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The Use of Subtitled Movies for Vocabulary Acquisition in ESP Settings: Insights from an Experimental Study in Algeria

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Abstract
Research in the field of second language acquisition indicates that exposure to subtitled movies as comprehensible input generally enhances the acquisition of vocabulary. This paper reports on an experimental study which seeks to explore the effects of using subtitled movies on the vocabulary acquisition of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) university students in Algeria. The aim is to possibly find empirical evidence using ESP programs in Algeria as a case study. In order to achieve this aim, a sample of participants were recruited for the research and were randomly divided into control group, those who were asked to watch a movie without subtitles, and treatment group, those who were exposed to the movie with subtitles. The two groups were later asked to complete a Vocabulary Test (VT), which involved thirty vocabulary items identified from the movie. The VT was quantitatively analyzed using the one-way ANOVA procedure to determine the statistical significance of vocabulary acquisition. The findings indicate that using subtitled movies clearly enhances the learning of new vocabulary, and that the vocabulary acquisition of the treatment group is much greater than the acquisition of the control group. As a conclusion, it is noted that these results are generally congruent with current theory in the field. It is recommended that ESP teachers in Algeria need to encourage the use of multimedia in their language classrooms towards enhancing their learners’ vocabulary acquisition.

Keywords: Algeria, ESP, experimental research, second language acquisition, subtitled movies, vocabulary acquisition

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Introduction

This paper reports on a study that explores whether exposure to subtitled movies as comprehensible input enhances the acquisition of vocabulary among English for Specific Purposes (ESP) university students in Algeria. It is generally expected that an application of such a method of language input would generate positive vocabulary learning results.

The study is motivated by ongoing reforms of the sector of education in Algeria (Ministry of Education, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2004). In fact, since early 2000, the Ministry of Education has initiated a project of technology-in-education, which involves a generalisation of the use of technology in all Algerian schools and universities by 2020 (Tawil, 2006; Roegiers, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2006; Toualbi-Thaalibi, 2006). In this respect, the Government has allocated extra funds to promote research on how best to use technology to enhance students' learning and achievement (Chevalier, 2006). Our study comes to provide a contribution towards this aim.

Seen from a macro-perspective, the study supports theory which indicates that multimedia and technology-in-education can represent good sources for learning foreign languages (see for instance discussions in Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Alias & Hussin, 2002; Baltova, 1999; Bernhardt & Kamil, 1997; Bianchi & Ciabattoni, 2008; Canning-Wilson, 2000). In other words, the study aims at exploring the impact of the use of multimedia and technology instruction on the learners' educational achievement in the context of Algerian university ESP programmes. In particular, it explores how students' use of technology can help them look for authentic materials, the latter of which can eventually be used as comprehensible input to subsequently enhance their acquisition of the target language. Some research that was conducted in the area of foreign language learning and teaching indicates that employing audio-visual technology enhances students' learning (Arslanyilmaz & Pedersen, 2010).

From a micro-perspective, the study can be seen as premised in the general paradigm of second language acquisition theory (SLA) that acknowledges that vocabulary acquisition is at the heart of any development of the learners’ communicative competence (Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Sökmen, 1997). In fact, while many studies conducted in the field have taken a holistic approach and dealt with the impact of multimedia on learning foreign languages in general (see for example Mekheimer, 2011), in recent years, however, we have witnessed a growing interest in exploring the effects of multimedia on specific language components (see for example Haghverdi & Vaezi, 2008). Hence, we have seen, for instance, an increasing focus on the effects of subtitled videos on vocabulary acquisition (Harji et al., 2010; Yuksel & Tanriverdi, 2009; Bianchi & Ciabattoni, 2008). However, while some studies have been conducted in different parts of the world, for instance, in Iran (Harji et al., 2010), in Turkey (Yuksel & Tanriverdi, 2009), and in Italy (Bianchi & Ciabattoni, 2008), no study has been carried out in Algeria. Our study, therefore, attempts to shed some light on the above issue with particular reference to the Algerian ESP context.

Objectives and research questions

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To add to theory in SLA and L2 methodology using university language programmes in Algeria as a case study.
2. To draw conclusions and to make recommendations that would subsequently be raised to the Algerian Ministry of Education for evaluation and policy formulation purposes.

3. To publish the findings in order to share them with the academic community in the field towards generating further debate in the MENA region and internationally.

In this respect, the study revolves around the following main question:

- What are the effects of using subtitled movies on the vocabulary acquisition of ESP university students in Algeria?

The study attempts to answer the following research sub-questions:

1. Does using subtitled movies in ESP classrooms enhance the learners’ acquisition of vocabulary?

2. To what degree does the vocabulary acquisition of the treatment group (learners who were exposed to subtitled movies) differ from the acquisition of the control group (those who were exposed to non-subtitled movies)?

3. What implications do the findings have on ESP teaching methodology and students’ learning?

**Hypotheses**

In our attempt to answer the above questions, we have advanced the following hypotheses:

1. Subtitled movies enhance the learning of vocabulary.

2. There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the post-test in favor of the treatment group.

**Literature review**

Research in SLA indicates that vocabulary is the bedrock of language, and, hence, it is emphasized that vocabulary instruction be given primacy in the second language classroom (Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Sökmen, 1997). It is argued that vocabulary is a crucial element in foreign language learning because words generally help learners express their meanings more appropriately and, therefore, communicate better (Oxford, 1990; Gass & Selinker, 1994). It is further argued that knowledge of vocabulary is important when reading and understanding written texts (Harmon, 1998), and that low levels of vocabulary usually engender poor reading comprehension (Lin, 2002). Thus, it is generally argued that acquiring vocabulary requires appropriate exposure to comprehensible input (Schmidt, 2001; Nation, 2001). By the same token, it is argued that it is rather insufficient to simply rely on incidental learning to acquire vocabulary (Haynes & Baker, 1993; Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 1998; Sökmen, 1997; Zimmerman, 1997). Hence, research in the field generally suggests that learners should be provided with opportunities for classroom instruction that would enhance their acquisition of vocabulary (Nation, 2001).

Multimedia resources offer many advantages to the second language classroom (Brinton, 2001). These resources can range from tape/CD players, to radio and television, to video players, to overhead and film projectors, to language labs, to smart-boards, and to the latest mobile phone technology. These, as it is argued, can be efficient tools in second language teaching and learning (Delaska, 2002). Multimedia resources have, in fact, created opportunities for integrating text, sound and image in the designing of authentic and interactive learning materials (Delaska, 2002).
In particular, video-based instruction is becoming widely used in the language classroom (Terrell, 1993; Yang et al., 2010). It is argued that videos can provide appropriate language exposure to native speakers’ accents and cultures while living in a non-native context (Richardson & Scinicariello, 1989), and can consequently enhance the learners’ motivation and interest (Altman, 1989). Furthermore, videos can help the learners develop their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in an integrative way and can subsequently improve their communicative competence (Cummins, 1989; Ciccone, 1995; Weyers, 1999). In fact, videos are found to have strong effects on the development of reading (Pezdek et al., 1984; Neuman, 1990), of writing (Hanley et al., 1995), and of vocabulary (Danan, 2004; Baltova, 1994; Duquette et al., 1998).

With particular relevance to our study, subtitled videos are found to have strong effects on second language acquisition in general, and on vocabulary acquisition in particular (Chang, 2004; Danan, 2004; Zanon, 2006; Weyers, 1999; Garza, 1991; Baltova, 1994; Duquette et al., 1998). By definition, subtitling is an audiovisual process whereby people can watch a movie while reading statements of dialogues on the screen (Reich, 2006). In recent years, the field of second language teaching and learning has turned to subtitled videos as a technique to help learners acquire language inside and outside their classrooms (Eken, 2003; Koolstra & Beentjes, 1999). In fact, there is a growing belief among researchers and practitioners that this process can be a good way to enhance the learners’ acquisition of foreign languages (Wang & Shen, 2007; Chang, 2004). For instance, Garza (1991) argues that subtitles have a considerable impact on listening and reading of Russian ESL learners. Markham (1999) notes that the use of subtitles considerably leads to listening comprehension of ESL learners. Kothari et al. (2002) notes that subtitles have positive effects on reading comprehension. With regards to vocabulary acquisition, other studies by Huang & Eskey (2000), Koskinen et al., (1995), Bean & Wilson (1989), Baltova (1999), Koolstra & Beentjes (1999), Katchen (1997), Yuksel & Tanriverdi (2002), Jones (2004), and Bianchi & Ciabattoni (2008) all claim that exposure to subtitles results in a significant improvement of their learners’ level of vocabulary, as well as of other language components.

Furthermore, researchers in the field divide subtitles into two types: (1) “interlingual” subtitles, where the language of subtitles is different from the language of dialogues in the movie, and (2) “intralingual” subtitles, where the subtitles are in the same language that of the movie (Caimi, 2006). It is argued that both types enhance language acquisition although an ongoing debate is still taking place about which of the two types is more efficient for second language learners (Danan, 2004). It is argued, however, that interlingual subtitles can be used with low proficiency learners, whereas intralingual subtitles can be used with advanced learners (Bravo, 2005; Caimi, 2006; Danan, 2004). Nevertheless, regardless of this distinction between interlingual and intralingual subtitling, a considerable body of research generally supports the claims that subtitled videos in general can facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary. For the purposes of the present study, interlingual subtitles were used, where the movie is in English, the target language, while the subtitles are in Arabic, the participants’ main language of instruction. Our decision to use interlingual subtitled movies is based on the fact that the participants are low proficiency students (see participants’ sampling below for more details).
Research methodology

Research design

The present study was generally conducted within an experimental research design (Nunan, 1992; McKay, 2006), which is defined as research where experiments are conducted to investigate the strength of relationships between variables (Cohen et al., 2007). In order to answer the above research questions, a quantitative method was used. Quantitative research generally focuses on providing an understanding of social phenomena using quantitative data and statistical analysis towards providing inferential results and conclusions (Nunan, 1992; McKay, 2006; Cohen et al., 2007).

Participants

The participants in this study were a sample of 27 university students who followed a BA Degree in History at the University of Mostaganem. The main language of instruction in their program is Arabic. One module they attended was English for Specific Purposes, where they were introduced to the terminology in the field of History using English language as a medium of instruction. This would eventually enable them to use the target language in their library research. The proficiency level of the participants in the target was generally intermediate.

The main strategy for sampling participants for the study was the “purposive convenience sampling” strategy (Kumar, 1996; Punch, 1998), defined as the one ‘where advantage is taken of cases, events, situations or informants, which are close at hand’ (Punch, 1998: 193). In this respect, all the participants recruited for the study studied at the University of Mostaganem in Algeria.

After being briefed about the nature and objectives of the study, the students were randomly assigned to two groups: 13 students were in the Control Group (CG), those who were not exposed to subtitles, whereas 14 students were assigned to the Treatment Group (TG), those who were exposed to the subtitles. This procedure of randomization in research generally ensured the minimization of bias (Muijs, 2004; Punch, 1998).

Instruments

First, we selected a short movie with Arabic subtitles, which we then duplicated into two pieces of material: one with subtitles to be presented to the Treatment Group (TG), and the other without subtitles to be shown to the Control Group (CG). We then viewed the movies and identified 31 vocabulary items, which were subsequently used to build a Vocabulary Test (VT) as data collection tool. The VT was intended to assess the impact of the intervention on the participants’ vocabulary acquisition. The instructions in the VT asked the participants to match the words or expressions that they heard in English with their equivalents in Arabic subtitles. One thing to note is the fact that the VT was generally adapted from Laufer & Goldstein (2004), Coombe (2012), Qian & Schedl (2004), and Milton & Alexiou (2010).

Procedures

After we briefed the participants to seek their consent for participation in the study, we handed out the VT pre-test and explained the instructions well. We also informed them that they were going to have the same test after watching the movie so they could prepare themselves and concentrate on the movie. After they had finished from the pre-test, the participants were invited
to watch their assigned movie separately, with subtitles for the TG and without for the CG. After that, we invited them to watch their movie for a second time to ensure a maximization of input, vocabulary processing and acquisition. Finally, we instructed them to do the post VT test.

**Data analysis**

To analyze our data, we used the one-way ANOVA procedure to determine the statistical significance of vocabulary acquisition between the two groups (Zar, 1999; Perry, 2005). The analysis was achieved with the help of the Microsoft Office Excel program. This initially involved allocating numerical scores to the participants’ VKT performance, where each item on the test was given one mark for each correct answer making the maximum score for each participant no more than thirty-one. The test scores were then entered in the computer system for analysis of the means. The analysis was conducted from four perspectives: (1) statistical significance between TG and CG on the pre-test, (2) between TG and CG on the post-test, (3) in-between TG on pre and post-test, and (4) in-between CG on the pre and post-test.

**Results**

**Research question 1: Does using subtitled movies in English for Specific Purposes Algerian classrooms enhance the learners’ acquisition of vocabulary?**

This first question seeks to investigate the effects of subtitled movies on the vocabulary acquisition of each group, i.e., it takes an intra-group perspective. The ANOVA statistical descriptions representing the pre and post-test performance of each group are presented in the tables below.

**Table 1. Control group pre and post-test performance results**

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<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
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**ANOVA**

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<td>Within Groups</td>
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<td>16.54487</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As it can be seen from Table 1, the mean score of the Control Group on the post-test (11.69) is higher than it is on the pre-test (9.23). This indicates that there is an improvement in the knowledge of vocabulary after watching the movie without subtitles. However, as can be seen from the ANOVA statistics, this difference is not statistically significant as the $F$ ratio 2.38 is smaller than the $F$ crit value 4.25. Therefore, there is no significant difference in vocabulary acquisition after watching the non-subtitled movie.
Furthermore, according to Table 2 the mean score of the Treatment Group on the post-test (21.71) is higher than it on the pre-test (9.92). This also indicates that there is an improvement in the knowledge of vocabulary after watching the subtitled movie. The ANOVA statistics indicate that this difference is statistically significant as the $F$ ratio 91.00 is much higher than the $F_{crit}$ value 4.22. In other words, and at the difference of the Control Group, the Treatment Group shows a statistically significant difference in vocabulary acquisition after watching the subtitled movie. Hence, in response to the first question above, the results indicate that using subtitled movies has a significant effect on the learners’ acquisition of vocabulary.

Table 2. Treatment group pre and post-test performance results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TG pre-test</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>9.928571</td>
<td>9.60989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG post-test</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>21.71429</td>
<td>11.75824</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$P$-value</th>
<th>$F_{crit}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>972.3214</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>972.3214</td>
<td>91.00669</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.225201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>277.7857</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.68407</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1250.107</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research question 2: To what degree does the vocabulary acquisition of the Treatment Group differ from the acquisition of Control Group?

The purpose of this question is to show the extent to which the performance of both groups is different on the pre and post-tests, i.e., it provides an inter-group comparison. The ANOVA statistical descriptions representing the pre and post-test performance of both groups are presented in the tables below.

As Table 3 indicates, the mean score of the Control Group on the pre-test (9.23) is slightly smaller than the Treatment Group (9.92). From the ANOVA statistics, this difference is not statistically significant as the $F$ ratio 0.28 is smaller than the $F_{crit}$ value 4.24. This indicates that the knowledge of vocabulary of both groups before the experiment was to a certain extent homogenous. Therefore, both groups had roughly the same knowledge of vocabulary prior to the experiment.

Table 3. Control and treatment groups’ pre-test performance results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CG pre-test</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>9.230769</td>
<td>13.85897</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nevertheless, according to Table 4 the mean score of the Treatment Group on the post-test (21.71) is much higher than the control group’s (11.69). Furthermore, the ANOVA statistics indicate that this difference is statistically significant as the $F$ ratio 44.12 is higher than the $F_{crit}$ value 4.24. This indicates that the Treatment Group shows a much higher difference in vocabulary acquisition after watching a subtitled movie than the Control Group after watching the movie without subtitles. Hence, in response to the second question, the results show that the vocabulary acquisition of the Treatment Group differs from the acquisition of the control group to a larger degree. Hence, using subtitled movies clearly enhances the learning of new vocabulary.

### Table 4. Control and treatment groups’ post-test performance results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CG post-test</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>11.69231</td>
<td>19.23077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG post-test</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>21.71429</td>
<td>11.75824</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$P$-value</th>
<th>$F_{crit}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3.282255</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.282255</td>
<td>0.281752</td>
<td>0.600239</td>
<td>4.241699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>291.2363</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11.64945</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>294.5185</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Discussion

The findings above indicate that using subtitled movies clearly enhances the learning of new vocabulary among the sampled group, i.e., using subtitled movies with the participants has a generally significant effect on their acquisition of vocabulary. In particular, it shows that the vocabulary acquisition of the Treatment Group differs greatly from the acquisition of the Control Group. A considerable body of research is generally congruent with these findings and supports
the claims that subtitled movies can help improve vocabulary acquisition. For instance, Baltova (1999) explores the effects of subtitles on the acquisition of vocabulary of Canadian students studying French as a foreign language. He divides the students into those who watched the movie with and those who watched it without subtitles. His findings indicate that those who were exposed to subtitles learned more vocabulary. Baltova concludes that subtitles have strong effects on the learning of vocabulary. In another study, Koolstra & Beentjes (1999) also make similar claims in their study on the effectiveness of interlingual subtitles among Dutch students. They argue that their experimental group performed better in terms of vocabulary acquisition. Katchen (1997) explores the effects of interlingual subtitles on Chinese EFL students and concludes that the process benefited the learners in terms of vocabulary. Yuksel & Tanriverdi (2002), on the other hand, investigates the effects of an American subtitled and non-subtitled movie on the vocabulary acquisition of Turkish EFL university students. They argue that the Treatment Group performed better than the Control Group. They conclude that watching subtitled movies has a strong impact on the students’ knowledge of vocabulary. Another research by Bianchi and Ciabattoni (2008) explores the effects of subtitled movies on the comprehension and acquisition of vocabulary of Italian EFL students. They conclude that subtitles lead to the best result in content comprehension and vocabulary learning. Koskinen et al. (1995) examine the effects of subtitled videos on incidental reading vocabulary knowledge of adult non-native English speakers. Their findings indicate that subtitled videos substantially improve the incidental reading vocabulary knowledge of the participants. Similar findings are also reported by Huang & Eskey’s (2000) who investigate the effects of subtitled movies on the listening comprehension of intermediate EFL students. They argue that subtitled movies not only improve the listening comprehension of students but also develop their general vocabulary. In another study, Neuman (1990) looks at the effectiveness of subtitles in foreign language education. Their results demonstrate that the participants who are exposed to subtitled videos learn more new words than those who are not. Similar findings are also noted by Wang et al. (2008) who explore the effects of a subtitled animation movie on Chinese students learning English. The results of their study show that the Experimental Group performs much better than the Control Group in vocabulary learning.

Conclusions and recommendations

This study investigates the extent to which exposure to subtitled movies as comprehensible input enhances the acquisition of vocabulary among a sample of ESP students in Algeria. The findings indicate that using subtitled movies clearly enhances the learning of new vocabulary, and that the vocabulary acquisition of the Treatment Group is much greater than the acquisition of the Control Group. The conclusions we can draw for the study can be summarized as follows:

- The use of multimedia in the ESP classroom can enhance students’ learning and acquisition of foreign languages because this technique can provide appropriate language exposure to authentic materials and can therefore maximize language input and output.
- Subtitled videos in particular can have strong effects on L2 vocabulary acquisition in the sense that they can help learners acquire new vocabulary.

Some recommendations can be made in accordance with our findings. In general, ESP teachers in Algeria should be encouraged to use multimedia-based activities in their teaching. In particular, teachers should promote the use of subtitled movies to help enhance their students’ learning of
vocabulary. For this to be possible, we suggest that continuous professional development training directed at developing appropriate media-based teaching methodology be organized. The results of our study and the above recommendations will be taken up to the Ministry for consideration.

Furthermore, we can also suggest that further research in the field be conducted in other Algerian universities to measure up the validity of our findings. It is worth noting that we intend to communicate the findings of our study to other universities across Algeria as a first step towards creating a network of researchers in this area. We hope that further liaising with other research groups would not only help build a more consistent theoretical framework, but would also encourage us to do more research in the field.

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References


The Use of Subtitled Movies

Bellalem, Neddar, Bouagada & Djelloul

pédagogique en Algérie. Programme d’appui de l’UNESCO a la réforme du système éducatif PARE.


Effect of Redesigned Classroom on Secondary Students’ Learning Behaviour

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Abstract
The objective of this paper is to illustrate how the redesigned classroom has affected student learning behavior in terms of the learner centered environment, self-directed and independent learning, improved 21st century skills, and better peer interaction. Data were collected through questionnaires, observations and focus group discussions from four secondary schools in Selangor, Malaysia which had redesigned classrooms. The findings show that the classrooms allow students to enjoy more learner centered activities with easy access to technology and learning is more individualized. Having access to materials online allowed students to view them as many times as they wanted to help internalize their understanding. Students are also encouraged to be self-directed and practice self-learning by discussing and sharing ideas with one another which helped build their confidence. Students reported developing better information skills, communication skills, negotiation skills and other 21st century skills. The redesigned classrooms provide a safe environment for better peer interaction and participation in learning among students. It is clear that students are comfortable to engage in better learning and understanding in the redesigned classroom with improved levels of motivation and interest.

Keywords: ICT, learning behavior, learning outcome, redesigned classroom, VLE-FROG

**Introduction**

The redesigned classroom was initiated by the Malaysian Ministry of Education to provide students access to a wide range of content that is engaging and interactive through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) usage while learning in a classroom environment that is conducive and supportive toward academic engagement. The principles of the redesigned classroom are based on rethinking the teaching and learning environment as well as approaches that would allow students to develop 21st century learning skills such as collaboration, cooperation, problem solving, critical thinking, evaluation and presentation skills. Washor (2003, p.20) talks about the need to “translate pedagogical designs into facilities” as it is apparent that the traditional classroom design is no longer suited for current pedagogical needs and has to be modified. The traditional classrooms are unidirectional designed with a teacher-student dichotomy where rows of tables are oriented toward the teacher, who is the sole authority of knowledge (Brooks, 2012). In contrast, redesigned classrooms are modified physically to include flexible arrangement of tables and chairs, ample space for teachers to move about as well as the use of internet in learning and teaching in class. Vibrant colours which make up the classroom walls are stimulating and conducive to studying. Classrooms are also air conditioned and well lit. Through the use of ICT in teaching approaches and instructions, students have a wider access to content that is more engaging and interactive where students learn to manage and organize their work through projects assigned to them. Social disparities between students are reduced as they are encouraged to work in groups, sharing knowledge and discussing to complete a task given. These new designing learning spaces foster intentional as well as independent learning which focus on taking responsibility for learning, setting personally meaningful learning goals and self-assessing students’ own success in learning (Bennet, 2011; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2014). However, Underwood (2009) stresses the importance of continuous training to new approaches to teaching and learning. If teachers are willing to experiment and apply these new approaches, then they are prepared to transform existing practices to support innovative pedagogies.

Although this initiative was undertaken in 2013, not much is known about the effect of the redesigned classroom on students’ learning behaviour and outcomes. Previous studies (Cheok, Wong & Ayub, 2017; Fatin, 2017) have investigated teachers’ readiness and perceptions toward redesigned classrooms while Kamalludeen, Hassan, and Ahmad Nasaruddin, (2016) have looked at the students’ usage patterns in the redesigned classroom. The objective of this paper is to investigate the students’ perceptions of the redesigned classrooms and to identify the factors that influence the use of the classroom among Malaysian secondary school students as well as the impact of the classroom on students’ learning behaviour and outcome. Findings from this study will allow policy makers, administrators as well as teachers to be aware of the impact of redesigned classroom on students’ understanding and learning.

**Related Literature**

A learning management system (LMS) is a web based comprehensive and integrated software that supports delivery and management of learning, assessment, and administration of courses in face to face learning, blended or online learning environment (Canul, 2011; Wright, 2014). In addition to developing learning materials and instruction, it provides a platform for institutions to store, manage and share its academic resources and knowledge with other academic institutions (Kamalludeen et al. 2016). The Frog Virtual Learning Environment (VLE-Frog) implemented by
the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) is one such system that is supported by 1BestariNet for the initial 10,000 schools that participated in 2013. One of the main objectives of the VLE-FROG is to create a borderless learning environment that will enhance students’ experiences of engaging with the internet and technology to improve their learning process. Some benefits of the VLE-FROG include self paced learning support, enhancing self directed learning and interactive communication which allow students to learn anywhere and at anytime (Kumarawel, Yusop & Abdul Razak, 2015). However, an important point to consider when using such systems is that students will only be able to use this learning platform provided that the internet access is available (Johawati, 2014; Abdul Rani, Suradi & Yusoff, 2014).

Studies on student engagement have revealed that newer, well designed learning spaces do influence students’ motivation and interest in learning (Grier-Reed, James Appleton, Rodriguez, Ganuza & Reschly, 2012; Miller, 2008; Barret, Zhang, Meffat, & Kobbacy, 2013) with an impact on students’ progress such as providing increased opportunities for classroom interaction, discussions, consultations and better grades (Brooks, 2012; Van Horne, Murniati, Gaffney & Jesse, 2012; Walker, Brooks & Baepler, 2011). Redesigned spaces promote active experiential learning as students demonstrate qualitatively and quantitatively improvements in how they engage in class and how much information they retain (Dori, 2007; Brooks, 2011; Cotne, Loper, Walker & Brooks, 2013). In contrast, traditional classrooms inhibit students learning as they are not arranged well to cater to students learning needs. Most traditional classrooms showcase straight lined tables and chairs, facing the front part of the classroom which are not necessarily conducive for peer interaction (Obliner, 2006; Milne, 2006). In a study by Brooks (2012), who investigates the impact of space between an active learning classroom (redesigned) and traditional classroom in a university context reveals that the space affected both the students and the class instructor. The instructors lectured/talked less but walked about more in the redesigned class than in the traditional classroom. As Brooks points out, the walking about proved beneficial as instructors became aware of how students progressed on tasks given and would offer assistance or contribute suggestions if groups experienced difficulties completing the tasks. It also reveals that communication between students flowed easily when they were sitting facing each other in the classroom. Similar results are reported by Cotne et al. (2013), who investigates the effects of redesigned classroom use in a science course. It is revealed that the classroom offered flexibility and demonstrated explicit emphasis on small-group interaction. This practice increased the individual student’s sense of accountability and lead to learning gains that resulted from peer interaction.

In the VLE-FROG classroom, activities emphasize on active learning where students are given opportunities for engagement so as to increase students’ classroom participants. They work through problems, apply concepts, analyze results and draw on their own conclusions which lead to increased motivation. Students become committed in their learning so that they are able to transfer what they have learned into new situations, courses, and beyond (Reid, 2012; Oman & Sofkova, 2015). For example in Reid’s (2012) study, Canadian college students were given a group project that required students to synthesize, analyse and make judgements. The objectives of the project was to promote deeper engagement in three main areas: (a) active and collaborative learning, (b) faculty-student interaction, and (c) level of academic challenge. Topics for projects covered students’ interests in a pre-course survey that allowed an in-depth exploration of the topics selected. In addition, activities within the project included question asking in class, peer teaching
within groups and teaching other students. Findings reported high levels of engagement with students being comfortable with the new classroom design. In a similar vein, working with nine-year old Swedish school children, Oman & Sofkova (2015) introduce a project that explored students’ redesigning of materials with available digital resources such as visual, auditory and spatial modes. Findings show that there were development of students’ communicative skills in relation to the subject content and the application of the digital resources that students were exposed to. These activities demonstrate that it is essential to assist students in building learning skills that will prepare them for life and beyond the classroom.

Creating proper redesigned classroom which meets students’ needs and interests’ provides students with opportunities that maximize learning and create meaningful experiences. Research findings from previous studies have revealed positive changes occurring in students’ behaviour following a redesigned classroom (National Training Laboratories, 2005; Miller, 2008; Granito & Santana, 2016). The study by the National Training Laboratories (2005) found that information delivered through lecture was retained at 5%, discussion groups had 50% retention rates, practice by doing received a 70% retention rate while 80% of information was retained when students teach other students. In traditional classrooms, communication tends to flow in one direction with teachers giving most of the input or instructions where students feel excluded and become disengaged. In contrast, communication between teacher and student or student and student flows in the VLE-FROG classrooms which improves levels of interaction significantly (Miller, 2008). As he reinstates “Students who have interaction with their teachers are more likely to express satisfaction overall with their college experiences. The more student-faculty interaction occurs, the better the outcomes (p. 518).”

Although many studies have highlighted the benefits and contribution of ICT and new technology on students’ learning, research on how new learning spaces or redesigned classrooms affect learning are sparse (Reis, 2012; Granito & Santana, 2016). Hence, the objective of this study is to investigate the students’ perceptions of the redesigned or otherwise known as the VLE-Frog classrooms and to identify the factors that influence the use of VLE-Frog among Malaysian secondary school students as well as the impact of VLE-Frog on student behavior and learning outcomes.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework used in this study is based from the findings of the Innovative Learning Environments (ILE) project (2013), an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) initiative. Based on the analysis of conditions to understand the impact of the new learning environment, the OECD’s ILE proposed 7 design principles that centered on the physical layout of the teaching and learning environment, teaching and learning approaches and teaching and learning outcomes for effective learning environments in schools. They are:

- Make learning central, encourages engagement, and develops an understanding of their own activity as learners
- Ensure learning is social and often collaborative
- Be highly attuned to the learners’ motivations and the key role of emotions
• Be acutely sensitive to the individual differences among the learners including their prior knowledge
• Be demanding for each learner but without excessive overload
• Use assessments that are consistent with its aims, with strong emphasis on formative feedback
• Promote horizontal connectedness across learning activities and subjects, in- and out-of-school

These principles were used in the designing of the instruments for the study as well as a guide in the data analysis.

**Methodology**

A multiple case study research design was employed in this study for two main reasons. First, it gives a more holistic or complete picture of a phenomenon particularly when conclusions are drawn from data from varied sources. Second, it allows a more in-depth exploration into the phenomenon making it possible for researchers to capture the emergent and essential features of the phenomenon in different sites (Yin 2009).

Four secondary schools in Selangor were selected based on convenient sampling as case study sites. These schools were located not far from the institution that the researchers were attached to hence travelling time and cost were kept to a minimum. The redesigned classroom in each school has been operating between one to two years. The laptops or netbooks named ‘Chromebook’ are available in each redesigned classroom to allow students access to the VLE FROG. Below are further details of each school:

i. SMK Puchong, Batu 14 Puchong.
ii. SMK Assunta, PJ
iii. SMK SalakTinggi
iv. SMK TanjungSepat

SMK Tanjung Sepat is located near the coastal area in Sepang. Most of the students do not possess computer and internet access at home. The Redesigned Classroom has been in operation for two years.

SMK Puchong is located in a less affluent urban neighborhood of Puchong. About 60% of its students do not have a computer and internet access at home. It is one of the first schools to have the remodeled classroom. The room and the teaching and learning tools and facilities have been in use since 2015. The Chromebooks are already in its 2nd year of use.

SMK Assunta is strategically located in an affluent urban neighbourhood in Petaling Jaya. This school is very privileged as it has three Redesigned Classrooms – two of which are sponsored by the Parent Teacher Association of the school. Almost all the students in the school have computers and internet access in their homes.
SMK Bandar Baru Salak Tinggi, is a secondary school located in Salak Tinggi Taman Dahlia, Bandar Baru Salak Tinggi, a semi-rural area in the Sepang district of Selangor. It is nominated as one of the best day schools in the category of ‘Malaysia’s Best Schools’. Besides, the school is under the 1Bestari Project, an initiative of the Ministry of Education in leading the transformation of education to provide the best learning technology to all schools in Malaysia. Most of the students have and use computers at home. They access their Frog website to check updates from their teachers and to submit assignments. The Chromebook is placed in the Redesigned Classroom.

**Sample Study**

In total 37 students who volunteered to participate in the study were interviewed, in groups, on their opinion on the physical attributes of the redesigned classroom, internet use as well as learning and teaching approaches. The table below describes the sample study (Form Four students) from the four selected schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF SCHOOL</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SMK TG. SEPAT</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMK PUCHONG</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMK ASSUNTA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMK SALAK TINGGI</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From SMK Tg. Sepat, a total of eight Form Four students participated in the study. From the Math class, the students comprised of three females (one Chinese, one Indian, one Malay) and one male student (Chinese). From the English class, there were two females (one Malay & one Chinese) and two males (one Chinese and one Malay). Fourteen Form Four students from SMK PUCHONG responded to the focus group interview questions. There were about four male students and the remainder ten was females. Only seven female students from SMK Assunta students participated in the study and five were from the Maths class with only two from the English class. Eight Form Four students from SMK Salak Tinggi were interviewed on their opinion of the Redesigned Classroom. From the Math class, the students comprised two males (Malays) and two females (both Malays). From the English class, there were two females (one Malay & one Indian) and two males (one Chinese and one Malay).

**Research Instruments**

**Observation**

Two types of data elicitation procedures were used: 1) class observation and 2) focus group discussion. The primary purpose of carrying out the class observation was to see how the students behaved in the FROG room. Due to time limitations, only two Form Four classes (one Math and one English) in each school were identified to be observed with the help of the FROG administrators of the school concerned. Observations were held between June to July 2016 and carried out by the researchers. An observation checklist was completed by the researchers during and after the observation. There were two main categories with a number of sub-categories that
had to be observed: 1) teaching approach and 2) student behaviour. At the end of the checklist, researcher also had to give their overall impression of the class.

The Form Fours were chosen because they are non-exam classes and therefore it was easier to obtain permission to observe these classes. The English lesson was chosen as the subject is close to the researchers’ heart since they are English Language Studies lecturers. Mathematics, on the other hand, was suggested by the funder and this is a good choice as it is one of the STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). These subjects are deemed important to be mastered for the 21st century.

The original intention was to conduct two rounds of observations – at the early stage and later stage of room utilisation. However, it was difficult to arrange for the second round of observations towards the later part of the school year (September - October) as teachers were either preparing for examination or having examination, or involved in other school activities. Hence, the observation data were not as comprehensive as planned. Nevertheless, the observations provided the researchers a “peek” into a few lessons conducted in the room. They could also see the teachers in action and how students behaved in the room.

**Student Focus Group Discussion**
Selected Form Four students whose English or Mathematic class had been observed took part in a focus group discussion guided by an interview protocol. Students’ opinions were sought on the following themes:

i. New Classroom Design
ii. Learning & Teaching Approach & Class Activities
iii. Student Behavior

Two focus groups (one each from the English and Mathematic classes) were conducted except for SMK Assunta where only one focus group was held with students from the Mathematics class. It was not possible to run the focus group with the English students (due to time constraints), instead they were asked to submit written responses to the questions. Only two students did so and despite repeated reminders the others did not respond. A total of seven focus groups were conducted and the number of students in a group ranged from three to eight. These were held after the class observation. The responses for the two students from SMK Assunta were also taken into account in the discussion of focus group data.

**Data Analysis**
All the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Combined with the notes from the observation sheet, the data were then read several times to determine the themes that emerged.

**Findings of Study**

**Reactions toward Redesigned Classroom**
The analysis of the students’ interviews discover that students find the redesigned classrooms comfortable mainly due to the design/layout and the air-conditioning. They like the vibrant colour of the furniture, the decorations on the wall, the curtains, and the books on the shelves. Many adjectives like ‘creative’, ‘beautiful’, ‘colourful’ ‘nice’, ‘comfortable’ are used by the students to
describe the room. This is clearly an indication that they are pleased and satisfied with the ambience of the room. Students declared that they liked the beautiful decorations in the room, as in the following excerpts:

*I can sit on a playful chair with colour.* (Student from English class- Assunta)

*The learning is more intimate so you’ll get better understanding towards everything because you can fully pay attention to the teacher and teacher can pay full attention to all the students.* (Student from Math class- Assunta)

*This is the first time learning in FROG classroom. It is fun; I don’t have to face the books solely. The colour in here is very colorful, fun and creative. So, it is not boring.* (Student from Math class- Salak Tinggi)

*And the colour is much more creative and it feels much more vibrant instead of in the class like 6 hours straight like that, very tiring.* (Student from English class- Salak Tinggi)

Students are in favour of the arrangement of furniture in the redesigned classroom that allowed interaction with their peers and sharing of information as in the following extracts (students from SMK Assunta):

*“It feels more comfortable than the last design”.*

*“The FROG room is colourful and a great place to study...the seating position is appropriate and interactive. Yes, it allows the students to be more interactive with one another and communication between the students improves”.*

*“Yes, since the tables are curve-shaped, I can be more focus during lesson. During groupwork we can exchange our ideas. It encourages me to pay more attention in class and think outside the box”.*

The arrangement of the chairs and desks give them the flexibility and ease to walk about, to talk and discuss with their friends and the class teacher. An interesting issue that is raised was on how easily the room can accommodate students and how effortless it is to rearrange the furniture for varied class activities. First, because of the wooden flooring and the fact that students take off their shoes before coming into the room, students can sit and work on the floor. This means although all of them would not have a seat they could at least sit on the floor. They also mentioned the aesthetic value of the desks and chairs. The female students commented they could sit in one line unlike in the normal class. They prefer sitting this way because they can “share-share” with their friends. This probably refers to the fact that they enjoy being able to consult their friends when they had doubts. In terms of communication, they like having the teacher facing them and since they did not have to look left and right they felt they got full attention from the teacher. It is also easier to communicate with friends and they felt comfortable after sitting long hours in labs or classroom.

*“This place is more interactive and much more communication with the teachers and students instead of just listening to the teachers is saying and writing it down. And the using of laptop itself, it is much more fun and holistic and it helps us to interact with each other instead of just listening to the teacher.”* (student from English class- Puchong)
The main attraction of the classroom is the air conditioning in the room (all schools). This is especially welcomed by the teachers who teach at midday and in the afternoon as they say students are more attentive and not as sleepy as they are in the traditional classrooms. Undoubtedly air quality is an important consideration in classrooms and will enhance both teaching and learning.

The students singled out the doodles on the desks and the knobs for hanging their bag found behind the class as features that they found appealing and inspiring (all schools). They feel that this was better than using and bringing textbooks to the class. They especially highlighted the fact that their school bags were not heavy and could be hung on the special hooks provided at the back of the classroom.

It is observed that there were two boxes with games in the classroom (Tg Sepat). The students wanted more games to be put in the boxes so that they could spend their time playing the games. One of the girls said that she sometimes read the books located on the shelves while waiting for the teacher to check on her friends’ work. Another girl said that sometimes she and her friends would sit on the floor to do their work. One girl said that she enjoyed reading the words written on the walls and on the desks as she felt motivated.

A plus point to note is that students in this classroom were able to better focus as there were minimal distractions. Curtains covered most of the windows thus minimizing outside disturbances with fewer problems of students not paying attention and gazing out of the windows (all schools). Furthermore, there seem to be a positive impact on the students in terms of classroom management. Their students are more disciplined; they are more attentive and show more interest in learning.

Aside from teaching, the Redesigned Classroom has been used for other activities such as PIBG meetings, staff meetings, extra classes, religious activities and aerobic classes (all schools). With reference to the use of technology, the schools encountered frequent connectivity problems making it difficult for teachers and students to use the Chromebook, especially when it came to uploading of pictures or videos. Due to this factor, most of the English and Math teachers instead opted for LCD projectors and their own laptops to teach in the classroom.

**Learning and pedagogy in the Redesigned Classroom**

The design of the Redesigned Classroom made it possible for learning to be enjoyable and focused. In reference to learning approaches, students in general were given the opportunity to use the Redesigned Classroom where technology was integrated in their lessons. Students could discuss with their friends (as students worked in their own ‘stations’), walk about easily and could even sit on the wooden floors to work on tasks given. For example, students from SMK Assunta mentioned that they could have better group discussions in these classrooms while learning from each other’s ideas. This was an improved way of learning from them, as the following extract exemplifies:

\*The environment does change how I think because during group work, the classmates share their ideas and opinions. (Student from English class- Assunta).\*
Students generally opined that the redesigned classroom was better for certain learning approaches like presentations, group work, activity stations and not so for pop quizzes or assessments as it was easy to copy from the person sitting next to or in front of them.

At times, students were unable to complete their tasks in school, hence teachers would find alternatives to enable students to complete the tasks given. For example in SMK Puchong, teachers took the initiative to upload materials online so that students who could not finish what they were supposed to do in class could access them and work on them at home. According to one teacher, the lessons were interactive, with music and multimedia features that appealed to the students. Students were also sometimes asked to search for information online. For example, students were asked to locate certain landmarks online and find out how to get to these places. They worked in groups for the task. Results of internet search and answers to tasks assigned were also shared online. Another activity (direction-giving) involved students to share what they found on the internet and then make a presentation in class. At the end of the session, other students participated in an answer question session.

Another task involved students writing their responses to a discussion question that the teacher has posted on the online discussion forum. They could view each other responses and shared their writing with their classmates by using a document sharing application. The sharing was not confined to the students’ class. The better compositions were shared with the weaker classes so that they could see what a good answer is like. This is evidenced of collaborative learning which is routinely carried out and appeared to be a success among the students. At the lower forms, students often work in groups to solve problem and present the results of their work online. Better students from the Form Four and Five could also be asked to present orally.

Students in SMK Salak Tinggi also enjoyed using the Redesigned Classroom as they stated it meant they were able to try out different activities.

*Just now the teacher taught us, she just upload a video and ask us to listen to the song and answer the question. Same like goes to other subjects like bio. If we are just studying, we won’t understand. So we just have to look for it, the videos, or something like, it is much easier for the students* (Student from English class- Salak Tinggi).

However, students from SMK Tg. Sepat did not have access to the Chromebook (as it was placed in the ICT room) and were not given enough opportunities to use the Chromebook. Thus they did not have sufficient knowledge of how to use the Chromebook. Instead, they were either given tasks (photocopied), placed in groups to complete their work and present via PowerPoint or on mahjong paper (supplied by the teachers).

Class activities were centered on chromebook and group presentations, as the following excerpts exemplify:

"Yes, I use it (chromebook) whenever we have lesson in FROG room to do the exercises that shared while another student added "Yes, we use the chrome book most of the time in frog room to look at presentations or slides prepared by the teacher or students, to search information and to carry out group activities"."

“Because teacher upload many files. They collect the material and put it there."
“It is portable, it is easier for us without having lots of books and textbooks and all that. So, it is much more easier when everything is in the laptop. You can access it here and at home. Ya.”

“In the classroom yes they have group discussion. But here is more computer centered..

“It is actually quite fun when you access to the internet, but when the internet gets so we get frustrated”.

Students unanimously believed that teaching and learning is more “effective” because of the availability of the Chromebook and internet access which enabled them to check up on anything that they do not know instantly. Chromebook and Wi Fi access were the two top items mentioned by students as things they liked about the room. They remarked that they could use the Chromebook as their personal device when they came into the room. Students were observed “becoming excited” when they used the Chromebook and when they worked on it by themselves. Students also mentioned that they “very enjoy” learning in the room because they were using technology to learn. They claimed it was ‘more fun’, ‘easy to understand’ and ‘feel cheery, easy to learn and easy to understand’. However, students agreed that the internet network was problematic as one student mentioned “The internet...sometimes, we can't connect to the internet at all. Other times when the internet does connect, it works very slowly and is very time consuming”. Another student added “It is better than the internet connection everywhere else but still pretty slow. Setting the Chromebook up doesn’t take very long around 5 minutes. But it is like when you need to go to FROG or to log in, it will take a while.

**Student behaviors**

A well organized classroom permits positive reactions between teachers and students, increases students’ motivation, engagement and interest in learning as well as reduces challenging behaviours that might occur (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010; Granito & Santana, 2016). From the data, students were observed to pay attention, focused and participated actively in class. The following excerpts exemplified this point:

“ I feel more focus and feel happier”

“the environment is more interactive and centered on both students and teachers rather than teachers alone. Hence, the learning process becomes more interesting and fun so I am able to absorb the subject matter better”.

“The learning is more intimate so you'll get better understanding towards everything because you can fully pay attention to the teacher and teacher can pay full attention to all the students.”

“...a noticeable difference is on the students psychological matters. Like in normal classes, we just look down at the table and write. But here, we come here because we want to learn. Because it is more entertaining”.

The data above provide evidence to show how redesigned classrooms can support active learning which create more effective classroom learning and higher student engagement. Students are more focused as they get the attention from teachers as well as are able to discuss with their peers. According to Cheryan (2014), the importance of enviromental features in a classroom (e.g. physical layout of chairs & tables) influence performance and engagement of students, hence
improving learning outcomes. In terms of work, some students preferred working on their own while some in groups, as exemplified in the following extracts:

“Because for example, sometimes I can ask the others and they can help me and I can help them.”

“We like grouping. We used to, if we don’t understand, then only we will ask friends... Strengthen the bond”

“Teacher gives the topic and then we look up for the information...Presentation in group, in front of the class...We explain the topic we learnt one by one”.

Getting students engaged and maintaining the interest to learn is not an easy goal to achieve. The adoption of collaborative learning approaches in the classroom may provide students opportunities to enhance, expand and enrich their learning experiences through the sharing of ideas, opinions and knowledge. As Miller (2008) expounds, when students work in groups, they talk about what they are learning and are open to share information, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and most importantly, apply it to their daily lives. The data also show that there is a shift in the teaching and learning paradigm where the concern of the teacher is more on student involvement in learning rather than instruction. Students are placed to work in groups or pairs which strengthens interpersonal, communication and personal skills. This form of peer-to-peer support enables students to achieve a sense of belonging which is essential for successful learning outcomes (Miller, 2008; Warwick et al., 2010).

Discussion
This paper presents the results from observation and the student focus group discussions to investigate the impact of the redesigned classroom on student learning behavior and learning outcome in four schools: SMK Tanjung Sepat, SMK Puchong, SMK Bandar Baru Salak Tinggi and SMK Assunta. The results of this study demonstrate that classrooms and the conditions within the rooms can have an impact on teaching and learning. These findings are consistent with past research (Grier-Reed et al., 2012; Miller, 2008; Barret et al., 2013; Brooks, 2012; Van Horne et al., 2012; Walker, Brooks & Baepler, 2011) which reveal that most students are positively affected by the classroom design, appearance and arrangement. The colorful, spacious, well equipped room with its cool environment made the room very appealing, conducive and supportive for learning. The available floor space also provided extra seating for the students. It is evident that students are learning differently and practicing more collaborative learning and depending on peer support and tutoring.

With reference to learning approaches and activities, students are exposed to various forms of learning materials such as listening to songs, watching videos, and searching for information using Chromebooks. Many of the activities involved collaborative learning where students worked in groups through paired and group discussions, activity stations and presentation (power point/mahjong paper/manila card). This finding resonates with previous researchers who discovered that activities conducted through VLE-FROG showed positive impact on students learning process as they acquire better understanding of topics learned, positive development of
IT skills as well as an increase in awareness and contentment of what learning methods would benefit them (Nair, Patil, & Mertova, 2012; Kumarawel, Yusop, & Abdul Razak, 2015).

When considering student learning, behaviours such as increased motivation, excitement, interactive, independent learning, peer-learning, self-assessment and being focused are observed in the Redesigned Classroom. All the students have positive comments about the redesigned room as they reported paying attention, being focused and participating actively in class as the learning was more interactive and they were able to discuss with teachers and friends to achieve better understanding of the subject matter taught. Furthermore, learning became more intimate as they worked in groups to discuss, communicate and share knowledge which created an overall positive learning environment which induces better learning. They also mentioned about having good ‘siratulrahim’ (good relationship) with all their friends in the FROG class, unlike the normal class, where they rarely knew one another and did not even talk to the other students. The findings are in agreement with past studies (Miller, 2008; Granito & Santana, 2016) that claim that student learning and achievement is greatly influenced by the environment in which the learning occurs. Through these experiences, student learn to develop essential learning skills such as communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving, interpersonal skills including teamwork, relationship management, learning to learn and personal responsibility (Miller, 2008). The finding is also supported by Guardino and Fullerton (2010) who observe that redesigned classrooms increase academic engagement and improve students’ behavior. They further emphasize that although classroom modifications are essential to enhance learning, many teachers are unaware of how to implement such changes. Teachers will need to assess their own students’ learning environment and choose suitable modifications that would positively impact students’ learning. It is observed in some of the schools that the teacher was always moving around in the classroom either attending to students’ questions or monitoring their work. Impacted by the attention given by the teacher, students become motivated and positive toward learning.

Despite the positive outcomes, there are some issues raised with regard to the redesigned classroom. The major concern is internet connectivity as most of the schools complained of the poor connection. However, this setback did not prevent students from enjoying the use of technology in learning. For example, the teachers from SMK Puchong took the initiative to prepare lessons and materials earlier, then downloading them so that they could be played in class or encouraged students to access the materials and work on them at home. This type of teaching approach is evident in an active learning environment where students are able to experience interactive lessons with music and multimedia features which are the norm for these digital natives. Most importantly, is the teacher’s role in designing the task which requires knowledge and awareness of multimodal teaching and design. As Walker et al. (2011) stresses, this teaching approach will enable a collaborative dialogic learning where both teachers and students contribute to common knowledge building.

Conclusion
The objective of this study is to investigate the Malaysian secondary school students’ perceptions of the VLE-Frog classrooms and to explore how these redesigned classrooms impact students’ behavior and learning outcomes. Although the results of this study complement the relevance of redesigned classrooms on student learning, additional research such as including more schools
and students of different age groups and race are warranted to better understand the factors that affect learning and teaching in the redesigned classroom. Past researches have provided evidence of positive connections between learning and new classrooms, yet little is being done to implement the changes that would possibly impact teaching and learning in classrooms. As Granito and Santana (2016) highlight schools should consider reevaluating their current classrooms and plan for the development of rooms that contribute to student success. As each school or institution are influenced by various elements such as number of students and classrooms, type of modifications needed and teachers’ commitment, further research will need to be conducted on understanding the needs of the teachers, students and administrators. Through a collaborative effort from all the parties involved, such implementation of new learning spaces or redesigned classrooms will create an engaging, active and more positive classroom environment.

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References


Comparison of Communication Apprehension in L1 and Communication Apprehension in L2 among MA Students with Different Ages Majoring in English in an International Program in Bangkok

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Abstract
The current study investigates and compares communication apprehension (CA) of the first-year MA students majoring in English in an international program in Bangkok of the academic year 2017. The research questions are: a) Is there any difference between CA in L1 (Thai) and CA in L2 (English) among the students in the study, b) Is there any difference in CA in L1 among the students in terms of their ages, and c) Is there any difference in CA in L2 among the students in terms of their ages. Quantitative approach is employed by making use of the Personal Report Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24). T-test is used to analyze the data. The participants are 32 students divided into 2 groups according to their ages. The results indicate that the students’ CA in L1 is lower than their CA in L2 across contexts. Students who are 30 years old or older are found to be with higher CA in L1 in meetings and public speaking contexts. However, for CA in L2, there is no difference among the students regarding their age difference. Benefits from this research for the students may occur when their instructors get the insight into their students’ communication traits when using L1 and L2 and they may select appropriate methods when teaching in the classroom and choose effective ways of communication when giving advice for writing a thesis or an independent study to the students of this MA program.

Keywords: communication apprehension, L1 (Thai), L2 (English), students’ ages, Thai context

Introduction

Education at the graduate level is still in demand in Thai society. Most students enjoy studying, attain success and make many good friends during their graduate study while some are unable to finish their degree or struggle unnecessarily before graduating. Communication in L1 (Thai) and L2 (English) seems to be a significant factor influencing the happiness and success of MA students majoring in English in an international program in Bangkok.

Even though the program in this study is an international one, L1 (Thai) is frequently used among the students themselves and with the instructors, especially when getting advice from teachers who serve as advisers for the MA thesis or the independent study (IS) project. In addition, L1 (Thai) is used between the students and the officials providing general and academic support in the graduate office. Meanwhile, L2 (English) is used as the medium of instruction in the classroom. Instructors, both Thai and non-Thai, teach all subjects in English. Also, all activities in the classroom are conducted in English. As a result, the communication traits of students when using L1 (Thai) and L2 (English) are considered important factors for success. Goldhaber (2002) suggests that educators should be concerned with facilitating learning and removing the barriers to students’ achievement. Therefore, if instructors understand students’ problems such as communication apprehension (CA), they should be able to be more helpful to students.

Students in the MA program are more diverse when compared to those in the BA program in terms of demographics, e.g. ages. Thus, in this study the concentration is on communication apprehension (CA) in L1 (Thai), CA in L2 (English), and CA in L1 and CA in L2 with age taken into account.

Purposes of the Current Study

This study aims to (1) examine the communication apprehension (CA) across contexts and trait like CA when using L1 (Thai) of the MA students in this study; (2) examine the communication apprehension (CA) across contexts and traitlike CA when using L2 (English) of the MA students in this study; (3) investigate the difference between CA in L1 and CA in L2 among the MA students in this study; (4) investigate the difference in communication apprehension (CA) across contexts and traitlike CA when using L1 (Thai) of the MA students in this study with regard to age; (5) investigate the difference in communication apprehension (CA) across contexts and traitlike CA when using L2 (English) of the MA students with regard to age.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study are as follows:
1. What is the score and level of CA in L1 (Thai) of the MA students of the program in this study?
2. What is the score and level of CA in L2 (English) of the MA students of the program in this study?
3. Is there any difference between CA in L1 (Thai) and CA in L2 (English) among the MA students in this study?
4. Is there any difference in communication apprehension (CA) in L1 (Thai) among the MA students in this study when considering their ages?
5. Is there any difference in communication apprehension (CA) in L2 (English) among the MA students in this study when considering their ages?

Significance of the Study
In learner-centered education, the anxiety of learners should not be ignored by instructors, especially English language ones. Thus, the research results can be beneficial for the MA students in this study as well as the teachers teaching the MA students as follows:
1. Teachers in the MA program in this study should be able to increase their understanding of their students with a variety of ages. This may enable the teachers to opt for appropriate teaching pedagogy for the benefit of their students.
2. MA students in this study should be able to gain a better understand of themselves and their classmates with different ages.
3. The research results of this study can be compared with the results of previous research conducted with different batches of MA students in the same program to get a clearer understanding of the communication traits of the MA students in this program. This will ultimately enrich the literature, which will be useful for students or scholars who might be interested in the construct of communication apprehension (CA).
4. In the future, some scholars might be stimulated to develop a similar instrument that could be used to investigate the feelings of Thai students when communicating in Thai or another foreign language.

Review of literature
What is communication apprehension (CA)?
Communication apprehension (CA) has received the most attention among the theoretical constructs explaining individuals’ predispositions to avoid or engage in communication with others. McCroskey (1977) defines communication apprehension (CA) as “an individual’s level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (p. 78). CA can be divided into many types or categories such as situational, singing, writing, intercultural, and traitlike. The most studied CA is traitlike CA. This study focuses on traitlike CA and it is conducted in terms of a contextual approach across group discussions, interpersonal conversations, meetings, and public speaking.

How is CA measured?
The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) (McCroskey, 1982) has been widely used to investigate the level of CA of individuals. The PRCA-24 is a measurement with 24 items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It determines CA in the areas of group discussions, interpersonal conversations, meetings, and public speaking. The scores of CA across those dimensions are calculated and summarized to measure traitlike CA, which range from 24 -120; any score exceeding 80 indicates a high level of CA, 51-79 represents a moderate level of CA, and below 50 is considered a low level of CA (Richmond & McCroskey, 1989).

What are the factors causing people to have different degrees of CA?
Beatty, McCroskey and Heisel (1998) emphasize that CA, which is a communication trait, is determined by genetic factors while Horwitz (1996) claims that fear of making mistakes and errors
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causes communication anxiety. In addition, Daly, Caughlin, and Stafford (1998) found that self-esteem within a classroom context was negatively correlated with CA. In terms of culture, people from collectivistic cultures are more likely to avoid communication than members from individualistic cultures since collectivist cultures place more emphasis on harmony while individualist cultures stress individuals’ needs and goals (Triandis, 1994).

**What are the effects of CA?**

In general, CA is considered a barrier to communication, especially speaking. Russ (2013) states that people with traitlike CA feel uncomfortable when communicating with others across four different contexts while context CA refers to a person feeling discomfort when communicating in diverse environments. Moreover, Blume et al. (2013) conclude that anxiety in communication might be a barrier to success in educational and work settings in today’s global context. The indirect effect of CA might be silence of individuals. According to Perlow and Williams (2003), silence can take a heavy toll on individuals, as it leads to anger, resentment, and feelings of humiliation.

**Relevant previous studies**

In terms of CA in L1 compared with CA in L2, some research studies are relevant to the current study. For instance, students in Puerto Rico are found to be less apprehensive when using L1 (Spanish) than when using L2 (English) (McCroskey, Fayer, & Richmond, 1985); on the contrary, their other communication traits such as the willingness to communicate, self-perceived communication competence, assertiveness, and responsiveness are higher for L1 (Spanish) than L2 (English). Also, Rimkeeratikul (2017b) finds that the CA in L1 of students in a graduate diploma program in English is lower than their CA in L2 (English) with statistical significance as measured by dependent t-test.

Various studies have examined CA with respect to demographic variables. Booncherd and Rimkeeratikul (2017) find that CA in L2 (English) of personnel in a public healthcare organization in a suburb of Bangkok, Thailand is affected by the number of years working in the organization. Rimkeeratikul (2017a) reports that the number of years that monks have been in the monkhood significantly affects their CA in L2 (English). Moreover, Amiri and Puteh (2018) investigate communication apprehension through the qualitative method via observation and interviews among international doctoral students communicating with an examination panel during proposal defenses. The research results reveal that the main factors increasing doctoral students’ CA during academic presentations are linguistic issues and deficiencies in research knowledge despite their years of working experience as lecturers.

**Research Design**

This study was conducted in a quantitative manner guided by the five research questions stated above. The instrument used was a questionnaire to measure the CA in L1 (Thai) and CA in L2 (English) of students in the first semester of the first academic year of an MA program in September of calendar year 2017. This is a two-year international program, which means that the English language (L2) is used in the classroom. However, outside of the class, Thai (L1) is usually used among students and between the instructors and the students.
**Subjects**
The subjects of this study were first-year MA students in an English major program in the year 2017. The total number of first-year students of this batch was 39. They were part-time students who came to classes only on weekends. Naturally, they were different in terms of ages. The students were divided by age into two categories: (1) lower than or equal to 30 years of age; (2) over 30 years of age.

**Research Instrument**
The instrument used in the current study was a questionnaire composed of three parts: (1) this part asked for the respondents’ demographic information, including their ages; (2) the PRCA-24 (McCroskey, 1982) was used to ask about the feelings of the respondents when using L1 (Thai); and (3) the PRCA-24 (McCroskey, 1982) was used to ask about the feelings of the respondents when using L2 (English).

**Procedures**
The questionnaires were distributed to 39 first-year MA students with the help of the instructors of a compulsory course in this MA program. The number of questionnaires returned by the respondents was 32, equating to a return rate of 82.05%, which was deemed acceptable. According to Dommeyer et al. (2004), an acceptable return rate for paper-based questionnaires is 75%.

**Data Analysis**
The data analysis of this current study was done to answer the five research questions as stated above. It was divided into five stages as follows: (1) the scores from the PRCA-24 when using L1 (Thai) of the MA students were computed to obtain the mean scores; (2) the scores from the PRCA-24 when using L2 (English) of the MA students were computed to obtain the mean scores; (3) a dependent t-test analysis was conducted to compare CA in L1 and CA in L2 of the MA students; (4) an independent t-test was applied to investigate the differences between CA in L1 (Thai) among the MA students with different ages; (5) an independent t-test was applied to investigate the differences between CA in L2 (English) among the MA students with different ages.

**Research Results**

**RQ1:** What is the score and level of CA in L1 (Thai) of the MA students in the program in this study?

**Stage One:** The scores from the PRCA-24 when using L1 (Thai) of the MA students were computed to obtain the mean scores. According to Table 1, from the research results, it is obvious that this batch of MA students in the study were found to have a moderate level of CA across contexts. Also, the traitlike CA of students in this batch was found to be moderate ($\bar{X} = 62.97$).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Group</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>Level of CA</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<td>Discussions</td>
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<td>14.69</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4.36</td>
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RQ2: What is the score and level of CA in L2 (English) of the MA students of the program in this study?

Stage Two: The scores from the PRCA-24 when using L2 (English) of the MA students were computed to obtain the mean scores. As seen from Table 2, the research results revealed that this batch of MA students in the study have a moderate level of CA across contexts. In addition, the traitlike CA when using L2 (English) of the students in this batch was found to be moderate ($\bar{X} = 71.34$).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Level of CA</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Discussions</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17.13</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>3.53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17.41</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Conversations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Speaking</td>
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<td>19.53</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>71.34</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>14.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ3: Is there any difference between CA in L1 (Thai) and CA in L2 (English) among the MA students in this study?

Stage 3: The mean scores of CA in L1 and CA in L2 across contexts and the total CA were compared through by employing a dependent $t$-test. Table 3 indicates that there is a significant difference in the scores for traitlike CA in L1 (Thai) ($M = 62.97$, $SD =12.74$) and traitlike CA in L2 (English) ($M = 71.34$, $SD =12.74$) conditions; $t(31) = 3.72$, $p = 0.001$. The results suggest that the students have less anxiety when they use L1 (Thai) than when they use L2 (English). Specifically, the results suggest that the MA students in this program have more anxiety when they are involved in English oral communication in every context: group discussions, interpersonal conversations, meetings, and speaking in front of a group of people.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Discussions</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>14.69</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>19.53</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Comparison of Communication Apprehension in L1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>17.41</th>
<th>1.91</th>
<th>3.71</th>
<th>31</th>
<th>2.91</th>
<th>.007*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>14.88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversations</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>17.28</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>17.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>19.53</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.014*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total CA</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>62.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>71.34</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td>12.74</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(p≤0.05)

RQ 4: Is there any difference in communication apprehension (CA) in L1 (Thai) among the MA students in this study when considering their ages?

Stage 4: The detailed information regarding the ages of the MA students in the study is shown in table 4.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information below shows that among the 32 students in the MA program that are included in the study, there are 21 people whose ages are at or below 30 years of age and 11 people who are older than 30 years of age.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students ≤ 30 years old</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students &gt; 30 years old</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At this stage, the CA scores were divided according to their ages. That is, the MA students were divided into two categories: (1) those who are 30 years of age or younger; (2) those who are older than 30 years of age. Then, the mean CA scores in L1 across the four contexts and also total CA were compared. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare CA in L1 in the MA students who are 30 years of age or younger and those who are older than 30 years of age. Table 6 reveals that there is a significant difference in the scores for traitlike CA in L1 in the MA students who are 30 years of age or younger ($M = 58.33$, $SD = 16.41$) and traitlike CA in L1 in the MA students who are older than 30 years of age ($M = 71.82$, $SD = 13.75$); $t(30) = -2.33$, $p = .027$. The results suggest that age really does have an effect on CA in L1 (Thai). Specifically, the results indicate that students who are older have higher CA when using Thai, especially in the contexts of meetings and public speaking.

Table 6

*Independent T-Test and Mean Scores of CA in L1 (Thai) among the MA Students in this Study when Considering Their Ages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MA Students</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤ 30 years old</td>
<td>13.81</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-1.62</td>
<td>.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 30 years old</td>
<td>16.36</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤ 30 years old</td>
<td>14.10</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-2.26</td>
<td>.031*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 30 years old</td>
<td>18.18</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤ 30 years old</td>
<td>13.81</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-2.00</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 30 years old</td>
<td>16.91</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤ 30 years old</td>
<td>13.81</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-2.00</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 30 years old</td>
<td>16.91</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤ 30 years old</td>
<td>16.62</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-2.16</td>
<td>.039*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 30 years old</td>
<td>20.36</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤ 30 years old</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>16.41</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-2.33</td>
<td>.027*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 30 years old</td>
<td>71.82</td>
<td>13.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

($p \leq 0.05$)

RQ5: Is there any difference in communication apprehension (CA) in L2 (English) among the MA students in this study when considering their ages?

Stage 5: An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare CA in L2 in the MA students who are 30 years of age or younger and those who are older than 30 years of age. Table 7 shows that there is no significant difference in the scores for traitlike CA in L2 in MA students who are 30 years of age or younger ($M = 68.15$, $SD = 14.07$) and traitlike CA in L2 in MA students who are older than 30 years of age ($M = 77.45$, $SD = 13.66$); $t(30) = -1.80$, $p = .083$. The results suggest that age does not have any effect on CA in L2 (English). Specifically, the results reveal that students of different ages do not have different CA when using English across contexts.
Table 7
Independent T-Test and Mean Scores of CA in L2 (English) among the MA Students in this Study when Considering Their Ages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MA Students</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>≤ 30 years old</td>
<td>16.33</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 30 years old</td>
<td>18.64</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>≤ 30 years old</td>
<td>16.48</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 30 years old</td>
<td>19.18</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Conversations</td>
<td>≤ 30 years old</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 30 years old</td>
<td>18.45</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>≤ 30 years old</td>
<td>18.67</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 30 years old</td>
<td>21.18</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total CA</td>
<td>≤ 30 years old</td>
<td>68.15</td>
<td>14.07</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 30 years old</td>
<td>77.45</td>
<td>13.66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(p≤0.05)

Summary and Discussion
This part is organized according to the research questions of this current research study. The summary and discussion are as the following.
First of all, the results for the first and second research questions from this study show that the CA in L1 (Thai) and the CA in L2 (English) across contexts and total CA of the MA students in this study in academic year 2017 are found to be moderate. In other words, the results can be interpreted that MA students in this study can communicate without the barrier of anxiety when using L2 (English) in the classroom. Moreover, they do not have high communication anxiety when dealing with the officials in the graduate office who provide support to them using L1 (Thai). They can also use L1 (Thai) to get advice concerning their theses or independent studies from their Thai advisers effectively without experiencing significant communication anxiety. The research results also reveal that the students of this batch share the same communication trait with the MA students majoring in English at a public university (academic year 2016) in the study of Rimkeeratikul (2017b).

Next, the results regarding the third research question reveal that CA in L1 (Thai) of the MA students in this study is lower than their CA in L2 (English) across contexts, leading to their traitlike CA in L1 (Thai) being lower than their traitlike CA in L2 (English). The difference between CA in L1 (Thai) and CA in L2 (English) among the MA students in this study confirm those of previous studies. Many scholars including McCroskey et al. (1985) have found that CA in L2 was higher than CA in L1. In addition, during the process of learning a foreign language (L2), learners might experience difficulty in their L2 speaking (Ellis, 2005).
For the fourth research question, in terms of students’ ages in the context of using L1 (Thai) in meetings and public speaking, students who are older than 30 years old are found to be more apprehensive when compared to those students who are 30 or younger than 30 years old. Thus, if instructors realize this tendency, they may understand their advisees better and use a more appropriate approach when giving advice to them.
Finally, regarding the last research question, the research results reveal that there is no difference in CA in L2 (English) among MA students in this study in terms of their age difference. This indicates that in terms of the communication trait among the MA students in this study, age does not affect their feelings of anxiety when using L2 (English) to have conversations, join group discussions, share their ideas in meetings, or give a presentation in front of people. Therefore, it may be safe to assume that the MA students in the study are ready to learn English using English as the medium, as they do not have a barrier from this communication trait. All in all, students of different ages in the program of this study are rather homogeneous in terms of the communication trait in question when involved in L2 (English) communication, especially speaking.

Conclusion
According to the results achieved in this study, the conclusion is as the following.
1. CA in L1 (Thai) across contexts and traitlike CA in L1 (Thai) of the MA students in the study are found at the level of moderate.
2. CA in L2 (English) across contexts and traitlike CA in L2 (English) of the MA students in the study are found at the level of moderate.
3. CA in L1 (Thai) across contexts and their traitlike CA in L1 (Thai) of the MA students in this study are found to be lower than their CA in L2 (English).
4. Regarding the age difference, among the MA students in this study, the research results reveal that, when using L1 (Thai) students who are over 30 years old are found to be more apprehensive when compared to those students who are 30 years old or younger than 30 years old when they are in meetings and when they are involved with public speaking.
5. Regarding the age difference, among the MA students in this study, the research results indicate that there is no difference in communication apprehension (CA) in L2 (English).

Implications of the Study
The research results can be beneficial for faculty members teaching the MA students of the program in the study in terms of offering insight into their students’ communication traits. This may enable them to use suitable teaching and communication approaches for their students. Consequently, students may enjoy studying more while instructors can also achieve their teaching goals more readily.
Moreover, the administrative officers of the program can give assistance to students with more understanding by paying greater attention to demographic differences, such as the age of the students in the program. This may lead to increased satisfaction in the students in the program along with higher achievement.

Limitations
This research study was conducted with MA students majoring in English in a master’s degree program at a public university in Bangkok. The results might not be generalizable to MA students in other programs of study, even in the same university.

Recommendations for Further Research
The recommendations for further research are as follows:
1. Future studies may investigate CA in L1 (Thai) and CA in L2 (English) among Thai people in certain areas or provinces in contexts other than educational in order to increase the understanding of their communication traits.
2. More variables might be included in future studies. For example, intercultural communication (ICA) (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997) or willingness to communicate (WTC) (McCroskey, 1992) can be examined in future studies together with CA.
3. Communication Apprehension (CA) may be studied together with other variables that are relevant to communication and English language learning/teaching as well as electronic communication in the modern world.

About the Author:
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References


English Language Learning Motivation and English Language Learning Anxiety in Saudi Military Cadets: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach

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Department of Languages
King Abdulaziz Military Academy
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
This study aims to investigate English language learning motivation and English language learning anxiety in Saudi military cadets. Some 174 Saudi military cadets completed a questionnaire specifically developed to be used in the context of Saudi Arabia. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to analyse a proposed model using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 21. The study found that the students’ language learning effort was determined by their Ideal L2 Self and their positive attitudes towards their immediate learning environment. However, the students’ imposed social ideal-self as well as their negative attitudes towards their immediate learning environment contributed to their Ought-to L2 Self, which in turn increased their English learning anxiety. Parental encouragement and religious interest impacted on the Saudi L2 learners’ Ideal L2 Self and their language learning attitudes, which might have helped them to see themselves as future L2 users and to adopt positive attitudes to their immediate learning environment. This in turn motivated them to invest more effort and be more persistent in learning English.

Keywords: English learning anxiety, intended learning effort, L2 motivational self-system, parental encouragement, religious interest

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Introduction
Since the late 1950s researchers in the field of L2 motivation have been attempting to determine why individuals make particular choices, engage in specific actions, and persist in pursuing those choices. Gardner and Lambert (1959) were the pioneers as they claim that the L2 learners’ attitudes towards the target language (L2) and the target community (L2 speakers) impact on L2 learner success in L2 acquisition. They created a socio-educational model that is based on the notion of integrativeness, which they defined as “a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group” (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In other words, the L2 learner “must be willing to identify with members of another ethno-linguistic group and take on very subtle aspects of their behaviour” (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 135). The notion of integrativeness dominated L2 motivation research for more than three decades creating what Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) named the social psychological phase.

However, due to globalisation, English has become a lingua franca and the idea that English (L2) is owned by a particular target community is viewed as controversial (Jenkins, 2007; Jenkins, 2009; 2012). Therefore, a number of L2 motivation scholars (Dörnyei, 1990; Lamb, 2004; Norton, 2000; Yashima, 2002) have called for the notion of integrativeness to be reconsidered, on the grounds of incompatibility with the contemporary globalised context. This has generated a great deal of research that is characterised by “a concern with the situated complexity of the L2 motivation process and its organic development in dynamic interaction with a multiplicity of internal, social and contextual factors” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 72). One significant conceptual approach in this body of research is the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005).

Furthermore, emotions form an important dimension in studies concerning learner selves because discrepancies mismatches with and conflicts within the self-concept result in emotional states. For example, Markus and Nurius (1986, p. 958) state that “to the extent that individuals can or cannot achieve particular self-conceptions or identities, they will feel either positively or negatively about themselves”. Language learning situations are likely to produce such contradictory emotional states. Consequently, looking at these language learning situations from a self-concept perspective is likely to provide better insights into the L2 learner’s learning motivation as well as their learning anxiety, which is “a major obstacle to be overcome in learning another language” (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 125).

Using structural equation modelling (SEM) this study aims to investigate some hypothesised links between a set of variables. These variables are the three constructs of Dörnyei’s tripartite model (L2 Motivational Self System), namely, English Learning Anxiety, Parental Encouragement, and Religious Interest (Alqahtani, 2017b) in an under-researched context: cadets from a Saudi Military Academy. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between future L2 self-guides (Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self) and emotions. The validity of Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System has been demonstrated in various English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts including Hungary (Csizér & Kormos, 2009), Japan, China, and Iran (Papi, 2010; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009; You, Dörnyei, & Csizér, 2016), Chile (Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011), Indonesia (Lamb, 2012), Pakistan (Islam, Lamb, & Chambers, 2013), and Saudi Arabia (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b).

Literature review
The L2 Motivational Self System

Dörnyei (2005) proposed a model which he named ‘the L2 Motivational Self System’. It draws on two fundamental theories from mainstream psychology, which are ‘possible selves’ (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and ‘self-discrepancy’ (Higgins, 1987). The proposed model has three constituents: Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self and L2 Learning Experience. The Ideal L2 Self represents the vision that L2 learners have of their future selves as a competent and/or successful L2 user, as they would like to be. The Ideal L2 Self includes the aspirations and hopes that encourage L2 learners to exert extra effort attempting to reduce the discrepancy between their actual current selves and their ideal future selves they want to be. The second construct Ought-to L2 Self represents the attributes that L2 learners assume they ought to possess in order to meet the wishes and expectations of their significant others (e.g. parents) and/or avoid unpleasant outcomes (e.g. failing an exam). This means the Ought-to L2 Self is less internalised (more extrinsic) in nature. The L2 Learning Experience refers to “situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 106). Therefore, issues including the impact of the L2 teacher, the experience of success, the peer group, and the curriculum belong to this construct of the L2 Motivational Self System.

Almost all the studies that used the L2 Motivational Self System as the main theoretical framework found the Ideal L2 Self to be the most significant variable for predicting L2 students’ learning effort (Alqahtani, 2017a; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Kormos et al., 2011; Taguchi et al., 2009). In some studies it explained more than 40% of the variance in the students’ learning effort, which is “an exceptionally high figure in motivation studies” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 87). In addition, studies like Csizér and Kormos (2009) and Kormos et al. (2011) found that the Ought-to L2 Self and the L2 Learning Experience directly affected the Ideal L2 Self.

Nevertheless, studies such as Kormos et al. (2011) and Lamb (2012) found that the influence of the Ought-to L2 Self on students’ learning effort was minimal. This caused Kormos et al. (2011) and Taguchi et al. (2009) to suggest that the Ought-to L2 Self plays a more significant role in Arab and Asian contexts as “family expectations are powerful motives” (Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006, p. 93). A number of studies have found that parental encouragement has a direct impact on the Ought-to L2 Self (Csizér & Kormos, 2008; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Kormos et al., 2011; Taguchi et al., 2009). Therefore, Csizér and Kormos (2008) concluded that the Ought-to L2 Self is “entirely socially constructed” (p. 177).

In terms of its impact on learners’ L2 learning effort, the L2 Learning Experience resembles the Ideal L2 Self. Some studies have found that the impact of the L2 learning experience is even more significant (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Islam et al., 2013; Lamb, 2012). A number of variables have been found to have a direct impact on the L2 learning experience, e.g. the Ideal L2 Self (Alqahtani, 2017a; Papi, 2010; Taguchi et al., 2009), the Ought-to L2 Self (Papi, 2010), parental encouragement (Alqahtani, 2017a; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Kormos et al., 2011), and religious interest (Alqahtani, 2017a). It is worth mentioning that various terms have been used interchangeably to refer to the L2 Learning Experience or to part of it; for instance ‘Language Learning Attitudes’ (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b), ‘Attitudes to L2 Learning’ (You et al., 2016), ‘Attitudes to Learning English’ (Islam et al., 2013; Taguchi et al., 2009), and ‘L2 Learning Attitude’ (Kormos et al., 2011). This study will refer to this construct as ‘Language Learning Attitudes’.
L2 anxiety and motivation

L2 anxiety refers to “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, p. 284). L2 anxiety usually exerts a negative impact on the process of L2 learning. For instance Coulombe (2001) and Gardner (2005) found that language learning achievements were negatively affected by L2 anxiety. Another example is avoidance behaviour (e.g. missing classes) by anxious L2 learners (Horwitz et al., 1986). Furthermore, anxious L2 learners are likely to take more time learning new vocabulary items in comparison with other L2 learners in the same class (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). The anxious L2 learners also find it harder to recall these vocabulary items. Finally, in oral activities anxious L2 learners are likely to be more reluctant to volunteer answers (Ely, 1986).

In the context of L2 learning, there are two well-known dichotomies that previous studies have identified when describing L2 anxiety, namely, Facilitating anxiety vs. Debilitating anxiety (Scovel, 1978), and State anxiety vs. Trait anxiety (Spielberger & Gorsuch, 1983). Firstly, facilitating anxiety positively influences the behaviour of L2 learners and promotes their performance whereas the debilitating anxiety has a devastating influence on their behaviour and performance. Secondly, the latter dichotomy take into consideration whether the anxiety is passing and temporary (i.e. state anxiety) or the anxiety is stable across different situations and does not fluctuate (i.e. trait anxiety).

Researching a multi-faceted concept like L2 anxiety is not an easy task. As an attempt to pave the way for research, Horwitz et al. (1986) proposed that L2 anxiety comprises three distinct performance-related levels: “communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). In order to measure such levels they developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). However, they do not believe that these anxieties simply transfer to the classroom. Horwitz et al. (1986, p.128) view foreign language anxiety as a “distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”. Later, Papi (2010), developed a similar scale to FLCAS and this is the one which this study uses. The scale mainly focuses on the connection between interaction in English as a foreign language (in the Iranian context) and anxiety. Papi’s study revealed that the L2 Motivational Self System and English anxiety are connected. For example, L2 learning experience and Ideal L2 Self reduce students’ English anxiety while Ought-to L2 Self increases their English anxiety. Similar results have been found by MacWhinnie and Mitchell (2017) in a Japanese context as Ideal L2 Self and L2 learning experiences correlate with lower levels of anxiety, whereas Ought-to L2 self is indicative of increased anxiety.

Parental encouragement

The influence of parents on their offspring’s language learning motivation is of considerable importance forming “an important constituent of the motivational complex” (Dörnyei et al., 2006, p. 14). Parental encouragement is an important constituent of the social influence that the immediate learning environment exerts on L2 learners’ motivation. Research has drawn attention to the fact that “the bidirectional nature of the socialisation process between parents and children, as well as interactions with multiple socio-contextual forces” (Pomerantz, Grolnick, & Price, 2007, cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) must be considered to form part of the dynamic relationship between motivation and context.
The significant role of parental encouragement in forming and sustaining students’ language learning motivation has been noticed by a number of previous L2 motivation studies. In their study conducted in a Hungarian context, Csizér and Kormos (2009) found that parental encouragement positively contributes to the formation of the Ought-to L2 Self, which makes parental encouragement a main determinant of the students’ L2 self-concept. Alqahtani (2017a) reached similar conclusions in the Saudi context. In addition, Csizér and Kormos (2009) found that parental encouragement impacts on students’ attitudes towards English as an international language. Alqahtani (2017a) also found that parental encouragement made a direct contribution to the English language learning attitudes of Saudi students.

Finally, studies in Saudi Arabia and Hungary have found that L2 students receive encouragement and support from parents regardless of their parents speak English or not (Alqahtani, 2017a; Csizér & Kormos, 2009). This support might reflect the parents’ perspective regarding the importance of their children acquiring English to provide better future prospects (Kormos & Csizér, 2007). A number of previous studies have found that parental influence on children’s language learning motivation is likely to be more significant in Arab and Asian cultures (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b; Islam et al., 2013; Lamb, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2009).

**Religious interest**

Alqahtani (2017b) recently proposed this latent variable, which was found to have an impact on the L2 motivation of Saudi students. Religious interest refers to Saudi students’ perception that learning English may serve as a means of correcting the distorted image of Islam that the international community may have “since media coverage of the international war on terrorism and political rhetorical has done much to promote negative images of Islam” (Alqahtani, 2017a, p. 91). Therefore, although religious interest represents a distal and long-term goal in language learning, it can be regarded as instrumental. This highlights the significant role of English as an international language in EFL contexts, including Saudi Arabia (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2005). The notion of interest includes “a salient cognitive aspect – the curiosity in and engagement with a specific domain – as well as a prominent affective dimension concerning the joy associated with this engagement” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p.93). For Hidi and Renninger (2006) interest is “an outcome of the interaction between a person and a particular content”, therefore, “the potential for interest is in the person but the content and the environment define the direction of interest and contribute to its development” (Hidi & Renninger, 2006, p. 112). Interest, therefore, is not static but may change over time. Renninger (2009) asserts that issues such as stored knowledge, stored values and feelings make interest “experienced-based, and is not necessarily age-related” (Alqahtani, 2017a, p. 86).

Previous research by Alqahtani found that religious interest as a significant constituent of the Saudi L2 learners’ motivation. For example, Alqahtani (2017b) found that religious interest to be one of the best predictors for the reported learning effort in his study population. In another study, Alqahtani (2017a) found that religious interest indirectly contributed to participants’ intended learning effort via their language learning attitudes.

**Method**

**The hypothesised model**
Building on previous research in the field of L2 motivation and L2 anxiety, the initial hypothesised model for this study is composed of seven latent variables: Parental Encouragement, Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, Language Learning Attitudes, Intended Learning Effort, Religious Interest, and English Learning Anxiety (see Figure 1). Based on the above literature, the initial model contains 13 hypothesised causal paths. Since Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and Language Learning Attitudes are the constituent components of L2 motivation, there is a path from each construct leading to Intended Learning Effort. This assumption is supported by the findings of a number of previous studies including Alqahtani (2015; 2017b), You et al. (2016), Islam et al. (2013), Kormos et al. (2011), Papi (2010), and Taguchi et al. (2009). In addition, based on the findings of similar studies in Asian contexts such as Saudi Arabia (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b), Pakistan (Islam et al., 2013), Japan, China, and Iran (Papi, 2010; Taguchi et al., 2009; You et al., 2016), it is hypothesised that the students’ future L2 selves (Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self) would affect their attitudes towards learning English.

Saudi society is a collective, conservative society (see Alqahtani (2015; 2017a) for further detail); therefore, it is expected that two latent variables will have a considerable importance, namely, Parental Encouragement and Religious Interest. Firstly, parental encouragement is linked to the Ideal L2 Self because in collective societies like Saudi Arabia parents are expected to affect the construction of their children’s ideal selves “forming what is known as a social ideal self” (Papi, 2010, p. 471). Secondly, there is empirical evidence that Parental Encouragement also has a direct effect on the Ought-to L2 self (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Kormos et al., 2011; Taguchi et al., 2009). Thirdly, in accordance with the findings of a previous study in a Saudi context (Alqahtani, 2017a), it is hypothesised that Parental Encouragement would directly affect students’ attitudes towards learning English. Fourthly, Religious Interest is regarded as an instrumental language learning goal (see literature above), so it is linked to the Ought-to L2 self as it is less internalised (more extrinsic) in nature (Kormos et al., 2011). Finally, based on the findings of a similar study in a Saudi context (Alqahtani, 2017a), it is hypothesised that Religious Interest would have a direct impact on Saudi students’ attitudes towards learning English.

The final three paths link the constituent components of L2 motivation (Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and Language Learning Attitudes) with English learning anxiety but display a different pattern. In the case of these three constituents of L2 motivation, Ideal L2 Self and language learning attitudes are considered internal while Ought-to L2 Self is considered external (Dörnyei, 2005; Kormos et al., 2011; Papi, 2010). Therefore, it is hypothesised that the pathways from Ideal L2 Self and Language Learning Attitudes to English Learning Anxiety are negative, while the pathway from the Ought-to L2 Self to English Learning Anxiety is positive. This assumption is also supported by empirical evidence, e.g., Papi (2010) and MacWhinnie and Mitchell (2017).
Participants
The population of the study is drawn from cadets at the Saudi Military Academy which young Saudi men who have completed high school are eligible to join. Cadets spend three years (elementary, intermediate and final level) studying various subjects in two main domains: civilian and military. English is one of the civilian subjects that cadets must study throughout their three years at the Academy. Successful cadets graduate with a bachelor’s degree in military sciences. The participants in this study are all elementary level cadets so the average age of participants is 19. The study questionnaire was distributed to students with the help of five colleagues, and completed questionnaires were collected afterwards. A total of 174 cadets volunteered to participate in the study, representing 21% of the 819 elementary level cadets.

Instrument
The author developed a questionnaire based on a number of recent studies investigating L2 motivation and language learning anxiety of learners in various EFL contexts such as Hungary (Dörnyei et al., 2006), Japan (MacWhinnie & Mitchell, 2017; Ryan, 2009), China (You et al., 2016), Iran (Papi, 2010), Pakistan (Islam et al., 2013), and Saudi Arabia (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b). The questionnaire employs a five-point Likert scale with each response being allocated a score ranging from one to five (strongly disagree = 1 and strongly agree = 5). With the help of a number of suitably qualified lecturers, the wording, comprehensibility and suitability of the questionnaire items were assessed. On the basis of their feedback, some items were eliminated or reworded. The questionnaire was then piloted with the help of 39 cadets. Next, any required
changes were made on the basis of the analysis of the obtained data. The final version of the questionnaire that was used in this study consists of seven latent variables and has 40 items in total. Before questionnaires were distributed among participants, the author gave instructions to his colleagues concerning questionnaire administration to ensure anonymity of the respondents. Below is a summary of the definitions of the seven latent variables with sample items:

- **Parental Encouragement**: “measures the extent to which the parents of participants support and encourage their offspring’s English learning” (Alqahtani, 2017b, p. 166). Example: My parents encourage me to study English.
- **Ideal L2 Self**: “investigates the imagined personally desired self of respondents as future L2 users” (Alqahtani, 2017b). Example: Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself being able to use English.
- **Ought-to L2 Self**: “represents the imagined future English using selves of participants as demanded or expected by their significant others” (Alqahtani, 2017b). Example: I believe that learning English is necessary to me because people surrounding me expect me to do so.
- **Language Learning Attitudes**: “investigates whether respondents enjoy the experience of English learning” (Alqahtani, 2017b). Example: I really enjoy learning English.
- **Intended Learning Effort**: “is used as the criterion measure to determine respondents’ perceptions of the effort they put into their English learning” (Alqahtani, 2017b). Example: I am working hard at learning English.
- **Religious Interest**: “measures participants’ perceptions of the benefits of learning English for representing Islam in a better way to the international community” (Alqahtani, 2017b). Example: As a Muslim, I think the knowledge of English would help me to represent Islam to the international community in a better way.
- **English Learning Anxiety**: measures how anxious participants are when speaking English either in the English classroom or when communicating with other speakers of English outside the classroom. Example: I feel nervous and confused when I speak English in my English class.

**Data analysis**

Firstly, the data obtained were entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics 20) to create usable input for Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 21, which was used to run the structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis. Following Dörnyei’s (2007) instructions, a number of checks were run to spot outliers and errors prior to starting data analysis. These probes resulted in two questionnaires (1.1%) being eliminated from the sample, which is regarded as acceptable. After that, reliability analysis was conducted for the seven variables. All obtained acceptable Cronbach’s alpha values (> .60), which meets the standards for social sciences research (Pallant, 2010). Therefore, it can be claimed that all the seven variables attained internal consistency. Table 1 shows Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, means and standard deviations for the latent variables.

The SEM model is made up of two sub-models, the measurement model and the structural model (Byrne, 2009). In this study, the estimation of the parameters was based on the maximum likelihood method. The measurement model was initially created on the basis of theoretical
considerations outlined earlier in the literature review. Then the latent variables were combined into a full structural model. The overall model fit was evaluated using the indices frequently advised in the SEM literature (Byrne, 2009; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Tseng, Dörnyei, & Schmidt, 2006). The indices reported in this study are: chi-square (CMIN), chi-square divided by the degree of freedom (CMIN/df), goodness of fit index (GFI) (Hu & Bentler, 1999), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) (Tseng et al., 2006), incremental fit index (IFI) (Tseng et al., 2006), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Fan, Thomson, & Wang, 1999; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

Table 1  Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, means and standard deviations for the latent variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>of the scale</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha value</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Parental Encouragement</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ideal L2 Self</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ought-to L2 Self</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Language Learning Attitudes</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Intended Learning Effort</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Religious Interest</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. English Learning Anxiety</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results
One of the most important indices that ideally should not be significant is chi-square. However, chi-square is sensitive to sample size as non-significant probability levels can normally be achieved with a sample size below 100 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Therefore, a significant chi-square was inevitable. The fit indices (CMIN/df, GFI, AGFI, IFI, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA) showed very good levels. As the majority of the fit indices indicate an acceptable model, it can be claimed that the theoretical model is supported by the data. The joint goodness of fit measures for the final model are shown in Table 2.

Table 2  Selected fit measures for the final model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Current level</th>
<th>Accepted level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMIN/df</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>&lt; 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>&gt;.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGFI</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>&gt;.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFI</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>&gt;.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>&gt;.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>&gt;.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>&lt;.05 to .08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis showed that five of the relations were not significant for the sample so these pathways were omitted from the initial model. The following pathways were removed:
As a result of analysis, three new pathways were added to the model, namely:

- Religious Interest \(\rightarrow\) Ideal L2 Self
- Language Learning Attitudes \(\rightarrow\) Ought-to L2 Self
- Ideal L2 Self \(\rightarrow\) Ought-to L2 Self

Therefore, the final model includes eleven significant relations. The schematic representation of the final model with the standardised estimates of the study sample is represented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2** The final model with standardised estimates. The plus sign (+) and minus sign (−) show positive and negative paths, respectively

**Discussion**
In order to gain insights into the characteristics of the language learning motivation of the Saudi learners of English in this under-researched context (the Saudi Military Academy), the influence of the three constructs of the L2 Motivational Self System on Intended Learning Effort was firstly examined. It can be seen from the structural model obtained that the Ought-to L2 Self did not
contribute to learners’ reported Intended Learning Effort. The absence of the motivational role of the Ought-to L2 Self coincides with the findings from previous studies (Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Lamb, 2012). Dörnyei (who proposed the L2 Motivational Self System) was also sceptical about the role of the Ought-to L2 Self stating that “because the source of the second component of the system, the Ought to L2 Self, is external to the learner, this future self-guide does not lend itself to obvious motivational practices” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 32). The lack of the motivational power of the Ought-to L2 Self might be due to the fact that English language education in Saudi Arabia is highly exam-oriented (Al-Mohanna, 2010; AlAhmadi, 2007; Alqahtani, 2015). This might have exerted extra pressure on the Saudi cadets, which is likely to have affected their persistence and effort in English language learning.

The model also showed that the Ought-to L2 Self positively contributed to the Saudi students’ English Learning Anxiety, lending further support to the findings of a number of studies in Asian contexts such as Iran (Papi, 2010) and Japan (Aubrey, 2014; MacWhinnie & Mitchell, 2017). The source of the Ought to L2 Self is external to the learner (Dörnyei, 2009). In addition, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) view anxiety as a characteristic of individuals who are concerned about the impression that others might have about them. One of the components of foreign language anxiety is fear of negative evaluation, which is “apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). Therefore, the Ought-to L2 Self is likely to make the Saudi cadets more anxious.

The other two constituents of the L2 Motivational Self System (Ideal L2 Self and Language Learning Attitudes) impacted on Intended Learning Effort confirming the results of previous studies such as Alqahtani (2017a), You et al. (2016), Kormos et al. (2011), Papi (2010), Csizér and Kormos (2009), and Taguchi et al. (2009). Nevertheless, the impact of the Ideal L2 Self was higher than the impact of Language Learning Attitudes, which coincides with the findings of a number of previous studies in diverse EFL contexts; e.g., Chile (Kormos et al., 2011) and China (Taguchi et al., 2009). The Ideal L2 Self is “a combination of future-oriented goals and perceptions of one’s ability to reach these goals” (Kormos et al., 2011, p. 507). This may suggest that these Saudi cadets had already developed an action plan to reach their proximal goals, which might have affected the effort and persistence they invested in accomplishing such goals.

In addition, the model also showed that Parental Encouragement affected the Saudi students’ Ideal L2 self, meaning that parents may have helped their offspring to develop their action plan. This lends more support to the findings of previous studies in various EFL contexts, including Saudi Arabia (Alqahtani, 2017a), Chile (Kormos et al., 2011), and Hungary (Csizér & Kormos, 2009). These studies found that parents’ belief in the importance of learning English and the support and encouragement they provide their children with is likely to positively impact on L2 learners’ future L2 selves. Furthermore, Religious Interest also contributed to the Saudi cadets’ Ideal L2 Self. The influence of Parental Encouragement and Religious Interest reflects Saudi Arabia’s conservative Islamic culture that can be attributed to “two inter-related main factors: the influence of religion, and the influence of tribal and family traditions” (Mellahi & Wood, 2001, p. 143). Therefore, the Saudi cadets’ Ideal L2 Self that is endorsed by their parents and their social standards might be “what is known as social ideal self” (Papi, 2010, p. 471).
To a lesser degree, Language Learning Attitudes contributed to the Saudi cadets’ English Learning Effort. There is a consensus regarding the significant influence of Language Learning Attitudes on L2 learners’ learning effort in EFL contexts (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b; Islam et al., 2013; Kormos et al., 2011; You et al., 2016). This suggests that these Saudi L2 learners have realised the importance of English for their future and that this may have helped them to maintain positive attitudes towards their immediate learning environment, which in turn may have encouraged them to invest more effort and persistence in learning this language.

Parental Encouragement and Religious Interest also contributed directly and indirectly to the Saudi L2 learners’ Ought-to L2 Self. Previous studies conducted in various Islamic countries (Al-Haq & Al-Masaeid, 2009; Alqahtani, 2017a) found that L2 learners view learning English as “a religious and a national duty” (Al-Haq & Smadi, 1996, p. 307). Given that “media coverage of the international war on terrorism and political rhetorical has done much to promote negative images of Islam” (Alqahtani, 2017a, p. 91), it is possible that the Saudi L2 students might view learning English as an opportunity to “restore the health and reputation of their religion as one of tolerance and compassion” (Alqahtani, 2017b, p. 170). This may have helped them to experience feelings of enjoyment during their duty of learning English. While this enjoyment might have helped them to invest more effort and persistence in their language learning, their sense of responsibility to learn English may have exerted more pressure on them, and this in turn might possibly have increased their English learning anxiety.

Furthermore, Language Learning Attitudes contributed negatively to English Learning Anxiety, which was in line with the findings of previous studies (Aubrey, 2014; MacWhinnie & Mitchell, 2017; Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 1999; Papi, 2010). This negative association between Language Learning Attitudes and English Learning Anxiety suggests that the more enjoyment Saudi L2 learners feel during the English learning process the less anxious they are likely to feel. This confirms the findings of Aida (1994) and Young (1991) that negative language learning experiences increase L2 students’ anxiety while positive experiences lessen this anxious.

Finally, the model revealed that Ideal L2 Self and Language Learning Attitudes indirectly affected English Learning Anxiety via Ought-to L2 Self. It must be remembered that both the Ought-to L2 Self and Ideal L2 Self “come under the label of possible selves”, so they are not “completely detached from reality” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 12). Therefore, “the degree to which participants expect their feared or wished for possible selves to come true affects their self-esteem, current mood, and optimism” (Segal, 2006, p. 91). Therefore, the contribution of Ideal L2 Self to students’ English Learning Anxiety via its impact on their Ought-to L2 Self suggests that part of the Saudi cadets’ Ideal L2 Self does not seem to be well-developed, plausible and/or compatible with social ideal self (see the argument above), which may have exerted pressure on this sample of L2 learners. It is possible that this adds to their anxieties regarding their English learning. Similarly, the influence of Language Learning Attitudes on students’ English Learning Anxiety through their Ought-to L2 Self might be due to negative English learning conditions encountered by this sample of Saudi L2 learners such as poor linguistic proficiency of English teachers, a poorly designed English curriculum, and a lack of suitable classroom facilities, reported by previous studies in similar Saudi settings (Al-Seghayer, 2005; Alqahtani, 2015). These poor conditions may have created negative language learning experiences in these Saudi L2 learners, which possibly in turn increased their English learning anxiety.
Conclusion
This study investigated the internal structure of English learning motivation and English learning anxiety in a sample of Saudi military cadets. The structural equation model showed that the Ideal L2 Self of these Saudi students and their positive attitudes towards their immediate learning environment motivated them to invest more effort and persistence in learning English. However, their negative attitudes towards the immediate learning environment as well as their imposed social ideal-self affected their Ought-to L2 Self, which in turn increased their English learning anxiety. The model also reflected the Islamic conservative culture of Saudi society as Religious Interest and Parental Encouragement impacted on the Saudi L2 learners’ Ideal L2 Self and their attitudes towards their immediate learning environment. It is possible that this helped them to develop an action plan to reach their proximal goals and may have enabled them to envisage themselves as future L2 users as well as having positive attitudes towards their immediate learning environment.

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References


Language Learning Strategies of Vietnamese EFL Freshmen

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Abstract
This quantitative research aims to investigate the language learning strategies used by Vietnamese EFL freshmen, and to examine the differences in the students’ use of English language learning strategies according to their English proficiency. A total of 124 first year students from Hanoi University of Business and Technology were selected as the respondents using probability sampling methods. All the participants learned English as a compulsory academic subject. The data collection instruments of the study were questionnaires adapted from Language Strategy Use Inventory by Andrew D. Cohen, Rebecca Oxford, and Julie C. Chi (2005). The major findings of the study showed that the success of language teaching and learning are determined by the effective choices of language learning strategies. The findings of the study benefit for not only the teachers being aware of students’ learning styles and language choice, but also the students cooperating firmly with their teachers to master the effective language learning strategies.

Keyword: Language Learning Strategies (LLSs), English as a second language (ESL), English as a foreign language (EFL), Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Second Language (L2).

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1. Introduction

Language is the most important and meaningful tool among people. People use one language to exchange with each other. In fact, a few languages are spoken commonly by million people whereas many other languages are used by particular people. Currently, English is regarded as an international language fluently used by 1.5 billion speakers worldwide, (Sawe, 2017). Thus, English is taught as either foreign language or a second language (L2) at all levels of the educational system in many countries in the world. Many researches have been done on second language acquisition (SLA) in general and English learning in particular. Moeller and Catalano (2015) state that ‘foreign language learning and teaching refer to the teaching or learning of a nonnative language outside of the environment where it is commonly spoken” (p. 327). In fact, learners may have different ways of acquiring L2, many researches have shown the importance of language learning strategies for learners who want to be successful at SLA. Language learning strategies (LLSs) are likened as a means that learners need them for the acquisition, storage, use of information, retrieval, and enhance learners’ self-confidence.

The term “language learning strategies” can be interpreted by Oxford (2002, p. 124) as “specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing second language (L2) skills”. LLSs direct English as a second language (ESL)/English as a foreign language (EFL) learners to get improved in their language proficiency development in their own way. The term “language proficiency”, or in other word “linguistic proficiency” means that an ESL/EFL learner has a good command of using English. As shown in the studies on LLSs such as Oxford (2003), Kato (2005), Lee and Heinz (2016), and other authors, the results confirmed that ESL/EFL learners have employed a variety of LLSs to get advanced in learning English, and the extent of their use is not too low. In fact, it is necessary for EFL/ESL learners to adapt LLSs because learning approach is changing day after day in order to keep up with the social development.

Vietnam has implemented many innovated policies in order to update school leavers with a good command of foreign languages, especially English competence. To improve the foreign language ability of Vietnamese learners, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) launched National Foreign Languages Project scheme, period 2008-2020 with the focus on teaching mainly English as a second language, not as a foreign language. Although the government has invested a lot of effort and money in improving the quality of SLA, the result has not come up with the expectation of the whole society. In fact, there is a strong practical bias in finding effective methods on improving the teaching SLA. Not many studies have been done on LLSs until now. In other words, there is a shift from teacher-centered teaching to learner-centered teaching, the role of LLSs has not got much attention in terms of SLA in the Vietnamese educational system. From this situation, the study is conducted on English language learning strategies used by first year students at Hanoi University of Business and Technology (HUBT). This study clarifies the frequency of English LLSs used by first year students and the possible link between their strategy use and language proficiency based on their first semester GPAs. The findings of this study would contribute to help students not only at HUBT scale but also other universities choose appropriate LLSs in SLA.

2. Literature Review
2.1 An overview of Second Language Acquisition.
SLA is the process of acquiring a second or foreign language. The concept “SLA” dates back to approximately the second half of the twentieth century. SLA refers to the systematic study of how people learn a second language (L2). The word “second” may refer to any language that is not learners’ mother tongue. Besides, “second” is not intended to contrast with “foreign”, any language out of learners’ mother tongue that is used is called “second” language acquisition no matter where the context happens. In other words, any language other than mother tongue learners try to acquire in any circumstance is defined as SLA (Rod, 2003 p.3). Take the following idea for the clarification of the importance for our understanding SLA. When we study human language, we are approaching what some might call the human essence, the distinctive qualities of mind that are, so far as we know, unique to [humans].

(Chomsky, 2006, p.88)

It is quite surprised with the distinction of Krashen (1982) when he differentiated the two terms “acquisition” and “learning”, in spite of the fact that they refer to the action to “master” a language. His viewpoint was that these two terms are dissimilar from each other, and they are classified into two different systems namely, the “acquired” system and the “learnt” system. According to his opinions, acquisition refers to the subconscious process of studying the language while learners are not consciously aware of grammatical rules of the language. Furthermore, learning a language means “knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them” (p.10). Krashen concludes that “the acquired system” or acquisition is more effective than “the learnt system” or learning. One more approach to the SLA was done by Grass and Selinder (2008), they investigated aspects of SLA, and their study tried to find out the reason why only some learners are likely to achieve native-like proficiency in more than one language. Although many SLA authors have put much attention to the SLA, more studies have been going on with the fact that new genres of language learning and teaching have appeared together with the international integration.

2.2 Language learning strategies
The definitions of LLSs in L2 or foreign languages has not come to a common agreement even though the studies of LLSs dates back to 1970s, remarkably by Rubin (1975). He defines that LLSs are the devices or techniques that are necessary for ESL/EFL learners to use to acquire knowledge (Rubin, 1975, p.43). From this point onward, more studies on LLSs have been carried out with different viewpoints namely, Stern (1975), Hosenfeld (1976), Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978), Cohen and Aphek (1980), Bialystok (1981). Noticeably, O’Malley and Charmot (1990) defined the LLSs as the special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn to retain new information. In the same year and some years later, Oxford (1990, 1993, 1993) came up with his viewpoints which have been popularly cited until now in the research of LLSs as follows:

… language learning strategies - specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in the developing L2 skills. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. Strategies are tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability.

In comparison with Oxford’s opinions, O’Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 1) consider LLSs as the special thought or behavior whereas Oxford (1990) viewed LLSs as steps that learners use to enhance their own learning. Some years later, Chamot (2005, p. 112) stated that strategies are most often conscious and goal-driven especially in the beginning stages of tackling an unfamiliar language task. Some researchers proposed to replace the term “strategy” to “self-regulation” such authors as Dornyei and Skehan (2003), Tseng, Dornyei, and Schmitt (2006), Gao (2007), … To defend their viewpoints, Tseng, Dornyei, and Schmitt (2006) propose a “conceptual approach highlights the importance of the learners’ innate self-regulatory capacity” (p. 79). Besides, Gao (2006) came up with a study entitled “Has language learning strategies research come to an end?” (pp. 615-620) in which he concludes that learners’ strategy complemented well the potential advance of self-regulation in language learning research.

The replacement of these terms, however, has not been supported by many researchers. It has been reflected in renewed conferences, workshops, and publications on the strategy subject. Remarkably, Cohen and Macaro (2007), Griffths (2008, 2013), Oxford (2011), Rose (2012), Oxford and Macaro (2014), Dornyei and Ryan (2015) and ongoing authors have contributed their opinions on the disagreement of the two terms shifted. Take some authors’ viewpoints for example. Rose (2012) argues that “movements towards self-regulation are not incompatible with language learning strategies” (p. 92). Griffths (2013) put it “the slippery strategy concept hangs on tenaciously and refuses to be so easily dismissed” (p. 6). More recently, Dornyei & Royan (2015) confirm that “neither self-regulation nor learning strategy has to become a casualty of the controversy, caught in the cross-fire of the various arguments” (p. 169).

2.3 Learning Styles

Learning style is also substituted by other names as cognitive style or cognitive strategy (Richards and Schmidt, 2010). Learning styles are the general approaches – for instance, visual, analytic, auditory or global – which learners apply in acquiring a L2 language or in any other subject (Oxford, 2003). Dunn & Griggs (1988) state that “Learning style is the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others” (p. 3). According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), several different learning styles are often referred to

1. Analytic versus global refers to whether the learner focuses on the details or concentrates on the main idea or big picture.
2. Visual versus auditory versus hands-on or tactile refers to different sensory preferences in learning.
3. Intuitive/random versus concrete/sequential learning refers to a difference between thinking in an abstract or nonsequential way versus a focus on concrete facts or a preference to approach learning in a step by step, organized fashion. (p. 331).

Although there are many style aspects to be influential to L2 learning, Ehrman and Oxford (1990) mentioned 9 major dimensions. Of which 4 strong associations with L2 language are discussed in this study, namely sensory preferences, personality types, desired degree of generality, and biological differences.
2.4 Research studies on the relationship between language learning strategy and language proficiency

Kitakawa (2008) investigated the patterns of strategy used by Japanese university learners of English. He concluded that the more frequent use of LLSs learners employ, the higher proficiency they get. However, Chamot (2005) did a research on language learning strategy invention studies, the author had different viewpoints by claiming that strategy instruction decided the development of learner mastery and autonomy, and increases teacher expertise. Astonishingly, in the same year, Deanna, Evie, and Alan (2005) carried out their research on LLSs and English proficiency of Chinese students by comparing between Oxford’s (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and an institutional version (ITP) of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Their findings revealed that there is no significant differences between males and females on eight measures of learning strategy preferences and language proficiency.

Very recently, Shyr, Feng, Zeng, Hsieh, and Shih (2017) investigated the relationships between LLSs and achievement goal orientations in Taiwanese engineering students taking an EFL class. The findings revealed that there is a significant correlation between LLSs and achievement goal orientations. The study highlighted the results that the influence of the LLSs on the learners are not equal to all instruments (SILL) in their study.

Method
3.1 Design of the study
This study was explored through quantitative research methodology. It was designed to investigate which English learning strategies were frequently used by 124 Hanoi University of Business and Technology (HUBT) first year students and examined whether there was a difference between students’ English learning strategy use and their language proficiency. This research combined two types of research design, survey design and correlational design together (Creswell, 2005). The survey design allows finding out which English language learning strategies has been used most popularly and less popularly by the first year HUBT EFL students. Besides, the correlational design analyzes the differences in the use of English language strategies by multi-level students at HUBT.

3.2 Research Instrument
According to Dörnyei (2010), the main attraction of questionnaires is their unprecedented efficiency in terms of researcher time, researcher effort, and financial resources. Using questionnaires for students in the current survey, the researcher aimed to elicit the frequency of the students’ self-reported strategy use by allowing them to show their own judgment. In this study, a probability sampling method was chosen for selecting respondents. 124 respondents were shortlisted. After collecting the data, the next step was to analyze the data using IBM SPSS software to deal with the raw data, basing on the questionnaire and rating score of EFL learners, the researchers explained the more and less popular choices of English language learning strategies used by the first year HUBT students.

4 Findings and Discussion
4.1 The background of the respondents involving the survey.
The table 4.1 shows the sample population of the respondents between male and female EFL freshmen. From the table, it reveals that 52.4% of male respondents compared with 47.6% female ones seems to be acceptable figures. The relatively equal distribution based on genders can lead to high reliability, which contributes to the better significance for the later of the study.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are 4 levels involved in the years of respondents learning English. The table 4.2 states that all respondents have spent a long time studying English. Particularly, 84.7% respondents have learnt English for 11 to 15 years, only 15.3% respondents have spent longer years studying English – 16 to 20 years, no respondents have acquired English for less than 11 years. This data may denote that EFL freshmen have gone through many LLSs until the time of doing this survey so that they can give more reliable findings.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Years of Learning English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>84.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to investigate the relationship between English Grade Point of First semester of the respondents, the researcher consulted the respondents on 5 levels of Vietnamese Marking Scales. The table 4.3 shows that the majority of the respondents passed their English subject, however, 58.9% of the respondents got the average scale as shown in the table, following that 25% for good level, 10.5% for above good level, and small number 5.6% for excellent level. These figures depict the reverse fact that the respondents have spent many years of learning English, but their results are not persuasive or otherwise very disappointed.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents Based on English Grade Point of First Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 5.0 to 6.9 grades (average)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 7.0 to 7.9 grades (good)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>83.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 8.0 to 8.9 grades (above good)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>94.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 9.0 to 10 grades (excellent)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerning with the poor results of English Grade Point, the table 4.4 investigated whether the respondents studied other foreign languages affected English subject. The finding pointed out that
91.9% of the respondents studied English, only 8.1% studied other languages. These figures denote that the number of studying other foreign languages rather than English may not have an effect on the poor results of the respondents in terms of LLSs.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents Based on Studying Other Languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Language Strategy Use Inventory

4.2.1 Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Test

*Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Test of Listening Strategy Use*  
The figures in table 4.5 show that all values of the Listening Strategy Use are proved to be internally consistent and could be accepted to participate into the factor analysis test because they satisfy the three requirements proposed by the Cronbach’s alpha reliability test as follows:
- First of all, α is 0.982 (excellent) which is higher than the acceptable value 0.7
- Secondly, all Corrected Item-Total Correlation values are higher than the standard of 0.3
- Finally, it is worth noticing that all Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted of 26 items do not exceed more than the α of 0.982.

Table 4.5: Reliability Test of Listening Strategy Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q1</td>
<td>57.31</td>
<td>338.621</td>
<td>.657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q2</td>
<td>57.35</td>
<td>336.215</td>
<td>.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q3</td>
<td>57.40</td>
<td>337.428</td>
<td>.751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q4</td>
<td>57.44</td>
<td>335.420</td>
<td>.776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q5</td>
<td>57.34</td>
<td>333.852</td>
<td>.811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q6</td>
<td>57.38</td>
<td>334.188</td>
<td>.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q7</td>
<td>57.35</td>
<td>334.149</td>
<td>.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q8</td>
<td>57.29</td>
<td>335.460</td>
<td>.746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q9</td>
<td>57.44</td>
<td>328.460</td>
<td>.898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q10</td>
<td>57.43</td>
<td>330.767</td>
<td>.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q11</td>
<td>57.49</td>
<td>330.626</td>
<td>.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q12</td>
<td>57.45</td>
<td>331.046</td>
<td>.891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q13</td>
<td>57.46</td>
<td>334.332</td>
<td>.816</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient = 0.982

Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Test of Vocabulary Strategy Use

The same analysis as Listening Strategy Use is shown in the table 4.6. Generally, the values met the three requirements proposed by the Cronbach’s alpha reliability test. The Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient is 0.789 which seems to be acceptable for the consideration.

Table 4.6: Reliability Test of Vocabulary Strategy Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary Strategy Use</th>
<th>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q27</td>
<td>42.60</td>
<td>25.755</td>
<td>.437</td>
<td>.774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q28</td>
<td>42.76</td>
<td>27.453</td>
<td>.393</td>
<td>.779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29</td>
<td>42.65</td>
<td>26.166</td>
<td>.374</td>
<td>.779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q30</td>
<td>42.81</td>
<td>27.783</td>
<td>.328</td>
<td>.782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q31</td>
<td>42.64</td>
<td>26.461</td>
<td>.306</td>
<td>.785</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient = 0.789

**Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Test of Speaking Strategy Use**

Eighteen items of the Speaking Strategy Use shown in the table 4.7 satisfy the three requirements proposed by the Cronbach’s alpha reliability test. In terms of Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient, the $\alpha$ is 0.941, which is the highest value that secures the reliability of the findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking Strategy Use Q45</th>
<th>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38.94</td>
<td>103.671</td>
<td>.745</td>
<td>.937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Strategy Use Q46</td>
<td>38.94</td>
<td>104.883</td>
<td>.663</td>
<td>.938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Strategy Use Q47</td>
<td>39.06</td>
<td>106.411</td>
<td>.596</td>
<td>.939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Strategy Use Q48</td>
<td>39.05</td>
<td>105.461</td>
<td>.701</td>
<td>.938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Strategy Use Q49</td>
<td>38.86</td>
<td>103.648</td>
<td>.739</td>
<td>.937</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Table 4.7: Reliability Test of Speaking Strategy Use**
Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient = 0.941

Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Test of Reading Strategy Use
The test results from the table 4.8 show that all the requirements for testing the reliability of the findings are satisfied. The α is 0.952, which is also highly appreciated for the research findings. From the findings in the table 4.8, it can be concluded that all values of the Reading Strategy Use are shown internal consistency and these values could be accepted to participate into the factor analysis test.

Table 4.8: Reliability Test of Reading Strategy Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q63</td>
<td>25.44</td>
<td>65.175</td>
<td>.667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q64</td>
<td>25.48</td>
<td>64.626</td>
<td>.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q65</td>
<td>25.42</td>
<td>64.961</td>
<td>.673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q66</td>
<td>25.47</td>
<td>64.218</td>
<td>.728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q67</td>
<td>25.51</td>
<td>64.415</td>
<td>.777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q68</td>
<td>25.56</td>
<td>63.745</td>
<td>.785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q69</td>
<td>25.45</td>
<td>63.209</td>
<td>.810</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient = 0.952

Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Test of Writing Strategy Use
Looking at the table 4.9, it can be seen that all the values are worth taking for consideration for the reliability test of writing strategy use. The high value of $\alpha$, 0.964, states that this figure is satisfactory for the analysis compared with 0.7 suggested in statistics.

Table 4.9: Reliability Test of Writing Strategy Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Strategy Use Q75</th>
<th>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item Total Correlation</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.27</td>
<td>47.176</td>
<td>.893</td>
<td>.958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Strategy Use Q76</td>
<td>20.23</td>
<td>47.286</td>
<td>.879</td>
<td>.959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Strategy Use Q77</td>
<td>20.24</td>
<td>48.543</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>.962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Strategy Use Q78</td>
<td>20.24</td>
<td>47.762</td>
<td>.870</td>
<td>.959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Strategy Use Q79</td>
<td>20.19</td>
<td>47.795</td>
<td>.811</td>
<td>.962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Strategy Use Q80</td>
<td>20.24</td>
<td>47.291</td>
<td>.913</td>
<td>.958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Strategy Use Q81</td>
<td>20.21</td>
<td>48.200</td>
<td>.850</td>
<td>.960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Strategy Use Q82</td>
<td>20.20</td>
<td>48.179</td>
<td>.800</td>
<td>.962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Strategy Use Q83</td>
<td>20.20</td>
<td>49.187</td>
<td>.777</td>
<td>.963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Strategy Use Q84</td>
<td>20.18</td>
<td>48.505</td>
<td>.783</td>
<td>.962</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient = 0.964

Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Test of Translation Strategy Use
The last thing mention here is the table 4.10 which shows the finding results of the Reliability Test of Translation Strategy Use. The same situation like the other test results in this study comes up with the internal consistence of the values of the test. Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient (0.936) denotes that this figure is the highest value recommendation.

Table 4.10: Reliability Test of Translation Strategy Use
### Translation Strategy Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item Total Correlation</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q85</td>
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<td>.824</td>
<td>.922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q86</td>
<td>11.78</td>
<td>13.261</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>.920</td>
</tr>
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<td>Q87</td>
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<td>13.583</td>
<td>.822</td>
<td>.922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q88</td>
<td>11.71</td>
<td>13.460</td>
<td>.802</td>
<td>.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q89</td>
<td>11.75</td>
<td>13.197</td>
<td>.858</td>
<td>.917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q90</td>
<td>11.69</td>
<td>15.047</td>
<td>.714</td>
<td>.935</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient = 0.936**

#### 4.2.2 Factor Analysis Test

Factor analysis is a method of data reduction which does this by seeking underlying unobservable (latent) variables that are reflected in the observed variables (manifest variables). Results from these tables have indicated that all factors in the findings are proved to be necessary to explain the impacts that English LLS are meaningful to be considered for analysis because the figures satisfy the four requirements of the test as follows:

1. KMO value is between 0.5 and 1.0
2. Barlett Sig. is 0.000 which is lower than 5%, this mean that the figures are relevant to the analysis.
3. The cumulative eigenvalues are all higher than 50%
4. Factor loading values are all higher than 0.30

Table 4.11: *Factor Analysis Test of Listening Strategy Use Factor KMO and Bartlett's Test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.</th>
<th>.968</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. Chi-Square</td>
<td>3493.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Variance Explained**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Componential</th>
<th>Initial Eigenvalues</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17.990</td>
<td>69.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.805</td>
<td>3.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.718</td>
<td>2.761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.600</td>
<td>2.307</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Language Learning Strategies of Vietnamese EFL Freshmen

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Component Matrixa</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q1</td>
<td>.677</td>
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<td>Listening Strategy Use Q2</td>
<td>.751</td>
</tr>
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<td>Listening Strategy Use Q3</td>
<td>.768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q4</td>
<td>.792</td>
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<td>.809</td>
</tr>
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<td>Listening Strategy Use Q7</td>
<td>.812</td>
</tr>
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<td>.764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q9</td>
<td>.907</td>
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<td>Listening Strategy Use Q12</td>
<td>.901</td>
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<td>Listening Strategy Use Q13</td>
<td>.832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q14</td>
<td>.886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q15</td>
<td>.830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q16</td>
<td>.921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q17</td>
<td>.871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q18</td>
<td>.811</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening Strategy Use Q19</td>
<td>.801</td>
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</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrixa
Table 4.12: Factor Analysis Test of Vocabulary Strategy Use Factor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component Matrix</th>
<th>Component 1</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Strategy Use Q27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Strategy Use Q28</td>
<td>.440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .753 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 723.178 |
| | df | 153 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

Total Variance Explained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Variance</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Variance</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</table>
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

### Table 4.13: Factor Analysis Test of Speaking Strategy Use Factor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KMO and Bartlett's Test</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1265.270</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.</td>
<td>.927</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</td>
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<td>Approx. Chi-Square</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>df</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Total Variance Explained</th>
<th>Initial Eigenvalues</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
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<td>6.042</td>
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<td>.540</td>
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<td>.393</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>.351</td>
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<td>.308</td>
<td>1.710</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.293</td>
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</table>
Table 4.14: Factor Analysis Test of Reading Strategy Use Factor KMO and Bartlett’s Test

<table>
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<th>Initial Eigenvalues</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of Variance</td>
<td>Cumulative %</td>
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<tr>
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<td>65.733</td>
<td>65.733</td>
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<td>6.352</td>
<td>72.085</td>
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<td>.581</td>
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<td>76.925</td>
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Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix

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<tr>
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<td>Reading Strategy Use Q64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q65</td>
<td>.721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q66</td>
<td>.774</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q67</td>
<td>.816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.822</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q70</td>
<td>.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q71</td>
<td>.810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q72</td>
<td>.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q73</td>
<td>.913</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Strategy Use Q74</td>
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</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 4.15: Factor Analysis Test of Writing Strategy Use Factor

<table>
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<tr>
<th>KMO and Bartlett's Test</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. Chi-Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Variance Explained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Variance</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% of Variance</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7.585</td>
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<td>75.847</td>
<td>7.585</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4.397</td>
<td>80.244</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.411</td>
<td>4.108</td>
<td>84.352</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.346</td>
<td>3.460</td>
<td>87.812</td>
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<td>93.936</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>1.856</td>
<td>95.793</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>1.691</td>
<td>97.483</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.135</td>
<td>1.353</td>
<td>98.837</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td>1.163</td>
<td>100.000</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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ISSN: 2229-9327
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Writing Strategy Use Q75</th>
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<th>Writing Strategy Use Q77</th>
<th>Writing Strategy Use Q78</th>
<th>Writing Strategy Use Q79</th>
<th>Writing Strategy Use Q80</th>
<th>Writing Strategy Use Q81</th>
<th>Writing Strategy Use Q82</th>
<th>Writing Strategy Use Q83</th>
<th>Writing Strategy Use Q84</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>.837</td>
<td>.897</td>
<td>.848</td>
<td>.933</td>
<td>.882</td>
<td>.838</td>
<td>.819</td>
<td>.823</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Table 4.16: Factor Analysis Test of Translation Strategy Use Factor

KMO and Bartlett’s Test

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | .914 |
| Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 593.687 |
| df | 15 |
| Sig. | .000 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Variance Explained</th>
<th>Initial Eigenvalues</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
<th>% of Variance</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Componen</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of Variance</td>
<td>Cumulative %</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of Variance</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix

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<th>Translation Strategy Use Q87</th>
<th>Translation Strategy Use Q88</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>.881</td>
<td>.894</td>
<td>.879</td>
<td>.864</td>
<td>.905</td>
<td>.794</td>
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</table>
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
a. 1 components extracted.

### 4.2.3 Comparison between Gender and Language Learning Strategies

The table 4.17 reveals the test results about the difference between gender and 6 factors. From the Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances, it is concluded that there is a difference between male or female EFL first year students in using LLS for vocabulary as Sig. (0.29). However, when considering the t-test equality of means, the findings show that there is no difference between male and female EFL freshmen as Sig. (0.201>0.05). Except for the Vocabulary Language Strategy, other language strategies such as Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Translation show the internal consistence between Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances and t-test for Equality of Means. It means that there are no differences between male or female EFL first year students in choosing language learning strategies. This finding is the same as the study carried by Deanna, Evie, and Alan (2005).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equal variances</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>.663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
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<td>.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>not assumed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>.757</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equal variances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>not assumed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
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<td>.810</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equal variances</td>
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<td>not assumed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>.164</td>
<td>.686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>not assumed</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>2.268</td>
<td>.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>assumed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.2.4 English Grade Point First Semester and Language Learning Strategies
The table 4.18 reveals the relationship between the English Grade Point First Semester and LLS. The analysis shows that only Vocabulary Language Strategy is not affected the results of EFL freshmen’s semester school report. The other language strategies highly influence the results of the first semester, which is similar in the other studies by Kitakawa (2008), Shyr, Feng, Zeng, Hsieh, and Shih (2017).

Table 4.18: Comparison between English Grade Point First Semester and Language Learning Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
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<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5.598</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.866</td>
<td>3.725</td>
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<td>Within Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65.708</td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.472</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>1.750</td>
<td>.161</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>10.801</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>.090</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11.273</td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3.457</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.152</td>
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<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>40.988</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>.342</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>44.444</td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5.814</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.938</td>
<td>3.963</td>
<td>.010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>58.686</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>.489</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64.500</td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>6.211</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.070</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>66.377</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>.553</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72.589</td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>4.382</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.461</td>
<td>2.818</td>
<td>.042</td>
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<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>62.197</td>
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<td>.518</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66.579</td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5 Conclusions
The findings of the current study reflected the real situation of English language learning strategies applied by the first year HUBT students. As a result, the results could make known to the teachers about their students’ English leaning strategy preference, produce an effective plan for strategy training in their English teaching class. The findings would raise the students’ awareness about LLS, promote them to construct and adjust their language strategies, and sketch out the suitable activities for applying English learning strategies.
From the result of the study, it is advisable for both the teachers and students to acknowledge the students’ strategy preference in order to determine the students’ strengths and weaknesses in English learning. The teachers cooperate with their students to decide which LLSs are best for their students to improve and how their students could master the LLSs. Besides, using the best LLSs encourage the students to become more independent and flexible in applying task-appropriate strategies to enhance the effectiveness of their learning.

So as for the students to become aware of the importance of choosing the best LLSs for them, the teachers are advisable to launch many activities for their students involve such as forums, workshop, English competitions or even camping trips to English speaking communities. According to Oxford (1990), language learning strategies are considered as teachable. The more LLSs are trained, the more successful the students gain by mastering their learning styles and strategies.

During the class time, the teacher may introduce many practical activities to take explicit and implicit strategy instructions into the regular lessons. It is only the teachers who understand which language learning strategies are suitable for different students. The study shows that both male and female students apply LLSs in their second language acquisition, otherwise, their first semester school report or particularly English Grade Point is firmly related to their learning styles and language strategies. The teachers’ tasks are to encourage them to develop the relevant LLSs and adjust the factors or strategies they have not done well. It is noticeable that students’ background plays an important role for the teachers to get to know before expecting to introduce the instructions in the target language. The teachers are advisable to know clearly about their students’ learning styles, learning goals or perception to the target language. Generally speaking, the success of LLSs are trained under the cooperation between the teachers and the students.

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References


Perspectives on Corpus Linguistics: The Methodological Synergy in Second Language Pedagogy and Research

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Abstract
Corpus linguistics is a new branch of linguistics but its status is still debatable - either as a theory or a methodology. This article aims to give an overview of the different approaches and perspectives of corpus linguistics. The neo-Firthians contend that corpus linguistics is a method, while other prominent corpus linguists claim that it is a theory. Other corpus linguists believe that corpus linguistics can be both a methodology as well as a theory depending on the extent and purposes it is used for. The applicability of corpus linguistics as a methodology is observed in English Language Teaching and Learning (ELT). Learner corpora are used extensively in second language pedagogy and research as either direct approach involving Data-Driven Learning (DDL) where students participated as researchers and worked directly with corpora or indirect approach where corpus is used as a research method in producing dictionaries, syllabuses, textbooks, and teaching materials.

Keywords: Corpus linguistics, corpus-based study, corpus-driven study, corpus-informed study, Data-Driven Learning (DDL), learner corpora, second language acquisition (SLA)

1. Introduction
Language is a system that people employs to communicate among themselves for multiple reasons, including persuasion, information or entertainment (Ziggiotto, 2016). Halliday (2007) advocates for ‘taking language seriously’ not only for the appraisal roles it plays in our ‘construal experience’ but for its status as an enactment of interpersonal relations. Making of meanings is the unique and distinctive feature of any language. From the common sense view, based on Firthian (Firth, 1968) and Hallidayan (1993; 2014) approaches language is a ‘system of meaning’ and that a grammar of a language is "the study of how meanings are built up through the use of words and other linguistic forms such as tones and emphasis” (Bloor & Bloor, 1995, p., 2). However, linguists have varying views on language as a system of meanings in a direct way as Firth and his students Halliday and other neo-Firthian linguists. From other perspectives language is viewed from its segmental structure (words and phrases and sentences) and how these segments work to form meanings. The notion of meaning is central to the study of language and most pervasive and intricate with diverse views among linguists and numerous presuppositions essentially centered to words and range of references that are inherent in or related to or be part of them. Words always play great roles in language studies of meaning variably as primary factors or secondary segments in more abstraction as a metaphoric or idiomatic expression. Philip (2011) considers the word as a container of meaning that one has to delve into to pull out the desired meaning.

With the advent of the computer and enamours internet resources applied in teaching and learning, the ways we study and analyse language have received quite a lot of changes and transformation in the academic (Alkhataba, Abdul-Hamid & Bashir, 2018). The interest of modern language researchers is attracted and focussed on the meaning of lexical patterning and pragmatic discourse which are well established and documented under the corpus linguistic analysis. Hence, corpus linguistics is the fast growing area of language studies that concern the study of meaning from analysing the word list, frequencies and words concordances (Hoffmann, Evert, Smith, Lee, & Berglund-Prytz, 2008). The title of this article might capture at glance the essential presuppositions in corpus linguistics as a new trend of linguistics field that poses a lot of theoretical issues. Despite, having a long history as a field, corpus linguists have still contended with various issues related to the status of corpus linguistics as a method or theory. Many attempts are made to resolve such issues in the last three decades. Some corpus linguists argue that corpus linguistics should be seen as a methodology while others believe it should be considered as a theory of language on itself; some behold a neutral position between the two claims. This article presents these presuppositions of corpus linguistics and their implications in second language pedagogy and research.

Linguists have long age interest in studying on how language is acquired by either native speakers of that language (L1) or second language learners (L2). Many theories, perspectives, paradigms and analytical and research approaches have been grounded, tested and employed to account for that purpose. The evolution of computational linguistics and corpus linguistics in the computer and internet era have revolutionised the language analysis in both L1 and L2 contexts.

2. Second Language Acquisition
The term second language acquisition (SLA) refers to a field of inquiry in linguistics studies established in the 1960s (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2009; Gass & Selinker, 2007). However, it would
be hard-pressed to state a beginning date of second language acquisition studies, but based on VanPatten and Williams (2015) perspective view, it is probably fair to say that the study of SLA has expanded and developed in the past 40 to 45 years. The notion of second language acquisition is frequently labeled in its twofold senses as either object of inquiry as learning of another language rather than one’s mother tongue or as a subject of inquiry as of the process of learning a second language. It is traditionally seen as an offshoot of general linguistic theory (Richards, 1992), which enacted presumably from the practical orientation to language learning associated with two periods of linguistics studies, behaviourism, and structuralism. Therefore, we can say that SLA is a constituted field of knowledge which drawn its theoretical inspiration from the philosophical underpinnings of other associated fields. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2009) mention some of the fields associated with English as second language (ESL) including: 'linguistics', 'sociology', 'sociolinguistics', 'psychology', 'psycholinguistics', and 'education'. In general, the term second language acquisition (SLA), according to Richard and Schmidt (2014, p. 206), is “any language learned after one has learned one’s native language”.

Moreover, Kachru (1992) conceptualises the spread of English around the world into three main circles: the Inner Circle of English refers to countries where English is spoken as a Native Language (ENL) members under this circle included Britain, USA, and Australia. The Outer Circle of English refers to countries where English is spoken as a Second Language (ESL); members included Malaysia, India, Singapore, Nigeria, and Ghana. The Expanding Circle of English refers to countries where English is spoken as a Foreign Language (EFL), members included Saudi Arabia, Jordan, China, Russia, and Thailand (Gika, 1996; & James, 1998).

2.1 Analysing Learner Language

The term learner language in the words of Ellis and Barkhuizen (2009) refers to any form of language produced by learners through written or spoken and paralinguistic (e.g. gestures) modes of communication. The language produced through these modes of communication served as the primary source of data used for the study of L2 acquisition. From its basic features, learner language is ‘not monolithic’, but rather a highly manifold phenomenon comprising many variables that address the issues of how learner learn a particular language; the processes and techniques; problems and prospects involved. It is primarily concerned with data analysis as an integral part of the research process. “It is shaped by the purpose of the research and the theoretical principles that govern the chosen method of inquiry (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2009, p. 3)”. It aimed at describing competence and competence as the highest goal of linguistic knowledge in the L2 study, be it implicit (rule-based or formulaic) or explicit (Analysed or metalingual).

According to Ellis (2007) The better approach in second language study might be to find out what learners actually do, as opposed to what they think they do, this would be by collecting samples of learner language, that is the language that learners produce when they are called on to use an L2 in speech or writing- and analyse them carefully. There has been a research interest in the analysis of learners’ language in the field of second language studies. Richard and Sampson (1974) believe that since language was viewed as a system, the notion of the second language could be considered as a juxtaposition of two systems or super-systems involving mixed features of the two or more systems or to inter-systemic interference.
However, it is worth to be noted that researchers in the field of linguistics have distinctively devised different perspective concerning the issues of learners language and deployed several analytical approaches to analyse the samples of data collected from L2 learners such as Contrastive Analysis (CA); Error Analysis (EA); obligatory occasion analysis; frequency analysis; functional analysis; computer-based analysis (such as corpus-based analysis) and a host of others. This paper limited its scope to corpus-based approach for its currency and the contended issues that surrounding it theoretical perspectives and the mixture of view among its scholastic founders.

3. **Meaning and Etymology of Corpus linguistics**

The term corpus linguistics was coined by Jan Aarts in the early (1980) who was hesitant in using the term, although many other linguists have been less than happy with it at that time (Leech, 2011). Later it is conveniently seen as an umbrella term for linguistic research that depends on the use of corpora, as in the words of prominent linguist and corpus linguistics pioneer Sinclair (1991) as he asserts “corpus is a collection of naturally occurring language text chosen to characterise a state or variety of a change” (p.171). It can be best defined as a language study based on the samples from the real-life language used (McEnery & Wilson, 1996).

A corpus (the plural corpora) is a collection of electronic texts or "a text in the computer-readable form" (Wray & bloomer, 2012, p. 205), written or spoken which is usually stored on the computer. It was in the past associated with a body of work, let say of one author (O’keefee, McCarthy & Carter, 2007). It is a representative collection of language that can be used to make statements about language, it inextricably concerned with how people used language in the contexts (Crawford & Csmomay, 2016). What makes it peculiar is that it is not just a mare lists of words but a guided and principled collection of text of particular language, usually used for quantitative and qualitative analysis to provide language users with available data on how language is used at micro (lexical) and macro (sentential) linguistic levels and help them to enhance language knowledge at frequency levels (keywords analysis and number of collocations) and beyond (cluster analysis, concordance and semantic relation analyses) (Biber, Conrad & Reppen 1998; O’keefee, McCarthy & Carter 2007). It is a useful tool that enables researcher/user to ‘make a meaningful comment about some aspect of the language’ in one's data set (Wray & bloomer, 2012). Anthorny (2012) construes that corpus linguistics is inseparably associated to computer technology in more essential way than other applied linguistics field, with exceptions of perhaps CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning).

The first concordance developed in language study was presumably that of Vulgate Bible in the 13th century which consisted the 'list of almost every word in the bible and the point where it was used' compiled by 500 monks under the direction of Hugh of St. Cher, ‘whose interest was in biblical exegeses. Probably, with the advent of the computer, Hugh can do this work single handily. Most corpus linguists are interested in the applications of the corpora rather than corpora per se, in the last century, in which Reference corpora and British National Corpus (BNC) laid the new foundation for creating dictionaries and for the translation purposes. Moreover, Sinclair (1991) was widely influenced work in applied as well as descriptive linguistics, leading to a view of lexis and structure as a continuum rather than an opposition. Corpus analysis provides an empirical basis or much contemporary research on language, employing data-based methods which emphasise statistical regularities rather than combinatory rules (Aston, 2011).
3.1 Corpus Linguistics: A science or a methodology?
Corpus linguistics is believed to be one of the fastest growing areas of language studies, more prominently in the last three decades. Nevertheless, corpus linguists heralded with sheer contended issues, recurrently concerning the status of corpus linguistics ‘whether it constitutes a branch of linguistics, a method, a methodology, a discipline, an approach, or something else’. Therefore, there is a mixed reaction whenever the question about the status of corpus linguistics is brought before the corpus linguistics pioneers, who withhold different stands on that issues, for instance neo-Firthian scholars such as Tognini-Bonelli (2001) arguably postulates corpus linguistics on ‘scientific panorama' and rejecting any view that foresaw it from ‘methodological panorama’ as she assertively posits that corpus linguistics attained theoretical status and defined set of rules and guiding principles, ‘that distinguishes it from other branches of linguistic’( Sinclair, 2004), while a sheer number of linguists strongly deem it as a method no more no less. At this juncture it worth mentioning that some corpus linguists stayed at intermediary position believing that corpus can be seen as both science and methodology depending on who used it and the purpose it served while others strongly argued that the two terms used to describe corpus as "method" or "science" seem to be misleading and inappropriate.

Viana, Zyngier, and Barnbrook (2011) extensively provide some insights on the issues of the status of corpus linguistics in the series of interviews with professionals in the field of corpus linguistics composed and titled “Perspectives on Corpus Linguistics”. To mention some among the contributors are Devies (2011), who arguably posits that corpus linguistics is a methodology rather than a science or even a separate field of linguistics. According to him corpus has implied set of laid down procedures based on frequency and functional approaches of linguistics that dealt with data at both micro and macro levels. Though he believes as a methodology it is always related to other important language approaches to complete a meaningful co-occurrence to give a meaningful result in language analysis. Th. Gries (2011), sees corpus linguistics as a methodology or methodological paradigm to him it is no more any less than that. He proposes some distinctions between corpus Linguistics and computational linguistics as the two overlapped.

Along the same Hyland and Tse (2005), considers corpus linguistics as methodology or a research tools used to analyses huge data which would be laborious or ‘impossible to access by observational techniques'. Although, the question about status of Corpus Linguistics as either science or methodology seems to be deceptively tricky trick, since basically, the two differ as science is a systematic way knowledge condensed into rules and theories capable of producing a reliably-predictable outcomes, science implies perspective on reality while method implies perspective based on assumptions or evaluations of the observable instances.

Swales, (2006) concludes his stake as he views corpus linguistics as a methodology which he defines as a way of looking at large bodies of language data for wider varieties of purposes, (historical, critical, pedagogic, etc.). He rejects the notion of seeing it as the new branch of linguistics. Scholars like Aston (2011), Baker (2011), and Johansson (2011) in their interviews compiled by Viana et al. (2011) maintain a neutral stake about the status of corpus linguistics as either science or methodology For Aston corpus linguistic can only be realised as both science and methodology, although it is predominantly concerned with applications, that it is more of methodological per se, where its use is guided primarily by concerns of practical effectiveness and
theory from other fields. On the other hand, corpus linguistics is a science inasmuch as it has a particular object of study, namely language as it is actually used in naturally-co-occurring speech and writing, with texts as primary data which differ with other traditions in linguistics (Sinclair, 2004).

As for Baker (2011), Corpus Linguistics embodied the aspects of science such as gathering and organizing knowledge into testable laws and theories through observation, ‘experimentation’, ‘measurement’ and capable 'replicability' by another researcher. And it is at the same time be seen as methodology inasmuch as it contained a set of procedures and principles such as ‘balance’, ‘representativeness’ and ‘sampling techniques in data collection as well as set processes in data analysis including annotations, wordlist, and concordances.

On the other hand, Johansson (2011) rejects the notion of describing corpus linguistics as either ‘theoretical or applied’, ‘science or methodology’ and according to him such restrictions to a particular user or application is uncalled for. He distinguishes three different uses of the corpus by different scholars: corpus-informed studies; corpus-based studies; and corpus-driven studies. McEnery and Hardie (2012) ascribe these categorisations views as the sources of diversity among corpus linguists.

On the other hand, in the interviews with another set of corpus linguists such as Conrad, Laviosa, Leech Loun, Sampson and Scott (Viana et al., 2011) argue that corpus linguistics is neither science nor a methodology, but described it using other terminologies. Conrad (2011) for example, refers to corpus linguistics as an approach to studying language all other terms seem inaccurate to it. The term approach is used in the sense that “all corpus works share certain general characteristics and a certain research philosophy” (Conrad, 2011, p. 49), and encompass great diversity in research purposes and methods. Therefore, referring to corpus linguistics as methodology or a separate field of science according to her is misleading since corpus coped with diversities at the essence of different linguists.

Henceforth, Laviosa (2011) advocates that as linguists we can reach consensus to the fact that ‘corpus linguistics’ is a new kind of research domain, an immensely important development of descriptive linguistics and a new approach to language studies. According to Leech (2011) corpus linguistics is neither a methodology pure or simple nor a pure science/scientific domain, but it is rather a methodologically-oriented branch of linguistics than the scientific domain. He adds that “using corpus has led to the development of growing collection of computer tools for searching, retrieving, annotating, and analysing, electronic text data: concordancers, parsers and so forth” (2011, p. 157). Louw (2011) supports the view of corpus linguistics as neither methodology nor science, but for him, it is best to be referred to as an instrument of science in the hand of Sinclairean.

Sampson (2011) argues that it is misleading to think of corpus linguistics as a branch of linguistics, like other branches of linguistics such as psycholinguistics, philology, sociolinguistics or historical linguistics. Scott (2011) chooses to use the terms tool and resource instead, referring to corpus linguistics. In the same vein, he does not recognise it as a separate science but more close
to the methodology. He asserts that the sheer power of tools and corpora have transformed and modelled the approaches of linguistics analysis both quantitative and qualitative.

3.2 Corpus-based approach and corpus-driven study
Corpus linguistics is a field of study that can cover all aspects of language through investigation of the casual use of a corpus to obtain a suitable authentic illustration language variation, linguistics elements as well as pragmatic and discourse-related phenomena. The different application of corpus analysis leads to the categorisations of corpora studies to general Corpus-based or corpus-driven models of how language works (Viana et al., 2011). Henceforth, linguists withhold diverse presuppositions concerning this issue most of them are often claim that their work to be as either corpus-driven or corpus-based. In addition to that, Francis (1993) is the first person to start using the terms corpus-driven and data-driven in which he emphasises the fundamental differences between corpus-based and corpus-driven approaches. As he postulates the term corpus in the latter approach is the main informant the only reliable authority, while in the former sense the term corpus is associated with basic principles and process of language based on the naturally occurring language. In the early day of corpus linguistics, it was certainly important to emphasise that things can be discovered in a corpus which can never be imagined by introspection. Almost twenty years later, Tognini-Bonelli (2001) revives the debate on the distinction between corpus-based and corpus-driven in her famous book ‘Corpus linguistics at work (2011)’. She explores different functions of the corpus as either theory or methodology in relation to corpus-based or corpus-driven analysis. In her conception corpus-driven concerned with the application of corpora for different pedagogical purposes.

Moreover, the distinction is intended to signal whether data are used (merely) to illustrate or test old categories of linguistic order, which have been taken from earlier linguistic theory (this is corpus-based analysis), or whether it is possible to induce new findings from sequences of raw textual data, and theory avoid assumptions and self-fulfilling prophecies (this is corpus-driven analysis). According to Hasselgård, Ebeling, and Ebeling, (2013) the corpus-driven concept is clearly related to the concept of induction, although in all the discussion about the corpus-driven approach, there is hardly any reference to the intensive debate about induction over the past 400 years or so. The concept of is usually attributed to Bacon in the 1600s, though in fact, it goes back much further. In the 1700s, Hume expresses scepticism of the concept, since what has happened in the past cannot guarantee what will happen in the future. From the 1930s onwards, this scepticism was expressed even more strongly by Popper (1975, cited in Hasselgård, Ebeling, & Ebeling, 2013) who argues that induction is simply a myth.

4. The Use of Learner Corpora in L2 Classroom
According to Vannestal and Lindquist (2007) linguists have been using corpora for pedagogical purposes for more than two decades. As a methodology based approach with a set of rules and principles, corpus linguistics is primarily concerned with electronic tools used to provide an authentic linguistic bank of data that could help in investigating language at the hand and promote pedagogical understandings in English Language Teaching (ELT) (Proctor 2012). Kennedy (2014) acknowledges the link between studies on corpus linguistics to second language pedagogy back to the early half of the twentieth century. This initially started with the use of corpora to generate vocabulary lists for foreign learners (Vannestal & Lindquist, 2007).

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Learner corpora are relatively recent development in linguistic studies. Flowerdew (2013) defines learner corpora as “systematic collections of learner language data with aim of comparing learner usage with native, or expert, usage” (p. 171). Meanwhile, Granger (2003) defines corpora of learner language as “electronic collection of authentic texts produced by foreign or second language learners” (p.34).

The main importance of learner corpora is that they are more generally allied with empirical data' which makes possible for linguists to study the aspects of language objectively with the language as a central object (McEnery & Wilson, 1997). According to Flowerdew (2012) “most of the learner corpora are collected from learners of a particular background so that the distinctive interlanguage of those speakers (or writers) is represented and can be compared with expert usage or from other L2s” (171). For Gaviola and Aston (2001 cited in Baker 2012) ‘using corpus findings to inform language teaching, and the actual use of corpora in language classroom has been a topic of much interest and discussion’. Tim Johns, was early pioneer in bringing the corpus into classrooms (Rappen, 2001 cited in Baker, 2012, p. 206), whom in his work ‘data-driven learning’ approach secured to exploit relatively small corpora to generate concordances from which learners could work out the linguistic regularities or themselves (Viana et al. 2011, p.1).

The development corpora of learner studies are always associated with application of computer for pedagogical and learning purposes, generally known as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) as McEnery and Wilson (1996, p., 105) posit that “a computer system based upon a parsed corpus database is already being used in the teaching of English Grammar at the University of Nijmegen” and many subsequent studies used developed software either in teaching language to the learners or for analysing language produced by language learners. Moreover, Sinclair’s (2004) work on how to use Corpora in Language Teaching immensely contributes to the development of corpora pedagogical purposes and help readers/researchers with quite a number of discussion and hands-on as well as practical activities covering a range uses of corpora in the classroom from various research findings.

Corpus is mostly used in Language Teaching (language pedagogy) for the availability of various electronic tools with the advent of computer and internet that can aid learners in studying the nature and different uses of language through frequency value, concordance hits, expended contexts, register types, collocations and syntactic patterns. Corpus-based language learning/teaching methods have revolutionised the traditional maxim about the method as they provide learners with the frequency value of lexical structures. At the same time, this approach forcibly redefined and refined the way and manner some language concepts are viewed or learned, for example, lexis and structure are learned as a correlated unit rather than piecemeal or separate linguistics units. John (1991) views of the leaner as researcher is complemented by a tendency for teaching materials to adopt syllabuses exploiting corpus-based research, privileging those features which appear most frequent in native speaker corpora, or most problematic in corpora o learner data.

Another considerable feature of pedagogical corpora is the size of the corpus. Based on the size corpus was classified as either small or large, most researchers advocate the use of small corpus in language pedagogy and learning. This is why the use of large corpus in the classroom is discouraged and ignored by language researchers (Proctor, 2012). However, there is no consensus
among the scholars in determining the size of the corpus that could be considered for pedagogical purposes (Sinclair, 2001). Most studies considered the use of corpus for specific language purposes which may consist from 20,000-words to 250,000-words (Ghaddessy et al., 2001). Moreover, Flowerdew (2012) adds that in two decades or more ago 100,000-words is regarded as small corpus but nowadays even one million-words may be seen as small corpus not very large at all.

Corpus as a guided teaching of language from studying the linguistics pattern in more general passion rather than units, this will help ESL/EFL beginners to enhance their knowledge of structure of a particular language as one of their basic needs as beginners is to interact with natural occurring language data (Krashen’s (1981) second language acquisition theory), this can be provided through corpus-driven approach, “exposing to authentic English and producing native-like English through corpus are of significance for many EFL students as beginners or intermediate ones” (Proctor, 2012, p. 5). O’Keefe, McCarthy, and Carter (2007) add that the book of Schmitt and Schmitt (2005) can serve as a clear example of using corpora in the study of Academic English, each unit of the book was based on ‘a set of target words taken from Coxhead’s Academic Word List and all target words are presented explicitly at the beginning of each unit which enables the user to conduct a self-test.

Many studies learner language especially those done to investigate the EFL learners revealed that learners at almost all proficiency levels have difficulty in using the high frequency verbs such as ‘make’. And suggest that concordance-based exercises can help raise awareness of the complexity of high-frequency verb (O’Keefe et al., 2007). There are numerous studies conducted using learner corpora spoken or written to investigate language use by language learners.

Reppen (2010) provides a step-by-step procedure on how to use corpora on to the classroom and for pedagogical purposes, which involved identifying the ‘structure or language features’ for instruction. The student needs to practice. It should be a goal oriented that inform the teacher about the student level of proficiency. Flowerdew (2012) construes that learner corpora can be used in L2 error analysis, as a process which involved annotating features of learner interlanguage (errors), as such a comparison of the learner and expert corpora can reveal inappropriate use and also over-and under-use of given features on the part of the learners.

5. Corpus as a research paradigm

Research from corpus linguistics can provide a great deal of useful information to language teachers/researchers that can be used to inform course planning. For example, information from corpus linguistic research can provide insights as to what features of spoken language
students will frequently hear outside the classroom, or what grammatical features students will encounter in the different types of texts that they will be reading or writing. (p.10)

Corpora could be used as a meaningful source of data in an empirical language study. McEnery and Wilson (1996) note the importance of corpora in language teaching as believe that they can be closely allied to the important means of generating empirical data corpora help linguists to be more objective and language centred in their view about language, rather than being subjective depending on individual's perception on language. Corpora could be important tools in language studies and played more generous roles in collecting samples of language varieties, dialects, and for translations purposes. Corpus enables us to collect a broad sample of speech or huge bank of written texts across varieties of genres from which we can make an analysis using co-variables of the status of the learners like age, sex, class, learning a language as second or as foreign. In the case of lexicography corpora studies have changed the way in which lexicographers and other linguists interested in the lexicon – can look at language as it provides up-to-date information about language in more organised and meaningful way of analysis both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Flowerdew (2012) posits that to understand how corpus linguistics is applied in language pedagogy distinctions can be made between direct and indirect approaches to corpus studies. Indirect applications are in the sense of using corpus as a research method in the process of dictionaries, syllabuses, textbooks, and teaching materials productions. For example the production of Collin COULD English Dictionary; Collins English Grammar textbook under the guidelines of Sinclair (1991); Macmillan Dictionary of English for advanced learners with Hoey as a chief adviser; the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (Biber, et al., 1996) Cambridge Grammar of English (Carter & McCarthy, 2006). Indirect applications also involve the use of corpus in English for specific purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP). On the other side, the direct approaches of corpus linguistics to pedagogy can be sum up of what is referred to Data-Driven Learning (DDL) where students participated as researchers and worked directly with corpora with teachers in the help in the interpretation of corpus data (Flowerdew, 2012).

6. Conclusion
It can be recalled that many presuppositions have emerged about corpus linguistics as discussed somewhere above in this article. Thus, corpus linguists have different views about the status of the corpus as a field of study or as a methodology or tool used in the analysis of language. Some of the perceived as a method or methodological panorama while some scholars believed that it could be a science on its own, some corpus linguists reluctantly partook an intermediary position and considered it to be partially a methodology and partially a field of enquiry on its own; consequently others rejected both of the notions referring to corpus linguistics as methodology or as science, they believed that the two terms are uncalled for and seem to be misleading. Corpus linguists observed that corpus linguistics is not directly a study about a particular aspect of language. Rather it is an area of which focuses upon a set of procedures, or methods, for studying a language or as characterised by others as a field of inquiry. Moreover, corpus linguistics is heterogeneous field not monolithic as such it focuses upon a group of methods and procedures for studying language, nevertheless, these methods and procedures themselves are still developing and remain an
unclearly delineated set-though some of them, such as analysis of concordance lines, are well established and regarded as central to the approach.

Based on this critique discussion we posited our intermediary stake concerning the corpus, as such by revisiting the definition as a collection of naturally occurring language text chosen to characterise a state or variety of a change corpus linguistic sound clearly as method, notwithstanding, the collection of samples of language is not just mere generating of word lists or concordances, but a guided and principled collection of text of particular language, with applied parameters, such as gathering and organizing knowledge into testable laws and theories through observation, experimentation, measurement and capable replicability by another researcher, by this definition, it is sound more of having scientific basis. Hence, corpus linguistics can be seen as both science and methodology depending on who used it and the purpose it served.

The approach to corpus linguistics can be direct or indirect. Where students participated as researchers and worked directly with corpora. Indirect applications are in the sense of using corpus as a research method in the process of dictionaries, syllabuses, textbooks, and teaching materials productions. Findings from learner corpus analysis can be applied to dictionaries, grammars and the design of the syllabuses. Learner corpus is an important tool for testing student performance, and relevance of a particular target language features to students' background. It helps teachers to know whether a particular target feature is difficult or not. It is more motivating and relevant for teachers to develop their own corpora from regular classes for immediate pedagogical use. Finally, we need to add that the term corpus in applied linguistics is generally concerned with the collection of naturally occurring texts that is the language that was generated by real speakers and writers rather than the language that was invented solely for the purposes linguistic analysis and argumentation.

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Awareness-Raising of Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Does It Make a Difference?

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Abstract
This study presents the results of the impact of a short training on vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs). The aim was to raise participants’ awareness of a wide range of VLSs and consequently to encourage and motivate them to utilize these strategies in their vocabulary learning. The participants were 29 Saudi male students in their first semester majoring in English as a foreign language in the Department of English and Translation in the College of Languages and Translation at King Saud University, Saudi Arabia. The data collection tool was a questionnaire which consists five main categories of VLSs with 8 sub-strategies under each type with a total of 40 sub-strategies. The same questionnaire was administered twice: before and after training. The results showed an awareness-raising impact as reflected in the increase use of VLSs following the training. The increase was in all five strategy categories with statistically significant differences in three categories; Determination, Memory, and Cognitive strategies. Furthermore, the participants of this study reported that they benefited a lot from the training and they not only increased their exploitation of the strategies in this course but this training led them to utilize these strategies in other courses, such as reading and grammar. Although the training was short, the effect was evident, thus it is assumed that longer period of training will be conducive to better results in terms of the use of VLSs and consequently vocabulary knowledge. It is recommended that such intervention should be implemented in other courses as an initial step in understanding learning strategies in general with the goal of enhancing learners’ autonomy in different types of learning strategies.

Keywords: King Saud University, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Students, strategy training, vocabulary learning strategies

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Introduction

In the field of applied linguistics in general and in the field of language learning and teaching in particular, no one can deny the important role that language learning strategies (LLS) play in mastering both second and foreign languages (cf. Cohen & Macaro 2007; Nation 2013; O’Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990; Schmitt 1997) among others. There is also a wide consensus among researchers on the effectiveness of good vocabulary mastery in successful communication and the vital role that vocabulary plays in language proficiency in all four language skills. However, for learners to master vocabulary and to increase their vocabulary stock, they will need the right tools. Among these tools are vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). Schmitt (1997) noticed that the importance of strategies was motivated by the growing interest in the active role of the learner in the language learning process.

Statement of the problem

Given the rapid advances in the process of language learning and the need for English as a foreign language for many learners around the world including the Saudis, it was noticed that Saudi learners are still weak and poor in utilizing vocabulary learning strategies in a way that will more effectively facilitate their learning of English vocabulary. Results from recent study (Alqarni, 2018) reveal that the overall mean score of the use of the strategies indicates that the Saudi participants are low/poor users of vocabulary learning strategies in general. Such findings should be informative about Saudi English learners’ vocabulary learning strategies, and of a particular interest to English language instructors, course designers and developers, as well as the language learners themselves. Consequently, they should guide future planning for vocabulary teaching, vocabulary learning, and most importantly for vocabulary learning strategy training. In this regard, the idea of strategy awareness is worthy of more investigation to make sure that participants are all aware of the set of the VLSs that are available for them and thus can be trained to utilize them in their vocabulary learning which would yield better vocabulary competency. This study will try to fill in this gap in the Saudi context.

Literature review

Vocabulary studies literature has revealed various vocabulary learning strategies taxonomies and classifications. Many researchers have grouped these strategies into different categories based on their research results (cf. Gu & Johnson, 1996; Nation 2013; Schmitt, 1997). The taxonomy proposed by Schmitt (1997), which includes: Determination, Memory, Cognitive, Metacognitive, and Social strategies, was the most comprehensive and famous one, and consequently has been widely used in many studies for its ease of application and for the ease of coding and analysing the obtained data. Previous research utilized Schmitt’s taxonomy to explore participants’ vocabulary strategies, and in many cases, with relation to participants’ level of proficiency, gender, and language background, among other factors. In the following lines, some relevant studies will be presented.

In his experimental study, Nunan (1997) investigates the effects of strategy training on four key aspects of the learning process, which include student’s motivation, knowledge of strategies, the perceived utility of strategies, and the actual deployment of strategies. From the same language program, sixty first-year undergraduate students at the University of Hong Kong participated in this study and were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups. The experimental
groups were systematically trained in fifteen learning strategies. Results indicate significant differences in three of the four areas investigated. The experimental groups significantly outperformed the control groups on motivation, knowledge, and perceived utility. However, there was no significant difference in the area of deployment. The author concludes that “the effects were not uniform across all strategies, and, in some instances, were inconsistent and piecemeal” (Nunan, 1997 p. 137).

Mizumoto and Takeuchi (2009) examined the effectiveness of explicit instruction of VLSs. The participants were 146 female English as a foreign language (EFL) learners from two Japanese universities and the training was conducted during a 10-week semester. Both vocabulary test and questionnaires on VLSs and motivation were administered at the beginning of the course. Based on the vocabulary test results, the participants were then divided into two groups: experimental and control groups where the experimental group received explicit instruction on VLSs during their regular language classes. The same instruments were re-administered at the end of the course to examine the changes in both the questionnaire responses and test scores. The results show that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the vocabulary test. The researchers conclude that the strategy training was effective for both improving the repertoire and the frequency of use of vocabulary learning strategies with different degrees for different strategies. Moreover, learners demonstrated different responses to the strategy instruction.

With the impact of the proficiency level in mind, ÇELİK and TOPTAŞ’s (2010) surveyed the vocabulary-learning strategies of 95 Turkish EFL learners enrolled in Ankara University School of Foreign Languages at three different levels (elementary, intermediate, and upper levels). The results showed that the Determination strategies were utilized very frequently, whereas the Cognitive strategies were the least utilized one in comparison to other strategies. The results also showed that the intermediate level learners regarded the strategy categories as more useful than the other groups. However, the authors conclude that the participants’ overall use of VLSs is somewhat inadequate and there was a gap between their use of strategies and the perception of strategy usefulness.

Rabadi (2016) carried out one of the recent studies in the Arabic context where she investigates the VLSs of 110 undergraduate EFL Jordanian students majoring in English Language and Literature from eight Jordanian universities. She administered a modified version of Schmitt’s (1997) vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire, with a total of forty items under five main categories of VLSs. These categories include: Memory, Determination, Social, Cognitive, and Metacognitive strategies. The results revealed that Memory strategies were the most frequently used, whereas Metacognitive strategies were the least frequently used ones. Rabadi concluded that her Jordanian EFL participants were medium strategy users.

Likewise, another recent study is Fatima and Pathan’s study (2016). They investigate the VLS employed by 180 undergraduate students in two universities in Pakistan. A forty five close-ended item questionnaire, consisting of four broad VLSs: Metacognitive regulation strategy, Cognitive regulation strategy, Memory strategy, and Activation strategies, was administered to the participants. Results indicated that Cognitive regulation strategy and Activation strategy were the most employed strategies. The authors concluded that their results revealed that there was no
statistically significant difference in practicing VLSs between both groups from the two different universities.

In a most recent study, Agustín-Llach and Alonso (2017) investigated the effects of contextualized training in vocabulary strategy use which was offered to 97 first-year undergraduate EFL learners. The authors stated that their aim was to explore the learners’ vocabulary strategy use as well as to foster their autonomy in language learning by means of strategy training. Results showed that the use of vocabulary strategies increased for every particular strategy after the training compared to scarce and occasional use of VLSs prior to training. However, the ranking of preferred strategies did not change. The researchers maintained that “the training resulted in awareness-raising with respect to strategic behaviours, learner empowerment, as well as some improvement in learner autonomy in vocabulary learning” (p.141). They concluded that longer and more sustained training may lead to better results in the development of strategy use.

The literature above reviewed two types of studies: studies that investigated language learners’ use of VLSs in general (ÇELİK & TOPTAŞ’s; 2010; Rabadi, 2016; and Fatima & Pathan, 2016), and studies that explored the effects of training on either language learning strategies in general (Nunan 1997) or on vocabulary learning strategies in particular (Mizumoto and Takeuchi, 2009; Agustín-Llach and Alonso (2017).

**The Present Study**

**Research Questions**

The aim of the current study is to address the following two research questions:

1. What is the impact of strategy training on the levels of strategy employment for the five main categories by the participants? In other words, do they use VLSs more frequently after the strategy training?
2. Does strategy training change the ranking of VLSs use when it comes to the top ten used strategies in pre- and post training?

**Participants**

The participants of this study were twenty-nine Saudi male students. They were in their first semester majoring in English as a foreign language in the English Department and Translation in the College of Language and Translation at King Saud University. Participation was voluntary.

**Instrument**

Due to its suitability for the taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs), this study utilized an adopted version of the questionnaire that was designed by Rabadi (2016) in her study with Jordanian students, which was based on Schmitt’s (1997) taxonomy of VLSs. The adoption of this questionnaire was motivated by its tailored design for the Jordanian students in an educational setting similar to the context of this study in Saudi Arabia. The questionnaire consists of five main categories of VLSs with eight sub-strategies under each type with total of forty sub-strategies (See appendix 1). The main five categories include: Determination strategies (DET), Memory strategies (MEM), Cognitive strategies (COG), Metacognitive strategies (MET), and Social strategies (SOC). A five-point scale from 0 (never) to 4 (always) was used to measure the frequency of use of the vocabulary learning strategies.
Procedures

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher to twenty-nine participants twice. That is, in the middle of the 4th week (pre-training) and in the middle of week 14 (post-training) of the first semester. Oral instruction was given in Arabic to the participants before filling out the questionnaire and there was no time limit to complete the questionnaire in both administrations.

After the first administration of the questionnaire, participants undertook five-week training on VLSs beginning from week five. The class meet each Sunday for 2 hours, where the first half of the class time was allocated/devoted for the training (awareness raising of the strategies) for five weeks. Each week one category of the five main VLSs categories was focused on. The training phase focused on raising participants’ awareness of VLSs where the instructor (The researcher) explicitly introduced the target strategies and demonstrated briefly how to apply them. Participants were given the chance to apply them to learning vocabulary while discussing their options and practice with classmates. They were also asked whether they used such strategies when learning new vocabulary items and how they would possibly employ such strategies in future learning. Participants were requested to submit a weekly dairy (every Thursday) for nine weeks, where they had to write down their thoughts about the training they received in the first five weeks and how the training had affected their vocabulary learning behaviour in the consecutive weeks, and whether their VLSs use had changed. In week fourteen, the same questionnaire was re-administered to the same group.

Data Analysis

This study employed a five-point rating scale, ranging from never (0 point) to always (4 points). Therefore, the scoring system of strategy used can be valued from 0.00 to 4.00. Any overall mean score for VLSs valued from 0.00 to 1.99 is looked at as low use of strategy, from 2.00 to 2.99 as medium use, and from 3.00 to 4.00 as high use. Data collected from this study was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), by applying the t-test to the data to get the means and standard deviations for the use of the strategies. Participants’ dairy entries were also looked into and participants’ responses were analyzed in order to find answers to the main research questions of the present study.

Findings

To answer the first research question: “What is the impact of strategy training on the levels of strategy employment for the five main categories by all participants, do they use VLSs more after the strategy training?”, the overall mean scores for each category in the pre- and post administrations were compared. The results showed, with no exception, higher mean scores after training for all the five main categories included in this study: Determination strategies (DET), Memory strategies (MEM), Cognitive strategies (COG), Metacognitive strategies (MET), and Social strategies (SOC) with statistically significant differences in three categories DET (p < 0.01), MEM, and COG (p < 0.05) strategies. Table 1 below shows the overall mean scores and standard deviations for all the five main categories of VLSs in the pre- and post training administrations. See figure 1 below, too.
Table 1. Overall mean scores from both administration of the same questionnaire for all the five main VLSs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Test mode</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determination strategies</td>
<td>Pre-training</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.7543</td>
<td>0.64042</td>
<td>4.130</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-training</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.2155</td>
<td>0.53022</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory strategies</td>
<td>Pre-training</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.5991</td>
<td>0.69788</td>
<td>2.666</td>
<td>0.013*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-training</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.9883</td>
<td>0.78515</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive strategies</td>
<td>Pre-training</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.4052</td>
<td>0.67203</td>
<td>2.579</td>
<td>0.015*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-training</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.7321</td>
<td>0.79870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive strategies</td>
<td>Pre-training</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.1320</td>
<td>0.75334</td>
<td>1.884</td>
<td>0.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-training</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.3935</td>
<td>0.79487</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social strategies</td>
<td>Pre-training</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.0338</td>
<td>0.68588</td>
<td>1.823</td>
<td>0.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-training</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.2500</td>
<td>0.75077</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1  Strategy use before and after training

To answer the second question: “Does strategy training change the ranking of VLSs use when it comes to the top ten used strategies in pre- and post training?”, the ranking of the VLSs was looked into, and the ten most used strategies with their mean scores were extracted from both pre- and post training questionnaires. This extraction shows different strategies distributions with different mean scores frequencies. See table 2.
Table 2. *VLSs and mean scores of the top ten strategies in both administrations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MET2</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>DET4</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>MET1</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>COG2</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>MEM4</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>SOC6</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>MET4</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>MET1</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>COG2</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>DET1</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>SOC6</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>MET3</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>MET2</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>MET4</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>MET1</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>COG2</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>DET1</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>SOC6</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>MET3</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>MET4</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>MET1</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>COG2</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>DET1</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>SOC6</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SOC3</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>SOC3</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>SOC7</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>SOC1</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SOC1</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>SOC1</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>SOC7</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>SOC3</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SOC3</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>SOC3</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>SOC7</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>SOC1</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>SOC7</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>SOC7</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>SOC1</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>SOC3</td>
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The list of the top ten used VLSs from the pre- and post-training data shows that these strategies come from all the 5 main categories of VLSs presented in the questionnaire. In the pre-training, they include 1 COG, 1 MEM, 1 DET, 3 MET, and 3 SOC strategies. The highest mean score is 3.07 (MET 2), while the lowest mean score is 2.11 (SOC1).

Similarly, the top ten used VLSs in the post-training data belong to all 5 categories of VLSs, though with different distributions. They include 1 COG, 1 SOC, 2 MEM, 2 DET, and 4 MET strategies. However, the list shows different ranking for these strategies with higher mean scores, with no exception. 3.45 (MET 2) was the highest mean score and 2.41 (MEM4) was lowest one.

**Discussion**

As shown by the results presented above, strategy training and awareness-raising of VLSs had an evident impact on increasing the participants’ awareness of VLSs and consequently an increase of the employment of these strategies. It is assumed that this short training not only enhanced the participants’ knowledge of these strategies but also increased the use of all five strategy categories with statistically significant differences in three categories; DET, MEM, and COG strategies. These results are in conformity with Nunan’s results (1997) in that strategy training significantly affect strategy use and deployment. They are also in line with results obtained from Mizumoto and Takeuchi study (2009). Likewise, recent results from Agustín-Llach and Alonso (2017) affirm such results showing that the use of vocabulary strategies increased for every particular strategy after the training compared to scarce and occasional use of VLSs prior to training.

Furthermore, by looking at the overall mean scores of the use of VLSs, as shown in table 3 below, results show an increase of the overall mean score in the post-training results: 1.77 in the pre-training compared to the overall mean score of 2.11 in the post-training results. It is evident here that the participants’ category of strategy use moved up from low/poor users of strategies in the pre-training administration to medium strategy users (similar to Rabadi’s results, 2016) in the post-training administration.

Table 3. *Results from both administration of the same questionnaire*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-training</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.776</td>
<td>0.555</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-training</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>0.624</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
One can claim here that the participants’ improved utilization of VLSs was an effect and a reflection of the training, though somewhat minimal.

Unlike results from Agustín-Llach and Alonso (2017) where the ranking of preferred strategies does not change, the analysis of the top ten used strategies in both administrations revealed different distributions and ranking of VLSs. All the five main categories of the VLSs were represented in both lists occupying different hierarchy in the ranking scale with higher mean scores for results generated from the post training administration (see table 2 above). Moreover, there was an increase in the number of the representative strategies from three main VLSs categories after training: Metacognitive strategies (3 vs. 4), Determination strategies (1 vs. 2), and Memory strategies (1 vs. 2). Only Cognitive strategies kept the same occurrence in both lists (COG 1 vs. 1), while the number of Social strategies has witnessed a dramatic drop in the list after training (3 vs. 1) in favour of other strategies as mentioned above. That is, 3 Social strategies in the pre-training list compared to 1 strategy in the post training list. The scarcity of the Cognitive strategies in both lists is in line with results from ÇELİK and TOPTAŞ’s (2010), however, it contradicts the findings of Fatima and Pathan’s study (2016), where they found Cognitive strategies as the most used strategies by all participants.

Additionally, the advantages of strategy training are even more evident in the post training list, where the top four strategies have high mean scores, three and above, moving the participants up to the high users category in regards of these strategies.

It should be mentioned here that the MET2: “Learn new words by watching English-speaking movies with subtitles”, was the favoured/used strategy by all participants in both administrations with slightly higher mean score after training (3.07 vs. 3.45). This is in conformity with results from ÇELİK and TOPTAŞ’s (2010), but in reverse with results from Rabadi’s study (2016), where she found Metacognitive strategies being the least frequently used strategies. For the participants in this study, this could be attributed to the high value participants give to learning input from watching movies with the added help they are getting from subtitles. And this option is also favoured for the easy access learners have to movies and similar materials in their smart phones wherever they go. Unexpectedly, none of the Memory strategies has accoupled any higher ranking in the list of the top ten used strategies.

Finally, by analyzing the dairy entries submitted by the twenty-nine participants, interesting observations have emerged. Participants indicated in the initial training session that many of the introduced strategies were new to them and they lacked the knowledge of them and how to use them. During and after the training weeks, participants expressed their happiness of being exposed to these strategies and they showed appreciation for the training they had received. Furthermore, their willingness to exploit these strategies in different vocabulary learning contexts was expressed and was then evident in their responses in the collected dairies. It was clear that participants had a good pattern of using these strategies in weekly bases as they tried utilizing a wide range of VLSs with different words in different learning contexts. Moreover, some participants stated that they extended the use of these strategies in other learning subjects, such as reading and grammar. In general, participants were keen to try these new strategies, with no
exception as reflected in their diaries. Moreover, they were keen to test their effectiveness in learning new vocabulary items. One participant reported that:

“I was happy to know different strategies each week and in fact every week I tried different strategies with new words. I was trying to see which ones are more effective for me so I can keep using them.”

Another participant reported that:

“The number of strategies was large, however that gave me options to choose from and to test their impact on my memorization and recall of vocabularies.”

And a third participant stated that:

“Knowing the wide range of vocabulary learning strategies made me a bit worried at the beginning and maybe confused about which one to use. But I remembered the instructor telling us that we don’t have to use all of them but to choose from them what suits our learning needs. I concentrated on some of them and I used them repeatedly.”

All the excerpts above and other diary entries indicate clearly that participants’ knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies has increased after training sessions and participants became more aware of such strategies and consequently use them more frequently. In the same vein, Mizumoto and Takeuchi (2009) conclude that the strategy training was effective for both improving the repertoire and the frequency of use of VLSs.

As a result, adding a strategy training component to English courses in general and vocabulary courses in particular is highly recommended.

Conclusion
The present study implemented a short and light training on VLSs. The aim was to raise participants’ awareness of a wide range of VLSs and consequently to encourage and motivate them to utilize these strategies in their vocabulary learning. The results showed an awareness-raising impact as reflected in the increase use of VLSs following the training. The increase was in all five strategy categories with statistically significant differences in three categories; Determination, Memory, and Cognitive strategies. Participants of this study reported that they benefited a lot from the training and they not only increased their exploitation of the strategies in this course, but this training led them to utilize these strategies in other courses, such as reading and grammar. Although the training was short, the effect was evident, thus it is assumed that longer period of training will be conducive to better results in terms of the use of VLSs and consequently vocabulary knowledge. It is recommended that such intervention should be implemented in other courses as initial step in understanding learning strategies in general with the goal of enhancing learners’ autonomy in different types of learning strategies.

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References


### Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire VLSQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determination strategies: DET</th>
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<th>Memory strategies: MEM</th>
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<td>MET8</td>
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</table>

**Social strategies: SOC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOC1</th>
<th>Ask instructors of English for Arabic translation of new lexical items.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOC2</td>
<td>Communicate with instructors of English in English to use a new lexical item in a sentence to increase the knowledge of vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC3</td>
<td>Communicate with instructors of English in English to ask for a synonym of a new word or to explain it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC4</td>
<td>Look for extra English information through the Internet to learn new vocabulary items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC5</td>
<td>Discuss in English with classmates to know and expand the meaning of a new vocabulary item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC6</td>
<td>Communicate with foreigners in English through different types of media to develop new vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC7</td>
<td>Play English games, such as scrabble, crossword puzzles to find meaning of a new vocabulary item through group work activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC8</td>
<td>Study and practice meaning of new vocabulary items in-group to expand lexical knowledge.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The Investigation of the Textual Organization of Research Article Discussion Sections in the Field of Second Language Writing

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Language Institute
Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand

Supong Tangkiengsirisin
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Abstract
This research aims to investigate the textual organization of research article discussion sections in second language writing in order to reveal how expert writers in the discipline prefer to construct their discussion. Move analysis was conducted on a corpus of 103 research article discussion sections collected from five established journals. The analysis reveals that the research article discussion sections in second language writing could be described with eight moves with some moves containing steps. It was found that the commenting on results move, reporting results move and deductions from the research move were most frequent in the corpus. These findings suggest that the main function of the discussion sections is to report and comment on results, but the emphasis is placed on commenting. Besides, writers in this discipline also prefer to provide suggestions, areas for future studies and implications for teaching and learning in this section. Managing the section move, used to announce the outline of the section, was also identified in the corpus. This is a move that has never been reported before in previous studies on discussion sections. This finding suggests a strategy that can be used to handle the complexity of the discussion sections and make them reader friendly. The analysis also identified some typical patterns of moves occurring in a corpus. This study contributes to the fields of genre analysis, English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes, and provides guidance to novice or less experienced writers who want to write for publications.

Keywords: genre, move analysis, research articles, second language writing, textual organization

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Introduction

In the academic world, research articles are a key to knowledge, reputation and achievement. However, writing a research article and getting it published, especially in international academic journals where English is used as a medium of communication, is not an easy task. Therefore, there have been many efforts to investigate the characteristics of research articles to help writers, especially less experienced ones and nonnative English speakers who are linguistically disadvantaged, to be familiar with the research article genre and have sufficient knowledge and ability to pursue their goals. A number of studies have been conducted to explore various aspects of research articles such as textual organization and other text features including uses of tenses, voice, hedging, modality, reporting verbs, pronouns, and citations (e.g. Crompton, 1997; Matsuda, 2001; Hyland, 2001).

Textual organization is one of the areas of writing for publications that has received particular attention from genre analysts. Following Swales’ Create a Research Space (CARS) model of move analysis (1990), substantial studies have been conducted to analyse the move structure of research articles in various disciplines. The model has been used to study both the whole body of research articles (e.g. Kanoksilapatham, 2005), and a particular section in research articles such as the method section (Wood, 1982; Nwogu, 1997; Lim, 2006), the results section (Brett, 1994; Thompson, 1993) and the discussion section (Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Swales, 1990; Nwogu, 1997). Together, the studies conducted demonstrate that move structures vary across disciplines. It was also found that differences in move structures exist even between disciplines that are closely related (e.g. Samraj, 2002; Suntara & Usaha, 2013) and between subdisciplines belonging to the same discipline (e.g. Ozturk, 2007; Kanoksilapatham, 2015; Li & Pramoolsook, 2015; Atai & Habibie, 2012).

The textual organization of research articles as wholes and of their particular parts, has been continually studied. One of the most difficult parts to write and thus one that had received attention from genre analysts is the discussion section. There are several studies done on the discussion sections of academic disciplines in natural science (e.g. Peng, 1987; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Posteguillo, 1999; Kanoksilapatham, 2005, Basturkmen, 2012) and social science (e.g. Holmes, 1997; Yang & Allsion, 2003; Amnuai & Wanawaruk, 2013). These studies reveal that the discussion sections are not linear like the introductions but cyclical. However, the typical patterns of moves vary among disciplines. For example, a typical cyclical order found in Posteguillo’s (1990) study on 40 research articles from 3 different academic journals in computer science was Move 2 (Statement of result) followed by Move 7 (Deduction and hypothesis) or Move 2 followed by Move 8 (Recommendation). A cyclical pattern observed is Kanoksalipatham’s (2005) study on research article discussion sections in biochemistry was Move 12 (Contextualizing the study) followed by Move 13 (Consolidating results). In addition, the models proposed to describe the organization of the discussion sections also vary.

The studies into the textual organization of the research article discussion sections in different academic disciplines so far have provided better understanding of the function and characteristics of the section. This section seems to have higher complexity than other sections.
However, compared with other sections, this section still receives less attention. Given the importance of specificity of learners’ needs and expertise in English for Specific Purposes and the complexity of the section, the discussion section should be explored more.

From the study into the textual organization of research article introduction sections (Ozturk, 2007), the findings indicate that the move structure of introductions in second language writing seems to have a great deviation from the move structure proposed by the CARS model. These results show that this discipline contains some distinctions, and this makes it interesting to explore further other sections such as the discussion section. Besides, the research article discussion section of this discipline is still under researched. Exploring the textual organization of the research article discussion sections in this discipline should fill the literature.

Hence, the present study aims to investigate the textual organization of research article discussion sections in second language writing in order to find out how expert writers in this discipline prefer to organize their discussion. The study is limited to research articles written in English and contributing to English as a Second Language. The results of the study can contribute to the fields of genre analysis, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and will be useful to novice or less experienced writers who write for publications.

Genre analysis and research article discussion sections

This section briefly discusses Swales’ genre analysis which is a framework of this study and reviews studies previously done on research article discussion sections.

Swales’ genre analysis

The concept of genre is diverse according to the linguistic perspectives it draws on. These different linguistic perspectives also alter the study of genres or genre analysis. Among the genre researchers and theorists, it is the work of Swales (1981, 1990, 2004) working in the ESP tradition, that provided the most detailed proposal for genre definition, and the idea was later developed by Bhatia (1993). Generally, genre analysis is ‘the study of situated linguistic behavior in institutionalized academic or professional settings’ (Bhatia, 2002, p. 22). For Swales and Bhatia, communicative purpose is the main criterion used for identifying genre. Conducting analysis of genre in the ESP tradition, analysts look at various academic and professional texts, sometimes focusing on one or more sections of the texts. They may either identify the staging of content of a genre in terms of moves and steps or examine the linguistic features which are commonly employed for the realization of these moves and steps.

According to Swales (2004, p. 228), a move is “a discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse”. It is a segment of text which is shaped by a communicative function. Each move is comprised of a number of elements which constitute information in the move (Nwogu, 1997). These elements are referred to as ‘steps’ by Swales (1990) or ‘strategies’ by Bhatia (1993). In order to identify moves and their constituent elements (steps), both the grammatical features and the context in the discourse should be taken into account (Swales, 2004; Nwogu, 1990; Yang and Allison 2003).
ESP genre analyses are largely based on Swales’ (1981, 1990, 2004) work. He proposed a three-move structure for research article introductions, known as Create a Research Space (CARS) model. It is Swales’ model of move analysis that has been influential in the field of ESP and provided implications for teaching and learning of language in academic and professional domains.

Swales’ CARS model of move analysis has been used to analyse a variety of texts in both academic and professional genres such as university lectures (Thompson, 1994; Shamsudina & Ebrahimib, 2013) and business letters (Pinto dos Stantos, 2002). The research article is one of the genres that have been examined extensively with the CARS model. Due to the increasing importance and popularity of research articles as a main channel to circulate knowledge among scholars, and the difficulties in producing such a genre, especially for non-native speakers, substantial research has been conducted to analyse the textual organization or move structure of research articles, both the whole body of research articles and a particular section of research articles, in various disciplines.

Move analysis of research article discussion sections

One of the sections in research articles that has received attention from genre analysts is a discussion section. Genre analysts have attempted to study this part and see how it is constructed. Early studies were conducted by Belanger (1982), Peng (1987) and Hopkins & Dudley-Evans (1988). They conducted move analysis and described discussion sections with different number of moves. For example, Belanger (1982) analyzed 10 discussion sections from articles in the discipline of neuroscience and identified nine moves: 1) Introduction, 2) Summarizing results, 3) Conclusion, 4) What results suggest, 5) Further questions, 6) Possible answers to further questions, 7) Reference to previous research, 8) Reference to present research, and 9) Summary/Conclusion. Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988) studied Msc dissertations from the Department of Biology at the University of Birmingham and articles on irrigation and drainage appearing in international conference proceedings. They identified a list of 11 moves: 1) Background information, 2) Statement of result, 3) (Un)expected outcome, 4) Reference to previous research (Comparison), 5) Explanation of unsatisfactory result, 6) Exemplification, 7) Deduction, 8) Hypothesis, 9) Reference to previous research (Support), 10) Recommendation and 11) Justification.

All studies found cyclical patterns in research article discussion sections; however, typical cyclical orders vary. A typical cyclical order found in the study by Belanger (1982) was statements summarizing results, comparing them to mainstream research, and interpreting and extending the results into speculations. Peng (1987) conducted a move-based analysis of 10 chemical engineering discussion sections and observed two types of cyclical patternings. One cycle involves a research question. The other cycle involves the author’s comments on the findings. Holmes (1997) studied the structure of discussion sections of articles from 3 disciplines: history, political science and sociology. A typical pattern was Statement of result or Background information preceding Generalization or Reference to previous research. These cyclical patterns occurred because after stating the research results, the author added a comment in the form of either a hypothesis or a suggestion for further research.

The findings regarding obligatory and optional moves are also different. Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988) identified Move 2 (Statement of result) as an obligatory move. This move
appeared many times, almost always at the beginning of a cycle, it was thus considered the “head” move in a cycle. All other moves were optional. However, Move 2 (Statement of result) was not reported as an obligatory move in Holmes (1997). It was found that no move was completely obligatory in social science texts. The most common moves were Move 6, (Generalization) and Move 2 (Statement of result). Move 2 (Statement of result) was also identified quasi-obligatory in Swales (1990) and Posteguillo (1999).

Later work still confirms cyclical patterns in research article discussion sections. The number of moves used to describe the structure of discussion sections varies. The findings regarding typical cyclical patterns or sequence of move occurrence and obligatory moves remain different. The differences of move occurrence and sequence reflect the variation of move structure caused by academic disciplines. More move analysis models have thus been developed to describe research article discussion sections written in various disciplines. Analysts also try to improve the methodology in order to increase the reliability and the generalizability of the developed models and the research results. They try to refine the categories of moves. Some studies (e.g. Nwogu, 1997; Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Yang & Allison, 2003) added sub-moves or steps to their model of analysis in order to describe the structure of research article discussion sections in the discipline being studied in more details.

For example, Nwogu (1997) examined the structure of information in the medical research articles and found that the discussion sections in medical research articles consisted of 3 moves: Highlighting overall research outcome, Explaining specific research outcomes and Stating research conclusions. Nwogu used sub-moves to describe the structure of medical research papers. Explaining specific research outcome could be realized by 5 sub-moves which are Stating a specific outcome, Interpreting the outcome, Indicating significance of the outcome, Contrasting present and previous outcomes and Indicating limitations of outcomes. Stating research conclusions could be realized by 2 sub-moves which are Indicating research implications and Promoting further research.

Kanoksilapatham (2005) studied randomly selected 60 research articles from five journals in the field of biochemistry. Based on the analysis of the corpus, she proposed a two-level rhetorical structure (moves and steps) to describe how the information in biochemistry research articles is organized. Her study revealed three conventional moves: Contextualizing the study, Consolidating results and Stating limitations of the study, and one optional move: Suggesting further research.

Yang and Allison (2003) examined 20 research articles in applied linguistics from Result sections to the final sections of research articles. They also proposed a two-level rhetorical structure (moves and steps) to describe the organization of research article discussion sections in applied linguistics. Move 4 (Commenting on results) was found to be an obligatory move. The result reflects that the discussion section focuses on commenting on specific results. Move 2 (Reporting results) was considered quasi-obligatory in their study as it occurred in all discussion sections except one research article. Subsequent studies (e.g. Amnuai &Wannaruk, 2013; Wuttisirisiriporn, 2015; Nodoushan, 2012) also employed this two-level (moves and steps) analysis and yielded similar results.
We can see that the studies into the textual organization of research article discussion sections so far have been conducted on many disciplines and the results of the studies provide better understanding of how this section is constructed. However, as said in the introduction, this section still receives less attention compared with other sections of research articles. This section should thus be explored more. As second language writing has yielded some interesting characteristics in the previous study on introduction sections (Ozturk, 2007), and research article discussion sections in this discipline is still under researched, the present study will, therefore, investigate the textual organization of research article discussion sections in second language writing in order to find out how expert writers in this discipline prefer to organize their discussion.

**Data and method of analysis**

The corpus used in the present study comprised 103 research article discussion sections from five journals: 37 from *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13 from *Assessing Writing*, 19 from *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 14 from *English for Specific Purposes* and 20 from *System*. These journals were selected because they are all established journals which regularly publish articles related to English language writing over a long period (more than ten years).

The corpus was restricted to empirical studies. The discussion sections were taken from research articles restricted to a period of five years (2011-2015). Each discussion section was about 500-2000 words in length. This range of words is derived from the inspection of the number of words in all discussion sections. It allowed the study to cover the majority of the data. The authors’ native language was not taken as a variable in the present study; therefore, the discussion sections were collected from any articles regardless of the authors’ native language. This study is interested only in English writing as a second language so articles which are on English for first language (L1) were not included in the study.

In order to analyse the data to study the textual organization of the research article discussion sections, a coding scheme was developed. A coding scheme was developed based on previous rhetorical studies on research article discussion sections (Belanger, 1982; Peng, 1987; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Swales, 1990, 2004; Holmes, 1997; Nwogu, 1997; Posteguillo, 1999; Yang & Allison, 2003). Moves and steps identification was a recursive practice. The data were analysed and reanalysed, and the operational criteria of each move and step were adjusted along the process of analysis until they were settled. The moves and steps identified in the corpus are shown below.

- **Move 1**: Providing Background information
- **Move 2**: Managing the section
- **Move 3**: Summarizing results
- **Move 4**: Reporting results
- **Move 5**: Commenting on results
  - **Step 1**: Interpreting results
  - **Step 2**: Comparing results with literature
  - **Step 3**: Accounting for results
  - **Step 4**: Judging results
- **Move 6**: Summarizing the study
Move 7: Evaluating the study
   Step 1: Indicating limitations
   Step 2: Indicating significance/advantage
   Step 3: Evaluating methodology

Move 8: Deductions from the research
   Step 1: Making suggestions
   Step 2: Recommending further research
   Step 3: Drawing pedagogical implications

The analysis was first carried out by the researcher, and then 15 randomly selected pieces of data (around 15% of the corpus) were analysed and checked for coding agreement by an expert in move analysis and applied linguistics. The agreement rate of this data analysis was 94.68 per cent. The Kappa coefficient of the analysis was also calculated which was 0.94. The agreement rate and the kappa have shown that the demarcation of move boundaries between the two coders was reliable.

Results
Moves and steps used in the corpus

From Table 1, the analysis of the frequency of moves and steps revealed Move 5 (Commenting on results) occurred most frequently. Following the classification of this move by Kanoksilpatham (2005), it was considered an obligatory move as it occurred in all 103 discussion sections. Move 4 (Reporting results) was the second most frequent move. Since it appeared 95.15% of the corpus, which is more than 60%, it was thus classified as a conventional move for writing research article discussion sections in second language writing. Move 8 (Deductions from the research) and Move 1 (Providing background information) were also used frequently in the corpus. The former appeared in 73 discussion sections which was 70.87%. The latter appeared in 66 discussion sections which was 64.08%. They were both considered conventional moves for writing research article discussion section in second language writing.

Table 1 Overall Frequency of the Moves and Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moves &amp; Steps</th>
<th>Frequency of occurrence</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Move 1: Providing background information</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>64.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move 2: Managing the section</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move 3: Summarizing results</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move 4: Reporting results</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>95.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1:</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Move 5: Commenting on results</td>
<td>Interpreting results</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2: Comparing results with literature</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 3: Accounting for results</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4: Judging results</td>
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<td>4.66</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Move 6: Summarizing the study</th>
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<tr>
<th>Move 7: Evaluating the study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Indicating limitations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2: Indicating significance/advantage</td>
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<td>54</td>
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<td>Step 3: Evaluating methodology</td>
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<tr>
<th>Move 8: Deductions from the research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Making suggestions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Recommending further research</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Drawing pedagogical implications</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The arrangement of moves in the corpus

The analysis of the arrangement of moves revealed that all moves could be used to open research article discussion sections in second language writing, except Move 6 (Summarizing the study) and Move 8 (Deductions from the research). However, Move 1 (Providing background information) was most frequently used to start the sections. It was used in 48 research article discussion sections. Move 1 appearing in this position was usually to provide background information of overall research such as aims and methodological information and restate all research questions, not mentioning only a particular research question like Move 1 which appeared in the body of the discussion.

For the closing move, the move which was most likely used to end the discussion sections was Move 8 (Deductions from the research). It was found in 52 cases in the corpus. Another move which was also often employed to close the sections was Move 5 (Commenting on results). It was found in 27 research article discussion sections. The moves that never worked as a closing move according to the corpus were Move 1, Move 2, and Move 6.

Regarding the move sequence, the analysis of the corpus revealed that there was no uniformity in the sequence of moves used in the corpus. The moves seemed to be able to appear in any parts of the discussion sections and in any sequence and form different patterns in all 103 pieces of data. Some moves were used only once in the section. These moves were Moves 2, 3 and 6. There were 5 moves that were used many times. These moves were Moves 1, 4, 5, 7 and 8.

Moves 1, 4, 5, 7 and 8 were arranged in various ways, and they tended to form a cycle. Although the moves were combined in different ways, it was found that there were some move sequences that were more common and used more frequently than others. These sequences were Move 4 → Move 5, Move 4 → Move 5 → Move 8, Move 1 → Move 4 → Move 5, and Move 7 → Move 8.

Move 4 followed by Move 5 was the sequence that occurred most frequently. This sequence was used repeatedly in a section. The writers reported the results of the study in Move 4, usually one specific result at a time, and commented on the result in Move 5. Each specific result could be followed by one or several comments. This extract taken from Kormos (2011, p. 156) illustrates how this sequence was used many times in the section.

As regards the effect of task demands on narrative performance, we can conclude that the need to conceptualize the story-line did not seem to result in major linguistic and cohesive changes. //Move 4// It can be argued that the lack of substantial difference between the two types of tasks is due to the fact that both tasks required learners to write in the same genre. Genre is one of the important factors that affects the use of cohesive devices in writing (Smith & Frawley, 1983), and it also influences the lexical and syntactic range of expression as well the use of connectives (for a review see Biber & Conrad, 2009). //Move 5// The results concerning accuracy and syntactic complexity indices reveal that at the upper-intermediate level, writers in this study did not avoid the use of complex syntactic structures and constructions that they had not yet fully mastered when given the opportunity to tailor a narrative text to match their own linguistic resources. //Move 4//
Therefore, it might be assumed that both types of tasks provide similar opportunities for learners to display their linguistic competence in writing. //Move 5//

Another arrangement of moves which appeared frequently was Move 4 followed by Move 5 and Move 8. The writers reported specific results, commented on them and then made deductions. The deduction made in this sequence was usually suggestions, recommendations on further studies or pedagogical implications made based on specific results or issues. An example of this sequence can be seen in the extract below (Fritz & Ruegg, 2013, p. 179).

Apart from lexical accuracy, lexical range is also explicitly mentioned in the rating scale. The results show, however, that the range of words used did not significantly affect the lexis scores. //Move 4// This means that, although raters were explicitly trained to evaluate essays on the range of lexis used, they did not follow the rating scale in this respect. Students, therefore, were given scores on their essays that did not inform them of characteristics which were supposed to be assessed by this writing task. //Move 5// This finding suggests possible implications for rater training, where spending more time attuning raters to particular aspects of the rating scale may increase the construct validity of the test. //Move 8//

Move 1 followed by Move 4 and then Move 5 is the sequence which was used almost as frequently as the previous sequence (Moves 4 – 5 – 8). The writers provided background information of the research, reported results and then commented on the results. If this sequence was at the beginning of the section, Move 1 was usually to provide background information of overall research such as aims, related literature, methodological information and all research questions. If this sequence appeared in other part of the section, Move 1 was likely to restate a particular research question, literature and methodological information related to specific questions or results. The extract below (Lindgren and Stevenson, 2013, p. 401) exemplifies a Moves 1 - 4 - 5 sequence.

This study has examined whether language and gender influence the expression of interactional meanings in the pen friend letters of young Swedish writers. It has also examined the textual resources that the young writers used to express interactional meanings in the letters written in the foreign language. //Move 1// The findings indicated that there were more commonalities than differences in the semantic expression of interactional meanings in the L1 and FL texts, and that gender appeared to have slightly more effect on this expression than did writing in a foreign language. The findings also indicated that the writers were able to express a range of meanings—sometimes sophisticated ones—in FL, using resources in their communicative repertoire creatively, albeit, as the examples showed, by no means always accurately. //Move 4// Similarly to other studies on young FL writers (e.g., Stevenson, Schoonen, & de Glopper, 2006; Silva, 1993), it was found that participants wrote significantly shorter texts in FL. At age 11, although these young writers can be said to be developing literacy in two languages, not surprisingly, there still appear to be considerable differences in their proficiency in L1 and FL writing. They are more fluent writers in Swedish than in English, and have a better command of the Swedish language system. //Move 5//
One more sequence of moves which was often found in the corpus was Move 7 followed by Move 8. The writers evaluated the study and provided deductions. Moves 7 and 8 occurring in this sequence were usually employed at the end of the section. There could be 1 – 4 cycles of these moves in a section. Unlike the deductions in the sequence of Moves 4 – 5 – 8 which were made based on specific results, the deductions made in the sequence of Moves 7 - 8 were based on overall research results or the points made in Move 7 (Evaluating the study). The extract below (Yasuda, 2015, p. 116) provides an example of the sequence of Moves 7 - 8.

Although the present study has yielded a number of significant implications concerning a link between writing-to-learn and learning-to-write, there are several limitations and new questions that can be derived from the findings. First, since this study focused only on the changes in the students’ meaning-making choices within a semester-long course that incorporated summary writing into content-oriented reading, it is unclear whether the students maintained their genre knowledge and transferred it to their subsequent practices in real-life writing situations, which is of utmost importance in educational contexts. Unfortunately, delayed post-tests could not be administered due to institutional constraints. Hence, it would be informative if additional studies could focus on EFL writers for a longer period to explore if or how they transfer genre knowledge learned through instruction into actual practice.

Discussion

This study explored the textual organization of research article discussion sections in second language writing. Using move analysis, a corpus of 103 research article discussion sections was analysed to identify moves and steps used in the section. The findings reveal the structure of moves and steps and the characteristics of the research article discussion sections in this discipline.

The analysis of the frequency of the move occurrence revealed that Move 5 (Commenting on results move) was found in all 103 research article discussion sections. The number of the move occurrence indicates that the main function of the discussion section is to discuss or comment on the results. Move 5 was classified as an obligatory move. This means that this move is indispensable to writing the research article discussion section in second language writing. The result confirms the importance of this move as reported in previous studies (e.g. Yang & Allison, 2003; Amnuai & Wannaruk, 2013; Dobakhti, 2011).

Move 4 (Reporting results) was the second most frequent move in the corpus. It appeared in 98 research article discussions or 95.15% of the corpus. The high frequency of occurrence, which is close to that of Move 5, reflects how important this move is to the discussion sections. It is almost as important as Move 5. Besides, it also shows that writers in this discipline prefer to restate the findings although all the findings may have already been described in the Results section.

Move 4 was regarded as a conventional move. This finding contrasts with Hopkins and Dudley’s study (1988) which reported the statement of results move as an obligatory move. This is probably due to the fact that these two studies looked at different fields of study. The previous
study looked at the discussion sections in MSc dissertations which is in the science field (Biology) while this current study looked at second language writing.

Another move whose function is also to restate the findings is Move 3 (Summarizing results). It appeared in 29 pieces of data or 28.16% of the corpus. The higher number of occurrence of Move 4 (Reporting results) over Move 3 (Summarizing results) suggests that writers in second language writing prefer to restate findings and deal with one finding at a time than summarizing the overall research results and discuss. The low frequency of occurrence of Move 3 is in line with the studies on the research article discussion sections in applied linguistics by Yang and Allison (2003) and Amnuai and Wannaruk (2013). The results are similar probably because second language writing is closely related to applied linguistics.

Move 8 (Deductions from the research) was the third most frequent move in the corpus. It was found in 73 discussion sections or 70.87% of the corpus. It was regarded as a conventional move. This finding suggests that Move 8 is quite a prominent move in writing the research article discussion sections in second language writing. Although the main function of the discussion section is to report and discuss results, making deductions is also important. This is because highlighting the contributions and implications of a particular result or the overall study is like a promotional act. The writers need to present how valuable their study is to the field by stating the knowledge derived from the study, areas for future research and implications to teaching and learning to promote their work in order to get attention from readers.

Move 8 is realized by 3 steps: Making suggestions, Recommending further research and Drawing pedagogical implications. Step 1 and Step 3 were used more frequently than Step 2. They both occurred in 41 research article discussion sections or 39.81%. Step 2 was the least frequent. This finding on Move 8 Step 2 with the lowest frequency is not in line with Yang and Allison (2003) and Amnuai and Wannaruk (2013). In their studies, it was Step 2 which was most frequently employed. The corpora used in these studies may account for the inconsistency of the findings. The studies of Yang and Allison and Amnuai and Wannaruk both looked at the research article discussion sections in applied linguistics. In contrast, the current study focuses only on the research article discussion sections in second language writing. Although these two disciplines are closely related as second language writing is sometimes categorized as a branch of applied linguistics, the preference for certain moves and steps may be different. This confirms previous studies (e.g. Kanoksilapatham, 2015; Ozturk, 2007; Maswana, Kanamaru & Jajino, 2015; Suntara & Usaha, 2013) which also found some differences when studying research articles in the disciplines that are closely related. However, this is just a possible explanation. More research and evidence are needed to confirm the preference of the writers in second language writing for using Step 1 and Step 3 to make deductions in the discussion sections and to confirm whether such trend can be used to distinguish the move and steps used in the research article discussion sections of second language writing.

Move 2 (Managing the section) is the move that has never been reported before in previous studies. Move 2 was employed by the writers to announce how the whole section of the discussion section or some part of the section would be constructed. It was used to inform the readers explicitly how the writers arranged the order of the content, and how the content or argument in
the section was developed. It was also used by the writers to inform the readers the scope or the focus of the content in the discussion section. Even though the move was found in this corpus, it occurred only in 17 research article discussion sections (16.50%). This move is actually similar to Move 3 Step 1 (Announcing present research descriptively and/or purposively) in the revised CARS model for introduction sections (Swales, 2004). The location of the discussion section may contribute to the rare occurrence of Move 2. Since the discussion section appears at the end of the research article, it is less necessary for the writers to provide the outline of the following information.

The low occurrence of Move 2 may also concern the length of texts. Giving previews, reviews and overviews to help the reader understand the structure and arguments is recommended in lengthy texts like a thesis (Patridge & Starfield, 2007). Therefore, this feature of writer responsible language seems to be more common in a thesis which is very long involving many sections and chapters. However, the discussion sections in research articles are usually around 1 paragraph to 3 pages. The writers may find that giving previews or telling what the section will be about and how it will be organized is less necessary.

Despite the low frequency of Move 2, the appearance of this move in the corpus has implied a possible strategy that the writers in second language writing may use to handle the complexity of the content and organization of the discussion sections to make them easy for the readers to read and follow.

Regarding the opening moves, the finding obtained from the analysis is consistent with Holmes (1997, 2001) and Dobakhti (2011). The finding indicates that two moves which most frequently appeared at the beginning of the section are Move 1 (Providing background information) and Move 4 (Reporting results). Despite the similarity of the finding, the preference for the two opening moves between the current study and the previous ones is different. In Holmes (1997), the statement of result move was found to be more preferable than the background information move while in the current study, the providing background information was used more frequently than the reporting results move. This finding reveals how the writers in second language writing prefer to open the discussion sections in research articles. They prefer to restate the research aims, research questions, methodology and some important literature than to immediately jump to reporting results. However, it is also common for the writers to start their discussion with research results. This preference reflects an awareness that reviewing the main points of the research will facilitate readers’ understanding of the discussion and argument. It is also helpful for busy readers who do not have time to read the whole article but want to focus on only important parts of the article.

The finding about closing moves is also in line with Holmes (1997). The move that appeared most often at the end of the section in the current study is Move 8 (Deductions from the research) which is comparable to Move 7 (Recommendation) in Holmes’ research. The move that never made any appearance as a closing move is also the same. It is Move 1 for both studies, which is to provide background information of the study.
The results regarding the move patterns are also in line with previous studies (e.g. Holmes, 1997, 2001; Yang & Allison, 2003; Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Dobokhti, 2011). The analysis of the corpus in the present study reveals that the organization of the research article discussion sections in second language writing is not linear but cyclical, which means that the discussion sections consist of many cycles of moves. This is because of the reoccurrence of certain moves. As reported in the previous section, the moves that tend to appear many times in the sections are Moves 1, 3, 5, 7 and 8.

It was also hard to find patterns of the moves since there was no regularity in the move appearance. However, some typical patterns could still be identified despite the low degree of predictability of the move occurrence in the discussion sections. These patterns are Move 4 → Move 5, Move 4 → Move 5 → Move 8, Move 1 → Move 4 → Move 5 and Move 7 → Move 8. Move 4 → Move 5 was the most common sequence in the corpus. These two moves also occurred most frequently in the corpus. This finding confirms previous studies (e.g. Kanoksilapatham, 2005) that research article discussion sections are built on 2 moves which are reporting results and commenting. The finding regarding the sequences of Move 4 followed by Move 5 and Move 1 followed by Move 4 and then Move 5 are also consistent with Holmes (1997, p. 331) who found that “the appearance of Statement of result or Background information followed by Generalization or Reference to previous research” was typical in his study.

Move 4 → Move 5 → Move 8 was the second most frequent pattern. This pattern is similar to the pattern found in Dobokhti (2011) who also found Move 8 (Deductions from the research) following Move 4 (Commenting on results). This pattern could be found at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the section. This finding suggests that the writers prefer both making deductions based on specific results by providing suggestions, recommending further research and providing pedagogical implications right after the issues raised from a particular finding and making deductions based on overall research.

One more move pattern that shows regularity of occurrence is Move 7 → Move 8. This is when the writers evaluate the study and then make deductions. An investigation into this pattern of moves reveals an interesting arrangement of steps. It was found that in the Move 7 → Move 8 pattern, Move 7 Step 1 which is to indicate the limitations of the study was employed most frequently, and this step was usually followed by Move 8 Step 3 which is to recommend further research. This arrangement of steps shows how the writers in second language writing make use of the limitations of their research. They use the limitations in their research to identify areas or topics for further research. The extract taken from Gennaro (2013, p. 167) exemplifies the occurrence of Move 8 Step 3 after Move 7 Step 1. In the extract, after the writer describes how one writing sample is unable to reveal the learners’ knowledge in a variety of genre, she suggests what could be done in the future studies based on the stated limitation.

Interpretations of the results brought to light a few limitations of the current study. For one, participants were evaluated by only one writing sample, limiting their ability to reveal strengths and weaknesses that might exist through a variety of genres. //Move 7 – Step 1/ Given learners’ different educational backgrounds, it is possible that the two groups would
perform differently across genres and tasks requiring different degrees of control in the five writing components examined. Future research could include learners’ responses to multiple writing tasks. Also related to learners’ backgrounds is the possibility that socioeconomic variables other than learners’ high school backgrounds and duration of US residency contributed to the differences found across the two groups. Future research could address this question by examining additional personal attributes of the learners in each group. //Move 8 – Step 3//

This finding, thus, suggests one of the strategies that the writers in second language writing use to identify areas for future studies, which is to identify them based on the research limitations. This strategy is useful for less experienced writers, and it should benefit not only those in second language writing, but it should be applicable to all fields.

Conclusion

This research investigates the textual organization of research article discussion sections in second language writing in order to reveal how expert writers in the discipline construct their discussion. Consistent with previous studies, the analysis of the corpus indicates that the discussion sections in second language writing were used to report and comment on results. Apart from this main function, the sections were also used to discuss the knowledge derived from the study, applications of the research results and chances for future studies.

The findings of this study have some implications for the teaching in English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes. Teachers can use the findings as a guideline for them to design their academic writing course, write materials and design lessons. The findings could provide them with some directions of how and what to teach their students when it comes to writing research articles, especially the discussion sections. For example, as found in the study, the managing the section move was used to announce the outline or content of the discussion sections. This suggests one of the issues that could be included in the lesson. Strategies and language that are useful for handling complexity of the discussion section to make it friendly to the readers could be taught to the learners.

In addition, the findings of the study could be of value to academics and graduate students who are writing for publication. The findings have reflected the convention and expectation regarding the content and organization of texts in the research article discussion sections in second language writing. Academics and graduate students can follow and write their research papers accordingly in order to fit in the discourse community and thus may successfully get their papers published.

This study has given valuable insight into the move analysis of research articles, and provided better understanding of the how expert writers in second language writing construct their discussion in research articles. However, as the aim of the present study is to explore the overall or macro structure of the discussion sections, the results are limited the organization of moves. For future studies, the linguistic features should also be studied in order to find out about the language that the expert writers in second language writing use to achieve each move and step, which can provide language guidance for the less experienced writers.
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References


Bridging the Gap: Change in Class Environment to Help Learners Lower Affective Filters

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Abstract
The present research was aimed at identifying the cause for poor performance of adult English as foreign language (EFL) learners in Saudi Arabia, as well as to test the hypothesis that one of the major causes behind learners' failure may be affective filters. The basic question to answer for the research was whether adult EFL learners raise their affective filters to block the input under the influence of certain affective factors, and whether a change in the class environment brings a change in learner motivation. To this end, data were collected through questionnaires, and a model teaching programme, based on a change in classroom environment, was developed and tested with a group of learners at the selected university in Saudi Arabia. The results obtained from the study show that EFL learners in Saudi Arabia raise affective filters, and that a change in classroom environment does help learners lower their affective filters. The study is very significant as its findings may prove helpful to EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia to create a conducive environment in their classes to help learners feel at ease to learn English, which at times is emotionally intimidating to some learners. The study is concluded with a recommendation that EFL teachers may replicate the experiment in their settings to test the efficacy of the hypothesis on psycholinguistic aspects of foreign language learning.

Keywords: affective filters, anxiety, classroom environment modification, negative self-evaluation, self-confidence

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Introduction
In Saudi Arabia English is taught as a foreign language. But, commonly, learners’ linguistic skills are noted to remain below acceptable standards. Al-Seghayer (2011), for instance, points out that the standard of English has fallen down in Saudi Arabia considerably. Our observation is that among several reasons behind this systemic failure, one possible reason is that adult learners come to the class with affective barriers to learning English, and the classroom environment may have something to do with it as it may be a bit intimidating to some learners (Saba, 2013; Al-Nasser, 2015). Affective barriers may be multiple; individual-specific as well as common barriers affecting a larger learner population, but lack of motivation, low self-confidence and anxiety affect almost all, and therefore, are the commonest of all barriers. Study of English language learning barriers is a comparatively new field of research for Arabic scholars working in the area of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education specific to the Arabic region. We have chosen this field specifically for two reasons: there are not many studies in this area, while there is an urgent requirement to explore the cause-and-effect relationship between EFL learning and the barriers hindering it. We have made an attempt to identify the affective barriers, if any, hindering the learning process of adult Saudi EFL learners, and to test through an experimental study whether a few changes in the classroom setting would help learners change their negative self-evaluation concerning EFL learning. Our emphasis is on investigating three major affective factors, i.e., low motivation, low self-confidence and high language anxiety, which Krashen (1987) calls “Affective Filters.” Krashen’s idea is that only comprehensible input is not enough for successful acquisition of a foreign language. There is a need for language learners to be receptive to the input received. The processing of the input can be negatively affected if learners are bored, angry, frustrated, nervous, unmotivated or stressed out. In such mental conditions, learners do not process the input, or rather, they 'screen' the input. Krashen calls this screen as “affective filter.” Our belief is that frustration and nervousness may be induced by a certain kind of class atmosphere.

Research Background: Literature Review
Affective Filters and Foreign Language Learning
If teaching of a subject doesn’t produce the expected results despite the best facilities for learners, right environment for learning and the right approach to teaching, the problem may lie either with the teaching materials in use or with the learners’ tendency to raise their affective filters. Teaching of English in Saudi Arabia faces a similar conundrum. The restrictive space in the classroom between the teacher and the students appears to be a possible factor behind affective screening of the input. Adult learning may get affected negatively by several factors, resulting in poor learner performance. Such factors are termed as ‘barriers’ in the present paper. Conn (1995) groups barriers into three categories: “institutional barriers” (practices that exclude or discourage adults), “situational barriers” (arising from one’s life situation), and “dispositional barriers” (attitudes and perceptions about oneself as learner). Dispositional barriers are psychological in nature as they reflect the attitude of learners towards something, for instance, language learning, that induces them to visualize it negatively. The major dispositional barriers to second language (SL) learning are four: language anxiety, low self-image, lack of motivation, and negative attitude towards the language (Bandura, 1986; Cohen & Norst, 1989; Lambert, 1972; Littlewood, 1984). These dispositional barriers may prompt SL learners to not allow any input filtering into their brains. In language teaching contexts, this situation is termed as 'raising affective filters,' and the concept was popularised by Stephen Krashen (1981) through his "affective filters hypothesis." Since then
several research studies have proved the real-time existence of affective filters among FL learners, influenced by affective factors, such as low motivation, low self-confidence and high anxiety (Andrade & Williams, 2009; Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994; Cohen & Norst, 1989; Dislen, 2013; Dörnyei, 1998; Du, 2009; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Huitt, 2001; La Spisa, 2015; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Ni, 2012; Örmeci, 2013; Ranjbar & Narafshan, 2016; Schumann, 1975; Watkins, Biggs, & Regmi, 1991).

SL learners may raise their affective filters for various reasons, such as disinterest, tiredness, bad health, and so on. Schumann (1975) speaks of the affective variables like, language shock, culture shock, attitude, motivation and ego permeability to SL acquisition and suggests that affective variables may play an important role in adult SL acquisition. Bialystok (1997) believes that "correspondence between language structures in the first and second language is the most important factor affecting acquisition" (p. 124). Fear of ridicule by peers may cause anxiety; lack of knowledge of language fundamentals at advanced age may cause low self-image; lack of motivation may be caused if learners visualize no significance of SL in their lives. Mother-tongue influence also plays a role in causing affective barriers. Our focus in the present study is on classroom environment, which to some learners may not appear to be conducive, prompting them to have low motivation, low self-confidence and high anxiety.

Motivation

Motivation has been studied extensively, specifically with regard to language learning (Dörnyei, 2005, 2001, 1998; Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Spolsky, 2000). Researchers find a relationship between motivation and human behaviour, that is, if motivated, man behaves positively, whereas, if unmotivated, he behaves negatively (Dislen, 2013). In SL learning theory, motivation is a construct, affected by intrinsic or extrinsic factors, and a change in variables usually brings about a change in learner motivation (Huitt, 2001; Lasagabaster et al., 2014). Gagne (2003) notes that personal initiatives enhance autonomous motivation (p. 385). To us 'motivation' is an 'affect' and 'attitudinal complex' (based on Dörnyei 1998), the state of learners’ mental make-up initiating the action of learning and maintaining it till the goal is achieved. The point is significant as we assume that motivation can be enhanced and learners may be induced to shed psychological inhibitions if their motivation levels are raised. Harper (2007) believes that “meaningful choice engenders willingness, and the willingness is the door to increased motivation” (p. 25). Ranjbar and Narafshan (2016) also note that "teachers' instrumental motivation is the most important factor in predicating the students' integrative motivation.

Self-Confidence

We have used the term ‘self-confidence’ to denote self-evaluation, i.e., learners’ evaluation of their abilities and attributes vis-à-vis the task at hand. If SL learners have a low evaluation of their abilities, their speech is affected adversely. The construct has attracted researchers’ attention as a debilitating barrier among SL learners. Brodkey and Shore (1976), Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Watkins, Biggs, and Regmi (1991) studied factors for success in language learning, including self-confidence, and as notes Brown and Marshall (2006), their results show that self-confidence is an important variable in SL acquisition, "particularly in view of cross-cultural factors of second language learning…" (p. 142). Learners' self-confidence can be enhanced through some measures, such as generating “a feeling of responsibility and independence” among learners (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Dişlen, 2013; Gerndt, 2014; Grant & Dweck, 2003; Nakamura, 2000; Scharle & Szabo, 2005). Deci and Ryan (2000) put greater emphasis on learners’ autonomy to boost their self-confidence. Autonomy is concerned with the atmosphere a teacher creates in the class: a positive atmosphere leads to greater learner autonomy which in turn enhances their self-confidence. Though this claim is refuted by Clement, Dörnyei, and Noels (1994) who say that self-confidence and anxiety show no relationship to classroom atmosphere, the present research is founded on the premise of a direct relationship between classroom atmosphere and learner self-confidence.

Anxiety

Anxiety is an emotion associated with the feeling of stress, tension, and worry. In FL learning context, anxiety is reflected in learners' nervousness in using the language. An anxious learner may avoid using the language with others. There may be a few similarities between FL anxiety and communication anxiety in general (Horwitz et al., 1986), but Allwright and Bailey (1991) find that high language anxiety can deprive FL learners of even their normal means of communication. Language anxiety may prompt learners to apply less challenging strategies, but such strategies may be less productive. Steinberg and Horwitz (1986) report that anxious learners avoid difficult messages and go for less interpretive messages than they do if free from anxiety. Even simple oral tasks make anxious learners nervous, and they feel jittery if their performance is evaluated (Allwright and Bailey, 1991; Price, 1991). FL learners may be affected by anxiety in any of the language skills (Andrade & Williams, 2009; Brown & Marshall, 2006; McIntyre, 1995; McIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Reading anxiety is very common in the Arab world, and a number of studies are devoted to the construct (Abdullah & Rahman, 2010; Abu-Gharaarah, 1999; Aida, 1994; Al-Shboul et al., 2013; Alghothani, 2010; Awan et al., 2010; Elkhafafi, 2005). Mainly three components of FL anxiety are identified by researchers, namely, communication apprehension, fear of negative social evaluation, and test anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz. & Cope, 1986; Macintyre & Gardener, 1989). The conclusion these researchers draw is that "foreign language anxiety can be distinguished from other types of anxiety and that it can have a negative effect on the language learning process" (Macintyre & Gardener, 1991, p. 112). Krashen (1981) claims that, “There appears to be a consistent relationship between various forms of anxiety and language proficiency in all situations, formal and informal. Anxiety level may thus be a very potent influence on the affective filter” (p. 29). Our premise is that certain measures can be taken to train EFL learners to lower their anxiety. We follow Schumann's (1975) idea that teachers can create conditions which make the learners less anxious, make them feel accepted and make them form positive identifications with speakers of the target language. La Spisa (2015), for example, finds that "use of talk cards lowers the language anxiety of adult learners and they show motivation to speak
English" (p. ii). Paquette and Rieg (2008) used music as a tool for school children to develop literacy, and concluded that "integrating music into children's everyday activities promotes literacy development" (p. 231).

**The Objective of the Current Research**

The nature of the arrangement of the space between teacher and learners in the classroom, in literal as well as figurative sense, may prove to be one of the factors strongly influencing affective factors. If the space is arranged in an extremely formal way, it may prove to be intimidating to some learners, prompting them to raise their affective filters. There is a lack of research on affective factors in the Arab region, and studies on the difficulties of adult EFL learners are mostly focussed on issues like, problems in reading, orthography, pronunciation, etc (Al-Jarf, 2008; Al-Nasser, 2015; Al-Nofaie, 2010; Kadwa, 2012). A few studies that deal with affective factors (e.g., (Abu-Ghararah, 1999; Alghothani, 2010; Al-Shboul et al., 2013; Awan et al., 2010; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Khan, 2011; Yazigy, 1991), though comprehensive in themselves, ignored classroom environment as a possible cause of negative influence of affective factors on learners. None of the researchers uses rearrangement of classroom space as a measure to help adult learners lower their affective filters. Moreover, the findings of research on motivation and learners' performance in EFL are inconclusive, leaving a gap for further investigation. In addition, Clement, Dörnyei, and Noels (1994) find no relationship between self-confidence, anxiety and classroom atmosphere, but their findings cannot be taken to be conclusive since other researchers' findings (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Dişlen, 2013; Gerndt, 2014; Grant & Dweck, 2003; Nakamura, 2000; Scharle & Szabo, 2005) show that learners' self-confidence can be enhanced through some measures, such as changing the classroom atmosphere. The point needs further exploration. Therefore, our research objective is to test whether developing a feeling of responsibility and independence among learners leads to better performance in learning English.

**Hypotheses**

The observed behaviour of English learners at the selected university in Saudi Arabia, as well as the mismatch between extensive linguistic input and the desired outcomes led the researcher to hypothesize that –

**H1**: A number of adult EFL learners in English Majors develop high affective filters, and thus, raise a psychological wall between themselves and the linguistic input to filter out the input while learning the target language.

**H2**: The major factor behind affective filters is learners' negative self-evaluation owing to language production anxiety, low self-confidence and low motivation to learn English.

**H3**: There is a direct relationship between classroom atmosphere and learners' negative self-evaluation causing learners to raise affective filters in EFL classes.

**H4**: A change in classroom atmosphere can bring about a change in learner self-evaluation helping them lower their affective filters to learn English.

**Research Questions**

To test the truth of each hypothesis, the present study has been designed to answer the following research questions:
RQ 1: Do some adult EFL learners in English Majors in Saudi Arabia raise affective filters not allowing linguistic input?
RQ 2: Are language production anxiety, low self-confidence and low level of motivation the major factors behind learners' affective filters?
RQ 3: Is there a direct relationship between classroom atmosphere and learners' negative self-evaluation causing learners to raise affective filters in EFL classes?
RQ 4: Can a change in classroom atmosphere bring about a change in learner self-evaluation helping them lower their affective filters to learn English?

**Methodology**
The present research investigates all the above-mentioned issues, i.e., affective filters, factors causing affective filters, potential relationship between classroom atmosphere and learners' negative self-evaluation, and the effect of change in classroom atmosphere on learner self-evaluation, using mixed methods research methodology. Quantitative data have been collected through (i) questionnaires, and (ii) pre-test and post-test. Qualitative data are generated through analysis and interpretation of the numerical data. Mixing of methods occurs at certain levels of data analysis and interpretation. Questionnaires are used to collect data from learners on their feelings concerning anxiety, self-confidence and motivation. These data are analysed to ascertain the level of affective filters raised by learners to block input of English. Based on the results obtained, the experimental teaching is carried out implementing the measures designed to help learners lower their affective filters. The measures included the following steps:

- No direct questions to be asked from learners in the class.
- Classroom setting changed to give a feel of informal learning atmosphere.
- Learners shared responsibilities to help their peers overcome anxiety.
- Learners shared their learning with their peers.

The study was quasi-experimental involving an experiment with learners to test the efficacy of the measures. The following sub-sections provide further details on the chosen research method.

**Research Setting and the Participants**
The study was conducted with participants from English Major students at a selected university in Saudi Arabia. The participants were only girls. The ages of participants ranged between 18 to 22 years. They had undergone six years of training in English. English is taught as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia and commonly English is not spoken anywhere except in conversation with a non-Arabic-speaking person. In conclusion, there are hardly any occasions for English language learners to use and practice English.

**Data Collection: Instruments**
Questionnaires and paper-based tests are the instruments used in the study to collect numerical as well as descriptive data. The questionnaire was adopted from Seyhan (2000). Seyhan's questionnaire was found suitable for the present study because of the similar nature of the two studies, though a few modifications were made in it according to our requirements. The number of questions was cut down to 24, and the questions were rephrased to elicit responses on the constructs relevant to the present study, i.e., motivation, language anxiety and self-confidence in
speaking English. The questionnaire comprised statements measuring the feelings of learners on a 5-point Likert scale – 1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree, and 5. Strongly agree. The distribution of credit on attitude for a positive direction statement was 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, whereas for a negative direction statement it was 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Positive direction statements agreed with or confirmed the meaning of the stated hypotheses. Negative direction statements prompted the students to assert that they had no affective filters and that they do not block linguistic input in the class.

**Measurement Techniques**
Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1951) was employed to test the Validity and reliability of the modified questionnaire. For the 24 item questionnaire piloted with 20 students the obtained Alpha value was 0.78, which is significant, as J. M. Cortina (1993) states that a commonly accepted value of Alpha is .60. The pre- and post-tests were checked repeatedly to establish validity, reliability and clarity.

To calculate Cronbach’s Alpha, Kuder and Richardson formula 20 has been used:

\[ \alpha = \left( k / (k-1) \right) x (1 - \Sigma \text{Var/Var}) \]

Where,
- \( k \) = number of items [statements] in the questionnaire
- \( \text{Var} \) = variance [population standard deviation] of obtained scores for each item
- \( \Sigma \text{Var} \) = sum of variance of the individual items
SPSS (version 12.0) has been used for statistical analysis of the numerical data.

**Research Procedure**
A Pre-test to check students’ entry level competence in English was conducted before the experimental teaching, and after the teaching a Post-test was conducted. The results obtained from Pre-test were used to compare with Post-test results to ascertain learners' progress. After Pre-test, the selected learners were divided into 'Treatment' and 'Control' group. The treatment group was taught English for two weeks with new measures, while the control group was given placebo teaching.

**Data Analysis**
To answer RQ 1, data collected as participants' responses to questionnaire statements in three variable forms, i.e., agreement, disagreement and neutral, were analyzed. To answer RQ 2, participants' responses to questionnaire statements grouped into three clusters eliciting responses to three variables – motivation, self-confidence and anxiety – were analyzed separately

As regards seeking answers to RQ 3 and RQ 4, the achievement grades of treatment and control group participants in pre-test and post-test were compared, and the post-test grades obtained by treatment and control group participants were also compared. A \( t \)-test was run to check the significance of the difference in grades. The higher achievement grades of the treatment group participants were associated with the change in classroom atmosphere introduced by the researcher in the experimental teaching session.
Results
An overview of descriptive statistics of the variables used in the study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Results Obtained from Questionnaire Analysis: Mean, SD and Variance
N = 55

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Self-Confidence</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>29.16</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>16.96</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>8.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>275.78</td>
<td>422.98</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Affective filters and Adult Saudi EFL Learners
In general, roughly 30% of the experimental subjects expressed that they are influenced by affective factors in EFL learning, and thus, raise their affective filters. It is a considerably large number. Roughly 16% of the subjects remained neutral, therefore, undecided whether their problems in learning English arise from affective factors or not. If we consider this population too as influenced by affective factors (their undecided nature hints at that), the number of students influenced by affective factors will rise dramatically. Even otherwise too, those who claim their English learning woes do not arise from affective factors are nearly 53% of the tested population, leaving the rest 47% in the category of the affected. This answers RQ 1 in the affirmative, that adult EFL learners in Saudi Arabia are influenced by affective factors, such as low motivation, low self-confidence and high language anxiety, indicating that they raise their affective filters in English classes. The answer to RQ 2, which concerns the effects of the major affective factors, lies in the number of learners responding to the clusters of statements pertaining to these factors. The number of learners influenced by the said factors is roughly the same as in the general case (i.e., low motivation = 29%, low self-confidence = 29%, high language anxiety = 28.5%).

Classroom Atmosphere and Affective Filters
The preliminary results obtained from the statistical analysis of pre-test and post-test grades scored by treatment and control group participants are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2 Preliminary Results from Pre-Test and Post-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Test</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Post-Test</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group</td>
<td>N = 25</td>
<td>20.84</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>38.47</td>
<td>28.76</td>
<td>5.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>N = 25</td>
<td>19.88</td>
<td>8.22</td>
<td>67.61</td>
<td>21.48</td>
<td>5.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A cursory glance at Table 2 reveals a marked difference in grades scored by treatment and control group participants in the post-test. The treatment group mean scores are higher with a difference of 7.28 marks from the control group mean scores. Treatment group participants have bettered their grades from the pre-test as well, with a significant difference of 7.92 marks. The control group participants have also bettered their grades but only with an insignificant increase of 1.6 marks.

Further results obtained from statistical analysis of this data, with t-test, are displayed in Table 3.

### Table 3
**Descriptive Statistics of Treatment and Control Group Mean Scores, with t-test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Pre-Test</th>
<th>Post-Test</th>
<th>df (n-2)</th>
<th>t-test value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>38.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Treatment Group</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Treatment Group</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Treatment vs. Control Group (Pre-Test)</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Treatment vs. Control Group (Post-Test)</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at p < .005
**Not significant at p < .005
***Not significant at p < .005
****Significant at p < .005

The t-test values displayed in Table 3 reveal two trends. The observed t values 4.637 and 4.360 for the difference in the marks of treatment group participants in post-test and the difference in treatment and control group participants' marks in post-test respectively are significant at α-level .005 (confidence level 99%) and df 48. Whereas, the observed t values 0.788 and 0.466 for the difference in the marks of control group participants in post-test and the difference in the pre-test marks of treatment and control group participants respectively are not significant at α-level .005 (confidence level 99%) and df 48. The significance of the first set of t values answers RQ 4, while non-significance of the second set of t values answers RQ 3.

**Discussion**

The primary objectives of the present research were to investigate if Adult EFL learners at the selected institution in Saudi Arabia raise affective filters under the influence of certain affective factors not allowing input in the class, and whether a change in the classroom atmosphere can bring about a change in the negative learner self-evaluation to encourage them to lower their affective filters. Classroom atmosphere in Saudi Arabia tends to be more formal, and therefore formidable, to some learners, even intimidating to some, especially when it comes to English language, cultural restrictions and other social factors (Saba, 2013; Al-Nasser, 2015). Al-Nasser
notes about Saudi students that, "There is fear of learning in the students' minds as classroom atmosphere is intimidating and discourages student participation of any sort, viewing it as an unnecessary interruption" (p. 1616). The results obtained from statistical analysis of questionnaire data suggest that some adult EFL learners at the selected institution are influenced by affective factors and block input in English classes. Though the number of such learners is not very high, still it is significantly high, and if the 'neutral' participants are added to them, the number rises higher. Therefore, H1, that a number of adult EFL learners in English Majors in Saudi Arabia develop high affective filters, and thus, raise a psychological wall between themselves and the linguistic input to filter out the input while learning the target language is supported by research.

Further analysis of the questionnaire data reveals that the reasons behind participants' negative screening are low motivation to learn English, low self-confidence to use English in context and high language anxiety. This supports H2, i.e., the major factor behind affective filters is learners' negative self-evaluation owing to language production anxiety, low self-confidence and low level of motivation to learn English as 29% of the subject population report the influence of these affective factors on their English learning experience.

Previous studies in this academic field have also identified similar issues with adult EFL learners. Guiora (1983), for example, notes that "foreign language learning is psychologically an extremely challenging process, threatening the individual's self-esteem and outlook towards the world around him" (p. 8). Andrade and Williams (2009) find that language anxiety affects 75% of the learner population, and the debilitating aspects of anxiety hinder the learning of about 11% of them. McIntyre (1995) and McIntyre and Gardner (1991) find a set of factors affecting learners' language anxiety, such as deficit in listening comprehension, reduced word production, impaired vocabulary learning, and so on. Lack of motivation among FL learners is also a common issue. Dislen (2013) counts several factors affecting learner motivation, such as age, solving multiple choice questions, syllabus density, overload, health issues, traditional teaching methods like expository teaching, lack of comprehension, noise in class, too many similar type exercises, and so on. Learners' self-confidence rests on several factors. Elliot and Church (1997) and Elliot and McGregor (2001), for instance, observe that if parents do not allow their children to be self-supportive and provide overprotection to them, their children may lack self-confidence in future life.

Analysis of the grades of treatment and control group participants in the post-test show a significant difference in treatment group participants' grades, in comparison to their grades in pre-test as well as in comparison to the grades scored by control group participants. The results support H4 that a change in classroom atmosphere can bring about a change in learner self-evaluation helping them lower their affective filters to learn English. Control group participants show only a marginal increase in their grades in post-test in comparison to their pre-test grades. This indicates that since the learners were given only placebo teaching, they still evaluated themselves negatively regarding their capabilities to learn English. The finding supports H3 that there is a direct relationship between classroom atmosphere and learners' negative self-evaluation causing learners to raise affective filters in EFL classes.

The relationship between class environment and affective factors has been explored in previous studies, with findings more or less similar to that of the present study. Clement, Dörnyei, and Noels
find no relationship between these constructs, whereas other researchers (such as Scharle & Szabo, 2005; Nakamura, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Dişlen, 2013; Grant & Dweck, 2003; Gerndt, 2014) find that learners' self-confidence can be enhanced through some measures, such as changing the classroom atmosphere. Huit (2001) suggests that teachers can help improve learners’ motivation by displaying the significance of a language like English. Brown's (2001) suggestion is that "humour can play a positive role breaking monotony in the class and bringing in motivation" (p. 89). Paquette and Rieg (2008) used music to motivate children, and concluded that "integrating music into children's everyday activities promotes literacy development" (p. 231). Their experiment was not directly related to affective filters but it does throw some light on the possibilities that input is allowed by learners in a comparatively casual and relaxed environment, which, in other words, helps them lower their affective filters. La Spisa (2015) finds talk cards useful to lower the language anxiety of adult learners and to motivate them to speak English. Longworth (2003) comments that the "inspirational skill of teachers can be stimulating… Teachers should be equipped with knowledge of psychology of learning, motivation tactics and the ways to overcome barriers to learning boosting learners’ confidence” (p. 23). In a nutshell, classroom environment affects learners' affective filters and a change in the environment changes the situation accordingly.

**Conclusion**

To sum up, the findings of the present research suggest that adult Saudi EFL learners are influenced by affective factors, such as low motivation, low self-confidence and high language anxiety, and therefore raise their affective filters to block input in class. Furthermore, the findings suggest that there is a direct relationship between classroom atmosphere and learner's negative self-evaluation causing learners to raise their affective filters. Therefore, a positive change (favourable to learners) in the classroom atmosphere brings about a positive change in learners' attitude towards English and encourages them to lower their affective filters.

The present research, to the best of my knowledge, may be the first of its kind in Saudi Arabia since the affective filters issue is a hitherto unexplored area of research. The researcher recommends that EFL teachers/scholars may replicate the experiment by changing formal classroom setting to bring in more learner-friendly informality in their respective settings with a new set of participants to confirm/reject the findings of the present study so that an informed consensus would arise among EFL practitioners. Only then the idea that a positive change in classroom atmosphere brings about a positive change in the attitude of EFL learners towards learning English can be advocated for a universal application.

**Strength and Weaknesses of the Study**

The primary strength of the present study is that it explores a hitherto unexplored area of research in Saudi Arabian contexts. The study highlights one of the major factors responsible for, commonly, poor performance of adult Saudi EFL learners, and suggests empirically tested corrective measures.

The limitation of the present study is the limited scope of the research as the researcher conducted this study using a small number of subjects from one college enrolled in courses, such as Linguistics, Literature and Semantics. Moreover, the selected participants were only females,
excluding male students from the study. The research issue bears significance not only for students from both sexes but also for all the students in the Kingdom, so, the research setting should have been larger to draw any definitive conclusions. But, the researcher worked bound by certain cultural restrictions, which became the limitations of the study.

It is hoped that future research studies will address these issues and will arrive at more encompassing conclusions.

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References


Bridging the Gap: Change in Class Environment

Mehmood


Investigating the Effect of Differentiated Instruction in Light of the Ehrman & Leaver Construct on Grammar Learning

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Abstract
This study sought to explore the effect of Differentiated Instruction, in light of learners’ cognitive profiles, on female English as a Foreign Language (EFL) foundation year students’ learning of grammar at King Abdul-Aziz University in 2017-2018. Following a pretest-intervention-posttest experimental design, the first part of the study aimed at exploring the phenomenon from a positivist point of view. The second, on the other hand, attempted to grasp the way learners perceive Differentiated Instruction through short one-to-one interviews of the participants. The quantitative results revealed that although the application of Differentiated Instruction made a significant difference between the pretest and posttest results of students in the experimental group, the difference in performance between these students and their counterparts in the control group was not statistically significant. The qualitative results, on the other hand, revealed that learners perceive the application of Differentiated Instruction in a positive manner. Three themes were found to be recurrent in their responses: the increased motivation, appropriateness of access, and autonomy. Based on these findings, a few implications and recommendations were drawn.

Keywords: differentiated instruction, Ehrman & Leaver Construct, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), explicit and implicit teaching, grammar learning

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1. Introduction
In the literature of language learning and teaching, it has been long observed that while almost all children are successful in acquiring a first language, second language learners’ success varies significantly from one person to another (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). According to Brown (2006), second language development is marked by ‘systematicity’ and ‘variability.’ It is systematic in the sense that it develops in a way similar to that of a first language and variable because it can be easily affected by cognitive and affective factors. On this ground, teachers who work in second language classrooms are always advised to ensure that each learner gets an appropriate access to the lesson. One way of doing so is through the implementation of what is called “Differentiated Instruction” (Tomlinson, 2014).

1.1 Statement of the Problem: Why not Just Teaching to the Middle?
Classes in which students are different in terms of their competence, needs, interests and styles of learning are called “mixed-ability classrooms.” Ireson, Hallam, & Plewis (2001) argue that the first step to teaching these classes is to understand that students have different points of strength and weakness and learn at different rates and in different manners. In spite of this, Al-Shammakhi & Al-Humaidi, (2015) allude that many teachers mistakenly view a mixed-ability class as one mainly consisting of average learners; with a minority of either weak or extraordinary children. As a result, it is common for those teachers to deal with this issue by teaching to the average students and leaving the rest behind.

Delivering monotonous lesson plans through a single instructional method is believed to overlook the different learning needs of students in a class (Subban, 2006). Thus, many teachers who have experienced teaching to the middle and using one instructional method reported some pedagogical drawbacks. For example, in a study conducted by Hernandez (2012) in the Middle East on two multilevel classes, one of the teachers pointed out that teaching to the average students makes the others extremely bored and frustrated. Another teacher added that when she tried to do so, she ended up teaching no one in class.

As educational institutes are becoming more and more diverse, their ability to provide students with a meaningful and equal education is directly associated with their willingness to invest the resources and time to step away from “teach-to-the-middle” and “one-size-fits-all” instruction. We, as educators, must do our best to meet individuals at their areas of readiness, interest, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2014) and that is the idea behind Differentiated Instruction.

1.2 Aim of the Study, Research Questions and Hypotheses
The current study aims at putting Differentiated Instruction in light of Ehrman and Leaver’s (E & L) Construct of Cognitive Profiles into practice and investigating its effects on grammar learning in EFL classrooms at King Abdul-Aziz University. It attempts to answer the following research questions:
RQ1: Does Differentiated Instruction in light of the E&L Construct have any significant impact on students’ grammar learning?
RQ2: How do participant students perceive the integration of Differentiated Instruction into their language classroom?

The null hypotheses for the first research question, therefore, state the following:
NH1: In a grammar achievement posttest, students in the experimental group will not achieve significantly higher ratings than those in the control group.

NH2: There will be no significant difference between the scores of students in the experimental group before and after the experiment.

The alternative hypotheses, on the other hand, state that:

AH1: In a grammar achievement test, students in the experimental group will achieve significantly higher ratings than those in the control group.

AH2: There will be a significant difference between the scores of students in the experimental group before and after the experiment.

The NHs are to be accepted if p<0.05, whereas the AHs are to be accepted if p>0.05.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The Preparatory Year at King Abdul-Aziz University is a program designed to subject the newly-admitted students in general preparatory courses for two academic semesters in a row. These courses include English, Statistics, mathematics, communication skills …etc. Since each student is obliged to go through this program, classrooms, where English as a FL and other general courses are taught, are believed to be full of mixed-ability students (Al-Subaiei, 2017). On this ground, the implications of the current study will be of importance when enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in these particular classrooms.

2. Literature review

2.1 Differentiated Instruction:

Popularized by Tomlinson (2001), Differentiated Instruction is defined as a method of teaching that is characterized by deliberate and conscious attempts to address students’ diversity (Joseph, 2013). It is a proactive, student-centered, qualitative, and rooted-in-assessment process and a series of whole-class, large/small group, and individual instruction (Tomlinson, 2001). Furthermore, it is an act of adding and modifying rather than of substituting. This view is supported by Benjamin (2006) who writes that the core of Differentiated Instruction is the appreciation of rituals and varieties. Rituals, according to her, represent norms and expectations, whereas varieties provide excitement and freedom of choice. The reason for adopting this method of teaching, as believed by Tomlinson (2014), is to enhance three crucial elements: efficiency of learning, access to learning and motivation to learn.

When identifying what Differentiated Instruction really is and what it is not, Tomlinson (2001) points out that the idea behind this concept is significantly different from Individualized Instruction that appeared in the 70’s. Unlike the latter, the goal of Differentiated Instruction is not to allocate a separate level for each student. Instead, teachers in differentiated classrooms might find themselves sometimes working with everyone in the class, sometimes with smaller groups and sometimes with individual students. Furthermore, Differentiated Instruction is not a way of making heterogeneous groups homogeneous, and this is one reason why its proponents disregard the notion of “fixed-grouping” and celebrate the “flexible grouping” of students (Baecher, Artigliere, Patterson, & Spatzer, 2012).

Differentiated Instruction, according to Levy (2008), requires the modification of a given curriculum with respect to students’ needs, learning styles and strengths. More specifically, it is
directed towards three curricular elements: content, process, and product. Tomlinson (2001) defines the **content** as the input or what students are expected to learn, the **process** as the manner of learning, and the **product** as the output or how students show evidence of learning. To differentiate the **content**, teachers, for instance, may make use of supplementary texts, novels or stories at different levels (Algozzine & Anderson, 2007). Differentiating the **process**, on the other hand, involves using sense-making activities such as journal writing, model making and choice-boards (Tomlinson, 2001). Finally, since the purpose behind the **product** is for students to demonstrate their understanding of the **content**, teachers can differentiate this part of the curriculum by making contracts or lists of potential project options (Algozzine & Anderson, 2007).

### 2.2 Strategies that Support Differentiation

There is a considerable variety of strategies from which teachers, who are interested in differentiating their classrooms, can choose (Tomlinson, 2001; Tomlinson, 2014). The ones, used during the intervention sessions in this study, are the following:

**Complex Instruction**: It is one of the dominant and most common strategies of differentiation. As per Tomlinson (2001), teachers using this strategy do in-depth studies on their students to determine their intellectual abilities. Then they design their lessons using high-level learning tasks drawn on the strengths of their students.

**Learning contracts**: In simple terms, a learning contract is one that functions as an agreement between students and their teachers and involves giving learners some freedom over the way they prefer to learn and apply new concepts. Most of the learning contracts offer students a variety of options from which they can choose and work accordingly (Tomlinson, 2014).

**Group investigations**: Using this strategy, teachers are expected to guide students’ thinking through classroom investigations of topics related to what is being taught. The teacher divides students into groups, helps them plan for the investigation, conduct the investigation, report the results and evaluate their progress (Tomlinson, 2014).

**4-Mat**: According to Tomlinson (2001), this strategy suggests planning a lesson in which four learning preferences are stressed: 1) mastery of the new information, 2) understanding the main points, 3) getting personally involved and 4) creating something new out of the newly learned information.

### 2.3 E & L Construct

Tomlinson (2001), the developer of Differentiated Instruction, classifies individual differences into three main categories: readiness, interests, and learning profiles. The E&L Construct, developed by Ehrman & Leaver (1997, 2003 as cited in Leaver, Ehrman & Shekhtman, 2005) is one of the most prevalent models of cognitive styles. It is comprised of ten continuum-like scales: 1) Analogue–digital, 2) Concrete–abstract, 3) Field independent–field dependent, 4) Field sensitive–field insensitive, 5) Global–particular, 6) Impulsive–reflective, 7) Inductive–deductive, 8) Leveling–sharpening, 9) Random–sequential, 10) Synthetic–analytic. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of learners according to each scale (Dörnyei, 2005; Leaver, Ehrman & Shekhtman, 2005; Ehrman, 1996; Ehrman & Leaver, 2003).
Table 1. Summary of the E & L Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Pole</th>
<th>Characteristics of learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field Dep.</td>
<td>Field dependent</td>
<td>Rely on the textbook, teacher, or syllabus to organize various forms of an element prior to the learning setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field independent</td>
<td>Can notice a specific linguistic element wherever they come across it and can subconsciously categorize the various forms of that element.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Sens.</td>
<td>Field sensitive</td>
<td>Tend to use the whole language environment for learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field insensitive</td>
<td>Do not focus on the language environment but rather they only pay careful attention to the language element being studied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random-Sequential</td>
<td>Random</td>
<td>Like to develop or structure their own approaches to language learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sequential</td>
<td>Complete assignments in no apparent (to the outsider) order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer to be given materials already organized by someone else: a syllabus, lesson plan …etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global–Particular</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>Understand the “big picture” and attend to an idea as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Particular</td>
<td>Alert to details and discrete units, and use bottom-up processing of information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inductive-Deductive</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
<td>Form hypotheses, then try them out or test them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deductive</td>
<td>Study the grammatical rules, then apply them to individual examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer to get these rules either from the teacher or from further references.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic–Analytic</td>
<td>Synthetic</td>
<td>Like to build new wholes out of old pieces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analytic</td>
<td>Like to deconstruct wholes into parts to understand their componential structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analogue-Digital</td>
<td>Analogue</td>
<td>Learn better when using conceptual links (such as metaphors and analogies) among units and their meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>Learn better when the new element is meaningfully contextualized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer direct associations and have a literal understanding of meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete–Abstract</td>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>Learn better when real materials and examples are used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leveling–Sharpening</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Accept theories well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leveling</td>
<td>Combine together different information that come from different sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharpening</td>
<td>Look for distinctions among items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notice differences and write well when the assignment allows them to use their abilities to describe differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulsive–Reflective</td>
<td>Impulsive</td>
<td>Think and respond simultaneously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>Finish their assignments quickly but with no much accuracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Show deeper levels of thinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The E&L Construct differs from the other models due to its flexibility and distinctiveness. Unlike the others, this model is not entirely polar in its nature. Instead, it allows the combination of multiple attributes from both poles (Riding & Cheema, 1991; Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003). In other words, as other models only accept the “either … or” rule, each scale of the E&L Construct
is a continuum in its own. For instance, people, as Leaver, Ehrman & Shekhtman (2005) explain, are not entirely field-dependent nor field-independent, they could be anywhere in between. However, being more field-dependent and less-field-independent still means that people process information differently from those who are the opposite. Thus, this construct is worth considering when planning, delivering and evaluating students’ progress.

Readers of the above description of the E & L Construct can intuitively notice that all of the ten scales fall under another umbrella scale. The larger scale is made up of two poles: Synoptic and Ectenic (Leaver, Ehrman & Shekhtman, 2005). Synoptic learning relies on students’ unconscious control over the language, whereas Ectenic learning occurs under learners’ consciousness (Skehan, 1998). The following figure illustrates how each scale contains a trait from each pole:

![Diagram of E & L Scales Classified into Synoptic and Ectenic Traits]

2.4 Why Altering the Way Grammar is taught?
Over the years, grammar teaching has gone through a few changes; from form-focused to meaning-focused instruction, from accuracy to fluency and so forth (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). From the 1840s to the 1940s, advocates of the Grammar Translation Method emphasized the importance of the explicit teaching of grammar rules. At that time, teaching was accomplished by giving students the grammatical rules deductively and then requiring them to apply these rules to individual examples. Later on, with the emergence of new constructs, such as the Direct Method or Communicative Language Teaching, and up until today; the focus of grammar teaching shifted gradually from form-focused to meaning-focused instruction. This change in the means of teaching, as analyzed by Rama & Agulló (2012), was the result of a shift in the competence intended for students to achieve, from being declarative (conscious grammatical competence) to being more procedural (communicative competence).
What unifies all of the above teaching practices, whether they promote explicit or implicit knowledge, is that they are all language-focused approaches. However, as education is starting to lean more towards learner-centered kinds of learning, the situation should be looked at from a different angle. To put it in another way, based on the description of Synoptic learning, one can genuinely assume that synoptic students learn best when they pay an overt attention to grammatical rules or when they get exposed to conscious and controlled language knowledge; and that is the core of “Explicit Instruction” (Ellis, 2015; DeKeyser, 1998). To teach grammar explicitly, teachers employ linguistic metalanguage, that is the language used to describe a language (Smith, 1981). Ectenic learners, on the other hand, lean more towards “Implicit Instruction” through which they focus on meaning rather than form; without receiving much explanation of grammar rules (Ellis, 2015; DeKeyser, 1998). Meeting the needs of both types of students is something that can be done via the use of Differentiated Instruction.

2.5 Previous Studies on Differentiated Instruction

One criticism of much of the literature on Differentiated Instruction is that although the number of studies that explored the existence and nature of individual differences among language learners is significant (e.g., Castro & Peck, 2005; Dörnyei, 2014; Gardner, 2011; McNamara & Deane, 2006; Cook, 2013), there are only a few studies that have attempted to put Differentiated Instruction into practice.

Among the studies that investigated the effects of this teaching method on language learning is one conducted by Alavinia & Farhady (2012) in the Iranian context. participants in the study were divided into two groups: experimental and control. After setting a pretest, students in the experimental group were put into groups based on their multiple intelligences and styles of learning and were instructed accordingly, whereas students in the control group received regular unified instruction. The posttest results revealed that the performance of the two groups varied significantly, with the experimental group outperforming the other. Although these results are believed to add to the available body of literature, one drawback of this study is related to the researcher’s application of Differentiated Instruction. As mentioned previously, Tomlinson (2001) emphasizes that Differentiated Instruction is significantly different from Individualized Instruction in the sense that the former is more about the flexible grouping of learners whereas the latter is mainly about putting students in fixed groups. Based on this description of Differentiated Instruction, one can argue that what Alavinia & Farhady (2012) investigated in their study is more like Individualized Instruction directed to fixed groups rather than differentiation.

In another study with a more systematic methodology, Paredes (2017) examined the effects of Differentiated Instruction on students’ learning of vocabulary, grammar and reading using differentiated strategies instead of fixed intelligence-based grouping, as in the previous study. Using pre- and post- standardized tests to assess students’ progress, the results showed that students’ performance has significantly improved after the experiment. What is intriguing about this study, though, is the fact that the duration of the intervention part was not declared. Nonetheless, considering that the researcher used standardized tests to assess students’ performance, the duration of intervention must have been long enough to make the improvement worth mentioning.
In the Saudi context, the number of studies that investigated the notion of Differentiated instruction is limited. A study conducted by Al-Subaiei (2017) at King Abdulaziz University revealed that teachers face a great deal of challenges in Preparatory EFL classrooms where students’ diversity is believed to be high. Another study conducted by Alghamdi & Alnowaiser (2017) reveals that teachers at the same site are well-aware of learners’ variance. Teachers in their study claimed to use various techniques, which according to the researchers belong to Differentiated Instruction. However, a couple of classroom observations conducted by the researchers revealed that teachers’ use of these strategies was somehow limited.

In an attempt to investigate the effects of Differentiated Instruction on vocabulary and grammar, Siddiqui & Alghamdi (2017) applied three strategies of differentiation on low achiever students in remedial classes. The strategies used were varied instruction, flexible grouping and differentiated content. To measure the effect of these strategies, the researchers had students sit a pretest, attend remedial classes for ten weeks and then take a posttest. The results of their study revealed that students’ performance has significantly improved. There are some notes, however, that should be mentioned about their study. With the presence of two independent, yet confounding, variables, it is hard to tell whether the improvement occurred because of the differentiation or because of the remedial classes. To solve this confounding variables issue, the researchers should have had a control group. The control group should undergo regular remedial sessions where the strategies mentioned above are not implemented. Another issue with the study is its insufficient definition of some of the main constructs involved. With a concept as general as Differentiated Instruction, it is better to identify and define the central point from which the subject matter is to be approached. Tomlinson (2014), for example, has identified three starting points for differentiation; students’ readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Defining the base of differentiation is very important; it would inform the current body of literature on the three areas mentioned.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design and Paradigm

This study does not attend to a single method of data collection. Therefore, it can be argued that the philosophical paradigm followed here is more related to Pragmatism; which, according to Creswell (2013), emphasizes the complete investigation of a subject matter regardless of the method used. To achieve the purpose of this study and to better answer the research questions, the instruments used are believed to combine some features of two research paradigms: Positivism and Interpretivism.

Positivism proposes that reality is fixed, unchangeable, value-free and independent of the observer (Healy & Perry, 2000). The main approach to Positivism is the experiment; which, as defined by Trochim, Donnelly & Arora (2015), is the attempt to understand a particular phenomenon via direct manipulation of variables and observation. According to Hussain, Elyas, & Nasseef (2013), empirical experiments are central to the positivist paradigm; they provide clear, precise, rigorous and generalizable information about the subject matter. In this study, the first research question will be answered subsequent to a classroom experiment in which Differentiated Instruction functions as an independent variable. The answer to this question revolves around one reality; either “yes” or “no.”
Interpretivism, on the contrary, is constructed on the assumption that reality does not only come in one objective form. Instead, there are many realities created by individuals who experience the phenomenon (Krauss & Putra, 2005). In other words, the best way to understand a specific situation is to get immersed and involved in it. Thus, to answer second research question, an Interpretive method of data collection is to be utilized to gain rich and elaborate data. By interviewing the participants, it is one of the aims of this study to understand the different facets of Differentiated Instruction’s reality.

3.2 Procedures of the Study
Since the population of the study is female preparatory year students at King Abdul-Aziz University in the academic year of 2017-2018, an ethical approval to conduct the experiment during the third and fourth modules was requested from the Vice-Dean of the ELI women’s campus. After getting the approval, data collection and analysis went through four stages:

   a. Pre-experimental stage
At this stage, four ELI-102 sections (with approximately 28 newly-admitted students in each) were randomly chosen as possible candidates for the study groups: experimental and control. Students in all groups sat a pretest at the beginning of the fourth module, that is an achievement test taken from previous exams. The purpose of this test was to select two sections in which students are homogeneous and comparable.

   b. Experimental stage
Both groups, then, received a different kind of grammar instruction. The experimental group, taught by the researcher, received differentiated grammar instruction in light of their cognitive needs. The intervention sessions lasted for three weeks, twice-weekly, until the mid-module exam. Meanwhile, the control group received traditional grammar instruction by their own teacher.

   c. Post-experimental stage
At the end of week 3, students in the two groups took a posttest, which is another achievement test. Once the test was taken, students’ results were compared to each other as well as to the pre-test results. The total number of students who attended most of the sessions and took the pre- and post- tests was found to be 20 in the experimental group and 22 in the control. As a result, two students from the control group were randomly excluded.

   d. Reflective stage
At this point of the study, six students from the experimental group participated in open-ended one-to-one interviews through which they were asked to reflect on their own learning experience. The interview questions tapped on the perceived usefulness of the intervention.

3.3 Means of Data Analysis
To analyze the data related to the first research question, three types of tests were run using SPSS. The first is Levene’s test of homogeneity used to eliminate the possible occurrence of any significant differences between the control and experimental groups. The second is Mann-Whitney U which was run subsequent to the administration of the posttest to compare the results of students in the experimental group to the results of those in the control group. The third test, which is
Wilcoxon signed-rank, was performed to detect any significant difference between the results of students before and after the experiment as shown in Table 2. These non-parametric tests were chosen because students’ number in each section was less than thirty (Barnes & Lewin, 2005).

The data collected from the interviews were analyzed thematically. The analysis went through a few stages: examination of data, recording recurrent patterns, grouping of ideas and deducing general themes.

3.4 Participants
The course chosen was an EFL undergraduate course entitled ELI-102, offered by the English Language Institute of King Abdul-Aziz University in the academic year of 2017-2018. This course comes the second in a series of four courses given to the foundation-year students. Most of those attending it are high-school graduates between 18 and 25 years of age. The estimated language proficiency level of them is A2 on the Common European Framework. Other characteristics of the participants, as to their homogeneity level and so forth, will be embedded in the following parts.

3.5 How to Differentiate Grammar Lessons in Light of the E&L Construct
The content of the English Language courses at King Abdul-Aziz University is highly structured. At the beginning of any course, teachers are usually given instructional packages where everything related to the learning objectives, skills, subskills, lists of vocabulary and grammar rules… etc. is made clear to follow. In order to properly differentiate a grammar lesson based on the E&L Construct, it was of great importance to design detailed lesson plans in which all class activities and teachers’ practices are explained.

A critical key to Differentiated Instruction is responding to as many learning preferences as possible throughout the lesson. Nonetheless, that does not imply that there is a single way of matching instruction to the preferences of all students’ at a time (Tomlinson, 2001). Therefore, the process of differentiation was synchronized with the different parts of the lesson; starting from the moment the grammar rule was introduced all the way until students were expected to show evidence of their learning.

4. Results of the study
4.1 Results related to the First Research Question:
RQ1. Does Differentiated Instruction in the light of the E&L Construct have any significant impact on students’ grammar learning?
As mentioned earlier, four ELI-102 sections (with approximately 28 newly-admitted students in each) were randomly selected as possible experimental and control groups. Students in all groups
(A, B, C, D) sat a pretest at the beginning of the fourth module, an achievement mid-module test taken from previous exams. The results of this test showed that groups A and B are the best candidates to represent the study groups: experimental and control. As shown in Table 3, the P-value > .05 confirms that the assumption of homogeneity of variance between the two groups is met (Loewen & Plonsky, 2016).

Table 3. Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Levene Statistic</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.255</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>.617</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The experimental group was then given a 3-week, twice-weekly differentiated grammar instruction. At the same time, the control group attended regular classes. By the end of week three, both groups took a posttest, an achievement grammar test that measures the same constructs the pre-test does. The following two parts include an analysis of the two tests used on the pre-post test results. Based on the results, decisions have been made about the acceptance or rejection of the study hypotheses mentioned below.

**NH1**: In a grammar achievement posttest, students in the experimental group will not achieve significantly higher ratings than those in the control group.

**NH2**: There will be no significant difference between the scores of students in the experimental group before and after the experiment.

The alternative hypotheses, on the other hand, state that:

**AH1**: In a grammar achievement test, students in the experimental group will achieve significantly higher ratings than those in the control group.

**AH2**: There will be a significant difference between the scores of students in the experimental group before and after the experiment.

### 4.1.1 Results Related to the First Hypothesis:

To check whether the first null hypothesis is to be verified or not, Mann-Whitney Test was used to detect any significant difference between the post-test results of students in the experimental group and their counterparts in the control group.

Table 4. Mann-Whitney Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Ranks Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exp.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21.23</td>
<td>424.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19.78</td>
<td>395.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Test Statistics for Mann-Whitney Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>185.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>395.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-.394</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 4, students in the experimental group scored higher ratings (with a mean of 21.23) than those in the control group. However, the difference between the two groups, as Table 5 suggests, is not significant since the P-value (.694) is more than (0.05). From this data, it can be concluded that this study fails to reject the NH1.

4.1.2 Results Related to the Second Hypothesis:
To check if the second Null Hypothesis is to be verified or not, Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to detect any significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores of students in the experimental group.

Table 6. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Posttest – Pretest</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative Ranks</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Ranks</td>
<td>18b</td>
<td>10.39</td>
<td>187.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ties</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Posttest < Pretest  
b. Posttest > Pretest  
c. Posttest = Pretest

Table 7. Test Statistics for Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Posttest – Pretest</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.3.707b</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 7, the p-value, which in this case is (.000), suggests the presence of a statistically significant difference in students’ performance before and after the experiment. This, therefore, proves that NH2 should be rejected and the AH2 should be accepted.

4.2 Results Related to the Second Research Question
RQ2. How do participant students perceive the integration of Differentiated Instruction into language classrooms?

To answer the second research question, six students from the experimental group were randomly selected and interviewed. The interview questions required students to reflect on their experiences throughout the experiment in order to inspect the way they perceive Differentiated Instruction. From there, three over-arching themes were deduced: Increase of Learners’ Motivation, Appropriateness of Access and Autonomy of Learners.

1. Increased Motivation:
When participants were asked about the advantages of the experiment, they described the learning environment as one where they felt involved. This involvement in learning, according to them, kept them alert and most importantly motivated throughout the six sessions. This was further indicated by one learner who stated the following:

“It has been a long time since I was in a class where my eyes stayed wide-open almost all the time. We had no time to get lazy; one moment we are guessing what the grammar rules would be like, or listening carefully to your (the researcher’s) instruction, and the next moment we find ourselves involved in activities where everyone is expected to participate. I honestly had no time to sleep at all!” (Participant 1)

Other learners went into details and identified with much accuracy what motivated them the most. For example, some indicated that it is the group work that kept them motivated, while others pointed out that their motivation was high when they engaged in physical and interactive simulation activities. The most intriguing response was from some students who added that they found the explicit instruction of rules and the simplified summaries of grammar very engaging.

2. Appropriateness of access
When the researchers asked the participants whether they were taught grammar appropriately and whether they prefer to learn it in another way, most of the responses came out positive. Some indicated that a remarkable feature of the current method is that they have had more than one chance to learn the lesson. One student, for example, stated the following: “Whenever I felt I missed something or did not understand a point, I always found other opportunities to catch up on what I have missed” (Participant 2).

3. Learners’ individuality and autonomy:
The last theme that emerged from learners’ responses was mainly related to one of the main principles of Differentiated Instruction; this principle states that students should sometimes be given the freedom of choice over the way they like to show evidence of their learning. In fact, learners in this study found the concept of “learning contracts” quite appealing. One of the respondents commented on the task list they were given at the end of the experiment by saying “I enjoyed doing the task I chose when I did it the way I want” (Participant 2). Expecting everyone to do the same tasks, as believed by students, limits what they can do and forces them to be all the same.

4. Discussion
To fully understand the usefulness of Differentiated Instruction, the instruments employed in this study are inspired by two theoretical paradigms: Positivism and Interpretivism. The Positivist data resulted from a classroom experiment answers the first research question, whereas the Interpretivist data gathered from one-to-one interviews with the participants answers the second. The following two parts discuss these two sets of data with regards to the previous research.

5.1 From a Positivist Point of View:
As mentioned earlier, the quantitative data collected before and after the experiment revealed that a 3-week, twice-weekly Differentiated Instruction resulted in a statistically significant change in
learners’ performance in a grammar achievement test. However, when comparing the post-test scores of students in the experimental group to those in the control group, the results revealed that even though the formers achieved higher ratings than the laters, the difference between the two is not statistically significant.

The first part of these results, the one which says that instructing students based on their needs resulted in a significant improvement in their performance, is consistent with the results from the studies mentioned in the literature review (e.g. Alavinia & Farhady, 2012; Siddiqui & Alghamdi, 2017; Paredes, 2017). The second part, however, which dismisses the presence of a significant difference in performance between the experimental and control group, is not. This conflict can possibly be justified in a number of ways:

1. Experimental treatment diffusion: In a study that was conducted in the same site (Alghamdi & Alnowaiser, 2017), EFL teachers showed a great deal of familiarity and awareness of learners’ variations. They also reported their use of some Differentiating strategies which later on was found by the researchers to be limited. This awareness from the part of the teachers might have resulted in an actual use of some of the Differentiated strategies in class. Consequently, students in the control group might have been exposed to some Differentiated Instruction. That might have impacted their performance in the post-test results.

2. Learners’ attendance: Reviewing the attendance records of students in the experimental and control groups showed that the number of students’ absences in the latter is significantly less than in the former. Thus, the high rate of learners’ absence might have prevented them from achieving the expected outcomes.

3. History: Much to the researchers’ surprise, students’ in the control group had an unplanned revision session with their teacher before the posttest (which was one day before the mid-module exam), whereas students’ in the experimental group did not. This revision might have had an influence on the results causing learners in the control group to achieve higher ratings than expected.

4. Method of assessment: for the purpose of fairness and equity when comparing students’ performance in the two groups, the pre-post tests used were formal assessment measures taken from previous exams. Using differentiated methods of assessment, as the researchers anticipate, might be more accurate when tracing the change in students’ performance. But then again, it would be difficult to compare learners’ achievements in the two groups.

5.2 From an *Interpretivist* Point of View:

The second research question aimed at exploring the usefulness of Differentiated Instruction as perceived by participant learners. The overall interview results suggest that learners have positive attitudes towards differentiated classrooms. Their responses revolved around three themes: the increased motivation, appropriateness of access and individuality and autonomy.

In her book, The Differentiated Classroom, Tomlinson’s (2014) argues that there are three reasons behind using Differentiated Instruction as a method of teaching; these include enhancing the efficiency of learning, increasing learners’ motivation and allowing learners to have good access to the lesson. Surprisingly, two of the themes that emerged from learners’ responses are
directly proving that application of Differentiated Instruction has successfully contributed to two of Tomlinson’s reasons: increasing learners’ motivation and enhancing the way they access the lesson. The third theme, however, is believed to be partially related to the efficacy of learning.

On another level, the first theme, which is the increase of learners’ motivation, as one benefit of Differentiated Instruction, supports other researchers’ argument that if the teacher adapted his or her instruction to meet students’ variation, students’ self-image as learners improves (Corazza, Gustin & Edelkind, 1995, as cited in Salvisberg, 2005; Dornyei, 2005). The increase in learners’ motivation is an example of this improvement. Furthermore, the other themes, which are the appropriateness of access and learners’ autonomy, confirm Baecher’s et al. (2012) assertion that the purpose of differentiated instruction is neither to make heterogeneous groups homogeneous nor to transform the traditional learning environment completely. Instead, the core of Differentiated Instruction, as illustrated by Benjamin (2006), is the appreciation of rituals and varieties. Rituals refer to norms and expectations already existing, whereas varieties provide excitement and freedom of choice.

6. Conclusion
The current study sought to explore the effect of Differentiated Instruction, in light of learners’ cognitive profiles, on female EFL foundation year students at King Abdul-Aziz University in the academic year of 2017-2018. Following a Pretest-posttest design, the first part aimed at exploring the phenomena quantitatively from a positivist point of view. The second part, however, aimed at exploring the way learners perceive Differentiated Instruction through one-to-one interviews. Results of the first part of the study revealed that the application of Differentiated Instruction resulted in a significant difference between the pre-post results of students in the experimental group. However, when comparing the performance of students in the experimental group to their counterparts in the control group, the results revealed that the difference is not statistically significant. Furthermore, the qualitative results revealed that learners perceive the application of Differentiated Instruction in a positive way. Three themes were found to be recurrent in their responses: the increased motivation, appropriateness of access, and autonomy. Based on these findings, the following implications and recommendations are made.

6.1 Pedagogical Implications
Based on the findings of the current study, a group of implications was drawn to enhance the quality of language teaching and learning. First, Professional Development and Qualification Assurance Committees are recommended to consider Differentiated Instruction when designing professional programs and courses and when setting the criteria for evaluating teachers’ performance in class. Another implication is to create planning circles where teachers can collaboratively design learning resources, in-class activities, and assignments that facilitate Differentiated Instruction. These circles are meant to form the base from which teachers can start adopting this method of teaching.

6.2 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research
Generally speaking, the number of studies that investigated the effect of Differentiated Instruction on language learning is limited in number. Unlike others, this area of research needs further investigation in order to come up with more reliable results. It is important, at this point, to
highlight the limitations of the current study and write up some recommendations for future research.

1. Experimental treatment diffusion (discussed in Section 5.1.2.1): One possible explanation for the insignificant difference between the two groups is the fact that the treatment strategies might have been used with the control group as well. To solve this issue, it is important to control the variables directly by assigning one teacher (either the researcher or any teacher) to the two groups: experimental and control.

2. Time constraints: One of the main limitations of this study is the time restriction; three weeks of treatment might not be enough to create a significant effect. Future researchers are, thus, recommended to conduct studies in which treatment sessions last for longer periods of time.

3. Loss of participants: Even though the estimated number of students in each one of the two section was twenty-eight to thirty, it was difficult to get students to attend the sessions. Including larger samples, on the contrary, might be one way of solving this issue.

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References


Processing English Formulaic Expressions in Situation-Bound Utterances: Strategies Used by Francophone ESL Learners in Thailand

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Abstract
In examining how English as a second language (ESL) learners process English formulaic expressions in a nonnative English context, this study aims to investigate the strategies that learners use and how first language (L1) culture and conceptual knowledge could influence the use of the strategies. This study is guided by the research question of how francophone ESL learners in Thailand process formulaic expressions in situation-bound utterances (SBUs). Three Francophone Cameroonian learners of English in a university in Thailand (served as the experimental group) and two native English speakers (as the control group) participated in this study. Oral Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was employed to elicit data and evaluated based on 4 categories: (1) Native-like English; (2) Towards Native-like English; (3) Francophone English; and (4) Irrelevant English. The result showed that among the three francophone participants in the study whose native languages were French, 60% DCT responses were Towards Native-like (TNE), 30% were Francophone English (FE), 10% were Native-like English (NE). There was no response from the DCTs, according to the analysis, that was irrelevant English. A further analysis of the three categories revealed that the learners primarily used simplification, verbosity, literal salience, and L1 cultural transfer strategies in processing formulaic expressions. This study corroborates the seemingly weak connection of English linguistic proficiency and sociolinguistic competence in ESL learner’s pragmatic knowledge, as well as the reliance on L1 conventionalized conceptualization in processing English formulaic expressions. Implications for teaching formulaic expressions in a nonnative English as a foreign language (EFL) context in general, and Thai context in particular are also discussed.

Keywords: English formulaic expressions, situation-bound utterances, Francophone ESL learners’ strategies

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1. Introduction

Research has shown that we store representations of individual words in our mental lexicon (Wray & Perkins, 2000). There is a growing agreement that the lexicon also contains formulaic expressions, such as, 'how are you' and 'thank you'. Wray (2002, p. 9) captures formulaic expressions rather nicely as “words or other elements linked together, which are, or appear to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar”. In fact, there are compelling reasons to think that the brain represents formulaic sequences in long-term memory, bypassing the need to compose them online through word selection and grammatical sequencing in capacity-limited working memory (Lyons, 1968). On this basis, therefore, formulaic expression is operationalized in this paper as a phenomenon that incorporates various types of word strings that appear to be stored and retrieved as a whole from the memory. This working definition is from Wray & Perkins (2000). They define formulaic expressions as:

A sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other meaning elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is stored and retrieved whole from the memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar. (p. 1)

The main characteristic of such utterances is that "their internal structure, unlike that of genuine sentences, is not accounted for by means of rules which specify the permissible combinations of words" (Lyons, 1968, p. 17). In other words, formulaic expressions and grammatical sentences are alternative ways of expressing meaning. Formulaic expressions are common in native-speaker utterances, but it is, probably, even more common in the speech of second language (L2) learners, practicing speaking. These prefabricated words have “a formula-specific pragmatic property” (Kecskes, 2000b, p.13), prearranged in English as a second language (ESL)/English as a foreign language (EFL) speaker’s utterances, “reflective of native-like selection and native-like fluency” (Pawley & Syder, 1983, p. 19). Kecskes (2007, p. 192) describes the importance of these formulae by stating that “people belonging to a particular speech community have preferred ways of saying things” and preferred ways of organizing thoughts. Depending on the variability degree, different terminologies are used for formulaic expressions, such as, conventional expressions, pragmatic routines, prefabricated expressions, multi-word units, ready-made chunks, and lexical phrases. The adoption of ‘formulaic expressions’ in this study is, most importantly, to emphasize the socio-cultural aspect of these expressions, and because it is the most widely used terminology in the literature, amongst others. Formulaic expressions serve as an available resource to a speech community in order for the community to communicate. Psycholinguistic shows that formulaic expressions are stored and retrieved as ‘chunks’ in the mental lexicon. Conklin & Norbert (2008) argue that formulaic expressions are often linked to a single meaning/pragmatic function in a social communication setting. Lack of ability to produce native-like formulaic expressions may lead to communicative breakdown in social interactions. This study aims to investigate how ESL/EFL learners process English formulaic expressions in a non-native English speaking context by looking at what strategies the learners use. How their L1 socio-cultural knowledge influences the use of the strategies is also part of the aim in this study. The case investigated in this study is francophone Cameroonian ESL learners in Thailand.
1.1 Learners processing of formulaic expressions

Aspects of sociolinguistic competence in the field of pragmatics and applied linguistics study formulaic expressions and second language acquisition. The production of formulaic expressions and natural interpretation characterise native English-speaking speech as they, without any conscious effort, process formulaic expressions without “decomposing their components” (Xu & Zhang, 2015, p. 1). Nevertheless, this is seemingly not the same situation for language learners without so much exposure to, or target language practice in the target environment. Learners acquisition of formulaic expressions requires “the knowledge of the socio-cultural background of the target language, whose meaning can be explained only as a function of habitual usage; the pragmatic functions, usually not elicited in these linguistic units” (Kecskes, 2000b, p. 607). As a consequence, language learners may portray non-native-likeness in producing formulaic expressions. This is indicative of their low level of sociolinguistic pragmatic competence. In the case of Cameroonian francophone learners of English in Thailand (as the studied example), students usually focus on the linguistic signs to pass their examination rather than the concepts in the signs. The ensuing effect of such a situation is that the learners will be deficient in native-like sociolinguistic competence. To illustrate this point better, learners may get high examination scores, but unable to correctly express themselves in English in social situations. They may produce seemingly grammatical utterances, but not appropriate ones. To this end, the social norms of the target language could be violated as a result of the lack of pragmatic competence to enhance grammatical competence. Such insufficient pragmatic awareness is most evident among these learners when they communicate with native speakers, be it within native context or non-native context. Observing what happens in ESL/EFL environments as teachers, the development of learners’ linguistic proficiency is oriented mainly towards language skills with little target-like socio-cultural knowledge. Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei (1998) argue that L2 learners are not able to acquire a sufficient level of sociolinguistic competence of the target language because the target language learners learn in the classroom lacks a native-like pragmatic function. ESL/EFL learners find it seemingly difficult with instructed classroom learning to acquire native-like or close to native-like sociolinguistic competence. It becomes unlikely for them to achieve a high level of sociolinguistic competence though they command a high proficiency level in linguistic knowledge. In a foreign language learning contexts, pragmatic competence generally tends to delay behind linguistic competence (Ringbom, 2013). In their argument, Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei (1998) assert that even the advanced language learners often show a marked imbalance between their grammatical and pragmatic knowledge or, more specifically, between the micro level of lexicogrammatical knowledge, and the macro level of communicative competence in sociocultural contexts. Along these lines, there is generally a weak connection between English linguistic proficiency and sociolinguistic competence in a non-native English learning context.

1.2 Strategies in processing formulaic expressions

Previous studies on formulaic expressions have so far been interested in investigating the existing relationships between L2 proficiency and processing of formulaic expressions (Cook & Liddicoat, 2002; Garcia, 2004; Taguchi, 2005, 2007, 2011; Holtgraves, 2007; Bardovi Harlig & Bastos, 2011). Their studies all attest to the overall advantage of ESL learners’ competence in processing formulaic expressions. Fewer studies, however, have researched into how L2 learners process formulaic expressions, that is to say, what strategies learners employ in processing formulaic
expressions, and how linguistic proficiency influences the strategy they use. Investigating how L2 speakers processed situation-bound utterances, Kecskes (2000b), analysed the strategies of 88 non-native students in the United States of America (USA) individually and found out that learners mainly use oversimplification, overuse, verbosity and ignoring the utterances strategies in processing situation-bound utterance. Probably due to the diverse home backgrounds of the learners, Kecskes did not go into further analysis of the reasons why learners used those strategies and how their home conceptual knowledge influenced the strategies (Xu & Zhang, 2015), thus, the need for this line of study.

1.3 Situation-Bound Utterances (SBUs)
This paper focuses on a particular type of formulaic expression known as situation-bound utterances (SBUs) (Kecskes, 1997, 1999). SBUs are highly conventionalized, prefabricated pragmatic units whose occurrence is tied to standardized communicative situations (Coulmas, 1981; Kiefer, 1995, 1996; Kecskes, 1997, 1999). The use of formulaic expression is highly predetermined and predictable by the situation in the SBUs. The acquisition and production of formulaic expressions in SBUs by an L2 learner requires the knowledge of the socio-cultural background of the target language, because SBUs are functional units whose meaning can be explained only as functions of habitual usage. The pragmatic functions are usually not encoded in these linguistic units, therefore SBUs often receive their charge from the situation they are used in. It is generally this situational charge that distinguishes SBUs from their freely generated counterparts. Different concepts have been used to describe these expressions in the relevant literature, such as routine formulae (Coulmas, 1979), situational utterances (Kiefer, 1985, 1995), bound utterances (Kiefer, 1996), and institutionalized expressions (Nattinger & DeCarrio, 1992). These varied concepts explain, but not limited to this particular type of pragmatic units, but are also discussed in other fields of applied linguistics. The term ‘situation-bound utterances’ is preferred in this study to any other concept because it refers to the main characteristic feature of the utterances being investigated: their boundedness to a particular situation.

2. Research objectives and research questions
This section presents the research objective and research questions in this study.

2.1 Research objectives
ESL/EFL learners’ processing of formulaic expressions in the literature has received not as much attention as it should, empirically. In an attempt to fill in this gap in this regard, this study seeks to examine the strategies that Francophone Cameroonian learners use to process English formulaic expressions, and how their L1 conventionalized conceptualization of these expressions may influence the use of these strategies.

2.2 Research questions
The research objectives in this study will be examined by means of the following research questions:
1. How do francophone ESL learners in Thailand process formulaic expressions in situation-bound utterances?
2. What processing strategies do learners use in situation-bound contexts?
3. Research method
The following sections are the research method.

3.1 Research instrument
An oral DCT (Discourse Completion Task) was used in this study. As there are fewer standard testing materials oriented on ESL/EFL learners’ formulaic expression processing strategies, this study based the DCT material on Xu and Zhang (2015) research. Ten discourse completion tasks were employed in this research, which included dialogues, ranging from making apologies, responding to compliments, making requests, greeting and introducing. All 10 DCTs were adapted to suit the ESL/EFL context and also used to serve as testing materials for the control group (rater) in this study. The choice of a single instrument for this small-scale study is mainly because of practical reasons.

3.2 Participants
The study employed two groups of participants. One is the experimental group and the other is the control group. The experimental group was made up of Francophone Cameroonian learners, studying in English in Thailand and the control group was made up of native English speakers. Considering this is a small-scale research, the Francophone Cameroonian learners of English were 3 undergraduate university students at a university in Bangkok, studying Airline Business Management. All three learners have French as their L1. They have been studying English as a school subject since primary school in Cameroon, and are undertaking their university course in English. It is mandatory for these learners to take the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) annually in order to check their English proficiency level due to their language background. The learners have also taken the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam with a minimum score of 6.5. They were tested on all the four language skills. This is indicative of the fact that, in general, the learners in this study have a good command of English. Three (two English speakers and one French speaker) native speakers (i.e. those with English or French as their L1) participated as the control group in the study. The controls are native English language lecturers in a university in Bangkok. Their replies to the DCTs were compared to those of the learners in the experimental group.

3.3 Evaluation
Four evaluative criteria, adapted from Xu & Zhang (2015) research were employed in this study to evaluate the DCT responses elicited by the Francophone Cameroonian learners. They were Native-like English, Towards Native-like English, Francophone English and Irrelevant English. A response is Native-like English when it is appropriate and grammatical in the English language. It is towards native-like English when the responses can still be understood by native speakers, but with errors in grammar and wordings. Francophone English responses are those that are only appropriate in the francophone culture, but may not be understood by native English speakers. Irrelevant English replies are neither understood by native speakers nor by the francophones, or have nothing to do with the target questions.

One major difference between Towards Native-like English and francophone English responses is that Towards Native-like English replies are generally based on English conceptual knowledge, while learners who provide francophone English replies tend to rely more on the francophone
conceptual system. Accordingly, two evaluating groups participated in the study. The first group comprised of two native English speakers who evaluated the 10 DCTs according to their native-like and towards native-like English categories. The second group consisted of one francophone teacher of English, teaching French in Bangkok who later evaluated and decided on whether the remaining DCTs responses were francophone English or irrelevant English.

4. Results and discussion
From the data, it showed that among the three Francophone Cameroonian participants in the study whose native languages were French, 60% DCT responses were Towards Native-like (TNE), 30% were francophone English (FE), 10% were Native-like English (NE). There was no response from the DCTs, according to the data, that was irrelevant English.

This study proposed that Francophone Cameroonian learners of English had a moderately low level when handling conventional expressions in situation-bound utterances, as 90% of the DCT answers are not Native-like. The subjects in the study had studied English as a subject, studying in English in Bangkok, written the IELTS exam, and every one of them passed with an overall score band of 6.5, showing the participants have a high level of English proficiency. The finding of the study might suggest the inadequate association between linguistic knowledge and sociolinguistic competence of the learners in a nonnative context. Because of the absence of target socio-cultural information, ESL/EFL learners have a tendency to depend on their L1 conceptual framework while understanding and uttering formulaic expressions in L2. A further examination of the strategies used as part of Towards Native-like English and francophone English of the DCT indicates that this finding partly corroborates Kecskes (2000b) and Xu & Zhang (2015) results. Notwithstanding the strategies of oversimplification and verbosity found in their study, the participants in this study used literal saliency and L1 transfer strategies, found in XU & Zhang but not in Kecskes.

4.1 Oversimplification
At the point of responding to a compliment, demonstrating a thankfulness, or making an expression of apology, Francophone Cameroonian learners of English tend to give a brief 'Thank you' or 'I'm sad' answer. Then again, native speakers have a tendency to be elaborative as in Tables 1 and 2.

1st Situation: You promised to return a textbook to your classmate within a day or two, after photocopying a chapter. You kept it for almost 2 weeks.
Classmate: I’m really upset about the book because I needed it to prepare for last week’s class. You: _____________________________.

Table 1. Making apologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Francophone learners of English</th>
<th>Native speakers of English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sorry.</td>
<td>I’m so sorry. I lose track of time. Anything I could do to make it up to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am so sorry.</td>
<td>Am so sorry. Please remind me next time so I don’t forget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So so sorry.</td>
<td>I’m so sorry. It was really selfish of me. I completely forgot about it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Without sufficient and explicit teaching of pragmatic knowledge to learners, ESL/EFL learners will most likely not comprehend what else they may say in these circumstances aside from a straightforward answer of 'Sorry' or 'Thank you'. It might likewise show that they would rather take no chances by saying less or nothing as this could be disrespectful or impolite. The propensity of shortened expression affirms what Taguchi (2011) found out that learners have a constrained scope of pragmalinguistic resources, often symbolized by the use of a few forms over a range of function or the use of formulaic language. However, native speakers of English tend to be more elaborate in their discourse turns in situations like this. As shown in Tables 1 and 2, native English speakers use more semantic and syntactic modifiers in contrast to non-native English speakers.

4.2 Verbosity

The data reveals that the learners have a tendency to be verbose, especially when they have to respond to questions relating to ‘how/why’. According to the learners, these kinds of questions are seemingly easier for them to answer, particularly if they have something to say. In other words, they would feel confident and safe when they have enough vocabulary to express themselves in English in this kind of situation. Nevertheless, native speakers, in this kind of situation, will often be succinct in their response as presented in Table 3. In his study, Kecskes (2000a), affirms that in the American culture, questions as ‘How are you doing?’ functions as a greeting, which demands responses like ‘fine, thank you’ or its equivalent. In some other cultures, on the contrary, this question would be interpreted literally as ‘tell me how you are doing?’ ESL/EFL learner’s inability to familiarize themselves with this difference causes them to use their L1 conceptual knowledge. Just as reported in Kecskes (2000a), this study supports his view in Table 3, where the francophone learners interpreted this situation-bound utterance in its literal sense as a question. Not realizing the question is a form of greetings, the learners responded with excessive information, thus violating the Gricean maxim of quantity which says “Make your contribution as informative as required. Don’t make your contribution more informative than required” (Grice, 1975, pp. 45-46). All native speakers interpreted the conversations in the non-literal way by providing brief replies. When doing so, the native speakers tend to take a ‘you’ perspective. By responding with ‘How are you?’ they seek to keep a smooth social intercourse to achieve the phatic function of language use.

5th Situation: You ran into a friend in the corridor right before both of you went to a class.
Friend: Hi, how are you doing?
You: ____________________________________________________________

Table 3. Responses to greetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Francophone learners of English</th>
<th>Native speakers of English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fine, thanks. I have a serious exam next week. Sorry we can’t talk today for long.</td>
<td>Fine, thank you. What about you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not too bad, not too good, but ok. I have to attend all classes in order to pass with good grades? How about you, too?</td>
<td>Am doing great, and you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Am fine. How are you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Salience of literal meaning

Proposed by Giora (1997) in the ‘Graded Salience Hypothesis’, the hypothesis postulates the relevance of salient meanings as the most conventional, frequent, familiar and prototypical. Salient meanings are often initially processed irrespective of the literary or metaphoric meaning. For instance, for native speakers today, the metaphorical meaning of ‘get out of here’, ‘you’re kidding’ has become the most salient meaning for them as a result of the change of collective salience over time. The metaphorical meaning is what is processed initially by native speakers, unlike for foreign language learners who consider what is salient quite differently. ESL/EFL learners initially process the literal interpretation before the metaphorical meanings when learning the language. Due to the lack of target native-like socio-cultural experiences, they are unable to acquire the conceptual load attached to the words. So, the literal meanings of the words are usually salient in their minds. The findings here support the literal salience hypothesis in foreign language learning based on the results shown in Table 4:

8th Situation: You are talking to your friend Bob about another friend, Ray.
You: I think Ray was really rude to you yesterday.
Bob: Tell me about it.
You: _______________________

Table 4. Response to ‘come again?’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Francophone learners of English</th>
<th>Native speakers of English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don’t really like to talk about people behind their back.</td>
<td>Yeah, he was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t want to gossip.</td>
<td>Can you imagine. I didn’t like it myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He said you were foolish.</td>
<td>I can’t believe he said that.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is salient, for native speakers, in the expression ‘tell me about it’ is the metaphorical interpretation. However, this is not the case with Francophone learners in this study, as they tend to us the literal meaning by telling the story of how rude Ray was to Bob. It is worth reiterating that without enough exposure to the target socio-cultural environment, what the ESL/EFL students learn are mostly the linguistic signs without the pragmatic function encoded in the units.
4.4 Transfer of L1 culture

The Francophone learners of English in the experimental group in this study tend to be modest when they receive a compliment as illustrated in Table 6.

3rd Situation: You had friends over and they have just finished having dinner at your house that was prepared by you.
Friend: That was really delicious!
You: ______________________________________________________________

Table 5. Response to compliments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Francophone learners of English</th>
<th>Native speakers of English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never mind. It will be better next time.</td>
<td>Thanks. I specially prepared it for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s a pleasure. Just poorly prepared.</td>
<td>Thank you. I spent so much time and money to make it delicious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learnt from my mother, thank you. I know it’s not what you really like.</td>
<td>I try to make it healthy. Thanks for the compliment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An instance of the learner’s modesty is represented in Table 5. Yu (2011), studying the sociolinguistic behaviour of Chinese learners of American English, focusing on how they offer ‘compliments’ in L2 shows that the linguistic strategies used by native Chinese speakers to realize compliments are different from those used by the native speakers. For instance, Chinese speakers exhibit a lower tendency to respond to compliments than the native speakers. Yu’s findings support that of this study with the Francophone Cameroonian learners. Also of importance is that fact that the Francophone learners of English would feel it is impolite when they had something good while others do not. Consequently, they tend to express their regret for others as presented in Table 6.

7th Situation: A friend of yours asks about a party that you went to.
Friend: How was the party last night?
You: ______________________________________________________________

Table 6. Response to questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Francophone learners of English</th>
<th>Native speakers of English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oh, we had fun. Sorry that you were not there to join the fun.</td>
<td>It was pretty cool. What were you busy with last night?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good. Too bad you could not come.</td>
<td>Good. It was fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent. Wish you were there.</td>
<td>Fantastic. It was such an extraordinary moment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Native English speakers view ‘How was the party last night?’ as a social ritual. They would ask ‘What did you do?’ in return to show consideration for the other party. By asking the question, they seek to establish personal relationships in human interaction for phatic purpose. That’s not the type of question most francophone people are used to asking in this situation. Umar’s research (2004) found that Arab English learners, even at a high level of proficiency, may turn to their L1 cultural framework when formulating their pragmatic strategies. The current study supports Umar’s research in that Francophone Cameroonian learners of English also rely on their native
conceptual base in selecting their pragmatic strategies when processing English formulaic expressions.

5. Implications for teaching
This study has a number of pedagogical implications. The findings so far seem interesting as it thus, in its own way, reveals the importance of teaching formulaic expressions in ESL/EFL classrooms as they seem to “hold the key to native-like idiomaticity” (Wray, 2000, p. 479). Ellis (2005) supports this claim by saying that formulaic expressions enable learners to be able to practice sociolinguistic function of the language and maximize their communicative ability. Learners may “raise their awareness of the conventions involved in the target socio-cultural norms” (Yu, 2011, p. 11) by learning formulaic expressions. As a result, learners will be aided to develop pragmatic competence, promote production fluency and reduce their reliance on their L1 conceptual base. For learning through explicit tasks (as we recommend in this study), the number of communicative exposures tasks will probably lead to greater engagement involved in the classroom, for it is clear that more practical pragmatic tasks will lead to greater learning. Thus, teachers should consider the various types of pragmatic tasks when setting up their classroom teaching activities. This brings up a more general question of what type of pragmatic tasks is most effective. We looked at only a limited number of pragmatic tasks in this study, and they all can be used in the classroom to facilitate learners’ learning of formulaic expressions. However, other types of tasks such as, salutation are particularly effective in teaching and learning formulaic language.

Stressing on the importance of formulaic expressions, Wood (2002, p. 1) says it promotes language processing “as lexical chunks segmented from input and stored as a single entity in the long-term memory”. Formulaic expressions are fundamental to language production by allowing language production to occur while bypassing controlled processing and the constraints of short-term memory capacity. The learning burden is minimized by the lexical chunks, as “calling on memorized formulas is believed to be less cognitively demanding than constructing new utterances from scratch, and so it is thought that formulas may help speakers to cope with the demands of real-time language production and comprehension while maintaining fluency” (Durrant, 2008, p. 43).

6. Limitation
This study has one major limitation. The limitation concerns the number of participants used in the study. Considering this is a small-scale research, the choice of the small number of participants was mainly for practical reason. However, the number of participants could be increased for greater generalisation. The concept of formulaic language could also be investigated with learners from other ESL/EFL contexts.

7. Conclusion
This cross-sectional study investigated the strategies that Francophone ESL learners in Thailand use to process English formulaic expressions. The result shows that learners have a relatively low level in processing formulaic expressions, although they command a relatively high English linguistic competence. This finding indicates the weak connection of English linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence in an ESL/EFL environment. One characteristic of
language learning in a nonnative English context is that learners are not adequately exposed to the “conventionalized conceptualization” (Taylor, 1993, p. 212) of the target language, so they usually tend to rely on the conceptual base of their L1 when producing formulaic expressions. An analysis of the strategies that the learners use to process formulaic expressions indicate this reliance on L1 cultural cognition and conceptual system.

8. Suggestions and recommendations
An easy way into native-like speech production competence in formulaic expressions is to explicitly teach learners since they will achieve fast and efficient language processing with “a natural tendency to economy of effort” (Sinclair, 1987, p. 320). The research described in this paper informs language teachers teaching English to ESL/EFL learners and other foreign language teachers of focus teaching areas in improving the idiomaticity and fluency of English production. Teachers may also organize classroom activities targeted at the use of formulaic expressions in daily interactions. Situational conversations, role plays, debates and topic discussions are among those which can be used to offer a close-to-authentic context for language learning. All these will make learners improve their language competence. Learners may come to realize how to appropriately use formulaic expressions and where to avoid simplicity and verbosity when performing speech acts.

Future research may also investigate whether ESL/EFL learners with different English proficiency level may use different strategies in processing formulaic expressions.

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References


The Lexical Approach in Action: Evidence of Collocational Accuracy and the Idiom Principle in the Writing of EFL Intermediate Students

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Abstract
The use of collocation has always been considered as a good yardstick by which the idiomaticity of second language (L2) use is reliably judged. Hence, this study aims at investigating the relationship between optimizing the lexical approach and improving the collocational accuracy and the ability to operate on the idiom principle in the writing of Algerian English Freshmen. To carry out this research, an experimental and a control group were assigned for a quasi-classroom experiment. While the experimental group was taught collocations based on the principled practices of the lexical approach, the control group was taught conventionally with on special attention paid to collocations. Data was collected from 124 compositions (pre/posttests) done by these learners. Results of this investigation show that there is a correlation between training students to chunk language successfully and the increase of collocational strength with high mutual information (MI) scores in their writing. Additionally, the chunk-based instructional program helped the experimental group develop a habit of processing language as building blocks and this, in turn, reflects these students’ tendency to operate on the idiom principle. Correspondingly, the paper concludes with pointing out some implications for effective acquisition of L2 lexis and future horizons related to developing the idiomaticity of L2 writing.

Key words: collocational accuracy, high-strength collocations, EFL writing, idiom principle, lexical approach

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1. Introduction

Our daily use of language is comprised of pairs of words whose combinatory nature cannot be explained by grammar only but also by referring to the arbitrary nature of that language. Therefore, the ability to produce language naturally and communicate effectively can only be achieved through the use of words that frequently collocate. Such performance in language is typical of native speaker competence or at least native-like proficiency. In this respect, Bollinger (1979) confirms that "our language does not expect us to blind everything starting from lumber, nails or blue-print, but expect us to use an incredible large number of prefabs" (p.23). Collocation, as a term used mostly to describe the habitual co-occurrence of two or more words (Stubbs, 1996), is the one-size-fits-all concept which includes many kinds of ready-made chunks in language. Any underuse, overuse or misuse of collocations will be the number one source of oddity and foreign sounding since collocations enable one to compensate for non-nativeness of L2 use mainly in writing (Pawley & Syder, 1983).

English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, mainly intermediate, seem to be marked down because they don’t know the four of five major collocations that serve as the defining vocabulary for the main idea they are writing about (Hill, 2000). This departure from the natural use of language is due to the violation of what Sinclair (1987) calls the “idiom principle”. According to this idiomatic account of language production, any text is in nature a compilation of prefabricated utterances and semi-preconstructed phrases that are stored in our mental lexicon and retrieved as single choices for later use (Wray, 2002). Evidence that supports the pervasiveness of formulaic sequences, namely collocations, in the written production of language abounds in the literature. For instance, according Erman and Warren (2000) more than 40% of native speaker writing is in nature formulaic. In addition, Glucksberg (1989) assets that on average four collocations are produced in every minute of fluent language use. Thus, non-native speakers may be at a disadvantage of producing language in violation of the holistic nature (idiom principle) and instead in favor of the use of separate words and novel constructs. This tendency, which Sinclair (1991) refers to as “the open choice principle”, is usually attributed to the practices of unorthodox methods the likes of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). Such primitive practices are very likely to produce L2 learners who are grammatically competent but communicative and collocationally impaired in the sense that their choice of words will be more typical of the first language (L1) than the target language. For this reason, our study proposes a set of classroom practices based on the lexical approach in order to increase EFL learners’ sensitivity towards idiomatic word combinations. The motive behind conducting this study is to answer the main question of whether there is any relationship between the implementation of the lexical approach (variable A) and the improvement of EFL learners’ collocational accuracy and ability to operate on the idiom principle (variable B). Our line of researching is then guided by the assumption that helping EFL learners acquire the habit of chunking the input reinforces their tendency to exhibit native-like output.

2. Literature Review

In 1720, the Irish satirist Jonathan Swift, on the significance of word choice in successful communication, asserts "Proper words in proper places make the true definition of a style" (as cited in Widdiwson, 1993, p.38). To this end, the proper methodology that guides the effective leaning / teaching of how to put proper words in their proper places was devised and summed up
in the so-called lexical approach. Michael Lewis is considered to be the founding father of this approach in 1993 but before he brought his premise to the fore, the significance of lexis in language learning and teaching has been asserted in many publications such as the lexical syllabus by Willis (1990), corpus linguistics by Sinclair (1991), and lexical phrases in language teaching by Natingger and Decarrico (1992).

The lexical approach is then based on the idea that fluency centers on the acquisition of a repository of fixed and semi-fixed phrases known as chunks. These chunks, mainly collocations, are of prime importance since they serve as “raw data” in which the structural patterns of language (grammar) are encoded (Lewis, 1993). Scrivener (2011) points out that the Lexical Approach recommends an extensive exposure to language and the use of authentic materials rather than slavishly sticking to the orthodox methodology of the Present-Practice-Produce.

Lexis was overlooked in language teaching as grammar was traditionally considered to be the jewel in the crown of language. Moreover, having effective communicative skills was seen as a matter of mastering the grammatical system of a given language. However, by the publications of Lewis' new views (1993, 1997, 2000) on language use, the latter becomes defined by the lexical approach's key principle as “consisting of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar” (Lewis, 1993, p.36). Therefore, any fluent use of language is in nature a successful use of the building blocks of language, in particular collocation, which is the core element of the lexis approach. The central role of collocations in the creation of meaning was clearly explained by Lewis (1993) in the sense that we cannot, for example, decode the verb *bark* without referring to the noun *dog*. *Since* lexis carries meaning more than grammar, collocations have a generative power of meaning and this qualifies such a habitual co-occurrence of words to be the fulcrum of any classroom practice.

3. Method

3.1 Data Collection Tools

This study is a classroom experiment that aims to put the effectiveness of the lexical approach to the test, i.e. it attempts to assess the impact of training Algerian EFL intermediate learners to notice, identify and store collocations on increasing their collocational accuracy and ability to operate on the idiom principle in their writing. To carry out this study, we first tested our subjects’ initial collocational knowledge (homogeneity) prior to the introduction of the instructional program. The collocational test served as a placement test. The latter is designed in the form of multiple-choice questions (see appendix A) which include the six types of lexical collocations explained by Benson, Benson, and Ilson (1997). This test was devised by the author himself using concordance examples taken form the British National Corpus (BNC) and Oxford Collocations Dictionary. The validity of the test was checked by some qualified EFL teachers. Collocations selected for the test were chosen according to their strength of association, i.e., their high mutual information (MI). Second, as far as EFL learners’ writing is concerned, each participant form both groups was required to do a composition ranging from 200 to 250 words on a similar topic. In other words, the subjects were asked to play the role of an eyewitness to best describe a crime scene (see appendix B). These learners had to write compositions, inside the classroom and without the use of dictionary, about that topic twice, i.e. before and after the introduction of the treatment.
3.2 Participant

Subjects recruited in this experiment are first year students at the department of English at Chedli Ben Jdid University of Taref in the extreme East of Algeria. Students’ ages range between 18 and 34. Most of these participants are females (46), i.e. 74%. The rest are males (16), i.e. 26%. These EFL learners studied English as a compulsory school subject for almost the same period of time (four years at Middle School and three years at High School). They were taught English there following the practices of the competency based approach (CBA) which was adopted by the Algerian Ministry of Education in the late 1990s. Hence, the subjects of this study are homogenous in terms of their age and their linguistic background as well.

To ensure more of such homogeneity in terms of collocational competence, all participants took a collocational knowledge test before the start of the experiment. Their performances in the test were almost the same. The average score (mean) is 11.87 for the control group and 11.80 for the experimental one. For ethical considerations, the participants were reassured that the results of test are only used for research purposes and not meant for any official assessment. Following the results of that test, these students were randomly assigned to two groups. An experimental group and a control group with 31 students in each.

3.3 Procedure

To evaluate the effect of the treatment on the learners’ collocational accuracy and idiomaticity in writing, the experimental group received a training program that was meant to focus their attention on chunking language appropriately to produce natural sounding writing. However, the control group was taught the same content of the instructional program by the same teacher but conventionally (examining synonyms, antonyms and the syntax of the input).

The instructional course designed to teach the experiment group lasted five months (from January 2017 till May 2017). It consisted of 36 sessions taught by the researcher himself over 18 weeks. Each week the experimental group received two sessions. Each one was scheduled for 90 minutes, i.e. the whole class time. This instructional program is based on the practices of the lexical approach and practitioners of this method are required to emphasize the centrality of lexis and develop strategies for chunking the input. Therefore, the methodology that underpins each session of the program is based on Lewis (1997) paradigm of Observe, Hypothesis, Experiment (O-H-E). Correspondingly, the unpacking of the course content was divided into three stages:

A. Observe. After learners were warmed up and introduced to the notion of collocations, the aim of this stage was to direct learners' attention towards lexical collocations found in the input. Each of the first six sessions of the treatment was meant to introduce one of the six kinds of lexical collocations \((Adj+N,N+V,V+N,N+of+N,Adv+Adj,Adv+V)\). The major activities that were done in this stage range from highlighting and circulating collocations to matching and crossing out the odd ones. For example, learners were given a reading passage and then tasked with underlining a given set of collocations. Also, to facilitate learning to chunk the input and store these building blocks, learners were provided with typographically enhanced texts (e.g. bolded and italicised collocations) which allow better recognition and retention of collocations. Students were also trained to store the collocations they encounter in a lexical notebook. The latter was divided into sections. Each one was devoted to a record a particular type of lexical collocations.
B. Hypothesize. In this stage and according to Lewis (1993,2000) and O’molly and Chamot (1990) learners are expected to make prediction about language use, process the input in terms of form and meaning, compare and contrast the input, and more importantly draw conclusions as to certain collocations they have noticed in the earlier stage. To this end, learners were required to do activities that boost their collocational sensitivity and develop their intuition towards the appropriate collocates. Such classroom exercises were centred on collocation grid (near synonyms), providing missing collocations in addition to activities that reinforce using collocation dictionary to correct miscollocations. It is in this stage that learners' mental lexicon was enriched as they explored examples of collocations in use taken from the British National Corpus (BNC) in the form of screenshots that we provided inside the classroom.

C. Experiment. Last but not least, learners in this step were required to check the hypothesis they had about the use of a particular aspect of language, in our case lexical collocation, in the previous stage. Thus, learners were involved in communicative activities that were meant to help them convert the intake into output and dismiss their incomplete knowledge of the phraseological nature of language which might be in violation of the arbitrariness of collocation. As Lewis (2000) puts “the communicative situations a learner experiences in or outside the classroom provide the ideal opportunity to use language” (p.178). To illustrate, learners were engaged in “expand the event-task” that was introduced by Wilberg (1987) and developed later by Lewis (2000). Ergo, they were required to write four or five nouns that are strongly associated with a topic about something happened to them. Next, learners made use of collocation dictionary they had on their cell phones to provide verbs and adjectives which collocate with those nouns, then the adverbs which combine with the verbs. In so doing, students were able to contextualise the collocations they learnt by using them to write short paragraphs about something related to their personal life (communicative use of language).

4. Results

The findings of this study emerged from a variety of statistically processed data that is related to the performance of learners in different tests. First of all and prior to the start of the instructional program, learners’ initial collocational knowledge was tested to check their lexical homogeneity before assigning them into two groups. According to the results of that test, both groups (experimental group and control group) scored similarly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students' initial collocational knowledge.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 1, the score average is 11.80 for the control group and 11.87 for the experimental group. Besides, the mean difference (0.6) indicates that students in both groups had similar knowledge and mastery of collocation before the start of the instructional course. To
confirm this, the independent T-test was performed. Clearly, the p-value in this test (0.22) explains that, by conventional criteria (p>0.05), there is no statistical difference in the scores of both groups.

**Table 2**

*Students’ use of collocation in the pre-test of writing.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3**

*Students’ use of collocation in the post-test of writing.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>10.87</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To identify collocations used in the participants’ compositions, we checked the learners’ combinations in the BNC which is adopted as reference corpus throughout this study. By adopting the MI score of 3 as a standard threshold (as suggested by Durrant & Schmitt, 2009; Siyanova-Chanturia, 2015) any combination of two words that failed to meet this standard was not labeled as collocation. Correspondingly, the outcome of this procedure reveals that the number of collocations identified in the pre-test of writing in both groups, as shown in table (2), (185 for the control group and 179 for the experimental group) is quite approximate. Likewise, the average score of the control group (M=5.96) and that of the experimental group (M=5.77) refers to the similar abilities these groups had in producing collocations in their writing at first. However, if we look at table (3) we can see that the number of collocations in the compositions of the posttest in both groups differ markedly. Given that 253 and 337 are the varying amounts of collocations produced by the control and the experimental group respectively, both groups also differ in terms of their score average (M=8.16 for the control group and 10.18 for the experimental group). Compared to its counterpart, the experimental group improved tremendously in the use of collocations in writing.

**Table 4**

*Degree of collocational strength in the pre-test of writing.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bands of MI</th>
<th>Control group</th>
<th>Experimental group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low [3-4.99]</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium[5-7]</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (&gt;7)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5
Degree of collocational strength in the posttest of writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bands of MI</th>
<th>Control group</th>
<th>Experimental group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low[3-4.99]</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium[5-7]</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High( &gt; 7)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The collocations produced by both groups in the pre and posttests were further examined to measure the strength of association between their components. For this reason, we classified these collocations into three bands (categories) following their varying MI scores. Accordingly, the collocational strength is defined by three degrees: low, medium and high.

As table (4) demonstrates, in the pretest half of the collocations (N=77.M=2.48) produced in the compositions of the control group falls into the category of low-strength collocations but only few (N=46.M=1.48) that can be categorized as high-strength collocations. Similarly, most of the collocations (N=70.M=2.06) produced by the experimental group can be classified as low-strength ones and only small amount (N=49.M=1.52) of such word combinations can be labeled as high-strength collocations. However according to table (5), in the posttest the largest proportion of collocations (N=99.M=3.19) used by the control group are low-strength ones while the smallest proportion (N=75.M=2.41) falls into the category of high-strength collocations. In contrast, the highest amount of collocations (N=163.M=5.25) produced by the experimental group is of a high-strength nature as opposed to the lowest amount (N=71.M=2.29) which is of a low-strength nature.

Table 6
Correlation coefficient between the variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Pearson’s correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collocational knowledge (post experiment)</td>
<td>.543*</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-strength collocations (posttest of writing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Since this research is aimed at assessing the relationship between the two variables (the lexical approach, represented by the treatment group scores of the collocational knowledge test after experiment, and the idiom principle, represented by these students’ use of high-strength collocations in their posttest of writing), we ran the Pearson’s correlation test. Results of this test, as shown in table (6), reveal that the Pearson’s correlation is positive (r=.543). Besides, the p-value is .03(p<.05), i.e. the correlation is statistically significant at the level .05. In other words, there is a positive correlation between the two aforementioned variables.
5. Discussion:

The main concern of this paper has been to assess the extent to which EFL writing can be idiomatic as an increased attention to lexical collocations is paid. To this end, the experiment we conducted provided the subjects with an extensive exposure to different kinds of lexical collocations in an attempt to enrich their mental lexicon.

It can be noted from the findings of this study that the number of collocations identified in all of the compositions of both groups is comparable. Arguably, any similarity between these groups in terms of the number of produced collocations, in the first compositions, on the one hand and the degree of idiomaticity of such collocations on the other hand can be accounted for form different perspectives. At first, the majority of the participants’ writings featured collocations with low MI scores due to the fact that this EFL learners’ exposure seems to have been affected by their growing tendency to process any input as either grammatically well-formed or ill-formed language constructs. Simply put, intermediate EFL learners rely heavily on their grammatical knowledge to build their mental lexicon and in turn produce language accordingly. This can be the driving force behind these learners’ word choice in the sense that poorly associated collocations are, to a great extent, similar to free combinations. No doubt that the latter are not problematic to use, since they considerably allow the substitution of either constituent elements which is not in violation of the mechanisms of the L2 word order. It is noteworthy that these findings are in line with those of Granger (1998); Howarth (1998) and Wray (2002) who point out that L2 learners tend to use language as separate words attached together by grammar rules.

Another point to consider is the level of restrictedness between the constituent elements of collocations in the first compositions which can be attributed to the effect of L1. In crude terms, the participants of this study drew on their knowledge of word association in Arabic to combine words in English. This means that such EFL intermediate learners are still unaware of the uniqueness of the socio-cultural and arbitrary nature of L2 lexis. Such results lend support to what was recently reported in the literature, mainly that of Granger and Bestgen (2014) and Chen (2017) who concluded that EFL intermediate learners avoid using strongly associated lexical items due to their poor mental lexicon.

A clearer picture emerges if we consider the increase of the density of collocations in the second compositions of learners. Although the effect of the lexical approach was naturalized in the control group, the latter shows a slight improvement in the production of collocation. This is undoubtedly natural because collocations are part of learners’ vocabulary which develops as a result of more experience with the target language. However as for the experimental group, it is evident that collocations mushroomed much more, not only in terms of size but also in terms of the strength of association, due to the great impact of the pedagogical intervention. It is also wise to acknowledge that the O-H-P classroom practice that we adopted enriched the target learners’ knowledge of the collocational range of English words, which resulted in learners getting more able to combine words more naturally and in turn convey meaning using native-like chunks. Furthermore, the results of this research suggest that L2 learners started gaining a processing advantage of collocations which can tremendously help them harmonize their retrieval of language with the appropriateness of the situational context. Such findings are significant in the sense that they echo Pawley and Snyder’s (1983) study which highlights the processing advantage and the
effortless production of language that non-native speakers can have when they acquire institutionalized forms.

It is worthwhile inferring from the outcome of our classroom experiment that raising learners’ awareness of the customary nature governing the L2 word choice (co-occurring of lexical items) can prompt adequate production of idiomatic forms. In other words, learners can feature high-strength collocations in their writing as they notice the behavior of different lexical phrases in language and are sensitized to the nature of the lexical gap between their L1 and the target language. It is therefore wise to emphasize that our study, though reveals a moderate positive correlation, experimentally confirms that the more EFL learners notice, store and retrieve collocations the more strongly associated words their writing features. This conclusive evidence, in turn, confirms our hypothesis that helping learners acquire the habit of chunking the input successfully reinforces their tendency to exhibit accurate collocations and idiomatic output.

6. Conclusion

Collocation is an important aspect of natural language processing and an essential prerequisite to produce native-like language. This research paper therefore provides a major contribution to the ongoing discussion of the acquisition of native-like building blocks. The instructional paradigm we tested in this study proved to be highly effective in the sense that helping EFL learners acquire the habit of perceiving language as building blocks correlates with the acquired ability to produce language idiomatically. In the light of this study results, it can be conclude that the success of the lexical approach lies in the fact that its underlining methodology is of more exploratory nature than explanatory one since the lexical nature of language itself is arbitrary, i.e. it is unlikely to be adequately explained by the grammatical system. Besides, developing learners’ sensitivity towards the arbitrary nature of word co-occurrence in L2 can tremendously help them positively transfer their tendency from operating on the L1 idiom principle to that of the L2.

Pedagogy wise, the main implications drawn from this investigation lie in the fact that the lexical approach can provide a shortcut methodology for EFL learners and teachers alike to speeding up the process of L2 acquisition by enriching learners’ mental lexicon. Textbooks writers and syllabus designers are also recommended to consider the arbitrary nature of the target language lexis and insure the authenticity of the teaching materials in order to increase learners’ exposure to high-strength collocations.

Obviously, the main limitation of this study is the small number of participants and the shortness of their compositions. Experimenting the lexical approach on a wider population and a larger size of corpus would yield richer results. In addition, focusing our approach on the acquisition of longer lexical chunks (e.g. idioms and proverbs) would enrich our understanding of new and better ways to develop the acquisition of the idiom principle in L2 writing. It is hope that the findings of this research pave the way for future inquiries to advance our understanding of the acquisition of native-like selection.
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References:


Appendix A: Collocational Knowledge Test

Dear students, fill in the gaps by choosing the right word from the items provided between the brackets.

1. 5,7,9 and 53 are all……….. numbers (strange, weird, odd)
2. Most of the world populations live …… the poverty line (beneath, under, bellow)
3. The sunk gives off ……..smell to defend itself (strong, powerful, heavy)
4. Ottoman remaining castles have …….history and culture (rich, valuable, precious)
5. Most of the newspaper articles that I read …. by reiterating the main decisions of the parliament. (end, finish, conclude)
6. Some of those articles ……questions about how to adopt the austerity measures (rise, arise, raise)
7. The internship can help you …… your professional skills (advance, hone, promote).
8. The suspect …….his shoulders and denied accusation (shrugged, shook, moved)
9. Usually, at night the temperature …………. (decreases, drops, diminishes)
10. It was midnight and my energy started to ……… (lower, flag, decrease).
11. She felt a …………..of anger when he treated her unfairly. (surge, torrent, storm)
12. Parents feel an/a …….of pride when they see good exam results of their children (touch, sense, aura)
13. The president was given a ….of applause as he delivered his speech (shout, round, blast)
14. She waited him ……… but he proved to be uninterested ( excitedly , patiently, happily)
15. She …….laid her hand on the orphan’s arm (mildly, softly, gently).
16. The guards were……injured during the explosion.( terribly, seriously , dangerously)
17. I am ……..aware that everybody agrees with me (acutely, totally, entirely).
18. The room hotel we booked was ………..expensive (highly, tremendously, totally).
20.Only half of the young people can……….their right to vote ( exercise, perform , do )
21. The local authority can…………….it responsibilities at time(discharge, do, actualize)
22. They answered all charges …….against him by his rivals. (leveled, given, done ).
23. The company advisory panel is going the ……. a lecture this evening ( do ,deliver, make).
24. The government…………rejects any negotiation with kidnappers (totally, definitely, flatly)
25. Any government……….condemns any terrorist attack (forcefully, vehemently, extremely)

Appendix B: Writing Test

Imagine you were once walking down the street and you happened to witness a crime. In no more than 500 words, explain how you would report that attack to police by describing the crime scene you have witnessed.
Integrating Adapted Approaches of Writing Instructions with Alternative Assessment to Improve Academic Writing Ability

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Abstract
This study aims to find whether the adapted approaches of writing instructions and alternative assessment could improve the students’ academic writing ability. This classroom-based action research was initiated from the observation and reflection of the researchers as English academic writing instructors in tertiary education. It was observed that students had difficulties improving their academic writing ability. The preliminary investigations revealed that the problem was caused by the dependence on a single approach of instruction and summative assessment. Adapting the strengths of different approaches of writing instructions: the product approach, process approach, genre approach and process-genre approach, the intervention was designed. Alternative forms of assessment were integrated in the pedagogy for their potentials in promoting learning. Through the steps of plan, act, observe, and reflect of action research, data on benefits and shortcomings of the intervention were analyzed and used in reshaping the instructions. Results from the statistical analysis of the discrepancy between the pre-test and post-test revealed that the intervention significantly improved the students’ academic writing ability. Besides, the findings from multiple sources also showed that the students developed positive opinion towards this pedagogical approach. Finally, this study offers informed knowledge on factors to consider in using the adapted approaches of writing instructions.

Keywords: academic writing, action research, alternative assessment, EFL writing, writing instructions

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Introduction

Writing is a complex activity that involves multiple steps to complete the tasks. It is one of the most difficult skills for learners to master, particularly in English as a foreign language (EFL) context (Myles, 2002; Watskins, 2004). For the learners, the importance of writing goes beyond a mode of communication. It serves as a means of acquiring knowledge. Writing poses a great challenge to EFL students at the tertiary level in which students need to possess the knowledge of academic English convention and its rules to perform in disciplines of study. In the assessment system, students are assessed through their ability to display their knowledge of those disciplines through their writing (Ivanic & Lea 2006.) However, it is arduous for students to write up academic texts. The problem is even more critical for students of English as a non-native language as addressed by Paltridge (2004).

As instructors of EFL academic writing in the tertiary education, we found that students had problems in effectively producing academic texts. Acutely aware of it, we started this study by problematizing the situation through a preliminary investigation. By interviewing teachers and students in the academic English course and a document study, the problem was confirmed. These baseline data suggested that the factors responsible were mainly the dependency of a single instructional approach and the summative assessment system that lacked power to develop students’ writing ability.

In this research context, the product approach of writing instructions had been the sole method in the teaching and learning of academic writing. It involved teachers exposing the students to the model texts that displayed the structure and linguistic knowledge for the students to imitate. Nevertheless, critics argue that this approach limits the opportunities for students to compose a text on their own. The exercises on different topics, moreover, do not focus on students’ continuous improvement in academic writing ability. Such problem was confirmed by literature. Raimes (1983), as cited in Ho (2006), addresses that letting the learners imitate the model texts can inhibit them the misconception of writing.

As for assessment, the major method was summative in form of formal tests to determine whether the students had met the objective of the course. According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2010), this assessment type provides conclusive information about the students’ learning without suggesting the ways for them to improve.

Problem statement

Since the context of this study was an international university using English as the medium of instructions, the students needed to be competent in academic English writing. Lacking the ability to effectively write English academic texts could negatively impact them such as poor grades and delayed graduation. This, therefore, called our attention to find a more effective instructional approach and assessment methods to improve the situation. Then, this action research project was initiated.

From reviews of literature, each approach of writing instructions has its own strengths and limitations. Moreover, research suggests that one approach’s strength can complement the other’s limitation. We therefore decided to adapt the strengths of each approach into the
instructions of academic writing. For its formative power to learning, alternative assessment was integrated to the pedagogical process. According to Hyland (2007), assessment is an essential aspect of the teaching-learning process and central to students’ progress towards having more control of their writing development.

We adopted action research as the research paradigm because the study took place in the actual classroom and action research was suitable for capturing the authentic teaching and learning process for improvement of practice. Burns (2010) and Hyland (2016) define action research as a systematic and progressive method of enquiry powerful in helping researchers identify problematic situation and bring about changes to improve the practices. The data from the insiders’ perspectives on the students’ problem in learning to write academic texts, with a careful reflection, could help identify what works and what does not work in the classroom (Abraham, 2015). Furthermore, the systematic observation and reflection could provide valuable information to understand and improve the practice as part of professional development (Nunan & Bailey, 2009).

Research Objective
The objective of the study was to see the effectiveness of the adapted approaches of writing instructions designed based on the principles of different approaches: the product approach, process approach, genre, and process-genre approach, and the selected alternative forms of assessment as an integral part.

Research Questions
After defining the objective, research questions of this study were formulated as follows:
1. To what extent can the adapted writing approaches and alternative assessment improve students’ academic writing ability?
2. What are students’ opinions towards using the adapted writing approaches and alternative assessment in improving their writing skill?
3. How can students’ academic writing ability be improved through adapted writing approaches and alternative assessment?

Literature review

Academic Writing
Academic writing refers to the composition of texts that include the common rhetorical forms in the context of written academic discourses, the convention of texts and set of rules in a discipline, writer’s self presentation, how texts are read, and how one text influences the subsequent texts (Paltridge, 2004; Spack, 1988, as cited in Weigle, 2002).

Approaches of writing instructions
In response to the increased awareness of the importance of writing skills, different approaches have emerged and been employed in the writing instructions over the past decades. The followings are the major approaches used in writing classrooms with their strengths and weakness.

1. Product approach
Product approach is the traditional approach that trains students to imitate the model to produce the final product that is coherent and error-free centralizing the appropriate use of linguistic knowledge (Nunan, 1999). Writing development is imitation of input (Badger & White, 2000).

However, critics argue that such approach constrains the originality of writing and prevent learners’ creativity (Pasand & Haghi, 2013) Imitation of models can encourage the learners to use the same plan regardless of the text type. It results in simply a mindless copying of texts (Silva 1993, as cited in Adeyemi 2012).

2. Process approach

Process approach emphasizes the importance of developing students’ ability to use different skills to plan, identify issues, analyze, and implement possible solutions (Hyland, 2003). Moreover, it promotes the nature of writing that is cyclical and recursive (Hayes & Flowers, 1980). The role of the teacher in this approach is to provide assistance to the students in all the steps of writing.

Nonetheless, the lack of models is a major drawback because they can partly help learners reduce the burden of formulating the content for the text (Pasand & Haghi, 2013). Furthermore, the process approach does not emphasize the fact that writing is contextually and culturally specific and students may not share the same knowledge background and it still bounds students to the constraint of syntactic structures and vocabulary (Hyland, 2007).

3. Genre approach

According to Hyland (2003), the genre approach views writing as purposeful and responsive to a particular context. According to Tribble (2009), writing is socially oriented with the focus on the interaction between the text and readers. A writing instruction that adopts the genre approach, therefore, deals mainly with analyzing the rhetorical structure and linguistic features of each genre convention.

Concerns over adopting the genre approach to classroom instructions were expressed by Dias and Pare, 2000, as cited in Hyland (2007). They address that writing cannot be learnt in the inauthentic context of the classroom because it is always related to the goals and occasions. Moreover, Raimes 1991, as in Hyland (2003), questions the reproduction of the target discourse adhered by genre approach as restricting the creativity of learners.

4. Process-genre approach

Process-genre approach involves the language skills, content knowledge, and writing process from the process approach and emphasizes the communicative purposes as the essence of the genre approach (Flowerdew, 1993; Nordin & Mohammad, 2006). Then, students would go through the process of planning, drafting, revising, and editing to ensure that the text reaches its communicative purposes.

Concerns over the practicality of process-genre, on the other hand, include the lack of emphasis on revising and editing (Yan, 2005). Also, the development of writing varies between individual learners, requiring much effort from the teacher to effectively facilitate the learning
Alternative assessment in writing

The traditional writing assessment concerns the summative information regarding the achievement of students based on the predetermined criteria. It is mostly in form of testing to evaluate what the students have learned, represented by grades (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Nevertheless, this assessment is heavily criticized that it neither considers nor proposes measures to foster learning and does not have the immediate impact on it (Sadler, 1989). Therefore, a grade, as a representation of summative evaluation on students’ achievement, is actually counterproductive for learning.

Realizing such weaknesses of the traditional forms of assessment and to meet the current instructions of writing that emphasize the process of writing, researchers such as Cheng, Rogers, and Hu, 2004 as cited in Çakir, (2013) have explored alternative ways of assessing students’ language development that are more open, collaborative, and authentic with formative power to provide information that helps empower students’ linguistic competence and skills (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010).

Context of the study

This study was conducted over the period of four months at an international university in Bangkok, Thailand. The course of investigation was a compulsory foundation English course that focused on advanced academic English with 4 academic writing genres.

1. Writing to respond to a reading passage and opinion writing
   The objective was to train the students to show their comprehension in a reading prompt and express their opinion towards the information in the passage in written form.

2. Data interpretation
   The objective of this genre was to train students to observe and discuss the key graphical information in textual form.

3. Short report
   The students were given a reading passage related to a current social issue to compose a report as well as propose logical, practical, and relevant recommendations.

4. Argumentative essay
   The students were to express their logical thinking to persuade the readers to agree with their position on a given debatable topic by making sound arguments, evaluating conflicting views, and refuting them in a logical and pragmatic manner.
students who had taken it for the first time. Their representativeness helped the study focus on the identified problems and generated the knowledge that answers the research questions.

**Methodology**

The research methodology was mixed-methods. We adopted this method of inquiry as it provided a complete understanding of the research problems than using a single approach (Cresswell, 2014). With multiple data sources and a systematic analysis, the process of data triangulation was utilized. The rich data gained from different instruments could provide conclusive, valid information that could surpass the issue of generalization.

**Action research model**

The action research model in this study was adapted from the action research cycle model of Kemmis and McTaggart (1998) displayed in Figure 1.

![Action Research Cycle Model](image)

*Figure 1. Action Research Cycle Model (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1998)*

The intervention in this study was designed and applied in the sequences of action research cycle: plan, act, observe, and reflect. There were 2 research cycles in each genre, totaling 8 research cycles in the entire study. When one research cycle was completed, the data from observation and reflection, together with the insights from the students, were analyzed and interpreted and used as the baseline for the next research cycle.

*Step 1: Plan*

The intervention was planned with the adaptation of different approaches of writing instructions in the teaching and learning of academic writing. It involved the use of model texts (product approach), identification of communicative context of the text (genre approach), collaboratively constructed model texts by the class, with the teacher’s guidance (genre and...
process-genre approaches), and multiple-draft writing (process approach). Furthermore, alternative assessment methods namely peer evaluation, teacher constructive feedback, student reflective journal, teacher journal, and writing portfolio were embedded in the instructions.

**Step 2: Act**
In this step, the intervention was implemented in the actual teaching and learning. Parallel with this was the observation of the outcomes of the implementation.

**Step 3: Observe**
Concurrent with teaching, the participants’ reaction and the effects of the intervention were observed in this step. In so doing, we used an observation note to record any phenomena that emerged. The observation was then transformed into a teacher journal. This method provided us opportunities to gather real-time data that naturally occurred in the real social situation to reflect deeply on the practice.

**Step 4: Reflect**
In this step, we reflected on the practice to evaluate the effects of the action in order to understand the issues that emerged during the intervention. Also, the students had the opportunities to reflect their learning in the student reflective journals. The two journals provided rich descriptive data from the insiders’ views to identify the aspects of the intervention that worked effectively or ineffectively in improving the students’ learning of academic writing. The information derived from the reflection, consequently, provided baseline data in the planning of the next research cycle.

Figure 2 below displays the action research cycle model designed for this study, representing 2 out of 4 genres taught.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre 1: Writing to respond to reading passage/opinion writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prewriting activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Model text; Communicative context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment 1 (Cycle 1)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Process approach with 3 drafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Peer assessment, teacher feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student reflective journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reflect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre 2: Data Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prewriting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Model text; Communicative context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment 1 (Cycle 1)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Process approach with 3 drafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Peer assessment, teacher feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student reflective journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reflect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2. Action research cycle model for this study (partial)**
Research instruments

For the quantitative data, the pre- and post-intervention test scores were compared to address the extent that the impact that intervention had on the improvement in the students’ academic writing ability. The test content and rubric, validated by experts, reflected the language convention of academic genres taught in the course and the grading criteria.

Another quantitative instrument was the 5-points Likert scale questionnaire asking the students to state their level of agreement to the statements regarding their opinion towards the pedagogical methods. The items were validated by three experts, using item-objective congruence (IOC). The areas of investigation included: 1) the overall impression towards the course, 2) the usefulness of teaching and learning methods, and 3) opinion towards the alternative assessment methods used.

For the qualitative inquiries, data were collected from the teacher journal and student reflective journals. Finally, follow-up semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the students’ opinions towards specific aspects of the study.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis

The data from quantitative inquiries were analyzed with the Statistics Package for the Social Science (SPSS) application. Inferential statistics of paired sample t-test was used for the pre- and post-test scores. For the questionnaire responses, descriptive statistics namely the mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation were used.

Qualitative data analysis

The data obtained form the student reflective journals and teacher journal were analyzed using data reduction and meaning condensation technique (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). Then, we used the process of coding by going through the journal entries to find repeated patterns and keywords that signified similar meanings. After codes were assigned, themes were drawn.

For the follow-up interviews, seven students were purposively selected based on their comments in the journal entries that we found worth investigating further in depth. Each participant was interviewed privately in an approximately 30-minute session. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Then, the transcription was coded and themes on different aspects were drawn.

Implementation of action research cycles

Conducting action research required attention, close observation, and careful reflection on the outcomes of the action, enabling the researchers to become adaptive and reflective. This section presents the major insights gained from implementing the adapted writing approaches in each research cycle and the way they contributed to the adjustment of the plan of the sequential cycle to achieve better results.

Adjustment in instructional methods
At the beginning of the study, the instruction was lecture-based in order to introduce the concept and ideas as well as language elements of the genre. However, feedback from the students in their journals suggested that the long lecture was uninteresting, making them lose attention. Then, we adjusted the instructional method to reciprocating shorter lectures and exercises. Other instructional materials such as a video clip was also added.

It was also observed that, while the initial plan was to instill learning autonomy to the students, they were highly dependent on the teacher. We assumed that it was a result of the teacher-centered culture that the students were familiar with. Such dependency stemmed in the students’ passiveness and reticence in the teacher-led prewriting discussion. Observing the fact, the plan for the prewriting activities was adjusted to include more collaborative learning such as group discussion, which yielded a satisfying result.

**Adaptation of different writing approaches with alternative assessment**

In the first research cycles, the students had struggled adjusting themselves to process writing with multiple drafts. Evidence showed that most text revision was merely corrections of grammar without substantial change on the content. We rationalized that it was due to the lack of clear understanding of the revision process. Thoroughly reflecting on this problem, we made attempts to improve the situation by directing the teacher feedback to addressing points of improvement and offering revision strategies. The students gradually understood the revising process and improved the subsequent drafts as a result.

For the use of model texts, derived from the product approach, it was apparent that the students imitated the language feature and styles from them, making their texts looked almost identical. We adjusted the plan to involve the students in collaboratively constructing the model texts in which they contributed the ideas and the teacher providing assistance with the language. Consequently, the collaboratively constructed models were the main source of linguistic input and display of writing process while the role of the model texts diminished to presenting the structure and format of the text. Other adjustments of the plan included establishing the text’s communicative context, following the principle of the genre approach, to assist the students in producing texts with clear directions. Additionally, supplementary authentic texts were employed to exhibit more language features and writing styles.

Peer evaluation was the assessment method that required several continuous adjustments. In the first cycles, the peer evaluation process was apparently not effective. Although some training was provided, the outcomes were not of satisfaction. The suggestions were mostly on superficial level. From the reflections, the factors responsible for the ineffectiveness were 1) the fear of offending the writers whom they were not familiar with and 2) the prescriptive nature of the checklist. Correspondingly, the method of assigning the evaluator was changed from random to letting the students choose their own evaluator to reduce the issue of personal distance. Besides, oral feedback was added alongside the checklist for them to discuss their texts in details. The situation had improved and the students could harvest more from this assessment method.
Results and discussion

Research question 1 - To what extent can the adapted approaches of writing instructions and alternative assessment improve the students’ academic writing ability?

The statistical analysis on the discrepancy between the pre-intervention and post-intervention writing tests offered empirical evidence to answer research question 1. In marking both tests, the students’ answers were rated by two experience academic writing teachers. Inter-rater reliability using Pearson correlation showed that there was no significant difference between the scorings of the two raters. Then, the mean scores of the tests were analyzed with paired sample $t$-test with the significance value of 95 percent confidence ($P \leq 0.05$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean difference</td>
<td>SD.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score Post-test</td>
<td>10.539</td>
<td>9.8503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 1, it can be seen that the $t$ value is 6.052 and the significance value is 0.001, which is less than the predetermined level of confidence of 0.05 ($0.001 \leq 0.05$). Hence, it is appropriate to conclude that the adapted approaches of writing instructions and alternative assessment could significantly improve students’ academic writing ability. The finding was consistent with previous studies by Ming (2006) and Cheng (2008), which showed that students who are instructed with other approaches in writing instructions significantly outperformed those who were taught with the traditional product approach. These studies, nevertheless, employed only one instructional approach of writing instructions such as the process and process-genre to compare with the product approach. This study, on the other hand, integrated the strengths that each approach offers and investigated the impact on the development of writing ability.

In addition, previous studies on alternative assessment focus on its impact in an idiosyncratic view rather than as part of the writing process. Some examples of those studies are by Cheng and Warren 2005, as cited in Matsuno (2009), on peer assessment, Lee (2008a), on teacher feedback, and Hashemi and Mirzaei (2015) on student journal. This study, on the contrary, integrated the alternative assessment methods as part of the instructions.

Research question 2 - what are the students’ opinions towards using the adapted writing approaches and alternative assessment in improving their writing skill?
In answering this research question, the quantitative data from the post-intervention questionnaire were analyzed. In addition, the analysis and coding to the qualitative instruments provided information that helped triangulate the data.

**The overall impression towards the course**

From the analysis of questionnaire responses using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), the students had positive attitude towards the course. They claimed that the instructional approaches helped them develop their writing and made them become better writers ($\bar{x}=4.28$). The students could learn to overcome their weaknesses in writing. In line with that, findings from qualitative instruments indicated that the students also developed confidence in their writing.

“After writing and rewriting, I knew better about what was wrong and what I did well. It made me write with more confidence.” (CT)

Besides, the students argued that they could transfer the knowledge of writing academic text to the studies of their respected disciplines.

“This course taught me many things about how I should write and all the assignments which I have done are very useful for my future.” (MP)

The students’ claim reflected the fact that they had met the objectives of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in using academic language convention to display their academic competency in the learning of other disciplines (Paltridge, 2004; Ivanic & Lea, 2006).

**The usefulness of the adapted approaches of writing instructions**

Findings from both quantitative and qualitative inquiries revealed that the students developed positive attitudes towards the pedagogical techniques in this study.

1. **Writing with multiple-draft technique**

The students strongly agreed that multiple-draft writing was helpful in improving their works ($\bar{x}=4.75$). They also stated that multiple-draft writing enabled them to learn to revise both the local and global aspects of their texts. Eventually, they could perceive much improvement between the drafts ($\bar{x}=4.84$). This finding was supported by the qualitative data as displayed in the excerpt.

“Writing with multiple drafts give me different ideas in each draft. I can improve both the grammar and content in each draft.” (PA)

The students also implied that they used metacognitive strategies to regulate learning through planning, evaluating, and monitoring their writing progress (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990). In the view of second language acquisition (SLA) theory, this process refers to the strategy of Monitoring (Krashen, 1981, as cited in Ellis, 1997) to correct their mistakes using the knowledge learnt. Additionally, they expressed that they felt the sense of achievement when they completed the final draft.
"I had more confidence in the third draft because I carefully thought about how to make it better. I was really proud of it because I gathered all of the feedback and put it into that draft." (TT)

The finding is supported by Özdemir and Aydin (2015) who claim that process writing can help the students feel that they have achieved the purpose of writing.

2. Setting communicative context for writing
The communicative context in the instructions included identifying the objective and target audience of the text as a prewriting activity. The students strongly agreed that knowing the objective and readers helped them construct the text more effectively with clear directions.

"After I know my target audience, I know how to revise to reach them and meet the objective of writing." (PL)

The findings were similar to the study on the effectiveness of promoting communicative context in writing by Li (2016), which finds that identifying the purposes of texts and awareness of audience enhance students’ comprehension of how to compose the texts.

3. The use of the two types of models: The model texts and the collaboratively constructed models
The students stated that each type of model texts was valuable in its own rights. The model texts were useful in displaying the structure and format of particular text types. They made the students realize what they were expected to write.

"I use to the model in the textbook to see the structure. It is better to known the basic pattern." (TT)

The findings were consistent with literature and previous studies. The model texts served the purposes of exposing the students to the structure, features, and convention of the text (Nunan, 1999; Saeidi & Sahebkheir, 2011, as cited in Pasand & Haghi, 2013), consequently enabling them to produce texts that display the language convention of particular genres as part of product approach.

On the other hand, the students stated that they preferred the collaboratively constructed models because it helped them understand the process of writing. Furthermore, they could understand the language convention clearly with the teacher’s assistance.

"Creating the models together helped a lot because it's our own language. And we can learn when the teacher rewrote our sentences and we could learn to adapt it to our writing." (MP)

This was supported by Wette (2015) who conducted an investigation on the use of collaboratively constructed model in the instruction of writing. The results show that practitioners
of this method find a number of benefits including opportunities to provide support and response immediately to contributions from the students.

4. Provision of authentic texts
Authentic texts were provided to tackle the problem of students having limited knowledge of language features. From the journal entries, the students found this material useful. They asserted that the authentic texts were interesting and could equip them with more variety of language such as vocabulary and expressions.

‘The samples help us see how the writers express their ideas under the same topic with ours. I can use the words and style as a model for my work.’ (BT)

Scrutinizing their texts, the use of the newly learnt features was found. For example, in the first draft, a student started the paragraph with ‘There are several disadvantages of e-cigarettes.’ After seeing the authentic text, it was revised to ‘A wide range of studies has shown the dangers from vaping e-cigarettes.’

The impact of authentic texts on students’ writing was relevant to Losada, Insuastry, and Osario (2016). The researchers state that the students who receive the instructions that incorporate the use of authentic texts distinctly outperform those who were taught with non-authentic materials. Besides, the positive impact on the students’ motivation was in line with Peacock (1997).

Opinion towards alternative assessment

1. Teacher Feedback
The finding reveals that teacher feedback was most vital to writing development for the students. It assisted them in identifying mistakes, showing them ways to improve their texts through suggested revision strategies, and helping them gain confidence, especially when praises were given.

‘The teacher didn’t only correct the mistake but he told to switch the focus to another point. The suggestions are very important in generating new ideas.’ (BN)

‘I have never been proud of my writing until I saw your comment “this is beyond my expectation”’. (PA)

The finding was relevant to Hedgecock and Lefkowitz (1992) whose study suggests that, with multiple-draft technique, students find teacher feedback helpful in improving their writing, especially when it addresses individual students’ needs (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Consequently, teacher feedback has pivotal roles in student motivation (Lee, 2008b).

2. Peer evaluation
Receiving peer evaluation was relatively ineffective in the students’ opinion. From the questionnaire responses, the means in this area were low, from 3.14 to 3.38. The findings from qualitative inquiries point to the same direction. The students contended that the feedback they
received were not helpful in improving their texts since it lacked substantive suggestions for revision.

‘For I think the feedback that I got was not that useful for me. The person who gave me the feedback wrote only a few sentences.’ (CT)

Such ineffectiveness is documented in a study by Meihai and Razmjoo (2016). The writers stated that students were unable to offer effective evaluation to their peers due to the lack of assessment knowledge.

The students also questioned the qualification of their peers in evaluating their texts.

‘I don’t know if I can trust my classmates because they are also learning like me.’ (BW)

This claim resonated the studies by Kaufman and Schunn (2011) and Smith et al. (2002). Their findings indicate that students have doubts in the expertise of their peers and believe that their peer evaluators are unqualified to assess their works.

However, the students admitted that the peer evaluation system had benefited them as evaluators. Being the evaluators provided them ample opportunities to see good examples of language use (\(\bar{x}=4.47\)) and ideas applicable to their own text (\(\bar{x}=4.50\)). The students mentioned the same benefits in their journals, adding that their peers’ texts influenced them to improve their works.

‘I really like how my friend gives her opinion. It makes me have more ideas to improve my work.’ (AS)

This discovery was relevant to a study by Lundstorm and Baker (2009) that divides the students into 2 groups: the provider of feedback and the receivers of feedback. The findings from the analysis of the pre-test and post-test writing scores showed that the providers obtained more gains than the receiver. Henceforth, it is sufficient to say that, in this study, the peer review method was more beneficial for the students as evaluators of their peers’ works.

3. Student reflective journal

From the analysis, the merit from student reflective journal was that it served as a communication channel between the students and teacher. The students expressed their concerns, made requests, and gave suggestions to me on several issues. This helped me adjust the lessons to accommodate those needs.

‘I expressed my thoughts in the journal. Because when I wrote my journal, the teacher always gave me some feedback.’ (MP)
This follows the idea proposed by Hashemi and Merzaei (2015) that journal writing establishes the relationship between the teacher and the class and could help in preparing lessons or special care for students to overcome their problems in learning.

4. Writing portfolio
The students mentioned that portfolio was useful for them in displaying the improvement of their writing performance and it was also used in preparation for exams. The most important aspect of the portfolio was that it helped the students learn about their weaknesses and find ways to overcome them.

‘I kept looking at the red marks in my portfolio to remind myself ‘mistakes, mistakes, don’t do it, don’t do it.’ (MK)

This finding was consistent with the study by Ghoorchaei, Tavakoli, and Ansari (2010). The researchers find that students in the experimental group using the portfolio assessment have improved more significantly in their writing ability than the controlled group without the portfolio.

Research question 3 - how can students’ academic writing ability be improved
The answer to this research question involves the roles of different parties and mechanisms in the pedagogy, which could be implemented in an actual teaching and learning of academic writing.

1. The roles of the teacher
Reflecting the practice, we find that our roles as teachers go beyond imparting knowledge to students. In fact, they are constantly moving on the continuum of the provider of knowledge and facilitator of learning. Those roles included being the manager of the class, facilitator, assessor, and evaluator (Archana & Rani, 2016). Other responsibilities include analyzing the students’ linguistic needs and engaging them in the learning process (Tudor, 1993). Additionally, we became a reflective practitioner who considered strategies to respond to the needs of the students and find ways to improve the practice (Lee, 2008b; Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Another important role was to establish rapport the students. As Žunić-Rizvić and Dubravac (2017) asserted, positive relations between teachers and students are essential for the success in language learning.

2. The roles of the students
Students have many roles to play in the teaching and learning process. They cover being planners, writers, evaluators of peers’ works, editors, and critical thinkers. They should be trained to become autonomous learners with the responsibility of making all decisions about their own learning process (Benson, 2006 and Holec, 1981, as cited in Alonazi, 2017).

A way to help students become autonomous is practicing metacognitive writing strategies. As advised by Wang (2017), successful students adopted planning, monitoring, evaluating, and cognitive control in their writing process. Students then should take the opportunity offered by multiple-draft writing to apply metacognitive skills to their text progression (Wu, 2004, as cited in Lv & Chen 2010).

3. The roles of the materials
As discussed, authentic texts are of value to the development of academic writing since they can constitute a wider body of knowledge, both linguistic and topical to the students. They should therefore be included as a learning material. A caution is that the readability of the texts should match with the students’ current ability. If the is a mismatch between the two, the result can be counterproductive. Learning from authentic texts will become an unpleasant experience for the students.

4. The roles of assessment
The alternative assessment methods used in this study had proven to have strong formative power to the development of the students’ academic writing ability. It is then highly advised that these forms of assessment for learning be included in the pedagogy. However, a careful planning is needed. For example, the teacher feedback should address both the local and global levels. Moreover, praise and encouragement are as important as constructive criticism.

While peer evaluation process was problematic, a silver lining was that the students could benefit from evaluating their peers’ texts. Thus, this form of assessment should be retained. Improvement in the practice can be achieved with provision of training to students on giving effective evaluation and feedback. As suggested by Saito (2008), trainings on peer evaluation can help students gain assessment literacy, develop their critical ideas, and understand how their peer and other readers respond to their writing.

Limitations and suggestions for further studies
This action research had some limitations. Since it was situated in a real classroom, the students had to work under strict timeframe to cover all the contents prescribed by the syllabus. This might have impacted the students in developing their skills with full potentials. Also, as the students were familiar with traditional instructions, they took some times to adjust to the new way of learning that was centralized on them. Next, with the large class size, going through all of the students’ texts to provide detailed feedback was a herculean task for the teachers.

While the findings suggested that using the adapted approach of writing instructions could significantly improve the students’ academic writing ability, there are rooms for further studies. Future research can apply this adapted model of writing instructions with other genres. Next, future studies on the efficacy of alternative assessment in writing should consider including other methods such as writing conference and self-evaluation. Also, a collaborative action research project by multiple practitioners can provide a wider perspective on the efficacy of this model of writing instructions.

Conclusion
Having the opportunity to conduct this action research improved us professionally both as teachers of academic writing and researchers. At the same time, it helped us learn to investigate, inquire, collect, analyze and interpret data systematically, and reflect on the teaching in order to generate information to improve the practice. Most importantly, it contributed to the student’s academic writing ability. Hence, it is highly recommended that teachers of writing and other English Language Teaching (ELT)-related fields take up action research to investigate the issues they feel worth investigating.
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References


Speech Acts as Means of Argumentation in Bank's Annual Reports

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Abstract
Argumentation is the process of changing others point of view and convincing them to do something or to think in a certain way. Different rhetoricians, like Toulmin (1958) and Aristotle (1984), define argumentation as merits of persuading or an attempt to give justifications. Giving that arguing can convince others to do or think in a certain way puts argumentation within the domain of the speech act theory. The current work aims at shedding light on argumentation from a speech act perspective, particularly in professional genre as banks annual reports. Precisely, the paper attempts to answer the question: "How are speech acts used in banks annual reports to convince clients, shareholders, and companies to collaborate with the bank?" A model of analysis is developed to identify the pragmatic techniques of arguing used by ARs (Annual Reports) writers to convince their readers. The data used in this paper consist of four bank's ARs for the financial years of 2014 and 2015.

Keywords: argumentation, argumentative texts, bank's annual reports, persuasion, speech acts

1. Annual Reports (ARs)

In writing, a report is defined as a document characterized by information or other content reflective of inquiry or investigation tailored to the context of a given situation and audience (Verma, 2014, p.268). Within the field of business communication, annual reports (ARs) are comprehensive reports on a company's activities throughout the preceding year. ARs are distributed to shareholders, employees, investors and analysts, describing the company’s operations, its balance sheet, future prospects and other relevant information.

In ARs two types of information are presented: (1) verbal section provided as a letter from chairman, describing the past year achievements and discussing the new development as well as the future planning (2) the second section includes the basic financial statements. This section includes: the balanced sheet, Statement of retained earnings, Income statement and the like. Both the verbal and the quantitati

ve sections are of equal importance; the verbal section provides explanations why things went the way they did, what are the future strategies and aims, whereas financial statements assert what has actually happened (Brigham & Ehrhardt, 2008, p. 80).

Ditlevsen (2012, p.379) (as cited in Bhatia & Bremner, 2014, pp.239-240) describes ARs as "an equity story" to stakeholder, both potential and current. This story is reported through both narrative and numerical. The numerical part is presented by balanced sheet, cash flow statement, whereas the narrative part precedes the financial statement and provides information about what businesses are successful, and how can the company help investors. Bhatia (1993) classifies ARs as "professional genre" which indicates that they are recognized conventionally by their communicative purpose.

The main purpose of reports is usually to inform, i.e. to give information about the company's activities and financial performance. Ditlevsen (2012, p.97) asserts that ARs are complex genre because they perform two communicative purposes: to give the truth about the company’s financial position, and to provide a positive image of the company.

2. Argumentation and Speech Acts

Argumentation is a verbal human activity where there is an exchange of arguments in order to reach a specific conclusion. It is related to the aim of persuading and convincing, i.e. to alter and direct the actions of others. Among argumentation theorists, there is a general consensus that "argumentation" refers to processes and "argument" to the product of these processes of argumentations. In his work "The Uses of Argument", Toulmin (1958, as cited in van Eemeren, 2001,p.12) views argumentation as a kind of "procedural form" where there are steps to produce valid and strong argument. Eemeren (2003, p.12) asserts that an argumentation consists of many arguments. Blair & Johnson (1987, p.45, as cited in Walton, 2013, p. 88) explain that argument is a product of a set of process of argumentation and such a product can be understood only against the background of the process of argumentation. Defined as "verbal, social and rational activity" by van Eemeren et al. (1996), argumentation is classified as a process of reasoning, in which such process is performed via stages to reach the aim of convincing the listeners or readers.

van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (1983, pp. 85-7, as cited in Al- Hindawy & Mirza, 2017,p. 92) model of critical discussion includes four stages over which certain speech acts are distributed
to resolve the differences of opinions. These stages are confrontation, opening, argumentation and concluding. Generally speaking, in the confrontation stage a participant puts forward a standpoint which another participant might not accept or express doubts about it. In the opening stage, the participants implicitly identify their common ground and accept their role as proponents or opponents, or as "proponent" and "opponent" of the standpoint. The protagonist advances an argument in the argumentation stage to defend the standpoint. At this stage, reasons and evidence are developed to support standpoint and when these advanced arguments are accepted by the antagonist in the concluding stage, the differences of opinion are resolved (van Eemeren, 2001, pp.15-16).

The concluding stage is an evaluation phase; where the results of argumentation are evaluated on the merits and it might lead to another confrontation stage. According to Al-Hindawy & Mirza's (2017, p.95) model of analyzing argumentation in novels, for instance, the concluding stage can be ended either positively or negatively. Positively when the antagonist accepts the protagonist's standpoint; negatively when the point has not been resolved, at this phase, the disagreement can be expressed by verbal aggression like quarrel, or physical disengagement like silence.

In his model of argumentation, Toulmin (1958) indicates three basic parts of argument; the step of expressing a standpoint, opinion or preference is called the claim. It is synonymous with a conclusion, which the arguer would have the recipient to accept or do. Toulmin (1958) uses the term data to describe the evidence and reasons needed to support the claim. Warrants are "general, hypothetical statements which act as a bridge connecting datum and claim, and authorize the sort of step to which our particular argument commits us" (as cited in Bermejo-Luque, 2011, p.105). To distinguish warrants from data, Toulmin (1958, p.100) adds implicitness and generality as the key features; where data "are appealed to explicitly, warrants implicitly". Data, at least one datum, must be explicitly stated to support claims. Whereas warrants can be implicit in argument; such statements are "hypothesical, bridge-like" and include values, beliefs and assumptions.

Since argumentation is seen as doing actions with words, it falls with the scope of the speech act theory which was presented by Austin (1962) and developed by Searle (1969); where "saying is part of doing". As such, producing an utterance means that the interlocutors are engaging in: (1) A locutionary act; producing sounds or words with their referential meaning. (2) An illocutionary act; the meaning one wish to communicate, (3) perlocution acts are the effect on the hearer. (Austin, 1962, as cited in Al-Hindawi and Naji, 2017:11).

van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1983, 34) treat argumentation as an illocutionary act. However, they think that (ibid), the illocutionary act of argumentation is not like any other illocutionary act, because argumentation involves a complex type of speech act. They (1991) criticize the Searlean standard speech act theory and they show that:

1. Speech acts such as asserting and requesting consist of one sentence, whereas argumentation always consists of at least two sentences. This can be illustrated, for example, by Toulmin's (1958) model of argumentation which presents: data, warrant, and claim as three obligatory parts of arguing.
2. There are two illocutionary forces in argumentative utterances. Individually they are assertives, but together they form an argumentation.

3. The speech act is regarded as argumentation only if it is linked to another speech act which expresses a standpoint (P.154).

Thus, from the above points, van Eemeren and Grootendorst distinguish between the sentence level - illocutionary forces and textual level - illocutionary forces. At the sentence level, argumentation is composed of assertive speech acts (elementary illocutions). At the textual level, argumentation is composed constellation of complex speech act of argumentation (illocutionary act complex).

From the above discussion, we can summarize argumentation as a speech act as follows:

(Locutionary)                    (Illocutionary)                    (Perlocutionary)
Arguing                         Understanding the                    convincing
argumentation

Viewing argumentation as a speech act, van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984, 1992) presented the following felicity conditions for the analysis of the speech act argumentation: The starting point is the situation where the speaker has performed another speech act advanced with respect to a proposition p. Then the speaker addresses the listener with a set of utterances which are considered as a performance of the complex speech act of argumentation, if two conditions have been met, these conditions are called "identity conditions". These conditions can be introduced as follows:

Identify Conditions
1. Propositional content condition:
Utterances 1, 2, ..., n constitute the elementary speech acts 1, 2, ..., n, in which a commitment is undertaken to the propositions expressed.

2. Essential condition:
The performance of the constellation of speech acts that consists of the elementary speech acts 1, 2, ..., n counts as an attempt by the speaker to justify p; that is, to convince the listener of the acceptability of his standpoint with respect to p.4 (Henkemans, 2014, p. 44).

In addition to these identity conditions, a number of conditions must be fulfilled in order for the performance of the illocutionary act of argumentation to be correct:

Correctness Conditions
3. Preparatory conditions:
a. The speaker believes that the listener does not wholly accept his standpoint with respect to p. 
b. The speaker believes that the listener is prepared to accept the propositions expressed in the elementary speech acts 1, 2, ..., n.
c. The speaker believes that the listener is prepared to accept the constellation of elementary speech acts as an acceptable justification of p.
4. Responsibility conditions:
   a. The speaker believes that his standpoint is acceptable.
   b. The speaker believes that the propositions expressed in the elementary speech acts 1, 2,..., n are acceptable.
   c. The speaker believes that the constellation of elementary speech acts is acceptable justification of p.

3. Data and Analysis
   3.1 Data Description and Collection
   The data of the present paper consist of four bank's annual reports. Two annual reports are of the year 2015 and two annual reports of the year 2014. Chronologically these reports are: (a) Bank of America / 2014 (b) Deutsche Bank/2014 (c) Bank of England/ 2015 and (d) Chiba bank/ 2015.

   The language used in these reports is English; it includes certain jargons and special words or expressions within the field of economy, investments and banking. Concerning the general structure of ARs; they start with a letter from the chairman or CEO, followed by the basic financial statements including: balance sheet overview, credit risk reports, statistical tables or figures, and then they end up with supplementary and contact information.

   3.2 Method of Analysis
   To analyze the data under scrutiny, an analytical apparatus is developed for the analysis of SAs in ARs. This apparatus is represented by Toulmin's (1958) model of argumentative writing and the use of locutionary, Illocutionary and Perlocutionary speech acts. The model is schematized in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: The Model of Analysis](image-url)
Bank's ARs are produced to convince shareholders, employees and investors to collaborate with the bank. According to the model of analysis developed by this study and schematized in Figure (1), such an aim is achieved through stages of reasoning and convincing.

These stages are presented by means of three levels; the macro, micro, and sub-micro levels.

At the first stage, confrontation, bank's ARs present claims about the bank's financial performance and provide a positive image of the bank. These claims are produced at this stage by means of macro-level illocutionary acts, i.e. producing statements with their various meaning. These claims take the forms of assertive, commissive, and expressive SAs (an alternative term for macro-level illocutionary acts).

In the opening stage, the roles are set up. As professional genre, the roles involved in ARs are: (a) the writers of ARs (advocators) who aim at convincing their shareholders and investors to collaborate with or invest in the bank, and (b) the readers, such as investors, who might be in doubt and need to be assured that their collaboration with the bank is successful. Warrants are implicitly produced at this stage, thus arguers authorize their commitment to a particular sort of argument. Warrants are produced by means of micro-level illocutionary acts as stating, promising, offering, planning and showing gratitude.

The argument is explicitly supported by data in the developing stage of arguing. ARs strengthen their position through statistics (providing facts evidences), making offers or deals and providing well-studied plans. The pragmatic realizations of illocutionary acts are captured at this stage; through offers or plans and promises. Finally, at the conclusion stage, the perlocutionary effects are expected through believing and convincing or accepting the offer.

3.3 Pragmatic Analysis

At the confrontation stage, bank's ARs start by providing their readers with statements (i.e. claims which represent the standpoint of the ARs) about the current state of the bank and its achievements. Such statements must provide information about the success and the achievements of the bank. As in:

To our shareholders, during 2014, your investment increased in value by 15 percent. This follows gains of 34 percent in 2013 and 109 percent in 2012. (Bank of America / 2014)
The past year has been one of transition and change for the Bank as it seeks to be at the forefront of international best practice in all that it does. (Bank of England / 2015)

Such claims are used highly by managers, CEO, and chairmen, i.e. those who are in position to state facts formally and commit themselves and their banks to the truth of these statements. Thus, pragmatically they are felicitous. For examples:

We serve people (individuals) companies (large and small) and institutional investors…in the U.S. we serve all three costumer groups, and outside the U.S. we have simplified and reduced our risk profile. (Bank of America / 2014)
In these statements, Moynihan asserts the commitment of his bank in providing services for different kinds of investors. His position as a Chairman and CEO allows him to make such statements and therefore the perlocutionary affect is that the readers (investors or shareholders) will believe them as being true and thus convinced to adopt further cooperation with the bank to achieve benefits.

In the opening stage, the micro-level of illocutionary act is activated by the use of: commissive speech acts occur which when the writer commits himself to a future course of action. In banks' annual reports the commissive SAs that are used are promising, offering and planning. Implicitly, warrants are produced in the opening stage of arguing; where the ARs' commit themselves to a particular sort of argument, for example:

2014 was a year of continuing to transform…For instance, we are adapting to the mobile revolution and increasing our sales force, especially in our financial centers.

Warrants are also produced by means of illocutionary acts of promising. Bank's ARs often make promises to their stakeholders about future achievements. Upon the analysis, the speech act of promising is highly used in annual reports because these reports, besides providing the truth about the company’s financial position, aims at capturing the attention of investors and shareholders and making them keep their cooperation with the bank. Promising Speech act is seen in:

We will fulfil our purpose of helping our clients and customers live their financial lives…we will continue to do so…we will keep simplifying our operations and reducing cost. (Bank of America/ 2014)

Here, promising is fulfilled in an indirect speech act, somehow to avoid the one hundred percent commitment to a future event. Promising speech act is also seen in Chiba's bank annual reports in:

We will assertively make investments for the future. We are expanding our locations in the center of Tokyo…we will open a new Ebisu Corporate Banking Office…in addition to moving into new buildings and making improvements, we will further expand channels and reform our business.(Chiba bank/ 2015)

Where the bank illustrate its future strategies and assures its shareholders witnessing expanding in profits, such assurance is affirmed further by evidence like "moving into new buildings and making improvements". To emphasize the strength of promising, a number of illocutionary indicators are used such as:" assertively… further". Thus, by using the speech act of promising, the bank assures the investors that they are in good and safe hand and convince them further by numerical evidence like statistical tables and charts.

Another strategy that ARs use in the opening phase is expressing thanks. Such expressive speech act clarifies the psychological state of the writer to the readers. Chairmen and CEO usually
start their letters to shareholders and directors by thanking them for investing and being part of the bank as in the following examples:

Thank you for investing in our company" (bank of America/2014), "I thank our board of directors, our management team, and our teammates around the globe for their hard work. (Bank of America/2014)

I am grateful to HM treasury for its continuing support of the work of the bank and its mission. (Bank of England/ 2015)

We thank Ms. Labarge for her dedicated work and constructive assistance to the company over the years. (Deutsche Bank / 2014)

Such explicit speech act of thanking gives the image of recognition and appreciation of the hard work, to reach the perlocutionary affect that both investors and employees are valued. The SA of thanking gives readers a sense of belonging to this institution, i.e. the bank, and therefore a sense of being involved with the bank's activities, future plans and success.

In the developing stage, these claims of "serving" are supported by numbers and percentages as in:

Produced revenue of $48 billion in 2014, about 57 percent of our total, and net income of $10 billion.

Offer speech act is utilized explicitly in the developing stage within different ARs as in the following Chiba bank's and bank of America's reports:

As a group, we will create and continue to offer next-generation financial services and new value to our customer. For example, we offer ABL (Asset-Based Lending) and loans for intellectual property, and strengthen initiatives for corporate profitability assessments. (Chiba bank/ 2015)

we are offering more opportunities to help these consumers transact, borrow and save… continue to simplify our consumer business…This includes fewer but better offerings; overdraft policies … clients by offering the best means of managing their capital and making.( Bank of America/ 2014)

Explicit offering is recognized in different ARs because one of the aims of ARs is to present positive view of the bank's operations, and these positive images help the bank to offer financial services to customers. The Chiba bank (2015) above provides examples to supports its offer to say that the offer of ABL actually helps creating financial services to customers. The use of: "…firmly endeavor to make proposals that will increase customers’ sales and reduce their expenses" is a further support to the offer.

Planning speech act is also used to show how robust the bank's future strategies and plans and thus convince clients keep coordination with the bank:
We are planning to start online trading as well. We will continue to provide high-quality consulting services combining banking and securities. We plan to increase customer convenience in such ways as using direct channels to provide expanded services. We plan to pay an annual dividend of ¥14 per share. We are currently ahead of our plan. We had planned to grow income before income taxes to a range from €1.6 billion to €1.8 billion by 2015. We conduct an annual strategic planning process which lays out the development of our future strategic direction as a group and for our business areas/units.

On March 11 we announced plans to return additional capital to our shareholders. We offer the banking, planning and investment services people want with the convenience and efficiency of an integrated platform. We have developed and maintain contingency plans that are designed to prepare us in advance to respond in the event of potential adverse outcomes and scenarios.

Announcing future plans makes the bank committed to execute them. ARs are formal and authoritative documents and mentioning future plans is a kind of legal obligation to fulfill them. These well-studied plans enforce the claims presented by the bank. Since planning achieves the illocutionary act of understanding the plan and ultimately the perlocutionary effect of persuading, they are presented in the developing stage of arguing that coordination with the bank is the best decision.

Explanations are also used by the bank of England (2015) as a strategy of supporting its statement:

The bank has announced a series of transparency and accountability initiatives, as well as improvements in the transparency of Court. The archive procedures for Court’s historical minutes have been brought in line with Whitehall best practice.

Again, since ARs are official and authoritative documents, their stating are taken to be expressing true proposition, hence they convince the readers, whether shareholders, companies or businessmen, to keep working with the bank. For quick and fixable clarification, the number of the page that provides details is mentioned by the statement of the Chairman of Court Anthony Habgood.

Finally, the concluding stage, Chairmen or Chief Executive Officers ends their letter to shareholders by highlighting the main strong points of success, as in:

We strengthened an already strong and liquid balance sheet in 2014, ending the year with record capital and liquidity levels. Last year we increased our common stock dividend for the first time since 2007 and...
on March 11 we announced plans to return additional capital to our shareholders… We continued to reduce expenses in our mortgage servicing unit… We completed the industry’s largest cost-savings program, achieving $8 billion of annualized savings… We know we have more work ahead… We have built a company with leading market positions across every core customer segment served by our eight lines of business… we are guided by the principles of simplicity, transparency and fairness in our business practices. This focus on business-driven corporate social responsibility helps to maintain the trust of our communities and customers.(Bank of America/ 2014)

The use of personal diesis "we" and verbs like "strengthened, continued, completed" gives the sense of team-work and influencing the readers of ARs to perlocutionary effect of being involved. As such, the perlocutionary effect of the previous stage, i.e. developing will be achieved when businessmen or shareholders accept the offer, promise and be persuaded.

The concluding stage also focuses on the influence of thanking speech act.
"On behalf of my more than 220,000 teammates here at Bank of America, thank you for your investment in our company. I look forward to reporting our progress to you throughout the year". (Bank of America/ 2014)

Assuming that the investment already happened, or surely will happen, because of the well- state of the bank is a strategy used to convince the investors unconsciously because of the perlocutionary effect of thank, i.e. consent, makes them feel appreciated and welcomed. Thus, at this stage of persuading the readers, ARs aim at achieving the perlocutionary effect of arguing that is convincing (whether shareholders, companies, or investors) to cooperate with the bank and through the illocutionary act of understanding the information, accepting the offer, the consecutive perlocutionary consequence of enrolling in partnership with the bank or abandoning the intention to stop working with the bank and accepting the bank's offer is achieved.

4. Conclusions
On the basis of analysis, the following concluding points have been reached:
1) ARs can be considered as argumentative texts. As they involve, besides reporting facts, arguing in favor of the bank and convincing others of the strong position of the bank.
2) There are three main levels of illocutionary acts through which ARs can be analyzed. These are the Macro-level Illocutionary Acts, Micro-level Illocutionary Acts and Pragmatic Realizations of Micro-Level Illocutionary Acts.
3) The speech acts of Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Perlocutionary effect in argumentation can be re-visualized as Claim, Data and Warrant respectively. In argument claiming is expressing a standpoint or view (expressing this view is achieved by "saying" it = (Locutionary act). Data are evidence, facts, or statistical supporting the claim thus they have illocutionary acts of asserting, announcing or making a point. Warrants are used to link claims and data by reasoning, thus they have the perlocution effect of persuading.
4) The perlocutionary effects of arguing in bank's ARs are intended by the bank. As such, they are distinguished from the accidental prelocutions or "sequel" which is introduced by Austin (1962, p. 118).

5) There are three kinds of SAs used in argumentative texts like bank's ARs; Assertive SAs which make an assessment, or claims that the bank attempts to reinforce; Commissive SAs where the bank commit itself with future achievements, offers and plans; and Expressive SAs to express the psychological state of the speaker. Using these SAs, different topics are arranged in bank's ARs to reinforce the contact between the bank and its stakeholders.

6) Assertive speech act is highly used in bank's ARs to convince shareholders and companies to collaborate with the bank. In principle, stating SA occurs in argumentation to express the standpoint. In bank's ARs, this standpoint is supported by means of the basic financial statements such as: the balanced sheet, Statement of retained earnings and Income statement.

7) Thanking speech act plays a small role in arguing. It doesn’t support a claim and hence help to persuade the readers of ARs to work or dealing with the bank in question. Psychologically, however, thanking helps creating a sense of appreciation and admitting gratitude therefore it encourages investors, companies, and individuals dealing with an institution that values even the little efforts.

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Common Linguistic Errors among Non-English Major Libyan Students Writing

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Abstract
This study aims to investigate the most common types of linguistic errors and their frequency occurrence in compositions written by forty (40) non-English major Libyan students at the pre-intermediate level in Language Centre at Omar EL-Mukhtar University, EL-Beida, Libya. A corpus of 40 compositions was collected from a sample of 40 students in order to be investigated in terms of Hubbard et al.’s (1996) taxonomy of errors. This study is designed to answer the following questions: 1) what are the most common types of linguistic errors made in English writing by non-English major Libyan students? 2) How frequent do these errors occur in their English written work? The findings showed that substance errors (331) constituted the highest number of errors, followed by grammatical errors (150), syntactic errors (54), and lexical errors (29). The findings also revealed that spelling, capitalization, tenses, punctuation, articles, varied words, subject-verb agreement, and prepositions were the most common types of linguistic errors found in the students’ writings. These errors could be due to overgeneralisation in the target language, resulting from ignorance of rule restriction and incomplete application of rules and interference resulting from first language (Arabic) negative transfer. This study is important for teachers and educators who should become aware of the types of linguistic errors that their target learners make. These findings are discussed with implications for English as foreign language Libyan teachers. Along with the discussion of findings, limitations of the present study are discussed, and directions for further research are highlighted.

Keywords: English writing, error analysis, linguistic errors, non-English major Libyan students

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Introduction

Writing in a second language is a complicated task; it is the hardest skill of the language to be mastered (Allen & Corder, 1974). As such, it is impossible to find the foreign language students not to make errors in writing. These errors are to be expected during the process of learning a second language. Errors are systematic deviations from the norms of the language being learned (Cunningsworth, 1987). Corder (1967) considers errors as a problem that should be eliminated as soon as possible. However, errors are now looked on as a device that can assist in the process of learning. They provide evidence of the learner’s level in the target language, as stated by Gass and Selinker (1984). Corder (1974) views “the study of error is part of the investigation of the process of language learning” (p. 125). Studying and analyzing students’ errors can help the teachers to discover what areas of language need further attention in teaching. Therefore, the study and analysis of the errors which students make in their writing in the second language have been a productive field for a large number of researchers.

Several studies (Ababneh, 2017; Darus & Subramaniam, 2009; Kambal, 1980; Khuwaileh & Al Shoumali, 2000; Lin, 2002; Mungungu, 2010; Scott & Tucker, 1977; Smith, 2001) have examined errors in writing produced by English language learners. These studies demonstrate that learners of English language have difficulty in using tenses, articles, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, word order, word choice …etc. Yet, to my knowledge, only two studies have investigated errors in the English writings of Libyan tertiary students (Abdalwahid, 2012; Hamed, 2014). In fact, Abdalwahid and Hamed's studies have focused only on investigating cohesion errors in students’ writing whose major is English. It seems that no studies have been conducted thus far to investigate the most common types of linguistic errors and their frequency occurrence in English writings of non-English major Libyan students.

Therefore, it is essential to investigate the most common types of linguistic errors and their frequency occurrence in the English writings of non-English major Libyan students. This study is important for teachers and educators who should become aware of the types of linguistic errors that their target learners make. The present study is an attempt to fill the gap in literature and will contribute to the research in English language education in Libya. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the most common types of linguistic errors made in English writing by non-English major Libyan students?
2. How frequent do these errors occur in their English written work?
3. Review of related literature

This section will review literature on difficulty of learning ESL/EFL writing and error analysis including the emergence of error analysis, definition of error analysis, classification of errors, the importance of errors, and previous studies on error analysis.

Difficulty of learning ESL/EFL writing

The ability to write in a second language without errors is not an easy task for many of ESL/EFL learners. Kroll (1990) considers writing to be a difficult skill which presents a challenging task for non-native speakers of English. Writing is not a natural skill. It is an
instructional skill that "must be practised and learned through experience" (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 6). It means that it requires training, instruction, practice, experience and purpose.

Widdowson (1983, p. 36) describes the learning of writing in a second language as problematic because "learning to write in English when it is not your first, but a second or a third language poses its own problems". That is, writing in English is more difficult for EFL/ESL students because they are faced with the task of learning the language along with the cognitive and psychological difficulties of writing.

Writing without teaching is too complex and difficult skill to be mastered. Accordingly, the teacher and teaching methods play an important role in determining the development of the students' writing. Piper (1989) emphasises this point by saying that instruction, with no doubt, does have an explicit outcome on how the learners write both in terms of written output, writing behaviours and attitudes to writing. The purpose and emphasis of the writing activities determine the methods of teaching to be adopted in the classroom.

The mechanics of writing such as 'handwriting', 'capitalization', 'punctuation' and 'spelling', as well as 'vocabulary' and 'grammatical structures' are traditionally believed to be the major ingredients of good writing (EL-Aswad, 2002). Therefore, a great number of empirical studies have investigated students' writing errors in terms of these mechanics of writing.

Error Analysis

The emergence of error analysis

Error Analysis is a branch of applied linguistics established in the 1970s by Corder, the father of error analysis, and colleagues. Error analysis was originated from contrastive analysis (Keshavarz, 1999), an area of comparative linguistics which compares the structures of two language systems and predicts errors (Kim, 2001). The contrastive analysis hypothesis was based on the idea that second language learners transfer the habits of their first language (L1) into their second language (L2). In the 1960s, the theory of contrastive analysis was replaced by error analysis, which maintained that the errors learners make were not only due to the transfer or interference from L1. Errors analysis indicates that contrastive analysis was unable to predict a great majority of errors, which were yielded by learners making faulty inferences about the rules of the new language (Ghani and Karim, 2010).

Definition of error analysis

Before defining error analysis, it is important to distinguish between errors and mistakes which are “technically two very different phenomena” (Brown, 2007, p. 257). Brown (2007, pp. 257-258) defines a mistake as “a performance error in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly; while an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the competence of the learner”. As reported by James (1998), mistakes can be correctable by the learner himself, while errors cannot be self-corrected. Errors are “systematic,” i.e. expected to happen frequently and not identified by the learner. Hence, only the teacher or researcher would find them, the learner would not (Gass & Selinker, 1994).
Over the years, error analysis has been defined by several researchers. Richards and Schmidt (2002, p. 184) define error analysis as “the study and analysis of the errors made by second language learners”. According to Corder (1967)’s definition, error analysis is a method used by both researchers and teachers to collect samples of learner language, identify the errors in the sample, describe these errors, classify them according to their nature and causes, and evaluate their seriousness. Similarly, Crystal (as cited by Hasyim, 2002, p. 43) proposes that error analysis is a procedure for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the ungrammatical forms produced by someone learning a foreign language. Also, Brown (1980, cited by Hasyim, 2002, p. 43) defines error analysis as the process of observing, analysing, and classifying the deviations of the rules of the second language and then to discover the systems operated by a learner. Gass and Selinker (2001, p. 67) define errors as “red flags”, warning signals that provide evidence of the learner’s knowledge of the L2.

**Classification of errors**

Corder (1967) states that there are two types of errors: performance errors and competence errors. The first are made when learners are tired or hurried. It means that the learners make performance errors not because of incomplete learning but due to careless, stress or fatigue ... etc. The second are more serious since they reflect inadequate learning. Brown (2007) views errors as being either global or local. Global errors hinder communication; they prevent the message from being comprehend. On the contrary, local errors do not prevent the message from being understood because there is usually a minor violation of one segment of a sentence that allows the hearer to guess the intended meaning.

Corder (as cited in Keshavarz, 1999) categorizes errors into two groups: overt and covert errors. As he argues:

An overt error is easy to identify, because it is unquestionably ungrammatical at the sentence level. A covert error occurs in utterances that are superficially well formed but which do not mean what the learner intended them to mean. Therefore, it is not interpretable within the context of communication. ( p. 70).

Errors can also be classified as interlingual or intralingual (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 267). Interlingual errors can be identified as transfer errors which result from a learner’s first language features, for example, grammatical, lexical or pragmatic errors. Conversely, intralingual errors are overgeneralisations (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p.379) in the target language, resulting from ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete applications of rules, and false concepts hypothesised.

Hubbard, Jones, Thornton, and Wheeler (1996) classify errors into four main categories, namely grammatical, syntactic, substance, and lexical errors. Then they subcategorized grammatical errors into seven categories: prepositions, singular/plural nouns, adjectives, tenses, possessive case, relative clauses, and articles; syntactic errors into three categories: nouns/pronouns, subject/verb agreement, and word order; substance errors into three categories: capitalization, punctuation, and spelling; lexical errors into two categories: varied words, and idiom choice or usage. This taxonomy of errors has been chosen as a framework in the present study as it has been widely used in several studies (Ababneh, 2017; Napitupulu, 2017).
The importance of error analysis

Many researchers in the field of EA have stressed the importance of second language learners' errors. As Corder (1967), in his article *The significance of learners' errors*, remarks that: They are significant in three different ways. Firstly, to the teacher, in that they tell him, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Secondly, they provide to the researcher evidence of how a language is acquired, what strategies the learner is employing in his learning of a language. Thirdly, they are indisputable to the learner himself because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn (p. 161).

As Corder (1967) points out, EA has two objects: theoretical and applied. The theoretical object is to understand what and how a learner learns when he studies an L2. The applied one is to enable the learner to learn more efficiently by using the grasp of his dialect for pedagogical purposes. At the same time, he says that the investigation of errors can serve two aims: diagnostic (to in-point the problem) and prognostic (to make plans to solve a problem). It is diagnostic because it can tell us the learner's understanding of a language at any given point during the process of learning. It is also prognostic because it can inform the teacher to adjust learning materials to meet the linguistic needs of learners.

Corder (1974) notes that Error Analysis is useful in second language learning because it reveals the problem areas to teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers. Errors can tell the teacher how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and consequently, what remains for him or her to learn. In consensus, Richards and Schmidt (2002) point out that EA may be conducted in order to 1) identify strategies which learners use in language learning; 2) try to identify the causes of learner errors; 3) obtain information on common difficulties in language learning as an aid to teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials.

Previous studies on error analysis

Several research studies have been conducted to investigate errors in students’ writing in English worldwide. Lin (2002) examined 26 essays written by Taiwanese EFL students at college level. The results of this study showed that the four highest error frequencies were sentence structures (30.43%), wrong verb forms (21.01%), sentence fragments (15.94%), and wrong use of words (15.94%).

In their study, Darus and Subramaniam (2009) examined errors in a corpus of 72 essays written by 72 Malaysian students. The findings of their study showed that the most common errors committed by the participants were closely related to: singular/plural form, verb tense, word choice, preposition, subject-verb agreement and word order.

Along in the same lines, Mungungu (2010) conducted an empirical study, using quantitative research methods, to examine common English language errors made by Namibian learners who are L1 speakers of Oshiwambo, Afrikaans and Silozi learning English as a second Language. The study investigated errors and their frequencies in a corpus of 360 essays written by 180 participants. His findings revealed that the students who committed 763 errors in tenses, prepositions, articles and spelling, the four most common in students’ writing. Among the four
types of errors, spelling errors (419) seem to be the most difficult for the students since it is probably due to the rare use of English vocabulary in everyday language, followed by tense errors (139), preposition errors (117), and article errors (88).

Kambal (1980) and Scott and Tucker (1977) carried out studies in order to analyse the performance of Arabic-speaking students enrolling in an intensive course. They found that Arabic-speaking learners have problems in prepositions, articles, tense, verbs and nouns. Recently, most studies in the Arab world (e.g. Mohammed, 2005; Muortaga, 2004) investigated EFL Arab learners’ syntactic errors, the results of which revealed that Arab learners were incompetent and weak mainly in verbs and prepositions.

Khuwaileh and Al Shoumali (2000) carried out a study to investigate the errors of the Jordanian students' writing and they discovered that tense errors are the most frequent ones committed by the students. They attribute this error to Arabic language interference because it has only three tenses.

In his detailed article on Arabic speakers, Smith (2001) pointed out that Arabic learners of English commit many examples of errors. Among these errors, for instance, were mistakes in consonant clusters, word order, questions and negatives, auxiliaries, pronouns, time, tense and aspect, modal verbs, articles, etc. As for articles, he stated that the indefinite article causes the most obvious problems as it is commonly omitted with singular countable nouns.

Ababneh (2017) conducted a study on the writings of 50 EFL Saudi female college students majoring in English and then categorized their writings errors in terms of Hubbard, Jones, Thornton, and Wheeler’s (1996) classification of errors namely grammatical, syntactic, substance, and lexical errors. The findings of his study showed that most frequent types of errors made by the students were in the categories of grammar (570), followed by substance (513), syntax (121) and lexical (90). His findings also revealed that the most frequent types of errors made by the students were: spelling, subject-verb agreement, tenses, singular/plural nouns, and articles. He ascribed these errors to the lack of conversation in the target language, rare reading in English, and interference of Arabic language.

Napitupulu (2017) investigated Indonesian students’ linguistic errors in English letter writing, adopting Hubbard et al. (1996) taxonomy of errors. His study revealed that students committed 42.4% of grammatical errors, 26.7% of syntactic errors, 17.9% of substance errors, and 13% of lexical errors. Based on the discussion of his findings, he concluded that Indonesian students committed a great number of errors due to first language transfer.

In general, most studies conducted in the field of error analysis among Arab and non-Arab students revealed that approximately the most common types of errors are all similar (prepositions, spelling, tenses, articles and subject-verb agreement). These studies have attributed the aforementioned errors to overgeneralisation in the target language which result from ignorance of rule restriction and incomplete application of rules and interference resulting from first language (Arabic) negative transfer.
From the preceding discussion, it is evident that errors committed by language learners have been extensively investigated worldwide. However, there seems a paucity of errors analysis research in Libyan context (Abdalwahid, 2012; Hamed, 2014). In fact, Abdalwahid and Hamed's studies have focused only on investigating cohesion errors in students’ writing whose major is English. This study is an effort to fill this gap by identifying the most common types of errors and their frequency occurrence in the English writings of non-English major Libyan students.

**Method**

**Participants**

The participants in this study were 40 non-English major Libyan students who enrolled in the English General Classes at the pre-intermediate level in spring semester, 2017 in Language Centre at Omar EL-Mukhtar University, EL-Beida Campus, Libya. They were all native speakers of Arabic at the age of 25 and 28 years. They have been learning English as a foreign language for at least 10 years: eight years at school through regular Arabic language instruction, one year at university and one year at the University of Omer EL-Mukhtar’s Language Centre. The University of Omer EL-Mukhtar’s Language Centre is an academically oriented English language instruction that provides courses for the students to improve their English.

**Data and data collection**

After obtaining a permission from manager of Language Centre, forty (40) compositions were collected from the Language centre at Omar EL-Mukhtar University, EL-Beida, Libya. The data were guided compositions produced by the participants during their pre-intermediate level final examination in May, 2017. The participants were asked to write 150 word about one of the following topics:

- Topic 1: Write a description of your country.
- Topic 2: Write an email to someone in your family and tell them about your weekend.
- Topic 3: Describe a film you have seen.

**Data analysis**

Based on the guidelines of selecting a corpus of language (Ellis, 1995), a sample of written work was collected from 40 pre-intermediate level students’ examination scripts. Various researches on error analysis including Ellis (1997) and Gas and Selinker (2001) informed the processes used to analyse the data. The following four steps were followed: 1) data collection, 2) identification of errors, 3) classification of errors, and 4) a statement of error frequency.

The 40 compositions used in this study were read and analysed by the researcher himself. Firstly, a corpus of writing data was collected, and secondly did the identification of errors. Next, the errors were classified according to their categories and subcategories based on Hubbard et al.’s (1996) taxonomy. This taxonomy of errors has been chosen as a framework in the present study as it has been widely used in several studies (Ababneh, 2017; Napitupulu, 2017). After categorising each error, the frequency of occurrence of different types of linguistic errors was quantified.
Results and discussion

The aim of this study, as previously mentioned, was to identify the most common types of errors and their frequency occurrence in English writing of non-English major Libyan students. A total of 564 errors were found in the compositions under analysis (See Table 1). The results of this study showed that substance errors had the highest number of errors. They accounted for (331), followed by grammatical errors (150), syntactic errors (54), and lexical errors (29), as Table 1 shows. The results of this study are different from Ababneh (2017) who reported that grammatical errors were the most frequent ones committed by the Saudi college students while substance errors were found to be the most frequent errors in this study.

Table 1. Total number of errors in students’ writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>564</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from Table 2, as far as the seven subcategories of grammatical errors committed by the students were concerned, tenses were the most common errors (11.0%), followed by article errors (7.1%), preposition errors (3.9%) and singular/plural nouns (3.5%). Possessive case and relative clauses had the least percentage of errors (0.2%). Of the three subcategories of syntactic errors, the highest frequency of errors was in subject/verb agreement (4.4%), followed by nouns and pronouns (3.4%) and word order (1.8%). Among the three substance errors committed by the students, spelling errors had the highest frequency (38.8%), followed by capitalization errors (12.4%) and punctuation errors (7.4%). Of the subcategory of lexical errors, varied words had the highest percentage (4.8%) followed by idiom choice or usage (0.5%).

Table 2. Frequencies and percentages of errors based on Hubbard et al. (category/subcategory)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Prepositions</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singular/plural nouns</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenses</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Possessive case</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relative clauses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td>Nouns &amp; pronouns</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject/verb agreement</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Word order</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capitalization</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As evidenced in the results (see Table 2), the most common errors found in the participants’ written compositions are associated with spelling (38.8%), capitalization (12.4%), tenses (11.0%), punctuation (7.4%), articles (7.1%), varied words (4.6%), subject-verb agreement (4.4%), and prepositions (3.9%). Only the aforementioned errors will be discussed under their main categories: grammatical errors, syntactical errors, substance errors, and lexical errors.

**Grammatical Errors**

As shown in Table 2, the students had great difficulty in using tenses (11.0%), followed by articles (7.1%), prepositions (3.9%). The students had problems deciding which tense to use. They used simple present or present perfect improperly instead of simple past and present continuous in place of simple present, as in the following sentences with the revised version in parenthesis, ‘…when he started war on Russia, he has chosen (chose) her …’, ‘he hides (hid) in when the British army were looking for him’, and ‘I am studying (study) English…’. The misuse of tenses is not difficult only for Libyan students, but also for most of Arab students, as in Scott and Tucker’s (1977), Kambal’s (1980), and Khuwaileh and Al Shoumali’s (2000) findings, which show that Arab students misused tenses in their writing. This result is not surprising since the Arabic language has only three tenses, yet there are 14 tenses in English and each one has more than one usage. Thus, tenses can be a thorny problem even for advanced learners of English in Libya.

The use of articles, totalling 40 (approximately 7.1% of all the error tokens), posed the second most common difficulty for Libyan EFL students. The students often used unnecessary articles. For instance, they added the indefinite article ‘a’ where it is not needed, as in the following sentence with the revised version in parenthesis, ‘It was a sunny in the middle of the summer’ ($\chi$). They also inserted the definite article ‘the’ that must not appear in a well-formed sentence in the target language. For example, they misused ‘the’ before the names of places, such as ‘I went to the London’ ($\chi$) and ‘I live in the Shahat’ ($\chi$), a city in Libya. In addition to this, the students omitted necessary articles where these articles should be used in the target language. They omitted the indefinite article ‘a’ more frequently, as in the following sentences, ‘It was a great film’ (a), ‘I had a piece of toast and a terrible cup of tea’ (a, a).The students also omitted the indefinite article ‘the’ where it is required, as in the following sentence, ‘we went to the zoo’ (the). (Note: this symbol indicates missing articles). The results indicated that the students had no problems with the indefinite article ‘an’. Such errors are imputable to the ‘negative transfer’ from the mother tongue, Arabic. Unlike English, which has definite and indefinite articles, Arabic has only a definite article called ‘L of definition’ (Abushihab, El-Omari & Tobat, 2011). While Arabic uses the definite article to refer to generic nouns, English does not use it in this way (Abdalwahid, 2012). Accordingly, Arab-English foreign language learners tend to produce so many errors of articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Punctuation</th>
<th>42</th>
<th>7.4%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td></td>
<td>219</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexical</th>
<th>Varied words</th>
<th>26</th>
<th>4.6%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idiom choice or usage</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>564</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preposition errors (3.9%) rank the third among all grammatical errors. The students misused the prepositions in their writing. They used wrongly ‘in’ instead of ‘to’, and ‘to’ in place of ‘at’, as in the following examples, ‘she decided to move in a new house’, and ‘After Vikram arrived to the house’, respectively. In some cases, the students avoided the application of prepositions. For example, the students omitted the prepositions ‘in’ and ‘at’ in the following sentences, ‘I live ^ a very nice house’ and ‘Students hold an ethic dinner ^ night’, respectively. This finding correlates with other studies of Arab EFL learners (Mohammed, 2005; Muortaga, 2004; Zahid, 2006).

**Syntactical Errors**

Among syntactical subcategories, subject/verb agreement (4.4%) was the most problematic to the students (see Table 2). In English grammar, the subject and the verb should both agree in number and in person. Depending on whether the subject is singular or plural, the verbs should take similar forms. However, this rule is often disregarded by Libyan students. In many cases, the students did not use the third person singular ‘s’ with the verb when the subject is singular, as in the following examples with the revised version in parenthesis, ‘My mother wait (waits) for me’, ‘My friend Najla work (works) with me’ and ‘The weather in Libya change (changes) all the time’. The students also misused the verbs ‘to be’ and ‘to have’ in their writing. They used incorrectly the singular verb ‘is’ instead of the plural verb ‘are’ with the plural noun ‘people’, as in the following sentence, ‘People is(are) very friendly’, and the verb ‘has’ in place of the verb ‘have’ with the singular noun ‘Libya’, as in the following, ‘Libya have (has) a lot of oil and gas’. The findings of the current study were in line with those of previous EFL research studies (e.g. Ababneh, 2017; Darus & Subramaniam, 2009) in that EFL learners faced difficulty in using subject-verb agreement to generate grammatical sentences.

**Substance Errors**

Based on the percentage of each substance error (see Table 2), it is evident that misspellings constituted the highest percentage of errors (38.8%), followed by the capitalization errors (12.4%) and punctuation errors (7.4%). The students made many spelling errors, as illustrated by the following examples, taken from the students’ compositions with the correct spelling in parenthesis: frendly, frindy (friendly), frend, frind (friend), brutiful (beautiful), jop (job), rememper (remember), whol (whole), befor (before), futur (future), proplems (problems). It can be said that the students had problems with the words that have the consonant letters ‘b’ or ‘p’ and the vowels ‘e’ or ‘i’. This finding is mirrored in previous study (Ababneh, 2017) in that Arab native students faced problems with spelling words contained those letters. This is probably due to inadequate learning in the target language.

Additionally, the students made errors in capitalization (12.4%) by using lowercase (small) letters instead of uppercase (capital) letters in many cases. For instance, they did not sometimes capitalize proper names, names of places, and names of countries. All these errors can be demonstrated by the following extracts, with the revised version in parenthesis, from students’ compositions: ‘james’ (James), ‘benghazi’ (Benghazi), ‘libya’ (Libya), ‘africa’ (Africa). Also, the students often commenced sentences with small letter words after a period, as exemplified in the following sentences, ‘the teachers aren’t good and unexperienced. there (There) is only… ’, ‘I watched film called ‘the Green Meil’. it (It) was very amazing’. Such errors can be imputed to the
students’ mother tongue, the Arabic language. Unlike English, which has uppercase and lowercase letters, Arabic language has only lowercase letters.

It was clearly found that the use of punctuation was a problematic area for the participants. A considerable number of the students committed punctuation errors (7.4%) by writing too long sentences without using punctuation between them, as illustrated in the following examples with the revised version in parenthesis, ‘Libya is the best place to visit (.) it (It) is a big country...’, ‘When the film ended, we went for a meal on a boat on the Nile (.) the (The) meal was fish with rice and salad’. As a result, the sentences ran on too long and confused the readers. These errors can be attributed to overgeneralisation in the target language, resulting from ignorance of rule restriction and incomplete application of rules.

**Lexical Errors**

As shown in Table 1, of the four categories, the lexical category had the least number of errors (29). The same finding was found by Ababneh (2017). And among the lexical errors, varied words (26) were the most problematic for the participants (See Table 2). A small number of the students used inappropriate words in their writings; for instance, using the word ‘save’ instead of ‘safe’, ‘work’ instead of ‘job’ and ‘live’ instead of ‘life’, as exemplified in the following examples respectively, ‘I was born in Libya and I feel in it very save’, I will starting my work as a teacher next week’, ‘what makes his live very difficult is the people who hearts his family’. It can be said that the students faced difficulty in using the appropriate word in its correct place. These errors could be due to overgeneralisation in the target language which results from ignorance of rule restriction and incomplete application of rules.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of the present study was to identify the most common types of errors and their frequency occurrence in compositions written by non-English major Libyan students. The errors were analysed in terms of Hubbard et al.’s (1996) taxonomy. The analysis of the errors showed that substance errors (331) constituted the highest number of errors, followed by grammatical errors (150), syntactic errors (54), and lexical errors (29).

The findings revealed that the most common types of errors found in the students’ writings were: spelling, capitalization, tenses, punctuation, articles, varied words, subject-verb agreement, and prepositions. These errors could be due to overgeneralisation in the target language, which results from ignorance of rule restriction and incomplete application of rules and interference resulting from first language (Arabic) negative transfer.

The present study has focused only on forty (40) students in one language centre and thus the findings cannot be generalized to all non-English major students studying English as a foreign language in EL-Beida Language Centre or to any other language centres in Libya. Therefore, much more research needs to be done on the analysis of students’ errors in writing in different language centres to reach final conclusions about an effective and enhanced writing teaching in Libya.

The research findings have suggested some implications which can be of great help to improve students’ writing skills. Direct corrective feedback on those errors is necessary and
helpful. In the direct corrective feedback, the teacher provides the student with the correct form by writing it above or near to the incorrect one. As Sheen (2007, cited in Ellis, 2009, p. 99) suggests, direct corrective feedback can be important in fostering acquisition of specific grammatical features. Further, explicit instruction on the errors identified in the students’ composition can foster the students to overcome these difficulties. In explicit instruction, the teacher either explains the rules to the learners or directs the learners to find the rules by looking at linguistic examples exemplified in sentences (Cowan, 2008). It has been shown that explicit instruction yields better and longer-lasting learning than implicit instruction (Norris & Ortega, 2000). EFL Libyan teachers should take the two aforementioned implications into account when they teach writing.

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References


A Move Analysis of Problem-Solution Discourse: A Pedagogical Guide for Opinion and Academic Writing

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Abstract
Knowledge about move is fundamental to language learning which prepares students and writing practitioners to understand the natures and the organization of a certain discourse and genre. Teachers, consequently, need to familiarize students with a framework of moves that enable them to produce well written work. Consequently, the author conducted a genre analysis on a corpus of 50 problem-solution (PS) articles in the opinion columns of two online newspapers to identify the move characteristics and the move structure of the problem-solution discourse in the genre. The study used a genre analysis methodology relying on Hoey (1983)’s framework of rhetorical organization for the problem-solution discourse. The findings have implications for the writing instruction. They include a set of move features which is a practical guide and a ready-made template for writing the problem-solution discourse. The findings also show that the Problem move is the nucleus move followed by the Response move. Regarding the move structure, the study unfolds that the Problem move and the Response moves are moves that are most used to start and to end the articles, respectively. The identification of move characteristics and move structure provides language learners, writing practitioners, and especially English language teachers with empirical results beneficial for a writing practice and for material designs.

Keywords: content-based academic writing, EAP writing, move structure, opinion writing, problem-solution discourse

Introduction

Writing various types of paragraphs and essays is a conventional writing task for English as a foreign language (EFL) university students whose expertise differ according to their areas of study. If English teachers assign a writing task which challenges students to produce a piece of writing on a topic in their area of study or on a substantial issue, it is necessary to encourage students to use their critical thinking skills. Assigning students to write a problem-solution article requiring students to use knowledge in an area of their expertise is a good example of content-based writing which helps students develop both their critical thinking skills and language performance.

Hyland (1990) expresses a classic concern over difficulties concerning a writing organization EFL students have encountered saying that the difficulties are due to a lack of understanding of text organization. Undoubtedly, the problem-solution genre is no exception. Students are not well trained to understand the rhetorical move structures of the problem-solution genre. Teachers, then, should familiarize students with the text organization or the move structure, including the problem-solution pattern, as an important tool to help them write logically and effectively (Aghagolzadeh & Khanjani, 2011; Hyland, 2007; McCarthy, 1991; Yin, 2007). Flowerdew (2003) uses the word “sensitize” to explain the need for students to sensitize themselves to textual or move structures. Generally speaking, the success and progress of a well-organized text is to “enable the reader to extract the writer’s intended meaning effectively” (Celce-Murcia & Ollstain, 2000, p. 143).

This study is one of many other attempts to respond to this concern. There have been several studies on the problem-solution genre (Aghagolzadeh & Khanjani, 2011; Ali, 2013; Flowerdew, 2003; Galan & Perez, 2003; Handford & Matous, 2014; Hoey, 1986; Yin, 2007); however, the data used and the context of each study are different. The problem-solution texts previously studied are, therefore, considered different from those in this study, not different variants of the same text type. Therefore, we need to build upon existing knowledge about the move structure of problem-solution articles across a representative sample of texts from the genre of opinion column in which writers aim to discuss problems and suggest solutions to the problems.

Analysis Framework

Problem-Solution Moves and Move Structure

An analysis of problem-solution discourse using Michael Hoey’s analytical framework is a data-driven analysis which can classify and describe texts according to the embedded communicative purposes (Flowerdew, 2003). The classification shows a textual interaction in the form of a problem-solution (PS) pattern. The textual interaction includes four communicative stages or moves; that is, a situation, a problem, a response, and an evaluation (SPRE). The interaction involves and usually starts with situations or background information relating to a problem and then leads to a discussion of the problem issue with an attempt to answer questions that a reader may have. The third move concerns proposing solutions to the problem before discussing the consequences of the suggested solutions or giving an evaluation (Fairclough, 1999).

According to Hoey (2001), the reader generally has questions about an issue under discussion and it is the writer’s responsibility to presuppose the questions and provide answers together with other information that the writer thinks the reader needs to know in a text the writer
is going to produce. This process is an interaction between the reader and the writer that helps determine the way text is structured (Hoey, 2001). It means that the text becomes the evidence of a purposeful interaction.

The rhetorical structure of problem-solution discourse, SPRE, was proposed by Michael Hoey in 1983 and was characterized in his book “Textual Interaction: An Introduction to Written Discourse Analysis” in 2001. The following structure includes the four moves of PS discourse and their definitions as given by Hoey (2001).

Move structure of problem-solution discourse and definitions of the moves

Situation: Background information on situations; facts about people, issue, event, place involved in the issue of discussion

Problem: Aspect of a situation requiring a response, need, dilemma, puzzle, or obstacle under discussion; weaknesses inherent to the current situation

Response: Solution(s) to the problem; discussion of a way(s) to deal or to solve the problem

Evaluation: Assessment of the effectiveness of the proposed solution(s); if there is more than one solution, which solution is the best?

Sometimes a writer might conduct his/her discussion in a different way from the SPRE pattern. In such case, the writer will modify the organization of a text that makes it look different from SPRE. That is, when the writer evaluates a solution raised and finds that it cannot completely solve the problem, a negative evaluation, the writer will propose a new solution to fill in the gap. The move will then be recycled until the problem is completely solved and the evaluation shows a positive consequence or shows no possibility of retrieval (Hoey, 2001). Figure 1 shows an alternative flow of PS discourse.

![Figure 1. Alternative flow of problem-solution discourse](image-url)
The followings are move elements of the alternative structure and their definitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative structure of problem-solution discourse and definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partial solution:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative evaluation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New solution:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon analyzing a text structure, the text will be categorized into different moves according to their communicative purposes, and this is how each move is realized. However, when examining contents embedded in each move, we will find that in order to achieve communication purposes, moves are supported by ‘a set of certain elements’ that carries different purposes, and it is these elements that mutually form each move. In this study, the term “move features” is used as an element that writers strategically use to construct certain moves and as an element that we use to realize each SPRE move. The move feature is considered an element which attaches to each SPRE move.

**Literature Review**

*Problem-Solution Move Identification*

Not all study using Hoey’s framework of PS move structure identifies all the four SPRE moves. Ali (2013) studies a move structure of business journalistic texts of two English magazines. She categorized the texts into two move categories, the *Problem* and the *Response* moves. The *Situation* and the *Evaluation* moves were not shown as two separate moves since the researcher categorized a communicative act, ‘explicating the problem’, pertaining to the *Situation* move under the *Problem* move and also categorized two communicative acts, ‘evaluating in solution’ and ‘prediction in solution’ pertaining to the *Evaluation* move under the *Response* move.

Having more than one opinion column under a newspaper issue can be a factor formulating the objective and the central move of each opinion column. Belmonte (2009) studies textual patterns of editorials and op-eds columns which are both opinion columns of *USA TODAY* newspaper. The results show that the objective of an editorial is to give readers well-rounded pictures of the problem under discussion. The text mostly employs the *Problem* and the *Evaluation* moves and has the *Problem* move as a nucleus of the text. In comparison, the op-ed column articulates around the *Evaluation* move. The text mainly reflects consequences of previous or present solutions of the problem while assuming that readers are provided with background information of the problem from the editorial. The *Response* move is scarcely presented in both editorials and op-eds. Readers of the columns are positioned to have their own opinion on the problem issues being discussed.

A different cultural background is another factor effecting how one can produce a well-structured PS discourse. Aghagolzadeh and Khanjani (2011) reveal that Iranians use less PS moves than native speakers of English when writing English PS newspaper articles, while they use more when writing PS articles in their Persian language.
**Problem-Solution Move Sequences and Structures**

Galan and Perez (2003)’s work confirms the need for EFL teachers to explicitly teach students PS move structure as well as the need to make them aware of an importance of using PS move structure as a writing template. The teachers’ explicit teaching and the students’ awareness both play an important role in helping students write a well-organized PS discourse. Teaching a move structure, including the one for PS discourse, helps students organize their ideas. A move pattern acts as a ready-made template which students can adhere to although good writing does not result from following the move pattern exactly; for example, starting in the conventional way with a situation move (S), and then going on to – a problem move (P) – and a response move (R), and finally an evaluation move (E) for a PS text (Hoey, 2001).

In practice, the order of the move pattern is not fixed (Hoey, 2001). Paltridge (1996) found that; for example, the move evaluation does not always occur at the end of a PS text as in the study of letters of complaint, which shows all the four moves of the PS discourse in the order of S – P – E – R – S, instead of the conventional move series S – P – R – E (Hammond et.al., 1992). Similar cases of no one-to-one mapping communicative functions are also confirmed by other scholars in genre analysis that the moves sometimes do not occur in the exact order (Ali, 2013; Flowerdew, 2003; Jordan, 1984).

Jordan (1984) confirms the same findings and adds that although the moves do not follow the convention of SPRE, they are organized in such a way that coherence between sentences creates a rhetorical pattern. Parts of text with certain purposes and moves will logically link to the next move. Hoey (1986) gives a reasonable explanation for the no one-to-one mappings of communicative functions that “the real nature of the pattern is the sense of order perceived by a reader” (p. 190).

Since the existing knowledge about SPRE moves of the PS discourse of the genre may not adequately contribute to the writing instruction of the PS discourse, the researcher then sees the need to conduct this research to fill the gap. This study is consequently conducted with the research objective to identify the move characteristics and the move structures of the problem-solution discourse in opinion columns of English written newspapers.

**Methodology**

**Data Collection**

Fifty English articles focusing on the discussion of a problem leading to suggestions or solutions to the problem were purposively sampled from the opinion columns of two leading online newspapers, twenty-five articles from China Daily and another twenty-five from The New York Times to study moves of PS discourse. The corpus studied covers a span of two years (from March, 2014 to March, 2016). These two online newspapers were ranked two of the top ten English online newspapers in Asia and America by the website www.onlinenewspapers.com. The information was retrieved from the website in July, 2015. The data is a cross disciplinary collection, including education, medical care, living standard, human rights, social issues, economic issues and communication and technology, with seven to eight articles for each issue, making up a total of fifty articles of approximately 40,000 words. Before analyzing the articles and identifying the move structure of all the fifty articles, the researcher examined all of them first to make sure that they are problem-solution discourse with the move structure that includes the situation, the problem, the response and the evaluation (SPRE) moves.
As for the writers of all the fifty articles, the research is well aware of the fact that they should be experienced writers of the PS discourse as well as being the experts in the issues discussed so that the PS articles studied are effectively written. As a result of the purposive sampling, the writers of twenty-five articles (50%) were the editors and columnists of the opinion columns while the other twenty-five articles (50%) were experts in the field of issues discussed. It includes two university presidents, five university professors, three book authors, three physicians; and three writers each in the groups of experts in the field of health science, finance, education and social development.

**Data Analysis**

The study used a genre analysis methodology relying on Hoey’s framework of rhetorical organization for the problem-solution discourse consisting of situation, problem, response and evaluation or SPRE moves. Hoey’s SPRE framework of analysis identifies different moves embedded in the PS discourse.

Since the shared communicative purposes of a written text are considered a central notion of genre analysis (Hyland, 1990), this study used the communicative purposes embedded in each article as an analytical tool for the SPRE move realization. Theoretically, texts can be distinguished according to their communicative purposes, and this determines how they are structured in a certain genre (Hyland, 1990). In light of this theoretical foundation, in this study, the texts were analyzed and divided into four different moves (SPRE) according to the communicative purposes connected with each move. Beside each SPRE move, their supporting move features were treated in the same way; that is, communicative purposes were also used to identify move features within each SPRE move. This study also used a quantitative analysis to show move occurrence by calculating the total frequency, the average value, percentage, and ratio of the moves identified.

All identified move features were classified as either conventional or optional move features, according to their frequencies of occurrence. The cut-off frequency used to distinguish a conventional move feature from an optional move feature is 60% of the corpus of 25 articles; that is, 15 times of occurrence for each corpus following the practice of Kanoksilapatham (2005). To illustrate the point, if a certain move or move feature in each corpus occurs more than 15 times, it is classified as a conventional move feature; on the other hand, if it is less than 15 times, it is considered an optional move feature.

Intra-coder and inter-coder reliability assessment are a necessary procedure in studies of this kind. The researcher reanalyzed and recoded all the data two months after the first analysis using the same analytical frameworks. The intra-coder reliability was 86.40%. Then the researcher identified SPRE moves and embedded move features of the randomly selected ten articles—five articles for each online newspaper or twenty percent of the data—while having an English-native speaking scholar of EFL who is well-versed in move analysis independently analyze and inter-code the same set of data. Then the results of the inter-coding were compared. The inter-coder reliability rate was 84.52%.

**Results**

*Problem-Solution Move Identification*
The corpora of PS discourse from the opinion columns of the two online newspapers were analyzed using Hoey’s framework for PS move structure. The objective of the study is to identify the move characteristics and the move structures of the PS discourse. The results show that both corpora used Hoey’s all four moves: situation – problem – response – evaluation (SPRE).

Definitions of each SPRE move and move feature were systematically and thoroughly reconstructed from the analysis (see Appendix A). Appendix A shows a list of SPRE moves, their move features and definitions found as the empirical results of the corpus study.

Table 1 shows that the most frequent move employed in the newspaper articles was the Problem move (35% for China Daily or CHN; and 40% for The New York Times or NYT). The less frequently occurring moves were the Response, Evaluation and Situation moves or R-E-S, respectively, in both CHN and NYT. In comparison, the frequencies of the Response, Evaluation and Situation moves in CHN were 26%, 20% and 19%; and the numbers in NYT were 24%, 20% and 16%, respectively. The frequencies and proportions of the four moves as well as the move features employed in PS articles in both newspapers were comparatively close and were almost congruent. The same values for the corpus of all the fifty articles can be arranged in order of frequency as 38%, 25%, 20% and 17% for Move 2 Problem move, Move 3 Response move, Move 4 Evaluation move, and Move 1 Situation move or P-R-E-S, accordingly.

Table 1. Frequency of occurrence of moves and the move features in the corpus of problem-solution articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOVE 1: Situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1: Present situation of the problem issue</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2: Background information of the problem issue</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOVE 2: Problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1: Specific problem issue</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2: Causes of the problem</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3: (Broad problem issue)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4: (Ineffective previous problem solving)</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5: (Criticism on problem &amp; people concerned)</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOVE 3: Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1: Call for action</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2: (Propose solutions effective for the long run)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3: (Refer to supporting laws &amp; rights)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4: (Encourage changes in attitude &amp; behavior)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5: (Refer to expert opinions &amp; research findings)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOVE 4: Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1: Consequences of problem solving</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2: Anticipated positive consequences</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of moves</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Optional move features with a move frequency below a cut-off rate of 60% equaling or below 15 move occurrence

It appears that Table 1. Frequency of occurrence of moves and the move features in the corpus of problem-solution articles is missing from the document. The table should provide a summary of the frequency of occurrence of moves and move features in different corpora. The table is structured as follows:

- **Moves and Move features**
- **Total**
  - **Average**
  - **Percentage**
- **The New York Times (25 articles)**
  - **Average**
  - **Percentage**
- **The corpus of 50 articles**
  - **Average**
  - **Percentage**

The table includes columns for moves such as Situation, Problem, Response, and Evaluation, and move features such as the specific problem issue, background information, causes of the problem, and criticism on problem and people concerned. The data is presented in a clear and organized manner, making it easy to understand the frequency of occurrence of each move and move feature.
features; the Response move included one conventional move feature and four optional move features; and the Evaluation move included two conventional move features.

The total of fourteen move features, consisting of seven conventional move features and seven optional move features, was identically realized from the two corpora. The conventional move features and their average value per one article arranged in order of occurrence included M2F1 Specific problem issues (0.96); M4F1 Consequences of problem solving (0.74); M2F2 Causes of the problem (0.68); M1F1 Present situation of the problem issue (0.66) equaling M4F2 Anticipated positive consequences (0.66); M3F1 Call for action (0.64); and M1F2 Background information of the problem issue (0.60).

The average values in parentheses in Table 2 show the average number of move employed per article. These average values were calculated to show the ratios of move employment in both corpora. It is obvious that both corpora employed almost the same proportion of move number, 1:1. An exception can be seen in the Problem move which China Daily possessed a slightly lower average number of move employment than The New York Times, 4:5.

Table 2. Number and ratio of move features in the corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corpus/Move</th>
<th>Problem T (A)</th>
<th>Response T (A)</th>
<th>Evaluation T (A)</th>
<th>Situation T (A)</th>
<th>Total T (A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China Daily (25)</td>
<td>60 (2.40)</td>
<td>44 (1.76)</td>
<td>34 (1.36)</td>
<td>32 (1.28)</td>
<td>170 (6.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times (25)</td>
<td>76 (3.04)</td>
<td>45 (1.80)</td>
<td>36 (1.44)</td>
<td>31 (1.24)</td>
<td>188 (7.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHN:NYT Ratio</td>
<td>4:5</td>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>6:7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T: Total number of move features  A: Average number of move per problem-solution article

Table 3. Number of moves used to start the problem-solution articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corpus/Move</th>
<th>Situation T</th>
<th>Problem T</th>
<th>Response T</th>
<th>Evaluation T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China Daily (25)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times (25)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (50)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4 shows, the moves did not occur in a fixed and predictable order as the finding revealed that a total of forty-two different move sequences was employed to formulate fifty PS articles. While most articles (54%) started with the Problem move, the most frequent move sequences started with the S-P-R moves or the Situation-Problem-Response moves (see Table 4). Of all the fifty PS articles, twelve articles (24%) started with the S-P-R moves and there were seven different move sequences starting with the moves S-P-R. The second frequently used move sequences started with the P-S-P moves (Problem-Situation-Problem). They accounted for 7/50
A Move Analysis of Problem-Solution Discourse: A Pedagogical Guide  
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PS articles (14%) and had six different move sequences. In general, the texts in the corpus studied were found to be differently organized in terms of move sequence or structure.

As for the move ending, thirty-four move sequences (68%) ended with the Response move, while sixteen of them (32%) ended with the Evaluation move. Besides, moves recycled when there was a negative evaluation (E^N). In such case, the writers furthered their discussion by articulating around either the Response or the Problem moves or both of them.

Table 4. Problem-solution move sequences of all 50 articles: Ending with the Response move and the Evaluation move

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PS move sequences ending with the Response move</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>PS move sequences ending with the Evaluation move</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S + P + R</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>S + P + R</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. S + P + R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1. S + P + R + E</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. S + P + R + E</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2. S + P + R + E + R</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. S + P + R + E + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. S + P + R + E + R + E + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. S + P + R + P + E + P + P + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P + S + P</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>P + S + P</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. P + S + P + E + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4. P + S + P + S + P + E + E + E</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. P + S + P + E^N + P + E^3 + P + E^3 + P + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. P + S + P + E + P + E + P + R + E + E + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S + P + S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>S + P + S</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. S + P + S + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5. S + P + S + R + E</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. S + P + S + P + E + E + R + E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P + S + P + R</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>P + S + P + R</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. P + S + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7. P + S + S + E + P + P + R + E</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. P + S + R + P + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. P + S + R + E + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. P + S + R + E + P + E + S + P + R + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P + R + E</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>P + R + E</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. P + R + E + E + E + E + E + E + R + R + E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8. P + R + E</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. P + R + R + E + P + R + P + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. P + R + E + R + E + R + E + R + E + R + E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P + E + P</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>P + E + P</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. P + E^N + P + P + R + P + E^5 + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9. P + E^N + R + P + E + E</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. P + E^N + P + P + R + P + E^5 + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. P + R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10. P + S + E^N + R + E + E + E</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. P + S + E^N + P + E^3 + P + E^3 + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11. P + R + S + E + E + E + E + E + E</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. S + P + E^N + P + E^3 + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>SUB-TOTAL</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. S + E^N + P + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. S + E^N + P + S + E^3 + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. P + R + P + P + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. P + E^N + P + R + P + P + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. S + R + S + R + E + S + R + E + R + E + R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUB-TOTAL</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E^N: Negative evaluation

In conclusion, concerning the PS move characteristics identified, the study shows that SPRRE moves were proportionally used. In both corpora, the Problem move was a nucleus of the PS discourse followed by the Response, the Evaluation and the Situation moves, respectively. Both corpora shared the same sets of conventional and optional move features. The numbers and ratios of move employment in both corpora were almost congruent. The conventional move features commonly used in the PS discourse studied were arranged in order of occurrence as follows: M2F1 Specific problem issue; M4F1 Consequences of problem solving; M2F2 Causes of the problem; M4F2 Anticipated positive consequences; M1F1 Present situation of the problem issue; M3F1 Call for action; and M1F2 Background information of the problem issue.

Regarding the move structure, forty-two move sequences were reconstructed from all theifty PS articles; 54% of them started with the Problem move and 46% started with the Situation...
move. Most move sequences (68%) ended with the Response move; while 32% ended with the Evaluation move. In case of a negative evaluation, there was a move recycle followed.

Discussion
EFL students have encountered difficulties in writing a well-organized text since they lack the understanding of text organization required (Hyland, 1990). This study, then, aims to offer insights into a pedagogical implications and to contribute to the international community of ELT professionals by adding to the existing knowledge of genre on move characteristics and move structure.

Remarkably, the findings about the identification of SPRE moves and move features as well as the frequencies of move occurrence and the move sequences of both corpora, China Daily and The New York Times, were almost congruent or very close in all respects. To illustrate the point, the findings reveal that the PS articles in both corpora devote the focus and discussion in a similar way. However, the finding disagrees with Aghagolzadeh and Khanjani’s (2011) study showing that Iranians use less PS moves than native-speakers of English when writing English PS newspaper articles.

This study has practical implications for an instruction of PS discourse writing for less experienced writers and EFL students and contributes to the knowledge of move characteristics and move structure of PS discourse in the genre of opinion column as follows.

Problem-Solution Move Characteristics
Like Ali’s (2013) and Belmonte’s (2009) studies on the move structure of the journalistic texts and editorial column, the Problem move is the nucleus of the PS text. The similarity shows the obvious role and characteristic of the Problem move as the central discussion of the PS texts giving readers a thorough information of the problematic issues under discussion.

In addition, the Response move plays a significant role in the PS discourse in the genre as well. The finding agrees with Ali’s (2013) study on the PS move structure of business journalistic texts. The top and only conventional move feature for the Response move is Calling for action. As empirically defined, it is the Calling for action that the writers demand the government, various sectors concerned and people in charge to solve the problems. This move identification and definition highlight the central role and characteristic of the Response move not only as the expert unit offering insights to readers but also as a representative voice calling for actions to solve the problem issues being discussed. Interestingly but contrarily, the finding disagrees with Belmonte’s (2009) work of which the Response move is scarcely presented in both corpora of editorial and op-ed columns because, according to Belmonte (2009), readers of the two columns are positioned to have their own opinion on the problem issues being discussed.

Another important feature of the PS move is the Evaluation move. Though the Evaluation move identified is not the nucleus move like the one in Belmonte’s (2009) study of the op-ed column, its proportion of move employment is 20% and the average use of its move features per one article is 1.40. It implies that, on average, there must be at least one Evaluation move feature in an article. That is, the Evaluation move is significantly positioned to readers to show the writers’ awareness and responsibility in evaluating the effectiveness of the past and present solutions as well as the effectiveness of the new suggestion the writers make.
All conventional and optional move features identically identified in both corpora are the empirical products of which the data is equally selected from the academicians in the fields of the problems being discussed as well as the columnists of opinion columns. The writers of this corpus are regarded as experienced writers and content experts. As a consequence, the findings can be effectively used as a ready-made writing template for less experienced writers and EFL students in their academic writing. That is, the PS move features identified in this study can be regarded as a practical and pedagogical implication for an instruction of a PS paragraph, essay and article writing in certain areas of students’ academic expertise. This contribution is confirmed by Galan and Perez’s (2003) study that it is necessary for EFL teachers to explicitly teach students the PS move structure and make them aware of it as a writing template to help them write a well-organized PS discourse.

**Problem-Solution Move Sequences and Structures**

The average numbers of SPRE move employment per an article of each corpus (Table 1) valuing more than 1.00 reasonably reveal that PS articles are likely to be structured by all four SPRE moves. The finding agrees with Belmonte’s (2009) move analysis of texts in both editorial and op-ed columns; however, the proportions of S, P, R, and E moves identified in the texts of these three columns are different. The difference lies in the objectives of each column. The finding of this study shows a good and balanced, though not equal, proportions of S, P, R, and E move employment (see Table 1). The proportion reveals that though the Problem move is the nucleus of the PS discourse of the genre of opinion column, the discussion of the other moves, including the Response, the Evaluation and the Situation moves, is well balanced. This proportional move employment gives less experienced writers and EFL students a guideline for PS discourse writing.

The study confirms the theoretical understanding that the order of the move pattern does not occur in the exact order (Ali, 2013; Flowerdew, 2003; Jordan, 1984; Hoey, 2001). In spite of the unpredictable nature of the move structure, this study adds three new insights to the existing knowledge of PS move structure about the moves frequently used to start and to end the PS articles as well as the most move sequence employed. These three findings agree with Hoey’s (2001) notion about the writer’s interaction with the readers. That is, texts are differently structured according to the writers’ presupposition of what the readers should know; as a consequence, the writers’ interaction with them will be designed accordingly. This is how moves are rhetorically and purposefully structured.

To sum up, this study contributes to the pedagogical understanding of the move characteristics and the move structure of the PS discourse in the genre of opinion column and meets the research objective. The implications justify the findings as an applicable guide for EFL teachers to developing a writing lesson of PS discourse that would solve the writing difficulties Hyland (1990) addresses; that is, the lack of understanding of text organization.

This study also has pedagogical implications for international community of ELT professionals as well as for writing instruction since teachers, not limited to language teachers, can refer to the findings of this study and apply the knowledge to design a writing lesson on problem-solution discourse. The implications can also be extended to the teaching of English for academic purposes (EAP) and English for specific purposes (ESP) writing courses. In addition, preparing and challenging students to write a PS essay or article of which the topic relates to different fields
of students’ expertise will encourage students to express their academic opinions with a focus on a problem discussion leading to suggestions. Practicing a content-based academic writing like this will, not only help students to develop their language performance, but also challenge them to think critically, solve problems, and bring out their academic excellence.

Limitation and Suggestions for Future Studies

The move analysis of fifty PS opinion articles in English from the two corpora of different cultures revealing almost the same findings in all respects might be a little doubtful even though the researcher considers cross-disciplinary factors concerning the selected discussion topics and writers in the data collection as well as the reliable data analysis methods including intra-coder and inter-coder reliability assessment. Therefore, future investigations can be conducted using the same corpora with a larger sample size and a wider range of discussion topics to better represent the target data and to more effectively generalize the findings, not limited to tentative conclusions. It might also be interesting to examine whether there is any significant difference in the PS articles written by two groups of writers: editorial and column writers and academicians of the same and of the different cultures to test whether there is any possible influence in the selected samples.

Conclusion

This study has fundamental pedagogical implications, especially for the writing instruction. Teachers of EFL and EAP courses as well as teachers of different fields of study can refer to the four moves and their move features identified in this study to design a writing lesson on problem-solution (PS) discourse challenging students to practice writing a content-based academic essay or article. The findings can be effectively used as a ready-made writing template for EFL and EAP writing practices since, first, the corpora studied is equally selected from the opinion articles written by academicians in the fields of the problem issues being discussed and by the columnists of opinion columns and, second, the frequencies of occurrence of the SPRE moves and their move features are almost identical and congruent in the two corpora. Interestingly, considering the average numbers of SPRE move employment per an article of each corpus, the findings show that all PS articles studied are likely to be structured by all four SPRE moves. Although the Problem move is a nucleus of the PS discourse, the discussion of the other three moves, including the Response, the Evaluation and the Situation moves, is well balanced.

The purpose of PS discourse is likely to identify the proportion of move employment. This study obviously reveals that the main purpose of PS discourse in the genre of opinion column of online newspapers is to give readers a thorough information of the problematic issues under discussion. It is followed by the purposes of being an expert unit offering insights to readers as well as being a representative voice calling for actions from parties concerned. Interestingly, the average number of the Evaluation move employment shows that all articles use at least one Evaluation move feature to show the writers’ awareness and responsibility in evaluating the effectiveness of solutions the writers make. It is worth a try for teachers to encourage students to practice writing a purpose-driven task that fulfills learning needs.

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References

### Appendix A

**Definitions of Moves and Move Features Identified in the Problem-Solution Discourse of Opinion Column**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move &amp; Feature</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Move 1:</strong> Situation to problem issues. Feature:</td>
<td>The writer provides background information related to problem issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Present situation of the problem issue</td>
<td>The writer provides information, with or without statistical support, on present situations and aspects related to problem issues so as to support the problem analysis and suggestions to be given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Background information</td>
<td>The writer provides background and situations, with or without statistical support, of what happened in the past that related to problem issues so as to support the problem analysis and suggestions to be given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Move 2:</strong> Problem requiring response. Feature:</td>
<td>The writer introduces problem issues or aspects of the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Specific problem issues</td>
<td>The writer discusses problem issues, deficiencies, inferior situations that need to be solved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Causes of the problem</td>
<td>The writer analyzes causes and factors possibly leading to problem issues with or without research and statistical support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Broad problem issues</td>
<td>The writer refers to problematic situations in general before specifying certain problem issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ineffective previous problem solving attempts</td>
<td>The writer refers to previous unsuccessful problem solving attempts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Criticism on problems &amp; people concerned</td>
<td>The writer criticizes issues and people concerned with the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Move 3:</strong> Response raised. Feature:</td>
<td>The writer suggests a wide range of solutions for the problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Call for action</td>
<td>The writer calls for various sectors concerned and people in charge to solve problems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Propose solutions    The writer proposes solutions to overcome deficiencies or complications for effective for the long run   long-term effects.

3. Refer to supporting The writer refers to laws and rights as a shared standard which members of society have laws and rights to follow in order to solve problem issues.

4. Encourage changes in    The writer encourages changes in attitudes and behaviors as a choice for problem solving.
   attitudes & behaviors

5. Refer to expert opinions    The writer refers to expert opinions and research findings as a reliable solution.
   and research findings


Feature: 1. Consequences of    The writer reviews and reflects on ideas about effective and ineffective solutions and possible consequences from previous and present solutions.
   problem solving

2. Anticipated positive    The writer anticipates the effectiveness and possible consequences of solutions the writer suggested.
The Academic Writing Experience of Jordanian Postgraduate Students at a University in Malaysia

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Abstract

Writing in English for academic purpose is a difficult task for many Jordanian postgraduate students (JPS) as English is a foreign language to them. This study aimed to explore academic writing problems encountered by JPS at a Malaysian university and to investigate how they address the problems. Employing a case study approach, a total of 182 online questionnaires were administered via email to registered JPS at UniSZA to which 90 responses were received. In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with 17 of the respondents to get further clarification of the questionnaire data and to gain rich insights into the phenomenon being investigated. The findings reveal that JPS faced several problems such as lack of vocabulary, difficulties in expressing the ideas, organizing the sentences and creating paragraphs, paraphrasing, the inability to build critical discussions and ideas, erroneous grammar, spellings, weak referencing and difficulty in finding the article/journal for literature review. In order to address these problems, they acquire help from their classmates, seniors, teaching faculties, participate in educational forums, workshops and lectures, attend paid tuition classes, translate Arabic to English, subscribe to journals and magazines and used online resources. The JPS recommend the provision of extensive language support at the university, regular lectures and workshops on improving academic writing and availability of language enrichment centre at the university to aid JPS to resolve their problems related to academic writing.

Keywords: Academic writing, Arab researchers, English as a second language, Jordanian postgraduates, scaffolding theory

Introduction
In the recent years, there has been a significant growth in the number of international students in Malaysia. Since 2014, Malaysia continues to jump the rankings of UNESCO’s international student mobility questionnaire from the 12th place to the ninth. The postgraduates from the Middle East contribute as one of the largest blocks of students (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). Although there is no exact statistical figure available to confirm the number of Arab students in Malaysia, the increase is evident in many universities in Malaysia (Al-Zubaidi & Richards, 2010). Among the South East Asian countries, Malaysia adheres to use English as the medium of instruction at the universities. Therefore, it is common for the universities to offer English language courses to the postgraduates. However, the English courses are generally designed in the context of the Western education system which does not adequately support Arab students’ needs. The Arab postgraduates who come to Malaysia face difficulties in their efforts to adjust with the English language communication and the education system. The reason behind the difficulties lies in the insufficient practice and least exposure to English in their home country. Majority of the universities in the Middle East lag in updating their educational programs for the students so as to confront the upcoming challenges and meet the demands at the international level. When the Arab students enter the foreign domain of academic system, they find themselves to be outdated, baffled and lost. It is common for Arab international postgraduate students in Malaysia to fall short and face difficulties in their academic skills. This creates barriers in their academic progress. The Arab students lack sufficient English skills (Al-Zubaidi & Richards, 2010, p. 112) because they have little opportunities to speak English since Arabic is their native language. Zughoul and Taminian (1984, p.4) found that Jordanian EFL students commit serious lexical errors while communicating in English. Rabab’ah (2003) stresses that acquisition of English among Arab learners is problematic because the formal instructions are delivered in Arabic language.

Salem (2007) points out that second / foreign language learners face difficulties to write effectively owing to the limitations in vocabulary usage, exposure to idioms, proverbs and phrases, lack of knowledge about the culture, least experience with second language use and little cognizance of writing skills. Salem (2007) studied the views of 50 male students whose major was English in relation to academic writing at the undergraduate level at the University of Al Azhar, Egypt. He discovered that students would feel overwhelmed on being asked to write on a particular topic. They felt lost and anxious as they did not know how to start, develop or end the essay. The lack of technical skills along with the shortcoming to critical thinking proved to be a major hindrance for the students to write English compositions. Repetition of ideas, reporting of invalid points, erroneous grammar and punctuations and inclusion of irrelevant information was common to witness. Malaysian universities take several initiatives including basic academic skills, language and cultural support along with professional development classes to help students develop their language proficiency. This study aims to explore how Jordanian Postgraduate students (JPS) at a Malaysian university address challenges related to academic writing during their course of postgraduate studies. The research questions explored are: 1) What are the academic writing problems faced by JPS at UniSZa? and 2) How do they address the problems?

Review of literature
Understanding academic writing
Academic writing aims to address a scholarly community where the students are actively involved
in learning. The basics have to be established at the primary stages of schooling as it directly impacts the scholarly achievement at the tertiary level of education. The academic writing is solely dependent on the students’ power of accessibility, evaluation, synthesis of words, thoughts, themes and views of those around so as to develop their skills of academic articulation.

This leads us to ask the question, “What is good academic writing?” The answer is, any writing that meets the expectation of the audience (Mudawy & Mousa, 2017). According to Ellis (1999) and Nor and Rashid (2018), proficiency in reading comprehension is a prerequisite to writing competency. The ability to converse in a second language prepares the learners to express themselves through writing their thoughts. However, that is not enough in the context of second language acquisition especially in the case of Middle East nationals where Arabic dominates the spheres of communication and interaction and English is widely acknowledged as a foreign language which is comparatively less focused at primary level.

Al-Zubaidi (2012) observes that different thinking habits of mind are meditated via oral as well as writing activities in the classroom. In fact, most the English academic courses dismiss the fact that Arab students have a different background in academic literacy. The English courses for postgraduate students are designed to benefit the Western students. Hence, they do not cater to the support needs of Arabs and local Malaysian students. Arab students are unaware about the instructions and rules of writing a thesis at postgraduate level and so they have negligible information and understanding with regard to the new academic system of learning and writing in English. Since writing thesis at postgraduate level is completely a new exercise which Arab students are unfamiliar with, they lack awareness about the depth of responsibility for their own learning and writing of thesis in English (Al-Zubaidi, 2012). Apart from writing a dissertation, many universities in Malaysia demand from postgraduate students to publish papers in referred journals during the course of their study. As Al-Zubaidi (2012) points out, most Arab students are unprepared to perform these tasks along with being unfamiliar with the requisite rules and regulations of required publications.

**Education system in Jordan**

English occupies an important place in the academic curriculum of Jordan. English is taught as a compulsory subject in government and private schools. But the teaching hours for the subject are not enough as they teach only for six hours per week. English is taught as a second language, whereas all other subjects are taught in Arabic language. The students only practice reading and speaking while listening is not practiced. The teachers teach English with the help of Arabic language. Some private schools have native speakers of English as teachers but that does not help the students to practice English in the primary area of socialization. English language has deteriorated pedagogically because the results that were demonstrated by K-12 schools took a back seat (Alhababba, Pandian & Mahfoodh, 2016). The results of high school examinations in English language subject in Jordan show that only 18% could successfully pass the test in Arts stream whereas 15% of the total test takers in all the streams had successfully passed the exam in 2014 (Jordanian Teachers Syndicate, 2015). As per the results of a national evaluation of basic language skills in both Arabic and English conducted by the Ministry of Education among first, second and third grades students in Jordan, only 22% out of all students were not able to read in Arabic and English (Jordanian Teachers Syndicate, 2015) There is an absence of a general educational body that can take the responsibility for maintaining the national standards and providing guidelines to the educators due to which the key components or necessary training needed for imparting
effective learning strategies is neglected which indirectly degrades the students’ learning capacity (Asassfeh, 2015). Since the development of language stems from primary socialization at home, negligible usage of English language empowers the disinterest in learning English as a second language since Arabic is emphasized to be the primary language. Hence, lack of supportive environment at home to learn English also adds to the writing difficulties in academic life.

The problems in academic writing

According to Salem (2007) points out that problems in academic writing arise from four main areas: i) English as a second language; ii) academic culture; iii) lack of knowledge in writing; and iv) unexpected patterns of academic writing. Lalasz et al. (2014) emphasize that lack of proficiency in English leads to academic dissatisfaction and stressful conditions where students avoid engagement with their lecturers least they fear that they would make mistakes. Students face many writing difficulties, such as inability to distinguish between spoken and written English, outlining the draft before writing, identification of skills mandatory for writing and avoiding redundant words and phrases (Fadda, 2012). The most common language problems faced by students are grammatical problems in the field of tenses, prepositions, syntactic, subject – verb agreement and the use of articles, punctuation problems such as missing, additional or misusing of punctuation marks, and spelling problems such as replacing, deleting, missing, adding extra, disordering, breaking or writing non-existing words (BaniYoune & Albalawi, 2015). In a more recent study, Saleem and Rashid (2018) show that the academic writing problems faced by Arab learners are also caused by their low level of self-efficacy.

Review of recent studies

The commonly found writing issues were reiterated such as vocabulary register, organization of ideas, grammar, spelling, and referencing in the study on Arab postgraduates in Malaysia (Al-Khasawneh, 2010). Al-Zubaidi (2012) conducted a study to determine the major language difficulties encountered by Arab postgraduate students in their academic writing in English. He found that the students require resources so as to build their comprehensive language skills. Imani and Habil (2012) investigated the writing strategies incorporated by the Arab postgraduate students in their dissertation and thesis writing and found significant patterns of academic writing problems across both types of writing. Similarly, it was a frightening and scary experience for Arab speaking postgraduate students at University Technology of Malaysia (Abdul Kareem, 2013). The review on the main difficulties faced by Arab postgraduate students in academic writing includes problems such as issues in language incompetence and citation and references (Al-Khasawneh, 2010; Fadda, 2012), difficulty in drawing an outline of the draft and making a rough sketch of the write up before writing (Fadda, 2012). Therefore, challenges of academic writing within the Arab community is a critical issue that should be explored in-depth by the researchers (Imani & Habil, 2012; Al-Zubaidi, 2012; Abdulkareem, 2013).

Methodology

This study employed a case study approach. Case study facilitates a detailed study of the social phenomenon in the natural setting without sacrificing the sensitivity of the complexity and the context (Punch, 2005). This study integrates qualitative and quantitative methods to enrich the confidence of the findings by capitalizing on the strengths of different methods.
Participants of this study are Jordanian postgraduate students registered in the year 2016-2017 at UniSZA. The purposive sampling was adopted to circulate the questionnaire among the JPS of UniSZA through email. The email addresses were retrieved from the international office of the university. Reaching out through email had two benefits. First it helped to reach out to the maximum registered JPS in the university and second it was a convenient way for them to respond to online questionnaire.

The questionnaire is divided into four sections. The first section is related to participants’ information. The second and third sections are compulsory opinionated statements and lastly, section four deals with subjective answers from the respondents. The completed questionnaires were analysed using descriptive and thematic analysis. To further augment the data, interviews were conducted with the same respondents who completed the questionnaire. In total, 182 online survey questionnaires were administered of which 90 responses were received and 17 in-depth interviews were conducted.

Findings

Demographic profile of the Jordanian postgraduate students (JPS) at UniSZA
Overall, 90 JPS respondent to the questionnaire, out of which 82 were males and 8 were females. There were 54 students pursuing PhD and 36 were pursuing Masters. Only one respondent was above the age of 40 and one was between 18 to 24 while the rest were between the age of 25 to 40 years. On an average the students had spent minimum 10 months in Malaysia. Only 40 students had more than six years of exposure to English language. Seventy two students did not appear for any English language qualification exam. Eighty four students did not prepare for any course in English language prior to commencing their studies in Malaysia nor were they oriented to any course at UniSZA for their postgraduate research studies.

Problems in academic writing
It was found that 32 respondents sometimes fell short of apt vocabulary to convey their expressions whereas 30 respondents sometimes used same words frequently owing to their inability to find new words. This is directly related to the usage of simple words in their academic writing as 38 respondents sometimes used simple words which had the highest response rate. It was found that only 18 students never abandoned their ideas as they never faced any difficulty in finding the pertinent words. However, 14 students always spent their time in consulting dictionary whereas only ten always used simple words. Hence, problems such as lack of vocabulary, repetition of words, incorrect usage of words, avoiding complex and complicated words were the major issues related to words in academic writing. Only four students reported that they never avoided using complicated words in their sentences whereas 36 students reported having sometimes avoiding the usage of complicated words in their sentences. As the masters’ students struggled with words, the doctoral students faced issues in rectifying their errors. In order to maintain the level of research and expected academic writing, the usage of complicated words such as homophones could not be ignored. Almost 40 students, sometimes felt confused in using appropriate punctuation in their sentences. Twenty six students faced difficulty in grammar sometimes, whereas 16 students were always turned down for grammar inconsistencies. Paraphrasing was another mammoth task that had to be encountered as one of the difficulties in academic writing. Only 14 students expressed
that they never faced any problems with paraphrasing whereas the rest of the students had difficulties in paraphrasing.

**Addressing the problems in academic writing**

*Seeking help from others (classmates, seniors, teaching faculties, etc.)*

Only four respondents reported never seeking help in discussing their problems with others whereas the rest sought help and advice from their peers. Seven respondents reported that they did not receive any support from their supervisors and the university whereas 32 respondents reported with a positive response towards the support provided to them by their supervisors. The supervisors helped them by advising, correcting their grammar, sharing and discussing ideas, helping them improve their academic writing. Seeking help from classmates, seniors and teaching faculties was sometimes preferred by 28 students. The discussions and interactions often provided a yardstick and a subtle support system to share their problems and seek advice. Students often resorted to their friends and peers whom they thought were better in comparison to them to help them out in their writing problems.

*Participating in educational forums, workshops and lectures*

It was found that only 28 students sometimes participated in educational forums that would discuss and share ideas on improving the academic writing. Only 16 students were found to always attending such events. The most interesting result of the study was that 34, never attended any workshops on writing skills organized by UniSZA and 26 students reported that they never attend any lectures pertaining to academic writing and 14 students never participated in any educational forums that discussed ideas on improving academic writing. Twenty six respondents reported never attending lectures specific to academic writing. Similar trend was found in the qualitative section where five students urged the need for the university to conduct lectures and classes on academic writing as interaction with the supervisor was not sufficient. Thirty four respondents reported having never attended any workshop in the university. This aligns with response provided by the respondents in the questionnaire where 22 students highlighted the need for the university to conduct extensive workshops, courses and sessions on various skills in academic writing.

Twenty four respondents very often attended paid tuition classes. Many students attended paid tuition classes to improve their academic writing. It was found that 75% of the students took some coaching to improve their academic writing. Twenty eight students affirmed that they always translate Arabic into English to express their thoughts. Almost one third of the students sometimes subscribed to journals that aided in providing help to improve their academic writing. Since students have issues with English language, understanding English is not easy for them and this is another hindrance for them in seeking help from written resources. Only 28 students sometimes looked for online resources that could help them in academic writing whereas 18 students always took help from the internet. Sixteen students never searched for online help. The questionnaire data reveal that only 16 reported never using online resources as an academic aid. However, four students confirmed in the qualitative section of the questionnaire that they always relied on the internet to help them with their overall postgraduate research.

Twenty four students expressed their views on supervision stating their need for more productive meetings, critical feedback on their writing skills apart from the research content, regular follow-ups and timely correction of the chapters. It was found that majority of the students at master level required intricate and detailed feedback whereas the doctoral students were more concerned about the content discussion.
Discussion

Since Arabic is not widely used unlike English, the students have to work hard to achieve a minimal level of English language proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening. For educational prospects, all the four forms are indispensable. It is not uncommon to find Arab postgraduate students with low competence level in their English language proficiency while they pursue higher education in Malaysia (Yuen & Nisreen, 2014). Only 33.33% of JPS had been exposed to English language for more than five years. Thus, it is obvious for the majority of JPS to encounter various writing problems in academic assignments such as critical reviews, paraphrasing, grammar, cohesion, summaries, thesis writing, lack of ideas, vocabularies, spellings, and punctuations. Writing research articles and theses in English requires a high standard of academic writing (Rabab’ah, 2003). Despite having an exposure, almost 84.4% of the JPS found difficulty in grammar, paraphrasing, finding the right source/article/journal for literature to review, lack of cohesiveness in writing, disorganized patterns of idea and discussion formats, weak referencing and weak vocabulary. This was similar to the findings of the study conducted by Al-Khasawneh (2010) which explored reasons for failure in academic writing. As a result of academic writing problems, the JPS suffered from anxiety, frustration and writer’s block which further lead to feelings of procrastination and delay in submission of their assignments. They used alternative resources such as internet, software such as Grammarly, auto-correct on word to help themselves. However, the authenticity of the internet sources is always doubtful in the absence of an expert human guidance at the time of learning. The unguided methods of learning have their own drawbacks as one cannot configure the veritable content especially in the case of amateur learners. They also sought help from their friends, colleagues, and attended paid tuitions. The JPS who could not afford to visit expensive external coaching centres or pay heavy amount for editing each version of their written draft. Moreover, with the increasing level of academic studies, it is difficult to find support that would be readily available to discuss topics on academic research. Translation was also used as a strategy to communicate and express the thoughts and ideas by the JPS, but even this strategy was not fool proof as translation created difficulties in cognitive issues when word by word translation was attempted from first language L1 to second language L2 to translate ‘the idea’ as a whole (Odline, 1989). With weaknesses in second language, the JPS faced other issues of difference between grammar of English and Arabic. It also became difficult to find the exact word form of Arabic word in English. Therefore, resorting to translation in all condition was found to be inappropriate because literal translation did not work in all cases (Rass, 2015) and did not deliver the intended meaning. It further burdened the JPS with added responsibility of checking the meaning of the translation in English language. The JPS were found to be weak in vocabularies, spellings, grammar and organisation skills of writing, they resorted to the strategy of avoidance in their approach to encounter the problem. Avoiding the problem did not resolve their issue neither it provided them any solution. In fact, it further overstated their weakness.

Almost 95.5 % of the JPS avoided using complicated words and chose simple words in their writing. Similar strategy was opted by postgraduate students of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia universities as studied by Fadda (2012). A total of 91 % of JPS preferred to repeat the words as they ran out of vocabulary. According to Tyldesley (2013), the strategy of repeating words often opted by students who have weak proficiency in English language. Eighty percent of the JPS chose to abandon their ideas as they could not find the apt words to express and this was identified as
one of the key challenges among Arab postgraduate students in five Malaysian universities Malaysia as revealed by Al-Zubaidi and Richards (2010).

Conclusion
The JPS’ needs and priorities were often not fully satisfied and looked after with the limited available support from the supervisor and reliable sources of improvement. The JPS struggle with their limited skills to overcome their problems in academic writing. The JPS turn to their own resources for supporting themselves in academic writing which further impedes their growth. The necessary support that should be provided by the institution for development and growth of the students is inadequate at the university level. The provision of academic workshops on improving the English language proficiency of Arab postgraduates along with regular lectures and seminars on research writing, thesis organization, grammar and paraphrasing will help the students to overcome their existing problems in academic writing.

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Abstract
With this premise as a backdrop that effective use of Socratic questioning in instructional practices is of vital importance in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms, this study was undertaken to investigate application of Omani knowledge of Socratic questioning (SQ) on students’ critical thinking (CT) in post basic schools. This study investigates the application of Omani EFL of SQ on students’ CT in post basic schools. The present study attempts to a) ascertain whether there is any statistically significant difference between mean scores of those who are taught through SQ and those obtained by students who are taught CT skills in a normal setting. b) identify SQ strategies that helped to develop the students’ CT skills. An experimental research design was implemented. There were 60 students participated in this study 30 students in each group. The Mixed method procedures and data analysis showed that, a) significant differences between mean scores of those who were taught CT through SQ and those who were taught CT skills in a normal setting, c) there is clear evidence that students in the experimental group had evolved effective CT strategies during the intervention phase.

Keywords: critical thinking, Socratic questioning, teachers’ knowledge

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Introduction
The Sultanate of Oman is facing the challenge of educating its youth for life and work in the new priorities made by the current global economy. These priorities need a high degree of adaptability and a concrete background in school education particularly in the English language, in order to deal with the modern economy, and capture international business opportunities. Consistent with this understanding, the Sultanate of Oman has specified in the Omani education system that Omani students acquire knowledge and skills in all areas of curriculum including skills in questioning, investigating, critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making (Ministry of Education, 2008). In addition, the following specific oral language objectives for higher classes are considered as fundamental productive skills that related to CT:

1. To initiate and participate in longer conversations and interactions.
2. To recognize and produce common idiomatic and conversational expressions.
3. To use English to carry out practical transactions in everyday life, using a largely predictable and restricted set of language and functions.
4. To use English for social communication.

Though it is stated in the national curriculum specifications that “the new English Language curriculum is being designed to equip learners with higher cognitive abilities and skills, and attitudes that Omani learners will need to succeed in this rapidly changing society” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 7). Teachers’ procedures and techniques of questioning may prevent learners from attaining this objective. This is based on the understanding that teacher’s knowledge and actual use of questions could influence the way they apply national education programs in their teaching, which in turn may affect the use of classroom questions. This will therefore hamper the nation’s effort in achieving its objectives as stated in its educational system.

Literature Review
An extensive review of literature indicates that some scholars employ CT and high order thinking seemingly. Elliot, (2006) is one of the scholars who were interested in studying and using CT and higher order thinking skills in teaching context. However, other scholars have different use of these two concepts and implement them differently according to the proper context and aim Zohar, (2004). The connection between “critical thinking,” “higher order thinking,” “thinking skills” and other terms such as “informal logic,” “informal reasoning,” “problem solving,” “argumentation,” “critical reflection,” “reflective judgment,” and “metacognition” have made them more difficult to apply differently. Scholars also have other issues that led to different understanding like (a) the degree to which CT is related to specific subject, (b) variations between novice and expert thinking in which novices can learn to reflect more like experts, and (d) if CT should be implemented as a process-based practice or a package of skills (Qing, Jing, & Yan, 2010; Keng, 2006; Gambrill, 2005; Thayer-Bacon, 2000). While some scholars have tried to use order on these different terminology (Preiss & Sternberg, 2010), none of them has managed to provide a description, classification, or even a theory could be conventional as ultimate (Martin, 2010; Folsom, 2009; Chenault & Orsello, 2008; Dagli, 2008). The main problem to this disagreement has rested in the grounding of different hypotheses separate fields that is related to this study. These two fields are philosophy and psychology. The current study aims to discuss both views in order to provide a clear picture of the nature of critical thinking in education.
Many philosophers have tried to discuss the quality and the nature of the results or conclusions of CT, such as analyzing justifications and reasoning responses. However, psychologists have focused on cognition procedures and process, the elements and practices implemented to indicate practical learning issues. In addition, psychology has been tested and examined through empirical research process, while philosophy has depended on logical justifications and reasoning to conclude solutions and recommendations. On the other hand, some educators realized the importance of both areas of psychology and philosophy to improve an accurate and reliable teaching methods and procedures of CT (Kuhn, 2005; Giancarlo, 2004; Marzano, Pickering & Pollock, 2003). The current study reflects on this dilemma and will try to investigate the correlation between psychological and philosophical aspects that affect teaching and learning of EFL (English as a foreign language) through CT.

Since the time of Socrates, CT has been related to philosophy. The importance of CT in the recent different educational reform projects has been directly related to informal logic as separate field within the area of philosophy. Many researchers consider informal logic as logic that is based on evaluation, interpretation, construction of argument and justification. Informal logicians consider CT as a general concept that includes and depends on the recommendations and conclusions of informal logic, not only that but it takes from other types of logic as well as from advantages of other fields (Johnson, 2008). The contribution of informal logic has been considered as a basic theoretical ground for CT.

Philosophers consider informal logic as a meeting point for examining and improving CT and philosophy-based theories, also, they have addressed various aspects and factors that related closely to CT and positively differ in a number of ways, they also reveal common concerns (Ennis, 2008; Siegel & Biro, 2008; Paul & Elder, 2006; Lipman. 2003; McPeck, 1981). Johnson’s, (2008) analysis reflects an importance of CT on cognitive theories and competences introduces by informal logic with neglecting the active role of “affective propensities” on the practice of those skills.

In comparison to philosophy, psychology researchers have based their conclusions about CT on theories of intelligence, cognitive and developmental psychology (Walker, Brophy, Hodge & Bransford, 2006; Sternberg, Roediger & Halpern, 2007). Psychologists have tried to relate problem solving to CT. However, philosophers tend to deal with problem solving and CT as equivalent concepts. Sternberg et al (2007) has concluded that CT is “purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed”. It is the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions” (p. 5). Though, Sternberg prefers using CT, other psychologists have used “thinking skills” as a general term (Miri, Chaim & Uri, 2007). Generally, cognitive-based theorists have analyzed and examined skills that contributed to thinking critically, often neglected characteristics of a good critical thinker and criteria for assessing thinking. In addition to general conclusions, recently some psychologists have started giving attention to learners’ acts and have in order to examine models of CT (Wegerif, 2007; & Zohar, 2007).

Many psychologists believe that Bloom (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives is considered as a foundation for psychology-based models and cognitive skills studies (Kite,
Stockdale, Whitley, & Johnson, 2005). Recently, psychologists have presented fast increasing knowledge base for different models for CT (Cheng, M., Cheng, & Tang, 2010; Hoa, 2008; Yamashita, 2007).

Presumably, if the college students attend their classes, participating and listening to lectures, writing their assignments and completing other learning activities, they would develop their CT skills. However, many researchers have indicated that developing students’ CT skills needs more direct and well planned teaching of CT skill. (Paul & Elder, 2006; Muspratti, Luke, & Leonards, 2009; Facione, 2007; Egege & Kutieleh, 2004). Until recently, there is no strong evidence or conclusive research findings on the most successful instructional methods for developing students’ CT skills. Forsyth, Story, Kelley & McMillan (2009) reviewed 27 studies that examined the result of different programs and courses on CT skills among college students, and they conclude that even results do not support the application of explicit instructional or course practices to increase CT; they did support the findings that college attendance improves CT. McMillan, (1987) concerned against using these conclusions to all courses or methods, quoting incomprehensive research designs, using weak instrumentation inappropriate to the treatments being evaluated, and unjustified definition and theory of CT. Halpern, (2002) recommended that the assessment tools existed in a particular study might add to the conflict of deciding the effectiveness of different approaches for CT. She has argued that assessment measures and tools must be constructed “more sensitive” to measure comprehensive progress in CT abilities. Obviously, more research is needed to find out which learning practices provide the best increases in CT. The current study is another attempt of investigation that would provide an understanding of different variables that are related to students’ critical thinking skills.

The focused research on CT, along with frequent attention in developing higher cognitive abilities and skills for learners at different levels of education and ability, has brought different methods and approaches to teaching CT skills. One has been concerned with the improvement of the courses taught and assessment procedures that involved in teaching courses (Ennis, Martin, & Sun, 2007; Savery, 2006; David, Baumfield, Steve, Mei, & Jen, 2004). This approach has been commonly used in high schools’ levels, particularly, in America such as California where the assessment and teaching of CT is a state-centered priority.

A second strategy has focused on “discipline specific efforts” to improve learners’ skills and ability to apply CT behavior while learning. Specific journals in all fields involve teaching matters, including topics on improving learners’ CT abilities. In teaching English as a second language, the TESOL Quarterly, the TESOL Journal, The Journal of Language Teaching and Research, and the ELT Journal have introduced widely read conclusions for instructional improvement, including suggestions and models for teaching for critical thinking to second language students.

Another teaching approach neglects specific plans and models while activating the enrichment of a classroom environment that supports learners’ responses to CT, having a deep exposure of discussions, real questions and tasks introduced to learners, and focus on evidence and justifications to enhance written or spoken claims (Kamali & Fahim, 2011; Beaumont, 2011).

Though the three approaches just discussed and introduced, another educational approach has incorporated plans or models to be involved in critical thinking across the curriculum (Swartz,
2009; Sternberg, Roediger, & Halpern, 2007; Keng, 2006; Paul & Elder, 2006). Obviously, varied models and strategies are available to encourage learners to develop their CT skills, while each approach has its supporters; little empirical research has been done to decide if one approach reflects successful applications than another in developing learners’ CT abilities and practices. Therefore, the current study aims to apply Paul and Eleder’s, (2006) model of CT to investigate the result of applying teachers’ knowledge of SQ questioning on students’ CT. This is because Paul and Elder’s, (2006) model is characterized with the following five standards that reflect the nature of the current study.

1. The model raises important questions and thinking process, constructing them evidently and specifically.
2. Collects and evaluates information, processing abstract concepts to understand them efficiently.
3. Reaches well-justified conclusions and answers compared to related and relevant indicators.
4. Students think deeply within different ways of thinking, identifying and evaluating their implications and assumptions in practical consequence.
5. The model helps students to communicate commendably with others to reach solutions to difficult issues.

The real ancient texts that function as basic foundations of what Socrates really said and did reflected a comprehensive knowledge of how Socrates applied the process of applying "counter-examples" to improve a series of questions that could increase the amount of thoughts, ideas, examples, and views to carry out the dialogue to a maximum advantage. It is clear that discussions and dialogues are the good means to maximize comprehension of the course content. On the other hand, there is no precise written manual that demonstrates how Socratic questioning should be used Paul & Elder, (2006). Generally, there is no specific Socratic model where someone can thoroughly try to use in teaching and learning practices.

Many scholars believe that the cause behind existence and extension of this approach is the way that interpreted. (Sahamed, 2004) indicates that Socratic questioning (SQ), having occurred about 2,500 years, has logically developed in its various practices today and the method has better adjusted to suit various purposes. Clearly scholars believe that questioning is an important tool of comprehension in teaching and learning context. As a result, scholars believe that Socratic questioning (SQ) can be adjusted and applied in various ways to different stages of comprehension (Paul & Elder, 2006). As a result, in literature we can underline different acts of applying this method, e.g. the "method of Dialectic "Socratic Method" (Paul & Elder, 2006). It also has been termed Socratic seminar and Socratic dialogue (Brickhouse & Smith, 2007). Keng, (2006) considers that over different applications of SQ as unreliable and considers that as misapplication of the pedagogy since only unreal features are applied without the nature of SQ. These misapplications have directed other researchers to consider SQ just open-ended questions and answer procedures (McCoy, 2008).
Purpose of the study
The purpose of this study is to investigate the result of applying SQ through reading texts in relation to students’ CT in Omani General Diploma Certificate schools academic year 2016-2017. The researcher would like to know that because the new educational reform in Oman is heavily student-centered and communicative based teaching, this kind of education requires teachers with real understanding of different methodological and pedagogical aspects of questioning strategies.

Research objectives
The main objective of the current study is to examine the result of applying SQ through reading classes teachers’ on students’ CT skills. In so doing, the study will seek:
1. To ascertain whether there is any statistically significant difference between mean scores of those who are taught through SQ and those obtained by students who are taught CT skills in a normal setting?
2. To identify SQ strategies that helped to develop the students’ CT skills.

Methods and subjects
This study is based on a quasi-experimental design where the researcher investigates the application of teachers’ knowledge of SQ on students’ CT skills in reading classes. In this design two classes were selected randomly and were classified in two groups, one control group and one experimental group. In other words, each teacher taught one class with 30 students in each class. Therefore, 60 students subjected to CT pre-and post-tests to measure the result of the intervention program that is based on SQ. Also, the researcher randomly selected 5 students (20%) of the sample size for the interview.
All students were general diploma certificate students (grade 12), aged 17-19. Their first language is Arabic. At the time of the study, they had been learning English as a foreign language for at least 11 years.

Figure 1: theoretical framework of the study

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Research design

This is a “mixed method” study (Greene, 2005) that was conducted in two phases. Each phase employed a different research design. In phase I, the correlational research design was employed to collect descriptive quantitative data that will help to identify the correlation between teachers’ knowledge and their actual use of SQ. This was to ensure that if teachers’ application of SQ reflects the needed knowledge and good application skills of using SQ. The result of this phase helped to determine the nature of the intervention in phase II.

Incidentally, a quantitative correlation design is the most appropriate method for the research study where it offers a non-inquisitive method to the investigation and leads to identification of significant correlation between the variables of the study (Creswell, 2012). The proposed model of teachers’ knowledge of SQ, and teachers’ actual use of SQ in figure 1 was examined by applying Pearson’s correlation coefficient to measure the hypothesized relationship among the variables existed in phase I of current study.

In the current study the researcher used a quasi-experimental design. The reason behind choosing this specific design was that subjects were chosen randomly. It is very important to select the proper research design that “fits for purpose of the study” (Gorard, 2002a, p. 354). The nature of an experimental method is that researchers “intentionally manipulate the settings which determine the procedures in which they are interested (Creswell, 2012, p. 303)”. In other words, correlational studies only define or measure the possible relationship between dependent and independent variables but cannot demonstrate the main cause-and-effect relationship between the two variables. However, an experimental design is a design that exposes experimental groups to a particular treatment and certain statistical procedures that could identify the cause-and-effect relationship between the two variables.

Since the current study aims at investigating the result of applying SQ strategies in EFL reading classes on students CT skills, the researcher believes that conducting an experiment is the appropriate for the current study to answer the target questions in this research. Two types of data were collected in phase II of the study, namely quantitative and qualitative.

The use of mixed method approach

This study is driven by a mixed method research approach. It integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches to research design. Creswell, 2012; Teddlie &Tashakkori, 2009; Greene, 2007 conclude that mixed method can be accrued in different stages of the research, which can be indicated in the planning phase, research questions, research instruments, and analysis lead to research findings.

Creswell, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Greene, 2005 claim that there are seven mixed method approaches to research design, which explain sequential phases and parallel phases to the study application. Since the mixed method approach is the research design of this study, exploratory design using sequential phases (quantitative-qualitative) was the most appropriate design, because to collect bigger volume of data which was helpful in gaining better understanding of the research problem, in order to facilitate more insightful findings of the study.
In this study there are three instruments were used to collect the required data. First, CT test scores were tabulated to count the means and total average of SQ elements, and the T-test to measure the significant differences between mean scores in pre-test and post-test relevant to the research question 1 (RQ1). This research counts as instrument place the role of a quantitative data. Second, the scores of quizzes conducted four times by the end of every two weeks were recorded. This instrument also, serves as a quantitative tool for data collection. Third, structured interviews were conducted on the experimental group as a qualitative data instrument in order to triangulate the result of the effect of the intervention in this study. Incidentally, this qualitative data and the quantitative data collected through the results of quizzes and interview are directly linked with the research question 2 (RQ2).

**Intervention**

The classification of SQ developed by Paul and Elder (2006) is not ordered and organized in a rigid traditional manner. These categories (elements) in the model proposed by Paul are flexible, teachers can select questions (elements) randomly based on the category of questions that relevant to the target skill that they want to develop. The task of successful and effective teacher is to sustain and maintain the process of inquiry. The subjects in both groups, i.e the control and the experimental group regularly met with the teacher for eight weeks. The control group was taught normally using traditional teaching method, whereas the experimental group was taught through SQ framework (SQF). Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking appraisal test (WGCT) pre-test and post-test were conducted before and after the intervention process. In addition to WGCT, the researcher used two additional instruments, namely the quiz and the structured interview to collect data from the students of the experimental group relevant to (RQ 2) after the completion of the intervention phase.

To elaborate further, the intervention included 8 reading topics. Each topic was taught and covered in one week (5 hours). SQ strategies used as teaching strategies in each reading topic which cover the five CT skills included in WGCT. The nature of SQ strategies is based on questions that evoke students’ CT, which helps the teacher and the students to exchange ideas at higher cognitive level through authentic discussions in the lesson. The teacher will target the type of relevant questions to evoke students CT in terms of the demands of reflection the reading text pauses on the students.

**Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking appraisal test**

This test includes 80 multiple-choice items ranging from 2 to 5 in its five sub-sets. Students were given five scenarios to evaluate the performative function involved in each scenario. The five scenarios offer scores for five different subtests ranging from 0 to 80. The five sub-sets focused on the following: (1) Inference: respondents are supposed to conclude inference among different levels of truth or falsity from given data. (2) Recognition of Assumptions: respondents are expected to identify unstated assumptions or sup-positions implied in given statements or assertions. (3) Deductions: respondents are required to determine if certain conclusions logically follow from the given statements and the data. (4) Interpretation: respondents need to evaluate the evidence and come to a decision if conclusions or overviews are based on the given information. (5) Evaluation of Arguments: respondents are subjected to different between discussions that are relevant and well-built, and those that are irrelevant and not properly justified in a particular
situation (Watson & Glaser, 2006). This test covers a comprehensive range of CT: therefore, it is a valid benchmark for different professional and academic indices of success. This test is intended to collect quantitative data relevant to RQ1.

**Interviews and Quizzes**

Interviews and quizzes were considered important useful instruments of the study. Both interviews and quizzes were conducted only with the experimental group after the intervention period and post-test. Interviews aimed to collect qualitative data, whereas quizzes intended to collect quantitative data relevant to RQ2.

There were 30 students in the experimental group. By the end of the course and after the post-test was conducted, the researcher, in consultation with the concerned instructor of the group, randomly selected 5 students (20%) of the sample size for the interview. The researcher met these students, took their concern to participate into the interview and explained to them about the interview process and all of them agreed to participate in the interviews. Interviews between the researcher and the participants were conducted individually after week eighth. The time was given for each interview was about 10 minutes. All the interviews were completely and carefully recorded in the form of dairy notes.

To address the issues of validity and reliability of the two instruments discussed in this section, the researcher would like to make two comments. One, as far as the validity and reliability of quizzes is concerned, it was ascertained as a part of the documents related to the intervention phase. Two, the validity and reliability of the structured interview can be considered as “met” or “achieved” because the findings of this data are close to the findings of the post-test data collected through the instruments of Watson & Glaser, (2006) CT test, and the results of the quizzes that assessed the progress line of the participants during the intervention.

**Normality test**

Normality test was conducted on the control group and experimental group to maintain normality distribution of the sample. Skewness coefficient for the control group ranged from (0.0) to (0.35), and for the experimental group from (0.0) to (0.58). Both results are close to (0) which indicate normal distribution of the sample in the two groups. Also, Kurtosis coefficient for the control group ranged from (0.46) to (-1.33) and (-0.39) to (-1.10) for the experimental group which is close to (1) for both the groups. This indicates normal distribution of the sample in the two groups. The researcher also used Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine if the two samples related to the control group and experimental group had the similar normal distribution. The Z value was (0.65), and the significance value was (0.78) which means that there was no statistical significance at the level of 0.05.

**Homogeneity and equivalency test**

In order to measure the homogeneity and the equivalency of the control group and the experimental group, before implementing the intervention of the variables, the participants’ English language achievement score (ELAS), their total grade point average (TGPA), critical thinking skills score (CTSS), and intelligence quotient score (IQS) obtained in the tests conducted prior to the intervention phase were subjected to t-test in order to calculate the differences of the
afore-mentioned pre-variables between the two groups. Table (1) shows the differences of the significance between the participants in the two groups.

Table 1 *Significance of Differences between the Two Groups in the Homogeneity and Equivalency*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
<th>T test</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELAS</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>79.38</td>
<td>9.95</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TGPA</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>71.72</td>
<td>68.53</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTSS</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29.28</td>
<td>02.39</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQS</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45.69</td>
<td>06.30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that there was no significant difference in the mean scores between the experimental group and the control group in the pre-test of the ELAS, TGPA, CTSS, and IQS. This shows that the two were equal in relation to afore-mentioned test scores prior to the beginning of the experiment.

**Homogeneity and Equivalency of CT Skills test**

The researcher conducted t-test in the pre-test stage which reflects the differences between the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group in the five domains (Inference, Recognition of Assumptions, Deduction, Interpretation, and Evaluation of Arguments) of Watson-Glasser, (2006) CT Test. This was to make sure that the dependent variable which is students’ CT skills in both the control group and the experimental group was equal prior to the implementation stage. Table (2) below explains the equality of variances.

Table 2 *Equality of Variance Test in Students’ CT Skills*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Control Group (N=30)</th>
<th>Experimental Group (N=30)</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inference</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of Assumptions</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deduction</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Arguments</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the above table that there are no significant differences in the pre-test mean scores of students’ CTS for both the control group and the experimental group in the five domains of Watson-Glasser’s CT Test. The mean difference of inference domain in both groups was (0.44)
which is not significant at (t=0.78). The mean difference of recognition of assumptions domain in both groups was (0.21) which is considered as not significant at (t=-1.27). The mean difference of deduction domain in the two groups was (0.14) which is counted as not significant at (t=1.49). The mean difference of interpretation domain in both groups was (1.00) which is not worthy of considering it as significant at (t=0.00). The mean difference of evaluation of arguments domain in the two groups under examination was (0.59) which is not to be considered as significant at (t=0.54). As a result, both the control group and the experimental group were at equal level in all the five domains of Watson-Glasser’s, (2006) CT Test.

**Results**

*RQ 1*: The result of t-test comparisons in table (3) suggests significant differences between mean scores of those who were taught CT through SQ and those who were taught CT skills in a normal setting. Put precisely, there are significant differences at (0.05) between mean scores of those who are in the first group, who were taught through SQ and those in the other group, who were taught CT skills in a normal setting. This result suggests that teaching CT skills through SQ strategies is beneficial and more productive. Furthermore, t-test results show significant differences between the two groups in relation to the five CT domains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
<th>T test</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total C.T.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45.69</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inference.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.35</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions Recognition</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8.66</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deduction.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*RQ 2 Quantitative result*: As discussed earlier, the quantitative data was collected through the results of the four quizzes conducted at the end of every two weeks. The quiz results were duly tabulated, as specified in table (4). Incidentally, the table shows the individual scores of the five students in each CT skill. In addition, the last column of the table highlights the average percentage of the scores of the five CT skills for each quiz. This information is tabulated in the ascending order of quizzes.
Table (4) shows the progress line of the five individual students’ development in each CT skill exposed to during the experimental phase. The tabulated data clearly indicates that all the five students in the initial phase of quiz 1 and 2 could obtain lower scores in all the five skills. However, in the final phase of quiz 3 and 4, the trend changed and the students’ scores improved gradually and significantly. Particularly, all the five students earned much higher scores in every single skill. The overall result in the ascending order of quizzes reflects a steady upward growth in terms of the marks gained by each student. On a separate note, individual differences between the results of the five students in each skill are also clearly visible which suggests the prevalence of mixed abilities of students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Quiz Number</th>
<th>Inference</th>
<th>Recognition of Assumptions</th>
<th>Deduction</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Evaluation of Arguments</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>31.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>37.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 3</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>62.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>81.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7/16</td>
<td>8/12</td>
<td>6/12</td>
<td>6/12</td>
<td>7/12</td>
<td>53.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>0/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>37.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>43.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 3</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>62.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10/16</td>
<td>9/13</td>
<td>6/12</td>
<td>6/12</td>
<td>6/12</td>
<td>57.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>56.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>68.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 3</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>93.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12/16</td>
<td>10/12</td>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>7/12</td>
<td>73.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RQ 2 Qualitative Data: The qualitative data for this study was elicited through the structured interview mode. The interview questions focused only on the initial quiz and the final quiz, i.e. quiz 1 and quiz 4 as indicators of starting point as mentioned elsewhere. Quiz 1 was conducted immediately after the completion of the first two units/themes of the intervention of the experimental phase. This was the phase where the students had started gaining CT skills. And, quiz 4 was conducted finally after the completion of eight units/themes. Thus, quiz 1 can be considered to indicate the initial level of competence in students’ CT skills, and quiz 4 results to indicate the final level of competence of students in their CT skills gained as a result of the implementation of the total experimental intervention program.

The interview questions were analytical in nature as the students were asked to explain and justify their responses in quiz 1 and quiz 4, on the basis of relevant strategies that they had exploited to answer the questions for each CT skill in the two quizzes. This analytical interview helped the researcher to get comparatively more detailed and deeper insights into their thought, and process involved while answering the questions in the two quizzes. The interview results also helped the researcher in triangulating these results with the results of the quantitative data (quizzes) to testify the credibility of the two types of instruments and the results. Now, the researcher would like to present the summary of students’ responses to interview questions for each CT skill related to quiz 1 and quiz 4.

Table (5) below comprises of students’ responses to the five CT skills tested in quiz 1. This summary is not exhaustive. It only includes the most relevant and representative comments of the participants which were directly linked with the main focus and the purpose of the study. The redundant and irrelevant parts have been ignored.
Table 5: Students’ CT Responses in Quiz 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Inference</th>
<th>Recognition of Assumptions</th>
<th>Deduction</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Evaluation of Arguments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>was difficult, just select any answers.</td>
<td>too much time, frustrating</td>
<td>too much pressure at the first quiz, reading text too long, lost reading the text.</td>
<td>answers were very close to each other; focused on answers not questions</td>
<td>very hard, reading, guessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>many times I read the text, was not clear.</td>
<td>can’t, reading the text only, try to guess answer</td>
<td>question was not clear, I read the text, difficult</td>
<td>answers looks all correct</td>
<td>read conclusions but not understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>some words were difficult….and time was passing very quickly</td>
<td>answers were same</td>
<td>reading but too much information</td>
<td>only focused on the statement, forgot to connect with the text</td>
<td>can’t match between the argument and the statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>(pause) didn’t understand the text, question was difficult</td>
<td>couldn’t control the time, statement wasn’t clear</td>
<td>couldn’t focus on major information in the statement</td>
<td>was tensioned, don’t know how to start, just guessing</td>
<td>couldn’t read the arguments with appropriate understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>first quiz and second one were difficult, I read the text but couldn’t understand the conclusions.</td>
<td>was difficult to make sense of assumptions</td>
<td>couldn’t use deduction skill, many information in the text</td>
<td>I think you need more than reading, was not really focused</td>
<td>couldn’t link different arguments to the main statement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After presenting the students’ responses to their achievement in the five CT skills in quiz 1, what follows next in sequence is the table (6) which shows the responses of the students relevant to their achievement in the five domains of CT skills in quiz 4.

Table 6: Students’ CT Responses in Quiz 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Inference</th>
<th>Recognition of Assumptions</th>
<th>Deduction</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Evaluation of Arguments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>read the question first, understand the question</td>
<td>was clear, assumptions should be identified, cause</td>
<td>able to identify extra information,</td>
<td>Um, reading the text, many times,</td>
<td>find connections between the statement and the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Having presented the results of the qualitative data in the two tables above, it is now time to juxtapose the results of the qualitative data with the quantitative data and evolve a critical discussion of the findings duly supported by the relevant researches. This analytical discussion will be carried out in a triangulated framework, which will also serve as a testing ground for the effectiveness and the validity of instruments and data collected relevant to RQ2.

**Discussion**

*Are there any statistically significant differences between mean scores of those who are taught CT through SQ and those who are taught CT skills in a normal setting?*

This section is meant to discuss the results relevant to the RQ1, as shown above in table (3). The data in this table highlights the differences between mean scores of those who were taught CT through SQ and those who were taught CT skills in a normal setting. The t-test was conducted to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Identify key words, read the text and make notes, underline expected wrong answers</th>
<th>Planning, reordering events, read and link to answers, some words help to identify the assumptions</th>
<th>I understand the question, focus, identify the answer, ……link the conclusion to the statement</th>
<th>Um, read statement very carefully, read the text many times, read, compare answers with statement</th>
<th>Truth, sometimes conclusions are not convincing, which one cloze by comparing conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Planning my reading, identify difficult words, read again, ask the teacher. Compare answers with the statement</td>
<td>Read the statement many times, take notes, I think before choosing the answer</td>
<td>Focus on the question, underline details, find specific information in the statement</td>
<td>I focused on the text, also, then I linked the answers to statement</td>
<td>Tried to find if the argument is strongly connected to the statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Quickly read the text, underline key words, read the text again, teacher helped to explain difficult words</td>
<td>Read the statement many times and compare it with the arguments, find connections between them</td>
<td>Identify key information in the statement, compare it to given answers</td>
<td>Try to find the relation between the statement and conclusions, also, check the importance of information</td>
<td>Read the arguments with good understanding, asking the teachers for difficult words, and make connections with the statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Identify the purpose of the question, read the text, then I apply the information</td>
<td>The concept was clear; we had practiced it many times. I analyzed the given assumptions and relate them the text</td>
<td>Identify key information in the statement, compare it to given answers</td>
<td>Reading the text but with expectations, also, I had to remember different ideas in the text</td>
<td>Identify wrong statements, check answers and link them with the text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
know the differences between the two groups in relation to the five CT domains as specified in Watson-Glasser’s, (2006) CT test.

The result of t-test comparisons suggests significant differences between mean scores of those who were taught CT through SQ and those who were taught CT skills in a normal setting. Put precisely, there are significant differences at (0.05) between mean scores of those who are in the first group, who were taught through SQ and those in the other group, who were taught CT skills in a normal setting. This result suggests that teaching CT skills through SQ strategies is beneficial and more productive. Furthermore, t-test results show significant differences between the two groups in relation to the five CT domains.

It is evident from the result that those students who were taught through SQ gained higher scores than the ones who were taught CT in a normal setting. The mean scores of the five CT domains show that students who were taught CT using SQ were able to develop and use the target skills in the five domains better than those who were taught in a normal setting. This result clearly demonstrates that the students who were taught CT skills through SQ developed abilities to use CT skills in the five domains at different levels of comprehension. This argument gets desired support from Paul & Elder’s, (2006) remark that SQ can be adjusted and applied through various techniques at different stages of comprehension. The researcher’s argument is consistent with the experimental work of Wenning, (2006) in which he proposed a typology, which is similar to SQ that can be considered as a “comprehensive treatment kit” to improve CT skills. Though this result of the study is not directly consistent with Forsyth, Paul, Kelley, & McMillan’s, (2009) study which reviewed 27 studies that examined the result of different programs and courses on CT skills among college students, and they drew a cumulative conclusion which does not support the view that the application of explicit instructional practices lead to an increase in CT. And, at the same time, they did support the findings that college attendance improves CT skills. The college attendance linked with the improvement in CT reflects the autonomous learning abilities of college students as against the school level students who, in contrast, depend on guided learning and therefore, explicit instructional practice to develop CT skills at school levels remains relevant which finds desired support in Thakur & Al Mahrooqi’s, (2015, p.126) argument that unlike ordinary thinking which is an inborn human ability, CT needs to be taught through implicit and/or explicit instruction. Thus, as an alternative interpretation of Forsyth, Paul, Kelley, & McMillan, (2009) study, the researcher intends to claim that the abilities to use CT skills do develop through explicit instructional practices involving SQ strategies at school levels, where the students have not yet become independent autonomous learners unlike the college students referred to in the afore-mentioned study.

The results of Garret’s, (2006) action research on higher level questioning at SQ clearly demonstrates a significant growth (76%) in the students’ ability to construct higher-level thinking in terms of using questions at the upper level of Bloom’s taxonomy as a result of explicit instructional input and practice. There is a strong connection of this finding of Garret’s study with the finding of the current study as reflected in the results of the four quizzes conducted in phase II. These results show that (a) There was an upward steady growth in terms of the participants’ performance scores from quiz 1 to quiz 4, and (b) There was also a process of internalization of
the knowledge of SQ in the five domains of CT and a gradual scaffolding of this knowledge as a result of explicit instructional input given to the participants of the experimental group. The cumulative results of the four quizzes conducted on the community of 30 Omani students in the experimental classroom of this study indicate that the continuously given instructional input in SQ led to improved students’ output in CT skills. This pedagogical gain is a result of the interactive instructional practice used in the classroom, which transformed learning and interaction. In this situation the CT is being used as a means to transform learning and the community, which strengthens the argument of Benesch, (1993); Atkinson, (1997); Fox, (1994) that social practice is one of the indispensable components of CT in developing information-based community. Having discussed the results of RQ1, the study moves on to the discussion of RQ2.

What are SQ strategies that helped to develop the students’ CT skills?

The aim of RQ2 was to identify SQ strategies and processes that students developed in the experimental ESL reading classes in order to enhance their CT skills during the experimental intervention phase. As discussed in the proceeding chapters, SQ strategies would enhance students’ CT and help them to understand, interpret and evaluate ideas, and provide more reflective responses.

To answer RQ 2, the researcher deployed a mixed methods approach. Four quizzes were used as an instrument used in relation to RQ2. Each quiz was conducted after completing 2 thematic reading units. Eight units were taught during the course of intervention. All the quizzes were developed based on Watson & Glasser’s (2006) five domains of CT Test (inference, recognition of assumptions, deduction, interpretation, and evaluation of arguments). The purpose of these quizzes was to measure the developmental progress of CT skills that students made through the intervention phase. The second instrument was the structured interview. Five students were selected randomly from the experimental group and duly interviewed. In this structured interview the students were asked to inform about what did they actually do to answer the questions in the quizzes and justify their answers. Quiz 1 was selected as the starting point, and quiz 4 as the finishing point to investigate students’ improvement in CT skills. After the preliminary discussion of RQ 2 instruments, it is now time to present the quantitative and qualitative data generated from the related instruments.

The analytical investigation of the responses made in table (5) in quiz 1 clearly suggests that at this stage participants’ reading was an unplanned activity which was seemingly based on merely a blind guess work devoid of any concrete strategy to process textual information critically. Therefore, the responses of the participants reflected negativity and frustration on their performance in the initial phase of intervention results. However, as the intervention process progressed and reached to its final phase, the performance and responses of the participants delivered encouraging and positive results. To illustrate this point, the researcher will analyze and discuss the quantitative results of quiz 1 and 4 and juxtapose it with the qualitative results of quiz 1 and 4.

The qualitative responses and also the quantitative results of students 1 and 2 in quiz 1 clearly indicate that they were very weak and were not able to process the reading texts and deal with higher order demands of the five CT skills. This is very clearly reflected in their qualitative
responses in quiz 1, which includes the comments that the reading text and the tasks were: not clear; difficult; time consuming and frustrating. They had to depend on guess work; they were lost in the reading and felt pressured; answers were confusing; and they read the text and tasks without understanding. This difficulty and inability of students 1 and 2 is clearly reflected in their cumulative quantitative scores in quiz 1 which was 31% and 37% respectively. Evidently, these two students have heavily failed in quiz 1 by 69% and 63% respectively.

This failure caused frustration and negativity in these two students. However, this situation improved considerably when these students reached to the last phase of the intervention in quiz 4 as overtly reflected in both the qualitative as well as quantitative results in quiz 4. The two students were able to read and process the reading texts and answer the questions related to the five CT skills as a result of their growth and development of cognitive abilities through continuous instructional input and related practice sessions given during the eight weeks of the intervention. The qualitative responses in quiz 4 testify this situation of improvement as reflected in their comments that they were able to read and understand, focus on key words, make notes and sift wrong answers. Both of them had the ability to read and locate answers, plan, reorder events, and find signal words for assumptions. They were also able to sift extra information, understand relate, and conclude. In addition, they had the ability to use the strategy of repeated reading and focusing on key words, scaffolding and comparing.

Furthermore, these two students had developed the ability to find connections between the task and the text, assess conclusions, and judge the quality of argument. This heightened awareness and strategy-oriented abilities that developed in the two students in the domain of the five CT skills are strongly supported by considerably improved performance in the quantitative results, in which they scored 81% and 75% with a phenomenal raise of 50% and 38% respectively as compared to their scores in quiz 1. Having compared the qualitative and quantitative data of the students 1 and 2 the researcher, similarly, needs to juxtapose the two sets of data for the students 3 and 4 for further confirmation of effectiveness and validity of the intervention phase. This will be dealt with in the next following paragraphs.

The qualitative data results of students 3 and 4 in quiz 1 also reflect their weakness and inability to process the reading texts and deal with the challenging demands of the five CT skills, which simultaneously gets confirmed by the poor results of the quantitative data. This is evident in the tone and tenor of the responses made by the participants of this study in quiz 1. Those comments are: difficult vocabulary and shortage of time; confusing answers; lot of information to process; connection lost and partial focus on the text and missed the link; difficult to match argument and statement; difficult text and difficult question; unclear statement and failed time management; lack of focus on key information; starting difficulty and guess work cause tension; gap between reading and comprehension. This difficulty and inability of students 3 and 4 corresponds with their cumulative average score obtained in quiz 1 which was 56% and 62% respectively.

The qualitative response data of the students 3 and 4 in quiz 4 is realized in numerous encouraging, positive, and confident statements influenced by their own successful performance in the five CT skills. Their responses include; identify key words and infer meaning from the context; repeated reading, note taking, assessing, judging, and finding the answer; sifting the
details from the main idea; focus on the text and generate the answer; find and judge a strong connection; repeated reading, compare arguments and link; identify main ideas and compare relevance; link relevant ideas and assess key information; comprehend argument, identify key words, and link relevant information.

These positive responses are clearly developed as a result of the overall outcome of improvement in their abilities and confidence in handling the reading texts and addressing the five CT skills after the completion of the intervention phase. These responses of success are very closely associated with the scores that students 3 and 4 achieved in quiz 4. Matching with the high spirit of the qualitative responses, the students 3 and 4 scored very high average marks in the domains of five CT skills which is 93% and also 93% respectively.

The quantitative scores established the fact that students 3 and 4 had already evolved a functional ability to apply CT skills on the reading tasks and they were able to use them successfully. At the same time, the qualitative responses of these students are clear indicators of their well-informed awareness of the knowledge of relevant strategies required in the five domains of CT skills. For an at-a-glance view, the CT strategies that the participants of the study were able to develop as a cumulative result of eight weeks’ intervention phase are presented in following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Inference</th>
<th>Recognition of Assumptions</th>
<th>Deduction</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Evaluation of Arguments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Read and understand</td>
<td>read and locate</td>
<td>sift extra information</td>
<td>repeated reading and focus on key words</td>
<td>finding connections between the task and the text, and make judgement on the quality of argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Focus on key words, make notes, and sift wrong answers</td>
<td>Plan, reorder events, locate answers, and find signal words for assumptions</td>
<td>Understand, relate, and conclude</td>
<td>Repeated reading, Scaffold, and compare</td>
<td>Assess conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Identify difficult words, read the text, and recognize meaning in the context</td>
<td>Repeated reading, take notes, and judge, assess, and choose the answer</td>
<td>Sift the details from the main idea</td>
<td>Focus on the text and generate answer</td>
<td>Find and Judge a strong connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Guess the meaning in context</td>
<td>Repeated reading, compare arguments, and link</td>
<td>Identify main ideas, and compare with answers</td>
<td>Link relevant ideas, and assess key information</td>
<td>Comprehend argument, identify difficult words, and link relevant information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Identify the purpose, read and process information</td>
<td>Investigate assumption and link with the text</td>
<td>Identify the purpose and link it with answer</td>
<td>Read with the purpose, recall, and reproduce main ideas</td>
<td>sift irrelevant information, link with answers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analytical discussion of the evolution of CT strategies thus far, the following transformations in the students’ knowledge, skills, and competence in CT have emerged as obvious. First, the functional strategy of students in reading the text critically got transformed from the stage of unplanned application to the planned implementation of reading strategies. Second, as a result of the development of this strategic ability, the confidence and spirit of the students in examining the reading texts critically got elevated. Third, the students were able to demonstrate well-informed awareness and strategy-oriented approach to process the reading texts critically. These favorable pedagogical gains were made by the students by exploiting the CT strategies evolved through explicitly taught and frequently practiced CT skills during the experimental intervention phase. It is now opportune time to examine these pedagogical gains made by the participants of the study in terms of research perspectives. The developmental performance and consistent improvement of the five students in all the CT domains find support in Miri, Chiam, & Uri, (2007) study which strongly suggests that fostering inquiry-oriented thinking and encouraging open-ended discussions lead to consequent development of CT thinking capabilities.

The results of growth and development of the participants of this study in the CT skills claim common grounds with the results of the similar study conducted by Sahmid, (2004) Who found that in the first two phases students’ anxiety was considerably reduced; their perceptions of the English teacher and what is expected of them in English classes were slowly evolving into something more realistic. By the third week and into the fourth stage of the study students were showing signs of adapting to the culture and practice of Socratic questioning. Similar incidents were observed in the participants’ progress of this study during the period of quiz 1 to quiz 4. Characteristically speaking, the CT strategies developed by the participants of this study are flexible, spontaneous, diverse, based on individual responses, and authentic. Attainment of such strategies through this experimental study lends strong research support to Thakur’s, (2016) remark that in line with the socially-aligned view of competence much needed spontaneity, flexibility, and diversity accrues only through a process-centred pedagogy of voice, agency and response, which was also involved in the strategy-oriented and well-informed SQ pedagogy approach during the intervention phase of this study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the data collected through the CT test was subjected to the statistical analysis, in which the t-test was conducted on the data related to the control group and the experimental group to find out the statistical difference between the two groups. After that, the data collected through the four quizzes and the interviews were put through the statistical and descriptive analyses. The most prominent finding relevant to RQ1 that emerged from the statistical analyses of the t-test is that teaching CT skills through SQ strategies is beneficial and more productive. Students who are taught through SQ strategies are better able to develop and use the target skills in the five domains of CT. Another important finding suggests that continuous instructional practice leads to upward and steady growth in the effective use of CT resulting in the internalization and gradual scaffolding of knowledge, skills, and competence of CT. Furthermore, an additional finding strongly indicates that CT skills do develop through explicit instructional practice of SQ strategies at school level, where students have not yet become independent and autonomous learners as against the tertiary level students. The quantitative results suggest that all the five students demonstrated a gradual
improvement in the five domains of CT skills in their performance from quiz 1 to 4. Furthermore, the results of the qualitative data suggest that all the five students had developed and informed understanding and awareness about the SQ strategies that they had gained in order to develop and enhance their CT skills in all the five domains. The triangulated data collected through the quantitative and qualitative instruments reflect a) at the end of the eight week intervention phase the participants had developed the knowledge and awareness of and the strategy-oriented abilities to use CT skills, b) the performance of the students had improved consistently to more or less at a similar exit level in quiz 4, c) the tone and tenor of the qualitative responsive related to quiz 4 indicates towards a significant reduction in participants’ frustration and lack of confidence which prevailed at the level of quiz 1 and 2. d) a significant raise was evident in the level of enthusiasm and confidence as all the five students placed themselves at a reasonably adequate level of competence in handling the CT skills in the reading texts using the required strategies to deal with the five domains of CT.

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The Efficacy of Using Short Video through Group Work in Teaching Speaking to Indonesian English as Foreign Language (EFL) Students

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Abstract
This research aims at finding out the efficacy of using short video in teaching speaking to Indonesian English as Foreign Language (EFL) students. The main question of this research: Is the use of short video through group work effective in teaching speaking to Indonesian EFL students? The significances of the research are (1) this study can be an addition in the persisting teaching speaking by using short video. (2) this study will also be helpful to curricular designers to integrate ICT for teaching and learning speaking to Indonesian EFL students. This research was conducted at the eleventh grade of Senior High School number 4 Luwu regency, South Sulawesi Province, an Indonesian High School. The total number of samples was 25 students. The research used a pre-experimental method with pre-test and post-test design. The pre-test was given to find out the basic ability of the students in speaking and the post-test given to find out the students’ improvement in speaking after giving the treatment by using of short video through a group work. The findings shows that using short video through group work is effective in teaching speaking to Indonesian EFL students. It is supported by the result of significance test through SPSS 20 program that the P was 0.00. Therefore, it is recommended to use short video through group work in developing speaking skill of Indonesian EFL students.

Keywords: group work, Indonesia EFL students, short video, teaching speaking

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Introduction
Technology has been widely popular as effective tools in English language teaching (Dudney & Hocley, 2007; Chapelle, 2001; Masruddin, 2015). It has been used to teach some skills in English such as listening, writing, reading and speaking. In addition, it can facilitate the students to gain the better achievement through the use of technology effectively. It also can increase the students’ interest in learning process. Bruce and Levin (2003) state that technology can be helpful thing in classroom settings through encouraging inquiry, helping communication, constructing teaching products, and assisting students’ self-expression. Furthermore, Alkhatnai (2016) states that using of technology as a tool in the classroom can help learner to work systematically by themselves or with their classmates. In addition, Liu (2013) finds that modern technology can increase the students’ ability within a very short time and it can be effective way to promote learner autonomy and effective learning strategy. Furthermore, the application of technology use in learning a language can increase a learner’s achievement and increase their learning efficiency in language learning (Chen & Chung, 2008; Lin, 2010). For example, Lin (2010) suggests that video-based programs can enhance a student’s vocabulary acquisition. Teachers can also benefit from technology aids by becoming more creative in the ways that they present their teaching materials and in designing online courses in a more structured and organized way than traditional courses (Zhu, 2010).

Focusing on the learning and teaching process, Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000) describe the roles of technology in five ways, namely: (1) being able to bring the real-world settings into the classroom. (2) providing scaffolding that gives chances for learners to participate in complex cognitive tasks. (3) increasing opportunities to receive sophisticated and individualized feedback. (4) building communities of interaction among teachers, students, parents, and other interested. (5) expanding supports for teacher development. In addition, Masruddin (2014) mentions that technology can create faster and easier way in delivering the learning message to the students in language classroom.

In Indonesia, speaking is one of the skills in EFL classrooms include in senior high school level. The students are expected to have the speaking skill. In fact, Some Indonesian students of EFL have difficulties to express their ideas orally since they don’t know what they should talk about. They find difficulties in pronouncing some words and expression in English. Also they are lack of vocabulary and lack of bravery to speak. Therefore, they need some helping to find the inspiration what to speak, and then it will make them easier to express it in speaking. Related to the Indonesian students problem in Indonesia, Astuti et al (2016) mention that there are seven problems faced by Indonesian students in speaking skill namely: (1) the misuse of Tenses, (2) Verb, (3) Agreement, (4) Word Order, (5) Wrong Chosen Word, (6) Redundancy-Reduction, and (7) Phonological difficulty. Then Mukminin et al (2016) find that Indonesian students in senior high school have English language speaking anxiety problem during the learning process. Many factors contribute to the students’ anxiety problem. Those factors seemed to be complexly interlinked. In addition, Rahman (2005) also reveals that the English ability of Indonesian students are very low.
In relation to the students’ difficulties in speaking, a teacher in EFL classrooms should choose a good technique in teaching process. The teacher needs to guide the students in getting ideas and making students speak up. Then, based on the writer’s believe, the things that should be improved is the using of media. The result of some researchers have shown that media has superiority to help teachers to deliver learning message faster and easier for students. In addition, media have a positive effect and can change the students’ behavior to be creative and dynamic. Then, the role of media is needed in learning process where media is not as a tool but as a part of integral in educational system and learning process.

A teacher should apply an appropriate technique and media in order to reach a successful speaking class. In choosing a teaching technique, Ur (1996: 120) lists some criteria that should be fulfilled by a good technique in teaching, namely (a) learners can talk a lot during the class, (b) students must be in the learning task and activities (c) motivation of students should be put as the priority to be developed and (d) language used is in accepted level. In addition, Brown (2001: 263-270) mentions some principles which teachers must consider before making decision about the technique in teaching speaking. Those principles are: cover the spectrum of learner needs, intrinsically motivating, encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful context, provide appropriate feedback and correction, capitalize on natural link between speaking and listening, and give students opportunity to initiate oral communication.

Besides teaching technique, media also plays great role in determining successful speaking class. The use of media gives valuable advantages in teaching and learning process. This statement is in line with Wittich & Schuller (1979) as cited in Pratiwi (2010) who says:

When more information is communicated by learning media, teacher can give more attention to the uniquely human aspect of education, understanding and the need of individual students, helping them to set and realize goals and stimulating them to use the information available from educational media (P.17)

Media is classified into audio, visual, and audiovisual. Audiovisual is categorized as one of the best media to teach speaking since the students not only can see it but also see it at the same time or in short term they see and listen at the same time. One of audio visual media that usually used in teaching and learning process is video. Canning- Wilson (2000, p.1) states that video can be defined as the selection and sequence of messages in an audio-visual context.

The use of technology as media in EFL classroom is very helpful. Furthermore, media technology can increase the students’ interesting in learning process. Movie as a one of the kind of modern technology, it can be used as a good media since it is an enjoyable things for students. They can enjoy the story and also the pictures of movie are always interesting for them. Related to the students’ difficulties in speaking, through watching movie the students easily can find material or topic to be expressed. In addition, short movie is considered able to solve the students’ problem in their speaking such as students can learn how to pronounce some words and expression in English through listening from the audio of the movie. If both subtitle and language that exist in the movie is using same language, students are also able to match the
pronunciation and the subtitle. Furthermore, through movie, watching and learning can be one package to make students’ pronunciation understandable.

In this current research, the researcher uses group work strategy to support the use of short movie as media in teaching speaking. Hammar Chiriac (2014) stated that group work is an educational mode that supports learning and interaction among students. According to Harmer (2007), group work is a cooperative activity, consists of five students, work together to discuss a topic, do a role-play that must be interesting activity for some students or solve a problem. In a group, students participate in doing the task, and they are also more able to experiment and use the language than they are in a whole-class. Billett (2011) reveals that:

> group work can be a stimulus to the individual, arousing him to greater effort and achievement – that the individuals within any group can learn vicarioulsy from each other – that the group can make possible education in ways of efficient and effective cooperation. (p.14)

Ur (1999) describes that in group work, students perform a learning task through small-group interaction.”When students divided into groups, they may get opportunities to talk than in a whole class, because in a group, they can interact each another, such as discuss a topic, share their idea or solve the problem.

In this research, the research will examines the efficacy of using short video through group work in teaching speaking to Indonesian EFL student. The main question of the research: Is the use of short video through group work effective in teaching speaking to Indonesian EFL student? The study is expected (1) as an addition in the persisting teaching speaking by using short video. (2) as a helpful thing to curricular designers to integrate ICT for teaching and learning speaking to Indonesian EFL students.

**Literature Review**

**Movie as media in teaching speaking**

Some experts mention that movie can give contribution to the students’ speaking skill such as Chan and Herero (2010, p.11) reveal that movie video brings some real conversation as authentic material to be talked about. Also, the students can easily understand the contents of the movie. In addition, the students will have various thought about the movie characters. It will have the students to be able to express their ideas about the movie. In addition, Berk (2009, p.2) explains that generally there are some advantages of using video of movie such as it is able to increase the students interest in class, make the students are relax in learning, stimulating the students to get the ideas, provide a chance for students to be free to express their ideas give some inspiration and motivation for students in learning process. In addition, Stewart (2006) adds some other advantages of using film in teaching English are (1) film can help on all counts, narrative film in particular use language to advance plot, define character, establish mood, and simply tell us what is going on. (2) film can also serve as the basis for writing assignment and oral presentation, especially when they are combined with the various film and resources which is exist on the internet.
Other expert’s idea about the advantages of movie is from Gebhardt (2004, p.2) who believes that movies can give many advantages such as (1) Movies are universal and have universal appeal across culture, providing current language usage. (2) the movies can present context of visual in which the conversation take place, action accompanying speech. (3) The movies can present gestures, facial expression, and other body language appropriate to the dialogue.

**Group work in developing language communicative competence**

According to Huda (2013) group work which is popular used in a short course is effective to develop the foreign language competence. This kind of activities can help students to develop their language communicative competence. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that group work is a technique in teaching learning, which it can encourage students to do the task together, solve a problem or do a role-play. It also provide more opportunities for students to talk more in the class and use the language much more than they do in a whole-class.

According to Harmer (2007) there are five advantages of group work, they are: (1) Give more opportunities to talk for students. (2) Make a greater chance for the students to share their opinion and their contribution. (3) Encourage students for broader skills of cooperation and negotiation. (4) Encourage the students to make decision in the group without being helped by the teacher. (5) Give students the opportunities to choose their level of participation.

McDonough and Shaw (2003) add some other advantages of group work, there are as follows:
1. Group work provides students to work correspondently.
2. Group work encourage student to share ideas and exchange the information.
3. The different tasks can be assigned to different groups.
4. Group work makes each student has more opportunity to speak and therefore to be involved in real language practice.
5. Group work can promote a positive atmosphere in the classroom
6. Group work can be seen very interesting to teach and provide the students’ creativity.

While group work could be a good strategy in teaching learning, it also has some of the disadvantages of group work. Penny Ur stated that the disadvantages of group work are the teacher worried they will lose their control to manage the students, because there may be to much noise made by the students or they may use their mother tongue and it could be worse if they did not do the task well. According to Harmer, the disadvantages of group work are:

1. It is likely to be noisy. Some teachers feel worried that they will lose control, and the whole-class feeling which has been painstakingly built up may dissipate when the class is split into smaller entities.
2. It makes not all students can enjoy it since they would prefer to be the focus of the teacher’s attention rather than working with their peers.
3. It seems that individuals may fail into group roles that become fossilized, so that some are passive whereas other may dominate.
4. It can take longer to organize than pairs; beginning and ending group work activities, especially when students move around the class, can take time and be chaotic.

5. The teachers who may have some difficulties in controlling the students when they use group work as a strategy in teaching learning, Daniel Muijs and Reynolds (2006) they quoted from Johnson and Johnson (1994), they suggest a list of students’ roles in a group work, where students can be assigned as follow:

1. The summarizer, who will prepare the group’s presentation to the class and summarize the conclusions to see if the rest of the group agrees.
2. The researcher, who collects background information and looks up any additional information that is needed to complete the task.
3. The checker, who control that the facts that the group will use are absolutely correct and will stand up to tight control from the teacher and other groups.
4. The runner, who tries to look for the resources needed to finish the task, such as dictionary.
5. The observer or troubleshooter, who takes notes and watches group process.
6. The recorder, who writes down the all activities of the group, and evaluates the work of other group members.

By using this role, it probably can decrease the teachers’ problem and students can more enjoy in their class. Therefore, it can help the students to develop their language skills.

Steendam et al.’s study (2010) shows that using group work in English as a foreign language (EFL) acquisition can help students become more independent and autonomous. Through participating in EFL collaborative learning activities, students have an opportunity to develop communication and interaction skills, and can use these skills to master the English language. While actively participating in learning groups, students get more involved in their learning process and are more capable of comprehending learning material effectively, hence, easily attaining their learning goals (Chenga & Linb, 2010). Aminloo (2013) conducts a research on the effect of using group work and collaborative writing on elementary-level EFL students. The results show that the students writing collaboratively have better writing performance than those writing individually. Ghaith’s study (2001) demonstrated that learning English through collaboration can bring students a more positive learning experience; they are more willing to share their experiences with other students.

Ghaith (2002) also explains that learning English in group work can improve the perception of social support and academic achievement in EFL learning, maximizing positive interdependence. Davoudi and Mahinpo (2012) suggest using the Kagan learning model to motivate language learners to make collaboration for foreign language acquisition. Situated in a collaborative learning setting, students are supported by each other, using various ways to solve language learning problems, therefore, increasing their language achievement, as well as their social skills. Alijanian (2012) uses a Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) approach, focusing on the team goals and success dependent on the collaboration of all group members. The
results also showed that students using the STAD approach based on collaboration performed better English learning achievement than those using traditional methods.

**Method**  
This study applied pre-experimental research. It aimed at finding out the effectiveness of Short movie in teaching speaking skills for Indonesian EFL students. It was conducted in eight meetings at public senior high school in Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The researcher was interested to conduct the research in the school because of the observation result. The observation results show that the students in Senior High School Number 4 Luwu (SMAN 4 Luwu) faced difficulties in speaking. Therefore, the researcher is interested in helping the students to increase their speaking skill. The total number of population of this research was 150 students at the eleventh grade students of SMAN 4 Luwu, in academic year 2018. It consisted of 4 classes, in each class there were 30 students. In this research, the researcher used purposive sampling technique in taking the sample. The researcher took five students as a sample from each class who have low ability in reading fluency. Therefore the researcher took 25 students as sample of this research. The instruments that had been used in this research were: speaking test through interview. The speaking test was given to measure the students’ ability in speaking.

In this research, the researcher conducted treatments in six meetings. The treatment was conducted for six meetings, the researcher used different theme of short videos in every meeting. In giving treatment, the researcher gave instruction what the student should do in class activity. Each meeting was taken 90 minutes. Steps to conduct the movie use as follows:

a. **Previewing Activities**  
In this step, the teacher prepares the short video and gives the students brainstorming about the video. The teacher explains the activities and what a student should do during the class activities.

b. **Viewing Activities**  
This is the main step, the students watch the short video and the teacher asks some questions about the movie and guide the students to understand the movie.

c. **Post Viewing activities**  
In this step, the students are in their group to discuss about the short video. Then, they prepare their ideas to be presented in front of the other groups in the class. Every students should express their ideas in their own group. Then one of the representative of the group should give the result of their discussion about the short video.

To sum up, the previous procedure time allocation can be flexibly adjusted according to students' needs and interests. The, there were some steps of conducting this research namely : (a) Giving Pretest, (b) Giving Treatment: previewing, viewing and post viewing activities (c) Giving Posttest

**Results**  
The result of the research shows that there is an improvement of students’ ability in speaking
after the treatments by using short video. There are 4 aspects that have been evaluated in students speaking namely fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehensibility.

**Table 1. Students’ mean score of speaking achievement in Pretest and Posttest**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre test</th>
<th>Post test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59.12</td>
<td>80.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that the students’ achievements in speaking test have been improved. The students can increase their achievement in the post test. Furthermore, the hypothesis of the research was tested by using SPSS 20. In this case, the researcher used t-test (testing of significance) for paired sample t-test, that is, a test to know the significance difference between the result of students’ mean score in pretest and posttest. Assuming that the level of significance ($\alpha$) = 0.05, the only thing which is needed; the degree of freedom (df) = N – 1, where df = 24, than the t-test is presented in the following table.

**Table 2. The Probability Value of T-Test of the Students’ Achievement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
<th>$\alpha$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X2 – X1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.05</td>
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</table>

From the analysis, the researcher concludes that there was a significant difference between pretest and posttest in teaching speaking by using short video through group work. In other words, using short video through group work in teaching speaking could be used to increase the students’ speaking skill.

The result of statistical analysis for level of significance 0.05 with degree of freedom (df) N-1, where (N) = 25, df = 24. The probability value was smaller than $\alpha$ (0.00<0.05). It indicated that the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted and the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected. It means that Language Experience Approach (LEA) effective in increasing reading fluency ability.

In addition, the next bar chart shows the comparison between the students’ achievement in three dimensions of reading fluency before and after the treatments.

*Figure 1: Students’ scores in pre-test and post-test*
From the previous chart, it can be seen that there was significance difference of students’ score in pre-test and post-test. The students’ score in post-test was higher than their score in pre-test. The students’ grammar (accuracy) score in pretest achieved only 1.3, in fluency the students achieved 1.3 in pretest, in vocabulary the students achieved 1.3 and the students’ comprehension score in pretest only achieved 2.0. However, in posttest the students achieved 2.4 for accuracy (grammar), in fluency the students achieved 2.9, vocabulary achieved 2.9 and the students achieved 2.9, in rate. It means that there was an improvement of students’ score from pre-test to post-test after learning speaking by using short video through group work.

Discussion
Based on the result of this study, the researcher proves that teaching speaking by using short video through group work is effective. The main reason for this efficacy is stated previously by Bruce and Levin (2001) stated that technology is helpful in classroom settings by encouraging inquiry, helping communication, constructing teaching products, and assisting students’ self-expression. Furthermore, Alkhatnai (2016) states that using of technology as a tool in the classroom can help learner to work systematically by themselves or with their classmates. In addition, Liu (2013) found that modern technology can increase the students’ ability within a very short time and it can be effective way to promote learner autonomy and effective learning strategy. Furthermore, the application of technology use in learning a language can increase a learner's achievement and increase their learning efficiency in language learning (Chen & Chung, 2008; Lin, 2010). For example, Lin (2010) suggests that video-based programs can enhance a student's vocabulary acquisition. Teachers can also benefit from technology aids by becoming more creative in the ways that they present their teaching materials and in designing online courses in a more structured and organized way than traditional courses (Zhu, 2010).

This also in line with what is explained by Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000) states the roles of technology in five ways, namely: (1) being able to bring the real-world settings into the classroom. (2) providing scaffolding that allows learners to participate in complex cognitive tasks. (3) increasing chances to receive sophisticated and individualized feedback. (4) building communities of interaction among teachers, students, parents, and other interested. (5) expanding supports for teacher development.

Furthermore, it was mentioned previously that in this research the researcher using the group work as a way to conduct the learning process, the result of this research is supported by the argument that have been previously revealed by McDonough and Shaw (2003) who explained that some advantages of group work, there are as follows: (1) Group work provides students to work correspondently. (2) Group work encourage student to share ideas and exchange the information. (3) The different tasks can be assigned to different groups. (5) Group work makes each student has proportionally more chance to speak and therefore to be involved in language use. (6) Group work can promote a positive atmosphere in the classroom (7) Group work can be seen very interesting to teach and provide the students’ creativity.

Conclusion
Using short video through group work is effective in teaching speaking at the eleventh grade of Indonesia EFL students at SMAN 4 Luwu Indonesia. It was proven by the data that there was a
significant difference between the students’ mean score of pretest and posttest. In pretest, the students’ mean score is 59.12 and the students’ score in posttest is 80.68. Moreover, it also can be seen by t-test of the students’ reading fluency achievement was smaller than $\alpha = (0.00 < 0.05)$.

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The use of L1 as a Source of Humour to Facilitate Interaction in EFL Classrooms

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Abstract
The recent decades have witnessed a remarkable increase in the body of research that examine the relationship between humour and language acquisition. This study, however, uses the micro-analytical approach of Conversation Analysis (CA) to investigate the impact of the teachers’ competent use of the first language (L1) as a source of humour on classroom interaction and, consequently, learning. The turn-by-turn analysis of the data shows how the teacher’s use of L1 as a source of humour resulted in smoothness in the interaction and helped in avoiding communication breaking down as a result of the students’ insufficient knowledge of the target language (L2) knowledge. The study found that the careful use of L1 as a source of humour also led to the production of longer and more meaningful turns by students, who are characterised as having limited linguistic resources. This use of L1, however, is context sensitive. Pedagogically, despite the scepticism surrounding the use of L1, the paper concludes by emphasising the usefulness of the competent use of L1 as a source of humour in EFL to increase classroom interaction and recommends increasing the teachers’ awareness regarding the potential of the competent and occasional use of L1.

Keywords: Conversation analysis, EFL, use of humour, Interactional Competence, Use of L1

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Introduction

In this paper, I show how L1 is used as a source of humour in naturally occurring classroom interactions, not as an end in itself, but rather to facilitate interaction and to increase students’ interactional competence. Through the use of a turn-by-turn analysis, the paper shows how the use of humour, in L1 in this context, is accomplished and the social function thereof. The paper also shows how this use contributed to language learning. It is worth mentioning here that learning is viewed through a sociocultural lens. In other words, learning takes place via socialisation and thus entails increasing the students’ engagement in a more meaningful discussion in which they display understanding of the on-going talk and negotiate meaning with other participants.

Some people might argue that the use of L1, traditionally referred to as code-switching, has been investigated thoroughly in the field on second language acquisition (SLA) via different methods of investigation such as discourse analysis, conversation analysis, video-stimulated recall, questionnaires and interviews (Norrish, 1997; Ferguson, 2003; Ustunel & Seedhouse, 2005; Raschka et al., 2009). However, as far as I am concerned, none of these studies has investigated the relationship of the use of L1, humour and interactional competence, which is the focus of this paper.

The analysis is conducted by identifying talk that is understood as humour by students and the teacher by examining interactional sequences that are marked by laughter. Humour is understood as an action that is interactionally achieved and socially situated in an orderly way. In this paper, no conceptual distinction is made between humour and play language with regard to meaning. In fact, the two terms are used interchangeably (Bell, 2005).

This paper challenges the common assumptions regarding the use of both L1 and humour as beneficial interactional resources in EFL, and presents evidence in the form of a low-level EFL classroom in which the teacher establishes a culture of humour, and how this leads to a notable increase in the students’ engagement and, consequently, to an increase in their interactional competence.

The importance of humour for ESL/EFL

Humour is one of the features that has been examined within different disciplines such as psychology, sociology and education. It has been characterised as a complex phenomenon in human behaviour, as it entails “cognitive, emotional, behavioural, physiological and social aspects” (Foot & McCreadie, 2006, p. 1079). However, it has only been three decades since the linguistic aspects of humour have received some attention from SLA researchers. Nevertheless, once recognised, the impact of humour on the acquisition of a second/foreign language has received tremendous attention. Subsequently, a substantial amount of research has emerged as a result of linguists’ increasing interest in this long existing yet rarely investigated phenomenon.

In this section, the researcher will focus on some of the related studies that have investigated humour in the classroom and have linked it to different aspects of learning and teaching.

Tarone (2000), for instance, recognizes the impact of humour on reducing the level of anxiety associated with learning a foreign language. He says humour has the ability to reduce learners’ affective filters. He also highlights the impact of humour on students’ cognition, as he
connects humour to the facilitation of the process of memorising the new language. Tarone concludes that humour allows students to “try on different voices and language varieties” (p. 45).

Hay (2001), on the other hand, examines the strategies that participants employ to display understanding and agreement via humour in interactions. The author identifies laughter and echoing the speaker’s words as noticeable support strategies that signal the understanding of humour. Involvement in and contributions to the humorous episodes are also categorised as signals of not only understanding humour, but also of agreeing with it.

Similar to this study, Schmitz (2002) investigates humour in EFL classroom. To him, using humour in the classroom helps the students to get a grasp of the different aspect of interactions due to the impact it has on the classroom environment. Humour, he argues, makes the classroom more interesting. This, he claims, helps in improving the students’ language proficiency. Schmitz, however, differentiates between the types of humour used by the teacher based on the students’ level of proficiency. Exaggeration, hyperbole and irony, for instance, are to be used with lower levels students. Cultural jokes, on the other hand, are less likely to be understood by students’ with limited L2 knowledge. Consequently, should be limited to students with higher level of language proficiency. Similarly, van Dam (2002) linked humour to the increasing level of students’ participation, but used discourse analysis as a tool of investigation. van Dam argues that the high level of participation associated with humour in EFL classrooms could be attributed, at least in part, to face work. For van Dam high levels of participation are not a result of one day’s work on the part of the teacher. In fact, participation is usually accomplished over a period until humour becomes normal practice. The paper concludes that humour in classrooms leads to the production of a fearless environment in which making mistakes does not constitute a loss of face.

Askildson (2005) and Bell (2005) examine the use of humour in second language classrooms emphasizing its importance to the teaching and learning process. Nevertheless, Bell (2005) focuses on the relationship between the use of language play and language proficiency. Bell argues that the students’ proficiency increases with the use of play language. In a following paper, Bell (2009) investigates the importance of overtly discussing and analysing humour in classroom activities linking it to L2 learners’ linguistic and sociolinguistic development.

Garland’s (2010) study supports van Dam’s (2002) findings. Garland, however, examines students’ use of what he calls “humorous mock translation”. By this, he refers to occasions in which the students use imagined translations of L2 into L1. This kind of translation is initiated by both students and teachers, and is mainly done to accomplish the mitigation of a loss of face. In other words, the students, in particular, use it in order to be perceived as funny people who are able to make others laugh, rather than to be perceived as slow students who lack L2 knowledge. By using humorous mock translations, the author argues, the students reflect expertise in the L2 by applying the rules they knew. Thus, this serves as a display of expertise that might elevate a student’s status and enable him or her to claim membership of a community of experts in a lesser-known language.

Similarly to this study, Forman (2011) examines humour initiated by teachers in low-level classes in Thai university EFL classrooms. He identifies two functions of humour in EFL classrooms, namely reducing the social distance between the students and the teacher, and creating
solidarity. He states that humour helps students to focus on form and increases classroom participation despite the learners’ low levels of proficiency.

Lehtimä (2011) also argues in favour of using humour in EFL classrooms. The author investigates humour in seven secondary schools in which Finish was taught as a foreign language. However, the focus of this paper is on the students’ rather than on the teacher’s use of humour. The study shows the systematic way in which the students deviate from the surrounding teacher’s serious talk and marked their contribution as humour. The study concludes by emphasising that, despite the negative stance that the students display in relation to the teacher’s talk, playfulness does not threaten the teacher’s pedagogical agenda. In fact, teachers show that they can align themselves with students’ playfulness and engage in serious work at the same time. The conclusion supports the claim made in this paper; in other words, teachers will always have the final say with regard to when or for how long humour can be used inside the classroom. It also shows that the scepticism surrounding the use of humour in EFL/ ESL classrooms is unfounded.

In relatively recent study, Pomerantz and Bell (2011) examine humour using discourse analysis. They investigate the function of humour in a Spanish-as-a-foreign-language classroom. As have many other linguists, they focus on students’ initiated humour and associate humour with the students’ lack of L2 knowledge. They argue that students use humour as a “safe house”, allowing them to criticise the institution and the instructional norm within that institution without being overtly critical and without being held accountable for what they had said.

Waring (2013) also examines humour in ESL classrooms but using the term “being playful”. The paper sheds light on an extremely important aspect of the use of humour in ESL classrooms, namely students’ identities. Using conversation analysis as the method of investigation, she investigates how the participants’ identities, in this case the students’ identities, played a role in “being playful”. The paper shows how students brought different non-student identities into classroom talk using humour. According to Waring, “being playful” allows the students to experience mundane talk in an institutional setting. Similarly, Reddington and Waring (2015), also using conversation analysis, study episodes of humour in ESL classroom interactions. They find that humour in ESL classroom interactions is the result of the students’ diversion from the on-going sequence organisation by producing turns that are characterised by having new and unexpected components.

Degoumois (2017) presents examples of the difficulty of expressing opinions in the classroom due to the students’ sensitivity to being assessed by others. The authors identify two strategies used by the students express their opinion. Firstly, the students, they argue, tend to conclude their opinions using humour. They offer their opinions through humorous talk. They also either preface or conclude the presentation of their opinions with downgrading in order to both satisfy the sequential expectations resulting from the teachers’ request to express an opinion and to avoid being held accountable for their opinions.

Farahani and Abdollahi (2018) study the effect of using humour techniques on developing EFL learner’s speaking ability and willingness to communicate. Their data consist of 60 Iranian adult intermediate EFL learners who are divided into experimental and control group. The learners are given a pre- and post-test to examine their speaking ability and their willingness to speak.
researchers find a significant difference in the students’ ability and willingness to speak between the experimental and control group. The experimental group that was exposed to techniques of humor in their EFL classroom showed more ability to speak and more willingness to communicate in the target language.

Finally, Fadel & Al-Bargi (2018) look at the characteristics and frequency of the use of verbal humor at a Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. They find a relationship between the frequency of the use of humor and the students’ level of proficiency. In fact, they argue, humor is used more frequently at higher level than lower ones. They identify; language play, irony, jokes, and self-defeating humor as the main types of humor used in the Saudi EFL classroom.

Participants
The data were collected from a Saudi language institute. The students were all native speakers of Arabic, as was the teacher. The students were studying English as part of their foundation programme, after which they would attend university and choose their specialties based on their GPAs. The selected data are part of a larger corpus that consists of 16 hours of recordings by three different teachers. However, this particular teacher, being a native speaker of Arabic, was the only one who used L1 as a source of humor. Her use of humor was unique in the sense that her classes were different from those of the other two teachers. Her classes were characterised by increased student engagement and a notable reduction in the social distance between the teacher and her students. It is worth mentioning that, when conducting this study, a teaching session of 120 minutes was recorded; however, only the part during which the teacher invited the students to close their books and answer a question regarding their real-life experiences is examined here. The question required the students to compare their lives to those of their grandparents. The goal was to elicit more personal answers from the students and to assess their ability to apply the knowledge that they had acquired in a different context. The chosen excerpts constitute what the researcher considered to be the most enjoyable moments of the lesson, as they are marked by episodes of laughter from both the teacher and from the students.

Data Analysis
The data were transcribed using conventions adapted from Have (1999) (see Appendix A). Following a detailed turn-by-turn analysis of the dataset, the researcher identified the recurring patterns of teacher-initiated laughter and examined the resulting interaction on the part of the students as proved by the next turn.

Conversation analysis was chosen as the method of analysis because it studies naturally occurring speech and shows that spoken interactions are systematic and orderly in all its aspects. Conversation analysis is different from other methods of analysis such as discourse analysis with regard to its focus and method. It examines the data, in this case classroom interactions, using an emic as opposed to an etic approach. In other words, it investigates the data from within the system and does not impose any external factors on the analysis. It shows the method and the interactional resources to which the participants resorted in order to display understanding and achieve intersubjectivity.
By using a detailed, moment-by-moment analysis of the interactions, CA aims to describe and explain the different competences that the interactants use, as well as the resources on which they rely in order to become engaged in an intelligible and socially organised interaction.

**Interactional competence**

Interactional competence (IC) is one of the most important aspects of classroom skills that linguists have recently suggested should be investigated and included in curricula. However, there is no single specific definition of what the term ‘interactional competence’ might encompass. In fact, the term has been used as an inclusive label under which different types of competences have been discussed and included. Nevertheless, linguists agree on different points regarding the term; for example, there is agreement among scientists that IC is co-constructed and that it is a joint effort on the part of the interactors (Young, 1999; McCarthy, 2005).

With regard to institutional settings such as classrooms, IC requires the students’ involvement in the on-going talk (Hall, 1999). This engagement should be meaningful, and takes the shape of an expert-novice relationship in which the expert offers constant support and guidance throughout the process of talk in interaction (Hall, 1999). The learners keep adjusting their L2 knowledge through meaning negotiation, as well as via other-initiated repairs and recasts (Wong & Waring, 2010). Walsh (2012) discusses IC in classrooms, adding that classroom interactional competence (CIC) was the “teachers’ and learners’ ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning” (p. 158). In other words, he highlights the importance of interaction and engagement in the process of learning. CIC, he argues, mainly involves the ways in which communication is managed by the interactants.

It is worth mentioning here that learners, particularly beginners, benefit from their knowledge of L1 when interacting in L2, particularly in unfamiliar contexts in which they lack knowledge in L2. The utilisation of L1 knowledge takes the form of borrowing some words or phrases, or even some interactional competences. The teacher’s role in this case should be to guide the students by giving direct or indirect instruction that highlights the similarities or differences between L1 and L2 without the students losing face; this is where the role of humour may mitigate feedback or save face (van Dam, 2002; Garland, 2010).

This paper shows how the use humour led to the establishment of a culture in which the students’ levels of engagement were relatively high, and there was no fear of making mistakes or of lacking sufficient knowledge to participate. The teacher built on the students’ L1 knowledge and defied the stigma surrounding its use in EFL classrooms, particularly as a source of humour.

**Analysis**

The next excerpt is taken from an EFL reading classroom. After introducing the reading lesson and discussing the new vocabulary, the teacher started a new phase of the lesson in which she asked the students to give their opinions regarding what they considered to be characteristics of a good leader.

Excerpt (1)
In this excerpt, the teacher used the discourse marker “okay” to announce the closing of a phase of the lesson when the new chapter was introduced and a move to the next phase in which the students were asked to give their personal opinions based on their understanding of the material introduced previously. The book’s chapter is entitled “remarkable individuals”. It discusses individuals across the world who have made a difference in their societies.

The teacher asks the students, “What are the characteristics of a good leader?” A relatively long intra-turn silence follows (1.6), which is understood by the teacher as a possible sign of misunderstanding of her question. The teacher takes the turn again and prompts the students to offer an opinion by using L1. She gives them an example of what the word “characteristic” might entail “other than being handsome”, while simultaneously initiating humour. The teacher’s use of the adjective “waseem” in L1, “tr. handsome”, has made the noun “leader”, which is usually used for both genders in classic Arabic, exclusively masculine which, in turn, has made her comment sexually suggestive. Discussing sexuality is considered to be inappropriate in classrooms in general and in the Saudi context in particular. However, the students’ affiliation with the teacher and a chorus of laughter follows (line 7). By terminating the original target language agenda and using L1, the teacher not only introduced humour, but also encouraged the students to initiate it. This is proved in the subsequent two turns in which S1 and S2 added to the teacher’s list of leaders’ characteristics using L1.
In lines 9 and 10, we can see that the students replicated the teacher’s humour by suggesting additional physical features that had sexual associations, something that could be considered to be irrelevant to the chapter introduced previously. In other words, by emulating the teacher’s joke, the students showed understanding of the humour and agreement on its use in this context. We can also see that the students self-selected, a phenomenon that is relatively rare in EFL classrooms. The teacher (lines 11 and 12) and the rest of the class laugh at the students’ (S1 and S2) humour. The teacher’s lack of reaction to the use of L1 as a source of humour by the students seems to lead the rest of the class to consider the use of humour (L1) in the classroom as a legitimate practice.

The teacher takes the turn (lines 12-14) to comment on the students’ contribution by acknowledging their answers. She uses “yeah” as an acknowledgement device, followed by her evaluation of their contributions. However, she uses a prolonged vowel with the word “to:::” to indicate that this can go on for ever. Following this, she seize the opportunity to tease the students by reminding them that the word “leader” can be used for both genders and that they are talking about leaders not grooms. Once again, when it comes to invoking laughter, the teacher used L1 as a resource in a long and complex turn in the target language. In this example, we see how the teacher plays with the use of L1 in a creative way. She manages to get the message across using L2, yet initiates humour by drawing the students’ attention to what she expects from them. In other words, she succeeds in creating a warm atmosphere for learning without deviating from her pedagogical agenda, as we can see in the rest of the excerpt.

The teacher’s initiated humour resulted in a chorus of laughter involving the entire class, followed by S3 taking an unsolicited complex turn in which she managed to display a relatively advanced interactional competence. S3 took an unsolicited turn using a “yes” turn initially to agree with the teacher’s assertion. Usually, the use of “yes” followed by other components is to indicate having epistemic access to the topic under discussion (Heritage, 1984; Jawhar, 2016) or to show agreement and consequently affiliation with what has been said in the previous turn (Pomerantz, 1984). However, S3 followed this by “but”, which can be understood as an announcement of further elaboration. The use of “but” indicates an addition that might be dispreferred by the other participants and indicates disagreement. S3 closes her turn by resorting to humour using L1 to downplay her commitment to her opinion, which is in disagreement with that of the teacher. In this way, S3 managed to accomplish the interactional work of delivering her controversial opinion while simultaneously maintaining affiliation with the teacher’s position regarding the topic in question.

The teacher latches onto S3’s comment (line 18) and takes advantage of the student’s use of L1 to place focus on form and to reintroduce the new word “handsome”. S3 picks up the other-initiated repair and continues it by repeating it after the teacher. She uses the shared knowledge device “you know” to involve her and to add to the on-going talk by offering a real-life example of a “handsome” leader. However, she substitutes the new vocabulary “handsome” with the more familiar term “beautiful”. She also prefaces and closes her turn units with laughter, again to downplay the sensitivity of her opposing opinion and to shape it as a less serious talk. In other words, she marks her opinion as humour. The rest of the class aligns with S3 and replicate her laughier.
The teacher (lines 22-24) claims the turn and introduces other-initiated repairs. She introduces the new vocabulary “Prime Minister”, and follows it with a translation in L1. The teacher then shows some solidarity with the student’s response by adding her own assessment of the Canadian prime minister’s physical characteristics, prefacing them with a “well” that suggests a less straightforward response (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009). The teacher closes the humorous episode via a question that redirects the talk to a more serious topic, that of leaders’ characteristics. The students understand the teacher’s shift in focus and follow it by giving more serious answers (lines 25-26).

In this excerpt, I have shown how the teacher’s deliberate but careful use of L1 as a source of humour resulted in a warm classroom environment in which the students were not afraid of taking unsolicited turns and contributing to the on-going discussion. In fact, the teacher’s use of humour, using L1, encouraged the students to initiate humour themselves, which resulted in a noticeable increase in the amount of classroom interaction. However, the teacher remained the main authority in the classroom, and was the only person who could bring the humorous episode to an end and shift the focus to more serious, pedagogically related work.

Excerpt (2)

The following excerpt is taken from the same reading comprehension class. In this part of the lesson, we see how that teacher plays her traditional role as the main source of authority by limiting the time and amount of humour allowed in the classroom. At the same time, it shows how the culture of humour introduced by the teacher in this particular classroom led to more student-initiated humour and, consequently, to increased participation.

In this excerpt, S6 displays a desire to participate by trying to attract the teacher’s attention verbally (calling her ‘miss’) and non-verbally (by raising her hand). The teacher (line 2) looks in
the direction of S6 and uses the short response token “yes” to assure S6 that she has been noticed and that she will be given the floor. However, the teacher gives S6 the floor using the question “what would you like to add?” S6 takes the floor and offers another example of a handsome leader. This time, however, and unlike S3 in excerpt 1, the student gives an example of a Saudi prince rather than of an international character. She also uses the adjective “handsome” to display having epistemic access to the word.

The teacher takes the floor (line 4) and teases S6 by emphasising the word “HANDSOME”; she also questions using the term again despite her previous comment regarding leadership as a skill rather than as a physical feature. She follows this with laughter to mitigate the negative effect of criticising the student’s use of the word “handsome’. Following this, she puts aside the target language’s pedagogical agenda and uses L1 to provide some procedural instructions in order to ensure understanding. The teacher’s use of L1 at that moment, the seriousness in her voice and the absence of laughter at the end of the turn are understood by the students as an announcement of the end of the humorous episode.

S7 uses L1 (lines 9-11) to offer a justification to the teacher for not being able to participate. She claims to understand the task, but lacks sufficient L2 knowledge to answer the question in L2. However, S7 does not surrender the turn or abandon her desire to participate. She uses “okay” as a discourse marker to shift from justification to a reattempt to complete the task. She offers what seemed to be the teacher’s desired answer - “the leader must be wise and studied well, especially English”. S3 latches onto S7’s comments and performs an other-initiated repair. She suggests “educated” as an alternative to “studied well”. S7 takes up the repair (line 13) without any resistance. The teacher witnesses all of these interactional actions without any interference; in fact, she uses the backchannel “aha” to encourage the student to continue and to expand on what she had said. S7 then proceeds to list more characteristics of a good leader. S8 (line 17) overlaps with S7, and comments on her opinion using a mixture of L2 and L1 in her turn.

Once again, the student picks up on the teacher’s interactional use of L1 as a source of humour. To mark her comment as humorous and to minimise the possible negative effect of her comment in her classmates’ opinions, S8 closes her turn with laughter. She follows this by looking towards the back of the class, seeking agreement from the rest of the class. The class aligns with S8’s joke and laughs at it. Petitjean and Degoumois (2014) showed that choral laughter following a student’s problematic turn was an efficient resource for troubleshooting in a classroom (p. 82). The teacher (lines 20-25) approves the joke by laughing at it and building on it using the same technique of combining L2 and L1 in the same turn. However, she uses reformulation as sequential closing third (Schegloff, 2007).
This excerpt is taken from another reading comprehension class presented by the same teacher (Jawhar & Walsh, 2018) following the closure of the chapter that pertained to changes in people’s social life styles in the United States during the last century as a result of economic pressure. After finishing the reading material in the book, the teacher asked the students for their opinions regarding the difference in life styles between their generation and that of their grandparents. Once again, the teacher was attempting to ensure that the students were capable of implementing the knowledge they had learned from the chapter in real life. In other words, the teacher was attempting to make the students use the topic under discussion to talk about their own experiences - topicalisation - (Slimani, 1989) or, in other words, their knowledge.

The teacher teased the students explicitly about their use of L1, yet accepted such for the ultimate sake of communication.

Earlier in the excerpt, S6 raised her hand in a display of willingness to participate. The teacher gives her the floor, but S6 informs the teacher that she will be initiating a new topic. The teacher allows her to introduce a new topic (line 145), and S6 adds something that is inaudible. The teacher (line 147) acknowledges S6’s input, but closes the sequence without any comment or
further explanation regarding S6’s suggested topic, which suggests the irrelevance of the new topic. S10 self-selects and takes the floor using L1. She suggests a relatively new subtopic. The teacher does not seem to object to the new subtopic, yet still uses humour to question the reason that S10 chose to speak in L1. Thus, she treats the contribution as humorous and repeats it, asking if the same answer can be given using English instead of L1 (lines 150-151).

The rest of the class also understand the teacher’s use of L1 as humorous, and follow with choral laughter. S10 (line 148) treats the teacher’s humour as a genuine question and responds to it by confirming the teacher’s assertion “yes it can not”. The teacher (line 152) maintains the humour and produces a turn that consists of both L1 and L2 while using an exaggerated foreign accent. The teacher’s creative but hilarious use of both languages was perceived as a license to resume the talk in L1; therefore, not to be concerned about the lack of L2 knowledge. The teacher’s humorous use of L1 encouraged S10 to take the floor again. She produces an extended turn using L1 to explain what she meant in the previous turn (line 148). S11 takes the floor to add to the discussion without any interruption from the teacher, who only resorts to using a newsmaker device in a single-unit turn without any attempt to claim the floor (line 162).

The teacher’s use of humour and her lack of action towards the use of L1 functioned as a successful strategy to create interactional space for S11 to elaborate on her answer, although still using L1. S12 follows her classmates daring attempt to communicate, even though she uses L1. She takes the floor once S11 has reached a transition relevant place (TRP) and adds to the ongoing topic (line 165). The teacher (line 169) uses a wh-question to ask S11 overtly about what she means. S11 responds with an extended complex multi-unit turn. She uses different interactional competences, such as false starts, in which she interrupts her turn and makes a new start, self-initiated repairs and reformulates her sentence. More importantly, she supports her argument with an example, again using L1.

In this excerpt, the teacher opens the interaction with humour to tease the student about her use of L1 by also using L1. The use of humour here minimised the tension that might have resulted from the student’s claim to lack L2 knowledge. To emphasise communication, the teacher submits to the student’s desire and accepts L1 as a tool for communication in order to smooth the interaction and to create a classroom culture in which communication is valued over accuracy. The use of humour also results in a display of different complex interactional competences in L1 that can be built on in the future to introduce knowledge related to L2. It is worth mentioning that the permission for the students to use L1 is not always guaranteed, as there are examples of moments during which the teacher denied the students the privilege of using L1 and they submitted to her authority and shifted to L2. This means that the teacher used and allowed the use of L1 only in specific cases when she thought that the use of L1 would serve the ultimate goal of smoother and more intelligent interaction. In other words, she uses humour in L1 as a vehicle through which students with lower levels of proficiency could find the space to interact and be part of the classroom community without being afraid of being judged as a failure or as lacking knowledge.
In this section, I provide an overview of the findings, including the detailed interactional features in this classroom, and I will show how humour contributed to bringing more complex interactional features to the surface in L1 and in L2.

A closer look at the data shows that the conversation in this context is goal oriented, as it lasts for a long time once it begins, and the topic is maintained over a long stretch of talk. With regard to topic management, the teacher in this class proposes the original topic; however, because the topic is quite free, the students have the liberty to suggest new subtopics, and the teacher seems to encourage this. Nevertheless, the teacher signalled the concluding move in each sequence and the shifts to the next one via the use of discourse markers, as well as by response tokens that indicated agreement or acknowledgement followed by the allocation of the next speaker’s turn. The teacher’s role does not entail undermining the students’ active role in the development of the topics.

In this dataset, we can also see the extensive mutuality and collaboration among the students themselves, as well as with the teacher, particularly with regard to topic development and other-initiated repair. We can also note the teacher’s use of syntactic elements to link the turns, and the tremendous sense of joint responsibility to maintain the interaction by all interactants. The teacher also tends to use many open-ended questions to help the students to extend the topic under development, thus increasing their interactional space. The use of humour in L1 has obviously increased the students’ interactional competence in the following ways:

1. **Creating a warm and less intimidating atmosphere:** The teacher’s creative use of L1 as a source of humour in this dataset created a relaxed classroom in which the students were not afraid to take unsolicited turns, to contribute to the ongoing talk or to be playful. In fact, it is obvious that the teacher’s use of humour in L1 encouraged the students to initiate humour themselves using both L1 and L2. However, this noticeable increase in classroom interaction and the alternation of the traditional role between the teacher and the students does not mean that the teacher lost control over the classroom. In fact, throughout the lesson, the teacher maintained her authority and was the only person who decided when to put an end to the humorous episode and when to shift the topic (Lehtimäjä, 2011). This role was used cleverly to refocus attention on the more serious talk.

2. **Addressing problems related to classroom interaction:** The students in this dataset imitated the teacher’s use of L1 to create humour. They used humour to minimise the possible negative effect of their comments on their classmates’ opinion or to challenge the established classroom roles with regard to what is acceptable as a topic for discussion and what is not. They also used laughter to deal with what Petitjean and Degoumois (2014) referred to as “troubleshooting” in classrooms; in other words, when there is a problem in the turn. In most cases, the teacher accepted the students’ initiated humour, and sometimes built on it using the same technique of combining L2 and L1 in the same turn. Nevertheless, there are moments in which the teacher used reformulation as a sequential closing third to such language use (Schegloff, 2007).
3. **Minimising the tension resulting from insufficient L2 knowledge:** The teacher initiated humour using L1 to emphasise communication and to avoid the tension that is usually associated with the students’ claim to lack knowledge in L2. In such cases, the teacher accepts L1 as a tool for communication in order to smooth the interaction and to create a classroom culture in which communication is more important than accuracy. This use of L1 as a source of humour encouraged the students to use longer turn that, when analysed, reflected different complex interactional competences. However, the teacher made it clear to the students that permission to use L1 in the classroom was a privilege rather than a guaranteed right. There were moments of interaction in the dataset in which the teacher denied the students the privilege of using L1 and insisted on the use of L2 instead. The teacher’s insistence on the use of L2 during these moments usually proved to be useful, as the students then produced the desired response. In other words, the teacher only allowed the use of L1 when it served the ultimate goal of smoother and more intelligent interaction. However, this use was always ‘sugar-coated’ with humour. In summary, humour in L1 served as a portal through which students with lower levels of proficiency could find the space to interact and to be part of the classroom community without being afraid of being judged as a failure or as lacking knowledge (Pomerantz and Bell, 2011).

Ultimately, this analysis has shed light on the importance of using both humour and L1 with low-level students in order to facilitate interaction and to encourage more participation in a friendly environment without the fear of losing face (Schmitz, 2002; van Dam, 2002). However, this use of humour should be combined with the work required to accomplish the pedagogical agenda. The results of this study are in agreement with several studies that examined the importance of humour in the learning process, but it add a new aspect as they show the impact of using L1 as a source of humour, particularly for students with low English-language proficiency. This use worked not only at the educational level, but also at the personal level, as it showed that teacher-initiated humour led to better interpersonal relationships and less distance between the teacher and the students.

**Conclusion**

Despite the scepticism surrounding the use of humour in academia, this paper is an addition to the body of work that calls for the use of humour in education in general and in EFL in particular. It offers further evidence from EFL classrooms in which the use of L1 as a source of humour minimised the tension witnessed in several instructional settings and increased the interactional competence in the classroom. Furthermore, the paper shows that teacher-initiated humour did not undermine the instructors’ authority; nor did it hinder efforts to develop understanding. In fact, these data provides insight into how the competent use of L1 as a source of humour resulted in a tremendous amount of interactional work, particularly from the students’ side. It also led to the creation of a warm classroom atmosphere in which the fear of losing face as a result of lacking L2 knowledge was not witnessed. By contrast, the students in this dataset, proved to be fearless about making mistakes.

The teacher’s use of L1 as a source of humour notably increased the students’ ability to take unsolicited turns that were relevant to the on-going interaction. It helped them to display their interactional competence and understanding of the interactional routine by obtaining the teachers’ attention verbally and non-verbally, taking unsolicited turns and initiating humour. These
interactional features are considered to be extremely important aspects of interactional competence (Young, 1999).

Finally, the study has pedagogical implications, as it shed light on the ubiquitous yet little-studied interactional endeavour of using humour in EFL. Taking note of the detailed interactional features of the use of L1 as a source of humour and raising teachers’ awareness of it will surely lead to better EFL teaching and learning. Finally, understanding the benefits of the competent use of L1 as a source of humour will help teachers to allow the less-proficient learners to participate without experiencing the usual loss of face associated with individual participation in L2.

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References
The use of L1 as a Source of Humour to Facilitate Interaction in EFL Classrooms

Jawhar


**APPENDIX (A)**

**TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS**
Adapted from Paul ten Have (1999)

- falling intonation contour
- ‘continuing’ intonation contour
! animated tone
?
rising intonation contour
:
lengthening of preceding syllable
-
abrupt cut-off

**Bold**
emphasise

CAPS
louder than surrounding talk

○ ○
quieter than the surrounding talk

> <
quicker than surrounding talk

[ ]
onset and end of overlap

==
latched utterances

(1.5)Silence, timed in seconds and tenths of a second

((())) Learner’s first language

(XXXX) Unclear talk

T teacher

S1: identified student

S? : unidentified student
EFL Student Teachers’ Lesson Planning Processes: A Grounded Theory Study

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Abstract
Lesson planning employs both pedagogical and content knowledge. The processes are complex and student teachers, undergoing practicum, struggle to plan. However, studies that explain processes drawn from a qualitative inquiry to explain the practice are rare. The purpose of this study is to generate a theory to explain Thai EFL student teachers’ lesson planning by adopting the grounded theory. The research questions include 1) How do the Thai EFL student teachers design their lesson plans? 2) How do the student teachers implement the lesson plans? and 3) What action do the student teachers take after implementing the lesson plans? The research instruments are semi-structured interviews as well as observations of 22 student teachers majoring in Teaching English. The data is analyzed by means of coding to identify emerging categories and generate a substantive theory. A constant comparative analysis of the data generates a grounded theory of EFL student teachers’ lesson planning, illustrating cyclical processes of four stages. The first stage is pre-planning, where personnel and institutions have an influence by giving information necessary for planning. The second stage is planning, showing both linear and non-linear processes. The third stage is implementing plans, observed by school and university supervisors. Student teachers agree, partly disagree or entirely disagree with feedback and use or do not use the feedback to improve subsequent plans. Finally, the last stage is reflecting/evaluating, showing modes of communication and a reflective process for both problems and success.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), grounded theory, lesson planning, lesson plans, student teachers, supervisors

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Introduction

Teacher preparation programs have been prioritized when qualified learners are in need because qualified teachers lead to development in students (Darling-Hammond, 1997). To illustrate, teachers directly interact with students in classrooms, establish a pleasant climate, design appropriate activities and select effective materials in order that student learning is supported to success. Student teachers in the teacher education program, therefore, have to learn about the teaching components and put them into practice. Boyd et al. (2008) and Ball, Knobloch & Hoop (2007) assert that teachers, who have had an opportunity to practice teaching in an actual school setting, can better apply theories into real practice in classrooms. The application of pedagogical and content knowledge prior to teaching must be learned and practiced, accordingly. Lesson planning is one of the components teachers have to come across as student teachers. It allows them to apply pedagogical theories into teaching students in classrooms. Writing a lesson plan involves integrating content, adopting methods of teaching, stating materials and planning assessment (Kammanee, 2001).

As such, lesson planning reaffirms quality in teaching and learning achievements (Jensen, 2001) because all teaching and subject-matter components are included in a plan and its implementation enables students to learn. To learn how to plan a lesson, then, is important to novice teachers, especially student teachers, who have little experience in teaching. Specifically, lesson planning is necessary for language instruction due to students’ rare exposure to the target language in a foreign language setting. Student teachers have to plan for students to have sufficient practice in a set up environment so that students can use the language in a limited physical setting (Ciaffaroni, 2004). Studies report problems in student teachers’ lesson planning: spending a long time thinking about a plan; struggling to write clear learning outcomes; writing irrelevant objectives to content, activities and standards and indicators; and lacking skills in planning English learning process and managing classrooms (Faikhamta, Jantarakantee & Roadrangka, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2006; Songserm, 2012). The studies focus on finding out problems student teachers have during lesson planning by means of the quantitative method. A profound qualitative inquiry on the area is still needed to understand lesson planning processes better.

Accordingly, previous studies on the area of lesson planning have not indicated descriptions of what student teachers are doing or thinking while planning, or what they are thinking or how they are reacting to other factors involving in lesson planning so that implications can be drawn as tied from the data. The previous studies are not concerned with lesson planning of language student teachers, either. To illustrate: Faikhamta’s et al. (2011) study focuses on student teachers’ level of satisfaction towards a teacher education program in Thailand, Ministry of Education (2006) describes problems of general in-service English teachers and Songserm (2012) reports problems in lesson planning of general student teachers.

What’s more, an interesting mixed-method study by Naeem (2014) identifies English student teachers’ problems concerning insufficient time allotted to activities; supervisors’ resistance to new teaching techniques and absence in expected class observation; negative effects of low voice; and students’ problem behavior, lack of motivation and poor skills. The results seem to involve student teachers majoring in Teaching English and relevant to explain implementation
of plans. Still, the results are based on statistical data and writing to identify reasons for the problems. Explanations for specific causes of problems are not investigated.

Also rare are studies that explore student teachers’ lesson planning in teaching a foreign language, such as English, which is the specific topic of this study. Despite works that inquire about English student teachers, the information is not sufficient to explain the processes of lesson planning. Richards & Bohlke (2011) and Kim (2011) reveal student teachers’ adoption of certain methods of teaching in lessons and need to seek meaning of teaching languages by considering their own thoughts. The conclusion encourages further study on student teachers’ thinking and doing while planning.

In fact, there are studies directly relevant to processes of lesson planning. Clark & Peterson (1986) argue that teachers’ thinking and acting are influenced by constraints and opportunities in a context. The processes of planning a lesson comprise of teacher’s thinking before and after teaching, interactive thoughts and decisions while teaching and theories and beliefs. Furthermore, teachers’ actions are influenced by students’ classroom behavior, student achievement and outcomes, teachers’ classroom behavior and outcomes and nature of teachers’ lesson plans. Based on Clark & Peterson’s (1986) work, Ball et al. (2007) figure out inexperienced teachers’ thinking and doing while planning a lesson and propose the following actions: thinking about aims of writing a plan; prioritizing and conceptualizing content; making daily or hourly plans; and coping and adapting from formal to practical plan formats. Other than that, influences on lesson planning include knowledge and experience; time tables of schools; school administrators; availability of facilities, technology and resources; students; personality; and impracticality of planning methods. What’s more, Richards (2015) argues teachers’ practice is shaped up by information, attitudes, values, theories and assumptions about teaching and learning, that is, a belief system, stemmed from experience, school practice, personality, thoughts about education, and other sources. A teacher may interpret content of a teacher education program differently due to his/her belief and establish his/her own practice.

The abovementioned studies focus on in-service teachers’ lesson planning processes concerning factors in their processes and steps they take during the lesson planning processes. Still, a study about lesson planning of pre-service teachers or student teachers is needed because they have less experience and are still learning. An in-depth study in natural setting will yield better understanding of lesson planning processes and a theory for explaining what is going on before, while and after student teachers plan a lesson.

**Purpose of the study**
To generate a theory to explain Thai EFL student teachers’ lesson planning.

**Research questions**
1. How do the Thai EFL student teachers design their lesson plans?
1.1 What factors influence the student teachers’ lesson planning?
1.2 What is the procedure in the student teachers’ lesson planning?
2. How do the student teachers implement the lesson plans?
3. What action do the student teachers take after implementing the lesson plans?
Research methodology

Because of scarce theories from studies to explain Thai EFL lesson planning processes, the researcher needs to generate a theory based on actual data. Therefore, the method used to conduct this study is the grounded theory. According to Corbin & Strauss (2015), the grounded theory approach is appropriate for exploring participants’ inner experiences, formation and transformation of meanings and areas, which have not been clearly investigated. This study aims to find an explanation of the processes of lesson planning, such as student teachers’ thinking during the process of completing a plan, other factors influencing lesson planning and other emerging elements not yet found or clearly explored. The following are the practical components of this study to find the answers for the research questions.

1. **Participants.** Participants of this study are 22 undergraduate students majoring in Teaching English in a five-year Bachelor of Education program provided by the Faculty of Education of a state university located in the West of Thailand. For the first four years on campus, the students enroll in various teacher education courses, including foundations courses, free electives, general teacher education courses, English skills courses and English pedagogical courses. Before the 5th year starts, the students enroll in the Practicum course and choose schools for practicing teaching for two terms or the whole academic year. During mid-February until mid-March each year, the practicum officially commences when the students, now called student teachers, escorted by university supervisors, visit the schools and meet with school supervisors for the first time.

The participants are purposively sampled, with the intention that they would “provide maximum insight and understanding of what is being studied” (Ary et al., 2006, p. 472). To be specific, the criterion sampling technique is adopted to select the participants, who meet predetermined criterion of importance and can provide rich information for this study (Patton, 2001). Actually, there are thirty student teachers majoring in Teaching English at the time of data collection but eight of them are under the researcher’s supervision. They, therefore, are left out for fear that their responses may not be based on their own thoughts but highlighted for the researcher’s satisfaction. This is called biasing effects, positive or negative results caused by both interviewer and interviewee’s preconceived notions about the interviewer’s role (Berg, 2007). The researcher of this study interviews the student teachers by himself.

2. **Context.** The twenty-two participants or student teachers go to nine schools, including elementary, lower secondary and high school levels. Three of them practice teaching at a vocational school. All student teachers are under a school supervisor and a university supervisor, to both of whom lesson plans are submitted and who observes implementation of plans regularly. Usually, students in schools have 2 – 4 hours of English classes a week. The number becomes the frequency of lesson plans student teachers have to write and submit.

3. **Research instruments.** A semi-structured interview is used as it allows the researcher to consistently collect data covering the topics of lesson planning, which have been set up as questions according to literature review and practice. When the questions listed are covered, additional issues can be asked until each concept is thoroughly clarified (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).
The concepts, then, provide meaningful understanding of lesson planning processes and eventually help generate a theory. The objective of the semi-structured interview for this study is to find: 1) factual information about the participants, including levels of students, average number of students per class, teaching hours and days of teaching, and 2) the processes of writing a lesson plan.

Other than that, observations are also used to investigate what student teachers actually do with the plans in classroom. In other words, observations allow the researcher to gather data of how a lesson plan is implemented to see if it is like what the student teachers have described in the interview or not (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). During observation, the student teacher provide the lesson plan that the researcher uses as a prompt for generating more questions for the second interview. The researcher also records video of the observation for writing field notes later.

4. **Data collection.** The collection of data consists of three phases: the first interview, the observation and the second interview.

4.1 The first interview is administered to gather data in order to answer the first research question: “How do the Thai EFL student teachers design their lesson plans?” The objective of the initial interview is also to find answers for the two sub-questions: “What factors influence the student teachers’ lesson planning?” and “What is the procedure in the student teachers’ lesson planning?” All interviews are recorded on audio files, each of which lasts about one and a half to two hours.

4.2 The observation is conducted to see how a lesson plan is implemented and to collect data for the second research question: “How do the student teachers implement the lesson plans?” The researcher contacts a student teacher and agrees on a date and time for observation. Usually, the contact will be made a day before the observation. The researcher has all student teachers’ timetables, so it is easy to set a date, on which they definitely have a class. The observation is recorded on a visual file, which lasts about fifty minutes. During the observation, the researcher is sitting in the back. The student teacher leaves the lesson plan for the day on the table for consultation.

4.3 The second interview is administered to investigate more about any concepts introduced by the student teachers during the first interview and the observation. The data collected at this phase is also used to answer the third research question: “What action do the student teachers take after implementing the lesson plans?”

5. **Data analysis.** To begin with, the interviews are transcribed. Pseudonyms are used and selected by the participants themselves. Based on a cyclical process of data analysis, similarities and differences are looked for among responses from the transcription. After that, themes and relationships among these categories are examined. The researcher, then, gains insights, conditional propositions and questions for more data collection. The construction of tentative theoretical statements is reached at this point. More data is collected to find meanings and understandings of the theoretical propositions. The researcher tries to explain the theoretical
constructs by comparing with more empirical data until no more new contributions from the data emerges, that is, theoretical saturation (Ary et al., 2006).

To illustrate, the researcher starts with open coding to find major categories from the transcriptions. Then, axial coding emerges as one open coding, called the core phenomenon, is focused. The data is searched again to find categories around the core phenomenon. Types of the categories include causal conditions, strategies, intervening conditions and consequences. The final step is selective coding, in which the researcher takes the model and develops propositions or hypotheses that interrelate the categories in the model or assemble a story that describes the interrelationship of categories in the model. This theory, developed by the researcher, is articulated toward the end of this study and “could assume several forms, one of which was a narrative statement” (Creswell, 2013, p. 86). For example, students, school supervisors, university supervisors and student teachers form the category personnel. Then, all the categories are put together. The result of this step is the diagram of lesson planning processes with factors influencing student teachers’ lesson planning. Further data is collected to add codes and categories. The steps of analysis are not strictly in order. The researcher reexamines data, codes, categories and the whole diagram.

Results

The theory about processes of lesson planning is generated from the interview and observational data. There are four stages of lesson planning (see Figure 1). First, in the pre-planning stage, student teachers gain information from two main sources: personnel (school supervisors, university supervisors, student teachers) and institutions (Schools and the Faculty of Education). Second, in the planning stage, student teachers think about the information obtained in the pre-planning stage or it has an influence on lesson planning components. Third, in the implementing stage, lesson plans are implemented in real classrooms and the implementation is observed by school and university supervisors. Finally, in the reflecting/evaluating stage, student teachers think about the result of the implementation, where they reflect, evaluate or record after-teaching notes for writing next lesson plans. Details of each stage are as follows.

![Figure 1: Lesson planning processes](image)
1. Pre-planning. In the first stage, student teachers are provided with information from personnel and institutions. The information is received by student teachers. The information is related to various components in lesson planning (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Information from sources in pre-planning stage](image)

1.1 Personnel

1.1.1 School supervisors. The information about textbooks, curriculum, students and equipment and physical settings is provided to student teachers by school supervisors. It influences student teachers’ thinking about different components that should be included in lesson plans: use of textbooks as a resource of content, use of curriculum as a resource of indicators, tactics to deal with students of different levels and possibility of use of teaching aids. First, school supervisors suggest use of textbooks for designating amount of content for weekly plans and language points to focus. The student teachers, then, write lesson plans at the suggested number and language points.

Nicky: “She [school supervisor] also tells me to write about 10 – 12 plans for a unit. In fact, the number may be lesser.”

Polita: “My school supervisor tells me to focus on grammar.”

Second, when asked for school curriculum by student teachers, school supervisors suggest using the 2551 B.E. core curriculum to identify indicators as guidelines for writing objectives for long plans and weekly plans. Despite existence of school curriculum, the core curriculum is encouraged for use as a main source. The student teachers use the core curriculum to write indicators accordingly.

Andy: “The school supervisor gives school curriculum to me but she tells me it is based on the core curriculum. I’m encouraged to use the core curriculum, then.”
Third, the information about students guides student teachers to design a variety of activities, linguistic explanation, examples and pace of instruction for students with different levels of proficiency and motivation.

Pooky: “So, I plan various activities as told [by school supervisor]. It’s like I plan to teach a grammar point and I should plan to have them [students] speak in a situation, not to write correct sentences.”
Nicky: “My school supervisor tells me to prepare explanations for students. … Yes, they are intermediate students.”
Helen: “My school supervisor tells me to use easy words for beginner students and I have to teach slowly, too.”

Finally, the information about availability, unavailability and limitation of equipment and physical settings influence student teachers to plan activities, electronic and non-electronic teaching aids and to be careful of using office supplies.

Gasoline: “My school supervisor tells me there are computers and visualizers in all rooms. Great! It’s convenient to prepare PowerPoint files.”
Jane: “I plan to use paper as teaching aids first when my school supervisor says not all computers and visualizers work well.”
Grace: “My school supervisor tells me A4 paper is provided, but only 50 sheets. I like that but I have to use it carefully.”

1.1.2 University supervisors. Student teachers say that university supervisors give knowledge of teaching methods, knowledge of language learning prior to practicum and inform them of rules for submission and change in the plan format. The information has a direct influence on student teachers establishing a lesson plan with methods of teaching English, expected practice in submitting plans and coping and adapting with change in the plan format. First, student teachers gain knowledge from courses conducted by university supervisors. Accordingly, the student teachers apply the knowledge in planning lessons. Otherwise, they have no idea how to teach with correct teaching techniques that may affect student learning. They describe the main concepts of methods of teaching English and teaching techniques.

Tharee: “The motivation phase is for making students interested. The input phase is for showing structures. The focus phase is for practicing and the transfer phase is for … umm … using English. … It helps me write plan correctly.”
Chanom: “I try to make my activities communicative as I learned from the university. … Students should communicate to each other. The activity should let students talk to each other.”
Boy: “I’ve got the SQR3 technique from the [Methods of Teaching English] course. … It’s good because I know how to teach students read.”

Next, university supervisors tell student teachers about rules of submission, such as time and frequency. This makes them more disciplined; however, some student teachers learn that some
university supervisors do not check plans regularly, hence rare submission of plans and search for feedback from school supervisors instead.

Andy: “My university supervisor tells me to submit plans two weeks before and to meet her every week to listen to feedback.”

View: “My university supervisor doesn’t usually check lesson plans. ... My seniors tell me. ... I still send the plan anyway via emails. ... But, I can see feedback from my school supervisor instead.”

The change in the plan format is also informed. The slight change to the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) format do not affect planning much, but the complete change from the detailed to shortened plan formats helps student teachers save time and encourages them to write plans. The normal format consists of four phases: information/motivation, input/control, focus/working and transfer/application.

Pooky: “My university supervisor tells me to change to PPP. ... It’s OK. Both formats are similar for me.”

Helen: “The shortened format is better. I write instructions with dashes. I can save paper and time. The detailed plan is too much.”

1.1.3 Student teachers. Student teachers talk about three groups of student teachers, each of whom has an influence on lesson planning in terms of being a source or not being a source of information, having moral support and seeking advantages of information about supervisors. First, student teachers talk about themselves, being a source of information for planning. They recall teaching techniques that can be used in lesson plans immediately.

Anna: “I remember what I learned from the Methods of Teaching English course. I plan activities that help students learn English.”

However, some student teachers say that they do not have any ideas to design activities because they are not sure about knowledge learned from the teacher education program and that their personality affects decisions in designing particular activities.

Mali: “I’m not sure if students will communicate in English. ... I don’t know if games can make them communicate.”

Tharee: “I try to make the motivation activity fun but it’s hard. Probably, it is because I’m not a funny person.”

Second, the student teachers talk about their classmates, who practice teaching at the same school. Chatting at school or on social networking and observing classes of one another becomes a source of information for writing plans. Therefore, they can have ideas to write plans easily. Other than that, when they have problems, they have the classmates to talk to. Though the problems are not solved, they have someone to understand them. It is for moral support.
Andy: “I get the idea from Boy, my classmate, when he teaches his class.”
Jane: “My classmates and I talk about problems ... about lesson plans. It’s good. We have someone to talk to.”

Finally, student teachers’ senior graduates also give useful information about school or university supervisors’ favorite techniques so that they can use the techniques in lesson plans to improve their grades.

Jane: “I plan to use VDO clips because I know he [university supervisor] likes clips. ... The senior graduates tell me about that.”

1.2 Institutions
1.2.1 Schools. Student teachers receive information about rules and learn about practices in schools during practicum. The information influences student teachers’ practice in submission of plans, designing of activities and time management. First, a school imposes that lesson plans be submitted to school supervisors three weeks before implementation. The plans are kept at the administrative office as evidence for annual education quality assurance. The strict rule activates the student teachers to write plans and submit them in time.

Nicky and Pooky: “I must plan my timetable ahead so that I can write plans to meet deadlines.”

However, the rule does not seem to affect a student teacher. He fails to meet deadlines.
Gasoline: “… My school supervisor warns me that I need to submit plans. Well, I try. But,... umm ... I’m busy.”

What’s more, student teachers learn about school policies, some of which influence lesson planning, such as a no-homework policy.

Chanom: “I must plan to finish everything within class time because students are not supposed to have homework.”

Student teachers also talk about a practice of cancelling classes on short notice at schools for special activities or official major events, where students must participate, such as decoration of flowers for Teacher Appreciation Day, preparation for sports day, use of rooms for national ethics tests, etc. This affects time management in planning and implementing the plans. Student teachers have solutions for the problem: planning to shorten each phase of teaching; rushing or speeding up implementation of some phases; omitting the last phase of teaching (the transfer or production phase); combining the last two phases of teaching (the focus or practice phase and the transfer or production phase); and combing two plans on the same day.

Paul: “... I have to go fast for each phase, like 1 – 3 minutes for the motivation activity and ten minutes each for the input and practice phases.”
Tiny and Polita: “At time constraints, I don’t implement the production phase.”
Jane: “I combine the focus and transfer phases at time constraints.”
Kara: “... Time isn’t enough. So, I combine lesson plans. I have to think about combining two lesson plans for a class.”
1.2.2 Faculty of Education. Information about rules and practice is delivered to student teachers by the Faculty of Education in the orientation. The information influences student teachers in the pre-planning stage. First, a rule of writing detailed plans has both positive and negative effects. Some student teachers say that detailed plans help them with delivering instruction to students because what they plan to teach is written in conversations on plans. Nevertheless, some student teachers feel discouraged writing the detailed plans because they spend a long time writing plans. This affects personal time for relaxing or rest.

Pooky: “It [writing detailed lesson plans] helps me remember what to teach. I can say Steps 1, 2, 3, correctly. I don’t have to look at the plan.”
Andy: “I don’t want to write detailed plans. There are a lot of details to write about, like things to say, things to do, steps to teach. It’s discouraging to write.”

2. Planning. Student teachers think about all information from the first stage and produce lesson plans, which comprise of various actions concerning components in a lesson plan. Figure 3 explains the planning stage in the lesson planning processes.

Figure 3: Planning stage
To begin with, student teachers study information obtained from the pre-planning stage. Next, they plan either according to the following two practices: (1) formulating objectives, designing activities and producing teaching aids; or (2) producing teaching aids and then designing activities.

In one practice, student teachers formulate objectives and design activities for each phase. They also think about time allotted to each phase. At the same time, class management is thought about each activity. Then, they produce teaching aids. Some student teachers say that after formulating objectives, they design activities along with producing teaching aids.

In the other practice, after formulating objectives, student teachers produce teaching aids, mostly concerning electronic ones, and then design activities. They look at textbooks, thinking about the information obtained earlier, and produce PowerPoint slides. Some student teachers say after looking at textbooks, they think about activities and then produce PowerPoint slides all along. They reason that the practice is time-saving and convenient because they use the PowerPoint slides as main teaching aids. The slides can show teaching procedures.

Then, for both practices, student teachers plan assessment. They say they use the objectives to write the rubric for the assessments. Next, they write out formal lesson plans, which contain all components. Finally, the plans are submitted to school and university supervisors for checking. There are two different practices at this stage: (1) receiving feedback and (2) not receiving feedback.

Student teachers receive feedback and think about it. If they agree with the feedback, they rewrite the components receiving comments, resulting in reiterating a cyclical process. Though they partly disagree with feedback, they still rewrite the plan. As for the reason, student teachers say that supervisors have been teaching for a long time and student teachers respect them. At times, student teachers say that they entirely disagree with feedback. Their decisions depend on their beliefs. The feedback may not be congruent with what they have known or practiced before. In this case, they do not rewrite the plan and implement it in the next stage.

Polita: “It’s hard to change according to my university supervisor’s feedback because I write grammar plans like my school supervisor. He also uses grammar exercises for students in his class.”
Tharee: “…Eventually, I don’t write 2 or 3 plans [differentiation suggested by university supervisor]. … It’s hard to find time.”
Fasai: “… I’m thinking the topics are not connected. Talking about nutrients and then asking about prices. … I change the topics as told, anyway. She’s my school supervisor. She’s been a teacher for so long.”

When student teachers do not receive feedback, they seek it from other supervisors. For example, if school supervisors rarely checks their lesson plans, student teachers can look at university supervisors’ feedback instead, and vice versa. The next practice is similar to receiving feedback: agreeing, partly disagreeing or entirely disagreeing with feedback and rewriting the plan or implementing the plan in the next stage.
3. **Implementing plans.** In this stage, student teachers implement lesson plans in classrooms. The implementation is observed by supervisors. Next, the process is similar to planning in terms of feedback (see Figure 4). After receiving feedback from supervisors, student teachers either agree or disagree with the feedback, think about it and use it or do not use it in writing next plans. In case of no feedback, student teachers have to seek one from other supervisors.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 4**: Implementing stage

4. **Reflecting/Evaluating.** For the reflecting/evaluating stage, there are four steps for reflection on problems: identifying problems, specifying causes, seeking possible solutions and evaluating solutions. There are three steps for reflection on success: identifying success factors, specifying causes and evaluating causes.

Figure 5 illustrates two modes of reflection: mental reflection and written out reflection. Student teachers think about their implementation and write after-teaching notes on the last page of lesson plans. When student teachers share reflections, they identify problems, specify causes, seek solutions, evaluate solutions by implementing the solutions in class to see whether they work out or not and share reflection with classmates (in private time) or in a seminar, officially attended by classmates and supervisors. The dashed lines suggest that some student teachers share reflection after they identify problems and receive solutions from classmates or the seminar. On the other hand, student teachers identify success factors; specify causes; and evaluate causes by implementing them in class. When student teachers do not share reflection, they go through all steps of the process without interruption of sharing to anyone. The end of the two alternatives is to use information for writing future plans.
Discussion

According to the purpose of this study, a theory to explain Thai EFL student teachers’ lesson planning processes is generated (see Figure 6). The results indicate a theory of lesson planning as a cyclical process, where there are four stages. First, in the pre-planning stage, student teachers gain information to design a lesson plan. Second, in the planning stage, they design a lesson plan comprising of such components as objectives, activities, time management, class management, teaching aids and assessment. They also revisit and rewrite the components to improve the plan. Third, in the implementing stage, they implement the lesson plan in classrooms with students. Finally, in the reflecting/evaluating stage, they reflect upon the implementation. The reflection, then, is used in the pre-planning stage of the next cycle of the processes.
This is similar to John’s (2006) lesson planning process of student teachers, where components in a lesson plan are designed in a non-linear, cyclical process, consisting of early and extended phases. Student teachers gather information and design the components of a lesson plan. Their professional values (e.g., beliefs, opportunities) and students learning have an influence on the process. They also reflect upon each component when they revisit, for example, objectives, student learning or activities, until the lesson plan is completed. However, John’s (2006) lesson planning process does not illustrate implementation of plans. There are similar features between this study’s processes and Clark & Yinger’s (1980) model on teacher lesson planning. First, the initial stage is pre-planning, where student teachers gather information about student teachers,
students, curriculum and environmental factors. Next, student teachers think about the information to write a plan to be implemented in a classroom. Finally, student teachers reflect upon the implementation. The difference includes that Clark & Yinger’s (1980) model is a linear process, whereas this study’s processes are cyclical, showing student teachers’ going back and forth in planning and rewriting a plan.

The following are details of each stage generated from the results of this study.

In the pre-planning stage, student teachers gain information from relevant personnel and institutions to design a plan. The information is concerning resources for content, student characteristics, components for producing teaching aids, pedagogical and content knowledge, rules and practices and supervisory styles. The information influences components in a plan. This is consistent with John (2006), who describes school supervisors’ as a source of information concerning subject content, curriculum, students’ learning and resources available for producing instructional materials. Apart from school supervisors, John’s (2006) process does not mention other groups in personnel, nor does it mention institutions. However, Clark & Yinger (1980) imply that student teachers, school supervisors and schools as institutions influence lesson planning because they provide information for student teachers to design a plan. The information is concerned with experience, personality, knowledge of subject, repertoire of teaching skills, student characteristics, curriculum and environmental factors. The results are consistent with Santoyo & Zhang (2016), who argue that teacher education programs provides necessary information for lesson planning, such as knowledge in teaching, knowledge and skills in subject matter and all elements concerning teaching and student learning.

In the planning stage, student teachers study the information gained from the pre-planning stage. Then, there are two practices. One practice is that they formulate objectives, design activities along with planning time and class management, produce teaching aids and plan assessment. This is the linear process introduced by Tyler (1949), whose four steps include “specifying objectives, selecting learning activities, organizing learning activities and specifying evaluation procedures” (as cited in Uhrmacher, Conrad & Moroye, 2013, p.11). John (2006) asserts student teachers need to learn to design a lesson plan in the linear process before they can develop their own alternative process.

The other practice is that after studying the information, some student teachers produce teaching aids first and then go through the rest of components. Similarly, many experienced teachers and student teachers do not adopt the linear process because there are more factors interrupting lesson planning: time constraints, institutional concerns, attitudes, moods or expected events (Clark & Yinger, 1980; Hall & Smith, 2006; John, 2006).

After that, student teachers submit plans to school and university supervisors and receive feedback. However, when feedback is not provided, student teachers seek it from other supervisors. Similarly, Dias-Lacy & Guirguis (2017) maintain that new teachers, who lack support from experienced teachers, will seek support from other sources. This is one of the coping mechanisms novice teachers use to handle problems. What’s more, when feedback is neither sufficient nor effective, feedback or relevant information from other sources is searched for, such as from supervisors, student teachers themselves or classmates. “These feedback approaches are
important strategies for providing student teachers with the information they need about their classroom behavior” (Freiberg, Waxman & Houston, 1987, p.79).

In the implementing stage, student teachers implement the lesson plan, which is observed by school and university supervisors, who provide feedback. Student teachers receive feedback, with which they agree or partly disagree. Then, they use the feedback to improve next lesson plans. However, student teachers, who entirely disagree with feedback, do not use the feedback to improve next plans. This is consistent with Bailey’s (2006) outcomes of supervision. The student teacher agrees with the supervisor and makes changes completely, gradually or partially or disagrees with the supervisor but still makes changes or disagrees and refuses to change anything. The student teacher sees the value of changing as suggested or he/she does not see the value of making changes. Student teachers also make decisions based on their beliefs (Clark & Peterson,1986; Perry & Rog, 1992; Richards, 2015). They practice according to the information, values, theories and assumptions about teaching and learning. Knudson (1998) also maintains that student teachers receive feedback differently. Some have trouble accepting constructive criticism. Those who receive feedback and communicate to supervisors have a better chance to improve their teaching.

In the reflecting/evaluating stage, student teachers reflect upon lesson plans, analyzing both problems and success in implementing the plans. This stage is similar to Hall & Smith’s (2006) instruction process: planning, instruction and reflection. Student teachers think about knowledge and application, difficulties and solutions for improving the teaching profession (Roberts, 2016; Ryken & Hamel, 2016).

From the results, the process of reflection is to identify problems, specify causes, seek solutions, evaluate solutions and use the information for future plans. It is similar to Lee’s (2005) process of reflective thinking: problem context, problem reframing, seeking solutions, experimentation, evaluation and acceptance / rejection; and similar to Schön’s (1987) reflective thinking approach: problematic situation, frame / reframe the problem, experimentation and review consequences / implementation (as cited in Lee, 2005). Though the terms are different, the steps in this study’s reflective process cover all actions of reflection. Lee (2005) and Schön (1987) focus only on reflecting problems; however, reflection on success is also found from the results of this study. This is consistent with Wegner, Remmert & Strehlke’s (2014) study, which portrays a self-reflection process of student teachers, with assistance from supervisors: implementing plans, reflecting on implementation and evaluating plans in terms of both problems and success, specifying reasons, comparing own reflections to methodologies and considering ways for improvement. The difference is that student teachers in this study do not reveal how they consider pedagogical methodologies as opposed to or in accordance with their reflection.

From the results, student teachers reflect by thinking in their heads or writing out reflection. Kanthorn (2015) explains that a person can think about things toward him/herself, called self or individual reflection. Reflection can be communicated onto a written form, called a reflection journal or a written format, or by speaking, called an oral format (Lee, 2005). Moreover, student teachers also share reflection with classmates in private time and in a seminar, where all student teachers and university supervisors meet and share problems and success in lesson planning. Some
student teachers gain solutions from the sharing. Freiberg, Waxman & Houston (1987) support the results, saying that student teachers search for feedback or relevant information from a classroom analysis system with supervisors, self-analysis and peer discussion such as in official seminars. In the same way, Spangler (2013) argues that seminars, organized by a university, or any other teacher community systems, like online networking, set up a sharing platform, from which student teachers can gain knowledge about teaching and learning and problem-solving. Meyer & Sawyer (2006) also assert that reflection about teaching, with help from fellow student teachers and supervisors, can improve future instruction.

**Implications**

The lesson planning theory generated from this study can be used to explain student teachers’ lesson planning processes. Better understanding can also be made among personnel and institutions involved in the processes. Different practices in planning in different student teachers should be accepted since there is more than one alternative to explain lesson planning practices. In terms of student teachers, they can be educated to think about the influence of many factors before planning, be confident in their own designing of a lesson plan that suits context and student learning while planning, implement plans and consider supervisors’ feedback deliberately while implementing plans and reflect upon or evaluate all lesson plans based on pedagogical knowledge to improve future lesson plans. Accordingly, a teacher education program can be improved based on the theory.

**Recommendations**

Faculty of Education should emphasize on the importance of lesson planning to student teachers and set up a collaborative community consisting of student teachers, university and school supervisors. All personnel from relevant institutions will be involved in communicating to one another.

For further studies, an investigation can focus on the thought process of supervisors’ giving information to and supervising student teachers. Moreover, studies based on a mixed method design can be conducted to test the theory in larger populations of student teachers and any other personnel involved in the lesson planning process.

**Conclusion**

Lesson planning is a complex process, especially for student teachers who are inexperienced and still learning. This study, therefore, generates a theory to explain the process. The theory derives from interviews with student teachers, who have practicum in an actual school setting. It explains student teachers’ cyclical lesson planning processes, consisting of four stages: pre-planning, planning, implementing and reflecting/evaluating. Factors include personnel and institutions, from whom/which student teachers receive information concerning components in a lesson plan; knowledge of pedagogy and subject matter; rules concerning submission and formats of plans; and practices about school schedule and selection of schools. Student teachers also receive feedback from school supervisors and university supervisors as well. However, their beliefs affect their decision-making: either they will agree, partly disagree or entirely disagree with the feedback or whether they will improve the lesson plan or not.
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**References**


Integrating Critical Thinking Skills in Reading Courses at the University Level
The Case of Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Beni-Mellal, Morocco

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Abstract
Critical thinking has been used and debated since the time of great philosophers such as Plato and Socrates. Its real origin is deeply rooted in the logic and questioning process used by these early philosophers. In recent times many scholars and researchers have conducted studies concerning the benefits and effects of critical thinking skills in different disciplines to the extent that now we are speaking about critical thinking movement whose benefits are much discussed in educational curricula. In language learning, activities that enrich learners’ conceptual knowledge ranging from listening, reading, speaking, and writing tasks can foster critical thinking skills. Within this framework, a study was carried out at Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Faculty of Letters and Humanities in Beni-Mellal. The aim of this study is twofold. First, to see the possibility of integrating critical thinking skills in reading courses; second, to investigate the attitudes of the students towards such integration of critical thinking. Two research tools were used: an experiment followed by a questionnaire. The findings revealed that after the experiment, which consisted of exposing the students to tasks involving critical thinking when dealing with the reading skill, the students developed an awareness of critical thinking skills and dispositions. They developed the ability of interpretation, analysis, inquisitiveness, truth-seeking, problem-solving, evaluating information and decision making. Besides, their attitudes towards the integration of critical thinking while dealing with reading were reported to be positive.

Keywords: attitude, awareness, critical thinking, reading

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1. Introduction

Over the past few years, there has been a growing concern in the integration of what are called 21st century skills in education ranging from the development of various types of competencies, soft skills and critical thinking skills. Orientations towards these various issues have become a necessity of modern education. The current research based paper deals with the issue of critical thinking as a basic cognitive skill in language education. It reports the findings of a study that was carried out at Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Faculty of Letters and Humanities in Beni-Mellal, Morocco. This study consists of a systematic integration of critical thinking in reading courses through the adoption of the interactive approach to this skill. The attitudes of the students towards such integration of critical thinking were also investigated.

The organization of this paper will be as follows. The state of art related to critical thinking skills will be presented first showing its importance in education. After this, we present the study we conducted starting from the statement of the research problem, specifying the research questions, the research tools, the setting and the participants. Later on, a section will be devoted to the presentation and discussion of the findings showing the attitudes of the students towards integrating critical thinking in the reading skill. Finally, the paper will conclude with some pedagogical implications based on the benefits of integrating critical thinking in reading through the interactive approach.

2. What is critical thinking?

Critical thinking is not a new concept. It dates back to the remote past, especially to the Greek philosophy where it was deeply rooted in Socratic questioning which constitutes the heart of critical thinking. Nowadays critical thinking is considered a basic 21st century skill to the extent that it is a primary goal of higher education (Flores, Matkin, Burbach, Quinn, & Harding, 2012; van Gelder, 2005). Critical thinking is generally defined as a complex competence consisting of knowledge, skills, and dispositions (McPeck, 1990). This concept has received the attention of many scholars resulting into numerous definitions.

Actually the variety of definitions of critical thinking indicates that there is always a debate concerning its precise meaning and scope. Some of these definitions emphasize the skills of critical thinking whereas others emphasize its process. Other definitions focus on its dispositions. To mention some of these definitions, there is that of Facione (1986, p. 222) who defines critical thinking as “the ability to properly construct and evaluate arguments”. The focus here is on the evaluation of information. According to Paul, Adamson, and Martin (1989), critical thinking consists of the art of thinking about thinking in order to improve thinking. The focus is on the process of thinking, its clarity and the meta-cognitive aspect. For Ennis (1992), critical thinking is a mental activity of evaluating arguments or propositions. The focus, here, is on the evaluation of information before taking action. Scriven and Paul (1997) give a broader definition of critical thinking. They define it as "the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication as a guide to belief and action." (p. 1)
It should be mentioned that a researcher’s own field of study or discipline strongly influences how critical thinking is defined and what it can be used for (Halonen, 1995; Moore, 2013). For example, according to educational researcher Ennis (1985, p. 45), “critical thinking is reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to do or believe.” Siegel (1990), who is influenced by educational philosophy, defines critical thinking as rational thinking involving some reasoning. These definitions highlight the different emphasis that researchers put on particular aspects of critical thinking.

A close analysis of all these definitions reveals that in critical thinking, there are some skills which are involved ranging from observation, interpretation, analysis, inference, evaluation, explanation and meta-cognitive skills. There is also integration of high order thinking skills (HOTS) which are related to Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives (Bloom, 1956). According to this taxonomy, there are six levels of the cognitive domain: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Higher order thinking skills, related to critical thinking, are those skills at the top three levels of the above mentioned taxonomies, namely analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The taxonomies at the lower level, namely knowledge, comprehension and application are also involved, to some extent, in critical thinking.

Related to critical thinking skills, there are seven critical thinking dispositions that were identified in the California Critical Thinking Dispositions Inventory (CCTDI), see (Facione, Facione, & Sanchez, 1994). These range from inquisitiveness which refers to the desire to learn, systematicity or having the sense of being organized, analyticity which involves the way one reasons to solve problems. There is also truth-seeking, open-mindedness, self-confidence and maturity. It is noticed that there is some overlap when comparing the list of critical thinking skills and critical thinking dispositions. They are, even, dependent on each other (Bailin, 2002).

3. Why is critical thinking important?

Critical thinking is important for learning and in daily life because all types of thinking are signs of our existence and this is what makes us different as humans. The French philosopher Descartes early mentioned this in his cogito: “Cogito, Ergo Sum”, known in English as “I think, therefore I am” (Sumner, 2015, p.7). In the same respect Cottrell (2005) argues that using some of the basic skills involved in critical thinking is a requirement of everyday activities.

Without thinking, learning cannot take place because all content to be learnt must be intellectually constructed and processed. In a sense critical thinking creates the willingness to develop one’s knowledge and point of view as we continue to examine and re-examine ideas that may seem obvious.

In the field of language learning, critical thinking underlies the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening and communication. It is in these language areas that students can have opportunities to engage in critical thinking process. This process is of paramount importance as it enables learners to make observations, distinguish between facts and opinions in the continuous information they are exposed to, ask good questions, and use sound logic and reasoning bearing in mind the three levels of comprehension, factual, inferential and evaluative.
Another point in favour of critical thinking is seen in the characteristics which critical thinkers themselves enjoy and which make them see the world with continuous critical minds that make them go beyond the reasoning of simple-minded people. Critical thinkers always base their views on evidence and always overcome confusion. They are always curious and they always engage in problem solving. Besides, they embrace challenges and never take the easy way out. They see critical thinking as a life-long process of assessment. Above all they wait till all facts are analyzed before making judgments (Ennis, 1985; Facione, 1990; Willingham, 2007).

Briefly, then, critical thinking involves the process of healthy skepticism which itself involves the processes of questioning, reasoning and evaluating information before reaching the final decision. We dare say it is a path to freedom from half-truths, prejudices and consequently acts as a liberating force from dogmatic fallacies.

4. Core critical thinking skills and questions to develop them

According to Facione (1990), critical thinking skills involve such core skills as interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation and self-regulation. Interpretation refers to comprehension and the ability to understand the significance of a wide variety of experiences, situations, data, events, conventions, beliefs and procedures. Analysis refers to the ability to identify the intended and actual inferential relationships among statements, questions, concepts, descriptions, or other forms of representation. As for evaluation, it implies assessing the credibility of information and assessing the logical strength of the actual or intended inferential relationships among different forms of expressions. Inference stands for being skillful at identifying the elements needed to draw reasonable conclusions and consider the relevant information to deduce the consequences flowing from data, statements and descriptions. As for explanation, as a core skill, it is about justifying the adopted reasoning in terms of arguments and evidence. The last core skill is called self-regulation. Again according to Facione (2013), this refers to the ability:

To monitor one’s cognitive activities, the elements used in those activities, and the results deduced, particularly by applying skills in analysis, and evaluation to one’s own inferential judgments with a view toward questioning, confirming, validating, or correcting either one’s reasoning or one’s results. (p.7)

Two sub-skills are involved here and which are self-examination and self-correction.

The questions used to trigger critical thinking vary according to the different core skills involved in critical thinking. These questions are shown with some examples in Table 1, adapted from Facione (2013):

Table 1: Core skills involved in critical thinking and some examples of corresponding questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical thinking core skills</th>
<th>Types of questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>What is this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How should we understand this?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the best way to categorize this?  
How can we make sense out of this?

Analysis
- Why do you think that?  
- What is your reason for making that claim?  
- What are the arguments pros and cons?  
- What is your basis for saying this?  
- How can we accept that claim?

Inference
- What conclusions can we draw from this?  
- What does this evidence imply?  
- What are the consequences of doing things this way?  
- What solutions do you recommend?

Evaluation
- How credible is this claim?  
- How strong are the arguments?  
- Why should this be trusted?

Explanation
- What were the specific findings of the investigation?  
- Why do you think that was the right answer?  
- How would you explain this?

Self-regulation
- How good was our methodology, and how well did we follow it?  
- How good is our evidence?  
- Our position on this issue is still vague, can we be more precise?  
- Can we justify our belief with evidence and information?

Source: Facione (2013)

It should be stressed that all the types of questions mentioned in Table 1 involve critical thinking skills and call for some reflections and dispositions before formulating the answers and making decisions. Pedagogically speaking, the integration of such types of questions in language education and language skills is highly appreciated to equip learners with thinking skills and to equip them with solid knowledge immunity to prepare them for evaluating information in this era of uncontrolled globalization.

5. Presenting the experiment

Having taught some courses related to reading at the university, we noticed that the students were familiar with just an initial level of comprehension which is factual comprehension that they previously had sufficient training in (before they joined the university). There was an urgent need to move forward with reading to higher levels of comprehension namely to the inferential and the evaluative levels which involve critical thinking skills. This constituted the ground of our experiment in the current study. The coming sections shed light on this study.
5.1. Research methodology used in this study

5.1.1. Statement of the problem

It was noticed while dealing with reading courses at the university that students are generally limited to factual comprehension or information explicitly stated in the text. They lack some strategies to deal with higher levels of comprehension, specifically inferential comprehension going beyond what is directly stated in the text. They also lack strategies to deal with evaluative comprehension which is a more sophisticated skill since the reader has to respond more critically to identify the truth and the value of what is said. Some dissatisfaction was felt on the part of the researcher concerning the simple way which first year students of English studies at Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Faculty of Letters and Humanities in Beni-Mellal dealt with reading courses.

5.1.2. Research questions

Related to the problem we identified, two research questions were put forward to guide our study. These questions are the following:

1. How can we make students aware of critical thinking skills and dispositions?
2. What is the attitude of the students to integrating critical thinking skills when dealing with reading tasks?

5.1.3. Research tools, setting and participants

Having noticed that students enrolled in the first year, English studies at Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Faculty of Letters and Humanities in Beni-Mellal lack strategies to deal with reading comprehension from a deeper perspective, we decided to integrate some strategies related to critical thinking skills while dealing with reading. It was a sort of experiment which was controlled to see if it yields any changes. The experiment lasted for a whole semester in the year 2017-2018. At the end of the experiment, we administered a questionnaire to a target population of 120 students (males and females) among those who were exposed to the experiment to see the changes that happened while dealing with reading tasks from a critical thinking perspective and to see the attitudes of the students towards such integration of critical thinking.

5.2. Data presentation and discussion

The aim of the first part of the questionnaire was to double check the observation we made about the students which was related to lack of strategies to deal with reading comprehension from a deeper perspective. An analysis of students’ responses related to the strategies which they were familiar with before joining the university (as shown in Figure. 1) reveals that all the participants (100 %) were familiar with tasks related to global factual comprehension. Likewise, the participants were familiar with vocabulary tasks and multiple choice tasks. Such tasks are related only to factual comprehension. It should be noted, however, that there was a minor manifestation of tasks related to inferential comprehension and tasks related to critical thinking with only 10 % of the participants admitting familiarity which such tasks. What is striking is that there is a total absence of tasks related to evaluative comprehension.
The aim of the second part of the questionnaire was to see if any changes occurred after having the students exposed to the experiment. More analysis of the data we got from the students through the questionnaire shows that some changes occurred. The students become, with varying degrees, familiar with tasks related to text analysis and understanding details as declared by all the respondents (100%). Also all the participants admitted that they are now familiar with tasks involving guessing word meaning. A change is also noticed related to inferential comprehension or reading between the lines because 88% of the participants are now familiar with tasks involving these issues. As for tasks related to evaluative comprehension and responding critically to information in texts, 85% of the participants declared that they are now familiar with such activities. Figure 2 clearly shows these changes.
After conducting the experiment, it was noticed that there was an awareness of critical thinking skills and dispositions on the part of the students. Such awareness is proved by the third part of the questionnaire which checked the participants’ ability to do some tasks involving critical thinking. All the participants (100 %) admitted that they can describe the problem dealt with in a text. Besides 96 % of these participants admitted that they consider various options to solve a problem or answer a question. The majority of the participants (86 %) added that they need to evaluate the credibility of information and to judge if a given evidence supports a claim, and not take every information for granted. What is striking is that 92 % stressed that they can engage in a sort of questioning while reading a text. It must be pointed out that all these tasks are related to critical thinking. Figure 3 shows this.

Figure 3: Awareness of critical thinking skills after the experiment

Related to the section on students’ awareness of critical thinking skills, the participants were asked to rate their critical thinking ability in a scale ranging from very poor, poor, good, very good and excellent. Figure 4 shows this rating. What is worth noting is that the participants’ choices fall in the three last options and no one opted for the option very poor or poor. 84 of the participants representing 70 % declared that their critical thinking ability is now good, 29 of the participants representing 24.17 % declared that their critical thinking ability is very good and 7 participants representing 5.83 % declared that their critical thinking ability is now excellent. Despite the challenges facing the measurement of critical thinking ability, the positive declaration of the student indicates that the students have some change and satisfaction with the way they approach reading now with critical thinking orientation.
5.3. **Attitudes of the students to the integration of critical thinking in reading tasks**

The objective of the last part of the questionnaire was to investigate the attitudes of the participants towards the integration of critical thinking tasks in reading. To limit the scope of these attitudes, we included the view of Fisher (1995) who mentioned some attitudes related to critical thinking ranging from enthusiasm about reasoning, development of thinking habits by means of questioning thoughts and the will to look for and find the truth of information. To investigate the attitudes of students to critical thinking in this study, a number of questions were devoted for this purpose from which the participants’ attitudes were detected. Data reduction emerging from these questions is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: **Attitudes of the students to the integration of critical thinking in reading tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>NR</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading tasks should focus just on language development.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading tasks should involve critical thinking skills.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>93.33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading tasks should include both language tasks and critical thinking tasks.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks involving critical thinking motivate the students to discuss and voice different opinions</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>91.66</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking tasks develop students’ analytical ability.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>96.66</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An analysis of the participants’ responses related to their attitudes towards the integration of critical thinking in reading tasks reveals that generally speaking, there is a positive tendency to have critical thinking included in reading courses. The majority of the participants 93.33 % said that reading tasks should involve critical thinking skills and this is congruous with the view of Fisher (1995) related to enthusiasm about reasoning. All the participants 100 % added that reading tasks should include both language tasks and critical thinking tasks. Only 36 % of the participants still adhere to the old practice that reading tasks should focus just on language development.

The positive attitudes of the participants are also inferred from their belief about the merits of critical thinking. 110 of the participants representing 91.66 % hold the belief that tasks involving critical thinking motivate them to discuss and voice different opinions. Besides, all the participants (100 %) admitted that exposure to critical thinking skills is necessary for the development of their knowledge and personality. Related to this, 96.66 % of the participants added that critical thinking tasks develop students’ analytical and evaluative ability. This is again related to Fisher (1995) specification on attitudes and the will to question every information. In addition to this, the majority of the students 93.33 % stressed that critical thinking makes them active learners instead of just consumers of information, claiming that the inclusion of critical thinking in reading has improved their performance in reading comprehension and has even made language learning meaningful for them.

5.4. Towards an interactive model to reading courses

It can be deduced from this study that the integration of critical thinking skills in reading courses and in learning, in general, is a timely issue. This is backed by its numerous benefits for the learners who are the citizens of tomorrow and who need to be equipped with sophisticated strategies to deal with the bulk of information which is available in this new era of globalization. Still, we are not advocating that critical thinking should be the only strategy to deal with reading. The intention is just to integrate it among other strategies to deal with the reading skill. Since we are dealing with students who are studying language, an interactive approach to reading will serve the purpose. So, how should this approach be conceived?

Reading has always been considered both a language problem and a reading problem. It is a language problem in the sense that it necessitates a mastery of an optimal level of language to be...
able to decode text meaning. It is also a reading problem since it calls for some strategies to effectively make the most of the reading material. Three approaches to reading must be mentioned: the bottom-up approach, the top-down approach and the interactive approach. According to Nassir (2012), the bottom-up model is text driven; the reader relies much on text variables to make sense of what he/she reads. He/she begins with decoding letters, words, phrases and sentences to construct the meaning of the text. This model is related to a process of reading at the lower level whose aim is to get factual comprehension. The top-down approach, on the other hand, moves from the text to the reader who has to make use of his/ her knowledge of the world to make guesses related to text meaning. As for the interactive approach, it refers to that sort of interaction that occurs between the reader and the text. This approach to reading has gained ground because the reader does not rely solely on the top-down approach or the bottom-up approach. Instead, there is combination of the two approaches. This combination makes up for the deficiencies of one or the other approach. In this respect Grabe (2009) points out that meaning is not in the text only, readers, on their turn, contribute to the construction of the text with their background knowledge and interaction with the text. Within the framework of such interaction, the readers get in a position to develop abilities that help them make sense of what they read and explore opportunities to enhance critical thinking, Nassir (2012).

In the interactive approach, the role of the teacher is substantial to foster critical thinking in students. He/she should encourage them to move away from the lower level dealing with word recognition and basic factual comprehension to inferring text meaning, reading between the lines and dealing critically with what the text offers. The thinking skills that can be developed by interactive reading again, as mentioned by Nassir (2012), are summarized in the following points:

- Predicting: this involves making intelligent guesses and predicting what the whole text is about based on what the students know about the topic and the theme.
- Logical reasoning: this refers to that process of drawing conclusions and making inferences about the opinions, facts and information that feature in the text.
- Questioning: among the responsibilities of the teachers in this respect is to establish a culture of questioning the information which students receive and not to take everything for granted. This is actually related to some critical thinking dispositions mentioned earlier in this paper, especially the disposition of inquisitiveness.
- Problem-solving: this goes in line with the spirit of reading which is, basically, a problem-solving activity. The dispositions here are related to processing the information, identifying the problem, engaging in analyticity and later on reaching problem-solving.
- Formulating perspectives: the interactive approach to reading entails getting engaged in constructing meaning because texts do not have meaning, it is readers who give meaning to texts.

5.5. Pedagogical implications

Having covered the issue of critical thinking from different perspectives and having deduced that it is a component that needs to be integrated in reading courses within an interactive approach, we feel that some implications are worth mentioning.

The first implication to put forward is that fostering critical thinking skills would yield rewarding outcomes in education. This is congruous with Gelder’s (2005: 41) statement that
“almost everyone agrees that one of the main goals of education, at whatever level, is to help develop general thinking skills.” Teaching and learning English as a foreign language is, undoubtedly, one of the areas where critical thinking skills can be introduced, especially in reading to give meaning to language learning.

The second implication is that integrating critical thinking within the interactive approach to reading is a timely issue to develop critical thinking skills ranging from comprehension as a basic element, moving to interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation and self-regulation. In this respect, the role of teachers is to raise students’ awareness to the need to bear in mind these components of critical thinking and never hesitate to voice their views.

Another implication is related to the fact that integrating critical thinking skills within the interactive approach to reading develops critical thinking dispositions, too, such as inquisitiveness through questioning, analyticity through reasoning, truth-seeking through evaluating information, in addition to systematicity, open-mindedness, self-confidence and maturity.

One more implication of this study is that critical thinking skills contribute to motivating the students to read equipped with strategies to deal with whatever information and put it under scrutiny instead of passively receiving the bulk of information they are exposed to in this new era of globalization.

The outcome of all these implications is that a manifestation of critical thinking while dealing with reading is an indicator of quality and will contribute to having a generation of active and responsible students who will always question the information they receive. Besides, fostering a culture of critical thinking will undoubtedly empower the learners and de-emphasize the so-called spoon feeding instruction based on presenting and receiving ready-made information.

6. Conclusion

Critical thinking has become a timely issue in modern education. It is considered a substantial 21st century skill. Students need to be equipped with critical thinking skills ranging from interpretation, understanding information through logical reasoning and analysis, seeing things from different perspectives and problem-solving before evaluating information and making decisions. Besides, developing critical competence is among the essential cognitive skills to be integrated in the curriculum. Because critical thinking skills cannot be dealt with in isolation, there is a need to integrate them in language skills, especially in reading. Students’ positive attitudes to such integration, as the current study has revealed, is an asset to invest on. Thinking skills should be, deliberately, incorporated within the interactive approach to reading to motivate the students and to make the reading skill make sense for them. In this respect, students’ roles cannot be ignored. Students need to be aware of these reflective skills and they need to have ongoing practice in applying critical thinking in diverse ways. Teachers’ responsibility should not be ignored as well. It is of paramount importance to guarantee a climate to foster the culture of inquisitiveness, truth seeking and questioning so that the reading material or any type of information can be analyzed, evaluated and correctly understood.
About the author
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References


Exploring Student-Writers’ Views on Replacing Teacher Feedback with Peer Feedback and Computer-Based Feedback

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Abstract
In the last two decades, a large number of studies have emphasized the significant impact feedback (FB) has on students’ writing. This emphasis has replaced the notion that teacher-based feedback (TBF) is the only source of feedback with the notion that there are other sources, such as peer feedback (PF) and computer-based feedback (CBF), that can be employed. It is commonly reported in the literature that writing teachers suffer from the burden of providing feedback, which gives rise to the need for finding alternative sources. Thus far, no studies have investigated the possibility of substituting TBF with FB that is jointly provided by peers and computer software. Therefore, the purpose of the study referred to here was to investigate foreign language (L2) student-writers’ views on whether or not peer and computer feedback can replace TBF, and how efficient these types of feedback are in a writing class. The study adopted a quasi-experimental approach that included quantitative (pre- and post-questionnaires) and qualitative (an open-ended section) methods. The participants in the study were 15 male English as a foreign language (EFL) undergraduate students undertaking a writing course in an English programme at a Saudi university. The duration of the study was 10 weeks, during which the participants went through four cycles of multi-draft essay writing. The intervention excluded the teacher from offering feedback and replaced the teacher’s feedback with a systematic process that involved receiving feedback from fellow students and from a computer software application. The main conclusions of the study suggest that students are not yet ready to let go of teacher feedback, and that feedback provided by intermediate level learners can raise concerns on the part of the learners. Overall, the participants reported having a positive experience with the intervention. The implications and limitations of the study, and recommendations based on the findings are also presented.

Keywords: CALL, computer, feedback, learning, peer, writing skills

Introduction
The relationship between feedback (FB) and language learning has attracted the interest of a large number of researchers (e.g., Cho & Schunn, 2007; El-Ebyary & Windeatt, 2010; Hasan, 2016; Hyland & Hyland, 2006a). It has been argued that there are several positive effects FB can have on learning: for instance, it promotes learning; it leads to improvements in linguistic proficiency, and it increases accuracy in learning. Over the past three or four decades, researchers have investigated teacher-based feedback (TBF) and effective ways of providing it. The results of these investigations were that research started to move towards creating more student-centred environments that would give learners more responsibility for their own learning with the aim of promoting learning (e.g., Albesher, 2011; Alhazmi & Schfield, 2007; Grimes & Warschauer, 2010; Hu & Lam, 2010; Kukich, 2000; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Paulus, 1999). This included combining TBF with other sources of FB, such as PF and computer-based feedback (CBF). A brief survey of such studies reveals the importance of writing skills to both teachers and learners. It also suggests the importance of becoming innovative in teaching and learning, and may encourage future researchers to explore other ways of improving current practices in language learning in general, and in learning writing in particular. The study referred to here, for example, explored an innovative approach to FB provision to student-writers. The aim of this study was to explore undergraduate students’ views on being exposed to two sources of FB (PF and CBF), and not receiving any TBF on their written essays. This innovative approach, if preferred by the learners, would contribute to saving teachers’ time, which would allow them to pay more attention to other issues in the classroom.

Literature review
The nature of writing
The writing skills of learners in many countries, including native-speaker writers, appear to be weak, which suggests that they possess only a basic level of writing proficiency (Cho & Schunn, 2007). The development of writing skills is valued by many learners since they believe that writing skills can help to improve other language learning skills. Writing skills can be used to demonstrate knowledge acquisition, and for learning and self-discovery (Gomez et al., 1996). It is argued that writing skills can help learners to become successful in many disciplines (Cho & Schunn, 2007), simply because most disciplines require knowledge to be demonstrated in the form of written essays.

In a writing activity, learners are asked to recall information and present it in the form of a written text; during this process learners need to become involved in a meaningful way that encourages learning. This can be accomplished by using appropriate techniques that will achieve the intended learning outcomes (Norton, 2004). Orsmond et al. (2002) support the notion of presenting learners with encouraging situations and describe these situations as environments that promote active learning. Some of the aspects of an active learning environment are as follows: they involve learners in searching for meaning; they give learners more responsibility, and they give priority to the acquisition of skills (Denicolo et al., 1992). It was hoped that the design of the current study would engage learners in active learning situations in order to make their learning meaningful.
**FB on writing**

With regard to learning writing, Phuwichit (2016) argues that FB is an integral part of writing development, as it can highlight learners’ skill deficiencies and show them how to overcome them and become better writers. In the early 1970s, learner-centred approaches to teaching writing were developed and the importance of providing FB on students’ writings was highly emphasized. Before that, FB took the form of teachers giving marginal notes, unlike the current form that includes oral and elaborated comments (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a). FB on written texts can have different emphases: for example, it can be focused on specific aspects of the written text, it can be very general, or it can be on the form or on the meaning level of a written text. Nevertheless, the way in which FB is given can have a significant impact on learners’ attitudes towards learning writing and their motivation to learn and develop their skills (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996).

Another point to be considered is the importance of the FB being ‘adequate’, because it can then have a positive impact on learners’ development (Tang & Thitecott, 1999; Zhu, 1995). Van Steendam et al. (2010: 319) describe adequate FB as “detailed feedback which addresses global concerns in a text, uses metalanguage to diagnose textual problems and suggests specific revisions”. Additionally, Brown et al. (2006) emphasize the importance of providing timely FB to learners, which is FB that is offered immediately after an activity has been completed and before they have the chance to start working on a different task. Also, effective FB needs to be tied to explicit and detailed criteria that indicate to the learners exactly what is expected of them (OECD, 2005). The current study was therefore designed in a way that meant the learners would be provided with adequate, timely and effective FB.

**The peer feedback technique (PF)**

The literature suggests that effective FB has several modes that involve learners in interacting with other individuals and in responding to the prompts they receive (Hyland & Hyland, 2006b). In this regard, effective teacher FB is feedback that involves a writing conference, where the teacher sits with a student and discusses points of strength and weakness in his or her written text and gives the student an opportunity to respond and interact, thus providing more opportunities for learning development (Gielen et al., 2010; Hyland & Hyland, 2006a). However, if teachers were to employ this mode of FB in every writing session, it would consume a great deal of their time and oblige them to expend a large amount of effort in a short time. As a result, teachers are likely not to have time to allow learners to produce very many essays simply because they may not have the time to give their learners the individual attention they need.

To compensate for the lack of teacher FB in writing classes, several instructors have employed the peer feedback technique, which is seen as a method of learning and teaching (Gielen et al., 2010; Hu, 2005). In a peer FB session, learners are involved in a scaffolding, collaborative activity that includes critically analysing one another’s texts with the aim of improving their quality (Hu, 2005; Rollinson, 2005). Sociocultural theorists argue that language learning is not limited to cognitive interaction with other individuals, but that social interaction is integral to language learning (Lantolf, 2000; Pica, 1996; Tuomey, 2014). From this perspective, associating FB with interaction in writing can lead to several positive impacts on learning. PF has the advantage of making students practise giving and receiving FB while interacting with their peers.
Several recent studies have investigated the technique within learning contexts and concluded that it can be beneficial for learning (Hasan, 2016; Phuwicht, 2016; Wong, 2015; Zareekbatani, 2015). Although the majority of PF studies are in favour of employing the technique, a few studies have reported some concerns regarding its use. For example, it has been reported that some learners may not accept the FB they receive from other peers owing to concerns regarding its reliability (e.g., Tsui & Ng, 2000; Yang et al., 2006). In an attempt to overcome this concern, some researchers have emphasized the importance of training learners in using the PF technique (e.g., Min, 2005; 2006). Taking all the above points into consideration, it may be concluded that, when used with care, PF can be a useful tool in L2 writing classrooms as it can develop learners’ linguistic, social and cognitive skills.

The computer as a source of FB (CBF)
In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in integrating technology into language learning. One area that has attracted many researchers is the advances in computer-generated FB on written texts (Warschauer, 2002). It is argued that one way of motivating student-writers to improve their writing skills is by involving them in a process that requires making online submissions to CBF systems and receiving electronic FB that is useful (Grimes & Warschauer, 2010). This has encouraged several writing instructors to integrate CBF into their classes in order to allow students to benefit from the formative FB that is offered (Warschauer & Ware, 2008; Zakrzewski & Bull, 1998).

The nature of the FB generated by computer programs differs from one program to another. Basically, all programs start by scanning the entered text and then providing immediate FB. However, some of this software provides only simple FB that focuses on spelling and possibly comments on basic grammar (i.e., commenting on the surface level of writing features) (Liou, 2013; Warden & Chen, 1995), while other software provides detailed comments on all aspects of writing skills (i.e., commenting on the surface and meaning levels of writing features) (Burston, 2013). In other words, effective CBT software offers FB on the main aspects of writing: the organization, style, development, usage and grammar of the submitted essay (Burstein, 2003; Burstein et al., 2004). MY Access! and Criterion are examples of this type of software.

A few recent studies have investigated the impact of integrating CBF into learning and have found that it produced positive outcomes for both learners and teachers (e.g., Coniam, 2009; El-Ebyary & Windeatt, 2010; Hutchison, 2007). Moreover, some of these studies have reported the learners’ positive views of using CBF in writing classes (e.g., El-Ebyary & Windeatt, 2010; Yeh et al., 2007). These software applications are seen to be very useful for writing instructors with large numbers of students who require individual attention on their essays and who need to receive useful FB on them.

The rationale of the study and the research gap
It is apparent that writing instructors all over the world suffer from the burden of reading and critiquing their learners’ essays, especially when student numbers are high. As a result, instructors may become less motivated to have their students write numerous essays with multiple drafts, a situation which is unlikely to stimulate the development of writing skills. Owing to the complex nature of a written essay, analysing it and giving recommendations on how to improve its quality is time-consuming, and can sometimes be frustrating. This has encouraged instructors to look for
other sources of FB. Large numbers of studies have investigated the impact of integrating PF with TBF in writing classrooms, many of which have reported positive results. Other studies have investigated the integration of different types of CBF software into writing classes, and the majority of these studies have also yielded positive results. However, none of these studies has attempted to investigate student-writers’ views on the possibility of combining PF with CBF to replace TBF in writing classes. So far, only two studies have integrated PF and CBF in writing classes (Lai, 2010; Luo & Liu, 2017); however, these two studies compared the effectiveness of CBF over PF, and vice versa, and did not investigate learners’ views on whether or not the combination of these two types of feedback can stand alone in writing classes. Therefore, this area was seen to be a gap in the current literature that required our attention; investigating this area could result in obtaining deeper insights into the phenomenon and, therefore, provide useful recommendations for researchers and practitioners.

Method
The study investigated a new approach to FB provision on students’ essays, the aim of which was to see if it would be possible to do without teacher FB altogether. It integrated a collaborative writing technique (PF) and a computer-based feedback (CBF) as the only sources of FB offered to students on their essays in writing classes. The study adopted a quasi-experimental approach to data collection that included quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The context of the study was an EFL department at a Saudi university. Since the focus of the study was on learners’ views, only an experimental group was employed. It was decided that using a control group would not add to the findings of the study because the purpose was not to compare the new method with a traditional approach. The duration of the study was 10 weeks that included learner training and four cycles of writing essays on four different topics.

Participants
The researcher took over a writing class in the third level (second year) of an English programme. Unfortunately, there were no advanced writing courses offered at the time that could be used for the study. The number of registered students in the class was initially 23; however, this number decreased after the first two weeks for reasons such as students transferring to different departments or dropping out for a whole term. Also, the data of a few participants were excluded from the study since these participants did not complete all the tasks. Therefore, the total number of those who were included in the study, who completed all the tasks required for the experiment, was 15 male students. They had already completed the Preparatory Year (PY) (the first year of the programme), during which they undertook intensive courses on basic English language skills as well as other subjects. Before they joined the PY, they had studied English in public schools for eight years, where the level of the taught English materials was basic language skills.

The research questions:
The following questions were developed for the study:

RQ1: In the view of learners, can the integration of PF and CBF exempt the teacher from having to provide FB?

RQ2: What views do learners have on the combination of PF and CBF as the only source of FB on their essays?

The intervention & the research tool
The aim of the intervention designed for the study was for learners to develop essays, then practise PF and receive CBF in order to develop final draft essays of good quality. The instructor was forbidden to comment on the participants’ essays at any stage (i.e., TBF on students’ essays was forbidden during the experiment).

The research tools employed in the study were a pre-questionnaire administered before the intervention, and a post-questionnaire administered after the intervention. This would make it possible to see whether or not the learners’ views had changed after the intervention. Both questionnaires were designed and developed by the researcher and revised by two other expert researchers in the field of applied linguistics. The pre-questionnaire had an introductory section that explained the purpose of the study, that their names and any personal details would be kept secret, and that participation was voluntary. Also, key words and abbreviations were explained. The pre-questionnaire also included a section that inquired about the learners’ background and a section that included nine items asking them what they thought about employing a combination of PF and CBF as the only source of feedback on their essays. The post-questionnaire included a section with the same nine items as the pre-questionnaire and an additional open-ended section that inquired about their views on the experiment in general.

**Procedures**

After I had taken over the writing course, the students were told about the study and its purpose and that participation was voluntary (which was also stated in the pre-questionnaire). All the students agreed to participate. There were two, one-hour sessions a week. In the first two weeks, the instructor (who was the researcher) used the sessions to illustrate how to develop an essay; this included teaching the structure of an essay, cohesion and coherence issues, and so on. The participants looked at exemplar essays and then developed essays of their own, which were checked by the teacher to make sure they were following the appropriate essay structuring. The following week (week 3) involved training the participants in how to give and receive PF, using Min’s (2006) in-class modelling. The training included the use of an already developed essay evaluation criteria form (which was borrowed from Alhazmi & Schofield (2007)). In week 4, the participants were trained in how to submit their essays to the FB software and how to respond to the feedback they were receiving.

The following weeks included four cycles of writing essays, during which the participants developed four multi-draft essays. Each multi-draft essay was developed in one cycle (one cycle lasted two weeks), and went through the following stages. First, the learners developed the first draft of their essays on the first topic, then exchanged it with a fellow student, who took it home and commented on it using the evaluation form (week 1 of cycle 1, first session). Second, in the following session, both students discussed the comments and made suggestions as to how the text could be improved. Third, the students went home with their classmates’ comments and developed second drafts, which they then took to class so the teacher could ensure that the work had been done according to the explained procedures (week 2 of cycle 1, first session). Finally, the participants typed the second drafts into the FB software, which provided them with comments that they used to develop their final drafts (week 2 of cycle 1, second session). This completed the first cycle. The teaching of the text book materials was at the beginning of each session, and did not last for more than 10 minutes a session owing to the nature of the writing skills materials.
should be pointed out that all the first drafts were developed in class to ensure that the participants performed their tasks without receiving any external assistance. The topics the participants wrote about were descriptive in nature. For example, one of the topics was: *Describe your favourite restaurant*. Other topics were similar.

**Results**

*Analysis of background items*

**Table 1: Learners’ background**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- How often did you receive TBF on your writing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- How do you evaluate your writing skills?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Have you received PF in the past?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Have you received CBF in the past?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that only two respondents had not received TBF on their essays in the past, six respondents had received it irregularly, and seven of them had received it frequently (see Table 1). Overall, the majority of the respondents were familiar with TBF and were likely to have some degree of awareness of the nature of FB given on written texts. Furthermore, most of the respondents described their writing skills as average, with three respondents describing their skills as good. This was expected, since the respondents were intermediate level students who were still in the process of developing their linguistic skills. It may also indicate that they were aware of the level of their linguistic skills.

With regard to receiving PF in the past, six respondents stated that they had received it and nine said they had not (see Table 1). On the other hand, only four respondents said they had received CBF and eleven of them said they had never received it (see Table 1). This suggests that the majority of the respondents had not been exposed to either PF or CBF, which also suggests that their experience with FB in general was limited to TBF.
Analysis of pre- and post-questionnaire items

1- I prefer to learn writing using PF and CBF.

Table 2: Preference for learning writing using PF & CBF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Pre-Q</th>
<th></th>
<th>Post-Q</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there were statistically significant differences in the respondents’ preferences for learning writing using PF and CBF before and after they were exposed to the two sources of FB (see Table 2). No statistically significant changes were found in their responses after the intervention ($Z = -0.437, p > 0.05$) (see Table 12, Appendix 1). The pre-questionnaire results show that five respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, one respondent was not sure, and nine respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. After exposure to PF and CBF, four respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, and 11 respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. In brief, the majority of the respondents reported having a preference for learning writing through practising giving and receiving PF and receiving CBF. However, it was observed that their preference increased after they had been exposed to both types of FB. These results suggest that PF and CBF can have a positive impact on writing skills.

2- PF and CBF have a significant impact on developing writing skills.

Table 3: Impact of PF & CBF on writing skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Pre-Q</th>
<th></th>
<th>Post-Q</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there were statistically significant differences in the respondents’ views on the effect of PF and CBF on writing skills before and after they were exposed to these types of feedback (see Table 3). No statistically significant changes were found in their responses after the intervention ($Z = -0.036, p > 0.05$) (see Table 12, Appendix 1). The pre-questionnaire results show that four respondents disagreed with the statement, two respondents were not sure, and nine respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. After exposure to PF and CBF, three respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, three respondents were unsure, and nine respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement.

In brief, although the majority of the respondents reported that the combination of the two types of FB had a significant effect on writing skills, a considerable proportion were either unsure about or disagreed with the statement. This could be the result of the respondents’ reservations about both or one type of the provided FB.

3- PF and CBF on my essays are reliable sources of FB.

Table 4: Reliability of PF & CBF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Pre-Q Frequency</th>
<th>Pre-Q Per cent</th>
<th>Post-Q Frequency</th>
<th>Post-Q Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there were statistically significant differences in the respondents’ views on the reliability of PF and CBF before and after they were exposed to them (see Table 4). No statistically significant changes were found in their responses after the intervention ($Z = -0.289, p > 0.05$) (see Table 12, Appendix 1). The pre-questionnaire results show that two respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, five respondents were not sure, and eight respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. After exposure to PF and CBF, two respondents disagreed with the statement, seven respondents were unsure about the reliability of the two types of FB, and six respondents agreed with the statement.

In brief, the data suggest that the respondents fell into two main groups, those who saw PF and CBF as reliable, and those who were unsure (had reservations) concerning their reliability. It
should be pointed out that it is possible that these reservations pertained to the reliability of only one of the two sources of FB.

**4- PF and CBF are a very interesting combination in learning writing.**

Table 5: PF & CBF are a very interesting combination in writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Pre-Q</th>
<th></th>
<th>Post-Q</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there were statistically significant differences in the respondents’ views on combining PF and CBF in writing classes before and after they were exposed to them (see Table 5). No statistically significant changes were found in their responses after the intervention ($Z = 0.000$, $p > 0.05$) (see Table 12, Appendix 1). The pre-questionnaire results show that five respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, one respondent was not sure, and none respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. After exposure to PF and CBF, four respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, three respondents were unsure, and eight respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement.

In brief, although the majority of the respondents said they found the combination of the two types of FB interesting, a considerable proportion said they did not. Additionally, the data show that the number of respondents who were unsure had increased from one to three, which may indicate that they had reservations about either both types or one type of the provided FB.

**5- PF and CBF complement one another in writing classrooms.**

Table 6: PF & CBF complement one another

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Pre-Q</th>
<th></th>
<th>Post-Q</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there were statistically significant differences in the respondents’ views concerning whether PF and CBF complemented one another before and after they were exposed to the two sources of FB (see Table 6). No statistically significant changes were found in their responses after the intervention ($Z = -0.272, p > 0.05$) (see Table 12, Appendix 1). In the pre-questionnaire, four respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, two respondents were not sure, and nine respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. After exposure to PF and CBF, three respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, seven respondents were not sure, and five respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. In brief, before practising the PF and CBF combination, the majority of the respondents had the view that the two types of feedback complemented one another, with only a small proportion disagreeing with the notion. However, after they had practised using the two sources, seven respondents reported their hesitation to agree with the notion, and the number of respondents who agreed with it had decreased. This may be because some of the respondents had encountered difficulties with regard to one or both of the FB sources provided that had influenced their views negatively.

6- **PF and CBF encourage me to depend on myself when writing essays.**

Table 7: **PF & CBF encourage depending on myself**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Pre-Q</th>
<th>Post-Q</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there were statistically significant differences in the respondents’ views on the notion that PF and CBF encouraged them to depend on themselves before and after they were exposed to the two sources of FB (see Table 7). No statistically significant changes were found in their responses after the intervention ($Z = -1.611, p > 0.05$) (see Table 12, Appendix 1). The pre-questionnaire results show that two respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, two respondents were not sure, and 11 respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. After exposure to PF and CBF, three respondents were not sure and 12 respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. In brief, the majority of the respondents reported that PF and CBF encouraged them to depend on themselves. This finding may be expected since they were involved in producing essays with the help of two types of FB and without any input on the part of the teacher, which resulted in their becoming more independent.

7- **PF and CBF make me less reliant on my teacher’s FB.**
The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there were statistically significant differences in the respondents’ views on the idea that they became less reliant on the teacher when using PF and CBF before and after they were exposed to the two sources of FB (see Table 8). No statistically significant changes were found in their responses after the intervention ($Z = -0.900, p > 0.05$) (see Table 12, Appendix 1). The pre-questionnaire results show that six respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, four respondents were not sure, and five respondents agreed with the statement. After exposure to PF and CBF, five respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, three respondents were not sure, and seven agreed with the statement.

In brief, the data suggest that the respondents in this study can be divided into two groups: those who did not think that using the two types of FB made them less reliant on the teacher, which may suggest they would prefer to work with TBF in writing classes, and those who did think that using the two sources of FB make them less reliant on the teacher, suggesting their satisfaction with the practice.

8. There is no need for TBF when PF and CBF are offered in writing classes.

Table 9: No need for TBF when PF & CBF are available

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Pre-Q</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Post-Q</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there were statistically significant differences in the respondents’ views on the notion that TBF was unnecessary when PF and CBF were available before and after they were exposed to the two sources of FB (see Table 9). No statistically significant changes were found in their responses after the intervention ($Z = -1.185, p > 0.05$) (see Table 12, Appendix 1). The pre-questionnaire results show that 12 respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, two respondents were not sure, and one respondent agreed with the statement. After exposure to PF and CBF there was no change in these figures. In brief, the results suggest that both before and after exposure to the treatment all the respondents, with one exception, felt they still needed TBF even if other sources of FB were offered. This finding suggests that TBF was appreciated and valued by the students and, unlike PF and CBF, they had no reservations about it.

**9-** **PF and CBF can replace TBF in writing classrooms.**

Table 10: *PF & CBF can replace TBF*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Pre-Q Frequency</th>
<th>Pre-Q Per cent</th>
<th>Post-Q Frequency</th>
<th>Post-Q Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to determine whether or not there were statistically significant differences in the respondents’ views about the possibility that PF and CBF could replace TBF before and after they were exposed to the two sources of FB (see Table 10). No statistically significant changes were found in their responses after the intervention ($Z = -0.783, p > 0.05$) (see Table 12, Appendix 1). The pre-questionnaire results show that 12 respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, one respondent was not sure, and two respondents agreed with the statement. After exposure to PF and CBF, 13 respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, and two respondents agreed with it. In brief, the results suggest that both before and after exposure to the treatment all the respondents, with two exceptions, rejected the notion that PF and CBF could replace TBF. This finding may suggest that the respondents realized the value and importance of TBF, and that PF and CBF may have some limitations that can only be overcome by TBF.

**Open-ended section**

After the intervention the participants were given the opportunity to provide comments on PF, CBF and the combination of the two types of feedback in a writing classroom. Providing these comments was optional. They made several points that could contribute to explaining some of the results presented above (see Table 11). The questions they responded to were as the following:
1- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using the PF technique in writing classrooms?
2- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using CBF in writing classrooms?
3- What are advantages and disadvantages of combining PF and CBF in writing classrooms?

Table 11: Learners' comments on the intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantages of PF</th>
<th>Advantages of PF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FB provided by peers is not reliable (this has been reported by 5 participants; therefore, 5Ps.)</td>
<td>PF can be received in a timely manner (1 P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers cannot help because of their lack of knowledge in writing skills (5 Ps.)</td>
<td>Practising PF is enjoyable (1 P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers are not available all the time (1 P.)</td>
<td>PF can improve text quality (1 P.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantages of CBF</th>
<th>Advantages of CBF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encountering occasional technical difficulties (3 Ps.)</td>
<td>Accurate and reliable (2 Ps.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes it can be boring (1 P.)</td>
<td>Availability from different locations (2 Ps.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers are not available everywhere</td>
<td>It is beneficial and has a lot to offer (knowledge) (4 Ps.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantages of combining PF &amp; CBF</th>
<th>Advantages of combining PF &amp; CBF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computers are reliable and peers are not (2 Ps.)</td>
<td>PF &amp; CBF are the best combination (1 P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBF alone is enough (1 P.)</td>
<td>They can compensate for one another (1 P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The two types of FB can be mutually contradictory (1 P.)</td>
<td>They offer immediate FB (1 P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They allow [us] to produce weekly essays and receive FB on them (1 P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The encourages learning in a different, intensive way (1 P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They help [us] to acquire better writing skills (1 P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They help to increase the vocabulary bank (1 P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent experience, they make it possible to produce better essays (1 P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It helps me to depend on myself (1 P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is the best learning method I’ve ever experienced in writing classes (1 P.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comments on PF
The analysis of the comments shows that the participants had concerns regarding the technique in general. For example, five participants reported their reservations regarding the reliability of the feedback generated by their colleagues. Further, five participants explained that their peers lacked the necessary writing skills, which may also have prevented them from being critical and producing useful comments. This suggests that the PF may have not been as effective as expected owing to participants’ modest linguistic levels. One participant reported that classmates may not be available whenever they are needed, which is to be expected since they may have other business to attend to after class time, or because they are occupied with the requirements of other courses.

On the other hand, a few participants reported some advantages of practising the technique: it was described as timely (i.e., provided at an appropriate time); it can be an enjoyable practice, and it can improve text quality. Although these advantages were reported, however, the majority of the comments given on the technique were negative, indicating that the participants had reservations about it.

Comments on CBF
The analysis shows that some respondents encountered technical difficulties when practising CBF (this was reported by three participants) — in that access to the feedback or the submission of articles can be difficult. One participant reported that the process of CBF can be boring, and another participant reported that computers are not accessible everywhere. Encountering technical difficulties may be the most important concern, since it may lead to students’ not receiving the electronic FB or even losing the work they have typed into the computer.

On the other hand, some positive comments were made with regard to the practice of CBF. Two participants thought that CBF was reliable and accurate, while four stated that CBF can produce beneficial FB and that it contains proper knowledge concerning writing skills. This suggests that CBF can influence writing quality and skills positively. This can be linked to the comments of two participants who reported that CBF provided logical comments on their essays. Moreover, two other participants pointed out that CBF can be accessed from any available computer. In general, it can be said that the majority of the comments provided on CBF reflected a positive learning experience, and the view that it was a beneficial practice.

Comments on combining PF and CBF
With regard to the participants’ views on combining the two sources, all the reported concerns were linked (in one way or another) to the reliability of the FB generated by their peers (four comments were given, see Table 11). On the other hand, 11 comments were given describing the positive impact and experience that was associated with practising this combination. For example, PF and CBF offer immediate FB and can develop writing skills; they can increase the vocabulary count, and make it possible for students to generate more essays. In general, the responses suggest that PF and CBF can have a positive impact on learners; however, PF may have negatively influenced the effectiveness of the combination owing to its unreliability.
Exploring Student-Writers’ Views on Replacing Teacher Feedback

General discussion
The study investigated an innovative approach to writing instruction in an EFL higher education context. It integrated a collaborative technique in providing FB (PF) alongside computer-generated FB (CBT), without any involvement by the teacher. First, it appeared that the participants in this study were already familiar with the nature of FB and that they were all of average level in terms of their linguistic skills. With regard to their familiarity with PF and CBF, a considerable proportion had experienced receiving PF, and a smaller proportion had received FB generated by a computer. These findings suggest that teacher FB is the most frequent source of FB employed in participants’ writing classes, and that most of their writing classes did not encourage them to raise their awareness about other available sources of FB.

The participants were exposed to two different types of FB for a reasonable length of time (8 weeks). Overall, it may be said that the majority of the participants appreciated the experience of practising the combination of the two types of FB (see Tables 2, 3, 5 & 7), in that the majority reported their preference for the combination, stated that their experience was interesting, and that combining PF and CBF had a significant impact on their writing skills and encouraged them to be independent. These findings suggest that this sort of intervention can have a positive impact on student-writers in developing their writing skills. However, it was observed that a smaller proportion of participants (an average of four) disagreed that the intervention had a positive impact on their writing and also disagreed that their experience with the two types of feedback was enjoyable. It can therefore be concluded that this group would not like to see this type of combination practised in the future. It appears that these participants had some concerns regarding the treatment, either about PF or CBF, or both. The comments that were provided in the open-ended section support this notion, indicating that a considerable number of the participants had reservations about the reliability of the FB generated by their peers (see Table 11), in addition to concerns regarding the limited writing skills of their peers. Additionally, when they were asked about the reliability of the PF and CBF, almost half of the participants were unsure about it. This could have been anticipated, since the participants were of intermediate level (linguistically speaking) and they were in the process of developing their writing skills. Therefore, some of the participants were probably under the impression that their fellow students had nothing to offer, which had given rise to their concerns about PF.

Interestingly, an average of 70% of the participants reported that the joint introduction of PF and CBF in their writing classes had encouraged their self-reliance in learning writing (see Table 7). During the writing sessions, the learners were engaged with their peers in critically analysing essays, negotiating meaning, and making recommendations to improve the essays, a process that in one way or another equipped them with some learning and interactive skills. Moreover, they had the opportunity to consult an artificial intelligence (i.e., computers and software) when seeking to develop their essays. During all these practices, the teacher provided no feedback at all. Having had this experience, the learners would have realized that there are other sources of FB they can access and utilize, in addition to that provided by the teacher. Another advantage of the two types of FB provided during the intervention is that they were given in a timely manner (unlike teacher feedback that normally requires a longer time to be provided owing to the large numbers of students in writing classes), which made it possible for them to develop multiple-draft essays in shorter periods of time, all of which could be done outside the domain of teacher FB.
the classroom. As a result, essays could be produced without the presence of the teacher (regardless of whether or not the learners had a preference for the presence of TBF).

Although the majority of the participants reported positive attitudes towards the intervention, their stance regarding teacher FB was very clear. That is to say they clearly rejected the notion that the treatment could replace TBF and that there was no need for teacher FB to be offered when PF and CBF are offered jointly (see Tables 9 & 10). These findings reflect the participants’ desire for TBF in writing classrooms, and suggest that they realise the importance and reliability of receiving that type of FB on their written texts. It may also suggest that since there were some reservations about PF, the existence of TBF would ensure that student-writers would end up producing texts of good quality. In writing classes the teacher is of course the most commonly used source of FB, and the most traditional. Learners may have become accustomed to rely on the teacher during any stage of learning; therefore, the idea of preventing them from receiving TBF is likely to be rejected by them. This notion is supported by evidence from this study, in that the majority of the participants (both before and after exposure to the treatment) reported either disagreement with or hesitation to support the notion that the introduced treatment would make them less reliant on the teacher (see Table 8). Nonetheless, some of them supported the notion, indicating their willingness—at some point in the future—to become less reliant on the teacher.

Before exposure to the PF and CBF combination, the majority of the participants were inclined to agree with the notion that PF and CBF complemented one another. However, their views seemed to have changed (although the change is not statistically significant) after practice with the two types of feedback (see Table 6). Interestingly, the clustering of responses was around being hesitant about combining PF with CBF. As discussed earlier, some learners had concerns about PF in particular, and seemed to favour the existence of TBF, which explains the responses we obtained. It is possible that some of the learners wanted to exclude PF and, probably, replace it with teacher FB. Although these particular learners did not seem to appreciate the form of the introduced treatment, other learners described some benefits of associating PF and CBF. For example, it was stated in the open-ended section of the post-questionnaire that PF and CBF can: offer immediate FB; allow them to develop multiple essays; improve writing skills; increase vocabulary knowledge, and increase self-reliance (see Table 11). It is therefore possible to classify the learners in this study under two categories: those who had a preference for the introduced treatment, and those who would like to see some alterations in the construct.

**Pedagogical implications**

Learners’ views in L2 classrooms can be of importance to their instructors, in that instructors may have a desire to provide their learners with the best learning experiences that will result in positive learning outcomes by exploring their learners’ preferences. The current study attempted to provide learners with a unique learning experience in a context that is commonly known for its reliance on traditional approaches to language learning. Language instructors should become more innovative in their teaching approaches and explore their learners’ views on what suits their learning and needs, and ways of promoting their learning. The teaching approach in this study was indeed innovative and yielded insights into both the design of the approach and the learners’ needs. These insights will help me and other researchers to improve the current design of the intervention and then use it in L2 writing classrooms to more positive effect.
The findings of the study suggest that the integration of technology into writing instruction can be very useful. Not only that, but the learners did seem to have enjoyed and benefited from it, and reported that the FB they received from the computers was reliable and timely. Instructors need to keep up with the rapid developments in technology and artificial intelligence that could take some of the load off their shoulders, a load such as having to provide FB on every single essay written by their students. However, involving technology in learning contexts can be expensive, and some instructors may not be able to obtain funds from their institutions. This should not become a barrier that hinders making use of technology, however, and instructors may be able to find alternative sources of funding.

Furthermore, in order to develop learners’ skills, such as critical skills, communicative skills and learning skills, their instructors need to promote active learning situations. The learners in our study were engaged in giving and receiving FB from one another, they were depending on themselves in submitting essays online and acquiring FB generated by the computer, and they were completing writing cycles away from the interference of teacher FB. Although the learners reported their desire for receiving TBF, the majority of the participants seemed to have positive views of the experience, which suggests that they may have acquired additional knowledge as well as other technical and communicative skills.

The findings of the study also suggest that PF as a technique is probably more suitable for use with more advanced learners. The reliability of the FB provided by peers was questioned, and it was reported that classmates do not have the necessary skills critically to analyse written texts (see Table 11). In our research the students were trained in how to provide FB and the criteria for critiquing essays were provided and explained to them; however, it is assumed that their modest linguistic skills in writing prevented a number of them from being able to produce effective FB, which leads us to conclude that PF as a technique is probably suitable for more advanced learners.

A final remark to make here is that the existence of teacher FB seems to be necessary for learners, regardless of the alternatives being provided. Some of the learners in our study reported having positive experiences with the combination of PF and CBF while not receiving TBF. However, they still stated their need for receiving teacher FB in writing classes. Learners everywhere put their trust in their teachers and are likely to accept whatever knowledge is given to them; thus, taking away what they trust the most in a learning context can make them feel less safe and less comfortable in learning. Throughout their learning journey (through elementary, intermediate and secondary stages in public schools), the traditional methods of teaching and learning have dominated, and therefore, they are likely to be accustomed to these methods. In light of this discussion, and given that this study excluded teacher FB, it can be said that for teachers who would like to experiment with excluding TBF from writing classes, a gradual tactic that involves a step by step withdrawal of teacher FB is recommended. This should make it possible for learners to accept the fact that FB can be obtained from sources other than the teacher.

Conclusion
The study investigated student-writers’ views on the integration of PF and CBF in the absence of TBF. The main findings of the study suggest that the combination was not as successful as we had hoped, in that it was found that teacher FB is viewed as an integral part of writing development, at
least for the present time. The study has revealed that learners at an intermediate level may have concerns about the reliability of PF, and that CBF is seen as more reliable. In general, the findings show that the combination of PF and CBF can be an enjoyable, beneficial and interesting experience.

With regard to the limitations of the study, it was not possible to include female students owing to cultural restrictions, in that male members of staff (such as the researcher) are not allowed access to them. Also, the study was not able to use a larger sample as there were no more students registering for the selected course. It is recommended that future studies explore other ways to lessen the burden on the teacher’s shoulders in providing FB on written texts. It is also recommended that teachers should explore other ways of improving student-writers’ attitudes towards writing and of encouraging their self-reliance in developing their own writing skills.

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References


### Appendix A

#### Table 12: Test Statistics

| Post_Preference for learning W using Pf & CBF – Pre_Preference for learning W using Pf & CBF | Post_PF & CBF are very interesting combination in writing – Pre_PF & CBF are very interesting combination in writing | Post_PF & CBF have significant impact on Writing skills – Pre_PF & CBF have significant impact on Writing skills | Post_No need for TBF when PF & CBF are offered – Pre_No need for TBF when PF & CBF are offered | Post_PF & CBF can replace TBF – Pre_PF & CBF can replace TBF | Post_PF & CBF are reliable sources of FB – Pre_PF & CBF are reliable sources of FB | Post_PF & CBF encourage depending on myself – Pre_PF & CBF encourage depending on myself | Post_PF & CBF make me less reliable on my teacher – Pre_PF & CBF make me less reliable on my teacher | Post_PF & CBF complete one another – Pre_PF & CBF complete one another |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Z | -.437<sup>b</sup> | .000<sup>a</sup> | -.036<sup>d</sup> | -1.185<sup>b</sup> | -1.185<sup>b</sup> | -1.185<sup>b</sup> | -1.185<sup>b</sup> | -1.185<sup>b</sup> | -1.185<sup>b</sup> |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .662 | .000 | .972 | .236 | .434 | .773 | .107 | .368 | .785 |

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<sup>a</sup> Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

<sup>b</sup> Based on negative ranks.

<sup>c</sup> The sum of negative ranks equals the sum of positive ranks.

<sup>d</sup> Based on positive ranks.
The Effects of L1 and L2 Hypertext Glosses on Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Retention among Thai Secondary School Students

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Abstract
This study investigates the effects of first language (L1) and second language (L2) hypertext glosses on reading comprehension (RC), immediate vocabulary recognition (IVR), and delayed vocabulary retention (DVR). A group of 83 secondary school low-achieving students (10th grade) were assigned to read glossed texts, L1 and L2 hypertext glosses. This study may help teachers create glossed texts to improve students’ incidental vocabulary learning and it can contribute to the raising of students’ attitudes towards learning English with encouraging and interesting vocabulary learning conditions. A repeated measure t-test design (without control group) was employed. The results indicated that the effects between the L1 and L2 glosses were significantly different. The paired sample t-test revealed that the L1 gloss scores were significantly higher than the L2 gloss scores regarding RC ($p = .014$), IVR ($p = .000$) and DVR ($p = .000$). The pedagogical implications suggest that reading with the assistance of glosses can be successfully integrated into a real classroom setting to improve low-achieving students' vocabulary knowledge in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. It is recommended that future studies use L1 written story retelling/recall techniques to collect the reading comprehension and vocabulary retention data as choices offer random guesses to the participants.

Keywords: hypertext gloss, incidental vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, Thai secondary school students, vocabulary retention

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Introduction

Vocabulary has a vital role in foreign language learning, in improving other language skills, and especially in communication (Nation, 2011; Read, 2000). According to Hunt and Beglar (1998), there are three approaches to improving vocabulary learning: incidental learning, explicit instruction, and independent strategy development. It is mentioned that among these three approaches, incidental vocabulary learning is considered an important part of learning vocabulary. This approach directly supports Nation (1995), as reading is valued as a main source for expanding vocabulary storage. However, Thai students are weak in English reading comprehension (Kasemsap & Lee, 2015; Sawangsamutchai & Rattanavich, 2016). As a result, EFL teachers should look for some alternative ways of teaching vocabulary in the classroom because the problem of “knowing words” among EFL learners still exists in the Thai education context. According to National Institute of Educational Testing Service (NIETS), 2017’s English test results from Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET) showed that over 90% of students, 12th grade, scores below 50 and the average scores of every previous year are below 30 out of 100.

Researchers have investigated incidental vocabulary learning through glossing techniques, and the impacts of L1, L2, and multiple glosses on vocabulary learning have been studied by many educators (Hong, 2010; Yoshi, 2006; Ko, 2005; Lomicka, 1998). In addition, presenting vocabulary assistance in a computerized glossing format has received attention. The studies of AbuSeileek (2011) and Chen and Yen (2013) have revealed that the way a gloss is presented on the computer screen can influence reading competence based on the measures of reading comprehension and vocabulary learning. The evidence supports the use of the glossing technique to assist students in learning L2 words incidentally when reading L2 texts. Most teachers might recommend the use of the guessing technique to help learners determine the meanings of unknown words in reading passages through neighboring words. However, in a situation in which students have difficulty guessing the meaning of words because their vocabulary storage is not large enough, they might consult a dictionary, resulting in an adverse effect on their concentration. Therefore, developing effective reading methods to help remedy this problem seems mandatory.

The studies conducted in Thai or overseas contexts have confirmed the effectiveness of glossing techniques with reading comprehension and vocabulary retention. The unique characteristics of previous studies are the research design, which tended to investigate the effects between treatment and no treatment groups. Also, the participants are mostly intermediate students studying at the university level. There are not many studies that have focused on only low achievers, and especially Thai secondary school students. So, the main objectives are set to investigate the effectiveness of L1 and L2 hypertext glosses on reading comprehension and vocabulary retention of Thai low-achieving students learning English, based on the following research questions:

1. Which type of glosses (L1 or L2 glosses) is more effective in improving reading comprehension?
2. Which type of glosses (L1 or L2 glosses) is more effective toward immediate vocabulary recognition?
3. Which type of two glosses (L1 or L2 glosses) is more effective in delayed vocabulary retention?
Literature Review

Vocabulary Knowledge and Coverage

It has been extensively admitted that vocabulary knowledge has a strong influence on communication in a second language. As a communicative tool, learners must know vocabulary as it is the mechanism with which to express messages (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Webb (2005) conducted an experiment to test whether receptive or productive learning can aid in vocabulary growth. Among the results, it was revealed that the receptive group could retain its vocabulary knowledge longer than the productive group. According to Webb (2008), receptive vocabulary is more important than productive vocabulary for typical learners. Therefore, it is believed that learners acquire words receptively first before they can apply those words productively. This fact supports the idea that low achievers, that have a small vocabulary, can rely on the bottom-up process and receptive vocabulary first to build reading comprehension.

In reading an average text, the vocabulary coverage of 1,000 words is estimated 72% running words of a text. With the vocabulary coverage of 2,000 words, readers know around 80% of running words of a text. This percentage might not be sufficient for L2 learners to guess the meaning of unknown words in order to understand reading texts (Nation & Waring, 1997). Laufer (1989) stresses the value of having a large vocabulary in order to understand 95% of the words in a reading text. Readers whose lexical knowledge is not large enough may not understand the text. In addition, it is confirmed that “percentage coverage of a text is needed for unassisted reading for pleasure, where the learners are able to read without the interruption of looking up words” (Hu & Nation, 2000, p. 403). The study showed that their participants needed to recognize 98% to 99% of the words in reading texts before adequate comprehension were possible. All in all, it can be concluded that learners’ vocabulary knowledge influences their comprehension which may allow for better reading comprehension.

Gloss

The glossing technique refers to a short definition or note to improve the reader’s reading comprehension (Lomicka, 1998). Yanguas (2009) claims that glosses are a substitute for the dictionary as they attempt to help solving the reading problems of a reader. The good point is that glossing techniques can save readers’ time and effort in reading L2 texts. According to Ko (2012), this technique can be used as the input modification and it has been concluded that it has advantages. First, learners will know the exact meaning of a new word instead of guessing the wrong meaning. This is an essential matter because if learners make the wrong guess, they will not understand the context in which the word appears. Next, electronic glosses lessen the number of look-up behaviors, which saves time and creates no interruptions while reading texts. Thirdly, with gloss assistance, prior knowledge will be triggered on the reading process with the new knowledge of the text, and this is useful for readers because it will help them to remember the content of the text which will possibly extend the vocabulary remembering period. Finally, the glossing technique provides students with better learning autonomy as it easily provides learners with the definitions of unknown words. Furthermore, Jacobs (1994) agrees with this point, saying, "Glossing strengthens the bottom-up component of the reading process. It is one of several possible repair strategies that readers can use when they recognize comprehension breakdowns" (Jacobs, 1994, p. 115). We can conclude from this statement that glossing technique is a useful strategy in
improving reading comprehension. However, a gloss has many forms and the following discussed
the hypertext gloss and gloss language.

According to Kommers, Grabinger and Dunlap (1996), hypertext refers to applications in
computer that provide additional information in many forms of media. This is very different from
the paper-based gloss. A hypertext gloss allows for the generation of a link between vocabulary
items and extra information. In terms of showing the definition of a word, a small pop-up window
will show only the key point of the target word and a brief definition. According to Yun (2011), a
hypertext gloss refers to short definitions or explanations in a computerized text. The meaning of
the glossed words will show up with a pop-up window after the students move the cursor on the
unknown word and click.

Next, L1 and L2 have been investigated according to which gloss type has more effects on
vocabulary learning (e.g. Hong, 2010; Yoshi, 2006; Ko, 2005; Lomicka, 1998). The results have
shown that the effectiveness of the glosses in L1 or L2 depends on the proficiency levels of
individuals. High achievers can benefit from L2 glosses while low achievers can gain much
knowledge from L1 glosses. As for Weschler (1997), L1 should not be neglected in the language
learning process as it can contribute to learners’ language proficiency. In fact, avoiding the
application of L1 in language learning can delay target language comprehension. Nation (2011)
also agrees with this point in emphasizing that first language translations offer a very useful choice
of learning vocabulary, and for vocabulary recall. It is believed that translation helps L2 students
acquire language skills such as reading, writing, and vocabulary. Studies related to
psycholinguistics have also demonstrated that L1 can be used actively and its role will fade when
their language skill increases (Sunderman & Kroll, 2006). Thus, using the L1 at the beginning
stages of learning vocabulary is a good method (Schmitt, 2008).

Incidental Vocabulary Learning and Retention
Incidental vocabulary learning is a learning situation in which L2 students acquire
unknown target vocabulary unintentionally after they experience them and engage in learning
activities and where the focus is on communication rather than linguistic structure (Choi, 2016).
In fact, one of the most commonly-accepted views of vocabulary acquisition is that second
language vocabulary acquisition occurs incidentally through comprehensible input (Krashen,
1989) while reading a text.

Rouhi and Mohebbi (2012) conducted a study to investigate the effects of computer-
assisted L1 and L2 glossing techniques on L2 vocabulary learning. The results of the recognition
and production measures back up the positive effects of glosses on L2 vocabulary learning
compared with no gloss conditions. Additional data analysis has demonstrated that the participants
in L1 glosses condition performed better than the participants in L2 glosses condition. Moreover,
Choi (2016) conducted a study to examine the effects of L1 and L2 glosses on incidental
vocabulary acquisition. The results revealed that the students benefits from L1 rather than L2
glosses regarding the long-term retention of words. To sum up, incidental vocabulary learning
promotes deeper mental processing and better retention (Web, 2005, 2007). Further, repeated
exposure involves cognitive processing, which helps learners retain words longer. The benefit is
that learning vocabulary through reading, as a consequence, improves learners' reading fluency
because they meet groups of words rather than single words while they are reading. As a result, successful vocabulary learning leads to successful application of language in daily situation.

**Recent Studies in the Thai Context**

Few gloss studies have been conducted in the Thai context. The topics to be elaborated relate to the effects of glosses on reading comprehension, incidental vocabulary learning, and vocabulary retention, which are the focus of the present study. First, Srichamnong (2011) investigated incidental L2 vocabulary learning, and the participants were asked to read the text on computers. The objective was to determine the effects of four different vocabulary learning tasks. Forty-five Thai intermediate-level students were put into four different groups and the results revealed that the more students joined the research activities the more their vocabulary retention improved even though the gain was only a little.

Second, regarding English vocabulary learning, Jenpattarakul (2012) investigated the glossing technique with 30 university students. Reading comprehension tests were administered and it was found that the students obtained higher scores on the posttest than on the pretest, $p = .05$, whereas the attitude towards the glosses was satisfactory. The results demonstrated that using glossing helped the students remember vocabulary in a reading passage. Therefore, the glossing technique contributes to the improvement of students’ reading comprehension and enables them to comprehend their reading more quickly. This conclusion is in line with Ko (2005) who mentions that glossing offers reading flow without too much interruption and students can quickly get the definition. As suggested by Hong (2010), it prevents the readers from making the wrong guesses. There is the possibility that guessing is not effective when the reading context is not clear to their understanding.

Finally, Gasigijtamrong (2013) also studied the effects of multimedia annotations on words and text recall. The participants were still Thai university students. Moreover, the students’ language proficiency was also at an intermediate level, as with previous studies. As multimedia vocabulary annotations were applied in reading texts, the results revealed that the Thai EFL learners recalled about 42% of target words, which was significantly higher than their pretest scores. Three weeks later, the retention test scores were significantly higher than their pre-test scores as well. The study confirms that the multimedia annotations helped with vocabulary recall. In general, the studies conducted in Thai contexts confirmed the effectiveness of glossing techniques in relation to reading comprehension and vocabulary retention. Furthermore, these findings from previous studies in Thailand correlate to findings mentioned in the introduction of this literature review which mention that glossing techniques improve reading comprehension and vocabulary recall. However, more gloss and vocabulary research needs to be conducted in Thailand and there are some research gaps which need to be bridged for the enhancement of L2 vocabulary learning.

**Methodology**

This study has a quasi-experimental orientation because true experimental designs are sometimes impractical because the research can only effectively be carried out in the laboratory. Moreover, the present study investigates a group of people, so the researcher utilized a quasi-experimental design to minimize threats to ecological validity as the study was conducted in a
natural environment and not a well-controlled laboratory setting. The findings which allowed for some generalizations to be made may be applied to other subjects and settings. The present study employed a repeated measure $t$-test design, which is a type under the umbrella of the quasi-experimental design. According to Mcleod (2017), repeated measure design is also known as the within group design where the participants experience the same experimental conditions (each level of the independent variables). Since the same participants were used in each experimental condition, the participant variables, such as individual difference or socioeconomic status, were reduced. The characteristic of the design was that only one group of participants was exposed to the research activities, L1 and L2 glosses.

**Population and Sampling**

A total of 199 participants were the population in the study and all were Thai secondary school students of Matthayom-Four (10th grade) at a secondary school in Thailand. First, the students’ scores on the nation’s vocabulary level test provided a first look at the target students. This is a tool that is widely used to roughly measure the written receptive vocabulary knowledge required for reading. The test consists of two versions, which are parallel forms. The vocabulary level test (VLT) was used to select the target participants. After the researcher received VLT scores, 161 students that had above 60% on the vocabulary test remained. However, the vocabulary level test score might not give the entire view. Their pre-existing O-NET scores in Matthayom-Three (9th grade) were next used to select the target students. Within the context of this study, the average 9th grade students’ O-NET English score was 31.94 in 2013. The scores ranging between 16 and 30 were used to frame the group for the study. As the score of 30 is obviously one third of 100 (the total scores), it indicates a low proficiency level. A score below 16 is too low for students to comprehend average texts, and scores above 30 and 60 may indicate average and high levels of proficiency, respectively, which were not the target objective of the sampling frame of the present study. At this stage, 93 students that met the criteria were selected. Finally, the total number came down to 83 after 10 students were removed from the pilot study.

**Reading Texts**

The students would encounter a text with approximately 240 words. The number of words from first text to the fourth text was 241, 245, 239, and 243 words per text, respectively. The percentage of K1 word coverage ranged from 73% to 82%, which showed that the texts contained a large number of high-frequency words. The researcher selected the reading texts based on the students’ preference, as they first chose the reading themes in the pilot study. The four English reading texts were from breakingnewenglish.com, which provided nine themes of texts, and each text had seven different levels of difficulty. The most preferable themes were health, technology, and lifestyle, which obviously outweighed the fourth preferred theme, so the researcher randomly selected the stories based on these three themes. Moreover, the pilot study revealed that the reading ease score of the target texts should be between 60 and 70, which means that the texts were average, and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade level results also revealed the texts were for 8th-9th students.

**Glossed Words in the Text**

After obtaining the reading texts with the appropriate readability, the researcher then chose and put four texts into an online service word calculator website, lextutor.ca, in order to categorize
every word into groups, i.e. K1 family, K2 family, academic word lists, or the off-types. As a result, the researcher was able to pick feasible glossed words to check later as to whether the pilot students knew or did not know the definitions. As a result, 40 words were then used to be glossed in the reading texts. For clear textual definitions, the researcher used definitions of target words from the Macmillan Dictionary, for L2 definitions (English), and LongdoDict, for L1 definitions (Thai). As the target texts from breakingnewsenglish.com and the Macmillan Dictionary are both British sources, and LongdoDict is the most visited online dictionary ranked by Truehits Ranking, the present study used the English and Thai definitions from these sources. The researcher edited some of the definitions to match the target words with the reading contexts. The texts were less than 5% glossed, with 11-9 words per text. The target words were 13%, 42%, 45% from K2, the academic word list, and the off-types, respectively.

**Reading Comprehension Tests**

Multiple choice tests were used and they consisted of 16 items for each text. The testing session lasted 40-45 minutes (including recognition tests). The given time was enough for the students as the pilot study suggested. In addition, the test items were on the paper but the reading texts were on the computer screen. For construct validity, the test items were sent to language experts to evaluate the relationship between the Bloom Taxonomy’s Learning Domains and each individual item. The experts were asked to rate each test item in order to see whether the content was congruent with the domain. In the present study, the average scores from the experts for text 1 to text 4 were respectively 0.72, 0.68, 0.62, and 0.66, indicating that the tests were acceptably congruent with the objectives. Moreover, after the IOC scores and comments were received, the researcher made the appropriate changes. The items that were not congruent were removed, while the rest were edited to fit the scheme of each test.

**Immediate and Delayed Vocabulary Tests**

According to research questions two and three, the purpose of immediate vocabulary recognition and delayed vocabulary retention tests is to investigate the effects of both text types and glosses (L1 and L2), that is, whether or not they influence retention. After finishing each comprehension test, the test papers were brought back and the participants logged out of the program and turned off the computer screen. The matching tests were given to the students immediately in order to test their immediate recognition of the target glossed words that they had encountered in the reading texts. The students completed the tests as the researcher provided altogether 40-word matching tests to check the students’ immediate vocabulary recognition. The definitions provided were the same as the glossed words which appeared in the reading texts. Then, the delayed vocabulary retention tests were given to the target participants to complete four weeks later in four consecutive days. The test format was the same as the immediate vocabulary recognition test so that the data could be compared. Each test took 8-10 minutes to complete in pencil-and-paper format.

**Results and Discussion**

The group of students, 83 participants, experienced the L1 hypertext glosses that were embedded in the English text. The main findings for the first three research questions were reported. The explanations are first provided under descriptive statistics and, secondly, the pair sample t-test aspects.
Research Question 1

This section of the results presents the comprehension scores obtained from the participants.

Data from the Reading Comprehension Tests (L2 and L1 glosses)

The reading comprehension test scores of the Thai secondary school students were that, out of sixteen points each, the means for the tests were 4.31 and 3.86, respectively, with SD values of 2.24 and 2.15. Regarding the L1 gloss scores, the means of the tests were 3.90 and 5.34, respectively, with SD values of 1.54 and 2.18. The mean for the 2 L2 hypertext gloss test scores was 4.08 and the mean for the 2 L1 hypertext gloss test scores was 4.62 and they were then put into the paired sample t-test analysis. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the two types of glossing techniques at the .05 level (p=.014). The table of the paired sample t-test scores is presented next.

Table 1

Paired Sample t-test Scores for the Reading Comprehension Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Test</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 - L2 and L1</td>
<td>-0.96166 -0.11063</td>
<td>-2.507</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, the results showed that the average comprehensive score for the L1 hypertext gloss was significantly higher than the L2 hypertext gloss, p = .014. Apart from the effects of the L1 and L2 glosses on reading comprehension, the next sections present the L1 and L2 glossing effects on the immediate vocabulary recognition test results.

The reasons behind the effect of L1 and L2 hypertext glosses on reading comprehension could be that glosses are functional and practical in terms of accessibility, as the reading process is not interrupted while readers are negotiating with the meaning of reading texts. The findings suggest that the glossing technique can be a substitution for a dictionary (Yanguas, 2009). Another advantage is that this technique can help to prevent wrong guessing and direct readers to correct inferences (Nation, 2001). The understanding of each student was more precise when he or she knew definitions as the L1 (Thai) gloss condition was more influential than that of the L2 definitions. In line with Nation (2011), the findings concluded that first language translations offer the more useful choices for learning vocabulary without a doubt.

In addition, with the significance differences between the L1 and L2 gloss scores on the reading test, the means for the L1 gloss scores in the present study were significantly higher than the L2 gloss scores. This showed that learners can benefit more from their L1 in terms of learning L2 vocabulary. Based on the questionnaire responses, the L2 learners in the present study preferred L1 to L2 vocabulary support. According to Schmitt (2008), this preference can be supported with positive L1 transfer in L2 vocabulary learning for both low and high achievers. According to Schmitt (2008, p. 337), “although it is unfashionable in many quarters to use the L1 in second language learning, given the ubiquitous nature of L1 influence, it seems perfectly sensible to exploit it when it is to our advantage.”
Incidental vocabulary learning occurs through reading for meaning comprehension, and comprehension is developed and enhanced by reading highly-informative contexts. If the findings are looked at through the lens of the vocabulary threshold, the reading success might be based upon the individual’s vocabulary capacity within reading contexts. Learners must be able to recognize the surrounding words in order to correctly infer the meaning of an unknown word, or to recognize a great amount of word to comprehend a whole text.

This amount ranges from 3,000 words, in order to reach 95% word coverage (Laufer, 1989), to 5,000 words, in order to reach 98% word coverage of a general text (Hu & Nation, 2000) for full textual comprehension. However, Bonk (2000) asserted that learners whose vocabulary coverage is less than 75% rarely comprehend reading texts. Table 2 shows the percentage of K1 words per text and 78.03% was the average. Based on the results, the students rarely comprehended the reading texts evaluated using the multiple choice tests even though the readings contained more than 75% of K1 words. These results were obviously in line with the concepts discussed earlier.

Table 2
The Number of K1 Words (1-1000) in Each Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text 1</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text 2</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text 3</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text 4</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To sum up, the average score that the participants achieved the four reading comprehension tests was 4.35 out of 16 items. This number accounted for 27.1% of text comprehension (4.35x100/16). Regarding the O-NET scores and the vocabulary threshold of 1000, which were used to select the participants, it might be concluded that the secondary school students that had an O-NET score below 30 will probably have fewer than 1000 English words in their memory. They also are likely to have reading problems as the limited vocabulary number negatively influences the perfect reading comprehension.

According to Nation and Waring (1997), the L2 learner needs to know 3,000 words of the target language for successful reading. Based on the findings, this seems inapplicable to the secondary school students in the research context because they would have to have more than 2 times their existing vocabulary in order to touch the K3 threshold. Moreover, if 95%, or 5,000 words, and 98%, or 8,000 words, are the learning goals (Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010), the students will take a long time to acquire the vocabulary. The results suggest that vocabulary learning and teaching should be paid attention to at the earlier school level so that the average O-Net test scores will improve and the gaps between the low and high achieving students can be reduced.

Research Question 2

Data from the IVR Tests revealed that the means for immediate vocabulary recognition tests were 2.31 ($SD=1.48$) and 2.14 ($SD=1.22$) for L2 glosses. For the L1 glossed words, the means were 4.88 ($SD=1.29$) and 4.45 ($SD=1.35$), respectively. The minimum score found in the results

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was 0, and the maximum score was 8. In analyzing the data, the researcher combined the two sets of scores in order to find the mean values. Out of 20 L2 and L1 target words, the means for the tests were 2.22 and 4.66 with SD values of .95 and .99, respectively. The means for both the L2 and L1 immediate vocabulary recognition test scores were put into the paired sample \( t \)-test analysis to find the difference of the two means. The paired sample \( t \)-test results, as shown in Table 3, indicated that there was a statistically-significant difference in the two types of glossing techniques at the .05 level \( (p=.000) \).

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Sample Test</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 - IVR2 and IVR1</td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.69665</td>
<td>-2.17082</td>
<td>-18.414</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, the result shows that the average immediate vocabulary recognition score for L1 hypertext gloss was significantly higher than that for the L2 hypertext gloss. Apart from the effects of the L1 and L2 glosses on immediate recognition, the next sections present the L1 and L2 glossing effects on delayed vocabulary retention.

**Research Question 3**

The descriptive statistics from the DVR revealed that the means for delayed vocabulary retention test were 1.96 \( (SD=1.36) \) and 2.06 \( (SD=1.58) \) for L2 glossed words. In terms of the L1 glossed words, the means were 4.22 \( (SD=1.69) \) and 4.57 \( (SD=1.80) \), respectively. The minimum score found in the results was 0, and the maximum score was 8. As with the calculation of the immediate vocabulary recognition test scores, the researcher combined the two sets of scores in order to find the mean values of the total 20 L1 gained words and 20 L2 gained words. Out of the 20 L2 and L1 target words, the means for the tests were 2.01 and 4.39 with SD values of 1.05 and 1.26, respectively. Moreover, the means were put into a paired sample \( t \)-test analysis to find out the differences in the means (L2 and L1 glosses). As shown in Table 4, the paired sample \( t \)-test results indicated that there was a statistically-significant difference in the two types of glossing techniques at the .05 level \( (p=.000) \).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Sample Test</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 - DVR2 and DVR1</td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.70643</td>
<td>-2.05261</td>
<td>-14.480</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, the results show that the delayed vocabulary retention score for L1 hypertext gloss were significantly higher than for the L2 hypertext gloss. On the immediate recognition test, the L2 gloss showed more limitations than the application of the L1 gloss, as the students that experienced the L1 gloss scored higher in IVR and retained more target words in DVR. The present results support hypothesis L1’s positive transfer in aiding vocabulary learning. The significant
results of the study reflect Hulstijn et al.’s (1996) statement that incidental vocabulary learning by reading definitely takes place. In contrast with Yoshi (2006), the students of the present study benefited more from the L1 gloss. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that university students in Yoshi (2006) and secondary school students can be differently influenced by types of gloss in terms of proficiency levels. The present study’s results support Nation’s (2011) view that first language translations offer a very useful choice for learning vocabulary and in the recall of vocabulary.

In line with Rouhi and Mohebbi (2012) and Lomicka (1998), reading on a computer with glosses promotes a deeper level of textual comprehension. Based on the present study results, when reading is given to students in the computer room, students have a lot of opportunity for gloss consultation. This could be influential not only for comprehension but also for vocabulary recognition. It can be summed up that glosses enrich the vocabulary learning environment, resulting in stronger retention. In addition, hypertext glosses may positively change learning activity atmosphere to be more comfortable, and the glossing technique provides more guidance to readers so the positive results towards reading comprehension and retention. However, the incidental learning of vocabulary through reading may be slow as only a slight word gain was noticed. Even if learners are equipped with facilitative devices such as glosses, significant gains cannot be expected unless students are regularly exposed to the target words. Regarding the delayed vocabulary retention scores, they were in line with the immediate vocabulary recognition scores. The researcher predicts that the repeated exposure of reading activities could make a difference in vocabulary gains and it might aid students in establishing stronger connections between the glossed words and definitions.

**Conclusion**

Regarding the comparison between the L1 and L2 glossing, it can be concluded that the L1 gloss had significant effects on the reading comprehension and vocabulary retention of the Thai secondary school students. The positive roles of glossing can be claimed due to the fact that both comprehension test scores and retention test scores on the hypertext L1 gloss were significantly higher. It is recommended that any task that aims to provide students with opportunities to learn subconsciously/incidentally needs to be formed and created in a way that attracts students’ attention. This will serve as a learning facilitator to influence L2 learners. Moreover, the results of the present study obviously demonstrated the benefits of the L1 gloss over the L2 gloss. At low proficiency levels, students can be supported more with L1-glossed reading texts, because L1 can provide scaffolding and decreases affective filters, and students can gradually make progress in language learning. Moreover, this is in line with the saying which is mentioned in literature review, "Glossing strengthens the bottom-up component of the reading process." (Jacobs, 1994, p. 115). Clearly, then, both the use of L1 and the bottom-up process should not be neglected in teaching and learning program where low-achieving students are present. In addition, one of the most useful and practical ideas is integration learning with the Internet. The Internet is today’s reality, and students and teachers should use it because of the easy access to never-ending amounts of instructional materials. It is asserted that "technology-based annotated texts present us with new opportunities to assist our students in getting beyond the 'mechanical' aspects of the reading process and to provide them with a means of developing good reading strategies" (Martínez-Lage & Herren, 1998, p. 146-147). Such a view should be taken seriously because it is technology era.
which students and teachers are living in, and technology will not be expired, never move back, but progress further both in foreign language learning and in our society.

**Recommendations for Further Studies**

Conducting study for longer periods by providing double reading amounts with learners at the same or earlier schooling ages is recommended since language learning is a long process. Finally, it is recommended that future studies use L1 written story retelling/recall techniques to collect the reading comprehension and vocabulary retention data as choices offer random guesses to the participants. In addition, the length of the story in the reading texts might have caused contamination in the data collection (e.g. different readability scores, power of contextual clues or boredom with reading). Further study should take these factors into consideration.

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Developing Plagiarism Policies in EFL Contexts: A Saudi Arabian Focus

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Abstract
This commentary responds to the approach used in establishing a plagiarism policy for preparatory year students at a medical university in Saudi Arabia. While appropriating others’ ideas and passing them off as one’s own is considered unethical in Western academia, the concept of textual ownership varies from culture to culture. Thus, this paper investigates the pedagogical and academic currency of establishing plagiarism policies in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts (and Saudi Arabia specifically) without accounting for the role local writing traditions and culture play in academia. Whereas much previous literature has examined plagiarism policies situated in English as a second language (ESL) contexts, this paper examines challenges that may be particular to EFL contexts and lays out a framework for establishing plagiarism policies therein. Keywords: academic integrity, contrastive rhetoric, intercultural rhetoric, plagiarism, second language writing, textual ownership

Introduction

For a working definition of plagiarism, we can use Park’s (2003) interpretation of it as “the theft of words or ideas, beyond what would normally be regarded as general knowledge (p. 472, emphasis not in original).” In the interests of leveling an academic playing field and “promoting both the theory and the practice of academic integrity” (Park, 2004, p. 292), plagiarism should be a primary concern for any institution of higher learning (HE); policies serving as preventative measures need to be implemented, dealing in a measured fashion when plagiarism does occur. But ‘general knowledge’ is not always universally understood: plagiarism not always clear cut, especially when ‘perpetrators’ come from different first language (L1) backgrounds and academic traditions. Currently, how policies are developed and how punitive in scope they are has become the subject of debate in both L1 and second language (L2) literature. In the UK, there has been a shift in focus to fostering university environments and creating plagiarism policies “where emphasis is on promoting good scholarly, academic practices” rather than simply “deterring [plagiarism] through detection and punishment” (Macdonald & Carroll, 2006, p. 244). The shift stems from research “[highlighting both] the problems students [have] with the concept of plagiarism” and “the need to improve student understanding and ability to avoid [it]” (Macdonald & Carroll, 2006, p. 240). Macdonald and Carroll (2006) showcase how UK students, for whom English is their mother tongue, have ‘conceptual confusion’ about plagiarism; likewise, for international students studying English and hailing from various academic traditions, the idea of plagiarism and ‘academic theft’ can be equally murky.

To this, scholars interested in reconceptualizing plagiarism in TESOL have hypothesized various theories as to why international students plagiarize. Differing cultural perspectives in knowledge construction (and whether such construction becomes a personal commodity or communal property) has been identified as one potential factor (Sowden, 2005; Gu & Brooks, 2008). Plagiarism has also been attributed to students’ lack of mastery of the conventions of academia; they might inherently understand that passing someone else’s work off as one’s own is immoral but lack the proper experience to cite sources properly (Wheeler, 2009). Hence, plagiarism has been identified as a challenging obstacle to navigate for many types of students (L1 English speakers and international students) in many different English language learning (ELL) contexts (ESL and EFL). The crux of this article, however, focuses on how plagiarism is particularly challenging in contexts where students are studying EFL.

Of the different modes of writing learners study in foreign settings (i.e. professional writing, technical writing, etc.), writing for academic purposes presents the greatest challenge. This is because beyond simply learning a particular set of writing mechanics, they will need to internalize what constitutes plagiarism and produce compositions that are in accordance with the procedural formalities of university policy which proscribe plagiarism in any form. To acclimate students in EFL contexts so that they manage this successfully is a formidable task. On one hand, it is imperative for students to know what plagiarism means because they might either 1) matriculate to inner circle universities’ or 2) they may seek to contribute to inner circle academic communities by way of publishing. On the other, plagiarism is arguably premised on a very ‘Western’ concept of textual ownership not universally understood as one and the same. One must then ask how does a HE institution develop appropriate plagiarism policies for students who are developing English writing mechanics, learning the expectations of L2 readers and required to
internalize the ethical framework within which inner circle academia operates? How punitive in scope should the policy be?

By this stream of inquiry, this article hopes to further an insightful dialogue about plagiarism in TESOL, one that has gained momentum in recent years (Pennycook, 1996; Liu, 2005; Sowden, 2005; Gu & Brooks, 2008; Pecarori & Petrić, 2014). I will briefly review how the concept of plagiarism and its moral connotations have been reconceptualized in recent years. I will then examine common problems international/foreign students face regarding plagiarism both in ESL and EFL contexts in light of these new trends. Next, current literature on some of the driving forces behind students’ ‘conceptual confusion’ of plagiarism in EFL contexts is reviewed. This will be done in the hopes that “looking to the underlying causes of plagiarism rather than just the symptoms [will provide] the opportunity for fresh thinking about assessment and the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders in the learning enterprise…” (Macdonald & Carroll, 2006, p. 244). I will then analyze the development of a plagiarism policy at a Saudi medical university in the context of traditional Saudi education. Finally, suggestions are made for how to appropriately develop plagiarism policies for HE institutions where English is taught as a foreign language.

An important point of clarification I wish to state early on is the distinction between ‘intentional’ vs. ‘unintentional’ plagiarism. Following Pecarori and Petrić’s (2014) line of thought, this article is concerned with addressing how HE institutions in foreign contexts should manage unintentional plagiarism, the incidental appropriation of text due to poor academic skills (i.e. referencing) or due to not fully understanding plagiarism as it is conceived in Western academia (Gu & Brooks, 2008; Duff et. al, 2006). Granted, students may be penalized regardless (even for unintentional plagiarism) in inner circle HE institutions, but such a discussion is beyond the scope of this article. Thus, I wish to differentiate between ‘Plagiarism’, “a moral transgression and a reflection of moral decay” (Pecarori & Petrić, 2014, p. 271), and ‘plagiarism’, the result of general ignorance of the conventional expectations of inner circle academia: this article focusing on the latter, not the former.

**Plagiarism for international students and EFL learners**

For many international students studying academic English in inner circle countries, becoming a proficient writer is demanding. Beyond learning to master basic rhetorical modes, modes which may be significantly different to their own native writing styles, learners must also internalize the ethical framework which underpins academic writing. There is no room for students to have philosophical debates with professors about the cultural perceptions of intellectual ownership; failure to understand plagiarism may result in very real and imminent consequences (i.e. failing a course or even expulsion). As students are expected to manage this all, many find great difficulty.

At a US university, observing undergraduate Indian, Saudi, and Chinese students writing assignments in English, Friedman (2014) as cited in Farhang (2014) remarked, “Students from Eastern cultures are generally used to working in groups toward a common goal in ways that can run counter to the American tradition of independent scholarship’ and that ‘plagiarism is a new word, [and] intellectual property is a new word and idea”. At an Australian university, “plagiarism
was perceived by Indonesian students as a foreign concept...[something] never introduced during their study in higher education in Indonesia” (Adiningrum & Kuteileh, 2011, p. A91). In the UK, Shei (2005) pinned the Chinese learning tradition of ‘imitation’, where “creativity has to be built upon the foundation of imitation” (p. 2), as the main ‘culprit’ for why Chinese students may have unknowingly plagiarized on their writing assignments. Thus, a common theme emerges concerning international students and plagiarism in ESL contexts; there is often a cultural and ideological barrier that creates ‘conceptual confusion’ for students. The concept is perhaps even more convoluted for learners studying English as a foreign language in their respective countries.

In a study with Japanese learners Wheeler (2009), while dispelling the notion that the Japanese condone plagiarism as a cultural practice, attributed cases of patchwriting and textual borrowing to a general lack of knowledge of proper citation techniques. In Turkey, Erkaya’s (2009) study found that some participants “had never heard the word [plagiarism] before in English or in Turkish (p. 91)” before entering university and “that no formal explanation on how to write research papers [had] ever been provided to the students, thereby leading them to plagiarize” (p. 91). Finally, Aldohmi (2017) as cited in (Albanawi, 2017) attributes plagiarism amongst Saudi students to “ignorance about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it”, “[in]sufficient training about academic ethics and integrity and ... the risks of academic misconduct”, and the fact that the education system in Saudi Arabia does not seem to have an established, clear and a strict policy against plagiarism in schools and universities.” What exactly is the source of this confusion in EFL contexts? To partially answer this, a brief discussion of the influence of L1 culture on knowledge construction is necessary.

**Culture and knowledge construction in private vs. public domains**

Language and culture are intimately related and exploring the idea that there may be a relationship between learners’ cultures and plagiarism is not new. While some have advanced notions that ‘cultural conditioning’ plays a role in predisposing learners to plagiaristic tendencies (Sowden, 2005), others caution us against generalizations based on faulty reasoning (Liu, 2005) and against making value judgements that stem from a myopic view of ‘textual ownership’ (Pennycook, 1996; Thompson, 2005). Others have clarified that plagiarism as understood in the West is “a historical and cultural phenomenon...[the] response to a particular set of economic, social and technological conditions...[and] may not be applicable to writing cultures and rhetorical traditions marked by a different course of development” (Pecarori & Petric, 2014, p. 274). Thus, plagiarism is a reality, but it should not be considered a universal reality. At a theoretical level, the principal idea of textual ownership is rooted in Anglo-Saxon, Enlightenment thinking which necessarily positions it in contention with other writing traditions that have different conceptualizations of what ‘intellectual ownership’ means (Pennycook, 1996). Some cultures may view knowledge and its construction as a communal, collective enterprise (Sowden, 2005; Gu & Brooks, 2008). As such, the idea of ‘borrowing’ other ideas or attributing a particular idea to a particular individual necessarily looks different and has different formalities in other cultures. In Western contexts, knowledge constructed by an individual becomes the sole property of that individual and is fundamentally private. Anyone wishing to use such knowledge must acknowledge its proprietor to avoid passing it off as his/her own work and impeding the original author’s right to monetary gain. In other societies, knowledge constructed by an individual
becomes communal property. Anyone is free to use such knowledge, choosing to refer to the original proprietor or not.

**Pedagogical considerations and support mechanisms for EFL students**

Foreign students could benefit tremendously from being educated about the intellectual and academic basis which plagiarism is founded on; a didactic approach aimed at informing learners how plagiarism came about, what it means, and how to avoid it. This helps in facilitating their induction into the academic communities that they will ultimately become a part of. In inner circle universities, there is “a growing awareness among scholars and practitioners alike that the solution to problems relating to plagiarism lies in education rather than punitive measures” (Pecarori & Petrić, 2014, p. 287). As such, a two-pronged pedagogical approach which 1) “[educates] students explicitly about plagiarism” and 2) “[teaches] source use and referencing in greater depth” has been proposed (Pecarori & Petrić, 2014, p. 287). Similarly, Macdonald and Carroll (2006) move away from ‘punitive’ measures and propose a holistic approach 1) in which students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills necessary for ‘a scholarly/academic approach to learning’, 2) that ensures assessment doesn’t necessarily ‘encourage or reward plagiarism’, and 3) in which institutions bear the responsibility of recognizing ‘that students are not adequately prepared when they enter HE’ as they need to gain “[the] understanding of the appropriate conventions and practices implicit in academic study in a western university.” (p. 236) This policy framework imposes “regulations [which] are not designed to punish” but instead to educate (Macdonald & Carroll, 2006, p. 236).

Thus, institutions of higher learning ought to concern themselves with introducing induction programs for international students who might struggle with the concept of plagiarism. Equally important is to familiarize students with the formalities of ‘source use and referencing’ to aid in the “development…of academic literacy” (Pecarori & Petrić, 2014, p. 288). Acclimating international students to understanding plagiarism and the formalities of academia must also be done “in a supportive learning environment in which students are not accused of plagiarism for making errors in the process of learning” (Pecarori & Petrić, 2014, p. 288). How effective might such interventions be? Duff et. al (2006) implemented a three-year intervention plan aimed at 1) familiarizing international students with Western expectations in academia and 2) reducing occurrences of plagiarism. Results suggest that the intervention framework led to a significant reduction in plagiarism. Pecarori and Petrić (2014) also advocate “[engaging] students in tasks and discussions that will lead to a deeper understanding of what constitutes plagiarism” (p. 288). Such a comprehensive approach “situates plagiarism within a larger framework of issues related to academic integrity, including authorship, copyright and intellectual property” (Pecarori & Petrić, 2014, p. 288). It is important to note that if these measures have been implemented in ESL contexts and yielded success, it is only more appropriate that such measures be adopted for students learning about plagiarism in foreign contexts.

**Plagiarism policy developed in a Saudi Arabian context**

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty have been documented amongst Saudi learners in literature (Razek, 2014; Tayan, 2016). But these studies have often lumped ‘Plagiarism – the result of moral decay’ and ‘plagiarism – the result of ignorance of the academic conventions of Western academia’ together, whereas I focus on the latter. Before discussing the dynamic of plagiarism
amongst Saudi students and the plagiarism policy we adopted at our university, it is important to contextualize the educational landscape of ELT in Saudi Arabia. Due to an assortment of issues such as poorly trained Saudi English instructors, limited opportunities for practice outside of the classroom, low motivation, and misalignment between curricular objectives and learner needs, many students come to university level with limited English skills (ur Rahman & Alhosaini, 2013). Consequently, there has been a proliferation of university preparatory programs in Saudi Arabia to help bolster English language proficiency before students enter respective colleges of study where the medium of instruction is exclusively English. Of the limited linguistic repertoire some Saudi learners have, writing is usually the weakest. Traditionally an oral culture, I have found through experience and independent study that many students have barely written for academic purposes in their mother language let alone have basic English writing skills before joining the university level. Thus, many Saudi students are essentially learning to write academically for the first time but doing so in a foreign language.

The government university concerned in this study specializes in science and health professions. Students enter a university pre-professional program (UPP), which consists of three semesters of basic science and English language courses, before moving on to their respective colleges (i.e. College of Medicine, College of Nursing, etc.). The college of choice is determined by the GPA they receive after the first year of the UPP program. The English component consists of writing, reading, communication and grammar courses scaffolded between beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. At its inception, the writing program used to begin students at the paragraph level in the first semester. In the second semester, students continued to work at the paragraph level but were required to use secondary sources in their assignments. For the third semester, students progressed to the essay level where they learned three rhetorical modes and included secondary sources in all assignments.

Given the educational context Saudi students come from in high school, the unrealistic expectations of the writing courses, and the general lack of knowledge of plagiarism and source use, a number of instances of plagiarism surfaced in the writing program, especially in the second and third semester courses. Absent an official policy, there was a general consensus that one needed to be created in order to tackle the issue of plagiarism and foster an environment of academic integrity in a health science university. Select professors and English lecturers were asked by the Dean of the college to form a committee to develop a college wide plagiarism policy. The committee consisted of Western and non-Western faculty, all of whom had been educated in either North America or the UK. As a writing course coordinator at the time and an appointed member of the committee, I was eager to share the pertinent literature I had been reading on ‘didactic vs. punitive’ approaches and eager to discuss shaping a policy around students’ academic realities. Somewhere quickly along the way, however, the line between ‘Plagiarism’ and ‘plagiarism’ became skewed. There wasn’t much effort nor interest in attributing Saudi students’ plagiarism to general ignorance or lack of awareness. Thus, a didactical element was missing from much of our discussion. Though I tried to voice the importance of factoring students’ L1 culture of writing and severe lack of basic English writing skills into the development of the plagiarism policy, it was often drowned out by the calls from many committee members to stop students from cheating and prevent them from compromising the academic integrity of the university. These students were ‘morally bankrupt’ and needed some deterring force to stop them. This approach
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spoke to a “pedagogical unsound[ness] and intellectual [arrogance]” that Pennycook (1996, p. 227) alluded to when one adopts such a narrow view of textual ownership. Why would we not consider these other factors when developing a plagiarism policy in a foreign context? Unless of course, it’s perfectly acceptable to export a myopic view of textual ownership and apply it in any context in any part of the world.

Punitiveness the soup du jour, the committee decided (by majority) to discipline students who committed plagiarism by giving them a warning for the first offense, a grade of zero for a second offense, and being referred to the Dean in the case of a third offense. In all fairness it was suggested that before implementing the policy, educating students in some form would be necessary. As such, a mandatory 1-hour workshop was conducted at the beginning of every semester by members of the committee to lecture about what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, and what the new policy entailed. Once students partook in the workshop, they were accountable to the plagiarism policy and subject to its penalties. However, 1 hour in the beginning of a 15-week semester was hardly sufficient to give Saudi students a comprehensive understanding of the inner workings of plagiarism within the framework of Western academia. In the Duff et al. (2006) study, a series of academic interventions were conducted over a three-year period to help internalize the Western model of plagiarism. And their didactic approach reinforced the notion that ‘students needed to be engaged with the nature of academic culture; …look[ing] to tutors “to provide the guidance to signpost the values of scholarship and nature of originality” (Macdonald & Carroll, 2006, p. 240). What we did was merely give a cosmetic introduction to a very compact concept, and then students were held accountable immediately thereafter. That to me was not in the best interests of the students and would create more problems than it solved.

Understandably after implementing the policy, there was panic and horror by students and their parents alike about not committing this ‘thing’ called ‘plagiarism’ which could adversely affect a student’s grades, grades that would determine eligibility to enter medical school. After being promoted to supervisor for the entire writing program (nationwide) I had to field many complaints and examine plagiarized compositions. While the university policy was to penalize students for plagiarizing, intuitively I felt uneasy about penalizing students, the majority of whom didn’t really realize what they were being penalized for. Some students presented their work having forgotten to add quotation marks: lack of thoroughness with referencing techniques. Some students presented work with barely coherent sentences, yet they were expected to be using outside sources. Some students became so consumed, even obsessed, with avoiding plagiarism that they seemed (as evidenced by my conversations with them) to focus more on citing correctly than with actual developing well written compositions with solid structure and mechanics. Essentially, the plagiarism policy created fear and confusion, “focus[ing] almost exclusively on identifying and punishing students who plagiarise” (Macdonald & Carroll, 2006, p. 235) rather than educating and ‘rehabilitat[ing] the offender[s].’

Conclusion

From the onset, the policy was not created with the students’ best interests in mind because neither students’ linguistic backgrounds nor the educational landscape of Saudi were never really factored in committee discussions. This runs incompatibly with Macdonald and Carroll’s (2006) suggestion to:
‘[have] in place …procedures and regulations that recognise that students are not adequately prepared when they enter HE and …[shoulder] a responsibility to ensure that they move quickly to an understanding of the appropriate conventions and practices implicit in academic study in a western university. (p.236)

Instead, there was serious overlooking of the ‘complexity of plagiarism’. We cannot simply project Western academic conventions and ideas of textual ownership in foreign contexts, and subject EFL learners to penalties and consequences for failing to adhere to that framework, without first giving them the opportunity to successfully acclimate. Once students have demonstrated that they can function properly within that framework, then I believe accountability is appropriate. Pecarori and Petrić (2014) highlight that some studies have shown that “both declarative and procedural knowledge [of source use] increased as a result of the pedagogical intervention” (p. 289).

Thus, plagiarism policies in EFL contexts need to 1) consider the role of the academic writing tradition in L1 and 2) develop an induction/intervention plan whose primary purpose is education learners about the expectations of Western scholarship. Doing so will “put arrangements in place to support those still developing necessary skills” (Macdonald & Carroll, 2006, p. 243). We also need to acknowledge that “existing research has established that textual plagiarism often has non-deceptive origins” (Pecarori & Petrić, 2014, p. 294), and that in unpacking this ‘complex issue’ we cannot simply assume that all students who plagiarize in foreign contexts are morally bankrupt and thus need only to be punished as a deterrent. By adopting these pedagogical interventions, we can help ensure institutions promote and preserve academic integrity while also compassionately inducting foreign learners into Western communities of scholarship, giving them every opportunity to succeed.

Notes:
1 For the sake of argument, I refer to Kachru’s (2003) ‘inner circle’ model as a base in which most inner circle countries subscribe to the same value system as it concerns plagiarism
2 Generally, students enroll in a 1-2 year language foundation program before entering a particular college of study (e.g. medicine, engineering, computer science, etc.)

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A Study into the Writing Performance of Moroccan Advanced EFL Writers from an Intercultural Rhetoric Perspective

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Abstract
This study investigated the extent to which results of rhetorical comparisons of persuasive essays by Moroccan students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) would provide empirical evidence for Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric hypothesis. This is especially regarding the fact that EFL students-writing problems are a byproduct of negative transfer of rhetorical strategies from their first language (L1). This hypothesis was tested by comparing 52 EFL and Arabic L1 persuasive essays by the very same EFL students to identify whether or not the language of composing affected the writing quality of their essays. The study hypothesizes that if Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric claims were accurate, then Moroccan advanced EFL writers would produce essays that tend to be rhetorically less accurate when judged by standard English rhetorical criteria. Prior to their use in the current study, the validity of the analytical measures was established by exploring if the participants’ rhetorical performance would predict the overall quality of their essays. While the results of a stepwise multiple regression analysis provided further evidence corroborating the validity of the rhetorical measures used in the study, group mean scores comparisons and a multiple discriminant analysis of the data indicated that there are more similarities than differences in the EFL and AL1 essays of the study participants.

Keywords: contrastive rhetoric, EFL writing transfer, persuasive essays, rhetorical patterns

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Introduction

Research on advanced ESL/EFL writing has witnessed a tremendous shift in focus away from grammatical and syntactical errors to be more concerned with macro aspects of students’ written products like rhetorical strategies, organisational patterns and above all the underlying logic of persuasion in general. Obviously, this line of research is not new. It was launched by Robert Kaplan 1966; a considerable number of whose similar studies have been subsequently conducted to compare different languages with the English language. These studies were geared to identify differences and similarities among written products by speakers of discrepant languages hoping to draw pedagogical implications that would improve the quality of instructional practices in ESL writing classes. These implications are hoped to lessen the agonies that EFL and ESL students suffer from when they get their teachers’/supervisors’ feedback comments like “clumsy”; “re-write and go straight to the point”; or “the material is all here but it is out of focus”; “I just don’t know what you are driving at” etc. Kaplan (1966) is said to be the first applied linguist to have attempted to account for these writing problems by initiating what turns out to be known in the field of ESL writing and composition as contrastive rhetoric (henceforth CR).

Background of the Study

1.1 Assumptions and key issues underlying the Contrastive Rhetoric Hypothesis

The contrastive rhetoric (henceforward CR) hypothesis assumes that both language and writing are cultural phenomena. It is deeply rooted in the twin beliefs that rhetorical patterns are culture bound and that schematic and organisational structures governing writing in one’s first language tend to interfere when one sets out to compose in English as a second language. Kaplan and his supporters advanced that ESL writing research needs to be geared toward raising teachers’ and students’ awareness of the fact that composing in English as a second or foreign language requires knowledge of discourse conventions and inter-sentential rhetorical organizations without which knowledge of grammar and syntactic rules at the intra-sentential level would be useless. Advocates of this hypothesis believed that all along acquisition of their native language, children grow to learn culturally acceptable forms of reasoning and acceptable ways of rhetorical expressions and these tend to persist when they set out to write in a second or foreign language context

1.2. Origins and early assumptions of the CR hypothesis

Kaplan 1966 and his followers (Hinds 1987; Ostler 1987) unduly extended the assumptions underlying both the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis (Sapir; 1929 and Whorf; 1956) and the Negative Transfer Hypothesis by Fries (1945) and Lado (1957) theories to the area of ESL writing and composition (Khartite & Zerhouni 2016). Kaplan’s renowned diagrams depict five language families unfolding how ESL students’ patterns tend to differ from culture to culture and how their ESL writing problems arise when they mistakenly resort to their favorite patterns in their L1 assuming that they might have the same positive effect on their audience in the new context of the second language. In fact, Kaplan (1966) observed that the very same undesirable negative transfer that takes places at the micro linguistic level like vocabulary and grammar takes place as well at the rhetorical and organizational aspect of discourse.
1.2.1. Arabic vs. English Rhetoric: Instances of some Unsubstantiated Assumptions

Ever since Kaplan’s ‘Doodles Article’ on contrastive rhetoric was published, many researchers hastened to provide empirical evidence to corroborate its underlying assumptions. Following are some of the major assumptions that have been made concerning rhetorical similarities and differences between Arabic and English.

To begin with, Kaplan (1966) was the first to cite instances from the Arabic language to substantiate his claims about rhetorical transfer arguing that “when Arabic speakers compose in English, they are not able to write in a logical or linear fashion because such concepts do not exist in Arabic” (p.14). In fact, Kaplan went further to claim that “the Arabic texts have no prepositional structure” and that “the primary focus of writing in Arabic rests on the language of the text” (Kaplan; 1988, p. 289).

Also, Koch (1981) complains that ESL writing by Arab students exhibit signs of “peculiar strangeness” that was, according to her, due “to higher-level, global ‘mistakes’ in how ideas are put together and how topics are approached” (p. 2). She claimed that whereas the underlying rhetorical structure of Arabic is highly paratactic, that of English is rather paradigmatic. In other words, an Arabic text “proceeds horizontally rather than vertically, wherein a series of ideas of equal weight for a given claim are chained together” (in Saez, F.T. (2001) p. 467).

Finally, Ostler (1988)-a student of Kaplan’s- observed that in Arabic, like most oral languages, writers make use of “an excessive number of coordinate sentences and most of them frequently begin with a super-ordinate or universal statement and end with some type of “formulaic” assertion or proverbial statement”. She claimed that this applied to the English language when it was still an oral language and when most of its speakers were still illiterate. However, as English gradually became a literate language “its rhetorical patterns evolved from those in which effect was achieved through use of formulaic expressions to those esteeming originality and creative thought, its syntax from one of repetitive parallels and rhythmic balance to preference for deletion and subordination (Ostler 1988, p.171).

Obviously, most of the above assumptions, being drawn from studies that suffered from major methodological flaws, were rejected either as unacceptable sweeping generalizations or simply as overstatedm ent of the effect of the first language on students' ESL writing and composition.

1.2.2. Exaggerating the Effect of the students’ First Language

Although some ESL writing researchers (e.g., Connor, 1996; Liebman, 1988, 1992; Ostler1987a) supported Kaplan’s contentions about the effect of one’s L1 and culture on their rhetorical performance, they rejected the claim that one’s L1 dictates their type of rhetorical choices when writing in the target language as an exaggeration. Instead, they acknowledged the effect of a broader cultural influence which put forward that one ‘s cultural background, among several other equally important factors-like writers’ past writing experiences (like classroom instruction), writing manuals used to teach writing and the discourse community to which they belongs etc.-can and do influence one’s reasoning strategies and rhetorical moves.
Likewise, Mohan & Lo, (1985) acknowledge the viability of both linguistic relativity hypothesis and the negative transfer hypothesis but not as being the only sources of the writing problems of ESL students. Their Developmental Hypothesis (also known as Inter-language theory) for instance assumes that students face problems writing in the target language and especially so at the rhetorical level, not so much as a result interference from their L1 but simply because they have not yet achieved an acceptable level of mastery of the logic/rhetoric underlying writing and composition in the English language- a language system they are still trying to come to terms with.

Other critics cast serious doubt on the claims of the Contrastive Rhetoric hypothesis due to such methodological concerns like the absence of a common ground for comparability among corpora or what (Connor & Moreno 2005) refer to as “Tertium Comparationis”. In this respect, they reasoned sarcastically that “apples should not be compared with oranges nor student’s writing in L2 with expert writing in the target language” (p.4). This implies that a valid comparison would first and foremost consider the rhetorical situation under which texts are written and the learning history/background of the student who wrote them. A rhetorical situation according to Bitzer (1968) is “the context in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse”. Therefore, the writing task/prompt, topic familiarity/interest, subject matter knowledge and finally language proficiency level of the study participants are all instances of situational variables that might affect rhetorical choices that one can resort to when composing in the target language. Put in Liebman’s own (1992) words, it is obvious that “Looked at in isolation … texts mislead,” which is true given the fact that "they do not tell the whole story about the writer and about how that text came to be.” This amounts to saying that “what seems like a structural problem, a poorly organized text for example, may be caused by something else” (pp.143-144) other than the learners’ L1 interference.

Finally, bias in favour of the target language is yet another major theoretical flaw from which future CR research needs to refrain. From an axiological point of view, critics like Kubota (1997), Johnson (1994), Spack (1997) and Zamel (1997) reject the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis as a culturally-biased and an ethnocentric enterprise particularly when considering the English language thought patterns as the only ones that are linear and by implication logical and rational.

1.3. Towards a New Intercultural Rhetoric Paradigm

The current study believes that for the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis to grow into a well-grounded theoretical paradigm, revisiting the legitimate criticisms leveled at some of its controversial assumptions listed above becomes an obligation. Indeed, as an implication for the present study caution is exercised to avoid all the methodological issues discussed previously. Firstly, there is a need for a shift in focus from adopting a prescriptive to a descriptive and non-judgmental approach that assigns all languages and cultures equal status. Second, writing corpora examined from a contrastive rhetoric perspective must attend to the requirements of an adequate Tertium Comparationis. Finally, a sound CR paradigm entails eliminating stereotyping, and/or marginalizing ESL students’ thought patterns as non-linear or illogical.

The Study

The short review above is hoped to have shown that some of the previous studies on persuasive writing by Arab speakers are predominantly intuitive, not least since they were mostly based on invalid and unreliable research design flaws. In fact, most of the contrastive studies involving
Arabic and English (Kaplan, 1966; Koch, 1983; Reid, 1984) seem to have failed to provide a valid research evidence to even accept the alleged rhetorical differences between the two languages cited previously let alone safely claim that Arabic native speakers’ writing problems emanate from interference and/or use L1 rhetorical strategies. Further empirical evidence is therefore required before one can securely attribute the ESL writing problems of native Arabic speakers, if any, to interference from their L1.

2.1. a. Research questions
The present study addresses the following two questions:

a. To what extent will the study participants’ scores on the analytic measures accurately predict the overall writing quality of their essays as measured by their holistic scores?

b. Are there any significant rhetorical differences in the EFL and Arabic L1 writing performance of the same Arab advanced student writers on the same persuasive writing task?

2.1. b. Research Hypotheses

a. The analytic tools measuring the rhetorical performance of EFL advanced writers will accurately predict their overall writing performance on the same persuasive writing task.

b. Rhetorical scores on the persuasive writing tasks by Moroccan advanced EFL writers will not be significantly different regardless of the language in which they wrote them.

Methodology
For the purpose of the present study, EFL and Arabic L1 persuasive essays by MA students from Ibn Zohr University- Agadir-Morocco- were elicited in response to the same writing prompt in both English and Arabic. It is not without relevance though to note that these persuasive essays are not rhetorically analysed with the view to identify in which language the study participants write better or worse essays. They are simply compared to examine which rhetorical patterns of English persuasive writing, if any, seem to especially prove problematic for Moroccan Arabic speakers in their EFL essays, and therefore confirm or reject Kaplan’s initial contention that the writing problems of native Arabic speakers are a by-product of negative interference or rhetorical transfer from their L1.

Study Design
Table 1 Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Native language</th>
<th>Arabic / Tamazight</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language of composing</td>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>ArabicL1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument Superstructure</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Reasoning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive Appeals</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic score</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Although some participants (8 to be exact) spoke both Amazigh and Arabic as their L1, the researchers assumed that because these students never use the first as a written medium then any potential rhetorical transfer is mostly going to be traced back to Arabic and not Amazigh language.
In a random sampling design, a group of 26 study participants enrolled in an MA English program responded to the same writing prompt adapted from Connor & Lauer (1990). They composed their essays in both English and Arabic. The task instructed the students to write a 1-2-page essay in which they explain what they consider as a serious problem in their community, try to convince their audience that it is a momentous one, propose a solution for it and do their best to persuade their target audience that their suggested plan of action to solve such a problem is the best and therefore needs to be adopted.

The 52 essays in Arabic and English were elicited bearing in mind the major methodological flaws that plagued early CR research. First, given their age/ cognitive maturity as well as advanced language proficiency level, MA students represent a generally more appropriate population for the study far better than undergraduate students. Writing a persuasive essay is obviously a cognitively challenging enterprise that entails prior instruction and a lot of rigorous practice. Therefore, essays by undergraduate students from lower language backgrounds might not prove to be an adequately representative sample for the current study.

The above measures are also taken to avoid methodological flaws from which earlier CR studies suffered like a) comparing ESL writing to English L1 writing; b) comparing student writing to idealistic/professional writing; c) comparing beginner ESL writing to advanced English L1 writing; d) mistakenly focusing on syntactic and intra-sentential features of texts rather than their rhetorical features. Finally, the study resorted to the use of well-defined analytical measures that have been empirically proven to be valid as reliable tools for cross-cultural and cross-linguistic examination of different languages from a CR perspective. Comparing students’ ESL writing with that of professional ones, for instance, without taking into consideration the non-native subjects’ low proficiency level will surely yield results that are biased in favour of the native English speaker group.

2.2.2. Writing Task

Based on the above, this study invested every possible effort to ascertain that the writing prompt is culturally bias-free and that all the ensuing writing samples are elicited under generally similar conditions. The study participants were asked to respond to the same persuasive task in both English and Arabic. To reduce the practice effect on their performance, all students were instructed to space out their essays with at least a three-week period. Compensatory measures were also taken to minimize confusing variables because of order effects. Thus, all the study participants were randomly split into two subgroups (A and B). Students in Group A were asked to write on the topic in Arabic L1, while students in Group B wrote in English. Two weeks later, students in Group A wrote in English while those assigned to Group B wrote in Arabic.

2.2.3. Analytic and Holistic Measures of the Study

The ultimate goal of the current study is to examine Moroccan students’ rhetorical problems from an intercultural rhetoric perspective. Therefore, the analysis of the resulting compositions in both languages examined focuses on the participants’ rhetorical performance on three major persuasive dimensions; namely, Argument Superstructure, Informal Reasoning, and Persuasive Appeals. Additionally, all the persuasive essays were holistically scored as a measure of overall writing performance against which the three rhetorical scales investigated could be...
checked for their validity and reliability to be established prior to their use as common grounds for cross-cultural comparisons. Table 1 summarizes the holistic and analytic measures that were used in the study followed by a detailed description of each measure.

Table 2: Summary of Analytic and Holistic Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Measure</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Description of the component parts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytic Measures</td>
<td>Argument superstructure</td>
<td>(Situation, problem, solution, evaluation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toulmin’s analysis of informal reasoning</td>
<td>(Data, claim, warrants, Added Toulmin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persuasive appeals</td>
<td>(Rational, credibility, affective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic</td>
<td>Holistic score (0-5)</td>
<td>Overall writing quality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.2.4. Argument superstructure

Two experienced university professors of composition and advanced ESL writing and composition scored all the essays solicited for the study using Connor’ & Lauer’s (1988) analytical measures; namely, Argument Superstructure (see Table 2). The latter consists of a four-point scale devised to identify the quality of the macro structural aspects of persuasive discourse. According to this theory, the schema of an effective persuasive essay must necessarily be structured in terms of situation, problem, solution and evaluation. Because “The reader approaches argumentative texts as a cognitive process of problem solving, the goal of the writer is to change an audience’s initial opposing position to the final position of the writer.” (Connor & Lauer 1988, p. 289). An argumentative/persuasive text is thus typically divided into four sequential slots, namely situation, problem, solution, and evaluation. The first slot- the situation slot- “is reserved for background material, that is, facts and views intended for orientation” (Connor 1990, p. 74). The next slot develops the problem; hence the reason why it is labeled the problem slot. Finally, the procedures or action plans suggested to solve the problem are detailed further in the solution slot. Finally, the evaluation slot contains an evaluation of the outcome of the suggested solution(s). The argument superstructure of an essay is quantified by assigning one point for each component.

2.2.5. Informal Reasoning

According to Toulmin’s new model (1958) - also in Toulmin, Rieke & Janik,1979- of argument analysis, an argument consists of six main components, namely claim, data, warrant, backing, rebuttal, and qualifier. While the first three constituent parts are fundamentally necessary for practical and persuasive discourse, the last three are optional. Their use depends on the nature and context of the argument. Just as is the case in most studies of its kind, only the first three components are investigated in the current study. Therefore, while the claim describes the main assumptions or premises of the writer, the data represent all the necessary details to support and
back up those claims. Warrants represent links that serve to explicitly show the type of relationship that one obtains between the two first components; namely, claims and data.

2.2.6. Persuasive Appeals

According to Cooper (1932), messages whose goal is to persuade their targeted audience to discard its point of view and share that of the writer or speaker are known to rely on rational (logos) or logical argumentation. Also, persuaders tend to build on their credibility (ethos) as trustworthy individuals who know what they are writing about while attempting to punctuate their discourse with some instances that appeal to their audience emotions (pathos). Therefore, an effectively combined use of rational, credibility, and affective appeals will in all likelihood play a pivotal role in helping writers or speakers achieve the goal of persuading their intended audience (Connor & Lauer, 1985); to win them onto one’s side and hopefully act accordingly.

2.2.7. Overall Writing Quality of the Essays

The same independent scorers rated all the essays in terms of the overall writing quality of each essay in the study using a 0-5-point holistic scale. Both holistic and analytic scoring procedures were, here again, spaced out to neutralize the practice effect on the raters’ objective evaluation of the essays both holistically and rhetorically speaking. Necessary guidelines and criteria of what constitutes a good or a poor essay were discussed so that the scores would attend to how each participant met the task requirement, addressed the topic, and whether they gave an adequate solution to the problem they choose to raise. Raters were also reminded to set aside their agreement or disagreement with the writers’ point of view lest it should affect their objective evaluation of the overall writing quality of the essay.

2.3. Results and Data Analysis

The study hypothesizes that for Kaplan’s contrastive rhetoric claims to be accepted as accurate and valid, it is assumed that the writing quality of the essays by Arab EFL writers would not be affected by the language in which they write them. This would all the more be true if their overall writing performance turns out to correlate significantly with their scores on the analytic measures/patterns (see table 2 above).

2.3.1. Responding to the First Research Question

Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 Mean and standard deviation of all the variables by holistic scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean (SD) Holistic score</th>
<th>Mean (SD) Holistic score 2</th>
<th>Mean (SD) Holistic score 3</th>
<th>Mean (SD) Holistic score 4</th>
<th>Total = n 52</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>.857 (.363) n=14 (26.73%)</td>
<td>.928 (.262) n=28 (52.53%)</td>
<td>1.00 (.000) n=10 (21.74%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>.857 (.363)</td>
<td>.928 (.262)</td>
<td>1.00 (.000)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution</td>
<td>.785 (.425)</td>
<td>.964 (.188)</td>
<td>.800 (.421)</td>
<td>.807 (.397)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>.571 (.513)</td>
<td>.928 (.262)</td>
<td>.800 (.421)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 summarizes the means and standard deviation values for the holistic and analytic variables. All participants’ mean scores ranged from two to four, which implies that all study participants attempted their best to respond to the writing task. The fact that none of the essays scored one means that no essay suffered from serious rhetorical errors, which is again natural given the fact that all participants are at an advanced language proficiency level. What is surprising, however, is the fact that the overall mean score of all participants is somewhat below average (M= 2.92 SD= 0.681). None of the participants scored 5 and only 10 students (21.74%) got a score of 4 points. While only 14 participants (26.73) got a score of 2, the rest of them - 28 participants (52.53%) scored 3. One way to account for the relatively below average scores is to note that the allotted time for writing the essay was possibly not enough. If this turns out to be the case, it confirms Zamel’s (1987) claim that writing persuasive discourse is a cognitively demanding task that requires a lot of preparation, use of high order thinking skills and a good mastery of the language. Another possible way to look at the below average score of all the essays in both languages (AL1 and EFL) is that perhaps participants did not invest the required amount of time and efforts to carry out the task especially that they were not provided with any real-world incentive (like an exam or monetary compensation for taking part in the study) to exhibit their full potential and demonstrate their best writing skills.

The reported correlations of all variable in the multiple regression analysis below (table 4) clearly confirm the existence of a strong correlation amongst all the analytical variables and particularly between these variables and the holistic scores. This means that participants who managed to work out a well-informed claim and provided enough data to back it up are more likely to get a better holistic score than those participants who failed to do so. Also, a well-structured essay that addresses the component parts of the arguments superstructure theory (situation, problem, solution and evaluation) seems to appeal to reason and therefore tends to score higher on the rational appeal scale.

Table 4 Correlations of all variables in the multiple regression analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument-superstructure</th>
<th>.851</th>
<th>6.28</th>
<th>.854</th>
<th>7.20</th>
<th>1.68</th>
<th>6.00</th>
<th>1.400</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>.503</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>.316</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.518</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>.390</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>.421</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrant</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>.363</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>.487</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.316</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added-toulmine</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>.966</td>
<td>5.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational-appeals</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.937</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.509</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility-appeals</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>.997</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective-appeals</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.937</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.634</td>
<td>.800</td>
<td>.421</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 confirms the above finding especially after the data was subjected to a Stepwise Multiple-Regression Analysis. The criterion variable in the regression model was specified as holistic scores while the predictor variables were specified as argument superstructure, added Toulmin’s rational appeals, credibility appeals and affective appeals scores. A Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was used because of its ability to calculate the predictive power of the analytic measures both individually and in combination of two or more variables. The stepwise–MRA of the dependent and independent variables (Table 5) clearly indicated that there was a positive linear relationship between the criterion variable (holistic scores) and the predictor variables (analytic measures).

Table 5 Stepwise Regression Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modèle</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
<th>Std. error of the estimate</th>
<th>Durbin-Watson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.667b</td>
<td>.445</td>
<td>.434</td>
<td>.512</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.737c</td>
<td>.543</td>
<td>.524</td>
<td>.470</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.824d</td>
<td>.679</td>
<td>.659</td>
<td>.398</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.849e</td>
<td>.721</td>
<td>.697</td>
<td>.375</td>
<td>.782</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
- a. Dependent variable: Holistic scores
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Data
- c. Predictors: (Constant), Data, Argument Superstructure
- d. Predictors: (Constant), Data, Argument Superstructure, Rational Appeals
- e. Predictors: (Constant), Data Argument superstructure, Rational appeals, affective appeals.

Table 5 shows that three out of the four independent variables had strong positive linear relationships that ranged from 66.7% to 84.9% with the dependent variable (holistic scores). Put more precisely, the scores of data, argument superstructure and rational appeals together predicted 82.9% of the variance in the holistic scores. The data and super argument variables turned out to be the two best predictors (73.7%) of the variance in the holistic scores. This means that a student who manages to provide enough data to support their claim in an essay that is well structured in terms of situation, problem, solution and evaluation pattern has a better chance of getting a higher score than a student who fails to do so. The affective appeals increased further the ability of the...
regression model and contributed to its predictive power by a low yet significant 3%. The more logical arguments a participant provides—the more appealing the data to the target audience affective or emotional way of thinking— the better the quality of their essays is judged by the raters. Table 5 shows the results of the Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis; and table 6 reports the significance results for the different regression models resulting from the regression analysis.

### Table 6 Summary Table for Multiple Regression Models: ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>10.541</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.541</td>
<td>40.075</td>
<td>.000b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>13.151</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23.692</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>12.856</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.428</td>
<td>29.066</td>
<td>.000c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>10.836</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>.221</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23.692</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>16.087</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.362</td>
<td>33.843</td>
<td>.000d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>7.605</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23.692</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>17.083</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.271</td>
<td>30.370</td>
<td>.000e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>6.609</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>.141</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23.692</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:

a. Dependent variable: Holistic scores
b. Predictors: (Constant), Data
c. Predictors: (Constant), Data, Argument Superstructure
d. Predictors: (Constant), Data, Argument Superstructure, Rational Appeals
e. Predictors: (Constant), Data Argument superstructure, Rational appeals, affective appeals.

Put in a nutshell, the use of the Multiple Regression Analysis to calculate the predictive power of the rhetorical variables has made it clear that performance of EFL advanced writers on three measures of rhetorical dimensions, namely, argument-superstructure, rational-appeals, affective-appeal can predict the writers ‘overall writing performance with 84% accuracy. Therefore—as a response to the first research question—it is only fair to conclude that three out of the four rhetorical measures under study turned out to be highly valid and reliable measures of writing quality. The researchers can therefore safely use them as a gauge to examine rhetorical variation, if any, in the persuasive AL1 and EFL writing essays by the same Moroccan advanced students.

### 2.3.3. Responding to the Second Research Question

The study hypothesizes that if Kaplan’s (1966) contrastive rhetoric claims were accurate, statistical analysis of the participants’ rhetorical performance- as measured by the analytical scales reported above as valid and reliable- would indicate that there are no significant differences in the EFL and Arabic L1 writing performance of the same Arab advanced EFL writers.

Table 7 summarizes the means and standard deviation values for the holistic and analytic variables for all participants in the study by data set or language of composing. The Mean scores on the analytical scales were calculated for the study participants group as whole then for each group defined in terms of the language of writing per se. The mean scores in AL1 and EFL essays
by the same Moroccan advanced writers do not seem to be significantly different. This is especially so where argument superstructure (AL1 mean score = 6.19 vs. EFL mean score = 5.80) and rational appeals (AL1 mean score = 3.00 vs. EFL mean score = 2.88) are concerned.

The relatively below average mean of the holistic scores in both EFL (EFL M=2.88; SD=.652) and AL1 essays (AL1 M=2.96; SD=.720) and the relatively below average mean scores of almost all the analytical scales can be interpreted as implying that some rhetorical aspects of English persuasive writing are especially problematic for Arab advanced EFL writers. But it does not follow that this is a result of rhetorical transfer from the students’ L1. These results might be understood as implying that students perhaps transfer rhetorical patterns backward from the target language to their L1. Yet it remains to be seen if the same research finding would still be the case when these EFL student’s rhetorical performance is compared to that of their English L1 counterparts. In other words, although descriptive statistics of the current study yields results that seem to be in favor of one of the assumptions of the Contrastive Rhetoric hypothesis - it is hoped upon analysis of essays by a comparable group of English native speakers to find out whether or not the latter face similar writing challenges and especially so at the rhetorical level.

Table 7 Means and SD for all Variables by Data Set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>AL1 (n=26)</th>
<th>EFL (n=26)</th>
<th>Total (N=52)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOLISTICSCORES</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.720</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BACKGROUND</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROBLEM</td>
<td>.961</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>.884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLUTION</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVALUATION</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARG._SUPERSTRUCTURE</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLAIM</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>.496</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATA</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>.904</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARRANT</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.367</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDED_TOULMINE</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>6.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RATIONAL_APPEALS</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREDIBILITY_APPEALS</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.859</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFFECTIVE_APPEAL</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To confirm the absence of any significant differences in the rhetorical performance of Moroccan advanced EFL students in both AL1 and EFL essays reported above, a computerized Multiple Discriminant Analysis (MDA) was conducted to identify whether the performance of the participants on measures of Standard English rhetorical criteria would accurately predict their language of writing. The MDA employed a Wilks‘Lambda stepwise procedure to examine which
of the rhetorical predictors of overall persuasive writing quality - either individually or in combinations of two or more - could accurately discriminate among individual writing samples from the two data sets. While the independent variables in the MDA were scores on the informal reasoning, argument superstructure, and affective appeals scales, the dependent variable was defined in terms of data sets with two categories, namely ESL and AL1 writing samples. Significance criteria of Wilks’ Lambda were set so that new independent variables were entered in the model at a significance level of .05 or less and were removed when they ceased to lower the overall Wilks’ Lambda F-value of the model by a significance level of .1 or less.

Table 8 Variables not in the Multiple Discriminant Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excluded Variables</th>
<th>Wilk’s Lambda</th>
<th>Sig of F to enter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holistic Scores</td>
<td>.997</td>
<td>.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument Superstructure</td>
<td>.981</td>
<td>.327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added Toulmin’s</td>
<td>.781</td>
<td>.530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational Appeals</td>
<td>.939</td>
<td>.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility Appeals</td>
<td>.858</td>
<td>.346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Appeal</td>
<td>.691</td>
<td>.454</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 reveals that SPSS failed to produce any model of one or more independent variables that could discriminate significantly between the two categories of the dependent variable with a reasonable degree of accuracy. As a matter of fact, none of the six independent variables that were specified in the model qualified to be entered in the MDA model because each of them individually failed to meet the pre-specified .05 significance threshold level for entry in the model.

Thus, failure of the MDA to produce at least a single model that could discriminate among writers in terms of the language of composing (AL1 or EFL) based on their rhetorical performance indicates that there are no significant differences in the EFL and Arabic L1 writing performance of the same Arab advanced EFL writers on measures of Standard English criteria. Again, it is hoped upon recruitment of native speakers to write equivalent essays in English L1 that the comparison and contrast of all the three data sets (AL1, EFL and English L1) will make it possible to find out whether or not there are any significant differences in the rhetorical performance of English L1 and Arab EFL advanced writers.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Results of the present study revealed that EFL and Arabic persuasive essays by the same Moroccan advanced EFL writers seem to suffer from an inadequate use of the rhetorical patterns investigated in the current study; namely, argument superstructure, informal reasoning and persuasive appeals. Put more precisely, the study participants’ below average performance as one group is an indication that they face the same rhetorical problems regardless of the language of composing. Although this finding corroborates part of Kaplan’s contrastive rhetoric hypothesis especially with regards to the claimed similarities in the writing of persuasive essays by the same study participants in both L1 and EFL, it is still premature to fully confirm or reject Kaplan’s contention that this results from the effect of L1 transfer at the rhetorical level. In fact, it is difficult to conclude whether or not there are any significant differences in the rhetorical performance of English L1 and Arab EFL advanced writers.
to conclude whether students’ problems are a result of transfer from their L1 to English or the other way around particularly that they seem to face the same challenges writing persuasive essays in both L1 and the target language.

Like the findings in the current study, Kubota (1998) found no significant differences that can safely be attributable to transfer from Japanese to English written texts (P.83). The researcher compared two collections of expository and persuasive essays in Japanese and English written by the same Japanese students. The analysis focused on the placement of the thesis statement, overall organization of the essays and the language use. The results showed clear similarity between the essays examined. In fact “No negative transfer of L1 specific pattern was observed. Instead the kind of negative transfer was mainly that of poor organization. There were many instances of positive transfer” (Kubota, 1998 p. 83). The same research results were underlined by Lui (2005) upon comparing argumentative essays written in Chinese and English by Chinese and American high school students. Lui found out that there were only minor differences between the two language groups and concluded that “contemporary Chinese argumentative writing of foreign language school students is closer to” Anglo-American rhetorical style than previously assumed” (P. 129).

In the same line of research, Ismail (2010) replicated Connor & Lauer’s (1985), and Connor’s 1990) study using roughly the same research instruments the current study resorted to with the view to analyzing persuasive essays by a group of 30 Doctoral Arabic speakers writing in both Arabic and English and 30 L1 essays by US Doctoral students. The aim was to identify whether"[the] Arab writers had similar or different writing challenges when they composed in ESL and in their native language " and emphasis was especially put on " whether these writing challenges were unique to the Arab writers or were like those experienced by their native English counterparts (Ismail, 2010 P.238). Having secured the requirements of a tertium Comparationis and established the validity of the analytical measures deployed for cross cultural comparisons, Ismail (2010, p. 240.) concluded that “(a) some rhetorical dimensions of persuasive writing are problematic for Arab advanced ESL writers, and (b) these problematic areas of persuasive writing are not unique to Arab advanced ESL students. Rather,”… it turns out that “(c) the same rhetorical dimensions of persuasive writing were equally challenging for advanced native English speakers” as well.

Conclusion

All in all, although it is beyond the scope of this study to cast doubt on the entire CR hypothesis as it was initially introduced by Kaplan and his supporter, the preliminary research findings reached thus far seem to partly support one of its basic assumptions specially in claiming that there are no significant rhetorical differences in the performance of Moroccan EFL students’ persuasive essays regardless of the language in which they wrote them (be they in L1 or EFL). As a concluding note for this small scale study, which involved comparing only the EFL and L1 of Moroccan advanced students, it is only fair to close with the idea that until after the performance of the students in the current study are compared with that of their English L1 native a contrastive rhetoric perspective then Kaplan’s contention regarding the role of transfer as the major variable accountable of ESL or EFL writing challenges at the rhetorical level remains unsubstantiated.
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References


The Authenticity of the Algerian English Textbooks: The Case of Third Year High School Textbook “New Prospects”

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Abstract
This research paper evolves from and revolves around a prevailing assertion: namely, that is the teaching-learning process has a firm attitudinal footing. Differently stated, the aim of this study is to explore and evaluate the authenticity of the Algerian English textbooks at high school level as they are considered as an important instructional materials and fruitful resources for helping English language learners develop communicative competence. This investigation is tackled by inquiring about the following questions: To what extent are the texts and tasks included in the Algerian secondary school textbooks authentic? And how far does “New Prospects” help English as a foreign language (EFL) learners improve their communicative competence?. It should be noted that the targeted population of this study are the Algerian secondary school teachers of English in the region of Mascara of which 35 English language teachers responded to the questionnaire copies in addition to the use of an informal observation as research instruments. The findings of this investigation disclose that the English textbook « New Prospects » that is currently used by third year Algerian high school pupils doesn’t offer classroom learners adequate opportunities for learning authentic language. This is due to many reasons such as the choice of one type of English at the expense of another which is more dictated by both political and economical considerations rather than by pedagogical concerns in addition to the lack of an appropriate model because most English adopted versions lack Englishness in addition to the mechanical way in which the tasks presented in the prescribed textbook are tackled and being dealt with. According to the obtained results, the researcher suggested the use of visual aids, Informational Communicative Technologies (ICTs), and some useful communicative tasks as pedagogical recommendations so as to remedy the situation.

Key words: authenticity, authentic materials, communicative competence, English language textbooks, foreign language teaching/learning

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1-Introduction

Moving from the focus “on form” to the focus on “meaning and language use” was an imperative step in the history of English language teaching in Algeria. It aims at developing learners’ communicative competence when designing curricular for English language learning by adopting the communicative language teaching approach.

The textbooks “represent the visible heart of any ELT program” (Sheldon 1988: p238) since they offer significant chances for both the teachers and the learners to practice the target language when used in the classroom. Once communicative competence is determined as the main objective of the curriculum, textbook writers find ways to achieve this goal by setting the benchmarks to design a useful material.

There is much evidence to support the great importance of textbooks in English language teaching programs because they are the foundation of school instruction and the primary source of information for students and teachers. In other words, they are the main instrument for shaping knowledge, attitudes and principles. In Algeria, the textbook serves as the basis for much language input that the learners receive when practicing it.

For most teachers, textbooks provide the foundation for the content of lessons, the balance of the skills taught, as well as the kinds of language practice the students engage in during class activities and for the learners the textbooks are considered as the major source of the contact they have with the language apart from the input provided by their teachers.

This research focuses on one of the three English textbooks which are currently used in the third level of the Algerian high schools “New Prospects”. This study aims at finding out the extent to which the prescribed textbook can prepare learners to be communicatively competent and whether it provides learners with authentic content that can be used in a particular context so as to be qualified as appropriate and suitable textbook.

2. Literature Review

The authenticity of the teaching materials in English as a foreign language context is a significant issue that has been raised by so many scholars who study English language teaching. To begin with, Harmer (2007) defines authentic material as “language where no concessions are made to foreign speakers and it is normal, natural language used by native or competent speakers of a language” (p. 273). So, by authentic texts ,we mean that genuine instances of language use as opposed to those translated versions and devised ones especially for language teaching and learning purposes .This issue of authenticity emerged as an important question within the communicative language teaching and in relation to notional “functional” syllabuses where the focus was placed on ensuring that classrooms in which English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) are required to contain natural language behaviors with content identified as relevant to the learner through the process of needs analysis .Once more, the texts should be presented in a way that make second language (L2) exposure seem similar to a native context.
2.1. What does authenticity stand for?

Authenticity is an umbrella term that covers different interrelated meanings. It has mainly to do with language produced by native speakers in a particular language community (Martinez & Roberts, 1981; Sarigleton, 1989). It may also stand for the type of tasks and the chosen texts to be dealt with as important EFL instructional materials which are our concern in this article. By authentic texts, we mean those stretches of real language produced by real speakers or writers for a real audience so as to convey a real message. Judging a particular text to be authentic or not can make the researcher think about the source of the discourse and the context of its production which are two important factors when dealing with authenticity as a cornerstone in teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

“Fitness to the learning purpose” may also be considered as a factor that defines what authenticity means. Generally, both teachers and students ask a question like what are we trying to achieve with authentic classroom materials? A possible answer to such a question would be to help learners communicate effectively in the target language (Breen, 1985).

2.2. The Need for a New Paradigm Shift

Being aware of the importance of discourse and having the willingness to take on a view about what language as discourse implies can only make us better and more efficient as syllabus designers, tasks analysts, dialogues writers, materials adaptors and evaluators of everything we do and tackle in our classrooms.

Above all, the approach that has been adopted recently enables us to be more faithful to what language is and what people use it for because the time when educators start to think of language as discourse, the entire landscape changes. (Widdowson, 1990). So, a paradigm shift would be the best solution because we are in front of so many models that are far from comprehensive but serves to illustrate how inadequate many current language textbooks are in enhancing learners’ overall communicative competence. Since the language of this English language textbook is poorly presented to the learners though researchers endeavor to improve it, the gap is deeper.

It is time to change as learners are supposed to know much more than any time how they can make meaning through language as a reaction to the research revolution into different areas of communicative competence such as pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics…etc

2.3. Textbook Role in ESL/EFL Classroom

Textbooks are considered as the potential that serves additional roles in the ELT curriculum (Cunningsworth, 1995). He argues that they are effective resources for self-directed learning and a source of ideas and activities, a reference for language learners, a syllabus where they reflect predetermined objectives and a support for less experienced teachers. Hutchinson and Tows (1994) too point out that textbooks play a pivotal role in innovation. They suggest that textbooks can support teachers through potentially disturbing and threatening change processes, demonstrate new or untried methodologies, introduce change gradually and create scaffolding upon which teachers can build a more creative methodology of their own.
Many of the aforementioned scholars are quick to point out that textbooks have long been considered central to English language learning and teaching. They are not only a source of knowledge that teachers rely on to prepare and deliver a lesson but also the basis of language input for language learners. Gilmore (2007) literally labels the language in textbooks as “a poor representation of the real thing despite the fact that much have been done to redress the balance between authentic language and the language in textbooks” (p. 6).

2.4. Presentation of « New Prospects »

New Prospects is designed for Algerian third year high school learners. It is determined to all streams: literary, foreign languages, scientific, and economy and management. It consists of 270 pages divided into two sequences and six units, which are as follows: Unit One: Ancient Civilizations- Unit Two: Ethics in Business- Unit Three: Education in the World-Unit Four: Food Safety-Unit Five: Feelings and Emotions-Unit six: Are we alone? .Each unit includes a project to be fulfilled at the end.

3. Methodology

3.1. Method

After an observation of more than five years teaching third year classes, the researcher decided to evaluate the textbook that is currently used by third year high school learners so as to improve their communicative competence. The current work is a cross sectional descriptive study that took place at different Algerian high schools where a total number of 40 questionnaire copies were randomly handed to teachers at Algerian high schools in the region of Mascara.

3.3. The Research Instrument

The researcher makes use of an unstructured observation and a questionnaire to test the research hypotheses and find out some solutions to the problem at hand.

3.3.2. The questionnaire

To validate the research findings and to cross check them the researcher used a questionnaire as a research tool. It should be mentioned that the total number of the filled questionnaires is 35 by the respondents who participated and they were not reluctant to fill out the questionnaire copies anonymously.

3.4. Main Findings and Discussion:

The first part of the questionnaire includes teachers’ background information and the second part contains questions related to the research theme i.e Algerian English textbooks authenticity, this part of questionnaire is formulated through the use of close-ended and open-ended questions which aim at providing answers to the research questions. While the second part aims at finding out their reference to the use of English textbook in their mundane teaching practices.

a. The teaching experience

In order to ensure realistic facts on the personal level, teachers were asked about their experience. This can be a reference point which provides the researcher with more facts if the teachers have witnessed the different changes that English language teaching (ELT) in Algeria has
undergone. In action, the majority of teachers that presents 70% of the total respondents were experienced instructors i.e. their experience range from 15 to 20 years. While 30% of them were novice teachers who have been teaching English for two to six years.

Table 1 *English language teachers experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possibilities</th>
<th>Teachers’ number</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experienced Teachers</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less experienced Teachers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. *Teachers Reference to the Text book*

Concerning the teaching materials used in EFL classroom, the researcher asks the participants whether they refer constantly to the text book in their teaching. Around 90% of them say that they depend continuously on the text book in their everyday teaching practice as it is mentioned in figure01. However, ten percent of them refer to it in frequent ways (from time to time). In this regard, Hall (2011) believes that well-designed textbooks have a number of recognizable benefits for teachers and learners since they provide language input and exposure for learners.

![Figure 1 Teachers reference to the English language textbook](image_url)

C- *EFL Teachers Perceptions and Attitudes toward Using Authentic Materials in their EFL Context.*

According to the elicited results that appear clearly in table 02, there has been an overall indication among EFL Algerian teachers on the merits of using authentic materials in second language classes. 95% of the informants indicate their preference for using such materials in language teaching. While five percent of the other participants express their opposition to the use of authentic materials in their English sessions and when they were are asked about the reasons behind such a view, they justify their answers as follows: authentic materials can add more responsibility on the teacher as they are sometimes obliged to prepare activities and questions since authentic materials are usually found without activities or issues which is not an easy task that any teacher can handle.

Table2 *English language teachers perceptions toward using authentic materials*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possibilities</th>
<th>Teachers’ number</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D- Reasons for Using Authentic Materials in EFL Classes

When asking about the reasons for using authentic materials, 17 of our informants said that the most important factor behind using authentic materials in their EFL classes is to expose their learners to real life context and make them in front of genuine instances of language use as opposed to translated versions. In this regard (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 161) states that authentic materials can provide meaningful exposure to language as it is actually used to motivate learners and help them develop a range of communicative competencies and enhance positive attitudes towards learning the language. However, nine informants selected item b which states for using authentic materials to attract their learners’ interest and raise their motivation to learn a foreign language and the other seven teachers state that developing their learners language skills and applying effective teaching strategies is the main interest behind using authentic materials at class and this what figure 02 can highlight.

![Figure 2](image_url)

*Figure 2 The causes behind using authentic materials in English language classes*

E- The Authenticity of the Tasks Presented in « New Prospects » Textbook

As far as this question is concerned and according to figure 03, 25 teachers select the option No which means that the tasks presented in « New Prospects » lack authenticity, they add that this is because the language of the prescribed textbook is of poor representation and it is no more of a simplified version of English that impedes learners communicative competence besides the mechanical activities that don’t go beyond classroom context. However, ten of the participants answer that some of the tasks represent genuine instances of language use such as in dialogues where the learners are asked to express suggestion, apology or offer and the rest of the activities seem to be far from the native speakers instances.

![Figure 3](image_url)

*Figure 3 The authenticity of the tasks presented in « New Prospects »*
F-The Contribution of the Content and Tasks presented in «New Prospects» in Enhancing Algerian EFL Learners Communicative Competence

The contribution of «New Prospects» Textbook in enhancing EFL learners’ communicative competence was another significant question addressed to the study participants; their answers were distinct as same as the previous ones. Twenty teachers say that although the prescribed textbook activities and content are meant to be communicative, when being put into practice things are different especially if the learners were not exposed to real life situations or put the language in use. The teachers in such a case should be careful of the hidden implications of some appealing looking activities that may not always target the right skill, the other 15 informants reply that «New Prospects» can encourage Algerian EFL learners to feel free to interact, negotiate meaning and finally be communicatively competent but this can be achieved only if the teacher is innovative in his selection of the tasks and the content being taught to support his/her teaching with authentic materials.

Figure 4 The contribution of the content and tasks in enhancing learner’s communicative competence

F- The Use of audio-visuais in EFL Classes

According to the answers provided by teachers in relation to this question 22 participants say that they don’t use audio-visual aids although they are aware of its great importance, while 13 informants express the fruitful usage of audio-visual materials. The former participants justify their choice for not using audio-visual materials by raising the following causes: overcrowded classes, lack of materials sources and workshops in many schools, difficulties in time management, extra work for teachers, lack of teacher training. This result can be linked to the previous question. In other words, audio-visual materials can be of great importance in helping Algerian English learners be communicatively competent because they provide a solid basis for teaching and learning as well.

Table 3 The use of audio-visuais in English as a foreign language classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possibilities</th>
<th>Teachers’ number</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G- The Criterion that EFL Teachers Take into Account when Selecting Authentic Materials

Most teachers (30) selected all the options mentioned in figure 05 that were given by the researcher so results that have been seen out of this question agree with when they refer to the importance of using such principles in materials selection and this goes hand in hand with what
Gilmore (2004) approves in his comparison between natural and authentic interaction and textbooks content. As far as figure 05 is concerned, twenty participants answered that needs analysis is the most fruitful aspect that should be taken into account when selecting authentic materials and audio-visual aids to be used at class. Since the learners are involved actively and motivated when taking their opinions and suggestions in the learning process into consideration. On the other hand, ten teachers shed light on the necessity of respecting the course objectives when using authentic materials. While, other five informants highlight the role of learner’s individual differences, language level and cultural differences in materials adaptation should be taken into account too.

![Figure 5: EFL Teachers criterion when selecting authentic materials](image)

**H-The Need for Specific Training for Using Authentic Materials Appropriately**

Almost all the teachers who participate in the current study as data providers agree that using authentic materials or audio-visuals at an EFL setting require specific training. Only two teachers were against teacher training for using authentic materials as shown in table 04 below. Thus, another question was added here for those who express the necessity for teacher training using authentic materials in their language classes. Most teachers 28 selected the option yearly workshops as they think that this will not only help them use authentic materials but even how they can use them effectively and appropriately. Seven teachers highlighted the need for curricular adjustment. The findings here indicated that EFL teachers need assistance to be able to use authentic materials appropriately. Assistance could be in designing activities, sources of authentic materials (websites, TV programs, handouts…), this will be of great importance particularly for recently qualified lecturers.

**Table 4: The importance of specific training for using authentic materials effectively**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possibilities</th>
<th>Teachers’ number</th>
<th>percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The final question was an open-ended question in which the research participants were asked to express or add any comments in relation to the topic of the current investigation. All of them agree on the great importance of using authentic materials in enhancing Algerian EFL learners communicative competence and most teachers confirm that «New prospects» is far from achieving such a communicative objectives because both the content and the tasks presented in this textbook lack authenticity and are of poor representation due to many reasons that have been highlighted above in addition to the lack of innovation at the level of Algerian EFL textbook designers and writers as working with the same textbook that we have used when we were students at the level of high school is really something that makes us dissatisfied and afraid of what is happening in our educational system because when books remain unchanged for years and years, the learners will not look for answers as they can first copy and paste from the old books. This kills the sense of innovation and creativity in both the teachers and students. On the one hand, the teachers don’t feel it necessary to stay updated. They have memorized every corner of the teaching program. On the other hand, learners won’t be attracted to a textbook content unless a need analysis of the things they like to study is done. Because I strongly believe that suitable textbook is the one that can establish a link between the world inside and outside the mind of the learners. These findings are also in uniformity with those of Garton and Graves (2014) who contend that textbook gives structure to lessons and to a course; saves time; gives a sense of security; promotes autonomy as learners can use and refer to it outside the classroom And, this is what Algerian English textbooks in general and «New prospects» in particular fail to achieve at present.

4. Pedagogical Implications

It is essential for learners of English in a non-English setting to experience real communicative situations in which they learn how to express themselves, negotiate meaning, and develop their oral fluency and accuracy. Unfortunately, that is not the case for the Algerian setting, in which such skills and competencies are not given much concern. Although it is of a major importance to evaluate the prescribed textbook, researchers noticed that students are not given much practice to develop their oral proficiency. Furthermore, the very few activities that are found treat some skills in a very negligible way at the expense of others. Such activities do not call for interaction or communication between students. As a result, students are very passive and demotivated. After the analysis of the third year textbook, many deficiencies at the level of the authenticity of both texts content and tasks are found and unfortunately this was what the questionnaire results confirm. The alternative task below is one of the most fruitful and pedagogical implications that the researcher experienced at class with her third year high school pupils and the results were really satisfactory and fruitful as well.

First Unit: Exploring the Past (Ancient Civilization)
Saying it in writing (textbook activity):

Prepare a short historical account of the development of western civilization using the timeline on the next page. Before writing and giving your account to the class, list, select and organize the major events in a timeline of your own.

Start like this: Western civilization is one of the world’s twenty-six civilizations…
Evaluation:
In the above activity, students are asked to write a historical account about a civilization and present it to the class. Although this activity is intended to be a speaking activity, it is entitled “say it in writing”. The way this activity is structured makes it obvious that it involves more writing than speaking. Moreover, instructions maintain that it is an individual work. So, there will not be any interaction or negotiation of meaning between students. In addition to this, students would normally write the account and then « read »it out loud to the whole class. Where is speaking then? If the class is overcrowded, not all of the students will have a chance to present their work. Because of time constriction the teacher will not be able to provide all of them all the efficient feedback on their work. So, with the absence of feedback and assessment, how can students measure their progress? And whether or not they are on the right path? Usually, students find that history and civilization is a boring subject. So, it would be better if some entertaining activities are planned in order to motivate them. In some cases, it would be better if students are asked about their personal impressions.

An Alternative Task:
Assignment: using posters, students will present one of the ancient civilizations to their classmates.
Teacher’s instructions: students will from groups of seven members. Each member has a role to perform within that group (spokesman, writer, timekeeper, artist…). Each group is given randomly a package (texts, videos, images, coloring pen, markers…) containing all the necessary resources to complete the given task. When time is up, each group’s spokesman will come to the board with the final product (poster) and presents the work for the rest of the class. Feedback is given before the end of the session.
Guideline to follow:
When /where did this civilization emerge?
What was significant about it?
Were there any myths, beliefs, rituals? What were they?
How/ when did it decline?

Evaluation:

In this activity, the teacher gathers his students in groups. It means that members of one group will cooperate with one another in order to complete the task. Since each group has to present his work, there would be much motivation and challenge between the different groups. Usually in such a collaborative task, each member of the group has a specific role to play. Students will discuss ideas and negotiate meaning which are two important aspects in learning. Thus, they are very active. Unlike the teacher, they do much of the classroom work and talk. They interact and influence one another in so many ways. Moreover, students are given authentic materials to work on. So, they will be very motivated and enthusiastic. In such a way, students are given the
opportunity to communicate and exchange views. They are given the chance to practice and use the language they are learning at all stages. As far as the teacher is concerned, he/she has to step out of the learning process and let the learning take care of itself, as it had been emphasized by Harmer (2001). Instead; the teacher can act as a timekeeper and makes sure that his learners are not using their mother tongue unless when it is highly necessary. After the presentation of posters, the teacher has to give his feedback to each of the groups. This way, students are able to measure their progress and work for more. Grouping students is an effective technique to mush students to interact. However, teachers get quite frustrated since learners can get very noisy and might attempt to communicate through using their mother tongue.

5. Conclusion

Teaching students how to apply words in sentences correctly, presenting some phonetic rules, learning new vocabulary items and pronunciation can never be an objective of a whole English program because language teaching is something more complicated than fast dealing with tasks and activities to prepare the learners to overcome the problems they encounter in real life. As a whole there are, however, many inconsistencies between the learners’ needs, and the textbook content.

After having identified the teachers’ perspectives of the use of New Prospects and their perception on using authentic materials to enhance EFL Algerian learners communicative competence, it is important to consider the way forward. Teachers need to perform similar tasks of evaluation of the textbook before using it in the classroom and find ways to combat with its defect. Teachers are the ones who will finally decide how to use the textbook. Therefore, they should use the textbook as their core material, make adaptations and supplement it with other authentic materials according to their learners’ needs and their teaching situation. Once more, textbook designers should make retrospective evaluation and make the necessary changes to improve its content. Finally, regular revised editions of the textbook should be made in order to constantly update the content according to the learners’ needs and the teaching context. So, a paradigm shift is an ultimate solution in such a case.

To put it in a nutshell, the elicited data confirmed that all Algerian EFL teachers, despite the differences in their teaching experiences and academic degrees are fully advocated the great importance of using authentic materials in language teaching and all of them agree that “New Prospects” doesn’t offer classroom learners suitable opportunities to learn authentic language and they confirm that the prescribed textbook should be supported with the adaptation of authentic teaching materials such as audio-visual, posters, handouts, songs…etc as they express the urgent need either for a new textbook or a new edited version at least as soon as possible.

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6-References
**English Speaking Teaching Model in Distance Education**

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**Abstract**  
This study is developmental research attempting to explore a practical model to teach English speaking in distance courses via videoconferencing technology. Therefore, the Dick and Carey instructional model design is used as guidelines in developing a proposed English Speaking Teaching Model (ESTM). The research was divided into four phases. The first phase featured the examination of stakeholders’ perceptions, i.e. distance learning centre administrators (DLCs), DLC teaching assistants, broadcasting English teachers, and students who were studying via videoconferencing. In the second phase, the primary teaching model was designed based on the conceptual framework and the results from Phase 1. In the third and fourth phases, the evaluation of the model effectiveness was implemented in three trials: one-to-one, small group, and field trials. In each trial, a pre-test and a post-test were employed to examine students’ speaking abilities before and after the application of each revised model. Additionally, thorough feedback was collected through researcher’s observation notes, course teacher and teaching assistant journals and students’ interviews. A questionnaire was also employed to examine students’ satisfaction after studying through the ESTM in the last trial. Results from both data revealed that the students were satisfied with the proposed model. The suggestions from students’ interviews, teachers’ journals and observation notes were employed to revise the third model draft, to be used as the final ESTM, which comprises teaching activities in six stages: a speaking pre-test at the beginning of the course, study before class, teaching and practice time in class, lesson review after class, a speaking mid-test during the course, and a speaking post-test at the end of the course.  

**Keywords:** distance education, English speaking, teaching model, videoconferencing

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Introduction, Background and Significance of the Study
According to English Proficiency Index (EPI) of 2014, Thailand’s English Proficiency ranked 48th out of 63. This survey was conducted by English First (EF), a Swiss-based company, in countries and territories where English is not the first language by using the test data from 1 million test takers in the previous year. The EF divided the countries into five categories: very high proficiency, high proficiency, moderate proficiency, low proficiency, and very low proficiency. As mentioned above, Thailand’s rank was 48, in the category of ‘Very Low Proficiency’. Moreover, the EF report revealed that the number of companies that have gradually been adopting English as the common company language has increased. Well-known companies such as Samsung, Aventis and Renault have already mandated English as the corporate language (Index, 2014). For this reason, institutions at the tertiary level in Thailand should take greater strides to develop students’ English communication skills and enhance their employability to meet the requirements of the workforce market. At present, most upper secondary-graduate students would like to continue their study in higher education; however some of them cannot attend on-campus courses for various reasons. Therefore, distance education (DE) is an alternative. The DE could be provided in various forms: web-based, videoconferencing, and correspondence courses. In doing so, most people wonder how those distance learning (DL) students can develop their language skills, particularly English which is important for their future career and academic life. As a distance teacher, the researcher has realized that distance students should have equal opportunities to improve their English communication skills, particularly speaking skills, as students taking campus-based courses. Thus, this study aims to develop an English speaking teaching model (ESTM) for undergraduate students in distance education, focusing on English courses via videoconferencing technology. In order to design the first draft of the model, the key components of the ESTM were examined in terms of teaching methods, materials and media, and students’ English speaking abilities.

Methodology of Language Teaching in the EFL Settings

Direct Method
This method emphasizes speaking rather than reading and writing. The concept of this method is to use a target language in the foreign language (FL) classroom. Both teacher and students use English as a means of communication to describe pictures and objects as well as in setting situations. It focuses on meaning rather than form. In doing so, grammar rules are taught inductively, but the fact remains that accuracy is still important (Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Howatt & Widdowson, 2004; Harmer, 2007).

Audio-Linguual Method
Listening and speaking skills are focused in this method. Language learners listen to target language sentences and then practice, memorize, and repeat those sentences. For this reason, the method uses dialogues and drills and the language learners learn grammar rules through memorization. Similar to the ‘Direct method’, it avoids the use of first language in the FL classroom. In addition, contrastive analysis is employed to compare language features of L1 and target language (Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Howatt & Widdowson, 2004; Harmer, 2007).
Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP)
The PPP method consists of three stages. The first stage is called the ‘presentation stage’. It begins with presenting useful information of a target language to learners. The second stage is the ‘practice stage’ or ‘repetition stage’. Language learners practice what they are taught. It might be individual work, pair work and/or group work. The implication of repetitive drills not only prepares students in using a target language but also helps them relieve their anxiety. It should be noted that this stage starts from controlled and gradually moves to less controlled practice. The last stage is called the ‘production stage’. At this stage, students are encouraged to produce a target language in a certain situation freely. Of course, this method focuses on accuracy, but it remains to be seen in a second or foreign language classroom and teaching materials today (Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Howatt & Widdowson, 2004; Harmer, 2007).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
This method was developed in order to support language learning in different purposes and situations. There are two teaching approaches which have been developed under the shadow of CLT: comprehension approach and task-based learning and teaching approach. The concept of the comprehension approach is well-developed comprehension skills leading naturally to productive skill development (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

Distance Education and Videoconferencing Class
The videoconferencing class consists of a ‘presenting site’ with a lead/course teacher and a ‘receiving site’ with a teaching partner or a teacher assistant as well as students (Mason & Davis, 2000).

Synchronous and Asynchronous Instruction
As it is known, there are two types of distance learning delivery system: synchronous instruction and asynchronous instruction. The synchronous instruction requires real-time communication between a teacher and students, whereas the asynchronous instruction does not. Students can study their lessons anywhere and anytime at their own pace (For adult learners, 2011).

Student Interaction during their Videoconferencing Class
According to Mason and Davis (2000), when videoconferencing is broadcast live, it is possible that student interaction could happen among their classmates on site, their classmates at the other receiving sites, their course teacher, and their teacher assistant.

Flipped Classroom Approach
The concept of flipped classroom approach is that students study before class. The subject matter is posted on a website. Then students study the content at home. When they are in class, they are asked questions about the content. Student-student interaction is promoted by discussion (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). To examine the benefit of the flipped classroom, Zainuddin and Halili (2016) conducted content analysis of 20 research articles on flipped learning. They found that the flipped classroom approach had a positive impact on student improvement, motivation, engagement and interaction.
Teaching Speaking Skills and Assessment in FL Classrooms and Distance Learning

Teaching Speaking Skills
Generally, listening and speaking skills including pronunciation are connected. Then, teaching speaking starts from teaching listening. In language learning, listening plays an important role as language input, for example, structures vocabulary use and pronunciation. This suggests that ESL/EFL teachers must provide sufficient necessary components as prior knowledge before teaching speaking (Richards, 2009). According to Burns (2012), the components of second language speaking competence are knowledge of language and discourse, communication strategies and core speaking skills.

Assessing Speaking in FL Classrooms
An important question often arises how students’ speaking performance should be graded. Test designer should design a wide range of tasks to assess a test takers’ speaking ability. Moreover, spoken word choices are also the criteria of speaking assessment (Alderson & Bachman, 2004). According to Scott (2005), there are five types of speaking tests: interviews, live monologues, record monologues, role-plays and collaborative tasks and discussions.

Teaching Speaking and Assessment in FL Distance Learning
Distance learning is a cost-effective way to provide education to a number of learners in different places. In language learning and teaching through distance learning, it was found that the speaking skills of DL learners are developed after the acquisition of three others: listening, reading and writing (Valentine, 2002). Moreover, assessment of speaking skills is difficult. Researchers such as Trajanovic et al (2007), have also taught speaking skills in distance learning. As there is a lack of face-to-face communication, the oral presentation has been selected to be taught and assessed. The tools used in class communication were microphones, Web-cam and Skype. In addition, another study showed the improvement of students’ public speaking skills by using such tools (Tolman, 2012). In their work, it was obvious that speaking skills as performance were promoted, not interaction and transaction. For this reason, there has been an attempt to teach interactional and transactional communication skills in distance learning through technology.

The following section will present the relevant research regarding such teaching skills outside the standard classroom context.

Relevant Research
Over a decade, technology use for enhancing foreign language learning has attracted much attention from research teams. There have been several studies conducted through modern technology in order to promote synchronous communication, particularly in foreign language courses (Wang & Sun, 2000; Hample & Hauck, 2004; Wang, 2004; Iino & Yabuta, 2015; Lu, Goodale & Guo , 2014; Correa, 2015; Yu, 2018), those studies were conducted in small-sized groups through personal computer or laptops. Studies on videoconferencing were broadcast live to a large number of foreign language learners in different places at the same time are still lacking. For this reason, I have been interested in developing an ‘English Speaking Teaching Model (ESTM)’ for distance learners studying in different places at the same time.
Methodology

General Information
This study was divided into four phases: 1) Survey the previous DL English course circumstances and interview, 2) model design, 3) model development and the initial model implementation and 4) model revision and evaluation.

In order to develop an English Speaking Teaching Model (ESTM), a university with a distance learning curriculum was selected. This university has a quarter year system. Therefore, its academic year is divided into four terms, namely Semester 1.1, Semester 1.2, Semester 2.1 and Semester 2.2. Thus, there are two groups of students. According to the university’s work-based curriculum, the first group undertakes their internship for three months and then resumes their study at distance learning centers for another three months. The other repeat the procedure but in reverse order. There are twelve distance learning centers: one in an outskirt area, two in the central part of Thailand, one in the eastern part of Thailand, three in the northern part of Thailand, three in the north-eastern part of Thailand, and two in the southern part of Thailand.

The distance learning students study their English courses via video-conferencing; therefore, they are able to communicate with their course teachers by instant messaging and video chat.

Moreover, there are teacher assistants at each distance learning center. Those teachers are part-time teachers who teach at local schools or universities. The selected university employs them in order to assist its DL students while studying in live broadcast video-conferencing classes. To make sure that those DL students will achieve course learning objectives, the selected university provides 3-hour tutorial sessions conducted by teacher assistants three times per course.

Participants and Research Instruments
Phase 1: Survey
Research Design
The mixed method was used in this phase. The quantitative method was employed to examine the students’ perceptions towards their DL English courses in terms of their course teachers’ and teacher assistants’ behaviours and roles, teaching materials and class activities. For the survey, the population of all DL students of the selected university was 2,116. The Krejcie and Morgan sample size formula was employed to determine the sample size which should at least be equal to 326. Then, 460 questionnaires were distributed to twelve learning centers. For the interview, the participants consisted of three groups of stakeholders: six administrators of distance learning centers (DLC), five teaching assistants (TAs) who had been with students at DLC, five broadcasting English teachers and English learning students who had studied via videoconferencing.

Instruments
In order to find the answer for what the components of an English Speaking Teaching Model for improving distance students’ speaking skills are, the questionnaire items were constructed based on ‘Teacher immediacy behaviours’ (Liando, 2010), instructional design principles for distance learning and media, technology and distance education application (Bourdeau & Bates, 1996),
whereas the students’ satisfaction survey results of the selected institute was paraphrased and itemized. The questionnaire was translated into Thai. Content validation of research tools was done by calculating indexes of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) by three experts. A pilot study was conducted to examine the reliability of the questionnaire. The participants of the pilot study had similar characteristics to the other students in distance learning centers. Unstructured interviews were employed to examine perceptions of administrators of distance learning centers (DLC) towards expected students’ learning outcomes, teacher assistants’ roles and broadcasting course teachers’ characteristics and performances. At the same time, the two different sets of interview questions were developed to examine teacher assistants’ roles and what broadcasting course teachers did in their DL English courses respectively. One of the main differences between the teacher assistant and the course teacher interview questions were TA roles and class management. The interview questions validation of each set was done by calculating indexes of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) by three experts.

Data Collection
The data collection of the first phase consisted of four processes. First, the researcher conducted group interview with six out of twelve administrators of distance learning centers (DLC). They are from different parts of Thailand. The unstructured interviews were used to collect DLCs’ perceptions. Second, teacher assistant interviews were conducted on the phone. Four teacher assistants, with experience in assisting in DL English courses, were selected based on regions. They were considered as representatives from the north, south, north-east and central part of Thailand. The interview questions examined what they did during and outside the class in the distance learning centers. Next, broadcasting course teachers with experience in teaching DL English courses were interviewed what they did in their DL English courses, particularly speaking skills. Then, 460 copies of questionnaire were distributed to twelve distribution centers. All were completed by students who have experience in DL English courses.

Data Analysis
Administrator, Teacher Assistant and Course Teacher Interviews
The data from interviews of administrators, teacher assistants and course teachers were transcribed, then the coding process based on Miles and Huberman (1994) and Saldana (2009) was employed to analyze the data. The dimensions in teacher assistant and broadcasting course teacher interview questions were used to assign categories. The interviews revealed that the DL administrators, the course teachers, and the teacher assistants agreed that DL students enjoyed teaching materials such as songs and movies during their lessons. Moreover, the DL administrators said that they expected their students to be able to communicate with foreigners in English.

Questionnaires on Students’ Perceptions
The 460 sets of questionnaire were distributed to twelve distribution centers. The questionnaire respondents were 411 greater than the calculated sample size, 360. Descriptive statistics (percentage, mean and standard deviation) were employed to analyze the data based on dimensions in the questionnaires. Almost 76% of the respondents considered their speaking skills as fair or poor. For this reason, English speaking skills were ranked in the first order. Regarding to the data analysis, it could be summarized that there were five components which should be taken in consideration in the model design. The components comprise: 1) language awareness promotion,
Phase 2: Model Design

In this phase, the first draft of the proposed model was designed based on the first phase results and theoretical framework: the 21st century learning framework, Common European Framework (CEF), flipped classroom, learning styles, teaching material selection, and Bloom’s taxonomy. Moreover, three components of speaking skill development -- knowledge of language and discourse, communication strategy and core speaking skills -- were taken into consideration as well as Burns’ Teaching-speaking Cycle (2014) for class activities. The summary of concepts in the first draft model which consists of five components, activities and the implementers is shown below.

Table 1
The summary of concepts in the first draft of model design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Implementer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language awareness promotion</td>
<td>Speaking pre-test before course</td>
<td>Native examiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary and language pattern development</td>
<td>1. Watching the video(s) before/after class</td>
<td>Course teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Class activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language application development</td>
<td>1. Talking with the course teacher via videoconferencing</td>
<td>1. Course teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Doing exercises in pairs or in group, e.g.</td>
<td>2. Teacher assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>role play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson delivery</td>
<td>1. Watching the video(s) before and after class</td>
<td>Course teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Real-time live broadcast</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperative and collaborative learning</td>
<td>1. Watching the video(s) before and after class</td>
<td>Course teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Doing exercises (worksheets and speaking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>tasks in and outside the class</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Phase 3: Model Development and the Initial Model Implementation
One-to-One Trial: Setting and Participants

The distance learning center in the central part of Thailand was selected to conduct the trial. The participants were three DL students chosen based on their grades from the previous DL English course, considered as good, moderate and poor. Those students took the speaking pre-test with the native examiner prior to the course via Google Hangout. The lessons were from ‘Straightforward, Pre-Intermediate level’ in Unit 10: ‘Animal lovers, Stress, Marathon men and Doctor, doctor!’

One-to-One Trial: Instruments

The 360 degree feedback was implemented in data collections: researcher’s observation notes, course teacher and teaching assistant journals and in-depth interviews with the selected students.
One-to-One Trial: Procedures
The researcher went to the selected learning center to assist an examiner who was in Bangkok in administering the speaking pre-test. The test was in the form of pictorial storytelling. Therefore, the cue cards of the speaking pre-test related to those lessons. Each student was asked to select one out of three cue cards. The examiner used the speaking rubric to assess their speaking performance. After finishing the speaking pre-test, the students were taught the study skills needed in this model. The important one was autonomous learning which was based on the flipped classroom approach. Three students had to watch the videos related to the lessons before class. In class, the course teacher showed other videos to review the vocabulary and language patterns. Then the students were asked to do exercises, worksheets and/or speaking practice. The course teacher called one of the selected students to have a real-time talk with her. At the end of the trial, the students took the speaking post-test with the same examiner. The same speaking rubric was employed to assess their speaking abilities.

Moreover, the students’ interview was conducted to investigate their satisfaction towards the first draft model.

Results of the Initial Model Implementation
In terms of students speaking progress, the results of the post-test did not present student speaking skill improvement. At this point, the students’ in-depth interview revealed that they did not follow the study skills mentioned in the model, e.g. watching videos before and after class. However, all of them agreed that the videos with subtitle helped them learn the language. They could follow the story by guessing body language. Additionally, the students commented consensually that games should be added to help them learn language with fun, which conformed to Chen’s (2005) and Fajariyah’s (2009) studies. For this reason, the second draft model added classroom language games to review students’ vocabulary knowledge and language that they have learned in the section of ‘Language application development’ component. The results from the researcher’s observation notes as well as the course teacher’s and teacher assistants’ journals were also employed to revise the first draft model in terms of teaching material selection and classroom activities. Table 2 shows the summary of the concepts in the second draft of model design as presented on the next page.

Phase 4: Model Revision and Evaluation
Small Group Trial: Setting and Participants of the Second Draft Model Implementation
The distance learning center in the Eastern part of Thailand was selected to conduct this trial. The participants were nine DL students chosen based on their grades from the previous DL English course, considered as 3 good, 3 moderate and 3 poor. Like the one-to-one trial, those students took the speaking pre-test with the native examiner prior to the course via Google Hangout. The lessons were from ‘Straightforward, Pre-Intermediate level’ in Unit 11: ‘Thing, Fashion victim, Camden Market and Looking good’.
Table 2

The summary of concepts in the second draft of model design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Implementer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language awareness promotion</td>
<td>Speaking pre-test before course</td>
<td>1. Course teacher (for selecting a speaking task and preparing the rubric)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Native examiner</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. DL Students</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Teacher assistants (at DLC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary and language pattern</td>
<td>1. Watching the video(s) before/after class</td>
<td>1. Course teacher (for selecting the materials and class activities)</td>
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<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>2. Class activities</td>
<td>2. DL Students</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language application development</td>
<td>1. Talking with the course teacher via</td>
<td>1. Course teacher (his/her roles including selecting games)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>videoconferencing</td>
<td>2. DL students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Doing exercises in pairs or in group, e.g.</td>
<td>3. Teacher assistant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>role play</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>3. Language game issues raised by the student interviews after the trial.</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson delivery</td>
<td>1. Watching the video(s) before and after class</td>
<td>1. Course teacher (for selecting the materials and class activities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Real-time live broadcast</td>
<td>2. DL Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperative and collaborative</td>
<td>1. Watching the video(s) before and after class</td>
<td>1. Course teacher (for selecting the materials and class activities)</td>
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<td>learning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>tasks in and outside the class</td>
<td>3. Teacher assistant (as a facilitator in class)</td>
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</table>

Small Group Trial: Instruments
Like the one-to-one trial, the researcher’s observation notes, course teacher and teaching assistant journals and in-depth interviews with the selected students were employed to collect data.

Small Group Trial: Procedures
The researcher went to the selected eastern DL center to assist the examiner who was in Bangkok in administering the speaking pre-test. The test was conducted in the same procedure as the one-to-one trial. After that, the students were taught the study skills needed in this model. Nine students had to watch the videos related to the lessons before class. In addition to class activities, the course teacher used language games to review the vocabulary and language patterns. At the end of the
trial, the nine selected students took the speaking post-test with the same examiner. The same speaking rubric was employed to assess their speaking abilities.

**Results of the Second Model Implementation**

The speaking post-test results showed that only the moderate students had speaking ability improvement. The students’ in-depth interview disclosed that the students in two other groups did not follow the study skills mentioned in the model. Similar to the interview results in the one-to-one trial, all of the nine selected students agreed that the videos with subtitle helped them learn the language. They could follow the story by guessing body language. One interviewee said that she used the content in the video to practice speaking with her friends. Another one added that studying at the distance learning center was difficult. Watching the video facilitated their study by themselves. Furthermore, they enjoyed playing language games and mentioned that those games helped them learn language with fun. This comment was confirmed by the researcher’s observation notes, course teacher’s and teacher assistants’ journals. Another additional comment was speaking with the native examiner encouraged them to improve their speaking skills. They wanted to have an opportunity to practice with a foreign teacher. However, the students from the lowest language efficiency group said that they wanted their teacher assistant to translate what the course teacher said in English to Thai. These results were employed to revise the second draft model. The third draft of the proposed model with its components could be explained in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*The summary of concepts in the third draft of model design*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Implementer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language promotion awareness</td>
<td>1. Speaking pre-test before course</td>
<td>Native examiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Speaking mid-test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary and language pattern development</td>
<td>1. Watching the video(s) before/after class</td>
<td>Course teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Class activities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Language application development</td>
<td>1. Talking with the course teacher via videoconferencing</td>
<td>1. Course teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Doing exercises in pairs or in group, e.g. role play</td>
<td>2. Teacher assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Language games</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Co-teaching model (Team teaching)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Teaching-speaking session</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson delivery</td>
<td>1. Watching the video(s) before and after class</td>
<td>Course teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Real-time live broadcast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative and collaborative learning</td>
<td>1. Watching the video(s) before and after class</td>
<td>Course teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Doing exercises (worksheets and speaking tasks in and outside the class)</td>
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</table>

**Field Trial: Setting and Participants of the Third Draft Model Implementation**

The distance learning center in the Northern part of Thailand was selected to conduct this trial. The participants were 44 DL students whose language proficiency levels were different. Like the two previous trials, those learners took the speaking pre-test with the native examiner prior to the course via Google Hangout.
Field Group Trial: Instruments
Similar to the two previous trials, the researcher’s observation notes, course teacher and teaching assistant journals and in-depth interviews with the selected students were employed to collect data.

Field Group Trial: Procedures
The researcher went to the selected northern DL center to assist the examiner who was in Bangkok in administering the speaking pre-test. The test was conducted in the same procedure as the two previous trials. After that, the students were taught the study skills needed in this model. It is important to remember that there were three co-teaching sessions (Thai and native/foreign teachers) in this trial. Each co-teaching session was conducted after two related lessons had been taught in the form of demonstrating how students could apply language that they had learned to their daily life conversations. Additionally, the students were provided with the “Teaching-speaking” session during the trial. In this session, the teacher assistant acted as a facilitator while the students performed the speaking tasks – storytelling. Later, the students took the speaking mid-test with the same examiner in order to examine their progress. The test content related to Unit 10 lesson. When Unit 11 lessons were taught, the teaching and learning procedures were almost the same as Unit 10 except the teaching-speaking session which was excluded in order to investigate whether this session affect their speaking abilities or not. At the end of the trial, all students took the speaking post-test with the same examiner. The test content related to Unit 11 lesson. The same speaking rubric was employed to assess their speaking abilities.

Results of the Third Model Implementation
The results of the speaking mid-test showed that 37 out of 44 students’ speaking mid-test scores increased. The researcher asked one student who gained the highest progress score to share her study skills with her classmate. She explained what she did which followed the study skills that the researcher informed them earlier. However, there were seven students whose test scores did not increase, particularly one whose score decreased. Interestingly, the results of the speaking post-test showed that 13 out of 44 students’ speaking post-test scores increased; six students’ speaking scores were the same as the mid-test scores; the scores of the rest decreased. All in all, if we compared the speaking pre-test and the post-test scores, only one student showed the score regression. The results of the student satisfaction survey revealed that the majority of the respondents paid more attention when there was a co-teaching session. Over 80% agreed that the session made them want to improve their English speaking skills in order to communicate with the foreign teachers. The students’ in-depth interview disclosed that they did not have time to watch video regularly. This might be an answer to a question why some students could not retain their language knowledge and ability. However, the students agreed that the proposed model could help them improve their speaking abilities. Additionally, they enjoyed playing language games and mentioned that those games helped them learn language with fun. Furthermore, they requested two or three teaching-speaking sessions which focused on speaking skills and student-centered approach and they wanted to have an opportunity to practice with a foreign teacher. The teacher assistants’ journal said that teaching materials and games were various and matched to the students’ ages. This is confirmed by the researcher’s observation notes. In addition, the course teacher said that she received a course evaluation from the DL students studying at the selected center: 4.61 out of 5 for using various teaching methods and techniques to motivate learners; 4.70 for integrating the content into real-life practice; 4.64 for promoting autonomous learning habits.
as well as cooperative and collaborative learning. The results from the students’ interview, the researcher observation notes as well as the course teachers’ and teacher assistants’ journals were employed to revise the third draft model. Consequently, the English Teaching Speaking Model (ESTM) is proposed as shown in Figure 1 shown on the next page. The final draft of ESTM is divided into six stages:

Stage 1: At the Beginning of the Course
Prior to the course, DL students have to take the speaking pre-test with a native or foreign teacher. The test should be related to the lessons which will be taught. One important thing is that the student has to listen to the native teacher’s questions or instructions what he would like them to do. This stage is not only aiming to evaluate students’ speaking skills but also to raise language awareness of the students as mentioned in the first component as mentioned earlier in Table 3.

![Figure 1. The English Speaking Teaching Model](image-url)
Stage 2: Before Class
The flipped classroom approach should be employed on the purpose of teaching the content before class. It is important to remember that all five components are taken into consideration at this stage.

Stage 3: In Class
Individual or Co-teaching live broadcast, practice time and feedback
A course teacher presents the lesson through teaching aids such as PowerPoint slides, songs and different video clips to review language use in the next lesson. Classroom games should be selected or developed based on expected learning outcomes. Moreover, the co-teaching approach (A mother tongue teacher and a native/foreign teacher) is suggested after two previous lesson units in order to demonstrate language application.

Teaching-Speaking Session
It is recommended that three-hour teaching-speaking sessions, at least nine out of forty-five hours, should be provided for students. The course teacher has to design or select speaking tasks and distribute them to the DL centers in advance. During this session, the course teacher could monitor students’ practice via videoconferencing. After that, the course teacher should ask students to perform the speaking task in front of a camera which is live broadcast to other DLCs.

Stage 4: After Class
Students have to review their lessons through different video clips and/or worksheets. This stage slightly overlaps with that of pre-class video which is also an assignment prior to the class.

Stage 5: During the Course
An individual student takes the speaking mid-test with the same native teacher in order to see how well he/she makes progress after studying. The same method in the pre-test should be used. After taking the speaking mid-test, the student whose gains the highest different scores between the pre-test and the mid-test should be selected to share their learning techniques to his/her classmates.

Stage 6: At the End of the Course
An individual student takes the speaking post-test with the same native teacher in order to see how well he/she makes progress after studying. The same method in the pre-test and the mid-test should be used.

Discussion and Recommendation
The findings that have emerged from this study were five key components in the proposed English Speaking Teaching Model (ESTM): 1) language awareness promotion, 2) vocabulary and language pattern development, 3) language application development, 4) lesson delivery and 5) cooperative and collaborative learning. To achieve the ultimate outcome of this teaching model, the study guidelines should be told prior to the class. In addition, a pre-semester meeting for all teachers should be held at least three times: prior to the course, in the middle of the course and at the end of course. Teamwork is a must in this model as mentioned in Mason and Davis (2000). Additionally, roles and responsibilities of individual stakeholder should be written and informed. For teaching materials, a course teacher as a team leader should set up a committee to select or develop teaching materials which should be various and appropriate to their students’ ages.
Moreover, speaking activities should be selected or designed on the basis of a student-centered approach. Lastly, students’ speaking performance assessment should be conducted three times: prior to the course, in the middle of the course and at the end of course. In doing so, students will be aware of their speaking abilities at the beginning of the course and also their progress in the middle and at the end of the course.

Conclusion
It can be concluded that the three trials and collected data from all phases indicate necessary components to enhance speaking abilities of distance learning students: language awareness promotion, vocabulary and language pattern development, language application development, lesson delivery, and cooperative and collaborative learning. All these would culminate in the final ESTM, comprising teaching activities in six stages: a speaking pre-test at the beginning of the course, study before class, teaching and practice time in class, lesson review after class, a speaking mid-test during the course, and a speaking post-test at the end of the course. This would be a practical model in teaching DL English courses via videoconferencing.

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Teaching Writing to Non-Native Speakers: First Language Composing v/s Second Language Composing

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Abstract
The study aimed to evaluate teaching techniques for non-native speakers in terms of first language composing v/s second language composing. The study holds significance since it discusses different aspects of writing, including deep examination of composing process. The study was conducted among skilled and unskilled L2 writers. The results of the study showed that L1 and L2 writers devoted most of their time to generate ideas that display recursiveness in their composing processes. Results also depicted that brainstorming techniques can be approached in different forms, which can also be a good individual strategy that can be used by the students. Pedagogic recommendations need to be based on accurate and practical theories. Results has depicted that time planning and quality of L2 texts among students are positively affected from translating thoughts. Regarding pedagogical implications, the study has postulated that these techniques should be adapted by L2 students.

Keywords: brainstorming techniques, composing processes, first language, excursiveness, second language

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Teaching Writing to Non-Native Speakers: First Language Composing v/s Second Language Composing

The teachers are advised to adopt similar practices, used to teach writing in the first language (L1) with increased number of international students learning English as a second language (L2). The motive behind such advice is the belief that composing is same in all languages regardless of a native language or a second or foreign language. L2 research findings have shown evidence to support the similarities of L1 and L2 writing in the composing processes that involve planning, writing, editing, revising, and the recursive nature of the composing process (Wang & Wen, 2002). Mostly, learners rely on Language 1 during writing, organizing and generating processes; whereas, the reliance on Language 2 was also found in terms of text-generating and task-examining. On the other hand, the findings also suggest greater differences between L1 and L2 writings regarding other aspects including deeper examination of the composing process itself (Beare, 2002). Moreover, it was found that the learners exhibited different level of interests at local and global levels. As the L1 and L2 composing differences started to be proven by research evidence, the complete adoption of L1 writing practices in L2 classrooms is no longer valid. Jones & Tetroe (1987) strongly support this assumption by stating that: “Second language composing we would argue, is not a different animal from first language composing.” (p. 55)

As researchers began to examine L1 and L2 composing processes, they discovered many areas of similarities and differences which led Kroll (1990) to conclude that: “It should not be presumed that the act of writing in one’s first language is the same as the act of writing in one’s second language.” (p. 2).

The study has reviewed the research conducted on the composing processes of L1 and L2 writings and has discussed the claims for and against the similarities in creating compositions between them. Moreover, study has also focused on implications of such claims on teaching writing to non-native speakers.

Review Analysis

Research on the Composing Process of L1 Writing

Initially, in English speaking countries the main focus of research on L1 composition was mainly on the writing product such as a finished paragraph or a finished essay on a chosen topic. Most of the research consisted of studies investigating pedagogic approaches and treatments of students’ written products and motivational approaches to encourage students for language learning (Gamero-Calera, 2018). However, instead of viewing the writing activity as a demonstration of learning; researchers started to view it as a tool for learning and became interested in understanding how students write. The shift in interest started in 1980s and indicated the beginning of research focusing on the writing process itself. Many researchers started examining a variety of writers such as high school students, college students, skilled and unskilled writers.

Grabe & Kaplan (2014) responded to the shift from product to process, including protocol analysis, case study approach, and the think-aloud protocol which was highly adopted by both L1 and L2 researchers. The theory also highlighted that there are various differences between each of L1 and L2 group learners due to differences in their writing processes. Flower & Hayes (1981)
based their research methodology on protocol analysis, talk-aloud and transcribing. A closer look at their writing model indicated a number of operational processes that generate the written text, including: planning, translating, and reviewing (Appendix A). Flower & Hayes (1981) pointed out the subcomponents of the planning process which include; generating ideas, organizing information, and setting goals. Therefore, the recursive nature of the composing process is emphasized and highlighted as the writer moves back and forth between these processes while writing a text. Sevgi (2016) also conducted a study which indicated the work of previously presented theories and further led to the categorization of native speakers in terms of composing written texts. The cognitive strategies involved in L2 learning were also discussed in the study which provided deeper understanding.

Another theory of writing process was presented by Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987) that described what writers do when they write and argued that the composing process should not follow a single model. The process needs to include different developmental stages of writing, which showed that the composing process of young students, adults, skilled and unskilled writers were all different. Two models of composing processes were presented that include; knowledge-telling and knowledge-transforming model. In the knowledge-telling model, unskilled writers plan and revise less and they also have limited goals (Appendix 2). The knowledge-transforming model showed how skilled writers analyze problems, set goals, and repeatedly change their texts and ideas (Appendix B).

**Research on the Composing Process of L2 Writing**

The number of foreign students in English speaking countries has grown tremendously. The researchers have curiously started to examine their writing processes in a non-native language. This might be extremely similar or entirely different from composing in L1. Initially, most of L2 research on the writing processes was drawn from L1 research findings and case studies; therefore, most researchers started to compare the composing processes of L1 and L2 writers. Raimes (1987) compared the composing processes of L2 students to findings concluded by other researchers on L1 students. The study claimed that there are many similarities and differences between both groups. Karim & Nassaji (2013) also showed different views related to the transfer of L1 and changes that took place with time. Moreover, the study also showed how L1 learning can be a beneficial communicative strategy in L2 writing. Jones & Tetroe (1987) strongly supported the complete adoption of L1 writings’ pedagogical instructions in L2 classrooms. This adoption of pedagogical practices may lead to the assumption that both processes are totally identical.

Some researchers have suggested some interesting differences; although, other research observations have shown contradicting results. However, several researchers have acknowledged the similarities between L1 and L2 composing processes. Cook (2016) showed that the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 learners require great attention. Furthermore, the study indicated that L2 learners are significantly different from the L1 learners, since they are already proficient in one language. On the other hand, Silva (1992) indicates that ESL composing processes seem generally more laborious than those in the L1. The notion of writing an essay in a non-native language indicated the requirement of extra efforts by the students to plan, generate ideas, and revise. Raimes (1985) conducted studies to examine the writing processes of skilled and
unskilled writers, which enabled them to further investigate the areas of differences and suggest more effective pedagogical implications.

**Similarities and Differences between L1 and L2 Composing**

**Claims for the Similarities in L1 and L2 Composing Processes.** The patterns of the composing process are one of the most obvious similarities between L1 and L2 writing. According to Arndt (1987), the findings of L2 research on writing process indicated that composing skills of proficient L1 and L2 writers are very similar. The study has used protocol analysis and case study techniques to trace the cognitive processes of six post-graduate Chinese students. These students wrote essays in their L1 and L2 (English) so that the researcher can compare the two composing processes in both languages. Both composing processes proved to be recursive, cyclical, nonlinear, and involved generating ideas, planning, and revising. Interestingly, L1 and L2 writers discovered their meaning and what they intend to express in the actual process of writing, which often forces proficient writers to abandon previously planned ideas and adopt newly discovered ones. (Arndt, 1987).

Eckstein & Ferris (2018) also conducted a study to compare L1 and L2 texts and writers in first-year composition. The L2 learners were intermixed with native learners and their experiences were recorded. The study indicated that a very small amount of research has been commenced to discuss direct relationship between L1 and L2 learners. The results of the study concluded that L1 and L2 learners have a number of similarities among them; however, they also possess few dissimilarities. The L2 learners were found to have self-perceived language needs as compared to the L1 learners. The differences as highlighted in the study included; language-related anxiety, linguistic accuracy and lexical diversity.

Zamel (1982) strongly supported the adoption of the pedagogical practices of L1’s writing processes. The study results found that L2 students’ writing processes are similar to those of L1 students. The study continued to observe similar findings among skilled and unskilled L2 writers. Similar to skilled L1 writers, the skilled L2 writers devoted their most time to generate ideas which displayed recursiveness in their composing processes, focusing on delivering meaning and postponing editing. The composing of these students was a process of discovering the creativity. On the other hand, unskilled L2 writers were very concerned with linguistic problems and writing mechanics such as grammar and spelling, which obstructed the flow of ideas. Such observation was similar to unskilled L1 writers, which showed that unskilled writers from both languages exhibited similar composing problems (Zamel, 1982). Arndt (1987) and Zamel (1982) noted the similarities between the composing process of L1 and L2 writers and acknowledged the individual differences between various writers. These differences include the variety of strategies and behaviors that writers display while composing. For example, some might brainstorm and write various ideas on notes, others might not write anything until they form a better understanding of the writing task.

On the other hand, Fukuda (2011) discussed the relationship of L1 and L2 reading and writing skills. The results of the study showed that the transference of both reading and writing skills was possible across languages. However, the study also showed that no relationship was found between L1 writing and reading skills. The results of the study indicated some contradictions...
with previous studies as they reported positive relationship between L1 writing and reading skills. The results also depicted a positive relationship between L2 writing and reading skills. The study can prove to be significant for teachers in improving the exam-oriented and teacher-centered approach. The findings suggested that exam preparation might be demanding for a number of students; such that, they might believe that only those students are intelligent who get successful grades in their exams. Therefore, teachers must adopt strategies to reduce the chances of raising such perceptions in the mind of learners.

Furthermore, Jones & Tetroe (1987) studied the L1 and L2 generated texts of five Venezuelan students and discovered that these students transfer both good and weak skills from their L1 to their L2. The planning strategies that these learners have developed in their L1 composing processes is aiding L2 composing. The effect of the L1 composing on the L2 was clear as students showed the same good or bad patterns in both the composing processes. Therefore, Jones & Tetroe (1987) claimed that the similarities in both composing processes lead to total implementation of L1 writing practices in the L2 classrooms. Interestingly, Caudery (1997) claimed that such factors add to the complexity of L2 composing processes. The study observed that unskilled L2 writers may have already developed satisfactory writing processes which can be transferred wholly or in part to L2 writing. That is, unlike L1 writers who deal with one language, the writing processes of L2 writers may employ aspects of two languages. For instance, L2 writers may generate ideas in their L1 and then translate them to the L2. However, even with all the research evidence of the similarities between L1 and L2 composing, the complexity and unique nature of L2 composing made many researchers question to research on the findings and conduct deeper research.

Claims Against the Similarities in L1 and L2 Composing Processes. Raimes (1985) strongly opposed the immediate and total adoption of L1 writing teaching pedagogy and claimed that there are more differences between the composing processes of both languages. The study has reviewed the previous research conducted by others and questioned the criteria of measuring skill in writing and stated that the meaning of the term ‘unskilled’ is vague as majority of the writing assessments are based upon the written product (Raimes, 1985). Raimes (1985) compared the findings with previous outcomes of research conducted on L1 writers. The results found that her L2 students showed commitment and attention to the task, unlike L1 writers. It was rationalized that L2 writers write with the goal of learning a language not only completing a writing task. These students generate many ideas in discussions and brainstorming; although, L2 students struggle to produce writing on demand. However, Raimes (1985)’s observation regarding writers’ attitude to errors contradicted with other research findings. Raimes (1985) observed that L2 students did not go back to edit as often as the unskilled native speakers because they are not intimidated by the thought of errors. That is, since these students are language learners, they know that their language is imperfect and expect the existence of errors.

Other researchers started to examine the possible differences of the composing processes of the two languages. Silva (1992) and (1993) acknowledged that the general composing process patterns are similar between L1 and L2 writings. The composing of L2 is more constrained, more difficult, and less effective (Silva, 1992). L2 writers struggled with lack of fluency and proficiency, which affected generation of ideas, setting goals, and caused repetition of content. For L2 writers,
the composing process is more laborious and their generated materials were less detailed, less developed, and less suitable to convey meaning (Appendix C). They reviewed less and focused on form rather than content. Silva concluded that L2 writing is strategically, rhetorically, and linguistically different from L1 writing (Silva, 1993). The L2 composing seems to exhibit unique cognitive and linguistic differences from the composition of L1. These differences justify halting the complete adoption of L1 pedagogical practices and call for further research into L2 composing nature.

A major difference between the composing processes of L1 and L2 writers was brought by Leki (1996), as the study discussed the bilingual implications for the cognitive writing processes which ESL students bring to composing in L2. The L2 learners have another language to use in writing, which is considered as the most prominent difference from L1 writers who only use one language. Leki & Carson (1997) studied the effect of cultural differences between L1 and L2 on the complexity of L2 composing. The L2 writers produce their texts in very different conditions from L1 writers. For instance, L2 students write academic texts for university assignments, view language, and approach topics from their native cultural perspectives. In their attempt to prove the different nature of L2 writers and its effect on their composing processes, Leki & Carson (1997) pointed out that cultural distinctions L2 writers affect their planning processes and the direction of the generated ideas. Furthermore, these students bring their L1 based knowledge to their texts and were asked to write academic assignments from multiple readings. All these factors add to the complexity of the whole composing processes of L2 writers.

Another area of differences between L1 and L2 composing processes is brought by Friedlander (1990) regarding L1 use in generating content for L2 composing. The study argued that translating thoughts from L1 to L2 do not negatively affect L2 writers, either on the time they spend in planning or on the quality of their L2 texts. Further research was later conducted by Wang & Wen (2002) on sixteen Chinese EFL writers where L2 writing process was claimed as a bilingual event, i.e. L2 writers have two languages to use for cognitive operations. Many researchers are often seen advising learners to ‘think’ in the target language; although, no one can stop or control the cognitive transfer or translations of two languages happening inside the learners’ mind. Despite all the similarities or differences, the research findings have indicated that some aspects of L1 composing processes have been used in L2 composing. All these research outcomes have recommended or cautioned against the application of L1 composing practices in L2 writing classroom.

Marzban & Jalali (2016) also emphasize on evaluating the differences and similarities between Persian and English learners. The study highlighted the association between both Persian and English writing. Thus, by evaluating the similarities and differences between both type of learners, the EFL teachers can learn about the strengths and weakness of individuals. The study also emphasized on the importance of integrating the instruction of both languages in EFL books which can enhance the pedagogical application of EFL textbooks. On the other hand, Kim & Yoon (2014) showed that there exists a language proficiency difference. The study also showed that the rate of switching to L1 was much higher among high-proficiency participants as compared to the low-proficiency participants. The language switching was done frequently by the high-proficiency
participants during writing tasks; while, low-proficiency students switched languages more during argumentative tasks.

**Pedagogical Implication**

As researchers started endorsing L1 writing practices and imitating them in the L2 writing classrooms, Leki (1996) cautioned that although successful L1 writing teaching techniques can be used from L1 writing classes, these techniques need to be adjusted for L2 students. The students need the flexibility of extra time to generate, brainstorm, plan, and organize ideas. They need to be given instructions and practices to help them generate and organize content. In short, all focus should be in the actual process of composing. Strategies such as brainstorming in groups or guiding students to find proper reading materials can aid the planning process of composing. Moreover, L2 students need to be aware of the audience who will read their texts; therefore, it is very beneficial and highly recommended to direct their ideas to convey the meaning to the reading audience. Interestingly, it was observed that both L1 and L2 writers did not care for the audience while generating content for their texts. The rationale for such behavior was thought to be due to L1 writers taking their audience for granted presuming that the audience will automatically understand them. On the other hand, L2 writers were focusing on delivering the ideas from their brains to their texts and neglected the audience. If writers took their audience into consideration from the beginning, it would have helped in planning a more effective and useful content.

There should be a balance between instructions that focus on helping students discover effective ways to generate meaning and exercises that focus on form or linguistic aspects. Moreover, individual differences and personal preferences should also be considered in composing instructions. There is no fixed and single method that is the best one to apply in writing classrooms. Therefore, teachers can attempt to satisfy and meet the demands of most students in the classroom by giving students variety of realistic strategies and exercises. One of the most common non-effective practices by writing teachers is leaving the rest of the writing activity as homework. By asking students to do the writing task at home, it simply becomes a test not a classroom activity where the teacher is available to observe and aid the writing processes. However, policy makers, curriculum experts and teachers need to consider giving students adequate time for in-class composing practices while designing writing syllabuses. Majority of Saudi students in writing classes were instructed to write traditional and linear models of writing. However, as research has shown and proved, composing cannot be divided into fixed stages. White & Arndt (1991)’s cyclical model of writing is one of the best pedagogic models to convey the nature of composing processes. There are plenty of exercises and strategies that can be employed in L2 writing classes. However, these pedagogic applications should not only focus on effective instructions and strategies, but also equip students with knowledge of composing processes. Other factors are equally important, such as choosing culturally sensitive topics, giving adequate time for planning, writing, and drafting, and encouraging students to understand and embrace the recursive nature of composing.

**Conclusion**

As the research has pointed out similarities between L1 and L2 composing processes, another round of research questioned these similarities and explored several differences between the writing processes of both languages. However, the outcomes are still unclear and need further
investigation. Feasible methods to L2 composing practices need to be based on a wider and clearer understanding of the L2 composing processes. Pedagogic recommendations need to be based on accurate and practical theories, case studies with representative samples, and adequate research in all aspects involved in L2 composing. The study has discussed the claims of various researchers for and against similarities of L1 and L2 composing processes and concluded that although some aspects of the composing processes are similar, differences exist and should be considered. The pedagogic implications of the research outcomes have also been discussed in this paper. More research is recommended as the number of L2 writers is growing tremendously.

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References


**Appendix A**

Cognitive Model of the Writing Processes
Appendix B
Knowledge-Telling Model of the Writing Processes:

Appendix C
Knowledge-Transforming Model of the Writing Processes
Appendix D

Pedagogic Model of the Writing Processes


Appendix E

Brainstorming Activity 1: Using Mind Maps

1. Teacher encourage students to create a diagram with a central main idea that can be divided and branch off to multiple and correlating words or concepts.
2. This activity will help students generate a well-rounded view, gain insights into the topic or get inspired with new emerging ideas.
3. It can be done as a pair or group work in the writing classroom as well as being a very useful individual strategy to generate content.

See an example below:

Writing task: *What are the advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad?*

*Write a four-paragraph essay with 150 words stating what you think are the pros and cons of such experience.*
Appendix F

Brainstorming Activity 2: Using Pessimist Vs. Optimist’s Game

1. This brainstorming activity can be used for generating ideas to topics and finding solutions.
2. Divide the students into pairs: a pessimist and an optimist.
3. Ask them to write down a couple of ideas for the topic.
4. In pairs, the pessimist suggests the problem, while the optimist provide a solution starting with ‘how about’.

For example, topic about online learning.

Pessimist: ‘what if students do not know how to communicate through educational forums?’
Optimist: ‘how about making tutorials for them?’

5. The pessimist then challenges the answer provided by the optimist.
6. After a few minutes, get the pair to join others to make fours. They should discuss their ideas, solutions and the problems generated earlier. They will build up upon each other’s responses and create more ideas.
7. After 10 minutes, ask each group (the pessimists and the optimists) to nominate at least four ideas.
8. Teacher write the ideas on the board and discuss them with the class
Key Conceptions on Learner Autonomy and Particular Links with the Algerian Educational Context

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Abstract
In the last three decades, the construct of learner autonomy has been a voguish word in the educational literature. It has been explored from a variety of perspectives and spheres, for it is a multifaceted notion that involves several parameters and tenets such as: taking control over learning, assuming responsibility, conducting independent action and exercising the freedom of choice. Its convolution, indeed, has yielded multiple directions that led to a great deal of discussion and research. However, a clear depiction of what ‘learner autonomy’ is and what it essentially conceals is not well represented. Hence, this paper aims at providing a clear account and a relevant review of the significant conceptions embedded within the term so as to gain a deeper understanding of it. To this end, the paper tackles the following issues: (1) the origins of autonomy (2) learner autonomy definitions (3) versions of learner autonomy (4) learner autonomy and its relation to teacher autonomy (5) and finally learner autonomy across cultures, as it puts forward important associations to the Algerian educational setting.

Key words: Algerian context, culture, language learning, learner autonomy, teacher autonomy

Introduction

Learner autonomy came into sight whilst a wave of educational thoughts called for a shift of focus from the teacher to the learner. It has intrigued several scholars and thus has generated a countless number of theoretical and empirical works that are still in progress. In its basic sense, learner autonomy is a learner centered notion that puts the student at the heart of the learning experience, it engages fundamentally self-reliance, self-instruction, self-access, and self-sufficiency. Plus, it endows the student with responsibility over his learning, decisions and actions, as it engages a capacity for detachment and critical reflection. It is not merely a significant theoretical construct in the literature but a worthwhile estimated goal across worldwide language classrooms.

1. A Brief Background of Learner Autonomy

Autonomy is a word that dates back to the end of the 16th century, it was first used in the European political framework, Berka (2000). It springs from the ancient Greek word ‘autonomia’ which is a combination of ‘autos’ and ‘nomos’. The former signifying ‘self’ and the latter ‘law’. Their meanings together have been interpreted as ‘living according to one’s own rules’ or ‘setting one’s own laws’. Historically, autonomy was not inherent in the field language education; “rather, it is an imported, essentially non-linguistic, concept that has been brought into language teaching, via psychology and educational theory from the fields of moral and political philosophy.” (Benson, 2009, p. 16). At its very first use, that is in the end of the 16th century, autonomy was initially a political notion, which served as a ‘killer phrase’ that indicated an illegitimate wish for religious freedom and freedom of the mind, Berka (2000). It was seen as a disruptive concept that may result in people breaking out the laws and escaping the legitimate power. However, some decades later, it became more common and ‘legal’, since it had come to refer to the individual’s ability to take control of his own affairs by treaty (ibid).

With respect to education, autonomy had long been, highly valued and recognized as a learning principle. Comenius (1592-1670), ‘the father of modern education’, notably had put children at the center of learning and stressed the importance of their autonomy. According to him, children are naturally born with a desire to search for knowledge, so teachers should consider this nature to support their innate development. Rousseau (1712-1778), on the other hand, through his famous treatise Emile (first published in 1762), advocated the view of respecting children’s natural inclination to learning, and put forward that a child learns better when he is curious about something. This makes him excited and passionate to learn it, and therefore he will be able to educate himself. Rousseau’s child-centered educational theory has eventually laid a sound foundation to learner autonomy, since his thoughts were adopted by many influential theorists who traced the path of autonomy in education such as: John Dewey (1859-1952), Jean Piaget (1896-1980), Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) and Carl Rogers (1902-1987).

2. What Is Learner Autonomy?

One of the most trashed out questions in the abundant body of literature is defining the construct of ‘learner autonomy’ for it has been regarded as a highly intricate and multidimensional construct whose systematic accounts can be approached from divergent perspectives (Knapp & Seidlhofer & Widdowson 2009). For example, Holec (1981) who is said to be the father of autonomy in language learning, views it as a capacity to take charge of the learning process:
to say of a learner that he is autonomous is...to say that he is capable of taking charge of his own learning and nothing more...to take charge of one's learning is to bear responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning. (As cited in Benson, 2013, p. 59).

In a similar way, Cotterall (1995) defines it “as the extent to which learners demonstrate the ability to use a set of tactics for taking control of their learning” (p. 195). Benson (2001) also seems to share this conception: “Autonomy is the capacity to take control of one's own learning” (p. 47). Little (1991) on the other hand, brought the psychological dimension into light by regarding the autonomous learner not just as being capable to manage his own learning, but also as competent enough to associate the acquired knowledge with his actual environment. In this way, “the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of learning” (Little, 1990, p. 7).

In Little’s (1991) view, this psychological relation to how and what is learnt, boosts the learner’s capacity to take control over their language learning. Whereas for Dickinson (1987) learner autonomy is conceived as a learning situation “in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his learning and the implementation of those decisions” and that involves “complete responsibility for one's learning, carried out without the involvement of a teacher or pedagogic materials” (1987,p. 11). To Dickinson (1987) partial responsibility for decision making and learning management is not autonomy; it is rather a preparatory stage for an autonomy labeled semi-autonomy.

However, Benson (2001) and Kohonen, (1992) views do not seem to concur with Dickinson’s individualistic interpretation that discounts the socio-interactive aspect of learning, for they maintain that learners’ interdependence is a necessary component in developing autonomous language learning. Benson (1996) argues that control over learning cannot be reached individually, it rather entails a cooperative decision making (p.33). In addition, Little (2004) maintains that “Autonomy is not synonymous with autism: it is not a matter of learners working on their own; like all other culturally determined human capacities, it develops in interaction with others” (2004,p.17). Furthermore, Dam (1995) believes that autonomy entails “a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others, as a socially responsible person” (p. 102). Accordingly, autonomous language learning involves not only capabilities and individualistic attitudes to learning, but requires also a collaborative learning network that helps learners to use and reinforce their capacities within and beyond their immediate learning context.

3. Versions of Learner Autonomy

In the last couple of decades, several scholars brought into the literature an assortment of versions and ways of examining the construct of autonomy; such as Benson (1997), Oxford (2003), Smith, (2003), Kumaravadivelu, (2003), and Holliday (2003). Each version is driven by distinct assumptions on the conceptualization of this notion. Table 1 illustrates different versions and their basic components:
Table 1: Versions of autonomy

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<tr>
<td>1. Technical: Learning management</td>
<td>1. Technical: focus on the physical situation</td>
<td>1. Weak pedagogies: students lack autonomy</td>
<td>1. Native–speakerist: students are outsiders to the native speakers’ culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Psychological: cognitive processes</td>
<td>2. Psychological: characteristics of learners</td>
<td>2. Strong pedagogies: students are autonomous</td>
<td>2. Cultural–relativist: autonomy is a Western construct</td>
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At the start, Benson (1997) pioneered the discussion of different versions of autonomy in the theoretical literature of language learning. He distinguished between three diverse perspectives from which the concept of autonomy can be examined; technical, psychological, and political. The technical version is concerned with the learner training and learning strategies. It focuses on the technical skills required to manage an autonomous learning within and beyond the classroom setting, yet, without teacher intervention. Benson associated this version with ‘positivistic’ approach to language learning, because the latter supports independent language acquisition rather than “direct transmission from teacher to learner” (Benson, 1997, p. 23), as it encourages drill and practice methods to language learning.

The psychological version, on the contrary, considers the learner’s internal mental capacities, attitudes, and behaviors, it holds that learners’ knowledge is constructed within their own social world, jointly with their teachers. This eventually leads to take a shared responsibility for learning between teacher and learner. In view of that, this version is constant with basic thoughts of the ‘constructivist’ approach to language learning, which attaches great importance to individual responsibility for decision-making on learning and “tend to value interaction and engagement with the target language” (Benson, 1997, p. 24).

Finally, the political version refers to learners’ control over the internal and external learning contexts, the learning content and processes as well as their right to do so. Besides, it emphasizes on second language learners’ critical awareness of the social context, and calls attention to the potential hurdles between learners and the target language community. This version, as suggested by Benson, corresponds to the critical theory of knowledge which presumes the crucial impact of political and social ideologies on knowledge construction and deals with issues of control, power and social change.

By implication, Benson’s three versions of learner autonomy can be analyzed and examined in different ways according to different contexts and purposes. If learning is viewed as the acquisition of the immediate necessary skills to gain knowledge, then the technical version of autonomy will seem appropriate and more likely to be selected. But, in contexts where learning
is seen as an individual or social construction of meaning, the psychological version tends to serve better the research ends. Lastly, when there is a focus on the socio-political dimensions of learning, the political version should preferably manifest.


Subsequently, Oxford (2003) recognized Benson’s technical, psychological, and political versions of autonomy and extended the model by adding a further dimension; the ‘socio-cultural’ perspective. It recognizes that autonomous learning is a ‘socially mediated’ process that can be promoted through shared interactions among learners, as well as practical integration with their social and cultural context. Smith (2003) on the other hand, in conceptualizing the term, made a different twofold division; weak pedagogies and strong pedagogies. In the former, “…autonomy is seen as a deferred goal and as a product of instruction rather than as something which students are currently ready to exercise directly” (Smith, 2003, p. 131). It presupposes students’ low level of capacity to direct their own language learning autonomously. It intends to provide them with the appropriate strategies that help them become autonomous in fulfilling objectives that are set by their institution. Because, curriculum and syllabus design are created by the instructors or the institution, leaving very little room for learners to make choices and decisions. This type of autonomy can be linked to Benson’s technical version of autonomy given that they both contend with learning strategies to promote autonomy. By contrast, the latter focuses on “co-creating with students optimal conditions for the exercise of their autonomy” (Smith, 2003, p. 131). In this kind of autonomy, learners are seen as already autonomous and capable to cooperate with their teachers in fundamental decision making processes such as syllabus design. In this way, they become active participants who play a crucial role in the creation of a self-directed learning space. With an involvement of collaboration and interaction, Smith’s strong pedagogy can, in turn, be associated with Oxford’s socio-cultural version of autonomy.


Kumaravadivelu (2003) made a distinction between narrow and broad approaches to autonomy; the difference between the two versions lies in outlining the goal of learner autonomy. The narrow form sustains that autonomy in learning is meant to help students to learn how to learn by providing them with the essential resources to learn on their own and by teaching them how to use suitable cognitive, meta-cognitive, affective and social strategies to accomplish their learning objectives, it is referred to as ‘academic’ autonomy. Whereas in the broad version, the goal of learner autonomy is directed towards learning to liberate, therefore, it is called ‘liberatory’ autonomy. In essence, this type of autonomy “…actively seeks to help learners recognize sociopolitical impediments to realization of their full human potential and by providing them with the intellectual tools necessary to overcome those impediments” (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p.547). Distinct from academic autonomy, where learning to learn is seen as an end in itself, liberatory autonomy regards learning to learn merely as a means to an end (which is learning for liberation). In this respect, Kumaravadivelu (2006) argues “if academic autonomy enables learners to be effective learners, liberatory autonomy empowers them to be critical thinkers”.


From a distinctive perspective, Holliday (2003) categorized three other approaches to autonomy namely; ‘native–speakerist’, ‘cultural–relativist’ and ‘social’ autonomy. In the native-
speakerist approach, learners are perceived as culturally outsiders to their ‘native speaker’ teachers’ own culture, and autonomous learners are expected to perform in ways that “conform to an image of the native speaker and his or her culture” (Holliday, 2003, p. 115). In the cultural relativist approach, autonomy is represented as a Western construct that should not be embraced by non-native learners due to their cultural non-conformity. Holliday associated this version with Benson’s political autonomy which is concerned with issues of power. While the first two approaches are culture-related, the third category i.e. social autonomy characterizes autonomy as “a pre-existing social phenomenon” that perceives members of the society as equal people (Holliday, 2003, p. 118). It considers autonomy as a universal concept that is inherent in all members of the society regardless of their cultural similarity or disparity.

In the light of the aforementioned versions of autonomy, one might assume that only some versions such as: Benson’s psychological version, Oxford’s socio-cultural version, Smith’s weak pedagogy, Kumaravadivelu’s academic autonomy and Holliday’s social autonomy can fit to the Algerian educational context. Because, within the Algerian foreign language learning context, learners remarkably lack autonomy, independent action skills, and responsibility in their language learning. Therefore, when conducting learner autonomy research in the Algerian context, researchers or practitioners ought to consider first these realities, and thus need to opt for such versions that stress shared responsibility for decision making, strategy training and the creation of optimal conditions for autonomy, as only these approaches seem to be reasonable and most proper for the Algerian context.

4. Learner Autonomy and Teacher Autonomy

In the course of working on the worthwhile goal of learner autonomy in language education, teachers need not only to play the role of facilitators, counselors or monitors, but also to be effective decision makers, responsible leaders, and independent professionals at schools. Those skills, in effect, are focal conditions for academic autonomy. This implies that teachers are supposed to be, in some degree, autonomous. With this regard, Little (1995) argues “the promotion of learner autonomy depends (in fact) on the promotion of teacher autonomy” (p. 179), and adds that learner autonomy is more likely to be developed if teachers have themselves received an autonomous encouraging education (Little, 1995, p.180). Furthermore, Breen and Mann (1997) maintain that “an essential precondition for the teacher to be able to foster autonomous learning is an explicit awareness of the teacher’s own self as a learner” (p.145). Hence, teachers ought to conceive themselves as learners not only of the teaching craft but also, of the foreign language they teach or even of their students’ first language, Smith (2003).

The construct of teacher autonomy has initially been used, in the field of language education, by Allwright (1988) and subsequently elaborated by Little (1995) who defines it as “teachers’ capacity to engage in self-directed teaching.”(p.176). It generally embodies learner autonomy tenets, in assuming responsibility, self-directedness, taking control, and freedom of choice. In this sense, Aoki (1999) suppose that if learner autonomy is: “the capacity, freedom, and/or responsibility to make choices concerning one’s own learning . . . teacher autonomy, by analogy, can be defined as capacity, freedom to make choices concerning one’s own teaching” (p.111).
Benson (2000) defines teacher autonomy as “a right to freedom from control (or an ability to exercise this right) as well as actual freedom from control” (p.111). Smith (2000), on the other hand, explains it “as the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes for oneself as a teacher, in cooperation with others” (p. 89). While, Thavenius (1999) describes the autonomous teacher as one “who reflects on her teacher role and who can change it, who can help her learners become autonomous, and who is independent enough to let her learners become independent” (p.160). As can be seen, the term teacher autonomy, akin to learner autonomy, has been described in several ways; as a capacity, a set of skills, and a right for freedom. To make it easier for users to employ the term, Smith (2001) has made an interesting list out of the various dimensions of teacher autonomy that are presented in the educational literature, in which he summarized six points in relation to two main categories, one associated with professional action and the other linked to professional development:

In relation to professional action:
A. Self-directed professional action
B. Capacity for self-directed professional action
C. Freedom from control over professional action

In relation to professional development:
D. Self-directed professional development
E. Capacity for self-directed professional development
F. Freedom from control over professional development

(Smith, 2001, p.5)

What can be drawn from the above distinction is that, the first set concerns the teacher’s action solely, that is, the autonomy of the teacher is experienced while exercising the teaching activity regardless of the proceeding effect, therefore, it sees autonomy as a ‘state’. Unlike the second set, that takes autonomy as an ‘ongoing process’ and emphasizes on the developmental dimension of the autonomous teacher. By inference, the two categories imply different degrees of autonomy, teacher autonomy in the first sense tend to bear a lower level of autonomy if compared to the second, because the act of developing an action entails higher autonomy and is more demanding than the act of doing the action itself. Besides, teachers who have the capacity and freedom to take control of their professional development are certainly well able to take self-directed professional action, but the other way around is not necessarily true.

From a relational perspective, La Ganza (2004) marks the notion of teacher autonomy in terms of four principal dynamic dimensions:

1. Teacher autonomy in relation to internal dialectics with peers and other mentors
2. Teacher autonomy in relation to learners
3. Teacher autonomy in relation to potential decision makers inside the institution
4. Teacher autonomy in relation to potential decision makers outside the institution

This view of teacher autonomy as an inter-relational construct suggests that the four dimensions “are interconnected socially and culturally, as part of the same society, and psychologically, through the common element of the teacher” (La Ganza, 2008, p.72). They all impinge on the
autonomy of the teacher; the social and psychological interactions with peer teachers, learners, internal and external decision makers can either support or hamper the teacher’s freedom to be creative, to act on their thoughts, and to attain their targets. In fact, such model has not just profitably contributed to broaden our understanding of the term, but it has also, displayed important aspects embedded in teacher autonomy that can be pedagogically useful.

With this interdependent relational aspect in teacher autonomy, external control is unavoidably self-imposed. Because, the relating individuals (colleagues, administrative staff, learners, parents, legislation and policy makers) can directly or indirectly restrict the teacher’s choice over the teaching content, instructions or evaluation. For example, teachers may be required to follow certain course sequence from a particular designated textbook. If such curriculum guidelines are strictly mandated, then teachers’ freedom to amend or to make choices over the content, arrangement and assessment of teaching activities, is therefore very limited. Accordingly, curriculum policies in particular, and educational as well as political environments in general, can to a greater or a lesser extent influence the autonomy of the teacher.

External control can be undesirable for some teachers since it hampers their freedom to act independently, however such restriction on independent action is, at times, essential to avoid the misuse of teacher autonomy. Indeed, this has been stressed by Cohen (1981) on the significance of teacher evaluation by others so as to prevent the profession from being ‘fossilized’. Because, teacher autonomy is a double edged sword, it can positively create life-long learners, effective decision makers, as it can potentially result in random detrimental teaching. Therefore, good control over teaching performance should be carefully maintained to ensure desired learning outcomes.

5. Learner Autonomy and Culture

Being aware of the significant impact of culture on autonomous language learning, many researchers (e.g. Riley 1988; Little & Dam, 1998; Benson et al, 2003; Holliday, 2003; Palfreyman, 2003; Oxford, 2003; Riley, 2003; Smith, 2003) drew careful attention to its implications within different cultural contexts. “if we accept that autonomy takes different forms for different individuals, and even for the same individual in different context of learning, we may also need to accept that its manifestations will vary according to cultural context.” Benson (2001, p. 55). Therefore, a need for investigating learner autonomy in different cultural settings is called for, so as to examine the adaptability of the concept within diverse cultures (Cotterall, 1995; 1999; Bullock, 2011).

This concept of culture has actually been highlighted in various educational settings. Because learning occurs, in essence, within specific cultural contexts which inevitably shapes the form of learning, in a way that is compatible with the cultural norms and practices of a particular community. If learning is notably influenced by the learners’ cultural background, potential questions, then, seem to emerge: is learner autonomy suitable as an educational goal for all cultural contexts? Is it appreciated in particular cultures and devalued in others? If possibly integrated in all educational settings, does it take equal implementation and promotion pace across worldwide cultures? Regarding such concerns and particularly issues of cultural appropriateness towards learner autonomy, there seems to exist two major views in the literature, one standpoint advocating
the generalization of learner autonomy in worldwide cultures, and another emphasizing the learners’ cross-cultural particularity.

On the one hand, some researchers hold that learner autonomy is a concept that can feasibly be discussed, instigated and developed in every corner of the world. Little (1999b), for example, strongly assumes the universality of learner autonomy “learner autonomy is an appropriate pedagogical goal in all cultural settings” (Little, 1999b, p.15), because for him, it basically involves an individual's ability to take responsibility for one's own learning, which makes up part of any human being's overall capacities. Likewise, Benson (2001) and Sinclair (2000) are of the same mind in describing some commonly recognized features of autonomy, “Autonomy is about capacity therefore is a learner attribute rather than learning situation” (Benson, 2006a, p. 23). This, indeed, implies the applicability of the concept in any learning context no matter what cultural background it belongs to. Even though this view is sensitively relaxing; since it takes all learners as having equal possibilities to become autonomous, it appears to discount the effect of social and cultural factors on learning.

On the other hand, it has been pointed out that learner autonomy may not be appropriate, due to some cultural constraints, in some societies as it may well be fitting to other ethnic cultures (Benson 1997; Pennycook 1997; Sinclair 1997). This claim corresponds respectively to the ‘non-Western cultures’ versus ‘Western cultures’ opposition. Littlewood (1999) for example, holds that autonomy might be unsuitable for non-Western contexts, since most of autonomy reported definitions are typically connected to Western individualism. In addition to that, Western societies are often characterized as upholding a good sense of individualism, self-confidence, self-expression, personal independence and critical thinking, which are key characteristics of learner autonomy; therefore, they are most likely to be appealing to Western values.

However, “doubts about the cultural appropriateness of the goal of autonomy for Asian students have been mainly based on a view of Asian cultures as collectivist and accepting of relations of power and authority” (Benson, 2001, p. 56). Accordingly, power gaps between teachers and learners cause one of the main obstacles for developing autonomy in collectivist cultures. Because in Asian cultures, ‘knowledge is power’, therefore, people conveying knowledge (teachers) are ranked in a higher position than people who are less knowledgeable (learners). For that reason, respect for authority is fundamental and learners who tend to discuss, contradict or criticize their superiors’(teachers) knowledge, may appear to be disrespectful and impolite, this evidently indicates bad education in the society’s eyes. Furthermore, the Asian ‘culture of learning’, as articulated by Palfreyman (2003), tends to cherish certain qualities such as, group work, memorization, imitation, theoretical knowledge and a receptive learning style, which actually mismatch the essential conditions for cultivating learner autonomy. As a result, it might be uneasy to manifest autonomy in such learning contexts. Nevertheless, despite such cultural constraints, Ho and Crookall (1995) have successfully shown the viability of promoting learner autonomy in an Asian context by engaging learners into a project that enabled them to develop certain autonomy-based capabilities, skills and attitudes.

In this respect, Littlewood (1999) interestingly puts forward two forms of autonomy: proactive and reactive autonomy. He describes the former as "the form of autonomy that is usually
intended when the concept is discussed in the West", while he presents the latter as the type of autonomy which "does not create its own directions" and which is most readily conveyed by Asian learners. In proactive autonomy, the learning objectives are autonomously set by learners. That is, without external intervention, learners are able to make deliberate efforts and purposeful contribution in fixing their own learning goals. This form is assumed to be compatible with the Western tradition. While in reactive autonomy, learners organize their resources to achieve learning objectives that have already been set. Being as such, it is believed that reactive autonomy can correspond with the East Asian context. What is more, Littlewood (1999) proclaims reactive autonomy to be a preliminary stage for Asian learners that can mature to become proactive in the Western sense.

6. Learner Autonomy and the Algerian Cultural Context

As for the Algerian context, there seems to be a set of cultural traits that can be regarded as inhibiting in the road to autonomy. Sonaiya (2002), for instance, believes that the idea of autonomy is unsuitable to African settings. In fact, this is assumed mainly because we tend to find within African or Algerian learners, in particular, certain educational beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that are not very far from the aforesaid Asian style. Such beliefs and attitudes stem from notions like; collaboration, authority’s control, indirectness and social status that are deeply rooted in the national cultural background.

For example, members of the Algerian society tend to follow parents and society conventions, Benaissi (2015). Because an Algerian student “progresses in a culture of the group, the family, the community; takes decisions with the parents (family); shares experience with others.” Benaissi (2015,p.412). This sense of collective involvement in one’s own life is, thus, reflected in students’ approach to learning, in that, they readily accept teachers’ full command in outlining their learning path, in determining the ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of their learning. As they show little capacity to take the initiative and suppose that their learning progression and outcome are in a large part their teachers’ responsibility.

Indirect communication is another cultural feature that defines Algerian students' learning attitude. With a habitual tendency to communicate ideas and information around the point or in a vague manner, generally to save face and to maintain the honor of both interlocutors or to seem polite and respectful, Algerian learners tend to find difficulty in describing directly what seems relevant, beneficial or redundant to their learning in front of their educators. As a result, they may not be able to express with full clarity and precision their learning needs and expectations. This eventually may hamper student’s freedom of self-expression and personal independence, and may implicitly discourage and reduce their capacity for autonomous learning.

Moreover, social status is important in the Algerian society and showing respect for members in a powerful position, is generally assumed; therefore, learners (being in a less powerful place than teachers who are masters of the class), often find it embarrassing to question the content of their learning or to discuss the knowledge conveyed by their superiors. Likewise, students’ intellectual disagreement and detection of what is right or wrong is sometimes seen as challenge and effrontery. This has in some way resulted in a tendency towards a conservative approach to
learning, where many learners lack a level of rational skepticism and critical thinking, which are key components of learner autonomy.

Although the Algerian cultural tradition holds some constraints that can cause uneasiness and reluctance towards autonomous learning, it is certainly not impossible to adapt ways and strategies that can cope with conditions of this particular context as, Holliday (2003) maintains, autonomy resides in students’ social worlds and learners from different cultures can be autonomous in their own way. Therefore, with the great variation in cultures, autonomy in learning can still be achievable since its core components seem to be universally inherent and shared.

Conclusion

This paper addresses various conceptions provided by pioneers in the field of learner autonomy. It attempts to illuminate important notions that are closely related to the concept as it makes connection to the Algerian context so as to offer insightful hints for researchers who might be interested in carrying out autonomy-related works in this setting. Admittedly, it cannot be claimed that this article is comprehensive and inclusive of all the crucial facets of autonomy, however it tends to summarize basic definitions, versions and principles of autonomy and eventually, it might serve as a supplement to the theoretical part in the literature.

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“Make them take an ‘IELTS test’ in Arabic”! Resentment of and resistance towards English and English-medium instruction in the UAE

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Abstract
English in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has grown to become the primary language of trade and retail, the mass media and advertising, and the de facto medium of instruction in federally-sponsored institutions of higher education (HE). In recent years, however, the widespread proliferation of the English language in this otherwise conservative Arabic-speaking country has become increasingly controversial. Indeed, resentment of and resistance towards English on the part of Emiratis has been found to exist in relation to English-language mass advertising (Nickerson & Crawford Camiciottoli, 2013) and English-medium instruction (EMI) within HE (Issa, 2013, March 6). In addition, there is growing concern that ‘native’-English-speaking teachers from largely secular, ‘inner circle’ countries will inadvertently transmit values, ontologies, and epistemologies contrary to those of their Muslim students (Ibrahim, 2013) and their traditional, tribal-based, gender-segregated society. In order to determine whether there existed any evidence of resistance towards the place of English in the present-day UAE on the part of Emirati HE students, a bilingual (Arabic/English) survey was conducted with a group of students completing a foundation programme at a major federal HE institution. The findings reveal some not inconsiderable ambivalence towards English and EMI, especially in the realms of cultural integrity and language policy.

Key words: Arabian Gulf, English, Islam, social distance, social psychology

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1. Introduction

1.1 The global spread of English

The spread of the English language in the post-World War II period has been pervasive. Watson (2007), for example, notes that approximately 430 million people now have English as their mother tongue, and some 1.6 billion as a second or third language. In other words, as Kachru (1996a) puts it, there exist approximately four non-‘native speakers’ of English for every ‘native speaker’. To put it mildly, then, Swales’ (1993) prediction that the use of English will hit a plateau – or possibly even go into decline – has not been fulfilled. Rather, Crystal’s (1985) forecast that by the year 2000 there will be more non-‘native’ speakers of English using the language than ‘native speakers’ appears to have been well and truly borne out. It is not, however, purely the vast number of English speakers which points to the relentless proliferation of the language, but also the sheer geographical range of the language’s users. For, as noted by Strevens (1982), English is employed, in one capacity or another, in practically every single country on the planet.

1.2 The English saturation of the UAE

Despite their relatively conservative nature, the Islamic monarchies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have not been immune to the global spread of English. In Saudi Arabia, by far the largest and most populous country of the GCC, for example, English now plays a central role in retail, banking, commerce, and travel (Al Haq & Smadi, 1996; Elyas, 2008) as well as in the education system of the kingdom (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014), as is also the case within higher education (HE) in Qatar (Pessoa & Rajakumar, 2011). In Oman, too, English is increasingly becoming the dominant language in tertiary education, as has been documented at the country’s flagship HE institution (Abdel-Jawad & Abu Radwan, 2011). This Englishisation of the region is, however, possibly exemplified by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the most conspicuous indicator of which arguably being the dominance of English in the mass media (Walters et al., 2007) and advertising. Indeed, a visitor to the country could perhaps be forgiven for believing that the E in the acronym UAE stood for English. Indeed, the predominance of English in public spaces in the UAE has, somewhat oddly, even led to the Romanisation of some standard Arabic-Islamic expressions. This can be seen in linguistic hybridisations such as Eid Mubarak and Ramadan Kareem, which are reminiscent of ‘Arabish’, ‘3arabizi’ (Bianchi, 2012), or ‘Arabizi’ (Allehaiby, 2013), and which thus constitute evidence that this “trendy” form of Romanised Arabic (Aboellezz, n.d.) is, as suggested by Allehaiby (2013, p.57), currently in the process of migrating “from CMC [computer mediated communication] online mediums to offline means, thus moving from unregulated to regulated spaces.”

English is also the predominant – if not the exclusive – language of the retail sector of the UAE. In reference to the role of the language in cosmopolitan Dubai, for example, Randall and Samimi (2010, p.44) remark that “there can be few societies in the world where a second language is necessary to carry out basic shopping tasks, from buying food in supermarkets to clothes in shopping malls.” Nickerson (2015, p.240) concurs, emphatically pointing out that “English is the language of retail. If you buy a pair of shoes in Dubai, then you do so in English!” Being the language, or the “acrolectal lingua franca” (Boyle, 2011, p.144), of retail for the more than 200 different nationalities employed in the UAE does indeed give English a certain functional prestige, especially when considering the size of the retail sector in the country. Shihab (2001, p.253) for instance points out that the service sector – of which the retail sector is a significant component –
“ranks first in size of employment (58 per cent of the labour force), which reflects its powerful dominance in the UAE.” The growing penetration of business and commerce in the UAE by English is also reflected in corporate in-house training. In his survey of 22 of the top 100 companies in Dubai, for example, Wilkins (2001) found that whilst none of the firms delivered training exclusively in Arabic, 41% did indeed conduct staff training solely in English, and 50% delivered training in both English and Arabic (9% utilised various other languages).

1.3 Growing disquiet over the Englishisation of the UAE
This wholesale embracing of the English language – “an icon of the contemporary age” (Guilherme, 2007, p.74) – signals how, according to Clarke (2007, p.584), the UAE “has accommodated globalization.” As with globalisation itself, however, English is something of a two-edged sword (Canagarajah, 1993; Hopkyns, 2014). As elucidated by Guilherme (2007, p.74), for example, “the connotations of English are complex”; on the one hand it is the language of “opportunity, science, social movements, peace processes, human rights and intercultural exchanges”, while on the other is also often simultaneously regarded as “the language of imperialism, consumerism, marketing, Hollywood, multinationals, war and oppression.” As such, English “has the capacity to empower, just as it has the capacity to divide” (Mohd-Asraf, 2005, p.103). The tension which is predictably created by such a double-edged weapon often manifests itself in resistance on the part of some who have the language thrust upon them. A candid example of this is offered by an examination of the views regarding the prevalence of English in public spaces in the UAE. In their study of the language of mass advertising in the country, for example, Nickerson and Crawford Camicottoli (2013) found that although many of their Emirati participants had a neutral or positive attitude towards English, they also (p.344) unearthed “evidence that participants viewed texts in English as a potential threat to the local language and culture”, with one participant stating (p.345) that “Advertisements should be in Arabic too [sic] keep the mother language and national identity.” This remark smacks of Modiano (2001, p.340), who notes that “Because English is such a dominant force in world affairs (and the bulwark of Western ideology), there is a danger that its spread dilutes (and ‘corrupts’) the distinguishing characteristics of other languages and cultures.” Such a comment also reminds us of “the need of the local minority [in the UAE] to show a strong identity resistance to the continuous westernized acculturation, especially in Dubai” (Rapanta, 2014, p.2).

It also behoves us to remember that English “was not invented along with cinema, television or the internet; it has its own heritage that is territorially and chronologically related to specific cultures and territories” (Guilherme, 2007, p.80). This is of particular significance in the context of the UAE, for, as a former protectorate of Great Britain, English is not merely a value-free complex of arbitrary Saussurean signs and an autonomous Chomskyan system of grammar, but is also the language of the country’s former colonial masters (Fellman, 1973; Sperrazza, 2012). Arabic, in contrast, is a treasured marker of ethnic solidarity (Almaney, 1981; Dahan, 2013; Shouby, 1951; Zaharna, 1995) and religious identity (Ahmed, 2010; Al Allaq, 2014; Koch, 1983; Morrow & Castleton, 2007). This role takes on a special significance since the religion of the UAE may well be the only aspect of the country which has not undergone radical change as a result of the “cultural tsunami” (Hatherley-Greene, 2012, p.iii) and “cultural colonization” (Hatherley-Greene, 2012, p.10) that occurred in the UAE following the discovery and subsequent commercial exploitation of colossal deposits of hydrocarbon resources.
2. EMI in HE in the UAE
In addition to employing a language in the mass media and advertising, customer interface in the retail sector, and office communication, perhaps the most aggressive vehicle for the spread of a language, however, is its adoption as a – or, as the – medium of instruction within educational contexts. In this regard, many states of the GCC appear to have acquiesced to the “Tyrannosaurus rex”-like stampede (Swales, 1997) of English. Indeed, referring specifically to HE in the GCC, Davis (2010, p.38) remarks that the “use of English as a medium of instruction has been embraced without reservation, in contrast to the bitter confrontations in other parts of the Arab world over the use of former colonial languages over Arabic.” This is perhaps epitomised by the EMI policy enacted by the UAE in government-funded HE. For, although Article 9 of the Cultural Treaty of the Arab League of 1946 stipulates that members “of the Arab League will […] work to make the Arabic language […] the language of instruction in all subjects and in all educational stages in the Arab countries,” English is nevertheless the predominant medium of instruction at all three federally-sponsored HE institutions. Thus it is no wonder that, although Arabic may be the sole de jure official language of the UAE, as noted by Sperrazza (2012), over 60% of students in the country nevertheless receive their HE in the de facto language of tertiary education in the UAE, English (see also Findlow, 2008).

2.1 Controversy surrounding EMI
In recent years, however, the policy of EMI within HE in the UAE has grown increasingly controversial, as evinced by the number of critically-oriented doctoral theses the policy has motivated (e.g., Karmani, 2010; King, 2014; McLaren, 2011; Mouhanna, 2016), demands made by students for Arabic-medium programmes (Swan, 2015, April 9), and the considerable discussion and publicly-expressed concern this aspect of HE in the UAE has begun to engender (Hatherley-Greene, 2012). Commonly expressed misgivings include a possible weakening of competence in and knowledge of Arabic on the part of students (Hanif, 2015, March 28), as well as the relative status of the language vis-à-vis English in contemporary Emirati society (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Sperrazza, 2012), that the policy creates inequities in HE by favouring students who attended (largely private, i.e., fee-paying) EMI secondary schools (McLaren, 2011; Ronesi, 2011; Troudi & Jendli, 2011), and that the policy potentially relegates Arabic in the eyes of students (Findlow, 2006; Hunt, 2012), at least some of whom, it has been reported (e.g., Diallo, 2014), appear to resent the imposition of English on their education, culture, and religion. This reference to religion is of vital importance in the region since, for many Gulf Arab Muslims, Islam is, through and via the Quran (Dahan, 2013; Shouby, 1951), intimately intertwined with Arabic (Al Allaq, 2014; Almaney, 1981; Koch, 1983; Morrow & Castleton, 2007). Perhaps the most telling indicator of the sheer extent of the controversy surrounding the present EMI policy, however, is the objection made by a member of the Federal National Council (FNC), an advisory body in the legislative system of the UAE, that the delivery of lessons in English stands in direct contravention of the constitution of the country (Issa, 2013, March 6), Article 7 of which states that the “official language of the Union shall be Arabic”.

3. Resentment of foreigners in the UAE
It is not, however, merely the ubiquitous presence of English in advertising or the adoption of the language as the primary medium of instruction in HE which are controversial and thus give rise to resistance; the ‘bringers’ of the language also often spark concern, too, as can the mere presence
of foreigners themselves, of which there are no small number in the UAE. Indeed, as noted by Shihab (2001, p.251), along with “immense wealth generated by oil”, the “dominant socio-economic features of the UAE” are “a small indigenous population” and “a large expatriate population.” Indeed, Al-Khoury (2012) notes that in the 2010 census, the population of the UAE stood at approximately 8.2 million, only approximately 950,000 of which were UAE nationals. While such “demographic imbalances” (Al-Khoury, 2012, p.1; Martin, 2003, p.54) are common in the Gulf (non-nationals outnumber nationals in four of the six countries that make up the GCC), the situation is somewhat more pronounced in the UAE, where non-nationals make up some 88% of the populace (Qatar 87%, Kuwait 70%, Bahrain 52%, Oman 30%, KSA 27%). The largest two groups of foreign workers in the UAE originate from Pakistan and India (Weber, 2011), at approximately 1.25 million and 1.75 million, respectively (Wilkins, 2010). In fact, as noted by Randeree and Gaad (2008, p.71), the Indian male accounts for no less than 49.9% of the workforce of Dubai, a point which leads Khalaf (2006, p.251) to quip that “Visitors to Dubai may comment that they actually feel they are in an Indian rather than Arab city.” As with the dominance of English in advertising, however, here too there are some signs of resistance to the presence of such an inordinate number of foreigners, which can sometimes be expressed in somewhat bellicose and apocalyptic terms. Some of the Emiratis interviewed by Ashencaen Crabtree (2007), for example, condemned (p.584) “the alien and therefore corrupt values brought in by the armies of multi-ethnic migrant workers that today flood the labour markets of the UAE.” Most of the informants in research conducted by Ouis (2002) also agreed that the Gulf hosts too many migrant workers, and that the local culture was thus at risk of being overwhelmed by alien values and beliefs.

3.1 Trepidation towards foreign teachers and ‘experts’

The presence of foreigners in the education sector of the UAE can also be resented, especially in the context of educational reform. Such resentment may not, however, always be totally unfounded. For, although within the fields of EFL (English as a foreign language) and ESL (English as a second language), ‘native’-English-speaking teachers are often lionised (Phillipson, 1992), frequently being portrayed as ‘one-size-fits-all’, ‘magic bullet-like solutions’ to all the ills and woes of a country’s EFL/ESL programme(s), such a stellar portrayal is often arguably unwarranted (Scovel, 1994; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999, 2000). As noted by Al-Issa and Dahan (2011), when ADEC (Abu Dhabi Educational Council) recruited a batch of nearly 1,000 foreign teachers to help implement their ‘New School Model’ curriculum and pedagogical reform, there was a conspicuous absence in the media reports lauding their arrival of any mention of the teachers’ qualifications or germane professional experience. In fact, state Al-Issa and Dahan (p.7), the teachers were never praised “for anything other than their native language” of English. One of the ATEs (Arabic teachers of English) in an ADEC school interviewed by Stockwell (2015, p.139) also questioned the employment of some of their EMT (English medium teacher) colleagues, remarking, with some obvious resentment, “We are replaced by someone who is supposed to but doesn’t know more. How can he be from a country where he uses English every day but can’t spell?”

In addition to such institutionalised marginalisation, the presence of and ‘reliance’ on foreign teachers can also be disempowering for their local counterparts (Sanassian, 2011), and of course disempowerment can further fuel feelings of resentment. The possible reasons for such bitterness are far from difficult to fathom. As asserted for instance by Sinadi and Thornberry (2009,
p.45), it is “important to note that Arab culture has been transforming. Arabs have been changing, but they resent imposed change that they perceive to be imposed by foreign forces”, and of course Arabs are hardly likely to be unique in this particular regard. This is of particular significance in the context of the UAE for, as noted by Ibrahim (2013, p.27), the number of ‘expert’ foreign consultants engaged in educational reform initiatives within the country “is significant” (see also Sanassian, 2011). Indeed, Ibrahim (2013, p.33) states that some of the Emirati teachers whose views he researched argued that educational reform should not rely on foreign consultants, since outsiders who are unfamiliar with the local context might “jeopardize the religion and culture of the UAE.” This concern brings us to another cause of resentment of foreign teachers in the local education system, that of the fear that such imported teachers may inadvertently – or perhaps even consciously – convey alien and potentially corrupting values and beliefs to their students.

4. Fear of alien values and second language learning
Even if teachers are culturally sensitive (see, e.g., Al-Issa, 2005; Diallo, 2014; McBride, 2004; Rapanta, 2014) and adhere to the mantra of “PARSNIP” (Akbari, 2008, p.281), that is, if they engage in the conscious avoidance of any discussion (or even any mention) of any topic in any way, even tangentially, related to politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, -isms, or pornography – and many do indeed engage in such stringent self-censorship, as documented for example by Hudson (2011, 2013) – their mere presence can nevertheless present a potential problem. This is since, as noted by Diallo (2014, p.3), the “imported Western-educated language teachers in the UAE, like any other teachers elsewhere, are far from ‘neutral’. They are highly positioned even before they enter local classrooms, given that they embody Western Judeo-Christian epistemologies, liberal views and secular traditions.” Emirati students, in stark contrast, are conservative, traditional, and devout Muslims (see, e.g., Simadi, 2006; Simadi & Kamali, 2004). As stated for example by Schvaneveldt, Kerpelman, and Schvaneveldt (2005, p.79) in relation to female students, Emiratis “are deeply devoted to the theology of Islam”, a point on which Lambert (2008, p.105) concurs, noting that for female Emirati students, Islam “forms the basis of their opinions, decisions, and behaviour.”

In addition to this secular-religious divide, cultural differences also loom large. In terms of Hofstede’s (1986) four dimensional model of cultural differences, for example – viz., individualism versus collectivism; power distance (small versus large); uncertainty avoidance (weak versus strong); and masculinity versus femininity – the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, that is, the societies from which most English teachers in HE in the UAE stem (Syed, 2003),ii would best be described as small power distance–high individualism–weak uncertainty avoidance–masculine, whereas the UAE would perhaps best be captured by the string, large power distance–low individualism–strong uncertainty avoidance–masculine. In short, the ‘cultural distance’ (Svanes, 1988), or the ‘social distance’ (Schumann, 1976), between Emirati EFL/ESL learners and the target language group is not inconsiderable. This is significant since within the field of the social psychology of language learning (e.g., Lambert, 1981) there is the assumption that any negative attitudes on the part of learners towards the speakers of the target language may adversely affect, and perhaps even wholly preclude, successful acquisition of the language. As noted by Lambert (1981):
negative, prejudiced attitudes and stereotypes about another ethnolinguistic group, quite independent of language learning abilities or verbal intelligence, can upset and disturb the motivation needed to learn the other group’s language; just as open, inquisitive and friendly attitudes can enhance and enliven the language learning process (p.3).

More contemporarily, as stated by Hagler (2014) in relation to students of English in Saudi Arabia:

one can infer that a negative attitude toward Western culture could significantly impede language acquisition and perhaps other aspects of learning. In order to resist assimilation and to assert one’s native culture, it is conceivable that some learners may adopt a more instrumental approach to their language learning in order to maintain some distance from the second language and its culture (p.3).

Thus, it is perhaps no surprise that, as noted by Ridder (1995, p.44), whereas German was a major influence in Holland prior to World War II, its sway waned in the immediate post-war period, and instead the “adoption of English words and phrases by speakers of Dutch” increased in popularity, as English was now “the language of the liberators, the money providers and progress.” Similarly, no one should be too overly surprised if some present-day Palestinians were to display resistance to English, the language of globalisation, which some in the Middle East regard as the “ideological framework of the new American imperialism”, if not an overt “conspiracy against Islam and Arab-Islamic culture” (Najjar, 2005, p.104) (see also Ouis, 2002). After all, as noted by Dwairy et al. (2006):

...because the Israeli occupation is supported by the United States, rejecting the Western individualistic and liberal style of life may be considered by some of the Palestinians to be part of their struggle to protect and preserve their cultural and national identity (p.241).

Indeed, negative perceptions of the USA and resistance towards American values have been found to exist throughout much of the Muslim world. In their post-9/11 analysis of nine predominately Muslim countries, Nisbet, Nisbet, Scheufele, and Shanahan (2004), for example, note that the general public in many such countries hold “unfavorable views of the United States” (p.14). Furthermore, it was found that in all the countries examined the majority (from 67% to 84%) believed that “the spread of American ideas and customs was bad for their country” (p.14). Such ideas and customs are of course spread via the vehicular language of English, which enjoys a symbiotic relationship with globalisation (Coleman, 2006; Dahan, 2013).

4.1 Muslim students’ perceptions of ‘the West’ and ‘Westerners’

With the total of the above in mind, one question that naturally arises is what, precisely, is the “attitudinal orientation” (Schumann, 1976, p.138) of learners of English in the Muslim world towards ‘the West’ and ‘Westerners’? That is, what perceptions of Western teachers are held by Muslim students of English? It has to be stated at the outset that research previously conducted into this question in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region reveals that many Muslim students have a somewhat unflattering picture of Westerners. Sellami (2006), for instance, investigated the views of Moroccan undergraduate EFL/ESL students towards the citizens of two
‘inner circle’ (Kachru, 1996b) countries, viz., the USA and the UK, and uncovered highly “stigmatized and stereotypical views” of both Americans and the British (p.177), with one informant writing that these two peoples “have become slaves of sex, money and alcohol” (Sellami, 2006, p.179).

As regards the perceptions of Westerners held by Emirati students, Walters, Quinn, and Walters (2005, p.70) report that during the US-led invasion of Afghanistan, one student at Zayed University (ZU) would read the Quran and ask “Allah to protect Muslims from those American criminals.” This is particularly noteworthy since ZU “is an American institution in concept and implementation” (Ryan Abu Wardeh, 2010, p.1), boasting of many faculty members from the USA.iii Similarly, in their research into perceptions of Europe and Europeans on the part of some 478 Emirati females, all of whom, significantly, were prospective teachers, Kostoulas-Makrakis (2005) also found “a high degree of animosity” towards both the continent and its people (p.506). “To their minds”, writes Kostoulas-Makrakis (p.506), “Europe stands as the imperialistic militaristic enemy, which poses a threat to the Arab or Islamic culture and existence.” These trainee Emirati teachers also referred to the perceived “hatred of Christians towards Muslims” as well as “Europeans’ lack of moral principles” (p.506), with one respondent stating that she hates “Europeans like any other Muslim does because they enjoy torturing Muslims” (p.506). Another remarked that “Europe claims to be developed but they only try to control others either by conquering countries and destroying their cultures or by demolishing ethics” (p.506).

5. Ambivalence and ambiguity in EFL/ESL

Of course, no matter what the learner’s perception of English speakers or ‘English-speaking’ countries such as the USA and the UK, there nevertheless exists widespread recognition that the English language itself does indeed appear to confer some considerable potential advantages upon its users, especially in the realm of earning potential. In his study of the economic value of English in capital-rich, conservative Switzerland (which has the four national languages of German, French, Italian, and Romansch), for example, Grin (2001) concludes (p.73) that “English language skills are associated with significant earnings gains on the Swiss labour market. Controlling for education and experience, these differences clearly rise along with the level of competence in English.” Even in ultra-conservative Saudi Arabia, the potential economic benefits of English are acknowledged. After all, as noted by Mahboob and Elyas (2014, p.129), “One of the reasons why English is considered so important in the KSA [Kingdom of Saudi Arabia] education system is its perceived economic value.” However, it is not simply in relation to potential earnings that English can be advantageous to its users. For, as explained by Marginson (2006), English can also be seen as an instance of a positional good, i.e., a product or service which affords the consumer greater prestige and status, or as Prodromou (1998, p.79) puts it, knowledge of English can confer “snob value” upon its users. However, any ambivalence on the part of students in regards to English – i.e., negative perceptions of the speakers of the language and their culture on the one hand, in tandem with a desire to learn the language for socio-economic mobility or ‘snob value’ on the other – can lead to students harbouring a somewhat ambiguous, if not downright dubious, attitude towards English, referred to as “double-think” by Abbott (1992, p.174) and dubbed a “want-hate relationship” by Lin (1999, p.394) (see also Kachru, 1996b), manifestations of resistance which have previously been found by educators of an ethnographic bent in Sri Lanka (Canagarajah, 1993) and Mexico (Francis & Ryan, 1998).
It should be noted that resistance, as the term is employed here, does not necessarily entail overt activist action such as students going on strike or taking to the streets in protest. Rather, resistance towards a certain educational policy can be manifested in behaviour such as “leaving assigned materials ‘at home’” (Talmy, 2010, p.133; see also Talmy, 2008), trivialisation of work through dishonest academic practices, distancing oneself from academic work by adopting a “cool demeanor” (Masemann, 1982, p.14), absenteeism, doodling in textbooks (Canagarajah, 1993), and, as has been previously noted in relation to HE in the UAE, opting for ‘tight’ timetables, i.e., back-to-back classes (Hatherley-Greene, 2012) so as to minimise time spent on campus. Many of these examples of academically counterproductive behaviour can often be observed on the part of Emirati HE students. Indeed, Rogier (2012) has commented upon female Emirati HE students’ unwillingness to study outside of the classroom, as has Martin (2003). Academic dishonesty within HE in the UAE has also attracted considerable attention (Hatherley-Greene, 2012; Hudson, 2013; Martin, 2003), even within the national media (e.g., Swan, 2012, February 12). Absenteeism, too, is such a potential problem (Hudson, 2013; Yassaei, 2012) that, despite its status as a university, attendance is taken at the location of the current study every lesson, a practice more commonly associated with compulsory education. It is even possible that the somewhat festive spirit of the food court on the female campus of the case institution – what in the framework proposed by Quantz and O’Connor (1988) would be termed a carnivalesque moment – may also be a manifestation of resistance to English and EMI.

Another possible indicator of underlying psychological resistance towards English on the part of students in the UAE is their demonstrable competence in the language, or rather the relative lack thereof. For as is well documented, levels of proficiency in English in the UAE are low, as indeed they are in the whole Gulf (Fareh, 2010; Said, 2011). Gallagher (2011), for example, points out that takers of IELTS (International English Language Testing System) in the UAE obtained the lowest scores out of twenty states in 2006, trailing developing countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka (IELTS Annual Review 2006). Highly similar results were obtained in 2007 (IELTS Annual Review 2007), 2010 (IELTS Annual Review 2010), and 2011 (IELTS Annual Review 2011). It is – at the very least – feasible that such suboptimal levels of English in the UAE may come about as a result of learners harbouring a ‘want-hate’ relationship with English, and that the very real social/cultural distance which appears to exist between the students and their teachers may account, at least in part, for Emirati students’ relatively low performance in EFL/ESL.

That such behavioural traits and relatively modest results in international English language proficiency examinations such as IELTS constitute expressions of resistance towards the language is not the only interpretation, of course. In his critique of Canagarajah (1993), for example, Braine (1994) argues that what Canagarajah describes as an oppositional response to ESL could just as simply be plain boredom or frustration. However, as we shall see below after briefly examining the intertwined nature of English and Islam, the results of the survey employed in the current study would tend to suggest that the students do indeed display a great deal of resistance to English, to the alien values which ride “piggyback” on the language (Qiang & Wollf, 2007, p.61), as well as to EMI.
6. Islam and English

One possible catalyst for any ambiguity and resistance on the part of students in the UAE would be the staunch Islamic nature of the country. This is since English can be seen as encroaching on the Arabic language, which, as noted above, is both a marker of Arab heritage and Islamic identity, a point which is often unfortunately overlooked. Kabel (2007), for instance, criticises Karmani (2005b, p.262) for presenting himself as a “Muslim applied linguist” (see also Karmani, 2005c), arguing that “formulas such as Jewish, Catholic or atheist applied linguist” would appear ludicrous (Kabel, 2007, p.141). Kabel (2007), however, has clearly overlooked the fact that the alternative formulations he offers are in fact arguably far from analogous. This is since Karmani (2005b) speaks from the point of view of an EFL/ESL practitioner in the Islamic context of the UAE (see also Karmani, 2005a), where, as previously noted, Arab identity, the Arabic language, and the religion of Islam dovetail seamlessly. As noted by Al-Khatib (2000), the Arab world consists of 21 independent states, and estimates as to the percentage of Arabs in these countries who are practicing Muslims range from 80% (Sidani & Thornberry, 2009) to as high as 95% (Al-Khatib, 2000). Perhaps, then, it should be no surprise that Arabic has a distinct Islamic flavour. Indeed, as noted by Morrow and Castleton (2007, p.205), “Arabic religious expressions are so common that the language counts Allah as its most common content word” (original emphasis).

Of course, not all Muslims are Arabs or Arabic speakers. Indeed, the most populous Muslim country is Indonesia, but even here Arabic and Islam are entwined, for, as noted by Zaharna (1995, p.246), “The Koran was not only revealed in Arabic, but Arabic is the language used in prayer by Moslems throughout the world.” That is, Arabic is the “liturgical language of 1.5 billion Muslims” worldwide (Morrow & Castleton, 2011, p.309). Indeed, a somewhat striking example of the extent to which Arabic and Islam are inextricably linked in the minds of some Indonesian Muslims is offered by Lukens-Bull (2001), who explains (p.362) how his informants believed that since the ingredients in an American snack were, along with other languages, listed in Arabic, the snack must therefore be halal (i.e., conforming to Islamic dietary practices). Thus, to these Indonesian Muslims, Arabic and Islam both entail and presuppose each other. Arabic is not only of such significance in Indonesia, of course; the language also “carries a powerful spiritual and religious symbolic value to the UAE’s national identity as an Arab and Muslim country” (Diallo, 2014, p.2).

7. The current study

With the total of the above in mind, it was decided to research attitudes towards the presence and prevalence of non-Arabic-speaking foreigners and non-Muslim teachers in the UAE, the link between Arabic and Islam, the policy of EMI in HE in the UAE, and the possible encroachment of English on Islamic values, as held by female students (n = 43) on a foundation programme at a federal university in the UAE, an institution which is arguably highly representative of tertiary establishments in the UAE, and indeed the greater Gulf.

7.1 Participants

The students in this particular study ranged between 17 and 20 years old (mean = 18.44) and represented all 7 of the emirates that make up the UAE, stemming from, in numerical order, the emirate of Abu Dhabi (n = 28), Ras Al Khaimah (n = 6), Sharjah (n = 2), Ajman (n = 2), Dubai (n = 2), Fujairah (n = 2), and Umm Al Quwain (n = 1). The vast majority of the 43 participants (n =
were Emirati, though 1 was from the Yemen and 1 from Palestine. Students on the foundation programme need to obtain an overall 5.0 in the academic variant of the IELTS examination, or ‘equivalent’, so as to be able to proceed to their relevant faculty and commence their degree programme.

7.2 Research instrument
The research instrument employed in the following study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. Since it was necessary to ensure as far as possible that students fully comprehended the statements contained in the questionnaire, it was decided to present the informants with a bilingual (English/Arabic) document, which students could complete in the language of their choice, or a combination of both if so desired. This, presumably, is the rationale behind the bilingual English/Arabic instructions of the Common Educational Proficiency Assessment (CEPA) exam (Coombe & Davidson, 2013), and it is of interest to note that in their research into the eating attitudes of students at ZU, Thomas, Khan, and Abdulrahman (2010) acknowledge the lack of a dual language version of their research instrument to be a shortcoming of their study. The initial translation of the survey was completed by a female final-year Emirati student of translation at the case institution, and this was subsequently reviewed by an English instructor of Tunisian heritage fluent in both English and Arabic, as a result of which some minor edits were made to the questionnaire.

Participants were invited to read and sign a consent form before completing the questionnaire, were guaranteed anonymity, and were given an unlimited amount of time in which to complete the questionnaire. The questions, being fairly broad in scope, arguably afforded informants the latitude to interpret them according to their own priorities, beliefs, and values (Ashencaen Crabtee, 2007). A 5-point, Likert-type scale measured the attitudes of the students towards the issues targeted in the survey. In this way, it was possible to score and thus operationally define participants’ attitudes. Since the areas on which participants’ views were desired were quite distinct, and in order to avoid “respondent fatigue” (Ben-Nun, 2008), it was decided to target the topics of interest with a short, 8-item questionnaire. Interestingly, perhaps, 18 students completed the questionnaire in English, and 23 in Arabic (2 students completed it in full in both languages).

8. Results & discussion
Table 1:
Questionnaire & Students’ Responses (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Foreigners in the UAE should learn Arabic.</td>
<td>SA 58.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A 30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am happy when foreigners learn Arabic.</td>
<td>SA 65.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A 25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Muslim students should only have Muslim teachers.</td>
<td>SA 11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A 11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO 16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Muslims have a duty to learn foreign languages.</td>
<td>SA 11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A 41.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO 16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA 46.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A 20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO 18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q1 of the survey looks at whether students are of the opinion that foreigners from non-Arabic-speaking countries, of which teachers are a particularly visible subpopulation, should learn Arabic. 25 students (58.1%) strongly agreed, 13 (30.2%) agreed, 3 (7%) had no opinion, and 2 (4.7%) disagreed. Interestingly, this question generated 5 optional comments, with four students, all of whom strongly agreed, adding, “To facilitate interaction, understanding and dealing with others,” “To benefit from knowing about our values and traditions,” “To facilitate communication between two cultures,” and “Their language is a must therefore they need to learn our language.” Of most interest, however, is the fact that Q1 appears to have hit something of a raw nerve with another student who also strongly agreed. For, with some not unobvious frustration, if not (arguably understandable) bitterness, this student wrote “Make them take an “IELTS” test in Arabic,” a rare outburst indeed for someone from a group known for, among other cultural traits, their hospitality and graciousness (Ashencaen Crabtree, 2007; Saudelli, 2012).

Q2, which is thematically linked with the previous question, examines whether the students surveyed are pleased when encountering a foreigner who has learned, or who is in the throes of learning, Arabic. Some 28 students (65.1%) strongly agreed, a further 11 (25.6%) agreed, 3 (7%) had no opinion, and 1 (2.3%) disagreed. One of the 28 students who strongly agreed stated, “It shows that we are civilized and advanced.” Another, who also strongly agreed, wrote that “This facilitates communication between me and them.” A student who agreed appears to have summed up the students’ attitudes on this topic, writing “I feel it is an appreciation of Arabic.”

Q3 seeks to ascertain students’ views towards the religious orientation, if any, of their teachers, more specifically, whether they believe that Muslim students should only have fellow Muslims as teachers. As such, this is a direct replication of Hudson’s (2011) question of “I think it is important that Muslim students should have Muslim English teachers.” In the current study, 16 students (37.2%) disagreed, a further 10 (23.3%) strongly disagreed, 5 (11.6%) agreed, 5 strongly agreed, and 7 students (16.3%) expressed no opinion. Of these 7 students who did not express an opinion, one nevertheless added that “There is no difference between a Muslim and a foreigner; the most important thing is the delivery of information.” Interestingly, this echoes a comment made by one of the informants in Hudson’s (2011) study who remarked (p.130) that “It’s not about who teaches it, it’s about how capable the teacher is.”

There is a hadith which is invariably translated as He whoever learns other people’s language will be secured from their cunning, and which, interestingly, as noted by Elyas and Picard (2010), is often employed by private language training centres in Saudi
Arabia as a motto to promote – and perhaps even justify on religious grounds – the study of foreign languages. Q4 (“Muslims have a duty to learn foreign languages”) sought to ascertain students’ attitudes towards the sentiments underlying this particular hadith. No fewer than 18 students (41.9%) agreed, a further 5 (11.6%) strongly agreed, 8 (18.6%) disagreed, 5 strongly disagreed, and 7 (16.3%) had no opinion. One of the 7 students who expressed no opinion added, “Our prophet mahammed said its good to learn others languages but its not compulsory.”

Q5 of this short, targeted survey seeks to gain an insight into the extent to which students believe Arabic and Islam are interwoven. Traditionally, it is often argued that the Quran should not be translated from Arabic as some meaning will inevitably be lost, and one should not corrupt the literal word of God, as revealed through the prophet Mohammed. From this point of view, then, in order to read the Quran all Muslims need to first fully master (classical) written Arabic. 20 students (46.5%) strongly agreed with the statement that “All Muslims in the world (from Indonesia, etc.) should learn Arabic”, 9 (20.9%) agreed, 8 (18.6%) had no opinion, 3 (7%) disagreed, and 3 (7%) strongly disagreed. Although there is a strong consensus on this point, the opinions of those surveyed are by no means unanimous, and it is interesting to note that no fewer than 8 students expressed no opinion. The two diametrically opposed views on this topic are captured succinctly by the additional comments made by two students. One, who agreed, wrote, “Because the Quran is in Arabic and cannot be translated. It is also the language of paradise.” However, another student, who strongly disagreed, stated, “We get nothing from forcing people.”

On the question as to whether students should be able to elect their language of instruction at university (Q6), as opposed to having to study in English for most degree programmes, 27 students (62.8%) strongly agreed, a further 8 (18.6%) agreed, 3 (7%) strongly disagreed, 3 disagreed, and 2 (4.7%) had no opinion. In sum, then, no fewer than 35 students (81.39%) were in favour of being able to select either Arabic or English as the primary language of tuition, a significant finding given the compulsory nature of EMI for the vast majority of degree programmes within federally-sponsored HE in the UAE.

As regards the potential threat which English itself may pose to the Islamic values held by the students (Q7), nearly one-third of the students (13, or 30%) agreed and a further 11 students (25.6%) strongly agreed that their Islamic values and beliefs are indeed threatened by the English language. In contrast, 17 students (39.5%) disagreed, and 2 students (4.7%) gave no opinion. The related question as to whether learning English may be seen as making students more Westernised is the point of contention tackled in Q8. 12 students (27.9%) agreed, 10 (23.3%) strongly agreed, 11 (25.6%) disagreed, 1 (2.3%) strongly disagreed, and 9 (20.9%) stated they had no opinion. Ultimately, then, 22 students (51.17%) stated that they believe that learning English does indeed have a Westernising socialisation effect on its learners.

9. Conclusion
Against a backdrop of the growing societal influence and cultural penetration of English in the UAE, this study examines the attitudes of a small sample of female students at a federally-sponsored institution of HE towards the place and role of English vis-à-vis Arabic in the country, the presence of non-Arabic-speaking foreigners in the UAE, the link between Arabic and Islam, the language policy of EMI within HE, the potential threat posed by English towards Muslim
students’ ethno-linguistic identity and religious values, and the possible socialising effects of English on its users.

As revealed by the questionnaire, the vast majority (38) of students surveyed are of the opinion that foreigners in the UAE – presumably also including their teachers, lecturers, and other educators they encounter – should indeed learn Arabic, the mother tongue of the students, an interesting insight given the clear preference for ‘native-speaking’ teachers of English and monolingual, target-language-only lessons and lectures in the UAE, and indeed in many other parts of the world. The majority (26) of students do not, however, believe that it should be compulsory for their teachers to be fellow Muslims, though it is important to remember that, in contrast, approximately one-quarter of those surveyed (10) assert they should only have Muslim teachers. It is also interesting to note that no fewer than 7 students opted to not offer an opinion on this point, which is the same number as those who gave no opinion on the question as to whether Muslims have an inherent duty to learn foreign languages.

No such ambiguity exists on the issue of the interwoven nature of Islam and Arabic, however, with a significant majority (29) of students agreeing that all Muslims should learn Arabic, though again somewhat interestingly this question resulted in some 8 students declining to offer an opinion. It is perhaps for this reason that more than half (24) of the respondents expressed a belief both that English constitutes a possible threat to their Islamic values and (22) that English has potentially socialising and ‘Westernising’ effects. Preferences as regards being able to elect the language of their instruction for their university studies are even clearer, with the vast majority (35) of students stating that they believe they should indeed be able to choose between Arabic and English. On this point, one wonders how often – in this supposed age of ‘student-centred’ education – students themselves are actually asked which language they would prefer to study in, or how often they are simply instructed what they are going to learn, how they are going to learn it, and the language they will learn it in.

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“Make them take an ‘IELTS test’ in Arabic”! Resentment

Solloway


“Make them take an ‘IELTS test’ in Arabic” \textsuperscript{1} Resentment Solloway


Fellman, J. (1973) Language and national identity: The case of the Middle East. \textit{Anthropological Linguistics, 15}, 244-49.


“Make them take an ‘IELTS test’ in Arabic”! Resentment


Karmani, S. (2005c) TESOL in a time of terror: Toward an Islamic perspective on applied linguistics. TESOL Quarterly, 39, 738-44.


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2. For an appraisal of this aspect of HE in the UAE from the perspective of critical theory, see Karmani (2005a).
3. It would of interest to learn the extent to which American teachers at this institution experienced what Dell-Jones (2008) refers to as teaching EFL in “anti-American environments.”
4. In addition to avoiding respondent fatigue, this may be a further advantage of a relatively short questionnaire.
5. لتبسيط التفاعل والتعامل والفهم
6. يستفيدون، وليعرفوا قيمنا وعاداتنا
7. ليس للتفاهم وللتفاهم وللتفاهم
8. لا نشرد لغتهم
9. لا نشرد لغتهم
10. لا نشرد لغتهم
11. لا نشرد لغتهم
12. لا نشرد لغتهم
13. لا نشرد لغتهم
14. لا نشرد لغتهم
15. لا نشرد لغتهم
16. لا نشرد لغتهم
17. لا نشرد لغتهم
18. لا نشرد لغتهم
19. لا نشرد لغتهم
20. لا نشرد لغتهم
21. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
22. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
23. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
24. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
25. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
26. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
27. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
28. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
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30. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
31. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
32. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
33. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
34. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
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39. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
40. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
41. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
42. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
43. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
44. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
45. لتبسيط التواصل بين ثقافنا البلدين
46. لتبسيet al., 2007).
47. Give us your questions and we'll answer them.
48. It's easy to learn a new language when you're motivated.
49. Let's talk about our mutual interests.
50. I'm happy to help you with your English.
51. Can you recommend a good English tutor?
52. Let's start by reviewing the basic grammar rules.
53. I believe that communication is key to understanding different cultures.
54. I think it's important to be respectful of other cultures.
55. Let's make an effort to learn more about each other.
56. I believe that education is the foundation of a strong society.
57. I think that technology is changing the way we learn.
58. Let's explore how we can use technology to improve our language skills.
59. I believe that everyone should have access to quality education.
60. I think that the government should invest more in education.