutes wrongful behavior. In contrast, Mun's mindset views burning land to clear it for agricultural use as a common practice often carried out by residents in his village. While Mrs. Wilda's environmental concern may not be entirely altruistic, it appears to be driven solely by material motives. The feeling of responsibility and to protect nature is not solely individual but also collective. This principle necessitates that humans undertake concrete initiatives, efforts, policies, and actions to protect the universe and all within it. This implies that the preservation and conservation of nature are shared responsibilities of all humanity. This shared responsibility manifests in the form of warnings, prohibitions, and penalties for anyone who damages nature or jeopardizes the existence of nature, whether intentionally or not. Moral responsibility extends beyond egoism and anthropocentrism to encompass cosmic concerns. It entails the duty to safeguard nature to maintain the balance and integrity of the ecosystem. In line with the idea, Dahlan (2021) emphasized the responsibility that instills guilt in humans when natural disasters occur due to the disruption of the ecosystem balance. Consequently, humans undertake enormous actions to express their guilt and seek to restore balance amidst the vast chaos. An attitude of moral responsibility towards nature is demonstrated through warnings, prohibitions, and punishments imposed on anyone who poses a threat to the existence of these natural elements, whether intentional or not.

Resistance to the conversion of forest areas was also undertaken by residents in Mun's vicinity. However, one might consider the villagers' resistance to their environment as too late. The reason is that it was only after forest fires blanketed the entire province in smoke and resulted in casualties that people became motivated, realizing the error of their actions. Additionally, their disillusionment grew as they felt deceived and manipulated by companies seeking to clear land. Moreover, villagers worked under coercion, fearing arrest by security forces. Furthermore, the villagers' reluctance to accept and protect the environment stemmed from the influence of outsiders' greed in their village, as depicted in the following quotations:

kawan-kawan, kita orang Malayu haruslah menjadi tuan di tanah sendiri. Tanah ini tanah kita, kitalah yang harus mempunyainya, jangan suruh orang luar datang kemari lalu menikmatinya, habislah kita. Jangan lagi ada orang yang bertanam surga di tanah kita, sedang kita tetap sengsara begini. Kita harus kawal siapa saja yang ingin mencari keuntungan di tanah kita. Tanah kita haruslah kita jaga. “jadi, jangan ada lagi pembukaan kebun sawit di tanah kita oleh orang-orang luar, setuju...?” (al-Ma’rab, 2017, p. 178)

“Comrades, we Malays must be masters of our own land. This land is our land. We must own it. Don't ask outsiders to come here and enjoy it. We will be finished. Don't let anyone plant paradise on our land while we are still miserable like this. We must control anyone who wants to make a profit on our land. We must protect our land. So, there should be no more opening of oil palm plantations on our land by outsiders, agree...?” (al-Ma’rab, 2017, p. 178)

From the quotation, it is evident that responsible behavior and efforts to protect the environment against those who seek to destroy it are portrayed by the characters. This is illustrated by the actions of some characters in the novel who endeavor to gather evidence of environmental damage caused by oil palm plantations, which they intend to utilize in confronting the perpetrators of this ecological destruction. Moreover, these individuals advocating for environmental preservation exhibit an attitude of respecting natural life, as demonstrated through their awareness of avoiding unnecessary harm to nature, refraining from posing threats to the existence of living beings in the universe, adhering to the obligation of preserving nature without causing harm, and allowing nature to remain untouched.

B. Ecological Criticism in al-Ma’rab’s *Luka Perempuan Asap*

To be classified as ecocritical literature, Lawrence Buell (Sukmawan, 2016) outlines several criteria, including:

1. the non-human environment exists not merely as a backdrop but as an active presence, demonstrating that human history is intertwined with natural history;
2. human interests are not seen as the sole legitimate interests;

3. human responsibility toward the environment forms part of the text's ethical orientation; and
4. some understandings of the environment portray it as a process rather than a static concept, which is at least implied in the text.

Environmental degradation arises from humans' philosophies or perspectives regarding themselves, the environment or nature, and their position in the ecosystem. These perspectives include anthropocentric, biocentric, and ecocentric views (Widianti, 2017). Anthropocentric perspectives regard humans as the rulers or center of the universe, assigning exclusive value to humans while considering other entities as mere tools for human satisfaction. According to this viewpoint, humans have the right to manipulate nature as they wish, and moral values solely apply to beings possessing reason and free will. Pollution is the main issue threatening health and the environment. Environmental pollution generally stems from human activities such as transportation, industry, power generation, combustion, factory emissions, and other household activities. As mentioned by Dahlan (2021), pollution refers to living things, energy, matter, and other components that enter or are introduced into water, air, or soil, resulting in changes in their composition and functionality. Pollution typically occurs in locations where its negative impact may not be immediately evident but manifests gradually. Environmental pollution poses increasingly significant problems that need to be addressed due to its implications for safety, health, and life. Literature serves as a means for authors to caution readers about the detrimental effects of pollution on life. *Luka Perempuan Asap* also depicts such impacts:

Tidak ada yang aneh. Tapi orang-orang kota begitu penasaran melihat tajamnya duri pelepah sawit, melihat brondolan yang jatuh ke tanah dalam kemuning, dan minyaknya tercecer dimana – mana. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 100)

“Nothing unusual. But the city people were so curious to see the sharp thorns of the palm fronds, to see the loose leaves falling to the ground in yellow, and the oil was spilling everywhere”. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 100)

From this quotation, it is evident that pollution is highlighted. This novel narrates the visit of the character Mun and several other people, including Mrs. Wilda, to Mun's residence. It indicates that Mrs. Wilda's purpose in visiting Mun's place was to assess the condition of the oil palm plantation. Furthermore, the results of their observations at Mun's residence reveal that the researchers, represented by Mrs. Wilda, noticed unusual occurrences such as oil splattered everywhere, indicating pollution of the surrounding soil. Soil pollution is caused by oil palm farmers and can stem not only from oil but also from various materials such as pesticides and waste disposal, including both industrial and household waste. Besides that:

Kuabadikan api yang menjulang tinggi dengan asap yang tebal”. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 103)

“I immortalized the towering fire with thick smoke”. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 103)

Irresponsible individuals contribute to air pollution by burning land, deliberately doing so to clear space for planting oil palm. In the narrative of this novel, these individuals are paid substantial wages to carry out such activities. The fires resulting from the land burning generate thick smoke that spreads across the area, prompting villagers to flee. Consequently, the village atmosphere becomes enveloped in dense white smoke.

Forest, as part of what is referred to as land, comprises a plant community predominantly composed of trees and exhibits environmental conditions distinct from those outside the forest. According to Dahlan (2021), land denotes a state of nature unblemished by civilization and represents a robust natural construct. This preservation is enacted to safeguard specific ecosystems and species, allowing individuals seeking refuge from the moral decay and materialistic tendencies of urban life, free from human pollution, to retreat there. Forests hold significance for ecocriticism as they symbolize rejuvenation and foster a genuine connection between humans and the environment. In line with this perspective, al-Ma'rab elucidates the damage to the land below:

Kemarin lahan sawitnya sudah mulai dibuka. Tapi karena cuaca lagi panas, jadi lebih baik kita pilih pembakaran saja. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 144)

“Yesterday, the oil palm land started to be opened, but because the weather is hot, it's better if we just choose burning”. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 144)

This illustrates the crisis situation in the wilderness. The clearing of new land is typically conducted through the mass burning of the area by irresponsible individuals. The intention behind forest burning is to expedite the planting of oil palm seeds. As a result of the forest burning process, the air becomes heated, leading to additional disasters such as air pollution, which can affect not only the burning site but also nearby settlements inhabited by residents. Further:

Ini semua ulah orang-orang tamak yang membakar hutan. Mereka hendak meluaskan kebun-kebun hingga merusak lingkungan. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 159)

“This is all the work of greedy people who burned the forest. They want to expand their plantations to the point of destroying the environment”. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 159)

Furthermore, this quotation illustrates the extent of land damage in Riau, where soil infertility arises as a consequence. Soil pollution resulting from land burning renders it challenging for residents to conduct activities, as the land surrounding the oil palm plantations becomes arid. Moreover, drought, as a component of disaster, signifies an unusual state stemming from natural and environmental conditions, including climate change, degradation, biological decline, ecosystem extinction, and heightened natural disasters. Barry (2020) believes that there is an awareness that it is not the end of the world, and that humans, like today's youth, tend to adapt and survive even if civilization is not established. According to Garrard in Barry (2020), disasters trigger social psychology inclined towards paranoia, violence, extreme moral dualism,

and canonization, always invoking imaginative action because they are ever-present. Not all environmental issues are anthropogenic; some significant events occur independent of human intervention such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and meteor impacts. However, it's crucial to recognize the environment's resilience, namely its capacity to restore balance after disturbance, referred to as the homeostatic concept. Therefore, if environmental issues stem from nature, nature itself will restore the environment to a state of equilibrium, or homeostasis. This scenario is depicted below:

Kemarau panjang telah membuat pucuk – pucuk bunga sawit enggan tumbuh. Buah tak ada karena keringnya tanah di Perkebunan. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 142)

"The long, dry season has made palm flower shoots reluctant to grow. There is no fruit because the soil on the plantations is dry". (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 142)

The quotation above illustrates that prolonged drought inhibits the growth of new shoots. In the novel, it is depicted that nature becomes unfriendly to humans. The consequence of clearing new land for oil palm cultivation is drought and prolonged dry spells. Temperature fluctuations, diminished water sources, and scarce rainfall are among the outcomes of land burning. Consequently, the yield of oil palm trees declines, resulting in losses for oil palm farmers. This poses challenges for residents, as many rely on the yield of oil palm trees for their livelihoods.

The extinction of fauna is another cause of concern. The study of the relationship between animals and humans in the humanities is divided between philosophical considerations of animal rights and cultural analyses of animal representation (Sukmawan, 2016). This extraordinary phenomenon has recently gained momentum, particularly suggesting that animal cruelty is analogous to slavery and asserting that the capacity to feel pain, rather than the power of reason, entitles any creature to moral judgment as the same can be said of women or Africans who have been mistreated due to morally irrelevant physiological differences. Hence, animals suffer because they fall on the wrong side of the line, which cannot be prevented.

Bahkan, sebagian telah retak. Tak ada lagi kolam yang berair. Ikan-ikan lesap entah kemana. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 138)

"In fact, some of it has cracked. There are no more watery pools. The fish disappeared somewhere". (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 138)

The quotation indicates that animals, specifically fish, are gradually becoming extinct in the depicted context. The novel describes a prolonged summer in the region where Mun resides. One of the reasons behind this extended, scorching summer is the deliberate setting of fires in numerous areas to clear land for oil palm plantations. This situation exacerbates with the absence of rainfall, causing water bodies such as rivers, lakes, and springs to start drying up. Residents who once engaged in fishing activities by the river no longer do so because the fish population that previously inhabited the river has disappeared.

Global warming is characterized by an increase in temperature both in the atmosphere and on the Earth's surface. This rise in Earth's temperature significantly impacts and disrupts the ecological balance of life. Temperature represents one of the abiotic elements in an ecosystem, though the primary cause of global warming is biotic, namely human activity (Barry, 2020). The presence of global warming leads to intensified heat on Earth; daytime temperatures are noticeably higher than before. Various human activities, including deforestation, excessive use of motorized vehicles and electricity, as well as industrial, agricultural, and livestock waste, contribute to increased gas emissions.

Cuaca panas yang sangat kian terik menambah kegersangan yang kian parah siang itu. Tim peneliti yang lain berlari-lari mengabadikan api yang membesar dan menyala di kejauhan. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, pp. 103-104)

"The hot weather was getting increasingly hotter, adding to the aridity that was getting worse that afternoon. Another research team ran around capturing the fire as it grew and burned in the distance". (al-Ma'rab, 2017, pp. 103-104)

Global warming occurs because of extensive land burning, leading to an increase in the Earth's average temperature. Furthermore, thick, widespread smoke contributes to air pollution. al-Ma'rab elaborates further on global warming in *Luka Perempuan Asap*:

Semua tempat telah rata menjadi putih. Hingga ke sudut – sudut ruangan rumah, tak ada lagi yang tersisa. Oksigen seolah sirna bersama kepulan putih di udara yang bercampur dengan warna kuning belerang sisa pembakaran. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 159)

"Everything has turned white. Down to the corners of the house, there was nothing left. Oxygen seemed to disappear with white puffs in the air mixed with the yellow color of sulfur left over from the combustion". (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 159)

The billowing smoke in the sky is a consequence of land burning, rendering the air unhealthy to breathe. The novel describes how the smoky haze has contaminated every corner of the village, turning everything white and severely limiting residents' visibility. Consequently, the residents decided to evacuate to another place until conditions became safe again:

Bumi yang dulu berkah kini telah memerah, memanas, dan mengering hingga nyaris membunuh siapa saja. (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 239)

"The earth that was once blessed has now turned red, hot, and dry to the point that it almost kills anyone". (al-Ma'rab, 2017, p. 239)

The aforementioned conditions depict the consequences of clearing new land. The land is no longer as it once was; it has become dry. Additionally, water sources are dwindling, and smoke from the burning process is spreading everywhere.

Based on the quotations and data evidence provided, the author seeks to convey her anxiety regarding the ongoing issues in Indonesia. First, illegal logging not only results in material impacts but also casualties. Most importantly, if natural exploitation persists, humans will inevitably face extinction. Humans and nature constitute a unified entity within ecological systems. Finally, as stewards of the environment, humans must show respect to nature.

V. CONCLUSION

The impact of destroying forests to convert them into oil palm plantations in the novel *Luka Perempuan Asap* causes several disasters, such as pollution, drought, fauna extinction, global warming, and the loss of society's benevolent qualities like love, peace, sincerity and living harmoniously. These disasters even have national level implications. Planting oil palm has detrimental effects on the sustainability of plants and the surrounding environment due to its voracious consumption of water and nutrients in the soil, leading to the area around the oil palm becoming arid land. This, in turn, contributes to global warming and forest fires, which result in haze and smog. It is imperative to safeguard nature to preserve the balance and integrity of the ecosystem. Efforts to prevent environmental damage include rejecting the destruction of forests for oil palm plantations, changing people's mindsets to return to agrarian farming systems, and abandoning oil palm plantations. This research highlights several attitudes toward protecting the environment, such as love, care, and respect for nature, along with taking on the responsibility that goes into protecting it, as demonstrated by various characters in the novel. In summary, *Luka Perempuan Asap* illustrates the importance of protecting the environment, emphasizing the need to use forests sparingly. The novel teaches readers not to excessively exploit nature, or it may lead to numerous problems that harm the environment and all that lives within it.

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Ceisy Nita Wuntu is an associate professor in the English Education Department at the Faculty of Languages and Arts at Universitas Negeri Manado. She obtained her first degree from the Institut of Teachers Training Manado in 1989. She also earned her Master of Humanities degree and her doctorate from Gadjah Mada University in 1996. With publications in various nationally accredited and reputable international journals, Dr. Wuntu is recognized for her research in Environmental Literature, Cross-Cultural Communication, Popular Literature, Literary Criticism, and Literary Theory in ELT. Dr. Wuntu has also served as the Head of the Master of English Education Study Program at Universitas Negeri Manado since 2020.



Devilito Prasetyo Tatipang was born in Maelang, Indonesia, on December 30th, 1999 and is currently a Research Consultant, Journal Reviewer, Researcher, Journal Manager and Editor, Mendeley Mentor, Assistant, and full-time Lecturer-Assistant in the English Education Department of the Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Manado. He completed his bachelor's degree at Universitas Negeri Manado in 2021 and his Master's degree at the same University in 2023; since then, he has presented his research at various National and International conferences in Indonesia. He has also published articles in several nationally accredited and reputable international journals. Devilito's areas of interest are Technology-Injected Language Learning, Issues in English Language Teaching (ELT), Pedagogical Linguistics, Curriculum Development, ELT in a Multilingualism Context, Motivational Studies, and Pedagogy for English Language Learners (ELL).



Olga A. Rorintulus is an associate professor and senior lecturer in Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia. She earned her Doctoral degree in American Studies from Universitas Gadjah Mada, Magister degree in American Studies from Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia and Magister degree in Women Studies from Flinders University, Australia, her Bachelor degree in English Education from Universitas Negeri Manado. Her research interests are in the areas of Literature, Gender, Women Studies and Literary Theory in ELT.



Merlin Maya Maukar is currently a lecturer in English Education Department, Universitas Negeri Manado. She completed her Bachelor Degree in English Literature of Universitas Sam Ratulangi Manado. While for her Master Degree obtained from Universitas Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta, majoring in American Studies. Since then, she has presented and published several articles in related fields to her background including teaching Literature, Culture and Language Learning.



Muhammad Ilham Ali is a lecturer at Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia. He earned his Magister degree in English Education from Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia, and his Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Hasanuddin University. He has published articles in several nationally accredited Journal. His research interests are teaching English literature and self-access language learning.

Analysis of Discourse Markers and Their Combinations in Nonnative Academic Writing

Kholood Salem Alenizy

College of Languages and Translation, Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Ameerah Abdulaziz Al-Thunayyan

College of Languages and Translation, Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Mohammed Nasser Alhuqbani

College of Languages and Translation, Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—This study aimed to give a full account of discourse marker use in nonnative academic discourse. This study is a qualitative and quantitative investigation of discourse markers used in a corpus of 14 dissertations in applied linguistics from a Saudi university that uncovers the use patterns and DM combinations in abstracts, discussions, and conclusions. The model employed in the analysis was that of Fraser (2006), who classified discourse markers into four categories. The findings reveal a specific hierarchy of discourse use where elaborative discourse markers are the most frequent, followed by temporal discourse markers, contrastive discourse markers, and finally, inferential discourse markers. A notable tendency towards discourse marker clustering is also observed in the corpus.

Index Terms—discourse markers, elaborative discourse markers, contrastive discourse markers, inferential discourse markers, temporal discourse markers

I. INTRODUCTION

Mastery of discourse marker use in academic writing is essential for creating text coherence. Discourse markers are usually held as the "glue" of conversation, as they mark the speaker's attitude towards the listener and the ongoing discourse (Schiffrin, 1987). In written discourse, discourse markers play similar roles by helping to establish structure and organization in the discourse, building up relationships between ideas, and marking the writer's attitude or stance towards what is being discussed. The most widely recognized and used model of DMs is that of Fraser (1999), in which he defines discourse markers as:

a class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases. They have a core meaning, which is procedural, not conceptual, and their more specific interpretation is 'negotiated' by the linguistic and conceptual context. (Fraser, 1999, p. 995)

Fraser (2009) classifies discourse markers into four classes: contrastive discourse markers (CDMs), elaborative discourse markers (EDMs), implicative discourse markers (IDMs), and temporal discourse markers (TDMs). They typically take the initial position in the second segment in a segment1-segment2 combination, signalling a semantic bond between the two segments. Discourse markers usually tend to occupy sentence initial position, although they sometimes can be found in different positions within a sentence (Šinajeva, 2005).

According to Fraser (2021), several studies have proven that employing discourse markers can improve the cohesion and naturalness of discourse. Sun (2013), for example, considers DM use in academic writing as a way of making texts more comprehensible, improving the text's global coherence. Although not using discourse markers (DMs) does not mean the text does not conform to grammatical accuracy, their absence can make writing not natural enough (Brinton, 1996). This critical role discourse markers play in creating text unity and naturalness in texts makes investigating them in academic writing worthy of extensive research as it can deepen our understanding of the functions and effects of DM use across various contexts, providing direct insights into the use of these linguistic devices for language learners, educators, and researchers.

Though Ph.D. dissertations have been widely studied, there is a great scarcity of research directed explicitly at investigating the DMs used by EFL doctoral students in their abstracts, discussions, and conclusion sections of their dissertations. The findings of this study are hoped to contribute to the existing body of research on DM use in academic writing and provide valuable insights for improving EFL doctoral scholarly discourse. Understanding the specific discourse marker use patterns and combinations in dissertations can inform the development of writing curricula and materials designed according to the needs of EFL writers. It can shed light on the development of coherence, cohesion,

and pragmatic competence in the EFL context and open a new horizon for throwing light on the underexplored area of discourse markers combinations in EFL scholarly discourse. An example¹ of an instance of DM combination is (1),

- (1) This clearly uncovers the teachers' tacit beliefs in preserving the same style of teaching not only by the same teacher, **but also** among different teachers.

Studying the use of discourse markers and their combinations in nonnative discourse is an interesting research direction this paper seeks to take. Despite the in-depth research conducted on the use and function of discourse markers (DMs) by scholars like Schourup (1985), Schiffrin (1987), Lenk (1998), Jucker and Smith (1998), Fraser (1999), Aijmer (2002), Fischer (2006), Heine (2012), and Degand et al. (2013), there is still one area that has yet to be explored. This new aspect involves looking at the phenomenon of DM combinations and the factors that cause the combination and sequence of individual DMs in clusters involving two or more adjacent or nonadjacent elements, commonly given terms such as clustering (Maschler, 1994), sequencing (Fraser, 2011; Lohmann & Koops, 2016), or combining (Fraser, 2015; Pons Bordería, 2018). Many studies consistently demonstrate that DMs frequently co-occur in natural speech across different languages (Pons Bordería, 2018; Cuenca & Marin, 2009; Dostie, 2013; Cuenca & Crible, 2019). These studies investigate various aspects, including the degrees of juxtaposition, the elements of co-occurring combinations, the scope, and functions of individual DMs in sequences, and distributional patterns. In summary, regardless of the extensive research on DMs, the combination of DMs in sequences, referred to as clustering, is an area that requires further investigation.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

According to Leuckert and Rüdiger (2021), the amount of research conducted on discourse markers in countries like the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada is significantly greater compared to research focused on countries where English is spoken as a foreign language and used by speakers who primarily learn English in classroom settings and do not extensively use it in their daily lives outside of the classroom.

The study of discourse markers aligns with the growing trend in linguistic research beyond analyzing individual sentences. This trend, which started around 60 years ago, concentrates on investigating language at the discourse level (Schiffrin, 1987). Discourse markers have received significant attention in linguistic research due to their fundamental role in establishing text cohesion and coherence (Fraser, 1999). Text linguistics highlights how discourse markers play a key role in building relations that improve the overall coherence and comprehension of a text.

The ability of discourse markers (DMs) to combine has explicitly given new perspectives to investigating their combinatory properties. Trying to understand how learners acquire and use discourse markers, in addition to studying their ability to combine in combinations such as *but I mean* or *and so*, would broaden our knowledge of their pragmatic abilities and proficiency in the language. Comparing the present study's findings to earlier research on discourse marker use among undergraduate students is hoped to illuminate the developmental path of DM use along different proficiency levels. The scarcity of research on acquiring and developing discourse markers makes this comparative analysis very important. Thus, by investigating the DM use patterns of undergraduate students arrived at in previous studies about the present study's findings, researchers can understand how DM use develops as students advance into different proficiency levels (Taguchi, 2011). Although we are making progress in understanding how speakers, both native and non-native, engage in pragmatics through language use, there remains a significant knowledge gap in our understanding of the development of pragmatic competence in foreign language speakers. These studies inform pedagogical approaches and curriculum design aimed at effectively teaching academic writing skills to students at various proficiency levels. "While Discourse Markers (DMs) have been studied as individual markers (e.g., *but*, *so*, *instead*), little work has been done on their ability to combine" (Fraser, 2015, p. 1).

III. PREVIOUS STUDIES

The previous research on the use of discourse markers (DMs) among English language learners has been limited in the context of the Arab World, primarily focusing on the description of use patterns in EFL undergraduate learners. Many studies have focused on the use patterns of DMs, including the works of Ali and Mahadin (2016), Alghamdi (2014), Al-Yaari (2016), Al-Sharif (2017), Alsaawi (2022) and Ahmed et al. (2023). These studies generally indicate that Arab EFL learners face difficulties in writing, including misusing, overusing, or underusing DMs. Their primary focus was on using markers, such as *however*, *furthermore*, or *so*, rather than on their development or combinations. It is worth noting that Alsaawi (2022) briefly touched upon DM combinations, but the bulk of the research has centred around the individual functions and meanings of discourse markers. Other scholars, such as Romero Trillo (2002), Müller (2005), Fung and Carter (2007), and others, have also undertaken DM use analyses to gain further insights into the use of discourse markers use as a part of academic writing conventions. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is currently a scarcity of research focusing on the clustering properties of discourse markers (DMs) in EFL scholarly discourse. Although the research on the use of discourse markers in native speech and English as a foreign language (EFL) context has been proliferating, there has been a noticeable lack of research specifically directed to the use and sequencing (combinations) of discourse markers in EFL doctoral dissertations.

¹ All examples are taken from the corpus.

Research on the combinations of discourse markers in English originated from Fraser's (2009) study, which focused on investigating the sequencing of contrastive discourse markers (CDMs). Fraser's study revealed that only "but" could be the first element in combination with all other CDMs. Importantly, Fraser noted that the sequencing of discourse markers had not been extensively examined in previous literature before his study. He emphasized the need to explore not only the restrictions on the acceptable and unacceptable occurrence of specific CDM sequences (e.g., *but + instead*) but also the combinations involving elaborative discourse markers (EDMs) and inferential discourse markers (IDMs) with CDMs. Further research is still required to delve into these areas and comprehensively understand the combinations and sequencing patterns of different discourse markers (Fraser, 2011, p. 35).

Fraser's research, which shed light on the sequencing of DMs in English, resulted in increasing attention to DM combinations, particularly following Models of marker sequencing in English, such as those proposed by Koops and Lohmann (2015), which reveal a surprising level of systematicity in the ordering of discourse markers. Vicher and Sankoff (1989) originally suggested the presence of an *emergent syntax* of discourse markers. Cuenca and Marín (2008) conducted a semasiological analysis of DM combinations in oral narratives in Catalan, classifying DMs into four categories: conjunctions, parentheticals, pragmatic connectives, and interjections. The patterns of combinations are as follows: conjunction + conjunction (e.g., "I / quan" meaning "and / when"), conjunction + parenthetical (e.g., "perquè / a més" meaning "because / moreover"), conjunction + pragmatic marker (e.g., "I / bueno" meaning "and / well"), and parenthetical + pragmatic marker (e.g., "clar / a veure" meaning "sure / well"). The resulting three combinations are *juxtapositions* where DMs co-occur but do not combine, *addition* where DMs combine but keep their individual functions, and *composition*, where co-occurring DMs function as a complex unit.

Maslauskienė (2020) maintains that the syntactic position and the potential for DMs to combine can impact their semantic-pragmatic functioning. According to Aijmer (2016), the DM exhibits functional variations when used independently versus when combined with other DMs. Fraser (2015) conducted a study explicitly examining combinations of CDMs like *but* and, *on the other hand*, and IDMs such as *so* and *as a result*. Fraser could not provide a clear explanation for the occurrence of these combinations, but he suggested factors such as genre and style could be worth further examination. Fraser's study included a table representing acceptable combinations of CDMs (see Table 1). The analyzed corpora are COCA (450 million words, mostly written text) and BNC (100 million words, all written text). To organize the collected data effectively, a matrix featuring all 12 CDMs considered in the study and illustrating their combinations with one another was created. The left column represents the first CDM in a combination (e.g., *but*, *however*, *yet*), while the remaining columns represent the second CDM in a combination (e.g., *but-however*, *but-yet*).

TABLE 1
RESULTS OF COMBINATION MATRIX OF CDMs²

	But	However	Yet	Still	Nevertheless	OTOH	Instead	Conversely	In contrast	Rather	OTC	Alternatively
But		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
However	X		*	?	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	?	?
Yet	X	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	?	?
Still	X	✓			✓	?	?	*	*	*	?	?
Nevertheless	X	?	*	?		?	?	*	*	*	*	?
OTOH	X	✓										
Instead	x	✓										
Conversely	x	✓										
In contrast	x	✓										
Rather	x	*										
OTC	x	✓										
Alternatively	x	✓										

Each category of DMs is divided into primary and secondary subclasses; primary refers to the most general DM in the category (as *but* in CDMs), whereas secondary refers to DMs that convey a more specific relationship (as *in contrast*, *however*, and *rather*). Two DMs can make up a DM combination if they occur acceptably as a single discourse marker in the combination of "S1. DM+S2" (Fraser, 2015, p. 2). The class of CDMs consists of at least the following 12 terms, one truly Primary CDM (*but*), *but*, *however*, *yet*, *still*, *nevertheless*, *on the other hand*, *alternatively*, *on the contrary*, *in contrast*, *in comparison*, *conversely*, *instead*, *rather* four, semi-Primary CDMs (*however*, *yet*, *still*, *nevertheless*), and seven Secondary CDMs (*on the other hand*, *alternatively*, *on the contrary*, *in comparison*, *conversely*, *instead*, *rather*). This categorization helps differentiate between broad and specific functions of DMs within a class. Due to a lack of in-depth study on the ability of the discourse marker *like* to co-occur with other discourse markers (DMs), Blanchard (2021) conducted a study to analyse the clustering tendencies of *like* in DM combinations, shedding light on how *like* interacts with other DMs and the most common combinations of *like* with other DMs. Based on conversational data in English

² Adopted from Fraser B. (2015, p. 339)

extracted from a corpus, Ceunca and Crible (2019) qualitatively analyse co-occurring discourse markers, precisely examining sequences of adjacent markers that belong to the same DM class but serve different functions. Various functional features of these co-occurring sequences were examined, including function, syntactic category, and position. The findings of the analysis reveal different degrees of combination. The study pays particular attention to cases that fall in between or are ambiguous, such as *and so* or *and then*, which represent different degrees of co-occurrence on a continuum based on the interpretable meaning of the cluster. The implications of these fine-grained differences are discussed. It emphasizes the importance of carefully analyzing co-occurring DMs.

Ph.D. researchers can be considered learners trained in academic writing skills. This type of analysis can cast light on areas where students may struggle or deviate from the established norms and conventions of the genre. It can also help identify areas where instruction tailored to the needs of researchers may be helpful for students in their journey toward becoming competent academic writers. A key feature of academic writing is maintaining argumentative coherence and adhering to conventions of writing (Andrews, 2007).

Discourse markers research has been a highly active and dynamic pragmatic research domain for the past three decades. Scholars have primarily focused on theorizing and analyzing the individual usage of discourse markers in different discourses, often overlooking their sequencing or clustering patterns. Bruce Fraser's 2011 work, "Sequencing of Contrastive Discourse Markers in English," particularly touched upon the study of the combinatory potential of DMs. The sequencing of DMs is a research area that has been under investigation. Hence, the principal objective of this study is to explore the use patterns of discourse markers in nonnative English speaker PhD discourse in applied linguistics. This study aims to add to the existing body of research on the topic by giving a full account of all possible combinations of DMs in nonnative scholarly discourse.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The taxonomy of discourse markers used in this study is based on Fraser's (1996) work, which provided a framework for analyzing and categorizing DMs based on their functions in discourse. Data collection and analysis procedures were both quantitative and qualitative. The phenomenon at hand in this article is the use of discourse markers in academic nonnative discourse. The prevailing assumption in discourse marker research suggests that only one marker or discourse relation exists in a sentence. By shedding light on this phenomenon, the study aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the co-occurrence and ordering of CDMs within scholarly nonnative discourse. Combinations from the same class as well as cross classes were studied. The researchers argue that occurrence of multiple CDMs and their respective characteristics should be investigated to better understand the text discourse structure and relations.

The present study is a corpus-based study in which the researcher compiled a corpus of EFL Saudi doctoral dissertations in Applied Linguistics written between 2017 and 2021. Later, researchers extracted and analyzed occurrences and distribution of discourse markers employed by nonnative speakers in their written discourse, specifically focusing on the abstracts, discussion, and conclusion sections of dissertations to examine the discourse marker patterns employed by EFL Saudi doctoral students in the parts of their dissertations where argumentation and synthesis of findings occur. The frequency of each discourse marker was quantified and examined using the Key Words in Context approach to gain deeper insights. ALL discourse markers were reviewed, and the surrounding context was studied to understand its use. Spreadsheets were studied individually to extend the corpus investigation beyond the limited scope of typical KWIC concordances. This detailed examination helped identify the items that genuinely demonstrated discourse marker use and allowed for the exclusion of any hits that were not functioning as discourse markers. By employing this in-depth process, the analysis ensured that only valid instances of discourse marker usage were considered, enhancing the accuracy and reliability of the findings. The study precisely highlighted and investigated adjacent and non-contiguous combinations of DMs. The objective was to investigate the complete range of DM combinations in non-native discourse and compare them to the patterns identified in Fraser's (2011, 2015) studies. Comparing nonnative and native DM use highlights potential differences in DM use and sequencing strategies. The present study adopted Fraser's framework of discourse marker (DM) classification as a basis for analyzing the use patterns of DMs (Table 2). Fraser's framework was chosen due to its comprehensive categorization of DMs, with a specific focus on contrastive discourse markers that indicate an explicit contrast between the interpretations of two different sentences (S1 and S2).

TABLE 2
FRASER'S TAXONOMY OF DISCOURSE MARKERS (1996, pp. 339-341)

Category	DMs
Contrastive Markers:	<i>All the same, Anyway, But, Contrariwise, Conversely, Despite (this/that), Even so, However, In any case/rate/event, In spite of (this/that), In comparison (with this/that), In contrast (to this/that), Instead (of doing this/that), Nevertheless, Nonetheless (This/That point), notwithstanding, On the other hand, On the contrary, Rather (than do this/that), Regardless (of this/that), Still, That said, Though, Yet</i>
Elaborative Markers	<i>Above all, Also, Alternatively, Analogously, And, Besides, Better, By the same token, Correspondingly, Equally, For example/instance, Further(more), In addition, In any case/event, In fact, In other words, In particular, Indeed, Likewise, More accurately, More importantly, More precisely, More specifically, More to the point, Moreover, On that basis, On top of it all, Or, Otherwise, Similarly, That is, To cap it all off, Too, What is more</i>
Inferential Markers	<i>Accordingly, After all, All things considered, As a consequence, As a logical conclusion, As a result, Because of this/that, Consequently, For this/that reason, Hence, In this/that case, It can be concluded that, It stands to reason that, Of course, On this/that condition, So, Then, Therefore, Thus</i> <i>Variations: for example, as a consequence, in accordance with</i>
Temporal Markers	<i>then, after, as soon as, before, eventually, finally, first, immediately afterwards, meantime, meanwhile, originally, second, subsequently, First and foremost</i>

The corpus was analyzed using the latest release of Ant Conc (4.2.4), a corpus toolkit that helps generate wordlists, concordances, and keywords (Anthony, 2023). The frequency and types of DM combinations in the corpus were highlighted. Examining potential errors or overuse can provide insights into the challenges non-native speakers face in acquiring and accurately employing DMs in their writing. Overall, using these tools in the analysis process allowed for a detailed exploration of DM usage in the corpus, providing valuable insights into the patterns and challenges associated with DM use by non-native speakers. Adjacent and nonadjacent combinations were examined to capture different syntactic and semantic relationships within the corpus. The discourse context in which the DM combinations occur was explored to see how the combinations contribute to the discourse's overall coherence and cohesion.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The corpus analyzed in this study consists of 83,480 tokens, which is a substantial amount of data or examining the frequency and patterns of discourse marker use among EFL doctoral students. The highest frequency of discourse marker (DM) category in the corpus was observed in elaborative discourse markers (EDMs), followed by contrastive discourse markers (CDMs), then temporal discourse markers (TDMs), and the least frequent category was inferential discourse markers (IDMs). According to the data presented in Table 3, EDMs had the highest frequency as they occurred 1088 times, representing 49.18% of the total occurrences with *and* as the most frequently used EDM. CDMs appeared a total of 355 times, accounting for 16.04% of the total occurrences. *However* was the most frequently used CDM. IDMs appeared 299 times, making up 13.51% of the total occurrences, and the most frequently used IDM was *therefore*. TDMs appeared 470 times, accounting for 21.24% of the total occurrences. The most frequently used TDM was *when*. In total, 2212 occurrences of discourse markers were analyzed in the data. The percentage of each DM category is presented in Figure 1.

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF CATEGORIES OF DISCOURSE MARKERS IN THE CORPUS

Type	Raw frequency	%	Most used DM
CDMs	355	16.04	However
EDMs	1088	49.18	And
IDMs	299	13.51	Therefore
TDMs	470	21.24	When
Total	2212	100	-

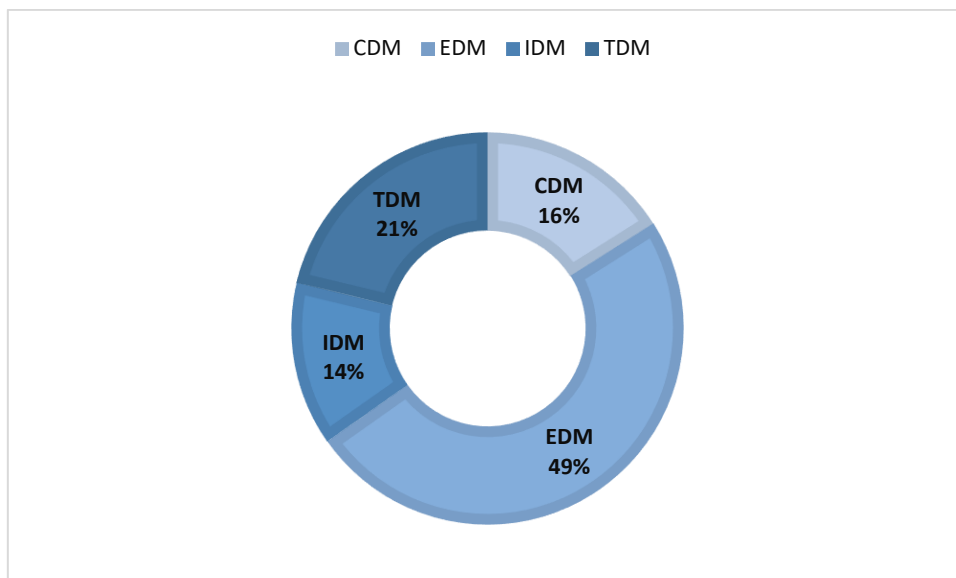


Figure 1. Percentage of DM Category in the Discourse

These findings align with previous studies that have also demonstrated EDMs as the most employed discourse markers. It is consistent with earlier studies conducted by Jalilifar (2008) and Prommas and Sinwongsuwat (2014), which have all confirmed that non-native speakers (NNS) tend to overuse discourse markers and that elaborative discourse markers are the most frequently employed DM category. The findings of this study are also in accordance with that of Alsaawi (2022) in that the top frequency is for EDMs in both studies. However, they differ in the second-ranked category, which is CDMs in Alsaawi's study and TDMs in the present study. This might be attributed to the nature of research in applied linguistics, which often involves the reporting of quantitative data that includes temporal patterns and associations. As researchers investigate language acquisition and language change, it is inherent in their studies to explore temporal aspects. This emphasis on temporal aspects may contribute to the higher frequency of temporal discourse markers (TDMs) observed in the collected data.

The high frequency of EDMs in the corpus may be a sign of the nature of argumentative writing, as PhD authors often strive to introduce persuasive arguments and influence their readers. PhD authors' heavy reliance on the discourse marker *and* is likely due to several factors. Firstly, *and* is easily accessible and understandable to readers, making it a convenient choice for connecting ideas and maintaining coherence in academic writing. Additionally, L1 transfer could play a role in this preference, as authors may unconsciously transfer their Arabic DM use patterns, where "*wa*" *and* is often the default choice as it not only play a role in text cohesion but also fulfils other tasks such as introducing topics, being a conjunction of two or more entities, events or propositions, introducing units of discourse functioning as an adjunct to modify an event, and marking companionship and an association semantic roles, etc. (Alazzawie, 2014).

TABLE 4
FREQUENCY OF TOP 10 EDMs, TDMs, CDMs, AND IDMS

EDM	Freq.	IDM	Freq.	CDM	Freq.	TDM	Freq.
Also	244	Therefore	89	However	79	When	136
And	544	As a result	17	But	64	Already	16
As well as	56	Because of that	14	instead	18	Before	40
For example	35	Consequently	18	OTOH	22	Finally	25
in addition	58	Hence	20	Rather	47	First	18
Furthermore	39	So	30	in	14	Then	31
				Comparison			
Moreover	67	Then	31	Still	16	After	50
That is	21	Accordingly	12	Whereas	13	While	71
in other words	14	In Accordance with	4	Despite this	12	Previously	13
Likewise	10	As a consequence	2	Yet	10	Until	9

Table 4 illustrates the top ten discourse markers used within each of the four categories and Figure 2 shows the top ten DMs used in the discourse. The most frequently used EDM is *and* with a frequency of 544. Other markers in this category, such as *also*, *in addition*, *as well as*, and *moreover*, also appear in the data, although with lower frequencies. This indicates that writers frequently use these DMs to add information, introduce additional points, or point out the accumulation of ideas. The data includes CDMs such as *however*, and *but*. These markers indicate contrast or opposition between ideas. *However* has a higher frequency (79) compared to *but* (64), suggesting that writers often use *however* to introduce

contrasting information or viewpoints. The data includes the causal marker *therefore* with a frequency of 89. This DM is used to indicate cause-and-effect relationships or logical conclusions. Its relatively high frequency suggests that writers frequently employ it to express the consequences or results of previous information or arguments. The data includes the temporal marker *when* which occurred 136 in the corpus. It is used to signify specific time relationships between events or actions. Its relatively high frequency suggests that authors frequently use it to introduce temporal information or describe a sequence of events.

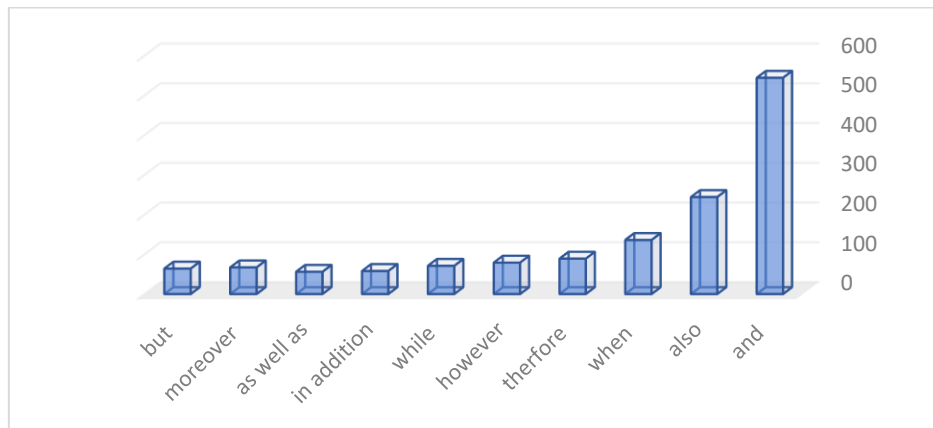


Figure 2. Top Ten DMs Used in the Corpus

VI. DISCOURSE MARKER COMBINATIONS

While Fraser's study mainly focused on combinations of CDMs, the present study sought to provide a broader account by examining combinations of all four categories of DMs. This cross-class combination exploration was suggested by Fraser. According to Fraser, "A whole world of combinations waits the curious" (Fraser, 2015, p. 339). However, it is important to note that the size of the corpus used in this study is limited. Thus, it can be assumed that larger corpora, as well as different registers or other sections of doctoral dissertations, may reveal additional combinations of DMs. By acknowledging the limitations of the current corpus size, future research can explore the potential for a more inclusive understanding of DM combinations in various linguistic contexts.

TABLE 5
ADJACENT AND NONADJACENT DM COMBINATIONS IN THE CORPUS

	Adjacent DM Combinations	Nonadjacent DM Combinations
CDMs	But also	In spite of- despite
	But rather	OTOH ³ - as well as
	But instead	OTOH- when
	However after	
	However when	
	However although	
EDMs	Also conversely	Besides-also
	And further (to this)	In addition -also
	And when	Moreover also
	And also	
	And accordingly	
	And, therefore	
	And consequently	
	And in particular	
	Besides when	
	Moreover when	
IDMs		Accordingly—in addition
		Consequently-and
		Consequently- therefore
		Accordingly-in addition

Table 5 shows various DMs and their corresponding clusters in adjacent and nonadjacent formulas. In the discourse, the DMs *but*, *also*, *on the other hand*, *on the contrary*, *in spite of*, and *in particular* exhibited combinatory behaviour indicating a tendency to appear together in specific contexts or discourse structures. CDMs demonstrated the highest tendency to combine with other DMs, constituting 46.4% of all DM combinations. EDMs followed closely behind with 42.8%, while IDMs showed a lower tendency at 7.1%. TDMs exhibited the least tendency to combine, accounting for

³ OTOH: on the other hand
OTC: on the contrary

only 3.5% of the total occurrences, which is considered negligible in comparison. In alignment with the results of Fraser's (2011) research, the CDM *but* occurred initial in combination with other CMDs like *instead* and *rather*. In all instances, it signals contrast between segment 1 and segment 2 while the second CDM clarifies the nature of the contrast. For example, the interpretation of *but*, in (2),

- (1) (a) Some of them, for example, realized the difficulty of using only the target language in the classroom, **but instead** of removing this belief from their repertoire, they elaborated/polished it by allowing a certain amount of mother-tongue use to facilitate learning and understanding.
- (b) Discernibly which targets the possibility of addressing the topic under investigation not from a specific-oriented dimension **but rather** from a universal perspective.

This is further specified in the use of *instead* which emphasizes the contrasting action being a response to the difficulty of just using L1 mentioned earlier. In (b), *but* introduces a contrasting idea between addressing the topic from a universal perspective compared to a specific-oriented dimension. *Rather* here strengthens the contrast presented by *but*. In Fraser's (2015) study, contrastive discourse markers show the greatest inclination towards combining when compared to other categories of DMs. The occurrence of cross-class combinations, such as CDM-IDM and IDM-CDM, is infrequent. The existence of cross-class combinations is demonstrated by the following examples.

- (1) **Because** the study reveals that the effectiveness of OCF depends on the linguistic foci, teachers should adjust their OCF feedback strategies **accordingly**.
- (2) **Accordingly**, the students were offered more than one activity to choose from, **in addition** to allowing them to choose their favourite role in role play to personalize their learning process.
- (3) **Consequently**, the analysis of the students' eye movements indicates that there are differences in the students' visual word recognition, **and** these differences rely on the degree of the orthographic regularity of the language.
- (4) **Consequently**, English proficiency is highly crucial for Saudi judges affiliated to Criminal Courts; it decreases the possibility of depending on translators **and, therefore**, guarantees a high level of justice and certitude concerning legal decisions and criminal rulings.
- (5) Some of them, for example, realized the difficulty of using only the target language in the classroom, **but instead** of removing this belief from their repertoire, they elaborated/polished it by allowing a certain amount of mother-tongue use to facilitate learning and understanding.
- (6) Discernibly which targets the possibility of addressing the topic under investigation not from a specific-oriented dimension **but rather** from a universal perspective.

The examples show instances of single-class clusters, as seen in (1), as well as clusters consisting of different classes, as observed in (2), (3), and (4). Examples (5) and (6) illustrate combinations of primary and secondary discourse markers of the same class (namely, CDMs).

1. Contrastive Discourse Markers

The primary discourse marker *but* is the most frequently occurring marker in the discourse, appearing 64 times. It is mostly bracketed together with the IDM *also* (13 occurrences), which is also another primary marker. The discourse marker *however* occurred 79 times and demonstrated various clusters, including *however when*, *however after*, and *however although*. *In spite of* occurred 6 times and sometimes associated with *despite* in a non-adjacent cluster as in (3),

- (2) **In spite of** a lengthy duration of exposure to the L2, most of the pragmatic features are not obvious for learners **despite** all the opportunities that L2 environment may provide for the development of the pragmatic competence.

On the other hand occurred 6 times coupled with the EDM *also* in a non-adjacent sequence as in (4),

- (3) **On the other hand**, integrative motivation was **also** enhanced through many of the module activities, for example in the lesson entitled Where are you from?, the students adopted different names and nationalities.

2. Elaborative Discourse Markers

And occurred repeatedly in the corpus, revealing a high tendency to cluster with other discourse markers like *also*, *therefore*, *consequently*, and *accordingly*. Additionally, it was found to cluster with the contrasting DM *conversely*. Moreover, *besides* occurred in clusters, particularly combined with a temporal discourse marker (*when*), which was rare in the corpus, and also with the EDM *also*. *Besides* occurred in sequences such as *besides when*, *besides – also* in an adjacent and non-adjacent combination as in (5),

- (4) (a) **Besides, when** students read and reread the wiki, they become more equipped and motivated to actively build on each other's work, unlike individual writing assignments.

(b) **Besides**, the instructor served as a facilitator for the students, who **also** scaffold each other; as mentioned before.

3. Inferential Discourse Markers

Accordingly occurred in a non-adjacent cluster along with *then* as in (6),

- (5) **Accordingly**, they learn spelling and grammar skills better, since they use them in their compositions, **then** when they are drilled in these skills without the opportunity to compose,

Consequently also occurred in a non-adjacent cluster in (7),

- (6) **Consequently**, scholars studying interlanguage pragmatics have stressed the importance of providing learners with explicit instruction on different pragmatic features, **as well as** raising their pragmatic awareness or consciousness in L2.

The DM *therefore* occur 89 times and is part of clusters like "*Therefore, it can be concluded*".

TABLE 6
DISCOURSE MARKER SEQUENCE ORDER

DM Category	First DM in Cluster
Contrastive	Yes
Elaborative	Yes
Inference	Yes
Temporal	No

It was observed that TDMs do not occur as the first element in a discourse marker combination. On the contrary, EDMs, IDMs, and CDMs have been found to occupy the initial position in discourse marker clusters (Table 6).

The results indicate that TDMs demonstrate the lowest tendency to combine with other discourse markers as opposed to TDMs which show the highest tendency to combine with other discourse markers. Particularly, the discourse marker *but* is the most frequent in combining with other discourse markers, often appearing as the first element in DM sequences involving various types of DMs from all four categories. These findings are consistent with Fraser's (2011) proposal that the functions of *'but'* are go beyond expressing direct contrast depending on the specific contrastive discourse marker it pairs with.

VII. CONCLUSION

Given their significance, this study aimed to examine the frequency, types, and combinations of DMs utilized by EFL doctoral students in the abstracts, discussion, and conclusion sections of their dissertations. In this study where a corpus of 83,480 tokens was investigated, the frequency of discourse marker use among EFL doctoral students revealed that elaborative discourse markers occupied the first place in the hierarchy of discourse marker use, followed by temporal, contrastive, and finally inferential discourse markers in descending order of frequency. The analysis revealed that contrastive discourse markers had the highest bent to combine with other discourse markers, followed by elaborative DMs, while inferential DMs showed a lower tendency, and temporal DMs exhibited the least inclination to combine. Cross-class combinations were infrequent but present in the corpus. Particularly, temporal DMs did not occur as the first component in DM combinations, while other DM categories tended to occupy the initial position. The findings are hoped to shed light on the most commonly used DMs in the field of applied linguistics.

This research is a contribution to laying the foundation for future investigations that can examine the specific acquisition patterns of DMs in other academic disciplines or explore the change in use patterns. It is hoped to facilitate the exploration of common challenges confronted by EFL learners in employing DMs in academic discourse. We can better understand of the development and patterns of discourse marker use as learners advance in their language proficiency by comparing these results with those of lower proficiency levels. This comparison can pinpoint the specific areas of development that EFL learners may have in their journey toward mastering the skill of using DMs in academic writing. Instructional methods and curriculum design can be enlightened by this knowledge, which is hoped to eventually support the development of EFL learners' discourse marker proficiency. The findings are hoped to have implications for language instruction and curriculum design. Investigating the sequencing of IDMs and EDMs is an area that Fraser (2011) regarded as an area awaiting further research. This can result in a deep understanding of the specific difficulties encountered by non-native speakers and consequently lead to design interventions to aid their effective use of DMs in academic writing. Previous research in this area is limited to undergraduates and does not specifically tackle DM use in EFL scholarly discourse.

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Kholood Salem Alenizy She holds a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from King Saud University. She also completed her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Translation. Dr. Alenizy worked as a translator at King Fahd Medical City from 2006 to 2008.

Dr. Alenizy is a Professor of Applied Linguistics and a faculty member in the Department of English and Literature at the College of Languages and Translation in Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. E-Mail: kalAnzi@imamu.edu.sa

Ameerah Al-Thunayyan is an Assistant Professor specializing in Translation Studies, with a particular interest in cultural translation, creativity in translation and training aspiring translators. With an experience over 12 years in teaching translation, mentoring students and equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge in translation, she is still passionate about exploring and understanding the translation process which goes beyond the mere linguistic transfer. She has held several leadership positions, including Vice Dean of King Abdullah Institute for Translation and Arabization, and currently the Head of Transition Department at the College of Languages and Translation at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University.

She is also a member of the Saudi Translation Association (SATA).

Mohammed Nasser Alhuqbani is a professor of Applied Linguistics. He previously served as the founder and head of the Department of Languages and Translation (2007-2016) at King Fahd Security College, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He currently works as a professor at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU), the College of Languages and Translation, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

He received his BS in English language and Literature in 1994 from the College of Education, King Faisal University in Alhasa, Saudi Arabia. He received his MA in Applied Linguistics in 1999 from Indian State University in Terre Haute, Indiana, USA. He obtained his PhD in Applied Linguistics in 2004 from Boston University, Massachusetts, USA.

Professor Alhuqbani has published five books and several scholarly papers in local and international journals. He actively participated in more than 35 local and international conferences during his career journey. His current research interests include, but are not limited to, ESP, discourse analysis, forensic linguistics, bilingualism, and language program planning and evaluation.

Cultivating Job-Seeking Skills in Youth: Exploring Vietnamese EFL Learners' Experiences With the English for Employability Skills Program

Ngoc-Tai Huynh*

School of Foreign Languages, Tra Vinh University, Vietnam

Phuong-Nam Thi Nguyen

School of Foreign Languages, Tra Vinh University, Vietnam

Tuyet-Nhung Thi Nguyen

School of Foreign Languages, Tra Vinh University, Vietnam

Cam-Tu Do

School of Foreign Languages, Tra Vinh University, Vietnam

Hieu-Thao Nguyen

School of Foreign Languages, Tra Vinh University, Vietnam

Thuy-Van Mai Huynh

School of Foreign Languages, Tra Vinh University, Vietnam

Abstract—This study examined the impact of a vocational English program on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' experience at University A in Vietnam. The research involved 20 participants and employed semi-structured interviews as the data collection method. The findings revealed that the program had a positive influence on participants' language and employability skills, as well as personal growth. Improved confidence, language proficiency, and various employability skills were reported among the participants. However, the study also identified the importance of addressing individual learning needs, optimizing resource utilization, and considering program duration. These findings make a valuable contribution to the existing literature on teaching English and developing employability skills in Vietnam, offering valuable insights into the effectiveness of English language training programs.

Index Terms—vocational English program, English learners, employability skills, Vietnam, EFL

I. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, English has emerged as a crucial mode of communication, particularly for employability opportunities. Therefore, possessing proficient English skills is not only an employer's requirement but also an essential quality for job-seekers across various sectors in the modern world.

There is considerable research focusing on highlighting the impacts of English language skills on employability opportunities and professional development (Huynh et al., 2023; Norton, 2018). Recognizing the importance of these skills, University A (pseudonym) implemented the EnglishWorks! program, aiming to enhance students' English language proficiency and necessary employability skills. The program is particularly relevant in the Vietnamese context, where proficiency in English is increasingly perceived as an essential factor for achieving success in the job market (Pham & Bui, 2019). The EnglishWorks! program provided at University A is distinct when compared with other foreign language training programs in the Vietnamese context. Traditionally, in Vietnam, the focus of English teaching has revolved around language skills and intercultural competence. However, very few English training programs have integrated employability skills into their English language curriculum (Tran et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, owing to the growing demand for English language proficiency in the job market, there has been a noticeable shift toward a more communicative and job-specific approach to English language instruction. Therefore, the

* Corresponding Author. Email: hntai@tvu.edu.vn

implementation of the EnglishWorks! program at University A can be considered a pioneering effort in the transformation of English teaching approaches within the Vietnamese context.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of employability encompasses not only job attainment but also a spectrum of skills, knowledge, comprehension, and personality traits that enhance graduates' likelihood of acquiring and retaining jobs (Bridgstock, 2009; Tomlinson, 2012; Tran, 2017). Consequently, employability serves as a crucial metric for assessing an employee's proficiency (Tong & Gao, 2022).

Qualities such as problem-solving, management planning, and teamwork, viewed as employability skills, hinge on personal and interpersonal abilities (Tran et al., 2022). In essence, these traits correlate with language skills as they all necessitate some form of communication. Consequently, by adopting English language pedagogy, employability skills can be systematically incorporated into English language syllabi, particularly in higher education.

Moreover, Idkhan et al. (2021) asserted that employability skills can be fostered through strategies such as effective learning, student-centric teaching methods, lecture assignments, extracurricular activities, student-led initiatives, and industry-based practices. Unfortunately, a dearth of expertise and comprehension in the domain of employability skills and their acquisition through learning poses a challenge to their integration into the classroom (Fulgence, 2015). This underscores the importance of research that explores the effectiveness of an English as a foreign language (EFL) training program that integrates job-seeking skills, such as the EnglishWorks! program implemented at University A.

A. English Language Skills and Employability

A range of studies have highlighted the importance of English language skills for employability. Radwan (2023), and Zainuddin and Perera (2019) both emphasized the need for English language proficiency in securing employment. In addition, Zainuddin and Perera (2019) highlighted the importance of good grammar and vocabulary for employees to be successful in job seeking and professional development. Pešić (2022) also provided industry-specific perspectives focusing on the hotel industry.

In the Vietnamese context, various studies have highlighted the importance of English language skills and related challenges for employability. Pham (2019) emphasized the need for practical skills and English proficiency in the workplace, and Hoi (2020) observed that traditional teaching methods and a lack of interest in English among students are major challenges. Moreover, studies on the role of English competence in employability opportunities for Vietnamese job-seekers have emphasized the need for a more practical approach in English teaching instruction. In particular, researchers have called for the alignment between English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curricula and industry needs (Doan & Hamid, 2021). For instance, it has been asserted that English communication skills are crucial for employees in the hospitality industry (Nghia et al., 2022).

Such studies indicate that issues relating to teaching English language skills for employability should be addressed in terms of practicality. The findings from these studies also affirm that investing time and effort in improving English language proficiency is valuable for job-seekers, especially Vietnamese youth. Proficiency in English can contribute considerably to fostering the employability of young Vietnamese citizens and can open doors to numerous career opportunities. This also sheds light on the importance of English language education and training programs. Therefore, providing English language courses with a proper integration of employability skills in the curriculum seems to be an essential task for English language training programs, particularly in the Vietnamese context. By offering such opportunities, English language training programs can empower learners, especially job-seekers, to develop the necessary English skills and thus enhance their chances of success in the job market.

In summary, researchers have consistently proven the positive correlation between English language proficiency and employability. This emphasizes the need for individuals to invest in English language education and for institutions to offer proper training programs to support the young people who are seeking jobs.

B. Soft Skills and Employability

Soft skills are crucial for employability, particularly in the retail sector (Nickson et al., 2012). These skills are essential for entry-level jobs, complementing hard skills and guaranteeing job opportunities and career growth (Subedi, 2018). Leadership, teamwork, and communication skills are crucial for business graduates (Succi & Canovi, 2020). Employers value a combination of soft skills and academic qualifications (Asefer & Abidin, 2021), with a growing emphasis on soft skills in the last decade (Succi & Canovi, 2020). In the technology industry, communication skills, attitude, integrity, learnability, motivation, and teamwork are critical for employability (Fadhil et al., 2021).

In the Vietnamese context, several studies have highlighted the importance of soft skills in enhancing the employability of Vietnamese young people. Soft skills that are highly sought after by employers in Vietnam's tech industry include communication skills, teamwork skills, and presentation skills (Nghia, 2019). Employers in Vietnam have expressed that graduates often lack these soft skills, with a significant percentage rating them as relatively weak (Nghia, 2019). Studies have found that employers highly value technical skills in the technology infrastructure and service domain, along with strong communication and problem-solving qualities (Lau et al., 2016). Furthermore, Le Vo and Wyatt (2023) emphasized the need for these skills in the engineering and business sectors. Universities and vocational institutions

should prioritize the training of these soft skills to better equip students for the job market (Nghia, 2019; Nghia et al., 2022). By enhancing training in general skills and improving the learning abilities of students, institutions can contribute to inclusive skill development in Vietnam (Mori, 2023).

Furthermore, the findings from related studies have validated that along with having strong English language skills, to ensure job success, learners of English as a foreign language should be cultivated with employability skills. These skills go beyond language proficiency along with a range of abilities essential in the workplace. Recognizing the importance of these skills, the EnglishWorks! program has been designed to not only enhance English language proficiency but also foster the development of employability skills. The program acknowledges that language skills alone are insufficient for individuals to excel in their professional endeavors. Hence, it provides a comprehensive approach that encompasses the cultivation of both linguistic and job-seeking skills.

C. Theoretical Framework

One of the well-known theoretical frameworks for research on employability is the Employability Skills Framework (ESF). This framework was developed in 2012 (with funding from the U.S. Department of Education) to propose a set of employability skills that span the workforce development and education sectors. The framework components comprise nine key skills organized into three main categories: *Applied Knowledge*, *Effective Relationships*, and *Workplace Skills*. These essential skills encompass various areas, such as interpersonal skills, applied academic skills, critical thinking, resource management, information use, communication skills, system thinking, technology use, and personal qualities (see Figure 1). The framework emphasizes the importance of these competencies for individuals to be career-ready and to secure and maintain employment.

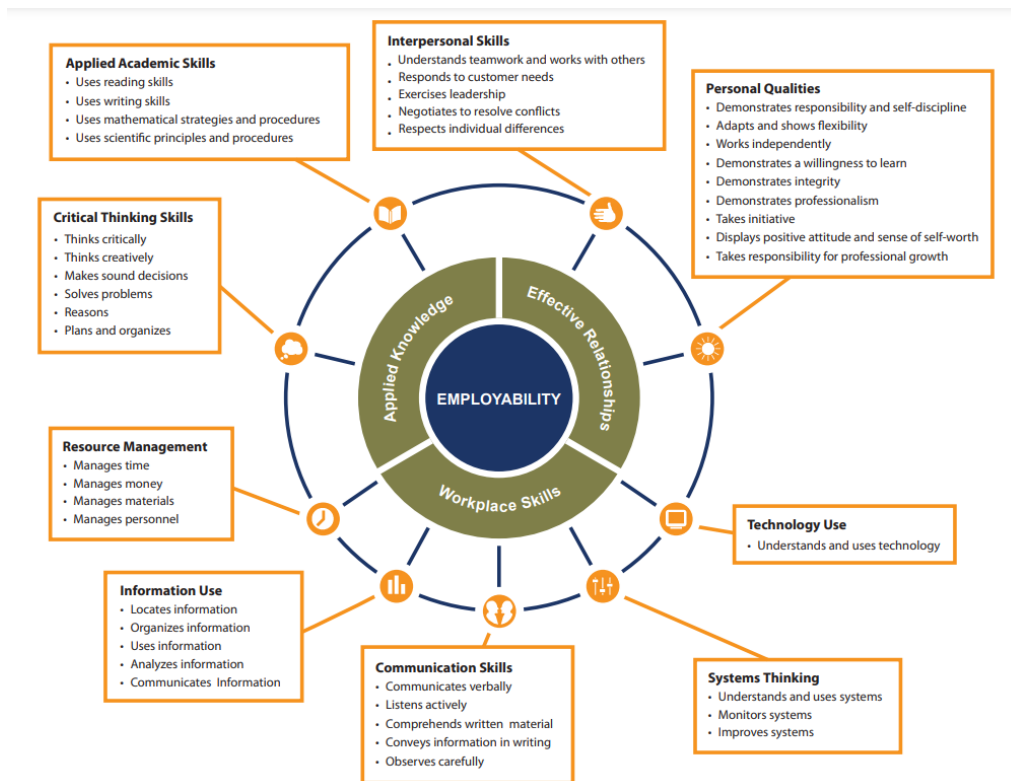


Figure 1. Employability Skills Framework
(Adopted from <http://cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills>)

Figure 1 shows that the ESF comprises nine subcategories that are essential for individuals to develop to be career-ready and succeed in the workforce. These subcategories of skills are (1) *Interpersonal Skills*, which are essential for effectively working in a team or independently; (2) *Applied Academic Skills*, including skills such as reading, writing, mathematical strategies and procedures, and scientific principles; (3) *Critical Thinking Skills*, which include the skills of analyzing information, engaging in logical reasoning, resolving problems, planning strategically, and prioritizing tasks; (4) *Resource Management Skills*, such as being capable of managing time and other accessible resources effectively; (5) *Information Use*, or the capacity to comprehend, evaluate, and utilize broad available information; (6) *Communication Skills*, namely, interacting and conversing with others verbally and non-verbally; (7) *System Thinking*, or the ability to execute tasks successfully by understanding the interconnections among the various components of a system; (8) *Technology Use*, that is, the capacity to complete job tasks successfully through the appropriate and efficient application of information technology; and (9) *Personal Qualities*, which include accountability, self-discipline, adaptability, ethical integrity, and initiative.

These components of the ESF provide a comprehensive framework for individuals to develop and demonstrate the crucial skills required for success in the modern workforce. The present study employs the ESF to develop interview questions for the purpose of exploring the experiences of the participants in a program that focuses on English and employability skills (i.e., EnglishWorks! program).

D. Overview of the EnglishWorks! Program

The EnglishWorks! provides un/underemployed young Vietnamese adults with training in basic vocational English, soft skills, and employability skills. The six-month program enables participants to build the professional skills necessary to compete in the 21st century job market. Learning activities include site visits and interactions with industry professionals, guest speakers, tech camps, and job fairs designed to enhance future employment opportunities. The expected outcome of the EnglishWorks! program was a diverse and empowered group of participants and alumni with an increased potential to shape the course of their own lives and their communities. In the academic year 2022–2023, a university (hereinafter University A) in Vietnam received financial support from the U.S. Department of State's English Access Microscholarship Program as one of the providers of the EnglishWorks! program in Vietnam. In line with the overall goals of the EnglishWorks! program in Vietnam, at University A, the program provided the local youth with basic English language skills, awareness of working requirements, and lifelong learning skills. The participants were expected to achieve an elementary level of English language, necessary life skills, and basic employability skills upon the completion of the program.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The general objective of the present study is to explore the experiences of students participating in an English for employability skills program (the EnglishWorks! or RELO program) implemented at University A. The specific objective of the study is to gain insights into the experiences and perceptions of students participating in the program regarding the development of their English language skills and job opportunities after completing the program. Drawing from students' experiences, this study finds that the proposed teaching and learning activities, which are currently being implemented as a reference for similar programs or projects in the future, are considered effective for career-oriented English.

A. Research Questions

This study seeks answers to the following research questions.

1. What is the experience of students participating in the English for employability program with the program's content, including the development of English language skills, soft skills, and career orientation?
2. How do students participating in the English for employability program perceive the program's effectiveness in developing their English language skills and job-seeking skills?

B. Research Design

This research employs a qualitative research design, specifically employing the phenomenological approach—a qualitative research method that aims to understand the practical experiences of participants (Neubauer et al., 2019). The study utilizes this approach to explore the experiences of Vietnamese youth in learning English and developing skills for future job opportunities.

Regarding the data collection and analysis, 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted with students after they completed the 240-hour employability-oriented English language program. The interview data was recorded and transcribed. The semi-structured interviews explored the participants' experiences in the program, their perceptions of the program's effectiveness in developing English language and job-seeking skills, the challenges that they encountered while participating in the program, their attitudes, and their perceptions (in terms of strengths and weaknesses) of the program's content.

The interview questionnaire comprised three main sections. The first section asked for the participants' perspectives on the overall impact of the EnglishWorks! program on their English language skills. The second part of the questionnaire focused on exploring their experiences on the development of their employability skills (based on the ESF). The final part of the questionnaire aimed at assessing the overall effectiveness of the EnglishWorks! program and identifying its strengths and weaknesses. The participants were asked to evaluate the program's impact on their job-seeking skills, highlighting the aspects that they found particularly effective and providing suggestions on how to improve similar programs in the future. The responses of the participants were transcribed, translated (from Vietnamese into English) by lecturers competent in English, and analyzed thematically.

In total, the study included in-depth interviews with 20 participants who completed the EnglishWorks! program at University A. The participants were selected for interviews based on their willingness and availability upon their completion of the EnglishWorks! program at University A. The number of interviewees accounts for 80% of the total participants in the EnglishWorks! Program. Table 1 presents the backgrounds of the interviewees.

TABLE 1
PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND

Participants	Gender	Age	English proficiency level
Participant 1	Female	17	Beginner
Participant 2	Male	18	Pre-intermediate
Participant 3	Female	17	Pre-intermediate
Participant 4	Male	26	Beginner
Participant 5	Female	20	Beginner
Participant 6	Female	19	Beginner
Participant 7	Male	25	Pre-intermediate
Participant 8	Male	22	Beginner
Participant 9	Male	25	Pre-intermediate
Participant 10	Female	21	Beginner
Participant 11	Male	24	Beginner
Participant 12	Male	21	Pre-intermediate
Participant 13	Female	21	Beginner
Participant 14	Male	25	Beginner
Participant 15	Female	24	Beginner
Participant 16	Male	23	Beginner
Participant 17	Female	23	Beginner
Participant 18	Male	20	Beginner
Participant 19	Male	22	Pre-intermediate
Participant 20	Male	25	Pre-intermediate

IV. FINDINGS

A. Overall Impact on Language Skills

Most participants reported considerable improvements in various language skills, such as speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary, pronunciation, and self-learning abilities. Some key areas of progress included confidence in communication, understanding of grammar, and interest in continuing English studies.

Specifically, Participant 1 noted a marked improvement in his language construction and vocabulary skills, reporting, "I can construct better sentences than before" and "I have increased my reflexes with English." Participant 2 lauded the unique learning approach of the EnglishWorks! program, stating the following:

It has a significant impact on my English learning because this program teaches in an easy-to-understand and comfortable way, making English more accessible. (Participant 2)

Participant 2 also acknowledged that the program's practical exercises for improving English language, which had a positive impact on his communication skills in English, particularly in everyday circumstances such as asking for or giving directions. Moreover, Participants 3 and 4 both emphasized the enhancement in their presentation skills due to the program. Participant 3 also stated the following: "I feel like I've learned a lot. First, it improved my teamwork skills ... and most recently, presentation skills," while Participant 4 shared the following:

Previously, I mainly focused on grammar and vocabulary. However, after participating in this program, I learned how to ... give presentations This has significantly improved my speaking abilities. (Participant 4)

Participants 5 and 6 echoed similar sentiments, highlighting improvements in their communication and listening skills. Specifically, Participant 5 indicated a substantial improvement in her English language skills after participating in the EnglishWorks! program. She particularly noted improvements in her communication skills, both spoken and written, as well as in her listening skills. She stated the following:

I can now communicate with others more confidently, both in speaking and writing. For example, in listening, I used to struggle with understanding, but now I feel I've improved by over 10%. (Participant 5)

Participant 7, an ethnic student learning English as an additional language, attributed his progress in speaking and listening skills to consistent class attendance, stating the following:

Yes, I do feel there has been some improvement. It has increased since I started attending. (Participant 7)

Similarly, Participants 8, 9, and 10, 18, and 20 noticed a marked improvement in their communication skills in English. Participant 9 shared the following: "After this program, it has improved my self-confidence, pronunciation, and communication skills in English." Participant 10 affirmed the following: "I can understand English conversations better now, and I can also speak more fluently and confidently." Moreover, Participant 11 believed that speaking activities (as in Figure 2) improved his English skills, particularly listening and speaking. He stated that these skills were crucial in his presentations at work. Participant 12 also recognized the program's impact on improving his English language abilities. He specifically noted how the program helped him understand the importance of starting from the basics in language learning. Further, he admitted to enhancing his presentation skills and vocabulary, despite not focusing much on the latter.

I think I have improved my English a bit ... I have improved my English presentation skills and vocabulary, even though I didn't focus much on learning vocabulary. I also learned English learning methods, such as learning the basics and prioritizing tasks. (Participant 12)

Participant 18, whose English proficiency was at a beginner level when participating in this program, expressed his overall improvement in English language skills.

After this program, my self-confidence, pronunciation, and communication skills have improved. It has also motivated me to engage in self-study and continue learning. Now, I am able to express my thoughts and feelings, such as expressing my desire to go out or to have something to eat. (Participant 18)

Participants 14 and 15 highlighted improvements in their listening, speaking, writing, and verbal expression skills. Notably, Participant 14's interest in English increased during the course, motivating him to continue studying in the future, as he believed that this would help him secure a better job.

My interest in English has increased since joining this course six months ago. I now have the motivation to continue studying English. If I have the opportunity to continue studying English in the future, I will definitely continue. (Participant 14)



Figure 2. EnglishWorks! Participants Engaging in Speaking Activities

In summary, the responses of the participants revealed a clear and positive impact on their English language skills. The personal experiences of the participants indicated the major role of the EnglishWorks! program in cultivating their job-seeking skills. During the interviews, the majority of the participants confirmed the improvement in their English language skills, overall confidence, and practical communication abilities. This indicates that the program's unique teaching methods, supportive learning environment, and emphasis on practical language usage made learning English an enriching experience. Accordingly, the program is a testament to effective language learning, equipping learners with not only linguistic proficiency but also the confidence and skills to engage in the global arena.

B. Employability Skills

The EnglishWorks! program yielded various benefits for its participants, particularly in enhancing their job-seeking skills and personal growth. Through in-depth interviews and reflective feedback, the participants conveyed valuable insights and experiences that underscore the program's positive impact on their journey toward career readiness. Here are the key themes and narratives that emerged from the participants' accounts.

(a). Interpersonal Skills, Personal Qualities, and Communication Skills

The emphasis of the EnglishWorks! program on developing interpersonal skills and personal qualities received positive responses from the participants. The majority of the participants reported a marked improvement in teamwork, leadership, adaptability, and other positive personal qualities.

Specifically, Participant 1 detailed how the program helped improve her interpersonal skills:

I experienced something like working in a group and improving the process of standing in front of a crowd and presenting our ideas. We also have additional skills to cultivate more leadership skills. (Participant 1)

Through the program, most of the participants developed their teamwork and leadership skills and became more adept at communicating effectively in English, both in daily life scenarios and professional environments. Participant 3 stated the following:

I feel more confident in group activities ... I'm comfortable speaking in front of everyone, and I can engage in discussions. The program enabled me to develop personal qualities like adaptability and patience because through group work, I've learned how to collaborate with others effectively. (Participant 3)

The majority of the participants reported substantial developments in their interpersonal skills and personal qualities as a result of the program's emphasis on teamwork and communication. The participants were particularly appreciative of the active engagement and unity fostered within the team activities, which not only improved their ability to work collaboratively but also enhanced their communication skills. Participant 4 noted, "I feel a sense of unity and active participation from all members in the group." Similarly, Participant 5 asserted that in addition to acquiring language skills, she also experienced an enhanced ability to work in a team as well as improved communication skills, particularly in terms of expressing ideas and engaging in discussions. This participant said the following:

The teachers taught us how to work effectively in a team and share responsibilities. I feel that my relationships with classmates strengthened, leading to a better interaction with and understanding of each other. We interacted more freely and got to know each other better outside of the classroom environment. (Participant 5)

Similarly, Participant 8 reported that he appreciated the program's contribution to his personal qualities. He learned soft skills and gained an awareness of his ability to share and connect with others:

What I learned from this is knowing how to share with everyone. Knowing how to love each other more. Connecting with each other more. To do homework together. (Participant 8)

Acknowledging that he struggled with confidence in communicating in English, particularly with foreigners, Participant 9 considered the program effective in improving his interpersonal skills and communication ability:

After interacting with the teachers and my peers, I have become more confident and can express my opinions. I really enjoy it now ... the program helped me build stronger relationships with my classmates and teachers and enhance my teamwork skills. (Participant 9)

More than half of the participants, particularly those whose English level was pre-intermediate (e.g., Participants 2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 19, and 20), asserted that their public speaking and presentation skills improved considerably after six months of participating in the EnglishWorks! program. These participants engaged in mock presentations, English speaking clubs, and group discussions and experienced a noticeable increase in confidence when communicating ideas and delivering presentations in English. For instance, Participants 3, 6, 8, and 20 made the following observations.

I feel more confident in group activities ... I'm comfortable speaking in front of everyone, and I can engage in discussions. (Participant 3)

The program's emphasis on public speaking helped me overcome my fear of presenting and improved my confidence in articulating ideas in front of an audience. (Participant 6)

My most specific feeling is that before I had the ability to present, I was only a very poor presenter ... My presentations are numerous; I have mastered the details and steps to have a perfect presentation. (Participant 8)

While participating in group activities such as ESC activities, I have had the opportunity to practice group leadership skills, leading to an improvement in my courage and confidence in public speaking, as evidenced by my active engagement in these organized activities. (Participant 20)

The above experiences can be considered evidence of personal growth and improvement in the presentation skills of the participants (Figure 3). This reveals a transformation from feeling inadequate as a presenter to gaining mastery and confidence in delivering presentations after completing the EnglishWorks! program.



Figure 3. EnglishWorks! Students Giving Presentations

From the responses of the participants, it can be observed that the program provided them with opportunities for group work, which helped them improve their communication and interpersonal skills. Moreover, the responses of the participants proved that the program played a key role in fostering a heightened sense of confidence and efficacy in their interpersonal interactions.

One notable case is that of Participant 14. Most of his classmates reported that he had not talked to them during the first three months of the program. However, in the second stage of the program, this participant became more open and started communicating with his classmates more, especially during classroom and field trips activities. In the interview, this participant remarked on his positive changes and how he communicated with classmates because of the EnglishWorks! program:

That's right, I'm more confident. I know I'm more confident than before. I was a bit shy and didn't talk to anyone much. However, after studying, I found I was closer to friends and talked more. (Participant 14)

When asked for the reasons, he first reported a notable improvement in his interpersonal and communication skills. He then stated that group work and peer interaction boosted his confidence, helped him learn from his classmates, and enhanced his speaking skills.

It helps me be more confident in communication ... I learned a lot from Tho, who is quite confident, and also from Tan, who always speaks up, whether right or wrong. (Participant 14)

The experience of Participant 14 indicates that the participants not only cultivated their interpersonal skills and personal qualities through the practical and meaningful content of the EnglishWorks! program but also developed their interpersonal skills and personal growth through various interactions with their classroom peers and through field trip activities—a unique feature of the EnglishWorks! program.

This sentiment resonated with several participants who acknowledged their increased confidence in communication. Participant 11, who worked a part-time job, acknowledged that his participation in the program considerably improved his confidence and communication skills. He also reported that he could confidently interact with foreigners visiting his company after the program, demonstrating his work, discussing his future plans, and explaining how these would benefit his customers.

In fact, all the participants asserted that field trip activities built closer relationships among their peers, enhancing their adaptability and comfort in communication and interaction. Moreover, the participants highlighted the program's role in fostering their motivation to study English and providing them with vision and inspiration for seeking rewarding employment opportunities. The participants emphasized the importance of field trip activities (Figure 4), during which they had the opportunity to visit real companies and workplaces and listen to employers sharing their requirements for prospective employees. This inspired and equipped them with the desire to study hard and obtain good jobs in the future. Participant 17 asserted: "My interest in English has grown significantly. I am now motivated to pursue further studies in English". Similarly, Participant 10 shared,

The program's diverse activities and projects prepared me to become familiar with different workplaces, especially for the field trip to the Duyen Hai Therna Power Plant. This experience has been crucial in my plans for studying and seeking job. (Participant 10)



Figure 4. EnglishWorks! Students and Teachers Visiting the Therna Power Plant

In summary, the participants' interpersonal skills, personal qualities, and communication skills were notably cultivated as a result of the EnglishWorks! program's targeted interventions and interactive curriculum. The participants cited a visible increase in their confidence in expressing their ideas, verbalizing their thoughts, and engaging in effective communication in English and Vietnamese with their peers and teachers. This underscores the program's success in equipping the participants with vital communication competencies essential for their future careers.

(b). *Technology Use*

The majority of the participants reported considerable improvements in their proficiency with office software, web development essentials, and professional applications, acknowledging the program's contribution in enhancing their technological literacy and adaptability for their studies and future careers. Specifically, the participants highlighted the program's supportive role in enhancing their technological literacy and proficiency. Participant 1 asserted,

Through the computer science course when participating in the EnglishWorks! program, I also know how to use technology to introduce myself like by creating a file or a business card for an email so that it can be polite and more beautiful. (Participant 1)

Similarly, Participant 3 acknowledged,

The teacher taught us the basics of office software like Word and Excel ... We also learned how to build a website, send emails, set schedules, and use tools in Google. (Participant 3)

The program's impact on the participants' acceptance of digital innovation and the enhancement of their online presence is encapsulated in the words of Participant 12:

... There were many useful features in tools like Google ... I found these skills very helpful for creating a more impressive online presence. (Participant 12)

Participant 13 highly valued the contribution of the program's information technology (IT) lessons, which were familiar and easy for her to understand, making them extremely practical and beneficial. In addition, Participant 13 noted that these IT skills were essential for job-seekers like her, particularly in terms of searching for information online and enhancing the visual appeal of her documents.

We learned about using tools and websites, selecting quality images, and formatting text. I find these skills quite beneficial for people looking for jobs or those currently using these tools to create CVs or edit documents. (Participant 13)

These experiences of the participants revealed that the program equipped the participants with up-to-date technological skills, thereby amplifying their readiness for employment opportunities. The participants also reflected on the guidance received in exploring new knowledge through the use of modern technology. Participants 7 and 8 disclosed the following:

The training in computer skills was very helpful, especially in video editing. I learned how to edit and put together videos, which I had never done before. (Participant 7)

That's the ability to create photos. Yes, that's cutting and erasing frames on Google ... as a search engine, you will know some good websites. (Participant 8)

Despite being an IT graduate, Participant 11 found that the program helped him improve his basic IT skills. This included learning how to create a survey on Google and how to send emails effectively.

The teacher guided [me] a lot. I saw that there was a lot of knowledge that I didn't have, hadn't learned ... about online. (Participant 11)

In conclusion, the qualitative insights from the participants unequivocally underscored the transformative impact of the EnglishWorks! program on their technology use. The program emerged as a catalyst for fostering enhanced technological literacy, digital innovation, and professional technological skills among individuals, thereby shaping an empowered and tech-savvy participant base poised for success in their future endeavors.

(c). Critical Thinking and Applied Academic Skills

Regarding critical thinking and applied academic skills, most of the participants highlighted the program's positive influence on fostering their critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making capabilities. The participants emphasized the program's role in cultivating independent reasoning, creative thinking, and collaborative problem-solving, resulting in a considerable enhancement of their academic and applied skills. Participant 3 disclosed the following:

The program's emphasis on practical problem-solving and group projects has sharpened my critical thinking and decision-making abilities, preparing me for real-world challenges in my chosen field. (Participant 3)

The participants acknowledged the program's profound impact on their critical thinking and independent reasoning abilities. Through engaging discussions and problem-based learning activities, the participants developed the capacity to evaluate information critically, analyze complex scenarios, and arrive at well-reasoned conclusions. Participant 7 emphasized the following:

The program challenged us to think critically and approach problems analytically. This has been instrumental in refining my ability to solve real-world challenges. (Participant 7)

In addition, the program's focus on creative thinking and innovative problem-solving techniques was a recurring theme in the participants' feedback. The participants shared their experiences of engaging in open-ended projects that encouraged original thought and imaginative solutions. Participants 9, 11, 17, and 19 observed the following:

The program encouraged us to think outside the box and approach challenges creatively. This mindset has become a valuable asset in my academic and professional pursuits. (Participant 9)

I really loved the activities, especially in the environmental protection project in which I and my friend pointed out the causes and proposed solutions for environmental pollution with our drawing. Then, we presented our products with other teams for competition. This was really fantastic. (Participant 11)

I really enjoyed the activities where the teacher assigned us a topic and we worked in groups to bring that topic to life through expression. For instance, one activity involved designing our dream house and then using English to describe it. This learning activity was very interesting and practical. (Participant 19)

Such experiences indicate the importance of collaborative learning activities and teamwork in the development of the participants' applied academic skills when participating in the program. In fact, the program's emphasis on group projects and team-based activities provided the participants with opportunities to practice their decision-making skills in a collaborative setting. Participant 16 recalled: "Each person will share their opinion, while others listen attentively. Subsequently, we will collate and consolidate these diverse viewpoints". Similarly, the program considerably aided Participant 4 in developing his critical thinking and applied academic skills. Activities that encouraged argumentative thinking and required independent reasoning fostered problem-solving abilities (Figure 5). Participant 4 explained the following:

Activities like teamwork and argumentative thinking, as well as homework assignments that required argumentative thinking, allowed us to think independently without necessarily aligning with the teacher's perspective. (Participant 4)

The participants' narratives underscore the EnglishWorks! program's multifaceted impact on their critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative decision-making skills, equipping them with a comprehensive toolkit for academic and professional success.



Figure 5. EnglishWorks! Students in a Drawing Competition

Furthermore, the program's approach to cultivating a problem-solving mindset and resilience in the face of challenges was a recurring theme in the participants' reflections. By engaging in complex problem-solving tasks and resilience-building activities, the participants developed the capacity to approach obstacles with a strategic and resilient outlook. Participant 11 stated the following:

When I communicate in class, I also learn a lot of skills in class, so it applies to my job. Research skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, time management skills, and work organization skills. (Participant 11)

C. Evaluation of the Program

(a). Strengths of the Program

As mentioned in the earlier sections, the overall strength of the EnglishWorks! program was its positive impact on language skills, employability, and personal qualities. In particular, the participants reported improved confidence, enhanced language proficiency, and a range of employability skills. In terms of specific comments, the participants appreciated the various strengths of the program, including the variety and effectiveness of teaching methods, practical skills and activities, and group work and collaboration.

When asked about the strength of the EnglishWorks! program, 5 out of the 20 participants (Participants 1, 7, 11, 15, and 16) appreciated the variety of teaching methods employed in the program and emphasized that the diverse approaches and highly qualified teachers enhanced their learning experience. Participant 1 shared her experience:

Each teacher has a different teaching method, so in those teachers' teaching, we will learn different skills. It's like getting different flavors in a dish, which makes it more interesting and enjoyable for us to learn. (Participant 1)

Similarly, Participant 11 highly valued the program's effectiveness and the diversity of its teachers. Each teacher had a different teaching approach, enriching the learning experience for him and his classmates:

One aspect that makes our course more effective is that there are many teachers teaching the class because each teacher will have a different way of teaching the core principles that that teacher wants to convey. (Participant 11)

Alongside the improvement in his language skills, Participant 7 appreciated the teachers' positive influences on his personal qualities. Specifically, he welcomed the teachers' guidance on ethics and life skills (such as meditation; see Figure 6). These shared experiences of the participants demonstrate the EnglishWorks! program's strength in terms of its focus on practical skills, the diversity of its teaching methods with highly qualified teachers, and its supportive learning environment.

In addition, one major point mentioned by a large majority of the participants of the EnglishWorks! program was group work and collaboration, which resulted in the improved presentation skills, confidence, and assertiveness of the participants. Participant 3 noted the following:

feel that I was improving my presentation skills, communication, and confidence by presenting in a group. Working together with others made me more assertive and better equipped to communicate effectively in professional settings. (Participant 3)

Participant 4 identified the program's core strength as its requirement for all the participants to engage actively in communication and presentation. He believed that the broad involvement and mandatory participation in team presentations were vital in fostering a collaborative environment and enhancing their public speaking skills:

The main strength is that it requires all students, every participant, to communicate and interact. Additionally, everyone has to give presentations, so it's not just for certain individuals. (Participant 4)

Participant 6 further confirmed the positive influence on her confidence:

This program gave me back my confidence. Now, I'm not as afraid to communicate in English as I used to be. (Participant 6)

Participant 9 viewed the program positively and was appreciative of the wide range of skills that he learned, including presentation and computer skills as well as improved English proficiency. He also enjoyed the variety of activities that the program offered.

The most valuable aspect for me was learning various skills from teachers, such as presentation skills [and] computer skills, [as well as] improving my English. I also enjoyed the activities during the program, as they inspired me and make learning less restrictive. (Participant 9)

Another major feature of the EnglishWorks! program was identified because most of the participants highlighted the practical skills and activities taught in the program, such as CV writing, email composition, and presentation skills. The participants found these skills beneficial for job hunting and personal development. When asked about the good features of the program, Participant 10 was appreciative of the program, particularly the CV writing aspect. She also found the extracurricular activities to be a unique advantage, enabling her to gain more knowledge about the outside world. Other participants also provided positive comments on the program for its practical applications, including the field trips and interactive social events. Specifically, Participant 5 highlighted the valuable practical skills offered by the program, including CV writing and email composition, which she believed would be beneficial for job seeking. She also valued the program's promotion of creativity and environmental awareness through painting activities.

In summary, the qualitative findings from the participants' feedback provide a comprehensive understanding of the EnglishWorks! program, highlighting its strengths in practical skill development and collaboration as well as its positive impact on language skills and employability.

(b). Weaknesses of the Program

In addition to the strengths, the participants also identified several areas for improvement in the EnglishWorks! program with respect to, for example, individual learning needs, facilities and resource utilization, and program duration and curriculum. Similarly, Participant 4 recommended stricter punctuality and attendance requirements, highlighting the importance of a disciplined learning environment:

In my opinion, there should be stricter attendance requirements. Punctuality and attendance should be emphasized more. Also, I suggest including more listening activities since it's an area that needs improvement. (Participant 4)

Participant 14 noted challenges when different teachers had overlapping schedules, affecting the logical connection between lessons. This signals the need for improved scheduling and coordination. These observations shed light on the importance of streamlining administrative processes and ensuring a cohesive learning experience for participants. In addition, Participants 9 and 10 both recommended incorporating more basics before advancing to complex topics:

I think there should be a more in-depth focus on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to improve pronunciation. He mentioned that while the program covers a vast range of topics, it could benefit from delving deeper into specific areas, like IPA. (Participant 9)

Several participants (such as Participants 1, 6, 8, and 18) also suggested the need for a more personalized approach based on the different levels of proficiency among students. These participants highlighted the importance of considering individual learning preferences, focusing on specific areas for improvement, and addressing the needs of learners to prepare for their future jobs. For instance, Participant 1 suggested a more personalized approach based on the different levels of proficiency among students, emphasizing the need for tailored instructions. These recommendations indicate the need for a more structured and progressive learning approach for future EnglishWorks! programs.

Another point for improvement mentioned by the participants of the EnglishWorks! program pertained to issues related to facilities, such as malfunctioning projectors and air conditioners. In addition, the utilization of learning resources, such as textbooks and online materials, raised concerns related to the depth of learning and continuity in skill development. Participant 7 expressed his concerns as follows:

Sometimes, we faced issues with the projectors and air conditioners, which affected our learning environment. Better facilities and resource utilization would enhance the overall learning experience. (Participant 7)

The above issue was also mentioned by Participant 11, who noted that the classroom facilities, specifically, the projector and air conditioner, occasionally malfunctioned. However, he did not perceive any weaknesses in the teachers' pedagogical approaches.

Of the 20 participants, four (Participants 5, 15, 16, and 20) suggested future EnglishWorks! programs should consider the duration both for lessons and the overall period of the program. These participants thought that an extension was needed for them to fully absorb and master the skills offered and indicated a desire for a longer learning period to allow for a more comprehensive learning experience. Participant 5 and 20 remarked,

I feel that the program duration is not enough for us to absorb all these skills. A longer duration would provide us with the time needed for a more in-depth and comprehensive learning experience. (Participant 5)

Most of my classmates said that it's okay to study longer, while others say it's too fast. At first, I thought that studying for 6 months would be too long, but it went by quickly. (Participant 20)

In summary, the EnglishWorks! program was evaluated by 20 participants, each providing valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Their feedback offers a qualitative understanding of the program's impact on language skills, employability, and personal development.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings reported in this study indicate that the EnglishWorks! program implemented at University A successfully impacted the participants' employability skills, personal growth, and learning experiences. By integrating the teaching of interpersonal skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities into an English language curriculum, the EnglishWorks! program equips learners with a well-rounded skill set.

Moreover, the EnglishWorks! program recognizes that employers increasingly value candidates who possess a combination of English language proficiency and employability skills. Employers seek individuals who can communicate effectively with colleagues and clients, think critically to solve complex problems, and adapt to the rapidly changing demands of a workplace. In comparison with related studies, the EnglishWorks! program appears to share similarities with other programs or studies that aim to enhance language skills and employability. These similarities may include a focus on practical skill development, collaboration, and the integration of technology skills (Le, 2020; Nghia, 2019; Tran et al., 2022).

However, the specific strengths and areas for improvement identified by the participants for the EnglishWorks! program may differ from those in related studies, as these aspects are based on the unique experiences and feedback of the participants in this particular program. Although there may be similarities in the broad goals and focus areas, the specific strengths, weaknesses, and impact of the EnglishWorks! program may differ from those observed in related studies.

For instance, one of the unique field trips of the EnglishWorks! program was to take the participants to a well-known Buddhist temple in Vietnam for the participants to be taught about morality and trained in meditation to help them control their mental faculties and emotions in real-life situations. This particular activity was highly appreciated by all the participants. This activity was particularly integrated into the EnglishWorks! program to teach English and employability skills and, at the same time, nurture personal growth in the Vietnamese context.

Although language skills are undoubtedly crucial, employability skills play an equally critical role in job success. The EnglishWorks! program recognizes this and strives to develop a holistic skill set in learners by integrating the teaching of both language and employability skills. The program's strengths, combined with constructive feedback, position it well in terms of maintaining continuous improvement and a positive impact on participants' employability and personal development.

In conclusion, this study offers insights into the real-time learning experiences of Vietnamese EFL learners who participated in a vocational English program. The findings from this study contribute to the field of teaching English and curricular development. However, one limitation of the present research is the lack of the perspectives from the teachers who participated in the program. Further research can explore the experiences of both student and teacher participants of programs that are similar to the EnglishWorks! program at University A. The findings of such investigations may offer more interesting and helpful experiences.

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Ngoc Tai Huynh is a lecturer in English studies at School of foreign languages, Tra Vinh University, Vietnam. Dr Tai received a Master of Philosophy in English Linguistics from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in 2013. In 2022, he completed his PhD program at the University of Tasmania. His research and teaching focus on Multimodal semiotics, Applied and Educational Linguistics, English, Bilingual and cultural education, and Teacher education.

Dr Tai has presented at various international conferences and contributed to several book chapters published by IGI Global, Multilingual Matters, and Springer. He has also published numerous articles on top quartile journals such as *Social Semiotics*, *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, and *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*.

Phuong-Nam Thi Nguyen (PhD in the English Language and Literature) currently works at the School of Foreign Languages, Tra Vinh University – Vietnam. Her research is in the area of second language acquisition and foreign language literature.

Dr Phuong-Nam is interested in intervention research in language teaching. Dr Phuong Nam has published a wide range of papers in Scopus Indexed journals such as *Journal of Culture and Education*, *Asian EFL Journal* and presented at various international conferences on TESOL and linguistics.

Tuyet-Nhung Thi Nguyen has joined the staff of School of Foreign Languages since 2009. She earned a BA in English Education in 2008 and MA degree in TESOL in 2015. She has published several peer-review journals and presented at various international conferences.

Currently, Ms. Nhung is a PhD candidate in the field of English language teaching methodologies at Tra Vinh University. She has published several papers and book chapters on translanguaging in the Vietnamese EFL context.

Cam-Tu Do is currently a lecturer specializing in teaching English language skills, pronunciation, translation and teaching methodology at School of Foreign Languages at Tra Vinh University. She received a Master's degree in TESOL from Victoria University, Australia and has been working as a teacher of English and freelance translator for over 10 years. Ms Cam-Tu is interested in teaching and researching interactive language learning in higher education, language acquisition, translation, interpretation and technology-based learning.

Hieu-Thao Nguyen is a lecturer at School of Foreign Languages, Tra Vinh University. She holds a BA in English Studies from Can Tho University, Vietnam, and an MA in Education from University College Dublin, Ireland. Her research interests include applied linguistics, language assessment and testing, and cultural education.

Thuy-Van Mai Huynh is a lecturer in English studies at the School of Foreign Languages, Tra Vinh University, Vietnam. She received a Master of Management from Southern Leyte State University, Philippines in 2014. Her research interests focus on Soft skills, English Teaching Methodology, and Research Methodology Teachers.

EFL Learners' Cultural Identity: A Case Study on Level Eight Female EFL Students at King Khalid University

Amal M. Al-Beshri

English Department, Applied Colleges, King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—This study aims to investigate the effect of learning English on the cultural identity of EFL learners. It also aims to examine learners' attitudes toward the influence of the English language on their cultural identity from their perspective. Participants included 103 level eight female learners from the English Department in the College of Education at King Khalid University in Abha, Saudi Arabia. The data was collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicated that the learners' cultural identity had changed through learning English, and this change was a result of adopting features from Western culture. Moreover, prolonged exposure to, and understanding of, the English language helped learners to develop a level of awareness of the differences between the Saudi and Western cultures. Furthermore, it was found that the vast majority (90%) of the learners had a positive attitude toward the influence of learning English on their cultural identity. The results further indicated that the learners looked at the English language as a superior language and associated it with success in their lives. Finally, the study concludes with recommendations for curriculum designers, teachers, and parents on how to minimise the effects of learning English on the cultural identity of learners.

Index Terms—second term, culture, identity, English language

I. INTRODUCTION

In our globalized world today, the English language plays a fundamental role in essential fields such as education, economics, medicine, and science. A significant amount of the world's knowledge about these crucial fields is written in English which means learning English is important to access this knowledge (Crystal, 2012). In Saudi Arabia, English occupies a vital role in the educational system. It is taught either as a school subject or as a special major in universities. However, some scholars predict that English is going to become the medium of instruction in academic institutions in Saudi Arabia. Elyas (2014) believes that students are taught intensive English courses to prepare them for studying at all the universities where the courses will be taught in English.

Nowadays, the English language has become more than a school subject to its learners; it has become a tool to enrich their knowledge, to communicate with the outside world and to express their feelings to others. Moreover, it has become something they want to master (Pishghadam & Sadeghi, 2011). Although learning a powerful language like English brings with it benefits such as increased knowledge and self-confidence, it can also adversely affect local languages, cultures, and identity (Hopkyns, 2014). The process of learning a foreign language such as English helps students attain a new perspective about their own society and culture. Furthermore, it also allows them to view and understand other societies and cultures from a new perspective as well (Osler & Starkey, 2000; cited in Pishghadam & Sadeghi, 2011). However, this new perspective can not only positively change a student's view of their identity and culture, but it can also change them negatively, too.

The concepts of language, culture, and identity are strongly connected to one another. For instance, Gunderson (2000) asserted that the concepts of language and culture overlap. They cannot be separated because they have no or little meaning apart from one another. To interact in another language, one's culture must interact with the culture of those who speak that language. Similarly, to understand one's culture, we need to access his/her language directly because every culture is transmitted through its own language/s. Therefore, it is clear that a language such as English is not and cannot be just a language. It is a language that is always accompanied by its dominant culture (Hopkyns, 2014). As a result, learning a second or foreign language like English in any community requires paying great attention to the culture of that language (Hinkel, 2015).

Norton (1997) asserted that individuals develop their identity by how they use a language whether it be their first language or an additional language. Research on language learning from the 1970s to the 1980s viewed the language learners' identities in terms of fixed personalities, different learning styles, and motivation to learn languages. However, the recent research on language learning identities has followed a post-structural understanding that describes identities as multiple, fluid, and always changing due to specific historical and cultural conditions (Norton & Toohey, 2011). This new perspective makes it clear that the learners' identities are far from being fixed or unitary especially if they are exposed to another language and another culture. Based on this perspective, identity can be defined as "how a person understands

his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (Norton, 2000, p. 5).

In the process of learning a foreign language, a second identity is internally developed through contact with a new culture; as a result, the learner’s beliefs, views of the world, and identity change. Moreover, the learner’s feelings and different ways of thinking and interacting can become confused or disturbed (Brown, 2007). Equally relevant is the present study’s educational setting where students learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in a non-native English-speaking country. It is a complex learning process that involves negotiating new identities to accommodate new values and to function effectively in the target language. Consequently, after being exposed to another language and culture, learners of a new language may appreciate their language and cultural values more or depreciate them more (Pishghadam & Sadeghi, 2011).

An individual’s identity has many elements that can be influenced by different social, personal, and linguistic factors (Hopkyns, 2014). One of these elements is cultural identity which is the key concept that this present study is attempting to explore. According to Hall (1996), cultural identity can be seen from two perspectives. The first one is that we can look at the cultural identity as a stable, fixed culture, or the culture of a whole society as a “one, shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self,’ hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’ which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (p. 394). The second perspective describes the cultural identity as flexible, dynamic, and ever-changing. The cultural identity of individuals that “undergo constant transformation [and are far] from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power” (p. 394). Indeed, the challenge of maintaining learners’ own cultural identity in the face of learning a global language such as English is an issue that EFL learners face during their university years of learning English. Therefore, the present study, which is limited to King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia, investigates the effect of learning English on EFL female students’ cultural identity.

A. Statement of the Problem

Learning English as a Foreign Language has given EFL learners access to the target culture. The learners get to view Western people’s lifestyles and values, listen to their music, read their literature and integrate themselves into the culture. Thus, this may lead to a shift in the learners’ cultural identity and their general attitude toward their own culture. According to Huizhu (2012), one aspect of identity change can be described as *relational* which means that an individual integrates him/herself in relation to other individuals (Huizhu, 2012; cited in Anbreen, 2014). Being influenced by Western culture is normal in our globalized world. However, it becomes problematic when it negatively affects the learners’ view of their own culture or the target culture and consequently affects their learning process. This study investigates the issue of cultural identity by focusing on how the learners show the continuation or change in their cultural identity after learning English. Moreover, it focuses on EFL learners’ attitudes toward the influence of learning English on their culture.

B. Study Questions

The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do EFL female learners show continuation or change in their cultural identity as a result of learning EFL during their graduation year (i.e., last semester) at KKU?
2. What are the attitudes of female university students of EFL toward the shift in their cultural identity at KKU?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Language, culture, and identity have attracted many researchers’ attention for the last ten years, and they have investigated the issue of culture and identity from different perspectives. The following sections discuss the existing empirical research on the topic. The first section presents previous studies on the attitudes toward English and Westernization. The second section presents previous studies on the effects of learning English on national identity, and the third section presents previous studies on the effect of English on learners’ cultural identity.

A. Previous Studies on Attitudes Toward English and Westernization

It has been noted that almost all of the previous studies focusing on the learners’ attitudes toward the English language and Western culture have found mainly positive attitudes. For example, Haq and Smadi (1996) examined Saudi university students’ attitudes toward the notion of Westernization, national identity, and their religious commitment. The results revealed that the use of English does not negatively affect the participants’ national identity or weaken their religious commitment, nor does it even make them Westernized. Moreover, Findlow (2006) investigated the linguistic-culture dualism in three higher education institutions in the United Arab Emirates. The study aimed to examine how Arabic and English are involved in reshaping Emirate identities through collective higher education. The results showed a conflict in desires and attitudes toward the English language as it is seen as a reflexive tool that changes cultures.

Furthermore, Morrow and Castleton (2011) examined the attitudes of 40 participants from 14 different Arab countries toward the English language and found the students to be almost entirely positive. A year later, Hagler (2012) investigated the attitudes of Saudi university students toward Western culture and found out that 62% of male participants and 70%

of female participants had positive views about Western culture and were very eager and curious to learn more about it. Similarly, Alkaff (2013) examined the attitudes of 47 level-one students toward the English language. The findings revealed that most of the students had positive attitudes toward the English language and a desire to improve their use of the language.

Such positive attitudes might be due to looking at the English language as a highly prestigious language associated with superiority and success. Al-Jarf's (2008) study investigated the attitudes of 470 female Saudi Arabian undergraduates toward the position of the English language in their lives. The results indicated that 96% of participants viewed the English language as a superior language due to its position globally, and 91% of them related English to success in life.

B. Previous Studies on the Effect of English on National Identity

Regarding the effect of English on national identity, Elyas (2014) investigated the Saudi EFL learning identities of first-year university students. The participants were required to write stories about what influences their language learning process. The study used narrative analysis to analyze the participants' stories, and the findings revealed that the EFL learners firmly aligned themselves with stories relating to globalization, the information age and individuality. The learners' identities were independent of and unconstrained with their society's values. Moreover, the investigated students valued online communication with English native speakers and were very fascinated by and immersed in Western culture.

A year later, Anbreen (2015) examined the influence of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) on the national identity of Pakistani students. The participants were 40 students who were learning English as a Second Language (ESL). The results showed that the students' identity was fluid and had changed. The author asserted that learning English changed the learners' identities by increasing their confidence and making them independent from their families while also changing their attitudes toward their former social relationships with others. Most importantly, the author believed that the learners' identity change is related to context change. He asserted that when the learners changed their context from high school to the university context in which they were majoring in English, their identity altered to meet the needs of the new environment. Moreover, the author asserted that "students even in non-native context use ESL knowledge to shape their identities and view the future prospects via these identities" (p. 386).

Recently, Sa'd (2017) investigated the identity construction of 45 EFL Iranian learners. The results showed that the investigated learners relied upon several concepts such as different personalities, ethnicity, religious affiliations, traditional customs, and values to describe the concept of identity. Moreover, the majority of the participants believed learning English has positively changed the way they perceive their identity, and they showed a strong tendency to be integrated and identified with the cultural and linguistic norms of Western societies.

C. Previous Studies on Culture and Identity

Regarding the EFL learners' cultural identity, Seppälä (2011) investigated how the influence of the English language and Western culture affects the cultural identity of Chinese university students. The results showed that learning English had changed the perspective and the attitude of the Chinese students toward their culture and Western culture. Moreover, attitudes toward the English language were mainly instrumented to get a better job and to cope with the globalization of the world. Furthermore, the author asserted that young Chinese students are intrigued by the Western lifestyle of independence and freedom; consequently, this led them to adjust their cultural identity to cope with what they have learned from the English language.

A few years later, Hopkyns (2014) investigated the attitudes of female Emirati university students' regarding learning English, and the effect of global English on their culture and identity. The results indicated that the participants had positive and negative attitudes toward the impact of English on their cultural identities. The positive views toward the effects were that learning English made them more confident, independent and able to communicate with other foreign people. On the other hand, some students felt that learning English had hurt the Emirati culture such as through the loss of some Arabic language, the changing of clothes and habits, and the desire to look and act like Westerners.

A year later, Razmeh and Davoodi (2015) analyzed the impact of learning English on the Iranian EFL learners' culture and identity. The participants were 50 bachelor's degree students and 50 master's degree students majoring in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). The results indicated that the young participants (the baccalaureate students) were fascinated by Western culture and were more interested in shifting their identities. Furthermore, the findings showed that MA students had an awareness of both their own culture and the target culture, and they were able to protect their cultural identities better than the BA students.

Although all of the previous studies mentioned above have been conducted inside and outside the Arabian Gulf region and have investigated similar issues related to language and culture, the present study is different from them. While those studies have approached cultural identity by focusing only on the learners' attitudes toward Western culture, this study investigates both the changes that undergo the learners' cultural identity while learning English and their attitudes toward the shift in their cultural identity. In general, the present study aims to add to the growing body of knowledge in the Arabian Gulf region as it increases awareness of language, culture, and identity.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *Sample*

The target participants of this study were 103 Saudi Female EFL level-eight university students majoring in the English language at King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. They were studying English between three and six years. Most of them (66%) had learned no other languages besides English and their mother tongue of Arabic though some of them (34%) claimed that they were learning Turkish or French as well. Furthermore, 60% of the participants claimed that other members of their family speak English fluently such as their brothers and sisters while 40% asserted that they are the only English speaker in their families. The reason behind choosing level eight specifically is that the students at this level tend to have a more prolonged exposure to and a better understanding of the English language than other levels have.

B. *Research Instruments*

The research materials for this study consisted of a questionnaire as well as a semi-structured interview. First, the questionnaire consists of three main parts. The first part of the questionnaire was named "Language and Culture". The second part was labeled "Saudi Culture vs. Western Culture". Finally, the third part was called "Attitudes Toward the Effect of English on Culture". The questionnaire was taken from a Seppälä (2011) study on Chinese students. However, the researcher made the appropriate changes in the questionnaire to meet the needs of her research context. All the statements were translated into the Arabic language to ensure the students' full understanding of the statements since the concept of cultural identity might be new to the participants. Second, there was the interview with interview questions that were divided into three parts. The first part of the interview was named "General Views About the Saudi and Western Cultures". The second part of the interview was called "The Impact of English on Learners' Cultural Identity". Finally, the third part of the interview was labelled "Attitudes Toward the Effect of the English Language on Saudi Culture".

C. *Procedure*

The researcher employed a two-part method. First, the questionnaire was administered to 103 Saudi female university students by their teachers. The researcher was present and explained the concept of cultural identity to the students and encouraged them to ask about any statement they did not understand. The informants were given 15 minutes which was deemed a sufficient amount of time to complete the questionnaire. After collecting the questionnaires, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program was used to analyze the questionnaire statistically. Second, after analyzing the questionnaires, the interviews were conducted. Out of 30 respondents, 11 were randomly selected for the interview. The participants were encouraged to express themselves freely, whether in Arabic or English, to attain highly personalized data without limiting the nature of the participant's responses. The interviews were analyzed using the content analysis method. First, they were searched through to find possible themes and similar attitudes. Second, the information was coded under specific themes. Finally, some examples were selected from the answers, to demonstrate both the common and abnormal responses. The examples from the interviews are transcribed, and for some, translated word for word. Moreover, the examples taken from the informants' interviews are separated with numbers from 1 to 11 using the abbreviation "Stud" for "student".

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Results*

(a). *The Questionnaire*

The findings of the questionnaire are divided into three parts. The first part of the questionnaire was named "Language and Culture". The second part was labeled "Saudi Culture vs. Western Culture". Finally, the third part was called "Attitudes Toward the Effect of English on Culture".

1. *Language and Culture*

This part presents the results regarding the informants' general attitudes toward the position of the English language in their lives, and the impact of learning English on their perceptions of their culture and the target culture. The results are shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1
MEAN PERCENT OF THE LEARNERS' VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.1. Learning English in Saudi Arabia today is important.	67.0	32.0	0	1.0
1.2. The increasing need for and use of the English language in Saudi Arabia has changed the culture of the Saudi people.	16.5	55.3	26.2	1.9
1.3. I think learning the English language has affected my cultural identity.	13.6	31.1	46.6	8.7
1.4. I think that studying English (language and culture) has changed my opinion about the Western world (culture, people, and way of life).	16.5	57.3	25.2	1.0
1.5. I think that studying English (language and culture) has changed my opinion about Saudi or my own (culture, people, language, way of life).	5.8	24.3	55.3	14.6
1.6. The English language is the only channel through which I can learn about other cultures and introduce my culture to people in other countries.	25.2	39.8	32.0	2.9

As can be seen in Table 1 above, the vast majority of the informants (99%) agreed that learning English in Saudi Arabia today is important, and only one informant disagreed. Regarding the effect of learning English on the Saudi people and their culture in general, 71.8% of the informants agreed that the cultural identity of the Saudi people in general has been influenced by the use of the English language while the remaining 28% of the informants disagreed. However, when it comes to the learners' own cultural identity, 44.7% of the informants agreed that learning English has influenced their cultural identity while 55.3% of the informants disagreed.

Furthermore, the majority of the informants (73.8%) agreed that studying English has changed their opinion about the Western world while the remaining 26.2% of the informants disagreed. Moreover, the statement that was most disagreed upon was number 1.5, "I think that studying English (language and culture) has changed my opinion about Saudi or my own (culture, people, language, and way of life), with 70% of the informants responding in disagreement, and only 30% in agreement with the statement. However, almost as much indifference was seen in statement number 2.6: "The English language is the only channel through which I can learn about other cultures and introduce my culture to people in other countries. To this statement, 65% of the informants agreed and 34.9% disagreed.

2. Saudi Culture vs. Western Culture

This part shows the results regarding the learners' preferences and attitudes toward the Saudi and Western cultures and the mixing of the two. Table 2 summarizes the results of this part.

TABLE 2
MEAN PERCENT OF LEARNERS' PREFERENCES BETWEEN THE SAUDI AND WESTERN CULTURES

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2.1. I find the Saudi culture/way of life more appealing to me.	18.4	43.7	32.0	5.8
2.2. I find Western culture/way of life more appealing to me.	9.7	34.0	44.7	11.7
2.3 I think my culture is the same as that of most Saudis.	14.6	61.2	19.4	4.9
2.4 I think my culture is different from that of most Saudis.	6.8	21.4	60.2	11.7
2.5 I think that mixing the Western customs with the Saudi way of life is a good thing.	15.5	35.0	31.1	18.4
2.6 I think that mixing the Western customs with the Saudi way of life is not good.	13.6	35.0	42.7	8.7
2.7 When I compare myself to my grandparents or other members of my family who have not studied English, I feel my cultural identity is different from theirs.	32.0	40.8	23.3	3.9

As shown in Table 2 above, 62.1% of the informants chose Saudi as their preferred culture while 37.8% of the informants disagreed with the statement. In contrast, 43.7% of the informants agreed that the Western way of life is more appealing to them while 56.4% of the informants disagreed with the statement. However, regarding the learners' way of life, 75.8% of the informants agreed that their way of life is the same as that of most Saudis while the remaining 24.3% disagreed. Correspondingly, the majority of the informants (71.9%) disagreed that their way of life is close or similar to that of most Westerners while 28.2% agreed.

Moreover, regarding the informants' attitude toward mixing the Western customs with the Saudi way of life, a little over half of the informants (50.5%) agreed, and the other half (49.5%) disagreed. Furthermore, the statement that was most agreed on in this part was number 2.7: "When I compare myself to my grandparents or other members of my family who have not studied English, I feel my cultural identity is different from theirs." To this statement, 72.8% of the informants responded with agreement and only 27.2% disagreed with the statement.

3. Attitudes Toward the Effect of English on Culture

This part illustrates the results regarding the informants’ attitudes toward the effect of English on their future in general and on their cultural identity in particular. Table 3 summarizes the results of this part.

TABLE 3
MEAN PERCENT OF LEARNERS’ ATTITUDE TOWARD THE EFFECT OF ENGLISH ON THEIR CULTURE

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3.1. I think that speaking English will affect my future.	45.6	39.8	9.7	4.9
3.2. I think this effect of the English language is a positive effect	54.4	41.7	3.9	0
3.3. I think this effect of the English language is a negative effect.	1.9	3.9	53.4	40.8
3.4. I think that learning English has changed the cultural identity in a positive way.	26.2	64.1	8.7	1.0
3.5. I think that learning English has changed the cultural identity in a negative way.	1.0	9.7	68.9	20.4
3.6. Learning about Western culture has helped me to enrich my own culture.	23.3	61.2	13.6	1.9
3.7 Learning English has helped me understand the cultural differences between Saudi and Western culture.	30.1	59.2	6.8	3.9

As shown in Table 3 above, the results indicate that the definite majority of the informants believe that learning English will affect their future with 85.4% having responded with agreement and only 14.6% having responded with disagreement. Moreover, 96% of the informants believed that the effect of English on their lives is positive while only 4% believed that the effect is negative.

Nevertheless, regarding the learners’ attitude toward the change that learning English caused in their cultural identity, most of the informants (90.3%) strongly agreed that learning English had positively changed their cultural identity. Meanwhile, the remaining 10.7% believed that learning English has negatively changed their cultural identity.

Regarding the last two statements in the questionnaire which focused on how the learners benefit from learning English, 84.5% of the informants agreed that learning about Western culture has helped them to enrich their own culture, and only 15.5% disagreed. Moreover, 89.3% of the informants agreed that learning English has helped them to understand the cultural differences between Saudi and Western cultures, and only 10.7% disagreed.

(b). The Interview

The findings of the interview are divided into three parts, namely: 1) General Views About the Saudi and Western cultures, 2) The Impact of English on Learners’ Cultural Identity, and 3) Attitudes Toward the Effect of the English Language on Saudi Culture. Priority was placed on providing original quotes from the interviews, and as mentioned before, each quote has a number which is placed after the abbreviation “Stud.” for “student”.

1. General Views About the Saudi and Western Culture

This part of the interview presents the findings concerning the learners’ views of Saudi and Western cultures. The first question of the interview was: “What does the word ‘culture’ mean to you?” It was found that the majority of the informants (73%) view the word culture as the way of life, the behavior, the clothes, and the norms that define a group of people and differentiate them from others. Meanwhile, the remaining interviewees (27%) described it as the traditional ideas and customs that a group of people follow in their lives.

Moreover, when it comes to describing Saudi culture, the informants had differing opinions. For instance, 36% of the informants described it using words such as “restricted”, “protective”, “stable and never changing”, and “ancient”, while 45% of the informants described the Saudi culture in relation to religion. They asserted that Saudi culture is inseparable from Islam, that it follows the teachings of Islam in its actions even though the people themselves do not follow it. The remaining 18% of the informants described the culture in relation to the Saudi people stating that the Saudi people themselves are incapable of accepting new ideas that go against Saudi customs which makes them inflexible. Moreover, one informant brought up the importance of ancient values and traditions to the Saudi culture stating that: “Our culture in Saudi Arabia follows ancient ideas and beliefs and makes it as traditional rules that everyone should follow blindly” (Stud. 3).

However, when it comes to describing Western culture, most of the informants had a very similar opinion. Question 1.3 asked: “From your point of view, how would you describe Western culture?” Most of the informants (63%) described it using the words “open-minded” and “peaceful”, and as “a culture that is very open and very acceptable to new ideas which help its people to live in harmony and peace.” On the contrary, 18% of the informants described it using the word “racist” and went on to say that it is “a culture that looks down on other cultures and is very racist toward foreign people.” Meanwhile, the remaining 18% of the informants described it using the word “freedom” and as “a culture that gives its people the freedom that they need to express themselves.” However, one informant has negatively expressed that they are given too much freedom and that sometimes people misuse it.

2. The Impact of English on Learners’ Cultural Identity

This part presents findings from the interviews regarding the effect of the English language on the informants' cultural identity from their perspectives. Question 2.1 asked: "Has learning English changed your opinion or view of Saudi or Western culture?" Over half (54%) of the informants asserted that their view of the Saudi culture did not change at all while learning English. However, the remaining 45% of the informants stated that learning English had changed their view of the Saudi people. They continued explaining that they used to think that old Saudi traditions and customs were put to limit the freedom of the people, but after being exposed to another culture they believe it exists to protect their identity. Still, some of them claimed that after witnessing how open other cultures are, they believe that the Saudi people need to open their minds to new ideas and change in general. Moreover, one informant stated that learning English has changed her view of the role of women in Saudi Arabia, saying:

"I used to think that a woman should only think about her house and her husband and that being successful is not on her path, but after seeing how Western women fight for their rights. I believe that women can be successful and have an important role in their countries" (Stud 10).

Regarding Western culture, 18% of the informants claimed there had been no change whatsoever in their opinion about Western culture. Nevertheless, the vast majority (81%) of the informants answered with "Yes definitely" asserting that after learning English, their opinion changed about the Western people and culture. Most of them expressed that, during their first two years at university they were very influenced and fascinated by Western culture, but with the growing knowledge and understanding of the English language, they had become very aware that Western culture is not as perfect as they thought, and that it has its own flaws just like any other culture. One of them explained:

"I used to glorify the West. 'WOW! The West! We have to be like the West', but that changed because I've got a deeper insight into their culture and I learned that we are the same and that our society has something special that no society in the world can come close to" (Stud 11).

The second question was divided into two parts and was aimed at finding out whether the informants believe their cultural identity has changed or not while learning English. Question 2.2 asked interviewees to "Compare yourself now to yourself before learning English. Has learning English changed your culture, your behavior or your way of life? Moreover, 18% claimed their culture had not been affected or changed by the English language. While the majority of the informants (82%) agreed that learning English had altered their culture, asserting that only a part of their own culture has changed and not their entire culture.

Question 2.2.1, the second part of the question, asked: "How did your culture, behavior, and ideas change?" The informants explained how learning English has altered their cultural identity. Some of them asserted that they had adopted some features from Western culture, such as being open-minded, accepting of others' opinions, and being more independent. Others expressed that they had become eager to learn more, be successful, and read a lot about other cultures which is a feature they believe they adopted from the West. However, some of the informants believed that after learning English they have become free from old Saudi traditions and restricted customs. One informant claimed the most significant change in her culture is in how she socializes with others. She explained that:

"I used to think I had to socialize with everyone, especially in family gatherings, and it was hard to find someone who thinks like you. But after learning English, I learned that you don't have to socialize with people you are not interested in. I become attached to people who have the same mindset and speak English, and it has become easier to find them these days" (Stud 8).

Moreover, some informants claimed that since they learned English, they could only express themselves in English. One of them explained that:

Now I can only use English to express my feelings especially when I talk to my friends because they know English... and I know other people don't, so this also makes me stay away from them... the people who don't speak English (Stud 6).

Regarding Question 2.3 about the informants' preference between the Saudi and Western cultures, 36% of the informants chose the Saudi culture claiming it's the culture they were born in and the culture of their family. However, 45% of the informants chose Western culture claiming that although the Saudi culture is at their root, they believe their way of life is closer to the West. Moreover, one informant chose both cultures claiming that she adopted from both Western and Saudi cultures to form her own culture. Meanwhile, another informant chose neither of the two cultures asserting that she has her own culture which is apart from both Saudi and Western cultures.

3. Attitudes Toward the Effect of the English Language on the Cultural Identity

This part presents findings regarding the interviewees' attitudes toward the influence of the English language in general and on their own culture in particular. Question 3.1 asked: "Do you think there is a need for learning the English language in Saudi Arabia?" All the participants answered with "Yes of course" claiming that, English nowadays is necessary for many essential things like getting a job, learning about other cultures, coping with world knowledge, communicating with others, and even for economic and tourism in the country as one informant expressed that:

"So many Westerners come here to Saudi Arabia... and there will be so many Westerners here who only speak English, and we cannot actually have them as tourists if we don't have the language to communicate with them" (Stud 11).

The question that followed was Question 3.2.: "Do you think the need for English will affect the culture of the younger Saudi generation?" Although this question was not asked to three (3) interviewees directly, they did state something about

the matter. Almost all of the informants agreed that English will affect the Saudi culture. In fact, 45% of them stated that this effect will be negative and that they are already witnessing that effect nowadays with the young EFL female learners in level one and four. While the remaining 54% stated that it is hard to decide and that it could have both a negative and positive effect depending on how the people learn the language and how they use it.

The last question in the interview was Question 3.3.: “Do you think learning English has affected your culture positively or negatively?” To this, all the informants answered with “Of course positively”. In fact, 27% of the informants stated that English has positively raised their confidence, enabled them to communicate with people from other countries, and helped them to share their own culture and learn about different cultures. Meanwhile, 36% of the informants claimed that the English language enabled them to be more open to new ideas and helped them to plan their future. Moreover, 37% of the informants expressed that English has helped them to be independent and successful in their lives. One informant explained that learning English and reading about the contribution of Western women helped her to realize that the role of women is found in more places than just the household.

B. Discussion

(a). *Saudi Culture in the Roots, Western Culture on the Minds*

After presenting all the results of the study from both the questionnaires and the interviews, it can easily be concluded that the learners’ cultural identity had changed and was strongly affected by the English language. Based on the participants’ answers to Question 2.1 about the effect of learning English on their views of their culture and other cultures, it was concluded that, during the four years of learning English, the learners had gone from being influenced by the Western way of life and imitating the West to an appreciation of the Saudi culture. This indicates that the change in the learners’ cultural identity was gradual, starting from glorifying Western culture to an awareness of the cultural differences, and for some, to an appreciation of their own culture. Similar results were found in the studies of Seppala (2011) and Hopkyns (2014).

Regarding the participants’ answers to the question about the change in their cultural identity, it was concluded that most of the participants still perceive their culture as Saudi in root and that they only adopt from Western culture the things that are missing in their Saudi culture such as accepting others’ opinions, being open-minded, and being passionate for learning and success. It was also concluded that learning English has raised the students’ self-confidence and made them feel comfortable to communicate with others. Moreover, learning English for four years has granted the learners access to world knowledge such access has allowed them to know about target cultures, and therefore, they could compare it with their own culture. Consequently, this knowledge and comparison of the two cultures changed their opinion about their own culture and helped them to see the uniqueness of their Saudi traditions. It also enabled them to adopt some things from Western culture and add to their own Saudi culture. This indicates that the learners have developed a level of awareness of the cultural differences between the Saudi and Western cultures, and this awareness was the result of prolonged exposure to and understanding of the English language. Similar results were found in the studies of Elyas (2014); Anbreen (2015); and Sa’d (2017). Regarding the learners’ preference between the two cultures the Saudi and Western, the learners did not show any desire to abandon their own culture completely and imitate the West. Therefore, there was no evidence of Westernization in their answers in both the questionnaire and the interview. This result is similar to the results found in the study of HAQ and Smadi (1996).

(b). *Superiority of the English Language*

The answers to the questions about the importance of learning English in Saudi Arabia indicated that the vast majority of the participants (99%) believe that learning English is a must in Saudi Arabia. The main reason is that English is known as a global language or the language of the world, and it is believed that it is the only channel through which one can learn about other cultures; therefore, it is needed for communicating with others. Another reason for needing English is to progress in studies and careers. It seems that most of the informants believe that English guarantees success in life as they attached it to getting jobs in Saudi Arabia. Another reason is that by using English, one can better access the world’s knowledge given the fact that everything on the internet is written in English nowadays. It is undeniable that female EFL learners look at the English language as a superior and dominating language. This view of English is similar to the findings found in Al-Jarf’s (2008) study and Hopkyns’s (2014) study.

(c). *Attitudes Toward the Effect of the English Language on Saudi Culture*

Regarding the participants’ attitudes toward the effect of learning English on their culture, the majority of the participants (90%) showed a great deal of positivity when it came to the influence of learning English on their lives and ways of thinking. The informants spoke positively about how learning English helped them increase their confidence, be independent, be more open-minded, and most importantly, granted them access to the world’s knowledge. Previous studies mentioned in the related literature review section also found mainly positive attitudes toward English (Alkaff, 2013; Findlow, 2006; Hagler, 2014; Hopkyns, 2014; Morrow & Castleton, 2011).

Furthermore, for some learners, English was a channel through which they were able to communicate with foreign people, learn about other cultures, and share parts of their own culture with the outside world. This knowledge has brought them an awareness of the differences between the Saudi and Western culture. Consequently, this awareness has helped

them to only adopt some things from Western culture regarding what is proper in their culture. This view was also mentioned in previous studies such as Seppälä (2011).

Nevertheless, some informants reported that being exposed to other cultures helped them to gain an understanding of their own culture and values and enabled them to change some of the old traditions. For some informants, English helped them to reassess their role as women in Saudi society, whereas for some, being able to express deeper personal feelings in English was a way to have privacy from others. This indicates that the learners used English as a tool to liberate themselves from old customs and Saudi traditions and also as a way to socialize with people who speak English and to isolate themselves from others. This view was also mentioned in previous studies. For example, Hopkyns (2017) in her doctoral thesis expressed that “English was also seen as liberating by some Emirati participants... students who were ‘different’ in some way using English as a way to escape from conventions” (p. 247).

Although the effects of English on the personal lives and the cultural identity of the informants were mainly viewed as positive, some informants reported in the interview that the impact of English on the Saudi culture might be negative in terms of clothes, habits, and maintenance of the Arabic language. This result is similar to the results found in Hopkyns’s (2014) study. However, some informants had a positive view about the 2030 vision stating that hopefully by introducing the Chinese language and culture alongside the English, the Saudi culture or way of life will positively change and cope with the other cultures, too.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusion

This study investigated the cultural identity of female EFL learners at King Khalid University. The results of the study showed that the EFL learners’ cultural identity had changed due to learning English. This change in their cultural identity results from adopting some features from Western culture and adding them to their Saudi culture. Moreover, the results indicated that prolonged exposure to the English language gave the learners an awareness of the cultural differences between Western and Saudi cultures. This awareness of cultural differences helped them better appreciate their own culture and values. Furthermore, the learners’ attitudes toward the impact of English on their cultural identity were relatively positive. They believe learning English has made them more confident and granted them the opportunity to learn more about other cultures and introduce their own culture to others.

B. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are set forth for curriculum designers, EFL teachers, and for further research:

1. For curriculum designers, the study recommends that it would be helpful to include topics from both Saudi and Western cultures and introduce cultural differences between them instead of focusing on one culture. As Hopkyns (2014) suggests: “With English surrounding the students in everyday life and in higher education, they may benefit from greater inclusion of local culture, in its many forms” (p. 12).
2. For EFL teachers, it is highly recommended to use teaching methods that encourage expressing students' own identity, such as translanguaging. As Sayer (2013) asserted "using translanguaging allowed space in the classroom for discussions and allows learners to negotiate meaning and affirmed their identities as bilingual learners" (p. 23).
3. Moreover, the researcher also suggests that EFL teachers encourage their learners to take ownership of the English language and to use it to show the traditions and values of their own culture through college workshops and activities, blogs, or any of the modern media applications. As Holliday (2014) recommended: “Learners should carry their own cultural experience into English and stamp it with their own identities” (p. 1; cited in Hopkyns, 2014).
4. For further research, studies can be conducted to investigate the usefulness of using teaching methods such as translanguaging in preserving learner's cultural identity. Moreover, to research this area further, it would be helpful to conduct a longitudinal study to investigate the impact of English on students’ identities as they progress from one level to the other. Such studies can help in identifying where awareness of the English language occurs and how students acquire this awareness.

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Amal M. Al-Beshri is from Khamis Mushait, Saudi Arabia. She completed a bachelor's degree in English language from King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia, in 2014. In 2019, she obtained an MA in Applied Linguistics from the same university.

Currently, she serves as a lecturer at the Faculty of Applied College, King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia. She has undertaken projects in designing English courses for deaf students. During her MA studies, she actively participated in several research conferences held at King Khalid University. Presently, she is engaged in two research projects that explore second language attrition and interlanguage traces among EFL teachers. Her research interests encompass the domains of identity, language and culture, and digital literacy.

In addition to her academic pursuits, Ms. Al-Beshri is an active member of the national platform for voluntary work in Abha, Saudi Arabia. She has contributed to numerous voluntary projects, particularly those aimed at assisting college students.

The Pragmatic Functions of Emojis in University-Related Facebook Group-Posts: A Gender-Based Study

Noor F. Al-Yasin
University of Petra, Jordan

Abstract—The present paper aims to study emojis used by male and female Jordanian university students in university-related Facebook group-posts. More specifically, it aims to reveal the pragmatic functions of emojis used by these students and to see whether they differ based on gender. The sample consists of 100 university-related Facebook group-posts collected from a Facebook group for Jordanian university students. The Facebook group is called Ask Petra University. The researcher collected 100 posts (50 posts by males and 50 posts by females). The data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The framework that this paper refers to is Yus's (2014) taxonomy of pragmatic functions of emoticons. The study revealed that the most frequently used emojis by both males and females are the face with tears of joy 😊, the broken heart 💔 and the red heart ❤️. Some of them were used for the same pragmatic function by both genders. However, the broken heart had different pragmatic functions. The study concludes with some future recommendations and pedagogical implication.

Index Terms—emojis, Facebook, gender, Jordanian, pragmatic functions

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, people tend to use emojis/emoticons in their online communication as a way to clarify or add meaning to their utterances. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines 'emoji'¹ as

any of various small images, symbols, or icons used in text fields in electronic communication (as in text messages, e-mail, and social media) to express the emotional attitude of the writer, convey information succinctly, communicate a message playfully without using words, etc.

In the last few decades, the wide usage of emojis in online interactions has drawn the attention of several scholars (e.g. Walther & D'Addario, 2001; Dresner & Herring, 2010). Scholars have shown interest in studying emojis due to their emotional expressiveness that mirrors non-verbal cues in discourse (Rezabek & Cochenour, 1998; Crystal, 2006). Plus, they are used in a variety of contexts as in casual texting, brand advertising and social media reactions (Romig, 2015; Alshboul & Rababah, 2021; Etman & Elkareh, 2021).

The use of emojis in online conversations and interactions has become the highlight of recent pragmatic studies. These studies are focusing on the various functions these emojis serve during online interactions taking into consideration the culture factor and how it affects their usage. For instance, Al Rashdi (2015) studied the forms and functions of emojis in WhatsApp groups by Omanis. The data were collected from two WhatsApp groups where one group had only male participants, while the other had only female participants. The study revealed different pragmatic functions for emojis by Omanis, such as emotion indicators, attitude indicators, responding to thanks, greetings and compliments. Furthermore, Gibson et al. (2018) studied the communicative functions of face-covering hand emoji in Mandarin chat groups. The data were collected from an exclusive chatting group dedicated for private Chinese company staff. This emoji was selected specifically in this study since it is frequently used in Chinese online conversations. The analysis revealed that this emoji is mainly used as a mitigating device. It mitigates criticism and disapproval. Similarly, Li and Yang's (2018) corpus-based study investigated the pragmatic functions of emojis in Chinese conversations. The researchers also investigated the most frequently used emojis by Chinese. The study presented seven different pragmatic functions of emojis, such as signaling emotions and attitudes, humor and irony. According to this study, the most frequently used emojis by Chinese are the thumbs-up emoji, the rose emoji and the traditional Chinese greeting emoji.

Emojis have also been looked at as a conversational aid that could help intensify verbal language. Sampietro (2019) investigated the use of emojis for rapport management in Spanish WhatsApp groups. The researcher gathered the data from a corpus for Spanish WhatsApp chats. The findings suggested that emojis are mainly used by Spanish for greeting, thanks and goodbyes. Moreover, they are also used as adjacency pairs for birthday and Christmas wishes. In addition, Cohn et al. (2019) studied the grammar of emojis used by a culturally-diverse group. There were two experiments in the study. In the first experiment, the participants were asked to communicate online using only emojis. In the second

¹ Definition of the word 'emoji' is retrieved from Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emoji>

experiment, they were asked to substitute at least one emoji with a word. The findings from the first experiment revealed that emoji-only utterances were very simple in structure and resemble formulaic expressions. The second experiment revealed that participants often substituted emojis with nouns and adjectives than other parts of speech. Another study by Inderasari et al. (2023) investigated the pragmatic functions of emojis used by Indonesian undergraduate students with their lecturer through online learning communication. After data collection and observation, the findings revealed that the students used multiple emojis to serve pragmatic functions, such as showing joyfulness, showing happiness, apologizing and showing gratitude.

More recent studies also investigated the pragmatic functions of emojis in an Arabic context. For example, Hamdan (2022) examined the pragmatic functions of the most commonly used emojis by Jordanian Facebook users. He found that the most frequently used ones were the Face with Tears of Joy, the Red Heart, the Slightly Smiling Face, the Face Blowing a Kiss, and the Winking Face. He also found that those emojis were employed for different illocutionary forces, such as expressive acts, directive acts and declarative acts. He concluded that these emojis go beyond their semantics as context and culture play significant roles to alter their literal meaning. Moreover, Al-Harbi and Mahzari (2023) used mixed methods to identify the pragmatic functions of emojis used in Arabic tweets. They also studied gender differences to see whether the emojis were used for similar or different purposes. Studying 421 Arabic tweets by Arab males and females, their study revealed that the most frequently used emojis in the tweets were Loudly Crying Face, Face with Tears of Joy, Red Heart, Smiling Face with Heart-Eyes, Broken Heart and others. They were used for multiple pragmatics functions, such as action and reaction, decoration, softening and tone modification. Regarding gender, they found that females used and repeated emojis more than males. Also, Loudly Crying Face was used more often by tweets posted by females, while Face with Tears of Joy was mostly used by male Arab tweeters.

Previous literature on emojis has concluded that they can be used for multiple functions depending on the user's cultural background, gender or even both. Yet, few studies have taken into consideration the age factor and how it could impact the use of emojis in online interactions. The present paper attempts to contribute to previous research on emojis as a communicative device by studying the pragmatic functions of emojis among Jordanian university students in university-related Facebook group-posts. Emojis are playing an important role in our conversations nowadays, especially among young adults. Emojis can help boosting the illocutionary force for the speaker. Therefore, studying them can be considered as important as studying linguistic/verbal features.

II. AIM OF THE STUDY

The present paper aims to study emojis used by male and female Jordanian university students in university-related Facebook group-posts. More specifically, it aims to reveal the pragmatic functions of emojis used by these students and to see whether they differ based on gender. The paper answers two research questions:

1. What are the most frequently used emojis by Jordanian university students in university-related Facebook group-posts? Are there any differences according to gender?
2. What are the pragmatic functions of these emojis? Do they differ according to gender?

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Sample and Data Collection

The sample consists of 100 university-related Facebook group-posts collected from a Facebook group for Jordanian undergraduate university students. The Facebook group is called *Ask Petra University*. This Facebook group is dedicated for University of Petra undergraduate students whom their posts are related to their university life, such as asking about books, classes, lectures and professors. They also post university-related events, jokes and random inquiries. The researcher collected the most recent² 100 posts (50 posts by males and 50 posts by females). Posts that do not have any emojis are excluded. In addition, the researcher collected posts that include utterance + emoji/s. The posts collected for the present study were posted between October 28 and November 9, 2022.

B. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative analysis answers the first research question on the most frequently used emojis and to see whether there are differences between males and females. However, the qualitative analysis provides examples from the data to study the pragmatic functions of these emojis and to find gender differences if one emoji, for example, is used frequently by both genders but used for a different pragmatic function. The framework that this paper refers to is Yus's (2014) taxonomy. Yus (2014, p. 526) revised his previous taxonomy (Yus, 2011) by presenting a new descriptive variable and sentimental gradation, and proposed an eight-function taxonomy:

1. To signal the propositional attitude that underlies the utterance and which would be difficult to identify without the aid of the emoticon
2. To communicate a higher intensity of a propositional attitude which has already been coded verbally
3. To strengthen/mitigate the illocutionary force of a speech act
4. To contradict the explicit content of the utterance by means of joking

² By the time the data were collected for the purpose of the study

5. To contradict the explicit content of the utterance by means of irony
6. To add a feeling or emotion towards the propositional content of the utterance (affective attitude towards the utterance)
7. To add a feeling or emotion towards the communicative act (feeling or emotion in parallel to the communicative act)
8. To communicate the intensity of a feeling or emotion that has already been coded verbally.

Names of emojis in the Results and Discussion section are adopted from www.emojipedia.org for convenience purposes.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first part of this section provides a quantitative analysis in order to answer the first research question ‘*what are the most frequently used emojis by Jordanian university students in university-related Facebook group-posts? are there any differences according to gender?*’ Table 1 below shows the frequencies and percentages of the emojis used by Jordanian university students in university-related Facebook group-posts.

TABLE 1
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF EMOJIS USED BY JORDANIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Emoji	Frequency	Percentage
Face with Tears of Joy 🤩	75	40.7
Broken Heart 💔	16	8.7
Red Heart ❤️	16	8.7
Slightly Smiling Face 😊	13	7.1
Cherry Blossom 🌸	12	6.5
Smiling Face with Heart-Eyes 😍	9	4.9
Unamused Face 😏	7	3.8
Grinning Face with Sweat 😄	7	3.8
Moon 🌑	6	3.3
Waving Hand 🙋	6	3.3
Beaming Face with Smiling-Eyes 😁	6	3.3
Loudly Crying Face 😭	6	3.3
Smiling Face with Sunglasses 😎	3	1.6
Crying Face 😢	2	1.1
Total	184	100%

As can be seen from Table 1 above, the most frequently used emoji among Jordanian university students is the face with tears of joy 🤩 with 40.7%, compared to other emojis used in the 100 posts sampled. The red heart ❤️ and the broken heart 💔 came both in second place after the face with tears of joy with a percentage of 8.7%. The slightly smiling face 😊 was also frequently used by the Jordanian university students with 7.1%. Some emojis were rarely used in the sample, such as the smiling face with sunglasses 😎 and the crying face 😢. This supports Hamdan’s (2022) results where he found that some of the most frequently used emojis by Jordanian Facebook users were the Face with Tears of Joy, the Red Heart, and the Slightly Smiling Face. This also conforms with Al-Harbi and Mahzari’s (2023) study which revealed that some of the most frequently used emojis in the Arabic tweets by males and females were face with Tears of Joy, red Heart, and broken Heart. This implies that Jordanians and Arabs in general tend to be expressive in their online communication by adding emojis to intensify laughter and emotions.

Table 2 below shows the frequencies and percentages of the emojis used by male Jordanian university students in university-related Facebook group-posts. Moreover, Table 3 shows the frequencies and percentages of the emojis used by female Jordanian university students in university-related Facebook group-posts.

TABLE 2
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF EMOJIS USED BY MALE JORDANIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

























Emoji	Frequency	Percentage
Face with Tears of Joy 	60	59.4
Slightly Smiling Face 	9	8.9
Unamused Face 	7	6.9
Broken Heart 	6	5.9
Red Heart 	4	3.9
Grinning Face with Sweat 	4	3.9
Moon 	3	2.9
Smiling Face with Heart-Eyes 	3	2.9
Crying Face 	2	1.9
Smiling Face with Sunglasses 	1	0.9
Waving Hand 	1	0.9
Cherry Blossom 	1	0.9
Total	101	100%

TABLE 3
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF EMOJIS USED BY FEMALE JORDANIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Emoji	Frequency	Percentage
Face with Tears of Joy 	15	18
Red Heart 	12	14.5
Cherry Blossom 	11	13.3
Broken Heart 	10	12
Beaming Face with Smiling Eyes 	6	7.2
Loudly Crying Face 	6	7.2
Smiling Face with Heart-Eyes 	6	7.2
Waving Hand 	5	6
Slightly Smiling Face 	4	4.8
Moon 	3	3.6
Grinning Face with Sweat 	3	3.6
Smiling Face with Sunglasses 	2	2.4
Total	83	100%

As can be seen from Table 2 and Table 3 above, male Jordanian university students used emojis in their group-posts more than females. Male Jordanian university students used 101 emojis in their university-related Facebook group-posts while female Jordanian university students used only 83. This indicates that male Jordanian university students tend to support their utterances with emojis more in order to clarify their illocutionary force, which confirms Sampietro's (2019) findings. However, this is not in line with Al-Harbi and Mahzari (2023) who found that females used and repeated emojis more than males in Arabic tweets. Yet, it is possible that this could be justified by the fact that the sample of the study reported here is taken from university students. Therefore, this contradiction might be affected by age factor where young adult males or university students use emojis more often. Nonetheless, this study is in line with Al-Harbi and Mahzari (2023) in finding that the face with tears of joy 😄 is the most frequently used emoji by both genders but was used more by males. This may imply that the majority of posts indicate humor, jocularity and laughter. The second most frequently used emoji by males is the slightly smiling face 😊 with 8.9%. However, it is not often used by females. The third most frequently used emoji by males is the unamused face 😏, which is not used in any of the posts written by females. The broken heart 💔 is the fourth most frequently used emoji by both males and females. Although the red heart ❤️ came in fifth place by males, it is the second most frequently used emoji by females. The cherry blossom 🌸 is the third most frequently used emoji by females while it is the least used by males. This might indicate a source of femininity in the post since the majority of posts including the cherry blossom were posted by females. The beaming face with smiling eyes 😁 is the fifth most frequently used emoji by females. On the contrary, this emoji is not found in any of the sampled posts posted by males.

A conclusion can be drawn from the analysis above is that some emojis, such as face with tears of joy 😄, the broken heart 💔 and the red heart ❤️, are frequently used by both genders. Nevertheless, they can be used for different pragmatic functions based on gender. Therefore, the second part of this section provides a qualitative analysis in order to answer the second research question 'what are the pragmatic functions of these emojis? do they differ according to gender?'.
 The first emoji to be analyzed is the face with tears of joy 😄 since it is the most frequently used by both genders. The pragmatic function of this emoji, which is used by both genders, is 'to communicate a higher intensity of a propositional attitude which has already been coded verbally'. Jokes, or humor in general, are implied in the utterance of the post. However, Jordanian university students tend to intensify the humorous aspect in the post by adding the face with tears of joy 😄 to the post. This conforms with Li and Yang's (2018) study that laughing emojis are used frequently to indicate humor. The data below are examples on this pragmatic function.

Example 1: (Male Post)

Original Text: 😄 أغبى اختراع شفته بحياتي هو جهاز تنشيف الايدين. تقعد ساعة حاطط ايدك وبالآخر تمسحها ببنطلونك
 Transliteration: ayba xtiraaʕ fuʔtu bhayaati hu zihaaz tanʕiif ilʔiden tugʕud saaʕa haati ʔiidik u bil ʔaaxir timsaħha bbantʕaloonak
 Translation: The stupidest invention I've ever seen is the hand dryer. You put your hands there for an hour then wipe them with your pants.

Example 2: (Female Post)


Original Text: 😂😂 يا بيبي ما اكثرهن [posts a picture of an innocent snake]
 Transliteration: ya bay makʕarhin
 Translation: How many of them!

The second emoji to be analyzed is the broken heart 💔 since it is in the top five used emojis by both genders. However, males and females used this emoji for different pragmatic functions. Male Jordanian university students mainly used this emoji 'to add a feeling or emotion towards the propositional content of the utterance (affective attitude towards the utterance)'. Although their posts indicate humor, the broken heart 💔 is added to the utterance to imply the feeling of sadness. The posts are related to failing exams or not doing so well in university. Thus, despite the fact that the post is humorous, the emoji 💔 implies an affective attitude towards the post. This is in line with Hamdan (2022) who concluded that these emojis go beyond their semantics as context and culture play significant roles to alter their literal meaning. Below is an example of a male post that included this emoji with the utterance.


Example 3: (Male Post)



Original text: 💔 لما انقل اجابات اللي قدامي و اطلع الاقيه بعبيط
 Transliteration: lamma angul izabaat illi guddami o atʕlaʕ alagiih biʕayitʕ
 Translation: When I copy the answers from who's in front of me and leave the test and see him crying.

On the contrary, female posts included this emoji for a different pragmatic function. It is used 'to add a feeling or emotion towards the communicative act (feeling or emotion in parallel to the communicative act)'. While males used this


emoji with propositions, females used it with communicative acts. The posts are mainly asking for help on how to study one of the courses. Therefore, the broken heart  implies a sad feeling towards the communicative act as a sign for help. Below is an example of a female post that included this emoji with its communicative act.

Example 4: (Female Post)


Original Text:  كيف بتدرسو الوطنية
 Transliteration: kiif btudrusu wat'aniyyeh
 Translation: How do you study National Education?


The third emoji to be analyzed is the red heart  since it is also in the top five used emojis by both genders. It is used for the same pragmatic function by both genders, which is *to indicate solidarity when communicating a speech act*, such as **thanking** and greeting (Al Rashdi, 2015). Below are examples from both male and female posts using the red heart  with speech acts of thanking and greeting.

Example 5: (Male Post)



Original Text: سلام  مين عنده كتاب وطنية؟
 Transliteration: salaam miin ĩindu ktaab wat'niyyeh
 Translation: Hello. Who has National Education book?

Example 6: (Female Post)


Original Text: [posts a picture of a book]  .. حد عنده هاد الكتاب؟
 Transliteration: masa lxeer ĩadu ĩindu haad lktaab
 Translation: Good evening. Does anyone have this book?




The slightly smiling face  is the second most frequently used emoji by male Jordanian university students. It is mainly used *to contradict the explicit content of the utterance by means of irony*. Some male students posted requests for help indicating an ironic situation happened to them, as seen below. In addition, irony was used as a means of humor intensified by the emoji.

Example 7: (Male Post)




Original Text: ضيعت كتابي من اول يوم   كيف بقدر الاقيه؟
 Transliteration: d'ayyaġt ktaabi min awwal yoom kiif ba?dar ala?iĥ
 Translation: I lost my book on the first day. How can I find it?

Example 8: (Female Post)

Original Text: [Posts picture of a keychain]  حد شاف مفتاح لكر عليه هاي المداية؟
 Transliteration: masa lxeer ĩadu ĩaaf muftaaĥ lakar ġleh hay lmdalyeh
 Translation: Good evening. Did anyone see a locker key with this keychain?

The cherry blossom  is the third most frequently used emoji by female Jordanian university students after the face with tears of joy  and the red heart . It is mainly used *to indicate solidarity when communicating a speech act*, such as thanking and greeting (Al Rashdi, 2015), as seen above in Example 8. Nonetheless, this emoji was used only by females which might indicate an aspect of femininity while greeting.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present paper aimed to find out the most frequently used emojis in university-related Facebook posts written by Jordanian university students. Furthermore, it aimed to reveal any gender differences in using emojis. This paper also investigated the pragmatic functions of the most frequently used emojis by Jordanian university students. The quantitative analysis revealed that the most frequently used emoji in the sample is the face with tears of joy . The pragmatic function of this emoji, which is used by both genders, is *'to communicate a higher intensity of a propositional attitude which has already been coded verbally'*. This emoji mainly accompanies posts of jokes and humor as a way to intensify the proposition. Males and females used the broken heart  for different pragmatic functions. Male Jordanian university students mainly used this emoji *'to add a feeling or emotion towards the propositional content of the utterance (affective attitude towards the utterance)'*. On the contrary, female Jordanian university students used it *'to add a feeling or emotion towards the communicative act (feeling or emotion in parallel to the communicative act)'*. Finally, the red heart  is used for the same pragmatic function by both genders, which is to indicate solidarity when communicating a speech act, such

as thanking and greeting. Regardless of gender, it has been noticed that undergraduate university students use emojis extensively in their online posts and interactions to be more expressive (Inderasari et al., 2023). This indicates the importance of these communicative devices in their lives. It would be interesting to conduct a study in the future where young adults have to make online interactions, such as posts, comments or texting, deprived from the use of emojis. Then, study perceptions of other young adults to see how much impact these emojis have on illocution.

There are some limitations in the present paper. The sample is limited to 100 posts (50 by males and 50 by females). The data were gathered from one Facebook group only. Therefore, results cannot be generalized. More data are needed in order to investigate the use of emojis by university students and the pragmatic functions they serve. Further research may study the use of emojis and their pragmatic functions by other age groups, such as teenagers and older adults. This study is also limited to emojis where there are other non-verbal devices are used nowadays in online interactions, such as stickers, animated stickers and GIFs. Further research may study how these devices are different from emojis in terms of the pragmatic functions they serve. Finally, a pedagogical implication can be drawn from the study reported here. Since young adults are used to using emojis, these devices can be integrated in the process of learning a second or a foreign language. For example, they can be used as non-verbal devices to teach lexical items, like adjectives and nouns, and formulaic expressions like idioms (cf. Cohn et al., 2019).

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Noor F. Al-Yasin obtained her PhD in Linguistics from the University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan in 2020. She obtained her Master’s Degree in Linguistics from the University of Jordan in 2016.

She is currently an Assistant Professor of Linguistics at the University of Petra in Jordan. She is mainly interested in Sociolinguistic and Pragmatic studies. She is also interested in TV language and Audiovisual Translation. She has published in academic journals and participated in international conferences. One of her notable publications is Al-Yasin, N. and Rabab’ah, G. (2019). Arabic audiovisual translation of taboo words in American hip hop movies: A contrastive study. *Babel, 65*(2), 222-248.

Representation of Palestine and Kashmir Conflict in English Literature: A Study of Selected Works

Akhter Habib Shah*

Department of English, College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia

Shouket Ahmad Tilwani

Department of English, College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—This comparative study delves into the nuanced realm of resistance literature originating from the conflicted territories of Kashmir and Palestine. It seeks to examine and juxtapose the literary expressions emerging from these regions, shedding light on their shared themes and narratives that articulate resistance against political oppression, occupation, and socio-cultural turmoil. Through an interdisciplinary approach, this paper shall analyse select works across a spectrum of fiction and memoirs from Kashmiri and Palestinian writers writing in English. It shall explore the multifaceted dimensions of resistance like displacement, identity, trauma, resilience, and yearning for self-determination as depicted in the select works. Drawing insights from critical literary theories and postcolonial frameworks, especially the works of Goldie Osuri and Ather Zia (2020), it also endeavours to highlight cultural, historical, and socio-political contexts that shape the narratives of resistance in the literature from both regions. It aims to discern commonalities and divergences in how these literary pieces confront power structures, articulate resistance, and affirm the enduring human spirit amidst adversity. The relevance of the study lies in its desire to contribute to a deeper understanding of how literature serves as a potent vehicle for resistance, advocacy, and solidarity in regions marred by protracted conflicts. It underscores the significance of these literary voices in amplifying the struggles and aspirations of communities grappling with enduring political strife and asserting their agency in the face of oppression.

Index Terms—conflict, Kashmir, memoirs, Palestine, representation

I. INTRODUCTION

Conflict is, arguably, the linchpin of all narrative literature be it interpersonal conflict or intrapersonal conflict. All forms of narrative evolve through situating characters caught in a conflict and how they strive to arrive at a resolution for the same. However, in certain cases as in the case of literature from Palestine and Kashmir, this conflict ceases to be a metaphor and captures the living realities of people living under siege, occupation, and colonisation be it imperialist or settler in nature. The regions of Kashmir and Palestine share a common experience of ongoing colonization by their respective colonizer states, India, and Israel. These states have a shared vision for a nation founded on the supremacist ideologies of Hindutva and Zionism, respectively. Noam Chomsky commenting on the hand-in-glove relationship between India and Israel notes, “Today’s Israel and Modi’s India are natural partners, sharing values of racist ethnocracy and illegal annexation, and, for Israel, offering a market for military and other advanced technology” (Essa, 2022, p. 4). Despite minor differences in the methods of governance and oppression, literature from both regions shows unmistakable overlaps in the portrayal of themes such as trauma, occupation, resistance, repression, and how oppression seeps into the minutiae of everyday life. These similarities are not limited to the experience of the occupation only and can be traced from the very historical origins of the problem. As Samreen Mushtaq and Mudasir Amin argue,

The colonisation of Kashmir, like Palestine, is not just the influx of a settler population that would derive multiple economic and political benefits at the cost of the natives. It is to be the “crown” of a Hindutva project that wants to make itself the only legitimate sovereign of a people that refuses its control over them. (Mushtaq & Amin, 2020, p. 36)

India and Israel maintain “their military control over Kashmir and Palestine, respectively, resulting in two of the most protracted and deadliest conflicts with noticeable parallels. The United Nations (UN) Resolutions 194 and 242 address the Palestine-Israeli dispute (Ali & Kitchlew, 2019, p. 120), advocating for the right to self-determination for Palestinians. In the context of the Kashmir dispute, UN Resolutions from August 13, 1948, and January 5, 1949, also advocate for the right to self-determination for Kashmiris. However, to date, these resolutions have not been implemented, and the conflicts in both territories continue. The conflict of Palestine and Kashmir emerged from the ashes of British colonialism. Whereas Palestinians were uprooted by the *Nakba*, hundreds of thousands of people from Jammu and Kashmir were displaced in the weeks and months following Partition because of a large-scale massacre against the Muslim population

* Corresponding Author. Email: ah.shah@psau.edu.sa

in the region of Jammu. Over the years, both the Kashmiri and Palestinian right to national self-determination have been subsequently reduced into a rubric of religious conflict: Hindu versus Muslim in Kashmir and Jew versus Muslim in Palestine. Both Palestine and Kashmir have been severely sold out by their leaders. Under the 1975 Indira-Sheikh Accord, Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdullah, who had spent more than a decade in prison, forfeited the demand for self-determination in exchange for being the chief minister of the state. Almost 20 years later, the Oslo Accord would accomplish much of the same for the Palestinians. Kashmiris were moved by the first intifada in the late 1980s to foment their mass uprising against Indian rule.

Essa Azad contends that after 9/11, the resistance against foreign occupation in the context of global anti-Muslim racism was labelled as "Islamic terrorism." Both Palestine and Kashmir are subjected to the ethno-nationalist ideologies of Zionism and Hindutva, which aim to eliminate them. As colonial projects, India and Israel have exercised similar modalities of control to wield the power of their dominions: extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, maiming, torture, economic dependencies, surveillance, home demolitions (or spaciocide), restrictions on mobility, checkpoints, a network of informers, as well as the creation of a collaborator class—the Palestinian Authority in Palestine, as well as pro-India “unionist” parties in Kashmir like the National Conference and the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Both countries also instrumentalize the law to protect their armed forces. Whereas the Indian government uses the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFPSA), to provide cover for the abuses of their soldiers, an entire cultural and legal apparatus in Israel protects Israeli soldiers from facing accountability for “unjustified use of lethal force” (Essa, 2022, p. 130).

In this study, we will compare the representation of two significant disputes in narratives written in English within a specific socio-political context. We will examine how narratives on Kashmir and Palestine have been portrayed by writers who write in English from these two regions. Despite being in different areas, the youth in both territories share similar experiences of oppression, resulting in similar atrocities and crackdowns by occupying forces. This has led to the emergence of generations of young freedom fighters engaged in a political struggle besides the unintended violence, death and destruction. Through a comparative analysis of these disputes by writers from the regions writing in English, we aim to gain insight. The study will delve into the works of writers who have experienced the conflicts themselves. Works such as Jabra Ibrahim’s *World Without Maps* (1982), Elias Khoury’s *Little Mountains* (1977), and Sarah Khalifeh’s *We Are No Longer Your Slave Girls* (1974) will be studied alongside the works of Kashmiri writers like Mirza Waheed’s *The Collaborator* (2011) and *Book of Gold Leaves* (2014) and Siddharth Gigoo’s *Garden of Solitude* (2011). We will deeply analyze the convergences and divergences in the literature of Kashmir and Palestine within the historical context.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Resistance literature challenges dominant narratives and perspectives perpetuated by those in power. It offers alternative viewpoints and counter-narratives that question and deconstruct mainstream ideologies, providing a more comprehensive understanding of societal issues. Having roots as early as classical Greek tragedies, Literature of dissent also known as Resistance Literature took a more concrete shape with the Civil Rights Movement and the Anti-Colonial Struggle through the works of James Baldwin, Maya Angelou, and Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, Salman Rushdie and others. In the Palestinian context, it was Ghassan Kanafani who articulated the inseparable role of literature and political activism. He writes,

My political position springs from my being a novelist. Insofar as I am concerned, politics and the novel are an indivisible case and I can categorically state that I became politically committed because I was a novelist, not the opposite. I started writing the story of my Palestinian life before I formed a clear political position or joined any organization. I do not find any duality between my commitment and the writing of novels because I feel something very important would be missing if I were not politically involved and I would feel greatly diminished if I had not been a novelist at the same time. (Coffin, 1996, p. 98)

Essa (2022) elaborates that the People of the valley have long identified with the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. In the back alleys of the capital Srinagar, cries of "Free Palestine" are spray-painted on steel shutters next to walls with "Free Kashmir" and "Go India Go" slogans. Kashmiri youth have been killed by the Indian army in protests for Palestine, while artists and religious leaders have been detained for expressing their solidarity with Palestine. India seeks to tame Kashmiri sentiments for Palestine, knowing that it both expresses solidarity with a global Muslim issue as well as a recognition of parallels between the two struggles. When police and army harassed non-violent protests, Kashmiri boys and girls resorted to stone pelting, like the *Children of the Stones* as Palestinian youth were referred to during the first *intifada* (Essa, 2022, p. 150).

In their seminal works, Goldie Osuri and Ather Zia (2020) both provide critical analyses of the archives of colonial solidarity in Kashmir and Palestine, shedding light on the complexities and implications of these archives within the broader context of colonialism and resistance. Their perspectives offer nuanced insights into how historical narratives are constructed and how solidarity movements are documented and remembered. Osuri and Zia (2020) highlight the challenges and limitations of archival representations of solidarity movements in Kashmir. She critiques the dominance of official narratives that often overlook or undermine the struggles and voices of the marginalized. She addresses power dynamics within archives, emphasizing how certain narratives are privileged while others, particularly those of the oppressed or colonized, are silenced, or marginalized. This selective framing perpetuates hegemonic narratives. Osuri and

Zia (2020) call for a reimagining of resistance narratives by challenging the traditional archive and seeking alternative forms of memory-making that centre on the experiences and perspectives of the subaltern.

Ather Zia on the other hand, examines the documentation of resistance movements in Palestine within the colonial context. She discusses how colonial powers, through their archives, often attempt to delegitimize or erase Palestinian resistance, portraying it as terrorism or unrest. She highlights the displacement of Palestinian narratives within colonial archives, emphasizing the importance of reclaiming and centring the voices of the subaltern, especially women and marginalized communities and advocates for the decolonization of archives, emphasizing the need to challenge the hegemonic representations present in these archives (Zia, 2019). She emphasizes the importance of indigenous knowledge and oral histories as crucial components of the archival process. This paper argues that literature can provide an alternative narrative space where the existential reality of colonial occupation can be archived, and the subjective experiences of the subalterns can be memorialized. The analysis of these narratives from conflicts is therefore also an act of challenging hegemonies and hierarchies associated with archiving and narrativizing historiography.

III. ANALYSIS

A. *Kashmiri and Palestinian Intifada: Representations Through Mainstream Media*

Since the 1947 with the emergence of India and Pakistan as significant powers in the geopolitical spheres and the subsequent invasion of the formerly princely state by the two neighbours, the Kashmir conflict is mostly and mainly approached through varying perspectives and with contradicting facts. The two countries, India and Pakistan continue to fight over it and provide different state narratives to legitimize their rule over its territory. The Indian state narrative recognizes Kashmir as an integral part and Kashmiri's struggle for freedom is deemed a threat to the integrity of sovereign India. The mainstream media narratives such as *The Hindu*, *Times of India*, and *India Today*, along with Bollywood films made about Kashmir frame partition as the beginning of Muslim terrorism in India and the consequent Kashmiri local insurgency in 1989 as the offshoot of global *Jihad*. Pakistan's intervention is seen as a proxy war sponsoring different militant outfits. While Pakistan sees Kashmir as a disputed territory and advocates for the right to self-determination. Pakistan represents Kashmir as the eternal part of the national imagination and argues that Kashmir is a Muslim-majority area and should not be ruled by Hindus. Both print and electronic media highlight Kashmir's struggle as an indigenous movement and the means to obtain it are deemed legitimate.

After 1990, there was a significant transformation in the Kashmir narrative in which the Pandit exodus/migration played an important role. These stories and narratives became the focal point for both fictional and non-fictional works. They provide contesting narratives about the Kashmiri dilemma. For example, Anand Kaul in his book, *The Kashmiri Pandit* subscribes to the view that biographies of Pandits reflect the idea of forceful conversion at the hands of Muslim and Sikh rulers. He does not see Kashmir history as the gradual process of assimilation and religious tolerance but provides the contesting narrative of Pandit persecution and mass migration. There are also several fictional texts by Kashmiri Pandits narrating accounts of suffering during the period of insurgency. Novels like *Our Moon Has Blood Clots*, *The Garden of Solitude*, *Under the Shadow of Militancy* etc., are some of the finest examples. Historians like Prithvi Nath Bamzai, Ratan Lal Hangloo, and Ishaq Khan among others, explicitly carry the message of religious tolerance throughout Kashmir's history without stigmatizing any cultural or religious sect. For instance, a historian like Mridu Rai alludes to the tradition of a peaceful co-existence manifested in the willingness of Muslims to protect Pandits. She also looks upon the local insurgency as the protest of the powerless in the valley. Similarly, novelists like Basharat Peer, Mirza Waheed, and Nitasha Kaul also try to reconstruct past events with their positions and perspectives. They provide parallel narratives by highlighting the unrecorded testimonies of people living across centuries. They challenge the dominant narrative of Kashmir being an integral part of India and foreground the violence perpetrated by different state apparatuses. They also provide a parallel narrative to the Pandit exodus in the valley by revealing the role of the state in creating such an atmosphere. Furthermore, Intellectuals living on both sides of India and Pakistan like Arundhati Roy and Sonia Kamal create micro-narratives by humanizing the predicament of Kashmir and their narratives come in clash with the official narratives propounded by both India and Pakistan. The partition of India and Pakistan gave rise to the fiction that acutely highlights ideas like an identity crisis, displacement, marginalization, religious rivalry, and so on. The contemporary fiction of Kashmir is also shaped by such events and discourses.

Much like Kashmir, Palestine is also a focal point of historical, political, and fictional narratives, thereby exploring the historical and geopolitical roots of the conflict. Both nonlocals and Palestinians have significantly drawn attention to the various aspects of the conflict, which also underscores how on certain parts, it is significantly different from Kashmir. Professor Norman Finkelstein (1996), an American political scientist in his *The Rise and Fall of Palestine: A Personal Account of the Intifada Years* and through his personal experiences of the first Intifada compares Israeli occupation with the tragedies of the holocaust. In contrast to him Azam Tamimi (2009), a British Palestinian in his book *Hamas Unwritten Chapters* chronicles the rise and influence of the Hamas organization and how their ground activities and popular appeal influenced the overall dynamics of Israeli- Palestine conflict. Tamimi tries to give vivid and grounded narratives of the conflict. Following the same rationale of chronicling the witness narratives of the people, fictional writers are at pains to write about it. The first *Al-Nakba* (Catastrophe) sets the tone for such a fictional representation. Mahmoud Darwish is one of the famous representational poets of Palestine and through his poetry and performance, he explored how ordinary people encountered violence in their day-to-day lives. His poetic symbols are drawn from the Palestinian historical past,

culture, and long-lived Islamic civilization. Hala Alyan (2017), a Palestinian American in *Salt Houses* follows the precarious life of displaced Palestinian families, while Atef Abu Seif's 2016 memoir *The Drone Eats with Me: A Gaza Diary* gives the personal and humane account of besiege and control in Palestine and experiences about Operation Protective Edge. Following these poets, the memoirist Khulud Khamis in her novel *Haifa Fragments* follows the struggle of belonging in her main Palestinian characters.

The lack of concurrence on Kashmir and Palestine implies heterogeneity- a phenomenon with differing parts such that it often becomes difficult to focus on the underlying cause for any final solution. This has become the trademark of fiction on Kashmir and Palestine because it does not provide any homogeneity of narratives about the conditions of people and their aspirations for freedom. These texts do not produce singular narratives, rather their testimonies of lived experience show that Kashmir and Palestinian identity is not rigid but allows multiple trajectories including that of co-existence. As in the words of Amartya Sen, "The singular affiliation towards ethnic subjectivity disregards intricacies of plural groups and multiple loyalties [which] are obliterated by seeing each person as firmly embedded in exactly one affiliation...The incitement to ignore all affiliation and loyalties other than those emanating from one restrictive identity can be deeply delusive and also contribute to social tension and violence" (Sen, 2005, p. 231). There are significant similarities and differences in the trajectories of both these conflicts, which will be thematically highlighted in the select comparative study of fictional narratives.

B. Narrative Representations of Kashmir

(a). Fiction as Documentation of Trauma: Novels of Mirza Waheed

Mirza Waheed's overall narrative and engagement with Kashmir and its conflict can best be described as the politics of dissent. Romila Thapar (2021) in her book *Voices of Dissent: An Essay* argues that "Dissent is in its essence, the disagreement that a person or persons may have with others or more publicly, with some of the institutions that govern their patterns of life" (p. 3). Apart from this simple definition she also emphasizes that "dissent in our time must be audible, distinct, opposed to injustice and supportive of democratic rights" (Thapar, 2021, p. 150). This helps to explore the fictional trajectory of Mirza Waheed. In his first debut, *The Collaborator* (2011), Waheed poignantly chronicles his dissent against the institutions of injustice and through his characters echoes the dissent and trauma of the Kashmiri community. Significantly, Waheed sets his novel in the infamous line of control which is a sort of settlement and area marked between India and Pakistan. It echoes the Israeli and Palestinian marked settlements in Gaza, Khan Younis, and others, separating the Israeli settlers and Palestinian people. The Line of Control in *The Collaborator* is also a contentious and bloodied space where ordinary Kashmiris are caught between two aggressive ideological forces. The narrator of the novel is an unnamed character whose first-person narration tells us that he ends up working with the Indian army where his job is to count dead militants across the line of control. The novel presents the history of the past, present and future of different families in Kashmir. Through the family of the narrator, it is evident that his family has decided to stay during the early years of the resistance – the resistance which started in early 1990 and it can be argued it is like the first *Nakba* of Palestine of late 1940s. His friends and other families have fled to Pakistan for armed training. In this first part, Waheed adopts a humanistic approach towards the early phase of resistance, as Mo Yan in her Noble Prize speech says, "As a member of society, A novelist is entitled to his stance and viewpoint: but when he is writing he must take a humanistic stance and write accordingly. Only then can literature not just originate in events, but transcend them, not just show concern for politics but greater than politics" (Mo Yan, 2012). Waheed humanizes not only the people who fled to Pakistan as they were taken by the shock of the statist violence but also empathizes with the predicament of the narrator who ends up working with Captain Kadian. The narrative of the book reiterates that away from the Indian and Pakistani Political positions, the conflict is the tragedy of unheard stories. Waheed takes upon this hiatus of providing the witness and everyday narratives of the people paralleling the dominant state narratives. In the second part of the novel, Waheed grippingly chronicles how repressive state apparatuses employed indiscriminate violence on the common people. These repressive apparatuses echo the Israeli apparatuses evident in the work of Mahmoud, Dervish, Ghassan Kanafani, and others. Kamila Shamsie in her review of the novel touches upon the central feature of the book which can also be applied to some Palestinian fictive discourses.

One of the most remarkable features of this novel is how much of it is concentrated around a single person, in isolation. It is only in his memories that the narrator has friends and a close-knit family he can rely on, and even within his memories, those relationships start to fall away as the state of war throws up divisions and absences and speechlessness – so that when we encounter him in the present, his closest intimacies seem to be with the corpses in the field. They are the only Kashmiris of his age left in the vicinity. (Shamsie, 2011, para. 8)

While *The Collaborator* was Waheed's first attempt to narrate the experiences of a common Kashmiri this tale was immediate, sensational, voluntaristic, and lacked polished symbols and images. However, it was clear that Waheed is uncomfortable bracketing his narrative into any ideological position. His second novel, *The Book of Gold Leaves* (2014) is artistically more powerful and its language stands more fused with cultural and artistic symbols and motifs. It follows layered thematic patterns and explores different prototypical stories. Waheed in this Novel tries to showcase the cultural harmony between two major communities of Muslims and Pandits exhibited through landscape motifs and lifestyle. In her ethnographic study of Jammu, Mohita Bhatia writes about the intersection of Pandits and Muslims,

My fieldwork reflects on the common cultural, social, festive, political, and sacred spaces that various groups among Hindus and Muslims share within a regional setting. Delineating communities such as Hindus and Muslims, thus, mask the various commonalities and many existing collective affiliations that are not based on religion. (Bhatia, 2020, p. 112)

In a similar vein Waheed also tries to capture these common threads by contextualizing the life of the Mir Clan in Downtown Srinagar with that of Pandits. The text showcases such affinity through common living and material artefacts. The public space is intermixed with the presence of both cultures.

Amid G. M. Master Tailors & Drapers ... Hridaynath Bhat Chemists & Druggists, owned and run by Pandit Hridaynath of the white turban fame – he has dispensed viscous cough syrups and Septran for the entire Mir clan for half a century ... and Wani General Store & *Kiryana* Merchants. (Waheed, 2014, p. 27)

These material motifs focus on generation-long syncretic living between Pandits and Muslims. Building this harmonious background, Waheed skillfully shows the rapture in this shared belonging by the violence perpetrated by state and non-state actors. Aditi Saraf (2022) in her paper “*Trade, Boundaries, And Self Determination*,” contends that “In Kashmir, the built environment as well as everyday exchange activities in the marketplace directly register the imprint of political violence and resistance. Material traces of marches ... the shifting terrains of “normalcy” and losses caused by curfews and shutdowns” (p. 131). The novel captures this fragmentation and violence by chronicling the trauma faced by the main characters Faiz and Roohi. The narrator echoes these traumatic experiences when he writes about the river Jhelum, “this river made the city, and the city has tried to unmake it over the centuries ... Of late, it has also started carrying the dead” (Waheed, 2014, p. 19). The occupation of the place is symbolized in the text when MP school is occupied by security forces. It brought a halt to the daily routine of their life and affected the relationship between Pandits and Muslims. Death and destruction now become the central thematic occupation of the novel. The incident of *Fateh Kadal* bears testimony to it. When a Minibus is attacked by the Indian army in front of Faiz: “He does not remember the children ... their clothes or their bodies ... what happened to the driver ... All he remembers is Faate. Fatima, his godmother ... was losing her breath when she looked at him” (Waheed, 2014, p. 77). Thus, through such micro-narratives, Waheed questions the statist and popular narratives on Kashmir and challenges statist discourses.

Waheed through these fractured narratives, exemplifies that freedom is not a master discourse for the common people and holds different meanings depending upon their positionality and context. Freedom for love-torn Roohi and Faiz means being able to meet amid curfews and Shutdowns. Freedom for Students like Farhat is to be able to go to school where security forces are not intruding into their personal lives. Freedom for both Pandits and Muslims is to be able to visit shrines and temples and invoke their gods for mercy. The narrator puts it thus: “The defence of the shrine is not a matter of discourse for them, it is who they are. It is said that they remember their soul histories so well that not even mass murder will turn them into people they are not ... [some] want to impose their shallow tales on this hour of freedom ... but these are people who do not know what love can do” (Waheed, 2014, p. 56).

(b). *Fiction as Alternative Memorialization: A Study of Sidharth Gigoo*

The fictional representation of Kashmir is caught between alternate remembering of the past, present, and future. The history of Kashmir is imagined contrastively and combatively by Pandits and Muslims. While Muslims predominantly question statist violence and impunity of human rights, Pandit's fictive discourse is predominantly marked by their exile in 1990s Kashmir. They engage the narratives of Muslim Jihad and their complacency in Pandit's exile from the valley. Pandit fictional writers and Poets bring in the themes of displacement, exile, camp life, and homelessness. They also checkmate Kashmiri Muslim narratives by highlighting their alternate memories of displacement, murder, rape, and looting of their property by fellow Kashmiris. This intense hostility of other communities echoes the complex dynamics of Israel and Palestine where each one accuses the other of terror and violence.

Pandit fictional narratives like T.N Dhar's *Under the Shadow of Militancy* (2002), Rahul Pandita's *Our Moon has Blood Clots* (2017), and arguably its most representative figure Siddharth Gigoo's *Garden of Solitude* (2010) to name a few, showcase the violence faced by Pandits. Siddhartha Gigoo is one of the prolific Kashmiri Pandit writers, besides the *Garden of Solitude* he has also penned down Pandit stories of exile in *The Lion of Kashmir* (2020) and *A Fistful of Earth and Other Stories* (2015). In *Garden of Solitude*, through the protagonist Sridhar, Gigoo explicitly chronicled the memories of Pandit's migration and the hardship they faced in a state of exile. The text like Mirza Waheed's *The Book of Gold Leaves* tries to capture the shared sense of belonging between Pandits and Muslims in Kashmir. The text captures how Sridhar's father Lasa is living a normal life and tending his kitchen garden. He is shown decorating his home and “A water heater was installed for heating the water during the winter” (Gigoo, 2010, pp. 22-24). Sridhar was studying mathematics under the guidance of Professor Wakhlu, this shows how Pandits had a culturally rich lifestyle. Both the communities were living a culturally syncretic life but the rise of militancy in Kashmir disrupted this social fabric. Sridhar once recalls the incident when a stranger came to Wakhlu's home, one of the children said, “Billa Puj is a goon of this area. He owns a butcher's shop at *Gaw Kadal*. Don't you know that his brother Majid is a militant and works for the Kashmir Liberation Front? Hilal says that he is back from the training camp in Azad Kashmir, and now roams with a *Chakir* and *Rof* under his *pheran*” (Gigoo, 2010, p. 31).

By bringing the narratives around militancy, the text charts a different trajectory from Mirza Waheed because Militancy is shown tearing apart the social and cultural fabric of Pandit life in Kashmir. Sridhar while living in exile becomes a

conscious chronicler of Pandit stories and memories who bear the brunt of armed resistance in Kashmir. In the novel, Gigoo sums up the whole project:

The Kashmiri Pandit story did not exist anywhere. The migrants and their stories did not appear in most news items related to Kashmir. There were no statistics, no pictures of the dead and the dilapidated Pandit houses, no accounts of brutalities on Pandits in Kashmir, and no record of disease in the migrant camps. There were no stories of people's past. There were no memories of ancestors. There was no remembrance of a generation which had lived in Kashmir. Sridar aspired to capture the recollections of people who still remembered their stories and ancestors. (Gigoo, 2010, p. 196)

The Garden of Solitude discusses the impact of labelling Kashmiri Pandits as "Kafirs" and obstacles to Kashmir's freedom during the 1990s. The narrator contrasts the experiences of Pandits, mentioning that Pandit women stopped wearing *tilaks* to conceal their identity, and men grew beards. They avoided speaking to each other in public. They abandoned their traditional greeting 'Namaskar' (Gigoo, 2010, p. 59). It reveals that Muslim and Pandit fictional representations intersect at many thematic concerns but also diverge on the parallel remembrance of their historical past, thus, echoing the combative history and fiction making in the literature from Palestine.

C. Fictional Representation of Palestine: Reading Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's World Without Maps, Elias Khoury's Little Mountains, and Sarah Khalifeh's We Are No Longer Your Slave Girls!

It can be argued that the novel tradition in Palestine since 1948 is remembered as the first catastrophe in constant dialogue with the political developments in Palestine. The poetic and fictional representation in Palestine dates to the late 1940's whereas Kashmir's fictional representation has seen a surge since the 1990s. Palestinian novelists had to deal with entirely different historical events from that of Kashmir. Before the defeat of 1967, Palestinian writers were dealing with the subject of colonialism and attempts at settler colonialism. After the defeat of Arabs and the failure of different accords and peace processes, the literature of Palestine begins to bring in narratives of liberation, threats of ethnic cleansing, and loss of statehood. The voice of writers became very local and many fictional writers have found themselves in precarious situations. In contrast to this, Kashmiri writers right from the inception had to make sense of Indian state apparatuses but at the same time deal with armed resistance in the name of Islam. Kashmir's fictional terrain also finds itself divided into alternate thinking by Pandits and Muslims and dealing with the intense hostility between the two communities. Palestinian fictional writers like Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Ghassan Kanafani, Emile Habibi Sahar, Khalifeh, and others, dealt with these facets of the Palestinian struggle followed by some non-Palestinians like Jean Genet and Elias Khoury.

The Narratives of Jabra Ibrahim Jabra and Sahar Khalifeh:

An Iraqi-Palestinian, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra is one of the notable writers of Palestine. Right from childhood Jabra was part of a traumatic history, born to an orthodox Christian family he survived the Seyfo Genocide. Jabra is also known as the forerunner of the Huruffiya movement which attempted to blend Islamic traditional art with contemporary art forms. He shared a deep sense of the historical past and a subtle consciousness of contemporary challenges. He is a prolific writer, writing novels like *Hunters in a Narrow Street*, *The Search for Walid Masood*, and most notably *World Without Maps* co-written with Abdul Rahman Munif. Unlike modern Kashmiri novelists, some Palestinian writers were very conscious of the power and importance of the Arabic language. Following the post-colonial emancipatory preoccupation with regional languages as a tool of resistance. He writes, "After 1948, however, I decided that if the Arabic language was not the vehicle of our revolutionary thinking and expression, we would be defeating our purpose: change had to begin with the word and the image, however intractable the Arabic word and image might seem" (Ibrahim, 1952). This shows enormous consciousness of the power of language Jabra was committed to carrying forward with this tool of resistance. Jabra is starkly different from Mirza Waheed and Siddharth Gigoo because neither of these writers shares such consciousness about the Kashmiri language as such. Before 1990 there were writers like Amin Kamil and Akhter Mohiuddin who were using the Kashmiri language as part of their resistance but for Palestinian writers, it is the foremost agenda. In *World Without Maps*, the basic thematic structure is revolving around a single event. The death of a narrator's lover is shrouded in a mystery and the cause of death is caught in multiple assumptions. Either murdered or killed by her jealous husband, all these perspectives set the journey of doubt, investigation, and scrutiny of history.

This theme of exploration and anxiety symbolically refers to the contemporary Arab condition and personal inquiry of a possible murder epitomizes the collective struggle of the people. Alam mirrors every other Arab character. Throwing light on this, Abu-Manneh in his book *The Palestinian Novel: From 1948 to the Present* observes:

Throughout this journey of anxiety, self-doubt, and self-questioning, stories are narrated and disbelieved, histories investigated and discarded, and theories put forward and withdrawn. 'Alam presents a dizzying array of causes and scenarios without ever giving up on the fact that truth and objective knowledge can eventually be had. An account of a possible murder thus becomes about the way the contemporary Arab world is constituted. Private acts and public conditions are deeply intertwined in a world that, as the title suggests, is ultimately one without maps, without firm objective grounding, and real social or political anchors. (Manneh, 2016, p. 150)

Jabra is subtle in his characterization and thematic preoccupations. *World Without Maps* is unlike Modern Kashmir novelists who are quite often direct in their political positionings and their narratives share a thin line with factual details. Mirza Waheed (2014) and Gigoo (2010) are at times revealing facts of Kashmir's history and their characters share a powerful resemblance with real characters in history. However, Jabra in this novel as is evident in his other novel, reveals individual experiences, valorises, and expands on them, and makes the personal public. His novel also shares some

autobiographical connotations and hence blurs the genre gaps. *World Without Maps* and its preoccupations are best underscored by what Jabra himself admits,

When I wrote my novels and used an aspect of my life in them, I did not imagine that I would write an autobiography, so I gave myself the freedom to weave those autobiographical threads into the rest of the novelistic fabric. When I came to write my autobiography and I finished, I found that some of the events that I could have added to *The First Well*, I had already spoken about elsewhere ... In some cases, I spoke better about them in my novels than I did in my autobiography.... That reason is what made me refrain from mentioning certain details; and I will not hide from you that if I had continued writing the autobiography, I would have restored very many things that I mentioned in my novels and that happened after I passed the stage of childhood ... And if I retold those events, it would be as if I had rewritten entire chapters from my novels... I know that this is an extraordinary admission because I usually say that my novels are separate from me ... And they are, but here you have cast me into my own "well". (Jabra, 2000, pp. 289-90)

His autobiographical notes resemble some Kashmiri Pandit writers like Rahul Pandita and Siddharth Gigoo as their autobiographical elements find ways in fictional garb, however, Jabra's characterization in *World Without Maps* is more complex than Kashmiri novelists. Apart from Pandit writers, woman writers like Sarah Khalifeh share substantial similarities with the ideological concerns of Mirza Waheed. Sarah Khalifeh, one of the famous Palestinian women writers, also won Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature. In her novel *We Are No Longer Your Slaves Girls!* she boldly takes upon the romanticisation and valorisation of liberation struggles and provides a corrective to it. It echoes Mirza Waheed's *The Book of Gold Leaves* where the epistolary communication between Roohi and Faiz provides the inward critique of freedom struggle and its complex oppressive system. Waheed (2014) critiques the sensationalization and corruptibility of the freedom struggle and subtly provides a feminist critique through the voice of Roohi. In her works, Khalifeh also weaves some important feminist threads and questions the muscular character of revolutionary causes at the cost of social demands. Much like Waheed's Roohi, Khalifeh's women characters not only fight and question Israeli occupation but also challenge internal patriarchal structures. Roohi provides a critique of armed resistance and their killing of fellow Kashmiri Pandits, while Khalifeh's women characters Samar, Nuzhat, and middle-aged midwife Sitt Zakia grapple with domestic and external Israeli oppression. However, in the fictional representation of Kashmir, there is not ample focus on the agency of women and the need for their liberation to attain freedom from the occupation but Khalifeh portrays women as potent weapons for the complete liberation of Palestinian society. Writers from Kashmir and Palestine through their fiction are at pains to capture the nuances of the distorted reality of their characters and this fragmentary narrative is followed by a Lebanese writer Elias Khoury in his novel *Little Mountains*.

Elias Khoury is a prominent Lebanese writer, playwright, and critic. In his novel *Little Mountains*, he experiments with the form and fragmentation of the subjects which is reminiscent of Kashmir and Palestinian distorted citizens found in Waheed, Gigoo, and Khalifeh. The common thread behind all these fictional representations is the ennui of capturing the nuances of the fragmented subjectivity through a fragmented language. This trait is best captured Edward Said. He says for Lebanon and Palestine, where

national identity is threatened with extinction (the latter) or with daily dissolution (the former) ... the novel is both a risky and a highly problematic form. Typically, its subjects are urgently political and its concerns are radically existential. Literature in stable societies is replicable by Palestine and Lebanese writers using parody and exaggeration, since on a minute-by-minute basis social life for Lebanese and Palestinian writers is an enterprise with highly unpredictable results. Above all, form is an adventure, narrative both uncertain and meandering, character less a stable collection of traits than a linguistic device, as self-conscious as it is provisional and ironic. (Said, 1988, para. 9)

This is evident in the narrative structure of *Little Mountain* which is about the different phases of the Lebanese civil war from 1975 to 1990, which is captured through the multiple perspectives of a joint force fighter, a distorted civil servant, and another part intellectual amorphous fighter. Like Waheed's *Collaborator* and Gigoo's *Garden of Solitude*, the thematic concerns are to capture the repercussions of civil war and fractured identities. Khoury also like Mirza Waheed imagines the material artifacts and cultural memories of old Beirut to bring home the point of subsequent catastrophe. The narrator recalls Beirut,

They call it Little Mountain. And we called it Little Mountain. We would carry pebbles, draw faces, and look for a puddle of water to wash off the sand, or fill with sand, then cry . . . We made up things we would say or would not say. They call it Little Mountain; we knew it was not a mountain and we called it Little Mountain. (Khoury, 2007, p. 1)

IV. CONCLUSION

The paper delved deep into the intricate connection between Kashmir and Palestine, as portrayed in modern fiction. It utilized a variety of non-fiction critical discourses to dissect the common themes prevalent in the fictional narratives of both regions, which are deeply influenced by enduring political and social conflicts. The paper emphasized the pivotal role of such imaginative discourses in comprehending the ongoing strife and providing a platform for ordinary people to share their experiences. These fictional narratives act as parallel accounts, diverging from the predominant narratives in

Kashmir and Palestine. However, the paper also addressed the disparities in these representations, considering the differing political and historical circumstances of each region.

The paper contended that the novel tradition in Palestine, starting from 1948, is intrinsically linked with the ongoing political landscape. Conversely, poetic, and fictional representation in Palestine can be traced back to the late 1940s, while Kashmir's emergence in fictional representation gained momentum in the 1990s. Palestinian writers have grappled with entirely different historical events compared to their counterparts in Kashmir. Before the defeat of 1967, Palestinian authors focused on colonialism and attempts at settler colonialism. In contrast, literature in Kashmir has always dealt with alternative memories of violence involving both Pandits and Muslims.

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Akhter Habib Shah holds PhD in English literature. He is specialized in south Asian fiction. Dr. Akhter has 14 years of teaching experience in different universities of the world. He has published numerous research articles in the journals of international repute.

His interest lies in conflict studies with special focus on representation of Kashmir in modern south Asian fiction.



Shouket Ahmad Tilwani is born in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir on 01-03-1981. Till his Masters in English in 2007, he has earned all his degrees (including bachelor's in education with English as a specialization in 2008) from the University of Kashmir, Jammu and Kashmir. He has got his Ph.D. in English besides M. Phil. (2010) from Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, India in 2015.

Dr. Shouket Ahmad Tilwani is academically specialized in the areas of post-colonialism, and discourse analysis. His papers are about marginalization and subalternity, published in well-reputed journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science databases. In addition, he is a reviewer of some reputed journals. He is currently working as an Associate Professor, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia.

Human Referents and Social Meaning in Balinese

Desak Putu Eka Pratiwi

Faculty of Foreign Languages, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar, Denpasar, Indonesia

I Komang Sulatra

Faculty of Foreign Languages, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar, Denpasar, Indonesia

Komang Dian Puspita Candra

Faculty of Foreign Languages, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar, Denpasar, Indonesia

Abstract—This paper discusses the ways in which human referents and social meaning are expressed in Balinese language through the use of kinship terms, non-kinship terms, pronouns, and other related expressions. The findings reveal that non-kinship terms are more frequently used in Balinese language than kinship terms, and that both types of terms are expressed in low register. Additionally, pronominals and deictic expressions play a significant role in expressing social meaning and indexing the social relations between speakers and addressees. The Balinese speech level system exhibits complex indexing of human referents and speech participants in both physical and socio-cultural spaces, giving rise to dynamic situated social meaning. We argue that the study of human referents and their social meaning in Balinese provides important insights into the cultural and linguistic diversity of Indonesia, as well as the complex connection between language, cognition, and social interaction.

Index Terms—Balinese, human referents, social meaning, social cognition

I. INTRODUCTION

Balinese is a language spoken by the Balinese people, who are the majority ethnic group on the island of Bali. Balinese has around 3 million speakers. It is a member of the Austronesian language family and is closely related to other languages spoken in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Balinese is well studied, particularly Lowland Balinese, such as Hunter (1988), Artawa (1994), Clynes (1995), Pastika (2006), Arka (2003). These studies have contributed significantly to our understanding of Balinese language, culture, and society. They have provided important insights into the grammar, dialectal variations, spatial deixis, and socio-cultural aspects of Balinese.

Balinese is known for its interesting grammatical features, including its word order and voice system. In terms of word order, Balinese is typically considered an SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) language, with some flexibility for emphasis and topicalization. Arka (2003) said that the Balinese language features an intricate voice system, including active, passive, and middle voices. This system is central to the syntactic structure of Balinese, affecting how subjects, objects, and verbs are related within sentences. Balinese has a unique voice system known as the "Symmetrical Voice System". This system is characterized by the use of actor-emphatic markers that are added to verbs to indicate the semantic roles of the subject and object in a sentence, as well as their level of prominence. In addition to the symmetrical voice system, Balinese also has passive constructions that are formed using a passive marker.

Balinese has a number of dialects that are spoken across different regions of the island. These dialects are characterized by differences in vocabulary and pronunciation, with some words having multiple regional variations or even entirely different words for the same concept. Bawa (1983) discussed dialectal variations in the Balinese. Specifically, Bawa (1983) noted that although there are differences in lexicon and pronunciation across different regions of Bali, the grammar of the language is generally consistent throughout the island.

Balinese is a highly inflected language with a complex system of grammatical and lexical rules. One of the most interesting aspects of Balinese is its use of human referents, which are words or expressions used to refer to people in different social contexts. Human referents are crucial in linguistics as they can significantly influence the grammar and usage of language. In Balinese, human referents can reveal important social information such as gender, age, status, and relationship, and play an important role in constructing social meaning in discourse.

Balinese has a complex system of addressing people based on their social status, age, and relationship with the speaker. For example, there are different words and expressions used to address older or younger people, colleagues or strangers, and people of different social status. Additionally, Balinese has a system of honorifics that are used to show respect and politeness towards the referent. This includes using different verb forms and particles to indicate the social status and relationship of the referent and the speaker. Furthermore, in Balinese, the use of pronouns depends on the gender and social status of the referent. For example, there are different pronouns used to refer to males and females, and different forms of the pronouns used to refer to people of different social status.

Previous studies on Balinese human referents have focused mostly on lexical and semantic aspects, such as the meanings and usage of different referential expressions, and have not explored their social implications in detail. Additionally, most studies have relied on small data samples, often collected through elicitation tasks or questionnaires, which may not accurately reflect the natural use of human referents in Balinese discourse. To address these research gaps, this study investigates human referents in Balinese discourse using a large corpus of spoken Balinese languages. The corpus contains a wide range of communicative contexts which allows for a comprehensive analysis of how human referents are used to convey social meaning in different contexts.

The main research questions of this study are: How do human referents in Balinese convey social meaning? How do social factors such as gender, age, and status influence the use of human referents in Balinese? What are the patterns and variations of human referents across different communicative contexts and speakers in Balinese?

The findings of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the complex connection between language, culture, and social identity in Balinese, and provide insights into the social functions of human referents in the language. Additionally, the study will have implications for language documentation and preservation efforts in Bali, by providing a comprehensive analysis of a key aspect of the Balinese language.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social cognition refers to the mental processes involved in understanding, interpreting, and responding to social information from the environment, such as social cues, relationships, and situations. It involves a range of cognitive processes, including perception, attention, memory, decision-making, and reasoning, which are used to process and make sense of social information. Social cognition is important for effective social functioning, as it allows individuals to navigate complex social situations, understand the intentions and motivations of others, and form social relationships.

Socio-cognitive theory emphasizes the importance of context in shaping and interpreting meaning. Social meaning is not simply inherent in language, but is constructed through social interactions and the cultural practices and norms that shape them. Therefore, socio-cognitive theory helps to explain how language is used to create and convey social meaning, as individuals use linguistic cues to infer and interpret the social contexts in which communication takes place. It provides a framework for understanding how language and social cognition are interconnected and how they interact to shape social meaning.

Social meaning refers to the interpretation of language beyond its literal or dictionary meaning, taking into account the social, cultural, and contextual factors that shape its interpretation. In other words, social meaning is the significance of language in its social context. It can include variation of tone, gestures, and other nonverbal cues, as well as knowledge of cultural norms and values. Social meaning can vary depending on the situation and the people involved in the conversation, and can be influenced by factors such as gender, age, social class, and power dynamics.

Langlotz (2015) defines social meaning as the constellation of cognitive effects that results from a language user's perception of language use as being systematically linked to the social organization of society. This means that social meaning is the way in which language use reflects and reinforces social structures and hierarchies. It involves the use of language as a means of constructing and conveying social identity, status, and power relations. Social meaning can be conveyed through various linguistic features, including vocabulary, syntax, prosody, and discourse structure.

Langlotz's theory of situated social meaning posits that language functions not only as a communication tool but also as a means to create and maintain social relationships and identities, shaped by cultural norms and values. In Balinese, the use of specific linguistic forms to refer to individuals or groups, such as kinship terms and honorifics, conveys social relationships and hierarchies, signaling respect, familiarity, power dynamics, or social distance. Arnawa et al. (2022) highlight the importance of proper forms of address in Balinese politeness, reflecting the hierarchical social structure and cultural values of Balinese society. Therefore, studying social cognition in this context reveals how Balinese speakers use language to navigate and perceive social relationships.

III. METHODS

This study used a corpus-based research method to investigate human referents and social meaning in Balinese. This study used spoken Balinese languages as the data source which taken from all regencies in Bali. The data sources consist of audio and video recordings of naturally occurring conversations in different Balinese dialects, including Lowland and Highland Balinese. Data collection involves transcription of the audio and video recordings into written texts. There are three groups of speakers from each regency and each group consists of three speakers. The data were collected using an innovative stimulus-elicitation methodology in a language documentation context that results in exposition, cooperative conversation and narrative data in different task phases (San Roque et al., 2012). This study used sixteen cards with family problem pictures that speakers must describe and organize into a narrative. The pictures are generally about domestic violence. Speakers went through four task stages. Stage 1 (description): the first and second speakers described and discussed what they saw in the images. Stage 2 (problem-solving): the first and second speakers arranged the images into a coherent narrative sequence. Stage 3 (third-person narrative): the first and second speakers narrated the story they composed to a third party who was absent during the first two stages. Stage 4 (first-person narrative): the third speaker created a first-person narrative from the perspective of one of the characters in the

story; the speaker was free to choose which character to identify with. The corpus is then annotated with information on human referents and social meaning using a combination of manual and automatic annotation techniques. Finally, data analysis includes statistical and qualitative methods to examine patterns and relationships between human referents and social meaning in Balinese.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Balinese Overview

(a). Social Meaning and Balinese Speech Level System

Balinese society is primarily Hindu. Hinduism has a profound influence on Balinese culture, shaping their beliefs, customs, and traditions. The island’s caste system, still holds in some areas, influencing many aspects of Balinese life. Balinese has a complex speech level system which is used to indicate social status and hierarchy (in Figure 1). The system mainly has three levels: low, middle, and high. The low level is used when speaking to someone of lower social status, while the middle level is used for equals or acquaintances. The high level is reserved for use when speaking to someone of higher social status or in formal situations such as religious ceremonies.

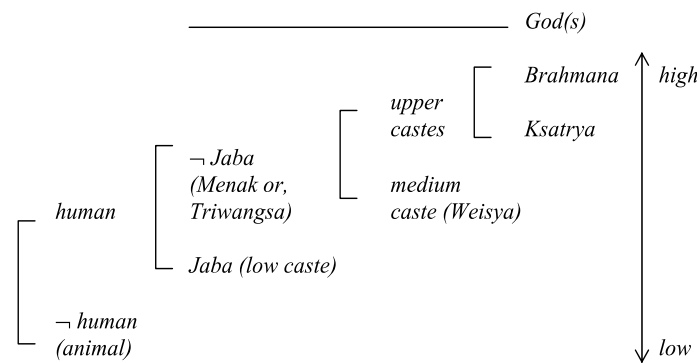


Figure 1. Balinese Traditional Social Stratification

Figure 1 shows traditional social stratification in Bali. The use of inappropriate speech levels can result in miscommunication or even offense. Additionally, the use of speech levels can vary depending on the context of the situation, such as in formal or informal settings. The Balinese speech level system shows the significance of social hierarchy and status within Balinese culture. One cannot speak Balinese without knowing the relative social status of speech participants. In Balinese culture, it is important to understand the social status of the people you are speaking with, and to adjust your language and speech accordingly.

Langlotz (2015) introduced a concept "The Spatial Logic of Social Order" (in Figure 2). The idea behind this concept is that social order is reflected in the way that space is organized and used in everyday life. Different areas and spaces are associated with different social statuses, and individuals navigate these spaces based on their position in the social hierarchy. This includes not only physical spaces such as the home, workplace, or temple, but also more abstract spaces such as the social distance between speakers, which can be expressed through the use of speech levels or honorifics.

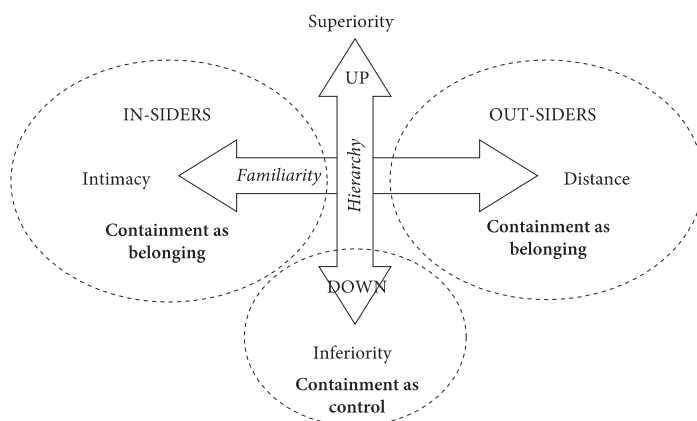


Figure 2. The Spatial Logic of Social Order

In the Balinese context, the spatial logic of social order is reflected in the use of the speech level system and other linguistic markers of social status. The use of different speech levels and honorifics reflects the relative social status of the speaker and the listener, and serves to reinforce the traditional social stratification of Balinese society. Overall, the spatial logic of social order is a way of understanding how social order is reflected in everyday life, and how language and other forms of communication are used to reinforce and reproduce social hierarchies.

Balinese society has undergone significant changes in the past few decades due to modernization, tourism, and globalization. However, traditional social orders and customs still play a vital role in Balinese culture. The traditional caste system, known as "Catur Wangsa," remains prevalent in Balinese society, with Brahmins at the top of the hierarchy, followed by Ksatrias, Wesias, and Sudras. Each caste has its own distinct duties, obligations, and privileges.

However, modernization and globalization have led to the emergence of new social orders in Bali. The younger generation is less likely to adhere to traditional caste boundaries and is more open to social mobility. Furthermore, the rise of the middle class and new wealth has led to the formation of new social hierarchies based on economic and educational status. These new social orders are often in tension with traditional social orders and customs, leading to complex social dynamics in contemporary Balinese society.

(b). *Obligatory Social Positioning in Balinese*

Obligatory social positioning in Balinese refers to the social norms and expectations that dictate how individuals should interact and communicate with one another based on their relative social status and relationship. This means that in Balinese, entities and events must be appropriately socially indexed or positioned to reflect the social order of Balinese society. For example, in Balinese, there are different words for "you" depending on the social status of the person being addressed. Similarly, when referring to people or events, it is important to use the appropriate social index or position. For example, when referring to someone who is of higher social status, such as a king or a priest, you must use a specific title or term of address that reflects their status, such as "*Ratu*" or "*Tjokorda*". In contrast, when referring to someone who is of lower social status, you may use a more generic term of address, such as "*Bapa*" (Mr.) or "*Meme*" (Mrs.).

In social indexing, a referent (person or thing being referred to) is indexed or positioned in relation to the speaker, the addressee, and other referents in the context. There are two kinds of social indexing in Balinese language: relative-interactive and absolute. Relative-interactive indexing of a referent is done in relation to the speaker and the addressee. For example, a Balinese speaker might use different vocabulary, grammatical constructions, and speech styles when addressing a higher-status person compared to a lower-status person. Absolute indexing of a referent, on the other hand, is done in relation to the referent's inherent qualities or social status, which are independent of the speaker and addressee. For example, certain words and expressions are used to refer to deities, ancestors, and members of the highest castes, regardless of who is speaking or listening.

Relative-interactive indexing in Balinese language involves using different terms depending on the social relations of the speakers in a given context. For instance, the words "*celeng*" and "*bawi*". Both refer to a pig, but their usage depends on the social context and the speakers' relative social status. The word "*celeng*" is a common term used in low register speech, while "*bawi*" is a more formal and polite term used in high register speech. The choice between "*celeng*" or "*bawi*" is determined by the speakers' social status and the context of the conversation. In situations where a high-caste person is speaking to a low-caste person, they may use "*celeng*" to assert their dominance over the other person. Conversely, if a low-caste person is speaking to a high-caste person, they may use "*bawi*" to show respect to the higher status person.

In contrast to relative-interactive indexing, where different terms are used based on the relative social relations of speech participants, absolute social positioning uses the same term regardless of the social status or relationship between the speakers. The use of the term "*Nanang*" or "*Aji*" to refer to a father in Balinese is an example of absolute social positioning. Both terms are used to refer to a father regardless of the social status of the speaker or the addressee. The term used to refer to one's father is determined by inherent qualities or social status, rather than the relative social relations of the speaker and addressee. The use of "*Aji*" is associated with higher castes, while "*Nanang*" is associated with lower castes, regardless of who is speaking or listening. This means that the same term is used irrespective of the social status or relationship between the speakers.

(c). *Social Positioning of Participant Roles and Events*

In the Balinese speech level system, the way speakers use verbs, adjectives, nouns, and other language elements depends on the triad of interactive roles, which includes the Speaker, Addressee, and Referent. The relationships between the Speaker, Addressee, and Referent can be monadic, dyadic, or polyadic. In Balinese, social positioning is an important aspect of language use, particularly in the way participant roles and events are expressed. The way in which a participant or an event is described in Balinese language reflects their social status and the relationship between the speaker and the listener. In Balinese, verbs such as "*seda*", "*padem*", and "*mati*" all refer to the act of dying, but they are associated with different levels of formality and social status.

"*Seda*" is considered a high register term and is typically used by the higher castes when referring to the death of someone in their own family or someone of higher status. This reflects the social positioning of the speaker as someone who is closely related to or affected by the death, as well as their higher social status. "*Padem*" is considered a medium

register term and is typically used by middle-caste individuals to refer to the death of someone in their own family or someone of similar status. This reflects the social positioning of the speaker as someone who is affected by the death but is not of the highest social status. “*Mati*” is considered a low register term and is typically used by lower-caste individuals when referring to the death of someone in their own family or someone of lower status. This reflects the social positioning of the speaker as someone who is affected by the death but is of lower social status.

The verb “*seda*” is an example of absolute social indexing in Balinese language. It is a high register term used primarily by higher castes when referring to death. This means that regardless of the social status or relationship between the speaker and the addressee, “*seda*” will always be used to refer to the act of dying, as it is determined by inherent qualities or social status rather than the relative social relations of the speaker and addressee. Therefore, it is an example of social positioning of participant roles and events in Balinese language.

The verbs “*padem*” and “*mati*” use relative social indexing of the addressee, meaning that the choice of verb is determined by the social status of the person being addressed. However, they also use absolute social indexing for the referential, meaning that the same verb is used regardless of the social status of the person who has died.

Another fascinating illustration would be the words “*baang*”, “*aturang*”, and “*icen*”, all of which convey the meaning of “giving”. The relative social positioning of the Agent (A) with respect to the Recipient (R) is important. This means that the social status or relationship between the person giving and the person receiving is taken into account when using the verb “give”. The object being given (Theme/T) is not the main focus.

When the Agent (A) and the Recipient (R) have equal social status, the word “*baang*” is employed. However, if the Agent (A) is socially inferior to the Recipient (R), “*aturang*” is used to convey important social relationships. On the other hand, if the Agent (A) is socially superior to the Recipient (R), the word “*icen*” is used instead.

The socially superior participant is not necessarily along the caste system, but is part of it in contemporary Balinese, e.g. being the governor of Bali. In contemporary Balinese society, the concept of social superiority is not limited to the traditional caste system. Instead, it can include individuals who hold positions of power and influence, such as the governor of Bali or other high-ranking official. This means that the socially superior participant in a given context may not necessarily be from a higher caste than the other participants involved. Rather, their social status is based on factors such as their occupation, education, or position of authority. This reflects the changing nature of Balinese society, where traditional systems of social hierarchy are being redefined and modified to fit with contemporary norms and values.

B. Social Indexing of Human Referents and Other Entities

(a). First Person Pronouns in Balinese

In Balinese language, the way first-person pronouns are used reflects the speaker's social status, power, and relationship with the addressee (in Table 1). This is a complex system that takes into account the speaker's caste, gender, and age, as well as the social context of the conversation. For instance, the first-person pronoun “*nira*” is reserved for referring to God and cannot be used to refer to humans or other entities. In contrast, there are multiple options for first-person pronouns when referring to humans, such as “*gelah*”, “*titiang*”, “*tiang*”, “*iang*”, and “*icang*”. Each of these pronouns has a specific social context and connotation. For example, “*gelah*” is used by the royal family when speaking to lower-caste individuals, while “*titiang*” is used by commoners when speaking to upper-caste individuals.

TABLE 1
FIRST PERSON PRONOUNS

	PRONOMINAL FORMS	RELEVANT SOCIAL STATUS	
		REFERENT	ADDRESSEE
a.	<i>nira</i>	<i>God</i>	-
b.	<i>gelah</i>	<i>Royal</i>	-
c.	<i>titiang</i>	-	<i>upper-caste</i>
d.	<i>tiang</i>	-	<i>menak</i>
e.	<i>iang</i>	<i>(menak)</i>	<i>menak</i>
f.	<i>icang</i>	<i>jaba</i>	<i>jaba</i>
g.	<i>kai</i>	-	<i>animal</i>

(b). Third Person Pronouns in Balinese

In Balinese, third person pronouns are socially indexed and the choice of which pronoun to use depends on the relative social status of the referent and the speaker. As seen in the Table 2, “*Ia*” is the most common third person pronoun in Balinese and is used for both men and women. It is considered a neutral pronoun and can be used in most contexts regardless of the social status of the referent or the speaker.

TABLE 2
THIRD PERSON PRONOUNS

	PRONOMINAL FORMS	RELEVANT SOCIAL STATUS	
		REFERENT	ADDRESSEE
a.	<i>Ia</i>	<i>jaba</i>	<i>jaba</i>
b.	<i>ipun</i>	<i>jaba</i>	<i>upper caste</i>
c.	<i>dane</i>	<i>medium caste</i>	-
d.	<i>ida</i>	<i>upper castes</i>	-

“*Ipun*” is a third person pronoun that is typically used to refer to people of equal or lower status than the speaker. It can be considered a polite or humble way of referring to someone, and is often used in formal situations or when showing respect to someone of lower status. “*Dane*” is a third person pronoun that is also used to refer to people of equal or lower status than the speaker, but it has a more familiar or intimate connotation. It can be used among friends or family members, or in informal situations. “*Ida*” is another third person pronoun that can be used for both men and women, but it is typically reserved for people of high status, such as members of the royal family, high priests, or other important individuals.

(c). *Indexing the Addressee and/or the Owner or Possessor of the Referent of the N*

In Balinese society, the choice of word to describe ownership or possession also reflects social hierarchies. The use of the terms “*bok*” and “*rambut*” to refer to hair illustrates how social status and ownership are indexed through language (in Table 3). The term “*bok*” is a low register term used to refer to hair when the possessor is of lower social status. This term is often used by people from lower castes to refer to their own hair or the hair of others from similar social backgrounds. On the other hand, the term “*rambut*” is a high register term used to refer to hair when the possessor is of higher social status. This term is often used by people from higher castes to refer to their own hair or the hair of others from similar social backgrounds.

TABLE 3
WORD CATEGORIES & REGISTERS

	CATEGORY.	LUMRAH 'LOW REGISTER'	ALUS 'HIGH REGISTER'	MEANING
a.	Noun	<i>Bok</i>	<i>rambut</i>	'hair'
b.	Adjective	<i>Gelem</i>	<i>sungkan</i>	'ill'
c.	Verb	<i>Mati</i>	<i>seda</i>	'die'
d.	Adverb	<i>Jani</i>	<i>mangkin</i>	'now'
e.	Preposition	<i>Di</i>	<i>ring</i>	'at'
f.	Pronoun	<i>icang</i>	<i>tiang</i>	'I'
g.	Determiner	<i>ene</i>	<i>niki</i>	'this'
h.	Conjunction	<i>lantas</i>	<i>raris</i>	'(and) then'
i.	Relative pronoun	<i>ane</i>	<i>sane</i>	'that'
j.	Question	<i>nyen</i>	<i>sira</i>	'who'
k.	Auxiliary	<i>lakar</i>	<i>jagi</i>	'will'
l.	Negator	<i>sing</i>	<i>tan</i>	'not'

In Balinese, the adjectives “*gelem*” and “*sungkan*” both refer to the condition of being sick. However, they differ in their usage depending on who is experiencing the sickness. “*Gelem*” is used to refer to the sickness experienced by individuals of lower social status, while “*sungkan*” is used to refer to the sickness experienced by individuals of higher social status. This demonstrates the indexing of the experiencer of the condition of sick. The choice of adjective used to describe sickness is dependent on the social status of the person experiencing the sickness.

Another example can be seen on Balinese verbs “*mati*” and “*seda*”. In Balinese, the verb “*mati*” and “*seda*” both refer to the action of dying. However, they are used in different registers of speech, indicating social distinctions between speakers. “*Mati*” is a low register term used by the lower caste to refer to the concept of dying. On the other hand, “*seda*” is a high register term used by the higher caste to refer to the same concept. This demonstrates the social indexing of language in Balinese culture, where word choice and register reflect the social status of the speaker and the addressee. The same thing also applies to other categories of words as listed on the table.

C. *Human Referents in Balinese*

(a). *Low Register as the Default Register*

The study found that the default register in Balinese language is the low register, typically used in everyday conversations among friends, family members, and colleagues. This register is considered less formal than the high register and is commonly employed in various social contexts when no specific social positioning is required.

The picture task participants were depicted as commoners, and as a result, they were referred to using the low register in order to accurately portray Balinese society. This can be seen in the kinship terms they used, such as “*bapa-ne*” (low

register) instead of “*aji-ne*” (high register) to refer to a father. The use of “*bapa-ne*” suggests that either the speaker or the father being referred to has a lower social status, as it is a more informal and common term, whereas “*aji-ne*” is a formal and respectful term typically used by higher-status individuals.

The use of the low register term “*panak-ne*” instead of the high register term “*oka-ne*” to refer to “his son” is another example of evidence that supports the use of low register in the Balinese data. The choice of kinship terms used by speakers can indicate their social status and relationship to the person being referred to. In this case, using the low register term “*panak-ne*” implies a more informal and common relationship between the speaker and their son, while the high register term “*oka-ne*” suggests a more formal and respectful relationship, which may be used by higher-status individuals.

(b). “High” Kinship Terms Based Vocatives

In the Balinese language, kinship terms in high register are generally reserved for use by individuals who hold higher social status or who are older than the person they are addressing. However, in the data collected from Balinese speakers, it was found that high register kinship terms were limited in their use and were only used in vocative form (i.e., when directly addressing someone). In other words, the characters in the picture task did not use high register kinship terms in their direct speech to each other.

An instance of the use of high kinship term based vocatives in Balinese can be observed in the following example: “*Nak ngujang ne bin, Ji?*” (“What is this person again doing, Ji?”). The example of “*Nak ngujang ne bin, Ji?*” illustrates the use of “High” kinship term based Vocatives in Balinese. In this case, the informants are a father and son from a high caste family. The son uses the high register when addressing his father, using the word “*Ji*” which means father in the high register. This usage of the high register is evidence of the existence of high kinship terms in Balinese, particularly in vocative forms. However, it should be noted that such usage is limited only to certain contexts, such as between language consultants in direct speech, and is not commonly used in direct speech by the characters themselves.

D. Patterns/Variations of Human Referents in Balinese

(a). Kinship Terms

In Balinese society, the frequency of using kinship terms to denote possession of a relative (such as “my mother” or “my brother”) is slightly higher than using kinship terms without indicating possession (such as “mother” or “brother”). However, the difference in usage frequency between the two types of kinship terms is not significant, as they are almost equal in proportion.

The Balinese language expresses possession in kinship terms by using a ligature (-ne) between the noun and the possessive pronoun (-n) without any additional morphological marking. For example, “*panak-ne*” means “his/her child” and “*bapa-n-ne*” means “his/her father”, where “*ne*” is the possessive marker and “*n*” is the third person possessive pronoun.

NOUN-(LIG)-POSS.PRO

<i>panak-ne</i>	<i>bapa-n-ne</i>
child-3POSS	father-LIG-3POSS
‘his/her child’	‘his/her father’

In Balinese culture, kinship terms that indicate possession, such as “my child” or “my brother,” are commonly used without any explicit morphological marking to indicate possession. This is in contrast to other languages where the possessive form of kinship terms would be used in such situations. In the example provided, there is no use of morphological possessive marking. The sentence is structured as follows:

“*O ne nyangkol panak pra*”
 PART DET AV.carry child also

Here, “*o*” is a particle that marks a reference to something close to the speaker or the addressee, “*ne*” is a determiner that means “this”, “*nyangkol*” means “to carry”, “*panak*” means “child”, and “*pra*” means “also”. The sentence can be translated to “Here, she is also carrying her child.” Instead of using a possessive pronoun or morphological possessive marking to indicate possession, the speaker uses context to convey that the child being carried belongs to the person who is doing the carrying.

Figure 3 shows top ten Balinese kinship terms used by the speakers in this study based on the family picture task they worked on. They are “*panak*” means “child”, “*kurenan*” means “spouse”, “*kaki/kak*” means “grandfather”, “*bapanne*” means “father”, “*memen*” means “mother”, “*matuan*” means “parent-in-law”, “*nanang/bapak*” means “father” and “*dadong*” means “grandmother”.

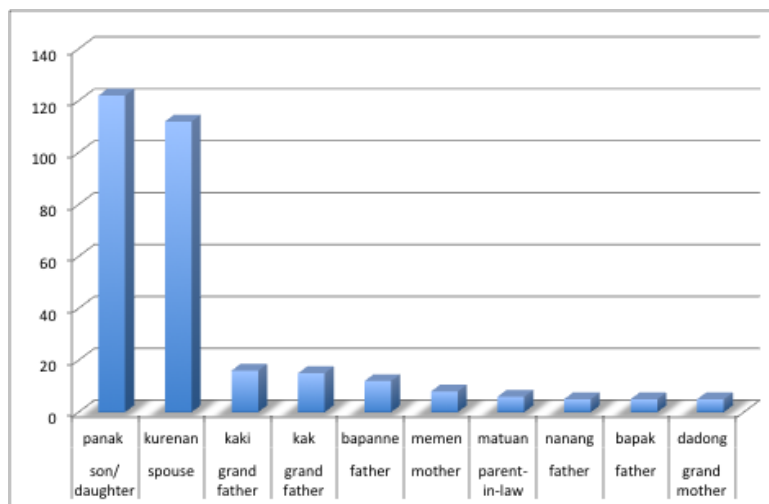


Figure 3. Top-Ten Balinese Kinship Terms in Use

The kinship terms mentioned above are primarily low register which used by individuals from commoner or lower caste backgrounds. They are commonly employed in colloquial language, reflecting the casual and intimate nature of Balinese social interactions.

(b). *Non-Kinship Terms*

In Balinese language, non-kinship terms make up around 70% of the total terms used in daily conversations. This proportion is higher than the proportion of kinship terms used, indicating that non-kinship terms are more frequently used in Balinese language. Non-kinship terms refer to individuals who are not related by blood or marriage, such as friends, acquaintances, and strangers. These terms are often used to address or refer to people based on their social status, gender, or age. Figure 4 shows top ten Balinese non-kinship terms used by the Balinese speakers.

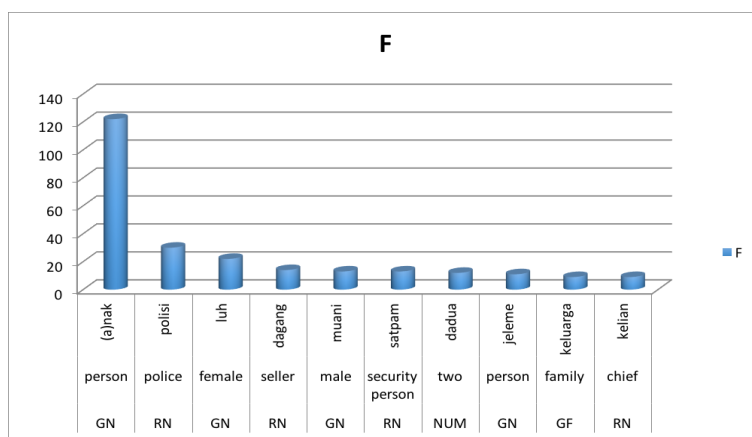


Figure 4. Top-Ten Balinese Non-Kinship Terms

The most frequently used non-kinship terms such as: “(a)nak” means “person”, “polisi” means “police”, “luh” means “female”, “dagang” means “seller”, “muani” means “male”, “satpam” means “security person”; “dadua” means “two”, “jeleme” means “person”, “keluarga” means “family” and “kelian” means “chief”. Those non-kinship terms are dominantly used because they are keywords related to family picture task which is about domestic violence. In Balinese society, the frequency of non-kinship terms in daily discourse reflects the various nature of social interactions and the different roles individuals play within their communities.

(c). *Pronominals*

In Balinese language, the use of pronominal is influenced by the social status and relationship between the speakers. Pronominals are used to refer to individuals without repeating their names or titles. The most frequently used pronominals in Balinese are in the low register, which indicates a close social relationship between the speakers. This is because these pronominals are used to refer to individuals who are known to each other and are of equal social status. For example: “(i)ya” means “he/she”, “ci/iba” means “you”, “raga/cang” means “I” as seen in Figure 5 below.

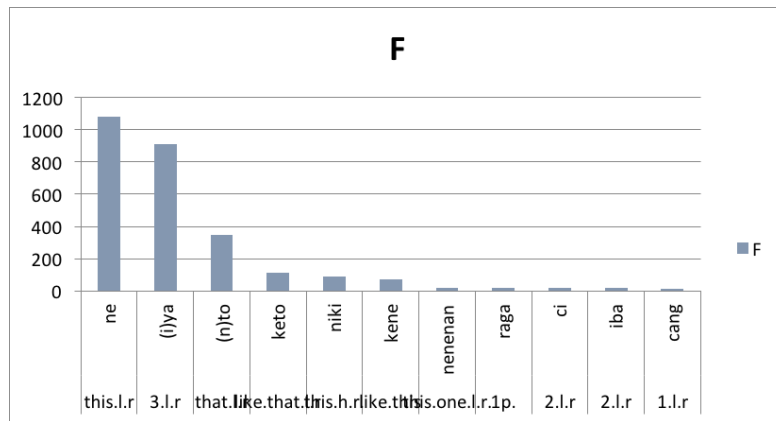


Figure 5. Most Frequently Used Pronominals

V. CONCLUSION

In Balinese, human referents convey social meaning by using different terms, pronouns, and registers to indicate the relationship between the speaker and the person being referred to. These linguistic choices reflect the speaker's perception of the social hierarchy and status in Balinese culture. Social factors such as age, caste, social status, and the nature of the relationship between the individuals play a crucial role in determining how human referents are used. The study found that the default register in Balinese language is the low register, typically used in everyday conversations among friends, family members, and colleagues. It was found that high register kinship terms were limited in their use and were only used in vocative form. The findings reveal that non-kinship terms are more frequently used in Balinese language than kinship terms, and that both types of terms are expressed in low register. Additionally, pronominals and deictic expressions play a significant role in expressing social meaning and indexing the social relations between speakers and addressees. The most frequently used pronominals in Balinese are in the low register, which indicates a close social relationship between the speakers.

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Desak Putu Eka Pratiwi is an associate professor in the English Department, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Mahasaraswati Denpasar University. Born in Denpasar-Bali, on June 4, 1985, she earned her bachelor's degree in English Literature from Udayana University in 2007. She continued her education at Udayana University, obtaining her master's degree in 2009 and her doctoral degree in 2015 in Linguistics. She is currently a lecturer and the vice dean in the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Mahasaraswati Denpasar University. She has published a book funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Republic of Indonesia. She also actively published articles in international journals in collaboration with international authors, one of them entitled "Language vs. Individuals in Cross-linguistic Corpus Typology". Her areas of research interest include semantics, pragmatics, ethno-linguistics, linguistic anthropology, and typology. Dr. Pratiwi is also the member of Linguistic Society of Indonesia and Association of Local Language Researchers.



I Komang Sulatra is a lecturer in the English Study Program, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Mahasaraswati Denpasar University. He is currently the Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Mahasaraswati Denpasar University. He was born in Karangasem on March 13, 1979. He earned his bachelor's degree in 2004 from English Department, Udayana University. He got his master's degree in Linguistics in 2012 from Udayana University. He is currently enrolled in a doctoral program in Linguistics at Udayana University. His research focuses on Eco Linguistics. His areas of expertise include Sociolinguistics, Morphology and Discourse Analysis. He regularly conducts research and shares his findings through publications in journals and presentations at international and national seminars.



Komang Dian Puspita Candra is a lecturer of English Study Program, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Mahasaraswati Denpasar University, Bali-Indonesia. She was born in Denpasar on February 17, 1989. She graduated from English Department, Udayana University in 2010. She got her Master degree in 2013 at Linguistic Department, Udayana University. Currently she is continuing her Doctoral study at Udayana University. Pragmatic is one of her research interests, besides semantics, phonology and discourse analysis. She likes to write articles on linguistics studies and published them on journals and conferences.

Requestive Perspectives and Conventions: Exploring Language Proficiency Influence Among Saudi EFL Learners

Shadi Majed Alshraah

English Department, Preparatory Year Deanship, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, 151 Al-Kharj 11942, Saudi Arabia

Nizaam Kariem*

English Department, Preparatory Year Deanship, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, 151 Al-Kharj 11942, Saudi Arabia

Husam al-omari

Language Center, The Hashemite University, P.O. box 330127, 13133, Zarqa, Jordan

Khadijah AlQarni

English Language Institute, King Abdulaziz University, 42801, Jeddah 21551, Saudi Arabia

Aa-ieshah Abrahams Kariem

English Department, Preparatory Year Deanship, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, 151 Al-Kharj 11942, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—This paper investigated the pragma-linguistic competence of Saudi EFL learners in expressing requests and how high achievers (HAs) and low achievers (LAs) differ in this regard. The main goals of the study were to investigate the genres of requests that these groups use and to identify the matter and manner conventions that separate their pragmatic competence. The study applied a quantitative cross-sectional design with a total sample size of 253 Saudi EFL learners. Data were collected using a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and analysed through statistical measures like Pearson's Chi-Square. The research showed that HAs and LAs had markedly different use of request strategies. HAs mostly used inclusive and hearer-oriented requests (30.0% and 31.17%, respectively), while LAs preferred speaker-oriented requests (50.60%). A considerable discrepancy among the uses of inclusive requests was found, with HAs utilising this strategy much more than LAs, probably showing a higher pragmalinguistic competence among the higher achievers. The study, therefore, shows that the pragmatics of learning English should receive greater attention and more extensive types of request strategies and cultural considerations should be taught. To target the imbalance between HAs and LAs, teachers can incorporate immersive learning and cultural teaching methods.

Index Terms—requestive perspectives, pragmalinguistics, Saudi EFL, language proficiency

I. INTRODUCTION

Speech acts include actions as well as words (Asif, 2017). These behaviours show several conventions for communicating requests, appreciation, regrets, praises, and rejections. Although speech acts are common to all cultures, their particular forms differ. An increasing focus on cross-cultural communication has brought pragmatic capability into focus, in addition to language abilities. As speaking multiple languages becomes the standard in our society, the realisation of speech acts by bilinguals has grown in interest. Speaking behaviours are culturally particular; therefore, language learners might need help to execute them correctly. Considering that Saudi Arabia is among the countries with multilingual and multiethnic settings, pragmatics understanding is crucial to the success of Saudi EFL learners in English contexts. The core difficulty for these speech behaviours is to become familiar with the linguistic conventions to follow the community rules and, as a result, attain pragmalinguistic competence (El-Dakhs et al., 2023).

Speech acts are a significant component of language use; they vary from merely informative to factual. Searle (1979), as cited in Alqarawi (2018), classified speech acts into five categories: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Assertives show the speaker's point of view about something true; directives are involved when the speaker tries to modify the hearer's behaviour; commissive statements represent promises of future actions; expressive clauses indicate what the speaker feels or emotions; and declarations are used to change reality based on the speaker's words.

* Corresponding Author

According to these classes, the speaker's part of speech under directives is an attempt to move the addressee's behaviour (Al-Hassaani & Al-Saani, 2022; Alshakhi, 2019). In this research, requestive speech acts are given the key role due to their pivotal role in communication and the challenges they cause to beginner Saudi EFL learners.

Requestive speech acts are one of the most important fields within pragmatics skills proficiency. Requests are used when asking someone to do or not do something and conveyed requests depend on one's competence in being direct, polite, and culturally appropriate. Saudi EFL learners may find learning the English language tricky due to the varying politeness, customs and social norms as opposed to a speaker of native English. This study focuses on investigating the linguistic and cultural factors affecting how Saudi students use English in different situations concerning the function of requestive speech acts by Saudi EFL Students. This study is expected to contribute to an improved understanding of how Saudi EFL learners acquire pragmatic skills and as a source of useful information for teachers and researchers in the field of EFL. Based on the study objectives, the following research questions are pursued in this paper:

- a. How do Saudi EFL learners with high English proficiency (HAs) differ from those with low proficiency (LAs) in their use of request strategies, particularly regarding inclusivity, impersonal requests, speaker-oriented requests, and hearer-oriented requests?
- b. What are the most common conventions of means and forms used by high achievers (HAs) and low achievers (LAs) in request acts, and what are the statistically significant differences between these groups?
- c. To what extent do social and cultural factors contribute to the variations in requestive speech acts among Saudi EFL learners, and how do these factors influence the pragmatic competence of high achievers (HAs) and low achievers (LAs)?

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Key Dimensions in the Study of Request in Foreign Language Learning

Countless studies have been dedicated to investigating requestive speech acts in the language use of Arabic and non-Arabic EFL learners. Al-Otaibi (2016), for example, contrasted the request speech act in Persian and English. In this regard, the direct statements from a couple of chosen Persian and English TV dramas were transcribed and ranked according to the level of directness. The research showed that the requirements of Persians and Americans were usually direct and assertive. Al-Momani (2009) showed the difference between British English and Kuwaiti Arabic in the speech act of request. Over 500 participants provide data using the mixed approaches methodology. The results showed that the Kuwaiti and the British participants used the "query preparatory" approach the most frequently.

Additionally, power as a personal trait was reflected in fulfilling the parties' needs. The participants opted for an indirect approach when the speaker had great power. Along with the cross-cultural investigation, much interlingual research was carried out. Bibi et al. (2021) researched types of English requests made by Costa Rican undergraduate students as the most effective ones, for example. In the survey, people consider the modal auxiliaries such as "would you mind" or "could you" to be more polite than other alternatives.

The students were likewise accurately assessed the amount "of the appropriateness of other structures, including as imperatives, interrogatives, and desire expressions" (Hamdi, 2023, p. 58). The findings, a testament to the meticulous work of the researchers, demonstrated that, via exposure to a foreign language, EFL learners may acquire a sufficient degree of pragmatic ability. In the same vein, Qadha et al. (2021) looked at how native speakers of Australian English and Indonesian English realised request speech acts differently. Data were obtained using observation and DCTs. Results revealed that both groups made both "direct and indirect requests" (Casil et al., 2018, p. 68). Nonetheless, the native speakers favoured using more declarative statements, whereas the "EFL learners tended to use more interrogative ones" (Jorda, 2005, p. 3). Besides, EFL students often used more honorifics and attractors than native speakers.

Many researchers in the Arab world have looked at the speech act of request (Ali et al., 2019; Al-Qarni, 2023; Jahara et al., 2021), however not according to the degree of directness as this study does. Relevant to this work are A-Qari (2017), Alsalem (2024), and A-Qari (2021). A-Qari (2017) looked at how native speakers of Saudi Arabic, Saudi English as a Foreign Language students, and native speakers of British Arabic produced requests. About 160 people's data were gathered using DCTs. The findings indicated that Saudis preferred to make more straightforward demands than the British group and the EFL students. Nonetheless, indirect tactics were preferred by the last two groups. Regarding mitigation, the British preferred to employ grammatical and linguistic strategies, whilst Saudis used semantic softeners.

In a similar spirit, Alsalem (2024, p. 39) looked at "how American native speakers of English and Moroccan EFL learners produced requests". Once again, sixty participants had their data obtained by DCTs. The results showed that compared to the Americans, the Moroccans made more straightforward requests. All the same, the two groups favoured the traditional indirect request techniques over the other ones. This applied especially to the regular use of the query preparation technique.

Regarding Qari (2021), her research was instructive. Qari (2021) examined whether giving requests clear instructions will help Saudi EFL students become more knowledgeable about and adept at using the right request techniques in English. To that purpose, thirty Saudi EFL students received specific instruction in using English request tactics, and written questionnaires were used to gather data before and after the exam.

According to the findings, students who received explicit instruction were much better at comprehending and using the request techniques in English. They also made notable progress in identifying the purposes of the pertinent strategies and

tended to use more suitable strategies in their production. This result is not just a theoretical finding, but it has practical implications for language teaching. It aligns with past research on educational pragmatics that demonstrates the need for explicit teaching to enhance the pragmatic understanding of EFL students (Napoli & Tantucci, 2022). This underscores the importance of our research in the field of language acquisition and pragmatics.

B. Theoretical Basis of the Study

Arrays of theories have been applied in studying different speech actions and their impacts on communication, mainly in the learning process of foreign language learners. This paper considers two theories: the Speech Act theory, the Politeness theory, and the Sociocultural theory. Speech Act Theory, proposed by J.L. Austin and refined by John Searle, is a basic linguistic theory in the linguistics and philosophy of language (Almomani, 2009). The locutionary act has a particular meaning; the illocutionary act is intended for the listener, and the perlocutionary act is the impact or the result of the utterance. John Searle followed the framework of Austin, concentrating on different types of illocutionary acts and the conditions of their use. Searle categorised speech acts into five types: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Requests are, by the definition of this study, the speaker's command to the listener to do something (Altheby, 2018; Elmahdi & Khan, 2015). Every speech act has its circumstances of completion called felicity conditions, which differ. They embrace intent, competence, and fitness, among others. As a result, a hearer's awareness of the speaker's intended meaning and the social norms of appropriate responses are the keys to the success of the request (Jackson et al., 2020; Elder, 2021). According to Alkhalaf (2023), speech Act Theory proves a helpful model concerning the requestive point of view and language patterns of Saudi EFL learners. The study highlighted how Saudi EFL learners' fashion their requests, particularly their underlying intentions and the desired outcomes. The data classification approach of speech acts aside from the linguistic structures and the cultural and contextual factors that influence such requests (Hamdi, 2023; Shen & Chui, 2019). The investigation aimed to estimate the degree to which the Saudi EFL learners stick to English-speaking standards in their requests or preserve the cultural communication patterns of their language. Furthermore, the Study of the Speech Act Theory helps to classify the tactics employed by Saudi EFL learners to be polite, blunt, or indirect when asking for something. These tools will help the teacher to assess the learners' pragmalinguistic competence which is shown through awareness of the social dynamics and language conventions.

The politeness theory developed by Brown and Levinson (1987), as cited in Alshraah et al. (2023), is the first model. It sees the speech act of request as a "face-threatening act to both the speaker and the listener". Interlocutors collaborate to preserve one another's societal reputation or face by refraining from face-threatening behaviours or lessening their detrimental impact. Face, in this sense, may be either negative (the need to be autonomous and unimpressed) or positive (the want to be loved and liked). Since it entails imposition and invasion, the speech act request threatens the speaker and the listener (Almusallam, 2023). Speakers may try to lessen the impact of requests by employing less direct tactics or combining several modifiers.

Furthermore, expected to change depending on pertinent situational elements like dominance and social distance is the realisation of speech actions. It should be mentioned, nonetheless, that the politeness theory has drawn criticism for failing to adequately consider cultural variations. Many claim the model is Eurocentric (El-Dakhi et al., 2023). As such, it is more available to Western culture, which greatly emphasises freedom and individuality. Many civilisations might respond to speech actions differently (Alrabai, 2016).

III. STUDY METHODOLOGY

A. Study Design

This research utilized a quantitative research design to analyse the pragmalinguistic knowledge of Saudi EFL learners in making requests. The researchers developed the study as cross-sectional survey in order to have a large data set from a suitable sample of various Saudi learners who study English as a foreign language. The choice of survey design is to be able to gain statistical insights from the study participants and understand their usage of different request strategies.

B. Study Participants and Sampling

This study involved a group of Saudi EFL students attending well-known universities in Saudi Arabia. There were 253 research participants out of which 170 were high achievers (HAs). The other 83 were low achievers (LAs) due to their poor English course academic results. Through this method of sampling, we had a varied representation for the students in terms of gender, age, and academic background which gave us the chance to have a wide view about the requestive speech act usage across the demographic groups. The High Achievers (HAs) group consisted of students with a high level of English language proficiency. The candidates who were identified as LAs were those who manifested poor level of proficiency in the English language through their low scores in English coursework. Sample size was calculated on the basis of power analysis that established 80% statistical power and significance level of 0.05. This approach, therefore, made the study powerful enough to detect statistically meaningful differences between HA and LA outcomes. A large sample size provided statistical tools for a thorough analysis and allowed to generalize the results for the wider population of Saudi EFL students.

C. Data Collection

Data was collected via DCT (Discourse Completion Task), a general pragmatic research method, whereby each participant was presented with a scene containing an appropriate request. The workshops included a range of context in the form of different level of social distancing and power arrangements that ensured volunteers could practice in all situations. The development of the DCT is based on the situated learning environment of a SA EFL learners which helps to assess their pragmalinguistic competence. The time allowed for the participants was enough for them to address the issues in the DCT and offered enough time to think things through before responding. The data collected helped in answering the question on the range of strategies used: ranging from direct to indirect and also in their frequency across two groups: HAs and LAs. Therefore, the research utilized the data obtained from DCT and enabled it to conduct in-depth analysis into the requestive speech acts and the norms involved.

D. Data Analysis Procedure

The statistical analysis performed was based on quantitative statistics to discover trends and differences in the use of requestive speech acts among high achievers and low achievers. The use of descriptive statistics features in this study is mainly to derive the actual frequency and percentile values of the requesting strategies of the study participants. We also employed chi-square to evaluate the correlation between the four request strategies and the related proficiency levels.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Results

(a). Results of Demographic Features

The survey included key demographic information of the study participants. The demographic characteristics form the basis for understanding the peripheral data required from the study sample. The findings are summarised in the Table 1 below.

TABLE 1
RESULTS OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Category	Variable	Repetition (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	138	54.5%
	Female	115	45.5%
Age Group	18-21	88	34.8%
	22-25	102	40.3%
	26-29	43	17.0%
	30+	20	7.9%
Academic Level	Undergraduate	145	57.3%
	Graduate	108	42.7%
English Proficiency	High Achievers (HAs)	170	67.2%
	Low Achievers (LAs)	83	32.8%

The demographic table above reveals that the sample consisted of 253 Saudi EFL learners with a relatively similar gender distribution, where males accounted for 54.5% (N = 138) and females 45.5% (N = 115). This relatively egalitarian distribution ensures that the results can be used across gender lines, thus minimising the biases related to gender that may be present in analysing the requestive speech acts. For the age groups, most participants were between 22 and 25, 40.3% of the total sample (N = 102). The second largest age group was 18-21 years and represented 34.8% (N = 88), followed by 26-29 years at 17.0% (N = 43), and the smallest group included people 30 or older at 7.9% (N = 20). This age distribution indicates that most participants were young adults, typically university students or young professionals, who coincide with the study's context about English language teachers.

Most of our respondents were undergraduates, making up 57.3% of the total respondents (N = 145), and graduates followed with 42.7% (N = 108). Such a relationship between undergraduates and graduates creates an overview of academic backgrounds and demonstrates a wide range of educational levels in the EFL training context in Saudi Arabia. Last, but not least, the English proficiency level of the participants was evaluated, and 67.2% were classified as HAs, while 32.8% were classified as LAs. This distribution is meaningful, suggesting that most respondents possessed higher levels of English proficiency, which might be a reason for their high frequency of requestive speech acts. The ratio of HAs indicates a considerable majority of highly accomplished English learners in the research, thus allowing for a solid observation of the disparities in request strategies between upper and lower achievers.

(b). Results of the Main Survey

As the importance of conventional indirect in request act and it was used frequently by both HAs (28.43%) and LAs (16.24%) with a significant difference between them in this study, it is necessary to present the results for requestive perspectives and conventions of forms and means. Choosing the request perspective shows a necessary choice of variation in employing request act. According to Blum-Kulka (1989), request perspective could be classified into four categories as follows: impersonal request (e.g., *how about cancelling the session*) inclusive requests (e.g., *can we prepare for the*

exam together), speaker-oriented requests (e.g., *may I get this the story*), and hearer-oriented requests (e.g., *could you help me*) as shown in Table 2 below. Request perspectives are classified into four categories as follows:

1. Impersonal request (S6, HA#23) "*how about postponing the meeting*"
2. Inclusive requests (S2, HA# 36) "*can we prepare for the exam together*"
3. Speaker-oriented requests (S12, LA# 21) "*may I get this story*"
4. Hearer oriented requests (S11, LA#18) "*could you help me*"

The classifications of request strategies according to the speaker-oriented requests, hearer-oriented requests, inclusive requests, and impersonal requests on DCT are illustrated in the following tables. The first column shows the perspective strategies that are used by participants. Next, frequencies and percentages are presented in column three and four. This is followed by the Pearson Chi-Square values that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is significant difference between groups pertaining pragmatic production in the last column.

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGE, RAW FREQUENCY, AND PEARSON CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF PERSPECTIVE BY GROUPS

Perspective	High		Low		Pearson Chi-Square	p-value
	N	%	N	%		
Speaker-oriented requests	48	28.2	42	50.60	.400	0.527
Hearer-oriented requests	53	31.17	35	42.16	3.682	0.055
Inclusive requests	51	30.0	6	7.2	35.526	0.000*
Impersonal requests	18	10.58				
Total	170		83		29.917	0.000*

* $p < 0.05$

Table 2 above shows that there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the inclusive requests according to the variable of the proficiency as the value of "Pearson Chi-Square" was (35.52) by a statistical significance of (0.000*). Furthermore, HAs (30.0%) employed inclusive requests significantly more than LAs (7.2%) at a p-value (0.000*). It is noteworthy that low achievers do not utilize impersonal requests in their responses; the reason may be the insufficient pragmatic competence that helps them use various request perspectives. HAs (n=170) have a significant pragmatic knowledge compared with LAs (n= 83) in using requests perspective strategies according to Chi-square (29.917) at P-value (0.000*).

The use of speaker-oriented request, which means that the focus lies on the speaker as a requester, was higher among LAs (n=42) than HAs (=48). On the other hand, hearer-oriented requests, which means that the focus lies in the hearer, were higher among HAs (n= 53) compared to LAs (n= 35). Interestingly, the findings revealed a great tendency of HAs towards using inclusive requests (30.0%) compared to LAs (7.2%). Surprisingly, HAs are inclined to use the impersonal request strategy with a proportion of (10.58%) as opposed to LAs who have never resorted to employing this strategy due to their insufficient pragmatic competence, as mentioned in Table 2, with 0.0% using impersonal request.

The most prevalent request strategy among HAs was the use of inclusive requests, as exemplified by the phrase "can we change the appointment" (S10, HA#3). This strategy was likely employed to avoid face-threatening acts by involving both the speaker and the hearer in the request. The use of the modal verb "can", which suggests the possibility, further served as a request mitigating device, preventing the hearer from rejecting the request (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

On the other hand, both HAs (6.7%) and LAs (0.0%) were less inclined towards using impersonal request strategy "suggestion", such as "how about postponing the meeting" (S6, HA#18), such as request is rendered in an indirect manner that implies suggestion, which entails the hearer to refer to the contextual cues. More importantly, such types of request strategies are considered face-saving because they risk not being understood since there are insufficient contextual clues for the hearer to interpret them appropriately. As Blum-Kulka (1989) stated, a requestive perspective may be employed to mitigate and minimize the coerciveness of the request act as it is seen as face-threatening.

(c). Conventions of Means and Forms

Blum-Kulka described conventions of means as "the kinds of sentences that are standardly used as indirect requests" (p. 41). For instance, speakers usually start their request by asking the hearer's ability to reply to his/her request, such as "Can you lend me your summarizing?" (Sit#5, LA# 34). However, the convention of form is used as the linguistic form and exact expressions. For example, "Could you?" rather than "Would you be able to?". Table 3 presents the five conventions of means used by participants: ability (e.g., "Can you?....."), permission (e.g., "Could I"), possibility (e.g., "Is it okay . . ."), willingness (e.g., "Would you...?"), and suggestion (e.g., "let us).

Data 3 shows differences and similarities in their use of conventions of means. LAs (n=41) and HAs (n=45) prefer ability but are not statistically different. However, there are also statistically significant differences between HAs (29.41) and LAs (2.40%) at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the willingness according to the variable of the proficiency as the value of " Chi-Square " was (37.786) by a statistical significance of P-value (0.000*). In addition, only HAs employ suggestion strategies compared to LAs with no occurrence. Most important, Pearson Chi-Square pair comparisons revealed significant differences in their use of possibility as used by HAs (11.76%) significantly more compared with LAs (6.02%) at P-value (0.003*).

Turning now to unravel the use of conventions of means into suggestion (e.g., what about...), willingness (e.g., would you mind...), possibility (e.g., is it possible....), permission (e.g., may I...), and ability (e.g., could you...). The first column shows the Conventions of means strategies that participants use. Next, frequencies and percentages are presented in columns three and four. This is followed by the Pearson Chi-Square values that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is a significant difference between groups about pragmatic realization in the last column.

TABLE 3
PERCENTAGE, RAW FREQUENCY, AND PEARSON CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF CONVENTIONS OF MEANS B BY GROUP

Conventions	High		Low		Pearson Chi-Square	p-value
	N	%	N	%		
Ability	45	26.47	41	49.39	0.186	0.666
Permission	49	28.82	35	42.16	2.333	0.127
Possibility	20	11.76	5	6.02	9.000	0.003*
Willingness	51	29.41	2	2.40	37.786	0.000*
Suggestion	5	2.94	0	0	-	-
Total	170		83		29.917	0.000*

* $p < 0.05$

Pearson Chi-Square was used to identify the differences and/or similarities between two groups in using request strategies according to the convention of means request strategies that consists of ability, permission, possibility, willingness, and suggestions. The findings in the above Table 3 showed that there are differences between HAs and LAs in using convention of means request strategies that consists of ability, permission, possibility, willingness, and suggestions. The data presents that the participants have used the convention of means sub-strategies with either major or minor differences between them. It is clearly obvious that “ability” sub-strategy occupies the highest rank for LA group. For instance, HAs used “could you...” while “can you...” among LAs.

To clarify, the use of request strategy “could you” is considered hearer-oriented requests in which the speaker might seek to check the ability of the hearer to do a specific matter such as “could you give me a charger.....?” (S3, HA#18). On the contrary, LAs used “me sorry, can you give me charge?” (S3, LA#45). To draw a distinction between them, both groups are using request strategies but statically different. However, HAs used more polite strategy than LAs. Moreover, it is clearly obvious that LAs have low English language proficiency. To illustrate, they use the verb “charge” rather than the noun “charger”, moreover, they did not use an article “a” that precedes the noun “charger”. The reason behind their linguistic errors might be attributed to their poor vocabulary items and their low linguistic and proficiency levels.

To sum up, there is a statistical difference between both groups in employing conventions of forms. Let us now turn to demonstrate the percentage of using convention of forms by HAs and LAs as indicated in Table 4. Closer inspection of Table 4 shows that conventions of forms sub-strategies, such as possibility, ability, permission, and willingness have been used by both groups with either major or minor differences between them. Remarkably, LAs have a greater tendency to use ability strategy, while HAs have a great tendency to use permission strategy. Furthermore, the use of the introductory phrases that precede the request strategy differs between both. However, it is observed no use of the suggestion strategy by LAs compared to HA.

Based on the results on Table 3, the three most preferred strategies by HAs were willingness (29.41%), permission (28.82%) and ability (26.47). However, LAs showed their preference just to the two strategies that are: ability (49.39%) and permission (42.16%).

TABLE 4
PERCENTAGE AND RAW FREQUENCY OF CONVENTIONS OF FORM BY GROUP

Convention of form	HA		LA	
	N	%	N	%
Ability	45	26.47	41	49.39
Can you ...	14		27	
Could you ...	21		14	
Would you be able ...	10			
Permission	49	28.82	35	42.16
Can I ...?	13		11	
Could I ...?	15		9	
May I ...?	13		15	
Would I be able ...?	8			
Possibility	20	11.76	5	6.02
Is it possible/okay ...?	9		4	
Would it be possible/okay...?	0	0		
Is there any way ...?	11		1	
Willingness	51	29.41	2	2.40
Will you ...?	7		0	
Would you ...?	14		2	
Would you mind ...?	12			
Do you mind .	18			
Suggestion	5	2.94	0	
How about ...?	3			
Let us ...	2			
Total	170		83	

Permission strategy was among both groups in which HAs inclined to use the phrase “could I”, while LAs were inclined to use the phrase “*can I*” for asking the hearer’s permission to perform the request. It is worth mentioning that using “could” is considered more polite than “can”, therefore, HAs have more proficiency levels in performing request strategies as opposed to LAs. On the other hand, the least commonly used request strategy by HAs groups is suggestion. To illustrate, HAs showed a much stronger tendency towards using “how about” introductory phrases that denote suggestion, while LAs did not use this strategy in their request situations.

Generally speaking, the data suggested that HAs group exhibited a high frequency of using ability request strategy, but a low frequency of using suggestion sub-strategy. In addition, LAs showed low frequency in using possibility and willingness compared with HAs. Based on the foregoing, HAs’ use of willingness, suggestion strategies and “could” suggests their ability to master the language and their pragmatic realisation in using request strategies that are appropriate for addressing those with higher power and social distance such as the use of could in the sixth situation in which the student asks his professor to postpone the date of submission for the final homework by using the following request strategy “*could you postpone the date of submission?*”(S6, HA#16).

On the other hand, LAs’ use of “can” suggests their lack of L2 pragmatic competence due to their inability to use the appropriate modal verb for addressing those with higher power and social distance such as using the following request strategy “*can postpone mission*” (S6, LA#45). which is considered informal as opposed to “could” that is considered more formal. More importantly, LAs lack the vocabulary knowledge that enables them to produce request strategy in an appropriate manner such as missing pronoun “you” after the verb postpone and the use of “mission”, rather than “submission”.

B. Discussions

(a). Summary of Findings

On the other hand, the higher use of speaker-oriented requests among LAs (50.60% vs. 28.2%) reflects a less collaborative approach; the low-proficiency learners may tend to focus on their objectives rather than paying due attention to the hearer. This might be derived from using language tools, which are rare and have less exposure to English-speaking cultures where people are known to use collaborative language structures more often (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010). In addition, impersonal request absence among LAs proves that low achievers use a limited pragmatic repertoire. They may prefer a more direct way of communication due to the features of high-context cultures such as Saudi Arabia (A-Qari, 2021). Their directness might prove detrimental while dealing with complex English communication, especially in the workplace and academia.

Concerning the second research question, the analysis of the conventions of means and forms demonstrated clear divergence from HAs to LAs. This trend was prevalent among both sub-groups, wherein LAs were dependent on “can you...” requests (49.39%), while HAs used a more diverse set of conventional phrases such as “would you mind...” and “could you...”. The sole fact that HAs also use politeness markers and modal verbs as native speakers do supports the research showing that proficient English speakers tend to use more indirect and polite language to avoid offending other people (Blum-Kulka, 1989; as cited in Bibi et al., 2021). On the other hand, LAs’ dependency on literal-based requests and the use of simpler structures suggests a lower level of pragmatic competence, likely due to insufficient exposure to English-speaking environments where indirect requests are more propagated.

The large gap in readiness strategies between HAs and LAs (29.41% vs. 2.40%) complements the existing evidence of the skill gap. HAs have shown a greater inclination to put forth requests in ways that make the hearer eager to consent, which is appropriate and non-violent. Such difference may be due to English-speaking cultures, which are more polite and face-saving oriented (Kuriri, 2023). LAs (whose linguistic resources are more limited) often fall back on simpler and more direct impositions, needing more delicate linguistic politeness demonstrated by high-achievers. This finding again reminds us that LAs are better-provided chances to get involved in real language usage and cultural practice activities to improve their pragmatic skills and comprehension of English style (Qadha et al., 2021).

The study results, in tandem with the third research question, revealed that social and cultural factors dominate in forming the requestive speech acts by the Saudi EFL learners. The variation in the use of inclusive requests between HAs and LAs demonstrates that cultural factors like collectivism and high-context communication affect how learners organize their requests. The HAs tend to use more polite and consensual request forms that correspond to the English-speaking tradition, which focuses on politeness and shared responsibility (Kim, 2020). This change might be justifiable through more exposure to the Western cultural context, where indirectness and collaboration are common practices (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010). However, using speaker-orientated and impersonal requests is rare, as SA cultural norms are stronger and favour clarity and direct communication between people (Hall, 1976). Such a result corresponds with an understanding that the high-context culture, which is a Saudi culture, such a culture typically uses shared understanding and implicit communication, leading to a preference for direct speech acts. The lack of diverse language request strategies among LAs shows they could lack exposure to English-speaking cultural norms that stress indirectness and courtesy. This may cause their communication in different linguistic environments to be affected as well.

These findings highlight the need to include cultural awareness in English as a foreign language teaching for Saudi EFL learners. The gap between HAs and LAs can be narrowed by offering learners a chance to engage in a broader

spectrum of ask strategies that will be most relevant (Asif, 2017). Hence, the learners will be able to develop their pragmatic competence more diversely while mastering English communications in all contexts, locally and internationally.

(b). Practical Implications

Regarding the implications for practice, this study's results are important for English language teaching and intercultural communication. The study findings have shown that proficiency levels can significantly determine the proficiency of the individual's pragmatic competence and how requests are framed and delivered. These outcomes emphasize the necessity of integrating the study of pragmatics into the English language curricula, which should include teaching how to use different request strategies and the cultural contexts in which they are most appropriate. Educators should emphasize activities that raise cultural awareness and empower learners to diversify the request forms, for instance, by using inclusive and hearer-oriented forms and the impersonal request form. The present research demonstrates the value of hands-on experience intended for the users to practice English in real-world situations, which boosts comprehension of social and cultural elements that affect language usage. Providing targeted teaching methods like role-play and peer-to-peer interaction will help fill the gap between people with high and low English levels. Lastly, if educators adopt these practical implications, learners can add pragmatic language skills necessary to participate in a global English-speaking environment and promote cross-cultural understanding and communication.

(c). Policy Implications

The results from this study have important policy implications for foreign language education in Saudi Arabia. The fact that pragmatic competence differs between high achievers (HAs) and low achievers (LAs) means that education policymakers should consider adding pragmatic training to English language curricula at both the school and university levels. This includes developing policies that embrace a balanced approach to language learning where learners are assessed on vocabulary and grammar and their ability to navigate culturally correct speech acts such as requests. Policymakers may, therefore, suggest professional development programs that enable English language teachers to be competent in teaching pragmatics that target cultural sensitivity and various communication strategies. Moreover, policies can encourage cross-cultural interactions and exposure to English-speaking communities, allowing the learners to have firsthand experiences with the social conditions that dominate language usage. Through implementing these policy measures, educational systems will facilitate their EFL students to attain proficiency in a globalized world that will make the learners both linguistically strong and culturally sound.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has meticulously explored the pragmalinguistic competence of Saudi EFL learners in making requests, and it has shown some important information concerning the differences in invoking request strategies between the high achievers (HAs) and the low achievers (LAs). Accordingly, the study revealed that HAs tend to have a broader range of request strategies, showing a preference for inclusive and hearer-oriented requests, which are more polite and cooperative. It indicates that more competent learners understand English language communication's social and cultural shades very well. In contrast, LAs often use more speaker-oriented requests, with shorter, impersonal requests suggesting a relatively narrow pragmatic repertoire and a directional communication style. Differences between HAs and LAs demonstrate the central role of English proficiency in requestive speech patterns, a key factor determining the quality of English language education and cross-cultural communication. The study results indicate the involvement of societal and cultural factors in creating the pragmatic competence of Saudi EFL learners. The documented disparities in request strategies suggest a requirement for a total approach to language education covering sociocultural awareness and pragmatic skills besides traditional language learning. This more diverse focus might be beneficial in reducing the fluency gap between LAs and HAs, implying a more intricate understanding of English communication. The research emphasises the need for classrooms conducive to immersion and authentic language use where the learner can acquire the required communication context skills. In general, the study provides the field of English as a second language with the necessary information and serves as a base for research on pragmatic competence in L2 learners. This study is aligned with Alshraah et al. (2024), who stated that "training in linguistic diversity and variation would be helpful in developing more effective methods of instructing students of many languages simultaneously in the field of foreign language learning" (p. 66).

In light of the study's findings, certain recommendations can give academic guidance to improve the practical skills of Saudi EFL learners. Firstly, educational policymakers should put up explicit instructions on pragmatics in the curriculum for English language teaching with the main focus being on various request strategies and the cultural context in which they are used. This orientation will help learners explore the wider aspects of their language choices, enabling them to use inclusive and respectful communication. Another important thing is that language teachers should incorporate native methods in their courses, for example, role-playing and peer-to-peer activities. They will help learners practice various requestive speech acts in real-life situations. Different approaches can aid students' self-confidence in using English and thus enable them to manage different communicative circumstances. Finding is consistent with AlTameemy et al. (2024) as stated that "HAs display consciousness of both social distance and power in realizing and producing speech acts. However, LAs show less consciousness of the influence of social power and distance in altering request strategies" (p. 321).

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Shadi Majed D. Alshraah, Ph.D. is Jordanian who is currently a lecturer at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU), Kharj, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He has 12 years of experience as a lecturer in the English department and a two-year experience as an English teacher in the Ministry of Education, Jordan. He holds PhD in linguistics from University of Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). He obtained his master's and bachelor's degree in applied Linguistics from Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), Irbid, Jordan. His interests revolve around pragmatics, socio-pragmatic, and teaching English as a second/foreign language (ESL\EFL). Affiliation: Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU), Email: s.alshraah@psau.edu.sa. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4656-2917>

Nizaam Kariem is currently a lecturer at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU), Kharj, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He has 20 years of experience as a lecturer in the English department in King Saud University and PSAU. His interest is in ESP, Sociolinguistics and sociopragmatics and education.

Husam al-omari is currently a lecturer at The Hashemite University, Language Center, P.O. box 330127, 13133, Zarqa, Jordan. He has 20 years of experience as a lecturer in the Language institution. His interest is in Arabic syntax, criticism, Sociolinguistics and sociopragmatics and education. Ahmad_ashraah@hu.edu.jo

Khadijah ALQarni is a full-time English Language Instructor who was working at the ELI of King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, SA. She has almost seven years of experience in teaching the foundation year students. She obtained a bachelor's degree in English Language from University of Tabuk with an excellent evaluation and a class honor. She is highly interested in different fields of language study such as linguistics, computational linguistics, teaching English as a second/foreign Language. khadijahalqarni2015@gmail.com. <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1861-5289>

Aa-ieshah Abrahams Kariem, Master from India who is currently a lecturer at Prince Sattam bin Abdul Aziz University (PSAU), Al Kharj, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. She has 16 years of expertise as a lecturer in the English department and she also holds two-year experience as an Academic Principal in Umm Al Qura International School, Riyadh. She has Masters in literature and has obtained her TEFL & TESOL Certification (120 credit Hours) & Advance in Business English Teacher training program (60 credit hours) through Asian College of Teachers, India Affiliation: Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-8635-2045>. Phone: +966-591557826. Email: nithaamabusolaah@gmail.com. Postal Code: Riyadh, 11535.

Application of Production-Oriented Approach in Seewo IWB Game Activities: An Innovative Strategy for Boosting Middle School Students' Speaking Competencies

Hu Yanfang

School of Education, University Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Malaysia

Fahainis Bt Mohd Yusof

School of Education, University Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Malaysia

Abstract—The Production-Oriented Approach (POA), uniquely imbued with Chinese pedagogical characteristics, stands as an innovative teaching method and concurrently occupies a central position in Chinese research endeavours in English education. This study aims to apply POA to middle school EFL classes and utilize comparative experimental data to show the efficiency of this approach in Seewo Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) game-based teaching activities. Despite the widespread recognition of Seewo IWB games' potential benefits, a notable challenge remains in effectively using them to improve students' speaking skills. Thus, this research included 120 middle school students as participants and involved comparing controlled and experimental groups. The findings revealed that integrating the POA teaching method improved students' speaking competencies, fostering a greater interest in learning English.

Index Terms—Production-Oriented Approach (POA), Seewo Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) Games, speaking competencies, middle school students, EFL teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the landscape of English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms has significantly transformed, moving away from traditional chalk-and-talk environments towards technology-driven intelligent classrooms (Pacatang & Pandi-Ruedas, 2024; Salem, 2019). Integrating the Seewo interactive whiteboard (IWB) has played a crucial role in facilitating this shift, opening up new avenues for English language teaching and learning (Luo et al., 2023). One standout feature of the Seewo IWB is its inner interactive game activities, which cater to the needs of modern game-based educational approaches. These activities leverage interactive whiteboards' touch and gesture functionalities to encourage seamless interaction between teachers, students, and the displayed content (Terrell, 2023).

Unlike conventional entertainment games, the games on the Seewo IWB are classified as Serious games, specifically designed for K-12 educational settings. The primary objective is to deliver targeted subject matter through engaging gameplay, enhancing student engagement and interactivity throughout the educational process. Seewo IWB game templates incorporate various gaming types (Seewo company, 2024). In EFL classrooms, teachers often use six types of games, including matching games, sorting games, quiz games, puzzle games, interactive story games, and team-based games. Meanwhile, some digital game elements, such as badges, points, levels, avatars, quests, social graphs, and certificates, all work together to create immersive gaming experiences that effectively address the need for authentic English language practice within a simulated real-world context (Zainuddin et al., 2020). Furthermore, teachers can insert other online games into the Seewo interactive whiteboard game templates and design, customize, and record specific game activities to suit detailed teaching materials.

However, despite the availability of intelligent teaching tools to EFL teachers, the desired effect of teaching on enhancing students' speaking abilities remains elusive. Traditional teaching methods, including grammar translation and direct instruction, often contribute to a significant gap between language learning and practical application (Shah et al., 2022). Although digital game-based teaching can be engaging, it may not yield optimal effectiveness. Worse, these traditional approaches excessively emphasize exam-oriented skills, overlooking the comprehensive and practical utilization of the language within the real world, particularly in speaking skills (Meng et al., 2021; Lu, 2022). Consequently, it is imperative to identify a suitable approach that facilitates the creation of an authentic language environment, enabling students to comprehend others, articulate their thoughts, and engage in meaningful communication with English speakers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEWS

A. *Production-Oriented Approach*

The Production-Oriented Approach (POA) is a “localized” foreign language teaching theory formulated by Chinese linguistic scholar Wen Qiufang and her team from Beijing Foreign Studies University. Its primary objective is to address the challenge of the disconnect between learning and application in the English language (Wen, 2018). By synthesizing pertinent curriculum theories with second language acquisition principles, this approach offers a teaching method more aligned with China’s specific educational landscape and needs, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of English language instruction (Ellis, 2017; Fu et al., 2021).

According to Wen (2017, 2018), the theory of the Production-Oriented Approach originated from Swain’s output hypothesis and Krashen’s input hypothesis. The output hypothesis advocates that learners can continuously improve their fluency in language using the output practice. At the same time, it holds that learners only turn their attention from semantics to grammatical structure when they output language, and only when learners can produce “understandable language output” in the target language, it shows that they master the language. Input hypothesis theory emphasizes that comprehensible language input is the condition of second language learning and believes input materials slightly higher than learners’ language level is the condition of acquisition (Wanlu, 2021). After investigating the adaptability of output theory in English language teaching, Wen (2013) found that combining the output hypothesis with the input hypothesis is necessary because teachers are challenged to deal with the relationship between output and input in classroom English teaching.

This innovative teaching model combines the strengths of Western educational approaches with the specific characteristics of the Chinese context. With its three core components, POA offers a comprehensive and tailored approach to teaching English. The teaching philosophy of POA places a strong emphasis on student-centred learning, promoting active student engagement in their educational journey (Lin, 2020). Furthermore, Wen (2018) highlighted the importance of the principle of ‘learning-using integration,’ which encourages the practical application of knowledge in real-world settings. Additionally, the ‘whole-person education’ principle underscores the holistic development of students, beyond just their language skills. Moreover, Wen’s teaching strategies within the POA framework include the ‘output-driven,’ ‘input-enabled,’ and ‘selective learning’ hypotheses. In this regard, EFL teachers play a vital role in the teaching process, taking on key responsibilities in motivating, facilitating, and evaluating student progress. The three guiding principles of POA serve as the foundation for the teaching hypotheses and overall instructional process. These hypotheses, in turn, provide a theoretical underpinning for the practical implementation of POA, offering a robust framework for effective English language instruction (Wen, 2018).

The POA approach is different from the traditional English teaching ways in that it begins with output (the final goal) and finishes with output (the final goal). It aims to enhance the effectiveness of English language instruction in China, bridging the gap between learning and practical application. Thus, students can actively participate in classroom teaching activities in the POA teaching mode, resulting in a true blend of learning and application (Sun & Asmawi, 2021). The development of POA theory has experienced six critical phases since 2007, as presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
THE DEVELOPMENT OF POA IN CHINA (WEN, 2018)

Phase	Development Track	Time
1. Warm-up Period	Output-driven	2007-2013
2. Embryonic period	Output-driven, Input-facilitation	2013-2014
3. Formative period	POA system	2015-2016
4. Revision Period	First revision of POA	2016-2017
5. Second revision period	Second revision of POA	2017-2018
6. Latest version period	Latest version of POA	2019-now

The theoretical framework of POA is continually evolving and being enhanced through the contributions of various scholars. Sun and Asmawi (2021) have advanced the POA theory by revising its theoretical system, which now comprises teaching philosophies, hypotheses, and procedures. The latest iteration of the revised POA system is visually represented in Figure 1, demonstrating the structured and integrated nature of this comprehensive approach to English language instruction.

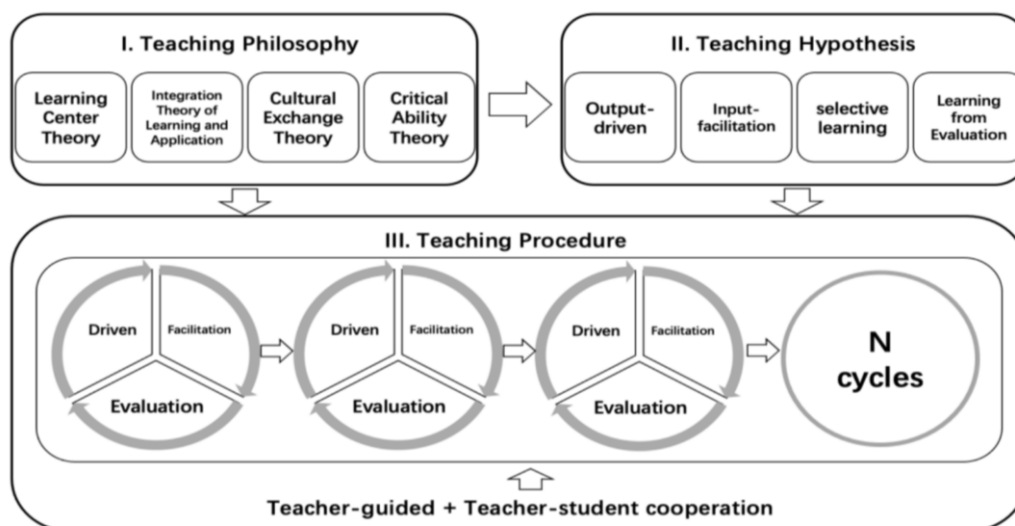


Figure 1. Theoretical System of POA (Sun & Adelina, 2021)

Regarding the instructional design of the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) in EFL classrooms, the majority of scholars have primarily focused on written discourses, exploring how to design reading and writing activities under its guidance. For instance, Zhang (2022) conducted a detailed analysis of the application of assessment in high school English reading classes. His study revealed that in immediate assessment, understanding and analyzing questions as well as providing critical feedback were more frequently observed. However, the creation of questions and process-focused feedback were limited. On the other hand, delayed assessment demonstrated a high level of student participation, with multiple assessments including group discussion, teachers' demonstrations of revision, and peer assessment, enabling students to deepen their understanding of assessment criteria and enhance their output. Furthermore, other scholars such as Du (2022), Huang (2020), Liu and Cao (2021), and Yi (2022) have demonstrated the effectiveness of utilizing POA to improve students' writing skills. These scholars share a consensus on several key points: input materials must be closely aligned with output goals, teacher-designed teaching tasks must be gradual and progressive, and students should be encouraged to accomplish output tasks in diverse ways to achieve their output goals.

It is evident that many scholars have realized that input and output are inseparable in language learning. However, there are also some problems in these studies: First, these scholars are based on the thinking mode of "input first, output later," demonstrating the importance of input to output but ignoring the reaction of output to input. Secondly, the evaluation of output tasks in these studies tends to be the final evaluation based on tests instead of the multi-level and multi-angle formative evaluation in which teachers and students participate together. Third, evaluating the teaching practice effect in the above studies is limited to achieving students' output tasks. Except for a few articles that use interviews with students, the rest fail to collect and analyze data by various methods to verify the effectiveness of teaching practice from multiple perspectives. Therefore, it is hoped that this research will contribute to bridging the gap in POA research and provide valuable insights for teachers and researchers alike.

B. Speaking Competencies

Oral communication constitutes a significant portion of our comprehensive expression, surpassing written forms. Proficiency in speaking has always been recognized as a key indicator of effective communication and success (John & Yunus, 2021). However, mastering the skill of speaking English as a foreign language presents a significant challenge compared to other language skills like listening, reading, and writing (Amoah & Yeboah, 2021). This is because speaking in English requires competency in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Thus, EFL teachers need to provide ample opportunities for learners to engage with the target language and interact with native English speakers (Anugrah et al., 2019).

Various definitions of "speaking" have been proposed by researchers in language learning. Some scholars define it as transmitting and expressing ideas, opinions, or emotions to others through verbal communication and articulation (MacIntyre et al., 2020). This process facilitates the conveyance of information and can be enhanced through various teaching and learning approaches. Other scholars regarded speaking competencies as the organization and synchronization of language knowledge and language skills in actual communication (AD & Jumriani, 2021). This view is supported by Wangmo et al. (2023), who believe speaking is a dynamic skill involving activating the speaker's expressive desires and emotional needs in real-world interactions. In light of this, EFL teachers should carefully select appropriate teaching strategies to ensure learners perceive speaking activities as enjoyable rather than potentially embarrassing and anxiety-inducing in front of their peers.

Furthermore, teaching strategies for spoken English vary depending on the specific needs and goals of the learners. Scholars have examined various approaches to improve students' speaking ability. For instance, Pangket (2019) found

that English teachers commonly use group work activities, role-play conversations, problem-solving tasks, narrating, sequencing events, and picture-narrative exercises. Other researchers have explored strategies such as the communicative approach (Sentishcheva, 2021), discussion and debate (Laia, 2019), rehearsal or repetition tasks (Newton & Nguyen, 2019), pair and group work (Maca, 2020), free talking sessions (Pambudi, 2020), and error correction and feedback (Khansir & Pakdel, 2018). However, these studies indicated that students may not always be adequately motivated or show better performance as a result. As emphasized by Alsaleh (2020), merely providing activities to learners does not guarantee the acquisition of knowledge and strategies. Thus, it is crucial to integrate these activities in a meaningful manner.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Questions

To examine the influence of POA as a strategy on Seewo IWB game-based spoken English teaching activities, a 16-week teaching experiment was carried out at the Taiyuan middle schools. The experiment primarily aimed to address the following concerns:

RQ1: Can POA improve students' speaking competencies in Seewo IWB game teaching activities?

RQ2: What are the challenges in using POA for Seewo IWB spoken English teaching activities?

B. Participants

The study involved 120 middle school students from two classes at Taiyuan Middle School. According to the school's curriculum schedule, an English oral communication course via Seewo IWB games was introduced in the second year of middle school (Grade 8). The course utilized random class assignments, with each class comprising 60 students. Upon enrollment in the middle school, the students underwent an English proficiency test, with pass rates of 48% for Class A and 49% for Class B, indicating similar overall proficiency levels with no significant differences. To examine the experimental effects, Class A was designated as the experimental group and taught using POA design, while Class B served as the control group and received instruction through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) methods. The ratio of males to females balances in each class.

C. Experimental Group and Control Group Teaching Process

The total duration of the experiment was 48 classes, with 3 classes per week. The teaching in both groups was carried out by the same teacher, who possesses 12 years of extensive teaching experience and is familiar with the application of various English teaching methods. The teaching time, tasks, and objectives were consistent between the two groups, using the textbook "Go for It" published by People Education Press, and the teachers employed the same Seewo IWB game activities. The experimental group followed the guidance of POA and conducted teaching in a structured manner following the process of "motivating-enabling-assessment." Based on the textbook and Seewo IWB game content, the teacher slightly organized and compiled the teaching content and process, dividing it into six units: shopping, holidays, table manners, TV programs, food, and sports events.

To enhance the comprehension of the POA teaching method among students in the experimental group, the teacher held a guided introduction session during the initial English activity class of the academic year. This session included a concise explanation of the POA teaching philosophy, instructional procedures, and evaluation methods. To reduce students' anxiety towards learning, the instructor presented a video showcasing his involvement in both the preliminary and final stages of the 2019 English Teaching Competition via Digital Games organized by the Foreign Language Teaching Press, all grounded on the principles of POA. Students showed enthusiasm and eagerness for this innovative teaching approach.

To delve deeper into the teaching approach, this article used the first unit "shopping" as an example to elucidate the teaching process of Seewo game spoken English teaching activities under the guidance of POA. It also explained specific design concepts. This unit contained many oral practice topics so it can serve as a prime example of unit-wide teaching that offers relevant teaching insights for educators on the front-line. The following describes in detail the specific teaching operations of the three links of motivating, enabling, and evaluating.

(a). Motivating

Differing from traditional "warm-up" teaching methods, POA introduces the output "drive" at the beginning of a new unit. According to Wen Qiufang's teaching steps and requirements for the "drive", it should consist of three elements:

1. The Teacher Presents Communicative Scenes

In teaching practice, the teacher provided two sets of shopping communication scenarios using Seewo IWB games in the classroom and explicitly indicated to students that this scenario was closely related to the content they were about to learn, making students aware of the importance of this learning task. Meanwhile, the teacher used the training in gameplay strategy to ensure students have a clear understanding of how to play and provide students with the opportunity to ask questions and clarify any confusion before starting the game scenery. The teacher speaks English throughout the process.

Scenario 1: At a clothing store, a lady visited to purchase clothes and asked about the color, size, and price. Teachers instructed different students to take on the roles of shoppers and salespersons separately.

Scenario 2: A mother took her child to the shop to buy fruit. They inquired with the salesperson about the types of fruit available and their prices. The teacher assigned various students to play distinct roles as shoppers and salespersons individually.

2. *Students Try to Complete Social Activities*

The teacher in the experimental group initially had students engage in group discussions before randomly selecting students or encouraging them to speak voluntarily to complete the scenario teaching and address the aforementioned issues. However, the students' responses were not ideal, revealing several challenges: Firstly, there were issues related to inappropriate word choice and a lack of precision in vocabulary expression. Secondly, students struggled with disorderly sentence structures, frequent grammar errors, and instances of misspeaking. Thirdly, there was a deficiency in the use of polite language and authenticity in situational communication.

To tackle these three issues, the teachers refrained from directly providing the students with the "correct answers" at the start. Instead, she began by showing a real video of shopping in an English-speaking country via the Seewo IWB game platform and then compared the everyday expressions and basic etiquette of the salesperson with that of the customer in the video. The POA driving phase aims to enable students to personally experience the challenges inherent in completing seemingly simple, mundane output tasks and to recognize the shortcomings in their language proficiency, thereby fostering a desire to learn.

3. *The Teacher Explains Unit Output Tasks*

After students have attempted the communication activities, teachers should assign a "unit output task" that aligns with the communication scenario and emphasizes practical application. This task encourages students to integrate learning and application, effectively utilizing the content from each unit in authentic situations to improve their oral communication and language skills. Following the guidelines of "driving" and classroom teaching practices, teachers engage students in playing various roles in IWB games and outline the output tasks for this unit, including presenting clothing types, colors, and prices to customers; inquiring with the salesperson about fruit selections, quantities, and prices; and discussing the variances in shopping etiquette and habits between China and Western countries with classmates. Upon completing the unit study, students are expected to carry out the output tasks through classroom game interaction or by uploading audio or video on the Seewo game platform.

(b). *Enabling*

The second phase, known as "Enabling," lies at the heart of POA. Teachers strategically develop game-based instructional activities that adhere to the principles of "diversity," "progressiveness," and "precision" to language, perspectives, and discourse logic.

"Language enabling" concentrates on delivering vocabulary learning strategies, applying language knowledge, and integrating language skills in a multi-modal fashion through explanation and practical exercises. This approach enables students to enhance their vocabulary acquisition while completing output tasks. Before classes, teachers distribute specialized vocabulary lists related to clothing and fruits to students and engage them in online vocabulary games to strengthen their word pronunciation, spelling, and understanding of semantics. Through this method, students can review crucial vocabulary expressions, activate relevant language resources in their minds, and utilize the vocabulary list as a reference during oral communication activities in class.

"Perspectives enabling" adopts a blended teaching methodology, combining online independent learning, traditional classroom teaching, and mobile learning. Utilizing the Seewo game platform, students are introduced to fundamental sentence structures and shopping etiquette, engaging in interactive games to practice dialogues, shadow speaking, and human-computer interactions, addressing the limitations of traditional classroom instruction hours.

"Discourse logic enabling" primarily centers on the discourse exercises themed on "argumentative techniques" in the current unit. Before classes, students engage in self-study through the Seewo IWB game platform by watching relevant micro-lesson videos and completing game-based testing exercises. In classroom sessions, teachers consolidate essential knowledge points and assist students in reviewing through simulated dialogues, and group competitions.

To effectively monitor the progress of classroom teaching, review key teaching points, and timely promote output tasks, the teacher devised an "enabling chain" tailored for each unit (illustrated in Table 2). This enabling chain guided the entire unit's teaching activities, ensuring their coherence and effectiveness. However, due to variations in unit themes and students' comprehension levels, the facilitation process did not strictly adhere to a standard sequence of "language - perspectives - discourse logic." It depends on teachers' lesson plans and students' existing knowledge.

TABLE 2
GAME ACTIVITY ENABLING CHAIN (TAKE UNIT 1 FOR EXAMPLE)

Input Enabling	Language Enabling	Synonym rewriting	
		Make sentences with words	
		Syllable relay	
	Perspective Enabling	Polite expression	
		Polite physical gestures	
		Cultural difference	
	Discourse Logic Enabling	Argumentative means	Argument and refutation

(c). Assessment

In the third phase, to assess whether the output goal has effectively achieved its “enabling” effect, the teacher must evaluate the output task. For learning tasks completed in class, the teacher used traditional “immediate evaluation” methods. However, due to classroom time constraints, she also adopted a “teacher-student collaborative evaluation” approach to deal with those in-class reports without presenting. The teacher required students to upload their completed game tasks to the Seewo IWB teaching platform as audio-visual works, and then the teacher and students conducted self-evaluation, peer evaluation, or group evaluation based on the evaluation quantitative criteria jointly established by teachers and students (refer to Table 3). With specific feedback from the teacher, students revise and refine their oral works before uploading the final versions to the online teaching platform. The teacher further evaluates these works and affixes the “A+” label to outstanding pieces, facilitating mutual reference, learning, and communication among all students.

TABLE 3
QUANTITATIVE CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF OUTPUT TASKS (UNIT 1 “SHOPPING”)

	Quantitative Criteria for Evaluation of Output Tasks	Comments	Marks
Content Accuracy	Accuracy of product names and related terminology Correctness of information provided about products, prices, and discounts.		
Language Usage	Grammar and sentence structure accuracy Use of appropriate vocabulary and expressions Fluency and naturalness of language		
Creativity and Originality	Degree of uniqueness and innovation in describing products or shopping experiences Ability to incorporate personal opinions and experiences into the task		
Speaking Skills	Clarity and coherence of speech Use of effective verbal and non-verbal communication Ability to engage the audience and maintain interest		
Completion and Timeliness	Timely submission of the task Completeness of the task, including all required elements		

In addition, in the control group, teachers used TBLT to carry out Seewo IWB oral English game activities, focusing on deep processing of the text language, to maintain the language authenticity and reduce the difficulty of learning. The teaching process is “Introduction-background knowledge - intensive text reading - class conversation - extensive listening exercises-homework”. The teaching process is centered on textbooks. Except for the Seewo IWB game exercises, teachers do not provide extracurricular texts or audio-visual input materials. At the end of the whole unit, the teacher will assign tasks to the students and encourage them to complete them successfully. In class, teachers are responsible for reviewing students’ oral work and giving relevant suggestions, but students and groups do not evaluate each other. In the teaching process of the experimental group and the control group, the offline learning time of each unit was the same.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 120 students from both the “experimental group” and “control group” who participated in the middle school English spoken English test, with 60 students in each group. A quantitative method was utilized to compare and validate the analysis of the two student groups. Before the experiment, all participants completed a questionnaire survey to assist the research team in gaining insights into students’ learning attitudes, motivations, and proficiency levels to ensure the credibility and impartiality of the experimental data.

Both before and after the experiment, all participants underwent an oral test conducted by two members of the research team. Teacher A conducted individual tests with students, involving tasks such as reading paragraphs, describing images, and engaging in spontaneous conversations on everyday English topics for a duration of 5 minutes. Meanwhile, Teacher B was tasked with overseeing and recording the entire assessment process, in addition to providing preliminary scores for the students. After the test, the research team collectively reviewed the videos and re-evaluated each student’s oral proficiency based on the grading criteria established by Xue (2019). These criteria encompassed six elements: pronunciation and intonation (10%), vocabulary utilization (25%), coherence (25%), content depth (25%), breadth of knowledge (10%), and conduct (5%), ultimately totaling 100 points.

Moreover, drawing from the research findings of scholars such as Sheng and Sun (2020), it was determined that the middle school English oral test effectively reflects students' authentic English proficiency and displays a strong correlation with their academic achievements in the subject. To further assess students' English proficiency, the research team also included the English grades of the students for the conclusion of their first year of middle school in June 2023 as a pivotal reference point.

A. Students' English Ability and Oral English Level Before the Experiment

To assess students' oral English proficiency and learning outcomes, this study employed SPSS software (version 21.0) to conduct independent sample T-test analysis on the gathered data. Before the experiment, the teacher performed independent sample T-tests on the final English scores of grade 7 and pre-test of oral scores in both the experimental and control groups (refer to Table 4 and Table 5). The findings indicated that there was no significant difference in the oral English scores between the experimental and control groups after the final semester of Grade 7 ($p = 0.228 > 0.05$) and no significant variance in oral test scores between the two groups ($p = 0.416 > 0.05$). These results suggest that students' overall language proficiency and oral competency are comparable.

TABLE 4
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST OF ENGLISH SCORES AT THE 7TH GRADE FINAL SEMESTER BETWEEN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND CONTROL GROUP

Groups	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Mean standard error	P-Value	Significance
Experimental Class	60	420.42	56.95	56.94	0.228	0.831
Control Class	60	422.51	49.51	49.25		

TABLE 5
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST FOR ORAL PRETEST SCORES IN THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS

Groups	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Mean standard error	P-Value	Significance
Experimental Class	60	53.96	9.77	1.261	0.416	0.777
Control Class	60	54.51	10.80	1.395		

B. Teaching Effect

After the end of the course (after the second round of oral tests), the teacher conducted the second independent sample t-test on the oral scores of the students in the experimental group and the control group. The results showed that there were significant differences between the two groups of students in the oral post-test (see Table 6).

TABLE 6
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST OF ORAL POST-TEST SCORES OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND CONTROL GROUP

Groups	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Mean standard error	P-Value	Significance
Experimental Class	60	67.22	7.23	0.934	0.018	0.000
Control Class	60	60.03	9.92	1.281		

Table 6 displays the improvement in oral test scores of students in both the experimental group and control group after a semester of intensive learning, showing significant differences ($p = 0.018 < 0.05$). Notably, students in the experimental group demonstrated a larger improvement of 13.26 points compared to the control group's 5.52-point enhancement. This outcome aligned with the observations made during the teacher's classroom evaluations. Following extensive exposure to professional English vocabulary, sentence patterns, and cultural background knowledge, students in the experimental group exhibited more flexible language expression and communication skills in English. In contrast, students in the control group tended to provide superficial commentary, highlighting room for improvement in their depth of thought and ability to articulate related topics.

To delve deeper into the specific areas of improvement, the study analyzed Tone and Intonation (TI), Lexicon Application (LA), Cohesion & Fluency (CF), and Cultural Background (CB). An independent sample T-test was conducted on the data from these aspects to compare the oral English performance of both groups. Before the experiment, the P-values of the oral indicators (TI, LA, CF, CB) in both groups were 0.062, 0.073, 0.091, and 0.086, respectively, all exceeding 0.05, indicating no significant differences in these specific indicators between the experimental and control groups. Identified issues from the students' oral pre-tests included limited English vocabulary, weak oral fluency, and a lack of cultural background knowledge.

Upon examining the data before and after the test, it was discovered that following one semester of study, significant changes were observed in the indicators of the experimental and control groups. Specifically, the significance P-value for TI, LA, CF, and CB in the experimental group was 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating a considerable improvement in these areas. Conversely, the control group showed significant differences in LA with $p = 0.011 < 0.05$ and CB with $p = 0.013 < 0.05$, while TI and CF did not exhibit significant changes with p-values of 0.072 and 0.059, respectively.

These findings suggest that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has a positive impact on students' mastery of vocabulary application and enhancement of professional knowledge. Nonetheless, the results imply that the teaching approach often focuses more on instructional content and output rather than refining students' pronunciation, intonation,

and logical reasoning. Consequently, issues persist in the oral tasks produced by students, including inadequate idiomatic expression, a lack of logical structure, and an over-reliance on Chinglish expressions.

C. Evaluation of the Effectiveness of POA From Students' Perspective

To ascertain students' comprehension of the new teaching approach of POA in Seewo IWB games and to ensure that the experimental group and control group completed their learning tasks without external interference, the author conducted a questionnaire survey with 60 students in the experimental group following the 16-week course of one semester. Guided by the principles of "logic, clarity, and neutrality" articulated by Qin and Liu (2015). The questionnaire, which encompassed three dimensions - pre-class feedback, in-class engagement, and overall evaluation of POA learning effectiveness, was anonymized and administered using Likert's five-level scale. Distribution of the questionnaire was facilitated through the questionnaire star mini-program, resulting in a total of 58 valid responses. Subsequent data analysis was carried out using SPSS software (version 21.0) in conjunction with student interviews to gain insights into genuine student feedback on the course (refer to Table 7).

TABLE 7
FEEDBACK OF SEEWO IWB GAME ORAL ENGLISH ACTIVITY BASED ON POA

Evaluative dimensions	Questions	M	SD	Agree completely	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Disagree completely
Pre-class motivating	Q1. Satisfied with the self-directed learning resources before class	4.18	1.08	48.3%	36.2%	13.0%	1.7%	0%
	Q2. Language practice is full and targeted	4.11	1.04	46.6%	34.5%	15.5%	1.7%	1.7%
	Q3. Learning tasks moderate, and can actively complete	4.02	1.03	41.4%	31%	13.8%	6.9%	6.9%
	Q4. Actively participate in the classroom interaction and relaxing atmosphere	4.23	0.97	53.4%	32.8%	12.1%	1.7%	0%
	Q5. Lesson design is moderately difficult and enlightening	4.07	1.06	43.1%	32.8%	17.2%	3.4%	3.4%
Input during the class	Q6. Teaching content is not limited to textbooks, and pay attention to knowledge transfer	4.20	1.07	50%	32.8%	17.2%	0%	0%
	Q7. Courses can improve language competencies, especially speaking skills	4.28	1.01	55.2%	36.2%	6.9%	1.7%	0%
Post-class overall evaluation	Q8. Rich cultural knowledge	4.09	1.03	44.8%	31%	13.8%	5.2%	5.2%
	Q9. Courses can cultivate students' cross-cultural consciousness and moral values	4.20	1.04	51.7%	32.8%	13.8%	0%	1.7%

The survey results indicate that the majority of students give positive evaluations to three dimensions of course learning, but the characteristics of evaluation between different dimensions are inconsistent, specifically manifested in the following three aspects:

(a). Recognizing Autonomous Learning Resources, but Needing Improvement in Learning Management Skills

Based on the feedback from students on the pre-class driving phase of the digital game-based oral English course, 84.5% of students are satisfied with autonomous learning resources, 81.1% of students believe that the language practice content is enriching, and 72.4% of students can actively complete learning tasks. Through questionnaires, it is also found that most students spend 1 to 2 hours learning before class, generally finding online learning to be innovative and effective. However, some students have difficulties in allocating reasonable time for self-study due to the heavy course load this semester.

(b). Recognizing Classroom Teaching Content and High Classroom Participation

Students overall rate input in-class sessions highly, with the majority of students feeling that they can actively participate in classroom interactions, with an energetic atmosphere of communication between teachers and students (86.2%), thanks to innovative teaching methods. Guided by POA, students have more practical opportunities to participate in the game activities, becoming the true masters of the classroom. In addition, the output tasks set for each unit require students to expand their knowledge of English cultural backgrounds both in and out of class, with 82.8% of students giving positive evaluations of the breadth of teaching content. Compared to the previous two items, students find teaching difficulty moderate and inspiring to be relatively low (75.9%), related to their language proficiency. Some students with lower English levels reflect on rapid learning progress, set tasks with high difficulty, and many language barriers in verbal communication. Therefore, in future teaching designs, teachers should pay more attention to the demands of lower-level students.

(c). Improvement in Oral Skills and High Overall Evaluation of POA Teaching

Through overall learning evaluations, the degree of achievement of teaching objectives can be assessed. Statistical results showed that students were most satisfied with language objectives. 91.4% of students believed that their

language proficiency and speaking skills had improved after a semester of English learning, enabling them to express themselves confidently and fluently. 84.5% of students believed that the cultural background knowledge contained in the course can cultivate students' cross-cultural consciousness and moral character. 75.8% of students said that the course content had enriched their knowledge of Western cultural backgrounds. In comparison, students' recognition of the achievement of knowledge objectives is relatively low (75.8%), which may be related to students' traditional learning concepts and lack of relevant learning materials. This requires teachers to strengthen the collection and integration of foreign language materials, providing students with more opportunities for in-depth reading.

In the experimental teaching of one semester, the teaching teacher adhered to the concept of "teacher-led" instilled by the output-oriented approach, fully building a "scaffold" for students. Data from speaking tests and questionnaire surveys show that students have a positive evaluation of the Seewo IWB English speaking game activities, reduced negative emotions in communication, and increased communication confidence and willingness, confirming the author's research hypothesis in the initial research: POA can significantly improve the teaching effectiveness of middle school students' English speaking skills.

D. Problems and Reflection of Teaching Implementation

While the teaching model based on POA has yielded positive outcomes in the Seewo IWB spoken language game teaching activities and has garnered favorable evaluations from students, the author has also faced numerous challenges during the implementation of the teaching approach.

Firstly, in the "driving and facilitating" phase, students utilized a human-machine interaction mode for flipped classroom oral language learning on the Seewo game teaching platform, with the entire learning process lacking real-time monitoring by instructors. Consequently, teachers were unaware of the amount of time students dedicate to authentic practice or whether they engage in unrelated activities while learning online. The educational principles advocated by the POA necessitate a considerable focus on autonomous learning, yet some students, particularly those with poor study habits and a strong sense of inertia, exhibit significant resistance during the initial stages of self-directed learning. This underscored the need for educators to provide enhanced psychological guidance and monitoring throughout the teaching process.

Secondly, as POA represents an innovative language teaching theory with a relatively brief history of development, the insufficient availability of pertinent literature and theoretical resources poses challenges for researchers in designing pedagogical approaches and refining the overall teaching procedures. Moving forward, the author intends to closely monitor the evolution and enhancement of POA, integrating the latest theories and research findings into the forefront of theoretical discourse and textbook development.

Thirdly, while Seewo IWB English oral game activities via POA presented highly practical teaching interventions, limited teaching conditions and class hours restricted the efficiency of classroom evaluation, particularly neglecting a comprehensive evaluation within authentic language contexts via digital games. Looking ahead, the author advocates for the integration of online testing, the creation of additional game simulation scenarios, online homework, and a concerted emphasis on targeted thematic practice to facilitate a more diversified and all-encompassing assessment of individual oral proficiency.

V. CONCLUSION

This study applied POA to the Seewo IWB English oral game teaching activities and conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the teaching effectiveness in terms of language abilities. The results revealed that both the experimental group and the control group students showed further improvement in their oral communication skills. The students in the experimental group made greater progress, particularly in pronunciation and intonation, as well as in coherence and cohesion. They displayed increased confidence and logical rigor during communication. Furthermore, the analysis of the assignment outputs of the students in the experimental group across different units indicated that high-level students (oral post-test scores ≥ 80 points) were able to quickly engage with the intended communication purposes, expand on related topics, and complete communication tasks both inside and outside the classroom. They demonstrated strong self-monitoring and error-recognition abilities in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and semantics. While they encountered difficulties in fluently expressing highly specialized terms and long sentences, high-level students could still articulate their opinions relatively fluently in English, indicating strong English thinking capabilities. On the other hand, low-level students (oral post-test scores ≤ 60 points) often struggled to comprehend the questions in oral exercises, even after repeating numerous words and phrases, finding it challenging to complete tasks and express themselves completely in English during communication. The issues they presented in communication were mainly attributed to insufficient vocabulary, consisting of isolated simple sentences and non-cohesive discourse, lacking self-monitoring abilities in grammar, and being heavily influenced by their native language thinking, leading to a higher frequency of errors in their output expressions. Do individual differences in language output suggest that POA may not be suitable for low-level students? On which English proficiency level does POA have a more significant impact? Compared to TBLT, why can POA significantly boost students' oral scores? These questions could serve as important topics for further in-depth exploration to develop a more complete and suitable English teaching method with Chinese characteristics for secondary school students.

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Hu Yanfang is a PhD student at the University of Utara Malaysia. Her major is English language teaching. Her research interest is digital game-based pedagogy.



Fahainis Mohd. Yusof is a senior lecturer at the School of Education, Universiti Utara Malaysia, where she teaches Organizational Behaviour in Education and TESL pedagogy courses. She is interested in teacher education, especially teacher communication skills and strategies in the ESL context. In addition, most of the FRGS grants she secured were for qualitative research. Her main research interests are in teacher communication and qualitative research. Her current research focuses on the quality and standard of teachers in high-performing schools in Malaysia.

Comparative Analysis of Linguistic Characteristics: Middle Eastern English on YouTube vis-à-vis British and American English

Sadia Ali

Department of English Language and Literature, College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Abstract—This research aims to compare the linguistic characteristics of Middle Eastern English with British and American English in the context of YouTube. For this purpose, the theoretical framework adopted is Biber's Multidimensional Analysis, in which Middle Eastern English is compared with British and American English regarding language usage features. To do so, the present study considers a purposive sample of 40 YouTube videos with speakers from the Middle East, Britain, and America. The methodology entails the use of a well-planned and structured process to assess the various aspects of the language of spoken English in the videos. In the particular concern of this study, the emphasis lies on comparing Middle Eastern English and its relation to British and American English on YouTube. Specifically, the comparative analysis identifies the differences in the linguistic features due to cultural, social, and contextual factors in Middle Eastern English. Based on the findings, Middle Eastern English differs from British and American English because it is more argumentative, less abstract, less situation-bound, and less narrative. Consequently, the results of this study help analyze the current state of change in English varieties on social media and reveal the sociolinguistic aspects of the English language in relation to the video-sharing site YouTube. The study elicits a rather complex picture of how linguistic diversity comes into play with regard to the integrated and interconnected nature of today's cyberspace communication.

Index Terms—Middle Eastern English, linguistic characteristics, YouTube, Biber's Multidimensional Analysis (MDA), lexico-grammatical patterns

I. INTRODUCTION

New technologies have played a significant role in the change of the English language in recent years regarding methods of spreading information. English is one of the most spoken and dynamic languages, and its linguistic features look different in different sociocultural backgrounds. This quantitative and qualitative research work investigates the lexico-grammatical features in Middle Eastern English in the YouTube videos of selected Middle Eastern countries vis-a-vis British and American English. Following Biber's approach to MDA, it is possible to analyze differences in the lexical and grammatical levels. Since YouTube has adaptations in almost all world languages, it is the best place to analyze language usage. Biber's MDA is an excellent tool for studying language because it can investigate different aspects of language.

Consequently, this method will facilitate the acquisition of a more profound insight into specific features of the contrasting Middle Eastern, American, and British English in an online environment. It holds that English is used differently in all countries due to many factors, including cultural and social influences. YouTube enables individuals to communicate globally, using different languages and ways of perceiving the world. This paper analyzes the YouTube videos by speakers from the Middle East, America, and the United Kingdom to determine how English is used in various ways. Thus, the patterns identified in the present study are compared with the identification of distinct patterns of sociolinguistic behavior. Therefore, the research strives to contribute to understanding English use in online communication in various sociolinguistic contexts.

It has, therefore, critical comparative undertones not only in categorizing the extent of the linguistic differences between Middle Eastern, American, and British English but also in revealing the effects of culture, society, and context on language usage. Given that in today's world, the Internet is crossing geographical barriers, it is necessary to pay more attention to the issues of the status of variation on a platform like YouTube to grasp the globalization of Internet communication. The research uses Biber's multidimensional framework to enrich our understanding of the diverse linguistic expressions of English in the digital age. As Biber's model employs a quantitative approach, it is proposed that the study will uncover objective quantitative patterns of language use that people employ in the respective contexts and eliminate any bias likely due to the selection of features to be analyzed by people. This has helped address the issues related to the variation in language and shed light on tapping the systematic nature of languages across different facets. This paper presents several benefits pertinent to the sociolinguistic features of English variety on YouTube. It makes a

helpful contribution to the topic of how linguistic diversification is evident with social media with a global connection in the context of the internet society.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studying how language varies in the digital world is becoming increasingly important as online platforms like YouTube serve as hubs for diverse linguistic expressions. In this regard, a contrastive analysis of Saudi and British English in YouTube videos adopting Biber's MDA could extend knowledge in language dialects, socio-linguistics, and how new media use affects English.

Papers associated with the content of YouTube in Arabic have been published in different works. For instance, Mustofa (2023) employed a qualitative research strategy to proscriptively portray the analysis of YouTube content in the information dissemination of the Arabic language. Regarding studying Arabic, the study established that the YouTube channel of Dars Arabi was influential in the process.

In another study, Ayoub (2021) conducted a cross-sectional analysis of breast cancer videos on YouTube in the Arab world. The study evaluated the 60 most viewed videos based on the global quality (GQS score), reliability (modified DISCERN score), content (content score), and misleading claims. The research found that governments and physicians should upload more informative videos and guide the population to reliable sources while supporting regulations.

Bella and Huda (2022) conducted a qualitative study investigating using YouTube media to improve students' listening and speaking skills. The study revealed that YouTube media positively impacted students' reading and listening skills.

Al-Tamimi et al. (2020) presented their work on Arabic comment classification in a separate study. They collected and manually annotated YouTube Arabic comments and found that SVM-RBF outperformed other classification methods with an f-measure of 88.8%. They employed a dataset that has been normalized with two polarities.

Abu Daabes and Kharbat (2019) sought to establish the current state of communication effectiveness with Arabic people and what the future could hold. To build knowledge, they focused on health information posted on the social platform YouTube.

Alawadh et al. published the investigation on the YouTube discussions in EFL learning in 2023. The researchers also advise that there is a need to diversify content production. The tackled topics should address the need for a broader spectrum of the population, including improvements in punctuation and meaning of certain words and a diverse audience that includes youths. Furthermore, they recommend increasing and focusing on the instructed aspects concerning the varieties of English, like British English and American English, to enhance the learning progress.

Choi (2023) conducted a study to determine the users' perceptions and interactions with English learning content on YouTube. The study outcomes showed that users consider the content as valuable as their English, which is enhanced in aspects like grammar, pronunciation, and many other facets by using the application. Also, their involvement is engaging since they contribute by asking questions and vocalizing any points of confusion in the comments section.

Moreover, a study by Alkoli and Sharada (2023) explored YouTube comments' sentiment analysis with a primary concern on Arabic comments gathered through manual data collection to support the research. The analysis process was split into four categories: preprocessing, feature extraction, optimum feature selection, and classification. The author proposed a novel optimization approach named Self-Improved Honey Badger Algorithm (SIHBA) in the research.

The study by Musleh et al. (2023) presents an NLP approach that categorizes Arabic comments as positive or negative; this tool may enable content creators to enhance viewers' engagement and video quality by monitoring their sentiments about the videos. The quality, content, and credibility of YouTube videos explaining self-administration for subcutaneous anti-TNF medicines were evaluated by Tolu et al. (2018). Healthcare practitioners should help patients identify reliable sources of information and critically assess such resources to enhance treatment effectiveness.

Following the analysis led by Alawadh (2023), the research examined YouTube discussions on EFL learning using the specific method of LSA. Although the authors provided suggestions for future enhancements of content, including the spread of topics, more instruction on punctuation and word meaning, the adaptation of courses as per age and nationality, and differentiation between British and American English, Biber and Conrad (2009) supplemented this theoretical stance stating that this method is actually.

Al-Hazmi (2009) investigated the growth of Saudi English with particular references to cultural and social factors. Moreover, in his book, *English as a Global Language*, published in 2003, Crystal gives more insights into the global use of British English as the benchmark.

Studies have been done on the impact of the said platforms on language with the increase in the use of online platforms. Many authors, including Androutsopoulos (2014) and Crystal (2006), have studied how these platforms, especially YouTube, influence language use. They have concentrated on how the platform offers the world a view of languages through YouTube. Researchers, including Tagg and Seargeant (2014), investigated YouTube as a linguistic space. They heeded the fact that the platform opened for them is capable of defining how language is used.

Hence, one needs to understand the various sociolinguistic factors that may influence language use to comprehend how English is used in the different contexts of Middle Eastern, America, and Britain. Thus, this research seeks to extend from the previous studies by following Biber's MDA to compare the lexico-grammatical features of Middle Eastern, American, and British English on YouTube. In this way, the current research investigating language variation in the context of the digital age will also increase the knowledge about the dynamic landscape of YouTube.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted Biber's analysis method to systematically evaluate the linguistic variation in the specialized corpus used in this research paper. For example, the mentioned theoretical approach, MDA, provides for the systematic study of the different aspects of language in use and lexical, grammatical, and semantic characteristics. On the one hand, with its benefits, it allows analyzing language usage through a statistical approach without relying on subjective judgments about deviant linguistic features.

Thus, it is found that Biber's conceptual framework is focused on quantitative research, as evidenced by the trends identified above, which prominently feature numbers. It involves analyzing vast collections of written material to find patterns and differences in language features. The language parts, such as vocabulary, syntax, connectors, and so on, are identified with the assistance of computers. These components form a numerical data set that goes through analysis using statistical instruments and approaches.

Therefore, the researchers selected fifteen prominent YouTube content creators from the Middle East, the United States, and the United Kingdom based on their subscriber counts and evaluations made by the YouTube algorithm. The researchers then used transcription software to convert the creators' spoken words into written text. Given this, the text was divided into smaller sections for systematic analysis. Because the texts were of variable length, normalization was carried out before tagging; this ensured equalization of the texts to reduce the differences between them and thus increase the reliability of the data to allow for fair comparisons—an identification number named every file to facilitate the recognition of the data during the analysis.

The collected data was further categorized by labeling it using the MAT software and analyzing it using the IBM SPSS tool. This allowed for understanding the pattern of the language used and to see the variation and similarity of all the aspects of language used by YouTube content creators in the Middle East, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 present the mean, standard deviation, standard error, and confidence intervals for the data collected in three regions: the Middle East, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Unlike other multidimensional studies conducted on different genres, like a newspaper (Ali S. & Ali M., 2023), academic writing (Ali, 2024), fiction (Biber, 1998), etc., where the results indicate the presence of informational discourse, the mean scores of all the three regions indicate an involved discourse on this dimension. The mean score for the Middle East group is 19.90. The results suggest that, on average, the linguistic characteristics of Middle Eastern English on YouTube in the sample tend to have a higher value for D1 than American and British YouTube. The mean scores for the United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US) YouTube English videos are 17.54 and 15.70, respectively. The statistics for British YouTube also show positive mean scores but slightly lower values than those of Middle East YouTube. The mean scores of the US show a further decrease, exhibiting the lowest mean score for this dimension.

TABLE 1
LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF MIDDLE EASTERN ENGLISH WITH BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH ON D1
Dim_1

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound
Middle East	25	19.9060	8.67333	1.73467	16.3258	23.4862
United Kingdom	25	17.5432	7.24786	1.44957	14.5514	20.5350
United States	25	15.7092	5.73769	1.14754	13.3408	18.0776
Total	75	17.7195	7.42315	.85715	16.0116	19.4274
Model			7.31845	.84506	19.4041	19.4041
Fixed Effects				1.21471	22.9460	22.9460
Random Effects						

The data in Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the linguistic characteristics within Middle Eastern, British, and American English on YouTube on D1. The higher mean score for Middle Eastern English suggests a greater prevalence of non-narrative discourse than British and American English. However, this finding is accompanied by significant variability within each group, indicating a wide range of linguistic variation. The standard deviation of 8.67 suggests that Middle Eastern English on YouTube exhibits considerable variability in linguistic characteristics. In contrast, American English on YouTube shows a relatively lower variability, as indicated by the standard deviation 5.73. These findings highlight the dynamic and diverse nature of English language use across different regions and cultures on YouTube.

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the variable labeled dimension two as "narrative vs. non-narrative concerns" in the context of the study comparing Middle Eastern English, British English, and American English on YouTube. The mean score for the Middle East is -3.30, for the United Kingdom is -4.18, and for the United States is -3.17. Comparing these means, we can observe that the United Kingdom has the most negative mean score, indicating that British English on YouTube exhibits more non-narrative discourse. The Middle East and the United States have fewer negative mean

scores, suggesting that Middle Eastern and American English on YouTube demonstrate fewer non-narrative linguistic features.

TABLE 2
LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF MIDDLE EASTERN ENGLISH WITH BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH ON D2
Dim_2

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound
Middle East	25	-3.3084	2.35738	.47148	-4.2815	-2.3353
United Kingdom	25	-4.1888	.95311	.19062	-4.5822	-3.7954
United States	25	-3.1708	1.17854	.23571	-3.6573	-2.6843
Total	75	-3.5560	1.65939	.19161	-3.9378	-3.1742
Model						
Fixed Effects			1.61809	.18684	-3.1835	-3.1835
Random Effects				.31888	-2.1840	-2.1840

The standard deviation measures the spread or variability of the linguistic characteristics within each English variety. The YouTube of the Middle East has a standard deviation of 2.35, the United Kingdom has a standard deviation of 0.95, and the United States has a standard deviation of 1.17. The Middle East and the United States show higher standard deviations, suggesting more significant variability in the linguistic features.

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for dimension 3 (D3), labeled as "Explicit vs. situation-dependent discourse." The mean scores indicate the average values for the linguistic characteristics of each English variety on YouTube. The mean score for the Middle East is -0.95, for the United Kingdom is -1.52, and for the United States is -2.25. Comparing these means, we can observe that the United States has the most negative mean score, indicating that American English on YouTube exhibits more situation-dependent discourse on this dimension. The United Kingdom has a slightly less negative mean score, while the Middle East has the least negative mean score among them.

TABLE 3
LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF MIDDLE EASTERN ENGLISH WITH BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH ON D3
Dim_3

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound
Middle East	25	-.9552	1.48534	.29707	-1.5683	-.3421
United Kingdom	25	-1.5284	1.36388	.27278	-2.0914	-.9654
United States	25	-2.2512	1.25691	.25138	-2.7700	-1.7324
Total	75	-1.5783	1.45471	.16798	-1.9130	-1.2436
Model						
Fixed Effects			1.37189	.15841	-1.2625	-1.2625
Random Effects				.37495	.0350	.0350

The standard deviation measures the spread or variability of the linguistic characteristics within each English variety. The Middle East has a standard deviation of 1.48, the United Kingdom has a standard deviation of 1.36, and the United States has a standard deviation of 1.25. The YouTube videos from all three countries show relatively similar standard deviations, indicating comparable levels of variability in the linguistic characteristics within the YouTube video of each country.

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for dimension 4 (D4), labeled as "Overt expression of argumentation/persuasion," in the context of the study comparing Middle Eastern English, British English, and American English on YouTube. The mean scores indicate the average values for the linguistic features of each English variety on YouTube. The mean score for the Middle East YouTube video is -1.35, for the United Kingdom is 0.92, and for the United States is 0.61. Comparing these means, we can observe that the United Kingdom has the highest mean score, indicating that British English on YouTube with positive linguistic features exhibits more argumentative discourse. The United States has a slightly lower mean score, indicating less argumentative discourse. In contrast, the Middle East has the lowest mean score among the three, thus having the most minor linguistic features that mark the presence of argumentative discourse.

TABLE 4
LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF MIDDLE EASTERN ENGLISH WITH BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH ON D4
Dim_4

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound
Middle East	25	-1.3596	2.36250	.47250	-2.3348	-.3844
United Kingdom	25	.9288	1.95277	.39055	.1227	1.7349
United States	25	.6156	1.61632	.32326	-.0516	1.2828
Total	75	.0616	2.22134	.25650	-.4495	.5727
Model						
Fixed Effects			2.00060	.23101	.5221	.5221
Random Effects				.71633	3.1437	3.1437

Table 4 indicates that the Middle East has a standard deviation of 2.36, the United Kingdom has a standard deviation of 1.95, and the United States has a standard deviation of 1.61. The Middle East shows the highest standard deviation, indicating more significant variability in the linguistic characteristics of Middle Eastern YouTube English. The United Kingdom and the United States have lower standard deviations, suggesting relatively less variability in their linguistic characteristics.

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics for Dimension 5 (D5), labeled as "Impersonal (Abstract) vs. Non-impersonal (non-abstract style)". It compares Middle Eastern English, British English, and American English on YouTube.

The mean scores indicate the average values for the linguistic features of each English variety on YouTube. The mean score for the Middle East is -1.94, for the United Kingdom is -0.52, and for the United States is -1.55. Comparing these means, we can observe that the United Kingdom has the lowest negative mean score, indicating that British English on YouTube exhibits a mixed-purpose discourse. Closeness to a zero-dimension score means the discourse is mixed-purpose, with positive and negative linguistic features. The Middle East has the most negative mean score, while the United States falls between the other two.

TABLE 5
LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF MIDDLE EASTERN ENGLISH WITH BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH ON D5
Dim_5

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound
Middle East	25	-1.9488	1.11017	.22203	-2.4071	-1.4905
United Kingdom	25	-.5288	1.42008	.28402	-1.1150	.0574
United States	25	-1.5552	1.10996	.22199	-2.0134	-1.0970
Total	75	-1.3443	1.34778	.15563	-1.6544	-1.0342
Model						
Fixed Effects			1.22218	.14112	-1.0629	-1.0629
Random Effects				.42327	.4769	.4769

The standard deviation measures the spread or variability of the linguistic characteristics within each English variety. The Middle East has a standard deviation of 1.11, the United Kingdom has a standard deviation of 1.42, and the United States has a standard deviation of 1.10. All three countries show relatively similar standard deviations, indicating comparable variability levels in each country's linguistic characteristics.

V. CONCLUSION

This study examines how Middle Eastern, British, and American English are used on YouTube, focusing on five dimensions: informational discourse, narrative vs. non-narrative concerns, explicit vs. situation-dependent discourse, overt expression of argumentation/persuasion, and impersonal vs. non-impersonal style. The study found that Middle Eastern English YouTube videos focus more on a specific language aspect than American and British English videos. However, each region has a wide variety of language use, as shown by the data's variations.

Regarding narrative vs. non-narrative concerns, the United Kingdom shows the most negative mean score, indicating that British English on YouTube exhibits more negative linguistic characteristics. The Middle East and the United States have fewer negative mean scores, suggesting that Middle Eastern and American English videos demonstrate fewer non-narrative linguistic features. Another factor from the study is that American English videos observed on YouTube are comparatively more concerned with the current situation than with general information. This can be seen from the negative mean score, which is the lowest compared to similar content found in other countries. At the same time, the videos in British English have persuasive and argumentative tones. This communication style is more prevalent in British English videos than in other English-speaking regions. The Middle East has the lowest negative mean value among the three areas of the world. This is evident based on the above result, where the average score for argumentative expression is higher than for other content in the case of British English content creators. Over them, the Middle Eastern countries have the lowest mean score, and the United States has a slightly lower mean score than the others.

The United Kingdom shows a relatively neutral stance regarding impersonal versus non-impersonal language, suggesting a mixed-purpose discourse. The Middle East shows the strongest preference for impersonal language. The United States comes in the middle. Such observations reveal various aspects of Middle Eastern English, British English, and American English that are present in the YouTube videos. Evaluating these deviations' peculiarities and cultural backgrounds is the only way to proceed. Future studies can explore the roots and other specific trends of such language features and their relevance in various regions.

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Sadia Ali received her PhD in Linguistics and Literature from Air University, Islamabad, Pakistan. She works as an Assistant Professor at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj, KSA. She published articles in internationally reputable journals and presented papers in national and international research conferences. She is also a reviewer for international academic journals of famous publishers. Her research interests include discourse analysis, genre studies, corpus linguistics, linguistic variations, ELT, ESP, AI, World Englishes, etc.

Exploring Al-Mutanabbi's Poetic Duality: Ego Exaltation and Model Defiance in "My Heart Is a Flame"

Feda Ghnaim

English Language Department, Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Amman, Jordan

Linda Alkhawaja*

English Language Department, Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Amman, Jordan

Ogareet Khoury

English Language Department, Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Amman, Jordan

Asmaa Alomary

Humanities and Social Sciences Department, Al Ahliyya Amman University, Jordan

Abstract—This study conducts a thorough analysis of Abi Al-Tayyib Al-Mutanabbi's poem 'My Heart Is a Flame' through the philosophical lens of German thinker Friedrich Nietzsche. It emphasizes Nietzsche's concept that superior humans are distinguished by their might. The research seeks to challenge the prevailing belief, supported by writers like Taha Husein, Blachere, and Abdulla Al-Ghuthami, that Al-Mutanabbi was a hypocritical, exploitative, and excessively arrogant poet who degraded others while asserting his individuality. The study explores two pivotal axes: the first focuses on Saif al – Dawla, emphasizing the elevation of the model and spaces of undermining; the second centers on Al-Mutanabbi, highlighting themes of superior ego and the fallacy of equity. In conclusion, the study presents the researcher's findings, offering justifications that underscore Al-Mutanabbi's egoism. By delving into Al-Mutanabbi's individuality, including poetic prowess, the pursuit of supremacy, engagement in war, courage, and boldness, the study contends that such characteristics fueled his distinct egoism. Furthermore, the research addresses Al-Mutanabbi's rejection of humiliation and arrogance, as elucidated through his disassociation from Saif al – Dawla, the Emir, and his court, following a dramatic ideological shift and an attempted assault on the poet's capabilities. This emancipation from flattery and avarice for Saif al – Dawla 's gifts is posited as a significant aspect of Al-Mutanabbi's resilience and selfhood.

Index Terms—Al- Mutanabbi, ego exaltation, adversary, Nietzsche

I. INTRODUCTION

Al-Mutanabbi is widely regarded as one of the most important Arab poets, if not the foremost, with a name known in all literary circles (Maqdisi, 1989). His poetry received great ovation and respect from the public, earning him the title of the "Emir poet" (Shalabi, n.d, p. 5). Badei (1975, p. 20) noted his favorable associations with kings and dignitaries. Numerous readings and critiques have been written about Al-Mutanabbi's anthology, a clear indication of his stature and role in poetry across various literary ages (Ismael, 1974, p. 95).

Al-Mutanabbi's poetry serves as an excellent example of the national life of his era, providing a vivid portrayal of intellectual and literary life (Mobarakeh, 2020). It depicts the struggle between ideals and reality, pain and discontent, contentment and hatred. Additionally, it reflects a pessimistic revolution and a social call for might and ambition (Khafaji, 2004, p. 238).

Upon Saif al – Dawla 's arrival at Antioch, his governor, Abu Al-Ashaer, praised Al-Mutanabbi and introduced him to Saif al – Dawla, highlighting his status in poetry and literature. The poet set a condition for Saif al – Dawla not to praise him except when the latter was sitting and not to be compelled to kiss the ground at his orders. Although accused of lunacy, Saif al – Dawla accepted this condition in 337 A.H (Badei, 1975, p. 71). Such a condition distinguishes Al-Mutanabbi from other poets, reflecting an ambitious soul rejecting humiliation. He would choose friends and companions among those he praised. Saif al – Dawla, being generous and tolerable, easily accepted Al-Mutanabbi as a friend (Barquqi, 1986, p. 38). Fatik Al-Asadi, the uncle of Dabba bin Yazid, whom Mutanabbi satirized, attacked him with 30 knights, resulting in the death of Al-Mutanabbi and his son in 354 A.H (Barquqi, 1986, p. 46).

* Corresponding Author. Email: l.alkhawaja@ammanu.edu.jo

The study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of Al-Mutanabbi's poem "My Heart Is a Flame", wherein he criticizes Saif al – Dawla, the prince of Aleppo, despite having previously praised him in poems collectively known as "Al-Sayfiyat", named after Saif al – Dawla, where he lauded the prince's heroism and victories. Additionally, Al-Mutanabbi praised several personalities, a subject explored by various orientalists, including Taha Husein, Abdulla Al-Guthami, and the orientalist Blachere, whose studies inspired the hypotheses of this research.

Taha Husein, in his study "With Al-Mutanabbi", emphasized that Al-Mutanabbi excelled in flattery, describing him as boastful, conceited, and proud (Husein, 2012, p. 174). Husein suggested that Al-Mutanabbi used his poetry as a means for material gains rather than pursuing art or beauty, a perspective shared by Blachere, who described Al-Mutanabbi as unable to maintain real dignity due to excessive pride (Blachere, 1980, pp. 83-84). Abdulla Al-Guthami also labeled Al-Mutanabbi as an egoist, criticizing his inflated individualistic egoism that ignores others (Guthami, 2012, p. 168).

In response, this study seeks to challenge these perspectives that diminish the poet's widespread acclaim. Al-Mutanabbi's success at the court of Saif al – Dawla led to intrigue and criticism from others (Badei, 1975, p. 87). This research focuses on the themes of flattery, cringe, and a perceived lack of dignity in Al-Mutanabbi's praise for Saif al – Dawla, exploring the influence of Nietzsche's principles related to power, superhumanity, or excellence. It seeks to address two primary research questions: Was Al-Mutanabbi a follower and subservient to Saif al – Dawla? Was Al-Mutanabbi justified in his inflated ego?"

The inspiration for this research stems from Abbas Mohmoud Aqqad's 1927 article "The Philosophy of Mutanabbi and Nietzsche". Aqqad suggested a correlation between Al-Mutanabbi and Nietzsche, an idea also indirectly referenced by Blachere, encouraging further examination. Blachere described Al-Mutanabbi's disposition at the age of 17, noting two dominating characteristics; pessimism and what Nietzsche called the "Lust for power" (Blachere, 1980, p. 81).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Al-Mutanabbi's poetry has been a subject of profound interest among both historical and contemporary researchers, prompting numerous studies that delve into various aspects of his literary contributions. Ibn Rashiq expressed this fascination, stating, "Al-Mutanabbi surprised the whole world" (Qayrawani, 1981, p. 193).

Omyemeh Khalil conducted a study titled "Discourse ambiguity in the poem of Al-Mutanabbi: 'My Heart Is a Flame'", aiming to approach the poem through the lens of fallacy theory, an essential aspect of contemporary rhetoric. Khalil's study explored strategies such as appealing, emotional polarization, and the use of connotative words. The researcher concluded that these strategies were a result of Al-Mutanabbi's awareness of the receptor's mental, psychological, and cultural competencies, tailored for different addressees (Saif al – Dawla), adversaries, and embedded in inflated diction.

In another analysis of the poem "My Heart Is a Flame", Battat (2023) delved into emotional individualization or negligence complex, revealing psychological contradictions within Al-Mutanabbi's portrayal. Battat identified a fluctuation between leniency and weakness on one hand and power on the other, reflecting psychological conflicts in the poet's psychological system (Battat, 2023).

Qarazah and Majali (2021) in their study on syntactic methods and their role in "My Heart Is a Flame," investigated the bonds of argument and persuasion in the receptor. They found that Al-Mutanabbi strategically used declarative syntactic methods when addressing Saif al – Dawla, emphasizing the significance of such methods in argument and persuasion (Qarazah & Majali, 2021).

In a study titled "Al-Mutanabbi between ego exaltation and self-awareness in light of consciousness and poetic competence in the poem 'My Heart Is a Flame' as an example," Al Qasim (2023) focused on the controversy surrounding Al-Mutanabbi's poetic self-assuredness. The study revealed that Al-Mutanabbi demonstrated a high awareness of versification and creativity, refuting claims of self-exaltation from a defective personality.

Taher's (2004) study, "Philosophy of Power between Al-Mutanabbi and Nietzsche," compared the philosophies of power between Al-Mutanabbi and Nietzsche, affirming the rebel spirit and the will to power evident in both. Unlike previous studies, Taher's work highlighted Nietzschean ideas adopted by Al-Mutanabbi, refuting accusations of flattery and subservience to Saif al – Dawla (Taher, 2004).

The current study distinguishes itself from prior research by focusing on a specific aspect of Nietzsche's discourse. Nietzsche addressed two pivotal issues – human ideas, the supreme human, and power – forming the core hypothesis of this study. By adopting Nietzschean themes, Al-Mutanabbi's work challenges the prevailing belief that the poet was a flatterer, humiliated, and a mere follower of the Aleppo Emir, Saif al – Dawla. The study establishes the contrary, demonstrating that accusations of subservience do not diminish the poetic brilliance of Al-Mutanabbi. This is evident in his critique of Saif al – Dawla and his condemnation of envious individuals, as expressed in the poem My Heart Is a Flame.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Will to power and supreme human: The Nietzsche's concept

The poet embraces Nietzsche's philosophical principles, particularly concerning the concept of the will to power. The first reference to that was seen in Nietzsche's notes written in 1870 and more apparent in his book "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" where Nietzsche posits power as essential for explaining various manners.

Nietzsche (2014) believes that the will to power contradicts the will to live, a notion introduced by Schopenhauer. While Schopenhauer struggled to transcend the confines of the will to live, succumbing to pessimism and nihilism, Nietzsche transforms this pessimism from negativity to positivism. In Nietzsche's words:

Whoever believes in the will to live will never reach the truth, as this will does not exist and Nihilism has no will what I call for is the will to power, not the will to live. The living human sees many things that are more sublime than life itself. He would have never seen anything better than life had he not possessed the will to power. (p. 145)

The will to power for Nietzsche contrasts with Schopenhauer's will to live. The more robust life is, the more fertile the world will be (Jaafer, 1999, p. 11). He also asserts that the will to power is found in every living creature, and those who are subjected to power aspire for dominance; will for the subjected incorporates the principle of the strong dominating the weak. Nietzsche captures this sentiment by stating that life itself is a struggle for a person who does not wish to live (Nietzsche, 2014, p. 145). Nietzsche further emphasizes that every human should aim at the will to power to maintain identity. He struggles to live through defeating his identity (Jaafer, 1999, p. 280). In this regard, Jaafer (1999, p. 279) states: "Nature of internal life is the will to power and nothing else".

The annihilation of any life is not a passive event; rather, it involves a continuous struggle between the dominator and the dominated, characterized as a constant strife, not mere resistance (Nietzsche, 2003, pp. 217-218). As life becomes more valuable, the intensity of resistance and enmity proportionally increases (Badawi, 1975, p. 221).

It can be inferred from the foregoing discussion that the will to power is not merely an aspect of life but its essence and identity. Nietzsche staunchly believes that it is the will to power that undergoes perpetual development, constituting the absolute core of life (Ben Dokha, 2012).

Given Nietzsche's perspective that life is the will to power manifested in struggle, he asserts that those who derive the utmost enjoyment from it are the supreme humans. For example, distinguished humans in history incorporate the will to power, but the supreme human excels because his will to power is at its best (Copleston, p. 82).

Zarathustra conveyed a message of optimism to humanity, declaring, "I tell you that the supreme human is coming." (in Nietzsche, 2014, p. 246). In another instance, he emphasized humanity's need to prepare for attaining the status of the supreme human, stating:

I prepare myself to be mature enough for the great emergence to meet it strongly like the molded fire and the lightning producing cloud. I want to mold my identity and will to become like the bow that twists, longing to embrace its arrow and like the dart, longing to fly towards its star... I want to be a glimmering planet saturated with joy in this life. I want to be an unshakeable sun ready to disappear after victory. (p. 246)

Given the pivotal role of the supreme man in Nietzsche's philosophy, aligned with the concept of the will to power, the question arises: What qualities does such a man embody? Nietzsche raises this inquiry in his book "Thus Spoke Zarathustra". The supreme man, for Nietzsche, is the human living on earth, not a metaphysical one. He adds, "The supreme man stands for meaning and spirit of this Earth" (Nietzsche, 2014, p. 43). Thus, he encourages humans to rise to the level of the supreme man with his qualities:

Move forward gentlemen, its high time for the future human of great life to be born... we love that only the distinguished human to live... My fellows, what I love in the human is passing through stages of this life; I found many qualities in you that endear you to me and stimulate hope in my heart... trespass trivial issues and care for essentials. (Nietzsche, 2003, p. 322)

Nietzsche wants the supreme man to be different by creating the values that fit his will and power and avoid nihilistic old ones. He asserts that he wants humans to embrace life and beautify it with strength and determination, to set meaningful goals, to hold courage for innovation, and to evaluate existence through fresh perspectives. He adds: humans should strive to redefine and enhance their lives and shape it with precision and completeness (in Kaufman, 1992, p. 267).

The supreme man is a creative person "who looks for companions known for being industrious. People might call them destroyers, mockers of good and evil, but they are reapers who will celebrate the results. Zarathustra asks people who are creative, like him, to share the outcome". He adds, "I do not need the mob and the dead... I want to join the innovators who gain and feel at ease. I will show them the rainbow and the ranks which supreme men attain... I will sing my song to those who feel duality through individuality. I track my way, disregarding the hesitant and the belated" (Nietzsche, 2014, pp. 50-51).

These qualities outlined by Nietzsche necessitate that the supreme man be free, rejecting conventional values and perpetually hovering above morals, laws, and traditional evaluation methods. Instincts of manhood, the spirit of struggle, and a love for victory are distinctive features of the supreme human, who despises peace and tranquility. For him, war is the holiest thing; his sole objective is to win and dominate. He rejects sympathy, viewing violence as the greatest force empowering humans to face dangers and undertake significant risks (Saleh, 2020, pp. 22-55).

IV. METHODOLOGY

To unravel the multifaceted nature of Al-Mutanabbi's poetry and answer the study's research questions, we examined Al-Mutanabbi's poem "My Heart Is a Flame" by employing close reading techniques to dissect linguistic nuances, metaphors, and thematic elements. Also, we conducted a comparative analysis with other poems in the 'Al-Sayfiyat' collection and additional works praising Saif al – Dawla to identify any shifts in tone and intent. We adopted Nietzschean principles, as proposed by Aqqad and indirectly referenced by Blachere, to guide the analysis of Al-Mutanabbi's disposition, particularly exploring elements of pessimism and the "Lust for power." Nietzsche's philosophy was used as a lens for understanding Al-Mutanabbi's poetic motivations and the perceived egoistic elements in his work.

Moreover, we provided a detailed examination of Abbas Mohmoud Aqqad's 1927 article on the correlation between Al-Mutanabbi and Nietzsche, considering how Nietzschean concepts might elucidate aspects of the poet's mindset and creative expression.

This multi-dimensional methodology aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Al-Mutanabbi's poetry, addressing the intricacies of his relationship with Saif al – Dawla, the influence of Nietzschean philosophy, and the philosophical underpinnings of his artistic choices.

V. ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

The relationship between Al-Mutanabbi and Saif al – Dawla is extraordinary. Whenever Al-Mutanabbi's name is mentioned, Saif al – Dawla's name invariably accompanies it. Saif al – Dawla, the Emir, received lavish praise from the poet, and Al-Mutanabbi is credited with immortalizing his political and military career in the history of Arabic literature. The collection of poems known as "Sayfiyyat" stands out as a testament to Al-Mutanabbi's admiration for the Emir's virtues of bravery, generosity, and more, widely regarded as the pinnacle of Al-Mutanabbi's poetic prowess. The question arises: Why did Saif al – Dawla command such exceptional interest from Al-Mutanabbi?

Al-Mutanabbi lived in a tumultuous period marked by political and military instability. This instability had a profound impact on ruling families, elevating poetry to a significant role in politics. Poets, including Al-Mutanabbi, played a unique role in navigating the ever-changing landscape of political and military alliances. The traditional authority held by Emirs, ruling family princes, and the caliphate eroded, as real authority became synonymous with prowess in war. Consequently, poets shifted their focus to praising strong emirs, particularly those who achieved notable military feats, exemplified by Saif al – Dawla (Stetkeyvych, 2010, pp. 241-242).

Al-Mutanabbi was the foremost poet of his age. He was an ambitious, brave knight with strong Arab nationalistic feelings. His poetry reflected the pain and harm inflicted by non-Arabs who usurped power from the caliphate. As a result, he, ideologically and politically, sided with the Arab emir, Saif al – Dawla, who satisfied the poet's ambition by his outstanding military achievements against the Romans and other nations. According to Stetkeyvych (2010), the emir was Al-Mutanabbi's mirror that reflected the excellent merits and the will to power that the poet admired and evoked his poetic talent.

The relationship between the poet and the lauded emir was an unprecedented and ideal one. However, this ideal connection was misconstrued in the perception of the educated Arab, who deemed Al-Mutanabbi a flatterer, subjected, and a blind follower of Saif al – Dawla. Immoral traits were unfairly attributed to both the poet and his poetic talent.

From the vantage point of this study, Al-Mutanabbi's persona is unveiled through the poem titled 'My Heart Is a Flame.' This poem showcases the will to power in direct contradiction to the defamation and slander he faced. It unravels the dignity of the supreme human who, in a rebellious act against Hamdan's authority, defied expectations and surprised onlookers. Al-Mutanabbi devoted a significant portion of his thoughts and creative energy to forging the ideal amid the decline of the Abbasid State, weakened under the control of non-Arabs.

In the end, Al-Mutanabbi came to the realization that the political and military ideology adopted by Saif al – Dawla was merely an illusion, leading him to dismantle the model that once elevated him. The machinations of whistleblowers and the envious ultimately succeeded in tarnishing this relationship, prompting Al-Mutanabbi to make an irrevocable decision to part ways with the Hamdan court (Badei, 1975, pp. 87-88).

In the analysis of the poem, the researchers delved into two pivotal axes, focusing on the philosophical and intellectual perspectives that ignited the poet's creative prowess. These axes included the elevation of the model and the spectrum of undermining, as well as Al-Mutanabbi's heightened egoism and the fallacy of equity.

A. *Saif al – Dawla: Exalting the Model and Fallacy of Equity*

The relationship between Al-Mutanabbi and Saif al – Dawla is encapsulated in the "Sayfiyyat", which glorifies Saif al – Dawla and immortalizes his name in the annals of history through accounts of war epics against the Romans. The poem commences with a reproach, shedding light on this relationship by nostalgically revisiting the splendid days of Saif al – Dawla history. It is worth noting that the translation of Al-Mutanabbi's poem used throughout the study is taken from the translator Masoud (2023).

My heart is aflame, burning with love for you
 While your heart is frigid-cold toward me
 You think so lightly of me, treating me with such indifference
 My soul is sickened, my body debilitated
 Why should I conceal a love that has consumed my body
 When pretenders fake the love of Saif-Al-Dawlah
 If what brings us together is our common love for you
 I wish we would meritoriously share your bounties
 Each according to the love he harbors for you
 I have been in your presence while rapiers sheathed
 And gazed at you when swords blood-stained
 And found you to be the handsomest of God's creation
 Superb in manners, incomparable in character
 When you charge an enemy and he escapes
 You are the winner just the same
 Albeit disappointing, such escape is yet a blessing
 You have stricken great fear in the enemy's heart
 A fear representing you, even in your absence
 You have made your presence awe-inspiring
 Far more than the combined power and prowess
 Of your valorous knights
 You make it a point to run after your enemies in hot pursuit
 Depriving them of shelter; they run, but cannot hide
 Whenever you target an army, before you it flees
 You make after it with relentless chase
 It is incumbent upon you to defeat the opponents in every battle
 Nor should you feel ashamed if they run away
 Rendering you incapable of subduing them
 Victory is made sweet to you
 Only when claymores and heads join in greeting

The poem begins with a lamentation call (My Heart Is a Flame), which reflects the size of pain that Al-Mutanabbi suffered from Saif al – Dawla. He mourned that relationship, which was cracked, threatening the poet's life and the beautiful days he spent in the court of Saif al – Dawla.

The depth of sorrow is portrayed through two contrasting elements: the poet's heart a flame with love for the emir, depicted as 'My heart is a flame,' and the emir's indifferent and cold heart described as 'frigid cold.' The poet's emotional cry is expressed through a lament style, reflecting anger and a sense of departure after the once-glamorous life fades away due to changes that befall the praised figure. This life is symbolized by 'the heart,' representing the source of life and perpetuity, which transforms into inertia and apathy ('frigid cold'). This transformation mirrors the extent of love the poet harbors for Saif al – Dawla, a love that has weakened his body.

The lamentation of the ailing poet reveals the reasons behind his love for Saif al – Dawla. He states, 'Why should I conceal a love that has consumed my body?' This line serves as a diagnostic expression, unraveling the causes of the tension and collapse of the relationship. The poet employs an antithetical style, such as "conceal" and "pretend," to disclose the discrepancy between the genuine love the poet conceals and the fake one the hypocrites in the court demonstrate. "The pretenders fake the love of Saif al – Dawla." Despite that, the Emir favors the love of the pretenders, and that makes the poet discover the illusion of his loyalty and belonging.

At the same time, the first spark of egoism appeared when the poet unhesitatingly drew a comparison between himself and the authority (the praised), Saif al – Dawla, within the context of their shared affection. The poet, in expressing love, places himself on equal footing with Saif al – Dawla.

In the poem that follows, the poet conveys a message to the praised, reminiscing about the joyful days they spent together in times of peace: 'I have been in your presence while rapiers sheathed' and in times of war, 'And gazed at you when swords were bloodstained.' The poet, in this instance, could not deviate from his customary praise of Saif Al-Dawleh, thus reinforcing the pillars of the military ideology embraced by the praised. The poet, having accompanied the emir in his wars, extends congratulations for past victories and entices him to replicate them, saying:

When you charge an enemy and he escapes
 You are the winner just the same
 Albeit disappointing, such escape is yet a blessing
 You have stricken great fear in the enemy's heart
 A fear representing you, even in your absence
 You have made your presence awe-inspiring
 Far more than the combined power and prowess
 Of your valorous knights
 You make it a point to run after your enemies in hot pursuit
 Depriving them of shelter; they run, but cannot hide
 Whenever you target an army, before you it flees
 You make after it with relentless chase
 It is incumbent upon you to defeat the opponents in every battle
 Nor should you feel ashamed if they run away
 Rendering you incapable of subduing them
 Victory is made sweet to you
 Only when claymores and heads join in greeting

In the preceding lines, the poet referred to the military qualities that the Emir had. He highlighted the reverence the praised had and the “fear” his adversaries had, dispersing them on the battlefield. He did not feel satisfied with their escape but chased them to be slaughtered by his swords. This reveals the courage and the ambition with which he can achieve his objectives. He cannot enjoy real victory without confronting the adversary and inflicting wounds on him through beating and stabbing.

The poet glorifies the supreme model, Saif al – Dawla, to whose authority he aligns himself. In the praised, the poet discerns not only merits and the will to power but also the ambition that has been a constant companion throughout the emir's life. This sentiment is palpable to any reader of the poet's verses.

Upon reflection on the preceding lines of poetry in which Al-Mutanabbi portrays Saif al – Dawla 's courage in facing adversaries, a subtle warning is conveyed — the admonition that the Emir's authority is not eternal. He mentioned three basic pillars to consolidate that authority: chasing the adversary, fear, and ruler reverence. Whenever these are lost, the Emir will lose his authority. Such a thing is an insinuation of his lousy selection of the men of his court, characterized by deception and hypocrisy. Humans with these qualities will never be loyal to the ruler. This kind of indirect warning to Saif al – Dawla not to abandon the essentials on which his rule rests. According to the poet, scammers and hypocrites will never achieve any victory or create sublime morals. Nietzsche's idea, as stated by Zarathustra, might be helpful. “Zarathustra asks the innovators, like him, to share the crop and rest; there is no need for the mob or semi-dead” (Nietzsche, 2003, p. 50).

You are the fairest of all people, except in my case
 You are the controversy, the opponent, and the judge combined
 Your intuitive perception is accurate, you correctly read
 So differentiate well between well-built bodies and those swelling with dropsy
 If a seeing person cannot tell the difference
 Between light and darkness
 What use is his eyesight

In the preceding lines, Balme is depicted through an appealing style: “You are the fairest of all except in my case.” Through this line, Al-Mutanabbi reveals that the Emir has transformed by neglecting him, thereby forfeiting one of the ruler's paramount qualities — justice. In Al-Mutanabbi's view, Saif al – Dawla extends fairness to this deceptive group, though they are undeserving, while he, despite his loyalty and love, is cast aside.

Addressing this matter, Ibn Jenni critiques, “This is an excessive complaint... If Saif al – Dawla was fair with everybody except Al-Mutanabbi, that was the worst type of oppression” (Barquqi, 1986, p. 83). Al-Mutanabbi persists in harmful blame against the emir, accusing him of having a blurred vision that prevents him from discerning the poet's position, characterized by individuality and excellence, in contrast to his adversaries. The poet uses antithesis, such as 'light' and 'darkness,' to underscore the disparity between himself as a poet and others who flatter Saif al – Dawla in the court. How could one benefit from eyesight if both 'light and darkness' appear the same? This, according to the poet, is akin to the perspective of a blind person or someone lacking insight — a blatant insult confirming the emir's blurred vision.

Al-Mutanabbi comes to the realization that the gentle reproach typical among friends and lovers is no longer effective. He discerns that an authoritative regime lacking justice and insight leads to frustration. The once-noble authority that fueled Al-Mutanabbi's ambition loses its potency amid changing values and concepts within the emir's realm.

B. Al-Mutanabbi: Supreme Ego and the Fallacy of Equity

After Al-Mutanabbi altered his stance toward the authoritative model, Saif al – Dawla, understanding that the conciliatory situation would never be restored, he firmly rejected oppression and humiliation. His spirit, now unyielding to authority after the rupture in their relationship, served as a reminder to Saif al – Dawla of the ambitious soul he had dismissed, a grave mistake on the emir's part. The subsequent portion of the poem emphasizes the poet's excellence, bravery, and valor.

Al-Mutanabbi, a name echoing worldwide, reveals an identity fully cognizant of his unique poetic prowess, which triumphs over all adversaries. Thus, he underscores his creative abilities on one hand and martial prowess on the other. By exalting himself and diminishing others, he aims to prove to the Emir, through a compelling argument, that he should not be equated with others; he is distinct. He articulates:

Even the blind man was able to see my verses
 Even the deaf man was able to hear my words
 I enjoy my sweet repose, not concerning myself with poetry
 Whereas others burn the midnight oil, in endless literary disputes
 Behold an ignorant man, deceived by my jovial manner
 Unaware of my intentions
 Until I unexpectedly pounce, hand and word, incapacitating him
 When you see a lion bearing his canines
 Never fancy him to be smiling
 When a knight contrives to snuff out my life
 I take away his own instead
 Mounting a noble steed, its back inviolable
 He runs with a rapid ambling gait
 His hind legs moving as one leg, so do his front legs
 He works in harmony with his rider's wishes
 In a manner best suited for hand and foot
 How often I strutted between two mighty armies
 Smiting with a thin blade claymore
 While the billows of death surged in full brawling roar
 Swift steeds, dreary nights, and the desolate wasteland, all know me full well
 As do the sword, the spear, the writing paper and the pen
 I kept lonely company with beasts of the wilderness
 Amazing thereby mounts and mounds

The preceding lines of verse unveil the supreme ego, starkly contrasting with the egos of poets within the court and others, including the emir himself, who contributed to the erosion of the court's noble values. The noble ego belongs to the noble self, a self that can be reinstated when atrocity and coercion dissipate. In such a scenario, it is accepted by others as something grounded in the law of nature. At that point, it becomes, in itself, 'justice' (Nietzsche, 2003, p. 265). The following lines unveil the poet's excessive ego:

Even the blind man was able to see my verses
 Even the deaf man was able to hear my words
 I enjoy my sweet repose, not concerning myself with poetry
 Whereas others burn the midnight oil, in endless literary disputes

In the preceding lines, the "I" discloses the unmatched poetic ability by which the poet tries to commemorate his glory in front of the governing changeable "I" to prove his supreme ego. If the governing "I" had been weakened by the loss of insight and did not see anything as before, the poet revolted against that authority of sick insight. He states, "Even the blind man was able to see my verses, "Even the deaf man was able to hear my words." His poetry spread worldwide so that blind people and people who were deaf or hard of hearing saw and heard them (Barquqi, 1986, p. 83). This talented, creative poet was distinguished for overriding the stereotypical method of writing poetry by being individualistic, original, educated, and with a broad, innovative imagination. The poet's skill lies in his ability to harness words that surprise the receptor: "I enjoy my sweet repose, Not concerning myself with poetry." Unlike him, other poets stay up for nights to achieve poetic diction, while Al-Mutanabbi differs from them as aberrated words are malleable and achievable for him.

Al-Mutanabbi dissected the heritage of Arabic poetry, seeking a leeway to single himself out from other poets. He used virgin words that were never used before; thus, he broke the conventional model of poetry. This is where his creativity lies. The creativity was seen by blind people and heard by people who are deaf or hard of hearing (Al Qasim, 2023, p. 313).

The "I" in the poem individualizes Al-Mutanabbi, who is filled with poetic feelings and challenges the authority of Saif al – Dawla, who has been struck by blindness and moral deafness due to negligence that made him not distinguish

between the natural talent and the fake one. The declared “I” in his poetry was a method of breaking the authoritative model and, at the same time, a way of exalting his ego by which he challenged the weakened authority of the emir, which would be defeated through this infiltration by knowledge, “Even the deaf man was able to hear my words”.

Al-Mutanabbi’s ego persists in encountering the emir’s and courtiers’ authority to create the exalted supreme ego as manifested in the military aspect of his life reflected in the bravery and knighthood the emir relinquished. Thus, the supreme ego integrates into his personality. He says:

Unaware of my intentions
Until I unexpectedly pounce, hand and word, incapacitating him
When you see a lion bearing his canines
Never fancy him to be smiling

The poetic scene extends to criticize the authority of the court, along with his adversaries among poets and writers, whom he accuses of ignorance, aligning with the blurred vision of the emir. ‘Behold an ignorant man, deceived by my jovial manner.’ This reflects a rebellion against the emir and the court, who are deemed ignorant and incapable of distinguishing between reality and falsehood.

The absence of justice and the disregard for Al-Mutanabbi’s potential resulted in the erosion of his free Arab identity. In response, he issues a threatening remark: ‘Never fancy the lion to be smiling.’ This serves both to assert his military valor and to highlight his dissatisfaction with the prevailing circumstances. He further expresses this by stating:

When a knight contrives to snuff out my life
I take away his own instead
Mounting a noble steed, its back inviolable
He runs with a rapid ambling gait
His hind legs moving as one leg, so do his front legs
He works in harmony with his rider’s wishes
In a manner best suited for hand and foot
How often I strutted between two mighty armies
Smiting with a thin blade claym ore
While the billows of death surged in full brawling roar
Swift steeds, dreary nights, and the desolate wasteland, all know me full well
As do the sword, the spear, the writing paper and the pen
I kept lonely company with beasts of the wilderness
Amazing thereby mounts and mounds

In the preceding military portrait, Al-Mutanabbi employs his legendary steed, the steed of the “Superman,” to describe how fast and skillful it is. Like its owner, it is different from others; its rider never scares anybody, and “its back is inviolable.” Like his super steed, he confronts the authority and courtiers to dispense with them and to open up new horizons that satisfy his ambition after failures the current authority achieved.

At the same time, the following lines present the military might of the poet, which the authority’s changed ideology has experienced:

How often I strutted between two mighty armies
Smiting with a thin blade claym ore
While the billows of death surged in full brawling roar

Al-Mutanabbi reviews his skill in mounting his steed in times of war. The previously quoted lines unveil the poet’s prowess in using his sword with which he moved between the two great armies surrounded by death from all sides “billows of death surged in full brawling roar.” In the previous lines of verse, Al-Mutanabbi showed his skill in mounting his steed in war and fighting his adversary engulfed by death “while the billows of death surged in a full brawling roar.” Lack of fear due to boldness is portrayed in the following line:

Swift steeds, dreary nights, and the desolate wasteland, all know me full well
As do the sword, the spear, the writing paper and the pen

Al-Mutanabbi, in these lines, draws features of his heroic personality by describing his prowess that reaches its apex through gaining elements of might (steed, sword, and spear), which constitute material elements of power for the knight. He also pleads with (paper and pen) associated with knowledge and culture to present an integrated picture of the hero, the supreme human. According to Nietzsche, the “majority of people represent parts of humans which should be assembled to have a complete human being at the end” (Barquqi, 1986, p. 470).

Al-Mutanabbi, thus, is the man of war and heroism, the creator of change on one hand and peace and knowledge on the other. His poetry was unique, as he averted the traditional way of versification. He made steeds, nights, and the desolate wasteland know him by exalting his ego filled with prowess, bravery, and venture. The following line of verse describes the daring acts with which he described himself earlier, saying:

I kept lonely company with beasts of the wilderness,
Amazing thereby mounts and mounds

No wonder the poet was accustomed to crossing large wildernesses in which he was the lonely beast, symbolizing his courage, boldness, and rare ventures. He was familiar with beasts of wilderness with their planes and valleys. All such things emphasize his individuality, which differentiates him from others. According to Nietzsche, "Men of truth only live in wastelands" (p. 130). This is a clear challenge to the opponents of the Emir's court who neglected Al-Mutanabbi, reminding them of his status and superiority.

From the preceding poetic scene, one can elicit that Al-Mutanabbi's adversaries plotted against him in the Hamdan court. Therefore, he reminded them of his heroic acts, which plots would never conceal. Therefore, he created a dynamic world for himself based on power and knowledge, contrary to the sloth that dominated the court of Saif al – Dawla. These aspects affirm the discordance in qualities and merit that the poet used to share with Saif al – Dawla before deception and estrangement. The last part of the poem renews blame, expressing regret for the coercive departure forced upon the poet by the court of Saif al – Dawla. The following lines elaborate on this issue:

Parting company with you is excruciatingly heartrending
My heart, soul, and all are nothing without you
O how I wish you have given me
The same affection and honor I accord you
Surely, I would have received that from you
Had I a place in your heart
If what my envious opponents said about me pleases you
With fortitude I will carry my pain
What matters a wound if you are pleased
There is a long-standing friendship between us
Wish you gave it what it deserves
Abiding loyalty is a sacred trust
For those who honor a pledge
How often you try to find fault with me, yet to no avail
Your attempts are unbecoming
In the eyes of both God and the noble-hearted
My character is far removed from blemishes and imperfections
Untouched by them
As the Pleiades is ever by old age untouched
I wish the storms breaking over my head change into benign clouds
I wish all barriers to your bountiful showers
Be permanently removed
My separation from you causes me to ceaselessly travel
Exhausting the most energetic camels, the swiftest steeds
Should I leave the Dhumair Mountain, to the right, and press on
You would surely regret my departure, once I am gone
Should you be forced to walk away from those
Capable of dissuading you from leaving them
They are the departed ones, not you
The worst of regions is where no true friends are found
The worst of gain is that which besmears one's honor
And the worst of birds my hand could ever catch
Is one not dissimilar from either falcon or vulture
How can ignorant and ignoble ones recite poetry in your presence
When they possess no articulate eloquence of the Arabs
This is my gentle rebuke to you, yet prompted by love,
Full of precious gems
In the form of soulful words conveyed

The concluding section of the quoted verses emphasizes the persistent blame on Saif al – Dawla. It elucidates that the poet, driven by the actions of the emir and envious individuals who infused a sense of nihilism, found himself compelled to depart, stating, 'My heart, soul, and everything are meaningless without you.' These circumstances heightened his anger and rebellion, as reflected in the subsequent two lines:

How often you try to find fault with me, yet to no avail
 Your attempts are unbecoming
 In the eyes of both God and the noble-hearted
 My character is far removed from blemishes and imperfections
 Untouched by them
 As the Pleiades is ever by old age untouched

In the preceding two lines, Al-Mutanabbi's vehement protests echo in response to adversaries who, as Nietzsche aptly noted, "try to find that fault reflects hatred for him because of his high reputation. People intensely hate those who soar above the clouds and unjustly ascribe shortcomings to them (2014, p. 85)." Al-Mutanabbi glorifies his ego, putting it side by side with the stars; it is flawless. His individualistic distinctive feeling singles him out to be unique and incomparable. Consequently, the imperfections that afflict ordinary humans, such as aging and graying hair, hold no sway over him, as they are earthly qualities from which he deliberately distances himself. It becomes apparent that the poet retains a sense of superiority, resilient against the attempts of his adversaries to diminish it through constant conspiracies, a trait inherent in treacherous plotters.

The poet keeps refuting the humiliation of the emir and his followers, who try to devalue the ambitious identity that seeks high grandeur. "I am the star." Such a declaration is a contempt for the authority weakened by aging "As the Pleiades is ever by old age untouched." That authority is no longer fair, so it is disqualified to be the supreme model he used to admire.

Al-Mutanabbi perceives that the envy of his adversaries played a pivotal role in the adversities he faced, as he surpassed them all in excellence. In his aspirations and desires, the envied poet endeavored to eradicate injustice, akin to a fire that consumed him, expressing, "Wish the clouds whose detonator I have," indicating his desire to dispel the wrath of authority. Rather than rewarding the poet for his loyalty with gifts, Saif al – Dawla opted to permanently redirect them elsewhere. Consequently, the favors of Saif al – Dawla found themselves bestowed upon insincere praises.

The shifts in Saif al – Dawla's policies convinced Al-Mutanabbi that a return to normalcy was unlikely. Consequently, the poet, embracing his individualism, pronounced his departure: "My separation from you causes me to travel ceaselessly." The psychological impacts of that stage on his life were "exhausting the most energetic camels, the swiftest steeds".

This statement conveys a sense of threat. The impending departure is framed as a catalyst for regret on the part of the emir: "You would surely regret my departure once I am gone." As per Akbari (n.d., p. 372), Al-Mutanabbi's predictions materialized, as Saif al – Dawla did indeed regret his actions. The departure of the poet, coupled with his praises for the emir, symbolized the departure of Saif al - Dawla's grandeur, with the poet noting: "They are the departed ones, not you".

Al Qayrawani (1981, p. 156) referred to the danger of the poet's recitation when he brought up the idea of remorse. In the beginning, he mentioned remorse, which was considered an insult. Al-Mutanabbi was almost killed when he left the gathering. This incident, as discussed by Al Qayrawani (1981, p. 156), exemplifies a manifestation of sheer pride (p. 156).

The worst of regions is where no true friends are found
 The worst of gain is that which besmears one's honor
 And the worst of birds my hand could ever catch
 Is one not dissimilar from either falcon or vulture
 How can ignorant and ignoble ones recite poetry in your presence
 When they possess no articulate eloquence of the Arabs
 This is my gentle rebuke to you, yet prompted by love,
 Full of precious gems
 In the form of soulful words conveyed

These words evoke Nietzsche's cautionary statement, "Beware the tramps; they feel disparaged in front of you. Therefore, their feeling turns into vengeance" (Nietzsche, 2003, p. 77). This sentiment parallels the poet's experience, where adversaries' envy transformed into conspiracies, rendering his life intolerable. The emir's court, lacking justice, amiability, and social equity, equates the superior, symbolized by "the falcon," with "the vulture." This bold outcry openly rejects such inequality, an idea vehemently rejected by enlightened minds. Neutral distinctions between individuals and a strong sense of individuality, as argued by Badawi (1975, pp. 260-261), inevitably lead to class divisions, challenging the notion of universal equity.

Interestingly, Saif al – Dawla seemingly contradicts this narrative by endorsing equity between Al-Mutanabbi and his adversaries. Instead of objecting, he elevates them to higher ranks in the emir's court. This accusation extends beyond the individuals involved; it implicates the emir himself and his policies, allowing for libels and slander. Furthermore, it fails to distinguish between feigned adversaries and genuine admirers, as Al-Mutanabbi articulates, "This is my gentle rebuke to you, yet prompted by love full of precious gems in the form of soulful words conveyed".

VI. CONCLUSION

Analyzing the poem addressed to Saif al - Dawla, it becomes evident that the reproachful poetic speech emanates from a profound sense of individuality and exaltation. Al-Mutanabbi, in the poem, reveals his divergence from the norm and articulates justifications for this individuality through creative lines of poetry, granting him the right to elevate his supreme ego. As a rebellious soul, he resists the impositions of the court, particularly when it denies him prudence and wisdom.

When the once supreme model transforms into an ordinary human, Al-Mutanabbi insists that the individual is no longer qualified for higher ranks. This poem considered the finest among the "Al-Sayfiyats" named after Saif al - Dawla, vehemently rejects the attributed qualities of flattery, hypocrisy, and opportunism through poetry that his adversaries associate with him. The poem stands as a powerful assertion of Al-Mutanabbi's unique identity, and a repudiation of false attributions imposed by his detractors.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

After conducting a thorough analysis of the poem, the researchers propose the following recommendations:

A. Explore Other Esteemed Poets

Conduct further studies on poets of similar stature to Al-Mutanabbi to determine the extent to which their ego influenced their poetic talents. Comparing multiple poets with a focus on their individuality and its impact on their work could provide valuable insights into common themes or divergences in this regard.

B. Philosophical Approach to Poetry of Praise

Reconsider the study of praise poetry within the heritage of Arabic versification using a philosophical approach or alternative methodologies. This could involve reevaluating the genre and its significance, examining the philosophical underpinnings of ego in poetry, and challenging accusations against both the poetry and the revered Arab poets in the historical context of ancient Arabic literature.

These recommendations aim to broaden the understanding of the relationship between ego, individuality, and poetic expression, as well as to offer a fresh perspective on the genre of praise poetry within the broader context of Arabic literary heritage.

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Feda Ghnaim is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Translation Studies at Al-Ahliyya Amman University in Jordan. She holds a Ph.D. in Arabic language, literature, and ancient criticism from Yarmouk University in Jordan. She is actively engaged in teaching Arabic for non-native speakers in the Department of English Language and Translation. She has held various administrative positions at Al Ahliyya Amman University, including the Head of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Deputy Dean for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and Deputy Dean for Accreditation and Quality Assurance.



Linda Alkhawaja is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Translation Studies at Al-Ahliyya Amman University in Jordan. She holds an MA in Translation and Interpreting Studies from Salford University/Manchester and PhD in Translation Studies from Aston University/Birmingham. She is actively engaged in various projects exploring the sociology of translation, cultural studies, and Machine Translation. Her work delves into the complex relationship between language, culture, and society, unraveling the transformative power of translation in different contexts. She took on, for two years, the role of the Director of the Language Centre and the Head of the English Language and Literature and English Language and Translation Departments.



Ogareet Y. Khoury is an Associate Professor at the Department of Translation and the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies at Al-Ahliyya Amman University (AAU). She holds a PhD Degree in Translation Studies from Aston University-UK with a 20+ years of teaching experience. Her research interests include, but are not limited to, Translator Pedagogy and Training, Discourse Analysis, Literary Criticism and Philosophy in which she published several research papers at top-ranked journals.



Asmaa Alomary is an Associate Professor who holds a Ph.D. in Education with a major in Islamic Studies from the University of Putra in Malaysia, obtained in 2004 AD. She taught in a high school for five years, certified by the Ministry of Education in Jordan. Additionally, she worked for three years in the College of Education for Girls at Taif University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Since 2007, she has been employed at Al-Ahliyya Amman University in the College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Social and Human Sciences. She attained the rank of Associate Professor in Islamic-Educational Studies in 2018. Furthermore, she has published numerous research papers in educational, literary, and humanities fields in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Towards Effective Learning: Understanding the Connections of Vocabulary, Reasoning, and Mathematical Word Problem-Solving in Islamic Elementary Education

Ardianto Ardianto

Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, State Islamic Institute of Manado, Manado 9500, North Sulawesi, Indonesia

Effendi M

English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Terbuka Makassar, Makassar 90222, South Sulawesi, Indonesia

Nur Fitriani Zainal

Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, State Islamic Institute of Manado, Manado 9500, North Sulawesi, Indonesia

Agustini Buchari

Language Department, State Madrasah Aliyah Model Plus Skills of Manado, Manado 9500, North Sulawesi, Indonesia

Abstract—Word problems in mathematics require reasoning skills and the ability to visualize the relationship between mathematics and language. This study aimed to analyze the correlation between vocabulary mastery, reasoning ability, and the ability to solve mathematical word problems. The research focused on students at the Islamic elementary school level who are just starting to learn mathematical problem-solving. The sample consisted of 100 students from two public Islamic elementary schools and five private Islamic elementary schools. Data were collected through tests for each variable, and the research hypothesis was tested using simple correlation and multiple correlations with Minitab Pearson Correlation software. This study found that the three variables were significantly correlated. This suggests that vocabulary mastery and reasoning ability are crucial in optimizing the ability to solve story-counting problems. To enhance these variables, teachers are encouraged to develop innovative and creative teaching methods that focus on developing and practicing math vocabulary from an early age. By improving students' vocabulary mastery and reasoning ability, teachers can enhance their problem-solving performance and ultimately improve their mathematics skills.

Index Terms—word problems, mathematics, vocabulary mastery, reasoning ability

I. INTRODUCTION

Mathematical word problems are real-life scenarios presented in a linguistic format that require arithmetic solutions (Adams, 2003; Fuchs et al., 2008; Khoshaim, 2020; Wang et al., 2016). These problems differ from those expressed purely in mathematical notation (Boonen et al., 2016). As stated earlier, a four-step process has been identified for the resolution of mathematical word problems: (1) understanding the contextual aspects of the problem; (2) comprehending the problem's vocabulary and transforming it into mathematical notation; (3) selecting and employing an appropriate problem-solving strategy; and (4) verifying the validity and accuracy of the solution through a thorough review. Consequently, engaging in the practice of solving math word problems enhances students' capacity to utilize mathematical skills in practical, real-life scenarios beyond the confines of the classroom (Jourdain & Sharma, 2016; Pongsakdi et al., 2019).

Students encounter difficulties in transferring the format of word problems to arithmetic or algebra (Gerofsky, 1996). Numerous studies conducted in Indonesia from the elementary to the tertiary level have revealed the prevalent difficulties faced by students. These include inadequate comprehension of the questions and an inability to convert word problems into mathematical format (Amalia, 2017; Fatahillah et al., 2017; Ferwinda & Syahrilfuddin, 2019; Hariyani & Aldita, 2020; Wulanningtyas & Marhaeni, 2022).

A lack of language skills, particularly vocabulary mastery, and inadequate mathematical reasoning abilities can be inferred from the inability to understand questions and translate word problems into mathematical expressions. This hypothesis aligns with several sources of evidence. Firstly, the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) results indicate

that students in grades 2 and 3 can generally read words but fail to comprehend their meanings. Secondly, in 2016, the Indonesian National Assessment Program (INAP) or Indonesian Student Competency Assessment (AKSI) tested the reading skills of fourth-grade students and found that only 6.06% scored in the good category, while 47.11% and 46.83% scored in the sufficient and less categories, respectively, indicating low literacy skills among Indonesian students (Wiedarti et al., 2016). Thirdly, students encounter challenges in comprehending and converting questions into mathematical expressions, which is the first step in solving context-based PISA questions (Murtiyasa et al., 2020; Wijaya et al., 2014). In 2022 PISA research in urban and mountain found that 26.7- 60% of students in Class VIII from the three schools in Pangkajene and Islands Regencies had very low competence in finding information, with a score of <54 (Amir et al., 2023).

Vocabulary mastery refers to the ability to comprehend and effectively use words, expressions, and terms in various contexts. Understanding words' meanings in context positively influences students' active thinking and search processes (Nurgiyantoro, 2001). Similarly, reasoning is defined as a logical mode of thinking that enables individuals to conclude (Nuralam & Maulidayani, 2020). It is considered a High Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) and plays a critical role in solving non-routine problems, making it an essential aspect of mathematical problem-solving (Kaitera & Harmoinen, 2022). Students' reasoning abilities can be categorized into two levels: Levels 3-5 and Levels 6-8. At Levels 3-5, students make conjectures about mathematical relationships, investigate those conjectures, make mathematical arguments, and provide reasons for their claims. At levels 6-8, students understand that reasoning and proof are fundamental aspects of mathematics. They develop and evaluate mathematical propositions and proofs, create and investigate mathematical conjectures, and select and apply various types of reasoning and proof methods.

Considering the challenges students encounter in understanding and converting word problems into mathematical expressions, coupled with the importance of mathematics word problems in developing students' problem-solving skills for everyday life situations, it is interesting to investigate the relationship between vocabulary mastery, reasoning ability, and the ability to solve story-counting problems. The scarcity of research on the correlation between language proficiency and math word problem-solving in Indonesia makes this hypothesis intriguing (Fatmanissa & Novianti, 2022). Prior studies on mathematics word problems have predominantly focused on analyzing student errors in problem-solving and devising strategies to enhance performance (Fatmanissa et al., 2020). This research specifically concentrates on Islamic elementary school (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) students who are in the initial stages of learning mathematical problem-solving, particularly in word problems that involve addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division (story counting problems). The research outcomes are anticipated to offer educators insights and recommendations for enhancing students' vocabulary mastery and reasoning abilities, which are vital prerequisites for resolving math word problem.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The overall research objective is to analyse word problems in mathematics require reasoning skills and the ability to visualize the relationship between mathematics and language, as well as to investigate the correlation between vocabulary mastery, reasoning ability, and the ability to solve mathematical word problems in Islamic Elementary Education.

III. THE RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a correlational-associative design through a survey approach. The data were collected *ex post facto*, meaning that the researcher did not manipulate the respondents' group. The data were collected through tests for each variable, with vocabulary mastery and reasoning ability as the independent variables and the ability to solve story-counting problems as the dependent variable. The study population comprised all sixth-grade students in Islamic elementary schools located in Manado City, while the sample consisted of 100 students from two state Islamic elementary schools and five private Islamic elementary schools.

In ensuring the validity and reliability of the research instruments, the three test instruments, each comprising 30 items, were evaluated on 20 Islamic elementary school students who were not part of the research sample but belonged to the research population. The validity test of the items was conducted using the Minitab Pearson Correlation subprogram, while the reliability test of the items was performed using the halving technique (even-odd), and the overall reliability coefficient was determined using the Spearman-Brown formula. Following the validity and reliability tests, it was confirmed that the vocabulary mastery test instrument comprised 28 items with an *r*count value of 0.848 ($> r_{table} = 0.623$), the reasoning ability test instrument included 26 items with an *r*count value of 0.866 ($> r_{table} = 0.684$), and the story count problem-solving instrument contained 28 questions with an *r*count value of 0.861 ($> r_{table} = 0.623$). Thus, the three research instruments were deemed to be valid and reliable and, hence, can be used to measure variables. Furthermore, the expert had validated all three test instruments before their administration.

The study analyzed the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reasoning skills, as well as their relationship with the ability to solve story-counting problems. Both descriptive and inferential approaches were used to conduct the analysis. The descriptive analysis aimed to describe the scores of vocabulary mastery, reasoning ability, and the ability to solve story-counting problems. Meanwhile, the inferential analysis aimed to test the research hypothesis using a simple correlation formula and multiple correlations, which was conducted using the software Minitab Pearson Correlation.

Before testing the research hypothesis, the normality and homogeneity of the three variables were checked. The Lilliefors test technique (Sudjana, 1989) was used to test for normality in this research. This test is not restricted to small sample sizes and can be applied to large samples as well. Additionally, the Lilliefors method is a simple technique for normality testing. The homogeneity of population variance was examined using the Bartlett test (Sudjana, 1989).

IV. RESULT

Description of the Research Data

To determine the distribution of data for each research variable, the empirical data collected was used to present a data description of each variable. The distribution of the data was displayed in the form of a frequency distribution of scores for each respondent (student).

Distribution of Vocabulary Mastery Scores (Variable X₁)

The analysis of variable X₁ data shows that the lowest score is 8 and the highest score is 26, out of a maximum possible score of 28 for vocabulary mastery. The distribution of the vocabulary mastery score data can be seen in Table 1, where the score data was organized using Sturges' rules (Sudjana, 1989) to determine class intervals. According to Sturges' rule, the class interval range is 18, comprising 7 intervals of length 3 each. Based on the data distribution presented in Table 1, statistical calculations reveal that the average vocabulary mastery score (\bar{x}) for 100 respondents was 20.5, with a standard deviation of 4.04.

TABLE 1
DATA DISTRIBUTION OF VOCABULARY MASTERY SCORES

Scores Interval	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
7 – 9	1	1 %
10 – 12	3	3 %
13 – 15	7	7 %
16 – 18	21	21 %
19 – 21	20	20 %
22 – 24	31	31 %
25 – 27	17	17 %
Total	100	100

Distribution of Reasoning Ability Scores (Variable X₂)

Table 2 displays the data distribution for the reasoning abilities of Islamic elementary school students, which were obtained from 100 research respondents. The lowest score recorded among the respondents for the reasoning ability variable (X₂) was 6, while the highest score achieved was 24 out of a maximum possible score of 26. Sturges' rule was applied to analyze the distribution of data for the X₁ variable scores, and the same method was used to determine the distribution of data for the X₂ variable scores. The statistical analysis revealed that the average score (\bar{x}) of students' reasoning abilities was 18.25, and the standard deviation was 4.22.

TABLE 2
DATA DISTRIBUTION OF REASONING ABILITY SCORES

Scores Interval	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
5 – 7	2	2 %
8 – 10	2	2 %
11 – 13	11	11%
14 – 16	17	17%
17 – 19	22	22%
20 – 22	29	29%
23 – 25	17	17%
Total	100	100

Distribution of Scores of the Ability to Solve the Story Counting Problems (Variable Y)

According to data collected from 100 respondents, the ability to solve story counting problems (represented by variable Y) has a range from a minimum score of 4 to a maximum score of 25, out of an ideal maximum score of 28. Table 3 shows the distribution of scores for variable Y, following the same rules used to determine the distribution of variables X₁ and X₂. According to the statistical analysis, the mean (\bar{x}) of the ability to solve story counting problems is 17.56, and the standard deviation of the data is 4.74.

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF SCORE DATA OF THE ABILITY TO SOLVE STORY COUNTING PROBLEMS

Scores Interval	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
3 – 5	1	1%
6 – 8	3	3%
9 – 11	6	6%
12 – 14	18	18%
15 – 17	19	19%
18 – 20	23	23%
21 – 23	18	18%
24 – 26	12	12%
Total	100	100

Hypothesis Tests

Requirements for Statistical Analysis Testing

1) Normality Requirement

The data for each variable, namely vocabulary mastery, reasoning ability, and ability to solve story counting problems, underwent a normality test using the steps (Sudjana, 1989). The Lilliefors method was used for the analysis, and the results showed that all three populations were normally distributed at a significance level of 0.05. Table 4 displays the results of the normality testing of the three population variance characteristics. The maximum L_{count} of the test result for the three research variables was smaller than the $L_{0.95(100)}$ list obtained from the critical value table list L for the Lilliefors test (= 0.0886). This indicates that the three population characteristics are normally distributed, fulfilling one of the conditions for testing the research hypothesis using the correlation formula.

TABLE 4
RESULT OF DATA NORMALITY TEST

Number	Variable	L_{count} maximum of Test Result	$L_{0.95(100)}$ Table List
1.	Vocabulary Mastery	0,0869	0,0886
2.	Reasoning Ability	0,0864	
3.	The Ability to Solve Story Counting Problems	0,0864	

2) Homogeneity of Population Variances Requirement

To fulfill the second requirement for hypothesis testing analysis, the homogeneity of variance was assessed using the Bartlett method, following the steps (Sudjana, 1989). This method was employed because the population's variance being tested for similarity exceeded two. The test results show that $\chi^2_{count} = 2.755$ and $\chi^2_{table} = 5.591$, with χ^2_{count} being less than χ^2_{table} . Hence, it can be inferred that the three research variables have homogeneous variances at a significance level of 0.05 with 2 degrees of freedom, which is equal to the number of subject groups minus one.

Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis testing comprised four parts: (a) assessing the correlation between variable X_1 and variable Y , (b) examining the correlation between variable X_2 and variable Y , (c) evaluating the correlation between variable X_1 and variable X_2 , and (d) analyzing the correlation between variable X_1 and variable X_2 simultaneously with variable Y .

1) The correlation between vocabulary mastery (X_1) and ability to solve the story counting Problems (Y)

The results of a correlation analysis between variables X_1 and Y indicated a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.8555$. The value was re-tested with a t-test to determine whether the correlation was significant or not, with the aim of testing the hypothesis that:

$$H : \rho = 0$$

$$A : \rho \neq 0 \text{ (two-tailed test)}$$

The acceptance criterion for the hypothesis test was that the t-statistic should fall between the critical values of t at the $(1 - \alpha/2)$ and $\alpha/2$ levels of significance. If the calculated t-value exceeded the critical value, the null hypothesis would be rejected, indicating a significant relationship between variables X_1 and Y .

The results of the hypothesis testing indicated that t_{count} was 31.5890, which was greater than $t_{\alpha(100-2=98)}$, obtained through linear interpolation as 1.6633. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that the degree of association between the two variables was not equal to zero. This conclusion confirmed that the correlation coefficient of 0.8555 was statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

2) The correlation between reasoning ability (X_2) dan the Ability to Solve the story counting problems (Y)

The two variables X_2 and Y were used to represent the correlation between reasoning ability and the ability to solve story counting problems, respectively. The correlation value of X_2 and Y was found to be 0.9450 through survey data analysis for hypothesis testing. To determine the significance of this coefficient of correlation value, a t-test was used. The hypothesis that was under testing was:

$$H : \rho = 0$$

$$A : \rho \neq 0 \text{ (two-tailed test)}$$

To accept the hypothesis, the t-value needed to be between $t(1-\alpha)$ and $t\alpha$, where α is the significance level. If the t-count value was greater than the t-table value, there would be a significant relationship between X_2 and Y. The results of the hypothesis testing showed that t_{count} was 87.4299, which was greater than the $t_{\alpha(100-2=98)}$ value of 1.6633 obtained from linear interpolation. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that the degree of association between the two variables was not equal to zero. This means that the correlation value of 0.8555 was significant at the 95% confidence level.

3) *The correlation between vocabulary mastery (X1) and reasoning ability (X2)*

The results of correlation analysis between vocabulary mastery (X_1) and reasoning ability (X_2) revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.9278. To determine the significance of this correlation, a t-test was conducted using the following hypothesis:

$$H : \rho = 0$$

$$A : \rho \neq 0 \quad (\text{two way test})$$

The acceptance criteria for this hypothesis were that the t-value falls between $(1-\alpha)/2$ and $(1+\alpha)/2$, while the null hypothesis was rejected if the t-count value exceeded the t-table value. This would indicate a significant relationship between X_1 and X_2 .

The results of the hypothesis testing showed that t-count was 31.5890, while $t\alpha(98)$ was 1.6633, obtained through linear interpolation. Based on this, it was concluded that the degree of association between the two variables was not equal to zero, and that the correlation coefficient of 0.9278 was significant at the 95% confidence level.

TABLE 5
SIMPLE CORRELATION BETWEEN RESEARCH VARIABLES

Variables	X_1	X_2	Y
X_1	1		
X_2	0,9278 (significant)	1	
Y	0,8555 (significant)	0,9450 (significant)	1

Description: X_1 : Vocabulary Mastery
 X_2 : Reasoning Ability
 Y : The Ability to Solve Story Counting Problems

Table 5 presents the results of the simple correlation tests for: (a) analyzing the correlation between variable X_1 and variable Y; (b) analyzing the correlation between variable X_2 and variable Y; and (c) analyzing the correlation between variable X_1 and variable X_2 , based on the testing results of hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

4) *Correlation between the vocabulary Mastery (X1) and Reasoning Ability (X2) with Ability to Solve Story Counting Problems (Y)*

The multiple correlation technique was used to test the hypothesis that there is a correlation between vocabulary mastery and reasoning ability, and their ability to solve story counting problems. The Ftest was used to determine the significance of the multiple correlation among the three variables.

A correlation coefficient of 0.9465 and an Ftest value (Fcount) of 407.1818 were obtained from testing the research hypothesis. As the Fcount value (407.1818) was greater than the Ftable value (3.093), the hypothesis that there is a significant and positive multiple correlation between vocabulary mastery and reasoning ability, simultaneously with their ability to solve story counting problems, was accepted with a 95% degree of confidence level, or a significant level of 0.05. Table 6 presents the results of the multiple correlation testing for the correlation between variables X_1 and X_2 , simultaneously with variable Y, based on the testing results of hypothesis 4.

TABLE 6
TEST RESULT OF MULTIPLE CORRELATION COEFFICIENT

Correlation	Correlation Coefficients' Value (R^2)	Value of F		Conclusion
		Count/Test	Table	
r_{X1X2Y}	0,9465	407,1818	3,093	Significant

Discussion

The relationship between vocabulary mastery, reasoning ability, and the ability to solve story counting problems is significant, indicating that language skills and reasoning contribute to optimizing mathematical abilities. This finding is consistent with prior research indicating that: 1) language skills can predict both initial arithmetic or numeracy abilities (Aunio et al., 2019; Purpura et al., 2011) and advanced mathematical development through arithmetic (Kleemans & Segers, 2020), 2) language literacy (Fatmanissa & Sagara, 2017) and verbal skills (Sarjana et al., 2020; Strohmaier et al., 2021) impact word problem-solving ability, 3) reading comprehension skills play a role in both scientific reasoning (Schlatter et al., 2020) and solving mathematical problems (Boonen et al., 2016; Duo-Terron et al., 2022; Hendriani, 2018), 4) according to the 2018 PISA results, students who enjoy reading have a math score that is 6.53 points higher than those who do not enjoy reading (Nur'aini et al., 2021), and 5) the accuracy with which one reads word problems influences the ability to solve mathematical problems.

Thorough reading refers to the practice of comprehending the ideas and details presented in a reading text (Lutvaidah & Hidayat, 2019). By carefully reading story questions, students can develop the ability to understand the question's intent and transform it into mathematical form. Consequently, the better students comprehend the meaning of story questions, the more likely they are to solve problems successfully (Andanik & Fitriawanati, 2019).

Moreover, optimizing reasoning abilities creates opportunities for students with lower performance to excel (Vista, 2016). As a result, teachers can act as learning facilitators by designing or modifying various learning models, approaches, strategies, and media to stimulate and enhance students' language skills, especially their mastery of Indonesian vocabulary, and reasoning abilities, starting from a young age and extending to higher levels.

To enhance vocabulary mastery in Early Childhood and Elementary Schools, a range of media can be employed, including literacy books based on Augmented Reality (Hartanti & Kurniawan, 2022), Reading literacy blogs (Irnanda et al., 2022), Flash Card Path to Literacy Indonesian language adaptation (Fitria et al., 2022), Anagrams (Oktaviani & Yanti, 2022; M. U. K. Sari et al., 2021), domino cards (Mumpuni & Supriyanto, 2020), literacy-based fable story learning enrichment books (Nuha et al., 2019), electronic wordless picture story book (Arifiyanti & Ananda, 2018), and the traditional Five-Principals Pancasila game (Buadanani & Suryana, 2021). Furthermore, teachers should gain an understanding of students' mathematical vocabulary to boost their problem-solving abilities (Amen, 2006).

Furthermore, to optimize reasoning abilities in solving mathematical problems, various approaches can be applied, including differentiated learning with RME-based teaching materials (Cindyana et al., 2022), the Discovery Learning model (Sary et al., 2022), Error-Analysis Based Learning (Khasawneh et al., 2022), the Problem-Based Learning model with ethnomathematic nuances (Maidiyah et al., 2021), the module-assisted ICARE learning model with the STEM approach (Pratiwi et al., 2021), Schema-Based Instruction (Hughes & Cuevas, 2020), Inquiry-Based Instruction (Schlatter et al., 2020), Auditory Intellectually Repetition (AIR) model (Nuralam & Maulidayani, 2020), Missouri Mathematics Project (MMP) learning with a problem-solving approach (Aprisal & Abadi, 2018), learning model of Kolb-Knisley Mathematics (Kusumayanti & Wutsqa, 2016), AIR model assisted by Student Worksheets (LKPD) (Handayani et al., 2014), problem-solving and problem-posing approaches (Falach, 2016), Relating, Experiencing, Applying, Cooperating, Transferring strategies (REACT) (Kurniawati et al., 2021), Hybrid Strategy in minimizing errors in understanding and transforming problem-solving (Rosli et al., 2020), Video Media (containing sharing tasks and jumping tasks) through the PMRI approach and collaborative learning (Khoirunnisa & Putri, 2022), development of LKPD based on Problem-Based Learning (Mahendra et al., 2019), and remediation programs (Wulanningtyas & Marhaeni, 2022). Additionally, for evaluating learning at the elementary level, teachers should consider the importance of visual representation in solving math word problems (Csíkos et al., 2012; Kaitera & Harmoinen, 2022) by allowing students to express their thoughts in different ways, such as writing down the completion of story questions in the form of mathematical symbols (mathematical symbol language), pictorial language, or common language (natural language) (Joutsenlahti & Kulju, 2017).

V. CONCLUSION

The relationship between vocabulary mastery, reasoning ability, and the ability to solve math word problems was examined, and the results showed a correlation coefficient of 0.8555 between vocabulary mastery and the ability to solve story counting problems, a correlation coefficient of 0.9450 between reasoning ability and the ability to solve story counting problems, a correlation coefficient of 0.9278 between vocabulary mastery and reasoning ability, and a correlation coefficient of 0.9465 between vocabulary mastery, reasoning ability, and the ability to solve story counting problems, all with a 95% confidence level. These findings highlight the importance of vocabulary mastery and reasoning ability in optimizing the ability to solve story-counting problems. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to utilize creative and innovative learning models, approaches, strategies, and media to optimize Indonesian vocabulary mastery, reasoning abilities, and story problem-solving abilities, as well as to cultivate and develop students' understanding of mathematics vocabulary from an early age.

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Ardianto, Ardianto is a lecturer at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education Study Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Manado State Islamic Institute. He completed his master's and doctoral studies in the field of Indonesian language education. His dissertation is a study of the pragmatics of speech acts. His scientific publications cover the fields of language, culture and education. In his field of expertise, he actively carries out research in the fields of sociolinguistics, cultural linguistics, discourse analysis, and Indonesian language learning. Currently, he is Chair of the Research and Community Service Institute, Manado State Islamic Institute.

Effendi M is a lecturer at the Open University. Pursuing linguistics for his master's program at Hasanuddin University, Makassar. He actively researches the field of applied linguistics. After completing his duties as Director of UPBJJ Ternate Open University, he is now actively teaching at UPBJJ Makassar Open University.

Nur Fitriani Zainal is a lecturer at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education Study Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Manado State Islamic Institute. She completed bachelor's and master's degrees in Mathematics Education at Makassar State University. Her research interests are in the fields of Educational Science and Mathematics Education.

Agustini Buchari is a Japanese language teacher at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Model I Plus Skills Manado. She actively conducts classroom action research to improve student learning outcomes, especially Japanese language learning outcomes. She completed a master's degree in Indonesian language education with sociolinguistic studies.

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